This Means War

“Your Majesty! The castle walls have been breached! We must get you and Princess Syrene to safety,” a knight reported to Pontiff Gethsem.

“No! I must stay here and defend my country, but get Syrene to a haven quickly,” Gethsem replied. Silence filled the air as bombs exploded throughout the halls; the siege of Castle Reveran was far from over.

“Any word of the 1st battalion at Fort Rauhten?”

“I'm sorry, your Majesty, but we lost contact with them when Gradia invaded our borders.”

“I was afraid of this. The invasion is one, and now I fear my son is dead. When will this tragedy end?”

Another explosion sounded throughout the castle walls. Gethsem went directly to his daughter giving her cover in case the ceiling collapsed on top of them.

“You there! Get my daughter to the Royal Spring in the bottom of the castle. Now!” Gethsem said hastily, “Syrene, listen to me.”

“Yes Father?” Syrene said.

“Take the harp your mother gave you; go with him to the spring immediately.” He was pointing at a cavalier standing five feet away.

“What?! No! I will not leave you, Father! Ever since mother died I promised myself that I will not lose you no matter what!”

“Please, this is probably your father’s last wish. Go with the solider to-”

Another blast rang throughout the castle. A foot soldier rushed into the Throne Room. He was panting heavily.

“Your Majesty, the entrance to the castle has collapsed! And all other exits are being blocked by Gradian soldiers. They are heading here right as we speak!”

Gethsem ran straight to his daughter and whispered in her ear: “Play the lullaby your mother sang to you when you were little. Play it at the spring, and please be safe Syrene.” He was crying bitter tears.
Two explosions rang simultaneously with each other. The ceiling collapsed and stone fell onto the marble floor blocking Syrene from her father.

“Father! Father! Can you hear me Father!” Syrene bellowed at the wall of stone that separated Gethsem from her.

She hit the stone with all her might which made her fists rather bloody from punching the wall with such force. The designated-soldier grabbed Syrene by her wrist and yanked her out of the room and down the stairs to the Royal Spring that lay another two stories down. Gradian soldiers plunged from the opening in the ceiling and landed with a hard thud. Several archers and guards shouted at the fugitives and pursued them by launching javelins and shooting arrows as they fled.

“Princess Syrene, run ahead to the end of the hallway and duck behind a barrel,” he said.


“You see the chandeliers hanging on the ceiling?”

“Yes, what about them?”

The soldier took a dagger from armor and launched it into the chandelier. The dagger cut the rope that was holding up the heavy golden chandelier. It fell to the ground with great force and killed the pursuers upon impact.

The duo made it to the end of the hallway, down the stairs, and to the next level of Castle Reveran. The soldier grabbed Syrene by her wrist once again and pulled her into an empty bedroom that wasn’t far off from the stair case.

“Wait, wait! Just stop for a moment. Please tell me your name. How am I going to trust you if I don’t know your name?” Syrene asked in a soft voice.

“My name is Seth. I’m from the 3rd battilion of cavaliers that usually patrol our border with Gradia and Syraca. Last week was my final week in service near Syraca to help reinforce the capital.”

“I remember something about the battilions being pulled from Syraca because I heard Father arguing with one of his trusted advisers. He didn’t want to pull them; it took two days for him to agree with them. I still wonder why he pulled all of them from the borders.”

“That’s beside the point, Milady. We need to figure out how to get to the Royal Spring in the Castle Garden.”

Syrene pondered this for what seemed like hours, but was really only a couple of minutes. Seth walked the walls of the room, which held only one bed, a chair, and a wash-bucket that was in the corner. Syrene straightened her clothes, a dress with white armor pads on the shoulders with gold bordering, a lavender gown with a gold belt around her waist and a piece of fabric that hung from the right side of her belt that held the Reveran Royal Crest:
a lion crowned with stars with one paw up and the other three keeping him balanced, and a bundle of arrows were in his mouth along with an olive branch.

Syrene stood up and paced around the room with Seth. Her brunette hair occasionally getting in her face made it harder for her to concentrate on the task at hand.

“I got it! Princess Syrene, how well are you in archery?” Seth asked.

“I was top of my archery class when I was 13 years old,” Syrene bragged.

“Okay, here is the plan: On this floor is a small armory and a uniform outfitter. If we can get you an iron bow and an archer’s uniform, we can possibly get closer to the garden without being noticed.”

“That is crazy enough to just get us killed! How do you plan to get anywhere if your armor is different?”

“Leave that to me, My Lady.”

“You’re not going to tell me what you’re up to, are you?”

Seth shook his head in response.

Click Click Click. Footsteps were ringing throughout the hall. An enemy soldier was heading towards Seth and Syrene! Seth heard the footsteps and told Syrene to stay quiet. He knew exactly what to do about the soldier. He grabbed a stone from the corner and crept towards the door. Click Click Click. The soldier was nearly upon them. When Seth saw the soldier walk by, he grabbed him and cracked his skull with the stone before he could yell for help. He told Syrene to help him strip him of his uniform as soon as he killed him. They stripped him, took his uniform, and left the room for the armory by leaving the dead man sitting in a wash bucket.

They managed to equip Syrene with an iron bow and twenty steel arrows and even managed to get her an archer’s uniform and a knapsack to keep her dress and harp in. Several times they posed as a guard and prisoner to get past the Gradian soldiers. It took twenty minutes to arrive at the Royal Garden. They walked on the marble stone walkway past two red oak trees and passed a patch of wildflowers. A fountain was in the back of the garden with a rectangular stone sticking out of the center with a metal rendering of the Royal Seal above it. Four pillars stood at each corner which made it look ancient and cryptic. The stone door to the Royal Temple was directly behind the fountain. Syrene ran to the fountain and took out her harp. She played her mother’s melody in front of the fountain. The melody rushed out of Syrene’s mouth swiftly and sweetly: “The chosen guided by the God and Goddess. Guided by the light, Land shall be razed, dark shall rise. Use the weapons of Light and Thunder, and free the land.”

