

“There,” Luna smiled as she stepped back. “Doesn’t that look nice?”

“I...yes?” Asia replied, unable to keep the upward inflection out of her voice as she stared at herself in the mirror.

True to her word, Luna had taken her to her room to let her try on her old clothes, asking that she try at least one outfit, and she’d picked the least strange thing she could find. The yellow dress was nice, even if the cut of it was a little unusual, but she’d quickly learned that the other blonde’s taste in jewelry had been rather unusual at one point in her life. What she was wearing now, a simple pair of silver earrings and a silver necklace holding what appeared to be a large, oval-shaped ruby, was quite simple and normal. The necklace of corks she’d been given and earrings in the shape of radishes were less so.

“It’s not like I ever really wore or even noticed much jewelry before, so maybe this is more normal than I think,” Asia thought to herself. Tracing a finger over her chest and the pale skin revealed by the relatively low neckline, she asked, “Is this not a little too low-cut?”

“I wouldn’t say so,” Luna smiled, resting her hands on the blonde’s shoulders as she peered around her. “You have a lovely pair of breasts, and it would be a shame to keep them completely hidden like they were by your old robes.”

“What?” Asia asked, whipping around in shock.

“Your breasts,” Luna replied, her eyes dipping down a bit, “they’re quite nice. You’re really very beautiful, you know.”

“I...you...I...” Asia spluttered, her face going beet-red.

“You’re not used to thinking of yourself in such terms, are you?” Luna asked softly.

“Never,” Asia breathed, wondering why Luna’s silver eyes had gotten so dark.

“I wasn’t either,” Luna murmured, taking her hand and leading her to the bed, where she sat down. “Fleur helped me a lot there, as did Harry, of course.”

“I was always taught that vanity was a sin,” Asia said as she sat down, deliberately putting a little space between them.

“I don’t know much about what the church considers sinful,” Luna admitted, “but I do know that feeling good about yourself is a lot better than feeling bad about yourself.”

“I don’t know how I feel about anything anymore,” Asia sighed. “I miss when life made sense.”

“Life often doesn’t,” Luna murmured, taking one of Asia’s hands in hers and tracing a finger over her palm. “When I was a little girl, Mummy once told me about how she came across a muggle shop when she was younger...”

“Muggle?” Asia asked, furrowing her brow in confusion.

“Non-magical humans,” Luna clarified. “The woman who ran it offered a number of services seemingly related to divination, even though she was not a witch. Out of curiosity, she decided to

pay for one of them, a palm reading service, where the woman claimed to be able to tell her future just by studying the little lines on her palm.”

“I’ve heard of that before,” Asia said, shivering as Luna traced one of her nails feather-light over those lines.

“She told her that she saw her living a long life and having at least one other child,” the blonde murmured.

“Was she right?” Asia asked.

“She died within the year, and I never got a brother or sister,” Luna whispered, swallowing thickly.

“Go...I’m so sorry,” Asia breathed, barely catching herself in time.

“Life can be hard, and cruel, and often seem like it doesn’t make sense,” Luna murmured, staring into her eyes. “The solution to that, the thing that makes it possible to keep going anyway, is finding joy where we can and balancing all out the sadness and pain with it.”

“How do you do it?” Asia asked desperately. “How do you find joy again after having so much ripped away from you?”

“I find having sex with Harry and the others helps,” Luna replied, “but I...”

“What?!” Asia cried, jerking back. “But he...but Rias...”

“Having sex with Rias is also really fun,” Luna beamed. “She, Harry, Hermione, Fleur, Akeno, Koneko, and I have all found that the secret to joy for us is having wonderful orgies.”

“I...I...I” Asia stammered, her face becoming burning hot in seconds.

“I’m sure there are other paths to joy if drowning in soul-searing ecstasy isn’t your thing,” Luna smiled. “I only bring it up to say that it will get better, and even after losing as much as you have, you’ll still be able to find happiness in life if you let yourself.”

Asia could barely think, much less speak, in her shock. Learning that the handsome, wonderful man who had seemed so nice when they first met and become her savior here in Japan was married had been a shock but convinced that she’d get to become a nun someday, she figured it was for the best anyway. With that path closed to her for good, she might have come to wish that he weren’t as her attraction to him only grew, but it had still remained a simple desire she knew it was best not to dwell on at all. This, though, the knowledge that not only was Harry married but, that he and his wife brought their female friends in for bacchanalian parties that would have made her old mentors drop dead of shock was something she honestly found hard to process.

“What...” she went to ask when a sudden rumbling shook the very walls of the tower. “Oh, God! Ow.”

“Stay behind me,” Luna commanded, growing more serious in an instant as she jumped to her feet.

“What was that?” Asia asked, rushing to join her as she padded across the room.

“I don’t know,” Luna replied, “but I’d wager it came from downstairs.”

“The ritual,” Asia breathed, and as Luna nodded and opened the door, she decided to follow her down to investigate.

“It’s beautiful,” Ciri said to herself as she looked around Malus Island.

She’d debated with herself a little about just where to bring Geralt and Yennifer, who were both still sleeping on the forest floor behind her, shielded from the sun by the numerous large, full trees around them, but ultimately, this island had turned out to be perfect. Gazing out at the tranquil meadow where she’d considered burying them when she was still not entirely sure that they’d live, she’d come to realize that, although they hadn’t woken yet, they were most likely going to live.

“From the moment Cintra fell, my life has been one unfathomable pile of shit after another,” she murmured, looking down at Geralt and brushing his long white hair out of his face. “What moments of happiness I’ve known since then, alongside my survival, I owe to you, and to you, Yen. I wish I could stay I do, but I fear that even here in this perfect, peaceful paradise, I’d invite more trouble to you. I came across a world during my travels that seems...boring enough to be safe, at least for a while, and I plan to try to build a life there. I’m sorry for leaving you, but I really do think it’s for the best, and, honestly, after the past few years, I need to get out of this terrible world. I hope you two find happiness here; you deserve it, and you deserve each other. I love you both...so much, and I...take care of each other...for me, yeah?”

She closed her eyes, letting her tears fall as her throat grew tight, and finished writing that down. Once she was done, she corked the inkwell and shoved it and the quill back inside Yennefer’s bag. Once the ink had dried, she rolled it up and lodged it between the raven-haired beauty’s full breasts, chuckling at the thought that it was one place she knew both of them find it in. With that done, she pressed her lips to her forehead, inhaling the familiar scent of lilacs and gooseberries, before doing the same to Geralt and standing up.

“Goodbye,” she whispered, too emotional to get more sound out than that, before turning around.

