

Reincarnated With A Summoning System

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Cain noticed that when Cyrene fell asleep, the thoughts vanished from the background of his mind, so the spell was only showing conscious thoughts. She was definitely dreaming right now, she was wiggling and smiling in her sleep, but none of that fed over into the spell.

That was a small blessing, listening to other people's disjointed subconscious ramble as they slept could get annoying.

Cain had the Puppets bring up a blanket with his evening snack. It got quite a bit cooler overnight, and he didn't intend to close any of the shutters or heat the room, so something to keep her warm would let her rest much longer.

Just after the sun came up, Cain had a revelation about the weapon he was making. Ancient quality was a transformative change, not just a quality change. He had been examining two similar items, one Legendary and one Ancient Quality when the difference was suddenly as clear as day.

Cain began the process again, using the same mace he had been working on all night. Once he started changing the nature of the energy in the enchantment as well as the power level the change seemed to just naturally happen, so Cain let it complete and make an Ancient item.

His hope was that doing it this way would give better results than the ones he pushed straight to Awakened. That first success had been Mythic, but not great. Going to Mythic from Ancient should give better results, Cain believed.

He was about to start on another attempt when Cyrene began to stir. But she didn't fully wake up, only shifted so her upper body was inside his shirt and then fell asleep again.

Now that Cain understood this process of empowering items, he was getting tempted to share it with someone who would truly appreciate it and not just perfect it for himself. There was a chance that a true professional might even offer him insight as to the parts that he was missing.

The Dwarven Smiths would love this ability, even if they couldn't use it to its full capabilities. If they could even master the basics of it they could use low-grade patterns

as a base and make extremely high-quality items out of them instead of trying to find the highest quality recipes.

They already improvised constantly, but the results of that were more random. This way they could enhance specific abilities.

[Moana, could you send us to the Smithy in the Demon Capital? Dimnys should be there working by now and I want to show her something.] Cain thought, knowing she would hear him.

[Give me just a moment. My other copy is a ways away.] She replied, and Cain could sense that she had sent a copy of herself to the ocean to hunt sea monsters while he was working.

Not out of some sense of justice or public service, they were just tasty, and nobody had any in stock when she wanted to eat one.

The clone that was at the Manor came upstairs a few minutes later, and Cain gathered up Cyrene using the blanket as a sack. She was in for a shock in about three seconds, because the forges were quite loud.

Cain considered leaving her behind, but he knew she would pout more about being abandoned than if she was rudely awoken, so along she came for a trip to visit the Dwarven masters.

Moana transferred them to the demon capital, opening her portal right near the forge where Cain could see Dimnys and a dozen other dwarves working. They should be all the Master Smiths that lived in the city, so even if he dropped a knowledge bomb, they were ready for it.

"Greetings everyone. I have a new technique for Dimnys here, and whoever else she thinks can be trusted with Guild secret techniques." Cain declared as he entered the forge, letting the heat wash over him as the echo of hundreds of hammers rang in the distance.

"A Technique for Smiths? How rare is that? We will gladly learn it." Dimnys called back, waking Cyrene up.

The Lamia was disoriented at first but adapted quickly since she could hear Cain's thoughts reassuring her. Once she had her bearings, she slid from the improvised bag to her place around Cain's waist, then placed the blanket in her inventory.

"Sorry, it was a really good nap." She whispered, but she could sense Cain wasn't bothered. Her mental celebration made Cain smile, she was way too happy just to know that he was pleased with her.

Cain cleared his throat and began his lecture. "I'm sure you know something similar already, but this is a technique to increase the level and quality of an item instead of reforming it."

The dwarves stared in awe as Cain explained the method, using the words from the text supplemented with his own experiences to help them understand. When he got to the last bit, where you had to change the nature of an item's energy to bring it to Ancient quality one of them actually dropped his hammer in shock.

It was easier to show them what he meant, so Cain borrowed an epic quality item off the wall of the forge room and demonstrated, thankfully bringing it to Ancient on the first try and not embarrassing himself.

"See, that's what I mean. At least, it was if you could see or sense what I did. I know that not everyone has the mana sense of an Ancient." Cain explained before the Smiths launched into a deeply philosophical argument on the true nature of the blacksmith's craft.

They continued their argument for almost an hour before Cain finally got bored and dragged them back on topic. If he didn't, they would go on for days at a time without ever reaching a conclusion. That might be the dwarven way, but Cain simply didn't have time for it today.

"Now, if we can get everyone to give it a try, let's see how much of what I tried to explain you could understand and apply," Cain suggested, and all the dwarves headed straight for their forges, grabbing the closest bit of material at hand to experiment on.

They all chose the most basic of recipes to work with so that they could be finished quickly and see if the results were as good as their hypothesis suggested that they could be. In only fifteen minutes, they had a collection of new items created, and a new discussion going on about how well the new technique actually worked.

"If you didn't get it to the level of quality you were aiming for you can just trace through the pattern again and enhance them further now that the item is created and stable," Cain suggested.

The Dwarves shook their heads in rejection of the idea, and Dimnys clarified for Cain. "We thought about that, but once the item is finalized we can't see the Mana lattice anymore, it sinks into the item and vanishes. So once we get the System notice that the item has been successfully created, that is it for us. I think the ability to see and manipulate the Mana flows is something unique to you."

That was a shame, they could have really increased the standard of smithing on the Central Continent.

"I think I understand. But with that in mind, how did everyone do? Better than expected, or did the technique not work well for you, since it has an odd interaction with the system if you do it during the crafting process?" Cain asked.

"I got a Common Quality item up to Epic, that's two whole ranks of Quality above the base for the recipe. I think if I had started with a better item I could have pushed it to be a better overall item, but there simply wasn't time in such a short crafting period to properly enhance the item.

The process is much like the standard method of creation, but with an extra step of enhancing the flow once it is in place. It's very finicky though, and I never would have thought of doing it that specific way if you hadn't shown it to us." One of the Dwarven Masters, who all looked nearly identical to Cain, being short, bearded, and covered in soot from the forge, which hid the small details of their features.

"I have some time, why not try something that was mediocre to begin with, maybe a low Epic item that doesn't take forever to craft?" Cain suggested, and they all ran back to the forges.

The Dwarves loved to talk but they loved the forge even more, so any reason they got to go back to their work was enough to send them on their way before you even finished talking. The sound of hammers and the bellows that fed oxygen to the lava-fuelled forges of the Demon Capital were the only sounds while they worked over the next few hours, and Cain watched carefully as they enhanced the items they were creating.

He didn't learn anything that was too outstanding, but a number of small things that Cain hoped would add up to a much easier time enhancing the items he was working with and lead to better final products. Every Quality level had a wide range of modifiers that could fall within it, and the goal was to end up at the top of the quality level every time.

That might not be realistic right now, but with a little more work, Cain thought it might not be too outlandish to be able to create top-tier Mythic items out of random stuff that people brought to him.

Cyrene loved the thought. A benevolent gift from the Darklight Host Guild Master, upgrading the very armor that supplicants wore to meet him.

The Lamia shrugged off his concerns about the Cultish behavior, firmly convinced that it was only natural for him to be worshipped by the people of the Central Continent when so much of what they had could be traced directly back to him and the benefits that he personally granted to his Guild Members. For many small nations, their very existence after the dungeons collapsed was the result of a group of Outreach Workers using the Guild Skill summons to reinforce the local guards and save their cities.

Put that way, she did make some sense, but there was still something missing from her logic that Cain couldn't really put his finger on. Cain was sure he would figure it out

eventually, but since Cyrene herself saw nothing wrong with the logic, her thoughts weren't going to lead him anywhere near the answer, he would have to focus on it himself.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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While Cain watched the blacksmiths work on their higher grade attempts to implement the method that he had shown them, things were taking a strange turn on the Eastern Continent. So far they had only seen a few Mythic Beasts, nothing that the armies of the cities couldn't deal with, at least those cities that still stood after the initial chaos, but midnight had just passed in Port Nefheim, the last location on the Continent to see the day change, and something was most definitely off.

The beasts in this area had always been either Fae or more primordial, with a heavy bias toward Dinosaurs and otherwise extinct species. But for some reason, that wasn't true this morning. They were under attack by humans. Crazy stupid humans no less.

They had killed most of the attackers before they realized how weak they were, but Neffie had stopped to capture some of them, for curiosity's sake.

It wasn't like nobody had ever attacked the port before, but if they did, they usually had the power to back up their confidence that they could take an established city and not just lord it over a small fishing village somewhere.

"Either you talk, or I am going to let the Watcher take over this interrogation, and he's not nearly as nice as I am." Cixelcid sighed as he interrogated the human that his daughter had captured.

They spoke with a strange accent, but they were understandable. The only strange thing was, that not a single one of the attackers seemed to have a Class. Even this one he was interrogating didn't.

The big vampire growled, and the man seemed to panic at the sight of his fangs. "You're not human at all, you're a monster just like that tiny demon."

"Of course, I'm not a human, she is my daughter and you will speak respectfully about her. Now, tell me what in the world you were thinking, attacking Port Nefheim?" Cixelcid tried again.

"Port Nefheim? Damnable Demons just capturing a city and claiming it as their own." The man said, then spat on the ground.

"There was no city here before we arrived. Duke Cain of Skyview built this place only a year ago. Look around you, can't you tell that the entire dungeon is new? We're on the ocean shore and there isn't even any rust on the shackles." Cid complained to his clueless prisoner.

"Release me, you vile demon. When the Chosen One, beloved of all the gods hears of your villainy, he won't spare you." The prisoner demanded, and the Watcher, in human form for the moment, stepped forward to read his mind and see what he was talking about.

The man began to scream as the Watcher forcibly tore through his memories, looking more and more confused as he went.

"As far as I can tell, they are from before the System. Or maybe after it? It is hard to tell, nothing he knows existed when we left, and none of it is in the records of this time. His energy signature says he is from this world though, just not here. It's not a local feeling, he is far too weak like he is mana deprived." The Watcher explained, then suddenly screaming came from another cell at the end of the hall.

Not just a little bit, like someone had been whipped, but a constant mournful wail, accompanied by incomprehensible screaming in a language that Cixelcid didn't know.

"Does anyone know who the Divine Oracle is? I've got him here, and he is exceptionally rude." En, the Bear Kin Monster Hunter called across the dungeon, making the prisoner that Cixelcid was interrogating burst into tears.

"Please, not the oracle. He is a pure soul, he doesn't deserve this." The prisoner begged.

"Then talk if you don't want him to suffer a horrific death." The Watcher complained, still upset that he couldn't get anything useful out of the man.

"We were just out on patrol, then when we came back to the city to end our shift, we saw your men had taken over the walls, so we attacked to retake the city. I swear that is all I know." He pleaded.

"En, why does it smell like roasting flesh? bring the Oracle over here so we can talk to him." Cixelcid called, wondering what the big bear kin was doing to get answers.

She carried the oracle over to the cell that Cid was working in, the bottoms of his feet were slathered in oil and blistered from heat, but the rest of him looked fine. Cixelcid was familiar with the method of torture, if done correctly, the bones of the feet could be

cooked clean and charred black before detaching and falling to the floor after days of agony.

In this world, that wasn't a death sentence, any decent healer could repair the damage in seconds before it got to that point, which really only made it that much more horrific.

The Oracle was in a trance now, clearly having a vision, and the Watcher tuned his senses in to see what was going on in the Oracle's mind.

"I've got it. I know where they're from. They are the holy armies brought with the Human Gods when they invaded and tried to kill off the Ancients before the Old Gods intervened and drove the Human Gods back to their own realm. That's why he smells like this world, but not here." The Watcher said happily.

"And they don't have a System because it didn't exist yet. What did they even do for power that they thought they could challenge the other races?" En asked, only partially enlightened as to the nature of their presence.

"They were granted holy power by their gods and enhanced it with magical items. That part didn't seem odd to anyone, because magical armor is something everyone wears now, so we overlooked the implication.

"So they were thrown through time? Is that even possible?" Cixelcid asked.

"Of course it is. Even the System does it on occasion. It was a quest that sent Cain back in time that started the weird head-patting thing that the bunnies have going on. He disguised himself as one and healed someone who was kind to him, and things kind of snowballed from there." The Watcher explained.

The Oracle was starting to wake up now, and the Watcher turned to him in intrigue, still reading his thoughts. "What do you mean you're not part of the holy armies? What else would you be doing here, calling on the power of the Human Gods to attack the other species?"

The Oracle didn't say anything, but the Watcher seemed to get the answer he was looking for. "Maybe it is a few generations past that when they still thought they were alone because they were isolated? He really wasn't from the Holy Armies, though that is still the only explanation for his beliefs that I can think of. If I dissect him I can see if Holy Power from a Divine Rank being has changed his internal organs."

En looked like she wouldn't mind, but Cixelcid didn't want to kill prisoners as confusing as these two just yet. There might be more like them somewhere on the Continent right now, and they might be more competent.

"You, Oracle. Can you still access the Holy Power?" The Watcher asked, and the man shook his head nervously.

"Only a little. I might not be a high Priest, but an Oracle still has some power. I fear that if I use what I have stored, I won't be able to renew it. Many of our soldiers used their reserves heavily against the monsters in the woods before the attack on the city was called. I was too far away to be able to stop them, even after I had the vision of battle." The Oracle sighed.

"Interesting. You likely won't be able to recharge your Holy Power quickly, though there is a bit of it in the air still, so it might be possible. Until we determine that you two are not a threat, we will be holding you here. With regular meals and no more forced questioning, plus I will have someone heal the Oracle's feet.

En, please take him to the next cell." Cixelcid decided, then waited while Cain was informed by the Watcher about the strange happenings here.

If this sort of thing happened everywhere, it could be an issue. Or maybe not, due to the nature of the new arrivals. Cixelcid simply didn't have enough information to know if they were coming from other times as well, or just this random point after the war, but before the last of the Human Gods' influence on the planet had waned after they were defeated by the Creators.

"The Guild Master says others have seen strange people around as well, but you were the first that was attacked. Some were spotted near Long Fang Valley, so he is sending a few of the Beastkin to go talk to them and determine if they are hostile, and where they came from." The Watcher explained, making Cid wish he hadn't been dragged out of bed at midnight without coffee.

If for nothing else, they deserved a bit of his animosity just for attacking in the middle of the night. What sort of patrol does that? At least have the decency to wait until after first light when he was awake. That would be the kind and humane thing to do wouldn't it? Or was that just the lack of sleep due to twin toddlers and an overactive Neffie clouding his thought process?

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 515 515 Lost In Time

When Cain started looking into the phenomenon that had led to Port Nefheim being attacked, he found that it was actually much more widespread than anyone had suspected. On the Southern Continent, it was impossible to track them, since the people stuck in the Vortexes had similar stories, but these outliers were from a much

earlier time. For the most part, they arrived right after the Human Gods were defeated by the Pantheon of the Creators, which included the Laughing God.

The only ones that seemed to be arriving were the human soldiers though, ones with a connection to Divine Energy, though Cain heard a few possible reports of Beastkin Clergy who worshipped the old ways arriving as well. Ironically, it was his own Guild that made those ones hard to verify.

If someone goes around talking about the benefits of serving the Ancients, and their true benevolence in looking after the world, are they from the First War or are they simply adherents to the Darklight Host's new outlook on Outreach Work?

Most people wouldn't notice the difference right away, so it made the reports unreliable. Cain did instruct his members to look out for them though and report the ones they found that seemed like they might be from the past so that he could talk to them and find out what they knew.

There was a chance that this was the backlash of an Ancient spell that was attempting to banish the Humans, but it might also be a temporal side effect of the spells that had been woven around this world breaking.

The Dungeon spell had collapsed, but when it was stable, it meshed with the protective wards that the Creators had put in place, as well as the unknown barrier that seemed to be keeping this world hidden from outsiders.

Cain didn't have a way to verify if those spells were stable still since they didn't rely on the Planet's mana to sustain themselves. If he started seeing more portals to other planes, like the ones the Gnomes had accidentally opened, it would be a dead giveaway, but there hadn't been any reports of that so far.

[Boss, we found some new arrivals on the outskirts of the Long Fang Valley. Five humans and a Beastkin who is dressed like a Cleric.] Svetlana informed him.

That got Cain's full and undivided attention. [What sort of Beastkin? Bring them all to me at the manor if you can, I would like to have a conversation with them.] Cain replied quickly, checking her thoughts for the answer.

The humans were soldiers, and the Beastkin was fully furred, but had their hood up, making positive identification difficult from a distance. The humans seemed to defer to the Cleric though and weren't attacking anyone like the ones near Port Nefheim did, which was a good sign.

Cain went down to the main floor to meet the visitors, who could be seen walking across the fields at the edge of town following Svetlana. As Cain watched, he realized that the hooded cleric was a Bunny, which explained why the humans hadn't attacked. Even they usually wouldn't sink low enough to harm the infamously peaceful race.

Cain extended [Superior Mental Domination] out far enough to read her thoughts, and found that she was an actual priestess of the Bunny God, Goddess of love and fertility. She also retained some level of her abilities, as she managed to heal the others, but her power was slow to refresh.

Cain could also see that she had a System interface pending, as her status showed her class as [Undetermined] and wasn't simply blank like those without a Class should be.

"Please, do come in. I have had food and drink prepared, and you can have a hot bath later, and rest here until long-term arrangements can be made." Cain welcomed the group.

"You must be the Duke. Cain, I believe your manager said that your name was. It is a pleasure to see a friendly human face here." One of the men said, making everyone around him laugh.

"Appearances can be deceiving since I am not actually human, but you are just as welcome as if I were," Cain responded with a shrug, but noticed that the Bunny of all people was giving him an evil look.

Her thoughts were on finding the perfect moment to attack him, but she was so focused on her task, that Cain couldn't find out why.

The Bunny didn't have a System, so the easiest answer was the best one. Cain simply walked over and patted her head. The instant his hand touched her head, her hand flashed out, and a small bone dagger bounced off his shirt.

"Well, that was mean. Care to tell me why?" Cain joked while the Cleric stared at him in awe.

"No, the Oracle of the Goddess said that if you weren't stopped you would bring centuries of harassment to her children." The bunny wailed.

"It's because of the head pats, isn't it? Look, that was over a thousand years ago, and it was an accident. Nobody means any harm, I assure you." Cain's words didn't match his actions, and he was still petting the fluffy bunny ears.

"Can you take your hand off my head? It's just weird. Why would you want to touch my ears of all things? Is this some weird sexual harassment that I don't understand?" The Bunny asked, annoyed at the entire situation.

"They're just soft and feel good on the hand. People started believing that it brought good luck since Bunnies are such kind people.

That brought a smile to her face once Cain removed his hand. "Of course, we're good luck, our Goddess governs love and fertility. If you're after a blessing that will bring you

truly good luck, she is the very best choice. Nature might be a decent choice for a blessing, or Rebirth if she is in a good mood, but the Bunny Goddess is best. Which do you follow? These men came with the humans, so they don't know the old ways."

"The Laughing God of course. He implemented a system to let everyone gain more power through a class system. Plus, they have been very good to me with random chance." Cain explained.

The bunny began to giggle. "If the Oracle had said that an agent of the Laughing God was the one that would play such a prank on us, I would have understood and taken a different approach. They never understand how their pranks can have long-lasting consequences, that is why they are mostly shunned and there are so few. But what is this Class you speak of?"

"Think or say the words [Class Selection]" Cain responded, then waited to see what happened.

Her face went vacant for a while, and when she returned her smile was back. "Sorry about this, but it is necessary."

With that, she jumped on Cain's shoulders, wrapping her legs around his neck and violently tousling his hair. Her level went from 1 to 13 in an instant, which Cain only noticed through Svetlana's thoughts, so she must have received a quest to repay all the headpats the Bunnies had received.

"I can't even be mad at that, I'm pretty sure I deserve it," Cain mumbled against her lower belly, and the cleric hopped off him, straightening her robes with a blush barely visible under her fur.

"Of course you did. Feel free to smack him a few extra times for being thoughtless." Moana laughed, floating over to see what all the fuss was.

"There is a baby Leviathan here too? This place is a strange one for sure." One of the humans commented when he saw the Companion approach.

"There is a lot to learn. Let's get you inside and get some food in you before you all pass out."

Cain brought them to the larger dining room on the main floor, but the Bunny Cleric kept looking toward the Spa room as they walked.

"If you want a bath, we can do that later. I'll lock the boys out of the spa for the morning, and we can take all the time we need, but first, you need to learn about the world you've been thrown into and it will be a lot to take in." Nemu whispered, also taking the chance to pet the bunny.

She didn't look as mad when the Felian did it as when Cain did, so either she was already adapting, or it was being touched by Cain specifically that upset her.

As they ate, Cain went over the current situation, how much time had passed, interspecies relations, where they were in the world, and finally the largest of overlooked details.

"I should likely also mention that I am the last of the Ancients on this world, though I wasn't born one. The System changed me into one when I made a choice to become more powerful."

The looks of horror from all of them were priceless, but they recovered quickly. "The last Ancient? I knew the Gods had banished them, but I had always thought that they would return at some point and not stay gone. That's why the army was left behind so that they could serve as the world's first line of defense against the wrath of the Ancients when they came back. Everyone assumed that they would simply kill all the humans to get revenge for their loss."

The human warrior had a point, but from what Cain knew of the Ancients they didn't hold a grudge like that. They viewed humans more like improperly trained pets, so there was no need to punish an entire species because a few of them had misbehaved. He wasn't going to mention that to them though.

"There is no fear of that. The Ancients don't hold a grudge, and I like getting along with everyone if I can. The only problem you might find is a lack of a system. The monsters and beasts in the wild are very, very dangerous these days, and without the Holy powers of the Human Gods at your disposal, you are at a huge disadvantage. Even young Dragons have a problem with some of the monsters on the other continents." Cain explained, making them all sigh.

The spokesperson for the humans was the first to speak. "At least we still have trades to fall back on. Assuming that they can still be performed and aren't all taken by those with your Laughing God's blessing. What species can have one of these Classes anyhow?"

"Everyone," Cain said simply.

"Seriously? The Laughing God would give even the descendants of the ones who attacked him his blessing? Or do you mean just the humans that are originally from this world?" The Bunny Cleric asked.

"Not only would he give it to humans from other worlds, but he also blessed ones that were summoned here as champions to fight in a war between species. Cain is one of those, he wasn't born on this world, he was summoned. Pretty much every intelligent species can have a Class. Even the Ogres got them." Nemu explained, shifting into her Neko form, with more human skin showing. In her mind, that should make these new humans more at ease.

"Miss Felian, could we go to the spa? I can smell the herbs of the Nature God, and I really, really need a bath." The bunny whispered, which Cain pretended that he couldn't hear. If she wanted to hear more from Nemu instead, that was just fine.

"I will have the servants lead the rest of you to the guest rooms then, and you can wash up and relax. Someone will come to get you for dinner if you aren't back down by then." Cain dismissed them all, hearing that Cixelcid finally had some more answers for him.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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While Nemu and the Bunny Priestess got better acquainted in the Spa, the humans all went up to their rooms to relax for the evening, and the rest of the Manor tried their best to map the new arrivals.

Stories about the remnant forces from the war between the Gods were hard to come by after all these thousands of years, and they didn't have an old enough dragon available to be able to tell them the whole story. From what they could tell, the generation that fought in that particular conflict were the ones that were the most likely to be ending up here in their current timeline, so the suspicion that it was a collapsed spell that was throwing them through time was all but confirmed, they just needed a bit of solid evidence.

Until they had evidence, there was also a chance that something that the Creators did ended up putting these people here, in their timeline, but what that might have been was beyond the understanding of even the Watchers, who gained a fair bit of ancient knowledge when they were summoned.

[Boss, should we give this Oracle in Port Nefheim a healing spell or something? We could get him a class and make him useful so we don't have to keep him in the prison. He seems like a fairly decent guy.] One of Cain's watchers asked while Cain was busy trying to connect the pattern of arrivals.

They didn't seem to be following the Ley Lines, there was no particular order they were showing up in, and their power level didn't seem to have anything to do with where they showed up. They also weren't appearing where they thought they were last, so that was out as well, ruling out a time displacement spell.

He was certain that he was missing something, but maybe giving the Oracle a class would help the process along. Doing strange things had gotten him new quests and fun

rewards in the past, there was no reason that he couldn't trigger another oddball quest this time.

The only commonality was that none of the arrivals that were lost in time could seem to recall what they were doing just before they appeared here. It was the same with the transfers, they had no recollection of the minutes or hours before they were brought here, and most thought they had been sleeping or had dozed off at work, trying to explain the lack of memories for that short period.

[One of the Creators is the Goddess of Reincarnation, right? What if these are all soldiers that died in the war and something happened that sent them here? If the Creators had disrupted or manipulated a reincarnation spell by the Human Gods, it might have made them reappear in the future, and it would explain why they are coming in groups. That's how they would have died during the war.] Cain suggested in Guild Chat.

[That's an even more horrific option. If they are coming back in the groups that they died in, that means we are likely to see groups of hundreds and thousands at a time arriving with no idea what year it is or where they are. If they don't show up somewhere friendly, they would be brutally massacred in the wilderness of this world once the last of their Holy Power ran out.] Cixelcid pointed out.

"Yeah, that's even worse. Can you imagine the hunters going out to look for beasts and finding the corpses of entire companies of infantry? They would think that a monster had broken through to the next level and begun a massacre. It would be chaos.] Vala noted, though her thoughts suggested that it might not be a bad plan if they were to do it on purpose to someone else.

'Maybe a horde of zombies playing dead would do the trick?' Cain thought, before realizing that he had gotten sidetracked.

[We won't know until it happens, but I will have Nemu ask the Cleric some questions while they relax in the spa.] Cain agreed hesitantly, not liking the mystery.

Unlike the headpats of Cain, the Bunny Cleric had no problems with Nemu's particular brand of physical affection, letting the Felian happily wash her and show her around the spa facilities. The cleric was particularly excited to see the nail polish station and ran to it as soon as she was mostly dry from her bath.

"Hello miss attendant, I am Priestess Jessica. Can I get my nails done? In the traditional way please." She asked the Puppet who was attending the spa today politely.

"I'm sorry miss, I will need a bit more description than that. I don't know what way is traditional where you come from. The Bunny Kin Clerics here paint theirs based on ranking within the Church, but I also don't know your ranks as a Cleric. Are you perhaps

an Acolyte? If so I can paint your nails the most lovely shade of green that would compliment your fur." The Puppet suggested.

"Oh, that makes sense, things must have changed since my time. Um, we did them in various patterns. Wavy lines, knotwork, dots, even painted animals if the artist was very good." She explained.

"Oh, that's even better. She can take one hand and I will take the other and we will get you all decorated in no time." Nemu exclaimed happily, picking the bunny up to sit her in the chair so they could begin their work.

p "Are you an artist as well? I thought you were part of the Duke's Harem, with that silky outfit." The cleric told her, then covered her mouth in embarrassment.

"No, I'm actually a type of Bard. I sing and dance and play instruments. Master Cain is very comfortable to sleep next to and warm, but I'm his Companion and not part of his Harem." Nemu explained.

"So he does have a harem then? I see that part didn't change." Jessica sighed.

"He's the worst harem leader ever. He is surrounded by beautiful women all the time, and the Laughing God made his summoning spells call even more to surround himself with, but he took one wife and a pet Lamia as his only partners of that sort."

Nemu smirked as Cain's annoyance at her estimation of his harem-building skills was relayed to him in the mental link, but she didn't stop talking to her new friend.

"He won't stop you if you want to sleep next to him, I do it all the time, but you would have to ask him and then get past the protective snake if you wanted to go further than that."

"Oh, no, it's not like that. Clerics bless others, we don't have broods of our own. At least not often. If he was a big strapping Bunny man, maybe, but no." Jessica stammered, twisting the towel she was wearing between her hands.

"None of that, you will mess up your polish. Now be a good girl and let us finish the painting." Nemu teased, before kissing the bunny on the forehead and getting back to work.

When they finished, her nails were a Kaleidoscope of colors, and the Cleric was overjoyed. "That is so much better, now everyone will be able to see the truth again."

"What truth?" Nemu asked, eager to learn more about Jessica.

"Oh, Bunnies are known to be gentle and peaceful you see. So we paint our nails to show that we haven't harmed anything or done anything violently physical. If we did, we

would chip the polish off our nails, and everyone would know that we had misbehaved." Jessica explained.

"You literally tried to stab someone an hour ago." Nemu pointed out with a giggle and the Bunny sighed.

"That was different, I thought he was a threat to the Goddess's people. Normally we don't even carry weapons. The bone dagger was a gift from my senior, and it's meant for cutting fruit, not stabbing people." She explained.

"That explains how it couldn't cut a shirt. Usually, when we have found others their magical weapons have been upgraded by the System in this time." Nemu told her between long breaths to blow dry the Cleric's nails.

Just as she was about to get up and look for a brush, Jessica found her nose tingling, and let out a series of harsh sneezes, ending with her eyes in tears from the repeated action. Nemu could only stare at her in amazement. Every sneeze had made the girl a bit more human until only the fur on her ears and tail was left on the otherwise fully human bunny kin.

"Is that something that happens to Bunnies?" Nemu finally managed to ask.

"Definitely not. I mean maybe? You can do it as well, but without the sneezing, so maybe it is normal now?" Jessica phrased her response as a question.

"That is a result of my level and class. Maybe something changed when you got your class, let me check." Nemu told her

[Name] Jessica Boop

[Race] Divine Bunny (Beastkin)

[Class] High Priestess of the Bunny God

[Level] 17

"There it is. Open your status and examine your abilities and your personal data. You are a Divine Bunny now, and from what I understand they can change their appearances between types of Bunny." Nemu told her, and the Bunny's nose scrunched up as she focused on working the interface, an action so adorable that Nemu couldn't resist giving her a hug.

"I see it now. Hey, what is this skills menu? Can I just pick the blessings I want? That would be totally amazing." Jessica asked.

"Oh, those should be your class abilities and spells. I'm not sure what all you will get, but almost all cleric-type classes get healing spells as their base abilities. You might also get something about fertility since that's your Goddess's specialty. Just read through them carefully, since you have a limited number of points and they can't be changed once you spend them."

The cleric looked concerned as she read through them and tried to grasp the System. "So I can only use each one once, and then my Holy Power will be spent? How long does it take to recover? Do I need to get a favor to use the blessings again?" The bunny sounded truly concerned now.

"No, you will be able to use them until you run out of power, and it will recover in a few hours. But you will only be able to use the ones that you have selected, or started with, and you will need to get stronger or gain favor to level up and gain access to more of them. By the time you finish, you will be able to use everything on the list and have the benefits of all the bonuses." Nemu consoled her, preventing a full-blown panic attack.

"This seems like a very good thing then. I can have a lot of them already, plus I can heal and help with Child Birth. I won't have to beg if I can work as a Midwife, and the Wolf Kin families are always eager for fertility blessings. At least they were in my time." Jessica laughed.

"That part hasn't changed. They still have huge families even without the benefit of the clerics. That's part of the reason they look for Bunnies, they want good luck relating to their families. I'm sure they will love you here in the Valley, two thirds of the population are Wolves or Foxes. I thought Bunnies were afraid of them though?" Nemu asked.

"Most of us are, yeah. But I've gotten used to them. They were fierce warriors, and I am a good healer, so we spent a lot of time together for me to get over my fears." The bunny told the Felian with a smile, which was great news to Svetlana as well. That Kitsune loved bunnies, the only species that could compete with her own fluffiness, and Nemu could sense that the Commander was willing to challenge her for her new friend's attention.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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The situation on the Southern Continent was getting stranger by the day. The expansion efforts were going well, and the latest of their conquests had reached the mountain range that separated a small portion of the eastern edge from the rest of the Continent,

plus they had managed to make alliance deals with dozens more Guardians in the area who had been selected before the group from the farm had arrived.

The Darklight Host now held almost all of the Coastline closest to the Central Continent, and a small portion of the cities that were inland in the region. But the appearance of people and creatures that weren't monsters was becoming a growing concern.

Victor, the Echo had sent out groups every day this week to go look for new arrivals, and every day they had come back to the farm with at least one group that had apparently been thrown through time. But this morning the single person they found was even more of an oddity, they didn't seem to belong to this world at all.

At first, Victor thought this person was an Echo, but they didn't have a class. They had the possibility of a class, but the System still showed [Undetermined].

[Boss, I think we have an issue with the Summoning. We just found a Dragonkin with a pending class assignment. I think that the damage to the Dungeon spell affected the Transfers, and that might be what is causing the random appearances.] Victor informed Cain.

[Do you think it might be related to the Goddess of Reincarnation? We found a Bunny Cleric yesterday who mentioned the Creators, and from what I could gather in her thoughts, I think that the Reincarnation God is working with the Laughing God to make the Transfers happen.

If that Goddess is just sending souls through whatever separates their original world from ours, it might be possible that the destroyed dungeon spell might have affected the targeting and now it's just making people from this planet's past appear.] Cain suggested.

[So, you think she might be from a nearby world and was simply pulled in by accident after death? That isn't impossible. The Transfer spell should have some sort of deliberate targeting to it, and if a God of Reincarnation is involved, those who followed their pantheon in the past would naturally be on the list to be sent back for another life.] Victor agreed.

[See if you can find out something about her past life. The people from the past and the Dragons themselves have both mentioned that one of the other worlds in this solar system had Dragons and Monsters on it in the past, so there is a chance she is from nearby and might know a thing or two about what is going on. If she is too weak to survive the Southern Continent, feel free to send her to me and we can see about getting her going on a class.] Cain instructed his Echo, who only gave a single thought of agreement before turning to the task at hand.

"Now young Miss Jin, can you tell me anything about the world you came from? This world has changed a lot in the past, so it might still be here, or it might be the other

world in this solar system. My boss suspects that the Goddess of Reincarnation might have something to do with all of the time-lost appearances, but we don't have proof of that yet." Victor explained.

"The last thing I recall was playing in the caverns, near an underground lake, when my friends and I decided to make a stop for lunch. Now, I'm here." The Dragonkin shrugged, her dull gray scales making a soft noise as they rubbed together.

"Underground lakes, a world of Caverns, and Dragonkin? That sounds a lot like the neighboring world, but I couldn't say for certain. Those who are Transferred here always lose a portion of their memory before the transfer, so we don't know if they died, or were affected by a spell, but they used to all arrive with a level one class from the Laughing God's System." Victor explained.

"It must be the same plane at least, I don't think I've heard of another Laughing God but ours." Jin agreed, wondering what in the Mortal Plane was going on.

"If you focus hard enough you might be able to sense the Dragons on the other world right now. The full-blooded Dragons say that they can when the planet is close in the sky like it is now." Lou, the second Echo suggested.

"I can sense something. Maybe the War Goddess, or the Nature Goddess? Both of them were dragons, but I can sense the planet as well. But what does it mean? How long was I gone for?" Jin asked, but nobody had an answer for her.

"We could send you to the Ancient Cain, our boss, and see if he knows something. We all share the same abilities, but he has an uncanny knack for attracting the Laughing God's attention." Victor informed her, trying to convince the Dragonkin that it was in her interests to go to the Central Continent.

"One place is as good as another. I will stay with your boss for now, and we will see what he can find out. Will he tell me about this Class thing that you all have mentioned, or is it something personal, like a Cultivation Path?" She asked, confusing the Echoes again.

"This world doesn't seem to have Cultivation energy. At least, the Humans who arrived here and Claimed they were Cultivators didn't find anything that they could use, and turned to Mana instead." Victor told her, and the Dragonkin frowned.

"Is it all Mana here? That shouldn't be right. If there are Dragons there should be both types of energy. Perhaps one is blocked off for a reason? I will start looking into it once I get settled in. Does he have a Library? If Ancients are the Creator's living tools the way you appear to be, then they should still have books in this world." Jin said with some certainty.

"Yes, there is a wonderful library, and the boss can teach you Inscription, so you can make Skill Books to empower your class." The Echoes told her in unison.

"So there are Skill Books as well. If there are skill books and Mana, why aren't there any Cultivators? Please, send me over, I need to know the answer." Jin demanded, making the Echoes smile as their plan to send the problematic new arrival away worked flawlessly.

After Merging with a clone of Moana, they simply opened a portal and used their tentacle arm to lift the Dragonkin through it without any more explanation, leaving her in the Garden of the Long Fang Valley Manor near the transport Circle.

