

CHAPTER 3 — THE FALL OF THE REGENT

Blood Brothers

The war with the Siege raged for nine and a half brutal years. Nine years of sacrifice. Nine years of kingdoms burning. Nine years of Sentinels falling faster than they could be anointed.

But in the end — against all odds — the Domains prevailed.

The final battle was a storm of elemental fury and desperate resolve. When the last of the Siege were driven into the **Abyssal** Realm, the world exhaled for the first time in a decade. Songs were written. Monuments were raised. The people believed peace had returned.

But peace was not what awaited them.

For in the shadow of victory, a new fear began to take shape.

The Regent Who Would Not Step Down

The moment the war ended, the rulers of the Domains turned their eyes to **King Regent Arick** — the young hero they had entrusted with absolute authority only because the world had been on the brink of annihilation.

Tradition demanded he relinquish that power. The Conclave expected it. The people assumed it.

But Arick did not step down.

At the urging of his father, **King Edrich**, Arick held fast to the Regency. Edrich whispered of unseen threats, of dangers lurking beyond the horizon, of enemies within the royal families themselves. And Arick — pure of heart, loyal to a fault — believed him.

He believed he was protecting the world. He believed he was safeguarding his young bride. He believed he was shielding his newborn daughter, **Princess Arica**.

But the other rulers saw something else.

They saw their worst fears coming true.

The Warren Is Summoned

Among the rulers, **King Nbu** was the first to speak the truth aloud.

“This is how tyranny begins.”

He turned to the one man who could stop it — the one man the Regent trusted above all others.

King Farab. The Warren. The Sentinel King.

“Fulfill your promise,” Nbu said. “Before this becomes a war we cannot win.”

Farab hesitate. He had sworn to protect the balance of the Domains — even from those he loved.

And he loved Arick like a brother.

The Confrontation

The Court fell silent when Farab entered, the Pearl Armor catching the torchlight in soft, shifting hues. Arick’s face brightened at the sight of him — relief, affection, and trust all woven together.

Farab wished he could hold onto that moment. He wished he could be the friend Arick remembered.

Instead, he stepped forward with the weight of a man carrying the end of an age.

“Step down, brother,” Farab said quietly. “Return the power to the royal families. The war is over. The world must heal.”

Arick’s expression tightened. Edrich’s warnings had sunk deep — deeper than Farab realized.

“The threats are not gone,” Arick replied. “Some sit on thrones. Some wear crowns. I cannot abandon the world now.”

Farab felt something inside him fracture.

This was not the prince who fought beside him in the mud and fire. This was not the king who carried hope like a torch. This was a man shaped by fear — fear whispered by his father, sharpened by power, and fed by isolation.

Around them, the Court watched in breathless stillness. Two heroes. Two brothers. Two futures — only one of which could survive.

The Strike

Farab bowed his head.

Not in surrender. In mourning.

He whispered the ancient Sentinel vow — the one spoken only when duty demanded the unthinkable. When a protector was forced to become a judge.

When he lifted his gaze, the grief in his eyes had hardened into something resolute.

Arick sensed it. Too late.

“Farab... don’t—”

The Warren moved.

To the Court, it was a blur. To Arick, it was a single, impossible instant — the moment he understood everything and could change nothing.

In less than a heartbeat. Farab’s blade whispered through the air with a sound like tearing silk.

Arick staggered, shock widening his eyes before pain could even form. He reached for Farab, for the man he had trusted above all others.

Farab reached and caught him as he fell, lowering him gently, as though easing a friend into rest.

“I begged you to turn back,” Farab whispered, voice breaking. “I begged you.”

Arick’s hand slipped from his arm.

A soft gasp broke the silence.

Arick’s new bride—still in her ceremonial silks—stood frozen, one hand over her mouth, the other reaching toward her fallen husband.

Farab turned.

She understood. She didn't run. She only whispered, "Please... spare—"

The Sentinel moved again.

She body crumpled beside her husband, decapitated by a single decisive blow — their hands nearly meeting in the space between them.

Shouts erupted as loyal guards and advisors surged forward, steel ringing free of scabbards. But they were human. Mortal. Slow.

Farab was not.

He cut through them with the precision of a master sculptor, each strike final, each movement fueled by grief and duty. Blood splashed across marble. Bodies fell in widening arcs around the throne. Those who tried to flee died before they reached the doors. Those who tried to speak never finished their words.

