

The Lakeshore Dyed Scarlet Incident



There once was a small nation named Silberia. 16

A province state with less than ten thousand inhabitants under the rule of the Eastern Sovereign Alliance of Nasca Namrium Ulmeria Empire.

It had no signature industry, nor special attractions. If there was anything worth mentioning, it would be its peaceful weather unique to the Namrium region and a beautiful lake that lies there.

No, there is in fact one other thing. That would be Silberia’s only daughter—Princess Blanche Nam Silberia. 17 Praised as the crown jewel of the kingdom. A princess loved by her people.

This is — the tragic story surrounding Princess Blanche. 18

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Blanche was a shy yet short-tempered girl. She inherited her mother’s beautiful silver white hair and her red eyes that symbolized Silberia's royal lineage. She was a cute girl, skin white as snow, with a passion for books, and a late bloomer.

On top of that, she possessed magicule none could rival. She perceived things people don’t normally see, an intrinsic trait of the royal bloodline's heirs.

Even though Blanche was that kind of child, she lived a comfortable life, embraced by the loving care of her mother Letitia. 19 Very few people were aware of this special ability passed down in the royal family, but thankfully everyone within the family knew how to deal with these special kids.

“Heed me now, Blanche. You must never tell other people about the things only you can see.”

“But why?”

“For doing so will only make people fear you. Besides, if those things you see discover they are being watched, monsters will appear and eat you!”

“NOOOO—!!”

“It’s alright. Mommy will protect you. So promise me now, never tell anyone about your secret.”

“I understand, mother. I’ll never tell anyone about it.”

“Good girl. How cute you are, my Blanc.”

Blanche swore from the bottom of her heart while staring into Letitia’s golden pupils. She kept that promise to her mother ever since. And thanks to that, no one was ever scared of her, and she was able to grow up in good care.

Although she was rather shy, her uncanny beauty from a young age made her quite popular among the servants. Such was Blanche’s happy childhood, being loved by everyone.

However—

Blanche’s happy days were not for long. Blanche had just reached ten years of age; the balance of power within the palace’s harem was toppled. Blanche’s mother, who was the most adored first princess, was in fact from a viscount’s family of lowly origin. The snobbish nobles had conspired to urge the king to marry a second princess.

The one who got selected was a woman named Emilia, 20 born from a marquis’ family. While still serving as a concubine, Emilia had already given birth to a daughter to the king. For that very reason she was selected as the new princess. Had it been a son, she would have been on the throne long ago.

Emilia, as a high-ranking noble, was keenly aware of the intrigue and conflicts within the harem. She seized control of the palace where Blanche and Letitia resided in little time. Blanche’s nannies as well the maids who cared much for her were all dismissed for fabricated reasons. None had the audacity to defy the second princess, and the servants relegated to the harem no longer obeyed the king, but her. And as a result, Blanche and her mother were treated poorly.

In stark contrast, Blanche’s sister Ashla—who was less than a year older—received affectionate care as the second young princess. Everything was according to Emilia’s plan.

The king had no siblings, granting Blanche the first right of succession. If the second princess Emilia was to conceive a prince, he would’ve been guaranteed the throne. Even if that failed, there was still Ashla. And if Blanche ceased to exist, the royal claim would fall into Ashla’s hands, leaving her to be crowned as the next queen of Silberia.

For that, I just have to deal with the meddling mother and daughter in my way—

The ambitious Emilia resorted to far crueler, clandestine tactics in order to advance her blood to the throne.

A fateful winter day.

On Blanche’s twelfth birthday, her mother the first princess passed away. A blanket of snow cloaked the courtyard. Blanche hid and sobbed alone in a corner no one could see. To Blanche, her father, the king, was a distant figure. And now she had no left to be called a family. Blanche could only cry, feeling utter despair and sorrow.

Suddenly, someone called out to the weeping Blanche.

“Why are you crying?”

Blanche raised her head to see the source of the voice. It was a breathtaking sight; someone with beauty beyond humans. No, it was a non-human existence that only Blanche could see. However, at the time it mattered not to Blanche, whether the individual was human or not.

“How beautiful…”

Blanche opened her heart to the beauty that could drive out anyone’s sadness.

She even forgot about her promise to her mother.

Such was the incredible impact of this beauty.

“Ho, thank you.”

Perhaps she had sensed Blanche’s sincerity. A smile emerged on her emotionless face, an extraordinarily destructive smile. A beauty that drove away even the falling snow. Her long hair floated in the wind, a more brilliant white than the snowflakes. Sharing Blanche’s red pupils, a deep scarlet, more vivid than blood. With skin that was an immaculate white, nigh transparent. Her dark dress, as if to obscure this brilliance, concealed her body. An existence beyond human realms. Whoever laid their eyes, be they as special as her’s or not, upon this beauty would find that she transcended humans’ very grasp. Such a beautiful female smiled towards Blanche.

“My mother passed away.”

“Is that so…”

“I’ve become an abandoned child. My Father too has abandoned me, he cares only for my sister Ash. My life no longer holds meaning.”

“It’s nothing like that.”

“But…”

“At least, I need you.”

That sentence was gospel for Blanche. Whatever this non-human’s intentions may have been, it no longer mattered.

“Because you can see me. Your white hair, red eyes, are the same as mine. They are gorgeous, and will only grow prettier as you thrive.”

“Really?”

“Indeed.”

“Big sister, do you really need me?”

“I do.”

Her angelic words meant salvation to Blanche. And she continued without pause.

“I really like you. And so I shall grant you any wish you desire. But I would also like you to hear my request.”

“It’s alright. If it’s a request from my big sister, I will work hard to make it a reality.”

Never conform to the words of non-humans. It was a bit of advice her mother often repeated. But Blanche nodded without hesitation; she had been taken in by this beautiful, kind woman; this non-human that spoke the words she needed the most.

Besides, Blanche’s instinct told her to trust the woman.

“That’s right, my good child. Then, let me tell you my request. I would wish to borrow your body. I am only spiritually present, so I wish to possess your body.”

