

## Bloodline 561

Chapter 561 What about Nine?

The battlefield swiftly started to clear up after Wesley entered the fight. The demons and dark race individuals began falling one by one under the combined forces of the elves, demi-humans, dwarfs, and humans.

Kyle killed most of the people from the dark side as he moved through the area with his spear, eliminating every person who attempted to breach his ice domain.

Once the phoenix got her divine energy back, she turned into her original form to fight alongside Kyle. After all, she didn't want to appear weaker than Nox, who had changed into his original form and was helping Yue kill the enemies.

With a fierce cry and flames of fury in her eyes, Bia sought vengeance against the demons for the injuries one of their kind had inflicted upon her body.

Kyle gazed at the phoenix with enormous breathtaking wings adorned in red, golden, and blue hues that shimmered under the dark sky. Golden flames danced along her wings, creating a mesmerizing display.

"She's stunning..."

Yue stopped next to him in mid-air and gazed at the phoenix too.

"She's... but you know, Nox isn't bad at all. His iridescent scales are the most beautiful in the darkness as they start to glow."

Kyle looked at the lynx.

"But he's quite a scaredy-cat because I can see he's getting frightened by Bia for some reason, almost as if the phoenix would eat him if he's not keeping an eye on her."

Yue blinked when she also noticed Nox's strange behavior. The lynx was really keeping a sharp eye on the phoenix... She suppressed a laugh when she saw how Bia ordered Nox to clean the space before him, and he silently did what she told him. Kyle raised his hand when he noticed his domain was losing its strength.

"The area is almost cleared, and only a few people from the dark side are alive, being hunted by Wesley and the elves who had lost their friends because of them. I think it's time to end all of this."

In the next second, the icicles floating near the icy layer enclosing the area trembled. Then they zoomed directly toward the flying demons and dark race individuals and impaled their bodies mercilessly.

Wesley paused as he gazed at the icicles and blood that spread out, making the already crimson group even redder. The old elven man swiftly dealt with the remaining individuals who were still alive even after the icicles had pierced their bodies before he looked up and noticed the icy layer that had encased them cracking.

As the ice cracked, it transformed into ice flakes that drifted in the air in a captivating manner. The symbols attached to the icy layer all dissipated as well. The dark sky began to clear up due to the cold yet sparkling ice drifting in the air.

The supreme rank individuals were still fighting high up in the sky, but the ones on the ground had dealt with their enemies, which is why everyone who had been inside the icy layer started to disperse. But before leaving, they all looked at the silver-haired human floating in the midst of it all one last time to imprint his face in their minds. To ensure they never made an enemy of this young human and, if possible, ask their people to make him agree to join their side.

Wesley looked at the numerous elves gathering around him. They were all injured, their clothes drenched in blood. He sighed and glanced at the sky where the supreme rank individuals were still fighting.

The old man told the young elves to come with him to a secure location where they could care for their wounds. Even though he saw a decrease in the number of elves due to casualties, he didn't have time to grieve for the fallen because his main focus was ensuring the safety of those who survived.

Yue looked at Wesley as the latter started moving in the opposite direction, and Nox shifted into his smaller form before landing on her shoulder. The lynx glanced at Kyle before speaking directly into Yue's mind.

'So... are we not following the old man?'

Yue looked at Kyle as the man reached out his hand towards Bia.

The phoenix had also transformed into a small crimson bird. But instead of landing on his hand, the phoenix changed direction and perched on Yue's shoulder.

-"It's been a while."

Bia rubbed her head against her neck and shot Nox a secret glare. The lynx flew away from Yue's shoulder with a aggrieved look and went to Kyle for comfort.

To the surprise of both Yue and Bia, Kyle actually patted Nox's head and allowed the lynx to move around his shoulders. Jian, Xavier, and the two humans accompanying them also began to float and appeared beside the couple.

Jian looked at Yue with a smile.

"How have you been? I never thought I would see you here... but it's good that you are safe and Kyle found you. Also, what about Nine? I haven't seen that rascal who vanished with you and Elli."

He let out a sigh when he mentioned Nine. Yue smiled back at Jian. She could tell the red-haired man hadn't changed at all. He was still the same Jian she remembered, even though the aura surrounding him seemed more mature than before.

"I have been good, thanks. About Nine, I don't have much information... he left Elli and me because he had important things to take care of. Elli said he will catch up with us once he's done with his tasks."

Jian's expression turned serious. Although Yue's words sounded usual because to get stronger, one needs to explore the universe, he couldn't shake off his concern for Nine. He just hoped nothing bad had happened to that idiot who had disappeared without a word about his destination. He shook his head and looked over at Kyle.

"So what's the next move? Should we all go and find Alec and the others because you know they are also here."

Kyle hummed. So Jian also knew that the others were here?

"I know they are here, but it would be very challenging to locate them in such a vast place, so it wouldn't be very useful even if we search for them..."

He paused for a moment.

'... especially because I don't remember them, which is why I can't track their scents.'

Kyle took Bia from Yue's shoulder and placed the phoenix on his head.

"I think it's best if we wait for the Gladiator Arena to open. They will surely participate, and we can meet them there."

Chapter 562 Then... left side it is?

Jian nodded and raised his hands in surrender. He had been searching for Alec and the others since he found out they were here but hadn't found a single clue about their whereabouts, except for their names engraved on the gates of some ancient tombs. It was like the group was here but not here at the same time.

Perhaps they were hiding because the Sacred Divine Land was currently very dangerous. The recent situation Jian and everyone around him had just experienced was a prime example of why the Sacred Divine Land was perilous.

He tied his tousled hair and looked up at the supreme rank individuals fighting above them. A bit tempted to enter the fight but knew he would just break his bones if he dared to even touch one of them. That's why he gazed at the silver-haired man.

"So... what are we gonna do?"

Xavier's eyebrow twitched at how easily Jian changed sides. The red-haired man had been following him around all this while, but now it was clear he wanted to follow Kyle and abandon him.

He grumbled inwardly; first Bia, and now Jian as well. Both of them had no loyalty. However, he didn't say anything because he knew staying with a stronger person like Kyle was safer for the duo.

Kyle tilted his head in a gesture of confusion, unintentionally not grasping Jian's intent.

"Of course, we go separate ways. I want to find some treasures and go into seclusion for a while to increase my divine energy stat. Yue and Nox will follow the other elves."

