

The Duke 741

Chapter 741 The young Noah Remington

Meanwhile, in Whistlebird...

In the lavish dining hall of the Remington Mansion, all members of the clan, with the Duke sitting on the head seat, were dining in silence. Clang!

The silent air broke when a cutlery fell from someone's hand. Everyone raised their eyes at Noah Remington, furrowing their brows upon seeing his pale complexion. "Noah, are you alright?"

Noah raised his shaking eyes at the person who asked him a question. There, his big brother, Arthur, who was also the heir of the Duke, laughed. Arthur pointed at the other cutlery with his chin. "You were suddenly zoning out while saying something," said Arthur to Noah, bringing his little brother back from his trance. "What is it? Father is listening."

Noah opened and closed his mouth, looking around the dining table, and the dread that crept up his spine grew distinct. His eyes then landed on the person sitting at the end of the long table.

'Father...' he held his breath, studying Duke Anton's face. Noah then shifted his eyes back to Arthur, and the latter arched a brow. "What..." Noah sprung up from his feet, making everyone pause in eating, and setting their eyes on him. Arthur, the said heir of the Duke of Whistlebird, leaned back. His brows furrowed, curious at the shock that was dominating Noah's face. "Sit down," Lord Anton, the current Duke of Whistlebird, broke his silence. Unlike everyone who was obviously wondering the same thing as Arthur, the duke continued slicing the piece of meat in his place. "Our family might've accumulated all the wealth in the world, but do not waste the food in front of me. Don't waste the food that our family had spent a dime with."

"If you want to waste money, go to that pathetic restaurant owned by the Browns." Arthur shook his head, resuming his meal since the duke wasn't bothered. "Uh..." Noah gulped, sitting back in his chair. His hand trembled, hiding them under the table while a servant approached him to replace his cutlery and picked up the other one. The family dinner resumed like usual; everyone was just silent, and without Noah bragging about anything he could broach, the life in the dining hall was practically dead. Some enjoyed Noah's silence since it was rare, while others couldn't be bothered.

Noah was known to be the unreasonable young Lord who followed Arthur around. He wasn't any less cruel than their father and Arthur, and thus, he got along with the heir of their father. Just a moment ago, Noah's voice was echoing in the dining hall while bragging about how he forced a clan to pay their injustice taxes. But now, he was just silent while staring at his barely touched food.

'What is going on?' Keeping his head hung low, everyone failed to see the dread plastered across his face. 'How... are they all alive? No, how is this possible? Why am I back in here? With them?'

Noah's last memory before waking up as the young Lord of the Remington Clan was being in this same mansion. However, he wasn't the young master, who was surviving by currying favor with Arthur's wickedness. Before this... he was the Duke of Whistlebird, and under his governance, he slightly changed the old wicked ways his father had established long ago.

'Kristina.' His wife's name crossed his head, making his grip around the cutlery tighten. 'I don't... His Grace!'

Noah's eyes lit up, recalling if Samael had known about this. Noah knew no matter how terrified and puzzled he was in this situation, he couldn't just act recklessly. He raised his head slightly, taking a peek at Arthur.

'It seemed he doesn't know yet.' Noah heaved a sigh of relief before he shifted his eyes to his father, Duke Anton. His back stiffened when the latter glanced at him.

Duke Anton said nothing, nor did he hold Noah's gaze that long. However, there was something different in the duke's gaze and Noah couldn't point out what it was exactly. 'Does he know?' Noah wondered, clearing his throat, forcing himself to act like what everyone expected. It was his survival instinct to take charge, lest there were others who were aware of the situation. After all, how Noah had gotten the title of the duke was a blood phase in his life. Samael killed Arthur in the past, taking out Anton's capable heir. And as such, Samael supported Noah to become the next duke of Whistlebird. Some of his family members supported Noah just because they didn't want to offend Samael, while the others didn't fancy the idea of having to deal with the said man. But that wasn't Noah's primary concern because, unlike the rest, Anton had fought for his status to death. Hence, to make sure Noah was capable and had the right to inherit the title, he had to challenge his father, which inevitably killed the duke.

'Until the end... he didn't acknowledge me.' Noah refocused his attention on the food right in front of him. 'Lest he remembers what happened, and he knew I retrieved my memories for some unknown reasons, I'll be in trouble. He will do everything he could to prevent what happened in the past... even if that means killing me.'

With that in mind, Noah continued eating in silence, trying to sort out his thoughts. But then, he slightly flinched when Duke Anton, Noah's father, spoke.

"Noah," called the Duke, watching Noah raise his eyes at him. "Did you talk to the Browns?"

"Pardon?"

"Noah, why do you look so surprised?" Arthur narrowed his eyes suspiciously. "Not only did you suddenly turn silent, but you're acting strange."

Noah's throat bobbed under his father and his brother's gaze. He then laughed awkwardly, waving.

"What strange?" he shook his head, glancing at everyone around the table. "I mean, I definitely warned the Browns! I swear I—" Noah winced and then huffed, setting his eyes back to Duke Anton. "Father, why the hell are you keeping those troublesome alive?! They kept resisting me and because you want them alive, I can't—ugh! It's frustrating!"

"I knew it..." Arthur clicked his tongue, assuming Noah turned silent because he messed up with his task. The duke, on the other hand, studied Noah in silence before he rocked his head.

"Arthur, take your brother and teach him how you bend those troublemakers," ordered the Duke to his heir, which Arthur received with a confident nod. Arthur pointed at Noah. "You are always so soft. Be honored. You'll see me in action."

"Tsk! Father! Arthur will just make me do all the hard work!" Noah complained like usual, making Arthur chuckle. But deep in his heart, he sighed in relief, only to feel dread since his assumption that the Duke was aware of it grew solid.

Chapter 742 It was hard for him too

The next day...

"So... not only did he watch you die, but he also left your daughter on the mainland all on her own?" Klaus looked at Lilou under the linden tree. Seeing her nod and huff, he produced a series of tongue clicking. He then gazed up at Samael, hanged by a rope around his torso and arms, tied on the thick branch of the tree.

"My... he deserves more than being hanged in here," he mused, elbowing Lilou mildly. "Hey, should I dig a grave for him? Let's bury him."

"He should get buried alive, indeed." Lilou huffed, running her hand through her hazel hair. She raised her brows, noticing the frizzy tips of her hair. "Ah, goodness."

"Oy, Hell. Why did you run all night? You should've just faced your doom instead of tiring your wife. Goodness... you of all people—I can't believe you call yourself a man after running away with your tail in between your legs." Klaus laughed, obviously enjoying Samael's plight. This was Samael's karma, and Klaus wasn't kind enough to pity him. They abducted him and stored him in the food storage; Klaus wasn't a saint to forget that, even though he let it slide for Lilou's sake.

