

Guardian gods 201

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Using the small opportunity, Wardenwild distanced himself. Just the small exchange already showed the difference in their levels.

Spirits aren't known for their offensive abilities which Wardenwild isn't that much surprised about. Thinking that the ash-like smoke around Wardenwild spread out which through it came out the best corpses Wardenwild has in his disposal.

Wardenwild preserves some special corpses for himself, which are off limits to those he sells, These corpses are mostly powerhouses of the human race that have met their end with no family to return to.

With his ash like smoke, he preserves and strengthens these corpses so they can protect him when in danger. Right now his best corpses are those of Björn's people recently found in the battlefield.

Dozens of ashy-like humans with animal features walked out as they all took their werebeast form.

One of the lions werebeast rushed forward towards Murmur with a roar, as soon as the beast got close it was immediately grabbed by neck and lifted up by murmur.

But soon a flash of surprise flashed on Murmur's eyes as the werebeast turned into an easy smoke that wafted away from his grip at the same time Wardenwild appeared in the place of the werebeast with ashy smoke covering his palm as he reached forwards to Murmur.

Murmur looked disturbed as he felt the divinity in the palm so with a poof, he disappeared only to appear above Wardenwild as he twirled and sent a kick towards Wardenwild head.

Chains of ashy smoke grabbed hold of the leg before they could reach Wardenwild as he used the opportunity to distance himself.

The chains pulled Murmur back to the ground only for him to flex his power breaking the chains at the same time breaking apart the corpses Wardenwild called forth.

Murmur looked towards Wardenwild only for him to frown as he saw the corpse being pulled back together as they rushed towards him.

For a while, Murmur was stuck in a lasting fight with the undead corpses as they are rebuilt each time they are killed, what Murmur found annoying was how slippery Wardewild was as he keeps switching places with the corpse once he sees an opportunity to try to get in contact with him.

Murmur, while not taking the fight seriously, understood he didn't want to be touched by Wardenwild especially with the divinity he felt wafting off the hand.

Having had enough, Murmur said "Enough" with that the same big hand appeared once again pinning down the unsuspecting Wardewild.

Wardenwild, like usual, tried to switch places only to find that hand had a field around it disrupting his ability. With a roar from Wardenwild, the corpses left Murmur as they began heading for the hand pinning him down.

With a scoff from Murmur, another hand appeared grabbing hold of the corpses in its huge hand, with a slight squeeze of the hand, all the corpse turned into ashy smoke.

The ashy smoke tried to rebuild whole individual corpses but this time they could as the smoke kept tumbling around in the huge demonic hand.

Wardenwild saw that closed his eyes as the huge smoke began condensing into an amalgamation of corpses in the demon's hand. Murmur, seeing that laughed "That would have worked if you were a bit stronger but right now" As he said that, the same purple flames on his head blossomed on the huge hand as amalgamation of corpses began roaring out loud in pain.

Wardewild who had his eyes closed opened them with a look of pain on his face. Murmur walked towards the pinned down envoy of death.

The huge pinched Wardenwild's head raising him up as he looked at Murmur who smiled and said "Time for me to fulfill my promise"

Not giving Wardenwild an opportunity to say anything, he began raining down punches on Wardenwild's body who began bleeding dark glistening ichor from all over his body.

Keles in her realm was fuming as she was watching the demon disgrace her envoy but she soon calmed down as she heard Wardenwild's voice in her head, which prompted her to nod.

Murmur who was taking out his anger on Wardenwild suddenly stopped and with a poof he disappeared from where he was only to appear at the edge of the town as he looked at where Wardenwild was being held.

Suddenly he fell to the ground, holding one of his hands as he began roaring out in pain. A look at his hand showed the fleshed being eating away soon only the bone on his hand was left and he also felt the bone being affected by the same power.

With a Mental command, he called back the huge hand holding Wardenwild captive. All of a sudden Murmur noticed a shadow standing over him.

He looked up to meet Wardenwild's eyes which now looked different, Murmur knew he was now looking at the goddess of death.

Chuckling to himself while holding his hand, Murmur said "It seems like my anger blinded me this time"

He received no response only for a female like voice to say back to him, "Wardenwild said as a spirit he is limited to certain action and since I am using his body that same rule applies, but I can still do this"

Keles said as she flicked her hand towards Murmur, who had a look of fear on his face. With that, Wardenwild regained control of his body, all healed up.

Looking at Murmur, he shook his head as he turned back into his animal form and began walking around the town, calling the dead souls to himself and pulling the souls tethered to the marked humans. The ground cracked open to reveal a dark abyss into which Wardenwild walked, the souls following behind him.

Meanwhile, Murmur writhed on the ground in pain as the remaining flesh on his body was slowly but surely eaten away by Keles's divinity. Unlike before, Keles made sure the process was excruciatingly slow so that Murmur felt every moment of agony.

By the time the sun was down, Murmur was nothing but a skeleton. With his flaming eyeballs, he lay on the ground looking up at the night sky. Standing up, the clothes he had on disintegrated to dust. Looking down at his skeletal form, Murmur had no visible reaction as he raised his head to look at the town.

Sensing a few hundreds of sick humans still alive, a dark portal opened behind him. He blew at the town, then turned around and walked back into the portal.

Up in the sky above the town, a huge dark mouth covered in sharp teeth appeared. Mimicking Murmur's gesture, a torrent of flames spewed from the mouth, washing over the town before disappearing. The sounds of pain and cries for help could be heard from the burning town, but no one was close enough to help. Even if they were, they dared not, as their emperor had commanded them to stay away from the town.

Red, who was watching everything with Ikenga, pointed at the screen and said, "This is exactly why we dragons have chosen to stay off the scene in this world and avoid dealings with origin gods."

Ikenga raised a brow at his words and asked, "Why do you say that? You make us gods sound unbearable."

Red scoffed, "Unbearable is an understatement. You don't have as much knowledge as I do to understand how unreasonable it is for a possessed envoy to have the strength shown by Wardenwild after she took control."

Ikenga's expression showed he still didn't understand what Red was saying, which made Red even more excited. He pointed at Ikenga, "Your seeing that as a normal sight is exactly what I mean. In any other world, Murmur at his current stage is already a being with power close to the gods."

"His handling of Wardenwild, the spirit, is not surprising, as spirits aren't known for combat. My problem is that there should not be that much difference after the Lady of Death took over, especially when it was just a small part of her that was pulled over."

"Murmur should at least be able to see eye to eye with that small part of her, but instead we were left with the sight of him being handled like an ant," Red said with a sunken shoulder as he shook his head.

"Is our world special in this case, or is it something that is normal in worlds with origin gods?" Ikenga suddenly asked.

Red shook his head, "It is exactly so. In most worlds with origin gods who have established their power, origin gods are rarely pulled down once they have an advantage."

Thinking back on Murmur last appearance, Red said "At least this should be a waking call for the demon"

Knowing what Ikenga will ask next, Red continued "Unlike its other consciousness, the main consciousness seem to still have the illusion of it's previous strength and status"

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Red continued "His other consciousness, while they may have been part of him at one point, they never really held the amount of power Murmur has so after the separation and memory they have about origin gods"

"They learnt to fear them and act in ways that doesn't invite their wrath, Murmur is the opposite as he has been at the top before where Origin gods mean nothing to him so even with him knowing that he no longer is at his best, he still slips up and act out of character" Red said as he shook his head.

Ikenga nodded remembering Murmur's actions on disgracing Wardenwild. Someone with his knowledge should know that will make Keles angry and he seems to have forgotten Wardenwild status as an envoy.

Ikenga looking at the burning town said "I agree with you, this should be a wake up call for him. I am excited to see what he plans on doing next"

Down on the western continent where a kingdom known as Humanity lays. This kingdom, unlike most other kingdoms, doesn't have large statues of gods to show which god they believe in.

It is a known practice in this kingdom that humans can do without the gods and their interference, of course this is not to say that worship of gods in the kingdom so it's normal for some homes to have a small statue of the god they believe in.

The leader of this kingdom is Erik, who's full identity is still a mystery to his people but that nonetheless still doesn't diminish their admiration of him, they even went as far as worshipping him for his beauty and strength he has shown.

For the humans in this kingdom, a lesson has been taught by them from the previous generation which states how Erik was the source of their civilization and its prosperity.

Even when the winged one abandoned them, it was Erik who made sure they didn't fall to despair and paved a path for their human race, he taught them ways to protect themselves and get stronger, he taught them to farm and make new clothes.

Erik, now in his castle, looked at a letter in his hand. His face, still as beautiful and unaffected by time even after all these years, reflected his eternal youth. Many of the humans who had accompanied him had succumbed to the curse of old age. Erik, who had transitioned into a whole elf over the years, now enjoyed the gift of longevity that came with his race.

