

Princess Indira
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Prologue

The Kingdom of Anastasia was once a magical kingdom within the nation of Lorrtenot ruled by King Donovan and Queen Annora. There lived sorcerers putting on shows for people in the commons, minotaurs on duty ready for any sign of attacks, and civilians at peace with each other no matter if they were creatures or humans. One day, the serene kingdom was attacked by an army of centaurs. They raided shops, stores, and houses alike with a determination to destroy everything in its path. They set fire to libraries and nurseries, rampaged over carts filled with fresh fruit and remedies, and held children captive. Sadly, many other lands do not believe that humans and creatures should live together in harmony because humans once hunted and killed them. The attacks left Anastasia the most grim it's ever been. Smoke and ash filled the air making it impossible to breathe. The sound of music was replaced with the cries of citizens. Anastasia was no longer the beautiful place it once was.

King Donovan and Queen Annora never wanted children. It wasn't because they were unable to; In fact, the King and Queen were both very healthy and attractive, but they did not enjoy the thought of caring for one with the state of Anastasia. King Donovan became very shrewd while Queen Annora was very deceitful in keeping everyone calm. They started to lie to their people all in the name of "safety" and shut out the people of Anastasia. Though they seem anything but, they did not become evil. When Queen Annora found out she was pregnant, she vowed to give birth to only one child regardless of sex to be the heir to the throne of Anastasia. After the birth of the baby, the King and Queen enforced strict laws amongst the civilians. Magic was prohibited inside of Anastasia, sunset curfew, festivals, and celebrations were not allowed unless approved by the Queen. The King kicked out all of the mythical creatures for the well-being of humans.

They named the baby Indira in memory of the beauty of Anastasia...

Indira sat in loneliness before her private tutor. She couldn't care less about learning another language to add to her already long list. Bored out of her mind, she stared out of her window to see the hills that lay behind the tall walls of Anastasia. The nation of Lorrtenot held twelve kingdoms, and although Anastasia was once the most beautiful and diverse, it no longer is. The grass on the hills was the brightest and healthiest she'd known. This is because between each kingdom are forests, waterfalls, swamps, and taverns; All rarely visited by people. She can't help but imagine herself running across each of them; Falling to her knees and rolling around on the ground.

"Princess... Do you know the answer?" asked Ory

"Hm..?" Indira said, confused.

"How do you say 'I am of royal Anastasian blood' in Orc?"

"Um... I think it is... um..."

"Have you been paying attention, Princess?"

"Not too much, Ory. I'm distracted with boredom."

"Do you wish to move on to another subject?"

"No, I wish to go to recess."

"Your archery instructor should be arriving in due time."

"Wonderful!"

Indira loved her active period. She was able to practice her equestrian and bowman skills as well as run around free. This usually took place in the garden behind the castle.

"Ory!" said The King's Regent.

"Yes...?" said Ory.

"His Majesty wishes to speak to the Princess before her active period."

"What of?" said Indira.

"I cannot go into much detail, but the Royal Majesties would like to speak of *your future*." said The King's Regent.

"Can't it wait? Active time lasts only the third noon hour of the day." questioned Indira.

"I'm afraid it cannot. His Majesty does not enjoy waiting for you."

"He doesn't enjoy anything..."

“Go along now, Princess.” Ory said calmly. “I’ll see what I can do about extending your active period.”

“Thank you, Ory!” Indira says excited.

“My pleasure.” Ory says while bowing.

The King’s Regent guides the Princess through the long halls of the castle to her parents. The castle is full of murals of past Kings and Queens; Pillars of cobblestone that show how tall the ceiling is; Velvet carpets so the Majesties wouldn’t dare touch the stone. The castle is often so big and empty except the guards. The Princess is constantly reminded of how lonely she truly is.

“Your Majesties! Princess Indira!” The King’s Regent shouts.

The guards and servants bow as she walks towards her parents.

“Father. Mother.” she says as she bows.

