

The leaves crunch as Erika Hawk walked up the white marble stairs to the academy. Her face was emotionless, but there was no denying the butterflies in her stomach. She subconsciously ran a hand through her faded pink hair.

Birds perched atop the blossoming trees, flowers adorned its branches. If paradise existed, this would be what it looked like. Erika wondered how much more of a paradise the academy would be at the top of the stairs.

"This place should be nice. They did a pretty good job turning the gates into a garden." She murmured and looked around with her lifeless silver eyes.

"You're right. They-no we, did do a pretty good job turning the gates into a garden." A voice called out full of pride.

Erika eyes moved towards the source of the voice, and her eyes flickered for a moment. A young teenage boy stood before her, his long brown hair tousled in the wind. His green eyes seemed to glow from inside and he had a smile that beckoned her to come closer.

However, charms like that do not work on her.

Erika returned a smile as her eyes changed its color to a greenish hue, as it usually does when she has company. Her eyes turns a cold silver when she is angry or terribly calm and neutral, but she had managed to control it after years of training.

The boy bowed down low. "Welcome to Blue Rose Academy!" He straighten up with a charming smile. "I am Cage Lighten, the president of this academy's council. I am assuming that you are the one they call Erika Hawk."

Erika blinked. "Yes." She paused. "Am I supposed to curtsy?"

Cage fell into a fit of laughter. His face was flushed, and he was gripping his stomach. Erika waited patiently for him to recover, and saw that one edge of his lip is lifted up into a smirk.

"Forgive me for the dramatic formal greeting. I like reading historical genre which had impacted on my everyday life greatly."

"Hmm... For a moment there, I thought you were going to kiss my hand." Erika laughed as she shook her hand playfully.

Erika's laugh was cut off when Cage grabbed her hand and softly planted his lips on her smooth skin. She gasped as her body went rigid all over.

"C-C- Cage!" She stuttered.

He let go of her with a victorious smirk. "Let that be a small lesson to you your highness."

"Right..." Erika mumbled.

Cage chuckled turned around, only to turn back again when he heard the thump of something hitting the ground. His eyes widened as he saw the figure on the ground.

“Erika!”

“Erika!” A voice swam into the girl’s unconsciousness.

“Ugh... What happened?” The girl mumbled as she struggled to stand up.

She gasped as she started to recollect the situation. She was walking up the stairs to Blue Rose Academy, was greeted by the council president Cage Lighten. He kissed her hand, and she totally blacked out.

Something cold and thin touched her face and more clung to her, gripping her ankles and wrist. She did nothing to stop it, for she did not have the power to do so.

At least, she couldn’t do it physically.

*Stop.*

The stings instantly froze that single thought.

*Show yourself.*

The strings glowed, and a light emitted across the void. A silhouette stood in the center of the light, she could tell that it was a male. He was clapping.

“A spectacular performance my dear Erika Hawk.” He said, still clapping.

Erika felt the smirk in his tone. She scowled.

“*Must you really mute my voice?*” She shouted in thought, it echoed across the glass like walls.

He chuckled. “Well yes. It was part of the test, besides you can communicate with your mind. Anyway, aren’t you wondering about how you got here, where you are, or who am I?”

Erika let out a sigh. “*True, but funny things have been happening lately. Can’t say that I’m surprised.*” She paused. “*Though, I am wondering who you are. I take it that you are a dream whisperer out of a tech world. You really chose the wrong time to summon me like this.*”

The man raised an eyebrow. “What exactly were you doing?”

“*Enlighten me. Then, I shall answer. That is, if your answer is a satisfaction to me.*” The girl’s eyes switched to silver for a commanding effect.

“Oh you are so cold my dear.” He chuckled. “I will not answer your question specifically, because you already know who I am.

Erika frowned. “*What do you mean?*”

He laughed. “Look at me again Erika. And this time, don’t turn away from truth.”

*"Don't turn away from the truth..."* Erika pondered on this line, her heart racing. Her eyes widened as recognition entered her. *"Ether?"*

The boy laughed. "Correct! I am impressed that you recognized me from that line alone." He brought a hand up to his face, and swept the other across the void dramatically. "Come! Join me as I rule the world of technology!"

*"How... How did you come back? I terminated you! I made sure you will never step into the world of technology ever again! How did you come back? Tell me!"* Erika shouted in disbelief, taking back a step before being stopped by an unseen barrier.

"You are not the only Deus, and that is a fact." He chuckled. "Over the years in exile, I have developed more and more. I then rose to the rank of Deus, and broke out of that endless void."

The cold silver left her eyes as mixed emotions overcame her. *"But that's impossible! There's nothing in the void for you to build on!"*

Ether smiled, his eyes taunting her. "Oh? But there is something for me to build on."

*"W-What do you mean?"* Erika stuttered in thought.

The boy smile widened. "Oh? It seems my virus had done it's work on you. You've forgotten all about it." He cackled. "Well good for me! I will be going now, but first..."

Ether's shoes clacked on the dark floor as he made his way toward Erika. Her eyes widened as he reached out a hand to her cheek. His cold hand made contact with her skin, sending shivers down her spine.

*"What are you doing?"* Erika gasped in her mind as he slid his hands down her chin. *"Ah...! Stop!"*

Her plea seems to encourage him to continue his pursuit, and she immediately regretted her outburst. His breath was cold on her neck, and he chuckled at how rigid her body was.

"My my, already frozen from a few puffs of my breath? You need to go out in the cold more often." He smirked.

Ether lifted up her chin and bit down on her neck. His neon blue eyes glowed as he sucked out her power.

*"VIRUS INJECTED INTO SYSTEM."* He murmured in a robotic tone.

*"A virus...?"* Erika wondered as she lost consciousness.

The last thing she remembered was falling through the void, into a huge gap of light.