

## The Duke 781

Chapter 781 No one wants to stare at Truth because it was naked

"Claude!"

Klaus and Silvia immediately rushed to the sitting room next to where they were the moment they smelled Claude's blood. Their dilated eyes searched the room and instantly caught Claude and Cassara inside. Klaus's eyes fell on Claude's hand, catching red fluid on the latter's small palm. Cassara was holding up Claude's wrist while the other held a small knife.

"You!" Fire shone in Klaus's eyes as she stormed inside. "What do you think you're doing to him?"

"Klaus!" Silvia jumped in the middle before her brother could even reach Cassara. She planted her hand on his chest, shaking her head mildly. "Calm down, Klaus."

"Calm down?" Klaus scoffed, keeping his unblinking eyes between his nephew and his sister. "It's clear she planned to hurt him. I'm not going to let it slide."

"I didn't!" Cassara aggressively let the little Claude go, huffing just as angrily. "If I wanted to harm him, this knife would've gone through his throat and not his little palm."

"You —!"

"Klaus!" Silvia perked up when Klaus took a step. "Please, Klaus. I know you care a lot for Claude, but Cassara is still one of the king's concubines."

Klaus ground his teeth, glaring at Cassara, before gazing down at Silvia. The moment his eyes met with Silvia, she shook her head, her lips drawn into a thin slash. "Claude, come here," he huffed, waving a hand. Claude looked back at Cassara before he hurriedly went to Klaus's side, hiding behind his uncle. "What a vile child," Cassara spat out, seeing Claude peek his head out behind Klaus. "Is this really what you want, you cursed child?"

"Cassara!" Klaus's voice thundered, barely holding himself back, knowing he couldn't get his emotions to get the better of him. Silvia had a point. Cassara was still the king's concubine, and one way or another, she still holds power no matter how little it may be. If she used that little power she had, it would definitely become a troublesome situation for Klaus. And dealing with anything bothersome that could divert Klaus from his mission was not worth everyone's lives.

"What?" Cassara scoffed as she raised her shaking eyes at Klaus. "Isn't that true, Klaus? This child... is the product of Lucia's greed and selfishness. He is the proof of his mother's vile nature, and I am not surprised why this child is so rotten at such a young age. After all, because he exists, Rottie has to die —"

SLAP!

Cassara's breath hitched as her face was tossed to the side. Her cheek instantly swelled from that resounding slap she received from Silvia. "A person's sin isn't their child to carry, Cassara. Neither of their deaths had got to do with this child as well. They... were executed by Stefan, whom this child was forced to call Father. Do not forget this undeniable fact." Silvia's voice was firm, staring at Cassara as the latter looked back at her with her hand on her cheek. "Did you come here with an intention of harming an innocent child?"

"Why, Cassara?" she continued incredulously. "I am aware of your fondness for Hell and Dyrroth, and your jealousy of the amount of attention Lucia was getting from everyone. However, Dyrroth was dead, and Hell? He wouldn't even bat an eye on you. If you're going to be angry, be angry at Dyrroth for dying and to Hell. Do not unload your frustrations on this child."

Cassara laughed dryly, peeling her hand from her slightly swollen cheek. Her mouth opened and closed, but she couldn't find her voice for a moment. All she could do was dart her eyes between Silvia and Klaus, who were looking back at her angrily. "I came here..." her voice was shaking from anger and indignation. "... to play with him. But why do I need to explain myself, right? No one ever believes me."

Cassara stumbled a step back. "It's a waste of time to even continue this when you are these pathetic hypocrites. This cursed blood that is running in my veins and in yours, Silvia, Klaus... and this family... I loathed it to the very deep of my bones."

"How I wish I was not born as a La Crox and had never met such a crude family." She shook her head. "You fear the day I turn mad because of my ability, but unlike you all, I am far more sane. All I've done and everything I had said, I was being true to myself. I was bad when I want to be bad no matter how shallow the reason was, and I was good when I meant to be good. I don't lie, I don't pretend, and that is how I am; I'm not a hypocrite."

"I hate everyone and their inability to accept the truth. You only listen to the things you want to hear, and turn a blind eye even when the naked truth was standing before you," she continued sarcastically, tossing the knife away, which landed with a clang. "Your unwillingness will be your own downfall, and I'll make sure to be there and watch it with joy."

Cassara let out a dry laugh, darting her eyes between Silvia and Klaus. Her eyes fell on Claude, making the little prince hide slightly behind his uncle.

"If I were you, never step foot in the Avolire Palace again or show up in front of me. I hold grudges and will never forget what you've done today," she threatened before she walked away without looking back at the three. Meanwhile, Klaus and Silvia remained silent for a moment. When they raised their heads, they looked back at the open door, but Cassara already left. "That girl..." Klaus snapped his tongue in irritation. "... won't she ever mature?"

"Klaus, I think you should tend to Claude's wound first." Silvia glanced down at Claude before lifting her gaze back to her brother. "Don't let him near the Avolire Palace or the inner palace for now. Cassara had to cool down first."

"Tch." Klaus shook his head as he bent down on one knee, taking out a handkerchief, which he wrapped around Claude's hand. After tying a small knot, he raised his eyes to Claude. "Everything she said or calls you... remember that's not you." He raised a hand and ruffled Claude's head. "You're good. I won't bring you here next time."

Claude pursed his lips and nodded as a response, making Klaus smile subtly. When Klaus slowly rose to his feet, Claude glanced up at Silvia, only to see the latter observing him quietly. "You're right, Silvia. It's wrong to bring my nephew in this place when clearly, the people in here only wish to hurt him," Klaus remarked with a tinge of sarcasm. "We had a pleasant conversation, but I have to excuse myself first."

Silvia nodded. "Take care on your way."

With that being said, Klaus bent down to carry Claude in his arms. He cast Silvia another look before he marched away. Meanwhile, Silvia kept her eyes on Claude, watching the little boy look back at her over Klaus' shoulder.

Unlike how Claude looked so innocent and harmless in front of Klaus, his eyes sharpened the longer he held Silvia's eyes. Seeing this transition, Silvia furrowed her brows and narrowed her eyes. "Did Cassara..." she whispered as soon as Klaus was out of her sight. "... really hurt him?"

Chapter 782 Uncle, are you crying?

"You're alright," said Klaus, offering Claude a warm smile as he knelt on his knees while the little prince was sitting on the edge of the bed. "That madwoman won't do anything to you. Just... just... stay here for now. This place is safe for you."

Klaus ruffled the young boy's hair in hopes that would comfort him a bit. Being back in time and staying in the royal palace was not the best time for the two of them. Even though Stefan and Samael were now on the same boat, things for this child were still the same, and Klaus would still say the same things he used to tell his nephew. But Klaus had to. He had to repeat these painful words, which only reminded him and Claude how little their world was. That in this world, the surface was thin as eggshells. Hence, each step should be careful and their weight calculated.

