

Evil 431

Chapter 431 - 431: A Monster.

All the knights wanted to unsheathe their swords when they saw Rasmus walk into the castle, but their brains prevented them from doing so. Their bodies couldn't move out of fear, and when Rasmus glanced at them, their bodies ran cold as if their souls were trying to leave their bodies. Some tried to fight their fear, their eyes filled with tears, and yet when they saw Rullein and her glowing dark orange draconic eyes, they saw nothing but a primal fear, the fear of death.

Rullein spread her arms as the dark smoke filled the castle and forced everyone to breathe it in. Screams of fear filled the castle and she fed on that emotion, laughing in excitement as she devoured them mentally. Arandil and all the disciples could only watch the soldiers crawling and curling in fear. They were furious, powerless, scared, confused, and desperate.

Rasmus walked the long hallway with the dark smoke following and spreading behind him. He didn't care, he didn't listen, and he didn't pay any more attention to them and let Rullein do what she wanted to do. His gaze focused on the six figures ahead of him with their weapons ready in their hands, but there was no resolve in the way they held them, an act of desperation was the only thing he saw in their eyes.

When Rasmus stopped walking, the dark smoke stopped spreading but it muffled the screams in the background. Rullein stood behind him with her pale face and glowing orange draconic eyes that peeked from behind his ear, staring at Arandil and his disciples with a huge grin on her face.

"You really made a deal with them..." Arandil said, tightening his grip on the sword, but he was too weak from that blow earlier. He was bleeding internally, and if he didn't get treated or rest, his condition would get worse.

"Of course I did. What makes you think I was lying?" Rasmus asked with a stoic expression. "But again, I'm here not for a mere pleasantry. I'm here to take what's mine," he glanced down at Aristoria's sword in Arandil's weakened grip.

Arnold dropped his rapiers to the ground, and the clanking sound echoed throughout the castle hall. Arandil and the others turned to look at him with a confused and a shocked expression.

"Count Blackheart, allow me to speak," Arnold said as he walked forward and stood in front of Arandil, blocking him from seeing Rasmus.

Rasmus eyes never left Arandil until Arnold blocked his vision, and then his eyes moved to Arnold's eyes.

"Why did you save us?" Arnold asked.

Arandil, Crestefan, Keith, and Mazur were confused by what Arnold meant when he said that Rasmus had saved them. There was no evidence that Rasmus was saving them, and the fact he burned and melted half of the soldiers, it wasn't saving, it was a massacre. However, Reynard understood that question, and would ask the same question to Rasmus because he saw it as well.

"You could have killed us all, and yet you didn't. You delayed that magic spell until you saw us enter the castle. You wanted us to live, why?" Arnold rephrased the question so the others would understand and wouldn't get in the way so he could speak his mind to understand his opponent that stood in front of him.

"I'm not saving you out of mercy," Rasmus answered. "I let you all live because I'm not stupid enough to let all of you die now. You all serve a purpose, to save humankind. I let you live now so you can fight in the upcoming war, the real war against the demons," he explained.

"And yet you killed half of our force even though you knew that we were necessary?" Arnold furrowed his brows, still unable to understand Rasmus and what kind of a person he was.

"First, I don't want to be seen by the demons that I'm showing my favor to humankind, because I don't, and I don't want to be questioned of the deal that I have made with them. Second, if I kept them alive, the demons would kill them, take them, and use them as their vessels. I killed them yes, but it was better than letting them become additions to the demon army. Lastly, it's because they're useless in the upcoming war, insignificant, an unnecessary burden and problem, Numbers mean nothing when it comes to fighting the demons," Rasmus answered with a calm expression.

At that moment Arnold could see the resemblance between his thinking and Rasmus' way of thinking. They both saw everything as a variable to be kept or to get rid of depends on the context and the necessity.

"So in this context, you're saying those fallen soldiers that you killed were pebbles on the side of the road, unnecessary for you because all you need is stronger rocks to build the fortress?" Arnold asked with his brows raised. "Because you believed if you used those pebbles in building the fortress, it would create imperfection, imbalance that one day in the future that imperfection and imbalance would be the reason why the fortress collapse?" He narrowed his eyes, staring into Rasmus' eyes.

"Yes," Rasmus answered with a stoic and unreadable expression.

Arnold thought that Rasmus would appreciate his understanding and gained some recognition from Rasmus, however he got nothing, not even a reaction. He was used to understand others and knew how to rub someone's ego the right way, and he always got what he wanted from it, but this one was different. He realized at that moment that Rasmus didn't care about ego, didn't care if someone understood him or not, a man who was unchained from anything.

"You admitted it yourself, then why do you want to take the sword away from Arandil? You said you don't want imperfection and imbalance, but you should know that taking the sword would only bring imperfection and imbalance," Arnold asked, suddenly felt something was off about the opponent in front of him as if the more he looked at Rasmus, the less he saw a man but rather a void that would devour him completely.

"Because he doesn't care, Arnold..." Reynard answered. "Have you forgotten what he said earlier? He didn't favor humankind. He didn't care if humankind won or lost the war. All he wants is a war between humans and demons, and he doesn't care who wins because in the end, he doesn't care," he explained, realizing what kind of a person Rasmus was. "He's a monster, Arnold. The kind who would kill anything just because they're in the way. Right now, you might be in the way," he glanced at Arnold.

At that moment, Arnold felt chills all over his body and gulped nervously. He realized that he was a bother because all Rasmus needed was the sword in Arandil's hand, not to have a conversation. He slowly moved away and let Arandil handle this matter because he knew he was never needed in the first place.

Rasmus took a few steps forward, and at that moment all the disciples unconsciously took a step back, leaving Arandil in his vicinity. Once again, the two figures stood against each other, but this time Arandil was no longer equal, no longer capable of resisting.

"I don't need a sword to win against you. I don't need a sword to make others bend, you do. I don't need a sword to win a battle, you do. I don't need a sword to win a war, you do. I don't need a sword to gain

power, you do," Rasmus stared into Arandil's eyes without blinking. "Now, do tell me. What's the point of that sword in your hand if you can't even do what I do? You said that the sword is the spoil of war, and here I am, to take that spoil of war from you," he said as he reached out his hand, waiting.

Arandil had seen countless walls and mountains of challenges that he had to surpass, to conquer, but this time, he didn't see any of them in front of him. He realized there was something that he couldn't surpass or conquer, a void. He realized that it was pointless to fight Rasmus not because he couldn't, but rather because he shouldn't, he could just look away and move around it.

Arandil loosened up his grip on the sword and slowly stabbed it to the ground. His gaze fixed on Rasmus before he took a step back. He didn't say a word, there was nothing to be said, knowing that Rasmus wasn't the type of person who cared so much about what others thought about him.

Rasmus stared at the sword for a moment before he wrapped his hand around the handle. Instantaneously he felt a surge of power run through his veins from his hand, like a gush of cold water that freshened his body. The energy from the sword resonated with him and slowly the sword glowed light blue, releasing a visible aura that moved around the blade like flowing water.

Arandil had never seen that before, not when he had held that sword for years of trying to master the sword. He realized that it never belonged to him no matter how hard he tried to master the sword. It was as Rasmus said, it wasn't the sword that defined him, and he forgot that it was him that made him who he was.

"When reinforcement came, just tell them the truth. Either way, it won't look good on you, to be defeated by a mere Count, a Blackheart," Rasmus said as he pulled the sword from the floor and stared at Arandil. "But remember, one day, I'll take that head of yours. You can forget the past, but you can't run from its consequences," he stored the sword in the spatial ring before he turned around and left.

Arandil stood there, still not a word coming from his mouth, watching as Rasmus left the castle along with that dark smoke that had caused primal fear of the people and the soldiers, making them suffer.

Rasmus swung the sword around, feeling its weight that he still hadn't gotten used to. The greatsword was almost as tall as him, and yet it felt lighter than a short sword. Every light swing he did, it released such powerful energy that it was enough to cut clean a big boulder of rock in half.

"You have never held a greatsword before, let me teach you how to wield it," Rullein jumped down from the tree and landed on the riverbank where Rasmus had been playing around with the sword for an hour.

Rullein approached Rasmus and stood beside him, slowly reaching for his hands and slowly guiding him.

"First, you need to be aware of its length and size, then use your whole arms and legs to adjust its range. Bend your elbows, knees, and back. Second, your footing, mind the weight of the sword and the possible energy from every clash, keep the balance," Rullein's hand held Rasmus' wrist while the other hand gripped on his shoulder.

"One-hand style's movements depend on your shoulders to adjust the sword's range. Good for flexibility and versatility, but bad at close range," Rullein taught Rasmus the moves, how to swing the sword using one hand.

Rasmus could feel the difference between swinging the greatsword using normal sword techniques and Rullein's techniques. He felt his body adapted to the movements, following Rullein's guidance and slowly predicting the next move at the same time as if the sword was guiding him as well.

"Two-handed style's movements, mainly on your elbows, your fingers, and your palm. Good for mobility and stability but the movements are limited," Rullein made Rasmus hold the sword with both hands as she guided him from behind.

Rullein guided Rasmus and noticed that he had grasped the basics. The moment she let go of her hands and moved to the side to watch. She didn't know how to teach him properly, that was why she used her hands to guide him rather than with words.

Not long after Rullein taught Rasmus the moves, Rullein noticed it, noticing how he moved so flawlessly. She didn't teach him how to move his whole body yet, and yet he knew how to swing the sword with either one hand or two hands. At that moment, she saw a glimpse of Aristoria in him, a glimpse when Aristoria showed her how to wield a greatsword.

"So? Which one do you prefer? One-handed or two-handed?" Rullein asked with her arms crossed.

