

## World of Vilous: Red Chapter



by Mick39

Note: This appears to be the last version of the story, as Mick says her Vilous Stories are "Stopped Forever" and no more complete version is known to exist. It is one of three stories detailing the three "Keys" or "Holy Objects" of Vilous, explained below in the story. The other two stories followed the other two Keys. These have not yet been translated.

Background information about the world and races can be found here  
[http://goldring.wikia.com/wiki/Vilous\\_Wiki](http://goldring.wikia.com/wiki/Vilous_Wiki)

“Ground Shelf, Rovuerugu, and Sailzane.”

“We must take haste. We cannot allow these lands to fall into the hands of the southern Sergal.”

A map is lain on the desk, covered with red and blue pins. Locations are marked with red letters.

“General Rain, shall you accompany the contingent to Ground Shelf?”

Supreme Commander Rain smiled silently.

The sergals of northern and southern descent, been warring for 150 years. In the past 5 years, the Shigu have become dominant and have expanded their sphere of influence roughly 3 times. This was entirely due to the accomplishments of General Rain. There are few in Vilous who do not know her name. However, her method is truly extreme and violent. Over 200 rekusu are stained with the blood of the fallen, the march of the Shigu destroying everything in its path.

A massive stonework dam, placed in the middle of an enormous river, has become a beautiful fortress for the Shigu clan. At one time it had served the former Agudona civilization; it now served as base of operations. From her tower, Rain watches the morning mist climb from the river below. Through the mist, the sound of a musical instrument is heard clearly.

She did not understand how the Talyxian could show such absolute subordination to the Shigu clan. They knew her past; knew what she was capable of.

Perhaps if one were to ask their motive, they would respond, “An ally must always be cautious, and in war you must think of yourself. We are only a small country, and if we did not join with the Shigu we would be crushed under their advance. And perhaps if we offer our lives and suffer the pain of battle, we may continue our existence, and perhaps enjoy the advantages of victory.”

A light shower of rain soaks the stone pavement of the road. It spreads the blood that covers the street, lending a red hue to its entirety. A dead soldier lies on his back, his expressionless eyes open, staring into the endless void.

The road lies through the center of the town, and corpses are strewn everywhere. The surviving people are restrained in the town center, surrounded by Shigu soldiers.

Among the survivors, two men stand at the forefront. One wears a suit of gray armor, with the Reono crest drawn in white on the back.

Another figure appears, this one wearing shining golden armor. Lines of red, resembling tears, run from her eyes.

General Rain is an imposing figure herself, but perhaps the most fearsome part of her is her weapon. It resembles a long lance, with blades extending up and down, so that there are blades on all sides of the weapon. It had been created in such a way as to not damage itself or the holder, showing a high degree of technological advancement; Perhaps a relic of the ancient Agudona.

The Reono officer, clad in his gray armor, brandishes his simple iron spear at the approaching sergal. He speaks briefly to his companion, "If I win, perhaps you will be released, my friend. If I die, at the very least I will have persevered until the end." With a daring smile, he calls out a challenge to General Rain. With great force he throws himself at her, charging with as much strength as he can muster. He draws closer and closer, but Rain stands motionless, not even placing herself in a defensive stance. The Reono readies his spear to strike, but in one quick motion Rain knocks his weapon aside. Off balance, the charging soldier falls to the ground. With her hook-like weapon, Rain drags the man to his feet, and then grabs him by the chest. "Looking at your face fills me with disgust." he spat.

In response, Rain rips off his armor covering and thrusts her blade deep into his throat. In his last moments, he glares at her in silence.

Rain watches her opponent expressionlessly, then, without warning, slices him in half from chest to groin.

Vivid red erupts in every direction, spraying the screaming crowd. With a sharp cry, the dead soldier's loyal companion rushes at Rain, easily breaking past two Shigu soldiers and leaping directly at her. He had hoped she would be too distracted to dodge his attack, but Rain merely laughs.

"Fool. Your intentions are good, but you have underestimated me.."

She easily dodges the man's blow, sidestepping to the right. With a fluid motion she slaps his weapon away, and follows through with a killing blow to his stomach. Rain stabs him several times, then allows him to collapse. Eyes agape, he convulses at her feet.

"They always wish to die," She intones. "Makes it rather easy to tidy up."

With her long tongue she licks the blood off of her weapon, then turns to leave.

The Shigu depart the town, leaving it mangled and bloodied.

As night fell, the rain began to fall harder and harder. The blood was washed away from the street, the continuous pitter-patter of the rain erasing the remnants of violence.

You who I cannot see:

What I write here is entirely fact. I must write it here as a message to myself, lest I forget. I will write down all of the things that happen from here on out. When you exist in this world for such a long time, your memory fades gradually, and you completely forget the most important things.

So, assuming I do forget these things, these notes will help me remember.

\*\*\*

Day 1

It seems that I have finally appeared in Vilous. Even so, steadily my memory continues to fade. It is a strange feeling. I must quickly note any important thing that occurs.

Let us speak of how I have come here. First I must say that Vilous is not the only place. There are people “outside the world”, in a hypothetical world. I cannot explain it accurately. But the fact that I cannot is my purpose in life.

You see, my life is spent investigating this world. I cannot be hasty; I entered this world, a place where time is meaningless; While the people struggle to comprehend the simplest things, I find myself several thousand kilometers ahead. I am the “Higasibata” of this world, a social and mental pariah.

My search for meaning involves one person; a key, if you will. And if I, the Higasibata, can find this person, perhaps Vilous can be saved. But this cannot be achieved automatically, and not on the first meeting between myself and this “key.”

\*\*\*

“Even if such a person exists.” On that note, the boy turned off the light and placed it into the bag he carried at his waist. The dim plain spread meanderingly into the horizon. The gray-haired youth ruminated on his surroundings.

“Such a world.. it is like a dream.”

His clothes were simple and colored dull gray; from his belt dangled a sword and gun for self-defense. A waterproof bag held his other, more fragile belongings.

