

Strongest Necromancer Of Heaven's Gate

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"I'm going now, Grandma," Lux said as he hugged Vera. "I'll come and visit as often as I can."

"Mmm," Vera hummed as she lightly patted her adopted grandson's head. "I'll always be here waiting. Be safe, Lux."

The red-headed teenager reluctantly took a step back as he looked at his grandma's gaze filled with affection. It was the face that had watched over him all these years and showered him with love and tenderness.

In his past lifetime, Lux had no goals in life. This time around, he had two goals in mind. The first one was to help save the world from destruction.

And the second, goal was to make his Grandma proud of him. He wanted her to know that all the sacrifices she had made for him all these years were worth it. More than anything else, he wanted the world to give Vera the recognition she deserved.

And for that to happen, he must return to Elysium. Back to the world that held the secrets on how Solais could be saved from its predetermined destruction.

"Take care, Grandma. I love you," Lux said as he pressed his fist over his chest. "Open, Heaven's Gate!"

Lux turned into particles of light and disappeared.

Vera smiled as she placed a hand over her chest. She was very happy that her grandson was doing well in Elysium. She knew that this parting wouldn't last forever, for in time, the little Half-Elf—who she had raised since he was a

baby—would return to her side once more after he grew tired from his adventures.

Leaf Village...

After returning to Leaf Village, the first thing that Lux did was to visit his Blacksmith Master, Randolph.

He had already returned Blood Moon to his Master's custody because the mission had ended. However, Lux was thinking if he could borrow it again for a short period of time to accomplish a great undertaking for the village.

Although he didn't want to rely on the Mythical Weapon for help, the mission he planned to accomplish was impossible to complete without it.

However, just as Lux entered the business district of the village, several familiar faces ran towards him with smiles on their faces.

"Big Brother!" Colette called out as she happily jumped at him with her arms opened wide.

The Half-Elf had no choice but to catch the adorable little girl who seemed to have become more lively after spending a few days back home.

After the battle in the Kobold's Nest, Colette and her friends returned to Solais in order to see their families. This was a very natural custom for Dwarves, especially after managing to survive a near-death experience.

After swinging the little Dwarf round and round a few times, Lux placed her back on the ground and lightly patted her head. Colette, on the other hand, grabbed hold of Lux's hands and held it firmly in her two little hands.

"Big Brother, I have thought about this for a long time. You have risked your life a few times to save me, and for that I am very grateful," Colette said with a serious expression on her face. "That's why, in order to repay you, will you please... marry..."

Lux gulped because Colette was looking at him with a flushed expression on her face. The Half-Elf waited with bated breath as the little dwarf finished what she wanted to say.

Matty, who was watching this scene, immediately became alarmed. He then gave Lux the "I'm going to kill you if you marry Colette!" glare, which made the red-headed teenager have the strong urge to slap him.

"Will you please... marry... my Big Sister?" Colette pleaded. "That way, you will be part of our family!"

"Eh?" Matty, who was about to draw his sword, ready to hack Lux into pieces, stopped midway. He then looked at Colette and patted his chest in relief before glaring back at Lux, who had a dumbfounded expression on his face.

"Marry your Big Sister?" Lux blinked once then twice in confusion.

"Yes!" Colette nodded her head. "My Big Sister is very beautiful! She has many suitors, but if I help you, your chances of marrying her will be very high! Don't worry, even if you are not a dwarf, I will vouch for you!"

Lux wanted to scratch his head using his left hand, since his right was firmly held by the excited little Dwarf who was looking up at him with sparkling eyes.

"... I'll think about it," Lux replied in helplessness. He felt that if he rejected Colette's offer right away, the little girl would throw a tantrum and pester him until he said yes.

"Good." Colette smiled. For now, she was satisfied with Lux's answer. After going back home, she had told her parents and her sister about how Lux had saved them inside the Kobold's Nest.

Colette's parents and older sister were quite surprised because they understood how difficult it was to fight against a horde of Kobolds inside their nest. Because of this, the little girl's father even prepared several gifts to repay Lux for saving his daughter's life.

"Big Brother, this is for you. This came from my Family. It's a thank you gift for saving our lives." Colette procured a silver ring from her magic bag and gave it to Lux. "Please, accept it."

Lux didn't stand on ceremony and accepted the silver ring from Colette's hands. Right now, he wouldn't reject any goodwill that would help him become stronger in Elysium.

When the Half-Elf glanced at the contents of the ring, he found twenty Rank 2 Beast Cores and a blue bow with intricate designs.

Out of curiosity, Lux took out the bow from the storage ring to give it a closer look.

"It's a good bow," Lux said as he held it in his hands. Right now, he didn't have the ability to appraise things because he still hadn't learned the skill yet, but it was not a problem because he had the Elysium Compendium.

Any item that could be found in Elysium was recorded inside the Mythical Item that Lux had acquired through Gacha.

After summoning the compendium in his hand, the information for the bow appeared, and Lux wasn't able to stop himself from whistling after reading its contents.

< Heartstriker: Bow of the Forest >

Weapon Type: Longbow

Rarity: Unique

Requirement: Dexterity 80

- Damage: 125 - 160
- Increase Range Attack damage by 20%

Passive Skill: Shot to the Heart

< Shot to the Heart >

- Deals double damage if your attack hits the heart area of your target
- This ability works with normal and skill based attacks.

"Thank you, Colette," Lux said with a smile. "This is just the thing that I need."

"I'm glad you liked it, Big Brother!" Colette smiled back.

She was quite happy that Lux liked the gift that her father had prepared for him. Although she hadn't seen Lux use a bow before, she believed that since her Big Brother was a Half-Elf, he was blessed with the ability to use a bow perfectly.

What the cute little Dwarf didn't know was that the reason why Lux was happy was because he was looking for a weapon to give to his Skeleton Hunter, Ishtar. With Heartstriker in her possession, her long range attacks would be even more deadly.

Matty, Helen, Axel, and Andy also gave Lux various gifts that came from their family. Although they didn't present Lux with any weapons, all of them gave him ten Rank 2 Beast Cores, which made the Half-Elf very happy.

"Are you angels?" Lux asked as he accepted the Beast Cores with gratitude. "The last time I checked, today is not my birthday."

"Hah? Did the Kobolds clobber your head on our return trip?" Matty snorted. "This is just our family being grateful to you for saving our lives. Mark my word, this won't happen ever again. I will never, ever, be placed in a situation again where someone else needs to rescue me!"

Colette, Helen, Axel, and Andy all nodded their heads in agreement. Their experience inside the Kobold's Nest wasn't a good one. Because of this experience, they wanted to become stronger. The next time a similar situation happened, they wouldn't be as helpless as they had been previously.

Lux could understand what they were feeling because he also thought the same. As long as he could become stronger than his enemies, then he wouldn't have to worry about being placed into a dangerous position.

"Big Brother, what are your plans for today?" Colette asked. "We planned to look for the Carbuncle in the Aspiration Plains. Would you like to join us?"

"Carbuncle?" Lux frowned as he returned the bow to his storage ring.

The Carbuncle was the Alpha Beast of the Aspiration Plains. It was the Lord of the Horned Rabbits and a Support Type Monster that healed and buffed its allies in battle. Of course, when put to a pinch, this meter-tall beast was capable of attacking its enemies with physical and magical attacks.

It was also very fast, which made it a difficult adversary for a party whose members still hadn't stepped into the Apostle Rank.

The reason why Colette proposed to attack the Carbuncle was due to Lux's performance in the Kobold's Nest. After seeing Diablo's strength, as well as the other skeletons under the Half-Elf's command, she was very confident that they would be able to beat the weakest of the Alpha Beasts of Leaf Village.

Colette's offer was very tempting, and Lux also knew that they were indeed capable of challenging the Carbuncle. However, the plan he had in mind must take precedence. Now that the Riders of Norria had a non-aggression pact with the Kobolds, who had resorted to banditry in the past, their hands were now more free to handle some tasks that they had set aside beforehand.

One of these tasks was dealing with the mosquito infestation that was still happening in the Figaro Gardens. Lux wanted to deal with this menace, before the Riders of Norria were dispatched to the scene.

As long as he could borrow Blood Moon from his Master, Randolph, again Lux was confident that his skeleton party would be able to decimate the mosquitoes that had forced the Adventurer's Guild to prevent everyone from entering the Figaro Gardens.

"There is something that I need to do first, but I'll probably be back within three days," Lux replied after organizing his thoughts. "If you can wait till then, I will be more than happy to challenge the Carbuncle with all of you."

"Okay!" Colette readily agreed to Lux's proposal. "Let's fight the Carbuncle in three days. This is a promise. Right, Big Brother?"

Lux nodded. "I promise. I will return in three days and fight the Carbuncle with all of you. Also, I won't fight with any of you for the monster drops. All of you can have it."

"Big Brother, you are the best!" Colette grinned as she gave Lux a thumbs up.

After talking about a few more things, the group parted and went to deal with their own business.

Lux resumed his journey to his Master's workshop while time was still on his side. He hoped that before the Riders of Norria arrived, he would be able to finish the task that he had set out to do.

Chapter 66: Striking While The Iron Was Hot

"Hmm... your purpose is good, but can't you just wait until the Riders of Norria handle this mission?" Randolph, the Blacksmith of Leaf Village, asked. "Now that the Kobolds are no longer a problem, it is only a matter of time before they resume handling the problems that they have set aside due to the Kobold's wanton banditry."

"It is exactly because of this reason that we should strike now, Master," Lux countered. "Right now, there are so many monster materials that can be looted from the Figaro Gardens. Are we going to let the Riders of Norria take them all?"

Randolph's expression eased up a bit, and Lux knew that he was faltering. All he needed to do was give his Master one more push before the latter agreed to lend him Blood Moon for a few days.

"Well, I'm going to be honest. It does tempt me, but the answer is still no," Randolph replied as he crossed his arms over his chest. "Listen, Lux, I don't want you to rely on the Mythical Weapon to boost your progress. Since you are my Disciple, I want you to resume your studies of Blacksmithing. I'm sure that after a few years, you will be able to craft Mythical Weapons."

"No, Master." Lux corrected. "I won't settle for Mythical Weapons, I will go for Legendary Weapons."

Randolph looked at Lux with a dumbfounded expression before roaring in laughter.

"Hahaha! Yes, you're right!" Randolph patted Lux's shoulder in a good mood. "As my Disciple, you are bound to create Legendary Weapons. This is something I expect from the person I have chosen."

Lux grinned because he was only just a step away from achieving his plan. Now that he had stroked Randolph's ego, it was now time to strike while the iron was hot.

"Master, I will be honest with you, I have a feeling that the Mosquitoes growth is suspicious," Lux said. "There has been no record that such a thing has

happened in the past. Something must be causing it, and the secret lies in the North end of the Figaro Garden."

Randolph rubbed his chin because he couldn't refute Lux's hypothesis. Just as he said, there had been no incidences in the past where a mosquito swarm of such magnitude had appeared in the place where Insectoid Monsters roamed.

Although the Elders of the Village looked calm on the surface, deep inside they must be very worried. A Mosquito Monster outbreak wasn't a joke, and compared to the Undead outbreak they had experienced not long ago, this one was potentially more dangerous.

It was so dangerous that the houses which still didn't have basements that the residents could hide in, had no choice but to cooperate with the Earth Mages of the village. These Earth Mages used their magic to dig an underground shelter to be used for an emergency, in the off chance that they didn't have time to go to the main shelter.

"Lux, I know that your main purpose in asking for Blood Moon is to take advantage of the situation," Randolph stated. "However, as one of the Elders of the Village, I still have to consider the well-being of everyone that lives here. If I lend you Blood Moon for a few days, are you confident that you will be able to deal with the Mosquito Swarm?"

Lux smiled as he held up two fingers from his hand.

"Without Blood Moon, my chances to accomplish my goal is only twenty percent," Lux admitted. "However, if I have Blood Moon, my chances will rise to sixty percent. Master, I think it is worth it to take a gamble."

"I know you have Skeleton Summons to handle the dangerous stuff for you, but can you assure your safety in this mission?"

"I can."

Lux patted his chest with confidence. He had no intention of dying in Elysium because he knew that his grandma would be sad. So more than anything else, he had always prioritized his safety above all others.

This was why he wanted Randolph to lend him Blood Moon. It was to ensure that his mission would become a huge success.

"Very well," Randolph relented. "I will lend you Blood Moon, but only for a few days. After you finish this expedition, you will not ask me to lend it to you ever again. Do I make myself clear?"

Lux nodded. "Yes, Master!"

The two talked about the details of how Lux would safely accomplish his mission. Hearing his plan made Randolph scratch his head in disbelief. He had thought that Lux had only planned a simple means to keep himself safe, so he was surprised to hear that his Disciple also planned to hide in the underground tunnels of the Ant Nest to ensure that no mosquito would find him.

After knowing that his sole Disciple was truly going to play it safe, Randolph lent Blood Moon to Lux with peace of mind. As long as the Half-Elf wouldn't risk his life to fight against thousands of mosquitoes, the Blacksmith of Leaf Village was willing to entrust him with the greatest creation that he had made in his lifetime.

"Ah, Master, I need another favor from you," Lux said after receiving Blood Moon and re-equipping it in Diablo's equipment slot. There was one more important thing that he needed to do in order to maximize the rewards of his expedition.

"Well, as long as it's not unreasonable, I will think about it," Randolph replied. Since he had already agreed to lend the Half-Elf his weapon, a little favor wouldn't hurt.

Lux smiled as he told his Master the contents of his favor. After hearing his request, Randolph nodded his head in agreement.

Now that his goal has been achieved, Lux made preparations to enter the Figaro Garden under the cover of darkness. The mosquitoes were more active around this time, and Lux was sure to find them instantly.

Looking at the Beast Cores that had been gifted to him by the parents of his friends, Lux planned to upgrade his Skeleton Party and have them attack the mosquitoes, and collect as many monster parts as possible during his expedition in the Figaro Gardens.

Chapter 67: I Will Show Them How Awesome Your Grandson Is!

Lux locked himself up inside his room in the inn and looked at the Beast Cores he had in his possession.

From fighting with his life on the line in the Kobold's Nest, as well as the rewards that were given to him by the parents of Colette, Matty, Helen, Axel, and Andy, the Half-Elf had acquired a good number of Beast Cores which would make his team a lot stronger.

One Hundred and Fifty One Rank 1 Beast Cores, and Eighty Rank 2 Beast Cores.

That was the total number of Beast Cores that Lux currently possessed, which made him feel giddy whenever he thought of it.

"I'll upgrade Ishtar and the Skeleton Archers for now," Lux muttered as he held a Rank 2 Beast Core in his hand. "Our opponents are flying creatures, so range attacks will be more effective than melee attacks."

Lux then checked Ishtar's current rank as he applied one Beast Core after another.

After using twenty Rank 2 Beast Cores, Ishtar's Rating went up from D+ to C, which upgraded her overall stats.

She also learned the passive skill Hunter's Eye, which allowed Ishtar's to lock on a single target and attack it with greater accuracy from great distances.

Lux spent an additional twenty-seven Rank 2 Beast Cores to raise her Rating to C+, which allowed her to learn two active skills, namely Arrow Shower and Piercing Arrow.

Arrow Shower, as the name suggested, allowed Ishtar to shoot a magical arrow where it would split into multiple arrows that would rain down on her enemies. This was a very effective AOE attack especially when dealing with enemies that were grouped together.

Piercing Arrow, on the other hand, was a skill that allowed Ishtar to fire a charged arrow that could pierce through armored units, or monsters that had very tough skin like dragon scales, exoskeletons, etc.

Of course, when certain arrows were paired up with the Piercing Arrow skill, their effectiveness would increase, turning them deadlier.

For example, an Adamantium arrow was an arrow that was strong enough to pierce through Dragon Scales. If Ishtar were to use the Piercing Arrow Skill, alongside the Adamantium Arrow, the arrow would embed itself deeper inside the monster's body, causing greater damage.

< Ishtar >

– Named Skeleton Hunter

– Rating: C+

– Mana: 10

– Progress (0/1,000)

Health: 5,500 / 5,500

Mana: 2,550 / 2,550

Attack: 180 - 215 (+160 Heartstriker)

Attack Type: Ranged Ice Damage

Strength: 80

Intelligence: 85

Vitality: 80

Agility: 85

Dexterity: 115

Active Skill: Hunter's Mark, Set Trap, Arrow Shower, Piercing Arrow

Passive Skill: Equip Item, Hunter's Eye.

Title: The Forgotten Queen

Note: Sometimes I aim to please. But, most of the time, I aim to Kill!

Lux smiled after seeing Ishtar's character information in his soul book. After admiring her stats and skills for a minute, he then shifted his attention to his Skeleton Archers, whom he intended to upgrade until they matched the strength of his Skeleton Fighters.

"Let's go bigtime on this one," Lux smirked as he consumed all One-Hundred and Fifty One Rank 1 Beast Cores, and turned them into 1510 Skill Points.

Lux used 1,300 Skill Points and upgraded his Skeleton Archers four times, which made them evolve into Skeleton Grand Archers. These upgraded Skeleton Archers had also acquired powerful skills like the Crippling Volley, and Vulture's Eye, which gave Lux the confidence that he would be able to accomplish his goal without fail.

< Crippling Volley >

– When four or more Skeleton Grand Archers are together, they will be able to activate this unique ability that allows them to fire a volley of magical arrows that have a high chance to paralyze their enemies.

< Vulture's Eye >

– Allows the Skeleton Grand Archer to see further by two hundred meters

< Summon Skeleton Grand Archer >

Rating: B

Mana: 10

Progress: (0/800)

- Summons Four Skeleton Grand Archer to fight for you
- Summon duration: 4 hour
- Skill Cooldown: 1 minute.

Health Points: 2000

Attack: 100 - 150

Attack Type: Physical Range Damage

Active Skills: Triple Shot, Crippling Volley.

Passive Skills: Fast Reload, Vulture's Eye

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Just to be on the safe side, Lux used seventeen Rank 2 Beast Cores to upgrade Diablo once, making his vanguard even stronger. The Skeleton Rider was already his party's strongest melee unit. However, since Diablo was also the wielder of Blood Moon, Lux decided to strengthen him to make him more formidable in battle.

< Diablo >

"Finally a worthy opponent. Our battle will be Legendary!"

- Named Skeleton
- Skeleton Rider
- Rating: B+
- Mana: 10
- Progress (10 / 800)

Health: 10,500 / 10,500

Mana: 1,940 / 1,940

Attack: 280 - 335 (+300 Damage from Blood Moon)

Attack Type: Ethereal Damage.

Strength: 98 (+1)

Intelligence: 97

Vitality: 96 (+2)

Agility: 97 (+2)

Dexterity: 97 (+2)

Defense: 83 (+250 Defense)

Title: Firstborn, Squad Captain, Relentless Charger.

Active Skills: Slash, Heavy Slash, Bone Spear, Duel [EX], Whirlwind Slash, Leap.

Passive Skills: Parry, Tactician, Improved Dodge, Union of Man and Beast, Enhanced Fortitude, Intimidate (New)

Lux still had 220 Skill Points remaining, which he set aside for the time being so they could be used for future upgrades.

Diablo had also learned the skill Intimidate, which struck fear in monsters that were equal or weaker than it in rank. Monsters affected by the Intimidate skill would have their attack speed and movement speed decreased by 30%

'Diablo and Ishtar are now Rank 2 Monsters, while my other summons are at the middle stage of Rank 1 Monsters,' Lux thought as he glanced at the information of all the creatures under his command.

Back then, he thought that it would take him a long while to gather resources in order to fully upgrade his minions. Gathering Beast Cores was not an easy task, especially at the start when one was going solo.

If not for the fact that he had been generously rewarded by Colette's parents at the beginning, as well as having the chance to take advantage of the Figaro Garden and Kobold Nest incidents, Lux would not have reached the stage he was in right now.

Now that his minions had all evolved and became stronger, Lux was finally able to breathe a sigh of relief as he finally overcame the insecurity he'd felt over the past few years.

For four years, he was barred entry to Elysium because of his weak body. Now, even though he had been left behind by his friends in Wildgarde Stronghold, who had gone to the higher areas of Elysium, Lux no longer felt envious of them

For he knew that after just a year, he could catch up to them.

And a year after that, he would surpass all of them.

"Grandma, just wait for me," Lux said as she stood up to leave his room. "A few months from now, I will surprise everyone in Wildgarde Stronghold. I will show them how awesome your grandson is!"

The Half-Elf left the inn with a serious expression on his face. His destination was the Figaro Garden, and he would not return until his storage bags, storage rings, and his Enchanted Beast Ring, were filled to the brim with resources that would make his Master Randolph, laugh until all of his teeth fell out of their sockets.

Chapter 68: Lux's Masterplan

The buzzing of mosquitoes could be heard in the darkness of the night. Ever since Lux had left to save Colette and the others, the numbers of mosquitoes had increased significantly.

In fact, there were now so many of them that the ecosystem of the Figaro Garden was in danger of being overturned. The first thing that the Half-Elf did when he entered the garden was to look for the nearest Ant Nest where he could hide.

The Ants recognized Lux right away because he was the only Half-Elf that visited the garden, not to mention that he had become their business partner as well.

After chatting with the Ants for a bit in order to get a general situation of the garden, Lux immediately summoned his skeletons and put them to work.

Diablo, along with Seven Skeletal Fighters, stood at the ready. Ishtar as well as four Skeleton Grand Archers were waiting for Lux to give them orders.

Lux admired his team of Skeletons and grinned evilly as he gave them the order to move out. Their first destination was the lair of the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis, who—according to the Ants—had already spawned after it was killed a few weeks ago.

After his nice long chat with the Ants, he had come to the understanding that all the other insects were now rallying behind the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis in order to resist the Red-Striped Predator Mosquitoes (Common Monster), Obsidian Spite Mosquitoes (Rank 1 Monster), and Scaled Torment Mosquitoes (Rank 2 Monster).

Truth be told, Lux had a feeling that there might be mosquitoes whose tiers might have reached Rank 3, or worse, Rank 4. This was something that the Half-Elf didn't want to see. He was afraid that if a mosquito had really reached Rank 4, there would be a new boss in the Figaro Gardens and it wouldn't be the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis. A mosquito boss would be much harder to deal with.

As they drew closer to their designated location, the buzzing sound also intensified. The red-headed teenager was monitoring the situation using Diablo's eyes and ears, while hiding inside the Ant's Nest.

There was simply no way that he would take the risk and accompany his summons' to fight against thousands of mosquitoes that could suck his blood dry and turn him into a dried husk. His team of Skeletons slowed their movements as they observed the on-going battle from afar.

A never seen before team battle between hundreds of the Insects that resided in the Figaro Garden against the Mosquito Swarm that outnumbered them five to one.

The Half-Elf was delighted as he watched such a scene because, for him, all of the monsters were simply Free Skill and Stats Points that were waiting to be claimed by him. As body parts of monsters piled up on the ground, Lux noticed that the majority of those that had died were simply Common Monsters.

In the Monster World, Common Monsters were merely cannon fodder that could be used to exhaust the enemies. The true combatants were the Rank 1 and Rank 2 Monsters, who were engaged in mortal combat.

While everyone was fighting, Lux was looking for the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis, who was nowhere to be found.

Suddenly, several giant flowers were sliced apart as the Alpha Beast of the Figaro Gardens entered the scene. However, the Half-Elf noticed that the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis didn't enter the fray right away. Instead, it looked in the distance, eyeing a dozen meter-long mosquitoes, whose exoskeleton had taken a greenish hue.

After using his Elysium Compendium to identify the new monsters, the red-headed teenager found that his fears became a reality.

"Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes," Lux muttered. "Rank 3 Monsters."

Although these dozen Rank 3 Monsters were weaker than the Alpha Beast, their numbers still posed a problem. Just like the name implied, these Mosquitoes carried a powerful venom in their bites, which had a high chance of poisoning their target. Aside from that, there was also a medium chance that their victims would become paralyzed in just one bite as well.

With this deadly combination, the Rank 3 Mosquitoes were something that the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis wouldn't dare attack recklessly.

Since the big shots were simply eyeing each other and not making any moves, the battle of the lower ranks raged on. The fight was so intense that the Half-Elf thought that their skirmish would end in less than fifteen minutes.

'What should I do?' Lux thought. 'Should I help the insects? Or should I help the mosquitoes?'

The red-headed teenager pondered this question for a bit as he eyed the battlefield with a serious expression on his face. After weighing the pros and

cons on who to help, the Half-Elf ordered his Skeletons to... help the Mosquitoes vanquish their enemies!

Although he knew that this was the wrong thing to do, Lux simply went ahead with his plan due to one simple reason.

"Mosquitoes only drink blood, they don't eat Beast Cores," Lux muttered. "Since that is the case, I'll just help them kill the other Insects faster. Don't think badly of me, this is just pure business."

After receiving Lux's orders, the Skeletons sprang into action. They immediately attacked the Insects and targeted their wings and legs, crippling them and allowing the Mosquitoes to go in for the kill.

Diablo's, Ishtar's, and the Skeletons' appearance had a profound effect on the battle. They were high-ranking Monsters, so their battle prowess was enough to tilt the advantage in favor of the Mosquitoes.

The Red-Eyed Terror Mantis screeched in anger as it opened its wings to fly towards Diablo and the others. However, Ishtar's ranged attacks, that were imbued with the ice element, slowed its movement by a good margin.

Seeing that an opportunity arrived, the Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes joined in and attacked the Alpha Beast from all sides. This was the effect that Lux had wanted to achieve, and he couldn't help but laugh madly, while he was inside the Ant Nest.

"That's it! Die and give your Beast Cores to me!" Lux laughed. No matter what happened, he would get the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis' body parts this time without fail. Back then, he was forced to compromise and sell the parts of the Alpha Monster to Frederick and his party.

Now, it was different. He was hunting the Alpha Beast solo, while using the Mosquitoes as a way to weaken it. The monster parts of the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis were very valuable. Its exoskeleton could be used as armor, while its claws could be used to forge a unique sword.

However, Lux didn't plan to forge the weapon right away. The reason? Because the Elysium Compendium had reminded him that a better weapon could be crafted using ten claws from the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis.

If crafted properly, the weapon had a high chance of becoming a Pseudo Mythical Weapon, that had a sharpness that could cut through steel. In order to achieve this, the red-headed teenager needed to fight the Alpha Monster five times, in order to collect five sets of claws.

This was something that beginners knew nothing about. In fact, there were only a handful of individuals in the entirety of the Gweliven Kingdom who knew about this, and all of them were Master and Grandmaster Blacksmiths.

Randolph was a Master Blacksmith, so he also knew the recipe of this Pseudo Mythical Weapon. However, he kept his lips shut tight and would only buy these monster parts from the dwarves, at a very high price, silently.

In fact, Blood Moon was made with five sets of claws from the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis, teeth from the Forest Wolf King, and the Beast Cores of three high-ranking Noble Vampires, whose rank was no lower than Viscount.

Creating this weapon was no easy feat because the chances of failure were high. Fortunately, against all odds, Randolph had succeeded and the Mythical Weapon Blood Moon was born.

As Randolph's Disciple, he had learned the recipe from his Master, which made him want to craft a Blood Moon of his own. Because of this, he decided to just collect the parts he needed, while he was still in Leaf Village.

That way, he would be able to craft the weapon that made Diablo a killing machine.

After the Mosquitoes gained the advantage in battle, Lux ordered his Skeletons to slowly back away to the outskirts of the battlefield. He was quite far from the location of the battle, and he didn't want to lose any more of his forces. Among the seven Skeleton Fighters, three had died in battle.

The Skeleton Grand Archers suffered no losses because they were attacking from a safe distance, and were protected by Ishtar.

The Half-Elf had also ordered Diablo to not use any of his flashy moves, so that Blood Moon's ability would be hidden from the high-ranking Monsters. He planned to deliver the coup de grace when they least expect it, giving them no time to evade the deadly blow that would end their lives.

Just like the Mantis stalking the Cicada, unaware of the Oriole from behind, Lux manipulated his forces to attack the Insects that were a safe distance from the battle being waged between the Rank 3 Mosquitoes and the Alpha Monster that ruled the Figaro Garden.

The red-headed teenager knew that the Alpha Monster was not an easy opponent to beat, but he would be damned if he allowed the rascal to get away after he had decided to claim its monster parts as his own.

"Diablo, pay extra close attention to the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis," Lux ordered. "Once it enters its berserked state, pull out as fast as you can. Stop all hostilities against the insects and get as far from the battlefield as possible."

