

I woke up the next day. It was quite early, because it looked like sun was still sticking to the horizon. Also, I saw some big clouds forming up. I wish that it won't start raining soon, because I want to do something on the outside, where I have bigger space.

I began to dress up - took the same clothes as yesterday. It isn't a big problem to me - they don't stink nor they are dirty. Good that I don't have to wear socks or something like that. Never even wanted such a thing.

I took my phone. I muted it, but perhaps I shouldn't do that, if someone wants my help. Still, I want to sleep too. Okay, what do I have... message from Bran. Said that he's sorry and we'll see each other tomorrow. So in work. And a pic from Zharena... looks like she went with her roommate to the restaurant. At least I think that's her roommate - she looks like a fox, but I've never seen her face and I can't see any here. But I certainly see something else...

After putting the phone into my pocket, I went downstairs, so I could get something to eat. Luckily, I didn't have to prepare anything, because I still had the meal from yesterday. Maybe I shouldn't do that much of it, but throwing it away is worse.

Probably I should say what I was doing for the rest of the last day. Nothing specific, really. Sat for a bit on the internet, read the big chunk of "In Tune with the Infinite", watched an old movie that's still holding up to today's standards and went to bed.

Maybe I should heat it up. After putting out the cutlery, I put the dish into a microwave for a few minutes. Suddenly, phone began to rang. Strange... rarely I have phonecalls on Sundays. I saw it was Fiura, so I calmed a bit.

"Hey, Ruvi!" - squirrel started the call with her cheerful voice.

"Ey, Fiura." - I replied. - "How are you doing?"

"Pretty good, actually. Thanks for asking. And you?"

"I'm eating right now."

"Sorry for the interruption." - her voice got a bit sadder tone.

"No, it's not a problem, really."

"So what did you prepare?"

"Meal from yesterday. I made it for me and my friend."

"Oh! Who is that? Maybe someone I know?"

"I doubt it. We haven't seen each other for two years."

"Good that you got reunited."

"Da..." - I sighed. - "It's strange that you called me on Sunday."

"You see... I have a problem."

"What problem?"

"I bought a new wardrobe. It came as already put together. But I have to get it to my apartment."

"Yeah, I can see an issue here. Dragging that thing to the second floor... But I remember that you had nice neighbors that could help you with that."

"They're absent. And I tried asking other people living here. They said that they won't help either."

"They refused to help you? How? You must did something bad, because I can't even imagine how someone can say "no" to you."

"He he... Nothing terrible."

"Uh huh..."

"Please, Ruvim. Help me with that."

"Listen... I'll finish my breakfast, do a couple of things in my house and then I can go to you."

"If you could hurry a little... I think it'll rain today."

"No promises, but will try my best."

"Thank you."

"You'll thank me later when we will got your task to an end. See you."

Meal got warmer and because of it - much more enjoyable. I wasn't in hurry - eating in that state will do more bad than good. But I said I'll arrive to her flat today and that's what I'll do. After doing couple of my things, of course.

I cleaned the table and went to decorative one instead. It has one wide drawer. And in it, there was an item I was looking for. It was a typical longsword. I grabbed, took a few smaller swings inside my house and went outside.

It was quite warm. I couldn't feel any wind moving through here. Other houses that were a small branch of this street were surrounding my yard and alley is sometimes used as driveway. They can watch if they want, because it's not something that amateur can do.

I raised my sword before me. I didn't use it to cut anything - that's why it's still sharp. But it's not a problem for me - I don't have any sparing partner and I'm not a rookie to cut myself. After looking at my reflection on the blade, I started my training.

At first, I did something that would be called "blade dance" by some. It's just I need to feel the sword again and spinning it around me in specific way helps me with that. Whirling it on my left side, right side, above me, with right hand, with left hand, with both hands, moving forward, moving backward, going to the sides, turning around...

It just takes me something around five minutes, but I need them. After that, I can go for the proper training. Single slashes, double slashes, thrusts... I also have to remember about the footwork. A good swordsman without it just doesn't exist.

Parries and blocking are also important parts of defense. Focusing only on one things can make you a master in it, but that doesn't mean it'll always be useful. Not all hits can be blocked and not all hits can be evaded. And - of course - no rolling, because it's just stupid when it comes to normal duel.

Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed some movement from one of the houses. A lion, dressed in bright shorts and black T-shirt with "Staind" written on it. Probably some band name. He had a cub on his side that's perhaps his daughter. She was dressed in yellow dress.

After turning my sight fully in their direction, but continuing my training, I saw that they were leaning on a fence, looking at what I was doing. Not that it

was a problem to me – they weren't an obstacle, so I let them watch. But they surely looked impressed.

Two minutes passed and I saw a lion going somewhere, telling the small one to stay in that place. She listened, most likely because of the show I was providing them. Soon after, the bigger one returned with wooden replicas of one-handed swords.

"Hey! Neighbor!" – he shouted.

"Not now!" – I replied, slightly angry. - "I'm training!"

"But that's what I wanted to ask for."

I stopped slashing the air and came to my fence, with blade turned away from them.

"I'm listening." – I said with calm.

"I don't think we've been introduced to each other. Lyvian. And this is my gorgeous daughter – Vica."