He began to walk across the fields, as the sun slowly rose to greet him.

Zyn walks toward the exit, which, in the dark corridor, is framed by the light outside. Opening the door, he is momentarily blinded by the dazzling evening sun. A soldier holding an iron spear holds watch over a large, imposing gate. Kanat Reinado stands in front of him, her chest plate removed.

“Rikk,” Zyn said quietly to the guard, who was innocently licking the hair on the female soldier’s stomach.

Rikk inclined his head upward slowly, looking at Zyn.

“Why Zyn, what business brings you this way?”

Zyn nods and says simply, “Open the door.”

Rikk slowly stands up to his full height and grumbles, “You better have a good excuse for going against protocol.”

He opens the gate, and Zyn passes through. He finds himself in a large garden, on a long stone path. He continues across it, to the building on the other side.

Rain holds the arm before her, and regards the flowing blood with an empty expression. The knife falls from her right hand onto the floor, resulting in a metallic clanging that echoes throughout the dim room.

“General.. I have done what you request.” Zyn says, holding his wrist in front of Rain’s face.

Silently, she runs her finger across the cut, then traces the blood down both sides of her face, under each eye. Then she speaks.

“I would like to have a serious discussion with you.”

Averting his gaze from Rain and his wrist, Zyn thinks a moment, then answers, “If that is what you wish.”

While she looks at Zyn’s face, the pain of the wound evident, she begins to speak in a whisper. “You do not understand. Every night the very air seems to carry an unhappiness, a darkness, as if I lay at the bottom of a river. Last night was especially terrible, for when I awoke, I could scarcely breathe due to the stifling darkness upon me.”

Zyn is surprised. He had heard the story several hours ago from a subordinate.

According to him, Quad and Rikk of the Sentinels had gone to her bedroom, as a loud scream had suddenly erupted from it. However, he had not believed it was true.

Rain continues, “In the past I have had the same feeling. I believe it began in the Tatola desert, during the campaign in Korusuran. Why do you think it is happening again? However, now that I think about it, the circumstances are similar.”

She licks the blood off of Zyn’s wrist; the cut had already begun to heal and form a scar.

“I hope you have taken my words to heart, and will remember this. But do not share anything I have told you this night. While we may remain close, do not speak of this to anyone.”

Zyn knows that he must heed her words; he has no choice. For General Rain holds power over all in the Shigu clan, and crossing her is not a good idea.

“Zyn,” Rain says, “I trust you to believe what I have told you.”

Zyn does not speak, but he knows that Rain holds deep gratitude toward him. He leaves her room, and disappears into the shadows of the night.

-5-

“What? We’re leaving tomorrow?”

Rikk stands leaning against the wall. Near his feet sits his superior, Quad.

Quad answers indifferently, “General Rain has given a direct order. Preparations are underway until tomorrow’s sunrise, and then we will set out.”

Rikk contemplates these news, then speaks.

“So it is time for us to head to Shelf, correct? This is the reason for our hurry?”

“It is such. Strangely you are more receptive than usual. Nevertheless, why do you question the order?”

“It was not difficult to understand! And I merely wish to know what we are doing when I lay down my life.”

With some disdain, Quad slowly rises to his feet. “It is our duty,” he says simply. With that, he lifts his iron spear from where it leaned against the wall, and jumps over, disappearing over the side.

Rikk does not speak, instead sighing and regarding the dark heavens; to him, the black reaches of outer space seem to be an enormous, jet-black mouth, opened gapingly over the planet.

After picking up his scattered armor and lifting his spear, Rikk runs and leaps over the wall, following Quad.

“We will advance to the Torr Shade inland sea, from Seinan west, paralleling the seashore and the mountain range that passes through the north. On the Aseto plain, we will crush the Rovuerugu, then place our command centers there. After the Jierisu squad rejoins the main army, we will hit Sailzane and destroy it in a single strike. It is roughly a 90 rekusu march, but as it runs through the forests and mountains, we will be safe from attacks.”

General Rain is sitting in a chair, a map spread in front of her. Two uniformed servant women stand behind her, grooming the mane of the general as she works. It

extends from her ears to a short distance away from the base of her tail, and requires a good amount of maintenance to keep it clean, and of the correct color.

While this occurs, various Shigu subordinates enter the room, greeting the general with the customary left-eye salute. After receiving information concerning the impending campaign, they would then exit.

Eventually, with a sigh, Rain speaks to the two servant women.

“Havika and Nerushiruta, it is good enough for now. It is time to get ready to leave.”

Rain begins to dress, putting on her armor, and constructing the double-bladed lance she used in combat. After this is done, she exits her room.

As she strides through the corridors of the fortress, every subordinate she passes stops to offer their salute, out of both fear and respect. There is something in her very gaze that instills fear in everyone; even the most hardened warriors could feel her golden eyes penetrate them to the very core of their being.

-6-

The general stands on a large stairway, surveying the fortress’s residential area.

It is known that the sergals are warlike people, and everyone is a soldier. It is an honor to die on the battlefield. When a child is born, it is taught martial arts by its mother, and at the age of 14 or 15 it receives its ceramic armor and iron spear.

Inside the residential area, preparation for the clan’s departure is underway, and the children run to and from holding materials that must be transported away. One child stumbles over the foot of General Rain and tumbles, scattering the cotton robe which he held in his hands. “Oh!! General!! Ma’am, please forgive me!” The small child quickly covers his left eye in salute.

General Rain smiles softly, advising, “Little one.. you must be careful with yourself. It is important that you become strong enough to someday be a great warrior among our ranks.” With these cautionary words, Rain gently strokes the child’s head, then leaves that place. Preparation was advancing favorably, and the eastern sky was already adopting a white hue.

The soldiers, sufficiently armored, had lined up in the main hall. They carried whatever baggage they needed on their shoulders.

Communications squad leader Kanat Reinado salutes General Rain.

“General! Roll call for all squadrons has been completed! The fire has been set to the goods which remain in the fortress!”

