

Jan was gone - somewhere. Somehow. Yet he knew where to look for her. He ventured the narrow corridors which divided vast halls. He crossed the rough staircase walkway and, turning the corner, he still thought on what he was to say. Only sound spread was that of his always elegant footsteps.

She is upset. Very upset. Angry. And she might do much in rage. There is no telling just how horrific is her state.

He smiled. No, grinned.

It can not be this bad. And even if it is - he knows what to say. Or maybe not. He knows what she shall say. What she shall most likely throw at him. Both phrases and heavy objects. After all, he knows her long enough.

He reached the cold stone wall with his hand and lead it, looking far forth, beyond old cracked glass at the end of the passage. His fingers dove into air - the door of carved wood was left open. Sound made by short heels of his came to a stop, then continued, much softer.

Jan rapidly turned away from the panorama of night, her eyes were threatening. She would never cry. She is not that weak. She did not make a single step. She just stood, partially facing Will. Aura around her was dense and dark.

She said simply, "You lied".

"I had. I had to!" He tried to soften his voice, but his manner of stretching every word was jesting him. "It was a necessary action."

"Why did you lie to me?" Jan looked away, as if she lost any interest.

"Lying to all of you was an important part of the plan. If any of you knew the truth you would not let me do this. But all of you are serene. Safe."

She asked again, "Why did you lie to ME?"

Jan looked at him again.

He thought about his answer. Late summer wind stroke the window slightly.

Two emotionless faces were at the state of mortal rivalry.

"You would not allow me, would you?" He eventually asked.

She raised her chin in one sharp move. Her jade eyes seemed to flicker. "And you knew that?"

"Yes."

Jan squinted, cutting William out of her sight ever further.

"Always know everything about everyone, do you? What," she paused, "Not so?"

William frowned. She finally was facing him with her whole body, as strong as it was feminine. Jeannette was not unlike a god, irritated by another deity.

She looked up, then pressed on. "You always think for everyone as if people around you are mere puppets. You know what they think, what they thought, what they will think. But what if you do not? You say you see through everybody, but you are blind to the fact that people are not see-through.

"Have you heard about the phenomena of identity?" Jan once more switched to him, mimicking his tone. "You might not have. We are all the same, after all." She smiled without joy.

"Deep in your illusions, you want not see others' feelings."

"I needed to keep you safe," he answered, "You personally, most of all. There are things I must do alone and there are things I would need help with. We have a goal and we need to reach it." His voice altered as he stopped controlling it. It was sincere and humane.

Then Jan exhaled heavily, "Right you are. The goal requires sacrifices. It always does, no matter what it is."

William walked up to her. They both let their gazes capture the dark beyond the frame. The miraculous place was located close to a rich forest. Abandoned castle was not taken since long, for it had no treasure to speak of. And they - a small group, not an armed garrison - they claimed it. They would have to provide it with resources and some guard system. But they have finally got themselves here. Of course, it was just the beginning. But

they would hardly get this far were they not dedicated to bring together antitheses. He wished to reform the castle to begin with! An elder structure that was traditionally kept precisely primitive in architecture, although overwhelmed with Ether. Whilst some individuals performed attempts at uniting by simple means, he would get to the very root of the problem. He would link magic and technology.

"Can you not see? There is a rift being spread: all the races have cut the world in two, for each culture was evolved to be a different realm placed on the same ground. What can that lead to?"

So he used to speak. Now situations intertwined, problems slowly arose. Did he expect difficulties? Yes. Partially, he did. He often ran through what was done and what was to be done. Altogether both sides created a scheme with gaps. Now they have almost settled in there. Ready to begin.

Rising moon was growing, passing the eternal field of stars. A new chronometer silently performed its humble task right next to a small candelabra, set on a table with carefully sorted papers. Perfectly identical letters there contained fair amounts of research, other stack, much thinner, had some schematics. Jan was very concentrated at any task, he envied that greatly. The room was silent. The world was silent. Tranquility could be opaque - it would not change a thing.

The souls were silent.

Too silent.

Suddenly, she yelled, "I can play this game, too!"

William rushed one unsteady step back in surprise. "What?"

"So you could read everyone and say what they would do, but you could not expect this? Oh, I see the change in your face."

She exhaled. Smiled ruefully. "Perhaps that was too much."

As eyebrows involuntarily danced on pale and disturbed face of William, she cut to loud and high tone again. "Was it? You still count, analyse. You can not deal with humans so. Not only

humans. No living being can be seen as whole if it is simplified to a thing that acts so or not so. You can never see the whole picture - no one can. Can you then treat others right?"

He averted his eyes. Difficult to understand... Humans, feelings... He had feelings too. He felt something at any time. Nothing he felt, too. But for a reason not known, each creature felt uniquely.

Jeannette jumped the windowframe and laid herself there, back against boulders of the wall, no more paying attention to anything but field of black and its white dots. "Jeannette in the moonlight... A picture waiting to be drawn," thought he and felt a pang, barely consciously giving oneself an uppercut. Silence poured as if it was water breaking down already leaking dam. Conversation could be continued only if he had any words to say. But he faced the doorway and strode off.

He could not... understand? He understood very well his coarse manners. Her rage was obvious, too. His fault. The wrong. Rift. What he was to say? "I'm sorry" is what anyone would say. He stopped. "I am sorry."

"Get! Out!" Voice was at its mightiest.

He tightened palms into fists and sped up, but she spoke again, now in unforgiving and even tone.

"You are making a great tragedy of your empathy-not. But you lied about your intentions and did a wrong move you still think is righteous. We had trust in you. Surely, Cohnal still does. Maybe even some others. But trust is not a currency. It is a part of someone you tore off."

She was now close enough to the door he crossed before halting to hear her out. With a corner of his eye he watched it close soundlessly. He did not leave. He stood, aware of her awareness that he is present. He pinned himself to the wall and reflected on the situation. He turned it around, cursed himself. Wearily he chose to leave, wondering how much time he spent here.