The Half-Elf knew that in that brief period of time when the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis enter berserk mode, its stats would double, and it would become unstoppable. He planned to wait patiently until the berserk effect wore off, before going in for the kill.

In the meantime, Lux had re-summoned the Skeletal Fighters that died and ordered them to regroup with everyone in battle. Although the journey from Lux's location to Diablo's was several minutes away, he figured that it was enough time for his forces to regroup and take advantage of the weakened Alpha Monster so they could end its life once and for all.

Chapter 69: Once In A Lifetime Opportunity

Due to Ishtar's and the Skeleton Grand Archer's harassment of the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis, the Mosquitoes were able to take advantage of the situation and collectively bombarded the Mantis with Venomous Sprays that whittled its health away.

The other Insects who realized that their leaders were losing the battle decided to shift their attention to the Skeletons that had appeared out of nowhere. However, Diablo stood in front of his subordinates and fought with Blood Moon in hand.

Although two more Skeleton Fighters died during the collision, Diablo was more than enough to hold off several enemies at once. After all, he was a Rank 2 Monster, and he had a Mythical Weapon on hand.

The Mosquitoes had figured out that the Skeletons were on their side, so they used this opportunity to deal significant losses to their enemies.

In the end, Diablo and only two other Skeletal Fighters remained as the vanguard, while Ishtar and the Skeleton Grand Archers fired volley after volley of attacks aimed at the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis in the distance.

Five minutes later, the eyes of the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis glowed brightly. This was a sign that it was about to use its Berserk Skill, which Lux and Diablo had been waiting for. As soon as the Alpha Monster showed signs of going berserk, the Skeletons immediately stopped attacking and ran away like there was no tomorrow!

A few seconds after they left the battlefield, an angry screech that was similar to nails scratching a steel resounded in the surroundings.

The Red-Eyed Terror Mantis' berserked state doesn't happen right away. It was a gradual strengthening that increased all of its stats by 50% after several minutes had passed. The best way to fight against it was to let it activate Berserk, then run away until its duration ended.

All Alpha Beasts and Field Bosses had Berserk Skills. This was why they were the hardest to fight, and also why they were more dangerous than normal monsters.

The Red-Eyed Terror Mantis was a High-Tiered Rank 2 Beast. Although it was only Rank 2, it was stronger than most Rank 3 Monsters.

Once it entered its berserked state, its strength would reach the middle stages of Rank 3, which would put it on par with a Rank 4 Monster at its peak.

Since it was a High-Tiered Monster, its Health and Defenses were stronger than most, so it was impossible to fight it alone, even if the opponent was also a Rank 4 Monster.

Lux had looked for all of the information related to the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis because it was one of the most dangerous Alpha Beast in the Beginner's Zone, only second to the Field Boss, the Forest Wolf King.

Those who had reached the Rank of Apostles would usually challenge this Alpha Monster as proof of their strength before leaving the Leaf Village, just like Frederick's Party did when their party had reached the Apostle Rank.

Powerful gusts of wind blew in every direction as the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis unleashed a devastating attack against the mosquitoes that had encircled it.

Its sharp claws sliced anything in its path, including the Rank 2 Monsters, the Scaled Torment Mosquitoes.

The Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes, who were Rank 3 Monsters, stayed outside of its attack zone and only hurled Venomous Sprays from afar.

The Alpha Beasts knew that it was fighting on borrowed time so it jumped towards one of the Rank 3 Mosquitoes like a cannonball. It then opened its wings for an extra burst of speed, closing the distance in two heartbeats.

The Mantis claws sliced the Ruthless Venom Mosquito's wings cleanly off its body, which made the Rank 3 Monster fall to the ground.

Surprisingly, the Mantis didn't go for the kill. In fact, the moment it landed on the ground, it leapt towards another mosquito and sliced its wings in half.

Mosquitoes can walk and crawl, but their speed was nothing compared to how fast they could fly in the air. The moment they landed on the ground, several angry insects, who were weaker than the mosquitoes mobbed them, despite the latter being stronger.

One by one, the Rank 3 Mosquitoes fell on the ground until only four were left. These mosquitoes had already flown to a height that couldn't be reached by the Mantis, which prevented the Alpha Monster from continuing its rampage.

Since that was the case, the Mantis focused its attention on the Rank 3 Monsters that it had crippled earlier and were now being attacked by the angry insects that they had terrorized for days. Even so, these Mosquitoes were still Rank 3 Monsters, so they overpowered their enemies and killed them one by one.

The Red-Eyed Mantis was really the only one that could cut through their defenses, and that was what it did. It slashed at them repeatedly until green blood oozed out of their bodies.

After killing the last Ruthless Venom Mosquito, the glow on the Alpha Monster's eye waned, signaling that its berserked state had passed. This was the moment that Lux and the Mosquitoes were waiting for.

After seeing that their nemesis had stopped moving, the remaining Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes swooped in for the kill. This was a once in a lifetime chance to suck the Alpha Monster's blood dry, and gain the chance to evolve into a higher specie.

This was the ultimate goal of all creatures. Even Common Monsters had the ability to evolve, but only if they consumed enough Beast Cores, or if the requirements for their evolution was met.

The Skeletons, who had now returned to the outskirts of the battlefield, observed this from afar. Although they were all made up of bones, a look of anticipation could be seen in the flickering lights within their hollow eye sockets.

Lux, who was safely hidden inside the Ant Nest, smiled evilly as he waited for the battle to end.

The Alpha Beast was on its last legs, and it was only a matter of time before it fell. Right now, it was a race against time for both the Mosquitoes and the Insects that were putting up a strong resistance until the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis recovered from its weakened state.

Chapter 70: One-Sided Beating

The four remaining Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes swooped down from the sky and then sprayed Venomous Sprays at the Mantis which had just transitioned into its weakened state after using its berserk skill.

The Alpha Beast was helpless against the ranged attacks that rained down on its body. The most it could do was raise its claws, taking on a defensive stance, covering as much of its body as it could. Its strong and sturdy exoskeleton was covered in Venomous Sprays in no time, but the Terror Mantis was mostly unaffected by the Mosquitoes' attack.

Feeling impatient at their lack of progress, the Ruthless Venomous Mosquitoes decided to try some hit and run tactics and used their sharp and powerful needles to pierce the Mantis' protective armor in an attempt to inject their venom directly inside the latter's body.

Out of the four Mosquitoes, the Mantis was able to seriously injure one of them after it came close to its strike range. The other two the Mosquitoes were able to pierce its armor and inject their Venom, but the fourth barely evaded a ferocious swipe that was aimed at its head.

Seeing this scene, Lux knew that he needed to do something, or the Alpha Beast would recover from its lethargic state. He no longer cared about being the one to deal the finishing blow to the Mantis. All he cared about was that it died.

Ishtar and the Skeleton Archers fired volley after volley of arrows, while Diablo and the two remaining Skeleton Fighters stood in front of them, serving as shields and protecting them from insects whose attention had shifted to them.

Ishtar's attack was incredibly deadly, especially when it was up against an unmoving target.

The Skeleton Hunter used her bow's exclusive passive skill "Shot to the Heart", which dealt double damage if it successfully hit the spot where the target's heart was located. Although the Alpha Beast was using its claws to shield that part of its body, Ishtar didn't care.

For her, it didn't matter whether the Mantis was blocking her attack or not. If the Alpha Beast chose to block her attack then the Mosquitoes would be able to attack its blindspot, using their sharp needle-like mouths to pierce its body.

Ishtar activated her skill Piercing Arrow, which pushed the Alpha Beast from where it stood with its powerful impact. Just as Lux expected, the Mosquitoes used this opportunity to attack the Mantis in its blind spots, making it shriek in pain.

Ishtar didn't relent in her attacks, and fired one Piercing Shot after the other. Soon, the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis decided that it had had enough and decided to go all out and kill as many as it could before it died.

Unfortunately for him, Ishtar's passive ability to shoot ice arrows had greatly slowed its movement and attack speed, which made its last attempts futile.

It was also at that moment that Ishtar's arrow pierced its chest, making it shriek in frustration. The passive skill Shot to the Heart activated, dealing great damage to the Mantis, pushing it one step closer to its death.

Two minutes later, the Alpha Beast of the Figaro Garden uttered a blood-curdling shriek before collapsing on the ground. It had breathed its last, which signaled the end of the battle.

The surviving insects hurriedly escaped because they knew that, without their leader, they no longer stood a chance against the Mosquitoes.

The Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes greedily pounced on the dead Mantis and sucked its blood. It was the reason why they had attacked its Domain, and they wouldn't leave until they had drained all of its blood.

The lower ranking Mosquitoes, on the other hand, flew after the insects that ran away. Because they knew that there was no way that they would get a share of the Alpha Beast, they chose to settle for the other insects who were running away in every direction.

While the Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes focused their attention on the Mantis, they didn't notice that a small team of Skeletons had already made their way to their location.

Without any warning, Diablo leapt through the air and stabbed Blood Moon on the back of the head of one of the Mosquitoes that had received a serious injury during the battle against the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis.

The Ruthless Venom Mosquito instantly lost its life, not knowing how it died. Its companions were a bit slow to react, so Diablo was able to thrust its sword to another mosquito, aiming at its left eye. At that exact moment, a whistling sound was simultaneously heard and a magic arrow pierced the mosquito's right eye, embedding itself directly into its brain, dealing critical damage.

Diablo's sword also pierced the Mosquito's left eye at that exact moment, which dealt critical damage as well. The combined attack between Lux's two Named Creatures was executed with perfection that their target had no time to react, which led to its death.

Suddenly, a shower of arrows poured like rain on the location where the two other Mosquitoes were about to take flight. The Grand Skeleton Archers had activated their team attack, Crippling Volley, which had a high chance to paralyze their enemies.

The two mosquitoes' bodies stiffened as the paralyzing effects of the attack activated. Diablo kicked one of the Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes, sending its

body flying into the air before targeting the other Mosquito which was struggling to move on the ground.

A magical arrow flew straight and true, piercing a spot on the back of the mosquito's body where its heart was located. Ishtar and the Grand Skeletal Archers focused fire on the fallen mosquito, while Diablo and the two remaining Skeletal Fighters gangbanged the other one.

The Mosquitoes looked at the Skeletons in anger because they thought that they were on the same side. What they didn't know was Lux and his team weren't on anyone's side.

Their goal was to take advantage of the situation and collect as many Beast Cores and Monster parts as possible. After a few minutes of one-sided beating, the two Rank 3 Mosquitoes finally died.

Diablo hurriedly activated the Enchanted Beast Ring and stored the body of the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis, as well as the bodies of the four Mosquitoes that had just been slain. Ishtar and the other Grand Archer Skeletons regrouped with Diablo and began the tedious process of Beast Core Collection.

Lux's Skeletons had acquired an inventory after they got upgraded. Although it wasn't big, it was more than enough to store a hundred Beast Cores per Skeleton Monster.

The fun part about this item inventory skill was that Lux could directly transfer those items from the skeletons' inventory into his through the Soul Book!

This was something that was never heard before in Elysium, and the Half-Elf felt that Eriol had "tweaked" his Soul Book to allow such things to happen. It was the only explanation Lux could think of, and he was more than happy to abuse this feature.

"It's too bad that the Monster Storage Ring has a limit," Lux muttered. "If possible I'd like a few more of those."

The Half-Elf knew that storage items that could store the Monsters' entire bodies cost a lot. However, he understood well that buying those would be worth it. If he happened to kill a rare monster in the future, bringing it back, instead of dismantling its body and only taking the most important part of its body, would be more profitable.

While Lux's Skeletons were busy prying the Beast Cores from the dead insects on the ground, the sound of buzzing once again permeated the air. The red-headed teenager knew that their time was up.

Although he wanted to get as many cores as possible at this time, he couldn't allow his cover to be blown at this point in time. The Mosquitoes thought of Diablo and the others as allies, so it would be a shame to not take advantage of it.

In the end, Lux unsummoned his skeletons to make sure that no traces would be left behind. This was a safer option than letting the mosquitoes discover what they had been doing while they were going after the fleeting insects that had escaped the battlefield.

'Five of my Skeletal Fighters are already on their way to that location,' Lux thought. 'It will be more than enough time to let the Mosquitoes drink their fill before I order them to resume the collection of Beast Cores.'

Lux grinned evilly as he summoned Diablo, Ishtar, and the rest of his skeletons one by one. They would return to the Leaf Village and dispose of the Monster Parts in his Master's smithy, so that they could free up some space for the second round of looting.

He was sure that Randolph wouldn't mind if he left those monster bodies behind. In fact, he believed that the Dwarf would be more than happy to take the monster's bodies off his hands, especially the body of the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis.

They made a deal earlier that Randolph would take the Mantis' parts, except for the claws, as compensation for letting Lux use Blood Moon.

Lux didn't mind sharing those things with his Master because this would not be the first and last time that he would be fighting the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis. He was planning on collecting enough Mantis Claws until he had enough to forge his own Blood Moon.

This way, he would no longer need to borrow his Master's Mythical Weapon. Lux believed that with hard work, he would be able to craft a Mythical Weapon of his own.

All he needed to do was patiently collect the items that were needed before leaving the Beginner's Area, the Dwarven Kingdom of Gweliven.

Chapter 71: This Is What You Call Investment

"You did well, Lux," Randolph said as he looked at the corpse of the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis that was strewn across the ground of his warehouse. "Can you tell me the current situation in the Figaro Gardens?"

Lux nodded his head and explained how the battle of Mosquitoes and the insects played out. He also told him about how they interfered with the battle and how he backstabbed the Mosquitoes when they least expected it.

Randolph listened as he rubbed his beard. After Lux finished his tale, the Dwarf sighed before he patted his Disciple's back.

"You're one god damn backstabber." Randolph chuckled. "Are you going back to the Figaro Gardens?"

Lux nodded. "The night is still young and there are still many corpses to be collected. It will be a waste if I leave them behind."

Randolph understood that Lux was right. Even so, he was concerned about his safety, so he reminded him to not do anything reckless, and just let his Skeletons do the fighting.

After bidding his Master goodbye, Lux once again slipped into the Figaro Gardens and headed towards the location of the Ant Nest.

However, along the way, he heard the buzzing sounds of Mosquitoes, so he hurriedly took cover in order to hide from them.

Diablo and the rest were with him, so he wasn't too worried about his safety. His only concern was that the number of the mosquitoes would be too much for him and his small team to handle. All the Skeletons each held a torch in their right hand, which served as a distraction that prevented the mosquitoes from sensing Lux's warm blood.

Fortunately, after glancing in their direction, the mosquitoes didn't bother to take a closer look. They just focused on their mission which was to look for the Insects that were currently grouping with each other to resist their overwhelming numbers.

Even after the Mosquitoes had left the scene, Lux didn't move from where he was hiding. He sent four Skeletal Fighters to scout in different directions to ensure that there was nothing that could threaten his life within the radius of five hundred meters.

Only after making sure that it was indeed safe to move did the Half-Elf hurry towards the nearest entrance to the Ant Nest in order to seek shelter.

Just like usual, the Ants happily welcomed him after he shared the location of where the latest battle had been fought. Lux's skeletons had already taken the Beast Cores that he could take from them, so he didn't mind sharing the dead bodies with the Ants, who always made sure to keep him safe while he was inside their colony.

The Mosquitoes were not too keen to fight the Ants in their underground tunnels. The lack of maneuverability as well as the cramped space prevented them from being able to use their advantage in numbers. One could even say that, among the Insects in the Figaro Gardens, it was the Ants which were least affected by the one-sided slaughter that was happening on the surface.

After arriving to safety, Lux didn't hurry to send out his Skeletons. The first thing he was going to do was upgrade them in order to make them stronger.

Lux had a dozen Rank 3 Beast Cores, as well as the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis' Alpha Core which glowed crimson red.

He also managed to acquire a total of fifty Rank 2 Beast Cores and two hundred twenty-two Rank 1 Beast Cores, which was more than enough to strengthen his skeleton army by a few grades.

Lux still had several Beast Cores in his collection, which he still hadn't used. After taking a quick look in his inventory, to see just how many beast cores he had, he saw three hundred seventy Rank 1 Beast Cores, Sixty Six Rank 2 Beast Cores, twelve Rank 3 Beast Cores, and 1 Alpha Beast Core.

This was a staggering number. If his Grandma Vera were to know how her grandson was faring inside the Beginner's Village, she would definitely be surprised and would question him about how he had managed to acquire so many Beast Cores on his own.

No matter how one looked at it, Lux was simply a cheat-like character who was abusing the mechanics of the rules inside the Beginner's Village.

Although his rank was still below the Apostle Grade, his summons had long exceeded the limit of the rank of anyone that could stay in the Beginner's Zone.

Lux was like one of those gamers who liked to over-level themselves before taking on the first boss of the game. This would ensure that the enemy wouldn't pose any threat to him, and he would be able to gain the upper hand in any of the battles that would take place within the different zones of the Beginner's Village.

The Half-Elf used forty-three Rank 2 Beast Cores in order to upgrade Diablo twice. He knew that the one who would decide the success of this mission would be none other than his First Named Creature, whose combined stats had reached five hundred and sixty, making him a Rank 2 Monster in the middle stages.

Diablo also learned the skill Expert Trainer, which allowed him to successfully train any kind of Monster which rank didn't surpass his by two tiers.

For example, Diablo was currently a Rank 2 Monster. He could tame monsters that he could use as his mount as long as they were Rank 4 and below. Of course, for higher-leveled monsters, he would have to weaken them first before he could make them submit to become his Beast Mount.

For higher ranked monsters, even if they were near-death, Diablo wouldn't be able to tame them because his rank would prevent him from doing so.

Ishtar was the next one that Lux upgraded. As the dedicated long-range damage dealer, it was only natural for him to buff up the former who would also play a vital role in the upcoming battle.

Just like Diablo, Lux upgraded Ishtar twice, which brought up her combined stat points to five hundred and ninety five. She also learned the skill Siege Stance, that rendered her immobile with the tradeoff of increasing her attack by 100%

< Siege Stance >

Increases damage output by 100% and has a high chance of dealing critical damage for ten seconds. While in siege stance, the user is unable to move from their spot, and can only shoot at their enemies like a siege tower.

Moving away, jumping, or breaking this stance will cancel the effect of the skill. This Skill stacks with any other long-ranged skills.

Lux also upgraded his Skeletal Fighters once and his Skeleton Grand Archers twice, greatly reducing his stockpile of Beast Cores, but Lux had no regrets. After all those upgrades, he no longer had any Rank 1 Beast Cores remaining and only eight Rank 2 Beast Core was left in his inventory.

He didn't touch the Rank 3 Beast Cores, as well as the Alpha Cores, because he planned to use those for himself after he left Leaf Village.

His Skeletal Fighters learned the skill Whirlwind Slash, which allowed them to deal AOE damage, while the Skeleton Grand Archers learned Poison Arrow, which made their attacks very deadly.

"This is what you call investment," Lux muttered as he gazed at his Skeleton Team that had become stronger. Although his way of doing things burned more resources when compared to Colette and the others, the payback was very satisfying.

Right now, aside from Diablo and Ishtar, Lux's army was only wearing the basic weapons and armor that he had bought from his Master at a very cheap price. If only he could arm them all to the teeth, then forget about forming a party for the dungeon.

He could go solo and kill the Boss all by himself, as long as his Skeletons had the right equipment for the job.

"Now, let's address the main goal of this trip. Diablo, lead everyone towards the North of the Figaro Gardens," Lux ordered. "It's time to raid the Mosquito Nest and see what is causing this massive outbreak."

Lux and Randolph both agreed that what was happening inside the Figaro Garden was a bit abnormal. He wanted to get into the bottom of things, and in order to do that, his forces would first need to travel to the North, and investigate the source of the problem.

—

North Region of the Figaro Gardens...

Someone, who was wearing a dark robe, frowned upon hearing the report of the Scaled Torment Mosquito (Rank 2 Monster) that he had tasked to supervise the attack on the other regions of the garden.

He needed the Beast Core of the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis for the ritual he was planning to make, but its corpse was nowhere to be found. Also, the Ruthless Venom Mosquitoes that led the attack had been all wiped out, which made the frown on his face deepen.

He didn't believe that the Alpha Beast was the one that killed them all, so he conducted a thorough investigation and interrogated the scouting parties that he had assigned to patrol the garden on a regular basis.

"Did any of you see anything unusual?" the dark-robed figure asked. "It could be anything that you don't always see in this territory.

"Bzzzt." one of the Red-Striped Mosquitoes flew towards him and spoke about the Skeletons that it saw when it was patrolling the area.

After hearing his subordinate's report, the person wearing the dark-robed smashed his fist on his make-shift table, breaking it in half. After panting for half a minute, he regained his composure as he stared at the giant cocoon that was pulsing beside him like a beating heart.

"So, we have a rat in our midst," the dark-robed figure gnashed his teeth. "All of you, find the location of those Skeletons. Do not alert them, just simply encircle the area where they are located. Find any Dwarf that you see and bring them to me alive. I would like to have a nice... long talk with the person that is getting on my way."

The dark-robed person assumed that the one that was getting on his way was a Dwarf. He could not be blamed for thinking that way because the Gweliven Kingdom was a Dwarf Kingdom.

No other races could be seen within its lands, so he deemed that only a Dwarf could pose a threat to his plans. Now that he was only one step away from realizing his goals, he would ensure that no more mishaps happened.

Although losing the Beast Core of the Alpha Beast was troublesome, he had other substitutes that he could use in order to take its place. However, what concerned him was the identity of his enemy.

Right now, he was increasing the pace of his experiment because he had heard that the Riders of Norria had just dealt with the Kobold Bandits that were terrorizing the lands. He thought that he still had a few more days before his experiment was complete, but it seemed that Fate had other plans for him.

Since that was the case, he had no choice but to find the perpetrator, and offer their blood to the new breed of Monster that would make him and his organization the overlords.

An organization that wished to control the Dwarf Kingdom of Gweliven from the shadows.

Chapter 72: Birth Of An Abomination

In the middle of the night, the intense buzzing sounds of insect wings spread across the Figaro Gardens.

Diablo, Ishtar, and the other Skeletons, were sneakily moving towards the North using the darkness as cover. The Mosquitoes weren't able to detect them because their bodies didn't give off any heat, making them practically invisible in the former's eyes.

As the elite Skeleton party neared their destination, they noticed that the Monster Nest was mostly empty. The robed-man had ordered the Mosquitoes to look for the traces of the Skeletons, and capture their summoner.

Fortunately, Diablo and his team had been using plenty of the underground tunnels the Ants had made to reach the Northern Regions, which allowed them to bypass the Mosquitoes that were looking for them.

Diablo gazed at Ishtar and the latter nodded her head. She then nocked an arrow on her bow and took aim. The Skeleton Grand Archers followed her lead and also prepared to shoot, only waiting for her signal to attack.

A few seconds later, a shower of arrows killed the Red-Striped Mosquitoes that were loitering around the entrance of the Monster Nest.

Since they were Common Monsters, they instantly died from the surprise attack that Ishtar and her Archers had unleashed. After making sure that no other Monsters were in sight, the group hurriedly entered the Nest.

Lux, who was watching everything through the eyes of Diablo, frowned. He thought that he and the Skeletons would be fighting their way through vast swarms of Mosquitoes, but after arriving at their destination, the Mosquitoes were nowhere to be found.

The Half-Elf wasn't aware that the majority of them were currently sweeping the Flgaro Garden in search of Diablo and him.

As the skeletons traveled deeper inside the Nest, they arrived in what seemed to be a spacious cavern, where a four-meter-tall glowing cocoon lay at its center. Beside it was the robed person who was busy chanting incantations, as if reinforcing the cocoon and strengthening whatever was inside it.

Before Lux could even assess what was going on, a notification sounded and a series of text materialized in front of him.

< Birth Of An Abomination >

Mission Rating: S

– An unknown organization is conducting an experiment within the Beginners Area of the Gweliven Kingdom. Their goal is to create a monster that could potentially make them the Overlords of the Dwarf Kingdom to overturn the rule of the Royal Family.

– Their plans are still in the initial stages and it is up to you to stop them!

< Quest Objective >

– Kill the Abomination.

– No matter what happens, the creature must be killed at all cost.

– Gather information about the unknown organization and pass it to the Knights of Norria.

– Quest Duration: 1 Hour

– Quest will automatically fail if you fail to subjugate the Abomination within the allotted time.

< Rewards >

100 Free Stat Points

100 Skill Points

100 Body Constitution Points

500 Elysium Gold Coins

500 Riders of Norria Reputation Points

100 Kingdom Reputation Points (Exclusive to Kingdom of Gweliven)

2000 Leaf Village Reputation Points

'A Rank S Mission?!' Lux gasped internally after reading the information that had suddenly flashed in front of him. 'And I only have one hour to accomplish it?!'

After staying inside the Leaf Village for a few months, he found that there was not a single Rank S Mission available for people in the Beginner Zone. The highest mission available was the subjugation of the Field Boss, Forest Wolf King, but even that was only a Rank A Mission.

What did that mean? It meant that this Mission was harder than subjugating a Field Boss. It also meant that an Elite Party of Apostles was needed to finish such a task.

'Fortunately, I upgraded Diablo, Ishtar, and my other skeleton summons,' Lux thought as he observed the robed-person through Diablo's eyes. 'Perhaps they will be able to finish this mission, if things play out right.'

Right now, the robed person still hadn't discovered that he was no longer alone inside the cavern. Lux assumed that the identity of the figure was a male dwarf, whose rank was unknown to him.

'We have the element of surprise in our side,' Lux mused as he used Diablo's eyes to look at the cocoon that was pulsing like a human heart. 'I bet he didn't expect that someone would venture deep inside this Nest and discover his sinister plans.'

Lux decided to act quickly because he didn't know when the Mosquito Swarm would return to their nest. Also, the timer was ticking and he had less than an hour to finish this task before the mission failed.

Ishtar planted her feet firmly on the ground as she activated her Siege Stance, which would increase all of her attacks by 100%.

The Skeleton Grand Archers also posed to fire a Crippling Volley to paralyze the robed figure, allowing Diablo to close the gap and deal with him.

Diablo and the Skeleton Fighters took a charging position in preparation for their united assault. After everyone had taken their position, Lux gave the order and Ishtar's Piercing Arrow flew towards the robed figure, at the same time the Crippling Volley was activated.

As the whistling of the arrow echoed within the cavern, the robed figure moved his body to the side, barely evading the arrow that grazed the side of his cheek.

Ishtar had aimed for his head in order to deal a lethal blow, but her opponent was a veteran that had fought in the battlefield before joining the secret organization. The moment he heard the whistling wind, his body had unconsciously moved to the side, allowing him to barely escape Ishtar's deadly attack.

When the rain of arrows, that were imbued with paralyzing effects, rained down on him, the dwarf raised a staff and created a barrier that repelled the attacks that were meant to incapacitate him.

"Who are you?!" the Dwarf shouted. "What faction do you belong—guh!"

The robed man was forced to stop his questioning when Ishtar's second Piercing Arrow collided with his shield, breaking it apart. In desperation, he rolled to the ground to evade the arrow that held considerable power to threaten his life.

Unfortunately, after rolling to the side, the robed Dwarf came face to face with Diablo, who had used his Leap Attack to smash Blood Moon onto the robed Dwarf's head.

"Protection!" the Dwarf shouted as another barrier appeared in front of him. He hoped that it would be enough to block the unusual attack of the Black Knight that was wielding a red sword in his hand.

What followed next was a scream of pain that made Lux breath a sigh of relief from inside the Ant Nest.

Diablo's Heavy Slash managed to shatter the barrier, but it didn't end there. The Dwarf had used a blink spell to escape, but Diablo's Bone Spear had already materialized in the air. In one swift motion, the bone spear pierced the left arm of the robed figure, making the latter scream in pain.

Lux watched as the robe of the dwarf fell down on the ground, revealing his body.

The man's scarred face, who seemed to be in his late thirties, appeared in Lux's vision. The Dwarf's hair was tied up in a braid, and there were ear piercings on his mouth, and nose, making him look intimidating.

Fortunately, Lux was not intimidated as he ordered Diablo to engage the Dwarf and knock him unconscious.

To his surprise, the Dwarf once again blinked away, and even summoned a Fireball that sent Diablo crashing to the wall of the cavern.

"Bastards!" the Dwarf shouted as he fired Fireball after Fireball at the Skeletons, who did their best to evade.

Although his left arm was seriously injured and couldn't be used at this point in time, his tenacity gave the Skeletons a very difficult time.

'At least Grade A Apostle,' Lux thought with a grim expression on his face. 'This won't do. I need to change my tactics!'

