



DARKAR.

EmberS to Inferno

By Shiroyuki

Season 2

◆ Angels and Demons ◆

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DARKAR HAD ALWAYS BEEN NOTHING MORE THAN VERMIN, AN INSECT SCUTTLING IN THE SHADOWS, LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE BORN WITH POWER.

YES, HE WAS STRONG, BUT HE WAS ALSO ARROGANT. HE BELIEVED HE BELONGED AT THE TOP SIMPLY BY EXISTING.

AND THAT ARROGANCE IS EXACTLY WHY HE FAILED. HIS LUST FOR THE ULTIMATE POWER BLINDED HIM, HIS OVERCONFIDENCE MADE HIM SLOPPY, AND IN THE END... HE UNDERESTIMATED THE WINX.

HE UNDERESTIMATED BLOOM.



STILL, NO ONE ELSE COULD HAVE COME BACK FROM WHAT DARKAR DID. SOMETHING SO INVASIVE, SOMETHING SO CRUEL, BARBARIC EVEN BY MY STANDARDS.

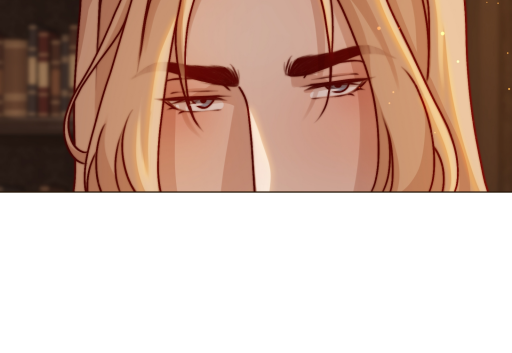
TO INFECT A FAIRY'S VERY MAGIC, TO TWIST IT UNTIL HER SOUL BEGAN TO UNRAVEL—THIS WASN'T JUST CONTROL. IT WAS ANNIHILATION. A CORRUPTION DESIGNED TO REWRITE SOMEONE FROM THE INSIDE OUT, ERASING WHO THEY WERE AND REBUILDING THEM AS SOMETHING ELSE.



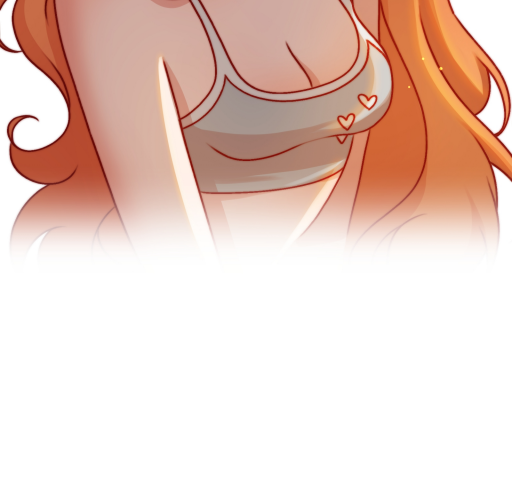
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE ENDURE IT AND SURVIVE, LET ALONE EMERGE WITH THEIR SENSE OF SELF INTACT.

BLOOM SITTING HERE NEXT TO ME IS NOTHING SHORT OF A MIRACLE.



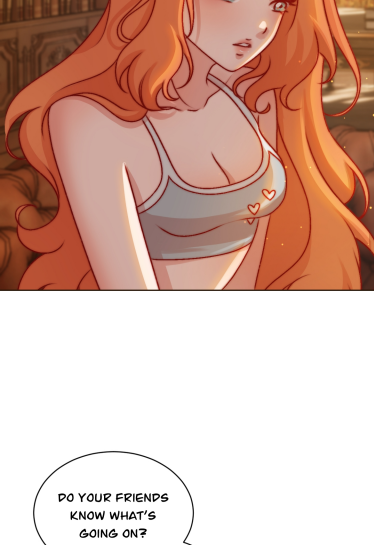


BUT AFTER ALL THESE WEEKS OF GETTING TO KNOW HER, MAYBE IT ISN'T SUCH A MIRACLE AFTER ALL.



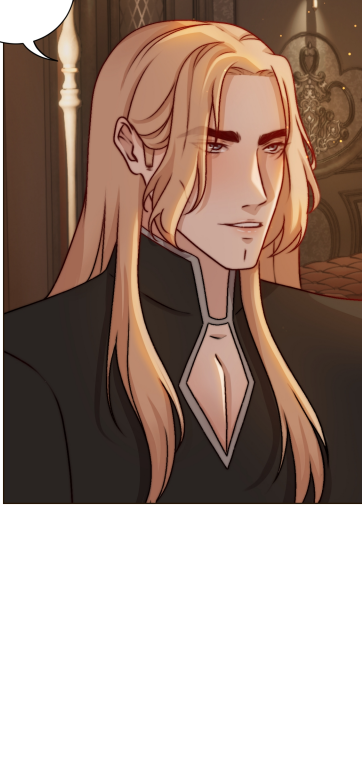
YES, SHE HAS THE DRAGON FLAME, WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY HELPED HER, BUT IT'S MORE THAN THAT. SHE'S STRONG NOT JUST BECAUSE OF HER POWER, BUT BECAUSE OF WHO SHE IS. DETERMINED, FIERCE AND STUBBORN BEYOND REASON.

NOW YOU KNOW EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR.

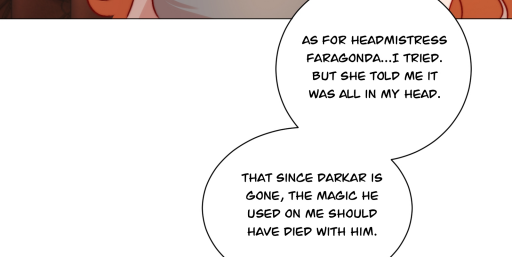


DO YOUR FRIENDS KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

OR FARAGONDA?



