

D. of Pride 86

Chapter 86: Cecilia

Simon carried the terribly injured body of the little girl on the back of his warhorse as he swiftly charted a safe course that had fewer monsters with the help of his [Mental Map] skill. The skill allows the user to map out the geography of any place that the user had explored before.

The skill is quite useful as it not only maps the geography but also helps him understand and mark the denizens and their numbers in the area. The more area of the forest he explores, the more detailed the [Mental Map] becomes.

In these past few days, Simon had explored a fair bit of the outer region of the west side of the Ghastly Winding Forest. Although he was still far from charting it out completely, he still knew where the strong monsters and their lair were. Avoiding the areas where monsters were especially territorial, they flew over a path with very little concentration of monsters.

Irene silently followed behind as she looked at the both of them, emotions continuously fluctuated at the depth of her eyes as she observed Simon who looked as clueless as ever. But more than that, she was surprised to find a member of the Forest Spring Spirit clan here. Not to mention that the girl that Simon found unconscious earlier, was no ordinary Forest Spring Spirit.

She had a peculiar dream, a nightmare to be exact. Her clan which resided in the Ghastly Winding Forest under the protection of one of the seven kings of the western region of the forest; the Ancient Titan Treant, was being cruelly subjugated by the adventurers.

The adventurers were all garbed in black robes and wore masks to hide their identities. But it did nothing to cover their hideous nature as they laughed, taking joy in tormenting to make them more obedient. The scene was truly a hellscape as their house was burnt down one after the other.

Men, women, children, all of her clan members were mercilessly being hunted and put under the collar by the vicious hands of the adventurers. Cries of agony rang across the whole place.

Her Village which was supposed to be hidden by the Arcane mist that made their village unreachable to anyone but them, was revealed by the very same human who was terribly injured at that time and was brought into their village for care and treatment.

Never did the Forest Spring Spirit Clan thought that the kindness that they showed to the human, would be betrayed in such a cruel manner.

Tears fell down her cheeks like an unending waterfall. Her friends and families were beaten and enslaved, those who resisted fiercely were killed to make an example for the rest.

It was truly a doomsday for her clan, she could still vividly remember her mother self destructing her spirit orb to allow the clan members escape as they ran towards the Ancient Titan Treant, one of the Seven Kings to seek its protection.

“My daughter, do not look behind and... run. You must never... allow them to capture you. Mother cannot come along with you, but I will always be watching and praying for your safety... Live well, my daughter” Her mother said during her last moments before choosing to self destruct her spirit orb to allow the clan members a chance to escape.

A brilliant emerald green light enveloped the village which stalled the adventurers for them to get away.

“No Mother... Mother.. Motherrrr” She screamed in despair and could only look on helplessly as her mother used her very life in exchange to push back the adventurers.

She was pulled back and carried away as she cried a fountain in her father’s embrace. Her father who similarly had a heartbroken face watching his wife self destruct her spirit orb. But as the patriarch of the clan, he had the duty to lead his clansmen out of this hellscape.

She cried until her throat became dry and she no longer had any energy to wail. From this moment on, she would no longer be able to feel the warmth of her mother. Her mother who was the most gentle person, she cared and loved the whole clan and the clan in return respected her very much.

She didn’t know how but during their escape, the human adventurers soon realised that a royal spirit was residing in this clan and started hunting down the escapees. Her close friends and relatives sacrificed their lives in order to assist their escape.

They ran and hid for days, it was like a nightmare that wouldn't end. Even until the end, the adventurers continuously pursued them and laughed merrily as they enjoyed their chase, before finally cornering them. One by one all of the people that she loved and cared for, died by self-destructing their spirit orb.

The last of her clan members who were with her gave up their lives in hopes of creating an opportunity for her and her father to escape. But the adventurers laughed at their futile attempt. She saw her clan members being toyed and killed amidst her overflowing tears.

