

Bloodline 291

Chapter 291 Scent perception Skill.

"One down two more to go."

Kyle gazed at the two awestruck moths and straightened his body. His brows knitted together when he felt the sensation of warm blood trickling down his thighs. Yet, he stubbornly shook his hand to clear the murky golden blood from his sword.

Amidst the intense pain shooting up to his spine, he took a step forward, his legs wobbled a little but he immediately balanced himself.

This sudden movement successfully jolted the moths out of their trance. They looked at him with raging breathing, contemplating if they should continue or not because the one who died was the eldest among the trio. Of course, they wanted to exact revenge but what if the human killed them as well?

Kyle clenched his empty hand tightly, almost digging his nail in his palm, to maintain his consciousness.

'I can only use instant teleportation one more time...'

His body was screaming with pain and his mana was exhausted, the remaining couldn't even help him if he wanted to escape. However, he had zero plan on falling here. After all, a lot of people were waiting for him. Not to mention, the panicked emotions of Bia that had been stabbing at the back of his head from the moment he saw the bloody sight. He almost thought, maybe she was the one who was injured.

'Did I just block her voice? How...I need to..'

Kyle's thoughts halted abruptly when one of the moths suddenly cried out and pointed his sharp and trembling wing toward him.

"You! Hum...an! How dare you kill our brother!"

After voicing his grief he looked at his companion to seek what he should do. However, his companion was too in panic. After all, the duo always followed the eldest command from the moment they gained sanity. Now the eldest was dead, so their emotions were in a mess.

The second moth suddenly grabbed his brother from behind and threw a seething glare at Kyle but if one looked closely under that anger was shock and fear. He hurriedly flapped his wings and dragged his brother away, his last words echoing in the air like a thunderous roar.

"One day we will kill you!"

Kyle's eyes stayed blank as he watched their figures fade away in the distance. He let out a dry laugh that looked nothing but forced.

"Ah.. "

After confirming that the moths were gone, he finally lost his balance and dropped to his knees. A trail of blood of blood oozed out from his mouth.

"That bug attack was powerful enough to send shock waves throughout my whole body..."

He touched his chest, the shield saved his heart or else it would have been ripped into pieces the moment those sharp wings targeted his chest. Slowly, he tilted his head to look at the place where the girl was lying, but she was a bit far away. That's why he could only catch a glimpse of her feet. He opened his mouth but closed it again. Not sure what he should say. In the end, he could not utter any comforting words.

"Are... you alright?"

Kyle waited but did not get any answer. Not even a whimper. With a hardened expression, he tried to stand on his feet. A painful expression appeared on his face as he forced himself on his feet and stiffly made his way toward the girl. But, he sensed it even before he neared her body.

She was not breathing anymore. Kyle closed his eyes to calm his troubled emotions and waved his hand to throw a blanket to cover her body. He knew the world was ruled by the strong but hearing about something cruel and witnessing it firsthand was an entirely different experience. Moreover, the experience was not pleasant at all.

He grabbed two healing potions from his storage ring and hastily spilled them on his back. A stinging sensation spread out on his skin but he endured it and poured everything on his injuries. After giving it a moment for the sensation to subside, he felt a surge of strength coursing through his veins. Finally, he regained the ability to walk properly. However, he knew his body needed rest. At least for a few hours or else he would not recover completely.

With a loud sigh, Kyle looked up at the brilliant sun. It was still shining brightly above his head, a far contrast to the brutal sight he witnessed a while ago. His eyes turned cold when he saw some dark flying figures in the distance.

"My impression of the dark race was already bad, to begin with, but now it reached rock bottom."

Kyle's face was emotionless as he mumbled under his breath, his words barely more than a whisper.

"....I hope their path doesn't cross with mine. Unlike the person who trapped them in this realm, I am not merciful enough to leave something so revolting alive."

He looked at the nearest mountain and started walking to find a quiet place. So, he could recover his mana. However, before he could leave the area, a glimmering light flashed in his eyes. The light was spilling from the lifeless body of the moth he killed earlier.

Kyle briskly made his way toward the source of light. Immediately, he grabbed his sword and bent down to examine the dead body with narrow eyes. Only to find a round core nestled inside the moth's chest.

"A skill core?"

He wrapped his fingers around the core with little to no interest. It was bright grey and bigger than a fist. Moreover, the light around the core was bright enough to illuminate a dark room.

Kyle stood up and closed his eyes to check the skill.

#*Scent perception (Pseudo divine)-Rank

This skill allows the user to naturally detect all types of hidden scents, enabling them to track down elusive creatures or special objects without any hindrances.

Mana isn't required for this skill.

Kyle's eyebrow twitched when he read the words 'pseudo divine'. He couldn't believe such a powerful skill belonged to a bug.

"Now I know how the moths were tracking me so easily even though normally my presence is hidden due to the artifact."

The skill core in his hand burst into bright particles before vanishing into his body. As he made his way toward the mountain, a wave of scents flooded his nostrils almost overwhelming his senses. At first, he sensed the air around, it was filled with the fresh aroma of grass, the delicate scent of flowers, and the intense smell of blood.

However, only after a second, Kyle's sense of smell expanded in all directions and he retched when hundreds of overpowering scents made his vision blurry.

"What the.. How the hell did they use this skill?"

He wiped his mouth with a frown and immediately deactivated the skill.

"Ugh.. it's a completely useless skill."

Amidst his complaints, he suddenly ran in the opposite direction before stopping in front of a large rock. Kyle pushed the rock away and looked at the ground, only to see a purple color plant.

"I just smell something good from this place."

Chapter 292 Little Birdie?.

After digging around here and there in the name of practicing his new skill, Kyle finally arrived in front of a large crystal-clear lake. At first, his destination was indeed the nearest mountain but he did not even realize when his path changed, because he was too engrossed in smelling the air around him.

Still, even after practicing for so long, he could only activate the skill for fifteen seconds straight, or else it would completely overwhelm his senses.

Kyle wiped the sweat trickling down his head and sighed. There were a lot of bad scents around him but detecting them made it possible for him to avoid all kinds of dangers. Moreover, if he hastily grasped the appealing scents, he could track a lot of good things. The reason he found the lake nestled inside so many boulders was also due to the scent perception skill.

"Okay, I take back my words. This skill is not half bad."

Kyle grabbed the hem of his tattered hoodie and threw it away. He bent down to check the water temperature with the tip of his finger. It was extremely cold but for Kyle, it was normal because his body was resilient against cold.