NO. I WAS ALREADY SUCH A BURDEN LAST YEAR... I KNOW THIS ISN'T SOMETHING MY FRIENDS CAN FIX SO I DIDN'T WANT TO WORRY THEM EVEN MORE.



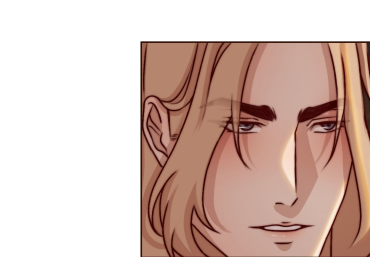
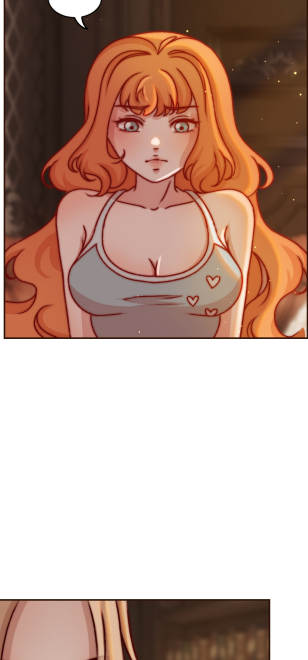
AS FOR HEADMISTRESS FARAGONDA...I TRIED. BUT SHE TOLD ME IT WAS ALL IN MY HEAD.

THAT SINCE DARKAR IS GONE, THE MAGIC HE USED ON ME SHOULD HAVE DIED WITH HIM.

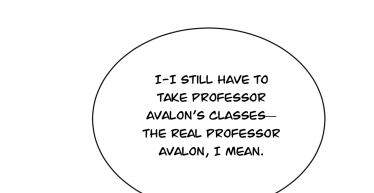
TYPICAL. NORMALLY, SHE'D BE RIGHT. BUT DARKAR ISN'T ORDINARY. HIS TYPE OF MAGIC DOESN'T PLAY BY THE RULES OF NORMAL WIZARDS.



TO ASSUME OTHERWISE IS... NAIVE. THEN AGAIN, NAIVE IS EXACTLY THE WORD I'D USE FOR FARAGONDA. SHE ALWAYS DID LOVE TO BURY HER HEAD IN THE SAND.



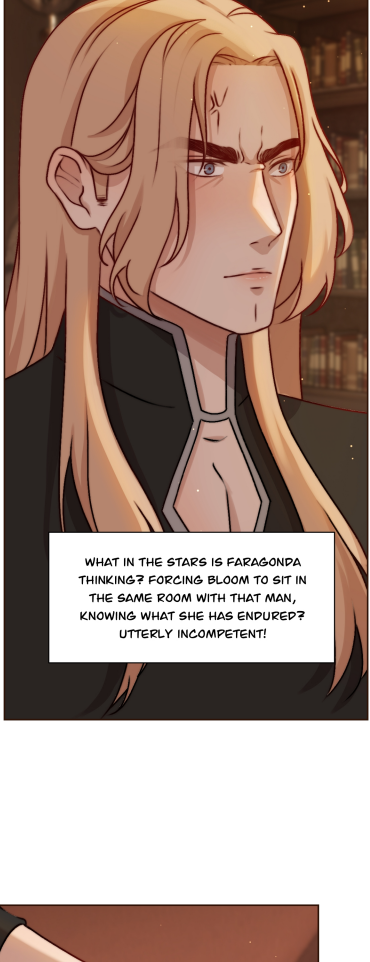
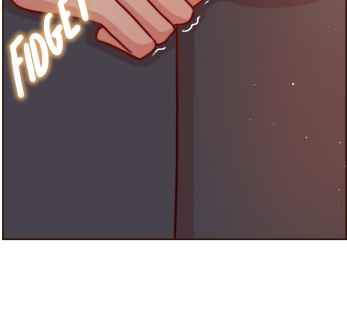
WHAT HAPPENED THIS MORNING?



I-I STILL HAVE TO TAKE PROFESSOR AVALON'S CLASSES— THE REAL PROFESSOR AVALON, I MEAN.



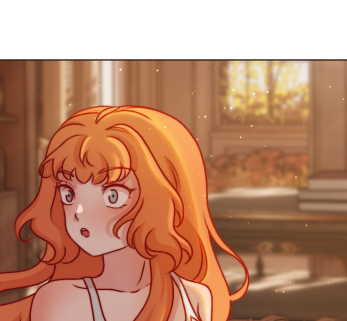
BUT HIS FACE... I CAN'T HELP IT. EVERY TIME I SEE HIM, I'M REMINDED OF THE OTHER HIM.



WHAT IN THE STARS IS FARAGONDA THINKING? FORCING BLOOM TO SIT IN THE SAME ROOM WITH THAT MAN, KNOWING WHAT SHE HAS ENDURED? UTTERLY INCOMPETENT!



DID HE... DO SOMETHING TO YOU?

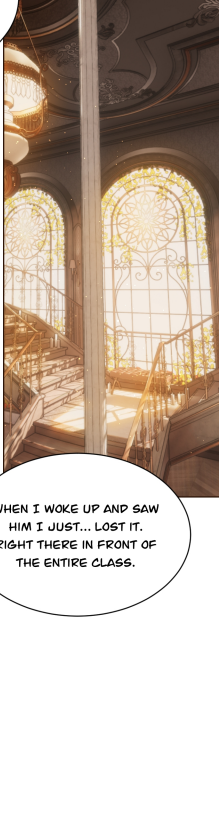


OH, NO! THE REAL PROFESSOR AVALON WOULD NEVER!

HE'S ONE OF THE KINDEST, MOST COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE I KNOW.