"Love... please forgive me! I told you, I didn't—I mean, we were rolling on the grass while making out before things went downhill!" Samael explained at the top of his lungs, making his body swing back and forth in the air. "It was Tilly's idea! I mean, I was back in my slumber and if not for her, I would still be inside that coffin cursing the life out of Stefan!" "Oh, right." Klaus pounded the bottom of his fist against his palm, facing Lilou's side profile. "If I remember correctly, we're a year or two ahead from the time you two met. So Hell is still in his slumber."

"Even so!" Lilou yelled, balling her hand into a tight fist. "You should've rushed to the mainland to get Sunny! Why did you come to me when you knew Stefan wouldn't harm me?!" Lilou panted, eyes glinting with murderous intent. If that person hanging on the tree wasn't her husband, she would've deboned him and scattered his remains in the whole Karo Kingdom. "How can you... argh! How do you think Sunny will survive, hah?!" she ground her teeth, barely keeping herself from unleashing Lakresha to beat the hell out of Samael. "Sunny is capable!"

"She's a child! Barely three years old, Sam!"

"But she's OUR child!"

"Even so—hah!" Lilou ran her fingers through her tousled locks and paced back and forth to calm herself down. Klaus, who was looking at her, sighed in disbelief, clicking his tongue, darting his eyes at Samael and Lilou's distressed figure. 'Shit...' he cursed internally, getting stressed the more he got to know that this situation was more problematic. If Klaus had an option, it was better to stay ignorant. In that case, he wouldn't get bothered if Lilou was bothered or her worries. However, Lilou was his sister, and he cherished her more than he cherished his familial connection with Samael. That brother of his could just rot in hell for all he cared.

"If the mainland fell just as you claimed and they were after the Grimsbanne, had it never crossed you, the first person they would seize is Sunny?" Lilou looked up at Samael once again, tears of anger and dismay shining in her eyes. "Sam, Sunny might be capable, but are you sure she can protect herself if she is met with a hundred purebloods?"

Lilou held her head, already dying in worry for her youngest. How could she not? She might be a capable woman who could wield a powerful weapon, but before anything else, Lilou was a mother of two. Even if her children were not ordinary children, she wanted to protect their little innocence.

Seeing her tear up in frustration, Samael's eyes softened. He understood her actions, and her worries, since Lilou's priorities were her children. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "I know I should've gone to her instead of going to you. However, Lilou, those people... I know what I will tell you is not enough to quench your anger, but they won't kill someone who bears the blood of Grimsbanne easily."

Samael breathed out as he spoke through his gritted teeth. "They will seize her, but they will surely keep her alive. They weren't stupid as to give her the slightest scratch if they want whatever plan they had to succeed. However, it wouldn't be the same for you."

"They weren't just coming for the Grimsbanne, but also they were coming at you. You're the last member of the Bloodfang, and also, the product of your clans' forbidden sacrifice," he continued, pausing as this reasoning was also a hard decision he had to make. "I hate it, I really do. I hate that I have to decide where I have to choose between my daughter and my wife."

"But, I need to keep you all alive, Love. Even if it means this decision is killing me from the inside. I can't lose any of you. Call it selfish and conceited or even ridiculous, but this is the most logical I can do at the moment," he added under his breath, and his tone bore a tinge of helplessness and anger. "I can't return to Sunny without her mother. That... will devastate her more than anything."

Lilou bit her trembling lower lip until it bled, looking up at Samael, and holding his gaze. She knew that. She knew it all along that Samael had to decide and make a painful decision. Still, it angered her. She could die for all she cares, but not her children. She couldn't allow her children to die before her. But at the end of the day, Samael's decision was the most logical decision. They wouldn't harm Sunny unless their enemies completely lost their minds. Lilou huffed and turned on her heel, stomping her feet away. She didn't say anything, leaving Samael hanging in the tree and Klaus on his spot. As she walked away, Klaus stared at her back and shook his head. Klaus then glanced up at Samael, who was staring at Lilou's back. "Goodness... why does it always need to be so stressful between you two?"

Chapter 743 Why Sunny was left behind?

Meanwhile, inside the mansion's dining hall...

Tilly, Law, and Rufus were already eating their breakfast, while Fabian served them refreshments. The head seat where Stefan always sits was empty, and a few chairs where Samael and Lilou would perch.

"Will my father survive?" asked Law when he couldn't take the silence anymore, raising his eyes at Rufus, who was sitting just across from him. "If Mother recovered her memories just as Tilly said, then that means she will remember about Sunny."

Rufus froze as that slipped his mind, gazing at Tilly, who also paused in forking a piece of pea. "Uhh..."

"His Grace will surely die," Fabian was the first to recover. Unlike Tilly and Rufus, who had almost forgotten about Sunny with everything that had happened during these months, Fabian had already thought long and hard about it all night. Hence, the black funeral attire he was wearing. "But it was

Tilly's decision to leave Sunny behind." Law set his eyes to Tilly and sighed. "Tilly, you should clarify that Father had nothing to do with it."

"But then again, His Grace should've rushed to Sunny instead of heading straight to Karo, where my lady was," Fabian answered in a knowing tone. He could already imagine the argument Lilou and Samael were having right this second. "Why did you even leave a three-year-old child all alone in that place?" this time, Rufus couldn't keep his curiosity at bay anymore, since the topic was brought up. "Why did you take Law and left Sunny behind? Even if you asked the La Crox to look after that child, it was still dangerous."

Tilly pursed her lips and glossed her lazy eyes across the people around the table. As she did, she noticed Claude coming in from the side. But unlike the previous days, Claude had shaved and seemed to have taken a good bath since he didn't look like an old haggard man anymore.

"They're still not done?" Claude asked while he pulled the chair in the farthest before sitting on it. "His Grace was caught, unfortunately," Fabian happily filled him in. "You look younger now, my Lord. I wonder what happened?"

Claude looked up at Fabian when the latter served him a plate and poured him a glass of orange juice. He let out a shallow breath and smiled.

"Thanks," he expressed, grabbing the glass of refreshment to his lips. As he took a sip, he noticed the plain butler uniform and the black ribbon attached to his chest. "You've prepared."

"I am always prepared, my Lord."

Claude shook his head mildly, ignoring Fabian while he glanced at Law and Rufus, whose attention was on Tilly. He overheard their conversation when he came in, so he was also intrigued about what was Tilly thinking about leaving Sunny behind. "Because Sunny grew up in the mainland," was all Tilly explained, making Rufus and Law furrow their brows. Claude glanced at Fabian, and unlike them, he didn't seem surprised at Tilly's vague answer. "What does that even mean?" Claude blurted out under his breath, keeping his eyes on Fabian. Between Tilly and Fabian, the latter was better at explaining things. "What Lady Tilly means is that compare to the young master, Sunny isn't influenced by her parents' teaching," Fabian translated since Law and Rufus also looked in his direction for some translation. "By this, she means, Sunny is born on the mainland and had a different outlook compared to the young master. Aside from the fact that the young master is needed here because of the gift His Majesty bestowed upon him, the young master had grown up in the south Minowa, which is a very different environment from the mainland."

