Twilight of Shepherd and Calamity

by Ming1080

Summary

There’s been a long time since the Dark Age ended, with the effort of the past Shepherds, the land and Maotelus are gradually purified. Innominat turn into one with Maotelus. The Empyrean wakes with young Lord of Calamity and the young Shepherd.

It is a brand new era. Everything became strange to them. They were the residents in the world but now the foreigners of time.

They no longer carry responsibility for their heavy identity. They are once again in this world as two ordinary human beings. The journey starts again while finding their friends......................

It should have been like this, but people are teased endlessly by life, all is a loop, and fate is still toying them who have been chosen by the times.

Someone waited for a thousand years, some people have been guarding the world, and some people even death cannot affect her persistence. Fates cross each other.

Even the world is cruel, they will once again resist destiny and look for hope, once again to get back the thing they lost.

Human and the Seraphim fight together, for their dream.

Hope the strayer finds her answer to live with Shepherd beside.
→ There will be a good ending
→ Reincarnation
→ A lot of exotic settings √
→ The author is a strange thinking creature
I write the story because I have read plenty of the stories about Velvet Crowe on AO3( and other platforms like fanfiction), and I think I better make my contribution of a story too.

This is actually a story took half a year to write and correct, mainly because I don’t want to update short chapters with low frequency when I have other issue. I tried to fix all the bug setting and grammar mistake, but still, I am not good at writing, if you see some part strange or like academic writing, I shall apologize for my low English writing skills in story writing.
Some part of the story may be translated from another language for my convenience in writing, for example, the battle description. I tried to correct it so that they look smooth. Still, there may be a case of differential expression in the two languages that I didn’t fix.

(Why don’t I post it on the forums in my country? There are very few writers and readers and I am not good at writing as them…..most importantly I didn’t get an account there.)

It is the story after TOZ timeline, and the setting is developed from TOZ and TOB, so no surprise that someone already died in the plot in the beginning. However, I may have them reborn or present for a short period or present in a form of memory.

Strange and various couple ideas such as Sorey x Velvet and I see it is more like friendship or family relationship or platonic love? So don’t ask me if it is a romantic relationship, I don’t know as well….(but I will still tag it)

For who want to see old characters in both TOZ and TOB, sorry for my arrangement in the plot that not so much familiar character in the beginning but they present gradually later, for example, Mikleo will present after Ch 30….But I will try to maintain Sorey and Mikleo’s friendship while writing Sorey and Velvet.

Lastly, my writing style is mixed with reference (reference of setting, conversation and ideas/inspiration). For example, the setting is partly referred from and greatly inspired by [The pages after the last page] and the relationship Greatly referred from Tales of Rays and Tales of Asteria, also referred from and inspired by the crossovers written by Blackrockshooterstar (fanfiction), Rocking85(Wattpad), Gravenimage (fanfiction), 羽虫(Pixiv) and other stories I read on Pixiv and AO3.

Thank you for your patience to read all the notes~ If you are fine with these all, let’s begin!

PS: OMG the note is almost ¼ to the content…..

let have some test of how to insert an illustration...

https://i.imgur.com/Ia9tMN6.png
See the end of the work for more notes.

- Inspired by The page after the last page by KeyKnows
(NPC POV)
There was a tale my grandfather told me. Generous Empyrean of Maotelus forgave the sin of humanity and gave them the second chance infinite time. He accepted and beared our sin and got tainted with the earth. A shepherd offers himself to purify him, until the day all sin cleared. And the God of all Empyrean always watches everything to happen. The shepherd wears ceremonial clothes, like the male in front of me. Both he and the woman on his back looked bad, they are searching for help. As a sincere prayer to Maotelus, I will help them as I can.

--------------------------------------------Velvet POV-----------------------------------

One’s said, "The boundary between dreams and reality is demarcated solely by one's own heart so it may feel better to say the dream is the reality."

I dreamed of beautiful dreams.

Where my family was alive, my friends were alive, no one died, a peaceful world.

Laphi was alive, he was healed from his awful sickness.

I should be happy about that.

Celica was alive, she gave birth a child for Arthur, named Laphicet too.

I should be happy about that.

In the day I got nineteen, I went traveling with my little brother Laphicet. Celica and Arthur were waving their hand to say goodbye to us with their baby. Exploring the world was Laphicet’s dream, a dream that he didn’t has the chance to achieve, and he was going to achieve it finally.

So…..I should be happy about that.

We met various kind of people, a daemon samurai, pirate, magician and exorcists in different places. Those people helped us in many ways, mostly tackling daemons and provide assistance to our journey.

Those traveled places should be new to me, but I had the feeling that I went there once, I tried not to recognize the places.

Loegres, the Glorious Royal Capital, the capital of Midgand and the home of the Abbey, where the shepherd granted his title and also a shadow guild known as the Bloodwing Butterflies was running there, but all those things like inexistent now, because Arthur is still in Aball.

Port Zekson, the Crossroads of Commerce, a trading port located in Midgand, the center of the continent. We met Captain Aifread there for a free sail at the gateway to the capital city of Loegres. However, I feel like I should have seen a blond man with ferocious eyes and wearing a black coat. I can’t remember where have I seen him.

And some many places and people, they were……familiar, I was glad that we could meet them this way and to go to the place this way, like that I had met them in a different way.

No, not familiar, they are just not real now.

I smirked that I knew this a long time ago, they were dreams, things just happened repeatedly in a different way. Those were fake happiness, and I pretend like I am truly happy all the time when I knew it was fake, and I nearly blurred the line several times. Maybe that is the pathetic punishment
for the Lord of Calamity, cruel enough than death, so I reminded myself to clear my mind at any time, not to sink in the sweet dreams.

Since the day I got my revenge, I trapped in here with Innominat for unknown years to redeem my sin. It is the price for requesting to keep someone alive after killing so many people and I will be here forever to let Laphicet survive.

Usually, I will have a fake and peaceful dream with innominat, I have it since the day I fell in a forever slumber with him. He acted like Laphicet but the souls are not him. Still, I will treat him like Laphi to entertain him and keep him concealed. We continue to dream those dreams, until one day, all the things become different.

I am embraced in a world of the void, it is not like the usual scene happened in our dream. In our dream, we are “living” in a “real” environment with buildings and people around but here is just literally empty.

“Seems that you awake. I have good news to tell you.” Innominat announced in Laphi voice.

“What is happening?”

“I said, you will awake.”

“..What are you talking about? I can’t wake, you too.”

“I will soon be disappeared,” he stated calmly.

“....... Laphi?”

“I am not the real Laphi, you and me both knew. I will soon be a part of Maotelus, don’t worry.”

“But you…..Are you fine with this?”

“Yes. I am full of your presents to me now.”

“Presents?” I doubted that I had given any present.

“Those dreams are the first time and the last time I feel alive. All the time I was doing my duty to clean world malevolence and eating emotions without truly understand them......No, I just forgot it in the infinite time of rebirth, now I remember, and I lived. So, I think it is the time for you to live again, you lost so much, so take your second chance.” He said in a satisfied tone and slowly fade away.

“...! Wait!”

“Thank you, and goodbye, ‘sister’.” He smiled and disappeared.

I lost my consciousness and sensations for a while. I barely get my sensations back when I feel like I am on something moving at a steady speed.

What is it? I feel the warmth, and steady sway, it's better for me to see what is happening. The last thing I remembered is that I fall a supposedly eternal sleep with Innominat.

"Hmm........??” I find that I can’t even talk or move, is bad, hope it is not the worst.

"Oh, you awake. Don't move now, you are injured. I am finding a doctor for you.” It is a tender boy's voice, my vision is blurred, all I can see is a brown head with messy hair.

And I can't help and fall asleep again.

Everywhere sprayed with white, it is a classic environment present in my dream. Somewhere with a
certain distance from my position blossoming groups of Princessias, which is the favorite flower along with my family. With pink core and white edges, sometimes it likes blood spreading on the ground. This reminded me of a tales Rokurou told me.

He always says he like a type of flower that blossoming in his country, called Sakura. It is pink, with five petals and it looks brilliant when thousand of them blossom on the trees. However, behind its beauty, it is the corpses under supporting them the nutrients. I think of those people and daemons killed during my revenge when I gaze those princessia in my dream. Though it actually possesses a beautiful meaning as an irreplaceable treasure and it may be a pretty symbol for all those years I lived with Celica, Laphi, and Arthur, it truly was a time irreplaceable in my life. Still, I am not going any near of them, cause I know I don't deserve it anymore.

"Uwa...!" It is the pain that brings me back to reality, a strong light shine above my body. My head is barely movable, so I check on the surrounding, there are some people with white clothes with a mask, I can't recognize any of their faces as they hide them well. I wonder where am I and what's happened.

"Calm down!" The man said while he was piercing something into my arm, the long-lasting pain is weakening, and my sensation is slowly gone, this is horrible like I fell in the void.

Then I fall into sleep again.

--------------------------Sorey POV-----------------------------------------

There was a space with pure white, I never thought I could have been to such a sacred place after falling into the abyss with Heldalf's dead body and the tainted Maotelus. I raised my head, I saw a giant Silver-white dragon. Unlike other dark dragons I had met, this one was not in the berserk state but just calm and warm as I can sense, he is Maotelus.

He processed hard wyvern wings with shining scales, crystal clear eye with kindliness and a strong muscular body. I wonder if he will talk in a heavy and dignified tone and I don't know what should I talk to a god-like being.

“I have been waiting for you.” I strained my eyes as I heard this, and also I shocked by his voice.
“Have you expected my arrival?”
“No, I believed,” He said in a holy, but a young and tender voice.
“Always believed?” I am amazed, but he keeps on speaking.
“Despite me tainted by malevolence one day, to not being myself anymore, there will always some people like you come and save me.” I still confused by his words.
He looks down at me, may be wondering what should he say.
“What's is your name?”
“I am Sorey.....Hmm.....Are you...Maotelus?” I tried to maintain a steady voice and asked bravely.
“Yes.” He curved his giant body and looked at me at a horizon.
“Thanks for saving me.”
That shocked me, but I am glad, for receiving appreciation from the Empyrean, I expressed the feeling directly then.
“Not at all, thanks is not enough for everything you have done.”He seems smiled.
“It is my pleasure, I should be the one to say thanks, Maotelus.” I relaxed.
“It will be terribly tired if you are being so revered to me the whole following days during the slumbering, Sorey.”Maotelus chuckled.
I always confused about the great contrast between his tender tone and his dragon form.
“I would like you to call me Laphicet, a name given by a precious person to me.”
“A precious person?” I tilted my head.
“It would be a long story, and I would like to tell you about the story of the person. The one I love, the one with a burning golden iris, whose name's Velvet Crowe.” Then Maotelus start to tell me the adventure in thousand years past.

Time flow becomes immeasurable in the empty space just Maotelus and me, but I never find it boring with the story told by Maotelus.

The earth was Maotelus vessel, so he has the ability to select and activate the Earthen Historia and let the story played like a movie. However, he did not do that in Velvet story. He said it is no polite to see her story fully since he guesses she didn't want to reveal. Moreover, he believed he will be upset if he knew the full story. He is already upset for not being able to help her, even being an Empyrean.

One day, I awoke to the chirping of birds. I can feel the warm, hazy sunlight spraying on the soft grassland and on me. The call of cicadas explained the season I am in, summer of adventure. Moreover, I sensed the smell of ancient tongue. I found that I am in a ruins, a throne is in front of me. I guess I awoke.

A sudden wind blow with a giant shadow shading me from the sunlight, those singing birds flew away from the corner of my eye. Instead, the silver-shining scale entered my sight.

“Good morning, Sorey.” that voice, with the silver giant scale I saw, so I could guess Maotelus is awake too.
“Good morning, Laphicet.”
“Sorey, I have a request to you, would you accept?”
“What is it? I will try my best to help my friend.” Maotelus smiled as he heard.
“Please take care of her for me. I want both of you to live freely and happily in this age of time.” A beautiful raven-hair woman without her left arm flew down slowly from Maotelus's arm.
“No problem, but what is her name?” I doubt gazed at the armless woman.
“Glad to hear that, she is Velvet, Velvet Crowe, the most precious person to me. And I will breath my bless to you two as you live.” He blows some light particles around our bodies.

Velvet's tales, the most impressive story Maotelus had told me among numerous story in the thousand-years history. I am glad and surprised to hear that she is gonna wake up too since her tales ended so sad to me, she lost everything and she intended to give up her life too to protect Maotelus for herself at last. Maotelus must think she deserves a better life, and so do I, I want her to have a happy end too.

“OK, so I will go get her to a doctor now. How about you?” I saw a bleeding state for Velvet's arm's flesh wound and she looked so weak at this moment. Seems Maotelus's healing arcs helped not much, the state is pessimistic.
“I will restore my blessing to the world and do my job as an Empyrean so I will first link with the earth again.”
“Oh, I see, cheer up! I will come to see you with Velvet sometimes.” Maotelus continue to achieve his dream and I think he may feel lonely sometime so I decided to visit him again after Velvet's recover.
“I am looking forward to it, have a nice trip, Sorey.” Maotelus smiled gently.
I carried Velvet to find a doctor then. She seems awaked for a short time on the way and she may doubt about my identity, thus I should think about how to introduce myself to her. What should I expect from a former Lord of Calamity? Even after hearing the story, I still can’t get the proper image.
When I arrived in the nearest village, the villagers are shocked and quickly brought us to the clinic. I thought maybe we have met some passionate villagers.

The doctor seems angry and worried, he shouted at me: “How long time have you two lived with such condition?! Why not see a doctor earlier?! Just sit down and rest!“

I am confused again, seems that both Velvet and I are having severe negative health conditions and I start feeling dazy now, I fell down in the clinic eventually.
Since Sorey and Velvet arrived at the clinic, the old doctor worked over the night to heal them initially. Now the doctor finally gets a moment to rest, he takes off the scrub and sits on the sofa.

“It’s a hard day, here.” The old woman brews a coffee for the doctor. “It has been a while to see you working hard like this.” She added.

“Thanks. They are unexpected, but it is not like they are chasing after me and come to hurt us. Besides, I am a doctor, I will help anyone in need.” The doctor took the coffee and comments on the two sudden clients.

“Even there are people looking for your skills, you haven’t changed.”

“Oops, my mind is too old to change.” The doctor made a joke for his stubbornness.

“That's why I love you, dear.” The old lady laughed.

“My pleasure, did you get their identity? The female looks similar to the one I saved in the lost tower but they have different iris color.”

“Better to think they are not related. I haven’t got them, they seem not having any identity documents, hard to believe. One thing to be sure, they went through a lot before arriving here.” She commented based on their unhealthy condition and the serious injury on the girl.

“Suspicious but safe, maybe.” The doctor commented.

“You can't define in such early stage.” The lady suggested.

“I won't, we will have to observe.”

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Velvet POV

None known of time, no longer the shaky carriage, I woke up in a place in white color style, I guess it is the same place as my previous wake. I can feel my body is heavy as if some metal poured into it and the pain remains to keep me awake now. More to doubt, I actually feel a bit cold in here and felt the warmth from the stranger back then, this should not be possible as long as I am a daemon.

“Good morning, lady, you finally awake.” sound like I pass away for a long time and I have just noticed there is an old man standing next to me. “......Where am I?” I searched the answer directly from this old man, it is dangerous to me if everything keeps unknown to me. I don’t know what does he need from me so I can’t trust him completely.

“A clinic, you are lucky that a boy sent you here. You lost your left arm with the body condition of malnutrition and defatigation, the wound of your left arm cut left unprocessed for numerous years. I just don’t understand how you lived still. You should expect a serious pain during the processing of wound.” He stated he is a doctor and he described my conditions with a little vicious tone, but I suppose he warned me for my sake.

The doctor said the “left arm cut”, then I noticed my arm is gone. I am not used to it, the left arm just brings too many things to me, it recalled the worst memory from me.

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Arthur pierced Laphicet’s chest before me and he fell Laphi into the endless pit in the shrine. I had to stop this, at least I had to try to save Laphi from this, there has to be hope, there must! To run and grab Laphi’s hand, I even managed to struggle out from the flaming constraint of the unknown magical power. I don’t care, I have to save Laphicet, he is the meaning of my life. I don’t know why he was stopping to come but I would grab him from falling down and I grabbed him successfully.

My left hand is the only hand grabbing the edge of the pit, there Arthur walked slowly up to the edge, staring me from the top, like those eyes no longer belong to the one I knew.

“Let him go. This offering is too important to the world.” He coldly commented. I was scared by his eyes and his cold sentence but I told myself to believe him once more. I asked him for reasons but I only got those unacceptable answers from him. I denied his answer, there must be a way to save Laphicet.

“Ever a slave to emotion.” He again coldly stated the comment. He raised his sword, sharply cut my left arm through the bone, without any hesitation.

I was shocked, my eyes widened to glare him unbelievably, but what respond me was still those cold eyes, there was not even a waver in his eyes.

How could he do this?! Without any hesitation, to hurt and kill his family. I thought we were family!

Whatever……I was falling……and it’s not like I could a way to go up again.

Then I see Laphicet eaten by a golden dragon with numerous of the head, I couldn’t help but felt unforgiving to Arthur.

This was the night I became a monster.

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“Hello? Miss? Are you Okay?” The doctor frowned as he observed my temporary catalepsy. “....ah...yeah, I am fine.” I broke out of my bad memory. “Great then,... Any inquiries?” He relieved for me not getting any serious case than it already has.

“Where is the boy?” I tried to sit up, but it is hurt, I feel extreme pain from my abdomen when I contract the Abdominal muscle and the doctor stopped me immediately. “Don't move! It affects your wound, it is miraculous that your wound didn't get infected. The boy is sleeping on the bed on your right, he isn't armless but in the same condition to you as well. You two should just rest! I will go get some pain-killer to you later.” The doctor criticized at the careless of the boy and me. Seeing his tensity around patients, I believed he is really a doctor. If anything he will want from me, it will be the Medical expenses.

“Okay, thank you.” I slightly tilted my head to the right and see a brown-hair boy slept peacefully, he should be the one who carried me here. I wonder why he did that.

The old doctor left the room and call someone here with some grumbling of us. He may be fierce, but the doctor is a doctor, I can feel that he truly cares about his patients, even for a sudden arrival like us. Maybe all doctors are like that.

After a while, an old lady got in. She replaces a new set of bandages to my left arm and injected something in my arm. I think that the pain-killer the doctor said, as the pain from my arm is alleviated. It didn't remove all my sense, I can still feel the dry finger touch from her. Accurately, I felt being touch but not sensing the detail from the surface, it is like my sensation filtered by
something strange and empty. Honestly, it is a bit scary.

Not like the old doctor, the old lady is not talkative, but that does not mean she doesn’t have a heart, she shows her concern too. I thought that she would ask for some information about the incidents and my family, then I will just respond with a fake story, but she didn’t. Instead, she shows her concern shortly, clearly and simply.

“poor girl, it must be painful.” Then she expressed her simple empathy softly.
“I don’t sense the pain after the pain-killer injection.”
“I am not saying this pain….I am saying the pain in here.” She touched lightly my heart position on the chest that is separated by the sternum.

I can't make a voice in that time, I feel like something choked in my throat and tears sightly slid down my cheek. I can't help but think of the old lady lived in the Aball village, who taught me words and told me ancient tales when I was a child. Although she had a memory problem and had little to do with me, she was as good as my family. Sometimes she gave me candies, she comforted me when Celica was gone. I cried unconsciously and soundlessly in front of her when she spoke of Celica, then she wiped away my tears with her finger, her fingers are rough but also soft. The old lady in the clinic did the same thing now, wiping away my tears. She said no words, but that is enough for me.

“Now rest, girl.” She said after made me taking the sleeping pills.

Sleepiness slowly invades my brain and I guess I may have a nostalgic dream.

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Sorey POV
I remember that I fell down in the clinic yesterday, the old doctor is already next to me when I woke up. My body becomes sore and heavy, never have been that fragile.

The doctor told me that we were in the Tewks village and he asked me for some information about Velvet and me, I barely answer the questions since I knew only a few things from Velvet and this Age.
“Are you the Shepherd? I see your cape pattern just like......” that is the only question surprised me.
“Well...I was?” I told him the fact.
“you were...oh, oh haha...” he chuckled, maybe he thought I made a joke.
If true, I can't complain. As I am not able to help people with the so-called special power of Shepherd without the help of seraphim. I am now only a human being who is able to see seraph.
“Shepherd or not, I shall ask if you have money to pay?” the topic changed realistically.

I am shocked helplessly, I found myself completely missing everything, cause there isn't a plan from the beginning and he is used to relying on seraphim on the healing.

I have no currency in this age.
“I am sorry, we don't, but may we stay and help instead?” I suggested the last thing we are able to do.

“Fine then. And you should rest more to recover yourself faster!”
“I will, thank you very much!” It is really lucky to meet such a kind doctor to help us without really minding of money.
As the old doctor advice, I lie in bed.
I am tired but not sleepy, it is boring to glare at the white ceiling. I start thinking of things.

The doctor told me that both Velvet and we have the problems of malnutrition and defatigation. I
guess this may be related to the long sleep of us. Our health condition is not maintained during the slumbering, so our body may slowly malfunction. Both of us didn't intake anything since we slept, Velvet may have eaten Innominat's malevolence, but she was also eaten by him, and that should not call food either.

For the defatigation, I guess it is because I carried Velvet from the throne with an empty stomach and I don't know the case of Velvet, maybe she overworked in her journey. I felt nothing until I arrived at the clinic, maybe I should thank Maotelus blessing. The blessing may just lengthen the time of supporting my body, like a temporary boost of stamina and fatigue, without it, I can't get both of us to find a nearby village for a doctor.

It is strange to be alone, actually, Velvet is next to me, but she is still a stranger to me, I only knew her through Maotelus.

In the past time, Mikleo will always by my side, when I was small, when I explored ruins, even when I became the Shepherd.

There is seldom a conversation without him.

There will not be anyone to tell me the next step to do.

This is the second time I recognized that I am alone, I miss everyone, like the time Heldalf blocked out my resonance.

Mikleo, Lailah, Edna, Zaveid, Alisha, Rose and Gramps, I miss them all, but I don't know where are they now. My human friend—Alisha and Rose have probably died already. This Age is far different from my time. I guess I may still find some trace they left, I hope.

I am not a Shepherd anymore, someone may be doing the job with Lailah right now. Now I think of the line I beg the doctor to let Velvet and me work here. It will mean we will make a living here, at least for a while. Then I wonder what life should be, I have never truly lived a human life even when I was a Shepherd. It is more like I was the observer to lives, I can't help much with their living, as I was the Shepherd. I hope it will be fine and I hope Velvet won't be mad at me for my sudden decision.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.

I guess I need to explain their state so I wrote it like that, Sorey may be OOC a little for my use for the explanation.

Sorry for my poor vocabulary and sentences, since my first language is not English. That is also a reason for a relatively small word count in chapters( it appeared to be longer after multiple times of elaboration). I will try to keep every chapter to have around 1200 words at least.

BTW, the village name: Tewks is the ancient tongue of “First”.
let admit I get Velvet a bit OOC this time....

one of my friends said that the illustration seems like Velvet is giving birth and Sorey is supporting her........
Hmm, now I have the same image to the illustration. (Actually, it is the installation of 'Automail')
After 3 to 4 days, Velvet and Sorey have almost recovered to a normal standard condition. At such rate, hard to not be doubted, and the old lady is well aware of how suspicious Velvet is, so as the doctor.
"If you are aware of how suspicious she is, why would you want to give her the mechanic prosthesis? I mean, she is already recovering in such monstrous speed, her strength may be immeasurable if you give it to her." The old lady stated her concern to the doctor.

"It will be fine. You see her eyes, right? Dull and confusing, she probably doesn't want to live." The doctor stated his sympathy.

"Yes, I noticed. Maybe she doesn't want to hurt others when she doesn't want to live. Even this won't post a hazard to you, then your prosthesis will be wasted." The old lady argued.

"It is a gamble to see if she is willing to live a little longer, for the debt. On the other hand, I have the feeling that the boy brings her here will give her hopes."

"What lead to this conclusion?"

"He said he was a Shepherd. True or not, he has the confidence to be a Shepherd, then he can give the girl hope."

"It is still a short time to make the conclusion, let observe longer. It is still possible for her to refuse your offer though."

"True, at least I get your agreement."

"You know…. Your offer is too big that you even considered for her mental treatment."

"As a doctor, I don't accept my patient to die in front of me or have no will to live after my treatment. Besides, it is the boy's job in this."

"Right….. You also want to say we have pretty much resources and time for this."

"Exactly."

"Fine, I will watch over the two for you."

"Thank you, for everything."

"You are welcome."

Velvet POV

The doctor said both Sorey and I were recovering at a good rate, he asked if I will install the mechanic prosthesis. I am surprised that the world has been advanced to develop such things and I stop a while to think about it.

His words reminded me that I lost my arm that once hanging on the edge of Innominat's pit and get sliced by Artorius, the arm then devour numerous of souls to achieve my selfish goal after I gain a daemon arm. I can't save my little brother but I avenged him for myself. I saved nothing but kept destroying in the end.

Now, I realized that I am still alive, in a strange age, no one in this age I know. Everything has become so unfamiliar to me.

What should I do? There isn't really a goal for me to live now.

Laphi, the meaning of my life had gone a long time ago. I lived to take care of and protect him, for that, I am willing to do anything. However, he is not here and Innominat is likely disappeared, my
family is all dead, my being is meaningless now.

……Ah, seem that I have no feeling to all the people not alive now, so I am the same. To be cold even to family, ever a monster, the monster won’t care things apart from the kill.

I should not deserve to live, for the peace of those murdered souls. Even there may not be someone to recognize me and remember my sin, I can’t live. I am different from these people, I am a monster.

Still, I feel sorry to have no payback to both of the people who saved me. It is rude to not treat my life a thing when I am saved. I will at least not make them sad to see me die before I go die. I wish to be more human before I become a monster again.

Maybe taking the offer will be good for me to payback, but thinking again. If I take the offer, it will mean I actually want to live, isn’t it?

Oh, just how selfish am I? After taking so many lives, still, want to live. Besides, I may still work without an arm.

“…..We are completely fine with it, just take it.” The doctor urged as I considered for the decision quite a while.

Maybe it is not a bad thing to live a little longer and pay back my debt to them. To go die along after returning all the favor will also be an option, so taking the offer is not too bad.

“Yes, I will have the installation, thanks.” I accepted the offer.

“No need to thank me, you guys will need to pay back with works, the boy told me that you both have no money and will work as payback.”

“…..OK, I am fine with that.”

I start to wonder if I am still a therion now, I lose my demonic arm doesn't mean I am a human now. Especially when I notice I am recovering in 3 to 4 days, it is pretty fast in human standard, but it is hard to say I still remember the human standard now. The 3 years of my therion’s life is a long time for me.

The doctor sends no solid food to me as he said it is still not suitable for me to take, instead, the intake is done by the nutrient liquid connecting to my right arm. To me, it is a transparent liquid like water but seems that I still pretty energetic for a person who has not taken any food, I guess it is true that the liquid provides me the energy.

I stop think after I see another issue, the boy is awake now.

He has emerald eyes, like the redhead in my team. His eyes are smiling, just like the gentle atmosphere I saw from the old Arthur. He is reading a book on his bed, the way he reads reminds me of my brother, who loved to know the knowledge all over the world. The atmosphere around him made me not hostile to him.

There are many questions I wanted to ask him, but for now, let just wait and watch him for a while.

Sorey POV
I realize that my body recovers at a good rate, they start offering me some solid food and I feel not too tired now. In these four days, most of the time I see Velvet sleeping, she is recovering slower than me, maybe it is because she slumbered much longer than me. Thanks to Maotelus's blessing, she recovered much quicker than I imagined.

The doctor said he can install a mechanic prosthesis for her, I am curious about the technologies in this Age, so I ask the doctor for the information.

“We connect the nerve ending with the micro electric cable in the mechanic prosthesis, the order may transfer to the arm by electrical impulse..”
“Okay, but what is nerve ending and electrical impulse?”
“I am sorry I don’t have much time. You may find the answer in the book.” The doctor gives me a large book which contains illustrations of the human body, then he goes talk to Velvet, who just awake.

She has golden iris, unlike the burning iris that Maotelus said, I see mist and decadent in her pupil. She is different from the one I learned from Maotelus, perhaps it is because she was acting for her anger in that time but the anger is not here now. I expected her to be more malicious as a Lord of Calamity like Heldalf but they surely are not the same person at all. No longer being an Avenger, I see a person who is confused, that is all.

Better not let her discovered that I am looking at her, I start reading the book, it is interesting to see how it works within our body, but then I feel a glare from someone, I try to look back and greet nicely.

“Hello?” I felt sweat dropped from the forehead, I don’t know what is she want from me if she stays silent and looks at me.
“...You may continue read it....but yeah. Hello, Who are you?” She is definitely keeping me on the mind, she stayed for a while and found that she was found to be looking at me before responding.
“i am Sorey.” I try not to reveal much information and try to be a natural stranger to prevent any unnecessary doubt as Mikleo always remind me.

“Why did you saved me? What do you want?” Velvet jumped into the topic quickly.
“Just because I can't leave someone in need alone.” I don’t use to lie, so I answer truthfully, I can’t leave a girl bleeding non-stop.
“......Anyway, thanks, and you are the one who promises the doctor that we will work here for the payback?” She seems to have something to say as she frowned but she changes another topic instead of stating her opinion.
“......Yes, sorry I----” I apologize to lower her temper, I am afraid that I get her mad by this.
“Fine, thing get much easier, I suppose, but try to tell me first next time.” I relaxed, she is not angry. I didn't tell her I was a Shepherd, I didn't tell her I knew her past, so as to avoid irritating her. I don’t want to make our relationship worst in the beginning.
“That's great, may I ask what's your name?” So I pretended that I don't know her name.
“Velvet Crowe.”
That is our first conversation, that's how our road starts crossing each other.

Velvet POV
After several days of rest and some exercises, I see the muscles back in shape and having the basic energy to move and support my move.

“Congratulation, your body meets the basic standard for the installation of the prosthesis now.” The doctor glad to begin the installation.
“Great, let's do it.”
“Yet, I must warn you that, it will be really painful during the process, will you still proceed?”
“Yes.” I agreed without a second thought. It will be hurt, I know, that is the price for the sin of life. Thus the operation began.

It is said that the mechanic prosthesis needs to be connected to the nerve ending. The transmission of the nerve impulse is required, so the pain-killer can't be applied in this case, I shall accept the pain.

A metal armor is attached to my left shoulder attachment, then an electric signal receiver attached on my treated wound. It has an icy cold surface to freeze me a second. It is not connected with a circuit, so I have not felt the pain yet but felt nervous. I stared at the electronic cable exposed from the connector, to imagine the electricity flow from it to my body and pass throughout my body by
whatever system, it is getting scary. None of the technology I really realize in this age.

Finally, the main part of the prosthesis, the metal arm, start connecting the cable end of the receiver. It is the time I endure the pain.

The installation time is much longer than the actual one. At first, I was watching her in the dress, but with the arrival of pain, my eyes even lost focus, I couldn’t see the further details of the installation. I closed my eyes and didn’t look at it.

“-----------” I thought the pain is benumbed to me since I have got infinite injuries over those battles, unknown to death nor life, just to go through the path.
“Ar-----------” But it is not, it never is, as long as I have the sensation.
“-------Ar...gh.--” I felt like millions of needle pass through my veins and entered my body. It is painful that it makes me start struggling. The old doctor order the old lady to fix my position on the bed.
“Ur.......Arrrgh------” I was screaming but I can't really hear anything since my brain is blanked out for the pain. I thought I have never experienced such physical and continuous pain that even greater then the time my heart got pierced through by Artorius. Maybe the brain thinks that I am dying, some memory is coming back on my mind.

The day Laphi died, I was unable to do a thing to stop it happen, and I made it even worse that I killed all the villagers in the Aball because they got into my way. When in the journey, I realized that all the facts were hidden from me, so I can't do a thing at that time, I felt betrayal from my beloved family. I felt anger and despair from my heart, and realized the reason for anger finally, my family abandoned me, and I am unable to change their mind. Until the day I got my revenge done, the moment I pierced Artorius's heart with his sword. My anger was ended but there is still an unfilled empty part in my heart. Artorius just said that he hoped Laphi and I died instead of Celica from the day Celica gone, with a peaceful smile. I respond with an agreement, with a sad smile. If I knew that things going in this way, I would go to die instead, so that everyone may continue their happy life, and Arthur won't despair and became Artorius, a Shepherd who lost his belief in humanity.

Life is painful, since the bloody-red-moon night. Every time the crimson moon rises, unfortunate falls, it took away everything from me, my sister, my little brother, and even Arthur, he was gone forever from the first Scarlet night. Those my precious days are gone forever, there is the only vengeance left in me.

But even for my vengeance, it is gone from the day I achieved my revenge, there should be nothing left, so why am I still feeling pain? There is nothing for me to lose.

Why am I want to seek a way to live after took away so many lives?

Is this life a gift or a price? Should I really live?

But even for me, I thought death is too cheap to pay for my sin. How can a single death compensate for the uncounted life taken?

I am confusing, I don't want to live, I don't deserve to live and I don't deserve to die either.

I am lost, what I should do, it is no longer like that. At that time, I never thought that I could have a future. I only knew that after I finished doing it, I would not be able to survive. I had done things to keep at least a relatively not too bad future to my friends who will still live in that age, I had beared all the blame and sin. It was the only thing I could do to make up things after so many destructions I caused and before I die. At least my death would gift hope to the world, at least people may still have their free will in the future without me.

I felt vague, so I could do whatever I could, do whatever it takes, and never imagined the future of mine. I thought it is best for me to be trapped in the everlasting dream with Innominat. Some said it is worse than death, indeed, trapped in a beautiful jail without an end, but I thought that the appropriate end for a Lord of Calamity like me.
Even in the dream of Innominat, there is no future after the age of 19, because I know too little about things, I have not experienced things after adulthood, I don’t know marriage, I don’t know love, there are too many things I don’t know, so I can’t imagine it, let alone the one who has no feelings. We stuck in the imagination of various of future that without future.

“Velvet.” I barely opened an eye, I found Sorey is here holding my right hand. He said something more and call my name with gazing at me unswervingly. I felt like he is looking at me this way and saying something cheerful, unfortunately, the stimuli from the installation blurred all my sensation from sight and ear. I cannot catch a sentence from him but my name.

Maybe he is trying to tell me that I am not alone. Mine confuse disappeared. Although I don’t really get the answer, I know there is someone want me to live. Innominat has said the same thing to me: to live.

Before I noticed, I unconsciously hold his hand tightly back.

Phi’s image is floated out of my mind when I see his eyes. Pure, crystal clear and kind emerald green eyes. He did the same when I fell in despair, knowing none of my things but just want me to live. I wonder if Phi is still living now, he said he didn’t want to live in the world without me but I left him and everyone out there in the end.

There is nothing for me to live, but I want to see Laphicet, the one who saves me from despair. Surely he is still waiting.

At least, I should go check on him when I am free and alive now.

Wait for me, Phi.

Chapter End Notes

Full of De Ja Vu of the automail in Fullmetal Alchemist, haha, but this really the first thing to comes to mind when you see a character lost his lime, you will want him to install an automail. I tried to explain and hope it is logical enough.
Chapter Summary

It is like the summary of how Velvet and Sorey lived in the village before they leave.......Just noticed that a high-rise building should not be in a village.....hmm.....nevermind~
“Talking about once you told me that the boy claimed to be a Shepherd in the past, is it true? He seems so innocent. Would he be the one remembered in the tale who purify our lord Maotelus?” The old lady asked after some days of observation.

“God knows. He said he has no money to pay and ask if we may let them help as a return.”

“...Hard to think about what will be suitable for them, we barely know about them.” The lady warned.

“Right, we should also provide them a residence.”

“You wouldn’t want to take them in, would you?”

“True, you know me too well.”

“...I suppose that also a suitable way to keep them under our watch.” The lady sighed for his kindness.

“Also, this..... and I think you are right, I feel sorry to the girl.”

“You said they are not the same.” She got that the doctor is talking about the girl in the lost tower.

“Indeed, that’s why I won’t let myself to make the same mistake. I won’t leave my patient alone again.”

Velvet POV

Almost a week pass by the day I installed the mechanic prosthesis. I try hard on the rehabilitation to gain the normal mobility of human.

The view here really different from my time, the building here built by a stone like hard material, but it is not stone and it looks more smooth than a stone. The ornament of the building cannot be found, it is not like there is any status or carving on the edge of the building, but a smooth slab. The buildings nowadays are at least 20 times higher than that in my time. I realized that I woke up in an Age far far away from my time. The only thing I glad to see is that people live harmoniously with their free will, just like the view I saw in Aball. Guess that is the reason I find peace in this place, no more killing and struggling.

Being ignorant in this age and place, there isn’t any complex work I may help with, but to start with some physical works. Even for physical works, text-reading is required, the word-form has changed a certain degree with time, so it is better to rely on someone to help on this. Luckily, the villagers are keen on helping me.

“Velvet, won’t you need to take a rest?” my colleague asked.

“No thanks, I am fine,” I answered as usual, despite the fact I am a bit tired. I would like to get used to the prosthesis and get back my past strength.
“...just don’t overwork yourself.” my colleague sighed as he knew it is hard to change my mind.

Sorey started working here earlier than me, but he isn't that reliable, he still lacks work experience, maybe it is because this is his first time to work. However, from the observation these days, he is just as ignorant as me that he has less common sense for the things nowadays.

In fact, since the day I met Sorey, I have thought that Sorey is a weird guy, for him to be a maniac about ruins and knowledge which the things I am not interested in.

Sure, Sorey is indeed a good person, as his appearance and character were perfect. But ... as the first impression, he was like hiding something big. In the evidence, he speaks nothing of himself and he explained it his loss of memory. However, I had already noticed that he was not really amnesia, he is not really good at lying, but I have no problem with him keeping in that way. I am not interested, and I have no plan to link with someone before I go see Phi and then go die again. My general impression to him is that he has the eyes that know the pain and beauty in the world. Everything indicating he is a nice person, but to talk something weird to me, excluding the fake amnesia, it was the earring. It is very rare to see a boy wear feather earring every day.

“Hey, I wonder how did you get the earring, it is a bit weird to me.”

“I don’t think so, weird?” He looked back at my eyes with pure doubt.

“Yeah, it is unusual for a man to wear earrings, but it somehow looks great on you.”

“Hmm, I will take it as a compliment, thank you. Oh, would you like to have a try? I will lend you.”

“Hmm…is it ok? I don’t mind to have a try.” I received the earring from him and attach it on my ears.

“So...How’s that? Sorey.”

“You look good, cuter.”

“Oh?? Is…is it?!” ‘Cute’ is a word that I hardly received, no one said this in the past, so it is unexpected from Sorey for me.

“Yeah, they form a contrast with your beautiful black hair.” It is not like a fake compliment, I can see the sincerity in his eyes.

“ It doesn't matter what hair is although some people told me that since I am a woman, I should aware of my hair more.’ Some people ... in the past.”

“ I think they are right, if you take more care of them, you will be more beautiful.”

“........Anyway, I will return it to you. In order not to lose important things, you must take good care of it.” The earrings seem important to Sorey, so I returned it and stop the topic by the way.

“Right, thanks! It is, in fact, the first thing I found in the ruin with my friend Mikleo.” Related to ruins again, why is that not surprising to me.

“.........Keep the ruin story, or we won’t have the dinner.” I will stop him with the catering things, a useful reason to stop his very long story telling.
“Oh, ok, just leave it next time.”

“Yeah, maybe next time.” No, I don’t want it thanks.

I doubt his identity, he is not the villager here. From the collected information, he stated himself as a normal traveler with his sword for self-defense, but my colleague told me that sword is rarely used by people nowadays, not to mention to carry it around. It feels like he is similar to me that he is not the people of this age.

For me, I have some work experience in Tabatha’s bar at least so I may adopt in the work environment faster. He is the one who saves me and supports me when I had a dying thought, so I will at least try to help him as I can. (Though I don’t really want to live.)

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Sorey POV

The doctor offers two separate rooms at his home for us to live, he said they were the rooms of their kids but their kids didn't live with them now.

They don't mind to offer to lodge to us, as the rooms are empty now.

I can't thank them more for receiving so much kindness from them, and I don't know how to payback in return, and I get another thought when I am thinking the way to pay back, I recall a person I can't payback anymore.

“We don't really expect a payback, so don't worry.” The old lady put a hand on my shoulder to comfort me, I guess I show my sadness to her when I have a sudden thought.

“Thank you very much.” This is the only thing I can say.

I amazed by the view I first noticed when I came out of the clinic. I was too busy to notice the view when I came to this village, and now I thought how did I miss such an astonishing view at that time. This is a type of architecture I never expect.

Buildings with 20 or more storeys stand on the ground without a large base. Even the tallest building in my time can't be built the tall height without the aid of a large base or a very sharp top.

The pointed arch is used in my time to build the tall church with a narrow tower at the top and gain natural light via the rose window, however, I see no such impression in nowadays buildings, the present buildings are built with a flat rooftop with a form of a vertical straight beam. It is simple but still astonished me.

I asked my colleague, they said that the buildings are not some important building but the apartment for people. They said there are houses with several storeys only in the outermost side of the village for some rich people residence and the large living area is designed in there.

This makes me curious about modern society and how will an important building look like? Since in my time, the palace and the church are the tall buildings, as the height was designed to represent power, not like what I got from my colleague.

Apart from the architecture, there is some interesting concept in the economic aspect too, such as a credit card. The design of coin also change a lot, some engraved with some flowers pattern, some engraved with an icon of someone, same happens on the design of the banknote. I wonder who is the person printed on the bank currency, is she a heroine?

Though I am excited about the new life, it is not easy to adapt to a new way of life. Thankfully, the villagers are passionate to offer aid and Velvet tries to help me get on track too.
She always notices some detail and reminds me of that, sometimes she helps me indirectly. If I have a sister, I believe she will act like Velvet too.

I heard that Velvet is a caring person with her own softness. I guess I get what Maotelus meant now.

Days went fast, two months have passed, but Velvet doesn't talk much to me apart from work reminding, so I still feel a certain distance from her and she seems to keep distance to all people around her too, it is not like she wants to live in here for a long time. Although it is obvious that the mechanic prosthesis is very expensive, the doctor said we may leave as our will now.

By this time, it is not like I would have fulfilled my duty as a Shepherd, but still, I would like to explore the world and visit my friends.

Let’s suppose they are all alive except my human friends, maybe I may meet Velvet’s companions too. I would like to start a journey, but I am not going to go alone, it is depressive if there is not a friend who share the fun with me.

To think about the days I exploring the ruins with Mikleo, discussing the history and functions of the ancient buildings, that may be few of the reasons I love exploring ruins. I don't know whether Velvet likes ruins and whether she is willing to go with me, but I will ask.

I knock on Velvet's room door.

"Who is it?"

"It is me, Sorey, I would like to ask you something."

"What is it?" Velvet opened the door.

"Umm......Would you like to start a journey with me after our work is done?" I tried to ask nicely since this is the first time for me to invite the girl who is not close to me at all to travel together.

"......"She held her chin and looked down the ground in another direction than me like she is considering the offer.

"Yes, sure." Velvet thought about something and finally agree to my invitation. It is surprisingly smooth and now we will travel together.

Velvet pov

Sorey has asked me to travel with him together one day, there must be something to trigger him to give the offer when we still have the debt to clear.

Considering only the offer, I am not fully willing to travel as I don’t really want to live but that is a good chance to see Laphicet, not a bad thing to have a companion on a journey when there is so much uncertainty in the world.

The doctor asked us for a meeting to talk about things one day.

"You two may leave now, it is enough for repayment." The doctor stated.

"...But.." It is clearly not enough for the high-rank equipment like the metallic prosthesis.
“You guys gave the precious time to us as a companion to elderlies like us.” He stated longingly, I may guess their children left them for a long time.

“........”

“What would you two like to do then?” The old lady who took care of us since our arrival asked.

“We would like to travel together,” Sorey announced happily.

“To where? And are you guys just go without a traveling passport and Identity card?” The old lady worried about us. If my mum still lived, she would be like her, worrying about everything.

I should say she has a right concern, even in my last journey, I was using a fake passport to pass through the city gate and it was definitely the worst to try passing the gate without a passport, thanks to the Empyrean that maybe I will not be forced to act like a dove.

“Umm......” I see Sorey hasn't thought about it, I wonder if he lives in this age as he seems as ignorant as me as I observed.

“I should know that, take them with you.” The old lady gave us a card and a booklet, which may be the passport.

“Thanks! How did you….?” I gazed at Sorey and wondered will the lady honestly answer the question. From my point of view, the old lady made the fake passport and identity card for us, she is doing us a favor, we better accept it silently.

“Not a big due, just made it from the first day we asked you guys to take a photo with some help from others.” The old lady answered normally. They made it in quite a normal way and not as the dark way I thought, maybe I am just thinking too much. However, I doubt that the documents could be made with just a photo taking but no signature required. Anyway, I will not ask for more.

“Thank you, for everything.” We thanks the doctor and the old lady sincerely when we leave the village.

The old lady reminds me of Tabatha, the boss of the Bloodwing Butterflies. She may be a nice person to some extent, I gain great aid from her too in my last journey, they always fulfill requests quickly with their network.

I shall say the Bloodwing Butterfly is a successful dark guild, I wonder if they are still operating nowadays, but I can sure that this old lady is related to the underground society.

As we go outside the village, Sorey is finding his bag for the map and compass that need in the journey. I see a cape with a similar pattern as I have seen on Artorius's cape and also his glove..... Is he a shepherd too?

Chapter End Notes

I am afraid I write it in a boring manner to describe the background of the world and I describe with reference to my hometown so you may find it strange to see the setting of 20 storeys high apartment. Most of the residents are living in single-storey houses in foreign countries but then I can't state there is a great difference in time with that. And I
draw a random tower for the illustration with our modern buildings. Quite some days for living together 2 months, I knew that it may be impossible for Sorey to hide something that long, but as long as Velvet doesn’t ask, the friendly-strangers relationship maintained…..so I skipped it –……and maybe compensate some memories of days in the future chapters. (Let’s say I am running out of the idea of how the life should be like….and If I write all the short memories out, this will result in extremely slow progress for the story.)
Sorey pov
"Grumble"
It was a rainy days with thunders, and it is not a peaceful night for me.
In such a disturbing and noisy night, I always cover my ears with my head until I can fall asleep. I
don’t want to hear the thunder not only because I am afraid of itself, but there is also more than itself
to be afraid. I want to have the quick sleep to avoid thinking about it, but I was wrong. As long as I
have the thought, it follows me to the dream to reflect----My guilty.

“Grumble”
Gramps is standing in front of me, saying nothing.
I can't see his eyes as always, they are hidden by his eyebrows. It is nothing different from him, not showing anger or sad, just stand indifferently.
I really feel sorry to Gramps, for killing him, after all, he raised me.
“I am sorry...Gramps” I apologized powerlessly to him.
“Grumble!” He cast the lightning artes to strike it on me.
“eh....um.....I am sorry, really!”
He didn't answer, only cast more lightning and chasing after me, like the ghost.
“Please!! forgive me!! Gramps!”
“Gramps” shows no difference at all but chases like an avenger. I realize for his anger, he raised me up but I kill him, I am such a bad child.
“Sorry.....sorry...sorry, I have no choice, please, forgive me” I still think there is no other possible choice for the better situation in that time, and it is not like that was a satisfying decision for me.
“Er....er.....sorry...sorry” The scene of apologies and lightning chase repeated infinitely.
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Velvet pov
At the rainy midnight, murmuring sound from the next door woke a light sleeper such as me. This is abnormal, so I go check for its sources.

I found the source is from Sorey's room, and the door isn't locked.

I slowly open the door of the room next to me which is Sorey's room, while making sure that the smallest creak sound I would make.
“er.....so...sorry...sorry, Gramps....” words leaked out from his half-opened month in crying like murmuring.
I see Sorey is sleeping with the posture of hugging his head and curling up his body, the fetal position. Laphicet had slept like this when he felt uneasy too, that days, Laphi stated his fear of death. I promised not to let it happens when I didn't want it and I rather believe a better future.
That time, I embraced him tightly to calm him, just like this situation.

By the time I back to myself, I already embraced Sorey tightly. Maybe it is because he made me thinking of my little brother, full of curiosity to the world, and love books. However, Sorey has lofty eyes sometimes, like looking to the world itself rather just watching where he is. He has eyes with purity and unwavering will, just like the Shepherd vision, I will not be surprised if he is a Shepherd. He is certainly a different type of person to me, he would hate me if he knows who I am and what I did, it is inconvenient, for now.
Although he is clumsy sometimes, he will try to fix it, never afraid of difficulty. I wonder what things worrying him to make him murmuring. I somehow want to fix this, it is not a good idea to wake others. However, I have no clue of what to do when someone similar to my age comes to cry, so I try the same technique that used to comfort my little brother.

“Grumble” A lightning strikes with a thunder.

“u...ahhhhhhh.....” He cried painfully like receiving a serious attack and he was shaking.
I wonder if he is afraid of the thunder.

“Sorey!” I can't help but hug more tightly while calling his names to change his attention to the nightmare, but he is not waking.

“GRUMBLE!!”Then another lightning strikes with a larger thunder.
“Gramps!Gramps! I...I...don't want to do that.....I... really...such thing...I...Sorry!!” Sorey continued apologizing to someone while shaking his body more greatly.

It is not only related to the thunder, but it reminded him of someone he felt guilty with.
“It is ok, you will be fine! Calm down, Sorey!” I held him more tightly. Repeating those words, I tried and managed to calm him, his breath becomes more stable finally.

“Great” I relieved, the duration was short but felt long, I almost think he is not going to wake. It was not really my business, but I just feel uncomfortable to leave him alone.

“...Velvet?” He woke with tears. 
The night returned peacefully and unwittingly, things are turning good.

Sorey pov

I woke and regained consciousness, no more Gramps and Grumble, but a vigorous heartbeat. 
Next thing I know, I'm embraced by Velvet. 
It is a thing I unexpected from her. 
“...Vel..vet?”
“...Finally awake, huh?” She released me while asked.
“...Yeah.” fully came out of my trance, I noticed that my eyes filled with tears. I wiped out my tears and sit up in bed.
“What happened?” She asked concernedly. 
“I...have a nightmare, dreaming about the one who raise me.” I answered truly.
“Did he do something?” She asked it in a statement tone, surely it is that obvious to see. 
“He summoned thunders while chasing me......” I answered without notice of the unnatural ability to normal human I stated.

“......Did you do something?”
“......I......killed him by my hand long ago.” I hesitated to answer, whether I should tell her about this, given that we both barely know each other.

Stills, I explained the story without mentioning Shepherd and Lord of Calamity. I think she may be a good listener, what’s more, I just want to talk this out. I explained how he was important to me and how I didn't want to kill him. The situation just didn't allow me to refuse, Gramps could not be saved from Heldalf. Before Gramps's disappearance, he had shown his gratitude to Mikleo and me, said, we both good children and he was glad to see our growth.
It is no way I can accept it like this, but I had no choice but to accept it in that time.

“........To praise the kid who kill himself, that's cruel.” Velvet coldly commented. 
“No, it is not, Gramps never...” I tried to defend Gramps. 
“Yes, I know, since he is the one who raised you. He must love you. Then, the final words must be his sincere words, to praise, to acknowledge, to comfort his child. However, your sadness is not wrong too.” Velvet stopped me and say unexpected words.

“...Not wrong?”
“Yeah.....to lose a family, an important person, it must be a great sadness. I had been sad too when my sister died. It is a normal thing for a human to have emotion for a moment that they lose the important person.”
“......” The last thing I expect is that she would sympathize with me and mention her unpleasant past. 
“And the world is not so tender to let you make the right or satisfying choice. Don't know the exact time, but you will have to remember the things and forget the sorrow. Your gramps would not want to see you sucked in the sadness.” The words just make her more like a sister. 
“Velvet....Thank you, it is great to know you.”
“Sorey....I suppose to say that to you. After all, you saved me.”
“That's is not a big due and I am truly glad to meet you.”
“Whatever...I just say something I want to say.”

“Why are you in my room?”
“Ask at this moment? Well, I am woken from some noisy murmuring.” She teased.
“Sorry....”
“No, you don't have to apologize, I am a light sleeper, I had nightmare too.”

“What kind of nightmare?”

“.......Can't remember it. It is not a big due.”
“...if you say so.” If she really forgets, she will not know herself had the nightmare. Guess that she is not ready to tell them to me. After all we still nearly strangers.
Then Velvet back in her room and closed her door.
Surely this a shocking incident to me. She shew empathy to me and didn’t comment on my killing. I am surprised she has a soft side and she cares about the surrounding. She never shows herself much in daily life, she keeps being indifferent and less interactive to others. This is the first time, I feel to come closer with Velvet, got to know her other side apart from the Lord of Calamity. Maybe it is not too hard to be friend with her and maybe I will talk more to her after tonight.

Since that night, I tried to talk more about myself to Velvet, the things about my journey, my hometown, with the least related to Seraphim and Shepherd stuffs.

Chapter End Notes

It is a short story came up after reading some story….I wanted to insert it as a memory but hard to fit it in so I will release it as a short story. The reason for Velvet to do such an act is because she linked Sorey to her family and unconsciously performed it. Just like how she rescued Phi by catching his hand when she thought of her little brother.......
Thinking about the days living in the Tewks village, it is peaceful and unbelievably fast, time flew away. Learning words with Velvet may be one of the interesting parts in those days.

* "You seems happy." Velvet looked at me and stated.

"We will learn new words today, why not?" I asked.

"I don’t find this being interesting, but it is just necessary to daily life."
"Oh, and I want to enjoy it. Many words must be created after all those years….."
“.........You sound like you cut the contract with words for years?” Velvet doubted my words, she always catches my word mistake in detail and I have to think of a reason for it.

“Well……..kind of……..I moved to a far location from here for years but I come back recently.”

“.....Hum……..You and I have a similar condition then, but you always learn faster than me.”

“Thanks, I guess my ruin-exploring enthusiasm help me.”

“How is that related to ruins again?” Velvet shows her annoyed face.

“You see, ancient tongue present in the ruins to record things and I learned to read them myself, so that also help me in mastering a new language.”

“I see, so may you help me in the learning?”

“Yes, of course!”

At last, we both managed to learn most of the necessary words in daily before we started our journey.

After leaving the village Tewks, Velvet winded her left arm with bandages to hide the metal outlook of it, she said she is more used to have her arm with bandages.

I am excited about the journey and with the accompany of Velvet. Her quiche definitely delicious and I guess it would be great if I could have Mikleo's ice-cream as the after dessert. I hope I may have their dishes again on the following journey.

She is far from the realization to the lord of calamity I learned from Lailah, haven't thought that an ex-lord of calamity could be that good at cooking, it was taught by her sister as I heard. I bet there are many types of people in the world, and she is not a lord of calamity to me, at least not an enemy.

While I am in an exciting mood, it is rather peaceful for Velvet, it is like that she has no plan for the future and she is awfully silent after we left the village. Well, she is certainly a silent type of person to me.

“ Are you a Shepherd?” after a while of silence, Velvet's question shocked me, I remember I didn't reveal anything related to Shepherd.

“Why would you doubt that?” I asked.

“....The pattern on the cape inside your bag, it is similar to the things of a Shepherd.” I gave a wry smiled as I heard, I got the same question from the old doctor and because of the same reason. Guess she saw it when I was searching for the map, my bag is messy to find the map and compress out, so it takes time for me to get them. Now I shall admit the identity, somehow, I think she got it earlier just not ask it out.

I nodded my head and admit.

“......Yes, I was.” It is never good to tell lie in a relationship and I am never good at lying.

Velvet is in silence, she looks at a far point and thinking about my identity. She didn’t seem to mind that, from my understanding to her, she hates the person but not the position of Shepherd and her hatred calmed a long time ago after that day.

“ .....If I tell you that I am the Lord of Calamity, will you regret saving me?” Velvet suddenly said, just revealed her past identity directly. It supposed to be a sad question but she asked in a relatively flat tone like she expected me to regret.
I wonder if she still feels guilty for what she has done, even that she does not regret. I don't feel any dangerous atmosphere around her, so at least she does not intend to fight. I am sure she is someone willing to do something to fix her faults, which is why I don't see her different from any human.

"Why? No, of course!" Still, I am not sure why she asked me this question.

"Why? This should be the question I ask, you should kill me instead if you were a shepherd. I am the monster who murdered numerous people and brought chaos to the world!"

I see that she is thinking herself not deserving to live. I wondered what is in her mind in the two months lived in the village, her eyes are always full of loneliness and betrayal, although they become more lively after she got the new metal arm, dull and decadent are still the majority I can feel, it must be hard for her to fully trust in a person and she is not interested in continue living on, I feel sorry about that.

To me, no one should be called a monster and be killed, even for Heldalf, I killed him for saving him from his curse.

"No, if you did wrong things, then I will try to stop you, but not to kill you. And you are a human, a kind, protective person who care about your surrounding people. You deserve a second chance." I said genuinely for her personality I get to know in these 2 months. I can see the good properties she possessed that Maotelus has told me, sometimes she shows her kindness when she is not aware of it. I don’t know if she has an aim behind it, as it doesn’t matter to me. I want to change her mind about reviewing herself, she is far more than a monster.

"Those souls taken by me can't rest in peace if you take it like that. I even killed my friend, my sister-reincarnated marak for my selfish reason. I never cared about the surrounding." She said with an irritated tone, urging me to kill her and all I see in her eyes is sad, I believe she was forced or knew none of the truth before she did.

"No, you care. This is why you remember it till now and feel guilty. You are not the only one who killed people. I had killed someone too since there wasn't any other way to save him. I had killed my family too since I have no choice." I said with the memory of killing Heldalf, I had to kill Gramps in order to get him and Velvet has once tried to comfort me for it. I may end up killing more if Rose isn't there back then, which I don’t want to do it until the very end. I guess there is no one to support Velvet in the beginning, what turned her a Lord of Calamity. I would like to be the one who supports her now, hope it is not too late….I want to save her.

"Weird...Reason over emotion, the needs of the overall outweigh the needs of the individual” This is straight out in the Shepherd credo... ” She can't respond and she seems to misunderstand shepherd, but I know the reason as I have heard the story from Maotelus.

"I don't know other shepherd but I am doing it with my own will with the aids from the other. For me, I want to help each individual and end up with the many, because I want to help everyone and build a world that the Seraphim may live with human harmony.” I answered like the time I answered Lailah and also with the experience I gained in the journey.

“What kind of answer is that?!"
" Umm.... is it wrong? This is just what I want to do...”
" No, it is not...."

The conversation turns out silent again, I think Velvet is confused with what should be done now.

"Velvet, promise me that, no matter how hard to forgive yourself, how sad life was, move on and live on. It is the irreplaceable treasure of yourself.” I break the silence with what I want to say the
“Even if my life is meaningless?” I feel sad if she thought of herself such a way. To me, at the very least, she gave the world the meaning of possibility, she shaped the world I lived, the world without the doom of Innominat.

“...You have gained so many ones help to survive till now, please don't give up your life so easily. I think Life is meaningless until the very end, but you will give the meaning of life to the other when you continue living on, and you gain your meaning from others too in the end.”

“...Why are you trying to convince me to live...so hard? You barely know my past....and my sin.” She said with a cold tone, still denying to live.

“Because I get to know you since we met and I like you, I want you to live.” Yet I knew her past, I will say the same thing anyway for who she is to me as I have known.

“...Fine. I'm glad that I had a chance to meet a shepherd like you, Sorey.”

“And I am glad I got to meet you too, Velvet!” I looked at her and grinned.

She finally gave up on the topic, that is not bad at all.

“Where would you like to go first? Sorey.” Velvet asked with a calm voice.

“Not really, just plan to visit the nearest city. Do you have any idea?” There are so many places I want to go to. I have no idea where to start with.

“Same here, but I want to find someone.”

“Where is he? “I guess she wants to see Laphicet but I still ask the questions.

“I don't know, all I know is he is a malak, a seraph called Laphicet.

“I guess I know where he is, follow me.” I lead her the way back to the throne.

I have not appreciated the surrounding view while I was carrying Velvet to find a doctor. Now I find the view don't change much in the surround since the day I slumbered, this must be the works achieved by my friends.

We entered the ruin entry of Camlann which connected to the Artorius Throne. There is a giant geologic fault that creates a cliff pointing to the throne. I find someone's grave built there, one's name Rose, the leader of the Sparrowfeathers and the Scatted Bones.

'Grave here to pay respect to Rose, who devoted her whole life into Shepherd's work.' The sentence is engraved on the gravestone, it seems that Rose became the shepherd after me, I am sure that she must be a good Shepherd.

“What's the matter, Sorey?” the noise of stepping on straw showed me that Velvet approached me.

“Just found my friend's grave.”

“...I'm sorry for that.” I heard the sadness in her voice, I hope this didn't remind her of bad things.

“It's okay, I know a long time pass since the day I have gone.” I know I've spoken strange words, but Velvet didn't ask me for that, she stays silent, I wonder if she starts doubting more about me. I am glad that I knew one of my friend like just now, and I want to find more of their trace, their proof of life.

“Let's go.”

So the ex-shepherd and the ex-lord of calamity go to see Maotelus now.

Chapter End Notes

I find it is hard to move on if I keep things hidden, or keeping Velvet with the deadly
negative mind.
(Although there still not really an aim to live for Velvet)

Also, I am interested in Sorey x Velvet in any relationship, but I am not good at writing romance, so it turns out like that...with a strong reference from the tales of rays plot. Let see what will it keep on with.
I must say the “I like you” from Sorey is not really meaning romance you see, he just expressed his like for his friends very straightforwardly. (although I want to write romance, no way for such fast progress in a relationship.)
And I am grateful to the players who post their recording for tales of rays/links/asteria plot.
Also grateful to New life, New chance, which inspired me so much!
BTW, there is some line referred from FGO too
Ch06 - Meeting Maotelus

Chapter Summary

Chapter Notes
Maotelus -- a name he once told people as the name of the Empyrean, the name that given to him Millennium ago. Now nearly on one know what is the name origin.

When he is just a number, just a boy, a female told him: “You are living.” She said, he possesses the interest to things, he possesses feeling to people, so he is living. She gave him a name--Laphicet, meaning the one who lives, which contribute the naming of his true name. Through now ‘Laphicet’ is more like the true name to him, cause now nearly no one knows about it, and there is barely someone would know the story before he became the Empyrean.

As Malak Laphicet, he traveled with the female and learned to live from her companion, learned how human lives with struggling in pain. The female before his eyes had withstood pain to continue her path and he was always by her side to support because he loved her. The female knew she won’t survive or end well, still, she told him to live.

“Please, no matter what happens to me, live and do the thing you want to do.”

Despite bringing lots of destruction to the world on their way, she prayed in the church in Meirchio, where only Eizen and he were with Velvet.

“Repent in the church, the Empyrean will forgive our sins. What am I saying here... will it be communicated to Innominat?...... Well, I only pray for one thing. Please----”

‘Please---- at least to let me redeem my sin with my life, to let human to have the possibility of future.’

As the reborn of the heart of Innominat, Laphicet accepted the pray.

At the very last moment of her revenge, she sealed Innominat with herself and he once wanted to die with her. He is not afraid of dying with her.

She prayed as her last selfish request: “Good. Then die. But only after eating. Living. Doing everything you want to in life.”

“Phi, you must have seen during our travel. Humans spend their lives in a constant struggle...That’s why they end up making so many mistakes. Even my poor brother...That’s why, I’m asking this of you...Please live. I was the cause of so much chaos and destruction...Help the world I ruined. Help people like me. Help the weak. This is... my last, selfish request.” The female, Velvet, prayed as her voice losing strength and she apologized for her selfishness.

She slept, with all the blame and sin beared.

He accepted all, her apology and pray, so he chose to become the substitution of the fifth Empyrean with his indomitable will.

Maotelus----as the new Empyrean to the world. He lived and bless the species on the earth, the weak but strong species--human. He wishes people to have another chance for them to right the wrong born of their fallible spirits, to give those great dreamers a moment of rest.

For Maotelus so loved the world, that he gave his life, that whosoever pray him should not doom but have the second chance. Various types of human he has seen, devotion, anger, sadness, disdain, all are the properties human possessed, and he will accept and forgive them. Then bless them to have the second chance, until a day human live with seraphim harmoniously.
He loves the world, he loves humans, and there is one he cannot forget, he will remember her forever, with the name she had given to him, with her last prayer to him and also the first prayer he accepted.

He gifts human the second chance with the risk of malevolence with his life, but he will still live as he wants. He holds his own wheel, but there is one thing he regrets, that he hasn’t told Velvet of his true name. He was too shy when he was just a Malak.

Now his Malak name gradually buried with time while his friends disappeared one by one after Velvet. He lives and waits, for her awake, the Shepherd to save the world, for one’s who purify him. No matter how many friends he has lost.

The first one to disappear like a meteor is the exorcist who gave him the name of Maotelus. Among all the people he knows, she came the most frequently. Human life is so short, even a short moment to him, it is a long time for human beings.

That is why she chose to do everything she can to help people, like what she was doing as an exorcist, to avoid more life buried by the disaster brought by their violent awakening method to the four great Empyrean. Her pink long hair was dyed with pale white by time, her well-trained body may keep her looks younger than her actual age, but still could not hide the traces of time on her face.

She said that she did not know how much time she could come to visit him, but she will continue her journey. He knows death is hardly a thing to stop her, her journey still continues.

She re-appeared in front of him, but then she disappeared again in the nameless history.

The second person that Maotelus can no longer wait for, he can still portray his face in his memory with the outline of his straight and unsmiling, the earth seraphim.

The earth seraphim will visit every once in a while to tell what he has seen and heard at sea. Human life is too short, and even though those who have known each other have gradually passed away, he always stays close to them.

He witnessed the death of the crew and witnessed the birth of a new life, and he became the legend of the old people passing on to the young crew from the past that the crew members missed after drinking.

The last time I saw the seraph who was blessed by the god of death, he smiled freely and said that if he survived, he would go with him to see his sister.

The third one that disappeared in his years was the war daemon who beared the malevolence and obsessiveness to survive...No, maybe also the first one.

He is always alone, perhaps this is the best trip for him, always a strayer who find the way to further forging his sword. Sometimes I called his name and he understood that I called his name hesitantly, guess there was seldom a person to call his name that he had forgotten it.

His smile that is the same as in the past, bright like sunshine despite being a daemon. The smile was brought up with his stories of the search of opponents, they can always make Maotelus send out a series of dragon’s laugh. The daemon would share stories with him with the powerful enemy he defeated, or how many humans are saved by the way. Those are the memories loved by Maotelus, which let him recall the memories of the past, to recall the days he traveled with the war daemon, the Lord of Calamity, the exorcist, the witch, and the earth seraphim.

He is always the same, survive for his sword, and die for his sword. He can’t change or stop him. Every time Maotelus raised his dragon's claws slightly and greeted the War daemon that he will continue his journey.

They both don’t know when it will be next time. If he is defeated, he may be dead, but he promised that he will visit him if he is still alive.

The last time he had seen him, he is not alone, but then he stopped appearing in front of him.
The last one left was the ‘human’ buried the of all the memories of Maotelus, and also the inheritor of history. She recorded the stories of all his friends.

The Mayvin led the child who would take her name. She was the only one who will talk about the Lord of Calamity the most frequently, because they are also waiting, waiting for the possibility of the person in the endless time to wake up.

“Your face shows that you want to let Velvet to see the world now.”
“Yeah, I try my best to change a better world to let her see after she awake.”
“Though I don’t know if I have enough galds to pay her if she awake.”

The wide brim of the witch masked her expression, and the curly long blond hair covered the majority of her face as always. The child she took with his face looked up at her with a small face, but he didn’t understand her. What is meant by the complex emotions that are implicitly lost?

“...You noticed that even if you purify the world, you can’t prevent your hellionization.”
“Right, but I will still continue my path, that the only thing I can do now, as the Empyrean.” He will continue his path, even if all of his friends are not here anymore.

“The kid in the past has grown up to say something like this, huh…..Right, believe the path you has chosen.” The witch encouraged him with a smile

“I will try to find a way to solve this, though I may not have too much time left.” She sadly added, the oath can’t lengthen her life that long.
“When the time arrives, you will have to record the history for me, kid.” She talked to the child standing next to her.

The child nodded with determination. Then they left.

The Age of Chaos started, Maotelus was hellionized. Fortunately, a Shepherd purified him, with the price of sleeping for 500 years to let his resonance shared with the people on the earth.

500 years passed, they awoke with the person who gave him the name of Laphicet. He is glad, the day he waits for finally come.

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Sorey pov

We manage to get our way to the Artorius's throne. This place is broken for far away than the last time I came here. I remembered this place was once the shrine of a forbidden Empyrean, which substituted by Maotelus.

After hearing the story from Maotelus, I can sure that the forbidden Empyrean was Innominat. Maotelus had gained his power after becoming one of the Empyrean and also gain his representative symbol from him. Instead of the carving of pure white sun in octagon, Maotelus is presented with half shadowed mark, presenting a balance between black and white, for the difference of forgiving the existence of Malevolence, embracing the sin of human, to show that the world isn't only black and white and both should be allowed to exist. There is darkness within the light, just like Artorius and light within darkness, just like Velvet.

The throne constructed by several sword-shape frames, connected by bridges. Last time I went there, there are many parts exposed to the exterior and cracks everywhere. Some octagon shape pattern is on the floor slabs which belong to the ancient god of Innominat. I wonder if the ruins kept perfectly the same after that long time.

Here we come to see Maotelus again, the friendly empyrean of kindness and charity.
“Here is the place of Maotelus.” I introduced the place to Velvet.

“...But I want to find Laphicet, not the fifth Empyrean. So, where is he?” Velvet asked since there is no one but the throne with grassland of peace. Velvet got the knowledge of Empyrean from the villagers, she is not keen on the faith that much but still she pays her respect to the religion.

“Here, Hello, Velvet, Sorey.” A silver flame burnt in the air and turned into a silver dragon.

“----” Velvet turned silent as she heard the familiar voice from the boy. The boy has become the dragon and Empyrean in front of her, I guess this is so unbelievable to her.

“Hello, Laphicet.” I simply greet back.

“-----Ph--” Velvet is shocked, looking up the dragon and opening her mouth with barely a word to come up with. There are so many words she wanted to say, she doesn’t know where to start with.

“Maotelus, my true name, meaning the one who lives. Sorry to tell you that late.” Finally, the Empyrean gets his long-awaited wish come true. The true name is like the confession to someone the seraph really trusted on, he didn’t hold the chance to say his true name to Velvet until now.

“Glad to hear that, seems Eleanor gave you a good name.” She smiled.

“...I have always believed you will awake one day.” Maotelus bow down to lean his head to Velvet, his eyes filled with fondness, tender and soft green eyes that you cannot believe it is the eyes of the dragon.

“Thank you, I am back.” Velvet held Maotelus's head with gratitude.

The wind blowing softly, with the natural scent surrounding the throne. The silver light of the dragon scale cast on the grass and made everything shining, everything is embraced in his shine. A woman softly holds and embrace the dragon and the wind blow her hair and clothes sightly. This is a beautiful scene to me that I can't say anything but keep watching.

I feel good to let them be gathered again, after all those years. They really trust each other, just like Mikleo and me, we don’t need a word to understand each other and we respect each other. I figured that he was upset with my decision to slumber with Maotelus and put him alone, but he didn’t disagree but support me. Once I find him, I would embrace him and talk about the things in the slumbering and after the wake, all the things just like happened in the yesterday.

“Phi, how come you turned into a dragon??” When Velvet asked, I remembered Maotelus told me once his marak form is just a little boy in the past.

“After your slumbering, I became the new fifth Empyrean as the four empyreans required, so I can breathe in the world with the silver flame and given the second chance to all human and daemon. The dragon form is my form of Empyrean as a result of the formed pact. Is that great?” Maotelus said like a child who wants to show off their achievements to their parent, he is smiling, it is kind of strange to a dragon smile.

“Yes, it looks great...you... grew up.” Velvet needed time to accept things that she can't react quickly.

“Yes, so stop calling me as Phi, I am 1510 years old now!” I can hear Maotelus cannot hide his glee to see Velvet.

“You are a child to me anyway, cause I am technically 1519 years old too when you come up with
“This” Velvet is trying to be like a sister and mock Maotelas.

“Puff, fine, I am still pretty young by seraphim standard. However, I experienced a longer life than you! You are still 19 to me.” Maotelas teased back with the age issue.

They talked as if it was yesterday, as if they were always together, like those precious moments, Maotelas told me, the time is never a gap for them.

“Well...how old is Sorey now?” Velvet gets embarrassed and change the focus on me, I laugh for her reaction.

“Me? I may be technically 517 years old.” I answer with a break of calculation, I think Mikleo may be able to count it faster than me but he is not here so I shall calculate myself.

“Oh...that's why you said you know a long time pass since you have gone...... wait, you slumbered too?” I can't believe she remembers such a line from me over all the time.

“Yes, I slumbered to purify Laphicet.” I see I am gonna reveal more to her as she is so smart to guess and I shall tell her everything on one day.

“...What's happened?” Velvet seems worried and emits a little Malevolence.

“That's a long story, Laphicet gets tainted by malevolence with the earth that time, so I slumbered with him to purify him and gift the resonance to people for the next Shepherd rise. Finally, you can see, we both awake, in the whole new age of humanity.” I tried to explain it shortly.

“Phi....may be I should not request you with such selfish wish...You don't have to do it like that.....” Velvet felt sorry about her request to Laphicet in the past and emit more malevolence, but I think that should not be her fault, she always blames herself too much.

“Did you remember the time I told you that I was not so keen on the name of Phi? But that's the name you gave me, so I love it at the same time. Like the time I said, I will always forgive you, but this time...It is not your fault. You don't have to feel sorry for that, I choose the path because I want to. I want to save you, and the people suffered or once made mistakes. I want to give them the wings to fly again and a moment of rest. I hold the wheel of my own life.” Maotelas knew so well about Velvet, he assured her that it is not her fault on this to comfort her and Velvet stopped emitting malevolence.

“......You really have grown up.” Velvet tried to retain her sigh towards the thing happened.

“As I told you, I am the older one.” Maotelas taunted.

“Fine, fine.....And Sorey, thank you, really.” Velvet genuinely thanks me, I feel a bit shy for that, this is the first time she thanks me in such a serious manner.

“You are welcome.” I managed to answer that with a calm voice.

“Anyway, How are you two going?” Maotelas asked.

“We are fine, just plan to travel together,” I answered.

“Good to hear that. I want you two to see the new world I pay effort to protect.” I am curious about what is in this whole new world too.

“Yeah, I will go and see it.” Velvet smiled and answered, I see she seems to let her negative thought
go away now. She walks away to calm herself with thoughts.

“And thank you so much, Sorey, for taking care of her,” Maotelus whispered, as Velvet has gone far enough. He must know that Velvet won't be happy to hear this sentence.

“ You are welcome, she took care of me too.” I chuckled, remembered all those days we spent in the village.

Maotelus used his arc to repair the throne in a more complete manner. I see Velvet is being thoughtful at this place and same to me too, since here is the end of both of our journey, and I believe it will be the start point of our new journey, in the blessing of Maotelus.

“Phi, can I ask you some question?” As I am memorizing my last battle, I heard the conversation between Velvet and Maotelus.

“Am I still a therion now?” I am surprised that Velvet inquired about this, she never reflects her thought in those days.

“No, you are a human now,” Maotelus assured Velvet.

“But I recovered so fast, barely have a taste on foods and most importantly, I can see you.” Velvet indicated some facts she minded, I guess she was once a human with low resonance.

“I bless you two when I saw you two are nearly awake from the slumber, this may make your recovery went fast but I am sorry with your taste, I think it may return gradually, as you are not a therion now. You may see me since you gain high enough resonance from staying with maraks like Eizen and me in our journey, and you stayed with Innominat for 1500 years, so you have pretty high resonance now.” I have never known that Velvet had a taste problem until now, I am glad to know it will recover gradually. And Velvet is just like my case, gain a super high resonance by living with seraphim for a long time.

“If you say so....And how is Innominat now?.” Velvet accepted Maotelus words.

“He became a part of me now. Oh, and yes, there is something I want to give you, here.” Maotelus gave a wooden chest to Velvet by invisible floating force.

“What is it?” Velvet asked.

“The letters to you.” This is another shocking line, it is really hard to believe there are letters kept since 1500 years ago and remain still fine even with the fight to Heldalf. Now they are finally delivered, I am a bit jealous as I got no letter, but I am also glad that Velvet can trace her friend life with those letters.

“And also a thing I would like to ask you for.”

“Yes?”

“Please, live, to see the world I changed with humanity.” Maotelus convinced Velvet to live, just like how she wanted him to live in the past.

“.......Right, I will.”

Chapter End Notes

A.N
Keeping revealing things, I choose Maotelus to be the first one they meet. I post-added lots of word about Maotelus in case you don’t about TOB story and try figuring out what he should be like now and this contributes an unstable word count (I can’t promise to have such word count in every chapter...) The concept of the letter is actually inspired by a story written in Pixiv by 羽虫/織原. I like his/her story very much. You may have a look at the story if you know Japanese.
The cover is inspired by ‘Tales from Earthsea.’
Velvet pov
I am given a box of letters, the box is surprisingly clean as if it was not from thousand years ago. Laphicet must have kept them well enough. I would like to read them, but then I am afraid to keep Sorey bored, I look at him.

“It's fine, I have my book to read and I may talk to Laphicet too.” He smiles and encourages me to read those letters, holding a book with leather cover and a golden icon which I saw once in the clinic too. His book is full of tags as if he has read it infinite times, still, this not reduce any interest from him. He must love this book so much, I guess I will ask about it the next time.

I open the lid of the wooden chest, a paper scent sent to my nose, yellow edges appeared in those sealed letter, but still in a whole, not damaged by any moisture or moth. The box is full of the letters
recording one's life, it must be hard to finish it in a day, but I will give it a start.

-----------------------------------------------

Eleanor POV

It is sunny today, despite all those horrible events and disaster human went through, they still live strong. Putting on all the items in place in the early morning, shout out their selling goods to attract customers, the people work normally and peacefully as if things never happened. It is glad to see this view, with all the effort Laphicet and the prince Percival has paid.

It will be more joyful if only I can share it with Velvet, but she isn't being here anymore. I want to tell her story to people, but it is unacceptable for them and they can't bear the truth either. It is quite a sarcasm that the one being feared the most is the heroine who saved the world from a mad shepherd who is memorized as a hero. The true savior can't even be given a proper name, but only being memorized as the Lord of Calamity.

Can't really blame the public, after all, Velvet’s action brought the broke of Abbey and the country, a unification war came up after the broke. Say, to bring the things in shape, we need wars. However, I believed Velvet did right, at last, to let people have their free will and fight but not live like a doll. The war is not Velvet’s fault but decided by people, but they will blame the responsibility on the Lord of Calamity.

All I can do is to keep it a secret from the public, what a shame as a friend, but Velvet may want it to be a secret too. She would say she doesn’t want to be a hero and all of that was done for revenge. She always thinks that blaming all the things on the Lord of Calamity would be fine, she even said that several times to me, but as an exorcist, I can’t do it that way. What’s more, I can’t let my friend bear all things alone. I admit, she became my friend later.

Last night of the sailing for the Empyrean’s throne at Port Zekson, she wanted to say something to me alone. We pretended to have a normal conversation, I pretended not to feel a strange atmosphere. We talked about how the world is nice, once her brother had seen the view of hope by looking at the horizon. Except for Laphicet, her voice has never been so soft to others, so gentle that I am surprised, I can know that she must have something important to tell me.

“Eleanor, I have a single favor to ask of you. If anything happens to me, take care of Laphicet.”

“What? Is something that matter?” I was glad that she relies on me finally, but the sentence surely sounds sad.

“The power possessed by the therions and Innominat is fundamentally the same. I have a theory…” Velvet stated while looking at her bandaged left hand. Under the covering, it was the theory claw she used to consume malevolence, now she was thinking of using it for another function.

“No. ‘Theory’ is too rational. A different part of me, something separated from my hatred, want me to do something.” She then denied herself to use the word ‘Theory’, for the rationality in it, she is a person acting by her emotion, but from my point of view now, she always has her rationality with her. This may be why she had the human form even turned into a daemon and now she is like a human to me, to embrace both rationality and emotion together.

“It wants me to leave this world with hope.” Her tone is like saying that it is no big deal, as if she expected her last departure, which made me feel a little scary.

“Wait, you don’t mean…?!”

"Humor me, OK? If the worst happens, I’m counting on you.”
“...I understand. You have my word. I’ll look after Laphicet.” I was glad that she trusts me, but I am not happy with this.

“While I’d love to take advantage of this momentary weakness, I can’t. My oath is to obey your orders until my dying breath.” I turned and walked farther to hide my emotion and then looking at her again to pretend I didn’t notice.

“I’d almost forgotten about all that.” She smiled softly.

“Good thing I kicked your butt after all.” She turned and continued to watch the sea.

She is still as dishonest as before, I wished that she say it is good to know me instead.

The moon of this night is also shining with the stars nearby. The moon shines on the waves of the sea, charming and can’t see the true appearance, just like someone who is standing in front of me. She always moves straight ahead, at all costs, and this looks very dazzling in my eyes. We used to be hostile in different camps, with the same age, the same teacher, but with the opposite standpoint. Initially, I joined her camp because of the special task of the spy, and she knew that I was a spy, and she chose to keep me in her team. Now that we are still traveling together, I am still unbelievable about this.

I laughed.

“What are you laughing?” She asked.

“I thought that I could finally become friends with you.”

“Just that?”

“It is an important thing to me!”

She responded with a short laugh that she was not interested in it.

The journey with her was not entirely happy. On the way, I had seen many different things. Many can't be defined simply by good and evil. It is not black or white. There are many daemons that cannot be called absolute evil, and justice is not completely good either. But they taught me to see everything in my own eyes, to understand, to think, to decide, not to blindly follow the reason for Abbey.

“Now you can see the same scenery next to you. It may be nothing for you, but I'm glad.” Velvet sometimes insensitive to the feelings of others, and I will directly express my feeling this time, as I have the strong feeling that it is the last moment for it.

“You are always stuck with something strange.”

“I do not want to be told by you.”

“...If we met as ordinary people, we would have been good friends.”

“What’s wrong? You are not like yourself today.”

“Nothing, just say my thought, there is no deep meaning.”

“Fuh. Is that so? I do not think so. But, no matter what form we meet, you and I will quarrel for things and finally get along. We are both too stubborn.”

“Yeah, maybe...I'll go back. I will feel troubled when Phi comes to search.”

“I stay here a little longer.”

“Don’t stay out too long. The sea breeze can get cold.”

“...Thank you.”
“...I will worry if you get sick, so be back soon.”

“I will return with you now, because an honest Velvet is rare.”
“Fine, fine.”

“....Eleanor, it is good to have you here.” She said with a voice so soft that almost disappearing.

I thought I would be glad if she said that, but it is not. I had no idea how much thought she put in the sincere words, but my heart was painful as I heard.

“It’s just getting started and it doesn’t start without you.” I can’t let the air filled with a silence that it looked like a goodbye and I looked for a substitute.

“Yeah, maybe.” She smiled.

She had known her time come a long time ago, it is her last words to say goodbye and she had gone while taking all the blame from the world.

At least no one remember her true name, except those who traveled together, at least we knew she saved the world and saved us so that her family and herself is not blamed. I can only comfort myself with that.

I see the kids running around the fountain, they live just as they did, never knew the truth behind the peace. I realize the reason to say innocence as bliss, but I don’t agree on it.

Then I think of Kamoana, who knew sort of the truth and continue to live, and as I become busier in recent, we can only contract through letters.....

---Wait....letters! Yeah, I may share things with Velvet with letters! Thus I prepared papers and a pen to write a letter.

--------------------------------------------------

Dear Velvet,

This is the first letter sending to you. I don't know whether you will wake up, but I believe there will be a day. I hope there is.

You really are a terrible person to leave all of us like this, it is hard to forget you. Yet, I am grateful to you too, for saving Laphicet, Kamoana and the other therions, thanks for finding the methods to save the sacrifices, thanks for giving hope to the world. Still, if I had known you planned to do it like that, I would have stopped you and tried to find another way.

And for now, I will do my best for you sacrifice.

The Abbey is in progress of destruction, the world is in chaos with that Despite being a betrayer, I try to contract those exorcists I knew and find whoever still having high resonance, so that I may rebuild Abbey with truly correct vision with correct way. Likewise, the country is breaking too, without the support of Abbey and the religion, the army took their region by force, a Unification war broke out to unify the kingdom again. I hate war, but I know it is the only way to bring peace now, so I am trying to support the people who badly affected by the war. To give them foods and resources while the army drained all the resources in war.

For Laphicet, he is being great, I take care of him as you ordered, but I do it not just for your order you know. Believe it or not, he became an Empyrean just after you have gone. He said he wants to protect those weak but also strong and beautiful human like us, this is also what I want to achieve, so I am working with him now. I will build up his reputation in human religion instead of Innominat to keep him in the best state so that he is able to help people.

Last but not least, I would like to talk about Kamoana, I know you would say you are not interested in it but I am gonna talk anyway.

After the battle, Laphicet's silver flame turn most daemon in the world a human again, same to Kamoana, Medissa and Dyle too. They built a family after that, I guess in our time of sailing, they
just built up the relationship. I thought we were great to bring the people from different place meeting
each other and becoming a family at last. They told me to say thanks to you, for saving their life but
they also mad that you don’t even give a chance to them to say thanks at last. They live strong, as
you and Laphicet saved them. It is because of your will and existence, please be proud of that.
Orthie and Russ are being strong now too, they accept their new family and protect them from
danger. They are not timid as in the past as you said. I have talked to them for your last, I think they
understand and feel sad for you too. They must have forgiven you already, thus, once you wake up,
don't blame yourself too much on it. As I said once, you should not bear all the things on your
shoulder.
I may continue to write you letters in the future.
Best wishes,
Eleanor Hume

As I finished the letter, wind push opened the unlocked window, I stood up and saw the view of
Loegres and a bird flying in the blue sky, so I pray that Velvet may fly freely like a bird one day in
the future.
I locked the letter up in a chest.

velvet pov
“----” I wordlessly put the letter in its original manner.
A feather fell down and I looked up the sky, I see a bird flew away. The wind blows to me and I
keep the letter locked from being blown away. I felt the wooden chest become heavier than before
but there is nothing other than letters.
I don't know about my feeling now, my heart beat fasting and my body starts tensed up and shaking
out. I just try to retain my emotion at the moment, but I feel a warm drop of water on my finger and
the warm flow of liquid slid down my cheek, I found my tears drop down unconsciously at last.
I noticed that is the first time I get a letter. Eizen usually sent letters to his little sister in our journey, in
one time we talked about the gossip about the writer and the receiver of the letter. I said, “At least he
got a person to write the letter.” I was admiring the things of writing letter although it is irrelevant to
my revenge. It is a beautiful but sad thing to me, to send the message in long distance, meaning both
the writer and receiver of the letter miss each other but they are separated.
I never admit that Eleanor is a friend to me, I thought I lost all the things on the Scarlet Night. I cared
for her because I had to protect the pure vessel for Laphicet. However, deep down, I used to care her
and see her as a friend, I had noticed that I forgot her pact of the slave to me until the night I ask her
to take care of Laphicet after I died. I have to admit that I miss her, I miss all my friend, even that it is
likely impossible to see all of them again. We are likely separated in different worlds, the worlds of
life and death.
I hold the wooden chest tightly and whispered “Thanks, Eleanor.”.

It is glad to hear Eleanor had lived with her will. I think I better not read all letters now but on my
way travel with Sorey. It may be much more experienced than just stay in a place. I can sure that she
had her new journey at her time too.
And now my new journey begins too.

Chapter End Notes

A.N
Originally quite a short chapter, but I try to rich the description in the story. I just want to list some setting after TOB ending without detail writing. Don’t know if I express the meaning good enough or not in the title, I want to express the meaning of “one’s mind thinking towards the other across a thousand years”.
The letters from Eleanor may not always come out as a chapter since it will be a disturbance in the plot. If I write the story of Eleanor, that will be long compressed side stories, but yes, she will present in…..the future.

P.S. I traced one of the pictures of Eleanor from the animated ending in tales of berseria for the illustration this time.
P.S.2. reference from りりこ/りこ in pixiv, she(?) captured the friendship very well.
Velvet pov

There is two types of traveler, the one with home and homeless. The former have their final place to back and stay, so they have less worry to travel and they are enjoying the journey out of curiosity. The latter one has no attribution, so they must go, keep going and learn to smile with their journey. Even the shepherd doesn’t mind to be friend with me, I know we are too different in everything.

Passing through the Mt. Mabinnogio Ruins, we leave the Artorius’s Throne.

We saw a giant gap between two ends of a broken bridge, but Sorey told me to pass it normally.

“How?! There only air.”

“Nope. Look again, the dust.”
I watched more carefully and see the dust from the broken bridge on the upper level that on top of the gap dropped dust on the air. The dust floats on top of something and remains stationary. I see, there is something. I try to walk on it and it really works, it is an invisible bridge.

Sorey was watching a status longingly and sadly, there are few chances to see him like that, maybe I should give him a moment.

We then walk through a place like the West Laban Tunnel I had traveled, but the geographic seems to have a great change. It used to be a place full of flora and fauna, covered with natural rock, it was a long cave lit by fluorite. It is completely different now, the natural coverage is gone, sunlight reaches the ground and trees grown over here now.

A group of goat assembled next to a giant stone and there is also some Prickle Boars appear too. The place is just like Aball where next to a hunting ground of animals. We have a similar hometown, still, we are different people.

As a travel companion who will walk together in the future, it is better to know more about it. After all, it is no longer the relationship ended only after seeing Laphicet. He was a Shepherd, presumably, he will have the opposite mind to me. Let’s know him more now, to avoid he will hinder me in the future. I initiated a question, no matter what it is about, even if I am not interested, I will ask. First of all, from his sword.

“I haven’t seen your sword in the village.” I pointed at his red sword with feathers.

“It doesn’t seem useful in daily life so I didn’t show it.”

“Is it the sword you used to kill the Lord of Calamity?”

“.....No, the sword left in the throne, this one is the first one I had, I found it in ruin.” His expression became a bit difficult, I guess the question is too sensitive, but he still answered. And it is related to ruin again, why am I not surprised.

“When I was a kid, I explored ruin with Mikleo and found lots of ceremonial swords on the shelf. It is the ceremonial sword of ancient Shepherd to hold the ceremony, I took one to protect myself, although it has no sharp blade.” Sorey is happy whenever he says about Mikleo, he must be someone so important to him like his family.

