

Evil 551

Chapter 551 - 551: The change.

Serena's expression was stiff, her gaze was distant because of what she had said. She didn't know if it was the right choice or if it was even necessary. However, she knew what Satan said was right about Videl and what he was capable of. She came to pause to look at the night sky where the stars were visibly moving slightly.

She listened to her unrhythmic heartbeat because of the anxiety and fear of the consequences. Her chest tightened ever since she left the spring, and she forgot to breathe most of the time, forcing her to breathe manually. She wanted to rip her chest apart and pull her heart out, begging it to stop beating so painfully.

She sighed and decided to lean against the tree, clenching her fist against her chest. She couldn't make her mind stop from thinking that even after she tried her best to think of something else.

"I'm sorry, Rasmus..." Serena muttered to herself.

(A few moments ago)

"I know how powerful Videl was, and I have seen how many times he dealt with countless rebellions in hell. The Fallen Watchers aren't that special compared to billions of primal demons after eons of living in hell. Yet, he could defeat them all with a mere flick of his finger," Serena said, remembering the horrors that Videl could do that made Hell feel nothing compared to the one who held power over it.

"Oh, I know him really well, Serena. Among the three of us, Lucifer and I are not that different from each other. However, Iblis is the smartest, but he never reveals that. He never reveals his true capability as someone who was created from smokeless fire, said to be the most powerful destructive power," Satan replied as she nodded in agreement. "Even what you saw, those might be just a glimpse of what he's capable of," she pointed out.

Serena knew how much smarter Videl was compared to the demons in Hell. He accepted his punishment without complaint once he knew there was no turning back. He bargained with God, something that not any higher beings dared to do, but he did. He then made a bet with God, the bet not any living being knew, not even Satan.

"If I chose you, Satan. What would you do?" Serena asked, wanting to get anything that could assure her that her choice was less burdensome than the other.

"Right now? Wouldn't sabotage his plan to regain power be the right thing to do?" Satan asked back as she walked toward the Fallen Watchers, staring at them and flicking her hand.

The Fallen Watchers bowed their heads and flew away, leaving the two alone. Serena could breathe a little bit better since she believed that she was a lot safer.

"But the question is, would Rasmus accept that? Would he accept that two forces were capable of erasing him?" Satan asked again. "Let's stop with the what ifs, stop with all the possibilities..." She turned around to look at Serena. "You have no chance of making an alliance with the Angels, never will be. They have one purpose, no bargain, just judgment," she pointed out, opening the curtains toward the truth.

Serena took a deep breath and exhaled slowly, her eyes locked and imprisoned by Satan's gaze. She knew that already, and that was why she preferred to make a deal with Satan than the cult who served the angels.

"I..." Serena paused to let out a shuddering breath. "What do you want me to do?" She asked.

"Nothing, really," Satan shook her head. "But I want this continent and everything in it," she answered with her brows raised. "Tell this to Rasmus, if he doesn't want to comply, I might as well make a deal with the angels. After all, I'm no different from them, servants of God," she smiled coldly.

Serena felt like her heart stopped beating for a moment before she felt the air in her lungs being sucked forcefully. Walking away would mean that Rasmus would end up as Videl's toy and Satan would make an alliance with the Angels. However, accepting Satan's deal would mean she forced Rasmus to yield for the sake of his own survival but avoided Videl from taking advantage of him and everyone.

"I'll make Rasmus comply..." Serena answered quietly with her head lowered.

"Oh, don't be so hard on yourself. It was Rasmus' doing in the first place to allow the cult to summon the angels. He should have known that his plan could backfire. I believe he would understand that, or I would be extremely disappointed," Satan replied as she snapped her fingers and opened a portal. "I want to see what kind of choice he will make, and any choice he makes, it will help me understand him better," she chuckled as she walked away and disappeared into the portal.

Serena sighed as she pulled her hair back, closing her eyes and trying to breathe.

"I'll send my army, and what you do will decide your fate."

Satan's voice was like inside Serena's head and that startled her. Serena looked around and didn't sense Satan's presence at all until she realized that her mind was connected to Satan because that was what Satan did, to remind. She knew that she had to tell Rasmus of what had happened, and she was ready to accept whatever Rasmus would say about her.

Satan came out of the portal and the first person she looked for was Ermaine. She found Ermaine playing with the tar around her, making the tar move like it was her own limb. Satan was intrigued by what Ermaine was doing, observing her quietly when suddenly she saw Ermaine sinking into the tar and disappearing like she was drowning in it.

"Hmm, fascinating," Satan narrowed her eyes, crossing her arms and stared at the pool of tar in front of her. That tar was the origin of evil, no humans or demons would want to be in that thing, and yet, Ermaine seemed to be fine and didn't find it unpleasant.

It didn't take a while when Ermaine's head to come out of the tar, the lower half of her face still underneath the tar. She was looking up at Satan with her glowing red eyes, her gaze had nothing in it, just a stare without any intention.

"What are you doing, child?" Satan asked as she bent her knees. "Aren't you scared about this thing before? What made you change your mind?" She raised her brows.

Ermaine slowly rose from underneath the pool of tar until she was completely out of it. The tar moved like slimes on her body until her skin began to absorb the them, all of them including the pool of tar underneath her. Satan was fascinated that there was a human that could withstand the power of corruption and even tamed it.

"I'm learning my new power, mother," Ermaine answered as she sat on the ground, hugging her legs in front of Satan. "It makes me feel calm and peaceful," she added.

Satan knew that Ermaine was special because she was the one that was mentioned in two different prophecies as the figure that led to the end of time. She never knew how special Ermaine was until now, until she witnessed how powerful Ermaine could become.

"I see..." Satan smiled as her hand reached Ermaine's head, caressing her head gently. "I want you to leave, to lead an army. To be the truth bringer," she revealed. "Your time has finally come, to fulfill your prophecy," she continued.

Ermaine's eyes widened slightly because she never knew that her time to fulfill her prophecy had finally come. A smile that grew bigger formed on her face, and slowly held Satan's hand and led it to her cheek, rubbing her cheek against Satan's palm.

"Mother, is it really time?" Ermaine asked.

"Yes, and you will lead my army in my stead," Satan nodded, cupping Ermaine's cheek. "Can you do that, my child?" She smiled softly.

"Yes, mother. I can do that," Ermaine nodded repeatedly.

"Good, now, I'll summon everyone because they will be in your command..." Satan slowly stood up and swirled her index finger, opening a portal in the sky.

Two days had passed, and Rasmus was still resting in his chamber with Aris beside him. He was still recovering and trying to understand the new power within him. At the same time, Videl was trying to absorb corruption from the continent that seemed to be a lot more than they had expected. Rasmus had received Erlina's report from herself, and he could see that Erlina's plan was going to move smoothly from here on out.

Rasmus was thinking about what could be his next plan until someone knocked on the door. He knew it was Serena because he could feel her divine energy, and that was when she came in and her expression

looked like someone who had done something irreversible, making both Rasmus and Aris look at her with a confused look.

Before Rasmus could say something to Serena who stood in front of him, Serena suddenly bent her knees in front of him with her head lowered. Rasmus knew from Aris about Serena's plan, the plan that could sabotage Videl by either asking for help from Satan or the cult, but he knew that the plan was still far away.

"I'm sorry..." Serena's voice was barely a whisper.

"For?" Rasmus asked as he went down to his knees and looked at Serena with a confused look.

"I met Satan by accident... and..." Serena paused as she slowly lifted her head to look at Rasmus with guilt written in her eyes and on her face.

Serena explained everything, about the deal, the consequences, and the options that Satan gave her. Aris narrowed her eyes when she found out about what had happened while Rasmus kept listening without showing any reaction.

"I'm sorry...." Serena said and bit her lip until it bled.

"There's nothing to be sorry about," Rasmus furrowed his brows as he shook his head.

Serena was surprised that Rasmus took the news so calmly. She stared into Rasmus' heterochromatic eyes, but she found no lies, anger, or even displeased in them.

"But... what about the plans? Yours, Erlina's, Aris's, and even the others?" Serena asked, and she still insisted that she was the one to blame.

"Are the plans worth more than our lives? I always told the Blackhands that their lives matter most than the missions, what made you think that it didn't apply to us as well?" Rasmus asked with his brows raised.

"So..." Serena looked at Aris to see her reaction, but even Aris didn't seem to care much about it. "So, we are abandoning this continent?" She asked.

"Yes, we are," Rasmus answered without hesitation. "I know something like this would happen, without removing the impossible outcomes or unexpected outcomes. I must say that this is the worst one. However, I believe there's an opportunity from this situation, and it would be best to look for them instead of changing something that's inevitable," he added.

"It's a shame, isn't it?" Aris glanced at Rasmus.

"It is, but what can we do?" Rasmus asked back and looked at Aris. "Bring everyone, we are leaving," he said under his breath as he stood up.

Chapter 552 - 552: Cutting ties.

Everyone gathered in Rasmus' room and they heard about Rasmus' plan to abandon West Neva. Rasmus explained the reason behind his decision to abandon the continent, but he didn't force anyone to follow him, he never was. Carrion, Erlina, and Aider didn't have a reason to not follow him. Daryus on the other hand, he didn't want to accept that he had to abandon people when they could be saved.

Videl hadn't said a single word ever since he was brought into the room. His gaze was cold, the same coldness that led Rasmus to experience what it felt like to be tortured in hell. He was suspicious not just toward Rasmus but toward Aris and Serena because he could feel something was off about them ever since they left the Walloce Trench.

"The world is still recovering, Daryus. We have no chance of winning on our own," Serena looked at Daryus, feeling what he felt.

