

## **Inevitability 31**

Chapter 31 – 31 Celebration

31 Celebration

Despite feeling the usual pinch, Lumian didn't stop his sister as Ava, Reimund, and the others turned around and walked towards the nearby buildings. He deliberately fell behind and whispered to Aurore, "Call me if you hear back from Novel Weekly."

**“Don't worry, I'll keep you updated,” Aurore replied, giving Lumian a reassuring look.**

The festive and joyous blessing tour continued with songs as they knocked on the villagers' doors in Cordu.

Finally, they arrived at the administrator's residence, which was modified from a castle from the Sauron royal era. It was located on a hill at the edge of Cordu, dark in color with two towering towers.

The outer walls surrounding the building had long been torn down. Lumian and company passed through the garden specially created by the Béost couple and arrived at the entrance.

The door was four to five meters tall, a brownish-green color like trees, and looked very heavy.

However, it was divided into upper and lower parts and only needed to open the two-meter-tall part below unless welcoming esteemed guests.

The Spring Elf was the embodiment of spring and the messenger of the harvest, so she deserved the most honorable treatment. At this moment, the heavy door was completely opened, and Madame Pualis stood there in a light green corset.

Her lady's maid, Cathy, stood to the side with a basket woven from tree branches, half a step behind.

Ava walked over and sang a song of blessings.

Madame Pualis listened quietly with a smile on her face, which made her look noble and reserved. The young men who followed the Spring Elf didn't dare to look at her, but Lumian, who had "listened" to the other party and the padre doing the deed, scoffed inwardly when he saw this.

As the song ended, Ava exchanged the seeds of a tree for a basket of eggs.

The blessing tour was over, and Lumian, Reimund, and the other lads escorted Ava, the Spring Elf, to the mountain river not far from the village for the second segment of Lent: the waterside ritual.

Arriving at the place where geese were usually herded, Ava approached the clear river and did a simple dance, repeating the song from before. Meanwhile, Lumian and the other lads stood still, seven to eight meters away from the Spring Elf.

After the dance, Ava took out a chopped turnip from a basket beside her feet, given by a particular villager, and threw it into the river.

As she threw, she sang, "A bumper harvest! A bumper harvest!"

When Ava was done, Lumian stepped on the ground and ran over in a few steps. He bent down and took out the cut turnips from the basket and threw them into the river.

**“A bumper harvest! A bumper harvest!” he shouted.**

The remaining lads were a tad slower than Lumian, but they rushed towards Ava, afraid of falling behind. They took out turnips and radishes from the basket and threw them at different parts of the river while shouting “bumper harvest.”

Reimund failed to take the initiative and couldn't beat the others, so he was the last to complete the ritual.

The next second, he saw the malicious smiles of Lumian, Guillaume-junior, and the others.

They lifted Reimund up, shouting “bumper harvest,” and threw him into the water with a splash. Reimund was drenched from head to toe.

The people on the shore even picked up soil and branches and threw them at him.

This was part of the waterside ritual: the person who completed the last prayer would be thrown into the river and not allowed to go ashore. They could only swim a little further down and quietly return home to hide until it was dark.

Reimund wiped the water droplets off his face and struggled for a few seconds before heading downstream.

Only then did the team escort Ava to the Eternal Blazing Sun cathedral at the edge of Cordu's square.

It was almost noon. Most of the villagers, including Lumian's sister Aurore, had gathered at the cathedral, which was not as grand as those in the city. The tallest one was only 11 to 12 meters, with a dome in an arc that looked like an onion from the outside. Looking up from the inside, a dazzling sun mural greeted their eyes.

The entire cathedral was golden in color and looked very bright, which was also the common style of all the Eternal Blazing Sun cathedrals.

The altar was located in the east, and all kinds of Sun Flowers surrounded a huge Sacred Emblem.

On the surface of the Sacred Emblem, the golden ball and the lines representing light formed a symbol filled with mysticism: the symbol of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

High up on the wall behind the altar, there were two pure glass windows inlaid with gold foil. Every day, when the sun rose, the light would shine from here onto the Sacred Emblem.

On the west side of the cathedral, there were two similar glass windows to take in the glow of the setting sun.

As this was not a formal ritual of the Church but a traditional celebration of the people, Padre Guillaume Bénét did not appear. Instead, Administrator Béost hosted the celebration with Ava, who was still dressed as a “Spring Elf,” standing next to him. Musical instruments such as flutes and lyres sounded, and the villagers sang songs that praised spring and prayed for a bumper harvest.

They hadn't rehearsed, so the singing wasn't uniform, and some people even sang and danced, making the scene lively.

