

Lights Templar

Origin - Book VIII

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by
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Dedicated to Rosamia and Adam
And forever and always Anna.

Prologue

Iris's Journal

*M*onths have passed by since my last entry.

While the wound I suffered at the hands of Alice is now fully healed, Alex was still very busy with Lithius with what seemed like many pet projects. Over time I've seen glimpses of the spells that they are working on and there have been a few times where I participated in what I think was related to something bigger but even with all the help that Taeral gave me it's still way beyond my complete understanding.

This gave us all a lot of downtime which was used a lot by Adam and Rosamia. While teaching Adam on his spell request Rosamia figured that she too would give it a try, this made Alex jump for joy. Funny enough I've been mostly the one teaching both of them more than anything, still I have asked Taeral for pointers here and there when he could spare the time.

Overall it's gone really good, Rosamia is a very quick learner and masters the spells she tries out with little to no issues. Unfortunately it's been discovered that her plateau with arcane magic is pretty low but she has tons of power to back it up with, probably due to all her experience with holy magic. The news was disappointing at first but then Alexandria started listing the type of spells that she could learn and after even a few minutes it was seen that the plateau is at a level that Rosamia never even dreamed she would be able to reach, so all in all it did not affect that much.

For Adam, while he started off great the overall

story is very different. His limit is very low and that has caused a lot of complications so much so that while he has finally learned that one spell it took a lot of modifications to it in order for it to happen. If anything his, and Alexandria's, stubbornness are probably the real reason why he's able to do it now at all.

So overall there was not that much time to enjoy this downtime as most of it was spent studying and training. Still there are two members that took advantage of it and that would be Anna and Mike. Not being able to read the most basic of spells books has excluded them a lot from everyone daily activities. They have stopped by often enough, and I know that Alex has visited them on her own many times but I also know that they have disappeared for a few weeks here and there, doing I'm not sure what. Before that would have bugged me, I would have seen it as a sign that maybe my new family maybe splitting apart or selflessly thinking that I was being cut off for some reason. But after reconnecting with everyone during my rehabilitation and the personal sessions with Alex going over both our pasts those negative thoughts in my head have way less volume then before. If anything part of me is feeling a bit sorry for them and worried, I know how Anna love to move around and being stuck here must not be to her liking, but given past issues I wonder how much of that boredom or even possibly frustration they are keeping to themselves.

Well with any luck all this will be over soon, a group meeting was called later today at our house and typically those signify a change in the current direction. Plus I know that Alex has recently completed all the extra work as she has been working with me on personal projects so there should be little reasons for us to stay.

Speaking of personal projects, while on my own, I've tried to see if I could find Alice. She did try to kill me but at the same time sometime tells me that at that very end she pulled back and did not do all she could to accomplish that goal. With that thought I'm assuming she may know that I'm still alive or must know that it's a possibility and should be able to confirm it, and yet there has been no attempt to try again or messages for another dual. Part of me hopes that it's because she is now taking the time she has to heal somehow, she has been through a lot and when all is said and done she does deserve some peace and happiness in her life. Still because I'm not as sure as I would like to believe, I have asked a few favors and have casted a few spells to determine if she is causing some sort of trouble somewhere. Thankfully nothing has come back so if she is laying-low, then I'll let her be. I'm perfectly willing to wait for her to pop out on her own terms and see where things are at that time.

Chapter 1

Rosamia extended her left arm and while still casting took her right and pulled it back. While the spell neared its conclusion, three flaming arrows appeared. She took a quick moment to look at the practice dummy that was up ahead and let the arrows fly. It took very little time for them to hit the target. A satisfied smile appeared on her face, she then heard a slow clapping sound.

Iris approached her, "I have to say that you really picked that up quickly compared to everything else. You also learned to maximize it pretty quick too." A bit of a small grin appeared on her face, "I don't remember showing you that part mind you."

"Well, already having experience with a bow both regular and magical probably helped a lot..." There was a pause and then she raised her hand creating a small gap between her index finger and thumb. "There also may have been a little bit of help from another source as well." An apologetic look then appeared, "Hope you don't mind?"

"Hahaha, no I don't... no worries. I mean, in reality I would have been worried if my sister had not stepped in somehow at one point or another. Still I do wonder where she found the time to."

Rosa took a quick moment to recall, "Well, all times it was late at night and the chats were very quick. Mostly progress reports and also a few drop off of books to help here and there." She was then very concerned, "She's not overdoing it, is she?"

Iris shrugged, "Hmm I wish I knew for sure but it does not look like it. I mean she is busier than I have ever seen her, which I did not know could happen, but she is also very happy about it all. It's

like everything she is doing is a new thing for her to play with and the main problem is figuring out which one will get her attention at that moment."

"That's not a bad problem to have as long as it's not all used to avoid a larger issue."

Iris knew what Rosa was referring to and for a while had wondered the same thing herself but those doubt where now long gone. There had been many conversations between the two of them about what had happened recently and also a long while ago. While the psychological wounds were still there some had healed up and with the help of Anna from time to time both of them where in a much better place now. There was still a lot to deal with, especially for herself, but now there was a path for them to do so. "I don't think there is any worry there."

Rosamia smiled, "Good to hear." She then turned to look at Adam who was on the other side of the magical training room in Astrum, "Speaking of problems that don't need to be worried over anymore looks like he has the hang of the spell now." Iris simply nodded her head in agreement and then they both moved closer to him.

The room they were all in was pretty basic, large and rectangular with magical training dummies that no matter what you threw at they would instantly repair themselves. All targets were space evenly around the walls of the room leaving the middle section totally empty. It was a clear zone between him and his target so it really could not get any easier than this. Quick as he could Adam crouched and started the casting. He then instantly appeared next to his target and quickly pulled out both his two swords and attacked it with a cross shaped slash across the chest area. Then he instantly reappeared where he had been moments ago. Satisfied, he then sheaved his two

swords in his scabbards. "I'm pretty confident about this now."

Iris got closer to him, "Looks like, and you have the casting speed down and also the timing of it. You should be able to use it in regular combat now."

"I think so too, I'll have to practice more when there are obstacles in the way but as you mentioned, that part does not matter as it's mostly in my head."

"That's right, the spell works as a minor teleport spell, so really all you need is to clearly picture your target location, anything in between is really simply a distraction."

Adam was once again sporting a satisfied look on his face but then it changed into a grin. "So now that I have the hang of it, who do you think is faster?"

Iris was not surprised; this was always the case when they trained together in the past. The final test was always to challenge the other. While she understood what he was doing this time it really would not be fair. "I'm not sure you want to do that one Adam."

He was stunned, "Since when do you back down?"

She took a deep breath, "Fiiine." Iris knew that if she explained it to him it would mean little, showing him would be much better.

While they got into position Rosamia simply stood back, she too was not surprised by his actions but at the same time his actions did not bother her. She understood why he was doing it and there was no malice at all in it, he simply wanted to know where he stood and that was the only way he knew how. Her attention then shifted to the training room door that suddenly opened something that typically did not happen as there

was no way to know what spell was being practiced on in the room.

Alexandria nonchalantly walked in and closed the door behind her. She then made her way to Rosa while she pointed at the two others now in a crouched position. "What are they doing?"

"Seeing who is faster."

"Well that dumb."

Rosamia agreed but the flat out way that Alex had said that comment made her wonder, "I agree but I'm thinking that the reason you think so is different than mine?"

"Probably..." She then stopped talking as they were both ready to start.

Both of them disappeared when the spell casting finished, made it to their targets, pulled out their sword and hit the target with two quick hits and then reappeared at the position that they started. Adam did not have a satisfied look on his face this time, if anything he looked more confused than anything else. He looked over the target, his sword and then Iris, "Well I guess you are back at the hundred percent."

She gave him a quick smirk, "I have been for a while, and while I don't doubt you where actually wondering on that one, how about you ask the real question that is on our mind?"

"You where faster than me by a little bit, why?" Alexandria then advanced, "The deck was stacked against you Adam, she was using the actual spell, you are using... something else."

Rosa wondered on that, "I know that you modified the spell so that he could use it, does that mean that those modifications lessen it effect somehow?"

Alex wondered for a bit on how to explain it, "Yes and no... hmm, ah, here is another way to explain it. Think of it as having two formulas to

resolve a math problem, both formulas are good and will give you the same answer but one of them is quicker to use but sloppier, that's what Adam is using."

Iris then continued the explanation, "If anyone looks while are you doing it, they will not know the difference as the end result is the same but if someone looks at it and know both then they will see it for what it is."

Adam scratched his head, "Okay but if I'm using the sloppier version does that mean that it's weaker then?"

Alexandria was suddenly insulted, "Do you really think that I would spend all this time and let Iris spend all this time as well explaining this to you so you would learn something that would put you in danger, the spell is totally safe..."

Adam quickly stopped her, "That's not what I mean, I'm sure that it is safe, but is it easier to counter or does it have other weakness that the original does not have."

Adam's comment stunned all of them, not because it did not make sense but mostly because this is typically where he would have continued to egg Alex on. Taken aback a bit by this changed Alex answered, "Ah... no, the weakness of the spell is the same as the original there is no difference there. When the modification where done I made sure of that but you're right in thinking that there is a difference and you just saw it, your version will never be as fast as the original no matter how good you get at casting it. But you will have the same advance options as the original, assuming you get there eventually."

It was clear to see that he was still a bit bothered by that news but seem to except it none the less. He then looked at Alex but this time paid more attention to what she was carrying. "That's

my old sword, is it done?"

She extended her arm holding the scabbard with the sword to him, with a giddy smile he reached out and grabbed it but then he stopped as she did not let go. "Adam, please be careful with this. I know how you and a certain someone else get around blades, but this one is very dangerous."

Once the warning was given she let go and he quickly attached the scabbard to his left side with his other short blade. "Please, we are not alike at all. I just see them as a weapon to use, for him they are a work of art." He then moved back and looked again at the targeting dummy.

Alex instantly knew what he was thinking and rubbed her forehead in mild frustration. "Rosa, if he cuts himself it's not on me okay."

As Adam teleported himself to the dummy and used the new blade to cut it in two, Rosamia was less worried than Alex. Was it a bit foolhardy as a first thing to try, maybe, but there was a reason why his older blade had been used for this enchantment and because of that there was no concern in her head that he would cut himself.

Adam returned to his original location and whispered, "Nice to have you back old friend." He then turned to Alex, "So it's permanent?"

"Yep, the only thing that will dull the enchantment is that scabbard. So lose that and you are stuck holding that blade for a while as anything it tries to cut it will slice through. Also while you do need to clean it, don't bother trying to sharpen it, the enchantment will take care of that." She was then suddenly less confident about all this, "You still sure you want something like this? One misstep and you are severing limbs like they were never attached."

Adam understood her concerns, "Look there is a reason why I did not get two of these and there is

a reason why I still will carry my dwarven made blades, but at the same time if we bump into large rock golems the size of cities I have to have something better then a flaming blade that I can't even cast by myself... yet."

Iris smiled at that last comment, "I take it that is your next goal now?"

"You got it... my own powers my own skills. But when that's not enough, now I have a little something extra that fits more with how I do thing." He then quickly lowered his head at Alex, "So, yea, thanks for this."

Alex took a deep breath and let her concerns go, "No problems and your welcome."

This interaction made Rosa smile all the more, so much had changed when you looked at them from many years ago. It really made her think about how much more things would change as they continued on.

It's then that Alex was about to say something but suddenly stopped and looked puzzled, "Something wrong?"

"Nothing really, it's just that they are already at our house."

Rosa thought that weird a bit too as the group meeting as their place was not due for about another hour so why would Anna and Mike be there so early. "You think something came up and they want to speed up the meeting time?"

Alex knew that was not the case as, little did everyone know, it was she that had asked them to call the meeting in the first place so there was no reason for them to want to start it earlier. "I don't think so. I mean if that was the case they would have simply told us right?"

"You're right, but should we go now still?"

Alexandria looked at all of them looking at her to make the final call, she was curious as they

rarely did anything without a reason behind it, be it important or not. At the same time she loved the fact that Rosamia, Adam and Iris were dedicating so much time to learning arcane magic and she did not want to cut them short on their practice if they did not need to. She shook her head, "I'll head there and check it out, you guys stay here and finished your training as planned. If anything comes up I'll let Iris know." And with that she turned and left, but before she left the room she did have one last comment, "Again be careful with that thing."

Adam shouted back at her, "I'll treat it like you treat a new spell book that you just found."

She left but it was clear to see that she did not appreciate the comparison and with that Rosa smiled as she focused on a few targets at the other end of the room, '*Back to normal I see.*' She let go and this time it was frozen arrows that made their way to the designated targets.

"Are you sure about this?" Mike then took another book and handed it to Anna.

She gave him a little smirk, "Are you doubting?"

"No it's just it's not a lot to go on, it's a green covered book..." He then stretched his arms around pointed at the stacks. Anna looked around, there where at least thirty books that fit that description and after about twenty minutes they had only covered about a third of them.

"I know this is taking longer than I expected but I don't remember the book nor do I remember the page that I was able to read." She then opened the book that he had handed her, "In the last little while this has annoyed me more than I thought it would, why was I able to read that and can you?"

Mike put back a book that she had finished checking and then reached out for another one, "Well it was confirmed that we can use magic, it's just very limited. So it's possible that you stumble on that."

There was a look of disbelief on her face, "You're not wrong it could have been that, but something inside of me tells me it's not." She then looked down and continued to flip the pages, "At the start I simply pushed it out and thought the same, oh cute I can read this it's probably a simple spell and that's why. But as time went on I started to wonder, what if it was not? And that's what got me here; casting spells is one thing, sure, but this change, that's what has me wondering more than anything. If I can find the book and it's the same, then whatever, but if it's not..." There was then a concerned look on her face, "Then something tells me that we need to look into that."

He took a deep breath, "I'm not arguing you know if something is changing then it's better to know sooner than later. I guess I don't understand why not go to Alexandria right away with this?"

He then walked over and handed her another book and then took the one that she had just finished again. "She been so busy, and there have been a lot of things on her mind, I just did not want to add to it. I plan to when the time is right, which seems to be soon by what Iris and she told me."

Mike knew that she was referring to certain late nights where they had asked for her help to sort things out. She had not talked about what was mentioned and he did not pry other than the general, are they alright and so on. Those conversations gave her more information than he had on their state of mind and if something new should be added to the mix. "Hmm, probably right

again..."

She smiled, "Still I sense a 'but' coming up."

He returned the smile, "... But, the Alexandria I know loves these types of problems I'm pretty sure that she would rather know even with all that is currently going on."

Anna did think about it as part of her wondered if he was right or if it's just something insider herself that simply did not want this to be out in the wild just yet. Her thoughts were interrupted as the lady herself entered her home.

"I only got the end of that, whatever he said he's probably right, I probably would like to know." She then closed the door behind her and looked around as Mike was placing back the books in the same way that it originally was with Anna sitting on the one seater flipping thought the pages in a magic book. "Okay, what's going on?"

Mike quickly explained the situation and when he was done Alex took a deep breath and dropped herself on the long couch, which was still clear after all this time. "So you thought that you could do a quick check in before the meeting, get some information and take the next step depending on what happened."

Anna nodded, "Pretty much yes."

Alex thought about it for longer than she had planned, they probably did not know and so there was that, but what they were doing was actually very dangerous. It would be one thing if all the books around were regular books or things you would find in public but that was not the case currently. A thought came to her on how to approach this but then it got interrupted.

"I found it, this is it, this is the book..." She then paused, "... and I can read way more of it, this time I can read the whole page."

While Mike wondered on what that meant,

Alex then stood up and then moved closer to Anna and looked at the book that she was reading. There was a mix of puzzlement and confusion on her face and then she grabbed the book, turned around and then stretched out her arm with the book opened at the same page. "And you, can you read that?"

Mike stood closer to read it, but there really was no point in doing it, "Nope, all gibberish to me."

"What?!?"

Their simultaneous answer and look of disbelief made him smirk. "It's the same as when I look at any other magical book. I see that there is something there but the language is unknown and from what you told me in the past that meant that..."

Alex then cut him off, "...That you simply cannot understand it as if you could then you would automatically be able to read it." She was suddenly very frustrated.

Anna then stood up, "I'm sorry about this, I should have taken a different approach... it's just that while something is telling me to learn why this is happening it's also telling me to be very cautious about it, and before you ask I'm not sure why."

Alexandria then dropped on the couch looking defeated. She then looked at Mike "This is one of those moments that you explained right?" he simply nodded.

Alex took a quick moment, then shook her head and then stood up. Instantly her demeanor had completely changed from the previous serious to something a bit happier. "Okay let's do this again then, forget about the fact that you really should not have been poking at books you don't understand, probably should have told me about this sooner, and the implication of you being able

to read magical books suddenly and only you... I will also respect your wish and keep this only to myself, but we are doing this together okay?"

Anna nodded and smiled, "Sound good, and again sorry about this."

"It's fine as part of me shares your unwillingness to share this at this time."

Mike wondered on that, "So I take it that the book is not a simple spell as we were told that we could probably be able to master. Also you mentioned magical books in plural."

"Yes I did." She then looked at Anna, "There is no way that this is the same book as you last read, as all book have recently been replaced and the book you did read was moved someplace else."

"Okay, so what book is that and what was the first one that I read?"

"That's what I want to know." Alex then handed her the book again, "Try to read the cover, you should be able too."

Anna did as she asked and then her eyes went wide in shock, "...This book is for the fireball spell right?"

Alex had a wide smile, "Yes it is, which is far more of a potent spell then the one my father evaluated you being able to ever cast." She then raised both her arms in the air to stop any comments, "And no I don't know what that means, but I am now very curious as to what that first book was about that started all this. Do you remember anything about it?"

"I'm sorry, I don't. I just remember that it was a green cover and that I could read part of a page."

"That is not much to go on, but if you want we can remedy that."

Mike was curious about that one, "Are you going to read her mind to find out?"

She quickly nodded, "You have the right train

of thought but it's more than that." She then looked at Anna, "With your permission we will travel to that time in your head and both see what you saw and experienced. There is no filter mind you so there will be no way to hide anything..."

Anna understood what she was getting at, "That's fine, thanks for letting me know." She then looked around, "So how do we do this?"

Alex guided her to the larger couch and motioned for her to sit, she then sat right next to her and put hand on Anna forehead. "Think of that time in your mind and I'll do the rest." She then started casting, as she did another thought came to Anna mind. "I should warn you in advance that..."

'...This did not happen during a happy time.' When she finished the thought, both Alex and her were somewhat standing half floating in the memory that she had remembered of that time. Adam and Rosamia were on the large couch and Anna was on the single seater flipping through the pages. Anna was impressed by the spell but did not say anything as she let Alex sink it all in.

'Wow... I mean...' She thought about her next words, *'We told you that both Iris and I talked about this time from her point of view and because of that I knew of Mike's frustration during that time, but seeing all of yours as well... I mean look at Adam he's about to bust a gut so much that he's keeping it inside.'*

Anna nodded, *'Yea he is, we all were.'*

At that comment Alex looked around more, Adam was beside himself, Rosa was trying her best as well but it was pretty clear to see that she too was near the breaking point. She then looked at the Anna of then, calmly flipping thought the pages of a book, but now in her mind it was clear to see that it was all an act for them. *'Wow even...'* She

quickly tried to take it back, *'Ah I mean I knew that you where worried and all that I did not mean to say that you did not...'*

Anna stopped her, *'I know what you mean, it's alright. But yes, even me. We where both so worried, but there was no way that we could both show it otherwise the others would have acted and that would have been a wasted effort that would have probably resulted in worsening Iris mental state even more.'* She then had a weak smile on her face, *'But make no mistake, I was flipping those pages for a reason because I needed to do something.'*

Alex took it all in and then her eyes started to water, *'Hmm, I am so sorry all over again... For originally giving up and...'*

'Don't do that, we have both told you before, don't apologize for that. No matter how much you care it's a thought that is bound to pop in eventually, it's what you do afterwards that matters.'

Alex wiped her eye and nodded in agreement, *'your right... wait did you ever feel that way?'*

As soon as she said it the world around them went all fuzzy as that time was starting to materialize around them the more Anna thought about it. Alex quickly waved her hands to draw her attention. *'Wait, wait, wait forget I asked that... think back to where we were.'*

It's then that the Portal Tower image during the time that they all lived there started to fade away and the familiar setting once again returned. Anna focused once again on the moment, *'Tricky spell this one it's easy to get lost.'*

'I does not take much, trust me.'

Anna left Alex's comment there, as it did not take much to understand that if this is the spell that they were using between Iris and her, she

could only imagine what was shown sometime possibly by mistake. While that thought was quickly dismissed as to not blur the spell again, Alex made her way to the Anna of then and stood around her and then she suddenly pointed at a page. *'Ah there we go, that's the book... and you're right it's not much to go on.'*

Anna moved closer as well and tried to see the cover of the book but it was blank for some reason. Seeing her puzzled expression Alex filled in, *'This spell will show us everything as you felt and saw it...'*

Instantly Anna understood, *'So we can't see information that I never had, but will that not make it tricky still if all we have is a simple paragraph?'*

Alexandria nodded, *'Yeees, it would be under normal circumstance.'* She then moved back and away, *'But this is my home, and this is a book under my roof and already I'm pretty sure on what book you had in your hands and yes it is a different one.'* She then looked at Adam again, *'I wish I could take a picture of him like this...'* There was a mischievous smile on her face, *'So that I could show him every time he gets in my face about something.'*

This time it was Anna that smiled, *'Come on, if you have the information you need it's probably best to leave otherwise this scene may change to something else.'* She put her hand on Alex shoulder as she was trying to burn the picture in her head. *'You know he cares and so do you.'*

Alex was playfully frustrated at the comment, *'I will not admit to that...'* Suddenly the scene around them started to change but what started to show up was not one of Anna memories but of something shared between Rosa, Alex and Adam only. There was only so much that she could see before she heard Alex's comment, *'Well that's enough for now.'*

It was suddenly disorienting and when it all cleared up they were once again sitting on the couch like they had never left, and in many ways they didn't. Seeing as the spell was over Mike got closer, "Did it work?"

Alex smiled, nodded and then stood up and made her way upstairs. "I'll be back in bit."

"That was a very interesting spell."

"But it all worked out right?"

She slowly nodded, "Sure but it also made me realize that I'll need to have another chat with them in the near future." Seeing that he was missing too many pieces she tried to explain it to him, "The spell is handy and will also allow you to see and feel the moment at hand, there is no fault there, but it also skips an important part which is the conversation of the moment or your vision of it."

There was still a lot of missing pieces but Mike thought he had a clue at what she was getting at, "So essentially you skip describing the moment to the other person as they can just see it, but in doing so they may not see what is truly important to you as without a guide, so to speak, they only see it through their own eyes."

Anna suddenly had a warm smile on her face, "You got it exactly, it may feel like you can skip that part but in reality it's a big missing piece that's easily missed in that circumstance."

"Hmm, so something again for later?"

There was a quick chuckle, "Seems like it yes."

It's then that they heard footsteps coming from the stairs. "I really need to stop coming in at the end of the conversations as I only have more questions."

They both did not bite nor clarify her comment, but they did have a questioning look that matched hers on their faces as they saw that she

had come down with what they assume was the green book in question but also a stack of six others.

Seeing as Alex was going to get nothing this time she moved close to Anna and handed her the green book, "Here, turn to page seventy seven, I think that's what you originally read."

Anna did as she was told but as she did so, something odd occurred to her, finally making it to the page in question, and having recently seen the memory of it, it took no time to confirm that it was in fact the book in question. She closed it and then read the cover of it.

Alexandria did not have to ask, "Let me guess, you can read the thing now right, not just a single little piece of it?"

"The whole book reads like a normal book." She then had a thought and then showed the book to Mike, "What about you?"

Alex was very interested in the answer but they both saw the answer to the question in his eyes before he said anything. "Sorry still nothing."

Alexandria shook her head, "That makes no sense at all."

"Well does it make sense that I can now read the whole thing?"

"Well it could, if you tell me that you spent these last few months in the library learning possibly with the help of a mage of some sort to guide you..." She let the question hang a bit to see Anna reaction but it too was clear to see that it was not the case at all. "I figured, and part of me hope that was the case, because if you tried to learn arcane and did not ask me first I would be really upset."

Anna smiled, "No worries then, you are the first."

"Well good." There was a playful smile on her

face, "So until I figure out what is happening, I suggest some light reading." She then pointed to the books now on the table that she had brought down at the same time. "I guess you can also take that one you are holding as well."

"I'm confused, so I just read these and that's it?"

"That is the start of it yes." She then took the book from Anna's hand and put it on the pile with the others. "Once you read all these, we will have a little talk, and see what you understood and what you did not. Then maybe try out a little something and see where things go from there."

As she started to cast a spell on the book, Mike laughed. "Ah look like you're about to learn how to be a mage."

When the books disappeared Anna turned to Alex, "Are you sure this is a good idea? I mean I want to know why but being a mage is not really something..."

"No worries, I've learned from Iris not to be as... how did she put it, pushy. I mean ask Rosa, things are great on that side of things, and I only gave you half of the book I gave her." She then had a concern look on her face, "I don't know what is going on, and I'll want to do a few tests once I figure out which test I want to do on you, but the thing is you can't learn magic like you are doing without any effort. So until it's figured out, I think it may be best for you to learn the basics of the craft as it could help in many different ways to understand what is going on."

Anna nodded, "Sound fair, I'll do what I can." Mike nodded as well but part of him was suddenly terrified at the possible implication of something happening to Anna but this was not the time or place for that conversation. Instead he looked around, "So where are the books now?"

Alexandria made her way to the other single seater and sat down, "No worries they are on a table in your private room in your house, moving anything there and back is a synch for me. Plus the others should be here anytime now so I figured this would be easier."

They looked at each other and had the same question, they did not doubt that the action would be easy for her but why was the coordinate for their private room such an easy location for her. They did not have time to ask as the door to the main entrance opened up as the others arrived.

As Adam made his way to the large couch he looked at Alex and then the other two, "So did we miss anything after all?"

Already sitting on one of the two singles seats Alex slowly waved one of her hands, "No not at all, they simply had a request on a spell they asked me about a while back and figured that maybe they could catch me earlier before the meeting to get an update."

Rosa sat next to Adam who was next to Mike, "Something that we can all use?"

Mike shrugged, "In a way, but as she said it's not ready so there is no way to know at this time if that will be the case or not."

"Hmm, I see, you two and your secrets."

It's then that they all looked at Iris who simply stood there standing realizing, with everyone else, that there really was no place for her to sit with Anna and Alex on the opposite singles seats and everyone else on the long couch. "I guess I'll grab a chair from upstairs."

Alex immediately stood, "Take mine; I need to get the item from upstairs anyways."

As Iris did so and Alex walked up the stairs Rosamia looked around, "While I'm happy that the cleaning that was done was kept maybe we should

have met someplace else?"

"It's an oversight, pretty soon the books you see around you will be gone, which should free more room and then it should not be an issue anymore, it's just something that we have yet to do."

There was a lot of concern in Rosa voice as she reacted to Iris comment. "What? I thought you mentioned that everything was okay, Alex getting rid of her books..."

"Oh no no no, don't worry about that. It's just something that we talked about and we have recently figured out alternate arrangements for all those books. No worries there not going anywhere nor is she actually getting rid of any of them."

While Rosa was visibly relieved, Alex came down holding a small sphere. Which Adam quickly pointed at, "Wait you still have that thing?"

Alex placed it down on the medium size coffee table in front of the couches. The sphere looked exactly like they had last seen it in that cave and the dark energy that was in it as still present at what seem like the same levels. "I do and that's also why I'm the one that asked to call this meeting so that we can finally talk about getting rid of it."

Adam quickly looked at Mike, "Wait but you called this meeting, why cover for her?"

"Given the last reaction from everyone with the item we figured that it would be best to..."

Adam cut him off and at the same time reach out to grab Rosa's hand. "You know its funny where you are going with that as it seems that you are doing this to hand hold me but really I think you should do that more with her."

Before he could answer him, Alex erupted, "HEY YOU STOP IT, that's more then enough times where you have made me out to be the bad guy. I'm fine with the teasing, I can take it, but you take

it too far especially last time in front of Lithius. With him I can find time to explain but one day it will be in front of someone that I can't and the damage that will cause because of your comments..."

Surprisingly to everyone, Adam cut in but he was very calm about it instead of his usual louder more direct approach. "I do get that actually, and I'm not here to treat you like the bad guy but you have to admit that you have a very reckless approach when it comes to new spells or new magic that you discover."

Alexandria was simply stunned and very insulted. Being reckless was the last thing that she did when it came to dealing with magic. It's then that she looked at Iris who did not say anything but her body language seemed to indicate that she agreed with Adam, this shocked her more. She turned to her to confront her, "Et tu Iris, seriously?"

She slowly turned to her, "Come one, you can't think that he's that off. Think back on how many time you sampled the cookie jar, got caught and sampled again?"

"Ahh... well... I mean... It's not like I do anything bad with what I learn..."

Seeing Alex so guilty made Rosa smirk a bit as this topic had come up in the past between Adam and her, "We all know that and we also know that because of that you have saved our lives and also many others many times over, but as you said yourself there will come a day where you may peek at the wrong thing..." Adam quickly interjected, "Or copy exiting texts..." Rosa nodded and continued, "...and trouble will come because of it and that's what Adam is trying to warn you about."

Alex stood there and glared at Adam while she thought about it and after a while she finally

spoke, "Fiiine I'll try and keep that in mind next time, will that satisfy you?"

Adam gently squeezed Rosa's hand in appreciation. "Truthfully no, because I know it's not something you will be able to keep as a promise." Alex's jaw dropped but before she could respond he continued, "Just try and keep in mind that's all I ask." He then pointed at the sphere, "Now you where mentioning destroying this thing..."

Seeing as he was suddenly changing paths and Alex really did not want to stay on the old one she jump on the topic that had started it all. "Well now that I know how to safely destroy it I was wondering if you could help me out as I will need Rosamia help and I assumed that you would love the honors of dealing the final blow."

Rosa was curious on what possible help Alex would need from her, "I don't mind, anything you need."

Adam happily shrugged and reached for one of his scabbard, "Why wait?"

Alex instantly reached out for the sphere, "Whooooa!!!" When he stopped she pulled back, "...And I'm reckless... anyways, if you don't mind I would rather destroy this outside, heck even away from Astrum and not on my coffee table in our house."

"Fine..." A quick smirk appeared on his face which made Alex slowly shake her head, '*That guy, never stop...*'

In order to defuse the situation more than was already starting to Anna proposed a plan, "Why don't we wait until tomorrow morning or this afternoon if we want to rush this and first go get some food, I mean considering the time we must all be hungry?"

Iris happy agreed, "I like that plan, I have yet

to get anything due to the training and if I can help it I would like it to not have an empty stomach if we are to destroy a magical artifact." She then paused and then turned to Alex, "Oh hey why not go to that place that I wanted you to try out?"

Alex seems less enthusiastic about the idea, "Hmm, I've tried to combine food and magic and the results are less than good most time."

"It was fine for me, maybe they learned something you didn't."

"I guess, I can't say that I spent that much time with that particular research..."

Rosamia turned to the two, "I would love to try it out if you don't mind my company."

Seeing as there was no objections to that Mike looked at Anna who was too easy to read so he did not bother to ask her if she was interested as well, "Mind if we tag along too?"

It's then that Adam stood, "Well I'm find with the idea but I'll pass on the food, there is something that I would like to take care of if we will be putting a pause on the main event." As he made his way to the door he quickly turned, "As for the main event, no more stalling, so contact me when you are done and let's do this in the afternoon."

He then walked out and the door closed behind him, "Well grumpy is out..."

Rosa shook her head at Alex and then suddenly made her way to the door as well, "You know on second thought I'll pass as well."

Alexandria was genuinely saddened by the turn of event, "Ahhh but I like your company, and he'll be fine..."

Rosa smirked, "Just admit it, you like his company as well." As Alex mumbled something that no one could understand Rosa smiled and then left as well.

It took no time for Adam to see that Rosa was

now following him, "You can go with them if you want, I'm fine."

Rosa paused at that, "I know you hate it when I ask, but are you fine?"

Again she heard grumbling but from Adam this time and afterwards silence. Because of the resent promise Rosamia had learned a lot from his constant change and she had to admit that she did like this new Adam a lot but she also saw something else. "You know, forget I asked... if you don't want to answer me on this then I'm fine."

Adam suddenly paused and looked panicked, "What? I mean does this mean we don't have to as open anymore or is it because you don't want to..."

Rosa wondered about his panicked state and then it quickly clicked, "OH NO! I'm so sorry, no, no, no, you have it wrong." She then pulled him closer and focused on his eyes, "Adam you have changed a lot here and there and I know you did it for me, which I appreciate, and also I know that it's something that you are still working on. But with this resent promise that we made between each other I also see that I'm being selfish a bit and it's hurting you because you want to tell me but I'm thinking that you are afraid that the wrong words will come out and this put you in a bad stop all the time." She then gave him a warm smile, "I don't want that, I do want to you to talk to me but I also don't want you to feel forced or put you in a position of struggle all the time it happens."

He visibly calmed down, "Hmm, I'll still try anyways, but thanks."

"So I know you wanted to do something but do you want to eat something together?"

He quickly nodded, "Of course, as for the thing I needed to do I just wanted time to think about the future of the team and other things." He then smiled at her offered his hand, "It can wait."

She desperately wanted to know more but she held back and simply took his hand as they walked away from Alex and Iris' house.

Adam looked around and the sun was setting but there was still plenty of light left to see, which was good considering that Iris and Alex had transported the whole team in the middle of a forest. "Ah you where not kidding when you mentioned away from Astrum, how far do we need to go to do this anyways?"

The reality of it is that there they did not really have to go too far at all, but at the same time Alex really did not want to take any chances, she was about to answer Adam but saw a small clearing up ahead of them. "Right here will do, actually." While the others looked around to see if there was anything special about this clearing in the forest Alex made her way to the middle and then kneeled down and touched the ground with a quick spell that created a stone pillar about four foot high. She then looked at Iris, "Can you start putting the glyphs in the stone while I explain to the others?"

Iris moved close and started the inscribing on the newly created stone pillar, while that was happening Alex stood and made her way to Rosa and Adam. "Okay, so this is where your part comes in, can you created your holy shield and hold the spell?"

Rosamia opened her right hand and above it a three to four foot diameter golden glowing shield like object popped up. Alexandria quickly poked at it and felt resistance, making the shield solid. "Great, now can you curve it more?"

Still very puzzled Rosamia followed still with the request and modified the spell, as she did the shield changed shape into what looked more like a

bowl now and then once again Alex tested the inside of it, which was still solid. "Perfect, now hold the spell like that and aim the shield above the pillar that I created."

While that was happening Alex turned back to look at Iris, "You done?"

She took a few seconds to answer as she was just finishing and then stood up, "Just did."

Alex then pointed at Anna and Mike, "Sadly I don't really have anything for you two, so if you can make sure anyone does not intrude while we do this."

The both nodded in agreement as it was a sound plan and took out both their sword and moved at opposite's end of the cleaning. Once in position Alex made her way to the pillar and from a pouch that she had, took out the sphere. She held it in her hand for a few moments while she casted a few spells and then once she looked satisfied she gently placed the sphere in the bottom of the bowl shaped holy shield.

She, with Iris, then moved closer to Adam and Rosa who where about five feet away from the pillar. Once again casting a quick spell, Alex created a small rock shape ice cube while Iris casted shield like spell around the pillar. "I think that things are pretty obvious now but just in case, the idea is to simply break the sphere and let its magic simply dissipate seeing as there will no longer be a container for it anymore. Ideally while it does that I would like it if it was in contact with nothing, hence the magical shield. Still just in case Iris put up some runes that will inform us if anything get in contact with the energy and also created an arcane shield around it so that it can't splash to any of us somehow." She then handed the ice rock shape she had created to Adam, "All that's left if for you to aim for it."

Adam took the ice cube that felt pretty solid, "So I just throw it at the sphere?"

Alex nodded, "Yep, that's all you need to do. I did not want to use your sword and getting rid of ice after the fact is pretty easy so anytime you want got for it..." It's then that a mischievous smile appeared on her face, "Unless you are indirectly telling me that you can't make the hit, than I guess..." She did not have time to finish the taunt as Adam, still looking at her and not his target, threw the ice at the sphere and as soon as it made contact that sphere shattered. "Yea that's not a problem at all."

She made no comments and then turned to see the dark energy pool inside the bowl shape shield but all that did was stop it from dropping on something and did nothing to contain it so very quickly a small black smoke started to rise and evaporate. Everyone simply waited and looked as the final part of the black smoke disappeared completely leaving only the small piece of ice in the middle of the shield. Alexandria quickly snapped her fingers to conjure a flame inside the shield melting the ice and evaporating it pretty quickly. Once that was done she turned to Rosa, "All good, thanks for the help."

Rosa stopped the spell and the shield disappeared, "So that's it?" Adam was very curious about that as well, "It all seemed pretty extreme for so little."

Alex nodded, "Well yea as it should be, if it had been eventful then something wrong would have happened."

They both looked at each other, what she said made a lot of sense but it still felt like something was missing. Iris smiled at the reaction as it was very similar to her the first time she had participated in the safe destruction of a magical

object. "Don't worry I was expecting more flash as well the first time, it's just not like that."

Still having to deal with that feeling of lacking something, they shrugged it off now understanding that their expectations had led them wrong. The process had not taken too much time but visibility was now dwindling as Rosamia then looked around, "I guess we head back to Astrum for today then?"

Alexandria was finishing up with the destruction of the pillar, and then looked at Mike and Anna, "Unless there are any new plans, I guess."

Due to the recuperation of Iris, training of Adam and Rosa and Alex simply being busy everyday they both had held off on making any plans for the group for a while now. They supposed that something could be figured out but that it could wait for now, "Let head back to Astrum and then get together tomorrow morning to talk about that." Mike then looked at Anna, "We will then tell everyone what we have come up with on possible actions that said if any of you has a place or target in mind..."

It's then that a projection of Lady Jessica suddenly appeared, she seemed very worried and considering that she was using the emergency sphere that Rosa had left in her care in order to contact her, her current expression did not surprise anyone. "Rosa come to Missa as soon as you can, use the same location as the last time. I'm sorry but it seems like we need your help, also if you can please hurry as there probably is not much time." Once the message was over the face disappeared, the sphere given was only one way so there was no way to answer her.

Mike looked at Rosa, "Seems we have a destination after all, assuming you wish for us to

join as well."

Rosamia thought about that, Missa was not a place that liked their group and they had a good reason but at the same time Jessica did mention the same location as the last time and the only way to get there was by use of a teleport spell so there is no way that she would assume that Rosa would head there by herself if that was the case. "Let all go and see what we can do to help."

The formed the teleportation circle and while Iris and Alex casted the spell Rosa worried on what could have possibly made Jessica use the sphere. Seeing her discomfort Adam gave her a comforting nod to reassure her that they would find a way to help with whatever the issue was. Before she could reply to his intention Rosa, and all the others, disappeared as the spell had concluded.

Chapter 2

*R*eappearing in Lady Jessica's private room

Rosamia quickly looked around and found her standing next to entrance. She had a surprised look on her face, "I did not expect you to show up so quickly."

Rosa reached out to her and gave her a hug, "It only happened that we were all together when I got the message, still I'm glad to respond so quickly." She then let go and took a step back, "So what happened?"

Jessica then turned her head and looked at Rob, who then stood, in her haste Rosa had not realized that he had been sitting at one of the chairs at the other end of the room next to the private study. "We have lost contact with Catherine, for more than a few days." He then moved closer to Jessica, "We assume that she got captured."

"That makes no sense, Catherine captured?"

Rob was quick to correct Rosa's comments, "You quickly forget our new power levels due to the events that took place."

Rosa was taken aback a bit and felt Adam move closer to her, "Hmm, sorry about that it's just hard for me to imagine Catherine in any kind of state that someone would see her as weak enough to be a target, I meant no offence."

Rob nodded, "None taken, considering who we are talking about I can see that point of view as well. Still it has been done it seems."

Seeing as it was twice Mike could not hold it anymore, "Seems? She is captured right?"

Jessica took out the pendant around her neck,

"She has been gone for few days as Rob said and I cannot contact her with this."

Alexandria nodded, "The Council member communication pendant, in theory distance should be no issues with that."

Rob then spoke up, "We believe that she is in the hands of the Crusaders not part of our faction."

This confused mostly everyone and Adam was the first of the group to voice his comment, "Last time it was mentioned that there was a bit of a split happening but what you're implying is pretty drastic there."

Rob had a sudden sadden look on his face, "I know the thought of it has been very troubling for me as well." He then took a quick breath and continued, "As you know, it seems," He then quickly looked at Jessica, "there has been a divide of sorts for the last few months over how Missa is being lead. This conflict in ideology was manageable at the beginning but then when it continued to the Crusader ranks it become more than expected. It also did not help that the main instigator from the Crusaders was the previous lieutenant of the General, William. He rallied those that believed him and his words then affected the Order. From there a divide started to occur."

Jessica then continued, "When you last came to Missa, Catherine and Rob where working to help heal this divide and while they had some success with some members of the Order they made no change in the Crusaders ranks. Actually as time continued the opposite started to occur and more Crusaders joined William's ranks."

Rosamia was crushed to hear this, "How was he able to sway so many to his side?"

"By promising them something, that to our knowledge cannot be done, the return of the lord of light."

Alexandria shook her head, "That's... impossible."

Rob slowly nodded, "True but then again, not too long ago we all thought that his return might be impossible and yet it happened. More than that, we also thought that his death would also be impossible unless at the hands of the lord of darkness and yet you people managed that task." He then glared at Alex, "So are you really sure that it's impossible? And even if it is, how do you not expect people to believe when impossible has already been broken so many times?"

Alex had no answers for him and wished that she had said nothing. Seeing her discomfort, something that Rosa shared a bit but for different reasons, she once again took focus, "So what did you call us to help you with, from the looks of it there are a lot of possibilities?"

Jessica nodded, "It would seem but really after some debate with Rob we wish for you to help us find Catherine."

"Only to find her?"

Rob answered Rosa puzzled look, "For now yes, we need to know first if she is still alive, how she is being treated and the situation that she is in. Depending on those answers it will define the next steps, which we may need your help with or not." He then turned to all of them, "All out war has not started and I would like to keep it that way, or at least not be its instigator."

Alex then reached out to Jessica, "Well if you only want to find her it should be easy with that thing around your neck, can I have it please?"

Jessica removed her necklace and handed it to Alex, "How will you do so with this if we cannot contact her? Also we were told by Lithius that they could not be used to be tracked so how can it be of use?"

Alex handed the necklace with the pendant attached to Iris, "Here you should know what and how to do it now, and while you do that I'll explain to the others." Iris took the item and started casting. "They cannot be used to pinpoint your location that is true, but if you have one of them in your possession and know a few choice spells they can actually be used to track another. Still doing so will let the person wearing it know so it's not the best idea if you are trying to find someone without them knowing."

Adam wondered about that a bit, "Ours have less protection right?"

Alex nodded, "Sadly yes, I did raise the protection a bit but in order to do the same as what the Council did it would mean that all those spheres that we left with others would stop working and I figured that would not be in the best interested to those that we gave them too."

She was then cut off as Iris finished, "I found her..." Jessica and Rob where visibly happy which in a way sadden Alex as Iris had made a bit of a mistake, "Good but you need to clarify that, you found her pendant only for sure."

Iris mentally slapped herself for her mistake, she should have known better. Her reaction must have been more visible then she had assumed as Jessica moved closer to her, "It's fine at least we are closer to where we were. Now where was her pendant found?"

Iris handed the necklace back to Jessica and slowly lowered her head in thanks, "The spell is telling me it's in a building to the edge of Missa in the north."

Given what had been told Rob and Jessica looked at each other and so did Rosa and Adam. "Is there a way for us to see this location, or should we get a map for you to point it out?"

Iris thought about it for a quick moment, "Well we can do that. But with your permission I can simply give you the location inside your heads." She then quickly added in order to not repeat the same mistake as before, "The link would only be one way so there is no fear of me getting anything back."

While Alex looked proud at Iris's recent new abilities in the arcane art, Rob and Jessica shared a quick look between each other and then turned to her, "You have our permission."

Once the spell was cast all those that had lived in the city for a while or longer instantly knew the location. Still Adam was the first to call it out, "That's one of the Crusader outposts in the city, and I guess that is where William is keeping all his troops as well?"

A sullen look then appeared on Rob face, "If only it were so."

Everyone looked at him to elaborate but it was Jessica that filled in the blanks, "As was mentioned in the passing days more and more Crusaders have joined his ranks, we still currently have more than half our total numbers under our control but..." as she trailed off Rosamia was stunned, *'How could this have happened?'*

Adam was less private about his thoughts on the matter, "Wait you mean to tell me that William has nearly half of all the Crusaders under his control and has kidnapped Catherine. Is there anything else?"

Rob cleared his throat, "We have also lost all the Enforcers, they were the first to go actually."

This time even Adam was silent. Mike took that as a cue to step in, "Well while you know more your request has yet to be answered." He then quickly looked at Rosa and Adam, "And I think we know enough now to act."

Before he could continue Rob interjected, "What do you plan on doing next?"

Considering the current situation and also the Lights Templar reputation in Missa Mike understood Rob's worries. "We are to split up." He then turned to the group, "Rosamia, Adam and Iris you go investigate the location as best as you can. Figure how many Crusaders are posted there and anything else you can find out without being spotted, so recon only. Also Rosamia you are the lead of the team." Seeing as there was no objection from the three he continued, "Anna, Alexandria and I will do the same but use different methods of scouting in order to possibly determine if Catherine is in the building."

Before he could finish Rosa got his attentions, "If we or you find her, should we try and do anything?"

Mike nodded understanding the reason for the question considering the current situation in Missa. He then looked at Rob and Jessica, "If she is being hurt or will get hurt then yes, otherwise get as much information as you can and report back here in about three hours."

Both Rob and Jessica seem to agree with the plan and with that Mike once again turned to the group, "Looks like we are good to go."

While Iris grabbed on to Rosa and Adam and started casting Rosamia looked at Jessica and Rob, "We will get the information you need and make sure not to cause you more trouble then we already have in the past."

While Alex did the same with Anna and Mike, he quickly added before they too disappeared, "See you both in three hours with hopefully better news."

When they were all gone Jessica turned to Rob, "Well at least things are off to a good start."

Rob did not disagree with her but still worried about this decision to involve them, "Let's just hope that it continues this way."

Rosamia's team was now only a few blocks away from the Crusaders outpost it's then that she figured that she would share her orders with the others. "The goal is to try and figure out if she is in the building and her state but we also need to know so much more." She turned to Adam, "Do what you do best, we need to know how many there are around the complex and in if you can figure it out."

"Should not be a problem, I'll use my tracking spell and see what I can see."

She then turned to Iris, "Now we all know that those pendants don't need you to have it in your possession in order to activate in some shape." They instantly silently groaned at the amount of time that a communication suddenly appeared while in the middle of a conversation or even when they were asleep, "So why is this one not picking up when Jessica tries to? I'm guessing that there must be a spell around this place that prevents or blocks it somehow."

Iris nodded, "Seems to be the logical thing yes, so I'll try and figure out if I can see anything. If I find it should I try and shut it down?"

