

Scene: Good luck with your choice

Three months ago.

"With all respect, Your Majesty. You don't need to participate in this battle," Vorman told Aerith. She was looking in the mirror when the maids were helping her on with a suit of armor.

"Why not? A good leader must project confidence at all times. You told me that. And, our army won't have enough confidence in front of their enemy without me...Ouch!" Aerith felt her stomach was in knots.

"My apology, Your Majesty," a maid said, "I didn't mean to..."

Aerith put her finger on her lips to sign the maid not to talk anymore. While all the maids kept helping Aerith, Vorman kept saying, "But this battle will become dangerous if the enemy can smell you. With only a few Eikons, we can resolve the problem quickly. More importantly, a report shows a secret entity was threatening our planet. So, my Queen, we should let these matters be for men with experience."

"You're telling me I should stay home in the kitchen, right?" Aerith raised her voice.

"I didn't mean that. I mean, you should give your personal situation some consideration."

Aerith understood what Vorman was mentioning. "Everyone out," she ordered to all the maids when they had done to help her wearing the armor. After they had left the room, she said, "I understand your sorrow. But don't worry. If you want to ask me again, then I can say I have already made a solution."

Vorman: I know, Your Majesty.

Aerith: You know?

Vorman: Yes.

Aerith smiled, then turned to see her in the mirror and said: Your magic is so good that no one can pull the wool over your eyes. However, I will never change my mind, even if you want to say anything. To make our family proud and keep this Kingdom prospering, I have worked hard as a Queen. But now, I realize I don't deserve to sit on the throne until my last time. So, to keep my mother's word, you can replace me with someone else.

Vorman: So you've known about the Queen Regent's last word?

Aerith: Yes. And I also know I am not the only child who can legitimately go to the throne. It means... the oath my mother gave me before she went to the promised land can be transferred to him. I know he's always willing to die for the Kingdom and me. It fits well with the oath.

Vorman: I understand. And I won't ask you when or how you could know all of this. I praise you for your fast progress. However, my Queen, whatever happens, you can't abdicate in favor of Captain Manuel.

Aerith: Why not? He's my brother in blood. I realized that I had felt shocked knowing that, but now I feel at peace.

Vorman: A half-brother. The Queen Regent once warned me not to let a member of royalty like him go to the throne.

Aerith: Though not harmonious with my mother when she was alive, I am controlling this Kingdom in the capacity of the next Queen and do not want to become like her. Manuel is a strong man, a good warrior, and intelligent too. He is more capable of leading our people than I am...

"Excuse me, Your Majesty," Vorman said and used his magic to stop Aerith's words. He then used another magic to make her calm. After that, he told her slowly: Please listen to me, your majesty. I know you'll feel disturbed if I tell you this thing. But I have no choice... You must give up your unborn child's life to save our family. Don't worry. I will help you with my

magic. You won't feel hurt and sad. And the baby will surely go to the promised land for a better life.

Aerith put her hand on her stomach and said angrily: You're sick f*ck, old man. How dare you require me to do that. My baby is from my love. It's my life too.

Vorman tried to keep calm when talking to Aerith: Wake up, my Queen. I won't blame you for learning some bad languages from him. But... Don't you see they have taken advantage of you by sending one man to make love to you? And they have succeeded. With the baby, they can put one leg to get all the Lifestream we have protected over those years.

Seeing that Aerith still did not listen, Vorman continued to say: I got information from a Humans man a few days ago near the border. He let me know that Zack the Mercenary is a son of the Dean...

Aerith was surprised: Oh, really? I thought Cissnei was her ex-girlfriend. My bad! I shouldn't have broken the contract with him too soon. It's all because of my jealousy of love.

Vorman tried not to be angry at Aerith's naivety: Yeah. We both know the Dean really wants the Lifestream since he always compares it with your beauty... Your Majesty, I beg you, give up the baby. This isn't a life for...

Aerith suddenly grabbed Vorman's hand and put it to her stomach. "No," he groaned.

