

LOA Nobody 311

Chapter 311 Ending Of The Auction Event

"System, please tell me you know something?" Shiva said as he appeared in the halls of Eclipse's mansion.

[... I'm sorry, host. But for now, whatever I know about her, you know it too.] System said.

"You told me it was a Primal Law that no one can take their past lives memories with them through soul reincarnation. I was an exception for some unknown reasons as you said. But what about her? Is she too?"

[...]

"At Least tell me your theories or guesses, you're old, and have been through countless planets and plotlines. Tell me what could've caused it. How can she not remember me, or herself, but can still be this aware of her movements, skills and senses."

System thought for some time and finally started to share its theories.

[There can be many reasons for this, like something went wrong in her reincarnation like yours, maybe she held onto her memories or something similar too. But failed in the middle.]

[Or maybe someone helped her a little like 'The Being' did with storing their memories in a crystal.]

[Or maybe she's just... soulless. Primal laws only bind souls, the core form of energy for every being's creation; if she's soulless, then the laws don't apply to her.]

"What do you mean soulless? How can any life exist without a soul?"

[It shouldn't. That's why I said it's just my thoughts and a theory. I've never seen or even heard of anyone who's without a soul.]

"But you did a scan on her, you told me she was perfectly normal."

[She is. I don't know what to tell you, host. You asked for my theories and I told you. As for the truth, maybe only one person can tell.]

"The being?"

[Yes. But he's missing, or offline, or whatever you wanna call it. He won't answer my summons.]

"Did you hear what she said at the end though, about me being one of them, or her killing me again."

[I did, and I know nothing.]

"Don't tell me she's the truck-kun. Cause that's the only time I remember dying." Shiva said jokingly, but the system ignored his jokes and kept on cooking theories in its mind.

"So basically we know nothing about her, great." Shiva said and sighed.

'She brings a headache in every world.' He thought while throwing the cigarette in his hands.

"The whole happiness of finishing the quest went down the drain. What a pain.'

[Come on. Don't take too much stress over it.] System spoke, trying to cheer up its host. [We atleast know Gaia is gone for sure now. Or she'd be sure to smack your ass with a stick considering how you slapped her avatar on the back and knocked her out.]

"Come on, that was just once. And on instinct. I didn't do it knowingly, okay." Shiva said massaging his head as a soft chuckle came to his lips thinking about all his training classes of earth.

"Let's just go back to the academy. I really need a nap now." Shiva said shaking his head and putting everything away, his face turned back into Rio's and he appeared in his car outside the Angel's office.

Sending a message to Esme to take him back, Shiva just lay back on the backseat and closed his eyes. Finally letting his mind rest for a little, so his headache can lessen a bit.

Turns out even though he replenished his mana from the system easily after every skill use, he still felt the strain on his body for using all those spells and techniques.

While Rio went back to his sleep peacefully, the venue at auction became chaotic instantly. The fight was over and the barrier set around the venue was broken by Nishkal family's elder, and soon many members of the Sentinels and adventurers guild had come to check the situation.

Getting everyone out and taking their testimonies about what really happened, Sentinels were doing a thorough search and scan of everything to record every detail and find any leftover proof.

Taking readings of any mana signs left was hard as over a thousand people had fought together and used their mana simultaneously. So they can just go old school investigation on this case..

If Rio was here to see their drama, he'd be sure to sneer and say "Police are always late in every world."

But ohh well, there author said it for him.

Important figures like nobles, elites or VIP's were moved to a separate location to get treatment. While the commoners were just huddled together in a big building.

Saisha, Rebecca, Vanessa, Leon and Edward, along with all the injured students of Zenith were also brought back and the academy was informed about their situation and the deaths involved in this attack.

Zenith learning about it sent a few teachers to check the scene and safely escort the students back. As for the investigation and revenge for deaths, well that wasn't their plan.

The news of this attack was moving at every social platform and method almost instantly, and in minutes basically every corner of the world had gotten the news.

The name of Evil's Scion which had calmed down and become a little dusty in people's memories after their brief disappearance became a hot topic again. As well as the hunt for Wrath guild, who became a top rising criminal organization with this stunt all of a sudden.

But overall the name that everyone was talking was something mostly no one had heard or focused on before today. Eclipse, just with their deeds of ignoring the barrier and ruining the plans of Evil's Scion, they had gotten an A-class reputation.

Not to mention the video clips of their one sided massacre on the rooftop as they killed the people from Evil's Scion was really working as a superhit trailer for their grand reveal.

Some general no bodies thought Eclipse was a heroic organization, who saved everyone's lives, but everyone in power could smell something fishy and had their doubts..

Wrath which in reality had nothing to do with this attack, also came forward and issued a statement to confirm their role, instead of clearing the air. After all, to them this was just free publicity. Though internally they did start an investigation about who it was that used their name and their signature poison which had even better results than them.

Evil's Scion which actually suffered the biggest loss in this attack resulting in the loss of an entire batch of their new trainees and a secret base on floating islands, had kept silent about this whole matter. Like they didn't exist or didn't care about this at all.

Though many suspected it was just calm before the storm and that there'd be another bloodbaths following this event very soon.

"Master,.... Master."

Hearing Esme calling him, Rio opened his eyes slowly and asked while yawning and stretching his hands. "Did we reach the academy?"

"Yes." Esme said and handed him the phone. "Lady Artemis called earlier, she asked you to give her a call when you wake up."

Hearing his mother's name, all the sleep and laziness left his eyes, as he took the phone and dialed her number. "You told her that I got out safely before anything happened, right?" he asked Esme, who nodded her head in return..

Breathing a sigh of relief that this should've put her mind at ease, he started talking to Artemis, who seemed eager on questioning everything again.

"I'm fine, mother. I was just too tired from the training and all the boring classes that's been going on lately."

...

"What_ no way. I would never do that. Don't you trust me at all now."

...

"Well, I did buy a gift for you but since you don't want it, I'll just give it to Amy."

...

"Fine, whatever. Talk to Amy about it."

..

"I'm fine, promise. Just missed your cooking a little. Ohh that reminds me when're you sending Tanya and Erza here."

...

"Hello, hello... she hanged up, again." Shiva said and shook his head with a smile.

"Riley will find you in some days, help her with the funds and anything else she needs." He turned to Esme and said to her, the previous smile gone as his face turned serious instantly. "And try to rank up as fast as you can. Stop wasting time on Angel all day."

He said and left the car, fixing the tracking watch back on his wrist again.

He had only taken a few steps forward when he noticed Amelia standing by the academy doors, seemingly waiting for him.

"Come on, why didn't you just keep sleeping till next morning. I called you twice, you know." She said.

"What worried much?" Rio said as he slapped her head and directly walked inside.

"Humph, I was just worried that you'd use this as an excuse to lose my gift." Amelia said as she ran and caught up with him.

"What gift?" (Rio)

"The one you bought at the auction." (Amy)

"I didn't buy anything at the auction." (Rio)

"Ohh yeah, Becca said you spent quite a lot. So no excuses, just give it to me. If I don't like it, be sure to pay for another dinner." (Amy)

"Isn't a dinner cheaper though?" (Rio)

"Not if I'm hungry." Amelia said and asked again, "You really didn't get me anything."

"Well, I got you an ice cream, if that counts?" Rio said, buying a icecream from system shop and handing it over to her.

"Wow, what a cheapskate." Amy said after taking it and dragging him towards the nursing room where Becca was resting.

Chapter 312 Training Sessions

It had been 3 days since the attack and the auction event, and the academy was actually back to the way it was. Preparations for the freshers party were going on in full swing, and excitement was over the limits as every other student you see is talking about this party and how much they're planning to enjoy it.

Even the classes and dorms were lively as every day new rumors and stories about boys proposing to girls and asking them out for being their partners for the party were going on.

Aside from this happiness, a small group of students were also dreading this event, as their introverted side didn't like all this exposure.

Not to mention, after a month of getting together many bullies and nobles had chosen these silent type students as their bullying targets for fun and have them as their ballboys or maids.

But through all this lively atmosphere, there are a few students in first year who didn't even think about anything and just went on with their routines and lives as usual.

Rebecca, who was poisoned, was perfectly fine now. And she was busy planning her shopping streak with Amelia, totally forgetting the gruesome scenes of the attack.