“Indira, Do you know what today is?” The King asks.

“The first of July.”

“Yes. We are half-way through the calendar.”

“I know, Father-”

“Then why haven’t you been keeping your side of our deal?”

“Father... I have.”

“In what way?” he says sternly.

“I-”

“You are not doing well in your classes. You are close to failing Politics and Warfare, and even Courtesy! The only classes you have done *decently* is Geography and Astronomy.”

“Yes. Those are important!”

“In what way? A Queen will never leave her castle in ANY case here!”

“Father...-”

“I am beginning to think you are not worthy or ready to be The Queen.”

“I *have* been holding my end of our deal, Father! You said I can choose the classes I take to prepare for my ruling if they are of use. I think they are.”

“How so, darling?” said The Queen.

“When I rule Anastasia, I plan to bring magic back into our kingdom.”

The Queen, the guards and servants, everyone in the room gasped... all except The King.

“And how exactly do you plan to do such?” he asked firmly.

“By bringing back every magical being *you* kicked out.” Indira said with such seriousness.

“Indira, I will not explain to you why that is strictly out of the question.”

“I think maybe you shall, *Father*, for I seem to not understand.”

The King paused tensely before answering.

“Because they should not have come here anyways. Having magical creatures here only lured other - more dangerous - armies of creatures to attack.”

“That was not the fault of them.”

“If not them then what, Indira?”

“Ignorance.”

“Ignorance is proven dangerous.”

“And proven foolish.”

“You dare say I’m foolish child?”

“Not you, Father, but what you believe.” Indira says angrily.

“You know what is forbidden.” insists The King.

“Says who-!”

“SAYS ME!” shouts The King. “The ruler of this land; The head of the church of Anastasia! *I* forbid it!”

Princess Indira is silent. Scared to breathe even another word of opposition to her Father.

“Indira...” The Queen begins slowly. “...Your father and I just want you to remain safe. You shall soon marry and after take charge of Anastasia’s destiny. The magical creatures that were once apart of our land... are no longer apart of that destiny. We need you to understand.”

Princess Indira glares at her father.

“I... understand.” Indira says weakly.

“It would be *foolish* not to.” says The King. “You are excused back to your lessons.”

Indira walks back defeated.

The Princess is very talented, just not the way her parents accept. Princess Indira has excellent bowmanship and fencing skills she has been exercising since she was six. Recently, she has been getting good enough to spar with highly trained knights and guards. She was allowed to be taught by a half-elf knight-in-training she grew up with, Fairlan Fernsong. Fairlan’s father is an elf and was forced away when the law passed. While in the courtyard for her active time archery lesson, she found herself distracted by the argument with her father.

“I can’t believe my father can be so close-minded, Fairlan.” The Princess said.

“I cannot legally speak my opinions of His Majesty but, are you surprised?” Fairlan asked.

“I guess not. I mean, he is the reason for the state of Anastasia.”

The Princess readies her bow as she begins to shoot the target.

“Remember: Focus your breath...” instructed Fairlan as he guides Indira’s body to perfection.

“...Aim...” Fairlan whispers. “...Launch.”

Princess Indira hits the target precisely.

“Would I be wrong to say you have perfect aim even without my guidance?” Fairlan flirts.

“You wouldn’t be so far off.” Indira flirts back.

“You could become a leader of our armies with such skill.”

“Now that would send my father into a spiral.” Indira laughs.

“I am on your side, Princess, but I do not understand. You are gifted all of your desires here, why do you wish to run away?”

“You are silly Fairlan. I do not have all of my wishes. I’m bound by the royal constitution that was made law before my birth. In no way am I free and *that* is what I want.”

“I apologize Princess. I did not realize.”

Princess Indira takes a deep breath.

“Life was simpler when we were younger, Fairlan.”

“I agree. There wasn’t such pressure to achieve.”

“You’re telling me.”