"Feel it. By using the magic, I know it's a boy," Aerith told him, "Can you hear his heart developing? I eagerly await the day when my boy can communicate with me. Listen to his first thinking, first emotion, and first doing. No words can adequately express my feeling. I'm sure Zack will be the same. Though I did not let him know, I decided to put our baby's name as Sora. Together, we will go to an ocean island to escape the sin and evil in the world."

Vorman quickly moved his hand back. He looked at her and said: I'm sorry, my Queen.

You're the rightful monarch of the Cetra, the only heiress of the House of the Angels. If you cede the crown to a man who isn't legitimate in our family, you will forfeit all those benefits. Nothing can thus ensure your survival.

Aerith: Why are you thinking that? I played with Captain Manuel when we were kids. He can't make harm me.

Vorman: Are you sure about that?

Aerith affirmed what she had just said. Vorman told her: Oh... Your Majesty, I've lived a long time, enough to make sure that our Kingdom won't disappear someday. I will retire when you're old enough to run the country on your own and go across the planet one more before I reach the promised land. But now I'm living in terror of a strange prophecy that you will be the last Queen, a heroine who makes our nation gone forever... I've tried to be strict with you for all these years up until now because of this.

Feeling hurt in the leg, Vorman slumped into a chair. Aerith began to cry. She said: Oh, Vorman. Why are you always like that? Why do you never believe someone? The vortex of political life. See how it makes you become. I really don't want to be like you...

There were some noises outside the room, then a frantic knock was heard. Vorman was tired but still moved to the door to open it. Captain Manuel was standing outside, being held by Aerith's bodyguards. They told Vorman: Sir, he's trying to enter the palace without any permission. We had no way but to use force to stop his lese-majesty.

Manuel: Sorry for that, Courtier Vorman. Too much for military work.

Vorman: Okay. Release him. Let him through.

After the bodyguards had left, Manuel looked over Vorman's shoulder, seeing that Aerith was standing close against the corner, turning her back to him. He asked Vorman: Everything's okay, sir?

Vorman: Don't worry. We are discussing the upcoming situation. Why are you here? I thought you were on your way to the battlefield this time.

Manuel: Yeah, but I need to report something to the Queen. We have discussed a protection plan and want to submit it. Your majesty, are you listening to us? Your majesty!

Aerith slowly turned around. She quickly wiped her tears and said: Yes, Captain Manuel.

Manuel: Your Majesty, since when did you have a beer belly? Oh, maybe we don't need to meal.

Vorman gave a hard look at Manuel. But Aerith just smiled and said: Starved.

Manuel smiled: Right. Your stomach is as helpful as a bucket without a bottom. All the Cetra army will feel happy if their Queen can come and eat with them tonight or the Libation. We must worship Gaia so she will feed all the Eikons and wish every Cetra soldier before they come to the border. Your Majesty, you are our inspiration. It's terrific if you can do magic to sing a song to Gaia.

Aerith: Oh, I will do it. Do you think so, Courtier Vorman?

Vorman: There will be no war on the border because we just show our power there.

Anyway... Yes, your majesty.

Aerith told Manuel: That's great! Ah, because you two are here, there's one thing I need to say. From now on, you're promoted to the rank of commander. You shall continue to serve me with all your best in our army.

Manuel was surprised. Vorman quickly told to Aerith: No, Your Majesty. I suppose Captain Manuel is still young to be a commander. We have many experience officers serving in the army. I plead you should consider your edict carefully.

Aerith: My decision is made. I need one more good man that can be trusted. One man will get a deserved reward if he can make work done. My Courtier, you are the best wise advisor we ever have. You can give him your good lessons during the battle.

Vorman had no way to persuade Aerith but to agree with her order. Manuel asked him: Wait a minute. What about Zack the Mercenary? After his employment with us came to an end, I learned that he had been arrested.

Aerith looked at Vorman and asked him: Is that true, Courtier?

Manuel: My brother-in-arms saw you go to prison many times. He then decided to go after you and discovered Zack the Mercenary was there. Hungry, thirsty, and exhausted, Zack screamed in many bad languages. It means you were penetrating his brain many times.

Vorman: Well, I only interrogated him that time.