Lux immediately gave his orders, which Diablo obeyed without fail. The Named Creature used its Leap and swung its sword at the cocoon at the center of the Cavern.

"Noooo!" the Dwarf shouted as he stopped hurling Fireballs at Ishtar and the Skeleton Grand Archers, who were using long ranged attacks against him.

Just like their leader, the Skeletal Fighters also started to hack the cocoon, using it as a shield to prevent the Wizard from firing Fireballs at him.

"Blasted Undead!" the Dwarf screamed as he tapped the butt of his staff on the ground thrice, activating a magic circle. He couldn't possibly just watch as the mission that was entrusted to him was destroyed right in front of his eyes.

The Dwarf regretted sending all, but a few Mosquitos out to look for the Skeletons. Because of what he did, the Monster Nest was left unprotected, which allowed the Skeletons to sneak up on him.

'Dammit!' the Dwarf cursed internally. 'Just one more day and everything would have gone according to plan. Why now?'

Knowing that he was left with no other alternative, the Dwarf forcefully awoke the creature that was inside the cocoon. Although it was going to be a premature birth, it was better than dying at the hands of the Skeletons who were hacking its body like crazy.

"Rise and trample these fools!" the Dwarf commanded. "Come forth! Ash Wing!"

One of the Skeletons that were hacking the cocoon was blown away when a spiny leg emerged from the cocoon. Diablo hurriedly ordered the other Skeletons to back away as they observed the Beast that was emerging from its shell.

A four meter tall, ash-colored Mosquito with golden stripes appeared in everyone's vision. Its golden eyes glowed brightly, as it glared hatefully at the Skeletons who had hurt its body. What made Lux shudder was the fact that the monster had three heads instead of one, which was something he didn't expect from the mosquito.

Although the newly born beast looked powerful, it was still in a weakened state after forcefully breaking through its shell. Its wings were quite small, perhaps due to the fact that it was born prematurely, depriving it of its ability to fly, which made the Half-Elf feel thankful.

Just as Lux was about to recover from his shock, an arrow flew to the air and pierced the monster's back, where its heart was located.

The Ash Wing screamed in pain, as it tried to move its body closer to the wall, in order to prevent it from getting hit from behind.

Diablo quickly made his move and used Heavy Slash repeatedly on one of its legs, cutting it in two. Another loud shriek echoed inside the cavern as the giant mosquito's three heads screamed in unison. It then kicked Diablo away, sending him smashing towards the cave wall in order to stop him from continuing to hack at its remaining legs.

The other Skeletal Fighters immediately retreated because they knew that a single kick from the Mosquito would be enough to kill them. Although it was still in a weakened state, the fact still remained that it was similar to a Field Boss that was in the peak stage of Rank 3.

Chapter 73: This Is Checkmate

"It's incomplete. This monster cannot be used to further our goals in the Gweliven Kingdom." The dwarf clicked his tongue in annoyance. "I shouldn't have been impatient. I should have continued to play it safe until this thing was born properly. Now, it's too late. This project has failed."

The Dwarf broke the bone spear that had pierced his arm, and poured a healing potion over it. His wounds healed up completely, but he wouldn't be able to fully use his arm for a few days. Since his plans had failed, he decided to leave and start from scratch.

As the man was about to leave, he heard a whistling sound coming from behind his back, and he was forced to roll to his right side to evade whatever it was. Grazing the side of his waist, an arrow shot past him, almost dealing a lethal injury to him had it hit its designated target, which was his heart.

"Dammit!" The Dwarf cursed as he opened another healing potion and poured its contents on his injury.

Ishtar had shot at him due to Lux's orders. The dwarf couldn't be let go yet because one of Lux's mission objectives was to collect information about the

unknown organization and pass it to the Knights of Norria. Since that was the case, he couldn't possibly allow the man to escape at all costs.

Diablo, who also received Lux's orders, leapt from the ground and aimed to deliver a fatal blow to the Dwarf who seemed to be an Apostle Grade Mage who specialized in Fire Magic.

"Barrier!" The Dwarf shouted just in time to block Diablo's Heavy Slash and prevent the latter from giving him a serious injury.

The barrier shattered, but the Dwarf was able to use his blink ability to gain distance from his attacker. Just as he was about to cast a fireball at the skeleton in front of him, several whistling sounds reached his ears, which prevented him from doing what he wanted.

The Dwarf slammed the butt of his staff against the ground, which created a powerful shockwave that repelled the arrows that Ishtar had shot in his direction.

Right now, the Skeleton Grand Archers, and the Skeleton Warriors were keeping the Ash Wing's attention, allowing Diablo and Ishtar to work in tandem to defeat the Dwarf Mage, who was responsible for overturning the balance inside the Figaro Gardens.

Ten minutes passed as Diablo and Ishtar fought together against the Dwarf, whom Lux had determined to be at least a Grade B Apostle (Rank 3 Monster). The Dwarf was hard pressed in dealing with the deadly long range and short range attacks that were forcing him to use all of his abilities to their fullest.

Meanwhile, the Ash Wing was being attacked by the hit and run tactics by the Skeleton Fighters, constantly being pummeled by volleys of long range attacks, and gradually increasing the injuries that it had received in total. After fighting against the Abomination, Lux realized that aside from its strength and size, the Ash Wing didn't know how to fight.

Simply put, it just uses its legs to deliver blows that could be avoided as long as one paid attention to its movements. Just as the dwarf had mentioned, the Beast was a failed project because it was born prematurely.

None of its deadly weapons were fully developed. The Ash Wing was just an oversized meat shield in a nutshell, which made Lux breathe a sigh of relief.

However, although its attacks were very basic, the fact still remained that a single blow from it would be enough to annihilate the Skeletons that were running around it.

After being locked in a deadly battle with Diablo and Ishtar, the Dwarf Mage was finally able to take a breather when he successfully blew Diablo away with a fireball that was fired at point blank range.

The Dwarf immediately used this opportunity to blink away from the battlefield, and he succeeded. He was quite familiar with the terrain of the Monster Nest and had already created several paths of escape to be used once the project had successfully been completed.

His clothes were drenched in blood because the battle had truly been intense. Even so, he just kept on running while pouring Health Potions over his body. Everytime the duration of the skill, Blink, became available, he would blink away again.

This caused his mana to drop at a rapid rate, but he didn't care. Right now, his priority was to escape the Figaro Garden and report his findings to their organization.

Suddenly, something unexpected happened.

Right after he blinked to a location, the ground underneath his feet exploded. The Dwarf found his left arm being pierced through by a sword, which made him scream in pain.

Lux was riding on top of a Silver Ant, and he used the momentum of its charge to impale the dwarf who was the ringleader of everything. However, his attack was not over yet.

"Mana Drain!" Lux shouted as he grabbed hold of the Dwarf's left arm, which he had pierced with his sword.

Mana Drain was a range spell that absorbed 2% of the target's maximum mana for five seconds. Lux knew that his current stats were not strong enough to fight against the enemy, so he decided to use the only thing that he could do and that was to prevent him from using magic.

The Dwarf panicked as he felt his remaining mana be taken away from him. As a Mage, all of his attacks relied on Mana. His mana was already dangerously low, and now even that was being taken away from him.

"Who are you?!" the Dwarf screamed in anger as he tried to break free from Lux's firm hold. "Why are you getting in our way?!"

Lux didn't bother to answer the dwarf's question, as he pulled his sword out of the Dwarf's arm so he could stab his enemy's chest. Unfortunately, the dwarf was stronger than him, so the latter managed to kick Lux away the moment he pulled the sword that was piercing his arm out.

After escaping from Lux's grasp, the Dwarf ran away, only to be pinned down by the Silver Ant that Lux was using as a mount.

The name of the Ant was the Speedy Silver Ant and, just as the name suggested, it was the fastest ant in the Ant Colony. Lux had asked for its help in order to reach the Nest as soon as possible, to help his Summons deal with the situation.

The duration of the mission was only an hour, so the Half-Elf decided to go to the site, and personally handle the matter in order to clear his mission.

"Annoying Ant!" the dwarf roared in anger. "Fire Bullet!"

The Silver Ant screamed after it was hit by the magical attack, which allowed the Mage to use his Blink Skill to distance himself from the Rank 1 Monster, whose only merit was its fast running speed.

This time around, the Dwarf had been drained completely of his mana reserves. However, just like everyone in his organization, he had brought several potions with him, and two of them were mana potions.

Unfortunately, just as he was about to drink one of them, the bottle he was holding in his hand shattered when an arrow passed through it.

A second later, his chest was impaled by a bone spear, which pinned him to a nearby tree. The Dwarf spat a mouthful of blood as he looked in disbelief at the enemies that had appeared in front of him.

"I knew that the Hunter's Mark is indispensable when hunting prey," Lux stated as he walked towards the Dwarf who was barely clinging onto life. "I

just didn't know that the first thing I would be hunting was not a beast, but a Dwarf. Sorry, Mr. Dwarf. This is checkmate."

Lux raised his hand and sneered at the slippery Dwarf who always used his Blink Skill to escape the battle. "Mana Drain!"

The Dwarf spat a mouthful of blood before his entire body stiffened. For magicians, and other spell casters, being deprived of mana was the same as being deprived of their health. When a magician loses all of his mana, and goes into a deficit, their whole body enters a state of shock, which knocks them unconscious.

When they entered this state, they wouldn't be able to regenerate mana for 24 hours, and their bodies would enter a weakened state, making it impossible for them to cast spells. Diablo pulled the Bone Spear embedded on the dwarf's chest out, which made the latter fall to the ground.

Lux poured just a bit of healing potion on the bloody hole to close it up. The Half-Elf had no intention of healing his enemy, he just wanted to keep him alive until he handed him personally to the Riders of Norria who were stationed in Leaf Village.

The Half-Elf rummaged through the Dwarf's belongings and took everything of value from his body. Storage rings, storage bags, his staff, and other miscellaneous items. He had no time to inspect them all because the battle was not over.

For the time being, he stored all of these items in his inventory for safekeeping.

The red-headed teenager then took ropes out from his storage ring and tied the Dwarf up properly and tight in order to prevent him from escaping. Just to be on the safe side, he had Ishtar cast another Hunter's Mark on the Dwarf as insurance, if he happened to wake up before they finished dealing with the Abomination.

"Speedy, can you take him to your nest for the time being?" Lux asked the Silver Ant that had brought him to the battlefield.

Speedy clicked its mandibles and nodded its head before picking up the Dwarf on the ground. He then carried him towards the hole that he had made earlier, and disappeared from Lux's sight.

The Half-Elf finally breathed a sigh of relief as he stared at Diablo and Ishtar who stood a few meters away from him.

"Let's go," Lux ordered. "There's one last pest remaining."

Lux ran towards the entrance of the Nest along with Diablo and Ishtar. Now that the ringleader was defeated, all they needed to do was whittle the Ash Wing's health away, and put an end to the Abomination that threatened the lives of everyone inside the Figaro Gardens.

Chapter 74: Mission Completion

A blood curdling screech reverberated across the Monster Nest as the Ash Wing Mosquito went berserk. This was its last resort to kill Lux and his skeletons that had backed it into a corner.

Lux panted as he distanced himself from the monster who was nearing its end. Although his health and mana was still full, the mental exhaustion he received from fighting the Dwarf and commanding his Skeletons piled up and took a toll on his body.

Diablo and the Skeleton Fighters had died plenty of times because Lux had ordered them to do suicide attacks, with the intention of cutting off the monster's legs, to prevent it from moving around.

In the end, they succeeded, and only one leg remained on the Diabolical Beast's body. And even though it had entered a berserked state, the only thing it could do was glare at Lux and his skeletons while helplessly accepting their beating.

The red-headed teenager did his best to calm his breathing as he stared at the dying monster in front of him. He was quite thankful that the Dwarf had been forced to make the monster be born prematurely, which rendered all of its fighting abilities incomplete.

Without wings to fly, it was no different from a stationary target that the Skeletons, whom the Half-Elf could summon over and over again, could beat up.

Five minutes later, the crimson eyes of the three headed Abomination, which glared hatefully at them, eventually lost their luster and turned dim. The Abomination's body collapsed on the ground, dead.

Lux didn't move from his spot until he heard the notification which said that his mission had successfully been completed. Several words appeared in front of him, congratulating him on his victory against the Diabolical Monster.

< Birth Of An Abomination >

Mission Rating: S

(COMPLETED!)

< Rewards >

100 Free Stat Points

100 Skill Points

100 Body Constitution Points

500 Elysium Gold Coins

500 Riders of Norria Reputation Points

100 Kingdom Reputation Points (Exclusive to the Kingdom of Gweliven)

2000 Leaf Village Reputation Points.

< Bonus Reward. >

Choose one among these options.

< Option 1: Hell Horse >

– A hellish creature known for its cruelty as it terrorizes its victims until they draw their last breath. They are found in places where the miasma is thick, or in ancient battlefields where they are known to spawn from the malevolent stench of death that lingers after the lives of thousands have been claimed.

– This monster's rank would always be equivalent to the rank of its Master.

< Option 2: Golden Token of Gweliven >

– This token is one of the thirteen tokens that the founder of the Gweliven Kingdom had made when he was crowned King of the Dwarves' lands. After several years had passed, these tokens changed owners many times before disappearing over the course of history.

– It is said that if you present this Token to the reigning King of the Kingdom, you will be given the title of "Honorary Knight", which would give you certain benefits within the Dwarf Kingdom.

< Option 3: Monster Egg >

– An unknown monster egg, which you can hatch at the nearest bestiary near you.

– Depending on your luck, the Monsters that could be born from the egg can be Common Monsters, Rare Monsters, Unique Monsters, Mythical Monsters, or Legendary Monsters.

< Option 4: Teleport Scroll 4 Pieces. >

– This scroll will directly send you to any places that you have visited, regardless of the restrictions that were set in place.

– For example, if you have become an Apostle or a High Ranker and you wish to return to the Leaf Village, using this scroll will allow you to return without suffering any backlash from the restrictions.

– If you want to bully children, this is the perfect item to satisfy your sadistic desires.

Lux whistled after seeing the list of Bonus Rewards that he could choose from after completing the mission. Although each option was good and picking one of them now was tempting, the Half-Elf decided to set it aside for now because he was still not safe from danger.

The first thing Lux did was to take the Beast Core out from the dead Monster's body, before storing the body inside his Enchanted Beast Ring, which was capable of storing the corpses of any monster regardless of their size.

After safely storing his prize, Lux hurriedly ran towards the hole that his friend, Speedy, had made. Surprisingly, the Silver Ant was still by the time he arrived, as if waiting to carry the Half-Elf for the return trip back inside their Ant Nest.

Lux didn't hesitate and mounted the Silver Ant's back, which was almost a meter and a half tall. Just as Speedy entered the underground tunnel that it had temporarily made along the way, the red-headed teenager heard the buzzing sounds of thousands of wings.

The Half-Elf breathed a sigh of relief at the thought of their very timely escape out of the monster nest. Even though Diablo, Ishtar, and the rest of his Skeletons were strong, they were still not a match against the thousands of Mosquitoes that had been looking for them for several hours in the Figaro Gardens.

Several hours later inside Leaf Village...

"Are you sure about this?" the Village Head of Leaf Village, Cedwyn, asked.

"Yes," Lux replied. "If not, I wouldn't have asked Master Randolph to call all of you out in the middle of the night."

Cedwyn's eyes narrowed as he looked down at the tied-up dwarf who was laying on the floor. The Elders of the village, as well as Boreas, the Captain of the Riders of Norria who were stationed in the village, were also present in the scene.

All the Dwarves had grim expressions on their faces as they gazed at the unconscious man.

"Do you have any other proof?" Boreas asked. "Cedwyn has already passed the documents to me, but this can be forged easily. Don't get me wrong. It's not that I'm doubting you. But for something major like this, I need more concrete proof before I can report this to my superior."

Lux nodded his head in understanding. "I have proof, but it will not fit this place. Let's go outside."

The Half-Elf didn't wait for the Dwarf's reply before leaving the room.

Boreas signaled for two of his men to watch the unconscious Dwarf before following behind Lux. Cedwyn, Randolph, and the other Elders of the village also followed the red-headed teenager outside the house.

They were very curious about what kind of proof Lux would present to them, so that they would be convinced that he was telling them the truth.

Only Randolph, who was Lux's Blacksmith Master, had a smug smile on his face. He had already seen the Ash Wing, which had given him a fright. He and Lux were confident that after everyone had seen the corpse of the Beast, they would understand that Leaf Village had survived a close call due to Lux's intervention.

Chapter 75: I'm Just Happy To Help

"Dear Goddess..."

Cedwyn muttered as he stared at the three-headed Abomination whose body Lux had summoned behind the Village Chief's residence.

This was the first time Cedwyn had seen such a creature in his life, and he was sure that this was not a natural born monster. The only explanation for its existence was that it was artificially bred from an experiment which forced it to mutate and turn into the horrific creature they were looking at.

Boreas circled the beast and appraised its entire body. After inspecting it for a few minutes, he glanced at Lux as he gave his verdict.

"Rank 3 Alpha Beast," Boreas declared. "How did you kill it?"

With a glance, the Captain of the Riders of Norria, who was often stationed in leaf village, could tell that if the creature stood on its legs, it would be four-meters tall at the bare minimum. Just thinking about a Mosquito with a size as big as this was enough to make everyone's hearts tremble.

"Take a good look at its wings," Lux replied.

He had already prepared a story about his confrontation with the monster, in order to make it sound that he just got lucky with the encounter.

"As you can see, its wings were undeveloped, so it was incapable of flight," Lux explained. "I attacked it while it was still inside its cocoon, so it was helpless under my assault. I hacked it over and over until it died. After that, I hurriedly left the scene and returned here to the village."

Boreas frowned. As someone who had fought powerful monsters in the past, this was not his first time seeing such a high-tiered creature. What concerned him was that Lux wasn't strong enough to defeat this monster on his own.

He had been there when the Half-Elf had been carried to the make-shift infirmary site that the Dwarves of Leaf Village had made after the monster outbreak of the Undead Army.

Back then, Lux was unable to defeat even a Rank 1 Monster. The Abomination in front of him was an Alpha Beast, which Boreas assumed to be at least a Rank 3 Monster. In simpler terms, it was extremely powerful. Even though he believed that Lux was just lucky and killed the beast while it was inside its cocoon, that couldn't explain how he managed to capture the Dwarf Mage that was inside the Monster Nest as well.

Only a fool would dare to raid a Monster Nest alone, because anyone would know that doing so was suicide. Boreas decided to just wait until he had time to talk with the Commander of Norria, who was currently in their Stronghold.

"Very well, I will interrogate the Dwarf Mage and get into the bottom of this mess," Boreas said after much contemplation. "However, I will need to bring this monster to our Stronghold, so that our specialists can study its body. Perhaps, we will be able to better understand how this Abomination was made."

Lux nodded in understanding. In truth, he didn't know what to do with the Giant Mosquito because even his Master, Randolph, said that its parts weren't good enough as a material to forge weapons and armor.

At most, the alchemists could use its body parts and organs as ingredients to concoct potions and other miscellaneous items that might be useful to him in the future.

"What about the Beast Core?" Boreas asked. "Did you take it?"

"Of course," Lux replied. "Afterall, it was my kill."

Boreas nodded. Although it was regrettable that they wouldn't be able to study the Beast Core, as the one who killed the beast, it was Lux's right to take possession of it. Giving them the whole corpse was already a generous move on the Half-Elf's part, so Boreas didn't ask for more.

"I expect that the Riders of Norria will give some rewards to Lux as well," Randolph, the Half-Elf's Blacksmith Master said. "If he hadn't stopped this organization's plans then this territory might have been compromised completely. Tell that to your Commander as well."

Boreas sighed and reluctantly nodded his head. He couldn't refute Randolph's words because it was the truth. He believed that if the Monster was born properly and had the time to grow to its fullest, the possibility of it reaching Rank 5 was very high.

A Rank 5 Alpha Beast in the Beginner's area was completely unheard of. The damage the Monster and its lackeys could have brought to the population of Norria would have definitely been astounding.

It might have been able to force the Dwarves to leave the Village just to escape from the calamity that was about to befall them.

"I will make sure to report your good deed to my Commander," Boreas said as he looked at Lux. "You have done the Kingdom a great service."

"I'm just happy to help," Lux replied. "However, the problem in the Figaro Gardens still persists. If possible, the Riders of Norria should still perform an extermination to ensure that such a beast can't be born again."

"Understood. I will request for more reinforcements from our Stronghold." Boreas promised. "I'll be taking my leave so we can make the necessary preparations."

After saying his parting words, Boreas gave a brief nod to Cedwyn before heading to the makeshift barracks where his subordinates were staying. This was an important event, and the sooner he reported it to his Commander, the sooner it would be taken care of.

Lux sighed in relief because Boreas didn't ask him anything else. Right now, the only thing he wanted was to go back to his room in the inn and get some rest. The battle in the Figaro Garden had drained him physically and mentally.

Seeing his exhausted expression, Cedwyn announced that the meeting was adjourned and once again thanked Lux for the meritorious service that he had made to their village. Because of this, he decided to reward the other party at a later day, after he had discussed this matter in full with the other Elders of the village.

After bidding his goodbye to Cedwyn, the Elders and, Lux's Master, Randolph, Lux finally got to go back to the inn where he, upon entering the room, collapsed on the bed. He didn't even bother changing his clothes, and simply laid on top of the bed after removing his shoes.

He had accomplished his main goal of going to the Figaro Gardens. As for the mosquito swarm, he would just leave the rest of it in the hands of the Riders of Norria.

As the Half-Elf slept a dreamless sleep, Cedwyn and the Elders continued their discussion about Lux's rewards.

Randolph made sure that the other Elders weren't too stingy with their proposed rewards, which made Grandma Annie, the old lady Dwarf who had a close relationship with Lux, smile.

She didn't expect that the Half-Elf, who had appeared in their small village several weeks ago, would become a promising individual that would catch everyone's eyes.

Chapter 76: Colette The Matchmaker

Lux scratched his head in confusion as he walked towards the East Gate of Leaf Village.

After waking up and leaving his room, he realized that there was a sudden change in the way the Dwarves of Leaf Village look at him.

Ever since he helped them defend Leaf Village during the Monster Outbreak, the Dwarves stopped distancing themselves from him and even treated him

civilly during his stay. However, it was different as to how they were being extra friendly now, which made the Half-Elf wonder if he had woken up on the wrong side of the bed.

The Tavern Owner even gave him two additional eggs when he ordered his usual order for breakfast, bacon and eggs. The middle-aged Dwarf insisted that it was in the house, and didn't ask Lux to pay for the extra.

The people in the tavern would also give him a brief smile whenever he met their gaze, which made Lux wonder if they were pranking him or something. This series of unexpected changes followed the Half-Elf as he walked towards the East Gate to meet with Colette and the others.

Everyone was looking at him in a kind and friendly manner, which made him pinch himself several times to ensure that he wasn't still dreaming.

"You're finally here, Big Brother!" Colette said as she ran and jumped into Lux's arms, which, as usual, made Matty shoot daggers using his eyes to the Half-Elf, who hurriedly opened his arms to catch the lively-little-cannonball that jumped at him so early in the morning.

"Have you been good while I wasn't around?" Lux asked after successfully catching the giggling little Dwarf.

"Un!" Colette replied. "Yesterday we defeated a Berserked Horned Rabbit with just the five of us!"

"Wow. That's amazing!"

"Right?!"

Lux chuckled as he patted Colette's head. A Berserked Horned Rabbit was a Rank 2 Monster, which could be found near the center of the Aspiration Plains where the Carbuncle resided. He guessed that the Goldenslayer Party, headed by Colette, was preparing for their inevitable battle with the Carbuncle.

The Half-Elf had assumed that they had already consumed Beast Cores that were given to them by their parents in order to boost their ranks. Lux had a feeling that the little Dwarves, who had accepted him as one of their party members, were nearing the Apostle Rank.

'Soon, they will be leaving this place behind,' Lux thought with a sigh as he gazed at the Dwarves who were looking at him with happy expressions, with the exception of Matty, who was looking at him with envy and jealousy.

'I feel sorry for this hen-pecked shrimp.' Lux chuckled internally as he flashed a smug smile to Matty, which made the latter give him the middle finger.

"How did the fight against the Berserked Horned Rabbit end?" Lux asked.

"It took us fifteen minutes to defeat it," Colette reported. "It was very fast and very strong. According to the information we gathered, the Carbuncle is always accompanied by two of them. This is the reason we decided to familiarize ourselves with its attack patterns."

"That is a very good plan," Lux nodded in agreement.

Knowing the fight patterns of the Monsters you would be fighting against would greatly increase the probability of defeating them. This was especially true for strong Monsters like the Carbuncle, which was the Aspiration Plain's Alpha Monster.

"You better pay attention when we fight the Berserked-Horned Rabbit later," Matty snorted. "That Monster is a meter tall and packs a punch. You don't want its horn stuck into your butt, right, Big Brother?"

Matty's words didn't hide his wish for Lux to suffer from a butt-attack from the Rank 2 monster who was known for its speed and short temper.

"You should worry about yourself," Lux replied. "A mere Berserked-Horned Rabbit is no match against me. I even fought against an Alpha Monster..."

"Alone?" Colette asked as she looked at Lux with sparkling eyes.

Lux shook his head. "No. It was fourteen against one."

Colette, Matty, and the rest of the Golden Slayers party, looked at Lux with a weird expression on their faces. While the adorable blonde-haired Colette didn't say anything, Matty used this opportunity to bring Lux down a peg.

"What? Fourteen against one?" Matty asked with an amused expression on his face. "Aren't you ashamed, Big Brother? Even the Dwarf Parties here in the Beginner's Zone only fight Alpha Beasts with up to seven members. You

on the other hand fought them with twice the number? That's not something to be proud of!"

Colette and Helen, the two girls of the party, giggled as they looked at Lux's proud expression. What Matty said was true, and there was no sense of achievement in fighting an Alpha Beast with twice the number of regular party members.

Although there was nothing fundamentally wrong with this strategy, many Dwarves looked down on this practice because they would not feel any satisfaction from this.

They preferred to fight Alpha Monsters with a single party, in order to prove that party's overall strength.

Lux just shrugged Matty's words because for him, fighting a monster one-on-one, or fighting it in a group was not a big deal. Since he was a necromancer, it would be a great waste if he didn't bring his Skeletons to fight alongside him.

"Where is Robin?" Lux asked. After scanning his partymates, he found out that the boy, whom the Riders of Norria had been very keen to rescue, wasn't around.

"Robin is handling some family matters, and will be away for some time," Colette replied. "He said that he will return once he is able to and told us not to wait for him."

"Robin comes and goes as he pleases," Helen commented as she walked towards Lux. "He's a free spirited boy and is only a temporary member of our party."

Lux nodded his head in understanding. Until now, he had been wondering about Robin's real identity. For the latter to be treated so highly by the Riders of Norria, that could only mean that the Dwarf boy was not an ordinary person.

"Let's go, Big Brother." Colette smiled as she held onto Lux's right arm and dragged him towards the gate. "We'll hunt for the Carbuncle and try to defeat it. I'm sure that if all of us worked together, we will emerge victorious! Oh, before I forget, do you want to marry my Big Sister? I talked to my father about it when I returned, and he said that he would love to meet you and go fishing with you."

The corner of Lux's lips twitched when he heard Colette's innocent words. Deep inside, he knew that Colette's father didn't want to go fishing with him. The Half-Elf had a feeling that if he really were to meet Colette's father, whichever fishing area it was, the latter would definitely feed him to the fishes if he ever played along with Colette's wishes and asked Colette's sister for her hand in marriage.

"Colette, why are you so intent on making me your Big Sister's fiance?" Lux asked as they passed through the gate.

The little blonde Dwarf was humming a tune before she turned her head to look up at Lux.

"Isn't it obvious? I want Big Brother to be part of my family."

"Um, that is what is bothering me. Why do you want me to be part of your family?"

Colette gave Lux a mischievous smile before replying to his question.

"Because, Big Sister once told me that she didn't plan on getting married," Colette answered. "When I pressed her for answers, she said that there was no Dwarf that had caught her attention. Since no Dwarves can satisfy her, I thought that you might be able to do that. After all, Big Brother is not a Dwarf, right?"

Lux didn't know if he should laugh or cry at Colette's innocent words. He found the reasoning silly, but coming from Colette, he thought that it was very likely of her to come up with such a conclusion.

'I'm sure that your sister just said that she didn't plan to marry in order to pursue her goals here in Elysium,' Lux thought as he walked hand in hand with Colette who had started to hum a song.