Rasmus stopped swinging his sword and stabbed it to the ground. He looked down at the sword, coming back to reality after he felt like he was in a trance.

"One hand, I feel like one hand feels right for me," Rasmus answered as he looked at the engravings on the blade, similar to the one that Aris made on their Black Steel Sword.

"I know you would choose one hand. It fits with your personality because one hand is unpredictable, flexible, and spontaneous. Your moves depend on the situation, and will choose what's the best possible outcome. On the other hand, two hands are more grounded, it requires discipline, and your moves are less creative," Rullein explained with a smirk on her face.

"Aris, you, and my mother, the three of you wield a greatsword with one hand. I have seen you and Aris wield the swords, and I guess that explains your personality and Aris's," Rasmus said and nodded with understanding. "I'll train more, but for now..." He paused to look at the woods. "It's time to focus on everyone's movements," he saw Erdinand and Ayla coming out of the woods, approaching him from across the river.

Erdinand and Ayla came back and reported about the situation in the Mayne Castle ever since Rasmus burned the castle. A few hours after Rasmus left the castle, Arandil commanded everyone to abandon the castle and to start moving to the capital city. They feared the demons would come for them once the demons found out that Rasmus was no longer there.

Half a day after Arandil and the others abandoned the castle, reinforcements came. Arandil told them the truth of what had happened at the Mayne Castle and ordered reinforcements to escort the refugees to the capital city. The news about what had happened spread around the Sun Empire, making Rasmus the most wanted person in Central Neva.

Ayla reported about Nemu's force that had grown exponentially after Nemu had managed to defeat the demon army. His name and his followers attracted people who were in fear of the demon invasion because so far, the only one who could defend themselves from the demons was Nemu and his followers.

"What about Lady Eveline and the refugees from the north? Any news from them?" Rasmus asked.

"We haven't received any information from them yet. We are planning to meet with the other Blackhands that are currently in the capital city of Sun Empire. It appears they have found another lead about the Ringleaders and their master," Edrinand answered. "They might have heard anything about the refugees from the north as well, so we will go there as soon as we finished reporting this to you, Count," he added.

Rasmus hummed with understanding and let those two rest since they had been working nonstop for the past few days. After he watched those two leave and went back into the woods, he continued his training under Rullein's guidance.

A few days had passed, Rasmus was taking a bath in the river, completely submerged and lying down at the bottom of the clear water. His eyes were open, staring at the sunlight that was trying to blind him. He watched the fish swim above him, unaware of his presence until suddenly his surroundings shifted, the space around him morphing. He immediately swam to the surface, but the moment his face came out of the water, he was in a giant spacious bathroom and in the bathtub.

Rasmus wanted to move his body, but his body couldn't move or to be exact too weak to move. He then heard a familiar hum behind him, and when he tried to turn his head, his head felt heavy and he almost fell to his back. Luckily, there was a hand that held the back of his head and prevented him from falling back.

"You're here again..." Aristoria's soothing voice was coming from behind Rasmus.

Rasmus felt a hand guide him around and slowly but surely he saw Aristoria in front of him, sitting beside the bathtub. He realized that he was taking a bath, and realized he came back to the past again, possessing his younger self, a baby who couldn't even speak a single letter. He was startled when Aristoria suddenly picked him up and cradled him in her arms and wrapped him in a warm towel.

Aristoria placed Rasmus on the bed carefully and gently put baby clothes on him. She couldn't stop smiling and staring at him, the love in her eyes for him was strange and foreign in his eyes. After she finished, she lied down beside Rasmus on her belly, staring at him with a gentle gaze.

"So? Where are you now? What kind of things you have done so far since the last time we met?" Aristoria asked, gently caressing Rasmus' cheek with her index finger.

Rasmus stared into Aristoria's eyes with doubts and suspicions that Aristoria could see them in his eyes.

"I see, you must have found out about something," Aristoria slowly rolled over and lied down on her back, staring at the ceiling. "What did you find? There are so many questions that I want to ask, but you're still too small, too weak to speak. But is it about me? About my purpose? Your purpose? My successor's purpose?" She turned her head to look at Rasmus.

Rasmus blinked his eyes slowly, answering Aristoria's question with his gesture.

"I see, you must have found out a lot of things... perhaps you have found Erglade's journal?" Aristoria raised her brows.

Rasmus once again blinked his eyes, answering Aristoria's questions.

"I have no idea what's happening out there, in your timeline, but I can see it in your eyes that you don't trust me at all. Something must have happened to you, and I know that it must be because of us, me and Erglade's faults..." Aristoria muttered, staring at the ceiling and letting the wind from the balcony brush her pale white skin. "Is the future really that grim?" She turned her head to look at Rasmus.

Rasmus blinked not once, not twice, but thrice, and that was enough for Aristoria to understand that the future was far worse than she could imagine. Rasmus wanted to ask a lot of things to her as well, but he couldn't. He knew he could use the Dragon's Breath to go to the Void Realm to find his mother, but he thought that his mother in the past, in this moment was different from the one in the Void Realm, something about her that was still a mystery.

Rasmus felt sleepy that he couldn't resist because he was a baby, and the breeze of wind made him even sleepier after that warm bath. Aristoria looked at him for a moment and gently placed her finger in between Rasmus' eyes and caressed it, making him unable to resist closing his eyes. As soon as he closed his eyes, he drifted off to sleep.

"I hope we can see each other again," Aristoria muttered and kissed Rasmus' forehead.

The moment Rasmus opened his eyes, he was lying on the riverbank with Rullein staring down at him with her brows raised.

"Did you fall asleep underwater? You almost drowned down there," Rullein said with her arms crossed.

Rasmus slowly sat up and pulled his hair back, feeling dizzy.

"I just got back to the past and met Aristoria again..." Rasmus said as he got up.

"Oh? What did you two talk about?" Rullein asked.

"Nothing much, nothing important," Rasmus answered as he shook his head and put on his shirt and trousers.

Chapter 433 - 433: Absolution.

"You know... I think I'm at my limit..." Rullein breathed heavily as she looked up at Rasmus. "How many rounds do you want us to do? It has been three days..." She asked, her voice trembling, unable to keep up with Rasmus' stamina.

"You're tired? That's new. You were fine in the past three days doing this nonstop," Rasmus asked as he pushed Rullein to the ground. "I didn't know a Dark Spirit could get tired," he stared into Rullein's eyes.

"Well, it's because of your sword..." Rullein dropped her swords and turned into a puff of black smoke, admitting defeat. She caught her breath as soon as Rasmus pulled away and let her rest. "Do you have any idea what that sword does? What kind of power it possesses?" She brushed away her bangs and stared at Rasmus swinging his sword around her.

Rasmus looked at Rullein and then looked at the sword in his hand, not knowing what she was talking about.

"Those engravings are unique, something that only Aristoria, Sanya, and the Elders know about. Those engravings will absorb the energy of everything that the sword touches. They're the reason why the sword feels so light and sharper than any blade. Also, the other effect is that whoever clash with that sword, they will be weakened depends on how powerful their attacks are," Rullein explained as she sat up and used her hands to support her upper body.

Rasmus knew the first effect of the sword because it was similar to what Aris made on his and her Black swords. The ability to absorb life and make the sword even stronger than before. He then looked at the blade, wondering how many lives, how many powerful beasts and demonic beasts that this sword had taken and absorbed. Rullein revealed that the sword had existed for more than a hundred years.

"To put it simply, the longer the enemy fight against this sword, they will become weaker while the wielder gets stronger?" Rasmus asked and glanced at Rullein. "Is that why I don't feel tired at all even after sparring for three days?" He asked with his brows raised.

"Yes..." Rullein sighed as she looked at her hands. "The more powerful my swing was, the more I felt tired because that sword absorbed my whole energy, my existence..." Her body slowly became transparent until she completely became a thin layer of black smoke that lingered in the air.

Rasmus didn't expect the sword to be that powerful. The sword that seemed to be unbeatable, unmatched, and it would give what the wielder needed. He carefully put the sword in the spatial ring and looked around at the flattened forest that had been reshaped into hills and valleys from the spar he did with Rullein.

Slowly the spatial space disappeared, being replaced by the real world where the forest was unharmed. Rasmus watched as the black smoke lingered around him because Rullein needed his energy to feed.

"That sword is called Deruyn in Orthias tongue, it means Absolution," Rullein's voice was like a breeze in the air around Rasmus.

"Absolution? That's an interesting name. Why did they call this sword that?" Rasmus asked, his gaze following Rullein's voice.

"All creatures in this world, they're all impure. Impure because they have power but always use it to harm others for any kind of reason. Power is the reason they're impure, and that impurity will be taken

and to give forgiveness to them. That sword is the only thing that can make them pure the moment they lose their powers," Rullein explained, her voice barely above a whisper.

Rasmus knew that Orthias had always thought of themselves as the superior being in this world. Every living being that had existed in this world, they were below Orthias. He found it surprising that they believed power was a form of impurity when they believed they were superior than other races and controlled them indirectly, making them the ones who held power.

"Hypocrisy paradoxical..." Rasmus muttered as he looked at the sky, his eyes narrowed and deep in thought.

"What was that?" Rullein asked, not understanding what Rasmus meant by that.

"To put it simply..." Rasmus paused when he saw an oval thin black smoke formed in front of him with a pair of orange draconic eyes staring at him. "Orthias is duplicitous, a race with its own type of arrogance," he explained.

"Of course they are. That's the reason Aristoria left and chose to walk her own path in the first place," Rullein nodded in agreement as the black slowly formed into her body shape

Rasmus furrowed his brows, mildly surprised and confused at the same time. He didn't know it was the reason Aristoria walked away from her own people. He thought that the main reason she left was because of the being that brought extinction to the True Dragons and wanted to prevent that being from destroying this world.