Stepping out onto the meadow, she considered again the world she was intending to flee to, as even in her own mind she couldn’t call it anything else. In truth, she wasn’t as clear on that as she’d claimed, but she knew that telling Geralt and Yennefer that she had a solid plan would help them worry a little less, and figured that the little white lie was worth telling. All she truly knew was that she couldn’t bring herself to spend another moment in her own world, and she had no desire to return to the world of the Aen Elle.

“I’ll find one I can tolerate, surely,” she murmured to herself as she opened up a portal. “That one world I got a glimpse of seemed quite nice. Perhaps I’ll meet people there who won’t turn out to be total arseholes.”

Shaking her head at that, she stepped into the portal only to experience something she never had before. Rather than slipping into it as she normally experienced, it felt oddly like she was being sucked in, pulled towards a destination not her own, and for a moment, she feared that Eredin had found her and was about to recapture her.

Panicking, she tried as hard as she could to fight against whatever force was pulling on her, but it was like trying to swim against rapids, and she found herself powerless against it. For a terrible moment, she barreled through time and space, powerless to resist the unending pull of whatever

was drawing her in. A kaleidoscope of colors flashed before her eyes, almost blinding in their intense brightness, until finally, everything went dark and so terribly horrible. She emerged into a dark room just as what felt like a tidal wave of blood exploded, coating everything.

Closing her eyes, she coughed out the blood that had gotten in her mouth and took a step back, asking. "Where...where am I?"

"What the fuck?" Harry asked, staring at the woman in shock.

"Stay back!" she shouted, speaking a language he knew he wouldn't have understood if not for the devils' gift of speaking in tongues. She stepped back again, trying to wipe the blood from her eyes as she reached for the sword strapped to her back.

"Wait, we don't..." Hermione went to say, when the woman slipped on the blood coating the floor, fell back, and hit her head, falling unconscious immediately, "...mean you harm. Shit!"

Akeno, standing closer to the women than the rest of them, rushed to her and picked her up, wincing when she realized that she'd managed to hit her head hard enough to crack her skull.

"We need Asia!" she exclaimed.

"I'll go..." Fleur went to say, when the door to the ritual room opened and Luna rushed in, with Asia close behind.

"What in the world...oh," the silver-eyed blonde murmured as she looked around. "I guess things didn't go as planned."

"What...happened?" Asia asked, feeling nauseous as she looked around at the blood-soaked room.

"I'll explain in a minute, but we need your help," Rias replied. "A woman came through the portal and then slipped in the blood and hit her head."

"Oh, goodness," Asia breathed, rushing over and kneeling by the blood-covered woman as Harry started vanishing the bodies of the dead fallen angels. "She's hurt but...oh, wow, she's suffered many terrible injuries before."

"Focus on the most critical one now and we'll try to talk to her when she wakes up," Koneko murmured, summoning her sword from the sheathe strapped to her back and examining it closely. "People are usually easier to talk to when they're disarmed."

"Good point," Fleur murmured, summoning the dagger strapped to the woman's thigh. "What in the world happened?"

"I have no idea," Hermione muttered, looking around the disaster zone of a room. "Everything was going fine; the sacrifices worked as they were supposed to. We even opened a portal, and then...it was like control of it was wrested from me somehow."

"Could it be that you weren't powerful enough to handle it?" Rias asked.

“Maybe?” Hermione replied, shrugging her shoulders. “It felt less like me grappling with something that was beyond me, though, and more like there was some very sudden outside interference.”

“From her?” Harry suggested, pointing down at the still-unconscious woman.

“Maybe,” Hermione sighed. “This was the best idea we had come across yet for accessing these strange other worlds, and it seemed like we were so close.”

“I’m sure we’ll be able to find other powerful enemies we can use if we want to try again,” Rias assured her, resting a comforting hand on her shoulder, “but it isn’t as though we got nothing at all from this. We have another living being from another world under our roof now, one that, unlike Gnarl, wasn’t brought here intentionally by someone who used one of the Apocalypse Dragon’s scales. Whether or not she interfered with the portal, she might be able to tell us things that he could not.”

“Provided she wakes up,” Akeno sighed. “She hit her head really hard, and...from what I could feel, I don’t think that you’d be able to revive her with even a rook.”

“Really?” Rias asked, curious.

“There’s power in her,” Akeno replied. “I don’t know if...”

“Done,” Asia smiled. “Her brain has stopped swelling, and I managed to undo the rest of the damage that she sustained in her fall. I suspect she’ll wake up soon.”

“It might be best if, when she does, she doesn’t wake to what looks like the set of a Motley Crue video,” Hermione muttered, blanketing the room and all of them with cleaning charms until every drop of blood was gone.

“I’ll set her on the couch, and we can wait for her to wake up then,” Harry murmured. Seeing the woman’s face without all the blood, he couldn’t help but remark, “Wow, that is a really bad scar.”

“From what I could feel, she’s got quite a few wounds like that that never properly healed,” Asia said, watching as the woman’s unconscious body began to float out of the room. “I’ll see if I can heal the one on her cheek before she wakes up; that might help convince her that we don’t mean to hurt her.”

“You can heal scars?” Fleur asked, and Asia flinched at the intense look she gave her.

“I don’t know what things I can’t heal,” she replied, and the Veela smiled.

“I have someone who I think could really use your help, if you’re willing,” Fleur murmured, wrapping an arm around her as she led her out of the ritual room.

“Of course,” Asia beamed. “Who?”

“My father,” Fleur explained. “He was afflicted with a terrible curse months ago...”

“We’ll get answers, I swear,” Rias sighed, wrapping an arm around Hermione, who was still looking around the room, appearing utterly lost.

“I hope so,” the brunette muttered. “I’ve never had a project blow up in my face quite this spectacularly.”

“Thanks for the cleaning charm,” Koneko said. “Getting all that blood out of my hair by hand would have been infuriating.”

“It was the least I could do,” Hermione sighed. “*Man, I hope that woman has some clue what the hell just happened.*”

In a far-off land of revelry and combat, an ancient, one-eyed man sat in his throne, watching a pair of einherjar fight as his fellow gods sat around him.

“Are you sure, Father?” Baldur asked.

“Sure?” Odin chuckled. “Only fools are ever truly sure, son, you know that, but I think that the young devil is the one who took that old bag of bone’s toys from him.”

“That could complicate things,” Freya sighed. “Hades has always been the least agreeable of the Greek pantheon, and if he learns about this, it might throw everything you’re hoping the three quarreling factions will manage to accomplish into chaos.”

“He, as far as I know, has no idea what became of his hallows,” Odin murmured, “and I certainly won’t be telling him.”

“How did you learn of this anyway?” Thor asked.

