



*Prologue w/ Chapters 1 & 2 (Patreon Edition)*

*Authors note (More like a disclaimer)*

First of all: I want to thank all of my patrons and followers who made this journey possible. I could name each one of you but that will be way too much work and effort. But, you know who you are, and you have my complete and utmost respect.

The following story that you are about to read is a work of true fiction. The material that was used is based off multiple sources of religions and beliefs. In no way, shape, or form I do not condone such violence on any kind of level. Whether if it's gratuitous or sexualized. This was written by an open-minded individual with an immense imagination, and such work of fiction SHOULD NOT be taken seriously. Also, the following story may include explicit language, sexual violence, and crude humor. Please understand that I do not attend to offend anyone as this is just another work of fiction. Those of you who are intolerant of profanity, sexual violence or violence in general, you have been forewarned about what you are going to read. For the rest of you, I will give you the same warning.

Viewer discretion is strongly advised.

*Prologue (December 31, 2009)*

***“People should either be caressed or crushed. If you do them minor damage they will get their revenge; but if you cripple them there is nothing they can do. If you need to injure someone, do it in such a way that you do not have to fear their vengeance.”***

***— Niccolo Machiavelli***

Cabo San Lucas or simply Cabo, is a resort city at the southern tip of the Baja California Peninsula, in the Mexican state of Baja California Sur. Cabo has been rated as one of Mexico's top 5 tourist destinations; it is known for its beaches, scuba diving locations, balnearios, the sea arch El Arco de Cabo San Lucas, and marine life. The Los Cabos Corridor has become a heavily trafficked vacation destination for tourists, with numerous resorts and timeshares along the coast between Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo.

It was New Year's Eve in Cabo San Lucas as everybody was celebrating on Medano beach in the afternoon. Medano is the main beach of Cabo San Lucas, pictured here with Land's End in the background.

The atmosphere was still lukewarm since everybody was yet following the aftermath events of the holy fire-bombing in London. Preachers around the area held a universal sigil, praying for the victims involved in such a terrorist attack.

That single act of terrorism changed the world of how they thought about other species in general, including nephalems. Of course, the Crucis Sentinels were discovered by the public and became heroic icons in the world where people needed a simple of positivity and unity.

The global spread of positive support of the Crux Nexus and the Crucis Sentinels, women of all ages took inspiration of their bravery and sacrifice of stopping a potential third world war.

The only two that were not so thrilled about the festivities and how the world perverted itself, where two men sulking at a beachfront, sitting on beach chairs.

## *Cross Roads: Wolves of Oleander*

One was a prominent and muscular male jackal kemonomimi with the long platinum blonde hair, purple eyes, and olive skin. He was with another muscular male who passed for human with long salt-and-pepper hair covering his green slitted eyes with the sunglasses.

They are trying to make their best of a situation that was way beyond their control. They wanted to relax, but they couldn't rest. There was no time to mourn or to even celebrate. The jackal kemonomimi, as big as he was intimidating to some passersby, was the timidest out of the two. He acted like he was a kid he was too big for his age.

The brunette looks over to the blonde jackal kemonomimi and sees this behavior, "new year, new me." He joked, trying to stir up a conversation.

The jackal kemonomimi tried his best to laugh it off, but it didn't work, "I never really believed in that..."

"Well, you should. That man be perceived as good enough for the society is gone, Běhēmōt." The brunette was calling him by his real name.

Běhēmōt just shrugged his burly shoulders as he shook his head, "I never really belonged anywhere at all, Daemon Archduke Endspiel..."

Calling him by his rank and namesake, the brunette balked at such formalities, "you don't have to say the whole thing, you know!" A part of them chuckled at that association. "I don't think I can call myself royalty after what we have accomplished. And you know what, I am a better man because of it. To hell with my namesake. Yet alone, my rank..."

"You think the Royal Nephalem Circle going to retaliate?" Běhēmōt, becoming worried.

Endspiel shook his head, "I don't think—no... I know for a fact they are not going to go after you... I mean, you did try to warn everybody about what was going to happen... And I sent them to their deaths. They'll be after me. I'm sure of it..." He theorized.

"I didn't know Daemon Queens had such big hearts about humanity and taking care of others..." Běhēmōt feeling remorse.