"I know, but are we really just abandon them without giving them a warning?" Daryus looked at Rasmus.

"The Westerners believe they're superior to anyone from other continents and you know that already. You want them to abandon this continent that they believe to be a sacred land when their whole lives and ideals have been nothing but to believe that?" Rasmus asked and stared back at Daryus. "They would rather die than abandon this land, but if you want to convince them, then go ahead. We have

three days before we leave because the Blackhands are still on their way here. You can use that time to convince them," he suggested.

Daryus looked at Erlina, Carrion, and Serena, he knew that those three had no reason to stay or to be against Rasmus' decision. However, the three of them nodded their heads, telling him that they would help him. He was relieved that even though they agreed with Rasmus, they didn't believe that they couldn't change the people's minds.

"Then, we will take our leave now," Serena looked at Rasmus.

Rasmus watched everyone leave the room, leaving only Aris and Videl. Serena looked over her shoulder at the door as she walked down the hallway. She knew that Videl was against it, and she could sense the brewing demonic energy in that room. Rasmus glanced at Videl after everyone had gone far enough from the room, staring into his eyes without saying a word. When he saw Videl take a step forward, he knew what was coming.

Videl charged at Rasmus, grabbing Rasmus' neck with such force filled with anger. He pushed Rasmus onto the wall before he used his other hand to grab Rasmus' face, slamming it against the thick and sturdy marble wall. The impact was enough to make the whole palace feel the vibration. Videl glanced at Aris, expecting her to stop him, but she didn't, she just stood there staring at them with her arms crossed.

"(Not reacting, huh? So she wasn't a part of his scheme? Or because she's pretending...)" Videl thought as his hand tried to crush Rasmus' face.

Rasmus grabbed Videl's wrist, using his pure strength that was enough to make a cracking sound coming from Videl's wrist. Videl's wrist was locked, loosening his grip on Rasmus' face until slowly but surely Rasmus pushed Videl's hand away from his face. Videl knew that Rasmus had dragon scales inside his body, enhancing and amplifying his both strength and resistance, but he didn't expect that Rasmus' pure strength was greater than his.

"What do you think you're doing?" Rasmus raised his brows before he kicked Videl in the chest and sent him flying to the other side of the room, hitting the marble wall until the wall cracked and Videl's body stuck in the cracks. "Can't you use words first?" He asked as he rubbed his neck, still feeling the phantom of Videl's hand on it.

Videl pushed himself off the wall with a grin on his face and slowly walked toward Rasmus with a desire to make Rasmus submit to him. However, that was when Aris stood in the middle and looked at him with a cold gaze. Videl then raised his hands with a smirk on his face, knowing how powerful she had become, especially when she made him realize that he was no match for her yet.

"Words? You have been using your mouth more than your sword and your magic. All you can do is talk, and that's it. How pathetic," Videl scoffed as he glared at Rasmus with killing intent. "Might as well become a whore and make good use of that mouth," he grinned with a mockery.

"And look where we are now. You were as pathetic as I was when we came here. You have been doing nothing but being useless most of the time, I fed you like a helpless infant," Rasmus raised his brows. "I have been doing nothing but to get you stronger. It feels like you have some schemes against us," he pointed out, his expression turned colder, his heterochromatic eyes stared into Videl's blood red eyes.

Videl's grin widened when Rasmus suddenly accused him and then the grin turned into laughter.

"Scheme? Are you so full of yourself that you think this is about scheme against you?" Videl asked with a clenched jaw. "Isn't this because of your fucking decision to let the cult to do whatever they wanted? If you didn't let them summon those angels, Satan wouldn't even have an opportunity to use this to her advantage!" He was seething in rage, and he was so close to snapping and would turn this whole continent into a sea of flames.

"Why are you mad at me when you were there when I let them free. You could have killed them, you could have erased them. But you didn't, why? If you think you were in charge, why you listened to me?" Rasmus asked back as he slowly walked toward Videl. "Because you knew, you were useless without me. On the other hand? You have done nothing for me, and I could survive even without you here," he pointed out with a smirk formed on his lips.

At that moment Videl realized something that he didn't want to admit, and that was the fact that Rasmus had attained independence. He realized that he was no longer needed like how Rasmus had needed him before because Rasmus had everyone on his side. The world didn't treat Rasmus like a tyrant or even an enemy to get rid of, he had become both a savior and someone necessary in this kind of world. That was when Videl felt he was being abandoned and that he was on his own. He also realized that this whole time Rasmus had been slowly loosening the tie between him and Videl, making Videl's presence unimportant and insignificant.

"You'll regret this... you'll regret of making me your enemy," Videl grinned widely as he snapped his fingers and opened a portal behind him. "I know you well enough, and from this moment onward, I'll make sure you'll lose everything you have..." He chuckled as he took a few steps back until he entered the portal and disappeared.

The room became silent the moment the portal disappeared, leaving Aris and Rasmus alone. Aris slowly turned around to look at Rasmus, observing his expression and reaction, but he showed none.

"You wanted this?" Aris asked.

"A part of it," Rasmus answered as he nodded.

Aris hummed and slowly walked back to the couch she was sitting on.

At the same time, a portal appeared in the sky and Videl came out of it. He looked down at the whole West Neva continent below him. His eyes began to glow red and his back began to deform until a pair of wings ripped apart his back and his clothes. Horns appeared from his forehead and around his head, making them look like a crown. He then stretched his wings until they grew wider and wider that it blocked the sunlight and made the people look up.

Videl spread his wings as wide as he could that they looked like two giant pieces of clothing floating beyond the clouds. He released his demonic energy like how his shadow covered the land below him. That was when suddenly the whole continent began to tremble, and the people looked down on the ground when they noticed black substance to come out from the cracks of their floors, the paved streets, and even the soil.

They panicked when they realized it was the same thing that had been terrorizing the whole continent. However, this time the substance was aggressive and attached themselves onto any living beings. It was so invasive that most of the people couldn't avoid or dodge them. In just a matter of seconds, thousands then hundreds of thousands of people got affected by corruption without any warning or showing any mercy.

Serena who felt the sudden surge of corruption energy from underneath, she had created a barrier that protected the whole city from it. She then looked at the sky, feeling a familiar feeling that she didn't want to remember.

"You finally showed your true color..." Serena furrowed her brows and looked at Videl and his massive wings flowing beyond the clouds.

Chapter 553 - 553: A new master.

"I can only protect this city!" Serena shouted as she looked at Rasmus and Aris who came out to check what was happening. "The Blackhands! They might be in danger!" She pointed out.

Aris instantly released her energy as her eyes began to glow bright blue. She could see millions of strings with dark purple color coming from the sky where it concentrated on Videl's life force. She pulled out her sword and jumped high above the city, leaving trails of light blue energy that enchanted the people who saw them. She swung her sword and cut the strings with her sword, cutting the connection.

Videl who saw Aris had decided to interfere with his plan, he immediately opened a big portal above him. One by one, demons came out of the portal in different shapes, sizes, and armors, making them look nothing like the ones that Satan led.

"He weaponized the demons... he let them grow stronger in Hell and evolve..." Serena muttered, realizing that Videl was trying to destroy the whole continent before Satan and her force came.

The demons spread across the continent, but Aris suddenly slashed the source of power behind the portal. She disrupted the strings by using her power until the portal suddenly cracked and dissipated. She manipulated the Mana in the sky and turned the air into a blue flame that covered the sky. The demons that had just come out of the portals were burned into ashes before they could do anything.

"It's pointless!" Serena shouted at Aris. "Demons can't be killed no matter how you tried to purify their existence! God doesn't allow them to die! They will reborn and they will come back under the Devil's command!" She explained.

Aris listened to Serena's words and decided to spare her power for something more urgent. Her eyes stopped glowing and she began to see things normally again, and when she glanced at Videl, she could see that smirk of arrogance on his face.

"It's better to save the Blackhands instead of saving these people!" Serena suggested.

Aris sighed and immediately flew away to find all the Blackhands. While she was flying, she looked down at the towns, villages, and cities that had been completely covered by corruption. People were killing each other and slowly turning into undead, which soon enough they would turn into demons and become Videl's pawns. She knew she couldn't save everyone, and what Serena said held some truth in them that saving the Blackhands was worth more than millions of lives.

Explosions could be heard in the distance and trails of smoke raised into the sky. The whole continent was in another crisis in just a few days, and this time there was no hope for them. Sorcerers were flying around, trying to protect survivors from the crisis.

When Aris scanned the terrain below her, she saw a group of people riding their horses, and that was when she noticed one of them was Javi. She saw hundreds of undead chasing after them, running at inhumane speed without showing any sign of exhaustion. She immediately landed behind Javi and the Blackhands, shocking them that she had come for them.

"Keep moving, Rasmus is waiting for you. Go to the marine base," Aris said as she swung her sword around.

"Lady Aris the second group is on the north side of us, they might be in a dangerous situation right now. They're Herman's squad, please save them," Erdinand shouted, looking back over his shoulder to look at Aris.

Aris dashed toward the undead before she stomped on the ground to make her completely stop. She used the momentum to swing her sword, releasing a powerful slashwave that ripped all the undead into dozens of pieces. The slashwave shredded the ground, rocks, cliffs, and hills, flattening them in almost an instant. She didn't stay to watch her own power that obliterated everything in her wake, she flew up north where Herman's squad was.

At the same time, the whole continent had been completely overthrown by corruption. The numbers of survivors were less than the numbers of the corrupted. Videl was laughing as he watched the whole continent that was going to be under his rule and influence. However, that was when he saw a portal appear from behind him.

"Finally showing your true color, old friend?" Satan appeared from the portal. "But unfortunately, this continent is mine already," she spread her wings and flew toward Videl.

