

BIOLOGICAL 991

Chapter 991: A turning point

Van Dyke quickly focused on the task at hand, checking his phone for the message Erik had previously sent him.

The message said that Richard was heading to the tunnel, and Van Dyke had already dispatched a trusted team to ensure his safe passage, but it said nothing about Volkov.

Erik went far beyond just saving Richard. He killed Volkov, and that was essentially a turning point in the overall situation. The broadcast also did a lot.

<Volkov died.I can't believe this...> Van Dyke and Fischer didn't think Volkov would have been at the prison, there were a lot of plans on how to kill the tyrant, but all of them were redundant anymore since Erik took care of him.

Though, Van Dyke couldn't help but wonder why the man was there. Did he get orders to head there in case Erik appeared?

Regardless, the man who oppressed them, made their lives miserable, and committed atrocities was finally gone.

Van Dyke felt relief, but it was soon overtaken by the realization that there was still much to do. The battle near the northern gate wasn't done yet. If anything, it only became much more brutal.

"Alright, listen up!" Van Dyke said to those within the room.

"Volkov is dead. Erik confirmed it. But we can't celebrate just yet. The blackguards are still out there, and they will not get out of the nation unless we make them do."

A murmur rippled through the crowd.

"We must focus our efforts on expelling them from the city now. Erik's Chimaeric Demons have been incredible until now, but they can't do everything alone. There will be a time when Erik's clones will be everywhere, and at least for some time, we will be protected. But this time is not now.

They are still not enough to kick the blackguards out of Frant, and we need every able body to stand up and fight. We push them back, street by street, block by block, until they're gone."

Fischer stepped forward. "We need Becker. He will be able to do this and lay the preparation for the Chimaeric Demons to do their job."

Van Dyke nodded at his own words. For the others, he was saying to them to cheer them up, but in truth, it was to win the uneasiness he was feeling.

"Erik says Becker is safe. With Volkov gone, he will for sure return. But until that point, it will fall on us the duty to secure New Alexandria and deal with the blackguards here. This is our chance; we must use the momentum we gained."

Van Dyke's thoughts drifted to the citizens. Volkov's propaganda convinced many that Becker was guilty of what Volkov accused him of. The fake evidence was also something to consider.

What Van Dyke was thinking was that maybe the citizens would not be so eager to let Becker in again.

However, the tide has been turning for a while now, thanks to Erik's presence.

People were beginning to see through Volkov's lies. Of course, the many crazy things he did and demanded of the citizens helped. In a sense, it was Volkov himself who made this situation possible.

"We must talk to the citizens," Van Dyke said. "Show them the reality. We must make them understand that Becker's accusations were false. We need every able body, but this means involving them. After today, my friends, it's clear we lost a lot of good people. We are not enough right now, and Erik's clones can't be everywhere at the same time."

The man paused.

"Things won't be this easy," Captain Lain said. "People are stupid most of the time. Nothing guarantees us they will see the truth."

Van Dyke breathed deeply. "Some will. Some won't. But many must be waking up to the truth. How would they justify what Volkov did?"

The rebels nodded assent, some of them at least. However, what Lain said was not wrong.

Despite this, despite the uncertainty, there was a renewed sense of purpose in the room. Erik's actions gave them something that could push the citizens to act. His actions made it really possible for them to win against the blackguards.

What was sad was that Volkov's death was needed to make the flame of rebellion really start.

That rebellion had nothing to do with Volkov. It was all about taking down the blackguards. And honestly, people were probably hesitant to support the rebels because they had been brainwashed into thinking the bad guys were actually good.

Fear also played an important role in all of this. The blackguards were the blackguards; they were strong, insanely talented, and, more often than not, had monstrous brain crystal powers and mana.

But something caught Van Dyke's attention and he turned to look at a window.

He was totally caught off guard when he saw a news channel's flying car cruising through the city.

Its bold "News Channel 5" logo stood out against the smoke-filled sky.

Volkov prevented many news channels from operating, meaning that what the news channel did was defy a dictatorial order.

That also meant that the news channel believed and reasonably verified that what Erik Romano did was not indeed false.

It also meant that Erik's message had reached the masses.

Van Dyke wasted no time and snatched up a remote, flipping on the room's massive screen.

Jessica Harlow totally owned the screen as an anchorwoman, her voice blaring on the TV.

"Live from New Alexandria, where the unthinkable happened moments ago. General Sinisa Volkov died. Erik Romano, Frant's only awakener, broadcasted Volkov's severed head on each screen in the city. How he did that, we don't know yet, but we from News Channel 5 verified that was indeed Volkov's head. "

A chilling video replay of Erik's daring act was played. Van Dyke watched in shock.

"We are now receiving reports that the citizens' are mobilizing throughout the city. They are rushing through the streets and attacking not only the city's soldiers but even the blackguards."

The camera operator moved it to show what was happening below. Indeed, the citizens were fighting against blackguards and soldiers alike.

There was one simple difference between them. The citizens were much more than them. Even the blackguards, exactly like Erik and the Chimaeric Demons, had limits. They couldn't fight against so many people.

"We have also received unconfirmed reports that General Becker, the former head of the military, was falsely accused of treason by Volkov. If this ends up being true, it would mean all that happened was a ploy staged by Volkov, and if I may add a thought, from the blackguards themselves. We can't verify this information as of yet."

Van Dyke leaned closer to the screen. It was clear who gave this tip to News Channel 5. It was Erik. Van Dyke grinned.

"This is a crucial time for our nation. Let's only hope that it will bring us to a better time."

They aired live footage of rebels and Blackguard forces battling it out in various spots around the city. The reporter didn't utter a word.

Chapter 992: Storming the Northern Gate

The broadcast had done its job, drawing the blackguards away from Richard. Erik now, though, has a far more pressing and lethal problem.

A queue of at least a hundred blackguards stood in his way of the northern gate. Erik was pumping mana through his neural links and using his Force Bastion brain crystal power to keep his speed and defense on par with the number of enemies in front of him.

The first wave of blackguards kept firing at him with brain-crystal rifles. Erik charged them. This kind of fight was almost the same every time it happened, to the point that Erik started feeling embarrassed on the blackguards' behalf.

The blackguards fired at him, and he avoided the shots. Though it looked like they were starting to understand that the rifles couldn't hit him. If they really wanted to have a chance against him, they needed to start using brain crystal powers again, those they were so eager to abandon for some metal scraps.

