

## **BIOLOGICAL 831**

### Chapter 831: The Prison (3)

"Shouldn't you be dead?" Captain Lain asked.

"Do I look dead to you?"

"Fair."

However, Erik wanted to know something from her. "Is there someone else worth noting in this prison?"

Captain Lain had little to think about. She saw a lot of her comrades getting imprisoned.

"Minister of Defense Jena Rose, Raveena Greene and Roma Sinclair, Lesly Spark, the Minister of War, and..."

"And?" Erik asked.

"Major James Fischer."

Erik knew who Jena Rose, Raveena Greene and the others were. How could he not? Those were the higher ups in Frant back when Erik still lived in New Alexandria, it was impossible to know who they were, especially Roma Sinclair and Raveena Greene, basically two war heroes.

But Erik didn't know who James Fischer was. He would have if he stayed at New Alexandria during the parasites' attacks, and he would know the pivotal role he played with Professor Derr Xillion in destroying the infection.

"Whatever. It's not like I planned on leaving people behind. Any idea where they are?"

"They should be in the isolation cells."

"Mind showing the way?" Erik didn't want to lose time searching aimlessly the area.

"No. Let's go."

Of course, Erik and June found some resistance further inside.

Puzzlingly, a considerable number of guards, at least fifty, had not converged at the entrance during their initial incursion.

These guards, scattered throughout the corridors and cells, posed a potential threat that needed addressing.

June took the lead in dealing with them. Each guard, one after the other, found themselves overpowered by his adept combat skills.

Despite their numbers, these adversaries lacked the strength and coordination to pose any real challenge to someone of June's capabilities.

For him, dispatching these guards was almost routine, their attempts to stop them feeble at best.

His movements were efficient and precise, each action calculated to incapacitate with minimal effort.

The guards, unprepared for an assailant of June's skill, were neutralized with ease.

Whether they were taken by surprise or underestimated the threat June posed, they could do little to halt his advance.

Captain Lain and her team members, of course, were scared.

Erik Romano had a monster at his service. How he, someone who should be much weaker than them, could ask someone like June to do what he wanted was a mystery.

The time during which Erik was believed to be dead now seemed to hold significant importance, a black box of untold events that had forged him into the figure standing before them.

Captain Lain couldn't help but feel that whatever Erik went through during that mysterious time changed him completely.

After a while, they arrived in the isolation cells' area. The place was of desolation and despair.

Here, the air hung heavy with the oppressive weight of confinement, suffused with the faint hum of mana coursing through the Aclatrium ore that comprised every inch of the surroundings.

The walls, floor, and ceiling were all fashioned from the shimmering metal.

The cells themselves were small, windowless enclosures, thought to make the occupants suffer.

Within these confines, the prisoners languished in the darkness, their faces etched with resignation and sorrow.

Their voices, though muffled by the thick walls, echoed through the air, a haunting symphony of despair.

"Free them," Erik said to June. He then turned to Captain Lain. "Bring me to the Ministers and the others."

Captain Lain nodded. However, she observed how June freed the prisoners.

He simply destroyed the Aclatrium bars. She was shocked to see that. Doing it was no easy feat.

While June freed the others, the others moved through the maze of cells. In the end, they found their targets.

The grim reality was that both ministers had succumbed to a cruel fate, dying from a harrowing blend of starvation and torture.

Their bodies were gaunt, bearing the marks of prolonged suffering. Several fingers were absent, a silent testament to the brutality they endured.

Minister Rose's condition was even more dire, as she was found without her legs, adding a gruesome detail to the already tragic scene.

"Oh god," Emma said. She couldn't believe what they did to her.

"Are you surprised?" Erik asked. "This is human nature."

While moving beyond the cells, they continued their journey down the corridor until they reached the end.

They came upon the final isolation cell, its door looming ominously before them.

In the dim light of the cell, they came upon a figure slumped against the far wall.

His appearance was one of neglect and despair. His hair, once perhaps neatly combed, now hung in unkempt tangles around his face, shadowing his weary eyes.

The uniform he wore bore the scars of his captivity—stained with dried blood and dirt, it clung to his frail frame.

Despite his clear weakness, a flicker of life still danced in his gaze, a muted spark of resilience amid the squalor.

Breaths came shallow and labored, yet in his survival, there lay an unspoken defiance.

"How do we open the cell?" Emma asked. While June was able to do so, she and the others didn't see Erik do anything.

"Let me take care of it," he said.

He clasped the cold metal bars firmly, his grip tightening as he exerted a force that seemed almost casual.

The bars, designed to resist and detain, yielded under the strength of his hands.

They bent with a groan, metal warping as if it were made of something far more pliable than iron.

The once straight lines twisted, creating an opening wide enough for passage.

For him, it was even easier than for June. While the clone destroyed them with kicks or punches, showing how he still had to put some effort into doing so, for Erik it was effortless.

Captain Lain and the others were shocked. As for him, it was like taking off a blanket from a bed.

"After you," Erik said. Captain Lain entered the cell. She tapped at Major Fischer's shoulder.

"James! James!" The man woke up. He was startled at the beginning, thinking it was another round of torture he was going to face.

However, after focusing on the face of the person in front of him, he recognized her.

"Mary? Is that you?"

"Yes. We are going to bring you out of here."

"Are the others ok?" Fischer asked. "Is Derr alive?"

"I don't know, James. I don't know if there is someone alive. Some died, that is for sure. Minister Spark and Rose are some cells behind. We could do nothing for them."

"I see," Fischer said. "What about Becker?"

Captain Lain found herself at a loss for words. Becker had disappeared without a trace, and no news of him had made its way to New Alexandria.

Since she had been held captive for some time, it was impossible for her to have any information about his whereabouts.

Her situation left her unable to respond, caught between the need for answers and the reality of her isolation.

"Becker is alive," Erik said.

Of course, that shocked everyone. How did Erik Romano know about Becker?

"He is under my protection."

"Under your protection?" Captain Lain asked.

She saw what Erik did to those bars, but she couldn't believe the mighty General Armand Becker could be under someone's protection.

"Where?" Fischer asked.

But Erik had no intention of saying that. What if one of them was a spy?

Liberty Watch village had to be safe. Before bringing those guys into the underground city, a thorough screening had to be done.

"I can't say that." There was a slight pause.

"No offense," Captain Lain said, "But I doubt someone on the caliber of Armand Becker would ask you for help. What could you provide to him so that he would agree to join you?"

Erik looked at captain Lain, understanding where she was coming from. "Do you really want to know?" he asked.

"Yes."

"All right. Do you remember what my powers were?"

Captain Lain looked at him. "You should have a power that allows you to make plants grow faster and one that should allow you to make everything sharp."

"Good," Erik said. "Now watch this."

He grinned, and then he summoned the Astral Wolf. The sight of the massive bluish wolf dripping venom from its fang sparked something into Captain Lain, because she stared at the beast unblinkingly for several seconds, until Major Fischer recalled the attention.

"Can you get me out of here?" Fischer said, making Captain Lain snap out of her reverie. "Sorry, James. Can you stand?"

"No." Fischer was too tired and battered to do that.

"I will help you then," the woman said.

Then June arrived. "Master, everyone is free. There are some wounded people, but the other prisoners are bringing them out. Do we leave?"

"I don't know," Erik said. "Are there more Crystal Cross Gang members?"

"No," June said. "I killed them all." Of course, that surprised Fischer, Captain Lain and all those present.

"Then let's get out of here then."

June's agreement was accompanied by a resolute nod, his eyes reflecting a steely determination as they all directed their attention towards the exit route.

#### Chapter 832: The Prison (4)

In that somber corridor, devoid of any presence beyond the imprisoned souls yearning for freedom, a heavy silence hung, punctuated only by the subdued sounds of the inmates' efforts to console one another and express their happiness at being free.

Tears of relief and joy flowed freely, tracing paths down weathered cheeks. They had endured much, but finally it was over.

