

Reincarnated With A Summoning System

Chapter 551 551

"Mister Cain, welcome, welcome. Are you here to make an offering? Have a nap? Do you need a massage?" The Bunny acolyte at the door greeted Cain as he reached the temple.

"Today has been mentally stressful, I would really appreciate a massage," Cain informed him, with a smile.

"No problem, we have many acolytes and clerics available right now. Do you have a preference?" The Acolyte asked.

"Not really, as long as the massage is good, I am happy with whoever gives it." Cain agreed, following the small man into the massage rooms.

"Just wait right there and I will bring your masseuse."

The acolyte practically ran out of the room, alarming some of the others nearby until they realized that he was just excited and not in any danger.

Cain prepared himself and laid out on the table to await the Bunny's arrival, using his skills to listen in on the thoughts near him. They were almost all about massages, naps, food, or other such daily activities, but there was one set of thoughts that were more calculating, trying to memorize everything that they saw.

Cain suspected that this was a spy for Morgeth, since the thoughts weren't sexual or possessive, as one might expect of an intruder into the Bunnies' sanctuary. But he couldn't locate the actual source of the thoughts.

They were definitely close, possibly in the same room as him, but even with the Mana sense of the Ancients, he couldn't locate them.

They must have been using a rather high-level stealth skill to evade his notice, which meant that at the very minimum they were an Awakened Transfer, likely a rogue type class, or possibly a druid, who could blend in with natural surroundings.

There was a garden above Cain on the roof, so they might be hiding there if they were a druid-type class who could merge themselves into plant life to hide, but it seemed less likely than a rogue type for an infiltration mission.

"Master Cain, it is good to see you again." A Bunny Cleric announced, hopping on top of Cain to give him a hug before spreading oil over his back.

"It's good to be back, I hope that things are going well for you all here on the farm. You aren't missing your old temple and homes too much, are you? We have enough people now that we could go fix it up if you have members who want to move back." Cain suggested.

"Oh, no it is very pleasant here. In fact, we are thinking of opening other temples in the area, at the nearby farming villages, now that they all have Guardians to keep them safe from monster attacks. We have been sending people into the cities with the trade groups, the Bunnies who wanted more exploration or to help with more childbirths, and that is helping with our numbers even if we really do have a lot of people here now."

The Priestess was rambling on as she massaged Cain's back, and Cain sensed more than a little bit of jealousy from the mysterious set of thoughts in the room.

Whoever it was wanted to join in and feel this sense of community, but felt that they weren't worthy of being accepted in such a place.

That seemed strange to Cain, everyone was welcome in a Bunny Temple, as long as you didn't attack them. It also meant that whoever it was that was observing him was actually in the room, and not just nearby.

"Maybe that is the best solution to our troubles. Now that the armies Morgeth raised have stopped and we know where they are, we can try sending people around to make sure that the people in the cities that they captured are living decent lives." Cain suggested, waiting for the response from their hidden visitor.

[Like hell I raised those armies. They have been stealing Morgeth's name this whole time and spreading my Curse.]

There it was, a solid response from their visitor.

It was more than Cain could have hoped for, and now he had something to work with.

"It feels like the people might have had a wide area curse cast on them. If we send some Bunnies to put everyone in a good mood, along with a Record Keeper to stealthily dispel everyone who comes to visit them, we might be able to break the effect that is forcing them to be so violently loyal to Morgeth." Cain suggested, causing the bunny to hug him again, heedless of the massage oil between them.

"A path where nobody dies? That would be amazing, and definitely, Bunny God approved. I am certain that some of our kinfolds would risk danger to try out that method." She informed Cain with a joyful smile, rubbing her face against his in a show of happiness while she clung to his back.

"That's settled then. After this, we just need to find Morgeth, and try to stop the Curse from spreading again. Assuming that it is a Curse type ability. That might take me personally though since I can modify a Transfer's Skills."

Again Cain was fishing for a response from the hidden person in the room, and again he got just the response that he was looking for, a reminiscence about the skill that was affecting everyone's minds.

The hidden watcher was a Djinn, a Mythic Demon with a very unique once-in-a-lifetime ability to grant a wish. When they arrived in the world, just after the Awakened Zone barriers began to collapse, they were immediately captured by a local warlord.

The warlord realized immediately how valuable they were, and spent a long time considering how to phrase the wish that he viewed as his own. The law of possession was the only thing he really understood. He had the Djinn imprisoned, so she was his, and so were her abilities.

What he had finally wished for, using the life of the one friend that the Djinn had made while in Captivity as leverage, was for everyone under his rule to Trust and Obey him unconditionally.

He was paranoid about being assassinated and wanted to take over the Continent, so he had formed a plan.

But that was the moment that the Djinn, their mysterious watcher in the room, broke from her reverie and returned to the present moment, leaving Cain dangling on what the actual plan was.

He could guess at least a fair bit of it. The Djinn had been upset about using Morgeth's name, so the leader wasn't actually named Morgeth, and that was why the Oath Breakers couldn't find them in the crowd. The real leader was likely posing as one of his own right-hand men to do the dirty work, and the one name Morgeth was a figurehead that was brought out for the sake of putting on a show, and to become the target of assassins like the ones that Cain had sent.

That was actually somewhat brilliant, and the real leader could order everyone to change their allegiance and recognize them as the true leader whenever they wanted.

The revelation also told Cain why he couldn't find the infiltrator, Djinn could become incorporeal, so one with stealth abilities would be impossible to trace. If the warlord hadn't caught them when they just arrived and didn't yet understand or have access to their powers, they would have never been in this position, to begin with.

"You might as well come out, Miss Djinn. We have a lot to talk about and the massage table beside me is open, with a Masseuse waiting." Cain called into thin air, startling the Bunny Clerics.

Confident in their ability to escape, but confused as to how they had been spotted in the first place, a slender demon with bright blue skin appeared right in front of Cain.

"How did you know that I wouldn't assassinate you when you announced you knew I was here?" The girl asked. And it was a girl, even calling her a teenager might be overestimating her age by Cain's estimation.

"If you had actually wanted to kill people, you wouldn't have started with me. You have been here for a while now, and I didn't sense any hostility from you, only curiosity and a dedication to recording everything that you saw." Cain shrugged, sighing as the Bunny moved to massage his legs.

"You really should lay down, the Bunnies work magic with their hands, and you seem stressed. Once you have had a moment to unwind we can talk about solutions to this issue."

Reluctantly, she agreed, laying down on the massage table beside Cain, and staring intently at him.

"You know, you are a very strange sort of person? Even your followers don't make any sense at all. I was sent here to determine what your plan for taking over the Continent was, and it still escapes me." She said softly.

"Oh, that's simple. We bring them a better life, dedicated merchants, Guardians who actually care about the people, and fluffy Bunnies. Who would say no to that? Don't think of it as an Empire, but an alliance between cities." Cain explained.

The young Djinn was clearly naive to the ways of the world, and while Cain's words were technically true, she didn't seem to understand the underlying attraction to the force that could accomplish such things.

"That seems better than simply ordering entire cities to do exactly what you told them and forcing the people you drafted into the army to be loyal until death." She agreed, then gasped at the warm oil on her skin as a pair of Bunny Clerics went to work.

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"Since we all now know that Morgeth isn't the actual leader's name, why don't you tell me who it is and I will go have a discussion with them and try to bring this all to a peaceful resolution?" Cain asked once their massages were finished.

He also stealthily recorded the Djinn, in case the status of the once-per-lifetime racial ability reset when he summoned others of the species.

"Unfortunately, one of the first things he did after I gave him the power with my wish ability was to prohibit me from revealing his identity. I can't even tell you who might know and not have such a prohibition on them." She sighed.

"That's fine, we can find out about him on our own later. Can you tell me what city you arrived in? How about what sort of starting gear a Djinn gets?" Cain asked, wondering if he could fool the system's limitations.

"I started out incorporeal, and these are the clothes I get when I become solid. I started out on the outskirts of Valmar, on the far side of the continent, near the shore closest to the Western Continent. It has been a long journey to get here to your farm." She informed him, unaware that what she said could and would be used against her boss.

"Did nobody tell you about equipping gear?" Cain asked, wondering about the default clothing when she becomes a solid comment.

"I mean, I know that people wear armor and stuff, but if I'm in trouble I become incorporeal." She responded, clearly confused.

"Alright, I have just the thing for you then. It's a very lovely dress, and it will keep the hot sun off your skin, now that you are going to be visible for a while. Hold this and concentrate on equipping it, your system will do the rest." Cain explained.

The item he handed her was just a basic cotton dress, with leather accents so that a rogue could use it as well. Her class only said [Djinn] the same as her species, so Cain wasn't one hundred percent sure what sort of equipment she was compatible with.

The dress vanished from her hands to appear on her body, and the girl smiled. "Oh, this is lovely. Can I keep it?"

"But of course, it's just a piece of clothing. I could give you armor and whatever else you need as well if you decide to leave the employment of the one pretending to be Morgeth." Cain suggested.

"But I swore loyalty." She sighed again, then flopped down on a bench in despair, not seeing a good way out of this for her.

While she was distracted, Cain called and merged with a Record Keeper and had it use its most powerful [Dispel] on her.

It might not be one hundred percent effective if the ability really was a Spirit Awakened one, but it had a pretty good success rate, and as far as Cain could tell, it had worked on the first try. She hadn't noticed it yet though.

"Do you know much about the history of this world? There have been people here for an incredibly long time, and there were two major wars in the past. One between the races, and one between the Ancients and the Gods." Cain began, sitting beside her to tell his story.

"Oh, I never asked. How did it go for them? I mean, they challenged real gods."

Cain smiled at her enthusiasm. "Let me start a bit earlier than that. The Ancients were originally much like you, incorporeal beings, only they were made of pure magic, tasked by the Creators to Build this world for them. After thousands of years, they grew bodies of their own, enormous tentacled ones that the people now call the Ancients.

They created many of the species in this world, and the Creators placed the others, and the Goddess of Reincarnation brought in the souls of people who died in other worlds to begin populating this one.

For a while, everything was good, but the Creators had enemies, a group of Human Gods, who wanted to tear down what the Creators had built, in order to punish them. At first, the Creators were unaware of the Humans' treachery, and the Ancients, their representatives in this world fought on their behalf, building up their own power and the power of the world to keep the Human Gods at a standstill.

Finally, it was too much for the Ancients, for they weren't actually Gods themselves, only constructs who had gained a body, and they were banished from this world before the Creators stepped in and drove the Human Gods out, leaving many humans behind in this world to go along with what the Creators had already put here.

On the other continents, there are many, many humans present, it is only the Southern Continent that is so heavily demon and Youkai populated. Since you didn't know much about the world they might not have told you all that yet." Cain explained, generously padding his knowledge of the past with plausible-sounding half-truths.

"That is amazing, and you are one of those Ancients?" She asked.

"No, that brings me to the second half of our story. Many thousands of years after the war against the Gods, the species of the world all went to war against each other, over a series of pent-up grievances.

During that war, the Human Mages cast a spell, a grand one that encompassed the whole world, to summon Champions and Heroes to their side to aid them to victory. It was an incredible spell and brought hundreds of reincarnated humans here to fight.

But the Laughing God, one of the Creators, saw that as too mundane. So, he changed the spell. Nearly every species, all over the world started getting new arrivals that looked like them and could access the System that you know today. One that would

make them heroes and champions. That is how I arrived here, the System Transferred me here, the same way that it brought you.

So, we are a lot alike, you and me. We are both members of lost species now, no longer what we were before we arrived. The only difference is that I have been here a little longer." Cain told her after his best attempt at captivating public speaking.

He had attracted a number of Bunnies as well, as they loved a good story, and even Luna, who was still sleeping when Cain went for a massage, had returned, draping herself around his neck and clapping in appreciation for the story.

"Is the little Lamia a transfer too? It started me very young, but she looks to still be only a few years old." The Djinn asked.

"Nope, I was actually born here. This is my dad." Luna told her proudly, and the young Djinn looked shocked.

"So your mother is..."

"A regular Lamia, with white scales and bright pink hair, but only two arms. She is back at one of our other houses on the Central Continent, taking care of the rest of the children." Luna told her with a smile.

"That was an excellent story, and I didn't expect you to be such an open-minded family man, but what was the point of it?" The Djinn asked.

"When the Record Keeper disenchant a curse or debuff effect it can take a little while to properly wear off, and sometimes it will reactivate on its own if the attempt doesn't work completely. I just needed to distract you with an interesting history lesson for a while until we could be certain that you are no longer under the control of the one leading the army." Cain told her.

"Wait, you can counteract the ability I gave him? But it is Spirit Awakened." She gasped.

"Lower rank abilities still work to counter higher rank ones, they just aren't always effective, the higher level effects will sometimes resist them. It happens with non-awakened abilities as well." Cain answered while the Bunnies all nodded in agreement. They had all seen the healers working on particularly tough poisons and curses during their training.

"So you can free the people?" She asked hopefully.

"I mean, technically, yes. It would be slow to do them all one by one, but we could. Instead, I want to catch him and take that ability away. I understand that likely means a duel to the death, but if that's what it takes, then I am willing to try, for the sake of the civilians on the Southern Continent." Cain told her.

Really, he had no intentions of actually fighting. He had acquired a lovely spell from his spell crafting that would send someone directly up in the air for thousands of kilometers. The demon might be tough, but unlike a powerful Dragon, he probably couldn't survive in a vacuum or fly through space on his own. That should end the whole mess in an instant.

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The conversation that the Djinn and Cain were having gave the Oath Breakers an incredibly great idea. If the one they wanted wasn't named Morgeth, all they had to do was find the one person without the compliance debuff and borrow them.

The fact that they hadn't been able to find the enemy leader so far had annoyed them to no end, and they had even asked a few other demons with search talents to help them find Morgeth over the last few days with no luck.

Fortunately, for them, finding a specific debuff, or lack thereof, was much easier.

The Oath Breakers split up and began searching through the recently occupied towns again, and then moved on to the outskirts of the army encampments.

They couldn't get any closer, as they were fast, but not invisible, and a bit too large to blend in with the crowd.

[Except maybe we aren't? These are almost all Demons, why don't I just walk in, look around and walk out? When was the last time someone actually had the balls to question one of us?] One of them asked, gaining the immediate support of the others.

Even if it went wrong, they could just go on a massacring rampage through the army camp and have Cain summon a replacement for themselves when they were inevitably killed.

That was the best idea any of them had come up with today, at least in the minds of the Oath Breakers, so one per army camp simply walked in to investigate. They waved at the guards on patrol, walked past the guards at the barricades with authority, and directly into the center of Camp where they could scan as many people as possible.

[Nothing here.] The first one reported.

[Same.] The second and third replied sadly.

[Holy crap, I found Morgeth. The actual Morgeth, and it's just some level two hundred oracle girl. I am totally kidnapping her.] The last one decided.

Morgeth herself had yet to realize that the Oath Breaker was coming for her. An Oracle's visions were mostly tragedy and death, and the Mythic Demon had no intentions of harming her. There was a good chance that the leader would come back to this camp though, since the figurehead was here, so the Oath Breakers made plans to keep an eye on the area, while the lucky winner brought their captive back to Cain.

"Hi, my name is Oath Breaker, and we are going on a little vacation." Morgeth heard from somewhere inside her tent, and then the feeling of weightlessness and rapid movement made her so dizzy that she had to restrain the urge to vomit.

"Wait, what are you doing? Where are we going? I told you, I won't keep our deal anymore if you don't." The Obsession Demon known as Morgeth complained.

"You are now a guest of the Darklight Host Guild. I am bringing you to our Farm. I believe that you have a friend waiting for you there, some Djinn girl whose system just calls her Djinn." The Oath Breaker explained impatiently.

"You can't capture a Djinn, they become incorporeal when threatened. Now tell me the truth." She demanded.

[Cyrene, how do you convince an Oracle that you aren't lying to them?] The Oath Breaker asked through the group consciousness.

[Focus on something that will harm her but show her the truth at the same time. Just making plans is usually enough to trigger a vision.] Cyrene suggested.

The Oath Breakers conferred with each other and came up with a solution, deciding that once she was back at the camp and the truth had been fully explained, she would be flogged with a belt until it hurt to sit for a week.

The one carrying her did his best to envision the scenario without laughing at the horrified look that was going to appear on her face when she saw the vision, and in only seconds she gasped and screamed, then flailed and tried to escape.

"That must have been the vision then. Good, now you know that we're not lying to you." Oath Breaker declared proudly.

"What are you talking about you psychopath, all I saw was you humiliating me and hitting me with a belt in public." She shouted in his ear.

"Hmm, I thought you would see that it was in front of your friend the Djinn and that the bit where it was for being so rude to me." Oath Breaker complained, confused.

“Should I come up with a new plan? Maybe one where we explain between swats of the belt?” Oath Breaker asked the horrified oracle.

“Oh, Demon Gods no. That’s even worse. Why were you only wearing a loincloth held up with a belt anyhow?” She exclaimed, flailing her arms to smack any bit of him that she could reach.

“You know what, this is way more fun than actually getting you to see the vision that explains everything.” Oath Breaker told her happily, causing the demon girl to pull a small knife and stab him in the side.

“Oh, now you’ve done it. You should have seen this one coming.” He laughed, sending her more visions as they dashed toward the Farm.

By the time they arrived, Morgeth was a sobbing mess, begging for forgiveness and promising to behave, and the demon hadn’t even laid a hand on her yet.

“Boss Cain, this is the real Morgeth. Nobody told me that Oracles were so well-behaved, but she’s here, unharmed, intact, and in the flesh.” Oath Breaker declared happily, while Cain rolled his eyes at the demon’s theatrics.

“Djinn, say something to your friend, she’s still freaking out. Oath Breaker got a bit too creative with the visions on their trip here.” Cain explained, ushering the two together.

They immediately embraced, and the Oracle gasped in recognition. “It really is you. They haven’t hurt you have they? They are monsters, true monsters, if only you could see the things they planned for me.”

The Djinn turned to Cain and glared. “You promised me your demon wouldn’t hurt her.”

Cain raised a hand over his heart and put on his best offended expression. “My dear, you misunderstand me. He just exploited a loophole in the Oracle’s class. Being abducted and uncertain of her future was enough suffering to trigger constant visions. So, they planned a variety of punishment scenarios where they explained the truth of the situation so that she would see them in her visions.”

The Djinn looked rather doubtful at that explanation. “And then how did she end up like this?”

“It was really fun and I might have gone overboard?” The Oath Breaker phrased his reply as a question as if he wasn’t actually certain that it was his fault.

It only took a few minutes for Morgeth to calm down, and Cain had the Record Keeper remove the curse from her, leaving her free to actually answer questions for them.

“What can you tell us about the leader of the army? We have some basic details already, but anything else you can add would be helpful.” Cain asked the Oracle that his Oath Breakers had abducted.

She only gave him a disbelieving look at first, but after a moment she shook her head. “I don’t think that I have any information that I can really add to what you know. The armies stopped because my visions got confused. There were too many people trying to influence the future at once and everything got muddled. That was why the scouts were sent out and the assassins.”

Cain considered that for a moment. “How many assassins? I don’t think that I’ve seen any actual assassins, only a few scouts and spies.”

“That’s just because your patrols are insanely overpowered. What is up with them anyhow? Every time I see an attack launched against the farm a huge wave of Zealots joins the battle like they don’t fear death and have absolute certainty of their victory.” Morgeth asked, trying to make sense of her past visions.

“You mean the Summons? Why would they fear death, they can just be called back for a few mana.” Luna asked from her place around Cain’s neck.

“Did your voice change? Who is speaking?” Morgeth asked.

“Oh, sorry, I totally forgot that you are blind. I am hanging around Cain’s neck, the name is Luna, and it is a pleasure to meet you.” The Lamia Progenitor explained, reaching out to shake Morgeth’s hand.

The demon didn’t look any less confused, but her Djinn friend whispered an explanation in her ear that made her giggle.

“Seriously, you wear demons as a fashion accessory? I have never seen that in a vision before, not even where we took you by surprise. But never mind that. It is a pleasure to meet you. I would love to speak to your mother later if there is a chance. I heard from the Oath Breaker that she was once an Oracle as well.” Morgeth answered with a slight bow.

“You would like her. You’re both kind of weird.” Luna informed Morgeth happily, only to get flicked in the back by Kone, who gave her a meaningful look, hoping that the little demon would figure out that she had insulted their guest.

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Chapter 554 554 Loyalty Is Its Own Reward

On the Eastern Continent, things were changing quickly. The massive influx of mana from the dimensional portals on the Northern Continent had turned a large portion of the continent into an awakened area in only a few days, then stabilized. It was the worst-case scenario that he had been trying to prepare for, with the continent undergoing another severe upheaval and not nearly enough awakened transfers in the cities to keep everyone safe.

