

This story is where he gains the fame and it is one of few stories that shed light on the Bau from inside.

[Masu arc] [2] [Masu the sage] [8631]

Rev 1.2 (Last modified on 2021 Feb 20)

Masu hadn't slept for a while. It wasn't that he did not want to sleep. Whenever he closed his eyes, the images of Affie's last moments tormented him to a point that he'd rather stay awake than be tortured by nightmares.

He grew increasingly tired and had little desires to live on. However, he had something to look forward to. It was a meeting with Cecil.

To his eyes, Cecil was someone he wanted to be. He was someone whose powers were so strong that he could get away with anything, literally everything.

"The Crimson wizard..."

A faint grin emerged on his face as he stared into the space through a circular window.

Only if he had that kind of powers. Only if ... Then Affie wouldn't have died. He wouldn't be in this transport. He would have been smiling back in Freedom colony. He would have had his first child together with her. He would have ...

What ifs

Masu gritted his teeth hard and attempted to calm himself down. He glanced sideways and there was Heather who was sleeping silently in her seat next to him. He missed the old days.

When their transport arrived on Moon, Heather immediately took Masu to a special luxury shuttle and took off right away.

“We are going directly into the headman’s compound,” Heather said in cockpit.

He couldn’t care less why the headman wanted to see him. He just wanted to get it over with and meet Cecil as soon as possible.

The shuttle was descending toward what was once Australia continent which had become a dedicated continent for Bau insiders. It landed on Sydney shuttleport and a car was waiting for them where it took them to middle of nowhere where there was what appeared to be a medieval castle. The car stopped at its main gate.

“It is the headman’s taste,” Heather explained even before Masu asked. She led him to a guest room and had him wait there for ten minutes or so before she came back and led him to the main keep of the castle compound.

A man with a light brown fur coat was in a wooden throne in a grand hall inside of the deep. There were numerous guards with plasma rifles standing by its main entrance.

“Heather!” He bellowed. He had to raise his voice since the hall was too big.

“Good job!”

She bowed deeply and whispered to Masu. “This is as far as I can take you. I will wait for you in the guest room.” Having said that, she left the hall at once.

“Masu!” He bellowed and gestured. “Come closer!”

As Masu walked toward the headman, the guards glanced at him. When he was about 20 feet away from headman, he stopped and stood still, waiting for the headman to speak.

The headman twisted his head a little, looking confused. He expected Masu to kneel down and show respect. Realizing he wasn’t going to do that, he spoke.

“Masu, I believe you know what has happened here on Earth.” His voice was calm and collected.

“Yes,” Masu responded indifferently. “May I ask why you want to see me? I do not believe the blame is on me.”

The headman looked confused again but soon reverted to his calm face. “Masu, I did not summon you here today to discuss the series of unfortunate incidents on Freedom colony.”

He couldn’t care less just as Masu couldn’t care less.

“What did Heather tell you?” The headman inquired.

Masu told him what Heather told him earnestly.

“That is correct. Do you see anything that is amiss from what she told you?”

He gave it a thought and realized something.

“You have no power over your own council. You are a puppet.”

Some of the guards in the hall aimed their rifles at him when they heard his blunt speech, but they were disturbed by the headman’s clapping.

“Very good. Affie had good eyes, I see. She chose a good man.” He paused and glared at his guards who lowered their weapons and then continued. “Yes, I am a puppet. The Bau council has been too powerful for me to control, and I would like to change that. My father was a puppet and they expect me to be a puppet as well.”

“It is no business of mine however,” Masu replied bluntly.

“It is your business, for you are a Bau.”

“I am not a Bau.”

“Yes, you are.”

“I am not.”

“You married Affie Bau. Therefore, you are a Bau.”

It really pained him to speak what he was about to say. “The marriage tie...” He gritted and he could feel his fist shaking in rage. “Has been broken.”

“No matter. I say you are still a Bau.”

“What the fuck...” It was his first time ever to swear at someone. Before this moment, he had never sworn at anyone for any reason in his life. “Is this nonsense?!” He walked boldly toward the headman within ten feet and pointed at him.

“You!” He exclaimed fiercely. “You sent men to kill my wife!” He panted violently in between. “You! killed her! You cut the tie! I am NOT A BAU!”

The guards ran toward Masu to seize him only to be stopped by the headman as he stuck out his hand.

Blinking his eyes, the headman looked around perhaps to organize his thoughts. He, then, looked into Masu’s eyes. They would look into each other for a while until the headman stood up and walked down his throne.

“Sir!” A guard shouted.

“Leave us be!” The headman bellowed. “This is men’s talk!”

Masu was still pointing at him. His eyes were watery but were burning with rage.

“Masu, punch me if it will make you feel better—” Even before he could finish, Masu punched him in the face, hard. And then he punched him in the chest.

Moaning with pain, he kneeled down. The guards in the hall dashed toward Masu and seized him.

“Let him go, I am alright.” Coughing, the headman stood up. “You are correct, Masu. On surface, I was the one who gave out the order to kill Affie. But, as you said, I am a puppet. I swear to our ancestors that I never gave that order. The council did. And I know that you know this. Your anger is misdirected.” He

laughed briefly at himself. “Although I suppose I still share the blame. This is my clan after all...” He glared at the guards who were still seizing Masu. “I SAID LET HIM GO!” He bellowed.

The guards finally let Masu go.

Having calmed down, he asked, “What do you want from me?”

“Look around.”

He looked around.

“These guards are all I have. I have no one. I am the best puppet,” The headman said sarcastically.

“Of course you don’t have anyone. Your father was a puppet and so are you. No one in right mind would serve you.”

The headman laughed pleasantly. “Yes, that is precisely why. I like you and I want you to work with me.”

Masu narrowed his eyes and the headman continued. “Not for free of course. Assist me in regaining my powers over the council and I shall grant you a seat in the council and will make you a Bau insider with an eligibility to become a headman.” He then beamed a smile at him and added, “And in progress, you will get to exact revenge on those who gave the order to kill Affie.”

It was a shocking and completely unexpected offer.

“I do not expect your answer right away,” The headman said, “I know how big this is. Stay here for few days and think over.”

When Masu returned to the guest quarter, Heather ran to him with a worried face.

“Is everything okay? I saw some guards rushing toward the keep. I feared the worst.”

He was feeling much better after venting his anger at the headman. His head felt much clearer.

“Yes, everything is fine.”

He inquired Heather about the current headman of the Bau.

His name was Yuiriel II. His father, Yuiriel the first, had eighteen daughters and had a late son. At which point, he murdered his own eighteen daughters to make his late son, Yuiriel II, the crown heir.

“He was nicknamed Yuiriel the mad in his late years,” Heather added.

“Why did he have to kill his own daughters? It’s not as if the Bau’s succession law is absolute cognatic.”

