

Affinity 1501

Chapter 1501 Kyle Taking Advantage

Kyle and the others were still in a state of shock when a groan of pain resonated in the place.

"He's getting worse, quick, let's take him out of here." One of the young men in the group said.

They were shocked by Grey and Klaus' abilities and cultivation stage, but they had more important things to do. A companion was seriously wounded and from the looks of it, it was very serious.

"It's not looking good." Klaus frowned when he saw the young man who had a large gash on his back. It had started to turn black.

'It's infected by the miasma. I can't remove it.' Klaus thought as he inspected the young man.

Grey looked at the young man and gave it a deep thought. At the young man's current state, given the amount of miasma in his body, he might die before he was taken out of the forest. Even those top Sovereigns in their Family wouldn't be able to help him out since most of the miasma has already merged with him.

But he was different, as long as the young man was still alive and his core wasn't destroyed, he could extract all the miasma in his body. However, this was an ability he didn't want too many people to know about.

He squinted his eyes and said to Kyle, "His situation is bad. I can help keep him stable before he's taken back."

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"Thank you." Kyle said quickly.

He knew Grey has immeasurable abilities, as long as Grey says he could keep him stable, then they didn't have anything to worry about.

Grey grabbed the young man and covered his body with his blue flames. The flames captivated those watching, while Grey made it larger and stepped inside. He wanted to make sure no one was able to spy on him.

He quickly inspected the young man and his expression turned serious. The miasma has gone even deeper than he thought and was already contaminating the young man's core. At this rate, it would've been impossible for the young man to recover with Grey's help.

Grey got to work immediately, helping remove the miasma that had gotten to the core and also the ones close to the heart and brain.

While Grey was working, those outside watched on curiously.

"What's he doing to him?" The young man who refused to drop the item asked.

"He's helping your friend." Klaus replied.

The young man wanted to speak, but recalling the ability of Klaus, he shut his mouth. Klaus didn't look like someone who would entertain people he wasn't friends with.

Kyle saw the young man's reaction and snickered inside. This guy has always been cocky, even with him, he was cocky, but in the presence of Klaus and Grey, his cockiness has vanished.

Everyone knew how difficult it was to break through to the Sovereign Plane. Some geniuses have not even been able to go past the Sage Plane, much less getting past the Venerable Plane. There are thousands of people who have been stuck at the Peak of the Venerable Plane for hundreds of years, yet these two young men passed through with so much ease, it goes to show that their potential was unmatched.

Kyle looked at Klaus and the blue flames which covered both Grey and the young man and he didn't feel any sort of jealousy, rather, he was motivated. Since they could get to the Sovereign Plane, so could he.

'This is a good chance. I'll make them escort me deeper into the forest. With them, I can acquire more precious items that will improve my cultivation speed.'

A golden opportunity just dropped before him, he didn't even have the time to be envious since he has to take complete advantage of it.

The duo has already helped them out of this and even trying to save the life of someone they weren't too confident would make it. Since they could do something like this, it meant that they could as well take him deeper without having to fear anything.

He knew this place was dangerous, very dangerous due to the miasma. But they hadn't gotten too far inside. He could at least get closer to the periphery of the place and get better items.

While he was mapping out his plan, the flames vanished and Grey reappeared with the young man who had a better complexion compared to when Grey took him.

"He should be safe now. Just take him and use your best healing treasures and he should be fine." Grey instructed while handing the young man back to them.

The group thanked Grey for his help and wanted to leave.

Their expressions changed slightly when Kyle told them to leave without him, but they didn't argue with him and left. They've already taken what they need, and he was in the hands of Grey and Klaus. If anyone was in danger, it was them, who were heading out of the forest.

With the group gone, Kyle looked at his two friends with a mischievous smile.

"What do you want?" Klaus asked curiously.

"I need your help to head deeper into the forest." Kyle didn't hide his intentions.

"I see, taking advantage." Grey chuckled.

"You're already here, what's the point of leaving without having some fun?" Kyle asked.

"Heading deeper does sound fun. Come on, I wouldn't mind escorting you inside." Klaus placed his hand on his chin.

Grey didn't have any issues with heading in. If the miasma got into either Kyle or Klaus, he could just take it out of them. He didn't need to worry about others giving away his secret.

The trio walked into the woods, heading further into the dangerous zone. This was a place Kyle never thought he could go into a few minutes ago, but now, he was very confident in getting into it. Strange how things could change with the appearance of two people, but he didn't mind since they were his friends.

Chapter 1502 An Eerie Building

"There's something ahead." Grey informed the duo behind him.

Klaus nodded in agreement, he could also sense the presence of something ahead of them.

Kyle was the only one lost, he didn't sense anything in front of them. He could only give a wry smile.

The trio walked forward and just as both Grey and Klaus said, a large building appeared in front of them.

"That place gives me the creeps." Klaus shook his body.

"I don't think there's anything good there." Kyle said with a strange expression. He could sense a very dark aura coming from that place, he didn't want to step into it.

"In contrast, there are multiple good items in there. It's just very dangerous." Grey smiled. He could sense a few good things inside that place, they were faint, but he didn't doubt his senses.

"You're saying we should go into that place?" Klaus pointed at the building.

"Haha, of course." Grey laughed, "Don't tell me you're afraid. Besides, how are we going to see what treasures it holds without stepping inside?"

Klaus shivered and looked at the place again. The building was giving off an eerie vibe, and the miasma present there is even stronger compared to the places around it.

"That's too much for me. I'm still alright here, but if I go closer, I'll be in danger." Kyle didn't like the idea of walking into that place. He was the one who told them he wanted to come here, but he knew how dangerous miasma is and if he were infected by it, he would be in serious trouble.

"Don't worry about the miasma. It's nothing serious, I can deal with it." Grey reassured him.

"Huh? You have a way to deal with the miasma?" Kyle was stunned by Grey's words.

"Of course, why would I dare to come in here if I don't." Grey said matter-of-factly.

Kyle threw a glance at Klaus and saw his calm expression.

"For real?" He asked again.

"Just follow him already, you should know he wouldn't joke around with his life." Klaus rolled his eyes when he noticed Kyle's hesitation.

Grey took the first step and Klaus followed closely behind. Kyle hesitated for a second but moved closer to Klaus and Grey. His expression changed when he noticed the relatively smaller amount of miasma he could feel around him.

