**Chapter 10: Saudade**

The kingdom is surrounded by a stone-cold wall that acts as a vast barrier. There is no barrier to insight; it is simply a stone wall. The kingdom's size is nothing more than a few villages banding together to build a castle uphill and form royalty from a single family. The marketplace is the only distinguishing feature of the kingdom. The marketplace is the most active around the seamless row of worn-down houses.

Demons of all kinds swarm here, from incubus and imp to gorgon and tanarruk. Life was never recorded before, nor was it ever worth recording. According to one of my authorities, this cannot be unarchived; otherwise, I am not the archangel of knowledge. As I am filled with curiosity, emotions like bubbles burst out in chains. Before I know it, the prince has fixed his gaze on my plight.

"We've arrived, little angel... My! Your reaction surprised me because it came so quickly. You weren't kidding about their fondness for bards." As I cover my face with the cloak in embarrassment, the prince laughs mischievously, and Blood Claw holds his laughter. This teasing will cost those two dearly.

"I'd rather you stop teasing me like this, Milord." I protest. It hasn't gone unnoticed, as the prince suppresses his laughter. "Stop with the Lord, won't you?" he says seriously. "If Eugen doesn't convince you, you can take over this kingdom on your own based on the little power you show."

"So, what should I make of you?" You are the lord for whom my partner worked. Would you not be the lord I serve if I followed him?" I make fun of him. His expression is perplexing. Is it my refusal to stop with formality, or his dismissal of one's power when he compares off that?

"Call me Kryos, inside and outside the castle," both seem to be the answer. "As my representative, you will be someone special. They will not dare to charge you with a crime or question you under my authority." In other words, being his power equal. While he is out playing, I am left with the task of ruling in his place.

"As you please, Kryos." I'm not concerned with whatever position you think I'm worth." The prince nods, pleased with the response. I'm not expecting too much from him.

"Good response. But that dress, did you choose it, or was it chosen for you by Eugen, who was concerned about my courtship?" As the tender white dress floated around, the prince snatched the cloak from me, and the demons around us whistled in delight at my fair skin and silver hair.

"Is it unflattering for me to appear in court because Blood Claw gave me this?" I look around, attempting to conceal myself.

"It would be cute in bed, but something like this in court." The prince snaps his fingers, and the "illusio" is instantly cast. The bardic garb vanishes, and he is clothed in imperial garb. Someone born from royalty wears a white shirt and black pants, red boots, and a gold cape. The people on the street were kneeling in honor of meeting the prince. As charming as he is, I can't help but feel sorry for the people kneeling in this rock-soiled place.

"Illusio," I say as my clothes change to look like Kryos'. A white shirt, silver pants, silver boots, and a blue cape are worn. The reason for this color is that it is similar to my skin tone; it may appear unoriginal, but it is distinct enough not to be a carbon copy of Kryos.

"Would this be enough?" As the prince sighs, I inquire, and many demons who were surrounding us flee. People stare at Kryos, who is better than before. But why was he discussing dressing in bed?

"Seeing you in this is quite flashy, but I prefer your lingering." That makes sense. I'm being targeted because of my unknowing immodesty. Why would I surprise at these pranks any longer?

"That dress isn't lingering; I just don't wear new clothes that often to compare," I explain quietly. Blood Claw turns away, unwilling to face my wrath. This is tedious; when will we arrive at the palace, as he promised?

The carriage arrives shortly after the uproar. The carriage, drawn by two centaurs, travels at high speed on the bumpy road littered with rocks and bones. My face turns pale as I try to focus on the one in front of me, suffering from motion sickness. Kryos makes an amusing face as if he planned everything just to make me suffer.

The castle resembles the wall that surrounds the kingdom. Black stone stacks together to form a simple menacing. This does not scream "royalty" or "great power." The inside is a garden of red roses, just as simple as its core. The maze appears small from the outside, but being enchanted with indecipherable dimension magic, figuring out this ancient puzzle will be a fun pastime.

A small imp in a suit greets us, his monocle hidden beneath his white hair. the person who has a high sense of self-esteem.

