

## **BIOLOGICAL 961**

### Chapter 961: Hidden Menace

"They're putting up a good fight," he said, referring to the attackers. Everyone understood that what the rebels were doing was way beyond anything they had ever done until now. "We need to reinforce the lines quickly before they're overwhelmed."

Brute Ape nodded in agreement.

"Let's move up and hit the rebels from the side. That should give the others some reprieve."

"No," Erik said. He was already pumping his instability brain crystal power into the three to make them more likely to listen to him. He needed to be alone for what he was going to do. If the group attacked as a unit, it would be problematic.

"Do not flank them; I've seen more rebel troops behind that building," Erik pointed in front of him. Of course he was lying; there were no other rebels there.

"If you go, you will get ambushed."

The instability brain crystal power's effects must have been working because Missing Air nodded.

"Thanks; I didn't see that. If it wasn't for you, we would have died."

The woman didn't even turn to look around. She didn't care, as she just trusted Erik, or rather, Savage Blood.

"Then what do you suggest?" Shatterfist asked.

"We should go to the entrance and join the defensive line there. We'll have a clear view of the situation from the front and can adjust our strategy based on how the rebels attack," he said.

The effects of Erik's instability power were already taking hold of the three because he could see from their tone and their posture that they were at ease with what the young man was saying.

And with that, Shatterfist nodded in agreement. "That makes sense. Then, since there is no other alternative but to join the defensive line, we'll do as you suggest."

"We'll hit them head-on!" Brute Ape said, while Missing Air also vocalized her agreement with a soft hum.

"Let's go then."

The team made their way to the entrance, where the fighting was the most intense. Blackguards were pouring mana, lasers, and bullets into the rebel forces, trying to breach the defence line. Or better, make it look like they were having trouble doing it.

There was no uncertainty in Erik's mind about what was about to happen. The strength and speed of the Chimaeric Demons were unparalleled, making the breach of the defence line a foregone conclusion.

The biggest challenge for the blackguards was the group of people wearing white clothes. They didn't just stick out; they were simply unlike anyone else they had ever seen. Their fighting prowess could only be compared to them... the blackguards.

These guys didn't fight or do things like everyone else, even the way they moved was creepy.

None of the blackguards' offensive moves or strategic attempts to kill them worked at all.

It was like they were trying to fight ghosts.

Besides, they were using some weird brain crystal powers that allowed them to spew out some weird fireballs. The attacks weren't that powerful, but fire was fire, and it was dangerous regardless.

They often used it as a sneaky way to trick their enemies, making decoys to distract them and make them think something false. Their enemies would be caught off guard by this tactic, making them vulnerable. In many situations, this tactic led to their enemies meeting their end.

Behind his mask, Erik grinned. His ruse was working, June's plan was too. Now, he only needed to enter unseen, and he would take care of Momentum.

<If only I didn't need to capture the mother fucker...>

Indeed, if his only task was to kill him, he could have left during the night and come here alone to carry out the deed.

Of course, things weren't as simple. Erik was more often than not outside with the team. To leave wasn't simple, and he would have to justify himself if he did.

His Ben Fink persona was too important to risk because it was the only way he could come into contact with the Blackguards without having to carve a path among dead bodies.

Besides, the blackguards implemented many safety mechanisms to prevent shapeshifters from entering the organization. They knew Erik could shapeshift, so things were even more complicated.

But he was Erik Romano. He wasn't so stupid to make a mistake that would give his identity away.

A man started barking orders at the group, in particular at Shatterfist, the nominal leader of Erik's team. But Erik wasn't listening to what he was saying. He had more pressing matters to attend.

<June, I'm here. Increase the aggressiveness. I need you to create chaos.>

<Understood, master.>

And that was exactly what happened.

Erik watched as the rebels, led by the Chimaeric Demons, went into a ferocious frenzy.

Their attacks on the blackguards' defensive line intensified. What was funny was that they attacked mostly melee. The reason was that they still had little mana, as their brain crystals were still developing.

But that unlucky coincidence made them even more terrifying. The Chimaeric Demons were as fast as Erik was when he made them, and he was quick compared to the average human. This meant they could avoid bullets, ranged attacks, and laser rifles.

Their Xeridon Anteris' and Hais' brain crystal powers made things even easier. But, of course, they had to be careful with their mana expenditure.

Even after having killed a myriad of blackguards, there was still a speck of dust or blood on their white uniforms.

And yet, they kept killing. As more and more blackguards arrived on the battlefield, more and more corpses piled up.

Explosions erupted around the building as the blackguards struggled to repel the onslaught.

The fuckers rallied and fought back, but there were only so many they could face at once.

Blood and chaos reigned as the two sides clashed in close combat. This was the worst thing that happened to the blackguards since their foundation.

The blackguards, despite their training and preparations, found themselves in a situation they couldn't comprehend.

Those rebels with the Chimaeric Demons were totally different from any enemy they'd faced. They had some crazy tactics, and they were super fast and strong.

The jerks couldn't figure out what was going on, couldn't even plan, because the attack carried out by the Chimaeric Demons was too intense.

The defensive line was falling apart, and the blackguards started realizing they were losing. This wasn't some minor issue, it was a major setback.

Nope, this was a total disaster that might just mean they lose. Their faces went pale, not just from being tired, but from the overwhelming weight of this scary truth.

They lost all motivation and started feeling scared, which was new to them.

"The defensive line is collapsing!"

A blackguard said. It didn't matter that more and more teams were arriving on the scene.

<All of this is very theatrical.>

The Chimaeric Demons then arrived right in front of the defensive lines. Then chaos erupted.

Erik saw Missing Air being ripped apart by a clone, while Shatterfist followed a similar destiny soon after. Erik did not know where Brute Ape was, but he must have met a similar fate.

Then one of the clones stepped forward. With a swift motion, he drove his foot into the massive boulder, obstructing the entrance.

The impact was so immense that the boulder shattered instantly, breaking apart into countless fragments that scattered across the ground.

As the dust settled, the clone stepped through the entrance. One by one, the other clones followed suit. Meanwhile, most of the clones remained outside, killing the blackguards like the maggots they were.

<That's my cue.>

Erik activated his Phantom Veil's brain crystal power and turned invisible. Nothing and no one was going to see him.

He then slipped past the chaotic melee and went inside the building.

There was no way Erik could leave the sounds of fighting behind, especially considering that the Chimaeric Demons were already inside and they were wreaking havoc.

