



CHAPTER 4. LIBRARY



Cedric woke up from the noise, pressing closer to Mom' body.

"Cedric."

Something was calling him. He opened his eyes, feeling emptiness overwhelming his entire body like cold water. What a horrible feeling.

He just realized he was by himself inside the tent. His Mom wasn't there.

"Cedric," The voice called again. He stood up, glanced around, and grabbed his moon sword.

"Mom?" he said, leaving the tent and pointing the blade ahead.

The camp was deserted. The remnants of a dying fire glowed somewhere. He walked on, searching. No horses, no wagons, no



signs of a fight. Nothing.

Everyone had fled.

"Elowen? Mom? Sir Blunder? Eligh? Anybody?!" He panicked, looking around; trying to understand why is he alone.

Why did they leave him?

At that moment, his eyes caught movement on the other side of the camp.

Elk emerged from the forest. The Sky Spirit. But this time he was much bigger.

Cedric's legs weakened as the red eyes of the beast locked onto him, straight into his soul. His horns intertwined, forming a twisted circle.

A faint voice reached Cedric's ears.

"You are not ready."

A red shadow loomed over the camp. He looked up and saw the moon glowing a vivid red. In an instant, a raging fire began devouring the forest and the camp, obliterating everything in its path.



A chilling scream pierced the air – a primal, horrifying sound.

"No!" Cedric jolted awake, drenched in cold sweat.

"Sweetheart, what's it?" Seraphina knelt beside him, gently soothing his clammy forehead with her hand.

"I..." He could barely utter a word. "Nothing. Just a nightmare, Mom."

"It's okay, don't be afraid. I'm here with you," she pressed his head against her freckled neck and stroked his hair, kissing Cedric's cheeks. "My dear."

He placed hands on the curves of her waist, feeling her skin, bones, warmth, and the scent of her lush warm hair. "I feel better now, Mom. Thank you."

He wanted to drown in her, but at that moment they were interrupted.

Elowen entered the tent and, upon seeing the entire scene, smiled at the corner of her mouth. "Well, well, well."

"What do you want, Elowen?" Seraphina kept stroking Cedric's head.



"Eligh is looking for our Great 18th descendant, Mom."



"Sometimes, waiting is the key. I've heard that if you pray and meditate long enough to connect with the spirits for a long time, sooner or later, the king himself will fall at your feet," Riley sharpened his dagger, surveying the soldiers sitting nearby.

At that moment, Cedric flopped down right at his feet.

"What do you think about that, Cedric?" Riley grinned. It was as if yesterday's lake incident never happened.

The soldiers chuckled.

"Screw you, psycho. We're not friends," Cedric stood up heavily and raised his sword. There were a few new bruises on his young face.



"Fell again. You haven't learned your lesson on balance," Eligh took another bite of an apple, lowering his silver sword.

"Maybe that's because you never taught me anything! You just keep hitting me like a punching bag. You're probably the worst teacher in all of Eldaria."

"If I have to teach you how to stand on your feet, then you don't deserve to wield a sword, spoiled child," he said, pointing the blade's end at Cedric's hand and knocking the sword out, all while taking another bite of an apple.

"Damn old man," Cedric bent down to pick up the sword, and at that moment, Eligh threw the apple right at his head. The prince turned away, narrowly avoiding the fruit. "Hey!"

"Well done. That was your first victory. Never take your eyes off the enemy and always be on guard, even in times of visible peace."

The soldiers behind Cedric clapped. Elowen, sitting among them, cheered, "Bravo, Prince. Your fighting skills are so impressive."

"No respect," Cedric sighed.

"Lift your sword. We've only just begun," Eligh stepped closer.

Cedric spotted Seraphina standing gracefully by the old oak tree. His mother, leaning casually against the trunk, had her arms crossed with a warm smile as she observed the scene with interest.

"I can't afford to embarrass myself, especially when she's watching."



"Why are you standing like a stump? Scared?" Eligh took a step forward and swung his sword.

Cedric quickly moved out of the way and used his sword to stop the next move. Just then Eligh used his free hand to pull Prince down by grabbing his arm, but Cedric stood firm, spread his legs, and pointed the sword at Eligh's chest.

"Not bad," Eligh pushed the guy back.

The soldiers clapped, but not Elowen. Seraphina stood silently, smiling.

