

~ Day 130 ~

"Beyond you... beyond this city?" I asked, if not a bit hesitantly. "Who has that kind of power?"

Instead of answering, Nosferas simply shook his head slightly, drinking from his glass and letting the silence run for a tentative moment.

"You needn't worry about them, it is not something you should be contemplating at this point." He said finally. "Besides, it's not because I have all that much to say in the first place. All you need to know is that the wastelands are an impossibly vast expanse, filled with creatures and monsters beyond imagination. There is always someone more powerful..."

"I see..." I muttered, taking a swig of my glass, marveling at the sweetness of the liquid.

"The Shaar you said... who, or what exactly are they?" I asked

"It's an ancient lineage of monsters that embody the concept of death feeding life, and life feeding death." He explained after a thoughtful pause. "The Shaar are divided into multiple clans of races, and while the lineage is one and the same, each of the Shaar races differs from each other slightly. The Strigoi are part of the Stagia clan, a clutch that embodies life in blood and death in darkness."

Listening with rapt attention at the revelations coming one after the other, I placed my glass on the table.

"What other clans are there?" I asked excitedly, wanting to know more about this odd race that I found myself as.

After having experienced and seen what not only **Stygian Transformation** did and its consequences of using it then also simply witnessing and wielding the power I've been given ever since evolving, I've become deeply intrigued by this mysterious race.

"I do not much more knowledge of the other clans, simply that there are more than just the one. The Shaar, as I explained, is an ancient race shrouded in mystery. I do know that there is another clan that they wield and weave the essence of life that is the soul, although, I do not know of their name. My knowledge is mostly based on rumors, books, and ancient legends. Being on the outer reaches restricts one to the secrets of the wastelands' core, so knowledge is few and far between."

Mulling over that information a long moment passed.

"I've asked my questions, so I believe it is time that you finally tell me why you've gone through the trouble you have to get to this point," I said, breaking the silence.

"Very well then," Nosferas sighed.

Putting down his glass, he walked around to the back of his desk and pulled out something in the drawer. Nosferas walked back to me, putting a small rectangular box on the table in front of me and I instantly recognized for what it was.

The relic!

"The lovely miss Menethil told me that she wished to gift this to you, quite a generous gift I must say," He paused, smiling. "But then again, such an item is surely much more befitting a **Sanctioned Lord** after all."

Although I wanted nothing more than to open the box right then and there, I didn't reach out for it, simply scrutinizing Nosferas's gaze for any deceit.

"I'm guessing whatever it is that you're about to ask me has something to do with that relic there, is it not," I stated bluntly, reading where this situation was going.

"Indeed," He admitted without batting an eye.

"What exactly do you know about **Sanctioned Lords**?" He asked me.

Taking a moment to think that through, I let out an exasperated sigh.

"No much to be honest. Ever since I got this moniker, I've been rather at a loss as to what this whole **Sanctioned Lord** and Relic stuff is about." I explained. "I simply know that these relics are instruments of great power, that **Sanctioned Lords** are some kind of title and power given by the system, and that all of this has something to do with this thing called a **Promethean**,"

Although his facial expressions remained placid, I didn't ever so faintly notice the unconscious tensing of his posture upon the mention of the last word.

"Yes..." He paused. "**Sanctioned Lords** are a curious breed of individuals which upon the system grants the hint of power to then pit them against each other in the hopes of cultivating what is called a **Promethean**."

"All **Sanctioned Lords**, in nature, are leaders and rulers, and their abilities reflect as much." He continued to explain but stopped as I cut in.

"Then why me?" I scoffed. "Why did the system pick me when I hardly have the affinity for leading anybody. I don't have the charm or way of words that you have for example. The only true avenue of my leadership is simply done through the fact that I wield power..."

I didn't mean to come off as annoyed, but this one fact had kept bugging me ever since I began training with Lana, making me finally reach the boiling point for my irritation.

"Who said there was only one type of leadership?" Nosferas suddenly queried.

That gave me pause.

"After having seen your ability to control those blood golems with the potency of your mind alone and your aura's signature; you wield the power of domination, not complex and finessing magical control." He continued.

"But... my control over magic is hardly something impressive, especially seeing as my relic is doing much of the work in that department." I countered. "Mia on the other hand is unfathomably much more skilled at control than I am."

"Yes, I've seen Mia's abilities in the tournament, quite impressive to be honest," He agreed before pausing. "But she can never accomplish what you're doing with her control."

