Cursed Blood - Epilogue[1,207 words]

Three Weeks Later...

You'd expect there'd be more to single-handedly ending a war.

Except, there hadn't been. Apparently people could be pretty compliant when you were basically an all-powerful god-killer telling them that if they disobeyed you, you'd kill them personally. The second the fighting was done for good, the Darkbloods slunk back to their camps. I made sure to strike up a deal with one to talk more about creating a law for their safety, but left them to hide away. The Lightbloods had all gone home, waiting further instructions. Everyone who lived at the castle had gathered the dead and injured, tending to their wounds while Lillian, who survived with barely any scratches, began planning funerals. Warren, Terrance and I found our father virtually unharmed, much to my satisfaction. Once everyone was accounted for, I personally dragged the Prince into the throne room where the late Queen's throne (more like a very well-made replica) stood once again. We were alone, facing off. The entire conversation had been quick with the Prince acknowledging the fact that I wasn't a tool anymore. I had been deemed the *Gray Queen,* which was a fancy title for 'Cursedblood that hasn't been killed yet and has a lot more power over us than we'd like.' It had been three weeks since that day, and most things had changed.

The first week was the most painful. The only thing I had to focus on were the funerals. For those I didn't know well, I was respectful and mourned politely. For the ones I did know, however, I was a mess. Along with the Queen, Charles, Rebecca, Travis, Shade and Andrew, among the deceased were Zen, Daisy, Raeni and Athena. Surprisingly, Zen was the only one of those four who'd actually fought -- the other three were caught in the crossfire. The entire week had been painful, but I learned what denying a person's death could do. It would make you make the worse decisions possible, and I gradually talked myself into coming to terms with it. My room, which had been moved into a spare royal family suite on the top floor of the castle, held all my old things and a picture of each person I'd lost hanging on one wall, as a reminder.

The second week, we changed laws. Darkbloods were given places to stay in the Valley and surrounding towns. We'd sent messengers to all of Mythira so that the entire country knew what we'd done. Elijah, myself and one of the strongest Darkbloods in the kingdom named Teranus, had signed a new law that gave Darkbloods the same rights as Lightbloods. The kingdom had officially become 'gray'. Things were still hard for everyone to get used to, but I personally sent out trustworthy people to work as ambassadors to advocate for the new way of life. We saw a decrease in blood-type-rated deaths almost instantly.

Then came the third week. After moving my room, coming to terms with my new power, accepting those I'd lost and changing society drastically, I was hoping I'd get a break. That

didn't happen, however, because the first thing we did this week was coronation. We held Elijah's coronation in the castle, crowning him King of Mythira, and I had my own coronation too. Down at the fountain in the center of the Valley, a ridiculous amount of both bloods gathered to see me crowned Gray Queen. If I was being honest, my coronation had more enthusiasm. After that, I was invited to Teranus' coronation as the Darkbloods' representative. He wasn't too bad of a person, and I congratulated him thoroughly.

Still, there was a lot to do. Janora and Lillian were now *my* assistants, helping me with coping and with doing actual work. My brothers and father were around much more, as well as my surviving friends. I missed Rebecca and Charles the most, their deaths leaving an aching hole in my heart, but I was slowly moving on. Elijah and I had improved our relationship, which I appreciated since we worked closely. Dmitri and Lori had also become some of my closest friends, and Dmitri constantly helped me practice with my power. The other gods had yet to annoy me again, and peace was shakily being created.

Things were looking up, even if I still needed closure on many things.

On of these things being the woman that strolled into the castle looking for me this morning.

Said woman just so happened to be my mother, who I went to the bakery with after she begged repeatedly.

"I know you don't want to speak with me," she said softly, "but I just want to say I'm sorry, Cloud."

I stared at the plate of baked goods in front of me. My thoughts were clouded, filled with more important things for the moment. I popped a brownie into my mouth, chewing irritatingly slow as I lifted my eyes to hers.

"I am too," I told her, "because I wanted you to die, if I'm being honest. But now I know that that wouldn't have fixed anything. And, I apologize for not being the daughter you wanted."

My mother sighed. "That's not what I meant."

"But it's reality. I *loved* you, Mom. But we're different people now."

"I'd like to make it up to you," she whispered.

"Maybe if you try hard enough," I said, getting to my feet. A burden was lifted off my shoulders knowing that I had spoken to her at least once more. The whole thing was actually rather fitting -- I had walked away from the Prince, or I guess the King, in the same way. To do things on my own, and to do things the way *I* wanted to. I was walking back to the castle when a familiar figure stepped in view.

The assassin, dressed in their usual getup, holding the other crystal. Someone who had genuinely wanted to help me in their own way, so it seemed.

But Sven still knew about them. Perhaps because of a reason I'll never know.

"Well, well, well. You really did surprise me, you know," they said, leaning on one hip.

I rolled my eyes. "I surprised a lot of people."

"I didn't think you'd survive it, honestly. That you'd take the soul and force peace."

I shrugged. "Well, I did."

They hummed, their mask shifting as they smiled. It was the perfect response considering most people who ever tried giving me hints, choices or *options* ended up dead.

"You kept the crystal, didn't you?"

With a smirk, I gave them the truth.

"Yup."

"Were you going to take me up on the offer?"

"Maybe," I shrugged. "I considered it as a backup. Doesn't matter anymore, can I help you?"

"I just wanted to check up on you, Your Grace," they teased. "I'll be watching."

A genuine smile appeared on my face.

"I look forward to it."

They turned on their heel, sauntering away as my wings sprouted from my back. I began to fly back home, the sun beating down on my back as I admired the Valley.

It hasn't changed one bit.

The smile remained on my face as I soared back toward the castle, catching myself just in time not to fall. Janora greeted me at the door, sweeping me away to go to some sort of meeting.

But I have.