Rain nods and strides to the top of the platform, where she shouts, “Preparations are complete. When the flame climbs into the tower, we shall begin our march!”

The Shigu clan, assembled in its entirety, salutes General Rain simultaneously.

The eyes of the soldiers are then fixed on the climbing fire, the wind whirling the ash of their former domicile ever upward.

And so the long formation left the fortress, and heads toward the Ribenku mountain range. General Rain calls officer Kanat to her side. “Kanat.. be watchful.”

“Ma’am!” Kanat answers, and runs to join the Jierisu squadron, carrying just a spear and wearing only a light dress.

The communications squadron consists of a group of sergals who possess a talent for long distance running, something which could not be performed by any particular squadron within the Shigu army. They possess very strong legs, having completely focused on their development since birth. They also temper their bodies in such a way that they are extremely lean, almost entirely muscle, only so that they can run even more efficiently.

Rikk grumbles to himself, “Kanat is gone.. off running 90 rekusu away?”

His complaining is audible to Quad, who looks back, glaring at Rikk; However, he is not aware of his superior’s gaze.

-7-

## Day 7

I have entered the swamp. It is raining very hard, so for now I have sought shelter in a cave. This is probably how it will be from now on.

My memory continues to fade. I cannot even remember the names of my parents. It seems that this world itself makes me forget.

It is frightening that there are times when I cannot remember what I have just recorded in this journal.

Every time I open this book to write, I feel the same fear. I must find the person I am supposed to meet. After this rain stops, I will leave this place and head west.

\*\*\*

Lucien, sighing, places his journal back into his bag. He looks outside the cave entrance, where the only visible things are the falling rain and the slate gray sky.

“It is as if the very air wishes me to stay here..,” he murmurs, heading into the innermost reaches of his makeshift shelter.

The stone floor is not fit for sleeping, but Lucien places a sheet of cloth upon it, and rests himself on the ground. “Well, well.” he says, eyes closing.

The downpour had begun yesterday, and he had decided to stay in the cave since then. He had much time to think and reflect on his unknown mission; he now felt a dark sense of foreboding.



Too tired to think anymore, Lucien slowly sinks into a shallow sleep.

In the distance, a small barn is visible. As it is the only thing for miles in this uncultivated and desolate stretch of lands, Lucien heads toward it. Though it looks weathered and old, there is a sign that it is still being used.

It is unnaturally silent. Lucien attempts to see inside the barn through one of the cracks formed by the warped wooden boards. Inside it is pitch-dark, as if darkness has simply accumulated within. Suddenly, two small points of light appear. Lucien is startled, and he falls back several steps.

“..What is it?” He wondered aloud, mustering his courage and looking through the opening once more.

Still the barn was absolutely silent. However, Lucien’s eyes had become somewhat accustomed to the darkness within, and in the faint light he was able to make out the form of a small creature.

What appeared to be a wire was coiled around its right forefoot, and this was connected to a chain adhered to the barn’s wall. Looking closely, Lucien noticed a stain of blood on the creature’s white forefoot. The animal did not show an expression of sorrow or suffering, but simply stared at him intently.

“Well, what are you?”

He awakes suddenly. It was a strange dream. He scratches his hair, looks outside of the cave, and is greeted by the empty blue of a clear sky. Thin gray clouds float gently across the horizon.

With a sigh, Lucien picks up his sleeping cloth and places it back into his bag.

“The rain has stopped.” He mumbles to himself, as he hurriedly leaves the cave.

It opens onto a hill, which is covered in plants that are roughly as tall as Lucien.

This, coupled with the humid air, makes visibility difficult. If he were to take a wrong step, he could easily trip and fall or become stuck in the mud.

He also will occasionally remember things, which causes him to immediately stop and write, but occasionally he will completely forget what he was thinking about halfway through recording it.

But he is not troubled by this. He knows that even if he cannot predict the future, it is his duty to continue his journey and complete his purpose.

The sky is a brilliant shade of blue, having been clear for some time now. A light fog blows across the plain, and the gray clouds cast long shadows on the ground. A breeze is blowing from the east. The brilliant sunlight reflects on the dew of the grass. It also shines off of Lucien's compass, dazzling and temporarily blinding him.

\*\*\*

My memory of the "outside world" has begun to fade..

After appearing on this plain, where "the God of the wilderness" is dead, I have continued to head west. It is my belief the person I must find is heading in that direction as well.

When I read my past entries, I see my notes to myself, obliging me to not forget my past, to try and remember as much as I can about myself. But I can barely remember this "past me", the one who wrote such a great deal in this journal.

However, I must continue my journey.. and as futile as it is, I must continue to urge myself to remember.

\*\*\*

A trail of footprints can be seen in the mud of the huge grassy plain, seeming to originate from the horizon itself. The vastness of the plain is remarkable, for even after traveling such a long distance, he still can see it extending for miles ahead of him.

However, the white outline of a mountain range has risen from the horizon to the northwest.

Lucien continues to travel in a westerly direction, according to his compass. Though a cold wind blows from behind him, he continues to walk, indifferent to it; it does not bother him at all.

He walks for a long time. Presently, he notices a large, humanoid shape standing ahead of him, its shadow reaching a long way behind it. Noticing Lucien, it turns slowly and begins to approach him.

"Why... hello there," Lucien calls out to the person.

Suddenly, he is hit from behind and thrown a good distance.

With a sharp cry, the youth collapses into the mud. He feels himself being held down by a very strong individual, who removes his sword from his belt.

"Put both of your hands on your head!" A voice barks, like an animal.

Lucien could feel the sharp nails of whatever was holding him down, pressing into his shoulders.

When he does not answer, the first creature Lucien had seen grabs him by the hair and shouts in his face, "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

Lucien replies breathlessly, "I don't know, really."

At this point he has a chance to see what the person actually looks like. He cannot see its entire face, as it has a metallic helmet. However, it possesses a long muzzle, and a large mouth that seems to extend to underneath its eyes. These characteristics give the creature distinctive canine features.

“I am only a simple traveler!” Lucien cries, struggling a little.

