

The Duke 541

Chapter 541 - Help...

"Everyone! Fall back right this instance!"

My voice went through the loud noise of the war. But that was because everyone finally noticed what was going on. They looked up, only to see that the dark sky was slowly being replaced by a dark veil. This darkfield that was this huge and stable only spoke danger.

"Fall back!" I repeated although I knew we all had nowhere to run or hide. But at least they weren't surrounded by the rebels. None question the order, as Glory also shouted. Even though they didn't dive deeper into the rebels' temporary base, retreating was still a challenge.

It was a good thing that Fabian was with them, so he could watch over them. Meanwhile, I tossed the bow to the person standing in front of the gates as I jumped down.

"This won't do," I said as the effectiveness of backing everyone up with a bow and arrow went down to negative zero. "Lakresha."

I called my scythe once again, which instantly took form in my hand. I marched forward while those in the back lines rushed back, passing by me while yelling to retreat. If not for the torches, normal humans wouldn't see a thing inside this void.

This darkfield gave off Stefan and Zero's aura. Hence, that only proved that those two were in here. Fabian and I had to at least reduce the rebels in half. My gut feeling told me things would just get worse from this moment on.

"Arghh!!!"

I leaped to the source of the yell to rescue him. In an instant, I slew a rebel from the back, tossing it to the side. As soon as I saw the victim, my eyes landed on his arm. I hadn't even processed how his arm looked as if a monster bit him when the person I stabbed rose once again.

'Oh no...' I could hear a hiss as I slowly turned my head to the side.

Black sclera, black fangs, while black liquid dripping from the corner of his lips. Veins from under his temple protruded angrily. His fingers revealed sharp claws as he curled them, producing a distinct cracking sound.

Undead.

My horror had come true. These rebels turned out to be guinea pigs, used to be undeads slash abnormal vampires. If my senses were correct, this monster wouldn't live tomorrow. But their survival wasn't the goal in here. These people were nothing but disposable pawns.

"Ugh..." the undead ground his fangs at me, but his eyes seemed to be in pain. "...help...."

My heart instantly dropped to my stomach upon catching his muffled cry for help. These people... these rebels that we had been fighting to death... were they simply deceived? For a moment, I froze at this possibility that rose in my head.

The possibility that not all rebels wanted to rebel. Instead, some of them seemed they were lured to be in this situation. Mind control could do all that, especially if the person controlling them were... as capable as Stefan and Zero.

My grip around Lakresha tightened as all I saw was red. In an instant, I ended that undead by slicing him right in the middle. I watched it slowly get separated, dropping on either side with a blank expression.

I looked down, wide-eyed. My entire body shook, not from excitement or from fear, but from intense anger. The word furious was an understatement of what was swelling in my chest right now. Neither was guilt nor remorse for fighting possibly 'innocent' people.

I couldn't pinpoint the feeling of what it was exactly. But one thing was for sure, I would kill Zero and Stefan. The people passing by me continued while I just stood there, gazing at the split person.

An army of undeads and abnormal... I scoffed before laughing in ridicule.

"Your — Your Majesty?" called the one I save while pressing the wound in his arm. He looked scared, but not in this situation. The way he looked at me was as if he was uncertain if I would save or kill him.

I extended my arm to him. "Get up and run. Get treated."

He hesitatingly took my hand, and I pulled him up. He thanked me nervously, but I just jerked my chin up.

"Go and never look back. If a rebel approached you, make sure to smash their skull to pieces," I said coldly before turning my back against him, facing my people who were running in my direction.

As I said, this war was something we could no longer turn back. Even if the fact that the rebels weren't all rebels were laid on the table, I steeled my heart before it broke. The only thing I could do to them was to end their sufferings by a quick death.

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, gripping Lakresha tightly. I entered a calm state of mind, shunning the voices and figures running past me. My shoulders relaxed and so was my breathing. Once I slowly opened my eyes, I guided Lakresha to my other palm, slicing across from it.

I raised my eyes, batting it ever so slowly as I watched the rebels pause and sniff. Unlike previously, these undeads and abnormal would prioritize the aroma that would make their stomach grumble.

"What... why did they stop?" someone from my side slowed down as he spoke in confusion.

"Don't stop. Keep retreating and regroup in front of the gate," I replied solemnly, without casting the person a look. "Tell everyone to crush their heads if they approached."

"Your Majesty?!"

"Fabian." I ignored the confused person as Fabian approached me. His eyes fell on my bleeding hand before raising it to meet my gaze.

"I won't conserve energy. I will end these rebels while you look after them."

"I can't." His expression was unchanging and aloof. "Your Majesty, if you are going to fight the rebels all on your own knowing they were --"

"That's an order." He abruptly stopped as my gaze veered past him. "I'm not on a suicide mission. I am simply asking you to take a rest since Zero and Stefan would be here any moment. Take care of them first. I will join you shortly."

His lips parted and closed a couple of times. Fabian was displeased about this, but he ended up bowing.

"Your wish is my command, Your Majesty.." He planted his palm across his chest before I leaped forward, luring the rebels away.

Chapter 542 - Sincerely Glad To Meet Her Majesty

"Your wish is my command, Your Majesty."

Fabian watched Lilou's back as she jumped forward, luring the rebels away. Since her blood was pure, these undeads and abnormals would easily follow the scent of her blood.

"She had decided," he muttered as his jaw tightened, thinking that no one would stop her anymore. "She never changes."

To Fabian, he understood Lilou's reasoning for wanting to fight the rebels all on her own. That was to carry the deaths of those innocents. He had already realized this when someone transformed into an undead. They were even more surprised than him as they slowly lose their control, agonizing at the pain of shifting.

Fabian might not have the heart to sympathize, but Lilou was different. She didn't want these people — her people, from soiling their hands even more. She would rather carry the guilt of the deaths of the rebels, who were simply deceived by wicked individuals like Stefan and Zero.

'I would keep that a secret, Your Majesty,' Fabian whispered in his mind. 'Your people won't know that they had to slew innocent people.'

He ordered everyone to run as fast as they could, helping others who were faced with undeads. Since she was luring them away, the enemies coming at them reduced significantly. Therefore, it was easy for him to detect the enemies around. Their retreat wasn't smooth, but it was a lot easier with little numbers of enemies coming at them.

Soon, they all reached their starting point. As others returned to the area, which gave a little more sense of security, they finally saw the enemies following Lilou. Only then did they realize how they all returned in one piece.

"Your Majesty..." Omar called with a shaking voice, seeing one woman running around with large groups of rebels wanting to kill her. She would consistently fight and down several rebels, but the numbers were still the same. Or rather, they were just too many to notice the reduction.

"What is going on?"

"Why are they only aiming at her? And what are those monsters? I already killed that person earlier, but... but he — he stood up."

The confused and worried voices slowly resonated in the air until Jaime spoke. Everyone turned their head to him, wide-eyed.