While marching toward the exit, Captain Lain and the others remained silent while observing Erik's back as he led the way.

Fischer was thinking about a lot of things, but Captain Lain didn't have fewer questions than him.

"What are you planning to do with us?" Captain Lain asked Erik.

"What do you mean?" Erik asked.

"You surely haven't freed us just because of a whim, right?"

Erik looked at her. "That's exactly the reason I did."

That shocked Captain Lain even more. "Why?"

"Well... I was thinking. Volkov and the Crystal Cross Gang were responsible for having kidnapped my father and persecuted me. I just wanted to stir troubles. Besides, they joined the Blackguards. Though I already took care of the Crystal Cross Gang."

"Your father has been abducted?" Everyone knew Lucius Romano. Such a revelation was too surprising to believe it. He was too strong to have been kidnapped by the Crystal Cross Gang.

Captain Lain knew little about the situation. Her work mostly brought her outside the city to hunt Thaidis.

What was happening? Why was Erik talking about his father, the Crystal Cross Gang, and the Blackguards?

"What do you mean by saying you already took care of the Crystal Cross Gang? Even Becker never found them. How could you have taken care of them, and what about the Blackguards?"



Erik didn't care anymore about hiding his powers anymore. He was too strong anyway for them to pose a problem.

Unless the Blackguards ganged upon him, it was unlikely he would die, and he was already thinking about how to avoid such a dangerous situation.

"I meant exactly what I said. I killed them all, or almost all of them, even their boss is dead."

That left the woman almost in a catatonic state. Even Fischer had his mouth agape.

"As for the Blackguards, they are those behind the Crystal Cross Gang and Volkov. They have always been. Why do you think Becker never found the Crystal Cross Gang's headquarters? The Blackguards were protecting them."

However, it was Fischer's time to say something now. "Do you have proof?"

"Well, not about this. The information was told to me by Becker himself. He also said the Blackguards kicked him out of his position because he didn't bend to their rule. As for the rest, yes, I have plenty of proof. I've hacked plenty of Crystal Cross Gang's and other organization's computers to be certain of what I'm saying."

But then the question arose spontaneously. "Then why didn't you say that to the world?" Fischer asked.

The Blackguards were a symbol of peace and order, justice's paladins.

"Do you think they only control the Crystal Cross Gang and Frant? They likely control the entire world, if not directly, at least indirectly. No one would have believed me."

To that, the two remained silent. Then the group reached the exit and left the building.

On their way out, they saw the many corpses. The ground was littered with the lifeless forms of fallen guards, their bodies scattered in grotesque arrangements that bore witness to the violent clash that had unfolded within the walls of the compound before the prisoners got freed.

The bodies were mostly concentrated in specific areas, meaning that Erik and June killed the guards not in small skirmishes here and there, but all at the same time.

This meant they were stronger than they assumed.

"What happened here?" Emma asked.

"Ah... that? June took out the trash."

The group then reached the outside. They were in front of the prison. No one dared to move an inch or escape to freedom.

They were all waiting for Erik to say something. Were they prisoners? Did he want them to work for him? What was the meaning of all this?

"What?" Erik said as he looked around and saw everyone staring at him.

"What do we need to do now? Where do we go?"

"I don't know," Erik said. "I guess you can do whatever you want?"

"What?" more people at the same time said that.

"Aren't you going to give us orders?"

"Why would I? I didn't come here because I needed men. I have plenty of them."

"Then why?"

"Just because."

Captain Lain looked at him again. "You said that before, but I refuse to believe this happened because of a whim."

"Believe what you want. I don't care."

There was a slight pause for a moment.

"Do you have a place to stay?" Erik asked. These guys had been out of the game for a lot of time now. They were probably going to search for their families to see if they were alive. That if they hadn't been killed, or worse, parasitized by the Heniate's spawn the previous year.

Fischer looked at him with a pensive look. "I have some places in mind to move these guys."

"I suggest you bring them there. Apparently, to move around a permit is required, so if you stay too much outside, you will attract a lot of attention."

Fischer shivered. Everything went to hell since Becker had been forced to leave. Now there was even a law, or something like that, that forced citizens to ask for permission to get out of their house? Was Volkov crazy

"Erik," Volkov said. "Is there really nothing we can do? Nothing at all? You should have seen or heard something. You should know what we can do to make Volkov pay."

Erik thought about it for a second. There were indeed many things this ragtag group of survivors could do. "Well, there are some things. But are you sure this is what you and the others want to do? To fight against Volkov, it's not that different from putting yourself in another kind of prison. "

"Speaking for myself," Lain said. "There is nothing more that I want than making Volkov pay."

Erik grinned. "Then I have a couple of suggestions for you."

Chapter 833: To Nokisi Point (1)

The tension in the room was very high as a man addressed General Volkov, the iron-fisted dictator whose steely gaze bore down on him with unyielding intensity.

Swallowing hard, the man cleared his throat before delivering the grim news.

"General Volkov, sir," he said, his voice tinged with a mixture of fear and urgency. "We've lost contact with Team Alpha. They've encountered significant resistance from the rebel forces."

"Damages?" Volkov asked.

"It appears the rebels were targeting camps A and B, and they also ransacked a weapon deposit, sir. We also have lost contact with several teams."

A heavy silence descended upon the room as General Volkov absorbed the gravity of the situation.

His jaw clenched with barely contained fury, his eyes narrowing into icy slits as he processed the implications of the loss.

"Explain." To the man, Volkov's voice was like a low growl that reverberated through the room.

The man hesitated for a moment before continuing, choosing his words carefully to avoid being killed on the spot.

"It seems the rebels carried out a well-coordinated assault, specifically targeting Camps A and B," he said.

"Their had been surgical. They exploited our vulnerabilities and caught off guards. We still don't know how they were able to do that. It is likely an insider's job."

The mention of the rebels' success elicited a collective murmur of concern among the assembled officers.

General Volkov's brow furrowed in contemplation, leaned forward in his seat, his gaze piercing.

His troops, seasoned and battle-hardened, grappled with the realization that the rebels had outmaneuvered them—a fact that challenged their perception of the enemy's capabilities.

The prevailing sentiment among Volkov's troops was one of grudging respect mixed with a simmering sense of frustration.

To lose two soldier camps represented a significant blow to his regime—a blow that threatened to undermine his authority and destabilize the balance of power that he had worked so tirelessly to maintain.

He didn't want to ask for the Blackguards' help again. That would put him in a bad spot.

"We must respond swiftly and decisively," Volkov said. "Gather all available units and mobilize them immediately. We will crush these rebels and show them what pain really is."

As Volkov's authoritative decree echoed through the room, a sense of fear gripped those who listened.

They knew that failing to meet the man's expectations was going to put them in danger.

Though hesitant to unleash further violence, they dared not defy their leader's command.

Eyes cast downward, a mixture of apprehension and resignation shadowed their expressions as they reluctantly accepted their orders.

With heavy hearts, they resolved to carry out Volkov's will, knowing that disobedience would only invite his wrath.

Then Volkov's men filed out, their footsteps echoing the weight of their burden as they prepared to execute their leader's ruthless bidding.

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"Are you sure you are going to be fine without me?" Erik asked.

"Yes. You already did a lot. Thanks to you, we also secured weapons and vehicles. They aren't that useful against Thaidis, but against people they could still serve their purpose," Major Fischer said.

After Erik did free the prisoners loyal to Becker, things progressed swiftly.

In just a month, they called people from all corners of the nation and started a resistance.

While there were less than a thousand people at the beginning, now there were many times more.

"Your strategies were very smart. I can't still understand how you came up with them."

"It wasn't hard," Erik said. "The real problem was to get the right intel. If we attacked the wrong places, we would be the dead ones."

Of course, Erik was including himself, but he feared nothing.

"What are you going to do now?" Captain Lain asked.