The injury behind his back was still not completely healed, but it wasn't painful enough to stop him from moving. After checking the surroundings and making sure there were no other people around, he cautiously jumped into the lake.

As the water cascaded down his handsome, muscular body, the droplets glistened in the sunlight, accentuating his toned and lean physique. His skin contrasted beautifully with his silver-bright hair, which shone brilliantly under the sunlight.

After cleaning himself, Kyle made his way out of the lake, feeling refreshed. He ran his fingers through his damp hair, ridding it of any excess water, and then proceeded to put on a pair of black-colored trousers and a cream-colored shirt.

Finding a quiet spot among the boulders that surrounded the lake, Kyle settled down and reached out to the person who had been worrying about him for the past few hours.

'Ahem.. Bia? Can you hear me?'

In an instant, a loud, angry roar echoed in his mind and Bia bombarded his head with questions, one after another.

-'How dare you cut off my voice!? Where the hell are you? Also, what happened a while ago? I sensed a lot of repulsive emotions from you...'

Kyle let out a sigh and massaged his temples, but he allowed her to speak to her heart's content. He knew that this time, he was the one in the wrong because he had blocked her voice when his emotions went out of control. So, he patiently listened to Bia. After hearing her out, he reassured her that he was fine.

'Where are you?'

-'Well...'

He frowned when Bia dragged her words.

'Did you encounter anything dangerous? I can sense you are quite far away from my location.'

Kyle stood up, almost ready to leave, but then Bia replied with a hint of speechlessness in her voice.

-'I am alright, don't worry. It's just after I left, I happened to see Jian. I have no idea how he managed it, but when I saw him, a big horde of monsters was following behind him.'

-'Moreover, the horde of monsters was not the only thing chasing behind him. So, I decided to help him a little out of concern but that little help cost me a lot.'

Bia grumbled at the end, feeling a strong desire to just strangle the red-haired boy fighting alongside her. Just how the hell can someone attract so many monsters at once? Not to mention the fact that the enemies were increasing with each passing second!

She wanted to rest so badly but due to the swarm of monsters attacking her from all directions, she could not even take a proper breath.

-'Damn it! Why do I need to suffer so much when I am not even paid for it? Ugh... the most infuriating part is that after I saved his life this brat is not even thankful! He is calling the majestic me little birdie? Can you believe it? Little Birdie?'

Kyle's eyebrow twitched at her continuous rumbling. He jumped up to stand above a boulder. With narrowed eyes, he looked in the distance.

'Can you handle it? Or should I come to find you?'

-'Who do you think I am? These (C)-Rank bugs are no match for me! Just wait at your current location. I will make my way to you in a while.'

Bia declared resolutely. However, inwardly she knew Kyle would come find her in no time. After all, how can he let her suffer alone? Yet, a far contrast to her expectations, Kyle agreed almost instantly.

'Okay. Come find me when you are done.'

Kyle did not hear it, but he had a nagging feeling at the back of his head that Bia was cursing him. However, he couldn't understand why.

After checking the surroundings one last time, he comfortably sat down behind a large boulder. He wanted to organize his thoughts and also recover his mana completely before moving out again.

Across from the lake where Kyle was taking a break, a set of amber eyes cautiously peeked out from a narrow underground tunnel. It felt as if those eyes were trying to detect someone's presence but all they could see was the vast expanse of a lush, green grassy field.

Yue let out a weary sigh and clutched a bundle of grass to cover the entrance of the underground tunnel. Her breathing came out irregular and her heart was pounding in her chest. Moreover, her appearance mirrored her inner struggle, as the brown tunic she wore was torn from various places.

The reason, from the moment she arrived in this realm she had to run. Not from the monsters but from the strange bat-like creatures. She witnessed a lot of things, so cruel that it tore her heart. However, she was weak, so weak to even protect herself. So, how could she help others?

She slowly gazed at the girl standing opposite her. Unlike her, the girl was a demi-human with a beautiful pair of fox ears on her head and a large fluffy tail.

"We are safe for the time being. That winged man, I think he left."

Chapter 293 Oh no

Yue placed the back of her hand on the girl's forehead standing opposite her.

"Sia? Are you alright?"

The ears on top of Sia's head twitched due to the sudden warm contact. She backed away and shook her head. Just like Yue, her breathing was uneven.

"I am fine, but is he really gone? That man has been following behind us for so many hours, and I noticed it..."

Sia sucked in a deep breath.

"He is strong enough to capture both of us within seconds but instead, he chose to trail behind when we made our escape. He was enjoying it when we struggled to take a breath! So, why did he suddenly disappear?"

Yue clenched her fists tightly. She noticed it as well, the man was indeed toying with them! She opened her mouth to utter some comforting words, but then a familiar laughter filled the air around them, sending chills down their spine.

Sia's eyes widened but amidst the fear in her eyes. She immediately grabbed the spear hanging behind her back before looking at Yue with gritted teeth.

"Let's attack this time, and when he's distracted, we'll split up and run in opposite directions. That way, at least one of us will survive."

Yue bit down on her lips, hard enough to draw blood. As a member of the famous WintCrest family she was taught to fight with a lot of weapons but in the end, being a mage made it challenging for her to excel in close combat.

However, she knew from her previous experience that her spells would not work on the enemy. That's why she grabbed a silver saber from her storage ring. With a deep exhale, Yue turned to Sia.

"I have an artifact. I can kill him with it but I need to get closer to the man to activate it."

After her words fell, with a burst of determination, they leaped out from the underground tunnel, but the man outside wasn't surprised as if he already knew the girls were hiding in the underground tunnel. The wings behind the man's back fluttered and he eyed them with a grin.

"Finally decided to come out huh?"

The girls' eyes locked onto their opponent, but their hearts trembled when they saw another similar man behind the one who had been following them.

'Oh no.'

Yue gritted her teeth. Now, with the addition of another strong enemy, the chances of winning were almost non-existent. Still, her saber gleamed in the sunlight as she charged forward with Sia.

Delight laughter spilled out from the man's throat as he saw their futile struggle. However, instead of stopping the attacks, he looked back at his companion.

"Tsk, it's getting boring. Grab them and let's go back."

Yue and Sia weren't able to comprehend the meaning behind his words, but they shuddered when they got the answer. A heavy, almost suffocating pressure descended on their shoulders. Simultaneously, their grip on the weapons faltered and they dropped to their knees.

A trail of blood oozed out from Yue's mouth as she looked at the incoming hand with horrid eyes. She wanted to shout, but the suffocating pressure around her body sealed her mouth. She noticed from the corner of her eyes, Sia was also struggling to move.