The non-human existence exhibited no intention of hiding her motives, having elegantly expressed her true desire. This non-human, invisible to human eyes, belonged to the most terrifying existences among all monsters—the demon race. Moreover, demons of the rank Greater Demon—No, not only those, this was an existence which even the ancient demons, so called Dominator class were bound to serve. The king among demons, one of the so called “Primordials”. The “Seven Primordials” have names based upon the characteristics of their appearance—namely colors. Unbelievably, her color is similar to Blanche’s name.

Primordial Blanc. 21

Of course, this was no coincidence. This land, Silberia, had been her domain since time immemorial. And according to the ancient pact formed with the ruler of this land, she adjusted for dozens of centuries before a vessel of flesh used to accommodate her mind would be born. Until the birth of her ideal vessel, she would protect the land. This was the content of the pact. And the special physique of the royal family was testament to it. The red eyes of the Silberia royal family were her blessing. She upheld the covenant and protected the land.

This was the real reason—why Silberia, despite being a province state, was able to retain sovereignty while within the grasp of the Eastern Empire.

And the body Blanc was satisfied with—was precisely the young Blanche. Primordial Blanc always kept her promises. The ancient pact formed with the first queen of this kingdom was kept to that day.

When a young girl with silver white hair and red pupils is born, Primordial Blanc shall take over its body upon fulfilling this girl’s wish.

It was a pact upheld for many generations, allowing its effects to compound, presumably to grant Primordial Blanc the perfect vessel.

And the day of the promise had arrived.

Twelve years of age, in ancient times this was deemed the day one matured to adulthood, and Primordial Blanc decided to talk to Blanche. She had deemed Blanche an adult capable of making her own decisions, capable of negotiating with others on equal ground. This was also invoked from the ancient pact.

Typical of most demons’ personality, they would cunningly induce others to sign one-sided pacts. Yet for someone of Primordial Blanc’s stature, there was no need for such trickery. She thought those would only dishonor the pact. Solely through loyally fulfilling a reasonable pact, would the body be Primordial Blanc’s righteous asset.

Therefore, she would fulfill any wish made by Blanche, to the best of her abilities. That was why, even if Blanche refused her, she wouldn’t have given up.

Human beings are creatures driven by insatiable desire, and there will always come a day they carry a wish. She needed only to be patient and await that day’s arrival. That was why Blanche’s answer came as a surprise for sure, but a welcome one.

“Would you…like to be my friend?”

“—Ayy?”

“I’ll give my body to you, big sister. Then please be my friend! W-will you not?”

Primordial Blanc was taken aback. This was a first for her, even throughout the many eons she had lived. Reflected in Blanche’s eyes was still that beautiful face, yet her heart had been greatly troubled by what just transpired.

Did she just say she wants to be friends with me? Okay now what am I supposed to do… Even for someone’s bad joke on their deathbed, this wasn’t funny. Plus, this is supposed to be some damning ravings, yet I don’t really feel pissed about it… And it seems quite interesting, in fact, that girl as well. This girl in front of me may allow me to have some fun. I could spare some time with her since human lives are cheap anyway.

Despite its subtlety, Primordial Blanc flashed a rare look of confusion. But she quickly reached a conclusion in her heart.

“Very well. From now on, you and I shall be friends.”

Blanche blushed upon hearing this, her crying face lit up with a big smile.

“Ehehe, I’m so happy! Please take care of me in the future, big sister!”

“Hmm, I will now latch onto you. Let’s have a good time together.”

Then, Primordial Blanc possessed Blanche’s body. On that day, the fate of the kingdom of Silberia rested on the young Blanche’s shoulders, yet no one was ever to find out about it.

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Blanche grew up to fifteen years of age.

Although Blanche still got the cold shoulder within the harem, that being a dark and cold place for her, as soon as she left it behind, the whole palace’s view of Blanche began improving by the day.

“Princess Blanche is such a genius. Her elegant actions and attitude are perfect no matter how you see it.”

“She’s well versed in History, art and mathematics. Even geography and sociology. The amount of knowledge she possesses is commendable.”

“More importantly, her theory of magic is fantastic! Her analysis of spells does not have a single unnecessary line and she’s able to improve her magical efficiency through simplification of spells. This level of talent is beyond genius, what an outstanding princess!”

The royal tutors appointed by the king complemented her unsparingly. And the one most frustrated by this was her sister, Princess Ashla. As they walked past each other in the hallway, Ashla began to pick on Blanche.

“My, my, isn’t this my sister dear. Greetings to you. Have you been studying hard today as well? Although that’s important, you’ll be disliked if you don’t go kiss Duke Grunce’s 22 son Lord Guinias’s ass properly, you know?”

The family of Duke Grunce, the famous royal family known since ancient times as the maintainer of Namrium. A noble family, powerful even within the Eastern Empire. Grunce’s domain alone held a population of three hundred thousand. The heir to such nobility from the Empire had been staying around Silberia since a year ago.

Guinias Nam Grunce. 23 Age twenty-two, a young man talented in many fields. Guinias had an elder brother who’d been appointed as the next duke. Because of that, it was rumored that Guinias had laid his sights on the throne of Silberia. It was an open secret among the Silberian public, most of who supported such an attempt. There were many reasons for it, the most pertinent one being to maintain friendly relations with the Empire. If the big shot royalty became the king of Silberia, they expected less pressure to be exerted on this province state.

There was also another reason. Guinias had imported a variety of wares into Silberia by leveraging his connections through Grunce, successfully winning the favor of the kingdom’s royalty with those extremely attractive goods. Those imports were also highly profitable within the kingdom and improved the citizens’ well-being. And for that reason, support for Guinias within the kingdom rose sky-high without any sign of slowing down.

That was how Guinias secured his remarkable popularity in Silberia. He was still young and handsome, and already brought great wealth to the nation, so becoming son-in-law of the queen wasn’t far off—that was the opinion of many within the nation.

And the one Guinias had laid his eyes on was Princess Blanche, who had been guarding a secret. King Silberia was mindful of the marriage’s significance, “If I was to help Blanche become the next queen, I would agree to the marriage.” Guinias swiftly promised his commitment.

That meant making Blanche the next queen. Ashla couldn’t stand the idea of Blanche getting crowded, she couldn’t tolerate the thought of their roles getting reversed. Besides, her mother Emilia had also been outraged by this. She exploited many tactics and invested a great deal of time and effort throughout the years to help her own daughter become the next queen, yet it had all been ruined by the appearance of Guinias. Even the nobles among Emilia’s circle had begun to flatter Guinias. If that were to continue, they would be handing the queen’s throne to Blanche.