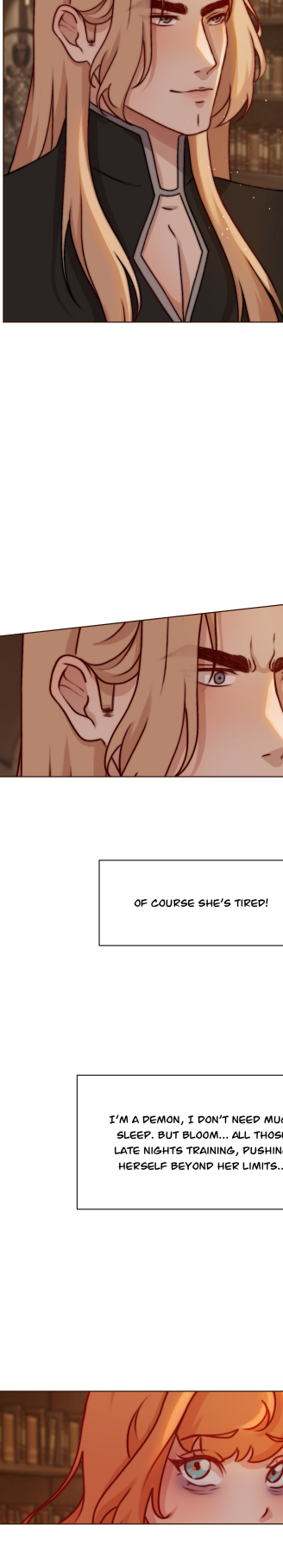
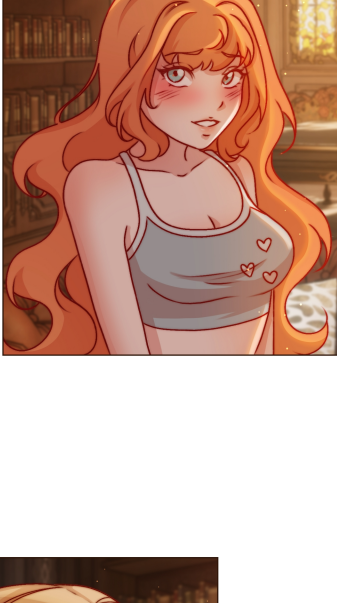
I'VE BEEN SO TIRED LATELY, I FELL ASLEEP IN CLASS.



WHEN I WOKE UP AND SAW HIM I JUST... LOST IT. RIGHT THERE IN FRONT OF THE ENTIRE CLASS.



I-I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE ELSE TO GO. BEFORE I REALIZED IT, I WAS AT CLOUD TOWER.



OF COURSE SHE'S TIRED!

I'M A DEMON, I DON'T NEED MUCH SLEEP. BUT BLOOM... ALL THOSE LATE NIGHTS TRAINING, PUSHING HERSELF BEYOND HER LIMITS...



SHE LOOKS EXHAUSTED...



THAT WAS IT. THAT WAS THE MOMENT HE HAD ME WRAPPED TIGHTLY IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD "SAVE" ME NOW.

IT WAS NOTHING LIKE LAST TIME, THIS KISS WAS ROUGH— HUNGRY. LIKE HE'D BEEN STARVING FOR IT. FOR ME.

JUST A THING ON A TABLE.

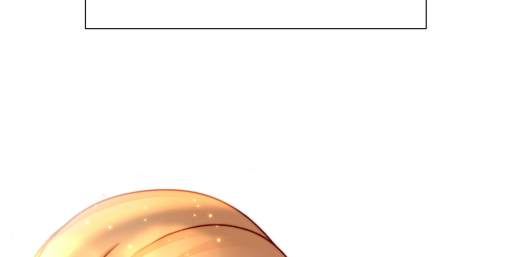
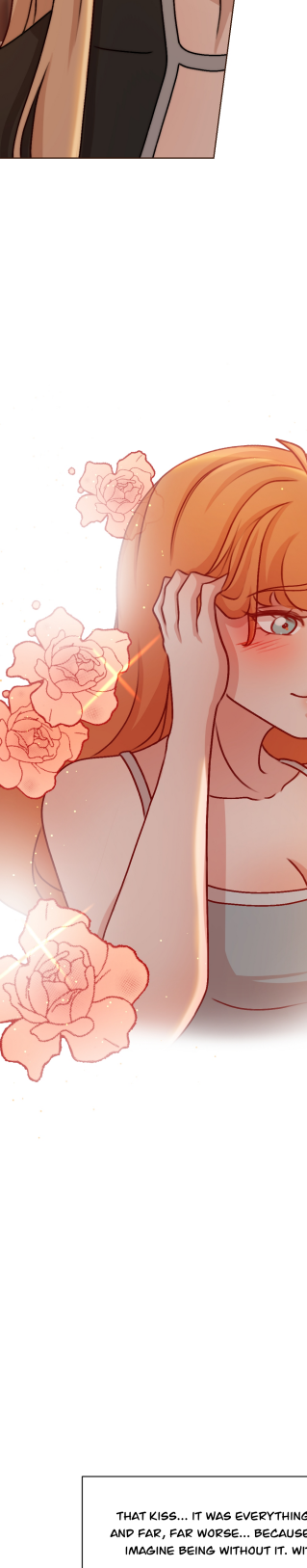
I FELT HIS EYES SWEEP OVER MY BODY, SLOW, UNBLINKING, AND GAZE FILLED WITH BARELY REPRESSED HUNGER. LIKE HE WAS PEELING AWAY MY CLOTHES WITH HIS GAZE, CLAIMING EVERY INCH OF ME WITHOUT LAYING A FINGER.



I KISSED HER. MANIPULATED HER.
I STILL AM MANIPULATING HER... HOW IS THAT ANY DIFFERENT FROM AVALON?

WHAT MAKES ME ANY DIFFERENT?
NOTHING.
I WANT HER. I LUST AFTER HER. I PLAN TO KILL HER.

