

## **A Journey 491**

### Chapter 491 The Kiss Of Death

Archer and Nefertiti made their way down the road while the college came into view. He couldn't help but be reminded of a certain magic school from a book on Earth.

Soon, the two walked through the entrance and saw Ella, Hemera, Llyniel, and Sera standing near a fountain, talking with Lioran's fiancées.

Lioran and Ciaran intercepted Archer as the duo approached, blocking his path while Nefertiti walked past them.

That's when Lioran commented with a grin. "Did you accept Nala? She has been very happy."

Archer looked at the lion boy with a neutral expression before responding with a chuckle. "Indeed, but as of now, only you two and the girls are in the know. I prefer to see how things unfold before making an official announcement and confronting your father."

Lioran's face lit up with a warm smile as he nodded in approval. Meanwhile, Ciaran extended a welcoming hand to Archer, firm in grip and camaraderie.

Before Cian could utter a word, Ella, Hemera, Llyniel, and Sera, each radiating excitement, surrounded Archer.

In a delightful display of affection, they greeted him with a shower of friendly kisses, expressing their joy at his presence.

Archer was caught off guard and started laughing as he returned their kisses. After that, he asked. "Where are the others?"

At that moment, Ella informed him, "Teuila and Talila went to look for Professor Grayleaf for a matter they needed to discuss, and Leira had to return to the palace to attend to her parents."

Sera interjected while the half-elf smiled, "Nala is engrossed in training, fueled by the excitement of someone accepting her. As for Halime, she simply disappeared, and we haven't seen her since leaving the domain."

That was when Llyniel walked over to him and spoke in a low voice as many people were around. "I think she may have gone to the gardens at the back of the college."

Archer agreed with a nod, then summoned a Tressym from the domain and asked it to find the snake girl.

The creature happily did what he asked. Everyone watched wide-eyed, making Archer smile as he explained to the group. "During my time in the Nether Realm, I discovered these little creatures. I invited them to join me, and they willingly became my trustworthy scouts. They've been really useful."

Upon hearing this, their faces lit up with joy, and Sera inquired, "After classes, could you summon more of them? We'd love to see those fluffy and cute creatures."

"Ladies. I'll summon a bunch once you're back in the domain before heading out on my date," Archer replied with a charming smile when he saw them all looking at him.

The girl's excitement radiated in their eyes as they collectively expressed eagerness to encounter the adorable cats later on.

Upon hearing this, Leonora and Nalika, the two lion girls, mirrored expressions of excitement before directing their gaze towards Archer.

"Arch, would it be alright if they joined us?" inquired Ella.

When he heard her question, he turned his attention to Lioran, who was engrossed in conversation with Cian.

"Don't look at me! They can do what they want, but can I also join? I've always wanted to see this domain Nala speaks of," the lion boy replied.

Archer asked, "Why do you want to see it?"

Lioran smiled as he responded, "Because the girls have talked about it, and I'm curious."

Upon hearing this, Archer chuckled, nodding in agreement. "You can go with your woman. The girls will warn you not to wander, or you'll be eaten."

After saying this, he noticed the Tressym flying toward it. When it arrived, the cat rubbed its head against him, conveying the information about Halime's whereabouts.

Archer expressed gratitude to the fluffy beast with a stroke and promised it plenty of pets soon, causing it to get excited.

The girls stroked the flying cat, who loved the attention, before flying through the portal with a meow, causing Archer to laugh.

Once that was done, he kissed each girl before turning to Lioran and Ciaran before asking. "What classes have you got today?"

Cian answered first. "I have Magic Theory, Combat Magic, Elemental Affinities, History, Geopolitics, and Spellcraft."

The lion booy spoke next. "Questing and Adventure, Anti-Magic Defence, Enchanting, History & Geopolitics, Spellcraft. What about you, Arch?"

"The Questing and Adventure class, Swordsmanship, Magic Fundamental, History & Geopolitics, and Spellcraft," He answered.

Lioran smiled when he heard this. He said goodbye and walked over to his fiances, with Cian following behind as the girls approached him.

Each one kissed him before going off to their classes, apart from Teuila and Talila, who had the same lesson and had just returned.

He told the two girls to meet him in the class while he went to find the snake girl sitting alone in the college's back garden.

Archer strolled through the college grounds, the vibrant atmosphere buzzing with activity.

As he traversed the pathways, he observed professors conducting classes outdoors, their voices carrying fragments of knowledge on the gentle breeze.

Students listened attentively, notebooks in hand, absorbing the lessons amidst the picturesque surroundings.

The college garden was a canvas of colors, with diligent individuals tending to the flowers, pruning bushes, and ensuring the beauty of the landscape.

Laughter echoed as friends gathered on benches, sharing stories and forming memories. As Archer continued his walk, his gaze fell upon Halime.

Seated on a bench next to a tranquil pond, she exuded a sense of calm amid the vibrant surroundings.

The sunlight played on the water's surface, causing gentle ripples that mirrored the serene ambiance of the scene.

Archer approached her with a concerned look as he sat beside the snake girl and wrapped his arm around her waist.

He pulled her closer to him, which made the unaware girl jump and try to back away until she realized it was him.

Halime's turmoil settled as she nestled against him, her gaze fixed on the reflective surface of the pond. However, Archer's words pierced through the fragile tranquility. "What's troubling you?"

Silence enveloped the girl, but his persistent probing compelled her to respond, her voice laced with pain. "You only halfway embraced me, yet with the lion girl, you offered full acceptance. Why am I denied the same?"

After speaking, a soft breeze carried the scent of flowers as they sat together, the weight of unspoken words hanging in the air.

Halime hesitated, her gaze fixed on the ground as if searching for the right way to express the ache within her.

Finally, she looked up, her eyes revealing the vulnerability she had long guarded. "Archer," she began, her voice tinged with sadness and longing, "you don't know what it's like to live with a curse that repels everyone. No one has ever wanted me, touched me willingly, because of this mark that stains my existence."

Archer, his eyes filled with empathy, reached out to gently touch her arm. "Halime, I..."

She pulled away, the pain in her eyes intensifying. "No, Archer, listen. You're the only one, the only person whose touch I can bear. The only one who defies the curse. But it's not enough."

His brow furrowed in concern. "What do you mean?"

Tears welled in her eyes as she spoke the words she had hidden deep within her soul. "I want more. I want your love. I want to feel your touch sparingly and freely without fearing repulsion. I want to be with you, truly with you, in every sense of the word."

Halime, her heart heavy with unspoken words, turned to him. "Archer, I can't keep living in this uncertainty. I need to know where I stand with you. Can we be together? Or is this just a game where we're so close yet so far apart?"

Archer sighed, his gaze thoughtful. "Halime, it's not that I don't want to be with you. I just... I wanted to get to know you better, understand you more. I didn't want to rush into something and end up hurting you."

Halime looked down, her frustration evident. "But the uncertainty hurts more."

His expression shifted, a mixture of understanding and determination. He took a step closer to her. "I don't want you to doubt my feelings, Halime. I care about you deeply. Maybe I've been too cautious."

Before she could respond, he gently cupped her face and leaned in, his lips meeting hers in a soft, unexpected kiss.

Time froze for a moment as Halime processed the surprise. Her eyes widened, and the surroundings briefly blurred.

The courtyard fell into a hush as they parted, and whispers rippled through the passing students.

Halime was infamous for her curse, and people steered clear of her. Seeing Archer kiss her, they braced for the expected fallout, anticipating his sudden demise.

Witnessing what they dubbed the "kiss of death," onlookers were stunned, their faces a mix of surprise and amazement.

However, defying all predictions, Archer emerged unscathed. A quiet stillness settled over the courtyard as everyone grappled with this unexpected turn of events.

Some students looked on with admiration, while others, grappling with confusion, regarded him with suspicion and fear.

Chapter 492 Do You Accept Me

Archer just looked at the dazed snake girl, who had a small smile and thought to himself. 'This probably happened because I said I don't love her. I won't be doing that again.'

He shook his head and paid attention to her. She had short black hair, bright yellow eyes, and was petite like Ella but had bigger boobs.

Halime sat there, her dazed expression gradually giving way to a smile as she regained awareness.

Her gaze fixed on Archer, and with a hopeful tone, she asked, "Do you accept me?"

Archer met her eyes, his smile warm and reassuring. Without uttering a word, he nodded, affirming his acceptance.

A burst of joy illuminated Halime's face as she lunged forward and hugged him tightly.

With playful enthusiasm, she showered his neck and cheeks with gentle kisses, a gesture that he found undeniably adorable.

Their tender moment was interrupted by the ringing of the bell, bringing her affectionate onslaught to a halt.

Archer smiled, glancing at her, and asked, "Which class do you have now?"

As the two lingered in the hallway after the bell, Halime, with a twinkle in her eyes, shared a piece of her schedule with him. "I've got Magic Fundamentals next. Ella, Sera and Hemera are in the same class."

He nodded, extending his hand, and she took it with a smile. They walked together to her class, engaging in casual conversation.

Archer couldn't help but notice the instant transformation in the girl. She became more animated, passionately discussing her experiences using magic against various beasts.

Archer walked Halime to her classroom, the chatter of students and the distant hum of the school creating a lively backdrop.

When they reached her destination, he turned to face her with a smile. Before she entered, he cupped Halime's cheek and gently kissed her lips.

It was a sweet and brief moment, filled with the unspoken promise of connection. She entered the classroom with a radiant smile.

Archer watched for a moment before making his way to the quest class. The path to the quest class led him through the bustling corridors.

While he walked down the corridor, he started to think to himself. 'Twelve girls Arch. What are you doing? This is going to be chaotic.'

