

Chapter 3

Eila watched as Midgar grew smaller and smaller underneath her feet. Nia was flying in no particular direction, but she knew that in a few seconds they would be outside the City. "Nia, where are we going?" She called out to the bird, trying to speak as loud as she could to overcome the banging sound of the wind. The bird only squawked in reply and increased her speed. Eila had to clutch tighter to the bird's neck as well as pin Cloud's limp body between hers and Nia's.

Eila looked back at the fading view of Midgar and saw for the first time the extent of the damage it suffered from meteor. There was a depression at the center of the city where the ShinRa Tower once stood. The mako reactors that stood guard at the perimeter of the city bent down towards the ground. It was a mixture of darkness and melted metal, which bonded both the slums and the upper plates. She thought that it was beautiful how the disaster brought the citizens of this city together. There was now equality among the rich and the poor, and she hoped, for all their sake, this state of equality would be maintained.

Cloud was still conscious, the pain in his mid-section taking up most of his energy. He barely had the strength to hold on to Nia and was put in a position wherein he had to depend on Eila for support. Nia kept on flying, as if it were fleeing from an unseen enemy that would swoop down on them at anytime. They were now clear of the Midgar area, although at their altitude and velocity, it was difficult for Eila to see if they were flying over land or over the ocean. Eila leaned forward and rested her head on Cloud's back, she just had to put her trust on Nia to bring them to safety, where the strange creatures that just attacked them would not be able to follow.

After about an hour of flying through the night sky, Eila woke up as Cloud started to cough and tremble violently. "Cloud--- Nia, we have to land now!" She commanded the bird, pulling on its neck to grab its attention. The bird turned its head towards her as if asking her master where they should land. Eila searched the dark space below them frantically. Searching for any sign of land or a safe spot for them to land. "Head for those lights, Nia." She said pointing to the distance. The bird squawked once more and flew straight towards what looked like a town. At least, they hoped that it would be a place where they could get help. "Hang on, Cloud. You're gonna be all right." Eila whispered into his ear.

The lights grew brighter until Eila could distinguish the cottages that were set on a tall plateau-like structure. At what appeared to be the center of the village, was a huge fire place where people gathered around it looked up as the strange-looking bird swooped down towards them. Some of the men even brought out their spears and knives as Nia landed in front of the frightened townspeople.

Before any of them could react violently, Eila jumped down from Nia's back and walked towards the people. "Please, my friend's been hurt, you have to help him."

"I am sorry, child, but there are no more vacancies in the Canyon, you must leave." One man spoke without lowering his weapon. "You've frightened our peaceful village, leave now!"

"But, my friend needs help." She grabbed on to the man's arm and was shoved away. "Just look at him, he can't even move!" The man continued to ignore her and somehow, the other people did the same. Eila looked at them helplessly as they moved away from her. Looking around the town, she noticed one building that had a huge device on it's roof. Hoping that it was where their leader lived, she darted towards the crowd and jumped up the stone steps that lead to the top building. She ran as fast as she could to escape the angry men chasing her.

"Where is your village elder?" Eila asked the woman behind a desk. The surprised maiden pointed towards another set of stairs and watched as Eila dashed towards them. She opened the wooden door and roughly closed it behind her, causing the three elderly men who sat in a circle to look in her direction.

"I'm sorry to barge in like this, but I need help." She said with a respectful bow. "My friend's been hurt---I only need some medicine." The three men stared at her in silence then turned their backs to decide amongst themselves. All of a sudden the door behind her sprang open making her fall on the floor hard. She felt a couple of rough hands pick her up and hold her tight.

"This trouble maker did not harm any of you, did she, my lords?" The man who held her spoke.

"I am not a trouble maker, I'm just asking for help!" Eila struggled to break lose from the man's iron grip, but her own injuries from the attack made it more difficult to struggle.

"Let her go!" One of the old men said sternly. There were a few more protests from the men who held her but an animal growl made them obey without further question. Eila rubbed her bruised shoulders quickly and walked towards the circle of old men, kneeling down before them. "My lord, forgive me for this intrusion, but my--"

"Don't ask us." The old man said raising her chin. "Ask him." He pointed towards the last member of their circle. Eila's eyes widened at the red beast which appeared to her as a half-breed of a lion and a wolf. It looked at her through its one eye with a stare that brought both fear and curiosity. She thought that this was their way of mocking her by letting her talk to their pet. However, she didn't have any choice but to humour them, if they were to save Cloud.