However, it looked like this time they understood the assignment, because that was what they did.

Not only that, but they also started sending people with two brain crystal powers at him.

<It looked like they learned their lesson back at the prison.>

Back there, there weren't people with two powers. Most likely because the blackguards' higher-ups thought a great number of people might have been enough to defeat him. But, of course, they were mistaken.

Sebastian reached the first group of blackguards. When he struck, the enhanced blow sent the first blackguard hurtling into a wall close by.

Another sprang at him from the side, but Erik dodged, turned, and delivered an uppercut that crushed his opponent's head in an instant.

Now that he was in melee range, Attacking him would be complicated for the blackguards, unless they wanted to kill their comrades, but it was insanely easy for him since he could simply spawn attacks left and right.

Then, Erik channeled mana into Volkov's brain crystal power's neural links. They were few, of course, but despite this, it was still a powerful ability.

The air hummed with electricity. With lightning twirling between his fingers, he pushed his hand ahead.

A group of blackguards were struck by an arcing lightning bolt that sent them reeling to the ground.

There was an ozone and burned flesh smell, and some blackguards even crapped themselves.

More blackguards surrounded him, but Erik would not let that trouble him.

He leaped and landed with a Force Bastion-powered kick that broke the pavement and caused shockwaves to ripple outward, knocking down multiple opponents.

Erik struck another lightning, killing more of his opponents.

[LEVEL UP.]

Energy flooded through him. That has been by far the easiest way for him to earn experience points.

The blackguards were strong, and they gave plenty of such points, most likely because they possessed a ton of mana, and that was exactly what experience was.

Just Mana called in such a way that would make him comfortable with the system.

At least that was what the biological supercomputer said to him.

Erik felt a sudden, sharp feeling as a blade glanced off his protective armor. The impact startled him, but the armor held firm and prevented the blade from cutting into his flesh.

"Fuck... I need to be careful."

With a backhand blow that sent the attacker sprawling, he spun around.

While seeking a hole in his armor, a blackguard brandished a spear and charged at him.

Erik leant aside, seized the spear's shaft, and swung lightning through it. The blackguard got burned to a crisp and fell dead to the ground.

Undeterred, the young man threw the spear down and continued moving forward.

The battle raged on, vicious and seemingly never-ending, clashing steel and cries of agony were all that could be heard around.

Erik applied every trick he knew, drawing upon every ounce of his power and skill.

Using powers to deflect approaching projectiles, he weaved and dodged through the enemy ranks with superhuman speed and struck with devastating force, while the blackguards suffered from every single attack Erik made.

Thanks to his earlier leveling up, his mana was full again. Honestly, if it hadn't been for this feature, Erik would have had to retreat a long time ago.

Even at the prison. Richard would have still been there at that point. Maybe he could have died if it wasn't for it.

That was the most cheating ability he had, because it could make him fight for a long time, as if his mana were endless.

Erik could not afford to stop. The weight of the enemy numbers dropped with every blackguard that fell, but there was still no other level up.

Eventually, though, the last of his opponents died, though Erik had some trouble.

[LEVEL UP.]

"F-fuck... This was... not simple..."

After each level-up, the number of experience points required to get to the next level increased, meaning that they became harder to get.

"I need to find a solution for this."

The Force Bastion armor shook and shimmered around him for a moment, its embrace beginning to fade as the mana pumped into it decreased.

Erik needed to save as much mana as possible, because nothing ensured he would level up at each fight.

He needed to use another strategy until he reached the Chimaeric Demons.

He glanced around and looked at the bodies on the ground.

"I wonder what the blackguards are thinking right now."

Erik moved over the dead bodies with a flat look and started running. However, something weird happened. Weird, indeed, but very good.

Another kind of energy was in the air. It was coming from rage, exhaustion, and desperation.

Around him, yells and sounds of fighting started spreading, but it wasn't just the sound of soldiers and blackguards this time.

<What the hell?>

It looked like the blackguards, and Volkov's soldiers started fighting against someone.

Chapter 993: A city divided

Armed with their brain-crystal powers, citizen groups were wreaking havoc.

The real rebellion finally started. However, if it was going to be successful, it had to be seen.

Even if the citizens fought, they were still fighting the blackguards.

Most of them had been trained, since it was mandatory to enter the military, but basically everyone who were not among Volkov's troops now had been injured in the past or were old.

That was coupled with the fact that the blackguards were many times more powerful than them, but they were even trained better, and a lot more at that.

However, there were many more people than there were blackguards. Even Volkov's soldiers couldn't do much, despite being in much greater numbers than the blackguards.

That was something already, but Volkov's soldiers—not everyone, of course—didn't know what to do at that point. Most of them were normal people, and many came from New Alexandria.

The situation got out of hand, with the chain in command in chaos, but still there, well, aside from Volkov.

They were basically fighting the people they swore to protect. Not that everyone did. A lot of the fighters were simply criminals the Crystal Cross Gang gave them.

Erik saw a gang of locals being overpowered by a small squad of blackguards. There was a terrible crunch as a blackguard swung a big mace into an old woman's head.

However, a younger man, just out of his teens, aided by at least 10 more, killed the blackguard.

The people's uprising had put the blackguards on the defensive. That was especially because the more soldiers and blackguards died, and the more citizens got their hands on their brain-crystal rifles or the fancy and valuable weapons they carried.

Slowly, things turned serious.

Erik, though, was unable to enjoy the occasion. He needed to reach June while keeping the blackguards away from Richard.

Besides, he needed to get news about the situation. The easier thing to do was to kill all the higher-ups on the blackguards' side.

That would push them to abandon the city. At that point, Becker could come back and mount a nationwide defense.

However, Erik needed June to get this information. He might know where the higher-ups were, and besides, clearing the northern gate a little more meant making the Chimaeric Demons join the fight within the city.

However, there was an alternative that required Erik to make something theatrical again.

Erik resumed his sprint through the city, observing the surrounding mayhem.

Though the streets were a battlefield, that didn't make it easy for him to reach the northern gate.

<At least the blackguards are not attacking me anymore.>

He passed by additional scenes of uprisings as he ran. People were building barriers, obstructing the streets, and establishing chokepoints with cars and other debris. Not that they were going to be useful, but at least it granted some kind of protection, even if little.

There were many bodies around, but most of them either belonged to citizens or Volkov's soldiers. The absence of blackguards could only mean one thing.