He shrugged, indifferent to the matter, deciding to handle it when the time came. With that thought in mind, he reached the classroom and casually walked inside.

Archer saw Teuila, Talila, Nala, and Nalika chatting to each other while Lioran and Ciaran chatted with another three boys.

That's when he realized two of them had saved him a seat, so Nala motioned for him to sit with them when they saw him.

He walked over to them with a smile and greeted the three girls with a kiss before sitting down at the end of the desk next to Teuila.

The four girls resumed their conversation as the lion boy took a moment to introduce the two boys accompanying him.

"Archer, let me introduce you to Cylix Maclin from the Riverland Duchy. He is the son of Count Maclin in the East," Lioran said, motioning towards a blue-haired boy of Archer's age.

He had the same blue eyes as his hair and was much smaller than Archer, who was much taller even when sitting down.

Lioran shifted his attention to the next boy. "And this is Barion Darkwell, son of Earl Darkwell from the Frostwyn Duchy."

Archer glanced at the second boy, noting the distinctive features of an elf with light blue skin and short white hair.

'An ice elf?' He mused to himself.

Before the elf could speak, the boy named Cylix spoke with gratitude. "Thank you for helping my family. They all appreciate it and want to thank you personally."

Archer looked at the blue-haired boy with a confused look, causing Lioran to explain. "You rescued their family's land in the East. They were under siege until you appeared and turned the enemy army to ash."

He shrugged before commenting. "I burned so much that I've lost track, but I'm glad I helped your family. The emperor can reward me even more now, Cylix."

Lioran chuckled as Barion remained silent, redirecting his attention as Professor Greyleaf entered the classroom.

Archer's face lit up as the older blonde woman entered. She stopped before the class, saying, "Good morning, class."

Turning towards the blackboard, she began jotting down some notes. Archer, unfazed, patiently waited for her to provide further explanations.

Samara stood at the front of the class, her voice clear and commanding. "Good morning, everyone. As S-class members, you now have the privilege of choosing any college quest available. Today, I'll guide you to the quest center where you can make your selections. Let's make our way there together."

The students exchanged excited glances, and anticipation filled the room as they prepared to embark on their next adventure.

Samara led the way, and the class eagerly followed, ready to see the quest center for the first time.

Archer and the three girls stood up, followed by the other four students. Together, they trailed behind the older woman who had exited the classroom.

Following Samara, everyone navigated through corridors until they exited the building. They continued walking towards the northern side of the college grounds.

As they approached, Archer noticed a medium-sized wooden building in the distance.

Getting closer, the nicely decorated exterior became more apparent, catching his eye with its charm.

Samara led the way into the building, followed by the entire group, including Archer and the girls.

Upon entering, they were greeted by a spacious interior with a large desk manned by a couple of older students.

Opposite the desk, a quest board caught his attention, while scattered chairs and a shop at the other end filled the space.

Archer approached the sign at the shop, realizing it dealt with the purchase of beast parts, a prospect that didn't pique his interest.

He surveyed the surroundings, considering the various opportunities and choices displayed in the bustling hub of activities.

Samara turned around, facing the eager group of students, and raised her hand for attention. "Alright, everyone, take a seat. I have an announcement."

As the students settled into chairs, Samara continued, "For your first assignment, I want you to break into groups of five. Each group will be responsible for completing ten quests within the next week. The

goal is not just to finish the quests but to gain valuable experience. Once the week is over, I'd like each group to write about their experiences. We'll then compare and discuss what you've learned."

Excitement buzzed through the room as the students exchanged glances, contemplating the adventure awaited them.

Nala, Teuila, and Talila exchanged glances and then turned to observe Archer, who seemed to be scanning the surroundings with a wide-eyed curiosity that amused them.

Amused by his demeanor, they giggled, drawing Archer's attention. He shifted his gaze toward them, narrowing his eyes, and inquired with a smile, "What's so funny?"

Teuila couldn't help but notice the wide-eyed curiosity on Archer's face, and a mischievous smile tugged at her lips. As the group gathered, she leaned in to share her amusement with Nala and Talila.

"I love the look on his face," she whispered the playful sparkle in her eyes mirroring the mischief in her tone.

Before they could continue their light banter, Samara intervened. "Alright, everyone, let's group up before choosing quests. Form your teams of five, and we'll get started."

Teuila grinned at Archer, teasingly adding, "Save that for when we embark on our quests together. "

The playful banter continued as the students excitedly formed their groups. He strolled over to the quest board, his eyes scanning the array of quests available.

As he looked at the options, he focused on a couple that caught his interest, particularly those involving beasts.

He carefully took note of the details, pondering the challenges and rewards each quest presented.

The girls gathered around the quest board. Their eyes focused on quests involving the hunting of formidable beasts.

They deliberated and carefully selected ten quests that promised both challenge and excitement as a group.

With their choices made, they approached Samara, who awaited them with an intrigued smile.

Archer handed over the list of quests, and Samara scanned through them, her expression growing more pleased with each selection.

"Well done, everyone. These quests will certainly test your skills and provide valuable experience," Samara commended, her approval evident.

That's when he saw a redheaded girl with blue eyes standing in one corner and wasn't approached by anyone.

Archer recognized her as Zarina from one of his classes. So he approached her when he noticed her discomfort.

Her eyes, initially reflecting unease, suddenly narrowed as she spotted him. The shifts in her expression hinted at a mix of wariness.

When he got close to the girl, she spoke in a hostile voice. "What do you want, dragon boy?"

Archer chuckled before answering with a charming smile. "Do you want to join my group, Zarina?"

The redhead looked at him and wondered what he wanted with her until Nala, Talila, and Teuila approached with smiles.

Chapter 493 Shadowleaf Forest

As the three girls approached, Zarina scrutinized them with narrowed eyes. However, she shifted her gaze back to him and nodded in agreement.

Seeing her response, Archer smiled and said, "Alright, meet us by the exit when you're ready."

He then walked away with the three girls trailing behind him. Nala asked with curiosity, "Archie, why did you ask her to join?"

Archer gathered the three girls aside, a thoughtful expression on his face. "I couldn't help but notice she seemed uncomfortable and no one was speaking to her."

Nala, with a sympathetic nod, stepped forward to explain. "Her family is from a Baron lineage that oversees some farms in the south. Unfortunately, there's a history—her family was once Marquess but was demoted many years ago due to an incident nearly wiping them out. Since then, they've faced prejudice within the Avalon Empire, and people tend to keep their distance."

Archer absorbed the information and felt sorry for the girl. "No wonder she seemed isolated. It's tough when history overshadows who you are now."

Nala shook her head alongside the other two. That's when Teuila spoke up. "I've seen her in some of my lessons, but no one talks to or sits beside her."

Curiosity gnawed at him, and he couldn't help but wonder about the reasons behind Zarina's isolation.

However, he shook off the thought, refocusing on the immediate task. "I'll tell Samara that we've selected ten quests and plan to start them right away," he commented to the group.

The trio of girls nodded in agreement before Archer approached the blonde woman, offering guidance to a group of students.

Samara noticed his presence and greeted him with a smile. She then requested the students she was advising to wait a moment as she walked over to him.

"Hello, Archer. How are you today? Have you selected your group's quests? There are quite a few options available," she inquired.

He smiled charmingly at the woman, Ksara's younger sister, and said, "Yeah, we've picked our quests. Just wanted to let you know we're starting now."

Samara nodded in approval, expressing her satisfaction. "That's good! You have two hours until your next class, so if you were quick, you could complete one quest."

"Okay, we'll get to it now and report back to you when we've completed the first quest," Archer commented as he returned to the girls.

When they saw him, they smiled, apart from Zarina, who gave him a dirty look that made him laugh.

Archer kissed Teuila, Talila, and Nala, which made them happy before the mixed elf asked. "What is our first quest?"

He took out the ten pieces of paper and examined them.

[Kobold Menace: Eliminate a menacing beast wreaking havoc on villages near the Shadowleaf Forest]

[Enchanted Herb Collection: Gather mystical herbs with unique magical properties from the depths of the Shadowleaf Forest]

[Goblin Extermination: Clear an area infested with goblins located north of Crossroad City]

[Wendigo Threat: Track and eliminate a perilous beast lurking in the Eldertree Grove]

[Orc Marauders: Neutralize a dangerous beast causing chaos in villages near the Shadowleaf Forest]

[Swamp Drake Menace: Eradicate a menacing beast threatening the peace of Riverwatch Town]

[Bugbear Ambush: Tackle a dangerous creature causing terror in villages near the Shadowleaf Forest]

[Vermin Purge: Exterminate the rat infestation in the sewers beneath Silvervein City]

[Troll Rampage: Hunt down the trolls responsible for raiding Starhaven Town]

[Marauding Minotaur Subjugation: Handle a marauding minotaur that poses a threat to travelers]

After Archer finished reading the quests he picked out, but that's when Talila held up two of her own and handed them to him.

He looked at them and started reading.

[Lost Ruins: Delve into ancient ruins south of Silverfrost]

[Bandit Den Raid: Infiltrate and dismantle a notorious bandit group's hideout]

That's when Teuila and Nala gave him one each, so he had fourteen altogether.

[Bandit Hunt: Wipe out the outlaws raiding caravans along the road from Eldoria Town to Serpents Cross City]

[Bandit Hunt: Deal with the bandits hiding in the Whispering Veil]

Following this, Archer addressed the four girls eagerly awaiting his decision. "We'll start with? hunting Kobolds in the Shadowleaf Forest and then collect the herbs."

All four girls nodded, but Zarina commented in a deadpan voice. "How will we travel that far in two hours? Do you have a magic carpet, or can you fly?"