"What do you mean by that? Why you never told me about this?" Rasmus asked.

"Because you never asked," Rullein answered. "And I also forgot about this until you mentioned about Orthias and what they truly were that it reminded me of Aristoria's words when she told me the reason she abandoned her own people," she added.

"She had enough with her own people?" Rasmus asked.

"Not really, but she said something about Orthias who had always been acting like a superior race which isn't wrong but she didn't share that view with them. She and Sanya had the same view about Orthias, which was why they both rarely stayed in their homeland," Rullein answered.

"So, there's a possibility that they both have some secrets that they never shared with the Orthias and their elders?" Rasmus asked with his brows raised.

"That's possible, yes. There were some things that she never told me or answered any of my questions about, like what she planned to do, the details she found in the Dragon's Lair, and her past. She never told me anything about her past," Rullein answered as she nodded her head, slowly solidifying her appearance. "I believe she had so many secrets that she didn't tell the elders or her own people. The only one that we can get all those secrets is Sanya, but even so, in the end, Aristoria chose to Sanya's side," she added.

"What kind of relationship that those two have?" Rasmus asked, leaning against the tree and crossing his arms.

"I'm not sure, they're similar to you and Aris. They rarely talked, and when they did, it was always something important. They didn't look like friends, but not look like strangers to each other either. They're close, but not that close," Rullein answered, trying to make it easy for Rasmus to understand.

Rasmus was intrigued by what Rullein told him. He wondered what kind of a person Sanya was, and he knew that both Aristoria and Sanya had two different views of the world. They both shared something in common, which was that they didn't share views with the Orthias. They both seemed to be walking in two different paths until they finally decided to go separately.

"What do you think of Sanya? You should have known her enough," Rasmus asked, slowly sitting down and leaned his head against the tree.

Rullein thought for a moment, longer than she thought. She could barely remember anything about Sanya, blurry images and memories of her and Sanya together.

"I'm not sure..." Rullein muttered, finding it disturbing that she didn't remember much about Sanya while she remembered almost every moment she had with Aristoria. "She's a mysterious one, nothing like Aristoria. I know nothing about her, at all..." She looked at Rasmus, with a confused look on her face.

Rasmus became more intrigued about Sanya, but he felt danger when he thought about her.

"Can I ask why can't you trust Aristoria? She's your mother and she loves you I know because back then she talked about you all the time in her last few visits," Rullein asked with her arms crossed, staring down at Rasmus.

"For what reason should I trust her? She didn't tell me anything about her and she had so many secrets," Rasmus answered.

"She had so many secrets? You have your own secrets, everyone must have at least a few secrets. Why does it matter?" Rullein asked back with her brows raised.

"It matters because those secrets have something to do with me, that's why," Rasmus stared back at Rullein with an unreadable expression. "You trust her?" He asked back, mirroring Rullein's expression.

Rullein hummed, glancing to the side as she thought about it.

"I do. She was the reason why I'm here right now and she gave me everything," Rullein answered and nodded.

"That's not trust, that's called owing your life to her," Rasmus said with his brows raised. "You're indebted to her, you're obliged to feel that way toward her. That's not trust, it has nothing to do with trust," he revealed.

Rullein slowly looked up, blinking her eyes a few times before she finally digested Rasmus' words. She never thought about it that way, and the more she looked at it from a different perspective, the more uncanny and obvious it was.

"You're not wrong..." Rullein muttered as she closed her eyes, finding it uncomfortable. "But, what about you? Do you trust me?" She asked as she slowly looked down at Rasmus with her dark orange draconic eyes, the eyes that were filled with the forbidden emotions of True Dragons.

"No, not yet," Rasmus shook his head, not even giving it a thought for a moment.

"Not yet? That means you're considering to trust me?" Rullein smirked as she sat down in front of Rasmus and leaned forward so that her face was close to Rasmus'.

"Yes, I am," Rasmus nodded and stared right into those narrowing and shrinking pupils of Rullein's.

Chapter 434 - 434: The smiles.

Eveline walked down from the carriage and looked at the temple in front of her. She couldn't believe that she had managed to reach the Holy Nation without any problems. She was so used to being on the edge back in the North because the demons would appear at any moment.

Aurelia came with Alexander and Novia while Serena stayed by Astrea's side, who was in a wooden wheelchair. In the past week, Astrea's condition had worsened, the medication and the herbs that Sima had left for Daryus were no longer working on her condition.

"Lady Eveline, welcome..." Aurelia looked at Eveline and the tall and beautiful woman beside her, Noir Wolffein.

Aurelia knew about the Wolffein family, a family that was said to have contributed to uniting North Neva along with the Wyverncrest family. The Wolffein family produced prodigies in swordsmanship, and swore to protect the north. That made her wonder why Noir followed Eveline and didn't stay in the North when the situation there was way worse than in Central Neva.

"Thank you for having us here, Saint Aurelia... I mean, Lady Aurelia," Eveline smiled at Aurelia. "It means a lot to all of us, that you're accepting us while we have nothing to offer," she frowned.

Aurelia shook her head repeatedly with a smile on her face. She looked at the Paladins escorting the refugees to the east side of the city where she had prepared for them.

"No, it's my pleasure. Lady Monica must have entrusted all of you to me, and I'll do my best to not disappoint my friend," Aurelia said with a gentle gaze filled with genuine care. "But if I may ask..." She

paused to look at Noir. "Lady Wolffein, I didn't expect you to be here. I thought you would stay in the North?" She asked with a confused look on her face, looking at Noir's cold and unreadable expression.

Eveline's warm and gentle smile suddenly disappeared when she heard the question. She cleared her throat and looked at Noir, who stared down at Aurelia with the same cold and unreadable expression.

"Lady Noir is the last Wolffein, Lady Aurelia. She would love to stay in the North and to fight the demons, but we want to keep the Wolffein family alive, and so, we all made a hard decision and forced her to join me here," Eveline answered, her voice quiet and filled with sorrow.

Aurelia's face turned bright red from embarrassment and shame. She immediately apologized directly to Nior for not seeing it coming. She felt ashamed that she had failed to see it, and when she was deep in thought, she was startled when she felt a hand on her right shoulder.

"Don't be," Noir said as she pulled her hand from Aurelia's shoulder. "There's no point in apologizing since you don't know, Lady Aurelia," she assured.

Aurelia nodded with understanding even though she was still ashamed and felt guilty. She then let them rest since their journey should be tiring, however, Eveline went to meet with Astrea first. She watched Eveline walk toward Astrea, realizing that those two had met a few times before.

Eveline looked at Astrea's body which was covered in bandages. She slowly went down to one knee and reached for Astrea's hand, holding it with both hands. Astrea closed her eyes because for the first time, she felt dirty and filthy in the presence of a real family of Saint.

"Moriganne wished to see you, Lady Astrea. My sister, she was worried about you when she heard about your condition back then, and she wished to use her power to heal you, but she couldn't because she had to stay in the North, to protect the people," Eveline muttered with a gentle gaze as she tightened her fingers around Astrea's hand.

"My time has come, Lady Eveline," Astrea muttered, slowly opening her eyes to look at Eveline. "I can feel it, I can sense it," her voice was barely above a whisper.

Eveline could see acceptance in Astrea's eyes, something that she had been accustomed to ever since the war with the demon began. She responded with a soft smile, nodding with understanding, but she didn't let go of her hands. She then glanced at Serena, feeling an overwhelming Divine energy that came out of her, more than Monica, more than Moriganne, and more than them all combined.

"You're Saint Serena, the one that came back to life after a hundred years of being dead," Eveline slowly stood up and let go of Astrea's hand. "I heard a few things, and it's an honor to see you in person," she said as she lowered her head a bit.

"No need for formality. Do you see knights or priests around me? No, it's because I don't want to. So please, treat me like how you treat your friend or someone you know," Serena said with a gentle smile.

Eveline nodded with understanding and she was wary of Serena. She had met countless people and knew all kinds of personalities. Those who humbled themselves in front of others, they were either kind, had ulterior motives, or they didn't have any interest in others. She didn't know which one Serena was, and her mind told her that it wasn't the first.

"I heard that the Magic Tower has decided to break their neutrality and support Lady Aurelia. But, I didn't see Great Sage, only her disciple, Lady Novia," Eveline looked around for Lenin, but until now, she didn't find Lenin everywhere.

"Great Sage Lenin is currently escorting the people from the South, Lady Eveline," Novia answered.

Eveline turned around and looked at Novia with a curious look on her face. "Escorting the people from the South? Escorting where?" She asked, tilting her head.

Before Novia needed to answer the question, they all heard the loud humming sound of propellers in the sky. Everyone looked up, even the people in the city stopped doing whatever they did to look up at the sky. They saw hundreds of blimps with the Magic Tower crest on them. Everyone immediately went to the landing site to welcome them, including Eveline and Nior.

One by one, the blimps landed on the landing sites, filling the empty spacious space with blimps that barely had any space left for a blimp to land there. The first one to walk down the blimp was Lenin, and then followed by Thalior, Xena, and Uriel. Nior saw the golden-haired woman with golden armor and a red scarf around her neck. She knew that was the person she had been wanting to meet in person,

however, she felt a pang in her chest because she remembered her brother because he also wanted to meet Uriel in person.

The Union army, the Servil army, the armies from various nations, and thousands of individuals like adventurers and mercenaries who volunteered to join the cause finally walked out of the blimps. In total, there were two hundred thousand people from the South to join Aurelia in defending Central Neva from demons that threatened humankind. Aurelia's hands trembled in disbelief, touched by the fact that there were so many people who chose to fight alongside her even though they knew the truth about the Holy Nation and the Angelis family.