“You must be strong to be the Shepherd......Do you learn sword from someone?”

“No one, but initially I trained my sword by hunting Prickle Boars, they may be kind of my teacher and sometimes Mikleo will train with me with his staff too. Later, I developed further in the journey. What about you?”

“Similar to you, I develop my sword from hunting and fighting the journey, but my brother taught me the basics of the sword.”

When I was a kid, I asked Arthur to train me to become a hunter so that I may hunt and earn money for Laphicet’s medicine. Arthur was a strict teacher when coming to battle strategies which he said a mistake could lead a fatal result but he allows my free fighting style to develop. He said his teacher used to be similar to me that he would fight irregularly. He is one of the reasons for the strength that support me until now, he taught me the sword to kill him.

“That’s the first time I hear of you talking your brother. Is he nice?” Sorey shows the surprised expression that he didn’t know I have a brother since I always avoid to talk about myself and don’t want to talk about him.
“He was nice......I don’t want to talk about him.”

“O...Okay, sorry.”

“It is fine....ah... Sorey, you don’t have the last name huh?” I just noticed the fact that he has no last name when I think about family.

“Yeah, I was raised by seraphim.” He said normally with a smile of proud, I can’t imagine what will it like as I could not see or sense seraphim in my childhood, even Seres was actually there all the time after Celica death.

“And I grew up with a water seraphim, Mikleo, he is my best friend. We always explored ruins together by then.” He started introducing his childhood with dancing like body language.

“We competed with each other for the shortest time to explore the whole ruin and find the treasures.”

“Like the sword and your earrings.”

“Yes, they are from the same ruin, I found the sword and he found the earrings. We would keep all the treasures ourselves but that time he gave it to me since he thought it was more suitable to me.”

“He is right, it suits your warm color. Is your fingerless-glove also the trophy from a ruin?” I observed that both the sword and earrings have tied with feathers but he didn’t mention the glove.

“Oh, yes. This one is from a ruin about Shepherd, I guess it was the glove of a Shepherd. We fell down the broken floor slab when we were exploring it. He saved me with his seraphic arte and we then discovered the deeper ruin in it.”

“Wait. You said you two explore ruins when you guys were just children, haven’t you been dangerous in the ruins?” I thought of the dangerous situations when he just told an incident.

“Yeah, there were several times we triggered the wrong gear and got trapped into a chamber. Gramps had to go find us with the whole village and we were blamed seriously for that.”

“....But still not going to stop you two explore the ruin, huh.”

“Yes!”

I see this friend is important to him, as he keeps talking about him on our way to the next place. I didn’t stop him to tell any story related to the ruin this time, because the only way to start knowing him is through the world of ruins.

“Here it is, this was where I grew up, Elysia, the village of seraphim,” Sorey spoke with a slightly joyful tone. He seems very proud of his hometown and I used to be like that too, people become relax in their home because it is a place to allow abandoning the pressure of identity and responsibility for a moment.

The place Elysia is highlighted with stone-made ruins like the giant gate, there are single-storey but mainly made by stone. No, the stone is the main body, but the decoration was attached to it for recognizing. The beauty is naturally adapted and connected with nature, truly like a place for seraphim living together. They are a species born from the natural mana, so their home should be very near to nature. There are not much people in the village, that made the place seems broad and empty, it is like a spring version of my village. My village is surrounded by autumn trees and here is surrounded by a view of endless clouds and blue sky. Although there are no other life in the village but seraphim, I feel an aura of life in the village.
As Sorey said all the villagers are seraphim, I suppose the villagers in Sorey’s time are all alive, except his gramps. It is good to have a friend or family when you know nothing about the world, they are the one who teaches you life in the beginning and they will always wait for their family in the home. It is how I perceived the term of the family that when I was not a Lord of Calamity, I was the one cooking and waiting at home for Arthur’s returning and I said family forgives each other.

We approach the gate entrance of the village and sensed an invisible barrier near it. However, Sorey isn’t minded of it, he greets to one of the villagers.

“Sorey?! Is that really you?!” The village noticed Sorey and walked towards us. The name of Sorey seems also raise the notice from other villagers.

“Yes, Kyme. It has been a long time!” Sorey exclaimed excitedly.

“It really is, glad to have you back again and who is this pretty lady?..... You don’t forget our rules right?” The seraph stated in kind of serious tone about the rules in the village. I felt his hesitance in question, as seraph doesn’t age like a human, I can’t ensure that if he ever met me, but I will say it’s a hesitance for meeting another human, this village is pretty enclosed from the human world. And being able to see Seraphim still not that common now.

“Hello, I am Velvet Crowe.” Considering all of the things, I think it is harmless to introduce myself truly.

“Nice to meet you, miss Crowe, I am Kyme, so you may see me?” The seraph tried to show a nice gesture when he knows I may perceive them.

“Likewise, call me Velvet is fine and yes, I am able to see Seraphim.”

“You are Sorey’s friend?”

“...I think so?” I answered him hesitantly, I doubt if I an ex-lord of Calamity can call an ex-shepherd as a friend. I saw Sorey smiled as I said we are friends. He is not defensive around me, so he may have treated me as a friend already. He is much pure than the shepherd in my time, and his personality is like Phi, I can’t say I hate him but feel comfortable.

“Oh, is Mikleo here now?"

“Nah, he is a ruin maniac like you, so he is traveling around the world for ruins, but he may be back some time.”

“Haha, thanks, I am going to stay a few days.”

“You are welcome, here is always your home.” Kyme smiled warmly.

Sorey leads me to his house, his house is a dome space consisted of stone wall and floor without chair but some utensils for daily life are available. It is much smaller than my house as it is only for a single person living, but space is enough to serve one or two guests. More importantly, the house just as clean as currently using condition, I believe there is someone taking care of this to welcome Sorey at any time. This is also a great thing, really, he has a good family.

“I want to go to a place alone, would you…….” Sorey asked to leave him alone with concern on me.

“I am fine if you need the time, besides, I have my staffs too.” I smiled while raising Eleanor’s letters.

“Thank you.” He nodded his head.

“You are welcome.” I nodded back politely.

Dear Velvet,

How are you now, Velvet? It has been 3 months ago from my first letter. I guess I would have to try accepting your disappearance. I am now focusing on the revivification of towns and villages. With the strong spirit of humanity, things restored smoothly and gradually, apart from some empty village.
I am sorry that I really can’t have much do with Aball, all there left was silence, the only thing I did was building graves for the villagers. However, the place left by the old Abbey was restored after the purification of Laphicet. The new Abbey is revived gradually too, although there is no trace of marak, people who were in Abbey truly want to save the world and help people. The chaos didn’t change their mind, these people now are assembling again despite the fact that the leader was once a traitor. Thanks to the prince…..the king Percival, he helped me to regain the name of good exorcist so that I may continue to serve the people without hiding. All will be good in the end……..I guess.

Apart from this, I got letters from Eizen and Rokurou. Eizen is still traveling with those pirates, I heard that they have just discovered a new island. And guess what, Eizen asked me to accompany him to visit his sister for the sake of the communication between the pirates and him. Since people barely able to see marak after Innominat is defeated. His sister, Edna is nice, she introduces her seraph friend Lailah to me. This helps me a lot in the restoring works. Although there is one concern, Lailah looks very familiar, just looks like …your sister, she clearly has no memory about any of the past incident. Edna said she is introduced from Laphicet, so maybe she is related to him.

Rokurou is still on his way of finding rivals, sometime they may just gather for strong and…..wine. Still, there is little chance to meet them. You know, but this is them, never stop their journey. They are living just like themselves, you don’t need to worry.

For Magilou, I have no clue of her but I have the sense that she is staying somewhere near me. Sometimes I feel sight from my back, I wonder if someone is watching me. Though, there is nothing for me to worry about her. After all, she is a witch.

It is short this time, I will write you a longer one once I got my spare time.

Best wishes,
Eleanor Hume

I sigh after reading the letter, thinking that she is as strong as ever, I somehow feel less guilty for my leaving. And I just taken out another letter, a voice stopped me.

“Lord of Calamity, what’s your plan here.” It is Kyme’s voice, my trepidation is correct, he met me before. I don’t want to make any interference and enemy in this place, so I should think about a proper reason to answer.

The silver-hair seraph still waits for my answer, then here just come with heavy dead air.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
I hope I didn’t write it an Awkward chat.
I tend to arrange the location in a reciprocal manner in TOZ, so it will be Elysia, I am surprised that there is wiki telling every line Elysia Seraphim has said. This helped a lot, and in my setting, Kyme is the village head here.
The author is getting lazy again as the illustrator...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Velvet pov
Air remains dreadful and heavy around Kyme and me, things aren’t turned not easy even my time pass along time ago. Seraphim who lived since my age will tell the tales, of course, I should meet one of the long-life seraphim, but this comes faster than I imagined.

‘Kyme, is it……..” I confirmed his name and Kyme nodded.
“I have no plan, at least, I am not going to ruin here.” It is never my strength to persuade others, I tried to tell him my thought truly but I doubt he will believe.
“Then, why are you with Sorey?” This line just let me know that he is doing this for Sorey’s sake. As Sorey told me he was raised by Seraphim, he must be one of them. I understand his concern, family care for each other.

“Sorey saved my life, Maotelus and him both try so hard to persuade me to live, so I try to live again, to find a reason to live. I am traveling with him now as he asked for.”

“He knew your identity?” My answer has not fully satisfied him, because he concerned with my past identity.

“Yes. I have known he was a Shepherd too. I believe he was a good Shepherd.”

“Great, that’s his style and you are not gonna ruin the world again?” Sorey had told me that the seraphim here didn’t care much about the human world, but that not completely true, they will concern when the malevolence came one day. They will take action if they have the purification power too.

“No, my revenge was over, it is meaningless to ruin the world again.” I calmly stated.

“.......Glad to hear that, take care Sorey for me on the way then.” Kyme was just worried about Sorey.

“I will, but, you are fine with that?” I sigh heavily as a relief, seems that he believed my saying, but asked if he is fine with my accompany to Sorey. He has concerned my identity after all.

“Yes, he trusted you when he knew your identity and you are not a really bad person.”

“..........maybe.”

“I suppose I should thank you too.” His response makes me gasped.

“..........for what?” Considering his stance and attitude, I suppose he treated me as an enemy.

“ For freeing our will and waking up the 4 great Empyrean in that time.” He said thankfully.

“That is not my intention.” I never took my action to help people.

“But you did, so I thanks.” He insisted.

“..........OK.” I speechlessly received the gratitude from Kyme.

I just don’t think I deserve the gratitude.

“Kyme, where can I get food here?” I suddenly think of the catering when I saw the kitchen in Sorey’s home, it is a good topic to change too.

“Oh, actually…..” The seraph told me to follow him the way, seems that there is some preparation.

__________________________
Sorey pov

I left Velvet in my home and go to Gramp’s grave alone, there are so many things I want to share with him. Despite it is just the beginning of the journey, I found his grave according to Kyme words ‘on a hill with a breathtaking view’, a stone is in there. I approach it and sit, as I am having a cozy conversation with someone.

“Gramps, I am back again. I purified Maotelus and the world I seeing now is out of chaos and
despair.” I paused after report general news that others may have reported. I have many words to gramps but they went empty in my brain now, I am not sure what to start with.

“......Gramps, thank you, for everything. You raised Mikleo and me from a baby, you taught us the history and manner. We always explore ruins and come back with mud cover everywhere on our clothes. You scout us every time with your lightning. Sorry for always making you worry every time we explore the ruin.” I sadly smile as I remember my old time with Mikleo and gramps. When they were trapped, gramps was the one come rescue them with other seraphim. He was terrified to get Gramps angry and get his lightning strike, he remembered how that hurt and now he understood it is all for his sake.

“I miss the time when I still had the chance to get your lightning and scouting now. I realized I haven’t given you anything in return since the day you raised me. I had the adventure with Mikleo all the time, never express the gratitude to the other seraphim and you…………If only I could rescue you in that time………………” I felt sad for the loss of Gramps, even after 500 years. That a fact cannot change, I am well aware of that, I accept it as the situation does not allow me to sink in my own sadness. When all the responsibility is gone, before I find a new target in life, I feel my ignored sadness at that time. I felt tears dropped from my eyes corners and I get my head down.

“I know it is the only way in that time, stills, I didn’t want to kill you, Gramps.”

“I know you had forgiven me, but…………” I haven’t forgiven myself to kill a family. Mikleo was upset too while seeing his human mother protected the place with her life as an exchange.

I had once felt guilty of killing gramps at that time, I dreamed of a nightmare as I cannot forgive myself, I hoped to get punishment from Gramps. Velvet told me that it is normal to feel sad as a human, but she didn’t tell how to move on, it is a thing I can only help myself out.

I stop saying words for a while, a sudden wind blow towards me, as if Gramps was patting my head to remove my sadness, I realized he is always there, watching me. Velvet said that Gramps said his last word to praise, acknowledge and comfort Mikleo and me, he didn’t want to see us upset.

“Don’t worry, Gramps. I will move on and live, this is the only thing I can do in return.” I tried to smile as the cheerful kid he was looking at as always, I raised my head and look at the gravestone again. Let’s not get him to continue to worry about me even after death.

“You know, Gramps? I’ve learned a lot of stories from Maotelus over those years, so many heroes worked so hard to sustain the peace, but the most impressive to me is the story of the first lord of Calamity, a sad but brilliant story.” I started sharing the story of Velvet to Gramps.

“Never thought a great Empyrean like him would be that tender and friendly, we chatted a lot about our journey and the people we got to know. Most surprised me that we have the same dream, I guess it is cool to have the same dream as the Empyrean.”

“Cooler thing that he told me to call him Laphicet, I was questionable to this at first.” Sorey started to remember the time in the slumber.

*  
“Hey, Mao---Laphicet, why would you like me to call you Laphicet instead of the true name?” I asked as every Seraphim I know perceived their true name as the most important name, however, Maotelus shared his true name to the whole world.

“I know your concern. Eizen has told me that the true name is a very important thing to a seraph that it almost like the confession to someone you trust. That’s why when you get Mikleo’s true name in
the children, the seraph parent of you two grew concern on this.”

“Yes, I had been told by Lailah for the meaning of the true name to the seraphim, but you shared your true name to the world,” I remembered how Lailah is surprised when she knew I got Mikleo’s true name before forming the pact with him.

“It is because. I think, as an Empyrean, I should believe in all the human in the world as an Emyprean to give them a second chance and…..I just think Maotelus sounds like a more mature name of an Empyrean at that time.”

I laughed as I hear the childish thought of the Empyrean.

“Don’t laugh!” Maotelus pretended to be angry and complained about my act.

“OK. Sorry for that, I understand your concern.. so why would you like me to call you Laphicet when you have the true name?”

“…..Well, as I shared my true name to the world, those who knew my normal name as a seraph were just my friend. I saw them disappeared one by one, now probably no one knew it…..It is kind of lonely.”

“I am sorry for bringing this up……” I had never thought that may bring up the sad memories.

“Hmm, don’t be, it is me to bring this up. Does this make you sad?” Maotelus asked calmly and not like in the sad emotion.

“Doesn’t it make you sad? I mean, they are your friends, and you won’t be able to see them anymore.”

“It is not like I won’t be able to see all of them again. They are too stubborn to die, I can still believe that we will still see each other again, after you and I wake.” Maotelus said longingly while watching to a far direction.

“Even if they already died, they lived deep in my heart forever. The eventual parting is inevitable, it is a thing we can never escape as seraphim, for we live far longer than any human.” Maotelus added.

“Then Mikleo may face the parting with me again even after I awoke……” I thought of the far future of Mikleo after I died.

“Yes, he will feel sad and feel lost, wander a while for his emotion, but he will eventually learn to deal with it just like me. I have parted with many Shepherd in this millenium.”

“So You won’t feel sad for the parting?”

“No, I will still feel sad each time, but I won’t regret to meet them and I will be glad that they left without regret.”

“And you will remember them forever.” I thought of all the stories he has told me.

“Yes, and I will remember you forever too, Sorey.”

“Thanks, glad to hear that.” I smiled, thinking that even if I left, Mikleo will remember me forever like Maoteuls. There is not only sadness in the parting.
“He is really a nice Empyrean as a friend, and he is like another teacher to me after Lailah. I know that there are still many things for me to learn.” I gladly told Gramps about the ‘young’ Empyrean.

“After I awoke, Maotelus requested me to take care of Velvet, yes, the Velvet I heard in his story. It is an exciting thing that I got the chance to know her the one to be told in tales in person! We are traveling together. Although I knew her story and personality, they were all from Maotelus, I start to know her more in the short period I lived with her. Despite being a Lord of Calamity, she is like a sister being and I am still glad to know her, so don’t worry about it, Gramps. I guess I really interested in her by her story and I also want to work a good future for her. I feel it is unfair to her when she has given a future to humanity. I will travel with her to find out my friends and their traces, especially Mikleo’s one. Can’t let him explore all ruins! He will show off to me that he has explored a lot of ruins.”

“Sorry for always making you worry every time we explore the ruin, but I am sorry that you may have to continue worrying about it. Cause we won’t stop exploring the ruin, so wait for the stories I brought the next time visit. I am glad that I was raised by you, gramps.” I said bye to gramps grave and get back to the village.

Day has gone dark when I finished the talk to gramps. I see warm light and smoke rise from the village, it is not like there is a fire, as I also hear the voice of happiness, maybe there is a party. I just felt my hunger after smelling the sense of foods.

“Welcome back, Sorey!” all villagers turned to greet me when Kyme noticed me. It is a familiar atmosphere for a long time ago. Even being the Shepherd, most of the time I am not that being welcome and people do not believe in the existence of Shepherd at all. True that only home welcomes and prepare for oneself at no price.

I taste the soup as Kyme held that for me. Hmm, tasty and it is the taste that gramps had once made for me, it is from one of our best recipe in the seraphim village. I want to share it with Velvet, but seems she is not here. Kyme told me that she is helping with the cook, so maybe I find her later.

“Hope that I didn’t ask so late, how is the village going on?” I asked.

“Everything is fine, actually I took the position of the head after Mr. Zenrus. Someone had to do this to hold the village back in shape after Heldalf’s attack.

“Congratulation! Kyme, I know you can do this! And I am sorry that I left here for so long………” I felt like I leave all the matter to Kyme.

“No, not at all, you tackled the biggest trouble for us, you may be proud of yourself, as we all proud of you,” Kyme said genuinely when patting my head, I became emotional at this moment.

We also talked about lots of things in the village. As well as Natalie got new family members and moved on from Mason’s death. In addition, a Shepherd visited here 400 years ago. I think I got the feeling of being long-lived, things just pass under my eye and I feel unrelated to it.

I went to check on Velvet once I finished the conversation. I found out that she was smiling while helping with the cooking which makes me think of the time when we were living together in the doctor’s house.

* Lack of knowledge, we are hardly being helpful even till now, but we may still perform our basic skills, cooking is one of them. In the home, we cooked by turn, when one was doing the cooking, the other had their free time and I normally read the Celestial Record again and again but sometime I will go check on Velvet for the alluring flavor from the kitchen. That was the first time I see her smile, she smiled unconsciously when she concentrated in the cooking. Since that time, I started to check
on Velvet’s cooking in her turn. I thought she didn’t notice but she said: “You may just do your thing, Sorey.” It appeared that she has not appreciated my little peeking behind her.

“Sorry, I thought you didn’t notice, but I like to watch it...may I?” I was shocked and tried to be polite and ask for permission.

She released a light sigh and responded “......You may if you want, just don’t get in my way.”

“OK!~”

We started to chat more since then, sometime she may even ask my opinion on the taste, but now I realized that her taste is lost.

“Hey, Velvet, can you teach me to cook?” One time she cooked when I supposed on my cooking duty. I felt sorry to let her cook every time because I don’t know how to cook properly.

“...I don’t mind, but why?”

“I don’t want to let you cook every time when it is my duty and I want to be able to cook for my friend too.”

“Do you have someone you want to cook for?”

“Yes, all my friends I met on a journey, they made many delicious desserts for me(to heal HP &, etc.), I was only able to make a dark-matter that time. Thus, this time I want to cook properly.”

“Just how you cook to make a dark-matter......Fine, I will teach you at least not to make something like that again. I don’t want the doctor and the lady get poisoned by this.”

“Thank you very much!”

“Only one thing you must remember the desire to bring a smile to the faces of the people eating it, like your friends.”

“Right!”

The cooking time became the few chatting time between us and became the little bonus in those lingering workdays in relatively repeating works. It was not just my own opinion, I thought Velvet enjoy the time day by day too, I could just say it from her natural expression, though she never says it.

* 

Maybe she is just a girl who wants to live normally and I think the smile suits her so much when I see her smile with eyes brim with warmth. I hope that she could always keep the smile.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.

That’s a chapter, I sucked in the part in Sorey talk to Gramps, just don’t know what to say to the death but I try to write with some supposed normal reactions. The talk supposes to be the main part of this chapter but it appeared not like this.... To not let the chapter appeared to be short, I added some clip of memory in the first village(Tewks) and a clip of memory of Sorey’s slumber. There has to be something happened in the 2 months I skipped.
P.s. The memory part is partly be inspired by the game when I let Sorey make a dessert in the game and he said: “Is that really editable?” after completed. Then I read the description of the item he just made…. (I almost surprised that thing has no negative effect)…. Hmm, Sorey, you better continue to find the ancient tongue monoliths instead of cooking.
See the end of the chapter for notes

Sorey POV

After the party, the little lights gradually went out, and the isolated villages were silent again. The villagers went home to rest, Velvet and I were no exception. In the past, I will definitely explore the ruins with Mikleo secretly, this is the time when at least people find us secretly going out, but maybe Gramps had turned a blind eye to us. However, now I have lost this impulse to explore, because the people who are always exploring with me are no longer there, maybe I am tired too. I flip through the pages of the Celestial Record that I and Mikleo have visited, recalling the funny and pleasant memories. At the party, I noticed that there were more Seraphim in the village that I didn't know. I wondered if some of them would like to explore the ruins like me.

I continued to flip through the Celestial Record, and Velvet, who was sleeping at a normal distance from me, suddenly took a quick breath and sat up, seemingly awake.

“Sorry. Did I wake you?”
“No, I have told you that I am a light sleeper.”
“So….Having nightmare?”
“No, surprisingly, a longing dream.”

The sudden rapid knock on the door interrupted our conversation. I went to open the door to see who was visiting and found Natalie and another new Seraph I didn't know.

“Sorey, sorry to bother you, but I really want to ask you for help!” Natalie said in a hurry.
“Calm down, what’s going on?” I tried to calm her down first.
“We can’t find our children, a new seraph in the village.” The male seraph next to him said.
“Any clues to find?” Velvet joined the conversation.
“You are going to help too? Velvet?” I am surprised that Velvet is willing to help.
“Yes, I have woken up anyway.” Velvet simply explained.
“Thank you. His name is Rune. He may be in the surrounding ruins. Sorey, you are the most familiar one with the ruins around here in this village, please help.” Natalie explained her request.
“He loves to explore ruin too?” I am glad that the new villager love explores ruin like me.
“Yeah, just like somebody in the past…” Natalie teased, seems a bit relax than before.
“Haha, alright, we will find him, don’t worry,” I assure her to find Rune and went find him.

For the ruin nearby Elysia, that one must be the Mt. Mabinogio Ruins, it was a deep ruin that I doubted I had fully explored it, I remembered there were hellions in there, then that would be dangerous for Rune to be there, we should find him out as soon as possible.

--------------------------(process skip!)--------------------------

“I remember that there was gear to a hidden chambeer….Alright, opened!” We see a kid sitting there sadly. Velvet sighed lightly.

“Are you Rune? It is fine, we come to find you.”
“….Are you human?” The little one surprised as that is his first time to see a human.
“Yes, you may not have heard of me, but I lived in Elysia a long time ago. Can you stand?” I lent my hand to pull him up.

“You know your parents are really worried about you to explore a ruin alone at such time. What are you going to do if you meet hellions? Can you fight back? It is really dangerous to go into such a place without leaving a message. You have no idea how is the one waiting at home worry when they
find a family member is missing.” Velvet is angry. She usually didn't care about things that not really related to her. This time she intervened and became angry unusually. After listening to her, I felt that I really should reflect on the behavior I had done before.

“But…..I really love to explore the ruins.” The little seraph said weakly.

“You may explore with your friend. I am like you, I love to explore ruin with my friend. Through it is dangerous too, at least you will have someone aside to take care of each other.” I suggested.

“Alright, I will go with my friend next time. Thank you, may I have the names?”

“Sorey.”

“Velvet.”

“Thank you, Sorey, Velvet.”

The seraph couple shows their gratitude to us and we went back to my house to rest.

“I thought you would continue to explore the ruin.” Velvet taunted.

“Well, finding Rune is our prior mission and I am surprised that you get angry by this.”

“……I just thought of my little brother. He used to go to the cliff to watch the sea horizon alone. He was weak and weak at any time. As the one who takes care of him, I was always worried. I just feel the same when I saw the seraphim couple.”

“Okay…Your attention must have been conveyed to Rune and your brother’s heart.” Just that I realized we had a different childhood, I was really fortunate to be raised in Elysia.

“I hope so.” She coldly responded.

Velvet pov

We left Elysia after several days rest, then we decided to head to Ladylake. Sorey said that the first stop of his journey.

He asked about my hometown on the way to Ladylake.

I hesitate to answer, there is no need to tell him about a place disappeared. I don’t know if there is any meaning to tell him.

“It is okay if you don’t want to tell, I am just curious.” He tried to say in a way not to irritate me.

“……No, it is just……it was not present anymore.” The map is no longer the one I recognized and I am well aware that all the things I knew gone already.

“Still, I want to know, can you tell me about it?” Sorey smiled, said without hidden reason, I feel sorry to not tell him if he is like that, and he has introduced his hometown for me already.

“…..Fine. I was born in a village called Aball, it is a small village found in Eastgand. It is surrounded by perpetual autumn trees. The villagers lived in there were just like the one we worked in. There was an old lady who taught me things and helped to take care of me when I was a kid. There was a shop which sold all the Daily necessities to the villagers, I used to go there every day to sell my hunted Prickle Boars. They were kind-heart people. I lived there with my sister, Celica, my little brother, Laphicet, and my sister’s husband, Arthur. He joined our family when I was 6. At first, I felt like he took away my sister from us, but we get along fast. Arthur was a gentle person, he was a
brother and father figure to Laphicet and me. And also...3 years later, Seres, a marak of Arthur joined us, although I knew her only after I became a daemon.....We all lived together for 7 years, it was a precious time for me.”

And those ‘kind-heart people’ I mentioned betrayed us and sold my family to the Daemon bandits. I never thought at that time, everyone becomes selfish when their life is on the libra. I reveal my sad memories as few as possible so that I won’t show sadness and make Sorey worry. I think he doesn’t need to know either. What’s the difference if he knows? It has changed nothing.

“........I would like to see it with you, it sounds attractive.”

“Unfortunately, both the villagers and the village has gone now, the world map change so much that I can’t recognize it now.” I hid the fact that I killed all the villagers and all the things happened at that night. He appeared to accept my past identity but I doubt it. He was a Shepherd so he stands for morality, and I will just avoid talking about the bad things I did to avoid any conflict. At least I don’t want to have a quarrel in our middle way to the next destination, not in a forest.

“Who can say it’s disappearance firmly without a look in person. we will just have to find.” Sorey said optimistically even I knew such low possibility of finding it.

“It already 1500 years passed....well, I hope so.” I made a fake smile.

No surprise, we met a daemon on the way. We have no ability to defeat them now, even Sorey got his ceremonial sword. I looked into the empty blade container of my Gauntlet, I have no weapon now but an aluminum arm since my sword is broken in the final battle with Artorius and there are no weapon shops in the Tewks village.

I want to leave out of the daemon’s sight as soon as possible, but he still sees us and approach us.

Sorey went tackle him immediately and I hide and see if I find things for a weapon, but I don’t expect it since we are near the edge of the forest.

“I will go tackle him, hide.” He said.
The werewolf rushed up, and Sorey struck his attack with a sword and counterattacked.

“How about that?” Without hesitation, Sorey made a triple scythe to the werewolf. However, the attacked but unharmed werewolf screamed angrily, it screamed more aggressively and frantically waving its claws. Facing the berserk werewolf, Sorey calmly and carefully see each attack tracks to dodge and slam back.
“Takes this!” Look at the buffer after the werewolf’s crazy attack, Sorey jumped to the air and attack in full power. The injured werewolf took a few steps back and then regained his vitality and attacked Sorey.

Sorey still does not give up, the large movement of the werewolf reveals a big flaw, Sorey makes a slanted cut from the right to the upper side and then slash in the opposite direction, the series of attacks formed an X-shaped cutting track: "Tiger Blade". The fierce attacks made the enemy unable to respond immediately. Sorey took the victory trend and pursued with the continuous stab "Sword Rain" to hit the werewolf into the air. Then he made the left and right sides transverse cut "Freezing strike". He struck with claw shade momentum in an upper hook direction “Wolfwind Fang” to repulse the werewolf temporary as his final act.

However, the werewolf still climbed up and seemed to have only consumed some stamina and physical strength. It did not give up the idea of attacking, and continued its irrational attack, force Sorey, whose strength is gradually exhausted, to recoil.

The violent combo of Sorey just now is really powerful, but when there is no support and relay of teammates after the combo, there will be a lot of gaps in the middle. Obviously, he is not used to fighting alone. I can’t be a teammate to fight with him without a weapon, now he can only barely reduce the damage caused by defense and dodge.

Sure enough, as Arthur had said, if not being an exorcist, there is no chance of winning the daemon with the human body. Even if he was a Shepherd, he did not have the power from the formed pact with seraphim. He was just an ordinary human being now. Even with the experiences of battles, it can only sustain for a while, can't kill them. Well, knowing him innocent, he will not want to kill daemons. In short, the action we should take is to escape as soon as possible.

Should I escape? This will survive.
Live, what then? I did not find anything wanted to do.
If there is no such person in front of me, I guess I can’t worry about these problems.

I hate the powerless self, which reminds me of my previous struggle to protect my younger brother before I became a therion. The result of the battle with the werewolf was that I was completely defeated. I even had to be taken care of by my brother to get away with it. When it went after my younger brother, I can only block it with myself. If Arthur didn't come, maybe both of us would be dead. I can't do anything.

However, now my brother would not come to save me. He is dead and killed by me.
There will be no heroes to save people like me. This time I have to fight against it myself. I can’t let myself do nothing. I want to help Sorey who is struggling with the werewolf in front of me. What should I do?

I want to do something.

A while later, I come up with an idea.
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Sorey pov
We met a hellion and he attacked us, I faced him while Velvet hid as I notice later in the fight. I
wonder will she just have gone. I won’t be mad at her as she has no weapon, but I still feel a little lonely if I gonna travel alone then. It is becoming tired and hard to hold his attack. The last time I fought a hellion without the purification power is with Mikleo, but now I am fighting him alone. The thought distracted me a little bit and then the hellion just hit his punch to me, I flew over a hundred meters of grass and end with my back hitting against the stone. How unfortunate, I received a critical attack when I am distracted. I try to stand and run away to dodge the hellion, but it does not work when my back hurt. I thought I would receive another heavy attack from him but it is not.

(Lethal pain in silent and without sword attack in middle)
Velvet jumped up high in backlighting position and make an air tumbling spin kick, even if the hellion noticed her sudden attack, it can’t respond as it cannot directly view its opponent. The Hellion is beaten to the sky and he didn't have a chance to breathe, Velvet keeps making kicks and finally jumped and pulled her left arm back. She made a critical attack to the back of the neck of the hellion.

“Arthur's maxim 4. Never let your guard down( even when victorious).” I see the hellion fell down and Velvet walked out behind it.
“I am sorry I can’t do much, but we better go now.”
“Can you stand?”
“.....uh...I........” I tried to answer but my voice still not back from the pain in my back.
She approached me and pulling my arm on her neck, so as to carry me half to walk the way, she did this so smoothly like she used to do it and I just notice that we get closer.

“.......Thank you.” I don’t know what happened but I am grateful to Velvet, for not leaving me. As soon as I got my voice back, I started my gratitude.

“The one to say this should be me, thank you for fighting the Daemon.” She doesn’t turn her face to me but keeps going.

“Anyway, it is a good thing we both survive.” There isn’t much to talk, I suppose we may walk silently for a while, seems both of us are too tired to speak until I get some stamina back.

It is weird to me if we are going to have silent travel all the time, I wonder if Velvet is like this too when she is on her journey. At least I knew her journey was colorful from Maotelus.

“ Velvet, may I ask you how do you defeat the hellion?” I tried to start a new conversation with a question I honestly want to know. How can she defeat the hellion without a weapon?
“I didn’t defeat, but I hit the Hellion into a coma. There is a possibility that the Hellion was a human, so I try the method of shocking the cervical vertebra to cause a temporary coma.” Velvet explain in flatty tone.
“Just a little knowledge learned from the old doctor.”She explained it like a plan but it was a gamble,
she used her metal arm as a weapon like the time she has her claw.

“Wow, I never thought about that, you are smart,” I stated my admiration.

“Praising me won’t do you any good.” She teased.

“But it is true, and I am glad that you didn’t leave me at that time,” I stated truly, I never feel such fear for being alone.

“.....just a return for saving my life. Besides, I have no plan to live alone.....Oh, I see the city.” She said as if she has an embarrassment, she then quickly moved on another topic. I wonder if she is shy, sometimes I think she is cute to have such a moment.

We see the view of a city from outside after getting out of the forest. There is a highway connecting the city to the others, with trains or cars running on it. The structure of the city still likes before, an orbicular city of layers of streets. Rings of residential zones appeared to be extended from the original outermost ring to build the city on the larger scale as I have seen 500 years ago. There were more people lived in Ladylake, that means the peace finally came so that people may live and have the population boost, it is good to see that. However, there were towers of high-rise buildings that much higher than those I have seen in Tewks village, the one in the middle of the city is the highest. It is enormous that can be seen clearly even from far away and it blocks the castle which originally in the highest position and in the center of Ladylake. I wonder what is in it. “That is the Ladylake, the city built on the lake like floating on it, I actually became Shepherd there.” I described the city while memorizing my journey.

“........May you tell me how you became a shepherd.” She seems to be a little interested in the things related to a Shepherd.

“...My friend invited me to join the Sacred Blade Festival in Ladylake. There is a rebellion in the half of the Sacred Blade Festival. It is not like there is other able to be the Shepherd, but I do it also for my dream, I answered the Seraphim waited in the center of the sanctuary and she formed a pact with me. I was able to down out the Sacred Blade, obtained the power to stop the rebellion and started a shepherd life then.” I briefly stated the things happened at that time.

“The Sacred Blade Festival........ so the blade is not there anymore, but in your hand?” I thought she was interested in the festival but she seems to be more interested in the weapon.
“No, The blade is brought along with the seraph named Lailah, so I lost it now.” I guess Lailah bring the sword and travel with another Shepherd.

“Fine, so you really just a normal human then. So we gonna find an inn and a doctor for you first, but it only happens after we pass the gate.” Velvet seems not interested in at all and she states a real issue.

“It may just be fine with this passport.”
“I hope so.” I see Velvet getting nervous to some extent, maybe I should ask her later.

We line up at the end of the line to pass the gate.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
This is like a filler chapter between locations, I tried to develop their relationship step by step, probably in a slow pace……since Velvet is not like a person to be friend with someone so easily, especially an ex-Shepherd.
I tried my best to describe the fight, hope that is fine in a basic standard......
detail but rough background of the church:
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sorey pov

After coming out of the forest, it is a large grassland. The sun at noon shines the green grass everywhere and shines brightly. The front is a stone bridge that connects to the city and is covered with pavements of bricks and tiles, once carefully calculated and constructed by workers, it still under the regular maintenance to sustain its strength to support all the traffic. The lake under the bridge glinted in the sun, now the city standing on top of the beautiful Lake Perniya is blessed in the lake's glory shines. The rings of stone arch structures on the bridge are guiding the road to the spectacular city of lake, and the brilliance of the city is framed in the arch.

The old path we now stepping on meandered down from the sparse forests connected us to our destination. The city is stacked by white blocks and its great city wall, it is welcoming us with grand bridge and arch. What makes it different from my time is that there is a bunch of high-rise buildings located in the center in the city which seems covered a high proportion in the city as saw from far outside and it
cast a large shadow to the city. The structure in the city may proceed a great change under those years.

We approached the place of identification, it is no longer a simple outdoor space for people to line up but a two-storey building with air-conditioners. The inspectors are separated with the immigrants by the glass of the counter, the security is much stronger than the ancient time.

Holding the fake passport, we pass the check counter and pass through the great arch.

The view framed by the grand arch, the grand road continues with some stalls and passengers. I would like to walk around the city but Velvet said we better find an inn and a doctor first.

“500galds per night for a room please!” The innkeeper stated in joy when he sees there are customers coming to him.

That a surprisingly high price without a meal, I wonder what wrong in the city and the point is our budget is enough for staying one night only, then we will have no money for the following travel, not to mention the doctor.

“Maybe we work here again instead of paying them the money………..” work is always enough to see how the people like in a place.

“I think so, but you are hurt, so you better stay and rest.” Velvet agreed with my suggestion but she planned to work alone.

“What? No, I can't let you work all alone for it.”

“If you are injured now, you should rest.” She instructed seriously.

“How about we found a seraph to heal, then I may be fully healed at a fast rate and go help,” I suggested insisting on helping.

“ In any way, I will suggest you rest. Look, you fight hard against the werewolf, so it is my turn to help.”

“But!”

“......How about you walk around the city to see what can we get. That helps a lot.”

“......”

“You can't work when you are injured anyway.” she scoffed.

“....Okay, got it.....Just don't overwork yourself.” I took the offer finally, Velvet is too stubborn to persuade and she is certainly a workaholic.

“Don't worry. I won't.” Every time she said this but ended up overworking.

“..... sometimes I think you really are a piece of work like someone.” She added with a whispering sentence that I can't hear clearly.

“Huh? Did you say something?”

“No, nothing.”

I agreed to Velvet’s suggestion and walked around in the city while Velvet is serving as a waitress in the inn for a day.
I walked to the outermost part of the city to see the lake, now I see the low level of malevolence in the city that the lake reflect the sunlight to shine in a beautiful way, there are no hellions on the streets, unlike the time I first arrived 500 years ago.

There are layers of the extended rings I see before I reach the city center, the outermost part is seemingly the suburban area with villages of farmland, they plant the foods for the city. The part next to it is the 3-storey buildings I once familiar with, they are constructed with the unchanged style in my time, like the gothic-style-imitating tower and arch. The streets views change to a large extent in these 500 years, the streets and roads are widened to become Avenue and Boulevard that to be broad enough to provide two-way traffic of vehicles and pedestrian, they also lead a clear way to the landmark. Normally, the castle should be important enough to be the landmark, but instead the high towers of modern buildings with groups of industrial buildings surrounding them be the view captured.

The giant water wheel is still working to form the water fountain but may not work for the electricity in the city.

I see the people walking on the street are usually rich people or middle-class by their clothing, but I barely see any poor people, is the city really that good? Maybe not, I see no one smile on the street, everyone walks with a troubled expression, I wonder why. I tried to seek a smile from the city, to find one to prove there is still happiness exist. I see smile while some customer is talking to the shop keepers, they are complaining about the situation in society and talking about their family but they are smiling while chatting. Also, I find a smile on children faces, at least the adults don't want their children to be unhappy to live, they try to make them happy and seek the way to become happy. Maybe it is stressful to live in the city, but as long as there is still a smile exist, I believe happiness will spread.

Walking around the city, I found much-segregated communities that they are segregated from outside with fences and they have their own facility inside, those facilities outside the fence appeared to be in poor conditions and there are slums extended from some structure to ruin the regularity of the street.

“Hey, younger, want to buy a unit? Take one.” I am stuffed with a flyer while looking at the buildings by someone who is sending flyers. Before I refuse, he already went away.

The flyer is about the sales unit, I guess they think I want to buy a flat as I keep watching the buildings. The flyer exaggerates the font of the content of numbers, I think they are the dimensions and the price of the unit. Unfortunately, the unit used is not the same as my time, so I can't get the size from it, but I get it from the photos included on it. My only comment to the unit is it is extremely small, and I can't understand why is that so expensive. I throw away the flyer and go to see the shops around, still, the objects are normally expensive. The good thing is that none of the shops is really necessary for us to buy a thing, but Velvet said she has no weapon, so maybe I should find the weapon shop for her, strange that I see none of the shops is selling weapon except the one selling kitchenware.

I went back to the inn with nothing bought finally and Velvet has earned enough for us to stay one and a half day. We left our package and go to the sanctuary. The line is really long that it occupy half the width of a street, but it is not the line to pray, it is the line to get a place to sleep. Under the high speed of development, the material price grows very fast that not every people can keep up with it, many of them have not enough money to rent a unit, so they come to get a free room in the sanctuary for a night.
I should know that thing never go that ideal. We got inside the sanctuary and see a little girl is talking to Uno, maybe she can see seraphim. I am glad that Uno is still blessing Ladylake.

“Hi, Uno, how are you?”
“Oh, Sorey! Good to see you, it has been a time!” I actually surprised he still remember me after all those years, seems that they have no issue of the fading in memories like humans.

“Yes, I just woke up several months ago, seem you know some people who have resonance?” It is rare to see people having resonance, so I ask of the situation in the present.
“Actually the number of people who has resonance has increased but I heard that the number of seraphim is decreasing.”

“Good to hear the people with resonance increased but why is the seraphim number decrease?”
“I don’t know and may you introduce the lady please?” I then just notice I forgot about Velvet, she just stood beside me and heard our conversation.

“Oh, sorry Velvet! I just got excited...Uno, this is Velvet, a friend I knew and traveled with after I woke up. Velvet, this is Uno, the Seraphim I requested to bless Ladylake when I was a Shepherd.”

“Nice to meet you Velvet.”

“Nice to meet you, Uno. May I ask you about the giant tower we see from the outside?” Although she never says it on our way, she concerned about the tower like me.

“That...I don’t know much about that place, I sense a barrier is there blocking my sense and I heard the poor people all live in there. However, some poor people beg aid from us because they don’t want to be related to that place. I have a feeling that malevolence concentrated in that place and I can’t do much with it, it is nearly a miracle that the city is in low malevolence. ”Uno stated the status of the city.

Maybe reality stranger than fiction and it is crueler than my imagination. I feel sorry for the poor people who have to live in the tower. The government just approved the ineffective policy to the country, like the time of Alisha, People can’t really rely on the government.

“My prayers warned me not to go there as no one came out from there after came in.”

“...Got it.” Velvet looked shocked by this, who can imagine such a dangerous place is inside a metropolis center.
“If Alisha was still alive, it would not be like this.”

“Yes. The girl worked really hard after being the queen, she also is the squire of the Shepherd at the same time, this helped control the district malevolence. Now, most of the government members are from the vote of people. This originally should be good for the country. However, it delays the proposed policies from practice. Since without more than half of the votes, the agreement cannot be achieved, the policy keep suspended. The is a say that someone would like to control the voting trend by bribes.” Uno started to state some political problem in the government that leading the situation.

“Excuse me, who is Alisha?” Velvet questioned.

“Oh sorry again, she is my dear friend who invites me to the Sacred Blade Festival after I met her and rescued her in a ruins.” I apologized and introduced Alisha to Velvet.

“In a ruin?! Hard to believe you make friends in a ruin. Harder to believe you met a female in a ruin.” Velvet teased.

“Oh, we just like exploring ruins! You see we may see the world history and architecture development in the ruins…..”

“Oh….save it……” Velvet looked annoyed but still smiling.

After asking the healing from Uno, we went back to the inn and plan what the next spot. Although Velvet is annoyed by everything about ruins, she seems interested in my friends. Well, people will not hate hearing story right?

“She was a really responsible princess that trying to tackle all the things seriously as she could. She treats herself as a knight and truly works for her people, she never stops learning and improving herself while being the knight and princess at the same time, thus the knights following her has high loyalty to her.” I talked about Alisha to Velvet.

“Sound like someone I knew……...”

“May I know?”
“She called Eleanor, she is a crybaby exorcist who cries for others unfortunate, a really serious person and she is always strict to herself to be a proper exorcist since she always wants to help others. Although I forced her to become my companion, she finds her own creed and become truly by my side later. Even I ask if she wants to leave for a few times, she confirmed not to leave. I requested her to take care of Laphicet. I suppose she became the Shepherd after I have gone. The thing I am uncertain about is her soulmate. In my journey, she kept rejecting every marriage proposal to her, because she put her happiness behind the happiness of people.”

“Hehe, I never thought about that, but I think she may find one in the last.” To think that Velvet will concern someone to this extent, she is a very caring person to me and it is interesting to hear her talking about her imagination of other’s love life.

“Yeah, because all you care are those ruins.” She teased again and I am not going to deny.

“Well, you know, ruins is fun!”

“Yeah, yeah, I know you a weird one.”

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
A shorter chapter…..I am not good at describing locations, but I try to learn from others…….The city landscape and map are totally changed by my hands but I am too lazy to draw it out.
I admit I have written the city to be a really bad city, after writing all the bad things I learned from the cities in the history lesson in it....seems that I enter a loop of [“Hi, ____ , how are you?” “Oh, Sorey! Good to see you, it has been a time!”] in every reunion…..sorry for that..and I am not clear about Uno characteristic, he is more like just stating the setting. Since I didn’t play the game when I write, so don’t relate the price with the price in the game, although I have taken a rough reference. Price always changes along time!
Chapter Notes
We never know what lies under the surface until we discovered.

Sorey pov

Through the shopping streets lined with shops, I noticed that the sounds around me gradually disappeared, and the crowds around them became distant. We came to an empty place like a large square covered by forests and lawns. I have been exploring the city by following the crowds for a while and I have not found this place. Maybe there will be families or couples here on the holiday, or is this a place where almost no one comes at any time? Compared with the lively surroundings, it seems a bit desolate here, and even the wind that has blown is chilly. The only thing that exists here is the statue standing in the center, with the statue of Alisa and Sergei holding hands. I know they are respectable people. They all pursue peace for the people of their own country. They want to avoid unnecessary wars. When I am not in their time, they must work hard to pursue peace for their respective countries, for their people to have a better life.

‘May all the people fight for the country and better future rest in peace. The foundation of society is fragile, we must be the guardians of our own civilization. We must bear the consequences of our own choices, whether it is honor or tragedy.
Remember, don't repeat the wrong history.’

The sentences engraved on the pedestal of the statue, to remind the people what had happened in the past, to prevent the future generations to repeat the war. There are lists of names engraved on the monoliths stands next to it.

“Looks like they did it.” I see at least there is peace in this age.
“Hard to say, the history of humanity is the history of wars.” Velvet stated coldly.
“It is the history of civilization.”
“The civilization grows by wars.”
“Also the thought to improve their living.” I won’t deny any of the statement of Velvet, but there is also a good side to see.

“You have great trust in humanity.”
“Yes, always believe, even if they make mistakes.”
“I see.” Velvet stated with a little relieved, maybe she is still estimating me as a Shepherd.

Next to the memorial place, it is the national central library, guessed there is a concept to store the record of history and knowledge for all the future generations as remind so the library was built in such place. It is a great library that it appeared to have 10 storeys, there must be various types of books stored in there.

“Let’s have a look inside!” I pointed to the library.
“I don’t mind.”

The arch-shaped doorway atop the front facade of the National Central Library symbolizes the Gate to Knowledge, while having the Greek temple like the top and the front gate of the library symbolizes the accretion of knowledge through history. Inside, there is a large atrium to see all terraces of floors and all way of elevators and lifts. We tried to read all the unknown new concept in this age and to know the history of the world, but there are still many new words for us to learn, maybe most of the words we learned are only related to medical science.

I can only capture the simple trend of history, there were still wars after the time Alisha and Sergei died, the war of Aggressions, the war of Irredentism and the most ridiculous one: holy wars for Empyreans. History did repeat itself, but it doesn’t mean all the works Alisha and Sergei had became nothing, at least, the war didn’t repeat in their generation. People still remember their words and their history, the words passed on as the will of someone.

When the time comes, people like Alisha and Sergei will raise again and aid the Shepherd to stop the war. That’s why the status still standing outside.

“You don’t plan to read the dictionary the whole day or take it with you, do you?” Velvet stopped my action when I just take a dictionary from the bookshelf.

“Of...of course not….” I put it back with a wry smile, she has discovered that I want to learn words again.

“You are going to the groups of towers, aren’t you?”
“Just have a look in close, you are curious too, right?”
“....Fine.”

The closer we go, the bigger the shadow of the building, the more it is like to devour all the darkness
here. I can't see an external window, just like it is separated from the place where I stand. Two worlds, and I can't find an opening that I can't see its structure from the outside.

“I advise you two better not to go in.”

I don't know when, there is a girl sitting on the roof of a single-storey building overlooking us.

“But if you two go in, it seems to be very interesting.” After she finished, she disappeared. It seems that she is not human.

“.......The sun is setting, let’s turn back to the inn.” Velvet reminded me to be aware of the time. She said that with our limited budget from her work as a temporary servant, we got the inn offer of a single room for half a day.

We went back to the inn and rest after discussing the plan for tomorrow, we stared at the only single bed in the room.

“I will sleep on the floor, you may use the bed.” Velvet said before I planned to say the exact same thing as she said.

“What?! No! How can I let you sleep on the floor?” I exclaimed as I think it is unacceptable to let a girl sleep on the floor.

“No, it is fine. I am used to sleeping on the floor.” She said while sitting on the floor with one of her knees crooked.

She then leans her head on the crooked knee and sleep in such seat position.

“.............” She just cut my choice to let her have the bed and I feel sorry to have the bed even if she refuses the offer.

I tried to sleep on the bed but I can’t fall in sleep as I keep in mind of letting Velvet slept on the ground.
I go outside to cool my brain down and run around the city to get myself tired. It is not like the past Ladylake, the market still works popularly in the night, it is like the normal daily life of people.

“Hey, I saw you in the afternoon. Are you cosplaying the ‘Grand Shepherd’? You are the best cosplayer I ever saw. May I take a photo with you?” The girl already assumed me as the cosplayer and she requested to take a photo with me.

“Yes…..”

The girl took out a small device from her pocket, she asked me to look toward the camera, but I have no idea where is the camera or what is the device in her hand.

“Yeah!!! Thank you!!!”

“You are welcome, may…” I wanted to ask about the device she held to take the photo but she has already gone. I sighed, what a fast-paced city, but it is a good thing that the tales of the Shepherd and the Empyrean become a well-known story, the faith in Seraphim is not extinct.

After a certain time, I return to the inn. I heard some groan when I walk through the corridor. People will say it is a phenomenon caused by ghosts but I know they are not truly ghost but a kind of hellions. I tried to find the sound source and I find it is from my room, it is from Velvet.
She is tossing and turning in her sleep and I focused to listen to the words she mumbled in sleep.

“I am….sorry…..I….have….no…choice…..I….need to…survive…..it….is you…..r…..fault…..no……it….is …….my fault……I….cannot……I must eat…….” Velvet mumbled repeatedly in a way to let me feel heartbroken. Her voice is soft and weak, almost like crying and begging, she has never forgiven herself.

I can't say it is not her fault but I can say the fault lies in everyone. So she doesn't have to blame all things on herself.

Her expression twisted into painful and struggling as I observed closely. She is wide opening her eyes and looking at nothing, not as she has noticed me. It is no way I continue to sleep on the bed and left her on the floor.

To think about the possibility that every night she sleeps in this condition, suffering from nightmares and act like normal every day. It is terrible, and I never notice it until now.

In how many times she fights against it without anyone, never showing her weakness and never search for help. I can't imagine how harsh will life be for the everyday nightmare. What is the thing support her now? She had experienced many harsh works and she nearly loses everything now.

I am well aware that she never wants salvation. I feel sorry about that and I should say she is really strong but also……fragile.

“It's alright. It's not your own fault.” I whispered to her ear.

I cannot do much but to accompany. I pull the blanket from the bed and cover it on her and me lightly. I sit next to her and lean my head on the behind wall. I hear that Velvet's mumbling is slightly and slowly vanishing so I start to sleep comfortably and hope that she will have a good dream.

In the next morning, sunlight penetrates into the room through the Windows, Velvet is the first one to get up. As she said, she used to prepare stuff in the early morning and she tends to have light sleeping.

“Sorey?” Velvet asked as she doesn't expect me to sleep next to her and…..leaning head on her.

“Velvet……good morning….ah….I am sorry, I unconsciously lean my head on you.” I slowly awoke and said but I quickly apologize just after noticing myself leaning on her body. I wonder if she will be mad at me for that.

“Humm, it is fine….but why did you sleep here?” She seems perfectly fine and carefree for my close touch in such a sleeping position. She is obtuse about this kind of things.

“I...just can't sleep alone on the bed(when seeing others sleeping on the floor).” I shut my later part of the sentence and swallowed it.

“Puff, are you a kid?” seems that she has mistaken something but let it be it.

“Did you have a nice sleep?” I asked as I saw her struggling in the nightmare and I don’t know how her dream continue.

“Yeah, sure.” she smiled. Whatever it is a lie or not, good to hear that.

We then prepare to work in the inn for another hour for breakfast and lunch and start our adventure again.
We go into the underground ruin as I suggested to search my dear friend Mikleo.

Clearly, Mikleo is not here. I am surprised that I got into the Vivia Subterranean Aqueduct without the royal sword and the purification flame.

I suppose there is no hellion under the field of Uno.

“I heard some sound of steps.” Velvet warned me to leave.
A giant shadow cast over me, I see red bright eyes. I draw my sword out and chop it immediately.

“What in the---- Why?!?” Empty, that is all I can think of at the moment. There are packs of hellions chasing us.

“Everything is possible, good to have a fruit knife at least.” Velvet took her fruit knife out of her package. She bought it with me after we left the sanctuary, but I don’t expect she use it this way. She did want a weapon cause that way is safer, but there is no direct way to buy a true weapon in modern society. At least we can buy kitchenware from tool stores but only small tools can be brought with us along in legal. It is too obvious if we buy a cleaver and bring it with us in our way, we will get caught by the police.

“That can’t be enough to fight the hellions!” I thought Velvet was joking at this moment. Using the fruit knife to fight? No way!

“True, have you any idea?”
“Let’s run away!” I know there is no way to defeat hellions by human’s hand.

“Agreed.”

We ran without really check the route, and end up with heading to a place certainly unlike any of the ruins, but more like those entrance of a modern building with some kind of shabby steel facade.

“You sure to go in? Cause it not like we may get out easily again.” Velvet reminded me of the tower Uno mentioned.

“.....Seem that we have no choice.” I look back, the Hellion is not far from us, besides, I did want to have a look in the tower.

The gate is unlocked, so we get inside and close the door. At the moment I felt relieved until I heard a locked sound of the door. Seems there is another issue we have to face.

I sense a weak level of malevolence around here, maybe this is why hellion presence in the ruin and the ruin is opened without the key. Someone opened it and set their spot in the ruin.

Velvet prepared herself with the fruit knife, it is not a great weapon but it is the only hope for her I think.

We got into the building, it is more like a building complex, those messy wire connection provide the resource to buildings. Walking through the dark alley, we see some thin and weak people are looking at us with strange eyes. We are weird to this place. Suddenly, a group of people present in the end of the alley, stopping our routes, when we looked back, another group is there, taking out their weapons, ready for a fight, we are trapped.

The gang fight began, they planned to take us down with the bat. Velvet uses her knife to cut other, I want to stop her, but I am too busy of handling the gangs fighting against me. It is easier to take down them than the hellions, but I don’t want to hurt them seriously. There is no mercy in their eyes,
their clothes are rotten, no doubt that they are poor, I guess they do this to survive. When people think they do this just to survive, they don’t think it is wrong, which is also why this place is not completely corrupted in malevolence.

“What’s going on?! Can’t take down two people with a bunch of people?” Their leader shouted out, then I see Velvet is heading towards him, what is she trying to do?!

---------------------------------------------

Velvet pov

Brawling, robbing, or even worse, there are still people living in this way in this building. It is like the seraph Uno said, better not to get in, here is not as peaceful as the outside city. Even under the blessing of Laphicet, the world is still like this, I see sin is born with the human.

I saw that a man is exchanging something with the other in the dark narrow alley, he received the money and he gave out a large bag that seems that it can contain a person. The man then saw me watching them. This is bad, I pretend I see nothing and continue to walk with Sorey, let’s don’t tell him anything about this.

However, it is useless, we still got surrounded by the gang. It seems I accidentally get into trouble, and now they want to eliminate witnesses.

To protect myself, I use the fruit knife to cut them and pierce them, it doesn’t make much damage but it still buys the time. Their leader is shouting at them, if I make their boss unmovable, maybe they will stop, so I approach their boss and quickly pierce my hidden cutter to him. It may not be a good weapon against a hellion, but good enough to hurt a human.

His blood flooding out from the wound, so he called his gang to leave with some of his unconscious members left behind.

It is not a good idea if we continue dressing like ourselves, especially not a good idea to wear a Shepherd cape in here. I suggest we pull those losers clothes on ourselves.

“But this is their properties! Why did you do that?” Sorey opposed my idea. I know his reason, I used to travel with an exorcist who has a kind heart like him too.

Really, a piece of work like someone.

“What done is done, if you are going to approach more fight like this, you continue to dress your cath.” There is no excuse for my actions and I don’t think it is wrong at all, it is what we need to do to survive. That what I have learned from Titania, the Island Prison in the 3 years I stayed. I killed numerous of daemons, even I knew they were human, just to survive and have my revenge.

“.........Alright.” I got his idea to avoid unnecessary fights. If he is a kind heart person, he won’t want to hurt anyone, so he will choose to avoid fights. And this place clearly doesn’t need a Shepherd presence, people in here work for themselves because they are abandoned by the government. A Shepherd will be existence to be hate, for not being able to help them.

We change our clothes, which dragged from the losers and we gave our only clothes in our package to the losers as the compensation. As Sorey insisted we can’t just leave them nothing and I don’t want to hold a bad relationship to him. Then our old set of clothes in our journey will be the only set of clothes we left apart from the rotten clothes dragged from the losers.

“.....u….!umm!!.....!” I heard some sound behind us, I see a large bag abandoned in the rubbish bags is moving like someone is struggling inside.
Now the kind Shepherd sees the bag, I guess he must go rescue the person inside, now it is unavoidable to be involved in some incidents among groups.

It is a little girl in the bag.

“...ha.....ha.....Thanks....Beta! Are you Beta? You finally back! This is great! We miss you so much!” The girl breaths heavily after being released from the bag, she is very excited to catch and hug me tightly.

I guess she recognizes the wrong person, but maybe the identity can be used, so I didn’t declare immediately.

I asked: “Yes, what is going on?!”

She must have been shocked by the capture and she is still shuddering. I slowly smoothed her back to appease her emotion, she has a value for me. Now, I know none of the names and information here, but I will try to get the information later.

“Vel....”Sorey is trying to ask but I shut his mouth with my eye to not let him reveal my true name.

“......Lots of things happen, maybe not to talk in this place?” The girl asked.
“Sure, just go anywhere you want, somewhere like your spot.” I tried to let her lead us to her spot.
“And who is he?” The girl suspected.
“Just a friend meet on the ground.”

I hope we get a safe place as soon as possible.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
I am not really good at writing fight but it is necessary to write with tales characters, I hope I can skip every fight like this but it is impossible.....I know there should be some difference between Sorey and Velvet, some of them may lead conflicts, I try to show some of them in this chapter.

By the way, no gun stores in my country, it is illegal, I applied this in the story.

PS. some settings like the setting of malevolence is like the 御都合主義, that sometimes I am afraid I can’t give a proper reason to explain the setting like why people are/ are not releasing malevolence, so it completely works for the plot. Good thing is that it is still not a very important problem in the story now.
Ch13 - The lost tower

Chapter Notes

no reunion but side quest involved to get in the main plot

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Velvet pov

I can sure that we will get into trouble, from the moment we save the girl from a bag.

Why is that she in the bag?
Why she acted as she knows me?
How is the one she knows like?
How should I act to be the one she knows?
What exactly the person do in this place?
What are the ways to live in such a place?

There are too many questions in my head that I can’t ask easily. Unknowing questioning is only a
clueless act in this dangerous place.

Before I figure out anything from the place, there already a problem come ahead.

“Are you really Beta?” The girl started to doubt after a while of calm down.
“Why would you ask?” I prepare to fail the plan.
“You possesses a deeper voice than I knew.”
“......I catch a cold and is not fully healed.”
“You seems to be taller than the last time I saw.”
“I wear high-heel boots.”
“Your eyes……are different.”
“.....Too many things happened that I can’t handle my emotion well, sorry.” Let’s assume she is not saying we have different colors of eyes.

Sorey shut his mouth with worry, after all, he is not good at lying.
The girl stops saying more after that. Whether starting to doubt my identity or trust me, I will prepare for any situations. Plans must be solid, and reactions flexible.
She leads us to a place where seems to be their spot to hide, I take that she believed in me, to the extent that if she still leads the way to their spot or she has another purpose to bring me here.

We pass through the narrow alley with water dripping above, the washed clothes just hang on the pipe ducts line outside the building to dry and block the limited sunlight to the alley. Buildings are very close to each other that almost close enough for a handshake and the electrical cables link the buildings together. Walking up all the stair, she leads us to a metal house on a rooftop of a low-rise building.

She knocked on a door with a specific beat like a signal, the door then opened a slit, I see an eye is watching outside through it.

“...Beta!! Anna! You are safe!”
Again they get the strange name on me, I guess the one called Beta may be like a sister or family member to them. Now at least I know the girl named Anna.

“....Who is the guy?” The boy behind the door pointed to Sorey.
“...A new friend. He helped me a lot.”

“Oh...Ok! Anyway, You have to see this!!” After a while, the boy decided to believe in Sorey too and opened the door. There is only a word to describe the view behind the door: disaster. Broken furniture everywhere and the things in the house are in a chaotic state. I see injured children staying in the room with shivering and covered by the ragged blanket. They powerlessly lean on each other.

“What is going on here? And where is Tom?”
Seems that someone is missing in the room.

“I don’t know, 2 men just suddenly opened our door and beat us down when breaking down the furniture to scare us.”

“Anyone followed you?” I asked.
“.........maybe…..”
“....I always remind you to be careful about the surrounding!” Anna stated in frustration.

“The men then pull some dirty water towards us and gave some strange medicines for us to eat while we cannot move. They caught Tom in a bag and brought him somewhere.”
“I remembered their last word: ‘Seems these kids can sell a fine price, now we get a new supply.’”

“Then they must come back again, I will beat them up,” I said to pretend as I care them if I was their sister, but somehow I feel the anger within me.

“Must be the asshole gang under Mafia.” The girl said with oppressive rage.

“Hey, isn’t it a great heat?!” I exclaimed after I test their body temperature with my own hand, it is hot like they are having a high fever.

“We still have time, so maybe we can look after them first,” Sorey suggested as he wants to help those poor kids.

“......I will take care of the gang and rescue the rest, but at first.........I will take care of you guys.” Those children in poor health reminded me of my sick brother that I can’t leave them alone.

“Sorry to make you worry……” The kid apologized in a weak tone.

“Hey. What are you apologizing for? We’re a family, right?” I responded immediately after I heard the kid says the same sentence as my little brother one said. We tidy up all the things in the house and throw away the broken furniture. Then I did things like a natural response like I back in the time when I still had my little sick brother here.

I instructed: “Sorey, the water.”
“eh?”
“Water, get it quickly. The kids are having a high fever.”
“Ah! OK! I will get it soon.”
I instruct Sorey to help taking care of those children with cool tower.

"Beta….” One of the sick kids is calling the person.
“Firmly cover the blanket and rest now.”

I make some pillows from our clothes package with some cardboards they stored to let them lie down comfortably and covered the kids with the blankets in their house and the clothes we brought along, it is not good to get a further cold.

“Wait here, I will try getting you guys something to eat,” I said then go to the kitchen to go cook some foods which are easy-to-digest.

“Can I help?” Anna asked.
“I don’t need help in cooking, more efficient to do it alone. You may just look after those kids….And I may need a taste test after a while.”
“OK! Leave it to me!” She gladly accepted, seems that she doesn’t doubt at me anymore.

Sorey POV

Velvet looks like a different person when she is taking care of the kids. Back then, she is cooler, like carefree to anything, and she always tries to avoid revealing anything about herself to me even after I know she was a Lord of Calamity. I know she has her kind and gentle side, but now she shows it more than I remembered. Not like I fully get to know her, but I am sure that she is a clumsy person to show her kindness.

“Here. It is hot, small sips.” Velvet said to the kid in a gentle and soft voice when she feeds the sick
children.
“When you finish eating, take medicine properly and sleep well. OK?”
“Ok…..”

“I place the water and medicine here, is this fine?” I asked when placed the necessary items next to the kid.

“Yeah, thanks.” Surprised me more, she becomes polite.
The children sleep after having the medicine we brought with the congee we just made. Glad that we brought some medicine from the clinic before we start the journey.

“Surprised me. You seem to use to this;” I asked Velvet with a surprised smile after all the kids are asleep.

“My little brother had a weak constitution and was almost sick every day in his life. I had to look after him.” She answered while twisting the tower to dry it and wet it with new cold water. I didn’t see her expression, maybe she just didn’t want to show her weakness.

“I see, you are a good sister. You’ve mentioned him once. I remember...he called Laphicet….. The same name as Maotelus……” Back then I forgot to ask her about that shocking fact.

“Yes, my little brother died, and I named Maotelus with my brother’s name because they look alike. You can tell that I am a terrible person.” She teased herself.

“.........Sorry to mention it.” I don’t know how to respond when I hear the fact of the origin of the name of the Empyrean in the past. Indeed, it is a terrible act to name one seraph with the same name as a dead person, like that just a substitution of a person. People do foolish and terrible acts when they lose in the maze of emotion. She must experience something like that which I can’t comment on her.

“Laphicet didn’t tell you?”
“No, he didn’t…..But he mentioned that the name means the one who lives, and you told him that he is living.”

“......Yes, when he was a slave of an exorcist and be ordered to kill me with self-destruction. I just accidentally grabbed him away with me. I once treated him as a tool and as a substitution too, but still, he saved me from the despair.”

“He loves you. He said everyone in your team taught him how to live.”
“.....I don’t........” She stopped a while and then make another sentence to respond.
“Good that he learned the great things from a team of bad guys. I will be always grateful to him.”
I stopped the topic after hearing the answer, it seems that she doesn’t want to talk about it.

After a while, we hear some sound outside the door and we assure each other the plan with an eyes contract and a nod. At the moment the door is busted open, we defeat the enemy in a second, too bad they still come with only two people. Although no surprise that they are hellions, they are the weak one and must possess the same weakness as human, that we can handle them in the first moment they didn’t notice. Velvet tied both of them on a chair tightly and waits for them to wake.

“Lead us to the spot you kidnapped the kids, also promise to not target at the kids again. Or I kill you.” Velvet puts the knife on his neck and threatens his life.

“Ri….Right!”
I see Velvet also a dangerous person to do such act, but I suppose she is right this time, it is not like they are some people to agree with things with only conversations.

Velvet POV

I sorted out the characters in this place from the views I have seen on our way when the 2 guys are leading us to the place.

There are people who timid and trembling in fear, they don’t bother the gang to earn a lesson.

There are people who curl up shivering along the street, they are so poor that they can’t even get proper clothes.

There is people rob for their living, they join the gang and commit the crime.

This is the life in this maze-like building complex which covered by its own large shadow with limited sunlight.

I think of my Titania 3-year life in the bloody pit, the view is, all the same, every day. The cold stone wall tainted with Daemon’s blood and bare sunlight from the steel caged skylight. The skylight is the only exit and the light source. Rain and snow sometimes blow down the pit, but they don’t wash away a thing but solid my realization to myself-- I am no longer human, I didn’t even feel cold. People who turned into daemon are thrown in the pit and be eaten by a monster who was too hungry and vengeful to care. All I care was to survive and had my revenge on the Shepherd. I even ate kids who were still under 10 years old.

Thus I can totally understand that human will do no mercy under extreme conditions. Like those malicious people that we encountered when we just headed in the tower. However, it is still a lively town with people live with their own will. We still see smile exist in this place. At least the children are not having the worst childhood, they may at least play around freely. The protection to the children is a hidden rule in here, but clear that it is used for some illegal human trafficking as well by some people too.

I may pretty sure that we are in the giant tower complex no mentioned to be the poor-concentrated slums.

It maze-like structure and gang presence made the government be hard to intervene. People are forced to stay here by the gang and by their poor. They call here the Lost Tower.

The groups that have linkage to the outside will be the management team and the dark guild.

We got all the information from those two I am threatening. They planned to defeat us with the people in their spot once we arrived but we defeated all the people with several minutes as they are too weak when compared to all the hellions Sorey and I fought in the past. We smoothly rescued out the Tom and other kids kidnapped by the gang, then we continue the search for the information about Beta.

The name Beta belongs to a person said to has similar look to me, she is one of the senior administrators in a dark guild called Wild Wolf.

The guild is not just receiving requests but also offer shelter to the lost orphan, I think that also to increase team member and train talent from child period.

“Are you sure you continue to do this?”
Sorey understands my way to get us survived but he still has opinions against it. The only consensus between us is that now is not a good time to reveal my true identity.

“Yes, I can’t turn back now.”

All I can lie to maintain the false identity of Beta is to blur the information given to others and give the accurate answer sometimes.

“At least, it is not hurting someone.”

I feel sorry to Sorey who need to help to keep the lie. I let him ask about the personality of Beta and I got the name list of the team members.

It is better to help them get the true Beta so the guild is willing to help us out of here.

In the midnight time, everyone is out from the guild, I found a female in sexy clothing and carefree expression is gazing at her and I can’t find her in the book, I guess she is a seraph as no one see her existence so she is not recorded in the book. However, I remembered that I have seen her when Sorey and I just watch the towers outside of this place. She was the mysterious seraph who warn us better not to go in, but she also said it will be interesting if we go in.

“Hey, who are you?” I asked, doubted it this woman related to the guild and what is her purpose to talk to us in that time.

“Oh? You still come. One looks like Beta or……Velvet Crowe.” A female said in a joyful tone, like that she know Beta.

“You know me?”

“You are the student of the disciple of King Claudin Asgard, the student of Artorius Collbrande.”

“Rare that there is one perceive me that way. Sound like you know King Claudin too?”

“Well, I was once the seraph following King Claudin, until he died to protect Artorius. I was curious how Artorius would be after that, then I watched you when you are trained by Artorius.” I can’t say she is lying while I was low in resonance to perceive any Seraphim at that time, but Laphi never mentioned her to me, maybe she hid well.

“You watched Artorius fell in despair and did nothing?!” I felt angry with her act when I heard that she was observing us at that time.

“It is not like I have the responsibility to save the world, I followed Claudin only because he was interesting, but Artorius is a boring person to me, I rather just watch. Besides, I lost my free will after the Scarlet Night, not like I could stop him.”

“…….” I can’t fully accept her answer, but true that she has the right to act as an observer.

“You are the Grandson of Claudin, I am interested in you.” She is the Seraph with the worst personality I have ever seen.

“That’s why you said it would be interesting if we enter this tower complex…….You should know that I am also the Lord of Calamity at that time from others.”

“Surprised me, you still remember. Sure, but your acts in later were also sort of similar Claudin Asgard style. Not wrong to say you are the Grandson of Claudin’s style.”

“I am not a hero, and it is not like I learned any things from Claudin.”
“Artorius taught you the basic skills in the fight and the maxims, then all you have to do is to develop your own fighting style with countless battles, this is the Claudin’s style. One more thing you are similar to Claudin that is some recklessness in your act that always gives a surprise.” She stated in a joyful tone that I wonder if she is trying to tease me.

“Anyway, I just want to get out here. Why will you stay in such a place when you are a Seraph?” I stated my aim here that I don’t want to continue the conversation with her.

There is a silent gap after I asked, but a sound of entry break it, it is Sorey who came back here to converge and present his findings to me. He looks surprised that here are one more people exist at such time in the guild since it should be the time that everyone goes home. I can understand as I was shocked too.

“I see your point. I already said I love to watch interesting thing. This place is far more interesting than outside. In fact, the outside is actually dangerous to seraphim now.” The female seraph answered finally. Like many other Seraphim, she is interested in observing human life, but I hate her for this.

“What do you mean? I sense much lower malevolence outside right now.” Sorey just came back and join the conversation.

“Not in terms of Malevolence, can’t you find that the seraphim number is awfully low in outside even in such low malevolence?” The seraph asked us a question with a gaze to idiots. I hate her gaze but I must admit we still barely know a thing in this age.

“That’s true. You mean someone trap those seraphim?” Sorey answered after a ponder, the significantly decreased amount in seraphim make him concluded there is someone who trapped those seraphim in outside.

“Maybe, that is why I need the information from some people in the guild.” The seraph declared and start being more honest.

“I see. And you also know the person called Beta in this place, right? Have you any idea where the true Beta has gone?” I requested information from the lady.

“I heard she went to the center of the Lost Tower to do something with the Mafia, like she wanted to do something with the growing human trafficking in this place.” The lady answered honestly, seems that she has the joy to observe what I am going to do.

“Great, we will go to find her.” I planned to leave as I think she is not the type of people I can handle well and I hate her.

“Is that fine with your equipment?” The female seraph teased.

“Better than what we got when we first got in.” I show my new equipment obtained from the guild and share some of it to Sorey.

“You steal it from the guild?!” Sorey exclaimed. I am sure he has a bad impression towards me but I don’t care. At very first, he should not view me as a good person. After all, I was a Lord of Calamity, who can tell I have changed along the time? I am still the one who is willing to do anything and use anything to achieve my goal, that’s all.

“Borrowed, just returned them to the guild after we left if you mind it so much,” I stated calmly as I think they are the necessary weapons for as to survive in the Lost Tower.

“Oh, boy, it will be fine, we have pretty much of those supply, just take it, you will need it.” The
female seraph claimed.

“If you say so…….Thank you. What’s your name by the way?” Sorey stated his gratitude politely and asked a question I avoided.

“You should report your name first before asking.” She responded.

“Sorry, I am Sorey and she is Velvet. What’s is your name?” Sorey just introduced both of us without a second thought, though the seraph already knew my name.

“My name is Ophelia. Good luck, you two.” The seraph revealed her name and expelled us out of the place in a polite manner.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
Originally I don’t plan to write them to enter the tower……. But I think the setting is wasted if I have set it. I decided to have the challenge to write this place.

The setting is a reference from some famous slum as I knew. For the name of Beta, actually she is called Ada at first, I changed her name after I thought of some special setting, so it is not just because I am lazy at naming, I also set some setting for a reason of laze( laugh).
I am not good at writing battles but I still wrote several battles here. As a result, this chapter looks a lot longer than usual.

Somewhere, at night, the bell that hanging on the door rings as the hint of the visitor, makes the one sitting in the bar turned her head.

“President, here I come~” Ophelia waved her hand to say hello to an old acquaintance, though they are no close enough to call a friend.

“Ophelia? What’s a rare visitor, you are usually the spectator.” The only one sitting in the bar
answered with a welcome smile.

“This is interesting people I found, one of whom calls himself Sorey.” Ophelia said with a confident smile, she has expected the person will care about this.

“Interesting. Did the feeling 2 months ago really because of the Maotelus awaken……. Why would you tell me?” The ‘president’ calmly responded and said in a carefree tone.

“Eh? I thought you would be interested in this, you obviously working so hard for him.”

“That's what happened in my human time, and I did it for myself too..... For the guy who doesn't know if he is a fake, I will ask you to help me observe it for a while.”

“Do you think I will help you?” Ophelia doubted, she should know she is always neutral.

“Because you won’t do anything but watch.” The ‘president’ taunted.

“This is really the best compliment, ok, I will observe it for you.”

“By the way, how is Beta now?”

“She is still missing, but recently there seems to be another news that she has appeared somewhere, Zaveid is going to check it out.”

“In this way, I pray for her to be safe, after all, she is also an important member of our alliance.”

Velvet pov

Approaching the center of the tower, the building appearance becomes more modern with metal panel facade, the building material in this district obviously more expensive than the outer ring, indicating the importance in this place.

Without any sign of action, we are attacked by a gang with a steel bar as their weapon. No matter where you go, a lot of troubles come. Is the one who call Beta in here so famous?

“Get out from here……..Wait….How did you get out?! Catch them!” Shouted the gang which in charge of protecting the district and they are only human, I have the confidence to defeat them quickly. Also, from his message, I can sure we are approaching the actual location for the capture of Beta.

“Get out of my way! or I will kill you!” I warn them and rushed into the groups of people and fight like a berserker.

“Velvet?! We don’t need to kill!” Sorey does not agree to my words but I don’t care, I never expect a Shepherd agree with the credo of a Lord of Calamity.

I leave no limit of power to hit 2 of them in a coma with the rod I obtained from the guild and kick down the enemies one by one with the blade in my shoe to draw out from the fight and move on. I don’t want to stop, so it is unnecessary for me to keep attacking a target until dead and it is not good to be recognized or wanted in this region, so it may be better to not kill anyone.

Soon, we break out from the gang and arrive at the central tower entrance.

“Thank you,” Sorey said while running after me.

“For what?” I confused.
“For not killing them.” He watched behind, obviously referring the gang.
“.........I only do for my own good.” I responded honestly and sighed. This ex-shepherd is really a
doormat, he even says thanks for the one just attacked him for their good, guess he will accept all the
request from others if he is asked.

“Still, I will thank you for that. What’s the next plan?”
“Heading straight into the tower….with violence.” I kicked open the door.
There is apparently empty. No one here, not like having any trace of living, it is a warehouse.

The door behind us automatically closed.
The in the possibility that another gang lie low here, we are their target.

The place remains dark, the lights are not turned on, we can no longer rely on our sense of sight but
our hearing.

Footsteps come from all sides, I can’t ensure the number of enemies or the approaching attack with
the sound now, as my sense is much weaker than when I was a daemon.

“Sorey……It seems that we are surrounded again.”
“Right, I am ready for it.” I heard Sorey draw his sword out.
Good to hear that, because I have no spare time to notice his side in such case.

Too bad that I don’t know if they are hellions or not, but it doesn’t matter, we will have to defeat
them.
I increase my alertness to the enemy and sharpen my sense as far as possible.

Let my heart peace like the water, feel the air surrounding me.

I catch the wind.

BANG!
The impact sound of the weapon to the ground caused when I just doubt it by a side step.

So my body didn’t drop my battle sense, it is a good start to ‘see’ where’ the enemy is now.

As soon as I sidestepped, I hit in the direction that I hear the sound.

“Damn it!” Bingo.

I continue to attack with an upper kick and low sweep, the blade in my shoe should increase the
given damage of a kick.

“Discord” I used the claw arte unconsciously when I don’t have a claw anymore.

“Hmm, get you.” One grabbed my arm tightly from the other side and I can’t break free from it.

“?!” How can I forget that I am not just fighting one people?!
He swings my entire body with my arm and hit to the ground. With such strength, no surprise that he
is a hellion.

“….urgh!”
“Velvet, you ok there?” Sorey asked with worry as he heard me cry out at the moment I got hit to the
ground.

“I………gu(Wham).…” I try to swing and hit his head with my rod in hand with the momentum he
swings me but I fail and the rod flies out of my right hand. The man didn’t release his hands and swing me to another side. I can feel my head is hit to a hard object like a column at a high speed.

SHIT! My head feels a heavy daze after the impact and I start to have the temporary deafness, it is not long to the time I may lose my consciousness. I am not used to be a human again with such a weak body.

“Velvet! I am coming!”
“Kid, Do you have leisure time to pay attention to the other side? I don’t think so.”

“Lion’s howl!” I can’t get exactly how is the battle in Sorey side but he is still fighting. A shame that I am too careless to use the claw arte and give the chance them to grab my arm.

“This woman has a nice body, guess we can sell her at a fine price.” I wonder why they can see us clearly in such a dark place.

“Fix her feet!” The man ordered, now the other people approach me, clearly, he noticed that I have the trend to attack with kicks combo. I didn’t give up and bite in a random direction hope to bite someone.

“Argh, yike?!” Out of natural response, the one who has my bite at his arm just throw me away with a great swing.

I am thrown and hit my back against the wall then slide down on the ground.

“Shit! What are you doing?!”
“She bites me!”
“You let her escape! Now, where is she?”
Good, seems that they haven’t found me yet.

I gingerly to stand up and embracing the wall, walking slowly forward with one hand on the wall pester, making the footsteps as light as possible.

It is hard to maintain my balance in dizziness, each step becomes heavy.

Light….I need the light turn on, maybe the switch is somewhere on the wall.

The fighting is still continuing, I can know this by the sound.

Finally, I catch something like a pull rod on the wall and I pull it down, all lights are turned on.

“Ah?!”
“There she is!”

“No way you go! Wolfwind Fang!” Sorey stabs his sword into one of the enemies, then switches hands and, in reverse, grip-slashes the sword upward diagonally, throwing the enemy into the air. He then grabbed back his sword to his main hand and performing a full spin while kicking with his left foot downward diagonally.

“Earth Dragon Fang!” Just after the Wolfwind Fang, Sorey makes a diagonal slash downward another enemy, following it with an upward diagonal slash, a horizontal slash, a kick, and one final horizontal slash. His opponent is stunned.
I go to pick my rod that flew away at the moment. One of them is trying to approach me; I slash him with a whirling cartwheel kick and then pick up the rod. I perform a lep sweep to the left then that generates momentum for a rightward kick that picks up downed the enemy.

“Vengeant Fangs!” Suddenly the enemies are mauled in a wide horizontal area to shred with fangs of wind. It is a higher seraphic arte in wind element, that means another seraph present.

“So you are here Beta….Hmm?! Are you…Velvet?! How is that possible……..” A man just entered from the door greets and his voice is familiar to me.

“Zaveid?! Long time no see!” Sorey greeted back despite he is not greeted.

“Sorey? You are here too?! Nice one!” Zaveid said like he knew Sorey, I guess things change a lot in the millennium.

“Velvet, you Ok? You don’t look great.” Sorey asked in concern.

“I am ………fine……..” I felt dizziness in my head that I nearly lose my balance in a stand.

Sorey hurried forward and held my neck with the other hand holding my hand to stabilize my posture.

“Huh? It is wet…….? You are bleeding!….. Velvet!” He noticed that when he sees the blood on his hand that held my neck.

I suddenly felt blackout in front of me, lost consciousness and fell down. I guess I lost my sense gradually since the moment I got and head-bang by the swing that I didn’t notice I am bleeding.

“Urgh…..” Don’t know how long I am out, but I suppose I am healed by the seraph next to me.

“You wake,” Sorey stated gladly.

“....How long am I out?”

“Half an hour….Lucky that is not a serious wound to heal by my seraphic arte.”

“Thanks, Zaveid….Why are you half naked?” I asked the question after stating my gratitude. The conversation just started too naturally and suddenly between Sorey and Zaveid when he came, I almost forget to taunt Zaveid about his clothing at that time.

“Why will he wear clothes?” Sorey asked me like I asked a ridiculous question, how ironic.

“So that I can feel the wind~” He is not trying to answer it seriously.

“Ugh…….Maybe we talk later. We came here for another thing, to find a girl call Beta.”

“What’s a coincidence. I am doing the exact same thing. Now I get it, the news of the recent activities of Beta is because of you, Velvet.”

“Yes, I heard that she has a very similar look to me, so I borrow her identity in this place but I have no idea where she is apart from being in the central district.”

“We want to leave here but we can’t find an exit,” Sorey added.

“So now we are a partnership, I am sure she is in this building,” Zaveid suggested.
“Why? There are so many buildings.” Sorey asked.

“I have investigated each of them and this is the last one I haven’t check.”

“Is she an important person to you that you search her out so badly?” Sorey is surprised that he went to every building to find a person.

“Sort of……a family maybe.”

“I see, then quickly find her and bring her back.” It is difficult to imagine how will he be with a family when he is always a loafer to me.

“Right. Let's find it separately. The even number for you two, the odd number for me.” Zaveid points at the floor numbers on the escalator of this building.

“Ok.”

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We found many floors in ascending order of the building but still not finding a hint until we reach the top level, there is a floor fully covered with metal.

“Intruder detected.”

Some mechanical arm attached with some kind of weapon suddenly extended out from the wall, I have a bad feeling about it.

Those devices shoot out the bullet automatically towards me. Shouldn’t this place a poor place?! This seems high-tech!

“Sorey, hide!” I ordered while dodging the shooting towards and rushed to interpose the rod between the arm and the wall.

“What about you?” He worried but can’t care much and hide under a table.

“I don’t know.” I disassembled the metallic extension attached with metal panel and the shooting devices. However, there is not only one mechanical arm with those shooting devices, but I should also seek a solution to take down all the devices.

I took away the disassembled part and rush to hide with Sorey. The metal panel attached on the extension and my mechanic prosthesis may be the temporary shield to me.

“I have no idea how those things work……” I sighed.

The table is breaking after taking up great damage from those devices’ attack, it is not a safe place forever.

“Let me try!” I gave the disassembled part to Sorey.

Sorey is trying to understand how the weapon functioning and he managed to half master it in such a short time. He targeted one of the machines and press the trigger of the devices. Something shot out from it and bread down a mechanical arm with the shooting device. Really lucky, we managed to pass the room with the devices we picked from the place.

A girl is captured in the room behind the trap room, her hands are tied behind the chair, wounds appear on her everywhere. Her black hair hangs down her head and covers her face.
“What are you planning to work on me?” The girl asked when she noticed we entered the place, she has a higher tone than my voice that just like my younger version of voice. I noticed the flat tone hides her anger to the one trap her here, she has fought back but fails. Seems that she mistook that we are her enemy, she even doesn’t spend time to see who came in.

She slowly looked up from her sullen head and let me see her face gradually. She glared at me. I am really shocked, it is not a face very similar to me, it is a face that nearly identical to me, with her hate glare, I almost think that I am looking in a mirror. The only differences between us are the eyes color and her height, she is shorter and possessed an orange iris.

There is a feeling of vomiting coming up from the stomach. How is it possible that there is someone so similar to me in the world?

“No, we are here to rescue you, are you Beta?” Sorey tried to clarify our identity.

Then she looked at us with a disgusted face after seeing me, I can understand while I have the same feeling about it.

“Who are you? Why are you look so similar to me?” Beta continued looking at me with disgusted sight.

“I am Velvet, just a person look alike you. I am born to be that and I have no idea why there is someone who looks nearly identical to me.” I answered.

“Any proof?” Her doubt is not solved.

“No, but we will free you, then do whatever you want.”

“I will, needless to say.”

I free Beta from her shackle, then she immediately grabbed my left arm and attack my elbow.

Pow!

No good deed goes unpunished.

“?!“ She is in shock at that moment when she hit my aluminum arm, but she didn’t hesitate, smoothly give a swift and violent knee attack after that.

I block her attack with the metal Gauntlet on my right arm.

“Tch!”

“Hard? is it? Of course, it is metal.”

Even if she just has her bare hands and feet, she still doesn’t give up to attack, I see a survivor in her eyes of red-orange, burning like a flame. Just like seeing myself, she must have something to do, like I had to take revenge at that time.

We had to circumvent her with the premise of not hurting her as much as possible, Sorey managed to grab her wrists while I block her way to kick to prevent her further struggle or attack.

“Calm down! We don’t want to hurt you!” Sorey tried to persuade.

“Lie!”

“If we want to hurt you, we don’t need to remove your constraints,” I stated.

“......” She glared at me with anger, still doesn’t want to believe, she can’t listen to a logical explanation when she is filled with anger and fear.
She keeps trying to pull her hands from him, but she fails, the battle is in a stable state until the arrival of the lift.

Ding.

The lift door open, Zaveid comes out from it.

“Hey, hey, what’s going on here?”

“.....Za..veid?” Beta started to calm down when she sees Zaveid.

“Beta, how did you get hurt? Where have you been? You left for a whole week without leaving a message, I am worried about you.” Zaveid hugged the girl looks nearly identical to me. This should be obviously a touching reunion. The person he is desperately looking for is finally found, but this scene has caused me a great sense of disharmony and nausea as if it was an unacceptable thing. I turned my head and moved my eyes away.

“..........” She didn’t respond.

“...Talk later then, we go back together.” Zaveid saw her hesitant and scared eyes. He held her hand in both hands, looked at her, wanted to give her a sense of security, and did not rush to remind her to answer.

On the way, I can still feel her glare, she does not believe in us, particularly not believe in me. Still, she followed Zaveid and us to back her guild silently all the way. Zaveid left her this way until she finally calmed down from it.

“Now, we are back. Time to have a talk. What’s happened?”

Beta is silent until this moment, she looked at us, hesitate to answer while we are here.

“Don’t worry, they are my friends, but if you mind, I may tell them to stay away for a while.” Zaveid calmed Beta and solved her distrust to us.

“Friend…..fine.” She turned her gaze away from us.

“The Mafia side runs more and more rampant recently, they started to kidnap people here, and even the children I usually know with me began to suffer from them. I can't stand it... I want to do something for the kids... but the result is that the people who followed me were caught together....the bastards took them away in front of me, taking the internal organs from their bodies one by one....” She tried to remain a calm voice, but at last, her voice trembled.

“Sorry. It is my fault......Now that we are stimulating them, there may be a big fight soon.” She calmed herself again to say the last sentence.

“Sorry, let you bring up the sad things.” Zaveid patted Beta on the head tenderly.

“Just can’t remain the peace.......... so you two heard it, help us,” Zaveid said as if he knows we will agree to help.

“..........Fine, I help and you help us leave here after, what about you, Sorey?” I agreed to help after hearing what Beta said and also to get an offer from them but I am not sure if Sorey will agree or not, he has shown disagreeing attitude towards hurting other in this several fights and I knew he hates to hurt other.
“I will go with you if it is to protect people. Glad to be in help but we are not quite familiar with the modern weapons……” Sorey surprisingly agrees with the request, he is not that naive as I saw.

“No problem, Beta will teach you guys,” Zaveid said no problem while giving the job to one just back from danger. I know both of them not in deep, but I suppose he has his consideration in this.

“......... I will go prepare. Meet at the lobby after an hour.” Beta helplessly agreed and leave.

And with Zaveid as the leader, I can imagine sometimes he will let you feel helpless, just like how many times he brought me trouble.

“So, Velvet, you are alive?” Zaveid asked until now.

“Yes, I can’t believe in it too.”

“And you…..are a human now?!” He doubted.

“Yes….don’t be surprised in every word.” I taunted.

