

Affinity 561

Chapter 561 - Where Is The Ring?

Ellis was surprised when a guard came to call him, saying he was summoned by his uncle. He felt a sudden uneasy feeling, but this was only because he was scared.

'Could Grey have been captured?' He asked himself as he walked towards the hall.

'Hmm, no. If he were, it would've caused a big ruckus. Then why is uncle calling me if not that?' He looked in the direction that led to his father's room.

It hadn't been up to five minutes since Grey left, yet, he had been summoned by his uncle. To be honest, he found it odd.

When he got to the door, he sensed a different presence inside, something he had never felt before. He didn't think much of it though, after all, this was his family's compound, one of the most powerful families in the entire Aurora Continent.

Creak...

The huge door to the hall opened slowly as Ellis' figure entered the hall.

All eyes turned to him, he felt a particular gaze staring at him as if it wanted to look at his soul.

"Huh?" He raised a brow while following his senses and staring at one person in particular amongst the guests, the old man with white hair.

"Uncle," Ellis called out to his uncle with a soft bow to show respect.

Even though he was angry with him, he still didn't want outsiders to know about the internal conflict in the family.

"Do you know these people?" Claude turned his gaze to the people from the Vaergahl family.

"No, uncle. This is my first time seeing them," Ellis replied.

He turned to stare at the group closer, but none of their faces rang a bell. He wasn't too focused on their clothing, so he missed the Dragon insignia some of them had on their shirts.

"They're from the Vaergahl family, apparently, they said you have something of theirs, is this true?" Claude introduced the group.

Ellis was taken aback when he heard the name and couldn't help but pause for a bit, "The Vaergahl family? I don't recall ever crossing paths with them,"

"You didn't, but someone you met not too long ago did," Claude said.

"Oh? Who's that?" Ellis asked, showing a slight confusion.

Of course he knew what this was about, but there was no way he was going to show that he did. First, before the Vaergahl family could travel this far meant there was something extraordinary among the items that he took from the bandit leader.

What was worth mentioning was that he wasn't the only one who took the items. So if he were to say he has any of the items, and they were to check him and what they wanted wasn't with him, it would expose Grey. Given Grey's current position and situation, he couldn't afford to do that.

"The bandit leader of Suyin Canyon. According to rumors, you were the one who cleared the place," The old man from the Vaergahl family spoke up.

He was starting to get impatient.

"Oh, it's not a rumor, I killed the leader here not too long ago," Claude intervened, using the opportunity to show off his family's superiority in young talent.

"Then did you acquire his storage ring?" The old man turned to Claude.

Since he was the one who killed the bandit leader, then it meant he saw him alive.

"I couldn't care less about what's in the storage ring of a crappy bandit. Just having such thoughts is like a blemish on my name," Claude replied.

Although he was taking every chance he got to annoy the Vaergahl family, he wasn't lying here. For someone as powerful as he is, things belonging to those weaker than he is can barely catch his eye unless he saw it physically.

When he told Ellis to bring the leader, it was only to make sure Ellis returned.

"That bandit has something important to my family. Where's the corpse?" The old man asked while standing from his seat.

"I've asked the guards to destroy it. But if I may, how did a small-time bandit like that take something important to you people?" Claude couldn't help but ask.

"None of your business, take us to the place where the guard destroyed the body. The ring should still be intact," The old man said.

"Hmm, alright," Claude thought about it for a while before nodding.

He was curious about what would make the Vaergahl family so frantic. The thought of a top secret treasure of the family being acquired by them made him a little excited.

Seeing the current strength of the Vaergahl family, he secretly summoned the Elders of the O'Brien family.

If whatever they were searching for was something that could increase the strength of the family, he didn't mind offending the Vaergahl family.

The guard he told to dispose of the bandit leader's body led them to a space at the back of the compound, behind a large garden. He pointed at the spot where the body was destroyed, and when the group looked closely, they could still see the charred ground. It was evident that the guard used the fire element.

Claude asked if he saw any storage ring with him, and his answer left everyone shocked. According to him, there was no ring on the corpse of the bandit leader.

"Are you certain?" Claude asked with narrowed eyes.

"Yes, My Lord, when I brought him here, there was nothing of value on him. I checked him personally before burning the corpse," The guard answered hastily.

He suddenly felt as if the sky had descended on him as a mountain-like pressure started to crush him.

"Do not lie to me, where is the ring?" The old man with the Vaergahl family asked, his voice cold and detached.

"I... I... didn't see any ring, Sir," The guard could barely get the words out of his mouth, but everyone could sense his honesty.

The second old man in the group waved his hand to dispel the pressure placed on the body of the guard. He turned to look in Ellis' direction.

"Since the ring was not on the bandit leader when he was brought here, it only means that it has been removed before he got here. Now, the question is by who?" He asked while looking at Ellis.

He wasn't the only one who had his eyes on Ellis, everyone from the Vaergahl family, as well as the O'Brien family who was there was staring at him.

Chapter 562 - Meeting Ellis' Father

"What? Why are you all staring at me like that?" Ellis asked after being stared at for almost a minute.

It was an uncomfortable feeling.

"You're the one who brought the bandit leader back, since the ring isn't on him, where is it?" Claude questioned.

"I don't know. I barely managed to survive fighting against so many people, do you think I would be worried about a damn ring?" Ellis asked, raising his voice slightly towards the end of his question.

"It did take you a single day to deal with the bandits, I presume you must've gone through a lot," Claude said.

"Oh, how did you defeat the bandits anyway?" The old man with dark hair asked.

"I fought," Ellis' reply was simple, but everyone knew it had a lot in it.

"I must commend your effort, but you see what we're searching for, we'll obtain it no matter what. If the storage ring is with you, I'd advise you to give it back now," The old man with dark hair said.

"I'm sorry, but I didn't see any storage rings. There were a lot of bandits, and some of them escaped when they realized they couldn't beat me," Ellis explained.

"Alright. We should get going," The old man with dark hair turned to the others from the Vaergahl family.

The O'Brien family weren't people they could oppress with their strength, so staying here any further wouldn't change anything. Since Ellis said he didn't have it they had to leave.

Leaving didn't mean they would let the matter rest though. The Dragon's blood they acquired took them through hell, they were not going to let it go that easily.

One of the reasons why the old man let Ellis go was that he had secretly made a hand seal that would identify if Ellis had been in contact with the blood, and the answer was no.