While everything in the kingdom looked like it was going well, Erik is under pressure by the demon Silas who brought down his home world at the same time he was also being pressured by another well known kingdom.

Erik has his doubts about this human kingdom, even with the teaching from the dragons, there was a limit to what humans could do with the small knowledge they have.

The human kingdom troubling Erik is the opposite, their development shows that it is being guided and led with someone with extensive knowledge, at the same time Erik suspects that the Harpies people play a behind the scene role in the kingdom.

As a nation that prides itself to be the best human kingdom, Erik shouldn't have any problem seeing another human kingdom progress, sadly he can't do that even if he wants to as the human kingdom is the opposite of everything his kingdom stands for.

His people function under the prospect of human power, while the other kingdom functions under the prospect of being led by the divine power of the gods.

The main worship of this other kingdom is Crepuscular the sun god which further confirms Erik suspicion of the Harpies hand in the human kingdom.

This opposite view is the cause of conflict between both, as the rival kingdom tries to make his people believe and fall under the grace of the gods, while on the other hand his people are preaching to the rival kingdom about their potential as humans.

None of this matters to Erik as he knows what he is "An elf" He took on the position as the human leader as it was a way for him to exact revenge on the demon that attacked his home.

He till now after living among the humans have never really cared much for them, but because they are necessary for his plan he sticks through the human debauchery, which is exactly why he has to play the role of the human savior, it matters not to him if the human worshiped their god or not.

The letter in his hand is from a scout stationed near Silas territory, In the letter it states that there has been an unusual movement from Silas and his people are moving like they were preparing for war.

Standing up from his seat and walking towards a window, Erik felt the throbbing on his ring finger from the tattoo. With a mental command, his spear appeared in his hand throbbing, Erik ran his hand across the spear as he whispered to it "Calm down, soon we can taste the demon's blood and exact our revenge"

Looking at the blue sky out of the window, Erik saw a bird flapping its wings dancing around in the sky. The sight triggered a memory as he remembered the departing figure of the flaming angel.

"Even with all I have accomplished, you never bothered to pay a visit so I can at least show off my accomplishment to you. I am curious to see your expression when you learn that the person in front of you was the lowly being you couldn't bother to extend a hand to" Erik said while looking up to the sky.

Even after Erik became a full Elf, for some reason the memory of Ursula Flying away was stuck deep in the core of his very being. His obsession led to him later finding out Ursula's name and her status among the people of Harpies.

Erik turned away from the window and walked back to his desk. The throbbing tattoo on his ring finger served as a constant reminder of his oath for vengeance. His spear, now resting against the wall, seemed to pulse with a life of its own, eager for the blood of their enemies.

"Prepare the council," Erik commanded a nearby attendant. "We must discuss the latest intelligence."

As the attendant hurried away, Erik allowed himself a brief moment of introspection. The image of the flaming angel, Ursula, lingered in his mind. Her abandonment had been a catalyst for his transformation and his resolve. He had to know: would she recognize him now, after all he had become?

When the council assembled, Erik shared the contents of the letter. "We have reasons to believe that Silas is mobilizing his troops. We must be ready for whatever comes," he announced. "Our scouts will need to double their vigilance. I want no surprise attacks, every movement by Silas has to be relayed back to the capital with quickness."

The council members nodded, their faces a mix of concern and determination. Erik's leadership had seen them through many challenges, and they trusted his judgment implicitly.

"We also need to address the growing influence of the rival kingdom," Erik continued. "If we are to go into war with Silas, I have my reasons to believe that they will make a move and try to take advantage of the opportunity that presents itself"

One of the council members, an older man named Garrick, spoke up. "I may have to disagree on that your highness, they know as much as us what threat Silas can be to anyone if left alone, I propose we call a truce with them so that we can handle Silas threat together"

One other council member named John spoke up "We all have an idea of the possibility of the Harpies kingdom hands in the rival kingdom. We have always tried to find a way to get in contact with the Harpies, a truce might be what we need to bridge this gap"

Erik oldest son Jonas spoke up "If we can get the Harpes on our side, it would be a great boost to our soldier and peoples moral, mostly importantly it guarantees us a win in our war with Silas"

"Not just a while ago, we had just a glimpse of the power held by their kingdom. After that day, we all noticed how the cursed forest was no longer expanding. A problem we had no idea on how to solve was taken care of by one decisive action from them" Jonas said as the others nodded.

Garrick spoke up "I agree with the prince's words, from how things are now, a truce works best for us. With the miracle performed by the Harpies. A lot of our people have begun to see a glimpse of the gods power being able to solve a disaster we never could"

Erik listened intently as his council members voiced their opinions. The prospect of a truce with the rival kingdom and the potential alliance with the Harpies intrigued him. It was a bold strategy, but he knew the situation with Silas demanded bold actions.

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"Garrick, Jonas, your points are well taken," Erik said, his gaze sweeping across the room. "However, we must proceed with caution. Trust is a fragile thing, especially in times of war. We need to ensure that any overture to the rival kingdom, especially the Harpies, is handled delicately."

He turned to another council member, a seasoned diplomat named Elara. "Elara, I want you to lead the delegation to the rival kingdom. Your expertise in negotiation will be crucial. Offer them terms that highlight the mutual benefits of our alliance against Silas. Emphasize the threat he poses to all neighboring realms."

Elara nodded, her expression resolute. "I will prepare immediately, Your Highness."

Erik then looked at Jonas. "You will accompany Elara. Your presence will demonstrate our sincerity and the gravity of our situation."

Jonas bowed his head in acceptance. "I will do my best to represent our cause, Father."

Turning back to the council, Erik continued, "In the meantime, we must strengthen our defenses and bolster our forces. Garrick, oversee the training of our soldiers. Ensure they are prepared for both defense and offense."

Garrick nodded. "It will be done."

John, who had spoken earlier about the Harpies, cleared his throat. "Your Highness, if I may, we should also send a small envoy to the Harpies. Their aid could be a decisive factor in the coming conflict."

Erik agreed. "Yes, and you will lead that mission, John. Approach them with respect since this is our first official meeting with them. Highlight our shared interests and the potential for future cooperation."

John's eyes gleamed with determination. "I won't let you down, Your Highness."

Two days' journey from Erik's kingdom, Silas's kingdom sprawled out across the plain. Contrary to the chaos expected of a demon-led realm, Silas's kingdom had a human beauty to it, with fields and children laughing and running around.

Only Silas himself knew how dangerous and capable the so-called "ordinary humans" in his kingdom were, unlike Björn, who chose to infuse his people with demonic blood mixed with animals.

Silas took a much more direct approach, opening a gateway to the abyss and summoning parasites to expedite his people's growth in strength.

The parasites Silas summoned were ordinary parasites from the abyss, not even considered demons. While these parasites meant nothing to the demons, for humans or any other beings, they did wonders.

The parasites formed a symbiotic bond with their hosts, enhancing their abilities while drawing sustenance from their life force or emotions.

Through a ritual, Silas bound the parasites to himself before allowing the humans under him to bond with them. Gifts from the abyss are not easily acquired, and the initial infusion is painful and transformative, with hosts experiencing intense physical and psychological changes.

After that, there is a period of adjustment where the hosts must learn to control and utilize the parasite's abilities, often facing internal struggles. During this stage, Silas could identify those with exceptional talents, elites, and those best suited as foot soldiers or cannon fodder.

This stage is accompanied by the host's body showing signs of demonic influence, such as horns, claws, or unnatural skin, but these can be suppressed if the host can utilize the parasites well enough.

The bond can cause psychological issues, such as hallucinations, paranoia, or split personalities. The host's soul gradually becomes tainted, potentially leading to damnation or loss of free will. Most humans now living ordinary lives are those who lost their will to the parasite. Through Silas's initial ritual, he is able to suppress the parasites so they don't act out, causing him trouble.

The effect of the suppression led these parasites to adapt, living normal human lives, even to the extent of procreating.

The abilities shown by those hosting the parasites include enhanced strength, speed, agility, and endurance, allowing the host to perform superhuman feats. They also experience accelerated healing of wounds and illnesses, with the parasite repairing damage to the host's body.

Hosts gain improved vision, hearing, and other senses, often allowing them to perceive supernatural phenomena. Some parasites grant control over elements such as fire, water, or shadows, enabling the host to wield powerful elemental magic. Enhanced mental capabilities, including telepathy, telekinesis, or precognition, are also possible.

From these abilities, Silas and his generals have determined that the parasites are divided into different variants, such as: Aggressor Parasite: Specializes in enhancing combat abilities, granting immense physical power and aggression.

Defender Parasite: Focuses on protection and healing, providing regenerative abilities and defensive enhancements.

Manipulator Parasite: Offers psychic and elemental powers, allowing control over external forces and other beings.