“Hades isn’t the only god whose domain touches on the dead,” Odin replied. “I’m the sexiest one, of course.”

“Considering that your competition includes a walking skeleton and a mummified eunuch, that isn’t all that much to brag about,” Frigga teased, and Odin clutched his chest dramatically.

“My own wife, wounding me so,” he replied melodramatically, making her chuckle.

“So how did you get what confirmation you have so far that this Harry Potter is the one who has so infuriated Hades?” Baldur asked. “Did you observe him in combat?”

“No, I watched him fuck,” Odin replied, making sure that he timed the response just as Rosewiesse, his valkyrie bodyguard, was taking a sip of mead, which she promptly spat all over Thor.

“Oh, gods, I’m so sorry!” she cried, her face going crimson as Odin burst out laughing and Thor just shook his head.

“It’s fine,” he chuckled, vanishing the honey wine. “Relax.”

“Must you torment the poor girl?” Frigga sighed.

“I’ve said for ages that she needs to lighten up,” Odin replied. “You need to lighten up, girl.”

“I just cannot fathom admitting such things in public, my lord,” Rossweisse replied, “especially in front of the queen.”

“Oh, Frigga knows what I’m about,” Odin chuckled. “Don’t you, dear?”

“If I didn’t by now, I’d have to be the dimmest woman alive,” Frigga replied dryly. “Was there any particular reason for you doing this, or was it just you being you?”

“Admittedly, it started out being because one of his fellow devils in the Gremory girl’s peerage was a Veela, but I think my inherent wisdom proved itself here, because it ended up being quite a bit more interesting than I expected,” Odin replied.

“I sincerely hope you didn’t just peek from outside their window,” Freya said, giving him a flat look, and Odin merely grinned at her.

“I’d never be so crude,” Odin protested, earning a few incredulous looks from the others. “Well, I wasn’t in this case. No, I took the guise of an old, purportedly dying Japanese man and offered the Veela my entire estate, which I cobbled together and bought a house for, if she had sex in front of me and then finished me off. I pretended to die half-way through but not before realizing that there was something very off about the young man’s magic.”

“I’m amazed that that’s what informed you that he’d consumed Hades’ relics,” Thor murmured.

“It wasn’t,” Odin grinned. “I felt that the moment I shook his hand. No, the strangeness came during the act itself. His magic felt wild and intensely sexual on a level that exceeded that of the veela.”

“Surely you don’t think he’s one of those...what in the world did they call them again?” Baldur asked.

“Incubi,” Freya replied. “Incubi and succubi.”

“Correct, and in truth, I don’t know,” Odin admitted. “I know that Yahweh hunted their kind to extinction ages ago; man, that guy was a stick in the mud, and it shouldn’t be possible, but...something felt off. I’m intrigued.”

“Truth be told, a random devil managing to consume relics made by Hades is rather odd in itself,” Frigga piped up.

“So what are you planning?” Freya asked.

“For the moment, nothing,” Odin replied, his eyes flicking to Rossweisse for a moment. “If those factions of bickering manage to bury the hatchet, it will be good for us all, especially with the trouble that seems to be stirring on the horizon, and I don’t want to risk screwing that up by going anywhere near them again, but...should Michael, Azazel, and the others manage it, I might find an excuse to poke around more closely. I haven’t come across a good mystery in a while, and in my ancient bones, I feel that this will turn out to be quite the interesting one.”

He smiled to himself, a dozen different plans running through his head as he leaned back in his chair and took a sip of mead while turning his focus back to the duel happening in front of him.

“Ahh!” Ciri gasped as she woke up, bolting upright and looking around the room frantically.

“Hello there,” a dark-haired man sitting across from her smiled, and she tensed as she saw everyone who had been in that blood-covered room was sitting around this one, alongside a couple she hadn’t noticed before. She reached for her dagger on instinct, already feeling that her sword wasn’t on her back, and grew even more tense when she didn’t feel it. “We don’t mean you any harm, I swear.”

“And yet you’ve taken my weapons,” Ciri murmured, trying to see if she could feel any sort of magic in the air that might prevent her from disappearing through a portal and relaxing slightly when she didn’t feel anything.

“We’d rather you didn’t try to do us any harm either,” a short blonde with silver eyes and an ethereal voice said. “We can hardly be friends if we try to stab each other.”

“*You’ve never been to Skellige,*” Ciri couldn’t help but think to herself wryly. “How did I come to be here?”

“That is something we were hoping you might be able to help us figure out,” a stunningly beautiful woman with crimson hair and possibly the largest breasts she’d ever seen replied, “but first, I’m Rias Gremory, this is my husband, Harry Potter, and these are Luna Lovegood, Hermione Granger, Fleur Delacour, Akeno Himejima, Koneko Toujou, and Asia Argento.”

“Enchante,” Fleur purred, and Ciri shivered at the breathy tone of her voice.

“*Gods, she might actually be more beautiful than Francesca Findabair,*” Ciri thought to herself. “*I didn’t think I’d ever find anyone who was.*”

“You know, without that unfortunate scar on your cheek, you are actually quite beautiful,” Fleur murmured, and Ciri’s eyes went wide as saucers as she reached to feel her ruined cheek and felt only smooth skin.

“How?” she asked, relief warring with her continuing apprehension.

“That was my doing,” Asia replied. “Hi. When you fell, you cracked your skull, and as I was healing that, I noticed the scar and thought you might appreciate it if I took care of that too.”

“My skull?” Ciri asked, reaching behind her head. “I don’t even have a bump.”

“Asia here has an incredible healing ability,” Harry replied, making the blonde blush.

“Hopefully that’s proof enough that we bear no ill will towards you,” Hermione murmured. “We didn’t intentionally draw you through the multiverse, and in fact, I have no idea how that happened.”

“So you are aware that there are whole other universes out there,” Ciri said. “I seldom run into anyone who does, anyone I’d want to, anyway. I’m Cirilla, though you call me Ciri. What exactly were you doing when I got sucked in here? All I knew was that one moment, I was trying to step through a portal into another world, and then I was in that dark, blood-soaked room.”

“We were performing a ritual meant to open a portal to another world,” Hermione explained. “Did you happen to be performing a similar ritual at the same time?”

“What, you think you two sort of...crossed the streams or something?” Koneko asked.

“It was certainly explosive enough for that metaphor,” Hermione muttered.

“I don’t require rituals to open the portals I use,” Ciri explained. “What exactly were you doing there?”

“We had taken custody of three guilty murderers and, as they were going to be executed either way, decided to sacrifice them in a ritual meant to pierce the veil between this universe and the others,” Rias replied, speaking with such authority that Ciri’s old instincts kicked in and she sat up straighter.

