

THIRST

Yash Gupta



BlueRoseONE.com
Stories Matter

New Delhi • London

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

India | U.K.

Copyright © Yash Gupta 2026

All rights reserved by author. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author. Although every precaution has been taken to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein, the publisher assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions. No liability is assumed for damages that may result from the use of information contained within.

BlueRose Publishers takes no responsibility for any damages, losses, or liabilities that may arise from the use or misuse of the information, products, or services provided in this publication.



BlueRoseONE^{com}
S t o r i e s M a t t e r
New Delhi • London

For permissions requests or inquiries regarding this publication,
please contact:

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

www.BlueRoseONE.com

info@bluerosepublishers.com

+91 8882 898 898

+4407342408967

ISBN: 978-93-7542-619-6

Cover design: Aafiya Saifi

Typesetting: Namrata Saini

First Edition: September 2026

Contents

Chapter 1: The Fracti.....	1
Chapter 2: Broken But Not Bent.....	7
Chapter 3: Undercover	11
Chapter 4: Strength Vs Speed.....	14
Chapter 5: Amber's Apicem.....	20
Chapter 6: Aurora	37
Chapter 7: The First Mission	54
Chapter 8: Haurientes And Sanguis- The Dual Tale	69

CHAPTER 1

The Fracti

2 figures stood facing each other as the fierce wind blew hard.

‘Brook? Never heard of him.’ Boomed the first figure, his voice was hoarse.

‘He may prove to be a threat to others.’ Stated the person in front of him. The figures were not clearly visible, but their dark shadows gloomed in the setting sun. While the city in front of them was shining with lights, they knew that it would not remain the same if their mission failed. No one would want that as it was the great city of Flata. The city blooming with tourists, a place loved by all; hated by almost none. The man responsible for its greatness was none other than the city’s mayor Klaus Vertigo. The city used their Plenus powers in day to day lives. On the other hand, there were some people who could not use the Plenus powers to the full potential, they were known as Fracti. These Fracti were always discriminated because of them having lesser power, this gave the birth to the Fracti’s main power source: Hatred. Because of this it was said that a secret agency was formed under the emperor by those having the Plenus powers, its main goal is to destroy the Fracti whose hatred is rising, as this hatred has more potential than the Plenus powers.

The Fracti took upon all the hatred and in turn developed new demonly powers. The Fracti were identified by their extra body parts springing out of their bodies, these parts were a replacement for the Plenus powers. In the city of Flata lived such a Fracti called Brook.

‘Happy birthday Brook!’ said Bona Una

‘Thank you so much, Bona’ replied Brook.

Brook was in a good mood today. His cheerful brown eyes showcased it. It was hard to see his eyes properly because of the strands of black hair covering them. His pale skin was covered with the new clothes he had bought for his birthday. He had 2 more arms coming out from both the sides of his shoulder area which signified that he was a Fracti. The place where all the Fracti lived was known as sub-Flata. It was a small community of 40 Fracti which was nothing compared to the 3 million population of Flata’s mainland. Out of the 40 Fracti, Brook was the youngest and Bona Una was the oldest. Bona Una had white hair till his shoulders which was neatly tied in a ponytail. His eyes were grey, they were calm and serene. Bona Una was very weak. He was a very kind person and did not despise the Plenae, because of that Bona Una only had his Fracti powers and not the deep power of hatred. Brook too was like Bona Una he had almost no hatred for the Plenae as he knew that it was him who was born with deformities. He was abandoned by his parents, as no parent would imagine their ward to have such less power. 15 years passed as Brook was raised with other Fracti that accepted him. ‘So, you remember your promise?’ asked

Brook. They stood in an alley that was busy at night but was silent at noon.

‘Of course! How could I ever forget! Today I will let you and Melodiam go to the Flata market. It’s a coincidence that the importing day from Flata falls exactly on your birthday!’ Bona scratched his head ‘But you have to be careful as some of the Plenae despise us.’

‘OK! Let’s go!’ Brook cried.

‘Wait, you do not go before we cut your birthday cake!’

‘But everybody is busy now! Let’s to do it after I come back.’

Bona Una considered Brook’s point and agreed.

Brook left the alley in the search of Melodiam. He found Melodiam in his house. Melodiam had spiky blue hair and a very thin face. A hand came out of his lower back almost looking like a tail. His eyes were green. The colour of his eyes and hair was a little lighter than the usual tint. Melodiam was more powerful than Brook as he had hatred for the Plenae. Melodiam was just about a year older than Brook but they had the same height. ‘Happy Birthday! How are you doing?’ Melodiam started the conversation

‘Thanks! I am good. Come on! We have to get the supplies from Flata! I know you have been there 2-3 times before, but this is my 1st time!’ replied Brook.

‘I knew you would say that! I am ready.’ Melodiam said smiling. He considered Brook his little brother. He and Brook had been through a lot together. Bonds which

make you happy are good bonds but bonds which makes your sadness disappear are better.

Brook and Melodiam left Sub-Flata about an hour before sunset. To reach Flata they had to cross a mountain called Mount Obex and then cross the Pure River. They reached Mount Obex and continued their journey and crossed the Pure River. The Sun had almost set on this wonderful city of Flata. Brook let out a deep sigh, from distance he could see the tall buildings of Flata. Upon coming closer, he could see how the Plenae use their powers in day-to-day life, some using their fire Plenus powers to cook food while others using their lightning Plenus powers for electricity. Melodiam pointed his finger to his right-hand side and said 'That is where we have to go.' Brook and Melodiam headed towards the direction that Melodiam had pointed to. Something seemed weird, everybody was glaring at Brook and Melodiam. Melodiam immediately became conscious, he looked at Brook who simply did not mind the stares. Melodiam smiled, they had reached the shop from where they bought the groceries. The shopkeeper packed the stuff in a jute bag, this bag was almost double the height of Brook, he stared helplessly at the bag. The shopkeeper kept his hand ahead open for money. After paying the money in the currency of Chom, Melodiam spread his arms wide, a semi sphere of around 10 cm diameter appeared. This semi sphere was blue and had floral white designs on it. Brook knew what Melodiam was doing. His mouth hung open as he saw this happen. Melodiam screamed a little in aggression, suddenly the semi sphere was completed to a full sphere through another red entity that had

emerged. The blue represented his Fracti powers while the red was his hatred. Both of them mixed to turn into a purple sphere, while the floral white designs still remained. This was one of Melodiam's powers. But you may ask about the use of this power. This power was teleportation. The jute bag suddenly disappeared, and it was safe to imagine that it had reached Sub-Flata. If Melodiam did not have the power of hatred the bag might teleport elsewhere. Melodiam took a deep breath trying to control this hatred he had just unleashed. He calmed himself as the sphere disappeared. After taking a deep breath Melodiam and Brook rushed towards Sub-Flata. They had crossed Mount Obex and had almost reached Sub-Flata.

'Race you' said Brook as he started running towards Sub Flata. Melodiam too started running, but Brook was faster. Brook ran covering the barren land between Sub-Flata and Mount Obex very fast. He entered Sub-Flata and stopped, not because he had won but because, of the sight in front of him. Blood lay in all 4 directions of Sub Flata. It was massacre. Melodiam reached a few seconds later and was shocked. Tears came out of Brook's eyes as he ran to take a look of the small city. Same red blood.

Everybody was dead except one. Bona Una was still barely alive, but his death was inevitable due to the deep wound on his stomach. Bona raised his hand signalling Brook to come towards him. Brook rushed but slipped on something, it was the teleported jute bag which lay horizontally. Normally, Brook would have noticed that but the tears in his eyes had blurred his vision.

Meanwhile, Melodiam tried to control his sadness. He had to be there for Brook. Brook got up and reached Bona Una. Bona Una pointed beside him. It was another body which lay on its stomach. Brook turned the body, and shrieked. It was his own body that lay on the ground but the body was shorter than Brook's actual height. Bona Una had used his cloning powers to make a body like Brook's. Beside Brook's clone body lay Bona Una, who was severely injured. His severed intestine could be seen as there his abdomen was ripped off. Bona Una called him and whispered in his ear knowing that this would be the last thing he will say in his life.

'The Plenae want you dead.' Bona Una coughed 'So Brook, run for your life' Bona Una passed away after saying this. Brook stopped crying now. He looked at the horizon, his fellow Fracti all dead. Blood was splattered on the walls.

He looked at Melodiam, who too was in shock. Why? Just why would they do that? Brook thought. No tear came down from his face. In fact, something had risen in Brook. Hatred.

CHAPTER 2

Broken but not bent

Brook was driven into his own world of thoughts.

Hopeless!

Yes, it describes this world the best. I shall make it in a way that there is hope. It shall not be false hope! But to do that I will need to do some changes. I shall, no, I will kill them, the Plenae, not all but the murderers. All those who have shed blood of an innocent Fracti, are nothing but the sworn enemies of hope.

But in this, there is one problem, I don't know one thing.

What is Hope?

Melodiam could not believe what he saw. The death of the Fracti was hurting him a lot but he knew how to control his hatred. Brook didn't as he had felt hatred the very first time. He had awakened a new power because of that.

Glass

The power the Plenae and Fracti get, depends on their personality during the power's awakening. It depends on their resolve. Those who don't have any resolve can never, no matter how strong their hate is, receive Plenus powers. When a Fracti or even Plenae feels hate, their powers increase, for one and only one reason. They have

resolve. The same is true for the opposite, love too brings resolve. What Brook had awakened was solely based on resolve. His resolve was rigid. It could be broken but not bent, just like glass and so Brook had gotten glass powers.

Brook stood at one place, his eyes looking very dizzy, when suddenly they sprang open. He let his hand out and a small piece of glass formed in his hand. Small, but sharp. He tossed the small piece of glass up into the air, just as it started dropping, shards of glass started appearing from the ground. Brook looked at his extra pair of arms. *These arms signify that I am a Fracti, they signify that I am inferior! I am not inferior!*

‘Brook!’ Melodiam cried ‘Snap out of it.’

But it was futile, the voice did not reach Brook.

Melodiam jumped as a shard emerged from beneath him. ‘Second sphere! Dancing cloud’ Melodiam was unsure it would work as he was still training for this technique but he still tried it as his hatred had increased after the massacre he had witnessed right now. Melodiam let out a faint sigh as a cloud came towards him. He grabbed the edges and climbed up. This cloud can change its state of matter and was planned to be used for travel by Melodiam. As he soared high with the cloud, he stared at Brook. *This is bad.* As the piece of glass landed in Brook’s hand, a glass prism formed above Brook, signifying his source of power, it was the same as Melodiam’s sphere. Brook held the piece of glass like a knife and chopped both of his extra arms off. He did not even flinch. Blood started coming out almost immediately. *Now I am an equal,*

I am no longer inferior. Now I can figure out on what hope truly is...
Brook thought as he lost consciousness.

Brook slowly opened his eyes. As he saw the sun blazing right into his eyes, he kept his hands as a guard from the light. He saw Melodiam. 'So, you are finally awake.'

'Yeah' Brook replied. He looked at his shoulders where 2 of his arms were missing, confirming what happened was not a mere dream. He gazed sadly around the horizon, filled with glass shards that had destroyed the dead bodies even more.

'Come on Brook, rise up. Instead of despairing for them, let's move forward and see what life has to offer' Melodiam managed a faint smile for Brook, but deep inside he was wounded just as much as Brook. Melodiam offered his hand to Brook to get up. Brook slowly got up feeling lighter, both in mind and body. 'We are going to Nolkan particularly, sub Nolkan.'