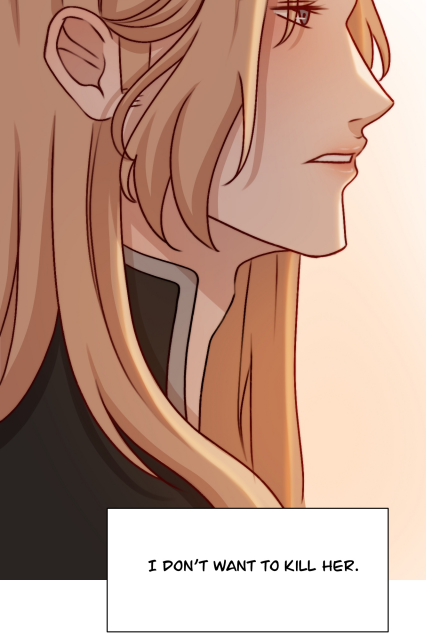
THAT IS STILL THE PLAN.
ISN'T IT?



THAT KISS... IT WAS EVERYTHING I IMAGINED AND FAR, FAR WORSE... BECAUSE NOW I CAN'T IMAGINE BEING WITHOUT IT. WITHOUT HER.



I NEED HER. I NEED HER BY MY SIDE, IN WHATEVER WAY POSSIBLE, IN WHATEVER WAY SHE'LL LET ME.



I DON'T WANT TO KILL HER.

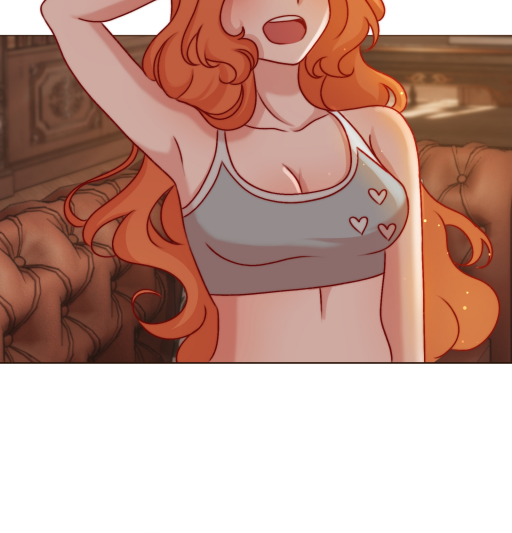
HAAA, I'M SORRY FOR BEING SO GLOOMY AFTER YOU SAVED ME!



THANK YOU, VALTOR.

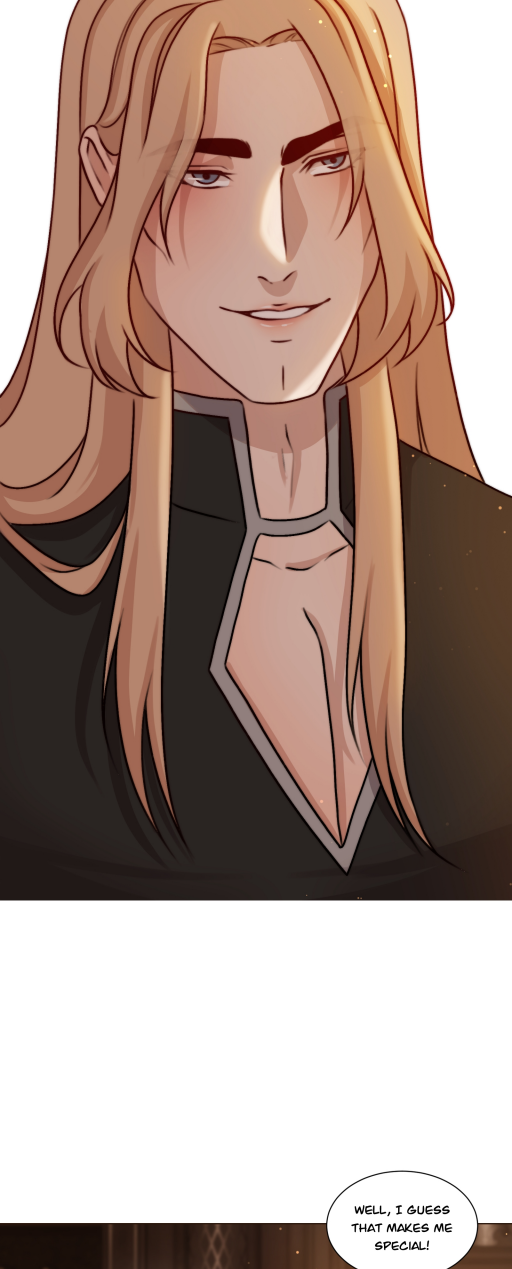


WOW. NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY THAT IN A MILLION YEARS.



AND I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOUR RESCUING A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS.

HARDLY MY STYLE UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES.



WELL, I GUESS THAT MAKES ME SPECIAL!



I SUPPOSE IT DOES.

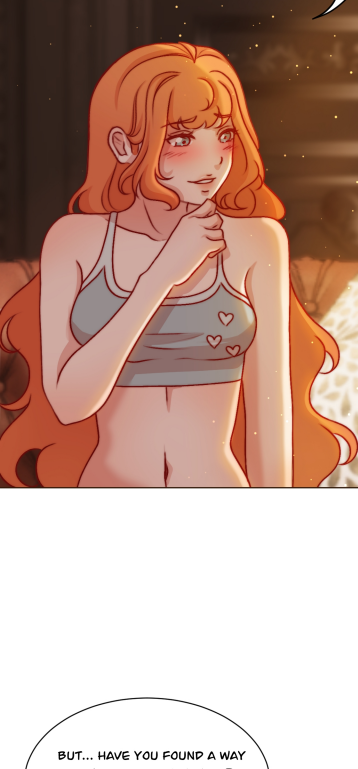


Tuck



AHEM. WELL, YES. THANK YOU AGAIN... FOR, YOU KNOW, GETTING ME OUT OF THERE.