Rosa saw that Iris already knew to answer to this but confirmed it anyways, "No, that can't be a run of the mill spell so it's safe to say that if it goes down then it will probably be known. Just get the spell information so that when the time comes it can be shutdown quick. While you do that I'll stay around you and give you cover and protection."

"Sounds good"

With the orders given Adam made his way out,

"I'll meet you back here when I'm done."

As he was about to leave an idea then occurred to Iris, "If you want I can cast an invisibility spell on you? It should make things easier." She was about to start casting the spell but then he stopped her, "I appreciate the thought but I'll pass, as Rosa mentioned there are probably spells around the place and maybe there is one that will detect that type of thing."

While he did have a point Iris was not total convinced, "Sure but I think you are being overly cautious as the opposite holds true for the detection spell..." Adam then cut her off, "For something like you, sure, but me, I personally think that I would walk right in it without knowing."

She wanted to keep debating the matter a bit but he did not give her time to come up with anything as he turned around and made his way out, "Take care both of you."

They both looked at him disappeared in the darkness now that it was nighttime. Iris turned to Rosa, "Shall we go..." she stopped short when she saw that Rosa was gazing a bit longer then she had probably intended at where Adam had disappeared. This made her smile, "I take it that things are going good between the two of you?"

The question made Rosa realize the moment of distraction that she had caused but it did not bother her at all, in fact a pleasant smile suddenly appeared on her face. "You could say that." It then turned mischievous, "Now before you start acting like your sister with the questions let do our parts first."

Iris signed deeply, "Fine." She then looked in the direction of the outpost, the two story building was fairly big and as such they could see it major features without issues from where they were.

Double doors at the entrance, tones of windows on the first floor but much less on the second so much so that most of the rooms probably did not have any. There was also no fence or any obstacle blocking the building, save for the many guards around it. "Hmmm..." Iris then looked around, while the outpost did have a large clearing around it past that you had regular housing of varying levels. "Let's get closer but use those three story houses as cover."

Rosa and Iris both walked back and zigzagged closer to the taller houses closer to the outpost being careful not to get close to the clearing. "Okay I should be good, while I cast if you see anything just pull me away. That will break my spell but will not cause any issues other than that." As Rosa nodded in confirmation Iris began her task.

From Rosa's point of view Iris did take a longer time then expected in order to do what she was expected to do. Still she had also casted a multitude of different spells so she must have found more than one spell active around the outpost. Eventually she finally stopped and started to rub her forehead, "I guess Adam was not being too cautious after all. There are spells on top of spells in that place, nothing too worrisome and nothing that will stop us from getting in, but enough to block anything trying to remotely get in." She then turned to Rosa, "Because of that I can't look inside and confirm, and I don't think Adam will be able to as well. I can't try and peek inside a guard head but in order not to get discovered I can only see what they are currently thinking about."

Rosa thought about that, "Try it then, it's not a guarantee as they could simply not know what they are guarding but there still could be useful information."

Iris once again resumed casting but it did not

take anytime this time around unfortunately the experience left her confused, "This makes no sense..." instead of explaining she casted the same spell again, and again, but each time the confusion only increased. "I don't get it I'm getting nothing from them."

This puzzled Rosa, "Nothing as in nothing of importance or..."

"That's just it, nothing... It's like they are empty or devoid of thought."

Now Rosa was confused as well, "That makes little sense, and is impossible. Could a spell be in play, I mean you checked the place but not the people I'm assuming."

Iris nodded at that, "True, hmm, but confirming that..."

Rosa assumed that she was busy trying to figure out a way to confirm this without being detected and with her limited knowledge of arcane magic there was little she could do to help with that, so instead she looked around to see if there was anything else that could be done. Supper time had passed by now for a while and most of the lights in the homes had been turned off but there was still a few that were still opened, which gave Rosa an idea. "Iris instead of looking in the minds of the guards can you look inside the head of the people around here, more specifically those still awake living next to the outpost."

Iris quickly understood, "I see, to see if they saw anything. Sure I can do that, and there is no way that they have any protection so I can be a bit more intrusive and not fear getting found out."

Rosa then followed Iris around going from home to home placing her hand on the wall outside and then focusing inside for a while. Eventually it looks like she found something, "This person is really being cautious. He saw the Crusaders bring

someone in, they were bound and wrapped up so they could not tell who, but it was a few days ago and since then the troops around have double and no one has left the place. All this is making him wonder if he should leave for a while in case something big happens around."

Rosa thought about the situation, "It's pretty circumstantial but we know that she was abducted and that her pendant is in that place so there is a good chance that the person they had covered was Catherine. Plus because of who she is there is no one here that would not recognize her so they would have to cover her up."

"So you are thinking that she is in there too?"

She nodded, "I am..." She then looked around and tried to figure out how much time has passed, "Hmm, lets head back. I'm thinking Adam should be done now and I think that we also hit a wall of what we can learn." Iris nodded in approval and they started to make their way back to their original location.

The three appeared a few block away from the outpost and where currently on the top of a roof of one the residential houses. "So when you mentioned a different method you really meant magic right?"

Mike smiled, "Yes I did. I figure that there may be too many spells around so it may limit Rosa's team progress."

"And yet you want me to use magic still in order to find out?"

Anna smiled at the mild teasing and figured she would join in but with a different target, "Oh I'm sure you know of a way around that little problem as this must be a wall that you have run into a few times already."

Alexandria cleared her throat, "Ah... I really don't know what you are referring too, not one bit. Still you are right as there is a spell that I can use." As she thought of the spell and her current situation and then an annoying experience popped in her head. This made her drop her guard for a second, which made Anna wonder. "Joking aside, it's not an issue right?"

Alex closed her eye for a second and pushed the thought away and smiled, "It's fine, it's just that the spell leave me completely defenseless while it's active so if anything happens to me here while I'm away..."

She did not have to finish the thought as even Mike quickly understood the reference, "If you don't feel comfortable then it's your call." She quickly stopped him, "No it's fine, this is not like the last time when I was captured, you two are around me this time and I trust both of you with my life." She then turned towards the outpost, "Plus not the type of worry and experience I want controlling my future, so I'm doing this." She quickly smiled at both of them and then sat down cross-legged and then closed her eyes.

Once the spell was complete an apparition of Alexandria's self was suddenly floating above the roof of the outpost. In this form there would be no way for anyone to see her and not having any physical presence she was also intangible. The only issue is that she could only learn anything from what she saw with her eyes as all other senses where blocked.

Quickly she commanded herself to drop down through the roof and very quickly was inside on the second floor. The inside looked pretty normal and fortunately she had conveniently dropped in a long corridor. On each side you had single doors that lead to different rooms but there was one in

particular that had three guards around it. Two to each side of the door and one on the opposing side, figuring that was a good place to start Alex made her way there.

When she appeared inside the room she was stunned to see that she had already hit the jackpot. In the middle of the now empty room you had a single chair and on that chair you had Catherine tied up and gagged. Her head was lowered so Alex slowly closed in and looked down to confirm. As she did Alexandria was suddenly very frustrated. As if resent events resurfacing in her head had not been enough she had to witness this, it felt like a brick wall slammed into her.

'I really wish I could say something or let you know somehow that you are not alone, I know that it's what I really wanted to hear in your position.' She knew that there was no point but she did it anyways and screamed her name, as she did Catherine raised her head, which partly surprised Alex. The eyes that glared back at her had a lot of fury in them. *'Not what I was expecting but okay. Plus this confirm that you are alive and don't seem harmed.'* She looked at her again, *'don't worry you won't have to endure this for longer, we will make sure of that.'*

It's then that suddenly Alexandria stopped as she felt something; it was a feeling of someone looking for something but not finding it. *'What is that?'* She took a moment to try and focus on the feeling but she could not get anything else out of it, still it was now present around her which it had not been before.

'I think it's time I leave now and figure this mystery later.' She made her way outside the complex and then terminated the spell.

It was a bit disorienting appearing back in her body but after a few second everything was back to

normal. As she stood she noticed that the two focused on her, "She there and she's alive."

This was good news but Anna saw that there was more to it as Alexandria looked a little bit shaken, "Was there something else?"

There was a small chuckle as there was no point in trying to hide it plus she probably shouldn't anyways. "During the spell it felt like something was wandering around, if that makes any sense."

This was not good new at all and Mike quickly gave a concerned look at Anna. "Alexandria, is there anything else that you can tell us about this something?"

"I tried to look into it but could not get anything about it, I could have stayed to figure it out but something did not feel right and I figured that it would be best to leave." She then turned to the two, "I'm sorry that all this is not much help, but I figured that was the right call."

Anna reached out to her, "No worries and also never question that and always follow those feelings."

Reassured by her actions Alex looked at Mike who seemed in deep thought, "I know he's not going to disagree with your comment but..."

Anna broke away, "No worries on that, but you did give him a piece of puzzle that he needs to think about." To show that he was not completely out of it Mike nodded, "That presence makes things, interesting."

To that Anna was surprised, "I did not think that you would use that word to explain it."

"Actually I agree with you, but it does help explain a lot and at the same time creates way more questions..." He then turned to the outpost, "So she is confirmed to be there but now it's also confirmed that this is something else as well."

Suddenly he looked at Alex, "Hmm, I have a personal question to ask."

Anything coming from the two would not bother her at all, assuming she was able to answer she would share anything. Seeing her nonchalance Mike appreciated it but at the same time figured that this would be a bit more private then she had intended, so because of it he leaned in very close to her and whispered, "It's about that link you have with Iris..."

It was too low for Anna to hear but it must have been something interesting as Alex instantly moved back a bit from the comment and suddenly she was in deep thought. Then she turned to Anna with a questioning gaze, Anna had a bit of a smirk appear on her face as she figured that there where tones of questions she wanted to ask but did not know how to approach it. With that she figured that she would help her out, "Whatever he said I don't know about it and if you wish for me not to know that's fine as well." She could tell that Alex was relieved to hear this but was still curious about something, "We don't share everything between us." She then looked at Mike, "He know nothing of the conversations we had and nor did he ask, same with me for this."

Alex wondered how that worked but did not care because in the end they trusted each other and they also trusted her as well. "Thanks for that, and I am sorry..." With that she took two of her fingers and raised them to press them on Mike forehead.

'I guess part of me wanted to forget that you knew more about that than the others, She really should not have told you that and I really should have talked to you about it as the knowledge of this could be very dangerous for the both of us if it got out.'

Mike had figured that it was important but the level of seriousness in Alexandria voice was more than enough for him not to pry more about the reasons behind it. *'I understand and will not share any of it to anyone.'*

She did not really know why but still there was a sudden relief that was felt at those words, *'With that out of the way, why did you bring it up?'*

The voice inside his head was more the regular Alexandria now which pleased him, *'I'm not sure if you can answer then but, knowing than the pendants don't work as they are blocked is it possible that your link with her could also be blocked?'*

The question did not make any sense to Alex as he already knew the answer to that but then it clicked, *'Right you don't know how common or uncommon that spell is that prevented Iris from knowing where I was. It's then that his probable plan was starting to form in her head, Yea I see where you are going with that and you are right, if that spell is blocked again somehow we are dealing with something pretty big... again...'*

He suddenly nodded and had a small smirk on his face, *'Good that is all I needed to know, thanks and sorry at the same time.'* He just heard a deep sigh in his head and then she cut off the spell.

"It's alright, I understand why now."

Anna figured that she would tease them both, *"Secret meeting all done now?"*

Alex smiled and looked a bit less worried, "Yes, but what now? Do we go in and save her?" Once again worry showed up on her face, "I mean she should not have to deal with that, no one should."

This time it was Mike that let out a deep breath, "That is not for us to determine just yet. For now let just wait for Rosamia team to be done and report all back to Jessica and Rob, then we

should know what the next move is when it comes to Catherine."

It was clear that Alex was not a fan of that answer but there were many reasons why it was the best plan for now so she let it go for as much as she could and waited for the others to be done.

Much more time had passed and now everyone was present in the large meeting room for the High Order. A small orb had been setup by Alexandria and Iris to be able to show everyone a picture of what you were thinking, as had been setup in the Council room meetings in Astrum. This had helped incredibly to update everyone on what they had found, especially with Adam's recognition and Iris's explanation on the spells that she had found around the outpost and where the area of effect was. Rosa had also mentioned what they had found about the Crusaders having bought someone at the outpost, seemingly unwillingly and then not having left yet. With all that Alex confirmed it all by showing them how she had found Catherine and the room that she was in.

There was a silence with that visual and Rosa was the first to break it, "Well we have to save her, that's for sure, are we going now?" As she looked at the group there was little resistance to the idea but the same could not be said for the other side, "Jessica?"

"No worries, we are saving her..." She then turned to Rob, "Yes we are, but..."

"But what?" There was a quick glance of surprise as they expected the comment from Adam but the voice that had asked was Alex, when they turned to him for his reaction he simply shrugged.

"Tomorrow I am to meet the one in charge of this movement and I wonder if saving her now

would impede that?"

"What? I don't get it you would prioritize that over her life?" Again the group had all tough it but had assumed that again Adam would have been the one to say something but this time it was Rosa, his reaction was a simple smile but there was an odd part that looked a bit proud.

"Jessica?"

Jessica took a deep breath; she understood Rosa confusion she was also was starting to understand why Rosa at the time would have had issues with her High Order position. "This will be hard to explain so please let us finish until the end. For a while now we have tried to learn who was in charge of this movement, as had it been a crisis of faith at what had happened then we would probably not be in the position that we are in right now. No instead you had William make great claims in order to have more people flock to his side, but it was obvious to know that William was not the person in charge as he would have no knowledge on how to do what he promised and many would know this."

Rob continued, "And yet somehow everyone stayed, believed in his word and more flocked to him. Both Catherine and I had many meeting with him but all those conversation only finished in circles with the same message of brining things to the way it was. Then Catherine disappeared and the meetings stopped, it was easy to see who the cause was once it was confirmed that she was in fact gone. But then the message changed and finally I was told that I would meet the one in charge."

"That meeting is tomorrow, both Catherine and Rob have worked very hard to get this answer and I'm not sure Catherine would want this chance to slip by on her account."

Part of Rosa could not believe it, "So when do we save her? After the meeting or after Rob get captured too, as this meeting is probably a trap as I'm sure you already know.

Rob nodded but Jessica was the one that answered, "In that scenario then it's been decide to ask your group for full assistance ignoring consequences." It was clear to see that Rosa was not happy with the answer and she was not the only one, "Please understand, she is not hurt from Alex's report and of course I don't like this as well, same with Rob, but Rosa please see that this is the right thing to do. We need to learn more about this situation if we are to save Missa and I'm not using the term loosely as Missa needs saving."

While Rosa seem to calm down Jessica gave a pleading look at Rob. Who then recalled the image of Catherine bound against her will in that room. "We can modify the plan a bit..." All eyes were suddenly on Rob, "I still need to go to this meeting, trap or not, but I supposed if it's preordained to fail and not reach a consensus between whoever this person is and us, than I see little harm in asking you to go and save Catherine while the meeting is in process. At the same time her capture is not something that we can simply brush off and it should be answered in some form or another then using only dialog."

It was not perfect but it was something that both Rosa and Alex could agree on from the looks of it. Rosa lowered her head in Jessica direction in thanks, "We will wait until the time come, and then save her and bring her back here." She then smiled at Rob, "And if something goes wrong promise to do the same to you as well, still hopefully it will not be needed."

Rob also agreed with that, "Here is hoping that is the case, yes and thank you for the assistance

and understanding."

With all that settled Jessica jumped in, "My thanks as well, and in the mean time, please rest up here. The top floor has been blocked off, as it often is, and two rooms have been prepared for your group, one for the women and one for the men, if you wish I can show you there now."

Suddenly it was Mike and Anna that looked at each other and Adam could only smirk at that, "I'm sure that you two can spend one night apart."

Mike reached closed to Anna and hugged her, as he did he quickly whispered something in her ear, "Tell Alexandria to show Iris... Also I love you." Anna gave him a half smile and whispered back "It's good that you added that at the end there." She then kissed him and continued to whisper, "I love you as well."

It was clear to all that they did not want to let each other go but for the sake of everyone they finally did. Jessica then led them to their rooms, thanked them and also wished them good night.

Once the door closed Alexandria instantly casted a spell on the room, "It's just us know, no one else can hear... Also it can't be just me that's frustrated by all this?"

Rosa sat on her bed, "No I am too, but Jessica's actions are making me wonder as well..."

Iris understood where she was going with that, "I'm stunned too actually." As she started to remove her gear she continued, "I'm starting to see why you had it hard back then now if that is the type of choices they make."

"And yet, Jessica is newer at it then I was and seem to be acclimating so well, I'm happy for her but ..."

This was not the direction that Alex had hoped that the conversation would have taken them but at the same time saw that this was bothering her

friend. "Personally I would not think about it too much you are you and she is she, maybe this type of thing is simply not your thing, nothing wrong with that."

Rosa did think about that and Alex did have a point. With her armor all off Anna figured now would be a good time to jump in, "Rosa also has a something extra that Jessica seems to be missing, a certain life experience that happened. I'm assuming that during that time this would have played a big factor in your overall mood when you saw all the issues that were in your way of what you wanted to accomplish."

This gave more for Rosa to think about and from there it seems that the conversation simply died out, because of that Iris made herself ready to go to bed.

"Sorry Iris but you can't go to bed yet..."

"What?!" They both answered at the same time but the tone was completely different. One was more questioning and somewhat disappointed while the other was full of hope and anxiousness. With that Alex moved closer to Anna, "This is one of those secret plans right? He told you something right? Are we saving her tonight after all?"

Both Iris and Rosa looked at Anna, they did not think it would be the case but it also would not be the first time. Anna slowly shook her head, "Sorry Alex, we are waiting until tomorrow after all." Iris and Rosa were both okay with that thought for different reasons, one because it would be difficult to take on so many targets with less people and the other because the consequences of those actions would be hard to repair, assuming they could.

Alexandria on the other hand was disappointed, "Okay but there is still something right?"

"Yes, we need you to teach Iris anything she may need for tomorrow."

Iris glanced at Rosa and then Anna, "Why, I mean with Alex there is no reason for me to take the lead on this."

Anna nodded, "Normally that would be true but Alex will not be with you, tomorrow we split up again, same configuration." She then looked at Rosa, "Same team leads."

Rosa was not against the idea but still figured that it was an odd choice, "Any reason why we are going about it that way?"

"Yes, it's pretty clear that Rob is possibly walking into a trap but the same could hold true for us as well." They all suddenly understood, more so Alex probably due to the question Mike had asked her about, still Anna continued to clarify. "We don't know what we are stepping into and there are, as always, a lot of questions. Still because of that let's try and do something different to keep the opponent off guard."

Rosa slowly nodded, "That makes sense, and with Alex with you and Iris with us then we should be able to quickly react if something happens one way of the other."

"Correct, but from what I understand, do expect communication to possibly drop between the two teams." Rosamia simply took that in consideration while Iris turned to Alex with a puzzled look. As if feeling her two eyes look at her behind her head Alex sent a quick message to Iris head, *'It can happen, it's happened before, remember we don't know what to expect.'*

Iris took a deep breath and then looked at the ceiling, "Ah... I am so not getting any rest tonight."

Alex then turned and walked closer to her,

"Nope..."

Anna had to smile, even if it was not funny,

she mouthed a word of sorry at Iris that she saw and acknowledged but then her focus needed to be on Alex if she was going to be able to do what may need to be done tomorrow. She looked at Rosa, who seemed to be thinking by herself on the tactics for tomorrow and it's then that she wondered on how Mike would update Adam. She then shrugged it off, there was nothing she could do about that and so she figured that getting some rest would be the thing to do.

In the other room, Mike and Adam were laying in each of their own beds.

"Night, Adam."

"Night..."

The next morning the Lights Templar were getting ready in the large meeting room, at this point they were only waiting on Jessica to give them the okay in order to try and time his meeting with the rescue. Adam finished his final check, "So I'm assuming that there is a plan for this rescue? I mean considering how tired those two look something must be up." He then pointed at Iris and Alexandria.

Everyone looked at Mike, "You did not tell him anything?"

Mike shrugged and then turned to Adam, "Same split teams, Rosamia is in charge and her team is the one going in. Do you need anything else?"

He thought about it, saw Rosa concerned look but nodded his head, "No I'm good, as long as she knows what needs to be done then there is no worries on my end."

Given his years as a Crusader that did not sit

right with Rosa for some reason but there was no time to pursue the issue as Jessica entered the room. "Rob should have arrived now, you can go." There was a small pause as she turned to Rosa, "Please bring her back."

It was clear to see that Jessica was nervous about all this, the odds where in the groups favor but then again there was never any way to one hundred percent guarantee success and everyone in the room fully knew that. Still Rosa approached Jessica and wrapped her arms around her, "We will get her back, I promise." Rosa felt Jessica nod and as she broke the hug Jessica looked in Rosa's eye, "Missa needs Catherine now, more then you may realize." There was a small smile that then appeared on her face, "Still I know of no one else to entrust this rescue to so I'll believe in your promise."

When Rosa stepped back to join with Iris and Adam, Jessica added, "While you are gone, just in case, I'll prepare some medical supplies here as I am assuming that you will return to this location once the mission is done?"

Iris was already in the process of casting for her group and so was Alex, so Mike confirmed her question. "As soon as we can and yes this is our planned returned point. We will get this done." and with that both team disappeared.

They both reappeared on top of a three story house about a block and away from the outpost. Adam turned back as he had moved forward as soon as his group had arrived, "It seems to be about the same numbers as before so if Rob is going in an ambush they did not sacrifice too many troops if any for it." He then shrugged, "Or they simply have that many to spare..."

That thought was not pleasing to anyone but it was a possible reality they needed to face, still Mike did not think that this was the time to think too much about that thought. "Alexandria start breaking as many protections spells as Iris will need to get in." He then turned to the other group, "Iris when she gives you the go, jump in, also Rosamia, good luck."

There was little to say so Rosamia and Iris both nodded in confirmation and all three got into position with Adam in front, ready to jump in and Iris and Rosa behind him.

While Alex was busy with the spell Anna pulled back next to Mike, "You're doing this on purpose aren't you?"

There was a little smile that she saw quickly appear on his face, "A bit."

She smiled back, "I approve, but I also think there is more to it than just for her."

"There is, but there are zero guarantees on that other part. But then again as you said that first part alone is worth it so why not see how far it can go."

"Tsk, tsk, evil..."

She was only teasing him and they both knew that as they shared a smile, which was also when Alex gave Iris the signal and the first group disappeared. Seeing this they pulled out their sword and moved closer to Alex. "Good luck Iris..."

It did not take long for Rosamia's group to appear in the room that had been described by Alex and as luck would have it Catherine was still present as well. Adam though that too lucky still he did not say anything and moved closer to the only door in the room ready to act if it opened.

Rosamia moved close to Catherine and removed her gag and then proceeded to remove her bindings that kept her on the chair. "You will be

out of here soon I promise."

Catherine cleared her throat, "I knew they would send you in to save me, you really should not have done that."

Rosa quickly inspected her for wounds now that Catherine was once again able to move if she wanted. "Really, you still hate me that much for what I did that even in this situation... I thought that..."

"Please stop, this has nothing to do with that. This has to do with the fact that I was simply bait." She saw confusion in Rosa's eye so she elaborated, "Don't make me shame myself more, you're smart enough to figure it out..."

Rosa did figure it out and then looked at Iris who slowly shook her head, "Sorry it happened so quickly, as soon as we came in my teleport spell was locked out and I could not pick a valid position."

"Could we not simply go way up? I know it's not a perfect plan but it could work."

"I thought of that, while you were removing her binding I tried to do just that but then a block was put in place for the spell all together."

Rosamia looked back at Adam's direction to check the door, "Well seems we still have some time, I take it contact is also blocked?" Iris simply nodded, "Swell..."

Catherine finally stood slowly, "So what now, also are you not less for my rescue?"

Rosamia was forced to smile at the sarcasm in her voice; "We figured that it may be a trap so we split up, we also figured that communication between the teams would also be blocked, but teleportation?" she then turned to Iris to confirm, "Actually that was also part of the plan, well from Alex's perspective. I'll start working on the spell now to get us out."

She moved to the opposite of the room and placed her hand on the wall and started inspecting the spell causing all these issues. While she did that Adam took a step back, "I knew there was more to the plan, do you mind if I add to it?" He did not wait for a conformation and he pointed his sword to the door, "Mind placing that thing on ice? They are starting to group up on the other side."

Catherine raised an eyebrow, "Probably should have asked for that sooner as your caster is..." It's then that she stopped and turned to Rosa in mild shock as she pulled back three ice arrows and let them fly around the door creating a large cover of ice around it. Rosa casting arcane magic was not too surprising as even Catherine could do it now in order to substitute the lack of holy but the power of the type of spells that she already wielded was surprising. "How did you learn how to do that so quickly, is it another trick?"

"I'm not sure what you mean, I learn the normal way with what Iris and Alex showed me..."

Before she could continue Adam interrupted her, "They are taking a swing at the door so get ready to..." He then stopped and no one near him asked why as they saw it too. In order to break the door they could use their swords, a ram or even their foot but none of that was used as instead the Crusaders on the other side used their fist to punch through and if not for the ice around it would have succeeded with only one swing.

There were so many questions but Adam was the first to react, "Rosa there are twenty on the other side now and more are incoming."

Rosa looked around the room and there was nothing to use save for the chair that was of little help, if they got in they would be encircled in no time. So with that she kneeled down and placed her hand on the floor and casted a quick wall of ice

to one side and then turned to the other side and did the same. This created a tunnel of sort to funnel them in and at the end of it was Adam.

"Adam I'm not so good with this spell so I'll have to constantly reinforce it as I'm assuming they will try and destroy it pretty quick."

"Got it..." He was about to say more but stopped and quickly moved both his swords to cover his face and midsection as best as he could and he got lucky as instantly a Crusader appeared in front of him and swung, his blade hit one of his own so most of the blow was blocked but it did slide over to his side and score a small hit.

"ADAM!" Rosamia instantly casted her holy shield pushing the Crusader back.

"Rosa the ground..."

As Adam got back into position to block the opening with his body Rosa then created a thin layer of ice on the floor and hoped that would be enough to stop the enhanced speed.

Catherine was confused, "How can they use they powers again, that's impossible..."

It did not take long to see that the Crusaders canceled their speed and instead moved on to strength. While they did that Adam switch up his blades and pulled out his new weapon, "That's something I'm sure is going to frustrate a certain someone for a while but in the mean time let try and level the playing field a bit."

Rosamia was on total defense, Iris was busy still trying to remove the spell that was blocking them and Adam was preparing to meet a group of Crusader, with magical abilities once again, and all Catherine could do was feel frustrated by it all.

Rob arrived at his destination which was a medium size church that was about four stories

tall, it too was at the edge of Missa but on the opposite side of the outpost that Catherine had been confirmed to be held. Rob paused as he entered the place as it was exactly as you would have expected from a church. Priest and Priestess everywhere with some pages going around from one place to the other, you also had a large group of them praying. The only thing that threw the room out of balance was the sole Crusader standing in the middle of the isle. As soon as he was him the Crusader approached Rob, "I'm happy that you could make it Rob."

The Crusader in question was William which was of little surprise still he was the only Crusader there which did gave Rob a bit of a pause on the situation as he too had assumed that this was going to be a trap for him. William was now close to him with his hand extended, "Please follow me." Rob shook his hand and followed him as he requested.

"I take it that I'm still to meet the person that is in charge?"

"Why yes, and I'm sure once you met him all will be clear to you."

The line was so cliché that Rob did not know what to answer so he said nothing and continued to follow the Crusader to the third floor where some private meeting rooms could be found. Again other than William no other Crusader could be found.

He showed him to a small room with a very nice wooded desk and two very large chairs position opposite to each other. William entered first and, with his open hand, pointed to Rob to sit on the chair that had its back at the door. Seeing as there was no one else currently in the room this meant that if Rob sat there he would have to twist himself in order to see who entered. Rob sat as

instructed and tried to look unfazed by what was probably a small mind game. What Rob also noticed was that William did not sit on the chair across him but instead stood behind and to the right of it, clearly showing that whoever was going to sit there commanded him.

About five minutes of silence passed, there was little reason to talk to William as Rob had tried many times before with Catherine plus while he waited William seemed unresponsive. There was no way that the Crusader had fallen asleep nor did Rob think that he was not paying attentions to his actions and yet he seemed off somehow. Before his curiosity got the better of him Rob suddenly heard the door open behind him and only then did William react with a simple nod of his head in respect to whoever had just entered.

Rob was suddenly a bit frustrated by this little game but did his best not to fall in the trap and waited for the person to slowly move in his peripheral vision, what Rob saw stunned him so much that he instantly forgot what he was there for in the first place and instantly stood up and reached out for the person.

"Joseph I am so glad to see you alive, where have you been? All of us in the High Order have been looking for you."

The old High Order member that had disappeared when they had felt the lord of light disappeared from their minds during the moment of his defeat took Rob hand and gladly shook it. "I need some time once the event happened. I am glad to see that you are doing well as well Rob." He then let go of his hand and pointed to the chair with an open hand, "Now please sit and let answer your questions."

Rob sat back down, the hand shake had been as he had remembered from Joseph and the way

he slowly moved around due to his older age was also what he remembered. As he finally sat down Rob figured that this would be a good sign and yet confusing considering the current actions.

"Now as I mentioned, I have been away, the shock of what happened I am sadden to say did confuse me for some time. But eventually I saw it for what it was... a ruse."

There was a small pause in the last word he had said and that word also sent Rob in a state of confusion, he tried his best to hide it but there simply was no way for him to do so and so he figured that he would simply act on it. "I'm sorry, a ruse?"

Joseph had a faint smile, "Yes a ruse, you think that the lord of light is dead correct?"

"Well in a way yes..."

Before he could continue Joseph cut him off, "Because his blessings are no longer with us and there are many account of people having seen his defeat." He then took a long pause, "But you noticed the people below, they are still praying... are they not doing the same at the main church anymore?"

"Of course they are... we all are."

"This is good news, but if he is gone, why do so?"

Rob figured where he was going but at the same time it made no sense to him from what he had been told. "Only his avatar form was destroyed and in doing so the conduit to our holy power was also destroyed. That said the being is thought to still be alive and this is to who we pray too."

Joseph nodded, "Good but also untrue. Rob I'm am happy that I have invited you here today in order to show you the truth as it was shown to me. You have been lied too..." as a demonstration of this Joseph casted a holy spell that enveloped his

body in a holy light, "His blessing are not gone after all and his defeat was a lie as well. He had not anticipated the level of doubt that lay inside his followers nor the audacity of the Council and because of this needed to pull back and rethink how to approach the situation. Eventually those worthy were once again blessed with his gift and presence." He then stretched his hand at Rob, "This is what I am offering you today."

Rob did not instantly reach out for his hand which disappointed Joseph, "Rob I will admit that I am saddened by your lack of action."

"I'm sorry Joseph, I truly am but given what you have just told me, well I need to think about it. I mean if what you say is true then the current action of your group is puzzling a bit."

This clearly surprised the old priest, "True that some of our actions have been questionable but overall we have protected the citizens and all who believe, that said there was no way for us to reveal the truth otherwise we would be attacked once again so our option of this secret rebellion as you probably see it was necessary. Unfortunately, what is truly sad about this is that there was never a rebellion from our side. We follow the lord of light and his guidance as we always have..." Then an odd smirk appeared on his face, "Who do you now follow Rob? Who leads the High Order now and how much has that path differed from what we used to be? I and the ones that follow me only want for things to return as they were, so who has been misguided really?"

Rob could see his point of view but still, "Is this why Catherine was captured and is being held right now as in your eyes she is leading this change away from what we were before?"

He sighed deeply at that question and also had a sad look appear on his face, "She was once

the best of us but somewhere along the lines something happened and now she is lost. You need to understand, she helped them try to destroy him. Not directly but by ordering the Crusaders to retreat and stop the fighting is a large sign of betrayal that cannot be overlooked. She will be judge by the lord of light; her faith is out of my hands now."

Rob was not sure he agreed with him but once again could see his point of view still would it be wise to let him know about the rescue that was currently going on. He then stopped his train of thought and saw Joseph smile, "That pause there, you can speak freely Rob and openly as I already know that those treacherous Lights Templar are currently trying to rescue her." His smile then grew wider, "But I'm not so sure how easy it will be for them to do so."

Rosamia felt the need to warn Adam about the use of the enchanted blade that Alex had given him but held it back, this was not something that she needed to focus on and plus she knew that he had it perfectly in hand. Also she needed to focus on keeping those ice walls up that the other Crusader constantly where trying to break in order to get around the one person at a time corridor that they had created.

With Rosa and Iris preoccupied Adam focused on his task, the corridor was so small that you only had overhead swings available in order to put any power in any attack. Side to side attacks were out of the question, even with the enhance strength magic. But this was not the case for him, with the little practice that he had with the new blade he knew that it took no effort at all to cut anything and so he took aim at the Crusaders side rib and

the blade cut through his armor and skin with no issues. With that attack the enemy finished his overhead swing that had been aimed at Adam's head, in order to counter Adam pulled out the sword and simply braced it in the way of the incoming attack. When the two swords connected the Crusader's instantly broke in two. With only half a sword and a wound to the side, Adam took advantage and kicked him backwards making land on the one behind him.

This tumble gave him a few second and he used those by looking afar and then started to casting. He suddenly reappeared in the way back outside, Adam only had time for two quick swings before the spell brought him back so he plunged his sword in the leg of the closes Crusader to his side and then quickly pulled it out in an arc. There was so little resistance that to his surprise when he pulled out the sword in an arc that he slashed the back of the Crusader in front of him cutting his armor and making him bleed and also slashed the leg of another at the end of the arc.

Before he could check on the damage he reappeared in front of a new Crusader, this time with a dagger, in his old position in front of the makeshift corridor. His new enemy did not waste time and slashed forward with his dagger, Adam moved away to the side but he too had little room and did not have time to reposition his sword to block the incoming side blow from the repositioned dagger holder. Still trying his best he moved forward and dropped his sword on the enemy shoulder that was holding the dagger. The counter was too slow and Adam got hit with the weapon on his side which had already been hit, but luckily his counter had removed most of the impact strength and with the enemy wound there was no way for him to continue his advantage. With his target

pretty much on top of him Adam used his strength and pushed him backward, causing the Crusader to stumble back on top of the other behind him again. This time Adam wasted no time with a spell and stabbed forward causing his blade to hit the dagger target again to his side and while putting some strength behind it he continued the plunge, in order to hit the one behind. Adam had to smirk as normally doing something like this would be impossible, but the enchantment sharpness simply cut anything in its way, pulling the blade out also offered no resistance at all.

During this there was little time for Rosamia to take into account what was happening to Adam as the ones near the opening where now focusing on the wall of ice more in order to crumble it. She could have compensated but the same thing was also happening on the other side. With frustration she picked a side to reinforce more, which caused about four Crusaders to punch through on the other side. There was now very little choice and also very little time so Rosa simply reacted and created a new wall coming from Adam side to the other side of the room. This now made it so that even more Crusaders could enter the room.

Catherine looked back at Iris, "Hurry up little one, you are running out of time."

There was frustration on Iris face, "I'm not... so little as you think..."

With her talking Rosa instantly asked, "Can you get us out?"

"Not all of us, only one at a time."

Rosa did not hesitate, "Take Catherine and go now." Iris did so and in a few seconds they both disappeared. "Adam, fall back to me." He sliced at a Crusader leg again and moved back as ordered. The tunnel was crumbled now and the leftover Crusaders where making their way to them

thankfully at regular speed due to the ice still being on the floor. "If you move back more we can limit them encircling us completely..."

She did not answer him instead she casted another ice spell but this time it covered both of them completely in a full semi circle, essentially creating an igloo with no opening. Adam understood the plan but with the constant pounding he wondered how long she could keep reinforcing the spell.

Iris reappeared with Catherine on top the roof where the others where. "Alex the spell it's too strong, I was barely able to get Catherine and myself out."

"Alexandria flip with Iris."

Alex quickly put two fingers on Iris forehead, "Hmm, I see... interesting..." She then looked at the outpost and in a few second disappeared.

Iris shook her head, "I'm sorry, I let Rosa down in there."

Mike reached out to her, "Nonsense Catherine is safe and the others will be as well soon, this mission had too much unknown in order to plan for everything. So no worries you did prefect."

Seeing as Iris was now okay, Anna instead turned to Catherine, "Are you okay? If you are hurt I'm sure we can help with that."

"I'm fine, frustrated but fine." She sneered at the outpost in front of her, "Worst part with all that I still don't know who is behind all this."

Having now recovered Iris answered her question, "Well if Rob meeting goes okay that should be known soon."

Catherine quickly turned to face her and moved towards her, "What did you say?! Rob is in a meeting with them now? Do you know where?"

Iris jumped back a bit to give herself some personal room, "Yes... and yes I should be able to find him..."

Catherine then turned to Mike, "You need to tell her to take us there now as there is no way that he is not in danger."

There was little asking in her tone and more telling, but there was also the issue that the others had yet to return as well. "There is no way that I can do that Catherine." She was about to cut him off but he did not let her, "I can ask her to bring us close to his location but we are not going in under any circumstance until the others join us or if he comes out." It was clear that she was not happy about it but it was also clear that he was not going to budge on the matter as well. "Fine we do it your way for now."

That was not the best of answer but still he was going to take it, "Iris if you can." There was hesitation, he could tell, but she still proceeded to cast to get his location.

"Okay I know where he is, let's gather up." As she was saying it she grabbed his hand and then he heard her voice in his head, *'Are you sure about this?'*

'If you tell me that you can contact Alexandria then let's abort. But if you can't, then they are on their own sadly. The only way we can help is to bust in from the outside, and if it's that desperate I'm sure Alexandria can do so on her own from the inside. Still I am not going in somewhere else until it's confirmed that they are safe.'

He figured that the explanation was good enough since as soon as he was done the four magically moved away from their location.

"Have no fear I have arrived..." Alexandria

looked around the igloo that was full of holes, a Rosamia that was seating and using everything she had to keep was little was there and Adam that was using his blade to cut through and counter attack the target on the other side. Given the environment she figured that her attempt to brighten the current situation would be lost on the two present.

"Forget that and HELP HER!!!"

Alexandria placed her hand on the igloo and suddenly the space around them shrunk, mostly because she had reinforced the spell so much that the walls had grown that much thicker. As soon as that was done Rosamia dropped on her knees, "Oh thank you, I'm not sure how much longer I was going to be able to hold out..."

Alex quickly slapped the wall, "No worries we should have tones of time now." As she said it she heard a large noise on the other side and then a crack appeared on the wall, it was minor but the fact that it was there at all confused her. "Rosa, Adam... what is going on here?"

Adam was fussing on the wound to his side, "It seems that they have regained their holy powers somehow."

"That makes no sense, are they somehow faking it with arcane... or is it something else?" Alex then proceeded to put her hand on the wall of ice and focused on something.

Seeing as she was not expecting any answers from the both of them Rosa took the time to look at Adam. He actually had many knick on him, but that wound on his side would need attention soon. She tried to focus some magic on a healing spell but it just would not come, suddenly a depressed look appeared. Adam moved in closer, "its okay, once we are out Iris can look at it. Also if not for you I would have many more then this..."

With that Rosa once again stood, "Alex can you get us out of here?"

It took a second for her to break out of what she was doing, "Ah... yea sure..."

Clearly she was preoccupied with something and Rosa could guess what that was but now was not the time for that. The reinforcement she had done was still standing but even now you could tell it was a matter of time until it too would crumble. "Then we need to get out of here. I know he will not like it but take Adam first."

Before Adam could object Alex commented on that idea, "I should be fine to take you both, Iris gave me the details of how she got around the barrier and it did not take too much time to improve it a little." She then trailed on a bit, "Actually she probably already knew how to take another but then who do you leave behind alone..."

Rosa thought about that and there was no way that any of them would have been okay alone, "Then let's get out of here before something else happens."

Alexandria moved closer and grabbed both of them by the hand, "Fine we may be missing an opportunity but I agree staying stuck here is not worth that secret." and with that she casted her spell to get them out of the outpost.

Once they repapered on the roof where everyone was supposed to be Alexandria was once again stunned, "Okay what is it with these pop in surprises where are they?"

Adam looked over at the outpost as Alexandria focused on something else by closing her eyes, "Odd even while we were attacked none of the guard outside moved in, heck even now they are still in position..." He then looked at Rosa, "That's wrong..."

"True but not something I don't appreciate,

Alex do I take it you know where they others are?"

"I do..." She then once again took their hands and whisked them away to this time appeared on a roof where all the others where, "What happened why the change in location?"

"Catherine wanted us to make sure that Rob was safe." He pointed at the Church, "and that is where it's taking place."

Alex then moved closer to take a better look, "So it that our next destination?"

This time it was Anna that answered, "No it's not."

This surprised Catherine and partly angered her, "What?! What is the point of saving me if he will then be captured?" Anna did not budge at her comment so she then turned to Mike, "Well?"

"I understand the resent event may have changed your point of view a bit but..."

Catherine was completely insulted, "How dare you go there, I want to save him and make sure that he does not have to suffer what I just did and you change that around as I'm panicking?"

"Not the word I would use, but at the same time is he even a hostage or still there of his own free will. If it's the later how will it look like if any of us show up demanding that they suddenly let him go?"

Anna tried to reach out to Catherine, who brushed off her advance, "Let's just wait a while longer to see what is truly happening."

While the two tried to calm Catherine down Iris made her way to Adam, "Here let me help you with that." She casted a healing spell that sealed the main part of the wound to his side and stopped the bleeding. Adam stretched it out a bit, "Thanks, I'm okay now and it may be better to save the rest of your strength." He then looked at Catherine and the other two still at it, "Just in case."

Iris nodded in confirmation and stopped the spell.

Joseph was suddenly distracted and then for a moment look like he was receiving orders in his head. "Hmm, well that is disappointing..." He then faced Rob, "It seems that Catherine has been freed and that none of the ones that saved her could be stopped in the process." He took a deep breath and then had a genuine disappointed look on his face, "I still don't understand why you asked their help of all people, after all the mess that they have created for our lovely city and its people."

Rob choose his next words carefully, "Well, at the time, there seemed to be little options available. I was also very worried about Catherine."

"Hmm, I suppose I do need to commend you on caring so much for your fellow sisters and brothers...Still..."

While Joseph was lost in thought Rob asked the burning question that was on his mind, "So what now?"

A small smile appeared on Joseph face that did not help Rob feel at ease about his situation, "Are you wondering if now we will keep you locked up?" He gave Rob a moment to answer but when he saw that he was not about to comment Joseph answered his own question, "No worries you are safe to leave here, you have not committed any actions against the lord of light and so are free of punishment."

It was clear to see that Rob was suddenly relived but that did not last long as Joseph continued, "I will warn you that you will need to choose, as all the others like you, and time is no longer on your side. Come mid day tomorrow the time for hiding is over and I will show myself and

the blessings I still have to everyone in the city auditorium. I recommend you go and tell the others this and also invite them so that they can repent for what they have done willingly."

Rob simply sat there for a while not really sure what to say next.

A few hours had passed and Catherine was near her boiling point even if it felt like she had already passed that an hour ago. "This is ridiculous, you know as well as I do that meetings don't last this long. How much time do you even plan on waiting? Do you even know?"

Mike in fact had no plan the only thing he was sure on was that going in there was the wrong plan but there was no way he was going to say that, "We are still waiting there have been no signs of anything..."

Catherine was about to cut him off, he knew that it was coming as he had given her the same answer a while back but before she could Anna pointed at the church, "Waits over, he's coming out..."

Catherine immediately rushed to the edge to confirm and while she did that Alex looked up at the sky, "Oh thank god..." Adam and Iris could not help but sinker as you could tell that the ongoing barrage of Catherine was starting to get to her.

There was a small smile that was shared between Mike and Anna as they both shared Alex's feelings as well. "So do we go to him and escort you both back?"

Catherine looked at him like he had just asked the stupidest question, "Of course not, what would be the point of letting him go only to capture him right after. No, next you will bring me to my home in the main church where we will wait for Rob to

make it back and then we of the High Order will discuss what has happened..." she then put a lot of emphasis on the next word as she looked at Alex, "...Alone."

Alex raised her hands, "Hey I'm good, talk all you want..." She then turned to Iris, "Do you mind taking an extra?" Iris smiled again as Alex was once again pawning off a person she did not want to teleport to her, "Sure I'm good."

With that Alex grabbed Mike and Anna hands while Iris reached out for Rosa and Adam who then reached out to Catherine. After a quick moment they all disappeared from the roof.

Hours had passed and the Light Templar where all held up in the room that had been given for the female gender of the group, mostly because seeing as they were more there was a few more places to sit then the men one that had been given.

Alex was lying on the bed, "You know I bet she is doing it on purpose, making us wait that is."

Rosa wondered on that, "Could be, it's something she has done in the past but in this case I don't think that is the case." She then looked at everyone else, "I know that I may be asking a lot as our mission is done and pretty soon we may be told to leave but I would like to stay somehow and see how this goes."

Unexpectedly Alex was the first to comment on the request, "I second that, I mean it's important to you and also I'm curious to know about how those Crusaders regained their powers."

Adam nodded at that one, "Yes, if a portion of them has their powers again then I don't think that the other half will fare too well if a fight breaks out."

Rosa looked at him, it was clear that his comment made her worry, "I hope that it does come to that..."

Before anyone could reassure her, the door opened and Jessica stepped in. "If you want to join us in the main meeting hall, there is a lot to discuss." As they did what was asked Jessica pulled Rosa to the side for a second and gave her a warm hug, "Thanks for keeping your promise and bringin her back." Rosa smiled and accepted the hug, "Not a problem, anytime you need my help I'll be there if I can." Jessica smiled again, "Thank, I figured that I would take this time to say it as later on it may be forgotten given the news."

Jessica could not have ended her comment in a worst way; still there was nothing to do then simply wait a little while longer in order to hear the full story.

Once seated in the large meeting room with all three High Order members Rob started explaining the details of his meeting, the fact that Joseph had returned to them and also that he had powers as well. He also mentioned what had been said about the lord of light and the meeting that will take place tomorrow. The news was a lot to take in for everyone.

Rosa turned to Catherine, "So what now?"

"We will go to this meeting of course, I don't plan on giving myself up but I do want to discuss it with Joseph himself."

That came with no surprise to Rosa but there was also more to the original question, "And we should go with you or..."

There was no hesitation in her answer, "No I do not want any of you to interfere with the meeting, you understand."

Rosa nodded slowly and waited for her to continue but when she did not Jessica stepped in, "If you all don't mind we would appreciate if you would stay here as there maybe questions that could come up after the meeting."

Sitting and waiting was not what she had wanted but it did not look like there was much room for debate, before any of them could comment mind you Rob turned to Alexandria, "On that note of question what are your thoughts on this ex-Council member, the return of holy magic and also the lord of light?"

Alex ignored his possible jab at her and actually thought about it, "There was no time to confirm if it was in fact holy magic even if it sure looked like it, as for his return is should be impossible."

"Are you sure about that, could you be wrong?"

Again she ignored the possible accusation tone in his voice, "Look this is not coming from me but actually the dwarf that got it from your lord of light himself. Once the avatar is killed he cannot come back again, it's done. So don't take my word for it."

This time it was Jessica that continued the question, "I don't doubt you, I really don't, but we do wonder, was he really destroyed? Could it have been a ruse as Joseph mentioned?"