The only thing was that Ellis could pass the blood to someone else without being aware of what it was, he may not even touch it. All in all, Ellis was the only person they could think of who had the bandit leader's storage ring.

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The Vaergahl family left soon after not being able to get anything from Ellis or Claude.

Back at the O'Brien family hall.

"Where is it?" Claude placed his hand on Ellis' shoulder.

"Where's what?" asked Ellis.

"Stop playing dumb, the ring. I know others might think you're speaking the truth, but I know for a fact that you're lying when you said you didn't have it," Claude walked away from Ellis' position, heading in the direction of the middle chair.

"Honestly, I don't. As I said, there were more important things to focus on, like staying alive. You sent me to my end, luckily I survived," Ellis said coldly.

"I sent you out to train, nothing more. You can take it however you see it, but without enough pressure, you will not be able to grow to the top. I'm just making sure this pressure is constant," Claude rubbed his hands together as he spoke.

Ellis stared at him but didn't speak anymore. He turned around and left the room, walking steadily towards his room.

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Mortar City. In a tavern.

The Vaergahl family were still in the city, not willing to leave so easily.

"Find out what you can about the boy, also, I want people who saw him returning to describe how he was when he came back," The old man with dark hair commanded.

The middle-aged men in the group nodded before vanishing.

"*Sigh* This is really becoming a bother. Why did the O'Brien family send out their Young Lord to fight against those bandits on his own? Given their numbers, and the strength of the leader, the kid shouldn't have been able to survive it," The old man with white hair said his thoughts of the current situation.

"Also, if I remember correctly, the kid said some bandits escaped. Find them and question them," The old man with white hair said.

"Yes, grandfather," A young man amongst the group said before leaving the room.

"Alright, now all we have to do is wait for reports," The old man with dark hair said.

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O'Brien mansion.

'Grey, what's the situation?' Ellis was unable to hold back anymore, so he contacted Grey first.

Unfortunately, he didn't get a reply.

"Damn it! Come on, Grey, answer me,"

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Ellis' Father's room.

After Grey closed the door, he placed his back on the door as he stared around.

The room was huge, with a large bed on the end of the room. He could sense an eerie aura across the room, an aura that made him feel uncomfortable.

"Looks like he's bedridden," He muttered to himself before slowly approaching the bed.

He could see a figure on the bed, one he assumed was Ellis' father, an obvious assumption.

"Who are you, and why are you sneaking about in my room?" A raspy voice asked softly.

Grey knew the source of the voice, hearing how weak it was, he was almost certain that Ellis' father wouldn't be able to live for long if this persisted.

"Hello Sir, I'm a friend of your son," He bowed.

Even though Ellis' father was still lying on the bed, he still had to show some respect. After all, this was once the powerful family head of the O'Brien family.

"Ellis' friend?" Thoma asked, his voice still raspy.

"Yes, he told me of your situation and I came to see if I can help," Grey explained.

"Haha, foolish boy, even the Elders and the best physicians in the Continent can't help me," Thoma laughed out lightly but coughed soon after.

Grey knew he was referring to Ellis when he was speaking.

"Thank you for willing to assist that foolish son of mine, but I don't think there's anything you can do. Also, how is he?" Thoma continued speaking after his cough subsided.

"Honestly, not good, he's the same as you, only still walking," Grey said.

"*Sigh* I knew it would come to this, this is why I told him to leave the family if anything happens to me," Thoma sighed, he understood perfectly what Grey meant by his words.

Chapter 563 - Unwilling Duo

"You should go to him," Thoma said.

"Can I try? Who knows, I just might be of help," Grey asked.

He didn't want to leave without trying, even though he wasn't a hundred percent certain that he would be able to help, he still needed to try.

"You can't help me, boy, just let it go," Thoma said.

"Believe in me sir, just like your son did. I'm only going to try," Grey persuaded.

"I want to, I really do, but the thing is, I was infected by a miasma when searching for Ellis a few years back when he disappeared without a..." Thoma explained his condition to Grey.

The miasma that infected him was something they have never encountered before, when someone tried to help him, the person was also infected by it. After the miasma entered his body, it turned into horrifying energy that is slowly corroding his innards.

The person who was infected by it was far weaker than he was and lost his life soon after. His strength has been the only thing that has been keeping him alive all this time, but even he knew it was only a matter of time before he too succumbed to it.

"After hearing this, do you still have any thoughts of trying when you aren't certain whatever you're planning to do will work?" Thoma asked after he finished his explanation.

"Yes," Grey nodded, it was as if he wasn't hearing anything Thoma was saying all this while.

"*Sigh* Look boy, I'm glad that Ellis managed to make a friend like you who is willing to endanger himself for his friend's happiness, but u can't let him lose you as well," Thoma said.

"Don't worry sir, even if it doesn't work, it won't infect me," Grey said with a confident smile.

"I'm sorry boy, but I can't allow that," Thoma shook his head.

This was a risk he wasn't willing to accept.

"I'm sorry sir, but I'm not leaving until I try," Grey's eyes shone with determination.

He will stay here for as long as he can until he helped out.

Thoma and Grey stared at each other, the atmosphere tense. Grey was unwilling to leave until he tried to help, Thoma on the other hand unwilling to put his son's friend in danger.

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While Grey and Thoma were stuck in a stalemate, a minor conflict seems to be on the verge of erupting in Mortar City.

The Vaergahl family are adamant that Ellis had the Dragon's blood and a report from someone who saw them enter the city with the bandit leader on his shoulder said that the ring was never in the leader's possession when they came in. A few bandits, as well as the girls who were partying with the bandits at the time Grey and Ellis attacked said before the attack, the leader had his storage ring in his possession.

Ellis was in the O'Brien mansion, trying to contact Grey who still hadn't replied to any of his messages. Claude was trying to figure out what the Vaergahl family were searching for so seriously.

A few hours after the Vaergahl family left the O'Brien mansion, they returned.

"Old man, why are you here again?" Claude came out of the mansion and asked, beside him were the family's elders.

"Where's the boy?" The old man asked coldly.

The group from the Vaergahl family wasn't like the way they were the last time they came, this time, they seemed ready to declare war against the O'Brien family.