Relieved, Cedric exhaled, only to be caught off guard as Eligh spat on his back.

He tumbled face-first into the mud, with the thick muck invading his eyes, mouth, and nose.

"But that's still not enough to defeat the real enemy. Don't get cocky, kid. See you tomorrow."

Struggling to his feet, Cedric grumbled, "He hit me in the back. I can't believe it."

Elowen clapped again, this time by herself. "I'm starting to like Eligh more and more."

Still wiping his eyes, Cedric looked towards the tree, but his mother had vanished. He sighed, "I almost managed to make an impression on her."



The entire following day Cedric's body ached from the extensive journey and he couldn't shake off the unsettling thoughts from last night's nightmare. Was it merely a bad dream, or did it carry a message from the Spirit?

As he wearily continued walking, he yearned for the comfort of a warm home, his own cozy bed, and the taste of royal food. "I'm just not cut out for this kind of adventures. Funny, but at least that I no longer dream of the pretty maids from the castle. Their bodies are no comparison to mom's hot body and beauty."

The memories of the previous evening spent by the lake and the intimate kiss they shared were the only things on his mind. It was only these thoughts that propelled him forward. "I can't let her think that I'm weak. It's all so wrong, but I can't help it."

"We'll reach the library in a few hours, Prince," Blunder walked beside him. All the horses were carrying supplies, so everyone proceeded on foot.

"I hope we'll deal with it as fast as we can, and return home. I'm so tired," Cedric adjusted his backpack, barely feeling his shoulders.

“Your mother mentioned you had a nightmare. Is it somehow related to our quest? What if spirits are trying to say something? Maybe we should ask Riley?”

“Riley?” Cedric glanced at the white-haired soldier up ahead. “No, it was just a nightmare. Can we even trust this guy, Lord Blunder?”

“Can we trust Riley?” Blunder stroked his beard, glancing at the white-haired soldier. “I found him in the woods many winters ago when he was just a kid. He couldn't explain why he was there or where his parents were. Since that time he has followed me everywhere. Riley has a good understanding of supernatural things. I don't know how, but he knows stuff. He might seem a bit odd, I understand that, but I trust him as much as I trust myself.”

“I see,” Cedric nodded, looking around for Seraphina. “Do you mind if I ask you how's my Mom? It seems like you catch up with her more than I do. She keeps avoiding me most of the time.”

Blunder smiled. “She keeps asking about you the same all the time. Your mother is a strong woman. She can take care of herself in a camp filled mostly with men. Like you, she finds it challenging to be away from the castle for so long after years of



royal life. She misses your father, but you should give her some time. She'll feel better."

"Yeah, you're probably right. Thank you, Lord. For everything."

Elias smiled through the bush beard and slightly bowed the head.

Cedric moved ahead and spotted Seraphina near one of the wagons, noticing how some soldiers were giving her admiring looks. It hadn't crossed his mind that others might find his Mother attractive, besides him.

"Mom?"

"Cedric? Why are you here?" She leaned, and he felt her warm breath on his neck. "Do you want Lord Blunder's people to see you walking alongside your Mother?"

"I don't care, Mom, about what they think of me or us. Is that why you've been avoiding me? Trying to make sure Blunder's people don't think less of me?"



"What? Me? Avoiding you? Nonsense. Of course, I'm not avoiding you!" she blushed. "I was at your training this morning, remember? You fought well."

"Not well enough. I still ended up face-down in

the mud. Was Dad not good at fighting when he was young too?"

"No, he was the best fighter I ever knew," she smiled.

"Yeah, right. Of course, he was." Cedric frowned and then turned around.

He saw Elowen nearby, who was eavesdropping on their talk. She was hiding behind a wagon, and Cedric pretended not to see her.

"Are you still missing Dad, Mom?"

"No, I'm doing better now. We had a good time together yesterday; it cheered me up a bit. Thank you," she looked at the road, deep in thought. Red and black roses grew at the edge of the road. "But you know, it is the end of summer. When we first met around this time of year, your dad gave me Black Briars. Every year since then, he's given them to me to remember the day we met. Arik said I was like them—beautiful yet hard to approach." She smiled, remembering the past fondly.

"And where do these Briars grow?"

"Hmm? Honestly, I'm not sure. It's a secret only your dad knew," she put her hand on his shoulder. "You can ask him by yourself when we return home. I hope when we stop the Eclipse, we'll be together again, and he'll give me one once again."