“Well, Eizen didn’t tell me how you ended up in the journey, I thought you were dead.” I wonder how is Eizen now after he mentioned him.

“Doesn’t matter to me.”

“So Sorey, this is the one I told you who fight the dragon with me.” Zaveid introduced me to Sorey with a smile.

“No, you fight me with the dragon!” This is a thing I must declare and complain, he was just being a troublemaker most of the time in my journey.

“Oh, you fight a dragon too?” Sorey asked.

“For power, you fight them too?”

“Yes, maybe I will tell you later. You knew Zaveid?”

“Yes, he brought a lot of trouble for me;” I complained.

“Oh, come on, don’t be some mean~” Zaveid said and clearly doesn’t feel it is a problem.

“Every time I meet you, trouble comes from you. Did you remember that you revived a wyvern and a dragon? Don’t you know how hard to defeat them even for a group?” I am angry when I memorize the memory and I am going to give him a punch.

“Look, I am sorry…I have helped you sometimes too….Please help me….Sorey!” He escaped behind Sorey.

Did he think himself as cute to behave like this?!

“Well…..it is the past now…and I suppose this made you stronger isn’t it?” Sorey felt helpless and say the word for Zaveid.

“....True.” I helplessly agreed since Sorey has his point.

“Anyway, I’m glad that you both are alive;” Zaveid said in longing.

“Let’s have my big hug! You two!” Suddenly there are powerful arms that embrace us from behind, and I can feel his body temperature directly. I am very surprised since when I was so close to him? ah, I suppose he somehow misses old faces, I just want to kick him off, but this will hit Sorey.

“How did you know Sorey?” I am curious that how is he end up with Sorey and seems Sorey didn’t
“That should be the question I ask. Well, I knew him as a Shepherd and I aid him to defeat the lord of Calamity.” Zaveid answered really briefly.

“Oh, hard to think that you will help someone throughout the process. For your inquiries, Sorey saved me when I am unconscious.” Since he answered me in very brief, I answered in the same way. I bother to give a detail explanation.

“Well, actually, Zaveid is my enemy when we first met,” Sorey confessed with a helpless smile.

“Oh, so he brought trouble to you too huh?” I teased at Zaveid.

“Yes, we are.” Sorey blinked his eyes innocently as he said nothing wrong.

“Okok, let off this topic, how are you end up in this place? and met Beta?... You said she is your family.” I will get annoyed if the conversation continues like that.

“Well, I come to Ladylake to see dear Lailah but she is not here. I then had sightseeing in the city. This ‘Lost Tower’ interested me the most. Thus I came in. I saw a boy with a similar appearance as Artorius but in younger age and he was carrying a girl looked just like you but in a younger age in his back. He sought help everywhere in the tower district but no one response, until he saw me. I was interested in them as they have near identical face to you and the first Shepherd. The boy said his sister Beta had a similar illness to Twelve Year Sickness. He wanted to find the cure for it as he had read it from somewhere. He begged me to take care of Beta, so I promised to take care of her for some years.......I must say she is just like you in some characteristic.” Zaveid told us his story here.

“She built her characteristic from every effect from the external, you are one of them.” Zaveid’s story reminded me of the things Zaveid did in my time, he had taken care of some children in that time, but when it came like he takes care of a child who just looks like me, I can’t help but feel disgusted.

“Twelve Year Sickness?” Sorey asked in a tone that he doesn’t know it. Maybe the illness is disappeared a long time.

“It is once an incurable illness in the ancient time, but we find the cure that is the Omega Elixir. Still, the cure may not pass down and across generations with such chaos stage.” I explained and feel sorry to the children who have Twelve Year Sickness.

“Well, we had Elixir but it may not have the real effect but a fake portion. They are mostly produced by the church, I was told that the church owned the formula.” Sorey responded.

“So is she cured?” I asked.

“Yes, and continue to live with the guild. She is like the big sister in the guild, all the members here like her.” Zaveid answered.

“How about her brother?” Sorey asked.

“That boy became a Shepherd later, we have written letters to each other, but we lost the contact in recent.”

“Became a Shepherd.....with the face similar to Artorius............” I am worrying things like mine will happen again at this time. To leave a despar Shepherd be alone is equal to leave the world to be destroyed by the Shepherd.
“Such a horrible manner to talk about others behind them, Zaveid.” Beta went down and see us after her preparation. We almost forget we should meet in the lobby after an hour.

“Well, as I said, they are friends, and there is no harm to you at all if I told them about you.” Zaveid didn’t think this is a problem.

“At least, please tell after asking me, and you two.”

“Velvet.”
“I am Sorey.”

“Velvet, Sorey, follow me.”

Chapter End Notes

A.N.

The chapter already relatively long because of the conversation, then I added more fight to practice (with some of the arête description copy from Aselia) when I am still not good at writing it. Maybe still pretty empty in the description in place and fight. Zaveid is one of the main character linking TOZ & TOB…….hope he is not OOC.
Chapter Summary

I really want to let them leave the place, let the gang fight begin and settle the things there.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sorey pov

Everyone here has done a lot of wrong things for survival, but they don't think it is wrong, even if it is not right either. thanks to this, the Seraphim can barely live here.
It is a place in darkness, darker than what I have encountered in my previous travels. There is a moment when I suspect that everything I have done is meaningless. Why would such a place exist? Why would it sustain? It is obviously such a painful place.....

The world has indeed improved compared with the previous ones, but humans have stopped at this point. Is there any change at all? Still, I believe in human, like how Maotelus has believed.

We have just been rescued from Beta and we were taken to their guild. Although it was not the first time we come, it is now the time we are officially invited. I haven't noticed before that their guild is more home-like than anywhere else. From the outside, it is a three-storey big house. The roof is covered by classic tiles, the whole building is basically a combination of red, white and yellow colors, giving a warm feeling. Inside is the big bar lobby that we met Ophelia, all of them are warm wooden finishing. Everyone should be here to meet and pick up the task, but I can't imagine what kind of tasks are there. Velvet seems to not let me get any closer to have a look every time and we didn't go up the stairs to the upper floor, so I don't know what's on it.

Zaveid took us to the upper reception room. Beta said everything. After hearing about everything, I was worried about her mental condition. Zaveid let her leave for a while and told us about his recent activities, including how did he get to be with the girl that with the nearly identical face as Velvet.

I can't imagine how he would have a family. When I met him, he was a man who was unconstrained like wind, only worked for his own goals, and he was always alone. He was like a big brother, but I couldn’t imagine how he taught children. Though Beta seems very obedient in front of him.

If Zaveid has spent so much effort into finding her, I can be sure that he has kept her in his mind. Then he must have his consideration in arranging for her to explain the weapons to us. Beta and Velvet are two different people, but maybe she is a workaholic like Velvet, so Zaveid decided to treat her like usual.

Going down the stairs, walking down the narrow corridor, we are following Beta to the warehouse of their guild.

“Hey, are you really okay?” Although she looks fine, I still worry about her and I decided to ask.

“.....I am fine. Zaveid didn't ask anything, why would you ask?”

“But..... that kind of thing happened…….” Hard to believe that she saw such horrible things but didn’t turn into a hellion.

“Something must be done for the people here when compared to this. Will you two help us?”

Perhaps it is because of the existence of such a person that the people here have the courage to live in extreme circumstances. Even if this place is worse, there is not just pain and darkness, hope also exists here. And because it is dark, let people see the light more clearly, even if there is only a little hope, they will try hard to catch up. That’s perhaps what Ophelia think to be interesting in this place and Zaveid does not seem to hate this place too.

“Yes, but You trust us?” Velvet is silent until now.

“Not really, especially for a suspicious person like you.”

“Very honest, what are you going to do?”

“Honestly explain the weapon to you guys as I was told to do so. Although you look dangerous, I'll use whatever means are available to me.”
“Oh?” Velvet smirked.

“Zaveid believes in you guys, then I will try to trust.”

“You really believe in Zaveid.” I stated.

“He is like a father figure to me, a dump dad sometimes though.”

Beta brought us to a room full of weapons, unlike the ancient time, the weapons here are almost blunt, the one with the blade is usually small.

“Here is the warehouse in the guild, just choose a weapon and I will talk about it.”

“Before this, may I have my blade repair?” Velvet asked and gave her Broken Gauntlet Blade to Beta. Fighting with a fruit knife is just horrible.

“That’s the first time I see someone using a blade to fight. It is not common nowadays, how did you get that blade?” Beta takes the Gauntlet Blade from Velvet and asked.

“It is from my parent. I use to fight with it.” Velvet explained. It may be a lie, maybe she just bought from the ancient weapon shop but I bet she can’t just tell the truth as it is ridiculous to people nowadays.

“Got it, I will try to find someone to fix it, I have seen a similar design before.” Beta answered after checking the retractable part in the Gauntlet Blade.

“So….I want to ask about this weapon.” When Velvet is talking about her weapon, I discovered a weapon similar to what we saw in the room but a smaller one. It is a black cold metal weapon with a trigger.

“Surprised me, you guys don’t know about it? It is a thing called gun, quite used to show in some TV programme, isn’t it?” Beta said in an annoyed tone.

“Umm, what is TV programme?” I asked with a helpless smile.

“Come on! What time are you guys live in?” Beta shocked by my question.

“Well……500 years ago…..”

“…..Huh? Fine, whatever…..a gun can shoot out the bullet with quick shocking force caused by the Gunpowder explosion.” Beta took the gun and hold it in a downward direction. She installs a back chamber with a shining bullet in the gun. She loaded the gun by pulling the upper part slide back, the upper part is retracted into its original position while we hear a sound.

“If you target the important part of the body, it can be a deadly weapon. We got quite of them but we don’t usually use it. We aim to win without dying.” Beta targeted the human-figure cardboard with a certain distance from here and pressing the trigger to shoot. Her body sightly fell backward by the force but she managed to fix herself by the standing position. A hole with smoke created on the heart position just after the shoot.

“That’s a naive thought.” Velvet commended.

“Yes, it is. Since death may induce malevolence, we don’t want our dear leader to be affected, but we just minimize kill as much as possible.” Beta agreed and explained.

“Zaveid is the leader?!” I shocked.
“Yes, kind of, although he is not doing many things, and I am the one to talk for him.”

“By the way, why would you guys have such an amount of guns when you don’t use it.” Velvet asked.
“We stole them from the Mafia. We don’t use it, and we don’t want to let them use it too.”

“........You mentioned the word Mafia before, what is it exactly?” I asked and then Beta sighed. Probably lamenting our ignorance, this is also a helpless thing. Now is an era farther away from us. There are many new things, but the whole essence of society has not changed.

“The Mafia is an organized criminal group that everyone is afraid of, and no one knows their true scale. Like the Mafia-Family that protects(governs) here, their territory is not only here, but there is also a strong backstage supporter. Their main way to make money is through illegal means, including prostitution, drug sales, extortion protection fees, and human trafficking as I mentioned. I may turn a blind eye on other things, but only human trafficking is unacceptable.”

“Why? You are saying the other illegal things are acceptable!?”
“Not really, but reluctantly, drug abuse and prostitution can be regarded as the choice of those people, and this is the way they live. The mafia also has people they want to protect, and they depend on it for a living. It’s not my turn to disagree.”

“Why can’t you disagree when you disagree with them? Why don’t just drive them away?”
“No, I said here is their territory, and this illegal slum complex exists based on their protection. People lived here are too poor to live outside. If it is cleared by the outside government, everyone will become homeless, like those who line up outside the church every day and there will not be enough capacity. Here live thousands of people. Despite the harsh life, we desperately protect our home. The Mafia is a must here.”

“A complex reason, huh, and you sound like you don’t hate them at all.”

“After all, the origin of the Mafia is also a self-defense group against the invaders spontaneously established by the people in the war. However, as their scale grow, they twisted into a large-scale criminal group. Everyone join them may have their backstory.”

“We have a fight against them, do you have the way to hold them?”
“No, it is just gambling with life, and the strength will be the necessary bargaining chip.”
“That is it, I do not hate people like you. As I said, I will help. Let’s continue......what is this?” Velvet takes out her rod and asked.

“That’s an electric rod, a good insight of weapon choice but I bet you didn’t use it properly. With this.......” Beta took the rod and hit it to the metal desk while pressing down the bottom. A current strikeout, some paper on the desk is burning.

“You may let someone suffer from electric stock to knock down someone and also burn down things. It works well with the metal product.” Beta hand over the rod to Velvet. Velvet and I shocked a little bit with the performance of the rod actual function. Velvet contemplates her left hand as her mechanic prosthesis is made of aluminum, she should be careful for it.

We spend an hour to realize all the weapons in the warehouse and we need to prepare for the future gang battle with them.
“Surprisingly, not many hellions appeared in the Lost Tower.”Velvet said.

“I was told that people don’t emit malevolence if they believe what they did is right. For the people in here, everything is correct for survival.” I answered.
“Are you sure you help them to fight, you may just leave the work to me.” Velvet suggested that she will be the only one who joins the fight. I wonder if she is worrying me.

“I will continue, as I promised to Zaveid, and it is also to protect the citizen in here.” I confirmed my determination after realizing how this place exists.

“Fine, if you think you won’t regret this…… it is hard to imagine the guild works for other’s goods but not for themselves.”

“I believe they work for both, that is why the citizen in here like Beta and the guild that much.”

“I guess so……”

We return to the reception room for Zaveid.

“How is it? You heard all from Beta, quickly choose your weapon if you didn’t have one. I have heard that they are gathering for us. Of course, we are assembling too.”

“I still choose the electric rod.”

“I still use my ceremonial sword.”

“….What’s the point in explaining modern weapons?”

“Nope, it is meaningful. After we got the target, only to swing our sword.”

“Needless for me to tell, not only human here, but also people turned into hellions. Now, none of you possess the power of purification or power of hellion, don’t force yourself in the fighting. If you have to kill, kill it.”

“……” I insisted to disagree with killing, it is wrong.

“If you cannot kill, then escape, Sorey. People here are not friendly that you can persuade with words. Even if you have the power of purification, you may not purify these people who are stubbornly obsessed with obscurity.”

“But”

“I said that hellions belong to hell. You should be very clear about the results of kindness on the battlefield.”

“……”

“If you really can’t kill, I will do it for you. I have killed countless people.”

“!!...No way! Those people have their reasons!”

“Despite this, they chose the path, they possessed the consciousness that one day to be killed. I just happened to be the one who finished their lives.”

“……You can also not kill.”

“Zaveid said kill when we have to kill and it is questionable that I can kill them. For survival, I will still kill, I have done it countless time.”

“…..Can't just let you carry things that I don't want to do…..I....”
“...Shocked that you possessed such a thought. I was the Lord of Calamity killed countless people, did you forget? If you are not prepared, don’t force yourself. You have killed, but you didn’t want to kill or you were forced to. I don’t want you to get tainted.”

“I.....will not be tainted.”
“I know, but I don’t want your hands staining. I don’t want next despair Shepherd, I can’t take the risk. Please, understand.” Unlike usual, it is not a strong request, Velvet said like begging and it is more than I can refuse. I understand. She had an older brother had lived with her for nearly ten years, then he did that kind of horrible things to his and her only family after despair. To trust one Shepherd not to despair would be difficult for her, as her tragedy was created by the despair Shepherd.

“But you!.... What can I do?”

“Defeat them, and live. You have someone important to you who you haven't seen yet, aren’t you? The water seraph you always mention. If you turn into a Hellion, what would you think? You can’t even touch him.”

“Can’t touch Mikleo...” It is a future I can’t imagine. Every day we do a fist bump when we meet or before we explore the ruin, to say I am willing to accept the challenge. And the next time I see him, I will tightly hug him and I believe he would do the same thing as well. It is a future I can’t bear.

“Right....Worrying the next moment he would turn into a dragon, but still, want to be with him. You will need to hold yourself from touching him. Even if he wants to touch you, you should dodge. Even if he falls, you can’t help him up........You don’t want this, right?” She shows a lonely expression when she is speaking and she spoke like her personal experience, presumably this is her mood at the moment of she was traveling with Maotelus.”

“......Yes.”

“You are .........unexpectedly a gentle person.”

“Having said that, Zaveid......you’ve changed.”
“Saying me half-naked?”
“I already said that. Although it is hard to believe, it is the condition of the oath, isn’t it? The thing I wanted to talk about is that you said, to kill the hellions. You used to totally disagree with killing hellions and even dragons.....Right, I said that this guy revived the dragon to fight my party, that is when he conflicted his creed of no-kill with us.”
“How is that possible?! I met him when he killed the hellion in front of us and he claimed to kill the dragon. We had encountered several times for that.”

“ Well, after a thousand years, what do you expect? It was your group of wayward people who taught me ‘Killing is also a way of salvation.’. I hated to kill, even if that brings trouble to the others, I insist on my creed. After you had gone, I was still insisting on my creed.”

“You paid a lot of effort for your creed then....how is that turned opposite?”

“After the not-to-kill that brought disaster to the world, and it hurt my friend, inevitably…” He recalled thoughtfully.
“Sorry.” Velvet also recalled thoughtfully, but she says nothing apart from an apology. “Nevermind, I mentioned it myself. Sorey, don’t repeat my mistake.”

“...okay.”
“Right, can’t talk more, they arrived.”

When noticed, the environment has already become noisy. Looked down from the indoor terrace outside from the reception room, there are people assembled in the bar lobby, all are the people come to protect the guild ‘Wild Wolf’.

“The Mafia surrounded us outside.” Beta is a bit trembled to state the situation. “No problem, we are all together, we will find a way.” Zaveid patted on Beta’s shoulder to calm her.

“I will count on you guys.” She looked at us. “Leave it to us.”

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3rd pov

In a mid-rise building, there are two Seraphim who are related to the guild but acting like a stranger.

Ophelia: “Rare of you, you actually came to observe it, really really care about the person who called SOREY?”

President: “Also that, too few things I know about him.”

Ophelia: “Look like you still haven’t talked to Mikleo. You know how much he misses Sorey, every time he comes he will ask for the news of Sorey.”

President: “I can’t leave a fake hope to him when I am not sure, and it is difficult to find him when he goes everywhere to explore.”

Ophelia: “You just want to be the prior one to meet Sorey, isn’t it?”

President: “Oh, that obvious? Anyway, who is the woman looks exactly to Beta that standing next to ‘SOEREY’?”

Ophelia: “She is the one I am interested in, the first Lord of Calamity. Strictly speaking, the first one who got the name.”

President: “What?!........okay. If the one down there is the real Sorey, it will be no problem. And I am no longer the one standing next to him.”

Ophelia: “...Boring. And you are not going to help our ally guild as the president of the alliance, aren’t you?”

President: “This is the battle for the survival of the Wild Wolf Guild, which we are allied with. I am very clear, so I will watch. However, this dispute between humans, I will not interfere. This is the trial they need to cross.”

Ophelia: “Well, you will help when the time come.”

President: “I believe as long as they have Zaveid and Beta, also Sorey and the first Lord of Calamity, there will not need my presence.”
They looked down from the sky, it is all black, apart from a space left for the people in the building trapped in it to have a place to stand up.
The outside area of the guild can be regarded as an avenue for many people to gather. Now half of the space on this avenue is full of people, and every street connected to it is filled with people wearing suits and holding weapons. Most of them are holding blunts, but the front row of people are armed with guns. They come for a fight, and obviously, the Mafia has the superior numbers, they hold the advantage.
Now Zaveid, Beta, Sorey and Velvet are standing in the front line of the guild to face the enemy.

“We don't want to fight. The request is just to stop your human trafficking. There are still many ways to make money, right?” Beta stood out to talk for her leader.

“Hah, what qualifications do you have to make comments on us? Don't forget that we have always protected you. Of course, we can do anything on you. How about we sold your entire guild this time?” The Mafia boss standing behind his people talked.

“No joke. Just because this is where we live, then we have a responsibility to protect our lives! Don't forget that many of your sources of protection fees are from the people here. How many times do we have to hinder you from continuing the Human trafficking? You are not qualified to decide our lives!” Beta talked for the people living in the Lost Tower.

“Then are you decided to resist? with such a small amount of people? Not to mention that some of your people are trembling. It’s a joke!” The boss teased.

“Yes, we are afraid. Here all the people of guild lived in the same place with me, who always stand with me with joy and sorrow, will never be forgotten. My bonds with them are my greatest treasure! Gather here my brethren!”

“Rahhhh!” The people of the guild cried to strengthen their bravery.

“Glory lies further beyond, there may be only 1% of a possibility to win. We challenge to get the 1%!”

“Ay! Ay! Ay!” The people of the guild answered to forge their determination.

“Now, all of us will fight. The winner state the request, you have stated yours, now us. If we win, you will continue to protect this and promise not to kidnap the people here for human trafficking!”

“Ha ha! remarkably brave! To your guts, and we accept your unreasonable demands! The premise is if you can really win it!”

“Ok! Everyone here today listens to your promises, don’t back out the deal! You guys! Come together after 5 seconds!”

“5 seconds? Ha!” The boss raised his hand and then waved it down. Seeing the order, the people in the front line prepare their guns to shoot.

“Zaveid! Takes care of the bullets if they shoot.”

At the moment, two of them standing in front of the guild acted magically in sync to remove guns from the front line before they shoot out any bullet. Almost immediately after seeing the enemy raise his hand, Beta jumped and stepped on the front of the two men to take the gun. Noticed Beta took actions, Velvet also rushes towards the people on the left side. She performs a clockwise spin,
striking the enemies with her right foot blade and let the shock unstabilizes the guns from their hands.

“Only 5 seconds.” Zaveid answered with the preparation of seraphic arte for the necessary case.

“That’s enough.” Beta took off the submachine gun on the hand of the person who was stepped on, the person then fall.

4 seconds left.

Without a break, Beta knocked down the one in front of her at his abdomen with the gun stock. During the time, the gun accidentally fired and shot down the one behind her. Meanwhile, Velvet shut the muzzle with her aluminum arm, so that even if the gunfire happens, it won’t hurt her. She grabbed the two guns in her own hands and threw the gun-owners away.

3 seconds left.

Grabbing the gun barrel with both hands, Beta swings the submachine gun like a bat and knocked down another man with the gun. And Velvet puts both of her index fingers on the triggers as Beta once demonstrated.

2 seconds left.

Some of the enemies see the situation and planned to throw her down, but Beta propped the muzzle against the people come and shot them in zero-distance. Meanwhile, she swings down her knife to the person flutter towards her in another side. And Velvet pulled the trigger, shooting all the people in front of her randomly, she decided to take the action until there is no bullet left.

1 second left.

Then Beta jumped into the air as using others as a pedal, then she used the submachine gun to shoot the mafia. Velvet and Beta together knocked and shot down a quarter of the Mafia people.

“Onward! To victory!” Beta throws the smoke bomb towards the Mafia at the moment she landed. The smoke is spreading out among the Mafia group.

“Ay! Ay! Blaze the path to victory!” The members of the guild standing in the direction of the semicircular radial are excited about the 5-second kill, they answered the order.

All the members rush onward and clash with the Mafia group while Velvet is still shooting out bullets from the submachine guns when running forward.

“Huh, no need for my seraphic arte now.” Zaveid is impressed that Beta and Velvet knocked out the front line of Mafia in 5 seconds while no bullets ever shot out.

It is the fight between groups, a fight between the weak and the strong, there is never a solo fight if they know they are weak.

Sorey dazed in confusion as to the fight started in a sudden after a chain of the amazing move of Beta and Velvet to disarm their guns.

Zaveid shakes Sorey and reminds: “Don’t daze at the fight, no everyone has enough spare time to save you.”
“Even Zaveid? Won’t you help to save the people?”

“I will help but try not to help too much since this is a fight between humans. Other Seraphim would also say that.” Then he looked up to see the two Seraphim sitting on the rooftop and watching the fight.

Ophelia: “Oops, we are discovered.”
President: “Expected. He can hear the wind in the radius of ten miles. Any sound like loading the gun cannot escape unless they installed a sound suppressor.”

Both of them continue to watch the fight.

With Beta leading at the forefront, and all the members of the guild are advancing in the direction of radiation sweepingly. Like a march that is crossing the vast desert, the pace and momentum are so strong that they raise dust and storm. In the smoke, they quickly knock down each of the enemies in front of them.

No one can see the enemy clearly in the smoke, so beta lets everyone move forward, and everyone does not hesitate to beat up the people block in front of themselves. Sorey and Velvet can’t rely on the visibility to sense the enemies too, but they already have a similar experience once when they are ambushed in a blackout warehouse. Fortunately, the enemy has no advanced tools to help them see people clearly in the darkness or in the smoke. They can attack or defend against the enemies by other senses in this temporary smoke.

The smoke should be dissipated in a minute, but some people in the guild sustain it by throwing another smoke bomb.

Inside the smoke, Sorey fight with a group of Mafia people that formed when he just noticed. He can’t really catch up from the surrounding situation. Still, he dodges as he feels that he will be attacked from his instinct. However, his body is not moving, he is locked in position by someone. He screams badly inside and tries to struggle out from the lock when he sensed a few people are running towards him.

Beez.

He managed to knock down one behind him by his head and the people rushing towards him are knocked out with the flash of a lightning strike out.

“Be careful, Shepherd.” Velvet instructed and then went to another side again.

“Thanks.” Sorey continued to fight against others after free from the lock.

“Lion’s Howl!!” Sorey released a lion-shaped surge of energy that pummels foes and knocks enemies away when more people come to fight him. The fight becomes messier and reminiscent to a mini-war. Without the help of seraphim, he can only rely on martial artes in this time to stop a fight, but this is enough for it.

Velvet is too busy to fight the gang in front of her and lose her notice to her back. A person sprint towards her with a knife.

“Velvet! Back!” Sorey just noticed from the light of reflected by the knife and he shouted out as he is not able to reach her.

Velvet turned her head and notice the man rushing to her and block with her rod but then there are people come to her in another side. Guess the gang notice her high ability in the fight and decided to
defeat her first.

“They are separating us! Back together!”

Now the smoke started to dissipate again, Sorey noticed the gang started to have the strategy of separating the best fighter in the field so he calls the group to assemble and prevent isolation.

However, no one noticed the Mafia boss is talking to his Bluetooth headset, ordering. His expression turned to worry as he sees the Reversal of the situation, he never thought that he will lose with his superior in numbers of people. Now the sniper hides in a building and prepares to shoot the wanted target for him.

ZAP.

A sound of bullet shot out largely suppressed with the aid of the sound suppressor, even the wind seraph can’t hear it clearly.

No one knows what is going on, but more and more gunshot suppressive resounded with people sad calls in injured around the battlefield.

Sorey nearly got a headshot but he dodged it luckily with only his left ear gets shot, he watched back at any direction that is possible to snipe him.

“!! Gu..” Velvet lost her balance as her right leg gets shot when she is performing a front-flip and kicking her enemy with her feet while using her arms as standing support.

“...Tch, I aimed at her head.” The sniper murmured.

“After some many sounds of the suppressed gunshot, you think I can’t hear it out, huh?” Zaveid stated coldly when knocked down the sniper from the back. The sniper can’t even notice his existence. Then Zaveid went back to his place to watch.

“In this rate, the malevolence will…!!” Beta said as she sees the malevolence is growing in the battle, and the malevolence will start affecting Zaveid negatively.

“Don't give in to fear…… Don't despair, no matter what.” Velvet stood up slowly with her hand covering her wound, but she can’t cover her bleed the blood from her wound.

“Velvet!” Sorey rushed to reassemble with Zaveid, Beta and Velvet seem not all of them in a fine status.

The condition will become worse if they can’t do anything!

Chapter End Notes

A.N.

This chapter looked worse, I got suck in it, so I changed and added a lot in it with several days thinking how to change it properly and make the fight more appealing, originally 1524 words only(now: ~5019).

Still, I am not good at describing a fight like this……I wanted to skip most of the part,
but I extended it finally, with not good enough imagination at all.

Yeah, the several chapters in the Lost Tower are not logical at all, although I try to make it more logical, it is never the real case. Also counting the next chapter, it is already 6 chapters but they are still in Ladylake, maybe I should accelerate the progress. By the way, I added the concept of Mafia just because I love Katekyo Hitman Reborn but I don’t want to write it like a crossover. As a result, I create chapters that not too dark but not positive either….=w=

Well, without a place of darkness, I can’t show the concept of killing for Zaveid.

Sorry that I didn’t handle the topic well and I can’t name an appropriate title either. Never thought to extend the story in this place since I know it must become complicated in the end, but I did so I should continue it.

P.S. Beta is like a plot tool somehow and Let she be the second Velvet, it is basically her initial concept. And I won’t reveal her special setting yet.

Reference list for lines and battle scene:
Lines from Iskandar in Ionioni Hetairoi (words from Beta)
Assassin’s Creed 3 E3 official trailer (the 5-second-kill at the beginning of the gang fight)
Ch16 - Leaving the Tower

Chapter Summary

Not an interesting title but......Yeah, finally they get out of the place!
P.S. guess no one interested but the one gets the hand chop is Beta

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sorey pov

Initially, there is no strategy in the gang fight. Each individual is easy to defeat if they are not good at team working, this will give us great credit to defeat them. However, they work good as a team, this is why and how they survive in the place.

Of course, we are holding back, our seraph friends haven't displayed their power in the fight. We have fought countless time in our respective journey, an ordinary human with less battle experience
should not be a hard opponent to us. Although I have the aid of seraphim and Velvet got her power as a daemon by then, we learned our battle experience in those fights.

By the lead of Beta, we had a temporary advantage because of the boosted morale, but the situation again once the sniper interfere with the fight. Though Zaveid told me that he has taken down the sniper, the battlefield already started to be filled with malevolence. Under the threat of the silent gunshots, our people are horrified and releasing malevolence.

“Zaveid, are you ok?” I worried Zaveid getting the negative effect in the growing malevolence. “I’m fine, my oath will let me stand longer in great malevolence.” Still, we better stop the malevolence growth before any human turn into a hellion.

“Calm down, everyone, we still not show our secret weapon,” Beta exclaimed and calm the guild down.

“Zaveid, I am gonna use that. Keep our people safe.” Beta said with a determination in eyes.

“Ohh, are you serious? I can’t promise success.” Zaveid said. I wonder what are they talking about, but it seems to require the aid from Zaveid. I am sure that Zaveid will help her now, notwithstanding he said not to interfere too much, given the fact that he already eliminated the hidden sniper.

“Alright, I will help control the target range,” Zaveid said while turning the battlefield into a windless status by creating a wind barrier.

“Sorey, Beta, buy me some time.”

“Alright!”

“Okay!”

“I can still fight.” Velvet protested.

“Nope, the wound can’t heal easily even with the help of the seraphic arte if the bullet still within the body, you better leave it to them,” Zaveid advised.

Seeing a reverse in the situation, the Mafia gain their morale and fight back while our people are injured by the gunshot. Fortunately, the gunshots are not fatal, as they need living people for their business. There are a few of our people can fight back but only Beta and me, before they go any near to Zaveid, we will stop them. The high morale in Mafia blinded their sense that they didn’t notice the battlefield suddenly becomes windless.

Now the Mafia gang and the guild members mixed together in the center of the battlefield and we rushed into the fight to separate the gang from our group.

“Phantasmal Flash!” I warp toward the enemies rushing towards us and sliced cornerwise downward, immediately follow with a long horizontal slice to all coming enemies that fast enough to tears space-time. Beta then knocked down them in the short torn open time gap.

However, when we are tackling the gang people in front of us to prevent them come forward to hurt our people, there are some people stepped on the people in the front and then appeared in the midair and ready to give a vertical slash to me.

"Sonic flurry!” As soon as I sensed them here, I immediately counteract with numerous invisible pierces and give a strike as the final attack.

Suddenly, a strong wind stops all the enemies temporary when they need to block the wind with their hands. Now that I noticed, the wind flows again in the battlefield, and it is not in a random pattern.
"It's ready now, Beta."

“Thanks, Zaveid. Velvet, may I borrow your rod?” Beta asked Velvet after leading me to assemble with Zaveid again.

“Use it as you like.” Velvet gave out her weapon and see what is Beta going to do.

It seems like the situation will be reversed by our move, she said that it is a secret weapon.

Beta prepared the electric rod and throw out three smoke bombs while hitting them with a lightning strike from the electric rod. As she hit it and the bomb burst, this time, not only the smoke but any actual explosion with fire.

It is a chain of explosions, burn and explode like a flying dragon. The flame flies around in organic curve and where it passed, explosions caused. After a moment, I realized that the specified wind flow blowing in the battlefield guild the range of explosions when the bomb exploded. The explosion only concentrates on the gang member and protecting the guild people from involving into the explosion. I think this is the works by Zaveid for his effort in controlling the wind.

“Give up or I cause more explosion!” Beta shouted out and prepared more smoke bomb to throw.

Now the battlefield is filled with screams and burning people. What a horrible incident just happened. That will only lead further growing in malevolence from people fear, but if they give up, the situation may change.

I am shocked by the whole things just happened in front of my very eyes, it is like the arte from fire seraphim but it is not, although the wind seraph actually involved in the process.

The Mafia Boss is not planning to give up at first but then he experienced the threat from the everlasting explosion with a continuous supply of smoke bomb. Their people are as severely injured as our people shoted by them, but I don't know if anyone dies in it. The boss exclaimed to give up and keep his promise at last.

The battle finally over, without Zaveid fight in full power and Ophelia didn’t even participate in the fight. The injured people get their bullet taken out and healed in traditional treatment except for Velvet as we want to leave quickly. The Gauntlet Blade also returned to Velvet after being repaired.

“You guys are pretty good at fighting, I kinda want you two to join us.” Beta gives an appreciation and invite us.

“No thanks, we want to leave here. Glad to be in help. By the way, what is just happened in your last move?” I thanked Beta and asked about the phenomenon of the explosion that ended the battle.

“It is called ‘Dust explosion’ as I learned on the TV program. Rapid combustion of fine particles suspended in the air in a certain concentration of dust, like the powder in the smoke bombs. I use the lightning strike to burn the smoke particles to cause the explosion and rely on the wind control by Zaveid for targeting.” Beta explained with mentioning ‘TV program’ again. I wonder if it is a convenient source of information and the concept of ‘Dust explosion’ is likely related to the science aspects other from the anatomy I get to know in the clinic.

“It is really dangerous though, have you any idea of how hard to precisely control the wind flow?!” Zaveid complained while giving an edge-hand chop to Beta’s head for this chaotic action. I can’t agree more that I see the combustion just happened in front of Beta at the moment of the smoke bomb bursting. If Zaveid had not controlled the target accurately, all of us would have involved in the explosion, even for Beta herself, that is why Zaveid said he can’t promise success.
“I don’t know but I know our leader is very smart and skillful~” Beta praised Zaveid to avoid the complaining while protecting her head from being hit again. Both Velvet and me making a helpless face for the scene.

“Aye, fine with this time, you are a mess.” Zaveid sighed as he heard the answer. I would agree to him if he stated Beta is similar to Velvet in the berserker-fighting style.

“You know me too well. If you guys don’t mind, can you please help me once more after going out?” Beta asked for a request.

“..........” Velvet said nothing but actually not very willing to do a favor if I guess right.

"Can we?” I asked Velvet in a whisper.
"Do it if you like."

“...Sure, we have time.” I answered as Velvet didn’t refuse directly, I suppose she is fine for the decision.

“Please find my brother and see if he is safe.” Beta stated her request.

“The brother that Zaveid had mentioned?” I memorized Zaveid’s words before about her.
“...the present Shepherd...” Velvet said the complement in information in concern of the identity of Beta’s brother as a Shepherd. I can realize that it takes time to accept any Shepherd as an ex-Lord of Calamity.

“Yes, we completely lose his track.” Beta sadly stated her condition.

“OK, we will go find him.” Velvet accepted the request after a while of consideration, I am sure that she realizes the feeling of worrying family......very much since she has lost all her family and she has expressed it unconsciously several times.

“Well, I will be lonely if you guys are not here~” Zaveid joked.

“At least you got Beta and Ophelia.” Velvet teased.

“Boring~” Zaveid complained.

“Yeah, yeah. Sorry that I bored you, and you are disappointing.” Beta teased.

“Just being curious, why would you need to set a barrier to block the sense from Uno?” I asked while remembered that Uno said he cannot sense the area of Lost Tower.

“First, here become my domain, I don’t hope there are other to peep in. Second, as Ophelia may have told you, someone is hunting down seraphim, we set it to protect ourselves from the hunt.” Zaveid explained in a serious manner.

“Well, why would you become the leader of the guild? I heard you don’t do much work.” Velvet teased again.

“Who told you......must be Beta...I was just taking care of Beta but accidentally involved in the guild business. The previous leader becomes friend with me, however, he died by illness and he entrusted me to be the next leader. You know, I am a man who keeps my promise, so I become the leader, at least for a while.” Indeed, his true name, Fylk Zahdeya, means ‘Zaveid the Oathkeeper’.

Beta sighed as she heard.
“What is that for?” Zaveid asked.
“Nothing…… Why don't you lead them the way? They are your friends.” Beta sighed again.

“Well, that's my plan.”
“Haha, see you again next day, Beta!” I like their relationship in this way, a little bicker just like what happened between Mikleo and Edna in my journey.

“See you.” Velvet said goodbye and our journey started again from the Lost Tower.

We walk along the direction guided by Zaveid, thinking the lost tower is far bigger than our imagination as the ground structures are also occupied by them. More surprisingly, we came out from a mountain but not in the Ladylake.

"Here little extra services for you, Sorey."

“Where is here?” Velvet asked.
"You are going to find it yourself, don't worry, you will find out soon." Zaveid smiled and left.

“.....The view is familiar, let me see if I can find it in the book.” I tried to find the place in the Celestial Record.

“I want to ask this earlier, what is this book about?” You seem to like it very much?” Velvet asked me out of curiosity.

“Oh, this is the Celestial Record, it recorded many tales with many guides, description, and illustration of map and view of ruins in Glenwood. I used to have an adventure in the place recorded in the book with my best friend Mikleo.” I explained gladly.

“The marak….seraph you always mentioned, do you believe he is still alive?.” Velvet stated her focus on my friend more than the information on the book.

“Yes, he will wait for me and I want to see him. He probably explored many ruins I don’t know.” I said in small frustration.

“Ruins...I have been pretty numbers of ruins too, there is a marak who always tell us the history of the ruin or the antique even no one asks.” Velvet rarely talked about the ruin, which excited me a little, but her focus is still the people.

“That seraph must know so much about ruins and the antiques, what is the name of the Seraph? I want to know the seraph.”

“His name is Eizen.” Velvet said a name even Maotelus hasn't told me, which I am surprised by this. Maybe Maotelus was sad to tell me about him. If he is the same seraph as Edna’s brother who turned into a dragon, no surprise if Maotelus felt sad when he knew it and avoid to talk about him.

“.........What a coincidence, I have a friend that is also her brother also has the same name. Is that name that common?” I tensed my muscles, I have a bad feeling about this.

“..........Is her name Edna?” Velvet seems to notice my sudden nervous.

“So….he is my friend’s brother…….I remember Edna had lived in a crest called ‘Rayfalke Spiritcrest’ where surrounded by super high rocky hills and the hill looks sharp. just like here.”

“Let’s see if she is here then.”
I am tormented by the worry that whether I should tell her the truth of Eizen-- I killed Eizen because he turned into a mindless dragon. I know Velvet will know the truth once we met Edna. I wonder what will she thinks and I have to consider about how to tell her. Maybe I should talk about it when Zaveid is here, but I don’t know we approach the same Eizen back then.

“Sorey, something bothers you?” Velvet looked at me with concern and expressed her worry. Seems my worry expressed on my face.

“Nothing, just thinking what should be said if we meet Edna.”

“Huh...You don’t even think about it when we meet Zaveid……..Could it be you like Edna?” Velvet teased.

“......No! Not at all!” I denied as I feel the heat rise in my cheek. I think my face is brushed at this moment.

“Eizen may say ‘Touch my sister, and I’ll kill you.’ if you like her. And he may threaten you with ‘Is there anything bad you saying for my sister?!’ if you say you don’t like her.” Velvet said with a laugh.

“....Ha.ha….He really loves his sister Edna, isn’t he…..” I sweated as I heard such obsessive love from Eizen, and basically, I could not answer him directly in such a question if I was asked.

“Yes, he said this to every his crew, ‘Touch my sister, and I’ll kill you.’.” Velvet intimated a male voice in a low tone but the sound still apparently from a female.

“heh, heh, I see……and you say crews?”

“yes, he is the first mate of a pirate ship called Van Eltia.”

“Pirate!!” I am surprised about it.

“Well, what do you expect? I was a Lord of Calamity, pretty normal to work with the evil party.”

“No, there is no pirate in my time, even no ship.”

“What?!”

“Yeah, I think there is a technology gap. Seems that the earth entered a frozen era since Innominat is gone and the sea road is sealed between the land, so the ship is not used in our age.”

“Oh...I see.”

“The only thing I know about the pirate is that there is a place called ‘Aifread’s hunting ground’. I heard that it is named by a famous pirate.”

“Actually, Eizen is the first mate of the Aifread pirate group.”

“Wow, this is amazing. He lived with the pirate and has no problem with this? I mean the malevolence…..”

“All I can say is he will say he has the wheel of his own life. To him, the pirates are his buddy who could live true to themselves under his curse.”

“Curse?”
“He has the blessing with the ability to bring misfortune, this is why he called himself the Reaper and he left his sister for this too………”

“Oh…..I see…….. That must be a hard time for him………..”

“No, I think he pretty enjoys his life, at least, no regret.”

“--------” When she comes with this conclusion, I don’t know what should be said. It is just like that she knows Eizen has died and she realized Eizen more than I guessed. Will she be upset about that? Will she be mad at me if I tell her he has been killed…by me?

“........I wish so.” I responded at my best. It is irreversible for a dragon, I never understand his last thought after became a dragon, but he must hate to hurt his sister when he was a seraph.

I hope everything will be fine if we meet Edna.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
I want to end the fight quick so not many action scene this time. There are many ways to end the gang fight but “Dust explosion” is just the interesting thing came in my mind in that time, good enough to solve the problem of me that I am not familiar with the artes. Also, it is kind of hard to define which artes are usable and what will it performed because now the main characters are only ordinary humans without pacts with Seraphim or any daemon power. Stills, I will study for it for any future fight that may need it and find a way to let them gain power again.
I am not good at naming a good title....

Rayfalke Spiritcrest, here still the greatest mountain on the continent, the daunting heights attract people to challenge but it is still being an emblem of both fear and faith for the tales of the seraph and the dragon and the high risk in death.

From a distance, it is a group of sharp mountains formed by natural erosion, like hard scales of dragons, like teeth of a dragon that can bite everything.

Sorey remembers that when he first came, he heard that it was a hill with dragons, but now the dragon is gone. Looking down, it is all the twists and turns of the mountain road, some entangled in the mountains, and some are connected to the slit between the mountains, making the mountain road look intricate. It was all stone forest along the way, but it was more life-like than when it was before
because the bushes, moss, and flowers are growing strong on those rocks.

Walking through the spiral stone ramp all the way up with the wide and varied cliff gap, the mist around the cliffs slightly block the view under, which keep the place holy enough to be the residence of seraphim. The atmosphere here is rather peaceful but not windy and wild when comparing the last time Sorey fought here. The shrine on the way up is worshipped with flowers and fruits, as proof of the improved relationship between human and seraphim.

Unknown the flow of time, Sorey and Velvet still reach the top of the Spiritcrest. Sorey gazed the stone somewhere far from his position for a second, it is still there, Eizen’s grave. He tried to be calmed and act as usual to hide his concern of the unspoken fact.

“Velvet?…… Here, the …..Rayfalke Spiritcrest, I am pretty sure about it.” Sorey smiled to introduce, but there is a stammer in his sentence.

“So the girl called Edna is here?” Ignoring the sudden awkwardness of Sorey, Velvet is concerning the girl Eizen had mentioned.

Didn't know how much Eizen had told his sister, Eizen only told her that Edna thought her was ‘appropriate’ to Eizen, she had thought that Edna may be a strange person too. After all, she was a daemon and the Lord of Calamity……Most importantly, she is an existence that most likely to turn her brother into a dragon, a toxin to him, she could not think of any reasons to think herself as an ‘appropriate’ companion. However, she somehow expected Edna would be similar to Eizen, in physical or characteristics, after meeting Zaveid, she hoped to see something she may be familiar with. Though it is not like she would do anything after seeing something she familiar with, not like she feels living in the world, not like she will feel anything in the world be important to her.

“Maybe……” Sorey answered hesitantly, both for the possibility of Edna’s presence and the hidden fact. This place is full of memory for Sorey, for the first time he met a female seraph that can tease Mikleo and him in a different way, somehow she impressed him a lot in a ….different way.

“.......Thinking of me? So you are back, Sorey?” A sudden presence of young girl voice with indifferent tone alive the conversation.

“Yes!Edna!.....e---?!” Sorey is surprised and pleased with Edna’s presence but he cried as he felt pain generated in his stomach.

The sense happens in a sudden that Velvet can't help but watch and this is pretty funny and impressive as the first impression to see someone poking the other with the umbrella.

The girl always mentioned by Eizen is there in front of her eyes. Just like Eizen, she has fairly short blond hair with brighter yellow toward the tips. The side ponytail tied with a green ribbon makes she a girl and a cute and elegant hairstyle with the black-headband in her hair.

Similar to Eizen, she has the pale skin, with the delicate body she has, Velvet somehow thinks if she is weak or unhealthy but it is not, and she didn't forget that Edna's is actually almost 2000 years old by the kid image she shows. She has blue eyes, with indifferent cold sight and calms like see as Eizen possessed. She wears a single brown glove wrapped in the same ribbon used to tie her hair on her right hand, and she has big brown boots with buckles, those clothes just like the same types as Eizen for they both have the bigger size. Velvet guessed Eizen gave them as a gift but he used himself to measure the size for Edna. Also, the umbrella she used to protect herself is hanging normin Phoenix.

The one in front of her is a stranger to her, but she possessed many things to let her recall Eizen, no
doubt that she is his little sister.

“You come so late! Why are you visit me after the whole 2 months you awaken?” Edna poked Sorey’s stomach with her umbrella and released her unsatisfactory. Seems that she missed Sorey that she waited at least 2 months for that if not counting the years when Sorey was still in slumber.

“Oh!... So you knew I awakened?” Sorey gently stroked his stomach to relieve the pain and surprised by Edna knowing him awakened some while earlier.

“Idiot, every seraph can sense the awake of Maotelus.” Edna taunted Sorey, she always thinks it is fun to tease people. The fact stated by her means that Mikleo knew him awakened too, then he must be finding him too now.

“Oh...well...for a lot of reasons......” Sorey awkwardly answered as he didn’t know where to start. Should he start from the request by Maotelus, the kindness from the old doctor, the identity of Velvet, the accidents they met in the Ladylake or from the stories Maotelus had told him? Anyway, he won’t be able to escape from the fate of teasing.

“Surprised me that you are not coming with Meebo. Hmm....will the reason be....her? The reason.” Edna asked in an ambiguous tone and eyes, never satisfy from teasing. Besides, she is actually interested in her, another human who can be side by side with a weirdo like Sorey.

“Well....sort of....” Sorey awkwardly scratched his head when answering, he has a bad feeling about it. When the topic is led to Eizen, what should he do?

“Who is she anyway?” Edna asked instead of keep teasing, she has a feeling that the raven-haired woman in front of her is not just a normal girl. Well, by only looking at the broken pieces she is wearing, she can tell the one in front of her is another weirdo.

“The name is Velvet, Velvet Crowe......... I guess you may know me if you are Eizen’s sister, he mentioned me in the letter.” Velvet finally speaks up after watching Sorey be poked by Edna, observing Edna and hearing their conversation, she calmly introduced herself, she can pretty much sure Edna has a smart mouth.

“Oh....... it is my pleasure to meet you finally. I had always wanted to see you, Lord of Calamity, but it may be inaccurate to call you this name.” Edna responded a while of memorizing, it has been 1500 years since she first has seen the name, but it would not be the last time she has seen the name as she re-reads the letters from her brother to remember him. Her name not only appeared once in the letters but numerous time even after hundreds of years. The one to be important to her brother and to be remembered deeply down her brother's heart. Now she is more interested in this woman, what makes her special to her brother?

“Me too. Call whatever you want. I did destroy the world even if I am not a daemon anymore.” Velvet felt Edna’s stare at her as if she is estimating her.

“I hope you didn’t taint our dearest Shepherd.” Then Edna gave a gaze of intimidation. Even she knew Velvet is not completely bad, she can’t afford her dear human friend suffered or influenced badly from the ex-lord of calamity.

“Edna!” Sorey tried to stop the conversation in tension, he never wants a serious argument between friends.

“I have no intention to that. I am not going to hurt him or you.” Velvet promised.
“And you won’t commit those crimes again?” Edna doubted, she didn’t fully know the story of Velvet too, Eizen didn’t include Velvet’s story or reasons behind the sin. It is not a good topic or content for letter and not a good manner either to tell other one’s story without the one knowing.

“No, if not necessary…… I don’t want to do it again.” To Velvet, she is not going to care how the world turns to be, but since it is simply troublesome to tackle the result after commit all those crimes, she would rather not try again without a reason. She never feels great after all she did, until now, she still has the nightmare with her, with all the resentments from the people and daemons killed by her hands.

Sorey knows Velvet’s weakness and tenderness from all the incidents they walked through. He knew that from Maotelus, but now he is convinced that Velvet is just an ordinary kind person despite she intending to use extreme ways to achieve her goals. He knows her answer to the question, but still, he is glad to hear that.

“Good to hear that, my brother would be glad ….if he had heard that.” Edna appeared to be relieved.

“I guess so, so long as I hold my own wheel……” Velvet noticed Edna stammered in her sentence and she guesses she can’t be optimistic to her guess. In fact, she never is optimistic about all the things around her, she can’t, the world she sees is cruel.

“That ‘doll’, you still kept. You like it?” Velvet saw the normin Phoenix still pretending to be a doll to accompany the lonely girl tied on her umbrella. She has thought about the time she searches all those weird dolls for Eizen to give his little sister as gifts then Eizen received a threatening letter from the normin. Pretty a hard battle against him but the most characteristic part is that the image and sound of the Phoenix come out in every time he did the featured pose.

“Yes, it is from my brother after all.”

“You know that doll?” Sorey asked and he won’t say sometimes he feel a gaze from the doll.

“Yeah, we spent some time to collect the whole series of dolls…The one there is claimed to have the special blessing…….” Velvet is satisfied by the answer and she didn’t reveal the true nature of that ‘doll’, it is not necessary. She didn’t regret to collect those dolls, it may be pointless to revenge, but she supposes a little relaxing is necessary and more importantly, she didn’t want her friend to lose his family like her before he could do anything.

“Edna always hangs the doll on her umbrella, and I feel the charm in it too. Through it feels creepy sometimes.” Sorey said.

"I am well aware of that, sometimes a gaze, sometimes creepy murmuring in sleep." For the one always brings the mascot toy with her, she always feels the creeps from the toy, until she figured out that he is a normin. For all normin who somehow having strange personality, she guessed there must be a reason for him to send a normin to her.

"Creepy, huh? I agree, but the doll has his passion to protect you with his firebird charm, fail to pretend like a doll or not." Velvet guessed that Edna had figured it out a long time ago.

"I will keep all the gifts from my brother anyway."

“By the way...The Princessia.”Then Velvet noticed the flower ornament on Edna’s left leg, she gazed at it and asks about it. On the way up here, she has noticed there is rare plant grow in Rayfalke Spiritcrest and princessia is not one of them. She guesses the flower is another gift.

“Princessia….I remembered it has a meaningful meaning..” The ex-shepherd hardly joined the
conversation lately as he has no idea what are they talking about.

“.......It means the bond between people and irreplaceable treasure......and that was actually a hand-delivered gift from Eizen, just after you defeated the Shepherd.” Edna is surprised that Velvet noticed the flower, she may guess Velvet is an observant person.

“So he did come and see you...........” Velvet gave a sigh of relief when she knows a headstrong brother like Eizen has come to see his sister at least. Mentioning Eizen makes Sorey be silent again as he wants to avoid the topic to reveal that Eizen is dead, but he is glad that Edna becomes fine to talk about the memories with her brother, and he gladly knows about her brother.

“Yes, he told me the things on the journey. Your journey and other’s journey. I guess I should also thank you for that.”

“Why?”

“Seem that you have mentioned that at least his sibling is still alive, so you ‘suggested’ him to pay a visit,” Edna said in a slightly sarcastic tone as it was actually a time Velvet out of temper because Eizen kept himself away from his sister for a long time to protect his sister from his curse. However this was not the actual reason Eizen paid the visit, Edna just wanted to tease Velvet, and she is amazed that Velvet had such concern at the first place.

“Not like that he cared in that time.” Noticed the sarcastic tone, Velvet still responded indifferently.

“But all the things you achieved had an impact, he talked pretty much about you, Velvet.” Edna sighed as she receives an indifferent response and smiled as she knew the raven-haired girl was important to her brother.

Velvet became speechless at this moment. She expected nothing, no one to remember her, she tried to leave without any deep relationship so that no one may be hurt or hurt less. She clearly aware of the fact that all the team members had their original respective goals, she knew that they will keep going without her. Even for Edna, she expected she is just a seraph knowing her name and nothing more. Maybe she was lying to herself that she did not notice all the members in her team was like a family back then. The fact is that they cared her leaving but they still go on while never forget her existence, they are never the people who will express their feeling straightly. She wondered the feeling of herself at this moment, guilty? touched? or other? Anyway, at least she has a feeling about it.

“You are the first one who turns his coin into the head side.”
“........”
“What coin?” Sorey asked.

“Eizen used the Reaper coin to be his vessel, and there are very few people, nearly no one can turn his coin into the head side,” Edna explained.

“I never look at the result after I turn the coin.”
“Maybe it is your idiotic spirit make you succeed then,” Edna smirked.

“Thank you for the present anyway.” Suddenly Edna thanks Velvet just after teasing her.

“......What do you mean?” Velvet has no idea what is she talking about.

“The Princessia ornament was from you, right?”
“...umm....oh.....I guess so.” Just that Edna mentioned, she recalled it, that is another reason for her to notice the ornament. It was a thing that a long time ago, she has forgotten but just remembered. It was once a gift she entrusted to Eizen to give to Edna in person. She chose the present that more fitting to girls after seeing Eizen delivered those ancient artifacts to her sister, and now she knows it was delivered.

“Had Eizen told you that it was from me?” Velvet doesn't get how Edna figured it out whose the present was given.

“....No, he said nothing but explained the meaning of the flower. I guessed it, it is clearly not his usual sense of the present choice.” Edna smiled when she is talking about the gift from her brother. So many antiques that one of them even possessed the ability to be the sacred object that can apply.

“Right.” Velvet remembered that she asked Eizen to delivered the present as she thought his presents were a bit weird for girls so she laughed.

"It's a good choice of present, though I think Eizen's choice is good too."

"You said that because you love antiques, right?" Edna smirked.
"Boys just don't know what girls like." Velvet followed.

"Haha...yeah."

“Eizen also said your favorite flower is Princessia, so that present, meaning in the bond between people, I think is also to remember you and other of his companions, maybe it was his way to make me believe in human.....Also to say I am his irreplaceable treasure, of course.” Edna continued the explanation of the flower while doesn't forget to show her importance to her brother but Velvet gave no response but a sad smile.

Talking the flower to be her favorite flower is the princessia, it feels complicated when she hates the flower at the same time to make her think of her sister’s death and the betrayal of family. It was the favorite flower of her sister Celica, so her little brother and she would go picking some of the flowers for their dead sister. Celica said the flowers are strong when growing together, like a family supporting each other to be strong. It became Velvet's favorite flower just because her sister liked it. It is because she loved the family, who she only had in that time, she hates their sin but can’t fully hate them.

‘The bond between people’ in the language of flowers is a meaningful one in common language of flowers and a treasure to her too. After all, she got many supports from other people with different bonds to her. Her feeling towards the Princessia will be hard to say, so she decided to stop thinking about it.

“ Why are you traveling with our dear Shepherd anyway?” Edna said when she noticed Sorey was trying to hold his laugh while hearing the last sentence, say "Also to say I am his irreplaceable treasure", she glared at him.

“Well, after I awoke. Maotelus told me to take care of her after I took her to a clinic, we spent some time in the village for the medical debt.” Sorey noticed Velvet’s awkward silence at the moment and he noticed Edna is pissed off, he thinks it is the time he should join the conversation again. He thinks a lot to avoid the topic but at last, he knows himself never good at this at all, so he will just let it be natural, to start with how he begins to meet her.
“I see, you come late to see me for this reason, and you seem pretty interested in her that you almost keep listening to our conversation. Would that be you like her?” Edna taunted to change the atmosphere at the moment. She can totally notice the sorrow atmosphere around Velvet whatever the topic is.

“What?! Not...Not at all!” Sorey is surprised by such unexpected teasing from Edna.

"As I expected, a dull response from Sorey as always."

“.....................”Velvet blushed a little bit when hearing the romantic implying, but she knows that is impossible since they are too different.

“Same as my brother told me, nothing more but a normal girl lived in a normal village.” Edna laughed as she sees a different expression from Velvet apart from a depression state.

“Edna…..you tricked me…..” Sorey whined.

“Yes, a penalty for visiting me late, Sorey.” Edna smiled evilly to make Sorey feel helpless.

"I think the poke is already a penalty...." "Oh, it is never enough," Edna said in an evil tone.

“Oh no….”

Leaving Sorey and Edna to talk with each other for they ought to be more familiar with each other as an old companion, Velvet watched around the place until her eyes meet the gravestone. It is nothing more but a stone, without a name or decent cut in stone. However, her intuition tells her it is something more than a stone, to be a stone so important that Edna put around where she lives like the gifts she got from Eizen, like a family, it is a gravestone.

“....Is that....”

“Yes. He traveled with the private again and turned into a dragon one day.” Edna tried to be calm. Although she is fine when talking about him, she feels sad when she talks about his death.

“.......We killed him.” Sorey sadly sighed and revealed the untold fact sinfully.

Velvet sighed deeply, avoiding the eyes contract by closing her eyes and turning back to them.

“I am sorry.........” Sorey apologized as he thought Velvet may be depressed or in anger by the fact.

“......Don’t be.....that’s the only way and that’s what he wanted.” Velvet act like perfectly calm for that but she clenched her fist hard that others may see her trembling.

“Zaveid said that he wanted to be killed if he became a dragon, so I think it would be a right thing to do, but in the end, maybe I don’t realize him at all,” Edna answered while remembering the moment being with the dragon.

“No, you are his sister, he has always told me that he is proud to have a clever and cute sister. He always thinks you realize him the most, and I can’t understand him the way you did.” Velvet said in a relatively tenderer voice than before to console the two.

“I hope so.”

Thinking Velvet may need a moment of silent, Enda and Sorey leave her to be alone for a while.
A.N.
I am too afraid I ruined Edna so I check out how other fanfiction writes her and watch some of her skits again, so you see some clear "reference" from other fanfic.

I try to add Sorey into the conversation but seems it appear to be awkward this time because when I write Velvet, I entered the depressed tone too. Finally the revealing of killing Eizen…….Just hope not to ruin any of the character personality…. 
Chapter Summary

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.
It is in the season of spring, but on the highest mountain, the temperature always lower than the usual places, and for a place is surrounded by clouds, it is always in a low temperature that can tremble the bone deeply. Wearing the long sleeve clothes, Sorey is immune to the coldness here, moreover, he used to live in Elysia where also at a very high altitude that only clouds can be seen in there. However, it is different for Velvet who is being a human again, and she still wears his exposed clothing like the past, she must feel cold and she could not stand the cold before she is turned into a daemon. Stills, she neither whine nor senses it now. Accurately, the shock brought by the facts she was informed before overshadowed the cold. Even if it was the ending that everyone knew, even he himself had noticed it, and Velvet felt sad for it.

People are always troubled by feelings and will be saddened by natural things. Now this sadness and cold wind further stabbed velvet's heart. Sorey thought it would be better to keep concealing, but the facts have already been revealed, and that is something that no one can predict.

All Sorey can do now is to let her have a calm space and time before she releases malevolence.

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Back then, just after the reveal of the untold fact, Sorey and Edna left Velvet to let her have a moment of peace and they are having their conversation.

“Even for a great mountain like this, the geometry change.” Sorey said as he seeing around precisely again. Some new couloir and rift valley are defined between the rocks that Sorey may guess the vertical and horizontal movement caused by earthquake affected the geometry. Some faults also show the geometric structure along time.

“What happened in all the years?”
“You don’t know? Then what have you done in these 2 months?” Edna teased.
“Well….Most of the time, Velvet and I stayed in a village called Tewks, we worked to repay the doctor healed and took us in there, he even gave Velvet a mechanical prosthesis!”

“No wonder after two months you still don’t get all the things in the world, even for a curious idiot like you…..It is a village in the separated rural area, very lagging behind, hard to believe they can provide a mechanical prosthesis.”

“What do you mean?”
“You awoke in the Artorius’s Throne, the area all around is protected by a secret guild which your friend Mikleo also contract with them. Of course, it is to prevent any malevolence from reaching there, and the village built there are consisted of the people who want to live in seclusion.” Edna explained.

“I doubt that you didn’t learn anything in this Era, you said most of the time you were living in the village, then how about the rest of the time?”
“I went to Elysia again to visit my home and then go to Ladylake, I have learned the simple history trend this 500 years in the library but by the limitation in language, I can’t fully understand all the things…..”

“So you want me to teach you…..No, it is troublesome. I don’t want to be your history teacher or science teacher or language teacher unless I see a Normin dance.” Edna disagreed to tell him as too many things to tell.

“Oh….eh….Can you teach me to dance? I will dance for you!” Sorey just wants to know about things in this Era.
“No, I don’t want you to dance, I want Velvet.” Edna refused by giving an impossible mission.

“What?! Why?”

“It is hard, right?”

“But I really want to know about things in all those years……”

“It is simply hard to tell all a sudden, you better just go buy a history book then finding someone to translate it,” Edna stated indifferently.

“Won’t you be the translator?”

“Ask Velvet to dance the Normin Dance in public then,” Edna stated the impossible mission again.

“……Alright. I will ask the others……” Sorey knew Edna doesn’t want to tell then he won’t force her to do it.

“By the way, you seem not surprised by the fact she was a Lord of Calamity. Even if you were a Shepherd.” Edna admitted she thought the Shepherd would have a larger response when she revealed Velvet’s past identity but he didn’t. She expected him to show response as he was a Shepherd and a Lord of Calamity in his time had brought a lot of trouble to the world.

“Yes, I learned that there are various types of people in our previous journey, she is only one in humans and Maotelus has told me everything about her. I want to stay with her for a while.” Sorey answered with the reason of the accompany in the very beginning and insisted on his own will.

“So you have been observing her all the time.” Edna was not surprised by Sorey’s thought, he always wants to help others, but she wants to tease him for how long time he hasn’t seen him and then he came with another female with such shocking identity.

“Eh?…..Not …. Not exactly…..After getting along for a while, I treat her as a friend, and I want to know more about her…..Well, I suppose I want to know more about Eizen from her too. To think that I know only a few things but kill him……” Sorey showed his sadness but not regret in the kill of Eizen.

“That’s not your fault like Velvet said, that’s the only way, I knew it a long time ago and I agreed with your choice. The journey with you has let me think that killing the one who was the closest to me to be acceptable.” Edna confirmed her thoughts on that incident while putting a hand on the boy’s shoulder to comfort him.

“Still, I hope it can end better…..I hoped to find a method to purify the dragon.”

“It is good enough for me…..Death is salvation for him.”

“Right…..You asked how I think about Velvet, now is my turn. What do you think about Velvet?” Sorey knew it is not good to be suck in the sadness, so he moved onto another topic.

“As I said, normal human, with empathy and feeling…..not as a Lord of Calamity I’ve imagined,” Edna answered with Velvet’s image combined from Eizen’s letter and from her short observation.

“Yes, that is what I am thinking too.” Sorey agreed with his observation in those days with Velvet.

“So you want to protect her? You feel sorry to her? Male chauvinism? Thinking that she is weak like the flowers that you need to protect?” Edna sarcastically asked if Sorey has any feeling towards the girl.

“Eh….I am not sure, all above maybe. I know she is strong, but I have seen her weak side. She
committed serious crimes, and she always blames herself for this, to the extent that she doesn’t feel that she should be alive. Yet, I want her to regain hope to live, I want to let her be happy again.” The boy answered with confusion.

“It’s like saying that you have to stay with her for the rest of your life. Really, you can say sentences like this anytime and anywhere. You just sacrificed yourself to purify Maotelus when you didn’t know whether there a possibility to be alive after the purification. And you make a choice like this again, you know that you are not a Shepherd anymore. Are you gonna give happiness to oneself without your own happiness and freedom? Such self-sacrifice is not a smart choice, Sorey. You should not value others more than yourself. Everyone has to look out for themselves first.”

Edna stated her concern as she worried Sorey would break himself when he always tries to help others. He has already sacrificed himself once the last time to save the world. She appreciated the selfless of Shepherd but it is also a twisted way to live and she doesn’t want the boy to get hurt.

“......I……” Sorey is surprised by Edna’s speech, he hasn’t thought that much in his action and he thinks she has a point.

“...Thank you, Edna, you are right, I will think about it, but…….I can give up on the one in need. I am sure that helping others is not wrong too.” Sorey smiled to express his gratitude for Edna’s concern but he insisted his will too, he wants to help Velvet.

“.....You never change.” Edna sighed speechlessly when she saw such expression, the pure, bright and brilliant smile as sunshine. In the journey, no matter how unsatisfactory things happened, this teenager in front of her still has a way to smile and face. That’s why she can’t do anything with him and she can’t hate him.

The teenager is no longer the Shepherd, he doesn’t possess the strong power, and he won’t be treated differently because of the monstrous power. Yet he is still a Shepherd, as long as he is being himself, his existence is already a Shepherd, doesn’t need any power, the light deep in his heart will affect his surrounding, seems that they really have educated a great Shepherd.

Edna opened her umbrella and turned back to him to hide her expression, hoped that the boy will always hold the hope in his heart and doesn’t get the negative effect from the Calamity he traveled with.

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Meanwhile, Velvet still indulging in her own contemplation. She is still clenching her fist hard like it helps her to focus and feel the pain her friend felt. She is sad, but she is not even crying. She has assumed Eizen’s death or dragon transformed since awaken, all is in her prediction. After all, Eizen has been with human all the time, accompany the guys like pirates, even if he managed to avoid the malevolence, he will get tainted in time. She cannot be optimistic after 1500 years passed.

*  

Before the final battle, Velvet had expressed her valid concern for Eizen’s condition. Then he answered relaxed “I can’t let it bother me. I’ve got more important reasons to stick around.” he told her to get the thing done even if he turned into a dragon during the battle. He admitted he has resigned himself to become a dragon one day

“I’ve long since come to terms with my fate, whether it comes a hundred years from now or mere moments.” His death is nothing should be surprised.

Talking about the source of malevolence, she supposed herself was the biggest threat to Eizen in that
time. He always stays with the pirates who may release malevolence, but no one will release more malevolence than a Lord of Calamity like her. His death was assumed. Still, she felt that her heart had been dug a hole, and it felt like she was feeling the general guilt when Laphi was killed. It is not like the sadness could be diluted with a clear expectation in mind. Even if Eizen said that they are just two ships who happened to share the same course, she was grateful to have the reaper in her journey, without his ship, she couldn’t sail around the world to achieve her goal.

“Heh....allow me to express my gratitude. To think I'd ever meet a group of companions bold enough to not even flinch at my curse.” Even to the Lord of Calamity, the reaper expressed his gratitude after the lord expressed her gratitude. Although she always said she doesn’t care, she cared each companion deep down her heart, no matter the fact that their relationship was fleeting. She felt that they could really be a bunch of best weird friend for the rest of her life but she also knew that her fate has come. She wouldn’t be alive and she shouldn’t be alive after sacrificed so many lives for her goal.

Fate is always that cruel.

*  

Since living, she has witnessed the demise of different things, whether they are ruined by herself or can only be helpless. She is used to the death happened on those who are close to her, so she doesn’t cry anymore. However, she still can't get used to the pain of parting, even for the death she only learned from hearing, she hates her powerlessness. Eizen had helped her a lot in many ways, and she thought she hasn’t given anything in return, even if it is Eizen’s choice to come with her along. Perhaps this regret is a pretense. It was her own choice to leave everyone, and that was the only choice she could make at the time. After that, Eizen will definitely make a choice that makes him regretless, but what makes him fall into a dragon? Again, the source of great malevolence, except for ones like her own existence, can't be other. For no reason, he does not take the initiative to approach such a presence. He does know that it is harmful to himself. If she thinks about it, it really means that her own malevolence affects him. Even if she knew herself was harmful to him, for revenge, her selfish self has not driven him away. As a result, she has harmed him. Wanting to improve his relationship with his sister may be just the hypocritical thought to make herself to feel better.

“I am still the incurable selfish woman.” She self-depreciated.

Indulging in sin and not going to change anything, what’s done is done, and she clearly understands this. She thought that all she could compensate was to take care of his sister, who he cared the most and treasured for his lifetime, like how she loved her little brother. That’s the only thing she can do for him, seems that now someone is capturing Seraphim, then Edna will be one of the targets, she won’t let that happen on Edna. For making herself to feel better.

‘Rustle’

She can hear the stepping sound, guessed that Edna and Sorey have come back, she turned ahead.

“Hey, we are finished, you ready to go with us?” Edna asked the raven-haired girl.

“Edna? You mean....?” Sorey blinked as he heard the question, it is like Edna is going to travel with them.

“Yes, I am going to travel with you guys, you okay with that?”

“I’m fine, what do you think, Sorey?” Velvet completely agreed as the compensation to Edna’s dead brother.
“Absolutely fine, just surprised. I’m glad that you will come with us!” the boy exclaimed.

“Surprisingly smooth but good, then let’s go! I have not left here for a while.” Edna won’t tell that she is interested in Velvet and Velvet won’t tell that she is guilty to Edna and Eizen.

“So let’s go check on how Rohan is doing, to Marlind.” Sorey cheerfully pointing the direction.

“After 500 years, you are so confident that the seraph still blessing there.” Edna teased.

“Because Uno is still in Ladylake!”

“Well, well. What a weak base you believed.” Edna helplessly responded.

“What will be in there?” Velvet asked as it seems there is no longer a place she is familiar with.

“It is the city of the great tree, people pray to the tree for the blessing. The last time I’ve been there is when there was an epidemic, artworks are greatly destroyed in that time, but we had restored the blessing there and the medicines were delivered to there. I expect there may be great with their artworks again.” Sorey remembered the view of the city when he was a shepherd.

“Artworks….not like I know how to appreciate them.” However, she remembered Eizen and Eleanor will explain the artworks for the team automatically in her journey.

“You can tell the story in the carving in ruins, the same as the art. You may find some of the art that you like too, cheer up!” Sorey started to be excited to the artworks there he will find.

“Don’t worry, the boy will just explain everything to you, he will start talking or thinking about the reason behind wherever he discovered something new. And in this Era, everything is new to him. Though it may be short when his best friend Mikleo is not with him and you don’t expect an accurate explanation from an ancient person to a modern drawing.” Edna teased.

“But Art is something timeless!” Sorey protested.

“See?”

“It doesn’t matter to me.” Velvet signed, she is not interested in the history and story at all, but she won’t mind that there is someone to explain it for her, accurate or not.

“There, you see the bridge.” Edna pointed somewhere far away with a defined structure.

The bridge is no longer the one in his time, it becomes a bridge divided the river into two different water levels. Small turbines moving as the water flows from the higher level, a small house is built on the higher-level side seems like to serve the maintenance. Stone cutting in simple geometry decorated the bridge to hide the ugly part and show the beauty of the bridge with its structure.

“Oh! the bridge is…….interesting and impressive!! It is not just an art but also look like so technology for some purposes.” Sorey got the exploring fever when he saw the bridge.

“That is the small hydroelectric generator in modern. Do you see things like artificial lighting and air-conditioner? They worked with the energy from electricity which is the offering from this generator.” Edna explained with her modern knowledge, and Sorey doesn’t taunt that she insisted not to teach him the modern things initially but now she does it automatically.

“If the technology is at such a high level, people can live relying on themselves but not seraphim. How is religion remain unchanged?” Velvet asked as she amazed by the fact.
“Just to show the miracle to human and the believer boosts the belief with architectures and works of literature. The Celestial Record is updated and become a very popular book among human. Something like that sustain the religion. Oh, Sorey, you are a big fan of that book. Have you bought the latest version?” Edna explained and just remembered that Sorey is also a big fan of the book.

“No….I don’t even know it has a new version.” Sorey shocked again by the revealing.

“Too bad, you should go see your friend Mikleo writing!” Edna said.

“Mikleo wrote the book?!” Sorey could not stop being surprised.

“He was one of the writers.”

“How come a book of map and ruins with tales become popular?” Velvet is completely confused as she thinks not everyone is interested in such knowledge.

“Some stories of Shepherd has been recorded, make a legend of adventure among children and also being taught in school. The children like to play the idiotic role play of Shepherd nowadays.” Edna laughed as she remembered some kids playing the stupid drama.

“Besides, just map and ruins are interesting enough!” Sorey exclaimed his point.

“Only you and Meebo will say this line.” Edna wicked smiled for the point.

“Edna, you say like we are weirdo……” Sorey said.

“You are.” Edna taunted Sorey in an indifferent tone.

“True, haha…” Velvet smiled as she can’t agree more.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
I hate to draw Velvet for her ragged clothing with so many belts, just how she put her ragged legging on and off?! Edna's clothing is another type of troublesome.......now I start to think Sorey is the easiest to draw if I don't draw his cape.
BTW, it is a direct reference from one of the Velvet facial expression in game.

I try to describe more change in Rayfalke Spiritcrest but I find it is not possible to apply many changes after studying the factors affecting geometry. As the location is not near to the sea, hard to apply change because of natural erosion, and it is not a volcano so lava is not the option either. Then the rest are the collision of plates, earthquake, the aerolith and etc. , which I think better not to apply too many changes as that will affect the living in surrounding districts and then the culture(etc.) in surrounding may change…….Thus, the geometry of the place didn’t change much.

I try to give a reason for Velvet to concern Edna to visualize her mind and same for Sorey, to give a reason that he concerns Velvet. I am not familiar with Edna at all but I love her character in the skits (PS. I only have the half revision of the TOZ and don’t understand Edna fully) and I try to show that in the chat and I think she will concern Sorey as he is important to her( in or not in romantic).
…..anyone finds the hidden Eizen x Velvet? I am a fan for Eizen x Velvet and also Velvet x Eleanor and also Rokurou x Eleanor(AKA simply universal love to all relationship) so no surprise if you find hidden couples in the following chapters…. (in here, the couple is not exactly referring romantic relationship but kind of like kinship and friendship too)

P.S. some part of the conversation is referred from a conversation between Shirou and Rin after Illya is killed in Fate UBW
Walking down the road from the other side, I saw the water flowing down the mountain from the top of the mountain. It is estimated that the snow melted down the mountain which is covered by snow all year round. The track that has been left by the water flowing for many years on the hard stone. It is true that the water is worn through the stone. A small amount of exposed ore shines in the river under the refraction of sunlight in water. As Sorey, Edna and Velvet start approaching the town, the river began to become looming as if someone wanted to design the river to be traceless. It is covered by the forests on the way and Marlind, their destination, is after the forest. Whether it is natural or
designed, it is uncertain. In design, to have a mysterious journey of searching before entering the entrance indeed an interesting concept. Certainly, such a concept would not be applied to the town entrance except for some isolated place like Tewks and Elysia.

Thanks for the isolated place, Sorey and Velvet still have a lot of things needed to learn in order to live in this age even they woke up 2 months ago.

“By the way, do you guys have a mobile phone? So I may add your number.” Edna suddenly thinks of the issue of mobile phone and asked while showing hers.

“No, what is it?” Sorey immediately attracted by technology.
“We haven’t seen anything like this in the places we’ve been.” Velvet tried to find something like the phone in her memory.

“Actually, I saw it once in Ladylake,” Sorey added.

“......It is a portable device that enables people to directly contract to anyone if you have their number. It is very general among the public, even for us Seraphim agree with its convenience. How come you haven’t seen it and you only saw it once?” Edna taunted how unenlightened the teens are.

“We’ve been to Ladylake but most of our time was in the Lost Tower,” Velvet still doesn’t believe the device is popular in that way.

“I see….the lost tower…..the place is too poor to have the devices then.” Edna rolled her eyes up as she thinks of Zaveid when they mentioned the place.

“It sounds very cool!” Sorey is excited about the device.

“Yes, for its convenience I want to buy you one, but I am invisible, and you don’t have enough money, right?” Edna doubted if they have enough money.

“How much is it?” Velvet asked for the general price.

“The cheapest price will be around 150000 galds,” Edna stated indifferently.

“.......Well...we don’t have much money.” Sorey is a bit down for the news.

“How did you get one?” Velvet doubted how come the seraph was able to get one if she is invisible.
“Ask a Shepherd to buy me one, or just take it myself, I am nearly invisible,” Edna answered in joy.

“And you are not going to get us one with your invisibility?” Velvet replied sarcastically when she heard the answer.

“No, you have to follow the human rules.” The sentence just makes the teens be down again.
“........Fine.”
“...a...haha......”
Isn’t this double standard?

“Edna, you become like humans?” Sorey is surprised that Edna actually be familiar with human technology and recommend us to have one too.

“Nope, that’s a thing I won’t change my point of view even after 500 years.” Edna decisively answered.

“But you know so much about human’ inventions.”
“Like what they created doesn’t mean that I like humans. They have never changed in essence.” Edna responded indifferently.

“Oh……”
“But I am glad that you never change,” Edna added with a tiny voice.
“eh?”

“And your clothes…… still the one from 500 years ago?” Edna noticed Sorey’s clothes are the same one from 500 years ago.

“Yes, and?” Sorey inexplicably tilted his head. Originally, they have more clothes but Sorey is too kind that he gave away their clothes package to the poor children he met in Lost Tower, and Velvet didn’t disagree with it, as a result, they are wearing their ancient clothes again.

“And Velvet, don’t tell me your outfit is from 1500 years ago.” Edna felt unbelievable.

“Hmm, yes, what’s wrong?” Velvet doesn’t find any problem.

“Are you a girl?!” Edna thought this is completely unacceptable from the human standard when she is wearing the same one from at least 500 years ago too.

“Well, yes.” Velvet still doesn’t find any problem.

“Err…… I can’t take you two idiots, we buy the clothes as soon as possible after we arrive Marlind!” Edna rolled up her eye.

“But what about the money?” Velvet concerned the prices after hearing the high prices of the phone.

“I have my own, and you guys just go hunt some breast around the forest for some galds! The clothes are much cheaper than the mobile phone now.”

“Why is she getting crazy to this?” Velvet still doesn’t find any problem.
“I don’t know, but good to have new clothes anyway?” Sorey still doesn’t find any problem too.
“Agreed.”

Marlind becomes a much larger town from 500 years ago. All houses become concrete boxes, but they are designed in a similar building style with the ancient one to have the feeling of a whole and also for the artistic feeling, to show it is the city of the great tree. Although it is not a town as large as Ladylake, the city feels bigger in space. There is much more public space for people activity. I see painters drawing for families or couples in the park, also people sing while they are having a picnic on a lawn. Some stalls are selling figure-like candy to children. Sorey asked the hawker how the candy is made, he answered that with the Sugar paste, pigment, Cornflour, and creativity will do. Still, somebody just sits on a bench with stressful expression. Comparing to Ladylake, people live in here spread a relaxing atmosphere, they live with their art. The spirit of art has been passed on, with historical buildings in the town.

Heard that there is the latest version of Celestial Record and Sorey is going to buy one in the town. Just when he wants to walk towards one of the book stores, Edna pulls him back.

“Sorey, Velvet, to the boutique!” Edna exclaimed.
“Ur er.…… Wait! Let me go!” Velvet sent a lovely moaning sound not normally hear.
“No, new clothes are the particularly necessary item for you, Velvet,” Edna added while continuing to pull Velvet and walking towards the boutique at high speed.
“...Fine...Fine....I will come with you, just don’t walk so fast!”

“Wait, the….the Celestial Record!!”
“Go for it later, now the clothing first!”
Sorey’s struggle seems useless in front of Edna, he just recalled, the Earth seraphim can perform extremely strong force like to crush rocks.

Sorey and Velvet both dragged by Edna to the boutique, any effort to struggle is useless.

“Welcome. Oh my lord! What may I help you?” The receptionist greeted them politely.

“Yes, please find some clothes that suitable for these two people.” Sorey is pretty surprised that the shopkeeper is having a conversation with Edna.

“Oh, this way please.” the shopkeeper politely invited them to follow her. She then quickly chooses some clothes for them.

For Sorey, it is a simple white shirt with a pair of blue jeans. he changed the chosen clothes and come out of the changing room.

 Velvet is slower than Sorey, he can hear some mumbling from the room, like: “What? That….I…..”

“I won’t let you out if you don’t get change. Look, Sorey is waiting for you.” Edna responded as soon as she heard the mumbling.

“......fine...........”That is the final sentence they heard from the room. Seems Velvet can’t do anything to Edna if Edna insists to do.

After a while, Velvet finally came out with an off-the-shoulder dress. It is a tiered mini-skirt in black and white colors with the external corset. She put her hands behind her and lowered her head. She looks shy as if a late flower seems to hide behind the green leaves. Sorey will say that is a pretty cute expression from her, but he doubts that why would she not shy when she is wearing the old outfit that is much exposed than this.

“Wow......You are beautiful! Velvet!” Sorey said without a second thought after seeing Velvet came out with her new dress. It is not like that Sorey judge a woman by her outlook, in fact, he always judges people by what he got from their behavior. However, this is different, it is really shocking when seeing a tomboy wearing girly. She never wears clothes like that, she used to dress casually, all wearing pants and shirts, and would not pay attention to the degree of breakage of clothes. Thus he is amazed by her girly look. What’s more, the dress shows her beauty in its way.

Maybe Lailah would say “The layers of dress show the youthful and joyful vitality in Velvet that should present on a girl in her age. The strapless design will be refreshing and it shows her quiet sexiness, show off with temperament and not arrogance!” Something Sorey would not understand at all.

There’s a saying that ‘Fine feathers make fine birds. The tailor makes the man.’ and this is describing Velvet at this moment.

“Tha.......Thanks, Sorey....You look good too.....but this is not convenient in moving...a large degree.” The blush on Velvet’s face was deeper and her ears were red after hearing Sorey’s appreciation. She still doesn't want to look at Sorey or Edna. The long eyelashes are moving gently, and she is so shy that she is going to shed tears because she is being the spotlight in the shop now.

“Learning to walk casually with a dress is also an important lesson for girls nowadays, plus you may
just wear shorts under the dress, it is not a problem,” Edna suggested carefreely and seems very satisfied with Velvet’s expression. The sentence becomes persuasive when Edna is always wearing a dress that is short like a super mini-skirt.

Edna then asks for the price, it seems that there is some left in the budget, so she tells them to choose one more set of clothes themselves. Sorey chose a T-shirt and short and Velvet chose T-shirt and pairs of trousers.

“Let’s not say Sorey’s, your sense of fashion choice is really just like my brother said in the letter.” Edna teased when she saw the choice from Velvet.

“Just what did he said in the letter?”
“Choosing clothes only base on mobility and flexibility.”

“Well…..that true…….but these clothes allow big move and may be worn in all seasons…..”

“Ah, blah blah blah...I am not going to hear that….you are surely a special type.” Edna signed. Sorey doesn’t understand why is she disappointed at all.

After paying the clothes, they left the shop. As an observant adventurer, Sorey found that there is a mark on the signboard while it is not existing in other shops, so he asked: “Edna, is there a meaning by that mark?”

“Good observation, Sorey. That is a mark for that the shop also capable of serving seraphim or working with seraphim. It is a concept originally formed by Rose just after you. You know, she is a businesswoman and it is then developed by her teams and the after generation.”

“Wow………. ” Sorey is amazed by the whole things, hope that he may see that in other districts since he didn’t see one in Ladylake.

“Now shall we go to the Art Museum?” Edna asked.
“I am fine.”
“I am fine too but I remembered that you don’t seem really interested in art. Why would you suggest to go there.” Sorey asked.

“......You said you want to know about what happened in the past 500 years, then you may see it yourself in the Gallery. The artworks somehow reflect the living of people at that time, I think start studying history in this way is more efficient for illiteracy from ancient times, isn’t it?” Edna teased.

“We are able to read a little though...Thanks, Edna! Let’s go there!”

There only one building is particularly recognizable to Sorey in the town, it is the Dumnonia Museum, and they are approaching it. Great effort must be applied to see it remains almost the same like 500 years ago, and he sees the extended parts which constructing with the similar style as the original part, guess that more artworks are stored there now. Sorey explored it with his companions to purify the malevolence that time, and sadly most of the artworks are destroyed in that time, but he is sure that it becomes better now for the wealth in the town.

Unlike the last time Sorey went here that the door left open just a crack to welcome them to enter, this time, the door is fully open that they can see through the lobby directly. The fascinating and bright circumference is very different from the previous time Sorey came. It was very eerie and horrible, it was neglected to repair, full of debris, holes and spider webs and it can only be illuminated by the only light that came in through the window. Now is how an art gallery truly
should be. Speaking of it, Sorey has never really been to the museum. Where he had been being the tainted places and the tainted ruins, so now when he comes in and sees its original appearance, sees it is working and people are enjoying it, his heart is inextricably excited. The other two companions seems indifferent to it though.

“Wow, fantastic!” Sorey is too excited to stop himself from shouting and jumping for joy.

Then he gets an umbrella poke from the Earth Seraphim and a gaze from Velvet, oh, actually, the gazes from many people in the Art Museum. Sorey forgot that he should be silent in an Art museum to not cause a disturbance in it, now the security guard come here to hint that they should be silent. Sorey apologized with embarrassment and buy tickets in the ticket office.

Seems Sorey’s shout isn’t bad at all, it led a notice from an acquaintance. A helmeted Normin, Attak, comes here with its cute sound of footsteps.

“Oh! Young Shepherd! You come back again! Lailah isn’t with you though……” Attak exclaimed his joy with Sorey’s arrival but expressed his disappointment with the Lailah’s absence. Attak is really affectionate that even if Lailah said that they only have one-time encounter and she would dodge his swoop every time, he still likes her so much.

“Umm, sorry, Lailah is not here, maybe she is traveling with the Shepherd of this generation,” Sorey answered.

“So you are not a Shepherd now?”
“Yeah, you can call me Sorey. I am traveling Edna and Velvet here. I want to know about the things happened during the past 500 years.”

“Hehe, then I can introduce the artworks for you, Sorey! I am familiar with every artwork in this Museum, I can definitely help you.” Attak claimed a self recommendation. Sure, for Attak who is passionate about art must have a deep realization to all artworks.

“Yes! Then please!”
“How great, you get a guide just after a while entering the museum,” Edna commented while showing a smirk, like cheering for the trouble of being able to explain. Another companion says nothing but rolled up her eyes, she thinks of the days that Eizen or Eleanor came automatically started discussing the architecture or art in the ruins, so long and monotonous to her like a lullaby that she almost became sleepy if she concentrated on it.

“Oh? You are an acquaintance of Attak, then you can have a free offer today!” The officer saw us talking to Attak refund the ticket money to us, which I felt embarrassed and I tried to refuse the offer. By his persistence, I accepted the offer at last and I am glad that there is more people who possessed a high enough resonance to see the Seraphim.

“You are really lucky, Sorey.” Velvet commented for all the things just happened. Meeting an acquaintance after a shout and then got a guide and a free offer, how can you say it not lucky?

“Ha...ha, well, kind of.”

“Great that we buy new clothes, or I can’t imagine what will it be Velvet.” Edna teased. “Why are you particularly mentioning my name on it?” Velvet questioned. “Wearing the ragged clothing just like a weird stray, that will only make us suspicious.” “.....I suppose you are right.”Velvet could not answer back.

“Well, we have to be decent inside a museum indeed.” Sorey tried to get the atmosphere peaceful
Attak is pleased to explain to me the development of art. He said that many different schools have evolved, and the people have begun to focus on the conservation of cultural relics and art. The art is less burned because of political factors, but smuggling is indispensable. To be honest, there are several paintings here that have to be taken back at the underground auction site.

Passing through the wooden door with carving, they entered the exhibition atrium, some people stop in front of the displayed drawings to appreciate them and some people stand in front of the statues and thinking the meaning behind.

In the first chamber they entered, the meditative classical music is playing in the room, reinforcing the classical theme in the exhibition. They see drawings about the thriving and prosperous Era or the lives of the rich. People like the hullabaloo and luxury, so are the painters.

“Seems a joyful moment in the painting,” Sorey commented in front of a painting of a dancing ball on the street.

“Yes. The painter uses brushstrokes of realism and fantasy colors to come to the beautiful environment. The painting described a ball with the crowd drawn, the crowds are moving, the colors are jumping, the excitement is extraordinary, giving a strong impression of joy and balancing the fantasy and realism. It described the festive mood of people in Rolance” Attak explained.

“Looks even more cheerful than the Sacred Blade Festival,” Sorey commented as remember the festival he had.

“After... war?”

“The darkest hour is just A Ball the dawn. If you learned the history in Ladylake, you knew there was war occur after Alisha and Sergei died.” Edna said indifferently.

“.......? Yes... I see, let’s go for the next painting.” Wait, is it a pun?

“What is this drawing, I somehow feel the warmth from lights in the drawing,” Sorey asked as he saw the drawing of a concert.

“It is a flute concert, guess that it was a too luxurious thing in the Age of chaos but it appeared again after it. The realistic techniques are reflected in every detail in the picture. The fantastic music, exquisite lamp, fluttering flute, twinkling candlelight, each kind of elements constructed the picture harmoniously and the picture shows the upper social atmosphere in that time. The painter concentrated on how to show the atmosphere in the picture so he used many handlings in the color to show the lighting in the scene. The yellow color of the hustle and bustle contains a few flashes of brilliance, the warmth is focused in the center of the picture, the dark brown background gradually extends outwards, the piper holds the flute, and the scene is beautiful.

The beautiful notes in the lyrical melody flow throughout the frame, and the luxurious society harmoniously gathered together in a graceful manner creates visual and auditory beauty in the drawing.” Attak explained. As stated by Attak, those were drawings in the prosperous period of Rolance after the War of Aggression between Hyland and Rolance after a hundred of years Sorey gone.

“Not presents in my time either.” Velvet commented.

“When was your time by the way?” Attak asked curiously.

“Hmm, not sure, but likely be the Asgard Unification Period, or maybe older than Edna......” Sorey answered. The idiotic boy gets another umbrella poke from the earth seraph. Edna minded to talk again.
about her age and Sorey never learns from it.