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As many people like Běhēmōṭ, Nephalems are not as evil as they are made to be. Those accusations were all propaganda produced by the Catholic Church centuries ago. Many Nephalems usually never commit crimes like murder or rape. They are often ultra-progressive being the ones who build civilizations, practicing acceptance and create a sense of equilibrium within their territories. Even the Royal Nephalem Circle governs better than any sovereign and or governmental power in the world, making many politicians and lawmakers envious.

This was a good time for Endspiel to tell the young man the truth about his kind, “I know for a fact you came from a broken home, so this might be a little bit foreign to you. Every Nephalem family has a code and a destiny that they all follow and adhere to. Maybe you never realize this, but my family always protect their own which is common for many Nephalem families-- both Royal and common. Blood is never really an issue; it’s the connection that we have with others that makes us family. Do you have any idea how it feels to have your life turned upside down?”

As if Endspiel was speaking from experience, Běhēmōṭ answered with confidence and a heavy heart, “As a matter fact I do, sir.”

However, Endspiel wasn’t buying it, “I don’t think you do. Between that Nazi wolf slut and that discounted version of Sailor Moon, it was only a matter time before people like us would be demonized and bastardized by such toxic natures... Masculinity and femininity. Like that even matters anymore. Maybe I’m not the one that should lay out what it means to be either a man or a woman in either society-- my own or theirs. Out of all of this... Nonsense as I see it now... The only one that was worth saving-- to keep such innocence-- was my daughter.”

Reminding him of such a blessing was a burden, turned Běhēmōṭ’s stomach into knots, “that’s right. You have a daughter... So how is she holding up?”

It was Endspiel’s turn to shrug his shoulders out of uncertainty, “she deserved to have somewhat of a happy and productive life. Even if it’s not with me, I don’t want to cheat her out of it. If things go the way I know it is with them, I want my little girl to be spared.”

“And not her mother?” Běhēmōṭ wondered.

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Even though Endspiel was wearing sunglasses, he could still see the glow of his green eyes as his eyebrows strained, “you mean that mountain of bullshit I knocked up? She was nothing more than a hole to me now. She never loved me, never wanted the kid in the first place. I begged her not to have the abortion... It was pure providence that the doctor decided against aborting the late-term pregnancy.

During that made Běhēmōt’s heartbreaking pieces, “you think she would ever contact you again?”

“I don’t give a fuck if she wants to see me again or not. Unless she wants to get raped and beaten to oblivion again, then by all means.” Endspiel threatened. “Killing her would be far too easy. It would have been like me forgiving her. No, nephew, there are fates worse than death for a bitch like her. That is why I killed everyone that every cared about instead. If they wanted to be closer to God, then so be it. I made that to a reality. I don’t give a damn what she calls herself now or what she does; she needs to stay the fuck away from me...”

The hatred between the Holy Mother and Endspiel was well documented to whomever you about the relationship. Politics was involved, sex was involved, violence was involved, and children were involved. A volatile mix of an uneasy truce between two people who will never see eye to eye about anything, to only use and abuse one another for their gain.

Endspiel was no saint, but that was the point. He knew what he was doing, perverted the code of conduct the Royal Nephalem Circle followed wholeheartedly so that he can climb the ladder of royalty and seize power that came along with it.

Běhēmōt was different than Endspiel, in every way. All he wanted to do was become a positive member of society. Abused when he was a kid, he tried desperately to escape the tumultuous life, only to be ripped away from him by a deceitful woman. He too was not a saint, but they turned him into a monster.

Still, the difference between Endspiel and Běhēmōt is that at least the latter was remorseful-- somewhat remorseful...

“How can you be a loving father to a child, even though you brutalized her mother in such a way she will never forget or forgive you?” Běhēmōt questioned.

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Endspiel took a deep breath as he stared out into the ocean, even though it wasn't hard for him to find an answer, "I loved her mother, don't get me wrong. But that's just it. Emphasis on 'loved.' I had to make an example of her... just like you had to make an example of Natty."

This somewhat disgusted his nephew, "how can you turn it off and then turn it back on again, becoming normal?"

"Like a butcher can slaughter hundreds of grass-fed cows and still have a pet calf back at his farm?" Endspiel analogized with a chuckle. "I don't know what you want me to say, Běhēmōt̄. I have been a father who has always talked and listened to my girl. Have always been there when she needed me the most, since the day she was born. I didn't see her as either a burden or a blessing unlike the Holy Mother. When she came into my life, I had my doubts if not, I was able to be a father that my daughter deserves."

"That easy, huh?" Běhēmōt̄ heckled with a sense of skepticism.