"Yeah... I hope so," Cedric frowned again and thought. "Would it comfort her if I gave her one of these flowers?"

They left the forest and saw a big old castle-like building on a hill in a valley. The Archi-Library looked like it reached the sky

with its tall, slim towers. Big columns with pictures of symbols and runes stood near the entrance. There was a long staircase from the library down to a little village at the bottom of the hill.



“Looks majestic,” Cedric said.

Seraphina gently stroked her son’s head. “We are finally here, dear.”

"Don't celebrate too soon," Elowen chimed in, appearing from behind. "What if the father has already sent assassins? A few of them could have reached the library faster than our large group and camp!"

"Your daughter is right, my queen," Blunder added. "Let's be cautious and keep an eye on the prince."

"Could my father really send assassins to kill me?"

"Of course not, Cedric. How can you even say this? Your father would never give such an order," Seraphina patted his shoulder.

"We can't be sure. Come on, we should be allowed through the valley," Blunder declared.

"I hope he did send assassins," Elowen smiled.



They walked towards the village at the bottom of the hill. Cedric saw lots of women talking quietly and looking at their group, especially at him.

Some of the women were young, and some were older. All of them wore unique clothes with symbols he couldn't understand, and they were all really pretty, both the young and the older ones.



"Shut your mouth; bugs might fly in," Elowen teased, giving him a pat on the back.

"Very funny. Why are you so nosy, sis? And why are you spying on me and Mom?"

"Me? Spying? You're the funny one. You see what you want to see. Bye, dummy." She walked forward, going up to Sir Blunder, and hooked her arm through his. He awkwardly went along, not sure how to handle the princess's teasing.

"We should have left her at the castle."

They kept walking, moving right through the village. There were more and more village women along the way.

He suddenly realized. "I don't see any men."

"That's because men aren't allowed here, as per the Library rules," Seraphina explained. "Blunder sent a messenger ahead to announce the Eclipsian Prince's arrival. If he hadn't, their guards would have stopped us at the valley entrance. The last time someone of royal blood visited the Library happened 25 years ago when your father..." She stopped and coughed. "Well, It doesn't matter right now."

"So, the Library is led by women?"

"Not just any women, but the Exarchs of Wisdom. They're born in the valley; they don't marry men because they are responsible for maintaining the library's integrity and gathering new knowledge. All of them are descendants of this place's founders, Laurence and Eldoran."

"This is weird. How do new women show up here if they don't let men in? How do they have babies?" Cedric scratched his head.

"Seriously, Cedric? Out of all the wonderful things here, that's what you're curious about? Let's focus on our mission, shall we?" Seraphina sighed clearly disappointed. She pulled her hood and walked ahead, closer to Elowen and Blunder.

"What did I say wrong? I think that's a pretty important question," he mumbled, glancing at village women. Some had tattoos on their faces, while others didn't.

The wagons and horses stopped near the village, on a big meadow by the river.

"They will settle in while we're inside. I've already entrusted



everything to Riley. He knows what to do. Let's go," Blunder, Seraphina, and Cedric headed up the long staircase.

"And what about me?" Elowen stopped at the very bottom of the stairs.

"You stay here and help others settle the camp, get to know some of the village girls. Maybe that way, you'll refine your manners and present yourself more like a proper lady, Elowen," Seraphina turned gracefully and ascended the steps, delicately lifting her dress.

"What do you mean? Am I not ladylike enough for you, Mother?" Elowen retorted, kicking the grass in frustration.

"I agree, Mom. She looks and acts more like a street thief than a princess," Cedric giggled, but Seraphina shot him a disapproving glare, sniffing disdainfully.

The very moment they entered the valley, his Mom started acting odd. She visibly got more and more nervous as they got closer to the library.

"Sorry for my words. You okay, Mom?"

"Yes, I'm fine. Your sister can just be a pain in the neck sometimes. Sorry for that," Seraphina smiled, nervously rubbing the ends of the green road dress.

"So you wouldn't mind if I ask again how exactly do new women come to be here in the valley?"

Seraphina let out another sigh, her bosom subtly rising beneath the dress. "Really, you're interested in that?"

He nodded.

“Very well. Distinguished guests and important visitors often come to this valley, much like we are now. Exarchs women seize the opportunity when the guest is occupied in the library during the day – they approach him, requesting permission for a couple of girls to conceive at night. The Supreme Exarchy herself selects these girls for this specific purpose.”