"Stop sugarcoating your words, Fabian," Rufus snorted. "What you both mean is Sunny took after you two and influenced her young mind?"

"Exactly." Fabian nodded, keeping his smile that was reaching his squinting eyes. "The young master is capable with principles."

"And that young child doesn't have principles? Is that what you're insinuating, Fabian?" "I wouldn't say she doesn't, but rather, unlike your virtuous principles, the young miss tends to be logical." "Even if that logic is evil and dangerous?" Rufus scoffed in disbelief as he couldn't wrap his head around this reasoning. "Would it hurt if you took Sunny since you already brought Law with you?"

He then set his eyes back on Tilly. "The Madam loves her children more than anything and anyone in this world. I wouldn't be surprised if she went back to the mainland now that she knew about her daughter's situation."

"Sunny wants to stay," Tilly spoke after the brief argument between the Barrett brothers, raising her eyes at the eyes cast upon her. "If she wants to go, she wouldn't agree to be left behind."

"But... even if she's exceptional. She's still a child." This time, Claude couldn't help but raised his concern. It reminded him of his childhood in the royal palace; just because Claude was mature at a young age, everyone just treated him as someone who could decide all on his own. If not for Klaus' guidance, Claude would've made even graver mistakes. "But Sunny will disappear if she stayed with us." Tilly put down her cutlery and raised her chin, settling her eyes on Law. "We are back in a time where Law and Sunny shouldn't be alive. Law is an exception, being able to hold the future, but Sunny... she will eventually disappear if she stayed with us."

"What?" Rufus gasped in dismay, not having heard of such a thing.

"The energy outside the mainland is far different from in the mainland." Tilly let out a shallow breath. "I need to keep her safe."

"How — how can you keep her safe on the mainland? Where our enemies are?"

"She left the mainland." Tilly turned her head to the other entrance. Her eyes instantly landed on Lilou's figure, who had just come and heard the last part of this conversation. "The mainland isn't a safe place for her, Lilou. Now she is safe with us. That is why... I sent her to a place that had the same energy as the mainland, but was a safer place for her."

Lilou's lips quivered, taking a careful step into the dining hall, eyes on Tilly. "Where is she?" she asked under her breath. "She'll be in my brother's care."

Chapter 744 She doesn't hate you.

Back on the mainland, the Grimsbanne clan — and everyone who lived in the forbidden forest — were indebted to the king of the mainland. Samael's entry on the said isolated island was first refused, but because of Tilly, he was able to live in the land with his family under the condition of not making any trouble. His life at first on the mainland was tough. Not just for Samael, but for all of them, since the valuables they carried had no value in the said land. Lilou had witnessed how her husband grind to give their children a better life. Using his skills and talent, Samael sold portraits and books, ignoring the disdain in those watchful eyes. The person who recognized Samael's talent was the king, and because of him, everyone in the forbidden forest lived a better life. A normal life where there was peace and no fear of what tomorrow holds. But now, that peace was gone and their family — Sunny, their daughter, in particular — was forced to stay in another land. The mainland was no longer safe. "Sunny..." Lilou held her trembling hands together in front of her, sitting across from Tilly. They were still in the dining hall as Lilou couldn't stand, feeling weak at what Tilly had just said. Her eyes had grown watery, barely keeping it together. Any mother would lose their mind in worry, knowing their child was somewhere far away from their reach. If not for Lilou's strong will to survive through this, she would've snapped.

"If I took Sunny with me, she would've disappeared right before your eyes," Tilly continued after a prolonged silence, breaking the news to them once and for all. "I don't recall telling Samael regarding this, but I was certain he had already guessed this much."

"Tilly." Law chimed in, looking at Tilly blankly. He didn't hear anything about this until now. All this time, Law and Rufus believed Tilly simply left Sunny to keep an eye on the mainland. But they didn't expect Tilly had another reason.

Rufus opened and closed his mouth, but his voice was stuck in his throat. He glanced in Fabian's direction, and even though his brother kept his usual smile, it barely reached his squinting eyes. 'So, he also knew?' Rufus wondered, and then realized it wasn't the case. 'He probably already guessed it.' — after all, Fabian was quick in reading people's actions and situations. "If the mainland had fallen..." Claude trailed off, mustering every energy of his body to raise the question no one didn't have the heart to ask. "Are you sure Sunny was safe?"

"She's still alive." Tilly cast her eyes at Claude. "For sure."

"What about the king?"

"He's alive... barely." Tilly then set her eyes back to Lilou and then sighed faintly. "I sent Leon to seek my brother. Once he meets with Sunny, he will send a word."

Silence descended in the dining hall with no one attempting to break the silence. They couldn't. They didn't know what to say. All they could do was stare at Tilly's unchanging front and then the distressed Lilou. "My baby." Lilou drew a deep breath, resting her forehead against her linked hands. "She didn't do anything wrong."

Her voice cracked, thinking about her youngest's safety. There were many things Lilou felt ashamed of for having the leisure to do other things instead of saving her daughter. Meanwhile, Law lowered his eyes, but the worry in his eyes was deep. There were no words that could console Lilou, nor there were any words needed to reassure her. They were all aware that the situation was worse than they expected. Especially after knowing the royal family on the mainland had fallen. *****

Klaus assisted Lilou to her chambers with Law so the two of them could rest for a while. Lilou was in a state of shock, and despite the sense of urgency she felt, her mind and body weren't just functioning well. The rest remained in the dining hall. Rufus remained silent, watching Fabian clean the table wordlessly. Tilly and Claude stayed seated in their original spot. Rufus's lips parted, but no words came out.

"Ugh... my entire body hurts." Suddenly, Samael's groggy voice pierced the thick silence in the dining hall. As soon as he stepped inside, he paused, looking at the four people in the dining hall. His brow arched, resuming in his steps until he dragged the chair across from Tilly. "Did someone die?" Samael asked out of plain curiosity, ignoring Fabian, who was now serving him a clean plate and arranging the cutleries on either side of the plate. "Why do you look so depressed?"

"My lord, the madam had already known about Sunny," explained Rufus, keeping it short and simple.

latter's lack of reaction, Rufus was now certain Samael had known it all along. "It's all my fault, isn't it?" Claude, who was in the farthest seat, murmured to himself. "Ah... I know. She nearly killed me last night, remember?" Samael rocked his head in understanding, and then his eyes fell on Tilly. "Did she lash out at you?"