Endspiel just shook his head as he continued his lecture, "Last time I checked, I've always been there and taught her from right and wrong. I gave her a sense of safety where she can grow to be a woman with values. Real parents raise their children to be productive members of society. They don't berate them, because they are different; they don't create them to be tools of destruction or what they want them to be. I can go on and on and on about real parenting. Let me be the first one to tell you, nephew; it's not hard loving someone that is a part of you or loving someone else who is different from you. Its people like her that make it difficult." He concluded.

At least, Běhēmōt̄ was trying to make sense of it all, "You would rather have her live a lie instead of finding out the truth on how she came to be?"

"As in, 'I wanted to spare her that pain for her mother not being in her life' or 'for not knowing the monster that gave birth to her?'" Endspiel mocked. "Only to realize, the only monsters that I saw before me were only in my mind. In. My. Mind. However, I too had to conquer the monster inside of me and let go of my past trauma to be a better man. It was till then, I would be able to face her and not look at her as a reminder, but as my daughter. She is one of the few people in my life, who saved me from myself." Endspiel explained with a genuine smile.

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With a slight shake of the head, Běhēmōṭ was still confused about his uncle's compartmentalizing, "I don't think I could ever do anything like that. Being able to be cool with it... I mean, it's still a part of me and what I've done..."

"Then you'll always be that 'big dog' to all the little wolf girls of the Oleander Syndicate." Endspiel insulted.

Uncharacteristically for a guy like Běhēmōṭ, he just laughed it off as he got up from his seat, "Well, this was both educational and depressing... I'm going to get us something cold to drink..."

Endspiel raised his head and looked up to him in disappointment, "If it were anybody else who looks like you, they would be beating the living hell out of me right now." He pointed out. "You need to start acting what you look like-- what you truly are deep inside!"

With a broad smile, Běhēmōṭ looked down at his uncle, "I guess... Besides my sister, you're the only one who ever would say such things to me, and I wouldn't give it a second thought..."

"Well, she's right! You, your sister and I have Royal Nephalem blood coursing through our veins as we are one. However, at the same time, you are indeed one of the elite. So act like you are and don't be afraid of how it will perceive you.

Běhēmōṭ nodded with a smile as he walked away and headed to the nearest concession stand.

Those Daemon Queens are going to eat him alive or make them their bitch, Endspiel thought as he lay back into his chair.

Běhēmōṭ was indeed looking around the concession stands behind something cold and pleasant to drink. He settled for a couple of pineapple sodas as he was going to make his way back to the beach. He saw a couple of females dressed in Crux Nexus soldier outfits who are armed with guns and swords.

As big and strong as he was, Běhēmōṭ was terrified at the site. It is a good thing they had their backs turned. Běhēmōṭ wanted to warn his uncle, but his greatest fear was realized; he saw a tall, dark-skinned woman with long shiny jet-black hair wearing a Crucis Sentinel uniform approaching Endspiel from behind. She had to be a teenager, but she handled herself with such maturity and sophistication.



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It was pretty apparent that the Crux Nexus had the Holy Mother in custody, awaiting trial. The United Nations sent out a most wanted list on the Daemon Archduke Endspiel. Also, they were looking for Běhēmōt's former alias that he went by, Alastair Copeland. For what reason, Běhēmōt didn't want to stick around for. Reluctantly, he used self-preservation as Běhēmōt slowly backed away.

Unbeknownst to Endspiel, his nephew fled the beach. Unfortunately, someone would indeed take Běhēmōt's seat as the dark-skinned woman in a Crucis Sentinel uniform sat next to him.

Oblivious on what was going on, you look over to his left and send the young lady. Of course, Endspiel was baffled by this.

The young Crucis Sentinel but make yourself known, "Walter Dunne." She spoke in a sophisticated voice with a British accent.

Endspiel hated when people called him by his "real" name.

The nerve of this little pipsqueak, he thought.

To everyone, he was Daemon Archduke Endspiel of the Royal Nephalem Circle and made everybody remember that.

As he looked over to his right, there were several Crux Nexus members, armed to the teeth; willing and able to take the Daemon Archduke down by force if necessary.

As if he was admitting defeat, he took a deep breath, "I knew you were following me for days, Sentinel. However, I want to know how you found me."

Then, the Crucis Sentinel shrugged her shoulders, "a colleague of mine once said, the hardest part of breaking up is getting back the stuff your lover purchased together." She said.

