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Story by Paul Michaels

I Got Isekai'd! Well Shyt!

Chapter 168 This is your Punishment.

The group of three made their way back to the camp to find all the Royal Knights surrounding Johnathan. Sir George was giving him a death stare and looked like he was ready to behead him. There were three of the bodyguards who didn't know what to do as they had their hands on their weapons, but they didn't seem to have the willpower to pull them out.

"What is going on here?" Quinus asked as he stepped forward.

Johnathan looked up in shock then it turned into dumbfoundedness. He couldn't believe that all of them came out alive. All the Knights looked relieved as they saw the Prince.

Sir Mathew was the first to walk over, "Your Highness! Are you all okay?"

"Well, we had some close calls, but we came out almost unscathed," Quinus answered.

"Almost?" Sir George said with anger in his voice as he put a blade to Johnathan's neck.

"Gah!" Johnathan tried to move away, but the Royal Knights were all around him.

"Stand down! The Prince is fine, and so are the Young Master's friends," Ronin yelled out to George.

"Tsk! I don't know why we gave any of you three an antidote for the poison. When we should have just put you all out of your misery for protecting a traitor!" Sir George hollered back.

"We will not go clawing back to our Lord with the death of his son. So, you can take your threats and shove it!" Ronin yelled back.

"Enough!" Quinus shouted.

Everyone went quiet.

"What happened while we were in the Labyrinth?" Quinus asked.

Sir Mathew took a breath and calmed himself, "Assassins attacked us... The boys' bodyguards are all dead with the expectation of these three who belong to this boy."

Quinus didn't know how to react at first. He thought for a moment.

"Do we know who they were targeting?" Quinus asked.

Sir Mathew looked at Wina and she gave him a nod.

Mathew sighed, "Yes, Your Highness... We know who their main target was."

"Who is it that they were after?" Quinus asked.

"I would rather tell you in private, Your Highness," Sir Mathew said with a straight face.

'Huh? Then they weren't targeting me? Then they weren't a part of Johnathan's or my cousin's plan to kill me... What in the world is going on?' Quinus thought to himself.

"Is this information I need to know now or can it wait until we are back at the palace?"

"It will be better to wait, my Lord."

"Fine... Then I need to judge Johnathan for his actions and pass down a punishment," Quinus turned to Johnathan who was trying not to panic.

"J-Judgement? What are you talking about, Prince Quinus? Don't I get a fair trial?"

"I'm the Crown Prince who has passed the trials... But I don't think you have, Johnathan..."

"Of course I have... I just haven't seen the Keeper yet!"

"And he won't show up... That's because you lost your ether crystal," Quinus said in a cold voice.

"I-I didn't lose anything! And I can prove it!" Johnathan yelled back.

"Then show me the proof," Quinus demanded.

"I can't. Not when I have a sword to my neck," Johnathan looked over at Sir George.

George glared back and was getting ready to say something.

"Sir George... Let him show us the proof... But keep your eyes on him." Quinus commanded with a calm voice.

Sir George grunted, "Fine. But the moment you try something, I will strike you down, boy."

"I-I don't need you to repeat yourself," Johnathan was sweating profusely as he tried to pull out the pouch from his belt.

'He's going to panic once he can't find the crystal...' Quinus thought to himself as he braced for the inevitable.

Johnathan opened the pouch and reached inside while staring daggers at Quinus. He was trying to be intimidating. But his eyes quickly changed from anger to surprise, confusion, and finally fear as his hand started to move around faster inside the pouch. He was desperately searching for the ether crystal.

"No, No, No. This can't be happening," Johnathan said under his breath.

"Have you found it yet?" Quinus asked.

"I-It should be in here. Where could it have gone?" Johnathan started to look more panicked as he dumped the pouch's contents out but to his dread, there was no crystal.

"W-Where is it? I had it before we left the Labyrinth," Johnathan was frantically looking around for it.

"You dropped it, Johnathan... I saw it happen when you ran around me and blasted all three of us into the portal trap. We were lucky that I was able to kill the monster before it could find Geralt and Thomas... That's why Geralt is covered in Cyclops's crap." Quinus said his partial truth.

All three bodyguards unsheathed their weapons and glared at the prince and his knights. They didn't look like they wanted to fight, but they feared they might need to.