"I'm heading to Nokisi point. Shade is still out there, plotting something and kidnapping people. I can't leave him be."

"I still can't believe he is real. I always thought it was just a legend," Fischer said.

"Yeah, many thought he was. Luckily, Howell knew him."

"How are you going to find him?" Captain Lain asked.

Erik's mind raced as he considered their options, knowing that Shade operated in shadows too deep to penetrate easily.

With a heavy sigh, Erik met Lain's gaze.

"We'll have to rely on our own instincts and resources," he said.

"We can start by scouring the streets, gathering whispers and rumors from the gutters. Shade may be elusive, but he must leave traces—subtle patterns only those who know about his existence can detect. But before trying that, I will seek the help of a friend."

Of course, Erik also wanted to make more clones and use the system.

Just as they pondered their next move, Erik's phone jolted to life with an insistent ring.

Its screen illuminated his features with a soft, ghostly glow. Noah's name blinked on the display.

"Noah?"

"Master."

"Is everything ok? Why did you call me?"

"Yes. Sorry to disturb you, Master. I have news."

Erik knew what that meant. Noah had news about his father, but it could be something else.

Noah was planning the rescue operation, and was amassing men and women, weapons and vehicles to reach this goal.

Jabir and the others started mass producing brain crystal rifles and creating stimulating serums and vehicles after Erik left Liberty Watch's village.

Of course, that was thanks to the models Erik brought back from Caelora city.

Noah was preparing to bring war to Frant, and to Fasard, but that also required to move men and women there.

Most of the workforce was going to be made by Erik's clones anyway, but that didn't mean no one wanted to help him.

"What?"

"Half our troops are in Fasard. As of now, we are in the process of establishing safe places and setting up our spy net. We also got the building's layout, guards shifts and the likes. We are almost ready."

Erik grinned, but was interrupted by Noah. "It is almost time for our attack."

Erik paused for a second. There wasn't anything that came to mind. He wanted to go there, to save his fathers with his hands. But now he could only trust his comrades. He had other things to do.

"Thanks, Noah. Please, save him."

Chapter 834: To Nokisi Point (2)

"Sorry for the call." Erik scratched his head nervously. That call meant he had little time to find and kill Shade.

"No worries," Fischer said. The old man offered a reassuring smile.

Erik looked at the man in the eyes, determination flickering in his gaze.

In the month Erik had been in New Alexandria, he and Fischer had forged an unexpected bond, and Erik felt sad about leaving him and the others.

Despite his past beliefs, they were good people.

"I need to leave now," Erik said, his tone weighted with urgency. "My men are going to move soon, and I have little time left."

Fischer nodded, his expression reflecting both gratitude and a hint of sadness.

"If you ever need something, don't hesitate to contact us. Words can't express how grateful we are for your help."

Erik's smile widened, a glint of appreciation gleaming in his eyes. "I will." Then Erik turned to leave, his footsteps echoing down the corridor.



With that, he and June left the apartment where Fischer and the others made their war room. As they stepped onto the bustling streets, Erik's mind buzzed. They were going to have a long travel ahead.

"Are we heading to the breach?" June asked.

"Yeah. We can't use the usual exit. You'll transform into a Galewing, and we'll fly until we're clear or we reach the Eldraith mountain range. Then switch to something swift but on foot," Erik said, his eyes scanning the surroundings for any signs of danger.

"Got any ideas?"

"Some."

The two then boarded the train bound for the northern district. It took them a while, but eventually they arrived at the wheat field.

While traversing the sprawling camps of golden, and heading to the breach, Erik contemplated this potentially last visit to New Alexandria.

Strangely, a melancholic feeling washed over him, fate playing its enigmatic hand.

Upon realizing that the chaotic situation in Frant resulted from the actions of the Blackguards, something within Erik shifted.

He made a firm decision to let go of all the negativity that had plagued him, opting instead to forgive.

The devastating losses suffered during the parasites and Heniate attacks in New Alexandria further solidified his resolve.

To hold on to grudges seemed futile and only threatened to overshadow his life with bitterness.

Thus, Erik chose the path of forgiveness, recognizing that harboring resentment toward a nation and a city, ruined by conflict and ruled by a tyrant, would serve no purpose in moving forward.

As Erik and June reached the barrier's breach, they stood before the gateway that would mark the beginning of their journey outside the city limits.

In a matter of moments, June underwent a swift transformation, morphing into the majestic form of a Galewing, signaling his readiness to embark on a flight.

Erik mounted June, his grip firm. The clone flapped his wings and soon they were in the sky. They soared, leaving the familiar skyline of New Alexandria behind.

As they traversed the open expanse, Erik's keen eyes spotted many Thaid's below.

Though weak individually, their presence was a little unnerving.

He also thought about his experiences in the forest below, the Thaid's killed, the experience gained, the things he saw.

He grew stronger since then, those Thaid's didn't scare him anymore. Then his thoughts drifted to Shade.

The figure who served the Blackguards consumed Erik's mind.

He saw himself confronting Shade, the architect of so much chaos and suffering, and the anticipation stirred a storm of emotions within him.

<I swear. I will kill you, Shade. >

Rage coursed through Erik's veins as he reflected on the tribulations he had suffered at the hands of the Crystal Cross Gang. Since they were under Shade's employ, his determination to eliminate him only intensified. Revenge consumed Erik's every thought.

The wind whipped around them, carrying echoes of distant cries and the whispers of vengeance.

As they soared toward the Eldraith mountain range, Erik steeled himself for the inevitable danger that will wait for them inside that hellish place.

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It took some time before Erik and June arrived close to the Eldraith mountain range.

The place was like the last time they saw it. A dense forest that climbed the tallest mountain of the entire continent, and that housed the Wyverns.

The forest exuded an aura of darkness and foreboding, its ancient trees shrouded in shadow.

Twisted branches reached out like skeletal fingers, casting eerie silhouettes against the dim light filtering through the dense canopy above.

The air was thick with an oppressive silence, broken only by the occasional rustle of leaves and the distant cry of unseen creatures.

Erik told June to land, but it was weird, they were still relatively far from the mountain range. Wyverns should have been far from their position.

"Do we switch to foot traveling?" June asked, after having morphed into a human.

"Yes. I feel something."

"Is this your Instability Brain Crystal Power?"

"Yes."

Erik was nervous. It was the first time he felt feelings so primal. But they were weird, very similar to those of humans, but much more intense. It was rage that Erik was feeling.

In an instant, a piercing screech shattered the tranquil air, its sharpness slicing through the silence like a jagged blade.

A deep, guttural growl accompanied the screech. It was so strong and deep that the reverberations it made enveloped him, making his whole body tremble and filling the air with a palpable sense of tension and foreboding.

"What the fuck was that?"

"Hide, June!"

The feelings Erik was sensing grew more intense. He and June dashed behind the looming trees, their movements urgent and rushed.

Erik's muscles were taut with tension, his every nerve on edge as adrenaline surged through his veins.

June mirrored Erik's unease, though his confusion added an extra layer of apprehension to his demeanor.

He didn't know what was happening, but based on Erik's reaction, his master knew.

Uncertainty clouded his features, his eyes darting anxiously.

"What is happening, Master?" June asked, his voice tinged with concern.

Erik turned to June, his eyes serious. "Keep your head low and hide as much as you can. They are fighting."

"Who?" June's brows furrowed in confusion.

"Them," Erik gestured towards the direction of the commotion.

As Erik and June hunkered down, the scene unfolding above them was nothing short of mythical.

The air was filled with the tumultuous sounds of the battle, the powerful whoosh of wings, and the clashing of talons that sounded like swords in combat.

A colossal bird, with cerulean feathers shimmering like a piece of the sky itself, moved with an elegance that belied its immense size.

Its wings cut through the air with such force that it created gusts of wind, sending leaves swirling around Erik and June, who felt the rush of air brush against their faces.

Both of them had never seen a Thaid so massive, or better, they never saw it with their bare eyes.

