# Chapter 17: Grim News

That same day, Angel sat side-by-side with Evariste at the meeting room table as she pulled out her mirror to contact Severin so they could give him the requested update. .

Severin’s face was grim when his image appeared on the mirror’s surface. “Enchanter Evariste, Enchantress Angelique, I’m relieved you called. Unfortunately, there's a grave situation that requires your assistance.”

Angel frowned. “What is it?”

“The Chosen have started launching coordinated attacks all over the continent, sending whole teams of dark mages to attack towns and villages full of civilians. The death count is rising and the Conclave is failing to respond. I’ve been in contact with Enchanter Clovicus and it seems they’re in disarray, with everyone arguing about who’s in charge and how to respond to all the attacks. He’s been trying to organize a response, but apparently they won’t stop arguing with each other long enough to listen to him.”

Angel sighed. *Of course the Conclave falls back into chaos right when we desperately need their help. They seriously can’t even get their act together long enough to go protect innocents?!*

“I suppose you want us to go to Verglas and knock some sense into them?”

Severin hesitated. “I wouldn’t ask if the situation weren’t so dire. I know we’ve relied on you too much already.”

“This is a dire situation indeed.” Evariste’s expression was steely. “When did this start?”

“Only a few hours ago. I’ve been coordinating with the other royal families, trying to organize a response of our own, but so far we’ve had little choice but to each send our armies to attempt to fight off the mages in our own borders, and there’s only so much they can do without magical aid.”

“What about the magic knights of Sole?” Angel asked. “Please tell me King Giuseppe isn’t *again* refusing to let them help the rest of the continent?”

“Sole seems to be faring better than the rest of us thanks to their knights, but there aren’t enough of them to defend against the attacks there and help the rest of us. We *need* the conclave to send teams of mages out immediately or the death count will just keep rising.”

Angel clenched her jaw. *How dare those mages misuse their powers like that?!* Those *hypocrites* who had spent years making her think *her* magic was evil, who had kidnapped and tortured Evariste, and who were now attacking more innocent people.

She startled when Evariste took her hand, then relaxed slightly, feeling their fingers twined together and the magic pulsing between them. *How does he always know when I need him to do that?* She squeezed his hand in unspoken thanks.

“The problem,” Evariste said, “is that we also need to retrieve that accursed mirror and destroy it, which will be no easy task. That’s what we were calling you about -- Acri gave us the information about their stronghold and where the mirror is kept, but he expects the information is only good for a couple more days before Lillian likely realizes he’s defected.”

Severin paused. “I understand the necessity of destroying the mirror. But these attacks are crippling our forces. If we don’t receive magical aid soon, there may not be much left for the mirror to destroy.”

Angel’s blood went cold at the look on Severin’s face. She’d never seen the usually stoic commander show such *fear* before. Instinctively, she squeezed Evariste’s hand and scooted her chair closer to his.

“The situation is truly that dire?”

Severin nodded grimly. “I’m afraid so.”

She exchanged a look with Evariste, who nodded. “Alright, we’ll go.”