The miasma was still there, but he wasn't sensing them the way he used to, it was as if they were avoiding the area they were standing. His eyes moved to Grey and genuine shock was in them.

He has always been blown away by Grey's feats, but some of these things were things some people could attempt to a certain extent. Like having five elements or being ridiculously strong. These were things that had been seen before and there would be people that would show even more. However, there was no one who could deal with miasma. This was formed naturally and was one of the most dangerous things created by nature. Yet Grey seemed to have seen a way to sort it out.

'This is amazing.'

The only thing that passed through Kyle's head was how amazing Grey is. Being able to do something like this was beyond imagination.

They soon got to the door and Grey pushed it open. He was the strongest and had to be in front.

The second Grey opened the door, a powerful miasma burst out and covered the trio.

Kyle felt his heart skip when he saw this, but he relaxed when he couldn't feel it in his body. He once again looked at Grey and couldn't help but be grateful he was friends with such a figure.

It took a while before the thing settled. Grey didn't rush into the place, he waited patiently as he tried to inspect the place from the outside.

"I can't pinpoint the exact location of the things I can sense. The miasma here is too much." Grey told the duo behind him.

Kyle didn't even attempt to in the first place, he already knew how dangerous it was.

Klaus nodded, he tried to see if he could sense anything, but he couldn't go far as well.

Their only option was to move around, searching for the place the signal was stronger.

"Klaus, go to the back." Grey instructed.

They were in the building now and it could be dangerous. The most dangerous place was the front and the back.

"I know." Klaus moved behind Kyle who stepped in the middle.

They were currently standing in a hall that had two stairs on either end. Grey went for the one of the left, since it was the closest one. If they couldn't get anything from this side, then they would use the next one.

They climbed the steps, but Klaus who was standing at the back of the trio turned and unleashed an attack.

Grey and Kyle turned around, and they noticed Klaus' attack hit a humanoid figure that dispersed into the miasma in the place. It was as if the figure was part of the miasma.

"Can't you see who is the strongest? Generally you take out the strongest before the others." Klaus yelled into the darkness.

Grey's eyes twitched when he heard Klaus' statement.

"How did you sense it?" He didn't bother with Klaus' statement and asked the important question, even he didn't sense anything. If Klaus hadn't attacked, there was no way he would've known about it.

"Simple, my domain is always active." Klaus shrugged like it was a normal thing.

"Your domain is always active?" Grey was the one taken aback this time.

"Yeah. Remember that technique I told you I learnt from my Faction when we just entered this place?" Klaus asked, and after seeing Grey nod, he added, "It makes use of my ice domain and is always active. I can sense anything fifty meters around me."

"That's amazing." Grey was intrigued by it, he looked at Klaus with a smile.

"Don't even think about it. She will kill me if she finds out I taught you." Klaus could already tell what Grey wanted to ask and outrightly denied him.

"Fine. I can use my earth domain." Grey snorted and spread out his earth domain. Although he couldn't always keep it active like Klaus, he could use it for a long period as long as he wasn't using it for a fight.

When he activated it and spread out his earth domain, the tiny invisible particles that spread across the place sent a chill down his spine when he sensed the number of things around him.

"There are so many of them." Grey was shocked at the figures he sensed. Luckily, they weren't too strong.

"Yeah, they generally won't attack unless we get too close." Klaus said.

Grey and Kyle couldn't help but look at him.

"I studied them from the first time we entered here. We got too close to that one that wanted to attack." Klaus explained.

Grey gave him a suspicious look but didn't say anything and continued climbing the stairs. They soon arrived at a hallway and they could see cracks on the wall of the place.

It was obvious this place has been abandoned for hundreds of years.

"I wonder who stayed in a place like this." Kyle thought out loud.

"Some bigshot, obviously." Klaus replied, he added, "If you notice. It's in the depths of the forest, and he obviously didn't want any disturbance."

Kyle and Grey didn't see anything wrong with his explanation. This was something that was common with some powerhouses, they don't like it when people disturb them as they cultivate, so they usually come to places like these and hide.

They continued walking and saw a door, Grey opened it, and he was attacked by one of the humanoid entities in the place. It was very weak and Grey was able to kill it with one attack.

"There's nothing here." He said as he closed the door. He didn't sense anything from that place and knew there was nothing there.

He continued forward and before long he had opened over ten doors in this hallway and was attacked in each, but he didn't find anything in any of them.

There were two doors left.

He walked to one of them and when he opened it, he smiled as he sensed something inside.

The humanoid figure that attacked was dispersed with only his aura as he entered the place.

"I don't know how valuable the item here is, but it shouldn't be bad." He said to Kyle.

Kyle was a little excited as he looked forward to whatever they would get.

Klaus followed from behind, happy that Grey could sense the figures now. Since Grey could sense them, he didn't need to worry too much. Anyone that had come close has been destroyed by Grey.

The room was big, and they saw a large bed, as well some things around the place.

Chapter 1503 What's The Backstory?

Grey moved the bed and found a chest under it.

"Whatever's here should be in here." He said and just as he was about to open it, he sensed something and couldn't help but shake his head, with a wave of his hand, all the figures that were about to step out from the miasma disintegrated.

Kyle didn't even sense the figures, but Grey had already dealt with them. Not just that, while he was dealing with them, he had also unlocked the chest.

"What's inside?" Klaus asked.

"Some kind of scale." Grey picked up a large dark-brownish scale from the box, its surface was rough and very strong.

"A Dragon scale?" Kyle asked.

"No, I have a Dragon and I've felt his scales, it's not like this." Grey explained.

"You know you didn't have to add the last part, right?" Klaus felt a vein pop on his head.

Grey was obviously showing off! What was the point of speaking about having a Dragon and this? A simple no would've been fine!

"How are you going to believe me?" Grey asked.

"You told us to walk into a dangerous miasma and we didn't doubt you, you think we would cause of a scale of unknown origin?" Klaus felt like beating Grey up.

Grey thought about it and confirmed Klaus was right. They haven't doubted him once, but still, he felt like he had to explain to them how he knew it wasn't a Dragon's scale.

While Klaus and Grey were in the midst of bickering, Kyle looked at Grey in shock once again, he couldn't help but ask softly, "You have a Dragon?"

"Yeah, a baby Dragon. You see, I saved..."

"We don't need to know its fucking story, what has that scale? It looks great." Klaus cut Grey off.

He had already heard the story, there was no point in Grey saying it again. All he wanted to know was what had that scale, he didn't see any reason Grey was diverting to himself owning a Dragon.