"I warn you... If you dare try to kill Lord Bluewood's son. We will do everything we can to protect h-

"STAND DOWN!" Quinus yelled at Ronin and his two comrades. His golden eyes seemed to glow with power when he glared at them.

The three didn't dare to take a step forward as they felt an immense amount of fear. Making it feel hard to breathe.

Quinus glare softened and he spoke calmly, "I have every right to pass judgment. You can't deny that."

Ronin took a breath and said, "You're right, Your Highness... But we can't-"

Quinus held up his hand to signal for them to be quiet, "It's fine. I know where you stand. And I will judge him fairly. As the law states."

The three bodyguards put their weapons away, but they didn't lower their guard.

Quinus looked at Johnathan who was panicking more than ever. Now that his guards couldn't save him.

Quinus walked closer to him as did three of his knights.

"Tell me the truth, Johnathan... Why did you do it?"

Johnathan's breathing was fast and short.

"It-it's not what you think! It was an accident!... Geralt! Tell him it was a misunderstanding!"

Geralt was pissed, "It was a misunderstanding!? Are you joking!? This misunderstanding caused me to run for my life in pitch darkness... All so you can kill the prince? No, John... I thought you were being a jerk but now I know you're a monster! If it was me? I would have never tried to kill a friend! Let alone the Crown Prince!... You're lucky that the Prince saved my life as well as Thomas'. You're the worst friend ever!"

"Geralt..." Johnathan was stunned, "T-Thomas! T-Tell him that-"

"Not happening, John... This is on you." Thomas didn't even look at him.

Johnathan was losing it, "I-It's not what you think! P-please listen to m-"

"Then tell me. Tell me everything... Was it you, or someone else who hired those assassins? What was your father planning?" Quinus ordered.

"My father is a good man! He has no ill will toward you! And I have nothing to do with the assassins! You have to believe me! It's a misunderstanding!" Johnathan was trying to tell everyone the only true thing. He didn't have anything to do with the assassins.

"A misunderstanding?" Geralt was losing his patience, "You used your water magic on us to let a monster do the dirty work!... How was that a misunderstanding?"

Johnathan looked like he was about to have a panic attack, "N-No! I was talking about the assassins! You have to believe me! You have to understand!... It was... It... was..."

He finally concluded that Marcus had played him from the start, like a pawn. He didn't know why he was trying to protect him, but he knew that if he didn't, his own life would be at risk.

"It was Marcus..." Johnathan whispered.

"I didn't catch that. What did you say?" Quinus asked.

Johnathan took a breath and said, "It was Marcus! Marcus Revelia was the one who told me to push you into the portal. I knew that led to a room that had a monster in it! He gave me a map and everything!"

Quinus could see this ten-year-old boy was beginning to tear up.

'Haah... I knew it... When will Marcus stop with the bullshit! Someday... I'll have to kill him...'
Quinus thought as he shook his head.

"Was it for money or something?" Quinus asked.

Johnathan hesitated, but he couldn't hide anymore, "H-He was going to make my life a living hell at the academy... I-I didn't want to do it... I didn't know how far he would go to torment me... I'm sorry..."

"And you didn't think to come to me with this?"

"He said he would become the next heir... and if I didn't help him, then he would ruin my family and everything I cared about... I'm sorry..."

The anger in Quinus's heart was starting to fade but he didn't want to show it.

'Haah... How the fuck am I going to solve this?'

"What will be your judgment, Your Highness?" Sir Mathew asked.

Quinus took a second to think, "Can I have a sword please?"

Sir Mathew nodded to Sir Andrew and he handed his sword over to the prince. Quinus took the sword before walking closer to Johnathan. Once he was three feet away from this scared boy. He stopped and looked back at the knights and then the bodyguards who were conflicted on what they should do.

'What's the right thing to do...?' Quinus thought before looking down at the boy who was on all fours. Looking like a lost child.

"Are you ready for your judgment, Johnathan Bluewood? Son of James Bluewood."

"Y-yes..." Johnathan whimpered out as he lowered his head.

Quinus lifted the sword and started swinging it around with a quickness and precision that even a knight would have trouble keeping up with. Johnathan didn't have time to react as he felt the wind of the blade.

*Swing! Swing! Swing!"