"What do you want with my nephew?" Claude asked. Before the group from the Vaergahl family could reply, he added, "If you're here for the same reason, then you should leave, my nephew already said he didn't have the ring,"

"I'm not speaking of your nephew, he came back with a boy, where is the boy?" The old man from the Vaergahl family said.

"A boy?" A look of confusion appeared on Claude's face.

His eyes suddenly widened after recalling sensing the young man who followed Ellis back to the mansion. He didn't really think much of it since it wasn't relevant.

"I don't know why you're searching for that boy, but I'm certain he doesn't have the ring. Ellis must've encountered him when returning back to the city after eliminating the bandits," Claude said.

"Looks like you're unaware, without that boy, your nephew wouldn't have been able to wipe out the bandits," The old man from the Vaergahl family said.

When they found some of the bandits who survived, they spoke of a youth who wore masks. The same thing was said from the people who confirmed not seeing a ring in the hands of the bandit leader.

"The boy's only at the Peak of the Origin Plane, even someone at the Early stages of the Overlord Plane will find it difficult in such a battle," Claude argued.

It's not that he didn't know of any geniuses, but none of them could help out in such a battle while still being in the Origin Plane. One has to know that almost all the bandits were Overlord Plane Elementalists.

"What?" The old man, along with every person in the Vaergahl family exclaimed in disbelief when they heard Claude's words.

They knew too well that he wouldn't lie for something so little.

They all exchanged glances, all seeing the shock in their eyes, especially the people who got the news from the bandits. They heard about a powerful individual who almost single-handedly fought against all the bandits in Overlord Plane on his own.

How could such a person be in the Origin Plane?

One of them recounted what they heard to Claude and the people from the O'Brien family, and disbelief appeared on their faces. If what they said was true, then it was impossible for Ellis to defeat the bandits without Grey's help.

"A Peak Origin Plane Elementalist holding his own against over a hundred and fifty bandits, killing a lot of them. This is a feat almost unrepeatable. The Young Lord truly found a great friend, geniuses truly do befriend geniuses," An Elder said with emotions.

He wasn't against Ellis, unlike most of the Elders here. Some of them only supported Claude for their own personal objectives.. There are a few who were against what he was doing to Ellis.

Chapter 564 - Dragon Blood Essence

"Call Ellis over," Claude said with a blank face, no one knew what was running through his head at the moment.

Most of the Elders here knew of his attempts to remove Ellis from the family to pave a way for his lineage.

Everyone waited for the guard to come back with Ellis. A few minutes later, the guard returned with Ellis in tow.

"Uncle, you called," Ellis' voice could be heard before he came out of the building.

He was surprised when he saw the people from the Vaergahl family again. Not expecting to see them this quickly after they left.

"Yes, where's your friend?" Claude went straight to the point.

"My friend?" Ellis almost freaked out when he heard this question, but he managed to hold himself back.

He initially thought Grey had been captured, but if he were, his uncle wouldn't ask him about it so calmly.

"The boy you came back with, where is he?" Claude asked, taking a step towards Ellis, standing in front of him.

"He's gone," Ellis lied without even blinking.

There was no way he could say Grey was in his father's room. That would cause him too many problems.

"You're lying, he hasn't left the mansion since coming, actually, he hasn't left your room since he came." Claude narrowed his eyes, he turned to look at the guard who came with Ellis before nodding.

"Uncle, what's the meaning of this?" Ellis asked, his eyes showing anger.

"Your friend has something the Vaergahl family wants, I can't let someone we aren't related to cause problems for our family," Claude held onto Ellis, stopping him from going after the guard.

Ellis clenched his fist while gritting his teeth. Unfortunately, there was no way he could free himself from the hold of his Uncle.

The Vaergahl family watched on silently, waiting for the guard to come back with Grey.

The Elders of the O'Brien family watched on as well. This was a very complex matter. If Grey truly has the item the Vaergahl family wanted, then they'll have to force him to hand it back so they don't go to war with the Vaergahl family. But if Grey doesn't have it, it will make things complicated since the Vaergahl family believes strongly that Ellis or Grey who wiped out the bandits had the item.

The guard returned within a minute, but Grey was not with him, contrary to the expectations of the crowd waiting outside.

"Where's the boy?" Claude asked the guard.

"There's no one in the room, My Lord," The guard bowed as he reported.

"Huh?" Claude raised a brow.

"You see, I told you he's gone," Ellis said as he freed himself from his Uncle's grasp.

"Claude, I need the boy," The old man from the Vaergahl family said.

"Hmph! I'm not your servant old man. This is the O'Brien family," Claude snorted coldly.

He might want to hand Grey over, but since he couldn't be found, there was no way he would cower in the face of the Vaergahl family. If he wanted to gain the trust and favor of the Elders, then he had to show them his strength.

"Watch your tongue Claude, when I was famous in the continent, you weren't born," The old man took a step forward, releasing his powerful aura.

The shape of a Dragon's head appeared above him.

'An avatar,' Ellis thought internally as he stared at the Dragon that seemed to have the strength to topple the world with a single roar.

"Zylres, what are you doing?" One of the Elders in the O'Brien family stepped forward.

"What the boy has is important to the Vaergahl family, and we will not stop until we get it back," Zylres withdrew his avatar before turning around.

The faces of everyone in the O'Brien family turned serious, they knew what Zylres' words meant. Either they provide Grey, or they would have to contend with the Vaergahl family.

"Just what does he have?" Claude took a step forward stopping Zylres from leaving.

"Since it's already gotten to this, I'm not going to hide it. You all know about my family's connection with the Dragons, since our first ancestor, none of us has been able to get a high purity of dragon blood when born, and over time, the purity of the blood continued dwindling, to stop it, the Elders decided we should start refining a true Dragon's blood."

"Of course it was easier said than done, it's not like we could capture Dragons since it was forbidden, so we made a pact with a Dragon who's a friend of our ancestor, every hundred years, he'll give us a drop of blood essence to give to the most qualified member of the younger generation."

"With this, we have been able to produce a genius every hundred years. The only reason I'm willingly telling you this is because other than the Vaergahl family, no one else can refine a Dragon's blood essence," Zylres explained.

"Does that mean..." Claude's eyes widened.

"Yes, what the boy has is the Dragon's blood essence," Zylres said before Claude could finish his statement.