Manuel: Really? It was torture. If I didn't interfere on time, he would surely be dead.

Vorman: Oh, that was you. Now I understand why Zack the Mercenary could escape the dungeon. Commander Manuel, I saw you don't deserve to receive a favor from our Queen.

Manuel: Yeah, but it's still better than seeing a brave fighter perish inhumanely. On the day Zack could see the sun after a long time in the dungeon, he told me that he had witnessed your deception, which you had created to appear as though a group of men attacked his sister while she was trying to call for his help. Although I had never so trusted a Humans guy before, his emotion and pain at that time made me unable to turn a deaf ear. Courtier Vorman, how could you? That guy has helped us to build a good army for many years. What do people think about our Queen after they have known your cruelty?

With extreme anger, Aerith turned to see Vorman and said: You better give us a reasonable answer, Courtier.

Vorman: I did that because Aerith had given too much information about the Lifestream for a kind of that man. I need to arrest him for our safety. However, I also plan to make his return to normal and forget all the nightmares I created for him until you have helped him to break

out. Now thank you, Commander Manuel. You've already had one step ahead of me without letting me know. Now with those faking memories, he might hate us too much and really want to harm our Queen.

Manuel: Your plan, huh? Well, I think you simply hate him since he's the only Humans man who came close to Aerith.

Then he pointed to Aerith and kept talking to Vorman: But to protect our Queen, I also came close to him all those years. I will be the first to know if he wants to betray us. I don't need to do anything so that pulling our honor to mud, like your way before...

When Manuel was talking, Vorman used magic to connect Aerith's mind: What're you waiting for, Your Majesty? Tell him the truth.

Aerith shook his head. Vorman kept connecting to her: Now or never. If you don't share it, no one can help you.

After Manuel had done talking, Aerith still kept silent. Breathing a sigh breath, Vorman said: All right. It's all this old man's fault. I will take responsibility for letting our Kingdom lose face. Now we have the battle to care. Commander Manuel, I apologize for not joining the Libation with you and our Queen.

Manuel lowered his voice: Courtier Vorman, I hope you can come back quickly. About Zack the Mercenary, he can't leave the Kingdom before the battle due to low health, so we won't need to worry about him this time. My Queen... see you soon in our Libation.

After Manuel had left, Vorman told Aerith: So, Your Majesty, you still want to join us in this battle. Right?

Aerith felt a little hurt in her stomach. She said: Yes, Courtier Vorman. If everything goes off just as you two had planned in the council, I believe I won't get into trouble standing in front of our enemy. My only purpose in this battle is to show our army's strength to let anyone who dares to conquer our nation will need to rethink. Oh, and I hope I will meet him on the battlefield, regardless of whether he has gone to the other side to fight against us.

Thinking for a while, Vorman said: Whatever. You're our Queen. You can do everything you want. I'm Courtier, so my duty is just to give you the best solution.

Aerith: Right. But that doesn't still change anything. Guys!

All the Cetra's bodyguards arrived in the room. Aerith ordered them: Courtier Vorman has broken our rule for unlawful detainment and discriminatory harassment. He did without my command. Take him to the dungeon.

While the bodyguards were arresting Vorman, he smiled and told Aerith: Well, this is my first time going to the Cetra dungeon in the capacity of a prisoner though I've been more than one hundred years old... Before I leave, can I give you an advice?

Aerith ordered the bodyguards to release him for a moment. Then he came close to Aerith, lowed his head, and said: You are stronger than any woman. But I sincerely hope you don't think about doing something great because one day, your emotion will make some good guys lose their minds.

Aerith was a little stunned while Vorman walked away with her bodyguards. Lowing her head, she said: Courtier Vorman, my uncle, though not pleased with what you've done, you're still a good mentor. I thank you... for your service.

...

"Save my baby... I promised him I'll save our baby. Someone... please," Aerith woke up from the nightmare. She was lying on the bed in a room of a tree house. A Cetra officer stood beside her. "My Queen," he said, "You are awake. Thank God."