<It looks like the blackguards are giving up. I wonder how they feel now that they see they can't really rule the world if the citizens do not comply.>

A grin spread across Erik's face, but it was soon replaced by a serious look when he saw a group of blackguards trying to block his way.

<Not again...>

But they were too few. They would not be a problem; what would be was that he was going to waste mana. A grimace appeared on his face when he thought about that.

Erik observed them. They were well-armed and, for sure, determined to make him suffer.

Erik breathed and activated his Force Bastion brain crystal power again, feeling the familiar energy surge. He dashed forward, focusing on the nearest blackguard.

The woman swung her mace, but Erik easily avoided the blow. He countered with a punch to the blackguard's midsection, crushing her bones. The gauntlets in his hands got slick with her blood.

Two more blackguards attacked him using some weird mana-powered attacks Erik couldn't really describe and wasn't even interested in.

Erik faced them, ducking under the two attacks. He then electrocuted the first of the two blackguards, who convulsed and fell to the ground, twitching.

Then he focused on the second one. The man's thoughts were a mess of fear and shock as Erik's killed his comrade.

One of Erik's electricity bolts hit the blackguard square in the chest, electrocuting and charring him to the bones.

The stench of burnt flesh spread through the area.

Erik glanced down at the two smoldering figures and grinned.

"Well, that was shockingly easy," he said, a hint of amusement in his voice. "Are you really sure you want to do this?" He asked to the remaining opponents.

"You, mother fuckeeer!"

A fourth blackguard tried to flank Erik, but a single person didn't even pose a problem at that point.

The young man ran past the blackguard and kicked his chest. A bone-crushing impact sent the soldier flying backward, skidding across the ground.

The last two blackguards struggled, losing confidence. Erik cut short their fight. Lightning bolts from his hands struck the remaining blackguards at once.

"This power is so fucking strong... No wonder Volkov was so confident in his strength. I don't even know how the fuck Becker could be considered his rival."

Erik checked the area for immediate threats, but aside from the dead bodies, there was no one around. Well, aside from the citizens fighting the blackguards and Volkov's soldiers on the other side of the street.

"Better move my ass... I can't stay here any longer."

With that, Erik resumed his march toward the northern gate, or better, toward the northern district, because it was really clear now that even if the blackguards held the northern gate, that would stay like that for long because of the citizens.

Chapter 994: The perfect storm

"Well, shit," Erik said, taking in the scene. "Rebels, blackguards, Volkov's troops, and now Thaid's? It's like someone threw a handful of angry cats into a blender and hit puree."

He watched as a rebel took down a blackguard, only to get blinded by a Thaid's... tentacle? At that point, Erik couldn't even understand why that kind of creature came from within the forest, much less how no one thought about killing it yet.

Nearby, one of Volkov's soldiers was screaming at a rebel, "I'll kill you!" right before both of them had to dodge a Thaid's acid spit.

<Looks like Volkov's boys didn't get the memo,> Erik thought.

<Or maybe they're just too chickenshit to stand down after Volkov died. I guess they still think they can win this. The question is: how can they not understand that Frant under the blackguards' rule is bound to be even worse than under Volkov?>

The air was thick with the smell of blood, sweat, and something alien that Erik guessed was Eau de Thaid.

Screams, explosions, and the wet slapping sounds of Thaid appendages made the area within the battlefield an absolute fuckery.

Erik's lips curled into a smirk. This was perfect. Well, not perfect-perfect, but the kind of perfect that only came when everything's went to absolute hell and that he knew he could take advantage of.

<Time to add some spice to this shitstorm,> he searched for June within the battlefield and used his instability brain crystal power to facilitate it.

<If I play this right, I can turn this mess into my own personal playground and drive the blackguards away without having to do much.>

Erik closed his eyes, activating his instability brain crystal power. Then a tsunami of thoughts and emotions crashed into his mind.

Fear, rage, bloodlust, and pain threatened to overwhelm him and made him feel dizzy. The mental maelstrom was too strong.

<June! Where the hell are you?>

Gritting his teeth, Erik pushed harder, trying to sift through the chaotic thoughts.

A blackguard's sadistic glee, a rebel's desperate courage, a Thaid's alien hunger—each distinct thought yet blending into his mind.

"Come on!" Erik started sweating at that point, beading on his forehead as he strained to find the clone.

Minutes ticked by, feeling like hours. That had been, for sure, the hardest time Erik had to use his instability brain crystal power. There were simply too many people, or rather, creatures, on that battlefield.

Then, like a faint whisper in a hurricane, Erik caught it—June's thoughts.

However, based on them, Erik understood the clone was in a pinch. He was being overwhelmed, his power inadequate for this hellscape.

He was at the rebels' level; that was true, but they were weak compared to the blackguards. If it weren't for the Chimaeric Demons protecting him, June would have died already.

<June, can you hear me?>

<Master?>

<Yes, it's me! I'm coming your way! Disengage from the battle, because I need you for something. I'm sure we will make the blackguards scramble in fear!>

<I don't know if I can do it, master. After I led the Chimaeric demons to kill the command chain on the battlefield, someone took over, and they started targeting me.>

<How bad is the situation?>

<Bad enough for me to need 50 Chimaeric Demons to protect me. They sent double-wielders!>

<Fuck! Try not to get killed, June; I'm coming your way.>

<Yes, Master.>

Erik rushed toward the battle without hesitation. Barely touching the ground, he crossed a great distance.

At the beginning, there were no opponents in his immediate surroundings, but as he got closer, they appeared.

Blackguards, Thaid, rebels, and city soldiers. There was meat, steel, and fire on that battlefield. Mechas were there, and heavily mounted vehicles were there too.

A Thaid lunged at him from the left, all tentacles and teeth. Erik didn't even break stride as he dove under its attack, letting it crash into a group of blackguards.

"Thanks for the assist, ugly," he said, ignoring the tangle of limbs and curses he left behind.

Thoughts raced as Erik navigated the chaos. June was close. Erik could feel his thoughts.

<Don't die, June. Don't die.>

Erik finally got close to where June was, but the situation had deteriorated further.

The number of blackguards in the area had increased, causing a noticeable shift in the local situation.

These were not just the usual blackguards who could be easily dealt with by Erik's clones; they were dual wielders, highly skilled compared to most of the blackguards, and for sure much more dangerous fighters, just as June had mentioned earlier. Their presence made the situation more dangerous.

The surrounding area was even more chaotic than it was elsewhere in the vicinity.