Infiltrator Parasite: Enhances stealth, agility, and sensory perception, perfect for espionage and assassination.

All the humans in Silas's territory are soldiers or weapons waiting to be activated. All Silas needs is a mental command to remove his suppression and direct the parasites at those he deems to be his enemies.

Right now, Silas has already identified his enemy: the elf Erik. Silas finds Erik annoying but not hateful. Silas's attention turned to Erik as he wanted to test the strength of the army he has been grooming all these years against this new world.

While Silas found Erik disturbing, he was also thankful for the foolish elf. From his contact with Erik, Silas understood that Erik knew little about demons, which was no surprise since the elf's world had never faced an abyss race before.

The elf, now known as Erik, believes Silas led to the destruction of his world, which Silas found gullible. The elf has no idea that Silas himself was just a consciousness derived from the main consciousness, who should be regarded as his real enemy.

The elf's misinformation is what Silas found both annoying and thankful for, as his race's innate ability to take advantage of the less informed couldn't help but surge forward.

As a new consciousness, Silas had the same goal as the other consciousnesses, but there was an underlying sense of identity missing, which the elf unknowingly filled for Silas.

The elf mistaking Silas for Murmur was a mistake that Silas wasn't going to correct. Instead he played the role and Image the elf had of him as someone responsible for destroying their world.

To play this role, Silas had to dig deep into his memories left of Murmur, Silas found nothing wrong with this as it falls along with his goal of conquering this world and becoming the main consciousness so it is right for him to take on the role of Murmur.

Playing this role for years has made Silas different from other consciousness which is why the kingdom he leads looked nothing like something a demon will associate themselves with. Silas under the years has wholeheartedly believed himself to be Murmur.

In the dimly lit chamber where Silas often brooded, he considered the irony of his situation. To defeat Erik is not only to solidify himself as Murmur but also a way to announce his existence to this world. Silas through his act of cosplaying as Murmur developed an appreciation for strategy and patience that set him apart. These qualities had shaped his kingdom into an organized and disciplined realm, something other demons might scoff at but which gave Silas a significant advantage.

Silas's contemplation was interrupted by the arrival of his trusted lieutenant, a human known as Captain Rena. She bowed respectfully, her eyes betraying a mix of fear and loyalty. "My lord, Our eyes have reported movement on Erik's side. It appears Erik's forces are responding to our sudden change."

Silas nodded, a slow, predatory smile spreading across his face. "Excellent. Inform the troops to be ready to move out at any time."

Rena nodded and hurried out, leaving Silas alone with his thoughts once more. He rose from his throne, his dark robes flowing around him like shadows. As he walked to the balcony overlooking his vast territory, he allowed himself a moment of satisfaction. The humans below, oblivious to the parasitic control he held over them, went about their duties with a mechanical precision that pleased him.

Looking of into the distance, he thought to himself "I wonder how the little elf will appreciate the gift he is about to receive"

One of Silas variants of Parasite has made its way into ERik kingdom with no one knowing and because of how human he looked, no one has doubted the Infiltrator presence.

One of these infiltrators over the years has managed to make it way up to the seat of council in Erik's kingdom. The infiltrator himself doesn't even know of his identity as a parasite host.

From a shared connection, Silas saw how the infiltrator was given a very important job. For Silas, this job the infiltrator got was a game changer, depending on how well it works he might not even have to make a move with his army.

As he gazed out over the landscape, Silas's thoughts turned to Erik once more. The elf was a wildcard, being driven by a misplaced sense of vengeance. Even after all these years, Erik has never taken time to appreciate the new world and people surrounding him. Silas knew that which is why he will be using the elf's own misconceptions against him.

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Erik's council member and his son each went on their way to complete the mission given to them by their king.

John, who was assigned to meet and negotiate with the harpies at the moment, is feeling very ecstatic, Among the council members he can be said to be the most religious.

His god for worship is Crepuscular so John has always had a fascination for a race who came directly for the god he worships. He couldn't wait to share tales of his faith with the harpies as felt that he would be understood better there.

As a Lord under Erik, John had his own envoy accompanying him on his route to the harpie kingdom, Right now there were on the horse but soon the rest of the Journey will be on the foot as Harpies don't make their home on the ground, Instead they do so at the highest place they could.

As John and his men made their way through the dense forest, the atmosphere was a mix of anticipation and unease. The path they rode on was narrow, flanked by tall, ancient trees. The sun was setting, casting long shadows that danced around them. John, riding at the front, glanced back at his men. They were loyal and capable, but he could sense the uncertainty of their mission weighed heavily on them all.

The group finally reached a clearing where they could dismount and begin the arduous climb to the harpies' domain. John gathered his men around a small fire they had built to ward off the evening chill.

"Before we proceed, we need to discuss our approach with the harpies," John said, his voice steady but firm. "Negotiating with them will not be easy, and we must be prepared for every possibility."

One of his senior officers, a burly man named Marcus, spoke up. "My lord, what are the chances they will even listen to us? Little is known about the Harpies for us to draw a picture on how it could possibly go."

John nodded thoughtfully. "It's true, Marcus. One thing we do know for sure about the Harpies is will they keep to themselves, they haven't shown any form of aggression to us or any human in particular"

Another soldier, a younger man named Elias, voiced his concerns. "And what if they see us as a threat? Us approaching them can be seen as threat and giving them reason to turn their aggression to us"

John met Elias's gaze, his eyes reflecting the firelight. "That is a chance we have to take for the sake of our kingdom and the upcoming war. So we must tread carefully. Our success hinges on showing them respect and understanding. We cannot afford to make any missteps."

A third voice chimed in, belonging to an older, more seasoned warrior named Roderick. "Do you really believe they will ally with us? What do we have to offer that they can't get on their own?"

John took a deep breath, considering his response. "I have no answer to that as they are for sure capable of getting whatever it is they need on their own, all we can do now is speculate and hope that we have something that can be of Value to them"

Marcus, still skeptical, asked, "And if the negotiations fail, my lord? What then?"

John's expression hardened. "If the negotiations fail, we must be ready to retreat swiftly. Engaging them in battle would be a last resort, and one I hope we can avoid. But make no mistake, we will defend ourselves if necessary."

The men nodded, their expressions a mix of determination and apprehension. John could see the weight of the task ahead in their eyes. He knew that their chances of success were slim, but he also believed in the strength of their faith and the righteousness of their cause.

As they prepared to continue their journey on foot, John offered a silent prayer to Crepuscular, seeking guidance and protection. He looked up at the towering peaks where the harpies made their home, steeling himself for the challenges that lay ahead. They made a small quick camp where everyone fell asleep.

"Let's move out," John ordered after the morning sun came up and everyone was ready to go, leading his men into the mountain, their steps heavy with duty, hope and trepidation.

As they climbed the mountain, John noticed the higher they got the more it became harder to breath. This led to them having to enable their Knightley breathing technique which caused John and his envoy to be covered in light of different colors depending on the attribute of the technique.

Up above the sky, A harpy surrounded by the cloud can be seen Keeping a close look at John and his party, The harpy looked away taking advantage of its race unique physique to look far down the mountain to see if there were other humans following behind or in hiding.

Seeing none, the harpy seamlessly blend in with the cloud around it as it flew up, to Inform of the intruders.

After the Harpy flew away. John looked to the sky at the position where the Harpy was "Somebody was watching us" John thought to himself, but said nothing out loud to scare his men as the mountain path was nothing getting a bit tricky.

As they neared a narrow ledge, John signaled for his men to halt. He scanned the surroundings, noting the sheer drop to one side and the jagged cliffs rising on the other. "This is where we must be most cautious," he said quietly. "One wrong step, and it could be our last."

The group pressed on, their movements careful and deliberate. After what felt like an eternity, they reached a plateau that offered a brief respite. The wind howled around them, carrying the faint cries of distant creatures.

"We're getting close," John murmured, more to himself than to his men. He could see the faint outlines of structures further up, blending seamlessly with the mountain.

Suddenly, a shadow swooped overhead, followed by the soft rustling of feathers. John looked up just in time to see a harpy land gracefully on a rock outcropping above them. She was imposing, with large wings and sharp talons, her eyes piercing and vigilant.

"Humans," she called out, her voice carrying an otherworldly echo. "You dare approach our sacred domain?"

John stepped forward, his posture respectful but resolute. "We come in peace, seeking an audience with your leaders. We wish to discuss matters of great importance."

The harpy's eyes narrowed, her gaze sweeping over the group. "What makes you think we have any interest in what you have to say?"

John took a deep breath, feeling the weight of the moment. "What if this has something to do with the demon named Silas?"

The harpy considered his words for a long moment before spreading her wings and taking flight. "Follow me," she instructed. "But be warned, if you show any sign of deceit or aggression, your lives will be forfeit."