"Welcome, I believe you were called Jin, right? I am Laura, your friendly Neighborhood Opal Prismatic Dragon, and I will lead you to the boss. Did you already eat? We always feed new people, it's a great tradition, and it gives me an excuse to have extra snacks every day." Laura welcomed the new arrival, who could only stare in awe at the chaotic bustle of the Manor grounds and the city around her.

"What sort of place is this? None of the architecture matches, and there are beastkin and humans and Dragons all mixed together in one city. Is this whole world like this?" Jin asked.

"There are Demons too, and Fae, and some Youkai. This place is special, since the boss is here, and he attracts interesting things to himself. See the tower there? He made that for people to train their Classes without risk of death, so everyone could get more powerful. He might take some getting used to though since he can read minds." Laura explained, but that didn't seem to help Jin's confusion.

"Alright, Mistress Laura, please lead the way to your boss." Jin agreed, hoping that the servant of the Creators would be able to explain things more clearly.

"Mistress Laura, I like that. I should ask him to call me that too, so everyone knows how wonderful and important I am." Laura declared with an abundance of misplaced pride that made Jin laugh.

"You really are an odd one. But very cute in that Pixie form." The dragonkin giggled, while Laura frowned. So much for making people call her Mistress Laura, her own transformation had backfired on her.

An out-of-control ball came flying their way from where the local kids were playing outside the gates, and Jin instinctively threw up a barrier around herself using Arcane Magic, the simplest barrier to create, and the least likely to damage the children's toy.

The ball bounced harmlessly back the way it came, making the kids cheer at what they thought was an intentional return while they waved their apology and thanks to the Dragonkin before continuing their game.

"This place really is live..." Jin's words trailed off as the System Interface opened in front of her.

[Welcome to the Class Selection Menu]

[Seven Options of Class are available, related to the Initial Skill you activated, Please Choose Now.]

Jin had always preferred being a Fire Mage, and in her past life had an Elemental Fire affinity. That didn't seem to be true in this life, at least not as far as the classes were concerned. They were all mage classes, but only two of them were Fire Elemental. She also had the option of the other elements, including Arcane, as well as a class whose description was highlighted with a Golden Barrier.

[Dragon Archmage] A Fusion of physical growth and multiple elemental magics that will combine to allow the user to obtain a fully Draconic form upon completion of the Class Path.

That sounded like just the thing to her, but Jin took the time to see what else she could learn and found the Skill tree right away, unlike Jessica, who only found it afterward when she was prompted by Nemu.

There were attack and defense spells, improved flight since she already had fully functional wings, and more skills further up the skill tree that she couldn't see yet. It looked like a very versatile Mage class since one of the magics was the Arcane Spell [Cantrip] which let her use Arcane Magic for mundane uses, like sweeping the floor, moving small objects, and creating night lights. It was perfect for her, but Jin didn't know how long it would take to get all of these skills and obtain the Dragon form that was a dream of every Dragonkin in her past life.

[Dragon Archmage] Selected

Cain was watching the Dragonkin activate her class from the front steps of the Manor when an unexpected quest notification came to him.

[All Avatars Active. New exclusive quest activated.]

[Quest: Balance] Obtain knowledge of the Rules that Govern the World. Knowledge may be found at random, in Ancient Tomes, or from Divine Level Beings.

[Quest Reward] 1 Spirit Grade item token, 1 Random Reward, and Bonus Experience for all Avatars involved in the quest.

Cain spent a while pondering what was meant by All Avatars involved in the quest, then realized that some of the Transfers must be chosen by the other gods the way Cain himself was favored by the Laughing God. The only problem was, that he had no idea

how to find them. There was a good chance this Dragonkin was one of them, and Cain suspected that Jessica the Divine Bunny was another, but there were more creators, and he hadn't seen anyone who stood out as an Avatar of the other Gods.

It did solve Cain's problem with deciding what to do next though. He had to get these two potential Avatars in top form, and then find the former Puppet who still has the Ancient's Library with her. That was his best bet to obtain the knowledge he needs.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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The best thing Cain could do to get ready for this quest was to level up the group he was going to take with him. There were no guarantees that the Bunny and Dragonkin were the avatars that the Quest referred to, but it was better to be safe than sorry.

Using the logic that the other Avatars should also be people who were close to him, since he got the quest, Cain decided to issue a Guild Quest, to turn in information relating to the laws that govern the world. That way as long as they tried, they were involved in the main quest and should gain the rewards.

At least in theory.

Getting Jin leveled up was easy, she was a Mage, so he could just send her to the tower repeatedly, or even to multiple towers daily to build experience.

There was also an experience bonus item enchantment among the abilities that he had learned through [Spell Crafting]. He hadn't had a chance to actually try it yet, but he had the diagram available.

If he placed it in every item that she had, she could greatly increase the speed of her leveling in the tower even without the quest active on her subsequent runs.

Cain immediately pulled a set of the Blue Quality Mage gear that Char kept in the Guild Bank for new recruits and got to work, hoping to get it all done before he was disturbed. Pants, boots, robes, gloves, helmet, amulet, two rings, two bracelets and a staff were all relatively quickly enchanted for a twenty percent per item bonus.

Each of the items was chosen because it already had a few points of bonus experience per kill, giving her maximum gains at the lower levels.

He would have to apologize to Char later for borrowing the best of the training gear.

220 percent was pretty good, but in order to clear the tower quickly, the gear would still need to be better. Unlike other transfers, Jin was a Mage before arriving here, so she only needed spells and practice to be somewhat capable again, since she had the experience.

The Guild Skills are unavailable in the tower, so she would have to rely on her own abilities, and Cain didn't know how much she got at the first level. It might only be a single attack spell plus her [Cantrip] abilities, which weren't really combat capable.

If that was the case, she would need to be gear carried for optimum speed, so Cain began increasing the quality of the gear, bringing it first to Epic, then Legendary Quality.

That gave it much better bonuses, and the experience per kill stat that all the items began with rose into the low four digits total from under a hundred combined.

Level 1 to level 2 was only 500 experience, so this set of armor should absolutely rip through the early levels.

Cain was finished before the others came down to eat, with the sound of four energetic feet and one slithering body rapidly approaching from the Guild side of the house.

Jessica and Jin might not be members yet, but they soon would be. Cain just had to show them the benefits of membership to get them to agree, assuming Cyrene hadn't done that already.

The kitchen Puppets passed by while he was waiting for the ladies to arrive from upstairs, bringing meals to the newly arrived humans in the other wing, and Cain gave them instructions to recommend that they all try out the tower, or a training battle. The combat might trigger a System activation if they really are transfers that glitched out on arrival.

"Guild Master Cain, buddy, pal, my new very bestest friend." Jin declared, hopping in his lap and wrapping her arms around his neck.

Cain listened to her thoughts for a second then smiled. "It's fire and arcane spells you're after, right? I will make you some quickly, since my inscription skills are faster than yours were in your past life."

The Dragonkin laughed and moved to a seat beside his. "Cyrene was right, you really are a helpful Guild Master. Just a couple nice offensive spells to get me started would be perfect."

"I will do you one better. I gathered a set of gear for you, but I will also make you some spells after breakfast. What can you do for magic right now?" Cain asked.

"I can do arcane barrier and magic missiles. It's a shame my body isn't as strong as my last life, but as I level up it seems like I will recover my magical power." Jin responded with a sigh.

Unlike the others who lived in mundane worlds, she still had memories of casting powerful spells that she didn't have the mana for anymore.

She did manage to use magic without a class though, so there was a chance she would be able to learn her old abilities without the system the same way that magical creatures traditionally did.

Nemu and Jessica seemed to have become very close friends, and the Felian companion was explaining all about Long Fang Valley and its residents as they ate. Jessica preferred not to fight, so the tower would be a last resort for her leveling, but she would probably get experience for helping out around town.

"Jessica, I will make you a new set of clerics clothes with bonus experience soon, then you can go with Nemu to explore the town and see what you can do to help. I am sure your goddess will help you out with some experience to build your strength, since she already gave you one special quest." Cain suggested.

"Oh, that would be good. I can meet the local midwife, and the healers, and all the expectant mothers, it will be great." Jessica agreed.

"Just no trying to stab people for patting your head. I can assure you that it is going to happen, they even tried it with the Tracii clones." Tasha, the recently summoned Commander in the form of a female Spider Demon laughed as she entered, braiding her long hair with her upper appendages, followed by all four copies of her Lieutenant and the Blood Dancers.

"Are you going to meet people? Can we come with you? We met a lot of people already and they are really friendly." The Blood Dancers asked eagerly while finding their seats.

"I don't see why not. Though we might not be going to see exciting people, more likely we will visit with the sick people and pregnant women." Jessica's comment made all the Blood Dancers, as well as Tasha snicker.

"What?" The bunny asked, offended at being laughed at.

"There's literally a hundred people with healing classes in town. It's very rare anyone stays sick more than a day. Every woman who aspires to be a mom and gets a class usually picks a healing class. The men and adventurous women pick a class to help with the sort of job they want, so the only families that need healing for basic sickness are the ones without any healers among the living generations." Cain explained.

"And with so many Wolf Kin, who are pack oriented by nature, neighbors are always willing to help. We don't even have a proper militia, since the Valley never needed one." Svetlana added.

"I like this place more all the time. Do you think I could join you all and just stay here?" Jessica asked.

"As you wish, Priestess." Cain joked, while sending the invitation.

[Jessica Boop has joined the Guild]

"Sneaky bunny. Me too please, Guild Master." Jin asked with her best pleading face.

[Jin has joined the Guild]

[64 Guild Slots available]

They really had added a lot of official members to the Guild lately, but it looked like they would have enough space left to finish their attempts to add the Guardians in their region of the Southern Continent.

After that, Cain would have to come up with something to keep the Guild growing. A regional sub Guild wouldn't get all the benefits that they used to lure members, but an alliance with other established groups could certainly be in their future.

As soon as breakfast was done, Jessica's self appointed entourage dragged her out to go see the city, while Cain led Jin into a sitting room and took out his inscription desk.

"What a curious artifact. Does it supply the materials for just a few mana? That would be incredibly useful in the Temples for the students." Jin announced, kneeling down to inspect the construction of the desk.

"It actually came from a training academy, but the technique for making them was lost for many years. I could probably recreate it, but it would take a lot of time." Cain explained.

He got straight to work, creating [Fireball], [Arcane Blade], and [Arcane Armor] to add to her repertoire over the course of the next hour.

"That's about all you can use at level one, but I will lead you to the training tower right away, with instructions for them to let you practice all day and not just for one attempt." Cain informs her.

"Why would you only train one set? Is the tower really busy, or is there something special about it?" Jin asked.

"Both. There is a once daily quest to challenge the tower that you will receive when you enter. The bonus experience and chance at a reward item is what everyone comes here for." Cain explained.

"Don't worry about making people mad. A hundred at a time can challenge the tower, one spot isn't a big deal, and the Guild Master created it, so he gets special privileges." Cyrene informed her with a consoling stroke of the Dragonkin's wings.

"If I'm not causing trouble, I will gladly take up your offer. Until I'm at least back at the power level that I remember from before I arrived here, I don't think I'll be able to really relax. I talked to some other transfers about the feeling of vulnerability earlier, and they all said that they felt powerful at level one, but none of them came from worlds with magic or cultivation. "

Cain nodded in understanding, then passed over the books that he had made for the Dragonkin mage. Her scales were an interesting sort, dull gray, but almost shiny black in some spots, and they seemed to get lighter or darker based on her responses. That was uncommon but not unheard of in full blooded dragons, but Cain had never seen the effect in person before, since Laura shimmered all the time. Jin used the spell books right after receiving them, then frowned and sighed, realising just how limited her mana was.

"Lead the way, Guild Master. I'm in desperate need of some more mana, this is just ridiculous." Jin half joked as she worked out a battle strategy for a mage that can only use a few spells before running out of mana. Fortunately Cain had given her [Arcane Blade] which lasted up to fifteen minutes on one casting, so she could just beat things to death if needed.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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Armed with a basic array of new spells that Jin found were more mana efficient than the ones she knew from her past life, she felt that she was ready to face the trials.

All the beastkin in line had been very understanding when Cain informed them that she was a first-day transfer and that she would be in the Tower all day getting herself up to an acceptable standard.

[Quest: Complete the trial of the tower 1 Time] Reward: bonus experience, 1 chance at a random item.

The Quest message greeted her when she passed through the door, exactly as Cain had told her it would, and the Dragonkin marveled at the level of Mage that must have been needed to create all this. She even considered the possibility that Cain was actually favored by the God of Magic and not the Laughing God.

The moment she chose to enter the trial, Jin was thrown into a simulated human village, where she was immediately attacked by a group of three level 1 goblins.

She had been hoping for something easier, maybe some nice feral dogs or something, but goblins would have to do. There wasn't time for a long casting chant or the creation of a magical circle the way she used to cast spells, but Cain said she could activate her class-granted spells with just a thought.

Jin lobbed a [Fireball] toward the charging goblins, then cast [Arcane Blade] to finish them off if they survived. The flaming orb hit the center goblin and exploded, killing all three at once without her even needing to use the ethereal purple blade.

She kept it active though because she would need to save her mana for the upcoming levels. Or so she thought.

[Level Up]

[Level Up]

[Level Up]

[Level Up]

Each time she gained a level her stats increased, and she regained some of her mana. She had only cast two spells, but they were ones with reasonable mana costs, so she was now back to full and looking forward to the second level when a message came from the tower.

[User Level out of range. Beginning Trial from floor 1]

The scenery shifted around her, and the goblins were back, but this time she was in a cave.

[Fireball]

[Level Up]

[Level Up]

[Level Up]

[User Level out of range. Beginning Trial from floor 1.]

Jin giggled in excitement. This was going to be a great day, she could sense it. Every time she gained levels, it would reset the challenge. That meant with all the experience gear she had on, she might actually get a pretty decent reward by the time she finished the challenge for the first time.

It should certainly be better than what would be awarded to a first or second level warrior, she hoped.

The third attempt at the Trial brought her to a clearing in the forest with a pack of wolves. Seven to be exact, and all her level.

With the bonus experience for every kill, large numbers were her friends, even if she had to fight them off with her arcane blade so she had enough mana remaining for the next fight.

She hadn't learned yet that she could keep one enemy just barely alive to give herself time to recover, and she hadn't had time to look through her class skills to give herself more options either.

Jin knew she would only be ejected when she finally lost, so she could upgrade her skills and abilities then.

She was level twenty-one before a single fight was no longer enough for her to gain a level, but Jin didn't fret and instead extended her claws to get ready. She had realized a few fights ago when a fast-moving fae got the drop on her that applying [Arcane Blade] to her own claws wouldn't cut her hands and made up for her lack of skill with other types of melee weapons.

When she finished the day, she resolved to have Guild Master Cain find her some clawed gauntlets for tomorrow's attempts to get her level up to an acceptable standard.

But now the fight in the second level was beginning, against a group of Stone Trolls, and she needed to focus or her partially depleted mana wouldn't last the fight.

While Jin fought her way up through the levels, Jessica, the much harassed Bunny God cleric, managed to activate another Quest.

[Quest: Solve Lady Anil's fertility problem.] Reward: bonus experience, 1 class-specific blessing.

"This quest says it will give me a Class Specific blessing, are those good?" She asked Nemu quietly while looking at the merchant whose appearance in her shop window appeared to have triggered the Quest.

"That's a blessing from your goddess. It should be good, but I don't know what it will be." Nemu explained and the Bunny started to think hard about her options to successfully complete the task she was assigned.

"I can't see anything wrong with her fertility though. I do have a spell that might help, but only if she has been mating very recently." Jessica muttered while walking towards the door.

"Hello? I have a Quest to help Lady Anil with a problem, do you have time to talk with me?" She asked and the Were Tiger female working the counter gave her a toothy smile.

"That's wonderful dear, but my daughter, Lady is busy upstairs with her new husband." The woman replied with a wink.

Nemu got a rather cunning smile on her face, but she didn't say anything before she pulled out a small wineskin from her inventory. "Jessica, why don't you bless this juice for them? It will help, I am certain."

Jessica, fully trusting her new friend's judgment, happily cast a fertility charm on the juice and handed it over to the mother, who ran upstairs with it.

"So, Lady was a name, not a title. That's a bit strange, but not everyone names their children the same." Jessica told Nemu while she waited for the Quest to complete.

"They were a bit upset that I barged in, but they've finished the juice between them." Mother Anil told them happily when she returned and Nemu began to panic.

"I didn't forget to tell her the dosage did I? Does anyone have healing portions?" The Felian asked in a hushed voice.

"Were they not supposed to drink it? Oh my. What do we do?" Mother Anil asked.

"Oh, they're supposed to drink it, the juice has long duration stamina restoring effects, and it is a potent aphrodisiac, Mythic Grade in fact. I meant to tell you they only needed a sip at a time. The whole flask at once is definitely going to be overkill, and they won't be leaving that room for a while." Nemu told the shopkeeper, but Jessica was too distracted by her System interface to notice the hushed conversation.

"Quest complete. She is guaranteed to be pregnant by tomorrow." The bunny declared happily, just as the sound of moaning and banging, followed by shattering glass came from outside.

People were stopping in the street with looks ranging from shock to cheering and laughter. The bed in the young couple's room had shifted and broken the window, dispelling the soundproof enchantment that had been placed on it.

Mother Anil made a gesture and the sound stopped, but the damage was done. City residents were dropping baby presents on her front step already, a local tradition to wish new couples a large family.

The two had married in secret because her extended family didn't approve of the groom, thinking he was too weak to father strong children.

"How long will the effects last?" The Were Tiger asked, but Nemu just shrugged.

"Eight hours at the most. If your family has a problem with him, just send them to me tomorrow. I'll tell them that Ancient Cain and the Bunny God approved the union."

Nemu backing up the union gave the merchant some peace of mind. Felian men tended to be significantly smaller than even the females of the Were Tiger clan, so there was some bias, especially from the Were Tiger men, who towered over the Felians and viewed them as weak and effeminate, not suitable to mate with the daughters of the Were Tiger Clan.

But the Guild Master and the Bunnies were both well respected, so if they said it would work out most of the family would give the couple a chance.

"We need to go, the bakery is open already." One of the Blood Dancers called from outside, her announcement instantly causing Laura to drag Jessica toward the door.

The cookies were best while warm and fresh, but the first batch of the morning sold out fast to families who wanted to pack them in lunches for students or those working away from the house. Laura wasn't going to miss out just because Nemu didn't understand portion sizes.

"Sorry for the trouble. Really, I am." Jessica called as she was dragged away, making the crowd in the street giggle and form theories about what was really going on in that apartment above the shop.

With the Blood Dancers forming a protective circle around Jessica, they could move much more quickly through town. The number of people stopping her for a blessing, or a chat, or simply wanting to pat the Bunny for luck dropped dramatically with the interference of the demons.

The four copies of Tracii, who were leading the group at the moment while Tasha brought up the rear, didn't get nearly as many requests now that word that they were a much harder to pat variety of Bunny had spread through the city.

That let them reach the bakery in only a few minutes, whereas the kilometer to downtown had taken over an hour.

"This whole city is crazy. Or is it just because I'm new?" Jessica complained, after trading a lucky head pat for a half dozen mint chocolate chip cookies at the bakery.

"It's definitely because you are new. Once everyone has met you at least once, they should calm down. Do you want us to arrange something so that you can meet everyone all at the same time? Maybe we can set aside some time to have a speech the next time we have a city-wide gathering dinner?

They happen pretty much every weekend lately, so it wouldn't be a problem to give you a few minutes to talk to everyone and let them get to know you all at once instead of one at a time." Laura suggested.

That sounded much better to Jessica. If she had known how popular she was going to be, she wouldn't have volunteered to head downtown her very first day here.

"Can we detour and see the farms instead? The Bunny Goddess also blesses farm animals and wildlife." She suggested, hoping to get away from the crowds.

"Good idea. The wolf who married the Druid girl, out at the edge of the valley makes great pie, and they've got puppies coming soon. That's like double the reason to visit." One of the Blood Dancers declared.

"Um, how do I tell you apart? I don't know any of your names yet." Jessica asked softly while finishing off her cookies.

"We haven't picked names yet. Once you do, they're finalized in the system, so we all want a really great and epic name, and we're willing to wait." One of the cleric-type Blood Dancers informed her, leaving Jessica even more confused.

"We will explain the whole thing as we walk. It's a bit of a convoluted story involving Ancients, extinct species, and a Demon King who loves children."

The Blood Dancer's description of how they came to exist as ten copies with no names made Jessica laugh, then hesitate before laughing even harder as she realized that they weren't joking. This world was definitely one that the Laughing God would approve of. Who else gifts resurrected children from an extinct species to a Demon King as adopted children without any warning at all?

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 520 An Important Day For Kone

After the arrival of the Watchers in Blood Sands Castle, and the building of the Tower of Sand, as they called their local training tower, things changed in the desert outpost.

No longer were they isolated and rarely visited, the castle was a bustling hub of activity in the desert, with the main gates open every day and a packed market inside the walls, something that was an unthinkable risk when the Castle was built, operated at maximum capacity every day, easily selling out all the available stalls.

Since the location didn't exist before the dungeons, they didn't have to worry about the crazed former occupants traveling here via an unguarded transport circle, so the Blood Sands Castle had become open to the public, under heavy guard by the two Lieutenants who are constantly stationed there.

A secondary transport circle had been placed aboveground, for public use, keeping unwanted visitors out of the keep itself, and the Guild decided that it would be free to use for everyone associated with the Guild as well as all merchants doing business in the Castle. The savings might be small to some, but they were very large to those selling common goods, and the policy had brought a lot of trade in foods and common textiles.

Kone's first duty of the day was to check on the aquifer under the castle, ensuring that the water elementals had kept it topped off and circulating so it wouldn't go stagnant.

The sand made an excellent filter, so what little was reclaimed came back relatively pure, and didn't jeopardize the safety of their drinking water.

Just as she got dressed and ready to head to the underground levels, the door opened and a slender young man rushed in pushing a trolley with two covered plates on it.

"Miss Kone, I am so sorry I'm late. I brought all your favorites from the kitchen." Larkin greeted her, hurrying to place them on the small table that was currently covered in design plans for the botanical gardens that the Druids were trying to grow in the desert surrounding the Castle.

Kone gave him a short kiss before sitting down at the table and packing up the documents. She had told Larkin many times that this wasn't necessary, but he still insisted on bringing her breakfast every day. She knew the hopeless man simply couldn't resist any hint of affection, so she was always sure to treat him well. It wouldn't do for him to develop a wandering eye and go looking for affection elsewhere.

Larkin was blushing at her from across the table and playing with the amulet around his neck, which made Kone almost giddy with happiness. She had given him that trinket for his birthday a week ago and he hadn't taken it off since.

That was the day that she had made their relationship official, following Char's advice not to string him along too long. According to Char, he was too cute and naive to be left unattended, so if Kone took too long to act, the Shaman was sure that another woman would catch his eye and steal him away.

Kone might not have been able to cure his simping nature, but she had leveraged it to encourage him to keep building his strength every day.

She was still leveling much faster than him and was almost to level 300 already, mostly thanks to the tower and an ingenious idea she had been invited to test the first day it was built. With the Watcher standing at the door, she could party with him and gain the benefit of his aura abilities, including the experience bonus.

The Watcher was treating the arrangement as an experiment, curious to see how long it took someone to notice that her rate of growth was unnatural and say something.

The party function was suspended inside the tower, but you weren't removed from your group. This exploit only seemed to work for the one that created the tower though, since bonuses from the other creatures the Watcher summoned disappeared when she entered.

Larkin followed her through the morning rounds, always a polite two steps behind her, like he was her bodyguard. It was a bit of a running joke in the castle that ever since Neffie moved away and he lost his partner in crime he had lost his enthusiasm for pranks and needed someone to think for him.

Kone knew it wasn't true, he was just an idiot madly in love with a girl who loves to bully him, and she had made sure nobody said mean things to him about his affectionate nature.

"Come along Larkin, we are heading out to the botanical gardens," Kone instructed, hiding her smile by turning her back on him.

The Druids had arranged a picnic for them today, to celebrate one week as an official couple. Lunch in the shade of the newly planted trees, next to the fountains, was her idea of the perfect afternoon, so she hoped Larkin liked it.

"Before you two head for lunch, there are reports of a large group of high-level scorpions in the desert. The patrol hasn't managed to track them down yet, and they're asking if you can help out." Maggie, the mint-skinned orc who was Cain's Lieutenant in charge of the castle defenses, called the moment she saw them.

"No problem. We still have time before lunch, just let the Druids know that I will be running behind." Kone called back.

The duo headed out the gate in the direction where the last attack on a caravan was reported, making their way slowly through the freshly planted gardens that were steadily taking over the valley around the city.

Most of the foliage was a type of grass that grew as one interconnected plant that could draw water from over a kilometer away, allowing it to grow and blanket a large area around an oasis. Steadily overflowing fountains with long stone drainage ditches served as the water source for the unique grass, and stands of hardy trees stood near the road, sheltering the castle's guests as they arrived.

"Su, can we get a ride?" Kone called for her Forest Dragon Companion, who had grown into a magnificent example of her species as Kone advanced through the levels.

The Dragon appeared to be covered in multicolored leaves, but if one looked closely they could see that the leaves were actually a loose secondary layer of flexible scales that shifted colors to help Su blend in with her surroundings.

"Of course, you can. Are we bringing Larkin or will he be chasing us on foot?" Su asked, only half joking. She admired his persistence but despised his shameless nature in chasing after her mistress.

[Be nice to him today. I think today is the day to give him that special gift I've been saving.] Kone sent the directions as a thought so Larkin wouldn't catch on, and Su snorted in amusement.

[Or you could put a collar on him and keep him as a puppy. You might have to smack him to stop him from humping your leg though.] Su countered.

[That's not a bad idea either. I wonder if Cain has an extra?] Kone joked, then mounted the dragon and helped Larkin up.

The target was only a pack of giant scorpions, so she should be able to deal with them from the air, just by summoning the very tanky Snapping Turtles she preferred as her main fighting force to defeat them.

"There they are. Six scorpions in the distance." Su called out, banking toward them and calling her own Drakes to deal with them before anything else was in range.

In her mind, it was better than getting close and risking a sneak attack. Many desert creatures had ambush-type skills to help them take down prey.

These were exactly that type, and a hailstorm of poison spikes flew from the scorpions' backs toward the drakes. As level 250 Epic monsters they weren't individually much

weaker than the drakes, and their carapace made them resistant to the debilitating effects of the drake breath.

Kone called the Turtles to help out and they appeared all around the unfortunate desert dwellers, swinging their huge Warhammers at the thick chitin on the scorpions' backs.

Tails flashed out in return, bouncing off shields, but one got through, knocking a Turtle Kin back with a festering wound on its shoulder.

The Healing Aura coming from Kone and Su quickly cured the poison, but a slowing effect was left behind that seemed to be a curse, which her aura didn't affect.

Another Turtle Kin was grabbed and ripped apart by giant pincers as the opponents ganged up on it, coordinating their defense much more efficiently than expected.

Hammers crushed first one, then another scorpion's brains and the battle turned lopsided while Kone and Larkin watched from the air. They were so distracted by the fight that they didn't even notice the sandstorm sneaking up on them until it was almost too late.

At their level, the storm wasn't likely to prove fatal, but it was very painful to be out in, so Kone ordered Su to land so they could set up shelter while the summons finished dealing with the Scorpions.

The tent Kone brought was enchanted for this reason, and wouldn't be damaged by the fire magic infused sandstorm, but the air would get rather hot inside, and it was already nearly forty degrees in the morning sun.

[You can dismiss the others, the battle is won. I will bury myself in a sand dune until the storm is over to give you two lovebirds some privacy.] Su reported, making herself a comfortable den, safe from the storm.

Kone decided that this was the perfect chance. They were out of the castle, and the storm would last at least half a day, so she made her move, removing her armor to leave herself in shorts and a tank top.

"It is only going to get hotter in here as the storm hits, you should remove your armor as well." She suggested.

"Good idea. I am already feeling pretty warm." Larkin agreed, trying not to look directly at the glistening skin that she was showing, and Kone could feel Su laugh in her mind at the man's naivety when he changed into long pants and a tunic.

"Is that any sort of outfit for this heat? How about you lose the clothes entirely and let me give you a present?" Kone whispered in his ear as Larkin gave thanks to any and

every God or Goddess that might be listening for giving him this opportunity. This was not a day he would forget any time soon.

Not that anyone else would ever know. Larkin was certain that he would die of embarrassment if he ever tried to relay the things that happened in the sweltering tent that day.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 521 521Nesting

Cain wasn't completely idle while the two newly arrived potential avatars were busy trying to build up their strength. He was dedicating his time to research. Spell Crafting got more and more difficult as the lessons went on, and he was struggling just to follow the lesson plan, much less accomplish the tasks necessary to master the knowledge needed to begin the next section.

Enhancing weapons and armor had been fairly easy at the start, just bringing up the level and quality, but the next section had him trying to instill specific properties onto it, and his mind simply couldn't seem to comprehend what was required of him.

He had thought bonuses should be like spell effects, a standardized structure that he could just copy and paste onto a new item once he understood what it looked like, but that wasn't the case at all. Every bonus interacted with the others, and changing a small bit of the intensity of one would affect every other bonus that the item had, and all the threads of the magic that granted the bonus were wound up with the ones that provided the base structure or showed the quality of the item.

Time after time he failed and wiped the enchantments off the item he was working with, forcing him to start all over from the beginning and attempt to rebuild the structure.

"Master Cain, I don't feel well." Cyrene interrupted his work, rubbing her lower body.

Cain could sense that she had already tried a healing potion, and it had no effect, but he could also see the gentle rippling of her scales as the muscles underneath worked hard at something. He briefly thought she had the Lamia version of an upset stomach, but then it dawned on him that her eggs were ready to be laid.

"How about we get you to the room we prepared upstairs? I think your eggs are ready, and you should feel much better once they are all out." Cain suggested, picking up her curled form in his arms and leaving the library for the heated room in the basement that they had prepared for the clutch.

Lamia eggs were supposed to like warm, humid environments, so the rooms under the spa were perfect for them, being near the magical furnaces, the forge, and the kitchens, which all added up to give the area an almost uncomfortably warm presence.

For that reason, nobody else stayed there, preferring to live further out instead of in the cramped underground quarters, leaving the whole area secure for the eggs to hatch in peace. Tasha met them downstairs, eager to see what Lamia's eggs looked like, but Cyrene locked her out of the room the second that they arrived.

"Alright, now find a comfortable position, and let your body do the work. I can call another Lamia here if you want some moral support." Cain suggested, but Cyrene shook her head.

"I've got this. It isn't painful, just uncomfortable and very strange." She explained, letting out a moan as the first of the eggs slid onto the soft bedding.

One after another a total of five eggs joined the clutch, all shimmering purple on the outside, and giving off the aura of very strong magic. It was clear right from the start that these would be no weak and unremarkable beings, they had a power that anyone nearby could sense even this long before they hatched.

When exactly that hatching would be was a matter of some concern to Cain, as there really wasn't much to go on. The stronger the Lamia, the faster the hatching, and if they weren't stopped the firstborn would usually kill off their unhatched sisters to reduce competition, so they needed to be watched carefully at all times.

Cain inspected the Eggs now that they were out in the open, and found a very interesting bit of data in their System information

[Lamia Egg]

[Level 0] Immature

[Cyrene's Daughter]

He hadn't seen the system give family information before, but then he also hadn't inspected any demon or monster eggs before either. Looking through the group, he found that four were the same, all Level 0 Immature daughters of Cyrene, but the last one was an oddity.

[Lamia Egg]

[Grade] Ancient

[Level] 99 Immature

[Cain's Daughter]

[Blessed]

The egg looked exactly like the others, but according to the system not only was it a blessed item, it was level 99 the moment it entered the world, and already Ancient Quality. Plus, why did this one say it was his daughter and not hers? It wasn't like Cain himself had laid an egg. That egg also seemed to be the source of most of the powerful energy that Cain was sensing from the clutch, which made sense, being the only one that wasn't level 0.

"Oh, that's a relief. I feel so much less sluggish now, like a whole new woman." Cyrene sighed, wrapping herself around the clutch of eggs.

"Can we let the others in now? I can hear them waiting impatiently outside." Cain asked, smiling at the happy little demon.

"Sure, why not, just keep them away from the bed until the eggs have settled and matured a little more," Cyrene told him protectively while moving so her upper body was between the eggs and the door.

The room wasn't soundproof, so one after another the other Manor residents came in to give her their best wishes, wondering what the appropriate sentiment for today was. Did it count as a birth, since the eggs were no longer in her, or did that wait until they hatched? If it didn't what did they call today, which was clearly an important milestone?

They all brought gifts though, and that seemed to make Cyrene very happy. Some were food items, most were trinkets, armor, jewels, and other oddities that reminded the gift bringer of her. That meant a heavy bias toward white and red colored items that matched her scales, or bright pink that matched her hair, but Cyrene was happy to receive every one of them and piled them around her body in an orderly fashion, creating a nest of precious magical items.

"You doing alright in there? Not going to get crushed under a pile of armor or anything, are you?" Cain asked with a chuckle as Cyrene completed her intricate pile of a nest.

"Nope, I'm good. But can you bring me something to eat? I forgot to get breakfast before heading down here." She answered, sticking her smiling face out of the pile.

Cain called for food to be brought, then merged with another Lamia to ask a few questions about demon behavior.

[Is that normal? The nest of items seems a little bit excessive.] Cain asked the Epic Demon in his mind.

[Totally. Normally they layer items between each other since Lamia normally mate and nest as a group, but we are obsession demons, so there was never an option of making a mediocre nest.

[And how long will they take from this point?]

The demon thought a little while before answering. [Four of the five seem pretty normal, but one is exceptionally high quality, and it will grow very fast. Have you experienced that before? A lot of demons suffer from it.]

Yes, Cain had seen it before. In the whirlwind of chaos that was known as Neffie. If this one demon was going to grow much faster than all the others the same way that she did, it is a good thing that Cain called for an extra Commander to help with child care.

Demon King Aggramor had a hard time with one Neffie, and both Aggramor and Cain are overwhelmed with the Blood Dancers, so adding a snake-bodied Neffie equivalent to the mix might just throw the entire Central Continent into chaos for lack of proper supervision.

The new exercise plan does seem to be helping with the Blood Dancers though, they haven't been nearly as rambunctious the last few days with the Tracii clones to wear them out and Tasha to keep them in line with her webs.

The last question is what sort of abilities is this one exceptional egg going to inherit?

There is certainly a skill that would tell him in advance, at least what physical abilities they are likely to inherit but other than holding them up to a light and guessing at their forms, Cain doesn't have many ideas that could be helpful.

Vala was the first to pay attention to his thoughts and send him a bit of assurance. [Look at it like a surprise present. You don't plan for it, just go with it once it happens. But if you need something to take your mind off of things you can't change, there has been another report of an attempted Guardian Assassination on the Southern Continent.]

[Another one? Has that alliance from the center of the Continent already spread so far that they are meeting up with the Cities that have allied themselves with us?] Cain responded.

The Echoes had the answer to that question. [No, if anything they are having trouble holding on to what they have. A number of cities have revolted against the heavy-handed treatment that they are receiving, but the closest confirmed city in the alliance is nearly two hundred kilometers from us. I suspect it is a distraction technique, trying to cause trouble in our ranks in preparation for their next expansion push.]

[Once Cyrene is settled and these two new arrivals are a bit stronger I need to come South anyhow. Let me know if things get out of hand and I will come down earlier. Until

then, just keep everyone on good terms with each other, and try to find solid evidence against the ones who sent the assassins.] Cain instructed, then sat down to wait for breakfast while listening to the sound of Cyrene altering her nest.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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The next week passed in a blur for Cain. Most of his time was spent in the basement with Cyrene, who had become somehow more clingy than when she decided that she would be his belt, but who was also obsessively protective of her clutch of eggs.

The one most advanced Lamia of the batch was looking close to hatching already, and everyone who Cyrene had allowed in to visit had agreed that it would likely only be a few more days.