The sword was inches away from cutting Johnathan. And for a few seconds, Johnathan didn't know what was going on. He opened his eyes to witness all of his brown curly hair was cut and lying on the ground.

Quinus handed the sword back to Sir Andrew.

"I have given you your punishment," Quinus said.

"H-Huh?" Johnathan looked around and then back up to Quinus.

"You can go home now."

"H-Home?" Johnathan didn't know what to believe.

"My Lord? Is that such a wise idea?" Sir George asked.

"You have your orders, Sir George."

"B-but..." Sir George couldn't finish his sentence as Quinus continued.

"I'm letting you go, Johnathan. But let your shaven head remind you. That you were judged by the Crown Prince."

Johnathan was still shocked, but he nodded, "I-I understand..."

"Good. Then, I want you and your bodyguards to leave my sight immediately."

"Y-Yes, Your Highness," Johnathan got up and ran.

"But, My Lord! He might have lied about the assassins?" Sir George asked.

"He told me the truth, Sir George... Leave them," Quinus said with a sigh.

Sir George wanted to deal the death blow to that traitor but he held himself back, "Understood..."

Quinus looked back to the remaining knights.

"Let's start a funeral pyre for the fallen. Then, we are heading home."

"As you wish, Your Highness," The knights answered with a bow.

Thomas and Geralt walked up to the Prince.

"That... That was overly kind, Your Highness... Do you think it was wise to let John go free?" Geralt asked.

"I was going to kill him, Geralt... But then I realized he was a pawn... A pawn that failed to complete his mission. And now he has to worry about Marcus... He doesn't need me to pass a sentence on to him."

Geralt and Thomas nodded their heads.

"Then, what should we do now, Your Highness?" Thomas asked.

Quinus looked over to Wina.

"Lady Wina... Can you come here please?"

Wina was confused. She didn't know why the prince wanted to talk to her.

"Yes, my prince?" Wina said as she walked up to him.

"Thomas and Geralt lost their bodyguards, correct?"

"That's correct, my prince."

"Then we will need to give them new escorts. Who can we assign to them?"

"Well, I believe we can assign Andrew, Richard, Mitchell, and Carter to follow these boys."

"Good. They can have two each."

"You don't have to do this for us, Your Highness. We can-"

"It's not just for you two, Geralt. It's for your parents and me... If anything were to happen to either of you on your journey home. Then, I will have a guilty conscience... And I don't want my friends to get in trouble with my father or your parents."

Geralt and Thomas were stunned by Quinus's kindness.

"Now, let's help them with the funerals."

"Yes, Your Highness," Both the boys said in unison as they ran off.

"You've grown, my Prince," Wina said.

Quinus looked back at her.

"I don't feel like I've grown at all. But maybe going through life or death situations has changed me."

Wina smiled, "It makes me glad to know you'll be alright without me."

"Don't say that... You make it sound like you're leaving me," Quinus pouted.

Wina smiled, "Well, unfortunately... I must, my Prince."

"Huh?... What do you mean? Where are you going?"

"The assassins... They were after me, my Prince. And now I have to go."

Quinus felt a little panicked, "What? No, no. You're coming home with us, and then we will deal with them."

"There's no need, my Prince. I've been putting this off for far too long... I never told you this, but I was an assassin at one point."

Quinus was speechless at first, "But... You don't do that anymore. Right?"

"I was hired to kill you, but... I fell in love with Mathew and I couldn't betray you, my prince. And since I betrayed my former client. The Assassin's Society is coming for me and they won't stop until they have my head."

"W-wait. W-what do you mean?"

Wina smiled, "I have to fight my old shackles so I can be free, my Prince. It's a dangerous journey, but I have to go. Or else you and the others will be in danger."

"Then... I'm going with you!"

"You can't, my prince..."

"I can't have you fight an assassin's organization alone. You're not the only one who wants to be free."

Wina was pleasantly surprised at how much her Prince had grown.

"You've matured so much... But I can't allow you to put yourself in harm's way."

"But you will put yourself in harm's way?! And expect me to stay behind?"

"I won't be alone on this journey, my Prince. My husband will join me. He will be my protection."

Quinus was getting upset for reasons he didn't understand. He took a deep breath to calm himself down.