'I thought I was strong after I broke through to (C-)-Rank! So why is it that I can not even save myself?'

Yue's body shook and she desperately tried to activate the artifact present in her sleeves but her fingers could not reach it.

'No... I still want to say sorry to dad because I fought with him before I left. I still want to see mom. Please move..'

But, before she could reach the artifact. Sia's loud cry reverberated in the air and she froze momentarily. Yue's eyes dilated when the man grabbed her neck and for the first time after her brother's death, glistening tears formed in her eyes.

'No... please.'

But then, suddenly another voice echoed in the air, tinged with drowsiness and a hint of complaint.

"What's happening? I just want to rest for a whi...!"

The voice stopped abruptly, and Yue noticed with bated breath. It was very familiar. She had heard that same voice many times before. Even the hint of annoyance within the tone was strikingly similar to that person.

Her eyes snapped shut and the tears around her lashes dropped to her cheeks before she called out, her voice barely a whisper.

"Kyle..?"

At that moment, everything around her fell into eerie silence. She hastily moved her fingers toward the artifact, only to be interrupted by a piercing, agonizing cry that echoed through the air. In an instant, she wanted to open her eyes, but a cold hand from behind swiftly closed them shut.

"It's fine."

Kyle's face was expressionless and his eyes extremely cold as he stared at the other winged man who was grabbing the demi-human girl. He shuddered at the thought that if only he was a few minutes late something devastating could have happened to Yue.

The winged man trembled under his gaze and staggered backward with shock and fear. He couldn't help but gazed at the glistening ice sculpture of his companion. What happened? They were enjoying themselves, weren't they? So how did his friend turn into an ice sculpture so suddenly?

His eyes remained fixated on the sculpture, but it was as if his friend had never existed. Suddenly, the ice sculpture burst into a mesmerizing display of glistening sparks, soaring away with the wind.

The man's panicked scream filled the air as he desperately flapped his wings, attempting to flee. But his eyes widened with terror when chilling blue flames materialized all around him.

Unlike his companion, he was not able to cry out in pain because the cold flames seeped into his mouth, traveling straight toward his skull and heart.

Opposite the newly formed ice sculpture, the demi-human girl's mouth was hung open and her eyes wide with disbelief. It was a sight that she would never forget in her whole life.

Chapter 294 There's no nighttime in this place

After a minute, the hand around Yue's eyes lowered and she finally opened her eyes to see the vast expanse of grass in front of her. She noticed with a choke, the two men were gone. They were not here anymore. Her eyes frantically wandered off toward Sia and relief flooded in her chest.

'Ah..she is fine...?'

Amidst her jumbled emotions, she instinctively reached out to grab the hand that closed her eyes a while ago.

"..!"

A far contrast to her searing temperature, the hand was cold, almost freezing but she did not want to let go.

Kyle let out a small sigh. He bent down and hesitantly reached out to slowly place his palm on her back. He wanted to say that the people who tried to harm her were dead, but in the end, he could only utter a few words.

"It's fine now."

Yue's grip on his hand tightened. She raised her head to retract the tears threatening to spill from her eyes before repeating his words in a barely audible voice.

"It's fine."

After a minute, she gathered her emotions and lifted her head to finally look at the person silently sitting beside her.

Just as she remembered, his clear eyes were glistening in a natural green color as they gazed at her. She blinked, dazed at the tremendous amount of worry present in those eyes. The hand behind her was still patting her back slowly in silent comfort.

After a minute, she gathered her emotions and lifted her head to finally look at the person silently sitting beside her.

Just as she remembered, his clear eyes were glistening in a natural green color as they gazed at her. She blinked, dazed at the tremendous amount of worry present in those eyes. The hand behind her was still patting her back slowly in silent comfort.

"I am alright."

The moment her words fell, Kyle's moving hand behind her back stopped, and the cold comforting sensation vanished. Yue almost wished for the sensation to linger a little longer, but it did not.

Kyle's eyes wandered around her before he opened his mouth to speak but closed it again awkwardly. After a few seconds, he reached out to his one and only companion.

'Hey, Bia? Can you tell me how I should draw back my hand without surprising the person who is grabbing it very tightly?'

-'Why the hell are you suddenly spouting nonsense? I am in the middle of a life and death battle! If you can't help me at least shut your mouth!'

'But.. this is important!'

After a few loud swearing words, Bia finally admitted defeat and answered him blankly.

-'If someone's strong is grabbing you, just use instant teleportation to run away. What's so hard about it?'

Speechless, Kyle wanted to speak again, but then, as if noticing his behavior, Yue released his hand.

"Sorry ...and thank you."

The tip of her ears turned red when the weight of her actions dawned on her. She stood up and immediately left his side to check on Sia.

Kyle stared at her back for a second before activating his newly acquired skill. After sensing a few distant scents, he looked at the girls with a serious expression.

"I don't know what it is, but something strong is coming this way. Let's leave."

The girls instantly nodded and the trio left to hide behind the boulders where Kyle was resting a while ago.

After they settled down, Sia gazed at Kyle with a wary yet grateful expression.

"Thank you for saving my life. My name is Sia."

She could not help but think deeply when she saw the glistening silver hair atop the boy's head.

'Why do I feel like I have seen him somewhere?'

Her thoughts were confirmed in the next second when Kyle gave her a nod.

"It's okay and.. my name is Kyle."

Sia snapped her head toward Yue to confirm her suspicions, and the moment she got a nod from Yue, her eyes widened with disbelief. The tail behind her back perked up with curiosity and in the next second, she neared Kyle while slowly batting her lashes.

"The same Kyle who made a commotion in front of the realm gate?"

Kyle's eyes trailed around her tail for a second before he answered with a small nod.

Sia's eyes sparkled with awe. She couldn't believe she found the person who was rumored to be the strongest among those who entered the realm. Suddenly, she remembered the mesmerizing fire phoenix, Kyle's bonded beast that shocked everyone including her, and her eyes roamed around him to get a glimpse of the legendary beast.

Still, even after a few seconds, she was not able to locate the phoenix. Almost thinking that maybe, Kyle sent it somewhere, Sia opened her mouth to confirm. However, before she could utter a single word, Yue dragged her back because the distance between her and Kyle was getting narrow with each passing second.

Sia turned her eyes toward Yue and blinked.

"What happened Yue?"

Yue immediately pointed at her clothes.

"There's a lake behind us let's clean ourselves. Look, the clothes we are wearing are almost ruined."

"Ah.. you are right.."