'But why?' asked Melodiam

'For a civil war! As you know our country, the country of Ferrum has 6 territories: Flata, Illuminaire, Nolkan, Joda, Sanka and Infraterre. We are going to unite all the Fracti and declare war against the Plenae. For that we will gather all the Fracti here, as this is now a barren land. Here we will prepare for the war, and finally we will attack.'

'But there are only around 3000 Fracti in this country. And what about the innocents?' Melodiam asked, shocked by Brook's plan. He thought it was impossible

but with Brook's newfound ability, they might stand a chance.

'Nothing will happen to the innocents; we will attack at the emperor's palace. Surely, he is the one who ordered all of this.'

Melodiam was in shock 'The emperor, you plan to take him down! He has the strongest Plenus powers!'

'And that is why we are going to prepare here. Trust me!' Brook said with confidence in his eyes. 'Let's get moving tomorrow.'

Melodiam had no choice but to say yes. The next morning, they set out on their journey.

CHAPTER 3

Undercover

Melodiam quickly teleported Brook and himself to the Flata Market. His teleportation abilities only help him to travel to the places he has seen. Melodiam had never travelled past the Flata market so that was his limit. Both Brook and Melodiam wore black robes and hoods today. Melodiam's third hand came to look out as a tail. Other people could easily identify that Melodiam was a Fracti. But it was hard to identify Brook without any extra body parts. The market was close to empty as the sun had just risen. Brook and Melodiam changed their path to the countryside. Brook tried to rush and increased his speed a little, but Melodiam stopped him. 'Don't waste your energy now, it is a long journey'. Brook listened to him and kept his pace down a little. The fresh morning turned into a slow evening. Both of them were exhausted by that time. 'According to the map, there are 2 ways to reach sub Nolkan- one by going through Nolkan and the other by crossing the Chain of good will which said to be really dangerous.' Melodiam let out a deep sigh. 'Which route do you want to take?'

'Let's take the Chain of good will. Going through Nolkan could raise suspicions.' Brook replied as he tried to find a place for him and Melodiam to stay. They had now left Flata and were in a no man zone. But surprisingly there

was a small hut around the corner of the jungle. A wise place, indeed, from where the inhabitant could easily access food and water but also comfortably sleep at night without having to worry of a predator hunting them down. The hut had green leaves coming down from the roof giving it an abandoned vibe. Brook thought that no one else was there. The house stood at a 3-mile distance from where they were standing. Both of them barely managed to reach the hut. From a closer view it was clear that the hut was camouflaged to be a part of the jungle. Melodiam stepped inside first hoping that no one else would be there. He checked the hut and gave Brook the signal to come in. From the inside, the hut looked really civilized with a clean sofa and a mattress and above all there was a washroom! Homes of this level were not provided to Fracti, so Brook was delighted. He smiled, which had become rare for him since he lost everyone. But Brook found himself returning to his own past self now. He found a closet and opened it, the closet had exactly what he wanted, food! There was preserved fish meat with some wild mushrooms. Brook figured that the mushrooms were poisonous so he kept them aside, and got the fish. He and Melodiam went out for the dinner. The sun was no longer to be seen. Melodiam found some wood at a corner of the hut which he kept on the floor.

Brook rubbed 2 rocks against each other, creating fire. They cooked the fish above the fire and slowly ate it while talking. 'Why would the emperor ever do this?' Melodiam asked.

‘Well, he is a stinky man, after all.’ Brook replied as took a bite of the freshly grilled fish and gulped it down. Melodiam chuckled ‘But what reason could he have?’

‘Well, the emperor...’ Brook started

Suddenly a shadow emerged from behind them pouncing at them with an iron mace. Melodiam saw a girl with long blonde hair hazel eyes a locket of a cross around her neck, she wore a grey t-shirt and blue jeans. The mace hit Brook which caused him to suddenly fall unconscious.

‘Who are you?’ Melodiam asked as he took his fighting stance, both of his spheres appeared behind him fluently mixing with hatred his main source for resolve, but now some serene light blue could also be seen adding which could have been the colour indicating his sadness. The colour of each type of resolve depends on each user. Brook’s hatred has no colour it is transparent.

‘The name’s Amber, Amber Garcia. Nice to meet you!’ She rushed towards Melodiam with her mace in her hand.

‘Now, go to hell!’

CHAPTER 4

Strength vs Speed

‘Dancing cloud! Awaken!’ Melodiam called out to the familiar cloud that came beneath him saving him from Amber’s strike. The cloud flew him approx. 5m from the ground at a safe distance from Amber. ‘An air advantage does not help you’ said Amber ‘we Plenae can use our powers without any medium such as spheres, even though our powers multiply by using the spheres. But flying is something every Plenae can do. You should already know that you pest!’ Amber closed her eyes for one second and slowly rose up in the air, gripping the mace lightly. ‘We don’t want to fight you!’ Melodiam shouted but Amber ignored it. Amber charged at him once again with her mace by her side as she brought her mace down swiftly but, in terms of speed Melodiam was on another level. He had teleported right behind Amber, and reached his pocket for his knife, but there was nothing there.

Crap! I forgot my knife at Sub Flata!

Melodiam attacked her with bare hands. He managed to hit a blow but his blonde opponent had suffered low injuries. Amber turned behind and struck Melodiam with a punch in the stomach which sent him crashing to the ground. But luckily the dancing cloud gave him a cushion due to which he did not suffer any hard injuries.

Melodiam got up, and started doing something which seemed useless to Amber. He was roaming around with the dancing cloud with a lot of speed. But Amber could see and keep up with his swift movements. Amber was annoyed and shouted ‘Quit wasting my time!’

Melodiam let a small sneer out but kept silent; focused on defeating the opponent in front of him. Amber watched Melodiam thoroughly as he soared with his cloud. Her eyes opened wide in shock! She noticed something. Once Melodiam passed through a point he would try not to cross it again. She had figured that Melodiam had another hidden power. However, it seemed to be too late. Melodiam had already finished encircling each and every single point within a 100m radius under 2 minutes.

‘Hmm! It is time to get my plan to work! Melodiam’s teleportation sphere was getting a little larger signifying that Melodiam had improved during battle. ‘Well, I don’t know why you are fighting me so I’ll probably spare you. Be thankful.’

With that, Melodiam teleported behind Amber and punched her on the back of the head, Amber went flying away but Melodiam was not going to let it end at that he teleported again to where Amber was about to land, this time he threw her into the air which was barely possible with Melodiam’s puny physique. He then teleported above her and drop kicked her, his leg swinging down swiftly. But Amber caught his leg and smashed him to the ground. Melodiam teleported again as Amber was making a smooth landing, he kicked her stomach making

her to fall down hard on the ground, her mace dropping out of her hands. By then both were bleeding.

‘I am not going to let your government dogs kill me!’ Amber cried even though she knew it was over

Melodiam frowned.

‘I am no government dog! We plan on killing the Emperor.’

‘Liar!’

‘I am serious.’

Amber stared at her hands in shock. Suddenly an idea struck her. ‘I too plan on avenging the government and rescue my parents. So, wanna shake hands?’

‘Yeah sure! But what happened to your parents?’ Melodiam offered his hand to Amber for her to get up. Amber got up using his support.

Amber’s expression suddenly changed. ‘I’d rather not talk about it’.

Melodiam bit his lip and cursed himself for asking such a question. *Obviously, it was personal! What was I thinking?*

Amber changed her expression again realising that she had been a bit rude. ‘So, what do you say? Can we join?’

‘We?’

‘Oops! I forgot to tell you about my brother. He spends his day near the lake in the forest. But he should be back by now. He is a year younger than me; he will turn 15 next month’ Amber cleared the confusion.

‘He just turned 15 less than a week ago.’ Melodiam pointed to Brook who had now begun snoring.

Amber broke into a quiet chuckle ‘Well they are the same age then! Oh, yeah and uh, sorry about what I did to him.’ ‘No problem he is fine now.’ Melodiam replied.

‘You sure are a sore loser sis!’ a new voice said in an excited but calm tone. The voice came from the left. Melodiam turned in that direction. He saw nothing but the dense forest.

‘I am up here!’ the voice teased.

Melodiam looked up, the boy was sitting on a tree, probably oak according to Melodiam. The boy took his pale complexed hand up and waved his hand. The boy was white but his hand seemed to be way whiter than him. Irritated with this white stuff, wait there is even more. His hair too was short but white and there were many directions to his twirls of hair. He wore a white t-shirt and grey shorts. His eyes seemed to be of the similar grey colour, just a bit darker. He kept waving his legs occasionally from the tree.

‘Speak of the devil’ Amber smiled at her brother.

‘I did not come here right now. I was just watching your fight.’ The boy yawned. ‘You could have defeated him, sis but you underestimated him. It would have been easy if you had used your Plenae powers to full extent. But I suppose even Mr Blue here had been holding back. You guys are so lazy!’

‘Erik, you have no right to call us lazy!’ Amber accused him

‘Nah, lets come back to topic I am too tired to argue with you!’

‘Exactly my point’ Amber said proudly when her point was proven.

‘But coming back to topic, the worst thing you did is let him roam around. According to my synthesis, Mr Blue can only teleport to points he has crossed before. Since he came here for the first time, he would have to cover a lot of area so that he can easily teleport without any inconvenience.’

The kid is sure smart. He is exactly what we need.

Melodiam’s thoughts were interrupted by Brook, who had finally come to. He got up slowly but then became alert as soon as he saw Amber. ‘Amber is our ally now, no need to worry’ Melodiam told Brook.

‘Should we head inside then?’ Amber suggested.

‘Sure’ Melodiam replied.

Erik jumped down from the tree, and waited for Melodiam and Brook to go inside followed by Amber. Lastly, he went into the hut and shut the door. He knew that this was going to be their last night in this hut. He smiled sadly. *I love this place, but I have to leave. But one day, I will surely come back here.* He made a promise to himself. *This is till now the only place that has accepted me. And my family.* His expression suddenly changed. *I will rescue my parents from that wretched Emperor. Life was so good. Ever since that day...*

‘Erik?’ Amber called out which broke his thoughts.

‘Yeah, I am coming, sis.’ He tried his best to smile but he could not hide it from Amber.

‘I know what you are thinking about. But we have got friends now, we will rescue mom and dad. Stop trying to act so tough, let it out’ at a certain point, Amber thought that she was talking to herself. She felt like she was at her breaking point the memories of her parents’ bringing tears to her eyes.

‘I will be back; I need to use the washroom.’ She rushed to the bathroom, and locked herself in, crying with tears sprouting.

God damn it! She remembered Erik’s grim expression right now and then remembered his childhood. *That innocent smile, it disappeared, ever since that day. When we were finally happy, that had to happen!*

CHAPTER 5

Amber's Apicem

Next morning they all were up early. Brook and Melodiam told them everything that had happened to them over the course of the past few days. Seeing them talk casually about what had happened only a few days ago made Amber wonder 'How can you talk so casually about something so painful that happened only like 5 days before?'

'Well,' Brook had a sad smile on his face 'We Fracti have suffered pain to such extent that we have got used to it.'

'We can't even talk about what happened to us without tearing up, even though that happened 4 years ago.' Amber pointed to Erik and herself.

'There is at least someone here with some sanity left' Melodiam joked as everyone else started laughing.

'No, but sis was only talking about herself' Erik said 'I don't cry while talking about it.'