The Blood Dancers had actually started to calm down now that they had a steady daily exercise routine that burned off most of that excess energy. They were coming along well, reaching over level 100 already, and in discussions on what way they should go with their First Advancement class. They had a lot of options already, but they were torn between picking their species' exclusive variant and diversifying their skills.

There were strong arguments to be made on both sides, but the others had left it to decide between themselves. They would keep gaining skill points that they could use after they picked, so it didn't matter that their class was capped out for a little while, they just had to be sure that they were going to be happy with their option.

Jin, the dragonkin Mage, was also getting close to level 100, but that was mostly due to a Quest Reward that she had gotten from the tower. It had increased her quality level to Epic, which triggered the System to start passively granting her experience to help her level up. The rate of adaptation didn't seem much, if any, slower than the Blood Dancers, despite the difference in quality, and the experience gear that Cain had given her had made a huge difference at the start.

That helped her close the gap with the ten Blood Dancers, who were her new rivals in the tower. The quest was a secondary concern for them all now, the real challenge was to beat each other and level up. Those few hours when one sister would level up before the others would allow them to brag all day about being the most talented and fastest progressing member of the group.

Jessica was further behind, but also much more relaxed. She spent her days wandering the valley looking for people to help and granting blessings to the travelers. Her

blessings were no joke either. They were almost all fertility-related, or healing blessings, but the potency had turned out to be incredible.

She had a blessing that would shorten a pregnancy by over half if cast at the start, and the farmers loved it. Less time immobilized meant more time to take care of the other kids and the chores that needed doing around the house.

The only issue she had found so far were those with nefarious intentions for her blessings. A few merchants had gotten the idea to head north to the Steppes between Skyview and the Demon Kingdom, where many of the migratory Clans still kept slaves, then use the Blessings of the Bunny God to help increase their numbers and restore failing tribes through the slave population.

Needless to say, that resulted in a thorough beating by the representative of the Bunny God and a repeat performance from everyone they passed on their way out of the valley. Most of them didn't even know what the Merchants had asked, but if it was bad enough for a Bunny to beat them, they deserved what they got. At least in the mind of the villagers.

The situation on the Southern Continent was also getting strange, with random disappearances, unpredictable Monster Hordes, and assassination attempts. Cain was heading there very soon, he just had to wait for the Lamia eggs to hatch, so that he didn't crush Cyrene's delicate heart by rushing away to fight monsters when she really needed him.

Cain suspected that this was what it should have been like with Misha, during the later part of her pregnancy at least, if she had not been abducted by the Ancients. He had a feeling that she was still doing well, but without a way to contact her, there wasn't anything to do about it yet.

"Why does everything need to happen all at once?" Cain asked Cyrene, petting her head as she relaxed in her nest of magical items.

"I have no idea. Things were so normal for so long, and everything was going to plan, then suddenly, I went into heat, new people started appearing everywhere, and chaos." Cyrene agreed.

At least she hadn't seen any disturbing visions of danger lately. She had been thinking ahead to the battles that might be necessary once they left the nest, but nothing had come into her visions that seemed threatening.

It was in the middle of lunch when they least expected it that that Ancient Quality egg decided that the time was right to begin to hatch. The sound of an egg cracking was soon joined by the sound of claws against steel and the rasping of scales on eggshells.

"Who made this Damnable thing so difficult to get out of? Is this some sort of extreme challenge? I swear by the Gods I am going to bite someone the moment I get out of here." A tiny voice rose from the nest, making Cain laugh.

"So there is someone awake out there. Get me out of this egg, I'm stuck and it is stupidly hard. What did they even make this thing out of?" The voice asked again, and Cain reached past the shocked Cyrene to gently pluck the egg out of the nest.

With something for her four arms to grab onto, the tiny creature pulled herself free and Cain saw what the problem was. While shifting in the egg, she had gotten herself tangled, and the curled part of her body wouldn't fit through the hole she had made.

Cain carefully laid her out on his palm, while he broke away the bits of egg, setting them aside for later inspection, and untangled the foul-mouthed child.

She looked a lot like Cyrene, with alabaster skin, pink hair, and a long white body, but the patterns on her scales were golden instead of red.

"So, you actually survived and stuck around? I might not know much, but I am pretty sure that Lamia are supposed to kill their mates once they've drained them dry." The young girl, no thicker than Cain's index finger in his human form and shorter than his forearm, asked him with a confused look.

"Species memory? That's impressive. But no, there is little to no chance of me being killed off." Cain laughed, stroking her back and causing her to give off a contented purr.

"Put me back in the nest, I need to grab some weapons and deal with the competition." She demanded, pointing back toward the other eggs.

"We don't do that anymore either. There is more than enough to go around, so you will let your sisters grow up." Cain informed her.

"Strange. Who are you then? Other than half of my genetic code that is." She asked.

"I am the Ancient, Cain. I don't know if your species memories tell you about my people." Cain informed her, while Cyrene was still staring in awe.

Demons that could speak at birth were quite common, especially in the older and more powerful species, but the fact that she was staring and her and Cain's child having a conversation with the man she loved was breaking her mind. It was too much for her to process today.

"Here, put this on. I will give you some armor and a weapon, so you don't have to bite anyone that threatens you. It wouldn't work well anyhow, most Lamia don't have teeth." Cain pointed out.

"I have fangs. Unlike Mother dearest, I'm half you, so I got a few benefits, like poison and extra arms. How about four short swords? I'm pretty sure it would work well." She told Cain smugly.

"We should pick a name for you as well. Everyone needs a name." Cain told her, moving her close enough to touch a piece of metal armor, assuming she could equip it.

"Huh? What does it mean I can't use it until I have a name? I don't need a name, I need a sword. Stupid voice in my head, understand that." The girl muttered, finally snapping Cyrene from her stupor.

"How about we call you Luna? I think Luna would be an incredible name." Cyrene suggested weakly.

"I like it. I will conquer everything from here to the Moon, so Luna is a perfect name." Luna declared happily, making Cain smirk and Cyrene facepalm.

"She really is your daughter, isn't she Cain? Well, my little warmonger, how about you pick a class so you can get started on your ambitions of world domination?" Cyrene laughed at the tiny girl's optimism.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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"Class should be easy. What is a class?" Luna asked as she wrapped herself around Cain's wrist, then stretched out her upper body in his palm to relax. Being out of the egg was hard work.

"Just say or think Class Selection" and it will tell you what the options are," Cain explained.

"Got it. Class Selection." Luna's eyes went vacant as she entered the class menu, then slowly closed as she focused. But she didn't come back from the menu, and a few minutes later soft snoring came from Cain's palm as she fell asleep.

"I hope the others aren't as bad as she is." Cyrene sighed softly, making the demon Cain had in [merger] laugh.

[That's nothing. I've seen baby Lamia try to attack their own mothers as competition and need to be disciplined the moment they are born.]

"The Lamia I asked for advice said that is normal, and an instinctive reaction. Hopefully, she will calm down some as we start teaching her about the world." Cain replied quietly, so he didn't wake Luna up.

Once Cain sat back down, the Companions snuck in one at a time to get a look at the newest family member, followed by a few of the Guild Members.

"She's really adorable, isn't she? It looks like wrapping you up runs in the family, she's only a few minutes old and already doing her best to become a bracelet." Laura joked, landing her Pixie-sized body on Cain's arm to get a better look.

"We need to teach her manners and etiquette though, so no misbehaving or pranks around her until she is grown up enough to know the difference between what is acceptable and what is not. I think we might be able to keep her from being a total nightmare. One sweet demon child would be a nice change." Cain replied quietly, making Laura giggle.

"I'm not sure that is possible. Look at her class information." The dragon replied, then flew out of the room, letting the next visitor come in.

[Name] Luna

[Species] Lamia Progenitor

[Class] Puppet Master

[Level] 99

[Quality] Ancient

[Awakened Mythic]

Laura had a point. A baby Puppet Master was chaos, and this one was level 99. The only advantage she had was her Ancient Quality which increased her cognitive abilities, so she wouldn't have to go through the toddler phase that the more Humanoid Neffie did. At least Cain could guide her down the proper path since he too was once a Puppet Master.

The Mythic Awakening was even more concerning though. Nothing Cain had as a Puppet Master was anywhere near Mythic Quality, and he couldn't check what abilities she had until Luna woke up so he could read her mind.

[Can someone send down snacks from the kitchen? Two meals, plus a small serving in very small pieces?] Cain requested of the kitchen Puppets, who were also Lamia, and would likely be eager to see this new addition to the species.

Cain realized that she was likely to get cold just sitting on his hand and draped a handkerchief over her as a blanket, which Luna unconsciously grabbed and wrapped herself around, leaving herself mummified in black silk. That was how she was when the head cook came down with the plates for them.

"She is adorable. They always look so peaceful when they're sleeping. Even Miss Neffie looked peaceful while sleeping during her toddler months." The puppet said with a smile.

The smell of food had awoken Luna, whose gaze instantly locked onto the plates, but she quickly found that she couldn't move. She had wrapped herself too tightly, and the conscious control of her body was too lacking to untangle herself.

"Little Help?" She asked, frustrated.

"First lesson, when you ask for something, it is polite to say please. But today I will feed you, so you don't choke on your first meal." Cain told her, and Luna nodded obediently, then opened her mouth as wide as it would go, with her eyes locked on Cain's dinner.

"I got a meal cut into bites you can actually eat. I see that your fangs are the only teeth you have, so chewing isn't going to happen, you will need to swallow the pieces whole, so they need to be cut small before you try to swallow them, understand?"

"Got it. Small bits are easier to eat, so cut the food into little bits first." Luna told him happily.

As Cain slowly fed her bits of smoked brisket, he read through Luna's recent memories, looking for the Mythic ability that caused her to awaken. It took a while because she didn't understand what she was looking at when she saw it, but he did eventually find it.

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By the time they were halfway through the plate, Luna was looking sluggish and curled up in Cain's palm for another nap, still securely wrapped around his wrist.

"Such a total Daddy's girl. But I'm not surprised by anything at this point, even the fact that she inherited your base Class. I've heard about other demons doing that, but usually only when it's a Species exclusive. I just hope that whatever made her such a high level didn't hurt the other eggs. One powerful daughter is nice, but not if it comes at the cost of all her sisters." Cyrene said softly.

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"Alright, we will go after Luna here wakes up from her nap. If the eggs start moving, let me know and we will be right back."

They didn't have to wait long, Luna seemed to be on a two-hour cycle, either awake or asleep.

"How about I show you around and you can meet some people?" Cain asked the tiny Lamia, who cheered and hugged his finger in excitement.

"Yes, we must meet people. But first, armor, and a sword. I tried my spell earlier, but the only one it can summon is mother." She declared, making Cain laugh.

As a Puppet Master, he was an invalid target, and the only other people she has been awake to meet are the Puppet from the Kitchen, who also isn't a valid target since it's not a living being and Cyrene.

"Don't worry, once you have met everyone and learned the basics of being a good person, I will show you a bunch of useful creatures to summon so you can defend yourself until you grow up," Cain informed her.

"Can we meet her now then?" A voice came from outside the door, and Cain found Kone waiting with Su and Larkin.

"We couldn't wait any longer, so we canceled all our plans for the day once we heard the great news. It looks like she is more developed than Neffie was as a child. It must be because her species expected danger from the moment they were born, while a Demon Queen would have been born in safety." Kone suggested.

"That sounds about right. Luna, I would like you to meet Kone, Su, and Larkin. They are Guild Members and valuable friends, as well as being good people."

"It is a pleasure to meet you, miss Luna," Larkin said with a smile, reaching out to pat the Lamia, who snapped at his finger.

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"Not just any touch, you usually grasp their hand as a greeting. And I am a Mister, not a Miss." Larkin explained.

"Are you sure? Father Cain smells different than you do." Luna pointed out, making Kone giggle.

"They are different species, so they will smell differently. But Larkin is male, I checked it myself." Kone informed her, making Larkin blush.

"Oh, noted. Larkins don't smell like Cains. There are a lot of things to learn aren't there? I thought that since I had these instincts I already knew all the things, but there are so many more. How many more important things do I need to know?" Luna asked.

"Maybe a hundred or so really important ones? Don't worry, you don't need to learn them all today, I will teach them to you slowly as they come up while we meet people. If you have questions, just ask me or someone we already know." Cain told her, making Luna frown.

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"That's a great skill. I wish I could do that. Flying sounds fun, like being carried, but without being attached to anyone."

Su thought about that a moment, then nodded her agreement. She might not quite grasp the concept, but she wasn't exactly wrong. From Luna's viewpoint, being wrapped around Cain's wrist probably was a lot like flying while being attached to someone.

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Chapter 524 524

After Luna woke up again, it was time to teach her about her class skills and the rules about summons inside the building or in public.

That was the most important part of getting her ready for public interaction in Cain's mind. He was about to launch into a long explanation when he realized that he could just use [Superior Mental Domination] to directly grant her the knowledge.

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Cain transferred him a Gold Coin for his trouble. [Thanks. Hopefully, this will save time since she is already mentally matured so much.]

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"Then we will need a lot. There are many new people to meet." Luna told him decisively.

"Long Fang Valley has their own tradition for meeting new people, they have a party so you can meet everyone in one day. You are all too small for Whiskey though. What did the book say about it?" Cain's question made her think for a while before she recalled the relevant information.

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She really would get along well with the dwarves, Cain decided. "I will have the kitchen make you some. Kone really liked it when we were staying with the dwarves."

The one who brought the milk wasn't one of the Puppets but Dimnys, who had taken the day off work to come to meet the Guild's newest Princess, as the Companions had been referring to Luna.

"Why don't we take a seat in the tower? The sun is warm and you can see how the others spend their day just by looking out the window." The stout Dwarven woman suggested while brushing the last traces of forge soot from her good clothes.

"Good idea. Learning by watching would be easiest." Cain agreed, following her upstairs.

The sun was shining bright in the sky, a new experience for Luna and an unusual one for Dimnys who rarely ventured outside her forge lately. But they still picked chairs on the top floor of the Manor's central Pagoda that overlooked the city with a small table between them.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Miss Luna. My name is Dimnys, head of the Darklight Host Blacksmiths." The dwarf greeted, pouring spiced milk into three shot glasses.

They were the smallest glasses any of them had, even a regular baby bottle was large enough for Luna to hide inside. The cup was still twice as wide as the young Lamia Progenitor's torso, but Dimnys came prepared.

She pulled a small silver pipe from her pocket and placed it in one glass. "It is customary that the first drink is finished in one long pull. Can you do that? I don't know much about Lamia's liquid capacity."

"This much should be fine, I think. Cheers and it is a pleasure to meet you." Luna replied, sliding onto the table and wrapping all four arms around her glass to pick it up before draining it dry.

She sighed in contentment as Cain and Dimnys took their shots and then helped her place the glass back on the table. Luna's body was visibly swollen from the amount of liquid she took in, but she was giving the glass a longing look and was very reluctant to let go of it.

"You can keep the straw in your inventory, you will need it often. You can have more milk after you digest this much." Cain told her while rubbing her back, making her burp.

"Are all those girls fighting in the yard? Why isn't anyone stopping them?" Luna asked, pointing to the spot below them where the Blood Dancers were training.

"That is combat practice. They are learning new fighting techniques and then later they will go into that large tower over there to put them to use. The tower is a magical item that lets you fight without having to wait for enemies to find you." Cain explained.

"There is so much good stuff here. No wonder you don't compete with each other over everything. I think this pace might be perfect." Luna said, gesturing wildly with her arms to emphasize her point.

"I have to ask, why did you want to take over the world when you first hatched?" Cain asked while Luna lazily flopped down on his palm and loosely wrapped her lower body back around his wrist.

"Isn't that what everyone is supposed to want? It's pretty much hardwired into my mind. Eliminate the competition and become the most powerful so others can't eliminate me." Luna explained, with her eyes already drooping as she fought off her post-meal nap.

"See that's why you need good people to teach you. Being in charge is way too much work. What you need is just enough power to do things you really enjoy without being bothered." Dimnys offered just before the soft snoring of an exhausted Lamia Progenitor filled the air.

"I think you're pampering her too much. She's in a food coma. But isn't she getting bigger? I'm sure she wasn't that large a minute ago." Dimnys laughed.

She was right, to Cain's eyes, Luna was growing at a visible pace as her body absorbed nutrients. Her body was becoming less bloated, but she had increased in size by nearly a quarter and was now noticeably thicker than Cain's index finger.

Cyrene was very small for a Lamia, so Cain wasn't sure how big Luna was eventually going to get. Many species of Progenitors were much larger than their current descendants, but that wasn't always true for obsession Demons, whose focus wasn't on brute physical prowess.

Like the Blood Dancers, agility, mobility, and intelligence were their usual weapons.

This time Luna was only out for fifteen minutes before she was ready to go again, and still as full of questions as if the impromptu nap had never interrupted their conversation in the first place.

"I leveled up while I was sleeping and now the System is asking me strange questions. Do I want to be a Lady or a General? Does one get better armor?" Luna demanded the moment her eyes opened.

"That is your first Class Option. Do you want stronger summons and a permanent big sister Companion, or do you want more summons and subordinates? Did you decide what sort of things you want to do that aren't taking over the world?" Cain asked her instead of answering directly.

"So it's not an armor upgrade? I thought a lot about it before I fell asleep, and I think I want to be one of those people." Luna pointed out across the valley to where a group of farmers was working in an orchard.

"What made you want to be a farmer?" Cain asked, wondering how her little mind worked.

"First, they have all the food, and they can trade it for the other good stuff. Second, they all carry weapons, so they must get to fight enemies, which means they are strong. Finally, they get to play with those small fluffy things." Luna explained proudly, making Dimnys burst into laughter.

"What's so funny? Did I get it wrong?" Luna asked, wondering if she had misunderstood her dream job. They were the ones with the food though, she was certain of it.

"Those small fluffy things are their children. That's a family of werewolves. The little ones love to run around in wolf form. But you are a Puppet master, so you can Summon small fluffy things to play with." Dimnys explained.

Cain's summons, who were listening in on his thoughts couldn't resist teasing him over that response.

[It really is true that parents will be cursed to raise a tiny version of themselves isn't it? She isn't even a week old and she's already fixated on food and fluffy things. She's even got your class.] Svetlana joked.

[Just wait until she gets her own fluffy Commander. She will never get anything done again. Unlike her dad, she doesn't have a Guild and group to protect.] Maggie agreed.

[Tell her to go General first, she definitely wants more summons.] Vala added.

They might be incorrigible but they weren't wrong. Getting Lieutenants and a Commander of her own would be a great benefit to Luna, and she could work through the other side as she leveled up. A Commander is smart and powerful, so it will do a great job of looking after her and keeping her from harm, even if Cain gets called somewhere that it wouldn't be safe to bring her.

Getting her to let go of him and be left behind might be a greater battle than anything Cain would be called to assist with though.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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"Class should be easy. What is a class?" Luna asked as she wrapped herself around Cain's wrist, then stretched out her upper body in his palm to relax. Being out of the egg was hard work.

"Just say or think Class Selection" and it will tell you what the options are," Cain explained.

"Got it. Class Selection." Luna's eyes went vacant as she entered the class menu, then slowly closed as she focused. But she didn't come back from the menu, and a few minutes later soft snoring came from Cain's palm as she fell asleep.

"I hope the others aren't as bad as she is." Cyrene sighed softly, making the demon Cain had in [merger] laugh.

[That's nothing. I've seen baby Lamia try to attack their own mothers as competition and need to be disciplined the moment they are born.]

"The Lamia I asked for advice said that is normal, and an instinctive reaction. Hopefully, she will calm down some as we start teaching her about the world." Cain replied quietly, so he didn't wake Luna up.

Once Cain sat back down, the Companions snuck in one at a time to get a look at the newest family member, followed by a few of the Guild Members.

"She's really adorable, isn't she? It looks like wrapping you up runs in the family, she's only a few minutes old and already doing her best to become a bracelet." Laura joked, landing her Pixie-sized body on Cain's arm to get a better look.

"We need to teach her manners and etiquette though, so no misbehaving or pranks around her until she is grown up enough to know the difference between what is acceptable and what is not. I think we might be able to keep her from being a total nightmare. One sweet demon child would be a nice change." Cain replied quietly, making Laura giggle.

"I'm not sure that is possible. Look at her class information." The dragon replied, then flew out of the room, letting the next visitor come in.

[Name] Luna

[Species] Lamia Progenitor

[Class] Puppet Master

[Level] 99

[Quality] Ancient

[Awakened Mythic]

Laura had a point. A baby Puppet Master was chaos, and this one was level 99. The only advantage she had was her Ancient Quality which increased her cognitive abilities, so she wouldn't have to go through the toddler phase that the more Humanoid Neffie did. At least Cain could guide her down the proper path since he too was once a Puppet Master.

The Mythic Awakening was even more concerning though. Nothing Cain had as a Puppet Master was anywhere near Mythic Quality, and he couldn't check what abilities she had until Luna woke up so he could read her mind.

[Can someone send down snacks from the kitchen? Two meals, plus a small serving in very small pieces?] Cain requested of the kitchen Puppets, who were also Lamia, and would likely be eager to see this new addition to the species.

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"She is adorable. They always look so peaceful when they're sleeping. Even Miss Neffie looked peaceful while sleeping during her toddler months." The puppet said with a smile.

The smell of food had awoken Luna, whose gaze instantly locked onto the plates, but she quickly found that she couldn't move. She had wrapped herself too tightly, and the conscious control of her body was too lacking to untangle herself.

"Little Help?" She asked, frustrated.

"First lesson, when you ask for something, it is polite to say please. But today I will feed you, so you don't choke on your first meal." Cain told her, and Luna nodded obediently, then opened her mouth as wide as it would go, with her eyes locked on Cain's dinner.

"I got a meal cut into bites you can actually eat. I see that your fangs are the only teeth you have, so chewing isn't going to happen, you will need to swallow the pieces whole, so they need to be cut small before you try to swallow them, understand?"

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As Cain slowly fed her bits of smoked brisket, he read through Luna's recent memories, looking for the Mythic ability that caused her to awaken. It took a while because she didn't understand what she was looking at when she saw it, but he did eventually find it.

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"Yes, we must meet people. But first, armor, and a sword. I tried my spell earlier, but the only one it can summon is mother." She declared, making Cain laugh.

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"They are different species, so they will smell differently. But Larkin is male, I checked it myself." Kone informed her, making Larkin blush.

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524 Chapter 524

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"See that's why you need good people to teach you. Being in charge is way too much work. What you need is just enough power to do things you really enjoy without being bothered." Dimnys offered just before the soft snoring of an exhausted Lamia Progenitor filled the air.

"I think you're pampering her too much. She's in a food coma. But isn't she getting bigger? I'm sure she wasn't that large a minute ago." Dimnys laughed.

She was right, to Cain's eyes, Luna was growing at a visible pace as her body absorbed nutrients. Her body was becoming less bloated, but she had increased in size by nearly a quarter and was now noticeably thicker than Cain's index finger.

Cyrene was very small for a Lamia, so Cain wasn't sure how big Luna was eventually going to get. Many species of Progenitors were much larger than their current descendants, but that wasn't always true for obsession Demons, whose focus wasn't on brute physical prowess.

Like the Blood Dancers, agility, mobility, and intelligence were their usual weapons.

This time Luna was only out for fifteen minutes before she was ready to go again, and still as full of questions as if the impromptu nap had never interrupted their conversation in the first place.

"I leveled up while I was sleeping and now the System is asking me strange questions. Do I want to be a Lady or a General? Does one get better armor?" Luna demanded the moment her eyes opened.

"That is your first Class Option. Do you want stronger summons and a permanent big sister Companion, or do you want more summons and subordinates? Did you decide what sort of things you want to do that aren't taking over the world?" Cain asked her instead of answering directly.

"So it's not an armor upgrade? I thought a lot about it before I fell asleep, and I think I want to be one of those people." Luna pointed out across the valley to where a group of farmers was working in an orchard.

"What made you want to be a farmer?" Cain asked, wondering how her little mind worked.

"First, they have all the food, and they can trade it for the other good stuff. Second, they all carry weapons, so they must get to fight enemies, which means they are strong. Finally, they get to play with those small fluffy things." Luna explained proudly, making Dimnys burst into laughter.

"What's so funny? Did I get it wrong?" Luna asked, wondering if she had misunderstood her dream job. They were the ones with the food though, she was certain of it.

"Those small fluffy things are their children. That's a family of werewolves. The little ones love to run around in wolf form. But you are a Puppet master, so you can Summon small fluffy things to play with." Dimnys explained.

Cain's summons, who were listening in on his thoughts couldn't resist teasing him over that response.

[It really is true that parents will be cursed to raise a tiny version of themselves isn't it? She isn't even a week old and she's already fixated on food and fluffy things. She's even got your class.] Svetlana joked.

[Just wait until she gets her own fluffy Commander. She will never get anything done again. Unlike her dad, she doesn't have a Guild and group to protect.] Maggie agreed.

[Tell her to go General first, she definitely wants more summons.] Vala added.

They might be incorrigible but they weren't wrong. Getting Lieutenants and a Commander of her own would be a great benefit to Luna, and she could work through the other side as she leveled up. A Commander is smart and powerful, so it will do a great job of looking after her and keeping her from harm, even if Cain gets called somewhere that it wouldn't be safe to bring her.

Getting her to let go of him and be left behind might be a greater battle than anything Cain would be called to assist with though.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 525 525

"If you take the General side of the tree first, you will be able to increase your total number of summons, and you will be able to call for a pair of Lieutenants and a Commander, who will have their own Lieutenant.

That would let you run a whole farm and still have someone to play with as long as you picked summons by the job that needed to be done." Cain explained to Luna, who was still looking longingly at the family of werewolves.

[Bring her to us. We are excellent farmers.] Victor the Echo suggested.

[That's not a bad idea. I will see what Cyrene thinks once the others have hatched.] Cain answered, thinking that the Echoes should have the capability to keep her under control and they were competitive enough that they would do an amazing job as babysitters if teaching her was a competition.

[How would you even do that?] Lou, the second echo asked, listening in to Cain's thoughts.

[Two weeks each, whoever makes the most progress toward making her a kind and moral landholder wins?] Cain suggested and could immediately sense their urge to beat each other.

[Tell the others to hurry up and hatch. I have just the plan.] The Echoes announced in unison before tuning everyone else out so they could refine their tactics.

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"Oh neat, it's not the same person, but just a bunch of you with the same skills. Greetings, I'm Luna." She welcomed her summons and the closest one came over to shake her hands.

"Hello, Luna. What are your orders?" The Pixie Druid asked.

"I need to know more about growing crops. I have a theory that the one with all the food has the real power." Luna responded, detaching herself from Cain to sit on the table next to his chair and have a conversation.

"Her curiosity level is good, but her attention span is a bit short. Definitely not ready to start work in the forge." Dimnys chuckled as the collection of small creatures had a very animated conversation on the table between her and Cain.

"That's not too surprising, given her age. Give it another half hour and she will be hungry, then sleepy again." Cain agreed, noticing that the small group at the table was talking about three topics at once.

Cain turned out to be off by five minutes. Twenty minutes later, Luna was asking for more Spiced Milk, and five minutes after that she was asleep around Cain's wrist again.

"What do we do now? I think she forgot to give us orders or dismiss us or something." One of the Pixies asked Cain.

"Just wait a while and she will be awake again. She's new at this, and we didn't cover those little things yet." Cain explained getting to his feet to escort Dimnys downstairs to visit Cyrene.

Jessica caught up with them first, running up to Cain to offer him a hug and accept a head pat.

"I've been all over and helped with a cut of everything, and they all say good things about you. We found more new people too, they arrived at midnight and the farms at the edge of town took them in. The farmers had to beat them up a little bit before they calmed down, but I think most of that was due to coming across them in the dark and startling them. They seemed like decent people by the time I met them." Jessica explained.

"Well, that's good news. Was there anything odd or special about them? We can go visit them once I send Kone off, but it would be good if I wasn't showing up unaware." Cain suggested.

"Nothing at all really. They're from the same period as the others, right after or at the end of the War between the Gods, but they were all low-level soldiers, they didn't fight on the front line, they were there to carry camp supplies for the others. They are wearing worn-out leather armor, not the fancy metal stuff that most of the soldiers were wearing when they arrived."

Jessica's description of them didn't startle Cain, you can't always find powerful and unique transfers, even when things were working right, two-thirds either died the first week or refused to do anything dangerous and simply hid in town, never leveling up past the double digits.

"I will head back on my own, go visit the new people and get them settled. If they were camp followers they should make good workers for either the farmers or craftsmen. These days a good assistant is getting hard to come by." Dimnys told them but stopped to give the Pixies that Luna summoned a bit of sugar before she left.

Jin was taking a break in the tower's base when the group walked by, stopping every minute or two for a short conversation with the locals. "Hey, where are you guys off to? I'm about exhausted and I could use a short diversion before I get back to grinding levels." The Dragonkin called out, slowly walking toward them as she caught her breath.

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Her health was coming back quickly, so they weren't just there talking but they were doing as Cain asked.

"That's a lot of Pixies in one place. One or two is already loud, a dozen is a whole new experience." Jin laughed, handing them a bit of chocolate to share with the group. It was no wonder Pixies loved the Long Fang Valley. There was fruit everywhere, and everyone carried candies.

The walk was unnecessarily long, but Cain learned many things about the day's happening, including the rest of the night's arrivals, who had ditched the porters that ended up in the valley. They had come across a wild bear on their way to the village in the next valley to the north and had lost half their numbers, with the rest arriving heavily mauled.

The merchants who had come this morning on their way to the Capital had told the local shopkeepers all about it.

Wild bears weren't really a threat to the locals, since they were only low-level monsters, and wouldn't attack unless threatened, but to a bunch of new arrivals who were just wandering through the woods in the dark and didn't know about them, they could be deadly.

The new guys were out in the garden of the farmhouse when Cain arrived with his small entourage. The family was a human one, and the kids swarmed them, welcoming Jessica back and trying to get on the Pixies' good side so they would use their druidic magic to help with the kids' daily chores.

"You two look like you have settled in well. I hear you had a bit of a scare this morning." Cain called, drawing their attention from where they were planting potatoes.

"A misunderstanding is all. They were generous enough to explain what had happened to us, and get us settled with a human family, saying that it would help us relax." One of the men told him, looking a bit embarrassed at the memory.

Jessica smiled at their response and joined the conversation. "They were right about the relaxing. Once you've seen the level of energy that beastkin children have in the morning you will be thankful for energetic human toddlers. This is Duke Cain of Skyview, the noble lord of this region, as well as the Guild Master of the Darklight Host."

"Our apologies your grace, we didn't realize that you were a Nobleman. Please forgive our rudeness." The man who had been speaking earlier apologized.

"No need for all that. You couldn't be expected to know who I am, and I don't insist on formality here at home. Did you two have a trade before you joined the human Gods' armies?" Cain asked.

"You're looking at it. Though our family farm was more inclined to Turnips and Cabbage, planting potatoes is very much the same thing we grew up with." The quieter of the two answered, his voice raspy from poorly healed past damage. The scars were hidden under the bandana that covered his face to keep the dust out of his mouth, but Cain was certain that there was a heavy scar on his neck somewhere.

"Then you should be fine here. I will give these fine folks a stipend to help get you settled in. There are a lot of farmers in the area looking for helpers, or if you prefer you could break ground on a fresh field out at the edge of the valley. There is still a lot of good unworked land, but it will be a lot of work, even for a pair of strong brothers like you." Cain suggested.

"Cousins actually. Our whole extended family lived on one farm, other than one cousin who got accepted to a cultivation sect. I think we can work something out right here. The oldest three children of the Mons family have already left home to become merchants and soldiers, so they could use the help." The new arrival told Cain, while the older woman who had been cooking inside the house nodded at him through the window.

"If that's the case, you're welcome to it. But I would like to have a word with you about these Cultivation Sects. I have heard a lot about them, but it seems Cultivation is impossible in this world. My good friend Duke Chen would love to get firsthand knowledge of them as well." Cain's smile set their minds at ease. If the local Duke says that they are fine to stay here, they don't have much to worry about, other than doing their jobs.

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525 Chapter 525

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Chapter 526 526

"So you're saying that you just need to meditate and collect energy to get more powerful through sheer willpower? That sounds like my kind of place, I could just watch my crops

grow and become the greatest." Luna announced after hearing the full description of what a cultivation sect entailed.

"That won't make you the most powerful though. For that you need resources. Special stones, the core of monsters, or mystic items. Without those, your progress will stop at a relatively low level, just like ours did.

We are still stronger than regular humans by about three times, but that is as much as we could manage without resources." The newly arrived human tried to clarify.

"Sister Dimnys told me monsters sometimes have stones filled with energy inside their bodies here too. They have a lot of mana in them and people use them to help cast spells, could you cultivate them? I am sure my dad would bring me lots if I asked." Luna continued and the two men shrugged.

"Maybe if they are the same as the ones we are familiar with? I would have to see one to know for sure." The larger of the two men said hesitantly.

Luna gave Cain her best pleading look, making everyone smirk at her shameless begging, but Cain did bring out a mana stone from the crafting supplies. It was from a Fire Element Mythic Awakened beast that someone had harvested yesterday for its spicy meat.

"That is a monster core, and of the Fire Element, but the energy is very strange. How do you use them?" The man asked and Cain handed it to Luna.

"My mana is full already. Pull a bit to top yours off." Cain told the Lamia who drew a few mana to make up for what she spent summoning werewolf puppies to play with the Pixies when she got bored in the middle of the conversation.

"It is a waste since most creatures don't have them and one of them could serve as the main ingredient for twenty high-grade mana potions, but you can just pull the mana out like that," Cain explained and their eyes lit up.

"Might I test something? I have a cultivation mat. If we could put this planet's strange energy into it, maybe we could use it?" He asked with a glimmer of hope.

"Sure, these creatures are all over the Southern Continent. They're deadly but very tasty, so the stones come in fairly regularly. The Smiths powder the stones to enhance metals for armor creation and elemental bonuses on weapons, plus some inscriptions use them as well." Cain told him, handing over the stone.

The cultivator placed it in an intricate circle on his mat and the lines inscribed all over the tool lit up with energy, but after a few seconds, the man frowned.

"The mat isn't changing the Mana to something I can use, though it is releasing it, I can feel that much. If I had an Elemental technique I might be able to use the Fire Energy. It might have the same problem though. If only one of the Elders was here, they know a lot more and might be able to do something."

Duke Chen would be overjoyed. He really wanted to be reincarnated as a cultivator, and even with the Class System, he would likely still jump at the opportunity to try.

While they talked, the quiet half of the human pair was deeply engrossed in thinking about ways that he could make the energy work for him. Suddenly he stood up and pushed his friend off the mat with a muttered "Shove over, I have an idea."

He sat down in the same position and pulled the mana into himself then did something that caused it to flow through his body. It looked incredibly painful, but a half second later his eyes went vacant and Cain saw a status appear for him.

[Species] Human

[Class] Fire Monk

[Level] 1

"Ha, I did it. It isn't possible to cultivate here, but you don't have to. You just need to have enough of your own mana in your body and the system will activate. My cousin doesn't seem compatible, or maybe he has too low of a Fire Affinity, but once I let the energy soak into my body, I saw the interface you described." He gloated, then coughed a ragged breath as the lingering effects of his attempt caused him more pain.

That would explain why Cain had never seen a dragon or Pixie without a system, they naturally had a lot of mana. It didn't explain other species that had innate magic and no class, but it did give Cain a bit of insight into how the System actually worked.

The Pixies that Luna had called cast healing spells on the man as the others talked, being the only ones paying enough attention to realize how the attempt had taken almost all of his health.

"It left behind two debuffs that we can't dispel, [Mana Poisoning] and [Burning]. I think the energy is still toxic to humans." One of the Pixies suggested.

"Try using all your mana and see what happens. Now that you have a class it should regenerate on its own. I've heard of people trying a lot of strange things to activate a system before, and a few that might have even worked." The farm wife whose home had been commandeered for this conversation suggested.

She had been around the local beastkin children a long time, and they tended to get impatient when they were wanting to activate their system, so more than one had injured themselves in unexpected ways while trying to force an activation.

At level one, he didn't have much for skills but he had [Flaming Strikes] that used mana to enhance his unarmed physical attacks. With his martial arts training, the skill was completely natural to him, and it didn't take him long to exhaust his mana and then collapse into a pile on the ground.

