



AFS
ECLIPSIAN
DYNASTY



CHAPTER 9. SISTER



Cedric walked silently down the Library corridors. They were empty at night, and he looked around, the books in his bag tending to fall out. In his other hand, he held his cane. It was strictly forbidden to take books from the library, but who needed rules when the fate of the whole world was at stake.

He walked out into the main hallway; the Exarchy's seat was empty for some reason. The path was open, but Cedric moved the other way. He walked around the Exarchy table and approached a big notch in the wall. There used to be a door.

A torch illuminated the downward slope, the steps leading far underground.

"I'm sure the creature came from here." There were noticeable dents and claw marks on the walls.

"Are you lost?" A voice from behind made him stir. It was the new Exarchy Cindy.

"Me? No, no, I just..."

"Just trying to find out Library secrets?" Cindy said calmly.



Cedric hurried towards the exit. "Good night."

"That girl that was with you that night was my sister, Prince Cedric." Exarchy took a place at her desk.

He did not answer, only hurried towards the exit.



Seraphina brushed her hair, staring mesmerized in the candlelight. Elowen's tent was more cramped than Cedric's, but she felt safe here.

"What am I even thinking? Safe from who? From my own son?" She covered face with her hands, holding back tears. "Why did I do this? How could I? I pleased my own son."

She hadn't forgotten Cedric's words. When he was about to release his seed he said. "I'll do it for my Mom."



She pulled her dress down, running a finger over the tiny wound close to the nipple, the mark of his lustful touch. The wound hadn't quite healed yet.

Seraphina smiled, remembering how small he'd been after birth, and how he'd touched her breast to get to the milk. She was so happy.

And now he's a grown man with desires and needs.

"Mom?" Cedric stepped cautiously inside.

Seraphina covered her boobs and wiped her damp eyes. "Yes, sweetheart? Did you want something?"

"Can I come inside? I didn't see you in the library today."

"Sorry, I just needed some time alone," she said, brushing her hair.

"Are you planning to sleep with Elowen again tonight?" He sat down beside her on the bed. "Do you want to talk about what happened between us?"

"I don't... No, actually. I guess we should talk." She set the comb aside and turned in her chair to face him.

"Let me guess," he sighed. "You changed your mind about getting married?"

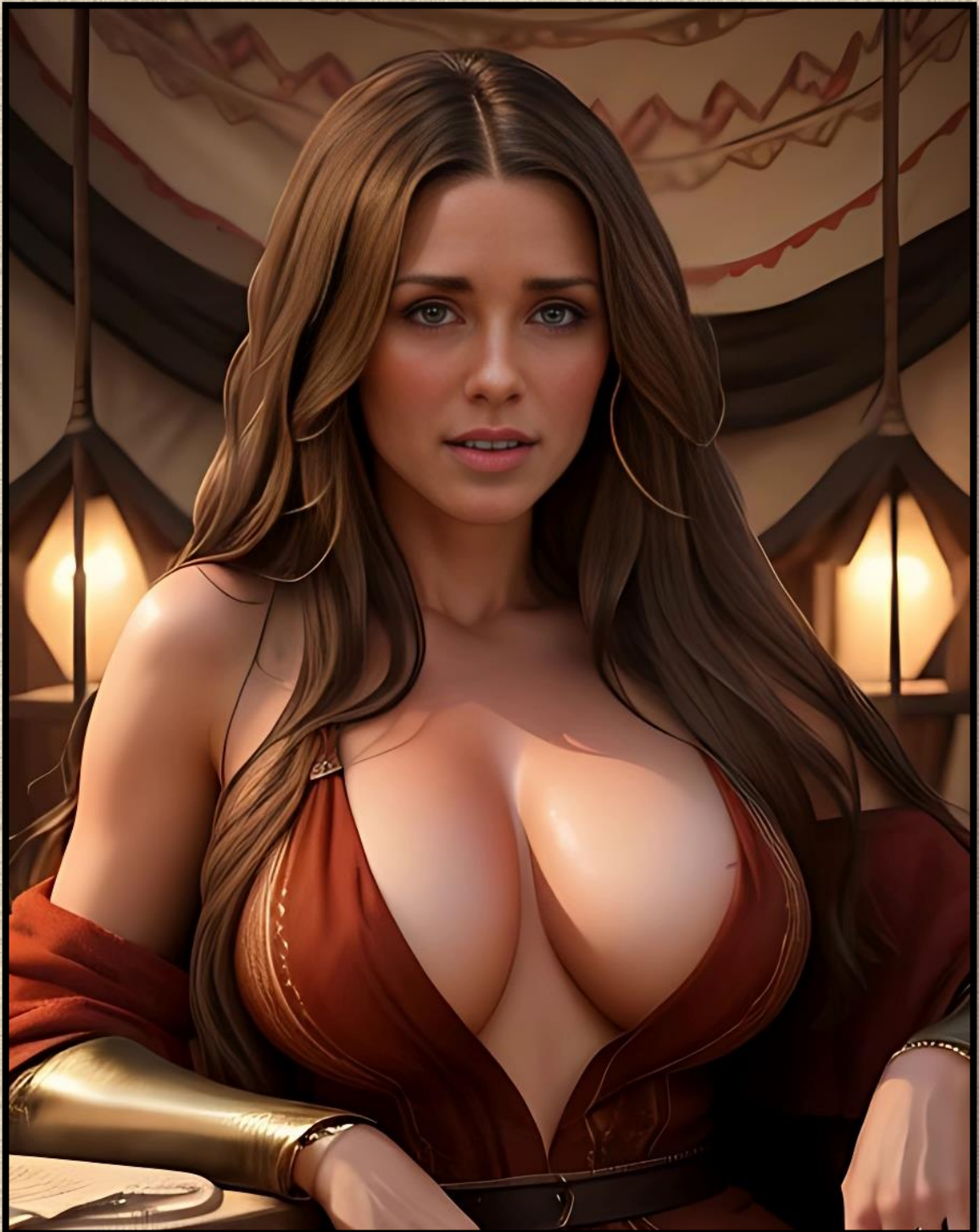
Seraphina took his hand. "I just can't understand why this is necessary? How does our marriage stop the Eclipse? Did you think about it? I know you want to be the hero, dear, and play the husband role. And I'm so proud of you for that. But, you know, I'm your Mom. I'm not supposed to be your wife. And your father..."

"You love Dad too much." Cedric interrupted her.

"No, I mean... But, well, yes. I won't follow the prophecy unless I really have to. I mean, you wouldn't want to marry your Mom and be my husband either, right? Why am I even trying to persuade you here, huh?"

"Yeah, yeah, right. You're my Mom. It's awful to be married to your own mother." He stood up and his hand slipped from her hold. "When are you going back to my tent though?"

"I'm okay here for now. Elowen needs me now. She's lonely and... Are you sure you're not mad at me for my refusal, dear?"



He hid his hands behind the back, clenching his fist. "Of course not, *Mom*. I love you more than anything and I respect your decision Good night." He hurried out of the tent.

"I love you... too." She said but he was already out. "Well, that was kind of awkward. Did I say something wrong?"

Cedric punched grass. She was still too loyal to Dad and too in love with him. This is another problem that stands in the way of their potential relationship.

"I can't just erase 20 and more years of their marriage life together. Maybe it's just time to accept that it's over. She's his wife, not mine. She's my Mom."

He was about to enter his tent when he noticed Elowen sitting nearby. His sister with a cute giggle was silently playing with a caterpillar on her fingers. Elowen playing with a caterpillar?

That was weird.

But despite her seeming cheerfulness, her eyes were watery and there was a fresh cut under her left eyelid.

"Maybe I should go over and ask her what was wrong? Yeah, right. She'd call me a mama's boy again and just run away. Like she always does. I don't care."



Cedric sat with his back to the tent's entrance, leafing through stolen books by candlelight. He spread some books in front of him so that if someone entered the tent, they could only see the prince's back.

The other half of the stack he hid under the bed.

He flipped through 'Spirits and Kings.' Seraphina cried when she discovered that one of the pages had been torn out. Now, he wanted to cry too.

She chose his father over him and meanwhile, he had no idea what the spirits wanted.

Cedric started reading about one of his ancestors, Anthragon, 8th descendant, a great lover of women. Cedric's heart hammered harder.

"I would trade all the girls in the world just for my mother."

His heart beat frantically now as he her gentled touch in the forest, and Mom's big lush bosom. Damn, she's good. It still felt unreal.

Until a couple of months ago, he hadn't even thought about the fact that his mother was also a woman, and a very stunning one. He was disgusted when he looked at her ass the day before they escaped the castle.