Tilly didn't answer as usual, keeping her eyes on the table. "My lord, did you know that the young miss might disappear if she tagged along with us?" Rufus asked since Tilly was keeping her silence. He observed Samael, and by the latter's lack of reaction, Rufus was now certain Samael had known

it all along. "It's all my fault, isn't it?" Claude, who was in the farthest seat, murmured to himself. "Why your family isn't complete now... it's because of me."

Samael let out a shallow breath as he darted his eyes between Rufus' solemn countenance and Claude's regretful facade. He ran his tongue across his inner cheek, casting Tilly another quick look. "She won't hate you for that," he reassured, but Tilly didn't raise her eyes at Samael. He didn't mind as he picked up the cutleries to fill his stomach to have the energy to go on. "And it's not your fault, Claude. Even if you insist it is, blaming yourself won't help. What we need right now is for us to stay strong and overcome this quandary." Samael shrugged while slicing the meat on the plate. "Lilou will be fine. I'm sure... my wife can take anything. Give her just a bit of time and she'll return fiercer."

Samael paused and raised his eyes at Tilly, instantly catching the latter's somber gaze. His lips stretched reassuringly. "She doesn't hate you, Tilly. You know Lilou, so you shouldn't be sad."

Chapter 745 No time to idle

"You are a mess." Klaus stood on the futon where Lilou and Law were sitting on. His hands were on his hips, sighing for the umpteenth time. Lilou had been weeping while her son was consoling her by patting her back. "I'm so ashamed of myself. While I'm playing house here, my daughter... my poor baby is caught up in a crossfire." Lilou's voice was shaky, wiping her tears with the handkerchief Law handed her. She blew her nose, unable to stop the tears from flooding her eyes. "My poor baby... I won't forgive myself if something happened to her."

"Mother..." Law called worriedly, teary-eyed. This was the first time Law had seen Lilou weep so dramatically. Hence, his heart ached for her. "Sunny will be fine." Klaus breathed out. "Tilly will not leave her alone on the mainland if she doesn't trust Sunny. Moreover, whose daughter do you think she is?" Klaus wasn't used to consoling someone, but he was trying his best. He sauntered towards Lilou, sitting in the armchair next to the futon. "Lilou, you need to get it together. If you really want this to be over, we have to keep moving forward," he continued solemnly. "I'm sorry to say this, but we don't have the leisure to look back. Whoever is responsible for the downfall of the royal family on the mainland is moving at a lightning speed. They are already a step ahead of us. We can't afford to let the gap widen."

Lilou hiccuped, gazing at Klaus. The latter sighed deeply once more, running his fingers through his hair. "Mother, Sunny will be alright." This time, Law reassured Lilou. "I'm also worried about her, but she's more capable than she looks. She might be young, but I'm certain Sunny already went to Tilly's big brother. Maybe she's already there. Who knows?"

Lilou slowly set her eyes on Law, feeling sorry for her son. She wordlessly pulled Law into her embrace, patting his back. "I'm sorry you have to go through this," she whispered, rubbing his trembling back. "I'm sorry."

Law's eyes softened as he lowered them, getting more emotional in his mother's embrace. He had stayed strong until now, and never shed a single tear ever since leaving the mainland. Law told himself to stay strong so he wouldn't worry his parents. However, he, too, was scared. Law crawled his arms around Lilou, keeping his silence. Although his eyes still stopped him from shedding a tear, he allowed his heart to feel the fear in his heart, only to soothe it in his mother's embrace. "Goodness..." Klaus ruffled his hair, watching the mother and son duo embrace each other. He

leaned back, spreading his legs, looking heavenward. "We still have to know if those fools retrieved their memories. It'll be a problem."

Klaus mumbled lazily, making Lilou and Law let go of each other. The two set their attention to Klaus, raising their brows. "Uncle, what do you mean, it'll be a problem?" Law blurted out, pressing his lips into a thin line upon realizing his question. But Lilou and Klaus didn't mind, as the latter shot him a look. "Ramin, Charlotte, Kristina, Noah, Silvia, and Yul. Those six went through a lot with us," explained Klaus in a knowing tone. "Although Noah, Kristina, Silvia, and Yul stayed with Rufus to watch over the empire, they had sworn their loyalty to Lilou."

"They were already there when Lilou was battling Stefan and managed to cinch the title of the Duchess of Grimsbanne. We equally despised Stefan back then. Going back in time with their memories and not having any notion of what was truly going on is the problem. They might do something crazy," he continued in the same tone. "I would do something crazy if I was in their shoes, but fortunately, I was here when it happened."

"Silvia and Yul are the least of your concerns since they are smart. They will observe things first before acting. Kristina and Noah as well," Klaus added, staring at Lilou solemnly. "But you know those two: Ramin and Charlotte. Those idiots... there's no telling what those two were going to do."

Lilou pursed her lips into a thin line, grasping Klaus' point. She cleared her throat, wiping the lingering tears from the corner of her eyes. "You're right. As members of the Divine Order, Ramin and Charlotte were equally capable. If they knew something happened to me and to our family..." she closed her eyes ever so slowly while breathing out heavily. When Lilou reopened her eyes, a glint flickered across her eyes. "They won't sit idly." Klaus completed Lilou's sentence solemnly. "Those two agreed to be mere servants on the mainland, refusing to get any position under Rufus solely because of you and Hell."

"I hope they won't do anything stupid for now," she murmured, raising her eyes when a knock came from the door. "Can I come in?" Samael's voice from the other side of the door reached their ears. Lilou and Klaus looked at each other. The latter shrugged, planting his hands on the armrest to push himself up. "That's my cue to leave. I did my best to console you," said Klaus. "I hope once you come out of here, you already get yourself together."

"Thank you, Klaus."

He let out a brief chuckle. "Not a big deal." With that being said, Klaus sauntered off and opened the door. As soon as he did, his eyes fell on Samael, standing right outside the door. "She said come in." Klaus tipped his head inside the chambers, taking a step to the side to give way to Samael. "Don't make her cry more. I'll kill you."

Samael simply cast him a look but he didn't retort. Instead, he stepped inside silently while Klaus went out. Closing the door behind him, Klaus looked back at the shut door. "Seriously... just how confident is he about his children?" Klaus mumbled, shaking his head mildly. "But well, I think that child, Sunny, is one capable young lady. It's more like she isn't Lilou and Hell's child, but Fabian and Tilly's."

Klaus walked away, tossing whatever idea he had in his head. However, as he waltzed through the hallway, his eyes glinted dangerously. "There were still two Claude..." he told himself, knowing the existence of two Claudes. "We don't have time to idle."