Everyone from the O'Brien family took a deep breath when they heard this revelation. Although they've all heard of this, it was merely rumors amongst the big families, no one from the Vaergahl family has ever confirmed it. The only reason they didn't dismiss it was because they followed the saying which was "there wouldn't be ripples in the water with disturbance".

Ellis was currently caught in a dilemma, the Vaergahl family are hellbent on retrieving the blood essence which means they wouldn't mind getting into a battle with his family. But he couldn't give up Grey.

'I'll wait till he finishes with what he's doing. I'll think of what to do then. But, I never saw something like that in the ring,' He thought, still confused about not sensing the blood essence.

For something so powerful, it was strange that they didn't notice it.

Chapter 565 - Ellis Vs Gilliard

The Vaergahl family left after some time, but the atmosphere in the O'Brien family was a little tense. They might not be afraid of the Vaergahl family, but that doesn't mean they want to go to war with them as well.

The main issue now was this, where is Grey?

They've asked Ellis multiple times and even done a complete search on the mansion, but they haven't found him. Of course they didn't go near Thoma's room since the thought of Grey being there didn't

cross their minds one bit. But just to be safe, they did ask the Elder who made the array to check on it, and after he verified that it was still normal, they didn't bother anymore.

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The O'Brien family hall.

"Ellis, this is important. Even though we do not know if the kid has it, we have to present him to the Vaergahl family as well. Once they've confirmed that it's not with him, then they will see no reason to fight us, after all, they know they can't beat us, they might be strong, but we aren't weaklings either," One of the Elders said coldly.

"I'm just as stumped as you all, originally, I thought he left when I didn't find him in my room. This was why I said he was gone when Uncle asked, but now no one saw him leaving the building, which means he's still here," Ellis replied, a little worried about the situation.

He knew about Grey's abilities with arrays, but the Elder who made this array was someone that is over two thousand years old, and he had been an array master since he was thirty years old, so it goes to show how long and knowledgeable he is about arrays. If he didn't sense any changes in the array, it meant two things, either Grey never entered his father's room, or, Grey somehow found a way to hide from the array.

Of the two possibilities, the first one was more believable than the latter. But, he had confidence in his friend and is certain that he will never leave without even informing him. Thinking about this, a third possibility came to his mind.

'Was he kidnapped?' His expression turned even sourer than that of the Elders and Claude.

If Grey was kidnapped, it would make things more difficult. At least now he still had some hope of Grey being able to heal his father. Not just that, but also coming out. Given Grey's personality, he didn't feel he would want to put his family in a difficult position, so he would most likely hand over the blood essence if it's in his possession.

"Zylres said they will return at sunrise tomorrow, we have until then to find the boy. We might not know how he left the mansion, but one thing is certain, we have to find him, no matter what," The Elder who stood up to Zylres said.

The others all nodded to his words, before leaving the hall, heading in different directions. They all had loyal spies they could count on in times like this. Presently, some are even watching the movements of the Vaergahl family.

While all this was taking place, Claude didn't say a word, his head rested on his chin. He stared at the Elders as they tried to find out Grey's position.

After a while, he stood up, leaving the hall and entering the hallway. He took a few turns and he soon appeared in front of a family door, it was the one that led to Thoma's room.

'I wonder what brother would do in a situation like this?' He thought as he walked towards the door.

Compared to his brother, he wasn't the best decision maker. This was one of the reasons why their father gave the position over to him. Even when he was slightly stronger than Thoma, it didn't change anything. Thoma has always been cool-headed when dealing with conflicts since he was young and possesses the aura of a leader.

He took a few steps forward, standing in front of the door. Holding the doorknob, he turned it slowly.

Click!

It made the sound of it being opened, and just as he was about to push the door open.

"My Lord, the Young Lord is fighting with your son," A guard rushed over to report.

"Huh?" Claude raised a brow as he turned his head to look at the guard.

"Where are they?" He asked.

"Behind the garden," The guard replied.

"Alright," Claude turned around, closing the door before walking away.

'I'll handle this myself,' He thought as he disappeared from the hallway.

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At the back of the garden in the O'Brien mansion.

Boom! Bang!

"Bring out that friend of yours, a thief will always befriend a thief," A young man said as he attacked Ellis.

Ellis dodged calmly to the side as he used the water element to push his cousin a few meters away from him.

"Gilliard, I don't want to fight you," Ellis said after casually brushing off his attack.

"But I want to, you've made us a laughing stock, bring trouble with you wherever you go," Gilliard said as he attacked with the wind element again.

Ellis made a few hand seals, and raindrops started to fall from the sky, "You're drunk, Gill, you can easily disperse the alcohol, but you choose to let it stay so you can say you're under its influence when you attacked me, pathetic,"

The rain began to pour down heavily from the night sky as Ellis started to levitate from the ground.

"I will show you what true power is, this time, I won't hold back," Ellis said as he continued to float higher into the sky, staring at Gilliard from above.

Gilliard raised his head to look at Ellis, his expression one of disgust, he spat on the ground before he summoned a small tornado that picked him up.

Claude and a few of the Elders were watching from the side, some youths were also watching as well.

"Is this who you want to lead the family, a drunk?" An Elder asked.

His question was met with silence from Claude, he only narrowed his eyes as he watched the two youths in the sky.

"I will settle this with one attack," Ellis said, his demeanor different from the one he always displayed.

This was the first time the Elders were seeing this side of him, and they couldn't deny it, they were impressed. He was just like his father, proud and confident in his abilities.

"Heh! Do you think you can trade blows with me?" Gilliard sneered before roaring out.

A large lightning snake covered by a tornado appeared before it charged at Ellis.

Ellis looked at the attack before shaking his head before muttering softly, "Everything before my domain shall fall,"

Rumble! Bang!

A large rumbling sound was accompanied by the explosion of the lightning snake. It was as if it self-destructed. It didn't even get close to Ellis before it exploded.

The Elders and the youths in the garden stared at Ellis in awe, they couldn't believe what just happened.

"Has he been able to awaken his domain?" One of the Elders asked in shock.

"Yes, I never took note of it until now. Even if there are five Gilliards here, they are still not his match, looks like the Young Lord has improved so much, he had been hiding his true strength," Another Elder said, changing the way he had been addressing Ellis.

A domain was something only those above the Sage Plane could use, and not all of them could awaken it, only a given few could.