When she said that, the other three started to laugh, and the redhead didn't know why and was confused.

Archer chuckled before explaining. "You do remember I'm a dragon, right? Normally, we can fly, but that's not how we travel today."

After finishing his instructions, he cast Gate to the college entrance, telling the ladies to wait a little while before he summoned them.

Stepping through the portal, he summoned his wings and took off, flying toward the Shadowleaf Forest.

An hour of flight later, he found himself on the other side of the forest, where he spotted a market.

Intrigued, he refrained from exploring it immediately, deciding to save it for later and take one of the girls there.

That's when he cast Gate again, and the three girls walked through as Talila dragged the shocked redhead behind her.

Archer laughed when he saw this catching Zarina's attention. The girl asked while looking around. "How did you do that, dragon boy?"

"Secrets." He answered with a grin, which annoyed the redhead.

Summoning the Tressyms, Archer commanded them to locate any beasts' nests in the forest. The winged cats agreed and swiftly flew off, disappearing into the dense foliage.

As the Tressym ventured into the forest, Archer scanned his surroundings and spotted a small hill.

Deciding to relax there until the cat returned, he began walking toward it, and the girls followed closely behind.

Archer led the four girls to the top of the small hill, where they found a comfortable sitting spot. He used Mana Manipulation to melt all the snow and dry the ground.

The vibrant greenery of the Shadowleaf Forest surrounded them, creating a serene atmosphere.

As they settled down, Archer spoke, "Let's wait here for the Tressym's. They should return soon."

After a brief moment of relaxation, the flying cats returned and gracefully landed near Archer while others found their places beside the others.

The usually moody Zarina began stroking the Tressym's, forming a connection with the magical beast who was rubbing its head against her.

The leader approached him and through a series of visions, showed him the locations of the beast nests.

Archer, in turn, affectionately stroked the head of the little beast as the Tressym's returned to the domain.

He leaped to his feet and exclaimed, "Ladies! Let's go. I know where the Kobolds are."

The girls followed him eagerly. Archer took a moment to strategize with the group as they entered the forest. "Talila, use your bow and fight from a distance. Nala and Teuila, take the front lines. I'll stay in the center to provide support if needed."

Turning to Zarina, he inquired, "What magic do you use for combat?"

Zarina responded with a hint of aloofness, "I specialize in fire and water magic. My expertise lies in long-range combat, not getting up close and personal."

Archer nodded and continued. "You stay with Talila and make sure she's protected."

The redhead nodded her head before he stopped talking and continued deeper into the forest.

The air became tense as Archer and the three girls approached the Kobold nest in the heart of the Shadowleaf Forest.

The dense foliage and ancient trees concealed the entrance to the nest, making it a challenging location to navigate.

The rustling leaves, and distant beast calls provided an eerie backdrop to their journey.

Archer took the lead, moving with a stealthy grace that betrayed his draconic heritage. The girls followed closely.

Approaching the Kobold nest, Archer's keen senses detected a subtle change in the surroundings.

He called out, "Stop, girls. I see the herbs we're after. They match the picture on the request."

Nala and Talila volunteered to collect the herbs. Archer acknowledged their choice with a nod, appreciating their nimbleness in navigating the dense vegetation.

As Nala and Talila gathered the enchanted herbs, Archer, Teuila, and Zarina took a leisurely break, awaiting the return of the two girls.

Puzzled by Archer's apparent lack of vigilance, Zarina inquired, "Why aren't we on guard?"

Before Archer could respond, Teuila said, "Darling possesses the ability to sense approaching enemies, sparing us the need to expend energy on constant vigilance."

After a short while, Nala and Talila returned with a bag filled with the magical herbs. They handed it to Archer, who skillfully stored it in his Item Box with a satisfied nod.

As they neared the Kobold nest, a repugnant stench filled the air, assaulting their senses with a nauseating combination of foul odors. Archer grimaced, clearly uncomfortable with the smell.

Zarina wrinkled her nose and commented, "What is that horrendous odor? It's like a mix of rotting garbage and something worse."

Archer responded, "It's probably the scent of the Kobold nest. They might have some unsavory habits or something in there."

#### Chapter 494 The Kobold Tribe

As the group reached the entrance, nothing was in sight. However, Archer gestured for them to hide.

They spotted bloodstains leading into the cave. While they were watching, two Kobolds emerged from the shadows.

Archer's eyes widened as he laid eyes on a Kobold for the first time and paid more attention to them.

The creature stood about three feet tall, with scaly, reptilian skin that shimmered in shades of earthy browns and greens.

Its large, pointy ears twitched nervously, and a pair of bright, intelligent eyes regarded the surroundings with curiosity and wariness.

The Kobold's slender frame moved agilely, clutching a makeshift weapon—a crude spear made from scavenged materials.

Archer's eyes narrowed as he contemplated their strategy for luring out the Kobolds. Turning to the lion girl with a mischievous glint, he asked, "My lioness, can you be dramatic?"

Nala raised an eyebrow, a playful smirk forming on her lips. "Dramatic? You're asking the right girl! What do you need?"

Archer grinned. "We need to get the attention of those Kobolds and lure more out. A dramatic scene from you calling for help might do the trick. Can you pull it off?"

She chuckled as her blue eyes gleamed with mischief and excitement. "You got it, Archie. Get ready for the performance of a lifetime."

The other three girls exchanged curious glances, sensing that something entertaining was about to unfold.

Nala suddenly unleashed her dramatic side. She stumbled over an imaginary obstacle, arms flailing, and called out in an exaggerated tone, "Archie! Help! I'm in grave danger!"

Her theatrics took a comical turn as she continued to trip and stumble, hamming it up for the amusement of Archer and the other three girls.

Laughter echoed through the forest as they watched Nala's playful display. As she continued her dramatic screams, she took the opportunity to declare her love for Archer in detail.

Her theatrical monologue, directed at the unsuspecting trees, delved into the depths of a romantic saga.

With an infectious blend of humor and exaggeration, Nala described romantic escapades grand gestures of affection, and even shared intricate details of their fictional love story.

Archer, caught off guard by the unexpected turn of events, found himself unable to contain his laughter.

The forest echoed with the sound of Nala's passionate confessions and the joyous laughter of the group.

Even Teuila couldn't help but laugh uncontrollably as she listened to the silly lion girl who was still shouting.

Nala's voice reverberated through the forest, catching the attention of birds and rustling leaves.

Archer burst into laughter, and soon, Teuila, Talila, and even the moody Zarina joined in.

Undeterred by the laughter, Nala continued her dramatic wails, adding exaggerated gestures.

As the laughter subsided, Archer wiped tears from his eyes. "Nala, that was... perfect."

The lioness took a bow, a grin playing on her lips. "Glad I could be of service. Now, let's see if our Kobold friends took the bait."

No sooner had she finished speaking than rustling noises emerged from the underbrush. A group of Kobolds, drawn by the commotion, cautiously approached the clearing.

Their reptilian eyes peered out from behind trees and bushes, curious yet wary. Archer noticed that there were about a dozen of them.

He motioned for the others to quiet down, and the laughter tapered off into a conspiratorial silence.

The Kobolds, thinking they had stumbled upon an easy target, crept closer, unaware that they had fallen into the adventurers' clever trap.

Teuila and Nala rushed forward with swift and coordinated movements, their weapons striking down the Kobolds precisely.

Talila and Zarina provided cover, ensuring no other threats approached as the two girls engaged in combat.

After a minute of fighting, all the Kobolds lay dead with missing limbs and blood staining the ground.

Archer watched the two fight and was happy, but he also wanted to fight, so he took the lead before walking into the cave.

The four girls followed behind while his Aura Detector picked up dozens of signals in the tunnels and caverns.

He turned to the girls and spoke. "Do you mind if I summon some help? They are hidden in small crevices and tunnels?"

The four girls nodded with eager smiles before he opened a portal to the domain. Stepping through, he summoned the Nightmare Cave Spiders, commanding them sternly.

"Hunt down the Kobolds in here. Find their nest, and don't leave any survivors," he instructed.

With their sinister appearance and gleaming eyes, the massive spiders acknowledged the order with an unsettling hiss.

After that, they scuttled through the portal, vanishing into the dark depths of the domain, ready to carry out their deadly mission.

As Archer and the four girls walked through the tunnels, the echoing sounds of the spiders hunting the Kobolds reached their ears.

The screams took on an eerie quality, a strange blend of fear and confusion. The cacophony filled the tunnels, but soon, an unsettling silence replaced the screams.

As they traversed the tunnels of the Kobold nest, they stumbled upon a sizable chamber.

Archer turned to the girls, his expression serious, and spoke. "Wait here for a moment. I'll go deeper into the nest. It stinks horribly, and I can already smell it."

The four girls exchanged glances, scrunching their noses in unison before nodding in agreement.

He continued forward, his footsteps echoing through the dimly lit tunnels. A foul stench invaded his senses.

Archer recoiled, gagging, as he came across macabre remnants—body parts from various beasts and humanoids.

But he shook his head before calling to the Nightmare Cave Spiders and giving them a command. "Don't kill the Kobolds anymore. Capture them from now on. Bring them to me unharmed."

As the spiders hissed in response, Archer ventured further into the nest. The tunnels led him to a cavernous chamber with a peculiar sight.

Hundreds of nests were scattered across the floor, which housed twelve eggs each.

That's when he noticed a group of Kobolds huddled together in the back of the chamber, surrounded by the Nightmare Spiders.

Archer's keen eyes spotted more movement as the spiders brought additional Kobolds into the chamber.

These newcomers struggled against the spider's silk, their attempts to resist evident in their frantic movements.

He crouched down and grabbed one of the eggs, catching Kobold's attention, and they hissed at him.