Hearing her warning, John looked up to see a group of harpies circling above, their silhouettes stark against the darkening sky.

As John and his weary envoy ascended the final steep incline, the clouds parted like a grand curtain, unveiling a sight so breathtaking it halted them in their tracks. Before them, perched majestically atop the mountain's peak, stood a city seemingly made of pure gold. The sun's rays danced across the golden rooftops, creating a dazzling spectacle of shimmering light that painted the sky with hues of amber and molten gold.

The architecture was unlike anything the humans had ever seen. Towers and spires rose elegantly into the sky. The buildings were interconnected by delicate bridges and walkways that appeared to be spun from the finest gold thread, glistening in the sunlight. From their vantage point, they could see lush gardens and crystal-clear fountains scattered throughout the city, their waters catching the light and sparkling like liquid diamonds.

John took notice how the surrounding Mountains were interconnected with each other. John heard Elias, the youngest amongst them ask "Is this what heaven is like?"

The Female Harpy noticed their stunned Visage, a flash of pride flashed across her eyes as she flew down with her wings tucked behind her, walking to one of the bridge connecting to another mountain she said "Follow me"

John and his group nodded, as they took the bridge and took in the ethereal scene of being surrounded by clouds. As they walked across the bridge, the humans could hear the soft hum of Harpies singing, their melodious voices harmonizing with the gentle breeze that carried the scent of exotic flowers and spices. The city's air was warm and fragrant, a stark contrast to the cold, thin air of the mountain path they had traversed.

The streets of the city were lined with majestic golden statues of Harpies in various poses: some poised as if about to take flight, others in mid-song, their faces carved with expressions of serene beauty and wisdom. The humans marvelled at the craftsmanship, noting how each feather was meticulously detailed, giving the statues a lifelike quality.

"So this is what happens above us all the time, No wonder they paying attention to us lowly humans running around on the ground like ants" John thought to himself while taking in the scene, John was the only one with the thought as the others too were feeling toowhelmed with the whole situation

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John in his stupor didn't know when but he was standing in front of what he would describe as a palace. Its domes and arches adorned with massive gemstones that glowed with an inner light. It was surrounded by lush, terraced gardens filled with vibrant flowers and exotic plants that cascaded down the mountainside, creating a rainbow of colors that contrasted beautifully with the golden architecture.

Not waiting for the humans, the female harpy walked through the palace gate, along the way the humans saw how guarded the palace was. Soon standing in front of a huge door, the female harpy turned to John and his envy "The council are ready to meet you beyond this door"

Taking a deep breath, John and his envoy pushed open the door as they were met with a sight inside the palace. The structure of the palace room had all the council members on a high stand where they looked down at John and his men.

John swallowed a spit as he could feel the aura emanating from the council members here. Everyone was at the fourth stage, some clearly at its peak.

Counting the council members, John noticed about 20 harpies there. While looking around, John was attracted to where the throne was. He could only see a silhouette of a woman as it was covered with curtains.

Composing himself, John walked across the huge palace room floor, feeling all the eyes on him. When he got to a certain distance, he took a knee with his envoys following through.

"My name is John Rosegust, an official seat at the humanity kingdom ruled by king Erik. Because of some circumstances, My king couldn't be here in person, so I was sent to extend a hand of friendship to the Harpies people " John said as respectfully as he could.

Bernard who was now the oldest council member of the Harpies poke up "Enough with the pleasantries, Why the sudden interest in our people"

John was about to respond when he froze, the white part of his eyes quickly darkening up as his body began twitching. Bernard frowned at the human behavior "Speak up human?" He said, raising his voice.

To his words, John had no reaction, only his envoy's had a look of concern on their face as they looked at John. Suddenly John stood up with the temperature around him rising.

The Harpies all went on alert seeing that, all of a sudden John screamed out "For humanity" In the confusion of his behavior, everyone was slow to react as flames gathered on his legs with a loud boom he propelled himself to the throne covered in curtains.

As he drew near, he pulled out his sword with a quick slash, he cut open the curtain to meet the golden eyes of Ursula who was looking at him with confusion.

Before John could take a step, all he heard was the chirp of a bird as he was covered in golden flames "For humanity" he managed to scream out as he turned to ashes.

Looking over to the other stunned humans who were now begging for mercy with tears in their eyes as Few council members all swopped in to capture them.

The youngest named Erik also began twitching in similar form as John as he pulled out a dagger not minding his throat being strangled as he shouted out "For humanity" as he thrust out with his dagger ready to take the eye of the council member holding him down.

The harpy council member frowned seeing that as Lighting climbed along the arms it was holding Erik with, with a loud scream from Erik he turned into dark charcoal as the council member waved his hand in disgust.

As the last echoes of Erik's scream faded, a heavy silence fell over the grand hall. The air was thick with tension and the smell of charred flesh. The harpies, still on high alert, watched the remaining humans closely, their eyes sharp and unforgiving.

Bernard, the oldest council member, stepped forward, his gaze stern and unwavering. "This treachery will not go unpunished," he declared, his voice resonating with authority. "You will all face the consequences of your actions."

One of John's envoys, the middle-aged man named Marcus, took a trembling step forward. His eyes were wide with fear, but also glistened with desperation. "Please," he implored, his voice cracking. "We had no idea... John and Erik, they... they must have been compelled. We came here with true intentions of peace and alliance."

Ursula emerged from behind the tattered curtain. Her golden eyes bore into Marcus's, searching for any sign of deceit. "Compelled?" she echoed, her tone laden with scepticism. "By whom?"

Marcus opened his mouth to answer yet for some reason his voice was so low, no one could hear what he was saying. Ursula, thinking he was maybe too scared walked towards him, Her form towering over him.

Yet with a soft tone, she said "No need to fear human, Just answer the question. Who compelled them?"

Marcus body began trembling, before he could shout out like the others, Ursula eyes flashed with cold light as Marcus was turned to ash by a golden flame that suddenly appeared from his body.

The harpies exchanged tense glances as Marcus's ashes settled on the palace floor. Ursula's golden eyes scanned the remaining humans, her patience wearing thin.

Ursula was the only one feeling weird about the situation as the humans left were now sneaking a glance at each other with eyes filled with distrust.

To them everything happening right now was a nightmare, People they have known all their life are all of a sudden acting all weird and possessed.

None of them even wanted to say anything anymore as they were scared if it would be them next when they tried to Talk so for a while the whole palace room was silent.

Bernard, was so angry Flames began flickering in an out around him "Are you all here to mock us, humans?"

To his words, None of the humans reacted. Ursula looked at the human, she couldn't help but think about how weird this whole situation was. She knew there was more to this.

"You said, Humanity was your kingdom right?" Ursula asked, yet she got no answer from the humans.

Iris who has been watching the whole incident, Walked out nodding to Ursula "Yes, they stated their kingdoms name was Humanity"

Ursula kept looking at Iris who knew what she was expecting "Information from our informant gives us plausible reasons to believe the humans were compromised"

"The reason he paid us a visit was because of the demon Silas, recent information shows that he is mobilizing his armies and from past history, the kingdom of humanity is his target" Iris said.

Ursula nodded "So they came to seek our help but for some reason it turned into this mess" Ursula said as Iris nodded.

Ursula continued "The only reasonable reason for their action is that the demon somehow comprised them to sow discord between us and the humans"

"It seems he succeeded, " Ursula thought as she looked at Bernard who was frowning, clearly dissatisfied. "No matter what, their actions cannot be ignored. There must be consequences for this breach of trust."

Ursula would be lying if she said that she wasn't feeling furious at the moment, Looking at the trembling humans who were no longer of any help to her "Normally I would send you all to the dungeon but since I am still unsure of the situation, you humans will be sent back to your kingdom and I expect an explanation from your king"

Looking at Bernard, Ursula said "I will leave it to you to handle them" Bernard nodded with a sinister smile on his face. Ursula rolled her eyes seeing that, she knew he didn't have anything good in mind for the humans but she doesn't mind at the moment as long as they humans were brought out of her sight.

"Guards" Bernard said out loud as the palace room door opened with a harpies soldier walking in picking up the five humans left. Bernard followed them out as soon as he reached the palace door, he whispered something to the soldiers as he turned back around, closing the door behind him.

Screams can be heard from the sky, as The herpes soldiers held the human envoy by foot as they flew out from the kingdom over to the humans kingdom. They Flew paying no mind to the humans' safety, even going as far as throwing the humans mid air and exchanging with each other.

With how fast they flew, the Humanity kingdom soon got in the view. The last thh the envoys heard was "If one of you survives, Inform your king and people of the same embarrassing play you played out in front our our queen mother"

The human hearing began screaming "Wait, wait. Hold on, how can we survive if you drop us from here" One of the humans said, looking at the ground surrounding them and their kingdom which was nothing but a huge dot from the sky.