Chapter 746 Change of plans

When Samael came inside Law's chambers where his wife and son were, he stopped several steps from the shut door. His eyes fell on Lilou and Law, sitting on the futon. Her eyes were almost puffy from all the crying, and the tip of her nose had already turned red. Meanwhile, the worry in Law's eyes was evident. A deep exhale slipped past his mouth, resuming in his steps until he was standing near the coffee table. Lilou looked away from him, looking back at Law.

"Mother." Law smiled subtly at her. "I will leave you two alone."

To his surprise, Lilou held his hand and shook her head. "Stay."

"But..."

"I agree with your mother, Law." Law raised his eyes at Samael at his remarks, watching the latter walk towards them. Samael squatted down in front of Lilou, holding Law's other hand. "I think this is a discussion you need to hear, son. We're family, and whether or not we like it, we cannot keep you in the dark."

"Your mother and I failed to stop this from happening," Samael continued, casting Lilou a look. "And as a result, we have no other choice but to get you involved. Or at least, let you know everything."

Lilou's eyes softened with bitterness while Samael cupped her cheek. Samael then squeezed Law's hand with his other hand, smiling subtly at his son. "I'm sorry for dragging you in this," he breathed out, but Law shook his head. "As father said, we're family. And this predicament is our family's problem, not just mother's and father's." The smile on Law's face stretched slightly, nodding in understanding. "Don't blame yourselves. This is bound to happen, anyway, since people just won't sit idly by knowing our family is at peace."

Law squeezed his father's hand and then looked at Lilou. "Don't cry, Mother. Everything will be alright."

"Law." Her lip stretched faintly, patting Law's silver hair gently. "God..." Samael breathed out and before the two could react, he pulled Lilou and Law into his embrace. He was still squatting down, but his arms were around Lilou and Law. "Everything will be fine. Our family will be complete again. I promise."

Lilou pressed her lips into a thin line while Law smiled gently. They could feel the vibration of Samael's body against them, making them place their hands on Samael's back to pat it mildly. Samael had always brought forth a brave front, as he couldn't afford to be weak ever since the regression. He told no one about his fears and worries, and no one also knew how he loathed and blamed himself all this time. Only now did Law realize how strong his father was. Not just by brute strength, but his heart was strong. Samael had been Law's pillar of support from the beginning — even back in Minowa when Lilou was in a deep slumber for years. "Everything will be fine. I promise." Samael's voice shook, breathing through his gaping mouth. "Sunny will be fine."

Lilou nodded. She didn't have the heart to argue with him anymore; she had already unleashed all her frustrations the entire night. "I'm sorry, Sam," she whispered. "And thank you for coming to me."

"I trust you, Father," Law chimed in with a calm voice. "You promised to take back Mother, and you did. So, I know you'll keep your promise."

Samael carefully released his wife and son, smiling at them. He ruffled Law's hair mildly and then cupped Lilou's face. He then reached for their hands, nodding encouragingly at them. His lips parted, but no words came out. But words weren't what they needed. The three of them remained silent, looking at each other. Their lips curled up subtly, holding each other's hands, and reassuring each other with just the warmth of their hands. "We can overcome this," Lilou's voice pierced the silence dominating them. "Our family can overcome this."

"We will..." Samael smacked his lips. "For sure."

Lilou, Samael, and Law stayed in the chambers for over an hour. When Samael left the room while Lilou and Law washed up, he ordered Rufus to summon everyone. And that summon also included Heliot. Fortunately, Heliot didn't make a fuss and answered this summon since he also needed to discuss important matters with Samael. With that, everyone gathered in the dining hall since the table was wider to cater to the new people — Claude, Lilou, and Klaus — who attended. Stefan was also present, sitting on the head seat. On his right were Samael, Lilou, and Law. Several vacant seats from Law was Claude. On Stefan's left sat Heliot, Tilly, and then two vacant seats were Klaus. Rufus was leaning against the wall with his arms folded under his chest. Meanwhile, Fabian stood behind Samael while holding a tray after serving them teas and snacks. Silence dominated the dining hall as neither of them spoke. Heliot's curious eyes could not help but gloss over everyone's faces. "It seemed this meeting gets more packed every time." Heliot's monotonous voice shattered the prolonged silence, eyes lingering on Lilou's face. He narrowed his eyes slightly, discerning that there was something odd about that unsuspecting woman. Lilou snapped her eyes ever so tenderly, holding Heliot's midnight blue eyes. His eyes were always so enthralling, like a night full of stars. But unlike their previous encounter, she didn't have the leisure to marvel at the beauty of his eyes. "We need to split." Lilou peeled her eyes away from Heliot and set them at Stefan squarely. "As you all know, Lakresha helped me remember my lost memories. The effect of that is Klaus, who had drunk my blood back then as my chief knight also retrieved his memories."

She kept her eyes on Stefan, but the latter could feel the distance between them. "There were still certain people whom we need for our plans to succeed. After all, I cannot allow my dearest friend to be a scapegoat." Lilou then cast Heliot a cursory look. "The land of Karo might be in danger since he didn't kill me just as he was ordered," she continued, making Heliot's brows furrow. "He had helped me a lot in the past. Betraying him wasn't the repayment I am willing to give him."

Her eyes glossed over everyone's faces. "If anyone disagrees with me, Lakresha will answer you. If not, we need to revise our plans today."

Lilou remained silent for a long time, waiting for anyone to raise an objection. When a full minute had passed without anyone disagreeing, she rested her arms against the edge of the table. "Since no one disagreed, will you listen to my plan?"

Chapter 747 The untold stories that were unfolding

Heliot remained silent as Lilou raised a new proposition regarding their plans. As she spoke, he couldn't help but wonder how come that lady just a few days ago and this woman was the same person? Not just the way Lilou speaks, but also the grasp of her understanding was different. "I

know nothing about this order." Heliot abruptly cut Lilou off. "I received no order to kill anyone. No one will dare order that."

Lilou narrowed her eyes slightly. "Heliot, I understand we are years ahead and you might not have received the order yet."

"As I've said, no one will dare."

"Even if no one dares give you such an order, do you understand if I know you made that all up..." Lilou trailed off as the lines between her forehead deepened. She cast Samael a look, and he had also furrowed his brows. "It was strange for Prince Heliot to receive an order from someone. Even if it was an order from someone on the mainland, there was no reason for Prince Heliot to act on it without any deep reason." Fabian rubbed his chin mildly, standing behind Samael's chair, where he could see Heliot properly. The side of his lips curled up in amusement, jumping to an interesting conclusion. "Does that mean Karo was under a threat and Prince Heliot had no other choice but to accept this request?" Rufus chimed in, and just with the Barrett Brother's mumbling, made the rest realize there were still many things they didn't know about. "Even if that is the case, Heliot had let Lilou off back then. Karo was left untouched," Klaus mumbled, recalling their lives before the regression. He then pointed at Rufus. "You had worked with him when you were the emperor. Even married his sister as the empress."