After the Sage Plane, the next level was the Elemental Venerable, after that was Elemental Sovereign. Elemental Sovereigns are those who have been able to create their domains. Without a domain, there is no way an Elemental Venerable can get to the next level.

Only a few geniuses can awaken their domains before they become Elemental Venerables, most of them awaken it when they are already Elemental Venerables. Ellis was one of the few people in history who has awakened his domain while still in the Sage Plane, his strength has increased drastically, that it could almost be said that he was unbeatable in the Sage Plane, this is the advantage a domain has.

One has to know that Ellis was still in the Mid stages of the Sage Plane, yet with a domain, he could go against someone at the Peak of the Sage Plane. The pressure from his father almost losing his life, Grey's sudden disappearance, and the appearance of the Vaergahl family pushed him so much that he unknowingly awakened a power he shouldn't have access to now.

The greatest disadvantage with awakening a domain quickly was that, he couldn't support it fully because of the huge amount of essence it needed to operate.

"Gill, after today, know your place," Ellis spread out both hands and he shone with a blue light.

Chapter 566 - Is This How You Treat The Younger Generation?

"Icy rain," Ellis muttered while looking at Gilliard.

The raindrops suddenly paused, before turning to small shards of ice as they rained down on Gilliard.

Gilliard created a rotating wind that he used to protect himself, but his expression changed when he realized that it wasn't stopping the attack.

"Enough," Claude's voice resounded just as the ice shards were about to pierce Gilliard.

With a single word, the ice shards shattered, and Ellis' domain was forcefully destroyed.

Splat!

Ellis spat out a mouthful of blood before falling from the sky.

An Elder acted quickly, catching him before he hit the ground.

"Claude, why did you forcefully destroy the domain, do you plan on damaging his core?" The Elder asked with an angry expression.

"He will be fine, I didn't use too much power," Claude approached Gilliard.

"My boy, you've disappointed me," He said as he stood in front of his son, his voice filled with disappointment.

With Ellis awakening his domain, the difference between the duo was like day and night. Gilliard will be unable to compete against Ellis anymore.

Gilliard clenched his fist so hard that his nails pierced his flesh, making blood drip from it.

Claude shook his head before walking past him, going towards Ellis.

The Elder who helped Ellis stood in front of him, acting as a shield before the approaching Claude.

"Do you think I would kill my nephew?" Claude asked with a serious expression.

"At the moment, I do not know what you are capable of," The Elder refused to move.

Ellis is a genius that might surpass all the geniuses the family has produced over the last three thousand years, there was no way he would allow anything to happen to him, especially if the person causing the harm was from the family.

"I've always put the family first in every decision I've been making, do you think I will allow someone like him to go to waste?" Claude placed his hand on the shoulder of the Elder.

"It's okay, Uncle wouldn't harm me, at least not while Father is still alive, and you all are here," Ellis gave the approval for Claude to come close.

The Elder finally moved to the side, letting Claude walk through.

"Provide the boy you came with, and I'll forget about your past transgressions," Claude said.

"My past transgressions? What have I ever done that harmed the family?" Ellis couldn't reign in his anger when he heard this.

Claude was sounding as if he was taking pity on him. He had never done anything that put the family name in jeopardy, so what was Claude talking about?

"You don't know, do you?" Claude asked.

Confusion appeared on Ellis' face, "Know what?"

Claude narrowed his eyes as he whispered into Ellis' ear, "The reason for Thoma's illness,"

"My father?" Ellis' eyes widened.

"Thoma told us not to speak of it to you if you ever returned, but you're not a child anymore, he was infected by a strange miasma when searching for you," Claude said.

The others couldn't hear what he was saying, but from Ellis' reaction, they could tell it was nothing good.

Tears welled up in Ellis' eyes when he understood what happened.

"Father... is... ill because of me?" His voice went soft as he asked.

"No, at this rate, your father will die because of you," Claude said.

When he was done with his words, he turned around and walked away, his objective complete. Since Ellis has shown such talents, and he couldn't do anything to him physically, he would bring him down emotionally and mentally.

The Elders watched on as tears continued rolling down from Ellis' eyes, unaware of the exchange between the two.

Ellis turned around and walked away, weak and dejected. In a family he came from, he was alone.

"Ellis, what did he tell you?" The Elder who was standing between Ellis and Claude ran after him and asked.

"The truth," Ellis replied before walking.

The Elder sighed, angered by Claude's decision to tell Ellis about the reason for his father's illness. He didn't need Ellis to tell him what they spoke about.

....

The next morning.

The Vaergahl family came at the break of dawn.

"Claude, we're back, where is the boy?" Zylres questioned as they entered the compound.

They didn't even get to the building before he released his powerful aura, drawing the attention of everyone in the O'Brien mansion.

Before long, everyone in the O'Brien mansion was standing outside, facing the group from the Vaergahl family.

"Zylres, the O'Brien family is not somewhere you can act as you want. We're still searching for the boy, when we find him, we'll hand him over to you," An Elder from the O'Brien family said.

"The boy is nowhere in the city, that means he's either hiding here, or has left the city. We can't begin a search since we do not know anything about him," Zylres said, staring coldly at the people from the O'Brien family, especially Ellis and Claude.

"Just like you, we do not know the boy. He's acquainted with Ellis," Claude turned to look at Ellis.

"I don't know where he's from, we only met by chance when I went missing," Ellis said, his expression blank.

He was telling the truth though, he really didn't know anything about Grey. If Grey didn't help him when he was still playing weak in the al Beasts' forest, they wouldn't have become friends.

"Then why did you take him with you to the Suyin Canyon?" Claude asked.

"He came along, it's not like I can tell him to go back. After all, I needed all the help I could get," Ellis had the same blank look on his face.

It was evident that he was still suffering from the words Claude told him the previous night. The revelation of finding out he was going to be the reason for his father's death was too much for him to handle. He hadn't even tried to contact Grey since then. And he had completely forgotten about the tracking device he had with him.

"The sooner you provide the boy, the better for you all," Zylres directed his pressure at Ellis.

Just when the pressure was getting too much for Ellis, the sound of soft footsteps could be heard from inside the mansion.

"Zylres, is this how you treat members of the younger generation?"

"That voice, don't tell me he's..."

Chapter 567 - Thoma's Return

"Claude, you've been disappointing," The voice from inside said.

"Father," Ellis turned around, staring at the door that led to the building.

