

## Evil 241

Chapter 241 - 241: Disturbing.

The Prime Lord used his wings to protect himself like a cocoon from Lenin's relentless spells. Each lightning bolt that struck him it was enough to make his whole body tremble and paralyze him for a moment. He never thought that a mage could annoy him that much, and not to mention, he had to protect himself from Uriel's attacks that had been imbued with divine energy thanks to Astrea's power as well.

Although the Prime Lord hadn't made a move and was bombarded by countless attacks, he wasn't cornered. Neither of their attacks could reach him because of his wings, which regenerated faster than those two could hurt him. However, he felt that they both were holding themselves back as if they were waiting for him to make a move.

Astrea clasped her hands together, creating a sphere of divine energy right above her head. The sphere grew bigger as she kept praying with her eyes closed. The moment she opened her eyes, she pointed her hands at the Prime Lord. The sphere released dozens of needle-like divine energies that pierced through the Prime Lord's wings.

The Prime Lord endured immense pain from their attacks, and it had been centuries since he had felt pain. He realized that those three were capable of killing him, and he was convinced that they were the ones who killed a King-rank demon.

The Prime Lord had had enough of being passive, so he spread his wings wide open. His left wing deflected the lightning bolts, releasing sparks into the air, while his right wing deflected the needle-like divine energy, dissipating them into glowing white dust in the air. He then grabbed Uriel's weapon and crushed it with it into pieces, even though it was extremely painful, like his hand was being cut thousands of times in an instant because of the immense Aura that Uriel had put on the blade.

The crushed pieces of Uriel's weapon scattered to the ground like broken glass. Her expression didn't change, still calm and collected. She summoned two more swords into her hands, spinning behind her back as she swung her sword with immense Aura toward the Prime Lord's torso.

The Prime Lord took the attack, making him bleed, which looked like thick tar from his torso. He didn't make any sound, even though he was in pain, he was showing that even if he bled, that wouldn't be enough.

Lenin stopped casting and stared down into the Prime Lord's glowing red eyes. Her arms lowered as the storm behind her grew heavier, but the lightning refused to fall again. She raised her right hand toward the whirlpool of storm above her, pointing her index and middle fingers toward it as she created a magic formation above her fingers.

The moment thunder struck her fingers, she lowered her right hand, pointing her index and middle finger down at the Prime Lord as she formed a five-circle magic formation. She channeled the immense energy from the thunder from her right arm down to her left arm and then to her fingertips. The moment the lightning bolt was released from her fingers, it was enhanced five times by the five-circle magic formation.

The Prime Lord looked up and saw the thickest and the widest lightning bolt,. He couldn't dodge it nor have the time to block it with his wings. The moment he got struck by it, he fell to his knees, his mind went blank for a split second. He didn't know what had happened, and then he felt something pierce his back. When he looked down, it was divine energy in the shape of a giant sword pierced through his chest and down to the ground.

Uriel swung her swords down vertically at the Prime Lord, cutting his arms off. She then spun and swung her sword horizontally, cutting the Prime Lord's body in half. The Prime Lord grunted in pain, and it was the first time he had made a sound. The Prime Lord was right that they were waiting for him to make a move, and he paid for it.

Astrea clasped her hands together once again, and created a bar cage around the Prime Lord. She tightened the cage, pressing it and crushing the Prime Lord inside. She began to sweat because she used everything she got, but she could barely maintain the Prime Lord within her power.

The Prime Lord was scorching in divine flame, taking away small portions of his existence as a demon. However, he was unbothered because it was similar to draining a mountain filled with water using a waterfall. He could reattach his body even during imprisonment and grasped onto the cage with his bare hands.

The moment the Prime Lord broke free from the cage, Astrea collapsed to her knees. She screamed in pain because her body was burning from the inside. The Prime Lord stepped out from the scorched ground, his robes torn, his wings slowly folding back. Steam rose from the holes in his flesh where divine energy had pierced him. They were healing, but not instantly.

"You have convinced me, now it's time for me to end this..." The Prime Lord said calmly.

Suddenly, the wind vanished. A heavy pressure filled the air, pressing down like a mountain on their backs. The divine energy dimmed, and even the clouds above seemed to freeze in place.

A black mist leaked from the Prime Lord's sleeves, spreading across the field like a living shadow. The divine barrier began to crack. Astrea gritted her teeth and pushed more power into it, sweat pouring down her face. She was on the brink of fainting, but she tried her best to maintain it.

"This mist... it's devouring my power," Astrea said, struggling to hold the barrier.

Uriel didn't wait. She dashed forward with both swords aimed at the Prime Lord's head. But the moment she stepped into the mist, her speed dropped. It felt like she was wading through thick water. Her Aura sparked, trying to protect her, but the mist began eating it away, little by little.

Lenin didn't move. Her eyes glowed faintly as she watched everything unfold. She was waiting for the right moment.

The Prime Lord raised his hand. The mist began to swirl, forming hands, faces, and twisted figures that reached for Uriel and Astrea. They were not illusions—they were souls, screaming and clawing as they tried to latch onto anything alive.

Astrea fell to her knees, blood dripping from her nose as her divine energy collapsed. The barrier shattered. On the other hand, Uriel swung her swords, cutting down souls one by one, but more came, endless and fast.

The Prime Lord took the opportunity to fly toward Astrea, who was on her knees. He wanted to get rid of her first since she was a troublesome one. However, he didn't expect Uriel to be able to do both at the same time, getting rid of the damned souls and protecting Astrea.

Suddenly, the sky began to rumble again, attracting the Prime Lord's attention for a moment. He saw how Lenin gathered Mana, a place he couldn't reach at that moment. He noticed that she was going to hit him with the same powerful lightning bolt again, so he was prepared for it.

A single bolt of lightning fell from the sky, but it didn't strike the Prime Lord, it hit Uriel's body. The lightning engulfed her as the shockwave pushed the Prime Lord away and dispersed the damned souls. At that moment, Uriel's eyes glowed bright blue as sparks crawled out from the corners of her eyes. That lightning strike enhanced Uriel's body beyond its limits, and made things move very slowly from her perspective.

Uriel began to attack the Prime Lord swiftly and quickly that the naked eye couldn't catch up. The Prime Lord was surprised by the sudden surge of power that Uriel showed, and he could barely keep up with her movements. He found her sudden growth didn't make any sense, and how each blow felt so painful that he had to spend more of his life's essence on regenerating the wounds.

The Prime Lord wanted to devour the damned souls that he had released earlier, but to his surprise, they all had gone. He didn't understand how, but when he glanced at Astrea, he was confused. There was no trace of Divine energy, and the way that, the amount that was needed to regenerate his wounds seemed to be a lot more than he thought, as if someone or something had devoured his life essence. Not only that, the way Astrea smiled coldly at him bothered him deeper than he thought.

Lenin threw fireballs at the Prime Lord, creating thick smoke around him. It was pointless from the Prime Lord's perspective since he could sense a living being without having to see it. However, it wasn't the purpose of creating thick smoke, and that was when the Prime Lord noticed the sword that Uriel held was different than before. It was a black greatsword, and it could withstand more immense Aura on the blade, where each attack could take a big chunk of his body.

Thalior and the others couldn't see the fight because of the thick smoke. They were worried about what had happened over there in the distance, but to see the smoke expand and shrink as if it were breathing was quite disturbing.

Lenin landed beside Astrea and glanced at the huge grin on Astrea's face.

"Stop making that kind of expression using her face, it's quite disturbing, Videl," Lenin said as she put on the hood. "Now, it's time for you to devour his energy while Aris take care of him," she muttered.

Chapter 242 - 242: Protector.

The Prime Lord began to reveal his full power after he realized the real danger in the situation he was in. He thought that those three wouldn't be a problem at all until he found out that his life was in danger. He used hellfire to coat his body, which could easily melt steel by just being near it as a defense mechanism.

The problem began to appear when Uriel was unaffected by the hellfire. Her black sword and even the robe she wore didn't melt by it because of her Aura. She ignored the black flame that acted like a shroud that could move freely by the Prime Lord's will. She could cut through the hellfire and his body like it was nothing.

Lenin flew up high into the sky and used everything she got to distract the Prime Lord with her spells. The lightning bolts, the wind slashes that could cut through the Prime Lord's skin, and created ice needles from the rain storm that could give him frostbite. She was beyond the Prime Lord's reach, and she could do anything freely without interference.

Astrea used her divine power to purify the Prime Lord's demonic energy. She also devoured the Prime Lord's life essence, weakening him gradually and rapidly as Uriel wound him.

The Prime Lord spread his wings and immediately avoided Uriel because she was too formidable. His next target was Lenin, but he realized it was a wrong call because Lenin had waited for him to target her.

Lenin had a bright blue sphere in between her hands, the same sphere that wiped thousands of Corrupted, but a lot smaller. She immediately released it and threw it toward the Prime Lord. The blast and the radiation were devastating and destructive, weakening the Prime Lord.

Astrea once again created a divine barrier even though her body was barely able to use any more of it. Uriel stayed in the barrier and watched how Astrea struggled to maintain her facade.

"Don't you mess up. I'll kill you if you do," Uriel stared at Astrea with a faint smirk on her face.

"Shut up..." Astrea rolled her eyes as she maintained the divine barrier, preventing the radiation and the heatwave from killing them. "Why don't you help me? You can easily make a better barrier with your

power. Aren't you the strong ancient race, Aris?" she narrowed her eyes and stared at Uriel, mocking Aris.

"That will blow our cover. Uriel isn't supposed to be that strong," Uriel muttered as she readied her stance and stared at the Prime Lord's wings slowly melted away.

Uriel and Astrea noticed a sudden fluctuation from within the Prime Lord's body. The surge of power brewed from his body, and Uriel immediately jumped as high as she could, reaching up high to the sky.

Lenin was confused, but the moment Uriel grabbed her hand, she got startled. Uriel pulled her down and protected her behind her back. Lenin didn't know what was going on at first, but then he realized Uriel was trying to protect her.