Saisha, Vanessa, Edward and Jaesin were all treated too and were perfectly fine now. And were busy with their own training and classes.

Leon was now obsessed over raising his strength as soon as possible as his heart was disturbed after seeing all those deaths and destruction.

On the other hand, the boy responsible for Leon's trauma was busy with his own things.

"That's all you got." Rio said as he looked at Katherine who was panting heavily.

"You're really wasting my time here." He said as he waved his hand and small icicles went straight for her.

Katherine tried to raise her sword to block and move her body to dodge the incoming projectiles, but every little movement caused her to grit her teeth in pain. She just wanted to lay down and catch her breath for a few seconds now, but sadly the boy in front of her didn't care.

Currently they were training in one of the VIP training rooms. These rooms were special as they allowed all kinds of settings and modes for various kinds of training. Like change of environment, change of gravity, limitations of mana and elements in the air, and so much more..

Obviously every hour spent here costs a lot of merit points so not many first year students use them. But this was a condition Rio put forward in return for helping her train in ice element and learn transformation magic, so even though Katherine wanted to save her points for later, she had to spend them here.

"Come on, put some effort into it." Rio said as he raised his hand to grab the sword that was about to hit him. The iron sword instantly froze and crumbled to pieces as he clenched his fists.

Losing the grip, Katherine stumbled over her balance, as he moved his body to the side and slapped her on the back.

"And dead again," he said.

The red print of five fingers formed over the blue barrier covering her body, as Katherine felt the hit over the back of her heart. She wanted to massage her back as the burning stinging sensation brought pain, but didn't get enough time, as another kick was about to land on her head.

"According to scanners, if this was a real fight you'd already be dead for 12 times now. Why don't you go take a rest and sleep it off. Maybe today's not your day." Rio said and yawned, as if mocking her for how bored he was at this moment.

"No, _ I _ I can..once more." Katherine said in between long breaths, as she threw the broken hilt of the sword in her hand, and moved towards the corner to pick another new sword.

"This_ this time for sure." She said and rushed to attack him with her sword technique. Each swing of her sword caused gusts of cold winds to hit Rio's face even though he dodged the slashes.

Her moves were pretty good, and he could tell she was improving too, but truth be told, he kind of expected more from destiny's chosen heroine.

Like now, training in 3 times the gravity, with mana and elements set to 50% lesser density, he used to do this when he was 12 or 13 or 14 maybe.

Anyway he did it when he was younger, and he's just a villain.

'Guess luck's really not working out for these chosen ones.' Rio thought as he punched her sword and broke it in two. Grabbing the broken piece midyear, he stabbed it forward to her guts, and the barrier lit up in red again.

"Aaand, you're dead." Rio said as he pulled his hand back and watched as Katherine fell to her knees.

"I _ huh huh.. I can..." Katherine tried to speak but ended up coughing a streaks of blood.

Looking at her struggling and trying hard to not give up and give her best, being as stubborn as she was described in the , Rio just sighed audibly, and passed her a normal grade healing pill.

"You should ease up a little." He said.

"No, I'm _ fine." Katherine said as she closed her eyes, feeling a refreshing feeling wash over her body. Even though the pill didn't heal her completely, and just reduced her pain temporarily, but she thinks with this, she can fight for a few times more.

Reading her thoughts through her determined face, Rio just shook his head and tapped her forehead with his finger, causing it to redden a little.

"I'm not going easy on you, or joking. You're trying too hard and being too serious, stop doing that. You might've heard, rest is as important as training in many classes, so sometimes listen to that advice, kay. Don't be a training maniac." Rio said and turned around to walk away from her.

"Now, go sit in a viewing corner and try to recover your mana naturally. Don't you dare try to channel any techniques or blessings to fasten the process."

Hearing the stern warning, Katherine though wanted to say that she can still fight for a couple of rounds more, chose to stay silent and do as he told her.

'I'll just try harder once I recover my mana. Maybe I can use that method to attack him. He's right handed, so maybe I should focus on attacking him from the left...'

Rio watched her walking away, lost in thoughts and he was sure he knew what she was thinking about.

'She sure is diligent. And damn, can she take a hit.' Rio thought and looked at his wrist which was still a bit red over how heavily he hit her earlier.

[Well, she was your friend. So maybe your insanity rubbed off a little.] System joked, mentioning her last life.

'You know what system, sometimes you just choose to be a bitch willingly, don't you? I told you not to remind me of that bullshit.'

[Hehehe]

'And now you're even turning shameless.'

Ignoring the system and its ever growing shamelessness, Rio just sighed and walked towards the center of the room.

"Zen, apply sequence 32P14."

As Rio's words finished, the academy AI Zen, gave its answer.

[Extreme environment changes requested. Please confirm the request again.]

"Yes, do it."

[Changes implementing in 3.2..1...]

As Zen's words ended, Rio felt the pressure on his body increase by a lot, the gravity had increased by seven times now. He tried taking a deep breath and sighed as he felt the air getting thinner in the atmosphere. The mana was almost non-

existent, as this sequence was only for training physical bodies and maybe for some aura awakneers.

"Zen, send in the bots." Rio said as he clenched his fist and cracked his knuckles. Raising his knees and moving his legs till he felt a little comfortable over the changes, he gave the new command to Zen.

[10 challengers appearing in 3.2..1...]

Watching as 10 mannequin-like figures walked through a gate and started surrounding him, Rio waved his hand straight, and a sword flew into his palms instantly.

"Now let's see how long I can last today." He said as he rushed to fight with the golems.

Katherine who was sitting in the viewing corner, a separate space in a corner where the environment was normal. This space was like a safe zone for rest or meditation between the training sessions, looked at Rio running and jumping through the golems, dodging their attacks with swift movements and precise control over his body and sighed.

'And he says he wasn't going easy on me.' She said as she watched the few golems falling down with their severed limbs and broken heads. Before being regenerated in very few moments.

'I love this,' Rio said as he chopped off a hand of the golem and caught it midair. The healing connection started pulling the hand back to said golem, but before the elbow merged back to the material arm, Rio twisted his hands and caused the broken arm to land a hard slap on the golem's face.

'How about one more.' Rio said, kicking the golem and using his bent knees as his stepping floor to jump into air, before increasing his falling pressure using nature's element and giving another hard slap to the golem, breaking his face and slapping it away from the rest of his body.

[Please don't ever do that on humans.]system spoke in a little disgust imagining the bloody scene if the metal was replaced by men.

Chapter 313 Day Of The Party

The day of the freshman party...

After taking a cold shower, that's always a reason for him to be late, Rio got out and stopped in front of the mirror. While getting ready for the party, he started thinking about the details written in the about this event.

"Hey, system. Do you think there'll be an attack on this party too?"

He asked as he brought a hairdryer and started drying his wet hair. He got bored doing this with a snap of fingers and using magic. That sucked the whole fun out of the feeling of hot air on his head, which he quite enjoyed after a long cold shower.

System, who was too used to its host's whims on wasting points on useless things, stayed silent over this new purchase and focused on the question instead. [Hard to say. But there is a possibility.]

"You think so. Warzy and Evil's Scion already made their moves on this map already. So they shouldn't rush to pull any extra hatred so soon." Rio said, throwing the dryer back into system inventory, and browsing the shop for some fancy new clothes.

Just like back on earth, he hated outdoor shopping on Arcadia too. And here he didn't even lack money or something, he just didn't enjoy it like others. So for everything he needs, it's always his system shop.

System again, ignored the ongoing purchases and answered directly. [Those two groups aren't the only villains in the book, host. So who knows, maybe it'll be some independent villain or someone from the other groups.]

"You mean the strays and the sinner's guild?" Rio said as he kept flipping through the long list, and applying all kinds of filters on search option.

[Can be, you should just be prepared for everything.]

"Well, as long as you don't go offline all of a sudden and bail on me, I should be fine."

[Come on, that just happened once.]

"Yeah, and it lasted for eight years. Hehee."

Rio said jokingly as his eyes fixed on a black suit costing 10000 points, and he bought it.

Don't ask what features it had, he just skimmed through them in a hurry. [Of course a suit costing that many points comes with a few benefits.]

[I should start cutting your points for all the emotional damage and insults you're giving me daily.]