"The mana use really takes it out of you. But I feel much better now." He explained.

The debuffs were gone now and his mana was slowly recovering on its own. To Cain, this meant the technique was a valid one, if someone without a system could merge mana with their body from a Mana stone and not die they would probably gain a system.

It was just that "and not die" part which was going to prove to be a hindrance to getting more people to try. People might say they would do anything for power, but they usually weren't suicidal.

"I have more elements of stones, as well as some that don't have an elemental aspect to them. Do you want to try what your Cousin did and see if it activates a System when you find an element that you are compatible with?" Cain suggested.

He had only known these two for a few minutes, and it was entirely of his own free will, so a little push to test the theory wasn't out of line. At least that was what Cain thought as he made the suggestion.

The Echoes and Watchers all agreed, though most of the Companions insisted that there was a flaw in that logic somewhere.

"I have always been good with Wind Skills. Do you have a wind elemental stone?" The other man asked hopefully.

"I do. It is a fair bit lower grade than the fire stone, but it should still do the job I think. We will keep you healed as you try if it starts causing physical damage." Cain agreed, finding a wind elemental stone.

Wind element monsters were much harder to capture, so they weren't hunted as often, and the best stone that was in the Guild Bank inventory right now was Epic Quality. Cain handed it over, and the Cultivator switched the stones on the mat and handed the Fire Element one back to Cain. Cain thought about the process for a moment and realized that they had missed the most obvious step.

"Wait, before you do that, try equipping this piece of armor. That's how youngsters in this world usually activate a system if they were born with the ability." Cain suggested, handing him a low-level cloth robe suitable for the Monk Class.

The man slung it over his shoulders and his eyes went blank as the farmers and Cain sighed at their oversight. The other cousin probably didn't even need to go through all that work and danger. If he had the affinity, simply putting on a piece of gear would have done the job. Though he was a Fire Monk, and that wasn't a default class selection like a regular monk was, so maybe there were some benefits.

His time in the character selection screen seemed much longer than usual, so Cain suspected that he had activated the default screen the same as anyone else who triggered it with a piece of equipment.

Finally, the System updated and the man opened his eyes. Bright red eyes, that no human should have.

[Name] Mick Jagger

[Species] Vampire

[Class] Monk

[Level] 1

"Hey guys, is it normal for it to let me pick a new name and species?" He asked while the rest of the room stared at him in shock. Of them, only Cain had ever had that option, the full character creation screen that was normally reserved for Transfers.

"No, normally if you are born here, your appearance and species are set. Only Transfers that are chosen by the Gods and directly transferred here to reincarnate here usually get the option to pick a whole new appearance." The farmer explained, looking over the new form of the strapping young cultivator.

"That is insane. I only got one class option, and my appearance was set." The other cousin complained, envious of the new physique his partner had gotten to generate.

[We need more test subjects. But have them try on various types of armor before trying the Mana Stone trick. We might be able to build our numbers just by putting hats on the people we like.] Cain ordered his Lesser Watchers and Echoes.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 527 527

The experience of Mick Jagger cemented in everyone's mind that the new arrivals were a glitch in the Transfer process, which gave everyone a solid guideline on how to treat them when they were first encountered.

Despite their historical presence in this world, they were still transfers, and the world has been accommodating and assisting the confused transfers for two centuries.

Word spread through the Darklight Host and their allies in a matter of minutes, and a new greeting ritual for the Lost, as most of the Guild decided to call them, thanks to their habit of arriving in the middle of nowhere, was determined.

Hats of each armour type were chosen and would be presented to the Lost as a gift once they had accepted that they were no longer in the time and situation they recalled, and the Payson who met them determined that they weren't going to keep attacking strangers.

Armour would change their appearance too much from what they were comfortable with, and a weapon could be used against their benefactors, but a hat could be briefly worn under most circumstances.

That would be enough to see if it would cause the System to activate, and the Guild's Crafters thought it would be a lovely keepsake. It would mark them as newbies needing help and someone who wasn't hostile to the Guild when they first met.

Not necessarily a friend, but someone potentially redeemable, as Dimnys put it.

[I have obtained two more volunteers.] The Watchers in Port Nefheim informed Cain only a few minutes after the decision was made, sending the message with a mental image of simply grabbing two people who had arrived the day before.

They had landed in the water just off the beach, a spot that had been land before the area around the city was terraformed for a more enjoyable beach experience.

[Explain what is going on, and I will be there soon.]

Cain looked to the group he had been talking with and gave them an apologetic smile. "I am sorry to cut the visit short, but there are more transfers in a similar situation elsewhere, and I should go see them. Anyone who wants to come with me is welcome; you can return through the Guild's travel circle if you don't want to wait for me when you are finished exploring Port Nefheim."

"Fresh fish for dinner sounds pretty good. I am far too busy, but someone needs to go." The farmer's wife demanded with a look of anticipation. There were fish in the river, and they weren't far from the ocean to get some shipped, but the supply was always low in the valley and she was very familiar with all the local species.

"I will go with the kids. They have never left the valley so it will be a good experience." The farmer announced, eager to find his wife an exotic present to celebrate their upcoming anniversary.

In the end, Cain brought a whole entourage with him. Luna, Jin, Jessica, the Farmer, his oldest son and his two daughters. None of them had ever been to the Eastern Continent, and nobody wanted to miss out.

Cain summoned a clone of Moana into [Merger], waking her up from a nap, but he cast her [Portal] spell to open a path to Port Nefheim and quickly fell asleep again.

"Everyone that's going, please go through. This portal exits near the city center, so you can go shopping immediately or see the sights first. Returning to the circle near the location you arrived at and focusing on being back at the travel circle in the Long Fang Valley Manor, will let you return in an instant." Cain explained.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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"So you're saying that you just need to meditate and collect energy to get more powerful through sheer willpower? That sounds like my kind of place, I could just watch my crops grow and become the greatest." Luna announced after hearing the full description of what a cultivation sect entailed.

"That won't make you the most powerful though. For that you need resources. Special stones, the core of monsters, or mystic items. Without those, your progress will stop at a relatively low level, just like ours did.

We are still stronger than regular humans by about three times, but that is as much as we could manage without resources." The newly arrived human tried to clarify.

"Sister Dimnys told me monsters sometimes have stones filled with energy inside their bodies here too. They have a lot of mana in them and people use them to help cast spells, could you cultivate them? I am sure my dad would bring me lots if I asked." Luna continued and the two men shrugged.

"Maybe if they are the same as the ones we are familiar with? I would have to see one to know for sure." The larger of the two men said hesitantly.

Luna gave Cain her best pleading look, making everyone smirk at her shameless begging, but Cain did bring out a mana stone from the crafting supplies. It was from a Fire Element Mythic Awakened beast that someone had harvested yesterday for its spicy meat.

"That is a monster core, and of the Fire Element, but the energy is very strange. How do you use them?" The man asked and Cain handed it to Luna.

"My mana is full already. Pull a bit to top yours off." Cain told the Lamia who drew a few mana to make up for what she spent summoning werewolf puppies to play with the Pixies when she got bored in the middle of the conversation.

"It is a waste since most creatures don't have them and one of them could serve as the main ingredient for twenty high-grade mana potions, but you can just pull the mana out like that," Cain explained and their eyes lit up.

"Might I test something? I have a cultivation mat. If we could put this planet's strange energy into it, maybe we could use it?" He asked with a glimmer of hope.

"Sure, these creatures are all over the Southern Continent. They're deadly but very tasty, so the stones come in fairly regularly. The Smiths powder the stones to enhance metals for armor creation and elemental bonuses on weapons, plus some inscriptions use them as well." Cain told him, handing over the stone.

The cultivator placed it in an intricate circle on his mat and the lines inscribed all over the tool lit up with energy, but after a few seconds, the man frowned.

"The mat isn't changing the Mana to something I can use, though it is releasing it, I can feel that much. If I had an Elemental technique I might be able to use the Fire Energy. It might have the same problem though. If only one of the Elders was here, they know a lot more and might be able to do something."

Duke Chen would be overjoyed. He really wanted to be reincarnated as a cultivator, and even with the Class System, he would likely still jump at the opportunity to try.

While they talked, the quiet half of the human pair was deeply engrossed in thinking about ways that he could make the energy work for him. Suddenly he stood up and pushed his friend off the mat with a muttered "Shove over, I have an idea."

He sat down in the same position and pulled the mana into himself then did something that caused it to flow through his body. It looked incredibly painful, but a half second later his eyes went vacant and Cain saw a status appear for him.

[Species] Human

[Class] Fire Monk

[Level] 1

"Ha, I did it. It isn't possible to cultivate here, but you don't have to. You just need to have enough of your own mana in your body and the system will activate. My cousin doesn't seem compatible, or maybe he has too low of a Fire Affinity, but once I let the energy soak into my body, I saw the interface you described." He gloated, then coughed a ragged breath as the lingering effects of his attempt caused him more pain.

That would explain why Cain had never seen a dragon or Pixie without a system, they naturally had a lot of mana. It didn't explain other species that had innate magic and no class, but it did give Cain a bit of insight into how the System actually worked.

The Pixies that Luna had called cast healing spells on the man as the others talked, being the only ones paying enough attention to realize how the attempt had taken almost all of his health.

"It left behind two debuffs that we can't dispel, [Mana Poisoning] and [Burning]. I think the energy is still toxic to humans." One of the Pixies suggested.

"Try using all your mana and see what happens. Now that you have a class it should regenerate on its own. I've heard of people trying a lot of strange things to activate a system before, and a few that might have even worked." The farm wife whose home had been commandeered for this conversation suggested.

She had been around the local beastkin children a long time, and they tended to get impatient when they were wanting to activate their system, so more than one had injured themselves in unexpected ways while trying to force an activation.

At level one, he didn't have much for skills but he had [Flaming Strikes] that used mana to enhance his unarmed physical attacks. With his martial arts training, the skill was completely natural to him, and it didn't take him long to exhaust his mana and then collapse into a pile on the ground.

"The mana use really takes it out of you. But I feel much better now." He explained.

The debuffs were gone now and his mana was slowly recovering on its own. To Cain, this meant the technique was a valid one, if someone without a system could merge mana with their body from a Mana stone and not die they would probably gain a system.

It was just that "and not die" part which was going to prove to be a hindrance to getting more people to try. People might say they would do anything for power, but they usually weren't suicidal.

"I have more elements of stones, as well as some that don't have an elemental aspect to them. Do you want to try what your Cousin did and see if it activates a System when you find an element that you are compatible with?" Cain suggested.

He had only known these two for a few minutes, and it was entirely of his own free will, so a little push to test the theory wasn't out of line. At least that was what Cain thought as he made the suggestion.

The Echoes and Watchers all agreed, though most of the Companions insisted that there was a flaw in that logic somewhere.

"I have always been good with Wind Skills. Do you have a wind elemental stone?" The other man asked hopefully.

"I do. It is a fair bit lower grade than the fire stone, but it should still do the job I think. We will keep you healed as you try if it starts causing physical damage." Cain agreed, finding a wind elemental stone.

Wind element monsters were much harder to capture, so they weren't hunted as often, and the best stone that was in the Guild Bank inventory right now was Epic Quality. Cain handed it over, and the Cultivator switched the stones on the mat and handed the

Fire Element one back to Cain. Cain thought about the process for a moment and realized that they had missed the most obvious step.

"Wait, before you do that, try equipping this piece of armor. That's how youngsters in this world usually activate a system if they were born with the ability." Cain suggested, handing him a low-level cloth robe suitable for the Monk Class.

The man slung it over his shoulders and his eyes went blank as the farmers and Cain sighed at their oversight. The other cousin probably didn't even need to go through all that work and danger. If he had the affinity, simply putting on a piece of gear would have done the job. Though he was a Fire Monk, and that wasn't a default class selection like a regular monk was, so maybe there were some benefits.

His time in the character selection screen seemed much longer than usual, so Cain suspected that he had activated the default screen the same as anyone else who triggered it with a piece of equipment.

Finally, the System updated and the man opened his eyes. Bright red eyes, that no human should have.

[Name] Mick Jagger

[Species] Vampire

[Class] Monk

[Level] 1

"Hey guys, is it normal for it to let me pick a new name and species?" He asked while the rest of the room stared at him in shock. Of them, only Cain had ever had that option, the full character creation screen that was normally reserved for Transfers.

"No, normally if you are born here, your appearance and species are set. Only Transfers that are chosen by the Gods and directly transferred here to reincarnate here usually get the option to pick a whole new appearance." The farmer explained, looking over the new form of the strapping young cultivator.

"That is insane. I only got one class option, and my appearance was set." The other cousin complained, envious of the new physique his partner had gotten to generate.

[We need more test subjects. But have them try on various types of armor before trying the Mana Stone trick. We might be able to build our numbers just by putting hats on the people we like.] Cain ordered his Lesser Watchers and Echoes.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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The experience of Mick Jagger cemented in everyone's mind that the new arrivals were a glitch in the Transfer process, which gave everyone a solid guideline on how to treat them when they were first encountered.

Despite their historical presence in this world, they were still transfers, and the world has been accommodating and assisting the confused transfers for two centuries.

Word spread through the Darklight Host and their allies in a matter of minutes, and a new greeting ritual for the Lost, as most of the Guild decided to call them, thanks to their habit of arriving in the middle of nowhere, was determined.

Hats of each armour type were chosen and would be presented to the Lost as a gift once they had accepted that they were no longer in the time and situation they recalled, and the Payson who met them determined that they weren't going to keep attacking strangers.

Armour would change their appearance too much from what they were comfortable with, and a weapon could be used against their benefactors, but a hat could be briefly worn under most circumstances.

That would be enough to see if it would cause the System to activate, and the Guild's Crafters thought it would be a lovely keepsake. It would mark them as newbies needing help and someone who wasn't hostile to the Guild when they first met.

Not necessarily a friend, but someone potentially redeemable, as Dimnys put it.

[I have obtained two more volunteers.] The Watchers in Port Nefheim informed Cain only a few minutes after the decision was made, sending the message with a mental image of simply grabbing two people who had arrived the day before.

They had landed in the water just off the beach, a spot that had been land before the area around the city was terraformed for a more enjoyable beach experience.

[Explain what is going on, and I will be there soon.]

Cain looked to the group he had been talking with and gave them an apologetic smile. "I am sorry to cut the visit short, but there are more transfers in a similar situation elsewhere, and I should go see them. Anyone who wants to come with me is welcome; you can return through the Guild's travel circle if you don't want to wait for me when you are finished exploring Port Nefheim."

"Fresh fish for dinner sounds pretty good. I am far too busy, but someone needs to go." The farmer's wife demanded with a look of anticipation. There were fish in the river, and they weren't far from the ocean to get some shipped, but the supply was always low in the valley and she was very familiar with all the local species.

"I will go with the kids. They have never left the valley so it will be a good experience." The farmer announced, eager to find his wife an exotic present to celebrate their upcoming anniversary.

In the end, Cain brought a whole entourage with him. Luna, Jin, Jessica, the Farmer, his oldest son and his two daughters. None of them had ever been to the Eastern Continent, and nobody wanted to miss out.

Cain summoned a clone of Moana into [Merger], waking her up from a nap, but he cast her [Portal] spell to open a path to Port Nefheim and quickly fell asleep again.

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Chapter 528 528 That was an Option?

[I hate to be a bother, but the rest of the eggs have started to move.] Cyrene sent the hurried message to Cain as she watched the four eggs still safely within her coils begin to shudder as the occupants woke up for the very first time.

It was great that they were all waking up at once. At least this way she wouldn't have to wait any longer to see how their health was, but after Luna wanted to kill her siblings to reduce competition, Cyrene was a bit concerned that she wouldn't be able to keep up with them.

[I'm on my way back. Give it three minutes.] Cain responded almost instantly.

"Sorry everyone, it seems that young Luna here has a bunch of siblings that are about to hatch, so I will need to go back home and keep them from murdering each other. Feel free to ask the watchers anything that comes to mind, I'm sure they will be happy to help you get settled here in Port Nefheim, or wherever else you might want to live." Cain explained out loud for the benefit of the other people in the room.

"We will explore the city and return through the circle. Go ahead and be with the kids." Jin announced while Jessica nodded her agreement. Neither of them had been here before, so it was all new to them and full of strange and exciting smells, both spices and exotic foods.

"Do the Serrah Woods still exist?" One of the Elves asked before Cain could leave the room.

"Indeed they do. Do you want me to have them send someone here to meet with you? I don't have a very strong presence there, but we are on good terms, so it shouldn't be a problem for them to come here and take you in to live with the other elves." The Watcher suggested, waving Cain away to take care of the kids while he took care of matters in Port Nefheim.

Cain didn't waste any time and had Moana take him directly to the travel circle at the Manor, then jogged through the house to get to the basement room where Cyrene had

been nesting. The eggs still hadn't hatched and were in the rocking phase as their occupants worked out the weakest point so they could smash their way out with relative ease.

Unlike Luna who was born at Ancient Quality, these ones were still showing as regular quality to Cain, so their strength would be closer to on par with a regular Lamia Hatchling. The first cracks began to form as Cain took his seat along the wall, handing Cyrene a drink and some snacks.

While Nesting she often forgot about meals, so Cain made a point to bring her something every time he came to visit, or he would send someone from the kitchen if he was busy at mealtimes.

The first hatchling emerged only a few minutes later, giving a joyful cheer at being first, and then grabbed a sharp bit of eggshell to go after the slower siblings.

"Alright, calm down. No stabbing." Cyrene reprimanded.

The hatchling looked ready to argue, despite not even being fully out of her shell yet, but then she caught sight of Luna wrapped around Cain's wrist with a smug look and a sword in all four hands.

"I wasn't first? I thought I was the first. I didn't hear anyone else moving before me." The hatchling complained, her jet black hair and bronze skin still glistening from the fluids in the egg.

"You were second by an entire day. They wouldn't let me stab you either, they say there's enough for everyone." Luna told her. The words were a simple explanation, but after mentioning that she was first by an entire day her tone turned smug. Very smug.

Once she realized that she was one of the lucky ones, the new hatchling quickly crawled up Cyrene's scales to twine herself in her mother's hair and watch the process.

A few seconds after she made her way up, the second of the four eggs hatched, showing a perfect twin to the first, only her eyes were bright green instead of black.

She had been close enough to hatching that she could hear the earlier conversation, so she simply escaped her confinement and climbed up next to her clutch mate. Both had four arms, the same as Luna, marking them as Lamia Progenitors, but the power level between them had a vast difference.

These two also didn't show any signs that their system was active yet, and they instead still showed [Undertermined] in the Class field. They most likely only needed a small nudge, like a new name, to trigger the Class option though. That's all it took for Luna, and in normal circumstances, Lamia hatchlings were expected to be self-sufficient from the moment they left the egg.

The last two took their mother's coloration. Pink hair and pale skin with white and red scales. They emerged at the same time and got into an intense slap fight before Cyrene could break them up, but they couldn't reach any decent weapons, and neither had fangs the way Luna did, so biting each other was pointless.

"Calm down, or I will stretch you all out straight so you can't wrap for an entire day." Cain admonished them, and the misbehavior stopped immediately.

The girls joined their sisters in hiding inside Cyrene's hair, but Cain could hear them complaining about him despite their attempts to whisper.

"He's so scary. Is that why he's still alive? He looks like the big boss, do you think he's planning to sell us off or something? Why else would a male stay around Lamia even after breeding? Our poor mother must be a captive. Don't worry, we will grow up strong and free you from the scary man."

All of their opinions on their current circumstances painted Cain as the bad guy and Cyrene as the tragic heroine, contrary to Cain's experience with Luna, where she immediately took to him and didn't seem to care at all that Cyrene was in the room. Even now, she was still wrapped around his wrist and more interested in the sisters than her mother.

That must have been what the System meant by "Cain's Daughter" versus "Cyrene's Daughter". It was a Daddy's girl versus Momma's girl distinction.

"Cyrene, how about you give everyone a name? They will do better if they have that sense of individuality, I read it in a demon parenting book." Cain told her with a smile.

"I have just the right names for everyone. Starting from the first to hatch today, you will be Renee, Reika, Rachelle, and Remi." Cyrene decided and the girls giggled.

"That's so you can start with the sound of R and we will all panic about who is in trouble isn't it? I'm right aren't I?" Renee asked, giving her mother a sly look.

"You're not wrong, but I won't be the only one you might get in trouble with. There are a pair of very large Spider Demons here, and their Demon Bunny assistants. They have volunteered to help get you all ready for the outside world. Plus, you've got older cousins here, the Blood Dancers, who have been excited to meet new family members." Cyrene smiled back.

"That sounds great. But is there any food? I smell meat, will you bring us to the meat? Is the meat coming to us?" The girls asked, making Cain laugh.

"You were just like that yesterday. Now, look at you all grown up." Cain told Luna, who gave a smug giggle before frowning.

“But there will be meat, right? It smells really good.”

The puppets from the kitchen brought in a platter of Lamia Hatchling bite-sized snacks moments later, leaving the door open so that everyone who had been eagerly waiting in the hallway could see the new arrivals. For their part, the girls didn't care who was watching, the five of them were much more interested in what was on the platter, and getting themselves stuffed full than anything else.

As expected, they were all unconscious again within a few minutes, having gorged themselves into a food coma, which gave Cain and Cyrene time to talk without being interrupted.

“Should we have them activate their systems now, or should we wait and let them do it later?” Cain asked.

“We should likely do it now. If they are like Luna, they will be looking for people to hitch a ride with to find excitement, and there are a lot of interesting things to see and do around the Manor.” Cyrene suggested, and Cain turned to the group consciousness, looking for consensus.

[Yep, best to get them a class now, so they can start building themselves up before they get in real trouble. Any daughter of yours that is helpless is a target, and you never know what sort of crazy person might manage to sneak by the guards.] Laura pointed out, on behalf of the others.

[Alright, as soon as they wake up.] Cain agreed, relaxing in his chair while the girls slept on the large silver serving platter near the remnants of lunch.

Luna was the first up, followed by Remi, who viewed her ten-second shorter than usual nap as a great victory.

Once everyone was awake, Cain began his explanation of the System and the Class options, finishing by asking if anyone had questions. They all agreed they understood the process, but the moment the lecture was over, Remi went off track.

“System? Hello, System. Can you make me a Frost Mage? I really want to have cool ice powers.” She called to the open air, then went limp as she entered the Class options menu.

She came back only a few seconds later with a huge smile.

[Name] Remi

[Class] Frost Mage

[Level] 1

[Species] Lamia Progenitor

[Cyrene's Daughter]

[Blessed]

"Wait, did you just get an advanced class by asking for it? How does that even work?" Cyrene stammered, looking at her daughter's joyful smile.

The Watchers' voices were suddenly forefront in Cain's consciousness as they watched the event through his eyes. [That's amazing. Nobody ever thinks to just ask for the class they really want. I didn't even know that was an option.]

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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One after another the girls finished with their classes. Renee had chosen to be a Berserker, Rachele a Hunter, and Reika chose to be a cleric. Between them, they actually had a pretty good adventuring party formed. Cyrene let them pick gear from the nest so that they wouldn't have to be naked and hiding in her hair all the time, but the immediate differences in their appearance were a cause for celebration among the sisters.

Now, even if someone didn't know which was which, they could tell them apart by class.

Cain could read in their minds that they weren't in a hurry to level up though. Unlike Luna, who reveled in seeing new things and places, the rest of the sisters were happy to remain exactly where they were.

Once they had gotten adjusted to wearing clothes and had the basics of their system functions down, they were back at the remains of the food that the kitchen had brought down earlier, eating themselves into another food coma, while Luna barely managed to remain awake, wrapped around Cain's wrist.

"It looks like it's a Lamia thing. Eat, sleep, repeat." Cain laughed, gently stroking the girls' backs as they slept.

"It's not a bad way to be. But it looks like you will only have one partner for your upcoming adventures. Or maybe three. You wanted to take Jin and Jessica with you before you realized that the eggs were going to hatch so soon didn't you?" Cyrene asked.

"Yeah, it did give me the quest, and it mentioned the avatars, which I am almost entirely certain are them. So, I plan to bring them with me once they have gained enough levels to at least safely travel by my side without being killed by random threats. That shouldn't be long, they are both progressing quite quickly. Luna here should also level up in a hurry, thanks to her Ancient Quality physique, and it will move even faster once we get to the Southern Continent. She can spend some time with the Echoes, learning all about farming, and then we will go explore new places." Cain explained.

That sounded very good to Luna. She hadn't forgotten her theory that the one with the food was secretly the most powerful, so learning to farm from experts that could cultivate Mythic crops was an important step into her future plans.

Jin came to visit them toward the end of the day after she had exhausted herself in the tower. She and Jessica had spent over four hours touring port Nefheim before they returned, and the Dragonkin was lamenting the loss of valuable practice time, even if she did have a lot of fun shopping and meeting new people.

"We're back. Though you likely knew that already. Are these all of the sisters?" She asked quietly, not wanting to wake them up.

"Yes, those four were all born today, and with Luna, that is the whole clutch. They're not a very outgoing bunch, but they do love to eat and sleep. I think it's a Lamia trait since they have so much growing to do." Cain replied with a smirk, looking down at Luna who was clearly comparing her own size to her sisters now that Cain had mentioned it.

"I can understand that. When I was little I spent most of my time either hungry or sleeping. Dragonkin also come from eggs and start out much smaller than human children. Because of that, the more Dragon blooded we are, the more we need to eat when we are little to gain strength and grow up healthy and strong." Jin agreed.

"You should get some sleep in a proper bed though. You spend most of your time in here next to the nest, but now that they have all hatched, there is no reason not to change back to a normal bedroom." Jessica added, her Cleric's instincts kicking in and giving her the urge to mother everyone around her.

"Good idea. Once the girls wake up, Cyrene can gather them and we can head back to the bedroom. There are plenty of good places to sleep in there, including padded baskets that I'm sure the girls would love." Cain suggested, thinking of the pillow-filled baskets that Laura had placed in random bedrooms in every city so she could comfortably sleep wherever the urge caught up to her.

[Sure, just giving away my beds. But Lamia do like to cuddle, so it might not be all bad.] Laura thought, imagining a cuddle pile of snake bodies and a Dragon Pixie. With their relative levels, there was no way that the girls could injure her, even Laura's delicate-looking wings in Pixie form could knock them aside, so she had nothing to fear.

The girls weren't out for much longer, and immediately returned to the safety of Cyrene's hair once they were mobile again, talking about various hairstyles they could modify her long locks into for more comfortable riding.

"Or you could ride on my shoulders," Cyrene suggested, but the girls only looked at her as if she had missed the point.

"A nice double heart braid, with half the hair left loose would be perfect. That's four spots to ride on, and a layer of cover to hide behind when necessary, with easy access to the arms when the food arrives. I even have a [Hunter's Mark] ability that I can use to let me know when there is prepared food nearby." Rachelle suggested to her sisters, while Cyrene shot Cain a pleading look.

"I should introduce you to Maggie, one of my Lieutenants. She is an Orcish warrior, and her hair is in dreadlocks that she often ties in bundles. I think you would like riding with her." Cain suggested, not really diverting the topic.

"Oh, that could be good too, like a forest of trees. The braids would be thick enough to easily climb without using your hands too. Father guy is a genius." Reika decided.

[You don't even rate a name from them, you poor, unfortunate soul.] Moana laughed in Cain's mind.

[At least one of them likes me. I am just going to go with it for now. Obsession Demons are hard to manage at the best of times, and arguing with them is usually pointless because they never change their point of view.] Cain mentally laughed.

Maggie's amused thoughts were the next that Cain noticed. [That's right, just leave them with Cyrene and they will come around eventually. She just needs to introduce them to your glory and benevolence. It is quiet here at the Castle, so I can drop by in the morning if they want to visit.]

[I'm sure they would appreciate it and so would Cyrene if it keeps them from tangling her hair into an unmanageable knot trying to make it easier to climb.] Vala's contribution to the conversation made everyone else laugh and Cyrene nodded rapidly in agreement, momentarily forgetting both that her hair was full of Lamia Hatchlings, and that the conversation was in her head.

"We are missing out on something, aren't we? You two have some super secret silent conversation techniques that you haven't taught us, right? Well, that's expected, give me another two or five years to get comfortable here and I am sure I'll be ready to start learning those sorts of things." Remi announced, being the first to notice there was a reason their hiding spot had been jostled.

"Very perceptive. But I think you might get bored before two years are up." Cain pointed out.

"Once you get too big to hide in my hair, you will start wanting to see more things every day, I'm certain of it." Cyrene agreed while the girls all made disgruntled noises.

Their mother was much smaller than most of the people that they had seen so far, so hiding in her hair to relax wasn't a great long-term plan. The girls shared a glance and silently agreed that they would start making plans for an alternate safe sleeping spot tomorrow. They were done with the nest, but they hadn't seen anywhere else yet, so maybe there were already places prepared where they would be comfortable.

After a moment's thought, Renee decided to speak up. "I will admit that you might have a point, but we won't be letting you chase us off until we find a better spot."

Tamii brought them more food, along with a hand-drawn map of the Manor, so that the girls could familiarize themselves with the building that they were in. All eyes went to her hair, pulled back into a loose plait since she had just been training with her clones and the Blood Dancers.

"That's good hair as well. We could climb all through the braid. Ladies, grab a handful, I think we can do it right now." Renee announced, taking the lead among her sisters, and Cyrene's hair quickly started to rearrange itself.

"It's like a grooming spell or having your personal handmaiden. Rather convenient if you ask me." Tamii told an annoyed faced Cyrene with her best attempt at being serious.

"Just wait, one day they will get attached to you as well," Cyrene muttered.

"Why would we do that?" Remi asked, curious about who this new person was.

"That is Tracii. There are four identical copies of her, and they are the Lieutenants that serve under Tasha, the Spider Acolytes that are Cain's Commanders. They will be helping with childcare duties, and the Blood Dancers that they also look after are eager to meet you all." Cyrene explained.

"Oh, there are more important people around. We should see them tomorrow, or maybe the day after. If we find a good room, tomorrow might be entirely taken with naps and meals." Remi said, thinking deeply about what her potential schedule might be.

"I will ask the girls if they want to bring you all lunch tomorrow. You can meet Tasha then, and if you ask very nicely, I think she might even make you spiderweb hammocks. They are the ultimate in comfort, and she can hang them in all sorts of places since the webs are magical." Tracii laughed, and Remi gave her four thumbs up.

"Bring the food with us. We are moving to my rooms upstairs. I'm sure Cyrene is looking forward to a proper bed again instead of the nest, and the girls should at least see some of the house." Cain's order set everyone moving, with Tracii picking up the platter and leading the way, much to the dismay of the girls who could no longer reach it.

Luna had no such issues. She simply summoned a pair of the small birds she had seen outside, that Cain called Budgies, and had them bring her bits of food from the platter as they walked. The inequality was not missed by her sisters, though she pretended not to notice it at all.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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The next morning the Blood Dancers were waiting outside the room with a copy of Tracii, ready to meet their new Lamia cousins. There wasn't any actual relationship between them, but Cain had made the Blood Dancers, so they felt like his adopted children, whereas the Lamia Progenitors were his biological children. In their estimation, that made them cousins.

"But Mom, do we have to get up? It's so bright and loud outside. How about we just nap for another two, no three hours first? That should be fine, right?" The girls complained while the Blood Dancers outside the room laughed.

"No, it is time to get up and exercise. You need to do it to grow up big and strong, you can't just sleep all day." Cyrene corrected them.

Fine, but can we eat first? I'm starving." Renee asked, giving her best pleading look.

"Only a light meal or you will be sluggish during your training," Tracii called through the door.

The look on the Lamia's face gave away her master plan, even if Cain hadn't been able to read her mind. She had fully intended to gorge herself into a food coma and gain herself a few more hours of sleep that way.

"I will have the chefs cook you all up some Mythic Quality beast meat when you finish the training for the morning. Now go on, and be good for your instructors." Cain told them, opening the door to let the others in.

"You will see, it is a lot of fun, and you will learn really cool new things. You have to get on Tasha's good side if you want her to make you spiderweb hammocks, right?" One of the Blood Dancers asked.

"Okay, let's do this. Where is the morning snack?" Remi cheered, encouraging her sisters.

The snack Cain had prepared was a small slice of Epic quality dried peaches, from the very first batch of trials on the farm in the Southern Continent, cut into small pieces for ease of eating. They would be easy to digest and give energy plus healing that should keep the girls going through the morning. At least in theory.

There was a pretty sizeable crowd gathered outside when the group made it to the training grounds, both those who usually joined the Blood Dancers in their combat training these days, and a bunch who had come to see the new girls.

Tasha had made five large webbing platforms, about two meters across, and Tracii carefully placed one Lamia on each.

“Alright, I know not all of you are melee fighters, but you do need to know the basics, in case something gets too close to cast a spell at. So that is what we will cover today, then the four of you will continue on with class specialties, taught by Tasha and her summons, while Luna will be taught her class specialty by Cain, who was once a Puppet Master as well.” Tracii explained, perking the girls up.

They hadn’t expected that the warrior bunnies or the Spider Demon Void Mage that was Tasha would have a way to teach them directly about their own classes, so now they were getting excited about this morning activity for more reasons than just the promise of a more comfortable bed.

Most of the group was much more advanced than they were, so a single clone of Tracii separated off to teach the newbies, which also included a number of local children who were in the single digits for levels, or did not have a System activated yet at all.

“First up, I will teach you all a basic attack sequence. It’s different for every weapon, so pay attention when I teach them all. If you have more weapons, or a suitably shaped stick, you can practice them all, so you know them before they are used against you.” Tracii explained, and the girls all turned to Cyrene for assistance.

She passed out a handful of small sticks that could emulate everything from a staff to a dagger, while Luna already had a variety of items in her inventory. She was pretty sure that Cain hadn’t noticed that her dad hadn’t noticed her slipping the failed attempts at enchanting into her inventory, but he seemed much less surprised than she had expected.

“Note to self, Guild Master Cain sees everything.” She muttered, reminding herself not to underestimate his sneakiness. She was certain that it was something essential to her class.

For two hours, the newbies’ group practiced various attacks, set to a rhythm that was actually a workout routine, designed to help them build muscle and stamina. That was all that the four girls could take before their stamina wore out, and they collapsed for an early nap.

Luna, on the other hand, had much higher stamina, and she had a full day's head start on adapting to staying awake for more than two hours at a time. The promise of a special meat lunch drove her onward to the end of the training session, even after the rest of the newbies were dismissed at the two-hour mark.

"Meat, there will be meat, staying awake for meat." She was muttering as she finished the last set of repetitions with a two-handed sword.

"Not bad form though the extra arms make the lower part of the swing awkward. Pull them back a little further, and they will be out of the way, and better posed for a secondary attack with your smaller weapons." Tracii explained while Luna took mental notes.

"So, I can use the big sword to force them to block, then use daggers to stab them while their hands are busy? That's a great idea." Luna praised her instructor, who giggled and gave her a head pat for her efforts.

"That's all for the morning. Good job making it through. We can continue this tomorrow." Tracii decided, then picked Luna up to hand her back to Cain.

The other girls woke up just in time for lunch to be served, one ribeye steak from a Mythic Grade Water Buffalo split between them. That was still nearly their own body mass in pure meat, but Obsession Demons weren't the sort to back down from a challenge, and it was almost all gone when they finally collapsed.

Like what happened with Luna the first day, and again this afternoon, the girls were growing at a visible pace with the influx of high-grade nutrients, speeding up their growth to a size where their bodies would be able to defend themselves from predators in the demon dimensions where the species had presumably evolved.

Being coddled by parents was a new experience for their species. Unlike the modern Lamia, who banded together for safety, all the information that Cain could gather on the Progenitors indicated that they were left to fend for themselves, with parents believing that the children needed to prove their worth in order to be accepted back into the highest ranks of society. Progenitors led their people, there was no room for weakness in their ranks.

"Can I go play in the tower? I heard the other kids talking about how fun the challenge is, and they even said that there were good things inside if you were lucky." Luna asked the moment that she woke up, getting so used to her sudden nap attacks that she didn't bother with transitions anymore.

"I don't see why not. It will also help you learn about new species even faster than me showing them to you. Just remember to record everything that you see and you should get a lot of knowledge. But it is dangerous inside, and you will get hurt. Are you ready for that?" Cain asked gently.