“Huh?” It is quite a shocking fact for Attak to know. “Look, we may not on the same age. Age Asgard wither her, nor custom stales her infinite creativity.” Edna said while pointing to a portrait painting on the wall.

“Indeed! Nothing wither her beauty and creativity!” Attak pumped up that he can’t wait to introduce them the drawing.

By just looking at it, it is a portrait painting drawing a fair lady dressed in a red and white long-sleeved dress. Seems it used a special technique to draw her hair that the lady in possessed a long straight silver hair with hints of green and red that certainly not a characteristic possessed by a human, and it is tied back in a high ponytail behind a red and gold headband. She has mysterious and smiling green eyes, like the prime lord, formed a pact with Sorey.

“It is…. Lailah!” Despite the drawing is not exactly showing Lailah appearance, most of the parts are similar to Lailah.

“Correct! There is a short story behind it. It is called La Gioconda* (A Carefree woman), drawn by a man successfully saw the Seraphim for a moment with the help of the Shepherd. The painter was impressed with Lailah when he saw her. Well, of course, Lailah is always radiating with glamour and charm! Sad that his resonance is not enough to let him continue to see Seraphim, he can’t see her after the Shepherd left the place.

However, Lailah is so charming and beautiful, her image left in his mind. Thus, the painter drew out the lady in his mind again, when his memory has not started fading yet, to record and share her beauty. Then he may remember her even if he started being forgetful by age, he may see her every day even if they are parted.

The characters in the painting are elegant in sitting, the smile is subtle, and the background is deep in layering, and the painter's strange smoke-like brushstroke of “unbounded gradient coloring method” is used in the background. The painter tries to make the rich inner feelings and beautiful appearance of the characters ingeniously combine. For the key parts of the face and lips, such as the lips and the lips, the special part of the face is also focused on the precise and implicit dialectical relationship to achieve the charm of the environment, thus making La Gioconda* has a mysterious and fascinating charm, and the dreamy smile is called "mysterious smile" by many art historians.” Attak talked fluently and endlessly about things behind the painting.

Somehow Sorey felt the explanation is longer than the other painting and he thought the painter’s story is similar to Attak’s feeling towards Lailah. Guess the explanation is more subjective, he can hear that Attak becomes infatuated with the painting and the smile it depicted that he repeated the lips for three times. Anyway, Edna successfully handled the issue for Sorey carelessly said about Velvet is a person from Asgard Unification Period by bluffing it out with Lailah.

“While people were in the prosperous state in Rolance, there were poor situations happened inside Hyland, sarcastically, the poor presented in Rolance too. The painters sympathized with the poor but they are helpless to it, thus the painters recorded the scene of poor farmers, the life of poor families, to criticize the government and the society at that time.” Attak returned to a normal state and is leading us to the next exhibition zone.

In the next zone, it is showing paintings of the stories of the poor people. Some of the drawings are talking about the beautiful things among the poor, like one of the drawings recorded a Teenager blowing soap bubbles. The young boy who dressed in poor but tidy clothing is blowing soap bubbles from indoors to the outside. His eyes concentrate on the bubbles he is blowing. He seems young that be only 3 to 4 years old, blowing the bubbles while squatting on the
window sill and squinting from inside to outside. His eyes are full of hope for the outside world. The drawing is showing a very ordinary and simple subject. a kind of leisurely and comfortable life in the lower level family. The children lived a happy and simple life even if they are poor.

Some paintings recorded the real scene of poor working life. One of the artworks: Gleaner, drawing 3 farmers picking up tassels in the farm at nightfall. As explained by Attak, the work silently confesses the poverty and hunger of the peasants, anxiety, and mourning, and implies a strong sense of social criticism. Some even drew the extreme situation like a Slave Auction. It recorded the female slave be taken off her clothes, naked standing on the stage and being auctioned, the audience is competing for bidding. They extend their fingers and conceal the price of slaves. The female slaves look at it all, listening to the fate of her .....The painting is showing the selfishness of human that Edna and Velvet are both not giving any comments on the paintings.

Except for a drawing depicting two children who are dependent on each other.

Attakexplained, One is a blind sister, and another smaller girl who is snuggling in the arms of a blind woman is her little sister. While looking up at the rainbow in the sky, the little girl is explaining the beauty of nature to the blind woman. The clouds are empty, the wilderness is golden, the air is moist, and there are several cattle and sheep walking on the trails in the distance. There are birds flying up and down. The blind woman can only listen to the explanations of her little sister. She can’t even feel the butterfly resting on her shawl, but she seems to have smelled the fresh air and heard the voice of the soul in the wilderness.

“......I’m going for a walk.” This time, Edna turned her head and left alone to see other drawings, different from the response when she sees other drawings. The siblings in the painting is blond hair, maybe Edna is touched by the scene with her memories reacting with it when she thinks of her little memories being with her brother.

“...Edna? Wait.” Sorey is just planning to go after Edna when he just noticed Edna walked away for a certain distance.

“Leave her be, Sorey. Sometimes people need time alone.” Velvet suggested.

“That’s the best things I can do right now?” Sorey believed it is for the best now as Velvet suggested.

“Yes, and if you worry about her, I can go after her. I think I can realize how she feels at this moment.”

“...Ok, I am counting on you. I do know it is easier to talk between girls.”

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Velvet walks around the museum as she followed the last trace she saw Edna and she caught Edna sitting on a bench in front of a statue of a sleeping dragon.

“Here you are.” Velvet approached Edna.

“...So I am.” Edna turned her head.

“May I sit?” Velvet sat next to Edna as she received a nod.

“......Thinking of your brother?”

“......Yes.” Edna said nothing more after a ‘Yes’.

“It’s fine because I think of my families too.” Velvet talked when looking at a far distance to the ceiling.
“You have siblings?”

“Eizen didn’t tell you in the letter?” Velvet smirked.

“Although he told many things, not everything,” Edna stated in a somehow annoyed tone.

“Should I be glad that he left me some privacy …… I had a sister and a little brother who as old as the age you look … also, a brother after my sister was married.” Velvet stated longingly.

“What kind of person is your brother?” Edna is curious about Velvet since she could hardly think of a reason for Velvet to concern her.

“……. He used to be a very erratic person, but he was very responsible and very considerate for us, he acted like both our brother and father. He always stayed outside because of work. He said that he would come back for dinner in the morning. In the afternoon, he might not be able to come back because of an accident. He would send his seraphim to inform my little brother and then he told me about it. However, after all, he was the pillar of the family, I couldn't complain too much.” Velvet hesitated for a moment, then she stated it with fondness in her eyes.

“…But you still kept waiting for him?” Edna asked and looked at Velvet after she talked about her family.

“Yes, and I wanted to share his responsibility too as an elder sibling at the same time, I did what I could for the best.”

Velvet did have a brother that somehow similar to Eizen in the aspect that they didn’t come back home in always, but both Velvet and Edna kept waiting for their brother. Edna is surprised that there is actually similarity between Velvet and herself and she is also surprised for seeing such facial expression from Velvet, she starts to realize the reason for Sorey’s and Eizen’s comment to Velvet.

“You loved him,” Edna stated.

“….Yes, I loved all my family.”

Edna noticed a subtle wry smile from Velvet, then she gets it that Velvet’s families all died. Yeah, why not, no human could live for a thousand year or more, even if they formed an oath. Edna won’t ask for their ends, that’s an unspoken agreement between them.

“… and so as I” Edna stated lightly.

“…..Sorry, seems like I am saying my things all the way.” Velvet supposed herself to hear Edna out if she has anything wants to say.

“I’m fine. Glad to know that someone actually knows how I feel, despite being a human.” Edna relieved in her temporary sorrow.

“That’s great. Let’s go back, Sorey must be worrying about you.”

“Right.”

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“You’re back! Edna!” Sorey exclaimed as he saw Edna is coming.

“Yes, continue, shall we?”

“Definitely,” Sorey answered gladly as he was too worried to appreciate any artworks while waiting.

The next theme introduced by Attak is about the religious theme, the stories of the Shepherds and the Empyreans. Sorey and Edna can see paintings of some familiar scenes they had seen, they are about
the journey of many Shepherds and most of them are featuring the story of the Grand Shepherd who is very famous even in nowadays.

“During the war of Irredentism which started by Hyland, some places isolated itself from the country as their former colony. At any time, turbulence and uneasiness, people rely on religion for spiritual sustenance, so some people used the position of the Pope to embezzle national sovereignty. Under the situations with unresolved wars of Irredentism and national divisions, the Holy War was launched in the name of God. At last, the war was settled, and the religion was further enhanced. The religion became a very important cultural element of the World. Which leads many paintings featuring the religion as their theme, we called the period as the Period of cultural unification. The time after it was the Renaissance and the industrial revolution raised, which let a great evolution in both cultural and technical development in human civilization. Now here are the paintings in the period of cultural unification.” Attak explained the history of art with the wars.

“This painting draws the Last Supper of the Grand Shepherd with his companion, drawing the Grand Shepherd in the center and his Squires and Seraphim sitting beside him, eating peacefully and joyfully to relieve their nervousness to the final battle to the Lord of Calamity. The drawing used the technique of one-point perspective to naturally extend the room. In the drawing, it shows it is at twilight to symbolize the end of the journey and also the new beginning after an end, saying that the Grand Shepherd started a new Era with himself. Of course, it is only an image of the painter that there was such a scene in the journey of the Grand Shepherd.” Attak explained the concept of the paintings would be only imagination.

“So who is the grand Shepherd?” Sorey asked for a Shepherd mentioned to be famous.

“The Grand Shepherd is referring to the one who purified Maotelus, so it is your title,” Edna explained.

“Eh? So it is me in the drawings?” Sorey surprised and looked at the picture again.
“Looks different.” Velvet commented coldly. Indeed, the one in the picture looks more handsome.
“Well, people imagined and drew depended on the description in the Celestial Record. There were no photos for reference taking, so there will be different faces.” Attak added.

Sorey looks into the picture and tries to distinguish the characters in it, some of them look familiar but some are too different.

“Wouldn’t this happen to be Edna?” Sorey asked as he pointed to an elegant lady dressed in noble while bringing an umbrella with her. If not referring the umbrella with her, Sorey can’t recognize the character at all for the large difference in age and face.

“Looks like it is.”

“No…..maybe it is like that for the future look of Edna grown-up version……” Sorey mumbled.

“Sorey….Edna is at least 1600 years old.” Velvet murmured to Sorey, then he can only give a strange smile after hearing that.

“Hey, Velvet. What did you talk to Sorey?” Edna asked with a ‘beautiful’ smile while holding her umbrella.

“Nothing. I wonder if we should take care of the elder.” Velvet looked at a random elder walking alone with a stick in the museum.

“……” Edna gazed at Velvet while still holding her weapon.

“Hmm…..To say, Edna still looks the same as before, I remembered that Seraph can change their outlook by their thought, then why aren’t you change?” Sorey asked to change a better topic.
“Firstly, my brother said I am cute in this way. Secondly, I am used to waiting for one with this look. Thirdly, I hope to be recognized immediately.” Edna answered with a hidden message that she maintained the outlook to wait for Sorey.

“Thank you, Edna.” Sorey sincerely is grateful to Edna after he gets that she seems to wait for him. “Do not get cocky!” Then Sorey gets the second umbrella poke from Edna.

In the theme section of the Shepherd, there are some exhibits belonging to modern archaeology. It is said to have been excavated from the ruin of thousands of years ago. With the help of modern technology, there are ways to discover the remains buried deep underground by the fierce changes in the earth’s crust and chaos assaulted the entire continent in that time. Inside the showcase, there is a painting based on the murals of the relics and a copy of the notes in it, the original is kept elsewhere. Accordingly, they are historical relics at the end of Asgard Unification Period. On the mural, there is a woman who is said to be the naming person of Maotelus, As a Shepherd, after the end of the dispute between the Lord of Calamity and the former Shepherd. Then the story of her journey began to help the people during the period of the national civil war while restoring the faith of Seraphim to human and strengthening the faith to Maotelus. She was commended as a savior in the form of a saint-like figure in that time, but it did not record her last, only her name: Eleanor Hume.

“Is that?” Sorey asked.
“Yes…..the one I told you.” Velvet answered.
“Hoped that she did not to be desperate with humanity. Human beings are very fragile, and there are many examples in which the Lord of Calamity are caused by the despair of the Shepherds.”

“She would not despair in humanity, not after seeing a Lord of Calamity nearly despaired before her, not when there were friends supporting her.”

“Despite the murals didn’t record her end, you have faith in her.” Edna doubted.
“Despite being an exorcist, she was a trustworthy companion to me, I believed that she held her promise to me at last to take care of Maotelus. And she always looks at the problems and figures ways to solve it. I don’t think that she will despair so easily after what she learned and fought with Maotelus there with her.” Velvet answered confidently.

Lastly, Attak leads them to an exhibition zone in a completely different atmosphere with those before it, many technical drawings and models are displayed.

“Actually, most of the works and concepts here were created by the master I mentioned before, he was the one painted La Gioconda* and Last Supper*. His tenacious implacability in art, science and other aspects led him turned into a hellion. The works shown here are honored to be a great basis for human great development in the Renaissance and the industrial revolution.” Attak told a shocking fact to Sorey.

“A Hellion?!"

“But, certainly not a bad one, he said although some of his sense lost after being a hellion, he had a stronger body and higher concentration to complete his works. He was a pretty close friend with me.”

“Maybe he is another human as a weirdo, like those my brother had traveled with,” Edna commented.
“Most of the artist are weirdos.” Attak laughed.
“Well, I had an old acquaintance just like the one you mentioned. His name is Kurogane. He became dae...hellion, because of his relentlessness to create a blade to best the power of another sword called Stormhowl.”
“We would like to hear about it!” Sorey and Attak said at the same time.
“I guess he would be glad if there are more people to remember a blacksmith like him when I first met him with my companion, he was said to ambush swordsmen and break their blades. Well, he became our blacksmith forever to repair our tools and forge swords for the swordsman of my companion after we defeated him. He first forged his head into a blade, hope that it can best the sword, but it was unsuccessful.” Velvet started to tell the story of Kurogane briefly.

“Forged his head into a blade?! Did he die after it?” Sorey exclaimed.

“No, he still lived after doing it, guess that because of his persistence as a hellion. He tried to forge a new blade with the hardest material we learned at that time, but still, be unsuccessful. At last, he lived to forge himself into a blade for the swordsman in my team. To respond his wish, the swordsman defeated his rival who holding sword Stormhowl.”

“Wow. That’s the relentlessness break through all limitation…..” Sorey commented.
“My friend didn’t have the relentlessness like this, at least he didn’t turn himself into an artwork.”
“The world is really full of freaks,” Edna commented.
“And the world is where allow different kind of freaks to exist together.” Velvet responded.
“Attak, what happened after your friend?"
“He is forever creating his works, but one day he stopped. He said he feels like losing himself gradually so he wanted to accomplish his last wish before the worst happened.” Attak stated.

“Last wish?”

“Remember the lady in La Gioconda* he drawn? He wanted to see her again, so he started a journey to find her. I didn’t follow him after, so I don’t know the end either.” Attak stated slightly in lonely tone.

“I believed he found Lailah at last and got purified too.” Sorey comforted.
“I think so.”

After a really long journey of artworks, Sorey, Velvet, and Edna stated their gratitude to Attak and just planning to visit other places in Marlind.

“Bieeen!! Are you…..are you Velvet?!!” exclaimed an annoying voice.
“Huh?!” Velvet turned back her head and shocked as someone recognized her, she thought there will not be one to know her except Maotelus.

Chapter End Notes

A.N. (New record in length in the Author note XDD)
As the story told it is in a modern age just like us, I would like to include more elements from our real world….The initial concept came from the end of TOZX that Sorey had the adventure with Mikleo in the modern age( some modern buildings are shown)…….The shop concept came from another fanfiction on pixiv called Lilium. And well, I want to show Velvet’s cute side to Sorey and her shy expression is really cute!

Sometimes I really feel that I am stupid, that I have created a problem for myself. Maybe I would be forced to solve the problem quickly if it appeared in the exam or I would
choose to write the other topics directly, but this time I can’t think of anything else. I suppose I am somehow affected by the surrounding gloomy atmosphere……

This was just a short chapter about some daily life clips (original word count: 1314), but I feel that I have to write about the art gallery when I let the team come here, and there should be more interactions between them. There are also reasons to study Edna. I found that she has two different attitudes towards Mikleo and Sorey. She will tease Mikleo but she is less likely to tease Sorey (since jokes aren’t really effective on Sorey). When the team needed the Great Strength to break the rock in order to investigate the fake Elixir, Edna said she will lend her power if Mikleo begs her, but when Sorey bowed for it, she immediately said that Sorey didn’t have to. I was still watching the first half of TOZ so I didn't see it all, but there are several times mentioned that Sorey is similar to Eizen in some aspects which lead Edna to have a special attitude towards him. In fact, I also used this to establish a subtle relationship between Edna and Velvet.

Also, the artworks mentioned in the story are referred from the famous paintings in reality but not all of them completely the same one. For example: *1: La Gioconda is drawing Lailah instead of Mona Lisa, Last Supper is already the different story behind, and the painter had an obviously different background if you were referring him as Leonardo da Vinci.

Also brief history settings in the setting: There are two known big countries in the world: Hyland and Rolance. First, Rolance launched a War of Aggression after Rose, Alisha and Sergei died, sadly the one after them couldn’t fully stop the war from the breaking out. After the Rolance’s victory, it gots lands from Hyland and it entered a period of prosperity. After the prosperity, Hyland launched revenge, the War of Irredentism, to recover their lost land. During the time, some places isolated itself from the country as their former colony because of great cultural difference and they developed their unique culture (something like how the republic city formed in the Avatar: Legend of Korra).

For the chaotic time again, people rely on religion for spiritual sustenance. There were people being the Clergy turned into hellions, they used the position of the Pope to embezzle national sovereignty (like what happened when Runette Forton succeeded in Zestiria). Under situations with unresolved wars of Irredentism and national divisions, the Holy War was launched in the name of God. At last, the war was settled, while the Hellionized one secretly assassinated by someone then, and the religion was further enhanced as a result of the Holy War. The religion became a very important cultural element of the World. For the monotonous theme in that time, the period is called Period of cultural unification. The time after it was the Renaissance and the industrial revolution raised, which let a great evolution in both cultural and technical development in human civilization.

(Basically, the history here is a version with reference in the real history in our world while messing with other settings proposed on it).

By the way, there is a Portrait version of the illustration, but I think something goes wrong in it:
“Bieeen!! Are you……are you Velvet?!!” exclaimed an annoying voice.
“Huh?!” Velvet turned back her head and shocked as someone recognized her, she thought there will not be one to know her except Maotelus.

They get completely silent but staring at each other.

“Old face, huh? Guess you two wanna talk, we will go to buy the latest Celestial Record which I guess you won’t be interested in.” Edna suggested.

“Eh? Well, yeah.” Velvet can’t make an immediate full response to the sudden suggestion to talk
with the normin in front of him. She didn’t really have a thought to talk with him, she can hardly think of the things to talk between them, but yes, she agreed with that she is not interested in viewing the latest Celestial Record.

“Let’s go to the book stores for your book, Sorey. And Attak, mind coming with us?”
“I don’t mind, see you later, you two,” Attak said for their temporary separation.
“Great, see you later then, Velvet,” Sorey said.

“See you later, Sorey, Edna, Attak,” Velvet said.

Then Edna walked with Sorey and Attak just sitting on Sorey’s shoulder. Edna is somehow familiar with the place for sometimes she will come and walk around Marлин so she is leading the way.

“Edna? We just passed a bookstore.” Sorey doubted.
“We are not entering that one.” Edna noticed the small bookstore Sorey just talked about.
“Huh? Why? If the book is famous, then most of the bookstore shall have it.” Sorey said as he doesn’t get the point.

“When you found it, you read, right?” Edna asked as snappily.

“Yes, I may just stand and read it.” Sorey still doesn’t get the point.

“But I don’t want to stand next to you all the time when you are reading the book,” Edna complained, she knew Sorey will forget about time when he is reading books, particularly for the Celestial Record. Mikleo has mentioned that he had to force Sorey to eat when Sorey was forgetting the time in reading.

“Oh…..got it…..Then, where would we go?” Sorey now had a wry smile that he finally gets the point.
“The big one with a cafe in it.” Edna continued to lead the way.

They then find a building with a similar eave design as other ancient building as if it is imitating the style and not to ruin the regular and natural feeling in the cityscape. Still, there are modern elements being used when looking from the exterior, instead of the traditional window, it is using window walls to lead natural lighting to the interior and increase the connection between indoor and outdoor environment, the transparency in design lead the feeling of openness to it.

Soon they entered the bookstore, they can see the Coffee bar already at the foyer. With the steel frame modular around to place books and plants surrounding the seating areas, it enlightened the area with the feeling of relaxation and knowledge. The frame modular as transparent and lightsome iron bookshelves also integrated the functions, transportation, equipment, and illumination and put green plants in the stores to make their internal space more continuous and open as well as full of vitality. (*1)

“The book should be around here, I will go to occupy seats for us, and wait for you there.” Edna left after leaving the message to Sorey.

“Ok!”

With the aids from Attak, Sorey gets the books quickly and go to meet Edna, but they finds another old face at the same time.

“Rohan!” Sorey called as he sees Rohan is talking with Edna.
“Hello, Shepherd Sorey.”
“Now is only Sorey.”
“Nice to meet you here, Sorey. There is something I have to tell you about.”
“Maybe we talk later? Cause I have another companion in another place talking with her friend”
“Very well.”

After Sorey, Edna and Attak leaving the place, Velvet and Bienfu still keep the silence between them.

“So, it’s been quite some time. Shall we talk in the park?” Velvet eventually broke the awkward silence with a sigh and talked.

“Yeah……it has been …….long. Maybe we could buy a drink there. I heard that there are new choices, lets try together.” He slowly turns around and leaves the place while adjusting his hat, no one sees his face. Guess he doesn’t know what face should be used either. He wanted to change the atmosphere too, so he suggested to buy a drink when pointing at the nearby drink shop.

It has been a long time, pretty long time that he can’t call himself young anymore, cause he is already 1650 years old now, and many people he knew has died and he expected Velvet was dead. To be more accurate, Velvet is alive but like she is dead back then. If one cannot sense things happened in the world, that is not really living, she was in a Living death condition.

“Sure.” Velvet accepted the suggestion and bought drinks from the nearby drink shop, then she gave the smaller one for Bienfu.

They stopped at a bench under a tree. Now Sorey and Edna already left them there and go to bookstores which Sorey really wants to go, all for the Celestial Record. Edna facepalmed as she knows no one could ever story the boy’s ruin maniac to the Celestial Record. Meanwhile, it is already a while between Velvet and Bienfu, still, the atmosphere between doesn’t improve much.

“…….What should I start with, there is so, so, so many questions!!”
“Same here.” Velvet agreed.
“Let say I almost forget about you, we didn’t talk much even we were together at that time.” Velvet knew seraphim can be long-life and she expected Laphicet may be alive in the beginning but she forgot about the normin in her team who is also a seraph. Now she tried to start the conversation with a little taunt between friends.

“Bien…..That hurt my heart……..though I should agree with you. I mean…you are brooding and taciturn……surely not the type of people that good to have a conversation, but I could say it had been better in later.” Bienfu is still the ‘brave’ Bienfu in that time, he has the nerve to taunt back one who may get angry easily, and he is doing this in front of the person, without even thinking of being beaten up.

“…..You have a point…..but well….you are the only one I knew apart from Laphicet now. How have you been anyway.” Velvet tried to lower her temper, it is not like the time in Asgard Unification Period when everybody is able to see Seraphim, most of the people in the world can’t see Seraphim, she doesn’t want to act like crazy in public, and she doesn’t want to end the conversation so quick.

“How should I say…….I think things get better now. After your disappearance, Madam Eleanor passed away, Miss Magilou passed too after several hundreds of years. Before she died, she was discussing something with Maotelus but they are keeping it from me. I have not seen Rokurou and Eizen after Magilou passed away. And Laphicet…….he became an Empyrean just after your left and
he corrupted after a thousand of years. Fortunately, he got purified by a Shepherd. The time after that Shepherd is relatively peaceful, people started communicating with us seraphim gradually. Still, I can’t find another partner like Magilou. How about you?” Bienfu briefly stated the latest status of the companions he knew.

“Well, Magilou is indeed a unique witch, seems that you miss her. Aren’t you a cat type normin?” Velvet thought of Bienfu once said that he and Grimoirh are the cat-normin who stick around places and objects but not like being around human.

“Well, I have served her a while……. It is not a short time that I can get used to it quickly, but I am still a cat type. I live in the ruins to pass my time now.”

“Fine, but I see Attak maybe a dog-type, and you seem completely fine with him.”
“No, he is a cat-type too. He sticks around artworks and the museum. Anyway, it is not like there is a huge gap between Phoenix and me….Hmm?……Anyway, what about you?” Bienfu felt that he missed something he saw before Sorey, Edna and Attak leaving but then he lets it be that.

“For me, I woke up with the Shepherd you mentioned. He saved me and we later met Laphicet, better known as Maotelus now. The Shepherd convinced me to live, so do Laphicet, although I didn’t really have an aim, I end up following the Shepherd to travel around the world now.” Velvet briefly told him what happened after her awakening.

“Umph? He? Looks quite young…..but how about Innominat?”

“He seems….disappeared, Phi told me that he is a part of him now.”

“Well, then good to see you are not sealed inside the world……wait….You mentioned meeting Maotelus and traveling with the Shepherd?! You are fine with that?” Bienfu just noticed the noticeable part in Velvet’s story. He just can’t believe himself noticed that such late.

“Yes. I have spent some days with him, I know him as a better Shepherd than Artorius, what’s more, he saved my life. For Phi….I actually feel sorry to him, he would not be tainted by the malevolence like that if I had not requested him to save people…….Glad that he is saved. One thing to declare, the boy said he is no longer a Shepherd now and I heard there is another Shepherd who looks like Artorius…….But now he is missing” Velvet is sure that she can trust Sorey and actually, there are too many words to say but she cannot express them well.

“Well, I see………Don’t worry, Laphicet really have grown up, he won’t let himself be tainted easily again! For the new Shepherd, I am not sure as I haven’t seen him.” Bienfu nodded.

“And perhaps it is too late, you look pretty girly in this dress. Could It bE tHaT YoU FelL iN LoVe…..” Bienfu said with a wretched expression but he zoon receive a punch from the former Lord of Calamity.

“Bieeeee---! What is that for? I think it is a compliment?” Bienfu cried miserably. Velvet can’t really agree that it is a compliment, especially for the wicked face Bienfu expressed, more like mocking her.

“Ha, I miss that noise, you should really learn how to praise people then. It is not the love issue. Just Edna forced me to wear it.” Velvet laughed.

“Edna? That girl? What a familiar name…”

“Eizen’s sister.” Velvet tried to answer in an indifferent tone.
“Bieen! You met Eizen’s sister!? How is Eizen then?!” Bienfu is surprised that Velvet met Eizen’s family, now then he remembered he just saw Phoenix being hung on the Umbrella.

“He…….died.” Velvet’s voice was softened and shaking, her voice fade fast for how short the sentence is. She is looking at the ground broody, she tried to hide her expression.

Although Velvet tried to hide, Bienfu noticed the change of the girl. For who he previously served, a witch, one usually hide her emotion with smiles and jokes, saying everything doesn’t matter to her, he has mastered to notice the change in emotion even for a subtle tiny change. He thought that maybe Eizen is important to Velvet. Back in the Journey, they all like a family, for Eizen and Velvet, they are like the role of father and mother in the team taking care of a bunch of problematic children, and they had deep enough realization to each other that even in tacit situations. It is not surprising if Velvet had grown feeling on Eizen.

He is not really the type of seraph to comfort someone, apart from blowing on someone cheeks, and he clearly knows the blowing-on-one-cheeks behavior is not going to work on Velvet. He is likely to get another punch if he blows her tears. He has to find another way.

“Bien…….I am sorry to bring this up, but I think his sister did the right thing, you look beautiful in this dress.” Bienfu stopped a while and try to change the focus.

Then he got another punch.

“Bieeeenn!! What is that for again?! I think it is the correct way to praise!?” Completely unexpected, he thought he was acting like a gentleman.

“I will devour you if I still have the claw!”

“Why is that?!” Bienfu then sees her reddened face. Oh, he forgot that Velvet is somehow a shy girl. Despite being the Lord of Calamity in the past and shout to declare herself ‘I am corruption made flesh! Velvet, the lord of calamity’ in the city Meirchio to scare out people, she can’t even talk loud in front of many people when it comes to Magilou’s show.

“You are just being shy aren’t you?…..Bieeeen!” Bienfu got the third punch from Velvet in a day.

“Well, thanks for the stress releasing, Bienfu, I feel comfortable now.” Velvet smiled, Bienfu felt the evil behind the smile.

“It’s a hard time for me…..Bieeeen………” Bienfu cried, he decided to search a way to make joke without getting a punch from Velvet.

Edna and Sorey went back with a book, it is the latest Celestial Record. They approach Velvet and Bienfu then asked, “ Did something happened? You seem to be in a good mood. Velvet.”

“Nothing specifically, just got another praise.”

“Great for that, I met Rohan in the bookstore. He said something is important for me to know. Would you listen to it together?”

“Is it fine for me to know too?”

“sure, I think it should not be a secret to you”

Velvet agreed and follow Sorey to the great tree of the town.
A.N.
A short chapter of conversations. For the part to reunion Bienfu, there is some reference from ‘Tales of a Crossover’, interesting but very slow update……

*1: search “Rong Bao Zhai Coffee Bookstore / ARCHSTUDIO” in Archdaily if you are interested in for it looks like.

*2: for the dress stated in the previous chapter, I forget to pose its reference image:
Chapter Summary

It is time for the transition.....
(P.S OK I don't get how to draw the posture and it looks weird...at least I tried my best in drawing the perspective of the kitchen!!)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Walking in a little fashionable and lively town in Marlind, they enjoyed a day in pleasant sunshine. Now they are following Rohan to the place being the narrative of tradition in the town, buzzers around the environment ring the wild strength and kindness of nature. The town well conserved the nature with the culture that the whole forest there kept. The great tree stands in the ancient forest with it, embraces all the end and beginning of lives with kindness. Sunlight leaks through leaves on trees shine the earth with blessing, the evening twilight somehow highlights the majesty in the place. The seraph wants to proclaim the message to the boy, which may be the prologue of upheaval.
There’s an ancient phrase “calm before the storm”, then the storm will start to destruct all the peaceful moment left in the past second, thus people enjoy and prepare in the last moment of peace.

Rohan always narrowed his eyes, even Sorey never see his eyes opening, but now he opened his eyes, which makes the thing seems more important now.

“Shepherd Sorey. I have an important request for you.” Rohan said with a serious tone.

“Though I am no longer a Shepherd, I will help as I could, and would you mind her be here as an audience?” Sorey declares his ability and tries not to exclude Velvet from the conversation.

“It will be fine. I don’t mind more people to hear recent situations.”

“Though I may not help.” Velvet declared her stand, she always avoids involving in unnecessary cases unless it is related to her.

“It will be fine. I don’t expect everyone will help.” Rohan gazed Velvet and said in a flat tone. He has seen so many selfish people, so he is not surprised or angered by Velvet’s opinion as he is neither a saint too. He is also hiding in a safe place to avoid capture.

"Just a reminder to keep your friend safe.” Normin Attak jumped down from the shoulder of Sorey, walked out with the interesting sound of steps.

“Hi, Attak, nice to see you.” Bienfu greeted Attak when he just came back from running errands for them the snacks as Edna ordered.

“Hi, Breyve. What have you brought?” Attak greet back and clearly feed the conversation out track.

Edna snickered when she heard the name.

“...Breyve.......”Velvet also smirked as she remembered something. She still doesn’t think Bienfu is brave enough for his name, all her companion teased him once for the name Breyve.

“Bien---! I tell you not to use this name........just call me Bienfu!” Bienfu cried and be shy as he saw Velvet and Edna reaction, but he still continues to hand out his foods.

“Cough, cough. Well, let’s back on the topic.” Rohan saw the chain of reaction between Bienfu and Velvet but he decided not to ask and continue to bring on the topic. He still stays cautious as he thinks Velvet has a dangerous atmosphere around her. Velvet didn’t smile all the way and somehow showing a ferocious and tough glare to him, she is on the alert to him.

“Yes, please,” Sorey said, and everyone is silent.

“Have you noticed that seraphim in outside here are like disappeared?”

“Not really, since we haven’t been to many places, but we have heard that from other seraphim,” Sorey recalled the words from Ophelia, the seraph choose to stay with the human to collect information and avoid the danger in outside. The problem may be more serious than the malevolence issue.

Edna tensed up when she heard, she added: “Zaveid has warned me too.”

She recalled sometime the wind Seraphim brought with a human girl who looks like Velvet and another seraph to visit her.

“I saw a girl looks very alike Velvet with him some time by the way.”

“That’s Beta, and I have no idea about her, but we are surely not the same person.”

“Right, no way you two will be the same person, she is more obedient than you that I can’t really find the way to tease her.” Edna smirked.

“Wow, I doubt we are saying the same person, and so bad, cause I am a wicked one.” Velvet
responded carefreely.,

“Is that so?” Edna asked profoundly, cause she thinks Velvet is more than a simple bad person she claimed herself.

“Anyway, Zaveid always share the information he collected to me and remind me to stay safe,” Edna stated and pull back the topic. Despite receiving the reminder, Edna still stay at the place to wait for Sorey, Zaveid even complained once about her insisting in staying the place in Rayfalke Spiritcrest, but he said no more, he understood the reason.

“Great to know that. So…..Seems some movement is aiming at catching seraphim. The seraphim outside Hyland is not protected and most of them are captured. We don’t know their aim. We need someone to figure out what happened and rescue the seraphim.” Rohan exclaimed.

“Well…” Sorey may just want to agree but he is disrupted by Velvet.

“First, where did you get the information?” Velvet has not expressed many of her opinions, she asked if Rohan has reliable sources of information, or else it would be pointless to take action.

“We are under protection and get information from an assassin guild named Scattered Bones. Their leader in the past had been a Shepherd, so they believed in the existence of seraphim and willing to help us. We must stay in the district to remain the blessing so we can’t move and go far. Although the assassin guild is helping us, they are not able to figure out the truth too.”

“A Shepherd from an assassin guild?!” Velvet is irritated in an extent that she somehow associated the Shepherd with Artorius that using dirty method to achieve the goal, to give up the least to obtain the most, and she is trying to protect Sorey from getting himself killed in helping others.

“Calmed down, I knew the Shepherd Rohan just mentioned. She is Rose, she was one of my squires. She will only judge people after fully investigate them and she will not kill only by request but also rightness. Remember the grave I saw on the way? That’s her grave. I am sure that she must be a good Shepherd so people remember her with the gravestone at such place.” Sorey tried to explain the mentioned Shepherd to Velvet with his opinion. Although he does not fully agree with Rose’s way, he respected her way and he agreed that it is correct to the reality in some cases. Edna frowned as she saw Velvet being irritated, she adds her comment to Shepherd Rose from her experience after Sorey is explaining.

“Still, what do you expect when those professional killers can’t achieve?” Velvet somehow calmed down, but still, doubt the request. Theoretically, the professional assassin guild has the top-rank information collecting ability, if they don’t know the truth, then how come a newcomer of the Era like Sorey will be able to do it?

“……Which is why this more like a reminder than a request…. I can’t really expect, but you are our hope……Recently, the Shepherd of this Era has lost.” Rohan sighed and begged.

“I understand the condition, Thank you. I will try to help if I can.” Sorey answered after a moment.

“Seriously?! It can’t be done by an assassin guild and it is no even related to you!” Velvet exclaimed.

“Still, I want to do something about that.” Sorey insisted, he just can’t leave the one who needs help.

“Well, that is our pure ex-Shepherd. Deal with it.” Edna smirked.

“…………And I won’t be in help.” Velvet exclaimed again coldly.

“Right.” Edna grimaced and doesn’t expect something from the ex-Lord of Calamity.

“It is fine if you don’t want to help.” Sorey smiled lonely and said.
Velvet doesn’t say anything when she sees his facial expression, but she thought that maybe she hurt him for that.

“Sorey, is it?” Sorey nodded as he heard the question from Bienfu. “I know a place where I think it may help you…..” Bienfu suggested.

“Yes, please lead me there.”

“It is okay, but…” Bienfu stopped and looked at Velvet. “…….Although I won’t help, I will come with you.” Velvet relented and looked away from Sorey.

“As Miss Magilou said, you are not being honest to yourself ~” Bienfu laughed. “And what is the mean by that?” Velvet gazed at Bienfu.

“Nothing, you will know one day.” Bienfu stopped the topic to avoid irritating shy Velvet. He learned something too in these 1500 years of time and somehow behaved like Magilou under her influence. He has observed Velvet became a little bit protective around Sorey, he supposed that is a good thing to Velvet. It is not easy for a human to live alone and he sees he was right for his joke about the ex-lord of calamity fell in love. She starts learning to build relationships, to love someone again. Though it may be not like romantic love, it is a kind of love in human and love is what makes them think the humans is precious.

“You plan to lead them there?” Rohan asked. “Yep.”

“Hey, Attak, would you mind to tell me the name of the artist you mentioned?” “His name Leo.”

“I will ask about his news if I meet Lailah on the way.” Sorey smiled. “Thank you. Have a good trip, Sorey. I wish you may meet Lailah early on your trip!” Attak jumped and waved his hand.

Sorey, Edna, Bienfu, and Velvet say bye to Rohan and Attak and they are heading to an unknown place with Bienfu being the leader.

It is awfully silent on the way, Velvet doesn’t talk, either Sorey or Edna. They can hear their steps all the way they walk. Bienfu leads them into the ancient forest in Marlind, Sorey and Edna are the those just behind Bienfu and Velvet is the last one in the team.

“(Why am I coming along if I am not helping? What am I doing?)” Velvet asked herself in mind, she hesitated to continue in doing it.

“(Weird, what is that mean for I am not being honest to myself?)” Velvet doesn’t understand herself at all when she is trying to find a reason for it.

“(Is it necessary to be with Sorey all along?)” Velvet slowed down her pace gradually and watching the distance between Sorey and herself lengthen.

Indeed, it is just that she is following him, and if she stops following, what will be different? “(Despite not being the Shepherd, the boy is still a Shepherd inside. Then will he do the same decision as my family did? …..Abandon me then walk on his own?)” Velvet stopped walking and wondered, somehow she is trying to prevent anything in the past happening again. Her mind just drives her to escape from it before it is happening. Her PTSD is never completely healed even if she has her revenge over, her past will always remind herself. As Magilou said, mental damage is something can’t be healed fully, a lifelong thing.

Noticed the lightened sound of footsteps, Sorey turns his head and asked: “Something’s wrong?
Velvet?
Then the other turn their head as well, they are looking at Velvet.

“.........” Velvet blinked at the action of Sorey that she didn’t expect.

So he is willing to wait for her and go together.

“...No, nothing, I am just in a daze.” Her mind of those trifling things cleared when Sorey asked. She supposes she is thinking too much, and maybe focusing on the other things will help her out of the trifling mind.
“Ha, dazed on the road. You really look like an idiot.” Edna teased.

“......” Velvet frowned and continued walking after them.

Then the silence continues, Bienfu wonders if the air always is that thick between them. They are in the forest, it should be fresh air around them, but the air just getting hard to breathe if the silence continues.

After a certain distance they walked, Bienfu told everyone to close their eyes, since the passage should be a secret passage, so the way to go there can not be leaked out even to the ex-Shepherd Sorey, Eizen’s sister Edna and his old friend Velvet.

Knowing the reason, no one disagrees and they obey to close their eyes, walk until Bienfu tells them to stop. The place they are told to stop feels different from the soft and wet earth in the ancient forest, it is hard like a stepped-up stone slab. They may feel something glowed and gave a breeze under them like some special power when they are still closing their eyes.

“Thank you for all your cooperation, never thought all of you that obedient. You may open your eye now.” Bienfu told them to open their eyes after some miles away from the ‘stone slab’.

“Sorry that I am so disobedient all the time.” Velvet rolled her eyes.
“After all, you were a Lord of Calamity.” Edna teased.
“So, here is the place?” Sorey asked. He expected to see something more than just a forest after open his eyes.

“Not yet, still miles away from here.”
“The one who built the passage really wanted to hide it well.....” Sorey commented.
“May we at least know where we are on the map?” Velvet asked.
“It’s a secret.”
“You don’t plan to make it a secret in everything, do you?” Edna asked.
“But....but.....” Bienfu murmured.
“At least you may tell what is the place like, right?” Velvet suggested.
“O....OK.” Bienfu then started to tell about the place.

Bienfu said it is the land of Mayvin and the Assassin guild.
Sorey remembered the past Mayvin in his journey. He saw the grave of a female Mayvin and cause the death of a Mayvin. He got to know the Mayvin via Scattered bone the assassin guild. At first, he thought Mayvin was just a normal ruins explorer without resonance. However, the Mayvin must reveal his identity at last for the sake of the condition of the world at that time. he must break his pact to help the Shepherd. Sorey didn’t expect the death of Mayvin, but he could only move on to save the world with Mayvin Sacrifice. He knew Mayvin is related to Scattered bone, but he didn’t know whether the position of Mayvin passes on.
“I can’t purify the world without the help of Mayvin.” Sorey lamented the past Mayvin and tried to start talking to entertain the walk.

“Mayvin…..I knew a Mayvin too, I can’t say she helped me a lot, but I suppose she somehow makes the journey…fun, and I never expect our relationship become that…..so-call friend.” Velvet remembered Magilou.

“You get irritated by Miss Magilou every time.” Bienfu teased.
“Can’t deny that she is annoying and always love to tease and make me irritated.” Velvet added.
“Sound like an interesting person.” Sorey’s eyes shined.
“Just an annoying witch, said my brother,” Edna added.
“Yes, but not that bad to hear some gossip while sailing.” Velvet said with a smile hard to notice.
“I heard Velvet acting like a dove in Logres entrance. Miss Magilou said that is a moment she would never forget.” Bienfu raised his death flag of ‘Coo-Coo’.
“Oh, how interesting. I would like to have a look.” Edna showed an evil smile.
“Velvet, why did you act like a dove in that time?” Sorey asked out of curiosity.
“.......Can’t she leave the world peacefully without irritating me…..” Velvet mumbled and completely avoid to answer the question.
“Coo Coo~~” Bienfu continued teased.
“Breyve, you are pretty brave at some points.” Velvet gazed at Bienfu with an evil smile and clench her fists.

“Th...Thanks for the comment...Bi...Bien...Did I say something?” Bienfu escaped to the direction of Magiland and others just laugh and see Velvet chasing him with her redden ears.

Although Sorey wants to ask more about it, he doesn’t want to irritate Velvet so he is not going to ask her……….. in recent.

Accompany by those “jokes” and they continue the silence after it. Finally, they arrived at the Magiland and find a hostel to stay in.

It is a large village with some people staying here. Just they heard from Bienfu, it is a town built for Mayvin and people with resonance to rest but also the work station of the Scattered bone. They intended to hide here well so they actually have other divided temporary base stations to keep here hard to be discovered to be the assassin base. Most of the members are working with their missions while the Mayvin ane people with resonance are traveling around the world. Only some of their families and some of the Mayvin stay in the town. Since the Scattered bone is also a merchant guild of Sparrowfeathers, the town is also running the business for the guild.

As 500 years ago, Rose, the Shepherd after Sorey, also known as the lead of Sparrowfeathers and Scattered. She wanted to find a way to build a bond between Seraphim and human while making her guild get the benefits. She thought of the idea to run business with seraphim and build a village for the financial experiment with some people moved in.

She also needs a way to study how resonance works in order to build a bond between human and seraphim. While the people with resonance are likely being discriminated for them seeing the ‘invisible things’, Rose built them the place where they can be normal. The village is the perfect place for her studies and the naturing of the next Mayvin and the next Shepherd while building bonds between human and seraphim. By her effort, some people in the village after her generation became the Shepherd, some of them became a Mayvin and some of them just live with seraphim.

Now, the village gathers both normal human, human with resonance and seraphim here.
Sorey is amazed by all the things Rose had done, she can always make things out in a practical way. The Shepherd spirit passed on in a practical way. By the aid of money, the belief of Seraphim also is promoted. Edna is not surprised as she also traveled with Rose at that time, and she is satisfied by Sorey’s reaction.

As the place is surrounded and shadowed by rocky cliffs, Sorey guesses the place is around Gododdin, the forgotten village. It is not a place riched in resources except the specific mineral, he wonders how does the place develop like this if it is the place.

“I knew this place is very great, but why did you bring us here?” Velvet asked directly, seems not interested in the place at all.

“I heard a Mayvin left for a long time came back again, so I think you guys may get some information from him,” Bienfu explained.

“By the way, I am hungry,” Edna exclaimed.

“Oh?” Sorey doubts as he remembered seraphim don’t need to eat, so they should not feel hungry.

“I love eating during the journey with you, it is your fault, Sorey,” Edna complained.

“ahaha….” Sorey can’t help but smile.

“Well, if you learn to eat, your stomach will be empty in time. ......It’s proof of living.” Velvet commented. Velvet’s response surprised Sorey that she keeps almost silent on the way apart from giving the necessary response.

“Any kitchen to borrow?” Velvet then asked Bienfu for the information in the Magilou.

“you mean you will make the meal?” Sorey asked he thought that Velvet is mad at his decision.

“Any problem? I am just in the mood to cook. Besides, we have no extra gald for the meal.” Velvet answered realistically but avoid to meet eyes.

“No, then I am looking forward to it.”

Then the team entered a hostel and Velvet borrow the common kitchen there to cook for the team.

“Sorey, I heard that Velvet’s cooking is great. Have you tasted it?” Edna asked while waiting for the meal.

“Yes, how to say it, I can taste the taste of home in it!” Sorey claimed.

“Interesting, I would like to watch the cooking process…..”

“But she appeared to avoid to talk in most of the time after our conversation with Rohan.” After seeing Velvet acting a bit weird in the forest, Sorey started wondering if she has a problem now.

“Then this is the simplest way to make her talk, just watch.”

Smiled and laughed, Edna opens the kitchen door. On the other side after that, there was a sound of a gentle kitchen knife, and a sound soup pouring. Besides that, it is Velvet standing there with her hair bundled and wearing an apron.

With the sound of the door closed, the regular sound of gentle kitchen knife cutting stopped suddenly and Velvet looked up to the direction of the kitchen entrance.

“... what? .... I have not done it yet, I do not need to help, go out and wait over there”

“I did not come to help ... I came to talk. You cannot escape if you are making something.” Edna smiled.
“I do not have anything to say ---”
Without a signal, Edna hugged at the waist from the back of the velvet. When Sorey is gasped at the moment, Velvet gave a furious voice “Malevo….. Hey, Edna!”

“If you don’t talk straight, I will keep this posture all the time.” Thinking all the features annoyingly mentioned in Eizen’s letters, Edna thought that she got the way to get her, after being with Velvet a short period. Maybe Velvet is a person who looks like hard to get along with because she looks cold and irritated, always intentionally or otherwise releasing a dangerous aura, make the others scared of her. Nonetheless, Edna is not scared of being close to her, not after she knew that Velvet is somehow important to her brother and not after what she learned about her on the way.

She wants to get along with Velvet as she really doesn’t hate her and Velvet has some features similar to her brother. From the halved word of “malevolence”, she sees Velvet concerned for the malevolence and afraid to hurt her by that. Seeing Velvet’s gentility, she believed that what said in Eizen’s letter is true and Velvet must have acted to prevent Eizen to become a dragon in her time.

“It’s not that, it's dangerous now when I am holding a knife.”
“....puff, I thought you would complain about other things.” Edna laughed.

“Still, I have nothing to say.” Velvet insisted.
“Nope, you have something to say, like, to Sorey’s decision.” Edna insisted too.

“......It's not like I can change his decision.”

“Still, say it.”

“..........I had a really bad feeling with that like we are running into a storm…..and I don’t like you guys get hurt or............killed.” Velvet said the last word in a fragile tone, carelessly revealed her fragile self in front of Edna and Sorey.

Edna shocked as she heard Velvet care about them that much.
“It’s alright. I promise that I will try my best to keep Edna and myself safe.” Sorey responded sincerely after thinking. Although he can’t say, there isn’t a chance to get in danger, he think making a promise is the best way to comfort Velvet now.

“I will try to believe you.”

“By the way, I am still hungry,” Edna added and try to change the atmosphere.

“.....Right, right. I will cook, so sit there and wait.”
“No, I want to watch you cooking.” Edna insisted.
“........”
“Besides, I heard that you need a taste test,” Edna added.
“.........Sorey told you?” Velvet is surprised that Edna knew about her taste when she never mentioned it.
“Nope, from my brother.”
“(just how many things you write to your sister?! Eizen?!)” Velvet exclaimed in her mind.
“.........fine, please be my taste tester then.” Velvet sighed to accept the offer.
“Hum? You prepared 4 bowls?” Sorey looked around and found.
“....That one for Bienfu.” Velvet answered.
“....Surprise me, you even considered for him.” Edna pointed.
“N...Nothing, just prepared by the way, and he will be hungry if he keeps watching others eat.”
“..How considerate....” Edna praised with a smile.

---------------------------------------------
Finishing the dinner, the team all in a relaxed state until the signal ring.

“Bing-------------” a sound flash inside everyone head.
“That’s the sound I heard inside the head when we arrived.”

“That’s the sound for a reminder of Mavin’s entry into the town by his Exorcist Artes.”  
They approach the entrance of the town and they see an adult in middle age came back with stick support to walk. The clothes on him have several holes with bloodstained. Seem the man is attacked by someone. They quickly help and heal the man.
“ The Mayvin is attacked?!” Bienfu mumbled.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
The chapter gets quite long after combined and further extended, it may be separated but then it would be 2 chapters for the peaceful moments.......I try to write the story with a more proper reason for adventure or a feel of the main plot there( by the fact I just found not really a main theme in the story, or say not a clear one......), you know.....the four steps in the composition of a story, so time for some transition......

I have just noticed the setting get a certain proportion in the late part of the chapter. Not like I am a fan of Rose, this village is only an idea came up when I put all the assassin guild merchant guild, Shepherd, Mavin and Seraphim staffs together.
A long whistling, powerful but also sad, it is a hawk, I can hear, must be somewhere near. In Cambria Caverns, right now, there is an old man waiting for his last moment. Feeling the drops on my face, I opened my eyelids slowly. As the focus of my eyes recovered gradually, I see the water dripping from stalactite. I can still feel the temperature from the drops, I can still feel my heartbeats, I am still living. I have worried that my eyelids would not able to be opened again and my eyes would not able to see again, it happened that I worry too much.

How laughable is that………for thought from a Mayvin. For a man explored countless ruins, read the numberless stories, lived innumerable ages, the man who passed the true history down.
Ah, numberless is too exaggerated, but yeah, I lived too long. I even don’t know my specific age myself. In fact, I didn’t count after it started exceeding a hundred.
Huh, it is appropriate to say I am forgotten by the years.

Haha…..ha…cough….cough
Well, why would my body start coughing, for a body not even able to say a sentence now, sarcastic, right?

I had made an oath, an oath to stay long-living.
Mere life is senseless existence to me, now this body had already become inhumane things staying far from death, lives of others or myself would be meaningless.
My job is to pass on the story, apart from that are none of my business. This is the rule within Mayvin, not to interfere in the world.
In no way I will be disturbed by my own so-called life crisis, to cause my mind shaken.

Death need not be commiserated.
Death need not be depressed.
Death need not be grieved.
Death need not be angered.
It is all the fate, a normal thing to life.

That’s me, the observer wandering in the world.
An old man whose mind like water, calm and splash less, straying to explore, read stories one after one and then get old enough but still not died yet, the old man Mayvin.

Could my legs still walk? Could my hands still hold anythings?
I think I can but it is uncertain.

What is the ‘person’ I met? who and what, mysteries all around him. My partner seraph is just taken away, I escaped miserably all the way to here…..At least I have stolen a memory fragment from him, Although it is still foggy after reading it. Now I feel sorry every time I remember it happened.
Shouldn’t I throw away my partner and escape?
If so, maybe I can save my partner, and I can understand what else from the man.
And there is no need to worry every night, but to wait for the fate to come.
Or to end my life earlier, that man may kill me ignoring my oath, I have such feeling, my dying wounds are the best proof for this.
............However, it is impossible. My partner would do the same things as I did. She must capable to escape, nevertheless she is carefree to live.
After all, she always comes and goes like a shadow, and everything doesn’t matter to her, just like the mirror of my reflection. She and I have long wanted to escape from him the first time when facing the person. She is sure to escape by her illusion. I am believed in that, Ophelia is a seraph like that. If not, she and I would not be friends.

What makes me curious is that she is very familiar with Mayvin's history. Together with the history of Asgard Period, which is already lost, she is not a very old Seraphim. Is there a relationship between her and Mayvin? Doesn’t matter to me.

It has been weeks for me to live in such condition, would that happen that I am afraid of death now despite being indifferent to it all the time?
Why did I escape?
I don’t have the enthusiasm of other ordinary people for their dreams, the enthusiasm for contributing to the world.
Yes, the old man has no enthusiasm to live, no.
In my way, the heart is useless. Emotional resentment is useless. I am just watching the observer of fate, not the mediator. But I also want to read more stories….such greedy….and there are things remained unfinished.

Then, I can’t wait here for death, not at least to hand out the fragment to the fateful one. That’s what the man said: “Oh? Still not died? And you stole something from me…..Very well, I will give it to you...........just struggle on whilst at death’s door and pass a message for me, Mayvin. ---------The Dark Age will fall again.”

I shall send the message, I shall not die.

Given time for me, it’s for my fate. As long as my hand can still move, I will climb and go back. Because I am the inheritor of Mayvin, even if this world will be turned into hell, I will continue to pass on the stories.

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The place is still surrounded by caves and caverns while part of it becomes exposed for the controlled mining and the extension of village, now that they can see the sea now. Guess there may be a trading port there, despite it is doubted that there is any resource for trading. Well, by the fact that virtual things and services can be traded, it is not surprised that Rose had found her way to build up the village with economic prosperity with the whole guild behind her.

Being in the upper part at the village entrance, They can see the sea view there and they can not see the whole village at all, given that the scale of the village is comparable to a town but still not a town yet. It is felt like the village is building along cliffs with the cliffs and caves surrounded as the natural barrier, it is an appropriate place as a natural hide-out. Many windmills built on the rooftop of the house, no except for the hostel Sorey’s group is staying, apparently, the residents rely on the wind power to make their life easier, it may not be possible for the Gododdin before, but now they have the sea breeze to make this possible.

Inside the hostel they are, several drawings are hung to decorate the living, some illustrations are drawing women that look alike Lailah and Magilou by some coincidence. Normally, Sorey and Bienfu will talk about it to explore the things in the village, but now there are more important things for them to concern, so they all concentrated for things right now.

The man known as a Mayvin is now resting in a bed. Bienfu is worried about the fact that a Mayvin is attacked. Everyone noticed it is a serious condition they should be prepared.

Sorey asked for Bienfu’s concern.

“Mayvin is always the people greatly desire in knowledge and story in an extent that they are willing to form a pact for long life and resonance. They are mostly pacifism, so normally they avoid any dispute and not to get involved in the great activities happening in the world. There is seldom chance they get attacked, not to mention that they are strong enough to defend themselves with the seraphim formed a pact with them.” Bienfu explained in a serious tone, no more casual tone in his voice. The change in his attitude let everyone in the room noticed the severity of the incident just happened.

“So we may approach a strong enemy in the future,” Edna concluded.

“The Mayvin seems coming back without a seraph, will that be possible it related to the disappearance of seraphim?” Sorey wondered after collecting all the clues together.
“Both are possible, we should prepare for the worst.” Velvet stated.

“You said you are not going to help, Velvet.” Edna teased.

“It is just self-defense now.” Velvet explained.

“Then you are going to help?” Sorey asked.

“......not really, apart from defending, we are not sure for anything right now.” Velvet looked away.

“I see.....” Sorey sighed.

“It’s too early to conclude when everything is uncertain,” Edna stated.

“We shall just wait for the Mayvin awake,” Sorey stated.

The cracking sound of the firewood fills up the room with the burning flame animation shows on the old-radiator-simulation screen in the modern heater. It is supposed to heat the air and the sound may cause a relaxing effect theoretically, but it is useless now. It failed to heat the cold air brought by fear and restlessness, it also failed to loosen the tensed air. Sorey, Velvet, Edna and Bienfu all sit on the sofa in the hostel common room to wait for the awake of the Mayvin. They may do other things to spend the time, but no one did since the atmosphere is too heavy. They each lost in thought, thinking about the effective strategy to respond to this situation.

After a while, the doctor comes out with the healer seraph and state that the man has just woke up. They quickly approach him and ask for the condition of Mayvin.

“You are...Shepherd Sorey and the first Lord of Calamity, Velvet Crowe.” the man said after a while of recognition as his focus of eyes recovered.

He never thought to see these people in person. At a moment, he thought that he died so he saw these people. However, hardly the Mayvin can die unless they break the oath or the oath effect has reached the limit. He guessed they are the fateful people he should meet before he truly dies. Right, significant enough to call them fateful one.

“You know us?!” Both of them surprised.

“Well, I have seen a lot of story from Earthen Historia, and I heard stories from the past Mayvin.” the man explained.

“Just what is happening?” Edna asked.

“Seems that a new Lord of Calamity raised and unfortunately the Shepherd in this Age is disappeared. I…..got attacked by a man, he grasped away the seraphim with me.” The old man spoke with worry when remembering the scene.

“What is the man look like?” Sorey asked.

“.........I can’t really see him clearly, there is always black aura around him but it is not like malevolence. He has a heavy and scornful voice. That is all I know.”

“If we don’t do something, there is more seraphim under threat.” Sorey concerned.

“There is just not enough information for us to traced the enemy,” Edna stated the fact in an unpleasant tone, she is displeased by the fact she can’t do a thing.

“The man told me to send a message--The Dark Age will fall again. That’s all.”
Velvet is silent, no one knows what is she thinking, and she doesn’t state a word. She gazed at Edna and Sorey for a moment and then look down the ground again. She felt guilty around Edna as if she causes her brother turning into a dragon but she managed to change her focus. She thinks she has to do something to protect Edna from the capture too, just as a compensation. Her feeling to Sorey is unclear, but she could not let the one who saved her and accepted her killed by the hand of others. As the situation comes to meet her prediction in early, they are involved in something big, something they cannot control. Therefore, she would do whatever she could to protect her friends now, she just doesn’t want to lose all the one she cared for again.

“Here something I shall give it to you.” The Mayvin gave a silver fragment to Sorey.

“What’s it?” Sorey asked.

“It is a piece of memory I stole from the man, I got nothing clear from it, but I hope that it may help you,” Mayvin said.

“Thank you. May you say about the seraphim with you?” Sorey asked as he wanted to help Mayvin saving his seraph friend.

“I can’t really describe her, because she is a master of illusion and she can just change her appearance. Things for sure are that she always wears a necklace with a golden eye ornament hanging on it so that I can recognize her. Oh, yeah, she is a female seraph, called Ophelia. I am sure that she escaped successfully.”

“Ophelia? We certainly met a seraph called Ophelia in the Lost Tower.” Sorey said.

“Hmm, I see, it is indeed a good place to hide. Thanks for the news, I will go find her later.”

Leaving the room with the fragmental piece given to Sorey, they sit in the living room again and trying to find a way to read the memory fragment. Suddenly, they entered a scene like they have triggered something.

The memory played in the first-person perspective to Sorey, Velvet, Edna, and Bienfu.

The so-called hell must be the world itself.
Inside the flame, I can see the people smile madly, for the death of mum and me.
“Die! Witch! Die! The Forbidden one!”
Not showing a single kindness to a neighbor had lived in the same village for almost ten years, is this what the human being is?
………………

The scene of flame changed to another scene, and Sorey doesn’t know how it ended up with.

“You are the observer for this proposal, let’s see how it ended up with. Oh, yeah, you have no right to refuse. Dirt will return to dirt, you won’t earn a proper position here but to doom with the human.” Someone said to the belonger of the memory.

………………

It appeared to be a mission but they can’t figure out what is it as there is too few information given by the fragment, the scene then changed into another scene again.

“I had hoped that we can understand each other, but it appears not. Sorry, it is the only way to stop you.” A man standing in front of the belonger of the memory said, like saying words to a friend, it looks like that he casts an exorcist arte to the belonger of the memory.
“Damn it! I will break the seal one day! That you will regret not killing me. Claudin!” the belonger of the memory said.

“Maybe, I hope there is a person to stop you at that time then. Goodbye, my friend.” The man who is called Claudin says with fondness like a farewell to a friend.

“Claudin!!---------” The cry ended the scene with darkness and this is all the content from the memory fragment.

Looks like that the belonger of the memory was a friend of Claudin and he is sealed away by an arte, so it means the seal is broken now by the fact that they are seeing this memory.

“......Wow, you all see that?” Sorey asked after he returned his consciousness to reality.
“Sure, what a mess I see,” Edna commented.
“......At least we can confirm he is related to Claudin.” Velvet said.

“Would he be a being that has lived in the Dark Era? He has exclaimed to raise it again.” Sorey speculated.

“......You know I am not familiar with history.” Velvet sighed.
“Apparently, he was a being lived an Era before I live,” Edna said.

“...Doesn’t matter when since he lives, maybe we should think of another part in it.” Velvet suggested.
“He is called a forbidden one……why?” Sorey wondered.

“Humans have superstitious belief, red hair, red eyes, having monstrous power, all can be the reasons for that. You should have experienced it, Sorey.” Edna added, reminding Sorey of the experience of being treated as a monster when he raised stones from the riverbed as the bridge construction base in front of everyone.

“What about the observer?”

“I have no idea about it.”

“Same here.”

“.............”

At last, Bienfu suggested all people in the room rest as he notices the atmosphere become much heavier as they have no idea from the fragment. He suggested they all go to their room and try to relax.

However, Sorey doesn’t sleep as he can’t really sleep with the issue. He decides to go for a walk around the village and he leaves the hostel in midnight.

He wondered if he should go to investigate to find out the myth of the enemy. Maybe his friends are gonna worry, he wondered if it will be fine to leave them all like this, especially Velvet, given that he was the one who asked her to travel with him. Then it appears that is not a mature decision at all.
“Hey, where are you going? Idiot ex-Shepherd?” A familiar voice reaches Sorey's ear. Sorey finds out Edna follow him out.

“Just go for a walk,” Sorey stated.

“In midnight?” Edna asked.

“Yeah…..I can’t sleep.”

“You know we will get worried if you just disappeared in a night like this.” Edna indicated.

“I have been wondering if I should just leave in the night and go investigate too,” Sorey admitted.

“Where are you planning to start with if you do?” Edna asked.

“I don’t know, anywhere.” Sorey admitted that he has no plan at all.

“Anyway, I am with you. You can’t do many things without a seraph if you approach an enemy.” Edna facepalmed as she heard the ex-shepherd’s word.

“Well, thanks!.”

“But what about Velvet? You will just leave her here if you are really doing this.” Edna shows her concern about Velvet.

“........That’s why I am still wondering.....She has stated that she won’t help.”

“I doubt it, she may be just being dishonest.” Seeing Velvet has grown concern to them, she supposes Velvet will help if the time comes.

“Is that so..........”

“..........And have you forgot your promise to her?” Edna remembered that Sorey promised her to be alright.

“No, never, I don’t plan to die.” The boy stated firmly.

“But you are playing with your life to leave alone in such a moment.” Edna criticized Sorey’s stupid act.

“And I am not alone now.” Sorey smiled.

“.................right.” Edna sighed.

“To prevent anything happen, I will reform the pact with you. Now, repeat after me.”

“o..ok!”

“O ye born sacred heart of purity and resolute stubbornness.”

“O ye born sacred heart of purity......and resolute ...stubbornness??”

“Don’t mind, just repeat!”

“O ye born sacred heart of purity and resolute stubbornness!”

“Here let our pact be forged, that my unwavering and unlimited stubbornness will may be thy absolute fortification! Shouldst thou accepts this burden.”

“Here let our pact be forged, that my unwavering ...and unlimited stubbornness will may be thy absolute fortification! Shouldst thou accepts this burden.”
“Now, recite aloud my true name.”
“Now, recite aloud my true name.”

“I mean just say my true name! or you have already forgotten?”
“Nope, never. Hephsin Yulind.”

This night, Sorey reformed the pact with Edna.
Everything is fine until the sky is painted in red.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
I get inspiration from the writing style in the beginning in FGO Epic of Remnant 3 Shimosa and I kind of fitting it into this chapter for Mayvin POV...

Hmm, the village is not having a complete setting but yes it is in Gododdin and is merged with features in Taliesin in Berseria. I originally like the place be around Tintagel Ruins, but the fact that Lohgrin is around there and it is certainly not a good position for a place isolated from countries or else the tragedy of Camlann may happen again by the geologic location there. To make it a place good enough for a hide-out, I rather change Gododdin into a different place for it is originally named The Forgotten Village. Thus it may be isolated from the country during the war because it is unnecessary and then both the countries would not want to attack there for not really a resource they can have in the place.

How to transport from Marlind to Gododdin if you ask, by seraphic artes for sure, though I didn’t name it exactly in the story.

(P.S. The old version of illustration below, it happened that a bit strange for the perspective, and I corrected it with the assistance of a friend:) (P.S.2. I didn't include the drawings that hung on the wall in the new one, as the furniture layout just become different, and one of the illustrations is the La Gioconda as mentioned.)
Chapter Summary

Dreams are similar to reality.
A strange, so-called cold-blooded seraph, Ophelia, hidden in the dark is following the team of Sorey. As everyone knows, this woman just left Mayvin to leave himself......such a bad woman. ......Well, although to put it more accurately, it is indeed two-way. Just to say, these two people are really like a pair of bad friends. Nevertheless, the seraph is kind of the mentor to the Mayvin in this generation, you just can't link her image to a master of something.

It is not wrong to say her creed is “Everything doesn't matter to me.”. No one will understand her true nature but to see their frustrated face. By such so-called creed, she won't interfere with anything basically but to wait and observe like those Empyreans.

Someone will claim that the Empyrean who only smile and watch is heartless, but it cannot be helped. Since the Empyrean holds their power by an oath, they can't violate the oath, they can't interfere things on earth to a large extent. To give power in the shrines of trial and give blessing will be the things they can do but they can't directly attack the enemy. Therefore, you can't expect the Empyrean can help that much. Different from the Empyrean, Ophelia doesn't interfere just out of her hobbies.

What? Cold-blooded? It is hard to define it you know? Would you say the same things to the journalist? They just stand beside the fight or the victim, record and report. They are necessary in the world and various kinds of people are living in the world, it is something you can't change or say it is wrong.

So seraph Ophelia with such personality traced Sorey’s team with her sneaking skills, then she finds an 'interesting' scene. “Oops, this is bad. Never thought that they just encounter him directly in this early......Well, it's can't be helped, I will just have to report it to the President.” She sighed as it looks like she won't be able to continue to trace them directly. She goes back to the Village Magiland while talking to herself, it may be the time for her to visit her old friend Mayvin.

Underneath the Crimson Moon, her shadow is lengthened and merging with the shadow of the trees beside, she supposes, this night will be a nightmare to someone.

Velvet Pov

Without any warning, I suddenly opened my eyes as if I was awakened by a nightmare. The blurred vision slowly recovered from my wake. I saw a wooden ceiling with timber beam structure as support. The ceiling I saw just felt a little nostalgic, and I felt like my home.

It’s so funny, it’s clear that my home has existed nowhere now. What is the meaning of this feeling now, there is no place in the world where I can stop. And it is not like I am controlling my head and body to move.
I changed my position from laying and see a familiar furniture layout, I am in my old home. “Why am I in my home??” I asked without expecting any answer. I look up at the window beside my bed. The blood moon is hanging in the sky.

“Scarlet night? Why?..... Is that a dream?” I want to test if it is a dream with pain but I can’t control my body in this dream, so I can only watch. I watched Laphicet’s comb held in my hand, it is still not broken, I knew, it is a dream in the past. I rarely have the chance to see such a dream, but this memory is something I will never forget. How can I forget it? This is the night when my little brother died.

I ran out of my house, no surprise, I see a pack of werewolf outside my house. Coming up with a howling, they chase me with an attack intention. The collapse of the villagers I once knew is everywhere on my way of escape. Scarlet moon hang in the sky, I see the bloody sky in the gap form by the mountain in the Tranquil Woods. I rush towards the Innominat’s Shrine. I was here at the instincts because Laphicet often ran here, he liked the flowers here and the sea here, imagining the world he could not touch in the distance.

As I expected, everything is following the trajectory in my memory. The tragedy is reappearing. Ah, even a memory that cannot be changed in a dream, the world is boring, but even if I change it in my dreams, I know that the facts cannot be changed... So accurately I am the boring person here.

As happened before, Artorius said his aims is to save the world. He then pierced Laphicet before my very eyes while I was fixed on the ground by Seres, which was recognized as an unknown magical power I too busy to care at that moment. He then fell Laphi into the endless pit in the shrine. I can still remember what will happen next, and my memory replays in the dream.

I managed to break free from Seres’s artes by my power from rampaged emotion and jump into the deep shine to hold Laphicet from falling down. Even I knew there is no turn back if a human is pierced, they soon die, my rampaged emotion blocked my logical thinking. I had believed there is hope and I wanted to believed there is hope. Laphicet has become the meaning of my life at that time, so I did everything to save him even if he refuses for it.

I managed to hang onto the shrine’s edge while holding Laphicet’s hand. My left hand is the only hand grabbing the edge of the pit, there Arthur walked slowly up to the edge, staring me from the top, like those eyes no longer belong to the one I knew. As I knew in the end, Arthur died in the day he lost his wife, in the day my sister died.

Why didn't I realize that my brother-in-law had already become another person? Just because I don't want to believe it? I always persuaded myself that my brother-in-law to say and do better for us. In fact, what he said is not wrong. If I can't become ruthless, I will be defeated on the battlefield because of my sudden emotions. The little carelessness by emotion will lead to death in the end.

He tried to teach me to be rational. I didn't notice the one who teaches me to be indifferent and
rational has long been not a gentle person I know. And there is no trace of temperature at the end of reason.

“Let him go. This offering is too important to the world.” He coldly commented. Arthur lost hope to humanity, so he could view human no different to an object which could be used. He built his value to the weight of life and decided who to be sacrificed for the world.

I had been watching him yet I never noticed his eyes are long gone, only his back is always left in the field of vision. So calm and clear that his eyes only reflect my own being, I finally realized the horror of the eyes at this moment.
I was scared by his eyes and his cold sentence but I told myself to believe him once more in that time. Yet, I was wrong. Yes, this person in front of me is a lie for seven years. So what have I always believed? I was just living around a lie.

I asked him for reasons but I only got those unacceptable answers from him. So icy that the rationality in the answer is biting cold. He once said that my emotions are too hot, yes, it was impossible for me to accept his answer when I was emotional. Even now I can say that I am cold-blooded, I will still deny this answer. If the saved world does not have my important people, I will not save this world.

I denied his answer, there must be a way to save Laphicet.

“Ever a slave to emotion.” He again coldly stated the comment. It is because of his severe emotional damage from Celica’s death, he thought emotion should be something disappeared from the world so that no one will be hurt and no more malevolence in the world. He denied the existence of emotion and the core of humanity.

He raised his sword, sharply cut my left arm through the bone, without any hesitation. I fall down from the edge.

I was shocked, my eyes widened to glare him unbelievably, but what respond me was still those cold eyes, there was not even a waver in his eyes. The shock even blocks my sensation of pain to the new wound.
I still feel the pain of betrayal.
How could he do this?! Without any hesitation, to hurt and kill his family. I thought we were family! Ah, why can't, he died inside a long time ago. I noticed too late and I realized too late......I am too stupid.
I was despair at once when I thought: “Whatever......I was falling......and it’s not like I could a way to go up again.”

Then I see Laphicet eaten by a golden dragon with numerous heads, I couldn’t help but felt
unforgiving to Arthur. The anger and my unforgiving feeling exceeded and canceled my despair.

“Artorius!!”
From the deep and unmeasurable abyss of the forgotten Empyrean, in the darkness without daylight, I stretched out my lost left hand to the only the hole of the Crimson moonlight. Even though there is no hope left in my world, I want to catch that man and kill him.

My vision is engulfed into light while I was eaten by the dragon of light.

I wake with my vision slowly recovered from blurred. I noticed I am extending my left arm with bandages, like I want to catch something. The ceiling is supported by a concrete beam. I pinch my cheek with my fingers. It’s hurt, so I am sure that I am in reality now.

Now, why am I still dreaming something like this? It is already a piece of memory that can't even be called a nightmare.

I look up to the steel-framed window next to my bed. It is a Scarlet Night. I wonder what’s happening.

Worrying if I wake someone in the same room with the talking in my sleep, I watched to other beds. I found all empty apart from the bed of Bienfu. The room door left unlatched, so they went out, and I don't know why. In the night now Scarlet Night has fallen again, I can't help but feel uneasy and dangerous. I immediately put on the bad clothes I used to wear, no matter how ragged it is, I find comfort in the clothes I used to wear.

I walk out to the reception in the hostel, no one is there but an opened door.

Someone gets out in this time? I wonder who is it and why is it.

Unlike my time, some shops still open in midnight now, I ask if they see anyone come out from the hostel before me. Although I want to ask about the Scarlet night, I have no enough time to find out who left the hostel then.

“A boy with white cape came out and a girl with a white umbrella followed after a while.” Finally, I find some answer, in such a description, I may guess they are Sorey and Edna. indeed, who else could be, including me, there are only 4 members in the team.

“Where did they go?” I am growing my worry to lose any of them, things turn to have a deja vu to the dream I just had.

“I see they leave the town and go to the west direction.” The shopkeeper answered.
“Thank you.” I didn’t ask more question and go. I go in the way as described and try to follow then, There is a ruin nearby as I heard. Sorey is a ruin maniac, but I doubt he would risk his life to explore ruins. After all, he had saved the world once, he should know what is the right time for things.

My mind cannot stop but thinking of bad things happened on both Edna and Sorey, I am feared of losing them. The time being with them was short, but both of them treat me sincerely even after knowing my past identity, knowing my committed sin. Despite the feeling of guilty, I actually have a similar feeling to my past companion on them. I could not keep the relationship tightly as I knew I was going to die at the end of the journey, but things are different now, this time I want to go the way with them, without a regret. Thus I am going to do anything to keep them safe.

In a place around a cliff, I find both Sorey and Edna fell on the ground and a Shadow-like man is standing there not far away from the two.

I guess he defeated Sorey and Edna and I can feel his strength by his casted domain. “I have been waiting for you, the first Lord of Calamity.” The shadow said.

“How do you know that?!” I extended my sword out to attack him. “Don’t be short-tempered. I am asking you to join me.” He said in free and unconstrained tone.

“You are not answering my question, and what if I say no.” I continued to slash him in high speed but he dodged all attack carefreely.

“Then these two people will be in a dangerous condition.” He snickered, like knowing my weakness. “I will save them by power.” Even I felt his extreme strength, I try to fight him for the people I want to protect. “You are powerless, in front of me.” He slightly swing his arm, then I felt an intangible power shackled me to the ground. Unlike Seres’s shackle, I can’t even struggle under the force. I feel like my body is too heavy to move. It is a gravity shackle. He is walking towards me and lean over his body. I can’t move and he pinched my chin to make me look at him. I can’t clearly catch his facial expression but I feel like he has a grimace and he looked at me with frivolous eyes.

“Have you forgotten that you are only a human now?” He snickered at my foolish behavior.

I want to curse him but I can’t even make a sound. Things just have gone similar to the past, as the events happened in the dream, I am always powerless to save someone important to me. Again they left me one by one in the Scarlet Night.
I grind my teeth and curse my powerless, curse him and curse the fate deep down my heart. I hate this world.

Are we all born to suffer? I had this question again in my mind. “Oh, the malevolence has already come out, you are really a potential Lord of Calamity.” Listened to his statement, I realized that he may want me to be tainted by malevolence and become a hellion again. I try to calm down to search for solutions.

“If success was guaranteed, we'd never get anything done. Uncertainty is what spurs us onward. Forward we move, if only by one step at a time, toward somewhere different than here, through sadness and anger and joy alike. Life is about that journey.” I remembered that Magilou gave me a piece of practical advice before the last battle in the last journey. Be patient and try to overcome the obstacle, even for the one strong like the man in front of me. Thinking of her words, I managed to calm myself down. I hate to admit, but she helps me this time.

“.......And constrain it so well too. Tch” He displayed a displeased tone, all the more proof of his aim to make me a hellion again.
“But you will have to obey me anyway.” He soon snickers again with an unpleasant tone, seems to cast an arte on me.
I feel dizzy to make my vision out of focus, I fainted.

I wake from my faint. My blurred vision slowly recovered and I see dark steel ceiling. I sense a shackle to my neck.

“Good morning, my dear hound.” It is that unpleasant voice from the man. I feel and recognize there is a cold metal collar on the neck with the word ‘hound’ and I know that he is not treating me as a human.

“You must obey my order, now.” He shows Sorey and Edna images on the screen, seems they are locked up in separate rooms.

“Also a bomb is attached to your neck, as a nice reminder.” He complimented more information before I ask any question to argue.
“But just wait for your fodder today.” The screen disappeared and no more sound I hear but my curse.
“You bastard!”

It is like me back to the time in Titania and I will have to do the works I hate to do. I wonder whether I will lose myself again in the end.
Chapter End Notes

A.N.
That's why I try to boost the relationship between Sorey and Velvet as much as possible and established bond between Velvet and Edna so Velvet will want to save them. Things happened all over again, finally in this stage of my plot! I tried to describe the scene in the game from video and it is kind of adopting the scene again in the plot in purpose. If you have noticed, part of the words is copied from the early chapter haha......
The place Stonebury was once was also a small village, but it was a resource-rich place. Under the efforts of the predecessors, it became the Lastonbell, the City of Artisans. There, the clear bells resounded through the city. Artists and technicians are gathered there to be proud of their city.

Opposite, but still similar, Gododdin, where should be the forgotten village, the place abandoned by countries by its lack of resources and distant location.

Back then, everything in the near-derelict village was supported by the village chief. Nothing in the barren land could be immediately turned into money, so the village chief used the addictive fake Elixir(Nectar) to let the funds flow into the village. The village is not blessed by natural resources,
The village is not sheltered by natural resources. Reluctantly, the surrounding caves and mountains can still be used as natural defenses. Unfortunately, this is not a value of aggression. The village chief can do very little, he contributes all his last contributions to the village. If there are no natural resources here, then at least leave the wisdom. While the village chief is using Nectar to maintain the village's life, he also hopes that the village will have a sustainable future in the correct way. He founded the school to educate the children of the village. He entrusted the future hopes to the children, the children became the pioneers of this land, and the old man’s body was gradually decayed by the poisoning of vermillion ore. After that, the true new Shepherd named Rose visited again. She promised that she would support the development of this place, let the hope of the village chief pass on.

In a lost tale, Gododdin poem which describes the assembly of 300 warriors fight the place for glory and eventually got nearly all killed.

“I appreciate the heroic spirit in the name but it is too sad for a place to be hoped, let’s name it more magical and mysterious. How about Magiland?” Shepherd Rose smiled and rename the place as her wish for the place to be more hopeful. It’s almost like a random name like how Mabo-curry bun made, but it indeed a symbol of a new future.

Now, in the original site of Gododdin, where became Magiland, the village of seraphim and humans, a guild is there to receive any request in the village, poor Sorey didn’t get his chance to fully explored the whole village. At night, the President of the guild just received the report of the return of Mayvin. It is certainly not a case to be ignored, and she is not surprised if there are more reports after this. The bell that hanging on the door rings as the hint of the visitor, makes the one sitting in the bar turned her head.

“President, here I come again~” Ophelia waved her hand to say hello the President, this is the second time she visits here since her escape to the Lost Tower.

“Ophelia? It’s rare to see you that frequent.” The President sitting in the bar answered with a welcome smile, although she is actually forcing the smile, you can still call it a perfect smile.

“Well. Actually, about the people I am observing……all of them got captured.” Ophelia said with a helpless smile.

“………Have any idea about it?” The President calmly responded and wait for an answer. She has already expected there are more after Mayvin’s return, and she doesn’t expect Ophelia will defend the observing target.

“No trace of where they go, maybe using the teleporting artes like us. And, he is the same person who attacks Mayvin and me, probably the one capturing the seraphim.” Ophelia stated in a serious manner.

“It will be terrible if he finds out here, let’s suppose the man is the new lord of Calamity and we need the Shepherd again.”

“I will not say he is a Lord of Calamity completely, he is not releasing malevolence, at least. So bad that the Shepherd is lost and the lady of the lake is searching for him.” Ophelia reported.

“Then the Sorey you say may be hope, at least he will fight, we need to rescue them.” The President planned.

“What do you need me to do?”
“You decide to help?” It’s rare that Ophelia suggested to help herself.

“Sure, so the story can continue. It is boring if it ended here.”

“It would be great if you go find the formula of armatus for me.”

“Hard works, but I will find it. Thanks that I have got some related knowledge in my human-self memory.”

Suddenly, another bell ringing from the entrance, that makes both the seraphim turn and see the visitor. They see no one, Oh let move our sight slightly downward, a normin arrived.

“Bien….! It’s….” The normin tried to organize words from his mouth.

“Bienfu, you are back again?” The President asked.

“Mi...Miss Magilou?!” Bienfu exclaimed when he sees Ophelia.

“Oh, Bienfu.” Ophelia sighed when she noticed that she forgot to change her appearance.

“I am Ophelia now.”

“Why do you change the name? Isn’t that anything doesn’t matter to you?” The President taunted.

“It’s a symbol of my new life! And why didn’t you?” Ophelia exclaimed.

“I am just respecting my human-self.” The President said.

“Anyway! Velvet is---” Bienfu urged himself to report.

“Velvet is awakened? Yeah, I knew, and I kind of following her along the way.” ‘Magilou’ cut Bienfu’s line.

“Apart from this, she suddenly----”

“She is captured, by what I found.” ‘Magilou’ said.

“Bien--?!! Are you sure?! And you didn’t stop?” Bienfu asked with terrifying expression.

“More and less, I am powerless. And Velvet is not like Velvet now, at least not the one I knew, she is confused with her target, I will rather just watch longer.” ‘Magilou’ stated.

“......And I hope that you may find out where they are, President!” Bienfu begged.

“No problem, we already planning to find.”

“Hmm...hmm....there is more, the Mayvin----!”

“Mayvin is back, I knew, I am just going to visit him. He survived, so let’s not let this kid die as the last kid did.” Ophelia sighed when she remembered the helplessness when she heard how the last Mayvin died because of helping Shepherd Sorey from Shepherd Rose.

“Are you planning to do something?” Bienfu asked.

“......You are knowing too well, I am going to explore the formula in armatus with the Mayvin and complete a request from Maotelus. Are you coming?”

“A request from Maotelus? Of course! I will help whatever I can.” Bienfu exclaimed.
“For the first time, I think you are brave, Bienfu.” The President taunted.

“Bien….! That’s hurt!”

Now, ‘Magilou’ and Bienfu gather again and start their journey to find out the secret formula in Armatus and do a favor for Maotelus.

Velvet POV

Just wait for you fodder today huh…..Just what he is thinking me to be? He is just acting like I am part of his property.

So unreal that all just happened to change everything surrounding me, but it is real.

I punch the wall with my metal left arm for frustration and not even a groove form on the metal wall but a clear clash sound of metal.

Frustration is the only thing I feel now, things repeat again.

I was ignorant in the Scarlet night that took my little brother away from me, then I wonder if it is the same that I am ignorant too, I wonder if they have something hidden from me again.

Even they hide something from me, I can’t really blame them, after all, I was a Lord of Calamity, a kind should not be trusted, and I can’t say close companion either when we just traveled together for a while.

Did they plan to leave me alone there so they went out at such time if they really are hiding something from me?

They do have the reason to leave me alone. Sorey wants to investigate the incident and Edna is a close companion with Sorey and I claimed that I am not helping. Can’t complain if they have such plan when we don’t have a mutual trust, mainly because of my anxiety and doubt around his past identity of Shepherd though, I kept everything inside and he shared information with me. I am horrible when he already put his trust to me.

Hmm, maybe I should be more optimistic, they may not have such a plan. To consider that all the package still inside the room, they at least plan to stay a night. It may be some moonlight walk at midnight, though I think it is really dangerous to be out such late.

Now all of my concern just useless, until I get the chance to ask them myself.

Yeah, why am I even thinking about it, it is the act unlike myself, but I just got too much time when I can’t take any action in this cell.

I proceeded my action anyway no matter what happened and no matter what it takes. I used to be like that, but I doubt that I am being like this now because I still don’t find the reason to live.

I don’t want to live, but the people surrounding me is telling me to live. Phi tells me to live and see the world, so I try to live and find a reason. I stay such a way until now, to lose it all again. It doesn’t matter how hard I try to live and it just happens again.

I watch my Gauntlet Blade attached on my right hand, the haughty man doesn’t even take away my weapon.

Ah, apart from just sitting at the cell and thinking something doesn’t even matter, I can also commit suicide.
No way I will do it, let’s just hold on a little longer, I can’t waste it like this, it is meaningless.

I extend my left hand to the high light source of the room like I always did back in Titania. I always look at the only skylight in the pit in Titania, waiting for the day I got the chance to escape when there is a seraphic arte fix me in the pit. My arm is no longer the therion arm and there is no seraphic arte to seal me here.

“Have you forgotten that you are only a human now?”

What can I do if I am only a human then?

I wonder what can I do in this point while finding my pockets, then I find a letter in it. I wonder when is it inside, there isn’t an exact address on the letter, apparently like the letters from Eleanor. Oh, I remember now that I once can’t finish reading all the letter so I just put it inside my pocket. Guess now I finally have time for it.

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Dear Velvet,

How are you, Velvet? Guess you are good if you read the letters.

[Hi! Velpoo! I see you must be living now, just there will be no galds from me~]

Ah….Yeah, Magilou is with me now and she insisted to write this with me.

It has already passed a year from my last letter and I am still focusing my job of villages and towns revivifications. The workload is finally somehow managed to be moderate with assistance from the reformed Abbey.

[You know, day 635 of tracing Eleanor, still find no element of humor inside Eleanor’s brain despite her Last name is Hume.]

This has nothing to do with my last name! Sorry if this looks messy, just get used to it……….Wait!

So all the days I felt sights from behind……..

[Bingo~~I am your paparazzi~!]

Shouldn’t a paparazzi keep herself in secret? Well, I guess she will say Magikazam.

[Aw aw...you say my line…]

Nevermind. It is getting hard to revive villages when the daemons are starting to appear again. I am well aware of the reason, it is emotion. In the era of endless war, I can’t expect people will stay calm and positive all the time. At the beginning of the war, it is on a small scale and King Percival managed to block the news to people, they stay calm. Then the war continued and gaining in scale, as the resources started to drain, people started to know, still, King Percival managed to calm people emotion by using ‘the end of Lord of Calamity’ to encourage people to stay positive to the future. Of course, I disagree with his way, but the worst is it was effective. However, now its effect is fading, even with the help of religion, negativity spreads so fast, we need the purifying flame again.

[….Well, well.....are you giving history lecture in the letter?]

[Speechless?]

I won’t be silenced! I will just continue the ‘lesson’ then. Sad that I have no enough strength to form a pact with Laphicet, cause he is now an Empyrean. Thus Laphicet asked Lailah to make an oath so that I may use the flame by forming a pact with Lailah. Lailah cannot say multiple things because of
the pact, this doesn’t affect me much but what affects me is that she learns bad puns to keep things hidden.....You have no idea how it is like.....

[Looks like Lailah learns well from me~Not far for the day for Eleanor to perform the Magilou show again!]

Oh.....Oh?...Oh?! How can you teach her such things!

[It’s definitely the best decision I made to teach Lailah, she is super talented in bad puns! Just thinking Eleanor is going to realize each pun day by day under her influence will make me excited!]

Ah....you have no idea how many times I rolled my eyes while writing this letter.

[Rolling your eyes is a good exercise for you eyeball!]

I suppose it makes the journey fun in some way. I understand it is not sustainable to revive places while quelling daemons, so I am also finding more Malakim to cooperate with us, but they are running away from us because of the past Abbey. Maybe they need more time to regain their trust in human, I don’t know whether this day will come.

[Who knows~ But seeing some serious and stubborn idiot keep fighting for people’ goods, they should have understood it already! Paparazzi all around~!]

It’s tired and frustration to see the ruined villages and towns everywhere. Nevertheless, seeing people smiling and gaining energy to live, I am sure my effort is not wasted and I will do better than that!

Other than that, Eizen is being the first mate as always, the last time I met him, he couldn’t wait to introduce his new collections. I am not sure how many in them are fake. And I am not sure about Rokurou now, sometime he will compete with Eizen for strength but no news other than that. I guess the recent news of some weirdo hunting down swordsmen will be him.

Well, that’s all, I guess.

I have asked Laphicet if he has words to tell you, but he said he will just tell you himself when the day comes.

[The boy really love you, surely you have got an affectionate confession when you got those letters~ And I wonder when will Eleanor accept the offer from the men on the way. From everywhere all the time, men keep proposing for marriage to her...How sinful this woman is.....]

Take care, and keep fighting. I am sure that you can get over of it whatever happens!

[Oh, ignore me again? Cheer up Velvet! I will make sure someone like Melchior will not appear again while passing down your story to make sure you get paparazzi in your time again!]

Best Regard, Eleanor Hume

[Biggest fan, Mazhigigika Miludin do Din Nolurun Dou Mayvin, simplified Magilou Mayvin]

[P.S. Coo Coo! (illustration)]

P.S. I wish to ask you what’s that mean?

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I read all until the end and see a black dove with big chest drawn next to the [Coo Coo!].

“She will never let me forget this one…….” I sighed while rolling my eyes, seeing the dove there leads an impulse of trashing the letter, but I managed to stop myself.

“.....And still affectedly shy and coy in her way,” I wondered if she is the reason that there are seraphim who know about me. Since Mayvin is the storyteller now, then I wouldn’t be surprised for
Magilou being the first storyteller as Mayvin.

It is a messy letter as Eleanor said, if I ignore Magilou’s parts, it may roughly a formal letter from Eleanor. Stills, Magilou’s writing make this funnier and I can almost imagine they are having a casual chat there like the girl’s talk without boy there in my journey.