System said in a seemingly annoyed tone, like it was wrongly accused and was feeling angry, but Rio directly shut it up.

"Don't you dare look at my points. I already doubt that they're decreasing quite fast. Maybe you're already eating them up behind my back."

[Wow, just great. If anything I might've added a zero or two extra by mistake with how much you're messing up everyday.]

[And can you stop with this useless shopping spree, geez what a waste.]

"Tsk, fine. Anyway, how many points do I have left now?"

[415820 SP]

"Just that? They really did drop a lot huh." Rio said looking at the meagre points much to the system's displeasure, "Well, I should farm Leon a little more in this party. Let's make it 500k by the night, that'd look a little nice."

(Poor protagonist, I wonder what this guy will do to him today.) System thought and prayed for the protagonist, while silently stealing a box of popcorn, preparing for the drama later on.

Leon, who was walking towards Vanessa's room, suddenly sneezed and ended up dropping the white flower in his hands. 'Why am I suddenly feeling cold all of a sudden?'

While Rio was busy training Katherine daily, (Not at all training himself in the training room bought from her points, after beating her up.) Leon was busy charming Vanessa.

After the auction event the two of them got to know each other. And since both use fire element, Vanessa even invited him to train together too.

Even though Leon's sudden rank drop and his video of perverted choices was known to the whole academy, it didn't cause as big a commotion Rio hoped it would. After all, with everyone talking about an attack that big and Evil's Scion's sudden appearance again, what happened to a freshie student paled in comparison.

Maybe it was fate or maybe Apollo's backhand, but there were even rumors going around that Leon's rank drop was caused when he used some forbidden spell in his fight against the villains to save people, causing some stupid kids to admire his heroism.

Though Rebecca and Alfred knew better, but both of them didn't come out to say anything for their own reasons. Rebecca simply didn't care and Alfred let it be for his own thoughts and plans.

As for Leon, being the protagonist he didn't care about others opinion and focused on training with Vanessa.

So overall Leon's image was stable again.

Though the bullying he faces and mockings he hears from some rich kids did increase a little. Some students even started challenging him, hoping to defeat this rank one genius.

But as any goes it's only the minions of some big villains, so Leon either managed to win, or hold on until someone interfered to stop their battles.

Vanessa too, didn't mind the difference in their strength over his rank drop, and happily trained together with Leon, learning more about fire element and mastering her spells better with Leon's help and guidance.

Yesterday, one of the elite families kids enamored with Vanessa, even formed his group and fought Leon, but Vanessa saw that scene and stopped it.

Feeling apologetic that due to her Leon was getting bullied, she even allowed Leon to spend this party with her, so no one else can trouble him, until he heals from his injuries.

What was she thinking doing that, knowing this would only make her suitors and fanboys more angry and determined to hate Leon, no one knows. Guess it's a certain glitch in the heroine's brain to become brainless when it comes to the protagonist.

Rio, of course knew about their budding development of this relationship, but he didn't care.

Vanessa already hated him for what he did to her brother, so being friends with Leon who was also against Rio was nothing unusual.

And besides it'd be fun to give hopes and love to Leon, and then watch as he loses everything step by step. The suffering caused then would be much better.

Looking at himself in the mirror as he finished his hair and put his rings back on. Just to be sure he even used Aphrodite's blessing, blink of brilliance, and smiled as he found his charm went up by another degree.

"Hey system, tell me how do I look?"

[Just like a man in black.] System said, throwing water on this ever growing narcissism it's host started to get nowadays.

Currently he was wearing an all black suit with matching shoes and watch. The only different colors on his overall look were just his combed white hair, and a few pieces of accessories. Like a golden brooch on chest with the insignia of Blake family. Two fancy rings on his right hand's fingers. One a storage ring filled with all kinds of stuff and the other a normal diamond ring. A dark red buckle for the belt around his waist, which is basically just a bloodthirsty sword in disguise.

"I'm getting more handsome every day, aren't I?" Rio said with a smile, just to annoy the system, who in turn gave another reply instantly.

[Urgh, go show off somewhere else Shakespeare. All you'll get from me are taunts and sighs for your shamelessness.]

Chapter 314 Better Than Disney Princess

"Can he be any more late? We're the girls, and we get ready faster than him." Rebecca said, looking at the watch on her hand and the empty corridor.

"Maybe something came up, you know." Amelia spoke in her brother's defense, but ended up getting a fierce glare from her room partner and bestie, so she changed her words instantly. "You shouldn't have let go of that monk. We could've sent him to call him again." she said pointing about how when she wanted to stop Rio's roommate, but Rebecca insisted on letting him go.

"What stop him? Have you seen that poor monk, he's got dark circles around his eyes and monks don't even sleep that much. I bet he's bullying the poor guy." Rebecca said already angry at Rio for making her wait.

'I'm a princess and I'm waiting for a Duke's son.' Rebecca thought and couldn't help but chuckle at this unusual thing.

Currently both of them are standing near the dorm's gate, waiting for Rio, who's apparently as always running late.

"Sorry, did I make you wait?" Rio said as he suddenly appeared behind her and tapped her shoulder, nearly causing her to scream in fright before she heard his familiar voice.

"You have the nerve to say that huh," Rebecca said as she turned around and punched him on the shoulder.

And it was not at all a light punch. She literally put all her strength into it.

Though instead of the smile she expected to have after hearing him scream or fall back a little, her face frowned as she felt like she just hit an iron wall.

"What happened princess, didn't eat this morning?" Rio joked as he patted his shoulder clothes lightly, and thought - 'Gotta say those 20000 points are well worth it.'

"Idiot." Rebecca said as she pulled her hand back and massaged her red knuckles with a frowning face, it still stings.

"Where's Ayla and Rubina?" Rio asked, noticing only these two girls standing there.

"Ayla went with her elven princess, and Rubina is God knows where. She said she's not interested in these parties so she'll join us when it's time to eat." Amelia spoke to answer him, as she shook her head in displeasure when talking about her muscle brain roompartner.

"We should've just dragged her with us." Rebecca added.

"Yeah, and just like a solution to every problem in her dictionary she'd ask for a spar first. No thanks. I'm just planning to enjoy today, no studying, no training, and no sparring either." Amelia made her stance clear with this declaration.

Rubina was after all the tribal princess, so getting her to listen to anything was only possible if you could defeat her in battle. To her, the sky would crumble if she followed someone weaker than her.

And just like any tribal person, she hated large happy crowds mingling together and playing their schemes and boosting her ego.

'She's probably afraid she'd beat someone in anger and offend other nobles.' Rio thought while remembering about the news he heard yesterday, which said Rubina ended up beating a guy in public, who kept pestering her for weeks trying to propose her. She challenged him for a duel and beat him to half death, where even the instructors had to interfere.

'At Least she's the same as in the .' He thought.

"See this guy started daydreaming again. I told you he doesn't have any manners at all." Rebecca asked as she wanted to hit him again for ignoring her, but learning her lesson from the previous time, she moved closer to Amelia and added. "I should ask Aunt Artemis to start his etiquette classes again to teach him some chivalry."

Amelia, who heard her best friend's threat, burst out laughing, remembering how much her brother used to hate those classes in their childhood.

Hearing this Rio too turned his face to the side and glared at Becca with eyes that said - if you dare to do that, see how I'll treat you.

But Rebecca just scoffed in response and stuck out her tongue a little to mock him.

Knowing very well this idiotic girl really might say that to his mother, Rio changed his tone and asked nicely as he bent his head a little, giving a half-assed royal salute. "What do you require, my princess? What precious etiquette did I miss out upon?"

"Humph, yeah that's more like it." Rebecca nodded her head with a proud smile, as she continued "And do I still have to tell you what you missed. Can't you see we are going for a public event and both of us are dressed and ready, so where's our compliment huh, where's the praise?"

"That's it??"

"What do you mean that's it. Praising someone is like rule 101 of any social meeting. You really did forget everything, I'll have to tell my aunt ASAP." Rebecca added again, while throwing her elbow at her best friend who was failing to control her laughs.

Hearing the threat again, Rio sighed and looked at both of them for a few seconds.

Amy was wearing a white and red gown, with similar accessories as he had, a family brooch, a few rings and a sword disguised as waist belt.

As he noticed that he wanted to smile but controlled himself.