The succession law of the Bau had always been selective elective, meaning the council would choose the crown heir among a pool of Bau insiders they selected. What that meant that Yuiriel’s murder of his own daughters would have no impact on his only son being inherited.

“True, but the Bau council’s chose eight possible candidates and his son wasn’t in it but five of his daughters were.”

Meaning he killed them off to free space as well as sending strong messages to the council.

“The council eventually let him have his only son be the crown heir, but in progress, he lost all supports and respects from other Bau insiders,” She explained.

And thus he became a puppet.

“Things didn’t improve after Yuiriel II took over following his father’s death. The council ignored him completely and there was nothing Yuiriel II could do to regain any form of support.”

He understood the situation but there was one thing that bothered him.

“Heather, why are you here? What is the meaning of you being here?”

“I...” She clearly hesitated to answer but she laughed off and explained, “I am his concubine actually.”

He was shocked. She knew that and quickly defended herself.

“I haven’t slept with him yet, I swear!”

“Are you not an insider? Why would he take you as a concubine?”

Insiders weren’t allowed to be mere concubines.

“It was ... a punishment because Affie eloped with you...”

“Oh, God...” He covered his face as he said it.

He had given some thoughts on circumstances of his actions. He felt he had to do what he had to do. He took Affie with him in fear of her being punished, but he

did not think about Heather. And he certainly did not think Heather would be punished to become a concubine.

“I haven’t slept with him, I swear. The headman doesn’t seem too interested in having children yet.”

“Does he have an official wife?”

“No, but I believe the council has been trying to get an O’ren insider to get married to him. That’s all I know.”

Concubinage was easy to be broken, he knew that, especially when it hadn’t really begun. Heather was suffering because of his actions and he swore to get her out of the concubinage.

His first task became clear to him. It was to save Heather from this ordeal. And he requested an audience with Yuiriel II and he was allowed to enter the hall.

“Have you made your decision?” The headman was wearing the same fur coat. The hall, being a masonry structure, was inherently chilly. All guards wore thick jackets and the headman was no different.

“I’ve come to discuss Heather’s situation.”

“Ah.” The headman moved his upper body forward in his throne. “I knew you’d bring her case up.”

“Then you know what I’ve visited you today for.”

The headman nodded. "Indeed, she has been under my care for few years now. The council 'gifted' her to me. I knew she was Affie's elder sister and I knew the council was giving her to me as a punishment which is why I've never touched her."

"Did you not touch her because you felt sorry for her genuinely or did you not touch her because you wanted to use her as a bargaining chip?"

It was a blunt question and the headman took a bit to answer him.

"It is the latter," He finally answered.

"I will assist you if you let her go."

The headman struck his back into the throne and sighed deeply. "It is not that simple unfortunately. Yes, I can let her go, but her punishment still stands."

Narrowing his eyes, Masu said, "Meaning?"

"If I let her go, the council will send her to some other man."

"You are the headman."

The headman added, "And a puppet. I don't have any powers over council's decisions."

Masu sighed and spoke no more.

"Masu, you help me and I will help you. I have not touched her and will not bother her. She will be the safest here ironically."

Masu saw where he was going and the headman continued, "When I regain my powers, I will be able to set her free."

There wasn't much of a choice for Masu. He had to save Heather.

“Why do you insist having me as your ally?”

“Because,” He laughed off as he said, “Cecil protected you. The council is afraid of Cecil. When he came down on one of our divisions and murdered more than six thousand, the members of the council shitted on their pants.”

Masu thought he was joking.

“I am not joking. Granted not all of them shitted on their pants but some did,” Yuiriel II assured and continued, “They fear Cecil and therefore they fear you as well. The council will not try to harm you. They may try to stop you in some other diplomatic ways but they won’t try to force their ways on you.”

He wondered, again, why Cecil did so for him.

“Which makes you the perfect person for me to work with.”

Yuiriel II had valid points, and he agreed to help him for Heather’s sake. Yuiriel II clapped in response. “Congratulations, you are my first real vassal.”

“What do you want me to do? I don’t personally see how I could be of help.”

“It can wait. Speak to Heather. She has a favor to ask.”

Returning to the guest house, Masu told Heather that he decided to assist Yuiriel II in restoring his control over the Bau and told her that Yuiriel II referred him to her.

“Yes, I do have a favor to ask actually.” She hesitated for a moment and told him, “Affie’s mother would like to see you in person.”

His face darkened.

“Do I even have a right to see her after what happened?”

She grabbed his hands desperately. “Please just meet her. She just wants a closure.”

“I see. Yes, I will meet her.” Perhaps, he needed some form of closure as well.

While Heather was taking Masu to New York where Affie’s mother lived, she briefed him up on her family ties.

“Our father married sisters. My mom is Affie’s mother’s younger sister.”

Maus was silently listening and she continued on.

“So, Affie and I may have been born from different mothers but we never felt we were half-sisters.” Heather laughed weakly as she recalled old memories. “She was devastated when she was informed that Affie died.”

“Heather,” He quietly called her out. “I’ve suffered. I don’t know how much I’ve suffered but I feel I’ve suffered enough. Please stop mentioning her for my sake as well as yours.”

“I... I see.” And she spoke no more.

Where Heather took him was a small manor outskirts of New York. The shuttle gently landed on a small landing pad not far from the mansion.

“The whole family lives here,” Heather told Masu before they left their shuttle.

“Although only the mother is in the mansion right now.”

She pointed at a see-saw further away and almost said something before she stopped.

“I will take you to the living room and I will bring her down.”

He nodded.

The house was very quiet. There was a grand clock in the living room and it was the loudest thing in the whole area. The interior was exquisite. Every furniture was antique and was made of real wood. They were all highly polished and were taken good care of.

When he heard silent feet steps from above, he immediately stood up and showed respect for whoever was walking down. A middle-age woman in a beautiful dark red silk gown was walking down. Heather was following her.

“You must be, Masu.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“I am Lousia. I am Affie’s mother.”

He refused to look at her face and his eyes were downcast. Trying to ease the uncomfortable silence, Heather guided Lousia to a sofa.

But she refused. “No, Heather. Masu, look at me.”

Sighing deeply, he slowly looked into Lousia’s blue eyes. They looked into each other’s eyes for a moment.

“They told me my daughter eloped with a bum. But I see that they were wrong.” She approached him and her attention moved to his gray-white hair. “What happened to your hair? Did you dye it?”

He didn’t answer. Instead, he kept on looking into her eyes. His eyes were shaking just slightly.

“... I see.” She understood the meaning of his silence. Masu’s hair color had permanently changed after Affie’s passing. “I was devastated but it seems you were even more than devastated.”

So devastated that his hair color changed permanently.

Sighing, Lousia finally broke the eye contact. She sighed again as if the meeting didn’t go as planned.

“I was going to slap you actually.” Turning away from him, she spoke. “But I see there is no need.” She walked toward stairs. “Heather, see him off. I am done.”

“R, really? But you didn’t really even talk to him.”