Death shadowed Erik like a faithful hound, trailing him through the chaos of battle.

The man avoided a bolt aimed at one of the Chimaeric Demons. Since he was invisible and around him there was mayhem, he ended up on the firing line.

He looked at the blackguards, who had just fired, with a shocked expression.

<Fuck! Invisibility is not as good as it looks like!>

Erik started searching around the building while invisible, moving at incredible speeds.

His goal was to locate Momentum while the Chimaeric Demons eliminated all resistance.

Then he had to call them, and make them abduct momentum, but that only after having killed every single blackguards in the area.

He zoomed through hallways and rooms, taking in the sights of chaos and destruction around him. His clones were going all out, decimating any blackguards in their path.

Blood and bodies littered the floors as the clones tore through defences with superhuman strength and speed.

Chapter 962: The elusive ghost

Erik had to dodge flying rubble and debris kicked up by the intense fighting.

Explosions rocked the building, causing walls and ceilings to crumble.

<I wonder what's happening outside.>

There was still a lot of noise going on suggesting that the battle outside, despite having tuned down a lot, was still going strong. It was understandable. The blackguards command center was barking orders constantly through the communication channels, most of them requesting help to all the groups scattered through the city.

But they were far. Reaching this place was not something that could be done fast, and regardless, the Chimaeric Demons killed every newcomer, making it so that the pressure on the rebels remained weak.

Erik glided among the battling clones and blackguards, invisible to all. Only the Chimaeric Demons knew he was there, and where, because Erik told them by mind link.

Many blackguards were firing their laser rifles at the invaders, but they missed Erik as he zipped past. Not that they target him to begin with.

The clones seemed unstoppable in their fury, tearing apart soldiers and sending some flying with powerful blows.

Erik stopped to look at a Chimaeric Demon, ripping the door off a room and tossing it aside.

He peered in to see several injured blackguards huddled together in fear as the clone advanced on them.

Erik decided to move on. He didn't care about what happened to these guys, and for sure, he wanted them dead.

He then focused on using his instability brain crystal powers to find Momentum. But it would not be easy. There were many people inside the building, and finding the man was going to need him to search each individual mind within the cluster.

<Let's see... Where are you, old friend?>

Erik searched and searched. To the point where he read the minds of every single person within the building. In the end, he found what he was searching for.

<There you are!>

With that, Erik moved.

When he glanced into Momentum's mind, Erik saw a mix of frustration and rage, but there was also defiance.

Though caught off guard by the rebel attack, Momentum was planning an escape through an underground tunnel below the building and was heading there right at this moment, together with some high-ranking officers from the organization.

Erik was surprised. The stoic and confident blackguard was going to flee, but understood Momentum valued his own survival above all, and despite everything.

Erik stealthily followed, walking through floors and corridors to chase momentum. While doing so, he reached five clones with his instability brain crystal power.

<Momentum and some other guys are heading downstairs. I will show you where he is going.>

With that, Erik sent the images of what Momentum saw and was thinking to them. The five Chimaeric Demons disengaged from whoever they were fighting and headed downstairs, chasing after Erik and Momentum.

As they descended into a bunker-like tunnel, Erik glimpsed maps and exit strategies in Momentum's mind, confirming escape pods at the tunnel's end were present.

Seeing the sprawling underground complex, the man realized the blackguards' de facto headquarters were far bigger than he thought.

After a not so long chase, Erik arrived right behind the man.

Momentum was running, but not even that fast, through the cement corridors. His face was obscured by a mask, but his mind was wary and on alert.

<Finally, I will have my revenge. I can't wait to interrogate him.>

However, Erik had to be careful because he couldn't kill him despite wanting to. Erik knew this was his chance to capture and interrogate a high-ranking blackguard.

Even if the man wasn't fully informed about the overall situation, it was clear he knew things few people knew.

For example, what did the blackguards know about him? What were his and his squad's exact orders when they attacked him in Caelora City? Who were those coordinating the effort to capture him?



Though all those questions had to wait for now, he had to capture him first, but Erik was planning on taking his sweet time.

But capturing Momentum alone was a problematic move, simply because he had to bring him outside somehow, and doing so alone while having to avoid deadly attacks would not be simple. Besides, there were two other men with Momentum.

If they were leaving secretly, as the men were doing, it meant they had at least the same rank as him, and that was an excellent turn of events.

"Are you going somewhere?"

Momentum and the other two men turned around, but they saw no one.

"Ah... Confusion... It's a funny thing, considering who the confused one is. You used to be those who knew everything and everyone, but now you don't even know who is in front of you."

Momentum and the other two men could see no one. Immediately, they understood someone with an invisibility brain crystal power was there, behind, beside, or in front of them.

"Who are you? Show yourself if you have the galls!" One of the two men said, Judging by the voice, this man was old. Not that Erik really cared; he had no mercy for the blackguards.

"I'd rather not, but I suggest you avoid trying to run, or I will be forced to break your legs."

"It's pretty bold of you to say that since you have a brain crystal power that allows you to hide only," the other blackguard said.

Momentum was remaining silent, but he already understood how dire the situation was, and that was because he recognized the voice behind the mysterious man hiding from their sight.

Immediately, he started channelling mana. His powers worked best with single targets, but they could also influence an area of effect, and since he couldn't see the man in front of him, influencing an area was his best chance at fighting him.

Of course, Erik read the man's mind and knew exactly where Momentum's powers reached.

"Oh... Momentum, you still think I don't know how your powers work? I learned it a long time ago. Both of us know I can counter it."

"Perhaps, but it's still good to mess up your movements. A single mistake could prove fatal, after all. You should know it well."

"Who are you talking to, Momentum? Who is the guy hiding?"

But the man didn't reply. He didn't have time to make his mind wander into useless thoughts now. Momentum had to flee, and he knew that.

Chapter 963: The Grim Reaper

"So, you came here to get revenge, or what?"

"Hahahahahaha. Revenge? I will for sure have it for having attacked me back in Caelora City, but this is not the reason I came here at all."

"Then why are you here?" Momentum asked. "For sure, the great Erik Romano must have some plan in mind. Honestly, I was slightly surprised you came here and even found me, but after some thought, I realized I couldn't expect less from you."

It was at that moment that those with Momentum realized who the man hiding from their sight was. They didn't know firsthand what Erik Romano could do, but they knew he was their highest-priority target.

Erik stared at the masked man before him, known only as Momentum. "I came here for information," he said.