“Hence the blood,” Luna supplied.

“I guess it might be possible that you conducted that ritual at the exact moment that I stepped through my portal and we interfered with each other,” Ciri murmured, sounding unsure. “To be honest, my control over my powers has never been perfect and...”

“Wait, so this is something that you can just do, then, huh?” Harry asked. “Is it a form of magic you learned?”

“It’s...inherent,” Ciri replied slowly, and he nodded.

“Fascinating,” Hermione murmured as Akeno and Rias shared a look.

“So, it seems to have been a mix-up,” the crimson-haired beauty sighed. “On behalf of the Gremory family, I do apologize. It wasn’t our intention to draw you or anyone into this world.”

“Where were you hoping to go, if you don’t mind me asking?” Akeno asked.

“*Are there just no ugly people in this world?*” Ciri wondered to herself as she looked at the buxom beauty. “I had a destination in mind...sort of. It was a world that I had managed to glimpse once and thought that it looked nice. My own world had become kind of...tiring, and I felt I needed a change of scenery.”

“So how did the ritua...hello,” Sirius said as he walked in, trailing off when he spotted Ciri, who cocked her head at him in confusion.

“Wait, I thought you all spoke my language for some odd reason,” she replied, wondering why she didn’t understand a word that the man had spoken.

“Oh, shit, is she from another world?” Sirius asked, looking at Harry for translation.

“Sirius here is different from the rest of us,” Rias explained. “We’re devils, and one of the perks of being what we are is that we understand, read, and speak all languages instinctively.”

“That’s incredibly useful,” Ciri murmured.

“It is,” Rias smiled, her mind racing with possibilities as she stared at the beautiful young woman. She looked to be around the same age as her, though she’d clearly been through a lot more in her short life, given her scars and the wariness in her eyes. Her ability was too potentially useful not to

try to make an ally of her, though she knew enough to know not to appear overeager or make her offer too soon. “You know, if you were looking for a change of scenery, you’re in one of the most beautiful parts of our world, and, as an apology for dragging you over as we did, we’d be happy to show you around.”

“At the very least, we could offer you a hot meal,” Harry added, sensing what his wife was thinking without her even needing to reach across their mental link.

“I am actually quite hungry,” Ciri admitted, tentatively willing to believe that these people, even if they did call themselves devils, weren’t out to hurt her.

“Luna, why don’t you take her to one of the nicer restaurants in town?” Rias suggested. “You can consider it our treat.”

“I’d be happy to show you around, though your clothes, while very nice, would make you stand out a bit here,” Luna murmured. “If you’d like, I could transfigure them into something less conspicuous.”

“I could do that,” Fleur said flatly.

“Transfigure?” Ciri asked, only to jump to her feet as her tunic and breeches were transformed into flowing, green dress that fell to her ankles and clung to her figure like a second skin. Before she could say a word, Fleur had conjured a mirror, which she stared into in muted shock.

“You look like a princess,” Luna smiled.

“I don’t think I ever looked this good when people called me princess,” Ciri thought to herself, palming her healed cheek and looking herself up and down.

“Shall we?” Luna asked. “I swear you’re going to love this place. They do these breaded pork cutlets that are amazing.”

Even her well-developed survival instincts were no match for how comically innocent Luna looked as she smiled up at her, and Ciri sighed, deciding to follow the incredibly cute young woman for now.

“If things go poorly, I can always escape,” she thought to herself, following the blonde who started to skip along the floor.

“What the hell happened?” Sirius asked the moment they left.

“There were complications with the ritual, or a complication, as it were,” Hermione muttered.

“Do you want me to send a pair of green minions to keep an eye on them, Dark One?” Gnarl asked, and they looked around the room in confusion.

“Gnarl?” Sirius asked, his eyes widening when the aged minion crawled out from within the couch Ciri had been sleeping on. “Wait, that couch is enchanted?”

“I discovered it this morning,” Gnarl replied. “There’s a whole room hidden between the cushions. I’d have come out while that woman was resting here, but she felt so powerful, I feared it would end poorly.”

“So you just stayed trapped?” Hermione asked. “Gnarl, you could have said something?”

“There are worse things in the world than being sat on by a fetching young wench, Dark One,” Gnarl chuckled, and her concern for him disappeared immediately. “Who was that anyway?”

“Cirilla, she said her name was,” Rias replied. “She is powerful, isn’t she? You were right, Akeno; I don’t think a rook would work for her.”

“You’re out of luck, then,” Akeno sighed. “That’s a shame, too, given everything, but maybe we can talk her into just helping us reach that world we’re looking for anyway.”

“I’ll want more than just the world from her if we can manage it,” Rias murmured, feeling a sense of greed the likes of which she hadn’t in ages.

“Rias, we just met her,” Hermione pointed out. “I trust that Luna will be safe with her, because she’s rather strong too, but we don’t know her at all.”

“She came across as lost,” Koneko said. “I think her world was more than just ‘tiring.’”

“I sensed the same,” Akeno murmured. “Maybe if we offer her a place to stay here, and the sort of stability I imagine she hasn’t had in a while, given the state of her, that will be enough to convince her to help us out.”

“Or to take me up on the offer I already want to make her,” Rias grinned.

“I will point out that you don’t have the pieces for her if she’s as strong as we think,” Harry said.

“Harry, if we manage to make a Philosopher’s Stone, we’ll get all the pieces we could ever want,” Rias replied.

“How would that work for the Rating Games?” Koneko asked.

“I imagine Lord Ajuka would mandate that everyone bring no more than a standard set of them for a given game, no matter how many devils they had in their peerage,” Rias shrugged. “That, I will let him and the others figure out, but for now, I need to speak to him, and I need to convince my mother not to stop me from making the deal with him that I want to.”

With a wave of her hand, she sent a glowing red ball off, which promptly disappeared.

“What was that?” Harry asked.

“I sent a message to Sirzechs, one asking him to meet me at the castle,” Rias replied. “You should come too; it’s high time we brought Lord Ajuka into the fold here. Akeno, keep a subtle eye on Luna and our new guest and make sure that nothing goes wrong.”

“Will do,” Ajuka replied.

“The rest of you, hold down the fort here,” Rias added.

“Rias, I would like to go to Kyoto with Asia and see if we can’t heal my father,” Fleur said, and she nodded.

“That’s fine,” Rias replied, taking Harry’s hand.

With that, the pair of them disappeared, making their way to the Underworld.

“You’re being impulsive,” Harry chuckled as he followed Rias through the castle’s anteroom. “All we know about that girl is her name.”