Grey sighed and placed the scale close to his nose, after a while he did something that grossed the duo standing close to him. Grey moved the scale close to his mouth, and licked it.

After getting a proper feel of the taste, he said, "It's an animal from the sea. I know this taste anywhere, no matter how faint it is."

"You're such a psycho. Who licks something just to know its origin?" Klaus gave Grey a weird look.

Grey didn't bother with him as he explained, "It should belong to a powerful beast that frequents land. So it shouldn't be a fish, but something that could survive on land as well."

"A sea snake can do something like that, and you know there are a fair few fish that can come to land." Kyle explained.

"I know there are some fish that can come to land, but this one lives on land just as much as it does on water. Some sea snakes or something else." Grey said.

Kyle nodded, "Well there's no point finding its origin. Is it useful?"

Klaus immediately spoke up when he heard this and threw a jab at Grey in the process, "Exactly! This is what we should be doing, not going around licking things that are hundreds of years old just to satisfy our cravings."

Grey was already used to Klaus' behavior and didn't bother with him, he looked at Kyle and said, "Well, you can't, but I think I can."

"Hopefully we can get you something good in the next room." Klaus consoled Kyle as they stepped out of the place.

Grey kept scale and walked behind them, making sure Kyle was in the middle.

Klaus was the one taking the lead this time, he opened the last door in that hallway and didn't find anything good.

The humanoid figure that stepped out of the door was frozen on the spot and Kyle was able to get a good view of it. Unlike Klaus and Grey who had been using a special method to see the figures since, he hadn't been able to sense them. Now that he saw it, he was a little surprised. It wasn't as large as he expected, and their facial features resembled that of a bird.

'Strange...' Something flashed through his head, but he shook his head. He didn't think there was a connection between this and what he just recalled.

The group entered the room and didn't find anything. This was within their expectations since they only found something in over ten previous doors.

They went on to head over to the other stairs on the other side of the Hall.

The first door proved to be productive as they saw a bead, although full with miasma, it seemed to possess some amount of pure essence.

Grey could easily remove the miasma in it so it was something Kyle could use. In this hallway, they found something good in almost every door they entered. But the strength of the figures increased, but it wasn't enough to threaten them.

As they left the hallway and returned to the Hall, Kyle walked closer to the chair that was placed on the end of the Hall, facing the door.

When he got closer to it, his eyes expanded, "Impossible."

"What?"

Both Grey and Klaus' attention were drawn over when they heard him.

"This is the place of a legendary figure, the Phoenix King." Kyle explained.

"The Phoenix what now?" Klaus was confused.

"The Phoenix King." Grey leaned closer to Klaus' ear and said clearly.

"I heard him the first time." Klaus pushed Grey away with his shoulders.

"The Phoenix King is not technically a Phoenix, rather, he was a powerful Elementalist that was well known for his closeness with the Phoenixes. It is said that he knows the exact place Phoenixes hide and even lives with them..." Kyle explained.

Allegedly, this Phoenix King has a lot of Phoenixes around him and is even said to be a descendant of Phoenixes from a strange story which Kyle didn't go into even after Klaus' insistent pestering.

Chapter 1504 I'll Take Seventy Percent

Kyle continued talking about the stories he knew about the Phoenix King.

Both Grey and Klaus listened to him, but they both had the same question in their heads....

'How did a human become a descendant of Phoenixes?'

Kyle didn't seem to see the looks on their faces, and when he was done, Klaus looked at him and said, "I don't care about whatever thing he achieved, what I want to know is how he is of Phoenix descent when he's obviously a human."

Kyle looked at Klaus and didn't know what to say. There's no way Klaus is expecting him to say that, right?

"Come on, I'm waiting. Grey told us how he knew that wasn't a Dragon's scale, you should also tell us why we should believe in this Phoenix King guy." Klaus had a serious look on his face, he wanted Kyle to tell him how the story of the Phoenix King being a Phoenix's descendant when he's clearly human came about.

Kyle couldn't help but look at Grey pleading eyes.

Grey laughed and placed his hand on Kyle's shoulder, "Come on bud, why don't you tell us, I'm very curious as well."

Kyle felt like his head was about to explode, but he still went on to tell them what he heard.

"Oh, so that's how it went?" Klaus asked.

"According to the rumors." Kyle said.

"I see, I never knew there were such people." Klaus said, and then he gave Grey a weird glance and said, "Come to think of it Grey, since you don't seem to like girls, or boys, could it be that you've developed a feeling for V..."

Bang!

Before Klaus could complete his statement, his figure was sent flying and he crashed into the chair that was placed in the middle of the wall.

To the surprise of everyone, Klaus' figure passed through the wall without facing any form of resistance.

"Huh?" Grey walked closer to the place and when he touched the armrest, he felt the coldness, which indicated that it was there.

He raised his hand above the chair and when he touched it, his hand passed through.

"Let's go." Grey didn't want to take the risk of leaving Kyle there alone and took him along as he entered the place.

When they entered, they saw a large cave and Klaus was stuck on the other end of the wall.

"What the fuck Grey?! Do you want to kill me?!" Klaus yelled from the other side, he hadn't even taken a good glance around him as he dropped to the ground.

"If not for the fact that I like you as a good friend, I would've fought you to the death!" He continued yelling.

"Shit! Where am I?" He was startled when he saw a statue of a beast close to him as he retreated.

"You'll die if you try to fight with me." Grey said coolly.

Klaus didn't even try to argue.

Kyle laughed when he witnessed the communication between the duo. He knew how they usually act. Klaus would brag but never try to fight with Grey. Even a genius such as Klaus didn't dare to tangle with Grey in a fight. They've all seen how powerful Grey was, and this was even more true for Klaus who has been friends with him for a long time.

"What's this place?" Klaus asked.

"A secret place, maybe there's something good here." Klaus said as he looked around.

He didn't see anything other than statues.

'Could these statues be what holds the secrets of this place?'

They all thought. Other than the statues, there was nothing else, so it obviously meant the statues were quite important.

"Let's take them." Klaus suggested.

"That shouldn't be right. Let's see if there's something on them first. If there's nothing, we'll destroy them." Grey's first statement made Klaus disappointed, but on hearing the last part of his statement, he couldn't help but smile brightly. This was the person he knew.

Grey would not leave this place easily without trying to figure out what is hidden here, this was something he's well aware of. And neither would he. Since they were here, thanks to him, they needed to take something good.