"Information?" Momentum said. "You think I'll just tell you what you want to know?"

"You will," Erik said. "One way or another, you will give me the answers I seek."

"Why are you wasting your time talking to this man, Momentum?" One of the two blackguards said: "We are three against one; if we do this together, we can apprehend him."

However, Momentum didn't respond. Although his team members were not as powerful individually as the two guys with him, when united, these two stood no chance against the team.

Erik confronted a full team of blackguards—not just an ordinary one, but a large team composed entirely of elites from within the organization.

And yet, not only Erik fought toe to toe against them, but he also escaped, killed a high-ranking member of Etrium's mercenary guild, one strictly closed to them at that, and last, he killed several members of the team itself.

Erik Romano wasn't someone which Momentum and these two guys could fight, and he didn't even know if they could run from him.

Momentum tensed, preparing for a fight. He ignored what the two men said. "You're a fool if you think..."

Erik's invisible fist connected with Momentum's masked face, sending the blackguard crashing to the ground several meters away.

The sudden attack caught the two men with Momentum off guard.

They looked at each other in shock. Momentum was standing beside them. One second he was there, talking against their invisible opponent; the following one, he was traveling several meters in the air, like a rag doll falling off a cliff in a bad animated video game, and falling to the floor.

They soon realized the man in front of them, their number one enemy, was beyond anything they could handle. Without a word, they turned to flee down the tunnel, not looking back.

"Do you really think I will let you go? Momentum was already a nice catch, but there is no way I won't take the chance to get two more potato sacks full of juicy blackguards' gossip with me."

Erik watched as the two blackguards turned to flee down the tunnel.

It was then that Erik started hearing footsteps behind him. He used his instability brain crystal power to see who it was, but soon found out it was his Chimaeric Demons.

<Take care of the two men fleeing. Do not kill them.>

<Yes, Master.>

In a display of unparalleled prowess, they sped up towards the men who were attempting to escape. Their speed was awe-inspiring, defying the limits of human capability, a speed unattainable by ordinary individuals.

Within moments, the clones grabbed the struggling blackguards, knocking them out. They didn't even have time to utter a word or mount a proper defence.

It was honestly unsettling to see from the outside how strong he had been just a couple of months ago.

The blackguards crumpled to the ground unconscious, joining their comrade, Momentum, who still lay motionless on the floor.

Erik eyed the three captured blackguards, satisfied they were now incapacitated.

Though his current invisible state cloaked his body, Erik knew the risk of exposing himself to capture the men. He still had his blackguard uniform on, with his codename Savage Blood on.

His clones approached, awaiting further orders regarding their prisoners. Erik knew the information these blackguards held could aid the rebellion immensely.

These prisoners were not just any individuals, after all; they were high-ranking blackguards.

But for now, security was paramount. Getting the prisoners to a safe location was the priority.

It was of utmost importance to ensure that his involvement remained a secret, for if the enemy learned of Erik's presence within the city, it could spell disaster for him and the rebels.

<Bring them out of this place. Fischer and Van Dyke will be happy to see them.>

Then Erik thought about the interrogation and what he was going to learn by simply asking questions and reading their minds.

The interrogation would require separating the prisoners, though, but that wasn't a problem at all.

<That's pretty obvious, of course.>

But that was a problem for later. Now there was something Erik had to do. Order is cloned to kill everyone and then find a reasonable way to justify his escape.

For that to work, Erik had to move to a safer area of the battlefield, telling his clones and the rebels to decrease their pressure there. When the blackguards inevitably realized they couldn't win, let him and a few of the remaining members alive leave. He couldn't be the only one to survive, right?

That would not only give him an explanation why he survived, while at least two of his two team members died, but it also would leave some people to report to the blackguards, to report about the Chimaeric Demons, to report how there was someone that could kill them, someone that could threaten their hegemony, and to let them know that their hold on the world was ending.

Erik smiled at that thought. There was still much to do and learn. Yet, for the first time, the organization of the blackguards might be fearful.

They had to. Because the grim reaper was coming, to take them all.

Chapter 964: The interrogation (1)

Erik sat on a chair, a sense of satisfaction filling him as he looked at the man in front of him giving him a defiant but amusing look.

Momentum was there, watching Erik's face as the man smirked. No one was saying anything, and they had been there for 10 minutes already.

It had not been hard to persuade Silent Scream to grant him and Brute Ape two days of leave after the attack on the blackguards' building.

Of course, that required a little bit of nudging from Erik's part, who, using his instability brain crystal power, made him inclined to agree to the leave request.

Brute Ape and Savage Blood were the only survivors from their team and needed some respite, after all.

Of course, Erik wasn't physically or psychologically scarred or injured by what happened. Instead, he felt like a kid on Christmas Eve, waiting to unwrap the gifts his parents had brought him.

In this case, the tree was his own sweat, and the gift were three blackguards' high-ranking officers. Enforcers were four ranks under the highest possible rank among the blackguards, the Justicar.

Justicar. Even the name itself was ironic considering what the blackguards really did.

<A name fitting for a justice organization, but so unsightly for these pricks... What a bad taste!

In truth, the young man was reading Momentum's mind. He was just curious to see what the guy was thinking now that he had been taken prisoner.

<I guess this is the first time Momentum get through something like this. If it wasn't for the attack at the enlistment centre, he might have been the first blackguard to have ever been kidnapped.>

Unsurprisingly, the man knew there was no way for him to flee, not with Erik Romano in the same room and not with those white-dressed demons that already thwarted a previous attempt at getting the hell out of where he was.

Erik wore a smirk on his face, but after he had enough of reading the man's mind, he decided it was time to start the real show.

"You have two options," Erik said. "Either you tell me what I want to know, and I'll make sure you're treated accordingly, or refuse, and I will make sure you will wish to talk to me. I can't promise I will be around when you are ready, though."

The Blackguard shrugged. "Ha! I thought you would have more convincing words to use or some weird, twisted, or mysterious means to make me talk; instead, the great Erik Romano wants to resort to torture. How typical and honestly disappointing twist. "

At those words, Erik smiled even more. The grin on his face morphed from a flat line to a first-quarter moon. The side of his lips was almost physically having a party with Erik's eyes.

"Let's start with a simple question. What's your name?"

It was Momentum's turn to smile at that point. "Are you stupid?"

<Birth name: Marcus Turner, Codename: Momentum. Boring name.>

"I heard something interesting about you, Momentum. It looks like you are considered a big shot within the blackguards. The youngest man to reach the Enforcer rank in over a hundred years. Pretty impressive."

