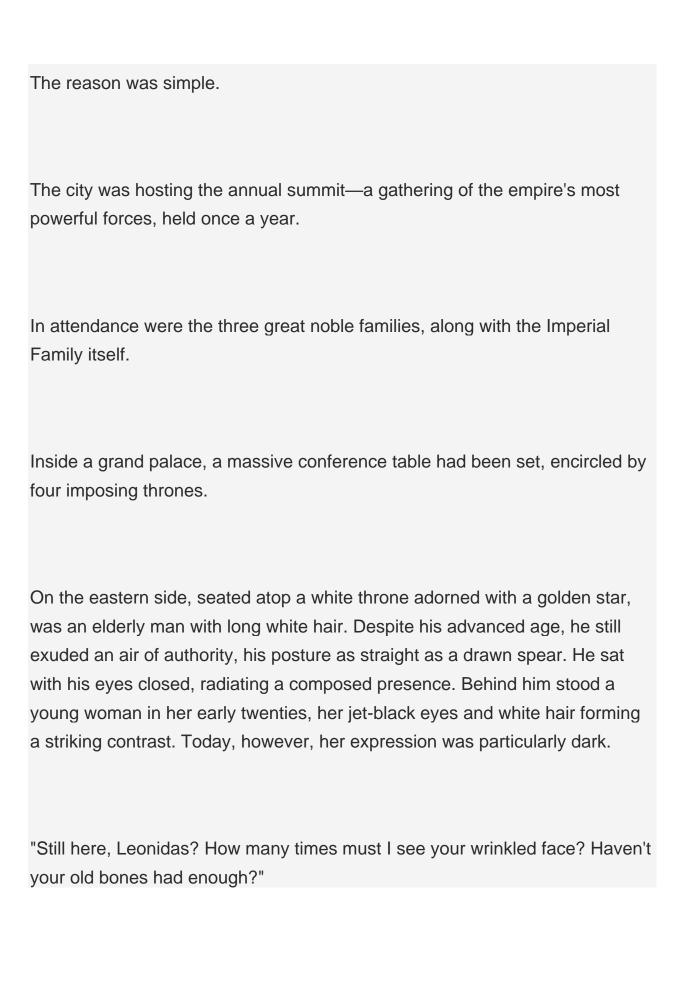
## THE VILLAIN'S POV

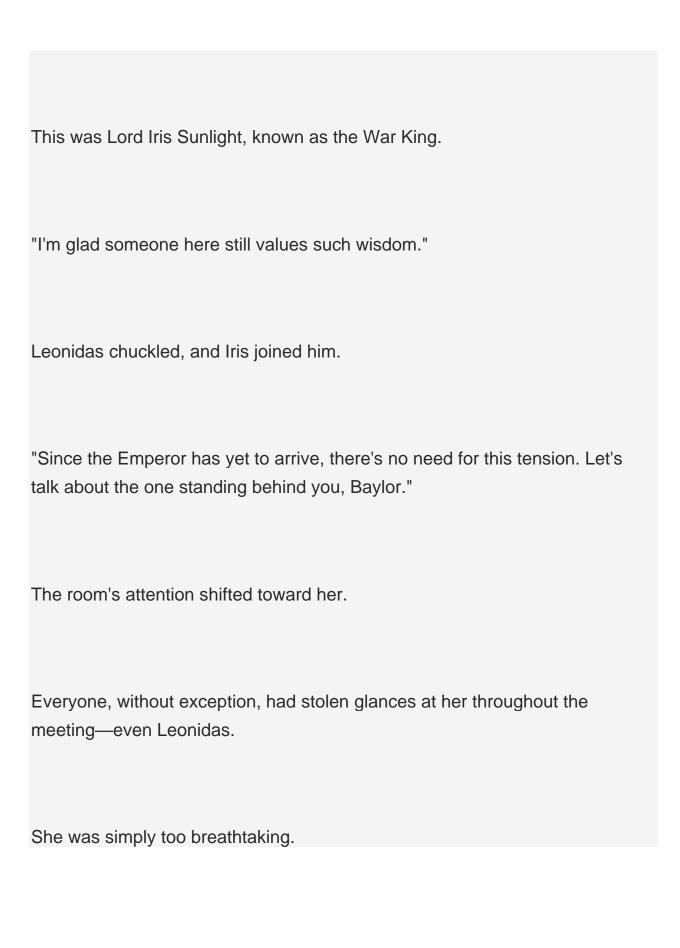
## Chapter 19 19: The True Beginning (1)