Videl turned around and blocked Satan's kick, but to his surprise, Satan's strength was a lot stronger than he had expected. He was sent flying down to the ground until he hit the ground and created a massive crater. Satan didn't stay put, she disappeared and reappeared right in front of Videl.

"This might be our first fight, isn't it?" Satan chuckled as she snapped her fingers, making Videl float right in front of her and chains appeared out of thin air and shackled his limbs. "Show me what you got, old friend..." She pierced Videl's chest with her wings.

Videl didn't feel any pain, his body was no longer of a puny being as he was before. He had regained a lot of power that pain didn't exist anymore. He laughed, his laugh was enough to inflict fear, a primal fear that caused all the corrupted, the undead, the demons, and the humans into madness.

"Adorable that you think a being like you have power to stop me..." Videl broke the chains. "Your mouth is your weapon, not your body!" He growled as he set himself ablaze with hellfire, the fire that melted even rocks in an instant.

Satan kicked Videl as far away as she could, and watched as her wings burned. Instead of turning into ashes, her wings became shadows that spread around her. She was fascinated by the fact that hellfire was capable of harming her existence. She realized that the whole time she visited hell, Videl made her believe that she was untouchable there.

"You made a fool of me..." Satan folded her wings and hid them under her skin.

Videl looked down at the gaping holes in his chest, large enough that he could see the burning world behind him through them. He slowly stood up and listened to the screams of humans, demons, and undead, they were burning by the mere heat of his hellfire. He looked at all the buildings around him melted like they were made of wax. When he took a step forward, the soil turned into a pool of lava, and sparks of lightning appeared around him when the heat clashed with the air around him. He casually rubbed his chest and the wounds immediately disappeared as if nothing had happened to him.

"You are a fool, Satan. You only understand what you see and experience, nothing more," Videl snapped his fingers and caught Satan in hellfire, the fire was big enough that it could devour a whole mansion.

Satan flinched as she covered her face with her arm as her body began to turn into shadow, like a black see-through cloth being pulled away. However, she didn't move, she stayed there until the fire no longer affected her, where her body regenerated faster than the hellfire could burn her.

"Thank you for the information..." Satan looked up at the hellfire that was trying to devour her. "You're absolutely correct, but now that I know, doesn't this make you understand what kind of being I am?" She flicked her hand and the hellfire got extinguished in an instant.

"You talk too much, like always!" Videl flew toward Satan and pulled a punch.

Satan narrowed her eyes and this time she turned into shadow and appeared up high in the sky. Videl immediately chased after her, and she kept dodging the fight while Videl slowly and gradually showed every punch he released was enough to clear the sky with a shockwave that could flatten a city.

Satan flew, disappeared, and blinked away while Videl chased after her faster than before. Satan knew she couldn't run away anymore until she was forced to block the punch with her wings. That was when a part of her body turned into shadow by the impact, showing how strong Videl had become. She knew that Videl knew that she might be adaptable, but there was a limit, and that limit was what Videl was trying to find.

"What happened? You can't speak anymore?!" Videl laughed as he punched Satan to the ground.

Before Satan could recover from the punch, Videl flew down that broke the sound barrier, releasing another powerful punch. The punch was so powerful that the ground began to turn into waves, releasing a powerful epicenter that sunk the ground. Videl grabbed Satan in the face, and for the first time he could grab her beautiful face like an inferior being.

"You're going to die here..." Videl cracked Satan's head with his powerful grip.

"What a peculiar thing to say, old friend..." Satan stared into Videl's eyes, her eyes visible in between Videl's fingers. "Do you think I would fight you knowing that I'm not that powerful? After all, you're not the only one who knows how to scheme..." She chuckled softly.

Videl narrowed his eyes, but he didn't hold back. He crushed Satan's face until suddenly her body turned into a single black feather. He clenched his jaw from irritation and annoyance, but then he felt something was off. The corruption that was supposed to be under his control had suddenly lost its connection to him. When he turned around he saw a portal and hundreds of Fallen Watchers standing there with a young woman in front of them wearing a black robe. He then saw Satan appear from thin air above them, not one, not two, but dozens of her.

"I told you to show me what you got, and you did..." One of Satan's body spoke as she descended and stood beside Ermaine. "Oh? You thought you had me for a second? That's adorable," she chuckled softly.

Videl was furious, but then something took over his attention, and that was Ermaine's existence. He could feel and see corruption running through her existence, and instead of corrupting her, corruption obeyed her. He realized the one who had just taken over one of his tools was that puny human. A single human was powerful enough to prevent the corruption from harming the people in the whole continent.

"You said that my mouth is my weapon? How can you be so right and so wrong at the same time?" Satan chuckled as she gently wrapped Ermaine with her wing, protecting her. "As I said, this continent is mine, and you have no place here," she smiled coldly at Videl.

Videl growled as his power exploded, and that was when all the Fallen Watchers spread their wings and raised their weapons. But when they heard the maniacal laughter of his, all of them saw a glimpse of fear within themselves, even Ermaine had to scoot over toward Satan.

"This isn't over..." Videl's power was subdued by his own will. "This is far from over..." His gaze was cold and filled with killing intent and anger. The demons that he commanded retreated, flying away under his command.

Videl spread his wings and flew away, opening a portal for him and his demons to flee.

As soon as Satan didn't feel Videl's presence, all of her bodies turned into feathers and her body and wings trembled. Ermaine noticed that, but not the others, she realized that Satan might have pushed herself too much to face Videl.

At the same time, Rasmus and Serena watched everything from the distance, watching the power of Videl that he had been hiding. Aris on the other hand witnessed how the undead suddenly collapse and all the humans that were being corrupted had regained their senses. She couldn't feel the corruption anymore, and so she flew up high into the sky to check what was happening, and that was when she saw a flare of black energy floating up high into the sky, the corruption energy.

"That human..." Aris muttered as she used draconic eyes and saw whose energy it belonged, and it belonged to Ermiane.

Chapter 554 - 554: On a silver platter.

Serena removed the barrier that protected the capital city. She noticed the corruption had disappeared and she couldn't trace them anymore as if it was erased. She then felt Satan's presence behind her, and she could see Rasmus' cold gaze pointed at something behind her. When she turned around, she saw Satan and Ermiane standing side by side.

It was the first time Rasmus and Serena met Ermiane, they only heard about it from Aris and about the prophecies from both the Sancticus and the Angelis. The figure that was fated to bring the end of humankind, judgment day.

Ermiane on the other hand, she looked at Serena with curiosity written all over her face. She could see a pure divine power running within Serena's body that could threaten her and the corruption within her. She then glanced at Rasmus, and she was confused by the power that ran in his body, three different powers but all of them flowing in harmony.

The people who were around the area looked at Satan in her black long gown and her long black hair. They were enchanted by her beauty, their only thought was to admire her and not even care about who she was.

"Looks like you have decided to cut ties with that old friend of mine, Rasmus," Satan said, her hand rested on Ermiane's shoulder, keeping her close and safe. "Does that mean you agreed to abandon this continent? Leaving this place for me to rule?" She raised her brows.

"Yes, we are leaving," Rasmus answered and nodded his head.

Satan hummed softly, tilting her head to the side as she observed Rasmus' expression and words. She then glanced at Serena, and she didn't see any sign of guilt or regret in her eyes anymore, even though it was Serena who made the deal with her to abandon West Neva.

"That's it? No push back? No schemes?" Satan smiled, the smile that didn't reach her eyes.

"No, nothing," Rasmus shook his head, his expression relaxed and unbothered. "The risk is too much for a reward that barely has any value," he explained.

"Ahh, so that's how it is? Risk and reward? That's quite a simple thought in this chaotic situation," Satan chuckled softly, finding it fascinating.

"If a simple thinking is enough to prove that this isn't worth the risk, there's no need to complicate it," Rasmus answered as he looked at Ermaine, who had been staring at him with curiosity in her eyes.

Satan nodded with understanding, making it a lot more complicated to read Rasmus. She knew that wasn't enough to understand him, in fact, it made it even harder because if he could think both in a simple manner and a complex manner, it meant that his vision was the thing she was after.

Marina landed beside Rasmus, and that was when both Rasmus and Serena looked at her, wondering what kind of reaction she would make when she saw Satan. However, to their surprise, Marina didn't seem to recognize Satan at all even though she was there during the war in Central Neva, fighting Satan and her army.

"Who are they, Count?" Marina asked as she looked at Satan.

Rasmus and Serena were confused that Marina truly didn't recognize Satan. That was when Rasmus remembered what Lenin, Novia, Astrea, Thalior, and the others who went on an expedition beyond the Blackcliffs. They said that Satan's appearance was different from each individual's, something that was beyond magic or divine power.

"This is Saint Maine, and I'm her holy guardian, Saturn. We are, Saint Serena's acquaintance," Satan answered with a gentle smile on her face.

Rasmus and Serena didn't expect Satan to reveal her plan to take over West Neva. When Satan's eyes met with Rasmus, there was some kind of recognition toward each other, and it was about truth. Rasmus answered Satan's question with truth, and Satan repaid him with truth.

"Saint Maine? Saturn?" Marina raised her brows because she had never heard those names before, especially when there was another Saint that she wasn't aware of. "Saturn is a unique name, never heard of it," she looked at Satan, looking at how beautiful she was, and then looked at Ermaine, realizing how young she was to be called a Saint, and that reminded her of Aurelia and Monica, who appeared to be in the same age as Ermaine.

When Marina was about to ask about them to Serena or Rasmus, Ermaine suddenly approached her and held her hand. Marina felt how cold Ermaine's hands were, like two blocks of ice pressed against her hand from both sides.

