

## **Strongest Necromancer Of Heaven's Gate –**

### **Chapter 301: 320**

#### **Chapter 301.2: The Heart Of The Abyss [Part 2]**

Vera and Esmond were having a heated battle with each other.

Earlier, the Ranker was confident that he could overpower the Avatar, but as their battle progressed, even though his opponent's strength only seemed to be at the E-Rank category, her battle experience far exceeded his own.

As a D-Ranker, Esmond had his fair share of battles, but he found his great strength unable to break past the old lady's defenses, because his full powered blows weren't blocked, but deflected, minimizing the power of his blows.

"I guess being old has its merits," Esmond teased.

Vera didn't bother to reply as she used her full concentration in order to keep the Ranker at bay. Just as Esmond had said earlier, this was only her Avatar.

Currently, her real body was seated in a lotus position back in Solaris. When Iris had left to the Hidden Domain, Vera had given her a gem that would allow her to summon Vera's Avatar if her life was in grave danger.

The Rankers of Solaris couldn't casually enter the territories that were off limits to them. The world of Elysium had rules, and they could only enter the higher-ranked territories, where people of similar strength gathered.

This restriction didn't apply to Elysians. They were free to travel wherever they wanted, which had led to the bullying of the members of the younger generation of Solaris. Naturally, the powerful people of the Six Kingdoms didn't take this lying down.

With Alexander as the head, they launched attacks against these kingdoms who dared to send Rankers to kill and even cripple their prodigies, decreasing their military strength.

These battles were bloody, even annihilating entire cities from the face of the world. Because of this, the other Kingdoms had stopped these acts of aggression, knowing that the Seniors of the children they bullied would fight them to the death.

Although there were still times when these incidents happened, they were kept to a bare minimum because they knew that the leaders of the Factions supporting the Solarian Guilds wouldn't take things lying down.

These were how the Avatars were created.

They were the last resort of the children that belonged to a very influential family. Even if they were in the Beginning, Intermediate, and Expert Areas, these Avatars could be summoned in order to save their lives.

However, there was a drawback. Once this was used, the Strength of the Ranker in Solaris would decrease by an entire Rank. Also, any damage they received in their Avatar Forms would directly damage their real bodies.

This was why even though Alexander loved his daughter, he couldn't give her an Avatar of himself, because he would fall from his Rank of a Saint.

Once that happened, the fragile balance of power within the Six Kingdoms, The Rowan Tribe, and the Barbatos Academy would crumble, and might lead to consequences that no one wanted to see.

In the end, Vera decided to sacrifice her Rank, as well as risk her life, in order to protect her granddaughter from harm.

While the two Rankers were fighting, Esmond noticed a subtle shift in the battlefield. The Elite Soldiers who had the upper hand at the beginning, were slowly being pushed back by the teenagers who seemed to have gotten a second wind.

'What's going on?' Esmond thought as he scanned the surroundings.

Unfortunately, he wasn't able to continue what he was doing because Vera's continuous attacks didn't allow him to take his eyes off her, making him unable to determine the cause of the sudden turn around in their side's current circumstance.

'Sid, Scarlet, take down those Initiates first!' Lux ordered, 'I'll handle the Apostle Grades, you need to eliminate at least two of them as soon as possible.'

'What a slave driver you are,' Scarlet complained as she melded with the shadows. Even so, she wouldn't disobey Lux's orders because she understood that dealing with the Initiates first was the right thing to do.

'As you command, Master,' Sid replied as soon as he pulled his blade out of the chest of one of the Grade-A Apostles belonging to Prince Lowell's Army.

The moment the Peak-Grade-Apostle died, his body suddenly shuddered before standing up from the ground. He had become a Rank 3—Grade B Apostle—Draugr, which was a type of Undead similar to a zombie, but it retained most of its strength.

"Mumumumu!" Eiko shouted as she used the skill, Animate Undead, which she had copied from her Papa to raise the Elite Soldiers that had died in battle.

Lux was doing the same. He was constantly raising the dead soldiers to fight for their side. He couldn't bear to summon the dead Solains to fight in battle, so he opted to just raise the Soldiers that Scarlet and Sid were killing.

'Master, you're still too soft,' Asmodeus said. 'But, that's fine. You can stay the way you are, I will do the dirty things for you.'

Asmodeus had no qualms in raising the dead Solains, using his intellect to use them to fight as a team, greatly increasing their effectiveness in battle.

One of the Barbarians that Asmodeus had raised after he died, grabbed a corpse of a Soldier from the ground and threw it towards a place where the majority of their enemies had gathered.

As soon as the corpse landed on the ground, the Archlich, Asmodeus, pointed his finger on the dead body and sneered.

"Corpse Explosion!"

Immediately, pained shouts reverberated in the battlefield as those that were twenty-meters around the corpse found themselves hit by Necrotic Damage, dulling their actions.

"Corpse Explosion!"

"Corpse Explosion!"

"Corpse Explosion!"

Asmodeus grinned as his "grenades" made the chaotic battlefield more chaotic, allowing the teenagers to finally gain a foothold where they could fight without holding anything back.

"Gaia Smash!" Orion roared as he jumped in the air like a wrestler and smashed his Jade Fist in front of him, sending soldiers flying in every direction.

"One shot," Ishtar said as she appeared right above one of the soldiers that were blown away by Orion's punch, and fired her arrow into the soldier's forehead ending his life. "One kill."

A moment later, the Nightstalker vanished in a cloud of black mist, appearing a few meters away, holding a black dagger coated with poison in her right hand, and slashing the neck of the soldiers beside her.

After doing this, she once again turns into black mist, reappearing to where the teenagers were having trouble and backstabbed the soldiers they were facing.

Diablo charged at the Soldiers and brandished his sword, dealing Ethereal Damage that bypassed their armor, making them feel extreme pain that harmed their soul.

One of the Initiates, who saw this, frowned and decided to attack one of the greatest threats to their faction. However, when he saw a little girl with red hair, wearing a black robe, a sinister glint appeared in his eyes as he shifted his focus to her.

"I like killing little girls," the Initiate said as she stood in front of his target. "Their flesh is so tender that my blade just passes through them so easily. I like killing them the most!"

Without another word, the Initiate swung his sword to split the girl's body into two. However, to his surprise, the little girl swayed her body to the side, dodging his attack completely.

"You like killing little girls?" the girl with red hair asked as her short sword pierced through the Initiate's stomach. "Trash like you doesn't deserve to live."

With a twist of her hand, a bloody hole appeared on the Initiate's stomach. However, she wasn't finished yet.

With a strength unbefitting of her looks, and height, the little girl with red hair, slashed upwards, splitting the Initiate's body in half.

Scarlet glanced down at the dead Initiate with a look of contempt before once again joining the fray.

This was the first time she had fought against humans, which made her realize that the Dwarven Kingdom was just a small part of a bigger world.

A world that she was just about to experience for the first time.

A few seconds after Scarlet left, the Initiate's body morphed into something hideous, transforming into a Rank 4, Skeleton Berserker, whose deathly howl rang out in its surroundings.

'Such a waste,' Asmodeus grumbled. 'I planned to use the body for an experiment, but since it is already damaged beyond repair, I guess I'll settle for another.'

The Archlich's glowing eyes scanned the surroundings, and saw another "little boy" who had snuck behind one of the Initiates who were trying to target Vera from behind.

'Oh? This one is good,' Asmodeus thought. 'My Master certainly has a good eye on people.'

The Archlich narrowed his eyes the moment that Sid's speed suddenly increased, allowing him to deliver his own sneak attack on the Initiate that planned to sneak attack Vera from behind.

A silver line streaked within the darkness as Sid's Silver Blade cut off the initiate's arm.

Vera was too focused on her enemy that she wasn't aware of the Initiate that was poised to attack her from behind, which would allow Esmond the opportunity to deliver a killing blow.

Sid knew that he was unable to instantly kill his target, so he decided to just cut off the enemy's arm first, stopping him from throwing the black dagger towards the Old Woman, who was also his Master's grandmother.

A look of surprise and disbelief flashed across the Initiate's face when he felt a stinging pain in his arm. However, that expression didn't last long as a silver blade slashed his head from his body, making it roll on the ground.

'Excellent,' Asmodeus applauded Sid in his heart as he looked at the Dwarf Assassin who had hidden himself in the ongoing chaos around him. However, the Archlich noticed the direction that Sid was going and it made him chuckle in his heart.

When Lux had left his Dhamphir Assassin in Leaf Village, he also gave him an order to go and visit the Kobold Draconian, Cadmus.

Cadmus had once told Lux in passing that he was planning to leave the Beginner's Area and head deeper into the Monster's Domain to the west of the Kobold Territories.

In that place, Goblins, Orcs, Trolls, and many other fearsome creatures roamed.

Unlike Scarlet, who received the full backing of Twilight Rain in order to become the next Slayer Candidate, Sid only relied on his own hard work to make himself stronger.

His path had always been a path of blood and thorns, but he didn't mind. Now that his sisters were in a good place, he could focus on making himself stronger, slowly advancing to become a Ranker, in order to repay and serve his Master, who had given him, and her sisters, a new lease in life.

Just like Asmodeus, Lux also saw where Sid was going and approved his plan without a second thought.

Now that they had eliminated two of the Initiates in the battlefield, the tide of battle had finally tilted in their direction.

## **Chapter 302.3: The Heart Of The Abyss [Part 3]**

"Your Highness, make sure to not leave my side," a young man with silver hair said. "The enemy is stronger than we expected."

"Indeed," another young man who looked exactly like the one with silver hair commented. The only difference between the two of them was the color of his hair, which was dark blue. "A Ranker Avatar, two Initiates, a Necromancer, and an Arclich. Dear me, he also has a Death Tyrant. Maybe we bullied the wrong group."

Prince Lowell clicked his tongue in annoyance as he gazed at his right-hand man who was battling against the old lady who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

"Esmond! Kill that old hag right away!" Prince Lowell ordered. "What's taking you so long?!"

Esmond, who had swatted one of Vera's puppets away, backed off as he gave the Prince a side-long glance.

"My apologies, Your Highness," Esmond replied. "This old ginger is still spicy. It will take some time to subdue her."

"Just hurry up!"

"As you command, Your Highness."

Esmond once again clashed with Vera, only this time, he started to strengthen the force behind his blows, pushing her puppets back and sending them flying.

Vera narrowed her eyes but didn't panic. She simply waved her hands as more puppets materialized behind her, continuing his fight against the Ranker who was a rank higher than her Avatar Form.

Iris, Cai, Keane, Nero, Einar, Vall, Enlil, Henrietta, and the other members of the Four Kings and Five Overlords took the Vanguard as they fought alongside their subordinates. With the Undead serving as their shields, they unleashed a barrage of attacks that made the enemy soldiers, who thought they already had this one in the bag, grit their teeth in frustration.

But, that was not the real problem.

Lux, Eiko, and Asmodeus had been Animating the Dead people around them, and using them to fight against their former comrades, which caused great mental pressure on Prince Lowell's private army.

They were also extremely wary of the Archlich whose deviousness knew no bounds. Commanding his Undead to throw corpses to places where the majority of the enemy soldiers congregated, Asmodeus would then detonate them using Corpse Explosion, sending shrapnel made of bone and Necrotic damage flying in every direction.

Truth be told, even the teenagers, who knew that the Undead were on their side, felt discomfort due to the fact that even their own comrades, who had died, once again picked their weapons and lunged at their enemies.

Fortunately, even though Asmodeus didn't bat an eye at using the dead teenagers as his soldiers, he didn't use them as grenades to be used for his skill, Corpse Explosion.

The Archlich knew that his Master would frown upon this act, so he just settled for using the enemy's bodies as his weapons.

Fifty five Skeleton Fighters.

Fifty Skeleton Grand Archers.

Seven Skeleton Mages.

If one combined Lux's Skeleton army, it would easily surpass a hundred. Although they were only Rank 2 Monsters, and weaker than the enemies, they were more than enough to threaten their enemies.

However, that number was now multiplied by three due to Eiko, and Asmodeus, who could use Lux's ability as well.

With over three hundred skeletons, being led by the Death Knight, Diablo, they were a force that was capable of turning the tide of battle in their favor.

"Dammit! Where did this Death Knight come from?!" one of the soldiers screamed as Diablo's Nightmare leapt into the center of their formation.

As someone who was able to increase his attack and defense depending on the number of the dead in his surroundings, Diablo's bonus damage had now



stepped into the thousands. With one swing of his sword, the soldiers screamed because their prided armor was useless against his Ethereal Damage that easily passed through their defenses.

"We got this!" Lux clenched his fist when he saw that they were gaining the upper hand in the skirmish between both sides.

He had been buffing his party members, as well as summoning the Undead to command them in battle. Right beside him, Pazuzu stood at the ready. Both of them were protecting Iris alongside her Guardian Beasts.

Just as Lux was about to raise the soldiers that had died in the battle, something silver appeared at the corner of his vision.

A moment later, a sword clashed against Pazuzu's shield, blocking a powerful blow that made the Demonic Protector take a step back.

"Oh? You managed to block that?" the silver-haired young man who was right beside Prince Lowell ago said. "Impressive. But, I'm not the only one you should focusing on, you know?"

Lux's sixth sense suddenly kicked in, making him transform his right arm into the arm of a red dragon and swung it behind him.

A resounding clash of two weapons hitting each other spread beside him, as a young man with dark-blue hair sneered.

"You blocked my blow... but so what?" the young man with dark-blue hair sneered.

Right after finishing his words, he pushed Lux back with all of his might, which sent the latter flying several meters away.

"Lux!" Iris shouted.

But, before she could even run to his direction, the young man with dark blue hair smacked the back of her head with the pommel of his sword, making the blue-haired beauty lose consciousness.

"Ma!" Eiko jumped off Iris' head and used Moonblast at point blank range, forcing the young man to dodge and back away.

A second later, the baby Slime blinked right beside Iris and used her ability to copy Pazuzu's Shield Wall, creating a blue dome around her and Iris.

Lux was able to breathe a sigh of relief after seeing this. But, at that moment, a voice filled with annoyance reached his ears.

"Annoying monster."

Suddenly, a silver spear collided with Eiko's Shield Wall, piercing through it and hitting the baby Slime, who had been completely caught by surprise.

"Pa..."

Those were the last words that Eiko said before her body blew up, splattering everywhere.

The blue dome shattered into a hundred pieces, and all the Skeletons that Eiko had summoned crumbled into dust.

For a brief moment, time seemed to stop as Lux stared at the remains of the baby Slime who had been with him for a goodly portion of his journey in Elysium.

"E-Eiko..." Lux was in a state of shock because everything happened so quickly. He was finding it hard to process everything that had happened. One moment Eiko had just saved Iris from the young man who knocked her unconscious.

The next moment, a silver spear pierced her body, killing her in front of his very eyes.

"Eikooooooooo!" Lux screamed as time once again started to move, showing him that what he saw wasn't a dream, but a reality that was akin to a nightmare.

The silver spear then flew back in the air and returned to Esmond's hand.

"So many annoying insects getting in our way," Esmond stated.

Vera was clutching her chest as blood spilled from it. Her opponent had used the opportunity to attack her when her attention shifted to Lux and Iris, who were attacked by the two Initiates that served the Prince.

"I'll be taking this beauty with me now," the young man with dark-blue hair commented as he picked up the unconscious young lady in his arms. "The Prince will surely reward me for this service—"

The young man with dark-blue hair suddenly found himself rooted in place as if something had grasped his entire body, holding him in place.

"You... bastard," Lux said in a hoarse voice. "I'll kill... you!"

Within his heart, a black seed sprouted. Those who held the power of the Abyss could draw upon its power anytime, but a price had to be paid. Depending on the user's need, the Abyssal Corruption in their body could take hold of their senses, making them transform into an Abyssal Creature, multiplying their power tenfold.

Black dragon scales covered Lux's entire body, and a pair of horns grew into his head. Eyes, as red as blood, stared at the young man holding his fiancée, making the Initiate unable to move a muscle.

"Dragon's Fear...", Cai muttered as she gritted her teeth to fight against the pressure that was descending on them all. "No good. The Heart of the Abyss is taking hold of his senses!"

Nero laughed internally as he looked at his love rival.

'It's over for you now, Lux,' Nero sneered. 'Once the Heart of the Abyss transforms your body into an Abyssal Creature, there is no turning back for you.'

Nero also knew that one day, his fate could be just like Lux's. This was why those who had gained the power of the Abyss had to have a strong will, or they would be consumed by the power and the temptations it brought.

"Lux...", Vera paled after seeing her grandson transform into a demi-dragon.

Lux's entire body was now covered in dragon scales, including his face. The two black horns on his head, and the two black wings on his back oozed a black mist that spread across his entire body, making him look like an Abyssal Creature whom both the Elysians and Solaicans hate.

With a roar filled with anger, Lux stomped his right foot on the ground, and shot towards the young man with dark-blue hair like a cannonball.

"N-No!" the young man shouted because his body wasn't able to move.

Lux's skill, Dragon's Fear, paralyzed anyone whose rank was lower than him. Right now, his strength was at the peak of the Initiate Rank, just a step away from being a Ranker.

The sound of metals clashing against each other spread in the surroundings as Esmond appeared between Lux and his subordinate, blocking the demi-dragon's attack.

"Run!" Esmond shouted. "Take the girl and run. As long as we have her, we can turn this situation around!"

"Y-Yes!" the young man suddenly came to his senses as he immediately turned around to run in the direction of the Prince.

But, before he could even do that, two black, demi-dragons appeared in front of him to block his way.

How could Lux possibly allow them to take Iris away without a fight?

The two clones roared and released their own Dragon Fear, stacking up with Lux's own making everyone gasp for breath. It was as if the air itself became heavy, that breathing normally was deemed impossible.

'Not good,' Esmond thought even he, a Ranker, was being affected by the combined power of the three black, demi-dragons, making him feel as if a mountain was placed on his shoulders.

"Die, fiend!" Esmond shouted as he pushed Lux's claw to the side before channeling his strongest attack to pierce through the demi-dragon's chest.

"Like hell I'd allow you to kill another family member of mine!" Vera jumped between Lux and Esmond, using her body to block the spear that was aimed at her grandson's heart.

A puppet stood in front of her, but Esmond's full-powered blow was so strong that it pierced right through it, embedding itself in her chest, which sent her flying alongside Lux who caught her in his arms.

"Retreat!" Esmond shouted. "Protect the prince and run!"

Just as he was about to turn away, he heard a cold chuckle behind him, which made all the hairs on the back of his neck stand on end.

"Run?" an aged old voice asked. "Can you do it, Mortal?"

Esmond looked behind him and his face immediately became grim.

The black mists that were oozing from Lux's body gathered together in one spot. The Half-Elf's demi-dragon transformation was being undone at a very fast rate, and the Abyssal corruption flew towards a golden token that floated in the air.