The change in power level wasn't Cixelcid's reason for concern, though. The unexpected number of monsters that came with it was. Port Nefheim had been under attack for six hours, and the Wave wasn't ending.

When the sun came up, Neffie had sent out scouts with the best stealth skills they could find to locate the source of the issue, and they were due to report in again anytime now.

[Portals to other worlds have been found at three different ley line junctions already, and we have reason to believe there are more all over the Continent. They can't be closed, and we can't pass through them.] The lead scout reported back.

Cixelcid had encountered this problem before, only a few days ago, when a similar portal had opened right in Port Nefheim and let out a group of Cultivators. The guards had blocked the portal with a large stone to keep others from coming afterward, though the new arrivals insisted that they were the only ones permitted to pass through that portal.

The Cultivators had lived up to their goal of taking on an extreme challenge to build their own power and were currently resting, having been on the front lines for most of the night. More and more Mythic Beasts were arriving as time passed, and Cixelcid wasn't sure if they had strong enough guards to maintain the lines.

"Cid, we have reinforcements," Lickity called happily as she ran over to him.

Behind her were Mary, the Elven Puppet Master from Munan, the forest city whose Queen Cain helped with a curse some time ago, and two hundred Mythic Awakened Elven soldiers.

"I brought everyone that I could when I realized what had happened. I'm sorry it isn't more, but when the cities fell, we evacuated everyone who wasn't awakened to the Serrah Woods on the Central Continent." She explained.

Somewhere along the line, she had upgraded her class to Puppet Overlord and gained a skill that granted her the Mythic Awakening. It must have been recently; only a few weeks ago, she had been leveling right here in the Port Nefheim tower.

“All help is appreciated. There is a buffet by the walls; grab some food and get a few hours of sleep. You look like you’ve been through a lot.” Cid agreed. He was going to lead the way for them when a portal suddenly opened beside him, and Moana flew through, circling his head in a form of victory dance.

“I brought more helpers. Master Cain has a plan for the South, so we brought you every fighter, healer, and cook who volunteered.” The Leviathan informed him.

There were hundreds of them, a steady stream coming through the portal from the Long Fang Valley.

“You get one copy of each Companion as well, and both copies of Nila will be here with Mythryll by boat in a few hours.

All of the new arrivals with Moana wore the black and white Tabards of the Darklight Host Outreach Workers, and Cid saw Cyrene guiding people to set up camps wherever they could without blocking roads or damaging crops.

“What brings you here, Cyrene? I know you hate fighting.” Lickity asked Lamia, whose hair was full of excited Lamia children.

“My visions will work better from here. There are still a lot of awakened warriors in the valley, so don’t worry about them, they are perfectly safe.

But we couldn’t stand around while our friends were in trouble. I saw visions of the invasion this morning, Central Continent time, and spent the last few hours getting everyone we could find ready to come and fight.

I even brought some old friends from the Yellow Tusk Clan Orcs. You remember Morgan, right?”

Morgan, affectionately called Mork by her brother, was at the head of twenty Awakened Orcs, leading them straight to the walls to join the fight with only a short pause to wave at Cid and Lickity.

“Mary, how many Elven villagers are still trapped in the woods? Should we send troops to rescue everyone within a day of us?” Neffie asked, coming to hug the Elf.

“We should be the last of the Elves here on the Eastern Continent. Some might be on the far coast, which isn’t an awakened area yet, but the entire Forest was evacuated and left to the monsters.” Mary informed her with a rueful smile, returning the hug.

Cixelcid couldn't believe what he was hearing. An entire Continent had been lost to the new arrivals from the portals? He knew it was likely to upset the balance on the Continent, but he hadn't expected that.

"Thank you for your hard work. I wish we could have done more, but there hadn't been news from more than a day away in a while." Lickity told the Elf, adding herself to the hug.

"Everyone was so panicked that they barely remembered to inform their families that they were leaving. We left in five groups to lead the evacuations. Well, other than Mary here, since she is a group all by herself as a Puppet Master." One of the Elven soldiers explained, indicating a pair of Dwarf-sized, white-winged Youkai and an Elven man who were most likely Mary's Commander and Lieutenants.

"I was in the next village over when we finished the evacuations last night, so I called everyone to me, and we decided to come here next to see how you were holding up, but we were attacked by surprise, and the travel circle in town was damaged, so we had to walk," Mary added.

That explained why they looked so bedraggled today. A monster raid in the middle of the night is a nightmare to defend against. You can't even see them coming.

The companions had joined the battle already, and the sight of additional Dragons in the air was helping reduce the number of monsters willing to attack the Port City, giving the warriors a chance to catch their breath.

The Watchers already had some out, mostly clones of Su, Kone's Forest Dragon Companion, who were healing the front-line combatants. Still, the extra group from Laura was enough to tip the balance even before Vala and her demons tore into the group of Minotaur Warriors who were holding the center of the battlefield.

Moana and her Leviathan squad, flying above the city and blocking the light were the last straw, and the attackers fled the field. They would be back, and the scouts would need to be careful returning, but for now, they had time to regroup and eat.

"Now that we have breathing room, I welcome everyone to Port Nefheim. We recently expanded our housing in expectation of seeing refugees, but the Elves seem to have taken care of that problem.

So, there are plenty of places for everyone to stay if you don't want to sleep outdoors. There is plenty of hot food, and our guards are on their way to collect more from the battlefield.

So please, make yourselves at home." Neffie welcomed everyone who had just arrived in the city and then returned to the walls. She didn't trust the monsters not to come back, and her most vital support abilities had a limited range centered on herself.

The diversion didn't create much of a break in the fighting, though. Thirty minutes after they fled, the monsters were back, patrolling the forest's edge.

Mythic monsters were more intelligent than most, and they understood the concept of weak spots in defensive formations. They waited and watched all afternoon, launching random attacks to test the lines.

"Is just like the old days, isn't it, Cid? The training tower is good, but it makes you lose your edge because you know you won't die. This is a proper fight." Morgan, leader of the Orcish Contingent, laughed, pouring a bucket of water over her head to clean off the blood from her body.

She had restyled her hair into a bright purple Mohawk, making it easier for her troops to find her in a crowd. Despite his size and well-muscled build, the Orcish Commander still dwarfed Cixelcid, as well as most of the other Orcs.

"There is never a dull moment here, that's for sure. How long can your troops stay before you need to head back to the Central Continent?" Cid asked.

"I think we will stay in Port Nefheim for now. There are no real challenges left at home, but there are plenty of them here.

Orcs need the challenge; they get depressed and ill if they can't exert themselves properly. The towers were enough at first, but so many of us gained awakened abilities that we needed something more.

We could have gone to Cain in the south, but he had a lot of support there already. Here, we not only get to fight, but we also get to feel useful."

It was an unexpectedly long and deep speech from the big woman, but she was right; orcs needed the battle; they couldn't live without it.

It would be a significant change seeing them in the Eastern Continent, but almost everything about this place had changed lately.

Cixelcid was pulled from his reverie by the sight of sails on the horizon, both the black of the Wave Riders and the Teal and Gray of Queen Rose, which should have Nila and Mythryll aboard.

[We brought supplies in case you needed anything, and we have news from the Northern Continent. The giants have abandoned the search for Gnomes and left the North to the Dragons and elementals. They are returning to the Western Continent now.]

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

Chapter 555 555

"I appreciate all help that we can get. I will fill you in on the situation in a few minutes and we can start making longer-term plans." Cixelcid greeted Nila.

"No need, we can hear each other's thoughts and there is a Watcher standing right behind you." The Wave Rider pointed out.

"I need to sleep, I am missing important things now." Cixelcid sighed.

"Go, sleep, there will still be chaos out here when you wake up, and we can get things organized in the meantime." The Watcher instructed, already planning how to organize everything.

If he just moved all the supplies to a warehouse, they could be inventoried and pulled out as needed. The sorting of the wall guards wasn't going to be hard, but they would have to increase the amount of food that they were importing, since their population spiked, and they were going to be using all of the areas that weren't already planted as fields to house fighters who had just arrived, as well as any refugees that might have been missed.

The scouts were coming back as well, so they would need to organize a push out into the woods to make a path for them to reach the walls safely. Most stealth and shadow abilities didn't work well in the open grassland around the city.

That was the easy part though, the monsters were about to attack again, so if he just ordered everyone to head to the shoreline and follow that in they could make it almost to the city hidden and not come too close to where the beasts were gathered to fight.

[We have new people coming back with the scouting group. More of the Dragonkin ones like that Jin who I saw in Long Fang Valley the other day.] One of the scouts told the Watcher in a private message.

That was unexpected, but they could work with that. [Refugees? Where did you find them?]

The scout's message was almost instant. [They came through one of the portals. I think they were just curious, and they didn't attack so we are bringing them with us. They can return home when they have done whatever it was they were trying to do. None of them speak common right now, and I don't speak dragon.]

Draconic was an odd language, and the System didn't translate it unless it was written. So, in essence, the new arrivals were just roaring at a very confused group of scouts and making hand gestures until they got a general agreement on what they were going to do.

"The scouts are almost back, and they have more random people from the portals. I need a team to head out into the field and engage the Beasts so that they aren't attacked on their way back." The Watcher called, and the Orcs cheered.

"Well, that's one group, anyone else?" The Watcher laughed.

"Shift three of the Guards is about to come on duty, we will join the fight." A voice from the crowd agreed.

That should be enough to at least keep the beasts busy, even if it wasn't enough to really clear them out or push them back. It wasn't like they could clear an entire continent from a coastal city anyhow, they just had to keep the immediate vicinity safe, the way that the Watchers on the Farm did.

That brought another point to mind. He wasn't the first of Cain's assistants to do a full clear of Mythic Beasts around a stronghold. That meant that there was a time to beat, and a standard of safety to meet. The watcher had to study what the Echoes had done and improve on it if he wanted to steal Victor's point of pride.

Victor thought that was hilarious. He had put a lot of preparation into his plan to clear the area around the farm, and even though he had to do a full circle and not just half like Port Nefheim would have to, he was certain that he would be able to hold onto his title as the first and fastest to clear a safe space in the awakened zone.

Other than time spent on location, the two were evenly matched in skills and power, at half of Cain's maximum, so that wouldn't be the deciding factor. Victor even had Lou, whereas the Watcher had his clone.

So, the Watcher started making plans while he sent his summons out to help the advance.

His preferred use of the [Versatility spell was to increase his [Supporters] to Mythic, so that Kone and all her summons would appear at Mythic quality. She was everyone's go-to supporter since Cain had set her up to both heal and tank.

Kone herself thought that it was hilarious that she was appearing all over the world, and people would tell stories of her mighty feats, but most of them weren't even her, but a clone of her that one of Cain's Summons had called.

If Cain himself had called her clone, the stories would be about him, but if they were about her, then it was because the Watchers had hidden in the crowd, or watched the battle from a distance.

With two dozen copies of her, which made forty-eight copies of Su, and almost five hundred Mythic Snapping Turtles, the battle outside the city was almost guaranteed to go their way, but the Snapping Turtle Kin were too slow to catch a lot of the beasts, so they would circle around the tanks and go for the others, making the whole battlefield a huge ongoing battle.

Even Victor was impressed at the level of chaos. It certainly wasn't the most efficient battle that he had seen, but as far as distracting a force of unknown size for an indefinite period of time while their allies tried to return to the city safely, it was incredible.

He still didn't think that the Watcher had it in him to beat Victor's own record though.

"There they are, all twenty scouts, plus another five people accompanying them. No, wait, I count seven. There are two humans desperately chasing them and screaming something." Neffie called to the guards on the wall.

"Send out a rescue force, we can't have them getting killed by a crazy human this close to home." One of the guards called, and Vala took to the air.

"I will go deal with the idiots. They look desperate, not dangerous, they likely realized that the group knows where safety is, but they can't see the city from their position because of the hill in the middle." The Demon yelled as she flew away.

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

Chapter 556 556

The humans noticed Vala coming their way when the scouts in front of them waved hello to the flying demon. Afraid of being overlooked, they both began frantically waving their arms as if she alone represented their last hope of survival and calling out to her for help.

Seeing how pathetic and desperate they looked, Vala couldn't resist messing with them for at least a little while before leading them back to the city.

"Halt. State your business in Port Nefheim." Vala demanded, landing in front of them with her sword drawn.

"Please, Miss um, winged lady. Our group was attacked the moment we passed through the portal, and they couldn't use their cultivation, and there were monsters. Please save us; we will do whatever you want. Just let us live through this nightmare." The younger of the two human men begged.

"You said that they couldn't use their cultivation. What about you two?" Vala asked, ignoring their desperate search of the area for threats.

"We are internal cultivators; our energy comes from within. It isn't as flashy, but it was enough to get away after our weapons broke." The older one, a dark-haired human man in his mid-twenties, replied.

[They're cultivators.] Vala notified the other Companions.

[The barrier around the planet must be broken, it has been letting just anyone who has tried moving between worlds come in.] The Watchers sighed.

This state of affairs might please the Laughing God, but Vala was confident that the humans didn't find it nearly as funny to be dropped into a world with no Cultivation type energy.

"How many were in your group?" Vala asked just as a juvenile Tiger growled in the trees near them.

Vala turned to stare it down, and the Big cat looked from her to the cultivators, weighing the odds of escaping with a snack, then changed its mind and retreated. Vala had left quite the impression on the local wildlife earlier, and even as cubs, Mythic Beasts had a good memory for threats.

"Did she stare that thing down? What sort of monster is she?" The younger man whispered.

"Not a monster. I am a Wrath Demon. My name is Vala, and I am one of the defenders of Port Nefheim." She explained.

"Is that far from here? We saw some others, beast people, I think. We wanted to follow them and ask for directions, but they ran away." The one man replied.

"Who wouldn't run away from a pair of crazies screaming in a forest full of monsters? That's just common sense. But if you could fly, you would see the city from here. I came over because I was keeping watch and saw you coming." Vala told him, pointing back at the city.

"Could we rest there? Is it safe? There was a giant lizard that knocked a Boulder over our portal, and we couldn't move it without getting attacked."

Vala shook her head at their idiocy. Who goes through a portal to another world after seeing a giant lizard and doesn't defend their only escape route? That's way past confidence and into hubris.

"Alright, follow me, but stop shouting; it upsets the cats." Vala finally relented.

She folded her wings against her back and walked in front of them, waiting for the beasts to attack, but the defense forces seemed to have everything well in hand for the moment.

The Watchers were usually pretty laid back, letting everyone else build experience instead of going all out, but today they seemed like they had something to prove. She would have to ask about it later and see if anyone had heard anything about a contest. If the Watchers were doing something unusual it was almost always because of a contest with their peers.

"Are there humans in this city of yours, or is everyone like you?" The older of the pair asked.

"There is only one other like me. But there aren't many humans, either. Cid is a Vampire, though, and that looks a lot like a human. But I seem to have missed how many more of your people the group you came with originally contained." Vala asked, pulling the conversation back on topic.

"There were ten. Only one more might be alive; the rest are gone. That creature was hungry." The older cultivator replied with a full-body shudder at the memory.

"The dinos look a bit scary, and they're pretty much everywhere on this Continent, but rest assured, none of the other monsters are any less bloodthirsty," Vala informed him happily, and the man began to look relieved before he realized that what she told him wasn't a good thing.

"There it is. As you can see, we are in the middle of a battle, but there is a ladder by the beach you can use to get over the wall and into the city. If you want to rejoin the fight, ask the Ancient, and he will find you some swords."

Vala was about to fly away when the humans called one last question. "How do we find the Ancient?"

"It is twenty meters tall with wings and Tentacles; it is impossible not to find him. Tell him about your situation, and he will find you a spot to camp inside the wall and whatever basic supplies you need."

The two humans looked like they might take their chances with the monsters outside the wall for a few seconds, but the growl of the young Tiger that had been following them was enough motivation to get them running toward the wall and its promise of safety.

They made it to the wall at a dead run, with the tiger right behind them. The defenders were cheering them on, but as far as the two cultivators could tell, none of them intended to leave their post to come to help them.

Or maybe they were waiting for them to get maimed before they intervened. That was common among the cultivation sects; they would only step in to save a life. Everything before that was up to the cultivator and seen as a necessary learning experience.

So, they just kept running. The guards certainly wouldn't let the monster into the city where there would be children.

At the top of the stairs, a small girl with fluffy white cat ears and horns was waiting for them. As far as they could tell, she couldn't be more than ten years old, but she showed no fear as she watched the monstrous tiger approach.

There were guards on either side of the strange-looking girl, and the two men had to dodge them as they jumped off the ladder, narrowly avoiding the tiger's claws.

"Watch out, little one." The younger cultivator called, scooping up Neffie in his arms and jumping off the wall into the city.

"That still counts as moving your feet." The guard on top of the wall laughed while Neffie scowled at him from the spot on the grass where she landed.

The other guard had killed the tiger in a single strike, and both of them openly laughed about the situation, making the cultivators wonder if this whole world was insane.

"Damn you fools, it was a level 150 Lemon Tiger; why were you so scared? You cost me two full bags of caramels because I lost the bet." Neffie complained. She didn't often wager her precious candies from the Demon Kingdom, and only offered them up when she viewed the bet as a sure win for her.

"Um, sorry? We thought you were just a kid, and that tiger nearly ate us." The older cultivator tried to console her, but the younger one had a better method.

"These are salt toffee from our sect. Please accept our apology."

Neffie looked over the bag of toffee after she tossed the caramels to the winning guards and nodded her head in agreement. She had never tried these before, but they smelled pretty good.

"Welcome to Port Nefheim. I am Neffie, the Guardian of the city, and leader of the city Guard."

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

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[Master Cain, we have located the moron. What should we do with him?] The Oath Breakers asked suddenly as Cain was chatting with the residents of the farm.

[If he suddenly disappears, there will be chaos, and many won't believe that he is dead. Make sure that he doesn't escape and I will be there soon with a retinue to deal with the issue.] Cain responded with a smile.

"Miss Morgeth, Djinn, we have found the leader of the army that is causing so much trouble in Morgeth's name. I would like you to come with me so that we can prove to the army around him that he is a fraud and that they aren't doing the will of Morgeth by taking over cities and treating people horribly." Cain asked the two guests beside him.

"Of course. But do you have a way to avoid his skills?" Morgeth asked hopefully.

"But of course. Record Keeper is immune to Debuffs, and I can keep a second one further back in case he manages to get through the resistance somehow. Without the ability to mind control, he has nothing that can take out my forces.

We could have done this the messy way and just eliminated his armies, but that is a lot of transfers, and they will be needed by their families and home cities in the future. The Southern Continent has already lost too many people for us to be making the situation any worse.

Even here on this side of the continent, we are short on capable defenders, and we didn't lose any to battle, so I can only guess how bad things are in the regions that were conquered by force." Cain explained.

"It's time for an adventure!" Luna cheered from her spot around Cain's neck, making him look down at his overly enthusiastic daughter.

"Oh no, you Miss will be staying back with Kone and the others. It's not the least bit safe for you to be headed off to a battlefield while wrapped around my neck." Cain admonished her.

"You should have thought of that in advance."

The shout came at the same moment that a Demon appeared in a flash of light, and the Oath Breakers' voice sounded in Cain's mind.

[He activated some sort of transport item. He's gone. Oh, he's with you, that's fine then.]

That was not fine at all, but at least Cain already had one copy of Record Keeper merged with him to prevent Mind Control.

Cain had expected him to start with that, but the attacking Demon was a half step too slow. Before he could stabilize in this location and start to activate an ability, the Bunnies all acted together and let loose a strange whistling wail.

It was some sort of group spell that Cain didn't recognize, and suddenly he found that he couldn't read their minds to see what it was. So, he went on the attack and tried to use [Balefire] The combination of Holy and Fire damage, to burn the Demon from existence. But that wouldn't activate either.

"Damn you, Ancient. Your anti-magic bubble won't save your life." The Demon screamed, pulling a pair of swords.

Cain forgot all about what he was doing before and drew his scimitar and Spear from his inventory.

[There are forces at the perimeter. Ten thousand or more, but they don't look strong.] Victor reported.

[A civilian force, it looks like he took the whole adult population of at least one city. Deal with him, we can't get close to that Anti Magic bubble without being dispelled.] Lou agreed.

The Bunnies had really outdone themselves this time, using Divine Magic targeted at the enemy General to prevent the use of his mind-controlling abilities. The only problem was that now, Cain had to fight him without the help of any skills or summons.

The situation actually might favor the large Demon, at least in theory, but [Malleable Form] didn't need Mana usage, so Cain could still shift forms.