"Oh, wow," Cedric stopped, eyes widening. "So, theoretically, I could..." He turned back; from this height, there was a breathtaking view of the entire valley and village.

Seraphina grabbed his hand like a jealous girl and pulled her son along. "We're not here for that, Cedric! Don't forget about our mission! *We have to prevent the Eclipse!*"

"Okay, okay, Mom," Cedric relented, hearing a rough chuckle from Blunder, who was leading the way.

"Have you been here before, Lord?" Cedric looked at his wide back.

"Yes, I have," Cedric could tell by the voice that Blunder was smiling.

"Let's stay focused on our goal," his mother's frustration continued to mount.

"What if a boy is born in the process? " Cedric pressed on.

"Then he is sent to the outside world to father as many daughters as possible. End of discussion. I've forgotten how long these steps are. Ugh."

As they reached the summit, five women in elegant blue cloaks welcomed them. Each woman, around 30 years old, bore

tattooed patterns on their faces. The cloaks, billowing in the breeze, hid their figures, though Cedric glimpsed the outline of swords hanging from their belts.

Good thing he had his own sword with him. He now always carried it, as Eligh told him.

"Welcome, Brother Blunder. Welcome, Sister Seraphina Astral Weaver. And of course, Welcome, Prince of the Eclipsian Dynasty. On behalf of the Exarchs of Wisdom - Welcome to the Arch-Library."

"Hello, Exarchs of Wisdom. We are here to enter Arch-Library to seek answers on how to stop the Cosmic Eclipse," Blunder stepped forward.

"I'm afraid that's impossible, Brother Blunder," the main one among them spoke." A messenger from King Arik visited us a few days ago. Our ruler has forbidden the Prince from entering the library, as well as anyone accompanying him."

"Right. Why send assassins when, as a king, you can simply deny us access," Blunder turned to his companions.

Seraphina stood in contemplative silence, her hands folded as she gazed out over the picturesque valley. The breeze played with her voluminous brown hair.

She looked so beautiful.

"I wish I could kiss Mom again."

She turned around and moved toward the group of women, causing Blunder to take a step back.

"I am the third-generation sister of the Exarchs, the sole descendant of Magister Leronse," she rolled up her sleeve to reveal a tattoo on her forearm. "I, along with my companions, possess the privilege to access the library without needing the king's will."

The women examined the tattoo closely. Two of them, positioned at the library entrance, promptly opened the door and vanished inside, leaving the others in thoughtful silence.

Seraphina lowered her sleeve. "Now, we wait."

Blunder, surprised, remarked, "Lady, I had no idea you were related to the Exarchs, especially that you were a descendant of Leronse."



"Now you know, and I trust you to keep it a secret, Lord Blunder," she said.

"Who is this Leronse?" Cedric thought and then said. "Didn't you say that Exarchs don't marry men but live in the valley, guarding the library?"

"Yes. And as I told you on the road, I was hard to approach. I was a very elusive woman. Very elusive."

The doors finally opened. "Welcome to the Library, Sister Seraphina. You and your companions may enter," said one of the women. The others parted, allowing them inside.

"Well, it's about time," Blunder exclaimed as he entered first.

Inside, they encountered a vast vestibule with high ceilings and shimmering lights. Massive polished marble columns supported galleries on different levels, each adorned with shelves holding tens and hundreds of thousands of ancient scrolls, books, and manuscripts. Along the passages, glass display cases showcased artifacts, relics, and antique maps, providing a glimpse into the centuries of accumulated knowledge.



In the depths of the library, behind tall doors and arched doorways, were special areas: rooms with mirrored walls for meditation and laboratories for alchemical experiments.

In the middle of the vestibule, there was a black woman covered in tattoos on her face, arms, neck, and chest. She was sitting and writing in a book.



Seraphina whispered, "That's Supreme Exarchy. We will talk, you just listen."

"Welcome Home, Sister Seraphina. Wasn't expecting you here again so soon," said the woman with a mean smile as they got closer.

Cedric noticed that her eyes were coal black, as if tattoos had been applied directly to her eyeballs.

"Greetings, Supreme Exarchy. We are here to..." Blunder stepped forward.

"I wasn't talking to you."