Amber let out a nostalgic smile. *He used to be such a big cry-baby back in the day.* Then the smile turned to visible sadness and a sense of guilt. Brook mouthed to Erik. *What happened?*

I'll tell you later! Erik mouthed back. Erik and Brook had become good friends and had come to trust each other in only one night. Brook simply nodded slightly making sure that Amber did not notice.

After finishing breakfast, the 4 of them left for Sub Nolkkan. Melodiam took a new knife for him from Amber. This knife had a hilt that was very suited to Melodiam. The knife overall was light, suiting Melodiam's speed ability. Judging the dust the knife had, the knife seemed really ancient. It had intricate designs of a lion carved upon the hilt. The knife was not of iron that was for sure, as there was no rust.

Probably steel! Brook thought.

Melodiam thanked Amber and then they set out on their journey. Brook had promised them that they would visit this place again while returning.

The 4 of them took the route to Sub-Nolkkan. It was going to take them 3 days to reach there. They all wore woollen jackets to shield themselves from the cold weather.

'Any enemies near?' Erik turned towards his sister.

Amber closed her eyes for a moment. 'I don't sense anyone nearby.'

Melodiam was shocked. 'You can sense people too! How many abilities do you have?'

'Well, let's just say that I am talented' Amber winked.

Erik however, knew the truth. 'These are basic Plenae abilities, anyone can do it.'

Brook joined in the conversation. 'Can you do it then?'

'No, he can't' teased his sister, as she patted him on the back.

'But what other abilities do normal Plenae have?' Melodiam turned the conversation serious again.

'Well, let's start right from the basics.' Erik took a deep breath before starting again. 'There are 2 types of people- Plenae and Fracti. The Plenae have Plenus powers, while the Fracti have very less of these powers. The reason for this is that the Plenus reacts with the chemicals present in their mother's abdomen before being born and results in extra body parts of the new-born. Then...'

Melodiam interrupted Erik. 'But I thought the Plenus could be recharged after a period of time.'

'You are right, but in the 1st year of life the Plenus in the body reforms to form a structure. After this structure is formed the powers can be recharged. A similar structure is formed in Fracti too but it is formed upside down and is incomplete. In Plenae this starts from the neck and reaches till the start of the spinal cord. While in Fracti, the same structure begins from the neck but goes upwards till the brain. That part of the brain is the one which processes emotion. The incomplete part which is on top, becomes complete when one feels strong emotions as a chemical is released from the brain while feeling that particular emotion.'

Melodiam nodded.

'I didn't understand anything' Brook confessed.

Erik unzipped his jacket revealing a paper. ‘Neither did I, I just read it all out.’

Erik and Brook burst out laughing while Amber and Melodiam stared at the younger ones and looked at each other with a smile.

‘I will take it from here’ Amber said. ‘Well, even though the emotion ignites power, it only amplifies the medium power or better known as the person’s apicem. The sphere which you use is the medium through which plenus comes out. Fracti lose their spirit powers completely and have half of their apicems are depleted.’

‘What are...?’ Melodiam asked.

‘The spirit powers?’ Amber smiled ‘The powers which enable me to fly, sense, capture and mark. Now, you are going to ask me what mark is. Mark is basically restraining your opponent to escape the certain area that they have marked. This can especially be useful against fighters like you who use teleportation powers.’

‘I can only teleport in a radius of 5km at max, and I can do that only once per day. Then I am at my limit.’

‘5km is a lot!’ Amber exclaimed.

‘It’s not that big of a deal’ Melodiam smiled.

‘Well, coming back to the topic, if I mark you, at let’s say... 7km. Then, even if you teleport, you will not able to cover more than 3.5 km in any direction.’

‘That’s cool!’ Melodiam replied

‘I know right! These are only the basic spirit powers; some can use even more of them! In the most elite of people, mark can be used for only a radius of 5m’.

‘See, Brook, we have got a lot of work to do!’ Melodiam looked at the place his brother was walking behind him, but found no one there. Then he looked up and saw Brook and Erik running around and catching each other. Melodiam slapped his forehead and sighed. Amber and he once again had a mutual smile. They could relate to each other, the person they cared about the most could be as carefree as a butterfly but sometimes as dangerous as a dragon. It was nice to see them being carefree. They set out on their journey again after a 1-hour break. ‘How come Erik is Plenae but can’t use these abilities?’ Brook asked Amber.

‘Well, remember when I told you about how in Plenae the structure that emits Plenus?’ Amber turned towards Brook.

‘No not really!’ Brook answered.

‘Your fault!’ Amber scolded Brook but then continued, ‘Erik’s structure does not fully reach the spinal cord. So, he can’t sense but he can fly and mark.’ Amber closed her eyes for a moment to sense again. ‘I have found some people, at 4 O’ clock. I don’t know if they are going to be harmful. Where do we have to go from here?’

‘We have to take a sharp left, 90 degrees.’ Melodiam answered.

Amber bit her lip. She hoped that the people were harmless. They were not Fracti, she knew that, as sense

can only detect people with spirit powers. There were 8 people according to her. ‘You guys cover Melodiam, as he is the only understandable Fracti here. I’ll go on ahead and deal with the people’

Erik and Melodiam nodded.

‘Don’t kill the people, if they are innocent, ok?’ Brook told Amber.

Amber gave him a thumbs up and left with confidence. Melodiam looked up at her in awe, his mouth hung open. Erik did not notice Melodiam’s reaction and gave Amber her mace which she had forgotten. Brook, however, whispered in Melodiam’s ear. ‘Someone’s fallen in love, huh?’

Melodiam shook his head, ‘No, I have not!’

‘You have!’

Melodiam gave up and admitted. ‘Ok, I have!’

Meanwhile as Erik handed over the mace to Amber, he said with a twinkle in his eyes. ‘Acting cool, in front of your crush, huh?’

Amber blushed, ‘Melodiam is not my crush’

‘Who ever said anything about Melodiam?’ Erik broke into a wild and broad smile.

Amber slapped him on the shoulder playfully, and admitted. Then, she left to get all work done.

She travelled slowly but steadily being aware of her surroundings and being sure not to step on a branch. Amber had read in books that is the biggest mistake she

could make in wildlife. If Erik would have heard her say this, he simply would have said, ‘Nerd!’ Amber smiled at the thought of her little brother. Then she moved on ahead. Finally, she saw a man sitting under a tree. She used sense once again, and was shocked, there was no one except him here. All the spirit power was his! The man was bald and well shaved. He had scars in the shape of a spider web on his left temple. His eyes were pitch black. He was dressed in green clothing. He heard movement behind a tree. ‘Identify yourself!’ The man said in a hoarse voice. Amber stood still, getting ready with her mace, she was planning on finishing it with one strike. Amber got into stance and leapt on the man. As she came close to him, black smoke was secreted from somewhere, the smoke smelled badly and made Amber dizzy. ‘Ew! Did you fart?’

‘Nope’ the man plainly replied.

As the smoke cleared. Amber saw the man with tentacle-like things sprouting from his back. She then realized, the man had the powers of an octopus! She looked above and found a mouth like structure above. *That’s the medium, huh? He is already using his apicem. I think the smoke is released when that mouth is opened.*

She saw a badge on the man’s chest proving he is a government official. *I can kill him then! Time to use my apicem.*

She took her mace and held it in front of her, the mace slowly began to lose its spikes, and became golden in colour. The size of her mace also decreased by a bit. There were parallel lines running down the mace. A small

point appeared at the top of the mace. The mace was her medium!

‘The power of Vali! Awaken!’ Amber whispered to herself slowly. She charged at the man who sprang a tentacle ahead to attack Amber. Amber blocked the tentacle’s attack with her mace. Both of them were equal in power. Amber reached close to the man, and swung her mace. The man let a tentacle go ahead of him and defend him. But the mace broke through the tentacle quite easily, as if it was double the power. The man was shocked but moved away from Amber’s strike. Amber charged at him again; this time the man used 2 tentacles to block the attack. After this collision, they realised that they were equal in terms of power. The man smiled. Amber swung hard again but the man was fast and reacted, but this time the mace broke through both the tentacles. As the man saw this happening the mouth-like medium above him sprayed black smoke again, to help the man escape. He was used to this smoke so he attacked Amber. Amber could not see anything. After the smoke cleared, she found blood on various parts of her face. The man had realised the power of her apicem. The power of anything that touches her mace will be doubled in her next strike. The man had to strategize properly; he had only 5 tentacles left. Amber’s mace now had the power of 4 tentacles. But Amber was not ready to give the man time to strategize, she charged at him, swing her mace swiftly and continuously. The man kept stepping backward, making sure that his tentacles don’t touch her mace. He was barely dodging and could not attack. According to Amber, he would not be able to use the black smoke for

another 30 seconds. She thrust her mace ahead the man stepped back, and barely dodged, then she took the mace over her back holding it with both hands and brought it down, as the man jumped behind, he saw Amber smile, 'Power of Vali! Release'

In a split second, the mace returned to its original size regaining its spikes. The mace hit the man and he fell down.

Amber remembered to keep manners before killing him, 'What's your name?'

'Octo' The man replied, knowing his end had come, he clutched onto his own body, and awaited the final strike.

Amber landed the finishing blow to Octo. His dead body lay still on the ground. His eyes were calm as he knew he was going to meet his end.

After sometime, Brook, Melodiam and Erik reached this venue.

'Looks like you took care of the intruder.' Erik waved his hand towards her sister from 50 metres away.

As they reached closer, Amber decided that she was not going to miss a chance to brag in front of Melodiam. 'I killed him easily, no sweat.'

Show-off! Brook and Erik shared the same thoughts.

But Melodiam was impressed. 'That is so cool!'

Amber looked away and blushed. 'Let's go now' she said and started going ahead. Melodiam followed her without

a word. Brook started laughing. 'You are going in the wrong direction!'

'Oops!' Amber exclaimed. Erik was secretly giggling behind.

They started moving and continued for 2 more days, until they reached Sub Nolkán. Upon reaching, they saw a closed gate. The gate was made up of wood. Besides the gate was a border which was also made up of wood. It was like an impenetrable defence. Both the gates and the borders were about 50m tall. Only skilled Plenae will be able to fly up this high. There was a small door near the gate to enter.

'Why is the gate like this?' Brook wondered.

'Tourism' Erik answered, 'a gate this tall attracts tourists. Except this, safety.'

Brook nodded.

'I think Erik and I will not be able to enter Sub Nolkán, we are Plenae.' Amber was worried.

'But, Sub Nolkán is an open district, both Fracti and Plenae are welcome.' Brook decided to help Melodiam. 'Melodiam gave me this information, when I told him about the plan. He is veeerrryy smart'

Brook winked at Melodiam.

All 4 of them moved towards the small door and spotted a little man of about 5 feet. His nose was straight, and his nostrils were barely visible. He had short black hair which were beginning to become grey. He was wearing a uniform suggesting that he was a guard. The little man

noticed them, and became alert. He approached towards them with a spear double his height pointed towards them. Brook, Melodiam and Amber put their hands up in the air. 'We mean no harm, we come in peace'.

Erik, meanwhile had a hard time controlling himself, the sight of a short man with a straight nose holding a 10 feet spear, made him laugh. He looked away and quietly chuckled.

The small man carefully glared at Brook, maintaining his distance. He reached for his pocket, but with his tiny hands he could not reach it. This made Erik burst out laughing for a second, but then he managed to compose himself. Brook turned towards Erik and pointed his eyes to his pocket. Erik was trying not to smile as he headed down to the small man's pocket. Erik looked at him while he picked out a small piece of paper from his pocket. The man opened his mouth to yawn. Erik handed the paper to the man with his expression changed because of what he saw. The man's tongue was cut off. He regretted laughing before.