In the next second, the girls left him alone. Kyle watched them walk away, then quietly found a spot behind one of the boulders to get some much-needed sleep.

The sun was still shining brightly above in the sky when he was jolted awake by a fleeting touch on his shoulder. The wariness in Kyle's eyes instantly dissipated when he saw the culprit who woke him up. It was Yue. She was startled due to his sudden movement.

Kyle let out a small yawn and noticed, from the corner of his eyes, that her skin had a healthy glow. Her honey-colored hair, once tousled from the fight, was now clean and flowing down her shoulders smoothly.

'Did she take a bath?'

He looked around before he questioned her seriously.

"What happened?"

"I didn't want to wake you up, but you've been sleeping for five hours. So..."

She almost blurted out that she was worried because he did not open his eyes even when Sia was practically singing beside him. However, she changed her words in the middle.

"Don't you want to eat something?"

Kyle blinked at her words, musing slowly.

"What, I slept for five hours? Already?"

He looked up at the sky with narrowed eyes, catching his trail of thoughts. Yue spoke almost instantly.

"I noticed it too, because I have been running around for a while. I think there's no nighttime in this place."

Chapter 295 Did you notice?

While gazing at the clear sky, Kyle was about to doze off again, but then Yue asked him once more if he wanted to eat.

"Huh? I'm not hungry though..."

Kyle started to say, but his words trailed off when a delicious aroma of meat filled the air. Slowly, he peeked behind the boulder and saw Sia sitting by a fire.

'Oh, so I just need to eat? right?'

He turned back to Yue.

"Now that you mention it, I think I am quite hungry. Let's eat."

Yue raised her brow with a tiny smile and the two of them joined Sia by the fire. As Kyle took a bite of the meat, he couldn't help but sigh. It was delicious, unlike his cooking, which was rather ordinary.

'Bia could have enjoyed this, but thanks to someone she's late. So, maybe next time.'

After they were done, Kyle looked at the girls. He couldn't help but think deeply. Surely, the girls were strong. He could sense it from their auras. Sia was (D+)-Rank while Yue was (C-)-Rank, but after roaming around in the realm, he knew their survival would be hard if he left them alone. Not to mention, the dark race.

He sighed but before he could speak, Yue beat him to it.

"We will go in different directions."

Kyle's brow knitted together. From her voice he could feel it, she did not want to trouble him, but how could he let them go alone after witnessing what happened a while ago?

"It's dangerous.."

He was not able to complete his sentence due to Sia's panicked interruption.

"Wait wait... There's no way I am going alone! What if something similar to what happened a while ago happened again? We should follow Kyle.. even if it's just for a while. He is strong!"

Ignoring Yue's glaring eyes, she slowly moved closer to Kyle with a pleading expression.

"I promise I will just quietly follow behind!"

Yue's eyebrow twitched. Immediately, she pulled her back. She knew staying alone was dangerous, but relying on others was not the solution to their problem. Instead of being shameless, it was better to grow stronger.

A blank expression appeared on Sia's face as she gazed at the beautiful hands clenching her arm. This was the second time, Yue pulled her back from Kyle. She could not help but narrow her eyes at her actions.

'Am I thinking too much?'

In an instant, their eyes met mid-air, and the girls became absorbed in a silent confrontation. Almost, forgetting about the person watching them from the sidelines.

Kyle massaged his temples, not sure what he should do, but then like a ray of sunlight, a familiar voice echoed in his head.

-I am almost there. Where are you? I can not see you.'

He stood up abruptly and narrowed his eyes in the distance before musing with a smirk.

"It seems she is fine. I can see her body parts are intact."

A pair of heads snapped toward him when the girls heard the word 'She'. Moreover, Kyle's words where he talked about someone's body parts so causally were everything but good. Still, before the girls could question him, he jumped to stand above a nearby boulder. His movement was so fast, almost like a blur. As if noticing the stunned pairs of eyes behind him, Kyle looked back.

"I am going to enter the nearest treasure land. Let's go together, it's better that way."

He paused remembering Yue's unwillingness. It made him realize that she didn't want to be seen as someone who relied on others, even in the face of danger.

"It's not that I am going to help out every time, but moving together is not a big deal. Just follow me for a while. You can leave when you are strong enough to survive on your own."

The last sentence was specially spoken for Yue. Maybe, it was because of the encounter they had when they were kids or maybe it was because Kyle had spent a lot of time with her silently in Kingdom tersia, but he was sure he could not let anything happen to her in his presence.

After his words fell, he jumped down from the boulder without even waiting for an answer. His gaze traveled up toward the nearest floating island. Subconsciously, he wanted to float but stopped because now he was not alone.

Sia cheered loudly and jumped behind Kyle. As a fox demi-human, she was more agile compared to people her rank. On the other hand, Yue gazed at his back and blinked her eyes in contemplation.

"It's okay if it's only for a while. Also..."

She fiddled with her storage ring.

'I am worried, except Faith.. no one else picked up when I sent the signal. I hope Regius and Niamh are alright.'

She shook her head to get rid of the bad thoughts and joined Sia and Kyle silently.

Only after half a minute, the trio started climbing the stairway leading up toward the brightly lit castle. In the midst of their walk, Sia could not help but narrow her eyes in the distance, before placing her hand on Yue's shoulder with a surprised expression.

"Did you notice?"

"What?"

"It's strange. We walked in an open area and now we are climbing the stairway... So why is it that we did not encounter even a single monster? Not just monsters, we did not even encounter any individual from any other race!"

Yue raised her head to peer at the black dots flying above in the sky. At least for now, they were far away in the distance.

"Maybe it's because of the bat-like individuals. They are hunting almost everything."

In front of them, Kyle stopped mere inches away from the castle gate. He looked up in the sky to find Bia, but his expression immediately sank when he saw that she was not alone.

'Damn, I told you to just toss him somewhere why are you bringing him with you?'

-He begged me. I wanted to ignore him and fly away but this leech grabbed my feet! Ugh! That's why I had to take him with me!'

Yue slowly walked beside Kyle and followed his gaze.

"What are you looking at?"

Her question was answered when a boisterous laughter filled the air.

"Hahaha, Kyle my bro! We finally meet again!"

Kyle's eyebrow twitched at the red-haired youth hanging on Bia's toes. Instantly, the phoenix's huge figure overshadowed the trio. Yue's eyes widened slightly at the huge firebeast and she instinctively stepped back.

Behind them, Sia's eyes were practically glued on Bia. She clenched her excited tail tightly and let out a surprise shout of awe.

"OMG! It's the phoenix! I can't believe I am seeing one so closely!"