And now Seraphina occupied all his thoughts.

He angrily slammed another book shut, tossing it aside.

"None of this matters if the world ends. What did the spirit mean when it said about deals with mother and sister? There is no prophecy about my sister. There is nothing! I am not smart enough for your riddles! Why didn't it just say where to look for answers on how to stop the Eclipse!"

Flipping through another large tome he suddenly stopped on a page. It was the very page with the Eclipsian Dynasty family tree.

The tree started straight from the great Arik and ended with Cedric and his sister. The ink on his name still seemed fresh, not dried out.

His attention was drawn back to the dark stains on some of the names. They were perhaps even fresher than the ink with his and Elowen's name. They made it impossible to make out one of his ancestors.

The 18 descendants were separated by dark lines—four black lines that divided them into groups of six each.

First line. First descendant.

Second line. Sixth descendant.

Third line. Twelfth descendant.

Fourth line. Eighteenth descendant.

He closed the book in anger. "I'm tired." Thoughts about his mother stirred his male gut, so he drifted off to sleep.





Soldiers were training, campfires flickered, and sentries were roaming the valley. Another new day was beginning at Lord Blunder's camp. Another day waiting for the unknown.

Cedric met this morning outside his big tent, leaning on a cane. He looked tired, with dark bags under his eyes. As he observed, Seraphina walked towards the forest. "She didn't even say good morning. Now, she often goes to the forest instead of the library. I guess she's too afraid of me."

He couldn't take his eyes off the two beautiful and firm curves of her ass. The halves moved in rhythm with her fast and confident strides. Fatigue prevented him from realizing that someone might notice his gaze.

"I should just let it go. She'll never let me..." But before he could finish the thought, Eligh slapped his shoulder with a stick.

"Keep your eyes up, soldier. Did you left your sword in the tent again?"



Cedric was catching his breath after training. His sore shoulder throbbed. A white raven circled above.

"I don't understand what you want from me."

"Me?" Eligh loomed over him. "I want you to stop thinking too much. Your problem is that you think when you're in a fight. Just let it flow and let your body fight. See you tomorrow, kiddo."

"Whatever." Cedric sighed and unintentionally eavesdropped on a conversation. Elowen stood outside Blunder's tent, but Riley blocked her.

"I want to see the Lord. He should know that I can be useful. Let me inside! Don't I have any rights in this awful camp?" she protested.

"Blunder has asked not to be disturbed, Princess. He can only see the prince, queen, and the generals."



"Oh, yes, I've noticed how often our mother visits his tent. They must be close, don't you think? Or maybe you're a little jealous of me and Lord?"



"Envious?"

"Your cold stare might impress other girls, but it doesn't impress me. I'm sorry, dear, but you're not my type." Elowen took a step forward, and suddenly Riley grabbed her hood and threw Elowen into the dirt.

Elowen fell painfully, staining her face and clothes. Her hair covered her face as she tried to hide her tears.

"No one wants you in this camp, princess," Riley said, placing his hands behind his back.

"Hey!!!" Cedric stood up and moved to the scene, raising his fist directly toward Riley's face. Strange, he'd never done that before. The sudden anger forced him to act. His fist clenched in pain, and Riley jerked back a little, blood spurting from his lip. He didn't speak but unsheathed his sword, aiming it at Cedric.

The prince did the same, raising his moon sword.

"Touch my sister again - I'll kill you."

Riley, with a bloody lip and an angry look, did something Cedric didn't expect. He actually attacked, swinging his sword. The prince parried the first blow, stepping back. Riley continued the onslaught of sharp attacks, he moved skillfully.

Cedric wasn't a match. He fought back, trying to save his life. Cedric counterattacked, shoving Riley in the chest. He barely steadied himself and flung his dagger straight at Cedric. The prince recoiled, but part of the blade grazed his cheek, leaving a tiny cut. Blood rushed, and he wiped his cheek, preparing for another attack.

"Enough!" Eligh appeared just in time, knocking the sword out of Riley's hands and grabbing him by his suit. "You could have killed him with a dagger!"

"So what? You can't tell me what to do, old man." He shoved Eligh aside.

"Perhaps I should tell Lord Blunder that you're not loyal to our mission. You're not loyal to the prince."

"You have no idea how loyal I am..." Riley went inside the tent.

Cedric returned his sword to its scabbard and walked over to his sister. She was still lying in the dirt unable to gather strength to get up.

"It's okay, Elowen." He reached out to help his sister. He wrapped his arm around her cute slender waist and gently lifted her, wiping away the tears that streaked her beautiful face. Using a handkerchief, he wiped her cheeks.

"Cedric," she whispered. His sister looked so vulnerable at that moment. He brushed the dirty curls away from her cute face. He wanted so badly to comfort her, to make her feel better, and to keep her safe. "I'm here for you. Let's go, I'll walk you to your tent. Everything will be okay."



"Don't... I... Just leave me alone," she pushed at his chest. "Don't fucking touch me! I hate you, Cedric. I'm a nobody here and it's all because of you! I just want to die."

She sobbed, covered in mud, and hurried back to her tent.

Cedric wiped the blood from his cheek as Eligh approached.

"Go, find your mother. Blunder is calling an emergency council again to discuss something important. Get some fresh air," the old man said, patting him on the back.



"Who does he think he is?" Cedric waved his cane in the air. "No one dares to treat my sister like that. Even if she calls me an idiot, even she calls a mama's boy and... and... other insults!"

He pictured her scared face again and heard her softly say his name.

"I love Elowen anyway."

Suddenly, he heard splashing and moved closer, hiding behind a random tree.

Seraphina dipped into the river. Water always helped her calm down and regain herself. Her dress, necklace and underwear were left lying in the grass. She wiped her breasts with water, squeezing nipples.

"Mmmm... Arik. It's been so long." She ran her hand between her legs but then pulled it out in disappointment. "I haven't felt you inside in months, because of your damned Eclipse, Arik, I think I'm starting to molest our own son. And also talking to myself. What's wrong with me?"

She shook her wet hair, rubbing her eyes. Her hands glided over her wet, incredible mother's body.

Cedric swallowed, watching her. "She's so stunning. I would also steal her from this godforsaken place if I was Dad."

He made a clumsy mistake, and his cane accidentally stepped on a twig.

Seraphina suddenly covered her boobs and looked straight in his direction.

"CEDRIC!?"

"I'm sorry, Mom. I'm so sorry!" He turned away, blushing. "You were gone for a long time, and I... I got worried. Blunder is gathering everyone in his tent again. I'd better go back to the camp."

"Wait," Seraphina rolled her eyes. "Since you're already here, hand me my clothes and help me get up."

He awkwardly approached. The water was just below ground level. Without looking at her, he extended his hand. She took it, and he helped her up.

But Cedric didn't release her from his arms; his hands rested on Mom's waist as she stood up. His fingers held onto her soft,



tender skin. He lowered his gaze – her boobs were right in front of him. Hard drenched pink nipples were just a few inches down.

"Cedric, let me go," she looked at him wearily.

"Yeah, yeah. I'm sorry. Just another second. Wow. Mom, you are so beatif..." He didn't want to let her go, but he had to when she grabbed his hand and tightly squeezed his index finger, almost breaking it.



"Ughhhh, Mom!!!"

"Do you remember I mentioned that I can do a thing or two as well? The priestesses taught us a bit of fighting, and your father also taught me to stand up for myself. Now, move."

She lightly pushed his chest, and he had to step back, wincing as he rubbed his finger.

She lifted her clothes and put on underwear, necklace, then draped a dress over her wet body.

"It's okay, I forgive you. I'm not mad at you for taking glances, hiding behind a tree without my consent...

Men. Your dad liked to

peek, too. You probably inherited it from him."

"Oh gosh, is she talking about Dad again?" He picked up his walking cane from the ground. Finger's still sore.

She continued, "That's how we met actually. I used to go to the river, and one day he was peeking at me. Can you imagine? At first, I was mad, but he was so charming. I couldn't resist; men were rare here. That same evening, after we met, we conceived Elowen, and that's when we realized that I can't stay here. We wanted to be together forever, until one of us dies." She touched her stomach. "Sorry, you probably don't want to hear that. I miss your Dad so much."

Cedric rolled his eyes, his cheeks were still flushed.

"But still. Don't you ever spy on me again! Never!"

She sounded so much like Elowen now. "Your father was lucky with me, but another girl is unlikely to appreciate it if you do it. Let's go."



His gaze constantly wanted to fall on Mom's stunning legs. It was so hard to look in a different direction. Cedric sat alongside his mother on council meeting at Blunder's tent.

