



Vi Kors

The Mist and the Lightning

Part V

СОДЕРЖИТ
НЕЦЕНЗУРНУЮ
БРАНЬ

18+

Ви Корс

The Mist and the Lightning. Part V

«ЛитРес: Самиздат»

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Корс В.

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Continuation of the sensational erotic adventure...They are not offspring of Hell; they just lived nearby... Arel Chig is a fallen prince, the only one who dares to break the rules in a society separated by race, language and origin. When he meets Nikto, a strange man of many secrets, Arel's life is going to change.Содержит нецензурную брань.

“You still could not resist. You should not have called him, because you know what he wants. Get over the need to completely change your life. THERE IS NO WAY BACK ALREADY...” – Gods see, I can no longer read their books! They scare me! I’ll put them on the fares shelf and won’t touch anymore!

We came back to the castle, and I continue my sad chronicle of events ...

Tol and Esa are rowing all the time, others try not to pay attention to them, but sometimes they start screaming so loudly that there is simply no strength to listen to these endless cries. They shut up only when Arel is near. But he is less and less likely to leave his rooms ...

It's sad to look at him, he is completely passed.

It seems to me he doesn’t eat or drink at all, just pricking...

Carina had thrown him again and went to Upper...

I’ve faced her when she was living and she was determined.

“Buy, Vil’, – she said, – “I don’t know if we ever met again, maybe somewhere behind the walls of this castle. I’m living! I can’t help Arel. I can’t and I don’t want to. I won’t even try to help him – it’s hopeless and ungrateful work. Let him do whatever he wants! I’m sorry, Vil, don’t you think that I left him in a hard time, however... maybe it is

what it is. Well, alright! I have no shame, I need to think about myself... I don’t know how could I help him! How to help, if he doesn’t want this help! Do you know?”

I shook my head sadly...

“Than you have nothing to do here too,” – she said, – ‘Leave until they didn’t ask you again to do something vile!’

I answered:

‘Carina, I can’t! If I leave the castle, who will take care after people? About poor people living in this castle. Arel’s steward is a real sadist, he’s been serving here since dad was alive and the way he behaves with slaves...’

She looked at me so strangely, with surprise, that I blushed.

“Now, when Arel is out of business, I suppose I could change some rules...’

‘Good luck!’ – she threw, – “And... If you need something... My help...’

“Thank you, Carina! Gods bless you!’

She didn’t hear out. She didn’t say something more. She just left. And what about Arel he seemed not to be very upset. Moreover, during the dinner ignoring the food he said arrogantly: “She’ll back! She has nowhere to go!’

At that moment I wanted to punch his stupid head!

Of course, I don't think Carina is a beautiful and innocent angel... After all I've known about her... I was so naïve and stupid! But still... Despite all that awful things she'd done...

She did it to save her life... And that justify her a little big in my eyes... but maybe more honestly... She yielded to the temptation... I could forgive her everything! And Arel must be happy that such a girl is beside! He must carry her in his arms...

No! I don't want any more to write about them...

Enriki intermeddles in my business... Only the one should answer for the men! Enriki seems to be having more fun commanding them that actually doing them any good.

I've talked about that with Arel.

“What kind of people’ – he asked.

I was always amazed at his ability to see no one around him! He lives in the world, where there are only Nikto, Lis, Enriki, Toland Sguint-Eye.

That's all!

I reminded him that the refugees are trying to live in the streets ruined by Black Bay, and this is not easy in the circs of winter and epidemics!

Then he seems to have understood a bit what I mean ...

I told him that more than half the people left us ...

Some went back to the east, it is good that the "red" subsided a bit ...

Others dispersed in the Lower City and settled on other streets ...

But those that remained despite the difficulties, have already restored several houses and began to build new ones.

I said that Nikto helped me a lot by putting at my disposal his“unclean” half-breeds soldiers. They help a lot at the construction.

“At first I was very afraid of the epidemic”, I said, “especially after hearing that the half-breeds endlessly tell a story about a sick warrior. But it turned out that I was worried in vain, they were talking only about some very respected commander who was seriously ill, fatally ill ... The tumor devoured him from within, causing incredible suffering and

agony, he knew that he did not have long to live, but he endured. Unable to fall asleep at night, he tried to escape from pain and heavy thoughts at the card table and alcohol ...but it didn't help much... His only desire was to die as befits a warrior by the sword, and not by illness in his bed

... "Unclean" half-breeds believe that only in this way can a warrior join the rest of the warriors in the next world ...

But he was not lucky, because of the epidemic, all hostilities faded away. And he counted every day and only prayed to the Gods that they would enable him to die as a warrior and die by the sword! Now he didn't go to bed at all, didn't go to the bed at all, barely standing on his feet, put out his last strength, and was still waiting for deliverance, and prayed to the Gods ...

I told this to Arel, and he suddenly looked up, and I saw in his eyes some glimmers of interest!

"And the deliverance has come!" he said suddenly.

"Yes! How do you know this!" I was immensely surprised.

"His God came down from heaven and struck him with a sword as a warrior," said Arel ...

I stood stunned:

"You ... did you hear that story too?" – I asked, and he laughed, laughed badly, I always get scared when he laughs like that ...

"I made it," he said.