"Protect the others, now..." Uriel muttered as she stared at the Prime Lord.

Lenin nodded and flew down as fast as she could to grab Astrea. She glanced at the Prime Lord, who had grown larger as the hellfire above his head turned into a sphere that expanded rapidly.

"Wow, you remember about me," Astrea looked at Lenin who landed in front of her. "I'm touched—" before she could finish her sentence, Lenin carried Astrea in her arms and flew toward Thalior and the others.

The Prime Lord gathered the hellfire and demonic energy into the sphere. He watched Lenin fly away while Uriel ran as fast as she could. He then raised his hands, compressing the sphere into a smaller sphere and becoming denser.

Lenin landed in front of Thalior and the others as she carefully put down Astrea. She then created layers of advanced Mana barriers similar to nanoparticles, making it impenetrable and solid.

"That's not going to work, he will devour your Mana barriers like it's nothing," Astrea said as she slowly raised her hands and used the remaining divine energy she had left to reinforce the Mana barriers.

The Prime Lord clapped his hands, the sphere exploded, released black flames, turning the sky into pitch black. The shockwave turned the ground into tiny cubes, cracking it before it floated and disintegrated into dust. The spell that Lenin used was pale in comparison to what the Prime Lord created.

The vast land turned into a massive crater and the sky became clear. The snow disappeared, the cold winter turned into a hot summer. However, everything seemed dark as if the world was being devoured by blackness for everyone on the scene.

Astrea gritted her teeth as she reinforced the Divine barrier and watched the shockwave approaching. She closed her eyes and used every last bit of her strength before the shockwave hit the barrier.

Even with the Divine barrier on the outer layer and the five layers of Mana barriers, everyone felt the scorching heat. They felt like they were being burned alive, and the worst part was the demonic energy and the hellfire that devoured Mana. Lenin and Novia couldn't use any magic, and the Mana barriers were slowly cracking and crumbling.

The knights's armor slowly melted, panicking and hurriedly removed their armor as soon as possible before the iron melted into their skin. Nobody could use Aura as the demonic energy had devoured all the Mana that existed in their surroundings. Everyone struggled, but Astrea was the one who took the big chunk of damage from holding off demonic energy.

"Your Holiness..." Thalior looked at Astrea's skin on her palm, and her fingers started to dry and peel. Blood started coming out of her fingertips as she kept reinforcing the barrier, even though her hands were already trembling uncontrollably.

They felt it like it was an eternity even though it was barely half a minute. They were suffering from the intense heat and how their skin turned red as if they were being cooked. They could only pray that Astrea could maintain the barrier because they knew the moment the barrier disappeared, they would turn into ashes.

The moment the heatwave went past the barrier, Astrea collapsed and went on all fours, screaming in pain. The barrier shattered, and everyone immediately went to the front to protect her from the Prime Lord, even though they wouldn't stand a chance. However, they were petrified when they saw the aftermath of the spell that the Prime Lord had cast. There was nothing but silence; not a single sound was heard except the breathing of the knights and their own heartbeats.

Everyone slowly turned around and saw nothing but two valleys because of Astrea's barrier that prevented the heatwave and the shockwave from obliterating them and the path behind them. As far as their eyes could see, they couldn't see the end of the valleys, and when they looked down, they noticed how deep the valleys went. They were standing on the edge of a cliff with more than a hundred meters of deep valleys below them.

"Is this really the power of a demon?" A knight asked with a trembling voice as he fell to his knees, losing strength out of shock and fear.

"A single spell that can obliterate a whole kingdom... You must be joking..." Another knight muttered with tears lingering in his eyes.

The remaining knights stood there, staring down at the melted armor and weapons. They silently stared into the distance with blank minds, not knowing what to think or what to feel.

Thalior, Xena, and Novia were staring at the massive crater that could fit a big city on it. They were like ants trying to fight a human, and realized that they stood no chance against the Prime Lord. They realized how humans could go extinct within days. They then noticed that the Prime Lord had disappeared without a trace, nowhere to be found.

"We survived..." Novia muttered as she swallowed hard because her throat was extremely dry that it was painful to swallow.

"But for how long?" Xena asked as she looked at her armor and sword on the ground, melted and became one with the ground.

Everyone overheard Xena's question, and they realized that their survival was meaningless. They might have survived that day, but it was because they were extremely lucky. It wasn't because they feared death, it was because they feared that they couldn't protect humankind from demons.

Astrea slowly got up as she groaned in pain, snapping everyone back to reality. Novia, Lenin, and Uriel went to check on her condition, but thankfully, since she was a Saint, she could recover from any kind of wounds immediately because of her divine power.



"You can lose all hope..." Astrea said as she slowly turned around to look at the knights. "But don't let those whom you swore to protect feel hopeless. We are their hope, so live with your head up even if death is breathing down your neck. We are sharing the burden, and we are the only ones who understand each other. You're not alone, you'll never be alone," she assured with a faint smile on her face.

All the knights looked at each other, realizing they had the same gaze. The hopelessness, the fear, the desperation, and the acceptance of the inevitable doom of humanity.

"Lift your heads, protector of humankind, bear your burden to your grave," Astrea said in a calm voice as she smiled gently.

All the knights lifted their chins up and nodded as they all stared at Astrea with determination. Tears fell to their chins, those tears were the last string of their doubts, released and wiped off.

Chapter 243 - 243: Disguise.

After the intense battle, everyone retreated and found a place to hide in a small village. It was early in the morning, and the villagers didn't know about them, even the innkeeper was clueless about the people who rented the rooms.

Thalior walked toward the window and made sure they weren't being followed. Once he was sure it was safe, he closed the window and pulled down his hood. He looked at Novia, Xena, Astrea, Lenin, and Uriel, who also pulled down their hoods.

There was only silence in the room until suddenly Novia lit her right hand on fire. She glanced at Lenin and created a magic formation right under Lenin. Lenin, on the other hand, only stared down at the magic formation and then glanced at Novia.

"You're not my Master. Who are you?" Novia asked. "This magic formation should be enough to burn you into ashes..." she threatened as the fire around her hand grew fiercely.

Lenin observed the formation, and the formula of the formation was similar to how a blow torch worked. Pressure was used to feed the fire with elements like propane or different types of gas. She

didn't know what exactly the runes on one of the circles were, but he assumed it was the fuel that would feed the flame.

Lenin looked at Thalior and Xena, who were only staring at her. Based on their expressions, they also suspected that she wasn't the real Lenin. Thalior and Xena then stared at Uriel, aware that she wasn't the real Uriel either. She then tried to manipulate the magic formation using Mana, but then Novia pointed her burning hand at her.

"Don't even try..." Novia warned the moment she noticed the Mana in Lenin's right hand. "I swear I'll kill you if you don't reveal yourself!" She gritted her teeth and glared at Lenin.

"Do it," Lenin said as she stared at Novia with a cold and serious expression.

Novia clenched her fist and activated the magic formation. The formation began to glow bright red, and when she swung her hand down, the flame on her hand combusted the magic formation.

Novia was expecting a fierce flame that would devour Lenin's body, trapping her in the prison of fire. However, all she saw were tiny flames around the magic formation as if they were being docile around Lenin. She could see the Mana flow, and she was shocked that the Mana didn't enter her magic formation as if the Mana was reluctant to harm Lenin.

"What... what is this..." Novia was shocked and in disbelief.

"This? This is the mage's weakness. The moment Mana turns its back on a mage, they're powerless," Lenin answered, and suddenly the flames got extinguished, leaving faint smoke in the air.

"Who are you?" Novia slowly lifted her head and stared right into Lenin's eyes. She was disturbed that the person in front of her sounded and looked exactly like Lenin, her master.

Suddenly, a black mist appeared around Lenin, covering her body with it. The moment the mist disappeared, everyone finally saw the real person who was disguised as Lenin. They were baffled that the one who pretended to be Lenin and was capable of creating such destructive spells that annihilated thousands of Corrupted and put the Prime Lord at a disadvantage was Rasmus.

"Count Blackheart?" Novia's eyes trembled in disbelief as she took a few steps away from Rasmus.  
"Then, Lady Uriel is?" She glanced at Uriel.

A black mist appeared around Uriel, covering her body with it. Once the mist disappeared, it was Aris, the one who fought the Prime Lord head-on and the only one who was on par with him.

After it was revealed that Uriel and Lenin were Aris and Rasmus, they looked at Astrea. They were unsure if it was really her or not, but knowing that she could use divine power that withstood the Prime Lord's power, there was nobody in Neva who could pretend to be her with such power.

"Your Holiness?" Thalior asked with his brows furrowed.

Astrea smiled as she shook her head, admitting that she wasn't Astrea, but rather someone else who pretended to be her. At that moment, everyone got chills down their spines, their eyes trembling in fear because whoever pretended to be Astrea they weren't someone ordinary.

"Who are you?" Thalior asked. "Who is she?" He looked at Rasmus, unsure if he wanted to know the answer or not.

Rasmus didn't say a word, only a cold stare and a stoic expression.

"The world isn't ready to know who I am," Astrea smiled as she placed her index finger on her lips, staring at Thalior, Xena, and Novia. "This will be my cue to leave," she bowed down gracefully like a high noble, and then left the room silently.

Thalior, Xena, and Novia were speechless, didn't know what to say or react. After a whole minute of complete silence, Thalior swallowed his saliva and stared at Rasmus as he took a deep breath.

"What's the meaning of this, Count? Who is she? How did you do that? What's going on?!" Thalior asked, unable to process, and didn't know what to ask, so he asked everything that came out of his mouth.

"The letter that I gave you, don't you remember it?" Rasmus asked as he walked to the bed and sat on the edge. "The letter of warning that a powerful demon might ambush you and might annihilate your army," he reminded Thalior.