"They were in the talks of divorce," Fabian happily added, warranting a glare from Klaus and Rufus. "Please do not misunderstand. I'm simply adding details lest we need them."

"That's right." Rufus ignored Fabian as he cleared his throat. "Prince Heliot and the Karo Kingdom were fine during my reign."

He then set his eyes back to Heliot. "There are only two reasons would Prince Heliot kill the Madam. One was he was lying for his personal reasons or... he somehow found leverage that will equal to the Madam's life."

"I was summoned here to plan the attack in the Spade. I don't appreciate how this somehow turned into an interrogation." Heliot voiced his thoughts monotonously. "Why would I want to kill her?"

Heliot glanced at Lilou and sized her up for a bit. "She might look and smell desirable with the blood of Bloodfang and Crawford running in her veins. However, that isn't enough for me to lie. Nor it was an enough reason for me to end her life."

"That's right." Heliot arched a brow as Lilou nodded, agreeing with him despite the slight sarcasm in his eyes. "You are not the person to lie on such menial things, and the purity of my blood isn't enough to entice you."

Lilou rested her arms over the table and pondered about it. "But it doesn't feel right. I can't shrug off this feeling there was something... we didn't catch the first time. Just what is it?"

There was a long silence that followed Lilou's distressed mumbling. Back then, Heliot and Lilou had an agreement. Believing Samael had perished along with Fabian and Rufus, Lilou wished to die after taking down Stefan with her. Obviously, Samael turned out alive. Hence, Lilou had to null her deal with Heliot, and thankfully, Heliot agreed since they became good friends over time. Heliot's reason back then was that he didn't want to kill Lilou if she didn't want to die anymore. But now that they thought about it, it was entirely strange. Heliot claimed he was doing this because it was an order from the mainland. If what Heliot claimed was true, then there was no way he got away

from it unscathed. Was he truly lying? But why would he lie about that? Or was their initial guess correct? Karo was under a threat and Heliot had no choice? But how did he overcome that predicament?

There was something they all had in mind, but they just couldn't point out what it was exactly. "Did you see him?" The silence was once again shattered when Tilly's soft voice caressed their ears. She kept her unchanging countenance, watching everyone look in her direction, before she set her eyes on Rufus leaning in the corner. Rufus pressed his lips into a thin line and then glanced at Heliot's side profile. "No," he answered. "The last time I've seen him was when we finalized the wedding. We still "Did you see Eli after the wedding?" Tilly repeated, making Rufus' brows knit. "What do you mean..."

"After the wedding. Your wedding." Tilly cut him off abruptly. "Did you see Eli physically?"

"Tilly..." Lilou called under her breath, mouth falling open, grasping what Tilly was insinuating. Rufus pressed his lips into a thin line and then glanced at Heliot's side profile. "No," he answered. "The last time I've seen him was when we finalized the wedding. We still exchanged letters, though... although he stopped responding months after the wedding."

"How can you not think something was wrong if he stopped responding?" Klaus immediately raised a question, drawing a conclusion in his head.

"He told me." Rufus' reply was quick. "In his last letter, he told me he would be on an expedition. Hence, he might not respond to me until he returned to Karo."

Lilou let out a short and dry laugh as she lowered her eyes. She shook her head mildly, while everyone bore a grim expression. Even Fabian's smile lines faded, staring at Heliot with sharp eyes. "That made sense, then," said Fabian solemnly. "If he wasn't lying about it, then there's only one reason those on the mainland agreed to let the Madam go. A leverage that is equal to the Madam's death."

"His own life." Samael massaged his temple while Lilou looked at Heliot in disbelief. The latter tilted his head to the side, clueless at what they were saying despite having a vague idea of what it was. "Hah..." Lilou clasped her chest, recalling all the memories she shared with Heliot and the strange things he would tell her out of nowhere. Her eyes shook, staring back at Heliot with guilt and gratefulness dominating her heart. There were many mysteries Lilou had overlooked because, before the regression, the story centered around her and Samael, not knowing the silent sacrifice of those around her. Be it enemies or friends, Lilou had no idea about their sacrifices.

Chapter 748 Penny's death

"I do not appreciate this look you in your eyes." Heliot expressed his thoughts as his eyes glossed over their solemn countenance. "If you summoned me to resolve the problem that had yet happened, and this great sacrifice I had done which none of you didn't know about, then I'll be on my way." Heliot planted his hands on the armrest, about to push himself up. But before he could do so, Lilou spoke. "Gather a small unit of elite knights." Lilou's voice was still shaky, but it was firmer. She raised her eyes at him, making his brows raise. "In today's gathering, Prince Heliot had walked out of this room after ending his agreement with us because of differing views and opinions."

Heliot furrowed his brows while Lilou recomposed herself. When she raised her chin, her eyes glinted, staring straight into his eyes. "Withdraw all the people you gathered to attack the Spade

Kingdom and gather a small unit of knights you can trust and are capable of fighting powerful people," Lilou repeated. "We'll approach Zero as quietly as possible."

"You are planning to fight zero and his troops of undead with just a few people?" Stefan couldn't hold himself back from asking, shifting his eyes on Samael's side profile. Samael simply shrugged without saying anything. "Isn't that how like it was even before? You never won, though. Moreover, we are coming with them," Lilou replied, casting Samael a look and then at Stefan. The second their eyes met, the latter held his breath at the distant look in her eyes. "My husband and I, including Rufus, Fabian, Law, and Tilly, will come with them."

Stefan furrowed his brows upon not hearing his name. But before he could ask, Lilou continued.

"You and Klaus will have to return to the Heart's Kingdom."

"What?"

"As I've mentioned, my people might've retrieved their memories before the regression. Although Silvia, Yul, Kristina, and Noah will surely not act rashly, there were those two, Ramin and Charlotte, who act before thinking." Lilou huffed, tapping her index against the surface of the table. "You had gathered the divine order before. You should gather them again and explain things to them."

"They don't like you and see you as a threat. If you summon them, they will surely come to find some clues about the regression," she continued solemnly. "That's the easiest way to gather them. If you truly want to help us this time, you'll do it, Your Majesty."

Lilou balled her hands into a tight fist. "Also, send a letter to Beatrice."

"Her?"

"I need something from her." She breathed out, casting everyone a look. "As far as I know, she had connections with the wolves. She helped Yul back then. Among every one of us, she wants Zero's head more than anyone. We might as well give her that chance. If anyone disagrees with this, you may raise your suggestions lest Sam and I have overlooked other angles."