The blackguards were determined, relentlessly trying to reach June, who was the reason why the previous chain of command had been destroyed.

But of course, they quickly substituted them, because they were all trained to get over in case something like that happened.

June was surrounded by the Chimaeric Demons, that were effectively keeping the enemy at bay. These demons were his last line of defence, which the blackguards struggled to penetrate.

However, the Chimaeric Demons finally found their match because these dual wielders, well, they were elite among the already elite blackguards.

Despite the demons' efforts, the odds were stacked heavily against June.

Erik pushed through the fray and saw a blackguard unleash a torrent of fire while, at the same time, manipulating the earth to create barriers, trapping June and the Chimaeric Demons as if he wanted to trap them in a furnace.

The Chimaeric Demons destroyed the dome and slightly retreated.

<Alright, you bastard,> he told himself. <Time to show these idiots how it's done. Let's see who ends up on top of this damn dumpster fire.>

Chapter 995: Fear the man

"Alright, assholes. Let's dance."

With a gesture, a massive wall of ice erupted from the ground in front of June and the Chimaeric Demons. It towered over the battlefield and prevented the blackguards from attacking his clone.

The wall was imposing, rising high above the battlefield with jagged spikes of ice protruding menacingly from its surface.

It was almost as tall as a five story tall building, something that anyone on that battlefield knew required massive amounts of mana.

People might have wondered why someone wasted that much mana on a battlefield, but they didn't know Erik could easily get that mana back by killing more people.

However, that wasn't the only feeling Its sheer size and the cold it released gave. People literally got shivers down their spines, if not because of fear, at least because of the chilling cold seeping into their bones and threatening to stop their hearts.

Humans were naturally scared by anything that was much bigger than them, and that wall for sure was.

Thanks to the Instability brain crystal power, he felt June rejoicing, as much as the Chimaeric Demons, seeing those walls. They understood who it belonged to. It had to be Erik's.

<That should buy us some time,> Erik thought, but he wasn't done yet, especially because the blackguards there turned to look at him.

Of course, they recognized the man they were desperately trying to apprehend.

Their eyes turned murderous, if not as such, at least enraged. The blackguards' angry eyes narrowed and their brows furrowed deeply. All their facial muscles tightened and their lips curled into malice snarls.

Erik only replied with a grin. That, and with a shit ton of mana, channeled through his neural links.

He shaped the wind into a colossal blade, because he needed to clear the battlefield in that area, to show his prowess so that everyone could see it, and revel in fear.

The wind howled, the blade took form and writhed in the air, squirming as if it was a leech eager for the blood it just sniffed.

"Hey, shitheads!" Erik said at the enemy forces. "Catch this!"

He swung his arm down, and the wind blade followed the motion, obeying his will. A will to kill.

It tore through the battlefield like the scythe of some pissed-off god of death, aimed straight at the frenzied mix of blackguards, Thaidis, and Volkov's troops that dared to attack June.

As it moved, a screech happened, because of the air that got violently torn like the belly of a lamb just slaughtered.

The smarter ones among the enemy troops, or better, the lucky ones that had enough power, threw up barriers, trying to shield themselves and those nearby. Of course, many didn't even register the attack.

Mana-infused shields flickered to life, a patchwork of barriers of all types spread across the field like flowers in bloom.

From fire shields, earth shields, and any kind of shields brain crystal powers could make. Some did not belong to powers that were purely defensive, and that meant they were the first to shatter, since they were not strong enough.

Though, those specializing in defence resisted. But not everyone was that lucky—or that quick.

The wind blade sliced through flesh, metal, and monster hide and plates with equal ease. Screams of agony and surprise filled the air, alongside the sounds of bodies being torn apart.

Erik felt a flood of mana rush through him as the screams of his enemies got cut short by his powers.

[HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

...

[HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

<Fuck me, that's a rush,> Erik thought, his whole body going wild with the influx of wild energy.

Though Erik knew that would not be enough for what he had in mind, and the reason was that he was there.

The blackguards would stop to nothing once they saw him, and that was because, despite everything, Erik was a human, and most importantly, he was a single man.

He had the clones, true, but the blackguards didn't know it was him who made them, or what they were, to be honest, and even if they did, it wasn't like he could physically double himself from a random clone.

Erik was a creature they could kill with sheer numbers if strength was not enough.

Much like a wyvern, at that point. The problem was, that contrary to wyverns, the Blackguards had all the reasons to throw their lives at him.

That was despite the battlefield would turn into an even greater mess of blood and brain matter than it already was, that was despite the massive scar left by Erik's attack and the prowess he just showed.

Despite everything, despite the bodies and parts littered the ground, while survivors scrambled to regroup, there were still some who looked at him like a prey.

However, that wasn't true for everyone. Most of those who had erected barriers in time huddled behind their flickering shields were wide-eyed behind them, full of shock and fear.

They stared at Erik with terror, realizing the true extent of the power he held.

Volkov's troops, caught in the crossfire, suffered even more. Those who survived looked around in confusion, their loyalties further shaken by this display of overwhelming force.

Then everyone turned to look at him. The blackguards had a murderous look on them.

"June!" Erik said.

From behind the ice wall, June's voice rang out.

"Yes, master?"

"You come with me."

The enemies were already regrouping. However, Volkov's troops were hesitant.

Erik's display of power hadn't been enough, but he was going to overthrow the situation soon enough, and that was thanks to a simple trick, and a single individual. June.

If fear was what he needed to make the enemy flee, then he was going to give him that fear.

"Alright," Erik said to himself, "time to press the advantage."

He raised his hands, preparing to channel his mana once more. The surrounding temperature dropped a lot.

A huge ice wall, even bigger than the previous one, appeared around June. However, the wall surrounded June. It didn't simply appear in front of him. Erik purposefully left a lot of space around him and the Chimaeric Demons within.

<Master, why a wall so big?>

<Because you can now turn, June. Shapeshift into the black wyvern.>

Finally, that moment came. The reason Erik told June not to do so before, wasn't only because June was a fake wyvern, and nearly not as strong as a toenail of such a creature, but even because he wanted to capitalize on that transformation to achieve a greater effect.

Wyverns were the bane of humanity, the top of the food chain, at least here on the Mannard continent.

To see one was bound to terrify the humans on the battlefield. Though, since they resisted Erik's attempts to strike fear in them because he was human, he had to resort to this trick to make it so. The fear they would have was going to be the same as those they had for a wyvern.