Until finally they forced her father, the patriarch to eventually self-destruct his spirit orb so that she could escape. Her father now drenched in blood from the cuts and wounds, pleaded to her "My daughter forgive your... father for not being able to protect you. Huff... Huff... It seems that father won't be able to accompany you anymore, but... y-you must escape from here. Never allow the adventurers to find you...".

"Father...Father...Father" she cried in the arms of her father in a heartbroken manner. The warm hands of her father were slowly getting cold and pale as he caressed her cheeks and said "Cecilia, I was glad... huff... huff... to have you as my daughter. F-From now on you might have to face many difficulties... alone, but you must stay strong and live".

"...." Before the light in his eyes dimmed, her father whispered some words into her before he smiled and said "You are the last hope... of our clan. Remember the w-world is vast, you must stay strong...".

And with that, bright emerald light started overflowing from her father as he used his Mutated Magic before the trunk of a nearby tree spread open to envelop her and swiftly transported her away. "Nooooo I don't want this... Father...Father... Fatherrrr" she cried again and again until her throat became hoarse and she fell unconscious.

"Huff...huff...huff...huff...huff..." inside one of the spacious rooms of the white palace, a girl was currently spasming and shuddering as tears continuously dropped down her eyelids while she slept.

Irene who was inside the room looked at the girl who was clearly having a nightmare and gently wiped her tears. Her usually indifferent eyes had pity and compassion as she lightly caressed the delicate cheeks of the girl.

As if feeling the warmth from her hand, tears glimmered at the end of the little girl's eyelids and her violent spasming finally settled down.

After her breathing became even, she fell into a deep sleep and it was only after a long while that she opened her eyes. Her eyes no longer held their previous childish light and looked dark and hollow.

She surveyed her surroundings before immediately getting up from the bed in a panic. Her first reaction was to check her neck and after finding that there was no collar on it, she sighed in relief.

Chapter 87: Cecilia (2)

Right after Cecilia woke up, her first reaction was to check her neck and only after finding that there was no collar on it, she sighed in relief. Next, she surveyed her surroundings and found out that she was on top of a bed in a foreign place.

The room was very spacious and moderately decorated. As she looked around, her eyes were quickly drawn towards the woman who was as beautiful as a goddess.

Pearly white skin, hair as beautiful as the waterfall, and donned in azure clothes that seemed to accentuate her beauty even more, she was the very definition of picturesque beauty. At this moment, the woman was sitting very close and was staring at her.

Snapping out of her daze, Cecilia immediately leaned behind her bed and tried to hide under the quilt. It was only after she discovered that the woman did not have any ill intention towards her, did she muster up her strength and asked "Who are you miss? And where am I?" Midway through her sentence, she remembered that her father used his magic to teleport her far away from the adventurers that were chasing them.

The moment she thought about that, scenes from the past few days ago, came flooding inside her mind and her mood became gloomy and dark. Cecilia quietly hugged her knees and dazedly stared at the floor.

It was at this moment that the woman seated beside her bed, replied with a smile that had enough charms to steal the brilliance of the world immediately and said "Don't be afraid, we are not going to harm you. You were severely injured and lying unconscious in the forest"

When Cecilia heard her voice, she was immediately stunned. The woman's voice was just like her appearance soft and serene like a heavenly note that soothes one's soul and sounded very pleasant to

the ears. Looking at the woman whose smile reminded her of her mother's she finally opened up a little and decided to ask "d-did you... save me?"

The woman neither denied nor agreed with her words and simply said "Hold onto your questions until he arrives".. Just as Cecilia was trying to make sense of what the woman said, the door was knocked and a man soon entered the room.

The moment she laid her eyes upon the man, she immediately realized that the man was not human. He had pitch-black hair that seemed to absorb all the light from the world, two jagged horns that protruded from his head, and a pair of crimson eyes that had enough power to suffocate anyone.

Cecilia had lived most of her life within the area covered by the Astral mist of her village and other than the knowledge that her mother instilled in her about the various races of this world, she did not know much about the outside world. But even she could tell from the features of the man that he was a demon.