Hearing that, Endspiel immediately knew how he was discovered so quickly. This made him groan in disbelief.

"Many Royal Nephalems easily pass for human, while using their 'government' names... Since you made it your business to expose the Holy Mother's identity to the public and she is a convicted war criminal, we

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easily gained access to her financials. She bought a lot of haciendas and houses in South America with all of that blood money you guys made together. I just took a wild guess...” The Crucis Sentinel explained.

With a smile on his face, Endspiel shook his head in disbelief, “so what happens to me now, Sentinel?”

The Crucis Sentinel didn’t mince words, “we are going to take you back to London. Get you processed and notify the United Nations and the Royal Nephalem Circle of your apprehension. And I am forced to take a vacation here due to a lost bet with the Aethereal Queen.” She dreaded.

“Let me guess, little Lolita will decide my fate?” Endspiel guesses.

The Crucis Sentinel didn’t any humor in his backhanded comments, “No, someone else.” She corrected and much surprise by the young Crucis Sentinel, Endspiel showed no emotion. She wanted to ask him an important question. Even though she knew the answer, she has to hear it from him, “Aren’t you a bit curious about Maria and how she is doing?”

This made Endspiel laugh out loud, “Like I give two squirts of piss. You Sentinel bitches always stick together...”

The Crucis Sentinel shook her head in disagreement, “she is still alive... From what I heard, she’s on suicide watch. I don’t think she’s ever going to recover after what you’ve done to her... However, if we can be honest for a moment with each other, I never liked her either. She reaped what she had sowed being broken beyond repair, and I don’t mind at all...”

He couldn’t help itself but laugh at the young girl’s apathy towards her former colleague.

The young Crucis Sentinel looks around the beach as she was trying to find somebody else, “so where’s Alastair Copeland, your nephew?”

“Well, you know about those predatorial kemonomimis. When they catch the scent of danger, they run...” Endspiel deadpanned.

This got a chuckle from the young Crucis Sentinel, “yeah... There’s a lot of mixed feelings about that one. However, guys like Alastair, don’t last very long. We will find him and his sister eventually...”

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The Crucis Sentinel gets up out of her chair as Endspiel was escorted off of the beach being flanked by Crux Nexus members. Even the local authorities assisted the Crux Nexus. As he was helped into the car, he'd seen this nephew onboard a bus going south. Weirdly, he was proud of his nephew's selfishness. Běhēmōt was going to have to be selfish if he wants to survive.

*Chapter 1 (October 9, 2014)*

***“If you spend your time hoping someone will suffer the consequences for what they did to your heart, then you're allowing them to hurt you a second time in your mind.”***

***— Shannon L. Alder***

The Nether Elite decided to take on Noel's offer and visit the Imperatoris De Neque Mansion at noon. It was Kayla's turn to drive as she went to the location; Ayeka was riding shotgun reading news on her smartphone; Ryoko was too busy looking outside and seeing the beautiful scenery and Natalia was in the back seat along with her.

Ayeka was looking over the workups, refreshing her memory when they got there, “for supposedly being a monarch, I do find it quite surprising he would make his home next to the city.”

“Well, it is a relaxing place around here,” Ryoko commented. “That reminds me, Kayla, how are the coordinates I programmed into the GPS?”

“It's working, I know where to go,” she confirmed.

“I wonder where this humble abode is?” Ryoko asked.

“I did some more research of what Noel left behind. She even left coordinates to where ‘his Majesty,’ and herself are staying. It's only 15 miles from where we were staying a couple of days ago. The location of the supposed monarch's home is in Yonkers, New York; particularly Northwestern Yonkers,” Natalia confirmed as of this somewhat shocked everyone since she'd never used to do any kind of research. “It makes you wonder. Of all the places that this Imperatoris De Neque guy can make his castle, he buys one of the classified ads?”

After that blunder in Brooklyn, Natalia decided to do some more reading with the workups Noel gave them two days ago. However, there were a lot of questions that she wants to ask as well.

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“Well, I did hear there were some mansions for sale in Yonkers. That’s what my real estate agent has been saying,” Ayeka stated. “Natalia-chan, have you ever heard of buying it on the cheap? Everybody’s doing it nowadays. And besides, from what I heard it wasn’t cheap.”