However, Archer ignored their hostility and used his mana to scan the egg. He realized what was causing them to attack the farming villages.

Their eggs appeared weak and lifeless. They resorted to feeding their females, hoping it would solve the problem.

Archer pondered the situation, his brow furrowed in concentration. As he examined the eggs, a realization dawned on him.

It wasn't a matter of insufficient food for the Kobolds; the issue lay with the eggs themselves.

The eggs weren't adequately absorbing mana, a crucial force for everything on Thrylos.

Considering that every entity in this realm was composed of mana, the egg's inability to absorb it indicated something was wrong.

As he looked at the egg, a slow smile spread across his face. The kind of smile hinted at mischief and cunning, a signal that an idea had taken root in his mind.

That's when he heard the girls walking down the tunnel and decided to eliminate the terrible smell and give all the remains to the Monster Army.

He opened a portal to Ksara's bedroom in the Ashguard mansion and used wind magic to funnel the smell into it.

After giving the command, Archer instructed the cave spiders to transport the gruesome remains to their nest to nourish their young, a task they eagerly accepted.

Once the spiders had gathered everything, Archer opened a portal, and the girls stepped through, leaving the Kobold nest behind.

As they disappeared, the Kobolds didn't immediately advance; instead, they gazed at him in astonishment.

The four girls appeared in the large chamber and looked around with wide eyes when they saw the portals close.

But Archer signaled them to wait a moment as he observed one approaching. He chuckled, thinking, 'A little old man lizard.'

The elderly Kobold came to a halt in front of him and knelt. Archer then heard a composed voice. "Thank you for helping the younglings, dragon. I can sense its life, but could you help the rest, and our tribe will serve you?"

Archer smiled as he closed his eyes before reaching out with his mana. He could sense the weak and lifeless energy emanating from the eggs, indicating something was amiss.

His mind raced with possibilities, and then it struck him – the eggs could not absorb mana properly.

That's when he channeled his mana towards the eggs, a gentle stream of ethereal energy that danced in the air like a shimmering mist.

As the mana touched the surface of the eggs, he felt an unexpected pushback, a resistance that sought to repel his intrusion.

Undeterred, Archer grinned as he intensified the flow of his mana, overwhelming the feeble resistance with sheer force.

As Archer persisted, the pushback weakened, and he felt a subtle shift in the energy surrounding the eggs.

The mana, now unhindered, seeped into the eggs, penetrating their lifeless shells.

Chapter 495 Heroic Charm

A minute later, a low rumble emanated from the eggs. The Kobolds, observing Archer's actions with wary eyes, now stared in astonishment as the eggs began to tremble and crack.

Archer's smile widened as he witnessed the magical transformation unfold. The cracks in the eggs expanded, revealing the emergence of tiny Kobold hatchlings.

The babies, covered in a glistening film, blinked at him with wide, curious eyes. The Kobolds in the chamber hissed and chattered, clearly bewildered by the unexpected turn of events.

They had never seen anything like this – their lifeless eggs suddenly hatching with newfound vitality.

Archer turned to the girls, his eyes still gleaming with satisfaction. "Looks like we've just solved the Kobold problem in a rather unconventional way."

Nala, Teuila, Talila, and Zarina exchanged surprised glances before breaking into smiles.

That's when the older Kobold approached and spoke, "Thank you for your help, dragon. We shall serve you."

Archer nodded before responding, "Yes, you will, but not from here. I will give you a new home."

He opened a portal and walked through after motioning for everyone to follow as they entered the shimmering violet portal.

All the girls, except for Zarina, were accustomed to this by now and weren't shocked because they found themselves in a wild jungle.

The air was thick with mist, clinging to the jungle canopy above. The diverse array of plants created a lush and vibrant landscape.

Amidst the greenery, the distant roars of various beasts echoed through the jungle. It created an atmosphere of mystery and danger.

The group stood in awe, surrounded by the untamed beauty of Beasthaven. There were calls of wild beasts painted a vivid picture of the vibrant ecosystem they had entered.

All the girls were looking around in amazement while Zarina asked. "What is this place?"

"My domain, and also where my Monster Army lives," Archer replied with a smile.

As he spoke, three large gorilla-looking beasts leaped from the trees and landed before him, startling the redhead and Nala, who was ready to rush forward.

But he gestured for them to watch as the gorillas knelt before him. This surprising display shocked the two girls, causing the other two to laugh.

Archer sent some mana into the beasts, bringing them joy before they bounded into the jungle, their roars echoing in the air.

He chuckled at the sight, finding amusement in the wild spectacle of his Monster Army.

Deciding it was time to get to work so they could return to college, Archer shut his eyes and imagined a large cave reaching deep into the domain.

In his mind, he crafted numerous chambers and included access to water whenever they might require it.

After completing that, the four girls and the Kobold gazed at Archer wide-eyed as a cave appeared out of nowhere.

Teuila and Talila were fully aware, but she was shocked at his abilities while Nala and Zarina looked on in awe.

He couldn't help but chuckle before addressing them, saying, "Well, now they can move in."

Opening a new portal, Archer signaled for the Kobold to enter, and it complied as Archer and the girls waited by the portal.

Moments later, the first Kobold appeared, followed by a steady stream of others. The creatures rushed into the envisioned cave, their excitement palpable.

They started organizing and building within their new chambers. Archer watched the Kobolds turn the cave into their new home.

They waited a little while before all the little beasts were through, and he closed the portal.

With two quests completed, they prepared to return to the college. Archer cast Gate to the college grounds.

As they stepped through, the familiar surroundings of the gardens greeted them. The Gate closed behind them.

Once they were through, Teuila commented. "We still have twenty minutes until the next class. What does everybody want to do?"

Zarina was the first to speak. "I want to study in the library."

The redhead walked off after saying goodbye to the three girls and giving Archer a nod.

He watched her walk away and wondered why she acted like that but then remembered her family area shunned by the nobles, but that didn't bother him as she was an interesting girl.

That's when Nala spoke. "She is a strange girl, but I don't blame her. Zarina was bullied up until she entered the college."

Archer nodded, then turned to the three girls. "What class do you have next?"

"Magic fundamentals," Teuila sighed.

"Combat Magic," Nala and Talila replied simultaneously.

That's when the ocean princess chimed in, "Let's relax until classes. The garden looks beautiful while covered in snow."

Archer and the other two agreed. They soon found a bench to sit on, and he used Mana Manipulation to melt all the snow covering it.

Teuila leaned back, causing her ponytail to sway, looking up at the sky. "The weather is surprisingly calm today, considering the season. It's quite serene."

Nala, shivering slightly, added, "I love the snow, though. Everything looks like it's covered in a soft, white blanket."

Talila nodded in agreement, her red eyes sparkling. "It's a magical sight. Winter has its charm."

Archer, enjoying the conversation, chimed in, "What about your classes? How's the magic fundamentals going, Teuila?"

Teuila sighed, "It's not my favorite, but I manage. I prefer practical magic over theories."

Nala and Talila exchanged amused glances and spoke simultaneously, which caused Archer to laugh. "Combat Magic is our favorite."

As they continued chatting, the distant sound of the college bell echoed through the garden, signaling the start of classes.

The girls sighed in unison, realizing it was time to part ways. Teuila stood up gracefully, her blue eyes meeting Archer's. "Well, time for class. Until later, Darling."

With that, she leaned in and gently kissed his cheek before heading off with Nala and Talila, who also kissed him. Archer watched them leave, a smile lingering on his lips.

Once they disappeared, he stood up, adjusted his shirt, and made his way to class. Archer strolled through the serene college garden, the remnants of snow beneath his feet.

As he approached the grand entrance of the college, the atmosphere shifted. Crowds of students bustled around, each engrossed in their world, making their way to various classes.

Determined to reach Swordsmanship class, Archer navigated through the labyrinth of students.

However, the sprawling corridors and interconnected halls soon proved confusing, and he was lost amid the sea of faces.

As a trace of frustration appeared on Archer's face, a familiar figure drew his attention. Gianna Silvercrest, Janna's older sister, caught his eye.

Her green hair bounced with each step, and her jaguar ears twitched as she scanned the bustling hallway.

Archer observed that she sported leather adventurer's armor, struggling to contain her massive mountains.

He shook his head and called out to her, "Gianna!"

The jaguar woman swiftly turned towards him, a big smile lighting up her face as she approached.

Archer couldn't help but admire her beauty, observing the graceful sway of her hips. Inwardly, he mused, 'Older women have a different charm than the younger ones.'

Gianna stopped in front of him as she spoke. "What can I do for my little nephew?"

He chuckled before asking, "Could you tell me where the Swordsmanship Class is, please?"

The jaguar woman's smile widened, and she nodded. "Of course, I can. Funny enough, that's my next class."

His smile persisted as he recalled, "Oh yeah, you do teach Swordsmanship. It will be good to learn from you, aunty."

Archer's charming tone caught the older woman off guard, and she shook her head, continuing to walk.

As they strolled together toward the Swordsmanship class, they engaged in a lively conversation about life in the college.

He remarked, "College life can be quite eventful. But I can't wait for Frostwinter to be over, though."

Gianna nodded in agreement, her jaguar ears twitching. "Elderbloom is always a refreshing change. The blooming gardens and vibrant colors lift everyone's spirits."

Archer grinned, "Absolutely. And the Frostwinter Festival on the way is something to look forward to because the emperor will pay me."

She laughed heartily at his comment and responded, "So I've heard. You've saved the empire and other kingdoms; the rumors claim they're all flocking here to meet you."

With a playful glint in his eye, Archer couldn't resist indulging in a bit of self-praise. "Well, you know, it's not every day someone saves the entire continent from a war that could have dragged on for years."