"Why? Why didn't you tell me before now? Were you afraid?"

"I'm still afraid, my Prince... But I don't want the people I care about to die because I was a coward."

'She's worried about me... But Mathew will be with her... And he better protect her or else...'

"I know what you're thinking, my Prince... He'll protect me... And he's the best man for the job... But I need you to do me a favor."

"Name it."

"When I'm on my journey, please watch over Percy for me... I love him, but I worry he's been listening to Sir George too much. I fear that he'll scare away his true love with that idiot's ideas."

Quinus couldn't help but laugh.

"Yes. Yes, I'll watch over Percy and make sure that he doesn't go down that dark path."

Wina smiled and hugged her prince and her breasts pressed firmly into Quinus's chest.

'Fuck! I missed these things! Goddess be damned! I was born too late! Mathew! You lucky son of a bitch! You better not fail her!' Quinus yelled inside his head as he enjoyed the warm embrace of his former wet nurse.

"Thank you, my prince. You and Mathew are two of the people who have saved me from myself. Please take care of yourselves. I will write to you when I can."

"You have my word. Just promise you'll return safe and sound."

"I can't guarantee that, but I will do everything I can."

'No problem! Let's just hug some more!' Quinus wanted to say it out loud, but he somehow held it in.

Then they released their hug and stood there. For one minute... Then two more minutes... Then three m-

"So, you're going to be sticking around for a bit longer?" Quinus asked awkwardly.

"Huh? OH! My apologies, my Prince. Me and Mathew will depart once we talk to your mother and father first. After we bring you back to the capital," Wina explained.

"Oh, thank goodness! I thought you were leaving right now. Ha hah... I feel a little awkward, now," Quinus said out loud as he was scratching the back of his head.

"You thought I was going to leave you right now, my Prince? Ha! How adorable," Wina laughed.

"I know! I know... Ha hah..." Quinus felt really awkward, but he was a little sad to let go of his second favorite woman.

Quinus stepped back from her, "I should go help the others. I will see you later."

"As you wish, my Prince."

Wina gave a slight bow before walking away.

Quinus sighed as he stood there. He was both relieved and disappointed at the same time.

"Wait? I forgot to ask her about who hired her in the first place?... Was it my cousin? No, he would have been too young."

Quinus stopped once it hit him that it was most likely his Uncle who hired Wina.

"Uncle... So, I'm gonna have to deal with you as well. I hope it's sooner rather than later. Haah... Why does everything need to be a pain in my ass."

"Talking to yourself again, Your Highness?" A voice called out.

Quinus turned and saw Lady Nelumbo standing about ten feet away.

"Huh? I thought you were on a mission?" Quinus was happy to see her, but also shocked.

"I was, but then I was in the neighborhood and stayed to aid Sir Mathew."

"You were around the neighborhood? What type of mission were you-" Quinus stopped himself when he realized it was her who brought Percy to the Labyrinth of Lost Souls.

'So, that's how Percy ended up in the labyrinth. I was wondering how the hell he got here. Well, it saved my ass for sure... Thank you, Lady Nelumbo.' Quinus smiled.

"So, are you planning on joining us for the trip back? Or are you heading somewhere else?" Quinus asked.

Lady Nelumbo glanced over to the entrance of the Labyrinth and smirked.

"I'll stay behind for a little bit."

Quinus shook his head, "Just get our friend once Thomas and Geralt leave. Alright."

Lady Nelumbo was impressed, "I'm glad you turned out to be the clever one."

Quinus smiled, "Not the smartest one?"

"You need some more time before I'll admit that. Maybe a few more years... Then we'll see," Lady Nelumbo laughed.

"Haha... Alright, well, I'll help with moving the dead."

"Yes, I'll keep watch... I doubt they'll be more assassins, but I'd rather be safe than sorry."

"Alright. See ya." Quinus said while nodding his head.

Quinus ran off and talked with all the knights and the boys as they gathered all the bodies of the dead. They separated the assassins from the guards before burning them. The fire caught the attention of the mayor. They explained everything to him before night came. Mayor Marlon offered his home to the prince and his entourage. So they can stay and sleep for the night,

which Quinus agreed to. By the time they made it back to the village, the sun was about to set over the horizon. That was when an eight-year-old boy came sneaking out of the entrance of the Labyrinth.

