

ToCS - Shorties

Von Khaosprinz

Batch #1 - ABCHT

Arsenal

"Rean, love of my miserable life~"

"No, Crow, just't don't."

"You wound me! Here I was, trying to proclaim the true depth of my furiously burning feelings for you-"

"*Crow. No.*"

"- and you just brush them away! Woe is me, why did I have to fall for such a dashing-"

"..."

"-knight such as you? Why does humble me have to fight dozens of fair maidens and rakish squires for the right to earn even the teensiest bit of affection granted by your tender touch-"

"... What do you want?"

"Aside from being cradled in the safety of your strong, unwavering arms?"

"*Crow.*"

"Just a little bit of *crowfunding* for my latest project."

"..."

"C'mon, Rean, don't leave a bro hanging. You know what, I'll even share the results with you. I won't spoil all the excitement, but it involves-"

"I don't even want to know. Here, take this and go bug someone else, I need to have this report finished by Friday. By the way, are *you* done wi-"

"Ah, I knew the ever-flaming torch of love I carry in my heart for you would reach you

one day! Hold me, my gallant knight, for the intense struggle of burning my way through ice's clutches on your heart has left me faint and powerless! ☐"

"... I'm so hoping Dorothee isn't anywhere nearby. How does one person even *think* of all that stuff you're saying?"

"You don't like it? I see, cheesy isn't the way to win you over. But alas, I shan't give up! Then I'll just take a different approach into the depths of your stony heart."

"Please don't."

"You know what would look good on me?"

"..."

"*You* would."

"..."

"My love for you is like diarrhea- I just can't stop it from coming out!"

Somewhere close, a female second-year with long, dark hair tied into a braid was furiously scribbling notes into a small book covered with doodles of slightly questionable content. She could barely keep her excitement to herself as she heard a heavy *thwump* from inside, before that black-haired first-year she'd seen running errands for the student council stormed out of the classroom, expression pained but with an *oh so adorable* blush covering his cheeks. She didn't even care about her glasses fogging up when, shortly after, her former classmate left the room as well, deftly pocketing some Mira while nursing a rather large bump on his forehead with a stupid grin that looked positively *smitten*.

Blade

More than once would Crow Armbrust and Rean Schwarzer find themselves wondering what their Divine Knights were up to during all those hours of them being alone in the storage room. They were sentient, after all, but the two Awakeners couldn't even hazard a guess as to what two humongous, human-like mechas could be doing together during their spare time. They both just filed that thought away pretty quickly after it would arise, assuming they were just inactive to recover mana for the next inevitable battle. After all, what else could they be doing?

Meanwhile, in the storage room behind the engineering building:

"I shall use a Bolt card."

"That was unexpected. I will reply in kind with a Mirror, then."

"Hm. It appears this round is yours, Ordine. My last remaining card has a value of three, which I am sure you can best."

"Indeed, Valimar. That leaves us at an overall score of 22 to 37. Allow me to deal the next hand."

"Very well. I am most impressed, though. It appears your Awakener's love for this game has indeed influenced you as well."

"That is quite possible. You, however, seem to have adapted some of your Awakener's stubbornness."

"Ha. That does appear to be the case. Let us draw."

"You're on."

Crossbow

On one sunny September afternoon, Rean found himself sprawled on his stomach in Crow's bed, studying a heavy book on military history. Suddenly, something interesting caught his eye and he spoke up, his voice perfectly neutral.

"You know, you should've picked up a crossbow instead of orbal guns."

Next to him, Crow, lying on his back, slowly raised an eyebrow at him. Rean merely held up the book, pointing at a picture showing a crossbow.

"These were also called 'Armbrust' back in the day", was his only explanation before lowering his book again to continue reading.

Crow's face was void of any emotion as he watched for a few seconds before he very, very slowly closed the magazine he'd been flipping through. He rolled it up, raising his right hand in front of his face, wiggling his pointer finger-

"No, no."

- and smacked Rean over the head with the paper before opening it again to return to the article he'd been reading.

Rean next to him erupted into laughter.

Handwriting

"Hey, Crow?"

"Hmm?"

"How come I can read your handwriting on these better than Emma's, while I normally need both a dictionary *and* a magnifying glass to decipher even half of what you're writing?"

A brief pause.

"What do you mean?"

"Here. Your handwriting is as terrible as ever on these-"

A slender finger pointed on notes that had been taken earlier today during class.

"But it's perfectly clear and readable on these."

Another brief pause. Red eyes slowly shift to meet grey ones.

"No special reason. Less time for jotting down info while Instructor Neithardt is hammering us with it. Gotta get things down fast. The others are from when I looked things up on my own- if you believe it or not, that *does* happen from time to time. But you'll have to excuse me now- business beckons."

"... I'm not even going to ask. Just... don't do anything that might get one of the instructors on your case. Or anything that would increase Towa's- and therefore *my*- workload."

"Heh, I won't. Later~"

Rean watched his older friend's retreating back. As soon as the silver hair was out of sight, his eyes wandered back to the notes in his hand. Something still struck him as weird, but he just couldn't put his finger on it. Figuring that mulling over such a thing would be pointless, Rean just shrugged after a moment before entering his own dorm room. He hadn't talked Crow into giving these to him without a reason, after all.

Trepidation

Outside of Class VII's dorm, one particular Crow Armbrust made a beeline to the path leading to Micht's Pawn Shop which was thankfully abandoned. Actually, there was no business waiting for him. He had just needed to get out of there, and fast.

For some reason, he'd almost slipped. He leaned against the wall, staring at his left hand as if its very existence was a federal offence. *He'd gotten careless. Or worse: Had he started caring? No!* Shooting a brief prayer upwards to Aidios, he thanked her on his metaphorical knees that it had been Rean to question him. Good, naïve ~~trusting,~~ kind, steadfast ~~better stop there~~ Rean.

He could feel a wry smile sneaking onto his face, accompanied by the faintest trace of

something heavy settling in his chest. He was getting far too comfortable. ~~No, he doesn't like the idea at all.~~ He'd actually *forgotten* about the very reason he was attending this academy in the first place, for however short of a time frame that might have been. ~~Just a minute or two. Surely not for multiple hours.~~ He'd *actually forgotten* and just acted like any other second year would towards his junior on *instinct*. He'd always taken care to never let anyone else see anything he was writing down in private- Not even Towa or Gelica or George had in over a year- he could do almost everything with his right hand just fine.

Except for writing. No matter how hard he tried, it always looked like an essay written by a severely spasming swine. Closing his eyes, the young man took a deep breath to regain his focus, forcing the heavy feeling inside of him away as well. When he opened his red orbs again, his smile widened and even took on a slightly deprecating turn. He dragged his hand through his hair while pushing away from the wall he'd been slouching against. He had to focus. *Focus*. This little charade was almost over. Only six more weeks. ~~Only six more weeks...~~ No chance in *hell* would he let a little, naïve first-year allow to screw him over. Not now, not when he'd come so *far*. ~~Because if anyone could at this point, it would be him.~~

And with that, the *perfect* persona of Crow Armbrust, slacking and gambling, but reliable and caring second-year, slipped back into place. ~~Or almost perfect, judging the heavy feeling in his chest simply refusing to leave entirely.~~