Hence, it had always been safe for Claude to stay within this cold palace where no one ever bothered to go. Claude's safe zone.

"Uncle, are you going to leave now?" asked the young boy after mustering enough courage to speak. "Mhm." Klaus nodded, smiling subtly at him. "I need to do something."

Claude's little mouth opened, only to close it again. His uncle hadn't been on good terms with the king, but even so, Klaus had always followed Stefan's orders without questions asked. Klaus was a good man; he was the only nice person in this place. And because Klaus cared for him so much, he had to do things that were out of his principles for Claude. "Will you be away for a long time again?" came out his tiny voice, and heaved a sigh of relief when Klaus shook his head. "I'll just be around for a while." Klaus retrieved his hand from his nephew's head, and then rested his arm on his leg. "Don't worry. I'll come and visit you every day."

"Really?" Claude's eyes glimmered; unlike the sharp look he cast at Silvia, Claude was just like any other boy with his reaction. "Of course! Since when did I disappoint you?" Klaus chuckled, tapping the surface of the bed. "Claude, remember. You have me. Always. Even if I go on a mission, I will surely come back and accompany you here."

Claude's expression softened as he nodded. "Once I grow up, I will always go on a mission with you."

"Haha! Well, I do not mind being the mentor of the crown prince." Klaus winked playfully. "I'll make you a great man!"

Both of them smiled at each other for a moment before Klaus tapped the soft bed again. "Now, time for you to sleep," said Klaus, pushing himself up while Claude crawled to his spot. After Klaus tucked the little boy in, he sat down on the edge of the mattress, eyes on Claude. "Bedtime stories?" he asked the little boy, only to see Claude shake his head. "Uncle, can you take me out of the palace

one day?" Claude inquired curiously. He had outgrown bedtime stories but had grown fond of talking to Klaus; asking questions to sate his curiosity. "Of course. I told you. I'll take you out of the palace one day." Klaus smiled. "One day, Claude. One day."

He then slowly peeled his eyes away from the little boy to look around the chamber. His hands were on either side of him, pursing his lips into a thin line. "Someday... I will take you on an inspection with me," Klaus continued with a hum along with it, recalling that time the two of them went to Cunningham. That was probably the turning point for the two of them, meeting Lilou for the first time, whom both of them were so fond of. Klaus couldn't help but smile as he looked back at Claude. Even though many things happened after that event in Cunningham, the result was overall good. Claude would break free from his royal duties as a prince and would get the title of the earl in Monarey. Monarey might be a place where it was cold all year round, but they had a good time there. There might be problems here and there, but the two of them managed.

Staring at Claude's young and adorable face, Klaus couldn't help but feel a little sentimental. The older Claude grew, the more he had become mischievous, having Fabian as his role model. But at the same time, Claude might be mischievous, but he had also become a fine young man; an earl everyone, even in the south Minowa, admired. "We'll be fine, Claude." Klaus sniffed hard as he fixed the blanket over the boy's chest. "Uncle, are you crying?"

"No, of course not."

"Who made you sad?" "No one. I'm not crying." Klaus chuckled as he forced a smile on the young boy's face. "I'm just... very proud of you — that's all."

"What did I do to make you proud?"

Many. That was the first word that came into Klaus' head upon Claude's curious question.

"For existing." Klaus's expression softened, knowing how this child went through so much at such a young age. Yet, Claude didn't let everything drag him down. And that... bring equal pain and relief in Klaus' heart. Because the current Claude, the one he left with Lilou and Samael, blamed himself for their situation right now. Claude even lost a good friend, but he couldn't even grieve properly.

Life surely has a sick and twisted sense of humor. It wouldn't even cut them some slack. Claude smiled, moved by his uncle's short yet heartwarming answer. No one had ever thanked him for existing or appreciated his existence. Hence, this meant a lot to him. "Don't cry, uncle. I am a La Crox, and I will surely make everyone proud and love me." Claude sported a reassuring smile.

"Until then, I will stay safe in the cold palace."

"Mhm." Klaus ruffled his head. "Good boy."

Klaus fixed the blanket again properly and inspected the room lest there was an open window. The night could be very cold, and leaving one open would freeze Claude to death — he was exaggerating. After snuffing out the last candle, Klaus bid his nephew a good night and left. Standing in front of the door with his back against it, a deep exhale slipped past his lips. "I will surely make everyone proud and love me." Claude's remarks hovered over him, causing Klaus to reveal the bitterness in them. 'There's no need to feel sorry,' he told himself as he took a step away. 'He might not achieve that in this place even if he does everything, but Lilou would surely love him at first sight.'

Chapter 783 You never changed

For Klaus, the problems they must face and they had to win once again weren't painful. They were bothersome with full of uncertainty, but he — they had grown stronger, wiser, and more mature before the regression. He was certain they could do it; just like all the other hurdles, they would overcome this.

But what was painful to him was to watch Claude in this cold palace again. It wasn't like Klaus had forgotten how this young boy lived within these walls. Around this time, Claude was still full of hopes, eyes full of optimism, and still has this child-like personality. Klaus didn't want to watch how those things would slowly disappear — get taken from Claude before meeting Lilou. Although the young and adult Claude now lived in the same timeline, both were his nephew. And thus, having to experience those again, ripped through Klaus's soul like no other. Claude had been through a lot — all of them had — but Klaus had always wished to end this cycle. The La Crox's already suffered from the man who should've protected them. They all loathed their father for what he had done to them and his cruel way of raising his children, and yet, they were doing the exact same thing to Claude. They might not hurt Claude physically, but emotionally, the child was beaten black and blue. The reason Klaus was even fiercer to fix this problem they had. He had already confirmed Silvia, and he was aware Cassara was no good. Even if Cassara remembered everything, Klaus didn't raise his hope that that woman would help even just a bit. For as long as Cassara didn't intentionally sabotage them, Klaus didn't care about her. Now... he had to confirm whether or not Yulis remembered.

"Yulis," Klaus called when he saw Yulis in the open hallway connecting the inner palace to Yulis's dwelling. Yulis was talking to the knights, who would escort him to his inspection as they would depart tomorrow.

When Yulis looked in Klaus's direction, he waved a hand dismissively. The knights bowed and, without a word, left while Klaus stopped at Yulis's arms-length. "Brother," called Yulis, holding his hand behind him. "I thought this important matter you want to talk to me about isn't as important as you said, since it took you some time."

A deep exhale slipped past Klaus's nostril. "Yulis, would you like to spar with me?"