Jian's eyes widened slightly at his words. This bastard... but then he snapped his sharp eyes towards Xavier, who attempted to stifle his laughter but failed miserably.

"You want a beating?"

Xavier shook his head and quickly moved back from the red-haired man. Kyle, who had been thinking, spoke up before Jian could engage in a one-on-one with Xavier.

"Why don't you all follow Yue as well? I inadvertently assisted the elves, so I think they wouldn't mind more company. I have seen that you, Xavier, and the people with you guys have the ability to defend yourselves in danger. Therefore, I'm not concerned about all of you."

Yue looked at Jian.

"Yes, you can come along with me and Nox if you want to. There are some powerful individuals guarding the elves."

Jian rolled his eyes and exclaimed.

"I don't get it. Why isn't anyone questioning why Kyle can roam around solo while we have to stick together in a secure location? Aren't the dangers the same for him? Yue, aren't you going to ask him to stay with us?"

Right after he spoke, everyone looked at Kyle, who remained silent. The man simply grabbed a cloth from his mind space to clean the blood off the silver spear he had been using all this time.

Then they all turned to Jian with expressions that questioned whether he truly believed Kyle needed protection. Jian let out a disbelieving laugh.

"What? I know he's strong! But he's not strong enough to face a supreme rank! I don't think he should be allowed to go alone! Let's stick together. In the end, our final destination is the Gladiator Arena."

Kyle furrowed his brows.

"Don't fret about me. It's not that I don't wish to remain with everyone. It's because currently, there's an imbalance between my strength and rank. It's not good for my body. I need to increase my divine energy quickly to raise my rank."

"That's why I want to explore for treasures and seclude myself. Plus, if I do face danger, I know how to escape."

Jian narrowed his eyes at Kyle's body. He had noticed Kyle's rank and seen the latter's strength, which was a lot higher than his rank. So he knew the man wasn't lying. He thought for a minute and then nodded.

"Okay, do whatever you want. Just stay safe... wait, will Bia go with you?"

Kyle nodded without a word. It was evident that Bia would accompany him. Jian's eyes widened as he looked at the phoenix.

"Bia?? You are gonna leave me?"

Bia cringed at the words that came out of the red-haired man's mouth. She sneered.

-"This majestic phoenix has already been by your side a lot and saved your life many times. Just be grateful for that."

Jian's face fell, and Xavier's expression also revealed reluctance. They both wanted the phoenix to accompany them, but it was evident from Kyle's expression that he wouldn't leave Bia behind.

Jian and the other humans silently trailed behind Yue in mid-air as she and Nox began moving towards the direction where Wesley had vanished with the other elves.

Kyle followed the group until they reached the edge of the area filled with buildings, the exact place where Yue was residing with the other elves until the Gladiator Arena opened. Yue looked back at him with a smile and waved, indicating that he could leave now. Kyle let out a faint smile in return. Yue blinked as he shifted from his position and stopped directly in front of her. He gently wrapped his arm around her waist and pulled her into a hug before placing a soft kiss on her forehead.

"Stay safe. Contact me immediately if you are in any type of danger."

Yue nodded with a flushed face.

"Hmm..."

In the distance, Jian, Xavier, and the two humans' face turned sour at the sight. They turned their heads away and flew towards one of the buildings in the area to locate a comfortable spot to rest. Having stayed in the forest since their arrival in the Sacred Divine Land, and following a strenuous battle, they were in need of rest.

Kyle observed until Yue and Nox also vanished behind Jian and Xavier before he caressed Bia's head.

"Bia... which direction should we go? Left or right? We have a couple of months before the Gladiator Arena opens. Let's catch up and also increase our strength, shall we?"

The phoenix shifted on his head.

"Nope, not gonna choose. Your choice is a better option, you know? I am sure we would end up finding some treasures if we followed your directions."

"So, choose yourself."

Kyle's lips curved upward. Truly, she knew him a lot. He extended his scent perception skill and gazed towards the left.

"Then... left side it is?"

The moment his words drifted in the air, he vanished from his location with Bia, and the duo began their search for treasures. As many as possible. That's how the rumors of a phoenix and a silver-haired man hunting and snatching treasures under the nose of others became famous throughout the entire sacred divine land.

Kyle's appearance had already become renowned when he effortlessly killed many transcendent rank demons and dark race individuals inside his ice domain. So when he and Bia began gathering treasures, they became even more well-known.

## Chapter 563 The Gladiator Arena I

Just as a breeze, time flowed by, and three months later within the Sacred Divine Land, above a particularly elevated area, a crack materialized in the sky, radiantly lit without a sun, as there was no sun in this land filled with divine and spiritual energy.

Numerous figures, both old and young, dressed in cream-colored robes with a large gray sword intricately engraved on the chest of their garments, emerged from the crack and gazed down at the elevated area. Among them were men and women from various races, yet they all shared a common trait - an imposing aura.

The elderly man, with white hair and light blue eyes, leading the group, was enveloped in a brilliant white light, appearing to have transcended mortal limits and reached a state harmonizing with nature. Yet, despite his immense power, visible battle scars marked his exposed hands.

Similarly, all the individuals floating behind him also bore numerous scars on their bodies, evidence of the deadly conflicts they had endured in their lifetimes.

The elderly man with white hair gazed around at the land beneath him and felt an uncountable number of people scattered all around the vast elevated area. He heaved a deep sigh as he peered into the distance, observing the region in the Sacred Divine Land enveloped by pure dark energy, which was extending to engulf the divine and spiritual energy.

"What a pity..."

His blue eyes brightened briefly as he attempted to foresee if a war would indeed erupt in this land within the Gladiator Arena between the dark side led by the shadow generals and the many races participating in the Gladiator Arena. But he furrowed his brows when he saw nothing but countless threads of fate intertwined with death.

Whose threads they belonged to, he couldn't discern for some reason. But one thing was certain, thousands of people would perish in this Arena that he and the others behind him are about to open.

"I suppose this time we will witness many deaths in the Gladiator Arena."

The expressions on the faces of the numerous people behind him remained unchanged even after hearing him. They were already mentally prepared to witness a brutal spectacle this time, a bloodbath that would stain the platforms in the Gladiator Arena.

The elderly man gestured and waved his hand. Without delay, the many figures behind him scattered in different directions above the raised ground. As each of them encircled the elevated area like a bubble, a hidden barrier that had concealed the seemingly desolate space shattered, revealing a grand spectacle.