"I thought that it would still take some time for the Abyssal Corruption in his heart to mature, but fortunately I was wrong."

The black mists that had gathered around the golden token condensed and formed a crystal body that towered above the Ranker whose face had become as pale as a candle.

"Do you know?" the Crystal Dragon, Keoza, asked in a teasing tone. "What I like to eat the most is Abyssal Corruption."

An amused expression could be seen on its draconic face, which made Prince Lowell's private army's heart shudder.

Lux didn't summon him, but the Crystal Dragon had used the power of the Abyss, that had gone berserk in his heart, as an energy source to materialize in the world.

"Well then..." Keoza scanned the Half-Elf's enemies with a sinister glint in its eyes. "How do you all want to die?"

Keoza released its own Dragon Fear that far surpassed Lux's.

If Lux's Dragon's fear was like a candle light, Keoza's Dragon Fear was like a bonfire. Forcing everyone below his rank to kneel in his presence.

For the first time since he approached the entrance of the Hidden Domain, Prince Lowell regretted his decision to attack the teenagers that belonged to the Six Kingdoms. If he hadn't done that then perhaps...

Perhaps he wouldn't be staring at the image of Death, whose gaping jaws had now opened wide, to release a Dragon's Breath that would turn him, and his subordinates, into crystal sculptures.

## **Chapter 303: It Is Only Natural To Bully Them Back, Right?**

'Sh\*t!'

Esmond cursed internally as he activated the strongest defensive artifact in his possession, blocking the brunt of the Crystal Dragon's attack.

This was his life saving item, and it could only be used once before it disappeared completely. He knew that right now was the time, so he didn't bat an eye and endured the powerful blow that had turned the other soldiers, who were not behind him into crystal statues.

"Stop! Don't you care if the daughter of the Saint dies?!" Esmond asked as soon as the Crystal Dragon finished its breath attack.

"As a matter of fact... No," Keoza replied. "I don't care about her."

The Crystal Dragon's reply made Esmond's blood turn cold because he didn't expect that creature before him didn't care whether their hostage lived or died.

"Y-You!" Esmond gritted his teeth as he tried to think of a way in order to get out of this situation. "Treasures! That's right! I will give you treasures! My Master is a Prince. He can give you the treasures you want!"

Using his quick-wittedness he decided to use something that worked on the majority of dragons as a way to preserve his life, as well as the members of the Prince's entourage.

"Oh?" the corner of the Crystal Dragon's mouth curled up. "Treasures you say? I am indeed very fond of treasures... so, what treasures do you have?"

"What do you want?"

"Everything you, that prince, and his subordinates have. If you don't give me what I want, I will end all of you, right here, right now."

Keoza took a step forward and the ground trembled. He then lowered his head until it was mere inches away from Esmond's face.

"I'll count to ten. If I don't have all the treasures in your possessions, I will kill all of you," Keoza declared. "One... Two..."

"Give him everything you have!" Esmond roared. "Don't even think about hiding any valuable items in your possession! A dragon is very sensitive to treasure. Even if it's inside storage items, they can tell if there is a treasure inside!"

"Oh my, how perceptive of you, Human...." Keoza chuckled. "Three... Four..."

The young man with dark-blue hair, who was about to lower Iris on the ground, found himself staring into the glowing eyes of a Death Knight.

"Give her to me," Diablo ordered. "Or else..."

A poisoned blade rested on the young man's neck, as Ishtar positioned herself behind him.

The young man knew that he was stronger than the Death Knight, and the Nightstalker behind him, but the Crystal Dragon in front of him was something he couldn't fight at this point in time.

He begrudgingly handed the blue-haired beauty in his arms to the Death Knight who checked her condition before turning away to return to his Master's side.

Lux was awake, but he couldn't even move a finger. It was as if all of his anger, strength, and stamina had been sucked out of him, rendering him unable to avenge the baby slime, who the Ranker had killed right in front of his eyes.

The sound of trinkets falling on the ground echoed in the surroundings as Esmond, the Initiates, as well as all the soldiers, threw their storage rings, weapons, and even armors, at the growing pile in front of the Crystal Dragon.

"Your Highness, please, don't make things difficult for us," Esmond pleaded. "Surely, the things in your possession are not more precious than your life, right?"

"Kuh!" Prince Lowell glared at the Crystal Dragon, and the latter glared back at him, making him experience the full power of a Dragon's Fear in its concentrated form.

"Akh...Kah..."

Gurgling sounds escaped the Prince's lips as foam oozed out of his mouth. Esmond hurriedly grabbed the storage rings on Prince Lowell's fingers and threw them onto the stockpile in front of the Crystal Dragon before grabbing him and running away.

He didn't know if Keoza would abide by his words, so he decided to run away as fast as he could before the dragon changed his mind.

"Take it all," Keoza said to Diablo.

The Death Knight nodded and used its own storage space to take the storage rings, and storage bags that littered the floor.

As for the weapons that the army had thrown as well, the Skeletons under Lux's command took them into their personal storage to upgrade their own weapon and armor sets.

Keoza shifted his gaze to the Half-Elf who met his own gaze steadily. The two stared at each other for a while before the Crystal Dragon chuckled. The truth was, the power of the Abyss he gathered from Lux couldn't sustain him for long.

If he did attack the enemies using his full power, his body would dissipate in less than ten seconds, which would be detrimental if he the Ranker has another life saving item to endure an all out attack from him.

Also, he didn't decide to finish off Lux's enemies for one reason.

He wanted the Half-Elf to take vengeance using his own hands. Relying on him to do things would only hinder the red-headed teenager's growth, so he wanted the latter to have a goal that he could pursue with every fiber of his being.

"This is just a one time thing, Lux," Keoza said. "Know how to control the Power of the Abyss in your heart, and don't let it control you. If you fail, you



will not only hurt those around you, but those who are important to you as well."

Lux nodded. "Thank you, Keoza. I owe you one."

Keoza then lowered its head to whisper something in Lux's ears. The amusement in its expression disappeared and was replaced by a solemn one.

"If you don't do something soon, your grandma is going to die," Keoza whispered. "Because she is a ranker, her body is able to resist the poison that coated the Ranker's spear. However, I'm afraid that she only has a day to live."

Lux's eyes widened in shock as he hurriedly glanced at his side.

His grandma was no longer there, and only a pool of blood remained.

"Diablo! Take Iris!" Lux ordered. "We're going back! Asmodeus collect all of Eiko's..."

"Already done, My Lord," Asmodeus replied as he held a vial in his hand. "I collected everything."

Inside the transparent vial was a blue liquid, which were Eiko's remains when she exploded after getting hit by Esmond's spear.

Lux gritted his teeth as he remembered the Ranker's face, which made his heart burn in anger. However, right now, he knew where his priorities lay.

Once he was done with it, he would make Prince Lowell and his entourage pay for what he did to his family members.

"Rowan Tribe, we're going back!" Lux shouted. "Everyone, move out!"

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Barbatos Academy...

"No good, this is a poison we have never seen before," the High-Cleric said as she tried to use her ability to help cure Vera's injuries. "Based on its rarity, I'm guessing that it is a new poison especially made to fight against Rankers. If this keeps up, I'm afraid Lady Vera will not see the sunrise tomorrow."

Alexander stood beside the bed with his arms crossed over his chest.

"Do whatever you can for her," Alexander said coldly before turning around to leave the room. "When I return, I only want to hear good news. Do I make myself clear?"

"But, Headmaster, the poison..."

"... Don't make me repeat myself."

Without another word, Alexander left the treatment room and closed the door behind him.

As soon as no one was around him, he clenched his fist so hard that the air around him started to crack. He stood still for a two-full minutes before walking towards the exit of the Infirmary.

Vera had told him everything that happened before she collapsed and lost consciousness due to her injuries.

'Mother, don't worry,' Alexander vowed after leaving the Infirmary. 'I will make them pay. Since they dared to hurt our family, I will make them regret it from the bottom of their hearts.'

Several minutes later, the Headmaster of Barbatos Academy appeared in Elysium. He only had one thing in mind and that was to go to the Ashina Kingdom, and make them understand the consequences of their action.

After entering dozens of Teleportation Gates, he walked towards the peak of a mountain top overlooking the Ashina Kingdom.

There, an old man stood with his back facing Alexander.

Maximilian, the Chief of the Rowan Tribe stared down at the borders of the Ashina Kingdom with his arms behind his back.

"I thought you weren't coming," Maximilian said without turning around to look at Alexander.

"What are you doing here, old man?" Alexander replied as he stood beside Maximilian, staring at the territory of the Ashina Kingdom from on top of the mountain.

"Someone bullied my granddaughter, as well as the kids of my Tribe," Maximilian replied. "It is only natural to bully them back, right?"

Alexander narrowed his eyes in the direction of the capital of the Ashina Kingdom.

"The Ashina Kingdom has one Saint protecting it," Alexander stated.

"What a coincidence," Maximilian sneered. "There's two of us. You take care of the Saint, while I destroy their capital city. Sounds fair, right?"

"Good. Let's go."

"Don't drag me down, boy."

The two Saints disappeared from the mountain top as they made their way towards the capital city.

On that same day, news spread that the Capital City and Royal Palace of the Ashina Kingdom, were razed to the ground by two Angry Saints, whose might had surpassed the boundary of humanity.

## Chapter 304: I Trust You

"Grandma!" Iris hugged Vera who was lying on the bed. Her tears seeped through the old woman's robes, and her wail of sadness echoed inside the room.

"Why are you crying?" Vera asked. "I'm just a bit injured from the fight. Just give me a few days and I'll be back up to normal."

"Grandma, the High-Cleric already told me," Iris replied as she held her grandma tight. "I swear I will kill that Ranker! He'll pay for this!"

"...Child, it will be best if you forget about him for the time being," Vera stated as she patted Iris back in order to calm her down. "Everyone dies. Some just die sooner than others. You're still young and still have a long life ahead of you. I don't mind if you avenge me, but only do it when you are strong enough. Do you understand?"

Iris nodded her head as she cried her heart out. Right now, she just wanted to stay with her grandma while she was still alive. She would set aside everything else, including her revenge, as well as her responsibilities with her guild, Serenity.

Lux stood beside the bed and allowed his fiance to vent out all the frustration and pain she was feeling. After the Seed of the Abyss had taken root inside his heart, all the negative emotions that he had felt during the battle were turned into the Power of the Abyss, resulting in his Abyssal Transformation.

If it hadn't been for Keoza absorbing the Abyssal Powers that had run amok inside his body, he might have been corrupted completely, turning into an Abyssal Monster that would bring ruin to those around him.

Now that all of these negative emotions were sucked up by the Golden Token, Lux was able to think more clearly, allowing him to make the necessary preparations to save his Grandma's life.

He had a chat with Asmodeus on their way towards the settlement of the Rowan Tribe, and the latter gave him some advice on how to utilize the Flower of Death to its fullest potential.

What the Archlich told him then made the Half-Elf shudder. His first reaction was to reject Asmodeus' proposal completely, but after the Archlich pointed out the pros of the "experiment" that he had suggested Lux to do, the red-headed teenager found out that it might actually benefit Vera in the long run.

However, there were still risks involved, and even the Archlich had to agree that his proposal was only based on theories that had never been tested.

Because of this, Lux decided to consult his grandma about this procedure and ask her opinion about it.

"Grandma, I have a way to prevent you from dying," Lux said softly as he sat on the bed and held one of Vera's wrinkled hands that had protected and guided him for more than a decade.

Iris, who had been crying, raised her head and looked at Lux in horror because she thought that the Half-Elf was planning to revive her grandma into an Undead.

As if sensing her concern, Lux shook his head before shifting his gaze back to the old lady who was looking at him with a tender gaze.

"You don't have to force yourself, Lux," Vera replied. "I am fine. Even without me, I am sure that you will be able to become a wonderful person."

"Grandma, there are still many things that you need to teach me. It's too early for you to go. You still haven't held my and Iris' babies."

"...Yes. This will be my greatest regret in this lifetime. I knew I should have placed an aphrodisiac in your meal when you turned sixteen. That way, I would have been able to hold my great grandchild before passing away."

Lux pretended to not hear his grandma's words and continued to talk to her about his plan.

"Grandma, during the Dungeon Expedition, I managed to get an item that has never been heard of before," Lux said as he summoned the Flower of Death. "This is the Flower of Death. It can allow someone to escape the jaws of death, as long as they still drew breath. However, after ingesting it, you will enter a comatose state for a month, as your body regains its vitality, giving you a new chance at life."

Iris' eyes widened in shock as she stared at the black flower that was floating above the palm of Lux's hand. Just as the Half-Elf had said, this was the first time she was seeing such a thing, and it made her feel hopeful.

"Quick! Let grandma consume it!" Iris said as if her very life depended on it. However, Lux only shook his head because he still wasn't finished with his explanation yet.

A moment later, a black coffin appeared behind Lux.

"Come out," Lux ordered.

Immediately, the black coffin opened and two beams of light shot out from inside of it, landing on Lux's left and right sides.

Sid and Scarlet appeared before Iris and Vera and bowed their heads respectfully.

"They are... the two children that helped us earlier, right?" Iris said after taking a good look at the two "children" that had come out of the black coffin.

"They are not children. They are Dwarves. Long story short, these two tried to kill me back in Elysium," Lux replied before placing his left hand on the young Dwarf beside him. "But they got killed instead, so now, both of them are my subordinates."

"This is Sid. He is very hardworking and very loyal. I have high hopes for him."

Lux introduced the handsome Dwarf who bowed respectfully to Iris and Vera.

"My name is Sid, and thanks to my Master's kindness, I was given a second chance to live my life to the fullest. It is my great honor to see you, Master's Wife, Master's Grandma."

Iris immediately got a good impression of Sid after becoming called Lux's wife, making her smile at the skilled assassin who once tried to kill her fiance.

Vera also smiled faintly as she acknowledged Sid's greeting. Clearly, she liked the dwarf who was now her grandson's subordinate.

Lux smiled as he patted Sid's shoulder. "Right now, he is a Dhampir, and he's working hard to become a Ranker. Unlike someone who is being spoon fed with resources..."

Scarlet, who was standing beside Lux, clicked her tongue before averting her gaze. Clearly, she didn't like the way her Master was going to introduce her, so she decided to just ignore the Half-Elf completely.

"This feisty lady here is Scarlet. After her revival, she turned into a Cambion," Lux said as he used his thumb to point at the Dwarf, whose arms were crossed over her chest and was looking off to her right side. "Don't judge her by her looks, she is one talented assassin and although I have revived her, she's not as obedient as Sid. Truly a troublesome girl."

Scarlet snorted before glancing at Lux.

"I can't stay here for long," Scarlet said. "The Elder might look for me soon. I have already wasted a lot of time coming to your aid, so can I go now?"

"See? Look at how ungrateful she is." Lux sighed, but still nodded his head. "Make sure to become a Ranker as soon as you can. I will need your help very soon."

"...Fine," Scarlet replied before walking towards the Black Coffin. "Only call me when it's truly important. If you want someone to run your errands for you, Sid will be more than enough."

After saying what she wanted to say, she turned into a beam of light and flew towards the Coffin, returning to the world of Elysium.

"Sid, you can go as well," Lux stated. "I'm sure that you're doing your best, so you won't get left behind by Scarlet. Make sure to show her what hard work can do!"

Sid respectfully bowed towards Lux. "As you wish, Master."

A second later, he turned into a beam of light and flew towards the black coffin.

Vera had an amused expression on her pale face after seeing Lux's two subordinates. She had seen how strong the two Initiates were in the battle, and it made her feel relieved, knowing that her grandson still had some trump cards that he could summon to save his life.

"Grandma, the name of this coffin is Blackfire," Lux explained. "It has the ability to store Dead and Near Death creatures inside it. Using its ability, one can..."

Lux explained Blackfire's functions to Vera. Iris, who was holding her Grandma's hand, listened seriously to the Half-Elf's words as if dissecting it from the inside out.

"Since grandma will be in a comatose state for a month, it will be best if you stayed inside Blackfire," Lux said. "With the Flower of Death as an offering, you will definitely recover. Also, there is a possibility that you will gain a strong, new body, just like Sid, who has turned into a Dhampir, and Scarlet, who has become a Cambion.

"But since you will be using the Flower of Death as an offering, you will not turn into an Undead Creature."

Iris, who had been listening quietly on the side, voiced her opinion. "Lux, according to your explanation, everyone that you revive using Blackfire will become loyal to you. Will they lose their free will?"

Lux smirked after hearing his fiance's worry.

"Did you not see and hear Scarlet earlier?" Lux asked. "Does that look and sound like someone who has lost their free will? Also, I don't plan to make Grandma my subordinate. As soon as the revival procedure is over, I will release her from Blackfire's hold."

The Half-Elf then looked at his grandma who seemed to be deep in thought.

"Of course, if Grandma doesn't like it, you can just consume the Flower of Death," Lux stated. "I will abide by your decision. But you have to decide soon, Grandma."

Blackfire, which was floating beside Lux, radiated a crimson glow. It meant that someone around it was about to die, which had activated its ability to store near-death creatures.

Vera could also feel her body slowly turning cold with every passing second, and she understood that she didn't have much time left.

"Lux, I trust you." Vera gazed at her grandson with a tender gaze. She knew that Lux wouldn't do anything to harm her, so she decided to put her life in his hands. "Do what you think will be best for me."

The red-headed teenager clenched his fist before nodding his head.

"Grandma, I'll see you in a month's time," Lux said softly. "Blackfire, please take her."

The Black Coffin opened wide as a black mist escaped from within its depths. The black mist covered Vera's body entirely, and she turned into a black mist, floating towards the coffin whose crimson radiance had become intense.

When the last trace of mist was sucked up inside it, the black coffin closed and hovered beside Lux.



Holding the Flower of Death in his hand, Lux stretched his arm and placed the flower over the coffin as an offering. A few seconds later, the black flower turned into particles of light, merging with the black coffin.

Lux didn't know whether he made the right decision or not.

All he knew was that he would find the answer as soon as the Black Coffin released one of the most important people to him, who had cared for him for the past sixteen years of his life.

## Chapter 305: Eiko's Revival

"Lux, will grandma really be fine?"

"Yes. Don't worry. She will be with us again before you know it."

Lux assured Iris, who was wrapped up in his protective embrace.

Since Alexander was not in Barbatos Academy, Lux decided to wait for him to return before leaving the Academy.

He was the one who had taken custody of Vera, so he at least wanted the Headmaster of Barbatos Academy to know what had happened while he was away.

The two teenagers hugged each other until Iris had no tears left to cry. She was still very upset about what had happened to her grandma, as well as her baby slime, Eiko.