"Are you all stupid? You haven't noticed with the pungent smell of blood and death, but Her Majesty is a royalty; a pureblooded vampire. Among everyone in here, we can say she is the best dish to feast on!" Jaime paused as Glory grabbed him by the collar once again.

"How dare you compare Her Majesty to a dish?!" he grumbled, eyes glinting as he also felt helpless. He wanted to help Lilou, to support her, to fight alongside her. But every time unexpected things happen in the middle of the battlefield, she would step in to protect them all.

"That is because that is the easiest way for you fools to understand Her Majesty's sacrifice!" Jaime argued while grinding his teeth. "She is luring those monsters so we can all retreat safely! I am clear that this... I am at fault. However, just like you and everyone else who is still inhaling this rotten smell, I want to live. I want Her Majesty to live! I don't care if I get punished after this or die so long as Her Majesty... my savior lives!"

Jaime's voice pitched until it shook. He knew it was already too late for him to correct his past actions. He wasn't even hopeful of being forgiven. Jaime never thought he would ever change, but this situation would change anyone. Especially if the Empress, herself, never hesitated to use herself as a shield.

For who?

For them. For sinners like them.

"All my life... Minowa is neglected by the royals — by the king. All my life I believed that even if this place will burn to ashes, no one will come to rescue it," he confessed, as his breathing grew ragged. "For you and me, for all of us. I will not excuse myself or wash my hands by justifying my past actions because I am still selfish for I... I am sincerely thankful for this day... that I met Her Majesty."

Glory loosened his grip around Jaime's collar. The latter knew his sins were too unforgivable, as he already caused many people suffering. But still, by his selfish nature, instead of regret, he was genuinely happy to this day to meet a royal that was different from the rest.

"That is a nice speech, Viscount." Just then, Fabian also arrived while wiping his hand with a bloodstained handkerchief. "Her Majesty said you all had to catch your breathing."

He slowly turned around, letting Maleficent rest for a short while. "Her Majesty is strong, so you don't have to worry about her."

"Butler, what are we supposed to do now that we only needed to fight a few monsters?" Omar inquired in a hurry, thinking that they couldn't just stay in the line once again. "We can help Her Majesty! We are all willing to help her!"

"If you want to help her, then help those four people dragging those injured back in the estate." Fabian pointed his thumb to the side, making everyone turn their heads at those four individuals checking and carrying their already fallen comrades.

"You already did enough," Fabian added, but this displeased Glory and Jaime.

"How was it enough?! Those rebels are still a lot and were attacking Her Majesty all at once!"

"This man is right!" Jaime backed up at Glory's barking. "How can we all say it is enough?"

Fabian's expression remained the same, batting his eyes ever so slowly. "Less than half of the rebels are either dead or injured, unable to fight. If Her Majesty and I fought them all, we would exhaust ourselves. But... these numbers are enough to only graze her. She isn't someone foolish to ask us to retreat, only for her to die miserably.

This time, Fabian slowly turned around to face everyone squarely. He traveled his eyes across these people. Although they all looked pathetic and dirty, the fire in their eyes didn't diminish at all.

"Do you see that?" he erected his finger, pointing at the dark sky. "That is called a darkfield. To cast something as stable as that only means we are all cattle in the slaughterhouse. No matter what we do, we are trapped in it. Until that vanishes, we are still fighting for our lives."

Fabian paused as his eyes darkened, rubbing his skull ring. Their expression instantly turned white with this information, but he didn't want to keep this from them.

"For this thing to exist, that only means someone who is more capable and powerful than those rebels and those you saw earlier are in here. For example..." he trailed off as a dark shroud surrounded Fabian's shoulder down to his palm.

CLANG!

In a blink of an eye, everyone only saw Fabian thrusting his spear but was stopped with just fingers. Everyone's eyes landed on the man that suddenly entered the scene, clipping Maleficent's blade in between his index and middle finger with ease.

"... for example, this person." Fabian continued, with eyes glinting as he shoved his spear, making his new enemy jump back a little. "It's been a while, Your Majesty."

The corner of Zero's lips stretched into a polite smile, standing leisurely, as if unaffected by the entire situation.

"It had been, Fabian." Just as Zero greeted back, three more figures appeared behind him. And that instant, Fabian was certain they all came to eliminate him first.

'Ru... It was a long life.'

Chapter 543 - How Lovely

Fabian swung his spear down, gazing at the multiple figures behind Zero. His eyes glinted as the corner of his lips curled up into a polite smile. There was no greater honor for him than getting this recognition from these powerful vampires. For them to come at him like this, only meant Fabian's presence was a threat.

"I like it," he said in delight. "For you to come at me, I am flattered."

"Well, we cannot keep underestimating you, can we?" Zero grinned until his fangs showed. "Mister Butler, this is unlike you. From what I heard, an act of heroism is the last thing you will ever do, unlike that big brother of yours."

Fabian's smile persisted, watching Zero tilt his head as he glanced at the alarmed people behind him. Even though Fabian couldn't see the people's faces, he could tell that they were scared out of their wits. After all, Zero's aura changed. He could tell with just a glance that this man... had become ten times stronger from the last time he had seen him.

"Are you protecting them because of Lilou? That former fiance of mine surely never changed, huh? She still thinks she can protect everyone whilst putting herself in danger," Zero added as he turned his head in Lilou's direction before setting his eyes back to the butler. "Of all people, you're the last person I think will get influenced by her."

"I am simply following Her Majesty's orders. Nothing personal."

"Nothing personal?" Zero chuckled while shaking his head lightly. "Sure, sure. If that is what you want."

Everyone held their breaths as they instinctively took a step back. Fabian and Zero and his lackeys weren't saying anything, but the tension between them thickened; suspending the air around them. They were certain if they got too close, they would suffocate to death before any weapons could take their lives.

Omar didn't blink, eyes on Fabian's back. This was too much for all of them. Four against one? Although Fabian faced two opponents earlier, he had been fighting with them ever since. Not to mention, these people were even stronger. Just who was this butler for these people to come together to take just one opponent?

Zero lifted his chin up a little as his eyes drooped. "Take him."

As soon as those words escaped his mouth, the three figures standing behind him disappeared. They were even faster than the bearers and Acheron as everyone looked around to find them. Only a second later did they see three figures above the butler, while the latter stood still.

Fabian slowly looked up, only to see three tips thrusting in his direction. He didn't move, nor did he show it alarmed him. Instead, his eyelashes fluttered ever so slowly.

"If you are coming at me, you should give your all from the very beginning," came out a whisper and disappeared inches before the swords pierce through his skull. All they had seen a second later was Fabian reappearing behind them, stabbing one man from his nape through his throat, sliding it up to his head as if a person's bones were as soft as tofu.