In the next second, many immense land pieces lifted into the air and began shaping themselves into towering walls engraved with ancient symbols encircling the expansive raised platform.

The symbols glistened and eagerly absorbed the divine and spiritual energy in the atmosphere. As the walls took form, elaborate statues representing powerful ancient rulers emerged from the walls at different points. A tall man's statue, representing the human race with strength and power, stood proudly next to a winged woman from the demi-human race. Close by, a dwarf's statue, holding a hammer, symbolized resilience and craftsmanship. Next to it was an elven woman's statue exuding grace and agility, holding a sword with a thin blade in her right hand.

Amongst them, a demon's statue was also present. The man was sitting lazily against the wall with a sinister grin, adding an air of mystery and danger. Lastly, in the midst of this grandeur, there was a stunning mer woman's statue. She wore a blindfold over her eyes, her hands lifted towards the sky, and a serene smile gracing her lips.

The statues, carved with exquisite detail from ancient stone, added a sense of history and reverence to the walls reaching the sky. Each figure seemed to tell a story of its race, standing as a testament to the diversity and legends of the past. Once the walls were established, numerous chairs crafted from sand emerged from the walls for the audience. Then, in the next moment, thousands of circular

stages where the participants would battle each other materialized in the middle of the walls surrounding the huge ground.

The group of people dressed in robes hovering above the area, watching the scene, stayed unruffled since they had seen this scenario play out many times. The Gladiator Arena, a centennial event, was a familiar occurrence to them.

The elderly man with white hair and blue eyes, leading the group, descended upon the walls. He gazed at the walls, and under his gaze, numerous illusionary figures of men and women purely made of spiritual energy emerged from the walls glistening with ancient symbols.

The figures had different duties: firstly, to provide a nameplate to each person participating in the Gladiator Arena. The participants would then write their own name or whatever title represented them on that plate. Once they inscribed their names, the plate would vanish and integrate itself onto the back of their hands, automatically entering their names in the countless large floating projections lighting up the sky every passing second.

This plate would show the participants when to join a battle and their designated stage since each stage had a different number. It would disappear from the back of their hands when the participants are eliminated from the Gladiator Arena.

Secondly, the illusionary figures would oversee the floating stages where different participants would battle each other. As a result, some figures settled on the floating stage, while others positioned themselves in various locations before the walls.

The group of people clad in robes floating around the elderly man channeled their spiritual energy. All at once, a sphere of light shot towards the sky. As the ball of light reached the highest point in the sky, it erupted into flames that engulfed the sky before a resounding trumpet blast echoed throughout the entire Sacred Divine Land, signaling the commencement of the Gladiator Arena. Right after that, the three grand gates positioned in various directions amidst the towering walls lowered with a resounding noise to allow entry for all those eager to participate.

As the crimson flames lit up the sky above the towering walls and the trumpet blast resounded, every person in the Sacred Divine Land with some knowledge of the Gladiator Arena was alerted. Those close by hurried towards the Arena gates, while others, following their elders, also gathered to head to the Arena. Immediately, the sky was filled with many figures, all moving towards the same destination.

The elderly man in robe and the group around him positioned themselves above the chairs that materialized near the majestic mer woman's statue. They silently observed as the thousands of people eagerly waiting for the Gladiator Arena to open filled the space from each large gate. The atmosphere quickly intensified and buzzed with various sounds, yet everything remained orderly as the illusionary figures moved about, handing a nameplate to each participant and guiding those old elders not participating to the audience seats.

## Chapter 564 The Gladiator Arena II

"Dang, it's super loud..."

A familiar voice sliced through the chaos of sounds reverberating in front of one of the three massive gates positioned in various directions amidst the towering walls of Gladiator Arena.

The young man, decked out in a sophisticated grey hoodie adorned with intricate designs on the cuffs, paired with dark trousers that exuded elegance and style, glided out from one of the many floating ships docked by the massive gate that loomed over a vast area. He pulled back his hoodie, revealing a pair of golden eyes that narrowed as he scanned the numerous people of different races lining up to get a nameplate before entering the massive gate.

Another curse slipped from his lips as he ran his hand through his brown hair, now showing hints of darker edges. The pure golden threads in his eyes swirled as he briefly shut them, but snapped them open again when a woman from the lizard race gave him a rough smack on the back.

"Nine, pick up the pace. The Arena registration might be open for weeks, but that doesn't mean we should lag behind and end up last in line for a nameplate. Let's move quickly."

Nine crossed his arms and grimaced at the overwhelming sight. The sheer number of people around him was beyond count. It felt as if the entire universe had gathered here for the Arena. How would he ever locate his friends in such a massive crowd?

He glanced at the individuals from the lizard race floating around him, the people he had spent many years with. The ones who had arrived on the Sacred Divine Land alongside him and clicked his tongue. Nine had hoped to arrive early at the Sacred Divine Land to search for his friends, but he was unfamiliar with the directions.

The lizard race possessed an array that could teleport them near the Sacred Divine Land, and even though he asked to use it, they were reluctant to use many resources to activate the array solely for his journey. Consequently, he had to wait until the lizard race members preparing for the Gladiator Arena departed from their planet.

However, because of the old supreme rank lizard bastard's command, the lizard race members left their planet just an hour before the start of the Gladiator Arena to prevent conflicts with the dark and demon races wandering the Sacred Divine Land.

Nine eyes widened with shock as the old supreme-rank lizard leading the group of people that had arrived with him instructed them to move forward, discreetly signaling for them to abandon him. He clenched his teeth and followed closely behind them.

'Darn, I really wish I could outmatch this old man. Ugh, If only I were stronger... I have trained under him for so many years, and he still treats me like I'm just an annoying bug. This old geezer. Why doesn't he understand that I don't have scales covering my body like him and his people? That's why my body is on the weaker side!'

He grumbled silently because over the years he had trained under the old supreme rank lizard, he had to endure intense training that was not suitable for his fragile body! The lizard race people bodies were stronger than his, so he had to put in extra effort to catch up with them.

He chuckled when he thought how among all his friends, he was the weakest and the one who detested training the most.

Nine grinned as he observed the well-defined muscles accentuating his physique. It was evident that he outshone all his friends in terms of physicality, strength, and agility, even though he had only reached the second stage of divine energy within the divine rank.

"Hehe..."

An evil laugh slipped past his lips, but he quickly slapped them shut when he remembered the familiar faces of Alec, Carcel, and Kyle.