They were still willing to fight a man. That was going to be the same, but a man controlling a wyvern? Well, that was going to be a different matter altogether.

Chapter 996: Fear the beast

June stood still, surrounded by a freezing wall that stopped him from seeing the battlefield but prevented anyone from doing the same with him.

<Turn into a wyvern,> Erik said, and as he heard those words, the clone took a deep breath.

The transformation began with a low growl that emanated from deep within his core, growing louder and more intense with each passing second.

His skin rippled and his muscles bulged unnaturally. June's bones broke and reformed, lengthening his frame.

He started getting really dark skin, like some kind of magical obsidian. As this transformation continued, scales started to appear and converge, uniting to create an impervious suit of armor that sparkled when exposed to light.

Instead of nails, he got some sharp, gigantic talons that were able to rip steel and flesh with ease.

June's face was twisted and stretched. His jawline formed a snout. Razor-sharp teeth came out of his gums, incredibly long and lethal.

His eyes turned red and slitted. Massive wings spread from his back, ripping his clothes. The wings' midnight-black span covered the entire area within the encircling wall.

June's transformation culminated in a roar that was heard throughout the battlefield, shaking the earth and terrifying whoever listened to it.

Few knew about June's ability. Not even Fischer and Van Dyke did, so when they started getting reports of a roar, which they knew well to what it belonged to, they started sweating in fear.

From outside the ice wall, Erik felt the battlefield's tension rise and shift because of what was happening within the ice wall.

At that point, everyone understood what was inside of it. Though they couldn't understand where it came from.

"A wyvern!"

"A wyvern!"

People shouted in fear, after having recognized to what the roar belonged to. The thaid's presence made even the most experienced blackguards hesitate.

A hush fell over Volkov's troops as they heard the earth-shaking roar. The sound was primal and filled them with a terror that no other creature could invoke in a human.

That was a pretty powerful statement, considering there were many dreadful beasts around the world.

But only a wyvern could have that effect on people. Maybe because they resembled dragons, and dragons were powerful magical beasts, albeit those of legend.

Regardless, wyverns were a bad sign. Volkov's soldiers faced many horrors on the many battlefields and missions they had been sent on in the past, but a wyvern was an entirely different beast.

The soldiers exchanged nervous glances for a couple of seconds, but then someone started losing it.

"We need to get out of here!"

Panic spread like wildfire through Volkov's soldiers' ranks.

Volkov's army collapsed as soldiers fled instinctively. Fear spread like wildfire among soldiers, engulfing the entire force in a frantic retreat.

"Fall back! We can't fight that thing!"

Fearful and perplexed voices yelled. Cries for retreat drowned out orders to hold ground.

Some soldiers lowered their weapons and stopped fighting. Some tripped and fell in their hasty escape, causing a jumble of bodies and equipment.

The lines of Volkov's army turned into a chaotic mess. A few tried to gather their fellow soldiers, but fear won over everything.

The thought of facing a wyvern was too much for them to bear.

"Perfect," Erik said to himself, his grin widening.

<June, I'm going to weaken the wall; you destroy it and try to look as threatening as possible, then let me jump on your head, but make it so everyone can see me.>

<Yes, master.> At that point, even June was grinning. <I can already hear the organ playing.>

Erik's weakening of the ice wall caused the icy fortress to tremble and crack. The blackguards looked up at the massive ice wall with conflicting looks. Their fear, hidden behind their masks, was likely being battled, with the blackguards trying to bury it, thinking about their mission.

With a loud crash, June shattered the wall. Ice shards exploded, sparkling in the sun. The clone, the wyvern, appeared on the battlefield, his black scales instilling terror into everyone.

Every soldier in the area felt June's primal roar. The clone flapped his wings, which flapped like thunder, causing a wind and debris storm.

Even the toughest of the blackguards wavered at that point, showing signs of hesitation and uncertainty. Though they were still trying to win their fear, struggling internally to maintain their composure and resolve in the face of the daunting situation in front of them.

June's red, slitted eyes scanned the battlefield. Erik, calm amid the chaos, advanced. He strolled toward the clone, staring at his massive form.

<It is time to seal the deal, June.>

Erik walked more confidently as he approached. Both friendly and enemy soldiers watched in silence. The man jumped onto June's colossal head and landed between the clone's terrifying horns.

June held his head high to show Erik on top of him. Already uneasy, the blackguards and Volkov's troops faced the ultimate show: a human having control over a wyvern.

The battlefield became silent, because it was at that point that everyone on that battlefield understood that Erik Romano couldn't be stopped, and that meant the rebels won.

The sight overwhelmed Volkov's troops. Seeing a wyvern was scary already as it was, but a man who could control one? That was legend and nightmare material.

At that point, even the blackguards' resolve fell. Fear took hold as they realized the true extent of Erik's power.

They retreated, their ranks breaking apart in a desperate scramble to escape what they perceived as impending doom.

Erik re-established his telepathic link with June, his expression one of satisfaction. "Well done, June. Let's finish this."

Then Erik raised his voice.

"Kill them," he said to his comrades. "Kill them all! Don't leave anyone alive!"

June, the black wyvern, nodded his massive head in understanding. With a powerful and swift beat of his wings, he took to the sky, his scales shimmering in the sunlight.

It was at that moment that the Chimeric Demons' eyes turned red with bloodlust. It was, of course, figuratively speaking.

Chapter 997: A city in Flames

As the blackguards and Volkov's remaining troops fled in panic, Erik and his forces seized the opportunity to press their advantage.

For the first time since the beginning of this war, rebellion, or whatever it was, the rebels had the upper hand.

Erik and June soared over the city streets. From his vantage point, Erik directed the chase, his voice booming across the sky.

"Don't let them regroup! Push them out of the city!"

The Chimaeric Demons bounded through the streets, cutting off escape routes and herding the fleeing soldiers towards the city gates.

Their presence alone was enough to send many of Volkov's troops running in blind panic, and Erik's theatrical stunt only added to their fear.

Though that wasn't the only thing they were doing. The clones were killing the enemy soldiers the best they could.

Even the blackguards were too scared to do something. Erik Romano was simply too much. They needed to get rid of him. At this point, it was even more important than getting the source of his multiple powers.

But at the same time, the blackguards were salivating at the prospect of getting that much power. Erik's display of strength only made the situation more salivating for them.

June swooped low over the retreating forces, his massive wings creating gusts that knocked fleeing soldiers off their feet.

