Part 4

The sound in my ears is gone, replaced by a deep humming sound, and a heavy feeling weighing down on my back and shoulders. I pull Grampa's broken sword from the ground beside me, it's so heavy even now, I can't imagine how heavy it was as its whole. I look over to the old man, still unconscious on the floor, and I begin inching towards Papa. I think of the memories of you that Gabriella shared with me, you seemed so… mean and uptight. Uncle Mont told me you were always grumpy and dissatisfied, Serenity told me you only loved Mama and what uses you could have for others, but why do you seem so content now, joyful even? I run in for the first exchange of blows, he's laughing as the sparks from our clashing swords scar and sear at our skin. I leap into the air and slam my blade down with all my strength, the weight of the weapon feeling like it could bury me into the ground. Papa initially tries to block my strike with one hand but pants with excitement as he's finally being pushed back. The humming returns, followed by a low rumbling coming from within; I look up to my father's eyes and there's now an image of a demonic mask covering his face. "Mooooooorrrrrreeee…" the mask speaks, and the smile on Papa's face grows wider. He kicks the iron ball into my stomach and I feel it singe my skin, knocking me back to the ground. I look down at my stomach, there's no burn, but the mask on my father's face is still growling at me. The sound echoes and reverberates inside my head, "Accept me." A heat cramps and burns my insides, I feel as though I could just vomit, but a force drags me to pick up my weapon. My vision blurs and sharpens and a warm yellow hue covers my vision, my body loosens up and I instinctively lunge forward with weapon in hand. The affront my father's face is now gone, revealing a wide grin that sat beneath. Sparks splash against our skin as our weapons clash against each other, blades now burning white. After swinging back and forth for what feels like forever, my body suddenly stops moving on its own, my hearing flowing back to normal as the winds blow at the dried out, burnt grass. I look at my hands and they're shaking, my eyes trail from my wrist, down my blade until I see trails of ash falling from Papa's chest. He's still smiling, but now softly chuckling instead of cackling maniacally. "A child of mine born with the flame… our flame" Papa stutters forward, dropping to a knee. I'm confused, I thought the cleansing didn't work. I open my mouth to speak, nothing but a soft gasp leaves my lips. "The tempering kept my soul incorruptible, but when children of Apoldyon battle, the defeated loses their favor with the beast." Papa loosens up and sits down, parts of his shoulder and chin beginning to ash away. "Miltifan, your mother, comforted me as your elder sister was born…" a puff of ash falls from his mouth as he forcibly coughs out what he has to say, I clasp at the cracklings of ash falling from his face trying to keep him all together. "…she favored your mother so heavily I could not tell if I had helped bore a child or been a bystander, and she was so…" his voice trembles and his eyes dart to the ground as if he'd remembered something terrible. He lifts his remaining hand to his horn, gently cracking it off and placing it in my hand. He places his arm around my shoulder, his arm felt dense and weighty but grew lighter as more of his body ashed away. "We bore you and saw the fire in your eyes and I was finally content, but the man I was then saw a fate not fit for who you would become…" his other leg began falling apart, his face growing into a smile. "Armina, was a name intended for a warrior bride, I'd intended for you to rise to the top of the tribe and one of the brightest children of Apoldyon's flame. Your sister's body was weak, but her soul was unable to be tempered, even forming a negative affinity to its influence." His remaining arm goes limp, his shoulder and hand

eroding away. “All ended as Miltifan intended… except…” his eyes darted to mines, flickering between gold and grey, “Where is the elezen that accompanied Lowain!?” Panic flashed across what remained of Papa’s body. Elezen… from Lowain? I explain as there was a duskwight before he’d been revived, and Papa’s crumbling face sagged into a scowl. “Where is he?” he grumbles attempting to get back to his feet, his remaining leg finally withers away and he falls to the ground. “Mont is a fake…” Mont? Uncle Mont? He’s been dead for years… Papa lifts his head, eyes finally flush with the familiar milky grey. He fights to move his mouth to speak, but even with me holding him together, he crumbles between my fingers. The world goes silent, all I can hear is my heartbeat echoing inside my body; I look at the shattered horn in one hand, and the ashen remains of my Papa in my other hand. A white loafer takes a step into my view, dispersing some of Papa’s remains; I shoot to my feet, look forward, and there he stands, the elezen from before…

Revision #2
Created 14 July 2025 00:59:48 by Mechseroms
Updated 14 July 2025 01:33:51 by Mechseroms