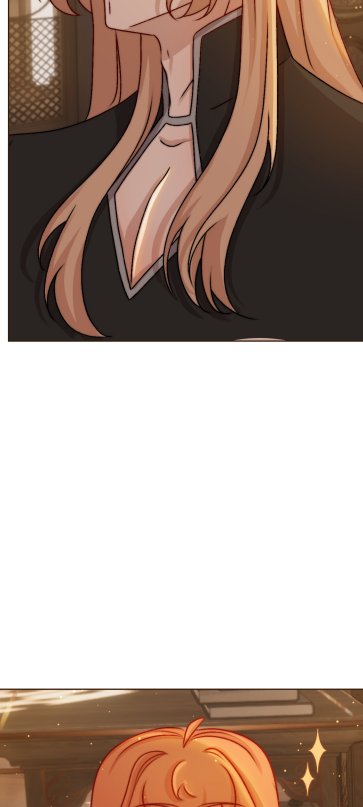
IT WAS GETTING KINDA DARK.



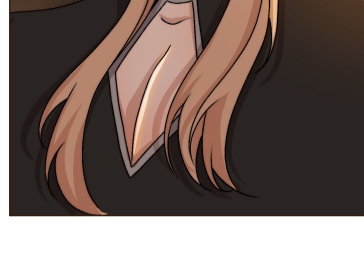
BUT... HAVE YOU FOUND A WAY TO GET IT OUT OF ME YET? BECAUSE THAT WAS A VERY UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE.

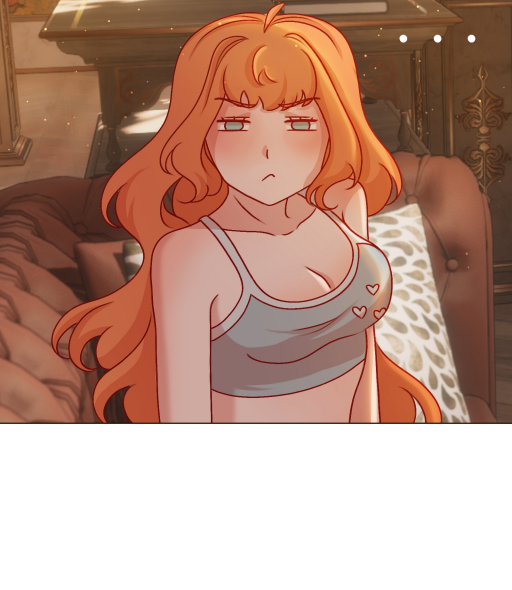


I MAY HAVE FOUND A WAY TO KEEP IT UNDER CONTROL, FOR NOW.

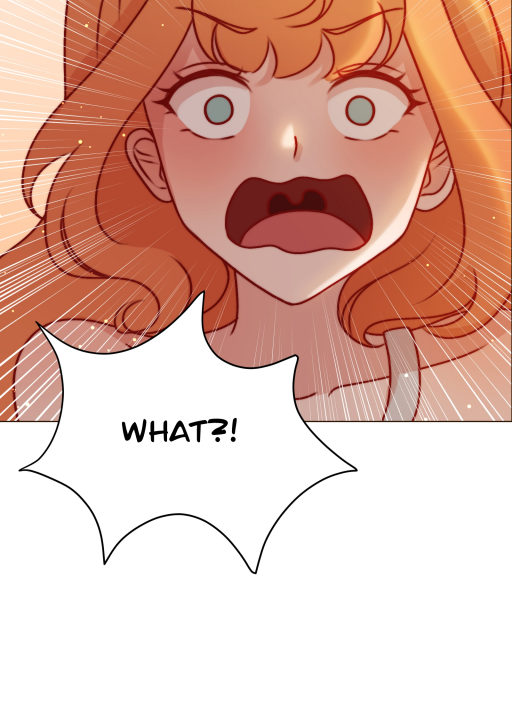
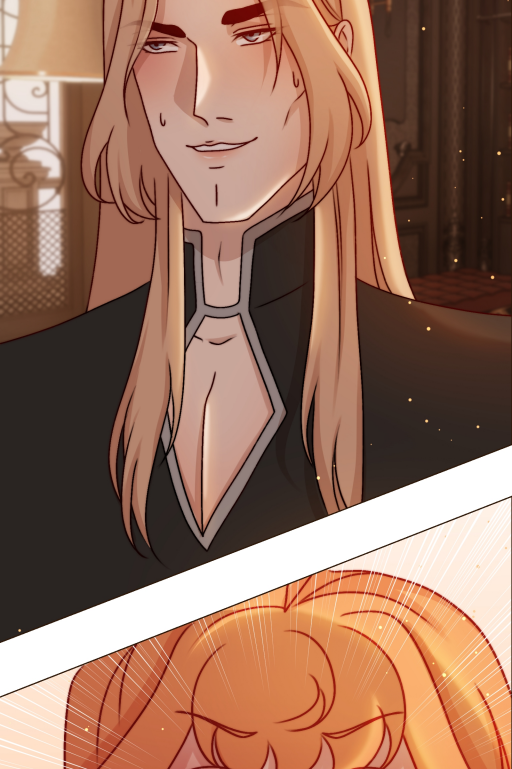


BUT... YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE IT.





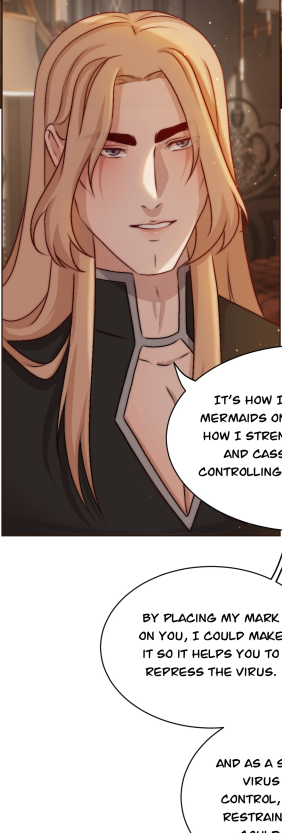
IT INVOLVES YOU
TAKING MY MARK.