The man opened the poster, and examined it. His eyes turned to terror and he kept his spear at Brook's neck.

'Why are you doing that?' Brook asked the man.

The man's expression remained unchanged; he moved his spear to slaughter Brook. Brook saw what the man was doing and moved away. Melodiam and Amber took guard for Brook; the man charged on them. Melodiam restrained the man making it impossible for him to move. Amber got ready with her mace to finish the job.

‘Don’t kill him!’ Erik shouted at Amber.

Amber was dumbfounded. ‘Why?’ She took Erik’s words lightly and moved her knife to the man’s throat. Just as the knife started cutting through the neck, Erik ran and stopped Amber with fury in his eyes. ‘I TOLD YOU TO NOT KILL HIM!’ Amber looked at her younger brother, slightly taller than her, in his usually calm grey eyes she saw fury, red hot fury. The knife dropped out of her hands. Melodiam was shocked too. Slowly his eyes returned to the same way they used to be. During this time, Erik spotted another guard, this guard came shouting from far away, seeing his mute friend in an awkward position.

Finally, someone who can speak Erik smiled faintly.

‘Who are you guys?’ The guard asked. He examined each one of them. ‘You!’ He said pointing to Brook. ‘Why are you here?’

Brook raised his hands in the air again, ‘I come in peace.’

‘Oh! We don’t want peace from a murderer like you.’ The guard unsheathed his sword.

‘A murderer?’ Amber stepped back, as she stared at Brook in horror.

‘Obviously, you don’t know, ma’am. Otherwise, you would not have come close to him’. The guard stroked his moustache with his free hand. The moustache was the same colour as his blonde hair. Unlike the other guard this one was tall, around 6 feet tall and was buffed. ‘This dude right here killed all of the Fracti in Sub-Flata!’

‘Brook? Is that true?’ Amber was now terrified, she looked at Melodiam waiting for his answer.

Brook was getting out of control. ‘WHAT!? It was one of your government pests who did that! And after all that you have the guts to say that it was me who did it!’

‘Brook...’ Melodiam kept a hand on Brook’s shoulder.

‘Calm down’ His other reached his knife to kill this pest.

Amber was still double guessing on who was right and who was wrong. Erik came from behind and gently tapped her on the head, ‘Don’t believe that guy! He thinks he is saying the truth, the government must have spread these rumours. I am sure of it.’

Amber lifted her face to look at Erik. But, suddenly pieces of glass started flying around.

Brook had lost control again. The glass prism had appeared behind him, and pieces of glass were flowing all around. The glass debris mixed to form a model, it looked like a hand. The hand moved towards the tall guard’s neck and the hand closed really fast. The guard died almost immediately. His neck was severed by the sharp pieces of glass that had formed a hand. The transparent glass took the colour of a lifeless red. The hand shattered into random pieces of glass and descended to the ground. Brook let out a large cry. Then he became quiet. And the rampage began.

Liars!

Pieces of glass sprouted from the ground again but this time Melodiam knew this was gonna happen so he got

ready with his dancing cloud and rescued Erik and Amber. He scanned the horizon seeing glass almost everywhere. Erik and Amber, however were very startled and were left in shock. They could not move a muscle as they were helplessly rescued by Melodiam.

As he was scanning the horizon Melodiam saw 2 people rushing towards them.

‘Go away!’ He cried ‘This is dangerous.’

One of them stared at Melodiam and ignored his advice. This one was a tall woman with long black hair tied in a ponytail. She had fair skin but not as white as Erik. She carried a knife similar to that of Melodiam. She looked like she was in her late 20s. The other one, however was an old man with long white hair that went till his neck. The hair was straight and silky except for 2 parts of his hair on either side above his eyebrows, were curved, making it look like horns. He had a thick beard and moustache. He wore an eyepatch in one eye and carried a huge scythe beside him. Both the strangers wore a locket with the sun on it and had some kind of weird designs on their necks. The design looked like a semi-circle with triangles around it. They calmly walked through the area where Brook was menacing. Melodiam still tried to stop them. ‘Don’t go there you will die!’

The woman scoffed, ‘Who is this kid?’

Not listening to Melodiam, the 2 made their way forward. They started flying to cover the distance between the sprouted glass and Brook. The glass formed a hexagon around Brook, who quietly moved his hand up and down

making glass come out of the ground. He saw the 2 newbies flying, he slowly took his hand up and shook it down. In no time, glass, started falling from the sky.

The old man removed 2 umbrellas from his backpack. He threw one of them to Melodiam and took one for him and the woman. The pieces of glass deflected from the umbrella instead of tearing it, like it. Erik and Amber had finally recovered from the shock and hid under the umbrella.

Brook joined both of his hands and a surface made of glass appeared which took him to the height of the others who were flying. He then just started slowly walking towards the old man and woman. With each step, a new layer of glass formed just below his feet.

The woman smiled. 'Ready, Garthos?'

The old man replied with a simple nod, and picked up his scythe in the air, while giving the umbrella to the woman. He held it from its string and not the handle. This made him give more range but less accuracy.

The woman however, did not unsheathe her knife or get on guard she just waited. The man swung his scythe towards Brook, who grabbed it with his bare hands, and pulled the scythe dragging Garthos towards him. Red blood fell on the ground drop by drop from his hands due to this action. As he was pulled towards Brook, Garthos used Brook's dragging to jump on to him with kicks ready while Brook's hands were busy. Brook realised this and came up with a plan. Brook raised his hand making a glass sword form in his hand. He looked like he was in a daze,

as if someone else is controlling him, or rather some emotion is driving him crazy. Garthos's kick almost reached Brook but he shifted to the side leaving the scythe and swung with his glass sword. Garthos took the support of his fallen scythe by leaning his hands on it and kicked again. This time Brook blocked the strike from his sword. Garthos felt immense pain in his feet after that strike. He limped to his scythe and maintained long distance and swung his scythe by holding the string. Brook again used his glass sword to protect himself. The attack was repelled however; Brook's glass sword was shattered.

'We must help Brook' Erik was getting ready to fight.

'Oh! Shut up!' the woman said. 'We are not going to kill him we want to calm him down.'

'Why would you want to do that?' Amber asked. 'What's in it for you?'

'Duh!' The woman replied. 'He is making a chaos, which can kill innocent people. And besides... we want make a deal with him and all of you.'

'What deal?'

A smile played on the woman's lips. 'You will see, after he comes back to sanity.'

Meanwhile, Garthos and Brook continued their fight. Garthos swung his scythe again. This time Brook was not left with any defence. Garthos's scythe hit Brook's head from the blunt side, causing him to become unconscious. All the glass pieces, vanished into thin air as Brook hit the ground.

Melodiam was shocked. ‘Who... are you?’

Garthos finally spoke. ‘I am Garthos and she is Linda.’

‘I mean, who sent you, are you from the government?’

‘No, we are from the Aurora.’

CHAPTER 6

Aurora

‘The Aurora’ Erik wondered. ‘What the hell is that?’

‘We are revolutionaries and we have one goal’ Linda started. ‘To destroy the government of this nation and help it develop with a better one.’

‘To destroy Vesperi, we will need your help.’ Garthos referred to the name of the government. ‘We will make our country, the country of Ferrum great again.’

‘And why do you think we will help you?’ asked Amber.

‘We know your goals. You too bear resentment against the government, Ms Amber Garcia.’ Linda revealed. ‘How do you know my name?’ Amber got caught off guard.

‘We research people who we would like to join us.’ Garthos answered her question, with his face as emotionless as ever. ‘We can still rescue your parents. But before that is going to be a civil war. The deadliest civil war ever seen.’

‘But things won’t end there would it.’ Erik remarked.

Garthos nodded.

‘Other countries may realise the instability of our country and attack us.’ Erik continued. ‘But that can be prevented

according to what you are saying. I presume you may already have done this but, you should have spies in the Vesperi's main Headquarters. This way, when the civil war is won. We will still have enough stability to prevent other countries attacking us.'

'Well, that is the hard way.' Garthos suddenly became engrossed in the conversation. 'We are trying to make alliance with the Lateres.'

'But, aren't they evil?' Melodiam asked.

'That is what you think as you are living here in Ferrum, where they are considered our enemies. Even the people there may believe that we are evil. But are most of the people here and there evil? No.'

'Well, if they do think that why would they help us?' Amber went where Brook had fallen and lifted him with Melodiam's help and seated him on a bench.

'Because we are overthrowing the Vesperi' Erik was starting to understand everything. 'This could establish a new beginning between 2 nations and we also defeat a corrupt, evil government.'

'You got it right, kid. Except one thing. The entire government is not evil. It's only the top 1% of the government that actually does the evil stuff. Remember this, the ones with power influence how you think about their community. Even if out of a 100 people, 99 people are right, and 1 person is wrong and that is the person with more power than all of them combined, the entire community follows him, losing their sense of right and wrong. They all run behind the powerful. But they don't

realize that it is them who is making the powerful run even ahead of them.’ Garthos explained while putting bandages on Brook’s hand.

‘But...’ Erik started. ‘You can’t exactly define right and wrong. What may seem as right maybe wrong to someone else. It is all about perspective.’

‘You are right!’ Garthos said. ‘But this does not change the point that everybody changes their point of view to acquire more power financially, physically and in any way possible. It is this thirst of power that drives you crazy. But you know why we, the Aurora might be able to defeat the Vesperi.’

‘Why?’

‘Because there is something, even more powerful than the thirst for power. That is the thirst for REVENGE.’ Garthos concluded.

‘OK! Enough of this philosophical shit!’ Linda joined her hands sarcastically. ‘Let’s get to the point. Join us and we can work together to defeat the Vesperi. Are you in?’

‘We are in’ Erik said in a split second. Amber and Melodiam smiled.

‘Good! The four of you will be in Barrack D with us.’ Linda added. ‘There are 4 barracks in the Aurora containing 10 people each. A, B, C and D are ranked from strongest to weakest. Well, Barrack D only had 7 people so now it has 11 making it the barrack with 2nd most people. Barrack B is first with 14 people. However,

our captains are the 4 strongest people out of all the barracks.'

'But before you become one of the Aurora you must get this mark on your neck' Garthos pointed to the semi-circle and triangles design on his neck.

'Nooooo! Don't tell me you are going to bite me!' Erik shied away in a cheerful mood.

'I am not going to bite you.' Garthos tried not to smile.

'Then this ugly woman here is going to! That is even worse!'

'Hey!' Linda was laughing but was also a little offended. 'Who are you calling ugly?'

Melodiam and Amber could not stop giggling. Even Garthos had a smile on his face. Brook woke up just then, slowly opening his eyes. The 1st thing he saw was Garthos smiling with his mouth wide open which made him startled.

'What the hell!' He exclaimed as he quickly scurried away from Garthos. Everybody except Brook and Garthos were laughing. Garthos's smile grew even wider. After everyone had explained the entire situation to Brook; they finally decided to put the mark on the 4 of them.

'It's time then.' Garthos finally returned to his serious demeanour. He bit his lip making blood come out, using that blood he drew a cup like pattern on his other hands, masterfully painting it with his thumbs. Then, he gently pressed his hands to the necks of Brook, Amber, Melodiam and Erik. The colour of Garthos's blood that

had been put on their necks now turned black and slowly started spreading around the neck forming a similar design to one that was already on Garthos and Linda's neck.