"What?" I asked, genuinely confused.

"There's more than one type of magical control," He explained, a smile creeping onto his face.

"Manipulation, finesse..." He paused. "Domination."

Then it clicked.

Falling into a stunned silence, my mind ran through everything Lana had been teaching me all this time, the one thing that had been eluding me for all this time. My talent.

The reason why my will had evolved so many times and so quickly, why that celestial being had 'accidentally' done what it did, why in the hell I was granted the power of a **Sanctioned Lord**, and why so much of my power and abilities ultimately came down to the concept of dominating my enemies into submission or defeat.

My talent was; domination.

"It would seem that you gained a revelation, good," Lord Nosferas chuckled mirthfully.

Giving an awkward chuckle myself, I rubbed the back of my head.

"It was exactly like Lady Eryanne said, I've been looking in the wrong direction," I explained. "Thinking that magical control was simply boiled down to how good you were at finessing the tendrils of mana, not even realizing that magic is also a construct of the mind, that in truth my will and mind could be channeled in more ways that to protect myself from the influence of others."

"Indeed, the system doesn't give out a **Sanctioned Lord** title to just anyone, and you've clearly yet to tap into your real potential," Nosferas smirked.

I was already itching to test out this revelation, wanting to see exactly what peaks I could bring this 'domination' specialty of mine to. But realizing that this was not the time for that, I clamped down on my excitement. Nosferas didn't need further prompting and quickly resumed speaking.

"As I said, **Sanctioned Lords** are leaders, they are conquerors, they are rulers. As such, the relics that are dispersed across the world, said to be artifacts created by the system itself, reflect exactly that type of individual." He explained. "A **Sanctioned Lord's** goal is to become a **Promethean**, an existence that is the embodiment of what they represent. However, such a journey is perilous and dangerous, most of **Sanctioned Lords** perishing in the pursuit to be replaced by the next that the system deems to name."

"To become a **Promethean**, realizing the full potential of your **Sanctioned Lord** powers, is to collect all your relics and finish your **Aegis**."

Touching the [**Heirloom of Sanguinity**] that hung from my ear, I willed it to detach.

"Is this really an **Aegis**?" I asked, showing the beautifully intricate earpiece in my palm.

"No, it is not yet an **Aegis**, that is an **Heirloom**; an incomplete **Aegis**," Nosferas explained. "It holds not even the faintest power of a true **Aegis** and has yet to even evolve as it is still at its first stage. To complete an **Aegis**, you need nine relics in total, but not just any type of relics."

Seeing the surprise on my face, he continued to explain.

"There are three different kinds, tertiary relic, secondary relics, and primary relics. Collecting relics has three different stages where you simply gather the rare items scattered about the world; only your own experiences, power, and such have an effect on what form your **Heirloom** takes. The second stage is drastically different, however."

"No longer can you just find relics and add them to your collection. That is where the '**Games**' come in."

"The **Games**?" I asked.

He nodded solemnly.

"Although I don't know the specifics of the **Games** as my knowledge is limited about **Sanctioned Lords** when they are so few and far between, I generally know once the system starts naming **Sanctioned Lords** that means the **Games** aren't far behind." He explained. "It is only those **Sanctioned Lords** who has collected all their tertiary relics that can enter the **Games** though, and I don't know more about it other than it is the only way to gain those secondary relics."

"The last and final stretch to becoming a **Promethean**, gathering the primary relics to complete your **Aegis**, is something even more vague and unknown though. However, it is a widely known fact that this is where almost all **Sanctioned Lords** fail. It's rumored that the system itself will put one through a series of nigh-impossible journeys and quests to prove one's worth."

"But the most important piece of knowledge about becoming a **Promethean** is that there can only ever be one **Promethean** of a concept at a single given time. So often, it is the ultimate quest for an aspiring **Sanctioned Lord** to defeat one of the peak existences that is a **Promethean**..."

Taking in all of this information, I thought through everything he had just told me.

"Then why? Why exactly tell me all of this?" I asked finally. "What is it that you want from me?"

As Nosferas's face grew determined, it also carried a hint of melancholy and hatred.

"Xavier Tal'chor, I've seen what you're capable of. I know that besides simply being a **Sanctioned Lord**, you're something much more special." He said, looking me dead in the eyes. "I want you to grow. To grow powerful enough to kill a **Promethean**."

"I want you to kill my creator, Deiden Archia."