Lumian's mouth opened and closed, but he didn't make a sound—he was simply going through the motions. On the other hand, Aurore, who was beside him, was engrossed in her singing, taking the opportunity to have fun and raise her voice.

As he was only going through the motions, Lumian had time to look around.

He didn't notice any abnormalities in the villagers' behavior. He subconsciously looked up at the golden sun mural on the dome.

Then he saw it—the thing he couldn't quite put his finger on.

The villagers weren't praising the sun.

For a village that worshiped the Eternal Blazing Sun, this was strange. Words like “Praise the Sun” and “My God, my Father” were staples of daily life, but Lumian realized he hadn't heard them in a while!

As a quasi-believer and having skipped activities in the cathedral since crossing the padre, Lumian hadn't thought much of it before. But something about the solemn and golden atmosphere of the cathedral made him realize that this was not normal.

And then he remembered the letter of help that he had reconstructed, the urgent plea for assistance from someone in the village: “We need help as soon as possible. The people around us are getting weirder.”

The people around us are getting weirder... At that moment, Lumian gained a deeper understanding and agreement with this sentence.

Lumian's heart raced as he looked around, searching for Leah and the other foreigners.

But they were nowhere to be found at this Lenten celebration.

Seriously, they don't appear when they're needed... Lumian muttered inwardly.

Lumian forced himself to join in the chorus, pretending not to notice anything out of the ordinary.

Finally, the singing died down, and the celebration ended. Lumian whispered to Aurore, his voice urgent, “Go home first. I have something to tell you later.”

He knew he couldn't leave yet; as an escort for the Spring Elf, he had to participate in the final part of the ritual.

He couldn't force his way out of the cathedral, risking an anomalous eruption.

Aurore nodded thoughtfully. “Okay.”

She didn't ask further and left the cathedral with Madame Pualis and the other villagers, leaving Lumian behind.

The cathedral was empty, save for Lumian and a handful of lads who had participated in the blessing tour.

Ava, the embodiment of the Spring Elf, stood in the center of the room, surrounded by the contributions, symbolic items that hadn't been thrown into the river—herbs, axes, shovels, whips, and goose sticks.

Lumian and his companions had to wait for someone to come in from outside and announce the departure of the Spring Elf before they could take off her crown, necklace, branches, and leaves. During this process, they needed to leave a gap for the Spring Elf to leave Ava's body.

In just 20 to 30 seconds, footsteps echoed from the cathedral's entrance.

Lumian instinctively looked up. Two figures entered the cathedral.

The thin Shepherd Pierre Berry had rushed back to attend Lent. His eyes were sunken, and he wore a dark brown long coat with a hood. He had tied a rope around his waist and was sporting new black leather shoes.

But what caught Lumian's attention was that his greasy black hair was now clean and smooth. Even his messy beard had been tidied, and it was now neater and shorter than before. As usual, there was a faint smile in his blue eyes.

The other man was Padre Guillaume Bénet, adorned in a white robe with gold threads, befitting of his role as a clergyman. He had sparse black hair and a slightly hooked nose, but he exuded a dignified aura. Despite standing at less than 1.7 meters tall, he still seemed to tower over Shepherd Pierre Berry.

The padre... Why did he come? Lumian was surprised and puzzled.

As a clergyman of the Eternal Blazing Sun Church, he had no business being here, at a folk celebration that didn't include a segment to praise the sun.

Lumian's mind jolted as he recognized that the padre and his group were previously up to something sinister, especially considering his past conflict with them. He quickly retreated to the side of the stained glass, moving slowly and silently to avoid drawing attention to himself.

The group hadn't yet surrounded Ava, the Spring Elf, so they were standing in different places, making Lumian's actions inconspicuous.

Ava was surprised to see the padre, but she quickly remembered his importance in the village. It made sense for him to announce the end of the Lent celebration. She smiled once again.

Padre Guillaume Bénet and Shepherd Pierre Berry approached Ava, and the former spoke in a deep voice.

**“Send the Spring Elf off.”**

Other than Lumian, people rushed forward to surround Ava.

**“Send the Spring Elf off!” Shepherd Pierre Belly shouted as he bent his back with a smile.**

Not good! Lumian's heart raced as he stepped forward, his body reacting before his mind could catch up.

But it was too late. Shepherd Pierre Berry picked up an axe from the pile of symbolic items, and with a tight grip and a powerful swing, the axe came cleaving down.

Blood spurted from Ava's neck, forming a thick red mist.

Thud.

Lumian watched in horror as Ava's head fell to the ground and rolled a few times in the blood, finally stopping, head facing up.

She still had a look of joy in her eyes.

Having just taken two steps in her direction, Lumian's heart sank. He immediately turned around and turned to flee towards the stained glass.