“Get up!” It says, wiping the mud off of the boy’s face and pulling him up by his hair. The creature’s partner relinquishes his hold of Lucien, allowing him to stand. It regards him with distrust, asking, “A simple traveler, eh? What shall we do with him, Captain?”

“According to our orders,” says the other creature contemplatively, “We are to spare any person who does not mean us harm.”

He looks over Lucien for a short while, then simply states, “You are just a boy. However, we cannot allow you to leave.”

-9-

They walk a good distance, whereupon they encounter a long procession of people. “Are these your companions?” Lucien asks quietly.

Ignoring him, his captors continue walking. Eventually, the Captain lets out a long howl, an animalistic cry. This continues for awhile, until Lucien can hear the faint howling reply of another creature in the distance.

Pushing him forward, Lucien and his captors join the huge crowd. It seems as if every one of the creatures wears the same armor, and all of them carry the same long spear. Each person also carries some sort of baggage on their shoulder. Some even carry children, who have been placed in special carrying bags.

The group seems to be divided into several neat lines, like a military procession. However, along the sides are the older children, wearing simple clothing, looking somewhat like refugees.

“Sentinels 6th Squad leader reporting. We have found an unknown person.”

The captain pushes Lucien forward before his superior, who has materialized from the crowd. This new creature possesses the same canine features as Lucien’s captors, but for some reason it is clearly different than the rest of the marching soldiers. It even wears the same armor as all the rest.. perhaps it is something about its face that sets it apart.

“He said he was a simple traveler, but,” the captain trails off.

“So..?” Rain says, “I shall try asking.”

With that, she grasps the rope that holds Lucien, and pulls him away from the group.

“Traveler, from now on you must act appropriately if you wish to live. Until I ask you to speak, you will not open your mouth. And you must show your subordination to me by covering your left eye in my presence. Be grateful for my magnanimity.”

“I understand,” Lucien whispers.

Lucien and Zyn stand before Rain. They both salute her, and Lucien kneels before her.

“Show your face,” Rain says, emotionlessly watching the youth.

Lucien returned her gaze. Though he is frightened by her eyes, which are full of bloodthirsty animal instinct, he does not show his fear.

“Where are you from, traveler? You must come from somewhere.”

“Ma’am..” Lucien tries to speak, but he cannot get the words to come out. His foot trembles slightly.

“It is alright that you are frightened. But I have asked you about your home. Tell me.”

As honestly and politely as he is able to, Lucien answers, “I am from.. outside this world. I am now meeting you, but I must continue heading west.”

Rain contemplates his words for awhile, then asks, “Where is this “outside world”? And what are you seeking out west?”

She laughs suddenly, then begins to speak with growing agitation, “That sword of yours, it belonged to a legendary swordsman, one who existed a long time ago.”

Lucien, shaking with fear, cannot bring himself to speak.

Without warning Rain leaps forward, grabbing Lucien’s chest. She bares her fangs in his face, and begins to bark wildly.

“You don’t know what you’re looking for? How funny! That swordsman killed the God of the wilderness with that sword, you see!”

With one motion she cuts Lucien's restraining rope, and throws it aside. He falls on his hands and knees, unable to move.

He hears a metallic clanging in front of him. Glancing up, he sees the weapon lying on the ground.

“Your sword,” Rain shouts, an insane smile on her face, “Pick it up. Now!”

-10-

Zyn shakes his head.

“I don’t think he will be able to fight you.”

“Hahahaha!! I will kill him otherwise,” Rain laughs, “Would you like to die, boy?”

Lucien, resigned to his fate, picks up his sword.

“Prove that sword’s worth, by running me through with it!” Rain cries, swinging her double-bladed weapon straight at Lucien.

With an expert motion, the boy catches the impact and deflects Rain’s attack deftly.

“Interesting!!” She shouts, preparing for another attack. She charges at Lucien, mud spraying in every direction.

The youth quickly removes the gun from his belt and fires it at Rain; the force of the blast hits her weapon and throws her off balance.

With a scream of frustration, she retreats a short distance and glares at Lucien.

“What was that..? Such a strange technique..!” Rain mutters.

However, the fight ends there. Lucien, unaccustomed to combat, suddenly falls to his knees, unable to act.

Taking advantage of his momentary weakness, Rain dashes forward and grabs the boy by the neck. Instead of killing him, she strikes him a sound blow to the head, and he immediately falls unconscious.

Having placed the boy into one of the carts, Rikk and his subordinates search his belongings carefully. They are unable to locate the strange weapon the boy had used, and strangely they cannot open the bag he held on his waist.

Rikk strains to open it, pulling on it with as much strength as he can muster. In frustration, he attempts to beat it against the ground and pierce it with his spear. But his immense physical strength proves useless, as the bag simply refuses to open.

“Dammit!! Damn this stupid thing!”

Bristling with resentment, Quad approaches his subordinate. “Fool. You may be strong, but you lack even basic intelligence.”

With this he snatches the bag out of Rikk’s hands and locates the small clasp on the side of the bag. “Here. This is what you should have seen, but did not.”

With sudden fear, Rikk steps back. “Keep that away from me, it’s a cursed bag! I’ve heard it is full of magic and demons.. I don’t want it.”

“Sentinels 5th Squadron will keep this. We will also watch over the sword.” Quad says calmly, departing with Lucien’s bag and heading back to the front of the Shigu procession.

“And it is my duty to watch over this silly thing,” Rikk grumbles, poking the sleeping form of Lucien.

-11-

It is now nighttime, and the Shigu are still on the move.

Lucien stirs in his cart, finally waking from oblivion. His hands and feet are bound, and he immediately wonders where his bag and sword have gone.

“Please,” he shouts, “return my bag!”

Rikk, surprised, turns to face the youth.

“Oh, it is awake now? Go back to sleep, boy. We are almost at the rest area.”

“Please, you do not understand! Think how you would feel if you forgot yourself! I cannot let that happen to me!” Lucien yells desperately.