Though she did have a few things extra like a fancy diamond necklace around her neck and a pair of ruby earrings, both of which were useful artifacts with wonderful effects too.

'Well, looking at her like this I don't have to worry about her.' Rio thought and nodded his head with a light smile.

Seeing this guy just looking at his sister and ignoring her again, Rebecca coughed a little to get attention, causing both Rio and Amelia to chuckle at her antics.

Turning his attention to the girl asking for it, Rio saw her dressed in a golden gown that matched seamlessly with her golden hair. Her earrings, the same color as her sapphire eyes. As she moved her face they moved along with their color changing depending on the light's reflection. She had a rose color diamond necklace around her neck, matched by the ruby rings she wore on her fingers, which were tied with the golden chain around her wrist. Becca looked every bit a princess that she was.

Rio was sure she'd beat every Disney Princess or any other princess he ever saw on earth's shows or movies by a mile. No, there wasn't even any need for comparison, as she looked even prettier up close.

'Is she using some blessing like me to increase her charm, or is she always this pretty?' Rio thought in his heart, as his eyes wandered on her perfect figure.

[You're the only one who does that host. She doesn't even need it. Hehehe] hearing his doubt, the system happily interjected and answered him, albeit it failed to control its laughter after saying that.

'She's...'

-hummm

Amelia coughed to break the silent staring contest this duo started, and hid behind Rio as Rebecca tried to slap her after seeing her cheeky smile.

"Come on, brother. Frozen so soon." Amelia said as she placed her hand over his shoulder and added "And here I boasted so much to the girls that you don't care about the beauty but look at others' hearts, alas how wrong I was... ahhh"

Amy who was laughing as she started teasing her brother next, suddenly screamed in pain as Rio pinched her ear and brought her forward.

"Brother,.. Sorry _ I_ I was just joking. I won't do it anymore. Promise."

"You're getting quite gutsy, aren't you?" Rio said as he exerted a little bit more force, as Amelia tried to slap his hand away.

"Becca, Becca _ help me. You_I was just helping you, you know." Hearing her brother wasn't planning to let go, she pleaded with her best friend instead, who in turn just laughed at her pleading cries.

"You deserve it. Who told you to joke around." Rebecca said, as she too moved forward and grabbed Amy's other ear before twisting it even more than what Rio was doing.

"Tell me, will you do it again?"

"Hey, we_ we're getting late, right, let's go. Eeeee , okay,okay promise _ I won't do it again." Amelia finally promised and ran away as both of them let go of her ears.

Stopping a little far from them, she turned around with ears blood red in color and glared at them with misty eyes. "I'll teach you both a lesson, traitors." She said as she touched both her ears, which felt hot to the touch with how painful it felt earlier.

"You.."

Seeing that Rebecca was about to say something or catch her, she directly turned around and ran away, leaving both of them behind.

Chapter 315 Flowers And Stars

[Aaaand there she goes, leaving you two behind. Just like I said she would.] System said, reminding Rio of their earlier talk, when system said not to worry about any attacks and just enjoy his date.

To which he replied confidently that "It's not a date. It's just some friends going to a party. And besides Amy and Ayla would be there too."

Of course system knew better, so it warned him of what would happen, and that's exactly what happened now.

'... .. Stop laughing please.' Rio thought in his heart, as the cheeky laughter of system echoed in his head.

"I'll see how long you can run away." Rebecca said, as she watched Amy's figure getting smaller and smaller in the distance until she turned a corner and disappeared from her view.

"Don't bully her too much." Rio said as he moved forward and pinched her ear for a second before letting go and moving out of her reach. "That's for her."

Rebecca glared at him for a second before stomping her feet on the ground and moving away. This pair of siblings were just around her to make her more and more angry every day.

"You're looking pretty by the way." Rio said the long overdue compliment as he ran and caught up to her, smiling as he watched her stumble a step.

"Tsk, you're okay too." Rebecca said and increased her speed, trying to hide the blush that crept on her cheeks.

[Going good, host.]

[Keep it up and you might lose your virginity faster than I thought possible.]

System spoke in a teasing tone, and it was Rio's time to stumble a step and lose his balance.

[Hehehahaha]

Ohhh how Rio wished he could slap the system at times like these, just as easily he slaps away the screen in front of him. But alas his hands just pass through air, and system always just keeps on laughing even more.

'Idiot.' Rio said and ignored the system.

"What's your plan for the day?" Rio asked ignoring the system's existence as a whole.

Rebecca halted her steps for a second, before answering "I don't know, your sister had this whole list prepared about what to do and where to go, but she's gone already."

As the preparations for the party had been going on for a few weeks now, most of the plans and things were already spread around the academy in rumors like what fun and games seniors arranged, or where they put together a gathering place, parties and dance stages etc etc.

Lisa being a president also informed everyone to gather in the auditorium as she'd introduce everything herself once and give them a little lecture on rules and punishments, but with how late Rio was, they probably missed all that crap.

"What about you?" Rebecca asked once they were both walking side by side. "You've had your freshers here before too, any plans or places you wanna visit?"

Rio thought for a few seconds remembering the event from three years ago when he first joined the academy. Truth be told, at that time he mainly used freshers party to get close to Lisa and get to know her better. Even if he had to create a few scenarios himself to achieve the results.

She was after all too important for his plans.

"I don't know, I was busy with something else the last time, so never really enjoyed the event that much." Rio said honestly leaving the past in the back of his mind.

"How about we go for a light breakfast and then we can decide over a talk." Rebecca said and then before waiting for his reply, which she thought was obviously gonna be to call or find that glutton too, she grabbed his hand and dragged him along as she moved through the flowery pathways.

The seniors really did go all out as Rio glanced around the familiar academy doors and found it all decorated in flowers and colors. The air was filled with the scent of enchanted flowers, and the pathway lined with floating lanterns. It all looked so pretty and perfect, that just a step onto that arched pathway could make their senses enthralled and calm at the same time. In between the flowery pathway opened

up with light vines, little shimmering stars kept flying in the air just like fireflies in a dark night, in close reach for everyone entering the academy to touch.

If someone wanted to propose and say 'Be my girl, and I'll bring you the shining stars from the sky and fix them on your shawl.' Then this pathway was the perfect place.

Rebecca moved her fingers to touch a golden star, only for it to turn out to be an illusion.. "Tsk, party tricks." She mused and decided to enter.

But Rio grabbed her hand, stopping her. "Wait," He said, as he raised his hand and grabbed the green vine overhead and shook it lightly. Watching as a few flowers fell down over their heads.

Rebecca waved her hand through the hair and removed the white petals from her head, "What're you doing?" She asked, as she saw him doing the same thing to the opposite vine.

"Just wait." He said and looked around carefully, watching as the rain of flowers filled the air.

Under her confused eyes, he waved his hand and grabbed a flower petal and closed his fist. Placing his hand over Becca's head, he smiled and stepped back, "There you go. It suits you."

Rebecca raised her hand, trying to find what this guy was upto, when her fingers touched something pointy and metallic on her hairs.

She created a mirror of water with a wave of her hand and looked at herself curiously, until she found a golden star fixed on her hair.

"How, those are just illusions?" she said surprised as she raised her hand to touch another star and frowning as she found it unreal too.

"Secret." Rio said and moved away with his hands in his pockets, leaving behind Rebecca who just curiously glanced at the vines Rio shook earlier and then at the ground which was now empty of any fallen flowers.

Shaking her head as she didn't understand anything, she just touched the star on her hair and smiled. 'Idiot.'

"If you don't get out of that pathway fast, that star will disappear just like those falling petals."

Rio's words came to her ears and Rebecca directly rushed out in a hurry, her hand still holding the star, afraid it would really disappear next second. Her face bearing another charming smile as she caught up with him, and kept looking at him walking with a serious expression.

'I really was an idiot kid at that time.' Unaware of her gaze, Rio just thought and shook his head in embarrassment, remembering the same thing he did for Lisa three years ago.

[It's not overly dramatic if it works. And looking at how Lisa still remembered it, I'd say it works quite well.]

'Please shut up.'

Chapter 316 No Rest For The Wicked

"So where are we going?" Rebecca said as she followed him, touching her hair from time to time to see if the star was an illusion which would disappear after she crossed a certain range.