Thalior lost the letter, it was a small letter, the letter that he showed Xena back then in his tent. However, they didn't know that Rasmus would pretend to be Lenin and Aris would pretend to be Uriel.

"But why do you have to pretend to be them? What's the point of doing that?" Thalior asked with his eyes narrowed. "Why do you have to use someone else's face?"

"First, it's to protect myself from being targeted by those demons. Second, the demons believed that humankind was weak, but I just proved them wrong and convinced them that humans were capable of killing them. Third, now the demons are clueless, and that gives us an upper hand. I can move freely without them knowing, and that's a good thing too," Rasmus answered as he stared into Thalior's eyes.

"Tell me, Count. Is that really all there's to it?" Xena stared into Rasmus's eyes. "Why do I feel like you're playing on both sides, Count? I'm no politician or schemer, but I have a strong intuition that you're playing on both sides," she crossed her arms and stared coldly at Rasmus.

"Interpret it however you want, Lady Xena. Prove your words and explain to Archduke Thalior and Lady Novia that I'm your enemy," Rasmus raised his brows, and stared back at Xena.

"You can kill that demon back there, but you didn't, why?" Xena asked with her eyes narrowed.

"Yes, Aris could kill him, but not Uriel," Rasmus answered as he pulled his hair back. "Let me explain it to you. Aris killed a powerful demon before this, and it was as I had expected that a more powerful demon came to check the one who killed that demon. If I let Aris, who pretended to be Uriel, kill that powerful demon, what would happen? The emissary would hunt Uriel down and kill her since she would be a big threat to them. However, she didn't kill the demon, and that would make the emissary believe that humans weren't that weak, but not that strong. That alone is enough to make them focus on Uriel, but not to the point of hunting her down. With that opportunity, I can surprise them in the future war," he explained with a calm expression.

"And what about the thousands of knights that died back there, Count?" Xena asked as she pointed at the window. "You could have come earlier, saving all of us, but you didn't. Why?" She asked, and anger began to show on her face.

"The demons knew that Commander Uriel and Saint Astrea were on the south while we were on the northern part of the continent. Wouldn't the demons find it suspicious that those two miraculously appeared at the perfect timing to protect everyone? Think about it, Lady Xena. Anger serves nothing here, keep your head clear and you will find all the answers to your questions," Rasmus answered as he stared coldly at Xena.

"But you felt nothing when you saw thousands of our knights die out there, didn't you?" Xena asked as she clenched her fists.

"No, I didn't feel a thing for them. I would sacrifice thousands more if needed," Rasmus answered as he shook his head. "Is that what you want to hear, Lady Xena? If so, then that's the answer," he said with a cold expression.

Xena gritted her teeth, feeling like she was being played emotionally by Rasmus. She believed there was more to it, but Rasmus just cut her off as if she were just a kid who annoyed him and gave an answer that would please her so she would stop bothering him.

"Why? You thought of me as an evil man, right? Then why is it that when I gave you the befitting answer for the image you have of me, you feel displeased? Am I evil, or am I not, Lady Xena? Make up your mind," Rasmus asked, knowing the reason behind that expression on Xena's face.

"I have the arsenal, the power to eliminate the demons, while you have none. You can play by my rules, or you can go and fight a losing war. You'll bring more death than I, and you'll lose everything," Rasmus said as he stood up. "But don't you ever blame me for not helping you. Because I already did, but you didn't like it. So choose, how do you want to see your soldiers die?" he asked.

Xena shook her head and stormed out of the room, furious and sickened by Rasmus's words. On the other hand, Thalior and Novia stayed in the room with him, silently listening to the whole thing.

"She left because she believed there was still another way, but you two are you staying because you know there is no other way, or because you're still confused?" Rasmus stared at Thalior and Novia.

Thalior had experienced what Xena had experienced, which was Rasmus's way of thinking and how brutal and heartless it was. However, he made a mistake by not listening to Rasmus, and the result? He made things a lot worse than what Rasmus offered.

"I'll talk to her," Thalior said and then left the room.

"What about you, Novia? Do you believe there's another way?" Rasmus stared at Novia.

"No..." Novia shook her head, knowing how powerless she was in that battle back then. "I'm going to catch some fresh air..." she said and then left.

#### Chapter 244 - 244: Plotting. (End of Volume.3)

Xena was basking under the bright moonlight, with the snow hitting her face. Everything looked peaceful except the expression and her gaze. They were filled with anger and hatred, something that she never thought she had within her.

"Lady Xena," Thalior said as he stood behind Xena, far enough to give her some personal space. "May I have a few words with you?" He asked calmly.

"I don't need some convincing, Your Grace. I'm not blinded enough to believe that there's another way. I hate that he's the only one who can do it," Xena said as she stared at the sky, her eyes became empty as she remembered the faces of her knights that died during the battle.

Thalior was relieved and yet saddened by the fact that Xena realized that. Xena could easily accept Rasmus's words without considering it further, but Thalior also knew that it would be foolish in this kind of situation.

"He planned everything... All the way to this moment, Your Grace," Xena muttered as she blinked slowly. "If that man had planned everything from the very beginning, and this outcome was what he desired, how far did that man have planned everything?" She asked as she slowly turned around to look at Thalior.

"His words when he said that he had the arsenal, the power. Anyone who has power has the luxury to bend people's will, it's the truth that we know, and we use that in a way. He's saying a fact that we took for granted and used it against us in a way to make us feel uncomfortable," Thalior said as he looked up at the sky. "We lost not only to the demons, but we lost to Rasmus's words and influence. However, at this moment, we are just a peasant following the lord's will, nothing else," he continued as he looked down at the ground.

There was only silence after Thalior revealed the harsh truth that they were facing. They both tried to steel their minds before they had to go back inside to deal with Rasmus and his dangerous mind.

"Your Grace, what if I'm right about him?" Xena asked as she looked around at the peaceful village she was in. "That he's playing with both sides, that he made some kind of a deal with the demons and the emissary?" She glanced at Thalior with her brows furrowed.

"Honestly, I would rather ask him why than confront him," Thalior answered as he put his hands behind his back. "He doesn't care about morals, your ideals, your thoughts, your feelings, or even your situation. You're wasting your time if you want to confront him, but if you ask him, he will tell you why. He's that kind of person, someone who answers questions without a single lie, however, he's the type who's hiding half of the truth," he explained as he turned around to look at the inn and at the window on the second floor.

"So we have to accept it like it's a normal thing once we can prove his connection with the emissary and the demons, Your Grace?" Xena raised her brows, surprised and disappointed by Thalior's answer.

"The fact that we are here, following his orders and agreeing with his methods, what's normal here, My Lady? Someone like him isn't normal. In fact, I'm sure you too haven't met anyone like him," Thalior stared right into Xena's eyes. "He doesn't care if we follow him or not, but we do care, for humanity and everyone's survival. You don't know him as much as I do, but I can assure you, he's beyond your understanding," he added.

Xena took a deep breath and tried to clear her mind. She didn't want to make an enemy or a conflict with someone who wasn't her enemy to begin with. She lowered her head and processed Thalior's words and remembered the grave mistake he had made that caused the war and the discord in South Neva. It was all because he didn't listen to Rasmus's words and went for his ideals, which cost peace and brought suffering to countless lives.

"At this moment, we might be powerless since we are on the battlefield, but we are beyond a commander on the battlefield, we are leaders of our own nations. We hold power there, not him. If you want to prevent him, then I do too, but this isn't the right moment," Thalior said with a serious expression and stared into Xena's eyes. "We don't know how far he has planned everything, but if we work together, with the others, we can try to maintain his influence," he added, but in a quiet voice.

Xena took a deep breath as she closed her eyes. It took her a moment before her eyes fluttered open and she looked at Thalior. She then gave a small nod at him, agreeing that she, the leader of the Servil faction who had stayed neutral and didn't side with any powerhouse in South Neva, had agreed to form an alliance with the South Neva Union.

They both decided to walk into the inn, but they were surprised to see Novia there, sitting at the table with a mug of beer in her hand. She stared at them, her eyes telling them that she had listened to their conversation.

"If I told my Master and Saint Astrea about what Rasmus did, using the disguise of their faces, I believe they will join hands with you two," Novia said with a serious expression. "My Master has been keeping an eye on him, for the same reason as yours. I also know that Her Holiness is interested in him, which can maintain his influence in Neva," she continued.

Thalior and Xena shared a look and didn't expect Novia to be on board with their plan. Xena gave a nod to Thalior, and then Thalior looked at Novia for a brief moment before he gave her a nod, telling her that she was welcome to join them.

The three of them went upstairs and got into the room to be with Rasmus and Aris once again. They were staring at Rasmus, who was casually reading a book on the table with a lantern next to his hands.

"So? Have you all decided what you're going to do?" Rasmus asked without having to look back at them.

"Yes, we are going to play by your rules, but we have one condition. Don't keep us in the dark like this," Thalior answered as he stared at Rasmus being absorbed by the book in his hand.

"So you want to know if thousands of your men will die for the sake of my plan?" Rasmus asked again.



Thalior's eyes flinched, and his fists clenched, but then he took a deep breath as he loosened up his fists. He glanced at Xena, and she didn't show any reaction, however, she closed her eyes, accepting it heavily.

"Yes, at least we know that it will be my responsibility, and that I can treat them better before they face death," Thalior answered as he nodded.

"I promise that I won't put all of you in the dark," Rasmus nodded as he flipped the page and kept reading.

At that moment, Xena realized Rasmus's personality was based on what she heard from Thalior. She could see what Thalior said about Rasmus that he wasn't the type who lied, and would answer questions without sugarcoating anything. Although she was disturbed by it, she hated to admit that he could be trustworthy and cooperative, unlike those people who rejected suggestions because they were superior to them.

"What now? What's our next move?" Novia asked as she stared at Rasmus coldly.

"What now? Rest," Rasmus closed the book as he turned around from his chair to look at the three of them. "It's late, and all of you just escaped death from the battlefield this morning," he said as he got up from his chair. "I'm not that heartless to let you all stay awake knowing that all of you are exhausted," he smiled at them and then walked toward the door.