"Well, thanks for that. I put in a lot of effort." Momentum said nothing else.

"So, I heard you got sent here after your failure at Caelora City. It was a sort of punishment for having failed the mission."

"I have to thank you for that. Not only did you escape, but you also killed Flexblade, Quakestrike, and Reflectra. It was kind of you." A murderous look appeared on the man's face.

"Oh, my! Thanks for having noticed that! It was pretty fun. But that's not important. I heard you were sent here to mentor a particular team. Its identification number should be Team 89, led by a guy called Dark Tendrils."

"I know nothing of such a team."

"Oh, lying until the end, uh?" But Erik read Momentum's mind. The rumours circulating were true because, behind Zakir's team, there was indeed Momentum.

However, that wasn't all. According to Momentum's memories, Zakir was also present in Caelora City. He was among those who attended the meeting that took place after Erik killed Max.

Of course, that was the first time Erik heard about such a meeting, but it was obvious something like that must have happened, considering what Erik did back then.

Dark Tendrils, no Zakir Nguyen, was there within the city because he fought against Erik in the past, and the blackguards hoped he would know ways to fight against him.

The problem was that Zakir fought Erik when he still had his sharpening power, an ability he got rid of by merging it. Besides, Erik improved and learned a lot during this time, especially combat wise. The 16 years old and the almost 19 years old Erik were two different people. So, Zakir had been basically useless in that situation.

However, he behaved arrogantly and insufferably the whole time. Momentum didn't like him a bit, and when he got told he had to babysit the guy, who was strong but with some problems, well... he wasn't happy.

What Erik found funny, though, was that Zakir was considered 'Slightly out of his mind' even by the blackguards, and they had pretty nasty and unhinged members among their ranks.

But that was something Erik didn't really care about.

"Now, I wanted to ask you this. Dark Tendrils reported to you, but where does he stay? What barracks has he been assigned to? Where can I find him?"

"I don't know who this team 89 or Dark Tendrils is."

But Momentum's no Marcus' thoughts told Erik everything he needed to know. Barracks 5.

Erik had to suppress the urge to grin this time because he didn't want Momentum to suspect he could read his mind.

Of course, Erik planned to say it to him just because he wanted to see the man's face change after he realized he had unwillingly answered all of Erik's questions.

Chapter 965: The interrogation (2)

"Momentum," Erik said. "What's the deal with Dark Tendrils in this city? What are the blackguards hoping to achieve by sending him here?"



At that, Momentum began laughing derisively at Erik.

"For real? Hahahahahahaha. This is the way you think an interrogation should go? Hahahahahahaha."

Until now, Momentum had refused to answer any of Erik's questions, finding Erik's attempts at interrogation amusing.

Momentum let out a dry chuckle. "I expected more from someone with your reputation, Erik," he said, a hint of mockery in his tone. "But so far, you're acting like an amateur."

Erik's eyes narrowed as Momentum continued to laugh, but the only thing he did was reply with a grin.

That was because Momentum was unwillingly talking. Really, all of this was easier than stealing candy from a kid.

But Momentum then turned serious. Honestly, Erik's reaction was freaking him out a little. Why was he laughing? Shouldn't he be enraged?

"You think your little questions will get you anywhere? I have nothing to say to you aside from that you are an idiot and that most likely, the higher-ups overestimated you."

Of course, that wasn't what Momentum was really thinking. Maybe he considered Erik amateurish in his interrogation, but his strength couldn't be denied.

He made him unconscious with a single attack, but the man wasn't even sure about that because Erik had been too fast for him to understand what had happened back then.

But Momentum replied to Erik's questions. The truth was that Zakir had been sent here to thwart the rebels, simple as that, but also for the same reason as when he got sent to Caelora City: to apprehend Erik Romano.

Zakir fought against him back at school. At that time, he knew better than most how Frant's awakener did it.

However, the difference between Momentum, his team, and Zakir was that the younger man was a genius.

That guy had 45 neural links, and he was 18 years old. He was strong, insanely so, and at that age, he was already among the strongest soldiers within the organization.

At that information, Erik almost grimaced.

<45 neural links at 18? Zakir is stronger than Becker!>

It wasn't only that, because this information meant Zakir was as strong as the Hevadrin. Right now, it meant nothing to Erik.

He was much stronger than before thanks to the many level ups and neural links he made, and that was because he had fought with and against the rebels. The number of people and thaids who died around him gave him a ton of experience, DNA points, and mana.

Right now, Erik's stats were almost twice as high as those of Zakir. Killing him would not be a problem.

But that wasn't what prevented Erik from doing it. Erik's problem had always been his mana, because he did lack it, and mana meant everything because it powered one's brain crystal power.

It was true he had a lot now, but he still had to fight alone against many, summed among them, the blackguards had thousands upon thousands of energy points. Seeing the blackguards as a single entity made him truly understand the difference between him and them.

One on one, he would lose to no one, but against an organization, things weren't so simple.

That was not the only problem. Brain crystal powers were unpredictable. Erik could be as fast and as strong as he wanted, but someone like Zakir, who could intensify his tendrils' speed and strength through mana, could nullify the benefits of multiple brain crystal powers. Zakir might make his tendrils so fast that even Erik might struggle to resist them.

That would be the case if Erik didn't have a way to defend himself. However, he did now. Erik got a significant amount of mana, nearly reaching the A rank on the Ferebitz scale.

Simultaneously, he now had fewer but very harrowing powers. For example, the result of the merge of Exoshield with Nathaniel's brain crystal power had been a tremendous surprise.

But of course, he would have rushed to kill Volkov, Zakir, and rescue Richard, if that was all. Of course, there were many things he had to consider in the current situation.

The number of opponents, the brain crystal rifles, and now Mechas artillery and the like, but most importantly, individuals with more than one brain crystal power.

That was because multiple powers might mean multiple neural links, meaning they could actually be stronger than anyone else.

What Doran's research did was create artificial awakeners. He still had no proof of that though, and didn't have that much information about how these powers worked.

If that was the case, the few people he saw wielding multiple brain crystal powers on the battlefield likely had few neural links, so they were strong, but not as strong as they could be.

That was why Erik was focusing on the Chimaeric Demons. They were his cards to win this war.

<It is sad. I could have wiped out the entire new Alexandria before all this stuff appeared. I could've been the king of this place.>

But things went this way, for good or bad, and he couldn't change it. Erik's thought went back to what he glanced at in Momentum's mind.