She raised an eyebrow, a smirk playing on her lips. "Oh? Do tell, humble hero."

Archer adopted a mockingly serious tone, gesturing dramatically. "Picture it: armies clashing, magic crackling in the air, and then there's me, swooping in to bring peace and tranquility. Quite the scene, if I do say so myself."

The jaguar woman chuckled, "And, of course, the heroic charm played a crucial role in resolving the conflict?"

With a mischievous twinkle in his eye, Archer couldn't resist a playful boast. "It wasn't just my charm that stopped the war. But my unparalleled handsomeness also played a crucial role."

Chapter 496 What Brings You Out Here

Gianna chuckled, arching an eyebrow. "Is that so? The mighty hero with looks that could rival the gods?"

Archer grinned, adopting a mockingly severe expression. "Absolutely. When the leaders saw this face, they realized there was no need for conflict. How could anyone wage war when faced with such dashing good looks?"

She burst into laughter, shaking her head before she spoke. "Well, I suppose you've single-handedly discovered the key to world peace – a winning smile and a dash of charisma."

As the laughter subsided, he adopted a more serious tone. "In all honesty, I don't see myself as a hero. I'm more like a handsome bandit, navigating through the chaos with a bit of charm and a lot of luck."

The jaguar woman raised an eyebrow, intrigued. "A handsome bandit, you say? Elaborate, Archer."

He grinned, "Well, heroes have destinies and prophecies. Me? I stumble into situations, relying on my wits and maybe a captivating smile. It's less about saving the day and more about what I can get from it."

Gianna smirked, "So, you're the charming rogue who just happens to find himself in the right place at the right time?"

He nodded, "Exactly. Besides, a dashing bandit sounds more mysterious, don't you think?"

The two stopped outside the classroom. She couldn't help but ask one last question that had been on her mind since they started chatting.

"Archer," she began, her tone curious yet respectful, "aren't you concerned about what people think? Your reluctance to be the hero they expect, the accusations of greed."

Facing her, Archer's eyes revealed a mosaic of experiences. His words were measured as he spoke. "Heroes are stupid, ensnared by lofty ideals. I, on the other hand, live for myself and my girls. My fight is solely for me and them, no one else. The mantle of a hero will never be for me."

He started to laugh as he remembered all the dead heroes from the stories he read back on Earth before continuing to speak. "They are fools, and when a hero fights for an ideal, all they ever rescue are illusions. Heroes unravel, dismantling themselves, and the ideals they clutch so tightly are nothing more than fleeting shadows, devoid of meaning."

Gianna raised an eyebrow, intrigued by his unapologetic stance. "So, you reject the hero's path entirely?"

His gaze held a steely determination. "Absolutely. I'd rather be the rogue who thrives and survives than the hero who falls for some grand cause. Ideals won't keep you warm at night or put food on the table. I fight for what's real, not the theoretical."

As Archer prepared to enter the classroom, he turned to the green-haired woman with a charming smile. "I am selfish, greedy, and hot-headed, Gianna, but at least I know reality. I'll never be considered 'good' by the world's standards, but I treat people with the respect they give me but I will never let them take advantage of me or my girls."

After speaking, he offered a smile to Gianna and entered the classroom, finding only about four people present.

Taking a moment to glance around the Swordsmanship classroom, he noticed the decorations.

The walls were adorned with intricate drawings and diagrams depicting various sword techniques, and the atmosphere was steeped in martial discipline.

Weapons of different shapes and sizes were neatly arranged along one side of the room, showcasing the diversity of styles covered in the class.

The fragrance of polished wood and metal permeated the air as his gaze lingered on the intricacies of the decorations.

Symbols and motifs spoke of the college's rich history and skills. Archer observed Gianna's entrance.

He loved her green hair that flowed down her back and her bright yellow eyes that held a well of knowledge and wisdom.

Archer couldn't help but notice how beautiful Gianna was. He noticed her frustrated expression.

Her brows furrowed as she checked her watch, a clear sign of impatience due to the tardiness of some students.

However, even more walked in after ten minutes, filling the classroom. They all started sitting down while the jaguar woman watched on with a smile as the room was full.

Taking a seat at the back of the room, Archer watched the slowing stream of students until it eventually ceased.

His attention was drawn to two familiar figures sitting at his desk. A friendly smile from the boy met Archer's gaze while the girl glanced at him before settling into her seat.

Content that everyone seemed settled, Gianna, with a smile, made her way to the front of the class.

Gianna addressed the class, her voice carrying authority and warmth. "Good morning, everyone. It seems we have some new faces today, so let's go over the basics. Swordsmanship is both an art and a discipline. It requires dedication, focus, and precision. Each of you will learn to wield a blade with skill and grace."

She continued to outline the fundamental principles, emphasizing the importance of respect for the weapon, one's training partners, and the art itself.

The students listened attentively as Gianna set the tone for the class, blending practical instruction with the philosophy behind the martial arts they were about to embark on.

Archer was listening to her introduction. However, his attention was briefly diverted when the boy beside him spoke up.

"Hey there! I'm Lucas, and this is my sister, Lily," he introduced with a friendly smile.

He nodded in acknowledgment before introducing himself, "Archer Wyldheart."

As he observed the siblings, both blonde with green eyes, he couldn't help but think that while Lily was good-looking, she didn't quite match the beauty of his girls.

Lucas spoke again. "So, how are you finding college? When we heard about a dragon joining, we were shocked."

"It's good. I'm enjoying it so far." He answered.

Archer turned his attention back to Gianna, who told the class about the skills you can learn through Swordsmanship.

After finishing her introduction, she addressed the class with a firm yet encouraging tone.

"Alright, everyone, listen up," she commanded the room's attention. "Our next class will involve one-on-one fights. This is an opportunity for me to assess your strengths and skills. So, make sure you're prepared both mentally and physically. I want to see what each of you is capable of."

With that, she dismissed the class, leaving the students buzzing with anticipation and a mix of nerves and excitement for the upcoming one-on-one battles.

Archer wasn't bothered; he just wanted to learn how to wield the greatsword better. After she spoke for a little bit longer, the bell started ringing.

He stood up and realized he had Magic Fundamentals, so he decided to skip it and head to the Western Wilds to explore more.

At first, he wanted to drag one of the girls along with him, but then he changed his mind and decided to see Sia.

He closed his eyes as he exited the classroom and scanned the bracelet to locate the Dragon-kin woman.

After a little while, he found her before casting Gate. The violet portal materialized out of thin air, startling the students who happened to be walking by.

Once he stepped through, Archer found himself in the eastern part of the Crownlands. His surroundings were unremarkable until he looked down and saw a column of soldiers below.

The realization struck him that he was standing on a mountain, overlooking the disciplined procession of troops.

A chuckle escaped him as he observed the scene from his elevated vantage point. With a mischievous smile played on his lips as he prepared to descend from the mountain.

He soared through the air with a jump, closing the distance between himself and the marching soldiers.

As he approached the front of the column, he saw Albert and Sia leading the way. With a swift use of Blink, Archer materialized in front of them.

The sudden appearance startled the old man, causing him to yell out in surprise as he nearly fell off his beast.

While Shiva jumped back at the unexpected arrival, Archer couldn't help but laugh at the reactions, enjoying the playful surprise he had orchestrated.

Spotting his sudden arrival, Sia's eyes lit up with excitement. She quickly dismounted Shiva and rushed over to him, enveloping him in a tight, joyous hug.

The warmth of her embrace radiated genuine happiness as she expressed her excitement at seeing him.

"Husband! You're here!" Sia exclaimed, her enthusiasm evident in her voice.

Shiva, too, seemed to share in the excitement, wagging its tail as it watched the reunion.

He couldn't help but return the embrace, appreciating the genuine happiness that Sia brought to the moment.

After the warm embrace, Archer gently pulled away from her, his eyes reflecting a mix of curiosity and concern.

"What brings you out here, Sia?" he inquired, genuine interest in his voice.

Sia's expression shifted to a more serious tone as she shared the reason for her presence. "There have been reports of slavers in the area, and we've been ordered to clear them out."

Chapter 497 Relationships Take Effort

Archer's smile widened at Sia's agreement. "Well, let me help you with that while you let your soldiers rest."

Sia nodded in approval, ordering the troops to take a break and rest. Albert approached Archer, enveloping him in a tight bear hug.

"My grandson, it's good to see you," he exclaimed warmly.

He welcomed the old man's hug, allowing the embrace without resistance. He stood there, accepting the affectionate gesture.

After being let go, he smiled warmly at Albert. "I came to see Sia, but it's good to see you too, Grandfather."

With those words, he opened a shimmering portal to his domain. Archer summoned his scouts, the Tressyms, and ordered them. "Go, my friends. Find those slavers and report back."

The Tressyms, keen to the urgency in their master's voice, took flight with graceful bounds, disappearing into the surrounding areas for any sign of the slavers.

That's when Albert patted Archer on the back, a twinkle in his eye. "Always the responsible one, aren't you, grandson?"

He chuckled before speaking, "Just trying to help Sia."

After that, he turned to the snowy landscape. Archer stood on the road, gazing at the enchanting snowy woods that stretched before him.

The trees, adorned with a pristine layer of snow, sparkled in the soft sunlight. The entire landscape seemed to be draped in a serene white blanket.

Sia's eyes sparkled with curiosity as she turned to him and spoke happily. "So, Archer, how's college life treating you? Have you met Ophelia, Jade, Gianna, and Samara?"

He smiled before replying, "Yes, I've met them. Ophelia is mystical, Jade is serious about her work, Samara is lovely, and Gianna is beautiful."