Right now, the blue-haired beauty felt nothing in her heart but hate towards Prince Lowell, as well as the Ranker, Esmond, who had killed her family members.

"Don't worry," Lux said as he patted her head. "I promise you that I'll kill them. They will not get away from what they have done to our family."

Iris nodded her head as she clutched the vial that contained Eiko's remains. Her beloved little slime, who would kiss her before she slept, had turned into a lifeless pile of goo after she had done her best to save her Mama from harm.

"Are you ready?" Lux asked Iris who seemed to have already calmed down.

"Yes," Iris replied. "We need to bring her back, Lux."

"I know. Let's begin."

"Un."

Lux took out a small blue vial from his storage ring. Inside it was a piece of Eiko's body, which he had taken as insurance before they went to Elysium.

Slimes were one of the weakest, if not the weakest, monsters in the world. Because of this, Lux made sure that he would have a way to revive Eiko by using the small part of her body that she had entrusted to him.

Summoning a crystal bowl, Iris poured the vial of Eiko's remains inside it. When the vial was emptied, Lux then placed the small part of Eiko's body in the crystal bowl. He didn't really know how Eiko was going to be revived.

Her ability's description only told them that as long as a small piece of her body remained, she would be able to regenerate until she regained her true form.

Lux and Iris watched the crystal bowl, waiting for something to happen.

However, after an hour had passed, there was still no movement that could be seen in the crystal bowl, making both of them worried.

"Let me try this," Lux took out one of the Argonaut Ranked Beast Cores in his possession.

When he saw this among the prizes that he received from winning the tournament, he thought that one of the rulers of the Six Kingdoms probably gave it to him as a joke.

Upon seeing this Beast Core then, he had been tempted to give the middle finger to whoever added this to the prize pool.

The reason for it was simple.

The Beast Core could only be used by Slimes!

According to the Elysium Compendium, the Beast Core came from a Queen Slime that once terrorized a Kingdom in Elysium.

Because of this, a crusade was launched against it, but the outcome was a pyrrhic victory. Only 5% of the expedition team returned alive, giving a devastating blow to the Kingdom's prestige.

To make matters worse, the Argonaut-Ranked Beast Core was a Slime-exclusive Beast Core, preventing others from using it for themselves.

In the end, the Beast Core was auctioned for a very low price, which was bought by one of the members of the Royal Family of the Six Kingdoms.

Perhaps wanting to use it to annoy the Champion, they added it to the prize pool.

Now, that same Beast Core was in Lux's hand, and he planned to use it to revive the baby Slime that had taken her place in his heart.

Placing the Beast Core inside the crystal bowl, the two waited for what would happen next.

Suddenly, a small ripple appeared in the crystal bowl, as if something had moved inside it. A moment later, more ripples appeared. Iris let out an unlady-like squeal before hugging Lux, while staring at the crystal bowl with bated breath.

Lux could also feel his breathing turn ragged as he held Iris in his arms. Both of their attentions were focused inside the crystal bowl, wanting to ensure that nothing escaped their eyes.

Five minutes later, the blue goo in the crystal bowl suddenly rose up to coat the Beast Core that was placed in its center. When the entire Beast Core was covered up, it started to glow. A few minutes later, the light started to pulse, just like a heartbeat, which made Lux and Iris feel their hearts skip a beat.

Ten minutes later, the Beast Core was gone, and it was replaced by a blue egg with a flower design on its surface.

Iris slowly untangled herself from Lux's embrace before moving closer to the crystal bowl.

Her hands reached out to hold it and bring it close to her face. A moment later, she pressed her forehead over the egg's surface, as if verifying if her hunch was right.

After what seemed to be forever, Iris hugged the blue egg to her chest and turned around to look at her fiance with teary eyes.

"She's alive." Iris sobbed. "Eiko is alive. But she will need some time to fully recover. She will come out of the egg on her own once she regains her strength."

Lux breathed a sigh of relief after hearing Iris' words. All this time, he felt as if a lump was stuck in his throat, but after hearing the good news, the anxiety he felt disappeared completely.

"Here, hold her," Iris said as she passed the blue egg to Lux, who held it as if it was a priceless treasure.

"Can you feel it?" Iris smiled as she rested her hand on top of the egg's surface. "It's very warm right?"

Lux nodded. "Warm, and full of life."

He and Iris shared a strong connection with Eiko, and even though the baby slime had reverted into an egg, that connection remained as strong as ever. Now that their two loved ones were recovering, Lux and Iris were finally able to relax a little.

The stress that had built up as they hurried to Barbatos Academy from the Rowan Tribe's main camp had taken a toll on them. Even so, they still pushed through. Only after everything was over did exhaustion take over their bodies, making the both of them unable to move.

Lux stored the blue egg inside his Enchanted Beast Ring, which allowed its owner to store dead Monsters, as well as Monster eggs.

After their grueling experience, Lux and Iris laid on the bed holding each other. They were too tired to do anything, so they simply slept.

They weren't aware that while they were desperately trying to revive Vera and Eiko, a political storm was raging in Elysium.

The news of the destruction of the Capital City and the Royal Palace of the Ashina Kingdom had reached the adjacent territories, prompting them to hold a council meeting.

The factions belonging to Barbatos Academy and the Rowan Tribe were called upon to attend an emergency meeting, so that the leaders of the various kingdoms could understand what caused the two Saints go on a rampage, and attack one of the Kingdoms in Elysium, which was part of their alliance.

Saints were the strongest mortals that everyone aspired to be. Above them were Supreme, who were individuals who had broken away from the path of mortality and had stepped into Immortality.

The number of individuals that had stepped into the Supreme Rank in the Western Regions of Elysium could only be counted on one hand.

Saints, although still rare, far exceeded that number, making them the Apex Beings that lorded above the mortal realm.

Two Saints working together was a very scary thing because they had the ability to wipe out entire cities and even Kingdoms if they wished for it.

This was why Alexander's and Maximilian's actions made everyone nervous. No matter what happened, this incident must reach a proper conclusion, or there would be war.

A war that not only involved the alliances of many kingdoms, but a war that would involve other Saints, which could lead to the loss of countless lives, and the destruction of the geopolitical balance that had been around for hundreds of years.

## **Chapter 306: Do You Dare To Go To War?**

"So the two of you attacked the Ashina Kingdom because their rankers bullied your family members?" one of the Kings, who belonged to the alliance that the Ashina Kingdom was part of, asked.

"Gentlemen, this is a serious violation of the pact between Saints. You should have dealt with the person responsible, and not the Kingdom they belonged to. This is a very childish act of revenge, don't you think so?"

Maximilian, who had just finished drinking his tea, placed it on the top of the table and eyed the King, who was seated across from him.

"So, in short, you want us to destroy your place as well?" Maximilian asked.

The King slammed his hand against the table and glared at the Saint who just threatened to attack his domain.

"I'm telling you that what you did was wrong!" the King shouted. "If all of us attacked others just because one of our family members was hurt, wars would break out innumerable, resulting in the loss of countless lives. Are you taking wars lightly?"

Maximilian rested his chin over the palm of his hand as he stared at the King with contempt.

"I don't give a hoot about this Pact between Saints," Maximilian commented. "I didn't sign it, so I'm not a part of it. Anyone who hurts my granddaughter will die alongside his kingdom. If you don't want to be destroyed, make sure to tell your children not to touch those they shouldn't touch. If you want war, I'll give you war."

The King was angered further and shakingly pointed his finger at the old man whom he wanted to slap so badly, but couldn't due to the disparity in strength. "Why, you...!"

"Enough!"

A powerful voice stopped the argument by force.

"Are you sure you want to take this path, Sir Maximilian?" the Emperor of the Vahan Empire, Emperor Andreas, asked. "Once we decide to go to war, there is no turning back."

Emperor Andreas was the leader of the Four Kingdoms and one Empire Alliance that matched the strength of the Six Kingdom in Solais.

His Empire also had two Saints in it, so he wasn't afraid of Alexander and Maximilian wreaking havoc in his domain.

"Yeah," Maximilian replied nonchalantly. "Do you dare to go to war?"

Emperor Andreas smiled before shifting his gaze to Alexander, who was just listening to the side.

"How about you, Sir Alexander?" Emperor Andreas asked. "Are you sure you want to go to war?"

Alexander held Emperor Andreas' gaze and answered in a calm manner.

"I only have four family members," Alexander said. "One of them is on her deathbed, and my only daughter was almost kidnapped and raped. I have nothing to lose, but you do. So let me ask you... Do you dare go to war?"

Alexander narrowed his eyes as he stared at the Emperor, who was the true leader of the Alliance that was opposing their own. Maximilian and he only cared for their family members, so they couldn't care less about what happened to other people.

Neither of them cared if countless people would lose their lives. If their daughter and granddaughter died, they would ensure that an entire Kingdom would be buried alongside them.

Emperor Andreas snorted before leaning back in his chair.

The other kings, who had remained silent throughout the discussion, waited for the decision of the Two Saints, as well as the Emperor, who would dictate if a war would happen between their factions.

"It's annoying to talk to people who have nothing to lose," Emperor Andreas commented after several minutes had passed. "Fine. We will turn a blind-eye on this incident, but neither of you are allowed to attack any of the other kingdoms belonging to my faction. Since this is a battle between the young generation, let them settle it themselves."

"Your Majesty! Please reconsider!" the King of the Ashina Kingdom stood as he gazed at the leader of their alliance. "My Capital City and Royal Palace have been destroyed. How can we possibly not ask them for compensation!"

Emperor Andreas glanced at the King of the Ashina Kingdom with an ice-cold expression.

"You dare question my decision?" Emperor Andreas asked.

"N-No. I am just asking why aren't we asking for compensation?" the King of the Ashina Kingdom replied.

"That is the price you must pay for raising a stupid son," Emperor Andreas snorted. "This is your problem, so deal with it on your own. Don't drag us in to clean up your mess."

"Ah, before I forget. From now on, the Domain of the Fallen will also be open to members of our faction. We can let our representatives settle the quota for each Kingdom to prevent any conflicts in the future. That is all. Once again, adults are now forbidden to get in the way of the conflicts of the young generation. If this thing happens again then..."

Emperor Andreas scanned the faces of the Kings of the opposing faction and sneered.

"Then we will go to war. This is not a bluff."

Emperor Andreas stood up and left the room with a smile on his face. Although he said that he would turn a blind eye on the incident that just transpired, that didn't mean that he wouldn't make things difficult for the factions that belonged to Barbatos Academy, the Rowan Tribe, as well as the Six Kingdoms, who dared to attack a territory that belonged under his umbrella.

"Domain of the Fallen," Emperor Andreas muttered. "I finally found your location."

Unknown to everyone, the Domain of the Fallen was something that the Vahan Empire had been searching for a long time. Their founding Emperor had passed down a message which said that one of the gates inside the Sacred Dungeon held a golden key that would lead to the Holy City of the Draconic Race that floated in the sky.

Anyone who was able to reach that place would gain treasures beyond anyone's wildest dreams.



Now that the location of the mysterious Dungeon was found, Emperor Andreas was confident that he would be able to secure the key for himself and allow the Vahan Empire to gain access to the Holy City. He believed that in the future, they would have power to expand their territories and become the true Overlord of the Western Regions of Elysium.

## Chapter 307: Now Is Not The Time To Be Happy

"I see..." Alexander muttered. "You did well, Lux. Thank you."

When Alexander returned to Barbatos Academy, he had already steeled himself for the news of his mother's passing. However, instead of her death, a possible rebirth awaited her.

This news alone made Alexander, who didn't usually praise Lux, complimented the teenager and thanked him for keeping one of their important family members from death.

Lux shook his head. "I owe my life to Grandma. Without her, I would have long been gone from this world. This is but a small thing for everything she has done for me."

A fleeting smile appeared on Alexander's lips, which the Half-Elf managed to catch before it disappeared.

"What are your plans for the future?" Alexander asked.

The Headmaster of Barbatos Academy and the red-headed teenager were currently inside his office, and there were only two of them.

Lux had told Iris that he wanted to talk to her father alone, and she respected his decision, so she stayed inside her room to wait for his return.

The Half-Elf used to be terrified of staying in the same room as Alexander because he felt like a useless person whenever he was around the other party. Now, it was different. Lux had already broken free from the shackles that bound him, allowing him to stand side-by-side with the strongest members of the young generation.

He had gained everyone's recognition after winning the Lionheart Tournament that even his step-father, who had very high standards, had no choice but to acknowledge his achievement.

Right now, Lux was able to look Alexander straight in the eyes and talk to him without stuttering like he used to in the past.

"Revenge," Lux replied. "Prince Lowell and his entourage are still at large. I want to personally make all of them pay for what they have done to my family."

Alexander nodded his head in understanding. If possible, he also wanted to personally deal with the lascivious prince and the Ranker who bullied his daughter, but after the meeting with Emperor Andreas, he was forced to stay his hand.

The other Kingdoms didn't want to go on a war against the Allied Kingdoms under Emperor Andreas, and Alexander knew that if he forced the issue, the relationship between the Solaians and the Elysians would become strained.

Because of this, he and Maximilian agreed to let the members of the young generation settle their dispute by themselves. Whatever the outcome would be, none of the adults was allowed to interfere in the struggles between teenagers.

The whereabouts of the Domain of the Fallen had also become known to everyone. Because of this, the Alliance of the Six Kingdoms, Barbatos Academy, as well as the Rowan Tribe, was left with no choice but to give half the quota to the other Kingdoms, in order to settle the cost of the destruction that Alexander and Maximilian had done to the Ashina Kingdom in a peaceful manner.

"Prince Lowell has a Ranker as his personal bodyguard," Alexander commented. "Unless you reach that rank, it will be difficult for you to kill him."

Lux nodded his head in understanding.

"For now, my plan is to stay in the territories that belong to our Faction in order to gather resources to become stronger," Lux replied. "I already talked to Iris and declined her offer to join the Serenity Guild. I still have things to settle with the Wildgarde Stronghold, and I'm sure that I'll receive an earful when I return. But after thinking it through, I decided to form my own Guild."

Alexander once again nodded his head.

Lux was raised in Wildgarde Stronghold, so he had a responsibility to help it grow. He was not shameless enough to ignore the people that cared and supported him all these years. The only problem was that he didn't intend to join Nero's Guild, the Storm Dragons, and wanted to form his own Guild, so that he could have his own faction within Elysium.

"Founding a guild is not easy," Alexander stated. "You must first receive the approval of three Guildmasters from any branch of the Adventurer's Guild. Once that is done, you will need to take a test in order to gain the Token of Leadership, which would allow you to formally register your guild in Elysium as a Bronze-Ranked Guild.

"However, before you are able to register your guild, you will need to gather thirty people to serve as your guild members. Finally, you need to think of the name of the Guild. Then, and only then, will your guild be truly recognized as an official guild by the people of Elysium."

Alexander eyed the red-headed teenager in front of him and arched his eyebrow.

"Can you do that?" Alexander inquired. "Or do you need my assistance in order to establish your guild?"

Lux shook his head. "I want to create a guild with my own hands. Although it is not going to be easy, I am prepared to take on this challenge."

"Good. I look forward to the completion of your guild."

"Thank you, Father."

Alexander's body stiffened when he heard what Lux called him. Lux was technically his step-son because Vera had registered the young man under his name, but he had always kept his adopted son at arm's length, making Lux afraid to call him father.

But it was different now. The Half-Elf who once shied away at his mere presence was now seated in front of him, without showing any signs of fear or anxiety.

"You have truly grown, Lux," Alexander commented before standing from his chair. He then circled around his table and stood beside Lux, looking down on him. "May fortune smile upon you."

The Headmaster of Barbatos Academy then patted Lux's shoulder twice before leaving the room.

The Half-Elf's eyes followed Alexander's retreating figure with clenched fists, not because of anger, but happiness. His step-father's gesture had told him many things, and one of them was that Alexander had finally approved of him from the bottom of his heart.

This alone made Lux feel like jumping in joy, but he reigned in this impulse.

'Now is not the time to be happy,' Lux thought as he rose from his seat. 'I still have things to do.'

Now that he had talked to Alexander, it was time for him to return to Elysium. But before that, he would need to return to Wildgarde Stronghold in order to talk to the Elders who had long been waiting for his return.

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## **Chapter 308: Weather The Storms Of The World Using My Own Strength**

"You want to create your own Guild?" Gerald, the High-Commander of Wildgarde Stronghold asked. "Are you sure of this, Lux?"

"Yes, Sir," Lux replied. "I want to create my own guild in Elysium."

Three days after his talk with Alexander, Lux finally returned to Wildgarde Stronghold in order to meet with the Elders, who were also the Guardians of the Fortress City where he grew up.

"I have expected this to happen sooner or later," Natasha, the High-Cleric of the stronghold commented. "Is your dispute with Nero so bad that there is no room for reconciliation?"

"I don't want to work under someone who doesn't like me," Lux replied. "Even if he treats me fairly like his other guild members, I will always think that he is just paying lip service because he doesn't want to look bad in your eyes. Also, there is always a small chance that he will intentionally make things difficult for me, and even send me to harm if an opportunity presents itself."

Rainer, who was Nero's Master, looked down on Lux from his seat with his arms crossed over his chest. He bore no grudges against the Half-Elf, and even thought that it was a waste not to have Lux in their Guild.

With someone of the Half-Elf's caliber joining their subsidiary guild, he believed that the Storm Dragon's Guild would truly spread its wings and soar to the sky.

The Guardians exchanged glances with each other and sighed. All of them had been briefed about what happened to Vera and were quite worried about her condition. Alexander's official response only said that Vera was taken to an intensive care unit deep within Barbatos Academy to prevent the poison in her body from spreading.

No one was allowed to visit her, so they didn't know what her condition truly was. However, the witnesses who had participated in the battle had attested that the old lady had been grievously injured from her fight against the Ranker that belonged to Prince Lowell's entourage.

"Creating a guild is not an easy task, Lux," Gerald stated. "Do you need to use our connections? That should make things easier for you. In regards to the Guild Members, we will give you free reign to choose among the talented individuals within the stronghold as well as the territories under our protection. What do you think?"

Lux smiled as he respectfully bowed his head towards Gerald.

"Sir, your offer is very tempting, but I must decline," Lux replied.

The atmosphere inside the room immediately turned tense after Lux responded to Gerald's proposal.

"So are you saying that you are going to break off from the stronghold completely?" Rainer broke his silence as he glanced at the Half-Elf, who just turned away the olive branch that they offered to him. "Has your victory in the

tournament made you confident enough to throw us aside after all that we have done for you?"

Lux pressed his right fist over his chest as he looked at Rainer, who was also Nero's Master.

"I will forever be a member of the Wildgarde Stronghold," Lux replied. "If someone tries to invade it, I will stand as the vanguard in order to protect it with my life. That is how much I owe to the place that has helped me weather the storms of my childhood."