"The corruption, it's in your blood..." Ermaine muttered, her voice soft.

Marina saw the golden light coming from Ermaine's hands and it surged into Marina's body. She felt refreshed and energized as if she had just been reborn. Serena and Rasmus didn't react at all, they looked at how Ermaine wielded divine power. It wasn't a surprise to them since they had been warned about her, it was just that it was their first time seeing her use divine power.

"Th-thank you, Saint Maine..." Marina looked at her hand where Ermaine's hands held hers.

"You're welcome," Ermaine smiled gently at Marina as she let go of Marina's hand, and then she looked at Rasmus again. She decided to walk toward him, trying to understand his existence, the existence that took Satan's interest.

When Ermaine stood right in front of Rasmus, her hand slowly reached toward his, but then Aris landed right behind Rasmus with her glowing bright blue eyes. That was when Ermaine pulled her hand away before she could touch him, and she subconsciously took a few steps back toward Satan. Aris glanced at Rasmus, trying to understand what was happening and why Satan was there and nobody panicked. Rasmus simply shook his head as his eyes glanced at Marina, signaling to Aris that Marina and the people didn't recognize who Satan was.

"So, why have I never heard of both of you?" Marina asked as she looked at Ermiane and Satan.

"Because we are from the north, not outcasts, but specifically beyond the human's civilization," Satan answered with a gentle smile on her face. "And by that we mean..." She paused when she slowly turned around and saw a group of people wearing black robes and hoods that covered their faces.

Rasmus, Aris, Serena, and Marina looked at the six people in black robes walking through the crowds, they were all tall, at least twice the height of the average man. When they stood behind Satan, all of them pulled down their hoods, revealing their white hair, and one of them was Illidan, the body that Lucifer possessed.

All the people gasped as they covered their mouths in shock when they saw more Orthias other than Aris. At that moment, they all felt joy, joy of finally seeing the ancient beings had finally come to their land to become their saviors. Marina was speechless, and her suspicions just went out of the window because of the Orthias in front of her. On the other hand, Aris stared at Illidan with a cold expression, the one person she knew so well, the one who was captured and fell during the expedition beyond the Blackcliffs.

Rasmus didn't expect that Satan would manage to capture more Orthias, and that was enough to say how powerful her force had become. He finally saw Illidan with his own eyes, wondering if she was the one he thought she was, a body bestowed by Satan because he knew the existence of the third Sovereign, which was under Satan's command, Lucifer. When he glanced at Aris, he saw nothing but calmness, nothing like the same Aris he knew that had grown more emotional.

"I apologize for my rudeness..." Marina slowly lowered her head when she was in front of six Orthias. "I have heard that the Orthias raised humans, and it is an honor to meet them in person," she said, her head still lowered.

At that moment, Rasmus realized how easily Satan could gain influence of the West Neva. His mind calculated possible outcomes and futures from this moment on, and all of them led into a big war. North Neva had been compromised by Satan and her army, and now she had received West Neva in a silver platter. Satan had two continents in her pocket while Rasmus also had two continents in his pockets, South Neva and Centriva.

"We are here to protect this continent from corruption, and we are going to protect this land from any threats," Satan revealed as she stared right into Rasmus' eyes. "Saint Serena, Count Blackheart, and Lady Aris have agreed to let us handle this land," she pointed out.

Marina turned to look at Rasmus and Aris, wanting to confirm if it was the truth.

"Yes, we had discussed this matter and they're going to protect this land. Which is why, we are planning to leave this land because they will be here in our stead," Rasmus affirmed as he nodded, his eyes never leaving Satan. "As you can see, we are lacking in the power to protect this whole continent, which is why we bring them here," he added.

Marina was surprised when Rasmus said that they were leaving and so suddenly.

"You're leaving, Count?" Marina asked.

"Yes, I believe there's one last continent that might need our help, East Neva," Rasmus answered. He then watched Satan's lips slowly turn into a smile, barely noticeable.

"I see, when are you leaving, Count?" Marina looked at Rasmus, Aris, and Serena, who seemed a bit tense in their expressions.

"Two to three days. We will be gone by then," Rasmus answered.

Chapter 555 - 555: Awakened that doesn't exist.

Satan looked down at her plate, a piece of bread, cheese, cherry tomatoes, roasted chicken, and thin slices of beef. She looked at her plate longer than she should, but then the sound of bread being ripped in half made her lift her head. She stared at Rasmus, who was sitting across from her, at the table where only the two of them existed.

"Who would have thought we would be sitting at the same table and enjoying a plate of meals together," Satan said with a soft voice. "Seeing you so unbothered, it's quite... pestiferous," she pointed out with a smile that didn't reach her eyes.

Rasmus crushed the cherry tomatoes on the bread before he ate it and put the cheese in his mouth after. He looked at his surroundings, Queen Anastasia, Serena, Aris, Marina, Agnesia, Ermaine, Illidan, and the Orthias were sitting at the big table. He then looked at Satan while he took a sip of his wine.

"You're not afraid that Aris or Serena might kill your beloved little girl over there?" Rasmus responded as he stared at Ermaine.

Satan raised her brows, looking at Rasmus before she turned her head to look at Rullein. She watched Ermaine being surrounded by Illidan and the possessed Orthias. She knew if Aris had decided to kill Ermaine on the spot, it wouldn't be an impossible task.

"What do you think? If a figure that's prophesied to be the symbol of the end of time, the apocalypse to die before it happens, would He allow it?" Satan asked back as she ripped the piece of bread and put the crushed cherry tomatoes on it just like Rasmus did.

Rasmus never thought the answer would involve God, and how Satan casually spoke about it and ate the bread. He could see the slight rise of her brows when she tasted how decent the food was.

"I don't speak about God and predict his way of thinking," Rasmus answered as he wrapped the cherry tomato with a thin slice of beef.

"Me neither, but wouldn't it be peculiar if prophecies could be easily prevented? Prophecies are meant to happen, just like back on Earth where prophecies still existed. Books proved that they were inevitable, unchangeable, unpreventable," Satan nodded and copied what Rasmus did.

Aris, Seren, Ermaine, and Illidan, the four of them glanced at the separate table in the big hall. They looked at their leaders, the ones who led everyone on both sides to be sitting across from each other and eating their meal so casually.

"Is that what you believe, or is that what you want me to believe?" Rasmus asked and ate a cherry tomato.

"Does it even matter? There are truths in that statement of mine," Satan answered, her eyes never leaving Rasmus, observing every pulse, every air he breathed.

Rasmus realized what Satan was trying to do to him, to put the Seed of Idea into him. Satan was a being who never deceived, but she was a being who gave humans ideas that challenged them and made them walk to their demise. If he didn't believe in her, he ignored the truth, but he believed in her, he would turn truth into belief, a far worse outcome.

"Agree to disagree," Rasmus nodded and took a sip of his wine.

Satan leaned forward and observed Rasmus' face from up close, resting her elbows on the table while her chin rested on the back of her stacked hands. Rasmus on the other hand, he still enjoyed his food without showing any sign of nervousness or fear.

"Are you pretending to be calm or are you truly calm?" Satan asked with her brows arched.

"Does it matter?" Rasmus stared into her eyes, and he could see how she observed his heterochromatic eyes.

Satan hummed, and for the first time, she showed a genuine smile when she looked at Rasmus. She then reached for Rasmus' plate, pulling it away from him so he could stop eating, to see his reaction. Rasmus on the other hand, he looked at her, with his brows furrowed. He could see the way she looked at him was like seeing an animal that she found it adorable, and she would do anything to see any reaction from him.

"Aren't you capable of seeing people's mind and thought? Why bother ask if you could find the answer?" Rasmus asked under his breath and reached for his glass of wine.

"You would be surprised that I can't read everyone's mind. I only read those I'm allowed to. And you, I have no power to look into your head, He doesn't seem to like that idea," Satan chuckled softly.

"I never thought you would reveal such a thing to someone you're supposed to make him lose," Rasmus replied, but deep down he wondered if that was the case or not because Satan could be hiding half of the truth.

"My, my... I might have talked too much," Satan pressed her fingers on her lips, but there was a mischievous smile that she didn't plan to hide. "But I suppose, the idea of Him showing a shred of favor would make you feel uncomfortable in a way," her smile widened.

Rasmus usually enjoyed having a conversation with a unique mind, but not Satan. He knew his limitations, he knew that trying to win over a being who had no desire of free will when given by God, no desire to use the heaven's knowledge for her own gain, and no desire to claim the throne when she was the closest to it. If there was a being with restraint, Satan would be the greatest creation even compared to the angels since they didn't possess free will.

Rasmus sighed as he leaned back, trying to be as comfortable as he could be in that moment. He ignored Satan's provocation, her plan to see ideas into his head. He knew enough that God did challenge him through Videl to see if he could destroy a better and more complex world compared to Earth. That statement alone was enough for him to think that God wanted to watch him do his best with challenges that had been prepared. The idea of God giving him a favor, he already had that conclusion a long time ago, but he didn't need to speak it out loud to Satan.

Satan narrowed her eyes slightly, finding Rasmus' way of dealing with information to be suspiciously calm. She had met countless of humans, saints, and people with utmost loyalty to God back on Earth, but all of them faltered and became vulnerable the moment God was the topic, when she made them believe God believed in them. She wondered how Rasmus perceived God, and his relationship to the being who created him.

"Join me, Rasmus," Satan spoke with a serious expression.

Rasmus was trying to listen to the conversation on the other table where the others were, but then he froze for a moment when he heard Satan's offer. He glanced at Satan and saw nothing but a serious expression with a genuine desire to have him by her side.