Rikk, not able to comprehend this nonsense, ignores his pleas.

Eventually the procession halts, and the entire group places itself in the formation that it had held before the march began. General Rain stands at the head of the group. Periodically, the individual Sentinel Squadron leaders (including Rikk) walk forward to report to the general, greeting her with the customary salute.

While this is occurring, Zyn walks toward Lucien.

“We have your possessions. Rain desires your presence. Come now.” He ties another restraining rope around Lucien, then removes the bindings from his hands and feet.

They then walk toward the general.

The surrounding soldiers maintain their fixed positions, but they are in a much more relaxed state now. They speak with their neighbors, and groom their fur.

In the pitch-dark, Rain surveys the surrounding hillocks. Her servants stand near her, already attending to her mane.

“Good evening, traveler.” She says to Lucien.

Zyn and the boy salute her, covering their left eyes, and then kneel before her.

“You caught my attack with your sword.. and my weapon is no ordinary one. It is the only one of its kind in this world, and it was made by the best smiths Vilous has ever seen. There is nothing that cannot be cut by the blade of my lance, but somehow..”

Rain’s eyes become narrowed, and she stares questioningly at the boy. “Then, there was that light.. the light that came from your hand..”

Lucien, after some reflection, answers her.

“It is from outside this world.. that weapon.. it creates a sort of “special thunder”, but only I can use it. If you were to take it from me, you would not be able to use it.”

Rain shakes her head angrily.

“What is this “outside world? What are you doing here, and why do you wish to head west? There is nothing there.”

Lucien bows his head a little, then answers, “Even I do not understand the full details. However, I know that if I do not go, this world will die. This is inevitable.

With your power, the path to the west will be easily traversable, if you will allow me to accompany you.”

With this, Rain slowly walks to where Lucien stands. She stoops down and stares directly into his eyes, the tip of her nose so close that the boy can feel her warm breath on his face.

“..It is a strange thing,” Rain says quietly, “I do not smell the stench of death or blood on you.”

Lucien suddenly feels his consciousness slip away, if only for a brief moment. He awakes with a start, and finds both of his hands resting on Rain’s face.

“Traveler..?”

“Ah.. well! I am sorry.. please forgive me!” Lucien stammers, surprised, quickly pulling his hands away.

Rain dismisses the event as another one of the boy’s strange qualities, and proceeds in a business-like fashion.

“As for your name,” she inquires, “what are you called, boy?”

“I am known as Lucien Calcatto.” The youth answers, suddenly trembling, for a strange feeling had filled him.

“Well, Lucien.. as regrettable as it is, I have no reason to kill you at this time,” Rain nods to the boy, and began to walk away.

Lucien, suddenly remembering, calls out to the general, “Wait, I have a request. Please return my bag. It is alright if you do not wish to return my sword, but I must have my bag.”

-12-

“Return my bag.”

Rain looks into Lucien’s eyes emotionlessly.

She makes a slight motion to Zyn with her sharp-nailed fingers. Saluting, he disappears into the crowd of soldiers.

“What do you use the bag for?” Rain asks, “My subordinate could not open it with brute force, as if it were made of some sort of metal. What is it made of?”

“I don’t think I will be able to explain it in such a way that you will understand. But..” Lucien trails off.

“But.. what do you use it for?”

“My memories are in that bag. It is where I keep my notes.. “

“What sort of notes?”

“It is a book.. ah.. a place where I write notes to myself.”

He was becoming desperate, finding it oddly difficult to explain it.

Zyn reappears, and after saluting the general, hands the bag to Lucien. “Here it is, you open it,” Zyn says, a little timidly.

“Open it quickly,” Rain commands.

Lucien fumbles with the metal clasp, then pulls the bag open.

The general nods.

“Have you removed the magic upon it? Zyn.. take it.”

Zyn takes the bag, and holds it upside down, pouring its contents on the ground.

Rain stands up slowly, and walks over to the pile.

“What is this?” She asks, picking up what looked like a metallic cylinder.

“Hmm, Augh!”

Having examined the small object, Rain had located and pressed a small button on its side, causing it to emit a powerful light directly into her eyes.

She had cast it away from her, yet as it rolled across the ground it continues to shine its white light.

“It is the light I use for writing. Also, when it is dark, I can use it to avoid any, dangers.”

Rain walks over to the light and picks it up again, shining it all around her, ending on Lucien.

“It is painful to the eyes,” She comments, “When it gets lighter.. is it still visible?”

Lucien shakes his head. “No. As the sun rises, it becomes more difficult to see the light.”

Moving on, Rain points at another one of the boy’s belongings. “What is that?”

It is what appears to be a long stick.

“Well.. this is a special knife,” he says, “It is not only a knife.. it also has tools..”

He demonstrates by folding out several different things from it.

“I see..,” says Rain, “Now.. where do you write your notes?”

Quickly shuffling through the pile of his belongings, Lucien locates his journal and the pen he uses for writing.

He sits on the ground and places his light in such a way that his journal is illuminated. “See? I write in this book, with this pen. Like this.”

“Show me one of your old notes,” Rain asks, “I am interested.”

Lucien flips to the first pages of the book, revealing an entry that he had forgotten he had even written.

Rain leans over him and attempts to read what the boy had written, but she cannot make out his script. Zyn, too, is unable to understand whatever the boy had scribbled on the page.

-13-

“What sort of language is that? I can’t read it at all.”

Rain continues to stare at the writing, but quickly gives up.

Slowly she returns to her original position, and sits down. Her servants continue their grooming, Nerushiruta attending to her mane, and Havika grooming the rest of her fur.

“Well.. you should be able to read it. Look at it, boy.”

“I think it’s about the sword..,” Lucien says, looking it over, “At least.. I assume. I will read it to you.”

-- Vilous is a dangerous place. If you encounter an enemy, use your sword and you should be victorious. The yellow part on the handle can be turned to release a powerful electric current. Whatever you hit should fall unconscious or die after a single blow.