"My decision to form a new guild is not because I want to break free from this place. No, far from it. What I want is to help this stronghold grow, but I will not be able to do that if I join the Storm Dragons for reasons all of you already know.

"As for helping me create the guild by using the stronghold's connections and resources, my reason for rejecting it is because of one simple reason, and that is... I wish to stand on my own two feet, and weather the storms of the world using my own strength."

"All of you bore witness to the hardships I faced when my body was still frail and riddled with sickness. Now, I stand before you, not as a cripple, but as a changed person. I know that this is a selfish decision on my part, but I want to see just how far I can go in a world where the only ones I can rely on are myself and the people that supported me with their own free will."

The tension in the room disappeared, and it was replaced by a profound silence that made Lux wonder if his message had made its intended effect.

A few minutes later, Natasha smiled as she looked down on Lux.

"As expected of the boy that I raised since childhood," Natasha said. "You inherited my boldness!"

"I was the one that changed his diapers when Vera was away," Gerald commented from the side. "Clearly, he got all of his good traits from me."

"I was the one who instructed him on stamina training..."

"I was the one who taught him history!"

"So what? I was the one that taught him manners. You plebs don't know a thing."

"I was the one that taught him archery!"

"Um, hello? Did you forget? On his first day, he shot an arrow into your butt, so you banned him from entering the archery range."

"Nonsense! Don't slander me. I was giving him secret lessons when no one was looking!"

The Guardians one by one claimed to have played an important role to help shape Lux to becoming what he was today. In their eyes, Lux was proof that their teachings were correct, and was quite happy with his achievements, because his achievements were their achievements.

The Half-Elf could only scratch his head at the unexpected turn of events that were happening in front of him. He had thought that his Elders would think that he had grown too arrogant when he became the champion of the tournament, but looking at their reactions, his worries were unfounded.

Only Rainer kept his cool the entire time and once again asked Lux the most important question of all.

"Can you do it?" Rainer asked. "Can you create a guild by yourself?"

Lux nodded. "Yes."

"Then prove it. We will consider this as your coming of age quest. You have exactly one month to create a guild, which is equivalent to two months in Elysium. Within that set amount of time, you must finish this quest. If you fail, you will be exiled from Wildgarde Stronghold for five years, never to step inside its territories again during your time of exile. Do you accept this condition?"

The two Guardians, who had been rowdy earlier, all clammed up as they stared at Rainer with solemn expressions on their faces.

Lux had been exempted from the Coming of Age quest because of his weak constitution, which was a tradition among those that had become sixteen-years old.

Usually, the Coming of Age Quest required an individual to either kill a certain monster, or collect a certain herb. There were other quests that were more forgiving for those who didn't excel in fighting, and weren't confident enough to travel to far away places.

Because of the minor quests that had been approved over the years, the Coming of Age Ceremony wasn't as demanding as it used to be, allowing anyone to pass it without problems.

"Rainer, isn't the hurdle too high?" Natasha asked. "Surely, there must be another way."

"Of course, there is another way," Rainer replied. "If Lux fails to meet the conditions, then he must join the Storm Dragon Guild, and make peace with Nero. What do you guys think?"

"Oh! This is a good idea. Definitely better than exile."

"I agree with this condition."

"Hah~ you sly fox. Still, I like it! Very well, I also approve of this."

Gerald and Natasha were surprised at first, but after careful consideration, they thought that Rainer's condition was brilliant. Exiling such a talented youth was simply a waste, so it would be best to keep him under their subsidiary guild for the benefit of everyone.

Lux was very tempted to tell them that he would rather be exiled than make peace with Nero, but after seeing everyone's eager eyes on him, he decided to just smile and agree to the conditions presented to him.

"Great!" Gerald clapped his hands. "As the High-Commander of Wildgarde Stronghold, I hereby declare the start of your Coming of Age Ceremony. Within a month, you must create a guild without fail. If you are unable to achieve this goal, you will join the Storm Dragon's Guild, and make peace with Nero. Do you accept this condition?"

"I do," Lux replied.

Gerald smiled. "Good. Your one month will start tomorrow. I look forward to the surprise you will give all of us one month from now."



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Inside Vera's Residence...

Lux busied himself with cleaning Vera's room, his room, as well as the other rooms in the house. He would be away for a month, and his grandma was currently in a comatose state, so no one would be in their residence for nearly a month.

While doing chores, he was already formulating the things that he needed to do once he entered Elysium.

The factions of Wildgarde Stronghold were based in the Azrael Kingdom, while the faction of Barbatos Academy was stationed in the Regulus Empire.

Both of these nations were neighbors and had a good relationship with each other. Lux planned to visit the Adventurer Guilds in the Azrael Kingdom first, and convince three of its Guildmasters to allow him to take the Trial of Leadership.

'The hardest part is convincing the Guildmasters,' Lux thought. 'Usually, they would prioritize individuals who have managed to become Gold-Ranked Adventurers...'

There were eight Adventurer Guild Ranks, and they were Bronze, Iron, Silver, Gold, Platinum, Mithril, Orihalcum, and Adamantite.

Lux took out his Guild Card and checked the information written there.

-----  
< Guild Card >

Name: Lux Von Kaizer

Age: 16

Race: Half-Elf

Rank: Gold Rank.

Registered in Leaf Village

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After saving Leaf Village many times, as well as helping the other villages within the territories of the Stronghold of Norria, Lux was able to raise his Adventurer Rank to Gold Rank.

The Half-Elf believed that with his current Rank, he would be able to at least talk to the Guildmasters of the Adventurer's Guild in the Azrael Kingdom, and ask them for recommendations, so that he could start the trial that would allow him to create a guild.

This would be Lux's first time visiting a Human Kingdom, since he had spent most of his time in Elysium inside the Dwarf Kingdom of Gweliven.

'I miss them,' Lux mused as he thought of Colette and his friends, who were probably off to an adventure somewhere in Elysium.

He hadn't been able to give them a proper goodbye because he didn't want to involve them in his conflict with Twilight Rain.

'I'll make it up to them the next time we meet,' Lux thought as he finished cleaning his Grandma's room.

His reunion with his Dwarf friends would still have to wait because he still had things to do and places to visit.

Even so, he believed that the next time he would see Colette and the others, all of them would have become more formidable and ready to take on greater challenges in the world outside the borders of the Dwarven Kingdom of Gweliven.

## Chapter 309: Everything Has A Price

Town of Everton, Azrael Kingdom...

"I'm sorry, but I can't recommend you to take the Trial of Leadership," the Guildmaster of the Adventurer's Guild in the Town of Everton said. "Try the other towns. Perhaps one of the Guildmasters there can give you a recommendation letter."

"Sir, this is already the third town I've visited," Lux stated. "I still don't understand why you're not allowing me to get a recommendation letter. I can still understand being rejected once or twice, but thrice is a bit too much.

"The other Guildmasters also didn't tell me the reason why they don't want to write me recommendation letters. They only told me to go to other towns instead. Am I blacklisted or something? Can you please tell me the reason?"

Omer, the Guildmaster of the Everton Adventurer's Guild, sighed before making a gesture for Lux to sit.

"I also don't know the reason, but the higher ups have passed a decree that no Adventurer's Guild in the Kingdom of Azrael is to give a recommendation letter to someone named Lux Von Kaiser," Omer explained.

"Usually, this happens when the individual is a top criminal with a bounty on their heads. I already checked the information on your Guild Card, and although I don't know where this Leaf Village is, you have clearly met all the requirements to become a Gold-Ranked Adventurer. There are also no records about you being a criminal or anything, which baffles me. Kid, did you mess with a bigshot or something?"

Lux frowned. After almost a week of trying to get a recommendation letter, only now did he understand why not a single branch of the Adventurer's Guild agreed to give him a recommendation for the Trial of Leadership.

It seemed that someone from the higher echelons of the Adventurer Guilds in the Azrael Kingdom was getting in the way of his Guild Creation.

"Sir Omer, is it possible to know which Kingdoms and Empires I am currently blacklisted in?" Lux inquired.

Omer, who was carefully observing the Half-Elf in front of him, closed his eyes.

"Recently, there was an incident in a Neutral Area bordering the Skystead Alliance and the Xynnar War Pact. Because of that incident, the relationship between these two factions has become strained," Omer stated.

"In order to settle the disputes, certain individuals have been blacklisted from being able to accept Quests in the Adventurer Guilds of all the Kingdoms involved in the Incident. Now that I think about it, your name is at the top of

that list. Unless the higher-ups clear your name from our blacklist, your rights as an Adventurer within all the Kingdoms and Empires that have signed the memorandum will be revoked."

The frown on Lux's face deepened after hearing Omer's explanation. If all the territories around him had his name blacklisted, didn't that mean that he was as good as f\*cked?

'... Don't tell me Sir Rainer knew that my name had been blacklisted in the Adventurer's Guild in the various Kingdoms,' Lux thought as he remembered the sly fox who was also Nero's Master. 'This is bad. If this is true then doesn't that mean that I will have no choice but to join Nero's Guild?'

Lux's face darkened after learning about this revelation. He would rather get exiled than rub shoulders with the brown-haired boy who treated him like trash in the past.

"Is there really no other way?" Lux asked. "Maybe there is a loophole that I can use?"

Omer opened his eyes and stared at the Half-Elf for half a minute before laughing out loud.

"You sure have guts, boy," Omer said after he finished laughing. "You're right. There are ways to have your name erased from our blacklist."

"Really?!"

"Yes. Do you want to know how?"

Lux nodded. If there was really a way to gain the letters of recommendation to take the test then he would grab it no matter what it was.

"Since you want to know, I will tell you how." Omer smiled and raised his hand.

Lux watched closely as Omer opened his palm and slowly connected his thumb and index finger together, forming the money hand gesture.

"At the end of the day, anything has a price," Omer said. "The only question is, can you pay that price?"

"How much?" Lux inquired.

"Ten."

"Ten thousand gold coins?"

"Ten Million Gold Coins."

Lux gave Omer the "are you f\*cking kidding me?" gaze making the Guildmaster smile.

"Take note, this amount is only enough to pay for your recommendation letter from this guild branch," Omer commented. "You will have to pay the same amount in the other branches, which means you need a total amount of thirty million gold coins."

Lux almost puked blood after hearing that outrageous amount. After winning the Lionheart Tournament, he was only awarded a million gold coins as his cash prize. It was nowhere near enough the ten million bribe that was needed for Omer to give him a recommendation letter.

After that, he would also have to procure an additional twenty million gold coins to bribe two more Guildmasters of the Adventurer's Guild for their recommendation letters.

"...Is there no other way?" Lux asked with a sigh. "This method is impossible for me."

Omer rubbed his chin. He found the Half-Elf quite interesting. Even though this kid was fighting an uphill battle, he was still looking for loopholes in order to reach his goal.

"A feat that will make all the branches of the Adventurers Guild recognize you," Omer answered after a minute. "One that will give us no choice but to acknowledge you as an Adventurer whose potential surpasses the norms. As long as you are able to do this, then all opposition blocking your way in creating your Guild will disappear."

Lux scratched his head. "A feat that will make all of you recognize me? What do I have to do? Slay an Elder Abyssal Creature?"

"Something like that."

"...You guys want me to die that badly?"

Elder Abyssal Monsters were all at the Dreadnaught-Rank. This was the next rank after the Argonaut Rank, and just hearing it made Lux feel his heart tremble. Even if he summoned Keoza to help him fight it, the chances of them winning were non-existent.

That was how powerful Dreadnaught Ranked Monsters were. They could only be challenged by a team of Rankers that specialized in hunting them.

After thanking Omer for telling him everything he knew, Lux left the Adventurer's Guild and went to a tavern in order to have lunch.

Just as he was about to place his order, a skinny young man entered the tavern carrying a boar on his shoulders. All of its limbs were tied up, making it unable to escape its captor.

Lux, who was seated in the far corner of the tavern, almost fell off his chair after seeing the two newcomers.

"Shop Owner, can you prepare a feast using this boar? The skinny young man asked. "I don't mind if it's roasted, or boiled. Just make sure to cook it well. I am originally a vegetarian, but just this once, I will partake in eating meat."

"Damn you, Little Swordy!" The Boar struggled to free itself from being bound. "How dare you ask someone to cook me?! Why are you so petty? It's just money, you know? We can make a comeback after I make a killing in the gambling den!"

"Petty?" Keane asked back. "You took our money while I was sleeping and went to gamble it all, and you dare say that you can make a comeback by gambling again? That's what all gamblers say!"

"Little Swordy, the ball really stopped on the number that I chose earlier," Cai explained. "I didn't know how it happened, but it suddenly moved to the next slot, a second before the wheel stopped turning. I'm sure that I have been cheated!"

"Fool! That's exactly why going to the gambling den is a stupid thing to do! All of them are there to take your money. You should have seen this coming!"

"Little Swordy, calm down and take deep breaths. We can talk this out like civil people. Um... Shop Owner, why are you pulling out that kitchen knife? Oi! Why are you coming closer?! Oi stop! Don't skin meeeeeeeeeee!"

The boar's squeal made everyone in the tavern start laughing because it was quite funny to see it plead for its life.

Lux, on the other hand, rose from his seat and walked towards his acquaintances, who had somehow appeared in the town he was in, while he was thinking of ways to secure recommendation letters from the Guildmasters of the Azrael Kingdom.

## Chapter 310: A Double-Edged Sword

"My Daddy, can you believe it?" Cai asked as it sprinkled ground black pepper on the pork chops it was about to eat. "Little Swordy actually dared to sell me for some petty cash. Tsk, if my grandpa hears about this, he will definitely give him a good spanking."

"Shut up," Little Swordy glared at the boar as he spooned apple sauce onto his salad plate. "I didn't ask you to accompany me in Elysium. You just accompanied me without any invitation."

"Hmph! I'm just worried about you." Cai glared back. "This is the first time you are visiting a place with many people in Elysium. What will you do if you get scammed? I accompanied you out of the goodness of my heart to ensure that you won't get tricked by people because you are gullible!"

"I'd rather be tricked than have an annoying, pesky, irritating, and chatty traveling companion like you!"

"This is the problem with people who have lived in the mountains all their lives. They just don't understand how the world works. Um, My Daddy, can you pass me the soy sauce, please?"

Lux handed the bottle of soy sauce to the boar, who then poured a generous amount of sauce in its saucer.

The Half-Elf didn't know what happened after he separated from his friends because he was too frantic to return to Barbatos Academy after hearing Vera's condition.

Now that he thought about it, he still hadn't returned to the Rowan Tribe to claim the rewards that would be given to him by Maximilian, who was Cai's grandfather and Rowan Tribe's leader.

"What happened to the Sacred White Lotus?" Lux asked. "Did your grandpa already use it to create a medicine to cure the Purple Plague?"

Cai nodded while chewing the pork chop inside its mouth.

"The Saint has locked himself up in his room and told everyone to not disturb him," Keane commented. "The Six Kingdoms have already sent delegations to the Rowan Tribe, and they are currently waiting for him to come out. They know that he is busy creating the cure for the Purple Plague, so none of them dare to disturb him."

Cai, who had just finished eating the pork chop in its mouth, joined the conversation and gave Lux a juicy bit of information.

"Do you know? Einar, Vall, and Xander, are being pestered by the envoys of the Six Kingdoms because they want them to return to the Sacred Dungeon and clear the other gates there? This is also why Little Swordy and I decided to leave the Rowan Tribe. Grandpa is busy, so there's no one who can stop the envoys from soliciting my and Little Swordy's favors."

"I'm not going to lie, My Daddy, they are getting on my nerves. What made them think that bribing me with money and artifacts is enough to sway me to return to that place again? Excuse me, I don't want to die, you know?"

"Oh? Such a thing is happening?" Lux arched an eyebrow as he bit into his ham sandwich.

"Yes," Keane replied. "Do they really think that we are going to help them out after they blacklisted us from the Adventurer's Guilds, Merchant's Guilds, Hunter's Guilds, as well as the Information Guilds? They must be out of their mind."

"Eh? You two are blacklisted too?" Lux already had a hunch that the other people that had been blacklisted were those that had managed to clear the Gate of Death. But, after Keane confirmed his suspicions things were starting to fall in place.



"I see... so, they are doing this to force us to agree to their conditions," Lux muttered. "It all fits."

"Damn right you are!" Cai grumbled. "Einar and Vall are also very pissed since they are unable to claim missions not only for themselves, but for their entire guilds. Those bastard kings really did us dirty."

Lux tapped his finger on top of the table as he formed a plan in his mind.

"I've heard from Iris that all of us were freed from the restrictions placed on those that want to enter the Hidden Domain," Lux said. "It means that while others need to wait for an entire year, the six of us can enter anytime we want."

"Right! But, that's not all, My Daddy," Cai interjected. "Each of us can bring five people with us, forming a party. Because of this everyone wants a piece of the action. Um, according to Xander, he was also approached by an envoy of the Vahan Empire."

"It seems that their Emperor wanted to bribe him to bring their elite members to the Dungeon in order to gather some resources. I don't know if they approached Einar and Vall as well, but the likelihood of that happening is very high."

Lux frowned. His step-father, Alexander, warned him about Emperor Andreas of the Vahan Empire before he left Barbatos Academy.

According to him, Emperor Andreas had long wanted to annex the territories that bordered his Empire. However, because of him and Maximilian, the Xynnar War Pact had a surplus of two saints, which made him scrap this plan altogether.

In the past, the Skystead Alliance, in which Emperor Andreas was the chairman, had an advantage when it came to military power. If Alexander and Maximilian were taken out of the picture, he would have long launched a crusade against his neighbors, and his chances of winning were quite high.

This was why, even though Alexander and Maximilian had rampaged in the Ashina Kingdom, the Kings and the Saints that backed up the Xynnar War Pact had sided with them.

The King of the Ashina Kingdom had no choice but to swallow his anger because he knew that he could only rely on Emperor Andreas to keep his rule over his domain.

"That's it!" Lux suddenly had a eureka moment. Because of Cai's and Keane's explanation, he finally found a way out of their predicament, and to clear their names from the blacklist.

After telling Cai and Keane about his plan, the three headed towards the Adventurer's Guild to talk to its Guildmaster, Omer.

"You again?" Omer sighed after seeing Lux for the second time. "Didn't I already tell you that you can't get a recommendation letter from me unless you pay me ten million? Don't tell me you already have the money with you?"

Lux shook his head before gazing at Omer with a determined look on his face.

"Can the Adventurer's Guild pass messages to the territories of the Xynnar War Pact?" Lux inquired.

"We can, but since you, and these two are blacklisted, you do not have this privilege," Omer replied.

"Well, why don't you listen to what I'm about to say first?" Lux asked with a smile. "If you deem that it is not important enough, you can ignore my request."