'Take this locket too.' Linda removed 4 lockets from Garthos's backpack and handed them over to the new Auroras.

'Thanks!' Erik tried the locket.

'This may seem a bit weird, but Melodiam and either one of you, must accompany Linda on an urgent mission. This is going to be one of the most major missions ensuring Vesperi's downfall.'

'Brook and I will stay with them I think you 2 should go' Erik looked at his sister, who mouthed a curse and a thanks one after the other.

'Ok, I will brief you the mission. You have to supply these weapons to Barrack D captain Vincent Phillipe. I will give you a description of him. Blonde hair, silver eyes, very tall. You will find him at the other side of the Sub Nolkans towards the east border. You can check it on your map. But after that no matter at what cost you must not engage in anything else. Return to this exact point, after your mission is complete. The captain will handle everything else. I will come with you on the mission to help you.'

'What will we do till then?' Brook wanted to get that stupid king's head chopped off for what he did.

'Well, Brook, your apicem can be of good use to us when you learn to control your powers, so you will be training

under a particular person from our barrack. He is strong, very strong but I am not sure about his teaching skills. Erik will join you as well 'Garthos answered.

'We will go then!' Melodiam waved them goodbye, nervous about their first mission but excited about going with Amber. He could not let this opportunity go to waste.

'What do we do about the guard who just died? And where did the mute guard go?'

'Don't worry. I have got that covered.' Linda smiled and took her hand up in the air, suddenly, a bottle of perfume came. She sprayed that perfume on the dead body of the guard. 'Soon, everyone will forget that he even existed. So will the mute guard. That is the power of my first apicem out of two.'

'That power... will be bad in the wrong hands' Melodiam gulped terrified with what he witnessed.

'What is the second power?' Erik was not that startled and kept his calm with a genuine smile on his face, he was amazed by what he saw rather than being terrified.

'Oh, wouldn't you like to know?' Linda teased. 'Some things are better kept a mystery.'

'Well, I guess we will know with time' Erik smiled realising that even he had never showed his apicem to anyone, not even Amber.

After a few more minutes of chit-chatting, Amber and Melodiam finally left for their journey. By the time they were leaving with small backpacks both of them were

acting awkwardly, forgetting small things. Erik as always was laughing in the corner. Brook, who usually joined Erik while laughing was concerned. 'If they are going to be like this, will they make it? I think I should...'

'Chill! I trust the 2 of them, they may act like this now, but when their lives will be on the line, they will fight harder than ever to protect each other. And according to my calculation there is only a 7.82 percent that they engage in a battle'

'Damn! Your numbers are pretty accurate.'

'Nah, I just made them up for the dramatic effect.' Erik winked. This time Brook started laughing.

I have people whom I trust now. Things might get better. No, even if I feel good with these guys, I MUST take revenge. But for now... I can lighten up a bit.

Meanwhile, Amber, Linda and Melodiam were headed through the gates of Sub- Nolkkan and making their way to the east. Melodiam kept his backpack from one shoulder only, according to fashion advice from Brook.

It makes you look cooler. He had said.

Melodiam wondered what Amber was thinking right now.

She also looked nervous about the entire mission. It was all too sudden. Looking at her, made Melodiam lighten up and smile. Amber caught him smiling at her and tried not to blush. 'What? Why are you looking at me like that?'

‘This is the first time I have seen you nervous. You look funny’ Melodiam grinned. ‘Even I am nervous, for the mission.’

Amber nodded her head.

It isn't just the mission, you Dumbo! It's you who is causing me to be nervous!

After an hour of walking, Melodiam realized something. ‘Do you want to go on the cloud, because this might tire us out?’

Amber had a silly smile on her face. ‘This came to our mind too early, eh?’

Linda smiled at their conversations.

Drogba, are you seeing this? They remind of the 2 of us when we were young. I just hope it doesn't turn out like us in the end.

Then she went back to hearing their conversations.

Melodiam and Amber burst out laughing crazily, and then restrained them. Both of them remembered their little brothers or at least the one they considered like their little brother, and all the times they teased Amber and Melodiam with each other's names. Brook knew that Melodiam liked Amber, Erik knew that Amber liked Melodiam. The 2 exchanged this information. Now, they are the only ones left who don't know they like each other. Amber remembered the creative ways in which Erik teased her while Melodiam remembered Brook, just calling the name Amber and seeing Melodiam's reactions at completely random moments.

‘Achoo!’ Brook and Erik sneezed at the same time.

‘Are we both gonna catch a cold at the same time?’ Brook asked sarcastically.

‘Enough jokes!’ Garthos said. Let’s wait for them here. Till then Brook, your master has arrived.’

From behind the gates of Sub-Nolkan, emerging from the forest was a tall man with a sword coming out. He was almost 6 and a half feet. He posed with one hand on his chin which had faint beard, his other hand with the sword pointed towards Brook. ‘I am Traka Chink! I strike fear in enemies, but since you are my ally, maybe I will teach you a trick or two.’ He had messy black hair, which covered his forehead but it was tied into a ponytail from behind. He wore a brown leather jacket and kept its zip open showing his 6 packs and fit body. He too had the locket and same marks on the neck like Garthos and Linda. His face had a visible jawline. He had scar marks running down from his lips.

‘You are a funny one.’ Erik muttered.

Traka smiled. ‘That was a compliment, right?’

Erik grabbed a packet of chips from his backpack. ‘What if it was not?’

‘Then, I will kill you!’ Traka’s smile turned to a cheeky one.

Everyone burst out laughing, obviously except Garthos who only had a smile on his face. Someone tell bro to get a life.

‘So, who is the one who wants to learn to control their apicem?’

‘It’s me’ Brook stepped forward.

‘What is your name?’ Traka asked.

‘Brook’ Brook answered in a light mood.

Traka narrowed his eyes, as if studying Brook. ‘You have a very bad fashion sense!’

Brook held his own head from both of his hands. ‘That’s what you were looking at?’

Traka ignored Brook and turned to Erik. ‘Do you know how to control your apicem?’

Erik smiled wickedly. ‘Well yes, I do! But I have never actually used it in combat. Oh, and by the way, your fashion sense is even worse than him.’

‘Well, look who’s talking.’

‘Can we please get serious for once?’ Brook pleaded.

Traka turned his face towards Brook. He swiftly walked towards him and kept a hand on Brook’s shoulder. He closed his eyes as if listening to his heartbeat. He opened his eyes and smiled. A new fire born in his eyes. He stared down at Brook.

‘Revenge, huh! This is gonna be interesting.’ He chuckled.

Brook stood there dumbfounded. Shocked by what had happened.

‘What revenge?’

‘It’s the Thirst of revenge that has caused you to awaken your apicem. There are different ways to awaken an apicem-

1. Thirst for revenge
2. Thirst for power
3. Thirst for love
4. Will to protect
5. Will to achieve
6. Will to avenge
7. Flair

You see what happens is when you feel a particular emotion in an excess amount it is released. For example when you feel sad a tear comes from your eye. But in this case your apicem gets secreted from your body. And the main difference between your tears and your apicem is that, your apicem contain your feelings. And after going out they possess you.’

‘Um... Could you elaborate a bit about the awakening of the apicems?’

‘Sure, come with me.’ Traka took Brook and Erik to a tent near the end of Sub Nolkkan. The tent appeared a bright yellow in the moonlight. Traka entered first, followed by the young boys.

‘Voila!’ Traka cheered.

Brook looked around the tent curiously. The tent was divided into 7 parts. A painting representing each part. Brook could not see the image properly until Traka turned the lamp on.

‘Are you ready to listen? Because this is gonna be a lot’ Traka warned as he moved towards the first painting on the left. The canvas was painted red, the colour of blood. In the centre of the image was a man standing emotionless with a spear in his hand.

‘This painting you see here. Represents the thirst for revenge. When a person, loses someone close to them, they want nothing but revenge. Their world becomes a hell. They stop feeling everything except deep anger in their heart.’

‘Wait. This is how my apicem was awakened. I am emotionless now?’ Brook’s face turned dry with worry.

‘Don’t worry kid’ Traka smiled genuinely. ‘No one ever has a pure thirst or will. It is always a mix of at least 2. Revenge is what you long for the most. Now let’s move on to the second painting.’ Traka moved a bit towards his right, his sword sheathed behind his back. This painting had the same reddish tone, but in the centre of the painting was a bright yellow light. Chasing that light was a figure standing on the corpses of many. ‘This shows the thirst of power. One loses sight of everything only to get that power. Next quickly move on to the next one.’

‘Um, one quick question. What is the point of doing all of this?’ Erik asked. He looked fascinated by what he was learning, but he knew that Brook and he had to power up fast. The main reason why he was accompanying Brook here was to take some tips and level up himself. Erik didn’t want others to teach him. He wanted to learn from them.

‘Well, if you know that you will fight an enemy, isn’t it common sense to find their weak points?’ Garthos was ready to move on to the next painting.

Erik was calm but Brook saw a fire appear in his eyes for a second. ‘So then... do we kill the feeling? Or do we manipulate it to use it to our purpose?’

‘You could do either, depending on the person. Come here for a sec, will you?’ Traka decided to let this side hustle go on. He kept his hand on Erik’s shoulder. Traka smiled.

‘What happened?’ Erik asked.

‘You are not an emotional one, are you?’ Traka said. ‘When I kept my hand on your shoulder. I felt how you awakened your apicem. That’s one of the rarest forms. It’s not even present in any of the paintings. You awakened it from sheer hard work.’

‘Whatever’ Erik ignored the compliment. ‘I am not hardworking at all. But I am interested in one thing. How do you identify how we awaken our apicems?’

‘Unlocking apicems usually happens when a major event in their life takes place. And one of my 2 apicems is finding out the main events of a person’s life. In short, I can access on the memories that are gonna stay for life with those people.’

‘I get it.’ Erik yawned. ‘Let’s move on to the next one.’

Traka moved on to the next one. ‘This one is the thirst of love’ He pointed to the painting. This showed a figure holding a very big boulder, and on the boulder was

written the word 'Regret'. Around that figure were numerous other figures dressed in red clothing. *Probably symbolizing evil* Brook thought. These figures were telling the main figure to keep holding the boulder. The main figure's eyes however focused on another boulder that lay beside him. It was labelled with love. 'This is the thirst for love. When a person loses everything, they have, they carry that pain with them forever in the form of regrets. Everyone else tells that person to hold on. Except an inner voice which tells them to go grab love. And when this inner voice takes control, apicem is released. Let's move on to the next painting.' They all shifted a bit to the right once again.

'This is the same as the previous one.' Brook said.

'No, it isn't. Look.' Erik pointed at the one white figure amongst all the red figures telling the main figure to keep holding the rock.

No different from the others, eh? Erik thought until he saw what was written on the rock. Love was engraved on it. And while all the other figures were telling the main one to drop it except one- the white figure. 'This is...'

'Similar to the previous one, yet the exact opposite. The one figure amidst all your hatred is the only support in your life. That is the only thing you want to protect. You will do anything for that support. This is called the will to protect.' After a few more ad-libs they moved onto the fifth painting. The background in this painting was blue.

This was quite similar to the second painting but instead of the corpses lying on the ground. People around him were lifting that person to great heights.

‘I get the pattern now.’ Erik said. ‘No need for an explanation, the next painting is gonna be similar to the revenge one.’ As expected by Erik this painting was very similar to the first one. The only difference was that the background colour was blue and the expression on the man’s face was determination.