"Okay, I retract what I just thought. If I got ahead of myself and those rascals are stronger than me..."

"...They might just pummel me to a pulp to taunt me for the rest of my days."

Nine shuddered at the mere thought of the trio teaming up against him just to tell him who is the strongest among them. He was certain that Regius, Jian, and Sinon would also join in for the fun.

It seemed likely that he would meet his grave early if he was haughty before them, so he decided inwardly to keep a low profile and avoid boasting in their presence.

In that moment, a familiar old voice echoed beside his ear as he had unknowingly halted mid-air while lost in thought.

"Nine Orlando!"

"Huh??"

Nine blinked. Who had the audacity to address him by his full name, a name he had almost forgotten, but as he turned his head and met the serious gaze of the supreme rank old lizard, he nodded.

"Yes, boss."

"How may this humble me assist you?"

The old supreme rank lizard raised his hand and gestured around them.

"Can this humble one see just how many people are floating around him?"

Nine glanced around. There were numerous unfamiliar individuals floating around him. He opened his mouth to respond, but the old man interjected before him.

"Nine, I don't have the patience to ensure you don't get lost in this crowd. You need to stay with the group. Otherwise, I will leave you behind!"

Nine let out a dry laugh and scratched his head when he noticed that the group of people under the old lizard had already entered one of the numerous lines queuing in front of the massive gate leading inside the towering walls. The old man harrumphed and swiftly moved towards the group looking at him from a distance; Nine quickly followed behind and joined the group. However, he didn't forget to mumble curses under his breath.

"Old geezer, just you wait..."

He glanced around at the countless people surrounding him, hoping to find his friends' faces among them because he knew he would meet them all here.

He moved forward with the line to get a nameplate. However, when he saw the incredibly long line, he was sure it would take him at least a whole day before he could get a nameplate.

Chapter 565 The Gladiator Arena III

Just as Nine had anticipated, it took a full day before he and the group of lizard race individuals with him, standing in the queue, reached one of the illusionary figures handing out the nameplates to the participants.

The supreme-rank old lizard stood quietly by everyone's side as the people under him each took a nameplate. Nine quickly rubbed his hands and grasped the small square nameplate that the illusionary figure handed him when it was his turn.

He let out a sigh, finally, after so much struggle, he got a nameplate.

After everyone in his group got a nameplate, he swiftly entered the massive gate with them. It took them some time due to the crowd to find empty chairs among the many lined up within the towering walls surrounding the stages where the battles would take place. Nine's eyes reflected a hint of surprise when he saw the massive platform in the middle of the towering walls. The ancient statues and the projections floating in the sky, displaying various titles and names of the people who had written their designations on the nameplates given to them.

They all settled as a group, and the supreme rank lizard sat in the middle of them to share some tips on how to handle powerful opponents. Nine listened attentively to this crucial advice, but his lips twitched when the supreme-rank lizard suggested, with a serious expression, that they should admit defeat if they realize they can't overcome their opponent.

The old supreme-rank lizard stressed that with numerous battles ahead, wasting time and energy on unwinnable fights was not smart. Instead, they could use that time to challenge a different opponent. Given the many battles in the Gladiator Arena, losing a few matches wasn't a big concern as long as they secured the necessary victories needed for the next round.

The noise in the air got louder with each passing second as numerous people entered the Gladiator Arena. Nine stared at the sky with furrowed brows because of the noise. However, his sharp ears picked up a conversation amidst the cacophony of sounds in the distance among a group of people from the dwarf race. The group sat together talking about how they could secure victory since all of them had reached the transcendent rank.

He tilted his head and started listening. Initially, it was just a dull conversation, and he was simply listening because he had nothing better to do. Suddenly, one of the dwarves spat out in anger and cursed loudly. Nine blinked, a bit surprised, but his eyes widened when the dwarf who cursed mentioned that he would have advanced to the next stage of transcendent rank if the powerful treasure he found last month wasn't stolen by a crimson phoenix.

"A phoenix?"

Nine turned back and chimed in with sparkling eyes, startling the people around him. The dwarf who had just spoken was also taken aback when he saw the pair of golden eyes peering at him.

"You...? Were you eavesdropping?"

He was a bit angry that his embarrassing past was known by someone else, but his anger faded when Nine shook his head with an innocent expression.

"I just heard one word, phoenix. So, were you the one who talked about a phoenix? I really like phoenixes, so I would love to learn more if you are willing to share."

He smiled, a bit excited to know more because what were the chances that the phoenix the dwarf mentioned was not Bia? Only five percent! After all, phoenixes were rare, especially those of such a powerful rank to steal under the nose of a transcendent rank. But his smile faltered when the dwarf sneered at him.

"I don't want to. Just mind your own business, human."

Nine sneered back at the dwarf and jerked his head forward with a serious expression. He rubbed his forehead and contemplated taking a nap. However, the man from the lizard race sitting beside him shook his shoulder. Nine opened his eyes and looked at the familiar man dressed in white.

"What happened, Quazi?"

"I just wanted to say, don't forget to write your name on the nameplate. Otherwise, you won't be able to join the Arena."

Nine muttered a thank you and quickly grabbed the nameplate he had tossed in his mind space. Quazi suggested he should just use his divine energy to engrave his name on the plate. Nine nodded, but before he could engrave his name, he paused for a moment and looked at the man next to him with a mischievous glint.

"You know... I heard we can write anything on the nameplate. A name or a title that represents us. Doesn't that mean I can write whatever name I want?"

The lizard man with scales all over his skin seemed a bit puzzled but nodded his head in response, and Nine let out a chuckle.

"Good, very good."

He thought for a few moments and then began engraving his title on the nameplate. Quazi stole a glance at his plate, not just him, but many others from the lizard race who knew Nine, also peeked at the nameplate to find out what he was writing because he was taking a lot of time just to write down his simple name consisting of only four words.

Even the supreme rank old lizard cast a glance at his nameplate from afar, his old face revealing a hint of surprise when he read what Nine was inscribing. All the people around Nine gazed at him with scrunched-up expressions as the plate in his hand dispersed into particles and melded into the back of his hand.

In the next second, an empty circle appeared on the back of his hand. The moment the circle appeared on his hand, another title lit up in one of the many projections floating in the sky.

[The Lone Overlord of the Sea.]

Nine glanced at the people around him, and shrugged his shoulders with a smirk.

"What are you all looking at? It's totally up to me what I want to write. Gotta admit, this title suits me best. Hahaha..."