Who knows, he might get a nice treasure here, after all, he was the one who discovered it.

At the thought of this he looked at Grey, "Since I'm the one who discovered this place, I'll take seventy percent of all the treasures, you guys can share the remaining thirty percent."

"I'll punch off a few more of your teeth." Grey threatened.

"Do you think I'm afraid of you?" Klaus asked, ready to attack Grey.

Grey didn't even bother with him and started inspecting the statues. Seeing that Grey ignored him, Klaus also started inspecting the statues as well. Before long they were done and both exchanged glances. Without hesitation, they struck out at the same time.

Kyle's mouth was wide agape as the duo destroyed the statues one by one. Underneath one of the statues, something glowed brightly.

Klaus was the one who shattered it, and before Grey could move he grabbed it.

"Hmm, I wonder what this is." He looked at Grey as he spoke.

"Let me see." Grey came close, but Klaus refused.

"Don't tell me you want to lick it again?" He commented.

"Just give it to me." Grey rolled his eyes.

Klaus tossed it to him and he started inspecting it. The item was small, but he could feel that it was special, he just didn't know what it was.

He looked at Kyle, "Any idea?"

Kyle was the one who spoke about some Phoenix King, so there's a chance he knows what this was.

Kyle shook his head, "I've never seen that thing before."

"What do we do with it now?" Grey asked.

Klaus shrugged, he didn't know. He thought it was something special.

"Just keep it, we'll know if it's useful in the future." He suggested.

Chapter 1505 How's This Possible?

1505 How's This Possible?

The trio left the building with the item. There was nothing left for them in that place.

Klaus was a little annoyed he didn't find anything good for himself, but Kyle was ecstatic since he got a few items that would increase his strength. With those items, the Peak of the Venerable Plane is not far away. In a few months or so he should be able to attain that level.

Thinking about his gains, he felt proud having such people as his friends. If not for Grey's ability to negate the miasma, they wouldn't have been able to enter that place. Not just negating it, Grey was also able to locate the treasures.

"Are we leaving this place now?" Klaus asked as they headed towards the exit of the forest.

"Well, there's somewhere else I would like to go. But I don't know if you two are free." Kyle replied awkwardly.

"We have nothing to do for a month or so, we're free." Klaus replied before Grey could speak.

Grey didn't stop him since he was right, they indeed didn't have anything to do for the time being. They had to wait for Reynolds and Alice to break through, which would take some time. The duo were in the Eighth stage the last time they saw, and there's a chance they might've gotten to the Peak by now, but they will still need some time before to get to that Sovereign Plane. Even Grey and Klaus who were at the Peak during their last meeting only managed to get to the Sovereign Plane a while back.

Kyle was pleased they would be free and told them of where he was headed. But first, he wanted to improve his strength. This was something he needed for the journey, he didn't want to rely on only the duo to do everything.

Kyle was in the Fifth stage of the Elemental Venerable Plane at the moment, he was already very close to getting to the Sixth stage, and with the help of this treasure, he will attain it and even try to push for the Seventh stage.

Grey took the orb from him and cleansed the miasma that had corrupted it. It was a simple process and within a few minutes, the orb was as good as new.

When Klaus saw the orb, he was a little taken aback by how it was. He didn't think it would be this good. Since it was covered by miasma the first time, he couldn't be blamed. It didn't have any sort of ice properties so it never interested him anyway.

Grey set up a large formation to ensure Kyle wasn't disturbed and left with Klaus, keeping watch some meters away from Kyle.

Klaus looked at Kyle as he was breaking through and chuckled, "I remember when we were all in the Overlord Plane. How time flies."

Grey nodded, indeed, they've come a long way. Thinking about it, their cultivation speed shot up after they came to the Aurora Continent. One has to know that the elemental grade which usually determines the speed of an Elementalist seemed nonexistent to Grey's friends the second they came here. He didn't know if it had anything to do with them or not.

"There's something odd about this place." He made mention of it and Klaus couldn't help but wonder about it as well.

Since they came to this place, their cultivation speed has increased. They weren't like Grey whose elemental grade could increase.

"What's happening to us then?" He wondered out loud.

Grey brought out a testing stone, "There's only one way to find out."

Klaus didn't waste any time and placed his hands on it. His original grade was Purple, one of the weakest amongst the grades. When he placed his hand on the stone, it glowed with a yellowish color and slight signs of Emerald could be seen on it. It was as if it was evolving from yellow to emerald.

Grey looked at Klaus and the other looked at him in shock.

"Are you sure that thing is functional?" Klaus asked with a weird look on his face. His original grade was Purple, yet he was not only seeing Yellow on the stone, but there were signs of it turning into Emerald.

In the Aurora Continent, Emerald is the highest elemental grade since the black and white grades are rumors and there hadn't been any news of them in thousands of years.

"It is. I've been using it for a long time." Grey replied.

"I have another one." He brought out a second one and used it, the result was the same.

Klaus brought one out. He has always had this with him, but he didn't think of checking his elemental grade. To be honest, he didn't even think about it much. After they took the Great Earth Essence Liquid, his grade moved up to Blue, which he already felt was a miracle. And after that, he has been growing at the same pace as Grey and others so he didn't think too much about it.

But now that Grey brought it to his notice, he realized there was a mistake somewhere, he shouldn't be growing at the same pace as Grey. Grey could infinitely increase his elemental grade which meant that he could achieve the highest known elemental grade. So how is he able to catch up to Grey?

"My elemental grade is increasing?" He looked at Grey with disbelief in his eyes.

"That shouldn't be possible." Grey was also in a state of shock. The Great Earth Essence Liquid is only effective once, and it can only increase the grade by one. Some people aren't even lucky and it doesn't increase theirs.

When they look at the pace at which other people are improving, they've always thought it was slow, but since all four of them were moving at almost the same speed, they didn't think too much about it.

They all had the pride of a genius after all and didn't think less of themselves.

"Something's wrong."

04:101505 How's This Possible?

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Klaus looked at Kyle as he was breaking through and chuckled, "I remember when we were all in the Overlord Plane. How time flies."

Grey nodded, indeed, they've come a long way. Thinking about it, their cultivation speed shot up after they came to the Aurora Continent. One has to know that the elemental grade which usually determines the speed of an Elementalist seemed nonexistent to Grey's friends the second they came here. He didn't know if it had anything to do with them or not.