"Finally... The coast is clear. Now I can-WHOA!... Who are you?" The young boy asked as he was caught off guard by an old man with a long white beard.

"So you were the one who broke the rules," Rolf said.

"Rules? W-What rules?"

"Sneaking in weapons? It's against the rules of the trial and you're not ten years old... Are you purposely trying to fail the trial?"

"Huh?... Oh no! I wasn't taking the trials!... I was watching over, my Lord. He was the one in the trial."

"Oh, is that so? Then why do I smell an ether crystal on you? If you weren't in the trial... Then why were you carrying an ether crystal?"

"Oh, I forgot that I had it," The young boy said.

"Really? Who forgets something like an ether crystal?" Rolf asked.

"Y-Yeah, I took it from that Johnathan guy... I stole his crystal because I knew he was up to no good... He's a jerk."

"Hmm... Alright, well, if it were any other circumstance. I would've failed you... but since you have an ether crystal on you I'll only punish you some," Rolf said with a stern look.

The boy sighed in defeat, "Fine, I will accept the punishment. And I'll give you the crystal."

"Give me the crystal first, and then we'll talk about your—WHA!"

The boy pulled out one of the biggest ether crystals ever and it glowed bright. Not as bright as Quinus's but bright nonetheless.

"W-What was your name my child? I must know."

The boy was surprised by the old man's sudden change in attitude.

"Um? My name is Percy, and I'm a son of Lord Mathew and Lady Wina Daz," Percy announced.

"I see. Then, Percy... I heard you saved the prince who had the brightest ether crystal I've seen in a long time. Is this true?"

"Y-Yes, it's true." Percy agreed, not knowing what this old man was talking about.

"Then, I will let it slide this one time!... But don't tell anyone else I did this or I'll fail you."

"Huh? Wait? You're not failing me?"

"No... Now give me the crystal and receive your reward."

Percy looked at the old man skeptically, "A reward? Like treasure?"

"Ha hah... Something like that. Now hand it over," Rolf ordered.

"Alright," Percy said as he handed him the ether crystal that was the size of a chicken egg. Rolf received the ether crystal and then grabbed Percy's hands and held them together.

"This is a day to remember! Now let me see your reward... Hmm... Hmm? Wow! Well, you're in for a treat," Rolf said with a big smile.

"I don't understand."

"Listen well, young Percy. You will come across a feisty woman whose beauty will rival the moons. She will have eyes as green as the forest, and hair as dark as night. She will give you many children who will be known for their bravery. She will also be the strongest and cunningest woman in all the land. So when the time comes. Make sure you have a strong constitution to handle her," Rolf said.

"Um, can you explain in words a child can understand?"

"I have spoken! Now... May the path guide you!"

"Wait?... That's it? That was my reward?... That was weird."

Rolf wasn't paying any attention to Percy as he slowly brought the crystal towards his mouth.

"You're not doing what I think you're doing?" Percy was confused.

Rolf didn't reply. He took a bite of the ether crystal. It was like a sugar cube to him.

'What is wrong with him?'

"Oh ho! This is a day to remember indeed! Haha... Mmmmh," Rolf moaned as he ate the entire ether crystal in one bite.

Percy was stunned. He couldn't believe what he just saw.

"You'll be the luckiest bastard alive. Congratulations," Rolf said with a smile. The crystal was making his cheek bulge out like a chipmunk. He was going to savor it for as long as he can.

"Thanks, I guess?..." Percy said as he furrowed his brow and walked away. It took him a couple of minutes before he found Lady Nelumbo. She was waiting for him in the field.

"Well done, Percy. Your parents will be very proud," Lady Nelumbo said as she walked over to him.

"Did you see that?!" Percy yelled as he pointed towards the old man.

"Hmm? You ran into the Keeper?"

"Keeper?"

"Yes. The Keeper watches over the labyrinth. He runs the trials and is responsible for giving rewards. He's an odd fellow. I try not to talk to him."

"Ah... Got it... Can we head home? I'm starving," Percy said.

"Very well. I have a room at the inn. Come with me."

"Okay. Thank you."

"No problem, kid."

They walked towards the village and stayed in their own room for the night. Once the sun rose in the morning, everyone gathered their things and left for home.