Cain parried the first sword strike, noticing that the man's System Interface was hidden, so he couldn't decipher anything about his potential skills, not even his true name. That must have been how the Oath Breakers found him, the lack of anything distinguishable was a big red flag.

Cain shifted back to his Demon Progenitor form, putting him on equal grounds with the enemy, as far as size went, and then returned the strike with a brutal thrust of his spear, following it up with a downward slice from his scimitar, forcing the enemy back.

As soon as he had evaded Cain's blade, the enemy General tried to make a break for the houses, where the healers were still working. It was clearly out of the range of the

anti-magic spell, but as he approached, their healing stopped working and the Bunnies grabbed their patients to flee the area.

"Give up, the spell is cast on you. You won't escape using your mind control." Cain informed him.

Neither of them could be sure how long that spell was going to last though. The whims of the Divine were finicky, and there was no guarantee that the Bunnies' efforts would hold up for the whole battle.

With a snarl the demon charged Cain again, flailing wildly, and driving Cain's blade and spear wide. He went in for a savage headbutt, attempting to knock Cain to the ground, but Luna's body flashed forward, biting his neck and then wrapping around it to cut off his oxygen.

The little Lamia might be woefully under-leveled for this battle, but her poison was Mythic, and her muscles were strong enough to crush the average person's windpipe.

Cain made the most of the situation and stabbed his spear into the exposed thigh of the demon, eliciting a howl of pain and making him drop one of his blades.

The demon used his free hand to wrench Luna from his neck and hurl her across the farm, landing close to where Kone and Jin were standing. She didn't look too good, and having her body stretched like that had to be painful, but she was moving, so she would survive, given that Kone gave off a healing aura at all times.

The poison was already showing as black streaks on the Demon's neck, but he wasn't backing down, and a rapid flurry of strikes landed a deep cut across Cain's unarmored left forearm.

"Once you fall, the summons will all disappear, leaving both this Continent and the Central one to me for the taking." The demon gloated, to which Cian only responded with a smirk.

If this man thought that the Darklight Host would fall because of a lack of Cain, he was sorely mistaken.

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

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Cain laughed as he inelegantly bashed the man's blades aside and nearly tripped him with the shaft of his spear.

"The Darklight Host doesn't rely on me for power anymore. The Guild Skill that your forces fear so much will live on without me, for my daughter and two other members could take my spot to keep it active.

I have already set my heir apparent in the system, you won't gain anything at all, except two continents worth of angry Outreach Workers. But can you even win?" Cain taunted him between blade strikes before falling silent again.

Trying to talk while fighting was way harder than it seemed, and wasted breath that he needed to avoid getting skewered by a magical sword.

There were also far more Ancients in the area than Cain remembered there being. As Cain and the enemy General traded blows, looking for an opening, Cain saw that there were at least ten of them, meaning that almost all of his Watchers had come to join the battle. If any had remained behind, it was likely Neffie's on the Eastern Continent, who were engaged in a battle the last time Cain checked.

The Demon General was weakening, thanks to Luna's poison, and the blocks he could manage were becoming sloppy. The black streaks on his neck were becoming a large gray patch, with black streaks at the leading edge.

[A Paralysis Poison. Just as lethal, but it will slow him as he dies] Cain heard the voice of Vala in his mind, just before he saw her at the edge of his vision.

She was impatiently roaming the area around the edge of the Anti-Magic field, waiting for it to fall so that she could help Cain in the fight.

[Not Good, they dare to use our own spells against us.] Victor complained in a strange accent, and Cain saw large portions of the summons in the battle vanish.

If they couldn't get a fighter close to the mages or whoever had that anti-magic spell, the Farm's defenses could be in for a world of trouble. Even if the leader died, Cain had seen that many of the followers were zealots that truly believed in the cause, and they wouldn't stop just because the mind control had ended, they would keep fighting to take over the farm and then try to take leadership of the group.

Cain had one final trump card to play in this fight though, one that he never thought he would use. [Useful Dolls] allowed him to set his Puppets and any of his permanent summons free.

They would keep their current status, being level 500 Mythic Beings, of various classes and skills, but no longer would they be a summons, they would be independent life

forms of their own. That would let them enter the battle directly despite the barrier against Magic effects.

It would be a great loss to Cain, he had always assumed that they would be behind him as long as he lived. But if he didn't they were going to lose a lot of innocent lives here in the battle for the farm.

[Useful Dolls, Free all Permanent Summons and Puppets] Cain directed the system as he fought the enemy General to a standstill.

The world around them seemed to stop for a moment as the spell activated, and Cain could feel that the excessive amount of energy released by the System activating to rewrite the status of so many Mythic Creatures at once had done something to the Ley Line nearest to the farm, but there was no time to consider that for now.

Cain grabbed the enemy general by the arms, stepping past his blades, and threw him to the ground, where he rolled away to get to his feet.

Cain picked up his weapons, using the second or two he had to make sure that the ability he used had worked and that the others understood what he had done.

Victor and Vala were the first to test the theory, charging into the enemy lines to massacre the mages that were dismissing the summons, then fighting back to back as the army surrounded them.

The enemy General didn't realize it as fast, thinking that the two were living beings and not summons, but either way, it didn't matter to their fight. He was a very skilled warrior before he gained the Mind Control type Spirit Rank ability he used to lead the army, and he wasn't about to accept that he was going to lose a sword fight to a summoner.

A low strike from his blade split Cain's leg open from ankle to knee, and he began to fall onto his right side.

The General pushed his advantage, stabbing a sword into Cain's left side, but his overconfidence cost him. Cain thrust forward with his spear, hurling it from his right hand for lack of ability to brace himself for a solid blow.

The spear flew the half meter to its target in a split second, sinking deep into the Demon's chest, while [Might of Many] enhanced its damage to ludicrous levels, letting the spear punch straight through both bone and armor, killing the demon in a single blow.

Cain breathed a sigh of relief as the body hit the ground. Then a roar of anger as it vanished in a flash of light.

"What the hell was that?" Cain roared, bringing Jessica running, already casting a healing spell.

"He had a resurrection item. When he died, the spell we cast ended, and the item activated, then he forcefully teleported himself to safety." Victor called back, as the clatter of falling weapons filled the air.

"The enemy army has surrendered. Well, most of them, we are killing the ones that didn't." Vala called happily, which made even more weapons fall to the ground in surrender, as the former army of Morgeth realized that they were doomed.

"Thank you, Jessica. I feel much better now." Cain whispered, petting the High Priestess's head in relief.

"Do we have any leads on his location? I hate loose ends. And someone please introduce the army of Morgeth to the real Morgeth already so we can end this idiocy." He shouted, loud enough for both armies to hear his command.

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

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"Hello, hi, yeah. As you all can see by my System interface, I am Morgeth, the one that that imposter told you that you were fighting for. You all have realized now that the nameless one mind controlled you to fight, but please listen to what I have to say before you leave this place.

That was never what I wanted. I only want the cities to be safe, I don't want to control the continent, enslave the people, or tear families apart. That was never my will, it was that power-hungry warlord using my name as a shield to do horrible things.

Now that he has fled, he will be hunted to the ends of the world, by hunters with protection against his skills. I would ask you all one thing before you disband though. In the name of the armies of Morgeth, the real Morgeth, please, go home, take care of the people, of your families, and set things right. Make the Southern Continent a better place to live."

Morgeth's speech was very touching, and with the Bunnies backing her up, nobody doubted her sincerity. The Bunnies were many things, but tolerant of people lying to them they were not.

The soldiers would need to have a long talk, and take time to accept what had happened, especially the zealots who were all for taking over the continent just a few minutes ago. Someone would have to take charge of those ones and lead them in a productive direction so that they didn't become a wandering menace to society, but there was hope that the real Morgeth could manage it.

Their loyalty had been brainwashed to be to her directly and by name, so if she led them, they would most likely follow her to help maintain stability and justice.

Cain decided that he would talk to her later, and see if she was willing, but at the moment the emptiness in his head was jarring and putting him off balance.

[You aren't totally alone. I am still here, and the Watchers as well, but they have most of their thoughts blocked right now so that they didn't confuse each other during the battle.] Cyrene assured Cain when she sensed the direction of his thoughts.

That was a bit of a relief, and he still had the Record Keeper merged in his mind. It was a quiet sort, but Cain could still sense it there.

It was strange to think that not long ago, having other thoughts in his mind was a strange and disconcerting thing, and now that they were gone, he actually didn't feel whole without them.

[We can teach the others the spell to join the collective consciousness, now that they aren't in it by default.] Victor suggested.

That was a wonderful idea, and it would make organizing much easier than having everyone scattered all over the world and having to send messages back and forth.

[When you see them next, teach everyone who wants it the ability to join the collective thought. No, scratch that. Teach everyone who used to be in the collective how to rejoin it, and then add only the ones that you are certain would be a benefit to the group.] Cain directed the Watchers and Echoes, who were still in contact, due to their nature as ancients and inheriting his abilities.

Having them loose on the planet might cause a few issues later, Cain was certain, but it wasn't like he was trying to keep them under control, to begin with, so that wasn't really an issue. He hoped.

[Someone has to go find the clones of Evangeline and Laura that were looking for the Library though. They are just out in the middle of nowhere and now they're out of the loop. They can still send messages though, assuming that they remember and don't panic, or have to spend all their time chasing Laura out of candy stores now that nobody can force her to stop.] Lou pointed out, making Cain and the Watchers laugh.

[I would take the group and go find them right away, but I'm sure there will be chaos around here for a bit. Do we have any volunteers?]

[I will go. Learning the spell is really easy, as it turns out.] Moana joined the conversation, having known the trick in her last life, so she only needed a few seconds to activate it again in this one now that she was independent.

She was still pretty shocked about it though. She knew that Cain was intending to free them all, but she had expected seconds before death, and not just for convenience when a bunch of local civilians were in trouble.

[I blame the fluffy bunny ears. He has always had a weak spot for Bunnies.] Victor told her.

[Bunnies and Lamia. Such a strange combination of creatures to be weak against. But who would ever expect it? If you're going to have a weakness for your enemy to exploit, those are great options.] Moana laughed back.

Moana didn't need to search, she had the capability to go straight to the wandering pair and teach them the basics of the technique, and she already knew where they were. Or at least where they were an hour ago before the battle. That should be close enough, since her Leviathan senses were very strong, and attuned to the two of them already. It was part of how the species located their friends and family in the wild since they traveled all around the entire planet looking for food and entertainment.

Her guess was spot on as well. Laura was inside a candy store near their hotel, interrogating the owner. Not about the Elf that they were searching for, but about the new flavors of Toffee. Ever since Neffie had been gifted a new type of sweets from another world, Laura had wanted to try them, but Evangeline hadn't let her. Now that she was free, this was the Opal Prismatic Dragon's first and most important act of rebellion before she got back to work.

Unfortunately, the candy shop owner had no idea what she was talking about, as the candy was from another world, and Laura didn't know the ingredients, only Neffie's description of the taste.

"Laura. If you want to know about the candy, I will take you to the Eastern Continent once you finish finding the Librarian." Moana yelled from the street outside the store, drawing the Dragon's attention, and bringing a sigh of relief from the shopkeeper.

He was absolutely certain now, no matter how powerful they got, the Youkai definitely weren't as scary as an excited dragon.

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

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Fifty kilometers from the Farm, a battered Demon with a gaping hole in the chest of his armor, right over his heart appeared and dropped to the ground with a solid thud.

"Damn that Ancient. My Resurrection Amulet was single-use, and that monster managed to one-shot me. I will have to find another before I face him again. And a more competent army. How they managed to lose to an army of summons after I put so much effort into giving the Mages a Mythic Anti-Magic barrier is a mystery only the Gods themselves know." He muttered.

The General of Morgeth's army was not in a good mood, especially as he only had one percent of his health left after the resurrection amulet took effect, and his everything hurt. Even parts inside him that shouldn't be able to hurt somehow did.

Downing a pair of Health Potions, he climbed to his feet and started making his way back toward the shore, where he would be out of the enemy territory and into a relatively safe neutral area.

He knew he had to come up with a plan quickly before that bimbo named Morgeth who he had been using as a shield against assassins got any bright ideas and started taking over the cities he had captured and turning them against him, using his own orders.

He didn't know yet that the effects had all ended the moment that he died, the General fully expected to come back to loyal and compliant populations. His skill was an amazing one but every skill had some sort of limitation, and this one required decisiveness. He couldn't give an order that directly countermanded one that he had given before.

He had made the cities that they captured loyal to the "Army of Morgeth", so if he was declared a traitor, he wouldn't be able to make them loyal to himself again without releasing everyone and carefully rephrasing his orders.

That was dozens of cities he would have to return to if he didn't act in time. Unacceptable, but he would find a way, he always did.

The Demon General wasn't the only one with a strong impression of the battle. On the far side of the Southern Continent, a blue-haired elven woman was watching the whole thing through a crystal ball with a shocked look on her face.

"What sort of Combat Power is that? You didn't tell me that an Ancient could one-shot a warrior a whole awakened rank above themselves." The young Elf told the equally youthful-looking woman sitting next to her.

"That's because it's ridiculous, nonsensical, and implausible. Don't judge your impression of Ancients by that one, he is the favored one of the Laughing God, and he has hidden tricks that even the treacherous scum that are called the Human Gods would be proud of." The Librarian told her protege with a vicious smile.

She had waited so long for the Ancient to return to free her from an eternal life as a Puppet, not knowing if he was ever coming back, and then today she was just suddenly freed with no warning, right in the middle of an epic battle for a single farmhouse in the middle of nowhere.

Nothing made any sense anymore, but she had seen enough to know that either Ancient Cain or his people would be here at the End Of The World portal soon enough.

Her viewing spell had already shown her what she needed to know. He knew what the End of the World was now, and he had dispatched a Seraphim and an insane young Dragon her way. Why he would trust them with such a mission was beyond her understanding, but the Seraphim had a good reputation everywhere, so maybe the Dragon was just a bodyguard?

If he had sent that bloodthirsty Demon and the Leviathan, they would likely be here by now, and they could have brought that lazy Ancient with them.

"Where did he even go for a thousand years?" She complained, while her acolyte smiled, used to the Librarian's random outbursts after years of experience.

She had trained a dozen others in the ways of the Ancients as a failsafe over the years since Youkai and Elves lived for a millennium or longer if they didn't suffer a tragic death. The books themselves had all been painstakingly manually copied by each acolyte and securely hidden in various spots that they were certain would survive even if they didn't.

So long as one of them lived, the knowledge that the Ancient needed would live on.

The acolyte turned back to her entertainment in the Crystal ball and saw that the battle seemed to be cleaned up faster than expected.

"They paralyzed and put as many to sleep as they could so that they didn't have to kill them all." The Librarian told her, shaking her head at the excess.

"One day, I will be that cool. Just imagine, being able to actually use all of these spells and do things like that in a battle between Awakened." The Acolyte sighed.

She had learned soon after she started copying the Ancient Scripts that even though she had learned to read them from the Librarian, many of the spells simply couldn't be used by anyone but an Ancient, including the one that the Librarian was after which would revoke her status as a Puppet and let her resume a normal life span.

Cain sneezed and looked up from his work checking the damage reports around the farm, wondering who might be thinking poorly of him. It was a silly superstition from his past life, but he was quite sure that this time someone really was talking about him behind his back.

"Must be that General cursing my name. Hopefully, the patrols catch up to him. I will keep killing him until he stops resurrecting even if it takes me a year." Cain muttered, annoyed at his failure to kill a single Warrior.

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

Chapter 561 561

Now that Moana had joined their little group, life was getting much easier for Evangeline. The Leviathan was not only incredibly skilled at finding people and things with her magic, but she was also better at bribing and coercing Laura into behaving.

The Opal Prismatic Dragon had not taken her newfound freedom well, and was at a bit of a loss, filling in the emptiness in her thoughts with constant social interaction. Now that they were free individuals, even the clones couldn't communicate directly with each other without a specific skill allowing them to.

That was hard for Laura, who was used to constantly asking herself for advice, and balancing her ideas against the other copy of herself, just to make sure that she thought it was an entirely good idea.

None of the other Companions thought quite this way, treating their clones more like twin sisters, so it wasn't as bad for them, though Nila did find that the newfound inability to merge with herself was an issue. Now there were properly two of them, but they shared the same wife.

They would adapt quickly enough though, it would just take a little time to get everyone the skill to rejoin the shared consciousness.

"Now that we have a good idea where the End of the World place is, should I bring us there with a portal, so we can narrow down our search zone?" Moana asked, eager to get this mission completed so that they could return to other tasks, like harassing the Merfolk.

It had become one of her favorite pastimes. Teleport in, summon Leviathans into the ocean, watch everyone panic, and teleport out.

"We might as well. But once we find the right spot, you should bring Cain and the others to us and let them do the hard work. Wandering around the continent looking for one single elf is a lot of traveling and Evangeline won't let me stop for snacks." Laura suggested.

"Deal. I am going to bring us to the mountain pass that they described, since it's easy to locate, and then we can get better directions from the locals." Moana decided.

That was good enough for the others, and Evangeline happily flew through the portal, eager to get this done with the mission and get back to her own clone. She was beginning to realize that the reason she could keep up her polite and righteous Seraphim act was that she could constantly complain about the people she met in her mind. Without that outlet, she was in imminent danger of ruining her species' reputation.

Plus, the other one was comfortably back at the farm and she was stuck out here, forced to wear clothes all the time. Like, all day long, it was just ridiculous. Maybe the next village they came to would be clothing optional, or she could have Moana send her back to the Elves, they had a much more healthy view of the necessity of clothing than most species did, in Evangeline's estimation.

The mountain pass that they arrived in gave the group a breathtaking view of a large tropical valley, with a waterfall flowing out of the hills near them to form a five-branched river that flowed out of sight toward the ocean.

"Not bad. Plus, there is a guard patrol right over there, so we can ask them which of the villages in this valley might be the one that we are looking for." Laura cheered, transforming into her Dragon form for higher flight speed and racing toward the group of startled Youkai.

They were well within the borders of the territory, there shouldn't be interlopers here, but somehow, there were three of them, and two were even Mythic Rank creatures.

There was a Seraphim with them though, so the guards relaxed a little, assured that a dragon traveling with an angel wasn't likely to directly attack them, but they still couldn't identify the blue-winged Pixie creature. None of the creatures on this planet had seen a Void Clan Leviathan in tens of thousands of years, and it had been even longer since anyone had seen one in a humanoid transformation.

"Greetings, I am Laura, a Companion of the Ancient Cain. We are looking for a Librarian. Or an elf named Librarian maybe? Or even just an Ancient book would be a good start. Do you happen to know anything about that?" The hyper Dragon asked.

"The Librarian? Yes, she is at the End of the World." The guard agreed, nodding his head.

"And that might be where?" Laura asked.

"Oh, sorry, I forgot that there aren't any maps of this place, since we all know where everything is and visitors usually get an escort. It is almost directly in the center of the valley, near a dimensional portal that gave the location its name. The saying was that if anything ever came through from that portal it would be the end of the world, so eventually, the whole village got named after it." The Tengu explained.

"That makes perfect sense. But can I ask a question? Are most Tengu wings shades of gray? I have only seen black shades so far, did you have a Seraphim ancestor to make your wings lighter?" Laura asked before Evangeline grabbed her.

"Forgive the Dragon, her mental link to the collective was severed yesterday, and she has been in desperate need of someone to talk to." The Seraphim apologized.

"And then she looted a candy store and loaded up on more sugar than any living being should ever consume," Mona added, making the guards laugh.

"Oh, the joys of youth. Come with me young Dragon, and I will tell you a grand tale of the valley while we walk to the end of the world." The guard laughed, holding out his hand to signal his patrol to go on without him.

Though they could actually see their destination from here, it was nearly two hundred kilometers away. If they were walking the whole way, it was going to take a lot of time.

Moana quietly memorized the location so she could open a portal there, and then sent a message with the coordinates to her clone, so she could send Cain and the others, while the guard led the trio of Companions through the valley at a leisurely pace, telling the whole story of the valley, beginning over a thousand years in the past.

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

Chapter 562 562

Cain gathered up the other Avatars as soon as Moana got the message from her clone and got ready to head to the place known as End of the World to meet the Librarian.

They had been on this quest for a rather long time now, and it was time to get it finished. The reward should also give him something very good, and he was hoping that it would let him advance himself to Spirit Awakened.

At the moment, he had everything that he needed except for a Spirit Rank item, and he hadn't seen one of them anywhere on the planet up to now, so the quest might be his best and possibly only chance to actually acquire such a powerful item.