Aerith didn't answer him. He kept saying: It's good when everything is over, Your Majesty. You can feel safe here because all Cetra reinforcement has arrived. The Eikons are now

revived. All of them are willing to join us well. The enemy had felt it. So, they decided to stop attacking us. Now they are standing outside our stronghold to see our power...

"Where's my baby?" Aerith interrupted the soldier.

"The baby... We have no choices..." he answered her awkwardly, "You have just survived an impact of a missile... We tried to save both of you by using all kinds of magic, but no magic can deal with the nature of reality... the foetal derangement... You can't be lived if we only use magic to do that... So, we could save you only," After that, he bowed his head to apology her.

Now Aerith felt empty in her soul. She wished he hadn't talked about something like the foetal derangement. The officer kept talking, "We captured Courtier Vorman. He's a man who launched the weapon of the Humans. We also checked his office. It turns out that he has made a deal with our enemy. That's the reason why he ordered us to withdraw immediately in the mist at that time. We... really didn't know you had been left. My apologies, your majesty."

Seeing that Aerith was still looking at the warm sunbeam through the window, he continued to say, "My Queen, the missile explosion gave you some severe wounds, but as I said, our magic can heal you, making you return like before. You don't need to worry about all your pains, even your face..."

"WHAT PROBLEM WITH MY FACE?!" Aerith suddenly turned around to see him. Burns on her face made the Cetra soldier feel scary. He bowed his head again and said, "Please calm down to preserve the body, your majesty."

Many noisy sounds were coming from the outside that Aerith couldn't understand. "The Humans troopers are making an unholy row..." The officer told her, "...to damp our ardor but believe me, we would never be deficient in courage,"

"What are they saying?" Aerith asked him.

"Don't worry, my Queen. The interpreter told me that there was nothing..."

"Answer me!" Aerith ordered him.

He took a deep breath and said, "They're telling about you... that you are weak. You only deserve to be a woman... a flower woman, according to their understanding. So if you gave your body as giving a flower to them, they might let you live after having fun... But now... But now you're gonna suffer because of trying to fight against them..."

The officer stopped talking because he couldn't bear it anymore. Aerith turned around to the window then ordered him, "Let me alone."

The officer bowed again, then left the room.

Alone among the sunbeam, Aerith felt she had lost everything but cruel sounds from Humans soldiers. The green eye flared up brightly in the wounded part of her face.

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Aerith went to the execution ground and saw that Vorman was standing at the stake.

Vorman: Good morning, Your Majesty. I hope my magic made you feel comfortable during the cure of your wound.

Aerith: Who released you?

Vorman: It's your brother, Captain Manuel. He wanted me back to the army to cover him. Because you lost yourself inside the land of our enemy and were surrounded by many evil men, there was no way to rescue you but to send an army with Eikons crossing the border.

Aerith: That's an invasion.

Vorman smiled: And only a King or Queen has permission to do that. I told him about your proposal before. Though he disagreed, he accepted to become the King. Our army then

invaded the enemy's territory for the first time after thousands of years. It's all because of his love for you.

Aerith closed her eyes. She said: Now I understand why they summoned a dark entity to attack all of us at that time. It controlled Knight Cloud and used him to tell me that "it" was very happy to meet me there because "it" wanted to help me to put the planet under our hands. But I never agreed since it was a dirty trick. Then... "it" destroyed me by letting me see all the men who love me fight to the death.

Vorman: I've told you.

Aerith: Why me?

Vorman: The entity only shows its victims their darkness in the soul, then turns them into monsters. No one can help them but themselves. I have to say because of you, we have to deal with the darkest thing.

Aerith: So you have tried to kill me. Right?

Vorman: The entity felt about your son. It wanted to help you because it believed that you would be the last Cetra right at this time. But everything has its price. If it helps you to avoid your tragedy, you must let your son under its hand to control all of us.

Aerith: How could you know about that? What is "it" exactly?

Vorman: I'll tell you from my information...

Aerith: F*ck your information.

Vorman smiled: The entity is only a combination of magic and technology, just like the cure which your father brought to the Kingdom to help you and other children. From the succession of the treatment, all the scientists decided to do a more significant thing: making a God with that combination, or rather, a God of harmony, to keep the planet in peace forever. They have all the materias except the hardest one: the Time. So your father gave them all the information about the Rift missing case, hoping our Mako energy will be safe.