“Don’t you see, Harry?” his wife asked, spinning around and staring up at him, eyes practically glowing with excitement. “Even if it turns out that Ciri can’t be trusted or doesn’t want anything to do with us, she’s a living proof of concept that this can work. We really can reach out to these other lands and if Hermione and she are correct about what made the ritual go wrong, then the chances of that same mistake happening again are pretty minute. Before, this was all theory, but now...now we know it can be done.”

“I love seeing you this excited,” Harry smiled, snaking an arm around her waist, and she furrowed her brow at him in confusion.

“To be honest, I don’t know why you aren’t more excited,” Rias replied, making him chuckle and rub the back of his neck.

“I know it’s all been in the same universe, but I’ve been introduced to a whole other world I didn’t know existed twice before,” Harry replied. “It’s cool, immensely so, but it’s also something I have kind of experienced before.”

“I suppose I get your point,” Rias chuckled, smiling as she saw Grayfia. “Grayfia, where are my parents?”

“They’ve just sat down for tea,” Grayfia replied. “This is the second time today that you’ve come here. Is everything alright?”

“Perfect, actually,” Rias replied, smiling. “Sirzechs might be showing up soon; if he does, tell him where we are, and I’ll explain then.”

“Very well,” Grayfia murmured, clearly still deeply curious but professional enough not to voice that.

Rias sped off, knowing exactly where her parents would be if they were having tea together, and Harry followed after her, amused by just how excited she was.

“I knew this was something she wanted to pull off, for numerous reasons, but I don’t think I realized just how important it had become to her,” he thought to himself as she turned a corner and stopped abruptly at the door to a small sitting room.

“Twice in one day,” Zeoticus smiled as he spotted her. The look quickly faded as he asked, “Did something go wrong?”

“Given that you’re here, things clearly didn’t go quite as planned,” Venelana murmured, looking concerned.

“There were complications, but it doesn’t matter,” Rias replied.

“We managed to make contact with another universe,” Harry added, “and more than that, we pulled someone through.”

“Someone?” Venelana asked.

“A woman named Ciri,” Rias replied. “That’s actually why I’ve come. She says that she can open portals between dimensions naturally, that it’s an inherent ability of hers, and I want to either make her a member of my peerage or find someone else with this ability and take them on.”

“That would be invaluable,” Zeoticus breathed. “The mere idea that we might be able to access and acquire resources from a vast array of other worlds...”

“Why come to us, though?” Venelana asked.

“I get the sense that Ciri is too powerful to be turned by a rook,” Rias replied. “When I came across the dying host of the Boosted Gear, his power was still locked away deep inside him, having never been accessed in any meaningful way, and I didn’t sense it at first, but whatever this woman is, her power is palpable.”

“Neither of us has spare queen pieces to trade for Akeno, though,” Zeoticus reminded her.

“And I wouldn’t trade Akeno for anything,” Rias murmured. “I’m not looking for a spare queen piece; I’m looking for a second set, and that I can only get from...”

“Me,” Ajuka murmured as he walked in, flanking Sirzechs alongside Grayfia.

“Rias, is everything alright?” her brother asked. “Your message said you’d found something critically important to the Underworld, but why would that require you to have a second set of Evil Pieces?”

“Your sister sent you one message, and you went to fetch Lord Ajuka?” Zeoticus asked, sounding amused.

“We were in the middle of a meeting when the message arrived,” Ajuka replied. “It’s an open secret that House Agares possesses extra pawn pieces they’ve used to create a significant number of bound servants, but even they cannot say that any of their members have been given two whole sets. If I were to grant such a thing, it would have to be for an exceedingly good reason.”

“I think I’m on the cusp of being able to create a Philosopher’s Stone,” Rias said, and the green-haired man’s eyes went wide as saucers.

“Really?” Sirzechs asked, trying not to sound too insultingly surprised.

“The answer to that is a long one, but it goes back to a discovery that my peerage made some time ago,” Rias replied, looking to her mother, whose purple eyes narrowed slightly.

“*We will discuss this strong-arming at length later,*” Venelana projected into her daughter’s mind. “Lord Ajuka, we have in our possession a copy of every book, scroll, and note ever written, not just in this universe but in all of them.”

“What?” Ajuka asked, stunned.

“We discovered a room, which has since been sealed, capable of creating anything the user envisioned,” Harry replied. “The things it made could not be taken out of it, but the written texts we asked for, we managed to copy down onto real paper. Among them were the journals of Nicolas Flamel, wherein he described the process plainly.”

“I know of the process, but it’s impossible,” Ajuka replied. “It requires something not found in this universe, and, as you said, this room cannot create things that can exist outside it.”

“We’ve found the means to access other universes,” Rias explained.

“How?” Grayfia asked.

“It required the sacrifice of three relatively powerful beings,” Harry replied. “We dealt with our fallen angel problem, by the way.”

“So you captured them and used them for this ritual,” Sirzechs murmured, sitting down and tapping the armrest of his chair as he contemplated that. “If they were low-level operatives, as I imagine they were, Azazel and the others are unlikely to look too closely into how they met their ends. This ritual worked, then?”

“Sort of,” Rias replied. “There was interference we didn’t account for, as, at the moment when we performed the ritual, someone who possesses an inherent ability to travel between universes was opening up a portal of her own. We ended up accidentally sucking her into our world.”

“And you’re thinking of turning her into one of us?” Ajuka asked.

“I haven’t come close to deciding on that yet, but if I could turn her or someone else with her ability into my devil servant, I could absolutely access the world Flamel found his quintessence in and make a Philosopher’s Stone,” Rias grinned. “Then I could use it to transform some random mineral into the crystals you use to make the Evil Pieces. It would fix the problem of our finite supply of them and...”

“Rias, slow down,” Sirzechs sighed, sharing a concerned look with Ajuka.

“What is it?” Rias asked, deflating somewhat at her brother’s unenthusiastic reaction.

Sirzechs took a deep breath, trying to figure out how best to put this before sighing. “I understand that you’re very excited about this, and I am so deeply impressed with everything you’ve done over the last year, but this isn’t a good idea, at least not at the moment.”

“Why?” Rias asked. “If you’re worried about how Aunt Minobella is going to react, I’m sure she’ll shut up when Seekvaira...”

“It’s not Aunt Minnie, though she will be absolutely murderous when she learns about this if you pull it off,” Sirzechs replied. “In truth, it’s remarkable that the Evil Pieces didn’t cause a greater stir among the other factions than they did. Being able to take any sapient being in the universe and make them into one of our own is an incredible and terrifying ability. I think the main reason that they all know both that trying to turn someone against their will is a terrible idea and that the crystals used for them are so scarce.”