The real mystery was what the other Avatars had to do with anything though. Sure, they were fun to have around, but so far they hadn't had anything to do with the search for the Librarian that Cain's summons couldn't do as well or better.

That made him suspect that they would have a role to play in the interaction with the Librarian, or perhaps they would be destined to inherit a skill or something from one of the books that had been rescued from the Ancient City.

"Boss, where did my Bunny go?" Cain heard Kone calling from across the yard.

"Isn't she at the temple saying goodbye to her friends?" Cain yelled back, making Jin laugh.

"How do you even lose a person? Just message her and she will come back, I'm certain of it." The dragonkin pointed out.

"That is a possibility. But it doesn't work if she is working or too busy to check her messages. Hey, acolyte, can you find the High Priestess and bring her to me?" Cain responded, grabbing the attention of a passing Bunny child.

"No problem mister Cain. I will be right back."

The little boy ran off to find Jessica, while Jin just shook her head in amusement.

"You realize that now there are two lost Bunnies right? Jessica and the one you just sent on an errand in the middle of his chores?" She asked.

"But he won't be missing for long. Once he finds Jessica he can go back to what he was doing." Cain shrugged.

Since they didn't know how long they would be gone, their small group was planning to stock up, getting trade goods from the farm to deal with the Youkai on the far side of the Continent, plus Mythic Juices, specialty foods from the farm, and anything else that they thought might be important or interesting and help them complete the quest.

Honestly, they didn't know what it would take, so they were just going for a bit of everything.

"We should teach Jessica to join the collective. She is always busy with something, but we could tell what she was up to right away if her thoughts were open to the group." Kone suggested, coming over with a large backpack on and a clone of Moana sitting on her head.

Su had brought another large backpack full of things that didn't fit in her inventory, and the transformed Forest Dragon was even more excited about the journey than the rest of them.

Everywhere Kone went, she went, but lately, Kone had been spending her time training Larkin, so she hadn't been on any adventures at all. Now, she finally got to go on a journey, and it was just one new thing after another. New foods, Bunny Clerics, Mythic beasts, strange people at the farm, and now she would even get to see a real Youkai City, something that she had never experienced before, as she hadn't spent any time on the Southern Continent.

"I found the High Priestess." A small voice called. The acolyte had attached himself to Jessica's leg so that she didn't escape from him, but she was already heading to Cain, so there wasn't much for him to do.

"See, he wasn't lost for long," Cain told Jin, winking at the acolyte, who cheered for the recognition of his hard work before running away to finish his other tasks.

"The people from Morgeth's Army had a lot of injuries among them, so I was over there helping out. They have almost all left now, but it looks like some are going to stay by the real Morgeth anyhow, and don't want to accept that the movement is over.

She thinks that the best thing to do is to go around to the cities that they conquered and make sure that the people are doing alright. The army took almost all their awakened fighters away to speed up the process of expansion, so they might not have enough guards and hunters to defend themselves from the mythic beasts in the forests." Jessica explained.

It was a good idea, they had to do something with them if they weren't going to brainwash or kill them, so having them become proper defenders of their hometowns again would be a good start, and the real Morgeth could warn the people from the farm if the General showed up again and started causing trouble.

He should be easier to deal with the second time though. There wouldn't be any anti-magic barriers, no army around him, and Summons weren't easily affected by Mind Control unless you could break their link with their summoner. If he caused trouble again, the Echoes could send assassins again to deal with him in a more final manner and hope that he didn't have more escaping tricks.

The Oath Breakers were out looking for him right now, but so far they hadn't had any luck. They thought they picked up his trail earlier, but it was from his way in, and only led back to his army's last camp.

"Do we have everything? Is one spot open in the inventory in case of quest rewards? I hear it is annoying if your inventory is full and you can't complete a quest." Cain reminded the group.

Su moved a sword from her inventory to her hip with a very serious look, and Kone signaled Cain not to say anything about the fact that Kone would get the quest completion notice, not the Forest Dragon Companion.

"Good to go, Boss Cain. Now, let's go see the Library." Jin cheered.

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

Chapter 563 563 The Librarian

Being the only occupants of the city that weren't Youkai made Cain's little group stand out more than a little bit. The fact that they suddenly appeared in the middle of a town that never got strangers visiting likely didn't help either, though.

"First order of business. Find the Librarian. Second order of business, see if she has the books I need." Cain instructed his group right before a small golden Lion that looked like an animated statue came over to them.

Su's first response was to pet the creature, but Kone managed to stop the curious dragon before she could insult him. Or maybe it was her? She didn't know, but she was sure that it was an intelligent creature, her instincts as a Beast Lord told her so.

"What is your business with the Lady Librarian?" The Golden Lion asked curiously.

"I am the Ancient, Cain. She has some books from the ruins of an Ancient city, including one on child care that I am particularly interested in." Cain explained.

Luna gave him a curious look because she thought he was doing a pretty good job even without a book, but she didn't say anything that might mess up the Quest that he was on.

"Oh, you wish to study at the Library. Follow me, and I will try to get you on the waiting list." The happy statue informed them, running between pedestrians and through the streets.

The city known as End of the World wasn't busy at the moment, so the group had no trouble following the tiny creature, but they did have to avoid several unfortunate workers who were nearly tripped by the rushing statue.

The Lion eventually led them to a large palace, built in what Cain recognized as the Ancient style, similar to the Greeks of three thousand years past in his former life.

"Mom, dad, I found an Ancient, and he wants to read a book." The little Lion informed the two enormous golden beasts at the gate.

Unlike the little one, these seemed to be a form of chimera with scaled front legs and a Scorpion's tail on a Lion's body.

"How often have we told you that you shouldn't believe every silly story people tell you?" A deep but feminine voice reprimanded him.

"Before he gets in too much trouble, I am an Ancient," Cain explained, shifting his form to the three-meter tall version of his Ancient self.

"I am Cain, and I haven't seen the Librarian since before the Great War. I am told she saved a large portion of the books from the city, and I need a few." Cain explained.

His physical appearance was really drawing attention now, especially among the older Youkai.

Some of their species were very close to Immortal and had been born into families with relatives who were alive for the War Between the Gods.

"Someone inform the mistress. She has been waiting for you, Ancient Cain, but don't expect too warm of a welcome. You kept her waiting for a long time." An elderly Youkai told him with a smile on her face.

"A small matter of time displacement. I think I can make it up to her." Cain replied.

The angry stomping of tiny Elven feet running through the building echoed for everyone to hear, and the very disheveled Elf in question appeared before them, wearing a simple red silk robe with wet hair dripping on the floor.

"It is you. And you look exactly as I remembered." The Librarian gasped when she saw Cain standing by the door, then narrowed her eyes when she saw Luna.

"What exactly are you wearing? I have a book on the rights of sentient species if you need a refresher."

"Librarian, meet my daughter, Luna. Miss Luna was born at level 99 as a Lamia Progenitor and a Puppet Master. I don't suppose there's anything about that in the books you saved?

I will also need to know a bit about Ancient species children since I have some on the way." Cain tried reasoning with her while Luna waved happily at the introduction.

"Come inside; we have a lot to talk about, it seems. First, you disappear for a thousand years, and now you're back with multiple children. But yes, I have books on the topics you want, both modern and legacy versions." The Librarian complained.

"You know, I recall you being much more cheerful, despite being trapped in a city for much longer." Cain pointed out, motioning for the others to follow them.

"That was a requirement of the Puppet Body. Whatever you did the other day freed me, so now I am fully capable of giving you a piece of my mind." She informed him, but her angry demeanor faded, and she looked exhausted.

"I wasn't sure you were coming back at all. I waited so long after the war, but I couldn't find any sign of you arriving back in this world. We only recently heard rumors of an Ancient, and that's when I started to track you." She said with a sigh.

"It looks like Moana using a portal to send us here caught you off guard as well. But I'm glad you survived everything. Did any others make it out, or were they destroyed in the War?" Cain asked, referring to the few Puppets he had fixed the last time he saw her.

"Oh, they're here. Nothing short of a Dragon could have destroyed them during the war, the human champions weren't strong enough, and most of the others didn't care enough to try. If you stay a while, I am sure they will come to say hello."

That was good news, though Cain wondered why he had lost his mental link to them. Maybe he had just needed to see them again after moving through time to fix the link, but they were free people now, so it wasn't an issue.

"First, this is the book you were reaching for when you vanished. I assume that's what made you finally come looking for me." The Librarian informed him, passing the tome over.

[Early Childhood Basics For New Parents] obtained.

[Quest Complete] Please wait for the rewards.

After all this time, that was definitely anticlimactic, but the announcement that he would be waiting made Cain think there would be more to this situation than simply claiming a reward and catching up on old times.

Things were never that easy when the Gods were involved, and he had assembled their avatars.

While Cain was looking at the book, Luna had crawled down his arm to greet The Librarian.

"You knew him all that time ago? Was he always weird, or did it happen because he's always talking to people in his head? Did you know Ancients do that?" Luna asked, crawling up The Librarian's arm to speak to her from Luna's preferred distance of ten centimeters away.

She had gotten so used to being wrapped around Cain that she almost forgot her voice could carry across a room, not only a few meters.

"It is part of being an ancient, little Lamia. They have too much power, and it changes the way they think. I see the System made you a Puppet Master, so you should be careful that you don't forget what it is like for regular people."

That made Jessica giggle, then move closer to pat the Librarian. "I don't think she has ever met a normal person. She hangs around Cain's neck all day, and her mother is the leader of the Darklight Host's Outreach Program."

"I thought he was paired with a human?" The Librarian asked, confused.

"He is, or was? Probably is. But the other Ancients took her away for the end of her Pregnancy, and later, he got with Lamia who was formerly an Oracle. The one he transformed." The Bunny God High Priestess explained, then jumped back in shock after touching the Librarian.

"Oh, I finished a quest. Everyone, come greet the Librarian, and it should finish the Quest for you as well."

"Oh, that's what that message was? I thought it was like a target reminder, telling me that we had reached our destination." Luna replied.

"Wait, you're one of the Avatars as well? Now I don't know whether we brought the right people." Cain muttered, carefully closing the book and setting it aside.

"Me too," Jin informed them, then Kone poked the Elf and smiled.

"That's all of us. But I have no idea which is which avatar. Well, except Jessica because that's obvious." Kone added.

"Can I be war? I would be a good conqueror; I'm pretty sure." Luna asked.

"The God of War is also the God of orphans. After you sure you still want it?" The Librarian asked the little Lamia Progenitor.

"I get to conquer and collect people?" Luna asked excitedly, making the Elf sigh.

"I almost forgot she is half Ancient. Of course, she would be fine with raising orphans; it's in her nature to collect, study and train living beings."

"She's way too cuddly to be a War Avatar, though. War shouldn't be that cute." Jin pointed out.

"War always seems reasonable and attractive on the surface, or nobody would ever agree to it." A soft voice came from the back of the room before an Elf in a maid outfit entered.

She was not one of Cain's Puppets, so she must be a worker here, Cain assumed until she bowed to the Librarian.

"Mistress, the restricted area has been dusted, and the maintenance spells have been refreshed." She informed the older Elf before bowing and leaving the room.

"I see that I am not the only one who collects people. Cute outfit, too, I approve." Cain told the Librarian with a wink.

"Of course you do. It's a replica of the ones you made for the other Puppets. But I am not collecting people; she is one of the other Librarians, hired to guard the books and save the knowledge, not a pet." The Librarian informed him with great dignity.

"Minor details." Cain shrugged.

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

Chapter 564 564 Big News

"Do you know why they call this the End of the World?" The Librarian asked, changing the topic.

"Because it's the last place anyone would look? Seriously, I checked most of the world before I found you." Cain replied.

"No, it is because of the portal in the middle of the valley. The Youkai have sealed it for ages now, but it leads to the world where the Human Gods were banished to.

They left that world millennia ago, but the power level there is much higher than here. It serves as a relief valve of sorts, preventing anything too dangerous from existing in this world.

Do you see what I am saying?" The Librarian asked.

"You think that if I learn what is in those books, I will advance and be forced through the portal." Cain sighed.

That was a risk he had considered. This world had many limits on it, and he was quickly reaching them. Eventually, something had to break.

"Close, I think that when someone or something is truly Spirit Quality the portal will open and won't close until the two worlds balance or the anomaly is gone."

Jessica looked confused at that. "But Djinn made someone spirit awakened without causing it."

"Not permanently. Since she's a transfer as well, she wouldn't know, but a Djinn wish only lasts a year and a day, then you die. The entire Djinn species is cursed, the wish is both their most powerful ability and their strongest revenge." The Librarian told them.

That was diabolical. You get what you want, but at a price. Their power was balanced in an unexpected way that allowed it to appear to be at a higher level than the caster.

That ends Cain's 'wish for all the things' plan.

"Do you have the next book after this first volume of Spell Crafting?" Cain asked, preparing for the inevitable. He could likely put it off for a while, but he was soon going to level out of the world like he did the Beginner's Valley.

Luna had just realized what they were talking about and she was starting to panic. "No, this is unacceptable. I am still new, they can't take him away yet."

"Relax, breathe, I'm not going to leave right away, there are preparations to be made before any great adventure, especially one to another world. First I need to finish things here, and then I need to study all these books before I go anywhere."

That, combined with gentle petting, helped calm Luna down. At least enough that she was rational again anyhow.

"Alright, fine. Let's see, it's been about a week. So I need to add the zero, carry the 1, and add the 4. I've got it.

If you prepare for just fifty more years I should be ready for you to go on an adventure." Luna declared.

That made the Librarian smile and stroke Luna's head. "I don't think you've got that long to prepare, but I can keep you busy for fifty years if you like."

"No thanks, if there isn't enough time, then I am going with him. Non-negotiable." She declared.

"We will talk about that later. For now, how about we all sit down and enjoy a good book for the evening? We are in the world's most esoteric Library after all." Cain suggested.

While Cain had solved the chaos in his immediate vicinity, his thoughts had caused chaos all over the planet. Until this moment, nobody knew what would happen if someone actually managed to make it to Spirit Awakened. There were a few Spirit Beasts on the planet, but in general, a single beast wasn't nearly as dangerous as a Transfer at the same ranking, so they hadn't caused any upset in the balance so far.

But Cain was a broken character, to begin with, he was insanely overpowered. If he reached Spirit Awakened and opened a portal that would dump mana into the world that already had too much coming in from the Elemental planes, there were no good outcomes.

The fact that he would do it, or leave through the portal the instant that it opened to prevent that from happening seemed inevitable, and the thoughts of the Guild on that topic were mixed.

Could he still be the Guild Master if he was on a different Planet, in a different Plane?

If he was leaving for a higher plane, did that make him an actual demigod of some sort? Should they make shrines for him within the Temples to the Gods of Creation that they had created?

And most importantly, if he did exit through that portal, would it attract the attention of the Human Gods to the planet that they had failed to conquer and then forgot about?

The Consensus was that if the System didn't let him be Guild Master, one of the other Puppet Masters would have to take over the position. The Guild Skill was simply too powerful to be changed to something mundane when they had over five hundred active members doing daily Outreach work that relied upon the Guild Skill for both combat and humanitarian reasons.

The news of his impending ascension spread through the Guild not long after it spread through the collective consciousness, since a certain scaly someone forgot that the voices in her head and the ones beside her couldn't hear each other, and she informed the entire tavern by accident.

The Guild took it much better than the Watchers and the Companions did. They already viewed the Guild Master as an almost Mythological Being, so news that he would be

going to explore another planet to keep himself entertained, which was the rumor that was spreading after the patrons of the tavern retold it, didn't shock the Guild as much as expected.

The only truly distraught ones were Cyrene and Luna.

But Cyrene had a plan. The Watchers and the Echoes were clones of Cain. They smelled like him, had his abilities, and could take on all the forms he used. So, if they needed a replacement Guild Master, one of them could step into the role, maybe even Victor, who had earned himself a proper nickname for his luck.

If she was really lucky, the replacement would transform into Cain's favorite human and demon forms and let her wrap it while Cain was away. Her scales were already getting lonely just thinking about him going on an extended trip. It might not be the real thing, but it would be a pretty good living hugging pillow.

Cain wasn't concerned with all the chaos in the collective at the moment though. He had an incredibly interesting second volume of the Spell Crafting book waiting to be started now that he was almost done with the first one and a distraught Luna in his hand. Literally, she had her arms wrapped around his hand and wasn't letting go.

"Would you like to read with me? I can get you something new and interesting and we can learn it together." Cain suggested.

That perked her up a little. Learning new things was fun, especially when she wasn't the only one learning them.

So, the Librarian was sent to find them a new book, something Cain needed to know, that both of them could learn from the start. What she returned with was a book called [Introduction to Runes] a textbook that taught how to make Rune Weapons, an Ancient alternative to the traditional Magical weapons that scaled with the power of the user, and could be used not only in a magical world but one that was based on the various forms of Cultivation powers as well.

There was a good chance that the world on the other side of the gate had very little or no Mana, so Cain would be starting nearly from scratch when he got there. He would still have his power, but without mana, and with his system possibly frozen due to the distance to the Laughing God, he might need to learn to fight without using his System Powers and weapons.

With the knowledge of Runes of Power, he would be able to make a scaling weapon out of whatever he could find, using only his own internal energy. That would let him survive almost anywhere.

Luna thought it was great for another reason. She was quickly leveling up, and she didn't want to have to replace her gear all the time to keep within her level, not

undergeared, and not hogging the good stuff that was meant for someone much more powerful.

First up on the creation list for Luna: A Runic blow gun.

Simple, unsafe, and effective, given that she could inject a bit of her Mythic Poison into the tube with the dart and turn a simple poke into a deadly injury. There was just one minor issue. While she was learning the language with Cain, she had never actually held a pen before, and her handwriting was terrible. It was going to take some serious time before she could actually write the runes well enough for them to work.

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

Chapter 565 565

Luna stared at the bamboo shoot in her hand with great concentration, carefully painting over the runes that she had drawn on in pencil and then double checked. A Runic weapon needed to be perfect, both in form and in creation, or it simply wouldn't work.

Carving the tube for her blow gun proved to be rather simple, she only had to make it smooth and pick a straight piece, since bamboo was already hollow. But after that, the Runes had to be properly placed, balancing the location against the effect of the individual runes to have them all work together.

For now, she was making the simplest of runic weapons, an enchantment that would increase the speed of the projectiles. In the runic language, her inscription was all one word, and it just had to be spread down the tube so that the dart would increase in speed as it went.

In theory, that should be really easy, but Luna had never written anything before, and it had taken her more than ten tries to just get the pencil part right so that she could check that it was correct.

When they were properly placed, Runes gave off a feeling of power, which was enough to tell her that she hadn't made a mistake, but in order to get them to activate, they needed to be permanent, and a Pencil didn't meet the requirements.

First, she made the little snake with no head, then the one looped around to touch it's middle. Those ones she understood, and they were written easily. But the next one had an extra branch, and she wasn't sure how she was supposed to connect it so that it looked right.

Hard angles weren't easy for her either, especially with the paintbrush.

Again she referred to the Calligraphy book, memorizing the brush stroke order, and carefully put down the third and fourth matching runes. They still looked right, and Luna put extra focus into getting the final one right, so she wouldn't have to discard this blowgun in the making.

It was also a snake and should be easy to draw, but it had two hard angles. Luna checked the book again, trying to understand, then suddenly inspiration came to her. These weren't all snakes, some of them were more than one snake. This was a curved one, and a straight one and each was its own brush stroke.

Why hadn't Papa Cain explained it that way, to begin with? Now that she knew, this calligraphy thing was way easier to understand.

Luna drew the final rune on the blowgun and added a bit of mana, watching the carefully painted runes glow with blue light before the whole blowgun faded to a soft silver color, with blue runes engraved on it.

It was right, she was certain of it. That was what was supposed to happen, the Runes made the material stronger, and added an enchantment based on the strength of the creator, or the wielder if they added the mana after the initial charges had faded.

With a successful first attempt in hand, Luna slithered off her seat and went looking for the target range that the Librarian had promised was nearby.

It was made for archery, so it should be far enough for her to test her blowgun, and there were trained people there to help the rookies like her, who had never done it before. At least, she hoped that one of them knew how to use a blowgun. You just added the dart and blew, right? Simple.

She just didn't quite understand the aiming thing without the System helping her.

When she got to the courtyard, Luna found that there were a lot of people waiting around the archery field, so she slid between their feet and went to find out what was so interesting up at the front.

Two young elven archers were having some sort of competition between themselves, with an old elven man judging them, so Luna simply climbed up the old man's leg and onto his shoulder to take a look.

"Hello, don't mind me. My name is Luna, I arrived with the Ancient Cain." She whispered to the Archery Master who she had just climbed.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Luna. These young men only have a few shots each if you wished to train afterward." He responded with a warm smile.