"Spar with you?" Yulis cocked his head to the side with genuine wonder in his eyes. "I am departing in a few hours, Klaus."

"I know."

"I cannot spar with you."

"Why?"

Yulis laughed dryly. "Because I will be departing for an inspection. Klaus. Therefore, sparring with you isn't ideal. I do not want to present myself beaten black and blue."

Yulis lifted his chin when the sound of metal pierced his ear and a blade was instantly pointed at his throat. He raised both his hands to the side, keeping his composed surface in check. "You cannot wield your sword in here, Klaus," said Yulis calmly. "Had your patience been tested lately that you deeply wanted to vent, even if you used force to make the other party agree?"

"Yulis, do me a favor, will you?" Klaus grinned devilishly. Doing this wouldn't raise suspicion. After all, although Klaus was a doting uncle to Claude and an obedient soldier to Stefan, he was just plain garbage to others.

Who liked Klaus? No one. The reason? This. His attitude to others was plain trash. He was a jerk too, so Cassara wasn't surprised as well when he nearly lost it after today's events.

"Klaus." Yulis let out a deep exhale. "I can't."

"And why is that?" Klaus cocked his head to the side, blinking almost innocently. "I just told you the reason. Twice," Yulis repeated and grunted when Klaus just kept on blinking at him. "Is Dom not around? Or Hanzel? Hanzel is a better opponent than I am. You two will surely have a fun time together."

"Ugh." Klaus scrunched his face in disgust at the thought of Hanzel. If there was one person Klaus's mind didn't change about was Hanzel. That guy was just ten times worse than Klaus and Fabian. Yulis let out a chuckle. "Are there no other people you can spar with?"

"Come on, Yulis. Are you dense? Would I ask you if there's someone else I can spar with without desiring to tear their mouths open and rip their tongues out?"

"I think those sentiments will come from your opponents, Klaus."

"One more fucking nonsense and this sword will go through your neck."

"Calm down." Yulis chuckled. "You never changed."

Klaus arched his brow delicately. "Why would I change?"

"Because... why not?" Yulis carefully clipped his fingers on the blade and took a step back. "You've been through a lot. Until now, you grieved for Lucia's death and now, you have to watch over her son. You also have to listen to the orders of the man who was the same person who ordered Lucia's death, live with Hanzel — the person who executed the order voluntarily, and grit your teeth each time you cross paths with them."

Yulis smiled warmly, watching the slight surprise plastered on Klaus's face. It wasn't like what Yulis said was a top secret; everyone knew about this. But what surprised Klaus was that... Yulis dared speak these words aloud. "Even when all that happened... you still hadn't changed, Klaus. And I'm glad for that," Yulis added solemnly. "Once I return, I will spar with you."

"Oy —"

"Don't tell Silvia, Klaus." Yulis kept his meek countenance. "Don't tell her about anything, and just say you didn't find out. Or... if you can, just tell her I don't remember a single thing, Klaus. It'll be easier that way, easier not just for her... but for me as well."

Klaus's breath hitched, taken aback at how Yulis casually revealed everything without directly telling him. He came to uncover the truth, but here was the truth, right in front of him, and yet he couldn't speak a word.

Chapter 784 I think you already know the answer to that

"Don't tell her about anything, and just say you didn't find out. Or... if you can, just tell her I don't remember a single thing, Klaus. It'll be easier that way, easier not just for her... but for me as well."

Yulis pressed his lips and studied Klaus's stunned reaction. He nodded slightly, turning on his heel to leave. "Hey!" Yulis stopped when Klaus suddenly appeared in front of him, blocking his path and grabbing his chest aggressively. "What did you say? You... remember everything?"

Yulis raised his chin and kept silent for a moment. "Yulis..." Klaus tightened his grip on Yulis's chest. "If you know Silvia remembered, why aren't you saying anything?"

"Because... I don't see the need why I have to tell her?"

"You —"

"Klaus, it's better not to dwell on what happened before the regression." Yulis cut Klaus off offhandedly. "You do what you need to do, and let me do mine."

"And what is that you need to do, Yulis?"

"Something that is none of your concern."

"Yulis!" Klaus's voice thundered, echoing in the air which the wind drifted with it. "Something that is none of my concern? How the fuck is this not my concern when you, Yulis Bloodfang, had been pretending all this time? Your wife... my sister, had to keep you at arm's length. No matter how she longed for her husband and cry herself to sleep every single night, she couldn't blame you. She couldn't even decide whether not retrieving your memories is a good or a bad sign."

His eyes blazed with anger, recalling how vulnerable and helpless Silvia was when she finally took off all her facade. Silvia was the type who gives her all in love. She gave everything to Rufus, so when Rufus left her, nothing was left for her. It took Silvia many years to mend her broken heart, which Rufus broke into smithereens. Silvia took a leap of faith and gave herself to open up her heart to Yulis. Although their relationship before tying the knot was much more complicated, she fought for him. Even when Yulis left her with a tiny note to go to the mainland, Silvia came to him because she wanted to fight for them until the end. Silvia was an amazing woman who had a big heart and tons of love to give. And yet, Yulis had the audacity to do this to her? Did Yulis really remember everything? Or did he just remember a snippet? Klaus didn't know, because the Yulis he knew wouldn't be this cold.

"Yulis Bloodfang. Since when... have you been playing innocent?" Klaus breathed out, eyes shaking in anger, holding himself back from snapping Yulis at this very second. Yulis kept his mouth tight for a second before he returned. "Not the same time as that night she came running to my room to confirm if I felt Lilou's blood burning me awake. But also, not the same time I woke up in my chambers in this place." freeweb . com

"You... what did you say?" — did Yulis mean he already remembered even before them? "How did you — who retrieved your memories?"

"I wished I didn't remember, Klaus. The past... how I deeply wished I didn't remember." Yulis carefully held Klaus' hand and peeled it from his suit. "I'd rather walk around this palace knowing nothing than wandering around in here, knowing the root of this anger building up within me at every breath."

Rage shone underneath the thin layer of frost in his eyes. They still looked icy, so cold they could burn.

"How about you, Klaus? Can you remember what you were doing before the regression?" Yulis took a step forward to lessen his distance from Klaus. "Did you just sleep? And then wake up ten years prior to the present? If so, good for you. It seemed even after one year, everyone had a good life."