"I, uh, maybe?" Luna answered uncertainly, making Cyrene smile.

"If it gets too scary or dangerous, call out that you forfeit and the tower will let you leave without getting too badly beat up. You have lots of summons, has Cain talked about battle plans with you yet?" Cyrene asked.

"Not yet. But they taught me to stab things while they're distracted and I think it will work pretty well." Luna said confidently, making her mother laugh out loud.

"That's not how Puppet Masters fight unless things have gone wrong. Have Master Cain explain the technique on your way over. The summoning spell copies the knowledge of the things you recorded, so they can teach you new tactics as well, you just need to trust in the summons."

"Got it, mom. Now, I have three major spells, Lesser, Greater, and Supporter. Which ones are which? I've only used Lesser to summon useful things, like the birds." Luna asked Cain as she moved to wrap around his wrist.

"I will show you a few options that are good at fighting, and you can start from there. First is a Lamia Scourge Caster. I use them all the time, and they are good fighters, with some magic. Then we have Lesser Elementals, which all have a specific strength, another good option are Goblin Mole Dog Riders. Or these cute and fluffy Snow Leopards. They are also Lesser Summons because they are of regular quality and not powerful enough to be greater, despite being very physically strong. Those are the staples of the Summon Lesser Golem ability.

Next up, are the Greater Golems. These are your primary fighters, and I recommend picking a large demon. The Wrath Bringers or the Blighted Paladins are both great tank-type summons, that can take a lot of damage and hold off enemies. For Beastkin, the Snapping Turtle Kin is a great option as well, but I don't usually use them for a reason we will get to later.

The last is the most important and versatile option, your Supporters. That spell summons a specific person you have met or seen and recorded. Auntie Kone gets a bonus when I summon clones of her, because of an ability that I have, but she is still a good option for you and will be able to summon a group of the Snapping Turtle Kin. Beyond that, you will want to pick healers or area attack mages with your Supporter options." Cain explained at length.

When others summoned Kone, they wouldn't get the benefit of her being Cain's Bonded Companion, so they wouldn't get Su, or the extra summons, but they might get the healing aura that Kone gained from Su. Kone could also still cast a variety of healing spells, and the Snapping Turtles were a real menace with all the bonuses that she gave them, so she was one of the best options for a Supporter.

"Why don't I just summon you as a Supporter?" Luna asked, then frowned as she tried it.

"Invalid target, right? You can't summon other Puppet Masters or certain other beings, and until you can summon Epic and Legendary quality creatures, a lot of the most powerful beings you meet will be beyond your abilities. But record them anyhow, so you have the options when you get to that level." Cain suggested.

"Got it. Now, what are the puppets? It seems like I can animate dolls?" Luna asked.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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She went through the Puppet Master's General Skill Tree first, so she has the General Staff ability, to make the Puppets smart and autonomous, but they will still be lousy combatants, and she lacks Cain's ability to create them from nothing.

"That is almost exactly correct. You can animate a doll and make it intelligent. I can make really good ones, like the Kitchen staff, but you can make ones with basic skills and intelligence to do basic things for you. Why don't I make a body and you can animate it as your first puppet?" Cain asked, but Cyrene waved off the notion.

"Too much information. I will get good with these other ones first, then I can work on the Puppets. You will help me out with yours until then, right?" Luna asked hopefully.

"Of course, I will. They already help you all day long, I won't make them stop." He laughed, patting her head just to hear the little happy noise she made when he did it.

"Excellent. Now, please bring me to the tower, I have a plan." Luna declared.

"Oh, you do, do you? Is it a good plan?" Cain asked.

"It is pure Genius. You see, the Bears are always lined up to train, right? So if I Summon a clone of the strongest looking one they can tell me what to do until I understand how the tower works." Luna told Cain with great pride.

It was actually a pretty good plan. They would all have some experience in the tower, so she couldn't get it very wrong, and at level 100, the difficulty level shouldn't be anything they had not faced already.

"That is a good idea. I also recommend that you pick one of your toughest summons and use [Merger]. It will make you stronger and harder to hurt, which will let you go further in the tower." Cain explained.

"Yes, I can see how being small and fragile would be a disadvantage. I will keep it in mind." Luna agreed, adjusting her plans.

When they got to the tower, the perfect partner was there waiting for them. En had just finished her daily run and was telling battle stories to the cubs.

That was good enough for Luna, and she quickly recorded them all then prepared to Summon a clone of En. The bear was huge, a whole meter taller than the human form Cain was using, so Luna was sure she would get a good view of the battle from her shoulder.

"Now, I know it is tempting to ask me to help you skip the line, but today, there are valuable insights to be gained. While they wait, everyone talks about their previous runs, the monsters they faced, and what was the best way to defeat them. Just by talking with the people around you, there is a lot to learn here." Cain explained, lifting his arm so he was speaking directly at the Lamia Progenitor.

"Oh, I wondered who you were talking to. Greetings Guild Master Cain, I am Shuri, a student studying under Duke Chen." A catgirl mage in front of them turned to say.

"A tiny Lamia? That must be Luna. Greetings, Guild Master, Miss Luna. I am Disciple Cindy, also a student of Duke Chen." A young human monk added with a polite bow.

It's unusual to see a mage under Duke Chen's training. Do you perhaps have a close combat specialty?" Cain asked Shuri while they waited for the line to move.

"Not really, but I want to learn to fight unarmed or with my staff, so I went to him for training. The Duke's training center has started taking in a wider variety of close combatants lately since so many nobles suffered heavy losses after the dungeon breach. I must say though, I'm glad I encountered Miss Luna out here and not as a target in the dungeon. Small creatures are hard to fight, they always hide in the grass, or under objects and strike when you least expect it." Shuri explained.

"Yeah, being overpowered by something like a Minotaur or those massive Wrath Demons is one thing, but a surprise poisoning from something you didn't even see is extra annoying." Cindy agreed while Luna nodded along.

"Hidden things are bad, but birds and dragons are the worst, I'm sure of it. I'm a bear, bears don't fly, and the annoying things keep flying out of my range just when I think I've got them." Another challenger in line complained.

"Warriors with strong defense cause me a lot of problems, but straight Caster types are a rogue's specialty. The more of them I can get in a trip, the better I do." Another one of the bears waiting in line bragged.

It didn't take long before they were at the front of the line, and Cain walked inside with Luna around his wrist. "Just accept the quest and choose to enter the tower and you will be on your own. Remember, call your summons right away, because you never know when something will start out hiding very near you."

"Got it. I can do this. Yeah, strong thoughts." Luna hyped herself up while the others around her smiled at the small creature's enthusiasm.

Seconds later, Luna vanished into the tower, and Cain was left alone to wait, so he headed back outside to where the locals had arranged a bunch of benches for viewing the statues as they lit up to show the contestant's progress.

With a full set of summons out and the bonus from being a Puppet Master, plus the experience bonuses on the gear she was wearing, Luna would likely reset herself at least once during the trial and drag the total time out much longer than usual. Possibly long enough that she either falls asleep or gives up in boredom, both of which would eject her from the trial.

The spells that form the tower's enchantments are quite advanced, but they don't differentiate between being knocked unconscious and simply sleeping. Both are counted as no longer training and get punted to make way for the next trainee.

The moment that Luna got inside, she called for both sets of her basic summons. Lamia Scourge Casters for her Lesser option, and Wrath Bringers for the greater. She then merged with one Wrath Bringer and called five clones of Kone and one of En for her to ride on.

"Welcome everyone, my name is Luna and I will be your summoner today. I hope you don't mind if I ride your shoulder, En. You are the tallest, other than the Wrath Bringers, who don't look very talkative, and I need to learn combat tactics before I leave this place today." Luna introduced herself, making the Supporters laugh.

"Don't worry little one, we will show you all the important things about fighting with the summons." One of the copies of Kone declared, calling for her assortment of Snapping Turtle Kin.

"First up, think of your job as a manager. With so many of us here already, what you need to do is keep everyone on track and find the best way to deal with targets. Your Supporters can do some of that themselves, but the lower summons are limited in intelligence by the spell, so they don't always make the best tactical decisions." The clone of Kone informed her as Luna climbed up onto En's shoulder to get a better look at the inside of the tower.

It was much bigger than it looked, definitely the work of magic, but more importantly, there were a group of Dire Wolves in the distance.

"What would Cain do? Durable things first, then powerful things, with fast things to keep them from running away. That's what the instructors were telling the students that trained with the Blood Dancers. Miss En, how do I do that?" Luna rambled.

En pointed out that the wolves were very fast themselves, so sending the Turtles after them would just result in a foot race that the tanks couldn't win, so Luna had to try again.

"You're close though, just fix the order of operations." Kone encouraged her.

"Oh, I know. Send the Lamia around the back and drive them toward the Turtles and Wrath Bringers. That should work. Everyone head out and let's see how it goes."

Over the next two hours and eleven levels, resetting once at eight floors in due to a level up, they practiced combat techniques and battle strategies until Luna was exhausted. She had been awake well over two hours before entering, and now two more where she had to do a lot of thinking, and she was just plain worn out.

"Just say that you forfeit and the tower will let you leave. We will all see you tomorrow and we can try again until you get everything perfect." En encouraged her, while the Lamia gave the big bear a sleepy, but happy hug to the side of the neck.

"Alright. Tower, I forfeit. Please take me back to Dad." Luna muttered, blinking rapidly to stay awake.

Cain felt the moment that she returned like a spell had been cast to call him to the tower for recovery of the sleeping Lamia Progenitor. The few challengers that were healing up in the open spaces of the main floor were smiling at her tiny snoring body, clearly not ejected for damage, but because she exhausted herself entirely.

"So cute. But I did that the first time I was in here too. Mana use exhaustion. I had gone through a dozen potions then boom, no more energy, and everything went blurry as I collapsed and got ejected. Poor thing must have really given it her all." An Elven Ranger who was leaning against the wall said with a smile as Cain picked Luna up, letting her body instinctively wrap around his arm.

"She does it constantly. She was born with high quality and advanced level, but she is still very young and doesn't understand her limits." Cain told them, then waved at the shocked faces and headed back for the manor.

None of them had expected to see the elusive Guild Master of the Darklight Host here today, actually seeing him was like a celebrity encounter for most of the visitors to Long

Fang Valley, something that they would definitely tell their friends about when they got home.

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"Yeah, being overpowered by something like a Minotaur or those massive Wrath Demons is one thing, but a surprise poisoning from something you didn't even see is extra annoying." Cindy agreed while Luna nodded along.

"Hidden things are bad, but birds and dragons are the worst, I'm sure of it. I'm a bear, bears don't fly, and the annoying things keep flying out of my range just when I think I've got them." Another challenger in line complained.

"Warriors with strong defense cause me a lot of problems, but straight Caster types are a rogue's specialty. The more of them I can get in a trip, the better I do." Another one of the bears waiting in line bragged.

It didn't take long before they were at the front of the line, and Cain walked inside with Luna around his wrist. "Just accept the quest and choose to enter the tower and you will be on your own. Remember, call your summons right away, because you never know when something will start out hiding very near you."

“Got it. I can do this. Yeah, strong thoughts.” Luna hyped herself up while the others around her smiled at the small creature’s enthusiasm.

Seconds later, Luna vanished into the tower, and Cain was left alone to wait, so he headed back outside to where the locals had arranged a bunch of benches for viewing the statues as they lit up to show the contestant’s progress.

With a full set of summons out and the bonus from being a Puppet Master, plus the experience bonuses on the gear she was wearing, Luna would likely reset herself at least once during the trial and drag the total time out much longer than usual. Possibly long enough that she either falls asleep or gives up in boredom, both of which would eject her from the trial.

The spells that form the tower’s enchantments are quite advanced, but they don’t differentiate between being knocked unconscious and simply sleeping. Both are counted as no longer training and get punted to make way for the next trainee.

The moment that Luna got inside, she called for both sets of her basic summons. Lamia Scourge Casters for her Lesser option, and Wrath Bringers for the greater. She then merged with one Wrath Bringer and called five clones of Kone and one of En for her to ride on.

“Welcome everyone, my name is Luna and I will be your summoner today. I hope you don’t mind if I ride your shoulder, En. You are the tallest, other than the Wrath Bringers, who don’t look very talkative, and I need to learn combat tactics before I leave this place today.” Luna introduced herself, making the Supporters laugh.

“Don’t worry little one, we will show you all the important things about fighting with the summons.” One of the copies of Kone declared, calling for her assortment of Snapping Turtle Kin.

“First up, think of your job as a manager. With so many of us here already, what you need to do is keep everyone on track and find the best way to deal with targets. Your Supporters can do some of that themselves, but the lower summons are limited in intelligence by the spell, so they don’t always make the best tactical decisions.” The clone of Kone informed her as Luna climbed up onto En’s shoulder to get a better look at the inside of the tower.

It was much bigger than it looked, definitely the work of magic, but more importantly, there were a group of Dire Wolves in the distance.

“What would Cain do? Durable things first, then powerful things, with fast things to keep them from running away. That’s what the instructors were telling the students that trained with the Blood Dancers. Miss En, how do I do that?” Luna rambled.

En pointed out that the wolves were very fast themselves, so sending the Turtles after them would just result in a foot race that the tanks couldn't win, so Luna had to try again.

"You're close though, just fix the order of operations." Kone encouraged her.

"Oh, I know. Send the Lamia around the back and drive them toward the Turtles and Wrath Bringers. That should work. Everyone head out and let's see how it goes."

Over the next two hours and eleven levels, resetting once at eight floors in due to a level up, they practiced combat techniques and battle strategies until Luna was exhausted. She had been awake well over two hours before entering, and now two more where she had to do a lot of thinking, and she was just plain worn out.

"Just say that you forfeit and the tower will let you leave. We will all see you tomorrow and we can try again until you get everything perfect." En encouraged her, while the Lamia gave the big bear a sleepy, but happy hug to the side of the neck.

"Alright. Tower, I forfeit. Please take me back to Dad." Luna muttered, blinking rapidly to stay awake.

Cain felt the moment that she returned like a spell had been cast to call him to the tower for recovery of the sleeping Lamia Progenitor. The few challengers that were healing up in the open spaces of the main floor were smiling at her tiny snoring body, clearly not ejected for damage, but because she exhausted herself entirely.

"So cute. But I did that the first time I was in here too. Mana use exhaustion. I had gone through a dozen potions then boom, no more energy, and everything went blurry as I collapsed and got ejected. Poor thing must have really given it her all." An Elven Ranger who was leaning against the wall said with a smile as Cain picked Luna up, letting her body instinctively wrap around his arm.

"She does it constantly. She was born with high quality and advanced level, but she is still very young and doesn't understand her limits." Cain told them, then waved at the shocked faces and headed back for the manor.

None of them had expected to see the elusive Guild Master of the Darklight Host here today, actually seeing him was like a celebrity encounter for most of the visitors to Long Fang Valley, something that they would definitely tell their friends about when they got home.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 532 532 A gift for Misha

Misha was sitting in the garden with a pair of binoculars, watching one of the Ancients set up an experiment that was supposed to help gather divine energy so that the youngest and laziest of them, who were still possessed of Immortal Quality bodies, could advance into the higher realms.

This place had an abundance of divine energy, but it had a will of sorts, so absorbing it into the body took effort that those who were least concerned with advancement didn't care to make.

Nyarla was supposed to be meeting her in a few minutes as well, the Ancient had said she was going to bring Misha a present to celebrate their ten-day friendship anniversary.

Arguing with Nyarla was pointless. She would do what she wanted anyhow, and now that Misha was linked into the collective consciousness, Nyarla could sense that she was actually excited to get a present.

Tappan, an oddball of a man who preferred the form of a young human boy, came jogging over while Nyarla was distracted, carrying a basket of fruit.

"I managed to recreate the fruits that Cain's Echoes were making when we watched them this morning. Technically I borrowed some fruit and grew new trees, but it's the same thing, really. Would you like some juice?" He asked, taking a seat next to her.

"Sure, I have been wondering what they were trying to make. Do you think they're trying to grow ambrosia in their world, or is it just a potion substitute?" Misha asked.

"I am not sure, but they do seem to be focusing on effects because the Peaches are very sour alone, but the healing factor and energy recovery that the fruits grant is very impressive." Tappan shrugged, taking out a blender and a bottle of water.

"Taken alone, the effect is at the level of a Mythic potion, which is overkill, so I have seen them water it down to make a refreshing fruit punch. Just don't add the strawberries."

The boyish look of concentration on his face was adorable, and Misha almost forgot he was one of the Elders of their species, born before they had a Corporal form. His actions didn't match his expression, and he moved with well-practiced grace, juicing and filtering the concoction, then placing a single spoonful in a glass of water and stirring before applying ice magic to cool the beverage.

A single sip was enough to make Misha feel as though she had just woken up from a good night's sleep, causing her to stare at the drink in awe.

"That is incredible. Especially for something from the world I came from. Common knowledge there is that Dwarven Ale is about the finest drink you can find anywhere on the planet unless you prefer elven tea." Misha sighed, sipping on her drink.

"Tappan, you know you're not supposed to feed strange things to pregnant women." Nyarla reprimanded him, coming around the building with someone following closely behind her.

The second figure looked very familiar and nervous, but Misha just couldn't seem to place where she had seen her before. When Daisy stepped from behind the Ancient, Misha realized why. The Bunny was someone she had never expected to see in this world.

"Daisy? How did you get here? Heck, when did you get here? Come give me a hug." Misha called, waving the reincarnated Concubine over.

"You went missing, and I couldn't find you anywhere, and they told me you had been abducted, but nobody would say where. I have been freaking out all day, but then that nice lady came and got me and brought me here to keep you company." Daisy explained.

"All day? It's been ten days here and months back at home." Misha asked, looking at Nyarla.

"She was freaking out, so I went back and grabbed her from the same evening we picked you up, but I didn't do it until you had time to settle in. Time magic is a bit odd that way, it's best not to worry too much about it. Do you like your present?" Nyarla answered with a pleased look on her tentacled face.

"Thank you, I didn't think you would bring my friends to visit," Misha told her with a hug, but the Ancient looked confused for a moment before an enlightened gleam began to appear in her eyes.

"Oh, you misunderstood. You can keep her, she's not going anywhere on her own. I brought you a pet bunny." Nyarla replied happily, making Misha shake her head at the Ancient's notion of common sense and bringing panic back to Daisy.

"Am I a prisoner? A slave again? Should I not have agreed to come here?" She asked in a rush before Nyarla's pat on her head calmed her down.

Misha recognized it as a spell effect, but Daisy was much calmer now, and Misha could explain. "No, it was once considered an honor to be picked to live with the Ancients. Think of it more like being a guest. They won't lock you up or hurt you. If you work, you

will be rewarded, though they don't use coinage or paper money for anything here." Misha explained.

"So, I'm what? A very confused house guest? Your Lady in Waiting?" Daisy asked, still looking for clarification.

"You could be my pet bunny, I only require one hour of head pats a day, and the rewards are very lucrative," Tappan suggested with a wink, making Daisy laugh.

"Men, are men no matter the world, aren't they? I think I would prefer to work for Misha, thank you. But if you ask nicely, you might still get to pat the bunny." She giggled, then winked at the disguised Ancient.

"I will count that one as a win for me. Would you like some Mythical Quality fruit juice? I can guarantee it is safe. Ancient Cain's Echoes performed extensive human testing before allowing it to be widely distributed." Tappan asked her, then pointed to the nearly empty glass in Misha's hand.

"Make it four. Misha's is almost done, and it looks like we won't be able to chase you away. What are they doing over there? He's blocked his thoughts from the group to surprise us." Nyarla asked, pointing to the ancient that was experimenting with Divine Energy.

"He thinks he has an amulet that will gather and merge on its own without conscious input, making it easier for the lazy to become Divine." Tappan smiled, excited to see the experiment's result.

"Is that even possible? Wouldn't he just blow up whatever he tried to implant that much powerful energy into?" Daisy asked.

"Most likely. Why do you think we're all watching?" Nyarla smirked, keeping her eyes on the experiment.

"The Ancients are all about entertaining and new things. They especially like children, so they gathered me to be sure the kids were safe. You will get used to things here quickly, I'm certain." Misha told her fluffy friend, pulling her down onto the reclining chair beside her and passing over one of the fresh drinks from Tappan.

"So, can all Ancients change forms like Cain? Or is it just the males?" Daisy asked, noticing that the man beside them was pretending to be human.

"Any of us who studied the route of a Biologist can change into other species, like Tappan there. Those who couldn't be bothered are more limited and can only change our size to match our surroundings unless we use an actual disguise spell." Nyarla explained.

“Before you ask, the answer is yes. I’m just as handsome in Ancient form as I am in human form.” Tappan told Daisy with a wink.

It was strange to see an Ancient flirting. They all knew each other so well that there was no need. But it looked like Daisy was weak to flirtation and pretty boys. Misha didn’t think it was a sexual attraction, but Tappan was more interested in cuddling the Bunny than anything sexual, so maybe the form he chose was a deliberate one to make people see him as harmless and innocent.

“We will have to see about that. But I think it’s starting, the device has begun to glow.” Daisy answered, smiling at the carefree-looking Tappan.

The start of the experiment was a success. The device did actually pull in Divine Energy, causing it to glow with a Holy light and give off a feeling of serenity and protection. But when the volunteer tried to move that energy from the device to their body, it caused an immediate and severe backlash, throwing them hundreds of meters and exploding in a flash of blinding white light.

The light was warm as it flowed over Misha’s body and left behind the feeling of being wrapped in a warm blanket.

“He should blow himself up more often. That light is really quite comfortable.” She whispered to Nyarla, trying to keep her thoughts quiet in the group consciousness. She didn’t quite succeed and had never actually managed to block everyone out fully, but it looked like most of the others weren’t listening closely enough to hear.

“Just don’t tell him that. When we did the drawing to get to spend time with the children after they were born, he was close to the bottom. If he finds out you enjoy it, he might cause an even bigger ruckus trying to get into your good books.” Tappan whispered out loud, with his thoughts blocked from the group.

“Noted.”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 533 533 To the Farm

Now that Luna had finished learning about the towers, Cain carried her sleeping form back into the house where children were swarming Cyrene, both her own and the ones they had met today.

Cain waited until he caught her attention before speaking. "I know you were looking forward to travelling with me, but it looks like escaping isn't going to happen anytime soon. I am planning to take a few others and go looking for the Librarian who has the books I need."

Cain paused while Cyrene relocated Remi, who was stretching out from the top of her head to try to poke the sleeping form of Luna that was wrapped around Cain's arm.

"They are somewhere in the Southern Continent, but I'm not sure where, so we could be gone a while." Cain finished.

"That's fine. Lamia aren't usually very good or concerned parents, but maybe because I wasn't always one, I couldn't bear to leave these girls with someone else. Plus, I'm in your mind now; that's pretty close to you." Cyrene agreed.

Cain smiled as two girls tried to open a pistachio someone gave them, eventually resorting to using a tiny sword.

"I need to collect Jessica and Jin before I leave. They're involved in the Quest as well." Cain told her, wondering where they might be right now. He didn't see them, but the area was crowded, so they might just be out of sight.

Kone waved as she walked up with a very dejected-looking Larkin. "They're in the spa, Jessica chipped her nail polish today helping deliver some baby sheep, so we made it an excuse to relax. I will also be coming with you; I have a Quest to help you find the Librarian."

That explained the look on Larkin's face. Not only was he prohibited from the spa after an incident a while ago, but Kone also intended to leave him behind to go on an adventure with Cain.

He really was hopeless.

"Perhaps Larkin could go visit Neffie while we are gone? They're old friends, and Neffie is looking for more soldiers for her guard. The extra training could help him bulk up and gain a few more levels." Cain suggested, giving Larkin hope that things might not be that bad while he was separated from Kone.

"That sounds good. I hear her Dino Cavalry are very powerful. If I could pass the training, it would greatly boost my combat power." Larkin nodded happily.

Larkin didn't realize that Neffie would push him just as hard as Kone, but would not be nearly as understanding about his slow progress and reluctance to actually work. Cain thought it might be just what he needed to regain some of his dignity.

“Let me know when everyone is finished in the Spa, and we can head out to the farm for the evening. You guys will love it there, and the people are great.” Cain told Kone, who nodded and left for the spa to join her new friends.

The Puppets had found a new product among the goods traded to the Guild by the Ice Youkai of the Southern Ocean. It was a protective wax for scales and armour that mitigated fire damage, but more importantly, it gave a glossy, wet look finish.

Jin was their first test subject, and they would massage her with the wax and polish her scales to a lustrous shine. Many Dragons and scaled demons like the Lamia took great pride in the shine of their scales, so if it turned out well, they would have a new service to offer in the spa.

“You don’t think Cain will be trying to make us an adventuring team, do you? I’m getting good at healing, but I don’t like violence.” Jessica asked Kone, who had known him much longer.

“I doubt it. He’s bringing his infant daughter with him as well, so he can teach her about her class basics. If there is any fighting, he will likely take care of it himself. The Quest we are both on is to find answers, it doesn’t require hunting anything.

The problem is, the Elf who has the information we need went missing over two hundred years ago, and the city where they were last seen was destroyed in the great war, so we don’t even have many clues.

We can only say for sure that they took the entire library with them and it wasn’t destroyed with the city.” Kone explained.

“Well, that could make things difficult. One random Elf in an entire Continent, who might be disguised, and that nobody has seen in centuries. Who even made this quest?” Jessica asked.

Jin only smirked and waited for the Bunny to remember where all the System Quests came from.

“The Laughing God. Of course, it would be. I should have known that.” Jessica muttered a few seconds later, thumping herself on the forehead.

“We should get him to stop by the Temple of the Creators when we’re down there. It’s a temple primarily to the Laughing God, the only one on the planet I know of, and its supposed to be really cool.” Kone suggested.

“Why would we go there? Agent we looking for an Elf?” Jessica asked, wondering if she missed the point of this mission.

“Who’s to say she isn’t waiting for him there? Cain met her before she went missing, some strange time effect so it is possible she might remember him and show up somewhere he is likely to be.”

Jessica’s nails were beginning to dry now, and Jin was starting to shine, so Kone went to soak in the herbal bath for a while. If she was going to meet new people, she would smell good doing it.

While they were finishing their rituals at the spa, Cain went upstairs to the smaller bath to get cleaned up while doing his best to wake up Luna gently.

Cyrene woke up if you stroked her back, but Luna just made happy noises in her sleep. She also didn’t wake up to the sound of conversation. The only thing that woke her up reliably was an attempt to remove her from around Cain’s arm, but that always made her panic and think she was falling.

“Silly girl, get up, or I’m getting in the bath while you’re still fully dressed.” Cain admonished his sleepy companion.

“Mm, bath. The lemon scent, please.” Luna mumbled, then returned to slumber.

“Fine, it’s been two hours since you left the tower; it’s time to get up.” Cain decided, sliding into the bath while carefully keeping Luna’s head above the water.

She seemed to enjoy the warm water and didn’t mind that her clothes were wet, but she did wake up a little, at least enough to open an eye and see what Cain was up to, then finally cooperate and grab a luffa to get herself scrubbed free of dirt from the tower.

Lamia don’t sweat, so Luna didn’t worry too much about bath time, but today she was dirty, and her hair was messy from all the exercise she got keeping track of the fights.

“Boss, are you in there? The girls say fifteen minutes until they’re ready.” Laura called from out in the hallway.

“Thanks. I’ll be there on time. I need to finish Luna’s scales, and we are good to go.” Cain called back, headed for the towel rack.

With everyone clean, polished, and happily smelling like the custom bath products from Long Fang Manor, the small group headed for the travel circle, in a bit of a rush to keep themselves on schedule after accounting for the time difference between locations.

It was almost dinner time on the farm, and the Echoes had gone all out today, celebrating a new Mythic food product. This one was not a fruit; they had managed to grow a Mythic Quality form of Corn. Even a few bites would sate the appetite, making it perfect for travel rations, and the taste remained that of regular sweet corn.

They hadn't had a chance to do a long-term test to see if there were side effects from eating such a small volume of food for an extended period, but the early trials showed a lot of promise.

At least they did after the first one, where the plant suddenly increased in volume ten times once eaten, causing intense stomach pains. The Echoes weren't counting that test.

"Everyone is so powerful here. The amount of mana in the air is incredible as well. Are you sure this is the same planet?" Jin whispered once they stepped through the travel circle and arrived at the farm.

"I am one hundred percent certain. I sailed here in person the first time, so I can guarantee that there were no magical transportation shenanigans involved.

This area used to be protected by a barrier that kept Mythic Beasts contained and that helped concentrate the mana in the air. We will be extra cautious while we travel so that nobody gets hurt." Cain assured her before turning to greet all the people who had seen them arrive.

The decorations around the travel circle have gotten even more elaborate since the last time he was here, and the scene was almost otherworldly, so Cain could understand Jin's question. The Druids had outdone themselves this time, and whoever had updated the stonework had excellent taste.

The group made their way down the walkway to where the staff was setting up for dinner, and everything came to a sudden halt as all the Bunnies all stopped to bow to Jessica simultaneously.

"Welcome, High Priestess. We hope you find our home to be pleasing." They welcomed her, making the Bunny smile at the warm welcome by so many of her people and, even better, fellow clerics of the Bunny God.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 534 534

While he was relaxing in the Manor, waiting for the others to get trained up enough that they could travel, and for the Lamia to hatch, Cain had prepared just the right spell for this situation. A modified version of [Warming Hug] at the Ancient Grade called [Comforting Touch]. With a single touch, while the spell was active, the recipient would

feel welcome, wanted, and cared for. the effect got stronger if the emotions were already present, and with prolonged contact.

As the Bunnies gathered around to greet the group, Cain activated the spell and reached out to gently pat heads wherever they came in reach. It was clearly working and the Bunnies looked overjoyed to see him, with many even stopping to give him a hug before going to visit their High Priestess, Jessica.

“Now that you all are here, let’s get some food. The fresher it is, the better, so take a seat wherever you like and we can get started.” The leader of the Bunnies declared, drawing Jessica away from the group to go sit with them over in the shade.

Cain wouldn’t escape that easily, everyone wanted to say hello, thank him for the place to stay, or another similar sentiment, so Cain picked a table that was easy to access, letting as many people as possible come up to greet him. Through it all, he kept the spell active, as it was effective even when shaking hands, and helped assure the nervous newer arrivals that everything here was indeed as pleasant as it seemed.

The flow of new arrivals had slowed, but not stopped. Now instead of people whose villages had been destroyed, leaving them homeless, there was a slow influx of people who had just arrived in this world. Wherever they found them, Cain’s people brought them to safety, and often that meant bringing them back to the Farm.

It no longer looked like much of a farm, more of a farming village, with fields slowly spreading out into the surrounding clearings and hundreds of people, but everyone still gathered in the original farmyard, which was now serving as the town square.

That was largely due to the fact that there was food here twice a day, and that the Echoes did a lot of their experimenting here as well, but it was relaxing to see everyone getting along.

Well, mostly. There were a few kids fighting, and one man clearly had a large black eye that didn’t seem to be made by a creature with claws, but for the most part, everyone seemed to be getting along.

The meal was as random as ever, served potluck style by the volunteers on Kitchen duty. That was a suggestion by the Bunnies, of all people. They believed that spontaneous meals were better for mental health than a meal plan that was refined and optimized for nutrition. So, every day, whoever was on duty just grabbed the ingredients they wanted to use and made a dish.

Sometimes it was enough for everyone, sometimes only those who showed up early or late got to try a particular dish, but there was always enough food, and the Bunnies insisted that was the intended result.

Today, they brought Cain and his group Cabbage rolls, with a side of pulled pork sandwiches, mashed potatoes, and Kimchi. Jin looked at it with some trepidation, unsure what was going on with the meal, and not sharing Cain's ability to read minds and find out the reason for the assortment.

"It's a potluck dinner. That's how they do it here. So you get a bit of everything." Cain whispered, and the now shiny dragonkin nodded.

"I like it. Usually, meals have a theme, but this is like an adventure on a plate." Jin responded with a smile, making the people around her laugh.

"I like that. Adventure on a plate. Someone write that down, and we can have a placard made for the buffet line." An older dwarf with a very familiar voice laughed, sitting down across from them with a plate overloaded with Cabbage rolls glued together by mashed potato. His plate was a small edible castle.

Cain looked up to see that their guest was Gramps, an old Dwarf from Graska, who took care of odd jobs for the younger smiths and helped manage the tavern.

"What brings you to a whole other Continent old man?" Cain asked with a smile, pulling out a flagon of Dwarven whiskey from his inventory to fill Gramps' mug.

"There was a communication issue. We got a double shipment of the same ore instead of two different types of it, so I came over to see what the problem was. Nothing major, they just checked off the wrong item on the list and filled an order twice, but here I am, so I get to try new things. There is some rice in the rolls, but they look pretty good, I think we might try serving them at the tavern one day." The old Dwarf answered with a grin.

"Just don't tell them that Cabbage is a vegetable. Call it a binder for the potato mortar and you could sell them hundreds of Cabbage Roll Castles a day, I'm certain of it." Kone giggled, admiring the craftsmanship that went into just making his dinner plate.

"They use a purple Cabbage here, and I don't think that we have that in the valley, so they would never know that we were just messing with them. I like it, good call." Gramps agreed, then watched with great interest as Luna circled her dinner plate, contemplating what she would do with a roll that was five times the diameter of her body. It was too big to swallow whole, but taking little bites just seemed like too much work.

She had considered making a castle as he had, but she simply didn't have enough cabbage around her single roll to make it worth it. Instead, she drew a two-handed sword from her inventory and cut the roll into bits, then used a small shovel and her potatoes to mix it into a slurry that she formed into bricks.

Once they were formed to her satisfaction, Luna grabbed one with two hands, tilted her head back, and swallowed it whole. She took a deep breath, then raised another brick

and pushed it in behind the first, moving the whole meal down one huge bite at a time, visibly expanding her body as the bricks were ingested.

“As you can see, we are still working on table manners, but Luna is a big fan of large bites, and not so fond of things like salads or soups.” Cain teased the now stuffed and groggy Lamia Progenitor, who gave him a horrified look at the word soup.

“Don’t even mention that evil concoction, I almost drowned,” Luna complained, pouting at Cain, while Kone and Gramps shared a confused look.

“Young Miss Luna here thought that a bowl of soup was a single bite meal, so she simply poured it in her mouth until her body was completely full and she couldn’t swallow anymore, making it hard to breathe,” Cain explained, causing the two to burst into laughter.

“Oh, the joys of parenthood. You have to teach them the most unexpected things.” Gramps agreed after a moment.

Not drowning yourself with mass consumption of soup might not be the usual thing that you have to teach a child, but it wasn’t out of the range of possibilities. Dwarven Children often did much the same thing with ale, trying to emulate their elders and drinking until they couldn’t swallow anymore, and ending up with a mouth and throat full of liquid and a need to breathe. The older dwarves viewed it as part of the learning experience of youth.

Luna was wrapped protectively around her last few bites of dinner when she fell asleep, her usual reaction to eating too much, but one that never failed to bring a smile to her companions’ faces.

“They are just so cute when they are little.” One of the Bunny Priestesses whispered to Cain, bringing around a round of Mythic fruit punch.

“They really are. Be sure to pour for the Dwarf as well, even if he thinks he’s too old for juice. Gramps, you will like this stuff, and it’s good for the old bones.” Cain replied with a wink at the Bunny to let her know that the old Dwarf didn’t know much about the fruit punch. Not much of it had made it to the Beginner’s Valley, and what did wasn’t enough to be served at the tavern where Gramps ate almost all his meals.

At first, he gave it a resigned look, thinking the youngsters underestimated his vitality, but after the flagon was drained, his eyes opened wide, staring at the Bunny with the jug.

“It’s good right? Made from real Mythic Quality fruits, grown right here on the farm and juiced fresh daily.” She giggled, then moved on to fill other cups.

"I think I might just have to start coming here myself to fill the orders for the forges. We don't use much of the high-quality stuff in the Valley, but in the Demon Capital they go through an awful lot of it, and need to pick up an order every few days." Gramps' logic was solid and inevitably led to him, the assigned Elder in charge of supplies, being here for meal times at least twice a week.