"I made a Runic Weapon Blowgun, and I was hoping that someone could teach me to use it. It seemed like the easiest ranged weapon for me to learn, since I'm a bit small for a proper bow, and I'm not a mage-type class to be casting spells everywhere." She explained.

"I know the blowgun, and I can take some time to teach you the basics. Watch how the archers line up their arrows. Notice how they sight it, adjusting for the wind and the distance? That is also how you aim a blowgun.

Learning the wind and rate of drop takes a lot of practice, even the simplest weapons aren't easy to truly master, but if you watch the archers you will learn how to point the blowgun properly.

Like the bow, you want one hand at each end. Instead of the bow and string, one hand near your mouth, and one closer to the front. Don't move your far hand for everything, adjust the one closest to you for fine targeting. See how they're doing it?"

This guy was a way better teacher than Cain. If she had learned to draw letters from someone who taught this well it might not have taken her all day to figure out the trick to writing the runic alphabet.

If anyone had been listening to her thoughts, they would surely want the strange the tiny lamia. Since when does it only take a single day to master a new alphabet?

But Cain had gotten it right away since the Runic Alphabet was similar to one he knew from his past life, so Luna thought that was the normal and appropriate learning speed, and that she was a slow learner because Cain was bad at teaching people how to write.

Luna watched as the archers drew back their bows, then memorized how they fine-tuned their aim, checked the windsock and adjusted again, then let loose the arrow.

Both arrows flew true, hitting the target and touching the others that were already embedded in the straw block, and the whole crowd clapped. Archery looked like a lot of fun, but not the combat art for Luna. The bow needed to be drawn across the body, and that would block her other two arms.

The blowgun was different, it was up and out of the way, so she could use swords in her bottom arms while she aimed the blowgun. It would take work to get the hang of doing them all at once, but using swords came naturally to her, so she didn't think it would be that hard to adjust her style for times when she wanted to fight up close and at a distance at the same time.

The two archers fired one more arrow, tightly clustered with the others, and the referee leaned over to whisper to Luna.

"This is how elves measure their archery skills. The judges will go out with a string and wrap it around the cluster of arrows. Whichever group gives the shortest string wins."

All the arrows were in the same little red circle in the middle, so there had to be some way to score them, but Luna hadn't expected a piece of string to be the measuring tool to determine their total points.

"If you are here for a while, come back at midnight, the students do the challenge with moving targets in the dark, to make it more difficult. You could learn a lot, and it is fun to watch the new archers learn." The old Elf told her, patting Luna's head.

"I will for sure. Once I learn a little bit about the blowgun I will have some time before I start on another project for Rune Crafting, so I can come to visit." Luna agreed.

"Your guardian won't be upset at you moving about at midnight?" He asked curiously.

"Oh no, he is used to it. I eat until I fall asleep, then I am up again two hours later." Luna told the old elf proudly, making the nearest members of the audience giggle.

They didn't see many Demons, much less baby ones, so the thought that she was proud of an erratic sleeping schedule was highly entertaining.

"Doesn't he need to sleep at some point as well?" One of the Elves asked Luna, too curious to keep quiet.

"Not really. My Guardian is my father, the Ancient Cain. They only sleep a few hours a night, or not at all if they are busy, so one of the times when I fall asleep so will he, and then we are both ready to go again once I am awake. Maybe he will come to check out the archery too. He sees really well in the dark, so I think he would enjoy it." Luna informed him, drawing the attention of everyone around her, including the archers.

"The Ancient's daughter wants to learn from us? Now that is an honor. Here, I will set up a table for you, so you can fire from the same height as the others. Lots of us have learned the basics of the blow gun for dense woods where it is hard to pull back a bow." The winning archer told her, still holding the short red string that the judges had brought back to mark his victory.

"Thank you all for the help. People here are really nice, aren't they?"

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

Chapter 566 566

While Luna had been happy just to activate a speed enchantment on her blowgun the first day, Cain was going for something a bit more difficult. He was working on getting sharpness, durability, and Frost Damage all to work together on a spear. Since Luna had four arms and excellent reach, thanks to the body of a Lamia, Cain thought that she too would do well using a spear as her main weapon.

It was a test piece, just to see if he could do it, but since Luna didn't have any good weapons at all at the moment, he could hand it down to her and it would still be better than nothing. He could also make her a pair of scimitars, which might be a better option than the spear for her since her first instinct was to put a sword in all four hands to take care of her siblings, but that could wait until he really knew what he was doing.

The Runic Language wasn't that hard to learn, as it was similar to a written language that he already knew, but to make a runic weapon the order, spacing, and intent all mattered. That made the successful creation of a runic weapon unpredictable with Cain's level of knowledge, and he was still on the surface rune's basic level of crafting.

Once he managed to finish with this, the next step was to imbue the runes as the item was being created, layering them through the weapon or armor for a multiplied overall effect. Unlike what Cain had expected, it was not done while the weapon was being forged. Instead, the runes would be activated in alternating sequences multiple times, which would mesh them all together.

But that also required that the spacing and positions worked not only for one activation, but all of them that you wanted to attempt. It was a three-dimensional geometric puzzle of a truly Epic scale, and it was still only the second chapter of the book.

How he let the Librarian convince him that this was an essential skill, Cain did not know, but she still insisted that it was something that he needed to know before he started on the other things that she insisted that he absolutely needed to know, so he couldn't just abandon it, for fear of trying something else and ending up with missing knowledge because it was supposed to be learned while learning Rune Crafting.

Everything in the Ancient tomes seemed to be like that. It was meant to be learned in order and done in a certain way, so that the student would end up with a fully-rounded education, covering every possible aspect of magical knowledge.

If you had an eternity, that was likely a great thing, but Cain had things to do and people to see, he couldn't just take a decade or five off to spend at the Library with Luna and the Librarian before he awakened his Spirit Rank skills and was forced to move on to another world.

Thankfully the Quest Completion message was still holding off. He wasn't sure what would happen when it started handing out rewards. There was a Spirit Rank item involved, but more importantly, there was a random spin involved, and those could end up being almost anything.

He had even been offered living beings and beanbag chairs from the spin in the past.

Just like Luna, Cain was working in pencil, so that he could adjust his work before finalizing it, and he thought he finally had all three enhancements correct on this spear. So, he started on the painting, and optimistically reached the end and prepared to add mana to it.

"Double-check your work first. You only get one try to activate them." The Librarian reminded him.

She was an annoying teacher, but she had a point. If you failed to activate the runes you couldn't edit them and try again, it would just keep failing, thinking that you were trying to use the defective item.

On closer inspection, the item was perfect, so Cain added mana, watching as the spear went from light purple to ice white and began to emit a faint chill.

"I think it worked correctly this time Librarian," Cain called over to her happily, bringing the Elf jogging back over to his position.

"It seems so. You have a knack for this. If only you were as good at geometry, you would be an instant Rune Master." The words sounded snarky, but Cain could tell in her thoughts that she was being sincere, so he took it as a compliment.

Once the weapon was finished, Cain could feel the power in it the moment that he wielded it. It might be a simple construction, and therefore lacking in unique and powerful effects, but in simple raw damage it should keep up with anything that he had wielded so far.

"This is a truly impressive skill, it's a shame it was lost to the world. Why didn't you revive it in your city here, since you had the knowledge all along?" Cain asked the Librarian.

"As much as I wanted to, the Runes will only activate for someone with Ancient bloodlines. I could draw them all perfectly, but it isn't possible for me, or anyone else on the continent to activate them. The only ones who might have been able to do it are the Demon Kings of the Central Continent, and with as many generations removed as they are from their Ancient heritage, even they might not be able to use Runecrafting." The Librarian explained.

That was a shame, Cain had hoped that he could teach some of the Dwarves how to do it. They used a wide variety of carved runes and magical enchantments on their weapons, so Rune Crafting would be exactly the sort of thing that they would love.

Jessica was watching from across the room with an intrigued smile on her face, looking intently at the spear while Cain talked to the Librarian.

[Need it, must have it.] her thoughts were repeating, so Cain reached out and handed the spear to her, to see what the pacifist Bunny would do with the perpetually frozen weapon.

He should have expected what came next, but somehow, she managed to take him entirely by surprise when she pulled a jug of fruit juice from her inventory, wiped the spear clean, and dunked it in the drink.

Only a few seconds later she gave it a small twirl and then pulled it out, dripping with slushy, half-frozen mythical fruit juice. The liquid was carefully cleaned off into a cup, then the rest was portioned out, and the Bunny ran out with a tray full of fruit smoothies.

"That was unexpected." The Librarian laughed, having watched the whole silent exchange.

"You get used to it. The Bunnies are very creative when they come up with new ideas. Maybe I should enchant a spoon for her? Even a simple frost enchantment would do the same thing, and she could keep it with her to make drinks whenever she wanted."

That was all it took for Cain to get sidetracked, and end his progress on Rune Crafting for the day.

But downstairs, Luna was having an incredible time, learning to use the blowgun. Speed was a very basic direction for the weapon, and relied a lot on intent, so when she blew the dart through the tube, she only had to focus on it speeding toward the target and it would fly at incredible speeds.

Her aim was still a bit questionable though. There were darts everywhere in the wall around the target, as well as in the target block itself. At first, when she aimed the tube, she would aim from her eyes to the end of the tube and assume that was a straight line to the target.

If her darts had been moving more slowly, maybe they would have been, after accounting for drop over distance, but her very first attempt almost flew over the retaining wall.

"You've got this little snake. Just like the old man told you, visualize the tube and the path from your mouth to the target, breathe in through your nose, and then a sharp breath out.

[Ptooh]

The blowgun made an almost musical note when operated, and the dart thumped into the target, almost on the red bullseye circle.

"Very nice, little Lamia. I thought you would have a much harder time learning the basics, but with the darts flying so fast, this distance has become easy for you." The Master Archer commended her, then patted her head again.

Luna was much warmer-blooded than elves, and her hair was silky soft, very pleasant on the old man's hand, and the action was addictive. She would only let him do it though, as Luna had decided that head pats were a sign of appreciation by those in authority.

Cain gave them out all the time, and he was in charge, but nobody else did, unless you had been doing a task for them, so she was pretty sure that her assessment of the unspoken rules was correct.

"Now, again. When you control your breathing, you control your body. Steady your breath to steady your hands." The Master instructed her, leading Luna through another round of blowgun drills.

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

Chapter 567 567

The more Cain studied Rune Crafting, the more he began to understand that it was the predecessor to Inscription. What the Ancients could do with their innate understanding of Magic's properties, the other species supplemented with materials of various properties.

The end effect was very similar to the Inscription Runes placed on magical weapons to give them specific sub-stats, which gave Cain a clue as to where to start in his journey to make more detailed Rune weapons.

So far the proper spacing and Geometry had eluded him, but he had a bit of knowledge on regular smithing, and he could merge with someone who had a lot of it. If he added that knowledge to what he already had, and practiced until it became his own knowledge, Cain was pretty sure that he could make Rune Weapons that were not only as versatile as any other Magical Weapon, but also scaled with the power of the user.

It sounded like a ridiculous impossible thing, but the more he read the book, the more sure he was that it was actually correct. The Rune Crafting Manual was teaching the most primordial form of magical weapons design.

Not only that, but it was a technique that would theoretically work with any sort of energy that you could insert into the weapon to activate it. The Cultivators that had come from other worlds could activate Rune Weapons here if they had the internal energy, and Cain could use them there.

It truly was the superior crafting method.

So, Cain summoned the strongest smith that he knew of, a Mythic Awakened Youkai that had come to visit the farm some time ago, to see what the Echoes were up to.

[Greetings, what are we attempting today?] The voice asked in Cain's mind.

[Rune Crafting. I know that I need to arrange all the symbols so that they create effects, in a three-dimensional grid, but I'm not completely sure how to go about it.] Cain explained.

[Oh, a fun challenge. The reason everyone uses recipes is only that this step is a pain to get right, and can often backfire. You see, every link between runes is a pathway for the activation of effects. If any of them are nonsensical, the activation will fail. If any of them describe negative effects, your weapon will be flawed or reduced in effectiveness.

The problem is that the runes can be read in many ways when you put them in combination.

It is the same with standard smithing, even the runes are the same if it is a Youkai smith, but we still need the materials and processes to inscribe them, whereas an Ancient does not. You could simply draw them on with a marker and the weapon would work just fine.

For this next one that you are attempting, you have to link them like so, because if you link them in the normal order, you will end up with a pattern that says Deactivate, and the weapon will never actually work, do you see?]

Cain saw the vision in his mind of what the smith meant, both the correct and incorrect ways, and the links between runes started to make sense to him.

[Is that why Magical weapons have all sorts of odd secondary skills? Because the runes to make the main effect have multiple translations?] Cain asked.

[Exactly. they can be linked in different orders, and with various meanings, so you end up with secondary effects. You will get the hang of this faster than you think.] The smith encouraged Cain.

Come to think of it, there was a game like this in his past life. Letters were arranged in a square, and you had to make as many words as you could with them. It was much simpler than this, but the concept was the same.

That made the process seem a bit less daunting. If people made a game of it, it couldn't be impossible, he just needed to understand the theory and then he too could do it.

Cain got to work, using runes to enhance a segmented armor that would protect both the upper and lower body. Hopefully, when this was done, he could give it to Luna as a gift and have armor for her that protected her spine from injury if she was grabbed, like the way she was by the General not too long ago.

Not many armors would protect the whole length of a Lamia, and they couldn't equip items meant to be pants, though they could equip skirts. This was meant to be one long piece, and Cain had hopes that it would protect more of her unique body style than most standard patterns.

The Youkai Smith that he had merged with couldn't say for sure, as he had never attempted it before, but he was definitely up for the challenge. New items and techniques were the highlights of almost every smith's life after all.

After an hour, and many mistakes, Cain finally had it right, and the runes on the armor activated. Getting them placed perfectly so that they didn't make unintended linkages was harder than he had thought it would be, and the initial plan had to be modified after the runes intended to increase flexibility had merged back onto themselves due to close proximity.

Now, he just had to find the Lamia.

She was usually so good about hanging out near him, but she had been gone for most of the day today. Cain had her in his party, so he knew that she wasn't hurt and that she was still somewhere nearby, but he had no idea what exactly she was up to that could be taking so long.

[Luna, are you almost finished with what you were doing? I've got snacks and a new armor for you to try on.] Cain asked.

[I will be back soon. The friendly people are teaching me how to use a blowgun. They wanted me to learn a bow, but I'm not built for that, so I've been practicing with the blowgun that I made this morning.]

That was unexpectedly studious of her, and it made Cain a little more proud of his daughter that she was taking the initiative to learn new skills on her own.

After a few minutes, she was back, wrapped around the arm of an elderly Elf, who was wearing some sort of martial arts training outfit.

,m "I am sorry if she bothered you today. I got busy with my studying and forgot to keep an eye on her." Cain apologized.

"It's not an issue here in the Library. There are many people around whose job it is to take care of guests, she was perfectly safe down at the archery range. She made great progress on her blowgun skills today, enough to impress even the elven archers." The old man replied with a smile, ruffling Luna's hair.

"Thanks for the help. I will be sure to come to visit you again soon."

Luna slid down his arm and onto Cain's shoulder, then looped around Cain's neck like a necklace before going for the snacks that were on the side table.

"Don't eat yourself unconscious yet. I have armor for you to try on." Cain reminded her, drawing Luna's attention away from the food.

"Pass it over then. I'm hungry after all that work." The little Lamia pouted, sneaking herself another bite-sized meat chunk with her tail.

Cain traded her the armor he had Rune Crafted and Luna equipped it, getting a chest plate and skirt-type Lamellar armor, but with a set of armor plates that ran down the back and almost all the way to the end of her tail, held in place only by the effects of the System.

"That's a bit better. Now if someone grabs you, the armor will help prevent them from stretching you and injuring your back. I know it hurt when you were tossed by the General." Cain told her, and Luna beamed with pride.

"It did, but I bit him good and I would do it again."

With that, she began to ignore Cain again, and busied herself with the food, eating until she was too full to move properly, then curling an extra loop around Cain and falling asleep.

That was when Laura and Evangeline, with the other copy of Moana, finally made it to the city limits. They had fully mastered the art of entering the collective thought now, so Laura was a bit less excitable and lonely, but there were too many new things to see, she would need some time to make it through the city so that they could come to say hello to Cain.

[Take your time, Luna is asleep anyhow. If you get here just as she wakes up I think she will have a lot of questions for you about your journey. We've been to a bunch of places, but we always use travel magic, so she doesn't have a lot of stories about a long trip on foot.] Cain suggested.

[See, I told you I wasn't stopping in too many places. Now, let's go see this shop, I have no idea what it sells.] Laura cheered, and Cain could sense Evangeline's exasperation along with Moana's amusement.

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

Chapter 568 568

It was a good thing that Luna slept longer than usual this time, as Laura wanted to do a lot of sightseeing inside the city, and not just shopping. They had a lot of unique and historical architecture that the Dragon hadn't seen before, from multiple cultures and even other places, including the Celestial Realm, which Evangeline helpfully identified.

The moment they entered the Library, Luna was already rushing towards them, barely slowing to wave at the archers as she passed them.

Luna took Laura and Moana into a side study room to talk, while an exhausted Evangeline came to see how Cain was doing.

"You know, even though Seraphim don't sleep, I don't think I have ever felt this exhausted before. I wonder if the Companion bond granted some sort of hidden bonus to mental fortitude?" The Seraphim complained, flopping down on top of Cain and letting her wings hang down over the side of the chair.

"You have had it hard for sure. But at least everyone is back in the Communal link now, so they have an outlet for questions." Cain tried consoling her.

"True, but it also meant that my twin has had ample opportunity to mock my luck, and the fact that I have had to wear clothes this entire time."

Cain took a moment to try to locate the other Evangeline, finding that she had been lounging in a lower level of the Blood Sands Castle underground with the Spider Queen and a few other free spirits. They had blocked the entrances to the areas that they were using so that nobody could bother them or tell them to get dressed, playing cards and having the kitchen staff transfer food into the Guild Bank so that they didn't have to get dressed and go up to eat.

No wonder this Evangeline was in a bad mood.

"I have made decent progress on the Rune Crafting portion of my preparations, enough that I have reached the level that the Librarian determined was essential before I reached the Spirit Awakening, so I'm going to switch topics now. Would you like to join me?" Cain asked.

"Sure, what's up next?" Evangeline asked, not getting out of his lap.

"Next up on the list is an introduction to Negotiating with Human Cultivators. That sounds like your specialty since you're so good with public relations." Cain informed her, taking out the book that the Librarian had left on the topic.

The world on the other side of the portal was supposed to be in a higher plane than this one, and almost entirely inhabited by Humans, with a few other sentient species hiding among the population. The Librarian said that he would have to pretend to be human, as if it was some impossible task, despite the fact that he literally used to be one.

That thought made all the Companions and Watchers in Cain's mind burst into laughter, and Evangeline laugh out loud.

"Have you not checked your own thought processes? Even if you used to be human, you forgot how to be one a long time ago, and Human Cultivators only respect strength. If you go to their world, you are going to have to learn to do things their way, at least until you finish whatever quest or task you need to do to get back home afterward. Or open a portal so we can come to visit, either one is fine.

"I'm not that inhuman in my thinking am I? I don't really feel like my thought processes have changed that much." Cain informed her, making everyone laugh again, including the Smith that he was merged with.

"You sent Mythic Demons to hunt down an enemy General, and then when you found out it was just a figurehead you sent her to the Bunny God temple for a massage." Evangeline pointed out.

"Extenuating Circumstances." Cain objected.

"You literally wear a Mythic Demon as an article of clothing." Evangeline continued, then corrected herself.

"More properly, you alternate between Mythic Demons to use as fashion accessories."

"But they like it." Cain laughed, seeing where she was going with this.

There was no objection from the demons themselves, he was right, they did like it, but that didn't change the fact that it wasn't really a thing that Humans do.

"You took over a Continent and started a Cult by accident," Vala added fuel to the fire.

"I claim no responsibility for that. The cult formed itself." That wasn't really even an objection at this point, and the former Companions knew that they had him.

"Finally, of all the things that a human has never done, you got another human pregnant with twin Tentacle Monsters." Nemu finished the accusations with a burst of humor.

"True, I can't say that any human has ever done that. Perhaps I really should put some effort into learning this guidebook on how to properly interact with humans from Cultivation Sects, whatever those are.

Oh, there's a bit about ones from Mage Guilds, Clergy Temples, and non-enhanced civilians as well. I think I should be good at dealing with at least one of those groups already." Cain encouraged himself, looking at the daunting thickness of the manual.