And I saw his eyes ... Terrible eyes ... Totally insane. I could not look into them, could not bear this look ... He looks at you and as if through you. As if you are not, or you are transparent. His mother had the same look, and I wanted to leave as soon as possible ... In the end, Arel has long been no matter what happens around ...

"He took me through again, however ... as always," Arel said, probably to himself, because I did not understand his words ... – Wil! – He called me.

And when I approached him again, he said:

"Wil, when I die, take the portrait of my mother off the wall, you know ... in my room ... in the bedroom." Take it off and open the cache, it is not locked ... for a long time. There is a box ... Take the letter, it will lie at the top ... I put it on top of all the other documents and it is written in large letters Vil Luven ... Do you understand what I'm saying?

"I understand, don't chew everything on me like that," I said. – But why all this? What do you mean, you will not be? What kind of stupid thoughts do you have? "Shut up!" he said it harshly, in his command style, and for a moment it was the same Arel, and I belted up ...

"Listen to me! Listen carefully! Take care of people, take care! People, the mass that everyone needs, while you do it, you will be useful.

Because someone who would do this work is needed. This is your chance to stay. Stay helpful!"

And it said Arel! Who has always been spat on people! I did not believe my ears! He told me to take good care of people! What happens to him? I would have been glad if he had said that before ... But now ... Now, it frightened me even more than his insane look!

Where? Where is the brilliant combination of mind, strength and feeling? Where is the power that terrified anyone who saw him ... Who heard his voice ... Who watched how simple he was holding, while still remaining inaccessible ... Where is everything that I loved so much and why did I forgive everything?! Nothing left! He seemed sucked.

Apparently, all the troubles, which in many ways he himself brought down on his head, nevertheless did their dirty deed, and emptied him, broke it ... It hurts me to look at it!

What should I do?

“In any case, I will not abandon people,” I said. «Whatever happens, I will try to take care of them ...”

And Arel smiled (now it is so rare).

“Then I am calm for you,” he said, and without saying a word, he got up and left ...

And I was scared ... It is terrible for him, for the others ... They may not be very good people, but they suffer from it. Suffer, I know for sure. I see! But before he was different! Arel was funny, I remember ... He was pretty witty joking; and he was always flap about ... He laughed at the jokes of others. And I so wanted to be with them! To be with them, sit with them at one table and laugh, not paying any attention to the rest. It seemed to me then that they are so friendly, they love each other so much ... Real like-minded people! It seemed to me that they certainly never feel lonely, because they are together! I remember one night when they arrived at “Backara” ... They sat down at their desk ... Not far from the entrance ... And I was sitting by the opposite wall and I saw them, although the tables in “Backara” were separated from each other by walls. I sat and looked at them, but they didn’t do anything special ...

They just drank and talked ... I didn’t hear what about, it was too noisy in the hall ... Drunken visitors rattled around, music was playing... And I was sitting far away... Arel and others did not pay attention to anyone, communicating in their close circle. And I wanted so much to be noticed by them, I wanted them to pay attention to me ...

I wanted it so much! I understood ... Somewhere deep in my heart I understood ... That this will not happen ... That they are not interested in me... Absolutely... But I was driving these thoughts away ... Eagerly staring into them... They were together ... And I was alone! And I was a little sad about this ... Although I'm used to the loneliness ... And yet, when I looked at them, I was sad ... I wanted to know what they were talking about ...

They laughed all the time ...

Now I understand that they laughed because they were probably nicely stoned ... But then I did not understand this ... And I wanted to carefree laugh with them!

They had fun with each other, I did not doubt it ... It was clear ... And further more... It was somehow felt from the inside ... They were great ... And I envied at them ... I thought whether they themselves appreciated these feelings, or were already so used to them that they did not feel this happiness ... Happiness to be truly united with someone ...

And they were like a loadstone, as I also wanted to sit there!

My dream has come true...

I'm with them ... But am I really happy?

They never accepted me into their circle ... And was it?

There was no friendship and unity, kinship of souls and other things, all this is nonsense! My naive inventions!

My shattered illusions ...

Chapter one

The Castle

“Give it to me!” Arel approached his master, Nikto stepped back a few steps. “Give!”

“No!”

Arel howled, it was a mix of rage and despair. Again, with a jerk rushed to him so that Nikto had no time to step aside. Nikto hit him, lightly, not hard, more likely just for the sake of diversity, than pursuing any goal.

Arel stopped, froze for a second, as if he did not immediately realize what had just happened to him. Then he collapsed on his knees and, bent over, crouching at Nikto's feet, knocked his forehead on the floor several times, well, that it was covered with carpets. Nikto tried to push him away from him, but Arel already grabbed him with an iron grip. Lame Nikto barely kept his feet. He hit Arel several times with his cane, already harder than before. Arel unhooked, remained lying on the floor.

“Give it to me,” he whined.

“Look at yourself! Where is your will?”

Arel raised his face to his tormentor, licked his dry lips:

“I am no longer a prince. I'm a slave! I have no will!”

Nikto with contempt and in some desperation shoved him with a boot in the face. Arel overturned backwards, but immediately sat down, again turning his gaze to such an unjustifiably cruel master.

“You're so pathetic”, said Nikto.

Arel was silent. In silence he demolished his derogatory look, the way Nikto looked at him coldly. And Nikto was looking at Arel's messy, tangled hair, at his dye-covered face, the skin on which again began to peel off. Arel was so thin that it was generally strange how he was able to raise his sword.