When the echoes faded, Farab stood alone in the center of the chamber, surrounded by the cost of his choice. His breath shook. His hands trembled. His heart felt carved hollow.

He had saved the Domains. And in doing so, he had destroyed that which he loved.

He looked around at what he had done—what he had been forced to do.

The Unzen royal bloodline, the loyalists, the inner circle... gone. Only two remained.

A distant cry pierced the quiet.

A newborn's cry.

Farab's head snapped toward the sound.

The child.

He moved toward the nursery corridor with astonishing speed—but another figure was already there.

King Edrich.

Face pale. Eyes wide with horror at the sight of Farab. The infant—Arick’s daughter—clutched desperately to his chest.

He had not seen but understood everything.

Farab stepped forward.

Edrich stepped back.

“Please...” the old king whispered, voice trembling. “Please... she is innocent.”

Farab did not answer. His expression was unreadable, carved from stone.

Suddenly Arcane Academia Guards—rushed in behind Edrich, seized him, and dragged him toward the throne room. The doors slammed open as they forced him inside.

Edrich stumbled, the newborn wailed in his arms, her tiny fists trembling against his chest.

Edrich’s eyes swept the room—and the breath left him.

Bodies. Blood. His son. His—daughter-in-law. The loyalists who had served his line for generations.

He swayed, knees threatening to give way. The guards released him, stepping back in horror as they too finally understood what had transpired.

Farab stood at the center of the devastation, his blade lowered, his chest rising and falling in ragged breaths. His face was carved from stone, but his eyes—his eyes were shattered glass.

Edrich clutched the infant tighter.

“Master Sentinel...” he whispered, voice cracking. “What have you done?”



Farab did not answer. He could not. His silence was its own confession.

Around the chamber, the other royals—summoned by the commotion—had begun to gather. King Nbu. Queen Elara. King Zephyrus. Queen Anne. Their faces were masks of shock, fury, and calculation. The air thickened with the weight of judgment.

Edrich fell to his knees.

The Plea

“Please,” he said, his voice trembling but loud enough to carry. “Hear me. All of you.”

He lifted the child high enough for them to see her tear-streaked face.

“She is innocent. She has done nothing. She carries no guilt but the blood she was born from.”

His voice broke—then sharpened.

“You all know my son. You all knew his ambition. His hunger. His refusal to yield. You know he would have torn the Domains apart before surrendering the crown.”

A murmur rippled through the royals. Surprised by his perspective—None contradicted him.

Edrich pressed on.

“But this child—this child is no threat. She has no power. No claim. No voice. She is a babe who has lost her mother before she could even know her face.”

He bowed his head, letting grief shake his shoulders. But beneath it, his mind worked—calculating, positioning, shaping the narrative.

He raised his gaze again, eyes glistening.

“If you must punish someone for my son’s sins... punish me. I was his father. His advisor. His guide. If he strayed, then I failed him. Let the weight fall upon me.”

He placed the child on the floor before him, his hands trembling.

“But spare her. Let her live. She will never claim a throne. She will never raise a banner. She will never be a threat to any of you.”

He looked directly at Farab.

Farab’s jaw tightened. His eyes closed. He said nothing—but the message was clear.

He would not kill again.

If the child or the old King were to die, it would not be by his hand.

The royals saw it too.

King Nbu stepped forward, voice low and grave. “Farab has fulfilled his vow. The bloodline has been broken. The threat ended.”

Queen Elara’s gaze flicked to the infant. “But the child—”

“—is no danger,” Edrich interjected smoothly, bowing his head again. “She will be whatever you command her to be. Her life is yours to shape.”

His voice trembled with sincerity, but his eyes—those sharp, calculating eyes—never left the circle of rulers.

He was bargaining. He was pleading. He was manipulating. He was surviving.

Queen Anne ruler of Blossom Grove. “And you, Edrich? What fate do you claim for yourself?”

Edrich lowered his head to the floor.

“I claim none. I submit myself to your judgment. If my life must end to secure peace, then let it end. But let the child live.”

Silence fell.

Farab finally spoke, voice hoarse.

“I will take my leave.”

He sheathed his blade and departed without another word spoken.

The royals exchanged glances—some cold, some conflicted, some already calculating the political ramifications.

The fate of the old King and the newborn now hung in the balance.

And the room knew it.

