

**CONTEXT:**

Freed to be used as a weapon of terror, Jhin lives to continue satisfying his urges to perform. The cabal has declared Shen and Zed as fugitives, so as to make sure they do not get in the way of Jhin's work.

**JHIN:**

And now, the curtain rises.

Sitting in the crowd, Jhin watched the play unfold disapprovingly. A sappy love story about who knows what. *Shows are so boring these days. You'd think after the invasion, Ionians would've woken up and started writing more elaborate productions,* he thought grimly. His eyes started wandering around, observing his fellow viewers. *Look at all these pitiful fools, soaking this nonsense up like a sponge . . .*

Suddenly the crowd gasped. A woman or two could be heard in the distance, shedding a tear, their noses sniffing. Jhin looked back at the stage, to find that the main character's lover had been poisoned and was now lying dead in his arms. *Tsk. There is no drama in a peaceful death! I should show the playwright what real art is, sometime.* Getting up from his chair, he started walking towards the exit, looking at the faces of those he was passing.

"This is folly. They are all so immersed in this rubbish," he muttered under his breath.

As he was reaching the exit he spotted someone who looked somewhat disinterested, watching him. Their eyes met and for a second Jhin's step faltered- he drew in a sharp breath of air as he started feeling butterflies. He had laid his eyes on the most magnificent woman he had ever seen. Purple eyes full of curiosity, with long white flowing hair, sitting there daintily, rolling a purple orb around in her palm. As he gazed into her eyes he could already see the life leaving them, the feeling of her warm blood in his hands, her hair turning into his favorite shade of red.

He cleared his throat, bringing himself back to the present and continued walking on and out of the exit doors.

**SYNDRA:**

*That was such a sweet play,* thought Syndra as she was walking out of the theater. Glancing around, she recognized that strange man who looked at her so oddly before he left earlier, sitting at the bar in the theater lobby. He was wearing that lavish cloak that she saw before, but now in proper lighting she could see him in full. Tall, lean and muscular, he had short tousled brown hair, with the reddest eyes she had ever seen, staring right at her.

"Wow," she said under her breath, as he gave her a wink. "Fine, I'll bite," she giggled as she started making her way towards him.

"Not a fan of love stories?" she asked the mysterious man as she sat down next to him.

"You could say that," he said in a deep and dulcet voice. "I was hoping for something a little . . . more fast paced," he admitted as his eyes were studying her. "The name is Jhin. Khada Jhin," he said as he was extending his hand out to her.

"Syndra," she replied, shaking his hand in response.

They talked for hours. *Khada is so polite, handsome... and oh so charming.* Syndra found herself doubting her relationship with Zed the longer she spoke with Khada, his alluring charm consuming her. *No, she thought. I love Zed. I know I love Zed.*

"It's gotten late and I'm afraid it's time for me to go home," said Syndra almost desperately. *He's a wonderful man but I have Zed, even if he is a fugitive right now.*

"Well that's a shame," said Khada. "I was starting to have fun," he confessed with a sly smile. *God, even that smile can knock a woman off her feet.*

"Do you come here often? Perhaps I'll be able to catch you again sometime," Syndra said breathlessly.

"Oh yes. I am a fan of performances if I do say so myself."

## **JHIN:**

As he watched Syndra leave, he felt like he could finally breathe again. His throat had felt so tight whenever he spoke to her, as all he could think about was the feeling of her blood on his hands, the smell of it filling his nose. But he executed that minor performance flawlessly. *I've got her wrapped around my finger,* he thought with a smile. It was always fun to play around with his next victim.

Paying his tab, he walked out of the building and looked for Syndra. He saw her down the path a little ways away, and started following her. After almost 10 minutes of walking and following, she had stopped at what Jhin could only presume was her home. Noting her address, he turned down another road and started making his way to his own place.

*I will make you beautiful. I will make you perfect.*

Upon reaching his home, he went straight to the wardrobe where his performance attire was held. He changed into his black bodysuit, equipping his shoulder cannon and golden armor. Draping his cloak over himself again, he donned his gun holster belt. He looked at himself in the mirror.

"I am a slave to this passion . . ." he said to himself before putting on his mask.

Starting to feel nervous as he did before every performance, he grabbed his gun, Whisper. "Tonight we shall create a masterpiece, little one," he quietly said to it as he walked out the door.

### **SYNDRA:**

There was always something peaceful about relaxing in a hot bath at the end of the day. It was hard to find peace nowadays in these troubled times. With the Golden Demon released to the public, there was always tension in the air. People who used to always be friendly and kind to strangers, kept to themselves and were suspicious of everyone. But Khada was not like everyone else. He was the only person she knew who reminded her of the harmonious times.

Syndra lay back in her bath, thinking about her evening with Khada. She was snapped out of her thoughts by the sudden sound of glass smashing somewhere in her house. Paling, Syndra quickly hopped out of her bath and wrapped a towel around her, trying to be as quiet as she possibly could. She listened hard. The sound of footsteps walking around her house could be heard, doors being smashed open. *Someone is looking for me. Oh Zed I wish you were here!*

With her home always in the dark, the idea of trying to escape past the intruder in the shadows came into her head. Listening, she waited until she thought they were on the other end of the house. When there was silence, she slipped out of her bathroom. Swiftly making her way through the corridor, she reached the living room. Here she could see was where the intruder came in. Sharp shards of glass were scattered across the floor. *Only a few more steps-*

A tall dark figure emerged into the room. Speechless, Syndra stood frozen in fear. Throughout the silence, only the heavy breathing of her intruder could be heard, muffled, as though he were wearing a mask. As her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she could make out more of his figure . . . and his cloak. *That cloak. I know that cloak.* The image of Khada snapped into her mind.

"K- Khada?"

Wordlessly, he lifted his arm which looked to be holding a gun.

"Darling. Through my work, you shall transcend," he replied, pulling the trigger.

### **JHIN:**

Jhin closed his eyes. *This pleasure strangles me . . .*

Exhilarated, he deeply breathed in the metallic smell of blood as it filled the air. The feeling of Syndra's splattered blood running down the skin of his right arm tickled. He opened his eyes

and saw the figure of her limp body on the floor. He found a candle nearby and lit it. And this was when he could see his latest masterpiece.

The sight of Syndra's blood sprayed all over the walls filled him with euphoria. He knelt down and held her body to his, putting her head on his shoulders. The sound of her final breath escaping her lips could be heard. Smiling, Jhin lay her back down on the floor, and cupped his hand where he shot her, to gather her blood in his palm.

Standing up, he walked over the wall and started painting a lotus blossom with the blood on his fingers. When he finished, he looked back down at Syndra. A pool of blood had gathered beneath her now, her hair and towel now a color of deep red. "I have made you pure, sweetling," he gently whispered.

He stepped over her body and walked over to the door. Looking back at her once more, Jhin slid into the dead of the night, to search for his next victim.