You also possess the stun gun from outside the world, which will probably save your life if you are cornered. However, remember to turn it off before you place it back into your belt. –

“Well.. it seems it was written while I was outside this world.”

“Interesting. The gun.. is that what caused that impact? The strong light you used in combat?”



“It was. It fires small invisible particles, which can hit an object with tremendous strength.”

Rain continues to interrogate the boy, intrigued by this. “I did not faint when I was hit by it. Why is this?”

“Well.. I believe it is probably because your armor does not conduct an electric current.”

“How fortuitous.”

Zyn begins to question the boy. “You say you are from ‘outside the world’? What sort of relationship does the outside world have with the west? I have been in that area, and I have never heard of such a place as an ‘outside world.’”

Lucien thinks a little, then speaks, “It is difficult for a person of this world to comprehend. There is a sort of.. wall.. that is not visible. It is possible to tear it and pass through.”

“How does it work? This wall?”

“All I know is that if it breaks again, I will not be able to reach the west, and I will not be able to complete my mission.”

Lucien is surprised that this particular memory is still entirely certain in his mind, yet he finds it so difficult to explain. He can feel the beginnings of a headache coming on.

-14-

-- There are things in every world that the people have recognized as normal; they are rooted in normalcy and common sense. If one tries to think subjectively, they become frightened; scared of the unknown.

It is natural for someone to create their own truth, even if it is influenced by the thoughts of another person.

However, I should not think about this too much.. it is a waste of time.

I look over my old notes, and I feel slightly disturbed. I have the strange notion that I have created this “Vilous”; that it is a mere figment of my mind.

But I do not know this, and I do not believe it. This place is very important, and I must protect it no matter what, but still these thoughts remain in my head.

My duty should be clear in my heart. But my doubts remain carved into my mind.. like instinct. -

It is a cold, almost noiseless morning. The only sound is that of Zyn’s instrument, which resonates beautifully in the perfectly clear conditions.

Lucien opens his eyes slowly, and sits up from his position between the soldiers’ baggage. Even after sleeping, he is still exhausted.

All around him the others are stirring and standing up.

“It is time. General Rain has decided to trouble us with further movement,” Rikk says, shouldering the sack Lucien had used for a pillow. “As for you, Rain seems to like you, so we probably won’t kill you, maybe.”

While Rikk leers at the boy with his fangs, Quad strides over and kicks him in the shin. “It is time for roll-call, idiot. Get in line!”

He continues to walk down the row of soldiers, ordering them into place. Eventually he begins to call names.

“Chi!”

“Sir!”

“Roku!”

“Sir!”

Suddenly, Zyn appears and grabs Lucien by the hand, pulling him near the front of the lines.

After preparations have been completed, General Rain, who stands in front of Lucien, lets out a long howl. This signals the start of the army’s advance, as the crowd begins to march across the grassy field.

Their legs are long, and the sergals walk rather quick. It is difficult for Lucien to maintain their quick pace, and he finds himself performing a sort of dogtrot in order to keep up. Zyn, next to him, must do the same.

It is quite an interesting occasion for the boy.

The wind blows through Rain’s mane.

“So.. what’s going to happen to me now?” Lucien whispers to Zyn as they walk.

In a low voice, he answers, “Rain finds you.. interesting.”

Zyn thinks a little longer, then continues.

“Rain’s eye is infallible. At one point a Reono spy with dyed fur attempted to infiltrate our ranks, and she knew almost immediately. Her ability to judge a person’s character is incredible. Why there was one incident where someone was stealing from the larder.. Rain claimed she knew which one, and we checked the soldiers’ belongings, interestingly enough..”

Lucien stares at the general’s back, not really paying attention any more.

“Our army is rather large, you see,” Zyn is saying, “We have people from all over the continent.. quite impressive, I must say.” An unusually proud expression had appeared on his face.

They had been walking for many rekusu. The army had entered a region where the gentle sloping bases of the Ribenku mountains mixed with the flat ground of the plains.

The Sailzane desert lies to the west, with the mountain range curving around its borders.

Quad and his squadron of Sentinels had gone ahead to forage for fruit and small game.

All of the soldiers walk with bare feet; the sergals possess strong soles and long nails, which can easily grasp the wet earth.

However, Lucien and his shoes are becoming rather dirty while he wades through the shallow mud and sand.

Suddenly, Rain turns to the boy and speaks, “We will come upon a village soon.. our first encounter with the enemy; a small village of sergals. They have armed everyone regardless of age. Perhaps your sword can take care of them for us, eh?”

Lucien is surprised.

Was she already relying on him, or was this her idea of a joke?

“But I am a captive, you want me to fight?”

“You are competent. To a certain extent I can recognize a person possessing superior skill. Haha.. it is funny to say that.”

A cool smile plays across her face.

“How is that funny?” Lucien thinks to himself.

Zyn, as usual, is regarding the horizon with a cold, hardened expression.

“Concerning food.. we can eat raw meat. That is the one of the only things we can eat, in fact. But like the old elves or Agudona, are you only capable of eating bread and rice?”

Rain is interested in this particular point as well, joining the conversation.

“Rice.. it is boiled, correct?”

Lucien stretches out his arms, answering, “Yes.. but when you mention rice, you are referring to the white grain plant?”

“I am not entirely sure, as I have never eaten it, but..,” Rain shakes her head, and continues, “Perhaps the fruit Quad has gathered will provide you with sufficient sustenance.”

It is difficult for Lucien to think about what had occurred at the camp. The “raw meat” had, in fact, been a captive from the village they were now marching toward. A small child, a sergal child, had been captured by Rain and brought to the soldiers. It was a spectacle beyond Lucien’s reckoning.

After the child’s execution, the soldiers had set upon the body like animals, tearing off its still-warm flesh.

“I do not meant to criticize, but.. I do not find your food to be particularly appetizing.” Lucien says to Rain casually.

She knows what he is referring to.

“It is simply our custom. Even though they are of our blood.. it is beneficial to the war effort.”

Zyn leans close to Lucien and whispers, “It is Rain’s way. While it is harsh .. it must be done.”