Eveline smiled when Thalior looked at her, not expecting to see him again after the expedition. Thalior smiled back and lowered his head as he walked toward her and Aurelia. When they were standing face to face, Thalior heard enough from Lenin and knew the situation and what had happened in the North.

"Lady Eveline, we pray for the safety of the people in the North," Thalior said, his voice filled with sorrow and guilt because he couldn't be there and had promised Lenin to help her protect Central Neva.

Eveline responded with a soft smile, and that hinted at Thalior, Lenin, Xena, and Uriel that there was nothing behind that smile. They hoped that smile wasn't a smile of defeat and acceptance, but they had seen that smile and were accustomed to that kind of smile.

"When did you arrive, Lady Eveline?" Lenin asked as she stood beside Eveline, trying to give her some kind of comfort.

"Just now, Great Sage. We just arrived and Lady Aurelia welcomed us and let the Paladins guide everyone to where they will be staying," Eveline answered and stared Lenin in the eyes with tired eyes.

"In that case, I believe it's best to let everyone rest first, Lady Aurelia. Archduke Thalior and the others are also tired. We will discuss everything tomorrow in the morning," Lenin suggested as she looked at Aurelia.

"Yes, that's the plan, Great Sage," Aurelia nodded in agreement. "Everyone, please come with us. We will show you the rooms for you to stay, and I'll let the Paladins guide everyone to the west side of the city. We have enough houses for everyone," she added as she looked at Thalior, Xena, Uriel, Eveline, and Nior.

They all nodded with understanding and followed Aurelia from behind. Thalior and Eveline walked side by side while Nior and Uriel walked behind them. They both looked at each other for a moment, recognizing each other, a Swordmaster and the Northern White Star. They both nodded their heads to each other with a straight and stoic expression.

"Lady Goldmane," Nior said quietly, filled with respect and interest.

"Lady Wolffein," Uriel closed her eyes and nodded once again, showing respect and interest toward Nior.

That was the only thing they said to each other before they focused on their surroundings as they matched the walking pace of Thalior and Eveline.

Chapter 435 - 435: Unwanted but indispensable.

Aurelia, Astrea, Lenin, Eveline, Thalior, Serena, Marina, Xena, Uriel, Nior, Novia, and Alexander sat at the long table. They gathered in the dining hall and ate their breakfast in silence filled with tension. Alexander was extremely anxious by the silence, and he could pass out if he didn't keep his mind on the food on his plate.

"The Ravenshroud decided to support Lady Aurelia's cause?" Eveline broke the silence and stared at Alexander who sat across from Aurelia.

"No, Lady Eveline. I came here not as the representative of the Ravenshroud family," Alexander answered, trying so hard to not tremble in his words. "I came here because I want to help my friend," he added.

"That doesn't change the fact you're a Ravenshroud, Alexander. The fact that your parents allow you to be here right now, that alone is enough to tell the world of the Ravenshroud's support to Lady Aurelia," Thalior explained and took a sip of his water.

Alexander had never felt nervous around people before since he would become the head of the Ravenshroud family. However, at this table, he felt so small, so insignificant that he might get crushed from a mere word coming from any of them.

"Perhaps, but the world doesn't know yet, so he's here as Alexander, not as Ravenshroud. He's planning to keep it that way," Marina responded as she looked at Eveline and Thalior. "Let this young man have his freedom and be selfish for his own desire and interest," she chuckled as she looked at Alexander, winking as if telling him to relax and not worry.

Eveline couldn't help but chuckle and nodded with understanding. They looked at Marina, one of the twins, the twin sorceresses. Thalior, Uriel, and Xena had fought side by side with her twin, Agnesia, and this time they were going to fight side by side with her.

Alexander could finally breathe easily after everyone's attention shifted to Marina. Aurelia couldn't help but tease him with a smile, knowing how it felt.

"Everyone..." Lenin said as she stood up from her chair and looked at everyone at the table. "The time is ticking, the demon forces have finally made their moves. They're moving fast, and we need a plan to stop them from expanding their territory and gaining more power," she pointed out with a serious expression and hands pressed against the table.

Thalior raised his hand as he looked at Lenin. Lenin nodded and let him speak as she sat down.

"First, there are things that we need to consider," Thalior looked at everyone at the table. "Count Rasmus Blackheart, that man is a variable that we can't ignore. We need to know everything about him," he said, and then glanced at Serena since she was one of Rasmus' people.

Everyone's focus shifted to Serena, but she wasn't bothered by those judging eyes.

"On our way here, we heard the news that Count Blackheart massacred the royal family during their daughter's coming of age ceremony. Not only that, he also committed a mass murder, killing everyone in the capital city," Eveline said, finding that news to be unbelievable.

"Is that true, Great Sage?" Thalior asked.

Lenin could answer the question, but she didn't want to because she felt uncomfortable answering it. She decided to turn to Serena, letting her answer the question to see what kind of relationship she had with Rasmus.

"No, that's not true," Serena shook her head. "He did plan to kill the royal family, but he didn't. He didn't even touch them. He let someone else do it for him because that person also had a deep grudge against them. And for the mass murder, it wasn't true either. It was wyverns that were controlled by the demons who did it. Rasmus took all the blame for something he didn't do," she explained.

For Lenin, Thalior, Uriel, Xena, and Astrea, they already knew that was the truth without needing more proof. On the other hand, Eveline and Marina didn't buy that explanation at all since they had never met Rasmus and were not knowing what kind of a person he was.

"Count Blackheart took all the blame and just let it be? Why?" Eveline asked with her brows furrowed.

"It's because he doesn't care," Alexander answered with confidence. "Count Rasmus never cared about what people said about him. He chose to take all the blame because it made him well-known, a figure to recognize. He used that opportunity to be known, but for what reason? I'm not sure," he explained since he remembered Rasmus' lectures like they were carved into his brain.

Eveline found that kind of move to be something that was unheard of. Nothing would make things better if someone took the blame for such an incident no matter how they wanted to use it to their advantage. She looked around, and to her surprise, nobody found that logic to be questioned and they seemed to agree with Alexander's explanation.

"The reason? Isn't that so he has a reason to not save humankind?" Serena asked with a smile on her face, the smile that didn't reach her eyes.

The hall was already heavy with silence, but the moment Serena revealed the truth in such soft spoken, it was deafening.

"Well, you wanted to know about Rasmus and his so-called mind. There, that's one thing you have found. He's not planning to help us in fighting the demons, and that's the truth," Serena said and took a sip of her water.

Eveline finally found out what kind of a person Rasmus was. However, she remembered that her niece, Monica, looked up to Rasmus and his teaching. She didn't want to believe that someone who taught her niece how to rule and think. Not to mention, he could make Moriganne the Saint love Monica like a mother should.

Marina had heard from her twin sister, Agnesia about Rasmus and what kind of a person he was. She remembered how Agnesia told her that Rasmus was both a dangerous and intriguing person she had ever met. Marina could finally understand what her sister had said about Rasmus.

"Wait a moment..." Eveline raised her hand, still confused and a bit shocked. "Great Sage, you gave us information related to those cults from Count Blackheart. He was right about it, and we had confirmed it as well. So, why does someone like him who doesn't want to save humankind do something that's so contradicting with what he doesn't want to do by helping us?" She looked at Lenin with a disturbed expression.

"Why? Because he's the one who controls the chessboard while we are just chess pieces. He doesn't help us out of sympathy but out of necessity. He wants to see humankind fall, but he doesn't want it to fall abruptly, without his will in a way..." Astrea answered with a blank expression, staring at the spot on the wall. "We are the white pieces and the demons are the black pieces in the board. He doesn't fit in either side, and he doesn't want to be on either side," she continued and looked at everyone in the room, staring at him with a stiff and serious expression.

"Do we need him? No, but that's not the truth. One way or another, we will rely on him whether we like it or not. Because in the end, he gave us the best outcome and took all the responsibilities to himself, and we have seen that many times," Astrea said, staring at Thalior and Lenin. "We tried to hate him for what he did, for everything he did. But the most painful truth is that hatred makes us hypocrites. The reason why he's still out there and do things as he pleases is because we are not hypocrites," she added and then looked at Eveline.

Eveline turned to look at Lenin, a Great Sage who had vowed and sworn to protect humankind from any threats. However, when Lenin looked back at Eveline, she didn't try to deny or admit Astrea's words. Eveline was devastated, not because of Rasmus but because of those powerful figures around her, they all failed to break the silence, or perhaps they never planned to break that silence to reflect on Astrea's words that felt so true it was painful to admit or deny.

"Is this the truth of what's happening in Neva? Everyone tends to falter by this man," Eveline asked in disbelief. "Is this why there are factions in this continent, disunity, knives on each other's throats, and even to the point they let each other die by the hands of the demons?" She asked, her voice filled with a bit of disgust and discomfort by the truth.

"We fought for our lives in the North, hoping that the rest of the world could overcome this crisis and join hand with us, but what I found here..." Eveline paused as she shook her head. "What I found here is nothing but chaos that the demons are feasting on..." She added with her eyes narrowed, staring at each one of them in the eyes.

Everyone stayed quiet even after Eveline accused them of being incapable of uniting and fighting the true enemy of humankind.

"The peace is fragile, it has always been," Aurelia muttered as she looked down. "The peace is based on lies. Count Rasmus knew that, and he exploited it, slowly revealing it to the world. You're right, Lady Eveline, we are the worst, and that's why everyone here failed to stop him," she added, realizing that this whole time, her teacher, Rasmus, he wasn't evil, it was the world that was rotten from the inside, not him.

"That's why we are here, Lady Eveline. We are trying to make a new world where we can be like the North. The reason why the Magic Tower and I chose to support Aurelia was because she was the only one who could make it happen," Lenin said with her head lowered and stared at the spot on the table. "We want to rebuild this world, we want a world where someone like Rasmus isn't necessary," she slowly lifted her head to look at Eveline.