Zakir had been sent here because the blackguards hoped he could fight against him. In their opinion, he had the means, and for sure he would be supported by hundreds, if not thousands, of other blackguards.

<This says a lot about the situation here. Richard was clearly a lure, and that the rebels are still kicking, despite the overwhelming odds, meant that they left them alive on purpose. The blackguards have artificial awakeners, for fucks' sake. It's impossible they couldn't wipe out Fischer considering this and the many weapons they had.>

Then Erik asked a question to Momentum. "Do you know where you are?"

There, Erik's worst thought materialized. Momentum knew. He thought he was at the Red Palace, and that meant the blackguards knew the institution sided with the rebels.

"What about the spy?"

Momentum remained silent; now, most of the thoughts the man was having were mocking ones.

Erik had to start using his instability brain crystal power to make him keen, at least on thinking about the answer.

"I'll ask you again. What about the spy?"

"There is no spy. And since you are insisting, I don't know where we are."

But there was indeed a spy among the rebels, the very same one that told the blackguards about the Red Palace, the very same one that gave them the idea to keep the resistance alive.

The problem was that this guy had been a high-ranking Colonel within Becker's government and was among those Erik rescued from prison months earlier. The spy was Colonel Stephen Middleton, one of Fischer's closest helpers.

Chapter 966: The interrogation (3)

Erik needed to warn Van Dyke immediately, but couldn't leave just yet. There was something he still needed to confirm.

"Who was involved in the attack in Caelora City? Who coordinated the attack?"

Momentum glared back, refusing to give Erik the satisfaction of an answer. Then a sneer appeared on the man's face.

"How adorable. But I'm afraid my lips are sealed. We wouldn't want to spoil the surprise, now, would we?"

Reaching out with his Instability brain crystal power, he invaded Momentum's mind.

At that point, what he saw, what he felt, overwhelmed him. A flood of thoughts and emotions: fear, anger, and frustration.

But among them, he detected traces of memories from the Caelora City attack. Fragments of names and faces flashed through Momentum's mind. One in particular left him shocked...

Well, he wasn't that surprised, to be honest, but still, knowing that man was the one manipulating the attack on him, It stung, and a lot at that.

Erik felt betrayed because among Momentum's team members, along with Zakir and some other high-ranking officers, was Uncle Benjamin.

What was the most surprising thing in all of this was that Momentum referred to Uncle Benjamin with the codename Levium, Blackguards' rank: Vindicator.

<It can't be...>

Vindicator. The next rank up is the enforcer. Uncle Benjamin was basically just two ranks away from the Justicar, the highest and most important rank within the blackguards.

<This isn't possible; this isn't right.>

Erik refused to believe this, but the proof was there. Shade told Erik to be careful about saying Benjamin's name, but now he understood. That was because he was a high-ranking member of the blackguards.

Then everything clicked. The rank explained why Uncle Benjamin was in Etrium with Doran. At the time, he was the one to whom Doran responded. The man wasn't simply a link between him and the blackguards.

It also explained why he was in New Alexandria. Because he likely coordinated the blackguards, Shade, and the Crystal Cross Gang.

Uncle Benjamin was the one who brought Zakir to Caelora City. According to Momentum's memories, he was the one who gave most information about Erik to the blackguards.

The prick tried to go easy on Erik but decided to use strong manners' when Erik allegedly refused to surrender to the blackguards and fought back.

<Incredible, fucking incredible...>

His rage surged at that point.

"Marcus," Erik said, looking into Momentum's eyes. Of course, the man was confused because Erik just said his name.

"Tell me about Levium; tell me about Benjamin Kaminski."

Momentum, then, understood.

"You are pretty smart, aren't you?" Erik said.

"You can read minds?"

"Tell me about Levium."

This time, Erik approached the man with an angry look. Many thoughts were going through Momentum's head.

The man was put on edge by the realization that Erik could read his mind, answering so many of his previous questions.

The younger man's question looked weird. In truth, what was really weird was that Erik just asked questions.

But now Momentum, or rather, Marcus, understood why he did that.

The questions Erik asked, while simple, was aimed at making him, Momentum, think about the answer. They were simple, yes, but also specific.

This meant that Erik not only possessed a terrifying brain crystal power, but he also had formidable intelligence. Crafting questions to elicit specific mental responses was no simple task.

Not only that, but Erik made those questions appear silly and generic.

And yet, those generic questions made him exactly think about the right answer.

This meant Erik now knew about Benjamin, he knew about Zakir; he knew about the spy, and he knew what the blackguards were aware of about the rebels.

Momentum's thoughts raced. He wondered how long Erik had had this ability and how he had kept it hidden for so long with no one finding out.

He tried to suppress any revealing thoughts, but it was nearly impossible with such a shrewd individual.

With this ability, Momentum realized Erik's threat level was even bigger than it already was.

This man was a disaster. The blackguard also realized that his organization's strategy to compartmentalize information within the organization was only going to slow Erik down, not prevent him from learning anything.

"Your attempts at controlling your thoughts are pointless. "

Momentum panicked, cursing himself for not noticing the signs sooner.

"Your organization believes it has hunted me when, in reality, I have been stalking you like prey. I have discovered secrets you never imagined possible."

Momentum felt defeated; all his efforts were meaningless in the face of Erik's overwhelming power. He remained silent.

Erik pressed the issue further. "Tell me of Levium, of Benjamin Kaminski." Momentum's tried to suppress any thoughts about Levium, and that made the younger man angry.

He didn't have the patience or the time to play this game anymore.

"TALK!"

In a flash, Erik grabbed the blackguard by the collar and slammed him against the wall.

"Tell me about Benjamin Kaminski!" Erik said. When Momentum remained silent, Erik punched him hard across the jaw. Momentum grunted in pain but said nothing.

"TALK!"

Growing more furious, Erik threw Momentum to the ground and began kicking him.

"Tell me what I want to know!"

But Momentum refused to utter a word, or better, to even think about Levium, even as Erik's assault continued.

Erik could have used his instability brain crystal power to make him willing to talk, or at least to think, but he didn't think about it being taken by his fury as he was.

Blood began pouring from Momentum's mouth and nose, yet he stayed defiant, or rather, the man became unresponsive.

Erik barely stopped in time; otherwise, he would have killed the man.



He looked around, and at some point, a woman heard the commotion and entered the room, only for her to see Momentum unconscious on the ground. Erik turned to her, recognizing who she was: Emma.

