



The Crimson Rain of Erz-Ken-Berna

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Vane pulled his heavy woolen hood tightly against the cold, drizzling rain as he hurried down the wet cobblestones of Prospekt Yedinstva. On either side, slender black basalt columns held antique lamps that cast a sharp, steady red glow from the faceted crystals locked inside them, reflecting on the pavement like pools of fresh blood. Ahead, the massive, intricate silhouette of the All-Union Assembly building loomed through the thick, red-tinted fog, its central glass dome glowing faintly like a dormant ember.



Stepping into the vast, irregular octagon of Unity Square, Vane paused near the towering tuff walls of the Cathedral Basilica of the Blind Serpent to observe the area. A few hooded figures crossed the wet square in the distance, their shapes blurred by the heavy rain and the low, waist-high crimson fog that hugged the ground. The immense West facade of the Assembly building dominated his view, its grand hexagonal portico and Corinthian columns standing like silent sentinels guarding dark secrets.



As Vane approached the grand stepped entrance of the Assembly, the sheer scale of the asymmetrical structure pressed down on him, each of its six floors adorned with sharply arched, Armenian-style carved windows. He looked up at the massive Foster-style glass dome where twin spiraling ramps wound through the dim red interior light, realizing the truth he sought lay somewhere inside that glowing labyrinth. With a deep breath, he climbed the stone steps, ready to confront the powerful forces that ruled Erz-Ken-Berna from the shadows.