

10th Kythorn, 1076

I cannot shake the feeling that my brother harbours ill will towards me and Tatyana. Strahd has been more circumspect since our engagement, but he was never shy about expressing his interest. Tatyana is fond enough of him, but she tells me that she never shared his attraction. Not that it stopped him from showering her with gifts and favours, even after we had begun openly courting.

Awkward overtures notwithstanding, I'm not sure that Strahd is still capable of real affection. I fear that he was changed by his campaigns against our late father's enemies. I wonder if his attraction to Tatyana is more aspirational than heartfelt - he wants to feel again, and thinks that Tatyana, bright spark that she is, can restore the humanity that he left behind somewhere on a distant battlefield.

Since our betrothal, my brother has been uncharacteristically laconic. He left abruptly in the spring without a word to anyone. He was gone for several weeks, and returned looking grimmer than ever. Despite my urging, he remained tight-lipped about where he had gone or what he had done. I pressed the servants for whatever details they could offer, but all I was able to learn is that he had travelled with a remarkable amount of cold-weather gear for the time of year.

Our wedding day draws near. Damn Strahd for clouding my thoughts so. I should be revelling in the coming celebrations, not brooding on his comings and goings. But he never quite meets my eyes as he conveys his good wishes for our coming marriage.

I still wonder if I should continue to keep Mother's revelation from him. It is surely as much his business as mine that we have a Vistani half-sister, but Mother chose not to

reveal her existence to him. I was too shocked at the time to ask why now, why only me; Mother's death a bare few days later forestalled any further pursuit of the matter. I understand that Katarina is happy enough among her mother's people, though she is aware of her true paternity. This matter, at least, can wait until Strahd's foul mood lifts.

There is more than enough to preoccupy him for now, however. What remains of the Order of the Silver Dragon continues their guerrilla war. I cannot help but be impressed by a host so mighty that death itself does not stand in their way. This should have ended with their defeat on the battlefield and the desecration of Argynvost's corpse. I had no stomach to watch, but Strahd insisted that the skull of the dragon be returned to Ravenloft as a trophy.

At his request, I managed to obtain plans for the former stronghold of the Order, Argynvostholt. I do not know if the knights have returned there after their death. Perhaps it is nothing but a deserted ruin. Nevertheless, I hesitate to give it to him, lest he lose himself further in his bitter vendetta. For now, I will keep it safe in my journal.

Now, I must away. I wish to catch some final minutes with Tatyana before we become so caught up in the coming festivities that we have no time for anything else.