“I suppose it works..,” the youth answers, nauseated, yet slightly impressed with the general’s use of psychological warfare.

Rain pierces him with her gaze, but he simply returns it with an emotionless expression.

-16-

After a little more walking, the faint outline of the small village becomes visible in the distance, obscured somewhat by a blanket of fog that has fallen.

Rikk, along with another soldier from the Sentinels 6th Squadron, has returned after conducting reconnaissance.

“Ma’am! They are already aware of our presence. It appears that they are all armed and waiting for our arrival.. however, the defending force is very small, and does not appear overtly threatening.”

Rain smiles coldly. “Hahaha, so these people are wearing their armor? They are not hiding in fear, their tails between their legs? This should be interesting..!”

Lucien glances at the general, who looks very much like an enormous demon.

Just the sight of her sends shivers of fear down the boy’s spine.

Her eyes are wide and shining, as if they already see the pitiful enemies she will soon slaughter.

Her mouth is slightly open, and threads of saliva hang from her jaws, like a cat waiting in anticipation for a particularly delicious meal.

The entire Shigu army encircles the small village, and in one instant, rushes in to destroy the town.

With great force, one Sentinels squadron cuts directly into the defending party. The Shigu are professional front line fighters, and the enemy does not have a chance against them. They soon crumble and fall back to more defensible positions, in a courageous attempt to save their humble village.

Rain, meanwhile, walks slowly and quietly, cutting down and throwing her enemies aside in an almost nonchalant fashion.

She stands at over two meters tall, and is rather imposing on the battlefield. With one swing she slices through any opposing soldiers, and in the next moment they collapse in pieces, spewing blood. Eventually, any enemy she comes across simply flees from her presence, as a battle with her meant certain doom.

Rain, appearing almost entirely emotionless, enters the nesting area of the village. Lucien does not know what she is doing, but he continues to follow her. He has not yet drawn his sword.

As she ducks into the small building, the youth can no longer contain his curiosity.

“What are you doing?”

“Be quiet. You will see.”

She pushes Lucien aside, and orders her personal guard to leave her and continue the sweep of the enemy outside.

After this, she locates a small dresser and opens the second drawer from the top, then proceeds to shove her head inside.

Lucien, still not understanding what is happening, says nothing. He had decided to heed Rain and simply watch.

After a moment, the general emerges, a small creature in her jaws.

Lucien knows he had seen one before.. then realizes it was another sergal child.. this one merely an infant.

Rain, still holding the child, exits the nesting area, and runs toward the west side of the village, where the remnants of the enemy attempt to fight off the Shigu.

All of the survivors are fearful of Rain, but on seeing her presence, they ready their weapons and wait to find out her intentions.

Approaching the gathered soldiers, Rain lifts the child by the scruff of its neck and displays it to them.

Suddenly one soldier breaks from the pack, and comes running out toward the general. “Stop!! Return my child, you monster!!”

Rain simply laughs with disdain, regarding the female soldier with a look of disgust.

“What is this I’m hearing? You want me to give back your child,? Perhaps.. if you kill me!!”

The child, seeing its mother, desperately calls out to her, its fragile voice increasing in intensity and fear.

“What could killing this child possibly accomplish?” Lucien thinks to himself.

To emphasize her point, Rain grasps the child roughly and rips out some of its fur, which causes it to howl in pain.

The mother goes into a frenzy, releasing a long and extremely loud scream of fury. She is not the only one enraged by the general’s actions. The leader of the small group bares his fangs and glares at Rain.

“How can you act so playfully!! Only animals could be so heartless, how can you even consider yourself a person?! How could you torture a child!!”

It seems that Rain’s plan to crush the enemy’s fighting spirit has failed, and instead has provoked them into an incredible rage. Almost immediately the remnants of the defense group rushes at the lone general. Leaping to her defense, Lucien draws his sword and readies his gun, preparing for combat.

The enemy troop rushed toward the general, howling ferociously.

Two of the leading soldiers dashed toward Rain, attacking from both sides. She might have been killed if Lucien had not rushed in, thrusting his sword deep into the back of one soldier. The large warrior screamed loudly, the powerful electric current pulsing through his body, killing him immediately.

Meanwhile, Rain had thrown her captive to the ground, attempting to shift to a more defensive stance.

Lucien shouted, "Look, he's coming your way!"

Already another enemy was charging toward Rain, weapon poised to strike.

Reacting quickly, Lucien deftly caught the attack, and followed through with a blow to the soldier's chest, who convulsed and fell to his knees, killed instantly.

Leaving Rain to her own devices, Lucien turned towards the fallen juvenile.

"Are you all right?" Lucien asked the young sergal, extending his hand.

The child looked into the boy's face and whispered, "Ah, thank you, it's too bad my mother couldn't help me." His eyes closed, and he stopped moving.

Lucien, worried, shook the boy. The child's eyes opened again, slowly.

"It's noisy. We're all going to die, don't you think? We're all corpses." With this, he stopped moving, for the last time.

Lucien heard the movements of the remaining enemies behind him, and spun around to face them. Several of them were charging simultaneously, their halberds ready to strike.

"Who are you?! Why are you helping this demon?"

"I have never seen his kind before, but he has raised his weapon against us! Destroy him while he's distracted!"

Lucien readied his sword, as four sergals rushed him from different directions. He quickly thrusts his sword into the ground. A flash of white lightning burst forth from it, blowing dirt and debris high into the air. When the dust settled, the soldiers fell to the ground, their eyes rolled back into their skulls.

Hoping to avoid future conflict, Lucien quickly retreated in the direction of Rain.

Rain, having regained her composure, was engaged in combat. At that moment her spear was implanted into the chest of one of the defenders. She shook her weapon, pulling it free, releasing a torrent of blood from her defeated adversary.

Lucien watched as she grasped the tail of her dead foe, and began to swing the corpse around.

"It ends already? And you thought you'd be able to kill me?! Aahahaaha!!"