WHAT?!

BEFORE YOU REFUSE,
PLEASE LISTEN.

MY MARK IS A CONDUIT
FOR MY MAGIC, ITS
EFFECT DEPENDS ON THE
SPELL I INFUSE.

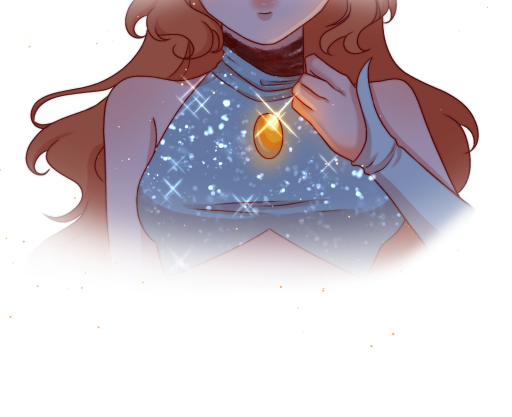
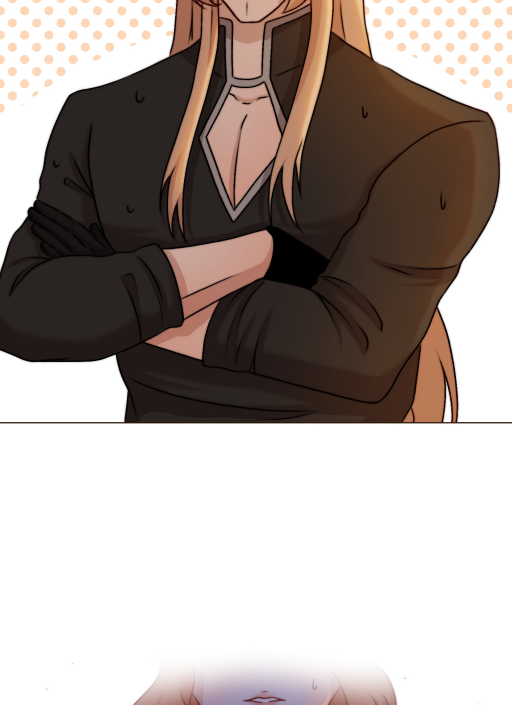
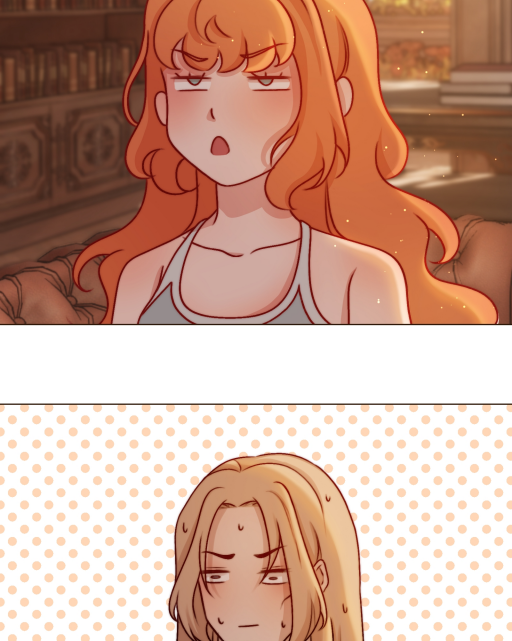


IT'S HOW I CONTROLLED THE
MERMAIDS ON ANDROS, BUT ALSO
HOW I STRENGTHENED CHIMERA
AND CASSANDRA WITHOUT
CONTROLLING THEM COMPLETELY.

BY PLACING MY MARK
ON YOU, I COULD MAKE
IT SO IT HELPS YOU TO
REPRESS THE VIRUS.

AND AS A SAFEGUARD, IF THE
VIRUS WERE TO TAKE
CONTROL, THE MARK WOULD
RESTRAIN YOU BEFORE YOU
COULD HARM ANYONE.

I'VE HAD YOUR 'MARK'
ON ME BEFORE. NOT
EXACTLY MY FAVORITE
MEMORY.

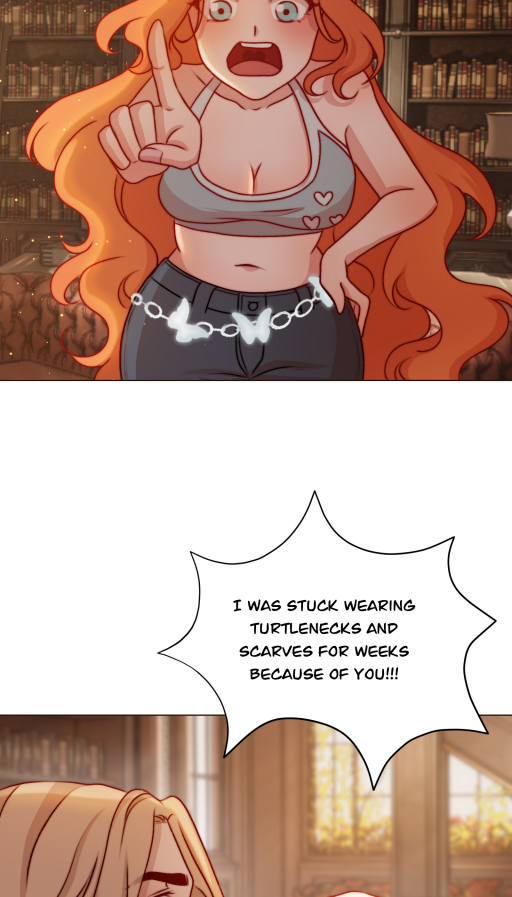


THAT WAS... AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT.