“Is my appearance depressing you?” Arel asked without reverting the eyes from those attentive, but such cold, bright eyes. “Well”, he shrugged resignedly. “After all, you did this to me, disfigured both my body and soul. I was free, and now I am not. You look at your work, and to see me like this – your payment for owning me!”

“I didn't want this,” answered Nikto. “I didn't want this,” he repeated, looking away, turning away. “Damn! I wanted to help you! And you die! You die on my eyes!”

“If you don't give me your medicine, I'll actually die! Why are you torturing me! Why are you so cruel?! What is my fault this time? What have I done wrong?!”

“I just wanted to help.” pronounced Nikto sad and thoughtful. His voice became a little softer, and Arel immediately caught it, in a new desperate attempt he threw himself at his feet, from where only the forces were taken.

“It hurts,” he said plaintively.

“Arel, Arel, I do not know how to cure you!”

“You know!” growled Arel frustrated and already with malice. “Your medicines! Your drug! You've made me addicted! And now you don't know! And what should I do? Go to Sguint-Eye?! But he has not the same, they do not bring me such relief! And the hangover is twice as strong!”

“I didn't give you drugs,” Nobody faltered, picking up words. “I did not give you the drug in the true meaning of the word.”

Arel looked at him with great doubt.

“Don't look at me as if I really am the fiend of hell, ruining your innocent soul! You're like your mother! Even worse, your illness began to manifest earlier and stronger! If I didn't give you these ... These sedatives from time to time. That's all! It's the end! I delayed this moment as much as possible! But your madness is developing with such a speed that it cannot be stopped!”

Arel covered his face with trembling hands:

“Like mom,” he whispered. I felt it ... These parishes, from time to time ... Why didn't you tell me before?”

“I did not want to scare you. However, I told you. I said that you were on the verge, but you, as always, did not listen to me. Did not want to hear. Like the others. I cannot get across you what I really want to say. I really don't speak your language well, you don't understand me!”

“We don't understand each other, nobody understands anyone, and the reason is not the language.”

“Well, try to understand now. Try to understand that I don't want something bad to you. On the contrary, I felt sorry for you, I softened your attacks, and you forgot how to suppress them on your own. You don't want to fight anymore, and I don't know how to get you out!”

“What if "black water"?”

“Not! You’ll never get off her! You aren’t a Lis, you really have little willpower, you easily get into everything you embrace. You easily become addicted. A couple of glasses and you cannot stop, a couple of shots and you’re ready for anything to get more. "Water" will ruin you in a couple of weeks!”

“But why so?”

“Because your brain is weak!”

“Help me! Find something if you really kind to me and don’t wish me anything bad as you say!”

“I will not prick you again, otherwise you’ll never get out. Alcohol will be sufficient.”

“I cannot anymore! I’m starting to puke. It’s the same with the food.”

“Da-a-amn, mad, my knowledge is not enough for you, this is a degeneration, and I am almost powerless.”

“But... but... do you still love me?”

“O-o-oh, what are you thinking about?!”

“Do you love?” – Arel whispered softly, and his voice trembled.

Nikto leaned toward him, hugged him, lifting him from the floor, putting him on the bed like a toy, like a big doll.

“Of course, I love you,” he said gently. “And I will fight for you! We will fight, right?”

Arel nodded not too confidently.

“Nik... Nik, if I become like her ... Like my mother. If you don’t succeed,” – he swallowed, suddenly grabbing Nikto by the shoulders, glaring at him with crooked fingers.

“Not me, but us, you must help yourself too,” – Nikto corrected him.

“All right, if we don’t succeed, promise me... promise that you’ll kill me. I don’t want to live like her!”

Nikto bowed his head, hugging him:

“I promise!”

He slowly knelt on the floor in front of Arel so that their faces were about the same level. He looked into those crazy and distressing brown eyes. He hugged Arel, pressing his face against his trembling chest with intermittent breathing. Arel clutched his shoulders harder.

“I promise,” said Nikto. “Promise.”

Arel greedily pressed his lips to the coveted flask, with foreign strong tart-smelling liquid. It didn't cause vomiting, it didn't stir up thoughts, it gave tranquility, all-consuming tranquility bordering on complete indifference.

“What a rough job!” Emba said, shaking her head and looking at the crouching on the bed and sucking her flask, as if his mother's breast, Arel.

“What if your mother and your sister saw this?! Did they teach you like that?” with indignation in her voice, she turned to Nikto, who was standing behind her. “They would burn with shame when they saw what you had done! I warned you! I said that people are fragile! Too fragile! You cannot do it this way!”

“But he's alive,” objected Nikto.

“Rather, still alive! And I am surprised at this! I wonder why is he still alive! After such a clumsy job!” she was suddenly horrified by the hunch that dawned her. “Unless ...” she shrank back from Nikto, as if from a stalemate. “Unless you did it on purpose!”

Nikto turned away and did not answer, he went to the table, poured himself a glass of red wine and took a sip.

“You ... You were deliberately cruel to him!” Emba's gaze darted over Arel's crooked body, and in that gaze flashed pity. “Poor boy,” she said softly, then turned back to Nikto. “If you did it intentionally, then why? Your cruelty is not justified!”

Holding the glass in his hand, Nikto sat in a chair, still silently looking at Emba, his face expressed nothing, and his eyes remained empty.