Aerith: The Rift missing case? All people know about that legend. Why did they need my father "give" to them?

Vorman: Good question. To make this planet peaceful, you must know everything happens at every timeline. The Rift missing case is the key for scientists to make God because they wanted to learn about our missing scientists' failure at that time. The Cetra scientists' leader was nicknamed Ultimecia, and we'll never know about her true name. She got a Knight from the Manual House and took advantage of his love to get many budgets and people for her project in the Rift.

Aerith: They were so arrogant about their knowledge and refused to connect outside to learn more, so they met the punishment from Gaia. Ultimecia's eyes lost the green color forever due to her ambition being too big. It made her Knight and the others meet danger and soiled the mountain.

Vorman: That's right. The legend teaches us a lesson of learning from the outside to develop our mind, or we'll lose our eyes' color as a way of becoming extinct from our original form. But what if they didn't fail? What if they had opened a new story we will see in the future?

Aerith: What're you saying?

Vorman: They never go missing, my Queen. Ultimecia had succeeded in controlling the Time. But as you said, Rift mountain was soiled. When the Humans scientists brought the entity to that place, "it" was infected and became a monster.

Aerith suddenly felt pain in her face. She said: Thank you for some information, Vorman.

Now your time comes, do you want to say any last words for yourself?

Vorman: Yes, my Queen. I want to ask you only two questions.

Aerith: Go ahead.

Vorman: If you have powerful magic to do one of these things: rule over the world, and save our people, which one do you want to choose?

Aerith: It's simple. I will save our people. And your last question?

Vorman: No matter the cost?

Aerith thought for a while, then she nodded: Yes.

Vorman: That's it. Magic never tells lies. Now I can rest in peace.

Aerith asked: Allow me to ask you.

Vorman: My pleasure, your Majesty.

Aerith: Which one do you want to choose?

She used the magic to connect inside Vorman's head: You don't need to give me your answer, uncle, I'll spare your life only if you beg me. Just do it.

Vorman laughed then he said loudly: Doesn't matter, your Majesty. It's the same damn thing.

Aerith felt very disappointed. Then she said loudly: I, Aerith of the Cetra, sentence you to death for your traitor and regicide on the Queen. You shall be burned and not go to the promised land for your sin.

The fire made from magic started to lick quickly up the body of Vorman, but he still smiled and raised a thumb up: Goodbye, my daughter. And good luck... with your choice.

Aerith still looked at the fire to ensure Vorman was turned entirely to dust. A Cetra soldier stepped behind her and asked her: Your Majesty, all documents about the sorceress Ultimecia were put in his hut. Would you like to go over there and take a look?

Aerith kept silent, only focused on the fire which was burning Vorman's skin. The soldier continued to ask her: I know this isn't a good time, but our enemy is continuing to escalate the war. What should we do now?

Aerith still looked at the fire when replying to him: Don't worry. If they dare to touch me and this country once again, I will defeat all of them with my bare hand. I swear.

Suddenly, Manuel appeared from the fire and stepped to Aerith. He grabbed her on the shoulder. "Get off me!" She screamed.

Manuel: I am the King now. I can do whatever I want. You should be my Queen.

Aerith: No, Manuel, I've told you I am your sister... Don't do that. You're under control. Fight it! FIGHT IT!

Manuel's face turned to char, making him look like a monster. He still grabbed her, smiled, and whispered: All hail the Queen... for making us fun.

Aerith tried to escape when Manuel prepared to press her down.

"Your Majesty!" She woke up and saw that a Cetra soldier was grabbing her "Are you okay? You were trying to step into the fire. We had to stop you."

Aerith felt pain like hell on her face. She went off into a faint.

Meanwhile, the Aerith in the church was dancing around a magic fire in front of all the excited children. She sang: With these flowers I plant, I feel peace in mind... No more hate, no more fight. I've met some good friends... Under the hand of God, I feel the rebirth coming...