Omer crossed his arms over his chest before reluctantly nodding his head.

"Fine," Omer replied. "I'll hear you out this once. If I don't like what you are going to tell me, I will ban you from entering this branch of the Adventurer's Guild."

The smile on Lux's face widened because he was confident that his plan was going to work. Since the Kingdoms in Elysium were making it hard for him to get what he wanted, he would also make it hard for them!

"Tell the members of the Skystead Alliance and the Xynnar War Pact that we are auctioning fifteen slots for the Sacred Dungeon located in the Domain of the Fallen," Lux stated.

"Only one will win the auction, and among the conditions listed, is to have our names cleared off the blacklists of the Adventurer's Guilds, Merchant's Guilds, and Information Guilds. Naturally, this is just one of the conditions. If they want to get in, they still have to pay the price. The one with the highest bid will win."

Omer's expression became serious after hearing Lux's declaration. Earlier, he admired the Half-Elf because he had guts, but now, he felt as if he had underestimated how gutsy the red-headed teenager really was.

On that day, news spread within the Western Regions of Elysium about Lux's declaration. All the Kings as well as the Emperors of both sides immediately called for an emergency meeting on how to best deal with the current situation that had been thrown in their faces.

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Wildgarde Stronghold...

"Haha! Lux really knows how to make waves." Gerald laughed after hearing the news from his subordinate. "Looks like your plan backfired, Rainer."

Nero's Master calmly sipped his tea, pretending that he didn't hear Gerald's teasing tone. Only after he finished drinking did he place the cup on top of the table and voice his opinion.

"What he did is a double-edged sword," Rainer stated. "On one hand, he will be able to gain the support of either the Skystead Alliance or the Xynnar War Pact. However, the one who will lose this bidding will treat them as an eyesore."

"If he chooses the Skystead Alliance, then he will be exiled from the territories that belongs to our Faction in Elysium. I just hope that the boy makes the right decision and gives us face."

Gerald sighed before nodding his head.

"I hope for that as well, but knowing that brat... he might just choose the opposing side just to antagonize us," Gerald said with a bitter smile on his face.

Rainer shrugged. "Whatever decision he will make, we will find out before this week is over. After all, his Quest ends in three weeks. We can afford to wait, but he doesn't have this option."

Rainer glanced in the direction of the North where Barbatos Academy was located. Now that Lux had thrown the dice, it was now up to the rulers of the various kingdoms whether they would take his bait or not.

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## **Chapter 311.1: Return To The Domain Of The Fallen [Part 1]**

Four days after Lux made his declaration...

"The Six Kingdoms and our allied factions in Elysium are very annoyed at how this matter escalated so quickly," Alicia reported. "I'm afraid that Lux will have a hard time staying within our faction's territories after he has made his decision."

Alexander took a sip of his coffee before signing one of the documents that laid on top of the table. When he heard Lux's declaration, he couldn't help but shake his head because he understood that the Half-Elf wanted to retaliate for the bad treatment he'd received as of late.

This was a daring move on his part, and Alexander ordered Alicia to keep him up to date on what the result of the "auction" would be.

In the end, the Skystead Alliance and the Xynnar War Pact had no choice but to meet with Lux and negotiate. The Domain of the Fallen was an ideal place for gathering unique resources that wouldn't be found anywhere else in Elysium.

Also, all of them were curious about the kind of rewards that conquerors would gain after conquering another gate. They didn't think much of the Pseudo-Legendary Items that Lux and his comrades acquired after clearing the dungeon.

For them, the Sacred White Lotus was the real prize in the Gate of Death, which allowed them to create a medicine that would cure the Purple Plague that had been ravishing the borders of their territories.

No amount of treasure could cure the plague, and even High-Rankers were not safe from its deadly grasp. Now that the Sacred White Lotus had been acquired and was currently in the hands of Maximilian for him to create a cure for the Purple Plague, the Kingdoms and Empires set their eyes on exploring the Domain of the Fallen, as well as the Sacred Dungeon, once more.

Due to the strength of the Monsters inside the Domain, no one had a chance to explore it. However, those with keen abilities or artifacts that could detect very rare artifacts, herbs, fruits, and other consumables that would grant great benefits to whoever acquired them, had sensed their presence within the Domain.

The Sacred Dungeon was just one of the many things that the Domain of the Fallen possessed, and this was why the Skystead Alliance, who had only come to learn about its existence recently, was adamant to send their own representatives inside it.

The only thing that was preventing them from doing so was the restriction that they could only enter it once a year, during a specific time.

Now that there were slots within their reach that would allow them to enter it at will, they would definitely jump at the chance to do it.

Lux understood this as well. The Law of Supply and Demand allowed him to get the upper hand in the negotiation.

"I'm sure that Lux knows that the Skystead Alliance will go all out to acquire these precious slots to enter the Domain of the Fallen," Alexander said as he placed the document he just signed to the side. "He sure is making things difficult for everyone."

Alicia could only smile bitterly because "made things difficult for everyone" was an understatement.

The Six Kingdoms of Solais, as well as the Kingdoms where their factions thrived in Elysium, were very displeased that the Half-Elf chose the offer of the Skystead Alliance.

They thought that since Lux belonged to the faction of the Barbatos Academy and Wildgarde Stronghold, he would surely choose their side, so their offers weren't as lucrative as the other side.

That was their mistake because Lux was someone who had already figured the delicate geopolitical balance of power in the region where these kingdoms were at.

"Cai is untouchable because Maximilian is a powder keg that can explode anytime, making the Kings' unable to find fault in its decision, in fear that a Saint will jump ship," Alexander commented.

"Lux, on the other hand, understood that they cannot be too unreasonable with him as well because he is under my umbrella. That brat really knows how to make trouble, taking advantage of the fact that no one would dare to make things difficult for me."

Alicia covered her lips as she suppressed a smile.

"Even so, he still planned things meticulously and dragged Einar, Vall, and Xander into his plans," Alicia commented. "If it wasn't for that, he might have become the Xynnar War Pact's public enemy number one."

Alexander sighed because the entire situation was a really close call for the Half-Elf who had decided to stick to his declaration that the one with the highest bid would win.

Just like Alicia said, Lux had met with Einar, Vall and Xander to discuss how to market their limited slots to gain maximum profit.

In the end, this was what happened.

Lux, Cai, and Keane sold their slots to the Skystead Alliance because they were the highest bidder in the auction.

This made the Xynnar War Pact scramble for the remaining slots, and raise their offers as well.

In truth, even if they didn't raise their offers, Einar, Vall, and Xander would still sell their slots to the Xynnar War Pact.

Lux knew that Einar's and Vall's area of operation was within the regions of their faction's territories, so they couldn't really antagonize them.

The Rowan Tribe didn't have this problem because they were a Nomadic Tribe. They didn't have a fixed settlement, and would pack up and leave whenever they felt like it, making them immune to the restrictions of geography.

But since Lux didn't want to offend the Six Kingdoms too much, he asked Xander to agree selling his slots to their faction's side, in order to balance things out.

In the end, fifteen slots went to the Skystead Alliance, and fifteen slots went to the Xynnar War Pact.

Lux, Cai, and Keane won big time in the auction, while Einar, Vall, and Xander, received a decent payout after the Half-Elf's shenanigans, forcing their factions to take them seriously.

"They should be there right now," Alexander glanced at the window of his office. "The Skystead Alliance had taken this matter seriously and had sent the Elite Members of each of their Kingdoms to explore the Domain of the Fallen."

Alicia nodded. "From what our intelligence gathered, they sent their best Pseudo-Initiates under the age of twenty five as their representatives. Because of this, our side also did the same thing. All Pseudo-Initiates from our faction were filtered until only the best were chosen to participate in the expedition."

"So everyone is finally taking this seriously."

"Yes, Sir. Lux and the others conquering the Gate of Death was like a wake up call to everyone. They didn't want to fall behind their competitors."

Alexander closed his eyes. Now that Vera's life was no longer in danger, and Iris was currently inside Barbatos Academy, two of his family members were safe. The only problem was the Half-Elf, who would once again venture inside a dangerous place, in order to finish his Coming of Age Quest, just so he could create a guild of his own.

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Entrance of the Domain of the Fallen...

"So, this is the fabled Hidden Domain," a teenage boy with dark-blue hair and eyes eyed the door in front of him.

He let out an indignant snort when he saw the letters inscribed on its surface. He believed that if they had been the ones to find out its existence, the first conquerors would have been his team, and no one else.

He was Malcolm Robles, the son of the Grand General that commanded the army of the Vahan Empire. He was nineteen years old this year, and was forced by his father to wear a Sealing Bracelet, which prevented him from stepping into the Initiate Rank since his eighteenth birthday.

Malcolm was a true prodigy, and because of this, his father was afraid that his arrogance would make his head too big, so he sealed his progress to make him "a little more humble". Unfortunately, this didn't do anything to lower the prodigy's arrogance.

The Sealing Bracelet only prevented him from breaking into the rank of a Grade-A Apostle. However, that didn't stop him from acquiring stats that he could freely distribute as soon as his seal was undone.

In a stroke of luck, the whereabouts of the Domain of the Fallen was discovered, and Malcolm immediately volunteered to be one of the people that would explore the new domain for the kingdom.

He thought that this was a perfect way to gain more merits, as well as to force his father to break his seal once he had successfully accomplished his mission.

Emperor Andreas had long known how talented Malcolm was, so he agreed to his request. He even made the teenager the leader of the expedition forces, as a way to encourage him to do better.

Malcolm was also the Guild Master of the Silver-Ranked Guild, Chaos Oath, which was one of the Top Three Guilds in the Vahan Empire.

"According to the agreement, once you guide us to the Sacred Dungeon, we will go our separate ways," Malcolm said. "You better not drag us down."



Lux ignored Malcolm's taunt because he had already gotten used to it. The first thing that Malcolm did when his team arrived at the entrance of the Hidden Domain was to challenge Lux to a fight, which the Half-Elf rejected.

Several Rankers from the Skystead Alliance and the Xynnar War Pact were present to prevent any trouble from breaking out.

They were all treating this expedition seriously, so even Malcolm couldn't force Lux to fight him. After all, the latter was the one who called the shots as to who would be going inside the Hidden Domain.

Einar, Vall, and Xander were standing on Lux's opposite side.

Behind them were the representatives of the Xynnar War Pact who would venture inside the Hidden Domain for the first time.

The Solaians, with the exception of Lux and his comrades, weren't allowed to join the expedition. The Kingdoms in Elysium adamantly demanded that the expedition party must only be composed of their members, since the Foreigners had monopolized the Domain of the Fallen for several years.

In the end, the Six Kingdoms compromised. Einar's, Vall's, and Xander's role was to only be the guides in the expedition, allowing their faction to reach the entrance of the Sacred Dungeon.

"Since everyone is ready, let's go," Lux said as he walked towards the giant gate that would lead them inside the Domain of the Fallen.

He and his comrades had made plans beforehand, so he didn't give a hoot about what happened to the representatives that were coming with them.

Since they would go their separate ways once they arrived at the Sacred Dungeon, he didn't have to worry about other people getting in the way of his own Dungeon exploration.

## **Chapter 312.2: Return To The Domain Of The Fallen [Part 2]**

As soon as the representatives of the different kingdoms got inside the Domain of the Fallen, their confidence disappeared, leaving only solemn expressions on their faces..

All of them were Pseudo-Initiates, which meant that they only needed around a hundred stat points before they reached the Initiate Rank. Because of this, their senses were more acute compared to others, and their senses were telling them that this Domain was teeming with creatures of greater might than themselves.

"I don't know what kind of orders you received from your superiors," Lux said as he faced the thirty people that they would guide towards the entrance of the Sacred Dungeon. "But if any of you don't want to die, you will have no choice but to cooperate with each other if you want to reach our destination."

"Starting from here, the Monsters you need to deal with ranges from Rank 5 Monsters up to the Deimos Rank, excluding their lackeys. However, there is a possibility that a Pseudo-Argonaut or an Argonaut-Ranked Monster exists. If we happen to bump into one of those, everyone better start running. We are just insects in the eyes of such beasts."

The Leader of the Xynnar War Pact's representatives, Ellis Roth, stepped forward to voice her opinion.

"I've heard about your exploits, Foreigner, and I am looking forward to working with you," Ellis said. "However, I would greatly appreciate it if you take us down the shortest route to the Sacred Dungeon. This place is... crawling with monsters whose rank surpasses ours. I don't think that staying in this place is a good idea."

Lux nodded. "That's the plan. But know this, even the journey towards the Sacred Dungeon is very perilous. On our last expedition, we lost over a hundred lives just to get to its entrance. So prepare yourselves."

Ellis smiled. Although she wasn't breathtakingly beautiful, she was still attractive enough to make the boys look at her with interest. She was in her early twenties and, just like Malcolm, she was also wearing a Sealing Bracelet.

Lux didn't know what was stopping her from breaking through the Initiate Rank, but since it was none of his business, he decided not to pry.

"Just stick close to us," Lux said before he started walking. "As long as we work together, we can minimize the number of casualties we have along the way."

Lux summoned a dozen Skeleton Fighters to act as Scouts, and another dozen to act as Vanguard.

There were only thirty-six of them, so splitting up was not an option. Back then, they had traveled towards the entrance of the Sacred Dungeon numbering in the hundreds, and all of them had to work together in order to not be overwhelmed by the Diabolical Doom Mosquito, which was a Rank 5 Field Boss, and its cronies.

The long and tension-filled journey ended after two hours.

Lux's Skeletons had encountered several powerful monsters that left the Half-Elf no choice but to halt their advance in order to find other routes to take to evade these beasts completely.

Thanks to his cautiousness, they were able to reach their destination safely without losing any lives along the way.

Malcolm, who had been silent the entire trip, breathed a sigh of relief in his heart because he had truly underestimated the Domain of the Fallen which Emperor Andreas coveted.

He had been given strict orders to challenge the Gate of Conquest, and gather any treasures that could be found inside it.

The young man didn't know why the Emperor specifically chose that particular gate to enter. But since it was the order of his Liege, he had no choice but to obey it no matter what.

"This is where we part," Ellis said as she pressed her palm and fist together as a sign of gratitude. "Thank you for bringing us here safely. Let us talk more after we've finished our mission."

"Of course," Lux replied with a smile. "Be careful and may fortune smile upon you."

Ellis smiled back before leading her team to the entrance of the Sacred Dungeon to choose a gate.

All of them had come to know what the Gate of Death was like, and none of them wanted to deal with thirteen Death Tyrants at the same time. Although the Sacred White Lotus was a tempting prize, the Kings of the other Kingdoms were more interested to know what could be found beyond the other gates as well.

Ellis and her team chose the Gate of Famine in Normal Difficulty.

Their superiors planned to take things at a steady pace, so they weren't in a hurry to jump into Hell Mode right away. Ellis' mission was to analyze what kind of teams would be needed in order to clear the Gate of Famine, so the next time they returned to the Domain of the Fallen, they would be more prepared to conquer it.

Malcolm gave Lux a side-long glance before he led his team to the Gate of Conquest.

Unlike Ellis who had been ordered to challenge the Normal Difficulty, the son of the general was ordered to pick Hell Mode.

Emperor Andreas believed that the Key that would lead to the Legendary Empire of the Dragons could be found behind the Gate of Conquest. Although the records kept by the first founder of the Vahan Empire were vague, the word Conquest had been mentioned several times in his biography.

After the thirty people had disappeared, Einar, Vall, and Xander approached Lux, who was standing beside Cai and Keane.

"Should we get going as well?" Einar asked.

"Okay." Lux nodded. "So, who wants the honors of choosing a gate for us?"

"Me! Me!" Cai shouted. "Let me choose!"

Lux glanced at Keane, asking for his opinion, but the latter just shrugged. Einar, Vall, and Xander did the same. For them, it didn't really matter which gate to enter because none of them knew what lay behind the four remaining doors of the Sacred Dungeon.

Cai pointed its hoof towards the three doors while singing.

"Eeny, meeny, miny, moe,

Catch a tiger by the toe.

If he hollers, let him go,

Eeny, meeny, miny, moe."

Einar, whose transformation turned him into a Tiger, was very tempted to kick the annoying Boar who had used a nursery song to choose the Gate that would decide their fate.

Knowing what the Barbarian was thinking, Lux chuckled, but he didn't stop Cai from playing its little game.

"Okay. I choose this one!" Cai pointed at the Red Gate that bore the Runes "War" on it. "Let's go!"

The Boar excitedly walked towards the Gate of War, while Lux and the others followed behind it.

All of them decided that whatever door they chose to go to, they would only choose Hell Mode and clear it to the best of their abilities.

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Outside the Gate of the Domain of the Fallen.

All the Rankers, as well as the other influential people of each Kingdom, had gathered to watch the expedition of their representatives.

The artifacts that were given to Malcolm and Ellis allowed everyone outside the dungeon see what was happening inside the Sacred Dungeon in real time.

Jeers sounded from the side of the Skystead Alliance when they saw that Ellis chose the Normal Mode of the Gate of Famine. For them, this was a cowardly act, which made the side of the Xynnar War Pact glare at them with hostility.

But deep inside, they had to agree that the Skystead Alliance's bold move to challenge the Hell Mode of the Gate of Conquest was more intriguing than the one that their faction had chosen.

None of them even bothered to think about what happened to the six individuals that were left outside the Dungeon. Since their attention was all

focused on their own representatives, they were not aware that Lux and his comrades had also entered one of the Gates of the Sacred Dungeon.

A Gate that would teach them that the concept of War was bloodier than they originally thought it would be.

## Chapter 313: The Warring Kingdoms

The sounds of warcries, screams of pain, and clashing of weapons were the first thing that Lux and his comrades heard as soon as they were teleported inside the Dungeon.

"W-What's going on here?!" Cai, who almost got hit by a fireball, squealed as it hurriedly jumped to the side, just in time to dodge the fireball by a few inches.

A loud explosion took place, sending everyone flying in different directions, followed by a rain of spells all around them.

It was complete and utter pandemonium as they found themselves at the center of two warring kingdoms, who were going all out against each other.

"Everyone, regroup!" Lux shouted after propping himself back up. "We need to get out of this place. Now!"

Everyone had the same thought, so they hurriedly regrouped and tried to run away from the battlefield.

Unfortunately for them, they were smacked in the middle of the frontlines, sandwiched on all sides by two armies, who had now noticed their arrival.

"Which Kingdom are you affiliated with?!" a Knight wearing black armor asked as he and his subordinates pointed their weapons at Lux and his party.

"We are not affiliated with anyone!" Cai replied. "Someone tell us what is going on here!"

"Hah! You think we will fall for that? Nice try, Yelan scum!" a Knight wearing white armor shouted. "Men! Kill these Yelan collaborators! Show them no mercy!"