Luna woke up a little as the desserts were brought around, too full to be interested in the sugary treats, but she did make the time to stuff the last few bricks of her Cabbage roll in her mouth before falling asleep again to let her meal digest. Like so many times before, she was visibly growing, and Cain suspected that she had leveled up again, due to the excess mana of the Southern Continent on her Ancient Quality physique.

Cain himself had enjoyed the same rapid leveling effect, but he was much closer to his final level than she was, so Luna would be gaining experience at an incredible rate, especially as she shared Cain's experience bonus, being in a group with him and the others for the trip.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 535 535

"While Luna sleeps through her growth phase, why don't we explore the Farm a little? There are rooms in the main house for you all, though they might be cramped. From here you can also see the main barn, where the Echoes do most of their experimentation, as well as the entrance to the fruit tree groves.

As you can see, they are under guard, to prevent people from poaching the Mythic fruits. It's not a big concern, the people here are very good, but the fear of infiltration or wandering monsters coming into the orchards is an ongoing one, so the guards are up all the time.

Of particular interest to Jessica, the daycare is right there, near the edge of the main square. It also has a Temple to the Bunny Goddess, so you will find most of the clerics there. There is a market further toward the south end of the compound, past the houses, as well as a large area for travelers to camp.

When we first formed the Farm, most of the new arrivals were refugees who didn't know what they were doing or where they might be going, so keeping a large area for tents and transient visitors was more prudent than making a large number of Inns.

There is a school on the east side, between the Peach Orchards and the clearing for tents and visitors. We have been collecting spell books here, the same way as we do back in the Guild Houses. In fact, most of them started off as copies of the ones in the Guild House. We gained a lot of instructors due to cities being destroyed after the dungeons collapsed, and they have graciously agreed to take in the students and keep teaching them as much as possible." Cain described the layout of the small village to the others who had just arrived.

"You really are the friendly neighborhood Eldritch Horror aren't you? Running a fruit orchard and communal meals for everyone who comes to visit your home? It was the same in Long Fang Valley, though they said that things were like that even before you arrived, you just turned the communal gatherings into a more frequent event." Jin teased.

"This place is slowly getting covered in food plants too. Almost everything I see is edible, even the vines with the pretty pink flowers that are climbing up the houses will grow fruit in a few months." Jessica added.

"That was my idea. I told the Echoes how well it worked in the Valley, and they thought it would be a good attraction for more people to come to stay at the farm. Food can be scarce here in the south due to the dangerous monsters destroying fields." Kone pointed out.

It seemed quite safe to the others, but they were in town, surrounded by powerful people. There wasn't much to worry about right where they are, but out in the wilderness, Jin could see how this place could get very dangerous very quickly.

"It smells so good I could just sleep out here." Jessica agreed, and Cain heard a few of the locals chuckle at that.

"Bunnies never sleep alone. They're too cuddly by nature. So if they are new to town, they always go to the Church and sleep with the Clerics." The slender Plague Demon beside them informed her.

"Like sharing a room? Do they always have empty beds?" Jessica asked, confused.

"No, they have one really big room and the whole floor is a mattress. They just grab blankets and pillows and find somewhere to sleep. Usually on top of each other." Cain informed her, and the High Priestess blushed.

"It's not a mating ritual, it's just warm and safe. You will see, it's very comfortable." One of the Bunny Clerics informed her, looking to Cain for permission to pull her away.

"Go ahead. If you want something different, come to the Farmhouse and I will find you a bed. The rest of us won't be up for long, I'm planning to get a bit of an early start on the

day so that we can visit at least two Cities and see how they are doing." Cain informed her, then motioned for the others to show her their ways.

It wouldn't be too much different than she was used to, but the communal bedroom had started after the Dungeon collapsed, when the Bunnies were all worried about getting attacked and not being able to defend themselves.

The Farmhouse ended up not having any other tenants when they arrived, only a few puppets for maintenance since the Echoes preferred to stay in the barn all the time and not use the former living room turned meeting room on the main floor.

"Man, I should have brought Larkin with me. Now I will have to wash my own feet." Kone complained when they reached the bedrooms.

"Seriously? You make him wash your feet every night?" Jin asked, somewhere between impressed and disturbed.

"It was a stupid bet. I told him that if he managed to make his first advancement one week that I would physically touch him once a day. It started out with me stepping on him, but he liked that too much, so it turned into having him wash my feet before bed. To be honest, I kind of got used to it." Kone shrugged.

[Someone needs to go and hold an intervention for Larkin. That poor soul is on the brink of oblivion and he doesn't even realize it. These days away might be the last chance to save his status as a human being. Well, he's technically Spirit Folk, but you get my point.] Cain instructed his Companions, who all laughed in his mind after seeing the conversation that he had just held with Kone.

[I think it's already too late for him. But we will try.] Vala agreed, taking her usual role of disciplinarian in the group.

"I can send a puppet up to do it for you?" Cain joked, making Kone stick out her tongue at him.

"No, that's fine. I just miss my pet simp. I know you get the same way when you're away from the others. That's why you always carry at least one with you." She replied, making Jin giggle.

"You guys really are close friends, did you spend a lot of time together at lower levels, or did you just hit it off right away?" The Dragonkin asked.

"Why don't we share a room tonight and I will tell you all about it? Cain will wake us up for breakfast, I'm sure. If not, the Echoes will wake me up before the meal is served. The watchers say that they never miss the opportunity to try out their concoctions on new people." Kone suggested, wrapping an arm around Jin.

Kone had grown a lot in the past half a year, and now she was only slightly shorter than the slender Dragonkin, and as tall as most full-grown human women, though still very short and clearly developing as a Spirit Folk woman.

That was part of the reason that Cain was putting effort into trying to get Larkin back on the right path. They were both still young, so there was a future ahead of him if he didn't fall into the life of a foot washing simp.

Those were words Cain never thought would pass through his mind. At least not in that particular order.

Once they were in the master bedroom, Cain tried to move Luna to the smaller bed on the nightstand that was favored by the smaller species, like Laura in Pixie form, but she just kept returning to his arm without waking up.

It really wasn't worth the fight, so Cain just fell asleep, doing his best not to accidentally squish her.

By the time he woke up, her growth phase was done, and Luna was starting to come around again. She was now almost a meter long and getting a good deal thicker than she was. Now, she wasn't so much a bracelet on Cain's arm as a sleeve, taking up most of his forearm with her coils. If she kept growing at this rate, Cain would have to rearrange her sooner or later, maybe make her into a loose-fitting necklace or something.

The thought of actually making her travel on her own, or using a summon to carry her never occurred to him. Cain had gotten far too used to wearing a Lamia everywhere he went. It was like the summons he Merged with, just another voice for him to chat with while he was doing other things.

"I'm getting pretty big. It's a good thing that equipped gear automatically fits itself to the wearer, or I would be in real trouble." Luna noted, checking out her armor as she stretched and checked over her rapidly growing body.

"True, you would wake up naked at least once a week if the armor didn't adjust for you. But you will be grown enough soon that you will actually be able to fight against some opponents with your own body. I think one more month at this rate and you will be big enough to fight against Goblin-sized enemies on equal ground, without having to stretch upward from your natural stance." Cain informed her, while Luna looked thoughtful.

"Good point. I will have to keep up with my combat drills so that I can fight alongside my summons. I heard that you do that as well."

Cain nodded his agreement. "You will get to see that soon enough. I'm sure that something will happen during our journey, but first, we should get a meal in and see

what the Echoes have planned for the day. If it sounds fun, we can delay leaving until tomorrow."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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Both Kone and Jin needed to be awoken the next morning, having spent half the night telling stories of adventures past. With Jin to talk to, Kone wasn't the least bit lonely, and the two had already made plans to spend more time together once they were finished with whatever Cain had planned for today.

Cain's plan for the day was a simple one, he only wanted to go to the next city and see how the situation was there, and ask if anything needed to be done with the Merchant Hunters that they had been arranging.

From what he heard on the farm, the system was working well, but working well for the hunters and working well for the people that they were serving weren't always going to be the same thing, so it was best to ask them both.

The city they were going to be visiting was Guarded by a friend, Prana, a plant-type Demon. It was supposed to be one of the most stable of the smaller cities in the region, making it the best place to start, with a group that wasn't really used to how brutal and cruel the world could be.

Jessica was extra lively this morning, having spent the night in the temple with the other Bunny Clerics, and she was already done breakfast by the time the others got downstairs to eat.

"That sleeping arrangement is amazing. I don't know how we didn't think of that earlier. Everyone who needs privacy can use the rooms, while the rest of the group sleeps in the cuddle room. Being together like that increases the rate of both Mana and Divine energy regeneration, and I could actually feel the power building up in me overnight.

If I slept there every night, I bet I could catch up to everyone else's level in only a few weeks. I don't know if it would stop there, but for sure I could catch up to them." Jessica rambled by way of greeting.

Cain laughed and patted her head. "I told you that you would like it here. We have some places to go, and the quest wants everyone to come along, so you might miss a few

days' sleep but we will come back every few days to check on the Farm and grab more supplies."

"A few days a week is better than zero days a week. Have you tried the strawberries, the Clerics all love them?" Jessica giggled.

"They are best served in small doses." Cain agreed, giving the Bunny a wink. Of course, the Bunny God would approve of aphrodisiac fruit, it was almost perfectly designed for her followers.

A few locals came to say hello while they ate, but the one of most interest was a group that had an order of fruit juices to go to Prana.

"Why don't you travel with us? I know you usually travel on foot, so you can hunt along the way, and that's fine by us. Though I might create a few mounts for the group, just for convenience." Cain suggested.

Mythic Awakened hunters past their second advancement were faster than most creatures that people used for mounts, so they preferred to walk, but in the right situation, having a few beasts of burden along was actually a hunting tactic.

"Can you call some of the large Elk with the water attribute? The local Panthers love the smell of them, and we often use a piece of their meat for bait. You could use them as mounts and we can hunt everything that comes for them." One of the group members suggested with a big smile on her pale Wrath Demon face.

"That's not a bad idea. a small herd of Elk moving along the road would attract a lot of predators. I know of a weaker version as well. I can summon us some stronger mounts, and then surround them with weaker versions that would be more vulnerable to attack, so they don't scare away the beasts." Cain agreed.

"I knew there was a reason everyone followed you. That's a genius idea." The hunters answered with a smile, thinking of all the likely gains they would make today with live bait.

The area they were walking through was pretty heavily hunted, so some days they wouldn't see anything at all, despite the overnight arrivals. Anything they could do to get a large animal for meat would help buffer their income from the trade goods that they carried.

Unlike Pirates, or regular merchants, the Hunters weren't too worried about death, so the worries about losing trade goods if someone was killed in an attack were minimal. They loaded up their inventory to travel between cities, letting them move easily and without hindrance when it was time to go after a Mythic Beast.

"If everyone is ready, we can head out right away," Cain said, standing up from the table.

The hunters joined him without hesitation, and Jin grabbed Jessica, who was looking longingly at the temple.

"It will only be a couple of days and you can come back to relax. We just need to work on the quest with the Guild Master for a little while. Plus, there should be people in the city who are in need of a priestess, right? You can't all hide in one spot forever." The Dragonkin knew just the right weak spots to target to get the Bunny moving, and that was the end of her objections.

First up, Cain called a group of eight Elk, which all arrived at Mythic Quality, then he looked down at Luna, who was wrapped around his arm.

"Now, call for the same thing that I did. They should be Greater Golem quality summons. You can have them surround this group, or wander through the woods near us, just as long as they don't get too far away. Those ones will be the bait to try to attract Mythic Beasts for the Hunters, while these ones are our mounts for the day.

They're herbivores, so they won't scare anything that we come across, and they will help hide our scents as well."

Luna focused a little and summoned a dozen level 116 Elk with [Summon Greater Golem].

"You're right, they do smell tasty. Can you eat summons?" Luna asked hopefully.

"Unfortunately no. If you kill them they disappear, and if you cut chunks off them they will vanish after only a few minutes, so they won't work for food." Cain explained.

"That's depressing, but if you have these as a summon, that means you have seen the real thing, so they must be something that you can find and eat." The Lamia realized, getting excited about the prospect of new flavors of meat for dinner.

"They don't taste as good as you might hope. But the beasts that we are going to try to lure with them do. Just wait, when we get there tonight, we will have a proper feast. Even our resident Bunny won't be disappointed. The city Guardian is a Druid-type demon, and she has some great spells for creating food.

That's why they made her guardian in the first place, they were starving and she could not only defend the city but create enough food for them to get by without too many problems. She should have some fine snacks and salads suitable for a Bunny." The leader of the Hunter team assured them.

Getting out of town took a bit of effort, since they were all popular people, and leaving during the after-breakfast rush meant running into almost everyone they knew. But after that, their herd of Elk made good time down the road.

They weren't particularly quiet, and Luna let hers frolic in the trees, making even more noise and spreading their scent for anything around to notice.

It wasn't paying off though, and even by the time they stopped for lunch, they still hadn't seen a single hostile creature.

"Maybe the early morning hunters already cleared everything near the road? There isn't any sort of set route or schedule, so you never really know." The team leader said hopefully.

"I won't be mad if there aren't any fights on the journey. But, I do understand that this is how you make a living. You can take another route if we're not helping?" Jessica told him with a sigh.

"No, we also need to get to the city and drop off these potion materials and some other items. The hunting is just a side deal to make a few extra gold coins. Don't feel bad on our behalf." The team's cleric told her, giving Jessica a hug.

After a full day and night, Jessica was starting to get used to the fact that the people here were very physical. The residents of Long Fang Valley always wanted to pat bunny heads for luck, but the people of the Southern Continent were a hugging culture. It wasn't just the Bunnies either. Nobody was exempt, even Cain got random hugs from people who came to say hello to him.

Jessica was intrigued by cultural differences since her arrival, and this was a notable one that she thought deserved more study. Of all the forms of greeting, hugs were far from the most efficient, and they were affectionate, but not too much, so the reason for their choice wasn't entirely clear to the Bunny Cleric yet.

The hugs actually served a double purpose on this Continent. They greeted people in a friendly way, but they also gave both parties a chance to discretely pass messages, speak privately, or check for hidden weapons on the other person. Hugs were simply the most versatile greeting of them all, and the ever-practical Southerners had adopted them as an all-purpose greeting in dozens of different styles for different levels of interaction that Jessica would soon begin to learn.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 537 537 Time To Shine

“Finally, I hear something coming our way.” The lead hunter whispered, moving into position to intercept the spot they expected the beast to attack the Elk from.

With Luna’s lower-level summons on the outer edge of their group, they looked like a very easy target to the juvenile Purple Leopard, and it began charging its lightning attack when it was fifty meters away.

Their standard attack was to strike at the weakest with their lightning then retreat, letting the target panic and separate from the wounded member, then the Leopard would strike and finish the target off. Once it was incapacitated, the big cats would drag it away and up into a tree, where most things couldn’t chase them, so they could eat in comfort.

The hunters knew this very well, so they knew that the best moment to attack was the first moment that the Leopard was in sight.

The juvenile hadn’t been in this world long and hadn’t experienced human interaction before, so it didn’t understand the danger that it was in until a moment too late.

With a flash of purple fur and white electricity, it struck the closest Elk but instead met a solid water barrier. The larger Elk that Cain had summoned called for a Water Barrier to protect their companions, causing the Leopard to fall short of the target, where it was quickly surrounded by Hunters, preventing its escape.

With the quick flash of a sword, the beat was dead and the Hunters celebrated their first kill of the day. It wasn’t a big animal, but the small ones were usually more tender, and the sort of meal that they would save for themselves, selling only the pelt and bones to the shops that wanted them.

Both were high-quality Lightning Element materials for crafting, so they would always sell, no matter the state of the animal that they came from, but the meat was in much lower demand.

“Watch how much you feed Luna. She will gorge herself until she falls unconscious, and we still need her awake to direct her summons.” Cain told the hunters, while Luna gave him an entirely unjustified look of great offense.

“That might be true, but you don’t have to put it like that. I do have some self-control.” The Lamia complained.

Cain thought about that for a moment and found that there was no evidence at all that it was true, but if she was trying, that was all that could be expected of her.

"You're getting better every day. Look at you now, you've been awake for almost four straight hours now." He told her instead.

"See? I'm doing great. But I could really use a nap. And a snack. What do we have?" Luna asked.

"Try these jerky cubes. They are bite-sized and should be slow to digest, so you won't get hungry as fast." Cain suggested, giving her four small squares of meat.

Luna looked disappointed at the amount of food Cain produced, but after some mental calculation, she determined that when she woke up it should be meal time again, so this would be enough to help her sleep.

These dried cubes of meat were absolutely delicious, and Luna sighed in contentment, moving up Cain's arm to drape herself around his neck while she slept.

In this position, she was looking the same way that he was, and while loosely looped like a necklace, she was in no danger of falling off. It also didn't swing and bounce as much as his arm did, which made it a more comfortable perch. She only wished she had thought of this spot earlier.

"Shouldn't you have her dismiss the summons before she sleeps?" The hunters asked hesitantly.

"Nah, it's fine. They have their instructions to follow the group, and that won't change until we get to town, so they can function as bait even without her intervention. It's only when they need to take specific actions that you need to pay really close attention to the summons. Unless they're really dumb or something." Kone shrugged.

The Elk were fairly smart, as animals went, so they understood their role, and they understood that the Hunters would kill anything that attacked them, so they were happy to just follow along and sample random plants as they walked.

They were almost to the town when a ring of metal on stone caught everyone's attention. Going by the sound, either two groups were fighting ahead of them, or a stone-type beast was being attacked. Neither was a great option since they didn't want to get in the middle of someone else's problems unless it was an attack on the city itself.

"Luna, wake up and dismiss the Elk. There is something strange going on up ahead." Cain whispered, tickling the sleeping Lamia.

The Elk vanished in an instant, and Luna was wide awake, ready for whatever challenges lay ahead, not quite grasping the concept of Mythic Awakened. She was born that way, so she didn't really take damage from anything that wasn't, but most Mythic beasts and Transfers were much higher level than she was, and Luna didn't have a Mythic Skill that she could grant to her summons, only her own venom.

The group crept closer, sneaking up on the noise until finally coherent voices could be heard.

“Give up the goods, you worthless hunters. Lord Morgeth will be here soon, and your weakling Farm won’t be able to save you. Play nice and we will let you keep your lives.” The voice demanded.

“Oh, I do love it when they push their luck. Who knew that the group from the Center of the continent had pushed this far north already? I do believe that they need a little wake-up call.” Cain whispered, then walked straight out onto the road where the fight was happening.

“Pardon me, but I do believe you are harassing my Hunters. You might not be aware, but that is a serious social Faux Pas in these parts.” Cain informed them, making the soldiers in black dragon scale armor sneer at him.

“And just who do you think you are? The King of the world?” The Captain of the squad laughed, idly swinging his axe in circles as he taunted Cain.

“That’s not a bad idea. Maybe I should turn that overgrown toddler Morgeth into one of my Puppets and declare myself King of the Continent.” Cain agreed with a nod.

Cain saw the moment that the mind control spell that had been put on the soldiers activated. They were forced to take action if anyone insulted the Demon Morgeth. Not that they wouldn’t have done it anyhow, as these were true zealots, but the option not to was never available to them.

“Oath Breakers, I do believe that these demons need an attitude adjustment.” Cain sighed, calling for a full dozen of them at Mythic Quality while drawing his spear and scimitar.

The pale violet demons were on the soldiers in an instant, using their movement ability to chop into the Soldiers with glee. Cain hadn’t called on them in a while, but they still remembered how much fun they used to have together. The Oath Breakers were eager to please, and that meant turning these upstart soldiers into spare parts for the Blacksmiths.

“Hold on tight, Luna. I will let you watch how fellow multi-armed demons fight, while I deal with that mouthy Captain.” Cain’s directions were loud enough that the entire force of soldiers could hear him, but they were fighting one on one with the Demons, and they were hard pressed just to stay alive, so there was nothing that they could do to stop Cain.

The Captain charged at Cain with his axe low, swinging upward in an attempt to split Cain in half, but Cain only parried with his scimitar and used the force to throw himself in the air, where he could strike downward with his spear.

As Cain flew up, he shifted into his smaller Ancient form, gaining wings that would grant him sufficient mobility to fight in the air, as well as an extra bit of durability and better eyesight.

The spear glanced off the soldier's pauldron as he rolled away from the vicious strike, then sparks flew as the ax and scimitar met, again and again, giving him time to fight back to his feet.

With Cain engaging the Captain, that left one extra Oath Breaker, and none of the soldiers could deal with a two-on-one fight for more than a few seconds. They were quickly falling, but the Captain was too busy to have noticed, fully engaged in not getting split in half by Cain's blades.

"Did you get to see how they fought?" Cain asked Luna, knocking the Captain's legs out from under him and pinning him to the ground with his spear.

"I think so. They are really fast and prefer their claws, but I think I got a general idea." Luna agreed.

"Excellent. Oath Breakers, dismember the others, I think we need to ask this one a few important questions about their boss's intentions for the cities under our protection." Cain ordered.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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"Please, let me live and I will tell you anything that you want." The Captain begged, wincing as the point of Cain's spear dug into his chest.

"How about I don't, and you still tell me everything you know?" Cain offered, spearing through his heart.

The Captain was dead in an instant, and Cain resurrected him as a Puppet using [Living Doll]. A very shocked Puppet that distinctly recalled being murdered just a second earlier.

"Now, kindly tell me what this Lord of yours plans to do with the city that is under our protection," Cain demanded.

"It is near the borders of our territory, Lord Morgeth intends to take over the Continent, so it is only natural that he would enter and kill anyone who opposed him, then take over." The Captain replied, looking horrified at his fate.

"What makes him think that he could possibly manage that?" Cain asked.

"His magic. He is Spirit Awakened, and his magic lets him force obedience on his subordinates. Even if we wanted to, we couldn't hurt him, due to the damage reduction. So he takes over every city he reaches and enslaves the population to provide for him." The Captain intoned, all the hope leaving both his voice and his eyes.

"Now that is interesting. How long until he gets here?"

The former Captain shrugged. "A month, maybe more? He has a number of other towns to pacify first, and it takes time for him to place control spells on everyone who rebels but is too valuable to kill off immediately."

The fact that he couldn't do large groups at once was a good thing. If he could just walk into the city square and mind control everyone so that they couldn't betray him it would be a huge hassle. Or perhaps he could, but it was limited by the level of his target? Cain's [Mental Domination] was like that, it took more effort for stronger targets. Even though it was a Spirit Awakened ability, Morgeth's ability seemed to be long-term, so there were bound to be limitations.

"How many other groups like yours are in the area?" Cain demanded.

"Four for this city, and five for the others in the region. Morgeth likes it when the people are already afraid and ready to submit when he shows up." The Captain explained.

"That is manageable. If it's only fifty or sixty Mythic Awakened soldiers at a time, I can kill them easily enough and ruin Morgeth's scouting abilities. That might draw him out and we can deal with him on the way to complete our Quest." Cain decided.

Kone nodded in agreement, while Jin looked surprised and Jessica was understandably upset. The Bunny was against killing sentient beings at all, much less in a premeditated and methodical manner.

"If it helps, think of it as saving the thousands that their boss would kill when he took over their cities," Kone whispered to the Bunny, loud enough for the Captain to hear and look down in embarrassment.

They indeed had to kill large portions of the population in many cities to keep them from rebelling, but Morgeth didn't care. He wanted power, no more no less. How many actual people were still alive and under his control when he took over the continent was irrelevant to him.

[Does that mean we get to go hunting the hunters? Just a little bit? We promise they will all be Morgeth's people, and not yours. The tokens that the farm gives out make the friendly ones easy to spot.] The Oath Breakers implored Cain.

That solved a lot of his problems without any hassle. If Jessica didn't know that the scouts were all dead already, there was no reason for her to get upset, and she wouldn't have had to watch the battles.

[Will you lot be alright on your own? I can summon some Mythic Plague Mothers to assist you if you need them. On their own, they can call a rather formidable army.] Cain suggested.

[We outnumber the groups. If we take them one group at a time, they won't even know they're under attack before they die.] The utter lack of concern in the Oath Breaker's voice convinced Cain that they could get the job done well enough that he wouldn't have to give them any extra assistance.

But, after a moment of consideration, Cain shifted into his Demon Progenitor form and used [Ancient Resistance] to triple the number of Oath Breakers, ordering them to go out in three separate groups for efficiency.

[As we move between cities, range about in front of us. If you see any more of Morgeth's people harassing the locals, eliminate them. If things get bad, just ask and I will activate [Ancient Wisdom] to give you all an additional spell ability.] Cain ordered them.

[If you do have to give us an additional ability, may I recommend Dominion?] The Oath Breakers all suggested at once.

[You don't want another Mythic spell?] Cain asked.

[Nope. Our area damage is at one hundred percent. If we could extend that to say one single kilometer, a simple assassination would turn into a massacre.] The pure joy in their voices was contagious, and Cain was tempted to just give it to them right away, but the range was already forty meters, so they would hit most of the group with their area damage anyhow.

[No, wait. Give us all [Swallow], that vortex that Moana has. Sucking an entire party into the void would be really funny.] One of the Oath Breakers suggested.

Swallow dealt crushing damage, then relocated the target somewhere that wasn't entirely clear to Cain, since he had never thought to question where the remains were ending up. Moana ate most of them since a Leviathan needed a large amount of nutrition, but that wasn't the only possible target.

[Let's wait until you need a little extra firepower. Ancient Wisdom affects my entire party as well as my summons, so whatever you guys get, the others will too. Setting Luna loose with a load of summons that can use Swallow might be chaos once she realizes what she can do, and I would never hear the end of it when she finds out that she can give everything Dragon Breath. Everyone loves Dragon Breath.] Cain told them off and the Oath Breakers gave up on coercion and headed out to hunt.

There were four groups left in the area and three groups of them, so the challenge was on to see who could find two groups first and take the lead in their impromptu competition.

The Oath Breakers Obsession was combat, so not competing in this situation was never an option. Cain would have had a better chance at convincing the Echoes or Carnage to not compete with each other than the Oath Breakers.

"What did you tell all those demons before you sent them away?" The lead hunter asked, confused about what happened during Cain's mental conversation with the Oath Breakers.

"I sent them out to scout for Morgeth's forces so that we don't run into unexpected trouble. If they do their job as well as usual we should be able to travel in relative safety. There might still be monster attacks though if we call back the Elk when we leave town.

The hunters accepted that easily enough, but Jessica was giving Cain a suspicious look. She had seen what those demons could do to a well-trained soldier, so sending three dozen of them out was more than a little suspicious to her, assuming that they were only out to scout the area.

"Now for you. You are going to come with us, and I will turn you over to the local authorities, then release you from my control. You will be free not only of my control but the spell that Morgeth put on you." Cain explained to the Captain.

"His spell should transcend death, and remain on the body for fifteen minutes, too long to wait for it to wear off." The Captain pointed out.

"Your body is in the Soul Gem here in my hand. That body is a Puppet. At least for now, it is. Once I release you, it will be a living body, but not your original one. I will hold on to the gem for now, and if you misbehave, I will crush it and free your soul from the puppet body. Understood?" Cain asked with a malicious smile.

"Yes sir, I understand. I won't give them any trouble." The Captain responded instantly, resigned to his fate.

What he didn't know was that when Cain released him, he would reset to level one, and have to start his training all over, assuming that they ever let him out of prison as a free person.

Cain wouldn't interfere in their process, whatever it might be, but they deserved to at least get to interrogate the lone survivor of the scouts that were sent to cut off their supply lines and demoralize their citizens.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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They were too close to the city now to bother calling for another batch of Summons to serve as bait. The local farmers and guardsmen would have cleared out anything that had spawned much closer to town than this.

So, the newly expanded group walked toward the outlying farms, greeting the few people that they met. The hunters that they rescued had already passed this way as Cain was interrogating their prisoner, and Cain could hear the Guard getting ready to mobilize in the distance.

Cain only had one person on his friend list who was guaranteed to be in town, so he messaged her before the Guards could be sent out into the woods, wasting their time looking for an enemy that was already dead.

[Prana, it is Cain. We took care of the raiding party. I have one prisoner for you, and he has been pretty much neutralized, the others are not resurrectable.]

[Guild Master? Wow, I didn't expect you to be here. Thank you. What is the special occasion?] The Demonized Dryad asked.

[We are on a quest to find a Librarian with a collection of ancient books, but we ran across a small issue in the meantime that the local leaders should be made aware of. Can you organize them for when we arrive? I've got a small party, plus a group of Merchant Hunters from the Farm and one prisoner with me.]

[No problem. Come to the Tree House and I will have tea on.] Prana answered, making things easy for Cain.

The city looked like it was in better shape than the last time Cain was here. Not only was it not about to be overrun by Mythic Beasts, but they had renovated the walls and some of the buildings that Cain could see. The renewal of trade must have been good for them.

"Guild Master Cain! Welcome. We heard about your heroics in rescuing the merchants with our shipment of Juice and new weapons. Thank you so much, we will be forever grateful." The gate guard welcomed them, waving the group around the lineup of people returning to the city from the nearby farms for the evening.

"What are we, chopped liver? Take note ladies, no matter if you are present or not, somehow he always gets the credit for every success." Kone joked, making the Guards laugh.

"It's the giant demons. They are the part that everyone remembers about the battle. If you can summon something equally impressive to fight, you might be able to steal his thunder." The Guard agreed.

Kone could actually do that, in the form of the Snapping Turtle Kin, but it was obvious that a Guard on the Southern Continent wouldn't know who she was. Luna on the other hand was taking intense mental notes of this new information.

"One question. You can call Thunder? How do you steal Thunder?" The diminutive Lamia asked.

"I can actually make Thunder, but that's not what the expression means. It means that if you do most of the work in the battle, you can get the glory, instead of the demons, which get everyone's attention and make them think of me." Cain explained.

"But you and I both know the same creatures to summon, and you know way more of them than I do. This is a total ripoff. I demand compensation." Luna insisted while Cain stroked her back to calm her down.

"Fine, here is a piece of dried Mythic Peach," Cain told her, handing over the small bit of food.

Luna cheered, then dropped the chunk of fruit the size of her head directly into her mouth, shocking the people who were watching. It was one thing to know that Lamia could swallow large objects, but most of them spent large amounts of time learning to fit in, so actually seeing it in action was a rare thing.

There was one other Lamia in the crowd, who had snuck forward to see the Lamia Progenitor that her senses had detected. She hadn't expected it to be a small child, and the woman was utterly entranced by Luna the moment that she saw her, looped around Cain's neck.

She was so distracted that she didn't even notice the looks that she was getting from the men in the crowd. She was slightly larger than Cyrene, with a humanoid torso larger than the average elven woman, but smaller than most humans, and most of the men seemed to be trying to understand how her physiology worked to allow her to swallow something the size of her head.

Luna noticed her attention and waved happily, then pulled a small piece of fruit out of her own inventory and threw it at the other Lamia, thinking that it was the fruit that the woman had been interested in. She caught it in her mouth, and though the piece was smaller than the end of her finger when the healing factor took effect her eyes opened in shock.

"Thank you, Young Miss. What can we call you?" The Lamia asked Luna.

"I am Luna, Cain's Daughter, but most people just call me Miss Luna. Aren't sour fruits good? They coat them in sugar when they dry them, so they are both sour and sweet at the same time. The Echoes have gotten really good at food." Luna informed her with a smile.

"So I have heard. I am not much of a traveler, so I haven't ever gone to the Farm." The Lamia answered with a smile.

By her brightly colored and low-cut dress, it was clear that she was a local courtesan, but Luna had no idea what that meant, so to her everyone was just another person, and they all got ranked on how interesting they were. To the locals, it was a sign that Cain had been raising her to treat everyone equally, regardless of station, and the young Demon was creating a very good first impression.

Slowly, they made their way to the house built into a tree that Prana had inherited when she moved here, next to the community garden, which was now thriving and well maintained, with a pair of city guards in place to see that nothing happened to it.

"It's good to see you. Everyone important is already here. I take it this news is important for you to request a meeting the moment you arrive?" Prana greeted them.

"You could say that. The nuisance that has been expanding in the center of the Southern Continent has sent groups of scouts out to harass and attack merchants and travelers around the cities in the area. This one here was the Captain of one of their squads, and he has filled us in on the details.

The forces of the Demon Morgeth are attacking a whole group of cities in the area as an extension of their desire to control the entire continent, capturing and enslaving them, using a Spirit Awakened Mind Control ability." Cain explained.

"And he just willingly told you this, despite being mind controlled?" One of the elders asked skeptically.

"Oh, not at all. Why don't you tell them what I have done, Captain?" Cain replied, making the Puppet glare at him. But he couldn't resist for long, Cain's will on a Puppet was absolute.

"We lost the battle and this man killed me with a spear through the heart. Then he trapped my body in a Soul Crystal and trapped me in this puppet body. Until he frees me or kills me I am a slave to his will." The Captain snarled.

"As you can see, he's not really housebroken. I will free him in a few minutes, so you can do what you wish with the leader of a bandit group that was attacking merchants." Cain assured the elders.

"I am not a bandit, I am a soldier." The Captain countered.

"Has anyone here recognized the nation or rightful rule of the Demon Morgeth?" Cain asked and the assembled locals shook their heads.

"He is an invader, taking cities by force." The Mayor confirmed.

"Therefore, his warriors aren't soldiers but bandits. So, you are a bandit Captain, and the city has a fine legal process about how bandits are dealt with." Cain continued, satisfied that almost everyone agreed with his logic.

Luna and Jin both looked particularly impressed, while Jessica seemed shocked that Cain wasn't going to kill him and was instead turning him over to local authorities for trial and what she could only assume would be imprisonment.

"What is the punishment for being a bandit?" Jessica asked to set her mind at ease.

"Ten lashes daily and ten years of hard labor." The mayor told her with a grim smile. Most bandits didn't survive the punishment, choosing to end their own lives, though the city did feed them and give them a nice dry prison cell to sleep in.

"That's good news then. Transfers live a long time, so ten years should go fairly quickly, and you can be a productive member of society again." The Bunny God High Priestess declared with a smile, deliberately ignoring the man's anguish at the impending punishment.

"You will be happy to know that with my skills we don't even need to use a leather whip for the daily lashes, I can create an all-natural, plant-based version," Prana told the happy Bunny.

That would be the [Crushing Tentacles] Mythic Grade spell, modified by her class to create vines, but it wasn't really a lie, they were plant-based.

"I will let you get the answers out of him on your own. Let me know if you need assistance and I can compel answers from him." Cain declared, then released the Puppet from his control, resetting him to level one.

The Captain looked shocked for a moment, then collapsed with a wail of anguish when he realized what Cain had done.

"Give it back. You have to give it back, it is too cruel to take my levels away. What sort of monstrous ability do you even have? Mercy, I beg you, mercy." The Captain wailed until the Mayor forcefully silenced him with a spell.

"So that's why you weren't worried about him overpowering us. He doesn't even have the mana to use any truly dangerous spells, assuming that he kept them at all, and his physical stats are that of any other level one transfer."

Cain nodded toward the Captain, who was silently sobbing. "He will still have anything he learned from a book, so he will be Mythic Awakened once he can use that ability again, but his class skills will start over at level one and his previous classes are lost. Just like a lucky Transfer who randomly rolled, he will be starting at level one with a Second Advancement class."

Some of the elders actually looked envious at that, but starting over at level one was a high price to pay for the chance to start over with their strongest class.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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[We found all four teams and we have a lot of prisoners.] The Oath Breakers informed Cain just after he turned over the Captain.

[Why did you take them as prisoners?] Cain asked, confused.

[Most of them had been forcibly awakened, they had one mythic skill, and it was terrible. We might be demons, but it was just too pathetic of a battle.] The Oath Breaker clarified.

[Fine, terrorize them for a little bit and bring them back here. The locals can deal with them, or I can reset them to level one.] Cain agreed, thinking of the amount of work that it would be to kill and revive that many people.

It was mana intensive as well, so he wasn't sure if he could do them all in one go, or if he would need to wait on mana regeneration. That could be good entertainment for the ones that were still alive, but if the Oath Breakers were right, he might not need to go that far.

Instead, Cain sent a thought through the mental link for suggestions.

[Any ideas on how to deal with these idiots without killing them all?]