‘Just as I thought.’ Erik said.

‘Yeah!’ said Brook

‘Now, the last one remains.’ Traka moved on to the final painting. ‘This is the last painting, and mostly gives rise to the most powerful ones.’ Brook looked at the last painting. It was confusing. Just a canvas painted red and blue.

‘What is this?’ Brook asked.

‘The red and blue represent the colours of thirsts and wills respectively, the person who has an equal amount of all these emotions while awakening their apicems have awakened through ‘flair’. They want revenge, power and love even though they still have something left which they want to avenge, achieve and protect. They are the most delusional people. They think they have the most trauma, even more than the ones who lost everything. But in truth, they are just the ones who suffered the most damage psychologically. But they are also the strongest when they awaken their powers. Because after all, apicem is just the power you awaken after suffering collateral damage.’

‘Are you done talking?’ Erik said poking his finger in his ear.

‘Good grief’ Traka sighed. ‘Pay attention at least.’

‘I never said I didn’t pay attention. The reason I got bored is because I paid attention. But this is useful information. So, I guess I will listen.’ Erik said.

‘But didn’t you just say that each person has all the reasons for awakening their apicem.’ Brook asked.

‘Can I explain this one?’ Erik asked.

‘You understood it?’ Traka asked.

‘Yeah, it was kind of easy to’ Erik stared across the room at each of the paintings. ‘The individual thirsts and wills are at 100% at only the moment of awakening. Different apicems can have different awakenings in the same person. But after the awakening, the priorities begin to change. The will and thirst usually lower down to 50%. And the other 4 cover it. Whereas, usually in ‘flair awakenings’ the wills and thirsts remain equals. Even after their awakenings the priorities don’t change. Because, they are too delusional to make decisions. So, they get stuck in the past and worry about their future.’

‘Erik, you understand emotions pretty well’ Brook remarked.

‘I am a failure in understanding emotions. This is based on pure logic. I believe that emotions get in the way, and I can’t do anything about it. However, if one understands how the brain works, it is easier to figure out other’s

emotions. Of course, no one can understand the brain, not even the brain itself. But what's the harm in trying?'

'Makes sense' Traka nodded, even though he didn't understand a word Erik just said.

'I hope Amber and Melodiam are doing well...' Brook looked at the ceiling.

'Stop worrying about them. Now the 2 of you begin your training.'

Erik and Brook creepily smiled at each other. They knew they were dead.

CHAPTER 7

The First Mission

Amber, Melodiam and Linda soared to the east of Sub Nolkán on Melodiam's cloud. The sun had set by this time. They had now reached an uncivilised chunk of land. The cloud took them between 2 plateaus.

'Why do we have to deliver this though?' Amber asked Linda.

'Barrack D's captain is going to launch an attack at the Chroma Summit.'

'Chroma summit?' Melodiam asked as he turned the cloud to avoid clashing into the plateau.

'Oh, you don't know?' Amber adjusted a strand of hair. 'It is the meeting in which some of the top army commanders of the country meet for discussion. Who all are gonna come for this summit? Is the summit today?'

'You ask a lot of questions at once.' Linda smiled. 'This time the army of the 5-10th sectors are gonna meet. And the summit is day After tomorrow. This is one of the most dangerous missions till now, so you must return back after delivering these weapons. We are gonna need you for the war ahead. The war is gonna be 10 times more dangerous

than this. That is why rigorous preparation is needed. The weapon we are carrying is the silver jewel.'

'That is a weapon?' Amber asked.

'Yes, there are many different jewels, each having a different ability. The silver jewel provides a silver armour to the one wearing it. But unlike normal armours, it has no weight, yet it can absorb most attacks. This allows you to attack with the same agility but has extra defence.'

'That doesn't sound very impressive' Melodiam remarked. They had almost reached the eastern side.

'Well, it doesn't sound like it yet, but when you see it in action it is going to be a lot more than just impressive.'

The 3 of them soared through the air on the cloud. Gustly wind blowing all around them. Melodiam and Amber were having trouble even opening their eyes. But Linda was prepared. She took out black sunglasses and bragged it to Melodiam and Amber. 'One should always carry sunglasses.' She said as she wore the shades.

'Never heard advice this good in my life.' Everyone laughed at Amber's sarcasm.

Linda suddenly stopped laughing and looked down. 'Did we reach?' She closed her eyes and used her spiritual powers to activate sense. She had a faint smile on her lips as she opened her eyes.

'We have reached. Take the cloud down.' The place below was also an uncivilised piece of land but it was behind the plateau, and instead being surrounded with another one, there was a tall castle that stood in front of

them. Melodiam glanced at the main window of the castle, and thought he saw the figure, which disappeared in the blink of an eye, but there wasn't anything to be found.

Must be my eyes he thought.

The cloud soared down reaching towards a man with long blonde hair in a white fully zipped leather jacket. The man was lean and thin. His blue eyes sparkled in the dark. The Aurora locket could be seen on his neck. A badge of the captain could be seen coming out of his pocket. It was a golden badge with the initial D printed on it in big letters and the name 'Vincent Phillipe' was written in a smaller font curved around the bottom of the D forming a semi-circle. 'Captain' was engraved on the upper half. Connected to the badge was a chain which was left hanging from Phillipe's pocket.

Melodiam felt a lump in his throat after seeing this mysterious man. He had a sort of aura that was calm yet powerful. His blue eyes were cold as ice, with no hint of warmth in them. His face stood expressionless.

Vincent noticed that Melodiam was getting uncomfortable. 'Ah! He must be uncomfortable seeing me in this state.' He said in a dull voice.

'What do you mean by this state?' Amber raised an eyebrow.

'Long story... But let's say that more than 3/4th of captain's power is sealed. To open that we had the Barrack B have some people searching for its key, the Hephaestus jewel' Linda elaborated.

Vincent tried to smile, but let's say it didn't look that good. 'Not only my power, everything got sealed, except the 25 %. That is why I can't even smile properly. Movement is possible only on the top left of my body. To move other body parts, I have to move it using my spirit energy.'

Melodiam was shocked. The Aura he felt back then was immense. If that is only 25%, then he must be a beast. 'So, you are going to invade this place with only quarter of your power?'

'No that would be a silly mistake. We have made an entire plan on how we will retrieve the jewel back from the government. Do you think we are fools to invade this place with only 1 captain, that too at 25% of his power? The reason we chose to come here is to recover the Hephaestus jewel so that we can restore Captain's power. But in the process if we can destroy 5 commanders what's the harm? And thus, we came up with a plan. Look at this.' Linda handed over an envelope to Melodiam. It was a simple envelope with a golden seal on it. Melodiam removed the seal, and found a bunch of papers inside the enveloped. Melodiam held the paper between him and Amber to read.

The paper read-

Details about the Chroma summit-

Major people coming-

Commander Squad 5- Crepitus

Apicem known- Explosives

Commander Squad 6- Eruptio Gratis

Apicem known- Lava

Jewel available- Hades

Commander Squad 7- Sanguis

Apicem known- Blood manipulation

Commander Squad 8- Tardus Unguibus

Apicem- Eagle

Jewel available – Prometheus

Commander squad 9- Cinderella

Apicem- Not known

Commander Squad 10- James Cheese

Apicem- Not known

Other people arriving to the Chroma summit-

All the Sub commanders and subordinates of the captains, the finance minister, warfare minister, head of the Fracti council.

Plan to invade the Chroma summit-

People involved- Barrack B captain- Haurientes, Barrack D captain- Vincent Phillipe, rest of Barrack B, Double agents, Linda and new recruits of Barrack D.

Procedure-

1. Find the silver jewel from Sub-Nolkan
2. Recruit the new members of Barrack D.

3. Arrive at the summit venue a day before. Bring 2 of the new recruits for delivering the jewel. Especially the one with the cloud.
4. At this time, the double agents must figure out the location of the Hephaestus jewel, according to our data, no commander uses this jewel.
5. The double agents must share this data with barrack B without revealing themselves to the government.
6. Barrack B has to sneak in to the location of the Hephaestus jewel, and steal it, preferably without being discovered.
7. The jewel is to be brought to Barrack D captain one day before the invasion. Through the jewel he can unseal all of his power.
8. The next morning, the Lateres army will reach here and together they will invade the Chroma summit.

End of report

Melodiam and Amber read through the report.

‘This looks like a fool proof plan,’ said Amber. She handed over the report to Linda again. Linda took the report and put it back into the envelope.

‘Easier said than done’ sighed Melodiam.

All four of them shared a moment of silence for themselves because of the load on them. Vincent limped forward. ‘Well, at least I hope they manage to get the

jewel back so I can fight at 100 % power.’ Vincent looked at the castle 500m away from here. The castle appeared big even from a distance. It was easily over 200m tall, and the castle spread out by at least 3km x 1.5km. The castle was painted white and grey. The castle had eight pillars surrounding it. Curved domes on top of each pillar. Even though the rest couldn’t be seen, Vincent had already seen this entire place. Between each pillar and the main castle was a pathway surrounded by green lawn. However, no greenery is to be found even a foot inside the castle. The castle was on a 10m elevation which could be climbed by the stairs, on all four sides. 2 guards located at each corner, all from squad 8 according to Vincent’s memory. However today, they will be from squad 1-4 as all members of 6-10 have a meeting on the 4th floor of the castle, the highest floor on the castle which can accommodate the 100 people coming for the summit, as each floor keeps getting smaller as they move up. According to Vincent’s prediction the emperor will not attend the Chroma Summit in person.

Meanwhile...

Haurientes led his troops towards the edges of the castle. His squad had 15 people, and just outside the castle were 14 guards. Haurientes cursed under his breath. Even though they had the numerical advantage, (which they didn’t need) Haurientes had planned to get a soldier’s uniform, after killing each one of them. He looked at Molta pointed his hand in the air, all fingers facing towards the sky, and swung his hand down, signalling to kill all the people. Molta looked at his red-haired captain,

and showed a thumbs up. He removed needle from his right pocket and started counting them. Once he was done, he observed each and every movement of the guards. He took a needle and held it between his fingers. He aimed at one of the guards, and waited... He waited till 2 guards came in the same line. When they did, he shot the needle, going swiftly through the air, it devoured the thyroid region of the first soldier, but it didn't stop there it pierced through the throat and went inside the middle of the head of a shorter soldier. Both of them falling dead on the ground without a sound.

The other soldiers however, became alert after their comrades' death. None of that shit matters to Molta. He took the rest 12 needles in his hands, and launched them all at once. Each of the needles hit their target killing almost everyone. The 1 or 2 survivors were finished out by the others. Everyone, except Haurientes, took the disguise of the soldiers. Haurientes still remained as he was before, wearing a red leather jacket with fur to match with his short spiky hair. Along with the captain's badge he wore a locket with three elephant teeth on it, representing the 3 parallel scars spread across his face, covering both of his eyes and his lips.

Now, that the outer members were killed they had to move inside the castle which would be much harder. Surrounding the wall of the entire castle, were 300 soldiers. However, they didn't belong to any squad so they would not be so powerful. Haurientes and his barrack took flight in the air and crashed down in front of the main gate; behind the back gate he imagined was

Vincent waiting for the Hephaestus jewel to be restored. Haurientes had to go to the 4th floor of the building, according to their spy, Magnus, a trustworthy rebel under Barrack B. He had to go unnoticed as the commanders of each squad will start coming and stay on the 2nd floor before the Chroma Summit started.