The only response they got was "That is something, you can figure out yourself" The harpy soldier responded before letting go of the humans they each were holding.

Chapter 206:

A yelling sound can be heard from the skies as the humans begin falling back to the ground.

As soon as the first humans got closer to the ground, he tried using his knightly technique to shield himself with his eyes closed.

The people of the Humanity kingdom were going about their day, only for them to be attracted by the sound of someone yelling. It took time before someone nearby screamed "Look up" Following the stranger's word, everybody nearby looked up.

They saw the sight of the first envoy covered in yellow light as he fell to the ground creating a loud thud and the disgusting sound of splashing.

Those close by felt wetness on their face as they reached their hand to wipe it away only to see their hands covered in red. The dust at the place of impact cleared only to show the sight of the disfigured envoy leaking everywhere.

That immediately caused panic as everyone began screaming, from different sides of their capital city, the sound of heavy thud can be heard accompanied by the panic screaming of the people.

Erik in his office, twitched his ears as the sound of screaming was heard by him. Immediately standing up and heading to his balcony he was met with the sight of humans running around in panic.

What caught his attention was the sight of small dots falling from the sky, enhancing his eyes with mana he immediately recognized they were the envoy who went with Erik.

A loud boom can be heard as the balcony Erik was standing on was destroyed with him no longer there. He appeared above where the last two dots were about to fall but he was slow as he impacted the ground with a scream splashing blood all over Erik.

Stunned but acting immediately as he knew one was left, a huge hand made of Mana appeared as it swooped in grabbing the human, the hand moved for some distance before stopping.

Erik appeared before the huge hand dispersed as he caught the human it recovered. Erik frowned as he felt the human shaking uncontrollably in his arms while screaming.

Pinching the human's neck which immediately led to her passing out, "What in the world happened?" Erik muttered to himself, his eyes narrowing as he gazed at the receding figures of the harpy soldiers. He knew he needed answers, and fast.

Erik took a deep breath, his heart pounding as he surveyed the chaotic scene below. The blood-stained streets and the panicked cries of his people fueled his rage. He cradled the unconscious envoy in his arms, his mind racing with questions and suspicions.

"Guards!" Erik barked, summoning one of his royal protectors. A tall, armored figure approached, bowing respectfully. "Take this woman to the healers and make sure she is tended to. I need her alive and coherent as soon as possible."

The guard nodded, gently taking the unconscious envoy from Erik's arms and hurrying towards the palace's medical wing. Erik wiped the blood from his face, his expression hardening with a clenched fist.

"Send word to the council members," he ordered another guard. "We need an emergency meeting immediately. I want all available information on the harpy kingdom's recent activities and any intelligence on the demon Silas."

As the guard rushed off to relay his orders, Erik turned his attention back to the crowd below. He raised his hand, channeling his mana to amplify his voice. "Citizens of Humanity," he called out, his voice echoing through the streets. "Return to your homes and stay indoors. We will restore order and ensure your safety. Trust in your king."

The crowd began to disperse, albeit reluctantly, still shaken by the horrific scene they had witnessed. Erik watched them go, his heart heavy and filled with rage. He knew that this incident would not be easily forgotten or forgiven.

In the grand council chamber, the air was thick with tension. The council members, a mix of seasoned warriors, wise scholars, and shrewd politicians, sat around a large table, waiting for Erik to speak.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Erik began, his voice steady but laced with anger. "We have been attacked and worstly humiliated. The harpy kingdom for whatever reasons has thrown our envoys from the skies like common criminals, and I intend to find out why."

An elderly scholar, known for his vast knowledge of inter-kingdom politics, leaned forward. "Your Majesty, if I may," he said, his voice gravelly with age. "This act of aggression on humans is a very unusual behavior from the Harpies, I think something must have happened for them to act in such a manner. This act of aggression could be a diversion orchestrated by the demon Silas"

A loud thumping sound can be heard as Erik slammed his fist on on the table "For whatever reason they have, It doesn't excuse their barbaric behaviour of dropping my envoys from the skies. There were a lot of ways this could be handled instead they decided to spread fear amongst my people"

The council, seeing Erik so angry all bowed their heads, Erik took a deep breath. "Indeed, Silas has much to gain from turning us against the harpies. But we cannot let this act go unanswered. We must respond, but with caution. We cannot afford an all-out war on multiple fronts." Erik said after calming down.

Garrick spoke up. "Your Majesty, a show of strength may be necessary to deter further aggression. However, we should also send a diplomatic envoy to the harpy kingdom to demand an explanation and negotiate for a peaceful resolution."

Erik shook his head "Sending someone back there is suicidal, besides one of the envoy survived and is recovering. We can hear from her own mouth about what happened"

Just then, the doors to the council chamber burst open, and the guard who had taken the unconscious envoy to the healers rushed in. "Your Majesty," he panted, "the envoy has woken up".

The envoy, still pale and shaken, was brought into the council chamber and given a seat. She looked skeptically around at the stern faces of the council members before meeting Erik's gaze.

"Speak," Erik said gently but firmly. "Tell us everything you know."

The envoy said nothing but instead said trembling and looking suspiciously at everyone, there was no trust on the woman's eyes as she regarded everyone.

Erik took a deep breath, trying to appear calm and reassuring. He understood the fear and trauma the envoy must have experienced, but time was of the essence. "You are safe here," he said softly. "No harm will come to you. We need to understand what happened so we can prevent further bloodshed."

The envoy swallowed hard, her eyes darting around the room. "It... it was chaos," she began, her voice barely above a whisper. "John and Erik... they weren't themselves. Something took over them, compelled them to attack. I don't know what it was, but it was like they were possessed."

A murmur rippled through the council members, and Erik's brow furrowed. "Possessed?" he repeated. "By what? Did you see anything unusual before it happened?"

She shook her head. "No, it was sudden. One moment they were fine, and the next, their eyes turned black and they started... attacking. I've never seen anything like it."

The elderly scholar leaned forward, his eyes keen. "Did they say anything? Any words or phrases that might give us a clue?"

The envoy hesitated, then nodded. "They kept shouting, 'For humanity'. It was like a chant, over and over."

The envoy looked at everyone "There was no magic or supernatural fluctuation, it was suddenly like it has always been part of them"

Looking at everyone in the council seat, she said "Please Exile me from the kingdom, I don't want to be around anybody anymore" She said with her hand on her head. "Who knows, you all may also be possessed"

"I can't trust anyone" She kept whispering to herself while looking suspiciously at everyone.

Erik's heart sank as he listened to the envoy's plea. The fear and paranoia in her voice were palpable, and it was clear that whatever had happened had deeply traumatized her. He exchanged a glance with the elderly scholar, who nodded solemnly, understanding the gravity of the situation.

"Rest assured, we will uncover the truth behind this," Erik said, his voice steady but filled with empathy. "But exiling you won't help us or you. We need your cooperation to prevent this from happening again."

The envoy shook her head vehemently, her eyes wide with terror. "You don't understand," she whispered. "I can't be around anyone. What if it happens again? What if I'm the next one to be controlled?"

Erik stood and walked over to her, gently placing a hand on her shoulder. "I promise, you will be protected. We will find a way to ensure no one else falls victim to this. But we need your help. Please, trust us."

She looked into his eyes, searching for any sign of deceit. Finally, she nodded slowly, though the fear did not leave her eyes. "I'll try," she said softly. "But please, keep me away from others. I don't want to hurt anyone."

Chapter 207:

Erik nodded, understanding her request. He turned to the guard who had brought her in. "Take her to a secure, private room in the medical wing. Ensure she has everything she needs and is kept comfortable. No one is to disturb her without my explicit permission."

The guard bowed and gently led the envoy away. Erik watched her go, a heavy weight settling in his chest. Once she was out of sight, he turned back to the council.

Now words were said but everyone understood, the thought they may be compromised without anyone noticing was a problem on its own and for them to continue their conversation after knowing this is the same as singing off their plans to the enemy.

Waving his hand, Erik said "You can all leave and try to calm the disturbed resident"

Erik was soon left alone in the palace room with his hand on his head "How was he to go about finding out those comprised and who can he trust to take upon the job of finding them out"

Erik didn't know when but confusion and paranoia is creeping in heavily into his heart, laughing mockingly to himself Erik looked off into the distance where Silas kingdom was "This was what you wanted, this feeling of weakness and not able to do anything about it"

Back in the Harpie kingdom as soon as Bernard closed the palace door, he got back to his position, no one seemed to pay mind to the smell of smoked meat wafting around the room.

Ursula sneaked a look at Bernard, she knew whatever he whispered to the guards taking back the human envoys was not good but this is something she had to do as it made her people that she stands with them in this upcoming conflict.