Clearing her throat, she crawled until she knelt right in front of the beast. She bowed her head down lowly and began to speak. "My lord, we mean you or your village no harm. We've only come to ask for help." Eila opened her eyes and sat up straight. The beast seemed to react as if it were confused with her actions. 'You should be,' She thought, 'You don't understand a thing I'm saying. They're just playing with us, these dirty old men.'

"My name is Nanaki." The beast answered which made the girl stumble back with surprise. "Who are you?" The creature studied her carefully. The question was asked in such a manner that it appeared the beast was disbelieving in what it saw.

"My-my name is Eila, sir."

Nanaki dropped his gaze to the ground as if in very deep thought. Eila quickly regained her composure. A thousand questions about the strange creature before her raced through her mind as she absentmindedly raised one hand and cautiously reached out to touch his fur. Some of the men who were watching started to stir thinking that she would attack their leader. But as her hands touched the beast's nose, it chuckled contentedly. Eila drew her hand back to herself in surprise. "I'm sorry, I just wanted to see if this wasn't a joke."

"That is quite all right." Nanaki answered, moving close enough to whisper into her ear. "I've never told anyone, but I do enjoy being patted on the nose."

"Oh," Eila nodded as Nanaki continued to walk on all fours towards the other men by the door. Eila saw his full body for the first time, adorned with tattoos and feathers. What caught her attention was his tail that wagged behind him, its end which was glowing with a mysterious flame. "Uh, pardon me..." She whispered to the nearest old man. "His tail is on fire."

The old man chuckled softly. "No. Nanaki is a special creature. He is the last of the guardians of Cosmo Canyon, and on his tail is his share of the Eternal Flame."

"I see." Eila sank back into her sitting position with her hands clasped in front of her lap. Nanaki turned around and faced her, "Your friend will be taken care of, don't worry about him. I shall escort you to your room. There is so much I want to know."

"Y-yes, sir." Eila answered, although she was greatly confused. What did she have to tell to a talking beast? And what did he want to know about? Unless he was another friend of the "Aeris" that everybody was mistaking her for. She stood up slowly and followed Nanaki outside the door. Once they reached the stone steps, everybody around the flame looked up to their guardian and paid their respects by bowing and nodding. Cloud and Nia was nowhere to be found, Eila presumed that they have been taken to some place where they could rest.

They passed a few more buildings, shops and cottages. Most of the people have gone back to their usual routines and no longer paid any attention to the ragged girl who came into their town atop a mutated chicken. Nanaki entered one of the buildings which used a thick cloth as a door, as Eila entered she was escorted by an elderly woman who introduced herself as Maria. She was led to a warm, small bedroom.

"There is a shower through that door, you can get cleaned up." Maria said, pointing to a door at the other side of the room. "I will bring you some fresh clothes and some food." The old woman lay down a basket of sweet smelling oils and soaps on the dresser and left the room.

"You need to rest. We'll talk tomorrow." Nanaki said before leaving the room and closing the cloth divider after him.

Once Eila was alone in her room, she sat down on her bed and offered a silent prayer of thanks. Thanks that they were alive and well and another prayer for her foster mother who, by now, must be terribly worried about her. After which, she picked up the basket of oils and a towel which was hung nearby and entered the shower room.

"Two more." Reeve said as he put down the report on his desk. He sighed as he brushed his hair back. "Two more deaths due to an unknown beast. This is beginning to disturb me." Reeve spun his chair around to face the glass windows. Under

the dark, early morning sky, Midgar was peaceful. he found it very difficult to imagine that somewhere in his city, a beast was murdering his people. Those who would never even watch the sun rise again."

Elena frowned, she had to agree, two people were killed in the park last night and it was her duty to investigate these attacks. She cast a sidelong glance at Rude who stared blankly at the mayor's face. Although he didn't show it, he was concerned about the people of Midgar. No longer the ruthless and cold Turks that they used to be, Elena and Rude found themselves enjoying their new position as protectors of the city.

"There is still so much to do. With half the walls of Midgar down, who knows what kind of monsters would come in and attack us in the night?" He turned to the two Turks, "I trust that the two of you will do your best to protect our people."

Elena nodded and offered a salute to the mayor before turning to leave. As she and Rude made their way out of the office, the door burst open and a very disturbed Tifa entered. She was pale, her eyes were red as if she were crying the whole evening, she walked directly in front of Reeve's desk. "Reeve, what happened in the park? Cloud was there and he hasn't come back. I'm so worried."