But there was still a way, as long as she could change Guinias’s heart. Emilia instilled this into Ashla, hoping she would win Lord Guinias’s heart instead. But even if she hadn’t told her so, Ashla shared the same intent. She had gone to great lengths to jeopardize her sister’s relationship with Guinias in order to snatch her fiancé.

This act was also part of her scheme, but Blanche didn’t really mind.

“Oh, Ash. Good health to you. I’m glad you are concerned for me. But, it’s really nothing. I shall be accompanying Guinias-sama to walk the city later.”

“…Is that so. You make me jealous. Very well, I hope you have a pleasant time.”

“Hmm. It’s work after all, one should not indulge their desire for pleasure.”

Like that, she was able to dismantle Ashla’s effort to provoke her. Blanche was hardly a young child anymore. She’d been hard at work behind everyone’s back to gain knowledge and power. Nowadays, even those servants couldn’t openly harass her, instead they had to find other subtler ways to do so. Likewise for Ashla, who could merely attempt to provoke her through sarcasm. And for that reason her hatred for Blanche festered day by day. Yet Blanche seemed unfazed even knowing so.

If anything, Blanche seemed to no longer be alone.

“Yes, that’s the way to go. Treat everyone around you as an enemy. However, there’s no need to defeat them all. You need only to differentiate those who can and cannot be manipulated. Hold on to their secrets to force them into serving you. Your sister is but a pawn used by that mother named Emilia. Neither is she useful nor a threat to your presence.”

“I understand, big sis.”

She now had a reliable friend named Blanc. That was why Blanche become strong. Her knowledge and magic were all taught by Blanc. Blanche accepted and humbly learnt her teachings and had grown dramatically in the past three years.

“Huh! Then be cautious when you do have some fun.”

“I will, you do that too, Ash.”

The two princesses appeared to coexist in harmony, yet the mutual hostility within their hearts burned like wildfire; thankfully any confrontations dissolved before escalating.

Just like that, Blanche developed day by day, gaining more and more supporters. She’d also been doing quite well with Guinias, at some point they came to represent the ideal couple. The number of people backing Guinias steadily increased with it. The royals who were still observing the situation also started to step forward in recognizing Blanche as the next queen in line.

During this period, Emilia’s intervention attempts became more radical. She scantly cared about decency anymore and resorted to bloodthirsty violence, ordering the assassination of Blanche.

However, every attempt amounted to failure. That was to be expected; Blanc within Blanche wouldn’t deign to let mere hitmen harm Blanche.

It was smooth sailing. All signs pointed towards her becoming the new queen in due time. The citizenry deemed the increasingly beautiful Blanche as worthy of being their queen. Blanche also gathered the confidence to show a delightful smile to people other than Blanc. That was her sign for having bonded with others, something that Blanc expected from her.

But, there were still parts which she was dissatisfied with. That would be Blanche’s relationship with Guinias.

…this is a real headache. “Romance” is an emotion that begets naught but uncertainty, nothing good whatsoever comes of it. If Blanche’s emotions are to be significantly affected, then I’ll have to confront whatever should follow. God damn hum—

But, if Blanche could be happy, Blanc didn’t really mind. Even if her partner was a stupid human, she would send them her blessing truthfully. Nothing less could be expected of Blanche’s friend.

However—

Blanc had a very bad feeling about Guinias.

Setting aside incarnation and rebirth into this world, Blanc was currently in an incomplete state. Likewise, her subordinates were only of spiritual existence and had limited impact on the physical world. Even if that was the case, Blanc would try her best to strategize accordingly.

Blanc would later come to find her apprehension manifesting in reality.

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“—That’s the end of the report.”

After receiving the reports from her subordinate, Blanc felt a disquieting sense of dread about the situation. She had dispatched scores of demons to collect information in Silberia’s capital, surrounding towns, as well as within Grunce’s territory. These, however, revealed some significant issues.

Even though I’ve always been on high alert with that man, I couldn’t have expected his comprehensive defense against demons. In other words, he has come to this kingdom fully aware of our existence.

The information collection returned no results ever since Blanche began hanging out with Guinias. Moreover, no useful information at all was collected since, that’s why Blanc had begun to suspect him. Precisely because not a scrap of useful intelligence was collected, it made things far too suspicious.

And so she increased the scope of the search while dispatching her top lieutenants. As a result, she began to uncover Guinias’s real intentions.

—Guinias knows the connection between Silberia and Blanc. And from that, it is conceivable that he decided to intervene after finding out.

—Silver white hair and red pupils. One who possesses both would be the key to the coming of the ancient demon.

It was no trivial thing to investigate. But if the big-shot royalty in the Empire had a hand in this, their way of extracting the truth made such conclusions plausible. In that case, his relationship with Blanche was nothing but a farce as well—

“If that’s the case… Unforgivable, absolutely—”

Blanc’s face contorted as she gazed at the sky covered in dark clouds. Rather than worrying about the road to her second coming, a project she had planned for eons, being cut off—right now she was simply worried about a friend’s happiness being lost.

A melancholic sigh came out of Blanc’s beautiful, thin lips.

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Guinias enjoyed quite the popularity in the capital of Silberia. There are several reasons to explain why, but the most prevalent one was monetary and pragmatic. To establish a new industry, he had considered exploring the mines containing magicule ores. In fact, the kingdom of Silberia possessed a high concentration of magicule, leading to the ores collected from the mine being of high quality. And Duke Grunce’s territory bought them at a high price.

Before his arrival, Silberia was a nation sustained through primary industry such as agriculture, farming and fishing. Citizens were mostly care-free people that led a self-sustained, simple lifestyle.

But now, the seeds of profiteering industries were planted. Alongside those, a number of entertainment industries began to take root. One of the most popular attractions was gambling at horse races. Given the insidious nature of gambling, those who turned rich overnight became obsessed with it.