They laugh then stare at each other. Indira steps back to clear her mind.

“Um... How has *your* training been? I understand you are to be knighted by my father soon.”

“It’s... uh... as exciting as it is jarring.”

“You seem nervous, Fairlan.” teases Indira.

“I do not get nervous, Indira.” Fairlan convinces. “I am only intrigued by what my next journey is.”

“Well you’ll be pleased to know I will be present for it.”

“What do you mean?”

“My father will knight you as my personal guard.”

Fairlan is surprised.

“You’re serious?” Fairlan asked, astonished.

“Yes!” Indira says excitedly. “You will stick beside me for the rest of my life.”

Fairlan cannot help but to hug Indira tightly. Along comes Ory.

“Ahem! Your Majesty!” Ory states. “Please contain yourself.”

Fairlan and Indira stop hugging.

“‘Tis time for your next lesson. Afterwards is your time to do what you please until the sixth evening hour for dinner.”

“Thank you Ory.” The Princess bows. “I shall see you tomorrow, Fairlan.”

“I look forward to it.” Fairlan says while bowing.

Ory sweeps The Princess away from Fairlan. It seems to Ory that is what he’s been doing since The Princess and Fairlan were old enough to realize their feelings towards each other. When the kingdom was still magical and miscellaneous, The King and Queen felt safe enough to have the young princess play with the commoner’s children. Then, they were not aware of the status

difference between each other. Princess Indira was not aware that most of the children she played with would soon be banished or captured in the future.

As Princess Indira anticipates seeing her father again, she plays with her evening dress sleeve as a sign of anxiety. She sits down at her seat across the table from her father with her mother in the middle of them both. The King and Princess Indira exchange a harsh glare at each other as the royal chef comes out.

“For tonight’s starter, Your Majesties, a choice of either pumpkin stew or herring soup. Tonight’s course, a giant glazed roasted bird thigh with mushroom dumplings and soft-boiled bluggsag. For dessert, a honeycream roll with sap from the finest Benogala tree.” states The Royal Chef.

The family sat awkwardly around the table as they loudly munched on their meals. Princess Indira’s mind could only be filled with insults to her Father’s ignorance, while The King can only think of his daughter’s naivete.

“What have you learned today, Indira?” asked The Queen.

“Nothing I didn’t already know, Mother...” Indira trailed off.

“You need to take what was said earlier seriously, Indira.” The King stated.

“Donovan... not again.” The Queen pleaded.

“Annora.” The King said annoyed. “She will never be ready if she continues like this.” The King turns to Princess Indira. “You will get your act together; Prepare for your day to rule Anastasia the way you *need* to.”

“*Your* way.” Princess Indira says in a mocking and annoyed way.

“**My** way.” The King assures. “If you do not have what it takes by then, you will be pursued to a fate far worse than our disapproval. Do I make myself clear?”

“Yes Father...” The Princess says crushed.

The family continues their meal in silence.

After the dinner, it is time for Princess Indira to get ready for bed. Everyday, she wakes up promptly at the eighth hour. Most likely tired from the night before because she stayed up reading. She then goes to her first three lessons: Literature, Etiquette, and Language. After which she is changed into her noon clothing for lunch and active time. She favored active time because she would get a break from staying inside the castle. That period is usually filled by archery practice, fencing, equestrian training, a dance lesson, or painting in the yard. After those periods, she has four more classes: Politics and Warfare, Music, Geography, and Astronomy. For around two hours she has time to herself until she has to get ready for dinner. After a quiet dinner with her family, she is changed into her night clothes and readies herself to bed. She would request a pepperberry pie and warm apple cider tea to go with her reading of The Brothers' Grimm fairytales. This is how a usual day for The Princess goes. You could understand why she wants to be free. Everything she does is packed into a routine she must follow. She rarely sees her parents and when she does, it's more than likely an encounter like the last. Her father yells at her while her mother watches in submission. The King and Queen must sit on their thrones in the dark Great Hall the whole day awaiting news and having conferences. They would not have time for entertainment and quite frankly, they haven't thought there to be any since the attack. So when they are not berated by other people, they sit in silence. Princess Indira only has one friend, Fairlan, who she can only see for one hour a day. She does not have any ladies-in-waiting because only few commoners are allowed within the castle wall. This is because The Queen fears everyone would see how depressing her family truly is. Would you agree?