Surveying the battlefield, Lucien noticed a lone survivor, a young male soldier whose mane had not yet grown, or perhaps had been cut on purpose.

Rain saw him too, shouting, "Everyone has been killed! And now, you will die as well!"

The boy desperately rushed at her with his spear. But he held it awkwardly, and Rain simply grabbed the shaft of the weapon. She shook it violently, disarming the young soldier.

Her tongue lolling almost playfully from her mouth, Rain grabbed the boy and pulled him to his feet with one hand.

She barked, "It is almost time for another death! I will kill you, eventually!"

Rain saw tears roll from the young boy's eyes, and ran her tongue across his face.

"Why, it has such a lovely face.. I do so love children."

She then grasped the neck of the soldier, and lifted him closer to her face, where she could lick his nose more easily.

The general noticed Lucien out of the corner of her eye. "Ah. It is time. Let us help with the clean-up."

With this, she dragged the captured sergal behind her, passing the empty nesting buildings.

The boy followed.

\*\*\*

The village had been wiped out. All of the corpses were pushed into a single pile. Lucien estimated that roughly 300 people had been murdered. He watched as the corpses were cut up, the meat distributed throughout the ranks of the Shigu force. It was a strange spectacle; to watch members of the same species consume one another, bound by tradition.

"Traveler." Quad called to the boy, "You should eat, fruit cannot provide all the sustenance you need."

Lucien hesitated. "Well,"

He did not want to eat it. To him, even though these creatures were not like him, they still walked on two legs, and had all the qualities of normal people. He did not want to consume something that he could relate to in such a manner.

Quad handed the boy a piece of the raw flesh.

"Come on. This seems like the meat of one of the young ones, it's pretty good."

Lucien watched as Quad voraciously consumed the hunk of meat he was still holding.

Feeling a little queasy, the boy bit off a piece. It tasted a little like the frogs he had consumed recently in the swamp; yet he still felt guilty eating it. However, he knew that if he was going to travel with Rain, he would need to become accustomed to their society.

Ignoring his moral qualms, Lucien stuffed the rest of the meat into his mouth.

Hours later, after gorging themselves on raw meat, the victorious Shigu soldiers lay about in a relaxed fashion. Some groomed each other's fur, while others told stories. It would have been difficult to tell that a battle had taken place only a short time before.

Rain appeared before Lucien, her mouth and chest dyed deep red. She sat next to the boy, inclining her head in his direction.

"Did you eat the meat? That boy tasted extraordinarily good."

Lucien glanced up at Rain, observing the blood that soaked her fur.

"Why are you here?," he asked, "What is your reason for fighting?"

"Hahaha.. what a silly question. But I suppose I'll be able to explain it.. with a funny story."

[--- And so, General Rain told the story to me. ]

<< "In ancient times, before the world was born, the sky was black, and inlaid upon it was a multitude of brilliant stars. 100,010,000 worlds, glittering in the void. Eventually came the young God Vilous, who used his power to gather the hundred million stars, condensing them in his hands to form a white shining ball. With this he crafted the sun and the water and the land. He then gathered the remaining ten thousand stars, and with these he created the first plants and animals.

Deciding that he must continue his journey across the cosmos, Vilous commanded the sun to watch over this new world.

And the sun gifted a saintly sword to the planet below, which descended to the surface in the hands of an angelic swordsman with golden eyes.

The holy sword inspired life across the plains of the young world.

It created new creatures to populate it, one after another, and spread tranquility and peace throughout the globe.

But the ancestor of the sergal family, Shigu, saw the sword, and grew hungry for its power.

After tricking and murdering the divine golden-eyed protector of the weapon, the sergal grasped the handle and attempted to wield it.

However, the instant Shigu laid his hand upon it, the sun suddenly disappeared from the sky, casting everything into darkness.

Suddenly, a strong light was cast upon Shigu, casting a shadow that was blacker than the darkness of outer space.

The shadow soon began to move, shifting into a strange animalistic shape. Shigu, too, transformed, mimicking his shadow. He stood on all four legs, and his fangs had grown longer and sharper.

From the darkness, the hidden sun called out to the changed sergal.



“Shigu. Your crime cannot be forgiven. For eternity, you and your kind will be cursed with bloodshed and war.”

As for the dead swordsman, his body transformed into three animals. His wings, eyes, and mind each became a different creature, and each respective animal returned to the sky and the wilderness and the forest. The power of the dead god had been split into three, and the three holy objects of Vilous were born. The creator was dead, but his spirit lived on in the world he had constructed. >>

[-- I remembered a note I had written about this “dead God of the wilderness.” Rain was one of these “holy objects”, and I was to accompany her toward the west. And I recalled another note, stating, “When the three holy objects become one, the son of the sun shall be reborn.” Was this my purpose? ]

“Lucien, I hope you understood my story?”

The boy nodded.

“Ah.. yes. In other words you are obliged to fight, because as a descendant of Shigu you must battle the dark shadows of your past.”

“That is correct. We have fought against the southern Sergal since ancient times. But once they are gone, the curse should be lifted. This “eternal punishment” must be a deception, and I will prove it. And if I am one of the three holy objects, and I eat the other two, I will have all three powers at my command!”

Rain let out a loud laugh.

Oddly, despite her violent temperament and seemingly endless thirst for blood, Lucien could not help but notice somewhere in the general’s face a certain purity, like the spirit of a young girl. He felt the strange feeling coming over him once more. Meanwhile, Rain’s twin servants had materialized by her side, and began grooming her fur, removing the red bloodstains with their tongues.

“Lucien, tomorrow will come early. It would be best for you to get some sleep.”

The boy nodded, and walked back to where his thin blanket laid on the ground. In the distance, he could hear Rain telling her servants about the boy that had been eaten earlier, and how delicious he had tasted.

---

The further adventures of The Brutal General and her companions are relatively unknown

Credits:

Original story by: trancy.mick (current nick is mick39)

Translation by: bash\*

Editing and spellchecking by: Opposite\_ends

Further editing by: BeakieHelmet