

Things were looking up in the realm of the Darlings. After some time of considerable bloodshed, the land had finally broken out into peace. However, while many continued on with their lives as they had known them before, some were not as lucky so as to be able to recreate their pre-war lifestyles.

Atop the massive Ovis tree, the sprawling city and palace of Canopy laid. Extending like another growth of branches out of the oversized plant. Within said palace, two advisors bickered with each other.

“If that is the will of the Queen, we should be able to trust in her judgement.”

“Think of the public response, it would be an outrage!”

“I assure you that she has already taken such risks into account.”

“But to go so far as to extend it all the way to opossums?” He turned to face the queen, the physically unimposing Kit Darling. The tiny fox appeared to be dwarfed by the extravagant throne she sat upon, but nonetheless her expression was that of a caring, trustworthy leader.

“Your highness, clearly you must see the fault in such a course of action. The people would never accept such policies, think of the resistance they would put up to it!”

“Thank you, Malex,” she spoke, her high pitched voice betraying the air of authority she once carried with her. “However, I have thought for some time on this matter, and have found this new policy to be a wise decision.”

Malex, the impressively dressed minister of domestic relations, sighed softly to himself. The goat gave a quick bow to the queen. “Very well, your highness, your will shall be carried

out.” He motioned to the door of the royal hearing room, “If you will permit it, your highness, I must beg my leave. There are many important matters that I must now attend to.”

“Granted. And you too should go for now, Phyrro.” She said, turning to her imposing defense minister.

“By your will, my Queen.” The hard faced lion also gave a quick bow before following Malex out.

Now finally done with her official business, the fox gave out a light sigh, her impressively large ears drooping slightly. “That was the last hearing for today, right?”

From aside the throne, the previously still figure of the queen’s personal bodyguard, a short tailed opossum by the name of Friedrich, stirred to life. “I believe so, we should not have anyone in here until-“ At that moment, a messenger rushed into the hearing room, the young, feline man panting lightly as he did so.

“Y-your highness!” he said, “Your special –huff- delivery has arrived!”

Kit’s face lit up. “Excellent! Bring it in at once!”

“Of course, your highness!” he said, rushing back out of the room. After a minute or so, a deliveryman entered into the room, carrying with him some sort of large parcel. He carried it with ease, although he got close to dropping it when trying to bow to the Queen.

“Where d’you want me to put this?” he asked.

“Just right there would be good for now.” Kit replied, the mover placing the box down between him and the throne. The hall remaining silent until he had exited.

“And what would this be?” the opossum looked over the plain looking box.

“‘This’ is something I ordered for you!” Kit said, getting up from her thrown and walking quickly over to the box. “It’s meant to help you with your, uh, ‘lefty-problem’.” The possum looked down at his left arm, that is, his left arm was the only one he could look at. His right had been forcefully removed from him during the previous war. Though the war had ended, the scar left by his struggles there stuck with him, as his right shoulder was now a mere stub, with no limb to be found growing off of it.

Kit opened the box and, reaching into it, pulled out what appeared to be a simple metal plate, circular in shape and near flat. Friedrich understood immediately what its purpose was. He had seen devices like it many times before, all upon the wings of various avians, who used them in order to project hands, which they otherwise lacked.

“I had to custom order this one.” Kit said, looking over the simple looking device. “We can get it fitted on to you whenever you wish.”

Though his face didn’t show it, a number of feelings rushed through his mind. Thankfulness for Kit’s generosity and the painful memories of past engagements clashed within him, “. . . Thank you, your highness.” were the only words he could muster up.

“No need to be so formal, Ricky. There’s no one here to scold you on your manners.” Kit said as she placed the plate back into the box, alongside numerous other pieces of equipment that would be used to properly attach the device onto Friedrich’s stub. She looked over the parcel as a whole. “Hmm, maybe the middle of the hearing hall wasn’t the best place to have it. . .” she noted as she called in a servant to pick it up.

Later that week, Friedrich was following Kit through some hall of her massive palace. The projected limb, despite being linked to his limited magic pool, had been installed without issue and was working well. The tiny fox lead him to a personal chamber, as again they had found themselves with some free time, which was quite surprising considering the usual packedness of her schedule between her research and political duties. However, Kit was not one to complain when such a moment arose, and had prepared for her and Friedrich a room where they could be able to share such moments of peace together.

Kit sat down at an intricately carved table, basking in the moment of respite. Friedrich sat down by her, glancing towards one of the room's windows to admire the view one had from such a height on the tree. The scene was quickly replaced, however, with that of an entirely different tone. Cries filled the air as warriors dueled across a blood soaked battlefield, bursts of light flying about as spells and counterspells were launched by each side at the other.

He gripped his sword, right arm fully intact, and rushed into the fray. He slashed his way through several opponents, not amassing even a single scratch on his person. Eventually, he found himself approaching a mob of enemies which had just finished off a small group of his allies, and had turned their sights to the possum next. They quickly surrounded him, although he was easily able to counter their various blows, weaving through them with grace. But then, one wrong step, a turn just too slow, a slight tripping over an enemy, he didn't know what had caused him to slip up, but he did.

It was at that point that one of his enemies took advantage of the situation, sending a heavy slash down at him. He should have been able to dodge, but instead received it as a searing pain tore through his arm. He tried to continue fighting, but his focus had been completely lost to the agony coursing through his being as his right arm held on to the rest of his body by thin strips

of flesh. Just as one of his foes prepared a finishing strike, he was cut down by another blade. The rest of the foes were defeated similarly as a group of allies moved into the area. One such ally was able to detach himself from the fight long enough for his attention to be drawn to Friedrich.

“Sir Zarigüeya, why aren’t you in the fight-“ he stopped as he noticed what little was left of Friedrich’s arm. “Mother of Mercy. . .” he murmured to himself, “Someone get a medic over here!” As he did so, Friedrich’s vision dimmed, his consciousness falling away as his pain became unbearable. He awoke back in Canopy, Kit looking down at him with a deeply concerned expression on her face.

He got up, stopping for a moment as he again realized that his right arm was no longer a part of his body. He looked back over the room, which now sported a flipped over table and several broken candles strewn about.

“Ricky, what happened? One minute you were sitting there, and the next you were striking at the air.” Kit asked, helping him up as best she could.

“It, I,” Friedrich sighed, “it was nothing.” He said, beginning to pick up the scattered pieces of furniture from the floor.

“No, really,” Kit pressed on, “you can talk about it with me, it’s fine.”

“No. The bodyguard of the queen must not show weakness, even in-“ he was stopped short as Kit suddenly embraced him, her eyes beginning to well up with tears.

“No, really, please, I care about you.” She said, her hug tightening.

Friedrich looked down at Kit and, after a moment, returned the gesture.

“ . . . Thank you, your highness.” were the only words he could muster.