Eleanor is as strong as always with people supporting her there. She has no idea what situation I am in but still encourage me like an idiot.

Hmmm, somehow I find myself to be relaxed and determined after reading the letter. That’s again I should thank a person who supposes to be dead now. Eleanor tried hard to achieve her goal and I want to try hard for my goal now. All I wish is to save Sorey and Edna now, doesn’t matter the reason I live.

The seraph Rohan has said that Sorey is the hope to him while the current Shepherd is missing. Also, I decided in my mind that not to let Edna be in danger when I met her. There are still things left for me to do, I can’t give up yet. In spite of the way he mocking at my powerlessness, I will make it come true in my way.

Last time I wish to contribute something to the world, to leave hope before I die as a Lord of Calamity, and it will be the same this time, to leave hope.

Although it is so unlike me to believe a hope without a basis, my friend just makes me believe it while she always believe a hope too. The only things I should do now is to wait for the chance to change the situation, like what I did when I was in Titania.

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Sorey POV

I am contained in a cell.

Pure white ceiling and white wall without window but a high skylight in the room, they are arranged by a giant metallic panel, and no slit can be found between the panels. I judged that it is unlikely to escape from the room alone and I don't know where is here. Surely, I was captured by the mysterious man. The reason he captured both Edna and me is unknown, the only thing I knew is how did I end up here.

I have never expected the midnight walk ended up like this. I left the hostel alone to go for a walk. Honestly, I don’t expect anyone follow me but Edna appeared in front of me and I am glad. I wondered if I should go investigate alone when Velvet doesn’t want to help, but deep down my heart, I hate to be alone and I want Velvet to come with me too. Still, I think it will be very dangerous at the same time, I don’t want her to get hurt because of traveling with me. She is only a human now and she may wish for a peaceful life, there is no way to get it if she involved in this event.

Edna and I continued walking until the sudden drop in temperature. There is a suppression in the atmosphere, cloud arranged into storm-shape, the sky suddenly changes its color from dark blue to dark red, like the situation in the night when I am hunting a drake with my group but now this is more contrast in color. An old woman I met in Pendrago’s Shrinechurch says there was an ancient prophecy that “When the sky runs red, the world will be shrouded in evil.”

Maotelus explained once that Scarlet Night will be likely to occur only when the earth malevolence reaches a certain level. At the same time, the mana in the world reaches its peak in this time, events related to human-like soul sacrifice are likely to occur in this period, thus it is like a symbol of human sin, the full moon is recolored in crimson red, the color of blood, of cruelty. It should not occur after the earth is purified, at least no so quick.

A sudden squall blow to us, it is suffocated, like the first time I sense large portion of Malevolence in
Ladylake when I was a Shepherd, I felt depression in my chest.

“It’s dangerous to walk such time. Little ex-Shepherd.” a male stood in front of us, I can’t see his face directly, as it is covered by malevolence-like particles. One thing I doubt that is the reason he knew my past identity while I have no image of meeting him in the past. Moreover, from his unfriendly tone, I am sure that he is an enemy to me, may as well as the one related to the disappearance of seraphim.

“Who are you?” I asked defensively. He is proceeding the physical characteristic just like the Mayvin said and there are plenty of things enough to remind me of caution. Like the dark particle around him, they are not malevolence, they look similar but different in feeling, at least Edna is not suffering from them.

“The one who collect seraphim.” He snickered.

“You are the cause of all then? Why are you doing this?” Edna grabbed her umbrella and widen her stand position, asked with the preparation of fight.

“To prepare a beautiful world of course.” To achieve such aim with such dirty works, I am sure that we have the opposite mindset, but I won't stop trying to communicate.

“How is that possible!?” From the way he used, I cannot agree with his vision to his action.

“No need for the one foolish like your kind to know.” He said in an arrogant tone and I guess he is not a human. All the hellions with consciousness turned from the human being, if he was a human, he at least loves or wants improve in human in somehow to admit himself existence as a human, but the guy denies the species totally.

“I see, you are a terrible kind and I don’t plan to understand you,” Edna responded.

“We didn’t plan to understand each other since long long time ago.” A long time ago, his word hint me that he may be an ancient being and be a seraph too.

I searched if any place enables us to break through the situation, unfortunately, I can’t find it. Next second, our vision blurred by the dark smoke he produced, my body become heavy and finally sink into the darkness.

“Surprisingly high resonance, maybe you still have another use for me.” We are captured by the man and sounds like he is going to use us for some purpose.

I can’t even armatize to fight as the enemy didn’t allow us a moment for that.

When I wake up from the coma, Edna is not around, she is likely to be separated. I observe the room where I am in. The wall, ceiling are all made of steel, there is only a skylight for the air and light to come in and there is a steel door as an exit. In the corner of the ceiling, I find ball like installations, much like the technology of camera in this age. Seems nothing is taken from me, no even my sword, he is very confident to his own strength. It is true that even after formed the pact with Edna, I am not able to touch him a finger, maybe I can fight with him when I have had my Shepherd’s strength back.

Suddenly I feel the pressure in air, it is the domain of the man, I know, he is outside.

“You awake. Ex-shepherd.”

“My name is Sorey.”
“Whatever it is, your name is not important to me.”

“How may I call you?”

“Hum, you insisted on something not really important. You will not able to see me or affect my action from that cage. However, as a gentleman, I will give my name. My name is Tartarus.” Despite being annoyed, this is a good sign that he is willing to answer me, guess I can at least ask something out from him. Usually, that’s Rose and Mikleo or others to do such a job for me since I am not good at talking at all. Now they are not here, I have to try.

“Tartarus, did you know King Claudin?”

“.......That’s none of your business!” He sounds angry when I asked about King Claudin, I can relate him to the owner of the memory fragments. It may be inappropriate to start with such a private question, I guess I should start from his aim.

“Sorry, then what do you want?”

“I think I have already said.”

“To prepare a beautiful world, what do you mean?”

“Very well, I have plenty of time. Let’s talk in simple. The human being is born with sin. Sin deep down root in their heart, so they will release malevolence. Seraphim said they are going to live with human together in the past. Both of them is dirty and foolish, it is the time to clean now.”

“Why don’t you see they start to co-living with each other gradually now? Humans can change!”

“ I won’t admit or permit it, I supposed that they will all die under the punishment.” Now that he mentioned ‘punishment’, I thought of the ‘doom with human’ in the memory fragment, or he is now planning to give the punishment himself? In either way, I will not let it happen.

“What are you talking about?!”

“It’s enough for today.”

I feel daze again when the dark smoke surrounded the room. At least I have to find out what is his aim before he achieved it.

I wonder how would it be if I had stayed in the hostel, if I listened to Velvet, not to be involved. Would there be a change? Would it end up better? However, “if” never happened and is only meaningless thought. Neither it brings change nor hopes to the situation.

The cell separated my connection to the external world. Unknown to death, nor known to life. I felt pity myself to be useless to the moment, consciously being unconscious to the exterior.

I wonder how is Velvet now, will she be safe? Is she worrying? I wonder how Edna now, is she captured too, will she be fine? I wonder how is Mikleo, Lailah, what are they doing? I really want to meet them again in this Era but I can do nothing now when I am captured now.

If only to let everything be fine, I would pray, for the peaceful world, for the future of human and seraphim, for the safety of my friends. There is no way to escape. Neither whining nor grieving will do things. Like what Gramps would have told me to do, I will just wait and hope, not to lose myself in the grief and find the action I could take.
Having a conversation with him may be my only choice now. From his information, he is going to save the world by cleaning all existence that he thinks is guilty and dirty, that is all human and seraphim, but I still don’t know in what way, I wonder what does he want with me.

I know nothing, I don’t even know how is Edna now and other people. There is no way to said it is fine if Tartarus succeeds. He may be the new Lord of Calamity to this Age even he doesn’t release malevolence, he will cause the release of malevolence.

“I hope I will find a way to fix things,” I said while looking up the ceiling.

I am alone again.

“I have been waiting for you,” Maotelus said when we first met. I don’t understand that feeling but realize now. I can do nothing but believe there is a chance to be freed by someone. The world is full of possibility. We won’t lose until we lose hope.

So, wait, and hope.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
As Sorey is separated and I shall not ignore his part just because he is locked up and cannot take any action, so I come up something like this…..try my best to describe his unwavering mind properly, always believe in hope. The letter in Velvet’s part is inspired by the Second Chance, I try to let Magilou not too OOC……

Ophelia originally is an Original character that related to King Claudin and also an observer. However, as I find Magilou is getting nearly no role in behind, and Magilou can also be related to King Claudin when she is related to Melchior Mayvin so then I decide to merge them in one. (Thus, what she told to Velvet in the chapter in Lost Tower is Half-true only. Now, Ophelia is a Half-original character as the seraphic reincarnation of Magilou, and there are also other characters like this in the future( Just because I can’t capture the character well and may write it OOC). I didn’t tag their name since it may be kind of different from the one.

I shall say the title and the main idea came from a line of Edmond Dantès(Fate), but I didn’t read the real novel. I spear I try my best to make the chapter to look more positive.
Chapter Summary

(scene reference: Fuyuki town fire in Fate Zero)
(Sorry, my photoshop skill is not good)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

(the words between ‘*’ is memory)

Sleep in the cell links a dream of someone memory.

??? POV

“Your dad is in somewhere far away.” Mum always says this to me, when she and I form a single-parent family, but I have never seen my Dad. I didn’t understand my mum, but I will try supporting her as I can.
Neither the villagers had seen my dad which is why they see her as an unfaithful and immoral woman. Furthermore, I possessed red eyes which are seen as evil at that time. This brought disasters to my family, all my neighbors pushed us out from them. Thanks that I have greater strength than all the people in the village, I started to solve problems for them to gain their ‘trust’ so we can continue to live there.

Although time filled up by almost requests from the neighbors or the other strangers, I could still call it a happy time. Yet, happy time passed fast.

All ‘trust’ vanished by fail in my mission. Greedy village head used my physical strength as the path to wealth, he claimed to complete difficult missions of ‘Monster suppression’ from the Feudal Lord. Follow missions by missions, finally, he claimed it for the King, for a higher position he seeking for which built on my effort.

Crawl higher, fall deeper. My failure led the disaster to the village, then the village head just shirked responsibility and shift the blame onto my family. The one like me who possessed great strength and possessed such portentous eyes were treated as an unwanted evil and my mum was seen as a witch because she is my mother.

“Die! One brought misfortune”
“Die! Witch! Die! The Forbidden one!”
“Sacrifice yourself! All Evil in the world!”

Villagers shout out with their twisted smile, smile madly for our pain. They had a blind faith that sacrifices a sinful being will suppress the anger of Gods and bless the place again, all people were superstitionists at that time.

My prayers and my begging for mercy are completely erased in the curse of the people. What is my sin? Surely they would answer: my existence.

They show no regret or mercy to us, they show no appreciation to my help over the years. Powerful one should help people, they take this as granted. Evil being must die, they see this as normal.

“Penitenziagite! Penitenziagite!” The ignorant people call the fire burning like me to the divine judgment, the inflammation of justice.

Tied to the cross, I look up to the sky, that is the burning color that I will not forget.

I thought it was the last moment of my life, end up in a flame of abhorrence, the flame of madness.

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Sorey pov

I wake up in the frozen air, it seems I have just seen someone memory, likely to connect one of the parts appeared in ‘Mayvin's souvenir’. The one in the memory was betrayed by the whole village.

Why would I see it? Is this some kind of seraphic artes? Gramps did say that by a very rare chance, the flow of external mana into a body may lead to such an experience.
I touch my pocket and I find the memory fragment given by Mayvin.

“Maybe it provides linkage to the owner of memory…..Is that Tartarus's memory?” I wondered, like Heldalf and Velvet, there was something in the past caused Tartarus to be him now. If I know all his past, maybe I can realize something.

I look up to the skylight.

It's morning now, I can tell by the brightness of the sky, with cloud floating on the blue sky.

It is rare of me to be silent and just look at something apart from ruin, causes my eyes always exploring something new, and it does not work in here.

Though, I remember that Velvet always looks up the sky like pondering something back when she was in the Tewks village with me to work for the paybacks to the old doctor.

*  
“Do you like the sky?” One day I asked Velvet when she looks up the sky again.

“Not really.” She answered without adjustment in her gesture, keeps supporting her chin with her palm and watching somewhere far away to the sky, I always wonder what is she looking at.

“Then, do you like the birds?” I followed by a question when I see a bird flying past the sky.

“Not really, but…..” She hesitated as if she thinks of something.

“But?”

“….Why do you think the birds fly?” Velvet thought of the question she once asked by Artorius.

“Hmm.......because they want to see different things in the world?” I answered the question without realizing the significance of the question and I still think it is the best answer for me.

“Suit you........and ....What if the birds don’t want to fly? Will they die?” Velvet relaxed and asked another question and I didn’t realize the reason behind the question at that time.

“.....Mmm....Even if they don’t fly, there are many things they can do. You see there are also birds like the penguin which can’t fly at all.” I answered with the knowledge I know at that time and I didn’t think too much.

“.........I see.” Velvet didn’t say more other than that which make me wondering if she seeks more than such an answer.

*  
Back then, Velvet didn’t know I was a Shepherd and I didn’t know she thought herself not deserve to live. She didn’t say it again after meeting Maotelus, but I wonder if she is still considering it. After experienced horrible things, what will one think about life, what will one thinks about the world? What is the case for Tartarus? Hatred to the world? What is left other than hatred?

Is there no love left for them? Alive, miss nothing, a walking dead.

‘What if the birds don’t want to fly? Will they die?’

It is not a question to the bird, it is another question to the will of life. Maybe I should reconsider the answer next time I see her.
Velvet pov

A bird flies past the sky in the little frame of the skylight in the cell.

Why do birds fly? Artorius once asked me the question, and my answer was: ‘Birds fly because they want to fly, they don’t need a reason.’.

Now I wondered, what if they don’t want to fly? They fly to hunt and live, then if they don’t want to fly, will they die?

I thought of a tale the Old woman in the Tewks village once told me, a story of a bird can’t fly.

* Normally, the old woman will help the old doctor in the clinic but seems she has a break today. I have just asked Sorey for the question: “What if the birds don’t want to fly? Will they die?”. Then, the old woman approached me and told me a story, I guessed she just heard our conversation.

“Have you heard a story of a bird can’t fly?” The old woman asked.

“I know penguin can’t fly.”

“No, it is an unpopular modern tales for children.” The old woman smiled and stated.

“Haven’t heard.” If it is an unpopular modern tales in the world, some ancient being like me is not going to know, and I am not concerning about such things in the past anyway.

“Then I will tell you, and, Sorey, you may come to listen too,” She said and then invite Sorey to come to listen to it together. Elders always love telling stories, and usually for the good sake of the kids. Even if I think it is somehow annoying, I will stay and listen to her. She started talking about the story in the point of view of the bird can’t fly.

What is on the other side of the island? Whenever I see the unchanging scenery, I will have such an idea.

Since I lived on this island, I have not left the island. Living on this island day after day, nothing changes, just a dull sense of peace of mind. There are basically no prey and no hunters, no plants, only the erosion of the waves, is an absolute desert island.

His being is what let me live this life from a boring life. He has the same characteristics as me. The front chest is white, black from the head to the whole back, and the black big bend, the difference is that his wings are much longer than mine, and he has feathers on his wings. The more absolute difference is --

"You still can't fly." He is sighed as I am so alike to him but I can’t fly. I don't count how many times he sighed, I am also annoyed with my incompetence. This is the biggest difference between me and him. I don't understand why we look so similar but so different. And this difference has also caused differences in our lives.

He always sleeps in the crevices of the cliffs and I can only sleep silently under those cliffs. I don’t have the ways to get there, whether it's flying or crawling. And I can't go hunting from this island, and I can only walk around at most every day.

"Why are you flying?" Why can you fly? If I know the reason, I might fly.
Because I have to prey to survive, you should also learn to stand on your own. When will you stop relying on the food I sent?" "Okay, well, the topic has developed into this, it is an answer full of reality, and he will turn this into a preach again. Whatever after this will be how he met me when I was an egg, he saw the egg contained me was particularly large and there were no birds around them, but he didn't expect me to be so useless even after growing up to a large size.

"I will practice it again." In order to prevent him from starting to swear again, I quickly interrupted his words.

"Better. Hey, I am going out, look after yourself!" With his dull voice, he stalked the waves again, his black back in the dawn of the ocean. Slow and small, but very obvious, the light reflected by his flying posture is very dazzling in my opinion. Flying low in the air to nearly touches the sea level, then fly high and gliding in the sky, how free is this!

Every time he came back, it was not long, probably to remedy the amount of fish without the role of the mother. From his speech, I learned that other birds would take turns with the female birds. But the female bird with him disappeared. When he came back, the female bird had disappeared. It is estimated that it was hunted or just flew away. Then he will complain: "If you know how to fly, I have already left this barren land."

There is nothing on this island, mostly rocks. No animals come to the island, let alone the birds having the same black and white pattern as us. He is my only conversation partner and learning object, and every time I see his flying posture, my inner admiration of the flight increases, which is the driving force for me to try to fly to the waterfront every day.

After he left, I went to practice on a small rocky reef on the south coast. I extended my wings which not long to reach my feet and in half-length as the wing-length of my partner, jumping at the top of the rock.

I fell into the water. It doesn't matter! Come again!
Fall again! Come again!

So I also fell into the water more than a hundred times today, and I hurry back every time. I have not forgotten that he said that falling into the water for too long will result in a curse that will not be able to move. He solemnly warned me that I couldn't get into the water for too long. He told me to show me that he had witnessed the horror of a friend who was struggling to get rid of the water after he was caught by the ‘black shadow’ while swimming. And he has never sailed since then.

Jumping tired, I will sit on the stone and look at the still landscape. The sky is falling into the night. The tiny stars are shining in the sky. Although it is beautiful, the scenery is the same as it is every day. Sometimes, an amazing scene may be seen, when the stars pierced the night sky with the end of their light. However, this spectacle is rare in a hundred years, so I am more look forward to seeing the rainbow-ribbons in the sky that he often tells the Far Southern Sea. It is said to be elegantly, gently swing in the night sky, it can't be touched, but it lets people feel the pulse of life.

Every time he came back, he always brought me a lot of novelty stories from the outside. This is something I can’t approach when I can only stay on this island. The world outside is very vast, there are many things I have never seen before. I hope that I can go out and see one day. For this, I have to learn to fly as soon as possible.

The flow of time cannot be seen on this unchanging island. I don’t know how many days and nights I have spent, he still has not returned. I always have an unpredictable hunch, worrying about what
happened to him, maybe I have worried too much about it. Still, I continue to try flying.

Why do birds fly? I asked myself this question again. Isn't my obsession not enough?

He said that he is flying for survival, and the story he brings always comes with joy for survival. On the other hand, I don’t know how many years I am trapped on the island. The idea of survival for me is that, besides being bored still boring, can such an idea really make me fly? Or I need a better reason. For example, look at the other side of the island, look at the end of the sea, and so on?

In that case, the big stone on the beach can no longer satisfy me, I want to see farther. I want to go to the upper level, jump up to the cliff on the other side, look at the endless seascape, and then fly out!

The reason for my flight is that I want to fly, I want to see more scenery I have never seen before, this is enough.

The sea breeze slammed on me. At the end of the cliff, I extended my wings and embraced the cold air and felt the wind. I know this is my most brave test of flight, and my last test of flight, this time I will fly!

I closed my eyes, straightened my arms, and jumped down the cliff.

The air particles swept through the body quickly, and the body was accelerating and falling. This is the feeling of nose-diving.
I patted the wings, but I didn’t see any change, but not long after, the body became light after it pressed something. Maybe I was already flying, I opened my eyes. . . . .

“The story ended.” The old woman told.
“Huh?” Both Sorey and I exclaimed as the story is clearly incomplered.
“It is ended, the author intended to keep it an open-end, leave the area of imagination.”
“It must be dead,” I commented. The story stated that the bird can’t fly for many times, I can sure the two birds are different species that one of them may be a penguin.

“Maybe, the author did say that the setting is a Great auk living with a Razorbill, but she also said that it is your choice to not perceive the story with reality setting.” The old woman stated the names of animals that I don’t understand.

“Then, the author also thinks the bird will die after jumping.”
“Or maybe he just dived into the deep sea.” Sorey wondered.

“Right, even if he died, his soul may start another journey too if you want, depending on how you view it.” The old woman stated.
“Why are you telling me this story?” I asked as I wonder if this does anything with ‘what if they don’t want to fly?’.

“I hope that you may perceive things differently before you think of it in that way again.” The old woman suggested when keeping things hidden in words, probably not wanting Sorey to worry about it.

“It is not healthy to always look at things with boring eyes.” She added. I feel that she is trying to persuade me thinking about the world in another way before I say I don’t want to live, even if she doubts at me.

“Got it.” I listened, but I will not promise.

*
I thought of the story but still can’t help to think the bird died in the end. No matter how much he wished to fly, his will would not change his species, he is limited that he can’t fly. As anything happened, it is hard to change the nature of one.

Even if being a human again.

Cold, a lost sensation since me becoming a therion. There is less cold since I stayed in the region in the summer period. In Tewks village, I saw the green crops shining with the water drops on them reflecting the sunlight, the fiery pomegranate flowers bloom on the street tree embellished the enthusiasm in the village. In the night, countless stars in the black gem-like sky squinted, the weavers gently smashed on the loofah frame, the melon fields were filled with the fresh smell of melons, and the quiet night was covered with a mysterious atmosphere. There is no air-conditioner, it is not necessary for such a plain and remote village and this didn’t cause discomfort to me, I was living in a similar village.

However, I am well aware that I am in a completely opposite place from Tewks village. It is freezing here, it reminds me that cold is my most disliked sensation when I was a human. Since I got my sensation back, I am only an ordinary people now, reminded me of my powerless in this stage. I am fixed on a panel by a cold metal ring, something I may be able to break when I was a therion. That is the first time I yearn for the therion power after the awakening.

Eye wide open, I found myself being trapped in a different room from the previous “cage”. The unknown liquid is contained in different cylinder glass containers some of them is connected to the other human body lying beside my bed by some tubes. Also, some embryos with orange eyes contained in some glass cylinder in the liquid, creepy that I feel it is similar to Beta when looking at the eyes.

I can say here is similar to the clinic in Tewks village but the atmosphere is different, silence and death is flooded in the air, it is a place for experiment, I may as well see some ‘fail experimental products’ chained on beds, like some semi-human I saw in Titania, I was also responsible to eat those failed experimental products in there, those people failed in becoming therion. Abbey has done dirty works to figure out how the therion thing works, as far as I knew, in more ancient time than Abbey presence, pure people sacrificed to become therion and awoke Innominat when world doomed in malevolence and all 4 Empyreans asleep. People with a pure heart who is receptive to Innominat power turned out to be the necessary properties required to become a therion. Ironic, people with a pure heart are able to suppress their malevolence in normal time, it is what needed to be the therion containing the malevolence well. With heartbroken events, enough to trigger the malevolence in those pure people overflown and turn them into therion. It turned out not easy to figure out how the therion things work, Artorius used 3 years for that, with lots of failed therion in process and I don’t know how long the weird man has been doing this in this highly technical laboratory.

“Hello, my hound.” The disgusting sound of the weird man ring in the room and he will never call my name.

“You are confused? Don’t worry, just a request. As you are only a human now, can’t do much for me, I shall grant you extra ‘blessing’ with my ‘arte’ and give you a partner. From now, you will have to collaborate with a seraph of my collection and go destroy the region you were sent. Good luck.” He ordered and I didn’t have a chance to answer. He doesn’t need to wait for an answer either.

A Portal created in front of me, I am freed after I felt a seraphic arte cast on me. Obeying the order or escaping from here are the options here but I must obey. Basically, no choice for me if I don’t want to risk Edna’s and Sorey’s life, not to mention my life. I touch the metal collar
at my neck to confirm its existence.

I can’t die before I save them.

I looked at my look in some reflection from the human-size glass cylinder around, knowing that my clothes are still the clothing of the Lord of Calamity, the ragged shabby black coat with the exposed strapless vest. Likely that I have to do it all again when I have said I don’t want to do this again without a reason to Sorey and Edna. Though I doubt this is a proper reason for it.

Getting to the destination through the portal, I saw a woman stand beside me. I am not used to it, the partners have been traveled together changed to another person. The woman is slightly shorter than me, wearing dresses in mainly white and blue tone and her hairstyle is double tail in mainly reddish hair turns silver at the end. Also, she has green eyes, almost remind me of Eleanor Hume if she is not in fishy(Sluggish) eyes.

“Hey.” I greeted the women who likely the seraph I required to collaborate in the following time.

“.....Hi. ” She hesitated and greeted me in a dead tone, sound like those calmed stagnant marak without a free will in my journey.

“......Eleanor.”The seraph doesn’t seem to have memory-related to Eleanor, maybe she is only having a similar look to her that the man just like to cause me confused. It is not surprising he knew Eleanor too when he knew about me, I wonder why is that though.

“.....Elean...nor?” The seraph repeated the word hesitantly.

“.......Nothing. What is the nearest village or town?” I managed to pretend I don’t know her. Indeed, we should be complete strangers. It is also possible that she is the seraphic reincarnation of Eleanor but what can’t be sure of is that they are the same person. Since her eyes are dead inside, not like the one I know. Eleanor should have more cheerful eyes while always trying her best to work for people, she would not work for an Evil being except for some reasons, like kidnapping. Still, I have a strong feeling that she is Eleanor Hume.

“Tewks….Destroy Tewks.” She answered me like a robot.

“......What is the point of the destruction?” I forgot to breathe for a moment when I heard the name of the village.

Tewks, the first village I lived after the awakening, ironically turned to be the first place I shall bring destruction. I would like to minimize the damage to the villagers if allowed, just not to repeat my sin in my original village, Aball.

“To bring the overflow of malevolence all over the world again.” The seraph stated emotionless.

Destroying the world that Laphicet tried so hard to protect it, it is not funny, like I am betraying him.

“Burn it?” The seraph urged me to decide.

“............” I didn’t answer when I need time to consider for my action, but it seems too late when I see the eyes of the female seraph turned red. I am sure that is the symbol of something bad will happen.

“Wait!”

“I didn’t allow you the time to think about it.” The voice of the man played out from a little vibration
in my metal collar.

“Damn it!”

---------------------BOOM-----------------------

When I noticed, I am already in a burning wasteland. It just happened next to me, at the moment I failed to stop the female seraph casting her seraphic arte. Just a second, the lightning strike the through village like a greatsword, like it is the Anger of God. Next second, it caused an explosion and the flame engulfs the whole village, spread around the buildings and forest surrounding.

The place I have lived for two months is turned into a burning wasteland.

I can do nothing but stand to watch the fire burn down the village.

This is the wanted result of the order, if I chose to obey, then I am an accomplice of this. I watch the female seraph next to me who do no more action other from the lightning, she is watching the fire.

The female seraph has the face nearly identical to Eleanor Hume, but she just has done a cruel thing to the village. How can she do such things without a doubt? And why the hell I still have the feeling that she is the one I knew?

Anyway, she and I are accomplices who cause the fire now, and we watch it burn, we can just watch. This is the order.

The situation didn’t last long, at least the fire became weak after a while. The wall of fire that as high as the building reduced its height gradually, but then, most of the buildings are collapsed, the reinforcement steel bar in the concrete exposed.

Automatically, I run into the fire.

In the fire, the collapsed house and charred people. Even for some murderer like me would find the burnt scent is disgusting, all are the scent of the burnt corpses.

No matter how far I go, only red is seen in the vision, like I am the only survivor in the fire.

I am running aimlessly in here, and I wish it is just a nightmare.

The surrounding blurred with smothery heat air. Although I can’t see it, I am sure that none of the faces of the people are showing happiness. Sound of demolishing continue as I see thick everywhere blocking my sight to see any available people or building but a blurred outline of shadow.

The fire flamed brightly and people scream lightly. Miserable yell became smaller to my ear as the inexorable hell mercilessly take away their life energy by the pain they felt. The sound of demolishing concrete building blocked the cry for help when more people are being pressed under the rubble.

The surrounding wood burns and nothing is earned. It is a result must be done to save my friends. Someone cried with the face twisted. I can only be witness to the ‘sin’ I sinned.

“Velvet? Why are you here?” A villager who has worked with me for a while just noticed me when he is trying to save people.
“I see her with the woman who starts the explosion!!” Another injured villager he just saved said, possibly that he has high resonance when he can perceive Eleanor.

“No, it won’t be...Right? Velvet?” The villager asked and I give no answer to it. Since I can’t stop it and it is indeed a result I need to save my friend.

“See? She can’t answer! Cough! Cough!” The injured villager is angry at me.

“.........I can’t believe it.” The villager took the injured one away and he just gives a gaze like he hated the sight of me.

I betrayed the village that saving me in this Era. It should not be like this, I struggled. I tried to be blind and deaf, saying this is none of my business and so I may do nothing to say those victims from the village ruin.

I watched the tragedy happened as I didn’t stop the seraph to burn and destruct the village. I need to do it anyway when I have to obey the order. Any compassionate heart is only a hypocritical existence at this moment.

It is the village which first accepted me and saved me. However, a monster like me have no sense of shame, I repay them with this destruction. I laughed, see what have I done to the kind people.

What am I doing? To save two of new and only friends left in this Era by destructing a whole village, nope, may as well causing more destruction in the future? This must be wrong.

More wrong is to feel sorry to those people hurt and killed by me.

Of course, I know it is wrong, I know the weight of the sin. I can’t even apologize, cause no one to hear, there is nothing to say.

I know I am the one to blame. Still, I commit the crime again, to bring destruction to protect someone. Feel worse than bring destruction to avenge someone. Well, at least those two is saved. They should not die.

Would there be a better way? I asked myself, maybe Sorey will ask me for a better way, a way to save both sides even if I know there is no way to save without sacrifice.

I can’t bear to see someone who saves me once in mortal danger in my very eyes.

The man didn’t prohibit me to do anything other from destruction, then there is a way to redeem my ‘sin’.

I know this is ironic, but I want to help those who are victimized by me. Even if it is very hypocritical, I want to do something for them. It is certainly not wrong to want to help people, even if there is little thing I can do, I want to do to save things before everything is irreparable.

That is exactly why I run into the fire in the first place.

I run into the scene of the fire and search for possible survivors.

“...!” I see the seraph want to run after me, her eyes recovered in its original color.

“Stay there, please,” I begged, at least allow me to do something right.

“.........” The seraph looked a little astonished but stayed in the spot.

Then, I turn my head back to the hell I ‘caused’.
The peaceful Tewks in the past is now turned into a village of rubble. I remove everywhere as I could to search survivors.

“Anyone there?” I shout and hope to get an answer from those victims.

A hand extended out of a pile of rubble as if it wants to catch a hand. I go and lend my hand without the slightest hesitation. I won't let my hesitation to bother me. There is a boy little boy under the rubbles with lifeless eyes.

I catch his hand while it starts slumping.

It is still warm and I can feel his light pulse from his brachial artery, he is still breathing and he is still living.

“Great, at least one.” Tears shredded from my eyes corners lightly for my gratefulness at this moment. I pull the child out from the dangerous space.

Hoping it is not too late, I remove the rubbles as much as I could and I am going to save as much as I could, even I may only save around ten people.

Still, something cannot be retrieved.

After finding 2 more survivors, I find an old woman lying on the ground with half of her legs buried under the rubble.

“--------No, please.” I held the old woman in my arm, recognizing that she is the one taking care of me in those days I lived in the village. I can never repay the debt fully to her and the old doctor, and I wish she doesn’t die because of this.

I tested her body temperature, obviously decreasing and her pulse is really light and slow, she is dying.
I tested her breath, with a finger. Thanks to the empyrean that she still has breath.

“...Velvet, welcome back, sorry but I can't bring anything for you.” The old woman smiled weakly and said.

“Just save your energy, I will pull you out of there.” Hearing the weakening voice, I have the feeling that the one in front of me will die soon, and I can’t allow this to happen.

“No, just give up on me, I know the end is soon for me.” The old woman stated weakly and peacefully, she knew her fate and accepted it.

“No, don’t. Sorry! It is all my fault….I am the one who causes this….live, please, just a little more.” My anxiety made the sentence organization messy, and the life that is about to die is what I want to recover.

If confessing my crimes arouse the survival will of the person in front of me and arouse miracles, I would definitely confess all, let her anger brought her alive. Like what brings me alive again when I fell into the pit of Innominat.

“It is okay, I understand, I knew and you are not that kind of person..... You have your reason.” She smiled and said in a miserable cracking voice, calm like death. Maybe she already got such information if she is a member of some skillful dark guild managing information. She used to doubt me, but she still cares about me and hopes me to live at last. She tried to persuade me to live too when I was still living with her. Yet, now...
“No…..I am a monster………You should be angry!!” Still, she can hate me for that. I can accept hatred but I can’t accept something like this, I don’t have the right for that.

“What I see…is only a girl crying inside… I am sorry that….” Not finishing her sentence, her energy is not enough to sustain her life. Her hand lifelessly relaxed with temperature fading away, released from my hand and her eyes closed forever.

“Sorry, really, I am sorry.” I hugged her corpse tightly, feel no tears down my cheek.

The only thing I can do is to hold the old lady’s dead body out of the fire and carefully put her down onto the earth.

“Rest in peace,” I whispered and prayed to the dead, then continue to try my best to save the left survivors. I didn’t count, and I don’t need to count it. It is just what I want to do for the villagers. It is what I have to do.

Then, I leave without burying the dead, as I have no right to do it.
I know I will have to kill more after today.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
I think I will receive knives if someone really read the story until now……well, at least I still leave hope in this chapter if you notice…..

Umm…..let’s just changing topic…. Did anyone forget the first village of the story, Tewks village? Well, even me the author forgot the name…..and I just find there are towns name generator in the Net…..Why didn’t I meet it earlier……too late to change its name(sigh) Whatever, so I remind the name and the place with a bunch of words and memory that may be useless……..

By the way, the story of the bird can’t fly is just a created story in the middle( and it is kind of unrelated?). Even if it really like that the bird dies in the end, there are lots of possibilities apart from it. The old woman is trying to say this to velvet (and I am trying to say it is no only bad endings even if I just write chapters like this…..)

Well, it is not persuasive? That’s why I promised a good ending in the very beginning.

Hum, like the previous chapter said, wait and hope……the pain and anger will be calmed one day….time heals all sorrow.

(The author escaped temporarily)
Peace and tranquility, the flowers bloom on a large lawn in the garden. This is the garden of the Empyrean where is not disturbed by the world. At least, under the guardianship of several generations, this zone has become the ideal land of tranquility in the world.

The historical throne is still standing on it. Although it is full of cracks and moss, it is still safely located here as a symbol of faith. The Empyrean here is taking a nap, reconnecting and detecting the world with the flow of the earthpulse. This is rather time-consuming and delicate work, so for the past few months, the re-awaken empyrean has been unable to do other things.
Then the thunder in far away has shocked everything surrounding it, including the sleeping dragon in his courtyard. The silver dragon awoke from his temporary sleep and raised his neck, gazed at the distant view from his place, there is a place burning--Tewks village.

“That must be bad for the people there.” Maotelus then prays and blesses for the people there to last their lives a little bit longer in the fire, but he does no more since he is an Empyrean, he can’t interfere too much.

Later, rain washes away the remaining fire and blood in the burnt village, it must be the tears of the Empyrean.

In the Artorius’s Throne, awaken Maotelus is sitting there worrying about many things. Everything is fine on earth, apparently, but he can’t sense the two who have his blessing in recent. Even by the fact that Velvet is in the spot where quite near to Maotelus as she is now in the burning Tewks village, he can’t sense her presence. Something powerful enough to block Maotelus’s sensibility.

Should he leave the Throne to find them? There is something more he cared about.

At first, he thought his friends just leave for a while, now he realized it is not like this.

It is already 2 months after Sorey, Velvet and he awakens, but someone who should awaken with Velvet is missing, and she is carrying a piece of an ancient artifact.

He thought she is angry with the mission he just gave to her, so she doesn't show up, but it is strange that he finds no trace of her.

What’s more, he detected a hole in the earthpulse, a new hole, and he has no idea who caused it.

“Hey, Laphicet~ Here I come to visit you~” When the Empyrean is still pondering, someone called him. This place is rare to have a visitor as he knew after awakening from the slumbering.

Laphicet, the seraph name which only his old friends and Sorey will know. The calling of the old name reminds Maotelus the old memory with Velvet and her companion, and it indicates an old friend come.

He crooked his neck to look down, a seraph visit him with an old friend of him, and he just recognized the seraph is Magilou.

Both Magilou and Bienfu come here to visit their great old friend Laphicet. Mayvin is not here since Magilou told him to rest in the hostel, while she has her way to get the Armatus formula.

“Hi, Magilou, Bienfu.” Maotelus smiled as he sees his old friend there.

“Have you been well since awaken?”

“Yes.”

“Very well, Because of many things, I can't come to visit you immediately just after you awake,” Magilou said.

"It is fine."

"I heard you have seen Velvet already," Bienfu said.
"Right. We talked about many things." Maotelus smiled.

"I bet it must be an affectionate confession of love." Magilou teased.

"Hmm. Not really."

"Oh, come on, how many years have you waited? How could you not confess your love?" Magilou urged Maotelus to confess like some annoying aunt.

"I have told my true name to her finally." Sometimes a word is more than anything, the true name is equal to the confession of trust or says - love.

"But the whole world knows your true name, boy." Magilou taunted.

"......I just want her to live and see the world I protected first before I confess again." Maotelus noticed Velvet's mental state is not right by the time she came with Sorey, so he told her to live at that time.

It indeed works on Velvet, making Velvet tried to live longer, as the word from an important person to her, as the chain hooking her onto the new world.

Maybe it is selfish to hold someone doesn't want to live, it is selfish for an Empyrean to do it. However, Maotelus never denies he is selfish.

"Again?" Bienfu doubted.

"Oh, you mean the confession in our final battle to Artorius." Magilou laughed, she thinks the boy got family-zoned at that time despite Velvet answered 'I love you too'.

"Well, what's the problem!" Maotelus complained.

"Nothing b haha.....let get into the right topic. I am here to ask for things about your request 700 years ago. I suppose it is completed, right?" ‘Magilou’ asked, entering the topic she comes here for.

“............Yes, but..........”

“But?"

“The piece of the ancient artifact is missing with one of the guardians missing too.” Maotelus honestly told Seraph Magilou the situation.

“Oops. But there is still a guardian left there.”

“Yeah, that one is a normin, he can hide well. He is the reason why the seal is still working.”

“Now, we just need to bring the pieces together once more to attain power.”

“Hmm......well....I have no idea what are you two talking about???” Bienfu asked at last when he can’t find a position in the conversation.

“Oh, Sorry Bienfu. We are talking things planned 700 years ago and you were not there.” Maotelus explained kindly.

“And what is it?”

“The handling of Armatus of Void Element. Once used by our strong enemy.” Magilou stated.
“......Arriorius.” Bienfu surprised and he noticed that there indeed no trial of Void in the world when the technique is existing.

“Yeah, things developed slowly in the time I am sleeping, but now the technique is renewed with my power in it to strengthen purification,” Maotelus said.

“But none of it will work without the ancient artifact........geeze.....I expect I can just get the formula of armatus there.” Magilou sighed.

“Actually, I have separated the armatus formula from the armatus and let the normin guardian protect it.”

“Oh? Then the ancient artifact is not important, is it?”

“No, it is a precious ancient emblem of hope, too sacred to be ignored or replaced, just like the guardian carrying it,” Maotelus added.

“It is really some accidents happened, but I think she will be fine in last since she was a Shepherd who walked through lots of mess.”

“Yes, I have my trust in her too. Why would you need the Armatus formula by the way?”

“A long story, but I have plenty of time for a friend. Now! Finally some showtime for the great master mage who traveled the whole world and laughed at the dragon! Where should I start to tell for a naughty boy sleeping so long? But he can cast a spell to make everything doesn’t matter! Answer! The spell makes pointless concern go away! The symbol of the membership of Magilou Menagerie!”

“Magikazam!” Maotelus laughed.

Then Magilou just tells all the situations in the world when he was in slumber and describes the recent mysterious movement causing the seraphim disappearing, she also described the world development with the guild she is related while explaining the reason of needing the Armatus formula. Of course, she won’t forget to mention the day she was tracing after Sorey and Velvet until the Scarlet Night. She is more and less, still a storyteller. She will tell the story, and it is the cast on the stage who decide what to do next, even to an Empyrean. Maotelus gladly hears the stories and also expresses his concerns to Magilou.

“I see. Thank you. Magilou.” listening to all stories from Magilou, Maotelus is determined to take action.

“By the way, my seraph name is Ophelia.”

“You don’t mention it this late, do you?”

“Magikazam!”

“Very well, I will try to find the Velvet and Sorey, also the missing guardian again with a scan to the earth covered in my domain,” Maotelus stated his plan to search the missing people.

“What if you can’t find them?”

“Then, I will go find them.”

“This may break the oath.”

“I don’t care.”
“Wow, you are just like someone.”

After all, the kid decided to become an Empyrean out of his great will of selfishness, he can just decide to abandon the position out of the same thing. Knowing the plan of Maotelus, Magilou smiled and say nothing. She will respect his decision and continue her mission to attain the Armatus formula from the secret site of Maotelus. Oh, yeah, she just received another request from Maotelus as to investigate the new hole in the earthpulse.

Hell that the Empyrean like to order his old friend for things. A headstrong Empyrean indeed.

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??? POV

Unknown the flow of time since then, is it one week? One month? One year? Or one hundred years? No dialogue, no food, at most only vultures flying from time to time. Countless times the day and night exchanging, the wind and rain crushing the land with strength, time became meaningless to me. I was still tied to the cross when I woke up.

It’s a miracle, I am still alive, but the surrounding turned into a wasteland, and there are sporadic fires igniting. Probably a fire broke out.

What happened in the middle of my coma, I have no way of knowing. The last thing I remember was that the burning sky was burned out then the night sky stained with bloody color fall.

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Ah ha, Scarlet Night, so the village head has calculated the time to do the sacrifice. In tales, this night is when the mana is overfilling, many ceremonies are carried out this night, like the living sacrifices tonight are also to calm down the disaster that occurred in the village. However, for the existence of a kind have long regarded as evil, I will not believe. It must be a folk superstitious ritual, and there is no practical effect other than adding resentment. Yet, the sacrifice is my mother and me.

I don’t want to die! It is not my fault!

Why should my family be treated like this, why do they treat me like this?! It’s just because I failed once. It’s just because of my outlook. All this is clearly the fault of the village chief. It’s too unreasonable!

The fire under the cross is still burning, and there is a burning scent on the side----mother!! When I looked to mother, I found her expression very peaceful and prayed like a devout believer. Is she still believed that the father who does not exist will come to save you?! I can’t believe it!!

I couldn’t help but look at my mother turned ashes gradually, but I still haven’t died.

“What?! He is still alive!”

“So indeed he is an evil being! Add oil and woods!”

Damn, why don't you all die? I have always been so hard to help you all!! Everything is given to you, how can I let my life be also taken?

I can't die like this!

I was tied to the cross on the torture platform, and I looked at the high-hanging red moon, thinking strongly about not wanting to die and with resentment against everyone.
Suddenly a thunder came, and together with me, it swallowed up and burnt down the things of the ten miles.

My obsession came true. It is not the wrath of God, but the thunder that is born of my anger. I have this feeling.

Then I smelled the burnt smell, not from the other, but the burnt scent of myself.

I am still burning, the anger in my heart is still burning, even if the whole village and my mother died, I became the only survivor in the village, and still burning, I hate like I am not myself anymore.

All of this is because of this corrupt world. I feel resentful of this corrupt and ignorant system and thought in the world, so I want to destroy it.

But I was still locked on the cross, because only my cross is made of iron, and it is engraved with some pattern like a curse.

This time came a footstep. Who came to this barren wasteland?

"Ah, the smell of the good fragrance, is anyone grilling meat?" A man in a big robe and a big hood came in the distance. It was dressed like a sage, but his first sentence has made me hate him.

"Oh, what a pity, it’s a person."

I widened my eyes and wanted to express my dissatisfaction. If I was not tied, I think I just hit him right away.

"Hey, you can see me... No, you are not an ordinary person... This hair with a gradual change in color is not a hair color that humans have...........Oh, red eyes, red hair with a hint of black, you are really like me... eyes and face are very beautiful, just like that person." This mysterious man praised himself indirectly while commenting on my appearance. Then he started taking off his hat and revealing his appearance -- it makes me not want to admit it, but his appearance is just like me.

"Could it be that you are my son?" He said he laughed himself, impossible.

"Do you know____?"

I heard the mother's name from his mouth. I desperately wanted to make a sound, but only a hoarse voice. After all, I have not used the vocal cord for a long time, I can't speak smoothly.

"Looks like it is that. Anyway, come to ‘Heaven’ with me, then we can start to communicate."

Then I was brought to a new place.

Sorey Pov

Dim and mystery present in the ruins, which enhance me to discover for more unknown, but the dim and unknown here cannot ignite my spirit of discovery. I hardly like this place, here, where cold and darkness maybe somehow sensed in the air. I started to get used to prison life, nothing change.

Also, the insufficient light in the cell just cause me easily fall into sleep, sometime, I may see Tartarus’s memory like just now. Just from the piece of memory, I realize his hatred a little bit, still, I will not agree with him.

Likely that the last person he just met at the end of this memory piece is a seraph as he hinted that normal people can’t see him. However, Tartarus is likely a seraph too, the difference is that he can be perceived by normal people. How could it be possible?

When I assume Tartarus is a seraph, he is likely the worst one I have met with such a mindset.

I found the cruelty of Tartarus from several times of conversation, he despised human being.
However, the strange thing is that he didn’t do anything to me harmfully. Every day, the foods that not as bad as the prison meal are supplied. Sometimes, I will be brought on a bed with unknown techniques, then some mechanical arm starts to work, something is taken from me, but it is harmless, like blood and hair.
I have no idea of his intention.

Today, he talks to me again, I will always have the chance to talk to him, maybe his despise to human lead him the behavior to tease. Even though, I want to convince him to change his mind. After all, that is the only thing I am able to do now.

“Where is Edna?” Before anything to go discussion, I wanted to see whether Edna is safe, she is involved because of me. Getting caught by the person behind the whole thing, I doubt the safety of Edna, I asked despite being afraid of bad news.

“The foolish seraph with you?”
“.....Edna is not foolish!.” I lowered my temper while hearing his insult to Edna but still I shouted my opinion.
“You are as cheerful as ever. She is safe, trapped, like you.” He snickered. I feel like I should not trust him, but I have no choice now.

“You didn't ask about you another friend. Should I even call you two friends?” Tartarus teased. It is pretty strange to me, does he mean there is my other friend in his hand.

“ She is trying so hard, so hard that I am going to laugh. Human is indeed foolish creature, conscious or unconscious, they will repeat the history.”

“....Tartarus. I still believe in the world that human may live with seraphim harmoniously.” I have a bad feeling from his words, I don't ask about it but just respond to his view on human. Unknowing the times I said this, I insisted on my belief. Especially when the situation in the world is allowing my dream to happen.

“Pupp. You may continue the dream, but it is impossible with malevolence existing in the world.”Tartarus smirked.

“No, they are moving towards the dream, there are shops collaborating with seraphim, the belief is also boosted and distributed widely. To communicate with the seraphim is not a dream anymore.”

“So what? Malevolence still exists in the world. So long as human remains selfish, malevolence never disappears. The overflow of malevolence will turn seraphim into dragons.”

“Which is why some seraphim cast their blessing domain to towns and cities, to lower the malevolence level, and the Shepherd also purifies the malevolence.

“There will not be an end, and there is plenty of time that the malevolence overflood in the world.”

“Stills, for a certain period, human lived with seraphim harmoniously.”

“....You are annoying, I should keep it straight. I hate you dirty human and the seraphim who have trusted with humans. Unsightly as garbage, I will hope to never see the dream come true. Thus I cursed them to fallen in the darkness and have the self-destruction.” he said with the wood cracking sound appeared the same time. There is nowhere a flame burning woods, I wonder where is it come from.

“Why are you hating human and seraphim so much?”
“Reason? Why do I need a reason for cleaning?” Still, he doesn’t answer my question directly.
“.........Is it because they burn you and your mum as sacrifices?”

“......So you have seen my memory.” Somehow, I felt his anger within the sentence. Every time I try to relate the conversation with the memory I saw, he will be irritated. It is something he doesn’t want to talk about it.

“Yes, it just happened every time I sleep.”

“I bet this is the thing cause it.” He grabbed away the memory fragment from my pocket and crushed it by his fingers. Looks like he is unhappy for others peeking inside his memory that much.

“You human is the failure. With the ugly nature of competition and selfish, it will be soon to the world an end. I should doom you human species before any of the human events bring the end of the world. You human should not exist!” He continued with his ‘reason’ of hatred, while I can hear human cries appeared weakly. I doubt that he like saying words with his own sound effect, this is unnecessary.

However, I noticed that the slightly laughed while hearing the human crying. That’s a thing to ensure that we are too different in everything and we won’t be able to fully understand each other. Since I never find hearing human crying is an enjoyable experience.

“Not every human like this, there is one who loves peace. I believe human will learn to correct their mistakes.” Although I believe I won’t be able to change his thought this easily, communication is the only thing I am able to do now.

“When they noticed the problem, it is too late. The kind people will be destroyed by the plans of evils and the evil remain, then there is no point to keep the species.” He stated his extreme mindset while having the “sound effect” of cries and some blurred voice of a female, it is a voice in a ‘shorter distance’, unlike the human cries from far away.

“I believe all men born good.”

“That’s your wishful thinking. Human is toxic to the world, they are sinful, they release malevolence all the time.” I heard the background noise of wood cracking and sound of collapse slowly faded away.

“.......and why would you hate seraphim as well? You seem to be a seraph too.”He is the kind of person that not allowing anyone to argue against him, an unreasonable person. What should I do to avoid confront then? I think Edna may be a wise advisor to me in the situation, now I just throw another question.

“ Oh? Pretty smart by human standard, but don't confuse those idiotic seraphim with me! They are now just as same as human, the toxin of the world that obstruct me.”

“Even if you are actually the same species to them…..”

“Why would that be strange? Hatred grows among human too, causing the repeating war.”

“Then you are as same as a human.”

“What the hell are you talking about?! One more chance for you to say it again now.”

“You hate like a human, carry emotion and also the destructing urge.”

“I see you want a death then I will give you.” He is anger at my opinion and postured like ready to
“...What’s the next spot.” his action is stopped by a familiar voice.

“Ah, almost forget, that’s lucky for you, Ex-Shepherd.” He left and I relaxed.

Seems that I couldn't change his mind by saying no matter how persuasive, he has a firm hatred towards human and seraphim, and he truly wants to bring doom to human and seraphim. I must stop him, even if the only way to stop him is....killing.

He went a bit far to have the talk but his voice still reaches my ears.

“..As you like, keep destroying towns and cities until nothing left.” Tartarus answered the voice.

“Won’t you worry I do something else outside?” the female responded. Her voice sounds calm but decadent, like the sound of Velvet.

“I knew what you have done, I heard it through the collar, but that is useless. No matter what you have done, doom will come.” He snickered.

“......How may I know Sorey and Edna are safe?” she mentioned my name, I wonder if she is related to me, I wonder if it is Velvet there.

“Velvet? Are you there?” I hoped to transmit my voice to reach the female wherever she is.

“.....Sorey?” Though it is a weak voice to Velvet, she still catches Sorey’s voice.

“You hear? He is here, so cheerful. Don’t worry, I will keep them SAFE as I promised.” He teased.

“...Tch.......You better do that.” the female said with frustration, but somehow relaxed.

“Keep up with your partner, if necessary, you may as well turn her into a dragon, my Hound.” Then the communication message cut, and all background noise disappeared. The background noise must be the notice at Velvet’s side, I guess I become a chip to Tartarus, but I still don’t realize his plan.

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Velvet pov(time just after Sorey pov)

The man cut out the communication, great that I at least hear that Sorey is safe now.

The doom of Tewks is followed by his teasing at the weak and foolish nature of human. He promised to keep Sorey and Edna safe, but that is never a promise to me. He only promised not to harm their life doesn’t mean he won't do a thing to them. Enemy’s word is never trustworthy. If anything I want, I want to devour him, but I am only human, and I doubt that I can do a thing when every single of my actions is recorded. I am frustrated that I didn’t know my action are recorded and sent to him and I don’t like to hear if there are more functions carrying on the metal collar.

I wonder how long will I have to be called by “hound”, the thought turned ridiculous when I am restricted by the metal collar like a dog.

Soon as I tried to relax, I tensed up my muscles again as I feel sight from my back. I quickly turn my head, shout “Who is there?”

However, no one responds to me. I think I may sense wrongly from the tiredness.

“...Why did you save people?” I quickly turn my head again as I sensed my shoulder caught by
someone, then I find it is the female seraph.

“......Why would you care?”

“......I don’t know….Seeing that your body is smoked and full of wounds, I just feel worried.” The seraph sounded like a little more emotional than before.

There are almost tears out of her eyes, like the face to pray, the same eyes as Eleanor when she takes compassion on the others. It was the reason I didn’t kill her the first time we encounter in a fight. I knew she truly possessed a kind heart. I hated to see her sympathetic eyes to me. I know it won’t pave a way to forgiveness, cause every sin I carved is everlasting no matter how long it passes, and now I carved a new one.

“Don’t….give me that look.” This will make me think that you are pitying me when she is just another seraph without free will. She looks like Eleanor, that makes everything worse, she is the last person I need to pity me.

“...........” Now she is showing doubt to my words, like someone who has a soul. Can I expect there is actually a possibility that her free will is recovering? However, she has just done some cruel act like burning down the whole village in a second.

“......You don’t have to worry, it is nothing.” I stated calmly, ignoring all wound on my body. I feel no pain but hot.

“.....But.” The Eleanor-like seraph insisted.

“Nothing.” I insisted back.

The seraph starts to act a bit like Eleanor, I try to hold any wrong expectation to her in my consciousness. Eleanor is kind-hearted like Laphicet, she is strong, that’s why she was qualified to be the pact former of Laphicet. I will be always grateful that they stayed at my side when I fell into darkness. However, I should assure myself not to get it wrong, the seraph is not my friend, there is no one on my side now, she is only a tool, Eleanor is dead.

“Then tell me why you are doing this when it is opposite to the mission.” The seraph asked reason in another way, this sentence is longer than any sentence she said before, which make her be more lively in my impression.

“..........It is not opposed to the mission, the human is a living source of malevolence, so it is necessary to keep them alive.” I simply made up a reasonable reason to suit my villain role.

“If that so, you may let me help you.”

“If you turn into a dragon, you will only be troublesome.” To me, a seraph became dragon will be an uncontrollable disaster and cannot sustainably be used in the following destruction.

“......ok”

“..........I thought you lost your free will, but it seems different?”

“...I just feel like…..awaken from a long dream……and I feel like I knew you, a long time ago.”

“....That’s none of my business.”

I stated with my consciousness slowly faded out with the rising temperature.

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“(Everything feels strange, why am I here? What did I just do?)” There are so many questions to the female seraph now.

The woman in front of her just gave her a very strange but familiar feeling.

‘Your name’s...Eleanor, right? If I defeat you, you'll be his vessel and follow my orders until the day you die.’ Deep inside her memory, someone said such a sentence.

Eleanor…..the same name the woman called her once when they met.

“(Have we met before?)”

The female seraph ponders and shuts her mouth with a sad look, but she soon turns into shock and stops pondering as she saw Velvet fainted in front of her.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
Nearly the whole chapter is a chatting chapter.
A long chat to Tartarus to reveal his vision with some memory pieces I managed to plug in the chapters, but it still doesn’t do any good to Tartarus’s personality, he is just a typical villain with an extreme mindset which normally no one agree on that I think……(I can’t make myself to like him so I can’t make the readers to like him either…but I will at least try to give him the reason of hatred)
The ‘sound effect’ of Tartarus is actually the background noise recording from the event in the previous chapter, sorry that if I didn’t make it clear enough.
Also, anyone guessed the seraph is Eleanor?……right, you may totally pretend she is Eleanor, although things don’t work like this in the official. I will make extra chapters to explain how I make the setting fit in the official setting.
Ch27 - Last time we talked

Chapter Summary

Since the very ancient time, there is no flower blossom on the Rayfalke Spiritcrest. Ah no, there is one, one that no mortal eyes can see, lonely and obstinately growing on the top of the Spiritcrest.

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Edna POV (a certain future time from Velvet POV in the previous chapter)

I used to be free, but I was imprisoned. I imprisoned myself in the Rayfalke Spiritcrest, waited day after day for my brother who was not returning.
Now I am imprisoned, but my mind is free. No one can twist the resolution of Earth Seraphim easily, it is the firmness in our perseverance make us an Earth Seraph. However, I know two people who made an earth seraph felt impressed, one is the Shepherd traveled with me, another one is the Lord of Calamity sailed with my brother.

As I witnessed how Sorey came along the way, my brother, Eizen also witnessed Velvet went through messes in the journey. I can only imagine it is a hard journey as she was being with Reaper Eizen. A lot of frustration along the way, they stand up again after they bear it. The strength possessed on the person we agree with is the reason why we will like the human being that we have been watching.

I don’t hate people who my brother likes, because our taste is probably similar. The so-called Lord of Calamity succeeded in getting him home once. That was why I didn’t hate her even if I haven’t met her yet. Probably, there is also gratefulness in it, after all, she made my stubborn brother come home to see me once.

I remember in that time when I was in a different cage from here, and I was in a cage without walls set by myself. I was waiting for Eizen, even though I knew he would not come back, I keep waiting. He would send a lot of letters and souvenirs to me, wanting to compensate my loneliness, but none of it can.

The only thing I want is he can be with me, just that.

However, it seems like a miracle happened one day.

*  
That day, everything just like normal, I sit on the top of the Spiritcrest, overlook the earth. Normally, no one pays here a visit, except the Turtlez. I expected no more sound of steps other from Turtlez and me around the hill Spiritcrest, but something has changed since one day. Eizen came.

“Eizen!” I exclaimed at the moment I saw him, and I ran to him without a doubt. If this is a dream, I hope it will never end. I hugged when I met him again, hugged so tightly to ensure his existence, I am in reality and he is here.

“It’s been a while, Edna.” He answered, pat my head while I was hugging him. If it is permitted, I would like not to release him, but I knew he would be troubled, so I released him at last.

“Have you...been well?” It had been a really long time since Eizen left, and I am sure he felt a bit guilty when he asked me about my recent condition.

“Do I look well?” I wanted to complain that I am not well without him but I didn’t. He would be troubled if I did. And I am actually being ‘fine’ and safe as long as I stay in the Rayfalke Spiritcrest. Still, I want to be a bit sarcastic when he left so long, so instead of complaining, I answer him with a question.

“Yes.”

“..........” Sure, I hide it too well from Eizen, don’t want him to notice, and don’t want him to worry. I look well to my brother as long as I act like I am fine. My brother is an idiot when it comes to me.

“..........” Eizen didn’t say anything then. Maybe he didn’t plan to stay so long as he always afraid his Reaper curse will affect me. I wonder if he is gonna say bye to me in the next second.

“It has been long enough. I want to hear the stories you bring.” It is the first time, I am not able to
hold back myself, I detained him for a moment by a request. Guessed it will be a long moment for him to finish telling all the stories.

“........Right. It would take time. Let’s take the moment with the palmier together.” Eizen can never refuse my request, he accepted. He suggested and took out his prepared palmier from his black coat, it is the reason I sensed a nostalgic scent from Eizen apart from his own body odor.

“Great.” It must be another enjoyable time for me, Eizen’s palmier always tastes good to me, and my brother will maintain the taste nearly unchanged by completely identical choices in ingredients. Of course, it is because I enjoy the moment with him, that’s a thing he never understands.

Brewed with mellow, thick and fragrant black tea, with Eizen’s palmier as tea dessert, a tea party with only brother and me started.

“ I land on tails, I’ll flip it to heads on my own.” My brother intimating Velvet's tone in front of me, admiring the one who is the first one able to turn his cursed vessel to the head side.

That was a long time visit from the last visit, Eizen visited me just after a few months from the letter about the lord of Calamity and her company, but the visit still very surprising and precious to me.

That is why he likes to travel with humans, always give him a surprise. I didn't understand him at that time but only after traveling with Sorey, I think I knew it now. It is not only negative things appear in humans, not just selfish, greedy, jealous and angry, but also sincere, kindness and selfless.

However, in other words, without those kind-heart idiots, the villain can’t exist that long, when they can’t use people for something when the world loses the boundary of light and darkness.

My brother talked a lot about Velvet Crowe and her companion. So far that I have memorized about Velvet and her companion by the time he talked about them. I can't ignore them and I know my brother must like them a lot.

Very strange that Velvet has become the second person I familiar with apart from my brother. Somehow like I was forced to be familiar with Velvet even when I haven't met her. Since I will read each letter from my brother, I can't ignore his words about Velvet.

If I was asked to evaluate Velvet Crowe, I would say she is either a good person or a bad person. She does things for her own goods no matter what brings, like the Calamity. Normally she cares none of the things in the surrounding, she won’t do good or harm to them if not necessary; but when it comes to what she cares, she will do everything for it, Everything, even if it cost herself.

According to my brother’s words, she pretended to be emotionless but actually, she is the most emotional person for people she cared for.

It is the emotion that turned her a daemon, a lord of Calamity.
It is the emotion made her a better person, even when she is a mess to the world.
It is the emotion made she decided to give the world a hope after brought all the disasters to it.
It is the emotion that made her human.

It is all well described in my brother’s letter and his talk to me in person. The message about her never stops even after Velvet’s disappearance. I guess she is another person that Eizen cared that much.

I don’t really hate her or dislike her, but say, a little bit like her after hearing such annoying texts about Velvet all the time and after seeing her in person.
We are both the selfish kind, that the first thing connects us together apart from having been with Eizen, which makes me being able to relate myself to her. After meeting Velvet, I realized we are somehow similar as we both waited for our family, we treasured our family.

She is also similar to my brother. Always a cold, indifferent look, but value her family very much, she will do anything for them. Sometimes she is acting like a sister, well, later I knew, she was indeed a sister. Cold but tender, alike to my brother, and not like she is over-relying on the seraphim, all the more reasons to be a human I don’t hate.

She stubbornly fights the fate again and again around the Reaper, even if she was called as the Calamity. That’s why I have the feeling that she is ‘appropriate’ to Eizen.

“In early time, she was blinded by vengeance, nothing stops her hatred towards Artorius. Even after a great fall, she never gave up. That’s what the idiot impressed me. Never give up and never treat my curse as a thing.” Eizen proudly stated his memory to Velvet, the memory to an idiot.

“......Even if herself that cracked, never stopped her steps towards.” Then the sentence was stated proudly but also soft and sad in the end. He saw all Velvet’s weak moments in the journey, cruel enough to cause him to feel painful and sorry to her, but he chose not to say a word, only stand beside her to see.

“......I am glad that she didn’t turn you into a dragon.” I expressed my relieve on that. After all, Eizen always stays around the sources of malevolence.

“Don’t worry. I will take care of myself and if you are talking about the Daemon and the Lord of Calamity. I will say they are very tender, especially the Lord. They always keep a distance to avoid the marak in the team turned into a dragon.”

“Which is why you all like a family despite different in species.” I sightly expressed my envy. I am glad that Eizen is glad around humans and seems found an interested person, but it is lonely to wait for a brother who nearly never returns.

“....umm...” Eizen wryly smiled, he totally got the hidden message, to treat other friends as a family but ‘abandoned’ his true sister.

“You are forever my only and true little sister.” Eizen firmly ensured.

“......I know, you idiot.” I sighed and then asked: “....Where is she? I mean Velvet.”

“....God knows, she may be sleeping in the underground, in the center of the planet, and dreaming a peaceful dream. There may be somewhere we won’t be able to access it. Just don’t know if I got a chance to meet her again.” He tried to say calmly. Indeed, he acted calm like a stone, but deep down, he has a heart and I knew he was sad. Who won’t be sad after seeing two of his dear friends died or disappeared.

“....I see.” I turned my back to Eizen, not to see his face. Something bad happened, so she was not able to escape from my brother’s curse finally. I knew the end of Velvet in her journey a little bit of time after this visit.

She was an idiot, to fulfill her aim at any cost that never wants to involve others in her pain or despair. She was somehow the savior but no one will see her that way, either herself. She was an idiot sacrifice herself and saved her team and the world but that seems the only choice to her if she wanted to protect the one she loved.

“What’s the reason for your sudden visit?” I thought he was not going to visit me but continue his
“A promise,” Eizen answered in a serious tone.
“What do you mean?”
“The Lord of Calamity asked me to go visit you after the journey. I answered with an invitation to her to visit you together, but she avoided to answer and just told me to go visit you.” So Velvet knew herself has no way to end well in the beginning.

“In fact, sometimes she was mad at me for leaving you that long time. Said, a terrible brother. She told me to cherish my own family when I still have the chance.” Eizen gave a wry smile.

“Very accurate, I should say, but why would she care?”

“Maybe she had a terrible brother too.”

“A Lord of Calamity, huh?”

“Yep, a Lord of Calamity who has sympathy towards some complete strangers.” Sounded like nothing more but a normal human.

“....That again shows the awfulness of human.” To push one like Velvet to become a Lord of Calamity and blame all on her.

“.........I hope you see the sea one day. It is cruel and terrifying when it comes with storms, but also wide, mysterious and peaceful. You may always find something new in it.”

“Maybe, one day.”

“...Yeah...one day....” We both knew it is a fake promise, he would never agree to bring me towards danger.

To think of the words he told me to praise the amaze of the ocean, I found it ridiculous at first. An Earth Seraphim who destinate to be drowning in water love the sea, while the sea is such dangerous things to him. Similar to human, he likes human, although human always releases malevolence that toxic to Seraphim, obviously dangerous to him. I understand most of them now, that he hoped me to understand more about humans and seeing positive things from humans too.

“......here a present for you.” he took out a box decorated with ribbon and opened it. It contained a ribbon with a pink flower.

“.....It is beautiful. Clearly not chosen by you. Thanks to the one for me, I like it.” One thing I doubted that it was not his usual sense of present choice, but I didn’t ask who was the one who bought it.

“......Glad that you like it. I will thank her if I get a chance to meet her again.” Eizen smiled and watched far away in the sky, at that moment, I felt that it is Velvet the one who choose it.

“Does the flower have a name? It is not like the Edna flowers you had shown me.”

“It is Princessia, meaning the bond between humans, an irreplaceable treasure. It is fragile to stand alone, but it stays strong when they grow in a group. Even the lord of Calamity liked them.”

“Bond between human......”

“Not just human, I think it means the bond between entities, like you and me.”
I laughed, Eizen is not good at words but he will say things like this which makes me happy. Maybe the present is not truly from him, but it included his meaning in it.

“I should go now.”

“Someone is waiting for you? I see. Would you like to introduce her before leaving?”

“huh?” Eizen turned his head and see the redhead behind him.

“S...Sorry. Did I disturb you two?” She said in a nervous tone. I am a bit disappointed that she was not Velvet, but I didn’t complain, after all, Velvet had no choice.

“No, not at all, anything?” Eizen answered indifferently.

“...No.....just be curious about Eizen’s sister...She is cute...”

“Oh~” I teased.

“Of course she is cute, she is my sister.” My silly brother defended for my cuteness

“Hum, sorry to be impolite. I shall introduce myself. I am Eleanor Hume, the former praetor of Abbey, I traveled with Eizen.”

“And I say, the new Shepherd of this Age.”

“Ei...Eizen!!It is not!! I...I just...”

“It is just like that to me and I am not blaming you. You will be a good Shepherd.”

“Is...Is that so....I think I am still not mature enough though....thanks.”

“A Shepherd traveled with a Lord of Calamity.....Interesting. If you are a Shepherd, you must have a Malak assistant, right?”

“....Actually, no.”

“What?”

“Malak avoid forming pact after the event. I don’t want to force them to form a pact, because I realized that we both have a soul.”

“......Then I will introduce my friend to you.”

“......Really?!Thank you! Why would you be so kind to me?”

“ You are my brother’s friend, and he trusts you, so I will lend a hand. I would introduce Lailah to you later.”

“Lailah? who is it?”

“It would be super boring if I just waiting for you or your letters all the time. Mao-boy sent Lailah to meet me, pretty considerate, isn’t he?” I teased.

“Tch!”

“Mao-boy?”

“The short form of Maotelus boy.”
“Be seeing you then.”

“...Sure.”

Then Eizen was gone again, days remained calm and silent, despite a little change in geometry and an episode of a temporary visit from Eleanor and Lailah. She said, “It is alone to be lone, so I would visit you in my spare time, that is just my willfulness.”.

I haven’t directly accepted the offer but I acquiesced. One thing I agree with my brother, I felt the time flow lively when I have someone company to have a conversation.

Eleanor had not noticed the princessia ribbon on my left leg, clearly, the present is not from her but from others. Just a guess, maybe it is from Velvet. We chatted things about the journey and human society. I will ask for more detail of the journey from Eizen and also grew frustration towards humans when hearing more stories of the human society from Eleanor.

Though Eleanor is not a bad person, she is passionate and eager to work hard, a typical excellent student, I continued to lose faith in humanity because of her. I saw she fatigued sometimes to tackle all kinds of stuff from human, I wonder if anyone works with her. If all human does is blaming all wrong on a person and relying everything on a person, then they are surely ugly and hopeless creature.

It was a short period, the lively conversation continued until a day I found Eleanor stopped visiting me but only Lailah. The answer was obvious.

I knew human’s fragile and short-life nature, she must be dead. I honestly grew not much feeling on Eleanor, just a little disappointment for her death.

She had a pure heart to help all human, marak, and Daemon live peacefully together one day but seems her vision was not achieved even she cost her life. I had seen much more death of humans before, she is only one of them who interact relatively frequent to me.

* 

I still not fully understood how is the feeling of my brother to continue writing more about his journey and Velvet after Velvet had disappeared long ago. Remembering the first I found her name on a letter, my brother started that she was a Lord of Calamity in the letter. I was shocked by that, thinking that ‘What was Eizen thinking? Traveling with a Lord of Calamity?!’ and thinking my brother got controlled or something else when I read it. Until now I become so familiar to her without even actually meet with her in the first place.

My brother just let Velvet lived in his letter and in my memory, telling me to take care of her if I ever have a chance to meet her while knowing his doom would come soon. I haven’t known her well and still not familiar with her, but if Eizen cared her that much, she must not be a bad person and I will try to care about her.

I am well aware that there is word should be spoken before anything too late but I will call it still an early state. A human who is able to travel with my brother with the Reaper curse such a long time, she must be tough enough to encounter horrible fate. Somehow I believe that she will take action to resist if she encounters the fate.

Pathetic that I can’t do anything now, not if I keep trapping in this anti-seraphic-arte room, seems
there is a kind of seraphic artes to resist and limit my power in the room. It was the worst moment to meet an enemy in strength like a Lord of Calamity and got caught. I wonder if Velvet is going to do something for us, I have seen her concern towards us in this. I don’t know if she cared, but I can be sure that once she thinks someone is important, she will not betray.

Sigh again for my pathetic state, then the door suddenly burst off, an old face appeared surprised me.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.

Edna has complained so few parts she plays in the recent chapters so I let her show up in this chapter.
(Somehow, I write them both being trapped so that I can play the memory clips.)

Edna’s memory is not much related to the plot( but to dilute the sadness I brought), it is a more detailed version of Eizen and Edna last meeting that mentioned in Ch17, maybe the last scene is more important to the plot.

Probably no one will guess the person who comes rescue as there may not be enough hints. I just write the memory it to support background information of the past events and hope to supplement more reasons for Edna’s feelings and concerns towards Velvet, although there may not be a good characterization of Eizen and Edna. Well, I would like to link everything together.

Remind again that this part(the last scene) is a bit future time from Sorey and Velvet clip in Chapter 26, but it gives hope, to say that Edna will be rescued!
Chapter Summary

Illustration reference: Pandora Hearts-- Retrace LXVII: Lacie (it is really similar, I admit, and it used up all the ink of my pen)
Formal Reunion of Velvet and Eleanor

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Velvet Pov (time after ch26)

‘To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there’s the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life’

Running, running, without an aim.
Remembering the last moment in the fire, I heard the scream.
Hands there waiting for a rescue, waiting for a pull.
Hence I go to rescue, like a fool.
Have withstood pain after created uncounted affliction.
Have never been understood and never sought for realization.

To be, or not to be: that is the question.
To be, hell is more worthy of me; not to be, Death is too cheap for me.
Known to my unatoned sin, yet I stained with blood again.
Known a should of atonement, yet those hand will never hold anything.

For my regret, I set the fire and then set out a rescue.
Forgiveness is never prayed, and yet I am also looking for an excuse.
To retrieve, I ran into the fire.
To atone, I play the role of savior.
I have no regret, this is the only path.

Yet, I should have known a scourage save nothing.
A familiar face of an old lady exposed from the rubble, staring at me.
My hand bloody stained, my vision redden, everything is covered by a red light mist.

Running, running, without an aim.
I pretended to hear none of the voices, see none of the faces, to those who used to familiar to me.
The thickets hide the way of the path with branches hide the sun.

Unaware of the way, I escaped from the burning wood.

Straying, walk astray in wood.

Lost the true direction, see a tilted compress half-buried in lifeless earth.

Compass….I think of Laphicet or creed of one. Not like I care about the creed, I walked away.

I am stumbled by likely exposed tree roots on my way, but when I looked back, I found no woods or roots.

Then, I feel a constraint on my leg.

My leg is grabbed by an emaciated hand, it is lifeless like it is a hand of a rotten dead body.

It is climbing from its nature earth grave.

The resentment displayed from the single red light in its orbit, the light glows and scan through me.

“Why.Why...alive??” winds blow loud around my ears as if someone curse.

I crawled forward to resist the day of the dead.

Suddenly, the whole surface stratum crumbled and I barely grab the edge of the cliff.

I looked into the abyss created from the collapse.

No more grab by the hand or root but empty.

No constraint, free from a firm base. Only darkness in the abyss under the cliff, the abyss can not be seen at the bottom.

If I fall, it likely to cost my life.

As if the caress off breeze is the embrace of the reaper, horror spread throughout my body as the coldness transmits from the air into my backbone.

At that moment, I heard the sound of silence, neither the sound of collapse or the wind howling, only the pure silence, it is the sound of death. The death is that near, attained by only releasing my hand. I never fear death like this. From every moment I pass by death, every moment I don’t care to kill, to the recent days I don't care to die, but now I am afraid to die, not until my aim is achieved, not until
my beloved friends saved.

I try to look up to the sky, covered in bloody red, the moonlight is what turned everything covered by light red mist. All things blurred but a clearly defined shaded figure.

‘SNAP’

Someone steps approach me.

How could I forget this night? One person is standing above, the person I shouldn't forget, staring at me. He may pull me up, but I know he won't. He just cut off my arm and let me fall.

The end is fixed, I will fall down the cliff, by his cut to my arm.

Watching my mechanical prosthesis dismembered in the air, I am pulled into the abyss by death.

To nothing I belong.

“Why did you kill me, why did you kill us?!”

“Why don’t you die?!”

“It is all your fault.”

The wind created brushing past my ear with the gravity acting on me, noise creating and echoing inside my head when I fall, like the murmuring of someone. I wonder if I am dying because of the ghost’s curse….no….it is just what I deserved a long time ago.

“Why did I live?” I asked myself and only the echo answered me.

I try to remember all my unatoned sins.

Too much to count, the memory faded with the departed spirit in the past, with all the people I killed, with all my family killed, how they die.
In this silence, I see them gone, just like I have seen before.

Memory slowly fading away, now I can't even remember the time and faces of my friends.

In this fall my dreams are gone, forgot my everything.

“Who …..am I?” The blank in my memory became larger, my memory is slowly broken apart. Forgetting the sad affair maybe a better way to live, but not for me, I know I should not forget.

As if someone is asking me: ‘Do you love the cruel truth more than the sweet dream?’

I should remember those sin unatoned for all my lifetime.
I still remember I must do something.

“...vet, promise….no matter…..forgive….life…….live on…………” A fragmental sentence I remember just now is told by someone, a boy has tender green eyes with brown hair.

“Don’t bear all the things alone!” I remembered someone blamed me once not for my sin, someone once an enemy, possessing the same bright tender green eyes as the boy.

My body finally lands on the cold earth, surprisingly no fatal wound.

It’s a nightmare, I realized.

The moonlight can’t even shine through the broad gap between cliffs, the surrounding area is all dark. Now I am in the bottom of the abyss I looked over, only darkness here, no sound, no warmth, no light, it is in absolute darkness as if it is isolated from the ground surface. The abyss is just like my mind, there is no dawn in my heart, always be in darkness.

Walking forward again, it seems that I am trapped in endless darkness as if the world is empty and there is only one person in the world. The sound of my breath and steps can be easily captured and are amplified in this quiet darkness.
I continue walking forward from one side to another side, greet with warm light lighten up and drives away the deep and thick darkness. I see a line of lantern lightens up one by one continuously as if they are trying to lead me a path.

The lights in the dark give me light, warmth, spirit, to illuminate the way of my journey.

I follow the light to find out what they lead to.

In the darkness with little light sparks in the air, I saw a black shadow standing there, waiting quietly.

“Hey…… Velvet.” When I heard a female voice, I move forward faster, I find a female there where lantern light is dim, with the voice trembling, and it is familiar. The female with half of her face hidden in the darkness is so similar to someone in my broken memory.

Crybaby exorcist.

“-----------” I felt that I knew her since she feels so familiar and reliable, but I forget about her. So sad that I can’t call out her name at the moment.

The next moment, she throws herself at me and I watch the band I that bind my hair flew in the air with my hair also flying.

“..........It’s has been a very long time.” She deeply hugs me, unaware of my reaction to her, as if she wants to push out all my oxygen. She holds me so tightly as if she afraid to lose me again.

Am I an important person to her?

And my chest is wet as I just noticed after a blanked moment.

“.......Why are you crying?” I asked.

“Because you never cry it out,” she answered while sobbing.
“.........” I have a feeling that I must remember her, I should not forget her name.

‘Crybaby exorcist’ however be the only words I sought, because she is crying.---- One willing to cry for others’ sadness.

Her hands full of warmth, like the fire in winter, very kind and warm, keep the coldness of abyss away from me. She grabbed my hand with a worrying face, the warmth flow along with blood with the sincerity held in her palm.

“......Sorry that I can't help much.” Before I realized her words, something light up the surrounding, a silver flame ignited in her hand. I immediately want to take my hand but she grabbed tightly and it seems the flame is not hot and hurting me. The darkness came over and enveloped the flame but the flame continues to burn and shine, illuminates the darkness. The silver flame gradually spread throughout the area and everything turns into a prairie underneath the blue sky.

I found my memory recovered slowly, it may be the effect of the silver flame.

The person in front of me, I must remember. The person who was crying in the first time I saw her. The person who always wants to help others, just like someone. The person who is my friend…….

“.....Eh….Ele...Eleanor.......?!......Am I dreaming?” I tried hard to find out her name again in my memory while it is still recovering.

“Yes.” What a disappointing answer.

“Didn’t you died? Why.....”

“Yes, I died and reincarnated into a seraph..... I am the seraph working with you in the burning town business.”

“........Sorry.” I feel sorry to make my friend suffer again. She shall not be the Victimizer, she should be a savior.

“Are you really the Eleanor I know?” I doubt about the person in front of me even when she just cried for me, this dream ought to be a nightmare. I once asked a similar question to Seres in my dream too, to ask her that can I call Celica and her the same person, but she denied that they are the
same, they just possessed the same memory.

“It is hard to explain, but I believe I am the same one and always be the same one.” That’s the answer from the seraph.

“.................” I didn’t continue to ask her about anything, like how long has she lived, what did she do, how did she end up being the seraph working with me. I want to know but I can’t ask, it must be a hard time. It is hard to respond, whether should I be glad or not, have a friend back. Somehow I feel guilty too but I can’t let this occupy me. If I am occupied by my feeling, I can’t use her for my aim now, so I can’t let myself continue to notice my guilty of being the one left out everyone. I have to use her to rescue Sorey and Edna.

“....May I know what happened?” Her eyes told me that she will believe me until the end.

I told the story after I awake from the slumber. I told her the days I live with a family in Tewks village, the day I got to know Sorey was a Shepherd and Laphicet became an Empyrean. I told her how I traveled with the boy and we met seraphim and people on our way, how are we captured by the man and how I end up with the burning town business.

Her face turned complicated as I spoke, not like that she has trouble with this, or say half.

“Do You treat the boy called Sorey as a family?”

“I don’t know, some of his features do like my Laphi and Arthur and I can’t leave him in this situation.”

“Although I want to ask more about the Ex-Shepherd called Sorey, your priority is to rescue him and Edna,” Eleanor stated after understanding the situation.

“Yes. I have to find a way to rescue them.” I stated.

“But you should just take some rest first.” After understanding the case, seems that she disagreed with my action.
“.......I must go to rescue them as soon as possible.” I insisted as I don’t know when will the mysterious man break his ‘promise’.

“I understand you care about them, but you should care about yourself too.” Eleanor is not going to change her mind.

“There is no time, I must go.” Why won’t she understand?

“.......I am afraid I can’t let you continue, not in such a state.” Eleanor sees there is no way to persuade me so she chooses the tough way. She placed her lance in front of herself, preparing to fight. She is going to fight me, but I can see the sadness in her eyes -- just like the sadness, I saw in the old woman’s eyes. I hate those eyes.

“What do you mean such a state? If you are going to stop me, I will fight you.” I don’t understand what is she talking about, but there is a thing I must achieve.

“You never change, always use your everything to achieve your aim. This time I should let you notice yourself!” Eleanor held her lance, rushing towards me to give a strike.

“Yes, I will cost everything to achieve my aim. I see you are obstinate to stop me. Let’s have a deal like the past. If I defeat you, you’ll follow my orders.” After dodged her strike, I jumped back and suggested, like how we had the deal in the past.

“I accept. But conversely, should you lose...You will hear me out!” Eleanor answered and started another attack on me.

I dodge again, although I am the one who starts the challenge, I only keep dodging her attacks. Strike, slash, thrust, she fights like without flaw in the move, like a veteran of a hundred battles. Maybe she was fighting in the past thousand years that she has more battle experience than me already. Still, I need to win.

“What’s the matter? Only knowing to dodge is not your style.” She teased.

Well, I have to get used to the body balance without my left arm here and I should find out the trend of her attack.
“How about you? You are not all out.”

Know your foes, and strike where they’re weak. If she continues showing no flaw, then my stamina may be burnt out first. I have to trigger her to show flaws to me.

“I just want to stop you, and you are only a human now,” Eleanor said while spinning the spear, enveloping me to the front and trying to cut me.

you are only a human.

“So what?! Rising Falcon!” She is the last one I expect to hear this sentence.

.....I kick on her spear, conjuring a small burst of water, launching myself a distance away from Eleanor’s spear. Jump into the air with the kick then dive down on Eleanor like a raptor, her overhead area is the only area that defenseless.

“Useless. Vanguard!” Eleanor shouted as she noticed my position and modulate her move to spin her spear in a straight line before her and attack her overhead area.

Two strikes clashed together making my attacking trace staggered and rebounded, so I take the reaction force from the clash to jump back and launch myself a distance away from her again.

Eleanor doesn’t leave me a break, immediately impale her spear into the ground, using it to perform a front-flip into the air, largely shorten her distance from me, strike me with her heel and spear.

“Crushing Drop!”

I start to stun but I managed to defend myself immediately. Her high battle experience is making me hard to take her down, but no matter what kind of foes will have weak points.

Eleanor keeps slashing and striking and I keep defending, yet every attack are not attacking my important body part to lead fatal results.

That is it, she said that she just wants to stop me, so she doesn’t want to kill me, so her weak point is
me.

At the moment I am not paying attention, I get cut from her but I feel no pain.

Right, here is my dream, although I sense other senses, it ought to feel no physical pain like I didn’t feel pain when I fell down the abyss. Knowing those two points that I will feel no pain wherever she attacks and she will not perform a fatal attack to me, I smiled. Not knowing if she is confused by my reason for the smile, she hesitated for a short moment and shew a flaw that I can’t miss. I will just reverse the situation with this flaw.

At the moment she shows a flaw, I moved to her back area with high speed that she can’t see and strike at her shoulder. In a few seconds, the instinct of the seraph tells her that something is behind her. She widens her eyes, the sudden movement of eyeballs with high velocity capturing my dynamic caused blood congestion to her eyeballs temporary. From the result, she still successfully dodged my strike, at the moment she sees me she bends her body backward and my Gauntlet Blade only strike air.

“Tch!” Perhaps that the Eyes of the mind she has got after constantly accumulating a lot of combat experience, stills, she can’t move quickly to respond to my second attack after just bending her body backward.

“I will defeat you, as a human!” At the moment she dodged my strike, I follow a kick by my left leg immediately and hit her in the mid-air.

“........Flame Beast!” Never thought that she will cast seraphic in the air, she fired a large fireball at me, urging me to change my move while rushing to her.

Only meters above the earth, I perform a series of upward clockwise spins, emit stroke of fire while leading Eleanor’s burst of fire following my fire, together to strike on her with my right boot blade.

I need to keep her in the air, or it is unlikely to win. Just when one spin over, I perform another front-flip kick that trails with a purple streak. “Rising Moon!”

However, Eleanor manages to thrust her spear into the ground, enable herself to move and spin around the spear then deliver a powerful kick to encounter my attack.

Without a gap, she then steps to the right and performs a wide clockwise spin attack with her scorching spear. “Burning Moon!” Possible that she cuts me but I don’t care, now I feel no pain.
It is still not enough.

“Heaven’s Wrath.”

Bottom right, Top right, upward….

I try to slash Eleanor with rapid combinations of kicks from right counterclockwise spin 2 circles followed by another 2 counterclockwise spin kick. Hoping that at least one kick hit her but she defends with her spear spinning.

I need to be faster.

Eleanor waved her spear from the side, relying on the conditional reflection, I blocked the spear that was waving toward my cheek with the sword attached to my right arm. The collision and friction between the weapons gave a sharp ironing sound, and a hot spark flashes at the point of friction occurred. Her spear slightly deviated from the original trajectory, but her spear still perfectly draws a beautiful arc.

“Ha!” I don’t rest or think much and immediately followed by another strike to here, but the attack is blocked with another arc of the spear in the opposite direction. Repeatedly I attack her from all directions, but I use only my gauntlet blade, dancing with my sword around her while she stays in her original position easily deal my slashes. What sparked in her eyes was the unwavering look, she is fighting for what she thinks is right and so am I.

Faster, messier--

Not only using my Gauntlet Blade, I start to use my boots blades, strike a sudden kick upward. The blade in the air drew a trajectory like the moonlight, bounced off her tip of the spear which like lightning.

CLASH!

Weapons clash another sound that heavier than steel, this time Eleanor starts to step back a bit.

Good, it works, keep up to attack her like this!

From top right to bottom left, immediately follows another kick slash by my boot from the bottom right to top left. Horizontal slash, slant slash, I attack as if I want to leave no gap to the seraph in front
of me. Moving all my muscles, controlling 3 blades and continuously slash her like lightning, the surrounding area seems to be pulled strong wind by my mad strike on Eleanor. Not to care if it is blocked, I leave no time for myself to think but slash and attack. She is now slowly stepping backward, it seems that the way is effective.

“Ha!”

Stepping backward to a certain extent, Eleanor suddenly waves her spear from bottom right to top left and follows a large sweep to the front, successfully lengthen the distance from me.

“Lightning, rain down! Shock Drum!” Quickly cast the spell, she summoned a series of lightning bolts around me. The electric current flow through the metal on me towards my body, I lose my sight for a moment and have the paralysis in limbs with heat and pain. That’s a pain I never felt before in here, since here is a dream, is that mean the electrical attack is effective in the dream? Anyway, I will notice it.

Eleanor starts to use more seraphic artes apart from her martial artes, maybe she starts to consider that martial artes are not enough to tackle me. After all, she is a seraph now, she should be good at casting seraphic artes, then I may assume that she is being serious now.

“Blade, pierce true! Maelstrom!”

Another seraphic arte! Eleanor launches a whirlwind from the spear and it is trying to engulf me.

“Cerberus Wave!” I quickly jump back and slash my ejected Gauntlet Blade conjuring a swirling wave of heat to dissipate her casted storm. However, the wind still cut through my body, surly harder to handle the seraphic artes without my therion claw.

Talking about this, here is my dream, it is strange that I can’t control it. I think of it while trying to change the view in the dream but it doesn’t succeed.

“--------!”

Just an instinct without any reason, I bent backward and twisted my body to avoid the strike from the front. It is not enough, the track of the spear points to my head straightly, well, guess she is really in serious mode.

I support myself to perform a kick from the earth in a gesture that nearly lying on the earth but
actually still centimeters from the ground. The ejected blade from the boot conflicted with the spear, sparkle sparks at the point.

At last, the spear deviated from its track, cut out some of my hair before my eyes, there are only centimeters between my forehead and the spear. I guess Eleanor won’t stop my a single strike failing to hurt me, I am afraid that the one before my eyes holds the determination that to stop me even to cut off my limbs. Even if here is a dream, it is uncertain that I am still complete without any damaging when back in reality.

How she enter my dream? How to wake up from the dream? If I die in my dream, what will it do? All are the unsolved question in my head, but one thing for sure. It is because here is my dream, I can’t allow myself to lose!

As estimated, after the failed strike, she changes the attacking track, planning to change the strike into slash. If I get the attack on the front side, I am afraid that either the body is cut in two halves or it is severely injured. Even if I don't feel pain, I still can't fight because of loss in stamina and physical limitations.

By now, neither the boot blades will not be able to block the slash on time, nor using the gauntlet blade on my right hand, which just supports me from the ground to perform the kick just now, can stop it, it is just a physically impossible move.

It is my dream, why the hell that teleporting, flying and other illogical things are not able to perform here? Damn that I am a realist that lack of imagination. Hell that even in my slumber with the Innominat there is no dream unrestrained but all bounded by reality. All the things in the dream are construct by my understanding.

There is only one thing to block the fatal slash from Eleanor, that is my long lost therion arm.

I have enough cognition to the claw, too enough that it can’t be more detail, the cognition to the curse that accompanied me in countless battles for 3 years---- no, I shall say, a fine partner.

If it is lost, then re-create. I order you once again be my left arm in name of Velvet Crowe.