Without answering her, she went upstairs.

On their way back, Heather told Masu that perhaps she shouldn’t have let her see him.

“It’s alright. She deserved a closure.”

“How about you?”

It was something he could not answer. He wasn’t even sure what kind of closure he could have. Perhaps he didn’t even want to closure. He didn’t know.

For better or worse, he decided to focus on assisting Yuiriel II.

“Would it be possible to arrange a meeting with Cecil?”

“That would be way, way, out of my league,” She responded. “I do know where the Klisis house is though. Maybe, you want me to take you there?”

“Where are they located?”

“I believe their HQ is in a city called Manchester. Of course, there is no guarantee that Cecil would be there.”

“I see. I will talk to Yuiriel II.”

“Yeah, that will be better. I could be punished again for taking you there.”

Masu inquired his decision to meet Cecil and Yuiriel II freaked out, almost.

“After what he has done?” He shook his head. “No, sir, no, no. Besides, I don’t think I even have the authority.”

Masu explained, “I think you are being too passive. Puppet or not, you are nevertheless the headman of the Bau. On surface, you are the big man. What you should do is act like one. The council may and probably will disagree with you but let the world know that you are in charge.”

Groaning, Yuiriel II crossed his arms and stuck his back deep into his throne. He was considering Masu’s proposal.

“Alright!” He raised his tone. “I am going to do this!”

Yuiriel II made a public announcement to arrange a private meeting with Cecil Klisis. The council was livid but the announcement was already made. Even before the council could react, The Klisis house responded positively, asking for an arrangement of a place to meet.

Yuiriel II responded that he'd meet him on a neutral ground and chose the city of Venice.

A councilor arrived urgently at the headman's compound and went directly to Yuiriel's hall.

"What were you thinking?!" He boldly pointed at him. "You cannot do this without the council's approval!"

Yuiriel, as usual, was in his throne, but it was different this day; Masu stood next to him.

"And why the hell is he there?!" He continued to exclaim.

"He is a Bau," Yuiriel II responded calmly.

"He is not!" The councilor shouted. "The marriage tie is no more!"

"He is a Bau," Yuiriel II repeated and added. "For he has married Heather Bau."

That was an unexpected improvisation from Yuiriel. Masu startled slightly but remained calm and collected.

"What the..." The councilor was loss at words but soon regained his ground. "Fine, so be it. Regardless, you cannot invite the Crimson wizard!"

"He is the headman," Masu spoke. "Why can't he?"

The councilor, this time, pointed at Masu and was about to speak but he was silent. Whether Yuiriel II was a puppet or not, he still had to maintain a certain level of manners. He lowered his arm and turned to Yuiriel II.

“Is this your answer, headman?”

Yuiriel II nodded firmly. “Yes, this is my answer.”

“So be it.”

He left the hall at once.

Watching him leave, Yuiriel II whispered, “So, I’ve begun.”

“Indeed, you have.”

In a few days, Masu wrote a script for him to speak on a public channel provided by ENN.

“The Bau council is timid.”

Yuiriel II stood before hundreds of journalists.

“I am not going to lie. I am doing this against the council’s will. Why? Because they are too timid. They became scared when Cecil Klisis burned down a division. We lost six thousand. It is a sad loss, and I demand to know why Cecil Klisis has done such. The council, meanwhile, was just busy trying to please Cecil so that they could stop him.”

He made a short pause and assessed the atmosphere before he continued.

“We are the Bau. We are the most powerful and largest clan ever in the human history. And I am not just going to stand here and watch the Bau council acting like a scared dog! If I have to, I will fight the Klisis. And the council is not going to stop me.”

He assessed the crowd of journalists. No body rose their hands to ask questions. But it was expected, and he wasn't discouraged.

“That will be all.” And he left.

The impact of his speech was positive. Many Bau insiders felt the council's recent resolution against Cecil's act was too timid and agreed with Yuiriel II. However, none of powerful figures spoke up for Yuiriel II openly.

They were back in the hall. Yuiriel II was in his throne as usual.

“It's only beginning.” Masu assured that the situation would improve. “But you need to be consistent. You cannot back down now.”

“Yes, I know. Meanwhile, we have a matter to discuss.”

Masu narrowed his eyes. “Is it about Heather?”

Yuiriel II nodded. “You saw how the councilor reacted. You must be a Bau in order to stay here. I believe it is within my authority to give Heather to you after all she is my concubine.”

There wasn't much a choice. Therefore, Masu showed no hesitation and accepted the idea of marrying Heather.

Yuiriel II called Heather immediately and informed the decision.

“Ah?” At first, Heather looked shocked and confused.

“Ah...” And then she blushed and became embarrassed.

Yuiriel II stood up from his throne and apologized to her with a bow.

“I apologize that I put you through this, but I am afraid you don’t really have a choice in this matter.”

“Aw..., this is awkward,” Heather talked to herself. At the same time, she found it funny since her father also married siblings. “Must be how it works in this family.” And just like that she accepted her fate. She did not mind it because she had feelings for Masu. Back in the old days, she backed off for Affie, but with her passing, the spot became available. However, she felt morally wrong to even approach Masu.

In the end, she was forced to take over the empty void Affie left.

Yuiriel II declared Masu and Heather married on that day. However, Masu’s treatment toward Heather did not change. He did not treat her like how he did to Affie. And he did not sleep with her. They were married on surface and that was all he needed.

Despite of the Bau council’s disapproval, Yuiriel II arrived in Venice with Masu.

There was no one else but few guards in the shuttle.

Konrad Klisis was Cecil's younger brother and he came to greet Yuiriel II.

As he bowed, he greeted Yuiriel II. "Greetings, I am Konrad Klisis, the younger brother of Cecil Klisis. My brother is waiting for you at Venice city hall."

Yuiriel II nodded. "Greetings, I am Yuiriel II, the current headman of the Bau. And this is Masu, my top advisor."

After exchanging greetings, they headed swiftly to Venice city hall. It was due to security. The more they were in public eyes, the worse it could get for them in terms of security.

And there he was in a conference room at Venice city hall. Cecil was waiting for them. He was standing by window when Konrad led Yuiriel and Masu into the room.

Turning around slowly, Cecil greeted the two men. "Greetings, Yuiriel II and Masu."

"Greetings," Yuiriel spoke and Masu bowed.

After they took seats around a table, Cecil was the first one to speak.

"Yuiriel II, it was quite bold of you to act against your council."

Yuiriel II laughed pleasantly. "I was waiting for my chance. And it came. I was not going to miss my chance of life time."

"I see."

Konrad approached them and asked, "Tea?"

Nodding, Cecil told him, "Green tea."

Yuiriel II asked for the same whereas Masu refused.

"So, here we are," Cecil said. "Ask away, Masu."

Masu organized his thoughts while Yuiriel II and Cecil were conversing and he was ready.

"Why have you done so much for me? I do not believe you know me."