Everyone closed their eyes, agreeing with what Lenin said, leaving only Eveline who could stare back at Lenin.

"Then I want to meet him, Count Blackheart. Where can I find him?" Eveline asked.

"We don't know," Lenin shook her head. "But it's better that we focus on the war first, Lady Eveline. I believe, he will show himself during that time, and we will have our moment with him. I can promise you that," she answered with certainty in her words.

Eveline took a deep breath before she finally closed her eyes and rubbed her nose bridge. She slowly nodded with understanding and decided to let it go for now and focus on the matter in front of them.

"Let's begin the discussion of our future moves, together," Lenin said with a serious expression as she looked at everyone.

They all nodded in agreement.

Chapter 436 - 436: The Sun Empire.

Rasmus glanced to the sides where dozens of elite knights pointed their weapons at him as soon as he stood in front of the city gate. He didn't even bat an eye on those knights and focused on the ginormous palace in the distance with the flag of a golden crown and a sun behind it.

"Count Blackheart, you have committed a world crime! Under the law of the Sun Empire, you'll be arrested and executed on the spot!" A knight captain, wearing a red cape and black armor with gold engravings on them. "Men! Arrest and kill that man!" He commanded the knights in front of him.

Rasmus controlled the Mana in the air, seeping through the knights body like strings that were attached to his fingers. He slowly raised his right hand and slowly all the knights felt something tightened in their chests, a sharp panging feeling around their hearts. The moment Rasmus clenched his fist, all the knights coughed blood, their noses started to bleed, and blood came out of their eye sockets and ears as they collapsed. They all died on the spot before they could even make a move, and the people who watched on the sides began to scream, panicking.

The knight captain was utterly shocked that all his knights collapsed with blood on their faces. He was alone and his face became pale as his body began to tremble until his knees gave up on him and made him fall on his back. He couldn't even form a sentence, just mumblings with his eyes wide open and hands raised.

A black smoke appeared behind Rasmus and wrapped around his body like a cape that flowed as the wind blew it. The black smoke expanded rapidly, slowly wrapping the buildings and the city walls. Rasmus walked into the city and let Rullein feast on the emotions, feeding her existence.

Isador was in his study room when he heard the bells and the faint screams in the distance. He jolted from his seat and walked to the window when he saw black smoke slowly tucked into the capital city from above. His eyes were wide open, thinking that the demons had invaded the city. He ran outside his study room to be with his parents, who were in the office at this hour.

"Father! Mother!" Isador screamed as he barged into the office, and saw his parents talking with the commander of the Royal Guard, Castor. "The city is under attack," he shouted as he pointed at the direction where he saw the black smoke

Isador was expecting them to react like him, but what he found was only calmness in his parents' and Castor's faces. He studied their calm expressions and noticed that they knew what was happening but chose not to make a move. He was baffled, but before he could say something, his father stood up as he fixed his attire.

"That's not a demon, Isador, that's your former instructor, your former teacher in Gratlan Academy," Julius walked toward Isador and stood in front of him with a cold expression. "The man you looked up to has just killed a few knights without hesitation. Now, he's here. Let's just hope that he's not going to repeat his deed just like what he did in the Refenus Kingdom," he said and then walked past Isador to stop Rasmus from whatever he was doing.

Isador was frozen still when he found out that the thing he had seen earlier was no other than Rasmus. He couldn't grasp what was happening until his mother and Castor walked past him that made him snap back to reality. He shook his head and massaged his forehead before he joined them, hoping that his presence would be enough to prevent Rasmus from spilling more blood.

"(As if he would listen to me. But I knew he wouldn't do anything without a reason...)" Isador thought as he walked behind Julius.

"Open the gate," Julius ordered calmly to the Royal Guards that were guarding the palace gate and walls.

The Royal Guards looked at each other for a moment, wondering if they had heard it right. They didn't want to open the gate after what they had witnessed and the things that were happening outside the palace.

"Disobeying the emperor's order will be paid with your head. Open the gate," Castor said in his deep and heavy voice, staring at the Royal Guards that guarded the gate.

The Royal Guards immediately pushed the gate open and lowered the bridge that connected the city and the palace. When the gate was fully open, they were welcomed by the thick layer of black smoke that had completely covered the capital city. They felt dizzy and lightheaded as they began to hear voices in their heads even though the smoke hadn't reached the palace.

Castor pushed the smoke away with Aura and managed to keep the royal family safe from the effects of the smoke. When the smoke got pushed away, that was when it revealed Rasmus was standing in front of the bridge, waiting and staring at them.

Castor wasn't well-known unlike Arandil that his name soared through the whole world. So few people knew about Castor's background, and the fact that he was from the same generation as Arandil. He was the second strongest swordsman before Arandil at that time, and the reason why he wasn't well-known was because the second was always overshadowed by the glory of the strongest.

Arandil admitted that Castor was as strong as Uriel or even a little bit stronger than her. He believed that Castor could win against Uriel, and was confident in saying so. With that being said, Julius possessed two great swordsmen, and the world didn't know that, only a few people did.

Castor was known to fear nothing and had experienced countless near-death experiences during his time dueling against Arandil. However, he heard the news about Arandil, who lost the castle and half of his force to the same man that stood in front of him right now. He could tell how strong Rasmus was, and he knew that the man in front of him wouldn't hesitate to kill him. It wasn't about being fearless, but it was being smart to not waste his life when it could be avoided.

"Count Rasmus..." Isador finally spoke to break the tension as he stood in front of Rasmus. "For what reason did you come here?" He asked, still couldn't believe that Rasmus was there in front of him.

"I'm here to speak with that walking dead man," Rasmus said as he walked on the bridge, staring at Julius with a straight and expressionless face.

Everyone was baffled by Rasmus' words, calling the emperor of the Sun Empire, the strongest nation in the whole of Neva as a dead-man walking. Anyone would have their heads rolling on the ground the

moment they said something like that, but this time, they could just listen. Isador didn't know what to do or say after Rasmus's words that was really unexpected. On the other hand, Julius stayed calm and signaled to Castor to not unsheathe his sword.

"I'm here to not threaten anyone, but I'm just telling the truth," Rasmus stood in front of Isador, who blocked him from standing face to face with Julius. "The secret that you have been hiding, the secret that has been passed down from generation to generation. The demons already sniffed it, and your life, your family, your nation, it will be their main target now," he said as he looked at Julius, but then shifted to Isador with his brows raised.

Isador furrowed his brows, not understanding what Rasmus was talking about. However, he had a feeling that it was similar to what had happened to the Holy Nation and the Angelis family. He hoped that it was nothing similar, but deep down, he had his suspicions behind the Great War that happened centuries ago.

"Would you rather die by my hand or by the demons? Or better, let's have a short conversation," Rasmus glanced at Julius with a stoic expression.

Isador turned around to look at his father, but as always, Julius didn't show any reaction. He realized that this was the time for him to find out what Rasmus knew, so he slowly stepped aside and let Rasmus walk past him and stood face to face with Julius.

"What will you choose?" Rasmus asked, looking down at Julius since he was taller than Julius even though Julius was already tall for a human.

"Let's have a talk, somewhere private," Julius glanced at Castor and nodded, signaling him to empty the palace.

Castor narrowed his eyes slightly for a split second before he lowered his head and hurriedly went back inside the palace to order everyone to leave.

"Come," Julius said in a flat tone as he turned around and guided Ramsus into the palace with Isador and his wife walking behind him.

Rasmus glanced at the black smoke that still coated the capital city. He let Rullein do what she wanted to do while at the same time she could guard him from any danger from the outside, and from below. He then followed Julius into the palace until the doors closed behind him, separating the palace from the outside world.

Chapter 437 - 437: Shared guilt.

Rasmus sat down, sitting across from Julius, his wife, Esmeralda, and Isador. The room was quiet, but the faint screams could be heard from outside the window, the screams of people from nightmares. It was too eerie for both Esmeralda and Isador, but for Julius, he only focused on the man in front of him.

"For centuries since the Great Era, this empire has been the face of Central Neva. But this empire isn't the only one," Rasmus said, staring right into Julius' eyes. "The Holy Nation was also the face of Central Neva. Both nations had the strongest bond that created this peaceful and prosperous continent. And yet, now the truth has been revealed behind the glory of the Holy Nation," he added and glanced at Isador.

Isador gulped and couldn't leave his eyes from Rasmus. The man that taught him about reality almost two years ago had become someone that the world recognized. He remembered that Rasmus wasn't that tall, his hair wasn't that shiny, and his eye color wasn't that clear and bright. He looked at Rasmus like he looked at a completely different person.

"The Holy Nation hid the truth, and you also helped them hide it so well. However, the relationship between the two nations is equal, which isn't logical when one knows the secret of the other," Rasmus said as he crossed his legs and leaned back to make himself comfortable. "The answer behind that equality is because the other knows the other's secret as well," he pointed out, his expression still flat and unreadable.

"In this scale, your logic doesn't work, Count Blackheart. I know the Holy Nation's secret, behind their sainthood origin and how they gain that ability to become a saint. You don't know my world at all, and you never will. It's not a shared secret or guilt, it's necessary that one must take the dark path for the greater good and the other will protect them for the future," Julius answered, his expression still calm and collected.

"You chose to protect the Holy Nation's dark secret for the future. You protect them because you don't know the world to find out about their secret? That's fear, and that kind of fear? That's not shared guilt?" Rasmus tilted his head with his brows raised, staring into Julius' eyes.

"As I said, you wouldn't understand because your understanding of my world is close to none," Julius answered, not even reacted to Rasmus' accusations.