Everyone in the family, as well as the Vaergahl family turned to look in that direction as well. The footsteps intensified as two figures appeared, a middle aged man who had the same features as Ellis with a well trimmed beard walked out, accompanied by Grey, Void elegantly standing on his shoulder, like always.

"Thoma, how?" Claude asked, shocked, but he soon took note of the person walking beside him, "Isn't that the kid we have been searching for?"

"Father, you're better now?" Ellis walked towards his father, a little unsure of how to react.

"Haha, yes," Thoma laughed as he took Ellis into his hands.

Grey smiled softly, his face a little pale from staying awake throughout the night, working on how to make Thoma better.

While the duo hugged tightly, Zylres approached Grey.

"Boy, where is the bandit leader's storage ring?" He asked, his imposing figure pressurizing Grey.

Grey waved his hand, and the pressure coming his way disappeared, "Huh? What ring?"

"Don't play dumb boy, we know you have the ring with you," Zylres said.

He was a little taken aback by how easily Grey was able to disperse his intimidating aura, but he didn't think too much about it, the blood essence came first.

"I have no idea what you're talking about? Ellis, what's happening?" Grey turned to Ellis.

"Oh, that. Well you see..." Ellis gave him a brief summary of what happened the previous day.

"Wow! A Dragon's blood essence! Now that's impressive, how did you lose it?" Grey exclaimed, before asking a question that infuriated the people from the Vaergahl family, especially the youngsters.

"The bandit leader's storage ring, where is it?" Zylres asked, starting to get annoyed by Grey's behavior.

"I have no idea what you're talking about. I might not be from a big family like you, but I don't loot people, that's disgraceful," Grey said proudly, putting on a dignified expression.

Zylres was about to approach Grey when the old man with dark hair walked up to him and whispered in his ears, "Zylres, I can't sense the aura of the blood essence on him, he doesn't have it,"

"What? Impossible! If he doesn't have it, then where is it?" Zylres' eyes widened, his eyeballs almost popping out.

"I don't know, but I know for a fact that it's not on him," The old man said, his eyes showing frustration.

They thought the blood essence was with either Ellis or Grey, hence they didn't worry too much about it. However, things are different now, since it's not with either of them, it meant that the band leader must have either kept it somewhere or passed it on to someone else.

"Damn it, how annoying," Zylres said, almost exploding with anger.

Luckily, the second old man was with him so he helped contain the energy that shot out of his body.

"Hmm, such a strange cat," The old man with dark hair raised his brow when he saw Void on Grey's shoulder.

He could sense that he was different, but no matter how hard he tried, all he could sense was a normal cat.

"Since you're here, why don't you all come in for a drink? It's been a while we encountered each other," Thoma said, standing face to face with Zylres.

"I'm sorry, but we don't have such luxury time, there are more important things we want to handle," Zylres replied.

Since they've been able to confirm that the blood essence is not with Grey, there was no use in staying here any longer. The sooner they start searching for it, the better.

What was more annoying was that the Dragon would not give them a second blood essence because it took too much energy from it. After giving them this one, it would have to recover for a long time before it can give them another one.

"*Sigh* Alright, but you're welcome to come whenever you want, as a guest of course, not an enemy," Thoma said with a smile.

The people from the Vaergahl family nodded, the old man with dark hair apologizing for their behavior before they left. Since their assumption was wrong, it was normal for them to apologize. After all, the O'Brien family is not a small family.

"How did you enter his room?" Claude turned to Grey after the Vaergahl family left.

Since Grey was with Thoma, it meant that Thoma's recovery has something to do with him.

"He helped me," Grey pointed at Ellis.

There was no use in hiding it anyway.

"So you know where he has been all this while?" Claude turned to Ellis, infuriated.

"Yeah, but I wasn't sure he was there since I couldn't reach him," Ellis nodded.

"And you allowed the Vaergahl family to demean us when you could easily provide him and end all this nonsense," Claude yelled as he approached Ellis.

"He said he could help with father, I couldn't allow you to disturb him," Ellis replied.

Thoma stood in front of Ellis, blocking Claude from approaching.

"You all have been really disappointing," Thoma turned around, looking at all the Elders.

They dropped their heads, not wanting to look Thoma in the eyes.

"You in particular, sending my son out on missions that might kill him," He said before turning to Ellis, "And you, why didn't you speak of this?"

"Father, I... I didn't want to make you worry," Ellis said.

"How come I wasn't able to detect you in the Family Head's room?" An Elder approached Grey, a curious expression on his face.

Ellis whispered in Grey's ears, "He's the array master who made the array in father's room. You don't need to worry about him, he's not interested in all this struggle,"

"Simple, I modified it, I added a small loophole to it," Grey replied after getting confirmation from Ellis.

"Impressive, come, tell me what you did," The Elder held onto Grey and disappeared with him.

None of the people here made a sound, not even Thoma or Claude.. This Elder was one of the oldest and strongest Elders in the family.

Chapter 568 - Thoma's Warning

With Grey taken away by the Elder, only the important members of the O'Brien family were left.

Thoma looked around before walking inside, Ellis behind him, accompanied by everyone else. Claude's face was portraying an array of mixed emotions, not sure of what to do now that Thoma was actually healthy again.

He originally thought the control of the family would rest on him with Thoma out of the way, but now, everything has changed. What's worse is that he had mistreated Thoma's last surviving child, almost sending him to his doom a couple of times. Using the excuse of him being the cause of Thoma's illness as an excuse for the other Elders and also to make him grow stronger.

Of course, not all the Elders agreed to this, but he had managed to win the majority of the Elders to his side, so he was successful with his plans.

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O'Brien family hall.

Thoma was sitting on the seat in the middle, the Elders and Claude sitting by his side. Discussing the events that occurred in the family since his absence.

"Claude, did you really have to go this far?" Thoma asked.

"They were reneging from their promise, if we don't show them who's boss, they will soon start defying us," Claude replied.

"Using force will never get you anywhere, didn't father teach you that?" Thoma shook his head at his brother's behavior.

"What did you expect me to do? Watch them as they continue expanding and not give us the full payment as usual?" Claude stood up from his seat.

"We've been allies with them for a while now, even though they're weaker, it doesn't mean you should step on them if they fail to make a payment," Thoma explained.

"There are times where action is needed for a relationship to hold. Talking can't fix everything," Claude said.