AHA

SO YOU ADMIT IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!



I WAS STUCK WEARING TURTLENECKS AND SCARVES FOR WEEKS BECAUSE OF YOU!!!



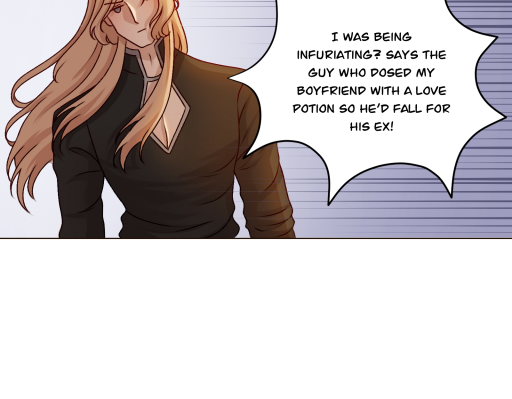
HARDLY MY FAULT YOU WERE BEING UTTERLY INFURIATING.



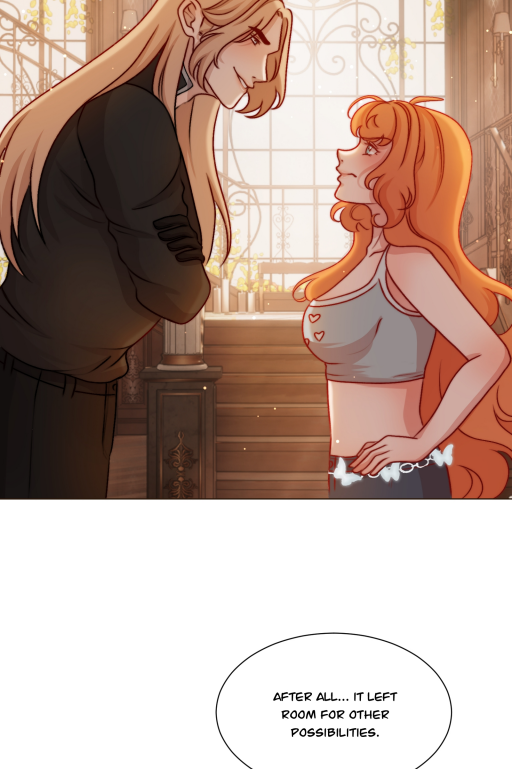
ME?!



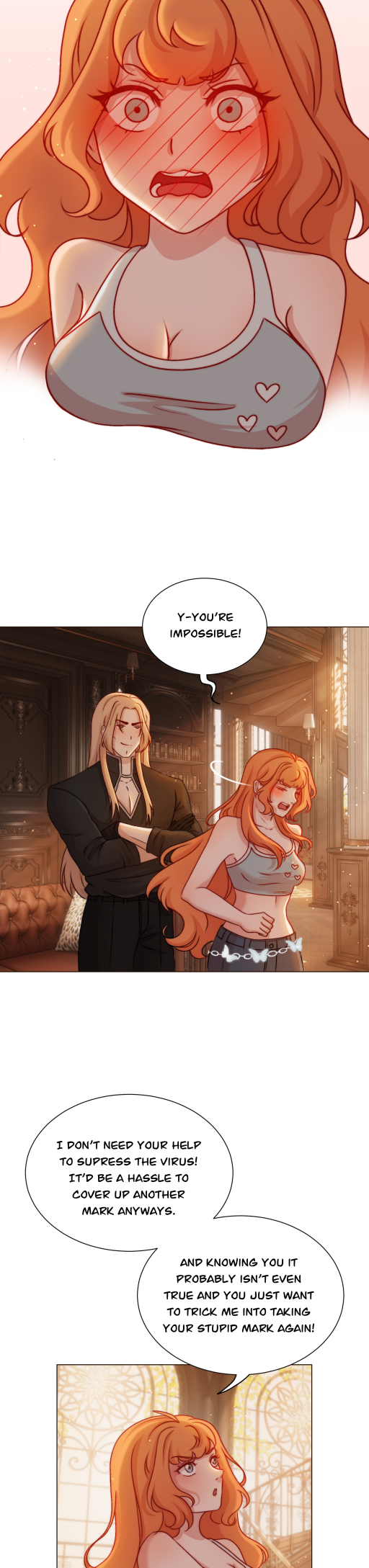
I WAS BEING INFURIATING? SAYS THE GUY WHO DOSED MY BOYFRIEND WITH A LOVE POTION SO HE'D FALL FOR HIS EX!



OH PLEASE, I DID YOU A FAVOR. YOU SHOULD BE THANKING ME FOR CLEARING THAT NUISANCE OUT OF YOUR WAY.



AFTER ALL... IT LEFT ROOM FOR OTHER POSSIBILITIES.

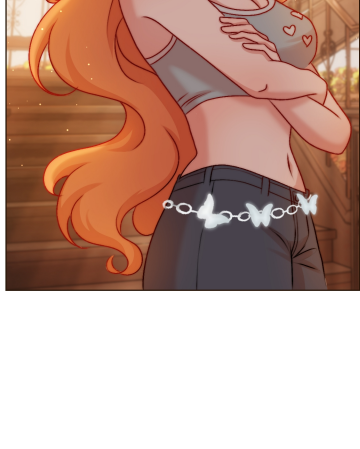


Y-YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE!



I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP TO SUPPRESS THE VIRUS! IT'D BE A HASSLE TO COVER UP ANOTHER MARK ANYWAYS.