"For this servant to greet another royal in place is a rare sight." His Majesty did not mention that we would have such a dignified guest." "Sir Blood Claw, I request that your journal be kept in the Foreign Affairs Minister," the imp bows before me. Please give it to me."

Blood Claw reluctantly hands over the journal; this must be the tradition he has stated. "This time, keep it safe; I don't want it destroyed like the others." His statement proves it isn't, just a strange occurrence in this ridiculous kingdom.

"Don't be so modest this time, we're going to the throne." I don't want you to look foolish as my equal." Kryos scoffs, revealing his serious side. How adorable is it for this bastard to have a shy side?

"I know." The response is prompt and decisive.

We three walk into the throne room. As we approach, the small imp blows the horns. Only six demons remain in the empty hall in the presence of their prince. Except for Kryos, the only six demons "earl" in the book that Blood Claw let me have are the minister of agriculture, minister of commerce, royal messager, advisor, dark bishop, and the librarian.

They are dressed as their title, and they have no names, despite the fact that some of them were human. The minister of agriculture is blunt and direct, the minister of commerce is greedy and sly, the royal messager is chatty and cheerful, the advisor is calm and calculated, the dark bishop is always complaining but kind to the sick, and the library is one secretive despite being the temporary minister of foreign affairs.

The six all bow to the prince, and Blood Claw does the same. I try but am stopped by Kryos' displeasure grunt. "I've told you many times that my equal should not be so formal." He walks me to my seat. On the side of Kryos, the throne rose in black as red.

"My loyal subject, I have come to my own conclusion and have decided to have Mikhail as my one and only equal." They will not be my queen or consort, but they will wield the same power as I."

"I knew he would sell this kingdom one day, but to a small angel?" The Commerce Minister jokes boldly. No loyalty is sworn to the prince; this much is said to consider his contribution to one's contract as appropriate on both sides. Blood Claw's boring sigh responds to his joke.

"I wouldn't trust him as my majesty as someone who caught his eye." The Agriculture Minister expresses his thoughts. As simple as he is, the man returns to his usual record papers without looking at me. Is the prince truly in such bad shape that he is shunned by his remaining nobles?

"A new friend in this lonely castle, how the flow of rumor may be stirred by them." The royal messenger is giggling and perplexed by his newfound information. He salutes, his tail still twisted by pleasure... On his way out, I see him whispering something to the imp maids, which is truly childish of him.

"They won't be like his majesty under my watchful eyes," Advisor assures the rest of them while glaring at me. His eyes are filled with determination, and they are frightening right now. I wish I won't have to interact with him so much in the future. He also goes with unknown intentions; will he erect a barrier that prevents me from leaving this place?

"What do the monarchs think, they'd come after us at this point?" Dark bishop protests angrily, but with Kryos' shaking head, he eventually gives up. When the church bell rang, he quickly exited. Only the librarian remains behind, keeping track of what has happened to the other five.

"...Leave my books alone." As soon as he shares his thought, the librarian returns to his workplace and whimpers. With only the three of us in the throne room, Kyros stretches out his body, groaning tiredly, and returns to his chamber, leaving me alone with Blood Claw.

"So, Mikhail, the prince has informed me that a special chamber has been built for you. But it will be at least a few days before it is finished; do you want to sleep in my chamber?" Blood Claw suggests one, but with so little time to prepare for my replacement of the prince’s role, it won't be swell if I take too much rest.

"I'd decline, but before you leave, could you tell me about His Majesty's office?"

"The location where he normally performs his duties?" At the central location behind the water fountain, for what reason must you ask for it this late? At the very least, get some rest before the new dawn; nobody, not even his majesty, rushes you to it." When Blood Claw rumbles, I rush off without thinking. The moonlight streams down to the empty fountain below. This is the first night I've ever seen the outside world so clearly, and it's more beautiful than that artificial garden could ever promise to be.

The door behind it is covered in gold and red roses, security spells are always active, and rune craving is the energy it emits. The structure harkens back to a time not long after the seal of the nine true archangels and seven demon monarchs.

As you enter the room, parchments and scrolls appear from the entrance, enclosing the door to a tight shut. Advisor organizes with those at the table while asking, "Who goes there?" without looking back.

**The end**