The Harpies always have had underlying problems with humans. If she had chosen now to protect them that would disrupt the balance she had with her people.

Looking around the room Ursula asked a question "It is already known fact that Silas is the one behind this attack, what I am curious about is how he was able to possess the humans with no fluctuations of magic to indicate that something was about to happen"

Bernard nodded, his expression thoughtful. "Indeed, it is perplexing. Especially considering the excess measures and parameters we have set in the throne room to prevent a situation like this, yet no one noticed when the possession took place. This suggests that Silas has a new method, one that bypasses traditional magical detection."

Ursula nodded "Considering his heritage, him pulling out something like this isn't surprising. This was exactly why I had the humans sent back immediately as I can risk having them around our people without fully understanding the method of possession"

Iris had a look of disappointment on her face "I understand your majesty, but I would have preferred you left us with one human who I can run some test on and maybe find out the root of the problem"

Ursula shook her head before the air around the palace shifted as Ursula spoke up "Now for the next matter, How should we respond to the demon for thinking it can easily drag us into his war games"

A Harpie council member named Kael spoke up "We have to respond back and show the demon that we are not one of its pawn, but I advise we do that lowkey as we can"

Ursula looked at the new council member who took over Felix's position "Why do you suggest we do this lowkey?"

Kael bowed his head to show his respect before speaking up "It is understandable for us to retaliate since we have been provoked, but at the same time we have to think of the long term consequences of our retaliation and how it affects people view of our kingdom and people"

"For those who have no knowledge of what happened behind the scene, Our retaliation will look to them like our people one day took up arms to bring down a nation of humans because we have been provoked. No matter our involvement in this conflict, it will always be viewed as human conflict, not godlings" Kael said as he bowed to Ursula once again.

Bernard from his position scoffed "Humans?, what makes you believe that a kingdom run and led by a demon will have real humans serving under it. We have all seen how most humans turn out when their leader is a demon"

Iris shook her head "Kael is right" Looking at Bernard she continued "We know that they maybe not be normal humans doesn't mean that others know that, which falls back to Kael point on us looking like a bunch of monsters killing a bunch of normal humans"

Ursula raised her hand, signaling for silence. "Both of you make valid points," she said, her voice firm yet measured. "We must be strategic in our response, ensuring it does not backfire and tarnish our reputation or escalate the conflict unnecessarily."

She turned to Bernard. "Your concern is noted, but we must weigh it against the potential repercussions Kael and Iris have highlighted. If we act rashly, we risk alienating potential allies and painting ourselves as aggressors in the eyes of neutral parties. I have a feeling that this is what Silas wants"

"As for retaliation, I have a plan for that. Right now, our most pressing issue is finding out what Silas's method of possession is and if it has affected our human vassal kingdom," Ursula said with a sigh.

Standing up from her throne, Ursula continued, "Follow me." The council members immediately got excited, knowing that their mother was about to show them a sight that rarely ever happens.

Walking out to the open palace, the day continued as usual. Harpies went about their business, but were soon taken aback when they saw their queen and her council members walking out.

Addressing them, Ursula said to Iris, "It might not be a good thing for our people to know what is happening right now, so provide me a screen."

Iris nodded, and with a wave of her hand, a wave of magic spread out with no visible effect. However, for the Harpies looking down, they all saw a different sight where it seemed that their queen and council members chose to have their meeting outside. Seeing as nothing interesting was happening, they all went on about their day.

Ursula immediately locked onto where Silas's kingdom is located. Golden flames began rising from her body, and the council nearby made sure they gave her enough distance.

Looking up to the sun, Ursula closed her eyes as she prayed, "In the shadowed light where day meets night, Beneath the gaze of stars alight, I call upon the power divine, of Crepuscular's blood, a lineage fine."

"With wings of fire and eyes aglow, My guardian rises, swift to go, From phoenix flame to piercing spear, To strike down evil, bring justice near. Silas, demon of darkest night, Your time has come, to face the light, By sun and sky, I now decree, Your end draws nigh."

With the incantations, the phoenix-like bird appeared, shrieking to the sky and announcing its presence. The bird soon morphed into a long flaming spear which Ursula held onto as she aimed into the distance before throwing it out with a loud boom as the spear broke through the sound barrier.

Meanwhile, in Silas's dark fortress, the demon lord sat upon his throne, a sinister smile curling his lips. His plans were unfolding perfectly, and soon, the realms would fall into conflict. He leaned back, fingers steepled, as he contemplated his next move, knowing the seeds of discord he had sown were already taking root.

As he was smiling, all of a sudden, he was overwhelmed with a sense of danger he had never felt before in all his years living in this world.

All his senses were telling him that if he didn't move from where he was staying right now, he would die. Silas stood up to immediately flee but stopped himself as he knew how much he had put into the security of his fortress.

Deciding to trust his Fortress, Silas immediately disappeared from where he was, he appeared at the core room of the magic protecting his home. Putting his hand on the core, Silas's whole perspective changed as he connected with the whole fortress.

His attention was soon drawn to what he believed to be a meteor passing by. His eyes widened when he noticed that the meteor wasn't passing by but instead was heading directly for his fortress.

He could feel the divinity in the falling star, thinking rapidly to himself, Silas thought "No way, she will do this knowing that there are humans under me. If this attack hits, the whole territory and humans in it will be gone with it."

As if he thought of something, Silas's eyes widened. He wanted to immediately run but from the falling star, a line fell into a different position of his castle forming a golden shield around it.

Chapter 208:

The humans under Silas saw the whole incident: the golden shield that appeared, followed by the blinding white light. It took a while before their sight was restored, and they could see the new look of their territory.

Silas's whole castle was gone. In the place where his castle once stood, there was a huge deep burning pit of golden flames that didn't seem like they were going to burn out anytime soon.

In the eyes of the watching humans, a golden bird-like fire flew out from the impact site before shooting off into the sky. Many humans wanted to rush into the impact site to take a closer look, but the closer they got, the more unbelievably hot it became. Their clothes even began catching on fire.

All of a sudden, the humans around took on the same expression, like puppets, they turned around as they all walked back to their homes, forgetting about the burning pit.

Among the humans, only one was left standing there after the others retreated. This human began walking toward the burning pit. His clothes burned off, and even the flesh on his body began sizzling, giving off a wafting scent of burning meat.

Yet this didn't seem to faze the human as he jumped into the pit. The human was lit aflame immediately, his entire body catching fire. The human's expression changed this time, but he continued walking until he reached the center of the pit, where a burned figure lay in the fetal position.

Bending down, the human touched the burnt figure, which turned into ash. Among the ash was a small shining core that was humming like a heartbeat.

A look of joy flashed across the human's eyes as he took the core before swallowing it whole. It took a while before the human moved. Looking around, Silas thought to himself, "I'm back."

Saying that, he began laughing hysterically, even holding his stomach. Looking up at the still shining sun, Silas smirked, "I survived. It was close, but I survived."

Once the huge spear broke through his defense, Silas knew he was defeated. But Silas wasn't going to let himself just die when he still hadn't had enough of this world so he waited as the spear struck his castle, burning it down and burning him too. While he was burning Silas decided to play a gamble, a gamble he knew he would win if he held on long enough for the attack to diffuse.

His gamble paid off because after the spear struck his home, the golden shield went down. Silas acted immediately, picking one of the humans in his territory as a target, transferring his consciousness through the parasite laying low in the human's body.

At the same time, not wanting to lose all he had gained all this while, Silas shrunk his power into a core that would be protected by the body turned to ash. All he needed to do was control his new human host to grab hold of the core.

Having laughed enough, Silas raised his right hand, his palm turned into a whirlpool of darkness that began swallowing the flames on his body and the other burning flames around.

Soon, in his hand, was a huge dark core with golden flames burning at its center. "This will make a good treasure," he thought to himself as he opened his mouth and swallowed the dark core.

"I will have to rebuild my home," he thought to himself as he looked around. But soon he stopped as his expression changed. The dark core he swallowed was moving, the golden flames flew out of the core into his consciousness, where a message was relayed to him: "If you survive this retribution, the Harpy Kingdom should be off-limits for your war games with the mortals. Else, I will be paying you a personal visit, which will be your last."

Silas stopped and looked up at the sky. "I already played the hand I wanted to with the Harpies. I have no further plan for them now, at least not at this moment."

Looking at where Erik was, Silas smiled to himself. "This incident will reach Erik's ears soon, and knowing him, he would immediately take this chance to attack."

Shaking his head, Silas thought, "Too predictable."

"Too bad, I still have plans for you, Erik. Our war will happen, but not now, so why don't I take your mind off me for a bit," Silas thought to himself with an eerie smile as he sent out a mental command to his parasites.