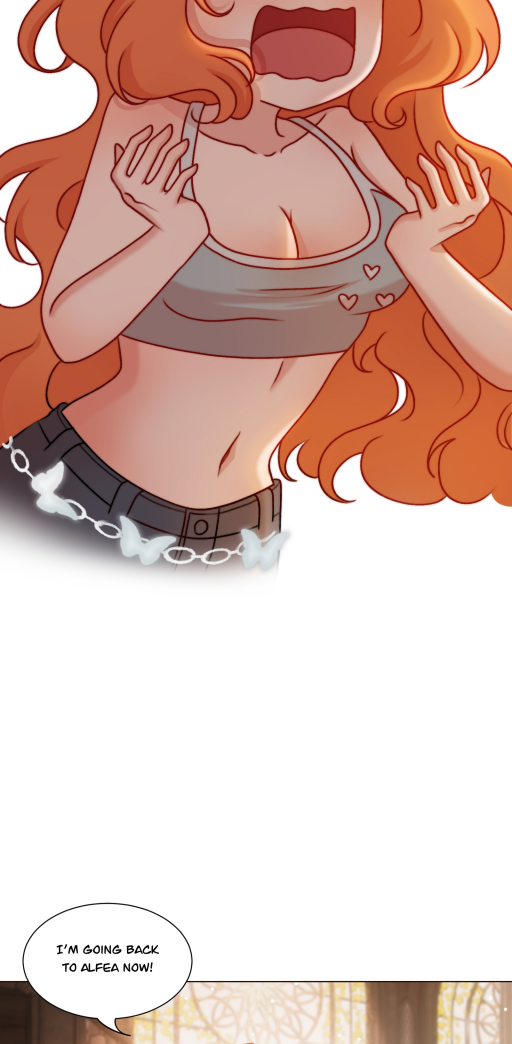
AND KNOWING YOU IT PROBABLY ISN'T EVEN TRUE AND YOU JUST WANT TO TRICK ME INTO TAKING YOUR STUPID MARK AGAIN!



SUIT YOURSELF, PRINCESS.

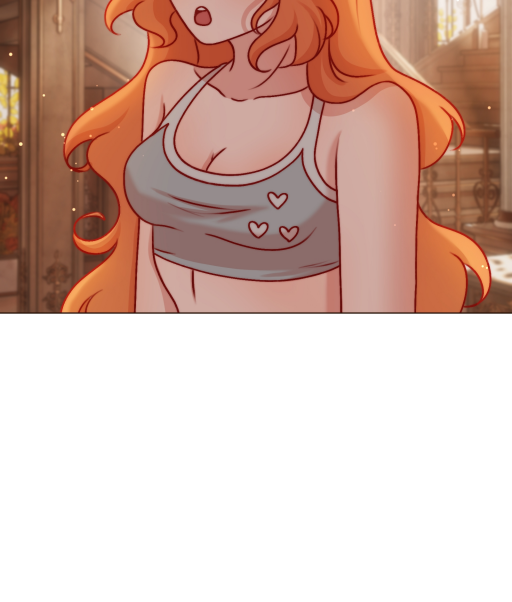


DON'T CALL ME PRINCESS!



I'M GOING BACK TO ALFEA NOW!

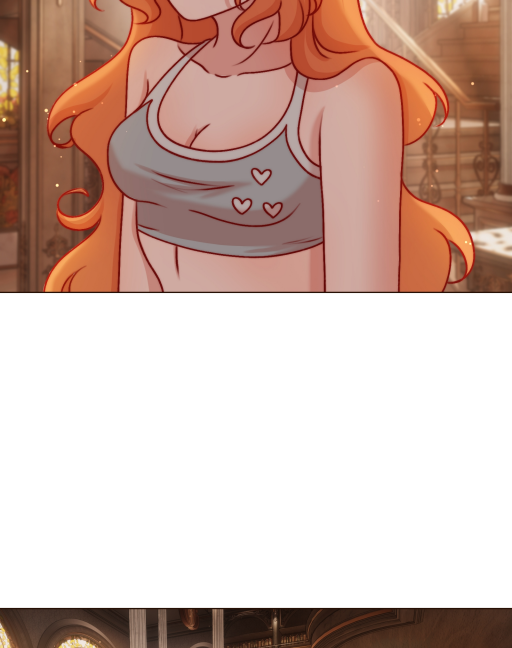
HUFF



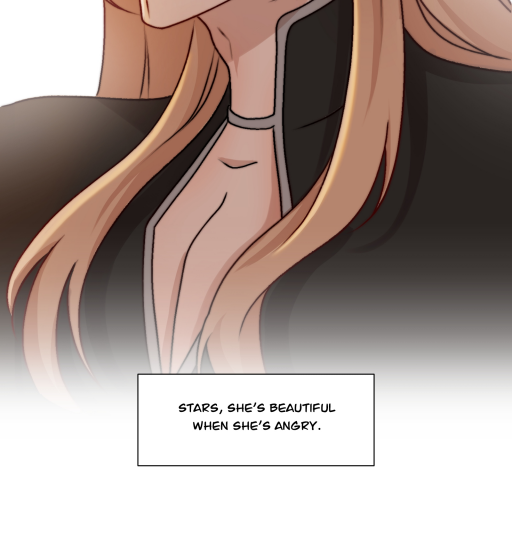
SEE YOU NEXT WEEK?



...YES



STARS, SHE'S BEAUTIFUL WHEN SHE'S ANGRY.



To be Continued

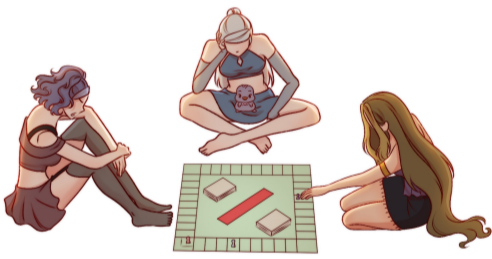
Story • art by Shiroyukichan

GUYS, WHEN IS IT MY
TURN AGAIN?!

YOU'RE IN JAIL, STORMY.
YOU NEED TO WAIT.

THIS GAME SUCKS.

YOU STILL OWE BOTH OF
US MONEY TOO.



ME?!