For the little girl, her sister was her idol. Her sister was one of the Prodigies of their country, and she was simply perfect. Many noble families in Solais and Elysium had tried to play matchmaker in order to form a strong connection with her, but all of them were politely rejected by her.

Aina, who was Colette's older sister, had a grand goal in life and, for that to happen, she had to expand her influence in Elysium to simultaneously build the foundation of her dream.

Colette was not aware of her sister's circumstance, so she was doing her best to play matchmaker for Lux and Aina.

After being rescued by Lux in the Kobold's Nest, her respect and admiration for the Half-Elf had grown in leaps and bounds.

Colette wasn't aware that the more she talked about Lux to the members of her family, the more her father wished that he could go to the Beginner Zone and hack Lux to pieces. Fortunately, he couldn't do that because of the rules that bound the world of Elysium.

As the Dwarves and the Half-Elf headed towards the center of the Aspiration Plains, a purple-skinned menace with red eyes and a red jewel on its head, opened its eyes.

It let out a soft cry, and four Berserked Horned Rabbits ran to its side. It was now time for it to hunt, and everyone in the Aspiration Plains was its prey, ready for the taking.

Chapter 77.1: Alpha Monster of the Aspiration Plains [Part 1]

As they traveled towards their destination, Lux pondered which among the four options that he obtained from his Bonus Reward was the most ideal choice. He must choose the one that would give him the most benefits.

Hell Horse

Golden Token of Gweliven

Monster Egg

Teleport Scroll 4 pcs

In truth, if he wanted an immediate upgrade, the Hell Horse was the most ideal option. Not only would it allow Diablo's Skeleton Rider Class to show its full potential, the mount would also grow along with its rider.

For example, if someday, Diablo became a High-Ranker, the Hell Horse would also become a High-Ranker, Lux would automatically have two powerful creatures under his command.

The Golden Token of Gweliven might have useful functions, but it was only effective within the Dwarven Kingdom.

The egg was either a hit or miss. Lux might gain a decent monster or an extremely good monster after hatching. Unfortunately, the Half-Elf didn't trust his luck too much, and he wasn't confident enough to choose the egg and hatch it.

As for the Teleport Scroll, Lux believed that it would be extremely useful in the future after he left the Beginner's Village. It could be used as a life saving item if he had to escape from a dangerous situation. The teleport scroll had different functions depending on the situation, which made it a very valuable item to possess.

'Fortunately, choosing a reward doesn't have a time limit,' Lux thought. 'For the time being, I'll keep it on hold and decide when something unexpected happens. I don't need to hurry.'

Lux knew that his current strength was enough to deal with anything in the Leaf Village, as long as he didn't do anything stupid like challenge the Field Boss, which was the Forest Wolf King.

The Half-Elf glanced at the Dwarves, who were seated with him, in the horse wagon, which they had rented back at the village. In the front, Matty was tasked to be the coachman, while the rest were assigned to scan the surroundings.

The children were being extra alert because of what happened with the Kobolds during their escort mission. All of them were holding their weapons at the ready, prepared to react instantly at the first sign of danger.

Even Helen, the group's cleric, had a serious expression on her face as she observed her surroundings with a critical eye. When Lux saw that, it made him

smile. Most of the time, he would almost forget that they were just children because of how strong-willed they were.

"Two Berserked Horned Rabbits at eight o'clock!!" Colette shouted.

Everyone immediately looked in the direction where the little blonde Dwarf was pointing. Two red Rabbits that were a meter tall were running in their direction. They were Rank 2 Monsters that were known for their speed and their aggressive attitude towards those that had entered their territory.

"Battle Formation!" Colette shouted as she jumped off the horse wagon, holding the mace in her hands. Matty stood beside her, while Andy, Axel, and Helen were in the rear.

Colette's profession was a Paladin. She was a hybrid offensive warrior that excelled in close combat, could use magic, and tank enemies if needed be.

As the leader of the group, she was always on the front line alongside Matty, who was a pure offensive fighter.

Lux also stood beside the two children as he raised his hand and summoned Diablo and Ishtar. It had been a while since he had fought side-by-side with his friends, so he was wondering how much they had improved during the time they weren't together.

"I'll handle one of the Berserked Horned Rabbit," Lux said. "The rest of you deal with the other one."

"Okay, Big Brother!" Colette agreed as she braced herself to collide with the horned rabbit whose horn was poised to strike her.

The sound of metal hitting a hard object reverberated in the surroundings as Colette and the Horned Rabbit clashed. The little girl's feet skidded across the ground by a meter, but her stance didn't break as she stopped the Berserked Horned Rabbit's charge.

Matty took this opportunity to deliver two powerful slashes to the Horned Rabbit's right leg making it cry out in pain.

"Fire Bullet!"

"Water Bullet!"

Andy and Axel fired their respective spells which landed on the Berserked Horned Rabbit's body, pushing it back.

Diablo on the other hand, smashed his shield against the Berserked Horned Rabbit's head, stunning it before delivering a Heavy Slash on the side of its body.

Ishtar, on the other hand, used Siege Stance, and fired a piercing arrow into the Berserked Horned Rabbit's leg, crippling it.

Diablo used this opportunity to strike the Monster's other foot, preventing it from running away. The Horned Rabbit's main weapons were its powerful legs as well as the horn on its head, both which were often used to attack its enemies with a charging attack. As long as its legs were immobilized, it would effectively lose more than seventy percent of its combat abilities.

Diablo was no longer ignorant of the ways of battle after he had fought in the Undead Outbreak, then against the Kobolds, the Mosquitoes, and the Dwarf Mage, which they had recently defeated. As a Named Creature, its intelligence was quite high. With each battle it fought, its Tactical Ability grew more and more.

Diablo and Ishtar worked together in order to kill the incapacitated monster, which they did with relative ease. Lux didn't do anything and simply stood still, while he observed the battle of his friends.

Matty had also attacked the legs of the Berserked Horned Rabbit after the initial clash, with practiced movements.

Colette, on the other hand, used her mace to give the horned rabbit an uppercut, which made Lux subconsciously massage his jaw due to the imaginary second-hand pain that he had felt.

"Fire Lance!"

"Water Lance!"

Andy's and Axel's attacks pierced the Monster's chest, making it screech in pain and frustration. With just a glance, Lux could see that the kids were also just a few points away from reaching the Apostle Rank. Their current performance reflected this.

'So, this is why you want to fight Carbuncle,' Lux thought. 'You guys are about to graduate, and are planning to fight against the Alpha Monsters of the Beginner's Village as proof of your strength and courage.'

Lux felt a little sad at the knowledge that his friends would be leaving Leaf Village soon. The Half-Elf guessed that due to the Kobold Incident, the parents of his friends decided to give them Beast Cores, in order to help them break through to the Apostle Rank.

'Ah, if I remember correctly, Colette's Big Sister is also an Apostle,' Lux mused. 'Maybe Colette's parents want her to babysit her little sister and keep her safe.'

Although he felt a little sad knowing that the children were preparing for their graduation in the Beginner's Village, he was also very happy for them.

A few minutes later, the two Berserked Rabbits were dead, and the Goldenslayers Party rejoiced for their easy win.

"Big Brother, how did Mr. Diablo become so strong?" Colette asked as she patted one of Diablo's legs, which was covered with black armor.

Diablo must have been amused by the little girl who was patting him all over, so he patted her head and even playfully ruffled Colette's hair, which made her giggle.

"This is the first time I've seen this skeleton," Matty said as he pointed at Ishtar who was looking at Colette's and Diablo's interaction with a curious gaze. "Is he your new Summon, Lux?"

"Yes," Lux replied. "Her name is Ishtar, and she is a Skeleton Hunter."

"Skeleton hunter? First time I've heard of it." Matty crossed his arms over his chest as he pondered. "I only know about Skeleton Archers. This Skeleton Hunter doesn't ring a bell."

Andy and Axel used their own Enchanted Beast Rings to store the corpse of the two Monsters, which they would bring back to Leaf Village to sell after they finished their goal in coming to the Aspiration Plains.

"You can think of her as a more powerful version of a Skeleton Archer," Lux explained. He was about to say more when he suddenly heard a screech coming from behind them.

A two-meter tall, purple Monster with a red jewel on its forehead charged in their direction. Lux's expression turned grim when he saw that the Monster wasn't alone. Running alongside it were four Berserked Horned Rabbits, whose red eyes glowed with fury.

"Everyone brace yourselves!" Colette shouted as she stood in front of her party members. "That is a Mutated Carbuncle! It's stronger than the normal Carbuncle, and its strength is equivalent to a peak Rank 3 Alpha Monster!"

Lux frowned because this was the first time he heard the term "Mutated" and it made him wonder if there was something special about this Monster that was now headed in their direction.

Chapter 78.2: Alpha Monster of the Aspiration Plains [Part 2]

The red jewel on the Mutated Carbuncle's head glowed brightly, signifying its increase in movement speed as well as the increase in speed of the Berserked Horned Rabbits with it.

Lux already knew that the Carbuncle was more of a support type monster, rather than an offensive one. Just like the Berserked Horned Rabbits, the Carbuncle was only supposed to be a meter tall.

However, the one that they were facing right now was at least two-meters tall, which was why Colette called it a mutated monster.

Lux didn't have time to open the Elysium Compendium and check what that 'mutated' meant, but he didn't have to be a genius to understand that it was a stronger version of the original monster.

'I just hope that it is still a support focused monst—'

Lux was unable to finish his thought because the carbuncle opened its mouth and released a barrage of sparkling golden diamonds, all of which were the size of fingernails.

"Skeleton fighters!" Lux summoned his Skeletons, which stood in front of the Dwarves and used their shields to block the unexpected magical attack from the mutated Alpha Beast.

When the dazzling attack receded, a third of the Skeletal Fighters' health was lost, which made Lux's face turn serious. However, before he could even think of a way to counter the Carbuncle's offensive, the four Berserked Horned Rabbits had already closed the distance, and rammed their horns on the Skeleton Fighters' shields, which sent them flying away.

Fortunately, although Colette and the others were young, they were not helpless little kids.

After the Skeleton Fighters were blown away, Colette, Matty, Diablo, and Ishtar all used their strongest skills to attack the legs of the Berserked Horned Rabbits, in order to lower their mobility.

The attacks successfully connected, which gave them the ideal results they were aiming for, but, before any of them could celebrate, the red jewel on the Carbuncle's forehead glowed once again.

A green light enveloped the Berserked Horned Rabbits, and the injuries that they had received got healed, allowing them to evade the follow up attacks of Colette and the others.

Lux summoned his Skeleton Grand Archers in order to deal range damage to the Carbuncle who stood behind all of his minions.

The Alpha Beast deftly evaded the rain of arrows that was aimed at it with its incredible speed. No matter what kind of attack was fired at it, the Carbuncle dodged it without fail, which made things difficult for Lux and the others.

There were times when they were able to seriously injure the Berserked Horned Rabbits, but because of the Carbuncle's healing abilities, the injuries the monsters received recovered at a rapid pace.

"This is not going anywhere, Big Brother!" Colette said as she smashed her mace on the head of the Berserked Horned Rabbit that had attacked Matty, who stood beside her. "We need to deal with the Mutated Carbuncle first!"

"Got it! Diablo, Ishtar, let's deal with that Alpha Beast first!" Lux ordered before activating his Battle Cry, which raised the physical and magical attacks of his allies.

He then ordered his Skeleton Fighters and Skeleton Grand Archers to assist Colette and the others in dealing with the Alpha Beast's minions.

The Skeleton Fighters, as well as the Skeleton Archers, were at the peak of Rank 1 Monsters. The Berserked Horned Rabbits might be stronger than them, but the gap between the two parties wasn't that wide.

The Dwarves were surprised when they realized how strong Lux's summoned Skeletons were. It hadn't been long since they fought against the Dark Draugr in the Bronze Crypt and came out victorious.

Because of that, they thought that if they added Lux and Diablo to their party, they would be able to fight the Carbuncle if all of them worked together. Never in their wildest dreams did they think that one of Lux's Skeleton Fighters were just as strong as them!

'Unbelievable,' Colette thought. 'Big Brother is really amazing!'

Matty who was fighting alongside Colette had also noticed the strength of the Skeletons fighting by his side and was dumbfounded.

'Just how did he get this strong in such a short period of time?' Matty couldn't believe what he was seeing. Although he knew that Lux had been rewarded with several Beast Cores by their families, it wasn't enough to create this many powerful Summons at the get go.

Without the help of the Carbuncle, the Berserked Horned Rabbits were slowly losing their ground in the head-on confrontation.

"I feel more powerful!" Axel gasped when the effects of the Battle Cry affected him.

Axel nodded as he fired spell after spell at the Berserked Horned Rabbit that was being pinned down by Lux's skeleton fighters.

"We can win this!" Helen chanted as she cast her own support spells to help her teammates become stronger.

The battle was quite intense, with neither side wanting to back down. The Mutated Carbuncle was fighting a three against one battle, while his minions were fighting four against sixteen.

Seeing that its minions' health had already fallen past fifty percent, the Carbuncle decided to use its healing ability to restore their health. However, Lux and Diablo were waiting for this exact moment.

Diablo pointed his sword at the Mutated Carbuncle and activated his special skill Duel [EX], which forced his enemies to exchange one blow with him.

It was similar to a taunting skill, but the difference between the two skills was that the Taunt Skill could be resisted, while the Duel [EX] couldn't. With an effective range of three hundred meters, Diablo could practically taunt anything that he had set his eyes on.

Although the skill had a one minute cooldown, it was still a very useful ability to break the enemy's momentum.

After executing the skill, the Mutated Carbuncle faced Diablo and screeched. Its healing skill was interrupted, and was now forced to charge in the Named Creature's direction.

Diablo, who was wearing his black knight armor, stood steadily in order to clash with the Alpha Beast that it had angered.

Ishtar had taken a siege stance and fired a Piercing Arrow, which flew towards the chest of the Carbuncle, making it howl in pain.

Lux extended his hand and shouted "Mana Drain" in order to deplete the Alpha Beast's mana reserves. The Half-Elf knew that this was going to become a battle of attrition, so he prioritized draining the Carbuncle's mana to stop it from being able to cast spells that would help its minions recover from the one-sided beating that they were currently suffering from.

The sword in Diablo's hand glowed briefly as he activated his skill, Heavy Slash. His sword met the Mutated Carbuncle's swiping attack. The sound of metal hitting metal spread throughout the surroundings.

Diablo's feet skidded against the ground, while the Mutated Carbuncle took two steps back after their collision.

Another arrow flew through the air and pierced Carbuncle's chest making it shriek in pain. Ishtar was a very opportunistic hunter and timed her attack at the right moment to deal significant damage to the Alpha Beast.

Lux also fired a Dark Arrow at the Mutated Carbuncle, hoping to blind it, but it failed.

It was at that moment when one of the Berserked Horned Rabbits let out a blood curdling screech before collapsing on the ground dead.

The Alpha Beast was immediately alarmed because it had completely forgotten about its minions since it was entangled by Lux and his two Named Creatures. Just as it was about to cast its healing magic on the survivors, Diablo smashed his shield against the Alpha Beast's face, interrupting its healing magic for the second time.

Lux understood that the only reason why they could overpower the Mutated Monster was because of the Carbuncle originally being only a support type monster. Among the Alpha Beasts in the Beginner's Village, it was the weakest.

To deal with it, everyone just had to kill its minions first before encircling it and hacking it to death. This was the typical strategy used when fighting against the Carbuncle, which had been proven effective over time.

Because it was unable to heal its allies due to Diablo's interference, the remaining Berserked Horned Rabbits fell one by one.

Just as everyone was about to encircle the Mutated Alpha Monster, it leapt high into the air in an attempt to run away. Diablo also used his own Leap Skill, following its enemy into the air, while Ishtar released another Piercing Arrow.

Although the sound of the whistling wind reached the Mutated Carbuncle's ears, the arrow was almost impossible to avoid while in air. Unable to evade, the arrow pierced its chest, breaking its stance. Diablo's Heavy Slash immediately followed after the arrow had struck true, smashing its back and sending it towards the ground.

The Dwarves and the Skeletons didn't miss this opportunity and ran towards the fallen Alpha Beast. However, Lux's shout made them all take a defensive

stance as the Carbuncle once again unleashed another Diamond Storm as its last resort.

Just like before, the Skeletal Fighters stood in front of the Dwarves and shielded them from the unique attack of the Mutated Beast.

When the attack ended, the Skeleton Fighters' bodies shattered because their health was already low after fighting against the Berserked Horned Rabbits. However, this wasn't a big issue.

"Arise!" Lux ordered and his Skeleton Fighters rose once again to beat the crap out of the oversized rabbit that had killed them just a moment ago.

The pitiful Alpha Monster then found itself surrounded on all sides with nowhere to go. Diablo and Ishtar had already dealt significant damage to its legs. However, its ability to heal itself was getting annoying.

To deal with this, Lux used Mana Drain every time the Skill's cooldown ended. After a grueling thirty minutes, the Mutated Alpha Monster finally fell, transforming into particles of light.

It left several items on the ground, including an egg that was two-feet tall, which made Colette jump up and down due to happiness.

Chapter 79: Special Quest Rewards

Colette and the other Dwarves flocked to the items that were dropped by the Mutated Carbuncle.

The monster egg stood at the center of it all, catching everyone's attention.

"This egg is without a doubt a Carbuncle's egg," Colette said with sparkling eyes. She then began to gently touch the egg as if it was a priceless treasure that she had seen for the very first time.

Helen also touched the egg just like Colette. This was the first time she had seen a monster drop an egg, so she was quite surprised when she saw it.

Since the two girls were busy touching the egg all over, Matty and the others busied themselves with organizing the rest of the loot that they had acquired.

One of them was a red jewel that was as big as Lux's hand. This jewel, which could be found on the Carbuncle's forehead, was very precious, and many merchants were willing to buy it at a very high price.

The second item was the Mutated Carbuncle's purple fur. This was another top tier item that could be used as a carpet, a blanket, and even clothes which were perfect to wear in places with cold weather.

The third item was the monster's meat, which also fetched a decent price in the market. Since rabbit meat is quite popular in Leaf Village, the meat of this Alpha Beast was considered to be a rare delicacy.

Last, but not the least, was the Mutated Carbuncle's Beast Core. It was the size of a bowling ball and had a bright purple color. Although it was a Rank 3 Beast Core, it was bigger than a regular one, which meant that the number of skill or stat points that could be gained from it would not be less than fifty.

"Nice haul," Lux said as he crossed his arms on his chest. "Congratulations for beating your first Alpha Beast."

The Dwarves who were in cloud nine were broken out of their daze after they heard Lux's words. All of them stopped what they were doing and looked in his direction as if they had completely forgotten about him.

It was at that moment when they remembered that the one who played a major role in subjugating the Mutated Carbuncle was none other than the Half-Elf in front of them. If Lux wasn't there, all of them might have been seriously injured. As for the worst case scenario? They might have all died fighting the Mutated Monster that came out of nowhere.

"B-Big Brother, these spoils of war should belong to you," Colette stuttered while looking at Lux with teary eyes. Her hands were still latched onto the egg like a Koala hugging a tree, which made the red-headed teenager laugh due to how adorable she looked.

"Don't worry, all the loot for this hunt is for you guys," Lux replied. "As you can see, with my current strength, it will not be a problem for me to hunt another Carbuncle. If you still find this unfair then just think of it as an older brother giving gifts to his little brothers and sisters. It's fine that way, right?"

Colette immediately let go of the Monster Egg and ran towards Lux, jumping into his arms.

"Big Brother, you are the best!" Colette shouted happily as Lux spun her round and round.

After spinning the little girl a few times, Lux finally set her back down on the ground. Colette then glanced at the egg then back at Lux before voicing her thoughts.

"Big Brother, you can take the egg," Colette said. "The eggs of Alpha Beasts are very rare, especially mutated ones. Even my sister didn't get one when she was in the Beginner's Village."

Lux shook his head firmly. "No. I don't need it. However, promise me that you will raise that Carbuncle with love and care. Since it is a support type monster, it will help you and Helen heal your party members when things get rough.

"I will be able to have more peace of mind knowing that you guys have an extra healer supporting you in your adventures. So, just take the egg and the other items."

"Big Brother, are you sure you really don't want it?" Colette asked with a serious expression on her face.

"I'm sure. Just keep everything for yourselves." Lux smiled as he glanced at the rewards that he had obtained from killing the Mutated Carbuncle in his Soul Book.

< Special Quest >

– Encounter with a Mutated Monster

Mission Rating: B

Status: Completed!

< Quest Objective >

– Kill the Mutated Carbuncle

< Rewards >

– 50 Free Stat Points

- 50 Skill Points
- 50 Body Constitution Points
- Mutated Carbuncle's Jewel
- Mutated Carbuncle's Meat
- Mutated Carbuncle's Fur
- Rank 3 Alpha Beast Core

< Bonus Reward >

- Alpha Monster Egg
- Hatching the egg will give you a random baby monster that is equivalent or higher than an Alpha Monster that could be found in the entirety of the Territory of Norria.
- You can hatch this egg with the help of a Monster Breeder

The reason why Lux didn't want to fight the children with the distribution of the loot was due to the fact that he had already acquired a set of items on his own. Since that was the case, asking for more would be too greedy of him.

Besides, he really liked Colette and the others. He thought that it would be best to just let the kids enjoy their first attempt at challenging an Alpha Monster as a team.

Since the egg wasn't an item that could be stored inside the Enchanted Beast Ring, Lux and the others carefully placed it inside the carriage. Matty was assigned to put the egg on his lap to ensure that the bumps on the road wouldn't break it.

Everyone was in a good mood as they returned to Leaf Village. The distribution of the loots was done as follows.

Colette would take the monster egg because she was the leader of the group.

The boys decided to give the monster fur to Helen as compensation.

Matty, Andy, and Axel, on the other hand, would sell the Carbuncle's Jewel, and share the profits that they would gain from it.

Since Lux didn't get anything, Colette decided to scribble something on a piece of paper and handed it to Lux.

The Half-Elf couldn't help but chuckle after reading its contents, which made Colette's face turn beet red due to embarrassment.

One Shoulder Massage Ticket.

That was what was written on the piece of paper that Colette gave Lux, which made Matty extremely envious. If possible, he would give Lux his share of the gold coins they would receive for selling the Carbuncle's Jewel in exchange for the shoulder massage ticket in his hand.

Naturally, he couldn't voice this out loud, so he had no choice but to glare at the Half-Elf who acquired a very precious ticket that he would fight to get.

As soon as their merry little band entered Leaf Village, Lux noticed Boreas, as well as the middle-aged Dwarf, Nevreal, who was also Robin's caretaker, standing by one of the sides of the gate. There were other Goat Riders beside them, which made Lux wonder if they were planning to go on a mission somewhere.

However, before their carriage could drive past them, Boreas called out to Lux.

"Lux Von Kaizer, do you have some time today?" Boreas asked. "There is something very important that we need to talk about. Why don't you follow me to the barracks for now?"

Lux frowned, but still nodded his head. Although he didn't know why Boreas and Nevreal were waiting for him at the gates of the village, he could tell that the matter they wanted to discuss was a serious one.

Chapter 80: Rewards From The Dwarven King

Lux and the important people in Leaf Village sat in a conference room.

Boreas had called for all of them because the matter he was going to discuss was about the recent incident that happened in the Figaro Gardens.

"My Commander, Lord Thoram, took the remains of the Abomination to the capital and had an audience with his Majesty," Boreas said with a serious expression on his face. "The mages there examined the corpse and found some highly-confidential information that I will share with all of you right now.

"Make no mistake, this information mustn't be revealed to anyone. The only reason why I've been given permission to mention this to everyone present is because this new organization is currently performing their experiments in the villages near the borders of the Kingdom."

"After his Majesty gave the order, a massive operation was set in motion, and various border Strongholds managed to capture four more members of the organization in the other Dwarf villages."

"These places also encountered an unusual increase of a specific type of monster in their area. Unfortunately, in two of those places, the monster was born successfully, which made subjugation very difficult. Many lives were lost, so his Majesty was forced to send Initiates to handle the situation."

"After a gruesome battle, those two Abominations were slain. However, after examining all of their bodies, the mages discovered that these monsters had the power to evolve..."

The faces of the Elders of Leaf Village immediately went pale when they heard the word "evolve". Certain monsters had this particular ability, so it was not that surprising. However, creatures that had the strength of field bosses after being born, and still had the power to evolve, was bad news for everyone.

If left undiscovered, they could step into a high rank, which was strong enough to wipe out entire villages and towns, whose defenders didn't have the strength to defeat it.

"Lux Von Kaizer, Lord Thoram, and the other Commanders of the Border Guards are very grateful for your contribution in this matter," Boreas gave Lux a brief bow before passing him a wooden box. "His Majesty wanted to hold a ceremony for you to become an Honorary Knight of our Kingdom, but his advisers advised against it."

"Although the Kingdom of Gweliven does trade with other races, their presence in our Kingdom is very rare. Usually less than ten people from the other nations are allowed entry to our borders. The advisers said that if you were knighted publicly, it might cause unrest for the people, and would in turn create unnecessary trouble in the future.

"This was why, instead of His Majesty, I have come to present to you the medal that bestows upon you the rank of an Honorary Knight within our Kingdom. Although you are conferred this title, you will not be awarded with any lands."

"However, you will receive discounts in any shops or for any services that this nation provides. Please, accept his Majesty's well wishes, and know that you are now known to him and he regards you in high esteem."

Lux opened the wooden box and saw a golden medal with the insignia of a war axe. It was carved with a very intricate design, which made the Half-Elf quite happy. It was because as soon as he received the medal of knighthood, he received a series of notifications telling him that he had acquired the Honorary Knight Title.

Title: Honorary Knight

– You have performed an outstanding service for the Kingdom of Gweliven, and his Majesty, King Maximilian Von Gweliven, hereby recognizes you as an honorary Knight.

– Grants additional 100 Reputation Points to the Kingdom of Gweliven

– You will receive a 10% increase in attack and defense if you are fighting within the Kingdom of Gweliven

'Very nice,' Lux thought.

However, that was the only beginning. After receiving the medal, the Reputation Function in his Soul Book activated. Lux checked the effect of the reputation points he had gained, and was quite happy with the outcome.

Kingdom of Gweliven Reputation Points: 200

Relationship Status: Good

- You will get up to a 20% discount for all services within the Kingdom
- The law abiding Dwarves in the Kingdom will not find any trouble for you.

Riders of Norria Reputation Points: 500

Relationship Status: Friendly

- Gives you the privilege to enter the Stronghold of Norria and explore the services available there.
- You will get up to a 20% discount on all services inside the Stronghold.
- You will be able to gain their assistance if you wish for it. Every time you ask for their help, your reputation points will be decreased by 500 Points.

Leaf Village Reputation Points: 2000

Relationship Status: Benefactor

- As someone who had saved the entire Village from a catastrophe, you will be treated politely by all of its residents.
- Certain services that are not available to foreigners will be open to you.
- You will get up to a 50% discount on all services inside Leaf Village.
- You will be able to ask for the help of the City Guards if you wish for it. Each time you use this service, 250 Reputation Points will be deducted.
- Points will not be deducted when you ask for their help, as long as the task will benefit Leaf Village as a whole.

'Interesting,' Lux thought. 'I will be able to ask for their assistance if need be. I never thought that reputation worked like this.'

Although the price for asking for the assistance from the Stronghold of Norria would immediately bring his reputation points to zero, Lux thought that it was a good trade-off since he would have their full assistance.

The Stronghold had hundreds of Warriors, whose Ranks ranged from Grade D up to Grade A Disciples. It was the strongest force within the territory of Norria, and Lux felt having them as a backup was a worthwhile thing.

"Aside from the Medal of Knighthood, you will be given other rewards," Boreas continued. "Sir Nevreal said that you are looking for weapons and armor. According to the information that we have on you, your profession is a Necromancer. Do you perhaps plan to arm your minions with these weapons?"

Lux had a dumbfounded look on his face as he gave Boreas the "how did you know about that?" gaze, which made the Rider Captain chuckle.

"It's not that hard to guess," Boreas explained. "You already have good weapons and armor, so I'm guessing that the weapons and armor that you requested from us will be equipped by your Skeletons. Worry not, our Stronghold will allow you to receive fifteen sets of weapons and armor which are in the same level as the standard equipment for Riders of Norria. Just go to the Stronghold and collect the things you need."