The bird was fighting another massive creature, but this time, the fiend wasn't an avian terror. No, it was another kind of creature from the nightmares.

A massive wyvern, enveloped in flames that danced along its black scales, while emitting a smell of brimstone and ash that was slowly enveloping the fresh scent of the surrounding forest.

The heat from the wyvern's fiery presence could be felt even from their hiding position, and the wind fluttering around the colossal bird it was facing was only spreading it.

The sounds of their battle were earth-shattering; the bird's cries piercing the sky like thunderclaps, while the wyvern's roars reverberated through the trees.

Each time the creatures collided, it was accompanied by a cacophony that echoed throughout the forest.

Erik and June watched, spellbound, as the bird pecked viciously at the wyvern, its beak striking with the precision and force of a spear.

The wyvern, in turn, snapped at the bird with its massive jaws, aiming for a lethal grip on its neck, its teeth gleaming dangerously in the sunlight.

The aerial combatants circled and dived, but it looked like they were in a stalemate.

"What the hell are those?!" June asked.

A jolt of recognition shot through Erik as he took his time to look at the bird. The wyvern, Erik had seen a few, but the bird, he saw it only one time, through the lens of his biological supercomputer system when he decrypted the White Desert's plane's black box.

"I've already seen the bird!" Erik said.

"Where?! Where would you possibly have seen this thing?"

In a certain sense, it wasn't hard. That thing was gigantic. The real question was how it was possible to fail seeing it. But that wasn't what June was asking to his master.

"The cargo plane. The black box. That thing is the bird that attacked the plane flying over the White Desert!"

June's eyes narrowed, and he searched through the memories he inherited from Erik to understand what was happening. Not that it would help them in this situation.

"What do we do, master?!" June asked as the deafening sound of battle was going.

"Keep your head down and don't let these things see you!"

Chapter 835: To Nokisi Point (3)

Despite its massive size, the bird displayed a remarkable agility and strength, maneuvering through the air with an instinctive grace that belied its colossal form.

Each flap of its enormous wings sent ripples through the sky, propelling it forward with a power and finesse that was mesmerizing to watch.

The wyvern, instead, was smaller than the majestic bird, carried with it an aura of fear and a palpable sense of might that commanded attention.

Its sleek black scales absorbed the sunlight, creating a stark contrast against the bright sky, making it appear as a shadow brought to life.

The flames that occasionally flickered around its body added an element of danger and unpredictability, highlighting its fearsome nature.

The problem was that If the rule size equal strength was true; the bird was stronger than the wyvern, and that was terrifying.

However, he couldn't understand how that was possible. Wyverns were supposed to be at the top of the food chain, at least on this continent.

This only made Erik convinced this creature came from the other one.

Erik was particularly affected by two of the many reasons that made the situation frightening. The first was that something big was going on the Mur continent.

The situation in that place must have been extremely dire to force the arrival of such an abomination on the Mannard continent.

Second: if a 'mere' flying Thaid was stronger than a wyvern, what were the true horrors that lived in the Thaid infested continent?

Were they really that much stronger compared to the Thaid here?

June watched in awe as the colossal bird unleashed a flurry of attacks.

Despite being confused by the sudden chaos, June couldn't help but feel a sense of reverence for the magnificent creature's prowess.

However, the reverence was shattered by Erik's shout.

"DIVE!"

At that precise moment, a cluster of trees, uprooted by the wyvern's tail, soared towards them. The sudden involuntary attack came out of nowhere, and Erik and June barely had a moment to react and avoid it.

"Run!"

As they sprinted away from the site of the aerial battle, both Erik and June couldn't help but feel a gnawing sense of apprehension.

The expanse of the open area around them felt oppressively vast, a seemingly endless terrain that stretched on far beyond what they had anticipated.

Despite their considerable speed, the distance to safety seemed to not shrink, as if the ground itself was stretching out beneath them. Erik's usually composed demeanor was ruffled, a rare occurrence. June, following closely behind Erik, mirrored his unease.

Erik glanced back and his eyes narrowed in concentration. The creatures were tearing into the side of the mountain, leaving behind a trail of destruction.

Then something happened. The two creatures behaved as if they got woken up by something, and started using their brain crystal powers with renewed frenzy, to the point they started solely using them.

The wyvern opened its jaws, unleashing a scorching torrent of flames that illuminated the sky in a blaze of fire.

Erik and June watched in horror as the flames crackled and roared, consuming the forest in a fiery blaze.

Meanwhile, the colossal bird unleashed a powerful gust of wind, its massive wings flapping and intensifying the force of the gale.

The sound of crackling energy filled the air as the bird manipulated the element, creating a swirling barrier of wind around itself.

The clash between the wyvern's flames and the bird's wind created a tumultuous display of swirling fire and gusts of air.

The bird must have had a hard time, judging by the way its feathers were ruffled and its wings drooped.



After all, Wyverns' flames were not common ones. The flames were powerful, surpassing the intensity of any ordinary fire.

Sparks flew and gusts howled, the chaotic battle raging overhead as Erik and June raced through the forest.

Fear gripped their hearts as they skillfully maneuvered around the debris littering the ground, their senses heightened by the menacing presence of the fiery winds.

The scorching heat engulfed the air, making the temperature rise to unbearable levels as flames danced around the nearby trees.

Erik's voice rang out above the roar of the inferno. "RUN, JUNE!"

The sheer force of the elemental conflict overwhelmed June's senses, causing his eyes to widen in awe.

Despite their efforts to escape, the heat from the flames seemed to grow more intense, searing his skin with each step.

However, something had altered the dynamics between the two.

With a surge of power, the colossal bird propelled itself forward, the sound of its wings slicing through the air reverberating through the surroundings.

It unleashed a final, devastating attack while making a deafening screech. The bird channeled an ungodly amount of mana that became visible to Erik and June before releasing a massive wind blade.

It towered over everything in sight, its size comparable to that of a bus. With a swift motion, the bird propelled the blade forward.

The wyvern tapped into its vast reserves of mana once again, summoning a wall of flames to protect itself.

The problem for the wyvern was that the blade sliced through it like it was made of butter. Even with all that mana, the attack could not be stopped.

In stunned silence, Erik and June observed as the bird launched its attack, colliding with the wyvern and shattering its defenses.

The air crackled with energy as the wind tore through the flames and bisected the wyvern's body, tearing scales and flesh alike.

"What the..."

The victorious bird let out a screech so loud that it reverberated through the smoky haze, proclaiming its triumph.

The wyvern's massive body hit the ground with a thunderous crash, causing the trees to tremble and the birds to scatter in fright.

As the fallen beast landed, the trees shuddered and let out audible groans, their branches snapping and splintering in protest, and most destroyed by the creature's massive weight.

As the wyvern's body reached the ground, a massive cloud of dirt, ashes, and earth erupted, creating a swirling vortex of darkness that enveloped everything nearby.

The thick blanket of debris, swirling in the air, suffocated the flames that had ravaged the nearby trees, bringing an abrupt and definitive end to the inferno in the immediate surroundings.

Yet, despite the temporary reprieve, the forest was consumed by flames, the unrelenting fire roaring without mercy.

The heat was so intense that the air crackled, and the landscape was engulfed in thick clouds of smoke, creating a foreboding atmosphere.

Amidst the devastation, the triumphant bird stood tall, its majestic form silhouetted against the backdrop of destruction.

Its wings outstretched, it surveyed the aftermath of the battle with an air of regal authority, a solitary beacon of strength amidst the charred remains of the forest.

[UNKNOWN WYVERN KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[0%...1%...5%...30%...70%...100%]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED, STARTING CONVERTING PROCEDURE.]

[3...2...1...0]

[MANA SUCCESSFULLY CONVERTED INTO EXPERIENCE. 132353 EXPERIENCE POINTS AWARDED TO THE HOST.]

