

Midnight Clash

Two Knights

Von UkeRuby

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The low rattle of armor echoed back to his ear and with a glimmer of interest, Artorias followed the sound. It was in the middle of the night and normally no one, except for the patrolling guards, was up anymore. And the common routes did not lead through the training rooms just below the castle. So, who was disturbing the soft chirps of the insects outside the mighty walls of Arno Londo? With slow steps, he approached the sounds and peeked into the huge hall. It was hard to make out anything in the dominant darkness of the deepest night, but in the middle of the room, on top of the sandy fields created to imitate the uneven ground outside the castle, stood a lone figure. The rattling stopped and the person stayed unmoving, as if they tried to pick up some sound they heard. With a very soft chuckle Artorias stepped forward and entered the huge hall, his own steps creating a similar echo to crush the silence of the night.

"How comes you are up and about at such an ungodly hour...?", he asked and pulled the whole attention of the other person on him. A few seconds there was no answer, but then he heard the penetrative sparkle of lightning. He had barely enough time to jump out of the way, before a bright beam of electricity flew at him and he gave an annoyed hiss. His eyes stayed glued at his opponent and the lingering brightness of the lightning revealed the familiar golden shine of the armor of his captain. The spear was still pointed in his direction, as if frozen after letting go of the spell. Artorias shifted lightly on the sand, hesitating to reach for his sword. It was obvious Ornstein was not up for jokes right now. But that was one more reason for the knight not to fight the other.

Even though, as soon as the next bolt of lightning flew past him just inches from his face, he flinched back and took hold of his greatsword, pulling it up just in time to neglect a direct hit from the spear that came at him with full force. He staggered slightly, but found enough footage to push the other knight back. The man wanted a fight? Oh, Artorias was all too willing to provide it.

And few seconds later, the whole room was filled with curling dust, lighting sparking in the darkness around them every so often. And the loud sound of steel and metal grinding against each other. They swirled around, dodging the other's swings and stabs and blew the sand into the air. After some time, they stood still, right in front of

each other, the screeching of steel kissing metal between them. Locking weapons with a spear wielder was uncommon. But after all, Artorias faced Ornstein the Dragonslayer. And this man knew exactly how close to an opponent he could step and when he had to back up into safety to avoid a strike to come. But keeping Artorias locked like that, with only his sword, obviously was save enough for the captain of the Four Knights to seek out such close combat.

Artorias let his eyes slide over the remarkable lion helmet until he found the other male's eyes. Or... more like where they should be. Instead he only found a strip of fabric, where the man's eyes should be visible in the helmet. What? Was Ornstein injured? Why did he...?

He got too distracted by his thoughts and his opponent realized it instantly. In one swift move, he brought Artorias to the floor and knelt above him, pressing his knee down on the man's chest piece and keeping him in place, while his spear hovered right above the knight's head. Artorias gasped surprised at the sudden change and found himself staring up at his commander dumbfounded, arms limp beside his body.

Silence engulfed them, only broken by their harsh breathing. Then Ornstein finally moved again, lifted the spear away from the other knight's face and let it fall onto the ground beside them. His body relaxed visibly as his knee slipped off Artorias' chest and hit the floor with a soft chime. He sat back and straitened, sitting on top of his fellow knight's abdomen, while reaching up to pull his helmet off. The familiar red hair fell free from its cage and hid the features of the man in the darkness, throwing more shadows on his face. But they did not hide the clear white cloth wrapped around the man's head, covering his eyes.

Artorias needed only a second to register the strange invader and pushed up into a sitting position, fingers brushing against the side of the fabric.

"Don't tell me you..."

"You need not worry.", Ornstein spoke for the first time, his voice carrying none of his normal ordering edge. It sounded more tired than anything and this only fueled the worry in the knight. Without to give his commander the chance to say any more, he reached around his head and released the knot keeping the fabric in place. It fell free without delay and revealed the sight of sharp golden eyes, piercing right into Artorias. A relieved sigh slipped his lips and he let himself fall back, a soft laugh slipping him.

"Damn, Ornstein. You scared me there for a moment.", he chuckled and watched the other male shake his head in mild amusement.

"I simply sharpened my senses. You read too much in nonsense." The redhead picked up the cloth and placed it in his helmet, making no indication of a plan to get off Artorias anytime soon. Aware of this, said knight shifted into a little more comfortable position on the floor, freeing him off his helmet as well and placed it beside Ornstein's. He did not mind that his captain used him as seat. The other male was a light weight, even with that heavy armor of his. The only thing that bothered him was the light edge of his own armor digging into his back, but he could bear it.