The three of them turned around and watched Rasmus grab the door handle, but when they thought he was going to leave, he slowly turned around to look at them. He stared them in the eyes before he raised his index finger and narrowed his eyes.

"Next time, if you want to plot something behind my back, you should do it somewhere far away. I overheard everything," Rasmus said with a stoic expression. "However, I don't really mind it, about what you're going to do. In fact, I'm grateful," he continued as he crossed his arms.

The three of them felt like they were on edge, and their backs began to sweat.

"You want to control my influence, right? Please do. It's more beneficial for me," Rasmus said and stared at Thalior. "Just imagine that a hunter is looking for a lion to hunt, but when they find one, the lion is already in a cage, guarded by other hunters. It's better to be caged by hunters who try to keep the forest safe from the lion than being hunted by a hunter who plans to kill the lion," he smiled at them before he left the room.

The three of them were speechless and didn't know how to react or how to feel. They were relieved that Rasmus didn't mind being controlled by them, but somehow it felt like they were only giving him what he wanted.

(At the same time, in a throne room)

Kiel and Yaza looked at the Prime Lord, who was badly injured, barely alive, as if he had lost a big chunk of his life from escaping. They heard everything from the Prime Lord, and couldn't believe they were wrong about the one who killed a Demon King. The fact that Uriel, Astrea, and Lenin were capable of killing a Demon King and harming a Prime Lord was beyond Kiel's expectations.

"Those three were unharmed? That means we don't have a choice but to use everything that we have built here," Kiel glanced at Yaza, who was observing the king's head in his hand. "The news must have spread widely, and who knows how many more strong humans that will come to get rid of us," he pointed out.

"What choice do we have?" Yaza asked as he dropped the king's head, and then grabbed the young man's head from the ground.

"A war, a total war. If we can get rid of those three even with the cost of everything, it's our win," Kiel answered.

"Hmm, it's a shame, but I guess I have to show my failed creations to the world," Yaza muttered as he kept observing the head in his palm. "Let's get rid of them," he glanced at Kiel and crushed the head.

Chapter 245 - 245: The Evil within.

Mages bombarded the capital city toward the remaining revolutionary parties that had been cornered into one nation. Thalior, Xena, Astrea, and Uriel were gathered outside the city wall, watching thousands of knights and mages try to occupy the city. Oddly enough, there was no sign of resistance from the revolutionary army.

The demons hadn't shown themselves yet, not even a single demon had been found in the past months. It was unnerving for Thalior and the others because they felt the demons were lurking behind them every time.

Rasmus had been on the frontline with Aris and Javi on the past dozen battlefields. Those three kept their identities hidden from the other knights because of the armor and helmets they wore. They stayed low and pretended to be ordinary knights to avoid being targeted by the emissaries and the demons.

"Your Grace, the city has been breached, and we got the report from the scout team," a soldier entered the tent where Thalior, Astrea, Xena, Uriel, and Novia were gathered. "There are no civilians, not a single soul, only a few hundred revolutionary knights within the city who have surrendered themselves."

Thalior already knew about it since Grayson had informed Thalior about the suspicious movements of the revolutionary parties in the past few weeks. There was no explanation for the sudden weakened state of the revolutionary parties, or of where they had all gone. However, Rasmus had a hunch that the remaining leaders of the revolutionary parties had become vessels of the demons.

"Your Grace? Your order?" The knight asked.

"Guard on the city walls. Don't let anyone enter the city," Thalior ordered.

The knight nodded and then left the tent hurriedly. Thalior looked at Astrea, Xena, Uriel, and Novia then nodded his head. The four of them nodded and followed him to check the city on their own.

All the knights watched the five figures walk past them, the expression those five wore was something that put the knights on the edge. There was uncertainty and anxiety in their eyes, and the knights already knew of the sudden weakened state of the revolutionary parties, which also made them anxious. They had heard about what had happened that day two months ago, when Thalior's and Xena's armies got wiped out by a powerful demon.

The tragedy had spread across South Neva, and it was heard by other continents about that event. People began to fear the demon's existence, the Corrupted, which people believed was a myth, they actually existed, and it made everyone cower in fear. That fear made the situation worse and better at the same time because the world knew about the threat that might bring humanity to extinction, causing them to cooperate and rely on the Holy Nation and the powerful nations that could protect them. However, some chose to accept it and turned themselves against humanity, choosing the side of the emissaries that pretended to accept them and protect them.

"You three, come with us," Thalior looked at the three knights who were standing next to each other, staring at them from beneath the helmets they wore. He knew that they were Rasmus, Aris, and Javi.

The three knights nodded and followed Thalior from behind.

As they entered the capital city, it looked like a city of the dead because there was no sound or any sign of living, not even birds could be seen in the trees. Astrea felt traces of demonic energy everywhere, and she could see how scared the revolutionary knights and mages were, and how glad they were for getting captured.

"They're terrified to stay in this place," Astrea muttered with her eyes narrowed at the revolutionary soldiers. "Something must have happened here, and they might know the answer," she pointed out.

Uriel nodded and immediately approached the prisoners. She ordered the South Neva Union's knight to bring one prisoner to Astrea. The knight chose one randomly and escorted the prisoner to Astrea.

"What's your name, child?" Astrea looked at the terrified young knight.

"Jasen, Your Holiness..." The prisoner answered as he lowered his head to show respect to the Saint.

"Jasen, what happened here? Where are the people?" Astrea asked with her brows raised.

Jasen glanced to his left and right as if he was afraid someone was listening or watching him. He hesitated to answer the question, and it was visible in his eyes that he didn't want to answer the question. Astrea could see it, and she decided to smile at him and nod with understanding.

"The palace, Your Holiness," Jasen answered, his voice barely above a whisper. "We didn't know what happened there, but we knew something happened there. Nobody dared to go near that place, Your Holiness," he muttered, his voice shaky.

Everyone's heads turned toward the palace in the center of the city, the tallest building in the city. Astrea and Aris could sense demonic energy looming over the palace from above. They were convinced that Jasen was telling the truth and that he had the right to be scared.

"Thank you, child. You may go now," Astrea smiled at Jasen.

Jasen bowed, and then the knight escorted him back to where the other prisoners were being escorted out of the city. Once they were alone, Astrea pointed her finger at the palace's roof.

"This is the first time I've seen anything like that. The density of demonic energy is out of this world, and I don't know what's happening in there, but I can assure you, no humans should be in that place," Astrea warned, her eyes focused on the looming demonic energy. "Let's find out what's happening over there. We might find the answer that we are looking for. I can protect all of you, so stay close to me," she said and began to walk to the front, leading the group.

They barely reached the tall fence and gate to the palace, and they were already suffocated by demonic energy. For Thalior, Xena, and Novia, they could bear it while Uriel was struggling to breathe. Uriel looked at those three and remembered what kind of suffering they had been through, realizing that she was the only one who hadn't seen the death door.

Astrea prayed as she clasped her hands together, releasing divine energy. For the naked eye, they couldn't see what was happening, but for Aris, she could see the white translucent light that cleansed and purified the demonic energy that loomed around the palace. She realized that Videl, who pretended to be Astrea, was a lot weaker compared to Astrea's divine power.

They proceeded to enter the palace area, looking around for any sign of life, but they couldn't even find a single insect or bug. The foul smell began to overwhelm their nostrils, not knowing where it came from, however, Aris and Astrea could see it, the most dense demonic energy that was hard to cleanse and purify.

"That path over there, where does it lead to?" Astrea pointed at the path on the right side of the palace.

"If I remember correctly, it leads to the dungeon, Your Holiness," Thalior answered, since he was the only one who had visited all nations in South Neva more than once.

"Then we will head there first..." Astrea nodded with understanding and took the path toward the dungeon. "We will be fine because I don't sense any demons, only remnants of them..." she assured.

They followed Astrea toward the building that led to the dungeon. Uriel and Thalior opened the heavy wooden door for her. As soon as the door was open, the pungent smell and the heat were overwhelming. The pungent smell, with the combination of damp and hot dungeon, made it far worse.

Rasmus learned about the dungeon from Videl after Videl managed to communicate with his minions, who acted as spies to keep an eye on Kiel and Yaza. That dungeon was where Yaza did his experiment to try to create a perfect being, better than the human that God had created.

"This is worse than what we smelled beyond the Blackcliffs..." Astrea covered her nose with the back of her hand.

As they went further into the dungeon, the damp and pungent smell worsened. Novia had to create a wind barrier to prevent the smell and the heat from reaching them. As they walked down the stairs, they were welcomed by the trails of blood on the floor, walls, and even the ceiling. They all then looked at where all the trails went, and it was a heavy wooden door that was tightly shut.

Astrea looked at Thalior and gave him a nod. With hesitation, Thalior walked toward the door and slowly opened it. Everyone immediately turned their heads away except for Rasmus and Aris. They saw a few eyeless, lipsless, or noseless heads rolling down as soon as the door was opened, and the next thing they saw were bodies hanging from the ceiling, stuck on the walls, or even stacked on the ground, missing a few limbs and heads.

"I can't..." Novia muttered as she hurriedly left the scene, then Xena, Thalior, and Uriel followed her.

Astrea stayed there, staring at each body, believing it was her fault because she couldn't save them or prevent them from being butchered by demons. She slowly went down to her knees, clasping her hands together, enduring the stench and the gruesome scenery in front of her as she prayed to God to save those souls.

Rasmus, Aris, and Javi stood behind Astrea, watching her pray.

"Who was she?" Astrea asked with a serious tone as she kept clasping her hands together and stared at the bodies in front of her. "The one who pretended to be me?" She asked.

"You remember the records that we discovered, Your Holiness? The ones that shook you deeply?" Rasmus asked back. "The Saint that the Cardinal killed, her body is out there, and I found it," he answered.