"New Exarchy doesn't seem too happy about us being here," said Blunder.

"Why should she be? We are jeopardizing her people and the virginity of her maidens" said Seraphina.

"We are here protecting her valley! She should be happy we are here keep her ass safe," said tough General Roscoe.



"Yes, protecting the valley from the danger we brought here," Seraphina now looked angry and Cedric placed his hand on her leg. Her skin felt incredibly soft. She gave him a slightly disapproving look from the corner of her eye but didn't say anything. She just gently took his hand off her leg.

"Let's talk about why I called you here today. The

King."

"The King?" Seraphina almost jumped from her chair.

"King Arik sent an army here. Colonel Tilidus leading them."

"Tilidus? But Tilidus is at war with Solarion. The king is sending him only when he wants someone dead!" Roscoe stood up from his chair.

"That is why I have gathered you here."

"Is the king going to war against us? But, my lord, didn't you say he wouldn't? I don't want to fight Tilidus' troops," one of the young captains asked.

"Me neither."

"Arik would never send his men against you for war, Lord Blunder," interjected Seraphina. "I know my husband. You and your domain are part of his Eclipsian Empire. He would never... Cedric, tell them."

"Maybe we wouldn't have to run away from home if he was the way you think he is, Mom," said Cedric.

Blunder stared pensively into the void. "I didn't know it could come to this. I've considered Arik my friend for so many years, and now he's sending Tilidus."



"Lord Blunder, I understand my husband better than anyone here. I believe his army is headed for negotiations or...or... something else. He would never..."

"For negotiations? Just listen to yourself, Queen. Maybe your son is right? Maybe you were mistaken in him, just like I was. The

desire to control the power of the Eclipse has blinded our King. I would like to believe your words, but there's too much responsibility lying on my shoulders. We'll wait until you and Cedric finish your search. You lead this council, Prince."

"Me? Am I now the head of the council, among other things?" He looked at all captains and generals gathered here. Bald Conrad still hadn't returned and was absent today.

He locked eyes with Seraphina. She looked so stunning.

"I guess you expect me to act older than I am, but I'm still not a hero or the chosen one. Whatever. You're expecting miracles from me, but I know nothing. And I don't have time for a council, I'm busy with my search."

"I don't think anyone else can step in for you, Prince"

"Well, there's someone who can."



He smiled as he sat in front of his books, remembering their faces – how they freaked out when he appointed Elowen as the new head of the council. He really didn't have time for councils, with the Cosmic Eclipse approaching.

He looked at his family tree again. Four lines. Near each line on either side was a black round. What does it mean?

"That's the Eclipses. That's what it means. It's happened four times. And now it's gonna happen on my watch. The fourth black line is the upcoming Cosmic Eclipse. But if the last Eclipse happened under the 12th descendant, over a hundred years ago, why don't we have any records of that day?"

He turned the sheet. Weird, but he didn't do that before. There was an inscription in gold letters.

"18th and 19th. When the night meets the dawn - one will stand, one will fall"

"Right. Another riddle."

Someone suddenly entered the tent. Cedric jerked, hiding the



books under the bed. "Who's there?"

"Are you jerking off?" asked Elowen.

"Disgusting."

"No, no. I didn't. Look!" He stood up, showing her his hands. "My pants are on."

"Whatever. I don't care. I just hope you weren't thinking about Mom!"

"I told you. I

wasn't jerking off!"

She gave him a slight smile; her cut was almost gone, but she still hid it behind her hair. She nervously played with her fingers.

"Don't you want to tell me where you got that cut from?" He tried to brush dark locks of hair away, but she pushed his hand away.

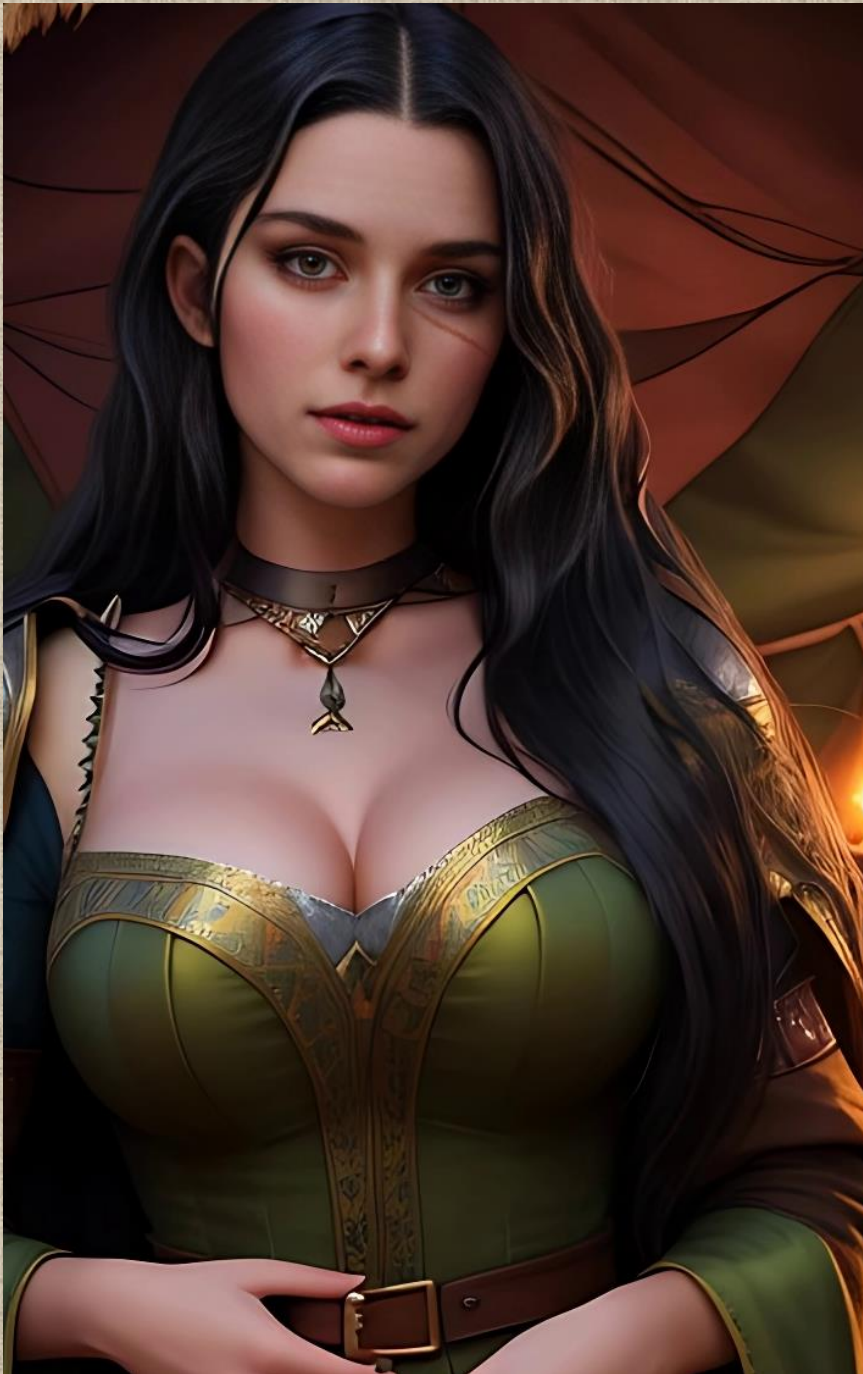
"Do not dare touch me!!!"

"Alright, alright. Sorry."

"I fell, okay?" She sighed. "Fine, I didn't fall. I came back to the

library a few days ago. You know, to help you and Mom with your search, but they told me my visits were over. I had exceeded my limit or some bullshit like that. And, well, you know me. I got angry and then I... got hit. One of them just hit me in the face. That's it. That's the story. But don't you dare to tell anyone! It's our secret. My public version is that I wounded while fighting the evil Cult."

"Why didn't you tell us anything?"



"It doesn't matter! Got it!? Forget about it."

"It's the first time you ever shared a secret with me." He grinned.

"Don't make me regret it, Mama's boy. Now, tell me something important. Why did you do that, Cedric?"

"Why did I do what? Gosh, I told you! I wasn't jerki..."

"Shut up. I'm not talking about that, you idiot! Why did you appoint me as the head of the Council?"

"Oh," he hesitated. "Because... you're smart. Smarter than me. You said that you wanted a chance to prove yourself? Well, here it is. Now you are not nobody, right? Show them that you're worth something. You've earned it."

He lowered his eyes, and when he raised them again, Elowen was standing so close. She hugged him. Her hair smelled so pleasant and soft. She cried into his shoulder, hugging him tightly.