Erik was far from the sight of the crash. In theory, he should have been outside of the biological supercomputer's range of absorption.

To stay in that cursed place was only akin to suicide. He only wanted to escape, and that happened just because of pure and dumb luck.

Erik thought that what he absorbed was just a tiny speck of the creature's mana, that left the immediate area of the crash and entered the supercomputer's range.

<I won't take this route anymore, I swear... >

The sheer magnitude of experience that a single thaïd provided him was utterly astonishing. It was the largest surge of mana he had ever received from a single monster. Just how strong was this cursed Thaïd?

Erik and June stood frozen in shock, their hearts pounding as they took in the unbelievable sight before them.

The forest fell silent, with only the rustle of leaves and distant cries of unseen creatures breaking the stillness after the battle. They exchanged a bewildered glance.

As the realization of the bird's victory sank in, Erik and June were left in a state of awe and disbelief, their jaws dropping in astonishment.

They had never seen such a show of power before, and the immense strength of the bird left them both trembling.

"Did you analyze it?" June asked.

"Are you crazy? That was the last thing I had in mind."

However, as they observed the bird gracefully soaring away, Erik's heart fluttered with a sudden urge. A mischievous smirk played on his lips.

June understood immediately what his master wanted to do as he saw the determined look in his eyes.

June's eyes, flickered towards the sky, searching for any sign of the creature.

"Did the bird go away?"

Erik wore a more contemplative expression. His brows furrowed as he tapped into his Instability Brain Crystal Power, trying to sense the bird's presence.

The corner of his mouth quirked up in a subtle smirk when he realized the bird had indeed left the area.

"I can't feel it anymore, so I would say yes," he said. There was a hint of relief in his voice.

"Should we go, then?"

His face then shifted to a more decisive expression etching across his features. "Yes."

Chapter 836: To Nokisi Point (4)

Erik and June made their way towards the scene of the recent battle. The forest was a chaotic landscape of destruction.

Flames licked the edges of their path, casting eerie shadows that danced across their faces.

Ashes fluttered down like grim snowflakes, coating the underbrush with a layer of gray.

As they advanced, the air thickened with the scent of burnt wood and singed earth, making each breath a labor.

Mingled with these odors was a potent, iron-rich smell of blood, likely belonging to the wyvern.

This pungent aroma was heavy and overpowering, saturating the atmosphere with a cloying, metallic tang that clung to the back of their throats.

The smell spoke of life violently torn asunder, its essence spilling onto the earth to mingle with the charred remains of the forest.

They treaded carefully, mindful of the embers that still glowed hot amidst the wreckage.

"It looks like a scene from an apocalyptic movie," June said.

Erik didn't reply, but he couldn't say his clone was wrong. There was devastation everywhere around them.

The heart of the battlefield was marked by a giant crater, a gaping wound in the earth itself.

Within this depression lay the body of the wyvern. Both June and his master observed the corpse of the nightmarish creature.

"This thing is massive."

"Yeah..."

Erik and June had never seen a wyvern up close before.

Well, Erik had a close encounter with a wyvern once, but it wasn't as close as he was today, and the sight that unfolded before them differed from how they imagined it.

The beast was dead, after all, which was basically unheard of.

The wyvern's corpse sprawled across the crater's breadth.

Its scales were a deep, obsidian black, shimmering with an unnatural sheen even after death.

A row of spikes, each as long as a man's arm, ran down the creature's spine, culminating in a colossal tail that was itself a weapon of destruction.

The wyvern's wings, now still and lifeless, were vast membranes stretched over bony frames, ending in clawed hands that spoke of its predatory nature.

The head of the wyvern was a monstrous amalgamation of an alligator and a Komodo dragon, with powerful jaws capable of crushing bone and flesh alike.

Its eyes, now dim and lifeless, were a piercing red, windows into a soul driven by primal instincts.

The cause of the wyvern's demise was clear in the grievous wound that bisected its body.

A clean, precise cut, as if made by an invisible blade of wind, had cleaved the beast in two.

Erik and June approached the body and examined the wound.

"This is fascinating."

"What?" June asked.

"Well..." Erik thought for a second. "That the mana which the two creatures used took tangible form, and the effects on the attacks they unleashed," he said, looking at the precise cut. "But this is not really important."

"Let's assume we didn't see the mana which the bird used. Based on the body alone, we could have said that a beast with much more mana than this monster killed it."

The edges of the wound were eerily smooth, the flesh and scale parted with surgical precision.

This was the handiwork of the cerulean bird.

"Yeah. If we didn't see the monster, we would have been even more freaked out by the presence of something strong enough to kill the wyvern lurking around. But the question remains, why is this beast here?"

"I don't know, but I have a bad feeling," Erik said. Many reasons could explain why this colossal beast could only come from the Mur continent, otherwise, such a powerful beast should have been known to humans.

But if that was true, then why it had ventured here from the distant lands of the Mur continent—a phenomenon that hadn't occurred in centuries.

Tales of creatures wielding such power were few and far between, meaning that what Erik and June saw was untold.

In the continent where Erik lived, wyverns stood as the sole testament to these ancient legends, the only creatures whose fearsome strength was not just spoken of in hushed tones but witnessed.

Humans had been strong enough to repel those monsters, not without losing a lot of good men and women in the process.

But they didn't set foot on the Mur continent for centuries. The strength of Thaidis in that place remained a mystery to humanity.

Now, the beast could have come from there, but it was also possible it was born on this continent. Erik didn't want to rule out that possibility.

"Let's absorb his blood and Brain Crystal and leave. I bet Thaid's are rushing here to eat this monster's flesh."

Erik approached the fallen wyvern, his movements cautious and reverent. He then drew a small vial from his pouch.

While kneeling beside the colossal beast, he collected the thick, dark blood oozing from the grievous wound that had cleaved the wyvern in two. The blood, still warm, filled the vial.

Turning to June, Erik handed him the vial. "Drink this."

June took the vial with a solemn nod. He tipped the contents into his mouth.

Erik then took a second vial for himself, repeating the ritual. But his task was not yet complete.

With a determination fueled by the knowledge of what he sought, Erik made his way to the wyvern's head.

The creature's eyes stared blankly, gateways to the immense power that had once animated its formidable frame.

Erik summoned all his strength and channeled his powers, then he reached into the wyvern's eye socket and went toward the brain with a lot of effort. This beast's flesh was hard.

His fingers ended up closing on the brain crystal. The small object pulsed with the essence of the wyvern's mana.

With the crystal secured, Erik withdrew his hand and stood, the weight of his prize heavy in his grasp. It was still relatively small, despite coming from a wyvern.

He then drank the blood from his vial, and then, with a deep breath, he swallowed the brain crystal whole.

Chapter 837: Nokisi Point (1)



It took little for Erik and June to arrive at Nokisi point. The journey had been safe as June used his Wyvern's form to travel unhindered.

Even the other wyverns near the Eldraith Mountain range steered clear.

Of course, as much as the other Thaid's did, the sight of such a colossal creature soaring through the skies sent waves of fear through the human populations.

Whispers turned into shouts as the enormous beast was spotted, and soon, tales of the sighting spread like wildfire.

Many guilds, mobilized to track down the mythical beast, were sent to at least find it, but Erik suspected the real reason was to try using the new brain crystal weapons to test them against its legendary hide.

Usually, Wyverns flocked together. To see one alone was a rare sight, and they didn't want to waste this chance to kill it.

Aware of the growing attention, Erik and June made a swift retreat into the cover of the forest, where June reverted to a form less conspicuous and daunting.

The dense foliage of the forest provided them with the perfect cover, allowing them to continue their journey undetected.

Their path led them ever closer to their destination, and after traversing the forest's hidden trails, they finally arrived at Nokisi Point.

Standing before them was a sight to behold. Nokisi Point loomed large, its massive walls stretching skywards.

They were the biggest Erik and June had ever seen, and it was also protected by a gigantic barrier.