The Dragon-kin woman laughed and gave him a teasing grin upon hearing his answer before she teased him. "Should you be calling another woman beautiful in front of your fiancée?"

Albert joined in the laughter, and Archer chuckled before shaking his head. "I won't lie to you, Sia. Finding someone beautiful doesn't mean I'm lusting after her. It means I have eyes."

The old man nodded and spoke, unwittingly dropping himself into it as he spoke to Sia. "Well, my little dragon, your friend Ophelia's mother, Vespera Blackfire, is an otherworldly beautiful. When we were younger, she visited the empire and caused a storm. Nobles and kings were proposing to her, but she chose to stay single."

Sia looked at her father with narrowed eyes before teasing him. "Oh, does someone have a crush? Shall I tell Mother about it?"

When Albert heard his daughter's threat, he put on a fake hurt look before he spoke. "I don't like her like that. As Archer said, I have eyes, Sia, but don't tell your mother; she won't let me forget it."

Archer started laughing when he pictured his grandmother teasing him, which would drive him mad.

Sia giggled before she answered with a grin. "Don't worry, Father, I won't tell her, but you have to behave."

The old man realized she had teased him but shut up with a chuckle. Sia turned to him, saying, "Don't think about wooing the Witch Queen. She has no interest in men."

With a curious voice, Archer asked, "Then how did she give birth to Ophelia? It doesn't make sense."

Sia laughed before approaching him, wrapping her arm around his shoulder and leading him off the road until they stood beside a lake.

She spoke after letting him go. "The witches have a special ritual to allow them to conceive children differently compared to humans."

Archer was even more confused now, but he asked, "So they don't have sex to make a baby?"

"They can, but just like dragons, it takes a long time to conceive if they are strong. So they use a ritual by taking some of the father's blood and mana, and the same with the mother. I don't know the details, but it results in pregnancy." Sia answered.

With this new information, Archer grows curious about witches and decides to ask Ophelia about it one day.

As he was about to turn to Sia and talk, he noticed the Tressyms returning. They nudged his head, passing on the information he was eager to know.

With excitement, Archer decided to hunt down the slavers himself. A confident smile played on his lips as he summoned his wings.

His wings radiated an ethereal glow as he prepared to take flight. Launching into the sky, Archer soared through the air, swiftly heading towards the first caravan of slavers.

Three caravans were scattered across the land, each representing a source of wealth he wanted.

As Archer soared through the skies, his sharp eyes scanned the land below, searching for the telltale signs of the slaver caravans.

Spotting the first one in the distance, he accelerated toward it and cast Element Bolts made of wind.

As he unleashed them upon the unsuspecting guards below, the bolts crackled with energy. The bolts sailed through the air, homing in on their targets with deadly precision.

A powerful force erupted when they connected, sending the slavers flying in different directions.

Chaos ensued as panic gripped the caravan. The guards struggled to regain their composure, shouting commands and rallying against the unexpected assault.

Archer descended swiftly to the ground, and as he neared, he cast Blink. He instantly appeared before the caravan, taking the remaining guards by surprise.

With a swift and calculated movement, Archer dodged every attack, and his claws sliced through the air, decapitating some of the guards who rushed forward.

The leader, witnessing the swift and deadly display, grew increasingly desperate. Archer cast Eldritch Blast into a few more, instantly killing them.

After fighting for a while, all the guards died, shocking the leader. Once they were out of action.

Archer looked at the older man with white hair and a long white beard and smiled before speaking. "Give me all your wealth, and I'll let you live."

When the man acknowledged him, he nodded, reaching for three storage rings. Approaching Archer, he handed over the rings, ready to share the spoils of the slaver caravan.

However, as the man drew near, he summoned his claws, and before the man could utter a word, Archer pierced his chest.

Sporting a chilling smile, he extracted the still-beating heart of the slaver, swiftly storing it away.

Following this gruesome act, he summoned his stone loot goblins, tasking them with looting valuables from the fallen bodies.

As they set to their work, he approached the cages that confined the slaves, a diverse mix of humans and demi-humans, each bearing the scars of their captivity.

Before liberating them, Archer cast Gate, opening a portal to where Sia and her troops were stationed. He tore the cage doors off freeing the captives.

The emancipated people were shocked, but he reassured them, "You're free now. Enter the portal, and an empire general will help you."

Having witnessed their difficulty, Archer cast Aurora Healing, a gentle magic that enveloped the weakened and struggling captives.

Instantly, wounds healed, and a renewed sense of vitality washed over them as they entered the portal.

He waited until the last person passed through before turning the loot goblins who approached him and started giving him everything they found.

Archer efficiently stowed all the loot in his Item Box before soaring into the sky again. He eliminated the last two slave caravans, freeing the captives and sending them back to Sia.

When he returned, the soldiers were astonished as they saw all the people, but Sia, with a radiant smile, approached him and kissed him.

Archer, taken aback, swiftly responded to her kiss before they parted. She beamed at him and said, "Now we have to head back to Eldoria, where the imperial army will ensure the people get home."

After Sia spoke, she called for Shiva, who appeared out of thin air and nuzzled her head against the Dragon-kin woman.

Archer, in turn, summoned Scar and mounted him after exchanging greetings. Sia commanded, "Get the people in the wagons; we are returning back to town."

The soldiers got to work and loaded people. Not long after starting, they were on the road. Sia and Archer were chatting while Albert followed behind with Valeria.

She took the opportunity to speak with Albert. "She seems really happy nowadays. She's a lucky woman."

Albert grinned before teasing her. "Why don't you confess to him? He might take you as a wife, Val."

Valeria blushed slightly, dismissing the notion. "Oh, come on, Albert. I'm just saying she's lucky to have someone like him. They make a good pair."

Albert chuckled, "Indeed, they do. But it's not just luck. It's about understanding and supporting each other. Relationships take effort, Val."

After addressing the group, Archer turned his attention to Valeria, the brown-haired woman, with a charming smile. "Hello, Valeria. I wasn't ignoring you earlier, just focused on handling the situation."

Valeria nodded in understanding, a small smile playing on her lips. Albert observed the interaction with a knowing smile, recognizing the subtle dynamics at play.

Chapter 498 History Class

Archer and Sia took some time to return to Eldora. Upon their arrival, he waited outside while she escorted the people inside.

While they were waiting, he started stroking Scar, which pleased the big tiger who wanted to see Shiva.

Leaping from the tiger's back, he grinned and addressed the majestic creature, "Go check on your mate. Return once matters have settled."

Amusement danced in his eyes as Scar dashed into the town, causing a stir among the guards.

Albert laughed before teasing, "You're aware that your tiger's sudden appearance is bound to create a bit of chaos in the town, right?"

"I don't care to be honest. It's not like he's attacking anyone he's chasing after his woman." Archer replied with a smile.

The old man laughed as he turned to the landscape and admired it. The vast expanse of snow-covered terrain unfolded around Archer and Albert as they lingered outside the town.

He saw dozens of farms in the distance, with windmills turned due to the cold wind that was blowing.

A chill ran down Archer's spine as the cold air crept up his shirt. Swiftly, he retrieved a cloak and draped it around his shoulders.

After waiting a little while, Sia and the soldiers returned with smiles. Looking at them, he saw Scar and Shiva running around in the snow.

The pair of large, ebony tigers frolicked behind the soldiers, playfully leaping and intertwining with each other, prompting him to think to himself, 'They're like big house cats.'

Sia and Valeria walked up to him. When they got closer, Sia kissed him, and the female knight said hello.

After the greetings, Archer asked with a smile, "What are you doing now?"

She turned to the brown-haired woman, who answered with a smile. "We have to head to Laketown and clear out some outlaws."

Archer nodded. "Okay, well, I have to head back to the college. I got Spellcraft, which Jade teaches, and I may learn something new from it."

Sia's smile widened as she stepped forward, wrapping her arms around Archer warmly. "Come see me again. I enjoyed seeing you, even just for a few minutes. It's better than nothing."

Archer grinned, the twinkle in his eyes matching the playful tone in his voice as he cast Gate. "Well, I'll be taking you on a date in four days, so I'll get you then."

Excitement lit up Sia's face as she responded eagerly. "Make sure you keep your word, Arch! I can't wait."

As he was about to speak, Archer felt a hearty hand land on his shoulder, causing him to jump.

Albert chuckled once more, a warmth in his eyes as he stood there with a smile. "Make sure to visit your grandmother. She likes seeing you, boy."

With a nod, Archer smiled back and reassured the old man, "I will," before turning to Sia. "I promise I'll keep it and see you both later."

Stepping through the portal, he found himself in the bustling college garden. Students hurried to and from classes, their chatter creating a lively atmosphere.

The portal closed behind him with a soft hum, prompting a sigh from Archer. Though he didn't mind attending class, he yearned for more time with Sia.

Heading towards the nearest entrance, he navigated through the bustling crowd of students.

In an unexpected encounter, he bumped into one of the girls Nefertiti had confronted earlier.

Seeing Archer, she turned and walked the other way, causing him to chuckle. Undeterred, he continued, eventually arriving at the corridor leading to his history class.

Walking for ten minutes, he found himself in a quieter space. Archer scanned the surroundings and soon located his class.

He pushed open the heavy door of the Legends and Mysteries classroom, greeted by an array of historical artifacts, maps, and scrolls scattered throughout the room.

The air held a faint scent of aged parchment, a testament to the wealth of knowledge embedded in the very walls.

Only three students occupied the room, their attention momentarily diverted from their textbooks as he entered.

Archer picked a seat in the middle of the classroom. The wooden chair made a soft creaking sound as he sat down.