Rio turned to answer her but seeing her actions he just smiled and clarified. "That's not magic, that one's real. It's probably made from some gems or dungeon metals, so it's yours until you break it."

"Humph." Hearing the answer Rebecca didn't reply but just scoffed at him, like trying to show she didn't care, but failing miserably at it as her face literally brightened 2° more afterwards.

'Sometimes I really doubt if she's the same cold girl who's supposed to be at the forefront of her army of millions, leading them to commit massacres on her command. She's so ... easy to fool.' Rio thought in his mind and didn't point her out.

"I heard every chef of the academy would present a new dish they mastered or made in the last year, so let's go and try them out." Rio said, as he could hear the murmurs of crowd from forward.

"Amy would be there too?" Rebecca said and started cursing herself for suggesting anything about food. 'Fool, I should've dragged him the opposite direction.'

"Y_ you know, I'm not hungry, so why don't we..."

"Nah, where we're going is a.. little special. Amy won't be there."

Seeing her downcast eyes as she stopped in place and tried to form out any excuse, Rio who wanted to explain something else, set it aside and cleared up the details for their breakfast first so she could stop being so soury.

"Oh, okay then." Rebecca said and breathed a sigh of relief and started following him again.

"So what's special about this place that that foodie won't go there?" Rebecca asked, seriously curious to know where her best friend couldn't go. Maybe it's something she doesn't like to eat, that's why.

But as soon as this thought came to her mind, her curiosity doubled, why. - Just so she can force Amy to eat that dish when she teases her again.

Seeing her face filled with a cheeky smile as she probably imagined the scene of Amy's wronged or bullied face, Rio raised his hand and tapped her forehead with a finger, squealing a light scream from her lips. "I told you to stop thinking about bullying her." He said.

Ignoring her glaring eyes, he just smiled and continued "You'll know when we get there. Now, come fast or we'll have to walk a lot and take a detour to go there."

"You're not taking me to the kitchen, are you?" Rebecca guessed after seeing the path he was taking, and crossed her arms over her chest when she saw his nervous expression. "You big idiot, don't you know that students aren't allowed in the kitchen. If someone saw us we'll be punished." She said in a reprimanding tone.

"Ohh come on, don't worry. It's not that serious. I know a shortcut." Rio said and dragged her along. "You just have to keep a lookout, and I'll take care of everything else." He explained.

"Why're we even taking a risk? There are so many restaurants and shops open, we can just try them." Rebecca said, still trying to reason even though her feet just went along his, like in sync. "And besides, won't the same dishes, by the same chefs, be served to us at night."

"Nah, what's the fun in that? I heard there's a competition going on now that will decide the chefs rankings and promotions, so every chef is doing their best now. At night, they'll probably just do a random half assed job, since they already got their roles and payments settled for the year." Rio said as he pulled Becca to hurry up.

"How do you even know that stuff? The kitchen's closed off the whole year." Rebecca asked but Rio remained silent in response.

He couldn't exactly tell her that it was something written in a , and Leon was supposed to get another little friend/guidance giver today.

[Seriously host, working even now? You'll die a virgin.] System quipped as it heard and understood what he wanted to do.

'No rest for the wicked, system. There's simply no rest.' Rio said and ignored it.

They had passed through the long pathway and entered the academy garden at this point. Becca took a moment as she stopped and glanced around, trying to appreciate everything that their seniors arranged for them..

The whole garden was filled with first year students talking and walking and moving here and there in groups.

This was the first time after their entrance ceremony that all the first year students had gathered in one place like this, and that too, everyone dressed so perfectly wonderful, the scene was almost...blinding to look at.

Today all the classes were cancelled for everyone. And other than the first years students and student council and discipline committee no one was allowed to come to the academy so the freshie's could enjoy themselves freely.

The other seniors stayed in their dorms or training rooms, while staff lived in their offices or dorms. No one was out there to interfere any fun the freshman wanted to have.

Even the student council and discipline committee were just sitting in their offices and monitoring everything through the drones and camera crystals placed all over the academy - their job just to make sure no fights breaks out and nothing untoward happens that puts a stain on academy's reputation.

All around the large garden were stalls and shops set up, with just golems and puppets managing everything. A soothing music was playing in one corner, while the other side had students flying through the air sitting on magical brooms and playing their games. A calm restaurant and a beach formed on one side, while the other side had a loud bar and haunted houses.

Normal games that mortals enjoys, like those shooting or racing games, to karaoke and dancing on the beat games were set up on one side, while the other had magical games like treasure hunt or mystery Machine or flying football and race on rainbows.

There were so many things listed on the digital screens displaying all the content they could visit, surprising anyone about how so many things could be done in a small space of this one large ground and the two empty buildings nearby.

And the answer to that question was one thing - magic.

With a bit of spatial magic, coupled with illusion magic anything could be done here.

"It's .. Beautiful." Rebecca couldn't help but mutter as she watched a holographic dragon pass through in front of her, with an excited student's figure exclaiming loudly behind, flying on the broom.

"What's he doing?" She asked Rio as she felt curious about why a dozen student were chasing a fake flying dragon.

"Probably a game to catch monsters or something. There should be some reward for doing so." Rio said, taking a blind guess.

"What're the rewards?"

"It can be anything. Just as small as some tickets or points to access some other games or some other reward like an egg or an artifact, bought or donated by the seniors." Rio answered.

"But aren't all the games and facilities free for the day, what good are the points?" Rebecca doubted.

"There are probably some secret games or clues or something, just to make this party more interesting and not like any shallow fair set up by others." Rio replied.

"Okay, once you're done with your little escapades, you are to follow my orders the whole day left." Rebecca said, guessing this guy was up to something and he'd agree to her request, which he did quite easily.

"Fine, as you command, Milady. Now can we go?" Rio said in a dramatic tone.

"Urgh Mi'lady, who taught you that? So cringy." Becca said and followed him.

Chapter 317 Leon Who?

"You have five minutes, after that I'm turning around and leaving." Rebecca said, glancing around the empty hallways, watching as Rio walked a little further and jumped over the lines of trees nearby, and disappeared from her view.

[Amy - Hey, where are you guys? Need any help?]

... ..

Rebecca read the message on her watch and didn't know what to say, so she just kept deleting whatever she typed and finally just closed the holographic screen and stood silently, leaning against the wall.

"What am I doing!!!" she said, and opened the world system's screen, where she could see a few notifications from her goddess.

[Selene says you should control him.]

[He's helpful to you, so stop wasting time and bind him before someone else finds him.]

[Indra's chuckles seeing your development. He asks you to not take the words of the idiot goddess to heart.]

[There's no need to rush in these matters, But... she's also right about someone taking him away. He has been busy with that other girl lately... But anyway don't think about it too much, you have us on your side.]

[Amphitrite asks you to follow your heart as is the nature of water.]

[Psyche abhors the schemes of everyone else's thinking. She just hopes you'll find your happiness with him.]

[....]

[....]

Reading the notifications from various gods all asking and saying the same thing in different words and emotions. She could guess they all had their own goals and thoughts for helping her, but still ...

Rebecca didn't continue checking any more messages and ignored them all.

'Is he simply oblivious or does he just not care?' she thought and sighed to herself, as she pulled the star from her hairs and held it in her arms.

"Princess, what're you doing here?"

A voice awoke her from her thoughts, as she didn't even realize when a boy was standing in front of her.

"How are you, I heard you were poisoned that day at the auction?" Leon asked, but Rebecca seemed absentminded as she kept looking around trying to see if someone else came here or not.

"I'm fine, thanks." Rebecca said nonchalantly.

Seeing her anxiously looking around, Leon thought something and then smiled a little.

"Are you lost, or looking for someone, princess? I just saw your friends at the arcade playing games some time ago. Do you want me to show you the way?" He asked, staring at the beautiful princess in front of him.

"I'm fine, thanks." Rebecca said the same reply again without even thinking.

"Princess, I wanted to apologize for how I behaved back then at your birthday, I shouldn't have ..." Leon, who wanted to apologize and sort things out with Rebecca about how he tried to ask her for something on her birthday, when he was just a kid then and didn't know any better, so he just thought to talk about it once.