"Impressive." There were no other words to describe those walls. After he saw the colossal bird kill the black wyvern, nothing surprised him anymore.

The atmosphere in this region felt distinctly more tranquil and secure, compared to Caelora City and Testrovsc's Rest. Here, there was no lingering fear of Thaid's hiding just out of sight.

Even the vegetation around Nokisi Point thrived, an oasis of life amidst the danger and desolation that plagued the lands beyond.

"This is very weird," June said. Just like Erik, he had never seen a place as safe as this one.

Even New Alexandria could not compare to the sense of safety this place held. "It's likely thanks to them." Erik pointed at some guards, clearly sporting the band of giants' insignia.

This sanctuary clearly owed its peace to the Band of Giants. The tales of their deeds were legend, and as Erik and June had witnessed firsthand, the land for several kilometers around Nokisi Point bore testament to their effectiveness.

Not a single Thaid had crossed their path several kilometers away from the city, a rare occurrence in a world where danger was a constant companion.

Erik and June paused at the threshold of Nokisi Point, taking a moment to absorb the significance of their arrival.

"What do we do?" June asked. "I'll turn into a fly," Erik said. I don't want to make things complex by faking a new identity and talking to people. "

"But what about me?"

"You turn into a bird. It won't be hard entering."

"Are you sure about this?" June asked. "I am. It will be hard to spot you, even less to catch you."

"If you say so, Master."

In a secluded spot, shielded by the dense foliage of a large tree, they carefully removed their belongings.

They stripped off their clothes and gear, folding them neatly and placing them alongside their backpacks in a hidden nook at the base of a tree.

Once their possessions were securely stowed away, they turned to each other, nodding in silent agreement.

It was time to shapeshift. Erik was the first. His form began to shrink and morph, his body contorting and reshaping until he was no larger than a fly.

June, following suit, underwent a similar transformation, his body condensing and reshaping into the form of a small bird, nimble and unassuming.

They took to the air. As they approached, they could see a column of flying vehicles descending towards Nokisi Point.

The city had two distinct entrances: one for land-based arrivals and another, situated atop the towering walls, for those coming by air.

It was towards this aerial entrance they directed their flight, blending with the flow of traffic.

The aerial entrance was a hub of activity, with vehicles of various designs and sizes landing and taking off.

Amidst this flurry of movement, Erik and June found it easy to weave through the gaps, avoiding detection by the guards.

The sensors blared, but as they saw June's bird form, they thought nothing of it.

Their small sizes afforded them the ability to navigate through the air currents, slipping past the security measures designed to screen much larger threats.

<We are in, > Erik telepathically said to June.

<Indeed. >

As they crossed the threshold of the city's walls, the sprawling expanse of Nokisi Point unfolded beneath them.

The city was alive with movement; flying vehicles darted through the skies.

The skyscrapers stretched towards the heavens, their surfaces awash in the glow of neon lights and vibrant advertisements that painted the daylight in a kaleidoscope of colors.

Among these towering giants of glass and steel, digital billboards flickered and flashed, many of them emblazoned with the insignia of the Band of Giants Mercenary Guild, showing how prominent this force was within the city.

In the meantime, they flew through the urban landscape, searching for a place to shapeshift again and find some clothes.

As they flitted between the neon-lit towers, the advertisements caught Erik's eye, but one in particular halted him in his aerial tracks.

There, displayed on a towering billboard, was the unmistakable visage of the Fierce Lioness.

The mere sight of her was enough to send a jolt through Erik's memory.

He remembered the day she had come to New Alexandria to kill the Blirldoth. Her arrival had been nothing short of salvation.

<Damn... The fierce lioness is like the messiah here... > June said. It wasn't the first billboard showing the woman's face and confident pose.

Erik made the equivalent of a sigh. Not that a fly could sigh.

<Are we going to meet her? > June asked as he looked at the billboard.

<Yes. She is the only one who could help us find that bastard, > Erik said.

Chapter 838: Nokisi Point (2)

<We must find some stuff, > Erik said, his gaze scanning their surroundings.

June tilted his head, his bird eyes narrowing as she pondered Erik's statement. <Clothes, and...? >

Erik paused for a moment. <A phone. I need to make a call. >

June's feathers ruffled. <Are you going to call her? >

<Yes. With her help, we should be able to find Shade faster. >

<But what if they sell us? Didn't Noah say the Band of Giants kept the guild under surveillance? >

<Yes. That's why I will talk to Rebecca. I doubt she will sell us. >

<If you say so. >

Their quest for suitable attire led them to a quaint shop nestled between towering skyscrapers, its windows aglow with soft, inviting light.

Without hesitation, Erik landed on the ledge, his insect form barely noticeable. June perched beside him.

<Wait for me here...> Erik said. For this operation, he needed someone fast, and between the two, he was the fastest.

Erik's form expanded, his body stretching and reshaping until he stood in his human form, albeit with one significant alteration.

He molded his features, rendering his face unrecognizable. He couldn't allow someone strong enough to see him to recognize his face.

June, meanwhile, awaited in his avian guise.

Erik didn't waste time. He dashed into the shop in a burst of speed.

His hands, moving faster than the blink of an eye, plucked a selection of clothing and a small bag to stow them in.

Men's attire for himself and June. With the items secured, he made his way to the exit, his presence as fleeting as a whisper.

The shopkeeper remained oblivious to the spectral visitor. To any onlooker, the shop appeared undisturbed, its wares untouched by human hands.

<Let's go. >

With that, the two left the area and went to a secluded alley, where June reverted to his human form. The two dressed up and blended into the city's tapestry.

<What about the phone? > June asked. <I'm going to ask the system to take care of that. >

<System, connect to a nearby phone and call Rebecca. >

The system obviously saved her number.

[SCANNING FOR NEARBY DEVICES.]

[DEVICES FOUND.]

[STARTING CONNECTION.]

[CONNECTION ESTABLISHED.]

Erik heard a phone ringing directly in his head. Then someone answered.

"Hello?" The voice on the other end was cautious. She didn't know this number. No one should have had it.

Erik took a deep breath, steadying his nerves. "Rebecca."

There was a brief silence after those words, a pregnant pause in which the world seemed to hold its breath.

She recognized the voice on the other side of the phone, a mix of disbelief and recognition flashing across her face, though Erik couldn't see it.

"Erik?" Rebecca's voice wavered, a cocktail of emotions swirling within.

"Yes." Erik's reply was simple.

"Are you crazy? Why are you calling me? Don't you know there is a huge bounty on your head?"

"I know, but I need your help."

"What?"

"Let's meet up..."

...

...

...

Erik and June chose a bar as the meeting spot. His face was still that of another person.

They chose a cozy corner in the bar, where the rich smell of coffee blended with the scent of old wood and a hint of spirits, but from which they could keep an eye on the surroundings without looking suspicious.

Seated with an air of nonchalance, they leisurely sipped their coffees.

Yet, beneath this veneer of calm, their eyes darted towards the entrance, vigilant, betraying their true intent as they kept a watchful gaze on every newcomer.

<Do you think she will come? >

<Yes, > Erik said to his clone. <She has no reason not to. Hearing what we have to say is not helping us, anyway. She has nothing to lose from this meeting. >

<I still think it's dangerous. >

Then the door swung open. A figure whose presence caused a subtle shift in the room's atmosphere entered.

When the woman walked in, everyone stopped and stared. Her body was noticeable in her clothes, curvy in a way that caught everyone's eye.

Because her face was hidden by a mask, people couldn't help but let their imaginations run wild about how she looked. She moved confidently, making her way through the crowd easily.

The mask wasn't just for show; it was the same one she wore at Testrovsc's Rest, probably so Erik could find her quickly in the crowd.

In theory, only he should have been able to recognize that mask since she used that mask only on some occasions in Testrovsc's Rest, and only Erik saw it.

June, his eyes catching the familiar pattern of the mask, raised his hand.