The kind and modest citizens were gradually corrupted, bit by bit. Financial troubles came to grasp the less fortunate, where Guinias astutely lent them his money with a smile. This generosity propelled his support to unseen heights. Other than having a populist foundation, Guinias had executed his preparations in every field. He steadily expanded his influence by welcoming the influx of royalty that attempted to befriend him. He threw out his money by the bucketload in the name Grunce, the largest noble family in the Empire, and then subsequently recycled the money back into his own pocket. His actions all reflected his immense talents.

Everything went according to the master plan.

“This is fairly boring to be honest,” Guinias sneered coldly. “There’s no fun now that everything is running perfectly according to my plan.”

“Hahaha, Guinias-sama. Please don’t say so. This type of remote backwater will go nuts over some pitiful fun. It really can’t be helped.”

The one complimenting Guinias was one of his aides from the home country. To the public he was nothing more than a minister-type butler who helped Guinias with random chores, given his status.

“Huh! Nevertheless, I still couldn’t get my way with the key figure, Blanche. Can’t that woman just accept me already? She always responds to me with some nonsense about keeping her chastity before marriage.”

“Well, forget not that she is the princess of a nation. So it’s understandable.”

“Everything has been according to plan, except for this woman. She irritates me to no end,” Guinias complained. This was his nature, beneath his façade as a noble heir.

“Okay, okay Guinias-sama. You needn’t keep that unpleasant look. You won’t have to endure for long.”

The one responding to him, a measly and cruel looking man, was another trusted subordinate of Guinias, who was in charge of his finances. He had been promised the role of the royal merchant in the land of Duke Grunce upon Guinias’s becoming a duke. To this end, he only needed to serve Guinias by investing and spreading money to Guinias’s desires.

“Ho? Have the preparations been finished?”

“Yes. We’ve negotiated with the military and got permission to secretly mobilize the Armored Corps. I spent a lot of money buying the gifts for Calgurio 24 , but we should be able to assemble sufficient manpower within the estimated time.”

“Hahaha, that’s impressive. At last our plan has reached its final stage. My days as a duke are imminent, I await the time with pleasure.”

Guinias fantasized about the near future, wearing a despicable grin on his face.

Their plan was straightforward. Guinias was to pretend to marry into the royal family by being engaged with Blanche, who had the claim to the throne. But in reality, Guinias was not satisfied with merely being the king of Silberia—his dream was to become the duke of Grunce.

His brother had become an eyesore as of late, but that had already been dealt with. If he was to rebel, Guinias already considered disposing of him. But his brother was aware of his younger brother’s nature; knowing their difference in ability, he had already assumed a position within Guinias’s military.

Guinias’s future as a duke was set in stone. So one might ask why he would visit the kingdom of Silberia in the first place…

“So, Guinias-sama, would Blanche be willing to leave with us as planned?”

“Huh. We haven’t slept, but that woman has already fallen for me. I don’t think she will refuse, but just in case, I’ve tipped the military.”

“I see. If possible, we should avoid using violence. For some reason, I sense the forthcoming of an unnatural power if we are to invade this land with force.”

“Our party agrees to that as well, let’s try to avoid war. Guinias-dono, it would trouble me greatly should this land fall to warfare. Facing such a development, I would need to reevaluate my relationship with you. To me, it would truly be a shame to not be able to maintain our partnership, but I wish to be on good terms with my granddaughter, who is soon to be crowned. If Duke Grunce’s household is to forge an alliance with us, us members of the kingdom of Silberia could live long and prosper as well.”

The one pandering was Emilia’s father, Marquis Barnes 25 . He had collected intelligence himself, anticipating his violent daughter lunging towards more violent actions. And through his instinct as a nobleman, he discerned that Guinias’s end-goal was never the throne of this kingdom. Barnes then took a gamble in order to make his granddaughter the queen, and approached Guinias, inquiring his true intent.

In the end, Barnes was accepted by Guinias and thus expressed his true thoughts. Guinias wanted to bring Blanche to his home country, and Barnes saw Blanche as a burden, best to be evicted from Silberia. Bound by a mutual goal, they decided to form an alliance. And it was for that reason that Barnes wholeheartedly wished to avoid any conflict with the Empire.

“Then, Marquis Barnes, would you be able to keep this country’s royalty under control?”

“Of course. Even if the king or Princess Blanche herself object, most of the nobles are on Guinias-sama’s side,” Barnes carefully responded to the young and not-yet-Duke Guinias. This was, indeed, a reflection of the overwhelming difference in power between big and small nations. Barnes had to force a smile for the sake of his granddaughter, as well as his own authority, even if it repulsed him. In spite Guinias already having seen through Barnes’s act, he kept on smiling as if unaware.

“Very well, then when shall we execute the plan?”

To Guinias, who wished to return home as soon as possible, the sooner, the better. However, he had endured for so long and cautiously planned his every step, so it would have been unwise to rush and mess up in the end. To ensure the success of the plan, the date of execution was extremely crucial.

“Let’s see…”

“It would only take a few days to surround the area completely with the formation of the army.”

“The next festival of sacrifice at the palace, which happens to be princess Blanche’s sixteenth birthday. In our country, one officially enters adulthood upon that age, it would be an appropriate time to make a proposal. Besides, most of the royalty would gather on that day, wouldn’t that precisely be the best timing?”

“Huhuhu, as expected of Marquis Barnes. When did you find out that I planned on that day from the start?”

“Hahaha, it’s just a coincidence.”

“Very well, we’ll settle for a coincidence. Then our plan shall be set in motion on the next day of sacrifice. Any disagreement?”

“No!”

“Understood.”

“As you wish.”

With the approval of the other three men, the day of battle had been settled. Then once Barnes was the first to leave, only men of the Empire remained in the room.

“Speaking of whom, what an idiotic man. But he’s clever you know, even as a noble he’s good at his stuff.”

“As you’ve said, he just let go of Princess Blanche, their national treasure. Completely unaware that whoever were next to inherit the throne would be meaningless.”

“The bloody red pupil is a sign of the curse. That silver white hair surely makes people think of that horrifying and damning ‘Primordial’. I’m impressed that despite every characteristic matching, the idiot nobles of this country are oblivious.”

“The Empire has been pushing behind the scenes to make them realize as well. To prevent that demon from coming to this world,” Guinias said with a calm and focused expression.