Astrea's eyes widened as she slowly turned around and looked up at Rasmus with a shocked expression. She slowly got up and stood in front of him, trying to look into his eyes beneath the helmet he wore.

"You knew?" Astrea asked, her voice shaky.

"I knew. It was a coincidence that I found her body," Rasmus answered and stared into Astrea's eyes. "As we speak, she's out there, perhaps... alive as we speak," he pointed out.

Astrea gulped, realizing there was another saint out there somewhere.

"What are you going to do about that information, Your Holiness?" Rasmus asked.

"I... I don't know..." Astrea answered, furrowed her brows, and stared down at the floor.

(At the same time, in Hell)

Videl walked through the piles of souls being tortured where their genitals were being melted by molten steel, or ripped apart from their bodies, before they poured lava on the wounds by demons. He listened to the screams like it were music to his ears, but he ignored their request for forgiveness.

Videl stared at a woman shackled on the dead tree, naked, with her burned body because the tree released hot molten steel from its branches and pores that dropped onto her head and body. He smiled at the woman, squatting, and looked up at her as he chuckled mischievously.

"It's been a while, isn't it?" Videl asked with a huge smile on his face.

"What do you want?" The woman had a deep and soothing voice filled with pain and desperation.

"You're so cold, Lilith. Why don't we have a talk?" Videl grinned. "I might be able to get you out of here, to breathe air into the world of the living. A place that God forbids you to follow your former husband. What do you think, Lilith, the first wife?" He asked.

Lilith stared down at Videl with her eyes barely open, there was only emptiness in her eyes.

Chapter 246 - 246: The First Wife.

(A week ago)

Rasmus, Aris, and Javi stared at Videl, who drew a circle on the ground. The circle had an unknown language inside it, and it looked nothing like what Rasmus knew from Neva or back from Earth. They silently watched him draw a complete circle, and then he released black mist from his fingertips into the circle. The circle sucked the demonic energy, and slowly the circle and the language began to glow a dark red color, breathing like lungs.

"What are you doing?" Rasmus asked as he tilted his head and stared at the circle.

"What else? I'm making a portal," Videl answered as he took a few steps away from the circle. "Thanks to that fight against the Prime Lord, I managed to increase my rank to a Demon King. Now I can go back and forth to hell as I please," he explained as he crossed his arms, the ground around the circle began to crack open and crumble.

Videl looked at the dark mist around his body, the immense demonic energy that he had absorbed from the Prime Lord had resonated within his body and soul. He had to suffer for two months straight to



endure the power that was beyond his existence, however, as he was the Devil in his core, he withstood the suffering and made the power his. He reclaimed more than half of his power, but it was nowhere near to when he was the Devil, the Sovereign of Hell.

"And what are you planning to do?" Rasmus stared at Videl in the eyes with a cold gaze.

"What else? You helped me regain my power, and now it's time for me to give you what you want, a soul to possess the body of the dead Saint," Videl smiled mischievously at Rasmus.

Rasmus kept staring at Videl with a serious and cold expression, not blinking for a whole minute. He didn't know what Videl was planning to do, and he remembered how mischievous Videl was back then when he still had his power as the Devil. He knew that Videl was being cooperative lately because Videl needed him, so Videl could regain his power by devouring souls and demons.

"Don't do anything funny, Videl. I'm being serious," Rasmus said coldly.

"Hey, we are on the same side," Videl grinned.

Rasmus knew that Videl was the embodiment of the deadly sins, but for those who knew him that much, they believed he was that shallow. However, Rasmus knew that was just an act. The devil in front of him was beyond human understanding since the Devil had lived longer than anything and had seen countless living beings rise and fall.

"Who are you going to bring to this world?" Rasmus asked as he crossed his arms. "You're the Devil, but your power is anywhere near your former self. You're just a Demon King, two ranks lower than the Prime Lords and the Fallen Watchers. You're not the Sovereign anymore, so who's befitting to possess the Saint's body?" He added with his brows furrowed.

"Oh, she's no demon, something more wicked if I must say..." Videl smiled widely. "A woman who fell from her grace, fell because God wills it, and because God wanted her to fall," he pointed out as he watched the ground inside the circle crumble and turn into a tunnel with a glowing bright red from underground as if a fierce flame was underneath it.

"Who?" Rasmus asked and narrowed his eyes.

"You'll see," Videl chuckled mischievously as he walked toward the tunnel. "Just wait, I'll be back with something you'll love to see," he turned around to look at Rasmus and the others.

Videl bowed his head down as he leaned back, making himself fall into the tunnel. As soon as he fell into the tunnel, the ground began to shake and closed the tunnel tightly.

(Back to present)

Lilith listened to the whole story about Videl's circumstances, including Rasmus and what was happening down in Neva. She didn't show any expression, only a dead stare toward Videl as if she was sick of listening to his story.

"You're not interested?" Videl asked as he tilted his head and stared right into Lilith's eyes that were barely open.

"I don't want to fall for you this time. I can't find the truth at all, the lies..." Lilith muttered as she kept her eyes staring at the glowing dark red eyes of the Devil in front of her.

Videl raised his brows, but then he began to chuckle as he crossed his arms and stared at the red sky of hell that could melt any soul because of the heat it produced. He slowly put a big mischievous smile on his face as he glanced at Lilith.

"Oh, I wasn't lying back then, Lilith. I only encouraged you to be equal with Adam," Videl said with that evil smirk on his face.

"You were the reason I got banished from heaven!" Lilith shouted as she glared at Videl. "You tricked me! And you followed God's order to put me here, in this dead tree, torturing me for eternity!" She tried to break free from the chains, but the more she resisted, the more of her skin melted and stretched until it regenerated instantly and painfully.

Videl's smile slowly faded away as he approached Lilith and stood right in front of her, staring down at her. He didn't say a word as Lilith tried so hard to reach his face so she could rip it apart, but the chains

were the only thing that prevented her from doing so. The pain was unbearable, but she could ignore it because of the deep hatred toward the Devil in front of her.

"Am I an angel? Am I a fallen one? Are we even different, Lilith?" Videl asked as he rested his hands on his waist. "I'm God's creation with the sole purpose of fitting into the design that God's created, Hell. I torment countless souls, others look at me as if I'm a disgrace. I was made from fire, while they were made from light. Why am I the one who's being the disgrace where God was the one who made me? Why is it that I'm the corrupted one when God put me in a place where the most corrupted souls stay in eternity?" He asked as he placed his hand under Lilith's chin.

"The answer? Because God is God! We are nothing but his creation! Reasons? None! So suck it up and accept what you have done because you can't blame anyone for anything that happened to you!" Videl grabbed Lilith's cheeks with one hand, tried to crush her jaw as he glared down at Lilith. It was the first time he showed wrath toward any being.

Lilith was petrified, the pain that she felt from the punishment was nothing compared to the terrifying glare of the Devil. Tears glimmered in her eyes, but instantly vaporized before she could shed them.

"I'm giving you a chance, as someone who has been here the longest..." Videl muttered as he loosened up his grip from Lilith's face. "I can free you from this place, and cooperate, that's all I'm asking of you, Lilith. No lies because I'm betting my own existence on this. You can fuck me over, but your place will still be here in hell. No matter what you do, God has condemn you in this eternal torment," he whispered, his face right in front of Lilith's face.

Lilith gritted her teeth and didn't hesitate to headbutt Videl right on his nose. She screamed in pain as her skull just got crushed, her brain felt like being stabbed by the shattered skull. Videl on the other hand, was surprised by her action, and he wasn't affected by her futile surprise attack.

"What was that?" Videl furrowed his brows.

"Shut up..." Lilith groaned as she looked down, enduring the pain from the regeneration.

Videl sighed as he grabbed Lilith's hair, pulling her head back so she looked up at his face.

"Fine, you can be free, do whatever you want. All you have to do is come with me, up there to Neva. I'm not asking you to listen to me, but I want you to cooperate with Rasmus. Don't you dare turn your back against him," Videl said in a cold tone and cold gaze at Lilith.

Lilith pursed her lips and then spat on Videl's face, to see his reaction. However, she was surprised that Videl was unbothered by her provocation. She knew the Devil really well that his pride was more important than anything, not even God could mock his pride, however, at that moment she realized how desperate he was.

"Are you done?" Videl asked as the spat vaporized.

"Yes, I'm done," Lilith answered as she nodded. "Bring me to this man. I want to see him in person. Even if he showed a little superiority toward me, bring me back to hell and I would love to see you lose the bet!" She grinned furiously.

"Deal," Videl smirked as he grabbed the chains that bound Lilith's whole body.

Videl pulled the chains and broke them off while Lilith screamed in pain because her limbs got torn and ripped apart in the process. Once Lilith regenerated her body, she slowly got up, trembling because of her weak body. She glared at Videl coldly as she gently massaged her arms.

"Shall we?" Videl smiled as he pointed at the path.

"Just get me out of here..." Lilith coldly responded.

Chapter 247 - 247: To understand a threat.

"Your Holiness..." Thalior looked at Astrea's weary expression as she walked out of the building.

"I'm fine, Your Grace," Astrea put a fake smile on as she turned around to look at the entrance to the dungeon for one last time. "Nobody should see what's in there... and those three are going to bury them in there..." she said, her voice was barely above a whisper.

Thalior, Xena, Novia, and Uriel were surprised that Rasmus could handle such a grotesque scene. Thalior decided to go back inside to help Rasmus and the others, and he also wanted to see what Rasmus planned to do with the bodies.

Thalior had been thinking about the possibility that Rasmus had made a deal with the demons and the emissary. He knew that Rasmus never cared about humanity, as he was the victim of the cruelty of humanity. He wanted to make sure that his suspicion was right or wrong.

As soon as Thalior reached the deepest part of the dungeon, he covered his mouth and nose with a piece of cloth. He saw Javi and Aris create a massive hole in the ground that would be used as the grave.