Chapter 296 I also want to know

Kyle gazed at Jian with a sigh, but amidst this, there was a barely visible smile at the corner of his lips. When was the last time he saw Jian? He couldn't help but remember the time. Just like in the tower, Jian was still so cheerful.

'I can see it from his bright face that somehow even though he was chased around by almost everything, he managed to avoid the cruel sight I witnessed.'

'It's better that way, I guess.'

With another laugh, Jian was ready to jump at him for a big hug, but his wish went unfulfilled because after carrying him for so long, Bia was too tired. So, the moment she spotted Kyle, she threw him away without any care. Also, as a considerate person who did not like blocking someone's path, Kyle immediately stepped away to give Jian enough space for a good crash.

"Wh-!"

Jian cried out in shock, but before he could crash into the gate, he flipped mid-air and landed perfectly on his feet. With an exaggerated sigh of relief, he gave his chest a little rub.

"Almost gave me a heart attack."

Behind him, Bia instantly decreased her size and pounced at Kyle with lightning-fast speed.

-I am sleeping for a whole day! Don't you dare to wake me up! Or else I am going to pluck all your hair!' "

Kyle could not help but chuckle at her actions. At first, she made herself comfortable on his shoulder but it was not enough.

-Why are you not wearing a hoodie?'

A gasp sounded beside them and Bia finally noticed the new faces standing with Kyle. Her eyes wandered around Yue's pointy ears before finally stopping at Sia's white tail.

-Wow? I was just gone for a while and you already found two beau-!'

Her sentence was cut short because she lost her balance when Jian punched Kyle from behind.

"So, Kyle how have you been? Also, what did you do with your hair? I almost failed to recognize you if not for Bia!"

Kyle hurriedly grabbed Bia before she could crash on the ground and assault his head with countless complaints. He placed Bia on his shoulder and glanced at Jian from head to toe with surprise. Jian was already (C+)-Rank. Moreover, from the dense and powerful aura around him, Kyle knew he needed just one little push and he would break through to (B-)-Rank.

"I am fine. How about you?"

He paused for a second.

"Where is Kelvin? I remember both of you always stayed together."

Jian froze and tears welled up in his eyes. He clutched his chest and looked in the distance.

"I contacted him a while ago. He said he found a spring that raised his rank with just a single dip. I wanted to go find him but he.. he..."

Jian wiped his tears with a hardened expression.

"He did not tell me the location!"

Kyle's eyebrow twitched when Jian suddenly grabbed his arm with a wronged expression.

"As a good brother, I always shared everything with him! But now that he has found something good forget about sharing he is not even responding!"

Awkwardly, Kyle tapped his back and hurriedly pointed at the gate behind him to avoid any further drama.

"Now that you are here. Do you want to enter together?"

Instantly, the tears in Jian's eyes vanished as if they were never there to begin with. He straightens his body with a serious expression.

"Of course! Let's go let's go! Don't worry my mana is almost full because I took a quick nap while hanging on Bia's feet."

However, inwardly, he was grinning madly. Finally, he found his lucky charm! How could he let such a precious opportunity slip away? That's why even though he had to beg, he clung to Bia almost as if his life depended on it. Suddenly, Jian looked back at the girls who had been watching their interaction for a while, and whispered slowly in Kyle's ear.

"What about the ladies standing behind you? Are they with you?"

"Yes, they are with me."

Jian gave him a nod before hastily leaving his side to introduce himself to the girls. Kyle's eyebrow twitched when Jian placed his hand in front of his chest and lowered his head slightly in a polite gesture.

"Hello, my name is Jian."

He even went as far as to flash a beautiful smile at the girls, making them laugh out loud. The moment, Yue and Sia introduced themselves, Kyle grabbed his shoulder and dragged him away because if he left them alone at this rate they would never enter the treasure land!

Jian grumbled under his breath.

"At least let me befriend some beauties."

Kyle rolled his eyes and pushed the castle gate open. In an instant, everyone around him turned serious. Their weapons appeared in their hands, ready to face all the dangers that were present in the treasure land.

As a mage, Yue preferred to fight with a bow and Sia was a spear user to begin with that's why she held her spear in her hand firmly. Jian's face fell when he grabbed the plain-looking wand hanging on his waist. It's because whenever he fought with a wand, he always remembered the not-so-beautiful memory of the tragic incident that happened to him a long time ago.

Like the observant person he was, Kyle noticed the wand in his hand almost immediately. He couldn't help but question with a raised brow as he stepped in the gate.

"Hmm, where's the blue (SS+)-Rank wand you used in the tower? I remember it was quite powerful..."

Kyle's sentence faded behind him as he vanished into the gate. The girls entered after him, leaving behind the sulking red-haired youth who was glaring at his wand.

"I also want to know where's my precious wand! Okay!"

Jian wiped his invisible tears before jumping in the gate behind the trio while cursing the person who stole his and Kelvin's storage rings in the past. Not once but twice.

"I swear one day I will find the person who stole the ancient map and our precious strange rings!"

Chapter 297 The key

When Kyle entered the gate, a familiar sensation of dizziness filled his head, but this time he did not even take a second to recover. His feet silently landed on a solid surface before he lifted his gaze to look at the scenery in front of him.

The space in front of him was rugged and weathered, filled with worn-out targets. His eyes trailed off toward the dented armor and weapons scattered around almost everywhere before finally stopping at the three heavily panting figures standing in the distance.

Kyle's eyes narrowed at them as he mused under his breath.

"Dwarfs?"

It wasn't his first time seeing dwarfs. He had seen some in Kingdom tersia, but he was still intrigued by them because, unlike normal humans, they were shorter in height.

Instantly, Kyle noticed the strangeness in their behavior. The trio was standing far away from each other, one in each corner of the large room that looked very similar to an old training ground. Moreover, their hands were devoid of any weapons yet they were panting like they had just run a marathon.

He wanted to observe them for a while quietly but unlike Yue and Sia, the moment Jian appeared behind him he started waving his hand at the dwarfs with enthusiasm as if they were his long-lost buddies.

"Hi, guys. What's going on here?"

Kyle's facepalm and the dwarfs instantly snapped their heads to look at the new arrivals with wary eyes. However, Jian was not done. His eyes roamed around the room before he backed away with knitted brows.

"What the? This room is so dusty and old. Moreover, aren't we already in the castle? So, why did the mechanical voice not announce our arrival? Hmm.."

One of the dwarfs suddenly grinned at Jian.

"Human, the voice will surely announce it you just need to cross the circular boundary drawn on the ground."