Everyone's jaw fell down as they heard a soft thud. Two figures hopped back while Fabian stepped his foot on the dead man's back. Their eyes fell on the man's split head, making their hearts drop to their stomach. Not because it was too gory for them, but because of how things happened in a split second.

Slowly, all eyes raised at Fabian and saw him stretching his neck leisurely. Jaime's mouth opened and closed, but he had already lost his voice at this point. He was already a noble vampire, but even so, he knew he wouldn't stand a chance against this butler. On the second thought, Fabian was the royal family's butler. So, of course, he wouldn't be normal.

"That was fast." Zero clapped while staring at his dead shadow knight, but he wasn't surprised.

"This is what happens if they go easy on you. I'm glad you're teaching my people a lesson."

"I will be holding a class soon. You can sign them up if you like." Fabian's smile persisted before he vanished and reappeared in front of Zero. "It's no fun if you just observe, Your Majesty."

Fabian swung his spear towards him, only to get blocked by the other two figures. This time, they were even faster after knowing sizing up Fabian's strength on the get-go was a mistake. This man's very tactic was his first move, and they fell for it.

"Impatient, are we?" Zero smiled as the two pushed Fabian away. "Are you that in a hurry to kill me?"

"I'm just the type of person who goes after the root of the problem, Your Majesty."

"Make sense."

"It will be efficient if you attack with them, though," Fabian advised, darting his eyes between the two figures standing guard on either side of Zero. "Or are you conserving your energy, knowing Her Majesty will come for your head?"

"Well, maybe you are right. I know she will get rid of those annoying ones, so I'd rather not exhaust myself since..." Zero bat his eyes and cocked his head to feel Lilou's growing aura. "... she will surely try to kill me this time."

Zero laughed, and as he did, those two figures dash in Fabian's direction once again. This time, the latter didn't idle as he knew these two wouldn't drop their guards anymore. So he fought them with everything he got, keeping him busy while still maintaining his other focus on those people.

Zero watched them clash, clapping in awe as this butler surely never disappoints. These two fighters were one of the best warriors in the Spade Kingdom, but Fabian was fighting them without getting overwhelmed. Among all of them, he was the only one who could see every movement.

After some time, Zero tilted his head to the side and pressed his lips until the sides of it curved down. As he did, he raised his brows and set his eyes on the 'insects' standing on the same ground as him. He noticed that Fabian couldn't fight to his heart's content because his focus was split.

"It's no fun if he doesn't show me everything," he muttered as the side of his lips stretched into a diabolical grin, staring at the distracted crowd. "Let's see."

His eyes drooped, keeping his smirk as he suddenly appeared in front of Jaime. Once his presence to them was known, Jaime, who was the closest to him, held his breath, wide-eyed. He slowly set his eyes to Zero like a rusty robot, frozen in place when he met the latter's eyes.

"It seems your existence is distracting him." Zero carefully raised his hand and reached for Jaime's head. No one dared to run because they couldn't. Before this man, his aura alone was enough to subdue inferior vampires and humans like them.

They're dead, was what their mind told them. This time, for sure, they were dead.

Just as Zero's claws were an inch away from Jaime's, he stopped. The side of his lips curled up into a smirk, turning around to see a small darkfield was created from a distance before it instantly exploded. Even from this vantage point, he could see the only person who came out alive of that darkfield, standing tall among the mountain of corpses with a gigantic scythe.

"My... how lovely," he whispered, staring at Lilou as she ran her bloodstained fingers through her silver hair. She then tilted her head back before cocking it in his direction, eyes glowing in bright red.

Zero licked his fangs because even in this distance, she was locking eyes with him. "I should have a taste of her before killing her. She always has her own strange way of arousing me." He leaped away when Fabian sent someone flying to his standpoint.

Zero gazed up, only to see Fabian's unblinking eyes with no trace of human emotion. "Oh? Did you hear me, Butler?"

Chapter 544 - Law Is More Important

As the undeads and abnormal followed me, I figured killing five at once would only exhaust me. So, without a second hesitation, I led them to a distance before stopping. I pivoted on my heel only to see them all coming at me while baring their disgusting fangs.

I had to take a gamble. I already felt Zero's presence and a few more. Fabian would be in trouble if I didn't end these immediately. Hence, I raised my hand in front of me with my palms facing down.

"Darkfield," I whispered, and my hand instantly trembled, not used by the power I was trying to unleash. A dark shroud instantly enveloped everyone. It was small compared to the one enveloping Minowa, but I could handle this size. The army of undeads and abnormal didn't seem to care as they had completely lost their reasons.

"May you all rest in peace."

In this darkness, I had all the advantages. They all froze at my command, slaying everyone while the darkfield formed black hands underneath their feet. If bloodfield usually sucked someone's blood and life, darkfield aimed for their soul. Since the Bloodfang clan sacrificed their lives for someone like me to get born, I could use darkfield.

Although it also had its downside. Unleashing darkfield or bloodfield took a lot of energy and it was exhausting. I was not Sam or Zero or Stefan who would use these abilities at will and could control it. But I had no choice. I had to get out of it alive and fight.

"Die," I muttered, and even without using my scythe, bodies collapsed one after another, as the hands dragged them all down. The sight of it was akin to a literal hell, but I didn't even flinch at the red mist ascending in the air as blood flooded my feet. To help the darkfield, I also moved and slew anyone until the bodies piled up into a mountain.

Before I knew it, I stood at the peak of this mountain while holding the last remaining one on the neck.

SNAP!

I let go of it and its body stumbled down, joining the pile of bodies underneath me. The darkfield then disappeared as if it was exploding, making me feel the distinct auras of our powerful opponents and the slight quietness of the surrounding. Those undeads and abnormal who didn't enter my darkfield were still alive, but none of them approached me.

"Fabian will be angry for having to look after those fools." I ran my fingers through my hair, staining it with red streaks while tilting my head back. I then cocked my head in the mansion's direction, locking eyes with Zero from this distance. Zero's smirk was clear to me, seeing him leap away when Fabian sent someone flying to the former's standpoint.

"I wonder what idiotic words Zero said to make Fabian that angry," I wondered under my breath, as Fabian's aura was stronger than ever. This time, our butler was pissed. I have never seen him lose it, so knew Zero must have pressed a button he shouldn't. But I didn't dwell on it for too long as I gazed around.

'Those fools can handle these little numbers,' I thought, thinking that if those people fought three at once, they could do it. Of course, I knew it was dangerous. But it would be even dangerous if I didn't keep Zero busy.

With that thought in mind, I disappeared from the peak of this rotten mountain and skipped back to the mansion. Small numbers of undead and abnormal followed from behind, but I didn't care anymore. With my speed, I quickly reached Zero and Fabian's vicinity.

Aside from Zero, there was an unfamiliar person standing from several meters away. I glanced at the ground and noticed two figures lying on it, wearing the same cloak as that person. Fabian was always reliable. He immediately downed those two, whom I knew were powerful individuals.