Most of the information in the dealing with Cultivators section was common sense things that Cain objected to on moral grounds.

"If you meet a Sect Master on your own cultivation level, you should bow before him and greet him with reverence... Who wrote this drivel? I mean, maybe don't attack him first, but grovel just because he has a few friends somewhere? I can call a thousand friends in a second." Cain muttered, making Evangeline sigh.

"You don't know that. We don't even know if that world has mana, which is why you're preparing for any eventuality so that you can come back safely and not get murdered by a random stranger or hunted down by the Human Gods when you cause a disturbance." Evangeline reminded him.

"Has anyone other than Laura ever told you that you're no fun?" Cain teased, making her laugh.

"No, just you and her. Everyone else thinks that I'm a lot of fun." Evangeline told him proudly, then mentally shushed Vala, who still took every opportunity to taunt the Seraphim. It was an innate instinct for the Demon, and Evangeline returned the favor, though they had long since become good friends.

"Alright, I think I have the part on Human Cultivators down. Now, on to the bit about Mage Clans." Cain sighed.

Downstairs, Luna and the girls were deep in discussion about the actual randomness of the Random generation function of the System.

Luna, Kone, Jin, and Jessica were all waiting on Cain to do whatever he needed to do to finish his part of the quest so that they could get their rewards, which were supposed to be randomized.

It was accepted at this point that "Random" meant whatever the Laughing God found the most entertaining, but beyond that, the pattern behind the creation of random rewards eluded them.

Surely a God wouldn't personally involve themselves in every single random creation, it would be too time-consuming, but there didn't seem to be a pattern to the bias that they could exploit to try to influence it into giving them the reward that they truly wanted, not the one that seemed the most or least likely to appear.

Just trying to decipher the pattern seemed to influence the pattern, and willpower had a randomly positive or negative reaction. If you really, really wanted something, you would either get something very close to it, or the exact opposite, but rarely something entirely unrelated, unless you had overlooked a factor.

"I still think that it was a drinking game. When the Laughing God created the random item generator, he was almost certainly drunk, that's why it's so strange. Like a drunkard, it gets randomly argumentative, fighting with what you want it to give you. But sometimes it just goes with the flow to see what is next." Kone suggested, having more experience than the others with the whimsy of the Random Generator.

"Well, we can make it an experiment then, you can all focus on an outcome that you really want, and see what the odds are that it happens. It's not often that a bunch of people have a random reward coming to them after all." Laura suggested.

"Not bad. Though the other Gods might interfere in this one, it's still worth a shot." Jin agreed.

Not long after, the girls went to bed, while Cain and Evangeline finished the etiquette and human interaction portions of the Librarian's random readings.

That left only one small section for him to complete, the combat styles guides. Fortunately, they were Skill books that he could copy, but couldn't use directly, so he just had to break out the desk and make a load of books to gain enough knowledge to recognize the major Human Martial Arts and fighting styles, so that he didn't come across as suspiciously ignorant if he should be approached by human warriors in the other world.

The Librarian seemed to have thought of everything, but she had overlooked one single important fact. Despite having all the knowledge in the world, Cain's life was still governed by Murphy's Law, which states that anything that can go wrong will go wrong, as well as the whims of the Laughing God, which can make almost any outcome possible.

With those two forces interacting, and Cain doing his best to pretend to be human and not an Ancient Watcher From Beyond and Flesh Crafter, there were endless possibilities for things to go horribly, magnificently off track in what should be a simple

journey to acclimatize to his new surroundings and then get in contact with the other Ancients.

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

Chapter 569 569 Spirits Everywhere

Copying out the combat manuals was much easier now that Cain had some skill in the inscription field. No more taking days to copy the hard parts, like what happened to him with the Dark Elven Combat style books. Instead, he just had to copy them carefully and they were completed on either the first or second try.

Which was a relief, because they were the entry-level texts to dozens of different martial combat styles used by human cultivators, magical warriors, and War Mages.

Evangeline brought in lunch, as well as Luna and Laura, just as Cain was finishing the last one, and the Librarian followed soon after, to check over Cain's work.

"It looks like you have all the basics down now, so if you've got everything that you need in your inventory, you should be safe to complete the quest now and see what happens." The former Puppet informed him.

"Well, that's good news, but we can't be doing that on an empty stomach, so why don't you come and join us for lunch?" Cain offered.

The Librarian had packed up a small collection of books for him, all copies of the original texts so that nothing could get lost due to translation errors from the original Ancient Language if someone needed a new copy. She had packed child care books, advanced Rune Crafting, Part 2 of the Spell Crafting book, and an "Animals of the Human Worlds" book that Cain assumed was to help him tell monsters from wild animals, and know what belonged on a human-controlled world and what didn't.

He was starting to see that the Human World might be a bit boring. They were limited in species diversity, there were no beastkin to pet, and, they didn't have any of the high technology of his past life, at least not according to what could be seen through the portal.

"I know, humans are everywhere, but aren't those limits a bit too narrow? I mean seriously, the scan says there is only one Lycan pack on the planet, and it's on the far

side of the world from the Portal, the rest is all humans and Magical Beasts." Cain complained, making the Librarian laugh.

"Not every world is like this one, you should remember that. The last world you were born into didn't even have magical beasts, just wild animals, and humans, and still, the humans managed to entertain themselves." She pointed out.

"By making technology for entertainment. I swear, the species must have been on the brink of dying of boredom without anything to do until they introduced better entertainment. If I recall right, they even started out by having mundane humans fight wild animals to the death just to quell their boredom." Cain replied sadly.

"I'm sure it won't be that bad, plus we found cultivation sects. If nothing else you can join one of them and have regular fights every day just to keep yourself entertained." The Elf joked.

When lunch finished, their whole eclectic group headed for the valley center to the Portal just in case something went crazy when Cain finished the quest.

[System, Complete Quest] Cain thought as soon as they arrived, not wanting to drag out the suspense.

[Generating Quest Rewards]

[Bonus XP granted]

[Cain has gained an item] Blade of the Heron

,m [Random Reward waiting, collect now?] Y/N

"Yes"

Cain was brought to the familiar sight of the enormous wheel with the prize slots all over it, only this one was a bit different. Most of the prizes seemed to be human-related, and not-so-obvious magical items.

"Pills? System, I'm not an addict, what on earth would I need so many selections of Pills for?" Cain muttered, and for once actually got a reply.

[Progression from Spirit Rank to Immortal Rank requires activation of a Core of sufficient quality.]

"So you're saying that I need to do like the humans we captured and cultivate a core if I want to become a true Immortal?"

[Correct]

"And I'm not going to have the chance to do that here, on this planet, where it would be done with Mana instead of pills and those Cultivation Techniques that I learned from the Librarian, am I?"

[...]

"Yeah, I sort of thought that might be the case. Alright, let's get this wheel spinning." Cain announced in his own mind, then grabbed the wheel and gave it a whirl.

The wheel raced around in circles as all the assembled Avatars received the notification that they too could complete their quests and receive their random rewards.

The first to complete was Luna, who saw a shiny spell book and only gave her wheel a tiny spin, hoping for the good stuff. It still spun a full three times around, startling the young Lamia, but as it slowed, with her desperately hanging off it to try to force the random result she wanted, it came to rest on a very different spell book.

[Luna has received a book of Inspiring Presence] Spirit Rank, range 1km per level. Inspires allied sentient beings into following the User. Increases likelihood of devotion to User's cause by 0.1 Percent per level.

The book wasn't as shiny as the first one she was after, but the ability looked pretty good to her. She wondered if she could make a copy of some sort as well because Neffie would absolutely love this ability.

[New Skill Learned] Beginning Spirit Awakening

"Dangblastit, it used the book right away, I wanted a copy first." She complained as she returned to the real world.

"What did it give you?" The Librarian asked, seeing that everyone else was still in their rewards interface.

"A Spirit Rank Inspiring Presence skill. It says I can convince my friends to do fun stuff, and the chance gets better as I go up in level." Luna explained.

The Librarian thought about that for a while. They had assumed that Luna was the War Avatar since the other seemed to be taken, but what if she was the Avatar of something else entirely? She didn't seem very warlike. But then, a Charismatic Leader, with the ability to convince an entire nation at a time to follow them in any sort of endeavor. Wasn't that how most large-scale wars started?

Every species had a version of the same saying "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

"That's a very useful skill, Luna. I'll bet your friends will be happy when you use it to convince everyone to get along and do fun things together." The Librarian assured her, wondering if she could steer the little demon away from an Obsession with War.

"Thanks, that means a lot from you, since you know pretty much everything with all these books. I finished the ones on Rune Crafting already, and I think I've pretty much got them down, but it seems a bit harder for me than it does for Cain, and I can't figure out what I'm missing." Luna complained.

"That's because you're only half Ancient. He does it naturally, but you're more in tune with the world, so it is harder for you to break the normal rules that the System uses and create items using Runes." The Librarian informed her.

"See, you're really smart. When I get a chance I'm totally having you explain these new class options to me, now that I've reached level two hundred." Luna declared.

The bonus experience from the quest had brought her to level 201, and when she came back she got the option to change classes, but put it on hold, so that she could celebrate with everyone else, only to find that they still weren't finished.

"Take all the skills from your current skill tree first. You don't want to miss out on any of the good things just because you got in a hurry." The Librarian realized that the Lamia had skipped almost an entire progression without doing anything with her class, thanks to the increased Mana levels in the world forcing her evolution, so there would be a LOT of points left over.

"See, you know all the things. There, all done. And I get new summon options, and these are some good ones too, I can summon Ancient Quality things now. Oh, and it says I have more new class options. But we can do those tonight when there is more time." Luna whispered to the Elf, not wanting to disturb everyone else's progress.

The other Avatars all returned at the same time with big smiles on their faces.

"I got a Spirit Rank item and a new Mythic Spell," Jin informed the group.

"Yep, same here." Jessica and Kone agreed at the same time.

"You guys got an item? I feel slighted now. But I got a Spirit Rank spell." Luna informed them.

That made everyone look at the portal, but nothing seemed to have happened so far, so Luna's Spirit Awakening wasn't enough to cause any problems between the two realms' balance.

The last one to finish was Cain though, and the sense that things were about to get very interesting sent shivers down the spines of everyone in the city.

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

Chapter 570 570 Mission Implausible

Cain stared at the wheel as it spun around and around, getting more and more nervous about what the Gods had in mind for him that could take so long for the spin to complete.

As it slowed down, Cain saw that an entire section didn't have any sort of representative symbols to tell him in advance what sort of ability they were. Or maybe that was a clue in itself, something that couldn't be seen or quantified in something as simple as an image.

"You know, a nice simple Spirit Rank Skill would do just as well," Cain called out into the nothingness, getting multiple voices' laughter in return.

"Yeah, I thought as much," Cain complained, waiting for the wheel to stop.

[Reward Gained. Immortal Rank Physical Upgrade] Dragon Core

Cain felt a sudden burning in his chest, before the feeling turned ice cold in an unnatural way, like a total void where nothing could exist, not even temperature.

Focusing on his body and System at the same time, he found the small round gem in his body and the description of the upgrade.

[Dragon Core] Allows the use of all forms of Energy.

[0 Percent refined] 100B experience to complete.

Cain could hear female cheering in the distance, and he realized that whoever was watching had been betting on the outcome after rigging the random roll.

"Um, thanks I guess? Now I have a clear path to Immortal Awakening, I just need to gather experience. Fortunately, I am very good at that." Cain told the void.

The sense of amusement that he got back told him that he shouldn't have said that. The Laughing God was totally going to mess with his chance at stacking experience. Hopefully, it didn't mess with his Class abilities.

When Cain opened his eyes, there was a Quest Notification waiting for him.

[Mission Implausible] Increase Body Quality to Immortal, then meet all of your children at once.

[Mission Cannot Be Refused]

That wasn't the only thing going on, the Portal next to him was going insane, pulsing power in and out, in danger of destroying everything in the area.

"I guess that's my cue. Everyone, please behave in my absence, since I have a mission to complete on the other side before I return to this side." Cain pleaded.

"No problem boss," Kone replied, while Jin and Jessica gave him the thumbs up.

"Luna, you too. Do you promise to behave while I'm gone?" Cain asked, and Luna appeared in front of his face.

"Of course, I'm the best-behaved Lamia ever." She informed him happily.

Cain stepped into the portal to stop the chaos and prevent the destruction of the valley, only hearing the screaming from behind him a second too late.

"Oh, this place is pretty cool looking. Did you say that there are only humans here? I haven't seen a lot of humans, where do you think the closest city is?" Luna asked, draped in her customary spot around his neck.

Now he understood what they were shouting. He was still wearing Luna.

Cain turned to put her back through the portal, but it didn't seem to exist from this side. All signs of energy fluctuations were gone, and he could see nothing but the forest around him.

Back at the End of the World, a group of Avatars stood staring in shock at the scene in front of them. Nothing could pass through the portal, it was one way, but it clearly didn't have an opening on the other side. Luna was still around Cain's neck, cheering him on to go find more humans, and there wasn't a thing that they could do about it.

Cain shifted himself to a human form, finding that it felt very strange to use energy in this world. It wasn't mana, but it was still workable for him. Then he looked down at Luna.

"You understand this is a human world, right? There are no Demons, you can't be here in that form. I will have to transform you." Cain explained.

"Oh, I've never been human either. That's two new things today, not bad." Luna agreed.

His human form was tall, muscular, and dark-haired with blue eyes, so he made Luna look the same, leaving her at the default size of a girl in her early teens.

She took a mirror out of her inventory and smiled at her new face. "I'm kind of cute still, in a human sort of way, if you understand what I mean. It's not bad. Good thing I learned all those new skills, I'm short two arms now."

"Alright, a primer on being in a human world, you can't talk about not being human, you never know who might be listening or what they will do if they find out. I also don't know if you can use mana in this world, so that might be a problem, try not to use any abilities until we are somewhere safe to find out." Cain instructed her.

"Alright, I think I've got it. What are the policies on stabbing stupid people?"

On the other side of the portal, everyone was in tears laughing at the absurd situation, but Cain took the question very seriously, given that this was his own daughter, and he knew she would actually do it.

"Only if absolutely necessary and you know for sure that they don't have any friends or allies stronger than you."

That was pretty close to what the books taught him about what the Librarian called a Cultivation world.

Cain thought for a moment, trying to recall how the Librarian said that everyone got around. Did they use horses? No, that wasn't right. Flying Swords, that was what she said.

Cain called a pair of Mythic Blade Demons, whose natural form was that of a large two-handed sword, and lifted the childish form of Luna onto one before stepping onto the other.

"Now, don't let Luna fall off or I will be very upset with you," Cain instructed, and the demon glowed a little in response, forgoing talking for such a simple instruction.

"Let's head up into the sky and see what we find. If there is a city, we will go there and hope that the System can still create local currency for us to stay at a hotel or something until we know more about the world." Cain instructed them.

What he had failed to think of was that while a Mythic Demon was much faster, it would also give off a Mythic Aura, which human Cultivators were much more in tune with than the people of his world. They had only made it up to a good viewing altitude when they saw a group of five men in flowing blue robes flying their way, on swords similar to the ones he summoned.

"Oh, you're good. Their swords are just like your swords, you got it exactly right the first time." Luna commended Cain.

"We don't know if they are friendly or not though, so try not to upset anyone and let me deal with them as much as possible," Cain ordered her.

"Got it. They don't look like bad guys though, they're so eager to come to say hello that they're still in their pajamas." Luna pointed out.

"I think those are cultivation robes, intended for daily wear, and extreme comfort." Cain corrected.

"Hmm, I need some. We should buy some when we get to town."

Traveling with Luna was definitely not going to be boring, everything was new and exciting to her, and she had no fear of death or comprehension of the truly vicious nature of humanity.

"Welcome, Mighty Daoist, to the city of Dacia. We appreciate your advance warning before arrival. What brings you to our home?" The leader of the group asked very politely, and Cain checked his status, wondering if the System would still translate for him.

[Name] Steve

[Level] 191

[Class] Martial Cultivator

[Species] Human

Finally, a bit of good luck after a System prank, his interface still worked and told him about the people around him.

"A minor mishap shifted me and my Daughter into this world during my advancement. Tell me, is your home visitor friendly? I would appreciate a warm bed and a safe place for us to stay." Cain replied, equally politely.

"Of course. The city is as safe as can be expected, and your Daughter seems strong. I can't sense your realm, but that is normal if you have Awakened beyond the Mortal Realm." Steve, the leader replied with a kind smile.

That made Cain think that they were judging based on Aura, which helped him since he could manipulate his Aura with relative ease. This place might just be somewhat enjoyable.

"If you have a less valuable method of transport, that might be advisable as well. You can see the city is only forty kilometers from here, and openly using Mythic Treasures is inadvisable in such an impoverished region." The Cultivator informed them.

Cain hadn't thought of that. So, he summoned the Lesser Demon version of the Sword Demons and held Luna's hand as she stepped from one to the other before dismissing the others, and watching as his Mana pool refilled with the strange energy of this world.

It wasn't affecting that Dragon Core though, so he would have to find a way to gain experience if he wanted to finish the quest before Luna forced him to explore the entire planet, looking for new things.

"That should do. I suppose it was too much to ask for one as powerful as you to have items as lowly as ours." Steve told him with a bow.

But they were the lowest Grade he could summon. It took Cain a few seconds to realize that it was the level that was throwing things off, he could only summon things his own level, and level five hundred and change was a bit too far above the level of this city. It was like being back on the Central Continent again.

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

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Chapter 539 539

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.

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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.

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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.

,m 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.

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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.

Chapter 551 551

"Mister Cain, welcome, welcome. Are you here to make an offering? Have a nap? Do you need a massage?" The Bunny acolyte at the door greeted Cain as he reached the temple.

"Today has been mentally stressful, I would really appreciate a massage," Cain informed him, with a smile.

"No problem, we have many acolytes and clerics available right now. Do you have a preference?" The Acolyte asked.

"Not really, as long as the massage is good, I am happy with whoever gives it." Cain agreed, following the small man into the massage rooms.

"Just wait right there and I will bring your masseuse."

The acolyte practically ran out of the room, alarming some of the others nearby until they realized that he was just excited and not in any danger.

Cain prepared himself and laid out on the table to await the Bunny's arrival, using his skills to listen in on the thoughts near him. They were almost all about massages, naps, food, or other such daily activities, but there was one set of thoughts that were more calculating, trying to memorize everything that they saw.

Cain suspected that this was a spy for Morgeth, since the thoughts weren't sexual or possessive, as one might expect of an intruder into the Bunnies' sanctuary. But he couldn't locate the actual source of the thoughts.

They were definitely close, possibly in the same room as him, but even with the Mana sense of the Ancients, he couldn't locate them.

They must have been using a rather high-level stealth skill to evade his notice, which meant that at the very minimum they were an Awakened Transfer, likely a rogue type class, or possibly a druid, who could blend in with natural surroundings.

There was a garden above Cain on the roof, so they might be hiding there if they were a druid-type class who could merge themselves into plant life to hide, but it seemed less likely than a rogue type for an infiltration mission.

"Master Cain, it is good to see you again." A Bunny Cleric announced, hopping on top of Cain to give him a hug before spreading oil over his back.

"It's good to be back, I hope that things are going well for you all here on the farm. You aren't missing your old temple and homes too much, are you? We have enough people now that we could go fix it up if you have members who want to move back." Cain suggested.

"Oh, no it is very pleasant here. In fact, we are thinking of opening other temples in the area, at the nearby farming villages, now that they all have Guardians to keep them safe from monster attacks. We have been sending people into the cities with the trade groups, the Bunnies who wanted more exploration or to help with more childbirths, and that is helping with our numbers even if we really do have a lot of people here now."

The Priestess was rambling on as she massaged Cain's back, and Cain sensed more than a little bit of jealousy from the mysterious set of thoughts in the room.

Whoever it was wanted to join in and feel this sense of community, but felt that they weren't worthy of being accepted in such a place.

That seemed strange to Cain, everyone was welcome in a Bunny Temple, as long as you didn't attack them. It also meant that whoever it was that was observing him was actually in the room, and not just nearby.

"Maybe that is the best solution to our troubles. Now that the armies Morgeth raised have stopped and we know where they are, we can try sending people around to make sure that the people in the cities that they captured are living decent lives." Cain suggested, waiting for the response from their hidden visitor.

[Like hell I raised those armies. They have been stealing Morgeth's name this whole time and spreading my Curse.]

There it was, a solid response from their visitor.

It was more than Cain could have hoped for, and now he had something to work with.