"Well the same thing happened to him as the lord of darkness when he died and that was confirmed as well so..." She then looked at Mike it was clear to see that there was no way that she could confirm at one hundred percent that he was in fact destroyed but at the same time she did not want to admit that it could be a possibility.

With that he quickly gave her a quick nod and then turned to the High Order, "Given the actions of that day, what was said by him and what happened as an after effect it's hard to believe that it was a ruse." He then turned to the others, "That said weirder things have happened in the past."

Catherine found it hard to believe as well, being there herself in the final moments, to think

that it had all been a trick, could be something others could believe but for those present it was a harder story to take in. "Fine, this will do for today." Not waiting on anyone else she then stood up, "If you need anything please ask Jessica. Assuming we can we will once again talk about this tomorrow after the announcement." And with that she left the room followed by Rob.

Jessica stayed behind to escort them to the rooms that had been prepared. "I'm sorry about this but I hope you understand."

Rosamia smiled and nodded, "its okay Jessica we understand, no worries."

She nodded her head, "Thank for that." and after that she left them alone and waited nervously for the next day to come.

Chapter 3

Mid next day had arrive and the group was making themselves as comfortable as they could in the large High Order meeting room. Jessica was looking at them from the doors entrance, "Are you sure that you want to wait here?"

The room itself was nice, big chairs and very large tables all made of nicely crafted wood and very good padding on the chairs. All in all it made for a very extravagant meeting room, but it also made it very intimidating. The chairs used for the High Order members where bigger than the rest, their table more decorated and you also had more fixtures around that zone to illuminate it more than the others. While all that even made Alexandria generally uncomfortable, there was a recent addition in this room that would prove advantageous assuming things went to plan. She moved close to Jessica, "We should be good, but we do have a favor to ask if you don't mind."

Jessica was skeptical but had no intention of not listening to the request, "Go on."

Alex then reached out in one of her belt pouches and pulls out a small sphere and handed to Jessica, "Can you carry this on you while you are at the meeting, seeing as we can't go with you."

It's then that Catherine suddenly appeared behind Jessica in a fashion that surprised both of them as they had not noticed her presence at all, "And this little thing will do what exactly?"

"Nothing too mysterious, it will simply allow us to hear what is being said, that's all."

Catherine did not seem convinced at all, "It rarely is that easy with you."

Jessica on the other hand was more worried about something else, "Considering that they are using magic will not having something active during the meeting cause issues that we would rather avoid?"

Alex ignored Catherine and focused on Jessica better question, "I see where you are going with that, but this is not me casting an ongoing spell on you, or you having a defensive or attack spell active. This is you having a magical toy on your presence that is it, which is not uncommon even among regular people so with High Order members it should not be unexpected. Also the sphere is connected to this sphere that we added in the room in order to allow sound to be broadcasted from it, which is the main reason why we are in this room."

Jessica looked at the sphere, she was right it was no uncommon to have something magical, the pendant alone that they had as Council members would trigger if searched for example. Sensing some lingering hesitation Alexandria added an extra point in order to hopefully convince her, "Worse case the sphere is very fragile, first sign of an issue just drop it on the ground or break it in your pocket and then no more magic will be found from it."

This seems to have done it as Jessica nodded and proceeded to place the sphere in her own belt pouch. "Alright I'll do as you asked." Catherine on the other hand was clearly not happy about it but also did not say anything about her actions, plus she also did not have much time for it as Rob suddenly joined them. "We should be going now."

Jessica lowered her head to Alex who did the same and then she turned and both Catherine and her followed Rob.

"You are far too accommodating to them, you know that right?"

Jessica did not see it that way, "Maybe, but all of their requests have good intension behind them and no, I will not agree with all of them but I will hear it out."

Once again Catherine was not convinced, "True as that maybe their good intensions have lead to some pretty bad messes." She then spread her arms wide to emphasize the state of Missa and their current situation. "It may be good for us to stay clear of their good intensions if we can."

It was a hard point to argue as it was true but at the same time there was more to it than simply the end result, "Hmm, well imagine if they had not intervened and where we would be now? Also, as for the consequences that they create, have they not tried in the past to deal with those with you and many others involved? Did that not work out to the benefit of all?"

This time it was Rob that joined in, "True but it also lead to a large secret being uncovered and showed that even they need to be watched as well."

"Sure I'll agree that they hold a lot of power, more than they probably should, and they make mistakes but they are also the type to try and resolve those if they can. I know that you both don't agree, but I don't see them as evil or people we need to be on guard against even with everything that has happened."

And that was the most frustrating part for Catherine about them, "Let's stop this discussion, for all we know they maybe already listening to it and also considering out next task it's a wasted effort."

The rest of the walk to the auditorium was mostly spent in silence, not because of the previous discussion that they had but mostly because of the massive amount of people that where all making their way to the auditorium. It

felt as if everyone that lived in the city was making their way there, old, young, rich, poor, Order members or Crusaders, all were walking to the same destination. Last time there had been so much people for an event had been when the lord of light had declared his intension to all, Catherine had to admit that the comparison to this event did not leave her comfortable at all.

As they got closer Crusaders of both sides escorted them to the middle of the auditorium. As they made their way it was hard not to look around. The auditorium was constructed similarly to a large coliseum, difference being that they outer seating around it did not go very high as it reached about three stories tall. Also the large area in the middle had tones of seating for a large amount of people in order to hold extra people. In the very middle of the more oval structure you had sixty foot radius empty era and in the middle of that, you had four large stone elevated deck structures so that multiple groups of people could stand on them and discuss matters that needed to be heard by all.

Catherine, Rob and Jessica now stood on one of those stone decks as they looked at their opposite side directly in front of them they saw that William was standing alone but was clearly waiting on someone. It took some time but then whispers started to be heard and Joseph started to slowly make his way to the same deck that William was on. Catherine looked as he slowly climbed the small set of stair and made his way next to the ex-lieutenant. By look alone she had to agree that it was in fact Joseph that had disappeared for some time now. As that man looked back he did not seem too happy about the people in front of him.

In a loud voice you heard him speak, "I see that there are fewer of you present than I expected."

It had been agreed that Catherine would take the lead, not that she would have allowed anyone else. "This is a matter for Missa alone and outside help should be used sparingly."

"True but to go for their help..." He then turned to the crowd, "Allow me to clarify, the current High Order is currently working again not only with the Council that have held us back for so long but also with the Lights Templar, the group that lead the attack on our lord of light." He then turned to Catherine, "Have you not spit on his name enough?"

Seeing as it was Jessica's idea she took that question over for Catherine, "There help was requested as member Catherine of the High Order had been kidnapped and anyone powerful enough to do so needed an equally powerful response. Ideally Crusader or even Enforcers would have been used." She then turned to William, "But those where indisposed due to current circumstance, leaving us with little choice." She then once again turned to Joseph, "Or where we to simply let this happen and do nothing of it? If that is your answer then that was not an option not only for a High Order member but for anyone."

Joseph nodded at her, "I agree but would you say the same if an enemy of the Order had been kidnapped?"

Catherine was visibly infuriated, "YOU DARE?!?"

Still holding his calm but raising his voice more he answered her, "Of course I dare. All this time word has been spreading that we are dividing Missa and the Order in two, causing a rebellion when all we are doing is removing those that caused harm to the lord of light, as are not those individuals to be considered enemies?" He then pointed at Catherine, "Not only did she renounce

the lord of light's favor but ordered the troops to pull back and worse she allowed those that harmed him to stay in the city." He then opened his arms wide, "She needed to be punished or at the very least step down as a High Order member and for her guest they too should face their punishment to the Order, and for all we know they may be around us now as we speak hiding and plotting as they always do." As he said so William and other Crusaders around took a defensive position to emphasize the possible danger that Joseph was currently in.

Jessica was once again going to answer but Catherine did not let her, "I believe in the Order and its mission to help everyone and will do EVERYTHING in my power to help that goal and mission. The Order was on the verge of collapse and not because of the defeat of that avatar at the hands of that group and the Council, but because of that avatar itself. His message was of help but it was selective and also left no room for compromise." She then turned to William, "You where in full compliance with his orders and yet when the time came to heal someone of importance to you, you could not as he pulled away his power. Also on a grander scale the Crusaders themselves had been originally created to defend in order to help us heal those that needed it or even do so themselves when possible, and yet here you had them barricading Astrum. While I will agree that the elves and that city may not be our close friends they were never the enemy and should never have been looked that way and yet how many days where left before an attack would have begun?" She then faced Joseph, "You call me an enemy of the Order and say that what you are doing is just, but it's you that's mistaken. I have never betrayed the Order and its mission and never will, but I will

also never stand quietly by while others head it in a direction that it should never gone in no matter who that person or being is." She then calm down a bit, "As for that group, you have nothing to fear, they are currently in the main church of Missa and have no plan to even hurt you unless we, all members of the High Order, say otherwise."

There was a slow clap from Joseph, "Good job Catherine, but still how can you stand there and think that we will believe that you know better than the creator of the Order himself. Madness, truly and to prove our point and also help you and everyone else present see that we are in the right and that we have all be lied to once again, I will use the blessings given to me and everyone that still follow the lord of light to show you where our real enemies are located and that you truly control no one."

Alexandria instantly reacted as one of her automated magical defense warned her "Iris there is tracking spell coming our way." She then looked at Mike, "I'm assuming we let it happen..." She did not wait for the answer as it was obvious so both Iris and her dropped their guard and let the spell that Joseph was casting finish.

It took no time after that and small circular light pillars appeared at their feet and then rose upward reaching the ceiling continuing past it until it reached the sky. Adam moved around and the beam of light followed him, "Interesting marking spell."

Rosa nodded, "Yes it will mark the target specified if they are in the area and follow them where ever they go until the caster stops the spell. The pillar will reach on high and not be blocked by anything."

It was a long shot but hearing that made Mike think of something, "Alexandria, is there anything you can learn from his spell seeing as it's effecting you in a way. It could be a good opportunity to learn something extra."

She smiled, "I do like that idea but all I can do is confirm that it is a holy spell..." She then stopped for a moment and then looked at Rosa, "Still no reason that we still can't use this moment to learn more, I can disrupt the spell freeing one of us from it leaving them to... possibly explore and learn more."

Rosa smiled a bit as now she understood why she had directed her comment at her, she had to admit that it was a good time for it but given what they had already heard if something went wrong then the results would be disastrous. "I would prefer not to take that chance but we need to learn more and I trust you and everyone here not to purposefully do anything that will damage the current situation so by all means Alexandria do what you need to do."

There was a quick nod from Mike and Anna and with that Alex sat on the ground next to Iris and then placed her hand between her feet. There was a spell that was cast and then a pause followed by another spell. "Okay Iris, try to step back."

When she did the pillar of light did not move but stayed where Alex had put her hand. Proud of herself Alex smiled, "I figured that would work." She then turned to the others, "Don't ask as I'm not explaining this one at all."

Iris figured out what she had done and Mike also had some clue and so did the others as Iris had mentioned during Alex's capture that she had left a message but with Iris's mark. As Iris moved back even more Alex quickly added, "Make me

proud and disappeared completely."

Iris smiled and nodded, there was a few spells that where casted and eventually they heard no words coming from her mouth even while it was moving and then eventually she simply disappeared. Alex smiled at that, "She should be gone now."

Adam was confused, "Should she not need to use the door to get out, I mean she is invisible right?"

Alex nodded, "Sure, but a door, please... what would you think if a door opened and no one walked out or in?"

Adam shrugged conceding to the point that she had mentioned, "Fine and you can keep this ruse up for how long?"

"As long as she needs or as long as the spell last I guess. It's the reason why I sat down as I'm thinking it will take a while."

Given then arguments still ongoing it was hard to argue.

Joseph raised his arms in the air and shouted for all to hear, "See, proof that our powers are not gone and that our lord of light is still with us." He then put his hands down and stopped shouting, "This is what I wanted to show everyone so that they could stop believing the lies that he has been destroyed and also finally see that we are in fact the true Order and not some sort of odd rebellion or splinter." Once again he raised his tone, "With our powers returned and proof of our leader existence, I wish to invite all, that once again want to join the Order, so they too can regain their former glory and help the people of this world as they used to in the past." He then pointed at Catherine and the others, "Also I am declaring that

we will be taking our rightful place in the main church of Missa and requests that the false Order leave of their own volition in order to stop this needless ongoing divide."

Seeing as there was finally a pause and before the momentum got lost with the chatter of everyone given what they had all just seen and been told, Catherine took stab at trying to muck the waters a bit. "And what of those that don't want to join, or us in the High Order, where do we fit in you're so called true Order?"

It was clear before he answered that she had fail as his answer was very relaxed, "For those, nothing, nothing at all. They will be expected to move on to another task as they will not be able to stay as Crusaders or Order members or course but other than that they will be free to do as they please as long as they follow the rules of Missa." He then looked at Rob and Jessica "As for the current member of the fake High Order, if they are willing to help me then they will be accepted and expected to play the same roles as they currently do. That is until the full return of our lord of light."

He then focused his gaze on Catherine, "Now as for you and the Lights Templar, you are to give yourselves up willingly at this auditorium in order to face the crimes that you had committed. I will show more mercy then you deserve given that you have escaped justice for so long and give you five days to put your things in order, but then it's expected that you all show up here. If you don't then we will be forced to take action, so please accept this punishment as a true righteous person would."

He then once again turned to the crowd. "Please everyone, let's finally take the right steps for this city and everyone that live here by making the correct choice."

Catherine wanted this to continue for a bit longer but it seems that Joseph was done as he suddenly turned and made his way down. As she looked around she also saw stares and fingers being pointed at their direction by the crowd, this meeting was over and they had lost horribly.

A bit of time had passed and once again everyone was gathered in the large meeting room for the High Order. Catherine was the least pleased out of all of them which was understandable, "We need to know how they got their powers back."

Rob wondered on that, "Would it be impossible to think that maybe he is correct and the lord of light was not defeated?"

"I simply can't believe that, first if his avatar form was really not destroyed as we thought and he was ready to act I just don't see him hiding behind Joseph. Sure it's been mentioned 'once he fully returns' but it make very little sense still." She looked at Rob with a very sadden expression, "Not being present I understand why someone could believe or want to believe but after seeing what I saw, it's... difficult."

She then turned to the Lights Templar, "Do you have anything to add? Or maybe some explanation as to how they have their powers back and we don't?"

Seeing as the question was more directed at Alex she felt she needed to clarify a few things, "I think you need to understand something, your powers are not gone." Clearly simply saying that was not enough so she elaborated in order to help with their confused look on their faces, "Nothing was done to remove your ability to cast holy magic, the only issue is that now you have nothing to power that ability. When the conduit that was

created was destroyed your natural ability to tap into that simply stopped working and because of that everyone 'lost' their powers."

Rob then pointed at Rosa, "What about her, if what you say is true then should she also not be able to cast? The lord of light had mentioned something about his being and you people I take it that has something to do with it?"

Rosamia took that one as it had been explained to her in the past, "In a sense yes, when we finished the trial that had been left over by the avatar a choice was given to obtain unimaginable power and we did not take it and instead." She then quickly turned to Adam, "Due to the consequences of the trial requested a small portion of that power to heal the damage that we simply could not on our own. Doing so resulted in still having some very small level of holy ability." She then looked at Alexandria, "At least that's the explanation I remember."

Alexandria looked at the High Order, "I'm about to say something that you may not like but... essentially holy and dark really is arcane with a pretty bow wrapped around it. So given enough studies and research a mage could replicate any holy or dark spell. The conduit purpose that I told you about was to teach you how to cheat that study and research and give you access to high level spells in an easier fashion, it also helps fuel the process in order to use it. So again you still have that knowledge in you but you can't fuel it making it look like you lost your abilities altogether." She then pulled out one of the flask that help with healing out of one of her pouches, "This is another example of what I'm talking about, before a mage being able to create anything healing without holy was unheard of but now not so much, that said as you all know now, creating these

things is much harder than using a heal spell."

Catherine added to that, "It's also less effective..."

Alexandria shrugged, "Give it time, eventually it will get there. Still going back to Rob's question, because of that change an extra consequence is that Rosa has retained the ability to access that hidden knowledge of those cheats allowing her to still use it in part. As for the, how is she fueling it part, the working theory is that she is using arcane somehow but there is still a lot to do in order to understand that part, which I've only recently started working on."

Rosamia was curious about that but instead Jessica got ahead of her, "Then is it possible that somehow Joseph, while gone, found a way to cheat as well and is now showing this to others." She then looked at the other members of the High Order, "Assuming that the lord of light's avatar body is in fact destroyed."

Before Alex could answer Iris cut in, "Actually you are probably not far off, during the meeting I was able to sneak out..."

Catherine was surprised but at the same time not really, "How? You had the beacon on you at all times... you know never mind that for now, simply continue..."

There was a small smirk that appeared as Iris tried that to hide it while she continued, "I figured that doing anything to Joseph would be a bad idea so I focused on the Crusaders seeing as we saw that they have access to their powers again and I found something interesting. The source that is fuelling them is targeted, meaning that it's not coming from all around as it was when the conduit was active but from someone or something. This was the same for all that I checked."

This is what Rob wondered on something,

"Assuming I understand correctly then would this not be the same principle as to when the lord of light gave us back access to our powers as you put it. If that is the case then would that not be a possible proof of his exaggerated demise seeing as I can't not see any other being strong enough to be able to power so many people other than him."

Rob had understood correctly and while his comment did give pause to the others Iris figured that she would clarify what she had said, "It could be but I also mentioned that it could be coming from someone or something..." She then suddenly stopped and slowly turned to Alex, "Wait if we go the something route can we not do the same now?"

Catherine and the others of the High Order instantly jumped on the comment, "What does she mean but this? Explain now?" Whatever had been said made Alex simply tune out and Iris did not seem to be in a mood to elaborate. This caused Catherine to turn to the others who to her surprise looked as confused as they did, which caused her to pause for a moment.

Mike took that cue and asked as well, "Alexandria...." When there was not answer still he turned to the other, "Iris, can you explain what you mean by doing something about it now? What did we do recently that changed what was originally mentioned in the past..." He then stopped himself as something flashed in his brain, "The only thing that comes to mind makes no sense as it was dark..."

Instantly Alexandria stood up and shouted at everyone, "STOOOOP!!!" Now having everyone attention she went to a normal level, "No more talking, no more question, we cannot talk about this like this." She then looked around, "This is going to be annoying... Everyone stand up and move those tables and chairs away, I need room in

the middle for us to all be able to stand there."

While the Lights Templar followed orders the High Order not so much, "What are you doing? What are you hiding again? You will explain yourself NOW!"

There was no way that she could follow up with that request, "No I will not and if you wish to know what is going on, you will instead help me by moving these things out of the way." She then took a more commanding voice, "If you don't, then we are done here. Know that I am not hiding anything out of my own will but because it is still my duty to do so. So what will it be?"

Begrudgingly Catherine stood and started helping and the others followed suit. While they move things around, due to Alexandria's reaction Mike knew that he was right about where this was headed but it still made no sense. Once the process was finished everyone stood in the middle of the room, Alex looked around again and nodded, "This should do." She turned to Iris, "Do you remember those protection and wards I made in that cave? Can you do those while I contact the Council?"

"I can do most of them yes but there are some that I will need help with."

She nodded, "That's fine, do what you can and then I will help out after." Iris proceeded to cast a multitude of spells while Alex sent a communication message to Lithius. Once she was done she joined Iris and started to draw rune in the area around them, when everything seemed done both Iris and Alex stood next to each other and waited.

Catherine knew that she was not going to get an answer but still asked anyways as this was getting to be ridiculous. "And now can we know what is going on? Also I will add that I am not

agreeing with including the Council in the current issues, permission was not given." When she was done asking her focus suddenly changed to the blue apparitions of Lithius, Taeral, Helram and Kilor. Save for one elf, all Council members were present in one fashion or another.

"You were instructed not to use the same way of communication in these circumstances."

Alex rolled her eyes at Taeral's comment, as of course he would be a stickler for the rules. Alex looked at Catherine and then Lithius, "I was just told by Catherine now to not include the Council in this current situation that they are in but something came up that is of this level of security in order for me to explain and so the message and barrier was sent." Once again she turned to Catherine, "I know you don't want to include the Council as I agree this matter is not related to Astrum at all, yet, but the possible solution that Iris mentioned will require the Council and will have very large implications not only in this current situation but also ongoing. So the choice is yours do we continue or drop it all?"

Catherine looked at her fellow High Order members, she hated this and it was also another reason why she hated dealing with this group as there always came a point in time where they would simply take over all the while swinging the banner of helping out and the greater good. It was clear to see that she was against it and that Jessica was for it so that left the swing vote to Rob. "Hmm, assuming I understand we are only talking about an idea at this time and not its implementation. So we are not agreeing to anything other than the sharing of knowledge and with that in mind I say that we proceed."

Alex had to admit that considering what was going to be talked about and the implications

involved the lackluster answers did disappoint her a bit but she let it slide as they was no way that they could image what she was going to propose. Still in order to advance on this she gave the Council an update on what is currently going on in Missa. Overall and predictably the only thing of interested and curiosity was the return of holy magic.

"Now before I go over how we want to try and level the playing field, I need you to recall that dark energy sphere that we found, and recently destroyed." She had added that last part as any mention of that item created some worry for Lithius, it was hard to see for the others but seeing as she had spent so much time with him recently it became a bit easier.

"Seeing as it's destroyed I don't see how it could be of much help, plus I don't see the High Order agreeing to use it if your plan was to recreated it somehow."

"We will NOT be using anything that came from the dark lord I don't care what you feel or think it simply will not be done under any circumstances."

Alex was a bit annoyed at Catherine's comment. "I was never going to suggest that..." Her expression suddenly changed as she turned her focus on Lithius, which worried him as it looked like she was pleading for forgiveness for something that she had done, sadly it was an expression that he was very acquainted with. "There is something that we may have not mentioned about that sphere as it had an extra spell in it that allowed it to convert any magic around it to dark..."

She paused there and let it sink in, everyone around her was as expected simply thinking of the possibilities but the dwarves and elves on the other hand instantly understood what the plan was

going to be and the implications of the spell that she had just mentioned. Lithius had a very serious tone, "Miss Alexandria, am I to understand that you know how to replicate this spell?"

She knew it was going to go there and in the spirit of full disclosure she figured why stop there, "I do, and so does Iris... That said I'm assuming that only I know how to modify the spell in question." On that Iris nodded in confirmation.

There was silence from the elves and dwarves but there were also a lot of glares being shared by all of them. After a while Lithius turned to her, "You need to give us a moment Miss Alexandria as there is something there we need to discuss." and with that they disappeared which left her totally confused, "I... did not expect that..." she then turned to Iris to see if she had a clue, sadly it did not look like she did.

Confused or not Catherine and the others where now starting to understand where this idea was going, "Are you saying that you can give us our abilities to cast holy once again?"

This question snapped Alex back, "Ah, in theory yes I think we can. I say we as I need the Council help with this one and given that we have so little time I question how much of an impact it will have at all."

Jessica then stepped in, "But you told me recently that there was no way to do that, I 'm assuming that was not a lie."

Iris figured she would give Alex a break seeing as she was still concerned about the implications of the others leaving temporarily. "That's right, I mean there is no way that we can create the conduit again but we may be able to make it possible so that... I don't know all the people in the church can use holy magic. The scope of it depends on a lot of things, plus there is a bit of a

wild card involved..."

She started to trail off and the others were going to comment on it but then suddenly the others reappeared and this time it was Kilor that took over, "Assuming you plan on creating a sphere that can create holy power in order to get them to be able to cast again, how do you plan on being able to jump start the spell? Will you capture one of them?"

Alexandria shook her head, "No, I'm thinking that Rosamia should be able to do that." She then turned to her quickly, "As I mentioned earlier I don't know how she is fuelling it herself but I am very confident that in the end she is producing a holy spell, and with that we should be able to teach the conversion spell what to generate." She then looked at Lithius, "Am I to assume that the Council will help with this plan?"

He took a small moment to think about his answer, "Hmm, no we will not..."

Alex quickly turned to Iris, then Rosa and then Mike in a confused state and then once again turned to Lithius, "Why not?!"

Lithius ignored her and instead looked at Catherine and the other members of the High Order, "Given the request, time that we have and the extreme efforts this will put on Astrum, assuming the best case scenario and you are able to cast one holy spell what purpose would it provide for your current situation?"

Catherine and Rob wondered silently on that one where as Jessica was more opened about her thoughts, "Well even one spell alone would help out be it anything as it would give the people a choice..."

Rob nodded, "True but it's beyond that point at this time, sure it would help but it will not do anything against Joseph accusations of us not

being the true Order. If I where him I would simply play it out as a parlor trick and then blame its existence on the help of the Lights Templar."

Jessica understood Rob logic and wondered if there really was a spell that could help out, it's then that Catherine suddenly smirked, "A cleansing spell would do the trick I think."

Only Rosa, Jessica and Rob understood the full implications of her comment and the latter felt very insulted by it, "Why do you think that he is possessed? Are you not convinced that the man is Joseph himself?"

Catherine took a deep breath and showed a look of sympathy to Rob, not a look that Rosa had ever seen on her face before today. "I will agree that he acts, moves and looks like him and I do think that he is alive and it may in fact be him but I'm not sure that it is him at one hundred percent. Think Rob, Joseph was the biggest believer out of all of us and I will agree that he was very stern when it came to those belief and the rules that came from them, but when the time came to show someone the error of their ways he always acted like a father would teach a child. Given that presentation, did it feel like that at all? Also I don't think that the Joseph I know would have taken this path of punishment and divide. If he had the power and he knew that the lord of light would come back, he would have simply marched in and lectured us until our eyes would be opened... that is the Joseph that I remember."

Rob thought about her words and also the resent actions of Joseph and he had to admit that Catherine had a good point still her plan was quite the gamble. "If you are correct, that spell would accomplish the goal of at least creating doubt giving us more time and possibly weakening his position with the people now. So I agree that would

be the spell to use."

With two out of three votes in agreement it then fell back on Lithius but before he could confirm if he would help or not Catherine stopped him. "That said, I don't think that we can go ahead with the plan..."

This surprised everyone but Rob who had an idea why Catherine had said this, on the other hand Rosamia did not understand the reason at all. "Why do you refuse if they are willing to help, would this not help in the long run?"

Catherine was a bit frustrated, "Oh course it would it's silly to think otherwise but still..." She then turned to Jessica, "If it gets known that the return of our powers was caused by the Lights Templar how would people see it?"

Instantly Jessica understood as of the three she had a better rapport with the overall people possibly because she was new. "It would be looked at unfavorably, us working with them is one thing but them being the cause of the return of our blessing would be another."

That statement hurt Rosamia a lot and Jessica silently apologized for it but the reality was that there simply was no denying the consequences that had been caused by the group. While the mood was suddenly very gloomy Lithius posed a question, "What if instead the help came from the Council or one of its members?"

Jessica thought about it and then looked at Catherine, "It could work..." Catherine then shrugged, "I agree, but again I will not allow it as it would be a lie. The Council would have helped but the idea of it came from the Lights Templar, more specifically Alexandria."

It's then that Lithius asked for clarification, "Miss Alexandria only correct? Not the rest of the group?"

Catherine was puzzled by this and she was not the only one but she still answered anyways, "Yes, from what I see only she can modify the spell and make it really happen so the little one stating a wild idea would be overlooked in this...Why do you ask?"

"Because seeing as you see it that way, and if you wish, there are no issues after all." He then looked at Alex, "As Alexandria is a member of the Council."

Alex could not hold back on that one, "What? When did this happen? Who agreed to that?" She then turned to her friends, "I really did not know anything about this..."

While she was still going on Catherine got Lithius attention, "A, I would like to point out that making her a member after the fact solve nothing and B, should there not be a vote on this as she will be taking one of the two human spots of the Council available."

Lithius ignored Alex as well and answered Catherine's concerns, "You are correct a vote would be needed in that case but seeing as she will not be taking over one of the human position but one of the three elves positions there was no need for your votes." Catherine was not overly convinced by that logic but she simply let him continue as this would mean that with this change the human representation would now be more than before which would be preferable even if it was who it was. "As for the time of that decision, fear not as it has been decided months ago." Finally he turned to Alex, "It was not announced as we wanted to wait until the first official meeting in the new location that has been recently finalized in order to do so. As for asking if you where interested, I am sorry to say that it is no longer your choice anymore and I think you understand why."

Alexandria took a deep breath, "Yea I think I do, but what does that mean for everything else?"

"Given the new location that you help built, I see no reason why you cannot stay with your group and fulfill the minimum of the Council duties that will be required of you."

Catherine then turned to Alex, "Wait you help build the new location?"

She nodded, "It's been part of the many projects in the last few months, yes."

Catherine sighed in frustration, "For someone so smart I wonder how you can be so stupid sometimes."

Adam held back his laughter but he did not do a good job of it, there was a quick glare from Alex but he simply shrugged and pointed to Catherine. While Alex then did turn to Catherine she did see the worried glare of Rosa from the corner of her eye and figured she would drop the insult. Instead she looked at Lithius and bowed her head down, "I accept the honor that you have given." She then lifted her head and smiled, "Especially given my past record."

While Lithius was convince by her current intension he also knew better, "It is assumed that it will be a continuing record as well. Still with that, we thank you for joining. Now seeing as we are all in agreement with the plan there is much work to be done. Is it assumed that you will be returning to Astrum or will this be done in Missa?"

Alexandria thought about it, "We could do it here but I think that would draw too much attention even if the floor is locked away, so I'll be going back to Astrum for the time being. Plus doing it there will make it easier to shield from other eyes."

Lithius nodded, "Agreed, we will wait for your return in the mean time we will prepare a room."

See you soon Miss Alexandria." And with that they all disappeared.

Alex then turned to everyone else, "Obviously don't speak of any of this to anyone, I mean eventually part of the cat will be out of the bag but ideally the how should stay locked between us only."

Catherine agreed with that one, "That would be obvious, but there will be questions assuming this work at all."

She nodded, "That's fine and it makes sense." She then turned to Iris, "I would like it if you came as well but it's probably best if you stay here in case something happens."

Iris smiled and gave her a quick hug, "It's fine, now go do your best miss once again Council member." Alex smirked, "Yea I'll need to get more details on that as well, like who did I replace and also more on the why I no longer have a choice, I have ideas but... anyways, lots to figure out as always."

She then turned to Mike, "If there is anything that you need my help with let me know okay."

He nodded, "We will no worries." He then looked at the rest of the members, "But I'm sure we will be fine." He then smirked, "And if you need help as well let us know or if you simply need to break out of Astrum..."

Alex laughed at that on remembering the many years that the place felt like a prison for her, she still had a smile on her face when she looked at Anna, "He jokes?"

She smiled as well "He does, but was it funny?"

Alex thought about it, "A little bit..." At that Anna turned to him with a half smile, "Oh progress."

She then gave them all a final look, "I'll be

back as soon as it's done, or if we don't make it in time then I'll come back before and to see if there is anything else that I can help with." She then started casting, which took a little bit longer than normal considering all the wards and shield that were still in place and then she disappeared.

Once she was gone Iris proceeded to remove the spells around the place and the others helped put back everything the way it was. Placing the final chair back Jessica looked at Catherine, "And what do we do in the mean time?"

Catherine turned to Rob and then Jessica, "Now we come up with a backup plan in case they fail. We need to be ready as it could happen." They both nodded in agreement.

Anna got close to Mike and so did Rosa, "I take it we will do the same?"

"Sure but I prefer to believe more in that she will succeed more than Catherine seems to believe."

Iris approached them too having overheard, "I will never bet against my sister so I'm confident about it."

Adam then reached out to Rosa's hand, "Even I know not to do that, plus she's got a whole five days, she's done much more under less time in the past so there is no way it will not work out."

Rosa smiled and squeezed his hand gently, "I believe that too."

Chapter 4

Anna found Mike on roof patio at the top of the church of Missa overlooking the city. "So you finally made your way here."

Mike reached out to Anna and gave her a kiss as she got closer to him. "I did and you where right it's surprisingly not easy to find."

She gave him a half smile, "I had Jessica escort me the first time so I was okay, but I could see where you had issues on your own." She then turned and looked at the landscape. From where they were they could easily see everything from the auditorium, to the large market, housings and also the other churches and Crusader outposts. "I have to admit, it is a beautiful city they have here." Her smile then disappeared, "Which make it all sadder considering what is happening in it now."

Mike nodded, "True, and I fear that after tomorrow it will only get worse."

"Hard to think otherwise, oh by the way we still don't have an answer from Catherine."

He chuckled, "Well worst off we already know that we are not handing ourselves in..."

Anna then interrupted, "Yes, think what they will, sure we may of had a hand in what happened but the loss of the conduit and our actions against the chaos was not something that could be avoided nor something I will take responsibility for. The attack was something requested by a lot of people and the conduit..."

Before she continued with that line of though he stopped her, "I agree and I think all the others see it the same way too, hence the decision, that said does it not also make Catherine's answer moot

as well?"

Anna let out a small laugh, "There is no way that anyone is telling her that, but I see what you are saying and maybe that's why she keeps not answering. She knows that Rosa will be next to her during and there is no way that she will let her be killed or hurt. Not sure on the damage that will cause overall, but it is what she will do and I for one will not stop her."

Mike nodded, "Same..."

It's then that their attention was focused behind them when Alexandria suddenly appeared. She looked around a bit confused as to where she was exactly, with the teleport spell she knew where she was but seeing it was a bit different. "Wow you two really like high place..."

Anna smiled, "It's nice, quiet, great view, what is not to like?" Before Alex could respond Anna looked at her a bit more carefully, overall she looked fine but looking at her face it was easy to see that she had been pushing it. "I take it that this request was harder than expected?"

Alex thought about it for a second and then she clued in on the reference which puzzled the both of them as what other thing could they had been referring too. "Oh that, yea that was done after two days, it's what came after that was really exhausting..."

That comment created a lot of questions many of which could not be asked in the open, but still it was hard not to, "Something to do with the task or something else?"

Alexandria took a deep breath, "More like something else..." She then focused her gaze on the both of them, but more so on Anna, "I got a bit more information on the reason for my new status and it seems as it could relate to your issue after all."

They both looked at each other, "How?"

"While the request did come from Lithius it was more Taeral that pushed him to it and he then roped in Kilor and Helram, who once told of something, pretty much forced Lithius into it. It's not that he minded because as much as I may be a pain I do compensate for that..." She then looked up for a bit, "Well at least I think I do, anyways, when I pressed for more information it seems that the ones that had it where Kilor and Helram, as Lithius and Taeral had ideas why but none wanted to share and the same was for the dwarves but they did give me one hint intentional or not." She then pointed to Anna, "You are learning magic without actually learning it..."

Anna looked at Mike and then turned to Alex, "Well I am now, but I think I see what you are saying as it's a bit easier then what I imagined."

Alex quickly nodded, "Right, and that's just the issue. In the little time that you have you have already learned what took ME half a year around... which is insane if you think about it." She then pointed at herself, "And even me, the things I understand now and the speed of it, it's staggering. I mean sure there are those more powerful than me but realistically that's probably not going to the case for long."

This worried Mike a lot but at the same time it was easy to see when this had started to happen, "This is not something that is only you and Anna, it's all of us right? When Rosamia ordered Chaos to extend our lives..."

"Yep, bingo, that's when it happened. Even with the original idea of transferring all of it to us divided he was not clear on how it would affect us on our magical abilities it was a case by case basis depending on our original state."

"But we did not do that, not even close..."

"No we didn't but we also did not go for the regular amount as well."

Mike was suddenly very worried, "And that is what is causing this? So what is the end of its effects?"

Alexandria shrugged, "I... really don't know. I think the dwarves do mind you or have a pretty good idea of it and I think that is why they pushed Lithius to it. I mean depending on where it ends already you would want someone like me on the Council for all the help I can give and..." She trailed off but Mike finished the thought for her, "and also to keep a watch on."

She had a faint smile on her face, "I'm making that assumption as well." Seeing that Mike was glancing a lot at Anna, Alex figured that she would add more information, "If it help, while they did not give me any information they did their best to reassure me not to worry about it so I am thinking that while this could be pretty big the effect will be more positive overall otherwise I'm pretty sure that they would have said something."

It helped a bit but not much it seemed which Anna understood as she felt it too but was less obvious about it. "So does that mean that my 'base' as you said was better than his? Is that why he still can't do anything?"

Once again Alexandria shrugged, "Initially I thought so too but then the more I thought about it the less it made sense, my dad evaluated both of you and you were pretty much equal so really he should be able to do something by now." She then looked at him, "But I'm guessing still nothing?"

"Nope nothing at all, but I do have an extra piece that the others don't maybe that has something to do with it."

Alex thought about it, "Hmm, maybe, I don't see why but then again there is a lot I'm still in the

dark about all this so I'll just add it to the list and eventually maybe it will make sense." She then turned to the both of them, "In the meantime, try not to worry about it." She then smiled at Mike, "Even if I know you will... But seriously I don't think it is harmful to us or something we need to worry about, still I do want to learn about it when I can but it may be a very slow process so again let's try and simply go with the flow for now."

Anna chuckled at her comment while she looked at Mike, "That's going to be a bit harder then you may think, but we will get there."

Mike signed deeply; he hated knowing that something was happening to Anna and that he could not do anything about it. He had full confidence in Alexandria and even more so in Anna who while concerned by it was not as worried, for those reasons so he would do his best to follow her footsteps and example, "Okay, well putting that aside I suppose we should head out to the meeting room, I'm sure that others are already waiting."

Alex's shoulders slumped a bit, "I'm sure a certain someone is already annoyed by the delay..."

Anna reached out to Alex when she looked back she saw that Anna had a bit of a smirk on her face, "Try to go easy on Catherine, she is going through a lot right now."

"Oh I'm sure, and because you asked and because I know it will make Rosa happy I'll do it. But really I don't think there is anything that will ever fully break that woman, so I don't really see why there is a need to tip toe around her especially when really it's the last thing she does."

It took them a little while to make it to the meeting room and as they opened the door, as it on cue, "Well I see that you enjoy tardiness at any meeting Miss Alexandria."

Alex simply ignored Catherine comment and

instead focused on the room that had already been prepared with all the shield and protections, from the looks of it the only thing left was to close off a few runes and everything would take effect. Alex made her way Iris and gave her a warm hug, "Missed you, and thanks for doing this."

She returned the hug, "Same here, and after seeing it the second time I got most of what I was missing it seems so I figured I would save you the trouble." Iris did not comment on her sister wariness as it had not been the first time recently that she had seen her like that and figured it would not be the last, still she made a note to try and be a bit more forceful in trying to make her rest tonight in order for her to regain some energy. "Will the others be joining?"

Alex figured that Iris was referring to the Council, "No they are busy with something else so now that we are all here if you can." Iris nodded and then finalized all the spells around them.

Once confirmed Alex reached out for a small one centimeter in diameter sphere from one of her pockets. Jessica stared at it for a bit and so did the others, "So this will give us access to our powers again. I'll admit that I'm confused as to how I feel about this, part of me happy and the other is..." She then turned to the other members of the High Order.

Catherine raised an eyebrow in mild disbelief, "...Disappointed is the word that comes to mind for me."

Rob also shared that but there was also more to it than that, "Personally it borderlines on blasphemous if you ask me."

Alex looked at all of them and while she never expected them to jump for joy these comments where rude, "Look a lot of work and effort went into this and something else linked to this, I mean we

are doing this to help you, you realize this right?"

It's then that Rosamia stepped closer to Alex and gently put her hand on Alex's shoulder to get her attention. "You need to realize Alex that basically you are telling them that this little sphere thing will be able to do what was believed to be powered by our faith in a way. So to be even more blunt, this thing is said to replace the power of their faith. That's a hard thing to simply be thrilled about, even if they are grateful for all the work and effort that was spent in order to created this sphere and what it represent for the future."

Alex put herself in their shoes for a bit and focused on the words that Rosa had just mentioned, she then looked at the High Order members. "I'm sorry I had not looked at it from that light."

Jessica gave her a small smile, "Apology accepted Alex, especially if you also accept ours for our comments as well."

While Alex nodded in agreement Catherine continued to look at the sphere, "It's look a bit empty is that normal?"

Snapping out of her current mood Alex nodded, "For now yes, I have one thing to do before it's ready to be used." With her thumb and index finger Alex held the sphere in front of Rosa, "In order for the conversion spell to take effect it needs a sample so if you please simply cast a healing spell on the sphere, as soon as you cast it the spell will be absorbed by it."

Rosamia did just that and as explained the spell never really took effect but instead you could see a small drop of light gray liquid inside the sphere. Alex saw that Rosa was still waiting on something, "Oh sorry you need to do this a few more time." Rosa once again casted the spell and then again and again until about five more times

had passed and then Alex stopped her. They all looked and again, while there was more liquid in the sphere it still seemed like a very low amount. While they stared Alexandria finished the conversion spell and Catherine was even more doubtful, "So how many spell will be able to be casted from this little thing? Also it's assumed that it will also need to be filled up? Will that not take a long time at that rate?"

"The amount of spells will depend on what you cast, I think you should be able to cast three small spells, two medium and one large... maybe. You should be able to cast ongoing spells as well, like the shield but keep in mind that ongoing spells like that will be constantly draining it so you can only keep it up for a little while." She then held the sphere like the last time and then again presented it to Rosa, "As for filling it, it should go much faster now that the conversion spell is fully active. Try it out again but this time use a flame arrow spell or ice wall, basically anything big you can do but using arcane not holy."

Rosa figured that her biggest spell was ice arrow with three of them, casting it would be tricky as she was used to conjuring it as she was pulling a bow string but seeing as this sphere would instantly absorb the spell she assumed that it would not cause any issues and it seemed that she was right. Still what surprised her the most was the fact that the sphere was now one quarter full with that spell alone.

Alexandria smiled at Rosamia understanding and after the spell was cast and everyone had seen the effects, she pulled the sphere to her and casted a spell of her own, instantly the sphere was full. "See much quicker." She then handed the sphere to Catherine, "As soon as you take it in your hands you should understand."

Catherine did not hesitate and picked up the sphere, it was not instant as she had said but as soon as she tried to cast anything then it was instant and as soon as that happen her eyes when wide, "This is... unbelievable..." Alex had a wide smile at her comment and now Catherine was a bit embarrassed as she had not planned on being so opened about her reaction but having access again to something that had been lost for a while, it made it hard to hide her true emotions. She focused on her spells for a while, "Something is odd I seem to have access to all spells?"

Alexandria nodded, "That's make sense I guess, you will not be able to cast it but I think if you try that it will be like trying to cast something when you yourself are depleted." She was then curious, "Try it out."

Seeing no reason not to Catherine did just that and it was as she had explained it but different, "Your right and wrong at the same time, it is like that but there is no feeling of pushing yourself that comes with, it's like you are simply denied." She then looked at the sphere and it seems that attempting to cast something that you could not did not deplete any energy or if it did it was not visible to the eye. "Let's try something that will work this time." She turned to and pointed at an empty chair that was in the shield that had been created and then a pillar of fire appeared and burned it to a crisp.

"WHOA!!! Seriously that was your first spell? Could you not have tried something else that maybe would also not have a chance to burn the place down as well?"

Catherine simply smirked and ignored her comment, that action had felt very satisfying for some reason but then it all disspread as she saw that nearly half of the sphere had been depleted.

"Well it will do the trick to do what I need to do I suppose."

Alexandria then took the sphere back and filled it up again. "As I said, a few spells only. It's pretty much a prototype more than anything and there are things that can be done to improve on it." She then looked at Catherine, but more specifically at what she was wearing. Like Rosamia old attire Catharine had the standard priestly gab, which was a white under shirt with a light blue one on top. At the shoulders you had a cover that dropped right below them and in the back held the connection to the long blue cape. With it you also had a collar around the neck that typically Rosa had opened but this was not the case for Catherine. Which fit Alex's needs perfectly.

She pulled out two gold coins from her belt pouch, "So the way this works is that the sphere needs to have skin contact with the person in order for it to work. As for the recharging again any spell will do as long you are touching it while casting and focusing on the sphere as the target of the spell." She then looked at Catherine, "So even you could in theory charge it up on your own with the utilitarian and defensive spells that you know from arcane." At that point she had transformed one of the coins as a small holder for the sphere that also had a small loop on the top of it, after a quick inspection she continued. "Keep in mind the main thing, you need to make sure not the fully empty it otherwise you will need me or someone else in the Council to readjust the conversion spell and also Rosa again. The spell always needs a sample present in order to do its job." At that point she had finished using the other coin to create a small golden chain, putting the two together she handed the item again to Catherine. "I suggest you wear it under your collar and shirts, the weight of that

should make sure you always have contact and it will have the bonus of hiding it from anyone."

She did as instructed and once everything was put back, she moved around a bit to try it out and all the while she could feel having access to all her holy spells once again. She had to admit that it was a great feeling. Regaining her composure she then turned to Mike, "So now that the means have been confirmed I take it that you will have demands on the next steps to come?"

Mike frowned a bit, "Well demands is a big word but yes there is a plan going forward somewhat for our group." He then turned to Rosamia, "As we have done before so far we will split up again. Rosamia, Adam and Iris will be next to you and the other members of the High Order." He then turned to Anna and Alex, "The rest of us will be... around, basically we will make sure not to be detected and close enough to come in at a moment's notice if need be."

"He is expecting all of you to show." Catherine nodded in agreement at Rob's comment, "It's true and with the group only partially there don't you think that will cause more immediate harm? As I see that it will."

Anna took that one, "Your right it does and we are not disagreeing with that but does it matter? I mean we did not get the impression that you where still going to try and negotiate, the only reason Rosa's team will be there with you is to try and protect all of you depending on what happens after you have casted the spell on him." She then quickly looked at the others, "None of us have any intension of giving ourselves up." Anna then looked to Jessica, "And I'm guessing that all of us being next to you in a show of solidarity is probably going to cause you more harm than good with the rest of the population of Missa, it's another reason

why those with you where selected."

Rob was skeptical, "I'm not sure that an ex-Crusader, ex-priestess and one that was never a part of the Order will help that much to pull people to our side."

Jessica nodded, "True but at the same time they are recognizable faces for the most part." She then turned to Rosa, "Some of which still hold meaning to some still present."

That was not a topic that Catherine wanted to bring up at this time so she jumped in quick enough so that no one could respond to that last comment. "Fine, fine, you are correct as I did not have any intension of trying to negotiate and I suppose if you will not submit to his judgment then there is little point. So essentially the plan is me casting the spell and then dealing with what happens afterward? It's not much of a plan."

Mike simply shrugged, there was no point in playing her game plus as Anna had convince him there was little point in making too many detailed plans as the spell result created too much of a wild card.

Seeing as Catherine's comment had left a dead silence Alexandria looked at everyone and seeing as there was no reaction she started to move away, "Well if we are done here then I guess I'll go and..."

"WAIT a minute! Not so fast..." Catherine quickly interrupted her and when she saw that Alex stopped she continued, "At the beginning of all this you mentioned that the Council would not be joining us because they were busy with something, elaborate."

There was an empty laugh that came from Alex, "Hahaha, oh you remembered me saying that... I had hoped that you had forgotten."

Catherine only had an annoyed look on her face and the more she stalled the worse it got.

"Well, you know that tiny sphere that you have? They are busy making a bigger one."

Jessica looked at the other that shared the same look of puzzlement as her, "How big?"

Alex thought about it, "Well if all goes well it should have the ability to cover the whole city."

Rosamia was stunned and so were the others, mostly. "Wait so everyone in Missa will be able to cast holy magic again, that's incredible and great news right?"