"My, my former fiance! That is quick!" Zero clapped as he set his eyes on me. "No wonder my heart only yearns for you even though you broke it multiple times!"

I only stared at Zero from head to toe, confirming he had grown stronger. This wouldn't be easy anymore, I thought. I shifted my eyes to Fabian, distinguishing he wouldn't let off Zero that easily. But I had another worry in mind.

"Fabian, I will handle this person," I said, making Fabian frown as he finally peeled his eyes away from Zero to me. "Go back inside and check Law. Stefan isn't here and I don't like that this man is acting like a clown."

Zero's eyes lit up as he laughed out loud. "Oh my, darling! Are you saying you will fight me all alone? Aren't you amusingly brave?"

"Fabian, go." I jerked my chin in the direction of our house, casting Fabian a quick look. "Law's safety is more important. These people can fight those incoming rebels while I keep this person busy."

Fabian wasn't pleased, but his shoulder relaxed as Law was also important to him. "Yes, Your Majesty."

But just as Fabian was about to go, Zero let out another loud laugh once again while clapping in delight. I furrowed my brows and fixed my eyes on him. Zero and that one soldier of his didn't show the slightest sign that they would follow Fabian, but that was even more strange.

"My former fiance, you're always so slow..." Zero wiped the tears from the corner of his eyes as he recovered from his laughing. "Didn't your son tell you about meeting his beloved uncle on his birthday? Ah! Right... he wouldn't remember, so how can he tell you?"

I instantly froze as my heart paused for a moment. Even Fabian halted, staring at Zero, wide-eyed. What did Zero just... say?

"Oh, my! You all looked surprised! I mean, aren't you sleeping with Stefan every night lately?" Zero snickered while staring at my pale face. "Oh, right! You don't know since he was in a body of a six-year-old."

"Fabian..." my voice shook, unblinking. "... I'll go myself."

Meanwhile, inside the Roux estate, everyone stared at the door in fear, staring at the man standing in front of it. Although his hair was argent and they initially thought he was Samael, they were wrong. This man... even though he had done nothing yet, gave off a very dangerous aura.

Stefan scanned the faces of the women inside, searching for someone. His eyes fell down on Law, who stood beside Adam. The corner of his lips curled up into a smirk.

"Greetings, my nephew."

Chapter 545 - I Miss You, Father.

"Greetings, my nephew."

Stefan smiled but didn't reach his eyes. Even though his voice was low, it was enough to send a shiver down everyone's spine. Out of instinct, Bey embraced Law protectively as her gut feeling told her she should hold on to the little master. This man just appeared out of nowhere, so he could abduct Law if left unguarded.

"Who are you?!" she asked with a shaking voice, alarmed that this man obviously came for the madam's son. "What do you want with the young master?"

"What else do I want with my son?" he asked, tilting his head to the side while staring at Bey. "If I were you, let him go before you put yourself in danger."

"No!" Bey's refusal came quickly, despite her fear creeping into her heart. "Please, go away... sir."

Stefan snapped his eyes ever so tenderly as he tilted his head to the side. "I'm not going to hurt him."

Everyone held their breath as they looked at Stefan, but no one stepped in because of fear. Still, deep down, they knew if Stefan moved the slightest, they would protect Law for sure. Lilou had put herself in danger for everyone — fighting in the front line for them. How could they face Madam Roux if they couldn't protect her child?

"Why would I hurt my son?" he asked, batting his eyes leisurely. "Come on, Law. We will fetch your mother and leave here."

His brows rose when another child, Adam, stood in front of Law protectively. The little earl's eyes brimmed with determination, staring at him straight in the eye.

"You will not take my brother anywhere!" Adam asserted as he clasped his hands into a fist. Law had always protected him to the point he was also ostracized with other children. So, the little earl wanted to protect him this time.

"Please sir, leave us alone."

"Did you just call him your brother...?" The side of Stefan's lips curled up into a smirk, sizing up this little lord. "Well, why am I surprised? Lilou is that type of person. She takes everyone as her family... and then turns her back on them."

Adam pressed his lips into a thin line as he took a deep breath. His instinct told him they all must run away from this man. How he got in here was not important, but getting away from here was what they should do. He didn't have a good feeling about this.

"Young Lord, don't be too attached to Lilou. You will be heartbroken once she turns your back on you as well." Stefan advised calmly, shifting his eyes on Bey, who was embracing Law. "I am speaking by experience, for she also sees me as her world at one point, but now I mean nothing. Hearts are fickle and ever so changing. Sadly, the person whose heart doesn't change will always lose. Law, son, let's go."

Bey's shoulder stiffened as her embrace tightened, watching Stefan crook a finger. She snapped her eyes when Law held her shoulder, making her turn her head to him. Her eyes instantly dilated as soon as she saw Law's lifeless eyes.

"Young Master..." she whispered as Law turned his head to face her. As soon as their eyes locked, she unconsciously loosened her grip. The little master wasn't speaking, but she knew that Law was asking her to let him go or he would hurt her against his will. Maybe because Bey had been serving the family that she got these unspoken words on instinct.

Law's eyes peeped with life for a second, and he smiled tenderly. He said nothing as he sauntered in Stefan's direction. Some butler and maids yelled for his name, but to no avail. Even Adam attempted to stop him, but Law ignored him. He stopped in front of Stefan, looking up at him fearlessly.

"Stop calling me son. You're not my father," the young master finally spoke, trying to keep the little consciousness he secured during his birthday. He was Lilou and Samael's child. Hence, it was by instinct that he knew at some point, something like this — this dangerous — would happen.

"I am not, indeed." Stefan nodded calmly, staring at this small child that looked like Samael. "I hate your eyes."

Although Law looked like a small version of Samael, he got his mother's eyes. The way this child looked at him lifelessly reminded Stefan how Lilou looked at him. It somehow irked him in a way.

"Either way, come." He offered his hands for the little master to take. "I am not as heartless as to let you die without letting you see my bride for the last time."

Law raised his trembling hands. He couldn't control his body anymore, but he was still managing to keep his consciousness. During this moment, the little boy could not help but remember his father. Samael used to tell him to always have control of his consciousness and never lose sight of what he was fighting for. Law often wondered why his father advised such vague words in the past, but he was still unconsciously doing that.

"Father," he whispered as he held Stefan's cold hands. Unlike his father's rough and clumsy grip, this man barely held him. The difference was too distinct. Samael had always held Law's hand as if it was the most fragile thing in the world that the latter often wondered if his father feared him or if he was disgusted with him.

But only now did Law realize Samael held him like that because... he treasured him. It was a hold of someone who didn't want to break something precious: careful and tender. This realization suddenly brought melancholy to the child instead of fear of the situation.