“This man submitted to you and was perfectly submissive and obedient from the very beginning. Did you doom him to such torments, just for your own pleasure? It was not necessary to break him, but you broke him! Why did you break him? What did you do with him? You are a monster!” She looked at Arel again, he finally fell off her flask, gave a loud hiccup, raised her dull eyes to Emba. She laughed with a hissing laugh. “Do you like my medicine? Yes? You see how good I am, I don't remember evil and offense,” and stretching out her hand, Emba patted Arel on the top of his matted hair, so carelessly, just like her dog, however, it's collar had already been on Arel's neck. “Poor kid. So cute,” she glanced at Nikto reproachfully. “You really exhausted him. As soon as the face is not cut into pieces. Just like your own,” and suddenly she stopped. “So what did you do with him?” and her voice has changed, has become icy.

Nikto was silent.

“What were you trying to get breaking an obedient slave? What?” She approached Nikto closely, looking into his eyes. Without taking his eyes off her terrible eyes, Nikto slowly put the glass back on the table. “So, what did you want from him?” She repeated. “Disobedience?!”

Nikto looked down and she laughed. As easy, as, for example, the boy-servant, hit him on the face with her hand. And Arel jumped up on the bed, he did not understand their language, but he saw their actions, and was ready to rush at her at any moment, to hold his teeth in her throat.

But Nikto beat him. Having seized her hands, he forcefully threw Emba away from him. Falling, she hit the bed, hissed.

“What a pity you weren't there, in the alley,” said Arel, looking down at her from the bed.

“What is he saying,” she asked.

“He regrets that he did not kill you in his time,” Nikto answered, getting up from his chair.

Emba laughed nervously.

“Good boy! Oh, he would never think to harm you and spoil himself!”

“Feed him”, ordered Nikto and took a step towards the bed.

Emba recoiled.

“No!”

Very quickly, Nikto approached and yanked her up, hurled her at Arel.

“No!” Emba screamed, fear now clearly visible on her face without expression before. She looked around nervously, and her gaze fell to the door.

“Don't even try,” said Nikto.

Emba rushed to the door. Nikto sharply threw forward his hand, trying to grab her? Emba was incredibly fast, lightning like a snake. She was halfway to the door when she fell, collapsed like a bag, clumsily entangled in a dress? Raising her head, she opened her mouth, closing her eyes, it was possible to decide that she would now scream with all her strength, scream wildly, loudly. But any sound came from her lips.

“It's useless to scream, Emba,” Nikto chuckled. “No matter how loud you scream, the “unclean” will not hear you here. This castle was built by literate people, and these walls are suppressed by the cries of people like you!”

“So that's why you lured me here!” she darted around the room, clawing at the walls in desperation. Not letting Nikto go to her.

“Your own curiosity lured you here! I just invited you to come, and if you can, to help me.”

“I helped! I did everything that is necessary!”

“This is not enough for me!”

“Do not come close! Do not come to me!”

“You don't have to do anything that I ask!” despite her fierce resistance, Nikto still managed to grab her, writhing, splashing her saliva. He was stronger, wringing her hands in several precise

movements, grabbing a knife and slashing Emba around her wrist. Dark, maroon, almost black blood spurting from the cut.

“It will cost you a lot!” she hissed, choking with rage and pain, it seemed that only her full of hatred not blinking eyes can destroy.

“Do what I said!” Nikto again threw her on the bed to Arel. Arel recoiled in horror.

“Well, you regret it! Take it!” Emba held out her cut, bloody hand to him. “Eat, little bastard!”

And then Arel felt Nikto grabbing his hair, putting pressure on the back of his head and pushing him forward to that nasty hand.

“No!” Arel tried to escape. His lips touched warm and dry skin and something else cold and clammy. He felt his stomach bouncing to his throat from stupefying disgust. He felt Nikto throw his head back up, not letting him expel that mucus that had already fallen into his mouth.

Already flowed on his throat. And already IT was pressed to his lips again, and Arelshouted, vomiting IT out of himself, and each time his mouth was filled with IT again and again.

Chapter two

Recovery

He walked down the street; it seems that it was Lower City. Too narrow streets and pressing clutter of houses. The streets did not rise up and down, and did not loop. It looks like it was already a flat level. Arel has never been here, and now was he really where he thought he was?

And was this him? Arel did not understand. He could not even imagine that such streets exist. He never thought about what the city looks like there, on the plain. There was no difference to him? But now, now everything looked too plausible, really, and for some reason he believed that the Lower City plain was like that and no other. He just knew it, knew without a shadow of doubt and hesitation. Did his diseased brain or inflamed imagination create this world? Create everything so carefully, to the smallest detail, to every stone, every crack on a peeling wall? No, that would be too much! He could not imagine all this. It was all real, it was all real. And if he comes to himself, wakes up and goes there, for example, tomorrow, he will find these streets, see them again and find out. However, to see them, he had to peer. Vision let him down, he could not understand what was happening, at another moment, completely losing orientation in space.

It was a bright sunny summer day. He understood this and felt, and at the same time he knew that now it was not summer at all, but only the beginning of spring, and he could not be there, on the Lower City, and even on a summer day. And yet he was there.