But just when he mentioned the birthday, Rebecca interrupted him and stopped him. "I get it, I was at fault too. And it's been years since then, don't worry about it." She said, while silently cursing him for not getting the hint and leaving her alone.

Hearing that she didn't care about it, Leon breathed a sigh of relief as what he wanted to say next could possibly anger her.

He wanted to ask her if she still had that bracelet he gave her on her birthday, and tell her about the feeling he got from looking at the bracelet Rio bought. Because something told him that Rio knew that bracelet and didn't destroy it, but just acted like he did.

Since he couldn't guess why Rio would try to hide and act that way, he at least wanted to inform the princess as a good samaritan.

"Princess, there's something else that I wanted to say, you remember the bracelet at the auction.." Leon had just started speaking about the auction when he heard some rustling sounds, and noticed the same guy whom he wanted to talk about, appeared in front of him.

Rio looked at the frowning protagonist and frowned a little, but then a smirk came to his face as he probably guessed what was happening here.

Ignoring Leon who was talking to her all this time, Rebecca pushed him aside and walked up to Rio and glared at him. "Finally, do you know how long it's been? You should've told me it was gonna take a while."

Hearing her, Rio ignored Leon and looked at Rebecca and smiled. "If I told you the truth, would you be willing to wait."

"Idiot." Rebecca said and chose to ignore this guy. "You were saying something about the auction and bracelet ..." She asked, looking at Leon, while Rio raised an eyebrow hearing it and glanced at Leon, only to see him looking at him keenly too.

'Does he know?' Rio thought, but then shook his head in dismissal. Both bracelets were safely stored in the system's inventory and after dealing with old grandpa, his trust in the system's skills had increased quite a lot.

'It should be the sixth sense of the protagonist, always smelling clues and finding treasures even faster than a dog's nose.' Rio thought and nodded his head as the system smiled in affirmation, confirming his theory.

"That.. I'll tell you about it later." Seeing Rio's reaction as Rebecca mentioned the bracelet, Leon was sure he knew something, that's why he decided to discuss this matter when he's alone with the princess and away from this guy, who for some reason always brought an unknown unsettling feeling in his heart.

"I'll see you both later." Leon wanted to turn around and leave, but stopped as he found Rio blocked his way.

Leon frowned while thinking what excuse he could use if Rio persisted on knowing what he wanted to say. But to his surprise, Rio didn't mention that point at all, he just pointed his hand at one side, and waited for his reaction.

Leon looked in the direction from where Rio just came from earlier and saw a notice written on a signboard.

[Students and staff below grade 3 clearance aren't allowed to trespass further.]

- "That area's off limits for the students." Rio said.

"But you were just there." Leon couldn't help but say as this scene directly reminded him of when he was insulted at the auction gate. People stopping him while this guy could just pass through without any interruption.

"Cause I'm me. And you're _ who again?"

Rio said with a genuine expression like he really didn't know who he was. But that only made Leon even more angry, so much so that Rio could almost hear the grinding noise of his teeth.

"Let's go, Becca. We're already late." Rio said and grabbed her hand and walked away, not even sparing another glance at the grinding protagonist.

Insulted is what Leon felt at this moment, since the guy whom everyone in the world thought to be his challenge, didn't even know his name. Just goes to show how he didn't even care about him at all.

[Loki laughs saying you're way too weak compared to him. So stop dreaming.]

[Skuld says 'wake up to reality.']

[Hela laughs at the ignorant ant who thinks it can challenge her chosen.]

Leon read the couple of lines from the world system and felt even more annoyed. As he just turned around and walked away.

Ignoring the subtle feeling that he lost something again..

Chapter 318 heavenly food

[Was that necessary?] System asked while Rio and Rebecca walked through the crowd to a silent place somewhere.

'Stealing this chance? No, but I did say I want to hit 500k by tonight.'

[I'm talking about poisoning the chef once you were done.]

'Come on, a guy who's teaching others his legacy, just cause they gave a useless life advice that just happened to ignite an idea in his head - is better off dead.' Rio said in his mind. 'Who knows, maybe leon would tell him to put some salt in some soup some day and that guy would laugh and teach him everything too. Idiots like him are better to be silenced ASAP.'

[Hmm] system who had no counter argument could just nod its head and be silent again.

According to , the day of the party leon would lose his way and walk into the kitchen somehow, and would meet a fat chef, who's secretly Apollo's fanboy.

Leon would help this fatty, who was stuck thinking what should he make for his competition by saying his mother is sick and he missed the taste of her cooking, and the feeling of home in academy's food. - this stupid advice would cause the fatty to have a light bulb moment and he'd get his motivation clear for the competition.

In return for helping him, and thinking it was fate, he taught leon a cooking skill passed down into his family and left.

And with this skill mastered to high and beyond level, Leon was able to cook up delicious food in the which boasted that the aroma of food could refresh people and spread for miles, and those eating it would fall in love with his cooking.

What does the taste of sugar or chilli on tongue has to do with the fun things down there, author didn't explain...

Rio just went there and interrupted this meeting first by saying those same words, and giving the fatty his light bulb moment.

Knowing this fatty was Apollo's fanboy who'll follow Leon to death if it meant getting to see or hear Apollo once, Rio also poisoned the guy and also made sure he loses this competition before his death.

[Poor fatty, he didn't even see Leon once, but is already dying due to him.] System said with sympathy in its voice, totally forgetting it was the one who happily suggested him various poisons when Rio had this idea.

"Was that necessary?" Rebecca said, once they were away from all the crowd and she couldn't even see anyone around.

'Just how far did he drag me out?' She wondered, totally forgetting he let go of her hand ages ago, and she was the one who followed him willingly.

"What?" Rio asked genuinely, getting out of his system's conversation.

"I'm me. And you're _ who again?" Rebecca tried to say it in his style and tone, but made a puking expression "Urgh cringy much."

"Come on, that was cold." Rio said seriously, "Did you see his face? The look in his eyes, hilarious." Rio said and smiled as if reminiscing about Leon's angry face.

Rebecca just shrugged her shoulders, not really curious enough to ask why he wanted to pull his leg like that, and waste their precious time together. So she just changed the topic.

"Anyway where are we? I haven't been here before." she said, glancing around at the empty forest-like area, where lines of lush trees were all around her.

"It's my favorite place in the academy." Rio said seriously, as he snapped his fingers, and tables, chairs and all kinds of cutlery appeared beneath the shade of a big tree at the side.

"Is that...?" Rebecca asked as she looked at his arrangements and noticed the large green tree at the side, which had a big sword slash that nearly cleaved it in two from the middle. She looked around carefully this time and found that though all trees looked the same generally, upon close inspection as she traced her fingers over a nearby tree, she found some name and information carved onto their trunks.

"Are we in the legacy garden?" She asked, recognizing the place.

"Yupp, and that's the tree planted by our principal." Rio nodded his head and took her hand as he walked over to the sword marked tree.

Zenith has a tradition of sorts going back to when it was first created centuries ago, called Chrono Blossom Pledge. Basically what it is, is that whenever a new principal is appointed at the academy, he would plant a tree in this garden and swear an oath about what he wanted to achieve in his lifetime for the academy.

It was meant to symbolize that a person may die and be forgotten, but his past and what he planted remains. A fitting analogy for teachers who can basically plant anything into their students mind.

"Aunt sure was really mad that day, huh?" Rebecca said, as she traced her finger over the deep sword mark, spreading from the top of the 25-30 meter long tree's trunk to the roots below.

"Well, shouldn't she be?" Rio said with a genuine smile as he looked at the sword slash and felt the essence of a familiar mana within it.

This attack was a sign of chaos his mother had caused when she first learned he was dead in that dungeon. When she forced her way in the academy and started killing every examiner who was present in that tournament yet failed to do their job.

If not for the principal stepping up himself, she might as well have fought those staff to death that day.

When he first came back and learned everything about what she did from Esme and Erza, he didn't even know how to react.

There's a warm feeling in your heart after having someone care enough about you that they'd do anything for you without hesitation. Knowing that if someone tried to harm you, they'd get you justice or revenge, whatever you want.

That's what he felt at that moment. The love and care she had for him. And for that very reason he liked this place the most in the whole academy.

But that's all for another day.

"Come, let's have breakfast, or you'll spend your whole day roaming around like this." Rio said, pulling Rebecca towards the chairs, and forcing her to sit down, before pulling a chair and sitting next to her.