The man was a few inches taller than the woman and although he looked quite scary, the man did not display any ill intent towards her.

"Are you alright? Do you still feel pain anywhere?" Simon inquired observing her injuries that had mostly healed.

Cecilia was surprised by the very first words that the man said since she could feel the consideration in his voice.

She did not know how to respond to that and ended up just nodding her head. As if realising her wariness, the man did not approach any closer and maintained his distance. She looked at the man who was trying his best to give his best smile but ended up failing miserably as she could only see wickedness in his smile.

"You don't have to worry, we are not going to hurt you" he assured her before introducing himself "I am Simon, the master of this dungeon and the pretty lady next to you is Irene".

It took her a while but she finally mustered up her courage and said "I am Cecilia... did you guys save me?".

“Hmm? If you mean healed you then yes. We found you collapsed and unconscious beneath one of the trees near the territory of the Elder Treants. At that time you were quite injured and it would be dangerous to leave you there and that is why I brought you here” Simon explained.

“I see... thank you very much for saving me. I do not have anything on me to reward you with so I can only bow my head and say my thanks” Cecilia bowed deeply to conceal the pain flashing through her eyes as she said her thanks.

Simon scratched his head at the awkward reply of the girl and helplessly said “Your thanks are enough I don’t need any reward. In the first place, I saved miss Cecilia in good faith without expecting any reward in return. So you don’t have to worry about paying me or anything”.

Cecilia looked at Simon with big wide eyes stunned at what she just heard. She thought that since he saved her, he would want something in return or worse if he knew her identity and demanded to enslave her?...

While she was still in her stupor, Simon flashed another wicked smile which he thought was a comforting one and said “Well we can talk some more after you are completely healed. For now, you can rest in this room without worrying about anything. After you finish organising your thoughts, you can come to the dining hall and we can talk some more over a meal”.

Having said everything he wanted to say, Simon prepared to leave the room when Cecilia cried out “Why are you being so good to me? Why didn’t you just leave me to die?!. It would have been far better for everyone if I had just died and now since you harboured me, you guys will also get in troubl...” before she could continue anymore, a voice interrupted her.

“Miss Cecilia if you think your death would make everyone around you feel better then you are just being selfish. From the moment I saved you I knew, you had gone through a lot of suffering. Getting distressed is one thing, but to think about death is just taking the easy way out. However, since I do not know about your circumstances, I might be just being nosy but I still think that simply dying would not accomplish anything” Simon closed the door and left after he said his words.

Irene gently sighed and caressed the emerald hair of the dazed-looking girl and silently left after saying a few words of her own “His words might sound harsh but they are right. I can only imagine the pain and suffering you have gone through so take your time and when you are ready to open up, we are naturally willing to listen”.

Tears fell down Cecilia’s face like an unceasing waterfall as she hugged her knees and mopped.

After coming out of the room, Irene found Simon standing still in front of a large hall and asked “What do you plan to do with her?”.

Simon was shocked when he heard Irene’s voice. It was the first time Simon heard Irene’s voice since she mostly kept to herself and interacted very little. It was only natural for Simon to get stunned after all he never thought that Irene would start a conversation of her own accord.

Chapter 88: Cecilia (3)

After coming out of the room, Irene found Simon standing still in front of a large hall and asked “What do you plan to do with her?”.

“Well even if you ask me... I do not have any plans for her. I just helped her without thinking much since I couldn’t just leave an injured girl alone. At that time it felt the most plausible action to do.”

Simon gave a vague answer as he himself did not know about the exact reason why he saved an unknown girl. At that time, his body moved on its own. While he was quite flustered by his vague reply, he failed to notice Irene’s lips which parted into a beautiful smile.

Suddenly as if remembering something, Simon asked “You seem fairly mindful of her, due you perhaps know something about her?” He asked as he felt that Irene was suddenly acting strange. Her usual self would always act distant and aloof to the point where it would be a miracle to even get a word out of her.