She looked at the others as Rob wondered on that, "true but the cost of this? A small sphere is one thing but a large one like that, how are we to power it?"

"Well that sphere will work a bit differently than the small one. It will have an added bonus of taking a small part of all magic being casted, not holy, in the city. This will help with the drain." The other members of the group said nothing as Alex explained but they all suddenly understood what the overall plan was as a similar setup had been done in Astrum, but seeing as no one was supposed to know about that the only thing they did was exchange looks to each other and wondered how much of this had been preplanned after the first meeting.

"To compensate for that drain, initially there will be a need from one of us and by that I mean Lithius, Taeral, Kilor or myself as we are the only ones that know of this and would like to keep it that way for now, to come over once awhile." It was clear that this displeased the High Order, heck even Jessica looked uncomfortable. "That said we hope, that one of you or whoever else you which to include, this will be left to you and only by the way, will be able to supply that energy on your own. At the beginning you will have to do it more often than we would, but as you keep working on

your arcane skills it should be no problems." She forced a smile, "So you see, your independence will be solely on you and how quickly you can reach that level."

Catherine took a deep breath, "At least there is that, but I think that you are missing the bigger picture again. The work as already started and this plan that affects us has been set in motion and once again when where we even told or consulted? How would you like it if someone came to you and preplanned what you could learn and how you would go about it?"

Alexandria actually felt that jab, "You know I would hate it..." She then turned to Adam and remembered his comments that he had mentioned earlier and then to Rosa, she then finally calmed herself and lowered her head at Catherine. "I'm sorry, your right and it is my fault as I was the one that convinced Lithius to start it as soon as he could."

"This does not surprise me, but go on."

"I just figured that there would be no way that you would say no to this so why wait. But I see that it was wrong of me to do that, and will mention that if you so choose you can decline this offer that the Council is currently working on. You still have a choice if you so hate the events that we have setup for you."

"When would this be ready?" Alex had to once again think about that, "I'm assuming two more weeks."

Catherine nodded and thought some more about this, "Well assuming that we survive the next few days I don't see that we have a choice as you have put it." She turned to the other who seems to agree with her. "So to get more details, I will request that this large sphere be located here and also will all have access to its powers once

implemented?"

Alex had a bit of an odd smile again, "About that..." She quickly continued seeing Catherine's gaze, "It will be accessible from here no worries, but to be really accurate it's also not going to be anywhere." She then flipped her small backpack under her cape and grabbed three scrolls and handed one to each, "Learn this spell and cast it on yourselves, it will imprint the key that you will need to access the large sphere. The idea is that I will create a gate in whichever location you wish me too and for those with that mark they will be able to access the room with the sphere. Seeing as you will learn to cast the spell you can decide who else you wish to include, if you wish to include anyone else."

Catherine looked at the content of the spell, it should not take long for her to understand and cast, "Expectable, now for the other question?"

"On that again you need to make a choice, Lithius instructed me to ask you if you wished for the sphere to allow anyone to use it automatically or if you wish to control via a mark as well on who would be able to use it."

"Wise man and following that..." Catherine looked at the other two members, "Normally decisions need only two out of three but for this I think that a unanimous vote would be need here." At those words Rosamia wondered on the outcome as she did not see the others agreeing with what she assumed would be Jessica's answer.

"I think we should allow everyone access." Catherine thought on Jessica's instant answer and after a while slowly nodded her head, "I agree and you Rob?"

Rosamia was pleasantly stunned and wondered if this would happen again as Rob was still thinking about his answer. "I agree as well, all

this talk of being worthy and choosing is childish and I'm tired of it. You were chosen and proven worthy at birth being told otherwise is ridiculous."

Both Jessica and Catherine smiled at his comment, "Well said Rob, well said." After a small pause she turned to the others, "Anything else?"

Part of her was surprised when she saw Alexandria reach in one of her pockets, as a little while ago she had been prepared to leave the meeting when clearly there was a still lots to go over and the other part was not as surprised. Alexandria pulled out two pendants and handed one to Catherine and then Jessica, "New ones to replace the Council ones that you already have." She then looked at Catherine, "Or had."

Jessica took out her older one and handed it to Alexandria who instantly destroyed it as soon as she had it. "I understand the new one for the one lost but why a new one for me?"

"Well we never recovered the old one and even if we had it could have been copied or tampered with so the other Council members did not want to take any chances, plus the new ones have an extra special feature as they will allow you access to the new Council room that was created..." She then looked around, "As soon as I create the gate for it anywhere you tell me to."

Catherine slowly nodded her head from side to side, "Seems that there is a lot to decide after all." Her tone then changed to sarcasm, "And here I was wondering how we would pass the time until tomorrow event."

Alexandria had a huge smile on her face, "See this is much better right?" When Catherine did not bother to answer her she turned to Iris. "I am assuming that now we are done, do you mind helping me out with something?"

While the others wondered what she was going

to jump to next Iris smiled, "Way ahead of you, I assume the 'work too hard and need to rest now' aid will be required."

Alex reached out and hugged her sister, "Yeeessssss please..."

Iris turned to the others while Alex was still holding on to her for support already mock resting. "If we are done, I'll drop the protection spells around us and then make our way to our room."

Catherine simply gave them a wave, signaling them to do as they please, and with that Iris did as she said and the others helped put the room back in order.

During that time Catherine secretly touched the new pendant that had been given for the Council but really she was feeling that small sphere under her clothes. She could not help but smile as she felt the power once again course through her, and for a little while she felt whole again.

"I am disappointed in you Catherine, I thought that you had the Lights Templar under your control and yet only a few of them showed up, was there an issue?"

Once again they were in the auditorium and standing in the same place as they were a few days ago, the difference being is that now it seemed like there was even more people that had attended which was hard to believe considering the numbers present during the last time. Also from the looks of it Joseph had brought with him more Crusaders than the last time, for Catherine the numbers were impressive but considering what she knew he could have ordered more to come and be present and there was no way that he did not know that she knew that. So it left the extra as a show of

force to not impress them but everyone else that simply did not know, all they would see is close the double the amount as the last time where present now and given the five day it could be assumed that most would think that they had recently switch sides.

It was not the best of ways to start things off and answering his taunts would simply continue that. "Think what you will of me, I will not order people to march to their deaths unwillingly, also don't try and hide it as the only punishment that would fit the crimes you mentioned is death."

"I will not deny it. So am I to assume that those present and you included are willing to finally accept the judgment given for those crimes, and also that the others from the High Order will bow down and re-pledge themselves to the true Order?"

Catherine slowly nodded, "Sadly no on all accounts, we are here to prove to everyone that what you are doing can be done by others as well and also to show everyone the truth of what you truly are."

Joseph was stunned for a moment and then he laughed out loud, "HAhahahahahah!!!!... Oh Catherine, child, what are you talking about? We are blessed with holy power by our lord of light and that is the only truth that matters."

Catherine smiled, "If that is so and I truly am an enemy of the lord of light and the Order now why have I regained my powers as well?"

There were a lot of curious stares from the crowd at her but all of them were washed away from the death stare that Joseph was currently giving her. "More blasphemy there is no way that..."

He then got cut off as Catherine pointed her hand at him, "Be cleansed, Joseph."

A glow suddenly appeared around him and his eyes went wide and so did everyone else but then the wild bewilderment turned to shock and then horror as Joseph screamed.

"YOU WILL... PAY...FO...." He was then cut off as the pain of what was happening was too much and his body dropped and he fell to his knees. Once in that position suddenly his skin started to melt away revealing red crimson skin underneath, not only that but his body started to grow twice its size.

Catherine was still looking at the process but was starting to wonder, "This was not what I had expected, do any of you know what is happening?"

Rosamia was also in shock, "I don't I've never seen anything like that..." It's then that she paused, "Wait we have right?" She had been reminded of those Crusaders a long time ago that had taken residence at the Portal Tower, they had fallen to a daemon possessing them and too much time had passed and the possession had taken over. But in this case, due to the cleansing spell, it seems like the opposite was happening and Joseph was being cleansed from the daemon.

Before she could clarify something else happened when the body of Joseph had finally stopped growing as two large bulges were starting to grow on his back and then finally they expanded simultaneously and as they did there was a large gasp that was heard as everyone was in shock.

"Large WINGS! He's a red angel?"

Catherine spared a look at Rosa, "So you were saying that you have seen something like this before?" She had to admit that part of her hoped that she had, but she knew better and simply assumed that Rosa had made a mistake with her last comment.

During that time Mike looked at Alex, "Is this for real? I thought they did not exist?"

Alexandria did not know what to say, "I read of no record that one that ever existed. I mean it was tried to be created but always failed and resulted in daemon being created instead. But now that I see one, I mean, they had to have gotten the idea from somewhere I suppose."

Anna wondered about all this, "Now I'm sure that we could stop it somehow but assuming we do, this got a whole lot complicated really quickly." Mike could only agree and the only thing left to do was see what its next move was.

It took a few more minutes but then the angel stood and to show himself even more started to float a bit for a few second using his wings. The sight was beautiful and also very imposing. When he opened his mouth and started to talk gone was the voice of Joseph and instead you had a very loud and deep voice that replaced it.

"Everyone, I know this must be a shock to all of you. Know that I did not want to hide my true form but was told by your High Order Priest Joseph, the man that helped free me from my captivity for all these years that I should considering what had happen to our cherished lord of light. Also I took his form as a way to honor the man that had helped me as in doing so it cost him his life."

"Now please, even if my true form has been revealed know that my goal is the same. To have our lord of light bless us all once again and return all of you who have followed his path for all these years to your rightful positions."

There was a pause and it was understandable as everyone was in shock but Rosamia had faced undead dragons, avatars and also living dragons and while an angel was new to her it's initial shock

and awe was quickly fleeting. "And how are we to believe this, you say that High Priest Joseph gave his life away to save you but how can we be sure of this? This form that you have now helps to convince us, but did you not do the same thing with your other form? Who is to say that this one was not chosen as well for that very impact?" She then turned to everyone and tried to grab their attention as best as she could, "He chooses a form to convince us and talks about the return to our previous state and give the impression that only he is capable of doing this." Rosamia then pointed to Catherine, "You all saw it, a High Order member not chosen by our angel over there has once again received the lord of light's powers, if his words are true then what she did should be deemed miraculous."

Her words angered the angel, "Don't DARE speak to ME of miracle human, this parlor trick is only that." He then looked around and quickly saw that her words and the situation had made an effect on the general crowd which did not please him one bit and because of that he calmed himself and turned to the crowd. "I see that these events have taken a toll and with that in mind I will give everyone a reprieve. Once again I will give time for everyone to come and see us and rejoin the Order, ask any question of me and I shall answer, see that what I have mentioned is the truth as it will always be." He then hovered once again for a little while, "Ten days will be given, but once those days are done we will march to the main church of Missa to take our rightful position."

This seemed all wrong to Mike, "Ten days, that's convenient for us, but why?" He then looked at Anna and Alex but it seemed that they had no answers for him.

"Once again I ask of you all to make the right

choice... And speaking of choice there is one present that has run out of time in order to make the correct one."

Rosamia immediately jumped to Catherine side "CATHERINE!!!"

"ROSA!!!" Adam screamed as he moved to reach Rosa but then instantly Iris grabbed on to his waist and pulled him back, "Wait..."

There was no time for her to finish as a large pillar of fire engulf both Rosa and Catherine, the flames where very hot and so strong that there was no way to see past them.

Alex linked herself to Iris and spoke out loud, "I know it looks bad but somehow she is still alive..." There was a small pause, "I suppose that would work but..."

Quickly as she could Iris relayed the message to Adam who was still trying to push her away. "Adam, she is still okay... trust me there is nothing you can do, if you get any closer the only thing that will happen is that you will burn up."

Adam was in full rage but part of him knew that she was right the heat alone that he was feeling now was a lot to take in and the worst part the spell was still going. He took out his blades and turned to the angel.

Catherine looked to her side and saw that Rosamia had, as best as she could, shielded her with her own body and had casted a holy shield underneath them. There was a small quick smile that appeared as she had appreciated the thought. "Rosamia I think you can let go now."

Rosa looked around and both of them where safe as both of them where now protected by a holy shield that wrapped around all of them curtsey of Catherine, "The sphere!"

Catherine nodded, "I'll admit that it was simply done by instinct but yes the sphere allowed me to cast the shield." She then looked around and saw only flames, "Unfortunately I'm not sure how long it will last under this intensity. Somehow I think he attacked us with a dual fire pillar from both below and above us."

It looked like she was right but seeing as that spell was not continuous he must be recasting it over and over, that was some point he was trying to make. Still now was not the time to think about that as pretty soon the both of them would be incinerated as the sphere would run out of power.

"Wait I have an idea but I'm not sure you will like it."

She gave Rosa a stern look, "Our options are your idea or turning to dust, I think I will prefer your idea now go on with it."

Rosa nodded her head and then reached out to Catherine's collar and unbuttoned it and then reached in with her hand.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!!" She then paused and realized that Rosa was reaching the sphere and casting spells herself in order for the sphere to replenish itself. "Do you think it will last?"

"I'm not sure actually but I don't know of anything else to do."

"Well instead of thinking of that let's think about what we will do when the flames start to die down as I don't want everyone to see you and me with your hand down my shirt."

Rosa tried to hold back the smile that had been created at that mental image, "No I don't think that will be a good idea. When the time comes crouch on the ground as best as you can and use the remaining power to create a shield below use and then I'll create one above our heads. It will not cover everything but should allow us to

survive... I think..."

"Have anyone ever told you that you people need better plans?"

Once again a smile appeared, "Constantly actually."

"I must admit that I'm stunned that Adam is still only standing there, also should that spell not have finished by now?"

Alexandria nodded, "He's constantly recasting it, I'm guessing to prove a point..."

"Hmm, that's the second time..." They both turned to Anna as she pointed to the Crusaders around him. "That's twice now, look at them no reaction. Even when he turned into an angel there was no reaction. Maybe William could have known but all the others that make no sense to me."

It also made no sense to Mike and as he thought on it Alexandria moved closer to get a better view of them. "Iris did mention that there was an odd reaction when she had used a spell on them, makes me wonder if there is more to it."

With that Mike turned to her, "Can you confirm that?"

She was a bit surprised, "I can but, ah, should we not stand at the ready as they say... you know in case he does something else after this?"

Mike looked at the ongoing pillar of fire, "They are safe right?"

"Yes, well as safe as you can be when you are incased flame hot enough to incinerate anything it focus on."

There was a moment of hesitation from Mike but then he cast it aside, "I'll trust in Rosamia and your judgment, so yes I'm sure do a double check and also push the envelope a bit if you need to... I mean he is currently occupied in a way."

"Alright I'll be back soon..." With that she disappeared leaving the two alone on a roof nearby overlooking the whole thing. "I get the feeling that this is about to turn around a bit for us, this showing was a bad move on his end." Mike reached out to Anna, "I hope your right."

The angel focused his gaze on Adam, "I am sorry that one of yours suffered the same fate as the ex-High Priestess, there was little that could be done."

Adam was holding on to everything he could, he believed what Iris had told him and that was probably the main thing holding him back, still what he thought he saw as a smile on the angel face did not help matters at all. He then pointed his sword at the angel, "This is NOTHING! You think this little fire is enough to kill one of us?"

"If you are so certain about that let's all see." As the angel stopped recasting the spell and the ones left over started to die out. For those around close enough it was hard to believe Adam's comment as they could feel the heat of the flames but as they finally dissipated their doubt turned into sheer shock. In the location that Catherine had been you could see her covered by Rosa body. It was clear to see that the fires had affected them but they looked very alive.

"No trick should have let you survive for that long..."

Catherine was the first to stand and when she did she had a bit of a smile on her face, finally a mistake that she could capitalize on. She looked at herself, sure there was a lot of burned part of clothing, her cape was nonexistent and also there were a few small part of her body that that showed damage but that had been expected and also

planned in a way. "I told you and everyone, this is no trick, my powers are restored and soon so will everyone with no exclusions." To prove the point more she used a healing spell to heal her wounds and she let the moment sink in as everyone stared at her as her wounds disappeared.

While everyone was whispering comments at Catherine's display Rosamia also forced herself up. Her wounds were a lot worse as she had physically shielded Catherine as best as she could with her body. From the corner of her eyes she could see the pain and anger that Adam was feeling but he made no move and instead stayed put and only sheathed his swords. Rosa was glad about that and would need to thank him later, doing so would help her in what she needed to do next.

Now fully standing Rosamia addressed everyone, "What High Priestess Catherine says is true, even one such as me has regained her powers as before." And with that Rosamia started to heal her wounds. "High Priest Robert told me recently that this need to rejoin or to show your worthiness again is childish. There is no need to do any of this, as worthiness has already been proven by all of us the minute we were born with access to these powers. These powers are a blessing and a responsibility to be shared with those that were not as fortunate in order to help and heal, and this is what the Order has stood for and what the High Order are still working towards."

Catherine then stood next to Rosamia, "We understand the pain and frustration that everyone here at Missa has felt during the last year but we urge you to give us a bit more time and we will promise results." She then turned to the angel, "There is one thing that I will agree on, now is the time to think about your next step, but I will urge you to be wary of words being spoken by creatures

belonging to stories of old as they are often not what they appear to be."

"I congratulate you on surviving but don't think that you can keep escaping your crimes, still I will keep to my word as that is what I always do and give time for people to think and come to terms with these new events." With that the angel flew off and soon after the Crusader under him flowed suit on foot.

Alexandria suddenly reappeared next to the other two, "Well that went well overall..."

Mike agreed but it was easy to see that he was forcing himself too, "I guess, still extra time makes no sense to me... Alexandria did you discover something?"

"I did but at the same time I did not... Iris was right normal spells don't work on them but it's not because they are shielded, it's because they are possessed."

Anna was stunned, "Wait, so just like that daemon from so long ago?" When Alexandria confirmed it she turned to Mike, "This is not good, I mean no matter how good Catherine and the others did today there is no way that they are able to sway any of those following him. In the end there is no choice or anything to think about for them."

There was no arguing her comment, Mike turned to where the others were, while the angel was now gone and most of his followers seem to follow suit everyone else had stayed around and were currently bombarding the High Order members with questions. "Well I guess we now have something to look into..."

Alex wondered on that, "I agree that it will be a priority, but I think that there is something else we need to look into before all of that." She then sat down on the roof, "But before I go over that I think

we need to wait and let them finish here, I don't think he will try anything but just in case."

It had taken many hours but eventually everyone had made it back to the main High Order meeting room, no extra defenses had been put in place so this allowed everyone to sit which everyone was thankful for. Alexandria had invited an extra guest via her communication pendant and was in the process of finishing the update on the current situation. "The High Order and I have no record of an angel ever existing, do the dwarves?"

Helram ran his fingers through his long beard. "We do and also know of who you are talking about, no worries there. He was created by the lord of light himself in order to help fight the lord of darkness's avatar form, this was before he had created his own avatar form. His name is Kausiphis. Still from what you said he did not have those abilities before and I'm also worried about all this talk of the return of the lord of light, he should know that's not possible."

Adam knew it was going to be a stupid question as he already knew the answer but asked anyways, "So if he was tasked with destroying the avatar and clearly he did not succeed, if it does come down to a fight there should be no issues right?"

Helram smirked, "Yea about that, normally back then and with your current situation and previous fights I would say that you would be on equal footing but I'm not so sure that's the case now."

Catherine wondered on that, "So do you know how he is increasing his strength?"

Helram was stunned for a bit and then he quickly chuckled, "Oh I see now, yes I do and so to

most of you as well. I understand he looks differently and that maybe that throwing you all off, but his structure and function is the same as any other daemon that you have faced or learned about in the past."

Alexandria eye suddenly when wide and then she turned to Mike and Anna, "That's bad, that's really really bad and also means you were right to be annoyed with that time thing."

Most were confused by her comment so Mike explained, "It was nagging at me why he was giving us so much time. First he captures Catherine and does nothing, okay maybe it's just to get our attentions. But then he give us five days, and even then more time, even when Catherine told him that given a bit more time we would be better prepared he still stuck to giving us the time. It felt like he was stalling for some reason but I could not figure out why, I take it that you did Alexandria?"

"Sadly I do, take in the stalling for time, information that the Crusaders following him are possessed and what Helram just said and well..."

Catherine instantly reacted and so did the other members of the High Order, "Wait what? They are possessed? When did you find that out and are you sure about this?"

Alexandria nodded, "Sadly I am, while he was... demonstrating his powers on the both of you I was asked to double check something Iris had mentioned when she had checked a few Crusaders very quickly. After digging in more, it was confirmed that they are possessed. Now seeing as he was an angel I did not know what that meant but if the same rules apply."

"Wait, do you mean that they will all eventually turn into... little angels then I guess?"

Rosa turned to Adam, "Not necessarily, being possessed is one thing but its level deepens on the

person doing it. I could see him putting more control on the Crusaders and less so on the Order members, as for transformation again that's up to him and the level he wants to go." She then turned to Helram, "But why do this? If his goal was the lord of darkness why mass control Missa?"

"I don't know, yes that was his original goal but at the same time these creation are self-thinking so there is nothing to say that during all these years he did not think of a new task... or one could have been given to him. While we did not keep in touch we did check to see if there was any sightings of him over the years, I'm sure that the lord of light would have done the same when he had returned... it could also be totally unrelated, really only he could answer this."

Catherine wondered on that, "He did mention that Joseph helped him somehow, could it be possible that his captivity affected him somehow?"

"No, no, no, I'm sorry but there is no way that a being like him could get captured unless he wanted too. I mean, I guess it's possible but very unlikely."

This worried Rob, "Then one wonders about Joseph and if he really did give his life freely or was he simply killed."

While the others worried on that Mike wondered on something else, "Rosamia you mentioned that Joseph was a man very devoted to the lord of light correct?"

"Yes very, more than most that I have ever met, why?"

Mike then turned to the High Order, "If something like an angel came to him and promised the lord of light's return how would he react?"

Catherine has not expected a question like that so she was a bit put off, "Ah, well I'm not sure, I mean I know what you are asking but..." She

turned to Rob, "Maybe, I could see it..."

Rob thought about it too, "I'm hesitant to agree as is Catherine but it is possible, still I would think that even if it was that he would need reassurance or proof to convince him at a hundred percent as anything less would not work." He then turned to Alex, "And how could the angel do that when you all have said many times that there is no way to do so?"

"True there is no way to do so, but there has been a substitute and really at that level how different is that then the original, power and ability wise?"

Iris quickly understood what Mike was referring to, "Genevieve, your thinking that he's not bringing him back but is going to become him."

Mike nodded, "It's what the lord of light had planned originally, to transfer all his powers to a being and essentially take over. Who's to say that can't be done with the angel given enough power? And with that logic I think he could prove his return." He then looked at Alex, "Still is possessing people going to give him that much power?"

"No it's not, it will power him but not to those levels... The only way to get to those levels is to take in a massive amount of life energy and eventually you would get there but where is he going to find that? It's not like he can just take it from those possessed, I mean that would work but if he did that then there would be a lot of bodies around."

Mike shrugged, "There is a cheat, I mean we did it in a way, given enough people just take a part and leave the rest. Would anyone notice, five, ten, fifteen years going missing from your lifetime? And how many of those would it take?"

Alex thought about it and while she did that Rosa just simply could not believe it, "That's a very

cruel and dark thought, to think that everyone that is following him is incapable of leaving once they do and also are all paying with part of their lives, without knowing how much, in order to have a fake lord of light return to them as well as their powers." She then looked at Adam with a very sad and concern look, "That's... simply horrible..."

Catherine took a deep breath and refocused her mind on the issue at hand as inside part of her was breaking at this news of what was happening to her people, "Is there a way to confirm this and is there a way to know how much was taken, or a way to stop it or even better yet reverse it?"

"I can confirm it yes..." Alex then looked at Rosa, Mike, Anna, Iris and even Adam, "I mean our group has a lot of experience with that particular effect." She then suddenly had a very somber look as she turned to Catherine, "As for a way to know how much was taken, that I can't do without knowing what they had to start with, and assuming I had access to that much life energy how do I know how much to return to whom it would all become one large guess. As for stopping it, stopping the process as it happens is easy but to protect someone against it is like asking to protect someone from never bleeding again, there are ways but really not really. I'm sorry Catherine..."

Jessica turned to the others, "This needs to be confirmed with all due haste and ideally we need to figure out a way to stop him from gaining more people."

Mike nodded at that, "Well our small sub team will take over the confirmation..."

Rosamia turned to him, "That feels like we are splitting the team again, assuming the same split what will my team focus on?"

Anna smiled, "Oh you know already, you have

the hard task of helping the High Order convincing people not to join with the angel. I mean if you can convince them to stay on your side the better but really you need for them to at least stay neutral for now."

Rosamia wondered on where to even start, "That will be interesting..." Catherine suddenly nodded, "It will as I will be joining you on that task."

Rosa was stunned and so was Jessica, "Not that I don't think it will be a good idea seeing as you can prove the return of our powers, so to speak, are you sure you wish to do this?"

Catherine suddenly stood strait on her chair, "Is there a reason why I should not?"

"It's not an issue of capability, but of reception. People see you as strong, commanding and a great leader but because of that could be on guard if you plan on meeting them face to face in a more personal level."

Catherine did take in the comment and weight it, she did not disagree with Jessica and in theory she could pass on the sphere to her solving both problems of proof and intimidation but that would also cause other issues and questions, as for now it had been mentioned that only Rosa and her had their full capabilities again. "I will keep your words in mind but will still join Rosa in her task." She then looked at Rosa, "At the same time we can use this time to share some knowledge."

Rosa saw where she was going with that as already far too much had been mentioned about what had happened in the Impregnable Tower, mind you at this point what harm would there be in telling Catherine so all in all there was no issues with that. The main problem was figuring out how they were going to pull off their task at hand.

Seeing as things were finishing Helram once

again took over, "Well, I'll update the others on what we all think is happening over where you are. I sure that may encourage them to speed up somehow." He then turned to Alex, "Keep me up to date and I'll do the same on their progress." When she nodded in confirmation his image disappeared and she then put back the pendant in its original place.

After that she looked at Mike, "I guess that means we are going Crusader hunting right?"

Mike nodded and also stood up, "Sound like the right place to start." As the three made their way to the door of the room Alex quickly looked at Iris and put an index figure on her own forehead, "Let's keep in touch with each other."

"I understand..."

As they left Rosamia turned to the High Order, "Well where do we start?"

It was now night time and Adam made his way to the roof patio at the top of the church where he saw Rosamia lost in thought. "Still wondering about tomorrow?"

She turned his way and automatically gave him a smile, "Yes but I think having the first step of visiting the families of the Crusaders that have joined is a good place to start to get more information." She then took a quick moment, "What I really was thinking about was trying to figure out what his plan is."

Adam was confused, "The angel?" When he saw from her reaction that he had missed the mark he was even more confused, "What 'his' are you referring too then?"

Rosa smiled, "Mike's, I'm sure that he is purposefully splitting the group this way for a reason and I'm sure that reason has something to

do with me and I can take a few guess as to why but I'm just not sure."

Adam shrugged, "Well I for one am fine with it, but I'm sure if you ask him that he will tell you."

"Yes I'm sure he would but I don't want to ask him, I want to figure it out."

Adam approached her more and wrapped his hands around hers. "I'm not sure if you need to worry about that. Personally I doubt he has an elaborate plan, but I do think that he is purposefully giving you the chance to mend fences if you choose too. I mean when the time comes, because it probably will, it will be all hands on deck but that's not now so if you have the chance then why not take it if you want to?"

She suddenly gave him a hug, "Hmm, that's twice today now." After a while she then pulled back a bit with their faces so close to each other that they could feel each other's breath. There was a shared smile and then she reached out and kissed him.

When it was over he still had his eyes closed as he took a quick moment of silence to commit the warm and feel of her lips to his mind. Once satisfied he opened his eyes to see her starting at him, "I love you Rosa, you know right?"

She smiled, "I do, and know that I love you as well Adam." She then rested her head on his chest and they both stayed that way for a while, sharing in each other's warmth and feeling each other's quickened heartbeats.

Chapter 5

*I*t was early the next morning when Mike, Anna and Alexandria appeared in an alleyway between houses close to the Crusader outpost. "So do we simply walk around until we meet a potential target?"

Anna gave Alex a quick smile and motioned for the both of them to wait there for a bit while she looked around. After a few seconds she walked back to them, "Alex can you make us invisible I would like to walk around a bit but not draw any attention to us while we do."

"Sure... I can do that." She casted the spell that they all assume was invisibility and then casted another. "So no one will be able to see us and as long as we keep our voices down no one should be able to hear us as well. Quick note before we head off try and avoid people as much as possible."

The group did just that and the fact that it was early made it really easy to avoid any passerby. Anna took the lead and the other two followed, eventually Alex saw a patrol of four Crusaders, "Should we go for them?"

She quickly got her answer as Anna let them pass by, Alex turned to Mike, "Ah any particular reason why we did nothing?" Mike shrugged, "It's going to be one of those, no worries she will let us know."

While Alex understood at the same time she didn't, many times in the past Mike had reference these moments and Alex had seen a few of them for herself and overall she had to agree with him as it made little sense, but typically ended up

fortunately for them somehow so there was little reason to stop her or argue. With that they continued to follow her as they moved along the houses, her general direction was the outpost but there were a lot of detours and then Anna stopped and looked to the side of a house where she saw a woman simply standing there. The woman was in her mid twenties, average build with short reddish hair. Her clothing was normal which indicated that she was probably not part of the Order or the Crusaders.

Seemingly satisfied Anna turned to Alex, "Can you change my look to be like a priestess and also remove the invisibly and other spell you put on me?" Alex clearly had many questions but did as she was asked by first putting a spell on her armor and clothing that would make it look like she wore the same thing as the priestess in the city. She then removed the other two spells, "You're good to go."

Anna silently thanked her and then proceeded to make her way to meet up with the woman that she had just spotted. When she got close, the person in question did not even notice her as she was constantly watching the other side of the open alleyway. She looked so preoccupied with something and that was why Anna had chosen her, "Hello, is something the matter?"

The question startled the woman and she also jumped back a bit at the sight of Anna, "I'm sorry priestess, I'm..." She quickly looked the other way and then back at Anna, "I'm simply waiting for someone." She then looked at where she was. Currently she had positioned herself at the edge of a house away from the large alleyway and with that confirmation there was a bit of confusion in her face. "I'm sorry if I was in the way?"

Anna suddenly smiled at her, "No worries, I

just saw you as I was passing by when I was on my way to the outpost and wondered if everything was okay. I was simply curious, nothing else."

Somewhat relieved but at the same time still anxious she once again turned but this time did not turn back and was suddenly glued to the small patrol of Crusaders that had appeared. The three made their way along the alleyway in order of two in the back and one in front as they passed both of them without even acknowledging their presence. When they were in front of them Anna quickly looked at the woman then the troop in question, it seems that her attention was focused on a man that was in the back with the other woman Crusader. After they had passed, the woman immediately felt discouraged, "I take it that one of them was who you were waiting for?"

The woman had a sad look in her eyes as she turned to Anna but then she held back and then stared at the ground. It's then that Anna wondered if she had made the wrong choice in her disguise, "It's okay to tell me, and if I can, I do want to help."

There was some hesitation but she started talking, "Scott, the person in the back is my husband, he's been a Crusader for as long as I have known him and he's been very devoted to that task... but recently that's all he's been doing, he has yet to come home for the past weeks." She then lowered her head, "I'm sorry to make a selfish request especially now but I would like to know that he's okay, I just saw him but he did not even look at me it's like I don't exist anymore and that worries me."

"I take it that he is stationed at the outpost?" she simply nodded in agreement. Anna then stood there like she was thinking about something and eventually she gave the woman a smile, "Well I may not be able to do anything but as I said I'm on my

way to the outpost, once I'm done with my task there I can ask around for an update on the situation and then I or someone I know will let you know." Instantly the woman smiled, "Oh thank you, thank you so much it would mean the world to me." Anna nodded, "No problem, but can I have your name and also can you let me know where you live so that I can find you again? If you don't mind that is?"

"Oh no problem at all..." She then moved back and pointed to a house that was a few blocks down, "That is where we live and my name is Jean."

Anna nodded her head and smiled, "Thanks, Jean, again I'll see what I can do and let you know. Even if I find nothing I'll make sure to let you know, you have enough to worry about and I would not like to add to it if I can."

Again Jean smiled, "Many thanks priestess." and with that Anna left the woman and made her way to the outpost. When she was out of sight she suddenly heard Alexandria, "You are once again covered in my spells also I take it that we have our targets?"

Anna smiled, "That we do."

It did not take too much time for the three to catch up with the Crusader patrol. Mike turned to the two, "It's assumed that as soon as they see us they will use their magic to speed up but we should still have the first blow, should we go for one each using the extra advantage that Alexandria gave us?"

Anna nodded and then got into position but its then that Alex stopped the both of them, "Get in position in case but I think that I got this."

Quickly she casted a spell that created a wall ice around all three Crusaders as the spell continued to apply more ice, making the walls

thicker, the Crusaders had to move closer to each other. While that was happening she casted another spell, and this time in a quick flash, a bolt of lightning fell from the skies and hit all three and in the process shattered the ice around them. The blow sent them all to the ground. "That was pretty brutal Alexandria."

She was about to say something but then she saw that the Crusaders were still moving, slowly but still moving which had not been the intended results. "Not brutal enough it seems."

After she finished saying that Mike and Anna sprung in action and quickly made their way to the Crusaders. While there were some passerbys this was the first that they had seen of the attackers, thankfully due to the bolt of lightning shattering a wall of ice it seemed that there were all still in shock and none reacted to what was happening.

The Crusaders tried their best to get up but with their wounds and the shock of the blow there was little they could do to stop the two from knocking them over with their swords. Once down for the count Alexandria joined up with them, "Do I bring all of them?"

Mike slowly shook his head, "No just the husband and also the woman. Leave the other here we are too few to keep all of them." As quickly as she could Alex touched the two in question and Mike and Anna placed their hands on her back and suddenly they all disappeared.

They reappeared in what looked like a forest. "I teleported us away from the city we are still close, relatively, but far too far for them to make it back on foot if they escape somehow, also there is no way that we should bump into anyone around here."

With that Mike and Anna took out some rope from their backpack. It's then that Mike wondered

on something, "Alexandria, with them being so far would they still be able to cast?"

It was a good question and one that she was not sure on, "In theory probably not as there has to be a range for the spell that fuels them but then again with the angel and the powers he should have, it's hard to tell."

With that Mike nodded his head and pulled out some more rope and Anna followed suit. They took each body and tied them individually to a tree; also they made sure that each of them could not see each other. They could still hear each other but that would be it, no matter how much they tried to twist their bodies. Once the task was almost Anna took a quick look at Alex, "I hope you are okay with what we are doing?"

Alex nodded, "I am, I'm not a fan but this needs to be done, they are possessed and that need to be handled somehow."

After making sure that they were both secure Alex made her way to the man and placed her hand on his chest and started casting. Eventually a sad look appeared on her face, "It's confirmed, the spell has been used on them so it's safe to say that he's lost some of his overall life total." She then made her way to the woman and it had the same result. "What now?"

It was an interesting question and given Anna's actions it was easy to see what the next step should be but how to go about it. "Alexandria I know I may be asking too much but is it possible for you to remove the possession? I would like to know if it's something that can be done without using the holy cleansing spell."

Alex thought about it, "I'm not really sure a long while back I did research the spell because of Rosa request but still I don't think I can replicate it even with that..." She then paused for a moment

and looked at that the man in question, "Still I don't really have to replicate its full effect I just need to reach the same outcome, so I'm willing to try something and see how it goes."

Instantly Anna went to her and gave her a quick hug, "Thanks Alex." She smiled, "Yea well don't thank me yet as I'm really not sure if this will work out."

Alexandria then placed herself in front of the man and then for a long while thought about how to possibly go about it, than eventually she took a deep breath and then placed both hands on him.

The first part she needed to do was to locate the possession spell itself and then figure out its effects on the person in question. Once that was done she paid attention how the spell had bonded to the person and the level of change that it had applied. From the looks of it the spell was still working strongly to keep the modification from undoing itself, which gave Alex an idea of trying to interfere with that part. With a few more spells she created a barrier around that location and also attacked the spell itself. The attack spell worked and reduced the possession spell and its effects on the body but that would be the easy part as she also needed for the section that had been modified to heal back to what they had been. She waited a while and kept her protection magic up eventually she saw a very minuet change for the positive. With that encouraging her, she started to cast another spell that she used when creating the healing flasks and applied it to the section which speed up the process. While this was all good news there was still a final test and that was to drop the barrier around the area and see what would happen. She waited a while and as expect due to the possession spell still being present its effects still continued but not in the area that she had

just worked on.

She dropped her concentration, "I should be able to save him but it will take me... the day at least."

Anna smiled at her, "That's great news, fantastic even."

She nodded in response, "I agree, but if I need to do this again there maybe issues as the longer they have been possessed the harder it will be for me to remove it."

Mike understood, "Makes sense, well do what you can for him and we will take it from there. Is there anything you need us to do?"

"Not really, keep watch I guess just in case the angel does something as he should notice, or will notice eventually, what I'm doing."

Mike agreed that was a concern but he was not too worried about it, "I wonder on that, in a way that could be another test. I mean now that he has what he needs from them how much will he do to get them back."

It was an interesting question that both had no answers too and with that Alexandria turned to her target once again and continued with what she had started with.

Iris came out from the side of the house as the others arrived close, "She's still in there."

Catherine seemed displeased, "Child was it necessary to teleport here before us to confirm this?"

"Well I mean it was useful in confirming that your first location on your list would have someone there right?"

She slowly nodded, "I suppose but don't you also think that using magic for that is, well, wasteful?"

Iris wanted to laugh or smile but instead she held it in, "Not really, I mean in Astrum the use of magic is pretty common place but I can see where here in Missa things are a bit different considering the type of magic you normally use and the faith attached around it. That's simply not a thing in Astrum." She then stood strait, "Also I don't consider someone in her early twenties a child."

Catherine eyed Iris, "Hmmm..." She then turned to Rosamia who was closes to the door of the house for the first person on their list. "Shall we?"

Rosa could see that Iris felt insulted but now was not the time for that and it was to be expected with Catherine so she ignored it as well and knocked on the door.

"Coming, please hold on a second..."

"MOM!!! Is that dad?"

The door then opened and a tall looking female opened the door with her brown hair tied in a pony tail, "Oh I'm sorry sweetie but I don't think that he will be home tonight again." She then turned to them and first saw Rosa, "What can I help you with priestes..." She did not finish the word as she continued looking then saw Catherine and recognized her, instantly she bowed down. "I'm sorry High Priestess I did not see you there, please forgive my rudeness..."

It's then that a little boy moved closer to her and pointed at Rosa and Catherine, "Mom who are they?"

The mom quickly placed her hand on the boy's hand and lowered it down, "Steven put your hand down now..."

"But Mom, Why?"

The woman closed her eyes, "I'm sorry, please the child simply..."

"Raise you head, and no worries, there is

nothing to apologize for at all as we are the ones showing up unannounced. Still can you invite us in, as there are a few things we would like to talk about?"

The woman looked nervous and Rosa could hardly blame her, "No need to worry we really only want to ask you a few questions that's all, I swear."

She then looked back, "Ah, but my house is no place for someone such as the High Priestess, and would it not be preferable for me to see you at the main church?"

Catherine lowered her head, "I see, I suppose then that means that you are refusing entry then?"

Immediately the woman reacted and grabbed her child and moved back, "No, no, no, please come in." They all did so but it's then that Rosamia wondered how much harder this task was going to be, especially with comments like that.

Once again the boy broke the tension that was rapidly climbing, "Mom can you ask them about dad?"

She then lowered herself to his height, "Steven, please be quite now..."

Seeing as the child seemed uninterested in listening Iris took a step forward and then lowered herself as well, "Hey why not let your mom talk to the priestess while I show you a cool trick." It's then that she opened her hands and fireworks jumped from one to the other.

"COOL!!!..." He then pointed at her, "Hey your armor looks like dad's are you a Crusader too?"

"No I'm not, but I was trained to fight by one." She then pointed to Adam, "This guy here actually and he was a real Crusader just like your dad."

"Was?"

Adam approached the kid, "Well I guess I was kicked out so..."

"AHahaha, you must have been bad at it then,

not like my dad."

The mother was instantly worried, "STEVEN!!!"

Adam quickly interrupted her, "It's fine, it's fine, he's probably right I'm sure his dad is a much better Crusader then me." He then eyed the kid, "So I guess your dad's really good then, mind telling me about him?"

The kid was now wide eyed, "SURE!!! Let me tell you about this onetime..."

Its then that Rosa placed her hand on the mother's shoulder, "They will keep him occupied and happy don't worry." She then pointed to the living room, "And they will be right there, so that you can keep on eye them while we talk." She then pointed to the kitchen table where Catherine had already taken a seat.

The mother was reluctant but did as she was told, one she sat down she kept her eyes focused on the table. This did not seem to bother Catherine and so she started, "We would like to ask you a few question about your husband actually, I hope that you don't mind as it would be a great help to us."

She did not answer and she looked really tense, this was really not going well at all so Rosa figured that a change of pace would help. She reached out and she put both of her hand on top the mother's ones, they where cold and clenched together. "I know you are afraid and I know you may not believe me but don't worry nothing you say here will bare you any issue during or even after we leave. As for Catherine here, just for now ignore her position..." She then smiled at her, "She is simply like this because after all this time, she owns nothing else to wear."

Catherine was about to say something but she saw that the woman was a bit less tense so she stayed silent, for now.

"I'm sorry but what you say is... I was there at

the auditorium recently and it is clear to see that there is a change happening and well as you probably know my husband is..."

Rosa stopped her, "This is not about sides or anything we are trying to get information on certain comments that have been said and can only asks people such as yourself in order to confirm this. Because of the importance we needed to come ourselves..." She then had a worried look on her face, "I know you may not believe me but we want no harm to come to you, your son and your husband we simply want to know more about what is going on right now." She then looked at her son briefly before focusing again on the mother, "Your son mentioned something about his dad being away for a while now, that is actually what we want to confirm, how long has been away and has he not returned home at all?"

The mother took a quick moment, "Ever since he was told about... it... he has not returned once, it's been weeks now. I've asked but all I get is that he is currently busy serving the lord of light." She quickly lifted her head at Rosa, "I know that this is the right thing to do and it needs to be done as he is our lord... but..."

Rosa gave had a warm smile on her face to try and calm her down more, "But his family needs him as well and you have every right to believe this as well. Also if it was in my power I would return him to you today."

Catherine then added, "If it was my choice as well, Crusaders are ordered to take downtime for this purpose, this has always been the case unless something was currently happening."

This confused the mother, "But you are a High Priestess if you can't order him home then..."

Rosa explained the situation more, "You are correct in thinking that there is a... argument..."

currently occurring in the Order due to the appearance of this angel that you saw at the auditorium. It's caused confusion with many, understandable confusion but confusion none the less." She then turned to Catherine, "We realize that the one that is to blame is the angel so there are no worries, once this is over, there will be no blame or consequences brought to those that have followed him."

Catherine simply nodded and with that Rosa focused one again on the mother, "We only want to protect your husband and also yourself and your son can you help us do so?"

She was a bit weary to ask but she did none the less, "What do you wish for us to do?"

Rosamia then lowered her voice to make sure that the child could not hear her "I don't want to worry you but I have to warn you that we think that something has happened to your husband preventing him from wanting to return home. At this time it's unfounded but we are currently working on a way to confirm it, in the meantime we which to talk to people and families as yourself to simply get more information." There was a small paused before she continued, "as well, and there is no easy way to say this, if he does come home and ask you to follow him or join him, please don't."

"You ... are asking me to not believe in my own husband... I don't think that..."

Quickly Rosa shook her head, "No, I am simply telling you to be careful if certain things are mentioned, nothing more. Is this okay with you?"

It took a moment but she finally nodded in agreement, the thing is that Rosa wondered if she was simply doing it to look like she was agreeing or if she was actually agreeing with her. There really was no way to tell without the use of magic which was not something Rosa was going to ask of Iris.

With that Rosa suddenly smiled at the mother and then stood up, "That all that we wanted and with that we will take our leave."

Catherine stood up as well and slowly made her way to the door all the while saying nothing at all. This grabbed the boy attention, "Is daddy coming home soon?"

Rosamia smiled at him, "We hope so and we will do our best to make that happen, while we do that listen to your mother okay."

The son then ran at the mom, "Mom, mom they are going to tell dad to come back, you think he'll be back soon?"

She gave him a hug, "I hope so." Then she moved to the door and opened it to let everyone out, "I hope I was helpful."

As Catherine, Adam and Iris made their way out Rosa gave her one last smile, "You where and thank you and sorry for all this." She then turned and left the house as well and then heard the door slowly close behind her.

The four then moved away and then Catherine quickly looked back, "I'm not so sure that was helpful at all."

Rosa was forced to agree, "Well at least it's the start of confirming what we figured that they are not going back home once they join, reinforcing our concerns. Still I do hope that we were a bit successful in convincing her not to immediately help out if they ask..."

She was then interrupted with the voice of Anna and a blueish floating head appearing in front of them, "Rosa do you have time?"

Rosa and everyone quickly moved to an alleyway, "We do, did something happen?"

The floating head nodded, "Everything is confirmed on all fronts."

This was grim news for everyone, "But as bad

as that is there is a favor that we wish for you to do for us."

Rosa was curious as she knew that Anna had figured that their task would be hard enough as is so anything extra would make it that much harder. "What is it?"

"There is a house that I wish for you to visit, there is a married woman that lives there, I want you to go there and give her the news that her husband will be returning home..." She then looked back at something, "Sometime today we were told?"

Catherine was instantly interested, "You are able to undo it, how?"

Anna looked up, "How would Alex put it... Magic finds a way?"

Iris could not help but chuckle, "That is something my sister would say, still to be able to do what it is doing is impressive and also good news."

Catherine wondered on that but did not argue, "And once we give this message is there anything else you wish for us to do?"

There as a bit of a demeaning tone to her voice but Anna ignored it and looked at Rosa, "I'm sure you'll be able to figure out what to do next." She then looked at Iris, "Can I give you the location?"

"Sure thing."

As Anna explained where the house in question with probably with enough detail to teleport too if need be, Rosa wondered on her capabilities of doing this considering that they had helped her out before she had even thought to ask for help. It's then that once again she felt Adam hand brush against her. When she turned to look at him he simply slowly nodded his head. She smiled at that, he was right, she needed to stop thinking that they had asked her to do this in

order to prove herself because it was not. Reality was that there were little options for her task and figuring out how to help with that would be easy for them and seeing as they were in a position to do so they did just that.

Seeing as she was done giving the direction to Iris she turned back to Rosa, "I hope it helps, from our end we will continue to see what the limits are and take it from there."

With the doubts from her head removed Rosa was able to think clearly and a thought occurred to her. "Depending on how this goes, we may contact you in order to return the favor you asked of us."

Anna smiled, "Just let us know what you need."

"I will." and with that the communication from the pendant was cut off.

Catherine then looked at her, "I take it that you are assuming that they maybe more cooperative if their family members are returned?"

"Yes, at least I hope, and I may have an idea how to use that, depending on many things."

Catherine nodded, "Good."

Iris then got Rosa attention but kept an eye on Catherine, "I take it that me going over there ahead of time will not be necessary?"