Erik looked at her with a cold, detached expression. "Call a healer. I'm not done with this fucker."

#### Chapter 967: Tensions Rise

Erik took several deep breaths to compose himself. Torture would not give him the information he desired, at least not quickly, and he didn't have that time now.

He needed to talk to Van Dyke and Fischer and explain the situation.

Erik left the room with Emma inside the room. Of course, she soon left to call for a healer.

Erik walked down the hall and spotted one of the Red Palace's teachers. Few knew about Erik's return to New Alexandria and his current involvement in the rebellion; luckily, the spy was not aware of that.

However, that particular teacher knew. That was why he was nearby, because he was tasked with guarding the area.

"Call Van Dyke and Fischer right away. Tell them it's urgent."

Though the professor did not like Erik's commanding manner, he agreed to make the calls.

Erik then entered a nearby meeting room and made his way over to the plush, inviting couch that sat against the far wall.

He sank into its comforting embrace, taking a moment to gather his thoughts and make sense of the current situation.

With a deep breath, he embraced the peace in the room and reviewed the events of the day.

So many revelations had come from interrogating Momentum: the identity of Caelora City's attackers, a spy within the rebels' ranks.

But Erik did not have enough information yet to have a complete understanding of the situation.

Van Dyke and Fischer needed to be brought up to speed on these latest developments, so they could take care of the matter.

The most important thing right now was to leave the Red Palace and find another place to house the rebels.

Not only that, but since Momentum had been taken prisoner, it was clear the blackguards were going to at least think he was going to say something, even if unlikely.

That meant they were going to attack soon, and if they did, the Red Palace was going to be razed to the ground.

All of this would clearly result in losing the chance to find Richard. If the man died, Erik would have free rein in killing Volkov, but he would lose a valuable ally and... he didn't know how Emily would take it. To make her friend suffer was the last thing Erik wanted.

The young man took a deep breath and steeled himself as Van Dyke and Fischer entered the room.

He stood up from the couch to greet them, about to share the troubling info he got from Momentum.

"We have an enormous problem."

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"So, Stephen is the spy?" Fischer said. "Mother fucker..."

Despite the man having been a colonel within the army and a relatively high-ranking member of the rebels, Fischer had the lucky thought of not telling him everything.

If he had, he would have known about Richard's search, about Erik, and about the tunnel.

"Is he a friend of yours?" Van Dyke asked Fischer.

"Not really."

"Good, because we must kill him."

"We can't do it now, " Erik said.

"We need to find another place to hide and a way to avoid Middleton learning about it and about the fact that we know about him."

"That won't be easy."

"It should if we keep doing what we were doing before. Attack the blackguards," Erik said. "But we have no time anymore. I found out where Dark tendrils stay, so I will take care of him, but we need to save Richard. Do you have any idea where he is precisely kept?"

"Yes," Fischer said. "We confirmed some time ago that he was in the Gran Ducal Prison; the problem until now was that we didn't know exactly where, we didn't know how to enter, nor did we have someone strong enough to pull that off. But with your clones, we would be able to do it. "

"I guess you found out about his cell, then."

"Yes. Right wing, Area G, Cell 385."

"All right. We need to come up with a plan to make this happen. Only when Richard is free, I will be able to kill Volkov."

"Yes, we will start working on it with June, then."

But Fischer wasn't really certain the situation was going to improve. The blackguards had many men and weapons in New Alexandria; at this point, killing Volkov meant nothing.

They would still stay within the city after he died, or so he thought, meaning the only way to get rid of those who controlled the city from the shadows was to wipe them all out.

"Do you really think the blackguards will leave the city after we kill Volkov?" Fischer asked.

"Not really; on the contrary, I think they will increase their efforts in getting it under control. Unless..."

"Unless?" Fischer asked Erik. "Unless I appear somewhere..."

"That makes sense."

And it truly did, because Erik told Van Dyke and Fischer that he was the blackguards' actual target.

Most of the things they did in New Alexandria, including Richard's abduction, was meant to lure him here. The sad part was that it worked.

However, this meant that they would do whatever they could to get him, and that meant taking troops from New Alexandria to send them to where Erik was.

"We should have a chance if they take away troops from here."

"Yeah, they do not really care about Frant at this point. They only care about me."

"We will need someone to take your place, especially Ben Fink's place. We will also need your clones and the weapons."

"I didn't plan to stop sending you the rifles or to take the clones with me. The only clone I will bring with me is June and my three friends. Richard, of course, I will leave him in your care. You might then give him to those who will come to bring you the rifles. They will escort him back to my place."

"I'm still curious to know where this place is," Fischer said.

"Maybe I will bring you there after all this shit is done."

"You promised, uh?" Fischer said.

"I promised."

#### Chapter 968: A shift in priorities

After two days of thinking about the situation, Erik concluded there was only one problem in this whole situation. They needed time to move. This meant the rebels needed to fool the blackguards into thinking they got nothing from Momentum and the other two high-ranking blackguards.

Naturally, they would not have a large amount of time at their disposal. Given the circumstances. It was almost a certainty that the blackguards would launch an attack on the Red Palace to free their captured agents before Van Dyke and his team could extract any valuable information from them.

This prompted the three to decide how to take care of Zakir. To do that, Erik needed one of his clones who could shapeshift. Aside from June, there were three others who fit the bill.

Hugo, Mark, and Xavier. These were the three clones that Mira, Emily, and Amber used as mounts to get here.

"Mark, you will take Savage Blood's place. As for you two, since Mark won't be able to read the blackguard's mind, you two will go with him and help in case the need arises. In the meantime, you will have to spy on the others. Collect as much information as you can."

"Are you sure, Master? I don't have Ben Fink's same brain crystal power."

"It doesn't matter," Erik said. "Just use a sword, and if someone asks you, just say you do not need to use your brain crystal power. Try not to grab anyone's attention, though. I know you are capable of holding yourselves; you are me after all, but not having all the powers I have, things will be much harder for you."

"All right, Master. Don't worry about anything."

Erik nodded and then left the room. With that settled, he needed to do two things. One was to plan Richard's rescue operation with the others. The second was to kill Zakir.

However, the second task had now been relegated to a secondary position. There was a straightforward reason for this shift in priorities: the likely imminent attack on the Red Palace from the blackguard.

Erik knew he couldn't let things get worse. He needed the rebels to act now to prevent any serious problems arising later.