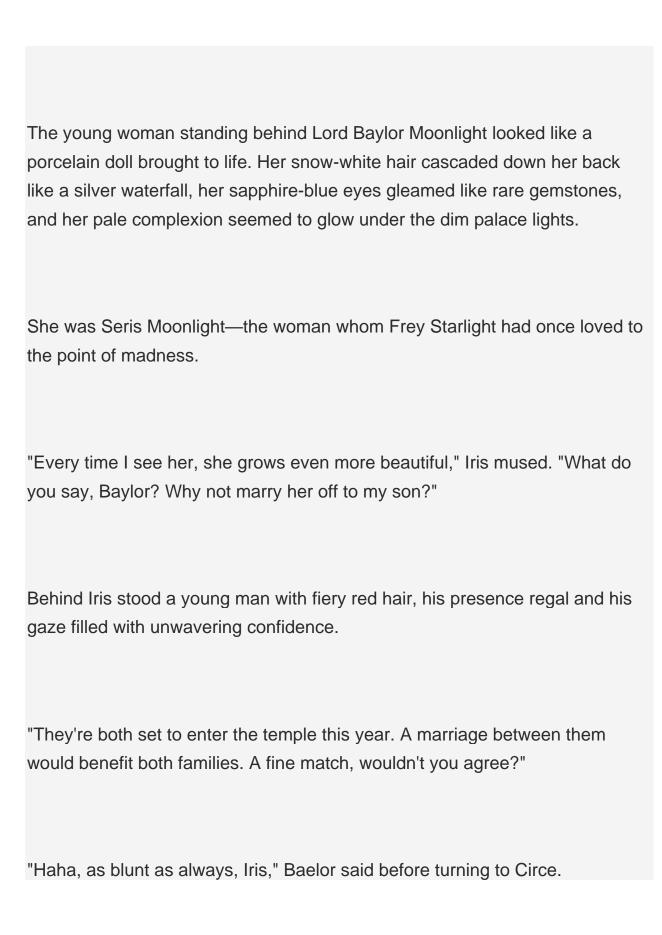
The Ninth Month, Year 2423 AD
Imperial Capital – Belgrade
Belgrade was known as the Jewel of the North. No matter how far one traveled, there was no place safer than this city—or so the people of the Valerian Empire believed.
After all, this was where the Imperial Palace stood, where the strongest living human resided—the Fourth Emperor, Maekar Valerion, a man known as The Phenomenon. A direct descendant of the legendary warrior who had saved the world three centuries ago—the One Sword.
But today, Belgrade was more alive than ever.