“They genuinely are, too,” Ajuka piped up. “I’ve tried for centuries to find other sources of them without even a hint of success. The Agrean crystals, as I often call them, are unique to Agreas.”

“Are you sure that Minobella and Hafaer haven’t...” Venelana went to ask, and he chuckled.

“Oh, they’ve both tried to stymie my efforts in suitable subtle ways, and I’ve been more than happy to let them, since it’s a waste of their time,” Ajuka replied before she could finish.

“So you’re worried about how the other factions will react?” Rias asked.

“It’s not just that,” Sirzechs replied. “Word of this is not to leave this room. Am I clear?”

When they all nodded, he continued, saying, “We are currently in negotiations with Heaven and the Grigori to bring about lasting peace between us.”

“What?” Rias and Harry asked in unison, sounding equally stunned.

“It’s been a long time coming,” Sirzechs replied, “but eons of animosity cannot be undone quickly, and reaching a true detente with them has been...challenging.”

“Would the Tyrant really allow that, though?” Rias asked. “All my life, you’ve all told me about how rigid and inflexible he was with his demands; how the church’s portrayal of him as a forgiving, loving being is laughable nonsense.”

“Circumstances have changed,” Sirzechs replied. “I won’t get into the specifics, but there have been rumblings for quite some time of growing threats out there that could affect us all. There’s a new faction developing, one which is opposed to all three of ours, and with us having a common enemy, figures who would have once balked at the idea of peace between us have been forced to reassess things.”

“That’s why you’ve been so reluctant to announce what I am,” Harry breathed, and the crimson-haired man nodded.

“Michael and Azazel are aware that there is a living incubus among us now,” Sirzechs said. “I didn’t want them to learn from any other source, and so disclosed the information myself.”

“They don’t know who, though, right?” Rias asked.

“Not yet, no,” Sirzechs replied. “They were both quite surprised, but it didn’t end up being a deal-breaker.”

“Which makes sense, of course,” Grayfia murmured. “If we’re no longer fighting to exterminate each other, they don’t need to care that we have a solution to our fertility issues.”

“Plus, with the Evil Pieces, we’ve managed to fix our numbers problem, to an extent, anyway,” Ajuka said.

“I don’t want the possibility that we might end up with a limitless supply of the agrean crystals becoming a problem, though,” Sirzechs said, and Rias sighed, staring down at her feet.

“I just...I just hoped that this might help me distinguish myself in the Underworld,” she sighed, and he smiled.

“It will,” Sirzechs said softly, and she looked up at him in surprise. “I’m not saying that you shouldn’t do it, but it will need to be kept quiet for a while.”

“How likely do you think it is that you’ll be able to make a servant of this woman you unwittingly dragged into our dimension?” Ajuka asked.

“We just met, so I have no idea,” Rias replied. “She was hungry, so I sent her along with Luna to eat at a local restaurant. She’s the most friendly and welcoming of us by far, so if anyone could convince Ciri to stick around, at least for a while, it would be her. She strikes me as someone that only a queen, a full set of pawns, or two rooks could suffice for, and I don’t have any of those things.”

“We figure that, even if we don’t manage to convince her to stick around, we might very well find someone like her eventually, and there’s every possibility that they’d be just as powerful,” Harry added. “We know that the ritual works now and that we can access other dimensions without relying on the Apocalypse Dragon’s scales, which don’t actually work very well.”

“What do you mean?” Ajuka asked. “I had heard of what they do, but I’ve never come across one myself.”

“They take you to a random universe for a while and then take you back,” Rias replied. “You have no control over the process at all. We managed to contact Zekhail Bael, and he explained how he had researched the scales at length and ultimately discovered that they were largely useless.”

“I can speak to the dead by the way,” Harry replied. “One of the objects I absorbed to stabilize my transformation gave me the ability.”

Ajuka chuckled at that, shaking his head. “You two are full of surprises. Now about this library; I imagine that your second set of evil pieces would be part of the deal to give me access to it.”

“A small part,” Venelana grinned. “It is a resource of House Gremory, and we would expect to benefit from anything that it helped you with in the future.”

“We’ll discuss that later, my lady,” Ajuka said flatly. “That was where that odd scroll came from, correct?”

“It was,” Rias nodded. “I’m hoping to visit the world it came from as well as the one that contains the quintessence.”

“If we do this, no one outside of your peerage is to learn that you have two sets,” Ajuka said. “Not even little Sona. Am I clear?”

“Crystal,” Rias nodded.

“If that becomes more common, I suppose we’ll just ensure that, for rating game purposes, devils can only bring one full peerage worth of servants with them,” Sirzechs murmured. “That might actually make the games more interesting, forcing the rival kings to prepare for numerous possible combinations from their opponents.”

“It will make things more challenging, certainly,” Grayfia replied.

“I thought it would be years before you managed to make any progress on this front,” Sirzechs said, smiling at Rias. “I underestimated you, little sister.”

Rias beamed at the praise, and Harry smiled at her, taking her hand in his and rubbing her palm softly.

“Much of the credit should go to Harry,” the redhead sighed, leaning her head on his shoulder. “If not for him, I’d have never learned about any of this.”

“We’ll have to go to Agreas, of course,” Ajuka murmured. “You’ll need to touch the king piece monument again to bind this set to you.”

“Right,” Rias nodded. “Shall we go now?”

“Yes,” Ajuka replied. Turning to Venelana and Zeoticus, he said, “I’ll be in touch tomorrow to discuss this further.”

“We’ll be looking forward to it,” Zeoticus replied.

“I’ll walk you out,” Grayfia whispered to Sirzechs, who smiled at her.

“Whatever else, I am immensely proud of you, Rias,” he said, hugging his sister. As he leaned in, he whispered, “I know being my sister can be challenging, but please don’t feel like you need to prove yourself so much.”

“I know I don’t need to prove myself to you,” Rias whispered back, “but at the end of the day, if I’ll never be your equal in power, then I need to distinguish myself in other ways.”

Sirzechs sighed and stepped back, looking to Harry and saying, “As you two go on your adventures to come, take care of her for me.”

“I’d protect her with my life,” the incubus assured him, and Sirzechs grasped his forearm.

“I know,” he said before letting him go. “Let me know before you leave.”

“We will,” Rias nodded, watching him leave with Grayfia.

“Shall we?” Ajuka asked, conjuring a magic circle large enough for the three of them.

“Absolutely,” Rias replied as she and Harry stepped inside and disappeared.

“She’s more like you than even I realize sometimes,” Zeoticus chuckled, sipping his tea and scowling before warming it back up.

“It all worked out in the end,” Venelana grinned, warming her own tea and taking a sip. “The entire family is going to benefit greatly from Rias’ discoveries, I just know it.”