"You needed help and I helped you. Is it wrong to assist a man in need?"

He couldn't argue with Cecil's answer but he felt Cecil was dodging his question.

"But you've gone beyond what a stranger would do for anyone."

"True, but it wasn't all for you. The Bau's cowardice has been displeasing and I wanted to vent my anger at them. It worked out for you and me in the end."

Yuiriel II laughed out loudly. "I wish I could do what you do!" He exclaimed.

"Because of the timing," Cecil explained while taking tea from Konrad. "The Bau council figured you were involved in my ire. I did not even ask them to pardon your charges. They did on their own accord."

"Cowards," Yuiriel II agreed.

"Was it really it? I don't think so. You helped me out on Freedom colony even. It couldn't have been a coincidence." Masu pushed on.

Cecil looked into his eyes lazily. "Masu," He called out. "You are a Marian. Do not forget what being a Marian is about."

Narrowing and twisting his head of confusion, he asked, "What do you mean?"

“Remember what I told you a long time ago?”

Of course, he remembered and he answered right away. “You said that Marians were hard workers and they don’t play lotto.”

Cecil nodded and spoke, “Not playing lotto means they want to have control of their destiny in their own hands. Those who play lotto are worthless pieces of garbage. They don’t need to exist in societies.” He dipped his tea and continued. “So, I chose an area with high focus on lotto and massacred the whole city.”

Masu felt that there was a fundamentally wrong preconception in Cecil’s thought. “But there are those who play lotto for entertainment.”

“No,” Cecil replied firmly. “There are plenty other ways of entertainment. Anyone playing lotto has the same thing in their mind whether they admit. It is to get rich without trying. You change your destiny by working hard. That is how it should be.”

Masu argued, “Very well. Let’s say that you are correct, but did they deserve to be killed like that? You even killed children and those who were uninvolved. That can’t be right.”

“It can be and it is right,” Cecil, again, replied firmly. “It is my divine right to kill others.”

A very bold and very wrong statement, Masu felt.

“You can try to put me on a trial but you won’t succeed because I will simply kill them,” Cecil spoke boldly. “I get away with what I do because I have the powers.” His attention moved to Yuiriel II. “The same kind of powers you seek, Yuiriel II.” And then his attention moved back to Masu. “You seek different kind of powers, Mr. Dandelion. Make no mistake; I do not disagree with your view. Your view is correct but so is mine.”

Masu wasn’t sure how to respond but Cecil couldn’t care less and continued on. “Your view is correct morally and is just. And the majority will agree with your view because you stand on the same ground as the most. My view is correct because I have the powers to enforce my view.”

Yuiriel II said while clapping casually, “You are mad, seriously mad but I like it.”

“Know where you stand, Masu, and do what you can. Do not do your best,” Cecil said.

“Don’t do my best?” Masu felt like talking to Cecil was too confusing and cryptic. Cecil stated that he’d do Yuiriel II a favor by making an announcement very soon. And their meeting was concluded.

As for Masu, he felt his encounter with Cecil wasn’t very fruitful. He did, however, learned what kind of person Cecil was.

Cecil indeed made an announcement that the Klisis clan would relocate to Venus within a hundred years. He stated that the decision came from his meeting with Yuiriel II. He also stated that, while he did not apologize for the incident that

earned him the nickname “the Crimson wizard”, he was “deeply saddened” by the event.

Yuiriel II was very pleased rightfully so. Cecil’s announcement meant that it was him who influenced the decision and that he was literally kicking Cecil out of Earth, on surface at least.

The council, therefore, could not do anything to punish their headman despite of a fact that they warned him prior.

What was more; Yuiriel II started to have supporters.

A man standing before Yuiriel II in the hall. Masu was standing next to his throne. “My name is Gerwin Bau, ser.” He showed respect by kneeling down and bowing afterwards. “I was deeply moved by your actions against the Crimson wizard and have decided to join your cause.”

Gerwin Bau was a leader of a small Bau division located in a city of Hamburg.

“Welcome, Gerwin, arise.”

“The current council is too timid, ser,” Gerwin continued as he arose. “It is time for a change. Time for a revolution.”

Yuiriel II nodded with a satisfied smile on his face. “Indeed, I shall remember you, for you are the first one to join me. Should I succeed, I shall give you the division of Germany.”

Gerwin expected some form of a promise for a reward, but being promised the whole division of Germany was unexpected. He bowed deeply and thanked him.

After Gerwin left the hall, Yuiriel II asked Masu for his opinions.

“What do you think?” He was asking about Gerwin.

“He is the first one to come by. He must have been displeased with the council for some time,” Masu stated. “However, he could be a spy sent by the council. We need to keep an eye on him for now although...” He paused.

“Although?”

“You promised him the whole division of Germany. Even if he is a spy, he might turn to your side after being promised of that.”

Yuiriel II laughed pleasantly. “From a small city ruler to a ruler of a whole division, yes, no one can turn that down.”

“You need to distribute and balance rewards well,” Masu pointed out, adding.

“But I can understand why you gave him a big reward since he was the first one to serve you.”

Yuiriel II nodded. “I am fully aware. Thank you, Masu, you’ve been a wonderful advisor. I shall not forget your efforts also.”

Gerwin Bau officially announced his support for Yuiriel II. Although Garwin’s influence was small, his announcement started ripples. Few smaller factions joined as a result as well.

“You are not going to see many prominent leaders joining your cause until later.”

Yuiriel II and Masu were conversing in the hall as usual.

“The prominent members have much to lose by supporting you. Less prominent members have much to gain and those who think it’s worth the gamble will join your cause,” Masu explained. “We now have five supporters all of whom are city leaders.”

“Not enough to fight the council,” Yuiriel II said.

“Not fighting them will be better, but if it has to come to that, perhaps you should think about relocating your compound.”

Yuiriel II’s castle was under Australia influence and it wasn’t under his control. He did not even have control of Sydney. He had no actual control of any cities or even lands. All he had was the title as a headman of the Bau clan.

“I see your point, but this is the only place I have.”

“You will stay here for now,” Masu responded. “But in near future, you should ask one of your subjects to donate his city to you so that you can have your own sphere of influence.”

He added that Gerwin was the one Yuiriel II should talk to in case he wanted to go ahead with the plan.

“You’ve promised him the division of Germany. If he is truly supportive of your cause, then he will not hesitate.”

For next few years, Yuiriel II continued to grow in powers. The Bau council turned a blind eye on him seemingly, mainly because he was still far too weak to even stand against the council.

However, as the Klisis prepared to relocate to Venus, the Vues voiced that they wanted to go with the Klisis. The Bau council denied the Vues to go initially until Cecil warned the Bau council to expect “dire consequences” if the Vues weren’t allowed to go.

In the end, the Bau council reluctantly approved the Vues to leave Earth.

Yuiriel II was laughing his lungs off in the hall. As usual, Masu was next to him.