His roars could be heard throughout the city. Even the citizens saw him at that point, and that prompted the news channels to create a piece on it. However, they quickly saw a man on top of the black wyvern.

The camera man zoomed on Erik's face. The camera then caught the call Erik suddenly received.

"Fischer."

"Erik! What is that?"

Albeit Erik couldn't see it, Fischer had a scared and worried face as he realized what Erik could do.

"What are you talking about?"

"The wyvern, the black wyvern! You had such a powerful weapon, and you said nothing?"

"Ah, that," Erik said. "The black wyvern is June."

Fischer's eyes widened in disbelief, his mouth slightly agape. He ran a hand through his hair, his face pale and brows furrowed as he struggled to process what Erik just said.

"June?! What the fuck are you talking about?"

"Fischer, listen to me. The black wyvern is June, but this is not important right now. What is important is that you send all our forces to kill the blackguards and drive out Volkov's forces from the city. Is that clear?"

"But...?!"

"No buts, please. We need to do this now. June is not as powerful as a black wyvern; it is only a ruse. Also, contact the news channels, saying that the black wyvern is with me, and tell them to push the citizens to keep fighting the enemy. Is that clear?"

"Y—yes..."

"Good. See you later."

Erik put aside his phone.

"Good. Now I need to capitalize on this."

Erik's sight ended up on a cluster of blackguards fleeing. They were the same ones targeting June; they had two brain crystal powers. The fire and earth wielder was among them.

"It's time for some revenge, June."

<Yes, Master.>

With that, the clone flew toward the fleeing enemy.

Then, Erik channeled mana through his neural links and unleashed his fury from above, creating obstacles to impede the enemies' retreat.

Of course, that was because he simply wanted to give a chance to the rebels and the Chimaeric demons to kill them.

These people needed to die. They were too dangerous, as they were able to fight on equal ground with the Chimaeric Demons.

Given how rich and shrewd the blackguards were, it was clear the blackguards were going to give to more of their man this ability. If they did, the situation would become troublesome.

Walls of ice sprouted from the ground, blocking streets and forcing the fleeing troops towards the major thoroughfares. Wind blades sliced through the air, killing those who lagged.

[HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

...

[HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

The blackguards, despite their training, found themselves overwhelmed. Some got lucid enough to try to form rear guards to cover the retreat, but these were quickly killed by the rebels and Chimaeric Demons.

Soon, the entire group was wiped out. Then Erik noticed a large group of enemies bottlenecked at one of the city gates.

"June, let's give them a push!"

<Yes, Master.>

The wyvern let out a deafening roar, making heads turn and people trip. Then Erik unleashed a massive ball of fire toward the enemy.

From that above, the blackguards weren't able to say if the attack came from the wyvern or from Erik, and that was exactly what Erik wanted to achieve. Confusion.

The blast hit the congested soldiers like a battering ram, sending bodies flying and making everything burn in a sea of fire.

Erik's gaze swept across the city streets below. To his satisfaction, he noticed the citizens were still helping the rebels fight.

"June, look," Erik said, gesturing down. The clone saw the situation below.

<I see it, Master,> June said telepathically.

All around the city, citizens were using their brain crystal powers to kill as many of Volkov's soldiers as they could.

A shopkeeper manipulated dust, creating explosions that sent a group of enemy soldiers tumbling.

But that was the best he could do. Though nearby, an elderly woman used her mana bow to provide cover for the chasing rebels.

In another street, a gutsy teenager used her crazy bright lights to blind and mess up the escaping enemies, making it tough for them to find their way.

Erik told June to fly lower, bringing them closer to the ground. He wanted to use the maneuver to scare the enemy soldiers, to let them know he was there, and that there was no escape for them.

"Let them see us."

As they flew, he continued to bombard the enemy.

[HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.] [HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.] [HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.] ... [HUMAN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

Chapter 998: Sealing the breach

At the northern gate, chaos reigned. The streets close to it were littered with bodies, blood, and the remnants of what could only be described as a dreadful battle.

Of course, not on the same scale as the one that took place when the Thaid horde attacked New Alexandria years ago, but it was still big.

The citizens and the rebels, emboldened by their victory, continued to harass the retreating soldiers.

From his perch on top of June, Erik felt a surge of satisfaction. Finally, he was starting to really get back at the blackguards for what they did. To him, to his father, and to the world.

Sure, he had destroyed the Crystal Cross Gang; he killed Shade, but he never openly fought against them. He never made the blackguards suffer.

To help the rebels settle up didn't count, neither it did infiltrating the organization.

<About that, June, do you have news from the clones we sent to take my place?>

<Yes, sir, they got out of the city already. Unfortunately, they didn't get orders yet, so we are not sure where the blackguards are going to meet to reorganize.>

The rebels were winning, and the city was almost free from its rulers. When the last enemy got out of the northern gate, Erik knew it was time to end it all, or at least to end this part of his battle against the blackguards.

Erik pulled out his phone and dialed Van Dyke. The phone rang before the old man's voice came through, sounding tense and hurried.

"Erik," Van Dyke said.

"Tom," Erik said. There was a small silence, which was interrupted by Erik soon after.

"Seal the breach at the northern gate. Now."

There was a pause, a moment in which Erik could almost hear Van Dyke's thoughts whirling. Then, with a tone that was unexpectedly submissive, Van Dyke uttered the words Erik anticipated and wanted to hear.

"Understood, Erik. It will be done."

The young man watched from above as Van Dyke's and Fischer's people relayed the orders they received from their bosses to the rest of the soldiers.

People shouted commands; others coordinated the barrier creation.

The northern gate quickly became very busy.

Erik's eyes shone with satisfaction as he saw the wall go up, blocking any way for the enemy to come back inside the city.

To see the blackguards and Volkov's out and having to battle the thaids that were still outside and that were trying to enter the city until moments ago made him feel a grim sense of achievement.

Not that the thaids would be able to kill the blackguards. Maybe Volkov's soldiers, but the blackguards... It would be hard, even with most of these thaids originally living close to the Eldraith mountain range.

June's wings flapped, creating gusts of wind that swept across the ground below.

Cheers erupted from the streets when they saw the black wyvern fly above them. The news channel already told everyone it was under Erik's control.

To see Erik on the black wyvern, leading the battle, gave hope and pride to the citizens, but most importantly, to the rebels, who for so much time fought against Volkov. The city was theirs after almost a year of struggle. The problem was that all of this wasn't enough, all of this wasn't the end.