"Here, I bought this all for you." He said as he placed a few dishes in front of her.

"Bought this?" She asked doubtfully.

"I mean, I got this for you." He corrected himself, or did he.

Rebecca looked at the dishes in front of her with a sweet smile. She could see they were all her favorite, and just the way they looked and the aroma they had was enough to tell they were all perfect. "Thanks." She muttered under her breath.

'Though he lies more often than he breathes, at least he's still caring.' she thought as she lifted the plate and a perfect aroma of heavenly food filled the air and making her mouth water, just imagining how good would it taste.

"Did they really make it? Why does it taste..." She said after taking a bite and forgetting to finish her words in ecstasy.

"Different?" Rio paused and passed her a second dish. "If that's not to your liking, you can try this."

"No, it's okay. It's.. Did the chefs really made this?" She asked doubtfully, not believing as what felt like heavenly food, could be made by mortals, and that too from the chefs working at her academy. "It's too good." She finished.

Rio coughed hearing her doubt, and chose not to answer, instead of speaking another lie. Gladly, Becca was more busy on her eating then to focus on him at this moment. Rio, who saw her eating like that in a rush and happy expression just smiled and thought - looks like Amy's habits are brushing off on her.

'Would I need to spend my points on her too?' He couldn't help but think, feeling a little regretful getting Becca dishes arranged by the system. 'Well, I earn a lot from her, so I guess I'll spend some back.' He thought, while drinking a juice.

"What're you staring at?" Becca asked as she noticed her gaze.

"Just another foodie."

"No, I'm not." she replied instantly. "I'm just hungry." She said.

"Now you can't joke about how I gave you poison on your birthday." Rio seriously replied, remembering how many times she cursed him for that one thing, while passing her another dish. "I'm wondering how can you still look fine while eating like a fatso." He joked.

Rebecca who smiled sweetly hearing the first part ended up choking on her food as she heard him finish that sentence.

"Tshmm hahaha" Seeing her coughing madly while glaring daggers at him, he just burst out laughing.

"Y_you..."

"Okay, okay. Don't be angry, why don't you try this?" Rio said, trying to calm her anger, but Becca just raised her hand in refusal and stopped him.

"No, I'm full. It's enough." She said, looking a little reluctantly at the dishes still left on the table, but thinking if she ate any more, she'd just be sitting in this place and feel sleepy, ruining this alone time, so she gave up on her stomach's desires to follow her heart's wishes..

"Enough eating, you said you'd follow my commands after I helped you steal all this?" She said.

"But I did it for you. And don't call it stealing, that's a bad word." He replied. .

"Ohh is that so?" Becca spoke in a teasing tone and started walking. "Come, you'll have to accompany me all day today. So you better not mess with my mood now."

"Yes, your highness." Rio said doing the same messed up royal salute which only he could get wrong.

"I told you not to joke around." Becca said, dragging him forward.

Chapter 319 Haunted House

"Well where do we go now princess?" Rio asked as Rebecca just stood at the entrance not sure which place to visit first.

"Wait, I'm thinking." She said glancing around at the crowd of students just enjoying their time, playing games or just sightseeing. Feeling confused over what to try first. She didn't want to go somewhere which had too much crowd or some annoying idiots who could jump up to pester her or ruin their time together.

Getting no response, Rio sighed and spoke up. "Come, I'll show you something fun." He said and started walking in one direction.

"Wait," Rebecca said as she followed him too.

Rio took her to a small shop that was set up on one side of the garden, while rows of few students were already standing there and cheering happily from time to time.

"What's this place?" She asked as they walked through the crowd who gave way seeing their appearance. (Being a high noble and known genius sure had its perks.)

"A race game. Something like what we used to play when we were children." he said as he bought the tickets and walked inside.

"The ones you always lost." Rebecca said jokingly which was also true.

"Lost willingly, cause you were a sore loser and a crybaby." Rio teased back. "Do you know how many times aunt had to step up and ask me to go easy on you."

"Lies and excuses, that's all what you're saying." She replied in total denial. "And I'll prove it to you by defeating you today."

... . (Few minutes later)

"Hehehe I just let you win the first time as a trial, so you wouldn't cry later on."

"You just got lucky, I'll beat you this time." ×2

"You cheated on that turn by distracting me, let's play again." ×3

"My hand slipped, let's try again." ×4

"This game's lagging, I clearly turned right on time. Why didn't my avatar change?" x5

"Sigh, it's too boring, let's go somewhere else." x6

After 6 consecutive losses Rebecca gave up on her luck and stood up to leave while silently cursing this guy for not even going easy on her once.

'Would he die if he lost once, what a show off.' She said, glaring at him as she noticed the students nearby holding their laughs seeing their matches.

The whole row of shops in that line were just some random small games made by either using illusion magic or tech from the dungeons like video games. After trying a few other normal games, Becca got bored and decided to leave, and try something magical. (Or something where she could win.)

"Come, let's play that game." Becca said, dragging him to what looked like a casino.

She always liked betting games, as the high lucky halo of heroine always made her win.

... (few minutes later)

"Hahaha you loser, do you need my help to win. Why don't you ask nicely, and this generous princess would show some pity." Becca said while laughing at Rio who just sat there with a black face.

'System, if you're messing around with me, I'll beat yo ass.' Rio said to his system, not believing how his luck can be so bad to not guess anything right in like a dozen tries.

"Come on, don't be sad, I'll teach you how to play." Becca said, patting him on the shoulder like coaxing a child.

"This is definitely rigged, let's go try something else." Rio said and walked out of that shop faster than eye could see.

"Let's go to that place." Becca said, noticing a shop nearby from where she could see a big banner floating upside.

[A dreamscape]

Seeing the new name and feeling curious Rio followed her and went to check the new shop. But as soon as he entered through the open doors, a surprise awaited him as he felt he was pulled into an illusion. A stone monument was placed in the empty zone ahead with rules explaining what this was about.

But seeing that this game was a team match that required ten members to start, they both just got out without waiting.

"What a sham, they should write it that it's a team battle game, and more players are needed." Becca said and left, while Rio just stared at the noticeboard at the side, which they both ignored while entering.

"That looks like fun." Becca's voice came to his ears and Rio followed her gaze and found her pointing at a tent house which said 'horror house' at the door.

"You wanna go there?" He asked doubtfully.

"Of course. Are you scared, big boy?" She teased hearing his hesitation.

"I'm just worried about you, okay. Don't come crying to me when you see a ghost." Rio said jokingly, pointing at the rule board first this time, which said that this tent had spatial properties of a maze and there might be real ghosts trapped inside too.

"Come on. I can purify them easily with my magic." Rebecca replied proudly after reading it.

"Magic's not allowed to be used inside." Rio said, pointing at the rule which said no magic so no one can damage anything or hurt anyone.

"Well, anyway I'm not scared. Even if there are real ghosts, they're probably just some little roaming spirits who're harmless." Becca said, excitedly moving forward.

"Remember, that's what you said." Rio said and followed her with a mysterious smile lingering on his face.

... . [Few minutes later]

Phew huhh phew

"Why the hell did all those damn ghosts swarm us?" Becca said, bent down with her hands resting on her knees as she breathed heavily to calm her racing heart.

"Maybe they heard you saying you don't fear them, so they took it personally." Rio said, passing her a bottle of water.

"You_ you didn't do anything, did you?" She asked while doubtfully glaring at him.

They had just entered the dark house when all of a sudden dozens of ghosts, real ghosts, ignored everyone else and swarmed onto them. Even the students nearby got a scare of their life with how they always followed and jumped onto them from every corner.

"Who, me? I didn't do nothing, swear." Rio said, controlling his laughter while hiding the video recorder that was still on.

[When Hela gave you that cloak, she didn't think you'd use it to lure ghosts in haunted houses and prank girls, host.]

[And not only to take advantage of girls, but also recording it in video, what a pervy host I have.]

'Don't twist my actions, you idiotic system.' Rio said to his system, who made him sound so bad.

I mean he did do those things, but just to scare Becca and record it to tease her later on someday, not to hug her or hold her or anything.

..

"What's up slowpoke, still cooking up excuses." Rebecca shouted flying on a Phoenix illusion, while Rio tried to catch her on a flying sword.