“Yonkers is the fourth most populous city in the U.S. state of New York. That’s behind New York City, Buffalo, and Rochester. And the most populous city in Westchester County, with a population of 195,976. It is an inner suburb of New York City, directly to the north of the Bronx and approximately two miles north of the northernmost point in Manhattan.” Natalia explains as this shocks everyone in the car. This makes Natalia blush and looks away, “Wikipedia, okay? I phoned it in...”

The Imperatoris De Neque’s Mansion is off the coast of Northwestern Yonkers by the river. The grand 3-floor mansion she resides in has 29 rooms and its 13,400-square foot. It has an elegant dining room and an up to date library. It also has large iron doors, dark wood staircases, and amazing painted ceilings with grounds to match.

It has also been recently renovated with brand-new central air-conditioning and heating system. And of course, fiber-optic Internet. The driveway itself is rather large and has cobblestones so larger trucks like RVs can make turnarounds in the driveway. The house itself was built in the 1600s, and over the years it has been renovated several times with English, French, and Spanish influences of designs.

In the production office of the mansion, Noel is typing away on her laptop. While she was doing her work, she was listening to music.

While nobody is around she usually sings out loud video game themes to herself and today is no different:

***“Do we fight to hold our heads up high and beat the drums to what we love?”***

***“...Follow we have felt it all, come crashing down from far above.***

***“Stars are rising, countless worlds colliding only one will take it all.***

***“Can we bring to fall the Giants; can we make the final call?”***

And when the chorus starts, she hits her musical strive:

***“We are the ones to ignite the darkened skies!”***

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***“The champions of a world that we define!***

***“I saw the reign of the few who rise up high--”***

As she was just about to hit the best high notes that she would ever achieve, her smartphone cuts her off with an incoming call, “it never fails...”

Disappointed, Noel answers the call professionally, “I.N.D. Estate. It is a new and beautiful day; may I ask who is calling?”

*“I have no idea what you’re planning. And I really don’t care.”* A low, syrupy voice belongin to a male responded.

“Excuse me--?” Noel was taken aback by the supposed man’s words. Fortunately for her, she’d recognized the voice. “Oh, Endspiel! Now I understand. So, I believe you have received the documents from your attorney. You do realize, your nephew means a great deal to the both of you regardless of what happened in the past. He and his wife Aurora Rose wants to help the two of you to start over with everyone, and it has always been in the back of his mind--”

*“Last time I checked, the Holy Mother never wanted to do things that way. She already made up her mind a long time ago. I loved her, but she’d never loved me. She didn’t need me in her life, and the feeling was mutual... There was no love, there was no friendship, there was nothing between them but hatred and an uneasy truce, using my me like he was her familiar...”*

Endspiel painfully summarized as Noel tried her best to keep his composure.

Noel was genuinely saddened my his memories as shee too knew about their relationship all too well, “Endspiel, I really think--”

*“In every time, I looked at that... perverse smile on her fucking face, just made me sick to my stomach now! To even think, I would have laid with her in the first place... She means nothing to me now. She used me to keep herself alive and to futher my carrer. After she was done with me, she tried to have me executed for treason in my own royal circle...”* Endspiel argued.

“Please, things are different now! Much different! Acknowledge the past, face reality and be done with it!” Noel vexes.

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Endspiel chuckled to herself, *“I don’t know what the Holy Mother is planning or what my weakhearted nephew is going to do either. But we had a deal to scorch the sullied Earth and watch it burn! And now he wants to make amends for his own justifiable actions?! But it doesn’t matter... She went back on her word...”*

This upsets Noel substantially, “I don’t understand what you’re talking about, sire--!”

*“THEY TRIED TO KILL US BECAUSE WE WE’RE TOO POWFUL TO CONTROL! THEY UNDERMINED US AND PUT US IN PSYCHOLOGICAL BONDAGE!!*

“Endspiel, please, I know all to well--”

*“THEN WHY IS YOUR MAJESTY PROTECTING THAT WHORE NOVAK AND YOU ENUAGING SUCH SUCH BASTARDRY?! I KNOW SHE IS STILL ALIVE ALONG WITH HER PRODUCT OF RAPE!”* Endspiel roared.

Noel took great offense as she rose from her chair, “REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU THINK, YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO MAKING SUCH BOASTFUL CLAIMS!” She yells.

This only made Endspiel laugh, *“A lot has changed! That sack of meat is the only reason why the wolf bitch is alive right now. The Novaks were weak. If it weren’t for me having a heart for not killing that little bastard, I would’ve killed her too. She exists out here because my nephew allows it... So, to give you another warning, before I will finish what I had started: Stay away from my toys. Don’t make me repeat myself...”*

Then, Endspiel hangs up abruptly, leaving Noel with a swirl of emotions, “and to think, His Majesty wants to save all of you now... Some people are not meant to be saved...”