[Summon a Record Keeper to cleanse them of curses, and then put a Death Hex on them, so they get reset to level one if they betray you. Killing is easy to resurrect, but the chances that someone can stop the hex from stripping their system advancement from them is pretty low.] Victor, the Echo, suggested.

[Vic always has good ideas. I was thinking mind break them and just leave them a slobbering mess.] Nemu suggested.

[That's always an option as well. You could bring them here for us to experiment on. We are always short on research materials.] Lou, the second Echo agreed.

That wasn't much less cruel than mass murder, so Cain would skip that option for now and try the Hax first. It was a Mythic Spell, one of the ones he hadn't learned from his [Spell Crafting] book yet, but he had seen the description as he was scanning through.

"My summons are bringing a lot of prisoners back to the city, and I am going to set some conditions on them so that they don't cause any more trouble. The group this Captain was leading was one of five in the area, and we will keep hunting for more as we travel, since he so kindly told us that his former boss was targeting every city in the area, and they are all our allies." Cain informed the Elders and Prana.

"Five groups for one city? They really must have wanted us to be desperate before the boss showed up. Are you sure it's not a trap?" One of the Elders asked, making Kone smirk and Cain give him a small smile.

The leader of the hunter team that accompanied Cain to the City shook his head before replying. "If it's those same demons, it's not a concern. They are all Mythic Demons, and insanely fast. This group didn't even have a proper chance to react before they were dead and dismembered. The whole fight was under a minute, and I'm not sure that the summoned Demons even took damage." He explained.

The Elder frowned at that description. "Don't you think that it's a bit unethical to summon Demons and bind them to your will?"

That one made most of the room actually laugh out loud.

"Ethics aren't really a concern. The Oath Breakers are more than happy to help. In fact, going hunting was their own idea. I was originally only going to have them keep the group safe while we traveled, but they are an enthusiastic lot, especially when there is a chance to compete with each other." Cain explained.

The Elder looked confused now, his deep red eyebrows pulling together on his ash-gray face as he thought about what Cain had told him.

"Oath Breaker is an unwelcome visitor to most Demon communities, but you speak as if there is more than one of him among your summons."

"Thirty-Six copies of Oath Breaker all at Mythic Quality is what I sent out today. As a general rule, that should be enough to take out three scout units at once, but they managed to find and capture a fourth squad as well tonight."

That made the old demon turn a bit pale in shock, but he recovered quickly. Centuries of experience as a political leader were enough to teach a man to recover from almost any sort of shocking news.

"They are at the gates now. It seems that they took the entire group alive. We should also get moving to claim the prisoners before they kill them. Oath Breaker is using their area damage effect to torture them all at the same time, and they are getting low on health." Prana told the group after receiving word of the new arrivals from a panicked gate guard.

The Oath Breakers' method of compliance was to simply claw one of the prisoners for every minor and imagined slight disobedience, spreading the pain and damage through the group. It was proving to be very effective, and the scouts were quite meek when the Elders and Cain's group arrived at the gate.

Every single prisoner had the same curse on them when Cain checked them, so he called Record Keeper into [Merger] since the Magical Demon was nearly the only being he knew that could dispel almost anything.

[Can you take care of the curse that Morgeth has placed on all of these scouts? After that, I will replace it with Death Hex, but modified to reset their system if they disobey. Getting verbal agreement from them should be enough to activate the modified Hex.] Cain told Record Keeper, getting him up to speed on the situation.

[That's not a problem, but it would be a pain to explain the process to you. If you let me out I can do it in a second.] Record Keeper agreed, and Cain released him from [Merger]

That was understandably shocking to everyone in the area, and the guards all had their weapons out the second that the Demon appeared.

"Sorry, calm down, he's with me. He is going to remove the spell that Morgeth put on the scouts so that they can properly repent for their actions. These ones didn't actually attack anyone as far as I know, if you don't count the demons I sent to capture them, I don't see why they couldn't be rehabilitated." Cain called so everyone in the area could hear him.

In the distance he could hear the Captain of the first group swearing at him, so he sent one of the Oath Breakers to go get him and bring him over as an object lesson.

"Hello everyone, I am the Ancient Cain. I will be your captor for the moment, as I was for the Captain of the last group of scouts in the area until a moment ago. Yes, here he is, thank you Oath Breaker. As you can see, he was rude and disagreeable, so I stripped his System from him and reset him to level one.

I would prefer to avoid doing the same to you all, so Record Keeper has removed the Curse that Morgeth put on you all, and will be placing an Oath of Moment on you all." Cain's explanation didn't make them any less nervous, but they were all focused on their comrade, who was very clearly now a level one transfer.

"How is that even possible? I have never heard of the System allowing such an abomination of an ability." One of them asked.

"Oh, that's not even the half of it. I killed him and resurrected him as a puppet, fully under my control first. It was a very enlightening experience wasn't it, Captain?" Cain asked, causing the man to immediately launch a tirade of enraged cursing at him. He even tried casting a few spells, but he didn't have the mana to actually activate them.

"Okay, we will ask him later, when he has calmed down. Now, I need your solemn oaths. Do you, the assembled prisoners, agree to never betray me or my allies?" Cain asked, watching Record Keeper place the Curse on them all, and then a second curse that would hide it from their debuff status.

None of them looked happy about the oath, but they all spoke the words. "I agree."

The Death Hex snapped into place and then vanished from their status bars, but Cain could still see it active, as he was the one who cast it. The Curse seemed to be in effect, and the condition of resetting their level to one every time they tried to betray Cain or his allies was active.

If Cain's reading was correct, it wouldn't end there though. The Curse would remain active until removed or broken, so every time they betrayed the Oath, the Hex would activate and reset their level.

Of course, if they managed to remove it before it activated, they wouldn't take any harm from the spell, but in order to do that, they would most likely have to sacrifice one of their members, betraying Cain to tell someone who could free them.

"Excellent. Now, if you do betray me, you will end up in the same sad condition as the Captain here, so I would recommend behaving until the city leaders decide that you have fulfilled your punishment or repented your former allegiance."

The scouts all nodded eagerly, but the Oath Breakers informed Cain that one was pulling a dagger. The curse wouldn't activate until the transfer actually did anything, so Cain ordered everyone to wait and see what happened.

The Obsession Demon dressed in Leather armor with his face covered seemed to hesitate as if sensing that something was about to happen, but then steeled his resolve and lunged out, putting the blade to Kone's throat.

"Release us all and I will ask that Master Morgeth spares your miserable lives." He shouted at the same time that the Captain screamed at him.

"Jerry, NO!"

But it was too late, the betrayal had already happened, and the Demon's level was reset to one in a surge of Mana that seemed to sap the life from the Demon's body.

"What happened? What did you do to me?" Jerry asked, looking over himself.

"Check your Interface," Kone answered, easily moving his arm aside.

Now, he couldn't seriously hurt her even if he wanted. He wasn't strong enough to push the blade through her skin.

The rest of the scouts stared in horror, the exact same response that the Captain had when it happened to him, only this time he had a resigned look of defeat on his face.

"You damned fool, I tried to warn you. This Ancient is no normal adversary. The System is on his side, he molds it like putty, and treats everyone around him like a toy to play with." The Captain muttered.

"That's not true is it?" Cain asked Kone, who turned her face away and began whistling as if the question had nothing to do with her.

"Fine, I'm sure that at least Luna is still on my side." Cain pouted, but the baby Lamia Progenitor looked far too excited about the situation.

"Can you make them little? Then I can have a pet demon. At level one they won't even be fast enough to run away if I chase them." Luna suggested.

Alright, putting faith in her to make things look better might have been the wrong call.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 541 541

The city council had a serious decision to make right now. Their jail wasn't large enough that they could hold all the prisoners that had been captured by the Oath Breakers, but none of them truly trusted them to be anywhere that wasn't secured.

They still had their friends list active and had no doubt sent messages back to their allies long before they arrived at the city, so Morgeth would know that things had gone wrong here, and would make it his first target for capture.

The best thing to do was to use the spell against them and see what they knew about their employer's actions so far.

"Is Morgeth coming here now? I would assume that some or all of you sent out messages before Cain had that spell put on you, so he must know by now that all of his scouts for the city have been captured." Prana asked.

"Yes, he is assembling the army now. They didn't say when they would be coming or with how many, because everyone knows that mind reading and truth spells exist, but it would be safe to say that they will be coming here very soon." One of the scouts agreed.

"How much more do you think it would take to get him to commit the majority of his forces to the region?" Cain asked, formulating a plan.

"You don't know much about Morgeth do you? The entire army moves as one, and then the leader uses Mind Control to convert the surviving fighters of the cities he has overtaken. Most join the army to bolster their ranks, the remainder is left in the villages to enforce his will on the non-combatants. That way he has a permanent recruitment method, and still keeps supplies flowing to the army and the central bases." One of the scouts, a pale-haired wrath demon with a black septum piercing explained.

"Sorry, Prana. It looks like we might be making a small mess of the area with an upcoming battle. I will have the Druids from the Farm come and take care of the repairs afterward." Cain apologized, while Prana just nodded.

"You don't understand, there are over ten thousand Mythic Awakened fighters in the army. Nothing can stand against him, even if you call all your allies and have them bring their awakened guards, it still wouldn't be enough." The Wrath Demon tried to explain.

"I think you have underestimated the might of an Ancient. If he wanted, he could bathe the continent in balefire and burn out every living thing simply for annoying him." Oath Breaker pointed out, making all the Scouts, as well as the Elders and Prana blanch in fear.

"That's got to be a lie, right? I mean a city maybe, but the entire continent? That's just ridiculous." Prana scoffed, horrified at even the idea of an entire city bathed in flames.

"I mean, if I summoned a few dozen Plague Mothers, and then gave them all Balefire Dragon Breath that they could pass to their summons, I suppose I could do a few thousand at a time, but Dragon Breath is limited in size. If we used an unholy flame aura, the radius would feed off the Plague Demons and undead, and they could likely set a few hundred square kilometers at a time on fire, but it wouldn't be as powerful." Cain said thoughtfully.

[Why not Golden Demon Ants? An Empress can call a hundred Queens, who can call a thousand workers. If you gave them all Dragon Breath, I bet we could reach just as large of a space.] Oath Breaker suggested in Cain's mind.

"[Not bad, plus, you have to see them in order to squish them, so durability doesn't matter. Do we know any birds that summon? I feel like flocks of Dragonfire-breathing birds would be a nice touch.] Cain thought.

[I don't think so, but the Watchers can take a look through the list and see if we missed anything.] Oath Breaker suggested.

"Why do I feel like he just thought of a way to do it? That look on his face definitely says he thought of a way to do it." Prana muttered, making Kone laugh.

"Guaranteed he did. Going by the introspective look it has changed to now, he is likely calculating the time it would take to actually cover the entire continent. I told you, Ancients are scary. Not just when they are challenged, but when they get bored and start thinking of new things to pass the time." Kone told the plantlike demon.

"Alright, I have a plan. Will one of you please contact your boss and tell them just how bad of an idea attacking us is? This contact won't be a betrayal of your oath." Cain instructed.

"Are you sure you want to give them a warning?" Prana asked, not sure where Cain was going with this.

"It's only sporting. With what I have in mind, I think that Jessica would strangle me in my sleep if I didn't at least warn them." Cain shrugged, making the Bunny High Priestess give him a dirty look.

"You know that warning them before you slaughter them still leaves them dead, right?" Jessica asked.

"Of course, but then they would be dead of their own free will, not some underhanded and unexpected trick that they couldn't defend against," Cain explained.

Jessica just shook her head and decided that it was easier not to argue with Cain for now. She could discuss the value of life with him when there weren't as many other lives at stake as there were in this situation.

"Sir, the message has been sent, and I think it might have enraged the boss. Morgeth says that he will be here very soon and that there will be a price to pay for the insolence of breaking his bonds of loyalty." One of the captives informed Cain politely.

"Ah, excellent, I do hate having to wait," Cain replied with a smile, then silently ordered the Oath Breakers out to go, scout the area, and incapacitate any enemy forces that they found wandering around the nearby cities and villages.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 542 542

While Cain prepared for the arrival on the Southern Continent, word of the Challenge had spread through the Darklight Host, courtesy of a very excited Cyrene.

The girls were still asleep as much as they were awake, so listening in to the collective thoughts was one of her new favorite pastimes, and the news of someone brave enough to attack Master Cain was the most exciting thing that she had heard in a long time.

So, when she was asked about what had her worked up, she had made the mistake of telling her fellow Guild Members about the situation.

Most of them couldn't do anything but wait for updates, but the Guild had amassed a fairly large cohort of powerful followers, some of whom had also obtained a Mythic Awakening inside the towers.

As far as they knew, everyone who had been blessed in such a manner had already held a second advancement class, so the news of a possible impending Guild War had the Second Advancement fighters scrambling for the Towers in an attempt to push their limits and obtain a Mythic Quest reward.

Nowhere was that as obvious as on the Eastern Continent, where the transfers were already much more powerful, to begin with. The tower in Port Nefheim was completely full for the first time since the week it opened, and there was a lineup that encompassed almost all the Guards, and most of the strongest Outreach Workers in the area.

"Calm down everyone. Pushing and shoving won't make the others finish their battles any faster. They don't even know how big the lineup has gotten." Cixelcid shouted over the din of the crowd, drawing everyone's attention.

Today he had both of his Lieutenants, the Succubus Royal Guard maids with him for extra clout, since the outfits were so distinctive that everyone recognized them right away, even if they had no idea who Cid was.

The crowd began to calm down right away before things could go far enough that the big Vampire had to call in the Watchers to assist. They were much less forgiving and liked to throw malcontents into the ocean to calm down. The water was relatively warm, but the embarrassment was very real.

Plus, they would lose their spot in line if they were tossed.

"The upcoming fight isn't even on this continent, I don't know what they are all getting so worked up about," Lickity muttered, coming to join her husband in overseeing the chaos.

Her presence didn't really help though, as the beautiful Succubus was a well-known Tailor, and there was a lot of cloth armor using transfers in the line who were willing to pay top dollar today to get an upgrade that might let them conquer another level of the tower. The reward from the daily quest got better as you improved, especially when you beat a personal best by more than a floor, so any little bit could change things drastically for them.

The only one who Cid expected to be around that was conspicuously missing was his daughter, Neffie. Normally she would be front and center of the chaos, but the guards that were in line hadn't seen her near the tower today.

Even though she was growing at a rapid rate, her mentality was still very much that of a young child, and every parent knows that quiet isn't a relief, it is a suspicious activity. If she wasn't here where the excitement was, that meant that she found something that she thought was better, and her parents were afraid to find out what that might be.

Below the Keep, in the underground laboratory that the Watchers had claimed as their own, Neffie was proving that her parents were right to be concerned about her lack of presence at the tower.

"All I'm saying is, take me with you. You will be going to join Uncle Cain when things get messy, right? Just bring me with you. I am Mythic Awakened, so I'm durable. I can summon a Dino mount to get away if I'm in danger, so I won't be at serious risk, and to top it all off, I'm a bona fide Guild Member. If the Darklight Host goes to war, wouldn't it only be right that the Guild Members get to fight?" Neffie tried negotiating with the Watchers.

The two summoned Ancients smiled at the little Demon Queen before responding. "And I counter with this. Despite all your qualifications, you are still a minor, so we won't take you to another continent without permission. If you bring us a signed note from both of your parents, we will gladly bring you with us."

Neffie glared at the two Watchers while trying to come up with a new line of logic. She knew as well as anyone that asking her Mom to let her go to war beside the Guild Master was never going to happen. Even during attacks on the Port, she had a hard time convincing her mom to let her fight, and Neffie even had specific skills that helped her defend the city.

If she asked to go, her Mom would definitely say no, while her dad would hit her with a logic bomb about the Guardian of Port Nefheim being needed on location so that she could defend the city in case it became a target as well.

That's why she came to the Watchers. They were a much better chance to get to the front lines than anyone else that she could ask. She could try sneaking out, but there was a tracing spell on her, so her mom would know the instant that she left the city, and if she didn't have permission then someone would be sent to catch the runaway Neffie right away.

It was great to know how much everyone cared about her, but the overprotective thing was killing her sense of adventure. Why couldn't they understand that she had never been involved in a Guild War? They didn't happen to the Darklight Host very often, and if she missed this one, she might not get another chance for years, if ever.

The Guild got stronger every month. If they kept up like this, Neffie might never be more than a bystander watching other Guilds battle it out.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 543 543

While Neffie was not having much luck in persuading anyone to let her go to the Southern Continent, most of the other skilled fighters in the area were having no such issues. They all understood that they would need to be Mythic Awakened to fight, and a few dozen of them were already, but the others had devised a plan.

Ironically, it was exactly the same plan that Neffie had come up with, but for a different request. They wanted the Watchers to grant them a Mythic Skill so that they would gain the awakened status and be able to join the upcoming fight.

Victor had moved up to the tower for the time being, so that their experimental area wasn't invaded by a mass of transfers. Now that he was in clear sight, nobody came to the basement levels to bother their work. Instead, they all crowded around to see what

he had to say about their proposal that he should bolster the Guild members with Mythic skills.

[Everyone listen up, I will only say this once. I will offer one single contestant a Mythic reward at the end of the day. Everyone who manages two levels better than their previous record today will be entered in the contest. I have a record of those who did so before I came upstairs, so don't worry if you got a good spot in line today.

Now, everyone get to work and prove that you really are hard-working and deserving of a Mythic treat from the Watchers.]

That got everyone suitably motivated, and the transfers in line were already discussing strategies to deal with the most difficult of their opponents. Every class had different strengths and weaknesses, so the ones they had issues with covered almost everything, but that also meant that there was almost guaranteed to be someone in line who had already found a solution to their issues.

For example, the Berserkers had found a tell in a number of spell activations that would allow them to dodge at the last second to close the distance with various spell casters.

The Crusaders had found different weapon combinations that worked better on certain opponents, while the mages had found ways for casters to deal with close combatants without burning through all their mana in the process.

In a long tower fight, mana conservation was essential to every class, not just the spell casting ones. so any advice that let you survive without using spells was valuable today.

Even for the lone Elven Puppet Master, who had come to visit Port Nefheim today, looking for fresh seafood and a trip to the now famous trial tower, had a lot to learn from these conversations. She learned what to summon, what she would be best off directing them to try, and how to best support them inside the trials.

The tower adjusted the difficulty by class. Not much, and within their own level, but it meant that the strongest and weakest classes would still find a challenge on every floor.

For example, where a warrior often found low counts of strong enemies in the lower levels, a summoner found higher enemy counts, as the tower worked to offset their advantages.

"Couldn't you open it up to more than just the one winner? If someone is going to attack the guild and the cities we protect, it's best if we have the largest possible force, right?" One of the warriors asked Victor as he reached the front of the line.

"That is a very good way to get a lot of Guild Members killed. Fighting as an awakened transfer isn't the same as when you are working your way up through the levels to gain power. The strategy is different because of the limited number of damaging skills that

you can use to damage your enemies. So instead, a lot of focus is on draining, exhausting, and controlling them." Victor explained.

That made sense to the people in line. If they could only use one or two abilities to actually hurt their target, they would need to take a very different approach than they would against a nonawakened target.

Most of them couldn't even imagine what the combat in the Southern Continent looked like, but they also didn't understand that one Mythic skill was the very minimum, not where most of the Awakened area transfers stayed.

Here, Mythic Skills were just that, a Myth. There, they were more common, and essential to survival if you wanted to hunt the beasts that roamed the wilderness or protect a city.

Victor was finally starting to feel like the pet sitter that his Spell had been designed to be. Everyone wanted something, they were all whiny and demanding, or in a big hurry for no reason. Normally he was treated as more of an advisor.

He liked the old treatment better.

"I will be staying with the one winner for today. If there is a particularly outstanding entry, I may grant them an extra bonus on top of the daily reward, so everyone, continue to work hard. Even if you don't win today, if you show up tomorrow, your entries from today will be put back into consideration."

Victor smiled in satisfaction as his words calmed and focused the transfers. One or two winners a day made little difference to the number of people in line, but telling them that they would have a chance every day until the battle if they just kept trying was enough to calm them down.

Mortals really were simple creatures.

In Blood Sands Castle the situation was much the same, only they had what looked like half the Landis army in line today, eager to try to get a reward that would benefit their nation long after the battle to assist their Darklight Host allies ended.

If even one of them could get a Mythic Skill, either from the tower itself, or a reward from the Watchers, the Kingdom of Landis would have a new champion and a much more secure position in the region.

They still faced a lot of rebels, Pirates, and other nuisances, though the conflict with the Orcs was in a ceasefire. That was the closest that the Orcs usually came to a peace treaty because they never knew when it could be fun or important to attack someone again.

The orcish territories were suspiciously quiet today, lacking the usual armies and ongoing contests that were a central part of the Orcish Culture.

The elite warriors of every Clan had gone to Long Fang Valley for a grand contest in the Training Tower. They would compete with each other both in pure power, and level-adjusted accomplishments for their up-and-coming youths. They weren't as worried about getting the one spot that every tower's Watchers had agreed to reward, but proving themselves to their Clan was more important than everything else, so losing was not an option.

At the forefront of their force were the Yellow Tusk Clan, now led by Clan Champion Morgan, who had bested every warrior of the Clan to take over the position only two weeks ago, after getting a Quest Reward from the Training Tower on a personal visit.

She was one of the three Mythic Awakened Orcs in her Clan, and the only one that was a direct combat class. The others were a Seer and a Healer.

The Clan viewed this as proof of the Laughing God's favor. They had more than warriors, they had the mightiest healer, and an excellent seer that could predict the best battle strategies for their Clan. A few of the other Clans had powerful Champions, including one that had returned from the Southern Continent to his Clan when he heard of the war against Landis after the changes began.

That had initially given them a great advantage, but the warriors of the Yellow Tusk Clan were much stronger on average, so they had maintained the leading position among the Clans that guided the Orcish people of the Central Continent.

What he did have was a much better understanding of group battles as an Awakened fighter than Morgan. She hadn't gone to war or even faced a real challenge since awakening, but her outright combat power was incredible.

Everyone knew that she had awakened, but Morgan herself was very quiet about what her Mythic ability was. Only Tuk, the Seer, knew that her ability was [Mythic Body] that let her attacks that didn't use a Skill count as Mythic Awakened damage, as well as greatly strengthening her body.

It was similar to the attacks of a Mythic Beast. Not particularly powerful, but unaffected by the damage reduction of the awakened.

With a Legendary ax in either hand, that made her a menace in Combat, and every day she trained her combat abilities even more to decrease her need for Skill usage to deal with even the strongest enemies. Now, she only used her skills to slow or control her enemies, and all her attacks were from her own power.

"Yellow Tusk Clan, we are up next. When two more leave, there will be fifty spots in the tower for the Fifty of us. All the other Clans will be watching, and I expect great things

from you. Don't let down your Clan or our Great Mother. Now, FIGHT." Morgan's speech sent all the Yellow Tusk Orcs rushing into the tower at once, lighting up all the statues that had been slowly fading as the Clans waited for enough others to leave that they could all challenge the towers at once.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 544 544 Beginner's Valley Is Changing

Char stretched herself out on the porch swing of the Guild House in Sunnybrook, enjoying the afternoon sun. She had spent the morning with the youngsters that had been brought into the Guild over the last few months, teaching them their basic schoolwork.

Not many people other than the aristocrats in the Valley put general education in high regard, viewing a very basic reading level, provided by the System as more than enough to get by, but Char saw the value in knowledge and worked hard to pass it down.

A well-trained tradesman was essential to running society, but one who knew more than just his trade could actually make things better. In her past life, she had seen what happened in cultures that focused on only essential skills, like trades and fighting. They stagnated for decades before either finding a natural genius and advancing or being taken over by a neighbor who had advanced past them.

Of course, the same thing happened with ones that taught the same set of basics for too long without updating them. They advanced at first, but eventually, the new knowledge became common knowledge, and the time in schools became worthless, as the students already knew most of what they were supposed to learn.

The leaders would take that as a sign that their children were brighter than ever, but after a decade or two, it would become clear that it was simply the schools lagging behind the people.

So, Char had taken it upon herself to reform the cities in the Beginner's Valley.

Not just the two that the Darklight Host had Houses in, she sent out emissaries who were like-minded to teach children everywhere. Even the Elven forest, where the Pixies spawned now had a teacher stationed in them.

The school was nothing more than a simple tree fort with one single teacher, but they quickly learned that those who reincarnated as Pixies were mostly children in their past life, so the appeal of a tree house full of safety and sweets was not lost on them.

That was the trick the teacher had used to draw them in. Pixies lived off sugar, but the honey in the Forest was guarded by vicious wasps. That meant that they had to scrounge for berries to survive, and made their lives very difficult, at least for those who weren't part of the Pixie gangs, who looted anyone else they saw.

The schoolhouse became known as the Lunchroom within the first week, and the Pixies didn't even mind that they had to do worksheets before they could get the sweets. Bribery will get you everywhere when dealing with Pixies after all.

Slowly the Pixies were learning more and more about the world, and many chose to leave the forest to join the group under Elmira in Sunnybrook.

The Guild's resident pocket Pixie had never been big on fighting, but she had excellent survival skills, both urban and wilderness.

"Living the Good Life, Pixie style" was the name of the course she chose to teach, and Char could hear her from the porch of the Guildhouse as she imparted her years of wisdom to the 'youngsters'.

"Alright, so you guys want to travel, but you need to do it safely. Today I will give you some basic pointers on how to get yourself into a secure traveling group. First up, play to your strengths. Pixies grant bonuses to magic power. That means both better healing and better spell damage for everyone around you.

No group doesn't want that, and you don't even have to officially be in their group for it to work, you can join a full group of five and still grant them the bonus if you view them as allies.

Secondly, your class. Most of you are either mages or healers. Healers, your advantage is obvious to anyone who looks at your interface, but Mages, it helps if you know some useful spells. Not for combat, but for utility.

Every casting class, no matter the spec, can use the F Ranked utility spells, like Campfire, Minor Create Water, and Warming Hug. I will teach those spells to every one of you in the second half of this lesson if you don't already know them.

But the most important spell that a Mage can use to get themselves into a group is [Create Honey]. This is a Pixie Specific spell that I learned early on. If you have access to sugar, which you should have stored in your inventory for snacks, you can make large amounts of honey-based treats for the group.

They are nutritious and tasty, and will get the group through a difficult time if they get trapped somewhere, or have boring trail rations.

If you want to go even further, many spell casters can use the A Ranked [Create Feast]. If you can use Mage, Shaman, or Cleric spell books, this one is the best you can find. It was dropped for a member of the Darklight Host in Long Fang Valley, which is known for its large food output, and I managed to obtain a copy.

I don't have any more copies to let you fast learn it, but in only one full day I can teach it."

The fact that the Pixies sat through that entire lecture by Elmira was a wonder to Char. They usually had an attention span best measured in fractions of a second, but she didn't hear any wings buzzing, so they had all remained in their spots while the teacher droned on about spells.

"Miss Elmira, you can really teach us to create a feast that will feed an entire party? With just mana, no need for storage space?" One of the younger Pixies asked.

"Indeed I can. Would you all like to skip today's lesson and start on the spell? If you can make it work, it will be an even better reward than the candies for the worksheets." Elmira suggested to exuberant applause by tiny hands.

"Alright, now let us begin."

Char tuned the Pixies lesson out from that point, as she already knew the spell. It was an incredible find for the Guild, and everyone was shocked that it was only A Ranked. Food creation spells were incredibly rare, almost as rare as Mythic Skills were these days.

Druids got a few of them, but they were mostly salads and berries, so most species didn't really count those. The Elves loved them, but even the humans found them boring after a while. [Create Feast] made a much wider variety of foods.

Instead of listening in on Elmira, Char gently rocked on the swing with a sleeping Gnome in her lap and thought about what to teach her next class.

Many subjects were viewed as boring, but she had convinced most of the students that trigonometry and basic physics were both important. Not for any obscure reason, but so that they could better understand thrown and fired projectiles, as well as the proper way to bounce things around corners.

The Barbarians got a bonus with Slings, if they wanted to use ranged weapons, and learning to use them without activating a skill wasn't an easy task. But once they understood the concept, it became easier, and they even learned to hurl the explosives that Warlocks could make down stairs and around corners by bouncing them off walls.

Of course, as she was teaching children, her applied mathematics lessons weren't often used in real combat, except in the Tower. Water balloons were the best way to show off their understanding of math. Over the top of a house to land on other students walking down the street, without hitting the other people in the road was both their favorite game, and the most common way that they got in trouble.

More than a few unsuspecting Elves had been doused with a water balloon thrown blindly.

The biggest change in the Valley lately had to be the Outreach Workers though. They had set up in almost every village and city inside the valley, even the Troll Capital had a branch, staffed by Trollish Volunteers.

No longer were goods hard to get outside of the area they were produced, the Darklight Host had a small trading post at every branch location, and the goods sold in the valley were made in the valley, so they were priced accordingly.

You could also get higher-level items, but that was pretty unaffordable to most. The Dark Dwarven city of Graska had been rapidly leveling up their smiths though, thanks to the influx of new materials and patterns, so being able to get a level 75 set of armor and a weapon was no longer a monumental task for the transfers here.

It was sad for Char to see them go, but she still felt a burst of motherly pride every time one of her trainees hit level one hundred and was forcefully transported to Montauk, where the local branch of the Guild would take them in and help them get settled outside the valley, or send them through the Guild House Transfer Circle if they were intending to stay in the valley.

Not many did. There was a whole wide world to see, and Char's students had all been well trained to see the Darklight Host and their Outreach Workers as noble allies in their endeavors.

But, Char was Spirit Folk now, and over level two hundred. Even in the worst-case scenario, she should have at least five hundred more years to raise these children and rock on her porch swing before old age got to her, and that was just fine by the former Empress.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 545 545 Stressed Bunny

On the Southern Continent, Cain was starting to get news of the state of the army that had been threatening their allies.

The size that they had been quoted, roughly ten thousand soldiers, was seemingly correct, but the army was behaving in a way that none of the captured scouts had expected. It had split into four groups, targeting four different cities at the same time.

Cain suspected that he was the cause of this. If they split their forces, it was only logical that he could only face one section at a time, and they could capture three cities and then come to surround him with the main force.

It was a great idea, but it severely underestimated both the abilities of the Darklight Host and Cain himself.

Every city under their influence had a strong force backing it, along with the forces at the farm, and two thousand soldiers wouldn't have an easy time taking any of them if the Guild had been warned of their approach. A force that size would likely take the city if it were just the usual defensive force, but if Cain brought in his Watchers and Echoes there wasn't much that could take a city from them.

The major reason for that was a simple mathematics equation. At Mythic quality, the Echoes had nearly two hundred thousand mana, and the Summoning Spells didn't scale up in cost as the caster's level increased.

With a set of Mana Flood Totems active, they could recover five thousand mana a second, and replacing the two options for Mythic Summons was only two thousand mana. That left them a lot of leeway to use [Dominion] to increase the range of area effect spells.

Then there was [Ancient Wisdom] Which would grant a single spell or ability to everyone in their party, including the summons.

In short, fighting them would be a nightmare for anyone. Even if they lost, they were summoned beings, they could just be summoned again and sent back to their partners. This gave Cain a great deal of confidence in what he had planned next.

He was planning to send out the Oath Breakers to find the Demon known as Morgeth before the attacks. If they could assassinate the enemy leader, that would be great, but ideally, they would capture Morgeth and interrogate the Demon to learn their skill set, personality, and habits. Then Cain would summon a copy and replace them, diverting the army and subverting it from the inside.

"If the battle is on this scale, what am I even doing here?" Jessica asked while she watched everyone preparing for the battle that would be on them in the next few days.

Cain lifted up his right hand, counting the points on his fingers. "One, because you are part of the quest. You need to be involved to get the rewards. Two, because who is better suited to slapping the stupid out of people than the servants of the Bunny God?"

Jessica sighed as she realized he was right. She was the only sane one in the group. The rest would just send everyone they met to the Goddess of Reincarnation to be sorted. With her here at least there was a small chance of a non-genocidal option.

Even here on the farm, surrounded by all the food that they could ever want, people were still excessively violent, and it only seemed to get worse by the day. More allies were coming back from trade missions to get prepared for a full attack on their faction, and the consensus seemed to be that the enemy could not pose a threat if their entire army was dead.

Just the thought stressed her out, so Jessica headed for the temple to clear her mind. Maybe one of the others might have an idea of how to deal with this insanity.

"Welcome back High Priestess. You look stressed, would you like a massage?" The acolyte at the entrance greeted Jessica as she entered the small stone temple.

All Bunny God temples were either stone or dirt, designed to emulate the burrows that set their animalistic counterparts at ease. This one was made of a very light-colored marble, created with Earth Magic, like everything else in the city. She had been startled to find out that none of the stone for the buildings here was mined, it was all magically created.

Now that she had been here a while and seen all the insane things that a living Ancient was capable of when left unsupervised, she realized that she shouldn't have been.

From what she understood, the collective self-enforced some level of sanity on their species, with everyone working to keep the rest from doing anything too far out of line, but Cain was the last one on the planet, so everything that popped into his head was a valid option to him, and he let his clones do the same thing, just to see what they did.

"Oh Goddess, give me the wisdom and strength to get through this," Jessica muttered before turning to the Acolyte who had greeted her.

"If there are others in the Massage room, I will go for one. I need to ask the group about how to proceed." She informed the younger Bunny, who bowed politely and led her to the upper floor.

There were actually a half dozen Clerics in getting massages when Jessica arrived. She quickly unequipped her gear and lay down on one of the padded tables so the Acolyte could begin her work before addressing the room.

"I need a solution from the group. We all know that war is coming, but if we don't put some sanity into them you know they are just going to kill and kill until there is nothing alive to threaten them. Does anyone have a suggestion that might end the madness without causing extra casualties on our side?" Jessica asked politely.

"We could try magic to break the curse that they are under, but it seems that had been tried and failed in the past, due to the level of the spell. I would say that the best option is to have the big boss find the other big boss before the battles start. If they sort it between themselves, the rest of the battles should stop, right?" One of the Bunny Elders suggested.

It sounded simplistic, but it was a good idea. Cain could use other people's abilities, so he might be able to win over the enemy leader with his own skills, and direct him to work together with them.

"Guild Master Cain has already sent the Oath Breakers looking for the Demon known as Morgeth, so that might be an option, as long as the enemy boss survives the encounter. There is no telling what will happen if the Oath Breakers take him by surprise and actually kill Morgeth." Jessica agreed.

"We have tried sending emissaries to Morgeth before, and it didn't end well. They either killed them or brainwashed them away from following the Goddess. That means we can't just go ourselves. As much as we don't like it, we might not have an option but to let the summons do the dirty work." Another Elder suggested.

"What if we try to influence Cain instead? If he's in a better mood, he might be less murderous, right? It works on almost all species. We could make a special meal tonight, and send some acolytes to keep him company. Our information says that he likes patting heads." The oldest of the Bunnies said slowly as the Acolyte working her table tried to massage the knots out of her back.

"That's not a bad idea, but we don't know when the fateful day will be, and he will catch on quickly if we go too far trying to put him in a good mood. Ancients are hard to fool." Jessica sighed, putting all the suggestions that they had come up with together in her head.

Jessica nodded off during her massage and woke up just in time to get ready for dinner.

It was a rush, but she made it to the table in time for the first course to be served. Cain was seated only a few seats down from her, with an acolyte in waiting sitting in his lap, filling him in on all the gossip of the day, and the intricate and important details of the daily life of a six-year-old.

That made Jessica smile. It seemed their plan was working.

"So, Jessica have you come to a decision? Which approach will you take to convince me not to slaughter the enemy armies?" Cain asked.

Jessica's ears shot up straight in shock at his words. They had only just decided to try, how did he find out already?

"If you use [Warming Hug] and gently stroke this spot behind the ears, their brains melt and Bunnies forget that they were supposed to be keeping secrets," Cain explained, and the acolyte made a blissful sound at the gentle petting of her ears.

"You are just impossible. But to be clear, I was going to appeal to your better nature and hope that you would try to settle things with the enemy commander before the main battle starts, assuming that he can be found." Jessica replied.