'I didn't want to admit it, but... I miss you, Father. I still think you shouldn't have left.' Law looked up at this man that had the same hair and eye color as his father. The only difference was Samael's eyes weren't as dead as this. His father's eyes were always arrogant.

'I'm sorry I cannot protect Mother.'

Stefan gazed down at him coldly. "Don't be sad, child.. I will make sure your father joined you in Hell soon."

Chapter 546 - Consider Me As Your Favorite Hero

"Don't be sad, child. I will make sure your father joined you in Hell soon."

"My lord, please stop this now!"

Suddenly, Lady Hazel sprinted towards them and knelt down until her forehead touched the floor. Law and Stefan turned their heads to her, seeing that not just her, but almost everyone knelt to their knees. Seeing this, Law squeezed Stefan's hand tightly. These people weren't close to their family, so why would they grovel on the floor like this?

"Just kill me — no, kill us all, but let the young master go!" Lady Hazel begged with a shaking voice, but none of them argued with her. They wouldn't be able to face Lilou if something happened to her child. Even Adam knelt down until his forehead touched the floor, tearing up at this helpless situation.

"How foolish," Stefan muttered, peeling his eyes away from them, then to Law. "Should I kill them all and let you go?"

Law's jaw tightened as he shook his head. "Please raise your head," he commanded softly, making everyone raise their head only to reveal their teary eyes and pale complexion.

The little master smiled warmly, knowing that even if these people lose their lives to him, this man would still take him. "It was me who will not be able to face my father if I sacrificed everyone to save myself. Thank you for caring about me, but this is my choice."

"Wise." Stefan nodded, pleased that Law wasn't a stupid child. "Let's go, child."

Law followed Stefan's lead going outside, turning his head back at the people with the same smile. He was just glad to see that his mother was more amazing than he originally thought she was.

"Young master, please!" Bey cried, springing up to her feet to come after them, but froze when Stefan glanced at her.

"Law...!" Adam also stopped as his knees tremble. "... someone... help my brother..." that was all the little lord could say before a loud crash rang in their ear.

CRASH!

Stefan halted by the door as someone crashed through the one pillar on the porch. Law also paused, furrowing his brows as he narrowed his eyes to see through the smoke and dust from the broken pillar. When he caught who that was, his brows raised.

"Mister Fabian?" Law watched Fabian get up from the rubble as the roof of the porch slighted, with one of the four pillars breaking at the crash.

Meanwhile, inside the mansion, everyone tilted their heads to see what was happening. Law and Stefan were still by the door, and they couldn't see through the thick smoke until a minute later. Some servants who caught the head butler's figure had their eyes brightened up.

"Mister Fabian!" one butler called, but his little hope instantly died when he realized what would Fabian do? They were nothing but servants and before Stefan, they could barely speak much more, do something to him. But confusion arose when they noticed a black spear in Fabian's hands.

"What a surprise!" Stefan tilted his head to the side, calm despite Fabian's presence. "I didn't think you will come flying in here."

Fabian dusted off his clothes as he stood up. He raised his head, gazing at Stefan and then to Law. A subtle smile resurfaced on his face when he locked eyes with the little master.

"Young master," Fabian called with the same smile, ignoring Stefan entirely. "Are you hurt anywhere?"

Law shook his head lightly. "I am alright. How about Mother?"

"She is a little busy at the moment." Fabian cocked his head in the direction he came flying from. The little master turned his head in the direction, catching sparks along with the disastrous sight outside the gates. It was hard to see through the dark and thick smoke, but he caught a long argent hair shining somewhere.

"Mother..." he whispered and smiled weakly, seeing that Lilou was fighting fiercely. He couldn't see their movements, though. All he could see was that argent, tousled hair kept disappearing and reappearing in different spots, along with the spark of metals.

"I'm glad she's fine."

"Young master, please come in here. Don't go close to that man." Fabian sprawled his arm in Law's direction, offering his hand. But the latter's eyes glinted with bitterness.

"Mister Fabian, this man is strong. I will be alright." The young master forced a smile. "Please tell Father..."

Fabian cut him off before Law could finish his sentence. "Please don't say such a thing, young master. You will break my heart if you say those words."

"Mister Fabian..."

"You." Fabian finally raised his gaze at Stefan coldly. "Let go of him."

"Will you look at that? I often think you are the most reasonable in this empire since you never looked down on me even before." Stefan chuckled while staring at the daunting butler. "But it seems that Quentin was having too much fun for letting you pass through him."

"Please don't misunderstand. The person who sent me flying in here was the madam." Fabian chuckled, making Stefan raise his brows before he grinned.

"Lilou did? Well, if it's her, it's not surprising. She always does things --"

Before Stefan could finish his words, Fabian suddenly vanished that shocked Law. Only a second later did the butler reappear while thrusting his spear into Stefan's arms. He was fast, forcing Stefan to let go of Law's hands and jump away.

That was Fabian's goal.

The butler stood in front of Law while the latter slowly gazed up at him. Fabian glanced over his shoulder and smiled kindly.

"Young master, please go inside." He took a deep breath, setting his eyes back to the villainous Stefan before adding with a raised voice, "Bey! If worse comes to worst, take the young master and the little lord inside the manor and hide. No, I mean everyone, just hide in the mansion if this man..."

Fabian trailed off as he swung the spear, creating a line a step outside the opened door. "... if someone crossed this line."

Everyone looked at Fabian's back with wide eyes, holding their breaths. Although they were confused, and he still sounded like they were all servants, just Fabian standing in front of the door brought relief to their hearts.

"Young master!" Bey rushed to Law and knelt beside him, checking if he was hurt anywhere.

"Mister Fabian, why are you..." Law paused when Fabian glanced over his shoulder and smirk. The latter then turned around, placing his palm across his shoulder as he bent over.

"My little master, I didn't tell you yet, but I am better than Rufus," Fabian claimed with a bright smile that made his eyes squint into mere slits.. "Please add my name on the list of your favorite hero after this."

Chapter 547 - Those Who Came Back Wished They Didn't

"Please add my name on the list of your favorite hero after this."

"Mister Fabian..." Law clutched his hand closer to his chest, watching Fabian turn his back against him. "... you will never be my favorite hero because you're already one of my favorite people in the world."

The little master saw him glance over his shoulder and smiled kindly. The reason Law never permitted Fabian to fight or spar or train was that the head butler hated sweating. Also, Fabian didn't need to be strong for Law to like him. The head butler was akin to his second father. Thus, he naturally loved Fabian deep in his heart.

"Well, that's flattering." Fabian chuckled as he set his eyes on Stefan. "Please go in and close the door... oh, it's broken. That will be a lot of money for repair."

"Hell is rich, so that'll be nothing." Stefan smiled as he cocked his head to the side. "Or were you saying that now because you might not say that again?"

Fabian let out a shallow breath. "I honestly don't know." He sauntered forward while Maleficent changed its form to a sword.