"Thank you," she whispered. "For everything."

He paused, placing his hand on her head. It felt unexpectedly good to hug her.

"I love you, El."

"No, you don't."

He could bet she was smiling.

"Prince?" a guard suddenly entered.

Elowen's eyes widened; she pushed Cedric away and stood beside.

"Uh... Yes?" Cedric asked, watching as Elowen wiped away the tears.

"I didn't mean to interrupt, but she wants to see you."

"She? Now? Who?"

"Exarchy. And it seems she's not happy."



He stepped out, making sure to grab his sword. Before leaving, he took the page with the Dynasty tree and concealed it in his clothing.

"I'll find Mom," Elowen vanished, but Cedric paid no attention to it.

In the center of the camp, the priestesses and warriors of the Library gathered, with Exarchy standing in the middle.

Blunder's soldiers gathered to watch the scene.

"I don't understand, Exarchy. You can't do this!" Blunder protested.

"No, I can. Prince Cedric," Cindy addressed the prince upon noticing him.

"What's happening here?"

"The Exarchy demands that we leave the valley because you stole the books. Tell her that's not true, Cedric."

"Lies are the last thing I want to hear today. Cedric of the Eclipsian Dynasty, we are banishing you and your people from our valley. You abused our hospitality and violated our sacred rules. You stole our books."

"Screw your books! The world is going to perish in a couple of months, and you're concerned about these stupid rules! You are not banishing us because of the books. Am I right?"

A brief pause hung in the air. A white crow flew over the crowd, and Riley, standing behind Blunder, kept a tense gaze on it.



"You are right. I'm banishing you not because of the books. I'm banishing you because you brought death and war to my home. Our valley has become a graveyard for many of our sisters and mothers. And you're responsible for that. You, Cedric from the Eclipsian Dynasty. Get out. NOW! All of you, get out!"

She turned around and, accompanied by her guards, hurried away from the camp.

"So what now?" asked Riley.

"It seems we lost," Blunder glared at Cedric as if it was his fault. "We're leaving."

"But the Eclipse..."

"Don't pretend you care about our mission, Riley," said Blunder. "You never have."

"Cedric!" Elowen, out of breath, ran up. "Mom. She's gone! Her tent is empty."



"Are you sure she's here?" Elowen scanned the trees, peering into the forest. It was getting dark, and it became chilly.

"She often goes to the river to think. I guess being with me is too uncomfortable for her after what happened between us in the woods.

"And what exactly happened between you two in the woods?" Elowen asked in surprise.

"Oh... It doesn't matter. Do you remember what happened between us in the woods?"

"I'm trying to forget it like a bad dream."

"I actually enjoyed it," Cedric smiled, and Elowen hit him painfully on the wounded shoulder.

"Ouch!" He winced.

"I'm not our Mommy. I won't encourage your



flattery and courtship, got it?"

"I was serious."

He rubbed his shoulder and walked ahead, approaching the water. The moonlight shimmered on the surface, and the forest was so quiet. But there was no sign of Seraphina.

"Did you really hear my words when you were out, Cedric?" She asked.

"Yes. I heard you." He took her hand. She probably wanted to pull away, shout the usual "don't touch me," but she didn't. Her cheeks turned red. She looked very beautiful in the silvery moonlight.

She reached out, touching the scar on his cheek from the dagger's blade.

"Thanks for standing up for me today. Maybe I'm starting to understand why Mom can't resist you."

He leaned in and kissed her, embracing her waist. Strangely, her lips felt so warm and tasty.



She pulled away and lightly hit his chest. "Idiot! What are you doing? I told you – I'm not like our Mom!"

"Sorry. You're just so beautiful." His cheeks turned crimson too. They stood there like a pair of awkward teenagers.

"Do you smell that?"

"What? If that's some kind of new insult..."

"Stop whining. Look." She pointed toward the sky, where thick dark smoke was rising. It was visible even in the night sky.

"That's Tilidus. King's people are already here. They arrived faster than Blunder expected. Did the keepers of the Library let them into the valley?"

At that moment, something heavy struck him on the head. He dropped to one knee, everything swirling before his eyes. He tried to reach for his sword.

"Cedric! Help!"

He heard Elowen's distant cry. "No, Elowen!" He swung his sword through the air. The blade hit someone standing nearby. He heard a female scream, but it wasn't Elowen. It was the one he hit.

Blood was streaming from the back of his head. Cedric swung the blade again.

"Leave him," another voice said. He stepped back and almost fell. He was blinded for a couple of minutes, but pretended to be ready for a fight. Another step, and he almost fell into the water when someone grabbed him by the coat and pulled.

He wanted to attack, but the unknown person stopped the sword. "You're bleeding." It was Riley. "How long have you been standing here? What happened?"

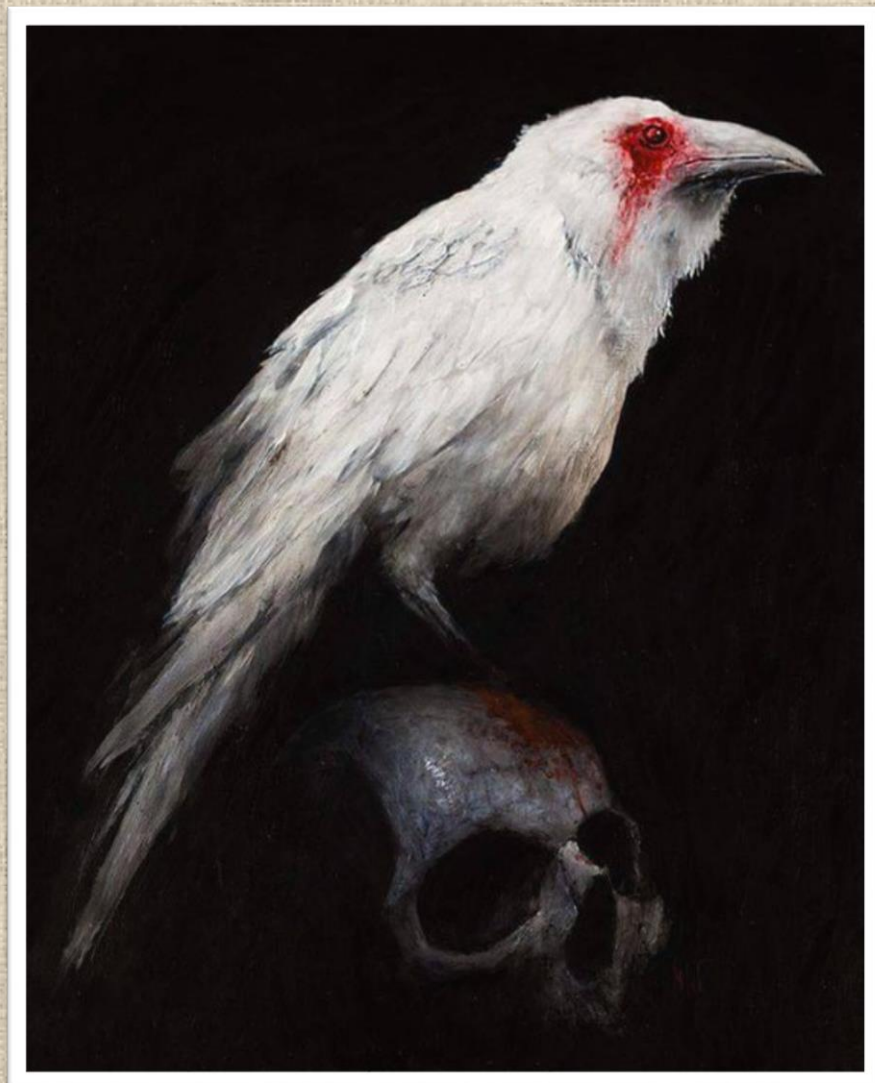
Cedric rubbed his eyes. "Did I lost track of time? Gosh, my head. They... they took them."

"They?" Riley tightened grip on his hilt.

"Library."



CHAPTER 10. UNRAVELLING THE SECRETS



He quickly climbed the steps with a small group of soldiers. Blunder let only a few people go for that mission. Lion's army was about to meet Tilidus' troops.

Riley walked alongside Cedric.

"Are you scared?" Riley asked. "Your knees are trembling."

"I'm just not over the shock yet," Cedric said, horror in his eyes as he looked at the building getting closer. "What awaits me there? Can I save Elowen and Mom? It's one thing to fight in training, and another to take someone's life in a real duel. No one is ever ready. That's what Eligh said".