Arel like a mole slowly walked an unknown destination, all the while keeping a hand on the walls. The houses here stood close to each other, and when one house ended, the next one started – it helped him. Several times he pressed against the saving wall, letting the horsemen pass by. They flashed in his mind as completely indistinguishable silhouettes, vague shadows, and he rather heard their approach and therefore pressed into the wall than saw them. And yet, despite all the precautions, he nearly fell a couple of times, his legs did not obey him any less than his eyes. Gods, he was lame!

“All this only seems to me! It only seems! It seems to me that I am Nikto! I am he!” – thought Arel, with a kind of horror and at the same time delight.

It was so weird. The whole world around was different, it was his world and at the same time not his, completely alien. But this is probably even more attractive. His body also became different, denser, heavier, wider at the shoulders. A very strong body, but some kind of clumsy, it didn't seem to work, because it needed “water”, “water”, “water”, “water” ...

Now he felt that he had not eaten or drunk for a long time, but these feelings were somewhere in the background. Perhaps his body needed it, but the brain did not care. His brain was empty. No thoughts, feelings, emotions, just some echoes of thoughts, vague fragments that he could not catch and realize. And sheer indifference. Where is he going? What for? Arel did not know. Did not understand. And he didn't care. When he was himself, he always knew what he needed or at least he thought he knew. He knew where to go and why. What he has to do. He always went somewhere, toward a goal, did something, or did not, but also thought about it, at the same time already thinking what he would do

next, what he would do tomorrow, and what he must do. And that he had to do necessarily, but did not. And only now he understood how all this knowledge weighed and limited him.

His legs were confused, he had never walked so slowly in his life, and vague spots around him were frightening. He did not see what was happening, and it was dangerous. And if they attack him? Strangely, these thoughts did not cause any emotions, just as the thought that he was hungry and dying of thirst. Such aloofness in Arel caused some kind of incomprehensible pleasure, some kind of perverted sense of freedom. He probably still fainted for a while, as if falling out of this continuity, and then regained consciousness and realized that it was dark in the street and he could see better! And he hears nearby the murmur of water.

Arel made the sound and soon found himself in a small courtyard, and almost in the middle of the courtyard he saw a well, and he went to him. He didn't look for water on purpose, it just happened that at that moment he caught a well. He didn't say to himself: “Oh, here's the water, now I'll get drunk, then I have to decide what to do next, where to spend the night, where to get food.” So would say Arel. But he wasn't Arel. He never said anything to himself. It was not important.

“Hey! Hey!” – he heard a shout and looked up. It was a woman. “Do not come here!” – she waved her hand in his direction. “Don't waste the water! Damned tramps! Children, run, call your father from the shop!

Tell him, the tramp wants to pollute the water!”

Small obscure shadows, which he had not noticed before, flashed past, they made some screams. Strangely, he understood everything she said, but somehow, he did not understand how he used to understand. He

understood it by heart, not by reason. He understood the meaning, for him all merged together – the words, her gestures, the expression on her face.

“Don't close the water!”

And he stopped. Perfect indifference continued to own it. Would Arel have abandoned his attempts like that? Is it not worth it to teach this sassy? How dare she not let him to come to the

water! Some kind of poor thing, a commoner. How dare she stop him, prince! But ... But he was not a prince! And he sank heavily on the ground, disobedient fingers in coarse leather gloves clumsily straightened the strands of hair that had come out from under the hood, hiding them. And this young woman stood nearby and carefully and warily looked in his direction, apparently ready, if need be, to protect her well from an uninvited guest. He did not hate her. Did not feel resentment. Maybe just a slight desire. He wanted her. I wanted to stupid, just knock down and fuck. Anything more. Just because she was a woman. And yet he did not budge. He understood that it was impossible to just take her and fuck her like that. That she is afraid of him, and she has protectors who she will call for help.

With unblinking fingers, he only straightened the hood of his raincoat, pulling him even more onto his face. However, there was no face. Only now, to his surprise, Arel felt and realized that he was in a mask, uncomfortable and tough. It is strange that he had not noticed this before, and for some reason, without knowing why, he experienced relief from this. Relief from the fact that his face is closed, and this woman will not be able to see him. Relief and comfort, all feelings were too fleeting and shallow, then again indifference. Involuntarily, Arel thought that probably some animal could think and feel this way.

“Who are you?” – the girl asked a little surprised, as he thought. “Half- breed, is it? Runaway?” It seems that she wasn’t so cruel as he decided at first, because, having scooped some water in a bowl, she put it near him: “Drink. Just do not go to the well.”

He reached for the proposed water: the bowl was dirty, maybe it was meant for a dog? However, he did not care, he lifted the mask from the bottom and pressed his lips to the cold, scalding water. Drinking was uncomfortable. His mouth was as broken as everything else, like legs and eyes. On the one hand, the lips did not move, and therefore icy water flowed on his chin, flowing under his clothes. Making the last sip, he strongly threw back his head and realized that she’d seen that. She saw the part of his face. His mandible is torn from the right side. He saw her eyes widen, she recoiled, apparently already regretting that she had given him water. And at this moment other people, men, appeared.

That’s all he could say about them, they were lit by the last rays of the setting sun, and he could not see them. But there was no fear, nothing again.

“What happened?” – one of the men asked. He was breathing heavily, and a stick was squeezed in his hand.

