

A Different Shade of Black

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A Different Shade of Black

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Summary

It was time to learn to ride as a warrior, the king said. It would be easy, they said.

If only.

Notes

Prompt 1h request:

Haou learns to ride a horse.

Ever often the heavy storms and harsh conditions; lately, the kingdom has been seeing pleasant sunlight and warmth.

Spring flowers, summer heat, and joys of open fields for the residents to harvest. Even the gardeners at the castle had found their much-piled free time be used up now.

In short, everyone was seemingly enjoying yet another sunny day. The king and the people, and even the young prince in his young teenager years.

A set schedule and he was already finishing morning duties; from swordsmanship training, to reading and further studying of many literature, musicals, and traditions.

He *was* supposed to be an heir to the throne in the future. But for now, before all of that knowledge had been transferred and a need to command war troops became unwanting reality, young Haou strolled through the wonderous castle walls in search of an excuse for a break.

Young, he was, ready for conditions many other youths weren't for, also was, but he was still just that; - a lazy teenager often unamused by given tasks.

Thus, before a chance of freedom has been prevailed and royal feet managed stepping outside, his presence was already requested over.

"Young Haou, the king is looking for you. Please come with me,"

And he had to. That wasn't even a question, he knew.

"As you wish,"

Another day, another command, and he was at the throne room of the older male.

"Haou! It is good to see you well,"

The bearded expression smiled; act done rarely for many but him. He almost served as the man's son.

"Yes,"

The latter spoke out of politeness.

"Ah, yes... I believe it is time for you to learn to mount and ride our mighty beasts," The voice paused and the teen took the time to acknowledge said request. "You will be using them to guide our troops into war after all. And what kind of a king would you be without knowing the basics of riding?"

There it was. Horse riding.

The smaller face subtly dropped. What was ordered wasn't exactly a task being wanted of, yet declining it wasn't even a consideration. If the king wanted it, it was done. Whether he wanted it or not.

"You wish of me to ride horses?"

"Correct. You've matured enough to begin your training,"

"...But... I already have many duties throughout my days,"

He tried, pleaded, wished for some magical force obey his command and not have another deed take up the remainder of his free time.

"Nonsense! I'm sure your schedule can be worked around. Now, onto the field, your journey to learn begins immediately,"

The final word and the final conversation for the time being. An assigned guard lead them out shortly after and the youth soon found and met his mentor – not an unfamiliar face, as most of the kingdom knew him.

"Welcome, welcome young prince! The king and I had already discussed this and I have everything planned out for your introduction,"

The said soldier was swatted away and soon, it was only the youngling and his guide.

"Come, allow me to introduce you to many of our stallions,"

The teen allowed himself be led in silence, meeting with the huge animals no soon after and inspecting their size with intimidation.

"Beautiful, are they not?"

"They are,"

Unknowing to the other man, 'pretty looking' wasn't the only thing the small royalty found them.

After all, they could crush him with one go, and *that* was certainly not a pleasant thought.

"Which one would you like, young master?"

The sunlight golden eyed the many horses in question, unsure of a choice in question given. *As if it mattered.* They could all stomp on him equally. Maybe, if one was smaller...

“It matters not to me,”

Whether or not that was the correct call, the taller figure practically jumped of excitement to be given free reign of choosing. His bizarre act disturbed the other by a silent amount, but Haou kept his tongue and simply watched one of the horses be led out.

“I present to you our finest beast! He’s a mighty guardian for those who manage to form a bond,”

The youth listened. *Clearly* the man had left something out about it.

“And for those who don’t...?”

A smile. Fake and mocking one.

“Let us see you give it a try first, no?”

Words to the prince equaled the definition of something he *didn’t* want to know. Whatever the answer to his question was, most certainly wasn’t an option to be found out. The horse was pitch black, and a lingering thought in Haou’s mind told him it wasn’t just for appearance.

Oh, wait. It was because he was the wielder of the Gentle Darkness.

...

Humorous.

“Are you ready to begin, prince Haou?”

When he was king, it would all be no’s. But for now;

“Yes,”

So it started. He was outside, instructed, shown and told, and now it was his turn.

“Just climb on top of him!”

Which part of the mocking voice thought it be so easy remained a mystery, but it was all the words of encouragement he received. Nudging, wiggling, even if it just mildly; none of it helped the young male gain enough confidence to attempt even approaching the animal, let alone dare tame it.

It eyed him with equally unpleasant eyes he wielded. At least now a part of him realized how *he* looked staring at someone.

“Come now, we must update the king on your progress,”

The watching mentor urged his form, and that reminder unfortunately did the trick needed. None wished to face the king’s displeasure over *anything*, and Haou was no exception.

“ ... ”

Last mental preparation and an audible sigh, the teen eyed the beast and settled his anxious mind over the striking fear of the horse’s size.

A hold, a nudge, leg sweep and a mild jump—

“?! Wait--! —Calm!”

A desperate attempt to voice his wants, but the animal gave into its bestial wrath and proceeded to fight off the small male on top of it.

Now in full panic, the prince clutched onto *whatever* he found and glued all of his form into not letting go even if life wanted otherwise.

It was mayhem; at least, in his mind. Eyes shut and hands grabbed, the frightful teen unknowing of what to do but wait the chaotic mess miraculously faded.

And well, it did. Somehow.

“You did master Haou!”

Golden eyes dared reopen and face the situation.

He really did.

Sitting, or rather, *laying* on the horse, hands tightly clutched around the beast’s neck, if the thing wasn’t twice his size the grip would probably be enough to choke it.

“...I did....”

Hesitant voice muttered out to himself in disbelief.

“I-I did!”

This time, the youth re-positioned himself properly, growing back some royal sophistication and composing his form into that of a king in waiting.

“I congratulate you! We shall call it a day for this session. My, I absolutely must see you attempt riding all of our stallions with such elegance!”

Elegance.

That was *anything* but elegant even he knew that. With shut eyes at that.

“Perhaps one day...”

The youth trailed off, unwilling to ponder too much about the recent events.

“Yes, yes, you are correct. Shall we report it to the king now?”

“I will go,”

Before taking his leave, his mentor scheduled the upcoming training to his upcoming days. And while they took up most of the time used as break, a small part of the teen thought that maybe, it wouldn’t be as boring as he thought.

As long as none of today repeated itself, that is.

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