"I never thought you would do something like this, Count," Thalior said as he watched Rasmus observe the corpses. He decided to grab a shovel and jump down into the hole to help.

"To understand the threat, Your Grace," Rasmus answered as he squatted and looked at the pieces of flesh, skin, and nails on the ground. "They were doing an experiment on humans, to create something..." he muttered as he looked at the countless pieces of flesh and skin on the floor.

"They dismantled them to understand how the human body worked..." Thalior muttered and realized this after he had seen the room thoroughly for the first time.

"Yes, and we can assume they have found out what they were looking for..." Rasmus nodded in agreement. "To think the Holy Nation and the Sancticus family hid the knowledge of demons from the public would be their biggest mistake," he continued as he stood up and looked at the bodies on the walls.

Thalior furrowed his brows slightly, trying to understand what Rasmus meant by that. Once he understood, he couldn't agree more with Rasmus's words. If only knowledge about demons and their power, everyone wouldn't fall for false saviors like the emissaries. Everyone would know the danger and how strong the demons were, and everyone would work together to get rid of the evil before it grew.

Thalior noticed how Rasmus was fine being in that room filled with corpses. He had seen countless wars before South Neva got united, he had seen bodies that normal people would stay awake at night for the rest of their lives from the horrors, however he couldn't withstand this scene while Rasmus was completely fine.

"How can you be so calm over there, Count?" Thalior asked as he stared at Rasmus in the room.  
"Doesn't it disturb you in the slightest?" He added.

"What makes it different from seeing cattle or livestock being butchered? Almost every animal is made from flesh, bones, and organs," Rasmus answered as he noticed the limbs and the bodies of specific corpses didn't have the same skin color as if they were mutilated and reattached with different limbs.

Thalior couldn't understand Rasmus's way of thinking at all. He was disturbed that Rasmus was beyond human, but he remembered that Rasmus was half Orthias, a race that didn't fit with humans in both physical and mind.

"They were alive when the demons were experimenting," Rasmus pointed out after he noticed the stiffness of the muscles and flesh of the limbs when he touched them. "Or the most convincing one is the expression these heads are making," he stared at the stacks of heads with their eyes and mouths wide open.

"Should we burn them, Count?" Thalior tried to change the subject because he didn't want to imagine the horror in the expressions of the dead.

"Yes. I believe if their souls are still here, they will beg us to burn their bodies," Rasmus nodded.

Once Rasmus put all the corpses into the pit, he burned them with blue flames that Thalior had never seen before. Rasmus fed the fire with hydrogen, and the heat was too much for Thalior, even though he coated his body with Aura.

They walked out of the dungeon and gathered with Astrea and the others. Thalior told them about what they had discovered, about the demons experimented on human bodies. Astrea was quiet the whole time, she seemed to be deep in thought, not because of what was going on, but rather the conversation she had with Rasmus back then, about the Saint.

"Your Holiness?" Novia asked with her brows raised, worried that Astrea had been oddly quiet.

"Yes?" Astrea raised her brows as she looked at Novia, realizing that everyone was staring at her.

"Do you have any idea what those demons are trying to create from studying the human body?" Novia asked and wondered at the same time by Astrea's empty gaze.

"There's a record in the Holy Nation about a specific powerful demon who's capable of creating a living being, superior to humans but inferior to angels. They're called the Nephia," Astrea answered with a blank stare pointed at the sky. "It was said that that being had roamed this world long before human existed," she added, and then stared at Aris.

Everyone turned their gazes toward Aris, wondering if she knew anything about the being called Nephia. However, Aris didn't want to tell them since she didn't care if she knew or not because she didn't want to speak with humans in the first place.

Rasmus didn't expect the name of the being to be similar to what it was called on Earth, Nephilim. He and Videl had discussed this being, a half human and half angel that was powerful enough to destroy Earth based on the record. However, he didn't expect that Nephilim existed in Neva long before humankind.

It was a bit awkward since Aris stayed silent even after a whole minute, and then Astrea cleared her throat.

"It's still a mystery even for me or the previous Saints. Nephia is supposed to be half mortal and half immortal. In religion, the only beings that are immortal are God, angel, and perhaps demons. However, there's a difference between an Eternal being and an Everlasting being. We don't know what the immortal is, except for God, but God doesn't breed, God creates," Astrea explained as she rubbed her bottom lip with her index finger.

"If a demon is capable of doing so, what kind of demon is it, Your Holiness? Is it Kiel?" Uriel looked at Astrea with her brows furrowed.

"No, I don't believe it's him," Rasmus answered, surprising everyone.

"What makes you think so, Count?" Xena stared at Rasmus with suspicion because it sounded as if Rasmus knew Kiel than anyone else, proving her suspicion that Rasmus might have played on both sides, demons and humans.

"It's simple to understand. How many masked beings that you saw beyond the Blackcliffs, Your Grace?" Rasmus stared at Thalior from underneath his helmet.

"There were twelve of them, Count, including Ermaine, the false prophet," Thalior answered, curious where Rasmus was going from that question.

"Now, let's count how many continents are there in Neva? Five, South, East, North, West, and Central Neva. There are twelve masked beings, there should be at least two or three masked beings on each continent who pretended to be emissaries. Kiel is the face of the savior for the lost humans in South Neva, and so far we only know him, only him. Not all emissaries are capable of becoming a savior, some are capable of causing chaos, like in East Neva while Central Neva has an emissary that also acts as a savior, a deceiver. With that being said, we can assume different masked beings have different roles on how to take over Neva," Rasmus explained in a calm manner.

Everyone began to see the dots that made them see the bigger picture of what was going on in Neva. Rasmus's words made them understand that the threat wasn't just the emissaries that pretended to be saviors, but the others who hid behind them, the rest of the masked beings that did things in the shadows.

"With that being said, we can decide which masked beings that we need to eliminate. We shouldn't focus on Kiel alone, but the other one that's hiding behind him, the one that did countless experiments on human body to create a being called Nephia," Rasmus continued.

Astrea was surprised that Rasmus could understand demons as well as hers, who had spent her entire life reading records about demons that only a family of Saints knew.

"Count Blackheart is correct. Demons have so many entangled layers that no ordinary human can understand. The reason why knowledge about demons is hidden from the public is because everyone can interpret it differently, creating discord, an opportunity, distrust, and other bad things. There aren't a single good reason that knowledge about demons should be publicize," Astrea said with a serious expression.

"Count, your understanding of human nature is admirable and terrifying. However, your understanding about demons and how you have dealt with them shows that you seem to have known about them long



before this moment," Astrea pointed out as she narrowed her eyes, hoping she could see what kind of expression Rasmus had from underneath the helmet.

Everyone's suspicion grew even bigger because even Astrea revealed that his knowledge of demons was terrifyingly precise. At that moment, everyone stared at him, waiting for an answer that would decide if he was a dangerous ally, or a dangerous enemy.

"Yes, because I have met and spoke with Kiel personally, a few times," Rasmus answered.

Thalior, Uriel, and Xena instantly held the handle of their swords. Novia clenched her fists as if she was ready to cast a spell to immobilize Rasmus while Astrea flinched her eyes, shocked by what she had heard.

"Why is it a surprise? To get to know someone, you need to speak with them. Am I not that type of a person?" Rasmus asked. "To know a threat, you need to understand it," he continued.

Chapter 248 - 248: What matters.

The atmosphere became so tense ever since Rasmus revealed his encounters with Kiel. It didn't matter for what reason he met with Kiel, it was enough to make them think that he had ulterior motives from those encounters. He had shown how he ignored what was right or wrong, good or evil, which convinced them that he might have made a deal with Kiel.

"Can you explain yourself, Count?" Astrea asked with her eyes narrowed, disturbed by his confession.

"I already did, what else needs to be explained, Your Holiness? Am I the problem for meeting him because I want to understand him, or are you the problem for turning a blind eye or covering your ear?" Rasmus asked back as he removed his helmet so he could stare at them directly. "You want a better world, but you can't stop being suspicious of others?" He tucked his helmet on his side.

"That's not what we are worried about, Count. What we are worried about is which side are you on?" Xena asked, her gaze was like a piercing dagger to Rasmus's eyes.

"Neither," Rasmus answered without hesitation. "From the very beginning, I have told Archduke Thalior and Saint Astrea that I'm not an ally, I don't have any reason to help humanity. I do what I believe is necessary, and I made it clear back then, so why is it that you're surprised, even though you already knew?" Rasmus furrowed his brows at Thalior and glanced at Astrea.

Novia remembered the Great Sage's words about Rasmus, her master, Lenin. Lenin had warned Novia about Rasmus, about his status as a wildcard that could either bring glory or the demise of humankind, or even both at the same time. Lenin planned to shackle Rasmus, tying him to humankind, however, the current situation made it impossible since she had to use her focus on the inevitable chaos.

"Believe me, or don't, it doesn't matter to me. Whether you follow my lead or not, it doesn't bother me at all. I have said those words many times. Why is it that I'm the problem when you're the ones who keep asking me something that has been so obvious?" Rasmus asked and raised his brows, staring at them coldly.

"And what is this necessary that you're talking about, Count?" Uriel asked with a serious expression. "Necessary for what? What is it that you're after?" She added.

Rasmus glanced at Uriel, and then the others began to stare at him more judgmentally. They were the ones who got pushed back by his words, it was time for them to push him back and corner him.

"Give me a valid reason why I should give you the answer, Commander?" Rasmus raised his brows. "What do I owe you or any of you to make me answer your question?"

Everyone was either gritting their teeth or clenching their fists, realizing there was no right reason for him to give an answer. He didn't need them, he didn't care about them, and he didn't care about humanity, so he didn't have a reason to give them what they wanted.

"That's enough..." Astrea sighed as she closed her eyes. "What matters right now is, do you want to get rid of the demons, Count?" She asked, knowing it was the least and the only thing that mattered.

"Yes, without a doubt," Rasmus answered without hesitation, his eyes and expression were determined to get rid of them.