After reaching the other side of the castle, Haurientes told his barrack to act as common guards and kill precisely one of them so that their captain could get the uniform. However, their bold entry, on the rather sleepy guards had made them alert. Saltare, searched for a sleeping guard nearby, he placed his palm on the green grass, (the palace had greenery even before the pillars) and hummed a tune. The grass started rustling towards the sleeping guard. It rustled slowly at first, making sure no one noticed. But, as it got closer Saltare's humming increased as his hair turned green, awakening his apicem.

No one noticed, the guards were too busy by the landing and were fighting and quarrelling among themselves. His humming made the grass grow taller and bring the sleeping guard towards him. Saltare's green hair started turning to the normal black again, and he snapped the man's neck quietly and sent the grass again to call his captain. Haurientes smiled after noticing the subtle movements of grass rustling. However, there was a problem. Around all of the guards had seen him with his leather jacket. Molta looked around, excepting the guards to attack him but they simply bowed down. Everyone from barrack B were confused, simply following the other guards and bowing to their captain.

‘Welcome, Commander Sanguis, thank you for coming to the Chroma Summit’ A soldier raised his head and spoke.

‘Thank you, can I ask for a request please?’

Everyone was in shock in now. The members of Barrack B were confused why Haurientes was being addressed as Captain Sanguis. While the soldiers were confused about the level of politeness, that their usually ruthless Commander was showing. But they knew, they had no option but to say yes. ‘Yes, you can ask anything’. Another one of these sheep took on the challenge.

‘Very good’ Haurientes held his chin in his palms and tapped his jawline. ‘Can I have 14 of you accompany me, and I, myself would like to choose who it will be.’

Molta couldn’t control his smile, he didn’t know how, but his Captain had made the enemy soldiers think that he was one of the Commanders, and now he will invade with no fear after selecting the Barrack B member as his guards that will accompany him.

As expected, their captain, picked all of the Barrack B members and together with their heads held high they went in to the castle. As they marched inside the Barrack B members were astonished by the simple yet magnificent architecture of the inner castle. In the centre of the castle was a huge pole, surrounded by stairs. The stairs reached up till the top, but the distance between the pole and any side of the castle decreased. The top floor could be seen from above here. Haurientes half expected the king to come out from the top floor and kill them with his weird

apicem, which apparently no one in the country knows. Anyone who has seen his apicem has died at his hands. But isn't that every final boss? Haurientes had heard crap like that while growing up too, and mostly the shit is false.

'This is going easier than planned' Dola whispered in Haurientes's ear. 'How did you manage to manipulate all of them?'

A lump emerged in Haurientes's ear before he answered. 'I will tell you later, or rather you will find out on your own.'

His subordinate raised her eyebrow, but let it slide. She found the soldier's uniform uncomfortable and was unsure if she could fight in it. Her purple specs, which matched the colour of her short hair, were hard to wear inside the guard helmet. Dola was new to the Aurora, being one of the youngest to join at just 21, (now she's no longer one of the youngest after Brook, Erik, Melodiam and Amber came.) Her thin face and short height made her look 17.

Barrack B marched towards the 5th floor without any fear. Suddenly upon reaching the 2nd floor, Haurientes halted his 15 man squad. 'Wait, this part will be tricky, you guys stay here and make sure no one comes, me and Celare will continue.'

'But why?' asked one of the members.

'The Commanders are gonna stay on the 3rd floor, carrying 15 men could raise suspicions. I will go up first, and talk to the commanders, and make sure that they head into their quarters, from there Celare will come, go

to the 4th floor and find the jewel, and come back. You will have exactly 15 minutes, to go up, find the jewel and come back. Do you understand?’ Haurientes looked at the skinny Celare. Celare’s thinness would make Dola look fat. Celare had wheat coloured skin, and light brown hair, with freckles on his cheek. Even though he was short and skinny, barely 5’2, he had a mischievous smile on his face. He was **THE YOUNGEST** in the Aurora until now, being the same age as Melodiam and Amber when he joined a year ago.

‘Yes’ he smiled slyly. ‘You can count on me.’

Haurientes marched ahead confidently, up the 3rd floor. Step-by-step, anxiety crept up his heart but he kept in under control. Finally, as he reached the top of the staircase, he slowly closed his eyes and opened them. Ahead of him stood a cheeky figure smiling with auburn hair and wheat coloured skin. His face was chubby but the rest of his body was neither thin nor fat. He stood at around 5 feet 8 with a sword behind his back, almost as tall as him. He wore bandages on both his hands, not because he was injured; that was how he dressed normally. He wore a red jacket over a black t-shirt. A red coloured headband was worn by him with strands of his hair coming down and barely reaching his eyes. ‘Welcome back Commander Sanguis.’

‘Thank you Commander Cheese.’ Haurientes had never known who James Cheese was but as only commanders were allowed here, James and Cinderella were the only ones he hadn’t met before. Thus, it was safe to assume that Cinderella was a female and James was the only man

he didn't know, so this had to be him. 'We were just waiting for you. Before the Chroma summit, we are going to play a game of cards.'

Haurientes's eye started twitching. These forces playing cards before a major meeting. But nonetheless this resulted in a benefit for him. This will buy more time for Celare to get the Hephaestus jewel. Haurientes put his hand on his eye, and it stopped twitching. He sighed and followed Cheese, trying to act just like his brother. Yes, you heard it right. Sanguis was Haurientes's twin brother. Haurientes entered the room with his head low, and a creepy smile on his face.

Just no mirrors in the room please, I will laugh my butt out if I see myself smiling like this, he thought.

The atmosphere suddenly began to grow tense as the amount of spirit energy that loomed around the entire room. Haurientes was strong enough not to tremble physically but this energy sent a shiver down his spine. His heart throbbed. But this was not anything new. This happened to Haurientes before every fight, no matter how small, and Haurientes enjoyed this feeling. The feeling which proves that you are still human, even inhuman creatures fully understand love but humans are the only ones of capably understanding fear. There are only 3 types of humans who are incapable of understanding fear according to Haurientes's philosophy. One which gain everything, the person on top of the world such as the emperor, this feeling is temporary and will be short term. The second however cannot be erased until death. The person who lost everything and seeks

vengeance, it's not that they are confident in their abilities but it is that; they have nothing to lose. But the third type are the people who have everything; but don't care about it, a prime example being Haurientes's brother Sanguis.

Haurientes maintained his expression, even with fear leaking from his body. Eruptio fixed his gaze on Haurientes and finally spoke in a deep voice. 'You still have that creepy smile, no wonder you and Tardus get along so well.' Haurientes looked down at Eruptio, who stood only at 5 feet 3. Young indeed, at the age of 15, but strong and mature. He was rather nonchalant unlike other people of his age. He was the youngest commander, achieving the feat at 14 when Haurientes left the forces. It was weird seeing his old subordinate looking down him, at least trying to, because he's too short too actually do so. Haurientes thought just how his brother would act in this situation. He then proceeded to push Eruptio who was not caught off guard and punched Haurientes again in the stomach. This caught him off guard and for a split second his demeanour disappeared.

'If you do this again, consider yourself dead.'

'Stop dreaming' Haurientes replied getting back into character with the creepy smile. But he was collapsing on the inside. *Please don't start a fight. I just have to make through for 10 more minutes.*

'Let's get started then, shall we?' a young lady in her 20s dressed in a white gown, with silver hair neatly tied into bun. Her eyes were light blue, with a hint of green at the bottom of the eyes. If there was a thing called British in

this world this woman would probably be the prime example of it.

‘I agree, enough violence already, let’s start the game already’ said Crepitus the squad 5 commander. His head shaved clean with a long beard and a handlebar moustache, Crepitus looked by far the scariest except Tardus out of all the captains present. Tardus sat silently with his eyes closed. His Prometheus jewel engraved in the middle of his bare chest. Flesh wouldn’t be the right word to describe him as almost his entire body except the right side of his face, was made with steel.

His ginger hair fit the cyborg by making him look scarier. But what frightened everyone the most were his eyes. The left side had a simple round eye with a plus sign in between of them. This was the less scary eye, his real eye, was different. It was of a snake with actual scales surrounding it. The moment his eyes opened, shivers were sent down Haurientes’s spine. ‘Let’s start’ he said in a husky voice. It was at that time when another person looking like Haurientes with a creepy smile entered the room.

IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT, THAT HE
REALISED THAT HE MESSED UP.

CHAPTER 8

Haurientes and Sanguis- The Dual Tale

‘I did not expect for you to be seen here, foolish little brother.’ Sanguis looked up at his brother. He had the same face cut, the same height the same body, and even the same scars as Haurientes. Only the hairstyle and the eyes were different. Yes, it’s always the eyes. The eyes are the ones that tell you the true nature of most of the people. But there are exceptions of course. Exceptions are found in everything, from science to history to psychology. That is the nature of the eyeless world. But there’s someone beyond the world watching. Enjoying every single person’s tale, for she is the one who created them. She is the goddess. Many people believed in the goddess. One of these people used to be Haurientes and Sanguis’s mother, Mina, one of the servants serving for the king. As they were growing up, Haurientes and Sanguis admired the king a lot and both of them joined the forces at the age of 18. By the age of 22 Sanguis had already become a captain and was favoured by the emperor. Three years later Haurientes also became a captain. Both brothers

used to be on good terms with each other often having sibling arguments. Things were looking good until...

Haurientes was heading back home after a long day of work. This was a peaceful era than the era Haurientes and Sanguis had been growing up in. As he was heading home, Haurientes saw Sanguis praying to the Goddess in a shrine located near his house. This was a small yet beautiful shrine. It welcomed everyone but asked for nothing but devotion. Sanguis sat inside a structure with four pillars and a dome, open from all sides except up. Beside him was the priest. Both of them had their eyes closed. Haurientes smiled. *He is a complete mama's boy. Even at this age he believes in the Goddess.*

Haurientes waited for his slightly older brother to finish his prayer and come. Sanguis rushed as soon as he saw his brother. 'Are you actually trying to be a role model for kids by praying to the goddess, "Commander Sanguis"?''

'Hardly! I bet any kid even likes me with my blood abilities. I am just hoping for peace and prosperity in this world. Now let's head back home, mother will be waiting for us.'

Haurientes and Sanguis had started walking back home, admiring the beauty of nature. Not long ago, they had been at war. Now, only peace was to be found just like Sanguis wished. But this wasn't the case for all areas.

Some areas were still recovering from the face of war.

Haurientes and Sanguis went home chit chatting, cracking jokes, and teasing each other. But then Sanguis felt a hand on his shoulder. 'Who is it?' He turned around

expecting nothing serious, but saw a messenger wearing a green robe. ‘Commander Sanguis, you have been immediately summoned to the emperor’s palace.’

‘But, the time of duty is over...’ Haurientes started but was interrupted by Sanguis. ‘You carry on brother; I will finish this work as soon as possible don’t worry about me.’ After saying this Sanguis left for the emperor’s palace while, Haurientes headed back home. Haurientes rang the doorbell of his home. Mina came and opened the door, with one hand locked behind her back. True, she was getting old, wrinkles all over her face, but seeing her sons work hard gave her motivation. Even though her hair had turned from crimson to silver, the fire was still lit in her heart. More than wrinkles, she had smile lines. But no smile could ever fully express the proudness and compassion she felt for her sons. As usual, she welcomed Haurientes back with a smile. Haurientes stepped in and removed his shoes.

‘Where is Sanguis?’ the old woman asked.