"We are here!" the clone said, enough for her to hear over the ambient noise.



She turned around, looking over the room carefully until she saw Erik and June's table. But something didn't match up.

There were two guys sitting there, and neither looked like the Erik from the photos she had seen.

This confusion made her pause, wondering if she was looking at the right spot.

With measured steps, she approached, her eyes flickering between the two, a hint of caution in her stride.

Rebecca had never seen June before, but she also never saw Erik's face in person.

She had long learned that Erik Kay was actually Erik Romano from Frant.

She had seen his face in pictures and videos before. But the man sitting in front of her looked different, not at all like the young man she saw in the photos.

This man was older, showing wrinkles and some grey hair among the black. Next to him sat a younger man who looked a bit like Erik, almost as if he could be his brother or cousin. Yet, even with the resemblance, he differed from the Erik she remembered from the pictures.

The two guys at the table could be just about anyone. She wondered they recognized her.

Then it clicked. The mask she wore was something only Erik knew about. It was their secret signal. This detail made her think that despite the unfamiliar face, one of those guys had to be Erik.

Though suspicion clouded her eyes as she came to a halt by their table. She remained silent for a bit, unsure of what to say.

Erik met her gaze as he understood her problem. "It's me," he said, his voice carrying the unmistakable cadence and tone that Rebecca had associated with him.

For a moment, her eyes filled with doubt, wondering if she had walked into some sort of trick.

The thought that these men might pretend to be Erik and his friend worried her. She questioned the situation, feeling unsure, and a bit scared about what was happening.

The world they navigated was one of shadows and deception, where trust was both a valuable commodity and a potential liability. She couldn't simply trust these two guys. Besides, she assumed Erik was alone, so why there were two people?

Yet, there was something in his voice, a certain quality that cut through her reservations, resonating with a familiarity that was hard to dismiss.

Rebecca hesitated, her gaze shifting from Erik to June and back again. "How can I be sure it's really you? You don't have your mask, and your face is different from that on your photos," she asked.

Erik gave her a small, knowing smile, a gesture that looked odd on his unfamiliar face, as if he was in on a secret she hadn't been told yet.

Erik leaned in closer, his voice dropping to a whisper. He shared a memory, one deeply rooted in their experiences together.

It was a story so detailed and unique to their shared history that it left no doubt in her mind—it had to be Erik.

The story the man said was vivid and filled with little nuances and inside jokes that no one else could replicate.

As he spoke, the pieces fell into place, erasing any skepticism she might have had. This served as undeniable proof of his true identity.

As he spoke, Rebecca's posture relaxed, the lines of suspicion softening as recognition dawned.

It wasn't just the story he shared that convinced her. It was also the way he spoke, the choice of words, the slight inflection at the end of his sentences—undeniably Erik.

"Alright, Erik," she said, a trace of relief mingling with the wariness in her voice. It was clear it hadn't been easy to come here and find no one resembling Erik. Everything pointed to a trap.

She took a seat, her mask still in place. "Is this really your face?" She asked. She was curious. Erik had never shown her his face, and a photo couldn't obviously be like the real deal.

"This is another disguise. I couldn't let the passersby see my face, right?"

Then she thought about something. "Is this how you were able to enter everywhere without people not noticing?"

"No."

She sighed. "Still clinging to your secrets, uh? But I want to remind you it is you who asked for my help, so at least try to collaborate."

Erik nodded.

"So, what do you need my help with?"

Chapter 839: Nokisi Point (3)

"I must find someone," Erik said.

"There is someone you can't find? Really?" Rebecca remembered how Erik had been able to find every single target he laid his eyes upon.

For Rebecca, it was weird knowing he wasn't able to find something or someone, but it also meant that the person in question was very strong or very cunning, and that made the young woman unsure on what to do. Was maybe Erik trying to bite more than he could chew?

"There is a limit to what I can do, Rebecca. What I'm chasing is a shadow, a legend," Erik paused.

"Maybe you heard talking about him. His name is Shade. Rumors says he is the leader of the underworld, and I'm confident enough in him being here at Nokisi point."

Rebecca never heard about this guy, Shade. People in Frant were aware of his existence because he was born there, and he started his criminal career there too.

The first gangs he gained control of were from Frant, so it was clear he didn't have the means he had today to remain hidden.

Erik sighed. "This guy is completely offline. I've scoured the internet and found nothing."

"Then this is the way you found people," Rebecca said.

"Among the many ways." He paused. "I still need some information to start somewhere, right?"

"Indeed. So, what do you need exactly? Keep in mind that, If you didn't find him, I'm not so sure I can help you."

Erik was the most skilled person Rebecca knew regarding these types of missions. If he couldn't find this guy, what could she do?

"I need the Band of Giants' contacts, mostly, and to see if there is someone among you who could have a lead. There must be someone knowing something, rumors, whispers, friends. I also need more people."

Erik had the ability to create clones, ensuring that manpower was never an issue for him.

However, the real challenge lay not in the scarcity of helping hands, but in the paucity of information and the dearth of reliable contacts. Erik needed a lead, and he had little time to scour the city and flood them with his clones.

Rebecca's eyes widened in disbelief, her voice rising slightly with a mix of alarm and incredulity. "Are you crazy? Did you forget about the bounty?"

She leaned forward; her gaze piercing into Erik's, as if trying to search his mind for a reason behind his audacious suggestion.

"My mother will kill you as soon as she sees you," she said. She was absolutely certain about this, knowing well the ruthlessness that her mother could exhibit.

Erik met Rebecca's gaze with a calm, almost unnerving steadiness.

"That unless you vouch for me," he said, his voice smooth, betraying none of the tension that the conversation warranted.

Rebecca's expression hardened, her brows knitting together in a frown that etched the seriousness of the situation deeper into the moment.

She shook her head. "She won't ever listen to me. You don't know her."

Many times Rebecca gave her suggestions, or asked her something, and never her mother even listened to her. That was one of the things that frustrated her a lot.

No matter how much Rebecca protested, her mother always disregarded her wishes, whether it was forcing her to witness death, assigning dangerous missions, or enduring long and grueling training sessions.

Her hands were clenched on the table. "Look, you must know the Mercenary guild accused me to have killed civilians in the slums the same day me and you went to hunt in the slums, right?"

Rebecca's posture stiffened, her defensive instincts instantly flaring up as she interpreted the undertone of the conversation.

"What do you mean by this? Are you trying to threaten me?" she asked, her voice laced with a sharp edge of suspicion and caution.

Such encounters weren't foreign to her; she had navigated through a myriad of veiled threats and overt intimidations throughout her life, making her all too familiar with these dynamics.

Her eyes narrowed, scrutinizing Erik's expression for any hint of malice or duplicity.

"Do you think I'm that kind of person?" Erik asked.

"I don't know what kind of person you are."

"There was nothing fake about our friendship, Rebecca. I may have omitted some things, but I never lied. What you met was the real me."

"Whatever," she dismissed with a wave of her hand, her tone a blend of frustration and rage.

"What I'm trying to say is, you know well, that I'm innocent. Yes, lives were taken that day, but let's be clear—they weren't civilians, far from it. And they certainly weren't innocents."

Rebecca's voice trailed off as she paused. "I believe you, but I can't see how this will make a difference."

"Listen," Erik said. "Here, you're presented with an opportunity—not just to track down a mere criminal mastermind, but the linchpin of all the nefarious syndicates on this continent. We're talking about the head of the Crystal Cross Gang, among others."

To convince her mother to lend him a hand, he didn't know what else it was. The Fierce Lioness was bound to gain something from this, either Shade's or Erik's heads. Well, of course, the second would not be easy.

He paused for a moment, allowing the silence to underscore his next point.

"Just imagine it, the Band of Giants, no—specifically you, standing in the limelight. This could be your moment of glory. Even your mother, with her high standards, would have to acknowledge your achievement, at the very least for this monumental feat. I'm sure I can pull this off. To find and kill this guy won't be hard, but I need a lead, breadcrumbs at least."