Rosa smiled, "No, it won't but not for the reasons you're probably thinking..." She then turned to Catherine, "If you can, while we head there, forget what Jessica told you and act as you normally would as High Priestess that you are."

"That will draw attention."

"That's what I want, I want people to see you, I want them to react and if they choose, try and ask you something."

Catherine understood Rosa's plan, "Fine, then in that case..." She then pointed at Adam and Iris, "You and the child, walk in front of me and you

Rosa to my side but somewhat behind me. Let us show everyone that we are still here and present in this city."

The modification in the plan has worked well, as it had taken a long time to reach the house, which was fine because they needed time to finish the process. Also the reason for the delay was a good one as lot of people had stopped them along the way as word moved around that the High Priestess, that had regained her powers, was traveling around the city with a small escort. At first you had high people stop them and asked quick questions that quickly turned into favors to help them with a healing spell to a family member with promise of payment later. When it was realized that payment for the service would be removed for now in order to return the favor for everyone's patience in this matter, even more people showed up.

In order to keep appearances up, Catherine did some of the spells herself but when it was a healing spell she would order Rosa to do it for her. Which gave her time to secretly recharge her sphere with an arcane spell or two while people where more focused on Rosa. All in all it created a great showing that the Order was starting to be back and that there was another option then to simply following the angel.

Finally reaching the house in question it was starting to get late and this is where Iris got a message from Alex, "It seems that the process is done and that he fully recovered from the possession. Currently Anna and Mike are trying to fill him in and also calm him down. She is saying that once that is done she will bring him over."

Adam looked at Rosa, "Should we wait before

we knock?"

Rosa kept an eye on Catherine while she answered his question. "No it's probably best to head in now as it will give us time to explain the situation a bit more before he arrives, plus we are not sure if there is more than her there, assuming that she is home."

Adam quickly checked, "There is only one person at this time." He then shrugged a bit from seeing Catherine's reaction, "The house is not really well guarded from tracking spells as it should be expected from a regular home."

"That's not the issue here; you still have your Crusader tracking abilities?"

Adam was not sure what to answer, "Seems like it, yes..." He slowly turned to Rosa.

"No worries Catherine it's all he has and its range is limited."

"Hmmm..."

It was clear to Rosa that there was more than she wanted to ask but it looks like she was keeping it to herself and with that Rosa turned to Iris, "Do you mind staying outside in order to wait for Alex? I'm assuming that she will not be staying once she brings him here and I also assume that she will not simply show up in the middle of the house so to not startle everyone."

"Hmm, well she did not mention anything on that but sure and just in case I'll let her know. Still why to do think she will head back so quickly."

Rosa gave her a quick smile, "Just a hunch." She then turned around and knocked on the door to the home.

"I'm coming..." It only took a few seconds and then the door opened with a red headed woman on the other side. There was a look of curiosity, then wonder as she turned to Catherine. She lowered her head, "I'm sorry I did not realize, it was

mentioned by another priestess that someone may come over but I never imagined that someone like you would show. I'm truly honored at your presence."

Catherine quickly turned to Rosa, "Other priestess?"

The women did not raise her head but still looked up, "Ah yes, a priestess with long brown hair and green eyes? I'm sorry that I did not get her name... Also I am assuming that this is why you are here?"

Rosa chuckled as she understood, from the looks of it so did Catherine but she seemed less amused by the prospect of Anna's dress up adventure. "Yes this is why we are here, do you mind if we come in and discuss the situation?"

The woman nodded and invited them in. The house was a bit smaller than the other that they had visited and so they made their way to the dining room table as it was the only place that would sit four people. Adam stood behind Rosa and Catherine as she sat on the other side of them.

"The priestess told us that your name is Jean and send us over to explain to you that your husband will be shortly returning."

Jean was elated, "I never... dreamed that my selfish request would be handled so... quickly..." There were some tears that started to form, "Thank you so much." She then turned to Catherine, "Can I be more selfish and ask how long he will be staying?"

"There is nothing selfish about the request especially after what happened."

This worried Jean, "Has he been hurt?"

Rosa thought of how to approach this, "He's fine now but in a manner of speaking yes he was hurt. Have you been to the auditorium of late?"

She slowly shook her head, "I was there at the

first meeting but could not be present at the second. Still I have heard of what happened."

"Good, that will make things easier to explain. We have recently been able to confirm that those that joined with him did not really have a choice after the fact on their actions."

Catherine nodded and continued for Rosa, "At the start it seemed that it was a simple argument and people were simply taking sides but eventually things started to change. I'm assuming that you must have seen this somehow?"

"Yes, at the start things were normal but then when the promise of holy magic was given, things changed rapidly."

Catherine was happy to have someone else confirm what she had figured out after everything that had happened in the last few weeks. "And that is where things get complicated as yes their power was returned but at the cost of possession tied to the angel, which is something I don't think was explained and once it happened it was too late."

Suddenly Jean was worried, "I don't understand... possession? What do you mean?"

Rosa reached out to grab her hand to try and calm her down, "Again I will state that he is fine now, but yes as High Priestess Catherine has explained the reason why his behavior changed was because he was not in control over his own actions."

"... Bu..t.. Why? This all makes no sense."

It's then that a knock was heard from the door and then it suddenly opened and Iris stepped in and escorted a brown hair man armored like a Crusader in the house. Instantly Jean let go of Rosa's hand, stood and then raced over to give him a hug. Once he saw her the man did the same.

Iris made her way next to Adam and stood next to him as they all gave them a moment. "Rosa,

it seems that you were right, as soon as she handed him off to me she was off back to the others. Is there something going on?"

Rosa nodded, "Not really, it was mostly just a hunch on something."

Iris thought the answer odd but did not pry as the two recently rejoined couple made their way to the table and both sat across them.

Rosa was happy at their reunion but could not shake the sadness on her face, "I'm sorry for what happened to you, how do you feel?"

It took him a while but finally he answered, "It's hard to tell, I'm angry, frustrated, extremely tired but at the same time happy that I'm finally home." He gave his wife a smile and then looked at the two priestess, "I'm also very worried, I'm safe now but what about all the others?"

Catherine nodded, "So what happened to you was explained, can you fill us in on the details to how it happened?"

Scott took Jean's hand and squeezed it, "There is not much to tell as I explained to the others that saved me. When I finally saw High Priest Joseph and when the process started to help me regain my holy powers everything went dark after that. All it took was for him to put his hand on my head and it felt like I was ripped out of my body. There was a lot of pain and after a while I completely blacked out. When it felt like I regained consciousness I felt trapped, I could not move, could not hear or see anything and I did not feel anything... I just knew that I was awake somehow. I tried to scream, make any noise of any sort but nothing came out." He then took a moment to look at his wife who was crying, which made him notice that he was as well. "Sometime I saw glimpses of Jean, but there were so fleeting still they gave me strength to endure."

After giving him a moment after he had

stopped Rosa glanced at Catherine and then turned to Scott, "I'm very sorry that you had to experience that, still if you don't mind do you remember possibly hearing a voice or a command of any sort during that nightmare?"

He shook his head, "No, never..."

This puzzled Rosa and she could see that Catherine was concerned with it as well. She assumed that this pause lasted longer than the both of them had intended as Scott got their attentions. "Can I ask what happens next? I mean the others?"

"Well that depends on you actually..."

Jean was suddenly worried, "Will he need to leave after going through that?"

Rosa nodded her head, "Yes but if possible we would also like for you to join him, you see we don't want him as a Crusader but as someone that has experienced the tragedy that he has and yours as well."

Catherine jumped in with a more direct approach, "We want you to share to others what happened to you so that everyone else is more aware of what the angel is really promising everyone."

Rosa then cut in, "Ideally, if you agree, we would like it if you could join us at the auditorium to share your story with others. We will be there to protect you if case something happens but ideally we just both want you to talk to the others so that they truly understand what happened to their loved ones. Coming from us will make it sound like we have an agenda. Also, if we can, we will save others as yourself and if they wish join you, assuming you accept, they too will help share the message."

This last part of the plan surprised the others as it had not been discussed but they all saw the

benefit of it.

"If you agree, just in case, we would also like to relocate you both temporarily to the dormitories in the main church of Missa, again just in case something happens. I know this part maybe more scary to both of you considering what happened but I offer it purely for both of your ongoing safety." As she finished she turned to Catherine who did not have any objections, which Rosa was happy about considering what she had just said to the couple.

Scott turned to Jean but asked the question to them, "Would they truly come and try and get us back?"

Rosamia shrugged, "I'm sorry to say that there is no way to know, I simply don't want to take that chance and also want to give you the option."

Jean then looked at the both of them, "And is this option available only if we help you?"

Rosa was about to answer but Catherine beat her to the answer, "No, whatever you decide the option is available to you. We will not force you to do something you don't wish too, especially after your resent experience."

Scott thought about it, "I want to help..." Jean nodded, "So do I, especially after you helped me but..." They both turned to them, "Can we really help as you asked us to?"

Rosa understood the worry that they had, these were regular people and while the task was simply talking to others the environment and condition that they would have to endure would be hard. "Tell you what, if you wish, bring what you want and we will bring you to the Church, settle you in, give you some personal time, and early next morning we can discuss on how you can help and then you can make your decision."

They both nodded, "If that is an option as well

then we agree to that."

Rosa then stood, "Good, then please pack whatever you need." She then pointed Iris, "Then when you are ready Iris will bring you to the church using magic, again just as an extra precaution giving you another options if you choose to leave the church, as that could be harder if a lot of people see you walking there with us."

They both nodded in understanding and then went about to gather some change of clothes and other miscellaneous items. While they did this Catherine stood as well and got closer to Rosa, "While I understand you choice, we are on a clock."

Rosa shrugged, "I know but this is the best way, sure we can maybe convince some with free healing and we may want to continue that but they need to know from the people that were affected." It was clear that Catherine was still not happy about it all and Rosa understood why, so she gave her the chance to change the plan, as she was in her full rights to do so, but instead she said nothing and eventually that chance disappeared as the couple then stood around them with two medium sized bags.

Rosa gave a nod to Iris who then approached them with both hands opened, "Simply each take my hand and when I start casting close your eyes and in your head count down from five." She then turned to Catherine, "I may be best if you return with us as well as it could be good to have someone of your position explain the situation over at the church."

Catherine made her way to her and put her hand on Iris's shoulder, "I agree child."

Iris was getting frustrated with the nickname that she had given her but again she ignored it and looked to the others, "Once they are settled in I'll come back for both of you." She then started

casting and in a matter of seconds was gone with the others.

Rosa then reached out for her pendant, "Anna about that favor I told you I was going to ask..."

Scott and Jean had been awake for a while now. The dormitory room that had been given was a room split for two. So to both side you had a single bed, a closet to put your clothes in and a small deck. Overall it was pretty basic but they would be the last to complain about that, but they had modified the sleeping arrangements as sleeping separately after being forcefully separated for so long was something that they were not interested in.

"So we are okay with doing this right?"

She reached out and wrapped her hands around him, "You want to right?"

"... I do yes, it's like I said, there are so many other trapped like I was and if this can help them do something about it then I want to do what I can. Still I don't just want to drag you into this as well."

"Its fine, I also want to help them out. They are the ones that retuned you safe to me, and I'm sure others want to the same too so... yes let do this."

He reached out to her and gave her a kiss, "I missed you so much."

It's then that they were interrupted with a knock on the door. They both stood up from the bed that they were sitting in and then Scott moved to reach for the door to open it. They were both surprised to see that on the other side it was not Rosamia or Catherine but a man that they did not recognize but from what he wore that he was part of the High Order.

Scott moved back next to his wife and then they both lowered their heads, "High Priest... good

morning."

Rob entered the room and closed the door behind him, "Hello, my name is High Priest Robert, you probably don't know me well as I then not to make public appearance as much as the others but none the less I am here to help out assuming that you are in agreement to do so as well."

They both nodded in agreement.

"Excellent now, High Priestess Jessica should also be joining me..." He then looked back at the door, "But for some reason she is running later so while we wait let's go over what we require of both of you."

He was about to start when there was another knock on the door, Rob opened it to see that it was Jessica but there was also another female with her. He moved to the side and let them both entered. This new person was also in their mid twenties, she wore the standard gear that a Crusader would and also had light brown hair that was single braided that went down to the middle of her back.

Lady Jessica lowered her head to Rob and also the couple, "I'm sorry for the delay this morning and now." She then with an open hand reached to the new person in the room, "A new person was recently saved and after being filled in is also interested in helping us."

Scott was instantly happy and also a bit depressed as well, "You too where trapped? It was the same for me until only recently."

The woman nodded, "Yes I regained full control of my actions sometime late last night and was filled in on what had happened. My name is Rebecca and I was a Crusader."

Jessica nodded her head, "There is no 'was', you still are if you so choose to be. We understand the dilemma and confusion that the current situation has caused, there will be no punishment

nor will there be a forceful removal of your roles unless you so choose."

The Crusader lowered her head, "Thank you for that."

Scott looked at her again, "I feel like I know you but at the same time I really can't recall you."

She shrugged at that comment, "Unless you where a part of the group that I lead I don't think that we have ever meet unless in passing."

Jessica stepped in, "Actually you where both taken at the same time while you were being controlled, their simply freed Scott first because he was the original target and he was also less affected from what I was told."

She slowly nodded, "I see, so I was only saved by luck then... it does make sense, my family is the Crusaders and I have nothing else." She then looked at Jean, "So I would have no one else to search for me if I would simply disappear."

Jean then reached out, "Maybe that was true in the past but no longer. My name is Jean and this is my husband Scott, and from this point on we will be there with you if you wish." Scott agreed as well.

There was a small smile that suddenly appeared, "You are both kind, thank you."

With the introductions out of the way Rob then took over, "Well now that everyone knows each other and are willing to help let get started shall we?" He waited a bit to see if there was any objections and seeing as there was none he continued, "You will be tasked with telling your tale in the auditorium to any present, ideally you will also answer questions that will come up. During this processes High Priestess Catherine and the others that she is currently traveling with will also be present." He then turned very serious, "While they will be there, do not be fooled as they are not

there to help you out with the people but to protect you should something come up. We wish for what you experienced to be known by others and we would prefer if that message can from you."

While they had all accepted to help it was clear that they were nervous and possibly hesitant and Jessica understood why. Talking about what had happened would be hard, in public harder and in such a large environment... well it was easy to understand their current body language. "While the words will come from you, we also don't want to send you out there unprepared. Today both High Priest Robert and I will help you with your task in order to prepare you for the things and questions that may come from this. We know that this will be hard for you and appreciate the sacrifice that you are making in helping us and so we don't want to waste this effort that you are willing to do for us."

With that comment Scott turned to his wife and then Jessica, "So from what we understand we will not be doing this today then?"

"No, today will be spent with you, to help you all out with your task. That said tomorrow, an hour before most move around to eat, you will be escorted to the auditorium. Once done it is planned redo this every day."

"I am assuming this will be our main task so for how long will be doing this?"

Rob frowned a bit, "Currently we have a deadline so I am assuming that at best a week, maybe a week and one half." He then looked at Jessica, "This is assuming that it will not be cut short."

Scott wondered on that. "You think that if we do this often then there will be retaliation correct?"

This is the part that Jessica was worried about as well, "Yes it is expected. Again you are not to

attack or anything. If something happens follow the orders that the others will give you and they will make sure to get you here safe."

Rebecca did not want to ask but she was sure it was a question on everyone's mind, "Does this mean that if they attack that Crusaders that are not in control of their actions will be stopped."

Jessica slowly nodded, "Stopped yes, killed no. The goal of those that will be with you are to protect you and to the best of their abilities not permanently harm the others. It will be hard but to their credit they do have a lot of experience with that and also they will not be alone." She then looked at all of them, "Given all this are you still willing to participate?"

Rebecca nodded in agreement; the couple did as well but had a bit of a longer pause.

Rob then opened the door, "With that then let us head to a better location and start the process."

The next day had arrived sooner than expected an while they had felt prepared after all the help that Jessica and Rob had given them, standing right now in the auditorium with about two hundred plus people around them made them feel very uncomfortable.

Currently they were the main focus, Catherine and Iris stood to the left side in the back of the raised platform and Rosamia and Adam on the other side. Also the General had strongly suggested that a group of Crusaders follow them and stand on guard on the ground in front of the platform. Their main task was crowd control in case something unexpected occurred. At this time there was nothing to fear from that possible situation, as generally the people had no clue what was going on and had mostly followed them due to simple

curiosity produced by the large escort that they had seen on their way.

Scott tried to take it all in and gather his wits about him. They had agreed that he would do the opening and nothing could begin if he simply stood there. He took a last look at his wife and they shared a quick smile, he then focused his gaze on the crowd.

"Fellow citizens of Missa, we are here today to tell you our story. As you can see I am a Crusader and with the resent promise of the return of our powers a while back, eventually it was decided that I would join again and follow this new Order that was promising a return to what was. The angel, or as I first met him as High Priest Joseph did not lie and was able to return my powers as a Crusader so that I could once again perform my duties as I used to."

There was a bit of a pause and its then that he reached out and grabbed his wife hand. "But it was not as it used to be as when my powers returned I was then imprisoned within my own body. During that whole time I could not see, talk or act and something else was controlling my actions."

"I know you will all find this hard to believe and may think that it's possible that maybe this was only something that happened to me." He then used his free hand and extended it to Rebecca, "This was not the case as another that was with me also had a similar experience."

Rebecca took a step forward and was less intimidated or shy then Scott and it showed. "My life is being a Crusader, I have no family anymore and when I was young they took me in and showed me a way to help and defend others. After doing this for many years there is nothing else that I would rather do and would gladly sacrifice my life for the cause. Because of this when the promise of

the return of my powers was given to me there was no hesitation, and I quickly jumped at the chance to once again serve the cause and serve you." She then took a moment, "As I said, my life is being a Crusader and while I still stand by my word of sacrificing myself there is a line where it becomes not right to do so when my body is taken over. No longer was I in control of my actions and no longer was I severing you and the cause anymore. Depending on the situation that could occur, my body would act a certain way and there was no way for me to know if this way was following the mindset of what I had pledged my life for."

She then took a firm stands, "The angel is not telling you the whole truth, and this is not simply something that is occurring to us but all that join at his side. Be warned that to do so is to give up who you are as a person. We hope that our story will help you make a inform decision if the time comes for you to make one." She then lowered her head, "Thank you" and then moved back to her original position.

As she did the silence that was there while they both talked was gone and replace with tones of chatter, eventually a louder voice in the crowd stood out. "You can't know this is happening to all of them. Who's to say that you Crusaders where even with the angel, this could all be a trick."

Its then that Jean let go of Scott hand, "IT'S NOT..." There was a small pause but the words had been enough to get most of people's attentions. "It's not a trick and it's not lies and deep down you all know it. You may all have a family member that does not return anymore after going to that church, or you may know of others, neighbors or friends that are in that situation. I was in that situation and I tried to get my husband back but during that time it was like he did not recognize me

at all as he paid me no attention at all, like I did not exist. This is happening to all like this, parent ignoring their families and children, sure they may have their powers back but that's not how it worked before. There were always words or news of what was happening and now nothing. Please tell me the days spent being ripped apart from the one I loved was a nightmare and a lie, please make me believe that because there is nothing else I want to do but to forget that time."

She then quickly looked at Catherine, "The High Order helped when they could and returned my husband to me. Believe in them and help them so that they can help all the other families."

Suddenly there was a lot of more chatter as Jean stopped talking but then before anyone could voice anything Catherine moved forward. "As you have heard we have helped these people and in returned they agreed to come here today and everyday to tell their stories. While they do this we will also keep freeing those trapped and if willing they will also join the others and share their stories. We will keep doing this until we cannot and even then we will still continue our efforts to free those that have been trapped."

Adam moved closer to Rosa while Catherine continued, "Can she promise that?"

"In a way yes, I mean I did ask them to do so and I don't think they will fail... it's just that I did not expect her to take that information and do this with it." She then glanced at him, "Still this will have a bigger effect."

"I agree with that, but now it will force him to respond, I mean he has too right?"

Rosamia took a deep breath, "I would assume so."

A back and forth had started with the volunteers and the crowd while things had gotten

loud at times generally things had gone well and after an hour Catherine put a stop to it and once again reminded them that this would continue the next day at the same time. The Crusaders then took their positions and gathered around everyone in order to escort them back to the main church of Missa.

The next day they had been joined by another, which helped on the promise of the day before. Once again Scott started thing up and told his story to all present who had now doubled in size. Eventually the new person joined them and told pretty much the same story as the other two.

While he did that Rosamia felt relieved, "I was not sure how this would go."

Adam agreed, "It was pretty clear that both the wife and husband where not thrilled by the idea even after he finally returned."

"Yes she was the first that we have visited and we all assumed that we had not convinced her then, still when her husband was returned and both her and that son of theirs saw him they were so happy and relieved which made it worthwhile even if they had decided not to do this."

Adam could not help but smirk, "Yea well for all their powers they could not help it when their son begged them for him to do this, because he was the strongest of all the Crusaders and so there he is. It makes me wonder if one day..." Suddenly Adam stopped and turned to his right, "A large group is coming Rosa, there is no way that it's the citizens of the city it's too orderly."

The back and forth was still going on but still Rosa stepped forward, "I'm sorry to intrude but please do not be alarm as to what is about to happen next. I urge you all to move to the left of us and to stay away for your own safety."

Before anyone could question her they all saw

the large group of Crusaders heading their way, there was about fifty or so and if their numbers were not intimidating enough their armor decoration would handle the trick.

Iris saw the Enforcers and quickly reacted and casted a quick spell and touched Catherine.

"What are you doing?"

There was no answer and she made her way to Rosa to perform the same action and then to Adam as well. "Give me your blades."

Adam pulled out his swords and she enchanted them with lightning, as she did that Adam took over. "Rebecca, take command of the other Crusaders and make sure the crowd stays safe. Iris, you're with me and Rosa back us up while we take care of the Enforcers."

With her experience Rebecca quickly followed the orders given and preceded to order the Crusaders on their side to help push the crowd away. Adam jumped down and so did Rosa and Catherine. While Iris did follow she did not move up next to Adam, "Sorry but there is something I'll need to do, these guys are the best of the best and they will have powers so I need to neutralize that and I think I found a way but I need to stand back for it."

Adam nodded, "Alright, Catherine can you cover her?"

"I suppose..." While she walked next to Iris, Rosamia walked forward closer to Adam. "Sorry seems I took over for this one." Rosa smiled, "No worries, too each their strengths, still let see if this is a fight we can avoid." They both knew the answer would be no, but she had try.

"So are we just going to stand here and watch?"

Mike nodded, "I know it's going to be hard Alexandria but yes, that is the idea."

She moved closer to the edge of the roof that the three were standing on. The building that they occupied was at least nine stories tall so they were hard to see, if not impossible unless you were specifically looking for them. "I don't get it why not jump in, the numbers aren't great."

Anna nodded, "Your right there not but at the same time look at the situation and the people currently there. While Iris is a bit odd she is also less known so more easily missed and for a long time was often with Rosa and Adam so it's already not abnormal to see her with them, and as for them..."

She did not finish her thought on purpose and let Alexandria do it for her, "Hmm, okay I think I see it now. So to many you see a Crusader, a priestess and one of their friends help the High Order and also other Crusaders in the holy city so nothing too out of place. That is until we show up and that creates a separation." She then turned to Mike, "Wait so is that why you keep splitting the team?"

He nodded, "It's one of the reasons, yes."

"One of the reasons, hum, okay fine, but still this is pretty bad odds in order to keep that going."

Once again he nodded, "If things get out of hand or they ask for help we jump in. It's one of the reasons for the detour for us today."

Rosamia moved forward making sure that both her hands were visible and also weapon free, "We don't want to fight you but we need to know what your business is here."

There were no murmurs from the Enforcers but eventually one did move forward, "We are here

to stop you from spreading lies about the true Order and our leader. Due to your already existing crimes and these added insults we are not taking you in alive."

"Not much more to talk about then I guess..." This was not a surprise to Rosa they had known that this would happen but it was still disappointing all in all. She reacted as quickly as she could and moved back as a series of five Enforcers powered themselves and then dashed forward.

Adam tried to react as he saw them disappear but there was no way to match that speed that was until they suddenly hit something invisible and then they suddenly slowed down to regular speed. There was a look of confusion in their face and some instantly tried to cast the enchantment magic again assuming that it had simply been removed somehow but nothing happened confusing them even more. Adam did not hesitate as he quickly casted a spell and appeared next to two of them and hit them both with his electrified swords, as soon as contact was made the Enforcers went down.

On her end Rosa was now able to back away and as she did she casted three ice arrows and aimed at the feet of the other Enforcers. The spell flew away and trapped the three, which forced them to use their blades to cut the ice in order for them to move. This gave her time to create a holy shield away from her and make it smack across the helmed face of one of them. As for the other two Adam once again appeared behind them and hit them in their backs.

There was an instant pause in the battle as everyone was trying to figure what had happened to the Enforcers, this is where Iris chimed in loud enough for her teammates to hear but ideally not

the Enforcers. "Stay close and I'll keep them slowed down but there is a range so keep that in mind."

The spell was a bubble of sort that would slow down drastically any who entered unless they were marked by her. She had wondered if there were other ways then using ice as there would come a time where that trick would stop working and had stumbled on this spell. Overall it did the trick but is also kept her pinned down as there was no way that she could keep the spell going and help out in melee. Still this would not be the only thing she could do to help. While keeping her focus she started to cast another spell and this time it was visible to all what she was doing as the clouds darkened and lighting could be heard.

Before her second spell could take effect, ten Enforcers then attacked and created an even split between Rosa and Adam.

As soon as they hit the bubble that Iris had created and slowed down to regular speed Adam teleported to them quickly he slashed at one of them in his back and then aimed for another to the side, but the hit was block by the target Enforcer. Thankfully the spell still took effect and the lightning traveled to his sword and then his body as Adam instantly moved back to his original position. When Adam looked he saw that while the blow had landed it had not been strong enough to knock him out but it had stalled him a bit leaving him to deal with only three for now.

He charged forward to meet the Enforcers overhead charge. With his first blade he blocked the blow sending a wave of electricity to the enemy's body. As quickly as he could he swung to the enemies left and with his free second sword hit him to his side. The armor cracked but Adam main goal was not to cut them but to let the spell take effect. While his body dropped to the ground then

the other two were now on him, Adam lunged forward but lowered himself as much as he could in order to avoid the blows, successfully dodging he struck at both of them aiming at their legs. The enchantment took effect leaving only the second one that had already been struck, as he advanced Adam took a step back and casted the spell once again to appear again behind him as the Enforcer swung at his old position. There was no blocking this time around and the final target fell.

While Rosa was confident with her spear taking down five Enforcers was not something she wanted to test out. Once again she used her ice arrows to stall three targets, the aim had to be quick so it was not as good as the last time but the end result had been achieved. She then took out her spear and flipped it in front of her to force the two that where charging at her to stop and push back. While they repositioned themselves she once again created a shield behind one of them and knocked it to his head. This time the tactic had not been successful as the last time and did not completely knock him out, but had put him of balance which she quickly took advantage of that with the butt of her spear and in a trust maneuver hit him squarely in his stomach. As he doubled down she flipped the spear around and attacked the other with an overhead attack, the blow was blocked but that had been the plan as she then twisted around putting her back to him and as she did she angled the butt of her spear to his stomach again scoring a hit.

With the two down she looked at the others and thanked her luck that these Enforcers were not of right mind as while they did start to free themselves from the ice they did not wait to attack all together helping her odds. The first that approached her swung his sword wide in order to

knock her spear away, she let it happen and let him approach her more, when he was close enough she knelt down and created a holy shield above her head blocking his sword. Using the shield she pushed it up creating an opening and slapped her spear across his ribs. While that target fell the other two were now fast approaching her. As quick as she could she ordered her holy shield to fly at one of the target stomach, the blows did not cause any damage but did manage to push him away for a few seconds that she used to arc her spear across targeting the other one. He used his blade to try and block the blow and possibly force it in an unfavorable position but as he made the move the sword was blocked by a holy shield that had suddenly appeared. Before he realized what happened the spear hit and sent him on the ground, leaving only the one that Rosamia quickly dispatched. In her case her targets were hurt but still awake, so she quickly casted an ice spell around them preventing them from moving and using their hands to heal their wounds with holy magic.

Rebecca looked ahead but quickly turned to the others around her, "She is priestess right? I mean last I remember she was in the High Order before she left. How can she do that?"

There were no words from the others as they had no clue as well. But the wonder of the situation quickly evaporated as they saw that another ten started to attack but this time their targets were not the four but the crowd, and as they made their way to them another five attacked head on. Rebecca took out her sword, "I know what they said but given the odds I figured this would happen." She then raised her other hand, "Everyone assume defensive positioned, do not let them hurt anyone."

Adam saw what was happening and moved next to two Enforcers, he did manage to disable one of them but afterwards was in no position to do this again as three Enforcers were going on him.

Rosamia quickly looked around, there was no way that they could let the others participate doing so would ruin everything. She thought about calling out for help from the others but then Catherine yelled at everyone. "You will not harm those that I protect under any circumstances."

Instantly a massive holy spell took effect in the form of a long large holy shield, suddenly pushing all the Enforcers back and then pushing them even more as all fifteen that had newly moved forward where now on the ground.

As the spell disappeared, Iris nodded. "I can work with that." She then took her hand and then punched down in the air, as she did bolts of lightning that had been building up came crashing down on the targets on the ground disabling them. She then moved back and continued to slowly power the spell again.

With twenty Enforcers left and barely a scratch on any of them Rosamia had to admit that things were going much better then what had been expected, but then something happened to all twenty Enforcers as they all started to scream. Once the screams were done, all their eyes turned red and their pupils black.

Adam was not sure what was happening, "Rosa, I don't know this one..."

There was no time to say anything else as suddenly nine of them disappeared and while they did slow down when they hit Iris's spell bubble's area of effect they were still incredibly faster than a regular person was. Adam did his best to block the first blow, while the enchantment on his blade

automatically traveled to his target he barely flinched at the pain that it caused. The same could not be said for Adam as he had successfully avoided the other blow but not the last one as it hit his side. He had expected a cut and he did get a cut but also the blow of the swing broke his armor and sent him down to his knee. He instantly realized that they had not only speeded up but also enhanced their strength as well making every hit count that much more.

Rosa also did her best but only managed to block one with her spear which was then sent at a weird angle preventing her from using it for the others. Now wide open she did the only thing she could do and created a holy shield on top of her armor and prayed to whoever was listening. Both hits hit her on each side, with enough strength to shatter her holy shield and also dent her armor. Sure there were no cuts but the strength of the blows alone sent her back and forced her to drop her weapon to the ground.

Iris cursed as she had to let go of the lightning magic that she had been slowly powering up and started to focus on another spell in one of her hands as she moved away to avoid one of the Enforcers blows. Sadly with their speed and her focus being extremely split there was no way to block the other hit as it landed on one of her shoulders. She screamed as the blade dug deeper and she tried her best to keep both her spells up and not lose control over them.

Alex was livid, "I don't care, I'm going in..."

Mike reached out for her, "Take control of the lighting spell and hit the ones in the back."

He could see that there was frustration in her eyes as she glared at him but she quickly turned

her sights on the remaining Enforcers. "They will not stand for quite some time for what they did to her..."

Scott looked ahead in shock and he was not the only one, "This is what could have happened to us as well had we not been freed?"

Rebecca stared ahead at one of her worst nightmare, "... Given the situation I don't see how it could not have happened eventually. The horrors that we could have done, all while trapped in our bodies with no control of our actions."

Scott was even more determined, "We need to help them, free them as well before something happens that can't be taken back."

Catherine had been fortunate and only one target came are her direction, there was no time for any fancy spell as she reacted with four holy shocks spells to the Enforcers face that sent him reeling backward. This gave her time to see what was happening to Iris but as she looked back she saw the blade cut deep in her and heard her scream.

"Child!!!" She instantly ran at her.

Iris gridded her teeth as she used her unwounded arm and hit the Enforcer, still holding on to his blade with her hand. As soon as contact was made, he spasm uncontrollably as a large jolt of lighting made his way in his body. She then let the spell go and it instantly jumped to the other that she had avoided hitting him squarely on his body. Then the spell jumped again but this time the target was the Enforcer that Catherine had hit with her spell as he was once again starting to move. Quick as he was he was not fast enough as the spell hit its final target.

Catherine was now next to her, "Let me heal you..."

Iris nodded her head, "No you must be running low, take the time to charge up..."

Catherine wanted to argue but then she looked at the other eleven that were preparing to move out and with Adam and Rosa still dealing with their targets she figured that pretty soon all eleven would be coming their way. She then stood in front of Iris and prepared a holy shield, hopefully giving Iris time to do something as she had been right and her supply of holy magic from the sphere was dangerously low.

She was about to cast it as suddenly large bold of lighting dropped from the sky and hit all eleven. Some had tried to move away and with theirs speed but even with their increase it was not fast enough. Catherine turned back, "How did you hold on to three spells of that power at once?"

"No time for that..." She then looked up, "There is going to be another hit, push the others away so it can finish this."

Catherine turned and looked at battle situation and instead of pushing the Enforcers away she instead created small shields around both Adam and Rosa. She did not know how long they would last but she did not have to worry about it as lighting once again struck all the targets trying to break down the shields.

Once the final blow had landed the clouds dissipated and with all fifty Enforcers down for the count the fight was finally over.

Catherine was about to try and heal Iris but was stopped by Rosa as she wobbled close to her, "I'll take over you go and deal with the citizen and explain why we did what we did."

Catherine was genuinely concerned for Iris and they all saw it but she then nodded, "You are

right, we need to use this attack as an advantage. Simply wining it was not enough." She then made her way over and started to talk to everyone.

Rosa and Adam ignored her and focused on Iris. "I am sick and tired of having blades stabbed at me."

"I'm sorry to say but if you feel that way you're probably in the wrong group."

Rosa quickly looked at Adam, she wanted to help him but knew that was the wrong thing to do and focused on Iris and she did the same. "I'm stunned that you where able to pull off that lighting attack at the end with this wound."

She was still in pain but it was lessening with both healing spells being active on her, "I didn't actually, that was Alex."

Adam looked around, "What they were here the whole time... what game is he playing?"

Rosa understood were Adam was coming from but as she looked at Catherine behind Iris and the crown seemingly rallying around her and the other Crusaders. She knew that despite these wounds this had been the right move for them. "I'm sorry to say but this is a better result, as much as it hurts us all."

They both took the time to look back and then understood as well. Once Iris was good enough to finish up the healing on her own Rosa turned to Adam. "Still good as these results are for us one has to wonder what comes next."

Mike pleaded to Alex, "I'm sorry Alexandria I really am, but this was the best outcome for her."

She knew that the 'her' he was referring too was Rosa and not Catherine and as they continued to look the citizen around started to cheer on for Rosa as well as Catherine, it's then that she also

understood what he had referenced earlier as not being the only reason. "I get it now, you're trying to make it so that she will be accepted again in her old home."

"Well, I think it should be said that I'm trying to give her the chance to be able to do that, as really it's up to Rosamia to take advantage of it, and she seems to be doing it so far."

"I just don't like it when she gets hurt and I'm not doing anything about it... same for all of them really."

Anna reached out to her, "I know, we both do, but I don't need to tell you right, especially after everything that has happened."

She sighed and tried to relax, "No you don't, sometimes hard decisions need to be made and all that yada yada..." Still holding on to Anna she turned to him, "Is this where we leave it off?"

Mike looked at the horizon and thought about that for a few seconds, he then turned to the both of them, "Well we can do a few detours to make sure that only the fifty Enforcers were sent and that no other reinforcements are coming their way." He then smiled, "That is if you are both up for it."

Anna let Alex go and simply nodded with a smile, Alex on the other hand was once again energetic. "Ahhh! Now we are talking. Both garb on to me and let's take a tour around the city to make sure that this is the last fight they have to deal with today." And with that they disappeared.

Chapter 6

Alexandria sat on one of the chairs while Mike and Anna prepared their resent capture. After a few days of doing this it had been mentioned that the church of Missa did have a room specifically built for cleansings and because of that they had move over there instead of using some random forest location.

At the start of this Alex had to admit that she was not crazy for the change, the room only had one door and a thick one at that, no windows and the surrounding were covered in stone. If that was not enough to make for a pleasant room you had to also factor in the decor. The middle of the room was a large table that could seat six people, currently where she was, and all around them you had three large slabs with large manacle to properly secure a person. Seeing as this was for cleansing the manacles were also able to hold a magically enhanced person, in order to make things safer. Next to that, at least, you had a cot that was setup in order to lay the person while they recovered after the cleansing was done.

So again not crazy at all with the change but eventually all that went away as when the people woke up and realized what had happened and saw that they where free once again, the warm thanks they gave her made it more than worth it. Plus it also helped that, once out of the room, things where all so very familiar for them.

When the person was finally setup Alexandria stood and made her way to the, man this time, and placed her hand on his chest. After a little while she turned around, "I'm sorry this one may take a

bit of time."

The two each took a chair and sat down. "Take the time you need Alexandria, we will both stay here while you work and make sure nothing happens."

There was a small smile and then she turned and once again faced the man. This pattern had been pretty much all that they had done for the past few days. In theory they could leave her be while she worked but seeing as they did not know the limitation or capabilities of the angel it was agreed to stay around just in case. She took a deep breath, focused her mind and started the process.

Some time had passed and finally Alexandria opened her eyes and then moved back. Instantly she crashed on the chair that had been prepared. "He should be good now..."

With that Anna and Mike moved to the person and undid the manacles and proceeded to move his body to the cot that was close by. As they did that Alex just breathed in and took a moment to rest as she did, she heard her stomach grumbling probably due to the smell coming from behind her. She twisted around and on the table saw a large metal pot, some bowls and a plate covered by a reversed metal lid. She reached for the large metal pot and looked inside to find that a stew had been prepared. She raised her head, "Thanks, I guess this one took longer than expected and it's already that time."

While she grabbed a bowl and started filling up they both sat next to her and Mike proceeded to correct her on something, "It's actually well past that time..."

She took her first bite and then wondered on something, "What? But it's still warm? I mean did you know I was going to finish soon?"

While she continued to eat Anna explained the

mystery, "Actually it's been ready for a while, I've just been using my base element spells to keep it warm while we waited." She reached out and removed the cover for the plate, "The stew was easy but the bread was trickier."

Swallowing what she had in her mouth, Alexandria nodded. "I could see that, still it's pretty good that you can do that already given the short amount of time with the one element."

It's then that she instantly focused on Anna as she felt a small quick breeze across her cheek, Anna had a bit of a mischievous smile on her face. "It's two actually, fire and wind."

"Already? That's very quick..."

Anna explained as she continued eating, "Well I was practicing here and there while you where cleansing." She then turned to Mike, "And when we found our regular pattern of helping each other things started to go much quicker from there."

With that comment, Alex then turned to Mike, "Wait does that mean that you can understand it now?"

"Nope..."

"What!?! " Alexandria was more confused which made Mike chuckle a bit. "While I can't read it she can explain it to me and with that..." He turned to Anna, "With that it helps me see it differently or helps me confirm things."

Alexandria nodded suddenly understanding, "Back then I did see mages do that, the buddy learning system, not that I had that... but I guess I do it now with Iris... hmm... anyways, while I understand that it's still odd that you can do that with someone that simply can't read, it's just odd..."

She was then was lost in thought for a while but then that was interrupted with a knock on the door. The area was already limited to who could

knock by rules of the High Order and also the function of the place and with that knowledge Mike turned, "It's safe to come in."

Lady Jessica entered the room and closed the door behind her, "I see that you are done with another one." She made her way to the cot and took a moment to look at the man, "We can't thank you enough for doing this Alexandria. Plus I know that it can't be easy on you."

Alexandria shrugged, "It's not that it takes a lot of energy per say..."

Jessica smiled and cut her off, "But that all that delicate work over time is what takes a toll."

Alexandria nodded in agreement and Jessica continued, "I figured that it would be like the cleansing spell as it worked in a similar way when doing this. Still I wish that we could help you out somehow."

Alex thought about one and but really she already had an answer she just was not sure how it was going to be received, still seeing as Jessica was more open minded she figured that with her there may be no harm in asking. "Well considering how I'm doing it there is a elf in particular that is studying this type of magic and I'm sure that he would be a great help, so much so that I'm thinking that after the first one we could double up our efforts or at least flip flop our times." She then cringe a bit as she continued, "It would mean that I would need to bring him here and explain what is happening..."

Jessica thought about it but really she only took a few seconds, "Do it, if it means these results then there is no issues."

Alex was stunned and was about to ask another question but then another knock was heard and Jessica then made her way to the door. When she opened it she saw the General on the

other side, "I'm sorry to disturb you High Priestess Jessica but there is a matter I would wish to discuss."

Jessica moved aside, "Is it okay if we talk here or should we go someplace else?" The General looked around, "Here should be fine if you are okay with it."

He moved in and closed the door as Jessica nodded in agreement. While he did so she looked at the old General who had been through a lot over the last few years. So much so that with the issues that he had indirectly caused he had once again reverted more to his previous self where he was more by the book. He had mentioned that he had done so in order to help rebuild confidence in the chain of command again with the troops and all that and it had made sense, still Jessica worried about him because of it.

"What can I do for you General?"

"It's not for me really it's for the all the Crusaders that we command. You see with the recent event there is talk that the other Crusaders are now reaching out to their families and moving them to their church, once again never to be seen after."

Jessica had a dire expression on her face, Catherine and Rosamia had told her about this. They figured that this was the retaliation for the battle that had happened. With them losing the angel would have a hard time to recruit and so it was figured that he had used the same plan as them, go for their families, friends, and so on.

"Their disappearance is making everyone uneasy and is making them wonder if anyone they know will be targeted. I was wondering if there would be a way for them to reach out to them even while they are on standby."

This was a tricky one but at the same time

there where very little options, "Let assume that the angel will keep to his word, so far there are no reason to believe otherwise, and tell everyone, in shifts if possible, to go to those that they are worried about and offer them to bring them here. This should help with their worries and moral overall."

The General smiled and nodded as she continued, "Sadly I know you know this will not be as simple as we don't really have the room so if they can bring spare cots I would suggest they do so." She then looked down, "Still depending on the weather there may be other issues with this idea..."

It's then that Alexandria got their attention, "Seeing as you are okay to help me out I can return the favor by creating some very crude but serviceable shelters." She then turned to the General, "If that is okay simply tell me where you would want them. Again they will not be pretty but they will do the trick and can be easily destroyed after the fact."

Jessica smiled, "That sound like a plan, again thank you for your help." She then turned to the General, "Request approved, let me know if you need help with the logistic just in case."

The General nodded, "Thank you, everyone will be very happy about this. I will keep you apprized on the progress as it comes." With that he opened the door and left.

Alexandria smiled at Jessica, "Wow you are creating a lot of change here, are you sure Catherine will not mind?"

Jessica slowly nodded but also had a small smile on her face, "You don't have to worry about Catherine or Rob on this matter I'm sure that they would have agreed to do the same thing. You two groups really need to stop being so suspicious of each other."

There was no comment from the others and Jessica did not expect any, she took a quick look at the man still in the cot. "I'll come back a bit later for him after he has rested, in the meantime please finish eating and get the help that you need okay."

They all nodded in agreement and then she left the room to go get an update from Rob on how things were going.

'They are about to leave you need to hurry...'

Rosa, Catherine and Adam were racing around the house when they saw that a female Crusader was holding the hand of a little girl and was also accompanied by a man with a large bag on his shoulder.

'We are here now child you can stop with the rushing.'

Rosa continued to rush to them, "Wait, please wait..."

The man turned and looked at her and so did the Crusader, "These are the ones I was telling you about. They are here to feed you lies about me just ignore them and come with me."

Rosa stretched her arm forward in an action to stop them even if she knew that she was too far away. "Wait no, they are not lies, please ask her where she has been all this time and why show up only now?"

The man had a sad look on his face, "Her duties kept her away and part of those duties was to stop you and what you people are doing." He then pleaded with her, "Please just leave my family alone."

Rosa heart was breaking, "I can't, you say that she was away because of her duties but which one? Also blaming us, there has been no attacks save for the one where we defended ourselves and

also those present when the Enforcers lost control. We have kicked no doors down, raised no weapons or made any physical actions against the angel and his followers so why did she need to be on duty I ask again?"

There was no way that the husband could answer so the Crusader stepped in, "You say all these things and yet prepare yourselves in that church, and you raised no weapons? Some of our comrades are being attacked and captured during patrols, and once that happens they don't return to us. You speak of defending yourselves but disagree when we do the same as well. We are being attacked and my duty is to defend and even now that is being compromised by this show of yours."

Rosa turned to the husband, "This is not a show, they are not returning because they are once again free and don't want to be a prisoner again. If you want I know some would gladly talk to you and explain their situation, please give us some time..." Rosa was now pleading with all her heart, "Please don't do this; if you do then we may not be able to help. What your wife is telling you is wrong."

They could all see that the man was torn up about all this and they all waited for him to make the first move. The Crusader simply looked at him, while Rosamia was practically begging. Catherine on the other hand made no moves as in her mind it was already too late. She did not mind that Rosa tried but in many ways it was clear that the only way this would resolve itself was if they attacked the Crusader and then proceeded to cleanse them. This unfortunately was not something that could be done and so she simply let it play out. Iris stayed out of site and Adam mostly focused on Rosa, he knew that the past few days was breaking her inside, he hoped that she could get a win with this one with all his heart in order to give her

something.

It's then that the tension was broken by the daughter, "Mommmy, I want to go."

When that was said the man took a deep breath and turned around and with that the Crusader and the daughter followed. Rosa screamed, "No, please don't let your child action be a reason to escape the decision that you need to make..."

As they ignored her Rosa start to move towards them but then she was stopped by Catherine, "That's enough Rosamia, let them go."

Rosa stopped but she closed her eyes as she felt a large pain in the middle of her chest take her over. The grief of another failure was getting to her as she knew that once they would get close to the angel he would use their life energy to power himself more and while they would still be alive they would no longer have any control over themselves anymore.

She wanted to lash out, something had to be done but then she felt the hand of Adam and opened her eyes. It took everything she had to push back the emotions she was currently feeling.

While Adam was simply concern over Rosa, Catherine looked around, "Child where are you?"

Iris then showed herself from the corner of the house, "I did not think that suddenly appearing would help the situation so I stayed away. Also have I not told you to stop calling me that?"

Catherine thought about that, "You have complained about it yes but I'm not sure that you have asked actually." Before Iris could say anything Catherine reached out for her pendant. "Jessica..."

It did not take long and suddenly Jessica face showed up, "Something the matter?"

"Yes for the demonstration today Rosamia and

Adam will not be attending, it will just be me and Iris here. Can you inform the General and the others so that it's not a surprise?"

She nodded, "I can do that but I have to also inform you that there has been a change, it was requested if the people at the church could reach out to their family and others close to them and bring them here. There is a lot of concern that they may start disappearing and so..."

Catherine cut her off, "It seems that it's the ongoing theme right now, I understand and thanks for letting me know." and with that she nodded one more time then the communication magic cut off. Catherine then turned to Rosa, "I suggest you take some time." She then started to walk off and motioned for Iris to join her. Iris quickly turned to Rosa but it was Adam that quickly gave her a nod of confirmation and with that Iris followed Catherine as she left.

"She is not wrong, let go someplace else okay?" There was little for Rosa to do but to simply follow.