Volkov's death left a power vacuum, which the rebels now had to fill if they wanted to retake the entire country.

<What do we do with them, Master?> June asked as he looked at the blackguards and the remaining soldiers flee from the city, heading toward the forest.

<I already gave the order to the Chimaeric Demons. They will kill them all, well, most of them. We still need the clones to head back to the blackguards headquarters here in Frant.>

Erik did so by sending a message through the Instability brain crystal power.

<And what about the rebels now? What do you think is the situation? >

<They need to secure the city and kill those who weren't able to flee. Besides, they need to rally more people and free the other cities. I doubt the blackguards will leave Frant alone after this. They lost New Alexandria, not the entire country. At this point, it will be up to the rebels to chase them out. I need to focus on something else now.>

<They can't without the Chimaeric Demons,> June said. <They do not have that strong troops.>

<I know, that is why I'm planning to make more clones and to lend Fischer and Van Dyke a hand, but after that, after the preparations, I'm going to settle my scores with the blackguards once and for all. Besides, I think Becker will come here as soon as possible once he learns we freed New Alexandria. He will be able to do the rest with the entire country.>

Erik's and June's eyes caught sight of the Chimaeric Demons. The clones raced past the remnants of the battle, past the fallen bodies and the smoldering ruins, heading straight for the fleeing blackguards and Volkov's soldiers.

It took a little before they caught up with the stragglers. The clones made their targets scream, but they didn't last long, since they died soon after.

Erik and June left the northern gate and approached a landing spot. The cheers from the streets below rose to meet them.

<Where are Amber and the others?> Erik asked. He didn't hear about them until now and was worried.

<They retreated at some point,> June said. <Amber had ended her mana, leaving her unable to keep fighting. Emily was left without a suitable vantage point to shoot from and retreated, and Mira decided to accompany Amber to ensure her safety.>

"That is good to hear. How did they manage the battle? Did they have problems? How did they handle the situation?"

<Pretty well, all things considered... Even Emily kept her composure.>

<What about the Chimaeric Demons? How was the battle for them? The dual wielders must have been problematic.>

<They were,> June said. <Much more than we anticipated. I don't think we will be able to take advantage of their lack of neural links for long.>

<Oh? Has this been confirmed? That they need to make new ones, I mean.>

<It was.> June paused. <They mostly used one power at a time, which we assumed was their original one. The second one was used less frequently, and we more or less understood it was because of the few neural links they had.>

<This means things will become harder when they get more,> Erik said.

<Indeed,> June said. <But even the Chimaeric Demons will be able to do that. Besides, your neural link-establishing technique is much better than whatever the blackguards have.>

<But they have more numbers and more resources. I bet they will give tons of stimulating serums to their troops. At this point, they do not need to keep the price high since they have their target finally in front of them.>

<The biological supercomputer,> June said.

<Yes.>

<Ok master, but if Becker helps us, we will be able to scale up our production to the previous levels, even more if we get New Alexandria's and later Frant's full support. We might be able to make more of our own version of the stimulating serums and we might be able to get more recipes we previously didn't have. All in all, I think we might be able to equalize the situation.>

<That's all to see, June... Honestly, I think the Blackguards still have tricks up their sleeves.>

Chapter 999: Building a New Frontline

Erik and June landed inside the Red Palace garden. The cheers and jubilation from the citizens were still audible in the distance, but here, a distinct tension hung in the air.

<We did well,> June said as they landed.

<We did, Master.>

June then turned human again, and Erik gave him his shirt so at least June could cover his, or better, their, little brother.

However, as June put the shirt on, Erik saw Stephen Middleton being dragged out of the Red Palace, flanked by guards.

Middleton's face was pale, his eyes darting around in panic as he got brought away.

<The fucker didn't think the blackguards would lose, uh?>

The guards wasted no time shoving Middleton into a flying car. The vehicle lifted off, heading to an undisclosed location.

Erik watched it disappear into the horizon behind some sky scrapers before his attention went back to the clone.

<I'm done, master.>

<Good.>

They both turned their attention to the Red Palace and walked through the main door.

Inside, the people were celebrating their victory. People who had been risking their lives until now finally found a moment of respite.

Though the conversations hushed as Erik and June entered. Honestly, they didn't know how to react to them.

They didn't know June was the Black Wyvern, but Erik... Oh, Erik had made an impression. Eyes followed him, respect, curiosity, and fear clear in every gaze. But Erik expected that much, and didn't care. He got used to this kind of look back in Etrium, when people looked at him in adoration and envy after what he did in less than two years in that nation.

Then Van Dyke and Fischer appeared from the elevator that had just arrived on that floor. If by coincidence or not, Erik didn't know, though their expressions were unreadable.

They shared a silent look with Erik; they didn't utter a single word. Erik was reading their minds. While Fischer was happy, he was conflicted about many things about how the situation unfolded. Also, from one side, he was sorry that Erik had to carry most of the burden of this entire situation. It wasn't just because of the battle, but the burden of this entire rebellion.

Fischer thought he was the adult one, a military at that, and yet he failed to defeat Volkov. A kid helped them, and while the world didn't allow kids to be just that, kids, and have a simple life, that didn't mean he was happy about the fact that a kid had to win a war for them, it brought shame to him.

Erik then turned to Van Dyke. In his case, he didn't feel sorry for Erik, instead; the man feared him.

Erik was strong; he showed that many times. He knew the young man had multiple powers; even his ability to create impossibly strong clones was proof of that; however, what he showed within the prison, what he did with the black wyvern, with June, was something else altogether.

"Follow us," the old man said.

The elevator ride was silent, the hum of the machinery the only sound. When the doors opened, the top floor came into view. They started walking toward Van Dyke's office. Though on the way, he saw them. Emily, Amber, Mira, and Richard.

Emily was clutching her father's leg while tears streamed down her face. Mira and Amber were by her side, comforting her and caressing her back.

Richard was there, alive, thanks to Erik's intervention. Amber and Mira glanced at Erik when they saw him turn the corner. Their eyes were full of gratitude. They gave him a quick nod, and Erik nodded back.

Van Dyke and Fischer led him into the principal's office; there, Captain Lain was already waiting. The woman's face was cheerful but... troubled. Though there was also gratitude in her eyes.

The room was nothing like Erik imagined. Van Dyke was rich, the leader of the most prominent training facility in the country. He imagined his office being full of pricey stuff—trophies and stuff like that.