Riley smiled, reading his mind. "Uncertainty is part of the journey, prince."

Cedric heard a familiar caw. The white crow flew in, perching on the shoulder of the white-haired guard. Riley gently stroked it, and the bird, cawing, flew away again.

"Are you.... Are you a spirit?" Cedric asked.

"No, probably not. But I'm somehow connected to them and this place. Blunder found me here, in the valley, when I was a child."

Cedric didn't have time to ask more. They reached the very top. There were no guards. Riley went ahead and swiftly opened the door. Torchlight illuminated the vestibule, and the Exarch's table was empty. A green cloak lay not far away on the ground.

"Elowen," Cedric rushed forward to pick it up. The soldiers entered. "There's a tunnel in the wall. They must be there; it leads downward."

"If you run ahead alone, you'll die," Riley stepped forward, holding his sword ready.

Following the wind, a crow slowly flew into the hall, inspecting the vestibule. It flew to the Exarch's table, settling on the edge.

At that moment, as if the crow was what they had been waiting for, the door slammed shut. The torches went out.

"It's a trap."

"Of course, it's a trap." Riley looked round.

They were surrounded. Fighting blindly was foolish, but their enemies didn't care. They captured the crow in a sack. Blunder's men were being killed one by one. Someone grabbed Cedric by the hand and took away moon-sword.



"Weapons are not toys for children. Don't you know that, prince?"

He was just lightly pushed, surrounded by several women. He tried to break free, but he couldn't. His hands were tied. They descended further, dragging someone else nearby, and a bag with a crow hung from someone's belt.

"Where is my sister? Where is my mother?"

"You'll find out soon."

They walked for a long time, descending deep into the mountains until he finally saw light at the end of the descending tunnel. The light got closer, and one of the priestesses awaited them with a torch.

"Are the others dead?" she asked.

No one answered; probably just nodded.

The priestess opened the door, letting them in. Cedric found himself in a vast underground space. It resembled a dungeon prison. When his eyes adjusted to the dim light, he noticed people. But not women—men. Men and boys were scattered in the cells. They stayed still, just staring into nothing, breathing and making incoherent noises.

Cedric and Riley passed the cells, entering a room with chairs and wooden platforms with chains and leather straps.

"What is this place?"

"It's where the future is born." Cindy closed the



doors behind them. "All of our knowledge and prophecies come from the spirits. Did you know that, Prince?"

She approached, picking up the bag with the crow. Riley silently observed, his entire face covered in blood.

"Exarchy said that some priestesses have the gift of communicating with spirits," said Cedric.

"She lied. Spirits don't like to reveal secrets unless you force them to. The Library has been using our men since its foundation. We use their bodies as vessels and try to trap spirits inside them. For some reason, our men are perfect vessels. Sadly, most men and boys die, but sometimes we manage to trap a spirit."

She took Riley's face, squeezing his cheeks.

"We underestimated your power, and you escaped. But now you are here again. How convenient."

"You experimented on me? Used me as a vessel?" Riley's white eyes filled with anger.

"Yes, and it's still inside you. Kukuwaya managed to escape once he got trapped inside your child's body. It didn't know how to leave you so it erased your memory. I guess that's what happened."

"That's why I hated every second of being here."

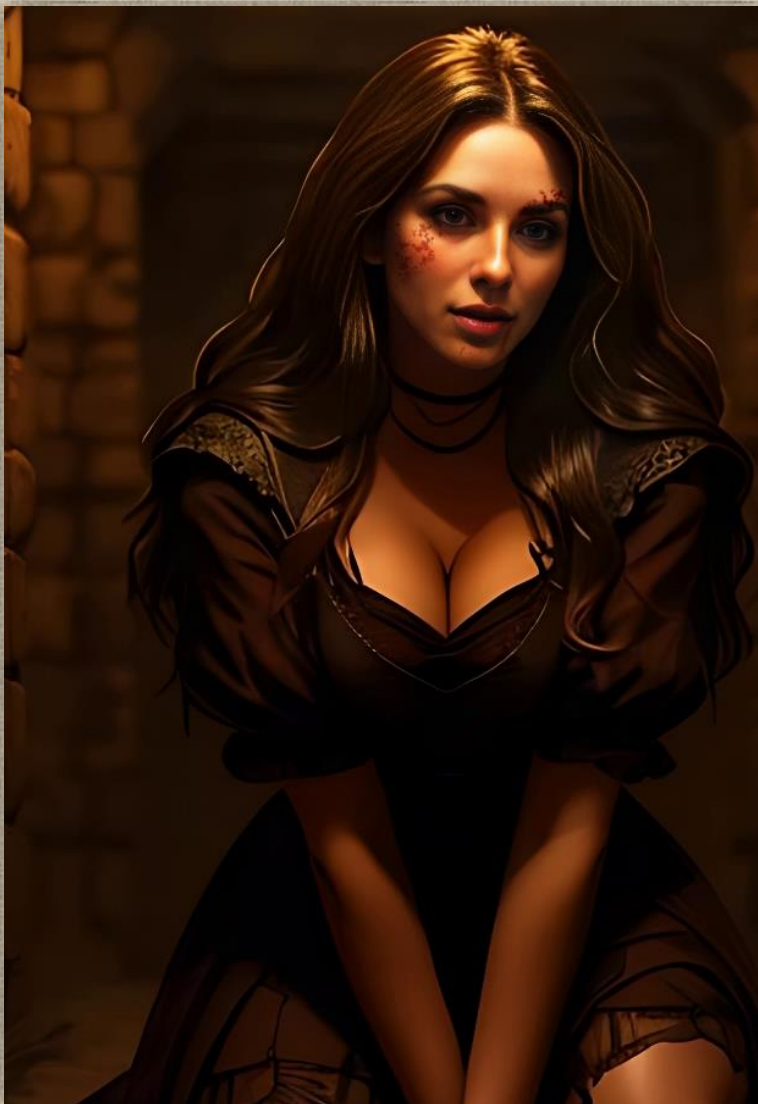
Exarchy inspected the bag with the crow. "And now we finally have Corvus. Can you hear me, Fatewinder? We've captured your last servant! What will you do now?" Cindy shouted, looking at the ceiling.

Cedric glanced at Riley, noticing him trying to retrieve the hidden dagger and cut the bound hands.

"Where are my mother and sister?" asked Cedric.

"They will be here very soon. Because of your presence in our valley, we lost some of our women. But fortunately, we now have the last descendant of Leronse and her daughter."

The door to the room opened, Seraphina and Elowen were dragged inside. His sister was unconscious. Their hands were also tied.



"Cedric." Seraphina looked at her son. Her face showed signs of a fight – bruises, scratches, and dried blood. It was clear she had tried to resist, and as a result, she had been punished.

"You dared to harm her? I'll kill you for that," Cedric tried to break free but received a blow to the face.

"We'll use your mother and sister as incubators to

give birth to new descendants of the library founders. I'll take

away your family just as you took away mine. I was on my own and I had to take on all this responsibility..."

"Don't tell me about responsibility." His face still burned with pain after the blow. "I know what it's like when it suddenly falls on your shoulders."

She stared into his eyes for a couple of seconds and turned away.

"I didn't know about what's going on here, Cedric. I promise..."

Cindy hit Seraphina in the face.

"Be silent. I have big plans for you two. All that's left is to find a perfect vessel for Corvus. Then all the spirits of Fatewinder will finally be ours."

Cedric slowly shifted his gaze to the bound Riley. His restraints were almost torn, but for some reason, he wasn't moving. His already pale face grew even paler; it seemed like he was listening to something or someone inside.

He suddenly looked at the Cedric.

"Prince. Tell Blunder that I have always been... loyal to our mission. And to him." A tear rolled down his pale face. Riley tore the rope and, with a swift motion, slashed his own throat with the dagger's blade.

A sharp, blinding light illuminated the room. The bag with the raven slipped from Cindy's hands, and Corvus was freed. When the light faded, and the lifeless Riley lay on the ground, two birds intertwined in the air—a raven and an owl. The owl flew towards

Elowen, while the raven, cawing loudly, headed straight for Cedric.

"No, no." Cedric covered his face, bracing for the inevitable collision.



But nothing happened. He opened his eyes, the light wind rubbing his hair, the bindings were gone.

"What... happened?" He looked around. He stood on a high hill, and below was a large city with a red castle in its center. He felt certain that the answer to how to stop the Eclipse was somewhere there.

"You completed the task."

Cedric heard a voice behind. He turned around. Fatewinder looked at him (though it didn't have eyes), with a raven on its shoulder. "Thank you. It was all Corvus's idea. He just needed to get inside. And for you – to bring Kukuwaya, I mean, Riley, inside with you."