Irene closed her eyes and kept silent for a while.

“It’s alright if you don’t want to say anything” just when Simon thought that he would not get any answer as usual, Irene replied “I do not know about her but I’m aware of her race that she belongs to. The Forest Spring Spirit Clan, one of the rarest and ancient beings living in the universe. It is said that they can harness a mysterious form of energy different from the mana system that you use and can grow the rarest and sacred of plants and trees”.

Simon was stunned. He was sceptical that there existed a different form of energy other than mystical energy. Although he had his doubts, he still quietly listened to her.

Irene further added as she crossed her hands on top of her full chest “In some places, they are also called the overseer of the forest and all the plant type monsters such as the treants that we met a few days ago receive many benefits from the forest spring spirits and have a duty to protect them as the

Forest Spring Spirits are not a race suited for combat. However, that is not all. The Forest Spring Spirit is hunted all over the world for their spirit orbs, which can help increase the purity of one's bloodline and can even heal a severely injured person on the brink of death".

Listening to her explain about the abilities of the Forest Spring Spirits, Simon was absolutely stupefied. What did it mean to cure a person from the brink of death? Such an ability would be coveted by many people.

Not to mention the absurd ability to raise one's bloodline. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the object would be desired and coveted by the entire world.

The restraints of bloodline placed by the world on the billions of its inhabitants. A chance to break out of that restraints would even induce a massive war. an object like that would be regarded as a treasure no matter where he went.

Irene knitted her crescent brows, looked at Simon, and asked "You should know what it means in this world for one to increase the purity in their bloodline. A person who can get their hands on a spirit orb can break the restraints placed on him by the system and step into a higher realm. The greed brought by such benefits would bring what kind of disasters for the Forest Spring Spirit Clan can you even imagine it?".

Simon knitted his brows, sat on the sofa and pondered for a while. He couldn't imagine the kind of pain and tragedy the little forest spirit girl he just saved might have gone through after listening to the details provided by Irene.

Simon let out a deep sigh and fell into contemplation. He finally understood now why that little girl who appeared to be less than six years old, was so adamant about dying rather than living.

He remembered how terribly wounded she was when he found her unconscious under a tree. Clearly, she was being pursued. Simon felt a violent pain assaulting his heart as he imagined the pain and suffering a little girl like her had gone through until now.

As he was lost in his thoughts, Irene spoke once again "it is even worse for the Forest Spring Royal Spirit, a royalty born in the Forest Spring Spirit Clan. There is one in a hundred million chance for a royal spirit to be born inside a forest spirit clan. It is said that from the moment they are born, they are able to harness the essence of nature and are considered to be sacred spirits".

Speaking till here, Irene's usually indifferent eyes had pain and sympathy flashing in them as she continued "However the heavens are truly unfair towards them. The Royal Spirit Orb of a fully grown Forest Spring Royal Spirit is considered to be one of the heavenly treasures. The benefits brought by an ordinary spirit orb are already incredible, do you know what heaven-defying benefits a Royal Spirit Orb can provide?".

Simon opened and closed his mouth a few times, he had no answer to that. He remembered that his analysis displayed the race of the girls as Forest Spring Royal Spirit and not just Forest Spring Spirit. This meant that the little girl he saved, was a royalty amongst the forest spring spirits.

Inside one of the rooms of the white palace, Cecilia finally stopped sobbing and stared at seemingly nothing for a long while before a light of resolution flashed in her lustreless eyes. The words Simon and Irene said previously continuously rang into her ears and the final words left by her father finally gave her the will to struggle.

She was the final hope of her clan, how can she simply die? No matter what she has to survive if not for her, then for her clan that had put so much trust in her. She got out of her bed and left the room.

Cecilia looked at the beautifully decorated interior of the palace as she tried to find her way to the dining hall. Suddenly she heard the sounds of conversations coming from ahead and hastened her pace but before she could step into the dining hall, her steps suddenly halted.