"I'll give you whatever you want, and I mean it," Satan said, and she hadn't blinked her eyes ever since her offer.

"Even if it's to let me and Videl win the bet with God?" Rasmus asked with a serious expression.

"Yes, I will immediately send everyone away from this world. They will never question me and they will follow me wherever I go," Satan answered without hesitation. "If that's what you want, we will disappear before the sun completely disappears into the night," she added.

Rasmus furrowed his brows, and for the first time he showed a glimpse of surprise and confusion. But even so, Satan didn't care about that anymore, she cared about what kind of response he would give.

"Why is it that a being who wants nothing has decided to have a desire to want something?" Rasmus asked with a serious expression.

"Because this desire has nothing to do with my purpose of existence. I want you, that's all I want. No orders, no rules, nothing," Satan answered without any ulterior motives or any deception in her words.

Rasmus stared into Satan's eyes for a few seconds without saying a single word. He closed his eyes when he suddenly stood up, and that gesture alone was enough to make Aris and Serena move their attentions to him. The room became eerily quiet.

"Then try to win. In the end, the winner takes all," Rasmus said then walked away, leaving the hall.

Aris and Serena knew that they didn't want to stay in the hall anymore when Rasmus had decided to leave. The two of them excused themselves and hurriedly followed him out of the hall.

Satan sat there, completely shocked that she couldn't hide the huge smile on her face. The more she spoke to Rasmus, the more she wanted him, and that was when she realized she had a reason to win, not out of obligation.

"What had just happened back there?" Aris asked as she walked beside Rasmus.

"I just gave her a reason to fight for us," Rasmus answered with a cold expression.

Aris and Serena looked at each other, they both looked confused and had no idea what Rasmus was talking about.

"But you refused her offer. You even challenged her to win, how's that making her to fight for us?" Serena asked with a confused look.

"Exactly that. Which means, she she can't let anyone else take me," Rasmus answered, but his expression stiffened. "But I also had just awakened a desire to a being who previously had none. That's also not a good thing," he revealed.

Aris and Serena looked at each other once again, and they realized the danger of the fire that Rasmus was playing with.

Chapter 556 - 556: One of the many.

Rasmus boarded the navy ship with everyone while Agnesia and the others watched them from the dock. Satan was there with Ermaine as if they were trying to mock them for one last time. Daryus stood there, looking at the people that he was going to abandon.

Agnesia and Rasmus stared at each other for a moment before Rasmus looked away and walked into the cabin. Agnesia then walked away since she didn't have a reason to stay there. She had received a message from him, a secret message that revealed what was happening.

When the ship began to sail, Satan and Ermaine went back to the palace in the Brithia Kingdom. All the leaders of each nation were gathered to discuss the future of West Neva. On the other hand, Agnesia went to meet with a few influential nobles under her request.

Agnesia entered a room and looked at the three figures already seated at the table. She took a seat and looked at the figures in front of her, one of them was the Ravenshroud family head. Even with the chaos and catastrophe that had happened in West Neva, the Ravenshroud family still had almost sixty percent of his force, making them the most powerful force that West Neva had.

"To be summoned by the great Sorceress, this must be extremely important. We will hear everything," Nicholas Ravenshroud said with a calm expression.

Agnesia took a deep breath, trying to not endanger them but at the same time to warn them. She took her precious time while the others were looking at her with a worried expression.

"The continent is in imminent danger. Even after everything that has happened to us, this one is the most dangerous one," Agnesia said, her expression was serious and she had a hint of fear and anxiety in her eyes. "It's not what, it's who. They're already here, and they're not who we think they are," she revealed.

The ambiguous message was enough to make Nicholas and the other figures in the room understand what Agnesia meant. They looked at each other for a moment before they focused their attention again on Agnesia.

"The same reason why Count Blackheart and his people have left the continent. They're powerless and they have decided to abandon us for his own sake and for us," Agnesia continued, her eyes focused on her fingertips. "The clash would end in complete destruction, and we would lose miserably. Since Count Blackheart has avoided that, meaning there was an agreement between him and them. That leaves our fates in our own hands," she glanced at everyone at the table.

Nicholas had heard about Rasmus' arrival, the man who taught his son how to think. He had been wanting to meet the man who could change his son's view of the world from being naive and skeptical into a critical thinker. It was unfortunate that he couldn't even see a glimpse of him.

"So we are just lambs waiting to be butchered?" Higgins came from the Estaria family, a powerful family that produced knight prodigies and had produced seven Swordmasters under their wings. "Both you and Lady Marina have seen how powerful the enemy is, so if you said it like that, we don't really stand a chance," he muttered as he rubbed his bottom lip with his thumb.

"We are basically waiting in line and hope it's not our turn next," Fern said of the Venmal family, a family that had become a trustworthy family by most nations due to their insight and abilities to maintain peace between nations. "We are extremely weak, nations are falling apart, and now the enemy is here among us..." He hummed as he rubbed his cheek, his eyes closed.

Agnesia sighed deeply as her elbows rested on the table, hands clasped together and pressed against her forehead. They were absolutely right and there was nothing she could do to prevent their fall.

"I have a few options..." Agnesia folded her arms on the table. "First, we can abandon our home, meaning we will abandon millions of lives. Second, we resist and fight them, meaning we will lead millions of lives to their death. Third, we submit to them, hoping they will spare us, meaning we will let millions of lives die to save ourselves. Or fourth, we ask for help, but that help will cause millions of lives as well..." She pointed at her four fingers.

The three figures sighed at the same time, but their focus was on the fourth option. Nicholas reached for his tea cup that had turned cold, the tea became bitter and a bit rough in his throat.

"Asking help you mean her? Your master?" Nicholas asked with a serious expression.

"Yes, Lady Sanya..." Agnesia nodded, thinking that this would cause chaos if the Orthias had decided to fight the enemy. "But let's assume that she won't answer our call, meaning we have to choose one of the three options that we have left," she pointed out.

The four of them thought about the future that awaited them, and all of them were grim.

At the same time, Sanya was standing still like a statue in the middle of the mist just like before. Rasmus looked at her and it was quite eerie to think that someone would just stand there, motionless, and nobody knew for how long she had been standing there. It was still fascinating for Rasmus to be able to move his consciousness out of his body and be connected to wherever Sanya was.

"You came to speak about them who have moved to the west continent?" Sanya asked, slowly turning around to look at Rasmus.

"You knew?" Rasmus furrowed his brows.

"It's obvious because the North has become completely peaceful. I can trace them, Rasmus," Sanya answered with a smile on her face. "However, you can tell me what I don't know," she raised her brows.

Rasmus told Sanya what she needed to know, about the deal he made with Satan, about Ermaine, and what would happen to the people in West Neva. He also pointed out that Agnesia was the only person who knew about the whole thing, and that she might have come to make contact with Sanya.

Similarly to Aris, Sanya didn't show any reaction and listened thoroughly. She had grasped about Satan's plan to misguide the people of West Neva, and what kind of war that she was trying to build.

"Unfortunately, we Orthias can't help them," Sanya answered with confidence, without even giving it a single thought. "If they chose to fight, then it's their fight. Nobody forced them to fight, and they could leave before the situation became worse," she explained.

"That might be their choice, at least some of them. But that's none of my concern, what I'm curious about is what you think about this," Rasmus said with a serious expression, his arms crossed and his weight shifted to his left leg.

"Nothing," Sanya answered without hesitation as soon as Rasmus asked the question. Her gaze was fixated on Rasmus', there was nothing in her eyes, just like the words she had said. "Those beings have taken a few of the Orthias, we won't give them a chance to take more of us just to protect the humans. The humans could leave or stay, and that has nothing to do with us," she explained.

Sanya began to walk around the mist with her arms crossed.

"You should know that half of this world is inhabitable, used to have civilizations on the other side. The world is too big even for those beings. You would be surprised what you humans haven't discovered yet," Sanya revealed as she stood behind Rasmus.

"Your point?" Rasmus turned around to look at Sanya.

"The scale isn't big enough for us as Orthias to make a move," Sanya answered with her brows raised. "Yes, we are strong enough to fight them, and so are you," she closed the distance between them. "But you didn't make a move either. After all, we all have our own grand plan, am I right?" She smiled, the smile that didn't reach her eyes.

Rasmus didn't respond because there was no need for him to do so since Sanya could read him. He looked at Sanya and there was a resemblance between her and Satan, both of them were hard to decipher.

"Then? What about you? You're abandoning the continent, and where's your next destination?" Sanya asked when she could locate Rasmus' body with her power that she had left inside his body.

"We are going to East Neva," Rasmus answered.

"East? Have you been to the east before?" Sanya asked, her expression showing curiosity out of the blue.

"Just for a moment, why?" Rasmus asked with his brows furrowed, knowing that Sanya's curiosity wasn't just a simple curiosity.

"You should be careful with them, they're like you," Sanya answered, her gaze stared at her hand when suddenly a light blue flame lit her hand.

"Like me?" Rasmus arched his brows.

"Half-breed..." Sanya chuckled and suddenly pressed her hand on Rasmus' forehead, sending his consciousness back to his body.

Chapter 557 - 557: Coming back.

Aris was with Serena, staring at the vast sea under the sunset on the deck, it was peaceful and they could no longer see West Neva continent anymore. Although they didn't care much about the lives that they had abandoned, they felt like it was such a waste to let it go. Aris then decided to leave the deck and went into the cabin, walking in the long hallway toward Rasmus' room.

"Hmm?" Aris furrowed her brows when she felt another energy behind the door that didn't belong to Rasmus.