The Judgment

The Conclave convened once more — not in ceremony, but in the aftermath of ruin. The chamber still smelled of blood. The echoes of **The Strike** clung to the walls like ghosts.

Farab notably absent. He had done what no Sentinel should ever be asked to do. And would do no more.

The rulers of the Dominion gathered in a tight circle, their faces carved from grief, fury, and calculation. At their center knelt King Edrich, the newborn cradled in his arms, his head bowed. Queen Anne, so young but wise spoke first.

“Arick’s line cannot remain among us. His ambition nearly shattered the Dominion. His heirs cannot be permitted to rise.”



Murmurs of agreement rippled through the chamber.

King Zephyrus added, “The child lives only because Farab refuses to fulfil his oath. If she is to survive, it must be under our terms.”

Queen Elara stepped forward, studying Edrich with a cold, assessing gaze.

“He counseled Arick. He fed his ambition.”

Edrich lifted his head, eyes red but sharp.

“I stood by my son,” he said. “As any father would. But I did not raise a sword against you.

I did not betray the Conclave.

My guilt is in my failure as a father, not treason.”

His voice trembled — but his mind worked behind every word.

King Nbu snorted. “You conniving bastard, your armada disbanded. Your line broken. But still, you sit here scheming”

Queen Anne’s eyes narrowed. “I no longer recognize the Capital of the High Order... nor the lineage of Edrich.” She drew a steady breath, gathering herself. **“My judgment is death.”**

Edrich bowed his head again, letting the weight of her words settle.

“If you wish me dead,” he said softly, “then kill me. But know this — my death will be a mercy from my pain. My suffering”

The rulers exchanged glances.

He was right. Death was clean. Too clean.

“Let him live,” King Zephyrus said, the words cutting through the chamber. “Let him witness what his son’s ambition has wrought. Let him walk the rest of his days in chains, stripped of crown and dignity. Let him serve the very Domains he nearly doomed — and carry that burden until his final breath.

A slow, grim agreement spread through the Conclave — not a chorus, but a surrender. Every ruler understood the truth: to let a bloodline survive after such devastation was to invite danger to their own. Yet to end it entirely was a stain none wished to bear. The debate dragged on, hour

after hour, voices rising, falling, breaking. Five hours passed before exhaustion and sorrow finally shaped a single, fragile consensus.

Queen Elara rose.

Her face was pale, her posture rigid, as though the verdict itself weighed more than her crown.

“King Edrich of Unzen,” she said, her voice steady only by force of will, “**you are hereby stripped of title, lands, and name.** You will live out your remaining years in the deepest cells beneath the palace — not as a King, but as a prisoner. You will have no voice, no counsel, no legacy.”

The words hung in the air like a tolling bell.

Edrich closed his eyes. A single tear slid down his cheek.

Whether it was grief, relief, or something far more complicated, none could tell.

Queen Anne turned to the infant.

“And the child?”

The question fell like a stone into deep water. Silence rippled outward.

No ruler spoke. No one wanted to be the first to shape a fate that would echo for generations.

Every sovereign in the chamber understood the truth: allowing a bloodline to survive after such devastation was to invite danger to their own. Yet condemning an infant was a stain none wished to bear.

At last, King Nbu stepped forward. His voice was low, steady, and carved from sorrow.

“Let her live — but let her live as no one. Hide her among the lowest servants. Let her grow without privilege, without power, without knowledge of who she is. If she is to survive, let her survive as the world survives... scarred.”

A murmur of reluctant agreement moved through the Conclave — not approval, but resignation.

A choice made because every other choice was worse.

It was decided.

The last heir of Unzen — a Domain erased from the map and from memory — would live, but she would live in obscurity. Her name stripped. Her lineage erased. Her destiny severed.

She became, in that moment, a living reminder of how close the Domains had come to ruin — and a fragile testament that innocence might yet outlast the sins of Kings.

And so the newborn — Princess Arica — was carried away into the shadows of the lowest tier, her cries fading into the stone corridors like a secret the world was too afraid to face.

King Edrich was led toward the dungeons, his chains echoing through the hall with the slow, mournful rhythm of a funeral bell.

One by one, the rulers of the Conclave turned from the devastation and stepped into the dimming light of the corridor. No one spoke. No one dared. Each carried the weight of the day like a sentence of their own — a burden that would follow them into the uncertain dawn.

The hall emptied. The echoes faded. And the world shifted, quietly, irrevocably.