Following the momentum of my previous action that my right hand still supporting my body twisting in the air to dodge the attack, my empty left arm is now directly confronting the place that the fatal slash shall hit. In the mid-air, strong light gleams right in the spot of my lost arm, slowly forming the thing I can’t be more familiar---the great giant claw with red and black in color.
No hesitation, I slash my claw to block and staggered her spear, excessive red mana as if flame remaining on the trace the claw passed. Eleanor is shocked and quickly dodged with herself disappear in front of me.

“Thermal Skewer.” When I noticed, she is behind, impaling the spear into the ground, conjuring a wide, horizontal crack in the earth in front of her violently burst with yellow, brown light.

There is no time for me to think.

“.....Nightmare Claw!” I run forward Eleanor, assault the area in front of me with frenzied sweeps from my claw.

There is no escape for you and me.

“You won’t get away.”

Once my claw catches her, I send a large sphere of gravity to her, the sphere then shrinks and explode. Instantly followed with a wide horizontal slash to the right, leaving a blue streak upon the seraph and throws away her spear.

“Thunder Blitz!”

Left no time, I press my left claw on her throat.

“Checkmate, my victory.”

I guess she has no way to reverse the situation this time and I won’t let my guard down, even when victorious.

“.......Right, I lose.” Eleanor silently sighed.

“If you are all out in the very beginning, maybe I will lose. The second thing is that here is my dream.” I taunted when sitting next to her. Even just now, I won’t believe that she is all out as she hasn’t shown her mystic artes.

“A duel is a duel, I lose this time and I will remember this well.” She answered.

“Sound scary. I can’t win if not in the dream anyway. Just by luck.”

“Luck and will are part of the strength. And I will help you.”
“eh?” I am surprised that she change her attitude this fast, not to insist on stopping me.

“I see you really want to save those two from the way you fight, the flame in your eyes. I'll keep my word. I will follow your orders, let's form a contract first.” Eleanor stated.

“Contract? Like an exorcist, we encountered back then?” I wondered if she means that I will be her vessel then.

“Yes, but there is a little change in the contract. Seraphim will have their free will and the human may gain strength by the contract. Now may we form the pact?” The seraph explained.

“Before that, I would like to ask if there is a way to cut off the contract on one side?”

“Why would you ask about such things?”

“......That’s for safety.”

“........Yes. There is.” Then Eleanor told me about the method to cut off the contract on one side.

“Got it. Now we can form the pact.”

“O ye born resolute soul of fondness and freedom.

Here let our pact be forged, that my unquavering incandescence will maybe thy purification! Shouldst thou accepts this burden.”

A glowing magic circle be created and float in the air with an unknown pattern, it is verifiable that it is like a circle with eight swords extending from the center. The circle grows size from a point to a circle big enough to cover my body exhibited overhead. Then the circle extended and divided into two layers of circles, with the silver flame burning alongside with me, whirling in the air while slowly decreasing in height from my overhead until it reaches the ground.

Meanwhile, it feels like something inside my body switched on and something is entering my body hot as fire. Filling up from my head, flowing through my heart and pumping towards my limbs to the fingertips. The concentrated mana of energy is flowing into this body and the heat keeps no raising as if the body is burning. The energy eventually fulls upon the whole body without any gap.

“I bear my true name ‘Liwyeamesv Umuabiw(Eleanor the cordiality)’. Now, recite aloud my true name.” when she ‘said' the words, I feel some of the directly voiced in my head.

“Eleanor Hume?”

“Not that, said the one I just told you.”
“Liwyamesv Umuabiw,” I spoke out the name engraved in my mind.

“Henceforth, you hold my lance in your hands, and I hold your fate in mine. Our contract is thus formed.” She stated each word firmly, ensure me that she is always on my side.

“.......Good to have you back. Now what we need is a plan, right?”

“Yes, have you any idea?”

“Before I state the plan, I wonder if the man can hear it via the metal collar, it can record voice in my surrounding area….Uh?!” I said while touching my neck to confirm the metal collar is here but I find it is disappeared.”

“As I say, here is your dream, in other words, the world of your mind, definitely won’t be heard, and we may discuss the plan.”

“First of all, the town burning business need to be continued and let the man not to break his promise. This time, I will do it, you are the one go on rescue the two.” I stated.

“Wait, you don’t have to---”

“Isn’t that you said to follow my order?” I interrogated.

“.........Right, just don’t bear all on yourself and push yourself too hard. At least, you may try destroying town after evacuated people in the town.” Eleanor sighed and stated with worry.

“I will take your suggestion.” Once I said, Eleanor smiled and relieved.

“The problem is that I don’t know where Sorey and Edna are trapped.” I started analyzing the situation.

“I know, the map somehow records in my brain. Once I enter the facility, I may send the information to you by seraphic arte.” Now Eleanor just said something suspicious, why would the map is already inside her head? It is a bit risky to believe the information, but let’s just use it first.
“Then you will rescue Edna first and send the map with the routine to Sorey’s cell to me.”

“Are you planning to rescue Sorey yourself? Why don’t just let me bring both of them together?”

“No, I will let the other do it, my job is to destroy after all. Back when I first saw you, you are like a vessel without a soul. This makes me wonder if the man has technologies that harmful to seraphim or he may have a way to suppress free will like Innominat. In that case, Edna is in a more dangerous situation than Sorey.” I analyzed the case with things I know. I hate relying on people but now I am only a human, and humans relying on each other to achieve things.

“....Right, then I will rescue Edna first. I am worried about her too. Who will you seek help from though?” Eleanor sounds worried to Edna too if I remember correctly, they knew each other somehow.

“I think of the dark guild I got to know in this age.”

“....Why would you know such groups of people again?!” She makes it sounds strange that my life is related to such a group again.

“Hmm...it was totally by accident, but it is run by Zavied, we can trust them.”

“..Excuse me?!...err...just explain it after we get all the things done.” I think that quite a large amount of information to her so she can't help to ask more.

“Thank you that you will ask it later. Alright, that's all I guess.”

“Right, we will talk to each other in mind channel in reality.”

-----------------------

As I wake up from the dream, I find Eleanor’s face is extremely near and her forehead contract with mine. She slowly wakes up later and finds out I am staring her.

“...Umm, that is the requirement of the arte. Sorry.” I wonder what artes is that, is it the arte to invade in someone's dream?

“Why would you apologize? I should thank you.”
“Indeed, you are almost at a stage of hellionize,” Eleanor stated a shocking fact to me.

“.........Are you fine ?”

“What do you mean?”

“You will turn into a dragon if you touch me when I am releasing excessive malevolence.”

“Even then, I can’t leave you alone, we are friends, right?”

“..............Right, thank you.”

“You are welcome.”

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
Do you think this is very literary in the beginning? Well, I just pretend to write in a literary tone... I didn’t totally follow the rules of verses, but borrow a few lines from “unlimited blade works” and “To be, or not to be”. Also, merge some lyrics in the middle. (lyrics from TetraCalyx--untold)

I found myself using the nightmare again.......I can’t think of another way to express how Velvet feeling guilty and confused in the situation....

I always want to write Eleanor and Velvet meets each other again but not when Eleanor still a human, cause I think that’s a too short period after Velvet decided to seal Innominat.....and too happy story tone. I also like to see Velvet form pact with Seraphim, so I wrote it that way.

Originally, there is no fighting part but I find it is more interesting to add a fight in, and of course, Eleanor must try to stop Velvet when she understands that Velvet’s mental state is not in a good state, so I decide to add a fight in.

Fighting Reference:
1.Velvet and Eleanor Artes exhibition and Aselia
2.Saber vs Lancer(Fate Zero+Fate stay night)
3. Velvet vs Oscar (TOZX)
4. Fate stay night visual novel

p.s. Eleanor’s pact forming chant is referred from Lailah when she formed the pact with Mikleo
Ch28.1 Side story1-Memorizing

Chapter Summary

(it is a side story and it is the summary of Eleanor’s human life)
This is a memory deep in another person's sleeplike consciousness when someone faints.

When consciousness is sinking and floating as though she is floating up and down in the mighty flood of water, memories are opened from the depths of the mind as if they are the wood floating on the sea to catch as the key to save herself, and the soul that was once isolated by the slumber is connecting back to the body.

-----------------------------------------------------

This night, a Shepherd fell and a life was born.

In the earth pulse, the silver dragon murmured “Eleanor……….you worked hard for everyone…….too hard, you have spent your whole life……….you even………..”.

*-------‘ Take my offering and breath resonance to the world, please.’----*

“Glad that you have a pure soul so I may grant you a new life as a Malak.” Though it would be years or hundred years after Eleanor’s time and there would be a loss in memory, but that would also be Maotelus’s special arrangement to not let the girl to overwork herself again, she may at least rest for a while to learn to live as a Malak. He has lost one dearest to him and he is not gonna let that happen again.

“Please, rest, and enjoy your new life.”

_________________________________________________________________________

The female Malak felt like someone whispered to her, not only someone who is kind and empathy but actually someone she knew. However, she can’t think of his name.

The cool air brought by the rain is the only thing that makes her realize that she is breathing.

“......ah?” unconsciously, she made a sound, then she realized that she can make a sound.

Somehow she believed this is unbelievable, until she felt the soft and wet earth with her hand palm, acknowledged the sky reflected in her eye and so as the birds that flew away.
She tried to believe that she is alive and she somehow also knew that she is a ‘Malak’ now.

“Just gonna check the sudden cast of mana in my domain and I see. There is a rare thing happening.”

“…Rare than your imagination, Zenrus.”

Before she figures out what it is, the next voice that came to ears blinked her.

She sat up from the ground, turned around and found only an aged elder with white hair and there also a single tuft of yellow, lightning-bolt hair characterized his image.

If there is only one person, it is impossible to hear a conversation formed with 2 different voices.

She lowered her line of sight, a cat is at her feet.

The cat looking up at her eyes, it is a pure white fat cat with a black diamond-shaped marking on her forehead and wearing a yellow scarf. However, she felt like she beforehand knew that it is more than a cat.

“You are Malak too?” She asked the cat.

“Well, yeah and I came as I feel that a new Malak was born…………Although you have seen already a teenager state for an infant, guess you were born of a very strong soul.” The fat cat stated calmly.

“……..I………….born…” I murmured. I still not feel real, I grabbed hands and opened them again. I knew my own appearance without looking at a mirror. Stills, I was just convinced to be born.

“Do you feel sad? Child?” The old man asked.


“…….You are crying from the beginning.” Now that he mentioned, I noticed the warm tears falling down my cheek.

“I don’t know.” but I don’t even know what is it for.
“You are….Morgrim…..right?” I wiped away my tears and somehow recalled the name of the cat.

“So, you recalled the memory, any other things you recalled?” The cat seems not surprised and she continues to ask.

The female Malak closed her eyes and tried focusing on recalling the memory, but she recalled nearly nothing.

“I……..was a human, that’s all” She was a human, that was all she can tell, but she can’t tell what she had done.

“Not even your name?”

“No, I can’t remember, but I feel like I have an unfinished commitment.” The newborn Malak felt an empty part in her heart apart, maybe that is why she cried unconsciously from the beginning. It must be something so important that she should not forget.

“Through I thought you had done more than enough already.” The cat sighed with helplessness.

“You knew me?” From the response of Morgrim, the newborn seraph can tell that the cat Malak knew her when she was a human.

“Of course I knew, you are very famous even among us malakim, but I am not going to tell you the answer.” Morgrim then turned around and has a discussion with another old Malak.

After a while, they turned to her again.

“You may be confused with your being here and want to seek the answer, but you better learn to take care of yourself first.” The newborn Malak blinked and the old man continued.

“I am Zenrus, I am here to teach you the knowledge you need.” The old Malak offered kindly.

“Nice to….meet you and …..thank you, Mr. Zenrus.” The new-born Malak still confused.
“No need to be that formal, call me Gramps……and about your name………… I heard it is ‘Eleanor’, a good name for you meaning the pure light and I still see the light and kindness in your eyes.” Zenrus commented kindly.

“…….Eleanor…….my name.” The name felt nostalgic and she tried to recall things with it but nothing is out.

“O child of firmest resolve, here let thy unwavering incandescence be forged. Shouldst thou accept this true name I bestow unto you ‘Liwyemesev Umuabiw( Eleanor the cordiality)’.” Hearing Zenrus’s voice inside her head, she received her true name after just born. Normally others may find their true name in a later age, but Zenrus took her case specially and hope her good human nature well pass in her new life.

From that day on, Eleanor lived and trained with Zenrus assistance. Zenrus told her to stay in his domain for the reason that she is still too weak and not familiar with the seraphic artes she could cast.

Along the time she lived, she recovered her human memory gradually. Sometimes, the memory just came when she gets tired and slept when she was reading books about humans, daemons, and malakim.

* 

“There must be a way to make a better world for everyone. Human, daemon, malakim, and I intended to find it. It might take years….No, decades, centuries, generations……Even if it takes me millennia. I’ll do it.” She heard her human-self said in a determined tone.

“Playing the long game. I take it?” Another female with raven hair responded with a smile.

“I believe in you, Eleanor. You’ll find a way.” A boyish voice stated tenderly to express his trust, and the voice is similar to the whispering she heard in the very beginning when she was born as a seraph.

* 

The female figured out what she promised when she was a human and somehow she feels it is still the thing she wants to achieve. She wonders why she still feels that she forgets important things when she heard the voice of the female and the boy, the sounds familiar that the voices intimated herself a feeling deep in her heart. A feeling strong and hot enough that she can’t ignore or deny,
somehow connecting herself with her human self, that makes her ensure herself to retrieve all her memory when she was a human.

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Zenrus treated Eleanor like his own child, he would tell all the history he knew between humans and seraphim to help her find the answer and decide the new way to live. Eleanor will take them all seriously, just like her human self.

The days go on until a day the external malevolence is strong enough to affect the domain for a second. Eleanor realized that it is time for her to go, she is not someone who is willing to stay at the place to keep herself safe, she still has her keen heart to help people.

Expressing her greatest gratitude to Zenrus, Eleanor went on her journey to search for the answer and the other part of her memory. Zenrus didn’t stop her as he knew the child will one day grow up and walk for themselves, all he did was to help them to gain enough ability to protect themselves before they go on a journey to explore their value.

At first, she arrived a human city with a status look alike her appearance, the description of it indicated that she was called the saint that fight hard to rescue people and died during the delivery of resources in an epidemic. A headache comes quick and something flashes in her mind, it is probably the memory about the time when she was the Shepherd here.

*

At any age, war is an inseparable thing to humans. She should have known that from a long time ago. Unity needed to be brought to create a stable environment for people. However, it also needed years and wars to bring. Either prince Percival nor her could stop the war began. It was destiny after the destruction of Abbey.

During the time in the Unification War, she could only assemble the old members in Abbey that she knew and reconstruct the new Abbey to support the people who suffered in the war. Religion became again a very important thing for people to rely on. Thus she tried to promote the fame of Maotelus by the religion to the people as much as she could and did all the things to support people in that time.

*
Eleanor walks around the city after rested for her sudden headache and finds that the religions are in the decadence again and she feels her body being heavier with the malevolence present in the city.

That makes clear enough that she is not a human anymore, yet she still tries to connect herself with her past self. Lucky that she got the protection from the vessel Zenrus gave her so that she can stay a little longer in a tainted district. However not every malakim that lucky. Eleanor finds a lady fainted around the sanctuary and no one sees her. Small particles float around the lady, she seems like the Malak worked with her when she was the Shepherd. Eleanor tested the lady’s forehead with her hand and found that she is having a bad fever under the impact of malevolence. As she remembered Zenrus’s teaching, the Malakim in such status may soon turn into a daemon or dragon. Thus Eleanor offered her vessel to the lady immediately and carry her back to Zenrus home.

“How did you get yourself tainted like this?! The vessel I gave you!!....oh…” Gramps is angered at Eleanor when he has just noticed her status. Eleanor managed to carry the lady to Zenrus domain but she is then severely affected by malevolence too. She is wondering the name of the lady and not hearing the shout of Zenrus.

“You idiot! Don’t get yourself die before you save someone!” Gramps found out the situation after seeing the vessel offered to the lady Malak who are affected by malevolence as well.

“Eleanor, you…!!” Gramps wanted to blame Eleanor but end up with a sigh as Eleanor fainted.

*

“You really are busy caring for and helping people.” A familiar male voice stated. Eleanor just realized it is Eizen’s voice after dragging herself out of the messy mind.

She turned and stunned for a moment, then reply, “Eizen? How are you here?” She was surprised the Reaper was not on his pirate boat, she had not seen him for months.

“Our boat just parked this surrounding, we’ve heard lots of news of you. You have been doing a great effort, so I pay a visit. How is your work?”

“Not great, we are in a turbulent situation, but anything better than losing our free will.”

“Good, you are still yourself but don't overwork yourself. Actually, I have a request to you, since I am generally invisible to the crew, so I would like you to talk for me.”
“Yes, please, I will be glad in help.” Shen then assisted Eizen to go visit his little sister by persuading the crews. The crews were generally willing to do this favor as they all knew Eizen’s existence.

It was a heartwarming reunion from a long parting, and she would stay away to let them had their time.

Eleanor got a surprising prize from Edna, her new Malak friend. Edna helped her for her being Eizen’s companion and she belief Edna didn’t want her brother to be taken by this cursed world so soon, even if there may not be another reunion in the future.

“Hello, Eleanor, I am Lailah. Nice to meet you.” A chance to meet a fire Malakm was given to Eleanor, and she was not going to waste the chance. She would work with the Malak for a better future for human, malakim and daemon.

Somehow, Eleanor found that Lailah looks familiar as if she met her before, but she guessed that only in her imagination. Maotelus told her that Lailah is born just after a few days later from the moment he being the Empyrean, so it is possible that Lailah is the reincarnation of Seres.

“Still, she is herself, a completely new person, right?” Maotelus commented, and told Eleanor not to treat Lailah differently.

“Yes, but I assume some of her parts are still here.” Like those bad puns she learned so fast from Magilou.

*  

Whether Lailah is Seres or Celica or neither of them doesn’t matter now, but whether herself still the same person as her human self is the question bother her.

Eleanor realized the dream was her memory just before actually being the Shepherd, and the lady she carried here called Lailah. If the Malak was related to her in the past, then she may have some hint to her past life. She slowly opened her eyes and saw the stone domes ceiling. Gramps is sitting beside her with a worrying expression.

“Thanks to the Empyrean, you awake.” Gramps relieved from Eleanor's wake.

“Sorry, Gramps….I…” She started explaining the reason to Zenrus and he sighed helplessly with the comment: “That is just like you from what I heard.”

“….I have recalled more memory from my human time, but I am not sure if I am the same person as
“Only if you feel like you possessed the same soul and same heart, then you two are the same person.”

She understood the words, but she still feels the lack of something when she wants to believe herself is the exact same person as her human self.

Eleanor sat beside Lailah, who is still sleeping, to see if she turns out better. Zenrus has told her that he has prepared a better vessel for the fire Malak.

“Lailah, do you remember me?” Eleanor asked after the fire Malak has just awakened from the coma.

“.......Eleanor?! You turned into a Malak??” The fire Malak exclaimed.

“Yes, it is a long story, but I don’t know why either.” Eleanor then told Lailah about her story after being a malakim.

Lailah is shocked and then turned anger for Eleanor’s altruism.

“You always want to sacrifice yourself,” Lailah commented on both the characteristic for human Eleanor and Malak Eleanor, maybe she is stubborn enough to prevent any changes brought by the reborn in life.

Lailah clearly realized that Maotelus didn’t want Eleanor to work so hard again so he chose to reincarnate Eleanor hundreds of years later than her human living era. However, Eleanor insisted to know about her past life, so Lailah suggested to bring Eleanor to a place as a favor after she heard her story.

She is brought to the Empyrean’s Throne.

“Maotelus…..or Laphicet.”

“.......It has been a while, Eleanor. You still recalled the memory eventually….” when a childish tender voice came out from the dragon, Eleanor was not surprised, she just knew it as if she knew
him a long time ago although she has not much-related memory to Maotelus for now.

“Part of it, and I hope you to retrieve all of my memory.” Eleanor requested.

“Why would you want?”

“I want to seek the answer and the reason for my feeling of emptiness.” She felt something wrong if she just continues her new life in Zenrus domain and leaves the human issue alone. She felt she forgot some important things that she had not achieved when she was a human. She felt she had an important promise with someone. All the answers are in memory.

“Eleanor…..you have literally offered you soul even after death, it is fine for you to rest…..” Maotelus signed for the stubbornness of the girl.

“No, I want to have it, I want to do it, and as long as I want, I enjoy it, so please!” Maotelus saw the determination through Eleanor’s eyes, they were the same when human Eleanor exclaimed to find the satisfying answer for herself in the Titania.

He sighed that the girl always has her way “........ok, as you wish.”

Maotelus teleport Eleanor into the Earthpulse and select all the Earthen Historia related to her memory to show.

*(Eleanor POV)*

I witnessed countless death during the Unification War, the famine and the epidemic. After the war, I felt sad about it and try my best to improve the situation. Still, it was not the reason I want to help others at first. It began with a small and simple desire.

I lived with my mother happily in a small village, but everything changed after a daemon attacked our village for the treasure of Eleanor in the Scarlet Night. My mother died from protecting me

“Be strong, and live!” This is her last word to me.

I tried to live strong and save others as I can for being the only survivor from the Daemon’s attack. I thought this should be the responsibility for being the only survivor in the Scarlet Night.
The day I got invited to be an exorcist, I was glad. That means I have the ability to slay daemons and prevent any tragedy that happens like my village again.

A Lord of Calamity raised in that time, called Velvet Crowe. We should be enemies as she is a Daemon, the thing I hated the most, but I became her side for many reasons after the oath I made to be her servant.

During the journey with Velvet, she flipped over my knowledge to Daemon, malevolence, malakim as well as the Abbey I got to know. I realized that daemon, malakim, and human, all are the same, they have emotions and they have free will. Thus, I promised to make the world a better world for malakim, human and daemon, all to live together with harmony, as I experienced in her team. She became a friend to me after I got to know her, although either of us will admit it. I realized that she is only a girl losing too much and is tortured by Abbey, and never a heartless daemon. However, in the end, she sacrificed herself after she got her revenge.

I remembered her last request-- Take good care of Laphicet, if she was not there after the revenge. She said a part of her wants to leave hopes to the world and she never told me how she is going to do. In the end, I knew the way she did it is to offer herself to seal Innominat, and I had no way to stop her but to see this happened.

Therefore, she will not be in the world she saved. The world is just unfair to take away so much from a girl. Yet, I believed she will wake up one day and have a new life in the whole new world.

Laphicet became the new Empyrean and possessed the ability to purify Daemons. I was still able to see Eizen and Laphicet after Innominat is sealed by Velvet, so I may be able to continue working as an exorcist, but not only slaying daemon now this time.

All of them become the reason for me to make my promise come true-- to make a better world for everyone.

* 

I see until my human-self life ended in helping people in the epidemics. I find the reason for me having the same will to my human self, it is the strong desire when I was a human. I think I am still myself and the same person as my human self.

I see my human self stand in front of me, holding the silver flame, she said: “There will be hell to go
“Even so, I still go on for an answer I seek, no matter what!” I received the silver flame from her will, our will. Once again I decided the same thing when I gain all the memory.

I remembered the way we fought, I fought.

I know that my will is not only from my memory, but it is also truly from my heart, my soul.

As long as I have my will, I will continue to fight for it.

We are in one now, and may our will sustain and never lose again.

----------(3rd pov)

When Eleanor opens her eyes again, she finds herself in front of Maotelus again.

“You have fully awakened, aren’t you?”

She somehow knew that Laphicet reincarnated her into a malakim with element Void after remembered all of the memory.

“Yes, and I will continue to search the answer. Will you come with me, Lailah?”

“Sure.”

----------TBC-----------------------------

Chapter End Notes

A.N. (another very long author note)

Apologize that once again I ignore the plot and write the chapter of past( and now I make the chapter of past TBC…).

Well, as I introduced Eleanor to become a seraph, I would like to explain the story for her to regain all her memory and for being the same person as her human time. Although it is actually kind of forced explanation and forced plot, I would also like to introduce some relationships to Eleanor after the timeline of Tales of Berseria while
(kind of) studying the personality of Eleanor.

I guess, the personality of this Eleanor is not like the one in TOB that much, because this Malak Eleanor is supposed to be the one after experienced whole human life, but at the same time she recognized herself in a young age in terms of malakim kind. Therefore she may have some of her concerns and maybe a bit different from what we know in TOB too, but not like someone immature and lack of experience like me can write her well... I apologize for that.

Zenrus was a helpful character in this chapter that he gave the human name back to Eleanor, helped a lot in gaining her memory back, but I have not shown much of his personality.

It is a side story, so I can’t let this be too long and to be comparable to the main plot. As a result, a suppose works that should be written in multiple chapters compressed into a chapter like this. By the way, the last part is a reference from UBW in Fate stay night.

For it is actually TBC as a side story because I need to connect the setting to some events happened before Tales of Zestiria. You know, if Eleanor gained all her memory, she must do something to save Maotelus in TOZ time, so I should explain for the reasons for she is not available in TOZ.

HOPE THAT I DIDN’T WRITE THE STORY OOC.
P.S. The properties of Eleanor the seraphim of the Void element is similar to Malak Laphicet (or say in the same element category). (I have considered having the Light Element artes, but considering Eleanor would be a Shepherd embrace both light and darkness after meeting Velvet, I decided to let her have the balanced element artes that same as Laphicet.)

Although basically she possesses the ability to cast all element of seraphic artes (including lightning, illusion etc.) at a certain level of strength if she learned and trained and maybe at a stronger strength when it comes to light and dark element artes, she can’t cast seraphic artes of the Four elements (earth, water, fire, wind) at the same strength as the seraphim of the for elements respectively.

The most important ability of her is that she possesses the purification flame too as the seraphim reborn by Maotelu. However, the only one who possessed the purification flame and able to assist Shepherd in TOZ time is still Lailah, only Lailah, JUST LAILAH (so important that I should repeat it 3 times). The reason will be explained in the next chapter of this side story.
Chapter Summary

Illustration Reference: Tales of Berseria Comic Anthology Vol.2 last chapter "heart remains still", last page.
(getting lazy when I draw Zaveid and the enemy)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Eleanor POV

As a dry wind blow gently, dry withered leaf lightly fluttered down, landed on my palm. Being colored with crimson leaves fallen, the lifeless tranquil place is ignited with energy. The crimson land stays its color as its time when it was the transient place the forbidden heroes called home, the place once the birthplace of the first Lord of Calamity, the place obliterated in the mighty torrent of time.
Everlasting Autumn view, I was here before I noticed and there is only one place I knew like this.

Wondering the day we meet again, I counted time and walked over the hill. On the top, a shrine is there, appeared like an endless hole, connecting to the core of the earth, sealed off the untold history in the tranquility.

Things all happened in sudden, time passed fast as if it was yesterday you wiped out everything like a storm and then disappeared like breeze.

You and me, similar but opposite, near but far, fleeting but eternal.

You are here, sleeping peacefully.

As told by Laphicet, my friend is dreaming sweet dreams now, traveling with her brother happily. I am here to ensure that she would not be wakened by the external malevolence, which is the only thing I could do. Time is rich but not a single moment allows me to be in the anxiety of the unseen future. He told me to believe in hope, so do I, we both believe that one day we will get the chance or reunion.

Her request still stays in my mind.

There are numerous of promises I made, but none of them are accomplished. Still, I keep trying to keep my promises, and that is the last thing I can do for my friend.

“ I am sorry, Velvet. I can’t keep my vow to you this time.”

Though I doubt if she could ever hear me, I will still talk like I am talking with a friend.

“ The world is gradually filled with malevolence again. Maotelus……Laphicet was on the edge of tainted and I can barely do a thing this time, but at least we managed to defeat the Lord of Calamity.” I described the situation I know, once again the world is on the edge of doom.

“ However the malevolence isn’t going to disappear without purification, like back in your time, the Lord of Calamity was not responsible for all the malevolence……….He was just another victim. Defeating him is not going to solve things.” To the cruel fact, I felt powerless to change that there is always victim rise. The speed of the growth of malevolence was too fast that our purifying speed was not enough to cover, the worst case is that Maotelus may be tainted. We need a Shepherd to burden the hope of many people.

“ I tried to offer myself to protect Laphicet from malevolence, but he refused. He believed that there will be someone to sure him if that really happened and he wants me to keep you safe…………as
stubborn as you………” But I guess Laphicet was right, I can’t do much when I am a seraph now, I may soon be tainted and turned into a dragon at any rate even if I try to protect him from the malevolence.

“I guess we have plenty of time to pass….Let me tell the long version of the story instead.” It is the long version that there are more things I felt sorry about.

A red leaf falling down onto the bottomless pit when I start telling the tale.

It is a tale as old as time, to say the least, an untold legend in an Age without Shepherd.

----------------------------------------------------------

When I decided to travel with Lailah, I didn’t know that another parting would happen that fast.

“So how did you end up fainted around the sanctuary? It is few to see perform such a careless act when you just walked in a tainted district without a vessel.” I asked Lailah on the way.

“Originally, I had a temporary vessel, it just happened to be broken when it reaches its limit. I managed to disconnect the bond with that vessel but it is unavoidable to face the negative effects from the external malevolence.” Lailah explained.

“Temporary, so there is a vessel for the long term then?” I asked.

“Yes. It may be a certain time after your …death, I became the lady of the lake and the sacred sword is my long term vessel. However, now the world is in calamity, the earth core may start to be tainted by malevolence. I can’t just wait beside the sword for the next Shepherd.”

“……That is how bad the world now?” I sighed and murmured.

“From what I’ve heard so far, there are rumors of the raise of the Lord of Calamity.” Lailah sadly stated the situation.

Just when we planned to leave the Empyrean’s Throne, someone came, we immediately hide and observe. Someone with blond and wearing a black coat with dragon-implying decoration is talking with Maotelus, that is Eizen.

“It has been long, Eizen,” Maotelus talked casually.

“Yeah...All like a sudden moment to change...I’ve heard the Lord of Calamity is heading towards
“Still, I have to stay here, as an Empyrean,” Maotelus stated his determination, although he can't fight because of the oath, he will still stay and wait for what he can do.

“Then I will be here to protect my friend.”

“You want to fight?” It is nearly a statement instead of a question.

“Yes, to stop the Lord of Calamity.” Eizen is talking to Maotelus. No one can stop him when he decided something, his will is firm like his earth element nature, guess he decided that to protect Laphicet and also to protect his sister.

“Though, no one could stop that person in our time,” Maotelus said in a longing tone, he must be talking to some of his old friends when he was only Malak Laphicet.

“And we knew she was doing right in the end. She paid her life and her freedom to save the world, I won’t let the effort by her and you, and everyone ruined.” We all can’t blame all on Velvet when she already paid her life to save the world once. Eizen joined Velvet’s party earlier than me, and be closer to her than me. Deep in his heart, he cares about Velvet and he could not bear the world's future is ruined when Velvet decided to sacrifice her life to protect the future. It is such a high price to pay, still, he chose to respect her decision, so he won't let her effort be wasted this easily.

“Alright…….How is your sister?” Maotelus said in a heavy tone as if the person before him will not return.

“She is alright, still being herself and she has the accompany of Phoenix.”

“Let’s go visit her together someday.” Maotelus pretended to talk about the future relaxingly even knowing it is an impossible promise. He knew how Eizen is tainted by malevolence now.

“Yeah, it has been a while since the last time I visit Edna.” I joined the conversation.

“Oh? …..Eleanor?…..Were you eavesdropping?” Eizen teased after recognizing me. He didn’t ask anything for that, after all, he had seen the cases of Laphicet and Seres, those are the malakim reincarnated from humans.

“Just……Just arrived! And if you are going to confront the Lord of Calamity, take us too!” As everyone said that I am not good at lying, Eizen keeps smiling that he doesn't believe in my line at all.

“I am going too!” Zaveid jumped out and joined.

“You all were eavesdropping.”

“Well, I can hear the wind……Ouch!” Zaveid laughed and Eizen punched him for the worst excuse.
“Alright, but we need someone to be prepared for the next Shepherd to raise. Right now, including Lailah, Eleanor and me, only 3 seraphim possessed with the power of purification and we only have the armatus weapons for fire, water, earth, and wind seraphim now….Lailah ” Thus Lailah must be the one to leave and wait for the Shepherd and she agreed: “......Then I will go back and wait for the Shepherd in Ladylake.”

“I will go with you on the way,” I suggested as a friend and old partner to Lailah.

“Thank you, everyone, and Eizen, before you go, I will blow you once more my purification power.” Maotelus tried his best to get rid of Eizen’s fate of turning into a dragon, despite it may not effective without a human there. Even if he has the power of purification, it can only burn away some of the malevolence when it works alone.

“Thanks, Laphicet.”

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After Lailah arrived Ladylake, I am on my way back to Maotelus’s place. I tend to walk through ruins on my way. Back in the time, the ruins around Gramps domain has less daemon and likely to find vessel or weapons, maybe sacred spirits rest in the place and drove away daemons, the case is similar in this ruin. Various types of weapons, Ceremonial sword, and Mithril spear are lied in the treasure room, among one of them I found familiar.

However, when I try to approach the lance, someone threatens me from my back.

“DON’T TOUCH!” The voice appeared to be angry but familiar, the man pointed his dragger to me. I felt malevolence appeared, he is a daemon.

Before I turn to him and try defending myself with the weapon, I feel wrong with this, I try to think of someone to related to the voice.

Hitting the one in my back by the end of the spear and lengthening the distance between us two, I see his face clearly. He wears foreigner clothing in east, messy black hair, the looming red and black prints from the bangs that covered half of the face. He has the physical properties identical to Rokurou Rangetsu in my human memory.

“.....Rokurou?” He is shocked by the call and reacted like hearing familiar words, but still, show no response.

“Rokurou Rangetsu, is that you?” He widened his eye and his hand loosens a bit from holding the
draggers. It looks like he even forgot his name during years of battles.

Back in the time when I was a human, I seldom met him. Apart from some difficult battle, he came to help me because he wanted to fight a stronger warrior. He never stopped his steps from fighting and the promise we made to taste the dessert together after the battle with Shigure was never accomplished.

The promise remained unfinished and we never met after the battle. I have never thought that he became this...miserable after then, the flow of time wash away his humanity and memory.

I hope that there is a little of his humanity and memory left in him.

His eyes continually widened when he saw my face and heard the name I called, then he came up with a confused expression.

“Hmm.....Sorry, I don’t know there is an owner, but the spear......” I held the spear tightly. I understand it is wrong to take away something without permission, but I really think this was 'my spear'.

“....you may take it........only if you win.” The raven hair daemon performed a fight stand, it seems the fight is unavoidable. I am not surprised, this is just how he was, Yaksha., the war daemon.

His hidden right eye exudes a strange light, and I remember that it was the phenomenon of his excitement for the battle.

‘Shockwave Slash. Smokescreen Assault!’

Rokurou turned from the right to left and immediately strikes the left-handed draggers in cross and then stepped on the left and strike his right dragger.

Yes, the battle has already begun, and I reacted in a sluggish situation to make a defensive posture, rotate the spear to block the attack and then spur.

‘Double Rush, Skewering Spear!’
“You are really amazing, but this is just the beginning. Double Haze!”

Rokurou carried out a double strike, the first hit defeated my defense, and the second hit came straight. If I didn’t intuitively move the spear to the chest position, I am afraid I have been stabbed.

Calm, I have to calmly deal with the opponent. He is the Yaksha that has survived countless battles and is getting stronger and stronger. I must make the most of the characteristics of my weapon—a medium-range attack.

Yes, his weapons are two draggers, and it must be slammed to a very short distance. Then the spear I am holding should be superior in the distance.

“Whirling Top!” I used the spear to make a spin kick, then I jumped to a far distance with a pole vault using the spear.

“Want to stretch the distance? Then take this! Form 0!” He slammed into my front and slammed me into the air and then planned to attack with the right edge.

Why do I know his next move? I have been watching him all the time. In the past battle, I was very clear about his habits. In any case, we fought together for a while. I still remember it for a long time.

“In the air, I can’t move. Do you think so?”

“Spirits, release! I stand in the light of the heavens. Cower before the gates of Hell. Come forth, divine lightning! This ends now. Indignation!”

In the air, I summoned the Gate of Light behind me and summoned the Gate of Darkness under Rokurou to bind him, using the Mystic Artes that Laphicet used before.

“Unfortunately, I am now a Malak!” I quickly stepped forward and slammed the sniper with the spear, slammed back, then send Rokurou into the air with my strongest spur.

“And I am not here to fight you.” Although it’s a bit hypocritical after I’ve already shot him.

“Fine...haha..you win, take it”

“Glad to have that, but you are not using full power.” In my memory, he still has a stronger artes that has not yet been used.

“Well, I am just sparing with my friend, why should I use full power?”

“So, you remember me..”
“At first I didn’t but had a familiar feeling. Only after I see your fighting style, I ensure that you are Eleanor.”

“I thought you forgot me, anyway, I would like to ask you a favor.”

“Speak it.”

I describe everything to him and ask if he will help us defeat the new Lord of Calamity.

“Of course, he or she must be strong.” He answered as I expected, with his excited smile, looks like the time hasn’t changed him.

----------------------------------

After that, Rokurou accompanied me back to the Empyrean Throne and see Laphicet.

“Hello, it’s really been a long time, Rokurou.”

“Yes, I am here to help you to fight the new lord of Calamity.”

“You just want to fight him? I guess.”

“Damn right, Haha!” Rokurou did not hide it and laughed nobly.

“Lailah is in Ladylake now, she knows her duty. I am going to fight the Lord of Calamity too. Where is Eizen now?”

“Meirchio, where we awoke the four Empyreans..... Please, be safe.”

“I will.”

----------------------------------

According to Maotelus’s information, we found Eizen and Zaveid on Mount Killaraus. The opponent is strong, but to stay with the past reliable companions, I feel like we may defeat him.

Then, Rokurou made the same promise again just before the battle: “After this fight, let's go taste the Yozakura Anmitsu together.”

“-----I thought you forgot..” For a moment, I feel like everything back in the past, nothing had changed. He asked me to have the dessert in his hometown together after the battle.

“This time you must lead the way and take me with you.” On the other hand, I have a general bad feeling that I am about to lose something.

“Yeah, promised!” He showed his bright smile.
We walked side by side, I was thinking about my own human time. I had contributed my life to the position of Shepherd. The people around me are very grateful, but also very worried. They all persuaded me to rest, Kamoana naively asked if I had thought about marrying. I paused. I first thought of the bright smile and straight attitude of Rokurou who traveled with me many years ago. I waited unconsciously, waiting for the day to meet him again, waiting for the appointment to fulfill, waiting for another crossroad in our life.

Now his words bring excitement and tension, and the deep uneasiness that is hidden in the heart is constantly expanding as if to devour me.

--------------

Distant from us, a man wandered and walked forward here slowly. Shaded deeply in malevolence, still, I can recognize it is a giant daemon from its exaggerated size in the body, it has a red skin muscular body with armor. There are 4 horns on its head with an angry expression on it.

“I need to cut through all evil beings in this world.......need to be stronger.” The daemon murmured, that may be the last thing on his mind. That is what he wanted to achieve.

However, I can tell that he is doing the opposite thing as he is now heading towards the Empyrean Throne and bring his malevolence to taint the earth he arrived. It may eventually taints Maotelus, leading the doom in the world.

“Stronger, huh?” I heard Rokurou grabbed his weapons tightly, he smiled as he heard, some parts of them are the same. The little trembling from Rokurou must be out of excitement, maybe it has been a while he hasn't met a proper opponent, I see his right eyes glowing red through the slits between his hair.

The daemon looks strong but we are strong too. I don't want to believe we will lose before an actual fight.

Suddenly, the rapid and short earthquake shocks me, the ten-meter distance between us is extremely shorten in a second, the daemon comes before us and confronts directly face to face by a long jump.

“Urghhh! Out of my way!!” Angrily shouted out the caution, it stomped down with a great force that causes the earth to burst while sweeping around the area with its hammers. The wind it wiped tore down some of the malevolence around him, letting us see its angry blue eyes. All of us jump backward to dodge and the stone it hit broken in pieces and fly far away, it must be a powerful hit.
“Sorry, this place is off-limits.” Managed to maintain his position, Eizen stated while standing at the frontline. All of us can feel the effect of the malevolence wrapped around it despite having a vessel. Eizen is in the most dangerous position among us while he uses his punch to fight, he needs to perform a zero-distance attack which brings more malevolence to him. In fact, I disagree to let him fight the daemon which likely be the Lord of Calamity when he will be fully exposed to a large amount of malevolence. I believe it is not far from his time to become a dragon.

When now Maotelus is already restricted by its oath and he is too weak to fight by the effect of the tainting earth, we are the only fighters here to stop the daemon. I don't mind sacrificing myself if this can stop the daemon, but I hate to see a friend sacrifice, again.

“No more step forward.” We all take out our weapons, just to stop the daemon in front of us.

The daemon gets angry and extents 4 more arms from its back, holding pairs of maces and swords while there is still a sword carrying on its back.

“Stay alert,” Eizen warned when he sees the new form of the daemon.

Now the battle begins.

Just in the time, it takes to blink, Rokurou's figure disappears. Need not to guess, he comes before the enemy, after all, he is a battle maniac.

“I am the first one!” Rokurou laughed while using a pair of blades together to damage the heavy armor on the daemon's chest with an impact that leads a burst in the surrounding air. Yet the daemon stands still, the impact is not effective enough when it faces a giant daemon.

“But you didn't knock him down.” Eizen hopped back a step, then perform a powerful downward hook punch with his left fist, ripping a wide arc through the air. The daemon moves a bit backward from its original position, showing the intention to strike his mace down onto Eizen.

“Heh. You either.” Zaveid suddenly appeared in front of the daemon, jumped and followed by a punch, making the daemon not able to continue its move. Then he launched a horizontal upward spin with his pendulum with a heatwave, but the heatwave is not effective to the daemon.

“Don't tell me that you guys are competing with each other again.” I sighed while rolling my eyes,
sending smooth six-hit strike to the daemon with my spear and kick attacks mixing between.

The daemon shields itself with the twin glowing swords held in its hand, then ignoring all our following attacks, wiped out its surrounding area with rampage strike by the weapons on his six arms. The strikes are messy, speedy and forceful that we shall concentrate on dodging the attack.

“Hahaha! Interesting!” Rokurou smiled and slow down while taking a parry stance to dodge the attack, appeared behind the daemon and strike, creating a cyclone under the daemon.

The daemon is then knocked into the mid-air with its back facing the ground, but it stomps down the earth that certain meter under it with the pairs of hammers and maces. The strike causes the earth to burst with blue cyclone, create a force to spin it back to a battle stance and push us all into the air.

“Opps. Eizen!” Rokurou shouted when hops back a step.

“I'll finish this,” Eizen answered while charging forward the enemy with his right fist, tearing through the air with a path of yellow energy. He firmly hits on the chest of the daemon, gives a ring in heavy metal sound and knocks it back a few steps.

“Annoying!!!” Yelled the daemon when it managed to keep its fighting stance, it flows away from it maces and draws its last sword out. The sword has been carried on his back, now it slashes it onto the earth with a wide arc, the large among of malevolence spheres the great sword with a purple aura. It looks really dangerous, it would be things I can't imagine if it directly hit on Eizen in such distance.

“Eizen, switch!” I yelled while jumps a long distance and performing several front-flips with my spear towards the daemon. My spinning slash directly clashes on the great sword and knocked a series of grating metal sound with sparks sparkle at the point of confliction. It is successful to slow down its sword. However, it seems that my attack is ineffective that it doesn't change the track of the great sword, instead, the weight above me is increasing, likely to hit me onto the earth.

“Eleanor!” Rokurou performed a long jump to catch me and drag me away while carrying me in his arm. Once he held me, tightly catch and immediate jump off the place.

I turn my head and watch the sword, Eizen has already left a certain distance from the place where the great sword will hit. The great sword continues to ripe through the air while emitting a line of purple energy, concentrate erupted the mana with the rocks flying into the air. The impact also push us towards the ground a bit, Rokurou and me both fall onto the ground and Rokurou bends over me as if he is trying to protect me.
“Thanks.”

As I sit from the ground, I blinked at the moment. What left on the ground is a line of the deep and wide exposed tunnel just drawn by the slash. Just how destructive the sword is?!

“Eleanor, Zavied, you two better leave the frontline to us. This daemon is resistant to fire and wind. It is not that I don't trust your skills, but could you two act as the support instead?” Eizen warned us in the air while noticing the strength of the daemon.

“Understood.” I agreed as it is dangerous to fight without support, most dangerous for both Eizen and Rokurou who fight in short distance, someone needs to be the healer. In that way, they will be able to fight without holding back.

“Then you should cast your seraphic artes in earth element to fight him. You know how slow you cast a seraphic arte, I will buy you the time.” Zaveid suggested while continue to fight the daemon with Rokurou in the frontline.

“Very well. Don't complain that I didn't warn you.” Eizen started casting the seraphic arte while I am casting the healing arte to heal the whole party.

Just finished the line, Zavied turned to hold the daemon as long as possible despite the daemon has the resistance to wind element. I cast supporting artes to help him but it still seems a bit strenuous to him, but he managed to contend with the daemon for a while with his rich battle experience.

When the casting ended, the ground shakes and a series of rock pillars erupt from the ground in a large area around the daemon, knocking the daemon. The raised dust floating in the air blocked our view to see the daemon.

“Still not down?” I asked.

“Guess not!” Rokurou smiled while seeing the light of angry blue eyes glowing and shoot through the smoky air.

“Deceiving Pumme! I've got him.” Zaveid drives his pendulums into the ground, instantly causing myriad chains to shoot from the earth and skewer the daemon over a wide area.
“Killing flash!” Rokurou yelled while Eizen shouted: "Ready to die?!"

“It's time to settle which of us...” Rokurou twirled his right blade around then charged forward, knocking the daemon down to Eizen.

“Is the better fighter!” Eizen who is on the opposite side then stomped down the earth to cause the earth to burst with yellow energy, blowing the daemon into the sky with an uppercutting.

“But first...” Rokurou met the daemon right behind it in the sky and knocks it back down.

“This enemy here...” Eizen immediately punches the daemon certain meters forward.

“Has to die!” Both Eizen and Rokurou then unleash a barrage of slashes and punches on the daemon.

“Last Laugh!” The daemon can't counteract, Eizen and Rokurou finished the dual arte by charging toward each other and smashing the daemon between their clash.

“...Urghhhhh!!!” The daemon angrily growled while creating a blue mist in the surrounding area which involving Eizen, Zaveid and Rokurou. Seems that the daemon cast a gravitational field over them, causing them hard to move. Now the daemon planned to initiate another power strike with its great sword.

“Anti-gravity...Geostigma!” I cast and created a gravitational field in the exactly same position but in the opposite direction for the gravity force. Now that they can move a little in the field, but I am not sure whether they are able to dodge the attack. Since the great sword possessed such a great power to digged a long and deep tunnel in the earth.

'SPLASH!'

At last, the great sword hit the ground, with all its other weapons held in its hands. The strike caused a great burst in the earth with purple energy overflowing in the ground, digging a great hole in the ground and al of us lose the solid base to stand. My gravitational field is no longer maintained under this circumstance, once it disappeared, the daemon's field is the only one left in the area, all of us acceleratngly hit onto the ground.
The field is still working, it is hard for us to move further and the daemon is trying to finish us with another smash.

'CLANK!'

As soon as I heard the large sound of a crash, I saw Eizen perform an uppercut with his left hand confronting the smash of the daemon's hummer, knocking away one of its hammers. He stomps his right foot with a great force, causing the earth to burst then strike upward with his right fist. A little difference in this time is that the lava together burst with the earth when Eizen causes the earth to burst.

Just before the daemon strikes another hit on Eizen, the lava splash against the jaw of the daemon, it is divided into 5 splashes when it meets the obstruction. A familiar shape formed before us, it is just like a figure of a giant claw that Velvet possessed, it is burning with massive heating red smoke surrounding it as if Velvet is in front of us and trying to buy us time.

Right. We can't lose and can't give up. That person hasn't given up and does until the end so that we still have our free will. Before we make the world better, can't let anyone ruin it so easily, Laphicet must think the same too.1

With the huge contrast in temperature between frozen air in Meirchio and hot air from the lava, the lava solidifies quickly and restricts the daemon. We managed to stand up and cast seraphic artes against the daemon there when it is restricted by the solidified lava.

"Restrict him! Zaveid"

"On it!"

Seeing the daemon started to move, Eizen ordered while casting the arte of Deceiving Pummel with Zaveid, chained the arms of the daemon.

"Grrrrrr!" The daemon struggled and trying to pull himself from the myriad chains from the ground, as a result, the chains are pulled off with the earth it chained at. Angrily stomps down the earth with great power, it destructed the solidified lava before him and created a burst of ice crystals randomly from the ground, trapped Zaveid and Rokurou inside.

"Shit!" Eizen cursed while the chains are broken.

Suddenly, a large, swirling pillar of water stream conjured beneath the daemon and elevated it into the air. Unknowing who cast the arte or when it is cast, twelve vertical icicles are fired to the daemon
from all sides.

“Rime Slaughter!” Someone standing in the edge of the hole containing us, likely a water Malak.

“You should stop, Asura.” He murmured.

“Hey! Who are you?” Eizen asked the unknown helper.

“.......It doesn't matter now, but you may call me Altul.” The Malak answered.

“Altul!!!!!!” The daemon seems named Asura yelled furiously at the water Malak.

“...Seems that you tell the truth. Can we count on you?” Eizen continued.

“Sure, we have the same enemy,” Altul assured him.

At the moment they are talking, Asura is going to strike on one of the ice crystals that trapped our party member----with his great sword.

“No!!!” I shouted while running towards Asura.

“Eleanor!!...Tch! Whatever. Altul, you act as support.” Eizen shouted as he is trying to hold me down but I have already run out.

“Right.” Altul agreed.

“Here I come! Drei!” I jumped up behind Asura and I strike a series of rapid forward thrust following by a great strike.

This successfully catches Asura's attention, he turned his head and madly gazed at me with his glowing blue eyes while striking at me with both his hummer. I am shot far away with several spins in the air.

“urgh......” Tolerating the severe pain and daze from the shot, I am trying to support myself and fight again, but Asura already performed another slash towards me.

'CLANK'

A clash between a hard object with the metal, Eizen just managed to come forward and punch the
weapon out of track.

“Fall back!” He ordered and I silently agreed and hops back a certain distance, seeing Altul is getting our team members out of the ice crystals.

Asura is then throwing his only left hammer towards Altul, surely he is mad at Altul. The hammer still successfully hit the ice crystal with Altul next to it, knocked Rokurou. I immediately run towards Rokurou and Altul, trying to heal both of them.

“You're wide open! Burn!” Eizen there launched another punch to the giant daemon with himself shielded in dark aura sprouting dark wings and his eyes are shielded in yellow and red light. He then soars into the air then releasing a blast of fire down at the area in front of him.

The daemon turns to him again, fight with his great sword and dual glowing swords still left in his hand. Eizen unleashes a large pillar of dark energy but Asura just cancels it out with his great sword striking towards it.

Don't know if it is a delusion, I find Asura attack in faster rate then before, maybe it is because he is carrying less weight than before.

“At this rate.....” It is not a good situation for Eizen as I see he is having a hard time in both fighting and receiving the negative effect from the malevolence.

“Eizen!” I cast another healing arte and thinking about what I may do in this situation. The daemon slashes his triple sword rapidly while fixing Eizen with his pair of arms that hold nothing now. At this rate, Eizen is receiving more and more injuries that my healing arte is not enough to cover.

Now Altul broke the ice crystals that trapped Rokurou and Zavied, the latter one still has his consciousness, and now we have no enough time and mana to retrieve both of them into full strength.

“Zaveid, Eleanor, please hold it off for a while!” Eizen requested.

“OK!” We switched our position with Eizen and fight with Asura, continuously clash our weapon with its sword while Altul is responsible for the healing and boosting our status. I heard that Eizen is casting resurrection arte to himself and boosting up his speed.

The strikes from Asura is heavy like a mountain is stomping on me, can't imagine how Eizen is able to hold him alone this long. It has become faster when both of Zaveid and I get slashes numerous times. While Zaveid and I are holding off his dual swords respectively, Asura strikes his great sword
with massive power that bursts us off the earth.

We are shot and bend over the land, the situation is despairing, my companions are running out in the fight but only Eizen is left, fighting hard, and even Rokurou and Zaveid are seriously injured. I tried to stretch my arm and tried to cast a healing artes, but it was blocked by the Asura with another strike. Is there no longer a way to be?

“Sorry, I’m ready now......Zaveid, Eleanor, take care of my sister.” Eizen talked to us without looking back. His back is just like Velvet in the last of the final battle.

“.....!! What are you planning?!?” Zaveid shouted as he sensed something wrong.

“Is it.....? NO!!” So obvious that I can sense it too, it is just like he is going to sacrifice himself.

“.....This is my all-out attack! Break Soul! Dragon Dive. You’re wide open! Burn!”

Eizen performed a series of attacks in the form that he is shielded in dark aura with his eyes glowing in yellow and red and extending wings behind his back. The form looks much more powerful than before, by the fact that Eizen is using part of the malevolence as the power source in the arte, the form makes me afraid to believe his status. He soars into the air then releasing a blast of fire down at Asura, then strikes on it.

“Not the end yet! This is just the first step, to kill you! Howling dragon!” He kept his form while grabbing Asura’s head, pressing and striking him onto the ground, rushes forward while keep dragging him, ended the arte with a final strike, engulfing the area in a purple aura.

Yet, it is still not enough to take down the daemon before him, he knew it.

“Engulfing the malevolence, I will finish you in form of dragon!!!!” Eizen shouted while still in the form that himself shielded in the dark aura, but the form changed and twisted, finally turned into a dragon.

Eizen always knows that he could turn into a dragon at any time, but he goes beyond his limit much time to live, for his sister and his friend. However, he is now turning into a dragon consciously, just to defeat the daemon that possibly the Lord of Calamity. He knows there is no future if he doesn’t defeat the Lord of Calamity now.

He is the reaper who always bring misfortune to the one around him. Even if there are people who
are willing to be with him when they know it, even if they won't blame on him when they meet challenges, Eizen knew that was his fault. The proof is that all the people around him didn't have a good ending, including Velvet.

Now, he thinks, at least, to save something in his long cursed life. He makes the same decision as the first Lord of Calamity had made, to sacrifice himself for a better future in the world. I can sure that Velvet will be mad if she knew this, she would yell at him an idiot. To Eizen, it is for his family, his lost friends, his living friends and also himself, he believed it is not a wrong thing at this moment. The only thing he can't help with that is someone is gonna be upset with it, but he believes that is his last time to make someone upset in his lifetime.

Eizen has turned into a dragon before my very eyes, the lord of Calamity is burnt and dragged for a long distance against the lava burst out from the earth.

At last, he drops Asura and flies to the beyond.

No one can stop Eizen, we can only watch it happen and watched him fly away.

The Lord of Calamity is knocked out, but nothing ended, it is just the beginning.

After quite a while from the battle, we are not able to talk after witnessing such an event, the newcomer breaks the silence.

“....I am sorry about that.” The water Malak apologized.

“.....Don't be, it is his decision after all.” Zaveid said, then he asked: “Who are you anyway?”

“My name is Altul. I was the Malak raised and accompanied the Shepherd there.” Altul pointed at Asura who is now lying on the lava.

“You said he was a Shepherd?!?” I exclaimed.

“Yes, thank you so much for stopping him. He was a pure person, but he lost the heart to forgive others while being the Shepherd. He exclaimed to cut through all evil things by destructing things that will cause malevolence. The great sword he forged is used for the purpose.”
“I see. He isn't dead yet. What is your plan?” Zaveid asked the water Malak.

“I want to bring him to the water trial, take away his sword and trap him there. May no one repeat the history again.” Altul answered with his will there.

“That is the way you atone your sin huh....” Zaveid sighed.

“Another Shepherd fell into despair.......” I murmured as I thought of Artorius when I heard the truth.

“Alright, I will carry and transport him to the water trial with you,” Zaveid suggested when seeing Asura possessing such a huge body.

“That helps a lot, thank you.” Altul thanks Zaveid kindness.

“I will go too.” I followed.

“No, you should take care of the idiot there. You know, I am not interested in taking care of males, not to mention a daemon.” Zaveid refused.

“....Right. Good Luck.”

Zaveid said he will go after Eizen after he finished carrying Asura to the water trial. I guess he is talking about the promise between Eizen and him. It is a cruel thing, but he accepted it as he is an oath keeper.

Now I supposed Rokurou and I are the only ones in Meirchio. Because of the severe injury, Rokurou still loses his consciousness, while I recovered him gradually from the injury.

I want to wait until he wakens but I have to ensure Maotelus safety too. Fortunately, Grimoirh is around here, I ask her to take care of him after I go check on Maotelus. After all, the Chaos isn’t solved.

“Eleanor, you don’t need to worry me, there will be Shepherd to save me, I believed. I have a request for you instead.” Maotelus stated after I reported everything happened and suggested to seal the surrounding area off to let it free from malevolence.

“What is it? I will try to fulfill.”

“Bring with the piece of the fragment I just have given to you. Please go to the Shrine of Tranquility, let it free from the effect of Malevolence, you may see a normin there. Innominat and Velvet may be affected. I don’t hope to see her wakes in such a chaotic world.” Maotelus said while blowing a shining sword-like fragment into my body.

“........You are still the same.” I commented. He really loves Velvet even in such a situation.
“Yeah, because I love her.”

“OK, I will seal it off.”

In the end, I even being unable to fulfill Eizen’s last request for his little sister, I can only protect this isolated shrine in the earthpulse, with its extended connection of Aball. Quite impressive that Maotelus isolated the whole area in the earthpulse, guess that is for Velvet to see it when she wakes up again.

“I really hope you won’t get mad, Velvet.” I sighed when I finished the story. A normin here said that he will be responsible to guard the place when I am going to lose my consciousness during the seal.

I found myself trapped in somewhere after an uncertain period, I was fixed on a desk inside a white room, a dark ghost-like being figure was gazing at me.

He said nothing, then my mind sunk again, sunk in the tranquility.

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By the effort I hook myself to the past memory, I managed to find the key to retrieve my conscious to wake and take over the control of my own body. My mind is connecting back to the body with the guide of memory and a familiar voice.

I woke gradually after hearing Velvet's voice, she is standing next to me, troubled agonizingly alone.

This time I must help my friends.

---------------------------END of side story---------------------------

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
It is a story based on official setting (in Japanese setting book) that 'Eizen is turned into a dragon in a fight with a Lord of Calamity in the Era without Shepherd that around 200 years before Tales of Zestiria'. I forgot whether Eizen killed the Lord of Calamity, ate him alive or else if he did, I changed the setting a little bit by turning the Lord of Calamity into Asura who previously a Shepherd. The Lord of Calamity 'died' as he stopped to destroy the world and be trapped in the water trial, to give the Shepherd a test, reminding them of the wrong history.

(I know I make Asura with his sword there be very OP so I can knock down the team member easier)
I tried to write some Eleanor & Velvet, Eizen x Velvet and Rokurou x Eleanor, well, I guess it is not obvious and they are not deep enough. Eleanor's setting is getting more and more, so I wrote a long story and compressed into 2 chapters. I want to add more Rokurou x Eleanor, but it doesn't seem to be obvious. Also, more I write, sadder it becomes.

In this final battle, originally not much battle description as I want to keep it short, but it would be weird. At last, I still try to write while finding fighting scenes with many people in it as a reference. Here mainly referred from the SAO fighting scene. I am not good at writing it so I suck at it for a long time.

If you ask where is Magilou, I ensure you that she was watching and do hidden works after the fight as a recorder of history. As the story was described in Eleanor Point of View, she didn’t discover Magilou so Magilou is not present in this chapter. (I admit I am too lazy to write more character into the chapter.)

P.S. partly referred from the lyrics in the song: Pair of Wintry Winds in the first part.
A dream is both virtual and reality, it is the image, voice, mind, and sense formed in the brain base on experiences and feelings. It is the extension of reality, it is the reflection of our true ego. No matter how imaginary it is, there is a solid base. Therefore, people can’t hide their true selves in the mental world.

That’s why Eleanor chose to enter Velvet’s mind world when she saw Velvet is at the edge of hellionizing, it is the way to find the cause or a way to talk. That is also the reason why Eleanor is trying to stop Velvet in the first place.
She understands it is a correct action, yet it is not the right action to take in such a pathetic state. One’s appearance in the mind world can hardly be a lie and Eleanor saw the woman before her horribly beaten, wounds present all over her body and her left arm is lost. Such mental status reminded Eleanor about the moment in the earthpulse, Velvet giving up all hope, desperately fell and sat on the ground, admitting all the crimes she committed and be willing to be eaten by Innominat.

“I have to die.” It is the sentence she never expected from Velvet at that time. Velvet was trying to ignore everything hurt her to move forward before that, it made Eleanor felt it is heartless and inhuman of Velvet being a daemon being to get through all the things so fast. However, the fact is that Velvet just ignored herself on her way of vengeance, ignoring herself from further mentally broken down while all the pain truly accumulated deeply and heavily on her. It is never the pain a normal person can bear, and to Velvet, she never saw herself a human and her heart already broken so she keeps ignoring it. The result of ignoring the pain is the wound be wide opened by the enemy when she finally received a critical mental attack from the presence of Innominat in the image of her little brother.

Eleanor was shocked at that time, being unable to help her, and she can’t let this happen again. It is to help people in the first place to become the Shepherd after Velvet’s sacrifice. She can’t ignore the one in front of her who needs help.

By the fact Velvet is hellionizing, the malevolence may cause her to lose her mind, her memory, taking ‘herself’ away from her gradually until the last perseverance the only thing left in her mind. Eleanor has seen many cases like this that the hellion forgot what caused it became one and forgot its name and became a mindless beast that loyal to their ‘perseverance in the first place’. It may not be that bad for Velvet by her strong will, but she can’t allow a possibility of it.

Eleanor wanted to help her friend, but she could not do much, her aid of purification flame won’t sustain Velvet’s state long if Velvet doesn’t notice the problem. Velvet will need a true solution for herself which could only be found by herself. It is pointless if she isn’t relying on others but endures and encloses herself. Therefore Eleanor thought of stopping Velvet even if she has to fight her again or cut down her limbs in the mind world. No way to let her go destroying herself when she has already sacrificed once. That is a must to stop her as a friend.

Yet, she is defeated by Velvet’s resolution. She thought after being a Shepherd, being a seraph can change something about herself but it is not, after 1500 years, she lost to the same person again. Doesn't matter if she is a daemon, a seraph or a human. The woman before her lived much shorter than her now but she is still stronger than her even in such state. Eleanor didn't even feel wrong with the fact that she loses again but she is feeling helpless for not being able to stop Velvet. Maybe it is because some part in her hind thinking Velvet is right because she feels sorry to Velvet that she can't protect Maotelus in that time. Now she lost to Velvet and once again being her technical servant, she will help Velvet regardlessly.

Anything to help Velvet would be the only thing she possibly does now, thus Eleanor help to perform the plan to rescue Velvet’s new friends—Sorey and Edna.

“........I must go to rescue them as soon as possible.” Velvet is desperate to rescue them even
knowing who are they.

She was surprised when she first heard Velvet has been traveling with a Shepherd called Sorey. They have such opposite identities, not to mention that they both knew each other true past identity. However, considering Velvet’s revenge was completed, she was no longer a Lord of Calamity. It is not impossible for Velvet to accept a Shepherd to be her friend, someone just like Eleanor had become a Shepherd too after the journey with Velvet. She believed the Shepherd is trustworthy and kind enough to earn Velvet’s trust, he must be a Shepherd that different from Artorius. Now maybe he is another one who can help Velvet from this state only if he is rescued.

It is another surprise that Velvet met Edna, though she knew it is not really a good state of Edna, at least she is alive. Eizen has requested Zaveid and her to take care of his sister Edna, Eleanor feels sorry that she was not able to fulfill it when she was preoccupied with another mission. Now that Edna is trapped, thus, Eleanor thought that she must do something about that to redeem her miss.

Before Velvet awoke from the dream, they discuss to proceed with the plan separately at the same time. Velvet is going to proceed with the destructing order after informing the dark guild about the terrorist attack to the city to get empty city destruction if possible, she also in charge to search aid in rescuing Sorey. On the other hand, Eleanor is responsible for rescuing Edna and hacking the information such as the map for the rescue team to Sorey that Velvet asked from the guild. At first, Eleanor stated her desire to rescue both of them at the same time, but Velvet thought that will be dangerous when having the feeling that the mysterious man values Sorey more than Edna and also he may have special technique to handle seraphim.

The last thing kept in Eleanor’s mind was that Velvet asked for the method to cut the contract with seraphim. She said it was for safety sake, but that became a bad feeling to Eleanor that Velvet will cut the contract with her.

As the information provider, Eleanor will take action first. She is amazed by the fact that a map to find the location of the facility is installed into her brain like a program. Maybe the man did something to her other than enslaving her consciousness and Velvet did warn her to be careful since this is supposed to be dangerous.

“He may have the technique to enslave you consciousness again. Be careful.” It feels like that Velvet doesn't want me to go either, but Eleanor is sure that she would not allow her to burn a town again so Velvet chose to be the role of the destructor.

“I am not going to be enslaved again as you have woken me up,” Eleanor promised. “Very well.”

Tracing the information inside my head, Eleanor knows that there is no exact physical entrance for the facility as it is designed for the entry of only one person and it is to trap seraphim inside. The only way to enter is through the teleporting artes set in each Malevolent Crucibles, she was told that it was a way to accumulate a large amount of malevolence and purify or kill it at once, she believes now it is abused in creating stronger hellions.

She remembered that she has been there but she is not herself at that time, there is an experiment to create stronger hellion or turn seraphim into dragons, and she was one of the seraphim brought to there too. For an unknown reason, the malevolence rebounded from Eleanor when it reaches her so she survived, but she witnessed the other unlucky one turned into a dragon. Maybe it is because her
mind is suppressed back then, she can't fully remember it, but she believes the dragons were teleported to a place.

Now she entered one of the Malevolent Crucible and fight to purify it again while searching for the trace of teleporting arte. She is able to find it and arrives at a large white space with giant glass tubes and machinery. She saw the images of different types of dragons and hellions on the screen, urging her to find out more, but now the priority is to find Edna. She searches the surrounding and finds a staircase leading to the lower floor.

Eleanor finds a living-space-like room with a desk, cabinet, and bed there. On the desk, there are a computer and a book there. She opens the book and reads the contents in it to see if any information can help her, surprisingly it is a diary written in the ancient tongue.

-----Someone's diary(translated)--------------------------
xx/xx/xx

I shall record it in the diary, remind myself of not to forget my hatred, remind myself of the process of the plan.
I awake finally after Claudin used his seraphic arte to seal me off. Guess he didn't kill me because of his oath 'not to kill'. Thanks to that I have a chance to awake in this world. Still, I don't know what's the time now, but I can feel that a powerful domain in the surrounding, that may be the reason why I am woke. Here is nothing like the surface of the earth, I know it is the earthpulse clearly as I was once planned to taint it with malevolence and the plan is not changed.

It feels like purified now, it seems that the ideal of the descended seraphim is coming true. Afraid that I can't let it come true, I hope to see doom in human society with the descended seraphim. I am not gonna forgive the tainted human who will kill one for 'God' and 'Justice', I am not willing to see them turning great. I am not gonna forgive the seraphim, the so-call noble species that not willing to accept 'tainted creatures' and acting as the position of gods, also, trying to push me out from the group. The day they sent me with those voluntarily descended onto the earth to live with humans, they close the path to 'Heavenly realm' and expecting a doom of us. I am well aware of that, doom is just what I expected so I wait for that day.

And it never comes, despite the world had overflown with malevolence and suppressed by Innominat numerous times, the species still survived. Thus I whether abandon my role as observer and find a way to doom the world myself. Thus I met Claudin who is trying to stop me, he was a large obstacle to my plan of doom, we cannot understand each other so we fought, and I lost.

Now I awake again, it must be the chance for me to doom the world again.

Xx/xx/xx

Day 5 in the earthpulse, I am finding an exit to the external world but I can't find it, it feels like someone is trapping me in a domain, causing me to walk back to the first start point every time. Thus I stopped trying to find an exit and cause a great explosion in the entire area instead, I see a seraph there saying him as one of the guardians in the earthpulse. I defeated him with my power and find out that Innominat is sealed now, which I am interested in who and how to do it. I continue to stray in the earthpulse, I can see random of the earthen historia there. Until I see an area in the earthpulse that obvious belong to the surface of the earth.

A normin is there to prevent my entry, he is a strong one. I am surprised that he is able to hold me that long, but not until I found and captured a sleeping female seraph as my hostage, so he can only
accept my request. I requested to see the earthen historia of how the Innominat was sealed and then I got to know about the story of the student of Claudin: Shepherd Artorius and the First Lord of Calamity. I thought it may be useful to my plan, so I take away one of the earthen historia and grabbed the female seraph away with me. I can just destroy the special area with the normin there, but it feels like unnecessary so I just left.

Since I find no exit leading to the upper surface on earth, I physically create a path to the surface.

Xx/xx/xx

I awoke, I have learned the fast development of human technology, also see that the world is in a very 'cleaned' status in terms of malevolence. I have to consider a way to bleed malevolence fastly and efficiently. I thought of the curse on the seraphim immediately, a dragon will bring malevolence to districts in the rampage. Apart from this, I thought the technology of human can be used to doom the world, it is fun to doom the world with the technique they invented. Thus I constructed a facility with seraphic-arte-strengthened chambers to contain dragons, seraphim, humans with a laboratory there. I start the plan by letting some seraphim be tainted and turned into a dragon in the Malevolence Crucible, it is a constant thing, so I set a teleporting arte there.

Somehow, I think capturing human is just ineffective, so I start producing one instead, with the information in the earthen historia I have got and with the assistance of human technology and seraphic artes. I use the profile of the Shepherd and the first Lord of Calamity with reference to the resonance they possessed to create high-resonance homunculi, one set of them has escaped though.

Since I created those homunculi, I can easily make them be my prayers to boost my power by the way, and I can easily make them into a hellion with the malevolence I collected, so they can also be the feed to the dragon I trapped.

I spent years to prepare, to get more seraphim so as to get more dragons or to get the strongest dragon.

Later, I find it is boring to see just a few types of face of the homunculus, I decide to get more earthen historia.

To get more earthen historia, I attack a Mayvin go let him escape in purpose to let him send a message to people.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Read until here, Eleanor finds it is too awful to continue reading it, so she closes the diary and turns on the computer next to it instead, hoping to find something such as the map and prison code.

Fortunately or not, the knowledge of modern just somehow engraved into Eleanor's brain with the route to this facility together, so that she can access the data in the computer for the whole floor plan to find escaping routes and to find Edna's and Sorey's location.

That is the first time she approaches the machine and computer after the seal is broken, the last time herself being conscious and taking action was 700 years ago. It should be strange that she is now using a computer to search for things smoothly and efficiently. She may only have the guess that it was the works of the owner of the diary to plant knowledge into one’s mind. After all, she was out that long time and she is ordered to assist Velvet in destroying, not a surprise that he has done something to her. For the worst case, he planted something to threaten her life, then she will be a burden to Velvet, and she would like to keep out such a possibility. This is another thing she shall concern, to take her own life under her control.

By the time Eleanor finding for the information related to Sorey, she founds something suspicious
enough to lure her curiosity. There is experimental data recorded in the memory drive on the
computer, one of the files of ‘Project Clone’ presents with the thumbnail of Velvet’s picture, the
experiment is about producing high resonance entity with sampling clone data from Earthen Historia,
it is something mentioned in the diary. The people, who likely be related to the identity of Shepherd
or the Lord of Calamity, were chosen. What she sees as the thumbnail of the file was the picture of
Velvet’s Clone, named Beta, the second clone produced after Alpha, the clone of Shepherd Artorius.
To watch carefully, the eyes color of the orange are the characteristic of the clone that different from
their original. As stated in the report, the many sets of clones were created successfully, but the ninth
set of clones were escaped with an unstable condition. It is said that the experiment based on the
theory of the relationship between resonance and the hellion strength, said the resonance proportional
to the hellion strength after hellionization. It aims to produce the strongest hellion in the world to
bring grief to the world. Apart from the resonance experiment, advanced dragon farming and
strengthening is also proposed to produce the strongest dragon. All to sink the world into the age of
darkness again.

Eleanor sends all these experimental to Velvet by a seraphic arte together with the building plans
after finding the new exit route to Magiland, she is sure that even Velvet would be shocked by these
projects. Then she immediately finds Edna’s location to rescue her with the found password. She wished
to rescue other seraphim too, but she is afraid that will cause a large commotion enough to make the
enemy notice.

“Edna, come with me!” Eleanor didn’t think of the words for a reunion after such a long period, she
may have already forgotten her. In fact, Edna shows a shocked facial expression when she sees
Eleanor, maybe she still has some impression to the girl visited her in long long ago.

“I will explain everything later, please hurry up now,” Eleanor added to urge.

“Fine, I will go with you.”

As soon as Edna takes Eleanor's hand, Eleanor is running to escape from the facility with her.

“So, care to explain? You... look familiar.” Edna asked with doubts on the way of escape.

“Yes. Let me introduce myself again, I am Eleanor, the seraphim turned from my human self of
Eleanor Hume.” Eleanor tried to explain when she approached a machine to search for new escaping
routes.

“You had not visited me for several hundreds of years, even if you reincarnated into seraphim.” Edna
teased.

“That’s a pretty long story, and I am sorry for that. I may tell you a bit after leaving here and
assemble with Velvet.” Eleanor tried to keep it short. She is sure that she will be guilty when telling
the story, this is not good for the plan.
“Velvet? You don’t mean the ex-lord of Calamity?”

“......Yes, it is her, we assigned into a group and I managed to get back my consciousness after the reunion, we make a plan to rescue you and Sorey.” Although she disagreed with the name, she shut herself up to continue.

“I thought she will just leave us alone.”
“I guess she sees both of you as her family, so she will do anything to rescue you both.” Velvet never tell about Eleanor about them in that deep, but she can feel it. From the resolution lied in her eyes when she fights her, she feels like Velvet is willing to rescue them even if that may cost herself. After all, she was ignoring herself when she thought she needed to avenge for her little brother. She will always do things regardlessly when it comes to the one close to her like her family. Eleanor is sure that Velvet valued them much.

“Anything....”Edna looks a bit sad when murmuring, maybe she thought of her brother, left her for a long time but keep sending letters to keep her safe and happy.

“Unfortunately, she is under control by the man who captured you and Sorey.”
“.......I would like to listen to the whole story, after leaving here.” Edna finally understood the complicated situation.

“Sure.”
“By the way, I find an escaping route to a place near Magiland, do you know that place?”
“That is the place we were caught.”
“Oh, sorry.”
“Never mind. Let’s go.”

It has been around a week after the fight against the Mafia, the place called the Lost Tower is relatively stabilized after it and the dark guild called 'Wild Wolf' works for the society as usual.

Today, a mysterious person comes to the reception bar with a large robe, covering the face with a big hood. The person shows nothing not even the voice but simply walks in, this makes everyone in the place watching the person in caution. Zaveid and Beta come down to see what is going on when someone reports a mysterious visit.

“....So, what do you want?” Assuming the person may not see Zavied, Beta asked the person. The person doesn't directly respond with voice but writes words on the paper, the strange thing is Beta cannot recognize the words. “Huh?” Since Beta can't understand what is written on the piece of paper, she is thinking it is a joke. Zaveid takes the paper and reads, and he is surprised, that is the words used in the Age of Asgard Unification, the Age when Velvet was the Lord of Calamity. It is never supposed to be some language to be easily mastered and written so smoothly by modern people. There are only several possibilities of this person, an ancient seraph or an archaeologist or the most ridiculous possibility--
an ancient person.

Those are the words written on the paper, it is not written in fine handwriting that you may just remove the possibility of an archaeologist, the handwriting seems from a person not usually write. Now that the possibility left are ancient seraph and an ancient person----possibly Velvet or Sorey then. If that is the case, the more reason for the person talks instead of writes it, that means there is a reason the person chooses the harder way to express the request.

“Ok, let's sit down in the room and talk, follow me.” Knowing that the person in front of him may see seraphim, Zaveid invited the person to the reception room and try to talk with her and Beta proposed no disagreement.

“....So, what do you want?” Assuming the person may not see Zavied, Beta asked the person. The person doesn't directly respond with voice but writes words on the paper, the strange thing is Beta cannot recognize the words.

“Huh?” Since Beta can't understand what is written on the piece of paper, she is thinking it is a joke. Zaveid takes the paper and reads, and he is surprised, that is the words used in the Age of Asgard Unification, the Age when Velvet was the Lord of Calamity. It is never supposed to be some language to be easily mastered and written so smoothly by modern people. There are only several possibilities of this person, an ancient seraph or an archaeologist or the most ridiculous possibility--an ancient person.

<I have an urgent request.> Those are the words written on the paper, it is not written in fine handwriting that you may just remove the possibility of an archaeologist, the handwriting seems from a person not usually write. Now that the possibility left are ancient seraph and an ancient person----possibly Velvet or Sorey then. If that is the case, the more reason for the person talks instead of writes it, that means there is a reason the person chooses the harder way to express the request.

“Ok, let's sit down in the room and talk, follow me.” Knowing that the person in front of him may see seraphim, Zaveid invited the person to the reception room and try to talk with her and Beta proposed no disagreement.

“So you may state your request.”

<Please evacuate the people living in the city as much as possible.>

“.......Care to state the reason?”

<There will soon be great explosion involving the whole city of Ladylake, it would cause massive damage>
“Why would you know?” Zaveid felt strange that the person knows about such a thing when the days in present are relatively peaceful in the city, unless the person is actually the instigator or the executor.

<I only ask, are you do it or not?> The person doesn't want to explain and no answer is given to the question.

“Very well, we don't do work for free, what is the reward?”

<Believe me or not, your friend Sorey is caught and trapped in a place, here is the map and the method to go to that place. I will just give you these before you evacuate the people, it is your choice to go get the reward or not.> After writing the message, the person gave the map to Zaveid.

The message is suspicious that the person knew Sorey is Zaveid's friend, making Zaveid doubts it more.

“Who are you?”

<It is not important, just remind you, it will be dangerous for a seraph go there, a human is better.>

“You are trying to persuade me to send her instead.” Zaveid looked at Beta who stands next to him.

“I am okay with that.” Beta answered.

<You can say that, it is all I have to say, and it is your choice to take the request, the time limit for the request is half a day.>

“Pretty harsh work, but I will take it.” Zaveid still thought it is suspicious in content, but he can't bear the loss of Sorey, he chose to believe it first.

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It has been days after the capture, Tartarus does not talk to Sorey and time flow is meaningless in the room. He cannot count the day since the incident.

* All Sorey may do is to remember the memory with his friends. Those adventures he goes with his friends. Until the day Sorey was captured, he was finding Mikleo, but he didn't meet him. The past life including the new one was nostalgia for him when comparing to the dry jail life now. Every day he lives with new events. he was scouted by Gramps when sheltered in Elysia with the thunder. he got to know different things in the world in the journey of Shepherd. He got to know more about Velvet and the human normal life in the Tewks village.
Sorey was accompanied by the joy and kindness of everyone in those days. Recently, he even got his birthday. In Elysia, the days are not recorded as human standard, and time is not a really important thing to seraphim. The concept of birthday is not important and not common among Seraphim as they live a very long life. Thus Sorey didn’t get the exact time flow and his birthday is not decided.

As co-workers were celebrating one’s birthday, Velvet asked for his birthday too, but he can’t answer when he had no idea.

“Then lets 26/11 be your birthday.” Velvet suggested a date as Sorey’s birthday.

“eh?” Sorey was shocked at that moment.

“I heard it is the Thanksgiving day, it would be full of joy and celebrating that day I guess.” She smiled, imagining how the day will be.

“...but why?” Sorey asked doubtfully.

“Birthday is an important culture in life, it is the day to celebrate you born and your existence. You should at least have one too.” Velvet explained.

“...Thank you! I will gladly have it! Then what about yours?”

“What?”

“Your birthday, I should remember your birthday to celebrate! You give me such precious things!”

“.....That’s not a big issue, you don’t need to be that serious.”

“But you said it is an important culture in human life.”

“.....ah….true, but the day I gave you is randomly set,” well, Sorey felt that obviously the date is carefully considered.

“I don’t think so. Anyway, I want to have your birthday too. It is not fair that only you get my birthday.” Sorey insisted to have her birthday.

“........Actually, I forgot.” Not lying, Velvet valued her brother more than herself, she was too busy taking care of her little brother and after that, she experienced 3 -year jail life. After all those incidents, she didn’t care and couldn’t care about a thing like her birthday, so she forgot it.

“...oh........Then, I will set one for you too, it is 1/5!”

“The International Labour Day huh? Why is that?” Velvet recalled the meaning of the day in the modern, just gets the strange idea to have a Labour Day as the birthday.

“You are a workaholic, so this reminds you to get enough rest for yourself!” Sorey chuckled when he explains.

“.....Fine, fine. I will gladly have it too.”

It is a small thing to make Sorey happy enough for a day, his life is full of things like this, and he treasures the days that much.

* All the memory in the past just pushes his desire to leave here further grows strong.

The door opened and Sorey sees Velvet is standing there beside the door.

“Velvet?!”

“Sorry, it is Beta.” focusing to see, Sorey noticed her orange iris, that is Beta’s eyes.

“If you want to escape, then follow me. I will try to explain to you on the way.” Sorey immediately follows her out.
She told a lot of information on the way like a person informed them about the attack on the city and the situation of Sorey. The person requests them to rescue by sending the map to them so she is able to rescue me out.

“Only you?” Sorey asked if Beta comes alone to such a dangerous place.  
“You are not confident to me, but not only me.”  
“No, it is not, just worrying about your safety.”  
“Thanks then.”

As soon as they meet some controlled seraphim to stop us more people and seraphim come out to encounter.

“We seek help from the Scattered Bone and a seraphic guild too. Haven’t told you? we are in a close collaborative relationship.” Beta stated quite big news to Sorey that he is astonished at the moment.  
“I see.” Sorey then smiled and relieved when he realized the sentence finally. He thought if Beta really came alone, that would be very dangerous to her.  
“Did you get a piece of news from my brother?”  
“No...I am sorry.”  
“Nevermind.”

When Sorey thought it is safe, Tartarus stands in front of them.

“Where are you going? Sorey, and welcome back, Beta.”  
“....Who are you? I have no idea what you are talking about.”  
“You don’t need to know, there are substitutions. White mice.”  
“..........We go immediately.” Beta exclaimed and pull Sorey’s hand, running to the opposite direction immediately.  
Sorey can feel her body shaking, it is obvious that she is afraid of the man. Almost like the one who wants to escape from here is her. Tartarus just smirked and stood there, obviously to let Sorey go on purpose, he doesn’t care at all, he has a way to make him back if it is needed and indeed there are substitutions for a normal human with resonance, he has already collected enough information to make a clone.  
Now Beta runs forward without hesitation like a map is in her brain.  
-----------------------------------------------

With the aid of the sudden attack of the combination of assassin and seraphim from Magiland, Sorey and Beta managed to escape from the facility with the straight forward running. However, the attack is not successful, there is a large amount of captured seraphim from the supporting team. They barely retreated safely while getting a large loss.

Sorey sees Velvet in the surrounding forest on the way and he managed to persuade others to leave first. He thought it would be a nice talk and he should apologize for his sudden disappearance from that night. He feels sorry to Velvet when he broke his promise to be safe.
“Velvet, it has been a while for reasons. I am truly sorry for my sudden disappearance and I miss you a lot.” Sorey apologized sincerely, he is afraid if Velvet will be mad at him, but he is ready for that.

However, Velvet didn’t say anything, this made him worry.

“Are you waiting in the town all the time.” Sorey tried to guess Velvet’s concern but he still gets no response. Instead, Velvet takes a deep breath like she is preparing for some actions.

“We may travel together again, right?” Sorey was worried that Velvet is that mad so that she didn’t answer him.

Finally, Velvet shows a response---points her blade towards Sorey without a word and then attack. Sorey has no choice but to fight back.

“Why are you attacking me? Velvet? I know I did wrong to leave secretly, but we may talk! Can’t we talk about it?” He continually searched for an answer, but Velvet escapes the gaze from him and still not answering.

She is not responding and keep attacking with moderate speed and power, obviously not attacking in full power. Maybe she has her reasons, but she is not willing to answer any of Sorey’s question to her now.
The battle continues like sparring until a seraph joins the battle.

“Yo, you guys seem to enjoy the fight, mind me to join?” The half-naked seraph is not asking permission but directly joins the battle, which makes Velvet in a relatively serious mode of battle.
The battle enters a white-hot stage.

In the middle of the fight, Velvet looked suffering and held her neck with eyes closed in suffering expression. When the eyes are opened again, they turned red, and Velvet starts fighting like a berserker. Zaveid sees the situation is not right and forms the pact with Sorey again but we didn’t use the Armatus against Velvet as they think it is not necessary.

However, because of the temporary oversight, Sorey was caught by her and then was slashed from the right shoulder by a sword. He could feel a lot of blood escaping from his chest, his body temperature is decreasing. Velvet didn’t continue to attack at this time, but she was scared and sluggish, she looked at Sorey with the expression almost crying out with pain.
Her eyes also returned to the original soft and bright golden eyes. However, these eyes now reflect her fragile and negative inner state.

“......Sorry.” She whispered and escaped from Sorey quickly.

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Getting out from one of the Malevolent Crucible that near Magiland, Eleanor and Edna keep running in the forest. They stop to rest when they think it is quite near to the edge of Magiland, they rest under a great tree and starts a conversation, Eleanor told the whole present situation she knew to Edna when they are waiting to assembly with Velvet and Sorey according to the plan.

“Even without my brother there, she doesn’t have much luck,” Edna commented after hearing Velvet’s situation.

“....Indeed, that is why she can accept Eizen easily and see his curse as nothing.” Eleanor agreed, then continued the storytelling.

In the middle of the storytelling, Eleanor felt great pain from her heart, just like the pain she received when she was influenced by malevolence but this one is stronger.

Soon, she realized that her pact between Velvet and herself is broken.

“Velvet!” She thinks it must be something that happened to Velvet so she cut off the pact, she can’t help but worry.

“What’s the matter?” Edna asked with worry when she saw Eleanor’s painful expression of a sudden.

“....I guess Velvet broke the pact with me, I feel like something happened on her. The last second before I noticed the pact breaking, I felt a deep pain in the heart like the malevolence effect.”

“Anyway, calm down. Let’s try to assemble with other first, so that we may figure out the way to help her.” Edna tried to clam Eleanor.

“You are right…” Eleanor managed to calm down when she related her human experience that similar to this case. This is never the first time she got a situation like this, now she can only hope that Velvet is fine while searching the way to help.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
Finally back to the main plot!
???: you just push the state into another dire situation!
Me: right, almost the direst situation as planned, I want to create a situation to let something happen...... I somehow want to write Sorey vs Velvet because every time I
google "Sorey X Velvet" I will see the discussions discussing who is the stronger one. Although I kind of skipping the battle description this time, it is because I need to write it again in the next chapter. I create the plot while trying to merge the plot of TOZ and TOB, that is one of the reasons why it becomes so dark in the middle.

Sorry I created a lot of exotic setting to build up the part of the story of the boss Tartarus, some of them pretty forcing, but I decided to make the character a homunculus a long time ago that is why they have a nearly identical face. It is funny that the original inspiration is a girl who looks like Velvet in . So. Anyone guess the Edna’s rescuer right since Ch27?

Let’s organize the timeline properly. First Eleanor entered the facility and find the list of required data, then she escapes with Edna. The guild took action once they got information from Velvet (received from Eleanor), then Beta rescue Sorey. Sorey arrives Magiland too after the escape, but he then meets Velvet and has an unexpected fight while at the same time Eleanor and Edna arrived the edge of Magiland and Eleanor was explaining the situation for Edna. After a certain time from the fight, the pact is broken.

For some detail setting about the little mentioned short memory by Sorey:
I find there is no material set of birthday for the characters so I set one instead. Velvet’s birthday 1/5, the international labor day, and also to be a birthday for Taurus, I really think that if she has a Constellation, it would be Taurus. Sorey’s birthday 26/11, the Thanksgiving day, I think a day like this would suit a Shepherd. It is in the range of Sagittarius, not completely identical in the general characteristic, but some part of them indeed similar.

Well, it is just some memory pieces created to give reasons that Sorey cares for Velvet or to explain the depth of their relationship. Let say I make them trapped and so I can write memory pieces when having a blank to explain about things I just skipped between ch4 and ch5. I thought if I tell the story following the time sequence, it would be extremely slow progress while it is already slow progress in joining casts in TOZ and TOB by now. Thus, I am pretty sure that I am abusing memory and dream in the recent chapters while I am telling the story of the boss in the same way.
Chapter Summary

It is the things on another side happening at the same time as Ch29, also something rephrased on another side, so please don't feel too sad, I didn't change the situation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Pure white cloud shines and appears solid while the sunlight is strong. Hanging in the cloudy sky, the tail of the clouds becomes disappearing as it flutters in the wind. The white clouds decorate the sky and make the azure color contrasting.
Sun shines through the clouds, casting heat and light onto the land of Ladylake. Stills, some places are so hot and receiving strong daylight that the view becomes dazzling, like the farmland area in the outermost ring of Ladylake, where Velvet is passing by. The farmers are farming in the afternoon, they would water the plant with the assistance of machines, the sunlight cast on the leaves is reflected sunlight from the leaves’ cuticle and the water on top of them, making the plants in the farmland shine lively. Their children are playing outside, surrounded by the vivid atmosphere from the bless of the environment, and from the energy they bring. Everything in this area works in accordance with the ‘law’ of nature, people use nature, play with nature and return things to nature.

In the prosperous Ladylake, farmland is ranked as one of the main sources of income in the periphery. In this area, people are low-income and simple farmers. There are no high-tech toys here, only the original playfulness engraved in the pursuit of physical instinct.

The boy of a family also takes care of his dog as other children's children do. They also have a good relationship with them, often chase to play. They have not noticed that someone is watching their chasing game.

Once upon a time, Velvet Crowe was just an ordinary rural girl. She hunted for her family's livelihood every day, to care for her brother, and to be happy with her friends' happiness. It’s just a normal and simple person, just like the boy. She never thought about destroying the world, killing people and setting on fire, destroying villages and the rules.

She also wants her friends back, to reconcile with the dogs of her friends, play again, and return to the ordinary people. Unfortunately, she can't, she has no chance to see them again, and she can't be a normal person. After all, she is already the devil, and bringing destruction is what she will do, her duties.