The demon within this land truly was an eyesore to the Empire. The demons invading human lands could generally be assigned to three categories: Demons who can be negotiated with, demons who won’t listen to reason, and demons who do whatever they wish. 26 The demons from Silberia were known for their willingness to negotiate with others.

Yet the White Queen was really something else. There was no way one could sit and negotiate with her on equal terms. However, the one who broke that common sense was the first ancient monarch of Silberia.

“It traces back to around 3000 years ago, and it’s no simple matter to pass on the correct historical narrative. But this irresponsibility on their part for not caring about their own national emergency is astounding.”

Early rulers of Silberia formed a covenant with the master of many demons, Primordial Blanc. Its content being to facilitate the coming of Blanc to this realm, and in return, she would be the guardian of the kingdom of Silberia. Testament to the pact were the ‘Crimson Eyes’ that could see through anything, a power only possessed by the king’s lineage. With the purpose of inheriting a cursed bloodline and amassing magicule throughout generations. And then, when the heir with the ideal flesh for the Primordial appears, it shall possess it and come forth to this world once more.

The Empire exhausted its means of espionage to explore the content of this secret pact. They had long been preparing in order to be ahead of the demons.

“So, Guinias-sama. What would you do with princess Blanche? Are you really going to marry her?”

“Don’t be stupid. Even if I decide to play around with her for a couple of years, I would get in serious trouble if she got pregnant. Before that happens, she will just have to die.”

“That’s reassuring to hear. If it were me, I wouldn’t want to have that type of woman with demonic character as my master.”

“Hahaha, it’s a shame really. But we have to destroy the bloodline in its entirety.”

“Of course I understand that. As soon as we end the king’s lineage, even the Primordial will be powerless. And unlike that Crimson Demon Lord, the White Queen is a picky one. We were much assisted thanks to that…”

“Regardless, we should be able to cut off the royal bloodline completely.”

“Then, about Princess Ashla—?”

“I wouldn’t ask that, it’s for your own good.”

“Hahaha, sorry for the intrusion. But I haven't asked anything yet.”

“You shouldn’t have spoken of it in the first place.”

Then, they continued their plotting.

Without noticing that a small bug had secretly concealed itself on the corner of the window…

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The sixteenth Birthday of Blanche. That day would mark the beginning of the “Lakeshore Dyed Scarlet Incident”—

Blanche was filled with regret.

She had already heard of Blanc’s advice, yet she smiled and said it was fine, failing to assess her circumstance.

“You will go with me, right, Blanche?”

“But, Guinias-sama, I must follow my father’s will. Just a little bit more would do, it is my duty to improve this country. Haven’t you also sworn to support me behind my back?”

“I hope you reconsider, Blanche. I too approve of your devotion to this kingdom. When you arrive at my country, we will continue to assist you in contributing to the kingdom of Silberia in terms of economic and cultural exchange. There will be countless things we can do. I’ll also respect your decisions. Now what do you think?”

“But…”

For the past day, Blanche’s head had been filled with the idea that Guinias would support her becoming queen one day. Guinias had always gone to tell those nobles supporting her that the throne was exclusively for Blanche.

In the ancient past, Blanc extended a helping hand to the people suffering from poverty in the form of a pact. In order to fulfill the vow with Blanc, this country needed to bear a real queen. At last, this country had gained what it needed—she believed this would also have been what everyone hoped for.

Blanche was puzzled.

Guinias’s proposal was to bring her to the Empire, and that was something unacceptable to her. Yet Guinias hadn’t mentioned it until then. The tumultuous situation could’ve even plunged Blanc into chaos. Moreover, all nobles present at the gathering approved of Guinias’s proposal. This was a particularly deep betrayal towards Blanche.

How can this be… I thought I was the one everyone needed?

The sharp disruption dropped a layer of despair upon Blanche’s heart.

“No! I will not allow you to take Blanche abroad!!”

Suddenly, Blanche’s father—the king—shouted. The king, who worked his heart and soul for the country all his life, who was always calm and quiet, now stared at Guinias with burning rage in his eyes.

“You bastard, have you been plotting to take Blanche abroad from the start? Your actions have tarnished the Empire.”

“My, whatever are you talking about? This matter is nothing but beneficial for both kingdoms.”

“Absurdity! Th-this country, since ancient times has been—”

“I can’t believe that your majesty would still believe those stale superstitions, for if that’s true, you’ll be a laughing stock before your guests,” Guinias retorted with a scornful tone, as if trying to taunt and mock the king. The nobles joined in with laughter; they ostensibly held loyalty to the king, but had long committed treachery. Guinias had prepared everything for it as well, just for this day. The celebration of Blanche’s sixteenth birthday was no more.

“Y-you whoreson…sabotaged my country’s politics…”

“Your majesty, you are too nice of a person. Were you so naive as to believe that those around you would never betray you, and that the people of this country were loyal is if bonded by blood? I’m sorry to inform you that these were all mere fantasies. We humans will resort to anything for the sake of our own interests. If we get to keep our life, money and a bright future safe and sound in our pocket, we wouldn’t even flinch to betray our nation.”

“Don’t try to fool us! I’ve distinguished you as a traitor. But the people of my country are earnest in wishing for Blanche to become their queen.”

“Aiya, I’m rather skeptical about that. Your majesty, I suggest you understand your circumstance better. I would be uneasy about the future if my father in law kept acting this way.”

“WHAT!?”

“I’ll give you three days’ time. Before the deadline, please hand over Princess Blanche.”

“Wait! Did you honestly think I would—”

“Your majesty, you should yield to Guinias-dono’s proposal. Should we let Princess Blanche marry Guinias-dono, our connections with the Empire would certainly become closer. If you truly want someone to be the queen, my granddaughter is still around.”

“That’s right, father. If you choose me, I’ll definitely be a better queen than my sister.”

Marquis Barnes interrupted, followed by Princess Ashla, their voices drowning out the king. These were supposed to be vile acts punishable to the highest degree without forgiveness. Yet, none of the nobles intervened, not even the minority who still held a sense of conscience, as they were forced into silence under the intense stares of the nobles supporting the Barnes family.

The king came to terms with his plight, his face distorting with regret. Facing the king at such dismay, Guinias calmly stated with a victorious tone:

“About what we just discussed, about what the people truly want—you should know the answer with tomorrow’s morning paper. You might as well read it before you answer anything. Please do contemplate what the right decision for this nation truly is. I shall await your response.”