"Don't spout nonsense when in reality that you didn't even protect the Holy Nation when they chose to reveal it. What did you do? You abandoned them, you pretended to know nothing. In the end, it's always about self-interest, the primal human nature, to survive," Rasmus added as he rested his arm on the armrest of the couch. "But again, I'm here to not argue with your delusion. I already have the truth about what's happening below us, the things that have been happening for centuries, the people you hide from the world," he added as he pointed down on the ground.

Julius still didn't react and maintained his calm expression. However, this time he didn't respond to Rasmus' words, his silence was different from before.

After Rasmus and Rullein infiltrated and killed the ringleaders of the Wraiths, Rullein gained all the information he needed. The truth behind the cult and the Lord they worshiped, Rullein managed to get enough information to connect a lot of the dots. One of them was connected to Erglade's journal where he met a Zevrathi and behind their hidden identity from the world.

"Your empire has been keeping the Zevrathi family hidden from the world down there. It all started during the Great Era, however, they disappeared and their worshipers stayed down there," Rasmus said with a smile on his face. "But what I found it interesting is the fact that most of the worshipers are high-ranking nobles from your nation," he revealed with his brows furrowed and head tilted.

Isador was shocked in disbelief when Rasmus revealed the truth and the secret that the Sun Empire hid from the world. He didn't expect that the Zevrathi's family, the one that the Angelis family killed to gain the power of a saint was being protected by the Sun Empire. However, he couldn't understand how the Holy Nation killed one Zevrathi but the Sun Empire protected them at the same time.

"Wait, Count... I don't understand..." Isador raised his hand, still reacting like a student to Rasmus. "If the Sun Empire protected them, then why didn't they resent the Holy Nation from killing one? Not to mention that you said that both nations knew each other's secrets and shared the responsibility," he furrowed his brows.

"I have questioned the reason behind the Great Era for a while now, and I'm assuming they were at war because they knew something that the world didn't, the existence of the Zevrathis and the power they

possessed. Of course, the Zevrathi family wasn't a righteous one because they chose to turn against Gods and made a deal with the demons after the world betrayed them," Rasmus explained but his eyes never left Julius'. "But it wasn't that simple, and so I assumed that the Zevrathis were being hunted by the Sun Empire, the Holy Nation, and the other nations that participated during the Great Era. When the Zevrathi were desperate, rather than fighting to the death, they chose to make a deal with the most powerful nations as the logical answer. That means, the Holy Nation and the Sun Empire," he added, reading Julius' expression that was still unreadable.

"Wait, does that mean the Zevrathi sacrificed one of them and gave the body to the Holy Nation so the Angelis family could become a family of Saints while the Sun Empire became the face of the Era and hid the Zevrathis from the world?" Isador said, finally connecting the dots from Rasmus' explanation.

Rasmus glanced at Isador for a moment before he averted his gaze so he could focus on Julius again. There was no need for an answer or a response because that glance alone was enough that Isador connected the dots like he did.

"Is that true, father?" Isador asked.

"Whether it's true or not, you already convinced with the truth you want to believe," Julius answered, staring Isador in the eyes. "However, even if it was the truth, that didn't change the fact that peace was made for centuries," he said and looked at Rasmus again.

"As I said, I'm not here to argue, I'm here to state the fact and to give you a warning, Your Majesty," Rasmus said with a serious expression. "The demons have sniffed out what your empire has hidden for centuries. They're coming, they want the Zevrathis. For what reason? I'm not sure either, but I know for sure that if the demons got what they were after, humankind will lose everything," he pointed out.

"Is that all?" Julius asked with his brows raised.

"That's all," Rasmus nodded. "Although, there's one other thing that I want to tell you," he said as he stood up and buttoned his suit. "Don't think that I don't know that you were the one who tried to assassinate my father during his mission because he knew too much, Your Majesty. You sent that Zevrathi to kill him but failed," he said with a cold gaze.

"And are you going to kill me now?" Julius asked with his head tilted.

"No, not yet..." Rasmus kept staring into Julius' eyes. "You're still a useful tool. I'll get rid of you when you're no longer useful," he said and lowered his head at the royal family in front of him before he walked away and left the room.

Isador looked at his father for a moment, couldn't believe that the Sun Empire was built on lies as well. He was raised, told, and taught to become a great emperor, but those words came from a hypocrite, someone who would do anything to maintain peace. It was as Rasmus had said earlier, that Julius was delusional, believing in righteousness by doing something dirty behind the curtains. He decided to leave the room as well and tried to catch up with Rasmus.

"Count!" Isador called, barely catching up with Rasmus who was already leaving the palace.

Rasmus didn't stop and continued walking while the Royal Guards moved aside and watched him walk through the gate. He didn't even look back when he knew that Isador was trying to catch up on him.

"Which is more important? Your own blood that has lived their lives deceiving people or friends that are trying to fight those lies and create a new world?" Rasmus asked as he watched the black smoke still covering the capital city.

"Friends?" Isador asked with his brows furrowed.

"Sooner or later your father will send you to the Holy Nation. At that moment, remember my question and ask yourself. Your choice will decide where the future will be," Rasmus looked over his shoulder as the black smoke suddenly moved toward the palace and wrapped around his body.

Isador collapsed to the ground like all the Royal Guards when they felt their brains were being controlled and forced them to kneel and lower their heads. Isador tried to fight it, trying to lift his head to look at Rasmus. When he did, he saw Rasmus being coated by the black smoke completely until suddenly the smoke dispersed and disappeared. Rasmus was nowhere to be found and the city was no longer being coated in dark smoke.

Isador sighed as he stood up, wondering what Rasmus meant by that and why he suddenly asked that question without waiting for him to answer. After pondering it for a moment, he decided to walk back inside and speak with his parents about the lies and the secret that they had hid from the world.

Chapter 438 - 438: Fate.

Rasmus dipped into the river and let the stream wash his body with the cold water. He never thought that being one with Rullein would make him nauseated and sick like a really bad vertigo. He heard, felt, and saw what Rullein heard, felt, and saw from the lives and emotions she devoured from thousands of people.

Rasmus wasn't the only one who felt sick, Rullein also felt the same way. She felt her whole body was being twisted and pulled from every direction. She felt that way because the Dragon's Blood within Rasmus' body and his Orthias bloodline threatened to devour her.

Rullein had to stay in her original form, an orb laying on the ground under a big tree. She couldn't manifest her human form because she got weakened from becoming one with Rasmus earlier.

Rasmus let his head go above the water and tried to relax as he remembered how it felt. Although it was an unpleasant experience, he felt something else, something within him that he had never felt before. He felt an itch that he never had until Rullein entered his body, the itch that if he scratched it hard enough, it might open something within him.

"You smell like Rullein..." A familiar voice could be heard behind Rasmus.

Rasmus slowly tilted his head up and saw Aris staring down at him with her expressionless face. He didn't say a word, but he slowly turned around to look at her because he noticed something was different about her.

Aris removed her clothes, completely naked and then slowly walked down to the river and sat beside Rasmus. She looked down at her reflection, staring into her own eyes as if she didn't recognize the face that the water reflected.

"Yes, I smell like... ashes..." Rasmus muttered and splashed water onto his face. "It was her idea to enter my body, saying that she could travel anywhere I wanted but only to the places that she had ever been," he explained.

"I know..." Aris said, her eyes never leaving her reflection. "I saw you two from afar when you went to the capital city. I watched everything," she glanced at Rasmus' wet face and hair.

Rasmus turned to look at Aris' face, their eyes met and they both remembered the last moment they had before Aris left. It was Aris' moment of vulnerability, something that she had never shown to anyone or that she knew she had.

"You look more puzzled than before, and you look like you have found an answer that you didn't want to believe," Rasmus said and saw Yur, in its owl form land on the tree branch where Rullein was resting below. "Your journey for an answer didn't go well?" He asked and stared into Aris' eyes again that never left his.

Aris broke eye contact and looked at the woods in front of her. She didn't want to think of what she had been through, the answers she had gotten. She felt bitter in her mouth when she tried to remember it.

"One is overcomplicated and the other one is oversimplified. I don't know what to believe or what I want to believe..." Aris muttered, her gaze empty and distant.

Rasmus slowly turned toward Aris fully with his brows raised, interested by her answer. Aris on the other hand hesitated to tell him about it because she didn't want to even think about it anymore, or at least not at that moment. However, there was always something about him that made her feel at ease when she spoke about anything to him. She slowly took a deep breath, trying to construct on where to start and when to finish the explanation.

Once Aris knew where to start, she began to tell Rasmus everything about her conversation with Serena, or the real soul inside her body, Lilith. She told him about fate, about one's purpose in existence by God's will. She felt bitter when she tried to recall that conversation she had with Serena, but it wasn't as bitter as she thought it would be. She began to feel comfortable telling what she experienced to Rasmus, and wondered if it had always been like that when she was around Rasmus. She didn't understand why she felt comforted by being with someone because she had never felt that way before.

Aris continued to tell Rasmus everything was like a broken dam that released a heavy flow of water. She didn't realize that she had told him everything, even all the conversations she had with Aristoria, her

predecessor. She revealed that her path was predetermined and that something would happen to her in the future that caused Rasmus to lose his calm.

"Before I left, I asked Serena about God and fate. She believed that everyone's fate had been determined because that's her reality, her truth, and the proof of her fate to be condemned. What Aristoria said was also similar to hers. She said that whatever I chose, it would lead me to that point in the future," Aris muttered, looking down at her reflection once again, but this time it didn't feel foreign or alien to her.

Rasmus didn't say a word nor did he react to her story, only silence and kept staring at her.

"Serena told me that... the only ones who could give me the answer to that were Videl and you," Aris revealed as she lifted her head to look at Rasmus.

"And did you ask Videl that question?" Rasmus asked with his brows raised.