Aris opened the door and saw Rasmus sitting on the chair, reading a book while Rullein was there on the bed, with only a blanket that covered her body. She looked at both of them, noticing the disheveled shirt that Rasmus wore and his messy hair.

"You have decided to come back out after all this time?" Aris asked as she walked in without asking Rasmus' permission.

Rullein rolled over to look at Aris, her eyes were half-lidded, her gaze was lazy. She then let out a soft groan as she stretched her body, revealing her bare skin. She slowly sat up and sat on the edge of the bed before she let the black smoke cover her body and turned it into a black see-through gown.

"Yeah, I have just regained my consciousness after what happened..." Rullein stood up and walked to the table where Rasmus had opened a bottle of whiskey. "I'm, powerless, Aris," she glanced at Aris as she took a sip of Rasmus' glass of whiskey. "I lost all my power..."

"I know, I can see it right now," Aris nodded, knowing it without having Rullein to tell her. "So, Aristoria erased all the powers you have gained because of the corruption?" She asked.

"Yes, I'm a lot weaker than the first time we met. I'm pretty much useless right now," Rullein answered as she sat at the table with Rasmus, staring at him with a gaze filled with regret, guilt, and something else.

"You're right about being useless, but that shouldn't be a problem with me around," Aris said as she walked toward the table and sat where Rasmus was on her left and Rullein was on her right. "I can manipulate the Mana from air, turning it into an energy that you can turn into Dark energy," she pointed out as she offered her right hand to Rullein.

Rasmus was still in his recovery process, and Aris had been feeding him Mana to satiate the power within him. Rullein knew about that already, and so she placed her hand on top of Aris'.

Aris took a deep breath and a surge of Mana began to gather around her, her hair turning light blue, almost translucent. When she opened her eyes, she saw nothing but strings and cloths of energy mixed and entangled around her. She grasped the bright color strings and cloths with her left hand, changing their colors until they looked like a stream of water, clear and reflective but not transparent. She then pulled the purified energies from her left hand toward her right hand where she held Rullein's energy that looked like solidified smoke.

Rullein's energy was invasive and aggressive that it didn't hesitate to turn the purified energy into her own because it was pure energy that could easily be digested. Aris watched at how fast and rapid Rullein's energy would absorb them all, and she had to keep an eye out because if she made a mistake, Rullein's energy would go out of control and would devour not only energies but also life forces.

Once Aris felt like her consciousness was fading, she let go of Rullein's hand and separated the strings and cloths that Rullein were absorbing. She released her power and let herself rest or else she would undergo ascension as soon as she lost consciousness. On the other hand, Rullein felt a surge of power running through her veins. Even though it wasn't as much as what she had gathered in the past year, she had regained at least ten percent of what she had lost.

"I can only do this once in three days..." Aris said under her breath, trying to stabilize her own energy. "Right now, my priority is Rasmus because his condition is more crucial than yours," she looked at Rasmus, who had been doing nothing but reading.

"That's fine by me, thank you, Aris..." Rullein said, her voice surprisingly soft and gentle.

"You're oddly being docile right now, and that makes you look weird," Aris reached into Rasmus' glass to have a sip of his whiskey.

"Weird? Fancy coming from you who have a conflicting feeling," Rullein snatched the glass from Aris' hand. "We both are disappointment, so don't even think that you're better than me," she said and emptied the glass in a single gulp.

Aris furrowed her brows and stared at Rullein weirdly, she didn't know what Rullein meant by conflicting feeling. However, she knew and was aware that she had disappointed Rasmus a few times ever since they arrived in West Neva. However, to be called out like that, it made her feel a sting in her chest.

"Now that I think about it, it's better that you keep acting docile..." Aris said as she grabbed the bottle instead and drank directly from it.

"Shut up and mind your own business," Rullein narrowed her eyes, her gaze cold toward Aris.

Rasmus sighed deeply, and both Aris and Rullein immediately looked at him. They both then became quiet, forgetting that they were in Rasmus' space where he usually wanted nothing but solitude.

"Have Erlina or Carrion visited you, Rasmus?" Aris asked and cleared her throat as she put down the bottle.

"They both came earlier this morning," Rasmus nodded. "They want to go back to South Neva, and since they want to go there, we are going there instead of Central Neva," he added.

"Oh? Erlina did tell me that she wanted to go back to South Neva, but I didn't ask what for," Aris looked at Rasmus with her brows raised. "Is there a particular reason why they want to go back there?" She asked.

"Yes, they're getting married, and I think they want to settle down and just focus on what they have now," Rasmus nodded and closed the book. "It has been a while since I meet with the others too, so it's nice to meet with them even for a moment. We can also warn the South Neva Union about what happened to West Neva," he added.

Aris was surprised to hear that those two were getting married, a human tradition to tie two individuals together, something that she had never seen. She somehow felt happy for Erlina and also a sense of

relief that Erlina had decided to stay away from Rasmus because things were about to get worse from here. For her, this whole situation was normal to her, but for humans with limited lifespans, she wanted Erlina to have a good life, a life away from what she was in right now.

"But, we are talking about South Neva right now. Aren't the cultists there as well? You're not worried that they would approach you and the angels would do something to you?" Aris asked with a serious expression. "We could bargain and made a deal with Satan, but based on what you told us about angels, I don't think they're as flexible as her," she pointed out.

Rasmus knew that already and he had been thinking about that as well. In Aris' and Serena's eyes, Rasmus had walked out of the fire alive, barely had any scratch on him, and yet he was walking toward another flame, but this time the flame was bigger and more dangerous. Aris didn't believe in luck, and she was worried that this time, he would end up in a place he shouldn't visit.

"I know, and I'm not planning to make a scene either. I'll let Erlina and Carrion be our eyes in the future, to observe the cult's movements," Rasmus answered.

"You want to put Erlina in danger like that?" Aris furrowed her brows.

"I didn't tell her to, she volunteered," Rasmus looked at Aris as he shook his head. "She wanted to help us, and in exchange, she wanted me to repay her with a few connections from Eastern continent, especially the Asghar family."

"Why am I not surprised. She's too ambitious for a human," Aris crossed her arms, remembering how ambitious Erlina was. "Then, what about Videl? Are you not worried about his whereabouts? You're not afraid that something would happen to you and about the bet?" She asked, and her expression became more serious.

"How big is this world, Aris?" Rasmus asked with his brows raised, remembering what Sanya had told him earlier.

"Too big to explore, and looking for him is like what you call a proverb of looking for a needle in a haystack. But it's not impossible if we can track his energy," Aris answered.

"The world might have turned into chaos before we can even find him. It's better to not spend our time looking for him," Rasmus said and looked out at the window where the night had taken over the sky. "Let's not think about that for now," he muttered.

Chapter 558 - 558: Men in power.

"We will arrive by midnight Thanks to the Great Spirit Yur who has been manipulating the sea current and the wind current for us," Arka informed Rasmus when Rasmus came to his cabin.

Rasmus hummed as he looked around at the displayed weapons and a set of armor in the room. He remembered that Arka was trained to befit his title as a naval commander, but he never knew how strong he was because Arka hadn't been in combat before. He knew that being a Commander required them to be on par with Swordmasters.

"I heard from Doctor Daryus about what actually happened there. You abandoned them," Arka looked at Rasmus as he took a seat at his desk. "I'm not trying to judge you, Count. I understand the reason behind your decision. But I'm curious if they would be alright? North and Central Neva have lost their power, South Neva is currently being rebuilt. West Neva supposedly became one of the remaining pillars of humankind, but now it's in the enemy's grasp," he explained with a serious expression.

Rasmus pulled out the chair and sat on it, sitting across from Arka.

"They should be fine if they don't show any resistance. They might join the enemy side from behind deceived or will be forced to submit. They know they have no chance to win against them, and the demons know that too," Rasmus nodded. "I'm more curious as to why the navy hasn't made a single contribution in this whole situation when you possess such power to help," he raised his brows and looked at Arka.

Arka couldn't deny Rasmus' accusation because he knew it as well that the navy was also a pillar of humankind.

"We are too spread, Count. The chain command takes weeks, and if we moved without order or permission, it would be called a rebellion or treason. The world is too big for one institution. We are lucky that there's no rebellion or treason in this, but I can't say it doesn't have any corruption," Arka

answered, there was a bit of shame in his voice. "Before we can move, either the situation has been resolved or it's too late," he pointed out.

"Believing the world would stay peaceful forever has turned this whole fleet paralyzed when chaos arose all over the world. The institution no longer works, and it needs to be reformed or broken into smaller ones," Rasmus looked at the small wooden horse on Arka's desk.

Arka knew whenever Rasmus spoke, it always had a hidden meaning.

"You want me and my fleet to separate ourselves from the institution? You want me to do an act of treason?" Arka narrowed his eyes. "I can be easily replaced, even the ships that I have can be easily destroyed if the Fleet Admiral has decided to sink them all," he warned.

"Treason? Do you think I always do things unlawful? We can request it, officially," Rasmus stared into Arka's eyes with a sharp gaze.

Arka thought for a moment and remembered that Rasmus planned to visit East Neva, which was where the headquarters of the navy was located. However, he knew enough about Fleet Admiral Gustav that Gustav wouldn't let anyone, not even a powerful family to touch his fleet, especially endangering what he swore to protect.

Arka's vice commander suddenly knocked on the door and walked in without asking permission.

"There's a ship coming toward us, and the ship is heavily damaged," the vice commander explained with a serious expression. "But the problem is the person in that ship, Commander," he pointed out.

"Who?" Arka furrowed his brows.

"It would be better for you to look at it yourself," the vice commander answered as he walked out of the room.

Rasmus and Arka went to the deck and saw a ship that had so many holes and even a broken mast. Arka used his telescope and saw the person standing on the deck, it was Anastasha and her bodyguards.