Einar fearlessly grinned as he immediately blocked a sword strike from their rear. As a Barbarian who was no stranger to war, being in the battlefield was second nature to him.

"I guess we don't have to worry who we are affiliated with for now." Vall sneered. "Just kill those who try to kill us first!"

Lux, Cai, Keane, and Xander all nodded their heads and immediately turned around to fight the Knights wearing white armor who had all ganged up to them.

They were clueless about whatever was happening around them, but the current situation didn't give them enough time to assess their situation. They were left with no other options but to either fight or die, and their choice was obvious.

As soon as they decided to take action, Lux immediately summoned Orion and Pazuzu. The Jade Golem attacked those around them, while Pazuzu shielded them from harm.

Although they were being targeted by the Knights wearing white armor, Lux was still in the right state of mind and did not summon Diablo and the rest of his Skeleton Minions.

The reason was simple.

He didn't want to affect the on-going war too drastically without knowing who was the defender and who was the aggressor between the two armies. If they helped the invaders get the upper hand, then the Defenders would surely find it difficult to hold their ground.

Perhaps, the others also understood this logic, so they only attacked those who were attacking them, and just hid behind Orion and Pazuzu after they had finished off their respective targets.

After seeing the Jade Golem's might, the White Knights no longer took the initiative to attack Lux's and his party. They only focused on attacking the Black Knights who were suddenly inspired by the Half-Elf's appearance.

Ten minutes later, a horn sounded in the distance, and the White Knights all retreated like a tide.

The Black Knights didn't follow them and simply raised their weapons high up in the air, while cheering for their victory.

"Is it over?" Cai, whose furry body had been littered with arrows, asked.

"For now," Lux replied. "Let's get out of here while we still can."

Nodding their heads, everyone followed Lux as they ran towards the side of the battlefield. The Black Knights didn't stop them because, in their eyes, the Half-Elf's party had fought for their side earlier.

If not for that, they might have stopped them, thinking that they were their enemies' hired mercenary group, whom they paid to fight their war for them.

After running for nearly half an hour, Lux and his comrades finally found a hill overlooking the battlefield. Both armies had returned to their main camps, and it seemed that the fighting for the day was already over.

Suddenly, as if waiting for that moment, Lux heard a familiar notification sound as rows of text appeared in front of him.

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< The Warring Kingdoms >

Mission Rating: S

– The Yelan Kingdom and the Ammar Kingdom have been at war with each other for the past four hundred years. Because of this, constant wars break out between the two kingdoms, but this time it is different.

Both Kingdoms have invited third parties as mercenaries in this fight for supremacy. Choose a side and reap great rewards that are exclusive to each of the Kingdoms!

< Main Quest Objective >

- Choose which Kingdom you want to support in this war.
- Kill the General of the opposing army.

< Subquest Objective >



- Capture the Main Flag of the opposing army.
- Kill the Mercenaries that have been hired by the opposing party.
- Quest Duration: 1 week
- Quest will automatically fail if you fail to complete the quest and kill the opposing army's General.
- Quest will automatically fail once your entire party has all been killed.

#### < Rewards >

- Rewards will be calculated depending on your performance. The greater your merits, the greater the rewards.
- If you manage to complete the two side quests before the quest is finished, you will gain the maximum rewards available for this quest.

#### < Choose the Kingdom you wish to ally yourself with! >

##### Option 1: Yelan Kingdom

- This Kingdom specializes in gnome technologies. All of their soldiers are equipped with inventions that are exclusively made by Expert Gnome Inventors.

##### Option 2: Ammar Kingdom

- This Kingdom is supported by Dwarven Blacksmiths. All of their weapons, and armors are crafted by the finest Dwarven Blacksmiths in the land.

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"Um? What is this Warring Kingdom Quest?" Cai tilted its head in confusion. "Where the heck did this come from?"

Lux, who was standing beside Cai, had to do a double take because the boar's sudden announcement surprised him.

"You got it, too?" Einar asked. "Weird. This is my first time seeing something like this. Maybe it is a Dungeon-exclusive thing?"

"Could be," Vall commented. "I've entered many Dungeons in the past, but this is the first time I'm seeing something like this. Hey, do you think this has something to do with us clearing the Gate of Death first?"

Xander nodded. "That's highly likely. I mean, the people who cleared the Gate of Death are all here. Maybe this is something exclusive to us. Also, I'm quite curious about the rewards. Will we get some Pseudo-Legendary items again like what we did in the Gate of Death?"

Having no opinion about the matter, Keane simply stood with his arms crossed over his chest. He was still trying to get used to how things worked in Elysium, so almost felt so new and exciting at the same time.

Lux had always received this kind of mission in the past, so he was already used to it. After listening to what his comrades were saying, he thought that maybe it did have something to do with the Gate of Death.

Since all of them were granted special privileges as the Sacred Dungeon's first conquerors, this kind of setup might also be included in the mechanics of the Sacred Dungeon.

'I guess I need to verify if they can get the same quests that I do in the future,' Lux mused. 'Maybe they are only getting it because we are in the same party. I will have to do some experiments after we leave the Gate of War.'

After finally organizing his thoughts, the Half-Elf glanced at his comrades and asked them the most important question.

"So, which side do you guys want to join?" Lux asked.

He knew that if they truly wanted to succeed in the mission, they must all choose the same side. Otherwise, they would end up fighting amongst themselves, and that was the last thing that all of them wanted to happen.

"I'll join My Daddy's side," Cai replied.

"Me, too," Keane stated.

"I'll go wherever Cai goes," Xander commented.

Einar and Vall glanced at each other and smirked.

"I'll let you decide this one, Lux." Einar crossed his arms over his chest. "I'm fine with either Kingdom."

"All for one and one for all, is what I'd like to say, but since everyone has chosen to let you decide our fate, I'll go along with the flow," Vall smiled. "Afterall, I'd hate to kill all of you when I join the opposing side."

Lux closed his eyes as he weighed the Pros and Cons of the two choices before him. Finally, after ten minutes, he raised his head and glanced at the battlefield with a determined look on his face.

"I choose to join the Kingdom of..."

## **Chapter 314: I'll Show Them The Might Of The Skystead Alliance.**

"Welcome to the Yelan Army."

A two-meter tall bald man who looked like a pro wrestler said with a smile.

"I am the General who oversees this battle, and I go by the name Watson Reid," Bruce said. "Just refer to me as General Watson. So, you guys are the mercenaries that are planning to fight against those invading Ammarians? Mmm, you kids don't look too shabby. What do you think, Sherlock?"

A gnome who was nearly four feet tall adjusted the glasses on his face and gave Lux and the others a side-long glance.

"Tell me, mercenaries," the Gnome named Sherlock raised his chin in arrogance. "What is better? Dwarven Armor or Gnome Technology?"

"Do you even need to ask?" Cai replied. "Naturally it's Dwar-mph!!"

Lux transformed his arms into that of a dragon and shut Cai's snout tightly, so it couldn't say another word.

"Gnome Technology is superior," Lux answered. "With the gnomes helping the Yelan Kingdom defend its territories, victory is assured."

The Gnome once again adjusted his glasses before giving Lux a nod of satisfaction.

"There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact," Sherlock replied with a smile. "Welcome to the winning side."

"Thank you. I look forward to working with you."

"I like you. Here, I made a Pseudo-Legendary Item a day ago, you can have it."

Cai, who was struggling to break free of Lux's hold earlier, froze when the Gnome casually handed the Half-Elf a metallic ball, after the latter had mentioned that the item was a Pseudo-Legendary weapon.

Lux examined the ball firmly in his hand as he released Cai's snout and his partial dragon transformation, then he tossed it to his other hand. It was around 2 kilos in weight, and if one were to observe it closely, it just looked like an ordinary metallic ball, with no redeeming features whatsoever.

However, after using the Elysium Compendium to appraise it, Lux's jaw almost dropped because of the information that was written on it.

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< Map Projector >

Rating: Pseudo-Legendary

- Once activated, this artifact projects a map of the area that is three miles from where the user is standing.
- This artifact will detect friendly and enemy forces within the map, key locations, as well as landmarks that might be useful.
- Can be upgraded to Treasure Map Projector once the requirements are met.

< Treasure Map Projector >

- Shows locations of treasures on the map that are no further than a mile from the user.

(Requirements to Upgrade)

- Beholder's Eye (0/1)
- Cyclop's Eye (0/1)
- Arimaspi Eye (0/1)
- Balor's Eye (0/1)
- Likho's Eye (0/1)
- Snallygaster's Eye (0/1)
- This artifact is Soul Bound to Lux Von Kaizer.

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'Wow!' Lux thought when he saw the information of the Map Projector in his hands.

Unlike other people, Lux had a special map of his own. However, its range was only up to five hundred meters. It was nothing compared to the Pseudo-Legendary weapon in his hands, that were casually given to him by the gnome named Sherlock.

"Master, I also think that Gnomes are better than Dwarves." Cai scooted next to Sherlock and tried to butter him up with praises. After seeing the Pseudo-Legendary artifact in the Half-Elf's hands, the shameless and thick-skinned Boar decided to try its uck and sang praises for the Gnomes until its spit was flying all over the place.

"Those smelly Dwarves are no good. From the start, they didn't stand a chance in this war. How can they be so delusional? Gnomes are the best! Gnomes are amazing! Viva Gnomes!"

Lux was about to tell Cai that it was pushing its luck. Frankly, he felt embarrassed by how the Boar was acting, who originally wanted to say that Dwarven goods were better than the Gnomes' Technology.

However, to his surprise, Sherlock chuckled and gave the Boar a nod of approval and handed it a red metallic ball.

"I like honest people and beasts," Sherlock said. "Here is the Pseudo-Legendary Artifact I made two days ago. You can have it."

"Yay!" Cai immediately stored the red metallic ball inside its storage ring before Lux could even blink. "Don't worry, Sir Sherlock. As long as I, Cai, am here, this war is already in the bag."

"Hahaha. I look forward to your performance, Cai."

"Leave it to me, Sir! I'll smash them good!"

Keane, Einar, Vall, and Xander, were also tempted to follow the shameless Boar's example, but they were too prideful to do it. In the end, they bit their tongues and glanced at Cai who was still buttering Sherlock with words in the hope that it could get another freebie.

Watson laughed before clapping his hands together.

"Well then, let's get down to business first," Watson said as he made a gesture for everyone to follow him to the giant table, where the map of the battlefield was laid out.

Several markers, and wooden figures could be seen on top of the map, representing the armies, as well as the position of the generals of the Yelan Kingdom.

"To tell you the truth, we are hard-pressed to win this war," Watson stated. "After the clash earlier, we have estimated that a good chunk of our army was slain by our enemies. Right now, we have a little over four-hundred thousand troops, while the enemy has more than six-hundred thousand. Also, according to our scouts, they have recruited a group of strong individuals who might turn the tide in their favor."

Watson sighed before pointing to key locations in the enemy's main camp.

"We have the territorial advantage, so we can hold out for a while. But, with a strong army, strong weaponry, and strong mercenaries helping them in this war, it is only a matter of time before they overwhelm us with their forces."

Sherlock nodded in agreement before voicing his opinion.

"In this war, brawn will not be enough to overturn our obvious disadvantages," Sherlock stated. "We need to use brains, and every trick in the book to turn the tide in our favor. Also, we have a time limit..."

The Gnome sighed before pointing at a location on the map that was marked with a wooden structure.

"The Ammarians are currently in the midst of casting a high level spell that can instantly obliterate our soldiers into meat paste," Sherlock explained.

"However, they need exactly a week in order to gather the needed magical energy to unleash their grand magic.

"There is no point in targeting that location because that place is heavily guarded by Rankers. So, our priority is to kill their army's general to lower their morale. Once we have taken their general's head, all of our forces can decimate their army, allowing our own Rankers to engage the Rankers of the opposing side."

Watson then tapped the location of the Main Headquarters of the enemy to show their allies how difficult it was to Assassinate the enemy's general.

"Both sides have sent their best assassins in order to take the life of the commanding general, but it was all in vain," Watson lamented. "I can't count the number of times that I was attacked by Assassins while I was taking a dump. Those dirty bastards, can't they leave me alone when I'm sh\*tting?"

Everyone ignored Watson's grumbling and returned their attention on the layout of the map. The battlefield they were fighting on was quite diverse.

There was a plain, a forest, mountainous regions, and even a marshland.

Since it was a large-scale battle, every part of the map could be used to tilt the battle in their favor.

While Lux and his comrades were discussing their strategy with Watson and Sherlock, three wagons arrived at the Main Camp of the Ammarian Kingdom.

"This quest sure is interesting."

"I know right? We are actually being sent to war and our side is the invading party. Feels good."

"I can't wait to go all out tomorrow. According to our quest, the more people we kill, the more Merits we gain."

"Yes. The items we can exchange for those Merit Points are insane! There are even Pseudo-Legendary weapons, artifacts, and armor in the list. The only problem is that I need to kill at least a thousand of them in order to buy one of those items."

Malcolm, the leader of the representatives of the Skystead Alliance, looked in the direction of the Yelan Camp with his arms crossed over his chest.

Right after they chose the Gate of Conquest, they found themselves in one of the border cities of the Ammarian Kingdom. There, they received a quest allowing them to exchange Merit Points for valuable items, and one of those items was a golden key, with a Draconic design on it.

The Merit Points required for it was a whopping One Million Merit Points, and he could only gain that amount once they had cleared the mission with flying colors.

"Everyone, rest properly," Malcolm ordered before turning around to go to the temporary tent that had been made for their arrival. "When morning comes, we will start our conquest of this Dungeon."

""Yes!""

Malcolm and the members of his team were confident of their strength. They believed that as long as they all worked together, the mission they'd been given would be as easy as a walk in the park.

'Just wait for me, Father, Your Majesty,' Malcolm thought as he looked at the map of the battlefield that was given to him by one of the general's aides before they arrived at the main camp.

"I will definitely conquer this Dungeon for our Empire," Malcolm vowed as he placed an "X" mark on the enemy's camp, where Watson, the commanding general of the Yelan Kingdom was stationed.

"I'll show them the might of the Skystead Alliance."

## **Chapter 315.1: Divide And Conquer [Part 1]**



When the sun was rising to the East, the armies of the two kingdoms started to stir.

Another day of fighting was about to begin, but things were about to change drastically due to the appearance of the two mercenary groups on each side.

Malcolm and his team had entered the Gate of Conquest, while Lux and his comrades had entered the Gate of War.

The meaning behind these two words were almost the same, but there were major differences between them.

The Sacred Dungeon was a special Dungeon that allowed the other Gates to link with each other during special circumstances. Meaning that Famine and Death could interlink, and so could Conquest and War.

But, this would only happen if both parties chose "Hell Mode". Also, there could only be one group entering each of the gates at almost the same time in order for this phenomenon to happen.

"Make sure you do your job well, Mercenaries," the General of the Ammar Kingdom, General Moriarty said coldly. "Any means are allowed. This is a War. Only the victors have the right to write the pages of history."

The General of the Ammar Kingdom was an extremely tall and thin, clean-shaven, pale, and ascetic-looking man, whose mere presence was enough to make even the most experienced of soldiers feel intimidated.

"What a coincidence," Malcolm replied. "I think the same way. Don't worry, General. My members are all Elites. We will move freely throughout the battlefield and slowly chip away their ranks, eliminating the captains and the commanders along the way."

"We'll see if you are really capable of doing that, Human," a Dwarf wearing a Mithril Plate commented. "I've seen people like you who are all bark and no bite."

Henry, the Dwarf Crusader, snorted. He was Moriarty's right-hand man and commanded a legion of Heavily Armored Dwarven Riders who were known to break any kind of defensive formation with their overwhelming charge.

Malcolm smiled and no longer bothered to reply to the dwarf because he understood that no matter what he said, the other person would just find ways to ridicule him.

'I'll just let my actions do the talking,' Malcolm thought before giving General Moriarty a respectful bow before leaving the tent.

When they were no longer in the vicinity of the main camp, Malcolm crossed his arms over his chest and looked at the mountain in front of him. T

'Although it will be a bit difficult breaking into their stronghold, it is not impossible,' Malcolm mused. 'I just need a good opportunity and this will end in no time.'

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Meanwhile in the Yelan Camp...

"We just need a good opportunity and this will end in no time!" Cai said as it aimed its glare at the distance where the Ammar Kingdom's army congregated. "Um, I'll ask for another Pseudo-Legendary Item after we win this war. If only I knew that getting rare items was this easy, I would have entered the Hidden Domain two years ago as well."

"If you had come, you'd probably be dead by now," Lux replied. "Get serious, Cai. We are up against an organized army and not a ragtag mob of fighters."

Cai raised its hoof and moved it left to right as if to make a point.

"I am always serious, My Daddy!" Cai stated. "I promise you that I'm gonna smash them like crazy later. But, before that, let's have breakfast first. I'm hungry. Oh... they have roasted pork. Very nice!"

Lux sighed internally as he watched the Boar lined up alongside the soldiers for breakfast. They had already discussed the strategy that they were going to execute today.

Since they didn't know how strong their enemies were, Lux decided to use the strategy divide and conquer by summoning his skeletons in the middle of the night, and sending them to travel to the destinations he had marked on the artifact he had been given by the Gnome, Sherlock.

Keane, who was standing not far from Lux, suddenly voiced his opinion, which made Einar, Vall, and Xander glance in his direction.

"Everyone, please be careful," Keane commented. "I have this very bad feeling at the back of my mind. Whenever I get this, my life will always be in danger. Right now, it is telling me to be extra careful, like a premonition about what is to come."

"Actually, I also feel the same way," Einar scratched his head. "Yesterday, when we were surrounded and suddenly attacked by the soldiers, I didn't feel anything dangerous. But now, it seems that my instincts are telling me that the chance of dying today is very high. I just can't explain it. I just know that something bad is going to happen."

Lux, Vall, and Xander frowned after hearing Einar's explanation. If it was only Keane who was feeling anxious, they could still shrug it off as something that was normal. But, even if the battle junky Einar was telling them that something bad was going to happen, they were forced to seriously heed their warning.

"At the start of the battle, I propose that you guys don't join the initial clash," Lux proposed. "Just observe the battlefield for now and take note of anything that looks suspicious."

Keane and Einar nodded their heads in understanding. All of them had nominated Lux to become the temporary leader of this mission because they knew that it would be hard if they acted separately.

Also, during the battle in the Gate of Death, Lux had gained Einar's, Vall's, and Xander's recognition, making them feel that it wouldn't be bad if the Half-Elf was the one that called the shots.

Although they were rivals during the Lionheart Tournament, they'd become comrades in a battle of life and death, making them share the same sentiment with each other.

"My Daddy, are you sure that you don't need someone to go with you on your mission?" Cai inquired. "Spider Boy here moves fast. As long as you use him as a mount, you will be able to perform your mission perfectly."