"No," Aris shook her head as she exhaled deeply. "But I'm asking you now. I want to hear it from you," she stared Rasmus in the eyes.

"You want my opinion about fate and predetermine path?" Rasmus asked as he looked up at the bright blue sky. "It's complicated to explain how it works. Not because I can't explain it, but there are layers of it," he muttered and turned his head to look at Aris again.

Aris chose silence and fully opened her ears to listen to Rasmus this time.

"The most simplest explanation of fate whether it is truly controlled by a higher being like God or not, then my answer will be not entirely," Rasmus answered with confidence. "For example. You have seen hell from my memory, and you saw those people being tortured for their sins and deeds. Now, do you think they were destined to become sinners? To suffer for eternity?" He asked with his eyes narrowed.

"I don't know, but that's what happened to Lilith. She was made to become an example to women for being disobedient," Aris answered.

"If God that petty to create a living being just to be punished, then what's the point of creating a being of having free will? What's the point of creating a world when God controls everything? Just to satisfy the ego? Is God really that petty?" Rasmus asked again with his brows raised. "A being that is said to be the highest, the omnipotence to be bothered with controlling everything just so everything moved smoothly. No, if a child misbehaved, you punished them and used that child as an example. The child did something wrong by their own will, and you punished them as a reminder to the other children that if they did the same thing, they would receive the same punishment. God didn't create Lilith to be punished, but God chose her as an example for disobedience because she did it to herself, not because God made her do it," he explained.

Rasmus stared into Aris' eyes and made sure that she understood what he was saying. When he saw nothing but a reflection in her eyes, he knew that she was listening and understood his explanation.

"Now, as I said. Fate isn't simple and has so many layers. Something that's obvious where fate plays a huge role in your life is your existence, being born into this world. That's God's will, your fate for life in this world. What you chose the moment you breathed the air for the first time until this day, fate plays it tiny part, nothing too significant but not too insignificant. Our encounter, is it fate? I believe so because no way would I be able to meet you if you didn't choose to take an interest in me back then," Rasmus said as he used the flowing water around him as an example by letting the water flow freely until he blocked it with his arm, forcing the flow to find a new path which his arm was acting as fate.

Aris tried to understand Rasmus' words thoroughly, and slowly she understood his view of fate. She found it somehow logical because if there was something illogical that couldn't be answered or explained, that was when something beyond their understanding made it happen.

"But then what about my future that Aristoria said to me? That something will happen to me in the future?" Aris asked.

"I don't believe in a predetermined path that a higher being has prepared for us. No, I will never believe that. Not out of pride or arrogance, but because it doesn't make sense after every fate that I have explained to you has something to do with your free will except something crucial like your whole existence to be born in this world," Rasmus answered without hesitation and with confidence.

"Then how are you going to explain what Aristoria saw?" Aris asked with her brows furrowed.

"What she saw wasn't a predetermined path that God had made for you. If you chose to jump off the cliff, you would fall. What she saw was everything that you chose that led you to that moment. It's not

predetermined by God, it's your own choice that led you to that moment. With that being said, you chose that path. I don't agree with her that believing it's predetermined, but I agree with her when she said that you're the one who walk that path, by your own free will and choice," Rasmus answered as he stared into her eyes.

Aris looked down at the water and stared into her reflection once again, and this time she saw herself, recognized her face. She felt like she could breathe again without that heavy pressure that had been pressing against her chest.

"Then, does that mean I can change it?" Aris asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

"You could, or not," Rasmus answered ambiguously. "If you're so focused on trying to avoid that path, but then in the end it was the path all along that lead you there. Who are you going to blame?" He asked.

Aris closed her eyes, realizing that Rasmus was right and that it was similar to what Aristoria had said to her that it wasn't about the fact that she could avoid it, but that her own choices might lead her to that point whether she expected it or not. She slowly moved closer to Rasmus until she was right in front of him, staring right into his eyes with that expressionless face.

"If you were in my position, what would you choose to believe?" Aris muttered.

"I'll challenge it. If in the end that I accidentally fulfilled it, then I would break free the moment after it happened. It's not about to avoid it, but to challenge it and to be free from it because I know that there's no such a thing as fate that controlled your whole decision," Rasmus answered.

Aris formed a soft smile when she heard the answer from Rasmus, something she had never even considered. She moved her gaze from his eyes back and forth, knowing what to do and what she needed to prepare.

"I was right to choose you to answer this question," Aris said as she took a few steps back away from him. "Thank you," she said, the smile never leaving her face.

"Anytime," Rasmus smiled softly at Aris as he nodded.

Chapter 439 - 439: Duty.

Julius read all the reports that came from different areas of the Sun Empire's territory. He noticed that the demons had occupied the northern, eastern, and southern sides of the empire's territory. He knew that the demons were going to invade the empire and their target was the capital city and what was underneath it just like what Rasmus had warned.

"What about our allies?" Julius asked as he looked at all the senators that had gathered in the grand hall, summoned by him personally.

"Our allies are on their way to assist us, Your Majesty. They're sending their best knights and mages to fight the demons with us, and they will arrive in a three days," one of the senators answered.

Julius thought about what he could do in three days while at the same time he thought about how fast the demon force would take to reach the capital city. He thought about his territory, the people, and everyone that he had sworn to protect.

"Your Majesty, the Ruzia Empire and the Crusteria Kingdom have opened their gates for our people. We know that Your Majesty is worried about the people, should we send our people there to take refuge?" One of the senators asked.

Julius closed his eyes for a moment and gave it a nod, not bothering about the debt and favor at all. His main priority was the people, and that was all that matters to him at this moment. However, there was another thing that kept bothering him, and that was the kingdom that his eldest daughter reign over, the Cerdentis Kingdom where Nemu and his faction had grown bigger and stronger.

"The Nemu's faction is untouched by the demons?" Julius asked.

"After the Cerdentis Kingdom defeated the demon army two weeks ago, there was no sign of the demons in their territory, Your Majesty. Should we consider joining hands with them so we can have a powerful ally that can help us defending the empire?" A senator asked, staring at Julius' unreadable expression.

"No, we don't need them," Julius shook his head. "The true nature of Nemu is unknown and if we compared to what had happened to South Neva before, Nemu and that same savior who turned out to be a demon in South Neva, they both shared the same pattern. We can't trust them, and make sure that they're not entering our territory at all cost," Julius answered with a firm tone as he stared at all the senators at the table.

All the senators looked at each other, didn't expect Julius to share his opinion about Nemu and his faction. Some of them had made contact with Nemu since the Cerdentis Kingdom was the territory that Julius' daughter, Visika, who became the queen of that nation. The Sun Empire and the Cerdentis Kingdom had a very close relationship, and to think that Julius had chosen to shut them off so suddenly, it was shocking.

"Your Majesty, does that mean we will treat the Cerdentis Kingdom and Nemu's faction as allies of the demons?" A senator asked nervously.

"The Cerdentis Kingdom is a member of the Sun's faction, Your Majesty. If we cut ties with them, we will ruin all the businesses we had with them which would be extremely bad for us," a senator pointed out anxiously.

"For now, we will cut our ties with the Cerdentis Kingdom," Julius stated as he looked at all the senators in the eyes with a cold gaze.

None of them dared to question the emperor's words and order.

"This will cause problems in the future for us, yes and I'm aware of that. However, it's better than letting foxes into our nation and creating problems and chaos that we are unprepared for, especially since we are currently dealing with the demons. Cutting ties with the Cerdentis Kingdom to prevent Nemu and his people from infiltrating our empire, and we will keep it that way," Julius explained as he read the reports in his hands.

"If the Cerdentis sent an envoy or a representative, send them to me. We can't risk anything right now," Julius put down the reports and looked them in the eyes. "Now, we will plan our defense," he looked at the Royal Guards and nodded, signaling them to leave.

Isador sighed as he looked at the book in front of him, and couldn't focus ever since he found out the truth. He was also conflicted in this whole situation and didn't know what to do because he couldn't even participate in the upcoming wars out of inability to protect the people. He was raised to rule, to command, but he was never taught to protect the people with his weapon.

When he was deep in thought in his study room, he heard footsteps moving back and forth from outside. He wondered what was happening because it sounded like everyone was in a hurry. When he stepped outside the room, he saw all the maids and servants carrying suitcases.

"Crown Prince, Her Majesty is looking for you in her chamber," the butler approached Isador.

Isador nodded with understanding and walked through the long hallway and realized that the maids and servants were moving in and out of his room. He watched them pack all his clothes, and he knew at that moment that he was about to be sent off somewhere for his own safety.

Isador entered Esmeralda's chamber and saw her personal maids doing her hair and putting on some makeup since she had just finished taking a bath. He stood there beside the door, waiting and letting the maids do their job since he knew that his mother wanted to talk with him privately.

"You must have seen what's going on out there," Esmeralda said as she stared at her reflection in the mirror.

"Yes, mother. Am I going somewhere?" Isador asked, curious where his parents were going to send him.

"Yes, you're going to the Ruzia Empire, they're going to keep you safe there," Esmeralda answered and watched the maid do her makeup. "You'll be safe there, and they will make sure of that," she glanced at Isador through the reflection in the mirror.

Isador remembered that the emperor of the Ruzia Empire had a daughter that was a year younger than him. He already knew their motive on why they wanted to protect him and would use that opportunity to use their daughter to become the empress of the Sun Empire with him as her husband.

Isador didn't want to say that in front of her mother's maids. He knew they were loyal to her and they wouldn't spill any words from her onto the outside world. However, he still wanted to speak on this matter further once they left the room.

Esmeralda noticed Isador's silence and immediately glanced over her shoulder. The maids knew that signal and immediately bowed their heads and left the room quietly and hurriedly.