Jian gazed down and after spotting the boundary he raised his thumb toward the dwarf with a smirk.

"Oh right, thanks."

Kyle instinctively reached out to grab his collar but even before he could grab him, Jian turned to look back at him with a cheeky smile.

"What? Do you think I am idiot enough to step inside when I can clearly see their condition?"

Kyle rolled his eyes. He so desperately wanted to say that yes, you are an idiot but held it in.

Opposite them, the dwarf who asked Jian to step inside shrugged his shoulders with a scoff.

"Do whatever you want. Anyway, in the end, you have to step inside."

Kyle frowned and looked around the room. However, even after a minute, he was unable to locate any exit. At that moment, Jian suddenly tapped his shoulder and sucked in a deep breath.

"I will enter the battlefield first save me if I am in danger."

Under Kyle's speechless eyes, he jumped forward and landed directly inside the boundary, but to everyone's surprise, nothing happened. Regardless, the familiar mechanical voice finally reverberated in the air.

"Welcome new participants to the '012' treasure land."

"Counting the number of new arrivals...."

"Total new arrivals one; A (C+)-Rank human."

"Please do your best to complete the training designed for you."

The room was filled with eerie silence as Jian gazed back with a grin. He couldn't believe he was safe and sound! This outcome was a thousandfold better than the first time he entered a treasure island and almost lost his dear life.

"It's safe guys."

With a nod, Kyle, Yue, and Sia entered the boundary behind him, and the mechanical voice echoed in the air again.

"Welcome new participants to the '012' treasure land."

"Counting the number of new arrivals...."

"Total new arrivals four; One (D+)-Rank demi-human, one (C-)-Rank elf, one (C+)-Rank divine beast, and one (??)-Rank human."

"Loading... unable to detect the rank of the human... Automatic rank would be assigned."

"Conclusion; The human would be assigned (F-)-Rank."

"Please do your best to complete the training designed for you."

In an instant, everyone snapped their eyes toward Kyle in shock. He was the only human among the ones who just crossed the boundary. However, no one was willing to believe that he was only (F-)-Rank!?

Jian was the first to question him regarding his rank.

"Bro?? How can you be (F-)-Rank? It's impossible-!"

His sentence was cut short because the land beneath his feet suddenly shook violently. Kyle reached out to pull him but just like Jian the ground beneath him also started quivering.

The dwarfs in the distance wiped their sweat with bitter smiles. They mumbled simultaneously under their breath.

"It's starting again."

The moment their words fell, the ground beneath everyone's feet was lifted upward before a round glowing transparent dome appeared around their bodies separately.

Kyle and Jian both hastily punched the dome but it did not even budge, instead a sharp current pushed them back.

A deep frown appeared between Kyle's brows. The moment he attacked the dome, he knew he could break it within ten or so minutes if he used his full strength. However, the problem was the current flowing in the dome. It targeted his mana, and he knew if he attacked the dome even for a minute he would lose all his mana. He glanced at the others calmly.

"Don't touch the dome."

Due to the sudden noise, Bia was startled awake, but before she could open her eyes fully, Kyle tapped her head with a chuckle.

"It's okay you can sleep I can handle it."

His ears twitched when a slow whistling voice reverberated around him. Instantly, he stepped backward to stand in the center of the dome. With a loud rumble, three moving targets appeared around them. The targets were old but on each target, a big '1000' was written. Kyle chuckled amidst the tense atmosphere.

"Now I know what the mechanical voice meant when it asked everyone to complete the training."

However, the treasure land was not done yet because, in the next second, a floating bronze key appeared in the center of the room. After the key appeared, the mechanical voice sounded once again.

"Only the participant who completed the training first would be shown the next path. The remaining had to try again. So, please do your best."

One of the dwarfs smirked and started punching one of the targets around him.

"I am going to take the key this time!"

The other dwarfs chuckled at him as they attacked the moving targets around them. The trio have been in this room for a while now but they failed to take the first key. The one who took it was a strong demi-human.

After them, Sia, Yue, and Jian also started attacking the targets. The room was filled with many noises as they hit their targets. The number on each target decreased with every successful hit.

Among them, Kyle was the only one standing silently without attacking the targets. Therefore, the moment Jian, Sia, and Yue noticed him they stopped and looked at each other.

As if noticing their behavior, Kyle looked up and said with a deep expression.

"Can not we just take the key without completing the task?"

Chapter 298 Enhancement pill

?The dwarfs scoffed at his words. If taking the key was so easy they would have already left this damn room.

Sia and Yue looked equally confused but then Jian grabbed his stomach and laughed out loud. He couldn't believe he had forgotten the strange skill Kyle used in the tower. After wiping the corner of his eyes, he placed his wand back and rubbed his hands.

"Bro, I don't want the first key. Okay?"

Kyle threw him a glance but before he could teleport he remembered something very very important. Silently, he grabbed Bia and placed her on the ground.

'Now it's fine.'

With a relieved sigh, he vanished from his place under everyone's stunned gaze. In the next second, Kyle appeared mid-air, just mere inches away from the key.

The dwarfs froze in their spots. The human was cheating in front of their eyes but they could do nothing but watch as he grabbed the key.

Instantly, the transparent dome around everyone vanished and a round fluctuating portal appeared at the end of the room out of thin air. Kyle glanced back with a smirk.

"So, who wants the first key?"

Jian immediately raised his hands and shook his head. For some reason, he was sure if he was the one who entered the next room first, he would probably have to face a life-and-death situation until the others arrived.

"Nope, not gonna take it."

While they were discussing who should take the first key, the dwarfs were devastated. In the end, the trio silently agreed to wait until the silver-haired human left the room. After all, they knew if they did not they would be wasting their breath.

Kyle thought for a second and vanished from his spot, he grabbed Bia and walked toward Yue.

"Yue, you go first. Also, Bia is sleeping so take her with you."

"It's kind of noisy in this place."

There was hesitation in Yue's eyes. However, the hesitation vanished when she gazed into Kyle's eyes. With a sigh, she carefully grabbed Bia and took the key.

"Okay."

A far contrast to Kyle, Yue's hands were warm. That's why the moment she touched the little phoenix, Bia blinked her drowsy eyes at Kyle.

-'Hey? It's rare for you to send me with someone else. You know her?... Why do I feel like you are worried.'

Kyle hummed and looked away.

'Just a friend. Stay with her for a while.'

Bia's eyes narrowed at Kyle's curt answer. She knew he made some new friends in Kingdom tersia but she never thought one of them would be a beautiful elven girl. After all, it was very rare for him to make female friends.