"I don't want to talk about the past. We seek answers on how to stop the Cosmic Eclipse, Sister," Seraphina said.

"I'm aware of the prophecy, for we wrote it. But what assurance is there that the Eclipse can be prevented? Life and history show us that some things are meant to happen."

"With all due respect, I don't agree. Unlike you, we won't just wait around for the end of the world," Seraphina replied.

"You are as stubborn as always. Suit yourself," the Exarchy said, searching for something with ebony eyes. "And where is the 18th descendant?"



Seraphina turned around, and Cedric stood right behind her, avoiding the Exarchy's intimidating gaze.

"Don't be afraid, Cedric," she put her hands on his shoulders.

"I... I'm not afraid," he said nervously.

"Still a child," the Exarchy smirked. "You know where to seek for the answers, Grand-

Grand-Granddaughter of Leronse. I only ask one thing: don't interfere with the priestesses in their work."

Seraphina bowed and pulled Cedric along by the hand.

"I'll go back to the camp, check if everything is under control," Blunder headed towards the exit, leaving the prince and queen alone.

"Why were you standing behind my back? You're our leader, you act like one."

"I've already said that I'm not fit for the role of leader, Mom. I'm not a hero. And I wasn't hiding behind your back."

"Maybe Arik was right. I've been too overprotective with you all these years after all." They walked through several large halls like Seraphina and knew exactly where they needed to go.

They finally stopped in one of the halls. Seraphina let him inside and entered herself. It was a huge hall filled with bookshelves reaching up to the ceiling. Numerous rows of books, scrolls, various tables, and empty stands for writing were scattered everywhere.



"Let's start here. The history of the Dynasty, as well as information about the prophecy and the Eclipse, might be among these books and letters. But we'll have to work hard to

find the answers. We have six months until the Eclipse arrives. Let's get started."



CHAPTER 5. MOM'S PAST AND A FLOWER



Cedric, engrossed in another book, glanced at Seraphina. It was insanely hot inside.

His Mother took off her green travel cloak, revealing a simple shirt with a graceful neckline. Sweat dripped down her neck and chest, making the snug shirt damp and outlining her sexy figure and boobs.

It was hard to concentrate on the books she was sitting like that right next to him, but he tried.

He saw a sentence that stood out: "The 18th descendant must marry the descendants of Laurence and Eldoran's only son."

"Who's only son?" he was too tired to figure out the details and who he was supposed to marry.

He looked at her, watching her boobs jiggle, as she moved some books. "Is there anything you want to tell me about what happened between you and this place, Mom? You've seemed uneasy since we got to the valley."

"There's nothing to talk about."

"Are you sure? You never mentioned how you met dad either. So it happened here?"

"I said it doesn't matter now. And my past is not your concern," she said, burying herself in her books.

"You sound so much like Elowen now."

He sighed and stood up. Thoughts were bulring in his mind.



"Maybe a flower will help loosen her tongue."

Seraphina kept silent.

Cedric went to the door and left, passing through the halls and women, and making his way back to

the vestibule. The Supreme Exarchy remained seated in the same spot, making notes in the book.

He approached closer, standing right in front of her. Her chest was at the level of his eyes. "Ahem."

"What do you want, child?" she continued writing, undistracted and with eyes as black as the night.

"Just looking for something. I need information about Black Briars. Where's the hall with the continent's herbs here?"

She finally looked at him, and from that look, shivers ran down Cedric's spine. "How interesting," she said, smiling. "What a surprising turn of events."

She was almost laughing, ready to jot down a note in her book, but her hand suddenly stopped. Pausing, she leaned back in her chair, enjoying the moment.

"What?" he swallowed.

"Go right, the fourth hall. Botany," she returned her gaze to her book, dipping the quill into the ink, still wide smiling.

"Okay. That was weird." He looked to the right but stayed put. "Can I ask why only women?"

She glanced at him again, this time with a mocking look, as if she found him amusing like he was a funny little creature. "Why only women?"

Cedric nodded.

"Because men are easy to figure out. They're easily influenced. Their minds revolve around mating... Sometimes they care so

little about who they mate with that they even start showing interest in their own mothers."

Cedric composed himself, concealing any surprise. The Exarchy kept speaking.

"Don't fret; you're probably not the first intrigued by this forbidden idea. I've been around a long time, child. I've known your mother since she was a baby. I might seem blind, but I'm not. I've noticed how you look at her."