“Hahahahaha!” He continued to laugh. “Hahahahaha!”

He laughed for a while. And when he was finally done with his laugh, Masu spoke to him.

“If this was Cecil’s plan all along, the guy is levels above me,” He said.

Yuiriel II wiped out tears and told him, “Well, it’s good thing that he is on our side, kind of.”

“I suppose he has his own agenda. It just happens that we are able to benefit from it.”

The Bau council’s decision to allow the Vues to break off from the Bau was not received well. And the manner of their decision did not please anyone, either.

And the tide started to alter slowly. People of the Bau started to feel that a revolution was in order and that Yuiriel II's cause was just. They felt that the council needed to be taken down.

A guard rushed into the hall to inform Yuiriel II that the leaders of Sydney and Australia arrived at the compound.

Two men walked into the hall and knelt down in front of Yuiriel II at once.

"Ser!" One of the men exclaimed. "I am Gabriel Bau, the administrator of Australia continent."

The other man followed afterwards. "Ser! I am Shaun Bau, the city leader of Sydney."

And then they declared their allegiance to Yuiriel II.

"The council is a bunch of cowards!" Gabriel exclaimed with anger as he said.

"They have no spine! I've had enough!"

Shaun agreed with Gabriel, adding, "We are the Bau! We can't just let the Klisis roll all over us!"

"Arise, gentlemen," Yuiriel II spoke proudly. "I see that there are still true Bau members left on Earth."

Shaun arose first and declared, "Ser, you shall have my city. Sydney is now yours!"

Not wanting to lose, Gabriel arose at once and declared, "Ser, Australia is yours to command!"

Defection of Gabriel and Shaun Bau caused great discomfort for the council as well as the others on Earth. At this point, Yuiriel II had the men power to combat the council. Still, the council was far stronger.

Amid the uneasiness, a council member arrived at Yuiriel's hall.

"Greetings." He showed little respect and did not kneel down. "I am Councilor Lucas. I bring you a proposal from the council." He glanced at Masu momentarily.

"Very well, out with it."

The councilor was carrying a marriage proposal. Apparently, the Bau council has managed an arrange marriage with the O'ren.

"We have a fine lass for you, ser. She is the only daughter of a powerful O'ren insider. She shows great potential as an ESP as well. We've arranged the marriage on your behalf."

Yuiriel II glanced at Masu who shook his head weakly.

"Answer me. Why should I accept this marriage?"

"The council believes that the marriage will benefit both of us greatly. The O'ren is willing to let us build a division on Venus if this marriage proposal goes through."

Masu sent a message to Yuiriel II by telepathy.

"Hah!" Yuiriel II sneered loudly. "You do realize the Klisis is currently being relocated to Venus, do you not?"

"Ser, I do."

“So, what’s the point of this marriage again?”

The councilor didn’t seem to understand what Yuiriel II was trying to say.

Therefore, Masu answered instead.

“So that Cecil can pick on the Bau on Venus also,” He replied on Yurieil II’s behalf.

Yuiriel II sneered at Lucas and told him, “Is the council so stupid that they are going to let that happen?”

“But ser.” Councilor Lucas was cut off by Yuiriel II.

“There is no way I am going to accept this marriage! Anyone with an ounce of brain will not accept this! Be gone!”

Time passed. It was year 8701. Yuiriel II and the council were in deadlock. Masu’s tireless efforts over half a century earned him roughly half of Earth. The council controlled the other half.

And Masu felt it was time finally.

“It is time for ultimatum,” He declared.

Yuiriel II replied calmly, “I see, so the time has finally arrived.”

“There are still those who remain undecided. They will decide only when they know which side is winning. The ultimatum will finally make them move.”

“So finally, it has come to this...” Yuiriel II looked around the hall vacantly. It was no longer empty. Gerwin Bau was there. Gabriel and Shaun were there. Diplomats from other numerous supporters were there.

The hall was no longer empty.

His castle compound had also seen numerous upgrades to fortify.

As Yuiriel II stood up from his stone, those in the hall stood in lines and showed upmost respect by kneeling down at once. Everyone except Yuiriel II and Masu had kneeled down.

“The time has arrived!” Yuiriel II bellowed. “It is time for ultimatum!”

“Ser!” The crowded exclaimed at once in response.

Few days later, Masu delivered Yuiriel II’s ultimatum to the Bau council in person.

The council either had to dissolve itself or it was a civil war.

The Bau council denied the ultimatum.

Conflicts broke out immediately as the Bau council announced that they had declined Yuiriel II’s ultimatum.

Center of Yuiriel II’s influence was Australia. He also had large influence over Asia.

But his influence in Europe and America continent was fairly weak. The Bau council was in Washington.

As the civil war began, Gerwin reported that he had lost the city of Hamburg to which Yuiriel II assured not to worry about.

For next few weeks, Masu had absolutely no time to sleep. He commanded armies from Yuiriel II's hall. He ordered retreats and advances. He calculated routes and attack patterns. He was the brain of Yuiriel II's operation.

The Bau council was very strong in the beginning of the conflicts but their advances were halted and were being drawn back. And they lost their grounds progressively as Masu outsmarted them on fields, and when the Bau council started to lose Europe, few key members of the Bau council defected to Yuiriel II's side. And it became only a matter of time when the Bau council lost South America to Yuiriel II.

Masu was yet to be called "Masu the sage" at this point. However, he was about to earn his nickname when he alone visited Washington to deliver a surrender letter to the Bau council.

"What is the meaning of this?!" A Bau council member violently threw away the surrender letter to the ground. "It's a blank paper!"

Indeed, it was.

"I do not believe anything needs to be said at this point," Masu addressed the council members in the White house. "If you think you are winning, you might as well get out of here."

"We still stand a chance," A council member insisted. "We've had some setbacks due to betrayals, but we have a backup plan."

"The O'ren will not send any aid," Masu said, reading his mind. "Why do you think Cecil relocated to Venus? The O'ren has to watch out for him now."

“Are you implying that Yuiriel II has been working with the Crimson wizard?!”

The council still held central and north America. They could still go on if they went on defensive. So far, Yuiriel II’s forces were able to take over territories with relative ease because the Bau council never took defensive measures. However, if they were to be defensive, Masu expected a lot of casualties and a much longer civil war, both of which he wanted to avoid. The longer this civil war went on, it would become progressively riskier for Yuiriel II.

The reason was simple. Yuiriel II’s influence did not go outside of Earth whereas the Bau council had strong influence over the whole Sol system. There was strong Bau presence on Saturn also which the Bau council could request backup from.

Masu did not want any outside influences meddling in this conflict. One sure way to insure that no outside influence would meddle in was to end this conflict as quickly as possible.

“Of course, not,” Masu replied. “The Klisis relocated to Venus to escape from the Bau. I thought that was obvious unless... you are trying to pick on everything desperately.” He was clearly mocking the council and there was nothing anybody could do anything.