With Richard still held prisoner, it would be impossible to kill Volkov. If the man was alive, New Alexandria's troops were still going to be a variable.

If Erik got a hold of New Alexandria, the troops were going to stop fighting., at least in theory, or not so much in theory if he played his cards well.

The blackguards would find themselves with not enough people to fight the rebels, and kicking them out of the nation would become possible.

But Zakir was a problem. Erik couldn't simply forget about him because the guy was going to be a problem the rebels had to take care of, eventually.

Erik reached a room. There, he found Fischer, Van Dyke, Emma, and Captain Lain. They were currently discussing their plans. Erik gave them some time to sort out their priorities.

"Have you decided what to do?" Erik asked. Everyone turned to look at him.

"We are giving the plan the finishing touches," Fischer said.

"Then?"

Erik listened closely as the others explained their plan.

In their opinion, now that they found exactly where Richard had been kept, rescuing him was the key first step to toppling Volkov's power. Of course, that was because, that way, Erik could focus on killing Volkov.

"June told us about the rescue operation in Fasard and said attacking with too weak a force would be risky. It may be better to save Richard first so you can then deal with Volkov without thoughts."

Fischer nodded. "So, we thought that rescuing Richard might be best for you to do. You freed us from that prison, with just June by your side."

"If anyone can rescue Richard Stone from the maximum security Grand Ducal prison, it's you."

Erik nodded. "Consider it done, then. This actually plays in my favour. I told you this already, but if it wasn't for the fact I had to rescue him, I would have stormed the Koma and killed Volkov already."

The others nodded. "Just one thing: the prison will be heavily guarded."

"We know," Captain Lain chimed in. "But we also know you're resourceful and powerful. With the information we are going to give you, you should be able to rescue him with no particular problems. If you play it well, you won't even have to fight."

"What kind of information can you provide?" Erik asked.

"We will feed you any intelligence we have on the prison and its defences," Van Dyke said. "We will also stage a distraction if needed to draw guards away, but regardless, the most important thing will be the prison's layout."

"All right," Erik said. "Aside from the layout, focus on the number of guards, the most notable people there, and stuff like that. I want no surprise, and the more I know, the better chance we have at success."

The others nodded, looking relieved and hopeful. Fischer clasped Erik's shoulder. "We'll get you everything we can find. We will take care of the rest. You just focus on getting Richard out."

Erik nodded. "Now the second question," Erik said. "What about Zakir Nguyen?"

"That... We need the Chimaeric Demons to take care of him for us. June told us there are around 1000 clones right now, not counting Hugo, June, Xavier, and Mark. They should be able to take care of him. The only problem is that we can't attack his barracks. In theory, we should not know of that place."

It was Erik who told them this. Only Momentum knew where Zakir was. If they attacked the place, it would mean Momentum talked. It wasn't weird for the rebels to target dark tendrils; the man had been their worst nightmare during these months, and it was clear the rebels wanted retribution.

The blackguards knew that. But the situation meant they needed to draw the man out. Zakir had to come where they wanted him.

"For this reason, we decided..."

"We decided?" Erik asked.

"We decided to tell Middleton you are going to join the rebels, and that you are going to do that by attacking the northern gate."

Chapter 969: Tangled Emotions

It couldn't be different. Erik was the blackguards' primary target, after all, and Volkov had to do as they said. It didn't matter he would Frant, because their real goal would be achieved.

Yet, the only thing they were going to find would be a mass of veritable demons hell bent on killing them all.

Of course, Erik wasn't sure about what would happen. He couldn't see the future, and what he predicted was just an assumption.

The main problem was that Zakir and people with more brain crystal powers were going to be there, at least in theory.

But despite a seemingly harsher situation, Erik doubted the Chimaeric Demons would fail.



If the situation turned out as he was thinking, for sure he had to tell the Chimaeric Demons that their main goal was to kill Zakir and to kill all those with more powers.

They were going to ambush the blackguards, who were going to think they were going to ambush him.

"When do you plan to make this operation?"

"In a week," Fischer said. "That's when you should ideally attack the prison. If the blackguards move the troops on the northern gate just to apprehend you, then you will have a relatively free rein within the prison. Of course, we can't be sure of that. The blackguards might expect an attack on the prison, leave people there, or even fortify the place. Most of our plan is based on conjectures."

"It doesn't matter. I bet you thought about this situation a lot. I don't think there will be problems, even if the situation doesn't play out as you imagined. Regardless, they won't find me, at least before I find Richard."

"If you say so."

Erik became silent for a second. "Then I will leave; I have to talk to the others about this."

"Yes. take care."

With that, Erik left the room. He had to tell Mira, Amber, and especially Emily about the rescue mission. Besides, he had to tell June not to bring the three on the battlefield. It was too dangerous.

June and the Chimaeric Demons had to do this alone. At least, that was what Erik wanted, but, of course, he also had to respect the three women's wishes.

<Let's hope they will understand.>

Erik wandered the halls of the Red Palace, lost in thought, but heading to Emily's room, since he had to tell the woman they were finally going to move.

He eventually arrived at her door, hearing her voice from within. Erik could sense the sorrow in her tone.

He knocked. "It's Erik. May I come in?"

There was a pause. "Come in."

The man entered and found Emily sitting by the window, her eyes red from tears.

"Emily."

But the woman didn't turn to look at him.

He approached the woman and sat down beside her. "We have a plan to rescue your father from the Grand Ducal Prison," he said.

Emily turned to face him. "It's too late."

"It's not too late." Erik tried to sound as sweet as possible to cheer the woman up, even if he had to lie.

"What would you know? Too much time passed; you had to move sooner if you wanted to save him."

"I understand your worry," he said. "But it was not my role to find out where he was; that was Fischer's and van Dyke's. You also have to understand that all of these concerns, not only your father, Emily. There are a lot of lives at stake here. Van Dyke and Fischer have a lot of responsibilities, and lives depend on their decisions."

"My father is not a priority. Right," Emily said while her voice shook a little.

"Every day he's in their clutches is another day of misery and suffering. You could have done more to find him sooner if you focused on that."

Erik paused, gathering his thoughts. He spoke calmly but firmly.

"Emily, winning this fight requires strategy. Storming the prison without a plan would have led to more casualties, including your father's. We acted as soon as we had solid intelligence. I know the waiting has been difficult, but we were always working to find Richard."

Emily's eyes welled with tears. "You don't know how it feels," she said, her voice trembling. "To wait and hope while torture continues. I trusted you to save him."