A few long days later, Princess Indira is having her active time with Fairlan. As she embroiders, and he watches over her, they talk amongst each other. Princess Indira finds she has the deepest of conversations with Fairlan even though they are so different. Fairlan grew up to nobles: reasonably staturesd people. Nobles were the ones allowed to come into contact with the royals the most. Of course, Fairlan's class is a fighter. He wears his father's armor in honor of him. Fairlan's once long dirty blonde hair, now cut short to better fit the knight's appearance. Lastly, Fairlan wields his father's rare sword, The Gravewalker, cursed with a hunting pact and frozen touch. Fairlan is easiest to talk to because he's close to Indira in age. She's nineteen, while he's twenty; However, he will outlive her by 180 more years when she passes.

After active time, Fairlan walks The Princess back to her classes when they hear a loud exploiting noise. The Princess was startled by the sound but was protected by Fairlan who immediately went to protect her. They hear nothing for a minute, then lots of commotion. Confused, both Fairlan and The Princess run towards the loud noise. There, they see a crowd of commoners from behind the castle wall. The crowd seems to be staring at something. Indira is frustrated about being behind the castle walls when she finally gets the idea to climb it.

“Indira! I mean- Majesty! What are you doing?” says Fairlan confused.

“I must see what is happening.” answers Indira.

Princess Indira now sees over the wall and to her shock, she deeply wishes she hadn't for she saw the younglings school building was on fire. All of a sudden, herds of guards on horses went running towards the incident. One big cloud of smoke started towards the castle arising from bright orange and yellow flames. People ran around crying as someone screams...

“THERE'S CHILDREN IN THERE!”

Immediately, Fairlan's demeanor went from protective to demanding.

“Princess. You need to get inside.” He says.

“Fairlan, what's happening.” Indira asks scarcely.

“Just get inside.” Fairlan demands.

Indira rushes inside to see her parents rushing towards her. She asks what's happening to be told by her father that there has been an incident unknown by whomst though.

A few days later...

“I can't believe we were attacked...” said Indira.

“It feels just the way it did all of those years ago.” answered Fairlan.

“But you were a babe. No older than three years of age.”

“I was old enough to feel the pain it caused my family. It broke my mother when my brother was captured.”

“Fairlan... I'm so sorry.” Indira said comfortingly. “You do not deserve that pain... no one does...”

Indira paused for what seemed like hours. She started hastily walking towards the castle doors.

“Princess, where are you going?”

“I want to make sure this does not happen to Anastasia again. I need your help to get me into the conference between my father and the generals. They will be discussing their plan of action. I wish to be present for it.”

“Is that allowed, Your Majesty?”

“I see why not. I am to soon be the head of Anastasia.”

The King, The King's Regent, The General, trusted knights were sat around a big table discussing the next move. Princess Indira and Fairlan's arrival interrupted the conversation. The entire room turned to stare at them in an everlasting silence.

“What are you doing here, Indira?” asked The King.

“I would like to be apart of this discussion father.” Indira said with confidence.

“You are not the ruler of Anastasia. Nor a General or Knight.” The King said almost sarcastically.

“No, but I am the Queen to be.”

The King looked at Indira with complete solemnity before he smirked while saying...

“Fine, Princess, you have a point. You can stay and listen to what's to come of Anastasia.”

“Thank you, Father.” she said smug.

“General, please continue.”

