

Wizardry

silent thoughts, lonely tears and - hope

Von Ryucama

All was silence. And still, the thought was in his mind. Raphael looked up, watched the sun set above the ocean. So much had changed. They had moved, crossed the sea, to reach a entire new world. Maybe he had been foolish. After all, he didn't regret his decision. He had thought that if he just moved, everything would be okay. No more haunting dreams, no more sad eyes that watched him. Well, at least this had stopped. Mostly.

He shook his head and sighed. Lunamaria was still mad at him for being such an idiot. He smiled. Staying up reading in the library until the new day's morning was about to enlighten the room he sat in wasn't really what a sister would want for her brother to do. Still, he couldn't help it. She didn't knew why. And hopefully, she would never know. Arius was the only one who knew, he had told him, back in the cave, when all three of them – Arius, Ascadin and Raphael – had been in grave danger because of the wandering corpses they had to banish...

Raphael sighed again. His cousin could not understand him, not ever. Gifted with eyes as sharp as an eagle's, but born without magical powers, Arius would never be able to fully realize what it meant to make this mystical power working, flowing through body and soul. And so was Lunamaria. Shortly, he thought about asking Shatra, his younger sister, but let it go then. She would also not be able to catch on what he really wanted to say.

He clenched his fist. Why was this so complicated? His siblings weren't able to work magic as he could. As they had ever been, mundane like the majority of people. He thought of Shelanda, his youngest cousin. The slender girl with the white hair and the dark skin would maybe be able to communicate with him in a way they both could understand.

Then, he laughed quietly, looked down to his feet.

Shelanda – the one he never was good with. He never knew what to say to her. She looked so fragile, was always so silent, holding back and shy. Maybe if he were as charming as Acaila, or as interested in medicine as Ascadin, he could stand a chance to get to talk with her. Maybe in a thousand years.

He couldn't tell Rinoa. He owed her too much already for taking care of his other secret. She already thought of him as a coward. Besides, if he told her, she would probably scream at him. „Idiot“ was one of the nicer words she could use. In truth, he was a bit scared of her. It was not to deny, his cousin was a strong mage, in full control of her power over the elements. Still, elemental magic was different from what he

was able to do. It wouldn't be the same. Besides, Elementalists were known to be the most devastating human beings alive.

Which brought him to Valentin. Slowly, he felt his hand relaxing, forced himself to brush his hair out of his eyes, to remain silent. Maybe the second-oldest member of his family would be able to understand him. Raphael hesitated. He never got along with Valentin very well. Their interests simply didn't match. Amongst Gianna's branch of the family, he knew Valentin the least. He feared him a little, just as he feared Rinoa. After all, both of them were powerful Elementalists, wielding Lightning, Fire and Ice as others wielded swords or guns. But would he get the point?

He didn't know. His gaze lingered back on to the sun that was slowly disappearing at the horizon. Why did this happen? Why was it always him who got in trouble?

Suddenly, Raphael wanted to cry. It wasn't enough that he was gifted with magic so strong even his teachers had been afraid, back in the Old World they had left. It wasn't enough that he fell in love with one girl he could never have. It also wasn't enough that he had almost been burned to death at a stake for being different than most other humans. It wasn't enough that the only one in his whole family heard that he would always be... he cursed, grabbed his head.

It was too much. He hadn't ever asked for anything except maybe peace to his own! He cried out in pain – was it physical or mental? Even now, when he did absolutely nothing to trigger it, he felt the magic welling up inside him. It tore him apart, slowly, he knew.

But he couldn't talk to anyone. Not anymore. Felicia wouldn't listen to him. Not after what she had witnessed. He had seen her face when she discovered him using Levitation. Shock, jealousy, fury, humiliation, all that had showed in her eyes, her pretty face, had almost made him lose concentration. Almost. Maybe, if he really had lost it, dropped to the ground – from what had it been, two feet? Three? He didn't remember – it would be different now. He didn't.

Lunamaria had accused him of being nasty afterward. She had said that Felicia cried for entire two hours, that it had taken her, Shelanda and Rinoa altogether to calm her down. Arius' frowning face was still in his mind, as well as Acala's wide grin.

It was then, as he felt soft arms folding around him, a warm body leaning close to him. „Relax. We did practice it so often, why do you still forget it?“ He froze. His hands, still on his temples, started trembling. As he closed his eyes to stop his tears from welling up, he just found out that it already was too late.

The woman behind him laughed softly. „Don't cry. It's enough if I do that for both of us, don't you think?“

It was then as he turned around, still with tears streaming down his face. „Felicia... I-I didn't mean to...“ She shook her head. Her dark, beautiful long braided hair fell down and she pushed it back behind her shoulder. „I know you did not. Raphi, how often do I need to tell you to stop worrying too much?“ He swallowed, unable to say anything. But to his surprise, Felicia just looked up to him. „I will always be there for you. Don't forget, we are the only two Wizards in this whole family. We need to stick together.“ „You're not mad at me?“, he managed to say and the girl in front of him laughed. „Of course I was furious about you being able to do what I couldn't achieve so far. After all, I'm older than you, plus I'm a woman who's supposed to have more accurate control about her magic than you do, so one should think it would be only logical that I would be the one who discovers the power of Levitation first.“ She smiled. „But logic doesn't really apply to magic, right? I realized that it might be good that you were able to surpass me even at a technique that's usually a female Wizard's domain. It's just

what I've always known since I eavesdropped back then. You're simply better than I am."