Cecilia heard the bits of conversation that she never wanted to hear, coming from the room. She felt as if her whole body was frozen and she could no longer take another step forward. Quietly ducking into a corner, she eavesdropped on their conversation as her tiny frame shuddered while fear gripped her whole body.

Irene's eyes stealthily glanced at one corner of the hallway that led to the dining room and her voice increased a notch.

"If one gets their hands on a Royal Spirit Orb, they no longer have to worry about their bloodline being impure as there will no longer be any restraints holding them. Not only that but the orb allows a person to raise their talent to an extraordinary height and gain abilities that can easily manipulate the forces of nature".

"There are many other unknown benefits a Royal Spirit Orb can provide" Irene narrated as she deeply looked into the Crimson eyes of Simon as if trying to see through his very soul. However, even she did not expect that even after listening to all of that, his face would be still as impassive as ever with not even a tinge of greed in his eyes.

“Yeah, yeah I get it. Enough about this spirit orb that... spirit orb this already. I don't know why you are telling me this all of a sudden but it has got nothing to do with me”. Simon shrugged, bored of continuously listening to how amazing a treasure the spirit orb was.

She was stunned by this unexpected and flat reply. “You are telling me that you have no interest whatsoever in the Royal Spirit Orb that delivered itself to your doorstep?! From what I can tell, your bloodline seems fairly impure which will limit your future growth but if you can obtain the Royal Spirit Orb from that girl, your future achievement will be limitless” Irene stared at Simon with a peculiar expression in her eyes.

Chapter 89: A Girl's Plea

“Are you telling me that you have no interest whatsoever in the Royal Spirit orb that had delivered itself right into your doorstep? From what I can see, your bloodline seems to be fairly impure and the heights that you can reach in the future is limited. The Royal Spirit orb can turn all that over” Irene said with a peculiar expression as she eyes Simon.

Listening to her words, it was the first time that Simon got annoyed at her. He said in an irritated voice “Enough! I told you already I have no interest in this so called heavenly treasure of yours whatsoever”.

“Although I'm not a saint, but if you think I'll fall as low as to try and snatch the spirit orb from a little girl who is already scared of the world? Then you are looking down on me too much. Besides, you didn't say it but wouldn't they die if their Spirit Orb is snatched from them? Isn't it the very core of their being? If I did something like that, I would no longer be human, what difference would there be between me and a beast!”

“You are right about my bloodline. As a demon, I was born with an impure bloodline in this world. But it was never able to daunt me, I'll choose my own path no matter how many setbacks or restraints I have to suffer on the way. Even if it's the very world it cannot prevent me from rising to the top and if it restraints me similar to how it restraints billions of its inhabitants, then I'll simply break through the chains. That is all there is to it”. Simon clenched his hands into a fist and said in a resolute voice.

He had his inherent skill [Main Menu] with him whose one of the functions allows him to purify his bloodline and break the shackles that would have limited his growth. Unlike the other, he was not bound by the unwritten law of this world. He knew that even without using a dirty means such as using the spirit orb of the Forest Spring Spirit clan, he would be able to keep on getting stronger.

A rarely seen look of appreciation bloomed on Irene's beautiful face as she heard what Simon had to say. His voice was full of determination and unyielding will to go against the restraints that have been placed on him.

When Simon saw her absolutely charming smile, he got stunned for a good while. At this moment Irene looked so beautiful that even the very light seemed dim when it fell on her.

He had never seen her smile once till now but now that he had seen it, he could not get the scene out of his head. Irene already had a soul stunning beauty but when she smiled, everything, even the stars, and moons in the sky looked mundane compared to her.

Her eyebrows curved into a beautiful arc as she quickly pointed out the fault in his sentence "If I did that I would no longer be human! Hmmm?... but aren't you a demon?".