They eventually made their way to an open park, which was unsurprisingly empty given the current environment in the city. They sat on benches in silence for a while and eventually Rosa spoke but she was still looking at the ground as she did, "This is going to be an ongoing thing right?"

Adam wanted to lie to her, he really did but he also knew that it was not the answer she was looking for. "Given the current trends and the days we still have left, seems like it yes. Are you trying to think of a way around it?"

She gave him a weak smile as she lifted her head, "I wish, I mean I did, but I came up with nothing. I mean sure we could split up more and get to them beforehand and that may help but in the end all they need to do is go home and it's

pretty much done. Whereas we need to get there before them and also convince them, assuming they want to listen to us as we will have to explain why they should not wait, as the people should all know that they are retuning by now. So it's like we are fighting a losing battle that we can't win."

Adam smirked, not he wanted too but it came out. "But still, even if it a losing battle, you're going to try right." The smirked then disappeared and was replace with heavy concern, "And while I do like that about you, it does make me worry as I know it's hurting you a lot, and that's going to continue for the next few days."

Rosa signed deeply, "I know, and I also know that it will hurt you as well. But I mean this whole situation it's like Denuo all over again, well before it was called that when we tried to help the ones that had not agreed to become reborns. Part of me thinks that I should be better prepared this time around and after everything that I've done, but I'm not and that's just frustrating."

Adam then got up and then sat next to her, "Sure I can see that, but I think there is more to it than that this time around..." When he saw that she was not getting it he continued, "Face it, you still like this place a lot Rosa, and the Order and..." He then stretched out his arms, "And all of this. You also don't want to see it all fall apart, Denuo was sad and tragic for sure but here, sure it's similar but it's also so personal that it's bound to create so much frustration and probably anger that's it's making it hard to see what should actually be done or what can be done."

Rosa thought about it more, "So you think that I'm feeling more frustration then I'm realizing, and because of it I'm not dealing with this in the proper way?"

Adam knew he had to be careful with his next

answer, "Well I mean... That last part not so much but you kept on telling me in the past, resent past in some cases, that me simply reacting to those emotions in battle and out tend to have a negative impact in some cases and I think that maybe in this case...that, yes it somewhat applies here?"

It was clear that he was being very careful which made her smile a bit but at the same time she did think about it a bit more. "Okay so let say that I am too attached what would be the solution if this was a battle and you where faced with something similar."

Adam thought about it and eventually he did come up with something, "Well if the main target can't be taken care of go for another assuming there is one."

It's then that Rosamia lost focus and was rattling things by herself. "Hmm, is there another target? I don't want to forget about the families but they have been the focus and what if there is more..."

Adam just sat there and waited while she played it out in her head and eventually she turned her focus on him again. "Let's say that we start focusing on extended families or even close friends. I mean it would be hard to track friends but in some cases it could be done, they would be easier to convince in some fashion but would they even be a target and would we be wasting our time?"

Adam slowly nodded his head, "There is no need for me to answer that one, and you already know that it does not matter."

With that one Rosa smiled a bit, "A life is a life and even if there is a small chance that they can be targeted then it's worth it." She now had a full smile on her face and felt that a bit of the frustration had melted away. "I'll have to think about it more but I'm pretty sure that this change

will be appreciated by Catherine and the others as well..." She then looked directly in his brown eyes, "Thanks Adam, for being there again."

He smiled at her and got closer to her, "I told you I want to make it a habit."

She then put her arms around him, "I know and I'm happy for it."

Many days had passed and the flow of things had continued steadily as had been expected. The auditorium presentations had continued but other the Rebecca, Scott and Jean who had stayed throughout most had only made a quick appearance. Given the amount of people that showed it was easy to understand why they did not believe that they being there constantly would make a difference, still it was sad to see them easily give up.

Most of the families had also failed to be convinced as well, there had been some wins but too few to make a difference. That said the same could not be said for the friends and extended families. If they got to them first then they could be convinced, sometime it took extra help which Scott and Jean where glad to provide anytime they needed, but still overall they had made good progress on that end. That was something that Rosamia was very happy about as she gazed at the night sky on top of the roof patio of the main church of Missa.

She turned around as she heard footsteps and saw that Adam had come up. "I finally found you."

She smiled, "Well I was looking for some time alone..." She then looked down. The whole area of the church had been filled with temporary shelters. Sure the Crusaders had brought their families but after Rosamia idea it was mentioned to expand

that to others to not make the same mistake that the angel had made. While this had been a good idea it had also filled up the area quite a bit. "And well there is very little of that around here now."

Adam chuckled at how true that was, "Yea I'm still wondering when they will kick us out or merge our rooms together in order to create a bit more space."

She knew he was joking but Rosa knew there was no way that was going to happen, "Catherine would never allow that, plus freeing the room would solve very little as the floor is mostly reserved for the High Order. Still if it did happen, I'm thinking that stuff would be moved instead in order to free up another room someplace else. I mean that has been what has happened to all the other rooms on the floor... well most rooms that is."

Now that he was next to her he leaned on the patio railing, "I suppose... So thinking about what comes next?"

Rosa nodded, "Only just a few days to go and the time the angel gave us will be up..." She looked ahead, "You really think that he will attack?"

Adam slowly nodded, "If he has enough power, oh yea. We have fought enough of those to know that they will not simply ignore the ultimatum they gave."

This time Rosa looked down, "I'm glad that we saved as much as we did but now that the time is almost up I wonder if brining them here was a wise move, this place will become a battle ground."

"The General is working on that and he's also having a lot of assistance with the others coming up with a plan to help with that and it must make some sense as otherwise I don't see they would have continued with the idea."

"You're probably right."

Its then that Adam smiled which made her wonder, "What is it?"

"Well... I'm just happy that's all, you have been saying that to me a lot these days and well..."

Rosa started to laugh and then had a mischievous smile on her face, "As much as I'm thankful, don't let it go to your head lest you bring back some nasty habit of yours." She then got closer to him and then got more serious with her tone, "Still I am thankful and yes I am happy that I can count on you more reliably then before."

Adam nodded and got closer to her, "I guess I just needed to really see what was important to me that all." They got closer still but then they both stopped as they heard a voice in their head, it's was Alexandria.

'The time has come people gather around in meet in the meeting room, it's finally done.'

Rosa then moved back, "Do you think she means what I think she means?"

Adam shrugged, "Has too right... which is a good thing, considering."

She then grabbed his hand, "Let's go confirm it now." There was a happy smile on her face and because of that Adam simply let himself be dragged away.

Rosa entered the meeting room with Adam behind her, "I'm still not a fan of this room but I'll admit that it's getting less intimidating as time goes."

He then took a chair next to Rosa and she too had to admit that this room was changing for her as well. In the past this had been a place of battle, her and the other members of the High Order of the time, and now as she looked around to find her friends sitting around, and in the case of Alex

slouching, in the large chairs she had to admit that it's confrontational emotions where quickly evaporating.

The doors then opened again and the three High Order members walked in and made their way to their seat, as Catherine passed next to Alex she cleared her throat probably in an effort to get her to sit strait which she ignored. Once they were all sitting, Catherine, still a bit annoyed, took the lead, "You sent us a message to inform us that it's done? Will it need to be moved to that place that is nowhere that you mentioned?"

Only then did Alex sit up straight, "Nope, it's actually already there as that is where it was being built. The only thing left will be for you to tell me where you wish for me to establish a gate so that you can access the place in question and also for me to link the two places together so that the power can flow both ways." She then looked at the three members, "I hope that you already have a place in mind and have also casted that mark?"

Rob nodded, "Yes we have." He then turned to the others, "And after some discussion we have also come to the decision on where this gate should be. I take it that you will need to have access to the room, but will there be anyone else that needs to be there as well?"

Alex was a bit puzzled by the question, "Does it matter? I mean everyone here know right?"

Catherine had a very serious look on her face, "Given the place in question it does."

This answered very little and Alex was still confused, "Ah, well, I will need access, Rosa and Iris... I think that will be it..."

"Does the child really need to be involved? As for Rosa, I'm assuming it's for the initial setup again but could I not handle that now?"

Alex wondered what was so special about this

room of theirs, "Rosa will be needed for that task yes and you can't do it because it will not be enough, as for Iris, it's mostly for in case of an emergency. At the beginning you don't have too many people that you can use to fill that back up, we will all need to take turns and seeing as she already knows it would be a waste not to include her as well."

Jessica turned to her other members, "I warned you about this, given what had been said previously this is something that you both will have to agree with."

All the members of the Lights Templar group where really confused but Rosa was starting to catch on. "Ah! That is where you have decided to put the gate?"

Catherine glared at her in efforts to tell her to not say another word while Jessica took another approach, "Forgetting about that for right now, Alex will the item be able to do as promised?"

Alex quickly nodded, "It should cover the whole city yes and as requested everyone that is able too will be able to access its power within the city. Also assuming that we can link up everything soon we should be able to fill it up by tomorrow morning. Ideally it would probably be best to fill it up first and then connect the two places."

Catherine then interrupted her, "On that note, can you perform this connection anytime? I ask as ideally we would like to announce this and also perform the connection while we are at the auditorium around everyone."

Mike was surprise by this, "That is a very bold move, what happens if the angel move on you during?"

"With our powers back, the table will change quite a bit, also I'm curious to see how dedicated he is to his timetable."

Mike wondered on that as well but the risk was a pretty big one, he understood it mind you but was still a bit surprised that they had agreed to it. Alex then shrugged, "Well if you want to do something like that then yes it's doable."

Rob nodded at the others, "Excellent, then we can proceed with the plan a few days ahead of time then."

Catherine nodded as well, "So it seems, Jessica would you be able to give the news to the General and others in order for them to spread the word. Come tomorrow midday Missa will once again regain the ability to use holy magic." She then turned to Alex, "Now all we need to do is escort you to this place in order for you to do what is needed. But before we do that I need your word that you will not tamper with anything in the room, touch anything or even talk about its existence."

Alex felt very singled out, "Fiiine... I mean you do know that this will not be the first room like this or the last that I know of right?"

Catherine and the others stood, "Those are not important, nor do I care for them, what I do care about is this one. Again we are clear on the rules right?"

Alex stood as well, "Yes yes yes..." She then mumbled, "You would think that she is about to give me access to her first born or something..."

As they all prepared to leave the room Jessica turned back and faced the others still there, "I hope you don't mind but you cannot follow."

Anna smiled, "Its fine..." She then turned to Mike, "I think that there is something else we need to discuss as well so we will use this time for that."

Jessica nodded and then left them behind. When she was gone Adam looked at the door, "Sure you say that, but I still mind and feel quite excluded."

Mike smirked, "Same here actually, still if you don't mind we need to include you in something as we need your opinion on something."

Adam was curious, "Oh, okay, well what have you got?"

The High Order led them around a few corridors and took a few extra turns and sometime even went back around where they had come from, this confused Alex but then eventually something happened and then her defenses kicked in. "Oh wow... you have something like that..." Rosamia automatically covered her mouth and whispered in her ear, "Please, not the time..."

Alex was a bit frustrated but dropped the discovery as they continued their walkabout on the floor. What was truly happening, now that she knew, is that they were unlocking a spell lock somewhere by moving around in a certain way. Once all movements would be done then the lock would open. She had to admit that this was a pretty heavy lock as they continued to walk around for a good five minutes only to finally stop in front of a door that had finally appeared in a dark empty corner. Catherine put her hand on the knob and once again looked at Alex, "Remember your promise."

She then opened the door, and as expected the other side was pitch black as you would only see what was on the other side once you stepped through. "I told you its all good, plus I really don't know what you are so concerned about..." As she talked she walked in and then she saw why Catherine was so instant and why she had singled her out.

The room was very large and filled with bookshelves full of books, but not just any books

but very old books. Alex's eyes were wide open as Jessica explained, "This is the private library of the High Order. Only High Order members know of its existence and even then most never go into it. For me it's my second time."

Rosamia nodded, "First for me actually, I was told of it but never given access to it while I was a member."

Catherine stood tall, "Yes well this place hold not only all the important books of our past history but also accounts and many other things. While we saw potential in you, there were also lots of issues and we needed time to see if those issues could be resolved."

Rosa smirked, "Such a kind way of saying that you did not trust me."

"Trust is eared over time." Catherine then reached out to Alexandria who had taken the advantage of the lost in focus to read the covers of the books present. "I swear, are you a child as well?"

Alex pointed to a book, "Wait this one is about daemons maybe there is something inside that could help us..."

Rob cut in, "While Catherine was with Rosa, and Jessica was keeping charge, where do you think I was and what do you think I was spending my time on? You are not the only one that can open a book and learn about a possible enemy's weakness. Now how much room do you need for this gate, before you once again get distracted?"

Alex was really not feeling the love and spirit of cooperation from these people but she figured that now was not the time, "Ah, let see..." She quickly looked around and then move to a small section where there was a gap between two bookshelves. "That should be good enough."

Jessica was confused, "But that's barely a five

inch gap we will not be able to fit thought."

In order for Alex not to sound too high and mighty in order to passively aggressively get back at their comments Iris cut in, "The spell does not need for you to walk in like this door, all you need is to have the mark and get close." She then quickly turned to Alex, "As an extra precaution Alex will also make it so that you will need to stand in this location for a few seconds so that you don't simply warp there if you move close to it."

Alex nodded, "What she said, but also when you do use the gate all your marks will burn a bit. Just in case to let everyone know that someone is accessing the room. If you are a light sleeper it could wake you up, but if you are awake it will mostly feel odd then actual burning."

Rob wondered on that, "I saw that as I read the spell, I assumed that a warning was its intended purpose but still it's nice to have a confirmation on this. There is one thing that has me worried, with how you are about to do this, if magic fails in the area will we not lose access and if that is the case would it not be safer to have the item here?"

While the idea and the concern made sense, given what had happened in Astrum recently, which only very few people knew about what really happened, as it turns out it was not a good idea after all but she could not just come out and explain it that way to all of them. "I think that you have a better chance of stumbling on a good thief over someone that can cast an anti magic spell in the area that will cut everyone off. Plus if that was the goal they would first have to do so from here, so unless you think this place is not secure enough?"

Seeing as there was no comment Alex then put her hands together and continued, "Okay well now

that all the questions are out of the way, if you would, please cast the mark on Rosa and Iris as they will need access. As promised, I in theory don't have the ability to do so and while you do that I'll setup the gate."

While she proceeded to cast the spell, Catherine ignored her comment as how could she not have the ability to give anyone she wanted a mark when it was probably her that had created the scrolls that she gave them in the first place. Still she did appreciate the symbolism even if she would not admit it.

Once all the spells where casted, Alex turned around, "And we are done, now if you please stand where I am standing one at a time." After about twenty second she disappeared and then Catherine took her place, then Rob and so on until all where on the other side.

The room on the other side had no windows and was simply a square room with a large sphere in the middle. The walls and floor looked like a dark material and was solid to the touch but at the same time felt like nothing they had felt before. Alex moved next to Lithius, Taeral and Kilor which were already present in the room before they had arrived.

"I take it that the only thing left is to connect the two places?"

Alex nodded at Lithius, "Yep, mind you they plan on doing this tomorrow afternoon in order to make a show if it to everyone so that give us a bit of time to fill this up."

Lithius turned to Catherine, "Considering the deadline given is in two days after tomorrow are you sure this is how you wish to proceed?"

Catherine nodded, "It is."

Lithius retuned the action in kind, "Very well, Rosamia when you are ready. I was told that you

would know what you need to do."

She nodded and then put both hands on the empty sphere. "I do but I'm assuming that this will take a bit more than last time in order to start it up."

Alexandria had a wide smile on her face, "Oh yes, painfully so, yes... I'm sorry to say that there are no real options around that." She then turned to the others, "Also for everyone else present, once the process starts you should feel your abilities return but don't act on it if you can."

Rob nodded, "No worries." and with that Alex motioned for Rosa to start, "Again I'll let you know when you are done."

Rosa nodded and focused on all she had and began to cast healing spells after healing spells. The process took a long time and Rosa was starting to get very tired but finally Alex gave her the signal to stop. She took a step back and saw that the sphere now had a thin layer at its bottom and it was so very small.

Lithius inspected the content, "Yes this will do well." He then began casting and in no time at all the spell was completed, "As with the prototype, if you touch the sphere and cast the spell it will absorb it's full power and then proceed to convert it, but unlike the prototype it will have the added effect of taking a small portion of any arcane magic also being used to fuel any spell if cast in Missa." He then pointed to Alexandria, "Now, if you please would you mind going first?"

Alex was a bit surprised but did not mind, "Sure, so large spell right?" She then mumbled to herself, "But I can't drain myself too much, due to tomorrow... Okay." She put both hands on the sphere and proceeded in focusing a lot of power in one giant spell. Once she was done about one fifth of it had been filled.

Taeral got close to Lithius and whispered, "That is more then what was expected... It's seems that she had gotten more strength from the last time."

Lithius nodded, "Yes but considering the last few months of heavy magic that she has been doing I'm not so sure that this was as unexpected as you make it sound."

While Alex recovered a bit from expelling of so much energy in one blow, the other marveled at the return of their powers. Jessica had a very wide smile on her face, "Thank you Alexandria, Lithius, Taeral and Kilor for giving us this gift to us."

Kilor return the smile, "Happy that it worked out."

Alex then looked at Rosa who was having a similar experience as the others but then her gaze focused on Iris, "Wait it just occurred to me, in Missa you will be back to full power right?"

Iris smiled, "Yes I can feel it now, access to both arcane and holy just as it was before but much stronger now."

"Well it's too be expected, I mean you have learned so much from back then..."

Iris then proceeded to move to the sphere, "Well if that is the case, I should probably contribute as well." But it's then that Alex stopped her, "Actually hold up on that, I'll give it another go and I'll be okay for tomorrow but I would rather that you be at full power just in case something happened between then."

Iris nodded and no one else objected with her reasoning, which Alex was thankful because there was another reason why she did not want Iris to participate. Already she knew that she was being looked at by Lithius and the other two, she did not know of the extent of it but at the same time she did not want to draw too much attention to Iris.

While Alex powered up another spell, Lithius took the opportunity to explain something to Catherine and the others. "Assuming this does fall in a large conflict we will stay and monitor the sphere during, so that ideally you don't run out during combat."

Catherine and the others lowered their heads, "Again thank you for your help with this."

Lithius nodded, "Given the situation, we also have a vested interest in making sure that a rogue daemon does not takeover Missa so the help is not entirely altruistic. Still we do appreciate your appreciation for our actions."

Alex was finally done and she had successfully added not as much as the last time but it was still a considerable amount. "Well I guess with that we will leave you to it." As the others started to leave the room Alex quickly turned around, "I'll give you more details as to when I will be connecting the two places, that way we can coordinate a bit more." She then smiled at everyone knowing that now all the others were gone, "Also thanks for your help with this, on a personal level I know this action will bring a lot of happiness to Rosa and she deserves a bit of that."

Lithius smiled, "Again not entirely altruistic but thank you none the less miss Alexandria."

She gave him a final smile and then used the gate to go back the High Order library room, which instantly as she appeared she saw that Catherine was in front of her. "Whoa, a bit close there?"

"Just making sure your eyes don't wander too much."

"Well then, why not help me focus my attention someplace else." She then pointed at Catherine's pendant, "I need to have a quick chat with you if you don't mind."

She knew what she was actually pointing at, "I

suppose, we can head back to the meeting room and discuss it there."

The others dispersed and when they entered the room they saw that the others had left, which was not that big of a surprise. Alexandria closed the large door behind them and while she did that Catherine reached in and removed the small sphere around her neck.

When Alex turned around she could see that Catherine was clearly displeased but said nothing and with the sphere in her opened hand handed it to her. "Ah, just in case what do you think is happening here?"

"Well it's clear that you are taking back this artifact now that things will be setup tomorrow."

Alex reached out and did take the sphere out of her hands which caused a bit of a twitch, which she assumed was her feeling that loss all over again. "Well I do need to take it back because of tomorrow but at the same time it's just because I need to modify something on it, I assumed that you would want to keep this... I mean if you don't then I don't need to bother but..."

Catherine nodded, "I would like to keep it if possible."

Alex smiled, "Well there we go then." She then proceeded to cast a spell and then another, after that it seems that she inspected the work and then handed the sphere back to Catherine that gladly took it back.

"What did you do to it?"

"Once things are active there would be no way for you to control where your source would come from." She then pointed at the little sphere, "I made it so that this little thing would only activate if it could not sense the other source."

Catherine proceeded to tuck the sphere back under her vest. "That will be very helpful, and it's

okay for me to keep?"

Alexandria shrugged, "I mean, if you want my true answer, then no, because if bad people get their hands on it then there could be a larger problem for the city. But in the end that's your decision, as far as Astrum is concern it's simply another magical artifact like many other out in the world and in our hand not overly useful or powerful. So yea, if on your person is where you feel it's safer then by all means."

Catherine thought about it and understood the concern she was raising but at the same time, given all the issues that had occurred by hiding things, she wondered if another path would not be better. Now would not be the time but later that could be a different story. She then nodded at Alex, "I understand and I will keep it..."

There was an uncomfortable pause after which made Alex wonder if there was something else but nothing came, "...Well, that's all from my side, if there is nothing else..."

Catherine signed, "Thank you..."

Alex was a bit surprised, "What?!"

"You hear me, and I will not repeat myself."

Alex smiled at the stern tone that Catherine had used, "... Thankful enough for me to maybe look at a few book?"

Catherine slowly nodded her head, "No, never." and with that she made her way to the door. Alex watched her leave and wondered on the never part.

The next day had finally arrived and all High Order members had made to the auditorium. With them a lot Crusaders had also join but mostly it was priest and priestess that were present. There was obviously a large crowd present as well as the word had been passed around. Sadly the present

company was not as large as the previous ones with the angel present but there was the question if that was because none of his forced followers were in attendance.

Other than Rosamia and Alexandria who were waiting in the High Order library in order to finish the spell, all the others were on the top of the same roof that they had been during the last time when the Enforcers had attacked. Iris was holding her pendant and was in current communication with Rosa. "It looks like she is about to start, so you can tell Alex to start and hold, assuming she can."

Rosa's image did not answer but they did hear another in the back, "Assuming I can, seriously?" It's then that Rosa's face simply smirked as an answer to Iris's comment.

Catherine took a final look around and wondered if he was watching, but even if he was there was no stopping this. "People of Missa, we of the High Order are here to deliver on the promise that was made a few days ago to all of you, the return of our powers. As mentioned there will be no need to pledge your worth or even for us to approve as there was no need for it in the past nor is there one now."

She then raised her hands, "Now if you wish, closed your eyes and try to once again feel the holy power within yourself."

Rosa looked to Alex and was about to tell her to finish the spell, but with the magic of the pendant she had already overheard and as soon as she finished the spell Rosa could feel all of her old powers return.

"You know while I said that I could hold the spell for the right time, it's was still not something that was easy to do." She then had a bit of a

playful smile on her face, "And now that it's all done, I think that maybe a bit of a reward is in order?"

Rosa saw her starting to slowly reach of one of the book. Part of her wondered why she was surprised that somehow she was reaching for the oldest one in reach and not just any book. "I'm sorry Alex but you know that I can't allow that."

Alex was about to say something but then was cut off by Iris, still in open communication with Rosa. "Get here quick, looks like he's making an entrance."

With that Alex redirected her arm towards Rosa, "There simply is never any time for anything sometimes." and a quick spell later they disappeared from the room.

Catherine had to cheat a little bit. She had asked Alex to hold off until the right time to connect the large sphere with the city but seeing as she still had access to the small one on her being she could not really feel when it activated. Still it did not take much to see it, as both her comrade in the High Order breathed in deeply and you could see tones of smiles and cheers from the priest and priestess and even Crusaders. The void that everyone had felt was finally back and in demonstration for their thanks, large pillars of light where casted as some kneeled in thanks.

"Once again while in the city we will be able to help those in need. Once again we will be able to continue with our sacred duty that was started centuries ago. And also once again, we will soon be able to feel safe in our own homes."

When that last comment was done everyone attention moved to the skies and some chatter could be heard. Rob whispered to Catherine, "It's

seems that he will make an appearance after all."

There was a bit of frustration in her voice, "Well it was to be expected."

Everyone waited until the angel made his way to the opposite platform that the High Order where currently standing on. Overall he had not changed from the last time that they had seen him, his wing where still crimson red and his body feature where still neutral. While that was still the same it was easy to see that he was bigger than the last time, if they had to guess he was now a more than twice the regular size of a human reaching about fifteen feet tall.

"While I agree that soon everyone will be able to feel safe, it will be because I and those that follow me made it so."

Catherine shook her head, she knew that her next words would not faze him but this time she aimed to win this battle of words. "We still do no which to fight you, release those that you are forcing to keep by your side and leave this city and the Crusaders will not chase after you." She stretched the truth with that last part but it mattered not as she knew what was coming next.

"My followers are devoted soul, and for that their powers have been retuned, they are better than they were before at their duties and can now reach levels of worship to the lord of light that they could only have dreamed about beforehand."

"So high of a devotion that they forgot about their loved ones and who they were previously, was that cost explained beforehand?"

"Their families and loved ones where never forgotten and now they bask in the same light, together like never before."

Catherine hid it well but inside her heart broke as now that was confirmation that all those that had followed, that they could not save, had

been used to feed his power. She was about to comment but then Jessica moved forward to confront him.

"You spoke of choice and of doing the right thing, and while it may be true that you have spoken no lies and have kept your word there have been many words that have gone missing from your speeches that should have been said. And those missing word where missing intentionally in order to feed your own agenda, leaving behind others to pay for the price." She then pointed at him, "You are no angel, you're simply a daemon with a corrupted purpose."

The angel glared at her, "Bold and treasonous words, I had hope that once this was over that you and Robert would have understood my cause but I now see that you too will need to be punished as Catherine." He did not let her respond as he continued but as he did, he shifted his gaze to Rob, "And what of you? With our previous conversation why do you still stand with them? Have you not realized that the time for you to choose has come?"

Rob nodded, "I do remember that conversation and what was talked about, but I too agree with High Priestess Jessica in that a lot of words were also missing from those conversations. I do believe that you think that you are following the lord of lights message but, as mentioned, over time this purpose and understanding has become corrupt."

Rob stopped as the angel seemed angry with his words and started to flap his wings in order to lift himself off the platform. "You all disappoint me and the lord of light, Joseph truly was the only real follower of the lord of light in the High Order. Enjoy your so called beliefs and fake devotion as in a few days from now it will all be over by my hand guided by the lord that you say you worship."

As he flew off, Catherine had to wonder on his

final comments and she knew that she was not the only one to wonder on them. She had expected that he would rally his followers and take back the church by force but now she wondered if it would even come to that, and instead with the powers he amassed, he would simply make it so that they all would not wake up and end all this right then and there. That thought terrified her but it would not control her, all that was needed was an unexpected plan and she knew a few people that specialized in those.

Once things had calmed down as much as they would, the High Order and Lights Templar once again found themselves in that now familiar meeting room, this time they had an extra guest as the General had been invited.

"Given what is about to possibly happen, General, how ready are we at this time?"

Catherine thought it was a good sign that he immediately started to answer her question.

"Originally we were prepared to create extra obstacles and defenses to slow down what we assume would be a marching army of powered Crusaders." He then quickly turned to Adam and Mike, "Given the return of our powers a different plan was created."

Catherine also looked at the Lights Templar, "I see that you are meddling again?"

Mike shrugged, "Given the news of the earlier return of your powers and the constant marching at his pace a suggestion was made, nothing else."

The General nodded as well, "The suggestion was welcomed but really when the information was given a new plan would have been formed anyways."

Rob was now more curious, "And this new

plan how different is it then the defense here?"

"It's completely different." The General focus his gaze to the High Order members and started to explain, "Now that we are on equal footing, and that the Enforcers are out of the picture still, the plan is to not wait and attack him, and ideally to do so tomorrow before his deadline expires."

Rob was still not convinced that this was a good idea. "I worry about this but there must be more to it then to simply attack?"

"Yes, the attack will be executed in three groups. The first will be compromised of mostly the full force of Crusaders at our disposal, this will be lead by me and our primary target will be their Crusaders. We want to show them what is coming at them in order to draw them all out in one section. As an extra backup we would request and one of you and a group of the Order could also accompany us to help with defense."

Before they could answer he continued, "This force is mostly for show mind you, as the secondary force will be tasked with entering their church and moving or removing all the civilians that have followed him somewhere to safety. Assuming things go bad or very destructive it is our duty to make sure to minimize casualty to those that we are there to protect. This force will be small and once again a request for aid from the Order would be required."

Jessica immediately interrupted him, "I will volunteer to lead this group. Simply tell me who you can spare and I'll figure out the rest General."

While the General nodded in thanks Rob turned to Jessica, "Are you sure? This plan has yet to be fully explained and approved."

Jessica had a small smile on her face, "Attacking him first saves everyone here from danger during the battle, the General also created

a part in his plan to save others, plus taking account his many years of experience and let's not forget the angel last comments given to us..." She then slowly shook her head, "There are very little options left, and so far this seems to make sense, so yes I will participate and approve."

Rob said nothing for a moment but eventually he motioned for the General to continue with the explanation.

"With us occupying the main army, another force taking care of those present this only leaves one target, then angel..."

This time it was Catherine that interrupted him, "I will lead that team." There was no room debate and so the General nodded in confirmation but he did also move his hand in the direction of the Lights Templar, "Your help will be appreciated High Priestess and also meet your teammates."

There was no way she was going to back down and she knew that it was the best choice still deep down there was something she did not like about leaving it to them once again. "And I take it you have a plan as well?"

Mike nodded, "In a way, yes. Assuming his process is not completed, we are thinking that he may try and rush things when the Generals army gets closer. The idea is that we will teleport in and attack him head on." He then paused for a moment, "This will give us time to see what type of power level we are dealing with but it is expected that it will be a similar fight to the avatars."

Once again Rob was curious, "Why do you expect that you will have time to evaluate during battle?"

"It's assumed that he will expect an attack but seeing as he is in the church and given his physical abilities, once the first blows are exchanged given the chance he will take to the

outside and use his wings." He then looked at Jessica, "Once out of the building it should help you with your goal of evacuation, so once he leaves it should be your cue to go in."

Catherine had a skeptical look on her face, "And for us?"

"Alexandria and Iris will be the main attackers in the sky, their goal is to bring him down."

Rosamia then added, "Both Catherine and I can try and use holy spells from range to help."

Mike nodded, "And for Anna and I we will use our enchantments, we expected that it will not harm him at those ranges but it could help create a diversion."

Adam then shrugged, "Well with my enchantment spells returned I plan to use this new trusty sword and warping skill to attack as well."

Alexandria had a stunned look on her face but before she could comment Iris took over, "Ah you can't just do that. As soon as you warp over you will start to fall and that will transfer over when you warp back." There was a disappointed look on his face but she had a small smile on her face which gave him hope, "We can cast a floating spell on you nullifying that effect mind you."

Adam thought about it but really he knew he was going to go for it anyways, "That will make things interesting, can we do a few practice runs later today?"

Iris smiled, "Sure thing."

With that out of the way Mike continued, "Again the idea is to bring him down to the ground and then try and defeat him. Once there we will have more options, but again this fight will be very unpredictable so we will all have to be ready for anything." He then turned to the General, "If thing clear up then we can have assistance, but ideally we want a quick battle."

Rob nodded, "I agree and to help with that, I will join with the General's forces seeing as we are doing this. I'll take lead on the Order members that will follow, will that be okay with you General?"

The General nodded, "Of course and thank you for your aid."

Catherine then turned to everyone, "It seems that the plan is agreed on, in that case I suggest that we take our leave as there will be a lot of things to prepare beforehand."

There were no arguments from everyone but before Jessica left, both Rosamia and Alexandria made their way to her. "Jessica I know you don't have much time but there is something we would like to go over before you leave, it should help with your task."

She smiled at both of them, "You will hear no arguments from me so what do you wish to go over then?"

Happy to hear that they both went over a few things with her, and hoped that it would be enough as once again the possibility of an avatar level treat was on them, but this time in city.

Chapter 7

Rebecca looked around as the fleet of Crusaders marched towards the church that the angel and his followers had occupied. Currently she was next to the General and High Priest Robert, normally this would have been a bit intimidating for her but after spending time with all High Order members and having seen the General up close and personal a few times she felt generally okay with their company. What was intimidating was this march, "I don't think I've ever seen this big of a coordinated attack from the Crusaders, ever."

The General nodded, "Well I suppose it will get a bit more intimidating then." He then pointed forward at the army of followers that they could now start to see. While Rebecca took that site in, she also saw a runner come close to the General, he quickly saluted and then gave his report. "It seems that the plan is going well, the time it took us to get here gave enough time for the followers to marshal their members and get ready to meet with the army."

"Good news, now go and watch our flanks to make sure that we did not give them too much time to make other plans then simple defense." The Crusader nodded then saluted and then left.

Rob then turned to the General, "Is this what the Portal Tower attack was like?"

"Yes, it's very familiar and in many ways I suppose that this is the result of that attack."

At this point they were close enough to see the head of the follower army and the General could see that this is where his old lieutenant, William, was.

"Let us hope that this time it ends better for everyone."

Rebecca wondered on what the General was talking about, unfortunately or fortunately, she had been unable to participate at that battle as she had not made it in time when the lord of light had ordered the recall of all Crusaders to Missa. She had been told the stories of it mind you and overall she considered herself fortunate for having missed it.

The church that they had occupied was not as big as the main one but was fairly large none the less. The courtyard was very open and even then houses and markets were easily a few blocks away from it making the area around even more open. That said the area was now packed with Crusaders. The followers had rallied around the entrance, courtyard and roads in front the church. Whereas the Crusader army of the General had marched in occupying mostly the front and the left side of the church, the back had been left alone, mostly due to the city wall and also this is where Lady Jessica was going to make her entrance, and the right side was also left alone as this is where the Light Templar where to try and push the fight with the angel, which was something that they did not want to interrupt with at this time.

Now close enough the General gazed at William and then a frightening revelation occurred to him, "You are not brainwashed are you, William, you are following him willingly right?"

William smirked, "I would ask what gave it away but it does not matter at all, still I am stunned to see you marching on us, I would have thought that you would have preferred a defensive position."

"Normally, but your new boss gave us little option..." There was a little pause, "I have to ask,

why follow him, you must know what he is doing, why betray the Order this way?"

He chuckled very quickly, "Betray it? I'm helping to save it." He then pointed his sword at the General, "The battle at the Portal Tower showed me the truth, that even the best of us can fall. You knew the whole time and said nothing and you speak to me about betrayal?"

The General sighed, "You compare this with what he is doing to the citizen of this city, the innocent?"

William shrugged, "Truthfully both are wrong to certain degree I will agree, but even so this way will open of a path for us to never be betrayed, to follow what we believe in with full conviction and no doubt in our heads and it will also bring out our better selves. My Crusaders are more focus and will not question anything, can the same be said of yours General?"

"Hmm, while those are advantages they are also weaknesses, and this perfect army you speak of comes at the high cost of the loss of freedom and self thought, which you clearly undervalue."

William then raised his sword, "Well let's see who is better than..." He then swung his sword down and the army of followers started with the attack.

The Lights Templar and Catherine where on the roof top pretty far away from the church, still with the numbers and the noise that their battle was causing it was easy to see that the first part of the plan had started.

"Alexandria, I know it's a bit too late to ask, but can you get us in next to him?"

Both Alex and Iris where focusing on certain spells as he asked, a few moments after Iris

answered him. "We should be able to. I was able to find his location. He's currently on the top floor."

Alex, having also finished her spells, added more information. "Also, for some odd reason, it seems to have no defense to stop us from teleporting in there with him."

Adam turned to Mike, "Could be a trap?"

Catherine then pointed at the army, "Does it matter?"

Mike was forced to agree, "Catherine's right, sadly it matters little." He then looked at everyone, "Okay Anna and me have point, Alexandria and Catherine behind us, plus Alexandria you will be the one to get us in. Then it's followed by Iris with Rosamia and Adam in the back, Iris you will be the one to bring them in." They all moved in the position ordered and with their free hand touched the caster and with the other pulled out their weapon. "We don't know what we are warping into so everyone be ready. The main goal is to get him outside so from the start let's aim him at the wall as much as we can."

He then quickly looked back, "If everyone is ready, Alexandria, Iris, it's on you." When he said that the two began to cast and in a few seconds they disappeared.

When they could all see again after reappearing in the room, they saw that they were in what looked like a small room. They quickly realized that this was a trick of the eyes as the room was in fact quite large, it may have been a large meeting room similar to the one in the main church only difference was that this one had been completely emptied. What was there was a pile of runes on the floor, the very large angel in the middle and also what looked like a civilian women kneeling in front of him. Currently he had his hand on her head was chanting a spell of sort unknown

to most.

Before Alexandria could inform them that he was in the process of stealing that person life energy and adding it to his own, Catherine instantly rushed at the angel and as she did, she casted a spell that created a spear made completely of holy energy. "Leave the people of my city alone!"

The shout force the angel to cancel his ritual and move his arm in the way to try and block the blow. Due to the surprise attack, Catherine got the first blow and the spear hit him squarely on his side forcing him to move backwards by a few steps.

While Mike looked at the wound that she had done, he pointed at the civilian and then at the only door out of the room. "Iris, get her out of here, Adam and Rosamia back her up depending on what is on the other side."

All three moved immediately but Iris slowed down in order to guard the other two with a possible holy shield in case of an attack. Rosamia reached the person first and as soon as she did the person looked up in horror. "What did he do to me?!?"

She was a bit hysterical which was understandable but they also did not have much time. "We are here to get you out, can you follow me?" She did not give her the time to respond as Rosa put her head under her arm and started to lift her up. Thankfully the person was cooperating and they quickly made their way to the door.

While this was happening Mike was getting worried as the wound that had been done had already closed, still it was not as fast as he had seen before in previous cases so it gave him hope. Anna and he placed themselves between the rescue effort and the angel with Catherine right behind them.

"If you think that attacking sooner will give you an edge you are mistaken." and with a flick of his hand two large lightning bolt made their way towards them. Catherine created a shield for them to stop the bolts and then quickly removed it in order to let them charge ahead. Both sword glowing bright green and pink flared up and hit him square on each of his sides. The wound was deep but whatever liquid was pouring out of him was stopping quickly.

"So this is the level of your attacks, amusing." This time with one hand he waved in Anna direction, which created a holy shield that pushed her away. With his other hand he launched a quick fireball at Mike, who canceled it by launching a blast from his sword which resulted in a small explosion between them forcing him to fall back. Taking the opening Catherine created a pillar of fire at his feet, enveloping him completely. She made the spell last a few moments but once done it was clear to see that something stronger would be needed.

Iris looked back, "We have to hurry..." She reached for the door but Adam stopped her, "There are a lot of people on the other side, just warning you."

With that she prepared a quick close quarter spell and reached out and opened the door, once open they saw that there were two Crusaders with weapons ready but they did not act immediately. Taking that advantage Iris reached out to one and sent a low level lighting spell instantly brining him down, as for the other Adam, now with strength and speed enhancement available to him, used the pummel of his sword and knocked the other out. But it's then that both their eyes went wide when they saw who else was with them.

Rosamia made her way thought with the

person that had been in the room and then saw a corridor filled with people with confused looks on their faces, one of them spoke. "What is going on we were supposed to meet the angel."

Rosa slowly shook her head, "That's not going to happen..." Before she could finish the person she was helping shouted at them, "IT WAS HORRIBLE... he... touched me and reached inside and I lost something... Also it felt like I was being ripped out of my body... DON'T DO THIS!!! Just run away from here..."

This created a quick panic with everyone, Rosa only had moments. "STOP!! Iris here will get you out magically, the place is filled with his followers so this is the best way to go."

Thankfully they listened but then Iris got close to Rosa, "I'm going to need to use a gate spell and I need another person for that on the other side?"

Rosa understood and lowered herself in order to let go of the person she was helping, she then turned to Adam, "We are going in." She then screamed at the others, "Alex, switch."

Currently Alex was following the plan which was to lay low for the perfect opening and then blast the angel and the wall behind him, when she heard Rosa there was a bit of hesitation considering the opponent and she figured that was seen as Anna, who was once again standing after being thrown backward gave her a signal to go. She had to admit that it frustrated her a bit but she moved away, crossed with Adam and Rosa and made it to the door with Iris and then saw the issue at hand. "...It's a good thing we did not wait longer." She then turned to Iris, "I'll head to the location and let you know when you can open the gate, with you here you can defend then easier with a holy shield if need be." Alex did not wait for a response and simply casted the teleport spell and

while she did that Iris explained to everyone the next steps in order for people to try and remain calm when they saw her disappear.

Rosamia and Adam put themselves next to Catherine and Anna and Mike as they were also grouping up. Adam waited for them to get close before he charged in but before he could the angel started to cast another spell.

"Seeing as you like fire..."

Catherine instantly created a holy shield below them knowing what was coming and Rosa did the same but in her case she created it above. There was a quick pause from everyone due to her actions but then it became clear as two very large pillars of fire, one from above and one from below assaulted them. Mike looked around and saw that the pillars were so big that they occupied most of the room, "Even more reasons to take this outside." He then turned back, "Can you keep us shielded for a while?"

Both Catherine and Rosa nodded in confirmation, which was a good thing but it still left a pretty big problem. Anna looked around as well, "There is no way that we can assault him like this."

It's then that Adam smirked, "I can still see my target, meaning that everything else is a distraction." He then looked at the two, "So do I have a target?"

Mike assumed that Adam was thinking of warping and using his blade to cut, something and there was a something that he had in mind that he could cut but then what. They really needed to push him out, "Anna charge your blade as much as you can, when the time comes we both charge and when we score a hit let it go and aim outwards." She nodded in agreement, it was simple to do but also tricky as a lot of power was needed

but not too much as it would blow back on all of them. He then turned to Adam, "When I give the signal aim for the hand, it should cancel his spells." Adam too understood and given his target got ready to be burned a bit as he would need to appear in front of the angel for this to work.

While both he and Anna focused their energy on their blades, the fire continued and thankfully the shield held but then Mike heard a voice in his head. *'We are good to come in again, should we?'*

The voice brought a smile to his face, *'Read my mind, can you do it?'*

'It's a bit crazy but it should work no problems, I'll let Iris know and keep in contact with you to help with the timing.'

'Thanks Alexandria.' He waited a few more seconds and then turned to Adam, "Now."

Adam started casting his spell and suddenly appeared right in front of the angel, as he thought because of the radius of the pillars of fire his back was getting burnt but he ignored that and used his enhanced blade with his magical speed and cut the angel hand that was stretched out towards the group. As expected this caused the channeling of the spell to end and as a reaction the angel looked at his arm and then at Adam's blade, he then focused on the wrist and from there a shape started to form.

Seeing as the spell was now dying out both Alex and Iris suddenly appeared and Anna and Mike charged at the angel. The shape that he was creating looked like a red blade coming out of his wrist and he tried to use it slice at Mike to discourage one of the charges. Mike tried to avoid but there was only so much that could be done and the created red blade connect with him slicing the side of his arm. While that hit scored so did theirs and they both planted their sword in his side

and let the enchantment loose. The blow caused the angel to fly backward and hit the side wall really hard enough for it to crack heavily. Disappointed but still satisfied both of them moved out of the way.

Now that they both had a clear shot Alexandria and Iris both aimed a lightning spell directly at him. The spells connected with him, and with the already damaged wall, blew him outside the church.

Catherine moved ahead and healed Mike while they both looked at the damage, already he was up on his feet and now that he had the room he extended both his wings. "That healing is really annoying." Mike nodded, "It typically is." he then turned to the others and saw that Iris was already casting the float spell on Adam while Rosa was healing his back. To his surprised Alex had moved next to Anna and was casting something on her, "Flyers, next step of the plan."

Iris and Adam moved out and then Alex dragged Anna as well, "I'm bringing an extra."

Mike quickly glanced at Anna and secretly wished her luck and they too moved out. Now that he was alone with the two priestesses, there was only one thing left to do, "Let head down and see how we can assist."

The fight with William was currently at a stalemate with the General but he was okay with that as the same thing could not be said of the battle with the Crusaders and the followers. Overall the followers fought well and it was impossible to surprise them but they also reacted slowly to changes in maneuvers. The other advantage that they had over them was the Order, while with speed and strength enhancing magic

was active there was little that they could do to contribute to the battle but they could pull back and use their shield to cover them and create healing spot to those that had suffered a near fatal wound. The same could be said with the followers but at the same time there was no matching the healing power of an Order member and while they did have some of their own in their ranks the numbers could not compete.

"It seems that your perfect army is wavering William."

The ex-lieutenant charged at him with a sideways slash with his sword which the General blocked with his large two handed sword. This had been expected it seems as William instantly followed up with a kick to his side. This made the General smile internally as William had fallen into a small trap that affected many Crusaders.

The General tighten his muscles and prepared for the incoming blow and as expected it did hurt as William was using enhancement magic for his strength but so was the General and this is where the mistake came in. Enhancement magic did just that enhanced your base abilities so if you where stronger than the other then if both used the same spell you would still be stronger. As William repositioned himself the General let fly a left hook, which William did have time to block with his open hand but the speed and strength behind the blow still continued and caused him to hit himself with the back of his own hand to his face.

The wound cause was nothing physical but same could not be said for the emotional one. While the General took a step back William focused completely on him for his next attack and that is what the General really wanted. During the battle he had noticed that the follower army did compensate for charges in the battle but only when

William paid attention to it. He did not think that William controlled the army per say but he did think that he help send them commands on how to counterattack and the less he did so the better they did overall. The General also had to thank his new diamond in the ruff Crusader at his side that had taken over part of the command while he was busy with William.

Focusing back on the battle at hand the General blocked William overhead strike, but then William continued his arc and lowered himself and did a second attack by performing a low kick to his legs. This forced the General to sidestep away which gave another opening for William to use his sword to swing up at him. This time the General used his weapon and swung down to meet William's. A large clang could be heard as the two weapons connected, but as it did the General used his position to push the weapon down forcing William to braise himself pinning him down.

The upper hand did not last long as William purposely then dropped on the ground causing the General to stumble forward. This is what William wanted as already he was preparing himself to catch him with his leg and flip him around. Thankfully the General was able to regain his balance but this also gave William time to regroup and once again drop into a defensive position.

Still all was not lost as once again part of the follower's army had fallen back to the Crusaders. The General could also see that now the Lights Templar had also succeeded in throwing the angel outside, now giving Lady Jessica a chance to save those trapped inside. So far everything was going to plan and he hoped that it stayed that way.

As it turned out Alexandria had invited a bit

more than a few elves to help with the possession removal and half of those elves were currently with Jessica now, along with about fifteen Crusaders and ten members of the Order. Currently they were all in the back of the church waiting on the signal. They had recently heard a large explosion and shortly after Catherine had contacted her that it was now safe to move in.

She was currently inspecting the back of the wall when one of the elves moved close to her, "While we appreciate the opportunity to understand more in our field of magic that we are currently studying I will remind you that we are not mages that you may be used too when it comes to combat."

She gave him a quick smile, "It's fine, I'm just happy that you agreed to help us out once more. As for combat leave that to the Crusaders and the other members of the Orders and if any of you feel like your life is on the line leave any way you can."

The elf looked relieved, "I know that this is what we agreed on beforehand but it is not the first time that someone has changed their minds when the time finally came and I am glad to see that this is not the case with you." He then paused, "If you don't mind again, what are you looking for?"