Astrea nodded her head at Rasmus with understanding, and then looked at the others with a serious expression. She didn't want them to agree with him, she wanted them to understand that he was on the same page as them. They knew that Rasmus wasn't the type who lied, and it was the only thing they could admire.

"Now what, Your Holiness? Are we done here?" Novia asked.

"No, there's still one place that we need to check," Astrea looked up at the sky and still saw the looming demonic energy above the palace. "There must be something in the palace that we can find as another lead," she said, walking toward the entrance to the palace.

They followed Astrea into the palace, and they could immediately feel the tightness in their chests. What they felt was nothing but demonic energy, and Astrea had to cleanse the palace with her divine energy. They then split the group into three, the first group was Astrea and Uriel, the second group was Thalior, Xena, and Novia, and the third group was Rasmus, Aris, and Javi.

Everyone explored every corner of the palace, but they didn't find a single soul. However, they saw traces of what had happened to everyone in the palace. The blood trails on the floor, on the walls, on the tables, and on the ceiling in every room. They assumed that the demons had brought the bodies into the dungeon so they could experiment on the bodies.

They regrouped and gathered in front of the final room that they hadn't checked, the throne room. Thalior slowly opened the door, and they were welcomed by the pungent smell of dead bodies. They saw the king and the queen, sitting on the thrones with their swollen corpses and maggots eating their skin and flesh. There were five bodies scattered around the chair, and they were the children of the king and the queen.

"Don't move..." Astrea muttered as she stared at the corpses. "I don't know what it is, but I can feel an immense demonic energy from there. That one might be the source of all the demonic energy that has been lingering around the palace," she warned as she narrowed her eyes.

"It's a portal," Aris pointed at the carpet around the thrones.

Everyone turned around to look at Aris, wondering how she was sure about that.

"Is it the same as the one that we saw back then?" Rasmus asked.

"Yes, but this one is a lot bigger. Last time, there was only one that came out of it, but this one, they might be able to bring more than one here from that portal," Aris answered as she kept her eyes on the ground that was covered in red carpet.

"So it's a trap..." Astrea hummed as she nodded with understanding. "I don't know what would happen if I cleanse the demonic energy over there, and I'm worried that I might make a huge mistake," she said quietly as she looked at her surroundings.

"We can't just let it be like this, right?" Uriel glanced at Thalior.

Thalior didn't know what to say since he didn't know anything about demons or about their powers.

Rasmus crossed his arms, deep in thought as he stared at the thrones at the end of the hall. He believed it would be wise to destroy the portal because it removed one of the escape paths that the demons would use. However, he didn't know if that portal acted as an escape route or a trap for them to get rid of.

"Aris, can you get rid of it?" Rasmus turned around to look at Aris.

"It's deeply rooted. The whole palace is like a structure of the portal, and if I didn't destroy it completely and simultaneously, the portal might open up and powerful demons would come in," Aris answered.

Astrea didn't know the demonic energy had rooted deep into the palace even though she had cleansed it earlier. She was glad that she didn't want to cleanse the portal because that would be a big mistake.

"So? Can you?" Rasmus asked.

"I can, it's not a problem, but I have to destroy this whole place to the ground," Aris answered with confidence.

"Then let's leave it to her," Rasmus said as he began to leave the throne room.

The others followed Rasmus and left the palace, all the way out of the palace walls. They all stared at the palace from outside the wall, wondering what Aris would do to destroy the palace in one go. If it was Novia or Rasmus, they could easily create a powerful spell to do it, but their spells couldn't get rid of demonic energy.

Suddenly they saw Aris break the roof of the palace and flew high enough above the palace. They focused only on her and watched every move she made. While she was in mid air, she pulled her black sword back, imbuing it with Aura and something else. The only ones who could see them were Novia and Astrea, the color of Aura was close to silver while the other one was bright blue like a morning sky. The two colors mixed around the blade of her sword as she pointed the tip of the blade downward.

Once Aris gathered enough energy on her sword, everyone got chills in their arms as if they were attracted by the invisible power that she had released. The moment she thrust her sword down, a massive shockwave was released around her, purifying the lingering demonic energy in the sky. Then, the palace that was as big and wide as a football stadium got flattened in the blink of an eye.

The shockwave knocked them down and shattered the glass of nearby buildings, some even collapsed by it.

Uriel sat up and saw the destructive power of an Orthias for the first time, and she was utterly shocked. She watched Aris land gracefully right in front of them as she sheathed her sword.

"It's done, they shouldn't be able to go to this place anymore," Aris said as she offered her hand to Rasmus.

"Thank you," Rasmus grabbed Aris's hand and pushed himself up.

(At the same time in an unknown place)

"The portal is completely destroyed," Kiel stared at his glove. "I don't know how, but they destroyed it without leaving anything behind. I can't use it or detect any string there anymore," he added.

"It doesn't matter. We have prepared everything that we need," Yaza said as he walked past Kiel, going to the front and stared down the cliff at the army of the Corrupted and the possessed combined. "We just need to get rid of them, altogether," he muttered as he stared at the distance where the giant trees shook fiercely and toppled down.

"So you managed to create one, a Nephilim..." Kiel glanced at Yaza.

"Not a perfect one, but I did," Yaza's glowing red eyes beneath the mask grew brighter.

Chapter 249 - 249: The final report.

It had been a whole week since they got rid of the revolutionary parties, however, they were more on the edge than ever because they knew the real danger was about to come. Since the words of warning had spread across Neva, a few figures came to assist, and a few of them were Lenin, the Great Sage, and Agnesia, the Sorceress. The remaining were volunteers of great warriors from East and Central Neva who wanted to assist them in eliminating evil.

The Alliance faction was powerless in the presence of the greats, they held no power at the table because they didn't achieve a lot compared to what the South Neva Union did. They couldn't demand anything as they had proven nothing to the world about their might and influence. Especially when Xena decided to join hands with the South Neva Union, weakening the Alliance faction's position in South Neva.

The South Neva Union had sent hundreds of scout teams to find the location where Kiel and the demons were. However, they failed to find them even after a whole week, as if the demons had disappeared and left the continent. They knew it was just a trick to make them lower their guards, and they didn't want to give the demons what they wanted.

"We need to pressure them, find them, and get rid of them. We can't just wait here doing nothing," Duke Gerald from the Alliance faction said as he looked at the powerful figures at the table.

"Like what, Duke? Can you elaborate on how we are going to do that without risking the enemy from growing in numbers since they can turn humans into their army by possessing their bodies or turn them into Corrupted?" Lenin glanced at Duke Gerald with cold eyes. "If you want us to do so, then at least contribute something other than words and suggestions, Duke," she added.

Duke Gerald clenched his fists under the table, not wanting the others to see his frustration. He was frustrated because the Alliance had become beggars, rather than an influential figure at the table. The hard work, the schemes, and the things they had done to reach this height were completely destroyed because they had done nothing but act like parasites who took the wealth and territories of the nations that the revolutionary parties took.

"You're disgusting for a human being," Agnesia stared directly into Duke Gerald's eyes. "You greedy pigs. Keep your head lowered and sniff on the crumbs you find on the ground," she continued with a cold tone.

Duke Gerald, Marquess Wilfred, and Duchess Adelina, the representatives from the Alliance faction, were enraged, but the moment they glanced at the other figures at the table, they realized they all thought the same thing as Agnesia. Their greed was written all over their faces, and they couldn't do anything, not even leave the table, because that only made their status more insignificant.

"We have contributed a lot to this war. Without us, the South Neva Union wouldn't even have the courage to make a move and wage a war against the revolutionary parties! We might be greedy, but we were the ones who brought all of us here in this moment!" Duke Gerald said, raising his voice a bit to the point that his voice echoed throughout the hall.

"You did, and that's why we still acknowledge the Alliance status here on the table. If we didn't, we wouldn't invite all of you here at the table," Thalior responded calmly. "It's not that we don't respect your status, it's you who asked for more than what you have contributed," he continued.

Rasmus silently listened to the unnecessary arguments with his eyes closed, and his cheek rested on his fist. He found the whole thing like childish banter. The Alliance, which was still blinded by greed and power while Thalior was acted high and mighty once he got enough footing to stand up for himself.

Lenin glanced at Rasmus and noticed that he was the only one who didn't want to stay at the table. It had been a year since the last time she saw him, and he never changed one bit. A man who didn't care much about anything except for the things he was after.

Suddenly, a knock on the door was heard, and everyone became quiet except for Thalior, who allowed the person in. It was Grayson, and he walked straight to where Thalior was, and gave a scroll to him

without saying a word. Thalior grabbed the scroll and began to read the report while Grayson excused himself and left the room immediately.

Everyone was silently watching Thalior read the report from the scout team, and they noticed the change in his expression. There was a grim in his eyes and the way he flinched his brows or how his eyes twitched when he read the report further.

"We might have found where the demons are, and possible Kiel as well," Thalior said as he put down the report and stared at everyone at the table.

"How many of them, Your Grace?" Astrea furrowed her brows, preparing herself for the answer.

"Fifty thousands, and even more," Thalior answered as he clasped his hands together and put them in front of his mouth. "There's another thing. Grayson himself witnessed an abomination, something that that didn't belong to this world other than demons," he added as he stared at Astrea.

Everyone furrowed their brows, waiting for Thalior to tell them what it was.

"Your Holiness, this being called Nephia, how big is it?" Thalior looked at Astrea with a serious expression with fear in his eyes.

"Based on the records, it should be at least twenty times or even fifty times taller than humans. It was said in the records that Nephia's hands could reach the sky and its wings could cover the sky, turning day into complete darkness..." Astrea answered.

Everyone who didn't know anything about Nephia was completely taken aback by what had just happened. They didn't know anything about demons, moreover about Nephia, something that they had just heard for the first time.