Thanks to him, everyone around who hadn't written their titles on the nameplate yet got inspired. Instead of their names, they also began jotting down various powerful titles for themselves. After all, Nine was right that they could put whatever they wanted on their nameplates.

The moment Nine's title lit up in the projection, the old man in a cream-colored robe with a large gray sword intricately engraved on the chest of his garments, sitting high above the crowd by the

mermaid statue was surprised. The old man read the title, and his blue eyes narrowed with a faint light that vanished, leaving nothing behind.

The people in similar robes beside him were also a bit surprised when they read the title. Then they all broke into subtle smiles. Indeed, there were always individuals who knew how to make themselves known.

The moment Nine's title lit up in the projection, the old man in a cream-colored robe with a large gray sword intricately engraved on the chest of his garments, sitting high above the crowd by the mermaid statue was surprised. The old man read the title, and his blue eyes narrowed with a faint light that vanished, leaving nothing behind.

The people in similar robes beside him were also a bit surprised when they read the title. Then they all broke into subtle smiles. Indeed, there were always individuals who knew how to make themselves known.

That's how so many powerful people found Nine and decided to keep an eye on the young man to see if he could truly live up to the title he had written for himself.

#### Chapter 566 The Gladiator Arena IV

A hearty laughter filled the air as a young man with black hair paused among the numerous people floating in the air. The horns atop his head and his black wings with golden edges and silver patterns glistened in the daylight.

Sinon paid no mind to the onlookers giving him side eyes and flashed a grin at the three men floating across from him.

"You all lost! I won this race, haha. That means I'm the fastest in agility!"

He ran his hand through his hair with a haughty expression. Finally, he defeated the trio in something... if only he hadn't started gathering so many water type skills because of Kyle, he would have been a lot stronger in that aspect as well. But well, it was already in the past, and now he was proficient with all his water type skills.

Carcel gave him a thumbs up with a nod, but the words that came out of the golden-haired man's mouth were anything but complimentary.

"It's because you have wings."

Sinon's smile faltered, and he clutched his wings with a wronged expression.

"Why? Just why? Just accept that I am the fastest among you all! You all excel in one thing or another!"

Regius's brown eyes glistened with a mischievous glint and he joined Carcel with a solemn expression.

"If you hadn't used your wings... you know you wouldn't have won."

Alec glanced at the duo and suppressed a chuckle when Sinon glared at him with dark eyes, almost as if daring him to join the duo and he would make him regret it.

The trio looked behind Sinon at the towering walls. Then they glanced at the massive gate leading to the Gladiator Arena, and their smiles faded. It had been months since they had been staying

inside a hidden underground chamber, and finally, the Arena was open, so they came out to join it. Their faces turned sour as they all looked at the extensive queues of people in front of the massive gate.

Regius furrowed his brows.

"Just how are we going to secure a nameplate in such a massive crowd...?"

Sinon glanced back and cursed.

"Damn, it's going to take many hours or maybe a day or two before it's our turn..."

As the four men gazed at the massive gate, Zron, Yon, Susan, Mia and Lara also arrived beside them. Zron grabbed his back with a pained expression.

"Who suggested we race mid-air?? I sprained my back! My old muscles are all aching because of you young people."

Susan shot the old dwarf a deadpan look. Being at a transcendent rank, his body was already strong enough to overcome numerous powerful hurdles, and his back was sprained just because he floated for a while? What a liar... Just admit you lost and stop making excuses.

He looked away when Zron whipped his head toward him. Yon chuckled at their interaction and gazed at the massive gate before them with a calm expression.

"Finally, it's time... So, we are all going to participate except Zron, right?"

The people around him all nodded, and they quickly joined one of the queues without any delay. Sinon glanced around in hope of finding a familiar face but sighed when he didn't. Alec patted his shoulder when he noticed his expression.

"Don't worry, if Jian and the others are here, we would know immediately because you know their battles would surely attract the most attention."

Sinon nodded as he adjusted his wings behind his back.

"Exactly, especially Bia... Haha, her true appearance is distinctive enough for us to spot her... but only if they are here and join the Gladiator Arena."

His expression turned gloomy, but he blinked when a beautiful woman clad in a grey dress standing in the queue across from him winked at him.

"Huh?? Hey, Alec, are you seeing what I am seeing!? Did a lady just try to flirt with me in the presence of your and Carcel's otherworldly visages?"

Alec's eyebrow twitched violently as he followed Sinon's gaze and noticed the woman with doe eyes staring at their group. He had already noticed that many people were secretly looking towards them. Well, this wasn't new because except for the old trio in their group, all the young ones were handsome and beautiful, especially Mia. Not to mention, all of them were wearing matching blue outfits, so they stood out a bit from the rest of the crowd.

However, they were here to participate in the Gladiator Arena, not to flirt. So, he cleared his throat to tell Sinon to stay away from everyone they don't know, but before he could even speak, the winged man had already left his side and entered the queue across from them to talk with the woman.

Alec's eyes widened with disbelief, and he opened his mouth to call Sinon back, but Zron beat him to it. The old dwarf moved swiftly and grabbed Sinon's ear before dragging the winged man back.

Sinon rubbed his ear and glared at the old dwarf before quietly waving goodbye to the woman with doe eyes who chuckled at him and pointed towards the massive gate. She was clearly indicating they should get a nameplate first. So he sighed and stood in the line that moved at a snail's pace quietly.

The bright sky above them had already darkened by the time they all received a nameplate from an illusionary figure and entered the massive gate. However, it seemed like the space inside the gate was distinct from the outside because unlike the dark clouds outside, the area within the towering walls was as bright as day.

The group quickly found some empty seats within the large walls and settled together amidst the noise. They gazed at the nameplates in their hands and got ready to inscribe their names. But in that moment, Sinon pointed his finger above at the numerous projections floating in the sky.

"Wait, why do the names on the projections sound more like titles people would choose for themselves rather than actual names?"

They arrived a day later than Nine, so it was expected that within just a day, many others would have written down powerful titles on the nameplates they received instead of names following Nine's example. Or maybe just to hide their names.

Chapter 567 Their fates are intertwined

Alec and everyone else stared at Sinon's nameplate with an intrigued expression as the winged demi-human inscribed a title on the nameplate for himself.

Once Sinon finished, the nameplate in his hand dispersed to create a circle on the back of his hand, and another name appeared within one of the numerous projections hovering in the sky.

