

I feel a harsh splash of water hit my face, wincing at the feeling as I regain my consciousness... I try to stand, my vision is obscured by the wet hair that's covering my face, but I can hear the metallic clanging that accompanies my standing. I pull the hair off my face and take in my surroundings, I'm in a cell, a tight shackle around my leg is keeping me within close proximity of the wall and there's someone patiently waiting outside of the cell, giving me an intense stare.

"Ah, the scum rises. I must say, I commend your kingdom from hiding such an important asset of theirs from us for so long. We've had the pleasure of killing many a noble prisoner hailing from your home land within this chamber, however, we have far greater plans for you... If you are to comply, that is." He speaks with malice, but there's also a hint of pleasure in his tone, he must know I'm an individual of high value to my kingdom's army.

"And just who exactly do you think I am to my Kingdom?" I cautiously ask. I'm no warrior, and this staggeringly tall man standing before me could easily tear me to shreds if he so desired.

"We've caught wind that you're the tactician responsible for orchestrating attacks that have resulted in the lives of hundreds of our men being taken. Such an intelligent tactical asset would be very valuable to us... however, killing such a brilliant mind would be detrimental to your kingdom. I suppose that leaves you with a decision to make. Die now with 'honour', or live on doing your job for a richer kingdom, and one that will value your contributions greatly. I will give you no longer than three hours to answer me, so I suggest you consider your options carefully." His voice is deep and harsh as he explains the dire situation I've been placed in. Neither option I have available to me is one I wish to make, and he knows this very well. What am I to do?

I should be able to think of a way to get myself out of this mess, I am a tactician after all, but there is truly no way for me to do so. I'm either in or out of the proposed deal, and I have great doubt that I will not be placed under a watchful eye if I am to accept the proposed job position. This is no longer a debate of what will be best for my own life, but the life of my kingdom, of my people. The most damage I am able to do in my current position is to stall as long as I can possibly manage to, before being killed without a second thought.

Five minutes have passed at this point. No one from my kingdom will manage to save me within these three hours. Stalling will do nothing but extend my time in this wretched cell. I look down towards my shaking hands, trembling with fear as I muster up the courage to speak up.

"I would rather die with honour than live in shame." I utter the words solemnly, my head hung low.

“How unfortunate... We would have treated you greatly here.” The man speaks with a sense of satisfaction in his voice, despite his words. He opens and walks into the cell, unsheathing a rusty sword. “Very well then. Speak to me your final words if you wish, just know the ears you speak to have heard every plea for mercy there is.”

“I hope you’re satisfied... I hope this murder brings you as much joy as any other. I know what you are. You’ve been conditioned to see us not as other humans, but as monsters. Swing your weapon, coward, do what your people do best and harm innocent lives, lives that wish not to fight back, but will do so until they cannot any longer just to provide safety to our people, to our youth. Allow yourself to continue living in blindness.” I look up to him with fire in my eyes as I speak, before once again bowing my head down and bracing myself for the mighty swing that will release my soul.