Erik, who had been disturbed about the whole compromised situation and whom to trust, was stuck in his office, thinking about what he should do.

Earlier in the day, he felt a huge fluctuation of mana from Silas's side. He was curious, but he knew his messengers would bring him the news.

"Speaking of the devil," he thought to himself as he heard the hasty footsteps heading for his office. Taking a moment to adjust himself, Erik looked at the door. Before the messenger could knock, Erik said, "Come in."

It took a while before the messenger left the office. Erik stood up from his seat with a smile on his face as he looked up at the dark sky and the shining moon.

"Hahaha, finally you messed with the wrong one, Silas, and now you are paying the price." Erik, who had been down since the whole situation with Silas, was now feeling very happy, hearing about Silas's predicament.

He still had a bone to pick with the Harpy Kingdom for their treatment of his envoy, but for now, he appreciated what they had done. Since they had created a great opportunity, he was going to take advantage of it. The messenger stated that Silas's condition was unknown for now.

This was enough for Erik. From the description, he knew that even if Silas survived, he would be extremely weakened, and for Erik, that was more than enough.

If not for the dark sky, he would have put on his armor and led his army over to Silas's territory. With a smile on his face, Erik spoke out to no one in the office, "Inform the council members to have their armies ready. A chance has been created in front of us. Tomorrow we march to Silas's kingdom. We are not going to give him a chance to recuperate."

A shadow fell from the roof, kneeling before answering, "Understood." With that, the shadow disappeared, leaving Erik alone, who by now had summoned his spear.

Looking at the spear, he could hear the wails of his dying people as the demon army marched into their world, killing his people. They were strong, but the demons had a greater advantage in numbers.

The demons were also growing fast, the longer the battle continued, each death of his people meant a demon grew stronger. With time, their strength no longer mattered as they were overwhelmed.

Erik still didn't know what happened after his spear went through the demon. He knew he was heavily damaged, and everything turned dark, only for him to appear in a new world, in a new body, with his spear close by and finding out that the demon he thought was dead was still alive and in this new world with him.

Tears fell from Erik's eyes as he heard the wails. Cradling the spear, he whispered, "It's okay, very soon you all will be avenged." The spear hummed in response to his words.

As night fell, the palace room where Erik brooded was quiet, but the homes of his council members were not.

Councillor Thane was in his study. He had already received the news from the shadows Erik sent, which was why he was surrounded by books and maps when his daughter Abby entered with a tray of tea. "Father, you've been working too hard. Take a break," she said, her voice soft and caring.

Thane smiled at his daughter, taking the cup she offered. "Thank you, Abby. Just a little more work, and then I'll rest."

As Thane sipped his tea, Abby's expression changed. Her body shook before calming down, her eyes growing vacant and her white pupils turning dark. She moved with sudden, mechanical precision. Before Thane could react, she drew a hidden dagger and lunged at him. The cup shattered, and Thane barely managed to deflect the first strike.

"Abby, what are you doing?" he cried, struggling to fend off his daughter. Panic flashed across his eyes as he felt the mana in his body become sluggish, not moving to his command. His eyes moved to the tea he drank.

Abby's face was emotionless as she attacked again with greater speed and power, the dagger aimed with deadly intent. "Silas commands it," she intoned in a monotone voice.

Thane's heart broke as he realized his beloved daughter was under Silas's control. "Abby, fight it! Please!" he begged, his voice choking with anguish.

His words fell on deaf ears as Abby struck out once again. Thane gasped, his strength failing as the blade found its mark. "I forgive you," he whispered, trying to touch his daughter's face but failing as he collapsed to the floor and darkness took him.

Chapter 209:

Abby bent down, taking off Thane's clothes as she began gutting him with her dagger. She pulled out his innards and began arranging them to form words.

After she was done, she swiped her neck with the dagger. Her dark-colored pupils turned white as she took notice of the mess with wide eyes, seeing her father's dead body. Abby wanted to scream, only to fall to the ground with her arms stretched out, reaching for her father. The light from her eyes went out as she fell dead.

Across town, Councilor Maris was in her kitchen, enjoying a quiet evening with her husband, Dorian. They laughed and chatted, the warmth of their love filling the room. But as the clock struck midnight, Dorian's demeanor shifted. His movements became stiff, his eyes glazing over.

Maris noticed immediately. "Dorian, are you alright?"

Without a word, Dorian picked up a kitchen knife and advanced towards her. Maris backed away, confusion and fear warring on her face. "Dorian, what are you doing?"

"Silas commands it," Dorian said, his voice hollow.

Maris's heart pounded. She knew her husband was not in control. "Dorian, it's me, Maris. Fight it, please!" she cried, dodging his first swipe.

Dorian didn't answer the words; instead, he continued attacking. Maris was a council member for a reason, so she had no problem dodging. This, in turn, turned the kitchen into a mess, attracting the attention of the maids and servants who rushed to the kitchen.

As soon as they appeared, Dorian turned his attention to them, and the whole kitchen and castle turned into a massacre as Dorian began killing everyone.

Maris, still in shock at her husband's behavior, took some time to gather herself. By then, only a few were left. With tears streaming down her face, Maris summoned a rapier from her ring as she covered herself in a soft blue energy.

Dorian turned towards her expressionless as he roared out, "Silas wills it." Maris closed her eyes as she struck out with her rapier. Years of training kicked in as she aimed for his neck, piercing a huge hole in it.

Opening her eyes to see what she had done, Maris moved in, catching her husband's falling figure. Blood and corpses were everywhere as she began crying out loud.

The same thing was happening to most of the council members under Erik. Silas's command activated the parasite lying low in their bodies, taking control of them.

Images of the parasitized humans acting on his orders were transmitted to Silas, who smiled. He couldn't help but appreciate his decision to make use of the parasites.

The humans who lost their will to the parasite and were living normal lives, giving birth to offspring, were indirectly giving birth to the next generation of parasites under Silas's control.

These humans had been sent out, living and having normal lives in Erik's kingdom. By subtle control of Silas, the parasitized humans were more prone to make friends with or work under established figures.

Erik, in his room, took notice of the small chaos rising in his kingdom. A maid walked in with a robe in her hand to drape over Erik as she left his room.

Nothing was said as the maid followed behind Erik as they headed to his office. As Erik was about to open the door to his office, the maid behind him moved, but before she could do anything, Erik caught her by the neck.

Erik was about to ask the reason for her behavior when he saw the dark eyes of the maid. Remembering his envoy's words, Erik said with a grave tone, "Silas."

The maid opened her mouth, and a purple gas shot out. Erik blew the gas back into the maid's face, and soon the maid's face began melting, revealing her skull.

Dropping the maid in disgust, Erik was about to call out his men when he saw the maid's corpse twitching. She stood up, looking at Erik before she began speaking. "Hello, Erik."

Erik, who recognized the voice, stopped and looked at the maid with a grim face. "Silas."

In response to his words, Silas said, "In flesh and blood."

Erik said nothing in turn as he continued frowning. The maid walked past him, opening the door to his office. Clicking on a wall, a bottle of wine appeared.

Silas, in the maid's body, walked around the office like it was his. He pulled out two glasses and began filling them with wine. While doing that, he said, "Did you like my recent gift?"

In response to his words, there was a huge flash of light followed by an explosion sound. Erik looked outside the window to see a few noble houses caught on fire.

Silas also took a look outside and shook his head before sitting down where Erik was supposed to sit. He took a sip from the glass he was holding. The wine couldn't go down his throat as it left from the side of the maid's melted face, but that didn't stop Silas as he continued sipping his wine while looking at Erik.

Erik, who was being stared at, wanted to scream and reach over to strangle Silas, but he knew that would change nothing except making himself look stupid in front of Silas, which was a satisfaction he was never going to give to the demon.

"Are you scared of me?" Erik asked as he took the wine glass filled for him.

Silas tilted the maid's head to the side, her dark eyes staring eerily at Erik. "No, why do you think that?"

Erik took a sip of his wine, savoring the taste. "It isn't about what I think but rather a deduction of your actions till now: causing conflict between me and the harpies, planting puppets everywhere in my kingdom, and now, when you are at your weakest, to prolong your life, you decide to further sow discord in my kingdom."

Erik suddenly stopped talking as he looked at Silas. "I care not for these humans' lives and your mind games. Why don't we both have our own battle—no soldiers, no generals, just us—where only one of us will live?"

Silas, hearing Erik's words, suddenly began laughing. The maid's corpse he was hosting kept spewing out blood the more he laughed, staining Erik's table and office.

Having laughed enough, Silas put down his glass as he walked over to where Erik was sitting. Placing a hand on Erik's shoulder, he said, "Your naivety, words, and actions are the reasons I act the way I do towards you."