“How far the mighty has fallen!” He exclaimed with a sneer on his face. “But it’s not too late. I am the headman’s top advisor. I can spare or kill your lives after this conflict is concluded.”

The forty or so council members murmured.

“Those who wish to surrender, let your intention be known and I will make sure you and your lands will remain untouched by the headman’s ire.”

The murmuring became louder, and he continued, “You have twelve hours to make your decision. Obviously, I don’t expect you to make the decision right here right now. That would be stupid, isn’t it?”

Few council members were verbally arguing.

“I shall be in Hawaii. You have twelve hours. There will be no going back after that.”

And then Masu teleported out.

His intention was to unsettle the council and it worked as the council members broke up and started to fight each other. And within twelve hours, more than half of council members sent their messages secretly, declaring their new allegiance.

And within few weeks, central and north Americas fell.

Year 8701, the civil war lasted six months and Yuiriel II was victorious. Yuiriel II quickly redistributed lands and formed a new council, and no one was surprised that Masu Bau was chosen as the head of the new council.

Furthermore, Yuiriel II officially nicknamed him “Masu the sage”.

“I had nothing. I was nothing!” Yuiriel II was addressing a giant crowd in Sydney.
“And this gray-white haired man came by!”

Masu was standing next to him. His once pitch black hair turned white-gray after Affie’s assassination. There were ways to revert his hair color but he never chose to do so. And his white-gray hair became symbolic with his image over years.

“He is my savior! He is your, the Bau’s, savior! With him, I fought against the cowardly council!” Yuiriel II continued on, making fists in the air. “He alone outsmarted the whole council! And here we stand today, united once again! Today, I nickname him the sage!”

The crowd cheered.

While the festive mood went on, Masu was troubled. It was Heather. She demanded to be treated as a wife. To be more precise, she demanded him to sleep with her because they had yet to share the same bed together even after all the years.

“I am not going to do that,” Masu said firmly.

“Why not?!”

“I married you only because the situation required me to do so. I can annul the marriage if you’d like. The headman will probably approve.”

“No, that is not what I want!” Heather raised her voice. “Why do you think I’ve waited all these years? The conflict is over now and I want peace. I want to resume my life.”

All Masu could do was sigh and Heather had enough of it.

“Listen!” She pointed at him. “I knew the loss took a heavy toll on you and I waited for you to get over! I’ve waited seventy years! Isn’t that enough?”

He wasn’t sure whether he had “gotten over”. He no longer was tormented by nightmares. He no longer felt the raging anger inside of him. However, where there was his rage, there was void. He had occupied himself by assisting Yuiriel II’s cause but now that it was over, he was sensing the presence of the void stronger.

Sighing, he shook his head. “I don’t want to talk about this right now,” He muttered.

Masu inquired Yuiriel II whether he could obtain annulment.

“No, you may not,” He replied firmly. “You need to stay a Bau. You need to be married to someone Bau.”

Hadn’t he done enough? He assisted Yuiriel II to dissolve the former council and helped him to regain the clan. He spent a century for his cause.

Hadn’t he done enough?

“You promised that you’d make me an insider regardless. Are you breaking your words?”

“I am not breaking my words. You are a Bau regardless married to Heather or not, but I need you to remain married to a Bau.”

Masu wasn’t pleased and Yuiriel II could clearly see that.

“Listen, we are on high. I cannot have you divorce Heather right now. People will think something is going on.

Masu was the head councilor but there weren't much for him to do as a councilor. The council had only twelve members and all of them answered only to Yuiriel II. He had been spending last few seasons doing nothing but arguing with Heather. He needed to get away from this.

However, for Yuiriel II, he needed to keep Masu by his side. Masu was the brain of his operation and he knew that, as long as he stood by him, he had much less risk of someone standing against him. But he wasn't going to just hold him indefinitely and make him feel unsettled. He was hoping that giving him Heather would make it work. Alas, it wasn't working out.

Meanwhile, Masu was alone in the council chamber in Washington. It was the very same place he delivered the surrender letter to. There was no one in the chamber at the moment.

It was a quiet place that he could get away from nagging and arguing Heather. As the deep silence dominated the area, Masu fell into thoughts.

At one point, he wondered how Cecil would have handled Yuiriel II's situation.

“Hah,” He laughed unintentionally because he could easily see what he would have done.

Cecil would have killed those who stood in his path and would simply demand others to either submit or die. It was a ridiculous way to handle things but he knew it'd work. Cecil could get away with such because, just as he claimed, he can.

He wanted to talk to him because talking to him often refreshed his mind. And then he realized he could since he was the head councilor. He had the authority. After clicking few buttons on a holographic screen, someone appeared on the screen.

"Excuse me, this line is restricted..." And then he realized who was trying to use the line.

"Head councilor!" He raised his voice. "My apologies. I will open up the line right away!"

He nodded along.

A female appeared on the screen soon after.

"Greetings, this is Venus operations. May I ask who you are and who you are trying to reach?"

"Masu Bau, the head councilor of the Bau council. I am trying to contact Cecil Klisis," Masu said indifferently.

The operator seemed shell shocked to see him. "The head councilor...!" She raised her voice. "My apologies. I will redirect your call to the Klisis house!"

And then another face showed up. It was a man this time.

“Hello, this is the Klisis clan. May I ask who you are and who you are trying to reach?”

“I am Masu Bau, the head councilor of the Bau council. I’d like to talk to Cecil Klisis.”

“The sage...!” He exclaimed. “O, of course, ser, I will let the headman know right away.”

And finally, Cecil’s face appeared on the screen.

“Long time no see,” Cecil greeted him. “How goes life?”

Masu beamed a grin. “Could be a lot worse, so I am not complaining. How is yours? Did the move go smoothly?”

“I had to kill few, but that happens all the time, so no one was surprised.”

He laughed casually. “I see.”

“Congratulations, head councilor,” Cecil said seemingly sarcastically.

“Nothing’s changed for me. Head councilor or not.”

“You speak as if you need a break.”

Cecil was precisely correct. He needed a break.

“Which isn’t all that surprising considering how many years you pushed on without a break.”

Smiling, he vaguely stared. “True, friend.”

“Why don’t you come over here for a while?”

Cecil's sudden proposal woke him up immediately. He wasn't sure what he meant by that. He could mean working for him. He could just mean just a visit. And soon enough, Cecil rectified his statement.

"My clan is going to be hosting a party. It is political in nature but you don't need to mind that. Guests from the O'ren and the Vues will come. You are welcome to come by."

Why not, he thought.

"I don't see why not."

"Make sure you bring your wife with you."

He frowned upon hearing that. He wanted to get away from his usual life. Bringing Heather wasn't going to make it happen. As if reading his mind, Cecil spoke to him.

"Just bring her. Trust me on this."

When he told Heather that they were going to Venus for a political party, Heather seemed pleased unexpectedly. He expected her to start arguing.