Yulis took a deep breath and blinked. When he reopened his eyes, the bottomless wrath within them was slowly replaced with unnatural calmness. It was almost like a calm, hiding the storm ready to unleash at the drop of a hat. "You went back over ten years, Klaus, but for me, it was only nine," he added under his breath, making Klaus knit his brows in confusion. "Before this regression... I was already dead — murdered." — The only reason Yulis knew that the regression was over ten years was after observing for months. As an eye planted by the Bloodfang to be useful once his queen decided to claim the throne, Yulis was great at uncovering secrets. No matter how careful Klaus was, he would always make a slip-up or mumble to himself. Klaus didn't change, and Yulis was glad he didn't because he wouldn't get a good grasp of the situation if not for him. "Where's Lilou, Klaus?" Yulis inquired as that was the only thing Klaus would never ever speak even to himself; Lilou's location. "I..." Klaus let out a sharp breath, backing away whilst keeping his eyes on Yulis. "I don't trust you, Yulis."

"If Lilou regained her memories, I'm certain she would one way or another had gone to the Spade Kingdom," Yulis concluded. He simply needed some confirmation from Klaus; Yulis was far too sharp not to make accurate predictions, and he knew Lilou too well. "Lilou is part of the Halberd."

The Halberd.

Klaus had heard of that. It was an alliance of Zero, a few of his strong supporters, and the last living Bloodfangs.

"It would be a miracle if she didn't show up in front of Zero, despite not knowing how dangerous it was. But well, Hell is with her — Tilly's presence was quite reassuring." Yulis rocked her head, taking a step back to create distance between them. "I know you don't trust me, Klaus, but the feeling is mutual. I trust no one but Lilou and Hell's heart for her. If you truly want Silvia to save herself from heartache, it is best if knows nothing about this, Klaus."

Yulis smacked his lips, assessing Klaus for a moment before turning around. But just as he took a step, Klaus spoke. "Yulis." Klaus straightened his back, staring at Yulis's figure, his fist kept firmly on his side. "Who... murdered you?"

"I think you already know the answer to that, Klaus." Yulis glanced over his shoulder. "There's only one person who can kill me and make me not want death."

Chapter 785 Yulis' destination

Death was never Yulis's worry. Ever since he replaced Cassara's twin brother to become an eye within the royal palace of the La Crox, there was never a day Yulis forgot how dangerous his everyday life was.

The man he called father was cruel, but also keen. He would end Yulis if he found out he wasn't one of his children, and he could do that so easily. The late king wouldn't be able to drive out the founding clans if he wasn't capable.

That was also the reason the former queen, Ameria Grimsbanne-La Crox, asked the founding clans to cut ties with her husband. The previous clan leaders might be capable, but against the patriarch of



the La Crox and his wife, it would just be a losing war. Still, despite that the third prince, Samael La Crox, had had enough of his father's lack of regard, and challenged him to a duel and came back as a victor, Yulis never felt comforted. Because the people he called siblings had grown into capable, smart, and vicious individuals. The outcome would be the same for Yulis if they found out he wasn't one of them.

With Samael giving up the throne and passing it to the fourth prince, Stefan, Yulis had to tread on eggshells if he wanted to live. It wasn't like Yulis's driving force was his desire to live. No. Yulis's only reason and purpose were to support his one and only blood kin; the holder of the Bloodfang's will. Yulis waited patiently and carefully to the day the holder of their clan's will would appear. And she did. His only blood kin, Lilou, appeared as the bride of Samael — a La Crox. He did everything in his own subtle way to drive her out or make her reconsider her feelings and decision but to no avail. Lilou was deeply, madly, and devotedly in love with Samael. She came like a blank canvas with humble beginnings. Therefore, the only comfort Yulis had told himself was, "she was probably not the chosen heir." But as things escalated, Lilou became more and more capable, wise, and powerful — she had uncovered the will of their clan. Yulis would die for Lilou.

If she asked him to cut his arm, he would. Lilou was his life and the reason he endured for many years was to be with her; to watch her every step of the way, to guide or support her, and make sure she would achieve everything she set her eyes on. Therefore, Yulis... had accepted long ago his life wasn't his anymore but to his blood sister. Even if he died on the way, at least, he would die with purpose. It just so happened Lilou was not the type who would use her people as pawns she would sacrifice.

Lilou taught him what true life was; she taught him servitude, respect, and the value of life. And because of her persistence, Yulis found love. A love so strong he could live in a place so far away from the woman he called his queen to live with another. His marriage with Silvia was happy and something he would forever be thankful for. Never once did Yulis regret loving Silvia and marrying her and giving his all. If there was one regret he had, that was... he failed her. Not just Silvia, but Lilou as well. Yulis failed both of them by dying so easily and so quietly that no one even knew he had died. That was why... with this second chance, Yulis had made a pledge. Once blinded by this so-called love and life and peace, now all he could see was the abyss called complacency. "Yulis." Yulis blinked as he slowly returned to the current lapse, gazing up at the man sitting on the throne. The throne hall was dark with only a few lit candelabras just to avoid total darkness. Yulis stood in the middle of the carpet several steps from the raised platform where the king, Stefan La Crox, was sitting. "I heard Klaus had confronted you," said Stefan calmly. "Didn't you say you don't want others to know your circumstance?"

"Klaus is a tenacious man. His grit scares me." Yulis humored. "When he came to me after months of behaving, I knew he was already desperate. He would do everything to uncover the truth, and therefore, to save both of us the time, I told him a part of everything."

"I see." Stefan rocked his head in understanding, assessing Yulis from head to toe. When Stefan returned after collecting the members of the Divine Order, Yulis requested to have an audience with him. That day, Stefan came to know Yulis had regained his memories... and they weren't just simple ones. Yulis remembered everything till the day he died. It was a little unpredictable for Yulis to confess to Stefan, of all people. But Yulis wasn't admired for his brilliant mind for nothing, and Stefan wouldn't recognize his raw talent if the seventh prince didn't deserve the merit. Therefore,

Stefan wasn't surprised that Yulis had already guessed about Stefan and Samael's alliance. All Yulis wanted in return was for Stefan to give him an excuse to leave the royal palace. Thus, the inspection.

"I had prepared someone to act as you during the inspection," said Stefan after a minute of silence. "However, as the person who had provided you this freedom, I have the right to know your destination. Lest I hadn't made myself clear, you are not needed where she is. I cannot afford to risk the little friendship I built with your sister. She'd kill me if she sees you in that place out of nowhere."

Yulis let out a weak chuckle as he imagined Lilou's troubled face if they meet in the Spade Kingdom. It would horrify her for sure.

"I am part of the Halberd, but no. I do not have the face to show her at this moment, Your Majesty," explained Yulis, keeping it short and concise. "Helping her doesn't necessarily mean I should be with her at all times. She is surrounded by people who candidly love her and are willing to protect her just as much as she wanted to protect them."

"Your loyalty to her had always amused me, Yulis."

"My loyalty... is the only thing I can offer to her." Yulis smiled. "I have a place I'd need to go and meet someone to settle scores with."