The melody echoed in the garden. Syrene’s voice was of an angel; Seth was lost in her wonderful voice. When Syrene finished, a faint light was shining from the Royal Seal. It sank into the marble altar and a rumble came from the door to the Royal Temple. The Seal of
Reveran was shining on the door. The seal faded, and the door opened before Syrene and Seth.

“After you, My Lady,” Seth spoke with a quiver in his voice. He was actually scared to go in.

“Cute,” said Syrene, “Real knightly of you.”

Seth nodded and went down the steps into the temple. Syrene followed close behind. The door closed behind them with a large jolt, yet a dark shadow zoomed past before it closed.

“Seth, wait. We don’t know exactly where we are.”

The only response Seth gave her was a nod. Syrene gave another sigh and fixed her quiver to walk beside him. His armor was cold against Syrene’s fair skin. Yet, she felt a disturbance in the air as if a dark shadow seemed to fill the entire temple. They walked for minutes, and minutes turned to hours. The temple was truly a maze. Seth and Syrene repeatedly got lost in the many turns and steps that filled the Royal Temple.

“My goodness, I learned the temple was large from old texts, but I would have never imagined it was a labyrinth,” said Syrene, “How long have we been walking, Seth?”

“I’m not sure, Milady; I would say we have been walking for about two hours."

“Are you sure?”

“Do you see an hourglass on me, your Grace?”

“Funny man, aren’t you?”

“I’ve been told I have a sense of humor by my fellow soldiers.”

“Hmph. I never would ha-”

The floor underneath them gave out dropping them into the darkness. Syrene’s scream filled the air with horror. Seth glided over to Syrene and grabbed her by the waist.

Seth landed on his back with a large slam. He bellowed in pain, and Syrene immediately went to his aid helping him to his feet and sat him down by a wall.

“It’s fine, My Lady.”

“No, it’s not. You’re injured. Lay down.”

“I’m sorry, but we must press onward.”

Syrene reluctantly agreed and followed the limping Seth down the hall. They found a door with a strange design. Seth opened the door and went in with Syrene behind him. The duo found a chamber filled with old carvings and designs. Stairs angled downward onto a hexagonal floor with an altar in the center. Seth and Syrene walked to the altar and Syrene touched it. The altar shined with a dazzling light and an archer’s bow made with a bright metal appeared on the altar with thirty arrows. Syrene was mesmerized; Seth in utter awe.

*I’ve been waiting for you.*

“Huh?” Seth and Syrene said simultaneously.
A divine spirit came forth from the bow. She wore a dress that went to her mid knee, a poncho that covered her arms to her mid-belly, and stockings that went to her heel shoes.

I’m Aquais, the being of the Divine weapon, the Thundaga Bow. I have served the Divine since my creation. Their final instructions were to guide the leader of light in her journey. I must assume it is you. Correct?

“I have no idea what you’re talking about. Leader of light? Journey? What is going on?” Syrene asked.

I have registered you as Princess Syrene of the Theocracy of Reveran. Correct? Good. My mission is to guide you in your journey.

“Like I said before. A journey to what, or where?” Syrene asked.

A quest to seek the chosen of the second Divine. We must find him before they do.

“They? They who?”

Explosions rocked the chamber; fire raged in the halls spreading towards the group. Seth grabbed Syrene, and they took refuge in a corner.

Quick! Get behind me!

They listened to the spirit and got behind her. She bellowed a phrase and light started to surround them. Whosh! A dagger flew by Syrene’s eye and cut her on the cheek. She winced from the cut and saw a dark figure with yellow eyes and wolf teeth. It stared at her with malice and slime. Yet it held something in its right hand. It was her father's crown! It hissed at them and lunged for Syrene’s chest.

“No!” Seth screamed. He threw himself in front of Syrene and took the sharp claws that dug into his chest.

“Seth! No!” yelled Syrene.

She stared at the figure once more with Seth’s blood all over her arms and face. Tears were pouring from her blue eyes. The flames now engulfed the entire room; the figure gave one more sneer at Syrene, and the light engulfed the group and the room disappeared.

They ended up in a field next to the castle on a white horse that was suited for a cavalier. She was holding the reins and Seth sat unconscious, bloody, and limp behind her. Aquais shot from the bow with a great light and levitated in front of her.

We must go Northwest towards Twla Village; Head to the Border Forest now for refuge and tend Seth’s wounds there. Now we must flee. Ride!Ride!

Syrene grabbed the reins and galloped away from Castle Reveran. More explosions came from the castle. The castle towers fell to the ground. Fire broke from the fallen towers onto the castle town below. People screamed as fire raged and Gradian soldiers slaughtered them upon sight.

“NO!” Syrene bellowed, “NO!”
Syrene galloped back towards the castle. Yet Gradian cavalry rushed forth in great numbers and forced her to take route back towards the forest. She rushed past rivers and mountain bases filled with ivy and wild flowers; she wasn't far from Border Forest. Smoke was rising higher and higher from the ruins of her old home. Everyone she loved was now dead. They were gone forever, and there was nothing she could do. She kept riding faster and faster as enemy soldiers perused a league away. Tears mixed with her blood and trickled off her face. Her despair turned to anger, and anger turned to rage. She screamed into the open air with revenge in her mind to avenge her lost father, to avenge her people, to avenge herself. This was the beginning with the power to affect all people in every nation, and Syrene couldn't stop it. This meant war.