"There's something odd about this place." He made mention of it and Klaus couldn't help but wonder about it as well.

Since they came to this place, their cultivation speed has increased. They weren't like Grey whose elemental grade could increase.

"What's happening to us then?" He wondered out loud.

Grey brought out a testing stone, "There's only one way to find out."

Klaus didn't waste any time and placed his hands on it. His original grade was Purple, one of the weakest amongst the grades. When he placed his hand on the stone, it glowed with a yellowish color and slight signs of Emerald could be seen on it. It was as if it was evolving from yellow to emerald.

Grey looked at Klaus and the other looked at him in shock.

"Are you sure that thing is functional?" Klaus asked with a weird look on his face. His original grade was Purple, yet he was not only seeing Yellow on the stone, but there were signs of it turning into Emerald.

In the Aurora Continent, Emerald is the highest elemental grade since the black and white grades are rumors and there hadn't been any news of them in thousands of years.

"It is. I've been using it for a long time." Grey replied.

"I have another one." He brought out a second one and used it, the result was the same.

Klaus brought one out. He has always had this with him, but he didn't think of checking his elemental grade. To be honest, he didn't even think about it much. After they took the Great Earth Essence Liquid, his grade moved up to Blue, which he already felt was a miracle. And after that, he has been growing at the same pace as Grey and others so he didn't think too much about it.

But now that Grey brought it to his notice, he realized there was a mistake somewhere, he shouldn't be growing at the same pace as Grey. Grey could infinitely increase his elemental grade which meant that he could achieve the highest known elemental grade. So how is he able to catch up to Grey?

"My elemental grade is increasing?" He looked at Grey with disbelief in his eyes.

"That shouldn't be possible." Grey was also in a state of shock. The Great Earth Essence Liquid is only effective once, and it can only increase the grade by one. Some people aren't even lucky and it doesn't increase theirs.

When they look at the pace at which other people are improving, they've always thought it was slow, but since all four of them were moving at almost the same speed, they didn't think too much about it.

They all had the pride of a genius after all and didn't think less of themselves.

"Something's wrong."

Chapter 1506 High Spirits

1506 High Spirits

Grey and Klaus were in a state of shock. It was fine since Grey had a reason for his increase, but what is the reason behind Klaus' elemental grade increase?

It's not just Klaus, but both Reynolds and Alice must have seen an increase as well, but like Klaus, they were also oblivious to it.

"Grey, did you infect us?" Klaus blurted out.

"Why are you saying it like it's a bad thing?" Grey couldn't believe what was coming out of Klaus' mouth, if he indeed 'infected' them like Klaus claims, wouldn't it be a good thing for them?

"This doesn't make sense. There's no way it can happen that way. Did you by any chance take a treasure that's powerful and can also increase your elemental grade?" Grey couldn't make sense of what was happening.

"If I did, don't you think I would've checked already?" Klaus hadn't taken any treasures like that. Besides, it wasn't something easy to come by. Because they found it once doesn't mean they will be able to do so again.

"If you're implying I did, which I don't remember doing, what about Rey and Alice?" Klaus added, "They're increasing at this same speed as well."

Grey grabbed his head in confusion. This was an unbelievable discovery.

"Could I really be infecting you guys?" He didn't know what to believe.

Klaus shrugged, he didn't know, he was just saying.

"I wonder what grades your elements are." He changed the topic, motioning for Grey to place his hand on the stone.

Grey, although lost in thoughts, did as requested and Klaus felt his eyes twitch.

On the stone, there were two glaring Black colors there, it was evident that it was from two elements. Not just that, but two more were White. As if that is not enough, the remaining four were all Emerald.

Four of Grey's elements had become the fabled Black or White grade, while the remaining four were at the highest grade for those in the Aurora Continent, Emerald grade.

"This isn't fair." Klaus murmured.

Seeing himself having part Emerald grade made him excited, he wanted to see if Grey had gotten to the Emerald grade in any of his elements, but to his shock. Four were already at the peak which was the Black or White grade, and the other four were in the Emerald grade he felt so proud of. What shattered his heart was that his own was just starting to show signs of cracking, while Grey's own was fully in the Emerald grade, there was no signs of them being in the process of entering the Emerald grade.

'He's bullying us in everything.' Klaus complained internally.

Grey has eight elements, as if that was not enough, all of them had such outstandingly high grades. This was unfathomable. If people heard of Grey's elemental grades, they would give up on cultivating. It was too discouraging.

In the Azure Continent where they were from, the Blue grade was regarded as the peak, and anyone who got to the Violet grade was hunted down and killed. This was the reason behind the Empires hunting the group. Klaus couldn't help but wonder what those people's reactions would be now if they found out their elemental grades.

"Hey bud, why don't we visit the Azure Continent some day?" He nudged Grey.

They had a lot of memories there, and he didn't mind going back there and seeing Lunar City once again. He was once the Mayor's son and enjoyed imaginable prestige there. Of course, his status here was almost on the same level as that one, if not higher. But that was a place special to him and he didn't mind visiting.

"Alright, maybe after the war we will go there, if we're alive." Grey replied.

"Stop being so pessimistic. With this new discovery, we can win this war. The four of us, at the forefront. We will prevail." Klaus was in high spirits.

"They have a God Plane Elementalist, we don't." Grey's words were like cold water as it drenched Klaus' high spirits.

"All we need is time." Klaus didn't want to give up.

"Time, we do not have. They can invade at any time. This is why I want to sneak in there and cause some chaos." Grey dropped his head, "If we can buy a year or two, maybe, just maybe we might make it."

"If a year or two is too much, then we'll break through faster. Aren't you confident in getting to the Peak of the Sovereign Plane in a few months?" Klaus asked.

Grey looked at him, he wanted to be optimistic like Klaus, but he couldn't. This wasn't so simple. He knew Klaus knew this as well, but he was just being himself.

"Heh, a few months to get to the Peak of the Sovereign Plane, we'll have to break every record to attain that." He joked.

"We've been breaking these records all this while, why would this be different?" Klaus' spirit was getting higher and higher, and to a certain extent, it was starting to affect Grey.

"Why would this be different?" Grey asked himself, and to be honest, he didn't know. He didn't know if it was just him being pessimistic, or overthinking the situation, but he knew it couldn't be that easy.

"There's no harm in trying, brother." He shook Klaus' hands.