This was what he hated the most about his brother, he was always looking for a peaceful way out of everything. That only shows how weak he actually is.

"*Sigh* I know of this too, but you're always too rash with your decisions. Fine forget about it, I'll head there to see them personally," Thoma sighed while looking at his brother.

They continued speaking about other matters before he brought them all back to the matter of Ellis, his expression was different compared to when he was speaking about the other matters.

"Alright, so why did you all try to kill my son?" He asked, his eyes dark.

"No one tried to kill him, we only sent him out on missions to help train him," Claude defended himself.

"Hmm, I wonder why you didn't do the same for Gill. Since that's the case, I'll be sending Gill out for a little experimental training as well," Thoma narrowed his eyes.

Since Claude was trying to hide behind this excuse, then he too would do the same.

Claude's reaction was just as expected, anger was written all over his face, "What do you mean send Gill out for an experimental training?"

"Ellis isn't the only member of the family, Gill is as well. It will be a shame if because of all the training you put Ellis through, he would be far stronger than Gill. I want Gill to be strong as well," Thoma answered nonchalantly.

"I'll not allow it," Claude hit the armrest of the chair he was sitting on.

"You have no say in this," Thoma said calmly.

"Brother, do not provoke me," Claude threatened.

"*Sigh* You're still not seeing the pattern here?" Thoma shook his head.

"Because of you, there's a rift in the family, brothers fighting brothers. Do you think the family will retain its prestigious name if it takes this road? How many families have fallen due to conflict? Too many to count," He added while standing up.

"Together we stand, divided and we will fall. Why do you think the Vaergahl family dared to impose on us? Because they know of the divide in the family. Stop being a moron and think properly. You say you have the family's best interest at heart, then why are you destroying it?" Thoma walked towards Claude as he asked multiple questions.

His words resounded clearly in the entire hall, and most of the Elders who were on Claude's side bent their heads in shame. It was true, a divided family could be easily taken apart. It has happened in history so many times, and even till now, it's still happening.

Families fighting against each other, slowly dividing the power that once made them great.

"You're my brother, and I will never do anything that will harm you. But this is your last warning, if you ever do anything that will jeopardize the unity of this family again, then I will personally end you," Thoma said, his aura oppressive. He turned to look at everyone in the hall, "This goes to all of you as well, I will not accept this again,"

The Thoma currently speaking wasn't the same as the one who was speaking about the issue of some other family, it was the family head of the O'Brien family, one of the largest families in the Southern Continent. He might look weak, but they all knew how scary he was when he was angry.

Claude gritted his teeth angrily, but he refrained from speaking back. With heads bowed, he apologized, something that Thoma, nor the Elders expected.

"Hmm, it's good that you know what's more important. Don't think too much about it. We're still one family, together to the end," Thoma patted his brother on the shoulder before walking out of the hall.

Ellis quickly followed behind him, impressed by his father's show of strength.

....

Thoma's room.

As soon as Thoma walked into the room, he started coughing seriously, with his hands across his mouth.

Ellis suddenly opened the door, "Father you were..."

He paused mid-sentence, looking at his father's pale face, and the blood dripping from the side of his mouth.

His eyes widened as he rushed towards him, "Father, what's wrong?"

Thoma continued coughing for a few more seconds before he managed to reply with a faint smile, "I pushed myself too hard, don't worry about it."

Chapter 569 - A Way To Hide The Mark

"Are you sure?" Ellis asked, worried for his father.

"Yes," Thoma nodded, "You see, your friend hasn't completed the healing process, he was drained, and I could sense the situation outside, so we had to take a pause,"

After hearing Thoma's explanation, Ellis finally calmed down. He couldn't help but feel grateful to Grey for his help. An illness no one has been able to resolve, he managed to heal it, even if it was by a little, it showed how extraordinary he was.

"How did he do it?" Ellis asked, excited by the prospect of his father recovering sooner. If the method was something other people could use, then he didn't mind trying it out as well.

"I don't know, and it's best if you don't ask. All I know is that it's quite draining. If we came out the moment he stopped using it, then you would've thought your friend was a walking corpse, he was not only pale, but he dried up too. Luckily, he was able to recover at an amazing speed, seriously, the speed of his recovery is shocking," Thoma shook his head in amazement.

Grey's abilities were shocking. And the fact that he was still at the Peak of the Origin Plane was more terrifying. How amazing would he be once he breaks through to the Sage Plane?

"Have you seen him fight? He's a monster," Ellis told him of how Grey helped him wipe out the bandits in Suyin Canyon.

After hearing Grey's battle capabilities, Thoma was once again left astounded. Grey could miraculously heal him, he had a quick recovery, his battle prowess was on another level, and he was even an array genius.

If he isn't regarded as a genius, who was?

The other geniuses he knew didn't hold a candle in front of Grey.

"Hmm, it's nice you got to befriend someone like him. Which family is he from?" Thoma asked.

"He's from a remote place, the place I was accidentally teleported to," Ellis explained, telling him of how he met Grey.

"Such a place where the people at the peak are only at the Early stages of the Sage Plane, and a genius like this was born there? Impossible!" Thoma exclaimed.

"I never expected it myself, but it's the truth. I've also encountered a few people, but none of them are on his level. It's strange that someone like him grew up in such a remote place," Ellis shook his head.

"Since he's a friend, then we don't have any worries. A genius like him is bound to rise to the top of the world eventually, I wouldn't be too surprised if he becomes the strongest person in the world at some point," Thoma said.

"The strongest? Isn't that a bit too high?" Ellis was shocked by his father's words.

He accepted the fact that Grey was a genius above most geniuses, but for his father to say he would become the strongest Elementalist in the world was an exaggeration.

"Fine, you don't believe me? Mark my words, someday, your friend will become the most powerful person in the world, if it does happen, you'll cry in front of me," Thoma said.

Ellis almost spat out a mouthful of blood when he heard his father's request. What sort of an odd request was that?

Come cry in front of him if what he said happens? Impossible!

"Then what if it doesn't happen?" Ellis asked.

"We'll have a drink together with you massaging my back," Thoma replied with a smile.

"I don't see how I benefit from either of your statements," Ellis rolled his eyes.

"I'm the father, I make the rules of the game," Thoma grinned.

Ellis laughed out before hugging his father, "I've missed you so much,"

"Me too, boy," Thoma patted Ellis' hair as they hugged.