Reeve's eyes widened as he stood up and lay a comforting hand on Tifa's trembling shoulders. He signaled both Elena and Rude to leave them alone for now, but the urgency that was painted on his face indicated that they should try and find Cloud as well.

They left the mayor's office and walked down the quiet corridor. Neither of them said a word until they entered the elevator. Rude punched in a few numbers which would lead them to their floor and leaned back against the glass walls.

"What if we can't handle these monsters? The Midgar army is still weak and the people cannot defend themselves." He heard Elena say, very softly. He turned to look at her, her head was bowed down and her hands were trembling while she held on to the paper folder which contained their reports. "I went to the murder sight and found nothing but dead bodies. There were no signs of the creature's attacks, no tracks ---nothing. What if we fail?"

"Elena." Rude said, gently squeezing her shoulder. "Don't forget that we will always work together. We won't fail." Elena looked up at him in surprise and brushed a tear away from her eye. Rude's lips were curled up in a smile, one that she has rarely seen him do.

"Thanks. That helps."

When Eila woke up, the sun was already shining. She must have fallen asleep after she took a shower and changed to the soft cotton night gown. Maria was in her room setting down breakfast of fried eggs and toasted bread, when she realised that Eila was awake, she smiled and greeted her "Good morning." Eila sat upright and stretched her arms in the air, only to draw them back as a sudden ache in her ribs attacked her.

"Are you all right, Eila?" Maria asked, concerned. Eila nodded and slowly straightened her body, checking for any more injuries. She didn't have to check much, her whole body was aching, her muscles were stressed due to running, being hit by a fierce creature and riding on Nia for a couple of hours. "You should have lord Nanaki heal you. He has strong command of materia magic."

Eila smiled and nodded "I have to check on Nia and Cloud." She whispered, and stood up. She scanned the room for any sign of her clothes and found them cleaned and neatly folded by her side.

After eating breakfast, Eila walked to Nanaki's room, taking note that the Flame still burned brightly at the center of the town. Nanaki greeted her warmly and she responded with a sweet pat on his nose. Nia came running up to her, the bird has shrunk back to it's original size and found her place on Eila's shoulder.

"Where is my other friend?" Eila asked, referring to Cloud.

"He's in the other room." Nanaki said, pointing to a door with a nod of his head. "He's my friend too. We've fought along side each other when Meteor and ShinRa was a threat to this world."

"Really? Wow, you guys are going to have a lot of story telling to do. I'd love to hear of your adventures." Eila said clapping her hands excitedly.

"I would love to tell you." Nanaki said.

"Then I guess, you also must know about Aeris." Eila said, her voice suddenly dropping into a lower tone.

Nanaki looked at her, "Yes, I knew her. Very well. She was like me, the last of her kind. She was a very kind and caring person, she would risk her life for her friends."

Eila nodded. "That's what they all told me. I guess, I remind you guys too much of her, don't I?"

"Yes, I have to admit that your resemblance to her is uncanny. Are you sure that you are not her sister or a relative?"

Eila shook her head and looked at Nanaki helplessly. "I don't remember anything. Six months ago I was found near a collapsed building in Midgar. Everybody who lived there died, maybe even my family and all those who knew me. The only life time I know are those six months I spent with my adopted family and nothing more."

"I understand." Nanaki bowed his head down and nuzzled the edge of her skirt gently. "Go see Cloud, he's awake now."

Eila nodded and entered the next room. Cloud lay on a bed still asleep. He only wore his black baggy pants, his chest was bound by bandages and he had a few bruises on his arms and forehead. As she neared his bed, Nia gave out a loud squawk which indicated that she was hungry. Eila covered the bird's beak with a start and looked around for anything edible to pacify the bird. Finding none, she quickly tiptoed out of the room so as not to disturb Cloud's much needed rest.

"Hey, where are you going?" Cloud's weak voice called. Eila looked back and found Cloud awake and smiling at her.

"Sorry to disturb you. Nia was hungry." She said, walking back near Cloud's bed. "Are you all right now? Those beasts did quite a number on you last night. I was so worried."

"You were?" Cloud grinned and sat up slowly, groaning as pain and cramps attacked his chest. He sank back into his bed and sighed. "I'll be all right, don't worry." He turned his head to look at her and gave her a reassuring smile. "I heal fast. Thank you, and I'm sorry that you got involved in something like this."

"Who were they?" Eila said, sitting down on the floor beside Cloud's bed. "Why did they want to kill you?"

