

Then, he finally addressed them.

“Administrator: Three – One; Catharsis.” He recited its name and designation. It was only now that they realized that ‘three – one’ referenced not just him, but an ancient Atelier or other group that was absorbed into Inflow Direct.

No, more than that – they were largely responsible for the creation of Serum C – Catharsis, a Serum that allowed one to raise one’s emotional state temporarily for better or worse. It was mostly used to allow those to vent or confess.

Hands guided a written book to the face of the entity, and as it read the hands within the chamber stood on their fingertips. The Blood Angels then guided the Moons towards the raised platform as ceremonial chants were uttered by them.

Suddenly, the deep, thunderous voice of the Administrator recited:

“You accept the blessings born from their sacrifice.”

Bloodied words were written in the air surrounding the Healers.

Blood dripped from their palms as they stood around the circular platform, creating a crimson barrier as the Moons stood in silence.

“You accept that your dignity comes from bearing the weight of the Head’s trust.”

Red mist was emitted from the masks of the Healers, beginning the armoring ritual of the Vermillion Moons.

“You accept that your vengeance will drive you to harrow a hell beyond comprehension.”

The hands of the Healers reached into the mist, and they clasped at the clothes the Moons wore, stripping them down to nothing.

“Be stripped of the past.”

The disembodied hands then felt their flesh, assessing available routes as the mechanical hands beyond the mist retreated through the archways. They returned with a series of empty vials and tubes.

“Wear the present.”

The Blood Angels surgically attached the tubes along the backs of the Vermillion Moons, causing them great pain but they stood their ground, knowing precisely that this was their gateway to reclaiming what they had lost.

“Claim the future, as we have written.”

Four vials were inserted into their backs, with the tubes being fished through their flesh. The blood that dripped from their bodies was collected into separate vials. Eventually, the tubes terminated at the end of various organs. The ability of the Blood Angels was to interact with the innards of people as well as to heal them, although, they were not so keen to heal the ordinary.

“Your blood will carry the burdens of your wrath. The trauma will destroy the minds of the weak.”

“Serum T – Traumatic...” A Blood Angel chanted as she was gifted a large syringe. She stuck the needle into the opening of one vial. A grey-like liquid filled each of them before they were given a direct dosage straight into the side of their legs.

The bodies of the Vermillion Moons flared up as though they were afflicted by a terrible fever. That fever soon turned to fervor as fury burned in their crimson eyes.

“The limitations of the flesh have been exceeded by your kind. The gift of our miracles will improve you through the sacrifices of those deserving of your hatred.”

“Serum U – Ultimo...”

Another syringe was handed to a Blood Moon, and she injected them with a bright-red liquid before their bodies were covered piece by piece with a black and red body suit.

“A series of woven cloth protects you from the elements that sever the flesh and shatter the bone. It shall be a gift from the Head who bolsters the flames of your fury.”

The seams that separated every piece wove together to create a perfect fit. A red, short cape that terminated halfway down their backs was also placed onto their shoulders. And on it was the new, formal insignia of the Head – the Black Feather.

“You wear the Head’s insignia with humility.”

Sharing the same space was the symbol of a black dahlia.

“You wear the symbol of betrayal with vengeance.”

The chanting of the Blood Angels grew louder. It became a cacophony rather than a choir. Utter reverence filled them as they brought forth yet another syringe.

“The emptiness fills with your drive to stand against the traitors.”

“Serum V – Vacuity...”

A pale fluid was injected into the third vial, causing their bodies to quiver slightly as they felt their innards seemingly disappear as though nothing existed within them. Their bodies were lighter than ever.

“You will stand before them.”

“Serum R – Red Riding.”

The final syringe was brought over, and a blood-red liquid was injected into the last vial in their backs.

“With necessity you will bring those fallen to your newfound heights.”

Unlike Serum G – Goldilocks which caused the Moons to remain in the present, Serum R – Red Riding caused those to vehemently chase their goals no matter what. It was a dangerous Serum that was known to lead many to ruin, for it caused a common suicidal tendency for users to jump into action.

But for these Moons such a thing was not an issue. In fact, it was their calling.

However, the ritual was not over yet.

A lull in the chants evoked the Blood Angels' utter reverence as countless half-meter tubes were brought to them by other Blood Angels. The red mist sterilized the great tubes as a barbed stake was found on each end. One Angel took the item and twisted it, causing four branching blades to emerge from the stake.

“With reverence you bear the instruments of war.”

Four transparent rods were stabbed into the backs of the Vermillion Moons. With each twist the branching blades anchored themselves into their flesh as the Healers secured it into place with their magic. Their upper backs held the containers that were to hold something forbidden.

Not a single word left the lips of the Blood Moons who were focused in only regaining the magic that was robbed from them.

No. It was more than that. What they were given was something beyond their expectations.

Suddenly, a giant needle surrounded by the locks of the Chained Theocracy was brought to them. Within was a dark liquid that somehow emitted a strange, powerful glow.

“You walk in the ranks of the Head.”

“Serum W – Wishcatcher.”

The first rod of each Moon was filled with this liquid.

“You serve Her as a Moon of the Head.”

A second syringe followed.

“Serum X – Xpulsion.”

“You are Vermillion.”

The third.

“Serum Y – Ylem.”

“You are your own beginning.”

And finally, the last Serum.

“Serum Z – Zenith.”

The very air surrounding the Vermillion Moons was temporarily torn apart at the atomic level following the administration of Serum Z.

And to think that these were only *Serums*, and not Infusions.

The Vermillion Moons stood proudly upon their completion. The rods they bared were their shackles under the reign of the Amalgam. But they did not see it as the latter. Rather, they saw it as they key to freedom, and most importantly –

“You are their end.”

– Their express ticket to sate their thirst for vengeance.

The book of blood closed, and the eyes of the Vermillion Moons glowed red like the orbs of the Blood Angels.