"I am not sure if this will end with just one losing his life, but... I have to drag you down with me."

Stefan's smile remained as he nodded slightly. Fabian was someone who always spoke his thoughts aloud without a second hesitation unless he deemed it a bother to speak. That was why Stefan didn't underestimate this man. But unlike Fabian, Stefan was certain he would win this fight.

"I will make sure to send your body to your brother so he can mourn for you," he asserted as red and black mist rose out of nothing.

"That is so nice of you, Your Highness."

"Not at all. It's the least I can do for someone like you. You always have my respect, Butler."

Fabian smiled as he batted his eyes, glancing at the red mist that was surrounding them. He could feel that Stefan wanted to end him once and for all. This didn't alarm Fabian or thrill him. If anything, he felt a little conflicted about this. Stefan never fought fair and square; the man always had his cards up his sleeve.

"It will be a shame to die without breaking Ru's leg for sabotaging my carriage during the little master's birthday," came out a weak chuckle, thinking that Rufus might get away from picking on him that day. "I still planned to butcher Bella and make him eat it."

"My. How sad..." Stefan let out a chuckle as the red and black mist thickened, surrounding the two of them until no one from the outside could see through it. "... I mean, how sad that that is the last thing you had in mind in this situation."

"I don't have many memorable things to recall." Fabian shrugged as his black sword trembled under his grip, eyes dropping menacingly as he tilted his head to the side. In a heartbeat, he suddenly bolted towards Stefan and thrust his sword.

PANG!

"How about you, Your Highness? Have you ever thought of what kind of memory will flash before your eyes once life slowly slips away from your grip?" asked Fabian as Stefan brought forth Lancelot to block Maleficent. "They said a certain memory — something that we all held dear — will flash before your eyes while dying. So, I wondered what kind of memory Your Highness will see?"

Stefan smiled, blocking the black sword with ease. "Who knows? I will only know if that happens to me. How about you?" and then grind his sword until both their blades spark, launching an attack towards him.

PANG!

"I am also intrigued about that, Your Highness."

The two of them fought equally, exchanging blows without delay. Despite that, they would constantly talk as if they were simply having tea in the garden on a lazy afternoon. Their conversation varied from life and death to hatred and love.

"Your Highness, why did you come back?" asked Fabian as their swords rattled between them. "Why did you conspire with the hateful Quentin? If you didn't come back, you'll be living a peaceful life."

Stefan snickered as he pushed the sword away and hopped back, swinging his swords down. "Butler, you always ask and say unexpected things. You make me want to think you are concerned about me."

"Please do not misunderstand. I am simply saying that everyone who came back to this place wished they didn't."

"And yet, we all find ourselves back in here." Stefan breathed out, chuckling softly. "Hell had enjoyed a vagabond life, but he returned. He wasn't the person who will return purely because of our father's death. He was the one who killed him, after all."

"If I didn't return, Hell will probably let me off as long as I don't approach the empire ever again. I don't mind living such a life outside, honestly. But here I am, back in this hell. I also wonder why I am here when I disappeared because I am already tired of everything and I wanted Hell to experience the weight of the crown," he continued with a shrug, speaking in all honesty. "Mister Fabian, you might have some answers about this obsession about why we keep coming back to this hell. After all, you also returned here after spending some time on the mainland."

Stefan smiled and Fabian, as well. The latter wasn't even surprised how Stefan knew about this as he didn't keep it a secret he went into that hidden land of vampires.

"Why are we all coming back in here...?" Fabian muttered with the same weak smile. "I also wonder why, Your Highness."

CLASH!

Once again, the two of them exchanged blows that made the mixture of blood and darkfield tremble every time their weapons clashed. This time, however, Fabian's expression grew solemn as Stefan's strength was just getting stronger. How did this man grow this strong? Fabian had no idea. But with this information in mind, his chances of winning were slimmer than he initially thought.

"This time, let me ask you, Butler," Stefan breathed out as he raised his free hand, shoving his claws towards Fabian's eyes, which the latter dodged. But just as he did, Stefan swung his sword and slashed it across Fabian's chest.

Fabian winced at his flesh being sliced through, jumping away. But Stefan wasn't kind enough to let him feel the pain as he vanished and reappeared behind him, piercing him through his back. Was it because Fabian had been fighting for hours that he was slow to react? Or was it because Stefan was just quick?

Either way, Fabian didn't think of those things as he gazed down at the blade that went through from the back of the side of his stomach through the front. Stefan purposely missed his vital points, but the pain was still the same.

"My question might sound stupid and cringe, but have you ever loved before?" Stefan inquired, pulling out his sword from him and blood instantly dripped on the ground.

Chapter 548 - The Memory He Saw Before Death

"My question might sound stupid and cringe, but have you ever loved before?"

Fabian snickered as he pressed on his wound to stop the bleeding. It was a good thing he was used to the pain, so he wasn't writhing on the ground and making himself look so pathetic. Still, this wound was fatal.

"Have I ever loved before?" he muttered with a weak chuckle, turning around to face Stefan. "What a stupid thing to ask, indeed."

"Haha! As expected from you."

"Love... People who had always done business with that complicated thing had surrounded me as of recently. And all of them, I can say they've all become foolish because of it." Fabian coughed weakly, making him wince as blood squirted from his fresh wound while he was still pressing on it. "From the duke of Grimsbanne to the Marchioness of La Lona, and then Rufus and your ex-wife,

the Princess of the Cross Kingdom, Dame Kristina, and Duke Noah... and then you, Your Highness. You are all so complicated, wanting to attain such a thing."

Fabian breathed in and out heavily, staring at Stefan and smiling weakly. "What is so special in that thing called love? When it forms in someone's life, they will do everything to get it. How dangerous that a simple rejection was never considered an answer."

"Love... is something I will never want," he added after a brief pause. "Because Love, that intense feeling, when is rejected and when it has nowhere to go, turns into obsession and madness, leading to blood and death and sorrow and tragedy. How complicated."

Stefan's eyes softened while listening to Fabian's thoughts about this 'out of topic' question. Or was it truly out of topic? After all, that was what drove him to this point; his intense feelings towards Lilou. Whether it was called love or hate or just an obsession, Fabian had a point.

A love, when it had nowhere to go to, would lead to something disastrous. At least, that was the case for him, for Stefan only yearned for one thing or person: Lilou. But obviously, that was also the only thing he could never have because someone already had her heart — someone already stole her love that was meant for him.

And he would never be happy unless he was part of her happiness. A selfish and greedy love; something that would want to monopolize and never to be shared.

"How lucky," Stefan laughed in a low tone, gazing at the wretched appearance of the ever neat butler. "That you were able to avoid such complicated and petty things."

Fabian shrugged, lips turning pale from the blood loss. But well, this conversation was giving him enough time to rest as he was slowly growing numb at the pain and was able to stop the bleeding from the inside.