"(̄ ɛ ̄);" The corner of Simon's mouth twitched as he forced a cough and tried to pretend he did not hear what she just said. But in his mind, he was sweating profusely 'This Woman is too sharp'. Earlier he was too flustered and made a mistake, but Irene was quick to spot it.

On the corner of the walkway leading to the dining hall, Cecilia fell to her knees and sobbed unceasingly as she heard Simon's words loud and clear. Her crystal-like teardrops fell into the carpet. She had never felt this much warmth from someone who was not her family much less her clan member.

Even while fully knowing the limitations he suffered and the heaven-defying benefits that the Royal Spirit Orb provided him, he still chose not to plunder it and rely on his hard work to overcome his limitations even though he could easily take the Royal Spirit Orb away from her and she wouldn't even be able to struggle.

Irene looked towards the corner where Cecilia was hiding, smiled gently, and walked towards her. Cecilia's small figure trembled when she heard someone coming near but relaxed soon when she found out that a warm hand had been gently placed on her head, caressing her hair.

Her tear-stained eyes looked at the beautiful woman who had a warm smile exactly like her mother and she couldn't help but dive into her bosom. Feeling the warmth and softness, all her wariness disappeared away as she cried out loud till her throat became sore. All the while, Irene embraced her and softly caressed her hair.

Simon watched the heartwarming scene and couldn't help but smile. He finally knew why Irene had provoked him with her words like that. She was trying to see through his inner thoughts and at the same time give the girl eavesdropping in the corner, peace of mind.

At that time he was too focused on their conversation that he failed to notice Cecilia's arrival but how could Irene miss it. She was well aware that Cecilia was eavesdropping on their conversation and at the same time tried to gouge out what kind of a person Simon was through their conversation.

She was clearly baiting him. Simon felt his skin tingle the moment such a thought arrived in his head.

Coming to a conclusion, Simon felt quite relieved that he didn't fall for her trap. He was sure that given Irene's temperament if he had given a materialistic answer, she would immediately lash out at him and take Cecilia away with her.

After all, there was nothing binding her to him. After the merger of the two menus, the [Summon] option and the [Hero's Altar] became bugged and there was no longer a way to summon subordinates who were absolutely loyal to the dungeon master.

He became aware of that a few days after summoning Irene.

Chapter 90: A Girl's Plea (2)

After a while, he saw Irene bringing Cecilia who was hiding behind her inside the dining hall. Simon couldn't help but smile once again looking at the cute action of the girl with bright emerald hair and wearing a pretty green dress.

Her face that still retained some of her childishness, looked very adorable. Grooowwl... a voice came from her stomach and the snow-white face of Cecilia quickly became beet red. Simon quickly opened the [Shop] and bought numerous dishes that lined up the table.

Cecilia looked over the table as an appealing fragrance assaulted her nose and increased her appetite. Food that she had never before seen was neatly lined up on the table and looked so delicious that she couldn't help but gulp audibly.

Simon looked at the sparkling eyes of the little girl as she stared at the food on the table. But was still hesitant for some reason. He pulled out a chair and told her to sit down. Cecilia after giving it some thought, came over as told and sat on the chair.

Irene pulled out her own chair and sat near Cecilia as she watched her glittering eyes when she looked at the food. Even Irene had to admit that the dishes Simon brought out, was always delicious.

“I know you must be very hungry so you don’t have to hold back. Dig in and eat whatever you want. Don’t worry about the food, I can bring out some more whenever I want” Simon said when he saw that the little girl was still hesitating.

Grooooww!~::~ Her face dyed a crimson red, Cecilia nodded and finally couldn’t hold herself back in the face of the appetizing smell. She grabbed the strawberry sundae and brought a spoonful of it to her mouth. “mmm~” a sweetness along with a cold sensation spread across her whole mouth and her big wide eyes became stunned.

She hurriedly gulped down few more mouthfuls before moving on to the next items. Burgers, cream stew, shrimp fries, meat rolls. One after the other she tried all the dishes. It was so delicious that tears glittered across her eyelids and it was only after a while that her appetite began to satiate. Seeing her finish one dish after another, Simon had to wonder where she was putting all the food into.