"You're testing your luck princess, stop hovering above the clouds or you'll fall down faster when I chop those wings off your birdy." Rio replied.

"Chop wings, using what? The broom you're holding," Rebecca said and burst out laughing.

The game they were playing was simply a game of tag using magical creatures.

When she rolled the dice it landed on the avatar of a top tier Phoenix, and as for Rio, he got to play the role of a knight in armor flying on a magic broom.

Knowing he wouldn't be able to even see the shadow of princess on that low grade magic broom, he just used the loophole and climbed onto the sword he was holding and used it to fly instead.

Even though the speed didn't increase, but the image did.

Flying on brooms is for idiot children and old witches, both personalities not suitable for his handsome appearance.

"You lost." Becca said, slowing down as the timer on the watch hit zero, and the ethereal form of phoenix disappeared.

"Yeah yeah whatever." Rio said, walking through the crowd of students.

"What now? We've been roaming around the games for hours." He said, thinking how many years had it been since he spent time so leisurely playing around.

They've been going through the crowd clicking on every shop, checking every game or event planned for this party. Be it gaming, betting, haunted houses, small magic competition, a fun duel, karaoke and dancing on beats, going through a maze and solving riddles or a treasure hunt. Not to mention the half an hour they wasted just taking various pictures in that one shop down the line.

- it's been like this nonstop cycle of walking from here to there excitedly from morning to evening now.

Though he enjoyed her company and his time of no worries very much so, it simply wasn't him.

Something always felt missing, hollow, and he didn't know how to fix it.

Acting happy and actually being happy are such a different things.

Chapter 320 His Funeral..

Ali stood opposite a glass wall, separating him from the morgue, where shiva's body was placed. Looking at the unfamiliar number in his phone, he dialed the call button. But as the rings kept ringing, hesitation crept in his heart if he should just hang up before anybody answers.

But his hesitation broke as he heard a sound from the other end of the call.

"Hello, who's this?"

"Hi, my name is Ali Arya, I'm sh_"

"If you're calling to sell me something, I'm telling you I'm not interested in buying anything. I don't need any loans, and I certainly don't want a credit card. So I'll hang up first."

"Shiva's dead."

Not waiting for the other party to hang up, Ali just skipped his introduction and said his purpose. After some background checks, Emily found the contact details for Shiva's family members.

Though the relationship between Shiva and his family wasn't good, but he still didn't want to burn their son without informing them.

"Who are you?" After a long silence from the other side of the call, a voice came to Ali's ears, asking him his name.

"I'm Ali, for the past 2 years he's been working with me, we were friends and colleagues." Ali said patiently.

"Where'd you get this number?"

Ali heard another question but telling someone he did a major background check on them, and hacked a few government documents wasn't actually nice, so he just skipped it, and focused on the main thing.

"There was an accident yesterday evening. Shiva_ he died. I've planned to held the funeral_ "

Ali was saying something when the other voice interrupted him. "I'm sorry, but you must've gotten a wrong number. I don't know any Shiva. Now please don't call us again."

"Wait _you're Vikram, right? His brother? How can you say that? Didn't you hear he's dead now. Is your personal issues so much bigger than his death." Ali ended up shouting as he heard the other party refusing to admit anything.

"My brother that you're speaking of died 3 years ago. An insane murderer killed him when he escaped his prison. Whoever it is that you know, that's not my family. So do whatever you want with his body , bury it, burn it, I don't care."

"Tut tut"

Ali heard the bitter replies from the other hand and crushed his phone in his hands in anger. "Fucking bastard." He said, as he dialed the number again but found it was switched off Or out of network coverage area.

"I told you not to call them?" Shiva's voice came to his ears as if his ghost was reprimanding him for not following his wishes.

"If I die, just burn my body and throw my ashes somewhere peaceful. - that's what I said, remember. Did you forget it already?"

"I remember." Ali said and turned around to leave. As Emily signaled the doctors to wrap his body up and load it into some ambulance.

While Ali went forward with the procedures for Shiva's final rites and funeral, Vikram, the one he called some time ago just held the phone in his hand and stared at the empty broken and burned house all around him, which held all the memories of his childhood and married life.

"Did you hear it, Babe. He's finally dead. I'm sorry I couldn't kill him with my own hands." Vikram said as a tear fell down his eyes, remembering the scene of carnage he saw three years ago with his own eyes.

It was just three days after his marriage, when even all the rituals hadn't been finished yet. When a barrage of gunfire and bomb blasts destroyed everything around him.

When he finally came to his senses, all he saw were signs of a bloodbath and corpses all around him, and the one whom he considered his brother snapping the neck of the girl he loved.

He vowed that day that he'd kill him for killing her one day, but it seems fate had other plans. Before he got ready enough to face that murderer, someone else killed him first.

"Thank you, God." Vikram said as he looked up at the sky and smiled.

#

After burning the body of his friend in a simple manner, Ali collected the remaining ashes in a small pot and stood up to leave.

Since Shiva didn't believe in any God, Ali didn't hold any prayers or preachings for his soul. It was just a simple funeral with him, Emily, Aarvi, Liv and a few of his other colleagues at the office.

After saying goodbye to everyone Ali asked Emily for an address and take him there.

After a couple of hours long journey the car came to a deserted place and Ali walked out of it.

It was just an empty dilapidated building in front of him. Dried out trees, cracked walls and broken windows - all the signs showing no one had been to that place for years.

There was even a full hour long documentary on this mansion, explaining how a massacre had happened here some years ago, and nearly 50 people were found dead in the most horrific ways. The media said that it took police and CBI more than a week to identify the severed pieces of the various bodies found inside, and gather them to form complete corpses.

That's why some locals even called this building a haunted house, and refused to enter inside or get anywhere close to it. There were even rumors that you could hear the screams of ghosts and wailings of spirits from this house at night.

Yet Ali walked in forward without any hesitation.

His steps came to a halt as he reached the main gate of that mansion and looked at the name plate outside.

Removing the dust covering it from his hand, he read the stuff written there, and couldn't help but smile.

There was just one word, consisting four letters - HELL ...

"Well I guess, I know who came up with this name." He said with a smile and shook his head and walked inside.

He walked to a giant tree in the center of the garden , just in front of that mansion and stood there.

The big tree was completely empty, with nothing but dried sticks barely hanging with the last support of the deep roots.

"I guess you did know him a little." A voice broke Ali's peaceful thoughts. Turning around Ali saw a middle aged man he hadn't seen in months.

"Rangaa." Ali muttered, signaling his guards who were ready to apprehend this intruder.

"What're you doing here?" He asked, feeling a little wary of the underworld leader of their city who ran nearly a hundred of clubs, casino, bars and mainly fight rings.

"I'm just here to say my goodbyes. I did know him longer than you, you know." Rangaa said and looked at the big tree which still had two small letters carved onto its dried shaft.

S & S

"He uprooted this tree from some park and then planted it here. I remember saying him that it won't work, Or that it'll dry down and die. But he insisted, saying it was special and he liked the shade of it." Rangaa touched the letters and started talking as if reminiscing about his past with a smile.

"Did it work? Did this tree grew?" Ali asked curiously.

"Maybe it would've. But one day he got drunk and then set it on fire, along with this whole of HELL. So we'll never know." Rangaa replied with a sigh, his expression unreadable. He watched as Ali pulled the cloth over the pot in his hand and scattered Shiva's ashes near the tree.

'Maybe now you can rest in peace, son.' He thought in his heart, burying the memories back before they surfaced on his face.

"I heard you wanted to deal with the guy who killed him yourself." He said breaking the unsettling silence and added, "You have two months. After that, if I see him alive, I'll burn this whole goddamn city if I have to. Starting with him and ending with Arya's." Rangaa gave a warning and then turned back to leave.

Emily, Ali's assistant clenched her fists hearing someone threaten her employer so brazenly, but before she ordered the guards to teach this man a lesson, Ali raised his hand and stopped her.

"Let him go." He said and all the guards gave way to Rangaa, who seemed unfazed by all the anger and annoyance those guards showed. Like he didn't even put them in his eyes.

And he really didn't.

After all, this HELL was once his home turf.. And if he got scared by some newborn baby bodyguards in his own home, then he's really not worth his title of Kingpin.