"Thank you very much!" Lux replied excitedly. He would initially get a headache whenever he thought about how he would even arm his ordinary Summons with stronger gear. Now that they would receive the equipment from the Stronghold of Norria, this problem was solved for the time being.

Nevreal, who had kept silent for the duration of Boreas' speech, suddenly cleared his throat in order to catch Lux's attention.

"His Majesty also passed a decree to me before we came here to see you," Nevreal said. "He said that if you have something you want, as long as it doesn't go past the limit of his generosity, he will bestow it upon you. So, is there something that you want as a reward for your services to the Kingdom?"

Lux's smile widened after hearing Nevreal's words. He knew that this was a good opportunity, so he decided to see if he could get the thing he needed most right now.

"Um, if it's not too much of a bother, can His Majesty give me a Hell Horse?" Lux asked.

Nevreal frowned. "A Hell Horse? What do you plan to do with one? They are malevolent Beasts and it is very hard to tame one. Although there are several of them roaming near the borders of the Kingdom, we mostly leave them alone because acquiring one is more trouble than they're worth."

"I want one," Lux replied. "This is the reward that I want his Majesty to bestow upon me."

Nevreal and Boreas glanced at each other before shifting their attention back to Lux.

"I'll pass your message to His Majesty," Nevreal said after pondering for a moment. "From what I can tell, you plan to get a mount that has an evil personality. Although we don't have a Hell Horse in our possession, we do have something similar called a Nightmare."

"If you are interested, I'll ask his Majesty to bestow this beast to you. However, if it causes any trouble to the Kingdom, you will take responsibility for its actions. Do you understand?"

Lux nodded his head in understanding. After getting Nevreal's promise, the Half-Elf felt like all the effort he put into investigating the abnormality in the Figaro Gardens had finally paid off.

Chapter 81: I Need Her Good Luck

After an hour, Lux left the conference room, while the others remained.

The Captain of the Riders of Norria and the Elders of Leaf Village were about to discuss something on a national level, so the Half-Elf politely took his leave. He didn't want to meddle in those affairs.

What he cared about were the weapons and the mount that were promised to him by both Boreas and Nevreal.

'Fortunately I haven't chosen anything from my mission rewards yet,' Lux thought as he praised himself for not being in a hurry to choose rewards from the Abomination Mission that he had cleared recently.

Now that he had an Alpha Monster Egg, which could spawn a monster that was completely random, an Honorary Title, and a mount for Diablo, he no longer needed to choose those things from the four choices that were available to him.

'Now, I just have to choose between the Golden Token of Gweliven, and the four Teleport Scrolls that could take me anywhere I have visited previously,' Lux mused. 'I guess, I'll just wait for a good opportunity to use either of those two rewards in the future.'

As soon as Lux stepped onto the street, he saw Colette and the others waiting for him on the opposite side.

"Big Brother!" Colette waved her hand enthusiastically the moment she saw Lux. In truth, she and the others had been worried because they thought that the Half-Elf was in trouble.

After seeing him unharmed, and his expression which implied that he seemed to be in a good mood, their worries disappeared completely.

"You guys waited for me?" Lux asked. Deep inside he was quite touched. He had really gotten close to the Dwarf children, which had been his first party members in the world of Elysium.

"It's not that we care about you. We just came here to accompany Colette," Matthew replied in a cranky manner. "Don't get the wrong idea, okay?"

Lux smirked as he looked at the future hen-pecked-boyfriend, who was doing his best to look irritated. The Half-Elf then patted Colette's head as he gave her some good news.

"I'll be traveling to the Stronghold of Norria ten days from now," Lux said. "Why don't you guys come with me? They might have some interesting things over there that we can't find in the Beginner Zones."

Colette blinked once then twice before latching onto Lux's arm and looking up at him with a serious expression on her face.

"You're not lying right, Big Brother?" Colette asked. "Can we really go with you?"

Lux nodded. "Of course. I asked Captain Boreas earlier if I could bring you guys, and he said that he didn't mind as long as we don't cause trouble when we are there."

"We won't cause trouble!" Colette replied happily. "Hehehe, even my sister wasn't able to go to the Stronghold of Norria. I bet she will be surprised when I tell her about this."

"Eh? Your sister hasn't been there? How come?"

"Big Brother, the Stronghold of Norria is off limits to everyone. Only high-ranking nobles and those with high-status are allowed to enter the fortress."

Lux nodded his head in understanding as he gave Colette a knowing smile. He knew that the adorable, little, blonde Dwarf adored her older sister like an idol that she hoped to become like her sister someday.

Colette always boasted that her sister was a genius, very beautiful, and had many suitors. She also constantly reminded Lux that she would be more than happy to play matchmaker, and pair him up with her sister in marriage.

The Half-Elf just laughed it off because he thought that Colette was just being childish and teasing him. Although he had to admit that he was quite curious to meet the little girl's sister, he wasn't in a hurry to do so.

"Well then, do you guys have any plans for the time being?" Lux asked.

Colette gave Lux a sweet smile as she told him that she planned to return home for a few days in order to have the monster egg that she had received from their battle hatched in their family's residence. Although she could hatch it in Leaf Village, Colette wanted her sister to be there to see the hatching process with her.

Helen also planned to return home to ask her parents for advice on what to do with the Carbuncle Fur that she got from the expedition.

As for the three boys, they planned to go back to Solais in order to sell the Carbuncle's Jewel. They would then split the coins among the three of them and get better gear from their parents, in preparation for their graduation from Leaf Village.

Everyone parted ways and promised to meet again after ten days in Elysium. Lux's main purpose in going back was to also hatch the egg that he caught. However, the one that would be hatching it wasn't him, but someone who he considered to be blessed with Lady Luck.

Since the monster that would come out of the egg was completely random, he decided to let someone lucky do the honors, so he would get the best possible results.

"Welcome back, Lux," Vera said with a smile on her face as she arrived at the training room. "Have you eaten? I was just about to eat dinner. Why don't you join me?"

"I'm back, Grandma," Lux replied as he gave Vera a loving hug. "What's for dinner?"

"I didn't know you were coming, so I just made rice porridge. Do you want something specific to eat? Just tell me. I will prepare it for you."

"Porridge is fine. Actually, I ate a bit before coming back home, so I'm not that hungry."

Vera smiled as she led Lux to the dining table. The two of them ate, and after that, Vera asked her grandson about his adventures in Elysium.

The Half-Elf didn't hide anything from his grandma and told her everything. He told her about the member of the secret organization that he fought, the Abomination Monster that had threatened the safety of Leaf Village, the rewards he had received, and rewards that he was about to receive.

Vera listened with a calm expression on her face, but deep inside, she was greatly shocked about the experiences that her grandson had faced while he was away from home.

"That is very generous of you to give the monster drops to your friends," Vera said. "But, make sure to also think of your own benefits in the future, okay?"

"Um, about that Grandma, I need to tell you something," Lux replied.

He then explained that he had obtained a reward after the Mutated Carbuncle was slain, which led him to take a pass on the distribution items after the Alpha Monster was killed.

"Strange," Vera thought. "I've never heard of this phenomenon before..."

Vera thought long and hard, but she didn't know anyone that could receive items directly into their Soul Book after killing an Alpha Monster.

"Lux, keep this a secret for the time being," Vera stated. "This is a good thing, but since I haven't heard of this incident happening in the past, those who also have the same ability must have made sure to keep it to themselves. I mean, when you think about it, isn't this a fantastic ability? You don't have to fight for Monster drops because you get them directly.

"If anyone discovers this, they will be very jealous. During dungeon expeditions, and fighting against Field Monsters, parties often distribute the monster drops due to merit. This allows only a select few to benefit from the hunt, but you don't have this problem."

Vera smiled because her grandson had this cheat-like ability. Back then, she was worried that Lux would be too nice, and people would take advantage of him. Now that the Half-Elf had this ability, she wouldn't worry about Lux not getting enough resources, or being treated harshly in Elysium.

'With this, Lux will definitely not lose out when forming teams with other people,' Vera thought. 'Although I feel sorry for his party members, this is still a good thing for my grandson.'

Lux, who had just finished drinking his tea, looked at his grandma with a hopeful expression.

"Grandma, I need a favor," Lux said.

"As long as it is within my ability, I will do it," Vera replied. As long as it was for her grandson, she would do her best to make it happen.

"Grandma, I want to see Iris," Lux stated. "I need her goodluck."

Chapter 82: welcome To Barbatos Academy

Both Lux and Vera stared at the towering, and majestic structure in the distance as they sat on the back of a White Hippopotamus.

They had traveled through a teleportation gate from within the Wildgarde Stronghold, and got transported at the closest relay station from their destination. Even then, they still had to travel on land for a day and on water for half a day.

But since they had Sophie, the White Hippopotamus, the length of their journey was cut in half. When compared to most boats in the water, Sophie was still faster.

As they neared their destination, Lux wasn't able to keep a sigh from escaping his lips as he looked at one of the grandest academies in Solais.

"Barbatos Academy," Lux said softly. "It has been nearly a year since we last came here to visit them. Right, grandma?"

Vera nodded. "Indeed. You were so preoccupied with training and trying to pass the entrance test to Elysium that you refused to visit your step sister. I'm sure Iris still feels bad about it. Make sure to treat her nicely this time around, okay?"

Lux scratched his cheek as he nodded his head.

Vera only had three family members in the entirety of Solais. The first one was her son, Alexander, and the second was her granddaughter, Iris. The third was Lux, of course, whom she had adopted as her grandson, making him Iris' stepbrother.

"Ah, by the way, Iris sent me a letter two months ago," Vera said with a smile. "She is asking me when you are going to see her. I only said that you are busy with your training because you failed again this year. Even so, I promised that both of us would visit her before her birthday six months from now."

"Time sure flies quickly," Lux commented. "She will be sixteen this year."

"And you will be seventeen, Lux. Should we proceed with making Iris your fiancée? My son is acting stubborn about it, but if I smack his head, I'm sure that he will agree. So, would you like Iris to be your future wife?"

"Grandma, I don't think smacking the head of a Saint is a good idea. Besides, Uncle Alex only wants what is best for Iris. There are more eligible candidates aside from me that can make her happy."

Vera snorted as she ruffled Lux's hair.

"I only plan to share good things with my family," Vera stated. "Since both of my grandchildren are good, why not match them up? That way, the bonds of our family will be stronger."

"Grandma, let's talk about this when I become a Ranker."

"Nonsense. By the time you become a Ranker, a moron might have already swept Iris off her feet! I'm not going to wait that long. Besides, Iris keeps on pestering me to ensure that no flies will gather around you until she comes of age. We just need to wait for a few months. After her birthday, the two of you can get married the very next day."

Lux subconsciously gulped. He knew that his grandma was serious about pairing him and Iris together. Truth be told, Iris had told him time and time and again that she would only marry him when she grew up.

The Half-Elf found her words amusing back then, and even casually replied that he would wait for her to grow up and marry her every time. Iris took his words seriously back then and even told Vera about it.

Vera was overjoyed and even agreed to it on the spot. Lux and Iris were only twelve and eleven years old back then and, for some reason, he felt that he had shot himself on the foot when he made that promise to her.

Naturally, Alexander didn't agree to it. As Iris' father, he was very overprotective of his daughter. Even though Lux was Vera's adoptive grandson, he rejected his mother's proposal to let Iris become Lux's fiancée.

"Don't worry. I'll make sure to convince that no-good-son of mine," Vera promised. "All you have to do is say yes, and we will host the wedding right away."

Lux chuckled nervously as he stared at the looming academy that was hailed as one of the best in the Western Regions of Solais.

Barbatos Academy was right at the center of six kingdoms. Most children of the nobility, as well as the members of the Royal Family, all went there to study and expand their horizons.

Just like the Wildgarde Stronghold, the Barbatos Academy had its own faction in Elysium and was based in the Regulus Empire.

The Wildgarde Stronghold's faction was stationed in the Azrael Kingdom, which was a neighbor of the Regulus Empire. Both of them were allies, and enjoyed trade, as well as other lucrative businesses between their two nations.

'I just hope Iris doesn't mention anything about marriage when we meet her,' Lux thought as he felt beads of sweat forming on his forehead. Truth be told, he didn't dislike Iris. In fact, he was very fond of her and treated her like a real sister.

As for his feelings for her, he would be lying if he said that he didn't like her. In fact, there had been times when he thought that it would be nice if she could become his fiancée, but he would also remember the things that he needed to do in Elysium. With his priorities shifted a bit, he would often brush off that thought.

'Also, I'm sure that Uncle will make it difficult for the two of us to be together,' Lux sighed internally. 'Well, I don't have to worry about these things. If grandma really wants us to be together, she will turn the world upside down to make it happen. For now, I'm sure that she is holding back, in order to respect Uncle's wishes.'

When Vera adopted Lux, his uncle, Alexander, registered his name in their family tree. Their relationship was civil enough, but Lux couldn't really tell if they were close or not.

While Alexander never made any effort to make Lux feel that he was happy with the latter, he also never made any effort to keep him at arm's length.

If Lux could use a word to describe their relationship, it would definitely be "lukewarm".

Iris was the only one that could make the cold and indifferent man, who was respected and feared by many, break out into a smile.

"We're here, Lux."

Vera's words broke Lux out of his daydream as they neared the portside of the academy.

Sophie swam towards the shore, which caught the attention of several people who were present in the area.

After Lux and Vera dismounted from her back, Sophie's size shrank to only half a meter tall. This was the form that she took whenever she was in the Wildgarde Stronghold, because her original size prevented her from entering into most of the houses in the stronghold.

"Welcome to Barbatos Academy, Lady Vera," a lady who was wearing the uniform of the academy, and seemed to be in her early thirties, said as she bowed her head towards Vera.

"Alicia, have you been well?" Vera replied with a smile. "I hope my no-good son is not overworking you."

Alicia waved her hand as a tinge of redness spread across her face. "The Headmaster isn't making things difficult for me. I am happy with my current work, Lady Vera."

Alicia then shifted her gaze to Lux and grinned.

"It's good to see you again, Young Master Lux," Alicia said as he gave Lux a brief bow. "It seems that you have gotten a little taller since we last met."

Lux smirked as nodded his head in acknowledgement. "It's good to see you again, Alicia. You've gotten more beautiful since the last time I saw you."

"Keep that up, Young Master, and you will not have a hard time finding a lover," Alicia replied, "but make sure to hide your affair from Lady Iris. She will definitely throw a tantrum if she finds out that you are meeting girls behind her back."

Lux chuckled nervously because it seemed that Iris had managed to make Alicia one of her people. If he wanted to enjoy his short visit to Barbatos Academy, he'd better stay clear of the young noble ladies, who usually flirted with him whenever he visited the academy with Vera.

After seeing Lux's nervous expression, a smile appeared on Alicia's lips before shifting her gaze to Vera.

"Lady Vera, please, come with me," Alicia said respectfully. "The Headmaster has been waiting for your arrival."

Vera nodded as she held Lux's hand. The academy had many beautiful girls in it, so she decided to keep Lux by her side to ensure that no random girl would ensnare him during their visit.

After all, she was dead set on making her two grandchildren a couple. That way, she could have the best of both worlds. She wouldn't have to worry about other people trying to use Iris as a political tool in order to form connections with her son, Alexander, who was the Headmaster of the strongest military academy in the Western Regions of Solais.

Chapter 83: That Was My First Kiss!

"Headmaster, Lady Vera has arrived."

"Let them in."

Alicia bowed to Vera as she opened the door, welcoming the latter and Lux to enter. She remained outside because this was a family affair and she didn't want Lux teasing her after their meeting with the Headmaster.

As soon as Lux entered the room, he saw a man who seemed to be in his late twenties signing a few documents that were piled up on top of his table.

With just a glance, one could tell that he wasn't an ordinary person. Although he did his best to suppress it, his overwhelming powers would fluctuate from time to time, causing the air around him to ripple.

Contrary to his very young appearance, Alexander Von Kaizer was already fifty-five years old. He had attained Sainthood at a very young age, so his growth had drastically slowed down.

In fact, Lux wouldn't be surprised if his Uncle looked like someone in his early thirties once the latter reached a hundred years old. This was one of the perks in breaking through the limits of the mortal realm in the world of Solais.

When Vera and Lux sat on the seats in front of him, the Headmaster placed the last document at his side and looked at his mother with a smile.

"Mother, it's good to see that you are doing well," Alexander said. He then shifted his attention to Lux and gave him a brief nod. "Boy, according to my informant in Wildgarde Stronghold, you once again failed the entrance exam to Elysium. You better man up if you want to have even the slightest chance of leaving your mark in the world."

Lux's neck shrank because his Uncle didn't bother to mince words when telling him that he needed to "Git Gud".

Vera, on the other hand, chuckled when she saw this exchange. She knew her son's temper better than anyone else because she was the one that raised him. The fact that he even bothered to remind Lux to step up his game meant that he didn't want the Half-Elf to spend his time feeling sorry for himself.

What Alexander wanted was for Lux to think of ways to improve himself, instead of moping like a useless bum.

'I guess, there is still hope in making my grandchildren become partners in life,' Vera thought as looked at her son with satisfaction. The latter rolled his eyes at his mother, whom he could read like an open book.

"I've received your letter, Mother," Alexander stated. "I don't think that you should spoil Lux so much. You even got him a rare monster egg for him to raise. How will he grow up to be an outstanding man if you spoon feed him each and every time?"

Lux lowered his head because he didn't want his uncle to see the smirk that was about to appear on his face. He and his grandma, Vera, both agreed that they should keep his entry to Elysium a secret for now.

The two wanted to surprise, not only the Wildgarde Stronghold, but also Alexander, at the next Gathering of Heroes by showing them how awesome Lux was.

Once every four years, a grand tournament would be held in Barbatos Academy to showcase the young talents within the Western Regions of Solais. All participants must be Grade A Apostle or below in order to join this prestigious event.

The Final Four would receive amazing prizes from the sponsors of the event. The six kingdoms that backed Barbatos Academy often used this opportunity to gather young talents and bestow upon them the rank of nobility in order to bring them under their wing.

Naturally, those who wished to serve a different king could take this opportunity to jump ship, and start their careers in greener pastures. This had been the established rule since the tournament was created.

If a ruler were to lose a talented individual, it just meant that the benefits they presented weren't enticing enough to make the young prodigies serve them. In the end, the only one that they could blame was themselves for being stingy.

Vera wanted her grandson to step on that grand stage and show the world how awesome he was. That way, the past grievances that Lux had suffered would be washed away completely, which in turn would force everyone to look at him in a new light.

"Don't be like that, Alex," Vera replied. "Lux was the one that found the egg while we were out camping. We just don't know what kind of monster is inside it, so I proposed that we bring it here so that Iris could help him hatch it."

"A good tale, but I don't buy it, Mother."

"I won't force you. Now, where is Iris? I want to see my granddaughter."

Alexander sighed as he rang a small bell in order to call for Alicia.

The moment the pretty lady stepped inside the office, Alexander ordered her to escort Vera and Lux to the training area.

The Barbatos Academy followed a strict rule. All students could stay in Elysium for the duration of five days before they needed to return to the academy, then they had to stay there for two days in order to give their reports to the academy.

Just like Wildgarde Stronghold, the Barbatos Academy had managed to create a kingdom of their own within Elysium. It was jointly managed by a council, composed of representatives from each of the six kingdoms, as well as Alexander, who served as the Head of the Council.

As a Saint, he held the strongest deterrence force that kept those who eyed the academy, as well as their kingdom in Elysium—that they had named the Barbatos Kingdom—at bay.

The purpose of the students inside the academy was to become stronger and help expand their Domain. Only those who had attained the rank of Apostle were allowed to enroll at Barbatos Academy.

They simply had no need for the weak to join their ranks, which was the main reason why Lux wasn't one of their students.

As they neared the training area, Lux and Vera could hear the cheering of a crowd. A few minutes later, they saw two young combatants fighting an intense battle in an arena.

Lux could tell that both fighters were at least the Grade B Apostles due to the intensity of their battle. Vera gave her grandson a side-long glance to see his expression, and was quite satisfied with what she saw.

The Half-Elf was currently focusing on the match, and watching the two combatants very closely. He was trying to put himself in the shoes of the two opponents and was trying to emulate how to best dodge or counter-attack their moves.

'He has really grown up after entering Elysium,' Vera thought with a smile. She then shifted her attention back to the two young fighters, who seemed to be fighting with their life and honor on the line as they continued to clash against each other.

Five minutes later, a young man with light-brown hair and blue eyes raised his sword towards the heavens to declare his victory.

The crowd cheered and gave him a thunderous applause.

"Sir Lawrence is so amazing!"

"Yes! Simply the best among the other boys in his year."

"I feel faint whenever I see him fight. I wonder if he has a girlfriend yet?"

"He doesn't have one. As if you don't know, he only has eyes for Lady Iris."

"I'm so jealous! She's such a lucky girl!"

The girls talked among themselves, while the boys looked at Lawrence in envy. He was simply too perfect in their eyes, and someone whom they aspired to be.

"I have won, My Lady Iris," Lawrence said as he gave a respectful bow to a young beauty with light-blue hair and eyes, which made anyone who saw them feel as if they were looking at a beautiful painting.

"Un, congratulations," Iris gave Lawrence an awkward smile.

This whole battle started because the combatant that Lawrence fought had confessed his feelings to Iris a day ago. Iris politely declined his confession and told him that she already had someone in her heart.

It should have ended then and there, but when Lawrence heard that someone had confessed to the girl he liked, he immediately challenged that person to a duel. Since the other guy had just been rejected, he wanted to vent out his frustrations, so the young man was more than happy to accept Lawrence's challenge.

And so, this duel, which Iris didn't want to happen in the first place, happened, and had turned into a spectacle for hundreds of people who were looking for entertainment inside the academy.

Just as Iris was thinking about how to get out of this mess, she saw something red appear in the corner of her vision, which made her turn her head.

It was at that moment when she saw Lux, who was standing beside her grandma, waving at her.

"Brother!" Iris immediately shouted as she broke free from the crowd and left the handsome Lawrence behind with a confused look on his face.

The crowd parted for Iris because she was a very important figure within the academy, and was treated like a princess.

"Brother Lux! I missed you!" Iris said as she gave Lux a very tight hug, which the latter returned by lightly wrapping his arms around her waist.

"I missed you too, Iris," Lux replied. "Have you gotten a bit taller?"

"Have I?"

"Yes. By a few centimeters I think."

Lawrence frowned when he saw someone whom he hadn't seen before hugging the apple of his eye. He immediately walked towards the stranger with the intention of knowing who he was.

Iris, who hadn't seen Lux for a very long time, stood on tiptoe and pressed her soft lips against his, kissing him in front of all the students who were present at the training ground.

'Oh my!' Vera covered her own lips as she gave her granddaughter two thumbs up in her heart. 'She really has the Kazier bloodline flowing inside her veins. She's so bold.'

Lawrence's body froze after seeing the scene unfold in front of him.

He was not the only one to react this way. Several boys, as well as girls, looked at the unexpected incident in front of them with shock and disbelief.

Even Lux, who had just been kissed by Iris, stiffened after realizing what just transpired.

The young lady in question pulled back with a smile. However, her smile didn't last long as the realization of what she had just done hit her.

"I-I'm sorry!" Iris stuttered as her whole face turned beet red. "I missed Brother Lux so much that my brain momentarily went blank! That was my first kiss! I was hoping to do it in a more romantic way. Oh, no! What have I done?!"

The beautiful young lady was about to panic when she found herself being wrapped up in a protective embrace.

"I missed you, Iris," Vera said as she kissed her granddaughter's forehead. "Why don't we visit your father, so that our family can have afternoon tea together?"

"Y-Yes! Let's do that, Grandma!" Iris immediately grabbed Vera's hand because it was the perfect excuse to get out of this tricky situation. She half-dragged her grandma towards the exit of the training ground. "Let's have afternoon tea together! Alicia, please, prepare some snacks as well!"

"As you wish, My Lady," Alicia bowed, but wasn't able to hide the smirk on her lips upon seeing Iris' flustered expression.

When the young beauty felt that there was something amiss, Iris immediately remembered that Lux was still rooted on the spot and was looking at them with a dazed expression.

"Brother Lux! What are you zoning about there for?" Iris asked with an embarrassed look on her face. "Don't tell me you fainted standing up? Let's go have tea together!"

Iris let go of her grandma's hand and ran back towards Lux. She then grabbed his hand and ran back to Vera's side, forcefully dragging the Half-Elf along.

"Now, let's go," Iris said as she held the hands of the two most important people in her life, aside from her father. She led them towards the exit of the Training Ground, leaving a dumbfounded crowd behind.

Lawrence, who had initially wanted to confront the red-headed stranger, stood rooted on the spot, as he watched them leave with a frustrated look on his face.

It was at that moment when the young man realized that the students inside the academy, who also pursued Iris, weren't his true love rivals. His greatest rival was none other than the red-headed teenager who stole his crush's first kiss!

Chapter 84: Brother Lux, Our Baby Is Finally Born!

"Brother, say Ahhhh!"

".... Ahhh."

Iris happily spoonfed Lux some apple pie with a sweet smile on her face. Vera looked at his scene happily. Ever since Lux turned ten and Iris turned nine, she had been thinking of pairing the two of them together.

Both of them were her grandchildren and she wanted the two of them to live a happy life together. Fortunately, Iris was more than happy with the idea, and even asked her Grandma to make sure that no other girls became close with Lux while he was in Wildgarde Stronghold.

Truth be told, there were many girls that had a crush on Lux in the stronghold, but their parents told them that it would be better to choose someone else. The first reason was due to Lux's sickly constitution, the other reason being his inability to go to Elysium.

The people of Solais pursued strength, stability, and resources. Lux might be good looking, but that was all he had. He neither had power, stability, nor resources. His good looks made him popular, but good looks and popularity alone wouldn't put food on the table.

When it came to choosing a son-in-law, the parents would prefer men who were strong enough to protect his wife. This was why Lux was not a good prospect in the eyes of those who lived in Wildgarde Stronghold.

But Iris didn't care whether Lux was strong or not. She had fallen in love with him because, although he was sickly, he always played with her and did his best to be there for her whenever her father was away.

Admittedly, Vera also played a vital role in how the two became close because. She always created opportunities for the two of them to always be together.

However, the time they spent together became scarce as Lux focused on his training in order to enter Elysium.

Iris did the same, but her environment was special. As the daughter of a Saint, she was well protected at all times.

Iris' profession was a Beast Tamer, who also specialized in Monster Breeding. The reason Lux came to see her was because there was something that not many people knew about Iris, and that was her unbelievable luck.

It would not be an exaggeration to call her Lady Luck's daughter. If a flock of birds were to drop their poop on a crowd of people. You could be certain that everyone would get hit, except her.

She also stumbled upon monster eggs in the fields and, when she hatched them, rare and legendary monsters would be born 100% of the time.

Right now, Iris had five Beast Companions that she had raised from eggs.

A Blue Dragon, a White Tiger, a Red Phoenix, a Black Turtle, and a Unicorn.

Lux had even joked at one time that if she planned to rule the world, it would definitely become a reality.

After Iris' one-sided display of affection which was sweet enough to rot Lux's teeth, the Half-Elf brought up why he had come to see her.

"An Egg that came from an Alpha Beast?" Iris' eyes sparkled immediately at the mention of the monster egg. "Fufufu. So, Brother came to see me so I could hatch your egg, right?"

"Yes," Lux nodded as he took his egg out of the special storage ring that Vera had given him, which was exclusively used for carrying monster eggs.

"Please, help me, Iris."

Iris smiled as she placed the two-foot-tall monster egg on her lap, and lightly caressed its surface.

"I can sense its strong will to live," Iris commented as she closed her eyes. "Don't worry. I will hatch you soon."

The young beauty with light-blue hair smiled as she carried the egg towards the Bestiary. Lux followed behind her because he was quite excited to see the kind of monster that would be born from the egg.

Neither Vera nor Alicia had gone with them because they didn't want to get in the way of the two youngsters.

—

"Fufufu. Brother Lux, somehow, I feel like I'm going to hatch our baby," Iris said as she placed the egg on an incubator. "So, what would you like to have? A boy or a girl?"

"Um, either one is fine," Lux replied. "As long as they are born healthy."

Because it had been a while since he had seen Iris, Lux had completely forgotten what kind of girl she was. The young beauty beside him was a complete brocon.

However, Iris wasn't just an ordinary brocon. She was the kind of brocon who had the intention of marrying her bro.

Iris smiled as she nodded her head. "Yes. That is the important part. Don't worry, I will make sure to give birth to our baby properly."

Lux was already used to Iris' way of speaking after spending many years with her, so he decided to remain silent and pretend that he didn't hear what she just said.