Looking around, Archer absorbed the historical tapestries on the walls. He couldn't help but like the immersive atmosphere the professor had created.

The silence hung in the air, punctuated only by the rustling of pages and the occasional murmur of the students engaged in their studies.

Archer sat in the classroom as more students arrived. Suddenly, Nefertiti and Sera walked in, their faces lighting up at the sight of him.

Nefertiti kissed him so passionately that he felt her love for him radiating from her, followed by one from Sera.

The dragon girl gave him excited pecks as she was pleased to see him. The two girls then took their seats just as a young man with grey hair and thick glasses entered the classroom.

"Sit down and quieten down; we have a lot to go through today." He declared, his tone authoritative yet not unkind.

Archer and the rest of the students exchanged glances, their curiosity piqued by the unexpected appearance of the new instructor.

The young man seemed poised and confident, capturing the room's attention with his presence.

That's when the Professor turned to Archer with a curious glint in his eyes before speaking. "So you're the white dragon who attends classes?"

He nodded but didn't say anything, causing the man to continue. "Well, why don't we start with introductions? I'm Professor Zale Jackson."

Standing with confidence, he introduced himself with a charming smile. "I'm Archer Wyldheart, and these two lovely ladies are my fiancée, Nefertiti, and Sera Wyldheart."

The girls smiled at the class as he spoke before sitting back down with Archer. Professor Jackson stood at the front of the class, looking at the students.

Their faces were eager and lit up by the soft glow of the lanterns. He began, "Today, let's delve into the legends of the Avalon Empire forged through conquest, diplomacy, and the unwavering ambitions of its first King, Darius Avalon, the ancestor of the current emperor."

He paced as he spoke, his words painting a vivid picture of the Avalonians, a once-small nation with ambitions far exceeding their borders.

"In the beginning, the Avalonians were modest, facing the challenges of a limited army and resources. However, the vision and leadership of King Darius set them on a path to greatness."

The Professor gestured to a map projected onto the wall, illustrating the sixteen kingdoms that comprised the vast Avalon Empire.

"These territories weren't always under the empire's rule. Each kingdom had its unique history, culture, and rulers. The Avalonians, facing adversity, looked beyond their borders, seeking expansion and prosperity."

His voice took on a cadence that attracted the class's attention. "Despite their limitations, Darius devised cunning strategies, formed alliances, and employed military might and diplomacy. Through a series of calculated conquests and political marriages, Darius gradually brought these sixteen kingdoms under the banner of the Avalonians."

He paused, letting the information sink in before he spoke. "What's remarkable is that this empire, now a vast and influential force, was born from the ambition of a people who, at the time, were just a fraction of what they would become."

The professor continued, detailing the key figures, battles, and treaties that shaped the rise of the Avalon Empire. "It's the brilliance of the first king and the indomitable spirit of a people determined to leave an enduring mark on the world."

The students scribbled notes, their pens dancing across parchment as they captured the essence of Avalon's ascent.

Professor Jackson's storytelling wove a tapestry of history, and within the classroom walls, the echoes of battles, alliances, and triumphs resonated.

When the lecture concluded, Professor Jackson looked at his students with pride. "Remember, understanding our past is crucial to grasping the present."

Archer wasn't particularly interested in the empire's history; what intrigued him were the tales of secret or guarded treasures.

He craved stories of lands overflowing with riches. Just as fortune would have it, the history teacher paused, capturing his attention as the professor locked eyes with him.

"Is something boring, Archer?" The professor asked in a frustrated voice, eliciting giggles from the two girls.

He responded to the man, "Well, yeah, it's boring, but that's just me. I prefer the legends of treasures and lost cities."

Upon hearing Archer's question, the Professor sighed and then strolled to a bookshelf, selecting a book.

The professor approached him and handed over the book, saying, "Read this while I finish the class."

Archer smiled before delving into the book's pages as he began reading the book handed to him by the Professor.

He found himself engrossed in the tale of the fall of Placidia. The words painted a vivid picture of a once-thriving continent that had succumbed to the ominous shadow of the Swarm.

The narrative unfolded, describing how otherworldly darkness enveloped the land, extinguishing all light and plunging the continent into an eternal night.

The Swarm, a malevolent force, had taken hold, spreading like a relentless tide, and anyone who dared approach its blackened borders met a grim fate.

#### Chapter 499 The Arcane Tournament

Archer's eyes widened, taking in the details of the tragic events. The people's desperate struggle and the valiant attempts to fight the creatures unfolded before him.

He delved into accounts of families escaping the continent, witnessing the heart-wrenching scenes of fellow citizens being dragged away, kicking and screaming.

The book narrated stories of kings making their last stands, fighting to buy time for their families and people to escape.

The revelation surprised Archer. He found it hard to believe there was a lost continent to the west.

Once vibrant and full of life like Pluoria, it now had fallen to the relentless advance of the Swarm.

It was a story of courage, sacrifice, and the indomitable spirit of those who faced an unimaginable threat.

Discovering that the Swarm had the potential to devour an entire continent left Archer awestruck.

He found an account that disclosed how they first took hold in a small kingdom, where darkness spread relentlessly like an unstoppable tide.

Upon receiving this information, soldiers from the neighboring realms were sent to investigate, only to mysteriously vanish.

His gaze widened as he delved further into the accounts detailing the valiant efforts of the kings and generals trying to repel the Swarm in bloody battles.

Archer uncovered a gripping account of how the kingdoms were overwhelmed despite joining forces with their neighbors.

Despite unity, the relentless waves of ghouls appeared insurmountable and overwhelmed all that stood before them.

He grew curious when he read more about the ghouls who were the main attackers until the Ratlings appeared.

In the following paragraph, the unsettling truth unveiled itself – the ghouls were once captured humanoids subjected to sinister and malevolent experiments.

They were twisted and turned into the vile ghouls who turned around and attacked the remaining kingdoms.

The chilling revelation made Archer shudder, grappling with the implications of the twisted plans behind the creation of these creatures.

The book portrayed a bleak picture of a chaotic world where alliances crumbled before an enemy was born from below.

Archer continued reading until the class bell rang, and Sera started poking his cheek, pulling him out of the book and back to reality.

Shaking his head, he apologized, "Sorry, I got carried away. Some of the things the survivors saw affected them until the day they passed away."

Nefertiti commented as she turned to him, "Why do you read such things? It's in the past and should stay there."

Just as he was about to reply, the Professor interrupted. "Well, as you know, history regularly repeats itself. Look at what happened a while back. It could have been another Placidia again, but you stopped."

The man directed his gaze towards Archer after speaking, who acknowledged with a nod before rising to return the book.

However, the Professor halted him with an upheld hand. "Keep it. It will prove useful."

Archer thanked him before leaving the classroom as Nefertiti and Sera fell in next to him before he asked. "What class do you two have?"

The dragon girl was the first to answer excitedly, which caused him to smile. "I have Spellcraft, sweetheart. What about you?"

Archer was about to talk until Nefertiti answered in an annoyed voice. "I have Magic Fundamentals, which isn't a bad class, but the Professor annoys me."

He nodded at the two of them and spoke. "I have Spellcraft. But don't worry about it, Nefi. We're going out today, so that's something to be happy about."

Upon hearing this, the succubus broke into a broad smile. She then turned toward him and hugged him warmly.

Archer was caught off guard but accepted her gesture as she shoved his head into her cleavage and excitedly hugged him.

He chuckled and reciprocated the hug. Before he could say a word, Nefertiti showered him with kisses.

She peppered his face with loving smooches. Initially stunned, he burst into laughter, unable to resist the infectious joy radiating from her.

Their affection drew Sera's attention, a grin forming as she looked at the lively scene unfolding amid the busy corridor.

"Nefi, you're going all out today!" Sera teased, her giggle escaping as she watched the succubus continue to shower Archer with kisses.

Undeterred by the playful remark, Nefertiti looked up with a mischievous twinkle in her eye. "I can't help it. He's just too handsome!"

After letting him go, his face turned red, clearly showing the affection she had given him.

"Nefertiti, at this pace, you'll transform me into a strawberry," Archer playfully remarked, still recovering from the cascade of kisses.

She laughed with a melodious echo in the corridor. "Think of it as payback for being too handsome to resist!"

Sera, who had been watching the scene unfold with a grin, seized the opportunity. With a twinkle in her eye, she lunged at Archer, wrapping her arms and legs around him.

The dragon girl also wanted to show him some love and decided to continue the affectionate assault on his face.

Leaning in, she showered him with a rapid flurry of kisses. Taken aback by the unexpected onslaught, he held onto the redhead's waist as she continued to kiss him.

Nefertiti, who had been watching with amusement, couldn't hide a slightly annoyed huff. She stood a few paces away.

Jealousy flickered in her expressive gaze, but she bit her lower lip, determined to keep her emotions in check.

With her contagious laughter, Sera continued with the kisses. Nefertiti's fingers tapped lightly against her thigh, her inner turmoil concealed beneath a composed exterior.

Despite the pink-haired girl's reaction, Sera continued expressing her love for him. The corridor resonated with their shared joy, a harmonious blend of carefree moments.

Amid the laughter, Nefertiti occasionally stole glances at Archer, her jealousy momentarily replaced by a more contemplative look.

"He's quite handsome," she reflected, a gentle sigh escaping her lips. "I need to force myself not to jump on him."

Sera's laughter filled the air as she playfully leaped off him, a mischievous twinkle in her eyes.

"Time for class, handsome," she teased, giving him a wink before Nefertiti stepped forward with a confident smile.

"See you later, husband. I will meet you before our date." Nefertiti said before she headed to her class.

A bit stunned by the sudden turn of events, Archer looked at Sera with an amused expression before he offered his arm. "Shall we, then?"