She didn’t have the time to fathom that conversation that she had moments ago since there is another incoming call she had to answer immediately, “I.N.D. Estate. It is a new and beautiful day; may I ask who is calling?”

*“Mistress Noel, the Nether Elite are here,”* the young man said over the phone.

“Well, they finally come to reason... I will meet them downstairs,” Noel ordered as she hangs up the phone. Putting the petty phone call behind her, she had better and more prominent business to attend to.

## *Chapter 2*

The Nether Elite arrived at the mansion promptly at noon. The four ladies got out of the car and made their way to the entrance. Ayeka already fell in love with the place. She loved the beautiful garden and the colored cobblestones on the driveway. Even the stained glass of the windows. Ryoko took out her smartphone and had to take at least 100 pictures of every beautiful flower from different angles.

While the rest of the three were standing outside the door with Ayeka not that far behind, Kayla rang the doorbell.

Afterward, the intercom turned on, and everyone heard Noel's voice, *"Greetings my friends and welcome to his Majesty's estate. As well as you all know, you know who I am. But the question is who are all of you?"*

The four stood there dumbfounded as they do know what the hell Noel is blabbering about now. Out of the four, Natalia tries to iterate what Noel is trying to say. Or in this case even trying to do, "I don't know, I am just a woman standing outside your door asking for entrance."

*"Okay,"* Noel said over the intercom. *"Then tell me this, what do you seek, and do you think it's here?"*

Natalia had to think about her answer for a little bit, but it didn't really take her that much time, "how can we ever know what to seek if it's here right in front of us?"

*"Interesting... Final question: A-horny-wolf-girl-is-no-match-for-an-elegant-fox-girl-says-what?"* Noel baited as the scowling Natalia said nothing.

*"A-horny-wolf-girl-is-no-match-for-an-elegant-fox-girl-says-what?!"* Noel repeated as once again Natalia said nothing.

*"Well done, you may enter,"* Noel greeted as the door unlocked itself. The Nether Elite entered the mansion. Already they were impressed with the interior design of the place, but the group was even more impressed by Natalia question answering every riddle right...



## *Cross Roads: Wolves of Oleander*

“So, he is really into religious art?” Kayla lazily critiques as Ayeka couldn’t help herself looking at all the beautiful art pieces. “These are 18<sup>th</sup>-century paintings. The vases are at least 500 years old.”

“Yes, they came with a place,” a familiar voice chimed in as the Nether Elite turned around to see Noel walking towards them. “Then again, her Majesty likes her simple tastes.” Noel winks at the group as Natalia looks away blushing.

“So, there is a missus in the picture, there goes my shot...” Ryoko stated.

“Something tells me you and *his* Majesty are responsible for the renovations here,” Kayla guesses.

“You could say that,” Noel confirms. “Welcome to our home.”

The Nether Elite and Noel started to walk down the hallway, seeing nothing but renditions of daemonic and angelic art. The carvings and the moldings of the place were a bit too unsettling for them.

Kayla spoke up about this, “don’t take this the wrong way but this place is a bit...”

“Unsettling?” Noel finished. “I guess it’s no surprise. Apart from what you have all done over the years.”

“W-what do you mean?” Ryoko questions.

“Sooner or later, we all need to repent for our sins.” Noel summarized, but she felt she needed to explain herself, “you see, his Majesty is not a perfect person. He has never has been, and he never will be. And that’s okay because nobody is perfect. The moment we find a perfect person in this world, is the moment we will all cease to exist. Because what is the point of forwarding progression if you are not allowed to make mistakes and learn from them?”

Ryoko hung her head in shame, knowing there are some things she will like to repent for.

“What are you talking about now?” Kayla questioned.

“This place once belonged to the Catholic Church,” Noel answered.

“You can’t be serious?!” Kayla interrogated. “No wonder I have such an uneasy feeling in this place...”

“This mansion was built in the 1800s, and it was used to house and raise higher class bastards all the way to the 1900s. In short, it was an orphanage for children who are born out of wedlock. Most of the children

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came from affluent families or even royalty who have cast aside or to be declared a bastard,” Noel explained further. “It has also served as a rest stop for the Underground Railroad, transporting freed and runaway slaves to the North. Over the years, this house took in their broken and rehabilitated many others. Healing the sick, resting the tired, mending the broken. Once you leave this place, you become a better person they used to say. Becoming different than you were before.”