"So, are you going to tell me why you were training at this late hour or not?"

"It is easier to train when none other is around. The chances of injuries are smaller."

Teasing blue eyes sparkled up into golden ones and a smirk spread on Artorias' lips.

"You did not want them to stare at you." Ornstein flinched, obviously caught in his lie.

"Ha, I knew it!"

The knight knew better than anyone else. As much as Ornstein loved to present himself in the right light, he hated to be stared at when he wanted to test new things, or train. It blew at his temper and made him a lot more aggressive when he wanted to keep to himself. He always stood under the pressure to be perfect in everything he did. And training was not meant for perfection. It was meant to make mistakes and learn from them.

"...Where have you been...?", it was a quiet question. And Artorias only heard it because he was so close to the other man right now.

"Ah, I was out with Sif. He needed to blow off some steam and Ciaran thought it was...", his voice trailed off at the sudden change in the golden eyes of Ornstein. They turned darker for just a brief second and his whole body tensed, armored fingers tightening into fists in his lap. Confusion spread in him and he tilted his head to the side, questioning the sudden change in posture of his friend. "What...?"

Abruptly, Ornstein pushed himself up again, taking his spear and helmet along with him and slid his helmet back on his head. The confusion in Artorias only rose and he sat up again, hosting his arm on a raised knee, while keeping his eyes fixed on the other knight.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing.", came the clipped answer and he noticed the sharp edge his friend normally reserved for the dragons only. Obviously he did not like the provided answer. With a soft sigh, Artorias rose to his feet as well and reached out to Ornstein's arm, only to be shaken off again.

With a now pretty annoyed huff, he grabbed the captain's wrist and turned him around with a rough tug. A full grown struggle grew, none of the both willing to give in on his point, which ever point that might be for Ornstein.

In contrast to a fight with weapons, Artorias was in pure advantage when it came to a conflict with rough strength. It took little until he finally had Ornstein turned to him and pinned against a wall, to prevent him from fleeing away.

"What the fuck is wrong, huh?", he hissed shortly, starring the other male strait into the eyes. He saw hesitation there, before Ornstein finally avoided his glance and stopped struggling against his hold.

"Ciaran...", the pinned knight started under his breath, still avoiding the other male's eyes. "She is consuming all of your time off duty."

Now, that was surprising. Artorias blinked slowly, before an open smirk climbed on his lips.

"Oh? So you want to tell me you're jealous?", he purred lowly and felt the other man tense again. "But why would you be jealous, I wonder. You are the one who keeps himself so secluded from us... Always the high and mighty commander of the Four Knights. Barely time to even listen to a joke. Keeping out of everything that does not includes in our duties..." He knew exactly which strings to pull to push Ornstein into a corner. And he knew how much the dragonslayer hated corners. But before he could continue, something changed. In seconds, he witnessed how Ornstein ripped his helmet off his head again and pushed against him. There was a heavy silent hanging around them. It took Artorias a long two breathed until he felt the firm press of lips

against his and his eyes widen slightly in confusion. What? What just...?

He blinked, before he slowly grinned against his captain's lips and pressed back. A forced screech of steel against stone made him hesitate for a second, but it was soon forgotten, when he felt a curious lick on his lips. He gave a small growl, before picking up another fight with Ornstein. This time a much more comfortable one than he ever had and in the end, he won this as well and claimed his prize. He felt the light shudder of Ornstein even through all this armor. When his eyes searched the other's, he found them lightly glazed over and he twinge of pride sneaked up inside of him.

But before he could act out on any small instinct rising inside of him, hurried steps reached their ears and they sprung apart shocked. Seconds later, a knight entered the hall with hurried steps, a torch in his grasp. He bowed in haste, oblivious to the scene in front of him.

"Sir Artorias! Lord Gwyn requests your presence."

Artorias grumbled to himself for a moment, his eyes wandering to the flustered Ornstein in front of him, before he answered:

"I'll be there. You're dismissed."

And the knight hesitated for a moment, until Artorias moved to retrieve his helmet and sword from the floor. Then the poor man quickly left the room in case the powerful men were in a sour mood and would use him as training puppet next.

The Abysswalker secured his sword back in its holster on his back and looked over to the still unmoving Ornstein with a soft grin.

"Let us pick this conversation up when I finished business with our Lord, mhm?"

And without another glance back at his commander, he left the room with a swell of pride and curiosity swirling inside of him. This was an interesting turn of events.

He did not hear any movement from the room, only the sound of his own steps, echoing back from the high walls of Anor Londo.