[The Ruler of Skies.]

He chuckled and shrugged his shoulders with a smile. If others can claim grand titles for themselves, why can't he? Zron tsked at the young man and shook his head. Back in his days, young people were not so utterly shameless. But the old dwarf's face turned deadpan when Susan also wrote down a strange title for himself.

[The elderly Emperor.]

Zron looked at the white-haired elder who grinned at the title as the nameplate in his hand scattered in the air.

"So... you have also chosen to be shameless like the youngsters?"

Susan chuckled at his words.

"What's wrong with being shameless? It's fine to join the young ones occasionally to enjoy the moment. No need to be so old-fashioned all the time."

Yon, who was about to jot down his name, stopped upon hearing Susan's words and also inscribed something different.

[The Divine Hammer.]

Zron rolled his eyes and shook his head with a sigh. In reality, he was somewhat tempted to join the Gladiator Arena just to craft a powerful title for himself. However, even though he could, he decided against it... It's not because he was scared; he simply didn't want to intensify the competition for the younger ones.

Alec peeked at Lara's nameplate. She seemed lost in thought, her brows furrowed in deep concentration. With a gentle smile, he brushed aside the strands of hair that had fallen on her face.

"Just write down whatever comes into your head. Don't bother with Sinon; he's a bit of a dimwit, you know. Feel free to put your name if you feel like it..."

Lara nodded, but her expression turned skeptical as she watched him write on his nameplate. Only to notice him following Sinon's footsteps. She arched a brow as she read out loud what he had written.

"The Invincible Sword?"

Alec touched his nose with a grin.

"Doesn't it suit me well?"

She shook her head and twirled the nameplate between her fingers, humming softly.

"I thought you told me to ignore Sinon... and here you are following his lead."

She pondered for a moment and swiftly penned a fitting title for herself. Alec read it and gave her a nod of approval before the nameplate dispersed in the air, and a circle appeared on the back of her hand.

[The Archery Queen.]

Regius glanced at the couple next to him and clicked his tongue with a smile. They were engrossed in their own chat.

So, after scribbling a few words on his nameplate, he swiftly showed it to Carcel before it disappeared.

"Hey, does this title suit me well?"

Carcel, who was seated across from him with Mia, tilted his head back and glanced at the title written on the nameplate that vanished in the air.

"The Regal Monarch?"

"Not bad... but a bit cringy."

Regius raised a brow.

"What? It's light-years ahead of what Sinon and Alec scribbled down! Come on, let's see what you came up with. I bet it's even more cringeworthy than mine!"

He rose from his chair and leaned over Carcel to check his nameplate. However, he couldn't hold back a chuckle when he saw that Carcel's nameplate was blank, not a single word on it.

"So, you couldn't even think of a title? That's... haha, the most cringiest thing I have ever seen in my life."

Carcel pushed his face back with a grim expression. He knew he wasn't good at this, but there was no need to mock him. He just wanted to write his name, even though the others had chosen strange titles. But when even Mia picked a title for herself, he found himself unable to write his own name. How could he be left out when everyone else had decided to do something together?

Mia gave him a quick look and held back a smile. She pointed to the round circle on the back of her hand.

"I put down 'The Azure Mage' because I'm a mage and my eyes are blue. You can just pick a title related to your strengths."

Carcel gave a nod. His brows furrowed with a serious expression as he thought for a bit and then wrote down his title.

However, by the time he finished, everyone around him was staring at his nameplate, and they all burst into laughter when they read what he had written.

[Just a Spear Lord.]

Unbeknownst to them, a pair of blue eyes narrowed at them with strange emotions swirling within the glowing orbs. The old man in a cream-colored robe, seated before the mermaid statue, closed his eyes when his pupils started stinging. The people in similar robes around him all looked at him with concerned expressions. One of the older women questioned with an unreadable expression.

"What happened, old Hal? You have been focusing on a particular group of people for a while. Have you seen something special in them?"

The old man, called Harold, but known as old Hal by others, rubbed his closed eyes.

"Their fates are intertwined... but someone or something in their lives is hindering me from discerning what is truly inscribed in their fates. This is the first instance where my ability is faltering."

He blinked a few times and looked at the man with golden pupils. The young man's eyes were stunning, with golden threads swirling within them.

"I suspect they are all connected to the young man who proclaimed himself as the Overlord of the Sea, as his fate is also somewhat vague."

The woman's lips turned upwards. Her smile seemed innocent and kind, but her eyes hinted at a touch of disdain.

"Who cares? Just picking fancy titles doesn't make them important. They need to prove they are as good as they say they are. Anyway, we will find out if they have got what it takes once the battles kick off."

Chapter 568 Not quite there yet...

The old man, Hal, furrowed his brow and glanced at the woman, but she quickly looked away to avoid his gaze. He sighed and changed the subject.

"What about the other elders? Among the seven elders involved in the war on the other side of the universe, I am here, and one more should have arrived by now. Has she contacted any of you?"

"We need her here. The two Shadow generals will arrive at the Gladiator Arena any time now... I don't want any of the participants in the Gladiator Arena to die because of the dark side."

One of the people sitting behind Old Hal leaned in and whispered in his ear.

"She's here. But she's in the crowd. She mentioned she would watch discreetly, and if the Shadow generals acted out, she would step up to fight them."

Old Hal nodded, and at that moment, two loud cries echoed from one of the three massive gates leading into the Gladiator Arena. The old man squinted his blue eyes and saw two bonded beasts in mid-air outside the gate, glaring at each other.

One was a huge eagle with piercing grey eyes, while the other was a towering horned lynx adorned with iridescent scales. The eagle held the divine rank, whereas the lynx was only at a pseudo-divine rank, yet the lynx stood its ground, matching the eagle's intense gaze without flinching.

Old Hal furrowed his brows at the scene and looked back at one of the young men seated behind him at a distance.

"Go and check what's happening. Whose bonded beasts are causing trouble. They are outside the towering walls, and I'm sure they don't know that bonded beasts are not permitted to revert to their original forms once inside the Arena. Their large forms could disrupt the peace of this place."

The young man in robes nodded and quickly moved from his spot to check what was happening and to control the crowd that had started gathering around the two beasts. But before he could intervene, a group of elves and some humans swiftly surrounded the lynx. Then, an elven woman with amber eyes among them hurriedly calmed the lynx down.