Sera grinned, intertwining her arm with his. "Absolutely."

As they walked down the sunlit corridors of the academy, the air hummed with the excitement of a new day.

His expression was thoughtful, and Archer glanced at the vibrant tapestries adorning the walls.

Their laughter echoed through the halls until they reached the imposing door of the Spellcraft classroom. Archer held the door open for Sera, and they entered the room together.

The scent of ancient tomes and the faint aroma of mystical herbs filled the air as they reached empty seats.

Professor Jade Ashguard commanded the front of the room. Archer's gaze shifted toward her, noticing the green dress that clung to her curves.

Her massive boobs swayed with each subtle movement, and her well-suited short brown hair framed her face gracefully.

Archer stood in the doorway, deep in contemplation, until Sera playfully poked him in the side with a giggle.

"Stop lusting after your aunt, you naughty dragon," she teased.

Chuckling, Archer shook his head, dispelling his reverie, and followed the redhead as she walked past him to take a seat.

Taking their seats, they noticed more students entering the classroom and finding their places.

He noticed the lion boy accompanied by his two fiancées. They exchanged smiles with Archer and Sera before settling down at the desk adjacent to theirs.

As the room filled, all the students took their places, their anticipation growing as they awaited the professor's address.

The Spellcraft classroom buzzed eagerly as the air hummed with electric energy, and Professor Jade Ashguard stood at the front, a spark of enthusiasm in her eyes.

"Good morning, students!" she greeted with a wide smile. "I hope you all had a restful night because today marks the beginning of something truly fantastic."

The room hushed, attention captured, as Professor Ashguard paced in front of the class. "I'm thrilled to announce the upcoming Arcane Tournament!"

Excitement filled the room as she shared the news. "The Arcane Tournament is a big deal, bringing in participants from all over Pluoria. It's even more exciting this year because the top three hundred students selected will get to represent our continent in the Celestial Magic Tournament!"

A collective gasp swept through the room. Archer exchanged a surprised glance with Sera, both captivated by the unexpected twist.

Professor Ashguard continued, her voice resonating with excitement. "The Celestial Magic Tournament awaits in the Nightshade Empire on the central continent. It's a chance to showcase your strength on an international stage. The prestigious event will draw the attention of renowned magical scholars, emperors, kings, and all sorts of people."

Chapter 500 Late

Archer was grinning when he heard the news as he knew it would be a good place to show the whole continent that he was the strongest on Pluoria.

But then he observed the students chatting among themselves. Jade's gleamed with pride as she surveyed the student's eager faces before her and continued talking.

"To be chosen for this honor is not only proof of your magic but also your strength. The selection process for our representatives will be rigorous, and each one of you has the potential to stand among the chosen few."

She paused, letting the weight of her words sink in before concluding with a warm smile. "Prepare yourselves, my dear students, for the journey begins now. The Arcane Tournament awaits, and destiny beckons the bold.

Professor Jade smiled at the students before finishing. "May your magic shine brightly as you step into the limelight of the Celestial Magic Tournament and represent everyone from Pluoria!"

Archer felt a sudden tap on his tail and turned to see Sera, a wide smile on her face, her tail was swaying with excitement. Unable to contain her enthusiasm, she grabbed him excitedly.

Her ruby-red eyes gleamed with anticipation and spoke with such excitement that it rubbed off on him, "Sweetheart! You will win the tournament alongside us. Then we can go to the central continent and show them why we're the best!"

Archer looked at her with a big smile as he answered her. "I promise you, I'll win both tournaments. The world will know my name and see what a white dragon can do."

When Sera heard this, her smile widened, but the two noticed the chatter among the other students hushed, creating an awkward silence in the class.

Whispers exchanged, and a few curious gazes turned toward the two of them. The sudden attention seemed to make them laugh.

Before the silence could stretch any longer, Sera, with a fiery glint in her eyes, couldn't hold back any longer.

"What's everyone staring at? Haven't you heard of Archer's deeds?" The redhead exclaimed, her temper flaring.

She recounted his exploits with animated gestures, passionately listing how he had rescued the empire and every surrounding kingdom from a long war.

Sera detailed his efforts to bring peace to Mediterra and the Southlands, emphasizing his role in ending conflicts that plagued those lands.

"And that's not all!" she continued, her voice rising. "He's engaged to not one, not two, but eight princesses! Can any of you boast such a feat?"

Her words echoed through the room, dispelling the awkward silence with a mix of pride and defiance.

Archer was really happy when she was defending him and could sense her love for him radiating.

Now more informed, the students shifted their gazes, some with newfound respect, while others merely exchanged glances before laughing even more.

When the redhead saw this, she was about to walk over to them, but Archer stopped her with a smile. "Calm down, my little dragon. Let's prove them wrong."

Before anyone could start talking again, Professor Jade spoke up, bringing silence to the class. "We will train with our magic today. I'm still planning your future lessons to help you in both tournaments."

Nods of agreement rippled through the class as she continued, "Now, split into groups of five. Four will engage in combat while the fifth keeps watch, and then roles will switch."

The door creaked open as students formed their groups, and that's when three girls walked in with apologetic smiles.

Hemera, Leira, and Nala instantly spotted Archer, but the Professor gave them a nod of acknowledgment, and they quickly made their way to their seats.

"Sorry we're late, Professor," Hemera expressed, her voice tinged with regret.

"Don't worry about it. Archer can help you catch up, just take your seats," Professor Jade replied understandingly.

The trio then joined Archer and Sera, seamlessly becoming part of the group. Each girl leaned in to give Archer a gentle kiss in a show of camaraderie.

Their affectionate gestures brought a smile to Archer's face. However, the Professor's voice interrupted the moment. "Follow me. We'll go to the fields for this lesson, and afterward, we'll head to the library to pick out some spells."

Now assembled and ready, the class followed the professor, eager to embark on the magical journey that awaited them.

They headed to the training field and spent the remainder of the class practicing. Archer engaged in friendly combat with all four girls, each of them thoroughly enjoying it.

After finishing their class on the field, they decided to seek out the rest of the ladies before heading back to the domain.

The sun shone as they strolled through the academy grounds, laughter filling the air.

The first girl they encountered was Teuila, who was engrossed in reading under a tree as her blue ponytail swayed in the wind.

She quickly noticed them and stood up as Archer greeted her with a kiss as she rose to her feet.

Moving forward, they encountered Nefertiti next, who was gracefully practicing magic in the secluded gardens.

Approaching the pink-haired girl, she looked up. A radiant smile appeared as she warmly embraced Archer in a tight hug.

He spotted Ella and Halime approaching. As soon as they noticed Archer, smiles adorned their faces, and they greeted him with warm kisses.

After finding them, they continued their search and eventually came across Llyniel chatting with her older brother, Alaric.

As he approached, the wood elf boy shifted his attention toward him, and a warm smile appeared.

Observing the boy, he noted a striking resemblance to Llyniel, but with darker hair and a slightly shorter stature.

"So, Mother tells me you're engaged to little Llyniel?" Alaric inquired with a friendly tone, curiosity sparking in his eyes.

Archer smiled when he heard Alaric's question, which made the elf chuckle as he thought. 'She managed to get engaged to a dragon. I bet father is happy about this.'

But his expression shifted as if he recalled something important and spoke with gratitude. "Thank you for keeping her safe when you two vanished."

He nodded in acknowledgment, and Llyniel, filled with joy, embraced him as she remembered their time together.

Smiling, Alaric commented, "I've got to go to a study class. It was good seeing you, Arch! And congratulations on the engagement. Mother will throw a big party when you visit the kingdom."

With that, he bid them farewell, leaving them behind. Once he was gone, Archer turned to the girls and spoke. "Head back to the domain, and I'll summon some Tressym's when I find Talila.

Everyone nodded as he opened up a portal. Each girl stepped through after kissing him, leaving a silly smile on his face when they were gone.

Archer closed his eyes and used the bracelet to find Talila, but he was shocked when he found out where she was.

She was already in the domain. Archer opened another portal to their area and stepped through.

When he exited the portal and returned to the Sparrow's place, he saw a garden in front of him growing so much.

He couldn't work out what it was but didn't bother as he looked around at the beautiful scenery that managed to block out the snow.

Archer noticed smoke from the house chimney, telling him the Sparrows still used this place.

The evidence of their efforts in tending to the place was apparent, and they couldn't help but feel pleased.

It was a well-maintained garden that spoke volumes about the care and dedication they had invested in the surroundings.

Archer stood alone in the garden, gazing at the vibrant flowers and lush greenery. The serenity of the surroundings offered a brief respite from the day's events.

Lost in his thoughts, he was momentarily unaware of his surroundings. Suddenly, a gentle voice broke the silence behind him. "Enjoying the garden, Archer?"

The voice was Cecelia's, a member of the Sparrows renowned for her healing skills. Startled but pleasantly surprised, Archer turned to find her approaching with a warm smile.

He looked at the woman he had known for a few years. Her auburn hair remained unchanged, but her yellow eyes seemed to hold a lifetime of wisdom.

Her playful grin, however, revealed a more light-hearted side, and he couldn't help but return the smile as he replied, "Yeah, it's beautiful."

Amidst the garden's tranquility, Cecelia approached Archer with gratitude evident in her eyes.

"Archer," she began, her voice carrying a genuine warmth, "I wanted to thank you. Talila seems happier than I've ever seen her. I've never witnessed her smile so much."

He offered a humble smile in return. "It's my pleasure. Talila deserves all the happiness in the world, and I'm glad I can contribute to that."

Cecelia nodded, her eyes reflecting appreciation. "You've made a real difference in her life. Thank you for bringing such joy to our friend."