‘Oh, don’t worry, the emperor has called him for some work he will be coming late.’

‘I wonder what the emperor wants from him now’ Mina scoffed.

‘Mother! Don’t disrespect the emperor, he is a good man.’ Haurientes comforted her mother.

‘Ok, then I shall be making dinner. You go get some rest. I will wake you up in time for dinner.’

‘Ok mom, what will we be having today for dinner?’

Haurientes asked as he removed his leather jacket.

‘Oh, today we will be having Sanguis’s favourite Baked beans.’

‘Nice, he has been working a little too hard lately, hasn’t he?’ Haurientes took a towel and went to take a bath.

‘Yes, he has.’ Mina muttered under her breath. She went into the kitchen and started cooking. She took out the utensils, the pulses and the spices. She had a feeling she was missing something and that’s when she realized, that she had forgotten to get chilli from the market. She took her purse and rushed out to the door hoping the market was still open. She opened the door of the house and saw Sanguis come back. His face was grim. Cold. Colder than he had ever been.

‘Welcome back Sanguis- ‘

Sanguis took out his pocket knife and slashed his mother’s neck, separating it from the body. Haurientes at that moment came out from the bathroom, drying himself and preparing to sleep. But he heard the door, and decided to check the noise out. With his towel hung on his neck, shirtless, he went to the door. And what he saw next is what he still calls the worst sight of his life. He saw his brother, expressionless, except a tear falling from his eye, blood splattered on his face, and below him his mother dead, her head coming bouncing towards him. Haurientes shivered. ‘W-wh-at happened?’ His voice trembled. Tears came out of his eyes. ‘Mother? Mother?’

‘She’s dead, Haurientes. I killed her.’ Sanguis admitted, also in the same emotional state as his brother. ‘The...

emperor.’ His expression was changing; sadness turned into psychotics. He looked down and a wide smile spread around his face.

Now, 2 years later, Sanguis’s expression remained the same. ‘No questions, go outside. This guy is an imposter. I will handle him alone.’ You guys go kill the intruders. My little brother isn’t that dumb to come here alone. He has obviously come here with the Aurora. Haven’t you?’

‘Ah but Sanguis, you will need our help, won’t you?’ asked Cinderella.

‘No, I won’t. And even if I did, I wouldn’t take it. This is a battle between two brothers. Nothing should come in our way. Let’s go, brother. Let’s take this battle somewhere else maybe in the palace duel ground. You haven’t forgiven me yet, right? I have told you I did the right thing. You should have joined hands with me.’

‘All right’ said Haurientes. He knew the time would come, when he would have to kill his brother. Sanguis broke the window and jumped down, followed by Haurientes. All other Commanders, at that moment, were too stunned to react. Eruptio took the lead. ‘I think till those 2 are fighting, we have no option but to fight the other members of the Aurora. This is the perfect opportunity to kill them without chaos. Don’t tell your subordinates anything; we captains will go ourselves and end the members of Aurora sent to invade the Chroma summit. We don’t want to cause any distress or chaos; we don’t want any casualties. We captains are enough. Cheese, you know what to do.’

‘Roger that, Eruptio.’ Cheese held his hand out and a flute appeared in his hand. He played the flute in a very low tune and the captains followed him as they went down the stairs. Every normal guard was falling into a deep sleep and was getting covered by a bubble. Cheese went to the third floor, in front of them stood the members of Squad B. Celare had returned and was going down to deliver the jewel to Vincent. Dola and Molta took guard and got ready to fight the people charging in front of them. They put one leg ahead of the other, taking stance to fight against the Commanders of Chroma summit, which seemed impossible without their captain Haurientes. The rhythm of the flute was making them sleepy, but they knew they had to keep standing till the Hephaestus jewel had been found. Dola felt her eyelids shutting but managed to stay awake, biting her tongue. The pain was keeping her awake as sleepiness loomed behind to grasp her. She ran towards James, expecting the other commanders to come in between. However, none of them moved. Questions ran through Dola’s mind, but this was no time to think. Other members of Barrack B ran with her, while some stayed guarding the stairs. Molta started launching needles on Cheese. The needles closed in at Cheese before Dola, and Cheese just simply moved aside and dodged. Dola finally closed in and jumped to kick Cheese. The commander stood still and started playing the instrument in a different tone. The tone was faster, more subtle. All of a sudden, Dola dropped to the ground, her face full of shock. She then understood that the tune had caused her to fall down to her knees. Molta continued shooting needles, but at a

faster speed to give Dola time to retreat. Saltare stood there helpless as there was no grass around. He was at a huge geographical disadvantage, in this field. Tardus's metallic arm extended from the elbow and the fingers retracted to form a prosthetic knife-arm if that's a real thing.

Dola stared at him helpless, accepting the fate that she will die, however, out of nowhere, a person spawned behind Tardus and between other captains and caught Tardus off guard from behind. Before, the man could land the blow, Tardus and all the other Commanders jumped away, forming a circle with this new stranger in the centre.

The stranger stood still with his guard down, his hands in his pockets, a smile on his face, dark skin, and long black curly hair. He closed one of his golden eyes and spoke, 'Sorry, if I'm late. But feels good to show my true colours to these assholes.'

Dola's hands trembled at first but a smile soon showed up. 'Magnus, you haven't changed at all.'

'Let's catch up later!' Magnus got in combat position. 'And kills these little pieces of shit before that.' He charged at Tardus while Dola covered his back. However, Tardus and the other captains simply vanished from there.

'Ah, looks like they went right to Celare.' Magnus scratched his hair. 'We got to rush'.

Celare ran as fast as he could with the jewel in his hand. The Hephaestus jewel could open anything sealed. It was

like a universal key. For now, it lay in Celare's palm as a normal brass key. He made his way out of the palace and saw Vincent, Linda, and 2 other people standing there. His legs were tired, but he gave it one last push and ran at top speed. He felt like someone pushed his back. His legs were sore but he knew this was a very crucial moment. Step by step he got even more worn out. But he didn't give up, he knew there was something wrong with sound playing in his ears. Vincent and Linda rushed to Celare with Celare also moving towards them. Soon they met and Celare fell to his knees, fainting, handing over the jewel before passing out. Vincent took the Hephaestus jewel, and checked Celare's pulse.

'Hypnosis...' he muttered to Linda. Amber looked at Melodiam and shrugged.

Vincent removed his leather jacket and all upper body clothing, revealing a blue mark extending towards both the sides of his back. The blue marks curved towards his wings and ended right before his armpits. It was hard to see where the marks started as those parts were covered by Vincent's long hair. Vincent handed the jewel to Linda who examined it wondering how it would work. Vincent lifted the hair on his back, showing the full blue mark that curved to meet in the centre again, making it look like a moustache.

'Now tap the key twice on my back' Vincent pointed right above the meeting of the marks in the centre. Linda followed Vincent's instructions, she tapped the key once but as she tapped it the 2nd time the key went inside Vincent's back. Vincent's breathing speed increased, and

suddenly it became normal again as the key came out from his back. He sighed. 'It's good to be back!' A smile popped out on his face. His muscles eased up and he could walk properly again. Melodiam looked at Vincent with awe on his face. The blue marks started vanishing slowly, proving that the seal was no longer there. Vincent's smile quickly went away, as he ducked low after sensing an attack from behind. He rolled over ahead and turned around and unsheathed his sword. Ahead of him stood Tardus, with a metal rod sticking out of his cyborg hand. Behind him were all the commanders, coming out of what seemed to be a hole.

'The commanders were waiting for us in a hole?' Melodiam asked Amber.

Amber got into position with her mace. 'They have secret entrances you idiot, I think that's how they slipped away from the forces inside the building.'

'You got that right, young lady' Tardus cracked his neck. 'Leave the shirtless one to me, I sense immense strength from him. I figure you are a captain. I am Tardus Unguibus, commander of squad 8, what is your name?'

Vincent wore his shirt back and got ready to fight, he pointed his sword towards Tardus. 'I am Vincent Phillipe, Captain of Barrack D.'

Eruptio scoffed. 'We all are supposed to deal with these small fries? This is gonna be a piece of cake.'

Vincent had already realized, that the chances of them successfully invading the Chroma summit had been reduced. Instead of catching the commanders off guard,

the Aurora had been caught off guard themselves. However, the Aurora had one last ace left. One last plot twist that can change the game as whole. The reinforcements from Lateres. They just had to hold on until midnight. He himself had to hold them until midnight.

‘Linda, run with Melodiam and Amber, I will try and hold them off as much as possible. Melodiam summon your cloud and get away.’

‘But Captain...’ Linda looked at Vincent in disbelief.

‘It’s an order.’

Upon saying that Tardus charged at Vincent and extended the metal rods coming out of his hands even more, Vincent parried it with his sword, and tried to stab the jewel on his chest, thinking it was a way, to kill Tardus. This jewel looked exactly like stone, but only upon touching it did Vincent realize that this, in fact was the Prometheus jewel. Cinderella and Cheese went behind Melodiam while Eruptio and Crepitus headed towards Amber and Linda.

‘Cheese release the soldiers from sleep in the palace, they can kill those pieces of garbage trying to rush here.’ Crepitus said.

‘Release’ Cheese screamed as he joined his hands. ‘Now let’s focus on killing them.’

Cheese played his flute, which made Melodiam want to sleep. The lullaby reminded him of his early days, when Bona Una sang a peaceful melody, for him and Brook. A

tear fell from his eye, but he knew he had to focus. He took out his daggers, and teleported between Cinderella and Cheese, Cheese jumped backwards while Cinderella ducked and tried to kick Melodiam's feet. However, Melodiam now teleported behind Eruptio and Crepitus.

Shit, I wanted to go behind Amber and Linda and get the hell outta here with my cloud. But it seems I haven't been at the point they are standing at.

Crepitus reached for Melodiam's neck, Melodiam was about to deflect his hand with his dagger but Cheese's flute made his reflexes slow. Crepitus grabbed Melodiam's neck and was about to strangle it.

Melodiam feared his end had come, he looked one last time towards Amber who stared at his face in horror.

Melodiam's eyes were about to close, when suddenly he saw pieces of glass falling around. He looked up to see Brook kicking Crepitus on his bald head, with his legs covered with glass. However, Eruptio had also turned on his apicem, with a huge red ball of flame behind him. Eruptio's hand beamed with lava, heading towards Brook's stomach. Erik leaped from behind Brook and deflected Eruptio's hand in the opposite direction. Traka and Garthos also slowly came into the vision drenched with blood after killing the soldiers who just woke up from their slumbers. Brook, Melodiam, Amber, Linda and Erik retreated towards Traka and Garthos.

'It's a 7 vs 4, considering Vincent will be able to take on Tardus himself.' Garthos said.

‘Brook, Erik and I will handle the silver head girl and the bald dude.’ Traka decided.

‘Very well, I will take on the lava kid myself, Linda, Amber, Melodiam. I leave the flute player to you.’

‘Roger that.’ Melodiam glared at the flute player.

Alas, began the war of Chroma summit, with soldiers awakened the 14 Barrack B members found themselves in trouble, Haurientes and Sanguis were gonna fight their fated battle, and the rest of the commanders faced only 8, 4 out of which were new to the battlegrounds.

Things looked bad for the Aurora, there was nothing they could do but hold on, keep hope until the Lateres arrived. It was now around 8pm. 4 hours were left, but it will feel like an eternity for the members fighting. And thus, began the battle of the Chroma summit.

*Pursuers in search,
Never knowing, what they seek
Lays in front of them*