Lux and Vall had already given up in reprimanding Cai to call them by their names instead of My Daddy and Spider Boy. Since the annoying Boar had no

intention of changing the way it addressed them, the two teenagers decided to accept their fate to prevent friction from happening in the group.

"I will be more at ease knowing that Vall is with you guys to hold the fort," Lux replied. "Also, I will be more mobile if I travel alone. I can just summon my minions to fight for me if I encounter any difficulties."

Lux hadn't told anyone that he had the Teleportation Boots, which allowed him to teleport to the location of an ally on the map.

This was why he had ordered the Skeletons to spread out across the map, in the middle of the night, and go to the places that he had asked them to go.

The Half-Elf was planning to use his Minions as relay stations to teleport to in order to more effectively backstab his enemies.

The element of surprise played a crucial role on the battlefield, and Lux was planning to harass the Army of the Ammar Kingdom, by sneaking past their defenses. Naturally, he could also retreat at any time as long as the cooldown time of the Teleportation Boots ended.

Since Sherlock said that they were already at a disadvantage at the start then Lux planned to hit his enemies where they least expected it, and summon his Skeleton Minions, to deliver a decisive blow to their enemies.

This was the beginning of a battle of schemes between Malcolm and Lux, who were both unaware that the other, as well as their comrades, were about to face off against each other in a battle that was being observed by the High-Ranking officials of the Skystead Alliance.

## **Chapter 316.2: Divide And Conquer [Part 2]**

"It already started," Lux said as the two armies clashed with each other. "I already told Sherlock that we'll move independently during the battle. However, since we need to have a temporary Vice-Leader, I'd like to appoint Xander as the Vice-Leader of our Party, so he can lead while I'm away. Is that fine with everyone?"

Einar and Vall frowned upon hearing Lux's words. They only recognized the Half-Elf as their temporary leader because of his performance during the

battle at the Gate of Death. Both of them were very proud individuals, and they didn't want others ordering them around.

"Xander, it's not that I don't trust you, but I just don't feel like following any of your orders," Einar said. "I hope you don't take offense."

"Same for me," Vall commented. "No offense."

"None taken," Xander replied.

He and Lux had already expected this to happen during their secret talk the night before. Both of them knew that the other two teenagers might not agree to listen to Xander's orders, so the Half-Elf prepared a Plan B just in case.

"Very well. If that is how you feel then I will respect both of your decisions." Lux smiled before raising his hand. "Come out, Asmodeus."

The Archlich appeared beside Lux with an amused expression on his face.

"I've intended to keep this a secret from everyone, but since we need to clear this mission, I will come out clean," Lux stated. "The truth is, I have a very strong connection with my Named Creatures. Whatever they see in their surroundings, I can see all of it as well."

"I'm sure that all of you are already familiar with my Archlich, Asmodeus. I will leave him here so I can observe the battlefield and give orders through my connection with him. Is that acceptable to both of you?"

Einar and Vall both nodded their heads. They had heard tales about Necromancers having a strong connection with the Higher-Undead. Although they were still a bit doubtful, they'd rather obey Asmodeus' orders than obey Xander's.

"Diablo, obey Asmodeus' orders as if they were from me, okay?" Lux said to Diablo, whom he had summoned earlier. "You are much needed here in the main camp because the power of the Dead will serve you greatly."

"Understood." Diablo nodded. "Be careful, Master."

"Don't worry. I have Ishtar, Pazuzu, and Orion with me." Lux patted the Death Knight's shoulder to give him some form of assurance. "Make sure to perform your duty well."

"As you command, Master!"

"Mmm."

Lux then took out the Map Projector that was given to him by Sherlock and observed it for two minutes, looking for a good place to start his ambush. However, while looking at the map, he noticed that there was a group of people that had detached themselves from the enemy camp's main force, and was heading towards the Southwest.

"Strange, there are over a dozen individuals that broke away from their main camp and are traversing the forest in order to reach our rear," Lux commented as he pointed at the map where over a dozen blinking red dots were moving in an organized formation.

Cai, who was chewing on some beef jerky, glanced at the map and voiced its opinion.

"Maybe they are assassins?" Cai stated. "Sherlock mentioned that both sides would send assassins at each other in order to target the commanding officers."

Vall, who was also observing the suspicious group of individuals in Lux's map, pointed at the path that they were taking.

"Look," Vall said. "They are now about to engage the sentries that are positioned in the forest to ensure that they will be able to take the main camp by surprise."

When Lux's comrades saw the function of the Pseudo-Legendary Item that was given to him by the Gnome, Sherlock, all of them became green with envy, with the exception of Keane.

Such an artifact was priceless in large scale wars because it allowed its user to spy on the movements of their enemies in real time.

However, there was a drawback. The map's fuel was High-Grade Beast Cores.

A Deimos Beast Core would allow it to remain active for an hour.

An Argonaut-Ranked Beast Core allowed it to function for four hours.

And an Emyrean-Ranked Beast Core would allow it to work for half a day.

It was truly a core-consuming artifact, but its effect was second to none. Fortunately, Sherlock had already charged it with an Emyrean-Ranked Beast Core before giving it to Lux, allowing him to use it for half a day.

Everyone looked at the over twenty green lights that represented their allies on the map. Lux and his comrades thought that as soon as the red lights discovered that there were defenders guarding the path, they would immediately retreat.

However, they were wrong.

Once the two forces engaged each other, the green lights representing their allies disappeared from the map one by one, until none were left.

"All of them are elites," Keane muttered as the red dots continued their advance deeper into their side of the forest.

"One of my skeletons is there," Lux immediately sat cross legged in Lotus Position in preparation to connect with his Skeleton Fighter that was currently on standby nearby the route that their enemies were taking. "Give me a moment."

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'Commanding an elite unit surely is truly different from commanding deadweights,' Malcolm mused as he ran in front of the formation. 'Those defenders didn't even know what hit them.'

The forces of the Yelan Kingdom that they had taken down were all Grade B Apostles, which were led by a Grade A Apostle.

For Malcolm and his allies, who were at the peak of Grade A Apostles, dispatching their enemies was not anything difficult. They were only a step away from the Initiate Rank, and all of them were battle-hardened individuals.

They were personally handpicked by the Kingdoms and the Vahan Empire, both of which belonged to the Skystead Alliance. Naturally, they sent only the best in order to ensure that the success of their mission was guaranteed.

As they were passing through the trees, they saw a dismembered skeleton along the way, but they paid it no mind. They thought that it was just part of the setting of the dungeon, so they didn't stop their advance and continued at a steady pace.

Meanwhile, back at the Yelan Main Camp...

"Impossible!" Lux gasped after breaking his connection with his Skeleton Soldier. "Why are they here?!"

"Who's here?" Cai asked before throwing the last piece of beef jerky inside its mouth.

"Malcolm."

"Malcolm who?"

Keane, who was standing beside the Boar, jabbed his elbow into the side of Cai's body, making the latter squeal in pain.

"Little Swordy, you bastard!" Cai glared at the skinny swordsman. "What do you think you're doing?!"

"Shut up, Idiot!" Keane glared back. "You don't even know the name of the leader of the representative of the Skystead Alliance?"

"Leader? Are you talking about that annoying blondie who challenged My Daddy earlier?"

"Yes. That's him."

It took Cai roughly half a minute in order to connect the dots before its eyes widened in shock.

"F\*ck!" Cai cursed loudly. "I-Isn't that bad? Aren't they supposed to be in the Gate of Conquest? What are they doing here?!"

Einar, Vall, and Xander, all had grim expressions on their faces. As much as they wanted to say that Malcolm's group was no big deal, the reality was different.

They were a BIG DEAL!



"Calm down," Lux said as he assessed their situation. "They still don't know of our existence. We have the element of surprise on our side. If we play our cards right, we can hit them where it hurts and stop their advance."

"Then what about your earlier plan?" Keane asked. "Are you going to abandon it?"

Lux shook his head. "I'm not going to abandon it. I'll just put it on hold until we repel Malcolm's forces. However, if we are going to do this, we can't let our identities be known by them."

"Um, why?" Cai asked. "Shouldn't we tell them who beat them up to a pulp?"

Lux glanced at the clueless Boar with a fed-up expression on his face.

"Do you really want the Skystead Alliance to know that you attacked their representatives while they were doing their mission?" Lux commented. "Don't forget. We just got our names removed from the Blacklist of their Kingdoms. Do you want to get blacklisted again?"

"I have an idea," Einar, who had been keeping his silence since earlier, voiced his opinion. "It will be best if we all wear masks, or anything that can cover our faces. Also, the Boar has to stay here. It is impossible to hide such an obnoxious creature, and although our fighting force will go down by a bit, it will be safer if we kept our identities anonymous."

Everyone nodded in agreement to Einar's plan with the exception of Cai, who felt as if it was being singled out of the group.

Still, Cai wasn't completely stupid and grumpily agreed to the plan to remain inside the camp. A few minutes later, they went to the Main Tent to tell Sherlock and Watson about the danger that was slowly making their way to the rear of their encampment.

## **Chapter 317: Let's Catch Ourselves A Field Boss**

Malcolm and his group, who were traversing the forest, suddenly came to a complete stop.

The reason for this was that the Oracle in their party, who had the gift of Clairvoyance, suddenly told them to stop their advance.

Oracle was a rare profession, similar to Lux's Necromancer, that branched out from the Cleric profession. They were blessed with great foresight, which allowed them to sense dangers that were personally targeted at them.

"They know we are coming, and they are currently setting up an ambush ahead," the Oracle warned. "They have over fifty Individuals, and six of them have the ability to threaten us. If we don't change our plan, we will definitely fall into their trap."

Malcolm and his comrades hesitated, wondering whether they should continue their assault or not. Although they were confident in their strength, fifty individuals with six of them able to threaten them was a risk they didn't want to take.

All of them were behind enemy lines, and if they weren't careful, they could be surrounded with no path of escape.

"What do you propose?" Malcolm asked. "Should we retreat?"

"Yes," the Oracle replied in a heartbeat. "We can only accomplish our mission if we have the element of surprise. Once that advantage is taken out of the picture, our group will have a hard time escaping if they manage to surround us completely."

Malcolm nodded his head in agreement. "Everyone, fall back. We will resume our mission at a later time."

Without another word, Malcolm's group retreated. They didn't have any intention of sacrificing any of their comrades in a battle if it was not favorable to them.

Lux, who was watching their enemies head back to their Main Camp, clicked his tongue in annoyance.

He had asked Sherlock to lend him some of his elite soldiers to help them ambush Malcolm and his group, but due to the current state of the battlefield, the Gnome only managed to gather over forty veterans to accompany them in their mission.

Unfortunately, for some unexpected reason, their enemies decided to turn back, leaving the ambush that Lux had prepared just for them useless.

In the end, Lux was forced to return the men back to the Main Camp and leave the Map Projector to Asmodeus.

Although it was quite inconvenient to rely on the eyes of his skeleton minions that had been spread over the different parts of the battlefield, the possibility of Malcolm's group returning was high.

This was why he didn't have a choice but to leave the Map Projector to Asmodeus and ordered the Archlich to activate the map once every ten minutes, and only use it for a minute every time to check the locations of their enemies on the map.

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"This place is boring," an Ammarian Soldier wearing his white armor said. "I wish I was on the battlefield. I could have been killing hundreds of Yelan Soldiers out there, but I'm stuck here doing guard duty."

"Shut up," the soldier commented. "Can't you just focus on your mission? We still have a job to do, so no more whining!"

The soldiers manning their post resumed the observation of their surroundings. They were the sentries stationed on the outskirts of the battlefield, and their main role was to light a smoke signal to inform their General if there were enemies attacking their outpost.

From within the shadow of a tree, a Nighstalker emerged.

Ishtar carefully observed the camp in front of her and memorized the layout of their defenses. A minute later, she disappeared, turning into a black mist that flew in the direction of her Master.

Lux was currently hiding under the cover of several trees in order to prevent the sentries from seeing him.

"There are over fifty of them, and a surprise attack is not going to work," Ishtar reported. "Shall we proceed, Master?"

"Yes," Lux replied. "Since we can't take them by surprise, let us just take them head-on."

Lux summoned Pazuzu, and Orion as well as his Skeleton Grand Archers.

After sharing his connection with Asmodeus, the Half-Elf was aware of the current situation of the ongoing war.

He wanted to have the enemy think that a detached force was attacking them from the side, and send some of their manpower in his direction in order to divert some of their attention away from the main battlefield.

The Sentries on duty suddenly found themselves staring at what seemed to be a very chubby Knight who was flying in their direction.

Seeing that the Knight wore silver armor, they initially thought that it was someone from their side. However, once the lone knight came closer, they could instantly tell that he wasn't one of their allies.

"Madlad Rush!" Pazuzu roared as he flew towards the outpost like a cannonball, smashing the small watchtower with his shield.

"Enemy attack!" the Captain of the outpost shouted. "Light the signal pyre! Everyone, with me—ack!"

A dark blade, coated with deadly poison, pierced through the captain's throat before he could finish his command. Ishtar, who had been lying in wait to take down the leader of the soldiers, immediately went for the kill right after the man made his presence known, leaving his subordinates without a leader.

At that moment, the ground trembled as Orion broke through their encampment, thrashing everyone that stood in his way.

Lux didn't join the battle and simply commanded his troops from afar. He was currently wearing a black robe and a mask to hide his identity.

He didn't know if the Skystead Alliance knew about his abilities, which was his primary concern. However, since there was no turning back for him and his group, they really had no choice but to fight against Malcolm and his comrades if they wished to clear this mission.

Rains of arrows descended upon the soldiers as the Skeleton Grand Archers fired volley after volley. Ishtar, Orion, and Pazuzu, played their roles well and scattered the enemy's forces, making them flee like wild ducks that had heard a gunshot.

Lux and his forces didn't even bother to extinguish the flames that had started to burn brightly, creating smoke that acted as a signal, alerting the main army that their outposts were under attack.

When the Half-Elf became convinced that they had caused enough mayhem, he decided to teleport to the next location and bring down another outpost to cause confusion in the Ammarians' strategy.

An hour later, Lux had managed to destroy three outposts of different locations, tricking Moriarty into thinking that the Yelan Army had managed to slip through their defenses. Because of this, he ordered the main force to retreat, while he sent a detached force to scour the forest and marshlands that were within their line of defense.

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In one of the outposts that Lux had destroyed...

"What is it?" Malcolm asked as one of his comrades examined the destroyed camp with a critical eye.

"Wait," a young man with sharp features replied. "I need to confirm something."

Picking up one of the arrows on the ground, he used his nose to sniff its tail feather. A moment later, he pointed towards the East side of the forest.

"The scent is coming from that direction," the young man said. "Follow me."

Malcolm nodded his head and the rest of the group followed the young man as he tried to understand what kind of enemies took down three of the outposts that were deep within their line of defense.

"Here, there are footprints," the young man pointed to the ground. "Archers, all of them. Although faint, there are footprints that were headed in this direction. But this is where the trail ends. None of them moved past this point. Also, I smell the stench of the Undead..."

At the mention of the word Undead, a frown appeared in Malcolm's face.

"What do you think?" Malcolm glanced at the Oracle who had also crouched down on the ground, chanting something that was barely audible to the ears.

"What he said is true, I can sense traces of Necrotic Magic in the surroundings," the Oracle replied. "It is possible that we are fighting against a Lich, or a Necromancer, both of which could summon the Undead."

A moment of silence descended upon the group as they assessed the mysterious enemy that they didn't expect to encounter in their mission.

"What do you suggest that we do?" Malcolm asked the Oracle.

The Oracle smiled as Divine Energy surged in his hands. "What else? We just need to find it and kill it. Who knows? This might be a Wandering Field Boss that the dungeon has created for us. We faced something similar to this in the Assyrian Catacombs. Have you forgotten? That monster even dropped a Pseudo-Legendary Item that is now in my hands."

The Oracle summoned a golden staff with a crimson skull adorning its tip.

"I don't take this out casually because I am an Oracle," the Oracle replied. "It is not... something an Oracle can use in public, right?"

Malcolm smiled after seeing the golden staff in the Oracle's hands.

"Indeed." Malcolm smirked. "I guess we now need to hunt the wandering Field Boss. Who knows? It might just drop another Pseudo-Legendary Item if we kill it."

Malcolm's comrades chuckled after his declaration.

The Oracle smiled and chanted an incantation. A moment later, a purple beam of light escaped the crimson skull that adorned his golden staff and flew towards the East.

"He's there," the Oracle said after finishing his tracking incantation. "Let's catch ourselves a Field Boss."

Malcolm and the rest of his members no longer wasted their time and traversed Eastward through the forest.

All of them had greedy looks on their faces, as if the precious loot that the "Boss Monster" would drop was already in the bag.

## Chapter 318.1: The Art Of War [Part 1]

Lux had completely destroyed another outpost within the defensive lines of the Ammar Kingdom.

This was the fifth outpost that he had destroyed, giving the defenders of the Yelan Kingdom a breather because their enemies retreated in order to deal with the hidden forces that had managed to infiltrate the territory they occupied.

Just as Lux was about to head to another outpost, a purple beam of light suddenly descended from the sky and hit his body.

At first, Lux thought that this was an offensive spell, so he immediately took a defensive stance, with Pazuzu, and Orion, shielding him from all sides.

However, nothing happened.

Lux immediately checked his Soul Book to better understand what just happened to him. After checking his status page, he read something that made him frown.

"Tracking Spell Active," read Lux aloud. "I'm... being tracked?"

Lux was well-aware that there were many kinds of tracking spells used to locate certain targets. Just like his Nightstalker, Ishtar, who had the ability called Hunter's Mark, there were other professions, which specialized in tracking targets, like Rangers, Hound Masters, and Druids.

After making sure that there was no harm done to his body, he immediately contacted Asmodeus and ordered him to check the Map Projector and see if any forces were headed in his direction.

'Master, over a dozen red dots are heading straight towards you from the West,' Asmodeus reported. 'Based on their movement speed, they will reach your location in about half an hour if you don't retreat now. I have reason to believe that this is the group led by Malcolm.'

The frown on Lux's face deepened as he summoned his mount, Jed, to take him back to the main camp of the Yelan Kingdom. He could have just simply teleported to where Asmodeus was, but he didn't do it for a simple reason.

He didn't want his enemies to know that he could teleport anywhere on the map.

'Monitor them for five more minutes,' Lux ordered. 'If they are still following me after five minutes, I will summon you to my location.'

'Understood, Master,' Asmodeus replied.

Since the tracker that was marked in Lux's body was spell-based, it would only work for a short period of time and within a specific range. Right now, he wanted to know just how far their tracking ability could reach, and how long the spell would last.