"Haha, that's the spirit! In a few months we will get to the Peak of the Sovereign Plane, we have no choice." Klaus said.

"We either get to the Peak, or die." Grey added.

"Chill bud, it's not that serious yet." Klaus had to calm Grey's spirit this time. He didn't mention anything about dying, so where did Grey get that?

Grey laughed when he heard Klaus, the duo entered a fit of laughter as they watched Kyle break through. They knew this was a serious matter, and breaking through has gotten even tougher since they got to the Sovereign Plane, but they have no choice!

Chapter 1507 Appearance Of A Griffin

Kyle's breakthrough took a while, and Grey and Klaus used the time to map out their plans for the Gnome world. Their objective was simple, cause mayhem.

If they had a way to blend into the Gnome world without being noticed, then they would be able to achieve unimaginable success since they wouldn't have to be sneaking around, rather would be walking freely.

"There might be a way, but we will have to make some adjustments to how we walk. And we can't talk much as well." Grey knew of a way. He has been controlling the Seventh Prince for a while now and has come to understand these people actually keep humans as slaves.

The powerful humans are used as puppets, while the weaker ones are slaves. Their cultivation is stripped, so they wouldn't be able to cause any harm to the young and weak Gnomes. Also, without permission, they can not leave their premises or talk to anyone outside the place they stay.

"So you're saying we enter to become slaves?" Klaus asked.

"I'll see if there's another way to hide ourselves. If not, that's our only choice." Grey answered.

"The appearance of new slaves and the sudden deaths of royals is definitely going to raise suspicions." Klaus said after giving it some thoughts.

They were obviously going to enter the Palace as the Seventh Prince's slaves. That will naturally draw attention. If chaos breaks out in the once peaceful Palace, they would be among the suspects, if not the main suspects by the guards. So they had to be smart with their moves.

"That's why we're not going to enter the Palace." Grey explained, "The Seventh Prince has a loyal ally that should be in the Mid stages of the Sovereign Plane."

"If we all work together, we should be able to knock him out when he's not expecting it during the first meeting. And with that, I can place him under my control."

"That's a good plan. But attacking such a powerful figure would mean we have to rely on talismans, which will cause a large explosion."

"I know. That's why I'll be setting up an array beforehand. We will meet at a spot we've already prepared for the mission."

The duo continued their plans as Kyle entered the final stages of his breakthrough. Surprisingly, he managed to get to the Seventh stage of the Venerable Plane.

Grey knew the item was good, but he didn't expect it to have such effects.

"I'm done. We should head out now." Kyle walked up to the duo.

Grey studied him and nodded. There was no point in staying here any longer.

....

While the trio were on a journey, Reynolds had left his Faction in the bid to break through to the Sovereign Plane. He is currently in the Ninth stage, but very close to the Peak.

A method of getting to the Sovereign Plane entered his head, but he can only confirm it after getting into a tough battle.

"Grey and Klaus have broken through. I shouldn't be lacking behind. With my Elemental Warrior, I should be able to gain the advantage for the first time." He laughed to himself as he walked into a town.

There was a place he wanted to visit, it is rumored that a powerful Magical Beast was ravaging a town not far from here, and the Beast is said to be at the Peak of the Seventh Rank. This was the type of opponent he needed to stimulate himself and grow to the next level. Once he can defeat this opponent, he knows for sure that his cultivation would shoot to the Peak, if he's lucky he might even get to the Sovereign Plane.

After entering the town, the people present were few. He knew it was due to the Beast ravaging the town not too far away. This was why he came.

The strongest person in this town was at the Peak of the Venerable Plane, but in Reynolds' eyes, he hadn't even left the Mid stages of the Venerable Plane. This person was one of those who only improved themselves using magical treasures and not honing their strengths. As time goes on, they will show weaker, and weaker strength compared to their cultivation stage.

The man was the leader of this town, and he was the one who sent out the news of this Beast.

Reynolds walked up to his place, and before anyone could even see him, he was already inside.

He appeared silently in the Town Leader's office, and seeing him seated, obviously to his arrival, he scoffed.

"What do you have on the beast?" He went straight to the point.

The Town Leader was shocked when he heard the unfamiliar voice, raising his head, he saw the young Reynolds standing before him.

"How did you get in here?" He asked.

"That's not what you should be worrying yourself about." Reynolds took a seat and said, "You sent out words about a Beast, I'm here to take up the task. I want to know what you know about it before I embark on the journey."

The Town Leader looked around and sighed, he couldn't sense Reynolds' cultivation, which meant Reynolds was stronger than he is. He didn't know if the person before him was a Sovereign, but thinking about it, it doesn't matter since even if he's not, he could kill him without him even noticing it.

"It appeared two weeks ago..."

The man went on to tell Reynolds of how the Beast appeared and its behavior. It appears every two days, and each time, it would take most of the precious items in the town. The town is known for its mine, and these stones were exactly what the beast was taking.

"Did you just say it's a Griffin?" Reynolds cut the man off when he heard the word, Griffin.

"Yes, that's what I've heard." The man nodded.

"When was it's last attack?" Reynolds asked.

"Two days ago."

"That mean it'll attack today?"

"Yes."

Reynolds' body was covered in lightning, and before the Town Leader could utter another statement, Reynolds disappeared from the room like a flash of lightning, blitzing past the window.

Chapter 1508 Exhausting Battle

Some kilometers away from the town Reynolds just visited.

A large figure could be seen in the sky of a fully abandoned town. The town was large, spanning hundreds of meters, but there was barely anyone present. It was as if it had been deserted.

Above the town, the figure with the body of a Lion, head of an Eagle, and massive wings hovered above it, looking down at the town with its menacing eyes. Its eyes were set on one place only, a large hill that was within the town boundaries.

The Griffin stayed in the sky for a while, inspecting the place, and after a few seconds, he dove down, heading straight for the hill.

Just as it was about to reach the hill, it sensed a powerful aura fast approaching. The aura was coming its way, and it could sense a little bit of threat from it. It wasn't enough to scare it away, but enough to make it wary.

It didn't focus on the hill anymore, rather, it turned to look at the aura rushing towards it.

Hundreds of meters away, Reynolds, covered in lightning, was flashing through the sky as he rushed toward the Griffin. He had already sensed its aura from some distance away and was excited at the prospect of fighting it.