-'Alright... but, it's just my opinion okay don't take it to heart. If you want to choose a mate I would prefer it if you pick Mia because she is gentle and a talented cook-!'

Kyle grabbed her by her neck with a blank expression. Just what the hell was this tiny thing thinking? He was ready to roll his sleeves and put some manner inside her head but stopped because there were many eyes watching him.

He placed Bia back in Yue's arms and immediately walked away.

"Yue, you should leave. Or else..."

'I don't think I can stop myself from strangling a certain bird.'

The glowing portal immediately vanished the moment Yue stepped inside. In the next second, as if waiting for her to leave the mechanical voice sounded again.

Kyle gazed at the dome that appeared around him and the moment he saw a similar bronze key in the air he vanished.

The second person to leave behind Yue was Sia. After the girls were gone, Kyle looked at Jian.

"You are next."

Jian scratched his head with a bitter smile.

"Okay, but you know... I am having this ominous feeling that even though we are entering the same portal somehow I am going to end up in a different room."

Kyle tapped his back with a sigh.

"Don't worry. This treasure land is all about training so as long as you follow the command you will find the exit."

"I hope so."

After Jian left the room, Kyle and the speechless dwarfs were the only ones left the room. Once again the training started and Kyle easily got the key, but before he could leave, one of the dwarfs suddenly offered him a storage ring.

"How about we trade?"

Kyle raised his brow and took the storage ring. He glanced inside the ring. It was mostly empty except for a bundle of herbs and a small mountain of beautiful shiny finger-sized round orbs placed in a corner.

"What's the thing inside?"

The dwarf looked back at his companions and after getting a nod from them, he smiled.

"It's the currency of my Kingdom. You can call them coins. One coin is made of at least one thousand mana stones."

Kyle narrowed his eyes and fiddled with the many storage rings in his hand.

"To be truthful I am not poor. Do you have something better?"

The dwarf was stunned. He couldn't believe the human was so greedy to ask more when he practically gave away half of his wealth. He cursed under his breath and looked back at his companions. They were also wearing sour expressions.

After thinking for a few seconds, the dwarf took out a wooden box from his clothes.

Kyle grabbed the box and opened it. There was a black round pill inside the box. He gazed at the dwarf with a curious expression.

The dwarf sighed.

"It's an enhancement pill. After consuming it, your strength will increase by one rank within a minute. For example, if you're currently (F-)-Rank, it will go up to (E-)-Rank. However, there's a catch. The pill's effects only last for an hour. After that, you'll return to your original rank."

Kyle closed the box. The pill seemed good, but he would be an idiot to think it had no side effects.

"Sure, tell me about the side effects. I will help you all get the keys."

Chapter 299 That was easy

?Kyle's eyebrow twitched when the dwarf told him the side effects of the pill with a bitter expression. Most of the side effects were not serious, except for one. He closed the box and gazed at the sweating dwarf.

"So, after the one-hour time is over, my overall strength will be greatly weakened for an entire day?"

The moment he got a nod from the dwarf, the storage ring and the wooden box vanished from his hands. After all, something was better than nothing.

"Alright, I will help you."

The dwarf watched him with a blank expression. Slowly, Kyle placed the bronze key in his hand and turned away. He so badly wanted to question about the storage ring that contained coins and herbs but who was he kidding? The human was clearly a lot stronger than him. That's why he quietly swallowed his question and after waving at his companions left through the portal.

Kyle stood in the middle of the room and swept his gaze at the other two dwarfs.

"So, who wants to go next?"

After a few minutes, the dwarfs were gone and Kyle finally got a key for himself. He jumped inside the portal ready to see others but instead, he appeared inside an empty round chamber.

"Huh?"

He couldn't help but chuckle as he thought about the last words Jian told him.

"It seems I am the one who got separated."

As if noticing his arrival, a sharp black arrow shot out from the ceiling. However, Kyle noticed with a raised brow, it was extremely slow. He side-stepped and easily avoided the arrow.

"Hmm, that was easy. Now what next-!"

His sentence was cut short because, in the next second, more and more arrows rained down from the ceiling. With a low curse, Kyle ran in the opposite direction to avoid the arrows. They were slow but too many. Moreover, he noticed with a frustrated expression. The speed at which the arrows were fired was increasing with each second.

In the blink of an eye, three hours passed but the arrows raining down at him were never-ending. After two more hours, the whole chamber was filled with arrows and Kyle had to jump around to avoid them.

Beads of sweat trickled down from his forehead and in the middle of his run, he accidentally scratched his leg and cursed loudly.

"Damn it, I am not running anymore!"

With another leap, Kyle's body started floating mid-air. However, instead of stopping the speed at which the arrows were falling increased.

He flew inside the chamber with a dark expression. The ground beneath him was almost black, not in color but due to the amount of arrows raining down from the ceiling.

After another hour, Kyle's whole body was drenched with sweat. His precious set of clothes was gone just like that. Also, he was tired of dodging. With another flip mid-air, Kyle raised his head with a sharp glint.

"I think I should break the walls around me..."

Instantly, ten ice spears emerged around his body but before he could act on his words, the arrows raining from the ceiling stopped abruptly and a round portal appeared in the middle of the chamber.

Kyle raised a mocking eyebrow, and the spears around him vanished. However, deep down, he was already strategizing on how to break through the walls, if the castle dared to send him into another similar chamber.

He wiped the sweat from his forehead and jumped inside the portal with a tired expression. His vision blurred for a second but in the next second, he arrived in a vast meadow field. Surprisingly, the air was fresh and quiet. Also, no matter where he looked he was alone. Immediately, Kyle slumped down on the carpet of grass with a sigh.

"Is this a resting area?"

But, how wrong he was. All around him, many glowing white eyes peeked out from the grass, and slowly they started crawling toward him. Kyle's eyes snapped open when he sensed a trickling sensation on his foot.

Startled, he immediately jumped and brushed his foot.

"What the heck!?"

Kyle's eyes widened when he looked at the hundreds of fist-size black insects surrounding him from all directions. Their eyes glowed in a strange white color as they made their way toward him.

With another loud curse, he started floating mid-air.

'I can not believe I have to fight insects! Is this damn treasure island kidding with me?'

Not to mention the fact that he was inside a big open field. There were no ceilings or walls around him. It was just wide open space as far as the eye could see.

Suddenly, Kyle sucked in a deep breath. Now that he was floating, he could see the situation around him more clearly. All around him, thousands of similar insects were crawling in the grass.