Jessica reached out for the wall and when her hand connected with it, magical runes appeared around her hand. "High Order members and certain Crusaders are registered with a certain spell that is on churches in the city, once we make contact..." She then paused and let the spell explain for itself. The runes eventually disappeared and then in its place a large black door appeared on the wall itself. "The issue with this magical door is that we can't see on the other side, so we are walking in blind." Jessica then turned to the Crusaders, "Just in case you go in first and then

we will follow, keep in mind that this will bring you right behind the main altar so it's hard to tell how many will be on the other side." She then had a serious look on her face, "If it's too many then return immediately and that is an order."

She moved out of the way as the Crusader saluted and then got in position with the others; once they were ready they walked in the magical door. Jessica waited about thirty seconds and when none of them returned she turned back, "Okay I'll head in next, then the Order members and finally the elves." Turning around again she walked in herself.

What she saw shocked her but she ignored it as the Crusaders were currently in combat with some followers. Overall they had the numbers but Jessica saw no reason to not help them out and with that she started to cast a few holy shocks at the followers. The goal was not to hurt them but to cause enough of a distraction for the Crusader that they were facing to knock them down. As time passed and more of the other Order members moved in the followers quickly all fell which left her time to take in what was happening around her.

Once again she looked to see that all the church pews on the first floor were filled to the brim with citizens currently all in a position of prayer. It was odd as well as throughout the combat they made no reaction to what was happening around them. Eventually Jessica moved in close to one of them and waited for the Crusader close to her to get ready, in case something happened. Once he was in position, Jessica reached out to the person and put her hands on his shoulder and nothing happened. She took a quick look at the Crusader who had an equally puzzled look on his face. Jessica then decided to shake the person a bit. While that did make him

move he still staid in position and did not react.

It's then that the elf moved in close to her and inspected the person, "It's seems that they are completely possessed, or enough to command them to just stay like this."

He was right, that did seem to be the case of what was happening. Jessica moved back and took a quick head count, there was so many of them but at the same time this could not be all of them. While the elves prepared the gate spells in order to move everyone, Jessica split her forces in two. "You help us move them across and for the other group start scouting around for the others, start with the grounds below us as I rather only worry about the front door and top floors for reinforcements."

Again her orders where followed without question and once the gate spell was up the Crusaders enhanced their strength and started the long process of moving people one at a time. While she was thankful that there was no resistance this angered Jessica as all these people where now trapped within their own bodies and she knew that at a whim they could simply wake up and follow whatever orders the angel gave them like puppets. While they could fix this now there would still be a part that they could not and that was the life energy that had been stolen from them in order to power the angel.

She tried to take her mind off it and see if there would be a quicker way to speed up the process but before she could give it any time a member of the Order suddenly came back up, "High Priestess Jessica, you have to see this... it's... it's... there are so many... I ..."

The loss of explanation worried her and so she called over one of the elves and they both followed the priest who led them in the lower levels. After the stairs down she noticed that a few followers

had been knocked out around a door that they had been guarding which should lead them to the lower basement. Currently they were open it's then that she started to see the rows and rows of citizen simply standing in file in the now empty room.

They walked in, and just like upstairs they did not react to any of them as they were all simply standing there. There were so many that she could not count them, clearly the efforts that they had put in over the last few days had helped from this being worse but she had figured that it had should have helped more than this. As she and the elf walk the single path that was still present that led to the end of the room Jessica heard shouting which made her race to the end quickly.

Again she had to pause as she saw civilians, this time not possessed, but lock into a large cage. Man, women and children where all reaching across the bars pleading with them to get them out, which a Crusader was currently doing. This scene broke her heart this was all so too much.

The elf suddenly snapped her out of it, "I will head up again and tell the others to setup another gate spell for the ones below, I'll also see if more cannot be setup to speed up this process."

Jessica was very appreciative of their help, "Thank you, and please do so." Once again she turned around, those now being freed could be easier escorted upstairs to the gate and freed but all the others, it would take so much time and that made her wonder if they had it. At any point in time if they tried to resist there would be nothing that they could do about it.

Alexandria had casted a few spells on Anna already and was currently dragging her in the air with her with Iris leading the aerial charge. "So

how I'm I suppose to control this?"

"Think of it like using your wind magic in order to control the direction you want it to blow, except in this case you are controlling your own position. It may be tricky at first but I'm sure you will get the hang of it quick."

Anna quickly tested it out and overcompensated and moved a bit too much to the left and then to the right while still climbing upwards. "Okay I think I understand, that said wont this blow the secret I wanted to keep?"

Alexandria shrugged, "Not really..." She then pointed at Adam still on the ground, "You think that Iris is not controlling part of the spell that they practiced last night, because I can tell you that she is. So if anyone else asks I'll just say the same, plus something tell me we may need you up here so it's worth taking that chance."

Anna still did not want to spill the beans on the change to everyone, she still did not know why exactly but something told her that it was for the best to wait on it at this time, so anything that may put that at risk did not put her in the best of position. Still there was no reason to doubt Alex and her logic so she let it go and focused on what was up ahead.

Looking up Adam was now ready, he casted the spell and aimed right behind one of the wings but as soon as he appeared the angel moved away. Still he was in striking position so Adam still took the opportunity to hit his back with a sideways slash. The cut had hurt him as the enchantment had worked as expected but as soon as the angel turned to counter attack Adam was gone and back on the ground.

With the back turned Iris and Alex figured that now would be a good time for a combine attack, Iris casted a large wind spell to keep him

unbalanced and Alex summon lighting to hit him directly. This combination of attack had less effect than Adam's as while the heavy wind did force him to move he was still clearly in control of his movements, as for the lighting somehow he had erected an arcane shield to protect himself from it.

Not feeling too discouraged Alex stopped and powered up a large version of it while Anna charged in with her glowing green sword. She did not have any intention of hitting him which was good because he easily avoided her, but the move did force him to move in a certain direction which caused both Adam and then Alex to try and hit him with another blow. This time mind you the angel moved clear of Adam and once again erected a large shield to defend against Alex magical attacks.

From the ground view things did not look to be going to good, and the range of the battle was far too much for Mike. "Can your holy arrows hit him from this distance?"

Rosa nodded, "It can but the power behind it will be very weak, so much so that there would be little point to even block it."

Catherine looked up, "They seem to be having difficulty, more so than was planned."

Sadly he had to agree, "Well it can't be too surprising, still there is some good news with all this as he did not just vaporize us and I'm pretty sure they will think of something." They both did not say anything as he looked up and watched Anna and everything else that was happening.

They had been at it for a little while and the current situation was frustrating everyone. So far it's not like this want-to-be avatar did not have the power, because it was clear that he did, but nothing that he casted felt overpowered. What still felt very unfair was that somehow he was responding to all of their attacks at the same time

in some cases. It's then that Anna started to wonder, it did not seem like he was casting some overpowered spell but maybe he was and they simply did not realize it. His counters were so on the mark that it had to be something magical about it, maybe something to tell him their moves before they made it and that was why combo move and single ones were just not working and if that was the case how far could he see? It's then that Anna thought of a chain attack to test it out.

She flew next to Alexandria, "Alex I need you to go to Adam and cast a defensive spell shield around him, while you're doing that tell him to watch for my signal while he still attacks, it should be easy to spot. Then I want you to do a lighting blow like you did with that large golem." Instantly Alexandria winced at the idea, "Don't go full out just one or two circles only."

It was clear that she was still not thrilled about the idea, "Okay sure but the way he's countering I'm not sure that will work."

Anna smiled, "That's fine just make it look good but don't go overboard." That last part made her wonder but she stopped questioning and did as she was asked by teleporting next to Adam's location.

In order to keep the pressure up Anna forcefully attacked the angel in a semi wild pattern, again none of her blows hit but she did launch a few less powerful blasts at him that he simply took and left to his regeneration to heal out. This left Iris who was also doing her best but no matter what she did it was countered or evaded. Plus now that Alex was gone he had time to counter attack with some fire magic targeted at her, forcing her to call up a holy shield to defend herself.

Overall it's not that he was hurting them but it was clear that he had an advantage over them and

there were no signs of him letting go of that advantage anytime soon if they continued this way. When Anna saw that Alex was now in position back in the air she hoped that her plan would work but before that there was still one tricky part left to implement. She powered her enchantment as much as she could making it go to a very light green glow and then she put herself between Iris and the angel blocking Iris out of the combat and then charged at him.

Iris wondered what the heck was going on, sure Anna was new at aerial combat but to make a mistake like that had to be purposeful so she decided to hang back for a bit and watch things unfold.

Anna screamed as she charged at the angel. The angel had a human looking face, it had eyes, nose and mouth but no hair or eyebrows and generally his expression was very neutral. Still with this charge Anna could see that there was a bit of a puzzled look on his face. Having made herself such a target she was easily countered with a large gust of wind that sent her flying back, as that happened she let lose the enchantment of her blade. Throughout this combat never did they let go of a truly powerful one and now so high in the sky there was no need to worry about extra damage. The blow did seem to surprise him as instead of raising a shield her purposefully launched something at it to make it explode before it reached him. While that was disappointing it still told them that something that big was not something he wanted to block and the resulting explosion did send him forcefully down a bit.

Quickly as she could Anna moved away and then shouted, "Now Alex!!"

This frustrated Alex, while she had been able to cast the spell during the attack of Anna

somehow the angel had casted a stream of holy bolts around her. Forcing her to try and keep the spell up but also defend herself from it. At this time only one circle had been powered and she knew that was not going to be enough but she still let it fly at the target. Knowingly understanding the strength behind the spell the angel forcefully braced himself in the air and extended his hand forward and casted a shield to block the spell. It was good to see that it took his focus to do so but it was clear that he was also going to be successful in doing so as well. But then his eyes went wide and he quickly jerked his body sideways.

"Not fast enough..." Adam suddenly appeared once again behind him next to one of the wings. The truth of it was that the angel had been fast enough in reacting to his attack as Adam had only been able to cut the tendon off of the base of the wing and not the whole thing, still this was a blow and probably the first one as finally the angel shouted at them for the first time.

"You INSINGIFICAT worm, you dare attack my wings?"

The look of anger on his face made Adam smile, "From ant to worm, does that mean I've gone up in the world?" He then teleported again but then it was him that was surprised by what happened next as the angel hand reached out and grabbed him by the waist as soon as he appeared at the location that he had targeted. Now with the size of the angel it's not like his single hand could completely wrap all around him, but the grip was so strong that Adam could not get away, but then he wondered if he even wanted too.

A few seconds passes and the angel had a creepy smile on his face and Adam started to wonder. "You though you would wrap back, no that spell was canceled as I caught you and so was

that floating spell. I would not want your dead corpse to slowly fall." Instantly Adam whole body was engulf by a ball of flame.

Rosa screamed, "ADAM!!!" but then she stopped as he heard laughter coming from the flame.

"Yea your right I did not see that, but someone did." There was no way that Adam could escape with even his enhanced strength but his arms where not pinned down and nor was his sword. Quickly as he could as he had no clue how long Alexandria's spell shield would last, he trust the blade in the angel wrist which forced him to let go, sadly he also had to let go of his sword in the process.

"Let the fall kill you then, here is some help." Adam felt a strong gust of wind push him down.

"Talk about my death all you want but there is no way that will happen, as I still have to convince Rosa to marry me." He then used his magic to wrap up.

Anna quickly looked at Alex, "But that's not going to work is it?"

In the little time he had Adam used his enhanced speed to cast again, "And even then, I'm still going to keep on going because I want to spend that time together making her happy for one." Before he was suppose to reappear in his previous location he had time to cast the spell once more and move again higher.

Anna once again looked to Alex who simply shrugged, "There is nothing that says the spell can't work that way... It's just never been done before."

Adam continued to move around like this but the angel also continued to follow his movements, "You think this will work? Fine how will you deal with this?" Then the angel warped himself in a

flaming red ball of fire protecting his body and the base of his wings with fierce fames.

Adam could only smile and targeted his final destination.

Rosa could not believe him, "No Adam don't... Don't you dare do this to me again."

Adam reappeared in the flames and as he did two small blades of white holy magic appeared in his hands as he slashed at the wings, cutting it off. In anger and pain the angel screamed then the flames around him intensified.

"BUUUUURRRRN!!!!"

The shield that was cast around him was failing and he was starting to burn but then his spell instantly took him back to where he was away from the flames, and then he started to fall like a rock to the ground.

Anna glanced at Alex, "Get him." As she quickly nodded and teleported away Anna watched as the angel started to slowly drop from the sky. Not wanting to stop with the pressure she used her blade to bombard the angel, but at the same time made sure to stay between him and Iris during the process.

Alexandria appeared next to Adam and grabbed him, "So what was the idea there screaming all of that while you bounced around?"

Adam shrugged as he padded the flames away from his burning clothes, "I was just reacting in the moment." As they landed on the ground he quickly looked at her, "You think that she minded?"

Alex was going to answer with something but then she saw a very pissed off Rosa run their way, "A bit, maybe..."

She moved away from him as Rosa angrily shouted at him, "After all this and everything, you go and do THIS? How many times must I tell you

to not go off and try and kill yourself? HOW MANY ADAM?!?"

Adam quickly shook his head, "No, no, no, no, this is not that at all. I was never doing that, Anna knew to ask for the shield and I knew that it would hold long enough for me to do what needed to be done. I figured I may get hurt, but I also knew that it would not kill me." He then looked directly in her eyes, "Rosa, please believe me, what I said there is true. There is no way that I'm letting myself die anymore, that me is dead and this me only want for you to be happy and to be with you." He then had a weak smile, "And well, I can't do that if I'm not around right? That's also what you have been trying to tell me all along, and I've just been too stupid to see it."

There was a few tear coming from his eyes but part of him wondered if it was because of what he was saying or because Rosa was crying too. "I swear, I don't want to make you cry anymore, and I'm so sorry for all that times that I did and I wish that I could take it back..."

He then stopped talking as there was a small whisper of a word that came out of her mouth "...Yes..."

Adam was suddenly confused, "Ah ... what?"

Rosa placed her hand around his face and look in his eyes, "...Yes, I will marry you."

Adam was speechless and Alex was stunned but it did not stop her from reacting, "WHAT!? seriously, like this? Rosa, are you sure?"

Rosa chuckled but still gazed at Adam, "I am Alex, I am." She then proceeded to kiss him on the lips and at the same time cast a healing spell on him.

Catherine was next to Mike but was looking at the exchange, "Okay, that's it, I've made up my mind, and you are all insane."

Truthfully Mike was happy for the two and he knew that everyone else was going to be as well, plus it was a long time coming. "I would like to argue that but given the situation I'm not going to try." He then pointed at the still slowly falling angel, "I should be able to hit him now, so if you can join with your arrows as well."

Catherine casted a holy bow, "Okay but again the power behind will still be an issue."

Mike launched a blast in the direction of the angel, "Its fine, power is not really needed now anyways if I assume her plan correctly."

Anna was still focused on then angel and trying her best to keep it busy but there was only so much that she could do and now was not the right time, but then a smile appeared on her face as she saw the angel move elsewhere in order to avoid a large red ball of energy. Soon after he was assaulted with arrows which made his turned and look down, "Stay out of this!"

As fire erupted from the ground around Mike and Catherine she casted a holy shield to protect them. Its then that Anna put her hand behind her and signaled Iris to get ready. Still casting his holy pillar of flame with his hurt hand, Anna once again charged at him.

"Will you just stop?" With his other hand now in the shape of a long red sword that had grew after Adam had cut it off, he sliced at the air. Anna saw it for what it was as a magical blade of wind coming at her, and she figured that if she let it hit it would cut her in half. Not wanting for that to happen she attacked it with her enchantment which again resulted in an explosion knocking both of them apart.

The angel stopped his casting on the fire spell and once again tried to rebalance himself. This was a bit of a difficult task with only one wing left, but

when he was finally able to do so his eye went wide.

"You know I'm the one that always casts his sword enchantments and while I did not cast that one, I did promise that I would learn it." Iris took her blade and sliced at the remaining wing, the enchantment that she had put on her blade to cut anything for its next blow did not disappoint as it and the angel started to then fall to the ground.

Anna moved next to her, "Good job Iris."

She smiled, "Thanks, I knew that something was up when you constantly kept blocking me."

They then both started to move down quickly in order to join the others, "My idea was to chain as many attacks as possible to tax the spell he was probably using to block all our attacks, I figured that you would have the best way to take advantage of whatever opening that it created when it did."

Iris was going to comment but then Alex raced at the both of them, "Iris, Iris, you're not going to believe it but..." She then turned and pointed and Rosa and Adam simply smiling at each other and after a little while she once again turned to the both of them with a confused look on her face, "She said yes!"

It took a second for both of them to catch on to what she was referring too but when they did large smiles appeared on their faces and Iris then suddenly ran at the both of them and proceeded to hug both of them, "I'm so happy for the both of you."

"Well I should have expected that reaction from Iris really..." She then looked at Anna, "But still, I'm mean was this really the best time?"

Anna gave laughed at her comment, "Is there ever a good time for any of us?"

Alex felt defeated and was going to comment

but then had to turn around as she felt extreme heat coming from the back. They both turned to see the angel slowly glide down on the ground with a large fire shield around him, "You will all burn for what you have done to me."

The General quickly glanced up at the sky, "Seems that your angel was grounded and I'd like to point out that your superior army is not doing so good as well."

William grinned at the General, "Are you implying might make right?"

"Not at all, I'm just pointing out that you were wrong about your army and maybe wrong about other things." Before William could reply the General then moved forward and with his large sword and swung at him with a horizontal cut. The blow was a bit telegraphed but it still left William with little options. Due to the General's extra strength William avoided the blow by dropping low and while the General's blade passed over him he took his own blade and counterattacked.

The General was happy that William had reacted in one of the few predicted manners and also that his counter was aimed at a predictable spot, which was his leg. In response the General repositioned his leg so that the blow would only cause a minor wound but would also force William to lean in closer in order to make that blow count. As William took the bait in order to score the hit, the General then used one of his hands and reached for William's head. Instinctually William flinched away in order for the General to not be able to reach him, but that was never the goal and by the time Williams realized it, his eyes went blind by the lights spells casted by the General.

Unable to see clearly William instantly backed

away, normally the General would followed up with another attack but instead he took the time to heal his wound and more importantly send a signal to Rebecca for her to start phase two of the attack.

After a quick confirmation the General once again turned his attention to William, who it seems tried to taunt him. "You're getting old General, the younger you would have finished the fight then and there instead of patching himself up."

There was a bit of a shrugged as the General went back in a defensive position, "Well I have to be able to keep up somehow. Still if I'm so out of touch why am I still standing, does that mean that you are that pathetic?"

William once again charged and focused on the General again, playing once again in the General hands.

Alexandria signed, "I guess it was too much to ask for him to crash and burn as he landed on the ground right?"

By now everyone had gathered closer, "Seems like it." Then Anna looked to her side as Rosamia attached her spear on her back and moved closer to the angel. She was about to say something but then Rosa turned to everyone and gave them a small smile. "Let me see what I can do."

Catherine was lost, "What can do you think you can possibly do all alone against that?"

Alex then suddenly smiled, "Oh wait... Rosa can use all of holy again, this should be interesting." Catherine was still very confused but the others did not seem to share in her confusion.

The angel pulled out Adam's sword and threw it away, "Enough of this." With his hand he commanded a wave a fire to envelop Rosa, confusion then appear on his face as Rosa

continued to walk towards him unaffected by the flames. "Fine..." Then he commanded a barrage of holy bolts to land on top of her but again she moved forward, still unaffected but then he noticed something odd. He had expected her to use of shield of sort around her but the shield was also burring red and not golden as you would typically see from a holy shield spell.

Rosa was brimming with power at this point and all she had used was a cleansing spell. What was different about hers is that she had learned a long time ago to use the spell in order to drain the committed energy of the spells casted and to take it in herself in order to rechanneled it for her own spells. This was a trick that she had used many times against Dark Clerics and also the lord of darkness himself, over time she had seen that this trick did not just work on dark magic but also holy and she assumed arcane. The interesting drawback with it was that often time spells casted using the energy stolen would take on certain visible properties of the one she had stolen it from. In this case it seems that everything would glow red and flicker a bit like a small flame and that held true as she casted a holy spear as it shaft appeared red and the tip was flaming a bit.

She took the spear and raced in the angel protective fire aura all the while stealing his energy and feeding it to the shield that she had casted around herself. The angel moved away but then once again had a confused look on his face as he saw Rosa move quickly enough to counter his movement and hit him squared on his side. The blow caused a large wound but with his healing was already starting to close it. Still Rosa was not done as she flipped her spear and aimed for his leg scoring another hit.

The angel then intensified his fiery aura

around him in order to force the shield to break and to burn her alive, but Rosa knew that there was no way that would happen for as long as she could steal his energy then she would have power to feed to the shield to keep it up. Still she could feel how immense his power was and her attacks would not cut it, so she took even more energy from him and powered another spell. At this point there was so much of his power coursing through her that her eyes turned red, thinking that was her limit Rosa unleashed a pillar of not fire but lava at his feet.

Rosa focused a large chunk of power in that spell and kept it up for a few moments and then stopped the channel. The ground around him was all black and while he was kneeling he was still quite alive. "I see what you are doing now, who would have thought that you would be a true nuisance to me." He then stood, "Still there are limits yes."

It's then that the sky turned black and lightning came crashing down on Rosa, this was something her shield could protect her from but at the same time large chunks of ground were being flung at her and there was no way for her to absorb that with her spell. Still the speed enchantment magic that Adam had taught her a long time ago was still active and helped her avoid those but this combat had suddenly bumped up a few levels.

Their back and forth continued and with that fire aura around him there was little any of the others could do. Alexandria and Iris did try and cast a few spells and while some did land the larger ones were countered still.

Catherine was stunned, "How can she do this?"

Adam moved in, "It's something she figured out by pushing herself when fighting others that

where using dark magic. It's been a while but because of it she's stood toe to toe with Dark Clerics, undead dragons and avatars."

It still made little sense to her, "Then can we not all do as she's doing?"

Adam shrugged, "I think in the past she mentioned that it could be doable but there is a block that needs to be removed or something, also in her mind the only candidate that maybe able to perform this was Lady Jessica, she never mentioned anyone else."

This frustrated Catherine to no end and Mike could understand why, still considering how the fight was going that would have to be pushed aside. "As good as she's doing at best she will only be able to keep up, we need something more. Catherine, Alexandria is there no way to break that fire shield around him?"

Alex quickly chimed in, "Well I could shield you but that has limits as for dispelling it, I can't think of a way using arcane. I mean because he is constantly fuelling the spell you would need to break it up in one shot with equal power, then that would force him to recast it which then we could possibly do something but..."

A thought then occurred to Catherine, "Holy could manage that feat but I would need to be defended."

Now it was Iris turn to be confused, "How, there is no survivable holy spell that strong."

Catherine had a faint smile, "There is child, but short of the late Joseph and myself no other member of the Order has been able to cast it."

Happy to have good new Mike nodded, "Well if it will work, Alexandria if you could..."

Alexandria stopped her attacks and moved next to Catherine, "Please keep in mind the drain of these shield." Catherine nodded and wondered

the same on the spell that she was about to cast.

With the magical shield around her Catherine moved closer and started casting as well, the spell was a long one compared to all other holy spells and eventually Catherine pulled both hands close and then squeezed them like she was holding the hilt of a sword. It's then that a large golden blade appeared. The blade was as tall as a person and a whole foot wide, once the blade was fully casted Catherine ran at the angel.

Its then that Alexandria got a message from Lithius in her head, *'Alex, whatever spell was casted I would strongly recommended not to do so again.'*

This suddenly worried her, *'How bad is it?'*

'We cannot keep up but we are slowing down the overall drain but if things like this are casted again it will no longer be manageable.'

'I understand.' This news worried Alex as now their time was quickly running out.

Both Rosa and the angel stopped as they saw Catherine approach with her large holy sword, part of it reminded Rosa of the spear tip of the Valkyrie spell and part of her wondered if there was a link.

Now close Catherine sung the blade down and it quickly connected with the fire shield and as it did the shield exploded and shattered. The angel was stunned as he felt the spell instantly cancel when contact was made, quickly as he could he reinforced his sword weapon that he had created and blocked the continuing incoming blade.

"Impossible..." was the only word that came out of his mouth as his blade shattered like it was never there and then the holy sword sliced into him. The cut went across his shoulder and as deep as his chest and the pain it caused him reminded him of the pain that he had felt when he had challenged the lord of darkness avatar. He

struggled to find the power and focus and eventually he did and then casted a spell that pushed the both of them far away from him.

As both Rosa and Catherine where thrown backward and the blade dissipated the angel slowly regained his focus. "To think that you worms would have been given access to such a spell by the lord of light..."

His words confused Alex, "Wait, what?"

Mike looked at her as it was odd for her to be confused with things like this but before he could ask anything all attention was turned away towards a regiment of Crusaders lead by Rebecca coming their way. "We are here to lend our assistance, you no longer fight alone."

While this felt like good news to all, the angel did not seem to react to any of it. "Impressive but still how will you fair without all of it?"

He then raised his arm and instantly tones of warning spells alerted Alex, "Iris, bail now..."

Iris quickly turned to Alex but she was already gone via teleportation spell, she was about to follow suite but then the angel hand slammed on the ground and then the spell activated and then she knew that it was too late.

A large wave starting from where the angel had hit the ground expanded and blew across the whole battle field, reaching the church and even continued past that. The first to know of the effect where the casters, as instantly they lost all effects on them and also their connection to the holy and arcane power. Iris turned to Mike, "We're cut off from our magic."

Mike focused on his blade and got into a defensive position while the angel stood once more and again casted his fire shield around him.

The General had his blade locked in with William when the wave hit them all. He instantly knew of its effects and there was a bit of dread that formed within him, but then he saw the look of terror in William's eyes and smiled at the realization of what had really happened. "He's taken away your powers as well. Clearly shows how much your lives actually mean to him."

William was furious but also a bit unhinged from the looks of it, "Not again, not this again... I am done with this, and your incessant taunting." He then pulled back his blade and trust forward with it. The General tried to avoid it as much as possible but really as long as it hit nothing vital he cared little as for once he agreed with William and this needed to end.

The blade hit his side, the blow was deep but not life threatening, and with him so close the General dropped his weapon and grabbed William in a chock hold. William dropped his sword and started to reach for something else, but the General kick the back of his knees forcing him to drop as he kept hold of him. "Don't worry William, you're not going to die here, there are too many questions we need to ask you first." and with that William went limp.

The General gently put him on the ground and started to bandage his wounds as he looked around to take measure of the new situation. Overall most of both armies had been depowered from the looks of it but there was still some on both sides that had access, lucky their side looked to have a bit more than theirs. It's then that he saw Rob move towards him surrounded with a few Crusaders. "Where you affected as well High Priest Robert?"

He nodded, "Yes and so where most of the Order, there are still some that have access and

I've ordered them to help the Crusaders that don't."

"That should help keep our numbers high." He then thought of their next move, "If you can take a group of Crusaders and head to the church and see if High Priestess Jessica needs help. I'm not really sure how she was planning on moving those people but I'm assuming it's using magic and depending on the situation her task maybe that much harder."

Rob looked at the direction of the church, "Agreed that does sound like a good idea, may I ask what you will do next?"

Once again the General looked around, "Ideally focus on taking the rest of them that have powers, once that's done it will free up the Crusaders to help quickly finish the others and then we can see about what is happening with the angel. I've already sent a group over but now I wonder if they will be more of a nuisance then help."

"We can only do what we can do General."

The General nodded, "Very true, very true..."

"Now let's get rid of the new pest that just showed up."

As the angel rose his hand at the location of where all the Crusaders had shown up they could only stare as there was nothing that they could do as a bolt of lightning made its way towards them. But there was one person that was on the move, Catherine quickly moved between the angel and the Crusaders and took the effect of the bolt of lightning on her, which was then blocked by a holy shield that had suddenly appeared.

"HOW!!!"

Catherine matched the furiousness of the angel, "BY OUR WILL!!!"

The angel quickly casted another bolt and then a pillar a flame at her but once it dissipated there was not a scratch on her, "Never again will be at the mercy of creatures like you, never again will we be left helpless by another's magic, NEVER AGAIN!!"

Its then that Alexandria suddenly reappeared next to Mike, "I'm sorry the only thing I could do is get away so to not be affected as well."

"There is no need to apologize Alexandria but I need to know more."

"The spell depowered everything and also is coating everything preventing outside sources to power up any magic. In her case, it's the sphere that is kicking in because while it's an outside source it's also shielded and pressed against her."

If that was the case then they really did not have much time before Catherine would be depleted. Mike turned to the only weapon he had, "But I can still power my blade?"

Alex nodded her head, "Your enchantments feed off your own stamina and ultimately your life force, so you should be able to create a glow around it but you will not be able to create a range attack as his spell currently overlaps it. Plus it should have other limits on it because of the spell's effects."

"I can work with that, can you create a shield around me and also can you remove this effect on the others?"

Anna instantly then moved in next to him, "You're not going alone..."

Alex had bad news for them, "I can remove the effect and I can create a shield around you but not both... This fight is not over and pretty soon it will not matter if we had access to holy powers or not."

They both understood what she meant but they could also see that Catherine was running out

of time and there was not much that anyone else could do because of that shield around him. "I'm sorry Anna you take command while I play decoy, and Alexandria try and remember that thought that you had before he cast that spell."

With hesitation Alex cast the shield spell around Mike and he instantly charged in forcing his sword to glow red, then pink, then white. Anna slowly shook her head, "I knew it..." She then looked at Alex who did look tired but also a bit puzzled as she looked at Mike's blade, "What was that last comment about?"

It took a few seconds but then Alex perked up a bit. "Oh yea, when he did not know about that blade spell it made me realize something." She then looked around, "Quick lets head to the others."

Catherine block the last of the lighting blots and deep inside her she knew that the next spell that he cast would not be blocked as the sphere did not hold enough power. Still she stood firm as he pointed his hand at her, and she saw that he knew as well that this would be the spell that did it. She took a deep breath and then saw a flash of white.

Mike rushed into the flaming shield and swung his blade at his hand casting the spell. With the enchantment at the level that it was there would be nothing that could stop it from cutting its target. While that was good he felt a lot of resistance that normally he did not feel, he assumed that it was because of the spell that had been casted. This would limit his time like this but then again with the shield up his time was very limited anyways.

He tried to stay close to the target as possible, it was not damage that he was looking for but more annoyance to keep him occupied while the others

figured out how to hopefully end this. And so with that he aimed for quick cuts as he moved around the angel. Because of this small bots of lighting erupted around angel, there was no point in trying to avoid it because he could not so instead he plunged his sword in his body and let the shield take the hit that it already would. This caused his target to be infuriated more which caused a volley of small bolts of light to assault him, he tried to avoid as much as he could but there were too many. That spell made Mike curse, as those spells hurt very little but would still dwindle the shield power overtime and that was not what he needed protection from. In order to try and make the angel react more and think less Mike aimed his swings at something else, his precious wings that by now had mostly re-grown. This made the angel avoid more than attack, which bought Mike more time and more importantly the others.

"There is still so many..." The elf looked at Jessica, "True less than half have been transferred but let us be fortunate that all the ones on the first floor have already been moved, considering our new situation this would have been that much harder."

Jessica nodded; she too tough it fortunate that whatever spell had been cast had missed all of them that had been below ground. Some had still been affected but most were still okay. It's then that both their attention shifted to the door as a new person showed up.

"Jessica, are you still okay..." He then paused as he saw what was before him, "Horrendous, truly and all used to simply power him?"

Jessica moved closer, "So it seems and yes I still have my powers and so do some other from

the Order that accompanied me, how goes it outside?"

"The General is taking over but the wave hit a lot of his men and most of mine. So if you can send yours to help him out. As for the others I have no clue, but I am assuming that they could use your help so with that I will take over your duties here."

Jessica hoped that things were not as dire as she assumed but the cancelation of magic around must have been a turning point for one of them.

"Okay, I'll leave this to you. Good luck."

Rob nodded, "To you as well."

Iris and Rosa quickly gathered around Alex and Anna and as soon as she was close Alex put her arm around Iris and started to cast a spell. "I'm sorry I was not quick enough, if I only saw it sooner than you would not have to do this."

With the removal spell casted Alex moved back, "Its fine for now, so don't worry about it." She then pointed at Catherine, "Now go do the same to her and also fill up that thing of hers while you are at it."

Iris nodded, "Alright then I'll jump in and help out..." Alex then cut her off, "No then you come back here I'll need you for the next step." Iris did not question it and then moved away.

Alex then made her way to Rosa and wrapped her arms around her as well. While she did that Anna need to know, "I'm assuming you have a plan in mind from that last comment?"

With the spell finished Alex pulled back again, "I do but I'll need Iris and I'll also need you Rosa." She then looked at her, "Can you cast that blade that destroyed that fire shield?"

"Maybe, but why not simply ask Catherine?"

Alex quickly shook her head, "I can't there is

not enough left to handle another spell like that, or so I was told by Lithius. So it needs to be you, using his power, so can you do it?"

Rosa thought about it, "I think I can yes, but it will take time to absorb that much power and with everyone else out of commission."

Alex slowly nodded, "Yea that's actually not the only issue believe it or not."

It's then that Anna turned back and saw a figure running in their direction, "Maybe she can help?"

Now closer Rosa moved to greet her, "Jessica? What are you doing here?"

"I was told that you may need help, seeing as I was unaffected by whatever happened."

Anna smiled and so did the others, "I take it that you can handle yourself in a fight?"

Jessica nodded and took out her mace, "There was no way that Kyle would let me be here by myself if I couldn't"

Mike saw his shield start to glow around him as it took another spell. He knew what that meant meaning that he probably had one or two more swings left. Overall he had done well and removed one of the two wings again but once he had done that the plan backfired and the angel redoubled his effort to try and kill him which used up the shield power all that more.

"Let try a combination..." It's then that a volley of bolts hit him with lightning and with the added constant damage from the fire shield his shield shimmered for one last time. Instantly he crumbled at the pain that the fire shield was causing him but to his surprise it did not last long as he felt a hand touch him. "You have done enough; now move back to the others."

Mike once again stood to see Catherine with a holy shield large enough to cover him and her. They started to move away from the angel fire shield but he was not going to let them go so easily. "No more of your constant running around."

A wave of flame then hit them, or more precisely her shield, at the same time lighting and volleys of holy bolts from behind. He moved in closer as they were both stuck in the shield that she had created. "I'm sure that I can defend us but when he gets close."

Mike then got ready and repowered his blade, which this time it only glowed pink, "When he gets close I'll see what I can do."

They did not have to wait long as the angel was nearly on top of them. He was about to move but then the ground that they were standing on started to quake apart. "Catherine we need to move..."

The spell was about to take shape and pretty soon they would both fall down but then a large hammer swung out at the angel canceling the spell and then Jessica moved in between them and hit the angel again square in his stomach pushing him back a bit.

With that opening Catherine turned to Mike, "Go now, we will keep him at bay."

Mike nodded and ran back to where the others where.

Iris was now with the others, "Okay so what is the plan, as I take it that you figured out something?"

She nodded, "I did..." She then pointed at the angel, "That is not an avatar that we are fighting but a daemon hopped up on a lot of life energy."

Anna then understood, "You plan on stealing

the energy back from him."

"Yes and no." She then turned to Iris, "Yes, that is the plan and no, I'm not going to do that because a long time ago I was locked out of using that spell again and simply did not take the time to learn of a way around that issue."

Iris had to smile, "Now you're happy that I've been avoiding casting it for so long even when you have instead that I do so."

"Yea yea yea, now get closer as I need to quickly teach you how to cast that spell." But then Iris stopped her, "There is no need I already learned it a while back." She then turned to the angel, "Still there are a lot of issues with this idea, I mean where will I transfer it? And also I'll have to be really close to him, like pretty much hugging him to do it I'm not sure he's going to allow me to do that."

Rosa then commented, "So that's why I need to break the shield, in order for her to get close."

Anna then jumped in, "But with the shield down can't we all try and simply pin him down?"

Alex wondered on that, "That could work, keep in mind that this process will take a while to execute, mind you on the up side the less power he has the weaker he will become."

Iris then cut in again, "Okay that's good news but what about the location of the transfer?"

Alexandria smiled, "That's where it gets fun, but also dangerous." She then reached for her pendant, "Lithius?"

"We are bit busy miss Alexandria..."

She figured as such, "On that, when I give you the word stop what you are doing. But before that I need you to lock it down so that no one will be able to access it anymore."

Lithius was confused, "What are you planning?"

"I'm planning on filling it up just with something else and I can't allow people to access it while that's happening."

He sighed deeply, "I will contact you when you can proceed." and then the communication was cut.

Iris then understood, "Okay but I can't do that part."

Alex nodded, "I know that's why I'll be doing that while you focus on the other."

Iris was puzzled, "Tandem casting, we have never tried that..."

A smile then appeared on Alex face again, "See... fun, what did I tell you."

Adam was looking around for something, currently everyone was huddled together so he assumed that they finally had an idea on how to stop this monster. The issue was that without his power there was little that he could do to help out, still there was another option.

Finally after too much searching he found his blade that the angel had carelessly thrown. He picked it up and tried it out quickly by stabbing it on the ground, there was resistance meaning that the enchantment had been effected as well but it was still extremely sharp which made him happy.

He was about to make his way back to the others but then a thought occurred to him and instead he made his way to the Crusaders that had come to help.

"Rebecca, mind if I ask for help with something?"

She looked at the ongoing battle with the two High Priestess and the angel, "I'm not really sure what we can do against that now that we can't really defend ourselves but if you have something

in mind I'm all ears."

Adam got closer and nodded at the same time, "Yea it's bleak right now but I'm pretty sure that things are being setup for the end game. Now so far he has yet to call for help but just in case can you order your fellow Crusaders to keep guard and prevent that?"

She shrugged, "Sure that sounds like a plan, but I have to wonder you said my fellow Crusaders, meaning you did not include me. Is there a reason for that?"

He smiled, "Actually there is, my next step, when the time is right, was to take my sword and put it in his body. Would you be interested in joining me in this activity?"

She gripped her sword hilt, "With everything that he did to me, yes, yes, I would."

'We are ready miss Alexandria.'

"Okay we are good to go, Rosa you're up."

Iris then stopped her, "Wait before you go, can you give me your spear, I think I have an idea."

Rosa reached for her weapon and gave it to Iris, "Hope it helps."

Iris nodded, "I'm sure it will, and good luck to you."

"Thanks." She then walked off to get close to the angel and his fight between Jessica and Catherine.

So far they had keep him busy but the fight was going poorly. Catherine put more power behind her shield as even large blots of lighting where casted at her. Before she could recover a large pillar of fire then appeared, she blocked it of course and moved away but then she was assaulted with barrage of holy bolts. All this forced her to move back from his shield in order to give

her time otherwise her own shield would break.

At that point Jessica ran in and slammed her hammer on the back of his knee; this unbalanced him but did not topple him. Before he could aim something at her as well she moved behind him and hit him square in his back. This did have an effect of slowing down the attack spell that he was currently casting on Catherine giving her a bit of a breather which was good, but it also got more of his attention and instantly a large gust of wind forcefully pushed her back. Before she could recover bolt of lightning made their way towards her forcing her to go on the defensive. Now this would not be so bad if during this time Catherine would be free to act but unfortunately she too was being pinned down with attack spells.

Jessica was starting to wonder how this would end, his power seemed endless and considering the amount of people that she had seen in the church wondered if it truly was at this point. But then the attacks stopped and the angel gaze turned to someone else.

"YOU!!! I was wondering why I my spells where not as effective. You need to be eliminated now."

They both grouped up as the angel moved away from them and made his way to Rosamia who was already incased in her own holy shield that looked more like a flaming shield. When the angel got close she collapsed the shield and formed it to wrap it around herself, like a second skin.

"That will not save you." The angel then reached out and grabbed her by the waist with both of his massive hands which had re-grown and then started to squeeze. "How much can you take before you pop priestess?"

Rosa focused a lot of the shield power around her waist but she also needed it to cover everything otherwise the fire around him would burn her

alive. All the while she had gathered as much of his energy as she could, and he clearly realized this and that was probably why he had chosen this tactic in order to get rid of her. Had he had done that earlier this could have caused an issue, but it was too late for that now. She took both her hands and raised them in the air like she was reaching out and grabbing something invisible.

"Blade of the Valkyrie, come to me."

The angel eyes went wide as he saw the spell for what it was and then he turned to Rosa and opened his mouth. A large jet of fire spewed out of it covering Rosa in it. Rosa held her focus on the shield and also the blade that was now visible to all.

Jessica pointed at the large three foot wide and nine foot long fire sword that had just appeared in Rosa hands, "What is that?"

Catherine was a bit stunned herself, "It's supposed to be a holy blade, but I've never been told that it could ever look like that."

Rosa turned the blade and swung down at her target. The blade instantly destroyed the fire shield and then continued to plunge itself in the angel chest and then popping out on the other side of him. The angel continued to pour fire on her as she pressed on and forced the blade deeper.

Everyone else looked at the spectacle of flame enveloping both of them. Adam then looked at Alex who was now holding on to Iris from the back hugging tightly. "She better walk out of that..."

Her voice was muffled because her face was pressed on Iris's back, "I'm sure she will."

Iris nodded at him, "Come on Adam, she just accepted your proposal there is no way that she is not planning on walking out of this." While she was confident about this, she could understand why he was worried as she too was wondering a bit. To

take her mind on that she casted a spell on the tip of the spear that she had borrowed from Rosa, "I'm ready Alex."

'Lithius, get ready. Once Rosa spell finishes we go in.'

'We are prepared.'

'Iris, I'll cast my last shield on you. I'll try and wrap it on both of us and that's why I'm like this. Once her spell is done I'll teleport us behind him and then simply focus on the transfer spell and I'll join in to give it the location of its destination. We will be unable to do anything else to defend ourselves so the others will have to figure something out while we do that.'

Iris suddenly smiled, *'I'm sure they will figure something out and really that's not the part that worries me.'*

She felt Alex chuckle, *'you'll be fine too no worries.'*

Rosa's spell was finally at its end but it seems that the angel was not done as fire still assaulted her from his mouth, and his hands were still squeeze at her waist and she figured that pretty soon another spell would be assaulting her. So she did the only thing she could do and used her cleansing spell to take on more energy, she was able to grab a bit but then suddenly everything cut off. She focused what she could on the waist which was the main issue, but then a spear tip came out of his chest in a downward angle and continued until it planted itself on the ground. From the side she could see that Iris was holding on to the shaft that now ran across his body with the tip anchored on the ground.

She tried to pry herself free but the angel would not have any of that, it's then that she heard a shout coming from the side. Adam with Rebecca where both charging, they both sung high and

aimed for the forearm, with both blade connecting they severed it. With only one hand holding on to her she was finally able to break free and moved back with the other two.

The angel tried to follow but then was locked in due to the spear, with his still working hand he reached out for it but then he paused. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!!"

He tried to shake Iris off but she held, because of this he casted a spell that caused the back of his skin to exhume fire. When he saw that there was a shield protecting her, he doubled his efforts.

Catherine moved close to Rosa, "Is this it for us is there nothing else we can do?"

Rosa turned to her and then looked at her chest, "Maybe not actually, take out that thing and hold it in your hand, I'll then grab on to it as well. Let's do the same thing as before so that you can help shield Iris and Alex." Catherine then looked around her and tried to, as inconspicuously as she could, grab the small sphere and remove it from her neck. Once done she put her hand down and Rosa reached out and grabbed it. When the connection was made to the both of them Catherine casted a holy shield around Iris and Alex and Rosa casted arcane spells after arcane spells to keep fueling it.

Alex was starting to get worried as she could feel that the shield's power was starting to dwindle but now with the extra one being casted on them those worries vanished. *'I knew it was the right thing to let her keep that thing, now to hope that everything is okay at the other end as well.'*

"This plan of her is completely reckless."

Lithius was still looking at the now half filled large sphere in front of him, now filled with a

glowing white substance that partially looked incorporeal. "Well considering her past idea this one is one of the better ones sadly."

Kilor was currently on the ground writing some magical runes around the pillar holding the sphere, "True as that maybe, this plan will fail if we do nothing."

Taeral nodded, "True, when you are done I'll reinforce the runes and try and stabilize sphere more."

Lithius then moved away, "I suppose I'll start the process of creating a temporary holder as I agree with your previous statement Kilor, I don't think that this will be big enough."

Kilor then stood, "Done... and yes this is filling up too quickly so let me help you with that and then you can help me in transferring some of it to it."

Lithius sighed, "Always a challenge with her..."

Anna and Mike continuously looked at the angel who had now shrunk in size and was getting closer to his original one when they had first seen him. "Something feels wrong..."

Mike focused his gaze and also thought about it more, "You think that he will try to magically escape?" Anna simply nodded.

They both then pulled out their sword and powered the enchantments, "Well then you take the left leg and I'll take the right?"

Anna smiled as they both charged at the angel, "Better plan than the other one you had going solo against him."

"Yea, sorry about that..."

They both reached their target and stabbed their sword in the angel leg and pushed through until the blade appeared on the other side and

then continued to push even more until it reached the ground. Then they locked themselves in place holding their weapons where they were.

This caused the angel to stumble forward but as he did the blades sliced his legs even more. He screamed at the pain that he was finally feeling. Seeing as they were not protected he expanded the spell that he was using on his back to his legs thinking that this would force them to move away. But then the holy shield that was protecting the ones in the back reversed itself and wrapped itself around him blocking the flames to both his targets. In a fit of rage he used his arms and started to physically assault Anna and Mike by pounding on or clawing at them.

Adam turned Rebecca and Jessica, "Can I leave it to you to take care of those arms?"

They nodded and charged ahead, Rebecca took her sword and stabbed it straight in his left shoulder severing two of the main ligaments. Jessica used her hammer and slammed it hard on the shoulder itself shattering it. Once the blows were struck they both moved away.

The angel screamed, "YOU WILL ALL PAY FOR THIS!!!"

Adam smirked, "Just give me two more strikes..." He then charged himself but as he got close he aimed high and slashed at the angel eyes rendering him blind instantly. "This is for trying to kill me." He then pulled back and then stabbed him in the throat, "And this is for trying to burn my future wife alive." This caused the angel to stop screaming and for whatever liquid he had inside of him to bubble up. Adam let go of his sword and then moved back as well.

By now the angel was very weak so much so that Iris used her body to push him down causing him even more wounds as she stole even more of

his life energy that he had collected from the others. At this point he was hardly putting up a fight with them and his spells where all starting to die out.

'Alex, I think we are done.'

She quickly checked, *'Yep I think you are right, stop your spell and pull back and I'll do the same.'*

Iris did as instructed and pulled back and also pulled out the spear, assuming that this action meant that they too could let go Anna and Mike followed suite as well.

With all the braces gone the angel fell flat on the ground, still alive but now bleeding to death as the wounds where no longer closing.

Rosa let go of Catherine hand as she moved closer to his body while still holding the sphere tightly in her hand. When she got close enough she casted a pillar of fire on his body and kept the spell going for as long as she could. Once done the only thing left were the charred remains of his body.

She then got even closer, "Angel my foot."

Catherine then raise her leg and stomped his head with her foot causing his head and the rest of his body to crack and fall to small burned pieced.

Chapter 8

A day and a half had past after the confirmed death of the angel Kausiphis and while this was good news it had still been a busy time for all members of the High Order because of it. Catherine thought back and a lot of that time had been spent preparing and making decisions on things that she completely agreed with, others that where necessary and some that she did not agree with.