"What is it?" Esmeralda did her own makeup carefully.

"They will try to use that opportunity to bind me with Princess Felisha if I go there, mother. The Ruzia Empire has been trying to tighten their relationship with our empire, and father personally didn't even like them. You also don't like them, mother, especially the empress. Are you sure that you want to send me there?" Isador asked.

"This isn't the time that we care so much about our personal feelings, Isador. If we reject their offer, do we have a solid reason that they won't think that we don't like them?" Esmeralda asked as she got up from the chair and fixed her dress. "To reject them, meaning they have a reason to stop supporting us. To lose support in this situation, meaning we will lose everything that we have protected for centuries," she turned around to look at Esmeralda.

Isador could understand that his mother also didn't want him to go there and perhaps his father also didn't want that. He narrowed his eyes as he glanced to the side at the wall, thinking of a solution.

"If my carriage suddenly got attacked or went missing... would that be enough to convince them? Perhaps the Crown Prince got kidnapped or the Crown Prince was in his rebellious phase..." Isador asked a theoretical question as he looked at Esmeralda.

Esmeralda stared into her son's eyes with her arms crossed, realizing that he was plotting something.

"And? Where would the Crown Prince go if he got kidnapped or chose to run away?" Esmeralda asked with her eyes narrowed.

"The Holy Nation," Isador answered, anxious about his mother's reaction.

"What a nonsense..." Esmeralda said without hesitation as she walked back to the vanity table. "I guess a rebellious Crown Prince wouldn't even listen to his mother," she glanced at Isador through the reflection and put a soft smile on her face. "If you have nothing else to say, you may leave. There's nothing else to discuss and you have to prepare to leave," she said loudly.

Isador was shocked, but immediately smiled and lowered his head, showing his gratitude that his mother had listened to him and given him permission. He immediately left the room and Esmeralda's personal maids came back inside to continue where they left off, grooming the empress.

Esmeralda watched the maid close the door in front of her, seeing a glimpse of Isador before the door was completely shut. She looked at her reflection for a moment before she closed her eyes and let the maids finish their job.

Chapter 440 - 440: Ice Dragon.

"Your Majesty, the demon force moved faster than we had anticipated. They will reach the capital city in two days," Castor reported, standing in front of Julius' desk where Julius was busy talking with his secretary. "Also, the carriage that the Crown Prince was in, it had been destroyed. I have failed, Your Majesty..." He said as he lowered his head, ready to be punished by getting his head rolling on the ground.

Julius listened to Castor's report and then glanced at his secretary.

"There's no need to worry about Isador. It was his plan to fake his disappearance, and I'm sure that your trusted men are currently by his side, following him to the Holy Nation," Julius said to assure Castor.

Castor was both shocked and relieved when he heard the truth because he thought that Isador had been kidnapped by demons. He made sure he sent his best men to escort Isador to the Ruzia Empire, and it would be a death wish if someone tried to kidnap him.

"I already heard about the demon force as well. Our reinforcement will be here in a few hours, and there's nothing to be worried about," Julius added, his expression still calm and collected.

Castor had served Julius for more than a decade, and he was amazed that Julius could still maintain his calm even in this situation. He knew that Julius knew by the meaning of the report that the casualties were immense, and yet Julius kept his calm.

"What about Lord Arandil? Has he arrived yet?" Julius asked.

"Lord Arandil will be here by the morning, Your Majesty. He brought thousands of civilians with him, and he has been fighting with the demons in the past week. I don't think he will be able to be in his prime when the demon army comes," Castor answered with a serious expression.

"That's unfortunate, but he has no choice nor do we," Julius said as he sighed and massaged his nose bridge. "Fortunately, the Federation faction has sent their representative and said that they were sending troops to join us. In total, they're sending a hundred thousand army and they will be here tomorrow as well," he revealed.

Castor was surprised to hear that the Federation faction, the republic nations had decided to assist them. He knew the Federation faction knew if they didn't help and the Sun Faction lost the war, they had no way of winning the war against the demons on their own.

"What about the Council members? Are they not going to support us?" Castor asked with his brows raised.

"It's too late to ask for their support, and it was unnecessary to ask for one before. The only one that could come to assist us would be the Magic Tower, but they chose to focus on helping the Angelis family," Julius stood up and walked to the window to look at the city below. "So many small nations have decided to join the Angelis faction because of Great Sage Lenin. Things aren't as how they used to be ever since the Magic Tower decided to leave the Council of Neva," he said as he rested his hands on the bottom frame of the window.

The city was empty like a dead city because everyone had evacuated and taken refuge in the allied nations, leaving only the knights and their preparations to turn the whole city into a fortress. They prepared magic weapons that they had collaborated with the Magic Tower, revealing their true power to the whole world for the first time. Those magic weapons could destroy nations in a single night if Julius wanted to, but he kept it hidden from the world because he didn't want a world to be built on fear.

"Two days is all we have left," Julius muttered, his eyes still focused on the city. "Make sure everything is ready before dawn, everything..." He glanced at his secretary and Castor.

They both nodded and then excused themselves, letting Julius have his privacy since it had been days since he had a glimpse of sleep. They could see the darkened skin around his eyes, and they could tell that a prolonged blink would drift him to sleep out of extreme exhaustion.

Rasmus looked at Rullein and Aris that stood in front of him, staring at him like understanding a creature. He had been stared at for minutes and they didn't even said a word but observed him from top to bottom. He didn't know what was happening, but ever since he woke up from his sleep, both Aris and Rullein were already there, staring at him.

"What are you two doing?" Rasmus asked.

Even when Rasmus finally asked them the question, they both didn't say a word and kept staring at him in the eyes. Rasmus slowly got up and walked to the river, wondering what those two were staring at. When he looked down at the water, he didn't find anything weird on his face until suddenly he saw it.

"My eyes..." Rasmus widened his eyes and saw his pupils shrunk like Rullein and glowed like Aris.

Rasmus narrowed his eyes as he went to his knees and stared at his reflection from up close. His fingers ran around his eyes, staring at his eyes that looked like a dragon. Before, when he used his draconic eyes, his eyes stayed normal.

"That's not the only thing," Aris pointed out as she approached Rasmus. "Did you feel it?" She asked with her brows raised.

Rasmus got up and turned around to look at Aris and Rullein. He looked all over his body but didn't find anything off about it. He gently squeezed his body, thinking if he felt something on his body, and yet he didn't feel anything off about it either.

"No, I don't feel anything," Rasmus answered.

"How can he feel it if he's the source of it?" Rullein crossed her arms as she glanced at Aris. "Try to put your finger in the water," she nodded up as she stared at the river.

Rasmus furrowed his brows as he turned around and went down to one knee. He put his index finger into the water, and to his surprise, the water began to crystalize and froze. As soon as he pulled out his finger, the water turned back to normal. He was confused and in disbelief of what had just happened.

"I believe the moment you became one with Rullein, she awakened the Dragon's Blood in your body. But that's not what shocked us, Rasmus. What made us shocked was that Dragon's Blood in your body," Aris pointed at Rasmus' chest.

Rasmus looked down to his chest, thinking about what made Aris, the Aristoria and Rullein, the Dark Spirit that was born from accumulating True Dragons' dark emotions so shocked about his condition. He looked at his hands and noticed the thin layer of cold mist that was seeping out of his palms.

"What's so shocking about it?" Rasmus asked as he stared at both of them with his head tilted slightly.

"In the history of Neva, there's only four types of True Dragons. Fargon or Flame Dragon, Eraga or Earth Dragon, Hirgon or Water Dragon, and Warga or Wind Dragon," Aris explained as she pointed at her four fingers.

"There has never been an Ice Dragon," Rullein pointed out as she stared into Rasmus eyes. "I have explored my existence from within, and none of them were Ice Dragons," she added.

"Or to be exact, Ice Dragon never existed," Aris revealed with a serious expression.

Rasmus sat down on the river bank and tried to process what those two had said about dragons. He pondered it for a moment, thinking the Dragon's Blood in his body didn't come from a normal dragon. The ones who extracted the Dragon's Blood were his mother, Aristoria and Sanya, and the history behind it was still unknown.

"If Ice Dragon doesn't exist, what makes you think that the blood that runs in my body comes from an Ice Dragon? It could be because of how the blood reacted to my body and created this effect," Rasmus asked and glanced at them back and forth.

"Just because I said it never existed, but that didn't mean I never heard of it," Aris said as she sat down in front of Rasmus. "There's a myth about an Ice Dragon that ruled over all True Dragons. Ice is the strongest element that we Orthias believe because it can freeze water, can be stronger and harder than any rock, can extinguish any flames, and can overpower the wind. It's the law of nature that everything never lasts, but cold is," she explained as she stared into Rasmus' eyes.

"The myth was about an Ice Dragon that ruled the North and all dragons. They said that the reason the north was so cold was because of an Ice Dragon. The reason why all dragons created nests in the north was because they were protected by something that prevented dragons from killing each other. No beings could live in a harmony without a ruler, someone who controlled them. With that being said, they all bowed to one being, and that being said to be an Ice Dragon," Aris explained the story to Rasmus and Rullein.

"To put it simply, an Ice Dragon is like the Sovereign of all dragons?" Rasmus asked with his brows raised.

"Yes, that's the myth that was told to us from generation to generation. However, there was no proof of such a claim that an Ice Dragon existed. Until now," Aris answered as she pointed at Rasmus' chest. "Rullein saw the glimpse of the Dragon's Blood in your body when you two merged and became one. What she saw was crystallized glowing light blue blood that released cold mist. That means, an Ice Dragon does exist in this world," she revealed.

Rasmus slowly placed his hand on his chest and clenched his fist, realizing that something within him could be the secret weapon that Aristoria planned to prevent the catastrophe that was coming in the future.