....

Later that day.

Grey was finally released by the Elder who took him away. And the moment he returned, he fell on Ellis' bed and fell asleep.

He was exhausted from helping Thoma recover, and now he was taken away by a strange old man who wanted to learn some things from him. Although, he couldn't say he didn't enjoy the company of the Elder since he learned a lot about arrays from him.

Even though he was able to make a loophole in the array the Elder made, it didn't mean they were on the same level. His creativity and quick thinking were some of the reasons why he managed to do what he did.

Grey woke up the next day, almost close to his original state. He still needed to rest, so he didn't even try to do anything and went to rest soon after eating.

He still had to continue healing Ellis' father, so he needed to ensure that he was in full health before he tried to help him again.

Grey stayed in the O'Brien family, and he was treated nicely, especially by the Elder who was an array master. When he was not with Ellis' father, he would be with the Elder, discussing arrays. His knowledge increased as time went on, and he actually got an idea to cover up the mark on his back.

The mark has been with him since his first encounter with a necromancer, and he still hasn't been able to hide it. No matter what he did, he was unable to. Luckily, other than the guy he met at the ruin, he hadn't encountered another necromancer.

Considering his usual bad luck, he felt happy about how things had been going. First of all, he was still alive, even in a place like this where youngsters were almost as powerful as his Teacher, there were even people like Ellis who were stronger. He recalled his Teacher was at the Peak of the Overlord Plane the last time he heard about him, it's a shame he hadn't seen him since leaving the trial land.

Thinking of his Teacher, he couldn't help but wonder how he was fairing. His friends also came to mind as well.

Once he was done here, he would head back to the Azure Continent to bring his friends here.

Chapter 570 - Return To The Azure Continent

Ten days later.

"That should be all of it uncle," Grey said with a slightly pale face as he stared at Ellis' father who was already back to normal.

He never expected it would take this long, but after ten long arduous days, he had finally removed the last of the strange energy in Ellis' father's body, well, consumed should be the right word. What he

found strange was that his body actually attracted the energy from Thoma's body into his, then the orb in his body will slowly start working, before integrating it into his body.

Even he didn't know how it was possible, but it happened. One thing that was worth mentioning was that his strength had increased significantly, and he was certain of being able to break into the Overlord Plane in no time. Not just that, but he knew he wouldn't just enter the Overlord Plane, but he might even jump straight to the Mid stages of it.

This is because of how long he had been conserving essence energy. He was like a dam waiting to burst open so it could release all the water stored in it.

Now that he was done with this, it was time to head back to the Azure continent, but before that, he had to rest up.

....

The next morning.

Thoma, Ellis, a few of the family's Elder were standing in front of the teleportation array in Mortar City. This was the array Ellis used when he was accidentally teleported to the Azure Continent.

Grey initially wanted to ask for help, but Void told him he knew the coordinates to the Azure Continent, so there was no need in asking anyone for help. Amongst the duo, Void was the one who wanted to leave the most, the reason for this was that he couldn't hold himself back anymore from refining the Dragon blood essence with him.

He also found this place very boring, although, the food was quite pleasing. But Grey was a better cook, so he enjoyed their company.

Just as Grey was about to leave, Ellis recalled something.

'Could it be that he's from a large family? I never got to ask him his last name,' He thought to himself.

He recalled facing an old man the time he was about to leave the Azure Continent, and the old man referred to Grey as Young Lord, this obviously meant that Grey was from a powerful family, only, he was unaware of this. If he could find out Grey's last name, he just might be able to find out which family Grey was from.

With this thought in his head, he approached Grey.

"I've been meaning to ask, what's your last name?" He asked when he got close to Grey.

"Why are you asking?" Grey raised a brow curiously.

"Since you helped my father recover, I recall that you are searching for your parents, maybe I could help with the search," Ellis explained.

"Oh, it's Dawson," Grey said offhandedly.

"Dawson?" Ellis asked, his eyes showing shock.

If it was the Dawson family he was thinking about, then it would explain why Grey was such an amazing genius. But it was also a problem given the hatred the Dawson family had for them.

"Yeah," Grey nodded, he didn't miss the shock in Ellis' eyes, but before he could ask any more questions, the array lit up.

He didn't ask any more questions as he waved goodbye to the people from the O'Brien family.

The Elder who made arrays had a sad expression on his face, it was like his long time friend was leaving him alone in the world.

"Ellis, is everything alright?" Thoma asked when he saw his expression.

"Yes, we should head back," Ellis smiled before walking away.

The others also left the place as well, heading back to the O'Brien mansion.

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Azure Continent.

A few months after Grey left for the Aurora Continent, the war that had been looming around broke out.

Grey's friends have been tagged as wanted criminals and they were all on the run. Alice's family had it rough since she was the only one who had a big family that could be held by the Emperor.

Thousands had died in the battle, and it was still ongoing. The first originally started between the Azure and the Qilin empire, but the other two empires had joined in as well when they saw the severity of the situation. Of course, this was all because of the influence of the two empires.

The Blue Wind Empire joined forces with the Azure Empire, while the Stellar empire joined forces with the Qilin empire. This battle had cost each empire thousands of Elementalists, and without a final result, it would be a shame for the dead bunch.

None of Grey's friends has been captured yet, which was good news. But rumors have been circulating about one of them being seen close to the borders of the Azure empire. It was none other than Reynolds.

Of the group, he could be regarded as the strongest thanks to his Elemental Warrior, of course this was with the exception of Grey. He had been surrounded multiple times, but he had managed to fight his way out of it, escaping and killing countless warriors.

All four of them were wanted by all four empires, and other than Grey, there had been a few times when Alice, Reynolds, or Klaus had been surrounded. Klaus had even been captured once, but he managed to escape before he was transported to the Capital.

One thing is for sure though, their lives were in danger, and the longer the war lasted, the smaller their chances of escaping unscathed.

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Grey and Void appeared in the middle of the forest, unaware of what had been happening since their departure.

"Finally, we're back," Grey took in a deep breath as they appeared.

He wasn't familiar with where they appeared.

"Come on, first things first, let's refine this thing," Void urged.

"Is it safe here?" Grey asked.

If they landed in the Magical Beasts' forest, then taking this out will only bring more problems to them.

"Yes, now let's go," Void said before going in search of a cave.

Grey looked around with a smile before going after him.