"But you're wrong on one thing, Butler. Love never changes, people do. Be it because of the circumstances or interference of another person, it had always been that way. Love is not a complicated thing, but people are naturally complicated beings," Stefan argued softly as he gazed at Fabian's feet, watching the blood dripping reduce significantly.

"If Lilou didn't change, this won't happen... although I am partially at fault for making her a fool. But still, if she truly loved me as she claimed in the past, she would've at least shown the second hesitation in her current love. If only she considered me or pretended she did, I will probably accept that thing called rejection." Stefan continued, as he raised his head to meet Fabian's gaze. "But alas, she didn't. Lilou will forgive and give Hell a thousand chances, while she wouldn't even give me just one chance. It's unfair that this life favored the detestable Hell. Why would everyone forgive such a person when all he did from the very beginning was to think of himself?"

Stefan paused as his eyes glinted with hatred the more he thought about the privileges Samael achieved without even trying. "And yet, someone like me, who carried the weight of the crown, who sacrificed my happiness, my woman, my life, shouldn't be forgiven? My wish is simple. I was willing to give up the power I held if Hell gave her up and let us be. But obviously, that simple wish isn't simple to others — it's too much, isn't it?"

Fabian didn't respond anymore and just listened. Was Stefan asking too much? If Fabian was going to answer, from his point of view, it wasn't too much. It was actually very simple that it was

hilarious to think. But that was where the problem lied. One couldn't change a person's heart that easily.

Just like Maxine and Acheron, even when they knew the people they devoted their life to just saw them as disposable pawns, it was already too late for them to walk away. Knowing Lilou, the reason she didn't give Stefan a chance, was that she knew it was pointless and didn't want to give him false hope. She couldn't change her heart anymore and pour her love into another man.

"Until the end, I still cannot understand Love." Fabian breathed out and chuckled weakly, watching Stefan raise his sword once again. "Until the end... I cannot understand you, Ru."

As the blood and darkfield thickened, Fabian knew they were reaching the end of this. Right now, with his current state, it was clear to Fabian about the outcome of this battle.

He would die tonight.

In a blink of an eye, Stefan appeared in front of him and swung his sword to the side. Fabian deflected it, but he still flew away with the impact. Mid-air, Stefan appeared behind him and kicked his back. Blood escaped Fabian's mouth as he crash down. But before he could land, Stefan reappeared in front of him again and swung his sword without hesitation.

Their routine repeated for a long time. Stefan attacked him one after another while Fabian blocked them, albeit not everything. Wounds and slashes kept adding to his skin while blood soaked his uniform. After the long exchange of blows, Fabian blocked Stefan's sword once again, but... Maleficent broke and the former's blade slashed across Fabian's chest before kicking him.

That instant, Fabian crashed on the concrete ground. He felt his spine crack slightly as he gasped for air.

'I'm sorry, Your Majesty,' he apologized internally with a weak smile, staring at the black and red above him. 'This is why fighting to protect is never my style. It only demotivates me more.'

How silly of him, but that was true. Fighting while avoiding hurting others was never Fabian's style. But if he fought just like in the past, he needed another century to recover his calm state of mind.

"Ugh..." he wince when Stefan stepped on his chest, holding his sword to the side.

"It was a long life, Butler," Stefan spoke solemnly, gazing down at Fabian while raising his sword up. "I thought you will fight even if it means awakening the devil within you, but I guess even you are afraid of him."

Fabian's weak smile persisted as he stared at the tip of the sword that glinted. "It was... indeed, a very long... life."

'Tea.'

Suddenly, Fabian heard a woman's soft voice inside his head, along with the sound of a ringing bell. A low chuckle slipped past the butler's lips, as he didn't expect that this unimportant memory would be the one he would see before death.

A memory he deemed not important back when he was in the forbidden land in the breeding grounds of vampires years ago.. A memory of that strange girl and her long white hair that reached the ground.

Chapter 549 - The Memory He Saw At Death's Door

Years prior to the present time...

Fabian pulled up the hood of his cloak whilst running through the dark, narrow alley. He glanced to his side, seeing multiple shadows skip through time and space at their speed. He clicked his tongue in irritation as water splashed when he stepped on the hollow concrete.

'I hope Charlie is alright,' he thought, thinking that the two of them went in opposite directions to split the vampires chasing after them.

After what happened in the capital of the Great Heart Empire, Fabian traveled with Charlotte to the border between the Heart and Spade kingdom. His initial reasoning was because he knew Samael needed time to make up his mind about what to do in the empire. Knowing his master, Fabian already figured Samael would take the position he had denied for the sake of everyone.

However, as he investigated the borders, Fabian had this unsettling feeling when he met a vampire. Obviously, he didn't know all vampires, but that person he met gave him this eerie feeling, even though the latter told him he was a mere inferior vampire.

That was the main reason he infiltrated the mainland. If his conclusion that vampires from the mainland were involved in the matters of the empire, he thought of taking out the root of the problem himself. The problem was, no matter how discreet he was, the vampires in this land already knew an outsider infiltrated the land.

And now he and Charlotte were on the run.

Fabian made a turn and squeezed himself between the narrow space of two buildings. Two shadows sprinted past him as he hid.

'It's better not to confront them now,' he said internally, peeking his head out before running once again. 'Troublesome vampires.'

It was not that Fabian hadn't fought them earlier. He had confronted a few; they were all strong, but not enough to overwhelm him. He knew that if he killed more and let those vampires stall time, more powerful vampires would arrive to capture him — worse, kill him on the spot.

"Ugh...!" Fabian suddenly winced as he looked over his shoulder because an arrow grazed him. His eyes sharpened as he glanced up, seeing a figure standing at the building with a large arrow in her hand. But his speed remained the same, pressing on his shoulder as he just ran around aimlessly.

As he did so, Fabian dodged the arrows even without looking back. This time, he also grew bold since he was bleeding; meaning, no matter where he goes, they would find him through his scent. He thought if he led them to somewhere far, like some woods or something, he could fight them and flee easily, that would be better.

And so Fabian ran and ran and ran, following his instincts. On the way, he encountered a few vampires. This time, he took out Maleficent and slew them mercilessly. Good thing he faced countless noble vampires as his victims during those crazy days in the past.

After that, Fabian noticed the buildings were slowly reducing in numbers as he entered the forest. He looked back, only to catch that his pursuers decreased in numbers as well. His brow arched as he sped away, sensing that everyone seemed reluctant to catch him now.

Or rather, they were reluctant to chase after him because of where he was heading. Either way, as long as they stopped chasing after him, Fabian didn't care about their reasons. So, he ran ahead without looking back until he reached the forest clearing.

His brows furrowed as his steps halted. He gazed at the old mansion ahead. The place looked eerie, old, and not well-maintained. A sight that told him no one could live in this abandoned-looking mansion. He looked back once again, and no one was chasing after him.