This place is plain and peaceful. She likes this rare and peaceful place more than other places in Ladylake, it makes her remember Aball. However, she should kill the emotion, she can’t let the emotion gets in her way, she still has to destroy the city and destroy the original life of the people here. All the things get in her way shall be eaten, including her feeling towards it. She understands that she will bear all the pain, even a good friend may not support her, but she still has to do it. For her, the people around her and the world are on the scales, she will choose the people around her, whatever the world will be, it is not what she can care about.

She thinks, at least she can take Eleanor’s suggestion: try to excavate the surrounding people as much as possible. Now she is going to the place of the Dark guild ‘Wild Wolf’ while still waiting for Eleanor’s information, she assumes there is plenty of time that she may excavate some people herself before arriving the guild in the Lost Tower and ask them to evacuate the people and reduce the casualties.
“Hey boy. What if I tell you, there will soon be a disaster in here?” She walked to the boy she watched and asked.

“What are you talking about? It is such good weather.”

“Silence occurs before the storm. The disaster will soon be brought by a person. I can tell you this. What will you do?” Velvet said in a serious tone, trying to tell him to evacuate the people.

“Why would you know?” The boy asked.

“Because I am a traveler who has been to many places, I have met numerous storms and disasters in my journey. I can just predict it, and I tell you there will soon be a disaster.” Velvet answered with a half-lie.

“........I will go tell my family and all the villagers about it!” The boy is scared by Velvet’s tone and is determined to save everyone in the village.

“Go, don’t let yourself regret. Accidents always happen.” Velvet said when the boy ran away to tell his family the news. Velvet guesses the adults would not believe in the boy at all, and she will just think a way to rescue them then.

Velvet continues to do all things to evaluate people she could to let herself not to regret too.

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The sound of the bell came from the brain. It was the tone of the seraphic arte that Eleanor used to transmit the message. Since she couldn’t suddenly learn to operate without a mobile phone and both of them don’t have a mobile phone, she could only receive information by this method even if this may be causing pressure in the sudden brain capacity.

Then Velvet reluctantly faced a bunch of information other than the demand, she remembered that she did not ask for the information.

Eleanor thinks that she has too much time, doesn’t she? Well. Maybe Eleanor thinks it is necessary to send her the information to have the confirm, let’s put it like that.
“‘Project clone, Dragon Planting’, not useless information huh.”

Now Velvet understands why there is a person in the world who has a nearly identical face to her, she is her clone. And the person who is missing now, who looks like Artorius is also a clone. But in any case, they are just an independent individual living in the world, and it is no different. She then quickly copied the map from her mind so she may show it to the guild. By the way, it is pretty hard work for Velvet, she seldom draws a picture, but now she has to make sure the drawing to be clean and tidy enough so that it is recognizable and readable.

During the time Velvet draws the map out in extreme focus.

'SNAP'

“Who’s there!?” Velvet exclaimed as she heard a sound.

A boy who looks like Artorius came out slowly.

“Artorius…..!” She murmured the dead name unconsciously until she looked in his eyes carefully. It is an orange iris, the feature of the clone. Right, no way it would be Artorius, she just killed him by her hand a long time ago.

“Alpha…”

“You know my name.” He stated calmed.

“Just got to know by coincidence. You are the Shepherd and the brother of Beta, right?” Velvet turned her head, gazed at him.

“Yes, and you are working with Tartarus,” Alpha stated.

“Who is Tartarus?” Velvet doubts as she heard the name.

“I want to doubt that you are acting like an idiot on purpose, but it seems it is not a lie.” Alpha indicated.

“…..What are you trying to say?” Velvet wants to give him a punch right now but she stopped herself but asks instead.
“The man….the seraph….how to call him….the one who produces us called Tartarus, isn’t that you are working with him?”

“Oh.” Velvet now finally knows what the mysterious man called, pathetic that she doesn’t know his name all the way while ‘obeying’ his order. From the cheapest perspective of Tartarus, Velvet is a dog who doesn’t even know what the name of its owner is.

“Yeah.....Kind of, if you are going to stop me, I will kill you.” Velvet doesn’t plan to deny it or defend herself.

“No, thanks.” But the clone surprisingly just refused to take action, he is saying that he will not stop her even if he knows Velvet is going to burn down the city.

“.............huh?! I expect you to stop me, aren’t you a Shepherd?” So unbelievable that Velvet asks him for the reason.

“Not anymore, I lost all my companions.” The supposed Shepherd there calmly stated with the eyes dead inside.

“So you just give up and cut the contact with your sister?!” Velvet doesn’t know why but she is feeling angry towards the one before her.

“......I cannot do anything. Beta isn’t really my sister either, we are just clones produced from the same place, you have already known that isn’t it?”

“How is that make a difference? I know a shepherd still wants to help others as much as he can even if he didn’t have the power he had. You can’t call yourself a Shepherd if you give up that easily.” Velvet responded while thinking of Sorey, she still sees him as a Shepherd as he always trying to help order, he is still a Shepherd inside despite calling himself an ex-Shepherd.

“.........” Alpha didn’t respond, created a dead air.

“No matter what is your origin, Beta is your family if you saw her as one. Didn’t you care for her?” Just thinking if the boy minds his origin, she finally continued with a softer tone. Some part within
her doesn’t want to see another parting of a family, even if they are actually homunculi.

“I did, but I am afraid if I go back, I can’t face her. It is me who brought her there, to bring her in the poor condition and let her live like a human.” Alpha responded as he heard Velvet talking about Beta.

“And why is that a problem? She is happy to live and she is waiting for you.”

“By the fact that we are not human and Tartarus can execute us with his artes……..I made the wrong decision.” Alpha sighed.

“.........what do you mean by that?” Velvet lost her calm all of a sudden, thinking that she missed something, she hoped she has guessed wrong.

“Tartarus has the ability to execute people once he has set up the arte inside the people. The escape was a mistake, there is never freedom. Besides, our body is not likely to live that long.”

Velvet said nothing but gave a punch, Alpha is shocked with such a response.

“How unpleasant to see you, having the same face as that guy. If you have the time to think about all such pessimistic things, you act to counter the fate, no matter the price. This is living. Clone or not, you live.” Velvet reminded the one before her to live. Meanwhile, thinking that Tartarus just let them live and doesn’t bother to activate the execute arte, Velvet guessed that may not be an issue but she will be aware of it.

“.........”

“If you don’t want to live, then do it for Beta. You saved her and asked Zaveid to take care of her. You want her to live, right? Then take your responsibility to let her continue her life, isn’t that you are her brother?” Being a little sister be left at home by Arthur, the little sister left by her sister, being the sister betrayed by his little brother, Velvet just wants to convince the one before her to care about his only family there.

The boy’s eyes fill with confusing, then fill with regret, finally, he looks up with determination, once again full of the color of life.
“Looks like you know your role.” Velvet stated and the boy nodded.

“What are you drawing by the way?” Alpha asked as he sees the ‘map’ behind Velvet.

“A map.”

“A…map?” Alpha tried to keep himself from laughing when he sees the illustration.

Alpha focused and watched again. Well, indeed it is rough, but it is a map somehow familiar with the place he remembered deep in his brain. It is engraved inside his brain, all the people who received data input from Tartarus by special seraphic arte will have some pieces of knowledge engraved inside the brain, the map of the facility is one of them, that is what helps Alpha live in the modern world in the first place.

“If you know the map, you draw it instead.” Velvet doesn’t want to admit but it is a fact that she draws not well.

“What? Why?”

“You criticize it, so you should show me the perfect version.”

Alpha feels the sweats drop for the sentence, just when did he criticize it?

“I need it to save my friend.” Velvet said it in low volume, but Alpha can still hear it.

“Very well, leave it to me.” Alpha decided to help her as he heard the call of help in Velvet’s sentence, and he believed it is not a lie. As a suppose Shepherd, some part of him still wants to help people.

He illustrated the map while asking about Velvet’s plan, and Velvet answered by writing it on paper in the words in her Era, saying that she will continue destroying towns as to obey the order, and she will ask help from the dark guild help her friend and to excavate people at the same time.
Lucky that Alpha has learned a bit of language in ancient, he can understand a bit. After realizing the contradicting plan of the woman before her. He doesn’t answer at first, just finish the map she needs then prepare to leave.

“I will also try to find a way for you.” The boy answered after a moment of consideration and left finally.

Velvet can’t even make an immediate answer.

“.........I didn’t ask for it, anyway, good news I bet.” The boy has already gone far, Velvet sighed and relieved although she doesn’t know what will the boy do. She knows that they are not enemies.

After asking the Dark guild to help to excavate people and waiting for half the day, she has to return to the sinful order for her.

Time repeats itself, she turns into the Calamity to bring destruction again, attacks on Ladylake on her own. There are still full of crowds with lively noise of excitement seems no one believes in the arrival of calamity. Ah, at least some people in Ladylake has excavated, but most of them continue their daily life until the successive explosion occurred. Even using the power of the Dark Guild, a good result is not promised, the ‘noble’ people living on the upper ground in the city don’t bother to hear the voice of the underground society.

Velvet caused the explosion by a seraphic arte just learned from Eleanor while also install the real bomb everywhere, she just got bombs from the Lost Tower

The explosion destructed various buildings, streets, and residences. People escaped from the city in chaos, the government and other professionals like the police are having the emergency conversation and trying to hold the order in society. Stills, no one figures out a possible solution for the disaster, apart from the people who already knew the plan, they can only save as many as people as possible, like what Velvet is doing now. She does the same thing as in Tewks, saves after destroyed, contradictory but noble.

"Hate me as you like." She mumbled as she sighed for the fate of citizens.

She shall follow the order, even though she hates to do it, even though it is wrong. For the people that important to her to be safe, she can bear the hate from the whole world again. She is used to bearing all the evil things, to be all the World’s Evil, Devil lord, alone.
“Well done, my dear hound.” Velvet didn’t respond to the voice, just waits for the next order.

She has no intention to communicate with this guy, she will wait for the chance and gain the strength to encounter him.

Go to Magiland now, capture Sorey.”

What? wait…. is that meaning Sorey escaped successfully? Then she can stop following his order!

“Why would you think I will obey?”

“The life of your friends is in my hand, both Sorey and Edna.” He stated sarcastically.

“......what do you mean?” She had a bad feeling, everything goes wrong again.

The rescue is not enough to free them from the evil, just like Alpha has said.

“I planted an arte inside them, including you.”

“Why should I believe?”

“Want to try?” Then Velvet felt a suffocating feeling after feeling something activated inside her body.

……..Can’t die yet…. 

“.......I will ............obey.” She wanted to kill him now but she can’t. She wondered if there is an end of the dirty works.

“Very well.” Tartarus is satisfied with Velvet’s response and he stopped the arte, Velvet recovered
from that suffocating experience then she sees a portal appear in front of her.

The man is telling her to enter it, there is where near Sorey.

Things just not right, this is unexpected and she doesn’t want to leave this happen again and again. She has to violate her own will and go capturing Sorey, then she meets Sorey around the wood in Magiland.

“Velvet” Sorey jumped as he is glad to see Velvet.

“Glad that you are safe, is everything alright in this period?” He continues to ask, but Velvet doesn’t plan to answer. Neither to let Sorey know nor to let the metal collar record her voice. Thus the conversation keeps continuing on one way.

“Velvet, it has been a while for reasons. I am truly sorry for my sudden disappearance and I miss you a lot.” Sorey apologized sincerely since he is wondering if Velvet will be mad at him, but he is ready for that.

“Are you waiting in the town all the time?” Sorey stated another question to guess Velvet’s concern since she didn’t say anything. However, he still gets no response. Instead, Velvet takes a deep breath like she is preparing for some actions. Now, none of these are Velvet’s concerns anymore, all she wants it to keep Sorey live, and Sorey won’t understand because she doesn’t talk, and she can’t talk.

“We may travel together again, right?”

That is something she hopes too, just to travel together again. Sadly, she can’t, she has to capture Sorey as she is ordered and she is afraid that she is not able to return the state before it even if they can travel together again. Instead of answering the question, Velvet just points her blade towards Sorey silently, clearly defined herself as an enemy to Sorey, then attack. It is not a multiple-choice question, it is a silent statement---They are now enemies to each other, so Sorey better fights for himself.

It is the mission to bring him back, obviously violated Velvet’s own desire, she is planning the way to let him go while displaying her blade to Sorey.

“Velvet……..?” Sorey doubted at the situation. Can’t blame him, they were companions. Sure enough, are they incompatible with each other? She doesn’t want to believe. Even a monster like her is eager for the existence of hope. She wants to believe in hope, one thing taught by Arthur in the first Scarlet Night, also taught by Laphicet in the journey of revenge. She prays for hope but she doesn’t know where is it.
Unknowing the reason for the gradual gaining in the heaviness of her body, Velvet keeps attacking Sorey while all the attacks either deviated or not aiming at an important part of the body since Velvet doesn’t want to hurt Sorey.

“Why are you attacking me? Velvet? I know I did wrong to leave secretly, but we may talk! Can’t we talk about it?” Sorey still not gives up on asking, he holds Velvet’s blade with his sword.

“What happens?” Velvet didn’t answer, but Sorey is not going to give up, because he sees the troubled expression shown on Velvet’s face, in her eyes, accurately. Velvet is used to pretend normal but her eyes won’t lie.

“.............” Velvet doesn’t know how to express her situation without language, she escapes the gaze from him and still not answering. She wants to let Sorey know the true situation but she gives up soon.

What is she thinking? Has it always been like this in the past? Without being understood by anyone, there is no need to be eager to be understood, by the position hostile to everyone. She will bring Sorey back with the lowest damage, in the worst case.

Velvet first leaps and performs an upper kick, then phases to her right, following by a sharp left kick across the ground as she is aiming at Sorey’s legs to cause him losing the center of gravity. While Sorey is falling down backward, she immediately followed by a strike.

One more strike to take him down, but then Sorey defended himself with his sword. His expression is still confusing, but there is also the strength in his eyes, Sorey is not willing to be defeated without knowing anything from Velvet.

Sorey slashed upward, spinning the wind with his right hand, with a push to the ground from his left hand he stands up again and fights back.

Continuing the spinning track by jumping into air while slashing upward, he created a tornado. Velvet steps back a bit for that.

“(He’s good, not a weakling that would be defeated by me that easily.)” Velvet thought, then slashes rapid combination of quadruple forward slashes towards Sorey with her gauntlet blade repetitively. Her attack is just like her mind, now messy and confusing, it is hard to find regularity in it.
“Earth Dragon Fang!” Despite the irregular attacking tracks of Velvet, Sorey still countered the attack with a four-hit combo fueled by the power of the earth.

The fight is still in a sparing level, Velvet doesn’t plan to defeat Sorey and their swords hit on each other with sparks and shocks. The crashings between swords are loud enough to be heard in the surrounding 1000 meter-range.

On the edge of Magiland, somewhere around the forest, a wind seraph is just going to meet Beta after finishing his work.

Precisely, to excavate people in Ladylake after the disaster, he never thought it would be that level of disaster which almost destroyed the whole town including the Lost Tower.

This would be a great loss to the people lived in there, the people who lived within the Lost Tower may easily get through with this but not the case for those richer citizens lived in the ‘surface city’ of Ladylake, they are used to the comfort life built on the pain of the poor. Zaveid doesn’t feel sorry to the citizen, but he takes that as a chance to rebuild the government there, so there will be no need for the place of Lost Tower, the place specifically gathering the poor and the underground society.

Meanwhile, he is worrying Beta since he sent her to rescue ‘Sorey’. Although she is not alone there, he worries her as a so-call dad to a child accompany him for years. He is reading the wind to find if Beta is around Magiland as that is their meeting place, now their guild is destructed in the great explosion anyway. He hasn’t found Beta’s position, instead, he heard the sound of sword-fight in the forest. It is a shame for a troublemaker not to take a look, besides, he should ensure there is no possible enemy surrounding the area. With the blessing of wind as a wind seraph, he goes to the place where the fight located at high speed and directly joins the fight.

“Yo, you guys seem to enjoy the fight, mind me to join?” While saying the sentence, he already joined the fight with his Pendulum. He wields pendulum-like whips to unleash both there.

‘Outlaw Barrage!’ with his mystic artes, he tempory held both Sorey and Velvet for a moment.

“Not good to have violent arguments, well, I will stand with Sorey side firstly.” Assuming they are having an argument, Zaveid then joined Sorey’s side as a friend.

With the continual gaining in body heaviness while seeing Zaveid’s appearance, Velvet is feeling more confusing to her decision to fight Sorey.

“..........” Velvet doesn’t know whether it is good or bad that the troublemaker joins the fight, by the fact that she is the one who secretly asks him to rescue Sorey, but she knows Zaveid will protect
Sorey and he is strong too.

Deep in her heart, she doesn’t want to fight with Sorey too, but she doesn’t know whether Tartarus is saying the truth that he can take Sorey’s life with his arte. Both Velvet and Zaveid want to help Sorey but in an opposite way, Velvet clearly knows that, that why she is confusing too, she can’t really figure out the solution for it, she just continues to fight Sorey not knowing if this is correct. Now she would just take the fight in a more focusing and serious manner since Zaveid joined the fight, in that way she can just avoid thinking the issue now.

Velvet readjusts her stance with her right foot stepped back before launching another attack, there is strange light in her eyes, the light urging for an answer and seeking for the loss in the fight. There is some part in her starts think herself doing wrong in this. On the other hand, very contradictory that it becomes serious when looking at Zaveid and Sorey at the same time. She is sure that she can’t handle Zaveid easily, especially when her body being more and more heavy to herself, so she has to fight more seriously to survive…… or is it?

Zaveid and Sorey just stand in front of her and wait for the next attack, Sorey is still in an unwilling expression while Zaveid just showing a confident expression. Velvet leaps into the air in a certain height to have backlight by the sun at noon, so both Zaveid and Sorey cannot catch her position with eyes. She then slammed her blade into the ground just in front of them, splitting the earth with shockwave thrust, shock two warriors standing there losing balance. The place where Zaveid and Sorey are standing bursts into fragments of rocks flying towards them, but at the same time, a series of golden chains emerge from between the rocks beneath Velvet, strike and chain her.

“You know, I don’t have to look at you. I can feel you.” Zaveid smirked, he has read the wind and sensed Velvet already without looking at her, thus he has struck his pendulum into the ground before Velvet hit the ground. The sentence just made Velvet scowled, Zaveid is making it unnecessarily ambiguous.

Velvet performed a series of spins in the position to twist the chains and plans to throw away Zaveid while she is tied to the chains linked with the pendulum, noticing it, Zaveid immediately dismissed the arte. Velvet then leaps into the high air and landing on Sorey with her left arm causing a great impact. Her left arm now a metal prosthesis is no longer the therion arm, but the strike still has certain strength with mana applying on it, to strengthen the damage it may apply, Velvet strike it in a punch instead of a palm form so that the force will be more concentrated on a point.

“Sorey!” Zaveid called.

“Right! Lion’s Howl!” Standing in the same place, Sorey holds his feet and directly counter Velvet’s attack with a strike unleashing energy in the form of a roaring beast.
The clash between the two doesn’t form sounds like a clash of swords but a heavy and solid sound of the clash of punch and energy. The energy clashes and blasts away the two for a certain distance, they eventually stop flying when hit on a trunk on the respective side. Zaveid rushed to see Sorey’s situation when on the other side Velvet is trying to stand again.

Velvet tried to stand again, but she noticed her body has become extremely heavy as if melted metal is poured into her body, including her eyelids. It is the heaviness far more than she can tolerate and stands against so far to make fast moves in the battle.

In fact, this condition has continued for a period just after forming the pact with Eleanor. Maybe it is because Eleanor didn’t directly enter her body directly even if they were actually forming the pact in the dream, so the syndromes of pact forming didn’t appear quick. Velvet maintained herself to continue her action against the gradual increase in heaviness and high fever of her body. Now she has just remembered a similar condition on Eleanor when Eleanor fainted after forming the pact with Laphicet and lost to her in the duel. For humans who have experienced several experiences of forming pact like the exorcist, it is still a normal phenomenon. Of course, a human being of the first pact forming like Velvet is unavoidable from the faint. It is quite amazing that she stood against it that long.

The tiredness embraced all parts of her body, from her skin to her muscles, from her muscles to her bones, deeply invaded into the marrow of the bone. Feeling the limbs, the bones all become too soft and light to support the body again. It is like she becomes mug setting on the ground and she has no strength to stand up again.

Velvet Crowe is tired, she just lets herself to lead on the tree trunk behind her, sit on the ground and she wants to rest. She is sweating because of the high fever caused by the negative effect of the pact with Eleanor, which makes even a light wind would be very nice to her. The vision starts to become blurry and twisting as her eyelids slowly fell down as if she is going to enter a dream so soon.

When would things end? Or it has already ended? Now, Sorey has escaped with Zaveid here and Edna will be saved by Eleanor, things will be fine. She doesn’t want to care if Tartarus has the technique to harm their life. He can kill them at the very beginning, there are reasons that he doesn’t kill them. One is that they have a certain value to him, the second is that he is toying with them, then you don’t need to destruct the toy but you wait for them to destruct themselves.

She is tired and she is drowning in the confusion.

She wondered, maybe it is fine to faint here, her mission is completed, she obeyed the order but she failed it, that’s all.

Waiting for the moment she is out and she gradually relaxed, suddenly Velvet feels something
activated and a strange flow of mana spread from her neck to the whole body. The strange energy extends to cover her whole body from the Cervical vertebra, backbone, nerve. When she tensed up, it is too late, her body is no longer under her control. Being conscious or not, she doesn’t have extra strength to control her own body in either way.

She panicked and tried desperately to think about what it was all about. Then she got a conclusion - that is, this collar is actually a dog band that controls her. From the moment she is put on it, she has no freedom. Tartarus can take her freedom away at any time, he didn’t take it as he wanted to see human struggling. She couldn't help but feels herself being distant to her body, her consciousness, vision, hearing slowly be taken away by an unknown force. However, her mind becomes crystal clear at the moment she feels something warm just splashing on her hand and face, something non-dilute, wet but warm.

That moment, Velvet takes over the control of her own body again, what she has seen is terrible. She is scared and shocked by the situation.
Sorey fell down in front of her in a fatal state, his chest has been opened a deep wound by a slash. Velvet looks at her ejected-out gauntlet blade that tainted with fresh blood and the blood tainted on her hand.

She wants to tell herself that this is just another nightmare that she can’t wake from it. Then she feels the warmth from the blood split out from Sorey’s chest, no, she can’t escape from the reality. She has deeply hurt her friend or even her family.

She wants to cry, but she is not qualified to cry. Watching Sorey gradually lose consciousness, she was more panicked and guilty than the moment when her body lost control.

Sorey is looking at her, wanting to say something but it seems that he can’t speak a voice.

“......Sorry.” Velvet whispered and she guesses Sorey is dying soon.

Her emotions broke out, she escaped from the scene, didn’t bring back Sorey. Keep running, not aware of the malevolence surrounding herself, not aware of the heaviness of her body, she has her control back and she stops herself.

She guessed she killed her new friend, hurt the people surrounding her again like her existence keeps bring misfortune to the people she loved. She realized Eizen’s mind at this moment.
“eh…….Eleanor will turn into a dragon because of me…….” She is not allowing herself to bring more trouble to the people surrounding her, she cut off the pact formed with Eleanor.

She runs, still running, enter a deeper region in the forest.

“Surprised me, you take over the control by yourself.” the metal collar spoke, she shows no response.

“How do you feel, after destroying the things you wanted to protect?” The evil character continues to count her sin, as if to list her sins one by one.

It is not rebuttable, she is obeying him to protect Sorey, but now she has done the exact opposite.

“You killed the people who saved and accepted you when you have lost your arm.” He continued to say as if he knows it from the beginning. “Those people cried for their death.”

“You destroyed the place where you have been. Those people suffered from their lost of home.”

“SHUT UP!!!” Velvet is angered by the count of sin.

“You killed the person you originally wanted to protect.”

“Ah……AH------” The sentence completely broke Velvet’s final reason, the malevolence grows along her body, a blast of the dark particles flew around her.

“How ironic? You came to me because you want him to live.” He sneered at her, enjoying the despairing cry of Velvet.

“Embrace who you are, wherever you go, destruction follows.” Velvet covered her ears, she didn’t want to hear.

“Wherever you go, pain is brought.” But the voice just appeared inside her head, and she keeps thinking of those painful memories.
“Wherever you go, death follows.” She sees all the people who killed by her standing around her, watching. As long as the least she remembered their names: Teresa, Oscar, Shigure, Melchior, Niko and all other villagers, are standing there.

“Wherever you go, despair resulted.” She remembered all the despairing cry from all the daemon in every moment of consuming daemons with her claws, followed with their memories and despair.

“You were? No, never, you are the Lord of Calamity, an unwanted monster.”

“.......AHHHH!!!!!” Velvet completely hellionized into a werewolf, lost her mind, still, with her last thought to avoid bringing trouble to others.

People transform into different types of hellions based on their desire and characteristic. Dyle hated the guild betrayed him but he wished to be alive while being wanted at the same time, so he transformed into a lizard daemon, that he may cut his tail to escape in danger. Kurogane had his relentlessness to create a blade that can best the powerful Stormhowl, so he became the daemon of a suit of armor without physical body. He didn’t need to eat, drink or sleep to live, nothing can stop him from creating better blades, even his head was gone. The daemon armor symbolized his relentlessness that he could create a better blade than Stormhowl with his whole body as the material. Velvet wanted a hand to catch her brother and to save him, she also want power for revenge, so she got a daemon arm with other parts of her remain almost human form.

However, now she has lost her aim and reason fully. Her last desire is to avoid bringing trouble to her friends and have the therion power back to kill the man who made her did everything. Therefore, she transformed into a powerful werewolf that possesses the ability to run fast, to avoid her malevolence and misfortune stay in a place.

“Wonderful, my dear hound.” Stills, Tartarus got the metal collar to control her, plus her physical appearance as a wolf-form daemon, she really becomes his hound now.

“I shall embrace you. I want you to destroy the world for me. Now, bring the malevolence all over the world!”

Somewhere in the forest, filled with the crazy laughter of a man and the torn crying of the beast.

Chapter End Notes
A.N.

Never thought to write a draft with 6 pages of the notebook in my language….That right, this chapter almost wrote in my first language then translated. Sad to admit, sometime, I can’t think of any good idea when writing with English. It is the things happening at the same time as Ch29 and the late part is the rephase from Velvet’s side and it is not a very long and well-designed fight like others. I can’t find a proper reference for this fight when both side fight unwillingly and both seems not to fight all out. I have to design it without reference to other fighting scenes and at the same time enrich the mental description instead then at least it looks not too bad.

When you try to bear all the things alone, easily resulted in some mental problem. When Velvet returned from her despair, she had Laphicet there to support her. This is why I separate Eleanor from Velvet, so she didn’t have someone to talk to. It is hard to make Velvet despair and she tried to stay strong for 30 chapters( 2.5-month time in the story) in a state that she doesn’t have a final target but only temporary targets. Let's say all the dire situation I made in the story are somehow designed to get this result, to make it logical enough.

By the way, the last few sentences to break down Velvet’s reason are taking reference/copied from other works, can’t think of a better one after reading those sentences, but I added different descriptions instead.

This is the saddest part in the plot I bet, very important, to turn them oppose to each other without a big degree of OOC. It is cruel, but I promised to have a good ending in the beginning.

About the later theory of daemon form and desire, it is unsure as it may not explain the therion form. Like Medissa, who is said to be representing "conceit" and she got a Medusa-like form. Sure that one of the versions of Medusa's story has mentioned her conceit to her beauty and this triggers the anger of Athena and got her curse. Apart from this, the snake in the Garden of Eden(Bible) maybe also symbolized “conceit” that he lured Eve with the claim that the apple leads the same wisdom as a god. Maybe this is the reference for the Medusa/ snake form.

However, for Kamoana, she represented “greedy” and she presented in the form of Tree daemon……Hmm, tree or every plant compete with each other for the nutrients in the soil to live, so the tree form is symbolizing the “greedy” absorption of nutrient to survive……something like that???

You don't think I made Sorey die, do you? Reminder: Zaveid is also there.
On the edge of Magiland, an ordinary forest located near the town. It is only a general forest grows among there with animals living in it, but the things just occurred there made it special. It is evenfall now, the close of the day. The clouds hanging on the sky are embraced by red-orange lining and the forest becomes dark gradually. The burning color of the sky is expressing the sadness to the things just happened in the forest.

The wheel of fates turns in the sparsely populated area of Magiland. Someone falls into the abyss of despair, someone walks on the edge of life and death, someone waits for the fate that is about to
come on, and the desperate tearing screams resound through the forest.

However, it is not the time for sadness, they have little time to become intoxicated in sorrow, and they know it solves nothing.

The waiting one noticed the person she waited for may not turn back. Her heart is that hurt in both physical and mental, she can feel the tearing pain, maybe that is the pain Velvet bearing for a long time.

Eleanor knew Velvet always fights against the giant malevolence, like the time she just gained her consciousness, she saw Velvet nearly fall in her endless self-blame.

* The line of reality and dream is blurred after Eleanor sealed the shrine of tranquility by herself, but the situation in front of her is not something she allows herself to ignore.

Velvet fainted, with the cloud of malevolence surrounding her. Malevolence is toxic to the seraphim, but it is nothing when comparing to a friend who disappeared for a long time and she wanted to help.

She knows what to do, to help those people who are not good at saying out things, to save those people always bearing all the things on their own, to save those who trapped in their nightmare forever. She has studied a seraphic arte to tackle such cases, it is an ancient seraphic nearly lost, it will allow the user to enter the world of mind or say: dream so the user may find out the reason of the malevolence easier and it is a way seraphim use to tackle malevolence when they didn’t have the purification flame.

In the time the purification flame is non-existing, people and seraphim can only kill the daemon to tackle malevolence. They want to prevent people from turning into daemons, thus the seraphic arte was created to let the user entering dreams and stop the one turning into a daemon. However, it is not an effective method and it is a dangerous method. Since the people in that time rarely see seraphim, the users of the seraphic arte are mostly seraphim. Seraphim may absorb the malevolence from the person nearly hellionize, it is possible that the seraph turned into a drake before he activates the arte. Not to mention that altering things in the mind-world can be dangerous and evil, all those may be the reasons why the seraphic arte be long lost or say it may be a prohibited ancient seraphic arte. Now no one will know why the seraphic arte called ‘Alice’, maybe it is the name of a person that is very important to the creator of the arte.

This must be dangerous to Eleanor, she, a seraph, will absorb the toxic malevolence from Velvet, but right now she is the only one able to perform it.
Eleanor touches Velvet’s forehead with her forehead and launched the seraphic artes “Alice” to enter the dream.

It is the dream of darkness, the night is painted with scarlet, the moon is tainted with blood. On the edge of the cliff, someone is hanging on it and then fell down. Eleanor search the person while estimating the falling position and she met the amnesiac Velvet. It is the worst case she has ever seen, the person before her is full of injuries, on the edge of breaking.

The Malevolence caused her amnesia, she didn’t want to remember.

Eleanor can somehow hear the infinite voice of curse echo in the Abyss when she just entered the world, she is sure that Velvet is blaming herself.

Eleanor thought of the days of the ancient journey with the Lord of Calamity. She had heard that Velvet kept saying a cursing apology in her dreams. She knew that Velvet was always pretending to be ruthless and secretly blaming herself for countless times. She is undoubtedly a conscientious human being.

In such a case, she can’t do many things, the situation may turn better if she has time, but Velvet urged to save her friends, completely ignored herself after the recovery in memory.

Eleanor knows she can’t stop Velvet, she never succeeded, but she still tried to fight and stop Velvet, and she failed. She hopes to complete Velvet's current wish as soon as possible, she hopes this will help a little.

From the result, she temporarily stopped the mental breakdown of Velvet, so that she will not become a Hellion, but if it is left, Velvet will collapse again. Because the spirit of Velvet is actually very fragile and returned to the status when there is only the wish to achieve without the awareness of herself.

* 

Eleanor is not surprised if Velvet hellionized again, she just doesn’t want it comes true. Glad that at least purification flame exists in this Era, there is a way to turn her back.

Velvet must be hellionized because she cares about Eleanor, she cut the link so that the malevolence would no longer affect Eleanor. In the end, Velvet still didn’t aware of herself in the action but only act to prevent herself from causing further pain to her friend. She acted to give ‘hope’ to people after
she destroyed their home but she just can’t find hope for herself. Eleanor doesn’t know that Velvet didn’t plan to live at the moment, but she would still want to help her friend. Sad that she now loses contact with Velvet, there is one more person Eleanor is waiting for, that is Sorey. She never truly meets him, but only briefly knows about him from Velvet and she knows Velvet wants to save him. She guessed that this person must have a position in Velvet, and she thinks he can help Velvet, so now she at least wants to keep both Sorey and Edna safe for Velvet’s sake.

“Sorey is around here,” Edna announced while Eleanor is pondering to calm herself down.

“Why would you know?”

“We have formed a pact, without the external disturbance, I am able to sense him,” Edna explained. She was not able to talk to Sorey in the facility because of the external disturbance until now she can sense him.

“Ok, then let's go find him,” Eleanor stated while gaining her calmness again from the guess that Velvet hellionized.

“You have calmed down,” Edna commented as she thought of her early emotional moment for Velvet cutting the contract.

“If I can't calm myself, I won't be able to do something for Velvet.” Eleanor shows her determination in her eyes. Now Edna noticed, Eleanor has the same eyes as Sorey, maybe this is one of the reasons she didn’t hate her and Sorey. She didn’t hate the one shows and live with the determination which just like her brother did.

“Great, let's go, we don't have much time,” Edna stated, somehow, she can’t wait to see Sorey too.

“AUWOO..” a wolf howl shakes the forest, the sound of horror and sadness, the struggle of a hurt breast.

“We should be careful.” Eleanor wanted to figure out where is the breast when the cry is so sorrowful, but she managed herself to concentrate on Sorey. She thought it is the best, for now, it is not like she can achieve things alone.

The owl light painted with star sky, entering evening as the forest went dark gradually, Eleanor lights
up the surrounding area by a simple seraphic arte forming a ball of light so the may see the way in the forest.

“Sorey, are you there?” Edna shouted to confirm when she sensed Sorey inside her domain circle.

“Here!” It is Zaveid to be the one to respond. They may already expect something bad that Sorey is not able to make a sound now. They increase their pace to approach the source of sound, then they see Zaveid is there casting the healing arte and Sorey severely injured. From the bloodstain on Shepherd’s cape, it can tell there is massive bleeding, he is nearly dying.

“Healing circle!” “Resurrection!”

Edna and Eleanor immediately cast the healing artes to make a first aid. Seems the wounds stop bleeding, but Sorey is still in a coma.

“What happened?” Edna asked in an urge with a little anger. She believes Sorey is strong, and hardly be injured seriously, her impression based on the memory of Shepherd’s journey when she fought with him together for a long time with countless battle. Still, as a companion, she thought she can’t forgive the one hurt Sorey like this, he nearly died.

“We talk in the inn!” Even Sorey may not in danger, the forest is not a good place for the wounded to rest. Zaveid urged two girls to find an inn.

Zaveid carried Sorey on his back to the inn in Magiland that Sorey and Edna once lived in and started the talk in the living room outside Sorey’s room. It is a meeting of old friends, maybe they were not close friends, they still concerned about each other.

Zaveid and Edna is already close companion in many ways since they traveled together and Eizen told him to take care of his sister after all. However, the relationship to Eleanor is a bit strange to Zaveid and Edna. To Zaveid, Eleanor is just a girl traveled with the Lord of Calamity and got her determination to help the world, also an ally in a fight with Asura. To Edna, she only knew Eleanor through several times of ancient visits after Eizen’s last visit as a seraph. She knew not much about her, but she is sure that the girl is a selfless Shepherd.

“First. I am glad that you are safe, Eleanor. Where have you been? I haven’t seen you for 700 years!” Zaveid asked Eleanor for the contact loss. Even if they are more like strangers coming together by chance, Zaveid will concern for her. Hmm, let’s say most of his friends are meeting by chances since
he is a wanderer. The core reason he concern for her maybe that Eleanor is somehow a beauty.

“Yeah, sorry for that. Maotelus told me to protect the Shrine of Innominat that time, so as to isolate Velvet and Innominat from the disturbance of malevolence. Though I never thought you would care for me.” Eleanor explained.

“Hey, of course, I will care for a pretty lady.” Zaveid protested and Eleanor just rolled her eyes.

“I see, which is why you didn’t visit me and didn’t aid the Shepherd,” Edna added, thinking that Eleanor should try to contact with her and help Maotelus at the time Sorey was the Shepherd if Eleanor reincarnated into a seraph with her memory still here as she is a kind-heart idiot like Sorey. However, what she concerned about is Eleanor reincarnated into a seraph and still keeping her memory, it is really a rare case among humans and seraphim.

“Yeah, part of it is because I haven’t fully recovered my memory in the early days…..” Eleanor stopped suddenly and her expression turned a bit sad.

“Sorry that your brother had turned into a dragon.” She continued while memorizing what had happened in the battle she fought the Lord of Calamity with Zaveid, Rokurou, and Eizen there to protect Maotelus. She felt guilty that she was not able to stop the incident in front of her, she realized the sadness of losing a family member as she lost her mother too.

“…..So you know.” Edna is a bit shocked and she pretended to be calm.

“She was there, fight side by side with Eizen, so am I,” Zaveid stated they were both not able to stop it.

“The enemy, the Lord of Calamity was too strong, we both severely injured. Eizen decided to attack him all out even if he would turn into a dragon.” Zaveid added to explain the situation, it is the unstoppable situation for everything.

“That was how he became the dragon...That idiot…….” Edna sighed and silently accepted the fact that Zaveid always avoids to tell her.

“Anyway, it is not your fault, and...we killed Eizen finally.” Thinking that Eleanor may be worried and feeling guilty, Edna tried to comfort Eleanor and stated Eizen’s fate afterward, they ended his life, for the best to him.
“...........I see.......”

“Back on track, what is happening?” The discussion is held back to the initial target by Zaveid, to know why would things happening and why Sorey gets such damage.

“Sorey and I were caught by a man, who may be the current Lord of Calamity.” Edna started from their side of the story.

“Velvet ran after and is controlled by the man using Sorey and Edna and also the metal collar on her neck. She was ordered to destroy towns and cities to bleed malevolence. I was the seraphim arranged to work with her.” Eleanor added the things she knew.

“You worked with the malevolence bleeding stuff?!” Zaveid doubted what side is Eleanor when Eleanor just said that she worked for the evil side.

“No.....I...I just found myself worked with Velvet when I awoke, somehow I remember the order. Maybe I got hypnotized after my seal to the shrine broken.” Eleanor explained.

“Poor kid, lived in a chaotic age, reborn in the chaotic age and awoke in the chaos again,” Edna smirked at Eleanor for her bad luck. Since Eleanor was a human lived in the chaotic age after Abbey was destructed with Shepherd Artorius’s fallen, then reborn as a seraph in the age without Shepherd, now awoke in such bad condition. Now Edna starts to wonder if all the people survived under Eizen’s curse have a certain degree of bad luck themselves.

“But it is good to see Velvet again. I realized all things from Velvet and we planned to ask help to rescue Sorey and Edna. I went secretly to rescue, and Velvet continued…..to follow the order to destroy towns.” Eleanor somehow felt sorry for Velvet to let her alone in doing the dirty works when she is telling the story.

“We received a request in ancient words from a mysterious person to rescue Sorey, would that be…” Zaveid remembered a person wearing a robe and a hood to mask the face request them to rescue just by writing ancient letters on paper. The grammar and words written are in ancient style, so probably only Seraphim like Zaveid would understand the meaning, the other people can only guess. After all, it is the language 1500 years ago, it should be lucky if people still recognize some of the words. He already guess the person maybe Velvet at that time as the person knew Sorey is a friend to him. Now he asks about it, he won’t be surprised if the person was actually Velvet.
“Yes, she is Velvet. It is inconvenient to talk directly. Velvet said that the metal collar can record all the voice in the environment surrounding her. We don’t know if it possesses other functions.” Eleanor answered Zaveid with the reason behind it.

“So, I am rescued out, and so as Sorey, this is the plan, right?” Edna asked and she found no hint of the person who hurt Sorey.

“But, I saw Velvet attack Sorey.” At last, Zaveid raised his doubt, he stated the fact he saw, and it is very opposite to the plan and aim Eleanor just told. Edna is shocked by this message, she is sure that Velvet is not this kind of person. She should not want to hurt Sorey from the plan she has just heard.

“How......Maybe another order.” This is the only conclusion Eleanor got from the sudden fact.

“Well, she seems not using the full power, but the power became different when her eye turned red.” Zaveid tried to think of some suspicious points in the fight. Certainly, Velvet is a murderer to him, still, she killed for some reason, now he is thinking of the reasons behind her action and trying to defend her to persuade himself.

“At the end of the fight, after she severely hurt Sorey, she looked like in a calmer state and was shocked by the scene. She was sad and then escaped quickly.” Zaveid listed out more observations he made.

Now all the observation pointed to the conclusion of she was under control when she acted.

“Maybe that is why she cut the pact with me, she may be a hellion now.” Eleanor is sure that Velvet must feel guilty because of it, this ensured her early conclusion in her mind that she didn’t want to believe it.

“I see a lot of hardship for Velvet again......We shall plan and wait for Sorey to wake up.” Edna stated and everyone here agreed.

Then, a special guest comes suddenly, the door of the unit lent for Sorey opened, Eleanor and Zaveid are shocked by it. They didn’t get caution once they sensed the sacred air around the invader.
He is the Empyrean of Void: Maotelus, but he presents with his past seraphic appearance. It appears to be a virtual body constructed with mind and mana with the assistance of a seraphic arte since his real body is still a dragon and it is too large to enter a building and to commit usual talk with friends.

“So you come, Mao-boy,” Edna stated.

“Yes, finally I find Sorey. Never thought the situation will become that bad.” Maotelus worried.

“I tried to sense Sorey and Velvet’s position when I finished my work temporary but the sensation is blocked for certain districts. Until now I sense Sorey, but Sorey is now severely injured and I can’t see Velvet.” Maotelus added his current status.

“Maybe you overslept and your mind is slow.” Edna teased the Empyrean in front of her.

Maotelus is stunned by the attitude of the seraph just teased him and he pondered to recognize the girl before him. She has short blond hair and the blue eyes of the sea, just like Eizen. He chuckled and said: “You must be the little sister of Eizen, Nice to meet you, Edna.”

Maotelus remembered all the moment Eizen talked about Edna with pleasant, he really loved his sister, even if turned into a dragon. Maotelus knew Eizen is going to fight against the madness as a dragon until he is unable to do so. Now he hopes Eizen to rest in peace.

“It is my pleasure to be remembered by an Empyrean,” Edna smirked.

He responded: “I won’t forget the family of a friend, especially the one he treasured that much. Now let's wake Sorey.”

Maotelus cast a superior healing artes to heal most of the inner wound in Sorey’s body to wake him. The boy slowly flipped open his eyes, look around the room. He wants to figure out the situation.

“Everyone, and Mao- Laphicet!” Sorey is shocked by his friends and the Empyrean presence, especially the latter one.

“Long enough for us to wait,” Edna smirked.

“Now Sorey woke, I will tell what is all going on, but first, let me introduce myself. My name is Eleanor, once the companion of Velvet.” Eleanor stated introduced herself to Sorey, she is sure that Sorey and Maotelus are starved for the truth.
“Nice to meet you, I heard some of your things from Velvet.” Sorey greeted nicely.

“Oh? That’s my pleasure, what did she say?” Eleanor is curious about how Velvet comments about her.

“She said you are a crybaby exorcist who cries for others unfortunate, a really serious person, who always wants to help others,” Sorey answered from his memory.

“Eh…..never mind, anyway I will start now.” Eleanor facepalmed when she heard the word ‘crybaby exorcist’, seems that it is the first impression that would never be forgotten. She pretended to hear nothing and she tells the story again.

Eleanor told them about Velvet’s things that after Sorey and Edna are caught, and she added a sad conclusion that Velvet has hellionized with the fact that Velvet cut the contract with her. Both Sorey and Maotelus feel bad about it.

“Guess the enemy this time is strong enough to block my sensation,” Maotelus mumbled.

Sorey exclaimed: “That is bad, we should go help Velvet!”

“Yes, but how, see what you got this time. The first time we encountered Tartarus, we are immediately defeated. Now you got severely injured, even with our artes, you are not completely healed.” Edna warned Sorey.

“......Sure we are too weak now, and it was my bad to go out that late…… I am going to find all my friends together to face him.” Sorey felt bad for his temporary wrongly estimated self-ability before the incident, but he is determined to do it, he believed he can do it with his friends who passed all the trials with him in the past journey. He will take back the power of Shepherd, even if it means he would be the Shepherd again.

“Guess that is the only possible option we have, I will go with you.” Edna can’t think of a new option but to agree.

Maotelus confirmed: “I will go with you too.”

“What about your duty?” Edna teased.

“Velvet is more important than my duty. And if we don’t solve the problem, I doubt my duty can be fulfilled.” Maotelus answered.
“Selfish as always, Laphicet,” Zaveid smirked, he is glad to see the Empyrean just like the boy he knew.

“Eleanor, I am sorry that you got caught and brainwashed after the seal is broken. When I awoke, I can’t see you and the seal is already broken.” Maotelus apologized to Eleanor, he thought it is his responsibility to let someone capture his friends, Velvet, Eleanor and Sorey, all under the influence of the unknown enemy to him.

“Nevermind, I managed to get my free will back at last. If I am not captured, I won’t meet Velvet too.” This may be the only good thing Eleanor could say.

Edna asked: “Talking about to find others, how do you plan to do it?”

“Hmm, I don’t know the way to find Mikleo, he is possible to be in every ruin, but I think I have an idea to find Lailah. Laphicet, may you help me?”

“Sure.”

“Please sense Lailah’s position. She possesses the flame of purification by the oath she has taken.”

“I know, I will try.” Maotelus closed his eyes to cast a domain. It released a strong power that the people here can feel the energy like a strong wind.

“...In one of the ancient shrines of Musiphe.” Maotelus added that it is not the shrine located in Magiland.

“Right, we will go!”

“And we will wait for your good news.” Edna decided to keep an eye on the town. Zaveid has guild members like Beta to take care of, so they both decided to stay.
(Meanwhile on Alpha’s side)

Live, the original of Beta(Velvet) told him, to a clone of someone.

Not just for the sake of the world, live for his important people and live for himself are the meaning of his life now.

He saw that the Raven hair woman destroyed a village and then went rescue the villagers with no awareness of her health condition.

She is a person full of contradiction, he thought.

Before he formally met her, he thought that she is a merciless monster with the least human heart.

When he asked her for the next plan and the reason for the action, she watched the destroyed village not that far away from view and said: “I……. don’t want to destroy their home, but I have important friends to protect from Tartarus, I must obey. To save the people and decrease the damage I caused is the only thing I can do for the people.”

She is still a person full of contradiction, but now she sounds like a demon pray for hope to him. He is impressed, and he wanted to do something for her too.

Thus he came back to the facility to search the solution of the cursed arte set inside the people caught by Tartarus, for the people he loved.

He is fear of this place instinctively, as a Homunculus born here, he knows their father as an Omniscient being. However, he fights against his fear to keep moving. He will hack the information from the computer to ensure it is the last time he comes here.

He knows many things about their father. Tartarus is actually an existence similar to a seraph, a strange thing that he relies on the technology of humans. The last time he saw his kind, they all like hypnotized to worship for their father. Their father is too pride to have a companion to work with, but this doesn’t matter, he still gets his strong power, by the power of ‘worship’.

He immediately escapes from the facility after hacked the required information and released an AI with a virus into the facility network. He didn’t know if his father is watching him, he is just a failure to him anyway, so as Beta, his pride will let his guard down.
He will ask the ancient seraphim about his father and his artes.

He ran away from the facility and go to Magiland, the town of Mayvin. He hopes he may get some help there.

A girl stands in front of the gate of the town as if she is waiting for someone. She has ravel hair as that woman possessed but she has orange iris, so she must be Beta, his 'little sister'.

“Brother!” Beta is surprised and rushes to hug him once she sees her long lost brother is in front of her.

“Beta? Why would you be here?” Alpha doesn’t expect Beta to be here as the guild is located at the Lost Tower.

“I came here for a request, how have you been? I am worried, we can’t get any of your news.”

“I am sorry for that…..I have important things to do, have Zaveid been here?” He avoided discussing the topic when he is not ready.

“.....Ok, Zaveid is there, kind of running the guild now.” Beta stated with a lonely expression.

“...I promise to spend more time with you after I have done the things.” Alpha comforted Beta with a ‘promise’ that he may have said several times.

“Really? Thank you! I will support you anyway. As we are family.” Beta gladly takes it as she always does, not to make her brother worry.

Alpha smiled as he heard, laughed at his doubt of their relationship sometime before while Beta has never doubted about it.

“Have you been great?” Maybe he should at least hear out his sister’s condition as a brother.

“Sure, although we involved in a gang fight, we got two useful helpers helped us out. One of them is
inside, another one looks nearly identical to me but with golden iris.”

Now that’s a piece of surprising information to him.

“Oh? May I know more about it?” He will ask for more to know about his sister and that woman.

3rd pov

As a friendly ride on the silver dragon: the Empyrean Maotelus, Sorey’s team arrives at the destination that Maotelus mentioned.

Following the indication of Maotelus, they arrived at the core of the shrine. Unlike the Fire temple Igrain, the ruin was decorated by more curvilinear elements to show smoothness and elegance rather than the solemn atmosphere by regularity. The curve highlighted the life in flame, always changing in form and still keep burning to sustain. The Guardian beast in this temple is the Phoenix which is claimed to have the ability of rebirth. However, the ruin seems to be an ancient one and be abandoned that there are many hellions on the way.

In the middle of the temple, the stone altar surrounding by the lake of lava, a lady is sitting next to the altar. She possesses extremely-long silver hair with fluorescent pink tips, the gold headpiece on her head glittered by the reflection of the light of flame in the temple. She is wearing a long red dress with multiple tails of translucent patterns. It matches the appearance of Lailah the fire seraph.

The female seraph, Lailah, is staring into the burning silver orbs inside the sacred flame on the stone stove in the altar. They are similar to the earthen historia and all the people in the altar automatically involved in the memory of orbs.

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It is the memory of another fire seraph, once called Lady of the lake too.

Billions of years ago, seraphim descended onto the earth from the heavenly realm. They are here to prove that seraphim may live with human malevolence with the oath set between seraphim and become the new law of the earth. They didn’t know the law was changed just after they left their home, where they cannot turn back. The Seraphim in the heavenly realm has no plan to open the door again.
The 4 Prime lords, with a powerful leader who possessed the imperturbable power to clean the malevolence, became the Empyrean on the earth and will take their responsibility to bless and protect the land with their guardian seraph, the fire seraph is the guardian seraph of Musiphe.

They fought hard for the future they wished for, however, every time ends with the malevolence overflowed on the earth, then Innominat would wake up and turn the world imperturbable. All the creatures on earth, including human and seraphim, become unable to be upset or excited, the world is brought to the end and start everything again, all the history, language, the culture will be recreated in every time and then doomed again.

The fire seraph lived the billions of years, she has experienced countless times of loop, saw the countless time that her pact former fell into despair from hope.

“Vermillion, let’s save the world together!” Every time the pact former claimed to save the world.

“Sorry, I….failed.” every time, they ended with an apology.

The Seraphim can’t break the taboo, to tell the truth, they know it would only bring despair, and things continue as a loop.

She had died infinite times and reborn infinite times with all the memory inherited by the power of oath to a fire pedestal. At last, she was done with this, she gave up, she didn’t want to reborn again, so she finds another seraph that is not Lailah to take her position and she broke pedestal and stop the rebirth.

She left, went far away, wandering aimlessly. After she left eternally from her responsibility, the world entered into the Dark Age.

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Now the broken pedestal is in front of them, became the fire stove that contains the orbs of the memory of despair, lights up the area with the eternal flame, they still feel the sacred power within it.

Lailah is sitting still, she has a complicated feeling when seeing the memory of despair of one of her ancestors. There are many multiple generations of Lady of lake, she is just one of them. Before she took the position, she can see the wry smile of the former Lady of lake. She didn’t understand the smile at that time but she gets it now. She wondered, will she end up like the ancient fire seraph recorded by the burning orbs? To witness countless times that the Shepherd fell into darkness, again
and again, and then despair. In fact, she has already witnessed many Shepherd fell into despair too, it would be sudden for human to have the sadness and they will die one day, but it is forever to her to remember the sad memory, maybe it is why the ancient fire seraph fell into despair finally.

Maybe she could call the world to become better now, after Sorey’s action, the situation is improved. Still, she would see the deaths of the Shepherd and remember them all forever. How long will this last until the day comes, until she despairs?

“Lailah.” A familiar voice called her, the voice is spiritual and hearty, just like a youngster she once knew. She turned her head and see the boy is there, dressing with the broken Shepherd cape Alisha gifted to him and wearing the yellow feather earrings as always. He is walking towards her and lending out his hand.

“Sorey……” The boy didn’t fall into darkness, he lives to see her.

“I’m back.” He smiled, she missed it.

“Sorry to keep you alone, Lailah.” Then another longing female voice reached her with the approaching steps. A female seraph walks out behind Sorey and stands next to him, lends her hand to Lailah. She possesses the green eyes that similar to Sorey.

“Eleanor……” She recognized an old friend missed a long time ago.

She wondered if she is dreaming, she reaches out to catch but also afraid the everything will disappear when she touches.

They both catch her hand and hug together.

“It’s fine, we are here for you.”

They come out from the shrine after calmed Lailah.

“Lailah...you have worked hard,” Maotelus stated longingly.
“Yes, it has been a long time, Lord Maotelus.”

“Indeed. I wish you may rest but seems there are some accidents.”

They then explained the situation they are facing and ask for the news of Mikleo. Luckily, Lailah gets the news of Mikleo, so they go back to Magiland together to tell their friends about the good news.

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When Sorey gets back to the Inn in Magiland with Lailah, Eleanor, and Maotelus, they meet an unexpected person.

“......Artorius and Velvet??!!” Eleanor has the biggest reaction to the presence of Alpha and Beta.

“Alpha! You are here!” Lailah doesn’t mistake them as the fallen Shepherd and the first Lord of Calamity since she never met them in person, instead, she exclaimed as she found her lost Shepherd here.

“Now a lot of stuff to be explained again, huh......Alpha and Beta, care to explain it for me?” Zaveid sighed.

“Yes my ‘dear leader’..... I would introduce myself first, my name is Beta. Just, unfortunately, I have a face that nearly identical to Velvet. I am here as a member of the guild of Wild Wolf. We received the request from Velvet to rescue out Sorey.” Beta explained with a bit nuisance expression and she remembered she is recognized as Velvet several times because of her face.

“My name is Alpha, I am her brother.” Alpha pointed at Beta and stop.

“Umm? Just that?” Eleanor asked.

“We may explain to you later.” Noticing that Alpha doesn’t want to talk, Zaveid ended the topic.

Gathering the information from Zaveid and Lailah, Sorey knows that Alpha is supposed to be the present Shepherd, but he is lost tracked after losing all his companions apart from Lailah. He thought that his mental condition will grow malevolence, so he disconnected his pact to Lailah and left alone.
One thing surprised Zaveid is that Alpha and Beta are actually the clones from Artorius and Velvet respectively, but this doesn’t matter to him, he will treat them no difference. Seems that Beta didn’t know her identity as a clone of Velvet, so he requests the group to keep it a secret.

As Alpha still not willing to talk, they will focus on finding Mikleo for now.

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Mikleo POV

500 years passed, I adventured various ruins and I am exploring the new one now.

The vine spreads on the ladder leading to the depths of the ruins, entwined with weathered outer decorative columns. The murals engrave the history of humans and Seraphim. It is still the history of Shepherd, Shepherd’s sword guides the sentient beings, shining The earth. However, no matter which one remains, there is no record of their end. It is enough when I know how my dear Shepherd ends his journey and achieve his legend. I want the world to know about it, so I take the position of one of the writers of the Celestial Record to record his legend, and now he is the Grand Shepherd everyone talking about, guess he will be surprised by it when he awake.

The flaming lava is the thing which keeps the ruin working, here is the ruin of fire element for the Empyrean Musiphe.

The dazzling lava flows through the early tunnels, and the sacred coat of arms is engraved. Among the engravings is the huge statue of the robe that stands in the robe.

Suddenly, I felt something, turned my head, but nothing behind me, maybe my illusion, maybe just my bad habit that to check if Sorey is behind me. The time is not long enough to change my habit when I still believe that one day Sorey will come back. I have to admit that I am still not used to the day without him, exploring ruins alone is somehow lonely when Sorey is not exploring and discussing it with me there. Now I understand that what I love the most is not exploring ruins but exploring ruins with Sorey.

I continued on and reached the remains of the bottom of the water, which is the remains of the sacred city of Atlantis, which was recorded 10,000 years ago.

From the central skylight, the sunlight that is refracted and softened under the water is adopted, and the entire space is illuminated by the crystal reflection of the surrounding.

This ruin is complete compared to other ruins, almost no cracks. I look up at the skylight above my head.

Ah, how sacred. Even the soft sunshine is too dazzling for me, so I have to cover the light slightly
I walked to the stone monument under the skylight, I don't know what it is, but it is placed in the center and under the light source, then this is an important belief!

I touched the water jade embedded in the stone tablet with my hand.

Suddenly, the floor under my feet collapsed! This is a trap!

But I did not continue to fall, someone caught my hand. I followed the light source to confirm the appearance of this benefactor.

I saw his arm wearing Shepherd’s gloves, the glove that I found in the ruins of Sorey and I. Maybe I can't see the person in the backlight, but I know, this must be Sorey’s hand.

I smiled with relief, welcome back, my best friend. I caught the other hand.

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Sorey pov

I pulled Mikleo up, he would still be willing to do something in some places while completely did not expect this trapping mechanism.

We always met again, and we made a punch between us for a long time.

Then he suddenly hugged me deeply. The strength was so great that I am even twirled by the force. Damn, he just did the thing I wanted to do, he just has taken away the position to be the one rush and hug a friend. I planned to hug him first, but now he is hugging me.

“Sorey!” It is too excited for Mikleo to say a word, he can just say out my name for I am his best friend.

I can understand his mood because I have been looking for him too. It has been months but feels like years without him when I have been trapped for a certain period. I am not saying it is boring with Velvet, but it is just different when Mikleo is with me. The time I spent with Mikleo is irreplaceable as much as the time I spent with Velvet, everyone has a position in me. Although a lot of things occurred, I found Mikleo eventually, now he is in front of my eyes.

Now he is taller than before, as tall as me, wearing adventurous clothes and with longer hair, so different from the outlook I knew. It has been 500 years but the 500-year gap has just disappeared at the moment I meet him again, and I am deeply holding him back.
“It is really good to see you, Mikleo.”

“Me too!” He was moved to cry. I really feel sorry, I have been away for 500 years, that long he has to wait for me. 500 years may not be a long time to a seraph but it is long by human standard, and I decided not to leave anymore for him.

“If you’re here, then you must have succeeded, where is Maotelus?”

“Oh? Just behind me.” Then he discovered that a bunch of people was watching him and laugh while covering their mouth.

“It’s great, Mibo.” Edna is ruining the atmosphere by a smirk. She knows calling Mikleo ‘Mibo’ will irritate him but she just likes toying with Mikleo.

“Don’t call me that.” 500 years passed, and he is still the same Mikleo I know.

May the time never change our friendship.

We then quit the ruin together.

“So you are Seraph Mikleo as Sorey always say? Nice to meet you, I am Maotelus.” Maotelus introduced himself in his old seraphic form.

“It...It is my pleasure to meet you! Lord Maotelus!”

“Haha, you don’t need to be so nervous.” The little boy disappeared but a silver dragon appears in front of us once we quit the ruin.

“I understand you guys are sharing the happiness, but sorry, we have to be quick.” Maotelus is concerning Velvet’s case, he is worried about her situation, so he urged everyone to move fast by riding on him.
“Are we really permitted to ride on your back?!” Mikleo is surprised that he can ride on the Empyrean.

“Yes, you have my permission.” The dragon extended his wings and shade everyone from the sunlight, he permitted with a voice of penetration and tender.

“Although I want to explore more interesting ruin around here with you, there are more important things to do now, we will explain later,” I said with a serious face, I am the same with Maotelus that I want to help Velvet as soon as possible too.

So Mikleo nodded and rides on Maotelus back with everyone and they tell things to Mikleo on the way back to Magiland.

“If you are not the one who tells me that, I think it is unbelievable…..so you are going to rescue her….the Lord of Calamity?” Mikleo exclaimed his concern.

“Yes, and I believe she is not a Lord of Calamity anymore. I will prevent her to become one again if there is a trend.” I cleared my mind with determination, I am going to help Velvet.

“You have decided…..that is the Sorey-est choice. Fine, as your best friend, I will fully support you!”

“Thanks! Mikleo!”

Chapter End Notes

A.N.

Finally, I can start writing something happier, Lailah and Mikleo are finally here! I try to write the scene meeting Mikleo with reference to the Epilogue of both the anime and game version of Tales of Zestiria. I am really unconfident to write Mikleo as I know he is important to Sorey, I hope that I write it just fine.

I don’t want to spend too long time to find the past companion, so I group them in a chapter( ok this doesn’t change much for the time). Just find and group them together is not enough to defeat Tartarus. Since I just set so many damn kinds of stuff here, I am
going to destruct it one by one with the bad things I set in the future. However, now I get the problem to link Alpha into the group........
Chapter Summary

See the end of the chapter for notes
“Lailah, is something wrong?” Sorey noticed that I gazed at them but speak nothing, thinking if I have something to say so he asks.

“Nothing, I am just in a daze.” The view in front of me is so beautiful that I am dazed by the view.

“Alright, by the way. I have a question from a friend. Lailah, have you met a hellion called Leo? I heard that he is an artist that likes you very much.” Sorey followed by a question like a usual talk.

“......Hmm….Let me think, there was a hellion keep murmuring my name and we purified it, he disappeared with an expression with satisfaction.”

“That’s great.” Sorey smiled and continued to carry the talk with a relaxed tone.

This is an Era of miracle, like the dazzling circumstance before my eyes. Pure ex-Shepherd, my first friend, a friend lost contact for a long time, awaken Empyrean of Void, the present Shepherd I keep searching for in this Era and the other companions traveled with me all gather in front of me in an inn and have a casual talk. Maybe there are influences from the wood material used in the inn with the tender lighting here, even if the situation is not very optimistic, I think the scene in front of me is heartwarming, like all the horror and sadness several hours ago disappeared without a trace.

Time flies quietly, memory roams in it, and I was hurriedly looking for someone not long ago. 500 years passed since the Era Maotelus slumbered with Shepherd Sorey, I have a feeling that Maotelus will awake in this Era. In this Era, I form a pact with a boy called Alpha.

Maybe he is another fallen Shepherd, my heart has felt this person in such a way. From the first time I saw Alpha, I have a strange feeling, I felt he is similar to someone as if I have seen him before. I thought he was a tender person who fights for his family with his everything, but at the same time he is weak, he will despair because of his tenderness. It is such a detail first impression I received since I first met him just in this Era. It felt like we had met before we were born, but we have just met each other. Have I forgotten something? Even if I know that a seraph will not forget but only not willing to memorize. From the time I have met him, I felt like I lost something as if I had seen how horrible he would be after despair as if I had regretted not being able to stop him. I have a complicated feeling that I have relieved a long time ago, but now I can’t leave him here. I don’t know whether ‘they’ are the same person, and I don’t know when did I first meet him, who am I and who was he. It is a rare case to let me feel a wave in my mind calmed for a long time, although I have witnessed countless Shepherd’s brightness with their ends, my mind fluttered for this normal younger. Is that I am finally broken down after 1500 years or else? Why am I feel different from this boy?

I remember that we first met in the sanctuary, no one sees me but still praying as usual case there, he just walks to me calmly and casually while the eyes of masses fixed on him, he didn’t mind their eyes and talked to me. He said he wanted to find the medicine for his sister and he wanted to do something for the world. As if he knew how the world works a long time ago, his eyes are cold but calm. He may not possess the passion like the other Shepherds but I feel that the calmness will lead him a good Shepherd. Since he said he wanted to do something for the world and I am affected by my suddenly unknown feeling to him, I formed the pact with him and made him a Shepherd. At the moment I formed the pact, a clip of a strange but familiar family flashed in my mind.

We started the journey, but I felt it would fail at the start because he is just like a Shepherd I knew that he bears all the things alone, I felt like he hid something and I can’t make him open to me. However, we still lost in the end. Though we gathered companions we lost to the unknown enemy.
At that moment, his face told me that he is fearful of the enemy as if they knew each other. Just after we escaped and survived, he just cut the contract and escaped alone. He is too tender, worrying that I may be negatively affected by his growing despair, at the same time, he is too reasonable, he clearly knows that I am important to the world as the only source of purification flame before Maotelus awaken, he thought I must live, so he cut the contract.

As if something catches my heart like a claw, it is painful when I realized his decision. I thought I should be used to such parting but it is different this time. A voice deep inside my soul tells me to stop that I can’t let him to despair ‘again’, it should not be such end ‘this time’. I must go to find him, not allow him to do some stupid things and to stop him from ‘another’ despair. If I let him despair ‘again’, I can’t forgive myself. It is an unknown reason for the flame in my heart now burning bright, to let me feels life again.

When I think of this person, I feel like everything I knew burning, something deep in my soul is waking.

Just by intuition, I search for him in the ancient temples, and one day I found a ruin of ancient Lady of the lake. I saw my ancestor felt despair in the repeating fate of failure and lost, at last, she ran away and abandoned her responsibility which leads a disaster to the world. I felt sorry for her, and I felt the same way, clearly understood that I am trying to lie to myself that I am not tired. I know I can’t abandon the responsibility that easily but I am also afraid that I would be like my ancestor someday.

Surely, a long journey I have been. From the time Maotelus just became an Empyrean to the time he fell asleep, a long sleep. I thought of those very ancient memories of mine.

“You are Lailah...I had heard you from Edna. It's a pleasure to meet you. My name is Eleanor.” I remembered it is my first contact to human, Eleanor was the first human formed the pact with me.

I asked what did she want, human all have their wish.

She said: “I want to protect people from daemon, and find a way that Malakim, Human and Daemon to coexist.” It is a selfless great dream to wish.

I asked: “Wasn't Daemon dangerous? Why would you want them to co-exist with us?”

“I thought them unforgivable at first too, but then I got a chance to travel with a daemon, forcefully.” she smiled and answered, but I thought that should be an unpleasant memory.

“She became an important friend. In the journey, she shows me the possibility that Malakim, human and daemon can be coexisting, peacefully. We fight, we chat, we eat, we laugh and we live together. She said, we are all living in the world, rational or not, we have to deal with it.” She said longingly while unconsciously showing loneliness in her eyes. At that time, I thought this person is pure and be honest with her feeling.

“Maybe I tell you next time.”She gave a lonely smiled, maybe the daemon friend she said has gone.

Eleanor is the first few Shepherds to have such thought: to coexist with the daemon. She gave me a brand new concept to view those creatures living on the earth including daemon, seraphim, and human. The Shepherd after her all tend to stand against daemon, they thought daemon must be purified.

She kept her will until the end of her life, never despair. I became the lady of the lake then, passed on her spirit to the one after her and travel with countless of Shepherds to save the world until an era without Shepherd. I left the holy sword and went searching for the Shepherd myself, but the malevolence was overflood that my temporary vessel was not good enough. I fainted and be rescued
by a seraph. Surprised me that the seraph that rescued me is the reincarnation of Eleanor and still possessed her will, but it was a short period to a reunion. Soon we were separated by the presence of Lord of Calamity. Maotelus told me to wait for the next Shepherd and she went fight against the Lord of Calamity with her friends. I haven't seen her by then, I guessed she died again, I am sorry for that.

However, I still fight, live for our earnest wish for a better world where seraphim and humans can be coexisting.

The first pact former after the era without Shepherd arrived was a tender Shepherd, when he came, he already formed the pact with Maotelus, but he still needed my power to aid. We traveled together and he tended to bear everything alone. Her journey with him ended when he told her that he wanted a rest. However, he was actually going to build a village where humans may live with seraphim peacefully. His wish didn't come true by the force of war ruining his dream. Just by a second, the village set on fire, village exclaimed for help or were killed by the soldiers, his friend of Roland's general betrayed him. He fell in despair at last and cursed the general, the general then became the next Lord of Calamity. I got to know these things in the journey with the next Shepherd.

The next Shepherd was a cheerful boy with a dream to make the world where seraphim may co-exist with human harmoniously. He was inexperienced to all the things in the world, which made the pre-education very important to his perception of the world as a Shepherd. This time, I taught all the things as I could, make sure he won't bear all the things alone to despair. He did it, at last, sacrificed the time of himself to purify tainted Maotelus and share his resonance with the world to raise the next Shepherd. I didn't know whether it is the best, he didn't know what will he be after the purification finish and I couldn't think of a better option, I felt sorry that to make him come up with that option, after all, I taught him the way to be a Shepherd. “As long as I remembered my dream, I will still go for it.” He said to his friend before the last battle.

In the time he and Maotelus were resting in peace, I continually fight for our dream with many Shepherds. It is indeed a long journey and there is never an end.

May all those souls lost on the way of our dreams rest in peace, weep them with the stories of the Shepherds gone. The stories will pass on, the spirit will carry on, until the day our dream come true. The numberless time I sit beside the pedestal of the sword, waiting for one arrival. I can never forget the memories with the lost soul, I can never rest until our dream come true.

“Lailah.” a cheerful and hearty voice called, makes me think of Sorey immediately.

“Sorey……” A warm touch in my heart fills my eyes with tears.

“I’m back.” The boy in front of me smiled brightly and warmly like a sun.

“Sorry to keep you alone, Lailah.” Another female voice called after several steps, the voices both too nostalgic to me and I can’t stop my feeling arise.

“Eleanor……”

This day, I met both my dear long lost friends, they both had a long-forgotten cloistered sleep. They lend a hand to me together. I reach my hand to them but wonder if this is a dream that it would disappear in the next second.

I never expect they still live. Is it just dreaming of my heart?
Now I'm crying don't know why.
Where do all the tears come from?
“Lailah…” Sorey shocked a bit while called my name longingly from his heart. It must be rare to see me filled with tears and I can’t dry up the spring of my tears.

“It is fine, we are here for you.” They both catch my hand and hug me to calm me down. I know, even if they are not here, they will be in my heart, become one of my light. I held them with my arm, erased my doubts and horrors. What I wanted is the future we dreamed and fought for together, and I will move my feet for our faraway ideal while grip tightly onto these certain bonds we built.

In this Era of miracle, Shepherds in the past and present gather with lords, my lord, Maotelus, is here again to fight with us. Then the Shepherd I have found finally presented, I’m glad that Alpha hasn’t despaired yet and somehow determination return in his eyes. I have forgotten that how we escaped from a bunch of dragons turned from our friends by the ‘Lord of Calamity’. We just ran and survived but his heart has broken from that time. I guess he has not fully recovered from the lost, neither I am. When I try to talk to him, Zaveid just said it would be fine to let him do the job.

Here we gather and we talked for the after stories, sharing the joy and sadness like the old days. Such a moment of such peace in my long tiring journey, it must be a longing of my heart.

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3rd pov

At night, Alpha sits in front of the bar desk, gazing at the glass with only ice left in it. Then the bartender gives him another cups of Whiskey with a clear sound of ice and glass hitting each other.

Alpha: “I didn’t order for one more.”

“It’s my treat, boy,” Zaveid stated with a bold and generous tone.

“.......Zaveid.” Alpha noticed the presence of Zaveid.

“What makes you troubled?”

“A lot.”

“Say it, I have plenty of time.”

Alpha looked at Zaveid, he knew that the man in front of him is reliable, he has asked him for a favor to take care of his ‘sister’ too, and he thinks he is asking too many things from this man.

“Why are you hesitating? I say I don’t mind at all. It is fine for a boy to rely on the older one.”

“I am already an adult.” Alpha insisted like a kid.

“It doesn’t matter. Besides, your actual age is six years old.”

“...! How did you?!”

True, Alpha and Beta came to him with the appearance of 10 & 6 years old respectively, but that was the time they just escaped from the facility, so both of them were just nearly baby from the test tube but possessed the knowledge to the world.

“I heard it from Eleanor, you guys are clones, right?” Zaveid said while remembering the words from Eleanor.
“......Did Beta know it?” Alpha became a bit nervous when concerning his ‘little sister’.

“No, she didn’t, and I don't plan to tell her. Besides, this doesn’t matter to me.”

“Doesn’t ….matter?” Alpha doubted.

“You are just a living entity in the world, like us.” Zaveid ensured with a firm tone that comforted Alpha a lot.

“......You said the same thing as the original of Beta.” Now Alpha started to remember the raven-hair woman who full of contradiction just said the similar words as Zaveid.

“You mean Velvet? Have you met her?”

“Yes, she told me to live and take responsibility as a brother.”

“So she will say something like that......Can't agree more, to think how long you have left your sister.”

“Yes, it is a miracle that we live until now.”

“What do you mean?”

“A fast production product like us are not expected to last long, 6 years is a long time already.”

“......Then, live the time as much as we can.”

“Yeah, I will search a way to strengthen her life too but one thing I must solve is a seraphic arte planted inside us. Our father may execute us at any time, I guess this also planted inside Velvet and her friend.”

“You don't need to find it alone, we may help you. So, mind explain in detail?”

Alpha explained it in detail and with the supplement of his works in the facility.

“Great! Let's get the work started! “ Zaveid praised as he listened.

“Huh? How?”

“First, let's tell everyone about the news you get. Oh, looks like the ex-shepherd has got his friend back.”

“Ex-shepherd.....Sorey was the Shepherd in the tales?”

“Right.”

Now Alpha eyes filled with admiration and respect.

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With the aid of Zaveid, Alpha managed to be accepted in the group. Now everyone knows about the situation. They will go tackle the set arte in themselves.

“Execution arte...Can't believe such evil arte was developed among seraphim.” Eleanor said.

“There are various types of seraphim, just like humans,” Lailah said.

“Yeah, but the Seraphim I know are all kind!”
“How about Symonne?” Mikleo thought of the female seraph set numerous illusion traps to stop them.
“I believed she has her kindness too.”

“But it is not the case for Tartarus.” Alpha said.

“So he really is a seraph......”Sorey murmured.

“You noticed all the time?”

“I somehow noticed. He acted like a long life being and he judges human.”

“If this is true. I am disgusted that I am in the same species as him.” Edna thought of his disgusted attitude.

“Maybe we should find a supercentenarian seraph to ask about.” Alpha suggested.

Everyone gazed at Lailah.
“Oh my, look at the brilliant star sky~”

Then they looked at Edna.
“What? That's rude, and I haven't left my home for a long time, you should not expect me to know.”

Then they gazed at Zaveid.
“Glad to see youngers rely on me, but I am just a troublemaker, I know nothing about this.”

Ok, the place filled with silence until the second-young seraph speaks.
“Maybe I know one, her name is Grmiore. She reads a lot of ancient books.” Eleanor suggested.

“Let's give a try, where is she?” Sorey said.

“Last time I met her in Meirchio and I asked a favor from her, but that is already 700 years ago......” Eleanor remembered she let her take care of Rokurou.

“At least we get a direction,” Edna commented.

“Agree, let's go together.” Lailah clapped her hands to cheer up.

Then everyone agrees to go to Meirchio to find Grimoire.

On their way to Meirchio, a terrible howl sent.

“AWROO-----” The group tensed when they hear the howl.
That's the same howl as they have heard in the forest of Magiland. The sad and torn breast howl, such heartbreaking voice to let Sorey feel like the wolf is crying.
It also a possibility for a hellion attack, the group all prepared with their weapons.

Following the reaching brush sound of plants, strong wind blow them away like a storm. A giant wolf is running pass them and then turned its head to them.

They met a giant wolf, no, a werewolf but it chooses to act like a wolf. It is covered in black furs like the color of Velvet’s hair and coat, its limbs have metal attached on and it possesses golden iris.
“No......”Eleanor moaned when she recognized her friend immediately.

This is an unavoidable battle.
Chapter End Notes

A.N.

Very unstable word count that it returned around 3000 again this time.

I am not familiar with Lailah, it should not be that sad but I let it became sad in the previous chapter. That may be kind of OOC. I am not making Eleanor into the main character either but just supply the information I told in the side story. I am trying to connect Lailah to a character with the reincarnation stuff, all the special feeling to Alpha is because her memory as Celica/Seres awaken a little and it reacted to Alpha who is a clone from the Earthen Historia. Sorry that no bad puns...( still studying......).

The problem of Alpha seems solved but it can be more reaction with Beta....hmm, but I still figuring the way to write them as I can't write 'Eizen and Edna' well either.

P.S. Reference lyrics from “My long forgotten cloistered sleep”.
Ch.33 In the Abyss of the realm

(warning that this chapter may be full of filthy logic and reason, please be careful with the mental contamination)

The beast roar in a harsh twisting voice as if it could tear its own throat, the voice is filled with sorrow and anger. In the forest not a soul in sight, no one hears or understands the meaning behind the roar, no one knows ‘who’ is roaring despite there is only one left in the forest. This is the story on another side after despair and craziness crossing through each other like a spiral. What lies beyond the end of the spiral? Would it be the darkness where the craziness engulfed the despair or another exit of light?
“Wonderful, my dear hound. I shall embrace you. I want you to destroy the world for me. Now, bring the malevolence all over the world!” Tartarus laughed when he finally got this done, still, the ‘beast’ is not going to listen to him easily, it is mindless, or pretending to be mindless.

“It doesn’t matter if you are not listening to me, I will take your body instead. Spirit release, arte activate-- ‘Alice’.” Tartarus doesn’t surprise with the fact that the beast doesn’t listen, he planned to take its body from the beginning.

Tartarus is troubled that he can’t release malevolence and he can’t be turned into a dragon. All the clone he produced doesn’t possess emotion since it is not taught to them except the two escaped. Although the external malevolence may let them turn hellions, it would not be a strong hellion that may release a large amount of malevolence since they have no emotion. Yet, it is a different case for Velvet. It is completely an accident that Tartarus woke in the earthpulse and then found the hidden place that sealed Innominat and Velvet with guardians there. He gained the memory of earth about the story of Velvet and Arthurius and so he basically knew a lot about Velvet, he may easily turn her into a hellion or lead her to release malevolence if she awakes. Let’s admit that though he knew all things about Velvet, the plan still not worked normally when Velvet restrained her malevolence very well.

Now Velvet is turned into a hellion, he enjoys to taint the land himself whether than ask the other to do it, therefore, he decided to take over her body in full control with the mental invading arte. To the hellion turned from despair and guilty, her mental state is empty enough to welcome the invader taking over the ‘place’.

To fall, to collapse, to tumble down the world of void. Here is the despicable interloper roughly invaded and dived into the One’s deepest part in the sea of spirit. There is a space of void, no cliff, no moon, no forest or any other things Eleanor has seen in Velvet’s mental world, nothing exist here, the scenery is filled with emptiness and darkness. This is the absolute calmness of void, not a single breath of life or light of hope to be felt in the space, this is the abyss of despair. The sudden invade of the interloper waves the space like waves on shallow water, in the moment his leg touched the ‘ground’ in the space, waves appear. A woman is lying on the water like a dead body, there is no lightness in her eyes.

“Do you despair?” The interloper Tartarus teased.

“.............” The woman doesn’t answer, only gaze at the front without focus, her eyes are not gazing at anything.

“My bad, indeed, I know the answer,” Tartarus smirked as he received no response.

“You want to achieve something for the other, but it is not possible. You can’t gain anything, or achieve anything or be anything. You can’t, because you are the void, the calamity, you only know to destroy.” Different from usual time, Tartarus said the words out of pity but not as a teaser, a more tender tone.

“But you do well for me, so here are the little presents from me. Take it, Velvet.”

As Velvet is not hearing, that is why Tartarus allows himself to speak with a tender tone. As Velvet is not looking at anything, he allows his eyes filled with empathy. He just can’t let himself to reveal his true feeling to her, from the day he saw her story, he has the feeling that this person will be the same kind as him. Yet, the people around her are the obstruction for her to find the ‘true self’, so he found ways to remove the constraint.

“Ecila.” Tartarus activated another seraphic arte that invade the space with the view of Scarlet Night,
painted the empty world with his color without permission. From now on, this world became his world and Velvet became the outsider.

“‘If it is you, maybe you will realize,’” Tartarus said while pushing down Velvet into the water below and frozen the water there.

‘After seeing his story, she will be his companion on his side.’ Tartarus thought when he decided to show his memories to Velvet that he once not allow Sorey to keep peeking in.

Velvet doesn’t care or want to see Tartarus’s memory like Sorey since she never tries to communicate with him. She thought it is impossible to communicate with him, but Tartarus just forcefully shows it to her, so Velvet sees memories of Tartarus from his childhood period.

He was a child with a strange appearance among people, he possessed red hair with a hint of black and red eyes. The surrounding people in that time always talk about him as the presence of curse and misfortune because of the external characteristic. Plus he had a single-parent family with his mother, people saw the family as forbidden and unfaithful, they are not welcome in the village. Since Tartarus helped the village in some way that they still had value to the village, they kept the family in the village and there is never an assurance that the village would not sell them out when it is needed.

Just like how the village Aball sold Velvet’s family out when the bandits came to the village, the villagers in Aball didn’t believe in Arthur as an exorcist at that time. For their home at the outermost location from the village, the easiest to be sold out to defend the whole village, they chose to sell them out. There is not even a single guilty glow inside their heart, they think it is correct, to sacrifice the least to save the whole, the proof is that there was no one in the village turned into a daemon.

The boy kept helping the village with the power he born with, sarcastic that this power is more powerful proof to the villagers that the boy is born with a curse. Therefore, his family was sold out to bear the responsibility of the failure when the village was using them to seek wealth from the king. The people at that time were superstitionists, in the name of punishing Evil by just letting Tartarus’s family bears the name of Evil and burn to die, the villagers seek pity and blessing from the ‘God’ and hope that would suppress the anger of ‘God’. They heard no pray from the ‘sinners’ when they deeply believed that the existence of Tartarus and his mum are the ‘sin’ of the ‘sinners’.

His mum died in the ‘flame of justice’ but he survived thanks to his special strength born with him, the ‘judgment’ by the villagers triggered him to activate a seraphic arte to burn down the whole village. The village turned into barren land in a night, guess that the people thought it was some cursed land so no one dares to come since then. Tartarus was not freed but tied on the cross he chained because of the judgment.

Unknown the time flow since then, a rare visitor, a seraph accurately, arrived. He is a seraph possessed red iris and red hair with a hint of black just like the Tartarus. The seraph found the boy was interesting that he can see him while most of the human has low resonance, and the boy looked like him in the physical characteristic while the boy also knew about the name of a female he just spoke. Tartarus thought the seraph has a bad attitude but he must agree that his appearance is very similar to him as if they are family. Whether they have a relationship or not, out of his own interest, the seraph freed and took Tartarus away with him and brought him to the heavenly realm.

“Here is the heavenly realm, boy.” The seraph said.

“..........”

Then he got the chance to enter a place very different from the earth, style or atmosphere, both too different from what he knew from the ground realm. The place called ‘Heavenly Realm’ is full of
brightness, architectures here are mostly in white and golden color shining with light reflection. It is surrounded by holy breath as if the country of ‘Gods’. People lived here dress strange that their clothes are kind of a unique folk custom with similar patterns on the clothing and most of them are wearing gold jewelry. Passengers possess various fresh color in their eyes and special hair color change with a hint at the end, those are the hair and iris colors that humans don’t possess such as light blue, orange, green, purple and red is only one of those colors. For the first time, the boy thought he has found his kind in a place but he didn’t notice the strange sight from the passengers.

“Surprised?”

“.........” The boy doesn’t respond but his eyes honestly reflect his excitement.

“I haven’t asked for your name, boy. My name is Chaos, what’s your name?” The seraph possessed red hair and iris just as he asked.

“....Tartarus.”

“What a boring name!” The seraph smirked.

Tartarus had no idea why the seraph brought him to such a place, but he was thankful to him despite the seraph is such a teaser.

“See, that the child between me and the human I have mentioned.” Then Chaos introduced Tartarus to his friend as ‘his dad’.

“Chaos, that is an unforgivable thing. That thing is not allowed to exist…..” The friend of Chaos looked at Tartarus with sadness in eyes as if he is sorry for his existence. Of course, Tartarus noticed that as he is sensitive to such things to survive as a ‘human’. In the end, he is not accepted in this place either. However, he still tried to survive in this place as a ‘seraph’, he paid effort and successfully joined the government of seraphim in the heavenly realm.

In that time, the seraphim hadn’t descended onto the earth but only observed their activities to measure the effect of malevolence. The situation maintained until the arrival of Tartarus, his existence changed the view to humans negatively, boosted the group of seraphim who extremely disagrees to coexist with humans as the evidence of impurity of seraphim. However, there is still a group of seraphim who insist it is possible to coexist with humans despite the release of toxic malevolence to the seraphim. To solve the issue of coexistence between seraphim and human, someone proposed the experiment that to send part of the seraphim to the earth to learn coexistence with humans.

However, when the day to start the experiment of coexistence, Tartarus was descended with the participants as the observer when he didn’t ask for it.

“You are the observer for this proposal, let’s see how it ended up with. Oh, yeah, you have no right to refuse. Dirt will return to dirt, you won’t earn a proper position here but to doom with the human.” The president of the government said to Tartarus with a clear stance to hate the existence of humans and Tartarus.

That day, a large number of seraphim descended on the earth and daemons and dragons started to appear since that day. Also, it is the day Tartarus is refused by the Heavenly Realm to exist in their place, just like the existence of Lord of Calamity which is not acceptable by people.

Tartarus hates everything in the world especially humans and seraphim and he waited for the world to doom. Yet the doom never comes because Innominat cleansed the malevolence in the world. Therefore Tartarus started to find a way to doom it instead. However, his plan was stopped by a
human called Claudin. At first, Claudin tried to communicate with Tartarus just like Sorey, but his words didn’t reach Tartarus since he closed his heart and not willing to listen.

“I had hoped that we can understand each other, but it appears not. Sorry, it is the only way to stop you.” A man standing Tartarus said, like saying words to a friend, it looks like that he casts an exorcist arte.

“Damn it! I will break the seal one day! That you will regret not killing me. Claudin!” Tartarus cursed at Claudin.

“Maybe, I hope there is a person to stop you at that time then. Goodbye, my friend.” The man who is called Claudin says with fondness like a farewell to a friend. Claudin has the oath ‘not to kill’ so he chose not to kill Tartarus but seal him underground instead. At the same time, he hoped there is someone to realize and talk to him in the future.

“Claudin!--------” However, Tartarus didn’t notice that and he hated Claudin for that. Now the seal is broken and Tartarus awakes in the world again.

“Velvet, I told you that it is not good to oversleep,” a familiar voice said beside Velvet’s ears, a low, hoarse but somehow tender female voice. It is a voice Velvet could not forget--Seres’s voice.

It is a very long time hasn’t heard Seres’s voice. Velvet thought it would not be possible to meet her again since the last conversation in the dream, seeing her memory in the earthpulse was already a surprise. Seres should have gone, that was Velvet’s thought, but she is here again now…..No, it is just another illusion of her thinking towards her in the brain, though she thought that she is cold-blooded enough to not miss her again.

Opening the eyes, as expected, Velvet sees a woman with tied red hair with white tips, dresses in a twin-tails white dress featured in butterfly wings in black and blue colors. The woman is watching Velvet with her red iris.

“Seres? Why are you here?” Velvet asked when sat up from the bed. She is apparently in an empty space with a door and a bed beside a closed window.

“Why ask if you have an answer?” Seres smirked while they both knew that they just want to talk a little longer.

“I am a fragment of Seres left in you mixed with your think of Seres and I will disappear after anyway. Yet, I can’t let go of my little sister, you are getting me a headache.” Seres said a troubled expression, and there is a moment, Seres turns Celica again.

Although Seres denied herself being the same person as Celica but their core is still the same. If Seres hasn’t loved Arthur as Celica, she would not hate Artorius in depth as Seres. Hatred is caused by love, and indifference is the opposite of love.

Heh, Velvet wants to say ‘5 more minutes’ as Seres comes to wake her. It has been a while she is not being affectionate since the person is no longer there. But then she knew it is not time to sleep yet when Seres comes to wake her.

What can be done after ‘wake up’? Seems nothing left to be done now.

“You are not here only to wake me, right?” Velvet asked while looking at Seres’s eyes.
“Correct, I am calling you to defeat the invader together.”

“Invader?”

“You should have known when you have finished watching his memory enforced to you. The body will be taken away. If Eleanor has not casted the same seraphic arte and left the purification flame here before, this body may be taken away in a second without such long resisting time of mental resistance.” Seres continued.

“That jerk is here…..Right, I can’t lend my body to him again.” Velvet stands up from the bed and walks towards the door in this ‘room’.

“Velvet, I should tell you something before we go face him. Unlike the previous you met Eleanor in this mental world, you will feel pain and you will not remember it this time no matter how the fight turns out. Since you are seen as the outsider under Tartarus’s effect and you are a hellion now.” Seres stated.

The words implied that no matter how things turn out here, it is not going to change the fact that she despairs and became a hellion in reality, and she can’t take back the control of her body that easily either.

“Heh, I don’t care. Why would I want to remember myself, it is silly and unnecessary.” Velvet waved her hand and opened the door.

“That’s it, that’s why it could be brought back. This existence of the small part of Velvet with the hope hasn’t engulfed by the despair may bring the chance……” Seres murmured when Velvet has left the ‘room’.

CRACK---

The flame spreads through the cracks while it burst the ice ground out. There are two people standing inside the circle of the flame, it is Velvet and Seres. Velvet stands slightly humpbacked, and the light still doesn’t return into her eyes, but at least she is standing.

“You always give me surprises,” Tartarus smirked and turned to the person. He doesn’t expect Velvet to awake and break the frozen seal. He narrowed his eyes when seeing Seres since he doesn’t expect to see one more person in this mental world, but then he decided to ignore her and talk with Velvet.

“Don’t you think that we are similar?” Thinking that Velvet has seen his memory, Tartarus asked, somehow wishing Velvet to agree.

“……In which parts are we similar?” Velvet smirked coldly.

“All! We are both not allowed to exist in this world! You can’t stand this world just like me, can you? We are the same kind! We can end the world together!” Tartarus speaks with the crazy tone bring up his emotion.

