

The Curse of the Third Eye by Lionora

Chapter 2: The Cursed Prince

The Battle of Bornah'yar was yet another victory for the empire. Soon, the commanding officers were heading back to their ships, the wounded were being attended at the med bays and the few dead were being recollectd to be shipped back home to be buried by their loved ones.

Prince Lotor was still in the surface of the planet supervising the last stages before the voyage back to Planet Drule. For a brief moment, in the place where all the gypsies' bodies lay in a huge big pile to be burned, he could've sworn he saw Adbar standing in the distance still gazing at him. He closed his eyes and shook his head, and when he opened them again all he could see was the fire and smoke starting to embrace the corpses. He felt that chill in his spine again and decided to finish his task faster so he could head back to the ship. He had never felt like that before and he didn't like it... at all.

Once inside the ship, he went straight to the bridge where he was informed that Commander Cossack would soon be joining him after he was released from the med bay to attend his minor wounds. He acknowledged and gave the order to finally lift off from that wretched place. He felt certain relief to leave even if, somehow, his inner self felt that after today's happening, his life would never be the same.

Back in Planet Drule, there was an expectant reception awaiting them. All officers and soldiers were being greeted and congratulated upon their return from their victorious battle. The emperor wanted to

celebrate their return in an award ceremony due to the achievements obtained. He informed about his intentions to all his staff through their communicators so that none of them would fail to attend.

Prince Lotor and his commander stood in a respectful position at a side of the path while the bodies of their fallen comrades were being unshipped from the vessel. Beside every lifeless corpse the prince could see a dark shadow moving along with it, but when he blinked, the shadow would disappear. "I think I should check my eyes", he thought. But soon enough, he discarded this idea, he just hated to visit medical facilities.

In his private chambers at last, he decided to take a hot tub bath and maybe rest for a while before heading to the award ceremony. He still had plenty of time. While he lay in the tub meditating, he started recapitulating all the recent events of the battle. But always his mind seemed to fixate in Adbar's disturbing gaze. He didn't want to remember the moment he thought he heard that evil laugh....no, that was not possible. He must've heard someone else's chuckle. Yes, that was it...nothing else. Slowly, he felt his body reacting and relaxing to the warm water covering him. It felt like his own self started to float in a sleepy haze. Even as his eyes were closed he could still see the white heated vapor of the hot water surrounding him. He felt like floating between clouds in a peaceful sky.

There she was again...like a guardian angel. His mother... Looking at him, eyes sad and worried, mouth opening and moving as to speak but no words could be heard. He tried to reach her but couldn't move. What was she saying...? She lifted her arms trying to reach out to him, her face desperate to make known a message, but still no sound...Then suddenly, there he was...that gypsy pirate, blocking his path with his evil gaze and mocking laugh...

The prince jumped from his dream, almost drowning when his head immersed in the full filled tub. He started coughing, and sat straight with his hands reaching to his soaked face and white hair. "What is wrong with me...?", he talked to himself. He quickly finished his bathing after shampooing and soaping. Then, after he dried himself he just went to his bed to rest a while, but somehow, the disturbing image of the gypsy's gaze would not let him conceal a resting state. So he just decided to watch the holos of the empires news until it was time to get ready for the ceremony.

All the invited guests were almost there when Prince Lotor arrived at the ceremonial hall. That place was impressive, tall and beautiful columns and exotic ornaments showed the extended riches and glory of the Drule empire. He felt so proud to be a part of it. He was dressed in his black imperial military uniform, which accentuated his tall and lean muscular figure. He had on all his previous military medals as it was required from all royal commanders to state their important achievements for the empire. His hair was neatly tied on his back and he walked with the impressive grace and straight forwardness of a royal drule heir. He knew that he caused a favorable impression wherever he went, his years living within the Drule empire had been proof enough for him. His handsome features had been praised by even the empire's gossipy royal news. Upon his entrance he was bowed and greeted by many distinguished guests, royalty and nobles. Males and females, drules and humans would bestow upon him lusting gazes from time to time. He was desired by most of them...including the emperor.

Surrounded by important dignitaries, royalty and nobles the emperor lifted his eyes and didn't hide his happiness to see him. He excused himself and started to approach the prince. Green drule eyes staring

at the prince while he got closer, yes..., he really liked what he was seeing. As he stood in front of him, Prince Lotor bowed respectfully to him.

"Ah, there you are..., my favorite royal...did you rest well, prince Lotor?"

"I did", he lied. The prince noticed that the emperor had already indulged in his one of his favorite pastimes: the consumption of alcoholic beverages. The scent and the silly smile denounced him.

As Prince Lotor observed his emperor, he suddenly saw a naked drule standing beside him. He blinked in astonishment, but in just a fraction of a second the naked drule was gone. He must've reacted in some weird manner because the emperor looked at him with curiosity and asked, "Prince Lotor...is everything alright?".

The prince answered, "Yes, ugh, (he smiled and shook his head) I am very honored to be here, your excellency...", he lied again.

"I am very pleased to hear that...now, my dear prince...be sure to drink some of the wine before the ceremony, I diligently exported it from the Denubian Galaxy,...I knew you would like that..."