Nox shot a glare at the eagle, who returned it with mocking eyes, and then transformed back to his smaller form before grumpily sitting on Yue's shoulder, prompting a soft sigh from the elven woman.

"That eagle started it! She dared to try and break my left horn! How could she even touch my precious horns!"

'Only you and the crimson phoenix have the privilege to lay a hand on them!'

Nox complained in Yue's mind, ready to tear the eagle apart even though the eagle was stronger than him; he was sure he could handle it! Jian and Xavier both quickly arrived beside Yue, and the trio glanced at the eagle's owner. She was a young woman with cunning eyes like a fox and pointed ears on top of her head, signaling she was from the demi-human race.

The woman stood surrounded by many other demi-humans, each with a bonded companion by their side. She sneered at Yue, Jian, and Xavier before calling back her eagle, which transformed into a smaller size and landed on her arms.

"I gotta admit, your little lynx is one brave fella. He went for my eagle, even knowing he couldn't beat it."

Yue glanced at the woman, her eyes showing nothing, but hidden anger flashed in her gaze, and she decided the woman wasn't worth a response.

She saw the woman surrounded by many powerful demi-humans and knew that if a fight broke out, neither Yue nor the woman could join the Gladiator Arena. While she thought about her next move, Jian interrupted with a dark expression.

"Hey, hey, hold your horses."

"Your ugly eagle barely escaped by fleeing. If Nox had attacked, it would be six feet underground by now."

"So, count your blessings!"

The woman's expression turned sour as she pointed her finger at the group with furious eyes. Numerous powerful old demi-humans emerged from the group, and as they flew towards the young elves, Wesley, Ronan, Oldeus, and the supreme rank elven woman vanished from their positions and floated in front of the younger elves.

The conflict was among the younger generation, so the supreme rank elves refrained from intervening initially, but if the powerful individuals from the demi-human side attacked, they were prepared to retaliate as well.

But before a fight could erupt between the two groups, a gentle pressure that didn't harm anyone but still sent chills down their spines descended on their bodies. Wesley lifted his gaze and locked eyes with the young man in cream-colored robes who materialized between the two groups and began speaking in a solemn tone.

"All of you, cease this conflict at once, or none of you will be permitted to participate in the Gladiator Arena."

The young man glanced at the demi-humans, who quickly backed off, then turned to the elves, who also retreated with their young ones. His eyes narrowed at the lynx and the eagle briefly, and he recalled his own bonded beast who was fighting in the war. Unconsciously, he compared the lynx and eagle to his bonded companion, and a sneer crossed his face.

"What are they both so arrogant about? Their bonded companions are just so-so. Not even worthy of attaining a rank above the divine rank."

He mumbled under his breath as he left the area, but both Nox and the eagle, who heard his words, were enraged. The two beasts glared at his retreating figure with dark, ominous eyes, and even their owners displayed anger in their gazes.

Yue clenched her fists and shook her head when Jian looked at her with an expression that hinted they should challenge the man who dared to label Nox as unworthy. She then eased her grip, and a smile lit up her face, contrasting her spoken words.

"Not quite there yet... but I have a feeling that we will soon be on par with him. Then we will see if he has the nerve to declare someone else unworthy."

Chapter 569 The dark side arrived

The young man in the cream-colored robe paused in his tracks, a chuckle escaping his lips as he glanced back at the elven woman with amber eyes who had just spoken up.

"The youngsters these days are so arrogant. They have no idea how dangerous the universe they are living in truly is. Well, I can't blame them because all their lives, they have been sheltered under the protection of their elders."

He disappeared and reappeared in front of Old Hal, only to find the old man looking at him with a serious expression.

The young man braced himself for a scolding because he knew the old man was powerful enough to be aware of whatever he had just done outside the gate. Old Hal shook his head and let out a sigh.

"Ned, how many times do I have to remind you not to blurt out everything that pops into your head? Who can predict the future and the potential these people hold? We should all unite and not belittle others who are on our side. What if those you have just branded as arrogant actually grow powerful enough to match you? Due to your careless words, they might end up on the wrong side instead of being with us."

Ned's face twisted in displeasure when he heard the old man's words. He quietly nodded and took his seat.

Meanwhile, after resolving the issue, Yue, Jian, and all the people with them lined up in many queues to collect their nameplates. It took a couple of hours before Yue and everyone else with her managed to get their hands on their nameplates.

Wesley and Ronan quickly directed the elves and humans as they entered the massive gate and made their way toward the many chairs within the towering walls. However, due to the large number of elves, they were unable to find enough empty seats all in one area. Therefore, they had to split into two groups eventually.

As usual, Yue followed Wesley, with Jian, Xavier, and the two humans accompanying them. Sebastian hesitated but then quietly trailed behind Wesley and the other elves. It had been three months since Sebastian last saw the silver-haired man, yet he still didn't dare to approach Yue closely. It seemed that in this life, it was safer for him to keep his distance from her if he valued his life.

Jian's eyes were gloomy due to the recent events he had experienced with Yue and Xavier as he sat down beside Xavier. He glanced at the numerous projections illuminating the sky with a sigh but then noticed the peculiar titles shining within the projection. He blinked and read them aloud with a puzzled expression.

"Huh?? The sluggish tortoise? The all-knowing betrayer? The double-faced Empress? What's the deal with the names on the projections? Am I the only one who finds these names kind of strange?"

He turned his head towards Xavier and the elves, only to see that they too had noticed the oddity in the names lighting up in the projections. Jian's eyes sparkled when a sudden realization struck him.

"Hold up, don't tell me we can write any title or name we want on the nameplates we received?? No way!"

"Haha, now we are talking! The person who created these nameplates is a genius. Wow, I can't believe I can finally flaunt my charm just through my name!"

Xavier looked at him with a blank expression when Jian enthusiastically started jotting down a title for himself. But he was relieved that at least it wasn't the sluggish tortoise...

[The majestic Magic Monarch.]

Jian chuckled as he also used the title Bia often used for herself into his designation and then glanced over at Xavier.

"Not bad, huh?"

Xavier smiled and nodded, but his nose wrinkled with distaste. He silently moved away from Jian, but before he could escape, Jian caught his arm and firmly made him sit next to him. The red-haired man gazed at him with a knowing smile, indicating that he wouldn't let him go until he came up with a perfect title for himself. Xavier felt like crying as the others around him quickly fled before Jian could involve them too. With a bitter laugh, Xavier also wrote down a title for himself.