"Haha, please tell me this is a joke?"

Kyle's hands turned sweaty as he looked up at the clear sky. He swallowed dryly because even though he was (S-)-Rank, taking care of so many insects was not something he could do in a short amount of time. It would definitely take him days, if not weeks, to handle them all.

'Don't tell me this is a punishment because I tried to break the walls?'

He couldn't help but regret. Regardless, it was too late. With a dejected sigh, he roamed around mid-air and waved his hand to kill the insects with his flames from time to time.

After roaming around for an hour, Kyle was dead tired. Specifically because before he arrived in this field he had to run around a lot. He couldn't help but whisper in his mind for some comfort.

'Hey, Bia? How are you doing?'

After a second, a satisfied sigh sounded inside his head.

-'It's amazing. Why didn't you tell me Yue is such a great cook? The food is tasty. Now, I don't think I'll ever be satisfied with your cooking again.'

-'By the way, where are you and the dwarfs? Only Sia and Jian joined us after a few minutes. Also, the training here wasn't too difficult. We just had to defeat a certain number of monsters, and then an exit appeared out of thin air. But because Jian and the girls were too tired that's why we decided to eat and rest for a while.'

Kyle's eyebrow twitched. Still, he took a deep breath to compose himself and slowly glanced at his luck stat.

'Don't tell me Jian rubbed off his bad luck on me?'

He was contemplating deeply when Bia's next words poured salt on his wounds.

-'Wait wait.. don't tell me you found the treasure room? Damn, I knew it!'

Chapter 300 Ice mountain

?In the middle of a vast meadow, a huge ice mountain was standing proudly. Atop that mountain, Kyle was lying with a peaceful expression. From his even breathing, it was evident he had been resting for a while.

However, if one looked closely, they would notice that the mountain was actually made up of hundreds of frozen insects stacked on top of each other. The alive insects crawling in the grass were attempting to climb, but because of the uneven edges of the mountain, they were failing miserably.

A frustrating cry echoed in the distance, and Kyle lifted his head to look, but it was too far away. That's why he opted to close his eyes again.

In the past two weeks, he has pretty much figured out everything about this place. First, the field was vast and had no boundaries. Second, after every few hours, some new individuals would arrive in this place just like him. And third, the mechanical voice never told anyone what they had to do in this place.

Kyle let out a sigh. He did consider helping the new arrivals, but he was just too exhausted. Besides, it wasn't his responsibility to save everyone. After all, he was stuck in this place too.

Yet, he couldn't help but think deeply when the loud cry sounded again.

'Why do I feel like I have heard this voice before?'

'No, it's not Jian... So, who is it?'

After thinking for a few seconds, Kyle threw the matter at the back of his head.

'Whoever it is, that person is not alone. So, I will check after a while.'

Far away from Kyle's location, two young elves were trying their best to calm the frustrated brown-haired youth.

In the end, the girl in the team reached out to grab the youth from behind with a sigh.

"Nine, calm down you are attracting more insects!"

Nine froze in his actions, he gazed at the beautiful pair of hands and blinked. Amidst the hundreds of insects surrounding them from all directions, Nine leaned into the hug with a sheepish smile.

"Okay, my dear Elli I will follow your command."

The person standing beside them hissed with anger and immediately grabbed Elli's hand to separate them from each other.

Nine glared at the green-haired elf before rubbing his fingers on Elli's wrist with a sulking expression.

"Elli, why did you bring him with you? You know I hate third wheels..."

Elli giggled and slowly slapped his hand away.

"Rowan is my old friend. Don't say anything bad about him."

A vein bulged out in Rowan's forehead. He couldn't believe the duo was flirting in the midst of hundreds of insects. Suddenly, a crawling insect jumped at Nine and Rowan slashed it with his weapon.

"You two stop it, let's find an exit, or else I don't think we can survive in this place."

Nine looked at Rowan with a sigh and refocused on the insects. It's been a while since he found the two elves. At first, after recovering he only wanted to find Elli and spend some time with her but she was not alone. That's why he had to bring along the third wheel, Rowan.

The trio killed and slowly moved around the vast field but even after an hour they found nothing. Suddenly, with uneven breath, Elli pointed his finger at the distance with a surprise gasp.

"What's that?"

Nine and Rowan both narrowed their eyes toward the place she was pointing and mumbled simultaneously.

"A small mountain?"

Nine cursed when another insect pounced at him from the left side. He kicked it away and started walking toward the mountain.

"Whatever it is, let's go and check."

After ten minutes, the trio arrived below an ice mountain. The land all around the mountain was frozen into ice. Moreover, the mountain top was hidden in a layer of white smoke.

Still, the trio did not dare to get near because thousands of insects were crawling around the mountain. Nine shuddered and rubbed his arms when cold air brushed passed his skin.

"What with this place? The temperature in the field is normal. So, what's an ice mountain doing here?"

With narrow eyes, Rowan suddenly killed an insect and bent down to grab one of many frozen uneven-shaped rocks lying in the grass.

"This!"

His eyes widened instantly. Nine grabbed the rock from his hand and inspected it. A shocked expression appeared on his face.

"OMG, it's the insect!?! How did it freeze to death?"

Simultaneously, the trio snapped their heads to look at the mountain. It was clearly made of many similar rocks!

An ominous feeling surged inside Rowan's heart as he looked at the duo.

"Guys let's leave. I think this place is dangerous."

Nine and Elli both immediately agreed. Fighting with insects was thousands of times better than being frozen to death. Slowly, the trio turned around to leave.

However, at that exact moment, a loud voice echoed in the air.

"You think after stepping in my territory you can leave?"

The trio froze in their spots and chills ran down their spines. With sweat trickling down his forehead, Nine grabbed his sword and mumbled to Elli and Rowan.

"Run!"

Yet, they did not even budge from their spots. No way, they were going to leave him behind. Due to the tense atmosphere, Nine failed to notice the fact that the voice was very familiar and quiet young as well.

Nine grabbed his sword and was ready to fight a life-and-death battle but then the voice sounded again. Moreover, there was a hint of amusement in the voice.

"Well, that's it, now that you have stepped inside my territory. It would be bad if I let you go. How about having some tea with me?"

Nine eyes widened when he finally sensed the familiarity in the voice behind him. He instantly turned back and gasped.

"Wow... Kyle, is it you?"

Kyle grabbed the corner of his hair with a thoughtful look.

"Yes, if you could just ignore my hair and eye color. It's me."

Nine laughed out and jumped at him for a hug. How could he fail to recognize him? After all, he had already seen those silver hair.