Rasmus was mildly surprised to see the ship in that condition, and it seemed that it had been ambushed by someone because he could see blood on the deck.

"Princess Anastasha Asghar..." Arka muttered with his brows furrowed. "Let them aboard the ship," he commanded.

The battleship closed in the distance and anchored next to Anastasha's ship. The soldiers watched as Anastasha boarded the battleship with no scratch or even a single stain on her attire. She looked calm and didn't even show any sign of fear or anxiety, she even stretched her arms like she had just woken up from sleep. When she saw Rasmus, her eyes widened and showed a glimmer of joy as she approached him.

"What a coincidence to see you here, Count. Looks like my journey will be smooth with you around," Anastasha stood in front of Rasmus with a smirk on her face, however, she noticed a big difference in his appearance. "Look at you, every time I see you, you look different like you're a different person," she stared at Rasmus' heterochromatic eyes. "Looks like the west treated you so badly," she chuckled mischievously.

"Let me guess, one of your brothers did this to you?" Rasmus glanced at Anastasha's ship.

"One? All of them were trying to assassinate me, Count. They have joined hand to get rid their biggest threat, how touching is that?" Anastasha turned around to look at her ship. "Well, they managed to assassinated most of my men, leaving only these handful loyal servants of mine," she looked at Andrei with injuries and blood all over his body, the man that had been accompanying her since forever.

"Well, enough about me, Count..." Anastasha tapped her folded fan on Rasmus' chest. "Tell me about yours. I have heard lots of bad news from West Neva, and for whatever reason that a dragon suddenly appeared and then disappeared without a trace," she stared into Rasmus' eyes with her dark green eyes. "I would love to rest and have some privacy with Count Blackheart if that possible?" She turned to look at Arka as she unfolded her fan, hiding her smile.

"You can use my office, Princess Asghar. We will treat your men as well," Arka nodded with understanding and gestured to Anastasha to follow him.

"How kind of you, Commander," Anastasha chuckled and followed Arka from behind.

Rasmus and Anastasha were alone in the room after Arka left them alone. That was when Anastasha clenched her fist, breaking her folded fan, the fan that was worth more than a single mansion that took Rasmus' attention. He looked at the cold and pissed expression that he never thought he would see from someone like her. However, he didn't say a word and just stared at her without any sign of judgment.

"He has gone too far," Anastasha said under her breath as she put down her folding fan.

"He?" Rasmus asked with his brows raised.

"The old man, my father," Anastasha answered as she crossed her arms, her gaze focused on the spot on the wall. "He was a part of this whole thing. I know the moment I saw one of the assassins that belonged to my father's, an assassin without a tongue and the carving on the crown of his tooth," she pointed out, and she showed a sign of anxiety in her eyes.

"How do you know he was your father's assassin? Your brothers could easily fabricated that. But you should have thought about that, so I'm curious at how confident you are about this," Rasmus asked with his brows raised.

Anastasha took a deep breath and exhaled deeply, trying to calm her mind. Her lower back leaned against the edge of the desk while her hands rested on it.

"Because my brothers don't know about that. My brothers and the whole East Neva don't know about that, and that's how easily for my father to detect if there's a spy among his assassins," Anastasha crossed her arms. "And how do I know? Because my mother told me about it. You can say that I'm the only child that my mother accepts as her own child," she revealed and glanced at Rasmus, showing nothing but the truth.

Rasmus nodded slowly, trying to understand the reason behind Anastasha's father that have decided to kill his own daughter. However, when Anastasha revealed that she was the only child that her mother acknowledged, that was a good hint behind her father's act.

"Do you find out the reason behind this?" Rasmus asked, trying to get the answer from Anastasha instead of thinking about it. After all, Anastasha had decided to reveal the truth and chose to trust him.

"Because I planned to break the tradition," Anastasha looked down, her words coming out under her breath. "The Asghar family tradition is that only one child should survive and take the seat. It has been going on from generation to generation, and I'm planning to break that tradition. He has decided that I'm a threat to the family," she turned her head to look at Rasmus.

"I see, looks like I'm going to have to deal with that as well," Rasmus leaned back, making himself comfortable in his chair.

"You?" Anastasha was so confused that she almost forgot about anything else at that moment.

"Yes, because I'm planning to go to East Neva soon," Rasmus nodded and looked at Anastasha. "I abandoned West Neva, that place is beyond saving," he revealed.

Anastasha's brows slowly raised before she furrowed them and stood straight with her arms rested on her waist. She knew about the continuous catastrophes that had happened in West Neva, but she didn't know that Rasmus had decided to give up on it.

"Tell me what happened," Anastasha said with a serious expression as she pulled a chair and sat in front of Rasmus. "Every single detail..."

Chapter 559 - 559: On a bigger scale.

The battleship docked on the marine base in South Neva where five carriages had been prepared for Rasmus and the others. Their destination was the headquarters of the South Neva Union since it would be the safest place for them to stay. Rasmus didn't want his arrival to be noticed by the cultists, especially the angels that had been summoned.

Javi and the Blackhands immediately went to gather information related to the cult and the angels. However, Rasmus warned them about the cult because he knew that the Zevrathi would see him and his people as a threat. He knew that the cult had regained its power that made him capable of challenging him directly if they wanted to.

The journey only lasted for two hours since the marine base was not too far from headquarters. Based on what Arka had informed, the South Neva continent was still surviving from the war. There were too many unoccupied lands and currently the surviving nations wanted those lands and had caused a headache for the South Neva Union.

When they arrived, they were surprised to see the Magic Tower blimp floating right above the headquarters. Since their arrival wasn't announced, Rasmus and Anastasha's arrival caused quite a scene because when those two came walking side by side, there was only bad news for everyone.

Inside the parlor, Thalior was having a private conversation with Lenin when they heard about Rasmus looking for Thalior. The room that was already tense and heavy, it became gloomy all of a sudden.

"Count Blackheart, Princess Asghar. I wasn't expecting you two to be here in South Neva," Thalior said as soon as Rasmus and Anastasha entered the room.

"Hmm, neither of us," Anastasha answered as she looked at Lenin, whose hair had turned gray since she didn't need to dye them black anymore.

"Neither of you? That doesn't sound good to hear," Lenin said as she stood up and gestured to Anastasha to sit on the couch with her. "But I suppose we have heard, or should we say that we saw something terrifying not too long ago. The world is still trembling in fear by the sighting of a dragon," she added and watched Anastasha sit on the couch before she sat down beside her, giving a big gap between them.

The room went silent when Rasmus sat beside Thalior because they noticed changes in his eyes and his hair. They all had the same thought as Anastasha about Rasmus that he looked different every time they met him again after a long time. However, what Lenin saw from Rasmus made her anxious because she couldn't identify the Mana around him.

"West Neva is gone, Satan and her force have taken the whole continent by using Ermaine as their savior," Rasmus revealed with a serious expression and uncertainty in his eyes.

Lenin could be said to be the one who understood Rasmus more than anyone in this world. She had never seen any uncertainty in his eyes, and that made her realize that what had happened in West Neva, Rasmus was powerless.

"Would you enlighten us about what happened over there?" Lenin asked, her back straightened and her hands clenched on her knees.

After Rasmus told his story and what had happened in West Neva, both Thalior and Lenin were shocked. They didn't know such corruption was the reason behind the existence of Demonic Beasts. The same energy that turned millions of lives into demons and countless casualties from it. They realized if that happened in South Neva and Centriwa, the damage would be similar even with religious figures on their side.

"Ermaine, if only we were strong enough back then, all this wouldn't happen. We would have killed those demons, Ermaine, and even Satan," Thalior muttered to himself as he sighed.

"No, I don't think that we could defeat them even if we were in our primes. The land behind the Blackcliffs was inhabitable, Mana has been corrupted there, and we are creatures that require Mana to live," Lenin shook her head as she crossed her legs. "But that's not something we should be thinking about. We should think of what would happen if West Neva decided to invade us. They believe they are superior to us, that they're the pure human breed that are blessed by Orthias. War might break at any time," she hummed as she rubbed her chin.

Rasmus already thought about that as well, but he wasn't worried because after all, it was none of his business.

"What about the cult, Lord Thalior? You must have heard a rumor or two about them," Rasmus asked, trying to get the information he needed.

"The cult..." Thalior crossed his arms, his eyes focused on the table in front of him. "Yes, I have heard a few rumors about them. The numbers of missing people have increased exponentially in the past months. The sacrifice, they really did sacrifice people to call their so-called Lord," he answered with a grim expression all over his face.

Everyone had agreed to allow the cult to take people's lives for their rituals because Aurelia's life was worth more than anything. However, there was one problem with this agreement, and that was the fact that the cult might betray the agreement and would take Aurelia's life once they held enough power.

"The cult's enemy isn't you, their current enemy has shifted to Satan and her force. Satan won't let the cult regain their full power when the answer lies in Aurelia's existence while on the other hand, the cult won't let Satan and her army grow stronger either. As long as you don't get involved with any of them, you'll be safe," Rasmus assured, and this time around he showed nothing but confidence.

"What makes you so sure about that, Count Blackheart?" Lenin asked.

"Because the angels won't harm humans while at the same time I made a deal with Satan. For my own sake but at the same time it will put all of you in a better situation as well," Rasmus answered without hesitation and without hiding a single detail. "I just let the cult enter this board we are in while at the same time I have made the board interesting for Satan," he revealed.

Lenin sighed with her eyes closed, speechless by how Rasmus could easily decide the fate of the world like a board game. She was surprised that Rasmus could pull this stunt while at the same time not surprised that he would do something like this.