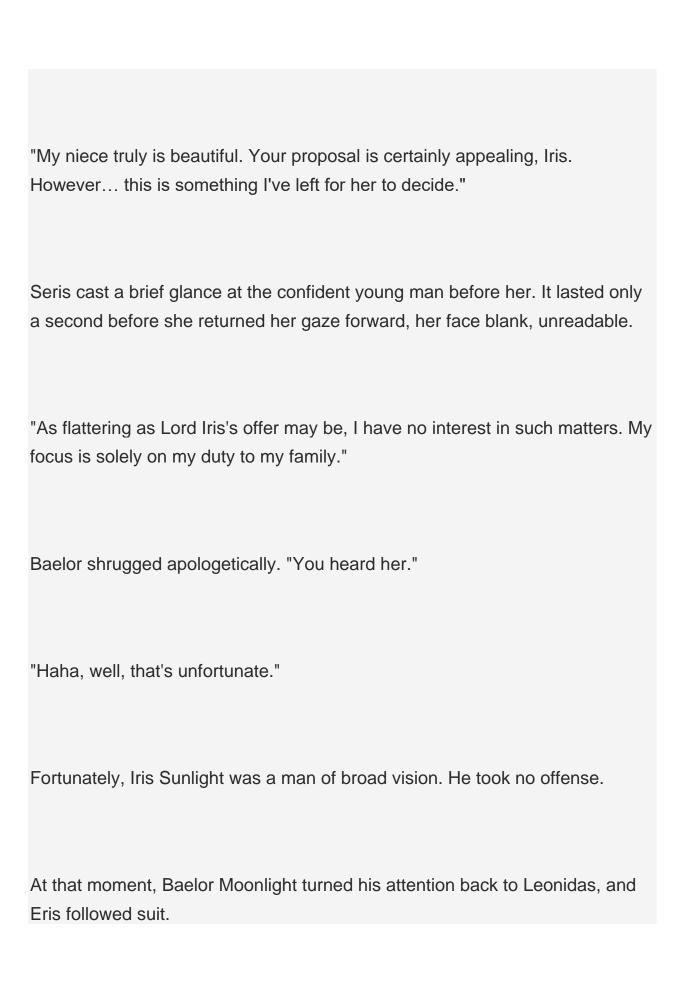


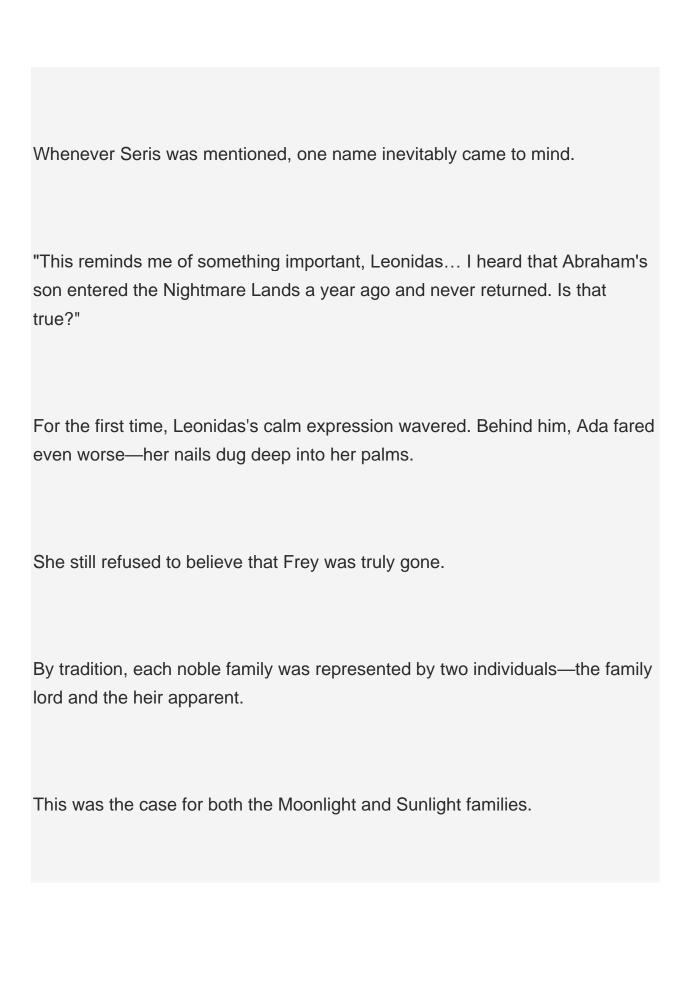
Leonidas lifted his head, following the voice to its source.
On the western side, seated upon an icy throne engraved with a crescent moon, was a man who appeared to be in his mid-forties. His skin was deathly pale, as if frozen by an eternal winter. His deep blue hair and glass-like eyes gave him a chilling presence.
This was none other than Baelor Moonlight, the current lord of the Moonlight Family—an SS-rank existence feared across the empire. The Ice Demon.
But Leonidas remained unfazed by the tyrant before him, answering in a calm steady voice.
"The day I can no longer serve my family, I will step down of my own accord. Until then, you'll keep seeing this face Baelor."
Baelor chuckled softly. "Still as unyielding as ever. No wonder the Starlight Family has managed to endure for so long."