"I am not scared of you or your invitation to a duel of death. Rather, my actions towards you are because you, Erik, give me the opportunity to experience something akin to a dream after being stuck in that thing's stomach for who knows how long and then finding myself in this high-level world where my experience with you is something of rarity."

Shaking his head, Silas continued, "I don't want to lose my plaything so easily. Your first world didn't survive the attack of the abyss, so you are a bit unlearned about my race's unusual characteristics."

"Immortal, powerful, the baddest of the baddest, but one thing we enjoy most is pestering people like you, turning them into playthings, making unfair deals. I could go on forever."

"Erik, an existence so eager to avenge his people and world's death, to the extent he no longer cares what happens to those around him as long as he can fulfill his mission of revenge," Silas said as he stood up, heading towards Erik's balcony.

"You must have realized it by now, how easily you have lost. That is why you propose a duel between us." Even though Silas was facing the balcony, his voice reached Erik's ears as if it was being whispered to him.

"You now realize it. Your kingdom is my kingdom. Your maid, children, anyone can be a puppet of mine—even your army. So blinded by your quest for revenge, you never really took a close look at the kingdom you helped create." Placing a hand on Erik's shoulder, Silas said, "Such actions are exactly what make you a great plaything."

Erik was now seeing red; he could barely hold it together. Each word that came out of Silas's mouth kept painting him like a gullible fool, which he was beginning to think he was.

All of a sudden, something clicked with Erik, which made him clench his fist, breaking the glass he was holding. "Do your puppets also reside in the rival kingdom and are now messing with my son's mission?"

In response to his question, Silas began laughing, which gave Erik his answer. Erik roared out loud in rage as he summoned his spear, which he swung at the maid, blowing her upper half into pieces and smearing blood all over the wall. Before Silas disappeared, he mockingly shouted, "For humanity!"

Hearing that caused Erik to go into a blind rage as he began swinging at everything in his office, roaring out loud. Yet no one approached his office to see what was going on.

Chapter 210:

It took a while for Erik to calm down, sitting on the floor of his office, holding his tattered hair. Silas's last words revealed how much Erik had missed when laying the foundation of his kingdom.

"For humanity, absurd," Erik thought to himself with a sad smile.

"I wonder what the humans would think if they knew that the core principle of their kingdom was an idea planted by a demon to control them easily," Erik thought, a mocking smile on his face.

His question to Silas about puppets in the rival kingdom and Silas's response showed that the rival kingdom, because of their strong belief in the origin gods, especially Crepuscular, had a protection or immunity that his kingdom would never have due to their firm belief in human power.

Erik never cared much about the origin gods. His world had gods too, but they fled when the situation started worsening. One thing he understood was that their gods were never origin gods; instead, they were a few lucky individuals who managed to ascend.

Erik's experience with his world's gods made him disregard the gods of this world, as he saw them all as cowards who would run when things got tough.

This was why he made no corrections when he started his kingdom; he didn't push for the humans' belief in the gods. He even entertained the idea that humans were similar to him and could only depend on themselves for greatness.

Now, his conversation with Silas showed that their human motto, "Humanity," had been pushed from behind the scenes by Silas to better exert his control without angering the gods.

Thinking of this, he remembered Silas's words: "Your kingdom is my kingdom."

Erik began laughing at himself. He realized he had really been a fun plaything for Silas, naive to think his revenge would go as planned. He now understood he knew little about the kingdom he led. He helped the kingdom grow by occasionally sharing his knowledge and letting the humans do with it as they wanted.

The same was true for his army, the Shadows. He had never fully paid them any attention, seeing them merely as tools for his revenge.

Erik found himself entertaining the idea of escaping his leadership role and finding a place to lay low and wait for an opportunity to take his revenge.

As soon as the thought arose, Erik shook his head. "No, this may be what Silas wants, and I no longer want to play his game."

Erik stood up slowly, his eyes steeled with determination. He could still feel the rage burning within him, but now it was held together by a grim resolve. Silas had manipulated him, exploited his grief and anger, but this would not be the end of his story. He would not allow himself to be a puppet any longer.

Walking to the shattered remnants of the glass he had broken, Erik picked up a shard and examined it closely, watching the way the light fractured through it. The symbolism was not lost on him. His kingdom, like this shard, was fractured but not irreparable. There was still hope, still a chance to mend what had been broken, but it required a change in strategy, a deeper understanding of his new world and its powers.

He needed to learn about the origin gods, the true nature of his enemy, and the hidden hands that had ensnared his kingdom. He didn't fully believe that Silas had control everywhere in his kingdom.

More importantly, he needed to connect with his people, to understand their way of life, their fears, and their strengths. He was originally human, but after becoming an Elf, he seemed to have forgotten that. Once he reconnected with his people, only then could he hope to reclaim his kingdom and avenge his old world in a way that would not play into Silas's hands.

Erik strode to the window, gazing out at the city below. The people were scrambling around, trying to put out the fires, unaware of the dark force at play.

"It's up to you, son," Erik thought as he looked out the window. If his son managed to succeed in forming an alliance with the rival kingdom, then he could see an opportunity for his kingdom's reformation.

The next day, Erik called in maids and workers to fix his office. While they were working, Erik couldn't help but sneak a few distrustful glances at them, not knowing which one might be under Silas's control.

At the same time, he was getting reports on the assassination attempt on his council members. Clenching his fist in anger, Erik took note of those council members attacked and those who survived.

In Erik's mind, no matter how tragic it was, it gave him an opportunity to see those he could trust in his council since Silas had made a move against them, which showed they weren't compromised.

At the same time, Erik didn't fully trust those who survived, as he couldn't eliminate the possibility of Silas purposely leaving them alive to confuse him and lead him back to square one.

Jonas and Elara had been in the rival kingdom for over three days without being granted an audience with their leader. The rival kingdom, known as "The Sun Kingdom," had a flag matching its name: a blue sky with a flaming red ball at its center.

Jonas had been sending requests for an audience since their arrival, yet no attention was paid to them. What made Jonas even angrier was the fact that other small human kingdoms who arrived later than them had already been granted an audience.

Jonas was beginning to think about aborting the mission and reporting back to his father on the mission's current progress. As he entertained that thought, there was a knock on the door to his guest room.

"Come in," he said. The door opened to reveal Elara, who had been exploring the city.

Elara dipped her head slightly before speaking. "Crown Prince, I believe I have an idea on how we can be granted an audience so we can present our case."

Jonas perked up and asked, "What is it?"

Elara had a disturbed look on her face before she said, "I need your Highness to follow me."

Jonas noticed her unease but said nothing. He patted himself to ensure he looked presentable before gesturing for Elara to lead the way.

Jonas and Elara walked out of the guest home into the bustling street. Jonas was once again met with a sight he still found hard to believe.

He saw humans and harpies walking side by side, laughing and communicating with each other, something that would never be seen in their kingdom.

Jonas noticed that the people of the Sun Kingdom had a special affinity for gold, as buildings, streets, and even the people and children had something gold-plated on them.

This brought Jonas back to the memory of the meal served to them when they first arrived, which was a safety gold-plated meat. As a prince, luxury meant nothing to him; he only found it strange how everyone seemed to enjoy the same luxury in this kingdom.

Before he knew it, they had arrived at their destination. Elara stopped and said, "We are here, your Highness."

Jonas frowned, seeing where they were. He asked in an angry tone, "What are we doing at a temple?"

Elara wasn't surprised by his reaction. She discreetly pointed at others near the temple to avoid incurring anyone's anger.

Jonas looked around. The more he looked, the more his expression changed as his brows furrowed.

Seeing that he was beginning to make the connection, Elara began speaking. "Those are people of the Net Kingdom, a small human kingdom on our continent. Their main belief is in the sea god Jaws."

Jonas raised an eyebrow, still unsure where Elara was going with this. "So, what does that have to do with our audience with the Sun King?"

Elara didn't respond to his words but continued speaking "That is the Gullon Kingdom. None of the origin gods are their main worship, but much is known about their fascination with the golden dragon."

Elara continued pointing at different groups of people, introducing them before finally asking Jonas, "What do they all have in common with us?"

Jonas frowned and said, "They all came to the Sun Kingdom with a purpose?"

Elara nodded before asking once again, "And what is the difference between them and us?"

Jonas saw how after each kingdom went into the temple and came out, they were met by a priest in a red robe with the mark of the sun on its back, who led them away. "They are granted an audience," Jonas answered after seeing that.

Elara took a deep breath before explaining. "I've been observing the Sun Kingdom's customs and their interactions with different groups. Each time a delegation from another kingdom was granted an audience, they performed some sort of ritual or offering at the temple of the Sun God, Crepuscular, beforehand. I believe this is a sign of respect that the Sun King values highly."