Klaus raised a hand. "I don't have any objections. I think splitting is a good and efficient way to catch up to whoever is responsible for this regression."

"I am the one responsible for this regression," Claude confessed while balling his hand under the table, watching Klaus cast him a cursory look.

"No," said Klaus while shaking his head. "Didn't you hear Tilly? You might have taken a part of it, but it's not only you."

Claude ground his teeth, assuming they were simply trying to make him feel better by denying this fact. "They killed Penny."

"But my lord, you were in delirium back then," Fabian argued. "You thought that woman named Penny was the Madam. Isn't that the reason you tried to reverse the time to save her? Was this guilt —"

"She's dead," Claude breathed out firmly. He then raised his eyes up at them. This was the first time Claude joined their gatherings, as he hadn't been himself for the past several months. With that being said, there were certain things he hadn't told them yet. Everyone furrowed their brows as they

frowned, staring at Claude. The latter lowered his eyes, resting his arms over the table. "Even when I reversed the time, Penny didn't go back in time," Claude confessed. "I had to bury her body somewhere in Minowa. The members weren't there when I checked the guild house. I thought it was strange, but I was sure. I've seen it with my own two eyes and felt her body turn cold before burying her myself."

"Penny... she was never affected by my abilities," he continued under his breath. "Even during our first meeting, I reversed the time for a minute and it did not affect her. I almost forgot about it."

Silence followed Claude's confession, as it puzzled everyone. They never heard about this, and now that they did, their plans were once again put on pause to make reconsideration. "Tilly, do you know anything about this?" asked Samael after an entire minute of nothing but silence, casting her an inquiring look. "Tell us now, since shocking revelations are already storming us, one after another. We need to know every little detail to get some sort of clues so we can deal with this accordingly."

"That's right. After this, we'll be parting ways. Sending a word or news will take some time," Klaus backed up Samael's remarks, eyes fixed on Tilly. "Tell us anything — even if it was just a wild guess."

Tilly pressed her lips, glancing at the people around the table, who was looking back at her with intrigued in their eyes. A shallow breath slipped past her lips. "I am not fond of speaking with uncertainty," she remarked with her naturally quiet voice. "But to make it simple, to fight darkness, there is always light. Vampires... the Grimsbanne to be exact were the prophesied seeds born out of evilness. It was the same with Werewolves whose origin came from the cursed god turned into a wolf."

"For creatures of the night and dark to walk freely in the mortal realm, the existence of the chosen individuals by the light will balance it out," she added solemnly. "The Divine Order is a branch of light. Treat them as individuals equal to pureblooded vampires."

Chapter 749 Fabian can't come

According to Tilly, there was a hierarchy in every race. Vampires, for instance, had a blood hierarchy. Starting from the bottom were Abnormals, turned, the complicated half-bloods, lower nobles, nobles, purebloods, and then the king. But not many knew... or rather, only those on the mainland were aware of the level above the King: the Grimsbanne. If they based it on the blood hierarchy, it was the same for the holders of light. The Divine Order was a branch of it. Their existence was obvious, and that was to stand on equal ground against the pureblooded vampires.

The Divine Order was created by none other than Soran; the man who has washed ashore at the vampire's breeding ground and captured the heart of the Grimsbannes. He was the man who used to rule the Heart's Kingdom before meeting his unfortunate end. The only remnants this man left were the existence of the Divine Order as if he had known all along vampires would plague his land. Hence, the Divine Order doesn't receive direct orders from its current ruler, Stefan.

Their sole purpose was to stop the vampire who was ruling the Heart's Kingdom if the vampires massacred humans unjustly. No more, no less. It was simple and yet a little complicated from another person's point of view, but Soran was strange, just as Tilly claimed. With all that laid on the table, how did Soran create the weapons of the members of the Divine Order?

As mentioned, in the blood hierarchy, the members of the Divine Order were akin to pureblooded vampires. In other words, Soran was one of the chosen holders of light whose caliber was equal to the King of Vampires or the Grimsbannes. "Vampires aren't chosen as they were born with the gift of their blood," Tilly continued her explanation, breaking her record for speaking as she explained the setting of the world. "But the holders of light were chosen. I am not sure how they were chosen, but the criteria never require a person's blood or history."

"That's tricky. You mean it's random?" Klaus concluded.

Tilly nodded. "It may or may not be the case. However, what we do know is that there were those holders of light that were as strong as the Grimsbanne. We are not yet sure how strong they were, or if they knew about their gifts."

"What I'm saying is that Peliperiru might be one, and she didn't know about it. Hence, Claude's ability didn't work on her since she's protected by the holy light." Tilly set her eyes back to Claude, only to hear Fabian's correction.

"Her name is Penny, my lady."

"Isn't that an advantage for us?" this time, Law could not help but break his silence. "Vampires knew which level of the hierarchy they fall into the second they were born. But the holders of light can be oblivious to their disposition. So they might die without knowing about it."

"That's right." Samael nodded. "It won't be a threat now that we know they weren't completed yet."

"Moreover, Lilou is a holder of Lakresha. She's a member of the Divine Holder despite being a Bloodfang," Klaus added and then gazed at Claude, who was hanging his head low as the latter listened silently. "I'm sorry to hear about your friend."

"It's fine. It's just... funny, isn't it?" Claude slowly raised his head and laughed bitterly. "I wanted to save her, but apparently, my abilities didn't work on her. It seems like those who started these hierarchies... the gods didn't want peace to begin with."

"Vampires are born hostile to other races such as werewolves and witches and vice versa," Tilly spoke once more. "More important than peace, they needed to put balance in this world. However, we all had our liberty to decide and certain things can be tragic just because you were born different."

"In any case, we are now aware there might be people who are aware of the regression without knowing the actual cause of it." Fabian rubbed his chin and rocked his head, making Tilly gaze at him. "I don't know about other holders of light aside from Soran." Tilly blinked, watching Fabian look back at her. "But I assume Rufus inherited a part of it."

Tilly and the rest slowly set their eyes on Rufus. The latter furrowed his brows in puzzlement.

"Me?"

"Well, now that I think about it, I heard you retained your memories despite the regression," Klaus mumbled and his eyes lit up as if he cracked a riddle he wasn't able to answer all this time.

"It affected me," argued Rufus firmly. "Because if I wasn't, how come I had slept in the emperor's chambers only to wake up in Grimsbanne?"

"We can conclude that every holder of light can have different reactions in every ability. Since we do not know what secret Penny could have, we can't tell exactly. But what we know is that Claude's ability didn't affect her, but it somehow affected Rufus. Although we can also assume that was despite that, he was able to keep his memories." Samael explained, giving out the most rational explanation for this phenomenon. He then cast Lilou a look.