For Heather, she had been in shadows. The Bau knew she was married to Masu but not once had she shown up in parties and whatnot. In a sense, it was embarrassing for her to have been ignored like so. There were numerous invitations which Masu rejected at once. They were all small unimportant social parties, but she wanted to attend those while Masu didn't bother. Affie wouldn't have bothered, either, which was why Masu and Affie got along very well.

But Heather forgave Masu for letting her tag along to a big one, a political party between three major clans. Yes, it was a big one for a mild social animal like her.

“Is it alright to go without informing the headman?” Heather asked with a big luggage.

Masu considered informing the headman but decided not to.

“No need. He’s busy anyway. He may not even notice that I am gone.”

It was half a joke but had some truth in it. Yuiriel II no longer relied on him. He had new advisors working closely with him.

And off they went, taking a private Bau cruiser to Venus.

Upon arriving on Venus, the Klisis and the O’ren welcomed them with a magnificent welcome party. After all, it was the Bau’s head councilor visiting Venus. It mattered to a lot. There was even a parade for them.

Masu couldn’t care less, but Heather was obviously enjoying the attention. They were advised to visit the O’ren first since they were the dominating clan on Venus. He was going to refuse and visit Cecil right away but realized possible political breakdown if he did so. Therefore, he reluctantly agreed to visit the O’ren.

The O'ren had numerous outposts on Venus, and location of their HQ was secret. Masu and Heather were taken to the nearest outpost from Fallen crater, and a crowd welcomed them as they took off a shuttle.

He realized how big of an impact this visit was when the headman of the O'ren came to greet him in person.

"Greetings," A tall and slender woman stood before them. "I am Elza O'ren, the current headman of the O'ren clan. I welcome you, head councilor."

Masu showed his respect by light bow. "I thank you for your kind welcome." And Heather curtsayed.

The outpost was a small military installation. The O'ren chose to live away from Fallen crater for some reasons. Nevertheless, they partied the whole day before Masu was finally allowed to visit the Klisis.

Unlike the grandeur welcome by the O'ren, the welcome by the Klisis was modest at the best. In fact, there was only one man standing but he was Konrad Klisis, Cecil's younger brother.

"Welcome to the Klisis," He said with a smile on his face. "The headman is waiting for you inside."

The Klisis relocated from Earth to Venus half a century ago and they had settled down on in Great rivers region, forming a small town of Aqua. The Klisis had less than two hundred members and their home compound was modest.

Heather wasn't obviously pleased by the modest welcome, but Masu couldn't care less what kind of welcome he'd get.

Konrad took them to a garden where Cecil was casually having tea at a table by a pond.

Noticing them, Cecil placed down his cup and stood up slowly. Showing them chairs, he told them to sit.

It was a complete contrast of how they were treated by the O'ren. But Masu liked the modest treatment better.

"Tea?" Konrad quietly asked them.

Masu gave him a nod whereas Heather asked for black coffee.

Cecil was casually walking around while Masu and Heather was waiting for their drinks. The place was silent as in completely silent. Unlike Earth where there would be birds and whatnot, Venus had none of such. Therefore, the quietness was completely different from Earth's quietness.

"You seem to be doing well." Masu started the conversation.

"So do you," Cecil replied.

"I didn't think the O'ren would let you settle down in Great rivers region. I thought this region was off limit for humans."

Great rivers region provided fresh water to Fallen crater and it was off limit for humans to live.

"Remember telling you I had to kill few?"

"Oh, I see."

Few got in Cecil's way and so he killed them off, a fine method by Cecil which always worked for him.

"I didn't understand when Yuiriel II said he was jealous of you when we first met, but I think I am starting to understand now."

Cecil beamed what appeared to be a faint grin. It was hard to tell. "He has qualities as a tyrant. Be careful of him."

Masu almost laughed. "How ironic to hear that from you."

"True, I may be a tyrant but I rule just. He is not a just man."

Masu disagreed but decided not to argue with him because he felt there was no point. He had his own ways that worked for him.

They casually talked for an hour or so until Konrad Klisis informed them that the party would be held few days later.

"In 3 days," Konrad said to Masu and Heather. "At 8 PM."

Cecil told them after Konrad, "You may stay here. Or you may leave and stay somewhere else. I don't care. Konrad will show you to your room if you choose to stay here."

Heather insisted to stay at a hotel, and Masu let her have her way. He started to see clear differences between Heather and Affie. Heather was an active and social person whereas Affie was a somewhat passive and slightly solitary person. He had a lot more common with Affie than he would with Heather. They were sisters but they had really nothing in common other than their appearances.

Masu stayed low and refused any attempts to contact him by VNN while Heather spent most of her time shopping. She insisted that she had to buy a new dress for the occasion. He played down the importance of the party but it was in fact a high profile party. And Yuiriel II contacted him.

“That was a nice surprise.” He began with a clap. “I was told that you were nowhere to be found and suddenly there you are.”

A Bau secret messenger had a holographic comm. device on his palm in a kneeled down position. The device was displaying a screen and Yuiriel II was on it.

Heather was out shopping, so there was only Masu in the hotel room.

“I didn’t feel I needed to inform you. I didn’t think it was such a high profile political party,” He explained.

“Hah!” Yuiriel II laughed rather pleasantly on the screen. “Nothing Cecil does is low profile. I thought you knew that.”

“Why were you looking for me in the first place?”

Indeed, he hadn’t seen Yuiriel II for a while. The timing wasn’t coincidence, he felt.

“You are my head councilor!” Yuiriel II responded half-jokingly. “Of course, I seek your council.”

He hadn’t sought Masu’s “council” ever since he dissolved the former council.

“Let us not kid ourselves,” He raised his tone slightly. “Admit that you were keeping eyes on me.”

Yuiriel II remained silent on the screen. He looked calm.

“I am the only one who can stand against you,” He claimed. “So, you are keeping eyes on me.”

Finally, he laughed again but a little hysterically this time. “True, I admit it! I consider you as my rival!”

“You should know that I have no ambition to overtake you.”

“Do you really? You never know.”

He recalled Cecil’s comment about him having characteristics of a tyrant.

“If you want me to be gone, I will be glad to oblige.” He had no attachment to his position. He was basically dragged into Yuiriel II’s affairs against his will initially.

He needed to focus on something to get over Affie’s death. Therefore, he chose to assist Yuiriel II. A century passed since then.

He wasn’t certain whether he had gotten over her death, but he was no longer tormented by the event, and he was no longer feeling too bothered by the void left by Affie.

“No, I need you by my side.”

He sneered. “Then decide.” He raised his tone substantially this time. “Either trust me or let me go. I do think I’ve done enough to earn your trust, did I not?”

He was being rational, and Yuiriel II was being irrational.

He matured, and Yuiriel II was losing the plot slowly but surely.

“I am willing to give you a leave of absence. I need you to hold the council for me. As long as you hold the council, no one can give me a fuck about the council being a puppet.”