After getting to the Ninth stage, his Elemental Warrior didn't skip into the Sovereign Plane, and he understood the reason. The Sovereign Plane was not something so easy to attain. Without the essence from the universe, there was no way he could use strength matching a Sovereign. He felt Grey could achieve it, but Grey wasn't like others, he was different.

His plan now is to break through and see the increase his Elemental Warrior would get. For now, he could unleash close to a Pseudo-sovereign's attack power if he went all out. That was enough for most Peak Venerables, but not a Magical Beast, especially one like this.

Reynolds stood before the Griffin with his eyes flashing with lightning, he looked at the magnificent beast before him and couldn't help but recall Grey's Teacher's Magical Beast. The first time he saw a

Griffin was when Chris brought it out, that was before Grey came to the Academy. He was left speechless by the act and had always been drawn by these magnificent creatures.

The Griffin, sensing Reynolds' cultivation stage gave him a look of disdain and went on its usual business. Yes, Reynolds could cause it some trouble, but it wasn't something it couldn't handle. At first, it thought maybe a Peak Venerable was the one coming, seeing that it was just a Ninth stage Venerable, it felt irritated. It had beaten multiple Peak Venerables that had come to stop it, and this Ninth stage Venerable would die from a single attack.

As it was heading towards the hill, something it never expected happened, the human it looked down on attacked.

The strength of the attack was beyond what it thought and was forced to take it head-on.

Change appeared in its eyes as it never expected the human to possess such strength. The fact that the human's first attack was enough to alarm it showed that it shouldn't take him lightly.

Reynolds nodded when he saw that he had gotten the attention of the Beast. He didn't say anything as there was no need to and attacked. His body was covered in his armor and his cultivation went up to the Peak of the Venerable Plane. This came as another shock to the Griffin.

Reynolds attacked, and the Griffin blocked the attack. It had the wind element which made it very fast. In the blink of an eye, it had rushed into the clouds, with Reynolds following behind it.

Reynolds didn't want it to escape, this was his sparring opponent, a very good one at that, he would never let it get away.

The Griffin didn't mind Reynolds' insistent chase, it soon stopped and attacked. The hill was too important hence it didn't want the battle to affect it. It would've moved into the hill, but it was not suitable for its stay.

Reynolds didn't speak and continued attacking, this time, the Griffin screeched and sent out waves of wind blades.

Reynolds dodged them and used lightning arrows to strike.

The Griffin was just as fast even though it was large.

Reynolds moved closer, he wanted to use the size of the Griffin to his advantage. Since he was smaller, he would make it hard for the Griffin to hit him while he dealt damage to it.

As if sensing Reynolds' intentions, the Griffin gave him some space, always ensuring they didn't get closer than twenty meters.

Both parties relied heavily on their speed, so the battle was all over the place as they were covering hundreds of meters within a stride. They attacked in flashes and dodge in the same manner as well.

From below the clouds, it was as if a beautiful light show was taking place in the sky, only those strong enough could sense the energies behind each ray of light.

The battle raged on for minutes and it was clear that none of them was getting the advantage over the other.

Both parties were attacking ferociously, but none of them had been able to deal any real damage to the other due to their insane speed.

The fight raged on for over thirty minutes, and exhaustion started to creep in. Both of them were tired, but neither wanted to back down.

After some time, they stopped attacking and only looked at each other, it was clear they were both tired and none of them could continue the fight.

Reynolds looked at it and said, "Draw."

After that, he left the place. He couldn't keep his armor on for much longer. If he does that, he would be at the losing end since his strength would decrease. The Griffin which was tired didn't have any issues with that and retreated as well.

Chapter 1509 No Longer A Back And Forth Battle

This time, the Griffin didn't wait for two days before returning, rather, it returned the next day.

Reynolds was there, waiting for its return. And when the Griffin returned, the duo started their battle once again. This time, the Griffin was more ferocious as it attacked with the intent to kill. This made Reynolds even more excited, this was the sort of battle he wished for, and since the Griffin wanted to kill him now, it meant he would be pushed even further.

The longer the fight continued, the better his chances of breaking through, either through battle or the aftereffects of the battle.

Just like the first day, the duo fought to a draw and both parties parted ways after they were exhausted from the fight.

Reynolds was pleased with what was happening, while the Griffin was getting angered. It was a prestigious Magical Beast, one of the legendary Magical Beasts, it wasn't like those everyday Magical Beasts, yet it couldn't defeat one human.

This discovery made it very annoyed and it felt like its pride was on the line. It's either he defeated this human or it was defeated by it in the end. From its perspective, there was no way Reynolds would be able to defeat it, so it still had a hundred percent confidence in itself. At most, they would continue fighting to a draw until it took advantage of Reynolds' mistake. It didn't think it would ever make a mistake as it was bigger than that.

Reynolds didn't know what was going on in the head of the Griffin, but he knew that he was slowly getting stronger as the battle continued. If he fought with this intensity for the next five to six days, he was sure that he would get to the Peak of the Venerable Plane. Once he gets to the Peak, then the Sovereign Plane was only a step away.

After each fight, he would cultivate, using the aftereffects of the battle to strengthen himself.

Since Reynolds' appearance, the Griffin hadn't been able to cause any harm to anyone, nor had it been able to attack the hill where the mine was located.

The people who were still in the town noticed an expert was battling with the Griffin, but none of them knew who it was. Some of them walked past Reynolds whenever he entered the town, and they didn't know this young man was the one helping them.

Without the Griffin attacks, the people who were all hiding in the town started to come out. There were few people in the town, but they still numbered over two hundred. Reynolds didn't expect this much would remain here while the others escaped.

Reynolds couldn't be bothered with them, he was stopped by a man in the Late stages of the Venerable Plane, this man was the strongest person here.

"I haven't seen you here before. Who are you?" The man asked.

"No one, just a wanderer." Reynolds replied, not wanting to engage in any sort of conversation with the man.

"You should be careful, there's a powerful Magical Beast in the area, and it attacks this town ever so often." The man warned.

"So I heard." Reynolds continued walking, not stopping as he exchanged words with the man.

The man couldn't sense Reynolds' cultivation stage so he didn't bother with him and continued with what he was doing. Everyone left in the town all either worked in the mine, or their family members worked there.

Reynolds didn't stay in the town for too long and left the place to cultivate. The place he picked for his cultivation was none other than the mine. It would be a waste for him not to use the mine while he was here.

The stones in the mine might not be the best he has seen, but they were enough to make him recover quickly from the exhausting fight, while also making advances in his cultivation. It was like killing two birds with one stone.