"And who might be this person who had touched the untouched part of your demon?"

Yulis kept quiet for a second, holding Stefan's gaze firmly. "The Cross Kingdom... to end Beatrice Le Blac."

## Chapter 786 A prayer for his little brother

Beatrice Le Blac. A princess from the land of the cruel Cross. The Le Blac Clan was one of the Heart's Kingdom founding clans and was said to be just as competent as the La Crox, Moriarty, and Von Stein. As the king of the Heart's Kingdom for many years, Stefan had always kept a close eye on these founding clans. Even though each of them had established a kingdom from scratch, Stefan was a man to consider all possibilities. Especially, knowing that these people knew how to hold a grudge, Stefan understood if he opened an opportunity for them, each of these clans would destroy the La Crox in a heartbeat. It was the same for other new clan leaders of these founding clans. Take Heliot, for instance. He had always kept all other founding clans a close eye for the same reason. Perhaps this was the curse they all shared. They just couldn't be complacent, knowing the clans they used to have strong ties with could be their worst enemies in the future. Therefore, Stefan heard a lot of things about the Cross Kingdom. The aforementioned place was the only land that was reigned by vampires who indulged in enslaving werewolves. For the citizen of this land — especially, nobles and royalty — owning a werewolf and having them as pets, or simply having their pelts as accessories had been a symbol of one's social status.

If others had thought living in the Heart's Kingdom was a dystopia, they probably hadn't heard about the Cross Kingdom. Aside from that information, Stefan, in particular, knew this princess Beatrice Le Blac... or not. Stefan had married her once out of a mutual and political agreement. They even shared multiple passionate nights that didn't incorporate their hearts. Just an austere mating to quench their longing for the people they craved for.

Beatrice was a woman Stefan would share a bed with, but not the type of woman he would want as a life companion. He could say Alphonse would say the same; even though his brother and Beatrice had a far deeper and obscure partnership than just tangling bodies, in which Stefan had no place to pry about.

At the same time, Stefan couldn't deny that Beatrice was more dangerous than she appeared. She would do everything to get what she wanted, be it by means or foul. No one actually knew what was going on inside that twisted head of hers. He heard she fell head over heels for Yulis. Stefan doubted that, though. Beatrice was someone incapable of love; she would even use her body to get what she wanted in a heartbeat. There was only a slim chance Beatrice had actually fallen for Yulis without any hidden motive. But even if she did, then... Stefan could understand where this rage in Yulis's heart was coming from. It just suited the concept, 'if she can't have him, no one else can,' But for sure, the reason wasn't as shallow as that. "I wonder..." Stefan whispered, standing in front of the window, as he watched the small unit of knights prepare to set off for the inspection he had approved. "... what did she actually do that induced this sort of reaction from Yulis?"

Even though Stefan was aware Yulis had died silently, he wasn't sure who did it or how it happened. But then again, Stefan heard Yulis and Silvia had gotten married. Hence, there were many things Stefan could think of. "Is it possible?" mumbled Stefan, putting the piece of information to complete the incomplete puzzle in his head. "That Silvia had killed him in a moment of haze, and Yulis knew it deeper than what it appeared?"

That was the only possibility that really made more sense for Stefan. After all, Yulis and Silvia were a married couple and even though the two had this very normal relationship as a Marchioness of La Lona March and the Duke of Grimsbanne, where they live separately, there was no way Silvia wouldn't figure out her husband's passing. Unless, of course, Silvia didn't care much about Yulis because that was the only explanation for his death to be left unknown. But Silvia married Yulis out of love, and not because it was convenient, like her marriage to Stefan. Silvia never once cared about Stefan's opinion, and even if Stefan would disappear for a year without a word, Silvia wouldn't care about him. "How complicated, indeed," he whispered, catching Yulis raise his eyes to the floor where Stefan was watching them. "I guess my death was still far better than his. At the very least, I chose Hell to kill me that day in Minowa, but Yulis... he had to die in the hands of his beloved wife — if my assumptions are correct."

Stefan kept his eyes on Yulis from his vantage point until the latter peeled his eyes away from him. Yulis then talked to a few knights before mounting his steed. Upon Yulis' call, the small unit that would accompany Yulis to this 'inspection' had galloped away.

"She will kill me for sure," Stefan expressed under his breath, watching Yulis gallop from the palace to his dangerous yet personal mission. "I should've just told him Lilou might need a hand. If Yulis died in that Cross Kingdom, and she knew I allowed him to go, Lilou would definitely sunder my spine." free

Stefan shook his head mildly, knowing the place Yulis was about to step foot in was a dangerous place. And Yulis' plan to settle a score with Beatrice was ten times more dangerous than the place. However, as a man, Stefan knew Yulis would do this with or without his permission. "I... am not a firm believer, but I pray for his safety," he added quietly. "He may not share the blood that sustains me, but he had always been my little brother. May he succeed in attaining the peace he had sought."

Stefan pressed his lips and stood silently until all he could see was the thick smoke the horses ambled up in the air. "Yulis was a good child. May this not be the last time I see him."

Chapter 787 Lala

[ SPADE KINGDOM ]

A round of applause exploded in the theater as the audience slowly rose to their feet. From their beautifully sewed dresses to their meticulously crafted suits, one could tell each of them came from well-off houses. A mask was covering each of the audience for tonight's show, but the smile on their faces were apparent. Everyone had their eyes on the stage where a woman was posing after her enchanting dance. The performer had this bright hazel hair, the lower half of her face was covered with a veil, but her beautiful green eyes were enough to give the audience an idea of her beauty. Lilou gazed around the crowd in satisfaction. It was yet again a standing ovation. She slowly pulled her hand from the air, curtsying to return the applause, as tonight's guests were an amazing crowd. As Lilou paid attention to each row, whistles chorused with the applause began to crescendo.

The side of her lips curled up, bowing to the last row before straightening her back. She waved gracefully once again before the curtains closed before her. The moment the crowd was out of sight, her smile instantly disappeared. Lilou turned on her heel as she walked away from the stage to the people operating this entire play. "You did a good job again, Lala," said someone from the group Lilou had joined a month ago. "The audience tonight was very satisfied with your performance."

Lilou let the woman follow her to her dressing room without responding to any of the praises the latter gave. Once they were inside, Lilou sat down on the divan to rest. "Lala, do you want any beverage?" Lilou raised her head at the woman standing near her vantage point, noticing the latter's exceptionally bright smile. "Yes. Of course, you need one. You were exhausted."