Instead, it was simple, with a large table in the center surrounded by chairs. Maps and strategic plans were strewn across the table, remnants of their battle preparations.

Van Dyke was the first to speak. "Erik, what you've done today... is beyond... commendable. We've struck a major blow against the blackguards. We freed Frant's capital, but... I guess you are aware of the fact that... this is not the end, right?"

Fischer nodded in agreement. "The city is ours, but this victory, while significant, is just a battle. There are many more blackguards throughout New Alexandria, and Volkov's troops... Let's say they weren't just people who had been forced to join the army."

Of course, Erik knew that. But still, a lot of them were criminals—the Crystal Cross Gang, the supplier.

"I know. I had no intention of stopping here. We need to solidify our hold on the capital and prepare for the inevitable attacks on the other cities. We must free the nation, right?"

Captain Lain stepped forward. "What do you suggest?"

"Well... I know for a fact we don't have many people anymore. Many died, but you know I have a solution for this."

"You want to make more clones?" Fischer asked.

"Of course, I will continue to create more clones and strengthen our forces. When Becker's comes back, things will be even easier. I doubt people would say nothing once they see him. I'm sure they will be relieved that he is here again, and... they will probably help us get rid of the blackguards."

"Many people will die."

"Many people already did." Erik had a sombre look on his face. "Besides, do you really think the other nations won't attack Frant now? The blackguards will tell everyone to attack us. We need as many people as possible."

That was an undeniable truth. The blackguards had power across the globe, or better, across the human-controlled territory.

If they controlled the underworld, if they controlled the mercenary guild in Etrium... It was clear they controlled the other nations.

Hin, for example, had been created for them, an entire nation. It was impossible for Etrium and Hin not to attack, and that was just based on the fact they were the closest nations to Frant.

The blackguards needed to reclaim the nation, so that they could control the entire world again. Besides, their target, Erik, was there.

Chapter 1000: The Stalemate

People from all across the country joined forces to fight against the blackguards, successfully liberating most of the cities that had been under their control within the country.

However, that wasn't true elsewhere. All the other nations were still heavily influenced by the blackguards.

Two of them, in particular, Hin and Etrium, launched their own attacks on Frant, creating a two-front war Erik and the others had to fight.

Though that wasn't easy, even for the well-armed troops of the two countries. That was because of what the blackguards did in the past.

Unbeknownst to most, the blackguards' caused many powerful thaids to migrate away from the Eldraith mountain range, which bordered Etrium and Frant, meaning that both countries were swarming with Thaids coming from the mountain range.

However, the situation worsened during these five months. Apparently, what the blackguards were doing in Mur pushed more monsters to migrate to the Mannard continent.

Even some weaker wyverns had been forced to leave the peaks of the Eldraith mountain range, and that made launching the attacks on Frant harder, as now the attackers had to navigate through unfamiliar and dangerous territories full of monsters they couldn't even kill.

Frant's troops had been severely weakened by what had happened during the past years. With Becker's loyalists being killed by Volkov, and later, with Volkov's loyalists being killed by Erik.

This meant that now, more than ever, the citizens played an important role in Frant. It didn't matter they were weak; it didn't matter they couldn't fight.

There was always room to improve and to help. Besides, Erik circulated the modified version of Liberty Watch's training technique to the masses, strengthening everyone and making the entire process faster.

However, the results one could achieve in five months were not that much. Yet, it helped, if even a little.

Though the technique could also reach their enemies, and that was why Erik asked for strict regulations for the technique usage, and made Becker implement severe monitoring procedures

within the city. Honestly, nor Erik nor Becker liked it that much, because they didn't want to do the same things Volkov did, but it wasn't like they had a choice.

There might still be some blackguard loyalists hanging around, but there could also be some greedy folks waiting for someone to give them some New Dollars in exchange for the technique.

But not only Frant was growing stronger, even the others were.

Now, nearly all the blackguards possessed two brain crystal powers, and those who already had such powers five months earlier had grown even stronger.

Essentially, many things made the general fighting prowess increase.

On Erik's part. During these five months, he focused on training and creating new clones, the Chimaeric Demons, to reinforce Frant's troops.

He also increased the number of his neural links for that brain crystal power, which were essential to make it so he could make more clones.

In fact, the greater the number of neural links, the lower the amount of mana needed to make the Chimaeric Demons.

In the end, his hard work paid off, and Erik's ability to create clones increased.

He once could only make around 30 clones per day, but now, after having reached the mark of 35 neural links, he could make up to 500 a day.

Over the course of five months, Erik had amassed an impressive army of 75,000 Chimaeric Demons, which, of course, got sent here and there to bolster Frant's troops.

Despite this significant increase in numbers and that Becker came back to power, all of this still wasn't enough to defeat the blackguards in the southern cities and the combined forces of Hin and Etrium in the north.

Frant held ground thanks in large part to the strength of the Chimaeric Demons, but even the citizens' support played an important role.

The situation had become a stalemate, with neither side able to gain an advantage.

The slightest shift in the current state of the war could tip the scales in either direction.

The thaid's migrating, the blackguards asking for other countries' help.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Fischer asked. The man was with Erik, Becker, and Van Dyke, discussing the things to do next.

Erik met Fischer's gaze. There was no shred of doubt in them. "Yes, I want to end what my father started."

"Erik, do you realize I cannot give you the same support I gave to Lucius when he went to Hin, right?" He paused.

"The situation there will not be simple. The war is now on Frant's shores, unlike in the past when it was on Hin's."

"There's nothing to worry about, Armand. I can reach the Mur continent easily if I go with June, and whatever help I need, well, I can simply make more Chimaeric Demons on the way, and they will take care of the rest."

"If you say so."

"Do you have any idea where the Blackguards headquarters might be located?"

Becker thought for a little. He recalled something Lucius had told him some time ago.

"Well... Lucius said something about the fact it was on an island, but there are a lot of them around Hin. So, it's not much information to work with."

"It's already enough. Thank you."

"Yes, but Erik, are you sure targeting their headquarters is the best thing to do? We really need your help here..."

"It is, Armand. By killing their leaders, the entire organization would crumble. I will make it harder for them to coordinate their troops in Frant... No, everywhere in the world. The Chimaeric Demons will take care of the remaining stragglers then... As for my help here... I provided you with enough troops to resist any attack.

The clones are strong, and the last ones are even stronger than the previous ones."

The others in the room exchanged glances. If he could indeed kill their higher-ups, then the blackguards were going to retreat regardless of the situation.