Iris chanted as her hands wrote runic engravings on the surface of the monster egg. Usually, monster breeders had the ability to inject some of their magical powers, as well as their life force, in order to assist the birth of a monster.

This would ensure that the monster would be born safely and, at times, awaken a rare skill or ability that would set it apart from monsters of its kind, similar to Named Creatures like Diablo and Ishtar.

After she finished her chanting, the egg started to glow, and a small crack appeared on its surface. Soon, the cracks spread until the entire egg was covered by them.

Lux stared at it with bated breath as he thought about the monster that would be born from it.

"Knowing Iris, this will definitely be a mythical monster. Could this be a dragon? Or perhaps a phoenix? Wait. She already has both of them, so what is the thing that is missing from her lineup? The only one I can think of is a Qilin..."

Lux then pushed this thought aside because the egg finally split apart revealing the monster inside it.

"Brother Lux, our baby is finally born!" Iris happily picked up the monster and gave her a kiss. "Isn't she cute? Um, from now on, your name will be Eiko."

The newly born monster, Eiko, pressed her body against Iris' right cheek, as if returning the kiss that she gave her.

Lux, on the other hand, looked at the monster in Iris' hand with a dumbfounded expression on his face.

He was expecting that he would get a mythical or legendary Alpha Beast, after getting Iris' help, but the monster that had been hatched was a very common monster, which made Lux question whether Iris had somehow used up all of her luck hatching her own beast companions.

"Brother Lux, isn't she adorable?" Iris asked as she presented the baby monster to Lux.

"Y-Yes," Lux replied. "She looks so... jiggly."

Iris giggled as she once again planted a kiss on the baby monster before placing her in Lux's hands.

The Half-Elf stared at Eiko, and Eiko stared back at him.

This was their first meeting, and it also marked the start of Eiko's journey alongside Lux, as they explored the world where miracles, and wishes, could become a reality.

Chapter 85: Mama's And Papa's Girl

Lux had a confused look on his face as he stared at his baby monster, Eiko.

The Half-Elf had no idea how a two-foot tall egg could give birth to a blue slime that was only as big as his hand.

"Brother, you still need to give her a drop of your blood," Iris reminded. "This is how we put our imprint on baby monsters, so that they will fully recognize us as their parents."

"Is that so?" Lux thought as he allowed Iris to lightly prick his left index finger to draw blood. He wasn't an expert when it comes to monster breeding, so he decided to let his step sister guide him to do the finishing touches.

Once enough blood pooled on the tip of his fingertip, Lux then placed it over Eiko's head, but the baby slime did something unexpected.

As if sensing Lux's blood, Eiko raised her head and extended her body to bite his fingertip. The Half-Elf almost jumped back in shock, but was able to stop at the last minute out of sheer willpower.

After consuming his blood, Eiko's body glowed briefly and rows of text appeared inside Lux's Soul Book.

Iris giggled as she picked up Eiko with both of her hands. She then used an ability of hers to draw blood from her fingertip, and allowed Eiko to absorb her blood as well. Just like what happened after Eiko had taken Lux's blood, Eiko's body glowed briefly, which meant that Eiko recognized Iris as her parent as well.

"With this, I will be your Mama and Brother will be your Papa," Iris smiled sweetly as she gave Lux a sidelong glance, before giving Eiko a kiss, which made the blue slime's small body jiggle.

The red-headed teenager could only scratch the back of his head because he didn't know how he should react to Iris' teasing.

'I guess I'll just check on Eiko's stats first,' Lux thought as he opened his Soul Book.

Just as he expected, a new page had appeared that was exclusive for Eiko. However, what he saw in the information sheet of the baby slime made Lux wonder if he was just seeing things.

< Eiko >

"The world is my oyster!"

– Named Slime Monster

– Rating: E-

– Progress (0 / 1000)

Health: 40 / 40

Mana: 400 / 400

Strength: 2

Intelligence: 20

Vitality: 2

Agility: 2

Dexterity: 2

Special Abilities: Mimicry [EX], Regeneration [EX]

Active Skill: None

Passive Skill: None

Title: Mama's and Papa's Girl

Note: This baby slime will someday rule the world.

—

< Mimicry [EX] >

– Eiko is able to copy up to six skills or abilities from anyone, and anything, within a fifty meter radius around her.

– Copied skills are only temporary and only last for a maximum of two hours before disappearing completely.

– This skill can also copy the appearance of the target creature, allowing Eiko to transform into that form. Duration of transformation lasts for a maximum of one hour.

– Eiko's stats remain as they are, regardless of what type of creature, or non-living creature, she copied. Even if she transforms herself into a dragon, her stats will remain the same.

< Regeneration [EX] >

– Increase Health and Mana Regeneration by 500%

– This ability can also regenerate any injuries that Eiko received in battle. Even if she was cut into a hundred pieces, as long as a part of her exists, she will be able to fully regenerate her body without fail.

Title: Mama's and Papa's Girl

– If either Lux Von Kaizer or Iris Von Kaizer is within a fifty-square meter radius of Eiko, all of her stats will increase by 50% during battle.

– If both of them are present, Eiko will receive a 100% increase in all of her stats during battle.

'... Dafuk is this sh*t?' Lux cursed internally as he looked at the cheat-like abilities that were available on Eiko's Status Page.

The first thing that he noticed was the incredibly high progression rating that Eiko currently had. Even Diablo's and Ishtar's ratings started with only a 100 points, but Eiko's rating had jumped straight to 1,000!

This was something unexpected, and Lux was starting to feel his head aching at the thought of how he would be able to get Eiko to upgrade with the measly amount of resources he currently had. Also, unlike his two other Named Creatures, Diablo and Ishtar, Eiko didn't have a 50% bonus when absorbing beast cores.

This meant that the baby slime needed to eat one hundred Rank 1 Beast Cores, in order to get her first upgrade.

Lux also believed that Eiko's two skills, Mimicry [EX], and Regeneration [EX], were nothing to scoff at. Those two skills alone was enough to tell him how powerful Eiko would be if she reached a higher rank.

'I knew that I would get something insane if I left the hatching of the egg to Iris, but I didn't expect to learn that this kind of insanity existed,' Lux pinched the bridge of his nose because his stepsister was truly a lady blessed by luck.

Just as Lux was wondering how to upgrade Eiko to the next level, he saw Iris holding a blue Rank 1 Beast Core that was the size of a quail's egg, and fed it to the baby slime in her hands.

The Half-Elf watched this endearing scene with a smile on his face, but his smile froze when a row of text once again appeared on Eiko's Status Page, catching him completely by surprise.

– Eiko has learned the skill Water Bullet!

< Water Bullet >

(Mana: 5)

– Shoot a small ball of compressed water at your target dealing 20 - 30 Magical Damage.

– Deals 100% additional damage to Fire Type Monsters.

Eiko activated the skill Mimicry [EX]!

– Target Lux Von Kaizer.

– Successfully copied Skill Evolution [EX]!

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Water Bullet will be upgraded into Hydro Ball once the requirements have been met.

< Hydro Ball >

- Shoot a ball of compressed water at your target dealing 100 - 200 Magical Damage.
- Deals 100% additional damage to Fire Type Monsters
- Requirements to upgrade: Use Water Bullet 10x
- Progress (0 / 10)

Before Lux could even digest the words that he had read, Eiko turned around and spat a blob of water at the floor. She did this ten times, with an interval of a few seconds in between.

Immediately after that, Lux received a notification that Eiko's Water Bullet Skill had successfully evolved into Hydro Ball.

"Wow! You're amazing Eiko!" Iris praised the baby monster who jiggled in her hand in happiness. "But, let's go outside, okay? We don't want you damaging this place."

Iris happily left the Bestiary and headed to her personal training ground with the baby slime in her arms. Lux could only stare at them in disbelief as he tried to understand what had just transpired a moment ago.

'I think I discovered a bug in the system,' Lux thought as he forced himself to follow Iris and Eiko to her private training room.

Deep inside, he was starting to have a feeling of anticipation. Although Eiko was still a baby right now, her possibilities were endless.

The Half-Elf couldn't even imagine what kind of upgrade the baby slime would have, once she consumed the necessary amount of beast cores to upgrade her rank to the next level.

Chapter 86: Not An Ordinary Baby Slime

Iris hummed, holding Eiko in her arms, as she headed to her personal training field, while Lux followed a few steps behind them.

The Half-Elf had lent her his Soul Book, so she could also see Eiko's stats. Lux was hoping that Iris would be surprised after seeing Eiko's status page, but the blue-haired beauty didn't even bat an eye after seeing the information that was in front of her.

"Iris, don't you think it's strange?" Lux asked. "Eiko's progression bar requires 1000 Points although she's only at Rank E-. Isn't this a bit too much?"

Iris stopped in her tracks and turned her head to look at Lux with a confused expression on her face.

"Isn't that normal?" Iris blinked. "My Beast Companions had the same progression point when they were hatched from their eggs."

The corner of Lux's lips twitched when he realized that he had forgotten that Iris' Beast Companions were all Mythical Beasts. Her standards for normal were already very high at the start, which made Lux feel sorry for his own Summoned Creatures, like Diablo and Ishtar, which started at 100 Progression Points at their lowest rank.

"Oh! Are you worried about raising her rank, Brother?" Iris smiled. "Don't worry. I will give Eiko a hundred Rank 1 Beast Cores to upgrade her Rank. This is my responsibility as her Mama. But, the rest will have to depend on her Papa, okay?"

Iris winked at Lux before she continued walking towards their destination while humming a song.

Lux could only scratch his head. Iris was really treated like a Princess in Barbatos Academy. A hundred Rank 1 Beast Cores were nothing to her. On the contrary, he had to fight against hordes of monsters in order to secure the same amount of Beast Cores.

'Well, I guess this is also a good thing,' Lux thought. 'My supply of Beast Cores has dwindled as of late. I don't even have enough to upgrade Diablo,

Ishtar, and the other skeletons. I guess I'll have to farm beast cores when I return to Leaf Village.'

While Lux was still thinking about the most ideal place to go to hunt for Beast Cores in the Beginner Zone, they finally arrived at their destination.

The moment Iris appeared in the training room, two monsters immediately ran up to her. One was a White Tiger, and the other was a Unicorn. Both monsters were two meters tall, which would have been intimidating to those who were not familiar with them. However, since Lux had visited Iris many times in the past, her two guardian beasts recognized him immediately.

The White Tiger nudged its head against Lux's chest, and the latter rubbed its neck, which made the tiger purr.

"Have you been a good boy, Hanz?" Lux asked the White Tiger who seemed to be enjoying the attention he was receiving from Lux.

Hanz growled lightly as if replying to Lux's question. Among Iris' Beast Companions, the White Tiger and the Half-Elf got along the most, and would play with each other whenever Lux visited Iris in the academy.

The Unicorn stared at the blue slime in Iris' arm and neighed. Clearly, it wasn't happy seeing its owner pamper a monster aside from them. It even moved its head closer to look at Eiko who was also looking back at it.

"Eiko, this is Astra," Iris introduced her unicorn to the slime that was looking at it with curiosity. "Astra, this is Eiko. She is mine and Brother's baby. Please, get along with her, okay?"

The Unicorn gave a light snort, as it moved its head closer to the baby slime. Astra didn't like it when other monsters, aside from its companions, got near Iris. Unicorns get jealous very easily. This was why it decided to intimidate the baby slime, who was currently monopolizing its Master's good graces.

Eiko stared at the unicorn for a few seconds before spitting a blob of water at its head, drenching it completely. The Unicorn hastily backed away as it shook its head to dry itself from the unexpected attack from the baby monster.

The baby slime giggled after seeing the unicorn's antics, and immediately spat one water bullet after the other.

Astra raised its head arrogantly as it easily dodged Eiko's attack, making the baby's smile turn into a pout. Seeing that its attacks weren't hitting its target, Eiko stopped spitting Water Bullets and cried!

"Oh, don't cry little Eiko," Iris coaxed the baby slime as she cradled her in her arms like a baby. "It's fine. Astra will play with you some other time."

The baby slime instantly quieted down when Iris started to feed it Beast Cores. However, she didn't expect that what she was doing could make anyone green with jealousy if only they were able to see Eiko's Status Page.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Fire Bullet will be upgraded into Fire Bolt once the requirements have been met.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Wind Bullet will be upgraded into Aero Ball once the requirements have been met.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Stone Bullet will be upgraded into Stone Spike once the requirements have been met.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Shadow Bullet will be upgraded into Shadow Ball once the requirements have been met.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Blink will be upgraded into Teleport once the requirements have been met.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Cure will be upgraded into Cure-All once the requirements have been met.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Dodge will be automatically upgraded into Uncanny Dodge.

Although his Soul Book was currently in Iris' hand, the rows of text that appeared in front of Lux made his throat dry.

Iris kept on feeding Eiko until her progression bar hit 1,000 points, which allowed the baby slime to upgrade its rank.

Eiko has acquired the skill Family Bond.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Since the skill Family Bond is not learned from a Beast Core, it will automatically be upgraded to Family Bond [EX].

< Family Bond [EX]

– Twice a day, Eiko will be able to teleport to Lux Von Kaizer's, or Iris Von Kaizer's, location wherever they may be.

– This skill works even if they are inside a dungeon, a domain, or a special plane of existence.

Eiko has acquired the skill Speech.

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

Since the skill Speech is not learned from a Beast Core, it will automatically be upgraded to Speech [EX].

< Speech [EX] >

– Eiko will be able to talk to any creature, as long as they use some kind of means to communicate.

< Select two options from the list to bestow upon Eiko. >

- Health +2000
- Intelligence +100
- Underwater Breathing
- Lava Walking
- Air Steps
- Dig
- Summon Metal Slime
- Summon Fire Slime
- Summon Water Slime
- Summon Rock Slime
- Summon Aero Slime
- Summon Saber Slime
- Summon Berserker Slime

- Summon Hunter Slime
- Summon Shadow Slime
- Summon Devil Slime
- Summon Angel Slime

"... Damn," Lux muttered as he scanned the long list of bonuses that Eiko gained after being upgraded once. He finally understood that the baby slime in his stepsister's arms was definitely not an ordinary baby slime, but a baby slime that matched the power of the mythical beasts in Iris' Bestiary.

Chapter 87.1: Eiko Vs.Astra [Part 1]

"Eiko, say Mama."

"Ma."

"Mama."

"Ma."

"My baby is so smart!" Iris said as she rubbed her cheek against Eiko's body, which made the baby slime giggle. On the other side, the Unicorn snorted in irritation.

Lux and Hanz only looked at this scene with amused expressions on their faces.

'I'll choose two from the options later, once I have a better understanding of what would be more beneficial for Eiko,' Lux thought as he walked towards Iris who was humming happily, while dancing with the baby slime in her hands.

"Thank you, Iris," Lux said. "I wouldn't have been able to upgrade Eiko's rank without your help."

Iris stopped dancing and smiled at the red-headed teenager who rarely visited her due to his training.

"You're welcome, Brother," Iris replied as she presented Eiko to Lux. "Eiko, call him Papa."

The little slime looked at Lux with curiosity before spraying water on his face, drenching him completely.

Iris hurriedly took a step back and moved Eiko away, preventing the mischievous baby slime from continuing to spray water on her beloved brother.

Eiko stopped spraying water before giggling like a naughty kid that had succeeded in its prank. Iris then gave Lux an apologetic look, while the latter just waved his hand to tell her that he was fine.

As Lux dried his face with a towel, Iris admonished Eiko for being naughty, which made the baby slime look at her with a teary-eyed face. Seeing her adorable daughter look at her that way, Iris couldn't find it in herself to further chastise the baby in her hand.

"Just don't do it again, okay?" Iris said in a gentle tone. "That is your Papa. you should always treat him as you treat me. We're family, so you shouldn't play pranks on your Papa, okay?"

"Family," Eiko repeated Iris' words before nodding her head in understanding.

Iris smiled with satisfaction "Good girl! Now let's say sorry to your Papa, okay?"

"Un!" Eiko nodded.

Iris once again approached Lux with Eiko in hand. The Half-Elf had just finished wiping his head, and looked at the baby slime with a guarded expression on his face.

Eiko looked at Lux innocently as Iris held her up until the baby slime was only two feet away from Lux's face.

"Pa!" Eiko said.

Lux smiled and lightly patted Eiko's head. "Mmm."

Eiko didn't move and allowed Lux to lightly pat her head. When the Half-Elf pulled his hand away, the baby slime jumped off of Iris' hand and landed on

her Papa's head with excellent precision. The baby slime then turned around to face Iris with a smile on its face.

"Ma!"

"Well done, Eiko!" Iris clapped her hand as she praised her baby. "That's my baby girl!"

Her praise made Eiko giggle, which made the baby slime jump back to her. The young lady caught the mischievous baby effortlessly.

Iris had a lot of experience from raising many monsters that had been left behind by their owners in the academy because they were still too young to accompany them on their journey to Elysium.

Baby Monsters were often targeted by other monsters because they were deemed as easy prey, which in turn resulted in their early demise. To prevent this from happening, Barbatos Academy had opened up a nursery for these monsters. Their owners only had to prepare a good number of beast cores in order to hasten their growth.

Iris was a Beast Tamer, so she would frequent the nursery in order to take care of the baby monsters that were left behind. She was not new to the mischievous antics of these monsters because, most of the time, newly born monsters just wanted to seek the attention of their owners.

Depending on their personality, some would play pranks to their owners because this was their way of showing their affection to them.

"Big Brother, I think Eiko is a prankster," Iris said as she lightly patted Eiko's head as she faced her stepbrother. "Monsters like these are very hard to raise because they do things at their own pace. Sometimes, they will even take the initiative to attack other monsters out of curiosity, which often leads to them getting seriously injured.

"If you plan to take Eiko with you to Elysium, make sure to always have an eye on her, so she doesn't go and cause trouble for anyone."

Lux nodded. "Thanks for the reminder. I'll keep that in mind."

As someone who had no experience with raising pets, Iris' insight was very helpful to him. Eiko was his first Beast Companion, so he needed to

understand her character. This way, he would know how to handle certain situations when he was traveling, while bringing her with him.

Iris was about to say something else, but she stopped after hearing Astra's irritated neigh.

"What's wrong, Astra?" Iris asked.

Astra once again neighed as it used its horn to point at the baby slime who had crawled on top of Iris' head.

Eiko glanced at the Unicorn and narrowed her eyes. Because of her ability to understand all creatures, she understood that the Unicorn wanted her to leave her Mama's head.

The baby slime didn't want to leave, so she decided to show the arrogant Unicorn that she wasn't someone that it could mess with.

Eiko spat several Fire Bullets in rapid succession towards the Unicorn that was trying to make her stay away from her Mama.

Astra had already expected that this would happen, so it casually dodged Eiko's attack with ease, while looking at her in contempt.

The arrogant expression on the Unicorn's face didn't sit well with Eiko, so she unleashed a barrage of spells that she had just recently learned.

Astra neighed with disdain as the little Slime pelted it with elemental attacks in rapid succession.

As a monster that had been cared for by Iris for many years, Astra's rank was equivalent to a Rank 3 Monster. Since the Unicorn specialized in speed, it was very easy for it to dodge the attacks of a low-level monster like Eiko.

After seeing that her attacks weren't connecting, Eiko's body glowed briefly as it shouted with its adorable voice.

"Arise!"

Suddenly, a scene that Lux and Iris didn't expect to happen in front of them happened.

Seven Skeleton Fighters, and Four Skeleton Grand Archers appeared in front of Iris.

Eiko raised its head and shouted. "Attack!"

The Slime's seven Skeleton Fighters charged at the Unicorn with fury. The Skeleton Grand Archers also used their Crippling Volley attack in order to limit the number of places that Astra could move.

The Unicorn was caught by surprise, but it wasn't entirely helpless either. As one of Iris' guardians, it had faced this situation numerous times when it accompanied her to Elysium.

Astra disappeared from where it stood using its Blink ability, then fired a beam of light from the tip of its horn at the approaching skeletons.

The attack blew the Skeleton Fighters away, and shaved off half of their health. The Unicorn once again Blinked and instantly appeared behind the Skeleton Grand Archers and used its Thrash attack, kicking them in different directions.

Lux had already pulled Iris and helped her back away from the intense battle, so she wasn't in any danger from the battle that was currently being waged by Eiko's summons as well as Astra's skills.

Hanz stood in front of his Master, ready to block any wayward spells or attacks that might head in her direction.

Unknown to the three of them, Eiko had Blinked away from Iris' head, and was currently jumping towards her minions in order to fight alongside them. Astra wanted Eiko to stay away from Iris, which upset the baby Slime.

Because of this, she decided to fight against the annoying Unicorn, and show it that she was not someone that could be bullied easily.

Chapter 88.2: Eiko Vs.Astra[Part 2]

"Brother, what is happening?" Iris asked. "Where did those skeletons come from?"

"Eiko copied my Summoning Skills," Lux answered. "Iris, the baby Slime you hatched from the egg I gave you might be the strongest Slime in existence."

"Brother, Eiko is our daughter. Of course, she's bound to be the strongest."

"Um. Now that you mention it, how can my daughter be a weakling?"

"I know, right?"

—

While Lux and Iris were spectating from the side, Eiko was spitting one spell after another at the Unicorn that was trying to bully her.

Astra merely looked at the baby Slime with contempt as it deftly evaded her attacks with ease. For the attacks that were impossible to evade, it would just use Blink and instantly appear several meters away from its original position.

If Astra didn't have the Blink skill, it would be hard pressed to fight against the skeletons that Eiko had summoned. However, since it could use Blink, it had complete control of the current pace of the battle.

Not wanting to lose, Eiko copied Lux's skill, Mana Drain [EX], and tried to drain the Unicorn's mana in an attempt to prevent it from Blinking away.

When the baby Slime activated her Mana Drain skill, the Unicorn instantly felt that some of its mana was being siphoned to the baby Slime who had its mouth open wide.

Neighing in anger, Astra Blinked towards Eiko's location, wanting to punish her for trying to defy it. However, just as Astra appeared in front of Eiko, the baby slime disappeared using her own Blink ability.

As soon as Eiko reappeared in the distance, she spat a Void Arrow towards the Unicorn, planning to blind it. Unfortunately for her, the one she was fighting against was a veteran beast.

Astra also blinked away, and this time, it Blinked behind Eiko.

Sensing that the enemy was behind her, Eiko Blinked away, preventing herself from being pressed down by Astra's hoof.

Starting from that moment, both beasts fought by using Blinks consecutively. The Unicorn was doing its best to get close to the baby slime, while Eiko was doing her best to escape from Astra.

This game of tag lasted for two-full minutes before the baby slime reappeared in the corner of the room, panting for breath. Eiko had used all of her mana with the constant Blinking, and could no longer move away from the Unicorn who had a devilish smile on its face.

Just as Astra was about to close in on the baby Slime, whose body had almost turned into a small puddle due to fatigue, a skeleton with burning golden eyes in its sockets appeared in front of it.

Soon, a clang resounded in the training field as Astra's horn met Diablo's shield head-on.

Lux's Named Creature held his ground, as he blocked Astra's attack. Although Astra was stronger than Diablo, his appearance had unnerved the Unicorn, which made the latter unable to use its full power, resulting in their clash becoming a tie.

"Alright Astra, I think that's enough," Lux said as he extended both of his hands to scoop up the exhausted baby slime that was lying on the floor. "Eiko is still a baby. Don't bully her too much."

The Unicorn snorted, but it no longer pursued the matter. Its main reason was because it felt that it was beneath it to keep bullying a newborn baby monster. Astra only wanted to teach Eiko a lesson for trying to disobey her superior.

It didn't expect Eiko to have a stubborn personality with no intention of backing down, which resulted in the short skirmish between the two of them.

Iris looked at this scene with a smile on her face. As a Beast Tamer, she understood that Astra was just feeling a bit jealous of Eiko because Iris was pampering her. Among her five mythical beasts, it was Astra who had the least tolerance towards strangers approaching Iris casually.

Luckily, after repeatedly reminding it to not attack the students in the academy who were trying to get close to Iris, the Unicorn finally managed to reign in its emotions.

Unfortunately, while it had developed sufficient tolerance against Humans, it still didn't like other Monsters being chummy with its mother tamer.

"Pa...", Eiko said as she weakly raised her head. "Wuwuwuwu."

The baby slime started to cry, and tears streamed down from her eyes. Lux lightly patted her head and allowed Eiko to cry on his chest.

Truth be told, he was shocked at how much of a Battle Junky Eiko was. Maybe she knew deep inside that Astra wouldn't really hurt her, so she decided to fight against the Unicorn in order to get back at it.

Unfortunately, the baby Slime was still a baby. Even with her cheat-like abilities, she was still not a match for a battle-hardened veteran that had protected Iris from the dangers of Elysium.

"It's fine, Eiko," Lux coaxed the baby slime. "Let's get back at it when you grow stronger, okay? Just give it a year and we will be clapping Astra's butt cheeks."

Astra neighed angrily at Lux as if telling him "Bro, what the f*ck? You are a bad influence on your daughter!"

Iris, who had also approached the crying baby, pouted as she lightly pinched Lux's ears.

"Brother, don't teach Eiko to carry a grudge," Iris said with a serious expression. "She's still young and must be taught what is right and wrong. Do you want her to grow up to be a rebellious child?"

Lux only smiled as he continued to pat the crying slime's head. Although he was still struggling to grasp the concept of treating a Monster as his daughter, he thought that it might not be such a bad idea.

Perhaps, feeling his change of heart, Eiko's body relaxed in his hand and fell asleep.

Iris peered at the sleeping baby's face with a smile.

"Brother, raising a Monster is not easy," Iris said. "Some people treat them as pets. Others treat them as friends, while the majority treat them as tools. I hope that you won't treat Eiko as a tool in order to advance in Elysium. If you

do, I'll make sure to take her away from you. Anyway, I can raise our daughter myself!"

Lux glanced at the young lady who was staring at him with a serious expression on her face. Clearly, she meant every word that she had said, and would definitely take Eiko away from him if he treated the latter wrongly.

"I promise that I won't treat her as a tool," Lux met Iris' serious gaze with his own. "I will also not treat her as a pet. Since you wanted to raise her as part of our family then I will do my best to treat her as one. However, I admit that this concept is new to me. Please, give me time to adjust."

"Oh~ You don't have to worry about that, Brother. If you're not comfortable calling Eiko your daughter, that's fine too. When I turn sixteen, I'll ask grandma to help me prepare our wedding," Iris said with a smile. "When that happens, we can make a real baby. That way, you will have plenty of time to practice how to become a father."

'... Well, that escalated rather quickly,' Lux thought as he took a step back, while looking at the young beauty whose eyes started to turn dreamy. The Half-Elf didn't reject the idea of the two of them getting married.

However, after regaining his memories, he remembered his main goal and the reason why he had to go to Elysium. In order to make his stepsister and his grandmother happy, he must do his best to find a way to keep the world of Solais from dying.

Only by doing so would they have a future and a place where they could raise a family together.

As Lux was lost in his thoughts, working out how he would achieve his goal, Iris had already closed the distance and wrapped her arms around him. She didn't hold him tightly, and even allowed the Half-Elf to break out of her hold if he really wanted to do it.

"Brother Lux, I know that you might be tired of hearing me repeat things over and over again, but these are my real feelings," Iris said softly as she gazed at her beloved stepbrother's beautiful green eyes that she liked so much. "Although it was Grandma who tried to matchmake the two of us, I sincerely hope that you will consider making me your wife."

"I promise that I will do my best to make you happy. I know that for the longest time, your goal has been to go to Elysium. I respect that, and I wish for you to succeed as well. However, know this, I have liked you for a very long time."

Iris smiled as she pressed her finger over Lux's lips in order to stop him from saying anything.

"Don't give me an answer now." Iris looked at him with a tender gaze. "Think about it and give me your answer in a year or two. But know this, if your answer is no then I will have no choice but to ask for Grandma's help to tie you up and have the two of us wed whether you like it or not."

The corner of Lux's lips twitched. Iris had managed to pluck his heartstrings with the first half of her confession. However, everything went south at the end, which made him unable to decide whether he should laugh or cry at her subtle threat of a shotgun wedding.

"Understood." Lux nodded his head in understanding. He had long known that Iris liked him, and he was no longer a child who would pretend that he didn't understand. Since that was the case, he would also be open with his own feelings, and ask her a question that had been in his mind for quite some time.

"Um, Iris, I have a serious question to ask you."

"Go ahead, brother."

"Let's say, for example, that I fell in love with someone else. What would you do then?"