Lilou just watched the woman walk over to the stand in the corner of the dressing room which had become Lilou's private room. It might be too early for Lilou to reach such success in this field, but because of her performances that had been just as popular as the usual sport in the colosseum, the group she joined had enough funds to give her such luxury. "Here you go!" the woman, in charge of Lilou's all needs, Freya, served Lilou a glass of fruit juice to freshen her up. "You've been performing for the past month without break, and everyone just wanted to see you."

"Anyone tried to meet me?" asked Lilou as she reached for the glass of juice. "That is inevitable." Freya chuckled. "The numbers of your admirers had significantly every performance. Some of them were so devoted they wanted to buy some of your stuff."

"Goodness..." Lilou gulped down, shaking her head as she leaned back. "Can people get any weirder?"

"They like you so much. Even the noble ladies, who were said to be vicious to other ladies, adore you."

'Of course,' Lilou thought, casting Freya a sidelong glance. 'I made sure they'd love me. I wouldn't be titled the most desirable woman in the Heart's for nothing.' Two months ago, Lilou had stepped foot in the land of Spade. Her husband wanted to outright taunt Zero, which was not surprising. Samael had always faced his problems head-on, and there was only one time he actually made a plan. It wasn't like Samael's plans were bad. Matter of fact, Samael's way of planning was

meticulous, thorough, and genius. However, they were mostly risky and put a lot of people in danger before he get things done.

So the person who was left in charge of their planning was Lilou and Rufus. Samael and Claude added ideas here and there. It was Claude's idea to get their own careers in this land to get to know more about this place and their way of living. Rufus and Claude set their eyes on the colosseum out of personal interest. Samael associated himself with the black market since he had no patience to become a warrior. Tilly and Law had become common citizens and were getting enough money to live in peace and follow the trend in the kingdom from Lilou, Rufus, Claude, and Samael. Lilou chose this. To become a performer. And she had a good reason for that; a reason just as good as Rufus and Claude and Samael.

"Ah, right!" Lilou quirked a brow when Freya pounded the bottom of her first against her palm. "You received a letter today!"

Freya hurriedly went to one of the drawers and glided to Lilou's side. Her smile was brighter this time, handing Lilou a letter with both of her hands. Lilou immediately understood what made Freya so happy when her eyes fell on the letter.

"Lala, isn't this a seal from the royal palace?" asked Freya, as Lilou accepted the letter elegantly and slowly. She linked her hands together, watching Lilou in anticipation. "Hmm..." Lilou assessed the envelope, flipping it around to check the back of the envelope. "Maybe?"

Of course, Lilou knew this seal. She had seen it many times back when she was the Duchess of Grimsbanne. Zero used to be her pen pal, although their exchange was mostly about politics and the state of affairs. The only reason she was feigning ignorance was that she wasn't as elated as Freya; at least, she wasn't elated for the same reason as Freya. As Lilou opened the letter, she glanced at Freya.

"Ah, right?" Freya cleared her throat, creating a distance from Lilou so she wouldn't be able to peek at the letter. She could only watch Lilou open the letter carefully, waiting for good news with bated breaths. Getting even the slightest attention from the royal palace was big for the entire crew. Hence, Freya was silently praying for good news. When she saw the corner of Lilou's lips curl up, her eyes lit up. "So?" Freya inquired when Lilou leaned back. "What did it say?"

Lilou kept her smile and looked back at Freya, clipping the letter in between her middle finger and index to Freya. "It's an invitation," said Lilou while Freya accepted it, watching the latter lift her dilated eyes back to her. "His Majesty wants to invite me to the royal banquet he would host."

"Really?!" Freya gasped in excitement, reading the letter immediately to confirm Lilou's news. "Oh, my goodness! This is big and will bring honor to everyone one of us."

"Indeed." Lilou smiled as she looked away, eyes glinting with malice. "This is, indeed, big, and will bring honor to all of us."

## Chapter 788 The most beautiful swan dancing in a black lake

It was no secret the people in the Spade Kingdom loved to indulge themselves in entertainment. It was so popular that it helped their country prosper by this wealth flowing within their walls. But, there was this one thing in particular that had the greatest honor for anyone in the country. That was to be invited into the palace and have an audience with the king. It wasn't like it was rare for the king to attend banquets, but the king had chosen every event he would participate in. It was a great

choice on his part, making a point that he only graces useful people with his presence. Anyone the king favored — even if that person was from the very bottom of the nobility — would have a complete change of life. Gaining the king's respect was akin to gaining the entire country's respect. This was definitely one of the strongest points of this country: their unity. It was like the king's words were the people's bible. This was why when Lilou, who was known for her stage name, Lala, was invited to the royal banquet she instantly became the talk of the town. The image and reputation Lilou built for the past month as a performer put her in a good light.

Men had admired her gracefulness on the stage while women somehow looked up to her. A mere performer getting the respect of even the noblest of the noble was amazing on its own. After all, it was amazing to be loved by all since jealousy was mostly popular amongst the ladies in this land. Especially if one was getting a lot of attention from men. Lilou was the special one.

She made sure she would be. Carrying the blood of the Bloodfang, who had sacrificed their lives for her to live, Lilou had to charm everyone in this land. The reason she chose to perform. She wouldn't attain that if she chose to become a bookkeeper which was her first option, or a barmaid to eavesdrop on the conversations in the taverns.

The round of applause concomitantly rang along with the orchestra. At this point, Lilou had grown used to a such mix of soft harmony. Dancing in the middle of the greenhouse within the palace premises, Lilou flicked her fingers beautifully, not fazed by the attention from the crowd.

Unlike the usual banquet in the Heart's Kingdom, the banquet hosted by the king had a different and much more serene setting. Surrounded by beautiful flowers that only grow in the palace, tables and chairs were proportionately arranged on the side. There was not a single guest who was standing with everyone sitting on the chairs and tables prepared for them. As Lilou spun, she carefully assessed each table. The banquet wasn't packed, so it was easy to identify some guests here as they were the king's pillar of support to strengthen his regime.

In other words, they were people she would have to fight if things go south. When Lilou was nearing the end of her performance, she faced the large terrace where the king was watching. Unlike everyone else, even though he was in the same place, his distance from the rest was a symbol of where his authority and importance. He was very meticulous, and Lilou wasn't surprised by it. Another round of applause resonated in the serene greenhouse when Lilou took a stance, her hands in the air, fingers flicked, looking like a beautiful swan. The orchestra also faded while Lilou watched her deep breaths. "Amazing," a voice from the terrace disrupts the applause, making everyone turn their attention to the king, Quentin Moriarty, or what Lilou called Zero.

Zero stood in front of the railings, holding a wineglass delicately. His lips were curled up into a dashing smile, donning an elegant pair of white suits with a red cape hanging on his one shoulder. He nodded when Lilou curtsied to pay respect to him. "I'll be honored," she remarked under her breath, watching him take two steps with his arms extending over her shoulder. Zero carefully pinched the drawstrings of her veil, watching how it fell from her nose to her red lips.