"It feels like the people might have had a wide area curse cast on them. If we send some Bunnies to put everyone in a good mood, along with a Record Keeper to stealthily dispel everyone who comes to visit them, we might be able to break the effect that is forcing them to be so violently loyal to Morgeth." Cain suggested, causing the bunny to hug him again, heedless of the massage oil between them.

"A path where nobody dies? That would be amazing, and definitely, Bunny God approved. I am certain that some of our kinfolds would risk danger to try out that method." She informed Cain with a joyful smile, rubbing her face against his in a show of happiness while she clung to his back.

"That's settled then. After this, we just need to find Morgeth, and try to stop the Curse from spreading again. Assuming that it is a Curse type ability. That might take me personally though since I can modify a Transfer's Skills."

Again Cain was fishing for a response from the hidden person in the room, and again he got just the response that he was looking for, a reminiscence about the skill that was affecting everyone's minds.

The hidden watcher was a Djinn, a Mythic Demon with a very unique once-in-a-lifetime ability to grant a wish. When they arrived in the world, just after the Awakened Zone barriers began to collapse, they were immediately captured by a local warlord.

The warlord realized immediately how valuable they were, and spent a long time considering how to phrase the wish that he viewed as his own. The law of possession was the only thing he really understood. He had the Djinn imprisoned, so she was his, and so were her abilities.

What he had finally wished for, using the life of the one friend that the Djinn had made while in Captivity as leverage, was for everyone under his rule to Trust and Obey him unconditionally.

He was paranoid about being assassinated and wanted to take over the Continent, so he had formed a plan.

But that was the moment that the Djinn, their mysterious watcher in the room, broke from her reverie and returned to the present moment, leaving Cain dangling on what the actual plan was.

He could guess at least a fair bit of it. The Djinn had been upset about using Morgeth's name, so the leader wasn't actually named Morgeth, and that was why the Oath Breakers couldn't find them in the crowd. The real leader was likely posing as one of his own right-hand men to do the dirty work, and the one name Morgeth was a figurehead that was brought out for the sake of putting on a show, and to become the target of assassins like the ones that Cain had sent.

That was actually somewhat brilliant, and the real leader could order everyone to change their allegiance and recognize them as the true leader whenever they wanted.

The revelation also told Cain why he couldn't find the infiltrator, Djinn could become incorporeal, so one with stealth abilities would be impossible to trace. If the warlord hadn't caught them when they just arrived and didn't yet understand or have access to their powers, they would have never been in this position, to begin with.

"You might as well come out, Miss Djinn. We have a lot to talk about and the massage table beside me is open, with a Masseuse waiting." Cain called into thin air, startling the Bunny Clerics.

Confident in their ability to escape, but confused as to how they had been spotted in the first place, a slender demon with bright blue skin appeared right in front of Cain.

"How did you know that I wouldn't assassinate you when you announced you knew I was here?" The girl asked. And it was a girl, even calling her a teenager might be overestimating her age by Cain's estimation.

"If you had actually wanted to kill people, you wouldn't have started with me. You have been here for a while now, and I didn't sense any hostility from you, only curiosity and a dedication to recording everything that you saw." Cain shrugged, sighing as the Bunny moved to massage his legs.

"You really should lay down, the Bunnies work magic with their hands, and you seem stressed. Once you have had a moment to unwind we can talk about solutions to this issue."

Reluctantly, she agreed, laying down on the massage table beside Cain, and staring intently at him.

"You know, you are a very strange sort of person? Even your followers don't make any sense at all. I was sent here to determine what your plan for taking over the Continent was, and it still escapes me." She said softly.

"Oh, that's simple. We bring them a better life, dedicated merchants, Guardians who actually care about the people, and fluffy Bunnies. Who would say no to that? Don't think of it as an Empire, but an alliance between cities." Cain explained.

The young Djinn was clearly naive to the ways of the world, and while Cain's words were technically true, she didn't seem to understand the underlying attraction to the force that could accomplish such things.

"That seems better than simply ordering entire cities to do exactly what you told them and forcing the people you drafted into the army to be loyal until death." She agreed, then gasped at the warm oil on her skin as a pair of Bunny Clerics went to work.

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

Chapter 552 552

"Since we all now know that Morgeth isn't the actual leader's name, why don't you tell me who it is and I will go have a discussion with them and try to bring this all to a peaceful resolution?" Cain asked once their massages were finished.

He also stealthily recorded the Djinn, in case the status of the once-per-lifetime racial ability reset when he summoned others of the species.

"Unfortunately, one of the first things he did after I gave him the power with my wish ability was to prohibit me from revealing his identity. I can't even tell you who might know and not have such a prohibition on them." She sighed.

"That's fine, we can find out about him on our own later. Can you tell me what city you arrived in? How about what sort of starting gear a Djinn gets?" Cain asked, wondering if he could fool the system's limitations.

"I started out incorporeal, and these are the clothes I get when I become solid. I started out on the outskirts of Valmar, on the far side of the continent, near the shore closest to the Western Continent. It has been a long journey to get here to your farm." She informed him, unaware that what she said could and would be used against her boss.

"Did nobody tell you about equipping gear?" Cain asked, wondering about the default clothing when she becomes a solid comment.

"I mean, I know that people wear armor and stuff, but if I'm in trouble I become incorporeal." She responded, clearly confused.

"Alright, I have just the thing for you then. It's a very lovely dress, and it will keep the hot sun off your skin, now that you are going to be visible for a while. Hold this and concentrate on equipping it, your system will do the rest." Cain explained.

The item he handed her was just a basic cotton dress, with leather accents so that a rogue could use it as well. Her class only said [Djinn] the same as her species, so Cain wasn't one hundred percent sure what sort of equipment she was compatible with.

The dress vanished from her hands to appear on her body, and the girl smiled. "Oh, this is lovely. Can I keep it?"

"But of course, it's just a piece of clothing. I could give you armor and whatever else you need as well if you decide to leave the employment of the one pretending to be Morgeth." Cain suggested.

"But I swore loyalty." She sighed again, then flopped down on a bench in despair, not seeing a good way out of this for her.

While she was distracted, Cain called and merged with a Record Keeper and had it use its most powerful [Dispel] on her.

It might not be one hundred percent effective if the ability really was a Spirit Awakened one, but it had a pretty good success rate, and as far as Cain could tell, it had worked on the first try. She hadn't noticed it yet though.

"Do you know much about the history of this world? There have been people here for an incredibly long time, and there were two major wars in the past. One between the races, and one between the Ancients and the Gods." Cain began, sitting beside her to tell his story.

"Oh, I never asked. How did it go for them? I mean, they challenged real gods."

Cain smiled at her enthusiasm. "Let me start a bit earlier than that. The Ancients were originally much like you, incorporeal beings, only they were made of pure magic, tasked by the Creators to Build this world for them. After thousands of years, they grew bodies of their own, enormous tentacled ones that the people now call the Ancients.

They created many of the species in this world, and the Creators placed the others, and the Goddess of Reincarnation brought in the souls of people who died in other worlds to begin populating this one.

For a while, everything was good, but the Creators had enemies, a group of Human Gods, who wanted to tear down what the Creators had built, in order to punish them. At first, the Creators were unaware of the Humans' treachery, and the Ancients, their representatives in this world fought on their behalf, building up their own power and the power of the world to keep the Human Gods at a standstill.

Finally, it was too much for the Ancients, for they weren't actually Gods themselves, only constructs who had gained a body, and they were banished from this world before the Creators stepped in and drove the Human Gods out, leaving many humans behind in this world to go along with what the Creators had already put here.

On the other continents, there are many, many humans present, it is only the Southern Continent that is so heavily demon and Youkai populated. Since you didn't know much about the world they might not have told you all that yet." Cain explained, generously padding his knowledge of the past with plausible-sounding half-truths.

"That is amazing, and you are one of those Ancients?" She asked.

"No, that brings me to the second half of our story. Many thousands of years after the war against the Gods, the species of the world all went to war against each other, over a series of pent-up grievances.

During that war, the Human Mages cast a spell, a grand one that encompassed the whole world, to summon Champions and Heroes to their side to aid them to victory. It was an incredible spell and brought hundreds of reincarnated humans here to fight.

But the Laughing God, one of the Creators, saw that as too mundane. So, he changed the spell. Nearly every species, all over the world started getting new arrivals that looked like them and could access the System that you know today. One that would make them heroes and champions. That is how I arrived here, the System Transferred me here, the same way that it brought you.

So, we are a lot alike, you and me. We are both members of lost species now, no longer what we were before we arrived. The only difference is that I have been here a little longer." Cain told her after his best attempt at captivating public speaking.

He had attracted a number of Bunnies as well, as they loved a good story, and even Luna, who was still sleeping when Cain went for a massage, had returned, draping herself around his neck and clapping in appreciation for the story.

"Is the little Lamia a transfer too? It started me very young, but she looks to still be only a few years old." The Djinn asked.

"Nope, I was actually born here. This is my dad." Luna told her proudly, and the young Djinn looked shocked.

"So your mother is..."

"A regular Lamia, with white scales and bright pink hair, but only two arms. She is back at one of our other houses on the Central Continent, taking care of the rest of the children." Luna told her with a smile.

"That was an excellent story, and I didn't expect you to be such an open-minded family man, but what was the point of it?" The Djinn asked.

"When the Record Keeper disenchant a curse or debuff effect it can take a little while to properly wear off, and sometimes it will reactivate on its own if the attempt doesn't work completely. I just needed to distract you with an interesting history lesson for a while until we could be certain that you are no longer under the control of the one leading the army." Cain told her.

"Wait, you can counteract the ability I gave him? But it is Spirit Awakened." She gasped.

"Lower rank abilities still work to counter higher rank ones, they just aren't always effective, the higher level effects will sometimes resist them. It happens with non-awakened abilities as well." Cain answered while the Bunnies all nodded in agreement. They had all seen the healers working on particularly tough poisons and curses during their training.

"So you can free the people?" She asked hopefully.

"I mean, technically, yes. It would be slow to do them all one by one, but we could. Instead, I want to catch him and take that ability away. I understand that likely means a duel to the death, but if that's what it takes, then I am willing to try, for the sake of the civilians on the Southern Continent." Cain told her.

Really, he had no intentions of actually fighting. He had acquired a lovely spell from his spell crafting that would send someone directly up in the air for thousands of kilometers. The demon might be tough, but unlike a powerful Dragon, he probably couldn't survive in a vacuum or fly through space on his own. That should end the whole mess in an instant.

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

Chapter 553 553

The conversation that the Djinn and Cain were having gave the Oath Breakers an incredibly great idea. If the one they wanted wasn't named Morgeth, all they had to do was find the one person without the compliance debuff and borrow them.

The fact that they hadn't been able to find the enemy leader so far had annoyed them to no end, and they had even asked a few other demons with search talents to help them find Morgeth over the last few days with no luck.

Fortunately, for them, finding a specific debuff, or lack thereof, was much easier.

The Oath Breakers split up and began searching through the recently occupied towns again, and then moved on to the outskirts of the army encampments.

They couldn't get any closer, as they were fast, but not invisible, and a bit too large to blend in with the crowd.

[Except maybe we aren't? These are almost all Demons, why don't I just walk in, look around and walk out? When was the last time someone actually had the balls to question one of us?] One of them asked, gaining the immediate support of the others.

Even if it went wrong, they could just go on a massacring rampage through the army camp and have Cain summon a replacement for themselves when they were inevitably killed.

That was the best idea any of them had come up with today, at least in the minds of the Oath Breakers, so one per army camp simply walked in to investigate. They waved at the guards on patrol, walked past the guards at the barricades with authority, and directly into the center of Camp where they could scan as many people as possible.

[Nothing here.] The first one reported.

[Same.] The second and third replied sadly.

[Holy crap, I found Morgeth. The actual Morgeth, and it's just some level two hundred oracle girl. I am totally kidnapping her.] The last one decided.

Morgeth herself had yet to realize that the Oath Breaker was coming for her. An Oracle's visions were mostly tragedy and death, and the Mythic Demon had no intentions of harming her. There was a good chance that the leader would come back to this camp though, since the figurehead was here, so the Oath Breakers made plans to keep an eye on the area, while the lucky winner brought their captive back to Cain.

"Hi, my name is Oath Breaker, and we are going on a little vacation." Morgeth heard from somewhere inside her tent, and then the feeling of weightlessness and rapid movement made her so dizzy that she had to restrain the urge to vomit.

“Wait, what are you doing? Where are we going? I told you, I won’t keep our deal anymore if you don’t.” The Obsession Demon known as Morgeth complained.

“You are now a guest of the Darklight Host Guild. I am bringing you to our Farm. I believe that you have a friend waiting for you there, some Djinn girl whose system just calls her Djinn.” The Oath Breaker explained impatiently.

“You can’t capture a Djinn, they become incorporeal when threatened. Now tell me the truth.” She demanded.

[Cyrene, how do you convince an Oracle that you aren’t lying to them?] The Oath Breaker asked through the group consciousness.

[Focus on something that will harm her but show her the truth at the same time. Just making plans is usually enough to trigger a vision.] Cyrene suggested.

The Oath Breakers conferred with each other and came up with a solution, deciding that once she was back at the camp and the truth had been fully explained, she would be flogged with a belt until it hurt to sit for a week.

The one carrying her did his best to envision the scenario without laughing at the horrified look that was going to appear on her face when she saw the vision, and in only seconds she gasped and screamed, then flailed and tried to escape.

“That must have been the vision then. Good, now you know that we’re not lying to you.” Oath Breaker declared proudly.

“What are you talking about you psychopath, all I saw was you humiliating me and hitting me with a belt in public.” She shouted in his ear.

“Hmm, I thought you would see that it was in front of your friend the Djinn and that the bit where it was for being so rude to me.” Oath Breaker complained, confused.

“Should I come up with a new plan? Maybe one where we explain between swats of the belt?” Oath Breaker asked the horrified oracle.

“Oh, Demon Gods no. That’s even worse. Why were you only wearing a loincloth held up with a belt anyhow?” She exclaimed, flailing her arms to smack any bit of him that she could reach.

“You know what, this is way more fun than actually getting you to see the vision that explains everything.” Oath Breaker told her happily, causing the demon girl to pull a small knife and stab him in the side.

“Oh, now you’ve done it. You should have seen this one coming.” He laughed, sending her more visions as they dashed toward the Farm.

By the time they arrived, Morgeth was a sobbing mess, begging for forgiveness and promising to behave, and the demon hadn't even laid a hand on her yet.

"Boss Cain, this is the real Morgeth. Nobody told me that Oracles were so well-behaved, but she's here, unharmed, intact, and in the flesh." Oath Breaker declared happily, while Cain rolled his eyes at the demon's theatrics.

"Djinn, say something to your friend, she's still freaking out. Oath Breaker got a bit too creative with the visions on their trip here." Cain explained, ushering the two together.

They immediately embraced, and the Oracle gasped in recognition. "It really is you. They haven't hurt you have they? They are monsters, true monsters, if only you could see the things they planned for me."

The Djinn turned to Cain and glared. "You promised me your demon wouldn't hurt her."

Cain raised a hand over his heart and put on his best offended expression. "My dear, you misunderstand me. He just exploited a loophole in the Oracle's class. Being abducted and uncertain of her future was enough suffering to trigger constant visions. So, they planned a variety of punishment scenarios where they explained the truth of the situation so that she would see them in her visions."

The Djinn looked rather doubtful at that explanation. "And then how did she end up like this?"

"It was really fun and I might have gone overboard?" The Oath Breaker phrased his reply as a question as if he wasn't actually certain that it was his fault.

It only took a few minutes for Morgeth to calm down, and Cain had the Record Keeper remove the curse from her, leaving her free to actually answer questions for them.

"What can you tell us about the leader of the army? We have some basic details already, but anything else you can add would be helpful." Cain asked the Oracle that his Oath Breakers had abducted.

She only gave him a disbelieving look at first, but after a moment she shook her head. "I don't think that I have any information that I can really add to what you know. The armies stopped because my visions got confused. There were too many people trying to influence the future at once and everything got muddled. That was why the scouts were sent out and the assassins."

Cain considered that for a moment. "How many assassins? I don't think that I've seen any actual assassins, only a few scouts and spies."

"That's just because your patrols are insanely overpowered. What is up with them anyhow? Every time I see an attack launched against the farm a huge wave of Zealots

joins the battle like they don't fear death and have absolute certainty of their victory." Morgeth asked, trying to make sense of her past visions.

"You mean the Summons? Why would they fear death, they can just be called back for a few mana." Luna asked from her place around Cain's neck.

"Did your voice change? Who is speaking?" Morgeth asked.

"Oh, sorry, I totally forgot that you are blind. I am hanging around Cain's neck, the name is Luna, and it is a pleasure to meet you." The Lamia Progenitor explained, reaching out to shake Morgeth's hand.

The demon didn't look any less confused, but her Djinn friend whispered an explanation in her ear that made her giggle.

"Seriously, you wear demons as a fashion accessory? I have never seen that in a vision before, not even where we took you by surprise. But never mind that. It is a pleasure to meet you. I would love to speak to your mother later if there is a chance. I heard from the Oath Breaker that she was once an Oracle as well." Morgeth answered with a slight bow.

"You would like her. You're both kind of weird." Luna informed Morgeth happily, only to get flicked in the back by Kone, who gave her a meaningful look, hoping that the little demon would figure out that she had insulted their guest.

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

Chapter 554 554 Loyalty Is Its Own Reward

On the Eastern Continent, things were changing quickly. The massive influx of mana from the dimensional portals on the Northern Continent had turned a large portion of the continent into an awakened area in only a few days, then stabilized. It was the worst-case scenario that he had been trying to prepare for, with the continent undergoing another severe upheaval and not nearly enough awakened transfers in the cities to keep everyone safe.

The change in power level wasn't Cixelcid's reason for concern, though. The unexpected number of monsters that came with it was. Port Nefheim had been under attack for six hours, and the Wave wasn't ending.

When the sun came up, Neffie had sent out scouts with the best stealth skills they could find to locate the source of the issue, and they were due to report in again anytime now.

[Portals to other worlds have been found at three different ley line junctions already, and we have reason to believe there are more all over the Continent. They can't be closed, and we can't pass through them.] The lead scout reported back.

Cixelcid had encountered this problem before, only a few days ago, when a similar portal had opened right in Port Nefheim and let out a group of Cultivators. The guards had blocked the portal with a large stone to keep others from coming afterward, though the new arrivals insisted that they were the only ones permitted to pass through that portal.

The Cultivators had lived up to their goal of taking on an extreme challenge to build their own power and were currently resting, having been on the front lines for most of the night. More and more Mythic Beasts were arriving as time passed, and Cixelcid wasn't sure if they had strong enough guards to maintain the lines.

"Cid, we have reinforcements," Lickity called happily as she ran over to him.

Behind her were Mary, the Elven Puppet Master from Munan, the forest city whose Queen Cain helped with a curse some time ago, and two hundred Mythic Awakened Elven soldiers.

"I brought everyone that I could when I realized what had happened. I'm sorry it isn't more, but when the cities fell, we evacuated everyone who wasn't awakened to the Serrah Woods on the Central Continent." She explained.

Somewhere along the line, she had upgraded her class to Puppet Overlord and gained a skill that granted her the Mythic Awakening. It must have been recently; only a few weeks ago, she had been leveling right here in the Port Nefheim tower.

"All help is appreciated. There is a buffet by the walls; grab some food and get a few hours of sleep. You look like you've been through a lot." Cid agreed. He was going to lead the way for them when a portal suddenly opened beside him, and Moana flew through, circling his head in a form of victory dance.

"I brought more helpers. Master Cain has a plan for the South, so we brought you every fighter, healer, and cook who volunteered." The Leviathan informed him.

There were hundreds of them, a steady stream coming through the portal from the Long Fang Valley.

"You get one copy of each Companion as well, and both copies of Nila will be here with Mythryll by boat in a few hours.

All of the new arrivals with Moana wore the black and white Tabards of the Darklight Host Outreach Workers, and Cid saw Cyrene guiding people to set up camps wherever they could without blocking roads or damaging crops.

“What brings you here, Cyrene? I know you hate fighting.” Lickity asked Lamia, whose hair was full of excited Lamia children.

“My visions will work better from here. There are still a lot of awakened warriors in the valley, so don’t worry about them, they are perfectly safe.

But we couldn’t stand around while our friends were in trouble. I saw visions of the invasion this morning, Central Continent time, and spent the last few hours getting everyone we could find ready to come and fight.

I even brought some old friends from the Yellow Tusk Clan Orcs. You remember Morgan, right?”

Morgan, affectionately called Mork by her brother, was at the head of twenty Awakened Orcs, leading them straight to the walls to join the fight with only a short pause to wave at Cid and Lickity.