“Yes sire. Gentleman, we are forced into an uncomfortable position. Even without magic, our kingdom is still an outsider to the rest. Lerrtenot is fastly becoming an anti-magic nation. We cannot continue to let Anastasia fall because we refuse to submit. And for that reason, we will join forces with those kingdoms.” explained The General.

Indira looked shocked.

“I hope you do not mean the beliefs of magical creatures being the greatest sin upon our land?” questioned Indira.

“I do, Your Highness.”

“General, those kingdoms passed laws that allows them to kill magical beings.”

“That is correct, Your Highness.”

“If we join forces with those kingdoms, we are adapting their beliefs. That is not what Anastasia stands for.”

“Not yet,” started The King. “But it seems to be what it must.”

“Father...” Indira pleaded. “Anastasia is the Kingdom of Serenity. We cannot give in to this bloodshed because they are persecuting us.”

“The fate of our people lie within our choices now.” said The King.

“But Anastasia is not a violent place.”

“And it will not become violent. Creating an alliance will only stop the attacks.”

“But what about what Anastasia stands for?”

“That is something that can be dealt with when people’s lives are not at stake, Indira. As a ruler, you must realize there are more important matters. When you **finally** stop acting like an incomprehensible child, **then** you will understand that.”

“I refuse to let the kingdom I will command soon become a monstrous place.”

“You are not the ruler yet. So you will.” said The King.

“General sir,” Fairlan says while bowing. “At what part of the plan will the knights be joining in?”

“Fairlan...” The Princess says shocked. “You’re alright with this...?”

“My duty is to my orders given by the head of the army, Princess.”

“But you don’t agree with this; Do you?” Indira said on the verge of tears.

Fairlan looks at Indira then towards The General and The King intimidated yet calm.

“Well tell us, boy.” The General says mockingly.

“I agree what’s right. Innocent people have died because of our naivete.”

“You do not actually believe that,” Indira begged.

“I do,” Fairlan said sternly. “It’s high time you do too, Your Majesty.”

Indira couldn’t believe what she was hearing. She had expected great ignorance from The General and even her father, but never from Fairlan. She felt betrayed by his words and obvious compliance to his superiors. Indira never thought Fairlan would not have her back in a time of need. That made her realize that everyone in Anastasia was closeminded and frightened. She realized that she would soon rule a kingdom destined to be solemn and somber. Before she could think about her words, she says...

“I refuse to be the ruler of a kingdom like this. I will do everything in my power to make sure Anastasia doesn’t become what you fear it has to be. My future kingdom will resort back to it’s once heavenly state,” Indira turns to her father. “And I am not naive for believing we can go back to the way things were. I find myself to be more ambitious than *you’ve* ever been father.”

Princess Indira walks out of the room determined.

Princess Indira walks out to the balcony and signals for the Royal Guards to call everyone upon the land to gather around the castle. Every commoner, noble, slave, and worker looked up to listen to what The Princess was about to say.

“Attention people of Anastasia. I understand everyone is scared right now, we are too. The attacks on Anastasia were out of ignorance. Our enemy is not magical creatures although it seems everyone thinks they are. Our enemy is ignorance. I have been consistently told by everyone that we have to do things we don’t want to do out of fear. I do not wish to live in fear. Anastasia was once beautiful. What made it beautiful wasn’t just the colors of trees leaves and the warmth from the sun; But the love that Anastasians had for one another. I am your future queen. The Anastasia we are living in right now is not who we truly are.”

The crowd below starts clapping and cheering. Princess Indira turns to her father who is looking at her in disbelief.

“I will find another way to protect Anastasia...” Princess Indira shouts. She looks her father in the eyes then says “Whether you’re with me or not.”

Princess Indira walks away as the crowds below cheer in amusement and hope for their land’s future. Princess Indira was crowned Queen not too long later and passed a law to bring in magical creature. She found other kingdoms outside of Lorrtenot to make an alliance. The kingdom of Anastasia grew stronger than ever before. Anastasia may have had enemies but nothing Queen Indira couldn’t handle.