"Stunning as ever," he mused, narrowing his eyes as she turned her head to drink, but maintained her eye contact with him. His lips fell open at her open seduction, then smirked. "I never thought I'd ever see you dance with how much you loathed banquets, dear."

"No wonder my subjects had been talking about the theater as of late," he continued with an amused tone, turning on his heel as he sauntered towards the short steps down. "The beautiful swan, Lala, is worth every gold and time."

Lilou stood straight, chin up, watching the man take the stairs and unhesitatingly approach her vantage point. When he stood at arm's length from her, his lips stretched even broader. "You have stunning eyes... like emerald found from the still lake," he praised seductively, studying her face that had a veil covering the lower half of her face. "That was the most stunning dance I had ever seen in my life — my heart has melted."

"It is my honor my dance was able to move Your Majesty's heart," replied Lilou modestly, keeping her eyes on him. From her peripheral vision, she could see everyone's eyes on the two of them, smiling, as if it didn't bother them that the woman before the king was a mere performer. "I want to offer you a toast." Zero raised his brows and glanced down at the wine in his hand. Mischief flickered across his eyes before raising them to her, offering the glass in his hand. "Would you accept my offer to drink?"

"I'm afraid I am not worthy enough to receive such honor."

"Are you refusing me?"

Lilou didn't show the slightest fear, keeping her eyes on him. "This humble one doesn't deserve such praise. However, how dare I refuse Your Majesty?" Her eyes squinted slightly, accepting the glass from his hand whilst grazing the back of his hand with her pinkie. "Should I take off the veil?"

There was a momentary pause after his question.

"I'll be honored," she remarked under her breath, watching him take two steps with his arms extending over her shoulder. Zero carefully pinched the drawstrings of her veil, watching how it fell from her nose to her red lips.

"Stunning as ever," he mused, narrowing his eyes as she turned her head to drink, but maintained her eye contact with him. His lips fell open at her open seduction, then smirked. "I never thought I'd ever see you dance with how much you loathed banquets, dear."

Zero then offered his hand. "Will you honor me to a dance, love?"

Lilou licked her lips as she swallowed down the wine that had a strong concentration of blood. His blood. "I would love to," Lilou smirked, clasping his hand ever so slowly.

## Chapter 789 Intro

Everyone wore a beautiful smile on their faces as they watched the emperor of Spade and the most dazzling woman in the banquet dance in the slow melody. Their hands intertwined to the side, her hand on the back of his shoulder. His hand was on the curve of her back.

One step back, and a step forward, their feet moving in sync. Each movement was calculated, and their sharp eyes didn't hide their contempt. Yet, the side of their lips was curled up into a lopsided smirk. "How did you like the wine?" Zero's voice was warm and inviting. "Good?"

"Will I get hanged if I speak lies?" Lilou let out a brief chuckle. "I am not as crazy as you think I was, my dearest bride." He humored back, chuckling with his lips closed. "Not as crazy as you. Surely, not par for your unique taste in men."

Lilou giggled. "I don't think so, Your Majesty."

"Interesting. How so?"

"I attract the crazy men," she dawdled, spinning elegantly before taking her original stance. "Most."

"Hah..."

"And it just so happened the ones who can only be crazy in this world were powerful men."

"Shock, horror, Lala." Zero pulled her body closer until there was only a tiny gap between us.

"Blame it in your blood. The blood that is created out of greed for power."

"But many understand that greed, hence, that greed attracts." Lilou's eyelashes fluttered ever so flirtatiously while the luster in her eyes was enough to enchant someone at first glance. "It is so simple and yet, so complicated."

"Attraction first..." Zero's movements slowed down as his eyes fell down on her body, then slowly raised his eyes up. "Then, obsession. I still wonder what sort of obsession I need to seek."

He pulled her body until it was against him. "Tell me, my dearest. Where is he?"

"You are asking the wrong question and at the wrong person, dearest Zero." Lilou lifted her chin up and smirked, unbothered by the closeness of their bodies. "You should ask me, when will he come to get your head? I might give you the exact time and date if you ask nicely."

"How bold."

"Bold had always been my nature," she said. "I'm surprised that seemed to be a shock to you."

"You never fail to amuse me, Lilou Bloodfang." The side of his lips hooked up wickedly. "I'm simply asking for his whereabouts to send him my first and last warning."

"How kind of you." Another sultry laugh slipped past her lips. "I can imagine him complaining if he heard about this."

"That man... had always been the loud type. His loud mouth never failed to amuse me, seriously."

"I've been with him for years and I can assure you, you will never get used to it. Even after that long time, I never predicted what sort of things would come out of that damn mouth of his." "No wonder he was born a vampire. A decade isn't enough."

"A hundred more thousand isn't enough to accurately keep track of his train of thoughts." Her eyes squinted, leaning forward to whisper in his ears. "But one thing I can tell you is he is not playing anymore, my dearest Zero."

Lilou slowly leaned back and smirked. "I don't think you ever saw him become serious. His wife never had, but thanks to you, I had met another side of him: Pride."

The orchestra slowly faded, standing a step apart from each other whilst holding each other's gazes. Lilou looked stunning with that devilish smirk, while Zero's beauty didn't pale in comparison. He looked good, more gorgeous and dashing than any of their guests.



Zero carefully arched his brow as footsteps grew distinct while the music faded. The soft applause from the crowd when they finish also subsided. The guests slowly turned their heads to follow the sound of light footsteps. Ironically, even when the footsteps were intended to be light, they sounded heavier in everyone's ears. Lilou's brows elevated, making Zero's brows raise as well. He slowly turned to the terrace where his seat was, and from his current vantage point, Zero caught a pair of deep crimson gazing down at him. "Oh, Samael." Zero laughed candidly, cocking his head back at the smiling Lilou. "A thousand years surely isn't enough to accurately guess what is going inside his mind."

Lilou shrugged at Zero's amused remarks. "I was thinking you would barge in, kicking the door wide open, and letting my men's blood pervade the air." Zero mused at the man now sitting on his throne leisurely. "Perhaps, drag a person to make a more impactful entrance. I didn't consider you'd sneak inside my place like a mouse."

He then threw his hands with a playful grin. "My bad. It seemed I have to overestimate you and saw you as a cat, not a mouse."

Samael blinked ever so tenderly, watching Zero welcome him much livelier than what would people normally expect. However, this was not a surprise for either Lilou or Samael. If they were crazy, this guy was just as crazy. The danger wasn't enough to break him, nor the loss of many people whom he considered numbers to count.