"That's strange," he muttered, but he didn't dwell on it as he marched towards the mansion. As he opened the rusting gates, it creaked, producing an unsettling sound in this soundless surrounding. Walking inside, the crisp sound of dry leaves under his feet resonated in his ear.

"Why an abandoned mansion in the middle of this forest?" he wondered, standing on the doorstep.

Based on his observation, the mainland of the vampires was just like the capital of the Heart's Empire. Streets were clean and quiet, establishments and mansions everywhere. So, it was a surprise that a mansion was situated in the middle of this place like it was a haunted house.

Convinced that no one could possibly live in this rundown mansion, Fabian knocked on the door lightly. Just as he did, his brow quirked as the door creaked open. Normal people would immediately turn around and walk away, but Fabian's initial thought was his knocking opened the door for him.

"I'll be entering," he whispered to show respect to the mansion's previous owners or to the ghosts who lived in it. He carefully entered, not opening the door wide, and simply squeezed himself to the small gap of the door. But just as he stepped his foot inside, Fabian halted.

He raised his gaze, and it immediately landed on the person meters away. He blinked twice, and so was the woman holding a lamp in her hand. Long white hair that reached the ground, wearing a white long sleeve dress that also reached the floor. She looked pale as if a ghost, like snow, considering her eyes were also silver.

Neither of them spoke at the presence of another. Fabian sized her up and didn't sense malice from her. But still, meeting this woman only meant there were people who lived here. He caressed his skull ring with a warm smile on his face, preparing himself to attack her if she thought of assaulting him.

But to his surprise, the woman in white with long white hair said nothing as she turned her back against him. He furrowed his brows as she walked away as if she didn't see him. After taking several steps away, Fabian's eyes fell on her hand as she pointed to the side without looking back at him.

"Kitchen." That was all she said before resuming her strides, leaving Fabian puzzled. Normal people's reaction when they knew an intruder was inside their property was to chase them out or catch them. But that woman just said kitchen. What did that even mean?

"Well, this is the mainland.. What am I going to expect in this strange place hidden from the world?" he shrugged as Fabian welcomed himself in.

Chapter 550 - The Memory He Saw At Death's Door II

The place was dark and as he walked through the hallway; the only source of light was the moon shining through the windows. Fabian figured no one seemed to live in this place aside from that

woman, as he didn't encounter a single soul in this mansion. For reasons unknown, his feet dragged him in the direction she pointed at.

The woman didn't lie. The direction she pointed at led him to the kitchen.

"What a shabby place," he muttered as he looked around at the dusty kitchen. Out of habit, Fabian went through the drawers where there were kitchen wares, teas, and such. He waved in front of him as dust flew up to his face.

"Not only it is shabby, but it's dirty."

His butler's persona of taking care of the house slowly crept into his heart. This place just... urged him to clean it. If he had all the time in the world, he would start cleaning up. But, all he could do was to get find himself a glass of water to drink. Fortunately, there was this one clean pitcher that had clean water in it.

In this kitchen, there was only one clean plate, a pair of cutleries, glass, and a pitcher. Which only proved that that woman was the only one who lived in this place.

"What a strange place." Fabian made himself a tea as everything else still worked, even though it was unclean. Since he didn't want to use her things, he cleaned a new teacup and saucer and cutleries while boiling some water in the kettle.

As he did so, he paused and recalled the woman. He tilted his head while wiping the teacup dry. Why did she say 'kitchen?' Was she hungry? Or was she telling him to make himself something to eat?

Fabian was used to Samael's whims and how his lordship speak what he liked and disliked aloud. So, for someone who only spoke a word, he was a little piqued.

"Her long hair bothers me," he muttered as he turned off the burner and proceeded to make some tea. He wanted to rest for the night and come up with a plan. He trusted Charlotte was safe since that young lady's survival skills were top-notch. She would be fine and could blend in like she used to.

Fabian poured hot water on the tea carefully in the dark, but then paused when he heard the soft sound of a bell ringing in a constant beat. His brows rose as he gazed up. The sound wasn't loud, but in this silent place, it was echoing softly.

"Is she calling for me?" he wondered with furrowed brows. Fabian gazed down at the tea in silence while listening to the sound of the bell.

Since it seemed she welcomed him, he thought of serving her tea to show his appreciation. With that thought in mind, Fabian cleaned the food trolley and placed the set of tea after consuming a cup. He followed the sound of the bell, pushing the trolley through the hallway.

The sound led him to one of the rooms, knocking lightly on the door. The sound of the bell persisted, but no voice from inside reached his ear.

"My lady, I brought you some tea," Fabian announced in his usual kind tone, pushing the door slightly. He snuck a glance inside before going in, seeing that lady who was akin to a ghost, sitting outside the balcony with a bell in her hand. She was staring at the bell while ringing it as if amused at how it rang whenever she moved it.

When Fabian entered the room, she looked back to see him pushing the trolley. She blinked, closed-lipped as her white hair flowed back along with the soft wind.

"I brought you some tea to enjoy, my lady," Fabian repeated with the same smile, staring at the woman on the balcony while he stayed inside. "Should I bring it there?"

The lady in white just stared at him in silence. There wasn't curiosity or anything in her eyes. She was just staring before ringing the bell once again. Her action caused his brows to furrow for a bit. This lady looked detached from this world, doing just what she thought amusing, like ringing that bell.

A shallow breath slipped past Fabian's lips as he pushed the tray to the balcony. Since she said nothing, he would serve her tea to make himself feel better. Without speaking a single word, Fabian arranged the table while she rang the bell.

"My lady, please have some," he said after pouring a cup and serving it in front of her. The lady stopped ringing the bell and gazed up. But instead of responding, she rang the bell once again while keeping her eye contact.

Fabian smiled, closed-lipped. "It's not poisoned." He tilted his head down and walked away to leave her alone.

When he was by the door, he looked back, only to see her still staring at him while still ringing the bell. Fabian knitted his brows momentarily, but he didn't dwell on it as he left the room.

Standing outside the room, Fabian stared at the shut door. He was still hearing the constant sound of the bell.

"What a strange person," he muttered before sauntering through the empty hallway.

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Meanwhile, as Fabian shut the door, the lady stared at the door for a very long time. She peeled her eyes away and set them on the tea in front of her, still ringing the bell in her hand. But instead of drinking the tea, she turned her head in the woods where she could see a battalion from the royal family surround the entrance of the forbidden forest.

Her white eyelashes fluttered ever so tenderly and rang the bell once again. She didn't speak as she slowly peeled her eyes away, picked up the tea, and took a sip. Her reaction was still the same after drinking the tea, putting it back on the saucer, and staring at it.

"Soran," came out a soft, harmonious voice before the sound of the bell came once again.