"Many beasts would love to kill me. I killed a lot of them in my days as a SOLDIER...and as an AVALANCHE member." Cloud closed his eyes and imagined himself wearing his old uniform, fighting terrible monsters with Barret, Cid and the others.

"One of them said something about a cell...uh," Eila scratched her head trying to recall exactly what the creature said last night. "J-Jeneva or Jenova...I'm not sure."

"JENOVA cells." Cloud helped her. "An alien life form's cells that were injected into me and some members of SOLDIER. They're supposed to make us more agile and stronger than regular human beings. Do you see how my eyes glow?" He opened his eyes wider for Eila to see. The girl nodded. "That's the mark of mako infusion with our blood. Those who made it to top SOLDIER were infused with JENOVA cells."

"Mako infusion? You mean the planet's life source?" She said, remembering one of Cloud's lectures about lifestream and the planet's spirit energy. Cloud nodded. Eila looked down on the floor in deep thought. "Maybe those creatures are worried that if you suck too much mako energy for SOLDIER infusion, the planet will die."

"Maybe. But that's what we fought for six months ago. We fought against ShinRa who was exploiting mako energy. We were all fighting for the planet, that is what she--died for." Cloud felt his face grow hot as frustration rose in his chest.

"Then, there has to be another reason why they're after those with JENOVA cells." Eila rubbed her chin and found herself staring at Nia. The bird was clearly once a chocobo, with its beak, black and yellow feathers jutting out of its scaly body. Only it had dragon-like wings and a reptilian tail, it could also breathe fire and grow in size. "Cloud, does mako-infusion result into mutations?"

"No, not that I know of." Cloud answered, pulling up one arm under his head as he relaxed his gaze on the wooden ceiling. "Ah," he suddenly said, remembering one encounter in the past. "Five years ago at the Nibelheim reactor. When Sephiroth was inspecting the reactor, a monster jumped out of its capsule." Cloud sat up and stared at his hands. "I remember Sephiroth going crazy after that incident. He was raving about being created the same way as those monsters. And after that," he added more softly, "Sephiroth destroyed my town."

"I see. Do you think that the creatures that attacked you are the same ones you saw five years ago in Nibelheim?"

"Eila," Cloud suddenly called her with a stern voice. She looked up and saw him sitting up straight and looking down at her with his glowing eyes. "That's enough. Leave those creatures to me. I won't let you get involved in this."

"But, Cloud, what if these creatures go on a killing spree and claim that all of us had JENOVA cells? They're not concerned about the planet's safety, they only want us humans to fear them! I won't just sit here and watch everyone get slaughtered when I could have done something." Eila stood up and rested her hands to her hips.

"No, you are not going to do anything about it!" Cloud said angrily. He found himself standing up and glaring at her. "You're either going to stay here in Cosmo Canyon and be safe with Miss Elmyra, or you're going to Wutai where those things won't find you."

"They're not after me, Cloud, they're after you, remember?" Eila folded her arms loosely on her chest. "And that's why I'm so worried about you. You know that they would stop at nothing until they kill you and...who knows, how many more people?"

Cloud opened his mouth as if to say something but ended up placing his hands on her shoulders. "No. I can't let you risk your life or just let you throw it away so easily. I won't let it happen again." He gave a heavy sigh and turned away from her, looking out through the window.

"Won't let what happen again? Let another 'Aeris' die?" Eila stepped up beside Cloud and smiled. "Cloud, you promised me that you would let go of that guilt. And I've told you time and again, I am not Aeris." She sighed and sat down on his bed. "Besides, you still have Tifa Lockheart and Nanaki and your other friends to return to. I've lost my family and my past, and for six months, I didn't even have myself. I didn't know who I was. At least...I'd be able to do something worthwhile with what's left of my future."

"Don't talk like that, Eila. We're your friends now." Cloud said, gently this time. "Besides, Miss Elmyra would kill me if she knew about this. I can't take you away from her, she needs you."

"Excuse me, sir." A young man appeared in their doorway, surprising both Cloud and Eila. "There is someone who wishes to see you."

Cloud grinned at Eila and gave her a little wink. "It's kinda nice being a friend of their guardian. They treat you like royalty." He started to chuckle which ended up in a choked cough and a terrible pain in his chest and back. He fell on one knee to the floor, gasping heavily for air. Eila rubbed his back gently and offered her hand to help him.