“The fact that we might well enjoy the sort of benefits from Lord Ajuka’s research going forward that Minobella and Hafaer have from the evil pieces doesn’t hurt either, of course,” Zeoticus added, and her grin grew more devilish.

“Naturally not,” Venelana murmured, already looking forward to tomorrow.

“I really have come to love Japanese architecture,” Asia said as she and Fleur approached the Delacour residence.

“It certainly has its charm,” the Veela replied. “Have you ever been to France, Asia?”

“I spent a few months in the town of Ventimiglia, which is quite near the border, but that’s the closest I’ve gotten,” Asia replied.

“That, we will need to fix,” Fleur said, and Asia smiled up at her.

“Thank you for being so welcoming,” the other blonde sighed. “You’ve all been so wonderful since we met.”

“You are a member of Rias’ peerage, just like me,” Fleur smiled. “That makes family, in a way, something that you’ve not had much of before.”

“I thought I did,” Asia sighed. “For so much of my life, the church seemed like my family, but in the end, they didn’t really want much to do with me.”

“Well, rest assured that we are all more than happy to welcome you with open arms,” Fleur beamed. “Thank you for agreeing to this.”

“What happened to your father was horrible,” Asia replied, shivering as she remembered the story she’d been told. “I’m so glad you managed to stop that evil man.”

“As am...” Fleur went to say, only to freeze as she stood just outside the door to her parents’ home.

“Is something wrong?” Asia asked.

“No, just...I felt something surprising,” Fleur replied, figuring it best not to tell the hilariously innocent girl that she was fairly sure her mother had had sex not long ago. “*Who did you meet, Maman? This wouldn’t still be from when ‘Arry and I were last here.*”

She knocked on the door, flaring her aura to make sure her mother sensed it was her, and started tapping one foot as she waited for her. A flare of desire belonging to someone other than her mother reached her senses, and she furrowed her brow when she realized it was a woman. The door opened a moment later, and her mother smiled at her, still trying to smooth her moussed hair and her hastily put-on blue kimono.

“Fleur, I wasn’t aware you were...ah, bonjour,” Apolline said as she spotted Asia. “We haven’t met before.”

“I’m Asia, Mrs. Delacour,” Asia said, “a friend of Fleur’s. Did we come at a bad time?”

“Oui, Maman,” Fleur smirked. “Did we come at a bad time?”

“Not at all,” Apolline replied, “though I do have a guest over whom you might like to meet. She’s...”

“My, my,” a husky female voice purred from just behind her. “You two really do look like you could be sisters.”

“*By the goddess,*” Fleur thought to herself as she took in the sight of her mother’s lover.

She was a tall, very beautiful blonde with long wavy hair that fell to her shoulders, flawless porcelain skin, and golden eyes that practically shone with satisfaction. Like Apolline, her hair was also a bit of a mess, and her deep red gown wasn’t on entirely straight. It was a very tight-fitting dress that showed off her voluptuous figure, and its plunging neckline not only revealed a tantalizingly deep valley of creamy cleavage but also the fresh love bite on the side of her right breast.

“*Goodness, I think she might be curvier than Maman,*” Fleur thought to herself.

“Oh, like you’re one to talk, Yasaka,” Apolline grinned. “If not for how we met, I’d never have guessed you were old enough to be a mother. Fleur, Asia, please come in.”

“How exactly did you meet?” Fleur asked as she stepped inside.

“My daughter, Kunou, has become a close friend of your sister’s,” Yasaka replied. “Anyway, as much as I’d like to stay and chat, I’m afraid I must be going.”

“Take care,” Apolline sighed, hugging her tightly.

“It was nice meeting you,” Yasaka smiled at Fleur before turning to go.

“Likewise,” the Veela purred, eyeing the beautiful blonde’s thick, round ass through her gown as she walked out. “When did this happen?”

“It’s very new,” Apolline replied. “She reached out to your papa and me, wanting to meet the parents of the girl her daughter apparently couldn’t shut up about, and the two of us became fast friends. Sebastian took one look at her and gave me permission before I even needed to ask. It turns out she’s a widow and she’s been so very understanding.”

“Permission for what?” Asia asked, and Apolline cocked an eyebrow at her daughter.

“Maman and Yasaka had sex not long before we arrived,” Fleur replied, and Asia squeaked, her eyes going wide in shock as she flushed scarlet.

“Wha...what?” she spluttered before blushing even harder as she realized what she’d just asked. “Nevermind, sorry.”

“Oh, you’re adorable,” Apolline chuckled, feeling absolutely relaxed. “She knows about the situation with your papa, yes?”

“Yes,” Fleur replied. “That’s actually why we’re here. I think Asia might be able to heal him.”

“What?” Apolline breathed. “How?”

“I...” Asia went to say, still too embarrassed to speak.

“She has an innate healing ability,” Fleur replied. “There’s no guarantee that it will work on the after-effects of Nathresia’s Bane, but it’s worth a shot. Do you know when Papa will be back?”

“He and a few others from the Taiyo Institute have gone on a retreat to a place near Mount Fuji,” Apolline replied, her heart racing in her chest at the thought of her husband being healed. “It’s part of the recovery process, and we’re not to disturb them, but...”

“When is he due back?” Fleur asked.

“In just over a week,” Apolline replied.

“Hold off for now, then,” Fleur replied. “There’s no guarantee that this will work, and if not, I’d rather he stay in the program going forward.”

“Right, right,” Apolline breathed, smiling widely at Asia. “You really think you might be able to help him?”

“I do,” Asia replied, having most recovered. “I’ve never healed extensive curse damage before, but I’ve also never run into anything I couldn’t heal.”

“This is wonderful,” Apolline breathed. “Please, come it down. This calls for celebration and I have a creamy piece of camembert that I know will go perfectly with this chardonnay I’ve been saving.”

Fleur smiled at that and sat down on a loveseat, gesturing for Asia to sit with her. “So this friend of Gabrielle’s, why haven’t I heard more about her?”

“You haven’t?” Apolline asked. “She’s practically all that she writes to your papa and me about. I wouldn’t be shocked to learn that she’s taken her to bed before the end of the school term.”

Fleur chuckled at that and smiled as her mother sat down, happy to see her so happy again.

“I doubt we’ll be leaving for one of these other worlds any time soon, but I’ll be certain to make sure Asia at least attempts to heal Papa before we go,” Fleur thought to herself, wondering how Luna was doing with Ciri.

“I’m so sorry,” the princess sighed as Luna finished telling her about the loss of her father and how Harry, Rias, and Akeno avenged him and Hermione’s parents.

“Thank you,” the blonde whispered. “The anniversary’s coming up in a couple months, and I...I can’t believe it’s nearly been a year.”