Jin and Kone both nodded happily at that idea. Watching Cain duel was always an interesting sight. Luna wanted to voice her opinion as well, but someone had made the most amazing whipped cream-filled puffs today and she was too full to do anything but squeeze his wrist before she fell asleep again.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 546 546

The Oath Breakers had been hunting all day long, searching for the enemy Commander, but so far they hadn't had any luck at all.

From what they heard, the leader should be with his army at all times, but after the force split up, the Demons couldn't find any trace of Morgeth. They had captured and interrogated scouts from all four forces last night and none of them reported having Morgeth with their force.

[I don't get it, boss. He has to be somewhere though, we will keep searching the area for a special forces team that might be hunting you the way we are hunting him. Maybe you will get lucky and Morgeth will come to you?] The Oath Breakers reported.

[My luck is pretty good, but that might be asking too much, especially when I'm at the farm, surrounded by people. I could try leaving the area, but there are still plans to be made, and I need to be where I can be found to make reports.]

The actions of this Demon General were getting stranger and stranger and Cain couldn't decide what exactly their plan was.

He had made a pretty solid defensive plan for their side though. The enemy had split into four, so he would gather all his Watchers and Echoes into groups of three and send them to the four cities that were being targeted.

With them there, the enemy should realize that they have no chance of winning, and it might draw out Morgeth.

Luna had gone through another growth spurt last night, and it was a rather spectacular one. She had nearly doubled in size, making her two meters long, and as thick as Cain's forearm.

"You're growing up into a powerful Lamia aren't you? Soon you'll be big enough to switch positions and wrap around my waist instead of just draping yourself over my shoulders." Cain teased his daughter.

Realistically, she could do that right now and would make it nearly twice around his waist in most of the forms that Cain usually used, but that wasn't enough to be secure and still leave her enough upper body to maneuver around him.

"How did Laura put it? Becoming Huge and Mighty?" Kone laughed.

Luna flexed her biceps and made a couple of poses before shifting around to look directly at Kone and giggling.

"I don't know about huge, she's a dragon, so she's totally going to be larger than I am even when I am grown, but I will be mighty. I told Papa Cain already that I am going to take over from him one day. I heard that it is the right of a firstborn to take over from their parents, so I have to grow up extra strong and devious." Luna agreed.

"Why devious?" Jin asked, wondering what she had missed about their family history.

"The others told me that Cain is secretly sneaky and always comes up with new ways to beat up and humiliate his enemies. If that got him this powerful, I must learn to do it even better, so I can be stronger." Luna told her with absolute certainty.

Cain placed his head in his hand and wondered how to correct the random impressions of the world that people had been teaching Luna. She always seemed to pick up on the most warped or obscure interpretation of everything that she saw, and it was leading her to a very unique view of the world.

"Being sneaky doesn't make you strong, you need to be creative and keep a bit of your total power hidden so that anyone who tries to overcome you doesn't know exactly how much you will be able to do against them." Cain tried to explain.

“See, very devious. Hold back, look weak, then BAM kill them all.” Luna nodded happily.

Jin just laughed at the Lamia’s antics. “Give up Papa Cain, she’s not going to get it. You might need to wait for her to grow up a little before she truly appreciates the subtleties of the hidden hand technique.”

Today, the daily Guild reports had been summarized by Svetlana, who had come all the way here to keep Cain in the loop about what was happening on the Central Continent.

She was just as popular here as she was at home, and her multiple fluffy white fox tails attracted a lot of attention as she came over to meet Cain.

Most of the news was nothing too outrageous, just a lot of people attending the towers, but one bit of news did catch his attention. The Dragon Riders in the Port of Assah had gone home for a meeting with the Dragon Council. They were having some sort of trouble with the Giants that had made landfall on the Northern Continent a few weeks ago.

What exactly had happened wasn’t clear, but it seemed that the Giants had decided that the Gnomes were hiding from them and they wanted more allies to help them capture the last of the species that were still in the wild.

The dragons didn’t actually like the Giants enough to willingly help them, and the Gnomes weren’t annoying enough to put in the effort to evict them from Dragon-controlled territory, so they were temporarily at an impasse.

The other bit of news from the North was that the Portals to the Elemental Planes had opened again, and it wasn’t just the fire Elemental Plane this time. The dragons had found large amounts of elemental energy all across the continent and it was rapidly increasing the Mana density of the Northern Continent to the point that it would soon catch up to the Southern Continent, as well as influencing the planet as a whole since a number of the largest Ley Lines run from the North to the Eastern and Western Continents.

That could be a very large problem if it started dropping awakened arrivals in places where they didn’t belong. The Eastern Continent was already seeing some of them and might be able to deal with more, but if it became like the South, where almost all of them were Mythic Beasts, the Eastern Continent would suffer an even larger catastrophe than they did when the Dungeons collapsed.

“Relay that bit to Neffie and Cid at Port Nefheim. Tell them to prepare for the worst, both for beasts and for refugees. Beyond that, Cid will know who all else needs to know and might not be in the loop already. The Dragons can take care of themselves in the North. A few Elemental Plane portals won’t scare them away, but it might not be good news for the Giants.

Either way, that's not our problem." Cain told Svetlana, who bowed politely.

Cain had put the Giant named Schmidt on his friend list, so he sent him a quick message to make sure the Giants hadn't gotten themselves into more trouble than they could handle.

[Hey, is everything going well in the North? I got news of more Elemental Portals opening near your army.] Cain asked the Second in Command of the Giant Army.

[Have you ever played Whack a Kobold? It is like that. The elementals show up, we smash them, and they give us loot sometimes. The Giants are strong and we are winning. Almost all the cities have been searched for Gnomes.] The Giant replied.

[Let me know if you have problems and I will see if I can send you some helpers.] Cain told him, knowing that the Giants were too proud to ever ask for help from smaller species and wouldn't actually take him up on it.

[Don't slack too much, or you will fall behind, Ancient Cain. Some of our Warriors will be near the peak of Mythic by the end of the war.] Schmidt answered, ending the conversation in typically Giant style.

That was promising, and Cain was in need of a Spirit Quality item to advance himself, which he was hoping to do in the near future. The Echoes had also gotten close to making a Spirit Awakened fruit, and if Cain ate it, or possibly even just held it, he might be able to count it as possessing a Spirit Quality item. The ability didn't specify that it had to be a weapon or armor.

[Spirit Awakening] Advance Ranks to Awakened Spirit. Requires [Versatility]5/5, [Dominion], 1 Spirit Rank item.

80 Points

He had everything that he needed to advance, except the item.

The inability to find a new class that would push them past the barrier between awakenings was what held back the Mythic Awakened. Cain's [Watcher From Beyond] Class didn't need to change to awaken more than once though, so he could safely say he was going to be one of the next people to move beyond Mythic Awakened.

He couldn't just sit and wait for a battle to start though, Cain had many other things to do. The best choice he had seemed to be to send away a few of his Summons and have them do the searching on his behalf.

[Evangeline, how do you feel about a field trip to the Southern Continent? I know you're not Mythic Awakened, but you can ask someone to accompany you if the danger level seems too high. Someone needs to find the Librarian who collected all the books from

the Ancient City before it was destroyed.] Cain explained, thinking of the appearance that the poppet had at that time, and that she might look very different now, either by disguise or age.

[Not a problem, if I bring Laura with me, we will be safe. Only an absolute idiot would attack a Seraphim and a Mythic Dragon traveling together. People speak to us too and don't hide like they do when you show up in town. That might make it easier to find who we are looking for, especially if they know your name or recognize us as your Companions.]

[Excellent. One problem down, ninety-eight to go.] Cain replied ruefully. Hopefully, they could do it, finding those books had been on his to-do list for way too long.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 547 547 Blessed Traveler

Evangeline planned to head straight east toward the mountains as soon as she left the farm. They had a lot of information about the areas around them and if the Librarian was here they would have known by now.

That meant that she likely hid somewhere east of the mountains, where very few were allowed in and out, so the news from the rest of the world didn't really spread.

"Hopefully she isn't just hiding from us. That would be a huge pain in the ass." Laura pointed out, thinking almost the same thing as the Seraphim as she found a comfortable spot in Evangeline's hair.

"She was supposed to be on good terms with Cain so she shouldn't be hiding from him specifically, but maybe something happened and she's hiding from someone else. If we spread the word that Ancient Cain is looking for the Librarian she will at least know that we aren't the ones looking to hurt her." Evangeline agreed.

"I say we start with the Youkai villages. They live as long as Elves, and they are more reclusive than the Demons. There are two of their villages between here and the mountains who might have news or even a story about the Librarian if we are lucky."

Laura's idea was a solid one, so Evangeline took to the air, and headed for their first target.

It was a quaint little village full of Tall Youkai with a single black horn in the middle of their foreheads, which Laura mistook for unicorns for a moment, before realizing that it was people walking beside a regular horse.

The duo landed just outside the gate, and a small crowd gathered to see what they were up to since it was unusual to see a Seraphim at all, much less traveling alone.

“Hello everyone. We are just passing through, but we are looking for a long-lost friend. An Elven Librarian, originally from the Central Continent, though that was centuries ago. She has a book left by the Ancients that we need a bit of information from. I don’t suppose you’ve heard anything about someone like that? Even if it wasn’t recently.” Evangeline fished for details.

“Oh, the wandering Librarian. Lots of Youkai have stories about her, but I’m pretty sure she is a Myth. The stories are centuries old.” A young man in the crowd answered.

“Bring her to the Elder in the bookstore, she knows more about books than you do.” Another one added, sticking her tongue out at the first man to answer.

“She’s got a point. You might know the story, but can you even read it?” Another Youkai joked, making the crowd burst into laughter and then circle up for the imminent fight.

“Please don’t fight on my behalf. I still need someone to show me to the bookstore and introduce me to the Elder.” Evangeline pointed out.

“Let them fight, it helps burn off the excess stupid. I will lead you over.” The youkai girl who was taunting the first man to speak laughed.

She just waved to the guard as she led Evangeline through with Laura on her shoulder, so the situation here must not be too dire yet. Evangeline would have to warn them about the issues with Morgeth and his armies before she left since they were still so close to the towns that Cain had set up Guardians in, but that could wait until after they had some news.

“Here we are, the bookstore. Everyone just calls the Elder inside Granny, and I don’t know her real name, so you can introduce yourself however you want. I am sure she won’t turn down a conversation with a Seraphim, I swear those old folk just live for long conversations with new people.

But I have other errands to run. It was nice meeting you.” The girl told them before running off toward another shop and disappearing inside.

“Granny, do you have time to talk? I brought candy.” Laura called into the bookstore before Evangeline could enter.

“At least wait until we are inside and can see the woman. There’s no point in bribing her if she can’t even hear you.” Evangeline pointed out.

Bringing Laura has both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, she is a formidable combatant when threatened. On the negative side, she is Laura, and staying on task is not her strong point.

Case in point, right now. Granny had appeared from between the shelves, and the Dragon flew over to meet her with a handful of caramel candies as a peace offering.

“We heard you know the story of the wandering Librarian. We are looking for her on behalf of Ancient Cain, but we don’t know where to find her. Does the story tell us anything?” Laura asked the elderly Tengu woman.

“The story is a simple one. A little under two hundred years ago now, when the village was a fair bit larger than it is today, a strange Elf came through, leaving messages with all the Elves and Youkai that she met. Every village got the same message.

[Tell the Ancient to meet me at the end of the world]. But some of them also got gifts. Some spell and skill books, scrolls, or even relic items.

We are one of those lucky places to get a relic item, and I have it right here.” The elder told them with a toothless smile.

She wandered away to her desk and pulled out a small emblem badge that none of them could identify. It had writing on it that the System didn’t translate, likely the Ancient script, but the central emblem didn’t raise any memories, not even with Cain or the Echoes when Evangeline and Laura sent the thought through the Communal link.

“It is an odd thing, and it doesn’t seem to do anything, but when I hold it or scan it, I can tell that it is an Ancient Quality artifact. If only they came with instructions.” The elder sighed.

“Can I hold it? I promise not to break it.” Laura asked, flying close to the elderly Tengu to inspect the item.

“I don’t see why not. I’ve dropped it more than once or twice and it hasn’t hurt it any.” The elder shrugged and passed the item over.

As soon as Laura touched it, the emblem gave off a brief burst of light, making an arrow that pointed vaguely east for a few seconds then faded again.

“It doesn’t look like the enchantment is worn out, it is just on a cooldown timer. Elder, do you think that we could hold onto this for a while? I can return it after we find the Librarian.” Evangeline asked.

“Go ahead, Dear. I’m sure it was for you anyhow. She didn’t leave any directions, only that I would know what to do with it when the time came. I carried it for years, wondering when the time would be right.”

“You make it sound like she passed it to you personally,” Laura said, passing the old lady more candies, in her own version of thanks.

“She did actually. I was the Village Elder at that time before I retired to let my daughter take over. Now I just run the bookstore, the same as I have for the last hundred and fifty years.” The old lady smiled happily at the books, a lifetime’s worth of collecting and care.

Most of them weren’t spell or skill books, but stories, educational textbooks made by transfers, or non-fiction history books to carry on the memory of this world’s heroes.

“Take a while and look around. The Librarian isn’t going anywhere. Well, I suppose she could, but she probably isn’t.” The elder told them, then led Laura to a section on cooking and baking.

Evangeline realized that it would take a while to get the food-obsessed Dragon out of here, so she too went looking for something to read. Now that they had a compass of sorts, leading them toward the goal, they could move with a bit more certainty.

They also knew that they needed to look for Elves and Youkai since that was where the old Tengu said that the Librarian was stopping off on her journey. All of the old cities that they passed had a chance to have someone with firsthand details that could help them find her.

Evangeline gave Laura and the Elder one hour to talk and snack before she bought a history book and took Laura away from their discussion on baked sweets.

“We should try to get to the next village tonight before dark. Thank you Elder for your assistance, and I hope to see you again soon.” The Seraphim bowed and left, then took to the air, heading east for the next Youkai village on her map.

“Such a nice young lady. I do hope that she finds what she is looking for.” The Elder smiled, then turned back inside to her books, wondering what took so long for the Ancient to come looking for the Librarian.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 548 548

With the compass token securely stored in her inventory, Evangeline collected Laura and took off for the next Youkai village along their route.

This one was a simple farming village and the moment they arrived, Evangeline realized that she had miscalculated. It was almost dark, so most of the village was asleep, and it was too small to have anything resembling an inn.

Neither she nor Laura actually needed to sleep, but they weren't going to find out anything from sleeping villagers.

"Welcome, Seraphim. What brings you here so late at night?" The guard at the chain link fence which served as their village wall asked.

"We are on a quest to find a Librarian. An Elf that is believed to have a book from the Ancients." Evangeline explained.

"Well, I don't know anything about that, but you can ask the mayor in the morning. My wife is still awake with a newborn, feel free to head down to the third house and knock at the door, I will tell her you're coming." The guard told Evangeline, pointing in the right direction.

The Seraphim waved and flew toward the guard's home while searching her inventory for a baby toy. She didn't seem to have anything, but she had an assortment of foodstuffs with her in case of emergency or a need to impress someone.

"It is a good thing I'm an excellent babysitter. We can give the new mother a night off." Laura bragged, making Evangeline snort in amusement.

"Since when are you good with newborns? Last time you babysat the werewolf children tried to chew on you." The Seraphim pointed out.

"But it kept them abused for hours. It's all part of my strategy I tell you." Laura defended herself.

"How about I will start out this time? You can show me the way if I am having trouble."

Laura didn't have time to respond before the door to the small log cottage opened and a Kitsune woman with a baby in her arms welcomed them into her house.

"Sorry to arrive so late, we didn't factor the travel time into our plans when we left the last village. But I am happy to help any way that I can." Evangeline said softly so she didn't wake the child.

"It is always a pleasure to meet a Seraphim. Would you like something to eat?" The Kitsune asked while the child stared directly at Evangeline.

Her aura made everyone like her, so she was actually very good with children now that she has learned about the other species and their habits.

"Don't worry about it. I have something prepared." Evangeline told their host, placing a pitcher of diluted Mythic Fruit juice, a plate of soft buttermilk biscuits, and a bowl of sausage gravy on the table.

"If you hand me the little bundle of joy, you can dig in. I'm sure you could use a hot meal and a nap. We will be here, and I can watch the little one." Evangeline explained.

The relieved look on the woman's face made Laura laugh, alerting the woman to her presence, but that didn't stop her from making a plate and taking a seat.

The child made a happy noise when the mother passed it over, but it just kept staring happily up at Evangeline for a while before falling asleep.

"No wonder the Angels have such a good reputation. He just doesn't want to sleep at all today. I'm not sure why, he's still too young to be teething and I've already healed him, so he shouldn't be sick." The young mother told Evangeline with an envious look.

"From what I remember, sometimes they just want attention. It might be a tiny, fluffy man but it is still a man. Let him squawk until he finds something entertaining and he should stop." Evangeline said with certainty.

Kitsune were technically foxes, but that was sort of like the Canine-type beastkin, so the advice was almost certain to be good.

"My husband told me you need to talk to the Mayor about a Librarian, but I am quite certain we don't have anything of the sort here. You've seen the town, even if it was dark it isn't large enough that you couldn't see the far side from the gates." Their host explained.

"This one would have passed through just after the Great War, and she has a book left behind by the Ancients. We work for Ancient Cain, and he is determined to read that book, whatever it might be." Evangeline explained.

"Well, that makes a bit more sense. If a noteworthy visitor stopped in, the Mayor should know. He will be up at dawn since he still works the fields with the rest of the men." The Kitsune woman explained, then nodded off a little as sleep threatened to overtake her.

"Go lay down for a while. I have the little one, and your husband is right outside by the gates if we need anything else." Evangeline instructed the woman, using a hint of [Command] to push the idea into her sleepy mind.

Letting strangers watch the baby was a bit of a stretch for most people after all.

Sleep won before the woman had even left her seat, and Laura caught her by the collar, then pushed her back upright.

"You will have to deal with this, I don't have the leverage unless I'm going to drag her across the floor. There is a bassinet over there." Laura told Evangeline, who was smirking at the sight of the tiny dragon pixie trying to sit a sleeping adult upright.

"Fine, make sure the little one doesn't roll away or suffocate or anything while I am gone." Evangeline agreed, placing the baby in the Bassinet and easily picking up the mother to put her to bed.

When she passed the second bedroom in the small cabin, she saw that there were four other children asleep in a pair of bunk beds and gave the woman a sympathetic look. She had a spell that dampened the noise in an area, and it seemed like this lady needed sleep more than most, so Evangeline soundproofed her bedroom and closed the door, leaving her to rest.

Everything was calm until near dawn, when the father returned, only to be shushed by Laura, who was watching over the little one as Evangeline made breakfast for the family.

"We soundproofed your bedroom so your wife could sleep, but the rest of the kids should be up soon," Laura explained to the confused-looking guard.

"In that case, I will bring the Mayor to us. He is already up and about this morning, and I'm sure he would greatly enjoy a conversation with the two of you." He agreed, heading back outside and whistling a rhythmic scale that was obviously a signal.

A much larger Kitsune came into the house a few minutes later, just as the little ones were waking up to the smell of pancakes, the one breakfast food that both Laura and Evangeline could agree on. Nothing else that Evangeline would eat was sweet enough to suit the Opal Prismatic Dragon's tastes.

"Grandpa. Come and eat, the Seraphim made pancakes." One of the toddlers announced, jumping into the Mayor's arms.

"Hush, you will wake up your mother. The spell only makes the area quieter, it doesn't mute little boys who shout indoors." The older man admonished the child, who was giving him an unrepentant look.

"I am sure you already know why we are here, and I don't really expect to find out something everywhere that we stop, but if you do know anything about the Librarian, we would appreciate it." Evangeline began, getting right to the point.

"I am friends with the mayor of the last village you stopped in, and I contacted them this morning to see if they knew about the Librarian, so I think I am all caught up on your

quest. As far as I know, they didn't stop here on their way to wherever they were going, and we don't have any valuable books that might be the ones you are looking for, but a Kitsune will never turn down company for breakfast." The Mayor explained.

"That's good news. Now I just need to look for Kitsune as we travel. Or Elves, they like breakfast too. The Seraphim is too focused on work and keeps wanting to leave before I've even had time for a snack." Laura complained.

Evangeline considered mentioning that the Dragon didn't actually need to eat, as she was a Companion, but she knew Laura well enough to know that her words would go in one ear and out the other. She simply loved sweet things too much to agree to miss meals just because she wasn't hungry.

"I can update your map for you if you like. I know a lot of people, so I can give you contact details for the various towns along your way, all the way to the mountains. After that, it is all you. They give everyone who wants to enter the End of the World a trial before letting them through." The Mayor suggested.

"End of the World you said? The Librarian's note for Ancient Cain said they would meet at the end of the world. We thought it was a time, not a place. Tell me, is that east of here? That is what the compass charm on the trinket we got from the last village indicated." Evangeline asked happily.

"A bit southeast, but yes. Go through the mountain Pass, meet the Tengu that guards the area and pass their trials to enter the valley. There is a portal there that leads to another world, and it has been open for centuries, which is how the area got its name." The Mayor explained.

"Interesting. Do you know anything about the other world?" Laura asked, pouring additional syrup on one of the kid's pancake stacks.

"Only that you can't pass through. There is some sort of spell around the portal. It looks out over a forest with trees that don't belong to this world though, so we know it isn't just to a different continent. It might be to the next world, the land of the Dragons, but nobody can say for sure." The Mayor told her with a smile, then added chocolate chips to the pancake stacks, earning him a growl from the father who would have to deal with sugared-up toddlers when all of his guards left.

"That's more than we were expecting to learn today. We will stop in at a few more villages along the way, in case the Librarian is traveling, so they might hear about our quest, but we will head straight for the mountain pass and the End of the World." Evangeline replied.

"As soon as we finish eating. Do we have any more of the good juice?" Laura asked, licking syrup from her fingers.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 549 549

While Evangeline and Laura enjoyed a leisurely breakfast, things were getting strange in the Eastern Continent.

The residents of Port Nefheim had an unwelcome new neighbor, an unstable portal that seemed to change destinations every few seconds.

"Do you think it is related to what is happening on the Northern Continent?" Cixelcid asked the Watcher who had cast a protective shield over the area, keeping everyone out until a decision could be made.

"It is possible. This ley line begins in the North. But they are only seeing portals to the Elemental plane. Plus, this is a strange portal, and it is dumping a huge amount of mana into our world.

That flow means the portal is one way. Beings from that world can come here, but we can't go there." The Watcher explained, trying to understand this development.

The Watchers were created with a fair bit of knowledge and had obtained more during their time here, but they had never seen a portal like that one before.

"Is there a way to close that thing? Too much more mana in the area is bad news. The guards reported Mythic Beasts again last night and had to ask Neffie for assistance when they lured them to the city barrier." Cixelcid sighed.

Neffie had been more than happy for an excuse to show off her power, and none of the guards had been seriously hurt, but the number of Mythic creatures arriving daily was alarming.

The Watcher suddenly motioned for silence and stepped through its barrier toward the Portal. It had heard voices coming from inside, but faint and speaking a foreign language.

The Watcher opened his senses to hear their thoughts and the System finally began to translate the words.

[Of course, it is safe to enter. We have eight King-level pets with us and we are all Great Accomplishment cultivators.]

[That portal creeps me out though. It feels dead like there is nothing on the other side. I don't sense any Prana at all.]

[If there is no Cultivation Essence, then we shouldn't be in any danger. Why would you fear non-cultivators?]

The Watcher let them argue, as they were still on the other side of the portal and might not enter at all. The others had seen this phenomenon before, where the new arrivals couldn't use this world's mana at all.

But the portal was giving off mana, which should mean that their world has plenty of it, making it very strange that they wouldn't be able to use it.

Cain's thoughts joined the Watchers as they examined this new phenomenon. [Maybe it has both, but they only cultivate using one? You were thinking about pets earlier, maybe they tame magical beasts that grow powerful from the Mana?]

While they discussed the possibilities, the portal stabilized and finally only showed one location, but with a thick barrier separating it from their reality. It still wouldn't be accessible to them, but those from the other side should be able to pass back and forth freely.

[Don't you think it feels like we are serving as the inside of a dungeon? The monsters in a dungeon can't just leave either.] Cyrene joined their thoughts as she woke up for the morning.

[That is possible. The protective spells around the planet have been changing.] The Watcher agreed.

If they were being targeted by a dungeon creation spell, the opponents on the other side might be in for a very bad time. Dungeon residents were usually limited in mind and power, so sending random people to face the armies of this world was tantamount to telling them to commit suicide.

The first thing through the portal was a large black Tiger. It took a single step looking around the area, then spotted the Watcher, who was sitting cross-legged in the grass, waiting for it.

The Tiger was level three hundred and eighty, which was certainly on par with the Eastern Continent's power level, but the Watcher was Cain's Summon, and Cain had advanced to nearly level five hundred now, and that was without factoring the power difference due to the Mythic Awakening.

The handler must have been expecting a message if there was an issue because only a few seconds later five humans and seven more beasts, all roughly on the level of the Tiger arrived, laughing and joking about imagined dangers and how paranoid they were before they entered.

Their amusement wouldn't last though.

"There really is no Prana here. I can feel some from the portal, but there's nothing else. What are you staring at Tiggy? It's still too dark for my eyes." One of the human women, a muscular brunette spoke.

[Allow me to turn on the lights.] The Watcher told them, letting his voice echo in their minds.

A simple light spell brightened the area, illuminating the Watcher, who was sitting in the open field near them with his wings spread and arm Tentacles extended to pet Tiggy, who seemed unsure what to make of this powerful creature.

"Fuck, flee!" Their leader called, then slammed headfirst into the barrier that the Watcher had raised between them and the portal.

[But you just got here. It would be rude to leave without at least staying for breakfast. I will have something brought.] The Watcher informed them as the group cowered in fear.

They had already realized their beasts didn't dare attack the Eldritch Horror, and without access to the Prana that they cultivated their own strength would never be its match.

The Watcher created a table and benches using an Earth Elemental then transformed into Cain's human form, wearing his favorite Dark Elven suit, and took a seat.

Dish after dish was taken from the Keep's kitchen, via the Guild Bank, as the Watcher contemplated the scene in front of him. He wanted to know all about these new people, but he had already scared them so much that they weren't speaking. That was horribly inefficient.

Eight large bowls, six with meat and two with fruits and vegetables were placed on the ground using a [Crushing Tentacle] and he decided that his hospitality was sufficient that they should start talking soon.

"Please, sit and eat."

The group was still staring at the scene in shock, frozen in place until they decided they really weren't about to die.

"Thank you." The woman who had spoken to the black Lion named Tiggy answered, taking a seat and gesturing for the others to join her.

Being invited to a meal with an Immortal Terror, as their planet called the Ancients, was unheard of. But if they wanted to leave here intact they didn't have many options.

"What brings you to my lovely home city? Oh, I suppose you can't see it yet. Give it fifteen minutes until the sun comes up and you will since your portal opened inside the city walls." The Watcher spoke.

That news turned their terror to dismay. They had heard of many things being on the other side of these portals, but never a city full of powerful intelligent beings.

"We should put lights all along the wall, so people don't get lost. We have gotten too used to everyone being able to see in the dark." Cixelcid added, tapping on the outer barrier to be let in.

"There is more than one? Should we collapse the portal so they can't find a way through to our world?" One of the humans whispered.

"There are two here, but I'm not one of them. There is no point in whispering, vampires at my level have very sensitive hearing." Cixelcid explained, then realized he had only scared them more.

"Um, I am Cixelcid and I mean no harm. After all, I was once human too." He tried, in an effort to smooth out the situation.

The looks they gave him very clearly said "yes, that is how vampires work" and Cid heard the laughter of the Watcher in his mind.

"Alright, that came out wrong. You have come to Port Nefheim, a multi-species city on the shores of the Eastern Continent. If you don't attack anyone, they won't attack you.

Please, eat before your food gets cold. It is made of Mythic fruits and monster meat, so it is very nutritious. See, your friends are all fine."

The animals were more than fine, they had already cleaned out their bowls and Tiggy was giving the Watcher a pleading look, pushing its bowl forward for seconds.

Numbly, Port Nefheim's newest guests began to eat, too shocked and confused to form a proper response.

[I get it now. Messing with people is way too much fun.] Cid thought, knowing the Watcher could hear him.

[It really is. But we should find out if their friends on the other side are going to be a threat, or if this portal will close when they leave. I can always put a temporary tower over it and make them think they have entered a dungeon if we need to.] The Watcher agreed.

As amusing as that might be, Cid thought that it was better to have an understanding with them.

"Where did you think you were going to end up?" Cid asked when they were nearly done eating.

"The Master has a fate-type beast that can open portals to a trial. We are supposed to go through, train ourselves in a dangerous environment and then return once we are stronger." One of the men explained.

"Then you are in the right spot. There is a group of very angry Trice outside the walls, and I am absolutely certain that fighting it will be a learning experience for you." The Watcher informed them happily.

It was always a relief when things worked out for the best. The guards could take a break and the Laughing God was going to have a great time watching these people try to fight off the daily Dino attacks.

"They will still be there after you eat, so clear your plates. Don't worry Tiggy, you're not going far and there will be dinner." The Watcher told them, then stepped away from the table and transformed back into his Ancient form so he could see over the walls and get an update on the situation outside.

Six large Trice, four-legged beasts with an Armored head plate, which got their name from the three large horns on their beak and head, weighing upward of ten tons each, plus a handful of raptors.

That should be enough of a challenge, at least for the first day.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 550 550

Cain listened to the night's happenings over breakfast and couldn't help but laugh. Port Nefheim's newest visitors were in the middle of their first engagement with the Eastern Continent's dinosaur population and it wasn't going well for them.

Only one of the eight monsters that they had brought with them was a large-sized creature, the rest were all the size of dogs or smaller. Normally that wouldn't be an issue, as they were very dangerous creatures, but against a herd of Trice, the unusually aggressive omnivorous beasts that Neffie had chosen as the tanks for her cavalry force, the small creatures proved utterly ineffective.

While they had sharp claws, they weren't long enough to make it through the thick hide of the Trice. Because they didn't make it through the hide, they did next to no damage, and the beast's natural regeneration closed the claw marks in seconds.

The swords that the humans had brought were just plain metal weapons, that they usually surrounded with their innate energy. But without the ability to pull it from the air on this planet, they needed to rely on their body to slowly produce it, and they ran out very quickly.

Even after Cixelcid took pity on them and gave them proper swords, they had still come back severely battered, and Neffie had to send the guards to deal with the last few raptors, who were openly mocking them as soon as the Lion moved far enough away that it couldn't easily attack.

[Uncle Cain, I have one teeny tiny favor to ask you...] Neffie asked in a private message.

[You could transform and summon the Tiggy yourself.] Cain responded, guessing what she wanted.

[No, not that. The Watchers already agreed to make me one of my own that will be permanent. I want someone to teach me this Kung Pow fighting style that those people have. I tried getting them to teach me but they are really bad at teaching.] Neffie explained.

[I will ask around. I know a guy, and he owes me a favor for sending him the last group of cultivators that we recovered. But I think it is called Kung Fu, not Kung Pow.] Cain tried not to laugh out loud as he responded to Neffie's texts.

[Thanks! I knew I could count on you. The flippy flying fighting is so cool that I don't know why more people don't use it.]

Neffie's enthusiasm had all the Companions plus Cyrene's attention, as the thoughts Cain had as he read the messages were not blocked from the group. Neffie didn't keep secrets well, she spontaneously blurted out everything, so Cain didn't treat any requests that she made of him as a secret either. Unless she specifically asked, that is.

[I can go get someone from Duke Chen's dojo. They are always excited to meet new cultivators, and they are good at teaching. I haven't seen Neffie in a while either, so a short visit would be just the thing.] Nemu volunteered.

[That works for me. Just make sure you get one with a lot of patience. Dealing with Neffie isn't the easiest task in the world, especially when she is excited.] Cain responded.

Vala laughed in the mental link and focused on a memory of King Aggramor chasing her around the castle the day that he learned that Neffie and sugar after dinner were a bad combination. She had calmed down a little since then, but not a whole lot.

On the Southern Continent, there was no word on the location of Morgeth, but all four sections of the army had stopped short of the cities that Cain had assumed that they were heading for. He had scouts out, and some preparations made, but he hadn't deployed his own forces yet. There wasn't any good reason for them to wait that he could see.

It might be a psychological attack, letting the army make everyone nervous and hoping that they break, but that wasn't as easy as simply sitting in the forest, they would need to attack travelers or the cities themselves if they wanted to get the locals to fear them. They hadn't done either of those things yet.

[Maybe they intend to negotiate? They could be waiting to see what you do, to determine if you are the sort of person that they can work with. If only we could find Morgeth, we would know more.] Victor, the Echo suggested.

"How did we lose track of the leader of the enemy army anyhow? Seriously, they took over dozens of towns by force, you would think that we could at least keep tabs on someone like that." Cain muttered out loud.

Victor chuckled at his frustration but didn't stop tending to the newest modifications to their crops. The single-kernel corn rations were fairly popular, but there was still demand for more types of travel foods that could be carried on the person and not use up valuable inventory space.

Victor thought that a nice fudge brownie might be a popular option, so they started developing a Cacao tree to make Mythic Grade chocolate. The trees themselves were a success and grew very well, but the results were unpredictable so far, and every bean was capable of giving a different effect.

To some of the people on the farm, that was a pure win. They could process small batches of distinct effects to make chocolates, but the Echoes wanted repeatability.

"Maybe you could go for a plain chocolate tree and use the other ingredients in the brownies to give the desired effects? Corn and other grains have shown great promise in hunger fulfillment, so they could be the base, while the chocolate was just a flavoring." Lou suggested, working on a new species of blueberry that would begin blooming again as soon as the berries were picked.

That one was a personal request from Svetlana, who loved the berries that grew all over Long Fang Valley.

Victor shook his head at the suggestion. "Plain Chocolate? What are we, wild animals? No, I will make these stupid trees give a steady effect soon enough."

"You have a point. There is no point in mixing in a mundane major ingredient when there is the opportunity for interesting effect interactions between the flavoring and the base of the brownies. Let me know if you need a hand." Lou agreed.

The exchange had drawn the attention of the Bunnies, who were intrigued by the possibility of magical chocolates becoming the basis of travel rations.

"This world really does have some wonderful things hidden in it doesn't it?" One of the clerics asked Jessica, who was still trying to adapt to all the crazy things she kept seeing since meeting Cain.

,m "It really does. But some scary ones as well. Like that Demon that is trying to take over the continent." Jessica agreed.

"What if they are doing it for a good reason?" Someone in the crowd nearby asked, making Jessica look around for the source.

She couldn't spot it right away, but she answered anyhow, assuming that they were listening. "Well, I suppose if they could meet with Cain and explain they could come to a solution without fighting. As a Bunny, that would be the very best course of action in my opinion, but I don't know if they will go for it."

There wasn't another response, so Jessica just assumed that the person had heard as much as they wanted to, or they didn't have another question, so she let it go and continued with her morning activities, namely watching the Echoes do strange stuff with plants.

[The armies are all setting up camp. I don't know what the plan is, but they have just stopped ten kilometers from their targets and are settling in for a long-term stay, going by the extent of their camp buildings.] The Oath Breakers reported back to Cain.

That was the second group that told him the same thing today, and it still didn't make any more sense. Morgeth was missing, the armies had stopped and were waiting for something. Was it a weapon that they were waiting on, or perhaps a specific timing?

"Not knowing is more annoying than not being able to do anything, I am certain of it," Cain complained to Jin, who had borrowed his [Spell Crafting] book and was trying to make sense of the first page.

"You are the chosen one of the Laughing God, aren't you? You should be used to nonsensical and annoying by now since that's how the rest of the world most likely views your activities." The Dragonkin pointed out.

"That's a bit rude. I mean, you're not wrong, but it's still rude. Maybe we can gather oracles and have them focus on various ways to search for Morgeth until we find him?" Cain suggested.

"We already did that. They haven't come up with anything new since yesterday, and none of them involved the army stopping. Cyrene suspects that it is a result of both sides using Oracles to try to create the same outcome but using different approaches and causing chaos." Victor told him.

"This whole thing is giving me a headache. I'm going to the Bunny God Temple for a massage." Cain complained, walking away from the bench where he had breakfast while Victor shook his head at the annoyed Ancient.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.