"Maybe you'd better tell them to come here." Cloud said in between heavy breaths as he took Eila's hand and sat down beside her on the bed. The man nodded and left.

Eila gently helped Cloud lean his back against a pillow which was supported by the wall. "I must have been hit harder than I thought." He said and tried to smile, but the pain erupting from within his injured ribs burned through his lungs.

In an instant later, Tifa Lockheart emerged from the door and wrapped her arms around Cloud's neck, forcing him to bump the back of his head on the wall. Eila giggled as she stood up to meet Nanaki and two other visitors who entered the room. The two men were huge and rough looking although they introduced themselves with surprising politeness. Barret Wallace, was a tall, heavy-built, dark-skinned man whose left arm was replaced with a gun. The other one was known as Cid Highwind, a rugged looking man with silver-grey hair. They were both surprised to see Eila, but she quickly assumed that they were also Aeris' friends. Their reaction was already one she has gotten used to.

"What happened to you? Why didn't you call me?" Tifa asked, non-stop as Cloud winced from the tight embrace. From what he could see on her face, she hasn't had much sleep and has probably been crying all night.

"I'm sorry, Tif. I would have been dead, if she hadn't saved my life." He said, gently touching Tifa's pale cheeks.

"Atta' girl!" Cid whispered patting Eila's back. "Welcome to the club. Saving Spiky's ass is what we all do!"

The girl blushed tremendously, trying to suppress a small chuckle. Cloud reacted violently to that remark which brought about laughter from the two burly men.

"You've got some explaining to do, Spiky." Barret said, raising his gun arm. "We would have reached Wutai if Red hadn't called us up on the PHS. At least one of us still knows how to use that thing."

"I just woke up, okay?" Cloud answered defensively.

"The first place you'd reach after Midgar is Kalm town. How did you get to Cosmo Canyon?" Tifa asked keeping her arms on Cloud's chest as he drew her closer to him.

"We rode on Nia, she's a flying beast, Miss Lockheart." Eila said, pointing to her little pet.

Tifa raised an eyebrow. So did Barret and Cid. The creature was barely larger than Eila's palm, how could it have carried both her and Cloud a whole continent away?

"Never mind about that." Tifa smiled and shook her head happily. "What's important now is that both of you are safe. When I heard on the news that two more people were killed in the park, I kept on praying that it wasn't you. Thank God.." Cloud held Tifa tighter as tears began to roll down her cheeks. Saying the most comforting words that he could think of.

They looked pretty together, almost like a picture in a movie. Eila found herself smiling at them, tears of joy forming in her own eyes. Suddenly, her heart sank, her chest began to hurt. She roughly clasped one hand over at where the pain started and leaned against the wall for support. She noticed Nanaki looking her way with a concerned glance. She responded with a smile and told him that she was just tired.

"Okay, so now that we're all sound and safe, what are we going to do? What's all this about strange creatures ravaging Midgar in the middle of the night?" Cid yelled breaking the moment without much discretion. He mechanically lit a cigarette and puffed out a thick, white smoke.

"First thing's first." Cloud said, coughing at the smoke. "We bring Eila back to Midgar tomorrow and talk Miss Elmyra into moving over to Wutai until we make sure that Midgar'll be safe." He gave Eila a stern look, telling her that he meant every word he said and that his decision was final. She was not to get involved in something that they should have finished six months ago. Eila only crossed her arms across her chest and stared at her boots in defeat.

"Those creatures are after me because I have JENOVA cells." Cloud continued. Cid and the others nodded. Although, they didn't quite understand how JENOVA could still exist or direct her "puppets" after they've defeated it and Sephiroth.

"I agree. We'll go see Reeve tomorrow. Maybe he could lend us a hand with a couple o' platoons or something." Barret spoke. "I hear that Junon is still a military base. We should have enough man power to--"

Tifa shook her head, thoughtfully looking at the big man. "Barret, don't you think that turning to the military should be our last option. There has to be another way to deal with those creatures."

"I don't think they'd talk. The almost killed me last night. And I don't even know how they knew about me having JENOVA cells." Cloud rested his back against the pillow and rubbed his chin several times before looking up at his friends. "Well, now that that's been settled. We're going to Midgar tomorrow okay? Everybody get some rest."

Barret and Cid nodded as both of them had the same plan of visiting the bar. It's been a while since they've tasted cosmo Canyon brew and it was now or who knows when. Eila left the room afterwards, slipping through the curtains silently. She felt incredibly tired and downhearted. She knew that after she returned to Midgar, she may never see Cloud or the others again. She knew, her adopted mother wouldn't allow it.