The corner of Iris' lips curled up into a smirk as she looked at Lux's handsome face.

"Whoever they may be, they must first get my approval," Iris answered. "Then and only then will I allow them to enter your harem."

Lux blinked as he stared back at Iris who was looking back at him with a smile.

"You're not angry about me having other ladies aside from you?" Lux asked.

"Well, I will be lying if I said that I don't feel sad about it," Iris replied.

"However, if they were capable of making you fall in love with them then that

means they have the qualifications to get my approval. So, dear brother of mine, promise me this. If you truly find someone that you love, do not hide her from me, okay?"

"Understood. I can make this promise to you."

"Good. That is all I ask, Brother."

Iris reluctantly took a step back as she looked at the Half-Elf in front of her, who had grown up with her since she was young.

Even now, she didn't know if the feelings she had for him were familial love or true love. However, one thing was clear. She liked Lux from the bottom of her heart.

She also knew that Lux liked her, too. It was only her father, Alexander, who opposed their relationship. Although the Headmaster of Barbatos Academy never talked about it, Iris could tell that he didn't think that Lux was worthy of becoming her groom due to the latter's repeated failures to get the qualifications to enter Elysium.

'Just you wait, Father,' Iris thought with an amused expression on her face. 'Brother Lux isn't the incompetent person that you thought he was. I can't wait to see the look on your face when he wins the tournament that you have prepared in order to look for my fiancé.'

The Princess of Barbatos Academy smiled sweetly. Although there were many geniuses that would join the competition to win her hand in marriage, for some reason, she wasn't afraid.

She didn't know where this confidence of hers was coming from, but after seeing Lux's Soul Book today, she understood that his potential was limitless.

Deep inside, she was very happy. How could she not be? She knew that if Lux was given a year or two, he would definitely surpass all those so-called geniuses that had graduated from the Apostle Grade and stepped into the rank of Initiates.

Her gaze softened when she saw Eiko crawl towards Lux's neck to give him a kiss. Although this little family of theirs might look like they were merely 'playing house' to other people, Iris firmly believed that one day her wishes, and dreams, would finally become a reality.

Chapter 89: I Don't Have Much Time Left

After Eiko's battle with Astra, the baby slime slept peacefully in Lux's arms.

Iris walked beside Lux as they went to find Vera in the Sky Garden of Barbatos Academy. This particular garden was divided into four areas.

The first one was for the students with commoner backgrounds.

The second was for those with noble backgrounds.

The third was for the elite students of the academy who had shown exceptional talent in Elysium. This special area didn't care whether you were a noble or not. As long as you had results, you would be a part of this exclusive club.

Everyone wanted to enter this circle of the Elites because they were truly the recognized prodigies of the six kingdoms that backed Barbatos Academy. Even Princes and Princesses could not enter the Elite Circle, regardless of how much influence and money they tried to use.

And last, but not the least, was the private sanctuary of the Kaizer family. Since Alexander was one of the strongest humans in the Western Regions of Solais, no one dared to defy him whenever he made a decision.

This was also the case for the part of the garden where Iris usually stayed with her Beast Companions whenever she wasn't training.

When Lux and Iris arrived at the garden, they saw Vera enjoying some tea, while being served by Alicia, who wanted to score some brownie points with Alexander's mother. Vera knew that the beautiful secretary admired her son, and had already approved of her.

However, Alexander had become distant and indifferent after Iris' mother died due to her poor health. Since then, he never remarried nor even looked at other ladies with the intention of marrying them.

For him, Alicia was only his secretary and their relationship was pure business. Nothing more, nothing less.

'Poor girl,' Lux thought as he looked at the beautiful lady, who was trying to aim for the moon, but was given rice crackers instead.

"Grandma!" Iris smiled brightly as she ran towards Vera to give her a hug, and a kiss on her left cheek.

After giving her greeting, the young beauty gave Lux a side-long glance before whispering something in Vera's ear, which made the old woman smile sweetly.

As if it was a planned move, both ladies gazed at Lux's with faces that screamed "Mission Accomplished!"

The Half-Elf could only chuckle nervously because he could already hear the wedding bells ringing in the distance. His only hope was his stepfather, Alexander, getting in the way of the two ladies' plans.

"Grandma, please meet your great granddaughter," Lux said with a teasing tone as he presented the still sleeping baby Slime to his grandmother.

As if sensing someone staring at her, Eiko opened her eyes and saw an old woman staring at her with an amused expression on her face.

"Manma!" Eiko said happily as she looked at Vera.

Lux was quite surprised that his baby Slime had called Vera "Manma", which was the endearment he used to call her when he was young.

Vera was also surprised and gave Lux a glance, as if asking him if he had asked Eiko to call her in this manner. The Half-Elf shook his head firmly in response, which made Vera shift her attention back to the little Slime who was lightly jumping on Lux's hands.

"Come here, Little One," Vera picked up the baby slime with both hands and brought her close to her face, to take a better look at Eiko.

Eiko didn't resist, in fact when Vera tried to scoop her up, she jumped on Vera's hands and giggled. Perhaps, she thought that her great grandmother was playing a game with her, so she decided to play with her.

"Manma! Kiss!" Eiko said as she jumped up and down on Vera's hands.

Vera chuckled because this was the first time she had seen a Slime act like a spoiled child, which tickled her heart. The old lady then kissed Eiko's cheeks, and the baby Slime returned the favor. After sharing a kiss, Eiko crawled from Vera's hand, to her shoulder, until she stood beside her neck.

Vera then picked up a small cookie from her plate and fed it to the baby Slime, who was more than happy to eat some snacks after her battle with the Unicorn, who bullied her.

"Although I didn't expect that my first granddaughter would be a Slime, this feeling isn't half bad," Vera commented as she gave Eiko another cookie. "But Lux, make sure to give me another great grandchild in five years, okay? I don't have much time left, and I still want to hold your baby."

"Grandma, you're still young," Lux replied as he rested a hand on his grandma's other shoulder. "I'm sure that you'll be able to live for another hundred years."

"Silly boy, my ears are not as long as yours."

"Grandma..."

Lux suddenly felt sad after seeing the wrinkles on his grandma's face. He hadn't paid any attention to this in the past because, for him, Vera was strong and healthy.

Also, Vera rarely showed any signs of weakness. For her to tell him that she didn't have much time, and wanted to see her great grandchild, made him realize that he had only been thinking of himself as of late.

He had never paused to consider his Grandma who had raised him since he was a baby. The Half-Elf thought that because Vera was strong, she would be able to live longer.

The people in Solais lived longer lifespans, compared to the Humans back on Earth. Most of them could live up to two hundred years old without any problems.

Lux had never asked Vera how old she was because he had long been told that asking a woman's age was disrespectful. But, seeing how old Vera looked, the red-headed teenager felt a tightening in his heart, as he thought about a future without her.

"Don't worry, Grandma," Lux said softly. "I promise you that before I turn twenty, you will be holding another great grandchild in your hands."

Vera looked at her grandson and nodded her head with satisfaction. "I look forward to it."

Iris who was listening from the side held her burning cheeks with both hands as her face turned beet red.

"Grandma, I will also do my best," Iris commented. "What do you want? A girl or a boy?"

"Hm... I don't mind if it's a girl or a boy. As long as they are born healthy."

"Understood! Let's do our best, Brother!"

"Mmm."

Eiko, who was listening to their conversation, also smiled. It was as if she was also excited to see her future brother or sister, who would be born a few years from now.

Chapter 90: Feeling Like A Novel Protagonist

"Look after your Papa for me, okay?"

"Ma!"

"Make sure he doesn't cheat on me, okay?"

"Ma?"

Vera chuckled as she patted Iris' head.

"Don't teach Eiko things like this, Iris," Vera said with a smile. "She's still a baby."

Iris stuck her tongue out at Lux, while the latter just shook his head helplessly. After spending a few days in Barbatos Academy, the Half-Elf had been targeted by several students who had a crush on Iris.

Naturally, Lux didn't fight them and simply told them that he was Iris' stepbrother. Instead of feeling relieved, the boys became even more aggressive, and some even cursed him saying how jealous they were of him.

Fortunately, Vera was always with him whenever he toured the academy, so no actual harm came to him. However, Lux's grandma told him that if he wanted the harassment to stop, all he needed to do was marry Iris after she turned sixteen and the problem would be solved.

Lux knew that his grandma was being serious about it, so he chose to stay silent and just turn a blind eye on it. He and Iris had already had a heart-to-heart talk about this and came to an agreement.

For now, the Half-Elf would focus his attention on the thing that mattered, and that was to get stronger in Elysium, and find a way to save the world of Solais from destruction. That was his reason for being born in the world.

After Iris clung to Lux for five-full minutes, under the glares of thousands of teenage boys who were wishing for his death, the young beauty finally took a step back and gazed at Lux with eyes filled with tenderness.

"Make sure to take care of our daughter, Papa," Iris said in a volume that was only loud enough for Lux to hear. "If anything happens to Eiko, I'll make sure to give you a piece of my mind."

Lux smiled and nodded. "I'll do my best."

Since Eiko and him were now bounded together by Fate, Lux decided to take good care of the baby slime and ensure that she became a strong monster.

"Goodbye, Grandma," Iris hugged Vera affectionately. "Please, visit as often as you can. Just a few days is not enough for me to tie up big brother and give you your great grandson."

"Don't worry, next time, I'll tie him up personally," Vera replied as she hugged the young beauty back. "Take care, Iris. Also, make sure that your father doesn't overwork himself."

Iris nodded. "Un!"

The White Hippopotamus, Sophie, transformed and became bigger, allowing Vera and Lux to mount her back.

Lux wanted to stay a bit longer to allow his grandma to spend more time with her son, and granddaughter, but he was on a tight schedule. He had made a promise to go to the Stronghold of Norria with Colette and the others, so he needed to return to Elysium as soon as possible.

The Half-Elf and his grandmother looked in the distance as the academy slowly disappeared from their sights.

"Lux, did Iris tell you about the upcoming tournament?" Vera inquired.

Lux nodded. "Mmm."

"Are you planning to enter?"

"Yes. If I don't, Iris will get mad at me. She will shout like a mandrake and wake up the dead."

Vera chuckled as she rested her hand on her grandson's shoulder. She knew what her son was planning as a reward in the tournament, but she didn't say anything about it. Even though Lux might not become the champion, Vera would not allow her granddaughter to marry anyone else.

After an uneventful journey, the two safely arrived in Wildgarde Stronghold. Lux decided to rest in his room for a bit and have dinner with his grandma before returning to Elysium in the morning.

There was also the matter of Eiko's skills, which he still hadn't chosen. Lux decided to rule out the summoning options that were available to her because she didn't need those at this point in time. This removed more than half the options from the list, allowing the Half-Elf to focus his attention on the remaining choices.

—

- Health +2000
- Intelligence +100
- Underwater Breathing
- Lava Walking
- Air Steps

– Dig

—

"There are no volcanoes here in the Beginner's Area so I can skip Lava Walking for now," Lux muttered. "Underwater breathing is good, but slimes can already float in the water, and are good swimmers. She didn't need to become a submarine. The additional 100 Bonus to intelligence is good, so I guess I'll choose this one. As for the last one..."

Lux had to choose between Air Steps and Dig. in order to better understand them, Lux decided to look at the information about the two Skills, so he could finalize his decision.

—

< Air Steps >

– Allows Eiko to move in the air as if she was moving on land. This skill consumes five Mana Point every thirty seconds, up to a maximum of a minute.

– Skill Cooldown: 2 minutes.

< Dig >

– Allows Eiko to dig a hole and move underground. This skill consumes fifty Mana Points every thirty seconds.

– This skill has no cooldown and can be used as long as Eiko has mana.

Lux rubbed his chin as he gazed at the two choices. Both were self explanatory, but he was still finding a hard time to decide which skill to pick for the baby slime.

If he chose Air Steps, Eiko would be able to maneuver in the air, assisting him in battle. Dig, on the other hand, would allow her to safely dig underground, preventing anyone from running after her.

Both were life saving skills, and their only difference was their usage. After a long struggle, Lux finally decided to choose Air Steps. Although Dig was a good choice, Air Steps was more versatile. It also gave Eiko the ability to

attack from above as she unleashed a barrage of spells that she had learned after absorbing the Beast Cores that Iris gave her.

You have chosen the skill Air Steps.

Eiko activated the skill Mimicry [EX]!

- Target Lux Von Kaizer.
- Successfully copied Skill Evolution [EX]!

< Skill Evolution [EX] detected a new Skill. >

< Since the Skill is not learned from a Beastcore, evolution requirements will be waived. >

- Air Steps has successfully been upgraded to Air Strider [EX]!

< Air Strider [EX] >

- Aside from traversing on air, this skill also gives Eiko the ability to fly for a short period of time.
- This skill consumes five Mana Points every thirty seconds, up to a maximum of a minute when traversing on air.
- This skill consumes fifty Mana Points every thirty seconds, up to a maximum of five minutes while flying in the air.

< Eiko >

"The world is my oyster!"

- Named Slime Monster

– Rating: E

– Progress (0 / 2000)

Health: 340 / 340

Mana: 4,500 / 4,500

Strength: 17

Intelligence: 150

Vitality: 17

Agility: 17

Dexterity: 17

Special Abilities: Mimicry [EX], Regeneration [EX], Family Bond [EX], Speech [EX], Air Strider [EX]

Active Skill: Water Bullet, Hydro Ball. Fire Bullet, Fire Bolt, Wind Bullet, Aero Ball, Stone Bullet, Stone Spike, Shadow Bullet, Shadow Ball, Blink, Teleport, Cure, Cure-All.

Passive Skill: Uncanny Dodge

Title: Mama's and Papa's Girl

Note: One small step for men, one giant leap for baby slime.

After looking at Eiko's stats, Lux couldn't stop the corner of his lips from twitching at the cheat-like abilities that his baby Slime possessed.

Looking at her stats alone, Eiko was now considered a Rank 1 Monster because her combined stats had already surpassed 200 points.

Not only that, she had a vast array of skills at her disposal. The best thing of all was that she could copy any move with the help of her Skill, Mimicry [EX], This allowed her to double Lux's Skeleton Army in a heartbeat.

With such a cute baby Slime by his side, Lux felt that he was like one of those novel protagonists, whose cheat-like abilities would make the readers reading it scream "OP!"

"Let's sleep, Eiko," Lux said as he lightly patted the baby Slime that was yawning on his pillow. "Tomorrow, I'll let you meet my friends. I'm sure that you will get along with them."

"Fwen?" Eiko sleepily muttered before closing her eyes to sleep.

Lux smiled as he envisioned Colette's and Helen's reactions after seeing Eiko. Knowing the two little girls, they would surely pamper and spoil the baby Slime, who would give them a wonderful surprise as they continued their journey in Elysium.

Chapter 91: This Is My Baby Monster Eiko

"Take care of yourselves, okay?" Vera said as she placed her left hand on Lux's shoulder, and patted Eiko's head with her right. "Visit me often."

"We will be careful, Grandma," Lux replied. "Please, take care of yourself as well."

"I love Manma!" Eiko stated, which made Vera smile. Vera kissed her adopted great granddaughter's head, causing the latter to giggle.

After looking at the father and daughter pair, Vera reluctantly stepped back. Whenever Lux returned to Elysium, she would feel worried about him. However, the red-headed teenager made sure to come home as much as he could, and each of his stays lasted for a few days before he left again.

Also, Lux would show her his Soul Book each time, just like a student who would show their parents their report cards, so they could see how well they were doing. The Half-Elf wanted to assure his grandma that she didn't need to worry about his safety in the Beginner's Zone because he was getting strong.

Since Vera already knew the extent of Lux's progress, her worries diminished a bit. But, just like a doting parent, she still felt sad whenever the two of them parted. After taking care of him for over sixteen years, the old lady knew that Lux had to take the path he had chosen on his own.

"Don't worry, Grandma. We will return safely," Lux said after seeing the worried expression that Vera wasn't able to hide as she looked at him.

Vera nodded. "I will be waiting for the two of you to return. May the Gods watch over the two of you."

Lux smiled as he placed his right hand over his chest.

"Open! Heaven's Gate!"

Eiko, who had claimed the top of Lux's head as her nest, looked at her surroundings with great curiosity.

As the Half-Elf strolled through Leaf Village, several Dwarfs greeted him, while others gave him a brief nod as he passed through them. After defeating the Abomination, the reputation points that he gained after finishing his quest made the locals of Leaf Village treat him as a friend.

The little Slime on his head also caught the attention of some Dwarf children. Most of them would often look at Eiko with great curiosity as the latter walked alongside Lux.

It was at that moment when he heard a familiar voice calling out to him in the distance.

"Big Brother!"

Lux glanced at the balcony of the tavern he usually went to with Colette and saw the adorable little Dwarf waving at him.

He also saw Helen, Andy, Axel, as well as the Simp, Matty, who was looking at him with an annoyed expression.

Lux waved back as he walked towards the tavern where his friends were at. Today was the tenth day since they last saw each other. They were also planning to go to the Stronghold of Norria later in the afternoon.

The red-headed teenager still had the special permits that Boreas had given him to gain access to the checkpoints that they would be passing through along the way.

"What took you so long?"

That was the first thing that Matty asked when Lux joined their table. "We've been waiting for two hours already."

"Sorry, I was delayed a bit because I had breakfast with Grandma," Lux replied.

Matty clicked his tongue but didn't say anything else. Andy and Axel greeted Lux in a friendly manner, while Colette and Helen looked at the Blue Slime on Lux's head with curious gazes. Seeing the two girls' reaction, the Half-Elf decided to introduce Eiko to them.

"Everyone, this is my baby monster, Eiko," Lux said with a smile. "Eiko, they are your Big Sis Colette and Helen. These are your Big Brothers Andy, and Axel, and that Dwarf over there, just call him Simp."

Matty rolled his eyes, before drinking the ale in his mug. He was not interested in whatever the baby Slime called him because he didn't care about its existence.

"Sis!" Eiko said as she crawled down from Lux's head towards the table.

She stopped in front of Colette and looked up at her with innocent eyes, which melted the little Dwarf's heart.

"No good, I may not be able to kill Slimes anymore," Colette said as she lightly poked Eiko's cheeks, making the baby Slime giggle.

"Eiko, do you like pancakes? You can have some of mine," Helen commented as she used her fork to feed Eiko the pancake on her plate.

Eiko moved towards Helen's location and opened her mouth, allowing Helen to feed her.

"Is it good?" Helen asked.

"Un!" Eiko nodded happily, which prompted Colette and Helen to both feed her.

The baby Slime happily ate everything that the two girls gave her. Since Eiko had a transparent body, everyone was able to see how she digested it all.

"Do slimes digest things this fast?" Lux asked Colette, who had just finished feeding the baby Slime a small sausage.

The Half-Elf hadn't seen any Slime in the past, so she didn't know if Eiko's digestion speed was normal or not. Each bite of food that was given to her would be digested in less than five seconds, which made him wonder if all slimes were like Eiko.

Colette and Helen paused as they considered this question. Suddenly both of them looked at Eiko in disbelief when they realized that what they were seeing wasn't normal.

"As far as I know, it takes Slimes a few hours to digest anything they eat," Colette said as she looked at Eiko in a different light. "Even the Gluttonous Slime, that eats just about anything, takes at least half an hour to digest the things it eats."

Right after Colette finished talking, Eiko let out a burp before crawling back towards Lux's hand. Soon, she crawled back up to the Half-Elf's head before closing her eyes to sleep.

'I think I need to do a bit more research about Slimes,' Lux thought. 'Good thing, I have the Elysium Compendium. I will take a good look at it later.'

Looking at the baby Slime that was peacefully sleeping on Lux's head, Colette and Helen asked the red-headed teenager where he got Eiko. Since Lux couldn't possibly tell them that Eiko came from the egg that he had received as a bonus reward after killing Carbuncle, he just told them that she was given to him by his Grandma Vera.

The two Dwarves didn't find this strange because it was very common for parents to give their children gifts whenever they do something praiseworthy in Elysium.

An hour later, all of them left the tavern and went to the Merchant's Guild to hire a carriage that would take them to the Stronghold of Norria.

Before he left to return to Solais, Nevreal told him that they would bring the Nightmare Horse that he requested from the Stronghold while he was away. Lux was quite happy with this arrangement because he was also going there to pick up weapons and armor for his Skeleton Army.

He believed that even if they were just wielding the standard weapons that the Riders of Norria used, the strength of his minions would be raised to a higher level, allowing them to deal more damage, and be more resistant to the physical and magical damage that came from their enemies.

Chapter 92: It Is Not Only Kobolds That Keep Grudges

As their carriage traveled towards the Stronghold of Norria, Colette and Helen took care of Eiko.

Lux, on the other hand, was busy reading the Elysium Compendium and doing his best to learn more about Slimes. However, the more he read, the more his confusion grew.

Eiko was a Blue Slime. It was the most common type of Slime, and yet her abilities far exceeded that of ordinary Slimes, which made it very hard for Lux to identify what kind of slime she really was.

'There's no doubt that she's a Blue Slime,' Lux thought as he scratched his head. 'Well, I guess I shouldn't be too surprised. After all, the one who hatched her was Iris.'

His stepsister's luck was off the charts, so any egg that she personally hatched would definitely be a Mythical Monster at the minimum.

After reading for two hours, Lux closed the book and watched the baby Slime lightly hop on top of Colette's palms, making the latter and the other Dwarf girl giggle.

Lux watched this scene with a smile. However, his expression immediately changed when something suddenly descended from the sky, blocking the road in front of them.

The horse pulling the carriage abruptly halted as it neighed in fear, but the coachman managed to reign it in. Even so, he looked at the monster in front of him with a guarded expression on his face.

The Dwarves immediately summoned their weapons, while Eiko hurriedly crawled towards Lux and hid behind him. All of them looked at the Draconic

creature with wings behind his back, who was staring at them with a hint of amusement.

Colette and her friends immediately recognized the monster, which made their faces turn grim. How could they possibly forget the one that was responsible for sabotaging their mission by attacking the caravan that they were guarding? They were even kidnapped and brought into the latter's nest as prisoners.

"I remember you Dwarves...", the creature said as soon as his eyes landed on Colette and her friends, which made them flinch.

It then chuckled lightly after seeing the fear on their faces. After having its fill, it then shifted his gaze to the Half-Elf who stood out from the rest. "You are the one that the Chieftain mentioned some time ago. The Half-Elf that led the Warriors of Norria to our nest and started a massacre while I was away."

The Draconic Kobold released faint traces of killing intent as his gaze locked on Lux. Clearly, it didn't like the fact that its brethren were killed while he was fighting the Goblins that were trying to annex their territory.

Lux faced the monster with a fearless gaze, but deep inside he was feeling anxious. The Elysium Compendium had identified the creature that was blocking their way.

The red-headed teenager didn't expect that he would meet this creature on their way to the Stronghold of Norria. Looking at its information, he knew that even if he fought alongside his friends, in addition to summoning all his creatures, the ending would still be the same.

All of them would perish under the creature's overpowering might.

< Draconic Kobold >

– Kobold Wyrmling

– Rank 5 Alpha Monster

Health: 400,000 / 400,000

Mana: 350,000 / 350,000

Strength: 300

Intelligence: 350

Vitality: 300

Agility: 300

Dexterity: 300

Active Skills: Dragon Breath, Dragon Claw, Dragon Tail, Dragon Fear, Berserk

Passive Skills: Enhanced Fortitude

< Enhanced Fortitude >

– Reduce all damage taken by 30%

'Sh*t,' Lux thought as he read the information that appeared in front of him. He also had the Enhanced Fortitude Skill as a passive skill, so he understood how troublesome it would be if he fought against the Draconic Kobold in front of him.

All Dragon Monsters had this skill. Lux was only able to obtain this skill because Vera had given him a beast core that contained the skill Fortitude, which the Skill Evolution [EX] upgraded to a higher rank, giving him the same resistance as the Dragon Race.

However, compared to the foe in front of them, his resistance was equivalent to toilet paper.

Rustling sounds were heard around them as several more Kobolds appeared to surround their carriage. Although none of them held any weapons, the Draconic Kobold that was eyeing their group was more than enough to make Lux and the others forget about this small detail.

"What do you want?" Lux asked the two-meter tall monster who was eyeing him like a predator that had found his prey. "Don't you know that your race

and the Dwarves have signed a nonaggression pact treaty? You are no longer allowed to antagonize the citizens of this Domain."

The Draconic Kobold snorted as his eyes locked on to Lux's body.

"True," the Draconic Kobold agreed. "But that only applies to Dwarves. You are not included in that treaty."

'Oh, f*ck...' Lux cursed internally because he had completely forgotten that he wasn't a Dwarf. The agreement between the Kobold Chieftain as well as Boreas, the Commander of Norria, only stated that they would no longer trouble the Dwarves in their territory.

"You are coming with me today, Half-Elf," the Draconic Kobold declared. "Take him. But, do not hurt the Dwarves."

"We won't let you touch Big Brother!" Colette shouted as she gripped her mace firmly in her hands. Although she knew that she wasn't a match against the enemy in front of her, she just couldn't possibly stand by and let them take Lux just like that.

"Surround Big Brother now!" Colette ordered.

Matty, Andy, Axel, and Helen, understood Colette's intentions. As long as they used their bodies as a shield to protect Lux, the Kobold wouldn't be able to do anything to them or they would break the agreement between the Kobolds and the Dwarves.

"Foolish children," the Draconic Kobold said as it unleashed its Dragon Fear.

Immediately, Colette and the others were subjected to an incredible pressure that made their knees buckle. They simply didn't have the ability to resist the fear-inducing effect of the Dragon Fear, which made them almost lose their consciousness.

Suddenly, the sound of hooves was heard in the distance. The Draconic Kobold turned its head to see six riders, mounted on goats, charging in their direction.

"What's the meaning of this?" the Captain of the Riders asked when it saw the Kobolds surrounding the carriage. "Are you planning on breaking the agreement, Kobold? How dare you harm our people?"

The Draconic Kobold scoffed as it pointed its reptilian finger at Lux. "I'm not harming your people. I only want him."

The Dwarf Captain frowned as he looked at the red-headed teenager, who was being surrounded by the Dwarf children.

"You can't take him," the Dwarven Captain said. "He is one of us."

"One of you?" the Draconic Kobold smirked. "Do you think I am blind, Dwarf?"

The Dwarf Captain ignored the Kobold and pointed at Lux.

"You there, do you have the medal bestowed unto you by his Majesty?" the Dwarf Captain asked.

Lux nodded and took the wooden box out of his storage ring. He then opened it and showed the Dwarf Captain the medal that had been given to him by the King of the Dwarves.

"Take a good look at that, Kobold," the Dwarf Captain said. "Although he is not one of our kind, he is considered a Noble of our Kingdom. This means that he is one of us, and our King treats him with high regard. You already know the punishment for those who try to kill the Nobles of this Kingdom, right?"

The Draconic Kobold walked towards the Half-Elf with steady steps. Colette and the others tried to move their bodies to block him, but Lux stopped them from doing so. The mere thought of letting the children get hurt because of him didn't sit well with him.

Since the Dwarf Captain was around, he knew that the Draconic Kobold wouldn't do anything that would break the agreement that their race had with the Dwarves.

The Draconic Kobold picked the golden medal up from the wooden box and scrutinized it. As one of the most intelligent creatures from its race, it knew the value of such trinkets. Seeing the insignia of the Gweliven Kingdom embedded on the medal, the Draconic Kobold had no choice but to recognize that what the Dwarf Captain said was true.

"Just this once, I will let this slide," the Draconic Kobold said as he returned the medal to the wooden box. "What is your name, Half-Elf?"

"Lux," Lux answered. "Lux Von Kaizer."

"I will remember you, Lux," the Draconic Kobold said with an evil smirk on its face. His face was only inches away from Lux's and his razor sharp teeth made the Half-Elf wonder when the Draconic Kobold had brushed its teeth last.

"My name is Cadmus," Cadmus introduced himself as he rested his claws on Lux's shoulders, holding him in a vice grip. "The next time we see each other, you better pray that I am not in a bad mood."

Cadmus sneered at the Half-Elf before making a gesture for his subordinates to leave. Its meeting with Lux and his friends had been completely by accident.

The Draconic Kobold was only able to detect Lux's location because the Kobold Sorcerer that the Half-Elf fought in the Kobold's Nest had subtly left a faint magical mark on his body. This allowed any Kobold to sense his general direction.

Lux didn't know that after the raid on their nest, the Kobolds had made him their public enemy number one. They were a race that kept grudges, especially grudges that involved the death of their kin.