"As for the Divine Order, it was understandable, since they were like the purebloods. However, it seemed the effects on them were much more fragile. Therefore, Lilou managed to retrieve her memories with Lakresha's help." "Then we have more reason to seek the members of the Divine Order," Lilou asserted. "We are against vampires..."

"Madam, it is presumptuous to assume we are simply against vampires," Fabian argued with a raised finger. "If the mainland had fallen, it wasn't surprising if one or two holders of light are involved in it. But I still agree that we will need the bearers of the Divine Weapons."

"Then we will stick to the plan?" Klaus knocked his knuckles against the table. "Stefan and I will return to the Heart's Kingdom. He will be the bait and the villain. I'll play the hero. Once we succeeded, we'll seek that mad woman from the Le Blac to add some spark of madness. Meanwhile, the rest of you will chop that Zero's head."

Klaus clapped, making things sound easier. Looking at their faces, Stefan kept his lips in a tight slash. However, just as Samael's lips parted to conclude today's gathering, Tilly spoke once more. "I want to suggest something," said Tilly, catching everyone's attention, only to see her fixed her eyes on Fabian. "Fabian... can't come."

Chapter 750 This time, I will protect you.

"Fabian... can't come."

"What?" Klaus gasped while the rest of them knitted their brows. "My lady, may you explain the reason?" Fabian inquired with a misplaced innocence in his almost squinting eyes. "Are you worried I will mess things up?"

"No." Tilly's eyes fell on the skull ring around Fabian's finger. "As I've said, if there was darkness, there is light. However, I haven't mentioned one thing."

"Why can't you just say it in one go?!" Klaus harrumphed in distress.

Tilly paused while everyone somehow held their breaths to whatever bomb she was about to drop. Fabian's eyes slowly opened, rubbing his skull ring with his thumb. "Maleficent?" Fabian asked, and Tilly nodded.

"Your weapon, Maleficent, was created and named after a powerful witch. There weren't many records regarding Maleficent. But there were only two things we know about her: one was she had risen to power out of nowhere and died silently. And the other one is that her power can be passed on."

"And you want me to find the person who inherited it?"

"Yes," answered Tilly without a second hesitation. "You might not know where to start, but my brother might know a thing or two. Or maybe Marsella knows. They might give you a clue. After all, my brother had been searching to break the curse running in the Grimsbanne's blood for the obvious reasons."

"I hate to say this, but losing Fabian is a tremendous loss." Klaus tapped the table to get their attention. "He can be troublesome, but we all know he's capable of many things."

"However, sacrifices should be made, even if it might put you at a disadvantage." This time, Heliot also joined the discussion, since he was already involved, anyway. "Or are you not confident you can complete your tasks without him?"

"I am flattered." Fabian smiled, causing Klaus's face to flash red in anger. "We are not losing Fabian," Samael asserted, causing others to frown until they heard his explanation. "He's just going to focus on another task. It's also better to have someone look after Sunny."

"I agree with him. If Sunny was safe, she should be in Marsella or in Abel's care now." Lilou agreed, mentioning Tilly's siblings, which were also the people they were supposed to seek help from before the regression. "If we want to keep everyone safe and inflict as fewer casualties as possible, we have no choice but to do our best and succeed in our plans."

"Heliot will divert everyone's attention by having a dispute with Sam and His Majesty. Stefan and Klaus will return to the Heart's Kingdom using the same reason as Heliot's backing out," she continued without a second hesitation. "We need to make them believe the Grimsbanne was all on their own."

"Once their attention was all on us, Klaus and Stefan can gather the Divine Bearers while Heliot can avoid a problem that was coming to the land of Karo," Lilou added. "Once the Divine Bearers are completed, and we gathered enough people — strong and capable ones — we will strike."

Lilou's eyes glossed over the faces sitting around the table. They looked at each other before looking back at her, nodding in agreement. "Then we'll set off tomorrow night." Klaus clapped. "This is a better idea. Lilou, I missed your strategic decisions. Hell is just too straightforward and selfish. He'll use everyone as a scapegoat to reach his goal."

"My family is my priority." Samael shrugged, only to hear Heliot's scornful remarks. "Your family isn't the only precious thing in the world."

"They're the most precious to me." Samael rubbed his ear with his pinky inside his ear. "Others... they can all just die."

"But having to live, knowing tons of people died just for us to survive, is not the life I don't want our children to carry. My guilt for living after the sacrifice of my clan can't even let me die in peace," Lilou retorted calmly, while Law nodded in agreement. "I agree with Mother. Sunny might disagree with us, though."

"In any case, this plan might have a higher risk, but once executed properly, we can have the upper hand." Rufus chimed in before this conversation would get sidetracked. "Letting them think we're in a disadvantageous position will slightly make them lower their guards."

"Even if they don't, since we're talking about the Grimsbanne Clan, it's better to not let them know our next move," Stefan added solemnly.

And with that being said, the meeting — probably the last they will have — came to a conclusion. Tomorrow night, Stefan, Klaus, and Fabian would set off to their destinations to execute their mission. Meanwhile, Heliot would stay in the land of Karo while gathering a small unit of knights to be sent to assist those going to the Spade Kingdom in secret. He would also keep an eye on the

people from the mainland that were roaming the land of Karo. Samael, Tilly, Claude, Lilou, Rufus, and Claude would also set off to the Spade Kingdom. *****

After the meeting, Heliot, although didn't have a good impression of them, still politely bid them farewell. As he left the meeting room first, he stopped in the hallway as Lilou's voice came from behind him. "Heliot," called Lilou, watching Heliot turn on his heel to face her. Heliot blinked twice, tilting his head to the side. Lilou cleared her throat and advanced in his direction, stopping three steps away from him. "Did I miss another important detail?" he asked when ten seconds had passed in silence. Lilou shook her head mildly, letting out a deep exhale. When she raised her head and looked at him straight in the eye, the side of her lips curled up.

"You always have my gratitude, Your Highness," she expressed as her eyes softened, pleased to see her dearest friend, who had always been a strong pillar of support. Even now that Heliot didn't remember a thing, he was still helping them despite that his reason was that Samael threatened him. "You might not remember it, but you've been a great friend to me," she continued sincerely. "Eli, I'm really glad to see you again. I might not know what you did, but I still remember every word you said in the last letter you sent me."

Her lips stretched, hiding the bitterness in her eyes at the possibility that Heliot lied to her for the first time and actually sacrificed his life for her. After all, Heliot had always told her he would make sure she was happy and safe. "This time, I will protect you," she affirmed softly before performing a short curtsy. "I promise. May you have a safe journey home."

Heliot could only stare at Lilou in silence before he nodded. "May you also have a safe journey, my lady."