"So, you just used me?"

"No. We observed how you took care of your family, your sister, and your mother. We were trying to understand if you're truly worthy. And you proved your love for your family. You are good brother and son. The library has caused spirits to suffer for many centuries. Their desire to know the



secrets of the universe and the future led them to the fate of butchers. How many men, their brothers, perished? They brought back evil that had been hidden for many thousand years and should've stayed hidden. The Ancient One..."

The raven suddenly cawed.

"Yes, yes. I got distracted, you're right, Corvus." The spirit stroked the raven. "We waited for a long time. Alone, spirits are weak, but when there are many of us, there is nothing more powerful. And now, with the strength of my two faithful servants, Corvus and Kukuwaya, in the enemy's lair, I can destroy the library and free all my spirits. Your friend had no future, Cedric. Don't pity him as his sacrifice will never be forgotten."

A raven flew up.

"You saved your sister and mother; you saved the spirits. We are in your eternal debt. The answers you seek are in the Red Castle. In my gratitude Corvus and Kukuwaya will follow you. They are spirits of love, two parts of one whole. They'll take care of you and, please, take care of them."

Everything flashed before Cedric's eyes. "Wait. I still have questions!"

But Fatewinder was already gone.



It hit him like a splash of cold water, while warm air filled his lungs. Dungeon's walls rumbled and shook.

"What's happening?" asked one of the priestesses.

"Spirits..." said Exarchy.

Cedric tore the rope, breaking free. His hand reached out, grabbing his moon-sword from the priestess standing nearby. He attacked as Eligh had taught him, he wounded the first one, then the second, clearing his way forward.

Debris fell around them, almost blocking the entrance. Cedric picked up the dagger that had fallen from Riley's hands and plunged it straight into Cindy's heart. "That's for hurting my family."

She emitted a strange squeal, going limp in his arms.

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

"Me too." Cedric sharply pulled out the knife, letting the body fall.

Everyone in the room hurried to the exit. Cedric quickly looked one more time at where Riley's body was, but the white-haired soldier was already under a heap of rocks.

"Cedric! Help me!" Seraphina tried to pull the unconscious Elowen away from falling stones. He approached, cutting the ropes on his mother's hands. Cedric lifted Elowen, and they headed out of the room. Bright light, like after Riley's death, illuminated the corridors of the dark dungeon. Spirits were releasing, destroying the foundation of the library

Most of the priestesses had already climbed the unblocked slopes. The vast chamber, filled with emaciated men dressed in rags, was still crowded. They weren't spirits, but rather victims of unsuccessful experiments. Empty shells.

"We must set them free!" He put Elowen down to find the key.

"Cedric! What are you doing! Are you out of your mind? We need to go. Come to your senses. We won't make it in time," Seraphina urged towards the exit.

"I can't abandon these people to die." He spotted a key near one of the bodies (his eyes immediately noticed the metallic glint of keys on the floor). As he reached for it, someone closer to the bars snatched it away.

"Don't. Leave us. I know you want to help, kid, but there's no future for us. Most here have long been dead inside."

"But I..."

"Go. Save yourself, kid."

"Eligh!" Seraphina shouted, but before Cedric could turn around, someone grabbed him by the neck and pulled him along. It was Eligh.

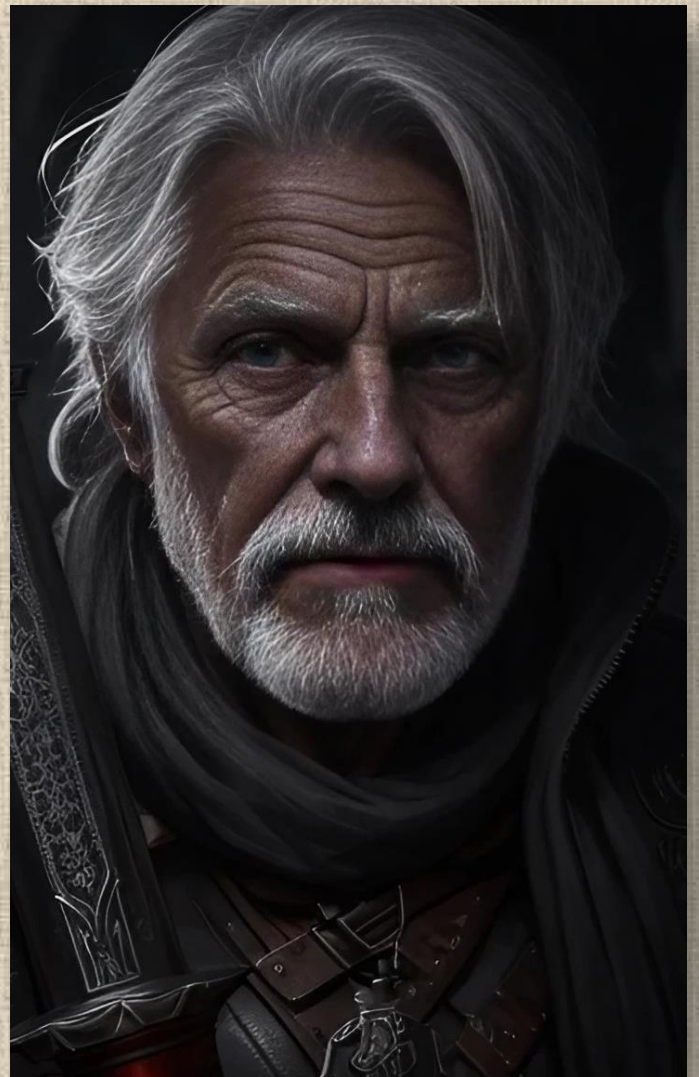
"The exit is in the other direction. Prince."

"But we can't leave them."

"You've done all you could." Along with Eligh, there were several soldiers, all looking tired after battle.

"What is this place?" asked one of them.

"Doesn't matter now. Let's go. Run you fools." The old man lifted Elowen's body.



Eligh carried the princess, and Cedric helped Seraphina. She attempted to hide it, but it looked like that when she was captured, she had been hit too hard on the head. She continued to lean on him, her boobs gently touching his chest.

"I'm so sorry, dear. Forgive me, Cedric," she whispered.

"There's nothing to be sorry for." He held her one boob and adjusted his grip on her body, continuing to climb up. "What's happening, Eligh?"

The upstairs seemed endless.

"Tilidus attacked. That's what."

"Impossible," Seraphina almost stumbled. "Arik would never..."

"Your husband has gone mad, Queen. It's time to admit it."

Another handful of the king's soldiers gathered at vestibule, when they finally reached the top. Conrad was among them.

"We need to leave the library before it collapses with us," Conrad said.

"We can't leave. There are books here!" said Seraphina.

"Forget about your books. They're already beyond saving," Eligh rushed towards the exit, and the soldiers hurried after him.

Cedric had to literally drag his Mom away when the building began to collapse. The knowledge accumulated here for centuries was now buried under a pile of stones. They miraculously saved themselves when the collapsing library only took a part of the stairs with it.

"The Library..." Seraphina fell to her knees in horror. She watched as the accumulated knowledge, gathered in one place for centuries by her ancestors turned into dust and ruins.

"You can't do anything now, Mom."

"I'm sorry, but there's no time for grief. Don't mourn scraps of paper." Eligh approached, handing Conrad Elowen's body. "You



need to leave. Conrad will guide you through the secret passage."

Cedric only noticed now that the valley and the camp were once again engulfed in flames.

It was madness.

"What about you?" Cedric looked into the old man's eyes. "Will you come with us?"

"We must find Blunder. We have to save our lord." He drew his sword and placed a hand on the prince's shoulder. "I've taught you everything I knew, Cedric. Our training has come to an end."

"Don't say it. I... I'm not ready yet."

"No one is ever ready. Go, do what you must. Save the world."

Eligh gave orders to Blunder's people and hurried down the stairs. Only Conrad stayed behind. Cedric looked back at the soldiers, thoughts swirling in his head.

"Come on. There's another way down here." Conrad rushed down and suddenly veered off, carrying Elowen's body down a steep hill.

"Mom?" Cedric turned around. Seraphina sat there, shocked, still on her knees.

"Arik would never... He would never," she whispered.

"It's time for us to leave." He helped her stand and followed Conrad.



The path through the forest was tough.

"We almost there. Cedric, give me a hand here." Conrad handed him Elowen's body.

They kept walking through the valley, and it was hard to ignore the sounds of battle. The fight between Blunder and the king's soldiers kept going.

Sometimes Seraphina would cover her ears, unable to listen any longer.