"Ruvim." – I introduced myself briefly and shook our hands. - "That's an interesting name you have..."

"You noticed? Well, we arrived here from Italy."

"Why here?"

"My brother-in-law offered me a job here. And it's good actually – I work in a port. I like this place, even if we're here just for a month."

"So you wanted to ask me something..."

"Yes... I saw your work with the sword. It clearly shows that you're an expert."

"You can say that. However, I'm more familiar with other type of weapon."

"Which is...?"

"...A secret. And let's stay that way."

"Okay... But I wanted to ask you about sparing lessons. I always wanted to learn that, but I saw that training school here is quite expensive."

"For a reason – it's fantastic. But never really learned anything new there."

"So can I train with you? I can pay..."

"Let me see how good are your skills first."

"Sure."

I thrust my sword in the edge of my backyard. Lyvian passed me the wooden replica, which was as expected, so of low quality. I looked at Vica.

"I advice you to keep your distance, miss." – I said, while smiling. - "No one wants to get hurt here."

She nodded and took few steps back. She almost got to the fence, but stopped before it. And I could focus on my opponent who was already making mistakes.

"Blyat..." – I said with disdain.

"What?" - Lyvian asked, confused.

"Why do you carry one-handed sword in two hands?"

"I just..."

"You see the sword in the back? That's the one you can use in two hands."

"What should I do with other hand, then?"

"Whatever you want, but you should keep it out of the danger from your blade. For example, I'll keep my left hand behind me. You can just have it near yourself on a side or near your belly, whatever."

"What now?"

"Show me what you got. I can't work if I don't have any info."

He started to charge at me with sword raised. He wanted to do overhead swing. I smiled for a bit and right before his attack, I stepped aside. He didn't expect this and because of the momentum, he lost his balance and fall on the ground. His daughter started laughing.

"Stand up." - I commanded without emotion.

"What... did I do wrong?" - lion asked, still confused.

"It'd be quicker to say what you did right. This move was way too predictable."

"Sorry. I got excited that I could fight with someone."

"Don't fight with emotions involved. The only group of people I know that fight better under the emotions are fanatics."

"Seriously?"

"You can look at religious wars, like crusades."

"I see."

"Since we're close, you can try and attack me."

Lyvian started to swing my sword towards my position. I didn't really have to block his attacks because of another of rookie's mistakes.

"Why do you attack my sword?" - I asked.

"Sorry. I just..." - he paused for a moment, swinging his tail nervously. - "I don't want to hurt you."

"Dude... I was training with real swords. We all had injures, but they weren't much of a problem and continued to fight as nothing happened."

"Okay... I'll try to fight normally."

"Good. Now..."

"Lyvian!"

A shout was heard from the house, from which Lyvian and Vica came out. A lioness came out of, dressed similarly to the lion. By the looks of her, she must be his wife.

"What are you doing here?" - she asked with anger in her voice.

"Darling! I just..."

"Stop playing as you're a kid. You have your duties. And why did you bring Vica? Have you lost your mind?"

"She was stuck with me and... and she had fun here."

"She could get hurt! And you..."

Lioness turned towards me. Still angry, but I was unfazed by it.

"You shouldn't drag my husband into this."

"Your husband, miss, was the one who asked me for the training." - I politely replied, with faint smile. - "You should blame him, not me, but even then, he can choose how he wants to spend his time."

"He has duties as a husband and father."

"Of course. But isn't he allowed to have some free time from them? Or is he treated like a machine?"

"Listen, you..."

"Because if that's the case, he isn't much different from the vending machine. Or should I say... ATM, in this case?" - my face got closer to hers. - "Am I wrong?"

She wanted to slap me in the face - I noticed it quickly. So I grabbed her arm by the wrist, before the hit could land and looked directly into her eyes.

"I advice you to leave my property, miss." - I continued to be polite. - "I don't accept unnecessary violence here. So leave or things will get nasty."

I released her arm. Lioness was still angry, but she didn't want to try her luck again.

"Is that a threat?" - she asked after a moment, doing a wide swipe with her tail.

"No - a statement. He may be your husband, but property is mine and if you can't behave properly here, it's better that you should leave and think about your actions."

She snorted and turned her back on me.

"I'll talk with you later." - she said to Lyvian and then turned to Vica. - "And you're going with me."

"Mom..."

"No discussion!"

She began to drag her cub towards their house. I could clearly see she was on the verge of crying. It's hard to blame her.

"I'm so sorry about Lante." - Lyvian finally spoke to me. - "She's... a troubled woman."

"I'd refrain from using euphemisms and say that she's horrible."

"Well..."

"How long you're together?"

"Eight years total, six in marriage."

"You should seek some help. It's far from normal."

"Heh... and what about the lessons?"

"Are you sure she..."

"Please, give me the answer."

"I can, but you must want that as well. You should also listen to me. I'm no miracle-maker."

"And payment?"

"Bottle of alcohol per session is enough."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah. Vodka, whisky, rakija, absinth... Nothing weak."

"I see. I should be going. Take care, Ruvim."

"You should take care, neighbor."

He smiled and then, after taking the training equipment, he began his return to house. I took my longsword and got to my home, where I hid it in its proper place. The sword, I mean. Okay... I can now go and see Fiura's problem.