Guinias had done his part. He then left the scorned king with those words. He departed from the celebration hall, and many nobles did as well, as if following him. The ones who remained in the venue were the king, Blanche and a handful of nobles.

“How can this… Are those people ignorant of our situation?”

“If-if this is to continue, our kingdom will fall into ruin…”

The King and the royals sighed, to an onlooker they resembled lost souls—

The morning of the next day.

Hidden away in the most secure chamber within the king’s castle, those who remained at the celebration hall gathered. Before them lay the country's morning newspaper, its content distressing everyone present. The cover page was filled with celebratory headlines.

—The great nobleman Guinias has come to marry Princess Blanche. It is equivalent to an engagement, surely she will become his wife and forge a proper marriage—

The newspaper declared it as such.

“It’s all over. My holy goddess, what an unforgivable betrayal—” the king collapsed on his chair with a whimper.

“Father!”

“I’m sorry Blanche. If only I had told you—forgive me.”

“No-no, there’s no such thing! Father has done nothing wrong. It is I who’s been too immature.”

“What are you talking about. You may be sixteen now, but you are still a child. You are still so young, yet such hardship…”

“That’s absurd! It is I who fell for Guinias-sama—”

“Enough…that’s enough. We should consider the near future instead.”

Everyone present began to express their views on that line of thought. The prime minister spoke first:

“The people are also convinced about the content of the paper. There’s no doubt to them that princess-sama is getting married. They all feel that the country has developed to become affluent, and their blind confidence has numbed their ability to doubt.”

The court mage commander said:

“Your majesty, from last night’s investigation, our country has been surrounded by the Imperial military. They’ve already drawn our people to their side, they could fabricate reasons to start a war at this point. Rightful justification in the public eye…would probably lie with the Empire.”

The Army Chief followed up:

“Allow me to be blunt here, we won’t stand a chance with the current strength of our army. Moreover, there may be soldiers in favor of the Empire within our ranks, who could announce that we’ve been surrounded, even before battle breaks out.”

The situation was desperate.

But they couldn’t meekly obey the Empire like a dog.

“We will not bow to the Empire. Should we do such a thing, we would be betraying our ancient pact. There will be travesties far, far more tragic and horrifying than destruction at the hands of the Empire.”

“Indeed, my king! Our god is a terrifying existence. If we were to disavow our promise, we would warrant punishment worse than death.”

“I can’t believe that the number of nobles who have forgotten about this has increased to such magnitude. How pathetic.”

“We shall fight, even if to no avail. Perhaps God will show mercy in light of our sincerity.”

The kingdom of Silberia—a kingdom bonded by an ancient pact. If they were to disavow the deal with God—with the demon—what awaited them ahead would be torment far more terrifying than the demise of their flesh. It was because they knew this all too well, that they could not succumb to the Empire’s demands.

Even if the country was destroyed…

“How about w-we summon our god…our god. Then, we shall unite and face our demise,” the court mage commander said solemnly.

Everyone nodded.

There may still be time before the final verdict—

Blanche couldn’t hear what her father and the rest were saying, only despair and sadness burst into her heart.

“This is all my fault… it’s all because I didn’t listen to Blanc’s advice…”

“No, Blanche. It is because my strength has yet to be fully developed. So you shouldn’t feel bad about it.”

“No, that’s not true! Maybe it’s because…because I wished to be your friend.”

“Calm down Blanche—”

“I’m sorry Blanc. I’m not needed by anyone after all. Whether it be Guinias-sama or the people of this country.”

“I-I need you…”

“Thank you. Truly, thank you for everything you’ve done, Blanc—”

“Blanche, what are you—”

This may have been the first time Blanc had panicked since her birth.

“It is because of my promise to you, that Blanc’s power has been limited, right? I truly thank you for keeping your end of the bargain with this country.”

“Stop it, Blanche! This is just a pact. I don’t care anymore. To me, what’s important is—”

“Thank you, and I apologize. I’m not as strong as you. But I’m still happy about one point. You are willing to use my body, for that I am satisfied. So Blanc, live your life freely from now on—”

Then, Blanche’s “soul” executed the pact. Based on which, Blanche would transfer her body to Blanc. Blanche’s shining, colorful soul, fell into Blanc’s hand.

“Ah…ah… Blanche, so gentle and kind…my Blanche. I love you, I love you the most. My first ever friend. I couldn’t protect that gentle and kind you, oh how powerless I am—”

Primordial White—Queen of Demons, symbol of power—now trembled and lamented her powerlessness. Perhaps this was a sight that no one who knew her would ever believe. There was no audience, yet this was the reality.

Blanc obtained Blanche’s flesh without the king’s witness.

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The court mage commander responded first among the group discussing the plans for the future.

“God, I’ve heard the voice of god—!?” he shouted and extended both of his hands to Blanche, sitting quietly alone. Then he poured all of his magic into a magical circle on the ground, initiating the ritual to summon the demon.

“W-what are you doin—”

What followed was faster than the sentence the king couldn’t finish.

“Greetings Gentlemen.”

Blanche stood up.

No. This was no longer Blanche.

This was Blanc in the body of Blanche.

Everyone present knew exactly what had occurred and fell to their knees on the spot. Among them, only the king remained standing and asked.

“G-God! Why…now? Your pact with Blanche should still…”

“Unfortunately this pact has just been invoked.”

“No, this can’t be possible! My daughter, Blanche confided in me that you would protect her—!!”

“You are…rather noisy, please quiet down.”

Blanc’s words shut the king up. But he couldn’t hide his anger thinking that Blanc broke the pact. However—

The king’s anger dispersed in the face of an immense, bottomless fury. The source of which, needless to say—belonged to Blanc.

“It is because you stupid humans took away my pleasure. Don’t you all agree this is a grave crime to be punished for?”

The king froze out of fear. For only he sensed Blanc’s fury.

“I-If God wishes so—”

Even though that answer was just one line, it exhausted him completely. Then, the debilitated king crumbled back into his chair.

“Good boy. Since you’ve kept true to your pact with me, I shall grant you all a painless death, however—”

What of those who broke the covenant?