Rebecca thought about it for a second. "Even if I say yes, this doesn't mean mom will do as I ask. She may not trust you, and she likely won't."

Erik leaned forward, his eyes locked on Rebecca's. He was calm, and that sold his point better.

"I know that," he said, his voice steady. "But at least we can try. If things become dangerous, I will simply leave."

Rebecca crossed her arms, her expression a blend of skepticism and concern.

"Yes, with the whole Band of Giants searching for you," she said. Her gaze bore into him, as if trying to gauge whether he fully grasped the danger he was proposing to court.

Erik met her gaze with a slight, defiant grin, an attempt to lighten the mood and perhaps to reassure Rebecca.

"Then let's try to be convincing," he said.

Rebecca sighed. "Why are you searching for this guy, anyway?" She asked. "It's clear you didn't take a quest. Is there a personal reason? I want the truth this time."

Erik looked at her. He didn't really like to say what he had on his mind, but in the end, he gave up, knowing he had to be honest about his intentions, or Rebecca wouldn't trust him.

"He is the leader of those who kidnapped my father. He is the leader of those who tormented me for years, the Crystal Cross Gang. They tried to kill me, to kidnap me even. He may have not been the one physically trying to do so, but for sure he was involved."

Erik's mind was full of memories, each one like a sharp reminder of the Crystal Cross Gang chasing after him.

He remembered how they broke into his house, searching for the biological supercomputer. That day was scary, showing just how far they'd go to get what they wanted.

But that wasn't the end. The gang kept following him, making him feel unsafe even on the streets he knew well. Being constantly watched and chased made him always look over his shoulder.

The scariest memory was when assassins, sent by the gang, tried to grab him during the Red Palace's outing.

That attack showed just how serious they were about getting him, using skilled killers to capture him.

Every time he escaped from the Crystal Cross Gang felt like narrowly avoiding death.

Their leader, the one behind all the trouble and attacks, was now right in front of him.

This was more than just another fight; it was about settling scores from the past, making Erik feel the weight of all those close calls and fights coming down to this moment.

Destroying the Crystal Cross Gang partially settled the score, but he wasn't satisfied with only that.

Besides, he wanted to weaken the Blackguards, those behind the mess Erik went through for years.

Rebecca noticed the intense look on Erik's face, a mixture of anger and resolve.

She got it; she had been through similar experiences herself.

Just like Erik, many people had tried to kidnap her, so she understood the deep sense of personal vendetta he felt towards his enemies.

"All right then," She paused and then turned to look at the man beside Erik.

"Mind telling me who is this guy now?" she said, turning to June.

Chapter 840: Nokisi Point (4)

Rebecca brought Erik to the Band of Giants' headquarters. She, Erik, and June found themselves within the compound, a first-time visit for the two men.

The Band of Giants' headquarters towered over Nokisi Point, a monolithic structure that dominated the cityscape.

Its imposing presence was immense, and it wasn't hard to understand how much power and authority the guild had over the city. No, over the entire nation.

The building, the largest in the city, was a fortress in its own right, with its modern design that belied the military precision with which it was operated.



"Wow, this building is absolutely huge!" June said, his voice laced with awe as he craned his neck to take in the towering structure before them.

To see his reaction, Rebecca couldn't help but smile, feeling proud. "Yes, it's the biggest in the city. Quite the fortress, isn't it?"

"I bet it cost you a lot of money to build it," Erik said.

"Money has never been an issue for us," Rebecca said.

Rebecca explained the building to the two. She did that particularly for June, who looked eager to explore the place, like a little child would, while Erik maintained his stoic expression.

Based on what Vanessa said, vast underground parking spaces stretched out, large enough to accommodate an arsenal of tanks and armored vehicles.

Behind the main building, a series of smaller ones sprawled across the compound.

These buildings, designed to resemble luxurious villas, were the private residences of the high-ranking members of the mercenary guild.

Among them were homes for Rebecca and the Fierce Lioness, her mother and the leader of the Band of Giants.

That area was different from the serious headquarters.

It had beautiful gardens winding through the villas, creating a peaceful vibe in the powerful atmosphere.

"I often came here when I was a kid. This place always calmed me when I was sad."

"It must have been not a simple childhood," June said.

Erik had a far worse situation, but being the daughter of someone so powerful, and having so many expectations placed upon her, must have made her life not simple.

It must have been hard, exactly like in Erik's case, but in a different way.

"It was," Rebecca said. "When I wasn't training, I was studying, when I wasn't doing that, my mother forced me to see battle footage. To see Thaidis dying wasn't bad, but seeing people getting killed was awful."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Erik said. For him, that wasn't a problem. He killed his first opponent when he was sixteen, but he could understand how that wasn't particularly pleasant for a little kid.

Erik maintained a stoic composure as they navigated through the headquarters.

His face was an unreadable mask, betraying none of the awe or apprehension that such a place might inspire.

June, on the other hand, could hardly contain his excitement. His eyes darted around, trying to soak in every detail of their surroundings.

The sheer scale of the headquarters, the obvious display of wealth and power, and the serene beauty of the gardens left him mesmerized.

He lagged slightly behind Erik and Rebecca, his gaze lingering on the architectural marvels and the verdant splendor of the gardens.

As they moved towards the main building, Rebecca led the way.

She glanced back at June, a small smile playing on her lips at his childlike fascination, then at Erik, whose focus remained undeterred.

"I'm going to ask mom for a private meeting. Let's just hope she will say yes."

"All right."

The trio approached a smaller, yet equally imposing, building.

<June, turn into a bird. > Erik said to his clone. <If the Fierce Lioness attacks us, I want to get out of that place as soon as possible. >

<Yes, master. >

With that, he left the area and went to the deepest part of the garden.

"Where is he going?" Rebecca asked. "I told him to be ready to leave the place."

"He can't escape from here," Rebecca said.

"Don't worry about that."

The building's exterior was full of reflective windows which concealed its interiors from prying eyes.

However, the people in the building seemed to be able to see them, and keep a close eye on who was coming and going. In fact, a butler quickly appeared to welcome them.

His appearance was timely, a subtle hint that within these walls, nothing went unnoticed.

"Good morning, Miss Ravithier. Is there a reason for you having come here?"

"Yes. I need to talk to my mother privately."

The butler didn't flinch.

"Your mother is in a private meeting right now. Unfortunately, she can't leave," The butler said.

"Tell my mother there is an urgent matter. This can't wait."

The butler hesitated, clearly torn between adhering to protocol and recognizing the seriousness in Rebecca's tone. She was also the daughter of his boss, so it wasn't like he could send her away.

Rebecca met the butler's hesitant gaze with an unwavering one of her own.

"I'm her daughter, and I know the matter is serious enough for her to not mind being interrupted," she said.

The butler paused, then made a huge smile.

"Of course, Miss Ravithier," he finally agreed, recognizing the authority vested in her by bloodline alone. "I will inform her immediately."

"Thank you." A subtle nod acknowledging the butler's compliance.

The dude had never seen Rebecca so determined, and maybe that's why he gave in to her request.

After a brief wait that seemed to stretch on, the butler returned, his posture straight and formal.

"Madam has agreed to see you, but you will have to wait for a bit. Please, follow me," he said, leading Rebecca and Erik through the polished corridors.

<Well, at least she didn't outright reject, > Erik thought.

They strolled under archways and through halls that echoed with their footsteps, getting closer to the heart of the guild's power.

They arrived at a secluded meeting room, its door opening to reveal a space that balanced opulence with functionality.

The room was lined with bookshelves filled with volumes of history and strategy, while the center featured a large, oval table made of dark wood.

Natural light filtered through the tall windows, casting a warm glow over the room's rich carpets and the intricate tapestries that adorned the walls.

"And now we wait," Rebecca said.

"And now we wait..."