"You're Conrad. Right? I remember you from the council," Cedric said.

Conrad silently continued walking forward, scanning the forest with his keen eyes for enemies.

"Do you know anything about the Red Castle?"

"Are you talking about Solarion's Red Castle?" Conrad replied.



"Does it belong to Solarion?"

"The Red Castle is the capital of Solarion. King Malachin lives there."

Cedric decided to keep quiet about the unpleasant fact that he now needed to go there.

"Cedric?" Elowen finally half-opened her eyes, touching his cheek with her hand.

"Finally. My hands were getting stiff, sissy. You didn't last long as the head of the council, did you?"



"What are you talking about. Ugh, my head."

"Over here!" Conrad pointed to the opening between two rocks. Dead Blunder's people, the watchmen, were here.

When they left the valley, they walked for a long time, until dawn. Elowen could walk on her own now, but Cedric still supported her.

"I heard everything... Everything that happened. I don't know how, but. It's so strange inside," she touched her

chest.

"It's Kukuwaya."

"Who?"

"Doesn't matter."

The night was coming to an end, but they kept going.

"I left all my things at the camp" Seraphina almost stumbled, but Cedric helped her. "So many books, so much knowledge."

She pressed her head into his shoulder, seemingly unable to take another step. His arms stung from fatigue, but he lifted Mom up and carried her anyway. She was slightly heavier than Elowen.

"We're almost there. The village is close. Put on your hoods and follow me. No one should recognize you." Conrad said.

They reached the village soon. Right in the middle was a big statue of King Arik. Cedric looked at his father's face carved in stone under the morning sun and then went with everyone into the house that Conrad had rented. He noticed that Seraphina didn't even glance at the statue.

"We'll be safe here. At least for now."

No one responded. Seraphina lit the fireplace, silently watching the dance of the flames. And Elowen went straight to bed.

"Thank you, Conrad," said Cedric.



"I'll keep an eye on the house. Rest, and watch over your mother and sister, Prince. I'm sure they're going through a tough time right now." Conrad left, leaving them alone.

"I need to ask you, Mom. Did you really know nothing about what was happening in the library all these centuries?"

"Not now, Cedric, Please."

"Swear to me that you knew nothing."

"I swear."

He sighed and sat down beside her, helping her tend to her wounds. Gently, he wiped away the blood on her cheek and lip

"Your Dad was always so gentle, respectful. He wouldn't harm a fly... But to send his people against Lord Blunder. How wrong I was."

"I've said it before. We wouldn't have escaped from the castle if he were the same man you fell in love with. Maybe it's time to admit that he has changed? Maybe he... no longer loves you? And us?"

"She remained silent for some time, contemplatively gazing into the fire. "Maybe you're right. Maybe I was so blinded by my love to him."

She burst into tears, loudly and terribly. Cedric sat beside her and hugged. He ran his hands along her back, pressing her head to his chest.

"But I still have you, Cedric. My dear son."

He hugged her tighter, feeling a sudden surge of strength. "Her loyalty to Dad is fading," he smiled, feeling the beating of her heart. Or was it his heart pounding wildly? It was now difficult to tell.



He put his mother to bed and then entered another room where Elowen peacefully slept. Her hair fell on her face. She was so beautiful. He touched her cheek, then her chest, trying to feel the beats of her heart.

"Corvus and Kukuwaya."

"What are you doing, Mama's boy?" Elowen opened her eyes.

He quickly withdrew his hand, frightened. "I...uh...nothing."

"Do you want to touch my boobs?"

"What? No, no! I don't..."

As he answered, she took his hand and guided it to her breast. He loved the sensation, he didn't resist, just enthusiastically swam with the current. Elowen's breasts were smaller than Seraphina's, but attractive and beautiful in their own way. Her nipple was amusingly hard and small.

"Come here." She grabbed him by his clothes and pulled closer, kissing him on the lips. He did the same. His sister tasted like strawberries. Her lips were driving him crazy. Her mouth felt like the most warm and tender place in the world.

"What are you doing... Elowen? You should be recovering."

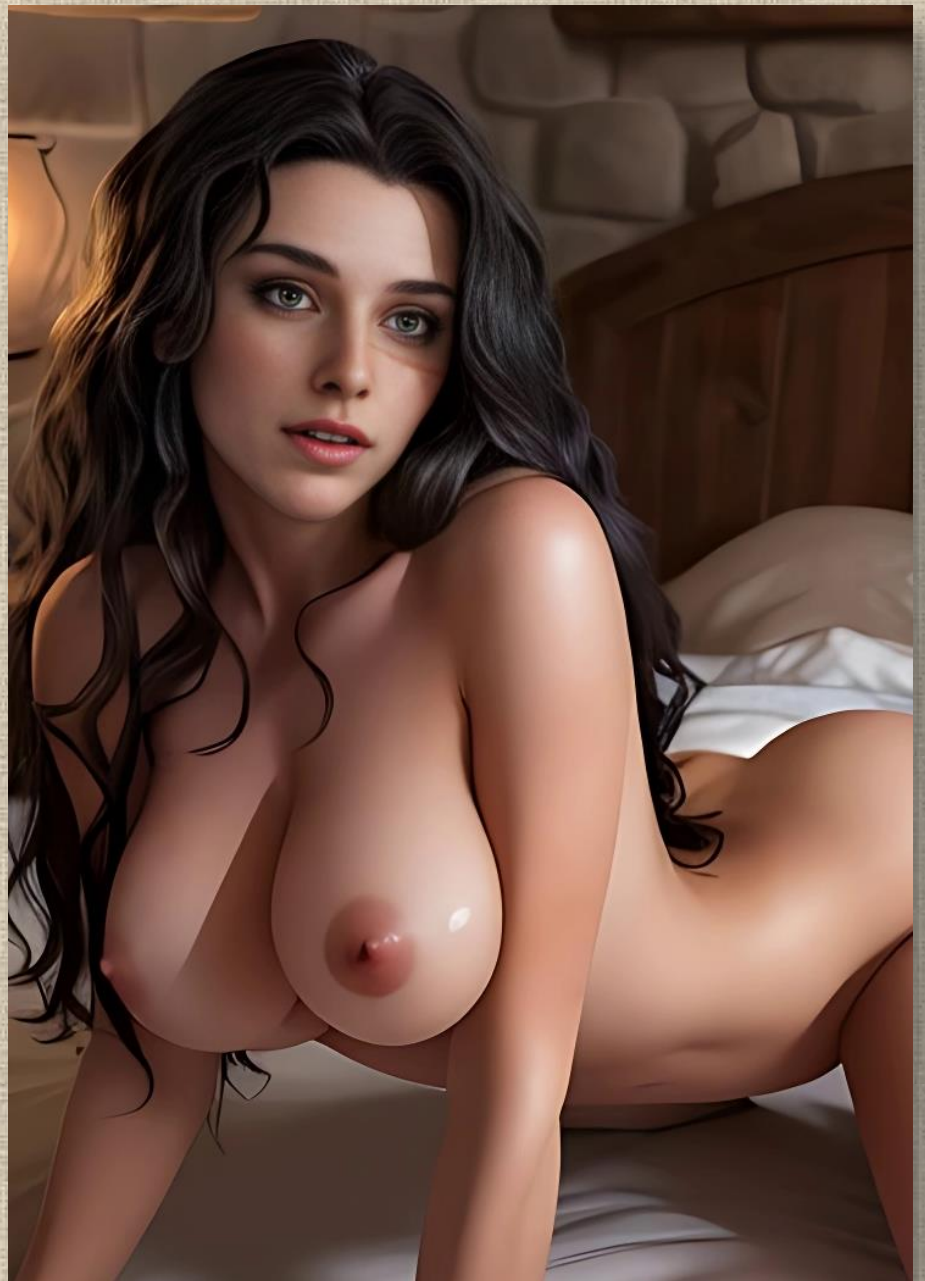
"What a fucking crybaby you are, brother. I almost died today. Just shut up and enjoy it."

She kissed him again and pulled close, and Cedric didn't resist. Elowen pulled down her dress, exposing her breasts and firm young ass.

She guided his hands to her ass cheeks, it felt like an electric shock hit him.

"I'll be honest. I don't know why, but I liked what we did back then in the woods too. I almost died and I want to repay you for saving me... Take off your pants."

"No, Elowen. That...that must



be the spirit talking in you." He jerked away, but she didn't let him go.

"Shut up, idiot. What spirit? You've done so much for me already. Let me just repay you. I remember our kiss. I'm not stupid and I understand everything. If you going to fuck our Mom you have to more experienced. To satisfy such a woman."

