

Tegrin jumped from Maketi's back, and pulled Kristina into his arms. Maketi nickered, trotting to the orchard in hopes of finding the last of summer's, ripe apples. Tegrin kissed her neck, the lift of her cheek, and then her temple. He could feel her pulse change beneath his lips, and his own quickened.

Kristina wound her fingers tightly into his braids, pulling him towards her, and when their lips touched, he felt like he was on fire. She pushed him away from her and ran for the cottage. She fumbled for the door handle, and he laughed.

His laugh was deep and full of anticipation, and when he pressed her body against the door, she could feel every muscle in his body. A soft moan escaped her lips. She could feel his hands around her waist, and then the door was open. They tumbled into the room, falling onto the scattered furs covering the floor.

Kristina's laughter filled the room, and his heart. He closed his eyes and rested his face in her red curls. Had he been redeemed, or was this a recess, a glimmer of light in the darkness of his life? She kissed him again, pulling his shirt over his head, and whispered his name. The thought was driven away by a need so deep he had no control over it, and he didn't care.

The swell of her breast against his bare skin, her body rising to meet his, this was what a man lived and died for. Not just the physical act, that was simple gratification. This was more than that. It was as if she had been created for him and him alone. Not as a possession, but as the one thing that made him complete.

Her spirit called to him again, like the crashing waves on a beach. Each one stronger than the last, pounding at the shore, changing what is below, but leaving the surface untouched.

The shadows of nightfall covered them like a blanket, calming the raging seas, and the sound of raindrops tapping on the windowsills, lulled them into sleep. One dreamed for the first time in peace, the other, dreamed of the evil that was to come.