"That is good to know... your Majesty...it was very thoughtful of you..." He smiled and lowered his head so that he didn't have to look at his emperor's eyes...it was just too disturbing to acknowledge his emperor's fixation with him; specially when he was not interested at all.

The emperor lowered his voice and got annoyingly closer to the prince: "I wish to speak to you in private

after the ceremony...." At the prince's startled reaction, he added: "Oh do not worry, my prince, I just want to discuss the near completion of your service in the empire and your future plans...". He pat the prince's shoulder in a friendly manner.

The prince was somewhat relieved and smiled. "Yes your highness, as you wish..."

"Good, good...so... I will see you later. Enjoy the celebration..." The emperor gave him a dashing smile and promptly was engulfed in animated conversation with other guests.

A little more relieved, the prince headed towards his reserved seat, taking some tyrusian wine in the way. He really needed it. Commander Cossack soon joined him so they could watch the ceremony begin.

After the ceremony, the prince wished to head back to his private chambers, but he didn't dare go against the emperor's wishes of meeting with him. So he decided to hang around with Cossack and speak to some of the guests who were more than willing to start a conversation with him.

Everywhere it was the same....he would sometimes look at a person, then suddenly he would see a disturbing figure beside that person and when he blinked...the image would immediately disappear. It just started slow at first, but as the night progressed, the visions were getting more constant. He didn't say anything to Cossack, but he noticed that his friend was sometimes looking at him with a questioning grimace. If Cossack wanted to say something, for some reason, he just didn't.

In a rare solitary moment while he was standing at one of the hall's balconies, just staring at the dark night, he was approached by a guard who after bowing to him, informed him that the emperor wished to speak with him in another chamber close to the hall. He followed the guard to the appointed place and entered the room when the guard opened the door. He walked forward through the neatly furnished office. The emperor was seated behind an enormous desk with a cup of wine in his right hand, his legs were crossed on top of the desk and with an amusing look upon his face he was watching the prince approach him.

The prince respectfully bowed before him and the emperor started talking: "Well, my dear prince, how did you find the wine, did it meet your expectance?"

The prince straightened up and answered: "The wine was excellent, sire. I enjoyed it indeed."

"Very good...I have always looked forward of you enjoying your free time from your military service in the empire. You have served us well". As the prince just looked at him and smiled, he added: "I have always respected your privacy and modesty towards your personal affairs. It is hard to find a decent royal, as you must know..."

"After so many years, I still have many background issues that I have to face on my own..."

"Yes, I can imagine. Being King Zarkon's son cannot be easy on you. Augh, it would not be easy on anybody...I have known your father for many years now. He is a fearsome king and a ruthless conqueror...I dare to tell you, that you are different from your father,(he gave an evil smirk) not just

physically. Do not misinterpret my words, you will be a great king. You have excellent leadership qualities, you are smart, brave, a great fighter...but your skills of diplomacy are much more developed than your father's. That makes you different."

"I still have my father's bad genius..."

"A necessary trait...", the emperor quickly added. "Your father's kingdom will be reluctant to accept a half-breed as a ruler...you will have to use an iron fist many, many times".

With this said, the emperor's face turned into a serious frown. "Your father contacted me today...he has been contacting me almost every day, now...I trust he has already reached you...".

"Yes sire, he did...."

The emperor lifted his brow, "he sounded urgent and looked worried...did you notice?".

"When I spoke to him last week, it seemed to me he has been having a problem with one of his commanders...but he would not tell me what was wrong...he just mentioned that he was looking forward to my return home".

"You know that you do not have to go yet. If you are still unsure of what to do, I can make a good excuse to delay your departure," the emperor's eyes looked at him hopefully. "So, have you decided yet?"

"I have decided to go back home."

The emperor didn't hide his disappointment. "Is there anything that I could say or do, just to make you change up your mind?"

"No sire, I am truly sorry.."

"So am I." The emperor sighed, "You will be missed. But if you ever wish to come back, you know that I will personally receive you..." His eyes were again fixated at Lotor's handsome face.

"Thank you sire." Lotor didn't show that he understood the intended meaning of the emperor's words. He just chose to ignore his intensions. He had been ignoring those intensions for four years now.

He knew that at first when he arrived ten years ago, the emperor would be very respectful and never make any forwarding comments to him. His sexual behavior hadn't been shown yet. But four years ago, when the emperor decided to get out of the drule closet, he tried with insinuations and comments to seduce Lotor into his bed many times. But it was Lotor's seriousness and respect that would always disconcert him to proceed forward with his futile seductions.

Prince Lotor excused himself with a bow and as he glanced for a brief moment towards the emperor, he saw the naked drule standing at the emperor's left side. But this time, he saw details that he didn't see before. The drule had lust in his eyes, his tongue was wetting his lips as an evil smirk was drawn in his face. Lotor immediately closed his eyes and when he opened them again, he was gone. The emperor didn't notice Lotor's confusion because he was staring at his cup of wine. Lotor slightly shook his head and then proceeded to leave the room.