The Half-Elf watched the Draconic Kobold spread its wings and fly towards the sky. He knew that if the Dwarf Captain hadn't arrived, he would have definitely been captured, and perhaps dragged back to their nest to be tortured.

'It's been a while since I felt this way,' Lux thought as he clenched his right fist. 'This feeling of helplessness. I hate this feeling.'

Lux remembered the times when he fainted after exerting his body. After he regained consciousness, that feeling of helplessness would wash over him, making him feel depressed.

However, this time it was different. He was no longer the same Half-Elf that he was a year ago. Now, he had been given a chance to become strong and catch up to his friends who had started their own journeys many years ago.

It was not only Kobolds who carried a grudge. Lux could also be petty at times, so he took Cadmus' words to heart. Although he was much weaker

than the Rank 5 Monster that looked down on him, he knew that it was only a matter of time before he caught up to it.

Lux had only been in Elysium for a few months, but his combined stats had already far exceeded the requirements of the Beginner Zone. As the Half-Elf gazed at his Soul Book, a sneer appeared on his face.

Name: Lux Von Kaizer

Age: 16

Race: Half-Elf

Rank: (None)

Health: 11,960 / 11,960

Mana: 940 / 940

Strength: 46 (+3)

Intelligence: 46 (+1)

Vitality: 31

Agility: 34 (+3)

Dexterity: 31 (+3)

Free Stat Points Available: 480

Special Abilities: Skill Evolution [EX], Mana Drain [EX], Item Transmutation [EX]

Active Skills: Power Shot, Dark Arrow, Fury Slash, Double Fury Slash, Battle Cry

Passive Skills: Enhanced Fortitude, Expert Parry,

'Your name is Cadmus, right?' Lux thought as he stared at the monster that was flying away from his location. 'I'll remember your name.'

Lux knew that there would come a day when his strength surpassed the arrogant Draconic Kobold. Although he and the Kobolds' conflict was over for now, his grudge against Cadmus, who intended to capture him, would remain.

Elysium was a world where only the strong survived. Since that was the case, then the other party shouldn't blame him for being cruel when the time comes. He was certain that Cadmus would be forced to leave the Territory of Norria after his rank broke through a certain threshold.

Although the chances were slim, Lux believed that he would meet Cadmus again in the future. When that time came, the grudge that bloomed on this day would be repaid in full.

Chapter 93.1: Chasing A Nightmare [Part 1]

"It's fine, Eiko. The ugly Kobold is gone," Lux said as he lightly patted the still-shivering baby Slime on his shoulder.

Eiko had been subjected to the skill, Dragon's Fear, that Cadmus had released to make Colette and his friends lose their strength and will to fight.

This was the first time that Eiko met such a fearsome monster, so she was unable to stop her natural instinct from taking hold of her body when the Dragon Fear hit her.

After a few more minutes of coaxing, the baby slime finally settled down as she hid inside Lux's robe, in order to feel safe and warm.

"Still, that was a close call, Big Brother," Colette said. If one listened carefully, they could trace the lingering fear in her words. "If you didn't have the medal with you, things might have gotten out of hand."

Helen, who was seated beside Colette, nodded her head in agreement.

"Big Brother, I didn't know that you were now an Honorary Knight of this Kingdom," Helen commented. "You are the third person I know that has received an Honorary Knight title from his Majesty."

Matty eyed Lux with an envious look on his face, as he tried to pry answers out of him.

"How did you get that medal of honor?" Matty asked. "What kind of achievement did you do in order to get enough merit to receive an Honorary Knight title?"

Lux glanced at the Simp Dwarf, as he proudly raised his chin.

"Did you forget? I saved your bum in the Kobold's Nest," Lux replied. "The Dwarf King thought that what I did was awesome, so he bestowed this reward on me. If you want to be like me, you better git gud you hen-pecked Simp!"

"Simp!" Eiko poked out of Lux's robes as she joined her Papa in teasing Matty. The baby Slime even giggled and called Matty Simp one more time before going back inside Lux's robes.

"Who are you calling a hen-pecked Simp?! I'm not a Simp!" Matty rebuked Lux's statement.

"Matty, be quiet," Colette said as she glared at the Dwarf. He instantly folded and immediately shut his trap. "You might scare Eiko."

"Okay," Matty replied before glaring at Lux.

Lux chuckled and wanted to say "See?" But in the end, he chose to hold back and give Matty some face. Although the Simp Dwarf bickered with him whenever an opportunity arose, Lux finally understood that it was just Matty's way of interacting with him.

The Riders of Norria, who had come due to the appearance of the Draconic Kobold, could only shake their heads due to how silly the children's conversations were. In order to prevent the Kobolds from sneak attacking Lux once again, they decided to just escort him straight to their Stronghold and prevent any trouble from arising.

The group traveled for half a day, before arriving at the base of a mountain, where the Stronghold of Norria stood.

Lux was quite surprised because the Stronghold was just as big as the Wildgarde Stronghold where he had grown up since he was a baby.

"Welcome to the Stronghold of Norria," the Captain of the Riders said with a smile. "We don't usually allow outsiders to enter our Domain, but you guys are an exception. Please, follow me and do not wander around after we've arrived at our destination."

Lux and the Dwarves nodded their heads in understanding. Although they wanted to take a stroll inside the Stronghold, they held back this urge for the time being until they got permission from Thoram, who was the Supreme Commander of the Stronghold.

Without taking any detours, the Dwarf Captain took their guests to the Barracks where another Dwarf Captain was waiting for them.

Before Lux and the others left the village, they had asked the Dwarf Captain, Boreas, who was stationed in Leaf Village to send a message to the Stronghold to announce their arrival. Because of this, Thoram was able to make preparations beforehand and even sent the Dwarf Captain to escort them to their Domain.

Fortunately, he had done that or else Lux might have been captured by the Draconic Kobold and might have suffered a lot from their thirst for revenge.

"Let's head to the stables first," the Dwarf Captain named Gustall said with a smile. "Lord Nevreal is there and is already waiting for your arrival."

Lux's eyes were suddenly filled with expectations because Nevreal had promised him several things before the two of them parted not too long ago.

Five minutes later, they arrived at the stables where several Dwarves were looking at a two-meter tall horse, whose body was completely black. Purplish flames blazed brightly near its feet and the edge of the mane and tail, which made it seem intimidating to those that were seeing it for the first time.

"Beautiful."

This was the word that escaped Lux's lips as he stared at the majestic creature in front of him.

"Glad you like it," Nevreal said as he walked towards Lux with a smug expression on his face. "Took me some time to bring the Nightmare to this place. However, are you sure you will be able to tame this beast? Not that I

doubt your words, but even the stablemaster in the Royal Capital couldn't make it obedient."

Lux scratched his head because he also didn't know if Diablo would be able to tame the beast or not. The only thing he knew was that his Named Creature was a Skeletal Rider, and was well-versed in taming beasts that could serve as its mount.

"We'll find out soon enough," Lux said. "Come forth, Diablo!"

Lux's First Born appeared in front of him and gazed at the Nightmare Horse in the distance. As if sensing its gaze, the Nightmare also turned its head towards Diablo who was seizing him up.

The two monsters stared at each other for a full minute before Diablo leaped towards the enclosed area where the Nightmare was currently being held in.

The Nightmare neighed fiercely as it stomped its foot, while looking at the Skeleton in front of it. Clearly, it didn't like anyone intruding on its personal space.

"Kekeke," Diablo chuckled as it summoned its shield and sword.

The Dwarves who were standing behind the fence all cheered as they waited for a good show to start. All of them tried to tame the Nightmare, but the latter was too aggressive to be tamed.

The Beast was currently a Rank 2 Monster, which spelled trouble for those that were weaker than it. It was fast, and had both short and long ranged attacks in its arsenal, making it a troublesome opponent for those who attempted to deal with it unprepared.

"5 gold coins that the Nightmare will smash that Skeleton to pieces," one of the Dwarves said as he started to bet with his friends.

"10 gold coins for the Nightmare!"

"5 gold coins for the Skeleton. Although I'm not confident in its chances, I like to bet on the underdogs."

The Dwarves became rowdy as they started to pool gold coins for their bets. Colette and the others were itching to join them, but were stopped by Lux.

"Kids shouldn't gamble," Lux told them with a serious expression on his face. "It might turn into an addiction."

Because of this, the young Dwarves reluctantly nodded their heads and simply watched the two Monsters that were facing each other.

Eiko found this fight to be interesting too, so she perched on top of Lux's head to get a better view of the battle. As a battle junkie herself, Eiko wanted to learn as many strategies as she could about how to fight. This way, she would be able to beat the Unicorn, Astra, the next time she visited her Mama in Barbatos Academy.

"Goodluck, Diablo," Lux muttered. "Make that Nightmare submit to your will."

Lux had full confidence that Diablo would be able to tame the proud monster whose body started to blaze fiercely.

Clearly, the Nightmare had deemed Diablo as a strong opponent, so it didn't plan on holding back. Diablo, on the other hand, gazed at the Nightmare Horse in front of him. It had long wanted to use its ability to its fullest, but the lack of a mount made him unable to do so.

Now that an opportunity presented itself, he would not hesitate to use everything in his power to make the Nightmare yield and become his new mount.

Chapter 94.2: Chasing A Nightmare [Part 2]

The loud neighing of the Nightmare made everyone pay attention to the battle that was about to start.

Diablo was like a black knight as it held a sword and a shield in each hand in a defensive position.

Nevreal scratched his head as he looked at Lux's Summon before glancing at the Half-Elf who was cheering for the Skeleton, alongside the baby slime on his head.

"Is this how you plan to tame the Nightmare?" Nevreal asked with a dumbfounded look on his face.

"Mmm." Lux hummed. "Don't tell anyone. It is a trade secret."

"What a bunch of nonsense."

"Relax. Just watch and learn."

Lux looked confident on the surface, but deep inside, he was wondering if Diablo's strategy to tame the wild Nightmare was going to work.

The fiery horse was a true Rank 2 Monster, which was of the same Rank as Diablo. Lux wanted to think that both were evenly matched, but there was one small problem. Skeletons were weak against Fire, Life, Healing, and Holy Magic.

The Nightmare was able to conjure purple flames to aid it in battle, which made the untamed mount Diablo's worst matchup. Even so, the Half-Elf felt that everything would just be fine. After all, his Named Creature had never let him down when it really mattered.

Suddenly, the Nightmare coated its entire body in purplish flames as it ran towards Diablo with the intention to ram him.

The Dwarves who were watching the battle smirked because they anticipated that the Skeleton's body would crumble even if it was just grazed by the Nightmare's attack.

However, to their surprise, Diablo did something unthinkable.

Diablo leaped high up in the air before throwing his shield like a frisbee towards the Nightmare's head.

A metallic sound reverberated in the surroundings the moment the shield collided with the Nightmare's head, dispelling the flames that coated its body. But, Diablo's attack wasn't over yet. After throwing the shield, Dawne, to disorient the monster in front of him, Lux's Named Skeleton took another shield out of its inventory.

He then charged towards the side of the nightmare, ramming its body, which sent it skidding a few meters away, and neighing in pain.

As a Rank 2 Monster, the Nightmare quickly recovered its footing and summoned two fire lances, and shot them in Diablo's direction.

Diablo didn't back down and fired two bone spears consecutively, which negated the attacks that were aimed at him. After the battle against the Kobold Sorcerer in the Kobold's Nest, Diablo had learned how to fight against spellcasters with long ranged attacks.

Also, Lux had helped him a bit by casting Battlecry, which raised his physical and magical damage by 100 points, allowing him to overcome his elemental weakness.

"Go Diablo!" Colette raised her fist as she cheered.

"Diablo go!" Eiko lightly jumped on Lux's head, as she also cheered for her Papa's Named Creature.

Nevreal rubbed his chin as he looked at the two monsters inside the monster pen.

"Not bad," Nevreal stated. "It's no wonder you were able to capture the mastermind behind the Figaro incident."

Lux didn't say anything and simply smiled. Although it didn't show on his face, he was worried about Diablo's chances of taking down the Nightmare.

By this time, the fiery horse had already realized that its opponent wasn't a pushover. However, because of its stubborn nature, it refused to believe that Diablo was better than it.

As the flames on its body burned brightly, eight flaming lances appeared around it. Their tip was pointed at the Skeleton that was currently standing perfectly still, as if he was just a mere target that was waiting for destruction.

However, before the Nightmare could even fire the lances that it had conjured, Diablo pointed his sword at the Nightmare, which made its body involuntarily charged forward.

Due to the loss of concentration, the spears that it had summoned disappeared, leaving only traces of ember behind.

Diablo had activated its skill, Duel [EX], which forced his target to exchange one blow with him.

As the Nightmare angrily charged forward, Diablo leaped up to the air at the last minute and fired a Bone Spear at his opponent's backside.

Everyone who saw this scene flinched, and some of them even subconsciously placed their hands over their backside, as their faces winced in pain.

The Nightmare neighed in pain as well as shame, as Diablo's Bone Spear pierced the one place that would make anyone go down on their knees.

The corner of Nevreal's lips twitched when he saw this shameless display of skill. Although this seemed to be an effective way to tame the wild mounts that refused to submit to anyone, he still found Diablo's method too... crude and unorthodox.

'If I mentioned this method to the Royal Stablemaster, he would definitely shout in anger and call me mad,' Nevreal thought as he tossed the idea to the back of his mind.

The dwarf then watched as Diablo walked towards the horse that had fallen on the ground and lightly stepped on the Bone Spear that was still embedded on its backside.

"Kekeke." Diablo chuckled as it looked at the Nightmare's defiant expression.

However, that stubbornness soon disappeared after it saw Diablo summoning another Bone Spear in its hand.

Seeing that his opponent had surrendered, Diablo placed his hand over its head as he activated the taming spell. The Nightmare was enveloped with a purplish glow before disappearing from the Monster Pen.

Lux then summoned his Soul Book as he went to check Diablo's Page to see the status of his mount.

To his surprise, the Mount received a page of its own, which also showed its stats and abilities. Diablo walked up to Lux as it peeked at his Soul Book to look at his new partner in crime.

"Do you want to give him a name?" Lux asked because the Nightmare's Page allowed him to bestow a name to Diablo's new mount.

Diablo rubbed his chin before nodding his head. He then tapped Lux's chest twice, before tapping the Nightmare's portrait, indicating his intention of letting his Master choose a name for his new steed.

"Understood." Lux nodded as he thought of a good name for the stubborn horse that refused to be tamed in the past.

After several minutes had passed, Lux lightly tapped the Nightmare's Page as he used his finger to write the name that he had thought of.

"Arion," Lux said softly. "From now on, your name will be Arion. The mighty horse that the heroes rode into battle."

Diablo nodded his head in satisfaction before turning into particles of light. Now that he had his own mount to carry him into battle, he would finally be able to unleash the full power of the Skeleton Rider Class, which Lux had bestowed unto him.

Chapter 95: Diablo's Preference

"Here are the weapons and armor that you wanted," Nevreal said as he led Lux to the warehouse. "All of them were made by the Blacksmith here in Norria, and their quality is a cut from the rest. Use them well."

Lux looked at the rows of weapons and sets of armor that Nevreal had prepared for him. He then secretly used the Elysium Compendium to appraise them and see their stats.

< One Handed Steel Sword >

Rating: Rare

– Standard Weaponry of the Warriors of Norria

– Increase physical damage by 10%

Attack: 35 - 50

< Longbow of Norria >

Rarity: Rare

- Standard Weaponry of the Warriors of Norria
- Increase range damage by 10%

Attack: 45 - 60

< Norria Light-Plate Armor Set >

Rarity: Rare

- Standard Armor of the Warriors of Norria
- Decrease Physical Damage Received by 10%

Defense: 100

Lux smiled in satisfaction as he gazed at the twenty sets of weapons and armor that Nevreal generously gave him.

"Thank you," Lux said. "This means a lot to me."

Nevreal waved his hand as if this wasn't a big deal to him.

"With this, all debts have been settled," Nevreal replied. "We no longer owe you anything."

Lux nodded as he acknowledged Nevreal's words. The Dwarves had generously rewarded him for his help during the raid in the Kobold's Nest in order to save Robin. Although the Half-Elf now had a hunch of who the snobbish Dwarf boy was, he had no intention of revealing this to the others.

After all, it was only a hunch at the moment, and until it was verified, he shouldn't tell anyone about it.

"I have also talked to the Commander about your other request...", Nevreal frowned as he gazed at the red-headed teenager in front of him. "Are you sure you want to enter the C-Rank Dungeon that is under the jurisdiction of the Stronghold of Norria? It might still be too early for you and those kids. Are you sure you want to do it?"

"Don't worry, we are just going to take a look inside," Lux answered. "If it's really too much then we will just use our teleport crystals to leave that place."

Nevreal could only reluctantly nod his head after hearing Lux's words. The C-Rank Dungeon, Orc Dominion, was a twelve-man team Dungeon. Although it could be challenged even if the number of people in the party didn't reach twelve, it was still highly recommended to challenge it using a full party.

These Dungeons were quite special, and they also had another name and that was "Instance Dungeons".

Instance Dungeons were Dungeons that would generate a similar copy of the entire Dungeon for every party that entered it.

Meaning, although everyone was challenging the same Dungeon, they would be in a different version of the Dungeon, allowing each team to challenge it without worrying about other people interfering with their expedition.

A twelve-men Dungeon meant that it was highly recommended to challenge it with twelve people instead of the usual party of six or seven. There were also fifty-men Dungeons, and hundred-men Dungeons.

On very rare occasions, SSR-Ranked Dungeons would suddenly appear in Elysium. This type of Dungeon required a thousand people in order to clear it. This Dungeon was an open world Dungeon, in which they needed to fight a Calamity-Ranked World Boss, which could drop Legendary Items once it was defeated.

"Okay, I will wait for you at the barracks while you finish storing the equipment," Nevreal said before leaving the warehouse.

Although he was very doubtful whether Lux and his friends would be able to clear the Dungeon or not, he still gave the Half-Elf the benefit of the doubt.

The Orc Dominion Dungeon was the place where the warriors of Norria would train after they had become Grade C Apostles. The Boss Monster inside it was a Rank 3 Alpha Monster called the Dark-Skinned Orc Chieftain.

It was a monster that was slightly stronger than the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis, and was very hard to kill because of its strength and tenacity. It also had a berserk ability which made it extremely dangerous once its health was dangerously low.

"Okay guys, time to suit up," Lux smirked as he opened his Soul Book and equipped the weapons and armor to his Skeleton Fighters and Skeleton Grand Archers.

Ishtar wore the new armor as well, increasing her defense. Although she would be attacking her enemies from a distance, having armor was still better than not having any.

To Lux's surprise when it was Diablo's turn to equip the armor, his Named Creature decided to turn it down. When Lux asked him why, his Named Creature used his sword to write down two words on the ground.

Black Armor.

Those were the words that Diablo wrote, which made Lux scratch his head. This was the first time that Diablo told him his preferences, so he decided to respect his decision.

'I guess I better look for Dark Armor sets for him in the future,' Lux thought. 'I'll ask Grandma if she still has some Black Armor available. If not, I'll just have it custom made for him.'

When all of his Summons had properly equipped their weapons and armor, the Half-Elf stored the rest of it in his inventory. He was sure that he would be able to use them in the future after the number of his Summons had increased.

For now, he left the warehouse in a good mood as he looked for Colette and the others who were busy sparring with the veteran soldiers of Norria.

The little Dwarfs were steadily getting stronger, and were nearing the Apostle Rank. Lux knew that it was only a matter of time before they parted ways with each other, so he decided to challenge the C-Rank Dungeon with them.

Although he didn't know if they would agree to his request or not, he hoped that they would. After all, he was confident that if they all worked together, they would be able to overcome the Alpha Monster that was considered to be one of the strongest monsters in the territory of Norria.

Chapter 96: Orc Dominion

"So, do you guys want to come with me and challenge a C-Rank Dungeon?" Lux asked the Dwarves who were currently having afternoon tea together.

"Eh?" Colette blinked once then twice before tilting her head to the side. "A C-Rank Dungeon?"

Lux nodded. "Yes. It is a dungeon that belongs to the Stronghold of Norria. Only their elite warriors can challenge it. Lucky for us, I got permission to challenge it. So, do you guys want to come along or not?"

Helen, who was currently holding Eiko in her hand, looked at Lux with eyes that were as wide as saucers.

"Big Brother, aren't C-Ranked Dungeons too advanced for our current ranks?" Helen asked. "We haven't even entered the Apostle Rank yet. If I remember correctly, Monsters inside a C-Rank dungeon are all Rank 2 up to Rank 3 Monsters. Their bosses are also Rank 3 Alpha Monsters. I don't think that we can handle it."

"No. You're wrong Helen," Matty commented. "That is only applicable for the Normal Mode of a C-Rank Dungeon. In Nightmare Mode, all of the monsters are Rank 3, and the Boss is a Rank 4 Alpha Beast."

The Dwarf boy stared at Lux with a serious expression on his face. "If he is with us, clearing the Normal Mode is possible. But, Nightmare Mode is just plain suicide."

Although Rank 3 Monsters were strong, they were weaker than the Carbuncle that they had fought in the Aspiration Plains. Matty believed that they still had a chance to beat them if they entered the Normal Mode. The only problem would be the Boss Monster. It was a Rank 3 Alpha Beast, which was even stronger than the Red-Eyed Terror Mantis that they had no hope of beating with their current strength.

"B-Big Brother, are you going to challenge the Nightmare Mode?" Colette asked in a worried tone.

"Of course not," Lux shook his head. "I'm not stupid."

Lux knew that challenging the Nightmare Mode of Orc Dominion was indeed suicide. However, that didn't mean that he wouldn't challenge it in the future. The Elysium Compendium had told him about the quest that could be acquired inside the Orc Dominion even if it was in Normal Mode.

The rewards were also amazing, but this was a once in forever deal. If someone had finished the quest already then the reward would be gone forever. Lux wanted to know if someone had already cleared this hidden mission. If not, he would be more than happy to share the rewards with his friends.

"Don't worry," Lux assured them. "We can always use teleport crystals to leave the Dungeon if it's too much for us."

Matty crossed his arms over his chest. "How about the split of the Beast Cores and Monster Drops?"

Unlike the Monsters in the outside world, when the Monsters inside of a dungeon died, their bodies would disappear and they would drop items like Beast Cores, Weapons, and other monster parts exclusive to them.

"Matty!" Colette glared at the Dwarf boy, but Matty didn't budge.

Although he liked Colette a lot, he would not allow others to take advantage of her kindness.

"We will split the rewards evenly among all of us," Lux answered with a smile. He had no intention of taking all the Monster loot for himself. The only thing he was really after was the generous rewards attached to the hidden mission for those who were the first to clear it.

—

Hidden Mission: I Wish For Dominion

– The First Orc Chief, who founded this empire hundreds of years ago, left his relics scattered across his territory. Those who are lucky enough to stumble upon them will gain the treasures that he left behind for the future generations.

< Rewards >

– Potion of Vitality

This potion adds +50 permanent Vitality Points to the one who consumes it. You can only consume one Potion of Vitality in your lifetime.

– Rank 3 Skill Book of your choice.

You will be able to choose any Skill that is Rank 3 and below from the treasury of the Orc Empire.

< Bonus Rewards >

– ???

These were the rewards that were available for the Hidden Quest inside the Orc Dominion Dungeon.

When Lux found out about it, he was already dead-set on checking to see if the quest was still available. Although the Potion of Vitality didn't seem much, it was quite precious for those who were just starting their journey in Elysium.

However, the real prize that Lux coveted was the Rank 3 Skill Book of his choice. With his special ability, Skill Evolution [EX], an ordinary skill would be upgraded one stage higher, making it more powerful.

These rewards would be available to all, meaning Colette and the others would also get a Potion of Vitality, as well as the Rank 3 Skill of their choice. As for the Bonus Rewards? Lux was also very curious on what kind of rewards he would be able to get from a C-Rank Dungeon's Hidden Quest.

"I'll go with you, Big Brother!" Colette raised her hand readily.

"Me, too!" Helen also raised her hand with a smile on her face. She still hadn't returned Lux's favor of saving her friends, so she was more than willing to accompany him on his Dungeon expedition.

"Ei!" Eiko also jumped up and down from Helen's palm. It was her way of telling Lux that she wanted to go as well.

Andy and Axel also nodded their heads. As for Matty? Lux didn't even need to ask if the henpecked boy was going or not. As long as Colette wanted to go, the Simp Dwarf was going to follow.

"Alright, let's go," Lux said with a smile.

After everyone prepared their gear, they went to find Nevreal, who took them to a hidden door inside the barracks that led them underground.

After a few minutes of walking, they arrived at a Silver Gate that was guarded by a dozen Riders of Norria.

If one looked closely, the face of an Orc could be seen etched on the surface of the gate. It was a ferocious looking image that seemed to intimidate those who wished to enter its domain.

Helen, who was the most timid in the group, flinched when she saw the image on the gate. Seeing this, Colette immediately held her hand, and gave it a light squeeze of comfort. Lux smiled when he noticed this scene and affirmed that Colette really had what it takes to be a leader.

Her great observation skills allowed her to notice minute changes in her friend's body language and use the most appropriate method to deal with it.

Lux then shifted his attention to Nevreal and the Dwarf who seemed to be the Captain that guarded this Dungeon. He knew that Nevreal had to pull some strings in order for them to be allowed to challenge the Dungeon that was exclusively used by the Riders of Norria.

"Lord Nevreal, are they the ones who plan to challenge the Orc Dominion?" the Captain of the Dwarves that were assigned to guard the Dungeon's entrance asked.

"Yes," Nevreal nodded.

The Dwarf Captain looked at the Half-Elf as well as the little Dwarves with a complicated expression on his face.

"But they're not even of the Apostle Rank," the Dwarf Captain commented. "Also, there are only six people. This dungeon is meant for twelve people. I don't think that they are fit to challenge this Dungeon."

Nevreal frowned. He also understood this matter, and also thought that Lux was eating more than he could chew. However, before he could even reply, Lux stepped forward and smiled at the guard.

"Captain, we are just here to experience what it is like to fight against stronger opponents," Lux explained. "We wanted to know what we could do once we met Monsters of similar rank in the wild. As you know, there are times when we encounter Monsters that are leagues above our rank."

"I want my friends and me to experience what it is like to face such monsters, so in the future, we will not freeze up and become paralyzed with fear. Although this may sound silly right now, I believe that the ability to adapt to such situations will save our lives in the future."

The guards who were guarding the entrance couldn't stop themselves from nodding their heads in agreement. As soldiers of the Kingdom, they were duty bound to ensure that the Territory of Norria was safe from all threats.

There were occasions like Monster Outbreaks, in which Mutated Monsters would suddenly appear out of nowhere, posing great danger to everyone. The ability to quickly make decisions in the face of life and death situations would indeed increase their chances of survival.

"Very well," the Dwarf Captain reluctantly nodded his head to acknowledge Lux's explanation. "Each of you will take one teleport crystal that is exclusive to this Dungeon."

"If you really can't hang on, just use it. Being stubborn will only lead to death, which will automatically eject you out of the dungeon. The penalty is harsh, but compared to dying in real life, it is a small price to pay."

Lux happily took the teleport crystal that was handed to him by one of the guards. He understood that this was just a safety precaution, and he would really not want to lose his current stats just because of stubbornness.

After Colette and the others were given their own teleport crystals, the Dwarf Captain stepped aside and made a gesture for Lux to step forward.

The Half-Elf nodded his head and pressed his palm over the gate of the dungeon. A row of text appeared in front of him.

—

< Choose Your Difficulty Setting >

– Normal

– Nightmare

—

Just as Lux was about to click the Normal Mode with his finger tip, Eiko jumped from Lux's head and landed on the back of Lux's hand, making him press the Nightmare Mode by mistake.

Immediately, his group disappeared from the entrance of the dungeon.

A few seconds later, Nevreal, the Dwarf Captain as well as the other Dwarf Guards gasped in shock because the eyes of the Orc that was etched on the gate's surface blazed a fiery red.

This only meant one thing, and one thing only.

"That brat..." the Dwarf Captain scratched his head in frustration because he didn't know if he should smack Lux or not due to his stupidity.

"Fortunately they have their teleport crystals in hand," Nevreal patted the Dwarf Captain's shoulder to calm him down. "Let's just wait for a bit. I'm sure that they will come out sooner or later."

The Dwarf Captain sighed and nodded his head. Since it was already done, the only thing they could do was to wait for Lux's group to return after experiencing the Nightmare Mode of Orc Dominion.