"I don't get what you're saying. My mother is just my mom," his throat went dry suddenly. "This is gross!"

"No need to explain, child. I don't feel emotions like disgust, contempt, or judgment. I'll just say this: you have a shot at what your male heart desires. If you push hard enough, she might be into it. But it's your call to decide how far you're willing to go. Are kisses enough for you? Maybe some affectionate touches from your mother will satisfy your lust? Or do you want to go all the way and explore more?"

"You're crazy!"

"Maybe. But I understand people well, like my ancestors who made prophecies." She dipped her quill again. "If you want to impress her, you don't have to possess the most stunning and rare flower or be the greatest warrior ever. You just have to be the best version of yourself, —the best you can be."

"I think we're done talking," Cedric turned back.

"You'll get why I laughed if she tells you the whole story of what happened 25 years ago."

He passed through all the other halls and returned to Seraphina. His mother was peacefully asleep on one of the books. Her body barely moved with each breath.

Cedric approached with a clear intention to wake her up. Gently, he brushed the soft hair away from her face and neck, sensing a delicate fragrance. 'This can't be,' he whispered, running his hand over her beautiful cheeks, trailing down her neck, to her chest and shoulders.



"I got angry because the Exarchy voiced aloud what I've been feeling these past few days. She voiced what I was afraid to admit to myself. Me and Mother? That's not right. I have to fight this. I have to resist my desires. I'm not an animal."

He saw her lips trembling slightly as she breathed. Moving closer, her half-open mouth was almost within reach. It felt like he couldn't control himself; he just wanted another kiss. Is that wrong? To taste Mom again. Just one innocent kiss.

He moved his mouth closer but froze.

"No, I have to resist," he said, his lips just a few inches from hers. "I shouldn't. No," he whispered, his lips getting even closer. Closer.

Suddenly, Seraphina shifted and sighed, closing her mouth. He managed to pull his head away right in time.

"Cedric? Is that you?" She lifted her head from the book, rubbed her eyes, and yawned. "Did I fall asleep? Gosh."

"It's late," he said, feeling his cheeks burn. "We need to go back to the camp."

"Yes, you are right." She yawned again. "I'm tired. Let's go."



The village and camp were shining brightly in the dark night. Cedric walked down the steps, supporting his sleepy mother. "We haven't even rested after the journey, have we?"

Finally reaching the bottom, Cedric saw a black rose in the moonlight. "I don't need to be the greatest soldier." He picked it up. "Mom?"

"Yes, Cedric?"

"This is for you," he presented her the rose.

"A Black Rose? Why is that? Because I'm as ordinary as that?"

"No. Because you're strong, steady, and beautiful, just like this rose."

She smiled, almost teary-eyed, as she took the flower. "Thank you, sweetheart. My dear son. My Cedric," she hugged him tightly, pressing her breasts against his chest. He still could feel the scent of her sweat. Seraphina's damp shirt clung to his clothes.



He liked the smell so much. "I love you, Mom."

"I love you too, darling. I'm sorry I was mean to you." She leaned back and gave him a quick kiss on the lips, a small secret gesture. "Just a little peck, since your sister can't see us," she said with a smile.

He couldn't believe she actually did it all by herself. The sweet Mom's taste was left on his lips. The back of his head was tickling again.

"Thank you, Mom."

She gently ran her fingers through his hair, as she always did. Seraphina looked at him carefully, twirling a rose in her hand.



"Twenty-five years ago, your father came here to study some books. The Supreme Exarchy offered him a chance to conceive children with a couple of girls that night, but he was the first in history to refuse. He and I had already met, and all he wanted was to be with me. The Exarchy said no, but she knew I didn't want that life. I didn't want to have daughters just so they could have more daughters. I wanted a son. I wanted to raise a proper son with goals beyond reproducing, with real life. So, I left to start a family with your Dad. They thought I seduced your father to run away. They thought I was a coward, a traitor who had abandoned them. It was humiliating for me, so I promised myself that I'd never come back here. I gave up my life here for you, Cedric. For my dear, perfect son."

She wrapped her arms around him, snuggling tightly against her son's chest.

"Because of me?" Cedric looked out over the valley, feeling the cold air rustling his hair. "What a surprising turn of events."

He murmured the Exarch's words.

Seraphina wanted a son, and now her long awaited son desires her as a woman.