No one dared to ask about their consequences. Then—

Everyone present was blessed. They now walked the path under their god’s command, their hearts in bliss, to be relieved from ever learning the tragedy that was about to take place.

“Very well, let us feast.”

As Blanc commanded, the demons quickly possessed all of the bodies at the scene. The tragedy now unveils—

Blanc, clouded by fury, cast out the forbidden magic. A spell to grant peaceful death to those who kept true to the pact and bestow endless torment to the traitors. It caused one to bleed to death from the inside out, the demise of this nation being seared into their eyes.

The effect of that curse covered her entire domain, no living being could escape the curse. But this was hardly enough to abate Blanc’s wrath.

“Bring those cretins before me.”

In that moment, not a single suggestion from her subordinates could’ve gotten through to her, even her ancient trusted aides—Demon Dukes—would’ve been sent to the guillotine, should they have caught her ire.

“ “ “Understood!” ” ”

Following the word, the demons scattered, returning after a few short minutes.

“Who do you think I am! Show yourself now!”

The first, arrogant, non-sense spitting fool had been brought before her.

“Oh, Marquis Barnes, so you are the first.”

“A-are you Blanche?! Why are you sitting on that chair!? That belongs to his majesty alone, that is the majestic throne!”

“You are really noisy, you know? That’s some annoying barking coming from a petit nobody.”

“W-what did you say? How dare you say that to me, you-you are just a little girl—ah…!?”

Barnes, clearly bluffing, looked into Blanc’s eyes and felt a sensation of ice cold water being poured onto his heart. The biting frost climbed up his back, with a broken spirit he was reduced to observing his surroundings. He stood where all the losers were supposed to be, yet not a single soul remained. The figures of losers who could only lament their defeat through the scheme of Guinias. The only person in front of him was Blanc.

“Blanche…is no more. Try to use your remaining few brain cells to try to understand me now.”

Only hearing that did Barnes begin to notice how strange Blanc looked. Blanche had always been a pretty girl, but the one in front of him couldn’t simply be described as beautiful. Her hair, whiter than snow, decorated the crown whilst she spitefully gazed down at Barnes with her crimson eyes. The gaps between her dark dress vaguely flashed her smooth white skin. Its seductive gleam could instill lust, yet before all else, it showed them fear. It was the type of beauty beyond human’s comprehension.

Barnes became speechless having guessed her true identity.

“C-Could it be…”

“Settle down, now. Soon I’ll invite your family and friends here too, let us have a celebration.”

Marquis Barnes had no right to refuse. Before he could say a thing, he was shackled in front of the throne. Then, another few minutes passed.

“Slow down this instant! Who do you think I am!!”

A woman shrieked words akin to Barnes’s.

“What are you doing! Are you knowingly offending the next queen!?”

That foolish young girl radiated an arrogant attitude without even knowing what she had gotten herself into. She was brought before Blanc.

“I guess it runs in the genes. Perhaps you all can reflect a bit if this girl sheds a little blood.”

She may have been the heir to the king’s blood, yet she held no significance to Blanc then. Ostensibly forgetting about that, she glanced over the two who had been brought in front of her.

“Blanche… What are you doing here!”

“Sister, please understand you position. Wife of the imperial nobleman is just an empty title. Do you understand that you are a mere lamb waiting to be slaughtered without anyone to back you?”

People unable to comprehend their circumstances tried to argue against Blanc. But that folly was devoured by a fiery blaze once Blanc’s eyes focused on her.

“I-I fee-feel horrible! Ca-can’t brea—!”

“KYAA—! I-it burns! MY FACE, MY SKIN IS BURNING—!”

“What an unpleasant sight. I will not let you off the hook that easily for bullying my friend all these years.”

Hearing that cold and emotionless voice, it struck Emilia and Ashla that he one before them was not Blanche. By that time it was already far too late. But, even if they had understood any earlier, Blanc would not have forgiven them anyway.

“You two should wait here for our final guest to show up,” Blanc said without even dignifying the wretched women with a glance. The last one—the man with the most sins. Only the hatred towards him burned quietly deep-within Blanc’s eyes.

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Guinias was satisfied with how everything went according to his wishes and merrily drank the day away. Thanks to teleportation magic, his body was not exhausted despite having traveled to such a remote nation. Or rather, he was quite energetic, having fully immersed in the joy of last night’s victory.

“This was a triumph. Now all that’s left is to get Princess Blanche out here.”

“If we are rejected, we’ll just have to force her away with the military.”

“Hmm, the people are on our side as well. But you’ve got to make it clear to the military to avoid damaging the surroundings.”

“Of course. This land will soon be in Guinias-sama’s pocket. So be cautious not to harm any civilians.”

“I’ll let you handle that,” Guinias laughed in high spirits. But his mirthful moment was suddenly interrupted by some intruders.

“You’ve been summoned by our queen, please come forth with us.”

“Resistance is futile, we’ve already eliminated anyone in our path.”

The two who showed up were the embodiments of inhuman strength.

“What the hell are the guards doing!?” Guinias shouted, despite which, not a single one came to his room. The smaller of the two interlopers mockingly smirked at the panicked Guinias and said: “Didn’t I say, we’ve taken care of the ones that looked like they’d get in our way?”

The innocent voice delivered a vicious line. This made Guinias’s aides realize those two were no ordinary beings.

“Then, let’s go.”

“That’s right, farewell then, bye-bye!”

The two only took Guinias away as they loyally carried out their master’s order. The people remaining began to panic and shout.

“Those are demons. DEMONS have come to stop us!”

“Go inform the military! Guinias-sama has been kidnapped!”

“Th-that is probably—”

The message was swiftly relayed to the military camp. Guinias-sama was kidnapped despite a highly secured premise. The two criminals, their true identities likely being—Greater Demon Generals. Those unprecedented reports plunged the military base into pandemonium. What immediately followed—the operation was urgently revised to demon hunting.

On the other side, Guinias unwillingly had the pleasure to experience demonic air travel. At first Guinias was still resisting, the young nobleman acquired combat skill equivalent to B rank adventurers and was acclaimed for his excellence in both brass and brain. In fact, having reached rank B, one could at least become a lieutenant officer within the army—quite the talent in others’ eyes. Because of that, Guinias had been rather naive in thinking he would be able to beat a demon or two.