After finishing her meal, she finally gave her thanks “Thank you for the food and also for saving me”. Simon nodded “You don’t have to worry about it. I saved you because I wanted to so there is no need for you to concern about anything”.

Cecilia opened her mouth and tried to say something but words failed to come out of her. After struggling internally for a while, she finally said it out loud “But now that you have involved yourself with me, trouble will come seeking you all”. Her eyes were trembling and her face was masked with worry.

Simon snorted and replied curtly “Who doesn’t have their own share of trouble. It is useless to worry about something that might or might not happen in the future. What matters is the will to tackle it.” He smiled and said in a resolute tone “And even if trouble does knock at my door, I just have to get strong enough to smash through it all”.

Hearing Simon’s confident reply did alleviate some of her worries but she still felt it was inappropriate to involve them in her troubles so she asked “I don’t want to burden you guys. It is something I must tackle myself so instead, will you train me so that I can get strong enough to beat those people back?”. Cecilia’s eyes showed how determined she was.

Simon sighed helplessly and couldn't help massage his temple. He said "Fight huh?! You better give up on that idea. I heard from Irene that your race is not suited for combat so even if you train, it would be hard for you to even kill a Direwolf as you are now. Look now, I know that you are worried about getting us involved in your troubles but now that I have saved you I have already gotten myself involved with you so those troubles of yours aren't just yours alone are they?".

Although Cecilia was at level 259, according to Irene she wasn't even strong enough to beat a level 100 direwolf alone.

Cecilia had a look of surprise on her face as she heard what Simon had to say. She couldn't believe that even after knowing that troubles and misfortune would befall him if he harboured her, he would still choose to get himself involved in it.

The first thing that came to her mind was why. Why would someone she just met, would choose to involve himself with her troubles instead of casting her away. Cecilia couldn't help but ask "Why?".

Simon reached out with his hand and caressed Cecilia's emerald hair and declared "You don't have to think of yourself as a burden because I'm not the kind of person who has it in him to abandon a girl who is suffering so much all alone and whose eyes clearly say that they need help".

Irene was still as indifferent as before but if one looked carefully, one would see that her eyes were no longer as icy as before whenever they stared at Simon.

Cecilia became dazed for a while, she felt warmth and care from him who was so adamant on getting himself involved with her. Simon looked at her clear green eyes that shone as bright as a crystal and said "Did you really think that you could convince anyone while having that look in your eyes".

He could see the girl's pain and suffering in the depths of her eyes as they desperately pleaded and sought help. No matter how she masked it, Simon saw right through it. When she saw his determination, tears glimmered in the corners of her eyes and she finally nodded and gave a weak reply that was a mixture of gratefulness, sobbing and relief "Unngh".

Irene wiped the tears from her cheek and comforted her. She knew that the girl who was less than five years old had gone through a lot and she couldn't bear to see her suffer anymore.

While hugging the girl in her bosom, Irene looked at Simon and said "I have a proposal. The Forest Spring Spirit Clan have the innate ability to manipulate nature and grow the rarest of plant and

trees. Not only that but they are the best caretaker and overseers of the forest you could find in this whole world and lots of hidden abilities that even I'm not aware of".

"Therefore if you take the Forest Spring Spirit Clan under your protection as your subordinates, it will help you and the dungeon grow in the future. You, who need subordinates to maintain the dungeon for you, and they who need protection to live on, are a perfect fit don't you think so? If you harbour and protect them, the benefits that the Forest Spring Spirit Clan can provide you will far outweigh any cons that they might bring in the future".

Simon looked deeply into Irene's eyes which wanted to protect the Forest Spring Spirit Clan. The benefits that the clan can provide was just an excuse to make him shelter the pitiful clan. However, even without her telling him the benefits he already made his mind to protect the little girl and her clan.

He stared at Cecilia and asked, "Where in the forest your clan is located at?".