“Here it is. He wanted water. I was afraid that he would pollute our well. Do you see the way he dressed? And I was right, under his mask there is some sort of tripe on his face. Maybe a leprosy or a plague! If only he did not turn out to be plagued!”

They recoiled from him, he understood everything, but for some reason did not feel the slightest desire to respond. Just tried to get up, but fell. And they bounced off him even further.

"Really sick!"

"I'm telling you! As soon as I saw him going to the well ... Gods, Gods, for all goodness, protect us from the plague!" – the woman began to lament, sobbing. He really felt her fear.

"Hey, you! Get out of here!" – the man swung his stick threateningly. Arel had a sword. Arel knew that a sword was fastened under his cloak behind his back, but he didn’t even try to get it, he didn’t even move.

And now this indifference, this desolation began to frighten him. It was necessary to act, but Nikto, in whose body he was, did nothing.

“He has white hair, see?!”

"Maybe half-breed?"

"Lost her mind! There is no such hair, he is probably gray ... "

"And the half-breeds?"

"He is gray! Hey, old man, go to the temple and ask for alms there, but here you have no place!"

"But he does not look like an old man!"

"What shall we do?"

They huddled together, deliberating. He heard only fragments of their phrases: “Beggar? Old man? Maybe he fluent? Half-breed? Plague? Infection”.

And he got up. And tries to go away. And they, seeing how awkwardly he tightens his lame leg, recoiled from him even more.

They did not ask him, why? They were lost in conjectures, but it never occurred to them to talk to him. Didn't they consider him a person too? Did he feel like a man himself? Same as these people? They were like in another world, as if behind glass, and he had no desire to break this barrier and become one of them. Their attitude towards him did not jar him, did not upset and did not excite. Arel would probably feel the same if a homeless dog banged him on the street. So what? He would immediately forget about it. These people were just as distant, alien and not worth the attention for him now. Just a given. It would be foolish to react to the dog; he was just as indifferent to the humiliation of these people. He did not consider anything; he simply did not notice him. So, he did not care what happens to him and around him.

And Arel suddenly felt uneasy. He must wake up! Wake up! Wake up! And it was not freedom! Imaginary freedom! It was a captive! And he is not Nikto! He is the prince of Arel! Prince Arel, who thinks, makes

plans and takes offense at people, because they are not indifferent to him and he is one of them! And he does not want to be different anymore!

“I want to be myself again!”

And he screamed.

Hard hands shook him, what was the strength in them! The iron bars of the lattice are expanded, if necessary. This is Nik.

“Arel?” – he asks in a calm, everyday voice, he has long been accustomed to the fact that Arel often jumps up screaming at night.

And as confirming that everything is as usual, Arel jumps out of bed, despite the dizziness, which makes it darker in the eyes.

Nikto fits to the side again, tucking the mutilated half of his face into the pillow, but does not close his eyes. His eyes glitter in the dark, and he watches Arel light the candles, fumble around the table, rattling the bottles.

"What are you looking for?"

"Food!"

"?"

"I feel bad! I need to eat! I need to put myself in order! I ... I do not want, do not want to become like you!"

Nikto is yawning.

“I see,” – he says indifferently. Another Arel nonsense, well, he has long been accustomed to this.

"Heck! There is nothing here! Nik!"

"Arel, we have no food here."

“And when did you eat?”

“Yesterday, we ate ...”

“Nik! You are hungry!"

Nikto laughs softly and says nothing.

"What did you eat?"

Nikto thinks for a second.

“Vegetables, I don’t remember the name, they were completely rotten,”
– he laughs again.

“Did you eat rotten vegetables ?!”

“The servants fired them; we all ate. And you too."

Arel makes a movement of the head, as if it drives away the annoying fly from itself.

“And I?”

“Yes.”

“And Enriki?”

“And Henrik.”

“Does he again inject himself with "water"?”

“Yes,” – Nikto replies, the illogicality of Arel questions does not bother him.

“I promised you the golden mountains when I took you to the team, promised profits, lands, slaves! And what is the result! Rotten vegetables!”

“Carrot.”

“What?”

“I remembered there were carrots, and ...”

“Stop doing that! Stop it, Nik, I'm ashamed!”

“Take it easy. I picked up pretty well at Dim in the Colosseum.”

“Yeah! And he gave me everything!”

“Not all. To restore the streets, you need a lot ...”

“Streets! The streets are eating everything! And my people are starving! I'm a crappy boss! And I am hungry! I need to eat! And have some coffee, do we have coffee? Or water at the worst!”

Nikto moves his lips slightly, as if uttering a new phrase to himself.

“I do not want to die! I was a living corpse now, a walking corpse! This is scary! I have to appreciate my body, take care of it! Control it! I need to eat! I want to eat!”

“Well, go and eat! Who keeps you up! Just do not yell here in the middle of the night!” – Nikto tries to lie down more comfortably, closes his eyes.

“It was scary! It is unbearable! I am human! I want to be a man! This is such a happiness; I did not understand! I need a wash! It stinks from me!”

Nikto opens his eyes again and lets out a sigh of fatigue.

“Is there water?” – Arel rushes into the adjoining room, rattles the jugs. “Nik! Call a servant, let him bring warm water!”

“Wash yourself cold, huh?”

“Are you kidding me! It is cold as ice!”

“Arel, go to hell!”

“Why is it so cold! Why not melted the fireplace! Call the servant!”