"So we will be just watching from the sides? But the casualty will be us humans," Thalior looked at Rasmus.

"You should know that you did the same thing to your people. But this one's scale is just a lot larger, that's the only difference," Rasmus answered nonchalantly. "When the options' difference is just the scale of causality, the choice becomes obvious."

Anastasha just casually sat there without saying a word, enjoying the scene quietly. She also had zero desire to uphold morality, especially to human life except her own family. Hypocrisy and contradiction had always been the problems that appeared when ideals and beliefs didn't fit in the reality that appeared.

"Are we in danger, Count? You said that this would put us in a better situation, but how better is it?" Lenin asked with a serious expression, wanting to understand his view and would think of a precaution to his claim.

"If you can turn a blind eye, you're safe," Rasmus answered without thinking twice.

Lenin and Thalior looked at each other, having the same look in their faces. They had become sheep in the board ever since Rasmus' existence grew dangerously significant. Not only did they not have the power to even matter in this war, their existence had become fodder for those factions.

"For how long?" Thalior asked with a cold gaze, his expression already showing restraint.

"I wouldn't know. The choice is yours, as well as the consequences," Rasmus shook his head. "But if I have to choose for myself, that's when both sides have decided to use Centriva as their leverage," he pointed out and looked at both of them.

Lenin and Thalior nodded with understanding, and they couldn't agree more because at the moment, Centriva would become the last bastion of humankind.

"And what about you, Princess Asghar? You were in Centrical the last time I saw you a few weeks ago," Lenin turned her head to look at Anastasha.

"Me? I'm just looking for a hideout, and this place appears to be the best one to hide in. Well, at least until Rasmus decides to continue his journey to East Neva, I will follow him and I will be his responsibility by then," Anastasha answered with an empty smile.

Lenin and Thalior were surprised to hear that Rasmus was going to East Neva. East Neva had so much conflict and bloodbath that Rasmus' presence was only like one extra noise.

"And the purpose of your visit there, Count? I'm assuming you want to make the Eastern continent be under your influence, but that would take forever," Lenin narrowed her eyes with curiosity.

"I know, but that's not an issue if I have the Princess on my side. After all, her family holds dozens of leashes that wrap around nations," Rasmus answered and stared at Anastasha. "I'll give her what she need, and she will help me get what I need," he added.

"That's right, a mutually beneficial relationship, just like any other nobles and nations, but in a bigger scale as what Rasmus said earlier," Anastasha smiled mischievously as she stared back at Rasmus.

Chapter 560 - 560: Belonging.

The sound of strings in harmony that turned notes into melodies filled the cathedral. The big place was only filled with less than twenty people, but it was what Carrion and Erlina wanted.

Carrion stood in front of the altar, his fingers couldn't stop tapping his thigh. He never thought he would stand there, to experience what people call being someone's other half. He glanced at Rasmus and Daryus, who were standing to his left and faced toward the guests.

"Fuck... this is... too much..." Carrion muttered as he took a deep breath.

"More than what you have witnessed and experienced so far?" Rasmus glanced at Carrion.

"Obviously... well, not really..." Carrion's voice was quiet, too quiet. "I don't think I deserve this, I don't think I don't deserve her," he looked at Rasmus with fear and anxiety.

"You don't," Rasmus responded without hesitation.

"Why did I say that in front of you. Of course you would say something like that..." Carrion muttered to himself, and then took a deep breath as he placed his hand on his chest. "But seriously, why?" He glanced at Rasmus.

"Because you're not worth more than she is. Logically and realistically, you're not worth her sacrifice," Rasmus answered with a straight face. "But love doesn't care about logic. In the end, it doesn't matter if you deserve her or not because it's not you to decide, she is," he tilted his head up slightly toward the door.

The moment the song changed and the sound of the door opening, Carrion's heart skipped a beat. He glanced at Rasmus, but he saw no reaction, he then glanced at Daryus, but he also tried to hide his expression.

"She chose you even with all the flaws you have, and that's all you have to remember," Rasmus said calmly and put a soft smile on Erlina who was walking toward the altar with Aris and Serena behind her.

"Right... right... I should be grateful..." Carrion nodded with understanding.

"No, that's not the point. It's not being grateful for being chosen, it's the understanding that she chose you, that's it, don't over think about it," Rasmus shook his head and looked at Carrion.

Carrion scoffed and finally a smile appeared on his face. He glanced at Rasmus and nodded with understanding, knowing that Rasmus would always have a way to make things clear.

"Thank you," Carrion muttered as he looked down at his feet.

When Erlina stood beside Carrion, her face was covered by the veil. Carrion turned to look at her, at the wedding dress she wore, the flawless skin of her exposed shoulders and the diamond necklace that perfectly rested above her collarbones. He could see her red lips and the smile that were hidden underneath the veil.

"You look beautiful in those..." Carrion whispered with a shy smile on his face.

"I know," Erlina whispered back and the smugness on her face was visible underneath the veil. "Is that why you're in love with me? Because of my look?" She teased.

"No... I mean, yes, but not the main reason," Carrion answered as he laughed nervously.

"I know, and I don't love you for your looks either," Erlina chuckled softly.

"What? That makes it sound like my look means nothing to you," Carrion raised his brows, mildly surprised by Erlina's answer.

"No comment," Erlina smirked but her hand reached Carrion's and held it gently before she intertwined her fingers with his and held it tightly. "But it doesn't really matter now. I'm yours and you're mine," she looked at Carrion and smiled gently beneath the veil.

"Yeah..." Carrion nodded and finally a genuine smile of happiness appeared on his face.

Usually marriage required a high-ranking priest from the Angelis church, but since the Angelis family no longer existed and no longer became a family of Saint, marriage didn't require a priest anymore. The one person that decided to be the official was Lenin, leading the wedding and becoming the witness of it.

Serena could do it, but she didn't want to because she wasn't a Saint, she was Lilith, a damned soul. She didn't want to taint a marriage that was supposed to be sacred and pure.

The wedding only lasted for an hour, and they wanted to go to Eddenvilla for their honeymoon. The place that held so many memories for both of them, the good, the bad, and the ugly ones.

When Erlina looked at the carriage in front of her, she turned around and searched through the small crowd. She was looking for Rasmus, and then she saw him, in the far back with Anastasha. She approached them without thinking for a second.

"I'll go back to my room. Come if you want to have a talk," Anastasha said with a smile on her face before she walked away. She knew that Erlina wanted to have some time alone with Rasmus, and that was why she decided to leave.

Erlina was breathing quiet heavily when she stood in front of Rasmus, having to arch her neck back to look into his eyes. A smile slowly formed on her lips before she reached for Rasmus' wrists and held them quite firmly. A shed of tears lingered in her eyes, pursing her lips before she chuckled in disbelief. She then slowly spread her arms open, asking for permission to hug him.

Rasmus bent down and Erlina immediately wrapped her arms around his neck. Her shuddering breaths and hiccups that came out because she was holding down her tears and emotions.

"You changed my life..." Erlina muttered as she sniffled, her hands gripped on the back of his hair. "But there's something that I want you to know, something that I have been kept to myself, about you," she whispered.

"I'm listening," Rasmus gently placed his right arm and wrapped around her waist.

"You have been walking on this path since the first time we met. I could see it in your eyes, the discipline in your eyes, in your expression. You always know what to say, but never what you want to say. You chose to look at reality and never question it. You chose to see things clearly even it means drowning yourself deeper into the abyss both willingly and unwillingly," Erlina's voice trembled as she pulled away to look into Rasmus' eyes back and forth. "I'm the one who's leaving, but why is it that you're the one that's slowly drifting away? I can feel your loneliness and it's painful to watch," she revealed and slowly cupped Rasmus' cheeks.

Rasmus didn't say a word and stood there like a statue while he stared back into Erlina's eyes.

"I could go on and on, and I knew you would listen, but I can't..." Erlina chuckled weakly as she shook her head, her hands still on Rasmus' cheeks. "I can't because if I told you everything, it felt like a goodbye... it felt like I had to let you go and watch you disappear," she muttered as a single tear fell to her chin while she forced a smile.

Rasmus softly smiled at Erlina and his gaze was gentle, almost looked like gratitude for seeing him that way. However, he didn't want to admit or deny her accusation, or any of her perspective about him.

"There are less than a handful of people that I know that looked at me that way. Thank you," Rasmus said as his smile grew softer and more gentle. "But there's one thing that you're partially incorrect about, and I won't tell you what that is. However, I'll always be the same, and the moment you see me that I'm changing it was because you're the one who have grown," he pointed out.

Erlina chuckled as she shook her head in disbelief, and then a smile appeared, a genuine smile of both relief and regret. More tears fell to her chin, and then she took a deep breath with her eyes closed, trying to calm her emotion down.

"Alright then, but are you really not going to wipe these tears off of my face?" Erlina asked with her reddened eyes and raspy voice.

"That would be disrespectful when you have finally become someone else's wife," Rasmus answered.

"Oh, such a gentleman you are, my patron, my friend," Erlina smirked and scoffed before she leaned in and kissed his cheek, too close to almost touch his lips. "I might as well make my husband a bit jealous

for one last time," she bit her lip and slowly pulled her hands away from Rasmus' cheek and then rested them on his chest. "Take care, Rasmus," she slowly pulled away and then took a few steps away from him before she walked away to the carriage where Carrion was waiting for her.

The moment Carrion and Erlina got into the carriage, they looked at Rasmus, Aris, Rullein, Serena, Yur, Aider, and Daryus, the people she always shared her moments with without judgment. She waved at them and blew them a kiss before the carriage moved and finally reminded them that they had their own path to thread, a future to build.