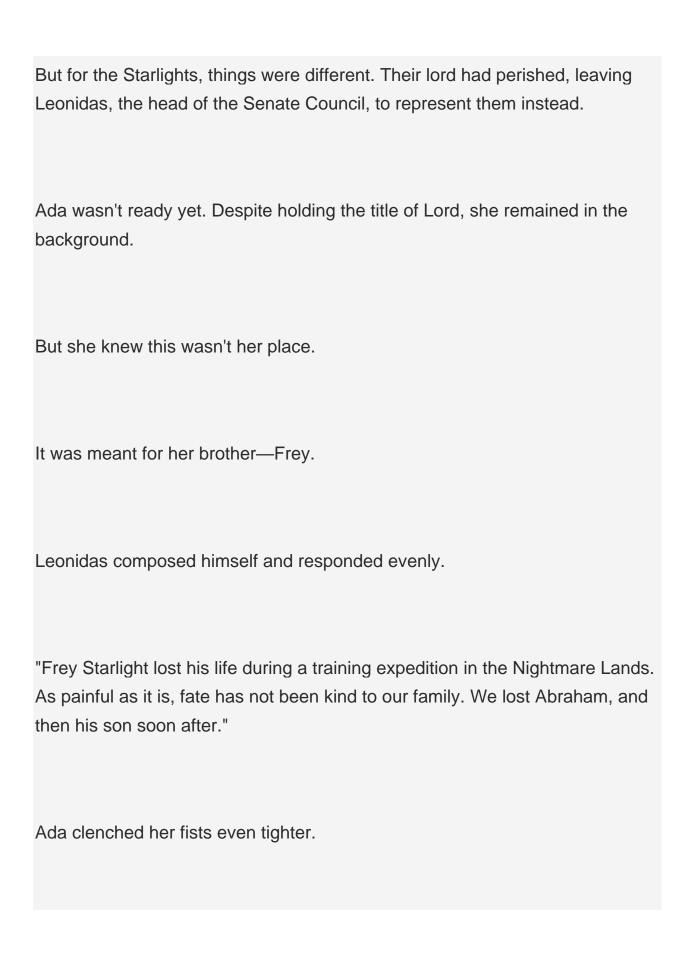




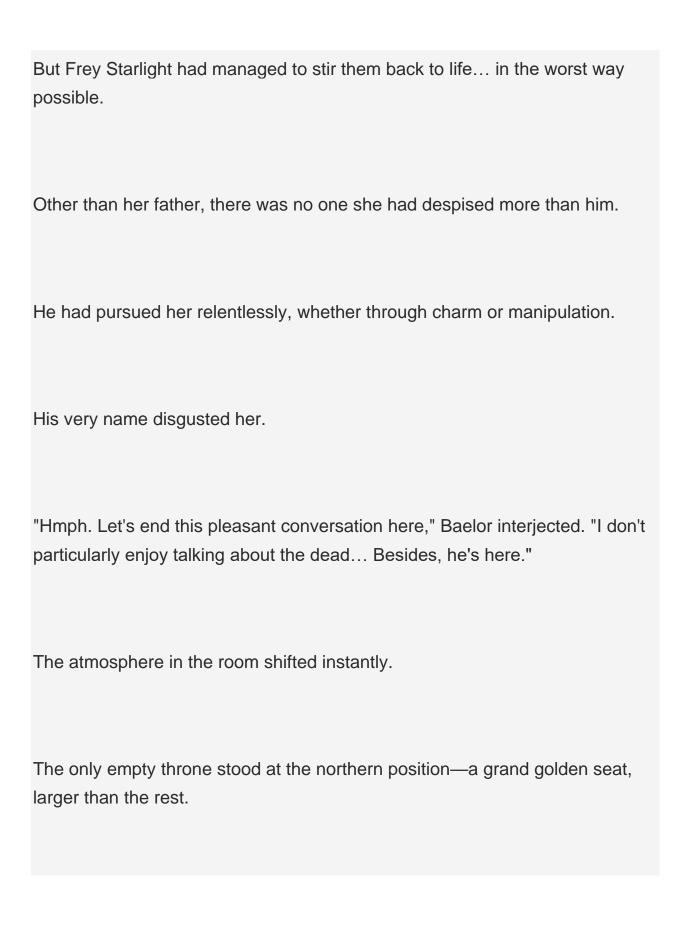








She knew how much of a hypocrite this old man was. No one had been happier about her brother's death than Leonidas himself.
"How unfortunate truly unfortunate," Baelor murmured. "He used to visit my palace quite often, after all."
He attempted to sound regretful, but his expression betrayed him.
For the first time, Seris expression shifted slightly as she recalled the black-haired, black-eyed boy.
Of course, he had come for her every time.
She had tried to remain civil, given the ties between their families.
She had thought she had buried those emotions long ago.



Now, its rightful owner had arrived.
The great doors of the hall swung open as a heavily armored man strode in, his presence overwhelming. In a booming voice, he announced,
"Bow before the Emperor!"
Everyone rose as a man in his forties entered, his golden hair shining like sunlight, his piercing yellow eyes burning like fire.
The strongest human alive—Maekar Valerion.
Behind him stood a younger version of himself—his firstborn son, Crown Prince Aegon Valerion.
Everyone in the room knew why the Emperor was furious.

"Let the summit begin," Maekar declared, his voice deep and commanding.