“What good, if there is no fuel.”

“Fuel?”

“Wood! Firewood! Coal, I don't know ...”

“Okay! I do it myself! I'll go down and do everything myself! Here you will be bent without me from cold and hunger, and no one will lift a finger to at least do something!”

“I feel neither one nor the other, Arel ...”

“I know! That scares me! I want to feel! I want to feel hunger, cold, everything! All manifestations and emotions! As a person, not as an animal!”

Nikto laughs.

“What wrong with you?”

“Nothing! Just stayed a bit out of my skin!”

“And in whose? Animal's?”

“Not! Nik! I was you! And ... And it is wrong if you live like this ...”

“Another glitch, Arel ...”

“I would be happy about that! Let it be just a bad coming, because if this is your life, then this is hell! Why didn't you say anything to them? Did not explain? Although yes, you didn't really know the language, they would be even more scared, and your voice ...”

“What explained? To whom?”

Arel rushes to him, snapping abruptly, squeezing his shaggy head in his hands, clinging to himself.

“To these assholes! They humiliated you! Gods! How I love you! Why – don't know! Why do I love you so much?” – he kisses Nikto on the injured forehead, on the scar. “Poor, poor my being! My poor monster!

You are a monster, Nik, do you know about this? And I love you so much!”

Nikto meekly allows him to squeeze himself, squeeze in clumsy embraces, touch the scars.

Arel removes him from his face, gazing in the wavering light of candles, his gaze glides over the body, neck, chest, and arms, all painted black for good.

“What a horror,” – he says quietly and squeezes Nikto again in his arms. “What a horror to be like you!”

He suddenly abruptly pulls away, as another thought comes to his mind:

“Would you like to be like me? Do not cripple? Would you like to be me?”

“You are in my heart.”

“Yes! For sure! I live in you! And you in me! That's why I catch such parishes! Did you do this?”

“If there is something wrong about you, then I have nothing to do with it!”

“I believe you now, strangely enough, why would you put such memories in my head! I probably really caught them myself, I was there, on this street in Lower City, at this well!”

“Well?”

“Yes! I have never been on a plain, but if I come there, I will find this place! I swear it exists!”

“So, you were me?”

“Yes!”

“Well, you felt like a demon in human form, or obsessed?” – in the voice Nobody reveals blatant sarcasm.

“Not! Heck! Not! But ... But there was a lot of emptiness ... There was enough space ... for ... maybe Enrique and the others are not so ...’

Nikto covers his mouth with his hand.

“Enough! I do not remember any place, no well and no people, and I do not like it!”

Arel moves back even further.

“Maybe because you were not there! I was not you; I was a piece of that little man! That's why it was so awful! Gods! Poor, poor man! Not you! You just squeezed it out of your own body!”

“That's it, go to hell! I was afraid that this would end! You wanted to be engaged in an economy, so go to servants and be engaged! And leave me alone! Leave me alone, the demon who settled in someone else's house! You see how great I am! See how good I am!”

“I see that is not very! The lodge did not suffer very little during the battle for it!”

“So, I will find a new one! Everything! Did you want to hear it? Heard? Now get out! Go, eat, you really have to take care of your body, it is still useful. And not to spoil it, like the others, it still didn't lead to anything good and didn't help them!”

Arel tries to laugh, turn the conversation into a joke. “Scare me on purpose? Yes? Nik? Sweet...”

“Sweet?” – a nasty smile is playing on Nikto's half-dead lips.

“Well, forgive me for those stupid words about a demon!” – Arel returns to the bed again, bows his head, trying to snuggle closer to Nikto.

Nikto removes his hands.

“You're ... are you kidding me? Forgive me! Punish me! Fuck me! This is the only thing you need! Nothing else!”

“You still want in my house?”

“That's all! Conversation is over!”

“Nik ...”

“I remember you were very hungry?”

“I do not want it anymore...”

“Get out, Arel! Now go away!”

“I do not want!”

“I said go away!”

Are you ordering me?”

“Yes!”

“Like ... like your slave?”

“Yes!”

Arel pulls away desperately, hands down.

“I ... I am your slave, and where are the others, where is my Lis, Sguint- Eye?”

“Here, at the same time and check the rest! You can go now! I repeat for a long time! Should I get up?”

“No!”

And Arel trudges to the door:

“Do you love me?”

“Arel!”

“If it stays, I’ll bring you some rotten carrots too ...” and he, already laughing, jumps out, deftly dodging a bottle that has flown into him.

Arel was obedient, especially since he was actually hungry. Going down to the servants, right into the kitchen, and sitting at a huge and empty cutting table, he ate everything that was brought to him. Then, taking

two girls, he descended even lower into the cellars of the castle, to the hot springs, where there was warm water in the pool. Once so long ago that he himself did not remember this, she was fed directly into the rooms upstairs, once ... He who had eaten himself almost fell asleep while the slaves washed, combed it and rubbed the skin with fragrant oil.

It was already light, but, rising to the top, Arel, to his surprise, heard voices. His friends talked loudly and played cards in the small living room upstairs, where he once entertained Nikto as a slave. Apparently, they never went to bed. The shutters on the windows were not removed, and twilight reigned in the room. The fireplace was caustically smoked by a brocade upholstery of a broken armchair, giving more stink than warmth. On the floor are lined up a whole battery of empty wine bottles. There were Lis, Sguint-Eye and Tol with Asa and a few more slaves, including Claire, Nikto’s slave. She also played cards. The whole company was drunk almost to insanity, and their skewed, sunbathing after a sleepless night face seemed sober Arel just wild.