Erik felt a pang of guilt but kept his composure. "We will save him. You must trust me on this, Emily, but we must do it in a way that ensures the blackguards cannot hurt anyone again. Your father's ordeal will soon be over. I made a promise, and I'm going to keep it."

Emily nodded, wiping her eyes. Erik hesitated, then laid a hand on her shoulder. "We will get him back," he said. "I swear it."

Emily looked at Erik, her gaze searching his. After a moment, she whispered. "Thank you."

It was then that the woman did something he never thought she would do. Emily kissed him.

The man's heart swelled with emotion as Emily's lips touched his, a feeling he had not experienced in years.

While pulling her close, he responded to her kiss with a tender passion, his hands gently cradling her face.

For this brief moment, all thoughts about the blackguards, about vengeance, and danger faded away, leaving only his fluttering heart beating inside of him.

As the kiss ended, Emily gazed into Erik's eyes and smiled. "I've waited so long for this," she said.

A million emotions swirled within him as she said that, but above all, he felt a strong desire to protect this woman who meant so much to him.

The truth was that Erik never forgot her; he never stopped thinking about her or feeling attracted to the beautiful woman.

But the thoughts of Amber and Mira swirled inside of him. Wasn't he doing exactly the same thing they criticized him for?

Or something similar, at least. But, honestly, Erik didn't care. It wasn't like he was doing this because he wanted to hurt them.

It was just because he had feelings. Not only for Amber or for Mira, but even for Emily.

Amber knew this, Mira not, but at this point she should have suspected it given how he treated her.

Erik embraced the woman, lifting her off her seat and slowly going into another room.

Chapter 970: A prison of silence

Erik gently brushed a strand of hair from Emily's face as they lay in bed together.

"Are you alright?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, smiling up at him. "More than alright."

Erik returned her smile, overjoyed to see the worry and sorrow had been temporarily lifted from her face. But as Emily nestled closer against his chest, Erik saw her expression shift again.

"Are you all right?"

Emily hesitated, but then whatever was keeping her from talking vanished. "Can you really save my father?"

Erik cupped Emily's cheek.

"I can," Erik said, injecting as much sincerity and resolve into his voice as possible.

Emily lifted her head to meet his eyes. She held his gaze for a long moment before nodding. "I believe you."

Erik wiped the woman's tears from her face, "I must go soon, but I will bring you good news next time we meet."

"All right..." Emily said. "Save my father. And then come back to me."

Erik kissed her once more. "That, I promise," he said. Then he rose from the bed and got dressed. He still needed to talk to many people.

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Erik looked up at the Grand Ducal Prison's walls, the place his nemesis Volkov had imprisoned Emily's father, Richard.

A week had passed since his encounter with Emily, and now Erik was waiting for the rebels' diversion.

His thoughts wandered to the attack on the northern gate, wondering if the clones would succeed. The attack, while thought to distract the blackguards, wasn't going to be "fake". People were going to die that day. The best they could do would be to at least bring as many opponents to the grave as possible.

The rebels would lead the initial charge while faking being led by Erik and drawing the blackguards' attention long enough for the Chimaeric Demons to act.

Making sure no one was watching, he activated the Phantom Veil brain crystal power, turning his body invisible.

<I just have to wait, now...>

A few minutes later, his communicator buzzed. It was Van Dyke calling.

"The attack has begun," the man said. "Now is your chance."

"Kill them all," Erik said to the older man.

"Don't worry, we will."

Without a word, Erik ended the call. He could already hear the sounds of fighting in the distance.

"Let's hope things will go as planned."

He turned his attention to the prison's towering walls once again. The usual guards had left their posts to respond to the threat at the northern gate, leaving only a skeleton crew defending the prison itself. It was now or never.

Erik jumped up to the wall, unseen. They were not tall enough to stop him. He didn't even have to turn into a fly to reach the summit. He was simply strong enough to make the jump.

The guards noticed nothing. <System. Unlock the doors.>

<All right.>

The biological supercomputer connected to the prison's system and then unlocked each door Erik approached.

The man headed to the door, unseen.

"Invisibility is fucking great!"

He went through the door and took a moment to assess his surroundings. No guards were in sight.

The prison seemed eerily quiet, save for the occasional pounding on the few guards' boots.

<It's weird.>

It was true many left the prison to go help the northern gate defenders, but the number of guards was too weird.

<I don't like this already.>

There was a hallway leading further into the prison. Somewhere down that hallway, Richard Stone was being held captive.

Without wasting another moment, Erik went forward.

<Let's see who is nearby...>

Erik channeled mana over his instability brain crystal power's neural links.

<It looks like there are few people within the building.>

But of course, the Instability brain crystal power had a range. Erik couldn't be sure that there were other people outside of it. Not that he was using his full range right now.

He needed to know how many people were in the immediate surroundings, not all those within the building.

So far, he has encountered no resistance, or more accurately, he has avoided the guards within the prison.

As Erik hurried through the winding corridors, his thoughts turned to Emily.

He had promised to rescue her father, and he intended to keep that promise. But what if Richard was already dead?

That could be a possibility; Emily's visions were more often than not very precise, meaning that there could be a chance the man was ok.

<Let's hope the old man is still alive.>

Erik continued making his way through the building, using his powers to avoid detection.

At a certain point, he reached Sector G. The number of guards still weirded him. Besides, the hallways were darker than one would have expected from a prison. That made him feel even more uncomfortable.

What was even weirder was that Erik went through many prisoners' areas, and yet there were just a few people inside.

Normally, there would have been hundreds, if not thousands, of them, and the area should have been filled with the sounds of prisoners calling out and guards on patrol. Today, there was nothing.

<I don't like this at all.>

A strange chill crept down Erik's spine as he stayed around Sector G's entrance.

While pulling out his sword, Erik entered the cellblock.

He made his way down the row of cells, peering into each one. Most were empty. But not all of them. In a couple of cells, Erik saw the bodies of the previous occupants. The blackguards, or Volkov, didn't even bother to take them out.

<Maybe they died recently?> That was a possibility. What instead was a certainty was that these people had been tortured, as testified by the torture signs on their bodies.

<That's weird even for Volkov...>

The man was known to have a twisted liking to torture, but it shouldn't have been possible for him to torture so many people. The number of prisoners must have been bigger, and those inside should have been alive.



Erik had an idea why there were no people, and he didn't like it at all. Though, it wasn't like he could turn back now.