

6/11/21 Prompt: Kings and Queens

"Checkmate."

I lifted my head and looked my opponent in the eye. His smug smile cut even deeper than he knew. If I lost our next match, my life would be forfeit.

"Until next time," I said, allowing the guards to take me back to my cell.

As I lay on my bunk, not looking at the wire springs above me, I put all of my brain cells into figuring out his secret. I kept my king well protected, surrounded by pawns. My knights ventured far into the other realm, slaying everything in their path. The bishops fought valiantly, selflessly for my cause. And the rooks, with their crenellated tops reminding me of my own imprisonment, held the enemy at bay.

And yet, somehow, he always slipped by my defenses. His queen and mine waltzed over the ebony and ivory board in a dance of death. But he always won.

What was I missing?

"It's time," the warden interjected into my frantic thoughts. "Are you ready?"

Rising, I knew that was only a formality. Whether I was ready or not meant nothing to my captors. What did matter, though, was that as I left my cell, never to return, I remembered my king.

He wasn't ready to give up, and neither was I.

Sitting across from my opponent, I nodded toward the board.

"Your move."