No one notices him when he's in the mine, neither do they notice when he steps out of it. He spends most of his time there, and whenever he senses the aura of the Griffin approaching, he would come out and confront it.

After two more days, the Griffin started to notice a change, Reynolds was getting stronger. The battles lasted longer than usual, and during the last fight, Reynolds had the slight edge over it.

From the start of the battle, it has always been the one who has the advantage in each battle. Although it always looked like it ended in a statement, in truth, it always has the advantage over Reynolds. But now, Reynolds was getting the advantage. It was barely noticeable, but this was a Griffin, a legendary Magical Beast that possesses amazing abilities, it could sense it.

The battle was shifting in Reynolds' favor, and if it continued like this, it would be defeated.

On the fifth day of the fight, it sensed the reason for Reynolds' improvement. The human was using the mine it set its eyes on.

This was the height of it. It had very little killing intent towards Reynolds, but after sensing that Reynolds was taking the food out of its mouth, and not just that, but eating it in its presence, it wanted to kill him.

As the duo fought that day, exhaustion started to creep in as usual, and Reynolds wanted to retreat, but to his shock, the Griffin didn't agree to it. It blocked his path of retreat and attacked.

Reynolds was taken aback by the sudden change in the Griffin's attitude. Usually, the Griffin would let him leave since their battle had been going on for some time and they were both tired, but now, the Griffin didn't seem to have any plans of doing that.

'This isn't how it's supposed to go.' He thought to himself as his eyes turned cold. He could sense the killing intent from the Griffin, and to be honest, it was mind-breaking.

Chapter 1510 No Special Treatments For Special Beasts

Boom!

The Griffin created a powerful gust of wind that blew Reynolds off balance, sending him crashing toward the ground.

Reynolds picked himself up quickly and attacked the Griffin with a bolt of lightning. The Griffin didn't hide from it, using its wings, he blocked the attack. The wing of the Griffin was covered with a screen made from the wind element.

Reynolds' attack struck the screen and even though it cracked the screen, the attack didn't go through.

The Griffin screeched and charged straight at Reynolds. But Reynolds moved faster, taking advantage of the time the Griffin slowed down to block his attack and he struck once again. Calling on his domain, he unleashed a sea of lightning at the Griffin.

The Griffin flapped its wings aggressively and a gust appeared around it. Reynolds was not the only one who had a domain, it too, had a domain and made use of it.

This was the first time both parties were fully making use of their respective domains which showed the seriousness of this fight.

Like the previous battles, even though both parties were showing signs of exhaustion, they still attacked with incredible speed. Only people at the Peak of the Venerable Plane would be able to keep up with both parties' movements, and this was true for those with lightning, wind, and the space element. Some slow Elementarists wouldn't be able to keep up with their speed.

Of course, this doesn't mean those slower wouldn't be able to fight with either of them at the same level, they would naturally know how to deal with them.

Their battle was a close ranged one as their domains came into play. Reynolds had his Elemental Warrior's armor which meant that even though he doesn't have the same strength as this Magical Beast physically, he could still keep up with it, at the very least.

As the fight continued, the Griffin took a chance at Reynolds and just when it was about to use its sharp claws to grab Reynolds' body, hopefully ripping him apart, something it never expected happened.

The second it grabbed Reynolds, Reynolds detached himself from the Elemental Warrior, letting the Griffin grab the Elemental Warrior.

With a vicious smile on his face, the Elemental Warrior exploded.

The Griffin never expected this to happen and didn't have the time to set up a good defense against it.

Reynolds didn't end there, he created the strongest lightning attack he has ever used and unleashed it at the Griffin a second slower.

The place he struck was the place the Griffin chose to use in its escape from the explosion. The lightning strike forced it back into the heart of the explosion.

Without being able to block the attack, the Griffin was hit by the brunt of the explosion.

Reynolds' Elemental Warrior had the strength close to a Pseudo-sovereign, even though when merged with Reynolds it only has strength slightly higher than that, it doesn't mean the Griffin would be able to walk out of a self-destruction of a Peak Venerable. Even a Late stage Elemental Venerable self-

destructing is dangerous to a Peak Venerable, much less one that was equal to it.

The pained screech of the Griffin rang in the explosion.

Reynolds looked on with cold eyes. He was exhausted, but he had to ensure that his opponent was dead, even if not dead, at least seriously wounded, enough for him to put an end to it. The thought of having a Griffin as a mount didn't cross his head, he wanted to kill it and take its core. Even its body was precious and could fetch him far more value than that mine the Griffin chose to attack.

Some time later, the explosion subsided, and a part of the forest where Reynolds and the Griffin were engaged in the battle had been wiped clean of anything. Not a single tree could be seen in a thousand meters radius of where the explosion happened.

In the middle of the now barren land, the large body of the Griffin could be seen on the ground, motionless. One of its wings was in an unnatural position, clearly broken. Not just that, but there were large gashes on its body. It was bloodied, but there were signs it was still alive.

Reynolds heaved a sigh of relief when he saw the condition of the Griffin. After detonating his Elemental Warrior, he had nothing else in his arsenal. There was no way he would've been able to fight with the Griffin that was at the Peak of the Seventh Rank with his Ninth stage Elemental Venerable strength.

He flew closer to it, and his pupils dilated, and without hesitation, he dropped to the ground.

A powerful beam of light shot past where Reynolds' figure was previously located.

Beads of sweat dropped from Reynolds' face, and his back was soaked. He felt a chill run down his spine when he sensed the strength behind that attack.

"Haha, you didn't think I would be preparing for your last attack, did you?" He laughed out loud, pleased at his foresight.

He didn't carelessly move closer to the Griffin, rather, he was prepared if it were to use a last ditch strike to try to escape. Until he was sure his opponent was dead, he never drops his guard. And luckily for him, he managed to escape what might've been a fatal attack from the Griffin.

The Griffin tried to stand up, but Reynolds attacked with a ferocious attack.

The Griffin wasn't able to move as its legs were broken.

Reynolds scoffed and without hesitation, he struck, killing the Griffin. He wouldn't blink an eye if this was even a Phoenix, which was rarer, much less a Griffin. He wasn't like Grey who took in these beasts, anyone that crosses his path, he would kill as long as they engage in a battle.

After killing the Griffin, he quickly kept the body in his spatial storage and left the scene of the fight. He was at his weakest and didn't want others to take advantage of him.