“I understand that all too well,” Ciri said. “A few years ago now my whole world was ripped out from under me. My kingdom was invaded by the forces of a neighboring empire, and my grandmother, the queen, and so many others were killed.”

“That’s horrible,” Luna breathed, reaching out and resting a hand on hers. “I’m so sorry. How did you escape?”

“My grandmother ordered a few knights to get me out, though they all died on our journey,” Ciri replied. “Eventually, I found someone who could keep me safe, a powerful witcher named Geralt.”

“Witcher?” Luna asked.

“The short answer is that they’re monster hunters,” Ciri replied. Chuckling, she added, “The long answer would take long enough for the owner of this place to start giving us dirty looks.”

Luna chuckled at that and sipped her tea. “So what do you think?”

“The katsu, as that guy called it, was fantastic, and this soup is really good too,” Ciri replied. “What did he call it again?”

“Miso,” Luna replied. “Rias would know what that means, but I’m rather new here.”

“So you and Hermione moved with Harry after he came here to marry Rias,” Ciri murmured, trying to figure out who everyone was to each other. “You must be really close friends.”

“Officially, we came because Sirius, his godfather, moved here, and he’s our guardian, but mostly it was because we’re in love with him,” Luna replied, and Ciri, who had been about to bring her spoon back to her mouth, went still.

“Huh?” she asked. “But Rias...”

“Oh, we love her too,” Luna replied, smiling serenely.

“Is that...normal in these parts?” Ciri asked.

“No, but I’ve never been one to concern myself with what is and isn’t normal,” Luna replied.

“Harry, Hermione, Fleur, Rias, Akeno, Koneko, and I are all happy together, so what does it matter what anyone else thinks?”

“That’s...impressive of him,” Ciri murmured. “You’re all with him willingly, yes?”

“Oh, very willingly,” Luna chuckled. “I don’t think any other guy could have compared to him even before he became an incubus.”

“Incubus?” Ciri asked, growing tense.

“You’ve heard of them?” Luna asked curiously.

“I know the term,” Ciri replied warily. “In my world, incubi and succubi are horned creatures with cloven feet, who charm and seduce humans so they can feed off of their energy, sometimes to the point of killing them.”

“Harry doesn’t have cloven feet,” Luna chuckled, “and he has such control over his energy-sucking ability that he’d never take more than we were willing to give him.”

“I...see,” Ciri murmured, wondering just what she’d stumbled into. “*A harem of this sort would be possible for an incubus in my world, though most would be too wary of attracting a witcher’s attention, not that most witchers would bother hurting them unless specifically hired to.*”

“You said he became an incubus?” Ciri asked.

“Yeah, we were all turned into devils by Rias,” Luna replied. “Harry was just very unique and became a very special type of devil. The others all say it’s because of something this really powerful and evil devil did to him as a baby, but personally I wonder if it isn’t just because he has a very, very large penis.”

Ciri stared at her in shock for a moment before snorting, saying, “You’re being rather open, considering that we just met and we’re in public.”

“No one can hear a word we say,” Luna replied. “I placed a silencing charm on the area around our table when we first got here. As for you being a stranger, that’s true, but I get the sense you’re really nice and that we’re going to be good friends, provided you decide to stay here.”

“Rias would certainly like that, I’m sure,” Ciri murmured. “I’ve been around enough to know when someone wants to use my ability.”

“With or without it, we’d manage to travel to the world we seek,” Luna replied. “We’re trying to make something that would help us heal people, for numerous reasons, and there’s a thing we need for it that can only be found in that specific world. We’re not going to try to force you to help us if you’re worried about that, and if you choose to move on to another world, that will be sad, because I think we really could be friends, but none of us will stand in your way.”

“Truth be told, this world is likely as good as any for my purposes,” Ciri murmured as she finished her soup.

“Would you mind telling me what you’re running from?” Luna asked, and Ciri sighed.

“More than I’d care to think of,” the ashen-haired beauty muttered. “I actually believe you when you say you’d not try to force me to use my powers to help you, and I’m amazed that I do.”
“Because everyone else has tried to?” Luna asked.

“Since Cintra fell, I’ve been pursued by kings who saw me as a way to secure a claim to it; the emperor who murdered my grandmother because, it turns out, he wanted to seize me, marry me, and impregnate me despite being my father; elves who also wanted to impregnate me because they consider the traces of elf-blood in my veins to be stolen property; and an evil sorcerer who was somehow worse than almost all of them,” Ciri muttered, watching Luna’s big silver eyes grow wider and wider as she finished her rant. “I’ll miss Geralt, the man who protected me, and Yennefer, his lover, and the friends I’ve made since then dearly, but if I never see my world again, it will be too soon.”

“You’re safe here,” Luna whispered, taking her hand in hers as she stared into her eyes. “None of them will reach you here.”

“Vilgefortz, the sorcerer I mentioned, is dead, and the humans among the bunch couldn’t reach me on any other world, but there is a chance that the elves might,” Ciri sighed. “You seem really sweet, and the others seem nice too, and I wouldn’t want to endanger you.”

“Even if they did and proved too much for us, Rias’ brother could destroy them all with a snap of his fingers,” Luna smiled. “He could probably destroy whole planets if he wanted to.”

“Seriously?” Ciri asked, her eyes going wide.

“He’s insanely powerful,” Luna murmured, tracing her finger over a scar on Ciri’s forearm. “Asia could heal this one too, if you wanted. Personally, I find scars kind of sexy, but…”

“No, thank you, though,” Ciri smiled. “The one on my cheek, I despised, and I am so happy to be rid of it, but the others… I earned them, you know? They’re proof that I survived everything.”

“I understand that,” Luna said, sitting back and finishing her tea. “How about this? Stay with us for a week or two; we have plenty of room at the Rookery, and treat it like a sort of vacation, something I’m getting the sense you really need. Relax, refresh, try to get your mind off of everything, and then decide from there if you want to stick around longer or move on.”

“Are you sure the others wouldn’t object?” Ciri asked.

“Yes, though even if they did, the Rookery is mine, so it wouldn’t matter,” Luna said.

“Wait, that tower is yours?” Ciri asked. “You said Sirius was your guardian, and Rias just seems to be in charge in general.”

“It’s my family home,” Luna replied. “When we moved to Japan, I decided to take it with me, and we’ve been living in it ever since.”

“You…took the tower with you?” Ciri asked, confused. “How?”

“It all started centuries ago when an ancestor of mine was playing chess with his dog,” Luna began, hoping dearly that the beautiful otherworldly woman would decide to stay. She could hardly seduce her into their bed if she left, after all.