The history was repeating. This time, the council was the puppet.

“For how long?” Masu bothered to ask. He figured Yuiriel II’s answer.

“As long as you want.”

Yes, he figured as much.

“Fine.”

After hearing Masu’s answer, the channel was closed, and the secret messenger stood up and quietly left the hotel room.

Masu didn’t feel betrayed or anything. He had no attachment to his position as a head councilor. In fact, he was glad that he was given freedom and, when he broke the news to Heather, she wasn’t surprised, either.

In fact, she asked, “Where do you want to go?”

Still they decided to attend the party nevertheless.

The party was being held at Fallen crater city hall which was an impressive skyscraper of 266 floors. The party was being held on the roof.

The roof was a size of a football field and it was crowded.

“Oh, my God, I might pass out,” Heather commented as she peeped down below.

“I can’t even see the ground.”

Masu casually laughed. “You are an ESP. Even if you fall from here, you won’t die.”

“That doesn’t mean I enjoy being up this high.”

“Point taken.”

Cecil approached them and greeted them both by telling them, “Congratulations on your freedom.”

“How did you know?”

“The messenger bumped into me and died,” Cecil said casually. It was his way of saying he killed him. Bau messengers were trained to be tight-lipped. Cecil must have tortured him to get anything out of him. Of course, Masu did not want to imagine how he tortured him.

“Thanks. I guess it’s only a matter of time before he fires me.”

“No, he won’t let you go. He’s too paranoid to let you go now.”

“Hah,” Masu didn’t want to admit but Cecil was uncannily correct in his predictions so far. “I guess I am stuck with him until he dies, I guess.”

“Indeed, but he won’t live for too long.”

He felt that Cecil knew answers to everything. He even felt that, if he asked how long Yuiriel II would live for, Cecil would give him an answer but he decided not to ask such questions. Life would be boring if one knew answers to everything.

For now, he decided to enjoy freedom he was given.

He and Heather were introduced to lots of high profile O’ren members. But what caught his attention was when Cecil introduce Hal Vues to him.

“This is Hal Vues,” Cecil introduced a big muscular man. He was so tall that even Masu whose height was 179cm had to look up.

“Sir!” Hal Vues lowered his upper body as a form of bow. He was too tall and too big to bow normally. “I am delighted to meet Masu the sage!” And He was loud.

“Woah,” Heather uttered as she looked up.

“Don’t mind his big appearance. He’s just a kid of 27 years old,” Cecil told them casually. “He is the heir to the Vues however.”

“So, how do you like being freed from the Bau?” Masu asked.

“Very glad, ser!” He spoke with vigor and power. “We are eternally grateful for the Klisis to have made that happen!”

Masu was sure other smaller clans would have wanted to go with Vues.

The party was, otherwise, very ordinary. People had drinks and a singer sang on a stage. Desserts were given out and so on.

When the party was nearing its end, Masu found Cecil swirling a glass of red wine alone, looking above the clouded sky of Venus. He felt he saw a faint eerie glow from his eyes which soon vanished as he approached him.

Cecil Klisis, also known as the Crimson wizard, was a man who did everything his way and was capable of getting away with every crime he committed. He got away not because he was elusive. He got away because he threatened to kill anyone who’d dare trying. And he did kill those who threatened.

ENN wouldn’t formally report it but other sources told that the police attempted to arrest him only to be wiped out as in killed. It was an unofficial record Masu was able to access because of his status of a head councilor. Not only did Cecil

wiped out those who went to arrest him, he went even further and blew up a local police station. Further attempts to arrest him came to an awkward halt when he threatened to blow up a whole continent.

Long story short, they could not take his threats lightly anymore and had given up pursuing him.

His nickname “the Crimson wizard” was originated when military personnel encountered Cecil during his massacre of a Bau city. According to their testimonies, they all saw the same thing.

“Bloody but glimmering crimson robe with vividly glowing eyes.”

The Bau had always wanted to absorb the Klisis. It was for their pure ESP blood and the Bau council concluded that Cecil was the most powerful ESP ever existed in the history. They feared that the Klisis would enter their golden era under his leadership. They feared the Klisis might overthrow them.

However, what Cecil had done was getting off Earth all together. Masu felt it was the right choice because battling the Bau would have been a lost cause. The Bau was simply too big for Cecil to take on alone. Instead of fighting a losing battle, Cecil chose to start anew on a new planet. It would require a strong leadership to unify the clan and move away from their home planet. And Cecil had done so, and he took even Vues with him.

Of course, Cecil could have fought the Bau. Masu was sure Cecil would have survived, but what of his clan? What would be the point of the war if Cecil was to be the only survivor?

“Cecil,” Masu called out to which Cecil responded, “Where do you plan to go now?”

He shrugged as he had no idea. “I don’t know.”

“May I suggest that you visit Freedom colony for the time being?”

It was an unexpected suggestion. He’d never have thought it. It was virtually the last place he’d want to go.

Cecil continued, “I know what you are thinking, but you can be stronger only when you embrace your darkness.”

Masu didn’t know what to say, and Cecil continued his speech.

“Darkness is a part of you. Don’t try to overcome or suppress it. If you do, you will become like your liege, Yuiriel II. It is a part of you. Accept it and embrace it.”

Sighing, he looked up at the sky Cecil was staring at.

“I don’t know what’s going on in my life anymore. I mean I am married to Heather who is wife’s sister. What’s worse is that I’ve become the head councilor of the Bau especially when I came from the Dietrich.” He had to laugh because he felt his life sounded funny. “I can’t say it’s a boring life though.”

Cecil agreed. “Indeed.”

Masu glanced at Heather who was a distance away. She was having chitchat with other ladies. She was wearing an exquisite dress she purchased on Venus. Sighing, He said to Cecil, “I just need to convince Heather to divorce me somehow.”

“No.”

“What?”

“Don’t divorce her. Take her with you.”

At this point, both of them took their eyes off the Venusian night sky. Masu looked at Cecil and he was staring down at his glass of wine, swirling it still.

“Everyone needs closure and her closure is you,” Cecil said.

“What do you mean?”

“If you divorce her, that will be it for her.”

Not clearly understanding the meaning of Cecil’s statement, Masu asked,

“Meaning?”

“She will likely end herself either out of great shame or out of feeling left out.”

Masu didn’t understand. “Why? Why would she do that?”

“Ask yourself. What is left for her if you divorce her? She was a concubine and was given to you. Where would she go? What would she do? What would be her position in the society? Again, what is left for her? The only place she belongs is your side whether you like or not. And whether you like or not, being with you is the only sensible choice for her.”

Inhaling, Masu attempted to argue Cecil’s point but he couldn’t. No words came out of his open mouth when he tried to speak. In the end, he let out of a long sigh instead.

“What a funny life, I have,” He eventually said.

“At least, it’s not boring as you say.”

“Thanks for the ... compliment.”

- Fin