"This sit of yours... isn't as comfortable as it appeared." Samael chuckled with his closed lips, stroking the armrest mildly. "Though it smells, Quentin."

"It smells?" Zero snickered with an arched brow. "It smells like..." Samael sniffed hard, taking a pause before pushing himself up. "... bullshit."

"Dear me, Quentin." Samael sauntered towards the railing, propping his arms against it, eyes down. "I would've pointed out what's wrong with your lack of a sense of style if not for the fact you actually had your eyes on the most beautiful woman in this place."

His eyes slowly shifted to Lilou, who was standing behind Zero and smirked playfully. "I can't blame you. She makes me hard just at one glance."

"I'll take that as a compliment." Lilou curtsied while Zero rocked his head, not a bit offended by this duo.

"Anyway, since the main event is here. Why don't we start the veritable banquet?" Samael raised a hand and snapped his finger. As soon as he did, the orchestra that stopped playing suddenly started playing as if puppets on strings were unable to control their movements. Zero arched his brow as he glanced at the band playing. When he caught the surprise of the musicians, his smile faded as he gazed back at Samael. "Now this is music, Quentin." Samael kissed his fingertips briefly. "Perfect."

Chapter 790 Come, let me earn your hatred.

"Now this is music, Quentin. Perfect."

Zero's smile faded, glancing at the orchestra playing. He then turned his head when Lilou walked past him, smirking at him. He watched her take up the stairs to where Samael was standing, wrapping her arms around Samael's neck coquettishly. "I thought you won't come," Lilou said

flirtatiously as if she hadn't seen him in a while. "Why the hell did you think I won't?" Samael humored, snaking his arm around her slim waist. "I made sure I wouldn't get late this time."

"I missed you."

"I swear Quentin doesn't have any idea of what would make this banquet perfect." Samael rolled his eyes and glared at Zero in disappointment. "Quentin, whenever you host a banquet, inviting a gorgeous lady like my wife, you should've prepared a room. In that case, you don't need to take a long journey before ripping out her clothes."

Samael huffed, shaking his head. "But whatever. I don't think you will even have the time to host an event. I'm wasting my breath on giving helpful advice." A sigh slipped past his lips, pulling Lilou closer to his body. "Darling, I don't think that is even helpful." Lilou laughed, paying with the tip of Samael's hair. "At least, not for anyone."

"Are you saying I am perverted to have such ideas?"

"I didn't say that. You did."

"Well, I'm sorry, my love. It's just so hard to resist your beauty." Samael let out a deep breath and again gazed down at Zero's vantage point. "I'm so disappointed in you."

Watching Samael complain whilst flirting with his wife, Zero's expression remained hard. But a second later, his lips curled up. As soon as his expression changed, the music also changed.

"I commend you, Samael," mused Zero, raising his hand while moving his fingers as if he was controlling something from the tip of his fingers. "I mean, you really did a great job of luring Theodore to your side."

"It's interesting, watching an insolent like you, my dearest bride, your damned son, that pale woman who looked like she needed immediate medical help, the unstable twisted earl, and the normal man in your group, sneak around my territory like rats," he continued, the music in sync with his fingers' movements. "I enjoyed watching what you people had in store for me."

Quentin's brows then rose. "Oh! I didn't see that butler, but well, I'm not expecting to watch his movements. I already guessed he was the only person who can go in and out of my territory unnoticed. Or did he even come? I heard your daughter was left on the mainland."

"Well, anyway, it was a fun two months, and I especially enjoyed your planning," he added as his lips stretched from ear to ear. "One thing I can tell you, Samael, is that your taste in music is awful. How insufferable!" "Fuck you." Samael nearly rolled his eyes, throwing his hand in disbelief. "Even your favorite composer will disagree. Stop this nonsense, Quentin. We all know you are simply going with the flow to fit the nobility, but you're no noble. Don't pretend."

Quentin laughed. "I don't pretend. I am rich!"

"You are — well, make sense." Samael nodded in agreement. "But you still have a bad taste in music — but on second thought, it's fine. I killed your favorite composer to stop his delusions, and I will kill you."

"That makes me angry." Zero's face stiffened as his tone dropped.

"You can't blame me. He was bad, and I simply did the world a favor!"

Lilou couldn't help but roll her eyes as this conversation definitely drifted to an unexpected turn. What did she expect from her husband, though? Samael wasn't the type to take things seriously in a long run. There would always be an out-of-place discussion or sudden thought in between. As the two argued about which music taste was horrible, Samael and Lilou's eyes suddenly sharpened. In a blink, Samael pulled her closer, barely dodging the arrow coming at Lilou. "That is not nice." Samael shook his head, watching a few strands of her hair fall onto the ground. But before he could say anything, red threads that were amassed to create large red threads suddenly appeared on their back. Each tip was sharp, aiming directly at Samael.

"Lakresha!" was the only thing that Samael heard before a piercing pang resonated in his ear. Samael glanced over his shoulder, catching Lilou blocking the large and sharp threads with her scythe, Lakresha. "Thank you, my love." He expressed with his hand across his chest.

"Sam, can you please focus?" Lilou rolled her eyes, pushing the large thread away with all her might. "Goodness, that was heavy! I swear, Sam, I will kill you if you keep up with that music talk!"

Samael cringed and faced Zero. "She's not sweet all the time. Don't misunderstand and take it as a sign of marriage crumbling down."

"I have accepted that to have her, I should kill you first." Zero smiled until his eyes were squinting. "Fret not. I will take care of her and make sure she will forget you, your son, and that little daughter of yours."

"Catharsis."

The moment Samael called forth his heavy sword, a surge of power filled the greenhouse. Some glasses shattered at the inbound current that circled around inside. When Samael held his sword, multiple people and guests surrounded Zero in a protective stance. "Oh, my..." Samael clicked his tongue while shaking his head in disappointment. "What a baby!" PANG!

Another loud clash was heard with Samael jumping from the terrace, only to clash against multiple people at once. In a second, multiple thuds and painful grunts were heard, crashing against the floor, which created cracks and hollow holes in it. Smoke ascended from each person who tried to stop Samael, only to fall on the floor. As the smoke thinned out, Samael's figure came into sight. "They said if people had gathered to take you down, that means you are powerful," Zero mused, not a bit surprised Samael finished a few of his people in one blow. "I'll take this as a compliment."

"Whatever makes you happy, Quentin," Samael smirked as his eyes shone a sinister glint. "Although I can say I'm simply in a hurry. So come forth and let me earn your hatred."

The corner of Zero's lips curled up and within a blink of an eye, another loud clash exploded in the air. This time, all the glasses had shattered as the fight broke out with Samael against Zero, while Lilou made sure no one would interfere. In other words, she fought the rest.