If Malcolm's group could repeatedly track his movements, then it would be hard for him to continue infiltrating the enemy's outposts as he was doing a while ago.

'Not even a day has passed and I am already a target,' Lux sighed in his heart as his mount, Jed, increased its speed, wanting to take his Master to safety as soon as possible. 'We need a change of plans.'

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"He is moving," the Oracle reported. "He is retreating and seems to be heading to the Yelan Kingdom Camp."

Malcolm raised his hand signaling that they would stop their pursuit of their target.

"I guess our enemy is not stupid," Malcolm commented.

"What now?" the Oracle asked.

"What else?" Malcolm turned around. "Let's go back to the Main Camp and report our findings, maybe Moriarty can help us lay a trap for this wandering Field Boss."

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"How can we kill their commanding general, Moriarty, in six days?" Watson laughed. "You're such a joker, Lux. If we knew the answer to that, then we would have done it already! That person is protected by an elite team of soldiers. Why do you think our assassins failed to assassinate him?"

"His Elite Team is all composed of Initiates?" Lux answered.

"Exactly. It's almost impossible to kill him even with sneak attacks unless we also send an elite team to handle his guards."

"But aren't you and Sherlock also protected by Elite Soldiers? This is why their assassination attempts have failed as well, right?"

Watson smiled and nodded his head. "In this regard, the strength of our security personnel is equal. Why do you think we recruited mercenaries to help us fight? The stronger our allies, the stronger we become. I don't want to say this, Lux, but in the end, the outcome of this war might be decided by the quality and quantity of the mercenaries we hired in this war."

Watson's usually happy-go-lucky expression turned serious as he rested his hand on Lux's shoulders.

"We're counting on you and your comrades to break the stalemate," Watson replied. "If there is something we can do to help, as long as it is not excessive, we are willing to do what we can. As for troops... since we are greatly at a disadvantage, the maximum number of soldiers I can assign to you is three hundred. Do you wish to become a Company Commander?"

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< Watson has deemed that it is necessary for you to increase the number of personnel under your command in order to accomplish your mission. Will you accept his offer? >

( Yes / No )

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"I accept," Lux replied in a heartbeat. "Can you make all of them Initiates?"

"Hahaha! Of course not." Watson laughed. "But, I assure you that all of them will be Grade B Apostles. I will even allow you to choose them personally."

"Can I choose them now?"

"Of course. Follow me."

"Also, General, there is something that I want to talk to you about," Lux said. "It's about our strategy tomorrow."

Watson smirked before using his thumb to point at Sherlock who was looking on the map of the table with a solemn gaze.

"I don't make the strategies," Watson stated because he already knew what Lux wanted to talk about. "I just execute them. If you want to talk about strategies, that is the person you should talk to. As long as Sherlock approves of it then I'm in."

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Ammar Kingdom Main Camp...

"Malcolm, I will assign you to be a Battalion Commander in charge of a thousand men," Moriarty stated. "I don't care what methods you use in order to achieve your goal. What I want is results. Can you make that happen?"

"I can," Malcolm replied and bowed his head politely. "Thank you for your trust."

Moriarty rested the side of his face over his closed fist as he eyed the young man with dark blue hair. He was quite satisfied with Malcolm's performance at the start of the war. Knowing that a Necromancer or a Lich was currently causing havoc on the left and right flanks of his army, he decided to take the initiative and create a task force that would get rid of it as soon as possible.

"Earlier, our opponents suddenly decided to be a turtle and focused on defending," Moriarty commented. "Although I am confident in the might of my army, I still find their strategy quite troublesome. If you were in my place, what would you have done?"

Malcolm didn't answer right away, and instead pondered about what was the best thing to do. His father was the Great General of the Vahan Empire and was responsible for leading his men to battle.

There had been more than one occasion when he had taken Malcolm to war to serve as his aide, so that his son would learn all about military tactics at an early age. Because of this, the young man learned a thing or two about tactics, and a few ways for how to bring down a fortress and the people that manned it, who only specialized in defending.

"I have an idea, but I don't know if the General is willing to accept it," Malcolm replied.

"Well, the most I can do is hear you out first," Moriarty replied. "If it's decent, I will consider it."

"General, what I want the army to do tomorrow is..."

Moriarty listened to Malcolm's explanation with a calm gaze. However, after hearing the entirety of the strategy, even the Great General of the Ammar Kingdom found it to be an ingenious move.

"Good." Moriarty grinned. "If this strategy of yours worked, then I will reward you handsomely."

That night, both camps made their own moves under the cover of darkness in order to gain the upper hand in the battle that would happen the next day. Both sides wanted to gain the upper hand against the other, and tilt the battle in their favor.

Just as Watson had said earlier, the outcome of the war could tilt based on the performance of each mercenary group that the two Kingdoms had hired.

The Yelan Kingdom had Lux and his comrades.

The Ammar Kingdom had Malcolm and the Elites of the Skystead Alliance.

These two teams, alongside their newly acquired troops, would determine whose side was going to win before the duration of the quest was over.

## **Chapter 319.2: The Art Of War [Part 2]**

The next day, just before sunrise, the war drums of the Ammar Kingdom reverberated across the battlefield.

Tens of thousands of troops steadily advanced towards the Mountain Fortress of the Yelan Kingdom with the intention of breaking their defenses apart.

"Archers, aim!" Watson ordered.

Tens of thousands of archers all nocked an arrow on their bows and aimed upwards. Their enemies were still outside of their firing range, so they all held their arrows steady and didn't shoot any of their arrows.

'This is bad. The wind is blowing towards us,' Watson frowned. 'This will reduce the effectiveness of our ranged attacks. I need to wait until they are close enough to order the attack.'

But, to Watson's dismay, the army of the Ammar Kingdom stopped just before they entered the range of his archers. It was as if they knew exactly where the safe spot was, and stopped before their formation could suffer a rain of arrows that would have taken countless lives.

"Prepare to start the operation," Moriarty ordered from his raised platform.  
"Mages, wait for my signal!"

Immediately, the soldiers that were at the front of their formation parted, and several people wearing white robes with magical staffs and wands in their hands stepped forward.

The soldiers once again parted as several large wooden wagons were carried to the very front of the formation. When all of them had been positioned properly, Moriarty gave an order that took the Yelan Kingdom by surprise.

"Light them all!" Moriarty ordered. "Mages, you already know what to do!"

As soon as the soldiers threw their torches inside the wooden wagons, the grass, as well as wooden branches in them started to burn.

The Mages then chanted and used their wind magic to blow the smoke towards the mountain where the Yelan Kingdom's first line of defense was stationed.

Immediately, the entirety of the army of the Ammar Kingdom disappeared from view due to the thick smoke that was flying in the direction of the mountain.

Lux, who had watched many documentaries in his past life, remembered something after seeing the smoke that was being sent in their direction.

His face immediately paled after thinking of that possibility.

"Sir Watson! Order everyone in the front lines to retreat!" Lux shouted. "That smoke might be poisonous! Tell everyone not to breathe in too much as they run away!"

Watson was startled because he never thought that their enemies would use this kind of strategy in order to force them out from their advantageous position

He immediately relayed Lux's orders to the rest of his army, while sending a few of his Elite Soldiers to take Sherlock away.

Unfortunately, the orders weren't relayed fast enough, and the thick smoke reached the location of the first line of defenders.

Half a minute later, screams spread in the surroundings as the soldiers on the front lines writhed in pain after being immersed in the thick smoke for half a minute. Their eyes, and skin started to itch at first then the burning sensation followed.

It was already too late when they realized that they could no longer escape the thick smoke due to zero visibility. Their condition worsened overtime, and soon, some of them became blind completely.

Others started to cough and wheeze heavily due to the irritation that was caused by inhaling the smoke through their noses.

Some of the Mages, who specialized in using Wind Element started to summon gusts of wind to blow the smoke back, which let them succeed in saving the lives of their comrades. However, some locations weren't lucky, and many people died because they weren't able to escape fast enough.

"Excellent," Moriarty commented as he watched the entire mountain slowly being covered by smoke. "Killing thousands without sacrificing any of our men. This is indeed a good plan. You did well, Malcolm."

"This is but a simple trick, General," Malcolm replied. "It is not worthy of such praise."

"Don't belittle your efforts, Malcolm," Moriarty crossed his arms over his chest as he listened to the screams that were coming from the mountain. "Because of you, none of my soldiers have died. This is a complete victory on our side."

Malcolm smiled and didn't comment any further. He wanted to say that this strategy was quite common during the wars between the Vahan Empire and its enemies. His father made sure that he understood how these methods were used in the past wars, and the ways to increase their effectiveness during critical moments.

An hour later, the fires in the wagons stopped burning, and only wisps of smoke emerged from it. The mages used water magic to completely drench the remains of the wagons to ensure that none of their own troops would be subjected to the same horrors that their enemies had encountered.

"Let's wait for two more hours before climbing the mountains," Malcolm proposed after using a telescope to check the mountain. "By then, most of the smoke will have already dispersed, and we can take over the enemy camp that is bereft of defenders."

Just as he expected, the only thing he saw were countless dead bodies that littered the entirety of the mountain.

Two hours later, Moriarty commanded his army to traverse the mountain. Without the defenders stopping their advance, their climb was smooth and unhindered.

Some of the soldiers of the Ammar Kingdom even spat on the dead bodies that they discovered along the way, while others started to loot their possessions.

Moriarty and Malcolm turned a blind eye to these barbaric acts because this was the privilege of the victors.

As they went higher up the mountain, they were astounded to see just how much death their smokescreen had caused to the Yellan Kingdom.

"With this, we have struck a decisive blow to their army's morale," Moriarty said with a very pleased look on his face. "I think we managed to take down a quarter, or even a third of their army. It is only a matter of time before they surrender."

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Meanwhile, at the base of the mountain, located at the rear of the Ammarian Army.

Lux teleported to one of his skeletons that had buried itself among the piles of the dead soldiers.

A moment later, the Half-Elf summoned his Archlich beside him, who stood straight and looked at the one-sided genocide that transpired not too long ago.

"This is quite an unfortunate turn of events for the Yelan Kingdom," Asmodeus replied. "But it also created an opportunity for us, Master."

"Indeed," Lux commented as he stood beside his Archlich. "I believe that the one who thought of this strategy is Malcolm. He even succeeded without even breaking a sweat."

"Yes," Asmodeus smiled. "He is an interesting specimen. Unfortunately, I will not get a chance to dissect him. At least... not yet."

Lux smiled wryly at his Archlich's comment.

"Let's start, Asmodeus," Lux stated as he raised his hand to channel his Necrotic Powers. "Let's use the gift that Malcolm had given us to the fullest."

"Humans have a way of fighting against Humans, and us Necromancers have our own way of fighting against the living." Asmodeus chuckled as he raised both of his hands high up in the air. "In Death, we find opportunities. I think it's about time they understand that it is not only them who can use schemes to perform a one-sided massacre."

The Archlich grinned as he channeled the necrotic energy in his hands.

"I'm ready when you are, Master," Asmodeus said after he finished his preparations.

"Understood." Lux sneered. "It's time to give them a taste of their own medicine. Happy Deathday to all of you!"

""Corpse Explosion [EX]!""

The entire mountain trembled as the corpses exploded one after the other, creating a chain reaction that detonated right under the Ammarian Soldiers' noses.

Shouts of pain, surprise, anger, and disbelief spread throughout the surroundings as another one-sided massacre took place.

Malcolm and Moriarty, who were at the center of the formation, no longer looked smug after everything around them started to blow up, sending bone shrapnel, blood, and pieces of flesh flying in every direction.

Those who were already dead killed the living, and those who died because of them killed more people. This unstoppable cycle was similar to a burning match that was dropped into a chest of fireworks.

A single spark was all it needed in order to set off an explosion that rocked the entire mountain, making Malcolm and Moriarty's faces pale from fright.

## **Chapter 320.3: The Art Of War [Part 3]**

< Corpse Explosion [EX] >

- Detonate a corpse, or corpses, dealing AOE damage to everyone within a forty-meter radius.
- Deals 2,000 Necrotic Damage to enemies within range per corpse.
- You will have the option to detonate any corpses within a thirty-meter radius of the first body that you detonate, forming a chain effect of explosions, dealing greater damage.
- If you detonate a corpse within a 20 second interval of each other, the damage will increase by 50% per corpse. This effect stacks, and the maximum damage that could be dealt by the corpse explosion skill is 2,000%. Damage dealt can't go any higher than this for single corpse explosions.
- If you detonate 10 corpses at the same time, damage will increase by 500%
- If you detonate 20 corpses at the same time, damage will increase by 1,000%



- If you detonate 50 corpses at the same time, damage will increase by 2,000%
- If you detonate 100 corpses at the same time, damage will increase by 3,000%
- If you detonate 200 corpses at the same time, damage will increase by 4,000%
- If you detonate 500 corpses at the same time, damage will increase by 5,000%

The maximum damage dealt by Chain Corpse Explosion [EX] can't go higher than 5,000% stacked damage increase.

Note: If you use this skill in the battlefield, the chances of wiping out entire armies is high. The only problem is that this ability doesn't recognize friend from foe. Make sure that your allies have retreated a good distance away to prevent them from getting wiped out by this skill as well!

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This was the skill Lux and Asmodeus unleashed at the same time, creating a devastation that even they didn't expect.

Lux knew that using Animate Undead to revive the dead soldiers of the Yelan Empire would be futile.

The Ammarian Army had sent around four hundred thousand of their soldiers to scale up the abandoned Yelan Encampment, leaving only two hundred thousand of their men to guard their main camp.

Over a hundred thousand Yelan Soldiers had died in the Poisonous Smoke Warfare that Malcolm had used.

But this was a tragedy that no one could have predicted beforehand, forcing Watson to order a hasty retreat, leaving their encampment behind along with their supplies.

Before leaving earlier, Asmodeus told Half-Elf to send his skeleton fighters to descend down the mountain while the smoke was still active. Although Lux

didn't know what the Archlich was planning at that time, he still decided to do what his Named Creature asked of him.

Now that the enemies were making their escape, the Archlich finally told the Half-Elf about his plan, which made Lux feel as if a pale of cold water was spilled on top of his head.

It was such a nefarious plan, no less than what Malcolm had done. Just like Asmodeus had mentioned earlier, Humans had a way to fight against Humans, and Necromancers had their own way of fighting against the living.

The entire mountain shook as if it was being bombarded by cannonballs from a distance. Clouds of red mist, carrying the scent of blood, erupted over the entire mountain, drenching it in crimson color.

Lux had detonated the corpses at the rear of the army, while Asmodeus detonated the ones in the front. These simultaneous explosions created a chain reaction that sandwiched the Ammarian Army, leaving them nowhere to escape.

The Chain Corpse Explosions was truly horrifying, making Lux understand that this wasn't something that can be used lightly. If he used this ability when two warring kingdoms were duking it out with each other in close combat, the consequences would be an all out genocide of friend and foe alike.

"Diablo, Ishtar, Pazuzu, Orion, Charge!" Lux ordered and his named creatures began to scale up the base of the mountain.

Diablo's entire body glowed crimson red, due to the overpowering boost that he was getting from Bloody Fervor.

This skill was one meant for war, and whoever had it would gain an incredible advantage on the battlefield the longer it was. Now that the number of the dead had climbed up to more than two hundred thousand, the Death Knight's damage had reached a staggering one million.

Although this was not enough to one-shot Pseudo-Deimos Ranked Monsters, anything below that Rank would be easily annihilated!

"You guys join as well!" Lux summoned all of his skeleton minions, including his golems, in order to scale up the mountain. "Find the enemy's general! Once you see him, notify me at once!"

Asmodeus chuckled as he, too, summoned his Undying Army.

"This has gotten quite exciting, hasn't it, Master?" Asmodeus commented as he continued to use Corpse Explosion to trap the Ammarian Soldiers, who had nowhere to go.

"Indeed!" Lux agreed. "We just need to find the enemy's general and end this once and for all!"

While Lux and Asmodeus were busy detonating corpse after corpse and sending their minions to look for General Moriarty, Malcolm and his comrades were trying to look for a safe place to hide.

Explosions surrounded them, and the screams of the dying reverberated in the surroundings.

Moriarty, who was being protected by his Elite Soldiers, was also looking for an escape route, but Lux and Asmodeus' strategy to encircle them with detonating corpses, ensured that there was no place for them to run into.

"General, we need to get out of here and fast!" Malcolm, who was nearing the end of his rope, yelled as he approached the Ammarian General, hoping the latter could think of a solution to their problems.

"Thank you for stating the obvious, Malcolm," Moriarty replied. "But that is easier said than done, however, we are not out of options just yet. All mages, aim your spells at the ground in front of us and create a big, and deep enough hole for us to hide in."

Malcolm and his comrades, who hadn't even thought about that solution, immediately sprang into action and bombarded the ground in front of them, creating an ever expanding hole, which was their last resort.

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Entrance of the Domain of the Fallen...

"Malcolm is still too green," one of the high-ranking officials of the Skystead Alliance commented as they watched the war that was happening in real time.

"Indeed." a commander nodded his head in agreement. "Still, if it weren't for that Lich or Necromancer, this battle should have been won already. Him using smoke tactics was brilliant."

"Well, I can't refute that. Perhaps this war would allow him to grow to new heights. Are we perhaps witnessing the birth of yet another great general?"

"The youngins really carry the hope of our nation."

The members of the Xynnar War Pact and representatives of the Six Kingdoms from Solais all had solemn expressions on their faces as they snuck glances at the projection on the wall by their rivals.

They were also surprised when Malcolm had used such a strategy to thin out the forces of the Yelan Kingdom, which made them feel that he was a threat that must be disposed of while he was still young.

Unfortunately, they wouldn't be able to do that anytime soon because, if any of the representatives of the Skystead Alliance died after during this joint exercise, an all-out-war would start, which was something that their side wasn't too keen to see happen.

Among the representatives of the Six Kingdoms was a High-Ranker that belonged to the Rowan Tribe.

He was none other than Xander's father, Hector, and he had come to ensure that his son would return home safely.

While he observed the Corpse Explosions that caused the entire mountain shake, the image of the Half-Elf with red hair suddenly appeared inside his mind.

He knew that it was impossible for Lux to be there, but for some reason, he couldn't remove this idea from his mind.

'I'm just overthinking things,' Hector thought. 'That boy, Lux, couldn't possibly be in the same Instance Dungeon as Malcolm, right?'

The reason why no one thought of this possibility was because Instance Dungeons, as the name suggested, were created on a different plane. Meaning, even if people were to enter the same Dungeon, they would not see

each other because they would be brought to different "replicas" of the dungeon.

However, the Sacred Dungeon was different. It followed its own rules, and right now, it had made it possible for Lux's party and Malcolm's party to face each other in a war that was getting more intense with each passing minute.