"I'm not going to fuck our Mom!" He jerked away and sat on the bed next to her. Elowen lay on her stomach, seductively playing with boobs and nipples.

"I was so afraid of losing you and Mom today." He brushed away her dark locks, tracing his fingers along her skin. She looked at him, and he looked at her.

"You are beautiful."

"Could you come up with anything smarter?" She smirked. And Cedric climbed onto her, grabbing her and putting on her back.

"That's better."

Elowen bit her lip when he took off his pants. His pink tip peeked out, but he didn't proceed any further. "This is my... first time."

"Mine too." She grabbed his ass and guided him straight into her. His cock collided with the pink insides of



Elowen's vagina and against his will went inside. "Ughhh, Elowen."

He closed his eyes, squeezing her breasts. She was insanely tight, and he just collapsed onto her chest.

"Unbelievable."

"I might not have much experience, but it feels like we should do more than just lie still when making love. Are you tired?"

"Just relax and let me savor the moment."

"I want to savor the moment too!"



He pulled his cock out and entered again, slamming into her. The sensations were too incredible to describe. He took her neck and kissed her again.

Cedric kissed her harshly, clumsily, breathing heavily. Elowen moaned with each thrust of her brother's hips. They covered themselves with the blanket.

"Gotta not wake...Mom." He said between kisses.

Making love was so much better than imagining or thinking about it.

"Ughh, Elowen."

"Can you shut up, please?"

His cock went in and out perfectly; he moved his hips sharply and vigorously. He pounded her with slaps. He penetrated so deep that he seemed to touch her very belly. Thrust after thrust. "Ooooghhh, gosh, yeah." Her insides were juicy and soft. Her pussy was getting wetter with is second. He was wrong. The most warm and tender place in the world was her pussy and not her mouth.

Elowen dug her claws into his back, scratching at it.

"Ohhhh, yes. Cedric. Yes. Faster, faster."

He had no intention of stopping. He just got more comfortable in his position and continued to thrust into her in precipitous thrusts. He felt like the air was escaping from his chest, as if he might faint soon.

"Are you close? Finish... But not inside." She bit her lip and covered her eyes, enjoying her brother inside her. "Thank you for taking care of me, Cedric. Ooooghhh, yeah, Enjoy it."

He was just on the verge. Her tight vagina was driving him crazy, there was no way he could last much longer.

She squealed, twitching. Her vaginal walls squeezed his cock and he barely had time to pull it out.

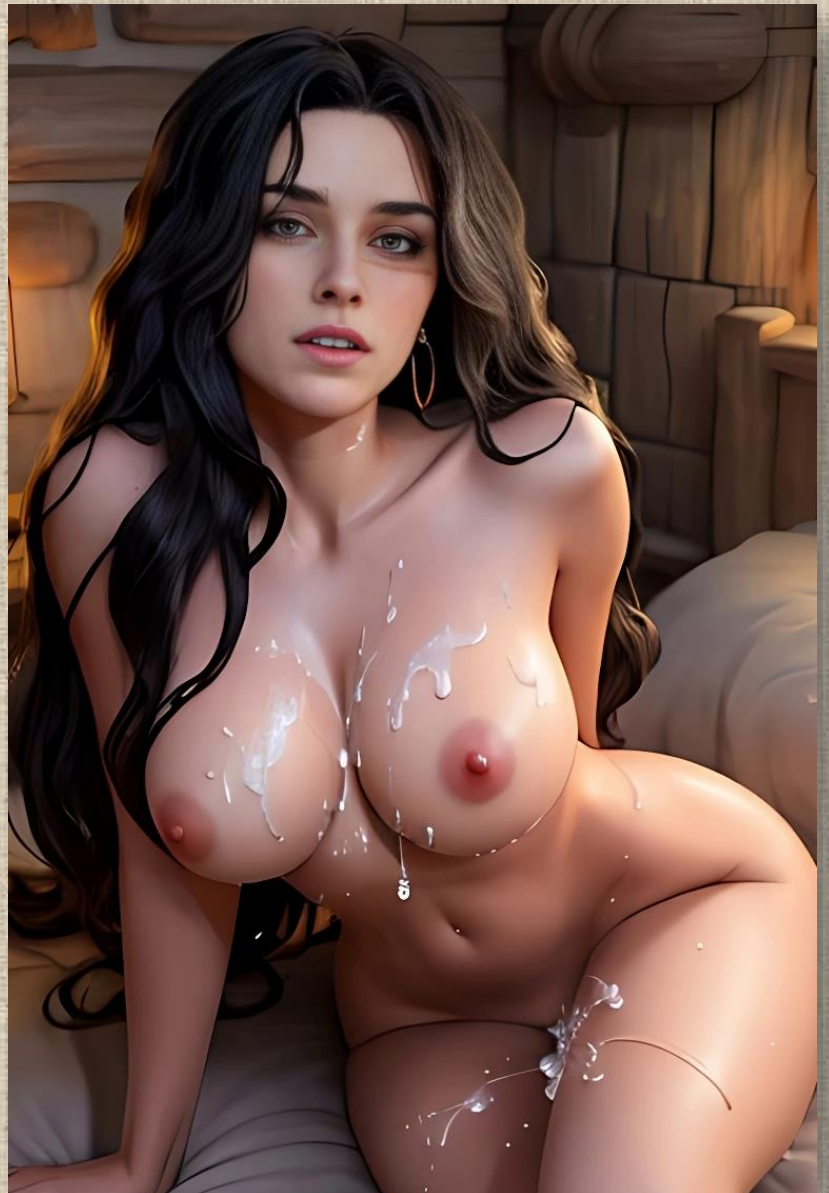
"Ughhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, yes, Elowen!" He guided it to her breasts. The back of his head felt like it had been hit with a stick. The white liquid flew right out onto her red boobs, her face and stomach. "Ooooghghh, so good."

She watched rapturously as her body became covered in his sticky clots of cum, the insides of his balls. "Oh, yeah."

His lungs filled with warm air, a pleasant chill of bliss and pleasure traveled down the back of his neck and head. He finally shook the last drops from the tip and collapsed beside Elowen.

"Madness...What have we done."

She lay down beside him, covering him with the blanket in a motherly way. "We lost our virginity. Sleep. We're both very tired."



He wanted to sleep badly, but kept his eyes open.

"I'm so, so sorry. Cedric. You did so much for me and I...let you down." She lay back and a tear rolled down the bridge of her eye, falling onto the pillow.

"You have nothing to apologies for."

She didn't answer and they both drifted into sleep.



He woke up alone, it was still night. "El?"

Her side was empty. He got up, put on his trousers, and went back to Seraphina's bed, lying down next to his mother.

"Who's that?" she half-turned, when Cedric put his hands on her waist and boobs, hugging her from behind.

"It's me, Mom. It's okay." He snuggled up behind her. Just like that first night in the tent. Cedric pressed his cock against her big tight ass. She felt it through her sleepy state and for some reason she smiled.

He smiled along with her..

"Goodnight my husband." She kissed him in the lips. This time she used her tongue. It was an incredible sensation – a real kiss, full of love and passion. And she was the one who initiated it. He finally tasted her. Their tongues entwined in a frantic kiss, saliva stirred and dripping down her chin on bed. He seemed maddened by the kiss, but suddenly Seraphina ended it.

She rested her head on his arm and fell soundly asleep.

"Love you, Mom." He whispered to her ear and drifted to sleep.



"Incredible," a young general in dark gray armor with the eclipse symbol engraved on his chest observed the ruins of the Library.

"For centuries this place has been a repository of knowledge and prophecies. But you, Lord Blunder, destroyed it only in a month of your stay."

"Why... Why did you attack? Why? Why did Arik do that?" Blunder, wounded and battered, sat kneeling beside the slain body of General Roscoe.

"You will call him only as the King in my presence. We weren't going to attack. Our great king is at war with Solarion. Why would he waste energy, time and resources on a handful of unfaithful dumb soldiers. If the queen and prince want to play heroes, so be it. At least they won't distract him from more important matters. But the letters that have been coming to him..."

"Letters?" Blunder looked at Tilidus through a blackened eye. "I don't understand."

"The princess reported everything happening here to the king—about the terrible abuses against her and her brother, about you holding them here by force, but worst of all, Lord Blunder. She informed the king about your audacity in courting the queen behind his back."

"It's a lie! I would never..."

"Silence! No one dares to steal the wife of the Eclipse Dynasty's king. You attempted to become her lover. For this, your people

are sentenced to death, and you, Lord Blunder, lose all status and will be executed. Personally by the king."