“That’s the reason why you do all kinds of things? To draw me into a picture as same as you, huh?” Velvet isn’t moved by a single word, they are all just nonsense to her. She isn’t going to hear that and she strikes directly straight with a clockwise spin to Tartarus with her ejected Gauntlet Blade coating with flame.

“You are a Lord of Calamity, aren’t you?” Tartarus blocked her blade with a seraphic arte barrier and blinked.
“I am.” Velvet said while continues to attack with a series of rising gauntlet-blade and boot-blade slashes to with a diving thrust to finish her arte.

She is not going to deny it as she feels guilty again for what she did even if she has killed people indirectly and destructed fewer towns in this era then that when she was a Lord of Calamity.

“Then you should hate the world, the world brings you misfortune and it doesn’t accept your existence.” Tartarus is still trying to persuade Velvet to be his side. That is something he doesn’t understand about himself, maybe he really wants someone to be his kind so he would not feel himself so strange to the world.

At the same time, he continued to cast the barrier to counter the attacks, so he can only see sparkles of slashing when the barrier encountered the attack.

“Seres!” Velvet shouted as she turns to slash at Tartarus immediately after her previous arte. Tartarus blinked as he keeps ignoring Seres in the beginning while talking and fighting with Velvet.

“Here you go.” Seres casted ‘Flare Vortex’ that she created a tornado with flames rising from the ground, burns and flows Tartarus into air.

“Take that!” Velvet activated her ‘therion claw’ and swings it upwards with red streaks behind, it knocks Tartarus to great beyond. Then the claw returned normal hand with bandages, Tartarus slowly sits up from the ground.

“That’s the difference between us. I only hate one person in the world and he is gone, I only destroyed the world by the way. I am aware that destroying the world is wrong but I chose to perform the act.” Velvet understated her thought as a Lord of Calamity.

“.......Such a dabbler as a Lord of Calamity. This must be something wrong in your mind!” Tartarus created numerous blades of wind flying around Velvet to slice her and Seres tries to dismiss the wind blades with fireballs.

“I don't need your instructions to act like a Lord of Calamity. Besides, even if we were the same kind of people, we won't be on the same side. You are going to take my body, aren't you? Then we will never be a companion if you don’t accept or trust a person.” Velvet claimed coldly while jumped and torn the surrounding air by her claw and unleashes her gantlet blade with blue flames.

“......Your reaction was similar to me, your experience was similar to me. Why aren’t we the same kind?” Tartarus disagreed while releases a light projectile into the ground.

“It is simple. We made different choices.” Now Velvet is charing at Tartarus in the air, prepare to strike him again.

“How is that different? You burn towns and killed people again, your core isn’t changed, just like me.”

“And I am telling you that we are different in the core. You thought what you do is right but I thought what I do is wrong.” At the moment Tartarus doesn’t move and Velvet may strike him to create a fatal wound in the next second.

“Ridiculous......Very well, to spread malevolence in the world, shaping the world I want, a world will accept me. If you won't be on my side and won't give your body, I will take it by force.” Tartarus once again returned his calm tone.

Admitting Velvet’s word, he understands that he is alone. He is trained to not trust anyone by the
environment so he won’t accept anyone easily. He will not have a companion if he doesn’t accept and trust anyone but only using them, and he is not going to give his trust to anyone even after knowing it. That’s why even he actually wants someone just like him to be his companion, he will not have one. That’s also why Velvet is different from Tartarus as she has companions even if she doesn’t realize it.

“Velvet!” Seres shouted when she just noticed what is going to happen, but she can’t help her this time. She can’t push Velvet away from the attack like the last time when they encountered a drake in Titania, Velvet is not going to be happy if this happens again anyway. It is nearly a zero-distance attack to Velvet that it doesn’t give time for both Seres and Velvet to response, not to mention that Velvet can hardly change her posture in the mid-air.

At the same time, a series of golden chains emerge from beneath Velvet before she actually struck Tartarus, they directly strike her with the burst of power. Some of the chains just slash Velvet to create small wounds, but some of the chains cause serious assault that they pass through Velvet’s body. It is very easy to predict Velvet’s position when she is attacking Tartarus, he prepared a serious assault to her. Now the golden chains seriously hurt and chained Velvet onto the ‘ground’.

“-----!!” Velvet tried to stand from the ground against the great pain brought by the sudden assault, but she got an immediate stamp of Tartarus foot, the stamp of foot tramped her shoulder bone and the chains still tightly bound her onto the ground.

Seres unleashes great Calamity flare and scatters many pieces of paper to conjure up a tower of flame. The power is not strong enough to send Tartarus into the air as she mentioned herself as a fragment of Seres so she doesn’t have the same power as the true Seres does, but it is enough to distract Tartarus’s mind away from Velvet and makes him dismissed the arte of ‘Deceiving Pummel’.

“……..Discord!” Tolerating the pain, Velvet said while turns her left arm into a daemonic claw and swings it to slash Tartarus to push him back a certain distance. Then she immediately stretches the distance between Tartarus and her with a jump.

“........You took away my last things in the world now, and at least I won’t let you have my body again this easily.” Velvet exclaimed. Thinking of the time she ‘killed’ Sorey, Velvet hates Tartarus so much that she can’t let him take her body again. To her, the man trampled her dignity, making her do things she doesn’t want to do, took away her friends which is also the reason bearly tied her to live, and the man turned her into a monster again. She despaired and is urging herself to die but not happen when this man can have her body. At least, she is going to decide how this body ends up with but not be taken by him.

Meanwhile, silver slits start to appear in the ‘sky’ and the flame invades and spreads through the cracks, seems that the world starts breaking when there is silver flame slowly burns down ‘the view of Scarlet Night’. The red sky is slowly engulfed and lighten up by the silver flames, painting the space with brightness and peace, turning the space returning to its original tranquility. During the destructing process, some ‘fragments of the view’ burning with the silver flames fell down from ‘the sky’ like aerolites, the place is the endpoint of the meteor shower, the burning fragments fell on the ‘ground’ and just separates Velvet and Tartarus, the flame starts to melt down the ice field here.

“The kids are making it happen.” Seres murmured while quickly comes and heals Velvet by her seraphic arte. She thought that may also be the reason why Tartarus’s reaction tends to be conservative and guarding for it is hard to fight ‘two sides’ at the same time.

“......He gets angry.” Velvet stated, thinking it would be bad if the emotion makes the enemy start
fighting them with full power.

“You see the silver flame, right? It may burn us too since we are still ‘outsider’ to this world because of that man. Even if we have the controlling right back, the flame may bring you far away from this deepest place in the mental world, then you can’t fight the man. You better finish him as soon as possible, we will lose if he fights us seriously.” Seres suggested while explaining things which quite difficult to understand.

“In short to finish him ASAP, got it, we shall finish him in the next move while not allowing him to cast an arte.”

“How do you plan to do?” Seres doubted.

“Do you know about the dual mystic artes between Phi and me?”

“Through your memory, I know a little bit, but I can’t cast the exactly identical arte as Laphicet did.”

“Just do the similar things will be fine.”

“I will try.”

With the cover of Calamity Flare and the felling silver flames, Velvet jumps and charged at Tartarus while Seres scatters numerous paper into the air and burns them by waving her hand, sweeping the enemy back off for a certain distance by the effect of the defensive barrier of Tartarus. Then Velvet unleashes her claw and swings it upward, hitting Tartarus into the air while Seres arrange the scattered paper into spiral magical glyph beneath him.

“Blood moon.” Raising a large red from the ground and trapping Tartarus in it, the arte just dismissed his magical barrier and Velvet immediately slashes Tartarus with her gauntlet blade while ascending by stomping and jumping on the scattered paper arranged in spiral orbit. The attack ended while Velvet reaches the end of the paper orbit, she sees Seres has finished the cast with the glyph under her glowing, Velvet let Tartarus falls down. Seres summons the Flared tornado that it sweeps and engulfs the arranged paper unleashes the mana and artes stored in it, a continuous explosive artes then caused.

Despite the explosions still continue, following Tartarus, Velvet then jumps down with her daemon claw activated to strike Tartarus with its extreme power. Now Velvet and Tartarus form a straight vertical line.

“Blessed bolts, seal my triumph! Divine Saber!” Lightning appeared and pierced through Velvet and Tartarus from the upper sky. Of course, Velvet takes most of the damage from the lightning, but she still finished her final act to strike Tartarus and Tartarus realized he lost this time.

Tartarus lost, he started to fade, but he laughed, and ‘loser’ is still a word can hardly be linked to him now.

“Heh. Let’s say I lose this time, but I will be back.” Tartarus said when he is slowly disappearing from the space with the silver flame cleaning the world and his mental existence.

“No, there will not be next time.” Velvet gave a meaningful smile, grabbed the metal collar appeared on her neck. As she starts to gain back the control right of her body, objects in reality appear in the mental world again under her control.

“Farewell.”

Velvet tore off the collar with her claw. The metal collar exploded at the moment it is broken,
causing a large damage to Velvet.

“........What a crazy and foolish human.” Tartarus finally disappeared from Velvet’s mental world.

After the disappearance of Tartarus, the world once again returned to the original color of pure white under the effect of silver flame.

Velvet fell down and fainted on the ‘ground’ with wounds everywhere again, maybe it takes a longer time to heal this time.

“You go to sleep so quickly, and there is a guest….” Seres sighed while preparing a bed and lifts Velvet to the bed.

“Guess, you are really tired. Goodnight, Velvet.” Seres whispered and gave a light kiss on Velvet’s forehead.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.

You may feel it is writing completely different things from the previous chapter because it is happening on another side in the mental world as you see I implied that Tartarus is fighting both sides at the same time while the silver flame entered the world. It is a chapter combined with some new settings and a summary of the backstory of Tartarus I created so far. The mental world is a great place to give random things a chance to happen.

I am not trying to raise anyone’s sympathy to Tartarus, but I am trying to make him a little human when he may want to seek his kind in a twisted way. Since I want him to be kind of the final boss during this part in the story, I can’t make him too weak. Thus again I don’t design a great fight or referred from a great fight that both sides fight with all out as I decided to let Velvet win this time. The other reason is I don’t have a great inspiration to write a fight like this again.

About Seres(fragment), Yeah, I just want to make her presence in the story, probably, only 1-2 times presence as Lailah is existing too.
A fight to bring back Velvet

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**Ch34 To save**

In the night forest before dawn, the daemons dance in the middle of the forest, and the unsettled souls are further bound to the land, and the animals are changed by the bounded malevolence.

Sorey settled a hellionized animal with a strike, said: “Fu~ finished. Really, everyone didn’t regress
“Of course, we are getting stronger when you are not there! Now I am afraid you can not catch up.” Mikleo chuckled.

“Is that so? I won’t believe and someday I will be stronger than you!” Sorey protested.

“Very well, I will wait. Now, I know you have a reason, but why would you choose to leave at night?” Mikleo is puzzled by Sorey’s insistence, it is dangerous under any circumstances at night.

“I agree with Mikleo-san, just remember how many hellions we met on our way.” Lailah can’t agree more when they can’t count the times for encountering hellions, it is really dangerous to walk in a forest full of hellions.

“Yeah, I know, so I am glad that you guys still come with me. Maybe it can’t be counted as a reason, I believe that I can meet Velvet at such time. I want to meet her immediately, help her and let her see everyone here.” Sorey recalled various moments between them when he is locked up, and he realized Velvet still doesn’t want to live at all.

“To let her meet with us?”

“Yeah…how to say it…..She always seems like not interested in anything even for living…….hmm..” Sorey shows a sheepish smile when he can’t explain it properly.

“I understand Sorey’s thought, you want to make Velvet happy by introducing friends you are proud with. Sometimes I want to introduce those past Shepherd and Seraphim I knew too.” Maotelus said.

“That’s it! Since I am glad when everyone is here with me, I want to share happiness with Velvet.” Sorey gave a big smile while agreeing with Maotelus. In fact, the situation is not optimistic to walk in a forest at midnight, but it is not that tensed because of the existence of friends.

“Sorey-san…”

“Well, not bad to have an exciting journey.” Edna is a little bit shy and coy to hide the joy of hearing this.

“You are embarrassed.” Mikleo indicated while knowing Edna for some days.

“It is not so obvious when your ears are red like beetroots. “Edna does not deny it and counters calmly. Now Mikleo’s face is redder.

“That’s the Ex-Shepherd Velvet met…..” Eleanor realized the reason why Velvet can befriend the boy when she see Sorey’s friendly attitude to the seraphim with his purity in his mind.

“Yeah, he is a type that different with Artorius, sometimes, I think he is similar to you, Eleanor,” Maotelus commented.

Eleanor: “Is that? I once treated seraphim like tools but he must treat seraphim as a peer presence.”

“You treated seraphim as tools because you didn’t know, and I think you treat us as a peer presence with emotion in the journey, this is enough for everything. The ability to accept things that opposite to you understanding is your charm, and I think you are similar with Sorey by this.” Maotelus smiled.

“Ch….charm? it is not that, but thank you very much for your appreciation.” Eleanor felt shy for a moment when she received the comment.
“Great that you can fight, opposite to me, I can’t help with anything other from blessing the status with assisting arte.” Maotelus felt sad when he is limited by his pact as an Empyrean, he wants to help to a larger extent but then he is reminded by Magilou’s word that this may lead to the disappearance of his blessing to Sorey and Velvet. That’s why he can’t interfere in a large degree when not necessary, he can only provide assistance by healing artes but not a direct attack.

“Don’t worry about it, I am glad that you have such thought. I have to become stronger too so I won’t over-relying on someone and my friends may fight without worry.” Sorey smiled that he doesn’t mind at all. In fact, if he formed a pact with Maotelus, Maotelus can directly help him, but he chooses not to do this. He realized it is not good to take seraphim blessing and assistance as granted in his last journey, and he understands the helplessness when he could not do anything alone, so he wants to become stronger.

“He can smile like that even in such a situation, that’s the legendary Shepherd, he is strong.” Alpha commented when he realized Sorey’s strength inside from his smile. Sorey clearly knows that they are bounded by the cursed cast by Tartaros, that they are under a situation to be taken life at any time, that’s why they start a journey to search solution from an ancient seraph called Grimoire.

“Yeah, maybe it is because he has the accompaniment with his friends.” Maotelus smiled.

“Is that there no other way to Meirchio? The forest is getting creepy…and it is getting cold.” Zaveid complained.

“A ghost-like presence is saying a place creepy huh? Well, if you feel cold you may put on clothes. Here, take it.” Beta commented while putting off her cloth for Zaveid. Clearly, she doesn't notice Alpha is looking at her, although they are not connected with blood, he still cares about Beta as a brother. The reason why she is coming with them is that she is one of the victims of the curse, both Zaveid and Alpha is too worried to leave her alone in the town. They shall bring her along even if that means they leave the guild in the place.

“Ah, nope! The presence of clothing will hide my charm! How can I let a pretty lady put off cloth for me~ Don't worry! I have got used to such temperature already, put your cloth on again please! (I can't let your brother see that!” Zaveid noticed Alpha's lines of vision, well, he doesn't plan to have the clothes anyway whether Alpha is looking at him.

“Oh? What is your charm again?” Edna teased.

“Agreed( laugh). Well, but I have the same line as Zaveid in terms of the path we are walking. It feels unsafe here.” Mikleo commented.

“I am afraid that this is the only path towards a place where protected by seal” Lailah explained.

Wind blows lightly on the faces of walkers, cloudy sky blocked the bless of star and even the moonlight is not allowed to pass through the cloud of malevolence. When the night fall, the shadow engulfed everything in the forest with its arrival, brings on the silence and mysterious mask. Followed with fights with hellions and joyful conversations, the boy moves forward slowly in the dark forest. The Shepherd team is moving forward to North Iceland, where Meirchio-- the place sealed in the dust with the history, one of the world's mystery now. Magiland, the original site of Gododinn, is surrounded by some remains of Meirchio, but that is a little isolated piece because of the variation in earth activity, the place with earthpulse points and especially the place of lifespring font will not change with that. It is said that the path will path through a forest and a site of ruin. It is rare to have undeveloped district such as ruin nowadays, it is said that there is a mysterious organization to keep places remain in mystery. Normal human is likely to get lost when they entered the domain but the accompanying of 4 high A rank seraphim will solve the issue. Lailah suggested to
leave in the morning for safety, but Sorey wanted to leave at night for his pure instinct of meeting Velvet. He wants to meet her no matter what and Edna didn't disagree, she wants to meet Velvet soon too.

Hours ago, the legendary seraphim, namer of Maotelus, the latest Ex-Shepherd, and the grand Shepherd gathered to search for the ancient seraphim of a knowledgeable advisor. They started the journey to realize the untold legend and constraints in the world. Thus they may free from Tartarus's curse and starts their fateful encounter. Now the Grand Shepherd once saved the world is on his way again, like a ring, fate incarnates and returns to the origins. So as the repeating history of humanity, when the Calamity arrives, a Shepherd rises up and to solve it every time. We can't tell the time the legendary story of heroes repeated, yet, each rings still deviates a little for the hero of each ring is different. Even for a very similar existence, there is a difference between. There are no completely identical individuals in the world, even for twins and clones, they will have their values inside; even for the very same person in the different universe, they are different by their choices, that's why the ring is similar but different at each time. And humans live and learn in each deviation of repeating history.

The Shepherd once saved the world was temporary a normal person again but then again he becomes the Shepherd again to bear the responsibility to solve the calamity.

The Calamity once saved the world was temporary a normal human again but then become the sign of calamity again to bear the overweight sin on her shoulders.

What leads them into the ring again? The observers? The carelessness at that Scarlet night? The emptiness of the Ex-lord of calamity? The infinite madness of the half-blood? Or all just a terrible accident? Now it is meaningless to trace the origin, as they will break down the despair in front of them to move forward, to search the bright future. Remember that always fight hard to resist the terrible fate is one of the merits of humans.

The giant beast walks through the dark forest, its bloody eyes gazed at its preys.

“....A domain!”

The giant beast has the choice to launch attack silently and quickly to end the life of preys, yet it chose to remind them its existence for its pride, that is the very least part it still shows features of humanity.

“ AWROO-----” A long howl to the sky shows sadness and tore the silence of the dark forest. Now all team members tensed and prepared themselves with weapons when they heard the call of the wild.

The shadows of trees hide the shape of the beast, merging it with the darkness of night. Its speedful strike is hence becoming invisible to the team. Following the reaching brush sound of plants, strong wind blow on them like a storm.

“------” Strong wind slashes roughly at Sorey's face with a bloody arc when Sorey is standing at the first line. Yet the boy shows no fear, he just stands there and watches the shadow passing by him. This is a very obvious hostility, but Sorey just turned his head and looked at the direction of the shadow who had just wiped him with the wind.

A giant beast turned its head slowly and gazed at the team. It is a short moment, they can only perceive some basic and obvious features from it. Overall, it possessed wolf-shaped features, the black color of its fur allow it to merge into the night. There are obvious metal attachments on its limbs when its left foreleg fully consists of metal. In the claw part, a human-hand-shaped claw shows
which indicated it is more near a werewolf than a pure wolf but it chooses to act like a wolf. And all of the above features are not the reason they think the giant beast is Velvet. Inside the darkness, it possessed pure golden iris of burning flame, they are the eyes left remarkable impressions, just by looking at the eyes, you will be attracted by the air it contained, it is not wrong to say it possesses deadly attractiveness. Such eyes are the things which let Sorey and Eleanor, one who knows about Velvet recognized her as the beast immediately.

“No......” Eleanor moaned when she recognized her friend immediately. In fact, she knew it in the very beginning, but she can't accept it when she sees it.

“I find you, Velvet.” As if nothing has happened, Sorey calmly gazed at the eyes of the beast, while the beast responds it with the same action-- unbelievably just silently gazed at the boy. That’s the only moment of quiet peace, suppressed with the perverse and atrocious atmosphere of the beast. Tonight the fates cross and stay, starts the crash from the moment, it is an unavoidable battle, and Sorey wants to face Velvet in this battle, to pull her back together again.

The giant wolf frowned and looked at the boy who was still smiling at it. This unhostile performance made it confused and distressed. It whispered and whimpered with noise, its eyes turned into blood-red in the next moment, surrounded by stronger atrocity and arrogance of power. With the shadow of the trees and the leaves blown wildly, the trace of the giant wolf hid. Before Zavida confirmed the enemy's position, the claws scratched everyone like a dance of storm. After slashing Sorey, then Lailah is turned to be the next target, following by Mikleo, Edna and even Maotelus are one of its targets. Eleanor tried hard to protect Maotelus from harm from the turbulent attack. From this point of view, the wolf has not left the rationality of human, because it is now hurting people who she wanted to protect when she was a ‘human’. When the rationality still exists, she felt sad when she is forced to hurt her friends, yet now even the little sadness disappeared with the strong atrocity surrounding it. The target of its attack is very unfixed and there is no order. Because of the target-free attack mode, it is difficult for everyone to see through its attack trajectory. If they randomly attack, they are only afraid of hurting their companions. Perhaps for the giant wolf, they are like the standing targets of practicing.

“never thought to use this at the beginning.” Zaveid shot himself a bullet at his head with the gun called Siegfried in his hand. Before he met Sorey, he always fights alone as a wanderer. This gun blesses him the power to fight even to stand against a dragon. In fact, it is the basic seraphic for armatus for the part of power, it must possess unique strength in power. With the boost in power, Zaveid is able to catch up with the storm to a higher extent. Then he casts an arte to attack and to constrain the wolf at the same time.

“Deceiving Pummel!” gold myriad chains shot out from the ground and constrained the wolf at its legs.

“Great! Everyone, attack!” Sorey caught the very moment of the wolf's movement paused by Zaveid's arte and called.

“Right, to stop this from happening again…….” Lailah murmured while summoning and holding a great amount of flare energy in the air to form a fireball just like a mini-sun. Then, the scene turned out like some scene of the disaster, the 'sun' falls from the sky. In the range of 5m from the center of the giant fireball, the place is engulfed and burnt by the high heat. As if the place is evaporated, only barren desolate wasteland left, at last, a very fine piece of land as a flat battlefield. And the one who performed such a horrifying act is the dearest prime lord who tells bad puns with an explanation.

“Lailah you are such a dangerous woman, but I like it.” Said Zaveid who actually assisted Lailah's arte to burn greater, his wind element is a fine element to assist fire element, so he is actually weak to
“Wow, we really better not to get Lailah angry.” Said Mikleo who is a water-elemental seraph that supposes to be stronger than fire element.

“Horrible Lailah, simplified, Horrlah,” Edna added.

“Oh, it is embarrassing!” Lailah said while shaded her cheeks with both hands acting as a pure maiden, very contrasting with the act to burn out the whole place.

Sorey released a sheepish smile for that, Lailah is Lailah. Well, this somehow relaxed the air on the battlefield.

The next moment, the burning flame faded away with the wolf standing at the center who still constrained by the arte. Its fur still burning and it breaks the magical chains forcibly, striking towards the team with the red eyes of hobgoblins.

Zaveid tried to resist its action with the horizontal storm but it is not effective. The fur on the wolf burning even stronger as if a fire coat of the wolf, like the flame, becoming one of its parts

“Wouldn’t it being fire-element?” Zaveid guessed while he viewed its ability. Zaveid throws his pendulum towards the wolf to make a 'High strike' then he successively pulls back and kicks off the wolf from the ground with 'Jealousy Cyclone' to cast a little typhoon as his temporary final move.

“Maybe it is being wind-element at the same time?” Lailah guessed with her experience with types of hellions. She released a slash of flames with triple explosive artes to let the wolf back off.

Zaveid controlled the surrounding wind to further boost Lailah's artes and responded: “Well, no surprise.” Sometimes, the personal characteristic is one of the factors deciding one's elemental status and so far Zaveid thinks Velvet possessed characteristics of both fire and wind element.

“Just fewer chances to see my performance.” Zaveid laughed while the beast turned and run in the same direction as the wind and counter-attack Zaveid with 3 successive ground-breaking slaps like 'Break boost' with the frame around its claw. He jumped off immediately to dodge the attack.

“Your existence can't be ignored as long as you are here.” Seeing Zaveid being the consistent target of the wolf, Sorey commented while waiting for a chance to attack the wolf.

“Well, that's nice.” Zaveid said and dodged another strike from the wolf and cast 'Deceiving Pummel' again to block its movement by chained the wolf temporary.

“So I say, it is your show time, Sorey, Mikleo.” Zaveid exclaimed while creating a chance for Sorey.

“Leave it to us!”

“Right! Luzrov Rulay!”

Sorey stands and raised his left hand while saying Mikleo's true name. The sacred water bow materialized in the air while the magical glyph formed above it. At the moment Sorey’s hand touch the bow, the blue light of water power surrounded him and water burst out from the ground to form water screen. When the water screen disappeared, he appeared in a new form. White coat with the hat with golden accessories show a sacred and vivacious feel. His hair lengthens and becomes golden in color with his eyes turn in clear and calm blue. In his eyes, only firmness and earnest show.

Mikleo: “Sorey, we better finish it as soon as possible, the malevolence is attracting hellions.”
Sorey: “Right! I can’t bear to let her in such state for a longer time, let’s do this with our strongest power!”

“Guys! Buy us some time!” Sorey and Mikleo exclaimed while stretch and tensed the light string of the sacred arrow.

“Pass it to me,” said Edna who hit a wind-up Punch to the werewolf.

The werewolf planned a counter-attack but it hesitated for a second.

Edna attacks continuously, she slashes upward with her umbrella then open it to slow her landing. The beast attacked back with 3 successive claw slap targeted just next to Edna and turned to strike its tail. Edna jumps backward to avoid the attack that obviously won’t hurt her and she see guilty appeared in the wolf’s eyes.

Velvet doesn't want to hurt her, she knew. The team members here all know the werewolf is Velvet, but they will still fight. They believe purification is the only way to rescue her now.

Edna continuous attack with a powerful strike towards the wolf with her umbrella spinning so the beast felt dazy.

“Stormy Rain.” She continued with successive slash strike with 'cloudy swirl' track.

“Never thought that you become a mindless beast. The ‘promise’ is not fully fulfilled but I am here right now in front of you. You should wake.” Edna tried to talk to the wolf as she noticed the little hesitation of the beast. Yet the voice doesn’t transfer to Velvet, Velvet’s mind is still slumbering, what left here is the beast that half-controlled by Tartarus. There only atrocity and survival spirit left in this empty body, this beast can’t be treated as Velvet when it is almost mindless. Edna can only send her message with force, there is something can only be told by fighting.

Meanwhile, Eleanor stands aside and is protected in Maotelus circle.

“Don’t you go fight it too, Eleanor?” Maotels asked the girl standing beside.

“It….It is my fault that she turned into a hellion again...if I had stopped her that time…….. Every time I heard its howl, its cry, I feel sad for it, and I don’t want to hurt her again.” Eleanor thought she was responsible for Velvet's hellionize. If she insisted on working aside, maybe things work differently. Eleanor knew the result as she guessed it right a long time ago, yet it is still unacceptable for her. Things should have been better if she had stopped her at that time. She knew what kind of person Velvet is, her persistence is what causes the result.

“I cannot comment on it, for the if of you stopped her that time. If I were you, I would respect her decision and help her. This may as well cause the same end, but things haven’t ended yet.” Maotelus responded to try comforting Eleanor.
“Mmm?” Eleanor is confused by Maotelus’s words.

“I attained the power of purification to save her in the first place, you too became a Shepherd to help people just like her. You even give your soul out to become a seraph to continue fulfilling the promise to her.” Maotelus stated when he realized it a long time ago after seeing the earthen historia. Eleanor claimed that she sacrifice her soul for sharing resonance to ensure the next Shepherd raise in the era. That’s a lie, in half. After seeing examples of the families of Velvet, Eleanor knew to sacrifice a soul will be reincarnated into seraphim.

Eleanor said nothing, agreed silently to Maotelus’s statement.

“Even one knowing Velvet for a shorter time than us, Sorey believes Velvet will be saved, so he fight. You should be more confident to our mind to Velvet that across a millennium, only fight her to stop her from suffering now.” Maotelus said while looking to the direction of Sorey.

Sorey is storing power for the strongest attack to give, his eyes are full of determination. By looking at Sorey, Eleanor finds herself understand something. He knew this hurt Velvet but still proceed to do it. A friend should stop a friend from doing wrong, and it is not too late now.

Sorey opened his left palm and the energy began to gather into the shape of an arrow. The magical glyph formed by the accumulation of the power at the arrow formed by energy, it becomes a giant bow of light floating in the air that covering the artifact bow for water armatus.

The accumulated energy has already reached the amount for launch, yet that’s not enough for Sorey. He holds the ‘arrow’ tightly, borrowing more energy from nature. The natural mana concentrated in Sorey’s hand via the spiral tracks of wind.

The body is starting to have burden for that. It is not surprising, they accumulated more than ten times energy than normal.

“Sorry, Mikleo, hold it a little longer.”

“It’s fine, I am always by your side.”

“Thanks.” Sorey is grateful to Mikleo, and under the consensus of the two, the convergence of energy accelerates, from tens to hundreds of times.

The sudden high-speed convergence of energy is strongly involved in the whirlwind and airflow around Sorey. The high concentration of mana makes it possible for even people who are standing farther away. Even Lailah the fire-elemental seraphim, feels the wind pressure of the mana compression that is so high. The mana that has been in the shape of an arrow shows an irregular state like a fire under high-speed energy concentration. Even Edna who possessed the earth element that stronger to water element felt pressurized from the water magical energy.

“Still not ready?! Sorey?” Edna asked while the beast is attacking like a berserker and the high energy concentration in Sorey is noticed, Edna can’t it for a longer time.

“Right, ready now! Throughout all! Azure Assault!”

This is an arrow on the straining cord-ready to start, an arrow that gathers the blessings of nature and contains the thoughts and consciousness of Sorey. Sorey raised his bow and pulled the arrow on his left hand with the strain. Irregular energy is barely forced to be tightened and then turned into an arrow-shape. Now Sorey only looked at the giant wolf that is actually hellionized Velvet. Aiming at the wolf, and let go of the finger that had been grasping the tail of the arrow, the arrow finally leaves the cord.
A burst of wind followed with the arrow was shot for the moment, the light - illuminating around at a second, the light covered everything in the moment of release, too dazzling that people can not open their eyes to look directly. It is a huge burst of energy, even the archers are not able to stand against it, there is not enough power to fight the recoil. In the sudden energy burst, it is not easy to stabilize the body, Sorey stabilized his body with stumbling but he doesn’t see a long pit under his feet for the distance he stretched while stabilizing the body.

The arrow performs a beautiful projectile with the energy burst behind, it is shooting straightly to the giant wolf with the silver blessing of purification. The huge energy stimulates the arrow to fly like a shooting star, excessive energy is still propelling the flight of the arrow, and the mana particles are visualized as the orbit of the flight remains in the air.

The mono-track is then divided into twelve light arrows, stretching their light tails behind the turbulent tracks, flying spirally towards the target, pass through it at a point and fly to the beyond with the wolf.

The night sky that was originally covered by clouds was swept away by this force. After the attack of excessive power, it can still remain in place as a light column caused by the magical explosion that continues to work. The light column runs through the clouds, opening a hole in the sky, and the clouds surround this burning mana become the light band of the ‘sky hole’. The gleam of the stars and the moon spilled from the ‘hole of the sky’, and there was no cloud in the area to block the sight from the galaxy depicted by the starry sky in the night sky. The stars guided the arrival of destiny. This may be a miracle phenomenon.

However, after this attack, Sorey’s and Mikleo’s water armatus defused immediately. Perhaps the energy consumption is too large, it is a miracle that the energy gathers hundreds of times higher than normal. Even Sorey, who has become accustomed to long-time armatus, was forced to dispel the armatus after a blow because of the huge energy consumption. The strange thing is not only this one, after that, Sorey’s team is transfixed, like the soul is not guarding their bodies.

“What's happening?” Eleanor asked when she sees the case. She is attracted by Sorey’s fighting with determination, so she watched Sorey’s action until now. Perhaps that is same to others who think they are not able to interfere the fight.

The light is as static as the stagnant activity of the team just now, the whole team at the front line has stopped.

“It is a rare case, perhaps the excessive mana int the air reacts with the thought of Sorey to save Velvet. It is a phenomenon of soul resonance when carrying out purification with powerful thought, they may enter Velvet’s memory now.” Maotelus explained calmly.

“.................” Eleanor can’t deny that she is now being a little jealous to Sorey.

The light of the light column diminished, and the wolf stood up again. It also had sporadic silver inflammation, and immediately wanted to rush to attack Sorey, who had just launched a powerful attack on it. Whether it is from the will to survive or from the consciousness of Tartarus, it is perceived that Sorey is a threat. The previous strike has already indicated that Sorey is a strong force that cannot be ignored, so it is possible that Sorey becomes the object of elimination to the wolf, and now is the best time for the Sorey team is transfixed. At the same time, the silver flame awakened the consciousness of Velvet in deep in her mind from the effect of malevolence. Although the control of the body is no longer in her hands, in the deepest consciousness world, she began to want to regain control of the body. Now Tartarus can no longer control the wolf intently with actions, this body becomes a half-empty shell.
“I will fight!” Eleanor understood it is not hurting friends from Sorey’s performance but to cut down the time she is in pain. For Sorey’s eyes full of determination, they ensured Eleanor that it must help Velvet. Thus she rushes out to face the beast, even if she is alone, she wants to protect Sorey’s team from this very vulnerable moment.

“How about you? Alpha.” Maotelus turned his head to the boy still observing the fight. Different to Beta, he was a Shepherd, so he has enough experience to handle such fight. Maotelus knows that he can’t provide great help during battle because of his pact, but he will try to guild those confused lost child on their way, that’s his responsibility as an Empyrean.

“I don’t have such power.” The boy answered.

“Is this not an excuse to run away?” Maotelus changed his tender tone into serious reprimand. Afterall, everyone is trying their best with their life, everyone, including Beta who is simply a human among those people. That’s why Maotelus is angered by the answer of the boy.

“I………” When Alpha is still pondered for the answer, Beta, the ordinary human among all in the team, has rushed out to help the lone fighter in the battlefield. Knowing that she doesn’t possess the ability to hurt the hellion much without the help of pact forming, she still decides to fight with the hellion there. She knows she is the weakest one among the team as an ordinary human, yet she is familiar with the way to fight as the weak. To protect the weak points of herself while always searching and aiming at the weak points of the enemy, also rely on the stronger one when necessary. She slashes at the joint of the legs of the giant wolf, if a single slash is unable to make damage, then slashes multiple times until she catches the notice from the giant wolf. Eleanor catches the chance and performed a critical attack on the giant wolf.

Just by watching the scene, Alpha realized that he is too spineless when comparing to the inner strength Beta.

“Do you want to fight?” Maotelus asked as he sees the boy gets the answer.

“At least, I have to protect my little sister.”

He decided to fight, not as a shepherd but as a brother. It is the responsibility of a brother, he somehow feels shame that he can’t teach his sister things but is taught by her now.

“I will cover you, go ahead.”

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In a blink of an eye, Sorey found himself in a different world, also a forest, but this one is full of autumn feature, a place surrounded with the maple forest, like the one that Velvet once mentioned of the forever autumn scenery in her hometown. Velvet rarely mentions her own things, but when talking about her hometown, there is always a kind of nostalgia with unspeakable sadness. Sorye doesn’t know why, Maotelus has never elaborated.

By the fact they suddenly arrive a strange place, worry always come, Sorey concerns about his companions. Lailah, Mikleo, Zaveid and Edna are here but Eleanor, Maotelus, Alpha and Beta are not.

“Everyone!”

“Sorey!” Mikleo wants to ensure the safety of his dear friend
After looking around surrounding, Edna stated: “so Mao-boy is not here.”

Lailah: “Eleanor is also absent.”

Zaveid: “same for Alpha and Beta.”

Mikleo analyzed: “Seraphim here are all formed a pact with Sorey.”

Lailah added: “Possibly that the phenomenon is related to Sorey. It is rare but when the Shepherd wishes to save deeply, the purification may allow a chance to contact with the memory of the opponent, specifically for type of malevolence that is hard to be purified.

Edna sadly commented: “Something like despair, huh……”

Mikleo remembered things taught by Zenrus: “Gramps said that when there is an external flow of mana into body, there is a chance to see the memory.”

Zaveid: “I guess it is also caused by the mana explosion from that arrow, must say it is a pretty cool one.”

“So how about Alpha and Beta there.” Sorey worried about the ordinary humans in the reality now not with them.

“I am lying if I say I am not worrying, but Beta can take care of herself. Eleanor and Maotelus are also there, so I guess they will be fine.” Zaveid expressed his little worry and also confidence towards the girl.

“That’s great.”

“Always worrying about others huh, so I guess we will see sad memories here. I will always be with you. You can rely on me if you feel that you can't take it.” Mikleo said.

“Thanks, Mikleo, I will count on you.” Sorey smiled.

Without any guidance, they talk all the ways in the forest until Zaveid hears some noise. Walking forwards the source of noise, they see a girl just finished hunting, the girl is similar to Beta, no, she is similar to younger Velvet.

“Guess this amount is enough to buy Laphicet the madecine.” The girl looks a bit tired but she doesn’t care when she thinks of her little brother, that’s the young Velvet.

The girl continued to ignore people standing in front of her and keeping her pace in harvesting the prey. Maybe it is the sympathy to the animal, she didn’t kill all of the boar but to let them go. At that time, the girl hadn’t truly understood the pain of the one who is left because she still have Arthur and Laphicet there.

“Guess she really doesn’t see us.”

“And her face really looks like Beta.”

“Well, Beta is a clone as we know….Never thought of a day to see such expression from her, she is a beauty when smiling,” Zaveid commented while looking at the girl smiled for her little brother.

“Yeah, Maotelus has told me that she is a loving sister.” Sorey added.

Suddenly, the left prickleboar hellionized and strike to attack the off-guarded Velvet.
“Watch out!” Sorey worried but then the hellionized prickleboar is then defeated by a fireball.

“Thanks, Lailah.” Sorey thought it is Lailah who helped the girl, forgetting here is the scene of memory.

“It is not me.” Lailah is confused.

“Who casted the seraphic arte then? I don’t see a person?” Mikleo asked.

“Maybe it is ghost~” Edna teased.

“You know, I am not Rose.” Mikleo sighed.

“May be it is because Velvet didn’t have enough resonance to see seraphim before so she can’t see the seraph there. Remind that here is her memory.” Lailah tried to find an explanation.

“Pride and anxiety. Pity for the enemy. The thrill of victory...Your emotions ran too hot. That will let your downfall.” A man walked out behind a tree. Velvet looked down when she got the comment from the man who looks like Alpha, named Arthur.

Arthur then discussed with his seraph, Seres, for Velvet's characteristic, but it is clear that Velvet was not able to see Seraphim as Sorey’s team can’t see the seraph in the scene.

Arthur then instructed her and help her like a teacher and a brother. Then, they see some moments between Velvet and his little brother. Sorey gasped, he had never seen Velvet smile, happily like that. He knew she bears much pain by her past, that is why her expression always in a gloomy tone. She never smiled from the heart. It was quite contrasted with the one he knows now.

Neither Maotelus nor Velvet has told these memories to him exactly. Maotelus may have traveled with Velvet, but he may not fully know the Velvet before he met unless he saw the earthen historia. Thus he won't be able to tell all the things to Sorey.

Now Sorey sees the Velvet he didn't know, the Velvet had not experienced the hell, fewer things to worry about, only a normal human wants her family to be happy. And he wants to protect the smile he has seen, he wants her to smile like that again, to catch her happiness again.

Velvet's family lived harmoniously until the Scarlet Night.

Velvet woke in the Scarlet night. Seeing the village filled with daemons, she escaped and started worrying Laphicet as she saw no one in home but herself.

Her worry stopped when she sees Arthur stood aside with Laphicet in front of an old ruin with a big deep hole. The red moon shined bright behind them with the inauspicious atmosphere, the ominous feeling still stopped when she saw Arthur there. She believed in him, the one who saved her and her
brother in the past Scarlet Night, the one who lived with her for almost ten years.

However, the ominous feeling to the audience of the memory didn't stop.

“The shrine of tranquility…….” Lailah stated as she remembered something.

“You know something? Lailah?” Mikleo asked.

“It belonged to a forbidden Empyrean……. It is a taboo within seraphim.” Lailah hesitated but still answered.

“Now the man is going to offer Velvet's little brother to the slept Empyrean,” Sorey stated the cruel fact. Everyone looked at him in shock. Sorey thought it is impossible for an Empyrean want that but it is the opposite, now he turned to accept it.

“Maotelus has told me that,” Sorey added to explain, all things in the memory had been roughly told by Maotelus in the 500 years of slumbering, stills it is heartbreaking to watch it with his own eyes. He thought he would feel heartbreaking every time he saw or hear it.

The incident continued with Arthur killed and offered Laphicet to Innominat through the hole. Velvet managed to catch Laphi before he fell into the endless hole, she was hanging on the edge of the ruins.

Velvet's face totally showing how unbelievable that Arthur is doing this, she thought that Arthur was protecting Laphicet. She couldn't stop Arthur pierced his sword to Laphicet's chest as Arthur's seraph stopped her. She managed to break through the shackle with her emotion but she still can't change the end.

The audiences stood there sadly, they felt unbelievable too as they saw Arthur is a good person in the previous moment. It is not impossible, they just didn't see how he changed. Sorey wants to lend his hand to Velvet, but his hand passes through Velvet's hand.

“Sorry, Sorey, we are in memory. We can't do anything to change what happened.” Lailah felt sorry to say the fact.

“It's fine, Sorey. We are going to rescue her after this.” Mikleo placed his hand on Sorey’s shoulder to comfort his friend.

The memory continued.

“Let him go. This is an offering to the world.” Arthur said indifferently. Velvet struggled, still denying to accept what happened, denying that Laphicet is an offering, denying that Laphicet cannot be saved.
“...I see you will not change.” Arthur took his sword, prepared to stab Velvet.

“Ever a slave to emotion.” Yes, he stabbed at Velvet.

The scene is too cruel that everyone looked away, they know Velvet's arm was cut and then she fell down the pit. Even if they don’t see that directly, the clear sound just indicated everything.

A golden dragon with numerous heads fly out from the pit and disappeared in the sky. They looked into the pit to see if more thing is coming out. Then a woman is shoted out from the pit. It is the girl who fell into the hole, she stood with smoke surrounding her, something different, she possessed a daemon claw.

The audiences are shocked and snapped open their eyes.

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Meanwhile, in the battlefield without Sorey’s team, there are 3 people resisting the giant wolf, the ex-shepherd, an ordinary human survived in the dark and a void-elemental seraph who lost her pact former. This is a very weak team combination, they can’t use strong power through armatus but only relying on attracting the target repeatedly with Maotelus’s assistance in healing to hold a long time.

Let’s not to say seraph Eleanor, the physical strength lost is huge for an ordinary human to continue attracting the monster as a bait, this is very obvious on Beta when the physical strength of females is always fewer. On the way to escape after acting as the bait, Beta runs slower because her significant drop in physical strength and the wolf almost catch her. She will be slammed by the claw of the wolf in the next moment but then Alpha immediately stretches his body to shield beta without a second thought. He thought that may not change anything but he knows he is gonna regret if he didn’t protect Beta.

With the consciousness to get seriously hurt, the damage doesn’t come but a warmth arrives.

“Regretful Thrust!” Zaveid swings his pendulum for three times with perfect projectiles towards the giant wolf and then jumps to bring the two to a safe place.

“Great that I didn’t arrive too late, that’s near. Rest and leave it to us now.” Zaveid patted heads of the two kids and watch the battlefield.

After ensured both kids are safe, Eleanor relaxed but also shows a chance to the werewolf. The werewolf slashed her with its claw and she can't dodge it after just noticed the attack.

“Eleanor!” Lailah cast 'Partner Blast' to form a fire swirl storm with herself and Eleanor as the center to form protection barrier and counter the attack.

“Looks like that the purification failed, Velvet is still a hellion, and the silver flame disappeared.”

“...We will try one more time!” Sorey said firmly when he felt the possibility of success from the phenomenon just happened and he doesn’t want to give up.

“Right! Let’s do this!”
“Luzrov Rulay!”

“Maelstrom!” artmatized Sorey cast water seraphic artes in the form of a steam storm to trap the werewolf.

“Guys! Back to our position!”

“Lailah.....I want to help. Will you form the pact with me.....again?” Although Zaveid told him to rest, Alpha decided to fight. Alpha asked as he knew he can't help much like an ordinary human. In fact, Eleanor confronts the werewolf in most of the time when Sorey's team are out.

“I am sorry. I have already formed the pact with Sorey, maybe let me think of another way....oh! You may form a squire pact first. Sorey, are you ok with this?” Lailah asked.

“Sure. Let me think of his true name...OK, I will gladly form the squire pact with you, Alpha.”

“A new bud forms on the holy branch. Its flowers bring fruit. Its fruit begets seeds. The circle of destiny turns once more!” Lailah said the chant while taking both hands of Sorey and Alpha. Power surrounded Alpha give to him in the form of a sacred magical circle with 4 swords.

“Give life unto the will of the Shepherd, and let it be proof of their bond. Thy true name as a Squire shall be:” Lailah waited for Sorey's answer.

“Amfha mepebx(Alpha the living).” They smile at each other when they heard.

“Happy to be your Squire, Sorey.”

“Me too, now, back to the field!”

“Right, Lailah, may I?”

“Sure.”

“Fethmas Mioma.” Alpha armatus with Lailah like Sorey forms armatus with Mikleo.

“Divine Phoenix Blade.” Alpha summoned the great sacred sword and slash on the werewolf.

“Calamity Flare.” He then cast to burn the beast in the fire.

However, he then hears the sound of swallowing, the flame is disappearing, they are absorbed by the wolf claw. It then released the energy as a burst of flame that its body is burning like its clothing.
It curls its body into a ball and rushes straightly with a random path. The way it passed are burning by its flame, the whole forest is burning.

“Tch, Maelstrom, trinity arrow.” Sorey cast the water storm to put out the fire and shot 3 successive arrows to the wolf.

He then jumped and shoot powerful energy which then divided into five arrows, the wolf is shoted into the air. Sorey didn't let it take the time to counteract, he rushed towards and gives a striking punch with the blade on the bow, “Aqua Limit.”

Then the wolf is burning in the purification flame again.
Sorey and his seraphim lost their consciousness again.

“Again?!” Eleanor exclaimed for the situation.

“So we can't use fire seraphic artes to it? Alpha confused when he saw that the wolf 'eat' his flame.

“I don't think so, it didn't do it when Lailah cast barrier or explosion and it seems to suffer from the damage too.”

“So only long-lasting flame does not work then....Watch out, it is rushing to you!”

“Got it! Your fate is been set! Restrict your wicked act. Rine Slaughter.” Eleanor cast a water seraphic arte, although its strength may be lower than the original version cast by a water seraph, it is still effective to the monster of the fire element. The seraphic arte formed twelve ice lances and hit the beast into the air with the water storm cast beneath it. All lances are shoot towards the beast at the same time.

The wolf turns its body and lets its tail to hit all the lances lost track and fell, it then rush towards Alpha.

Alpha then slash the beast with his sword possessed the power of the flame.

“With the single strike, I will calm descent to your wrath.” He summoned numerous swords to strike through the beast. Then strike the beast in high speed from a different direction in a short moment, “Savage Wolf Fury!”

The beast is hit into the air.
“Here I come! Heya!” Eleanor strikes numerous hits in the second that the beast is still in the air and she strikes the final hit with a tornado cast. “Spiral Hail.”

After such a long battle, the beast shows no tiredness while they start feeling tired.

“Just how long will it stand?!”

“Arghhhhh------!” The beast howl, so sad and angry, and it is powerful enough to shock and stop everyone's action in a moment.

The beast is still burning in the silver flame, it rushes to strike in numerous directions to attack. Through all of its attack only hit the edge to its enemies and it crushes to break the tree every time.

Eleanor watched and she finally got that the beast is hurting itself. Maybe the silver flame let it gets back a little humanity in its mind, but she cannot stop the beast to hurt itself as she is still fixed by the shock of the howl.

The beast raised its claw smoothly and attacked its neck to destroy the metal collar. The collar exploded under the impact of the claw. The beast finally fell down, still burning in the silver flame. Eleanor cried as she sees its act, she knew, Velvet was trying to stop herself from hurting her friend by hurting herself.

Sorey and his seraphim are inside Velvet's memory again. The scene continued from the moment she turned into a daemon.

The girl climbed up from the ground with her red hot giant claw grow on her left shoulder. The area was surrounded by werewolf-daemon, they were approaching Arthur and Velvet.

One of them pounced to Velvet, the girl used her claw to stop it without any hesitation. She slabs it onto the ground and consumed it. She did the same thing to all the werewolf surrounded her.

“Arthurrrrr!!” She rushed toward Arthur while cleaning the path filled with these obstructive daemons.

“Take a look around.” Arthur calmly said.

The girl hesitantly looked around her.

Collapse, the human collapse of the villagers lied everywhere, including her best friend Niko.
“.......uh!....uh!.........” Velvet is shocked and confused by the fact, that she has killed a whole village of villagers and she killed her best friend.

Through she rushed towards Arthur then consumed by anger.

“I, Artorius Collbrande, will end your pain,” Arthur said.

Seres cast a fire barrier to stop Velvet and slapped her onto the ground. Artorius said while prepared to pierce his sword to Velvet.

“Why is that the birds fly? Behold my answer. Velvet.”

“Ar....thur.....”

“I ask no forgiveness. The sin is mine to bear.” He pierced his sword.

The scene ended with a shout of “Artorius!!” and a sound of bloody slashing. Sorey and his seraphim stunned by the scene, no one makes a comment.

The scene changed, inside a circular cell. The period Velvet didn't tell to Sorey when she sat in that pit of darkness and fed for three years.

At first, when the daemon is dropped down the pit, she refused to consume, she has refused to eat it. She has known that they were human. However, the daemon fight back, or else they will be killed. They were told that it is their job to feed the hungry daemon in the special lowest cell, they should be killed by that daemon and be eaten. The first daemon was sent there, he didn't want to die. He saw, it is just a little girl in front of him, she was sleeping, then it should be easy to kill. He raised his claw and planned to kill the girl. This severely hurt the girl, and she dodged all the following attack as she could while running inside the small cell, but only more wounds overlapping each other. At a point she felt her consciousness was losing, she knew she was going to die if she continued the fight like this. She used her daemon claw, slab him onto the ground easily and to consume him finally. Days by days, she realized it is a place she should show no mercy, she devoured the daemons to live.

The day is iterative, every day, the fed would be dropped from the ceiling, but sometimes, semi-human is dropped. Some of them just very young, just at the same age as her little brother. She hesitated, and refused to eat again. Artorius was there, watched on the top silently. He told the exorcist guard not to feed any of the food before Velvet consumed the kid.

“Why would he do this?!?” Sorey and Mikleo are terrified by the scene before their eyes continuously and now Artorius did something more unacceptable.

“...Maybe he wants Velvet to be cold, separated from her emotion, what he thought to be the best in
the past.” Edna guessed as she remembered the scene when Arthur instructed her to show no mercy to the enemy. And he was a brother, she supposes Artorius still had a little feeling to Velvet that he couldn't completely shut it off.

“He was just destroying her humanity!” Lailah exclaimed terribly.

“One thing to be glad that the Velvet I knew hasn't lost her humanity, after all these hell,” Zaveid stated while pretending to be indifferent. Sorey agreed with Zaveid when remembering the Velvet he knew from both Maotelus and the reality.

Velvet stayed to maintain her reason against the increase in hunger. The little kid didn't fight back, he rolled up into a ball at a corner as Velvet told him not to approach her.

She had bitten herself and taste the blood from the wound to reduce her hunger, but this only made her hungrier. She rolled into a ball to prevent the further loss of energy.

Under hunger, she lost track of time, she heard someone stomach growling, not herself, but the boy there. The guard had not to throw food since they threw down the boy. Then the next growling, this one from her. She is tired and starts losing consciousness again.

“Still didn't eat him yet?” The guard discussed.

“You are going to die if you don't eat.” The kind guard reminded.

“.....Why must I eat this kid?” Velvet asked back weakly.

“He cannot back to his normal life anyway, after the experiment.” The guard answered.

Velvet didn't show a response, instead, she slept, or say, fainted by hunger.

Next time she opened her eyes, the boy was there, said: “Just eat me.” There was no hope in his eyes, he knew he won't get any foods and either the lady in front of him. It was his job to feed her, now, he accepted his fate, just not to die with the hunger.

She still hesitated, she covered her eyes with her right hand to prevent herself from thinking the boy is delicious. She thought it was wrong, but her left-hand unconsciously transformed into the daemon claw.

Her claw approach the boy, she cried “ No!” but her body is consumed by hunger and the wish to survive. At last, she did it again, like how she consumed the first daemon.
“.....I......need to live.” She stated silently, now she is alone in the cell again.

From this moment, she shows no hesitation to devour anymore, sometimes she consumed the daemon just when the daemon is dropped.

She is tired, she is hungry, and she is a monster.

Sorey, Lailah and Mikleo eyes filled with tears, while Zaveid and Edna just show their back with umbrella to hide their emotion. They turned into reality again, now they see the werewolf seriously injured with the broken metal collar next to it. Alpha is shocked and Eleanor is crying. Maotelus sadly watched all the thing happened.

“What's happened?” Sorey asked. He got the answer from Eleanor.

Even when she turned into a mindless hellion, she had tried to maintain herself and protected her friends, just like what he saw in her memory. Sorey approached and got down on one knee.

“.....I will accept all your malevolence and will surely save you! Here, purify! Haaa-------!” Sorey continued the purification, and this time Eleanor and Maotelus help to strengthen the flame too.

They all entered the last memory, they see Velvet be forced to obey to Tartarus in the Scarlet Night and be ordered to destroy the Tewks village she lived with Sorey for 2 months. They see her trying to rescue the victims as she could. Finally, they see her be forced to fight with Sorey. After that, she escaped, until Tartarus's word broke her final reason.

“You are the lord of Calamity, an unwanted monster.” Just this, to judge her origin, she can't change it no matter how much she tried. The scene ended with a torn crying of the beast.

The memory ended, and Sorey entered a white space, in space very similar to the space he was in slumber with Maotelus.

“Where am I again?” Sorey asked and looked around, this time, no one with him here.

“Greetings. This is the first time a guest come here not by any invasive move.” A female voice stated.

“......Is that an appreciation?”

“Yes, it is. You are the Shepherd, aren’t you?” A female appeared from nowhere talked.

The female appears with tied red hair with white hints at the end, dressing a white dress in the theme of the butterfly.

“.....Yes, I am. Are you the seraph helped Velvet once?” Sorey is confused about the female in front of him but he is sure that she has a request to him. He guesses she is a fire seraphim by the
appearance of the female, and thinking of seraphim that related to Velvet, Sorey thought of the invisible seraph ‘appeared’ with Arthur in Velvet’s memory.

“Yes….My name is Seres, but now I am just a fragment of a soul. Why would you know?” Seres is surprised that Sorey guesses it right in the first time.

“Haha…..just my instinct to things. Is Velvet an important person to you?” Sorey thought this place may be a place that related to Velvet as he entered this space during the purification of Velvet. Sorey wonders if the female is an important person to Velvet when she is being in the space.

“Kind of….We had lived together for 7 years though she could not see me that time, she is like my little sister. Yet, I am not able to watch over her soon.” Seres said while her image is kinda fading.

“You are…..disappearing!!” Sorey exclaimed when he sees the phenomenon.

“Yes, because I am only a fragment soon disappear in here, this is the reason for me to be here……To request you to watch over Velvet.” The female stated.

“...........I will, for sure.” Sorey ensured the female.

“You don’t ask for more.” Seres stated.

“Because that is what I want to do too, you can leave it to me.”

“Glad that Velvet has someone like you......I can be at peace now.” The female disappeared with the light shining brightly in the space.

When Sorey awake and back to reality again, he sees everyone here around him and Velvet is turned back in human form, lying next to him. Her neck is seriously hurt that it appeared bloody to taint the surrounding area with red but the blood somehow stopped. Seems the seraphim here have done their best to heal the girl, but everyone filled with a complex and sad expression after seeing the memory.

“Welcome back. I’m glad that you live.” Sorey stated and carried Velvet on his back like the first day he met her.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
I am really sorry that it takes me so long to update the chapter because I have just started to have my full-time worker’s life. It has done a long time ago but I always think it can be better, especially for the part of the fight. This is the longest battle I have ever written, although it is not an exciting battle and most of the time is memories. So far there are many people involved in the fight, I can’t describe them well but at least to make them contribute conversations. I hate to write a fight with many people, but this is an important fight, I have to try.....For a chapter that Velvet still not here, I have to continue writing about the relationship of other characters, I am not good at it but I tried to achieve that by adding a lot of conversation even in the battle. Guess many people skip the fight, so I guess conversations between may help change this a little bit relax. So Sad that I still can’t fully convert the fighting reference into words so most of the move still
from imagination. That’s why I decided to put most of the effort to describe the scene of shooting the arrow, that’s a scene referred from TOZX the animation, after all, this fight is kinda important too.

Hmm, yeah, very memory fuels abusing again, I referred some scene from the anime and the setting of parts of the memory in the cell referred from “The Second Chance” on AO3 by the way. Hope you enjoy the chapter.
Ch35 Redemption

The dark clouds were dispelled and time flows fast in the acute fight. The moon has already been taken over by the sun, the fight in hours has finally ended. It is a meaningful fight, they have to save Velvet from the status of a hellion. Sorey goes on a long and rugged road with his companions while carrying Velvet on his back. From the ‘new wasteland’ in the forest to the fields of mountains, where the Falewin Hillside connecting with the other side of the mountain range there. They are heading to Meirchio, to find the way solving the execution arte set on them. However, now they will first find a place to take care of Velvet.

The way is much shorter than the estimation from the distance drawn on the map. Accurately, they sometimes ride on the back of the silver dragon so the time goes very differently. Maotelus is kind to let them ride on his back, maybe because that is something he can help them. Stills, it causes three days to reach the mountain range and Velvet has not shown any sign of awakening. They landed on one of the mountains with a ruin there so that they may rest in there. The abandoned building was a tower, apparently, there are traces of living that simple furniture set present here and it is big enough to allow a group of people staying there. Sorey and Mikleo are amused that the building is not recorded in the Celestial Record, guess the writer was not able to enter the secret domain at that time. This tower may see the surrounding view in a wide range from the rooftop that linking to the ground of a cliff and when they look up the sky at night, they can view the starry sky without obstruction. They won’t be surprised if this tower was a tower of the observatory with people lived in seclusion here.

The view here is amazing for sure, yet Sorey has no mood to appreciate the ruin or the view here because the sleeping beauty is not awaking.

Velvet is saved from Tartarus's control finally. When Sorey finally purified Velvet, she curled into a ball and held her head, there’s bloodstain of wounds everywhere on her body, the most serious one is the one on her neck that caused by the explosion of the collar. If she was not a hellion at that time, she may not survive through the bomb explosion of the destruction of the metal collar. Although the seraphim have tried their best to heal, it is not sure if there still inner wounds exist, as Edna has claimed that she is not sure if Sorey is fulled healed by the seraphic artes too, and it is very obvious in Velvet’s case.

The evidence is that Velvet lost her consciousness since then, Velvet has overworked herself under the physical burden of forming a pact with a seraph, she didn't rest but proceed her plan, until the time she can't sustain, it is already over limit when Velvet chose to take action after she formed a pact with Eleanor, the sub-effect of the pact forming was causing burden to Velvet, yet she still stood and proceeded the order of Tartarus. At the moment Velvet can’t sustain herself in the fight with Sorey, Tartarus controlled her body by force and forcibly let her body act under the burden to seriously injured Sorey. Then she hellionized and never got a chance to rest. As a result, she is in a coma after purified by Sorey, now she gets the chance to rest, to sleep.

It has been 3 days, they all worrying if Velvet is not going to wake up, so they all join together to discuss a way to wake her in dinner.

Most of the members of the team are seraphim, they work together to cook dinner while using some foods bought from Magiland.

“She still not awakes.” Eleanor sighed in the dinner conference, it seems that the great dinner doesn’t cheer her up.

There was a similar experience in the past that Velvet slept for 3 days after she ate Oscar and Teresa, according to Velvet, it is just she ate too much at once, but that is not true at all. At the moment after
she accidentally killed Oscar before his sister's very own eyes, then she lost her mind and just killed Teresa then, she recognized her sin, she thought she became the one she hated the most in the way of avenging. There is no way to run away from it and Velvet carried all her sins to force herself continuing it at that time, her body temporary collapsed for the sudden physical and emotional burden at that time, just like this situation.

“She will awake.” Maotelus ensured Eleanor, he was the one accompanied beside Velvet when she was lying on the bed for 3 days at that time, he knows how it feels. And there are two more people that always accompanied beside Velvet when she is still in a coma now.

“Yeah, we brought her back from a hellion status, I believe things are gonna be alright from now on,” Sorey said to cheer up Eleanor.

“Let’s together to bring up some ideas to wake her, for example…..” Lailah suggested and bring up the topic.

“For example?” Now Mikleo is curious about the method.

Lailah then started to tell a story: “Have you heard a story name ‘Sleeping beauty’? Once upon a time, there is a girl, on her birthday, she received a blessing with a curse. An evil fairy told that the girl will grow in grace and beauty, but die before the sun sets on her sixteenth birthday in a situation that she will prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and die. Luckily, after the evil fairy left, another fairy weakens the curse that the girl will fall into a deep slumber instead of dying, and a true love’s kiss will be the only solution. The girl’s parent does all kind of things to avoid the worst result so they sent the girl to live in the forest fairies, yet the girl still falls into a deep slumber. The girl is truly beautiful and charm, a handsome prince passing the forest get attracted and fell in love immediately. He kisses the girl and the girl awakens from the deep slumber. Happy forever!”

“Hehe…..That’s a strange direction of topic…..” Sorey mumbled.
Eleanor thought Lailah has a ‘romantic mindset’: “Lailah you always know about this kind of thing…..”
Zaveid: “Heh….A true love’s kiss can be given by a prince just passing by.”
Mikleo: “Wait, doesn’t the curse be too specific that to curse her die in such a specific situation, and it needed to wait until a 16-year old birthday to be effective, does it?”

Edna teased and told the version she heard without feeling: “ Let’s not mention whether our pure Shepherd can do this act. I heard that the story has an original version. The slumber of the girl is a prediction and what wakes her is the rape of the King, she even born two children for the king. Her children sucked the toxin in her fingers so the sleeping toxins are taken away and she is thus awakened. The girl is then married by the King, the queen hates the girl and she wanted her to disappear. The queen planned to murder the girl but it is not successful and she uses her life to pay the ‘price’ for that. So the girl live with her newly formed family peacefully and happily, happy forever~”

“ Excuse me? Happy forever?!” The story is too ridiculous to Mikleo, it is hard to understand a woman feeling happy to a family formed from raping her.
Eleanor: “ That is unacceptable. These two versions are too different! Where did you get to know about it, Lailah?”
“I don't know the story will be ….this way in the ‘original’, I just watched ‘Sleeping Beauty’ from Disney. Surprise me that you know detail about it, Edna.” Lailah seems really shocked by Edna’s version.

“Just a book from my brother.”
Mikleo chuckled: “In either way, Sorey will not be able to perform such act.”
Sorey: “Yeah, I can’t perform this without formal permission…….”

Zaveid: “Nah, there will always be a moment that you want to kiss someone so much that you want to do it without permission.”

“Please do not teach some strange knowledge to our pure Sorey, Zaveid.” Lailah smiled simply, and Zaveid felt the danger by this. “Well, well…..”

The dinner ended with the strange topics around, when Sorey goes to visit the one who supposes in the bed, the person is not there. Velvet disappeared in the room, Sorey is surprised that Velvet wakes, more shocked that the person left the room. To think of the actual status of Velvet, worry raised to urge Sorey he goes asking for assistance from others and find Velvet immediately after seeing the empty room.

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Things are strange, they always happen when you don’t expect it to happen like they don’t know the girl just woke up when they were not there.

‘Where am I’
It is a completely strange place to see for a person just waking, it is not normal that to wakes in a typical room that natural cool wind may arrive--there are windows and there is furniture, something can’t be seen in Tartarus's cell.

It is a room on the seventh floor above the ground. Velvet grabs the edges of the window frames, extends out her body to observe. She could somehow see the appearance of the building as he is staying through the window. The appearance is showing it is one of the ancient buildings existing in the world, there are parts extended out from the wall as decorations or structural components with the engraved pattern on it. Seeing through the window, the snow-covered mountainside comes into sight, she believes there is a certain height above the sea. It is a brilliant sight of view, yet it becomes boring to Velvet, she can’t connect with it, and she will go crazy with the emptiness she holds.

Looks around the room, there is a vanity and a dresser in the room seems like a simple empty bedroom. Through the mirror, she sees herself, she finds that the clothes she is wearing is no longer her old clothing but loose clothing, like the clothes she once wore in the clinic, her aluminum arm exposed as her bandage is unwound. However, she neither possesses memory of climbing a mountain herself, nor the memory of changing the clothes, she lost the memory when she was a mindless beast as a hellion, not to mention the fight to take back the control of her body, Just as Seres said, she will remember nothing about it, no matter how hard she fought. The only conclusion to get is that someone takes her here and changed her clothes. Without even knowing why she is here now, the hellionization deprived her of memory, sins and good deed, also someone she wanted to protect. It may be sort of salvation for someone, but not her case.

There’s a wheyface in the mirror, it looks horrible, and Velvet temporarily can relate nothing to it. She looks into the emptiness and sadness in her eyes in the mirror, not only indicating the emptiness in her memory, but also emptiness in her heart, she can’t recall something precious and determined.

What makes Velvet terrified is that there is another woman in the mirror, she hasn’t noticed there is another person in the room.

“Why are you……” She looks back, there is no one.

Yet when she looks into the mirror again, the woman is there, just next to her, and she just knows
she is a person that impossible to exist here, cause the woman--Teresa was killed by her a long time ago.

“Don’t you tried to forget what you’ve done.” ‘Teresa’ stated, coldly stare into the depths in Velvet’s eyes.

The sentence reminds ensured Velvet for something she forgot, something can’t disappear so easily still exist somewhere in her mind. Through it’s blank, theemptiness never stops to show up, it feels powerless when seeing the hands hold nothing, or they never hold anything. There is a reason she feels she is not reconciled to something.

Dry wind strokes the nerves lightly, freeze signal hints Velvet to be cautious, it is not the time to stay and observe the room as she doesn’t know whether the person is her enemy and when will he arrive. In either way, she decided to escape from this place.

Ignoring the presence of ‘Teresa’, she turned open the door and started to explore the place. Walking through the long corridor linking the room to the staircase, Velvet sees another one standing at the end of the corridor.

“There is no way for you to go.” ‘Shigure’ said while leaning on the wall of the arch at the end of the corridor.

Velvet still try to continue passing him without looking at him, he has no action, since he is just an illusion, but then another illusion appears on the way.

“No matter how many times, we will stand against you.” ‘Oscar’ said just as he has said in Velvet’s dream a long time ago.

“..........I know.” Velvet wondered why is she seeing ‘things’, who is casting those illusions, or it is the reflection from herself.

Walking to the end and the top of the stairway, she opened the door. This is the roof and it is connecting to the cliff. Velvet can have the full view of the surrounding on the rooftop, she could hold the information of the place more effectively. It is an abandoned forest surrounded the district, following by barren land. There is nothing that needs to keep in mind in the near district but the farther content--Velvet sees the ruined Ladylake, the iconic tower has fallen, she could immediately recall the disaster happened there, remind her to remember the sins.

“Sinful daemon, you shall not exist and you shall not be forgiven.” ‘Melchior’ appears next to Velvet, said coldly.

She has recalled the feeling at that time again. That's right, she destroyed villages and towns destroyed, for a rightful reason, she thought it should be rightful, yet the result turned out bad to her. Searching the memory of the last moment, she remembers the horrible things, for she is forced to commit the crime, for she hurt and 'killed' the person to save. To think such a way, a feeling of frustration raises from the bottom of the heart.

That may be her deserved fate, hurting others can’t protect anyone, for one who has nothing can’t protect anything. Tartarus said, she is just like a cursed calamity, Velvet thinks it is right, that’s why she became a hellion and her thought is remaining unchanged even after purified. After all, she lost some much, all the one being close to her passed away one by one and the thought is heavy enough to raise her despair whenever she recalls it again, the feeling still exists here to recall her guilty.
The reason to escape from the room only a simple survival instinct, but it is unnecessary to run away, instead, to wait for the punishment arrives.

Ah, now she aware that she is waiting for an appropriate punishment.

The wind lightly caresses Velvet with a frozen breeze, reminds her of the attitude of the place. Looking below the abyss covered by icy smog, the mysterious caress of death is calling her just like once she heard in her nightmare. If death is the appropriate punishment, she would gladly take it, since there is nothing left to be done or undone, nothing left. No matter how many things she has achieved, she still possesses the guilty to live. The taken lives are countless and those corpses may nourish a whole forest. She is thinking that if she was not there, Sorey would not have met the trouble, he would not be hurt and killed by her. He should be the one to live. Memorizing the last cursed words of Tartarus, Velvet still thought they are right-- she is just like a cursed existence, everyone died but she lived, that should be wrong.

The purification flame may undo the curse of hellionization but it does not possess the power to change the thought. To bring a person on the right track need people in the surrounding, a human can’t live alone. The end of forever solitary has written in history with the sacrifice of the time of Sorey. He knew about that, maybe this also a reason he can't leave Velvet alone, while Velvet now urges for the fate of death. She doesn't remember the words and determination when she fought Tartarus to take back her body, but the conclusion to get is still the same -- at least to choose the end herself and 'death' is the end for both punishment and relief.

Therefore she broke the metal collar when her little determination still exists to resist Tartarus even if she knew it will cause an explosion of the bomb attached to the collar. She has accepted death already at that time, never thought of the possibility to live. The mental damage caused so great to be healed that easily by just purification flame.

Looking down to see the silent lonely abyss, it is like the entry of hell, where she thought to be home.

Two steps from hell, a familiar voice stopped her from stepping forward, she turned.

"VELVET, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!" The sound mixed with the harsh breath, the person must run all the way to get here. Right, to know a person has just got back from hell and be healed from the serious wound and fell down for a long time, how could a friend not be worrying? To see a friend in such a dangerous position at the edge of a cliff, Sorey worries the worst will happen, he shouted out desperately to stop the person there.

“S….Sorey?” Velvet turned her head, looked at the boy unbelievably. She wonders if he is only an illusion, she thought the boy should be died, should be killed by her hand. With such thought and the shock by meeting the boy there, her body refuses to accept it, persistently to perceive herself as a monster belongs to the hell. She steps tottering backward, stepping on the air.

The next moment, she would fell down the cliff, but she doesn’t. Her left arm is caught by someone, so she is hanging in the air.

“V….Velvet! Got you.”

“You….You are real.” Velvet hesitantly stated to ensure when she feels the hand catching her is solid.

“Of course I am real, now give me another hand,” Sorey said and tried to lend another hand to Velvet, while he is also using the hand as supporting, but it is too hard to do that. However, Sorey’s hand is not Velvet looking in focus, she is looking at the clothes Sorey wearing. After seeing that, Velvet depressed again. The chest part is torn open, she can see the scar with scab formed on the past
wound on the chest through the slit of the blue shirt. Velvet knew all things that happened are real, although Sorey doesn’t die, she can’t forgive herself for that.

“.....No, let me go........ I don't ....deserve to live.”
“......Why would you say this again? ....You have the right to live, just as I told you once, and you promised me to live.” Sorey is worried when he hears that, his worry becomes true. Now he is worrying how bad the situation comes, he tried to persuade her once more.

“.....I have never agreed to the promise.” What a tricky answer to be heard but Sorey doesn’t have the time to comment that. Indeed, she was silent at that time, Sorey recalled, so really Velvet has not agreed to live on at that time. That’s one thing Sorey hates himself to has the guess correct.

“I hate to make a promise that I am not sure to achieve. I tried to live, but it has all been wrong, I should die.” There is no will of life in her eyes and Sorey is scared for the one before he can’t be saved even after purified. He will try to help her no matter what, he promised to himself that he will save this person.

“Why would you say that?” His voice cracking, he underestimated the case, it is farther than severe. He wants to change her negative comment on herself.

“Why would you ask about that after being hurt by me seriously, you nearly dead.”

“It’s not--”

“Things don’t change along time. I am still a Lord of Calamity, I have killed innocent people, even my friend...Niko.” Velvet looked away from Sorey when she sees another person appeared next to him.

“Velvet, why would you do that? I thought we were a friend. We were best friends!” The ‘Niko’ appeared as an illusion be seen only by Velvet asked. It has always been a question to Velvet to the action that day.

“Niko...I didn't mean to...I don't know you turned...I am sorry.” Velvet tried to explain but that is not even an explanation to persuade herself.

“Sorry won't do a thing! You killed that smoothly, without any hesitation! Really, the name of Lord of Calamity suits you well.” ‘Niko’ swore what Velvet constantly blaming herself whenever she thought of that incident.

“.....Velvet, who are you talking to?” Sorey worried when he sees Velvet is not talking to him while looking at his direction.

“I am Sorry....truly ....I.....” Velvet murmured while looking down.

“There is only one way I will forgive you.” Velvet gains hope and raise her head to look at Niko again when she heard the line from ‘Niko’.

“Die.” ‘Niko’ smiled coldly. Of course, the true Niko won’t say it this way, yet now it becomes the line persuading Velvet her death is the only solution for all the things she has done.

“...Of course, that’s the only way......Sure. I will, now, go die.” Velvet used her right arm to pull herself away from Sorey.

“........Velvet! What are you doing?! Stop!” Sorey is perplexed when he feels Velvet is pulling herself away from him, he tried to pull back while using his left hand grabbing the edge of the cliff. “I will go to die now. Let me go.” Velvet is perplexed that Sorey is still catching her arm tightly, doesn’t let her go and falls down.
“No, never! I am not gonna let you go! …..Remember our days in the village! I want to live with you!” Sorey has no idea how ambiguous those words are, he tried to raise Velvet’s mind to live, but the words seem not even hit her a bit.

“You had no idea. I must go to die. I have destroyed that village, mercilessly. Now, let a monster like me die!” Velvet scolded for not letting her die.

“No! I refuse to let you die! You are human, you are just another normal human to me! You are not the Lord of Calamity!” Sorey urged Edna to find Eleanor to help him in his mind while persuading Velvet.

Velvet thought of Tartarus's word to her that acknowledge her to be a monster.

“You know none of my sins! I am a monster with a tainted soul. I will bring trouble to the surrounding. Let me go before I bring you more pain.” Velvet said while losing her hope in eyes.

“......I know, all the things, I heard it from Maotelus. Sorry to tell you that late.” It seems that none of the lines works, Sorey decided to tell the truth with trepidation.

“......You know.....He told you.....Why then?” Velvet remains silent for a while, looking at Sorey unbelievably, not for the fact that he is hiding but for how he treats her after knowing things all along.

“I want to save you, you deserve a second chance!” Feeling there may be a chance, Sorey continued.

“No, I deserve to die, I have done the same thing again in this second chance…… I only bring pain, death, despair, and misfortune to the surroundings…That’s the only way to calm the soul I killed, for all the sin I have committed….so, don’t interfere….. I cannot be saved, so set me free. ” Velvet said as she smiled with ever a peaceful smile, yet those words are filled with sadness and cruelty.

“Don't smile for such a cruel thing! Interfere? What's that supposed to mean? I am determined to save you! I will accept all your sins! Now take your chance to live. Give me your other hand!” Sorey shouted and tried hard to extend his other hand to Velvet.

“I cannot embrace the kindness that you give... I don't deserve.....” Velvet continued pulling herself away from Sorey, her body swings in the air.

“No....please.....!” Sorey tried to hold and pull back Velvet, it becomes difficult when Velvet constantly resisting to be pulled up.

Suddenly, a burst of the door sound breaks the conversation.

“Velvet......WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!” Eleanor is shocked when she saw the situation. Although she has heard from Edna, she still feels terrified to see. She aware of Velvet is releasing malevolence there, but she still immediately approached and pull Velvet with her hand, still, this is not enough to pull Velvet up, as long as she holds her another hand to pull away herself.

“....Good to see you alive, Eleanor....” Velvet is glad that her malevolence that time didn't turn Eleanor into a dragon.

“It is not the time to say such words! Give us another hand!” Eleanor is holding Velvet’s hand while tolerating the pain brought by malevolence.

“No...I have to die...I will bring you pain......I can't control my malevolence. It would only hurt you. Now, let me go.” Velvet sees her malevolence are absorbed into Eleanor's hand, although Eleanor tried to maintain an expression as if it is normal, she seems painful to Velvet.
“The hell I am going to let you go! I have been waiting for you for nearly a thousand years! I am not
let you go die like this!” Eleanor stated with anger. In the last battle, she is blaming herself to let her
alone that time and she can’t stand aside this time, she has always regretted that she was not able to
save or help Velvet when she was a human, so she can’t let herself to be regret again, she can’t let
herself to stand aside again this time.

“Thousand years.....Sorry. I didn't mean to restrict you like that, you supposed to be free after you
died.......Maybe I should not give you such a selfish request.”

Unfortunately, Eleanor's word is not going to stop Velvet self-hatred, her persistence of self-blaming
is too strong, now she is growing more malevolence.

“No! I do it because I want to...stop putting yourself like that! Stop shouldering everything yourself!”
Eleanor shouted, tried to call her back. Velvet is still the same one she knew and she hates that now,
such a pessimistic mindset with such persistence! She hoped that she can listen to them at this
moment.

“You are the victim all along, why don’t you see it? Why won’t you feel angry about the one who
makes you like that?” Tears fall from Eleanor’s eyes, she begs Velvet to feel angry about it, all the
things, Velvet has the right, she hopes Velvet to see it. Yet Velvet doesn’t listen to that, stubbornly staying in the corner of the mind.

“....... You two are both hurt by me. Sorey, the wounds are going to be torn open. Eleanor, my
malevolence is hurting you, so let me go. I don't want to further hurt you guys.” Velvet answered
with a trembling voice.

“....Shut up!!” Sorey shouted with anger, he is done with this self-abandoning idiot who continued to
urge them to let her die, he realized their words are not reaching the idiot if they keep the
conversation that way.

Both Velvet and Eleanor are shocked by his reaction. Sorey is not that easy to show his anger, but
this time, he is angry at Velvet’s self abandoning. The release of malevolence slowed down by the
shock.

“You don't understand...You just stopped listening.........You think going to die will solve
everything? Well, it won’t! It won’t solve a thing! Do you really want to die that badly? Maybe you
are, but we will be sad, I will be sad. I don't want you to die!”

“......”

“Maybe we know only for a short time, but Edna and I truly care about you, we still want to travel
with you. Not to mentions Maotelus and Eleanor, they have been waiting for 1500 years. Do you
think we want you to die? After we fight so hard to bring you back from the hellion? Do you think
we will be fine with your death? No, we can't take it! If you died, it would only hurt us more!
Because you are very important!” Sorey needs the idiot to understand she will hurt them deeply if
she is dead.

“......” Velvet widened her eyes when she heard they cared for her.

“I have said that I will accept all your sin, I don't care about what you did and I mean it. I will be sad
if you die.”

“You may have a bad temper, solve by hook or by crook and you act like you don't care. But you
also kind, strong, tender like a sister.”
“You saved the world once so I may live with free will in my time. You let us have Maotelus as the Empyrean so we have the hope.”

“You comforted me from guilty when I was barely a stranger to you. You aid me in work even if you may have doubted my identity. You saved me several times in the battle and you gave me a birthday. All these small clips of memories add together to be my precious memories.”

“That's why I care about you, Velvet! I will not let you go and I am not forgiving myself if I let you fall and let you do such a stupid thing! I will fall with you if this can save you. I will not let you fall in despair. I will be your light if you need, so live for me, for everyone who cares about you!” Sorey said while his image is overlapping with Laphicet in Velvet’s mind, Laphicet had said something similar to hold her back in that time, yet she forgot about that because of the despair and sadness.

Velvet can't response and her eyes keep wide open when she heard, the release of malevolence gradually stopped. She has forgotten, there is someone who cares about her. She has forgotten how painful she was when Artorius killed and sacrificed her brother. She has never found her meaning of life since she woke in this age, but everyone who cares about her tells her to live. She doesn't want to hurt anyone. If she dies, she will truly hurt her friends. That is probably the reason of the painful expression of Eleanor, it is not because of the effect of malevolence, because she hates to let her die like this, she hates that she can’t help her in every important moment.

Something ignites again inside her heart, whether the anger to Tartarus or the desire to live. She sees the light from Sorey's eyes, she is chasing his eyes, for the dreams and hopes he believed, for the firmness, he holds as a Shepherd. She doesn't want the boy to lose the light, and she doesn't want him to be upset by her death. If he is trying to say he wants to live with her, she will try again. If there are people be upset by her death, she will try to live for them. She will try to find her value again.

She fully trusts Sorey now, feels like she can tell him about all the truth now even when he already has known it.

He is the light and she is the shadow. If he let the shadow standing behind him, then she will follow behind, like the shadow chasing the light, always by his side. She believes he will get the right way, and she will follow him to start her journey of redemption.

Eleanor agrees with Sorey’s word in her mind, and she sees there’s a chance, so she keeps silent but only holding Velvet’s hand.

Finally, stubborn Velvet tried to extend her other hand to catch Eleanor’s and Sorey's hand, it is rather hard to extend her arm to catch when she doesn't have any energy. Sorey gladly sees the change, he extends his body and arm to catch Velvet, but then Sorey has extended his body too much. Now he lost the balance and fall down with her, yet still holding her tightly. The weight is too heavy to hold by Eleanor, she released the hand at the moment but wanted to jump to catch them but she is pulled back by a great force. It is Edna.

“Why are you stopping me, Edna?! Don't you care about her??”

“I care, I want to stay a little longer with her, but it is not my character to do something like Sorey does. Don't worry, we have our friends stand by on the ground.” Edna smiled while looking down, everything is prepared.

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When she wanted to die, she is desperately caught, when she wants to live, she can't catch the chance. Maybe this is what we call fate.

At the moment of falling, Velvet Crowe relieved and lost her consciousness for a moment. Maybe
this is the out-of-body experience.

“You self-absorbed idiot...not yet.” another familiar voiced appears, this one is rather nostalgic to Velvet.

“.........?” She turned her head and see a blond with black hood comes at her.

“The time hasn't come to you yet.” The man took off his hood and shows his face.

“...Eizen!”

“....ah, Velvet, we have been missing for a long time, but I am not very happy to see you here,” Eizen said with a little disapproval.

“Why?”

“Did you ask? Isn't that obvious? You haven't lived long enough. You haven't experienced the things as a human at all, isn't it?” Eizen perplexed, although he won't call himself a long-life seraph, he has experienced various experience before death, but his dear friend has only lived 16 years as a human before she went sacrificing herself. Even for a bad guy, he wishes his friend goes to live for herself again.

“There is nothing I am interested in the world. Nothing to care.” Velvet said.

“Oh?......you surely too care about your little brother and you forget about yourself,” Eizen smirked, even the revenge was started for her little brother, he knows his friend really seldom notices herself. When her brother had gone, she thought that there is nothing in this world that deserve to care and love. Eizen has observed Velvet for a certain period, he has hoped that she will notice there is still something or someone she likes, she cares, but she doesn't notice it in the end.

“I don't want to be judged by you.” to think that Eizen also thinks of his little sister a lot, Velvet doesn't think he is fit for saying this statement.

“Heh, right, but there are things I know you like and care in the world, not like what you say.”

“What is it?”

"It is meaningless if I say the answer, you should find it out for yourself."

“........”

“and I say, your life has just started, there are still so many things you need to learn and experience, like this......” Eizen pulls her face near, so near that she can feel his breath. Velvet gaped and shocked, not knowing what Eizen will do in the next moment.

“Huh...I will let the living to teach you.” Seeing such a pure maiden reaction, Eizen smirked and released the girl.

“.....but, I already dead.”

“So I told you now isn't the time yet.”

“...?”

“You are not understanding, right.....? Ay, I will say I am being the reaper here and I know how long time you still have, so don't rush to see me here.”
“...eh?”

“Just that you know, you are living, and you have my blessing.”

“...That's too bad.” Velvet laughed.

“I can't help, it is an unconscious blessing to those I care about. So, work hard to live.”

“Yeah, I will, I suppose nothing has changed.” Her life is always harsh with that misfortune beside, a ‘blessing of misfortune’ surely nothing to her.

“I will be here, always watching.”

“Sound like a stalker.”

“...Well, because I like you.”

“...I like you too...but...”

“It is fine, after all, I died, so it is fair for you to like the others. Don't think that you will bring misfortune as I did. You should feel free to like the others. Well, maybe there already someone.”

“....who do you mean?”

“.... it is nothing to be told by a dead like me. I will pass it to those who are living.”

“eh???”

“Anyway, take care, Velvet. Don't let me meet you so quickly here again.”

“...Well, it is really good to see you again, Eizen.”

“Yeah, take care of my sister for me.”

“Well, I will never let her become a dragon like you as long as I live.”

“Hah, you dare said that...and there is no way for other men to touch her.”

“...This is what you should let go, such an obsessive love...”

“and that's me...Goodbye.”

“Goodbye.”

Come back to reality and she found herself not dead but lying on something hard but warm. A shadow cast on her with shining. It is the shining scales.

“Just as I told you I'll protect you for my own sake.” The dragon said with a tender voice carried Sorey and her to the rooftop again.

She can see Zaveid, Lailah and Mikleo prepared the artes to prevent the tragedy in below.

Maotelus transported her to the rooftop and put her down Edna and Eleanor are waiting there.

“You idiot! Welcome back!” Eleanor is the first one rushed to hug and cried.

“Welcome back.” Sorey and Edna hugged Velvet.

“....I...am back.....I am...sorry...I....am.......sorry........sorry.......I....”
Why does she cry? Glad, sadness, touched or all of them. Tears start running out when Velvet tries to say a sentence, the sentence is broken into parts when the feeling raising up. Velvet repeatedly apologized and buried her face into their chest, eventually start sobbing. Velvet doesn’t plan to cry but her body becomes too honest after all the things just happened, she would have regretted if she had fallen down there. She is sorry that she forgets about her friends here. She lost words to say, apologies is the only thing she remembers to do. This time she is not crying because of feeling touched or nostalgia, this time she cried for the sadness she bears, all the negative feelings and pressure relieved at the moment she cries it out. Everyone embraced her and say nothing while comforting her back.
Velvet kept on crying while apologizing, her body trembling, finally, she gets tired and slept again.

Velvet wakes in her previous room again, she unconsciously touched her neck and she finds no metal collar there anymore.

“Finding something?” Sorey's voice reminded her to notice his existence. He picked up the broken metal collar to show her.

“.........” Velvet took the broken piece and see it finally broke, she is free.

“...So worried that I am gonna commit suicide again?” She smirked.

“Yes, and I wonder if you need anything after awake.”

“Nothing really.” The broken piece is already enough for her.

“......Sorry, it is all my fault......I am unable to do anything apart from destroying.” Velvet saw and touched the bandage on Sorey's chest. That is the position she hurt him fatally.

“No, I am here, you saved me. I know you did all the things to save Edna and me. Then I will bear the sin with you.” Sorey took Velvet's hands.

“...You don't have to.”

“....I want to.”

“.........”

“And I want to know your past.”

“Why would you want to know it from me when Phi told you all the things?”

“He told me and I watched some of them when I was purifying you. Stills, I want to hear from you.”

“......It is a long story....and a sinful story. Even so, are you willing to listen?”

“Yes, I want to know you better. I don't mind spending time. Even if I spend more time, it is worth it. I am here for you all day.”

“......Well, when you put it like that, how could I refuse?” Velvet can't resist the request from Sorey, and she feels she is ready to tell him now.

So she said, about all things happened in the past, from her original life to prison life and then her journey of revenge. She confessed her sin that she ate her reincarnated sister, for the power to revenge, that she burn towns and turned the whole village overflow in malevolence while rescuing the therion, that she killed one's brother accidentally in front of one's sister, that she kills the exorcist to sacrifice their soul to wake 4 Empyreans and what she did after the Scarlet night in that time.

“If you hate me because of that, I won't mind...I am such a repeater who kills many people, for selfish reasons.” She downed her face while waiting for the answer.

“No, I won't hate you for this, even if everything you say may be unforgivable. For a human being, making mistakes and slaved by emotion are normal things. But I know you, if you are sinful, just change it, I will stay with you. I think you deserve a chance again, please give yourself a chance to live again.”
“...b...but---”
“It can be saved, as long as you want to save.”
“.....Thank...you...I thought you'd hate me.” Actually, she is not fine when her friends hate her, so she hides and tries to be a good person. She tried to hide all things from Sorey when traveling, but it is relieved after the confession and she is glad that Sorey doesn’t hate her.

“I have said I accept your sin, I forgive you.” Sorey knew she did it to survive somehow. This is normal for a human to want to live, this is an unseparated part of her.

That’s the day, Velvet truly acknowledged herself and starts to live again after awakening, with the accompany of her friends there.

Chapter End Notes

A.N.
Sorry, so late again! Finally, Velvet is back!! It seems kind of forced plot so I try my best to relieve the feeling of forced……... I planned this part for a long time( just as long as the part I made Velvet despair) but it is difficult to write it well, so I strongly referred from another story(' The Journey to Redemption is the one referred strongly). Well, I think at least Velvet’s problem is solved now.

Still, not sure if Sorey and Velvet now are in love or friends only. ( I admit I want to write Sorey/Velvet somehow, while at the same time I am weak at building relationship ........ so I try to build the relationship to the extent at least as deep as the old traveling companion).

Eizen: so you are pushing all responsibility of Velvet's bad luck on me?
Me: no, it is my fault indeed, but it would be a good reason to remind your existence....in name of love
Eizen:(gazed with anger)
Me: (Gaped)......sorry!.

End Notes

Well, that's my first fanfic of TOZ and TOB crossover and also my first fanfic. I read many of these fanfics, they inspired me to create my own fanfic as well, so it is normal if you saw some of their shadows, just because I have read and referred from them, taking reference is nearly one of my writing style.
I hope I didn't get any of the characters OOC as I am not too familiar with TOZ. This fanfic is the timeline after TOZ(game), so Eizen ......I honestly think we can't get back all lost things again but to accept it. However, he will present in some chapters.
The clip of Maotelus told Sorey the story is actually inspired by TOB novel but I rephrase it into Sorey’s POV.

By the way, both Velvet's and Sorey's clothes are hard to draw!
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!