His preconceptions were easily crushed. These two demons were able to rush in and kidnap Guinias from the military base filled with sharp soldiers and a strictly secured perimeter. Their incredible strength spoke for itself.

“You bastards, what are you going to do to me?”

“Look below.”

Guinias looked down and witnessed scenes straight from hell. Their faces torn, twisted with agony, blood flowing out of their body without end. They writhed in pain—people, people everywhere. The once tidy streets were tainted with blood, while fresh blood kept gushing into the lake. It was dyeing the lake scarlet.

“—WHAT!?”

Guinias was speechless at the sight, but he soon regained clarity and howled: “You damn demons! You bastards, you should never have existed in this world! The people living on this land have signed a contract with your master. But you… How dare you just sacrifice them like this!?”

Hearing it, the small demon shook its head.

“That’s not the case. It’s all because of your actions.”

“Caused by my actions?”

“Yeah. You. You taught them to be like this. It was you who seduced and betrayed our master’s ally Blanche-sama, and attempted to exile her from the country.”

“T-that’s…”

“We don’t want traitors, nor do we want collaborators who failed to prevent the betrayal. They both carry equal sin.”

“Wait a moment! What about children? Shouldn’t there also be innocent infants? Are you just gonna kill them all!?”

“So what?”

“What gives you the illusion of righteousness?”

“Didn’t I just say that your sins are collective? But our master has shown mercy this time. She even granted those free of sin a painless death.”

“That was really surprising. If she was anything like before, exemptions would’ve been unthinkable. I suppose it’s all by virtue of Blanche-sama. That Blanche-sama also died because of you. So all of these tragedies are of your doing, look below and have its sights burned into your heart.”

Guinias felt confused being told so. At heart, he was not a man of pure evil. He’d contracted all the self-serving habits of a noble, and it was his sincere conviction that a noble was nothing without their people. First improve citizens’ standard of living, entrap their support through entertainment, then milk them through taxation and their labor. Because those were his previously held beliefs, his heart began to shake upon seeing so many people being slaughtered below him

I-I’ve done nothing wrong. I’m not wrong!

He told himself that, trying to steady his mind. But then, he could no longer keep his composure after hearing the next line coming out of the demon.

“It’s tragic indeed that the residents are involved as well. But rest assured that you are the one who caused all of this, you ain’t gonna be let off the hook with just this amount of suffering. So don’t lose your nerve just yet, brace yourself now for what’s next to come.”

Guinias came to terms with his reality—that horrifying reality crawled in front of him.

“No-no. Someone save me, please let me go!”

“Sorry, but we can’t help you with that. We’ll get killed for it,” answered the small, frowning demon, to which the other agreed. Then, Guinias was dragged in front of the queen. His ego shattered along with his inner self. Guinias was a shell of his former self.

“Ara ara, what happened to prince charming? Why are you crying so much? Have you pissed yourself too?”

“Someone save me, I’m begging you, please spare me,” Guinias wailed while sobbing like a bitch. Hearing this, Blanc’s laughter echoed with joy. Alas, the fire of hatred in her eyes only grew in ferocity.

“Idiot, why would I ever spare you now? But, you are pretty lucky.”

“Ayy?”

Guinias regained some hope hearing Blanc’s words and raised his head. What met him was a sinister smile.

“At least you are not the only one getting punished. You won’t feel lonely that way.”

In front of Blanc lay Guinias’s companions’ figures, their faces filled with fear and agony, and their bodies ugly, distorted and rotten. They’d been stripped of all clothing, their dignity as high nobility was a thing of the past.

“N-no! Forgive me, please forgive me!”

“That won’t do. Farewell then, fool. Enjoy the curse that grants you eternal suffering without death.”

Guinias heard that annoying yet beautiful voice.

“NOOOOOOO—!!”

Guinias left the world with a loud scream before his consciousness was consumed by terror and agony—what followed was a hellish inferno beyond words.

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Afterwards, the Imperial army that rushed into Silberia were terrified by the mere sight of the calamity. Fierce battles against the demons broke out. The elites who triumphed against the demons were able to head to the capital. There, they confronted Blanc.

By that time they arrived, Blanc had completed her revenge and was filled with desolation. She had no motivation of fighting whatsoever.

I feel so empty. Blanche is not around, nor her country as my playground. I suppose I don’t have any further reason to stick around these lands—

Blanc sparred with the Imperial knights while thinking that.

“Don’t get careless! From the situation, our enemy is the ‘White’ primordial. But do not be afraid! Us Trinity 27 will not be defeated, even by Primordial Blanc.”

She had little interest in fighting the menacing knights.

What a mess. I could easily win but don’t want to risk hurting Blanche’s body. I should just retreat to let the children of this land have a good sleep.

Blanc ceased fighting early on. It was the saving grace for the knights that had confronted her. Their identity was the most elite military force within the Empire, the emperor’s Imperial Knight Corps. However, the knights were no match for the White Queen.

If Blanc had fought seriously, the Imperial army would likely have been wiped out. They were convinced of their victory, not realizing their luck in avoiding their complete demise.

Then, Blanc—

She left her host body and cut ties with the physical world as her parting gift for Blanche. In order for no one to ever touch her flesh and let it rest in immortal beauty, Blanc casted a special seal to bury Blanche beneath this land.

“Good night, Blanche. I’ll have the souls of those who kept their promise sent to you as well, so that you will not feel lonely on the other side, and may you rest in peace there.”

Many souls with shining sparks gathered around Blanche’s soul. Then, Blanc carefully released them all. Even though demons enjoy souls the most…

“Farewell. When would I…meet you again…”

Perhaps Blanc didn’t want to consume Blanche’s soul and for that she pretended to be destroyed by the knights.

The wind was howling.

Then, the demons’ aura vanished from the land.

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In the past, this land once was a small nation named Silberia.

Its quaint towns stood tall, surrounding a beautiful lake.

Today, there’s not a trace of that left. The lakeshore is dyed scarlet by blood, its reddish-brown water reaches as deep as the sea.

The laughter of demons echoes day and night.

The ancient city is a tombstone. A cursed land.

A kingdom there once stood, met its demise.

The truth behind it never to be revealed.

(End)