[Tempest Spearmaster.]

Xavier's expression turned deadpan when Jian began laughing at his title. However, he sighed with a smile when he saw the displeasure in Jian's eyes finally dissipate. He watched as Jian made his way towards Yue to see what she was jotting down.

Yue glanced at the red-haired man and shrugged her shoulders.

"Just gonna write down my name."

Jian's eyes widened as he moved the elven woman sitting next to Yue aside and settled down beside Yue with a serious expression.

"Nooo, you can't! Choose a strong title! You know Kyle, he would never just write his name! Let's do what he would do, right?"

Yue smiled.

"Then...?"

She pondered for a few seconds with a thoughtful expression.

"How about 'The Queen of the Forest'? I like greenery and I have held the title of queen previously. So, it wouldn't sound too awkward to me, right?"

Jian's eyes sparkled as he gave her an approving nod. She noted her title, and her nameplate also dispersed. It was a calm moment, not only for Yue and Jian but also for Alec and the others as well. Although they were seated far apart, the tranquility in the noisy atmosphere was disrupted when an ominous crack emerged in the sky above the numerous projections floating in the air.

The crack widened with each passing second, and the crowd erupted with panicked whispers as a tremendous amount of dark energy seeped out from the crack. Countless individuals from the demon race, dark race, and nighkin race emerged from the crack and filled the sky with uncountable black dots. All of them had twisted smiles on their faces. Finally, the people from the dark side, who had previously sent their envoy to inform the overseers of the Gladiator Arena that they would also participate, arrived.

Chapter 570 Oh... I'm third

Among the numerous dark beings floating in the sky, a handsome young man dressed in a golden garment adorned with silver designs stepped out from the crack.

He appeared incongruous amidst the darkness, radiating brightness. With golden eyes and long peach-colored hair pulled back into a high ponytail, flowing down his back, he peered down at the Arena below, enclosed by towering walls.

As his golden eyes landed on Old Hal, the old man's expression grew grim. He got up from his seat and started floating in the air to make sure the second shadow general wouldn't try anything while he was around.

However, the young man with golden eyes before him, surrounded by numerous dark figures, looked away with a disinterested expression, as if he had already assessed what the old man could achieve and what he couldn't with his gaze alone.

Ceano, the second shadow general, shifted his gaze back to the crack pulsating with dark energy behind him, and another figure emerged from it. It was a handsome youth who appeared slightly older than Ceano but no more than twenty years old, dressed in a blue shirt and dark pants, with short grey hair and light ivory-colored pupils.

Different from Ceano, who could easily be mistaken for an ordinary young man due to his pristine appearance and the noticeable absence of the dark five-petal flower, the youth with ivory eyes had a dark five-petal flower etched beneath his chin in the middle of his neck, standing out distinctly.

The youth with ivory eyes yawned wearily, as if he had been toiling ceaselessly, but Ceano remained impassive when he observed his rank.

"Third, why haven't you progressed in rank yet? I saw you last time, and you are still at the same rank. Why is it that you haven't advanced, despite doing as you please and not even participating in the war?"

The third shadow general, named Will, blinked and looked at the familiar face before him with narrowed eyes. It took him a few moments to remember which number shadow general was floating in front of him. If not for the golden eyes, he might not have remembered at all.

"Oh... I'm third. I almost forgot. Haha, well, it's been a while, enchanted beauty. How have you been!"

He opened his arms with a smile for a brotherly hug but tsked when the person before him recoiled back with disgust.

Ceano raised his hand to smack him, thinking what the heck he had been doing all this time since he hadn't advanced in rank at all. However, his hand paused in mid-air when Will's eyes turned icy, and a menacing expression crossed the man's face, indicating that if he dared to touch him, the latter would tear him apart.

It was a stark contrast to the lazy demeanor the man displayed when he emerged from the crevice. Ceano's lips curved into a smirk... even though the third shadow general was the laziest and most useless among them all, the malevolence within the man was unfathomable. After all, unlike him, who solely pursued strength, Will harbored a pure desire to reign over nothing but the darkness. That's why, despite lazing around on Planet Azure for so many years, he still held the title of the third shadow general.

"I'm certain that in the entire universe, you're the only one weaker than me yet still have the audacity to gaze at me with such an expression, all due to the dark energy that constantly there to help you, huh?"

Will's expression shifted in an instant, and he blinked with a bewildered expression.

"What are you on about? I would never even in my wildest dreams consider threatening someone stronger than me!"

He casually waved his hand, yet the dark energy in the air coiled around his wrist in a sinister fashion, almost as if it relished his entire presence. Ceano shook his head and looked down at the Arena.

"It's just like I remember... nothing's changed. These people are gearing up to fight each other like crazy and shed blood. Tsk, what's the real difference between them and us when all we want is what we desire at any cost?"

The atmosphere within the towering walls buzzed with countless murmurs, some anxious, some solemn, some furious, all aimed at the numerous dark beings hovering in the sky.

The demon race, dark race, nighkin race individuals floating behind the two shadow generals sneered at the people below, eager to bathe in their blood.

Old Hal spoke up upon noticing a smile at the corner of Will's lips as the man tried to discreetly slip away from the sky, but his bright attire gave him away instantly.

"Don't do anything you might regret."

"You all are here to take part in the Gladiator Arena, right? According to our agreement, all the people you brought can join in, but if they dare to break the rules, don't blame me for being ruthless."

Will tilted his head as he glanced at the old man before him in a cream-colored robe.

"Hey, oldie, do you really think we're afraid of you? You alone can't take us down..."

He wanted to say more, but Ceano shook his head at him, hoping the grey-haired man would remember that they were here for a purpose, and to achieve it, they couldn't halt the Gladiator Arena from progressing. Will shrugged his shoulders and glanced at the people floating behind him.

"Alright, all of you head down and grab some nameplates for yourselves to join the battles. Then settle into the chairs. Don't make too much mess... you know, the old man can be ruthless, puhahaha."

He laughed at his own words, and Old Hal's expression darkened as he vanished from his spot. However, before the old man could disappear behind him, Will's fading figure paused in front of the massive demon statue lounging against the towering wall with a wicked grin.

The third shadow general admired the demon statue, and a chair appeared before him. He took a seat in front of the statue with a proud look as he looked at the numerous individuals in cream-colored robes seated in the distance opposite him. He winked at them with a playful expression, and they all scowled in disgust before gesturing for Ceano to join him.