Some of those decisions had to do with those still possessed, while the angel was gone his influence was not and those that had been effected where alive but unresponsive to the world. So the first priority was to setup help for those people which involved creating a place where they could rest while they waited for proper cleansing. While room was a bit of a problem the real issue was the cleansing itself, as the sphere powering their powers that they needed to cast the spell was out of commission due to Alexandria's plan. While Catherine was thrilled with the idea of being able to return was what stolen from her people it did leave a bit of a sour taste in her mouth that this had to come at the expense of what they needed in order to help them. This was being taken care of by mages of Astrum for the cleansing and also Kilor and a few of his aids for the transfer of life energy back to their bodies, or at least the approximate amount. Again all good news in her mind but still a bit sour as once again they needed help from others.

Catherine tried to put all this aside as currently she and the others of the High Order

where currently on top of a platform, once again in the auditorium, and this time there was no lack of people as the place was packed once again. She took a step forward and prepared for one of those necessary items.

"Thank you citizens of Missa for joining us today, as promise will explain all that we can. First let us confirm to everyone that the angel was in fact lying to us all. His main goal was to use our people and their beliefs and steal from them something very precious, their life energy, in order to empower himself more. The angel in the end was simply a daemon in a pretty disguise."

There was a lot of chatter and also lots of questions from people being yelled out instantly, Catherine raised her hand up high to signal them to calm down and then continued.

"Now those affected are being treated, but the process is slow. This mostly is due in part because of our powers, being returned, now needs to be focused on keeping that energy that was taken back from the daemon in a safe way so that it can be returned to those that have been affected, which is happening as we speak. That said some have retained the ability to heal and perform the previous services offered in case of emergencies. If this happens to you or someone you know, come to the main church and I will personally help you in order to show you the truth of this. As I mentioned in the past, no longer will our powers be taken from us and once again we can return to the duties that the Order was originally created for and that was to help heal others. But before we can do that we will need to help those that have been affected as that is our duty."

There were less shouted questions but the chatter was still present and there was still a few going at it. That had been expected but it was also

not for Catherine to deal with as she had another task to perform after this one that once again left a sour taste in her mouth.

"Please while there are other duties that I need to get too, High Priestess Jessica and High Priest Robert will stay and answer all questions you may have." With that Catherine took a few steps back and Rob took her place and already was starting the process. Before Catherine could leave Jessica moved next to her, "Please don't forget..." Catherine did not look amused, "Of course not the vote was clear and I will respect it."

It took a while to leave the auditorium's location due to the amount of people around but a few Crusaders and also the presence of Catherine herself help move people aside in order for her to pass. She did not mind this as it gave her time to think on how the next step would go but that time was fleeting as after clearing the large pool of people the rest of the way back to the main church of Missa was fairly quick. Once there she made her way to the top floor and then knocked on a door.

Rosamia's voice could be heard, "Come in."

Catherine opened the door to see that everyone in the group was present, "Ah you are all here..."

Alex teased her, "Well I mean you told us not to show up for that speech but did you really think that we would not listen to it anyways?"

"No I suppose not, and to do so you may as well be in the same room..." She then once again looked at Alex, "Still why are you still here, is there not enough work to do with all the people still affected?"

Her tone annoyed Alexandria a bit, "Sure you are right there is no shortage, but I can take break and I also need to in order to keep going strong to help you with this task... Why am I getting the impression that you don't want us here?"

Anna laughed a bit, "Because it's true." She then turned to Catherine, "I suppose you wanted to talk to Rosamia alone?"

Catherine shrugged, "Yes but I mean in the end it hardly matter I suppose as you will all know of it once I'm done."

Rosa was starting to wonder what all this was about, "Should I be worried?"

Finally there was a bit of a smile on her face, but for some reason that did not help with Rosa's concerns at all. "For the first part not at all, given the news of your engagement to a fellow Crusader," Adam being referred to as a Crusader also caused for a quick worried glance between the two of them as she continued, "We have decided to honor your event by inviting you to perform it here at the church of Missa... in the next three weeks...."

"WHAT!!!" Both Rosa and Adam where stunned and then it clicked for Adam, "Wait a second you plan on using this to help sweep all this away right?"

Catherine was already not pleased by their reaction, "Such a crude way of saying it. We simply wish to thank you for the services and help that you gave us and make this as memorable of a day as possible." Rosamia simply stared at Catherine who took a deep breath, "I suppose I need to admit that you are not completely of base in your thinking, but we did wish to thank you and make it memorable and as an added bonus it also allows the city to participate and think about something else than what has recently been happening." She then turned to Rosa with a sympathetic look, "I suppose that you can refuse, I will simply let the others know to cancel and not let the word out to the people..."

This time it was Rosa that sighed deeply, Catherine had essentially trapped her and she

knew it. While she could refuse it would be true that it would rob everyone of a potential positive event that they could focus on if they wanted too or needed to, which is something that she did not want. She then turned to Adam, who immediately answered before she could ask. "I'm sorry Rosa but I'll be of no help to you on this one, you know that I really don't care where it's done as long as it's done. I do care if you don't want to do it here, but I also know that you would not mind it and that you also would not care that our event was used like this if it could help others in the process."

Rosa answer was only a long sigh, which thrilled Catherine, "Its set then, excellent I'm glad that you approved of my request."

Rosa slowly nodded, "Of course, it was your request... I suppose I was owed that from way back when that I confronted the High Order with my own lack of choice."

This pleased Catherine as well, "I am so glad that you see it that way." But then she paused and the smile was gone and Rosa wondered again, "Wait you said the first part right, so there is a second?"

"There is, and this one is a bit more... complicated so I will just come out and say it. Rosamia you have been asked to once again join the High Order."

Rosamia was once again stunned but that was broken by Anna giving a quick jab on Mike arm, "Ha... I win."

Mike simply lowered his head which confused everyone but puzzled Adam more, "Wait? Win what? There is no way that you knew this was going to happen, no way at all."

Mike shrugged a bit, "Well it's no secret that the teams were split on purpose I'm assuming by now, and it's also not a secret as to why." He

looked at Rosa, "We simply wanted to give you a chance if you wanted to take it." He then looked at Anna, "But then we started talking and playing around with the idea of how far things could go, so your right Adam, we did not know but Anna was right as she did mentioned that the end result would be more then I had expected and so here we are."

Iris suddenly curious, "Okay so what did you win?"

Anna's smile was a bit mischievous, "That's something that going to stay between us if you don't mind."

Iris suddenly blush a bit while Rosa was still wrapping her head on everything. "I still don't get why." She then faced Catherine, "I know you don't want me to join so why ask?"

Catherine matched Rosa's gaze, "First because the vote was two against one, so I lost. Second, it's not that I don't want you to join it's that I fear that the same issues will once again reoccur. It's true that it's been a while since then, but when face with those that needed help it once again got very personal with you as it often does. While this can happen from time to time this seems to be an ongoing issue with you and in the High Order you need to rise above that sometimes, which as mentioned, is still something you struggle with in my frank opinion." She then paused for a moment before continuing, "I have been told to ask you myself because of our past issues, another vote that I lost, so I am doing so now. And in the spirit of that I will not stand in your way should you decided to take it, and I will agree that we do need the help and under certain circumstance you would be a great addition to the High Order as I thought before. But I will urge you to think about this properly this time as I think that the first time

around there may have been issues with that."

"How much time do I have?"

"Three weeks, or sooner if you come to a decision earlier that is."

There was a slow chuckle that came from Rosa, which worried Adam a bit. "Of course, it had to be three weeks... I must admit that the shoe does hurt when it's on the other foot."

Again Catherine shrugged, "Oh well, I have done what I needed to do and said what I wanted to say on the matter. I will add to really think about it, we will welcome you should you choose to agree but..." She then looked at everyone else, "It will mean leaving them behind again and also a change in the level of your priorities, again please keep this in mind as you think about it."

As she left Rosamia was at a bit of a loss and simply made her way to her bed and dropped on it. "Ah what I'm I going to do?" After a long moment of silence she then sat up as something occurred to her, "Wait, Alex, why are you silent about this?"

Alex thought carefully about this as everyone attention was turned to her, "Well... I mean, I'm not glad about all this talk of breaking up and I don't want it and I'm sure I'm not the only one. But just recently I was roped into the Council again and while I had little choice in it I also did not even try to fight it as well. So if this is what you want..."

Rosa could see that it was hurting her to say it because it was true she did not want it but she also would not stop her if that is what Rosa truly wanted. Rosa then looked at Adam who pointed at Mike and Anna, "Maybe you should ask them as they seem to have all the answers."

He was clearly dodging answering the question and she knew it but Rosa had to admit that she was also curious about it as well, so she turned to them. Mike hesitated for a while, "I... I think that

I'll let Anna answer this one." He had a wide grin and a pleading look on his face as she looked at him with pursed lips and mild disappointment. She slowly shook her head and then turned to Rosa, "I think that... maybe you should just forget about it for now."

Rosa could not believe it, "How can I possibly do that?"

Again there was mild disappointment but this time it was only shown internally and possibly only Mike would pick up on it. "Truthfully I don't want to tell you what I think as I want to you come to your own decision on this. I will give you a hit if you wish, I agree with Catherine and pretty much all she said but I disagree with her last comment as there are more options available to you, all you need to do, is clear your head of it all and I'm sure the answer will come to you."

She then stood up and took Rosa's hand and then Adam, "As for how you can possibly do that, that one I will answer. You are both about to live out a very important event for the both of you, I urge you to enjoy it to its maximum and to not trouble yourself with the other matter. Your future is important and you need to think about it but not at the cost of the present otherwise you will miss out and you don't want to miss this." She then looked at Mike and smiled, "Trust me on this one."

Rosamia took a deep breath, took a moment and looked at Adam with a warm smile, "She's right. This is ours, even if Catherine may want otherwise, and it's something we both want and need to enjoy for what it is."

Adam smiled as well, "I totally agree."

Iris smiled at the two, "I guess this bring up an interesting question. In order to help enjoy this, and also to help you with Catherine and her taking over, I'm sure that you will need help in the form of

a maid of honor and a best man right?"

Alex laughed at that, "Well I think one of those is obvious right?"

Mike sighed and turned to Adam, "We don't really need to fight do we?"

Adam chuckled, "Nope, not this time, plus you would lose anyways."

Mike was skeptical, "I'm glad... but I also disagree."

Both Iris and Alex then cut in, "Too bad we both wanted to see it this time around." It's then Adam stopped them as they were about to turn to ask the obvious question to Rosa. "As fun as that would be for everyone, don't just assume that it means that I'm picking him." He then turned to Mike, "Hope you don't mind."

Mike nodded his head, "The choice is yours, but I think that I'm not the only one curious now... who is your choice?"

Adam laughed, "Ha, there proof that you don't simply know." Mike simply sighed, if asked he would gladly tell anyone that he did not know everything so why Adam insisted on proving it whenever he could was something he wondered on but he said nothing and let him continue.

Adam then turned to Iris, "Actually it's you."

Iris was confused and so was Alex while others simply understood his choice and wholeheartedly approved of it. "Iris we have spent a lot of time together, and we have helped each other out quite a bit. I've also mentioned it before I see you like the daughter I don't have but more importantly I know that, excluding Rosa, you are the other person that has helped me the most get to where I am, and because of that I can think of no one better to be by my side for this event." Iris was already crying so he assumed he knew the answer but figured he would ask anyways, "So what do you say?"

Iris reached out and hugged Adam, "Of course I'll be there next to you, nothing would make me happier."

Alex was glad for Iris, after hearing that she too had to admit that it made perfect sense. She looked at Rosa, "So a bit of a twist there, should we expect another?"

Rosamia thought about it and given Adam decision gave an apologetic smile to Anna, who simply nodded in understanding. Rosa then turned to Alex, "Actually Alex, yes as I would like you to be my maid of honor." Alexandria looked ecstatic about the process and so Rosa continued with the other news, "And seeing as I have no one to give me away I would also like it if you escorted me down the aisle as well."

Suddenly Alex turned very cautious, "Wait a second, you're not asking me to do this because of what my dad did right?"

Rosa quickly explained before she got the wrong idea, "No, no, well maybe in part but the main reason is not to pay you back or anything like that. I ask you this because I want to thank you once again for the gift that you and your family gave me, and also want you to share in one of the happiest moment of my life which you help save." Rosa had a warm smile on her face as a few tears started to appear, "Please Alex let me show you the happiness your gift allowed me to experience by being there with me."

Alexandria was now in tears and she too stood and then proceeded to give Rosa a large hug, "...Well, when you put it like that... there's no way that I can so no can I."

Everyone simply watched the exchange and after a while Mike suddenly realized something, "Hey more time off for the both of us then."

Anna chuckled, "Seems like it." Then he had

another realization, "Oh and even better seeing as we are not officially part of the wedding we don't have to deal with Catherine as she as I'm sure that she will try and gain control of this event as much as she can." Anna then smiled, "So true so true..."

Alexandria suddenly turned and stared at the both of them, "You know... there is such a thing as bridesmaid and a groomsman you know, I'm sure Rosa and Adam can be convinced."

Mike raised both his hands up in defeat, "All good, I'll stop now, you win."

Iris then turned to Alex, "He is right we will have our hands full."

Alex shrugged, "Meh, I'm a veteran Council member and have more power then she will ever have, what can she possibly force us to do that we don't want to..."

Shivers suddenly ran throughout Rosa back and she felt that Alex had suddenly cursed them with that last comment. "Ah let's still try and keep a united front with Catherine and not go too far."

Iris agreed with that, "And on that note there are a lot of things to talk about." She then paused and looked trilled about something, "Oh I get to create dresses again."

Mike suddenly remembered the last one that Iris had created for Anna and had to agree that Rosa was in great hands with that particular task.

"So when do you want to start?" Rosamia thought about that one and then turned to Adam, "I know that both of you probably want to start now with this Iris, but I think that there are a few things that I wish to talk with Adam about first if you both don't mind?" She then looked at Anna, "I will try and do what you said but seeing as it's still all fresh there are a few things that I want to iron out before I put it aside."

Anna nodded, "That's perfectly fine and again

try not to worry about it as I'm sure the answer will simply come to you." She then looked at the current room, "You know on the topic of giving both of you time, why not flip with Mike and be in the other room with Adam... it will make things easier."

Mike quickly looked at Anna, "Not that I mind but don't you think that you are creating a particular problem with Catherine and maybe the other member of the High Order with this flip?"

A mischievous grin suddenly appeared on her face, "If any of them have an issue with this, send them my way I'll deal with it." She then turned to the newly engaged couple, "Think of it as my first gift to both of you for your upcoming nuptials."

Rosa quickly looked at Adam, "That sound like a plan, thanks, I'm sure it will help."

Anna then stood up, "No worries." She then turned to Mike, "Shall we there are a few things that we need to do right?"

He stood as well, "I suppose, sure..."

It's then that Alexandria stopped them, "Wait if you don't mind there is something I want to ask in private before you two leave."

Iris turned to Alex, "Ah, I mean I'm kind of curious too still but I don't think they will tell you..." Alex was confused for a moment and then remembered that bet between them and suddenly was very flustered, "No, no, no... geez Iris, even I have limits."

For some reason both Anna and Mike suddenly felt very happy to hear that as they always assumed but hearing it answered a certain question that they had in the back of both their minds.

Alex then pointed to Mike's sword, "I just have a few questions about that..."

Then Adam thought of something and then

unbuckled his enchanted sword and handed it to her, "On that note, this was damaged I'm assuming that it can be fixed?"

Alex took the scabbard and pulled out the blade really quick, "Yea that is destroyed... I'll see what I can do but I'm sorry to say it's not going to be a priority." She then stood proud, "I mean my main priority will be my duties as Maid of Honor but there is also all the people that I'm also helping seeing as holy is currently unavailable again. And in order for that to come back Kilor and the others dwarves need to finish transferring all the all the life energy which will take a while, especially considering that they took ownership of that task and are not keen on getting help for it for some reason."

Adam then stopped her, "I know its fine, just something to add to the list."

Alexandria put the blade back in the scabbard, "Well as long as you are okay with that, then sure I'll let you know when it's done." She then made her way to Mike and Anna and then saw that Iris was suddenly following, which was not too much of a surprise. "Ah you know Iris, if you can, could you go help out now... I'm sure that if we spend more time away than something will be told to someone and then that will be told back to us in a less then pleasing fashion I'm sure."

Iris wondered on the true reason she was sending her away but had learned not to always push on those things. "Sure thing, but don't take too much time."

Alex smiled, "I won't." And with that that the three left the room, Mike then looked at her, "Any particular place we should go?" Alex only grabbed his hand and then Anna's as well and all three vanished from the corridor.

They reappeared in Alex and Iris's living room

all the way in Astrum they looked at her with a bit of a surprised look. "I needed to drop his sword somewhere and this place is guarded for what I have to ask so why not?"

They both took a seat on the couch while she put away Adam's sword. She then made her way on the other end of the small coffee table in front of the couch and stood there pointing at Mike's sword. "So during the fight you managed to turn that thing white?"

This was not the best moment during the fight as Mike knew that it had angered Anna due to his action so he tried to answer as quickly as he could, "Well yes, but there was resistance so it was harder than expected, and not something that I was able to keep up for long. Why do you ask?"

Alex took a deep breath, "Because you really should not have been able too at all."

Anna had not expected that, "How so?" She then gave him a stern look, "While there was no way for me to join the fight due to the fire shield around him, I later tried and noticed that I was not able to reach that level myself. I thought it was simply due to my enchantment being trickier than his, are you saying that's not the case?"

Alexandria nodded, "That's exactly what I'm saying, and while I figured that the enchantment would work still there should have been limits because of the spell that he had casted." She then looked at the both of them, "So he's helping you out in your learning can you explain that to me, how that works? As you're not able to read magic still right?"

Mike nodded in agreement while Anna explained the process, "I first need to learn the basics of it myself, then I can explain that to him and then where he helps speed things along is when there is a combination of two items together,

he seems to have a knack for that that which helps me in turn when I get to that point in my studies."

Alex nodded, "Okay that seems to follow with my hunch, now for the final test." She grabbed a glass sphere and casted an ice spell in it, and then reached over and handed it to Mike. "Take this and smash it a feet away from the door, as you do try and think of a very complex shape."

Understanding her request Mike stood, made his way around and then thought of a figure and then when he thought he had a clear image of it smashed the sphere. What shortly appeared was a life size ice statue of Anna. Alex stood back a bit impressed, "Well that's something."

Anna also stood and looked at the statue, "Is it? I mean..." She then looked at herself, "It's not wrong?" Alex did a quick comparison between the two and smirked a bit, "Looks good to me."

Anna did another do over, "Hmm, I guess I need to look at myself in the mirror more." Mike then reached out and gave her a small kiss, "It's all good I have a constant eye on you."

She did not want to but the corny joke did make her smile, "Okay all that aside is this that special?" In order to answer her Alex prepared another sphere and gave it to her, "Try is out yourself and see."

Anna did the same thing of picturing an image in her mind and when it was clear shattered the sphere next to her life ice statue. The processed worked but it was easy to see that it was lacking in many ways. "Hmm, so no face detail and well no detail at all really..."

Alex did a quick inspection as well, "Yep, now it could be that you have issue with that, sadly I do, but I think it's something else." She then pointed to the couch again, "Let sit while I explain... oh first let's get rid of these before they

make a mess."

Once the statues were gone Alex sat in one of the one setter. "So let's take it from the top, Adam is able to use the warp spell, now I assumed it was because of his great teachers but... You are learning magic at an incredible rate, Rosa is learning quickly as well, Iris is a power house but I don't think that she has realized it yet and I'm trying to make sure no one else does but I don't think I'm succeeding at it." She then pointed at Mike, "And you while you still can't read magic or cast it, I think instead your power lies in being able to use it to its full capabilities. But it's limited to a spell already cast on an enchantment."

Mike understood where she was going, "And given my past good educated guess..." She then cut him off and had a teasing look, "Educated? From where, did you not tell me you did not have those books where you came from?"

Mike shook his head, "Fine, good guess then... but because of that it was less obvious that I too was being affected by what is affecting Anna, hmm, wait..." Anna then finished for him, "You're thinking that it's affecting all of us right Alex?"

She quickly nodded, "I am yes, again as I told you, I'm not worried about it but I am very curious of it and what it will ultimately do to us. But I also know that Kilor knows something, but I guess he's convinced that now is not the proper time to tell us."

Anna thought about that, "That would not be a new thing for the dwarves, would it?"

Alex shook her head, "No, not really. Anyways, I just wanted to confirm this, I'm sorry if I only ended up worrying you instead about this."

Anna smiled, "Actually I think you helped lessen my own worries about it. I was worried that it was something that was happening to me alone

which could mean different things but now that it's everyone, does it not prove even more your thoughts that this happened because of what happened to us in that Impregnable Tower?"

Alex stood, "I'm thinking so yes, now it's just figuring out what that is."

Mike and Anna both stood as well, "Well I know that we both have full confidence in your abilities Alexandria, and if we can help out somehow let us know."

"He's right, and in the meantime I'll continue the studies that you recommended and I suggest that you try and focus on the current events as well instead of being swept up in this mystery already we know more then when I told you about it, so again less worried, thanks for that."

Alex took both of their hands, "I do plan on enjoying the next little while and will try and put this aside as you requested for now." She then suddenly cheered up, "Okay now let's head back, if I take too long Iris will let me have it for the whole night."

"Probably something to avoid seeing as we are all in the same room now."

Alex nodded, "It is..." and with that they all teleported back to Missa.

As Adam looked at himself in a full body length mirror it suddenly occurred to him how quickly the three weeks have flown by. Overall the united front with the ladies against Catherine and the Order had been needed and had also been tested. Due to the need of the High Order to use this event to help move things along there had been a lot concessions that Rosamia had needed to make, overall nothing bad had occurred but Adam had to agree that their wedding had been blown so

much out of proportion that you would almost think that royalty were getting married. To be frank this end result had been caused by both the High Order and also Rosa, as they had needed this event to include the public as much as possible and with that Rosa had requested that anyone who wanted to attend could if they where to help with the event, basically opening the doors to anyone in the city. The plan had worked as the more people wanted to show up the more others needed to be included and pretty soon a large part of the city had their hands in this in one fashion or the other.

Adam repositioned his bow tie, this wait was killing him a bit but then his attention was drawn to a knock on the door. "You can come in."

Iris opened the door and entered the small waiting room that had a few chairs and a mirror only. Adam was stunned when he saw her. She had changed her hair and had fashioned it into a curly bun updo type hairstyle pinning all her hair up leaving open her neck line, which the openness continued with the elegant off shoulder dress that she was wearing that featured a lace bodice and a flowing chiffon skirt. The color of the dress chosen was light sky blue which only made her green and blond hair pop all the more. "You are stunning..."

Iris smiled at the compliment and did a small curtsy bow, "Why thank you, I can't say that I've worn a lot of dresses in my life but this feels and look nice right?"

Adam smiled again, "Yes it does." Iris had spent a lot of her life in a giant nightmare and then had been trust into a world of battle and revenge, something he knew all too well. Recently she had to have dealt with a lot of guilt and had been forced to grow up so much. But right now at this present moment Adam simply enjoyed the smile that she had as she swayed her lovely dress from side to

side and looked at herself in the mirror. He was so happy for her and he was so happy for himself to have her in his life, it made his stupid choices of the past seem worth it if only to have helped her along to get to where she was now.

Iris then approached him and started to straighten some of his clothes. "I'll also say that you look really charming in your suit Adam, I'm sure Rosa will love it and I'm sure you will love what I prepared for her as well."

With Rosa's help Iris had created pretty much all the dresses and suits for all of them using magic and the materials that had been purchased in the city and so far from what he had seen she had done a great job overall. "You have no idea how I can't wait to see it."

Iris suddenly had a playful smile on her face, "Oh are you suddenly nervous?"

"About the marriage, no, about this whole event... well I'll admit that I'll be happy when it starts."

Iris reached out and gave him a quick hug as to not ruin the clothes they were both wearing, "I'm sure time will just fly by when this all starts and don't worry everything will go perfect." She then pulled away, "Tell you what I'll go check on your bride to be and report back how things are going." She then went to the door, "Don't worry I'll be back soon."

When she was gone Adam wondered, "Ready or not this event will start when the time comes and no sooner, I'm betting she just wanted to see Rosa in her dress beforehand. Oh well, enjoy yourself little Iris, you deserve it as much as we do."

Both Anna and Mike had dressed up as well for the event. Mike simply wore a simple clean

white shirt and black cloth pants and a matching suit jacket. Anna wore a strapless burgundy long dress; she had done her hair as well in a jeweled designed that cascaded down the back. They came into the main church arms intertwined and simply where stunned at what they saw.

"There are so many people coming in that it's easy to see how this whole place will be packed."

Mike nodded as he looked around. The pews had been tripled up in the very large main section of the church. From what they had been told the seating had been split into three parts. At the entrance you had the common folks that had help with the event and whoever they had wanted to invite, then you had the Crusaders and Order members and at the front honored guest and high members of the city. Currently they had been told that their seating had been reserved in the honored guest section but no actual seat had been reserved, only the section. This had been something the united front had lost on against the High Order in order to not give too much priority to any honored member. At the time both Anna and he thought nothing of it but now they both wondered if they both should not had shown up sooner.

"Well I know that we will have a place to sit but this is all so much." Anna agreed and was about to comment but then saw someone in the first isles wave at them. Realizing it was the General himself they both hurried to him.

Finally getting close to him they saw that he was currently out of his typical armor and in a more decorated suit that all Crusades had been currently wearing. Mike did notice that he had a weapon equipped on his side which did peek at his curiosity. Seeing this the General quickly explained, "I, in theory am on duty right now. But seeing as the groom asked a favor of me, probably

coming from the bride, to save you both a seat in the front row I had to oblige."

They were both thrilled as they saw the two empty seats right in front of everything. "Thank General, we were wondering about this as we entered."

The General cleared his throat, "Yes well, call it my gift to the bride and groom." He then quickly bowed, "Now that you are here if you excuse me I will once again take my place at the entrance." As he left Mike then realized that at the one end of the entrance to the main hall Rebecca had been standing guard as he watch the General make his way to the other side he wondered if someone had gotten a promotion in rank.

Both of them sat down and looked around. The front was elevated by a few stairs and a huge altar could be seen, if you looked up there where two massive pipe organs with people already present getting certain things ready. Mostly due to the amount of people you also had Crusaders in formal wear standing guard at the end of every six pews to each side in case something occurred. Anna turned to Mike and whispered, "With all this I'm getting nervous for her. This is so big."

Mike smiled, "Not something you would have been interested in?"

Anna slowly nodded, "No, after seeing this, not at all. I love ours as you only had those that loved and cared for us around, still I will admit that I also enjoyed the fan fare and size of the renewal but this is so big. It's nice but... It also steals your breath away at its magnitude."

"Well, this had been the plan all along and it will make of a very memorable event for the both of them and possibly the city for a while, so all well that ends well I guess."

Anna smiled, "I agree..." She then looked

around a bit more, "You know now that our seats are picked would you mind if I go visit a certain someone while you stay here?"

Mike reached out and gave her a kiss, "Not a problem at all." Anna kissed him back and then stood, "Thanks." And with that she made her way to the side, spoke to one of the guards who then pointed her in a certain direction and then she made her way there.

Mike was pleased to see her so happy, he also assumed that everyone else was in the same boat as well making him happy as well.

"You look great Rosamia, almost too good for him even."

Rosamia quickly grinded at Alexandria, "Now Alex... we had this talk, no more of that..."

Alexandria chuckled as everything said was all in playful jest and they both knew it. Rosa turned to look at her once more. Alexandria had very long hair that made it to her lower back, she had currently placed it so that half was fixed up and the other half dropped strait down in an overall half up half down style. The desert rose dress that had been made for her was a chiffon dress featuring a draped v-neck bodice with a criss-cross back. "You know it's nice seeing you in a dress."

Alex did a quick look at herself and her dress, "It is nice from time to time and I do look pretty in it." She then turned to Rosa and looked at her, "Still you look way better..." She then smiled, "As you should."

"Thanks..." It's then that there was a knock on the door, they both turned, "Come in."

Iris opened the door, "Look who I bumped into..." She then paused as they both walking in with the door closing behind them. "Wow Rosa, you

look fantastic. With the hair and everything it's perfect." Rosa was beaming, "Thanks I love it too."

Anna was still looking, "It is perfect, it's also perfect for the environment out there. Wow congratulations Rosa."

"Thanks..." She then paused a bit from the comment that had been mentioned, "Speaking of the environment how bad is it out there?"

Anna suddenly laughed a bit, "Oh there is no way that I can spoil that for you, you will have to wait and see. But truly you have nothing to worry about, after seeing you like this it's all so very perfect."

Rosa was about to say something but then there was another knock on the door. Seeing as everyone was here Alex wondered and walked over, "You don't think that Adam was tired of waiting..." she stopped as she opened the door and then stood back as she saw who was there, "Oh look... it's Catherine... to what do we owe the pleasure of your visit... Catherine..."

Catherine simply glared at Alex and the deadpan way she had introduced her, it had been a trying few weeks for the both of them. She quickly looked at Rosa, "Good I'm glad to see that you are ready."

Rosa was a bit surprised, "That can't be the only reason for the visit?"

She quickly nodded her head, "No, while everything is in place there is one thing missing."

Rosa took a deep breath, as she knew what part she was referring too. "You still plan on making the announcement before the start?"

Catherine nodded, "Depending on your answer, yes, it's the perfect time really."

Rosa was not so sure about that but it hardly mattered. "Well you will be happy to hear that a decision has been made on the offer that you made

to me about the High Order." Instantly all eyes was on Rosa as everyone had known that today was the day that she had to let Catherine know, but none truly knew what the answer was.

"I will agree to join the High Order once again." There was a bit of a look of sadness on everyone's faces, including Catherine, for different reasons. Before any of them could comment Rosa immediately added to her comment, "But I will only join temporarily. Currently while the enemy that was causing issues in the city is gone there is still a lot to do before everything come back to even a semblance of the normal that I remember. I know that I can help with that and the past few weeks has shown me that I want to help with that as this place still means a lot to me. But I also know that I am not the best fit for ongoing membership in the High Order so until I'm not needed or until a replacement can be found I will do what I can to help out."

Catherine thought about it all and then a rare smile appeared on her face, "I... agree with that decision and think that it is truly a wise one." She then lowered her head a bit, "So with that allow me to be the first to welcome you to the High Order, again, High Priestess Rosamia."

Suddenly hearing that Rosa felt a small shiver along her back as it made her remember the first time of it all, but she quickly dismissed it as this time it would be different. She then lowered her head, "Thank you High Priestess Catherine."

Catherine lowered her head again, "Now if you will excuse me I will go tell the news to the other members to let them know first and then take up my position at the altar as we shall be starting very shortly." She then opened the door and left.

Rosa then looked at the others, "I hope that you agree with my decision."

Anna reached out and carefully hugged Rosa and whispered to her, "Again it's perfect, I knew you would figure it out." Rosa smiled, "Thanks and also thanks for the hint as it was helpful in the end."

Anna moved away as Iris took her place, "I think it's the right call too, even if it will be sad without both of you for a while. Still we are a teleport away so, no goodbye's right?" Rosa nodded, "No goodbye's is right."

Iris moved back, "Okay well I'll head back to Adam and let him know that things will start soon and at the same time both of us will be coming out first so I need to be by his side." She then quickly turned, "Again I'm so happy for the both of you."

As Rosa nodded, Anna made her way to the door as well, "I will need to head back as well, and hopefully Mike did not have to fight off too many to save my seat." Rosa suddenly smiled and was happy about the joke comment as the emotions were starting to get to her and now was not the time.

With her and Alex left in the room Rosa wondered how she truly felt, "And what are your thoughts Alex?"

"I'm fine..."

Rosa was not buying it, "Are you?"

"Hey, I'm trying to be supportive here..."

Rosa moved closer to her, "I know but I really want to know, it is important to me."

Alex took a deep breath, "Fine, then I'm not going to lie, this will be hard but I get that you want to help your city after everything that happened especially after it accepting you again after... well everything that happened. And I know it's not goodbye, but I also know that you will not be around anymore when we wake up when we are somewhere. And will also not be there when I need

help with something. So yes I'm fine, but it's going to hurt."

Rosa reach out to Alex to wrap her arms around her, she was the first true friend that she had made in this journey and after everything that's happened she now truly felt how hard this decision would be compared to the first time. She did not regret it, but she also agreed that it was still hard.

After a moment they both instantly pulled back and saw that they had been caught up in the moment too much as both their faces had tears in them and new wrinkles had appeared on their dress. Rosa panicked a bit, "Oh nuts... and so soon after Anna cut the tension of it with a bit of a joke, this happens."

Alex wiped out her face, "Actually I'm sorry to say that I'm not so sure if that was a joke from what I saw quickly, there really is a LOT of people out there." Suddenly Rosa was more worried but then that disappeared as she saw Alex's wide smile, "Don't worry Rosa, magic can fix everything..."

Adam did not have to wonder anymore as now in front of everyone a few steps off the altar he knew that it was possible to get more nervous about this event. There was no hesitation in marrying Rosa but the location and crowd did make him wonder if this had been a good idea after all. It looked like the crowd of people that he had seen during those larger auditorium speeches where all were packed in this main hall, with the focus all on them. He was glad to have Iris next to him as she did provide a level of calmness. From what he saw she was not impacted at all, heck she had even sunk in a quick wave at Mike and Anna who had

managed to get front row seats to all this. Adam tried to make a mental note to thanks the General when he could as given the people here there would have been no way for them to manage that without this help.

Catherine was also now present at the altar as it had been decided that the one that had been part of the High Order the longest would perform the honor of marrying them. While the formal attire of the High Order did not look much different than their normal one, there was an extra shawl worn over the shoulders that was decorated with symbols to signify her position in the Order. Also as expected Catherine looked stoic in front of everyone, which was expected but also did not help Adam's nerve at all.

It's then that when he tough he would go out of his mind that the organs started playing the wedding song and instantly Adam forgot about everything and turned back, as with everyone else, to look at the large double doors being opened by the General on one side and his chosen person on the other.

Rosamia and Alexandria took their first step inside the large room and as they did all Crusaders that had been sitting and also all the honored guests all suddenly rose to greet her entrance. This action made them both pause for a moment.

Rosa had requested to hold Alex's hand as they entered and walked down and she was very thankful for it as right now she was holding on to it with quite the grip. Alexandria with a large smile on her face quickly whispered one word to try and deflate the shock of it all, "Surprise!"

Rosa, also with a full smile on her face and quickly nodding to those around her who where trying to get her attention, whispered back, "Now I really wish Anna would have spoiled it for me." She

took a deep breath and took her first step forward down the aisle.

All eyes were on her as she walked down. Her hair being a little bit longer than shoulder length had been combed with a side swept hairstyle with the side curling down the front of her chest. It beautifully rested showing off the off shoulder applique illusion lace long sleeve white dress she was wearing with a solid gown and a court train attached. The middle of the dress had also been fabricated to show symbol patterns of the Order. All in all it made it look like the princess of the Order was getting married, if there was such a thing.

They slowly made their way to the altar and once there an extra smile was given to Anna and Mike and then Alexandria let go of her hand and moved to the side as Rosamia walked closer to the Altar by herself, with Iris and Adam still off on the other side. It's then that everyone else also stat back down.

While Catherine cleared her throat, Alexandria casted the spell, as instructed, to make it so that the voices of those around the altar would be heard properly everywhere, without causing those in front to go deaf. When the music finally stopped Catherine started the prepared speech.

"Thank you all for joining us for this event and the work that everyone provided in making it happen. Before we start with the event I wish to give everyone some new. Given the confirmation of the passing of one of our High Order member we are now lacking some resources in order to clean up after the issues that have recently been dealt with. To that end, in order to help our city out and also give back for past issues, Rosamia has been chosen to once again temporarily join the High Order as one of its members."

Catherine paused at that point to allow everyone to clap and congratulate Rosamia. She in turn, turned around and bowed in front of everyone. Catherine let this go for a little while and then raised her hand to ask for silence. Once it was given she continued, "During her time we will be looking for a permanent replacement, but while we do so it is imperative that we all be there to help govern this city back from the blows and setbacks that it has taken and this is why a temporary position was appointed. I will add, temporary or not, Rosamia will be treated as a full High Order member and will have the same privilege as any of our other members." She then spread her arms wide, "Now if you can help me welcome High Priestess Rosamia to the High Order of the holy city of Missa."

Once again everyone clapped their hands and there were also some cheers that were also heard from some members. Anna moved close to Mike, "Bit of a little extra spice in that speech." Mike nodded, "But our group diplomat handled it just fine." Anna smiled, "Of course I would expect nothing less from her."

Once again Catherine raised her hand to demand silence. "Now let us begin with the wedding proceedings. Both bride and groom would like to share some words to each other and to everyone before we proceed." Catherine then moved a step back while Adam joined Rosa in the middle.

Earlier Adam thought that it would be hard if not impossible to ignore the crowd while he said his part but now looking at how beautiful Rosa looked and also how happy she looked he did not even care about them being around. "Rosa our journey has been a very bumpy one in order to get here, and for a while I wondered if we would ever make it, but with the help of our friends, your

inexhaustible patience with me we did make it and I could not be happier. I want to stay with you for the rest of our lives no matter how long that is, because I know that is where I belong and also where I'm the happiest."

Rosa gave him a warm smile, "Adam, I did not know it back then but I've loved you for much longer then I've realized. Throughout that time I've seen you grow from a little boy that loved adventure, to a soldier, to the man in front of me that I know I can fully depend on, and during those changes it's only made me love you more. I too wish for nothing else but to spend the rest of my life with you and to enjoy every given moment that we are blessed to spend with one and the other."

There was a warm smile that was exchanged between the two of them and then Catherine step forward once again. As she did, Iris moved in closer to give her the two rings and then moved back to her original position.

"We are gathered here today to join Adam and Rosamia in holy matrimony." She then turned to Adam, "Adam do you take Rosamia to be your wife, to love, honor and comfort for as long as you both shall live?"

"I do."

She then turned to Rosamia, "Rosamia, do you take Adam to be your husband, to love, honor and comfort for as long as you both shall live?"

"I do."

Catherine then took Rosa's ring and gave it to Adam, "Please then place this ring on her finger."

Adam reached out to Rosamia's hand and then placed the ring on her finger. "I give this ring to you as a symbol of my love for you."

Catherine then took Adam's ring and gave it to Rosa, "Please place this ring on his finger."

Rosamia reached out and took Adam's hand and placed the ring on his finger. "I give this ring to you as a symbol of my love for you."

Catherine then raised her hands, "By the virtue and authority vested in me under the law of the Order, I now pronounce you husband and wife." She then smiled, "You may kiss the bride."

Adam gladly reach out to Rosa and gave her a long kiss on the lips as everyone once again stood up and started to clap their hands and cheer.

After a while Catherine yelled out over the people still cheering, "The newly married couple will now make it to the outside church courtyard where everyone is invited to meet and congratulated them. Also there will be food, drinks and music for everyone to enjoy."

Adam then took Rosamia's hand and walked down the aisle with Alex and Iris behind them and Catherine behind them.

Once a little bit of time had passed and the music had started playing Rosa and Adam kicked off the first dance which then allowed everyone else to dance if they so wanted too. Then came the crowd mingling part and so far Rosa had to admit that this day so far had been one giant surprise after another, except for this part. Right away her old friends of the Order came to her and wished them both their good wishes and that part had been fun, but then came the less interesting one where all the noble made it their duty to come forward. Rosa greeted and thank them as she should but overall it disappointed her as a large part of inviting everyone was for everyone to participate but it was clear to see that the regular citizenship of Missa where staying quite far from her and Adam.

Determined to make it her secret mission to include them she made her way slowly down to where most were standing around and eventually Rosa hit a jackpot in the form of a little girl who suddenly started to point at her. "Daddy, look it's her..."

There was no way that the father could ignore her now as she approached both of them. "I hope that everyone is having fun."

The man nodded his head, "Yes of course." Then the little girl tugged on the fathers pants, "Pick me up daddy, I'm too low." The father then had a weak smile on his face, "I'm sorry honey but I can't right now."

Clearly troubled by this the daughter started to pout, and then Rosa had to ask as clearly the man in question should have no issues being able to lift his daughter, "Is there an issue?"

The man took a moment to choose his words carefully, "I was hurt during one of the gatherings, it's nothing to be concerned about and it will heal on its own..." He then stopped as Rosa reached out to his shoulder with her hand and instantly started to cast a healing spell, she also realized that given the amount of healing that she gave him it was not that small of a wound. The man was stunned but also very pleased and when Rosa removed her hand he instantly picked up his daughter and brought her to the same height as Rosa. "Wow!! You're beautiful."

Rosa gave her a warm smile, "Why thank you."

The daughter then turned to the father, "Daddy I want a wedding like this as well when I grow up, it's magical."

The father simply looked around, which made Rosa chuckle. She then reached out for the daughter with a smile on her face, "What would be better than having the same wedding as me would

be to instead have your own special wedding just for you. Be it bigger or smaller, is all good as long as it's your wedding."

The daughter smiled and nodded, and so did the father.

That exchange changed things and now many others gathered around her regardless of social status.

Eventually she had to make it back, while the overall event would go on for much longer during the night the official proceeding would soon come to a close. At this time it was already the dance before the last one and there was a particular person that Rosamia wanted to share a dance with. Eventually she found the General and asked him for a dance, which he could not refuse. Adam to on his part turned to Iris, "Will you accept this dance with me?" Iris bowed and took him up on his offer.

As they made their way to the dance floor Anna turned to Alex, "Did you not dance at all today?"

Alexandria, "Well I'm not much of a dancer and even while I like this dress it is a bit odd for me to wear something like this so..." Anna would not hear any more of it and she grabbed her and turned her towards Mike, "Go ask him, you should experience this and no worries, between you and me he's not that good of a dancer as well."

Alex was clearly not sure about this plan, "Ah are you sure I mean don't you..." Anna again cut her off, "It's fine I'll have the last one."

A bit clumsily Alex made her way to Mike, "Ah..." Mike smiled and grabbed her hand, "I would be honored." and with that they too made their way to the dance floor.

The General cleared his throat a bit, "You, ah, did not have to do this you know." Rosa nodded her head, "I did as it gave me the change to thank

you for everything that you did to Adam, and yes I know some of those things where not all good but I know that when the time came you had his back and that is very important to me."

"Well he was a good soldier even if there were issues."

"I'm sure, but he's not the only reason as well. We, I, have put you through a lot of grief over what happened in the past and I know that it's caused you nothing but issues and for that I do wish to apologize to you personally."

The General knew that she was referring to the secret that he had kept with the existence of the lord of light and she was right it had caused no end of trouble but it had also been his decision. "I thank you, but it was my choice in the end, none of you forced me to take it so while I appreciate the gesture it was not needed on my part."

Rosa smiled, "Well it was on mine."

Adam looked at Iris, "Not the type of things we typically do together."

Iris laughed, "No, it's not, but this is nice. And I know I've said this many times already but I really am happy for both of you. I hope that this day was perfect for you both as well."

Adam nodded, "Yea, I think it was and I will again thank you for being there with me and hope that you will keep an eye on me still going forward in case I slip up somehow."

Again Iris laughed, "You can count on me, but I don't think you will need much of my help." It's then that Iris saw something that shocked her. "Hey Adam, look who's dancing."

Adam turned to see Alexandria and Mike, "Ah that's such a perfect moment, still I won't tease even if I could probably get away with it."

Iris could only smirk at his comment, same old Adam even after all this.

Mike looked at Alexandria, "See it's not so bad and this way you can somewhat pass as you know what you are doing."

Alexandria was still looking down as she nodded, "I guess..."

"So I have to ask Alexandria, what got your attentions during the exchange of the vows?"

Alexandria suddenly started to trip a bit as she looked up when he asked the question, Mike shifted his weight and grip on her so that she could quickly regain it. "Oh sorry, it's just that you caught me off guard with that one. Ah nothing really it was just a random thought in my head that's all."

He was not content with that so after a bit she spilled the beans, "Again it's nothing, it's just that comment that he said about no matter how long we have. You know that for us long is longer than most but then something else clicked when I thought of that, given Kilor actions and everything else that is happening to all of us and well a random thought occurred to me. It's totally baseless at this point so I would like to keep it to myself but it will be something I'll want to look into."

Mike smiled, "Can't stop thinking about it even after what was said."

Alex then looked at him with a funny accusing look, "Would you let go of anything that bugged you like this?"

Mike chuckled, "Touché."

Alex smiled, "We are too much alike with it comes to things like this."

"It's probably why we work so well together." Alexandria smiled and nodded.

By then the end of the dance was coming so he figured now would be a good time, "Alexandria, in case no one has mentioned it, you look very

beautiful as well." She gave him a warm smile, "Thanks."

The night had fully set by now and both Mike and Anna were standing on the top of the church patio. Even now they could hear the festivities down below which made him chuckle a bit, "Given everything that has happened you think they both enjoyed their special day?"

Anna wrapped her arms around him, "Oh I know so, I'm sure it's not what she or he expected but I'm also sure that if you ask them to give you one word to describe this day they will say something in the lines of 'perfect'."

Mike raised his hand with his own wedding ring at the horizon, "So they are finally married, I guess that means that things will change from now on again."

Anna reached out with her own hand with her ring to his, "It will, but this is good change so there are no reasons to be sad about it."

They both put their hands down and around the other and moved even closer, "I love you Anna, forever and always."

She smiled, "I love you as well, forever and always." They looked in each other's eyes for a while then shared a passionate kiss.

Epilogue

Iris's journal

*T*hat wedding was fantastic, I know that the idea was for it to help out the Order as a quick diversion for all the things that has happened but still the end results blew all my wild expectations away. There is no way that this day will not be memorable for the both of them and that make me extremely happy and if I'm really honest with myself a bit confused by my own feelings. I mean this is great day for them and I was happy to be a part of it like I was but at the same time, because of the High Order's offer, this will also be the same day that we separate the group and well that scares me.

The difference now is that I'm willing to accept it, were as in the past there is no way that I would have so I supposed that I have grown in that way. Still can't wait for them to find a true replacement or for her work to be done, that way they can come back home to us.

As for us well it seems that Alex pulled in too many favors and already one of them is being cashed in. It seems that the elf that relinquished his position on the Council for her has had some breakthrough in a spell that he has been working on. Alex got the gist of the spell but even that was a lot for her to understand so it must be some spell. From what she told me she will not be the only one that will help him out but all of us, meaning that our next stop is home, to Astrum.

Still it makes me wonder why she commented that the spell should be an adventure like we have never seen before if we will be in Astrum. It also makes me worried as Alex's definition of adventure

typically is filled with danger and this time we will be less than usual. I guess that means that I'll have to try and pull my weight more if I can, especially on the defense department...

... Hmm, I'll only admit it here and here alone but really I really don't want them to go, I want them to stay with us and keep adventuring with us. I know that the Order means a lot to Rosa but so do we right?

No, that's not the way I should think. Yes we mean a lot to her, probably more, but at the same time they need her more than we do right now and I know that she can help them out. And if she does not try I also know that she will regret it, and I really don't want that for her.

She is my friend, and both are precious to me, so I'll keep my selfishness inside and wish them nothing but the best in their new journey together and know that at one point in time we will meet again.