“Fuck, stupid March! How do you distribute ?!”

He heard the voice of the Lis, and froze on the threshold. Lis turned to Sguint-Eye, and Arel involuntarily shrank everything inside, he called him what he was called “black” cripples from birth, considering them to be harbingers of the degeneration and death of the “black” race. It was an insulting, derogatory nickname, and Arel never allowed it to be used against Sguint-Eye or Nikto.

The scythe did not hit the Lis, as one would expect, did not give him, as Tol would say, a rally, no. Without even changing his face, he slowly

collected the cards and began to hand them out again, and Arel hated Lis for that now.

Tol, as usual, bluntly barked:

“Who are you?”

“I am a half-breed, you moron! Half-bre-ed

"And what, the half-breed cannot be, well ... they ..."

“Fuck, you stupid, of course, can! But I am not!”

"And the hair?"

"What is wrong with my hair? I am a "red" half-breed, fucking how much times I need to explain, why I have such hair!"

"Tol, do you want to suck you so that you do not ask stupid questions and do not anger Mr. Atley Alice?" – asked Claire.

"And what's the point, your mouth will be busy with you, and not with him?" – Lis laughed.

Arel stepped away from the door, he didn't go to them ...

I watched them not out of interest, no. They were not interesting to me, I watched them rather from a sense of my own security. No matter how it was there, the instinct of self-preservation still worked. I had something to protect myself in case of need, and in spite of everything I could still stand up for myself! These bastards can't reach me! However, I soon became convinced that they were not going to touch me. They shunned me like a leper. I was lying in a corner on a roughly hulled trestle-bed, on a mattress soaked in my own blood, and it was as if I did not exist.

They did not even look in my direction. Scorned? Afraid? I dontknow. Believed that they are not affected. They did not need extra trouble.

Their problems were enough to even contact me! And I must give them their due, they reasonably thought, really it was not worth contacting me! Probably, it would be their will, they would get rid of me. I was just thrown to their cell after six months of a loner, and they had nothing to do but to accept this. Just to pretend that nothing is happening, that I am not there, that they do not take me for interrogation in the evening and do not bring me unconscious in the morning. No, I just do not exist.

Although, when I was dragged to them at the very beginning, they approached. I collapsed on the floor; I was in such a state that I don't remember if they said anything. It seems that someone particularly intelligent said in a half-whisper: "This is the king's nephew, the apostate."

In fact, I am not the king's nephew, as everyone thinks. Some kind of family ties between us really exist, but not as close as attributed. Simply, people tend to simplify everything: a relative of the king younger than him by age is a nephew! Moreover, we are similar in appearance, as it is

unfortunate for me! It's just that all purebred blacks look alike. We have common ancient ancestors, whether they are not fine! Then they seemed to take me to this couch, to the farthest corner. At first, I was not up to them, but they, of course, could not help seeing all this. And although from time to time the doctor gave me infusions so that I wouldn't be completely bent, anyway, I think it was not a very pleasant sight.

Probably, then they got used. They understood that I would not be bent, they would not let me, they would not let me go so easily. And then the toy finally got tired, they stopped dragging me out of the camera so often, I got a break, and I had the opportunity to think. And then I saw them. As I said, I paid attention to them first out of caution, well, and then simply out of interest.

They were from the nobility. Notable criminals who went to jail, what could be more stupid! However, for the most part, they were notable fallen scum. He brought one, already quite old, and I must give him his due, he did it quite competently and even fairly. The rest obediently obeyed him.

There were about twenty of them. But not their leader attracted my attention, no. Among them, I soon began to allocate another. Probably just because he saw that he was as young as me.

He was the youngest of them. He never brought the gear and did not call on a date. He was quiet and always kept a little apart from everyone. I never heard his voice. Others didn't humiliate him, but they didn't say much either. I felt some kind of estrangement, some kind of boundaries between him and the others. When he took off his shirt, I saw that his back was wonderfully tattered with a whip, the scars were already healed. One of his eyes was always bandaged. At first, I waited that after a while he would take it off, but the days went by, and he still continued to remain in it, without taking off even for the night. And I decided that he was one-eyed. Despite his youth, he also had a lot to experience. And it brought us even closer.

He silently obeyed the established rules, but never participated in anything on his own initiative, preferring to sit, crouching against the wall, knees tucked to his chest and buried in his face. He had long hair the color of a raven's wing, and looking at how they scattered on his knees when he hid his face, how they touched the floor, I suffered because my long hair was once mercilessly and shamefully cut off, and now only barely grown to the shoulders. I was probably jealous of the fact that his hair did not touch, that he was not dishonored like me. My haircut now was a common hairstyle, not a noble warrior. I did not want to look at him and could not take my eyes off. I envied him some stupid childish envy, although I knew with my mind that there was nothing to envy! He had a beautiful pale face, perhaps even a little more childish, but no longer healthy: haggling sunken cheeks, not at all childishly protruding cheekbones and lips compressed into one line. As time passed, I grew stronger, and my curiosity grew stronger. And at some point, I do not know what came over me when he was nearby, I suddenly called him.

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