"The good news is that the Nephia that Grayson found was nowhere near what the records had depicted. It appears that they failed to create a perfect Nephia in a short time," Thalior said as he stared at the report on the table. "However, it's still big enough to destroy a whole nation on its own in a single night..." he pointed out.



"What is a Nephia, Your Holiness?" Lenin asked with her brows furrowed.

"A Nephia is a being that is said to be against the will of God. Demons, humans, angels, they all exist because God wills it, but this thing, it's an abomination, a calamity that can erase a civilization in a single night," Astrea answered as she clenched her fists, staring at the table with a blank stare. "We need to kill this abomination, and more importantly, kill the one who's capable of creating this abomination..." she continued and stared at everyone's eyes.

Everyone shared a look at each other, wondering if they were even capable of killing a Nephia, not to mention there would be a lot of Prime Lords, Demon Kings, and not to mention, Kiel, and the other masked being that was suspected as the mastermind behind the creation of Nephia.

"Where is it, Your Grace? The location of the demon army?" Rasmus asked as he stared at Thalior.

"Far west near the Verdnan Kingdom, and there's another report that the Verdnan Kingdom has disappeared from the face of Neva. If we can assume, the demons had invaded that nation, taking all its people and turning them into Corrupted," Thalior answered.

The Verdnan Kingdom was only a five day journey using horses, too close from danger. The Verdnan Kingdom was the last three nations that existed on the west side. The Bastios Kingdom was on the north-west and the Frelan Republic was on the south-west of the continent. They were basically at the front line where the enemy's full force was right in front of them. However, before they could completely absorb the danger they were facing, someone knocked on the door rapidly.

"Let them in," Thalior looked at the knights that guarded the door.

As soon as the knights opened the door, a knight raised his right hand with a letter in it.

"Your Grace! The Bastios Kingdom and the Frelan Republic nation has fallen! The news just came in! Both nations got obliterated five days ago! The demons... they took those two nations in a single night!" The knight reported with shaky breath.

Everyone jolted from their seats because they couldn't believe that the two nations had fallen at the same time in a single night.

"The clock is ticking, Your Grace. The masked being might have on his way to create the perfect Nephia while we are sitting here doing nothing," Rasmus warned as he glanced at Thalior.

"We don't have the luxury to wait..." Thalior put his hands on the table as he stared at the powerful figures in front of him. "We are going on an all-out war, those who don't answer the call will be treated as an enemy in the future. Bring every soldiers here, and we will march on the seventh day, and I hope the enemy won't make a move on that day," he said with a serious expression.

Everyone nodded with understanding and then left the hall hurriedly to inform the other nations or to prepare their soldiers, except for Rasmus, Aris, Novia, Lenin, Astrea, and Thalior who stayed behind.

"Count, we need your help," Thalior looked at Rasmus with a serious expression, a lump formed on his throat as soon as he said his plead as if he didn't want to say it.

"To answer your pleading, yes, I'll help," Rasmus said as he stood up. "You should pray to the God you believes in, because you need it for protection," he continued before he lowered his head at the powerful figures in front of him and left the hall.

Chapter 250 - 250: Patience and Understanding.

Rasmus was sparring with Aris in the open field, away from everyone. They had been sparring for the past five days while waiting for the remaining forces to come. They fought without hesitation, and every slash they did was intended to kill, and Rasmus always got badly injured after each session. The amount of blood and lives they took with the black swords made them stronger and fiercer.

"Do you feel the difference now?" Aris smirked as she clashed her sword with Rasmus's.

"Yeah..." Rasmus said with gritted teeth as he tried to push Aris's sword away. "But it drains my stamina a lot!" He grunted and pushed Aris's sword to the side, and swung his sword instantly at her head.

Aris used the pommel of the sword to block Rasmus's sword, and then pushed him away. She readied her stance and threw a slash wave at him with immense Aura.

Rasmus pointed his left hand at the slash wave and flicked his hand to the side, deflecting the slash wave away from him. He then swung his sword rapidly, releasing a dozen slashing waves at Aris.

Aris swung her sword, creating a greater slash wave enough to disperse all of Rasmus's slash waves. She was taken by surprise when Rasmus already used his secret technique, imbuing his body with lightning, and appeared in front of her.

The two of them clashed their swords once again, releasing powerful shockwaves that were enough to crack the ground around them. They didn't care about their surroundings or their swords since they had become unbreakable.

"My goodness, so this is how strong Rasmus is in swordsmanship?" Lenin watched the battle from a distance with Uriel, Thalior, and Novia.

"He has grown a lot because he has mastered the Primal Force. However, that's not the only thing," Uriel followed their movements that the naked eye couldn't follow. "His growth seems to be limitless, and his appearance has changed a lot as well," she continued with her arms crossed.

Lenin was shocked when she met Rasmus for the first time a few days ago. She didn't expect him to grow taller and a bit more muscular. One thing that took her interest was the fact that his hair had grown whiter to the point it almost became silver.

"The reason Lady Aris is agreeing to my suggestion to meet with Rasmus, she might have found a way to unleash his potential. He's half Orthias, and I believe what we are seeing right now is his growth to completely unleash his blood as an Orthias," Lenin said as she watched Rasmus move from one side to another in the blink of an eye.

"But Master, are you really fine that he imitated you and made you the target for the demons because he disguised himself as you back then?" Novia looked at Lenin with her brows furrowed.

"No, but what makes it different since I'm going to fight those demons anyway? Those masked beings had seen how strong I was back then beyond the Blackcliffs, so that won't change anything," Lenin answered as she smiled softly at Novia. "I'm more surprised and impressed that he could pull that off, pretending to be me, a Great Sage. He had shown how capable he was in magic, and how his single spell

was enough to annihilate thousands of Corrupted and even harmed that powerful demon that you guys fought back then," she continued as she widened her smile and stared at Rasmus.

"Great Sage, he's not someone that we can leave alone. His growth, his personality, his unknown goal, and the people that are following him, they're not someone we can ignore," Thalior looked at Lenin with his brows furrowed and arms crossed. "He's dangerous, and we don't know what he's after. He's not sided with humanity, and he said that he wasn't with the demons as well, that alone is enough to say that he will become the enemy of humanity in the future," he continued.

Lenin had a serious conversation with Rasmus back when he was still an instructor at her academy. She had known him long before anyone else, and he had always shown his true colors from the moment she saw him for the first time.

"Tell me, Your Grace, is it wrong for a young boy who got banished and abandoned by humanity to seek nothing but destruction for humankind? Rather than trying to stop him from doing so, why don't we try to understand him? Purely, just wanting to know what he really feels and what he really wants. Have you even considered that, Your Grace?" Lenin asked, staring Thalior in the eye with a serious expression.

Thalior took his time to think and find the right answer, but he realized that he had never tried to purely understand him. All he did was try to understand Rasmus so he could place Rasmus in a specific box where he should be treated as an enemy or an ally. He had never considered what Rasmus had been through, and how humanity and society treated him as the disgrace of humankind, treating him like the incarnation of evil because of what his parents did.

"Well, he never asked you to understand, right?" Lenin chuckled softly. "He doesn't care, but that's the point. If he doesn't care, that means we can try to guide him to a different direction, slowly and subtly, once we understand him completely," she continued.

"What if that didn't work, Great Sage? What if we could have prevented him before he grew stronger, before it was too late? There's no place for failure in dealing with that kind of person," Uriel asked, her eyes focused on the battle.

"Trying to stop something that we don't even know is more dangerous than waiting. He has Lady Aris on his side, an Orthias, an Aristoria, the highest breed of an Orthias that is said to be the champion and the ultimate protector of Neva. What can we do against her? Tell me, Commander? Tell me, how many lives were wasted before you realized it was pointless?" Lenin asked with her brows arched.

Everyone went silent, unable to argue with Lenin's view, after all, she was a Great Sage who was said to be the wisest person in Neva. She was burdened by the responsibility to protect humanity from any kind of threat, so she understood exactly when to make a move or wait. She knew when to sacrifice lives and when to avoid unnecessary deaths.

When they were deep in thought, they got chills down their spines when Rasmus and Aris had done the fighting and were staring at them from a distance. The way they kept staring at them from a distance felt like they could understand and hear what they were conversing about.

"Don't look at the stepping stone ahead of you before you even land your foot on the stepping stone below you. That's what you should do now, not the other way around," Lenin stared at Thalior and the others with a serious expression. "Don't make an enemy out of someone who's not trying to pick a fight with you," she said, and then left since the battle was over.

Novia followed Lenin while the others watched them walk into the distance. They then turned around and looked at Rasmus and Aris for one last time before they decided to leave as well.

Rasmus stored the sword in his spatial ring as he wiped off the sweat on his neck and watched the spectators leave. He knew they were talking about him, and they might think of him as a threat that needed to be taken care of. He had known that from the very beginning, since he was against humanity that had abandoned him. He had known that his enemies were the ones who walked on the same and different paths as him.

"We are done?" Aris asked as she swung her sword around, releasing a gush of wind with each swing she did.

"Yes, tomorrow we will be dealing with demons, only demons," Rasmus answered, nodding as he rubbed his face with the towel. "Javi, how many have arrived?" He asked.

Javi appeared behind him and began to tell Rasmus about the forces that had come to join the fight against the demons. So far, there were thirty thousand armies that had set up their camps near the capital city. He also heard there would be another ten thousand armies that would arrive before the sun went down.

"That's a big number to be a fodder for the masked beings," Aris muttered and stared at the edges of the blade, clean without a single chip or brittle on them.

"You're not wrong..." Rasmus put the towel over his shoulder and stared into the distance. "But Videl will be here as well, with that body of Saint that we found," he muttered and stared at the bright blue sky where the snow fell.

"You're curious about the soul that will fill that empty shell of a Saint?" Aris asked as she sheathed her sword.

"Aren't you?" Rasmus asked back with his brows raised.

"As long as they're nothing like Videl, I'm fine with it," Aris answered.

"We can agree to that," Rasmus chuckled as he nodded in agreement.