Raphael shook his head, speechless about her words. Felicia said: „Now. Don't you want to tell me what's bothering you?" That she was. Straight to the point when she tried to avoid a topic too touching for her. If it wasn't so terrifying, what he had to tell her, he would have laughed. But as it was, Raphael hesitated. He felt his eyes getting wet again.

He breathed: „I'm losing control..."

Felicia froze. Her eyes widened, then she frowned. „How – I mean, are you sure? You – you always were so strong..." He nodded, tears running down his pale face. „It's getting worse. Day by day. I don't know how to stop it. I've tried it for weeks, but it's just getting more and more clear that I can't get on. One day, I will lose it completely. God knows what will happen then."

Felicia shook her head. „It can't be! You're so young... you shouldn't..." He grabbed her by the arms, looked her in the eyes and said: „I know! I know all of this! I've searched the library about this! I've tried to find a way to stop it! But I never found anything to help me! Please, Felicia, if you know anything about this, please, tell me! I... I don't know if I could stand it if my magic is going wild..." Abruptly, he let go of her, turned back to the sunset. He sobbed. „Most likely I will die when it happens. But I'm so scared... I don't want to die. I had been so close to death already. To know that all that's left is... it's too much. The pain, the fear, all of it!" She touched his arm.

„Quiet, Raphi. We will find a way. We always did. After all, there had been many Wizards as powerful as you, and all of them kept their control as well as their sanity. We will figure out how to." He looked at her. „Felicia..."

Suddenly, she threw her arms around him again. Protective, this time. „I won't let you go. Not so easily. Trust me." He knew she meant it. „But what if we really are cursed?" Felicia sighed. „Don't even think of starting this old story again. Our powers are just as normal as walking, breathing, or eating! There's nothing evil in them!" He couldn't look her in the eyes, avoided her glance and looked up in the sky. „I'm not so sure about that."

The girl laughed softly. „Silly boy. You couldn't be as religious as you are if your powers were cursed. You truly believe in God, don't you? You believe in Him, you believe that He gave your sisters the power to save you when the pyre already was aflame. He would not do that for evil human beings. Right?" Raphael set his jaw. „What if it wasn't God who saved me?"

Felicia's grip got harder. „Don't give me that crap! You are just as human as everyone else!

And about your control – maybe it's just as it was back in the Old World. You never tried to train with anyone else, right? Maybe it's just time that you get a partner. A second pair of eyes often sees more than one. If we work together, we can get a hold." She grabbed his chin, forced him to look at her smiling face. „I remember you being sick because you just wanted to do too much at once with your growing magic. It had always been me to tell you to stop or to go on so you wouldn't overdo it or slack off. Remember that, dear cousin?"

Looking at her, he couldn't deny that she really was more of a teacher than just a cousin when it came to magical training. Felicia had helped him so often when both of them had been children. She never gave up on a problem. She just experimented or simply trained as long as it took her to get it done.

The thought filled him with hope. He nodded slowly and she held up her index finger.

„I will help you. But on one condition!“ He blinked, confused by her sudden change of topic. „That would be?“

She grinned. „You teach me how to use Levitation!“ Raphael couldn't help it, he laughed. „It's not as easy as you think! I don't really know how I'm doing that myself!“ She frowned, looked up at him and then grimaced. „Okay. Then at least promise me you will try! Oh, and I want to levitate with you!“ „What?“, Raphael stammered. „You want what?“ Felicia laughed. „I want to fly with you. On your back. Now! I know you can do it!“

„B-but do you really think this is such a good idea? I mean, what if I lose control?“, he managed to say, but his cousin just threw her hands up. „Stop fooling around, Raphi! I want to see how it is. How you're doing it!

And, who knows, maybe it's the key to our problem!“, she added. He sighed, giving up on her. He knew, once she really wanted something, it was hard to stop her. „Okay. Then get up.“

Felicia laughed like a little girl and placed her arms around his neck. He gently lifted her off the ground and took her in his arms instead of letting her climb up onto his back. „This is so... cute!“, Felicia whispered and he just coughed: „You know, if you wouldn't be carrying around like a ton of cloth with you, it'd be all easier for both of us!“ She slapped him on the shoulder – gentle, of course – and countered: „After all, I'm a noble girl, you meanie! If I would wear clothes as that tomboy Shelanda does, I'd look like a peasant!“

Although he didn't share her opinion about Shelanda's more plain and practical clothing style, he didn't say anything but concentrated. His magic came up almost without effort.

He closed his eyes and *lifted* both of them into the air. At about two feet above the earth, he stopped. He wasn't sure if he could manage to keep his hold steady, so it was more wise not to risk too much. If he really dropped from the air, it would be hard enough not to drop Felicia as well.

„We're flying! You really did it, Raphi!“, Felicia cheered, obviously deeply moved because of the fact that they were floating in midair. „Levitation is so much more than just anything I've ever experienced!“ She laughed out, and then, suddenly, she bent forward and kissed him on the cheek.

„You see?“, she said. „We will get this done! Your power is so strong, but you can still bend it to your will! It all requires training and trying to keep control!“

Raphael, still puzzled about the sudden kiss and the cheering, could only nod. Maybe, she was right. Maybe, he just let himself get too terrified about the unknown. He had gotten stronger lately. Maybe it really just required more training to get used to it. He smiled.