“With this place being so particular, why the church abandoned it?” Ryoko asked.

“Money. Just like any organization, money is the real King,” Noel answered.

“Figures...” Kayla added.

“This place has done a lot of good. No one has ever thought about tearing it down for some odd reason. Many people say that there is a guardian angel who dwells in this house,” Noel speculated.

“They could’ve just sold the place,” Kayla said.

“Fortunately, the house was always privately owned by someone and was never owned by the church. There is a lot of secrets that are built on these walls. Being a silent spectator of one’s surroundings. The only thing the church did was cut a check to the owners of the past, and in return, they received publicity,” Noel said.

“Hypocrites...” Kayla added.

“Hey. Even Mother Teresa advocated suffering and the Catholic church made her a saint. You honestly think they care about this place?” Noel defended. “We live in a world where everyone is going to step on anyone or everyone to get one step ahead. That is just the way things are. It’s sad, but it’s also true. Now this place belongs to his Majesty’s family.”

“Family?” Kayla chimes in.

This made Noel elated as she blushed, “His Majesty has been recently married to a woman he had his eye on for quite some time: N.D.I, Nec De Imperatrice.”

“Empress of the Nether,” Kayla translated.

## *Cross Roads: Wolves of Oleander*

Noel nodded as she continued her anecdote, “They had their problems in the past, but her Majesty is a strong and resilient woman and understood his Majesty’s pain. You can say she pursued him, while he was pursuing his own self-destructive endeavors. They saved each other from their own personal hell and created a strong friendship out of it. Even creating a wonderful family.”

“Kids in the picture?” Ryoko questions.

“Only one... For now, at least... I’m surprised myself. They are both young. The way they go at it, they could’ve had a football team of kids,” Noel teases, winking at Natalia.

Agitated, the blushing Natalia looked away while twirling her hair.

This made Ryoko chuckle a bit, “so now you’re wondering if this kind of mojo will rub off on them?”

This made Noel giggle in admittance, “something like that.”

“Where are they, by the way?” Ryoko wondered.

“The couple are in London right now, in talks with the daemon lords.”

“So, he received an invitation from our grandmaster?” Kayla guesses as Noel nodded.

“Yes and no. They will be at the ceremony next month, but the Emperor and The Empress don’t need an invitation. I do understand what your grandmaster is doing, rebuilding your reputation, but he is wasting his time in my opinion. Some memories are just better left burned out and faded away.”

“Well, that’s your opinion. Fortunately, that’s the only opinion that doesn’t really matter,” Natalia insulted.

“Somewhat defensive of you little master. Meanwhile, you are all ready and willing to destroy each other for next to nothing. How hypocritical,” Noel insulted with a coy smile.

Not wanting to have a repeat of what happened two days ago, Ayeka came in between the two, stopping another fistfight, “Okay, Noel-san, we are here because you invited us.”

“Yes.”

## *Cross Roads: Wolves of Oleander*

“And we all came here under the assumption that he-- I’m sorry, ‘his Majesty’ would be here. Now we hear just now that he has flown across the ocean to meet up with our Grandmaster.”

This grieved Noel, “and I do apologize if ever made such a promise, Madame. But this was pretty much at the last minute. But as you well know, a man of his stature is immensely busy. In honesty, I thought your grandmaster would hold off on his celebration he is doing next year so he could present himself and his family to all of you. But I believe that it’s been pushed up for obvious reasons. Reasons that I don’t know personally, but they are reasons that only your Grandmaster feels justifiable.”

“And so are we, Noel-san. Let’s go,” Ayeka said as they take their leave.

“Yeah, and send *her* Majesty our regards,” Natalia mocked.

“Wait! Before you all go, would you like a spot of tea and cake?” Noel offered as the Nether Elite stop walking away. “It is lunchtime, and it would be rather rude of me to send you on your way with an empty stomach.”

Kayla turned around to face Noel, “you honestly think a little tea party would make us stay?”

“I know for a fact you didn’t come all out here, just to turn back. And besides, you still want to know more about BDX model that was stolen...”

Noel was right. She did have valuable information about the war machine that has gone missing. If they couldn’t see his Majesty and his family, they could at least stay and get down to business.

*(To Be Continued...)*

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