"Red," Cloud called his furry friend before he left. Nanaki directed his attention to Cloud and Tifa who were sitting side-by-side on the bed. "Watch over Eila tonight, willya? And no matter what she says, don't let her sneak out on us again."

"I will." Nanaki answered with a slight nod of his head and left the two alone.

The next morning found Eila sitting in one of the Highwinds bunker beds. She no longer wore her pink and white dress but a white tank top and baggy, green army pants and boots. She sat cross-legged on the bed, rubbing Nia's back as it slept beside her. Suddenly, Cid entered the room, with another cigarette in his mouth.

"We're not yet ready to leave. Cloud and Nanaki's talking over some things." He said watching the girl as she straightened herself up. "You wanna tour the Highwind?" He asked, proud to show off his legendary ship. His grin widened even more as the girl nodded and jumped down from the bed with sparkling eyes.

"Aeris never got to ride this ship. I knew that it was always her dream to."

Eila said nothing but let the old pilot speak of Aeris as he wished. There was no point in trying to argue with them anymore. It was clear that she does remind them of their dead friend. First, they went to the operations room, the long table had been replaced with a small round one, enough for ten people to sit around. The walls were decorated with pictures of Rocket Town and a couple of Airships. Cid was proud of this room, he designed it himself to look more homely and less ShinRa-ly.

"I'll add a mini-bar somewhere there," He pointed to the vacant space at the far end of the room. "C'mon." He said leading Eila out a door and into a metal walkway to the Chocobo stable. A friendly old man greeted them as they entered the now-

clean looking stable. There were two empty stalls filled with hay and vegetables and another stall for the expensive greens. "This is where I keep my gold chocobo, Axel."

Next stop was to the cockpit that had faced many battles and decisions once upon a time. The pilots and their assistants stood up and saluted as their captain entered. Cid nodded and everybody resumed their duties. They were already hovering above ground, just waiting for Cloud and the others to get on board. Barret was sitting in a corner, reading the Midgar Times magazine and frowning as he passed over an article about the attacks.

A few minutes later, Cid and Eila headed to the deck. He nearly shouted out loud as Eila ran towards the railings and leaned over them too far out for Cid's comfort. He moved to her side quickly, in case the winds do change and she does fall off the Highwind.

"It's so beautiful." She said, looking out at the brick red canyons and the dark purple mountains appearing on the horizon.

"Y'know there was a time when I didn't think about the planet and life and stuff like that." Cid said, again lighting another cigarette and puffing out smoke. Eila stepped down from the railings and listened to him intently. He grinned as a memory crossed his thoughts. "I remember, at first I never understood why Aeris died in the first place. Why she was so determined to protect the planet with her life. I wouldn't do that, no way, I had dreams to fulfill. Until Cloud told us to go out and search for a reason why we want to fight. I found mine, so did Barret, and Yuffie and Red."

Cid inhaled the last of his cigarette before putting it out and tossing it to a trash bucket. "It sounds kinda mushy, but we wanted to make sure that our loved ones would have a future to look forward to. Now, here we are again. Faced with another threat of monsters. It's not as big as meteor, but we're ready to put our lives on the line for the people again."

"Captain, sir. Mr. Strife is on board and we're ready to leave." One of the pilots called out from the door. Cid nodded and turned leaving Eila alone on the deck to think and to watch the skies.

Eila bowed her head down and looked at the little people going about their business below them. She knew why she wanted to protect the planet. Not for self-glorification or to become in line with the heroes of Midgar. It was all for them. The words she told Cloud yesterday echoed through her mind. She may never find out who she was in the past, or her family. "At least," she told Nia, her voice quivering with the sinking emotion she felt in her chest. "at least, I'll be able to do something worthwhile with what's left of my future."

The ships engines roared and they began to gain altitude. Looking back at the closed door that lead downstairs, Eila's heart began to race wildly. She clasped one hand over her heart and closed her eyes, praying that they would forgive her. Slowly, she dug her hands into her pocket and produced a map of the world. Something that she had stolen from the operations room, while no one was looking.

It was the other way around, this time, she didn't want them to get involved. Not them, who had families and loved ones to return to. Unlike her. She took Nia from her shoulder and placed her on top of the railings whispering a few words. As the ship began to move, Eila took one final glance at the deck before leaping off with Nia.

"To Nibelheim." She said pointing to the east. "We'll find our answers there..."