“Mary, how many Elven villagers are still trapped in the woods? Should we send troops to rescue everyone within a day of us?” Neffie asked, coming to hug the Elf.

“We should be the last of the Elves here on the Eastern Continent. Some might be on the far coast, which isn’t an awakened area yet, but the entire Forest was evacuated and left to the monsters.” Mary informed her with a rueful smile, returning the hug.

Cixelcid couldn’t believe what he was hearing. An entire Continent had been lost to the new arrivals from the portals? He knew it was likely to upset the balance on the Continent, but he hadn’t expected that.

“Thank you for your hard work. I wish we could have done more, but there hadn’t been news from more than a day away in a while.” Lickity told the Elf, adding herself to the hug.

“Everyone was so panicked that they barely remembered to inform their families that they were leaving. We left in five groups to lead the evacuations. Well, other than Mary here, since she is a group all by herself as a Puppet Master.” One of the Elven soldiers explained, indicating a pair of Dwarf-sized, white-winged Youkai and an Elven man who were most likely Mary’s Commander and Lieutenants.

“I was in the next village over when we finished the evacuations last night, so I called everyone to me, and we decided to come here next to see how you were holding up, but we were attacked by surprise, and the travel circle in town was damaged, so we had to walk,” Mary added.

That explained why they looked so bedraggled today. A monster raid in the middle of the night is a nightmare to defend against. You can't even see them coming.

The companions had joined the battle already, and the sight of additional Dragons in the air was helping reduce the number of monsters willing to attack the Port City, giving the warriors a chance to catch their breath.

The Watchers already had some out, mostly clones of Su, Kone's Forest Dragon Companion, who were healing the front-line combatants. Still, the extra group from Laura was enough to tip the balance even before Vala and her demons tore into the group of Minotaur Warriors who were holding the center of the battlefield.

Moana and her Leviathan squad, flying above the city and blocking the light were the last straw, and the attackers fled the field. They would be back, and the scouts would need to be careful returning, but for now, they had time to regroup and eat.

"Now that we have breathing room, I welcome everyone to Port Nefheim. We recently expanded our housing in expectation of seeing refugees, but the Elves seem to have taken care of that problem.

So, there are plenty of places for everyone to stay if you don't want to sleep outdoors. There is plenty of hot food, and our guards are on their way to collect more from the battlefield.

So please, make yourselves at home." Neffie welcomed everyone who had just arrived in the city and then returned to the walls. She didn't trust the monsters not to come back, and her most vital support abilities had a limited range centered on herself.

The diversion didn't create much of a break in the fighting, though. Thirty minutes after they fled, the monsters were back, patrolling the forest's edge.

Mythic monsters were more intelligent than most, and they understood the concept of weak spots in defensive formations. They waited and watched all afternoon, launching random attacks to test the lines.

"Is just like the old days, isn't it, Cid? The training tower is good, but it makes you lose your edge because you know you won't die. This is a proper fight." Morgan, leader of the Orcish Contingent, laughed, pouring a bucket of water over her head to clean off the blood from her body.

She had restyled her hair into a bright purple Mohawk, making it easier for her troops to find her in a crowd. Despite his size and well-muscled build, the Orcish Commander still dwarfed Cixelcid, as well as most of the other Orcs.

"There is never a dull moment here, that's for sure. How long can your troops stay before you need to head back to the Central Continent?" Cid asked.

“I think we will stay in Port Nefheim for now. There are no real challenges left at home, but there are plenty of them here.

Orcs need the challenge; they get depressed and ill if they can't exert themselves properly. The towers were enough at first, but so many of us gained awakened abilities that we needed something more.

We could have gone to Cain in the south, but he had a lot of support there already. Here, we not only get to fight, but we also get to feel useful.”

It was an unexpectedly long and deep speech from the big woman, but she was right; orcs needed the battle; they couldn't live without it.

It would be a significant change seeing them in the Eastern Continent, but almost everything about this place had changed lately.

Cixelcid was pulled from his reverie by the sight of sails on the horizon, both the black of the Wave Riders and the Teal and Gray of Queen Rose, which should have Nila and Mythryll aboard.

[We brought supplies in case you needed anything, and we have news from the Northern Continent. The giants have abandoned the search for Gnomes and left the North to the Dragons and elementals. They are returning to the Western Continent now.]

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

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“I appreciate all help that we can get. I will fill you in on the situation in a few minutes and we can start making longer-term plans.” Cixelcid greeted Nila.

“No need, we can hear each other's thoughts and there is a Watcher standing right behind you.” The Wave Rider pointed out.

“I need to sleep, I am missing important things now.” Cixelcid sighed.

“Go, sleep, there will still be chaos out here when you wake up, and we can get things organized in the meantime.” The Watcher instructed, already planning how to organize everything.

If he just moved all the supplies to a warehouse, they could be inventoried and pulled out as needed. The sorting of the wall guards wasn't going to be hard, but they would have to increase the amount of food that they were importing, since their population spiked, and they were going to be using all of the areas that weren't already planted as fields to house fighters who had just arrived, as well as any refugees that might have been missed.

The scouts were coming back as well, so they would need to organize a push out into the woods to make a path for them to reach the walls safely. Most stealth and shadow abilities didn't work well in the open grassland around the city.

That was the easy part though, the monsters were about to attack again, so if he just ordered everyone to head to the shoreline and follow that in they could make it almost to the city hidden and not come too close to where the beasts were gathered to fight.

[We have new people coming back with the scouting group. More of the Dragonkin ones like that Jin who I saw in Long Fang Valley the other day.] One of the scouts told the Watcher in a private message.

That was unexpected, but they could work with that. [Refugees? Where did you find them?]

The scout's message was almost instant. [They came through one of the portals. I think they were just curious, and they didn't attack so we are bringing them with us. They can return home when they have done whatever it was they were trying to do. None of them speak common right now, and I don't speak dragon.]

Draconic was an odd language, and the System didn't translate it unless it was written. So, in essence, the new arrivals were just roaring at a very confused group of scouts and making hand gestures until they got a general agreement on what they were going to do.

"The scouts are almost back, and they have more random people from the portals. I need a team to head out into the field and engage the Beasts so that they aren't attacked on their way back." The Watcher called, and the Orcs cheered.

"Well, that's one group, anyone else?" The Watcher laughed.

"Shift three of the Guards is about to come on duty, we will join the fight." A voice from the crowd agreed.

That should be enough to at least keep the beasts busy, even if it wasn't enough to really clear them out or push them back. It wasn't like they could clear an entire continent from a coastal city anyhow, they just had to keep the immediate vicinity safe, the way that the Watchers on the Farm did.

That brought another point to mind. He wasn't the first of Cain's assistants to do a full clear of Mythic Beasts around a stronghold. That meant that there was a time to beat, and a standard of safety to meet. The watcher had to study what the Echoes had done and improve on it if he wanted to steal Victor's point of pride.

Victor thought that was hilarious. He had put a lot of preparation into his plan to clear the area around the farm, and even though he had to do a full circle and not just half like Port Nefheim would have to, he was certain that he would be able to hold onto his title as the first and fastest to clear a safe space in the awakened zone.

Other than time spent on location, the two were evenly matched in skills and power, at half of Cain's maximum, so that wouldn't be the deciding factor. Victor even had Lou, whereas the Watcher had his clone.

So, the Watcher started making plans while he sent his summons out to help the advance.

His preferred use of the [Versatility spell was to increase his [Supporters] to Mythic, so that Kone and all her summons would appear at Mythic quality. She was everyone's go-to supporter since Cain had set her up to both heal and tank.

Kone herself thought that it was hilarious that she was appearing all over the world, and people would tell stories of her mighty feats, but most of them weren't even her, but a clone of her that one of Cain's Summons had called.

If Cain himself had called her clone, the stories would be about him, but if they were about her, then it was because the Watchers had hidden in the crowd, or watched the battle from a distance.

With two dozen copies of her, which made forty-eight copies of Su, and almost five hundred Mythic Snapping Turtles, the battle outside the city was almost guaranteed to go their way, but the Snapping Turtle Kin were too slow to catch a lot of the beasts, so they would circle around the tanks and go for the others, making the whole battlefield a huge ongoing battle.

Even Victor was impressed at the level of chaos. It certainly wasn't the most efficient battle that he had seen, but as far as distracting a force of unknown size for an indefinite period of time while their allies tried to return to the city safely, it was incredible.

He still didn't think that the Watcher had it in him to beat Victor's own record though.

"There they are, all twenty scouts, plus another five people accompanying them. No, wait, I count seven. There are two humans desperately chasing them and screaming something." Neffie called to the guards on the wall.

“Send out a rescue force, we can’t have them getting killed by a crazy human this close to home.” One of the guards called, and Vala took to the air.

“I will go deal with the idiots. They look desperate, not dangerous, they likely realized that the group knows where safety is, but they can’t see the city from their position because of the hill in the middle.” The Demon yelled as she flew away.

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

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The humans noticed Vala coming their way when the scouts in front of them waved hello to the flying demon. Afraid of being overlooked, they both began frantically waving their arms as if she alone represented their last hope of survival and calling out to her for help.

Seeing how pathetic and desperate they looked, Vala couldn't resist messing with them for at least a little while before leading them back to the city.

"Halt. State your business in Port Nefheim." Vala demanded, landing in front of them with her sword drawn.

"Please, Miss um, winged lady. Our group was attacked the moment we passed through the portal, and they couldn't use their cultivation, and there were monsters. Please save us; we will do whatever you want. Just let us live through this nightmare." The younger of the two human men begged.

"You said that they couldn't use their cultivation. What about you two?" Vala asked, ignoring their desperate search of the area for threats.

"We are internal cultivators; our energy comes from within. It isn't as flashy, but it was enough to get away after our weapons broke." The older one, a dark-haired human man in his mid-twenties, replied.

[They're cultivators.] Vala notified the other Companions.

[The barrier around the planet must be broken, it has been letting just anyone who has tried moving between worlds come in.] The Watchers sighed.

This state of affairs might please the Laughing God, but Vala was confident that the humans didn't find it nearly as funny to be dropped into a world with no Cultivation type energy.

"How many were in your group?" Vala asked just as a juvenile Tiger growled in the trees near them.

Vala turned to stare it down, and the Big cat looked from her to the cultivators, weighing the odds of escaping with a snack, then changed its mind and retreated. Vala had left quite the impression on the local wildlife earlier, and even as cubs, Mythic Beasts had a good memory for threats.

"Did she stare that thing down? What sort of monster is she?" The younger man whispered.

"Not a monster. I am a Wrath Demon. My name is Vala, and I am one of the defenders of Port Nefheim." She explained.

"Is that far from here? We saw some others, beast people, I think. We wanted to follow them and ask for directions, but they ran away." The one man replied.

"Who wouldn't run away from a pair of crazies screaming in a forest full of monsters? That's just common sense. But if you could fly, you would see the city from here. I came over because I was keeping watch and saw you coming." Vala told him, pointing back at the city.

"Could we rest there? Is it safe? There was a giant lizard that knocked a Boulder over our portal, and we couldn't move it without getting attacked."

Vala shook her head at their idiocy. Who goes through a portal to another world after seeing a giant lizard and doesn't defend their only escape route? That's way past confidence and into hubris.

"Alright, follow me, but stop shouting; it upsets the cats." Vala finally relented.

She folded her wings against her back and walked in front of them, waiting for the beasts to attack, but the defense forces seemed to have everything well in hand for the moment.

The Watchers were usually pretty laid back, letting everyone else build experience instead of going all out, but today they seemed like they had something to prove. She would have to ask about it later and see if anyone had heard anything about a contest. If the Watchers were doing something unusual it was almost always because of a contest with their peers.

"Are there humans in this city of yours, or is everyone like you?" The older of the pair asked.

"There is only one other like me. But there aren't many humans, either. Cid is a Vampire, though, and that looks a lot like a human. But I seem to have missed how

many more of your people the group you came with originally contained." Vala asked, pulling the conversation back on topic.

"There were ten. Only one more might be alive; the rest are gone. That creature was hungry." The older cultivator replied with a full-body shudder at the memory.

"The dinos look a bit scary, and they're pretty much everywhere on this Continent, but rest assured, none of the other monsters are any less bloodthirsty," Vala informed him happily, and the man began to look relieved before he realized that what she told him wasn't a good thing.

"There it is. As you can see, we are in the middle of a battle, but there is a ladder by the beach you can use to get over the wall and into the city. If you want to rejoin the fight, ask the Ancient, and he will find you some swords."

Vala was about to fly away when the humans called one last question. "How do we find the Ancient?"

"It is twenty meters tall with wings and Tentacles; it is impossible not to find him. Tell him about your situation, and he will find you a spot to camp inside the wall and whatever basic supplies you need."

The two humans looked like they might take their chances with the monsters outside the wall for a few seconds, but the growl of the young Tiger that had been following them was enough motivation to get them running toward the wall and its promise of safety.

They made it to the wall at a dead run, with the tiger right behind them. The defenders were cheering them on, but as far as the two cultivators could tell, none of them intended to leave their post to come to help them.

Or maybe they were waiting for them to get maimed before they intervened. That was common among the cultivation sects; they would only step in to save a life. Everything before that was up to the cultivator and seen as a necessary learning experience.

So, they just kept running. The guards certainly wouldn't let the monster into the city where there would be children.

At the top of the stairs, a small girl with fluffy white cat ears and horns was waiting for them. As far as they could tell, she couldn't be more than ten years old, but she showed no fear as she watched the monstrous tiger approach.

There were guards on either side of the strange-looking girl, and the two men had to dodge them as they jumped off the ladder, narrowly avoiding the tiger's claws.

"Watch out, little one." The younger cultivator called, scooping up Neffie in his arms and jumping off the wall into the city.

"That still counts as moving your feet." The guard on top of the wall laughed while Neffie scowled at him from the spot on the grass where she landed.

The other guard had killed the tiger in a single strike, and both of them openly laughed about the situation, making the cultivators wonder if this whole world was insane.

"Damn you fools, it was a level 150 Lemon Tiger; why were you so scared? You cost me two full bags of caramels because I lost the bet." Neffie complained. She didn't often wager her precious candies from the Demon Kingdom, and only offered them up when she viewed the bet as a sure win for her.

"Um, sorry? We thought you were just a kid, and that tiger nearly ate us." The older cultivator tried to console her, but the younger one had a better method.

"These are salt toffee from our sect. Please accept our apology."

Neffie looked over the bag of toffee after she tossed the caramels to the winning guards and nodded her head in agreement. She had never tried these before, but they smelled pretty good.

"Welcome to Port Nefheim. I am Neffie, the Guardian of the city, and leader of the city Guard."

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

Chapter 557 557

[Master Cain, we have located the moron. What should we do with him?] The Oath Breakers asked suddenly as Cain was chatting with the residents of the farm.

[If he suddenly disappears, there will be chaos, and many won't believe that he is dead. Make sure that he doesn't escape and I will be there soon with a retinue to deal with the issue.] Cain responded with a smile.

"Miss Morgeth, Djinn, we have found the leader of the army that is causing so much trouble in Morgeth's name. I would like you to come with me so that we can prove to the army around him that he is a fraud and that they aren't doing the will of Morgeth by taking over cities and treating people horribly." Cain asked the two guests beside him.

"Of course. But do you have a way to avoid his skills?" Morgeth asked hopefully.

"But of course. Record Keeper is immune to Debuffs, and I can keep a second one further back in case he manages to get through the resistance somehow. Without the ability to mind control, he has nothing that can take out my forces.

We could have done this the messy way and just eliminated his armies, but that is a lot of transfers, and they will be needed by their families and home cities in the future. The Southern Continent has already lost too many people for us to be making the situation any worse.

Even here on this side of the continent, we are short on capable defenders, and we didn't lose any to battle, so I can only guess how bad things are in the regions that were conquered by force." Cain explained.

"It's time for an adventure!" Luna cheered from her spot around Cain's neck, making him look down at his overly enthusiastic daughter.

"Oh no, you Miss will be staying back with Kone and the others. It's not the least bit safe for you to be headed off to a battlefield while wrapped around my neck." Cain admonished her.

"You should have thought of that in advance."

The shout came at the same moment that a Demon appeared in a flash of light, and the Oath Breakers' voice sounded in Cain's mind.

[He activated some sort of transport item. He's gone. Oh, he's with you, that's fine then.]

That was not fine at all, but at least Cain already had one copy of Record Keeper merged with him to prevent Mind Control.

Cain had expected him to start with that, but the attacking Demon was a half step too slow. Before he could stabilize in this location and start to activate an ability, the Bunnies all acted together and let loose a strange whistling wail.

It was some sort of group spell that Cain didn't recognize, and suddenly he found that he couldn't read their minds to see what it was. So, he went on the attack and tried to use [Balefire] The combination of Holy and Fire damage, to burn the Demon from existence. But that wouldn't activate either.

"Damn you, Ancient. Your anti-magic bubble won't save your life." The Demon screamed, pulling a pair of swords.

Cain forgot all about what he was doing before and drew his scimitar and Spear from his inventory.

[There are forces at the perimeter. Ten thousand or more, but they don't look strong.] Victor reported.

[A civilian force, it looks like he took the whole adult population of at least one city. Deal with him, we can't get close to that Anti Magic bubble without being dispelled.] Lou agreed.

The Bunnies had really outdone themselves this time, using Divine Magic targeted at the enemy General to prevent the use of his mind-controlling abilities. The only problem was that now, Cain had to fight him without the help of any skills or summons.

The situation actually might favor the large Demon, at least in theory, but [Malleable Form] didn't need Mana usage, so Cain could still shift forms.

Cain parried the first sword strike, noticing that the man's System Interface was hidden, so he couldn't decipher anything about his potential skills, not even his true name. That must have been how the Oath Breakers found him, the lack of anything distinguishable was a big red flag.

Cain shifted back to his Demon Progenitor form, putting him on equal grounds with the enemy, as far as size went, and then returned the strike with a brutal thrust of his spear, following it up with a downward slice from his scimitar, forcing the enemy back.

As soon as he had evaded Cain's blade, the enemy General tried to make a break for the houses, where the healers were still working. It was clearly out of the range of the anti-magic spell, but as he approached, their healing stopped working and the Bunnies grabbed their patients to flee the area.

"Give up, the spell is cast on you. You won't escape using your mind control." Cain informed him.

Neither of them could be sure how long that spell was going to last though. The whims of the Divine were finicky, and there was no guarantee that the Bunnies' efforts would hold up for the whole battle.

With a snarl the demon charged Cain again, flailing wildly, and driving Cain's blade and spear wide. He went in for a savage headbutt, attempting to knock Cain to the ground, but Luna's body flashed forward, biting his neck and then wrapping around it to cut off his oxygen.

The little Lamia might be woefully under-leveled for this battle, but her poison was Mythic, and her muscles were strong enough to crush the average person's windpipe.

Cain made the most of the situation and stabbed his spear into the exposed thigh of the demon, eliciting a howl of pain and making him drop one of his blades.

The demon used his free hand to wrench Luna from his neck and hurl her across the farm, landing close to where Kone and Jin were standing. She didn't look too good, and having her body stretched like that had to be painful, but she was moving, so she would survive, given that Kone gave off a healing aura at all times.

The poison was already showing as black streaks on the Demon's neck, but he wasn't backing down, and a rapid flurry of strikes landed a deep cut across Cain's unarmored left forearm.

"Once you fall, the summons will all disappear, leaving both this Continent and the Central one to me for the taking." The demon gloated, to which Cian only responded with a smirk.

If this man thought that the Darklight Host would fall because of a lack of Cain, he was sorely mistaken.

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

Chapter 558 558

Cain laughed as he inelegantly bashed the man's blades aside and nearly tripped him with the shaft of his spear.

"The Darklight Host doesn't rely on me for power anymore. The Guild Skill that your forces fear so much will live on without me, for my daughter and two other members could take my spot to keep it active.

I have already set my heir apparent in the system, you won't gain anything at all, except two continents worth of angry Outreach Workers. But can you even win?" Cain taunted him between blade strikes before falling silent again.

Trying to talk while fighting was way harder than it seemed, and wasted breath that he needed to avoid getting skewered by a magical sword.

There were also far more Ancients in the area than Cain remembered there being. As Cain and the enemy General traded blows, looking for an opening, Cain saw that there were at least ten of them, meaning that almost all of his Watchers had come to join the battle. If any had remained behind, it was likely Neffie's on the Eastern Continent, who were engaged in a battle the last time Cain checked.

The Demon General was weakening, thanks to Luna's poison, and the blocks he could manage were becoming sloppy. The black streaks on his neck were becoming a large gray patch, with black streaks at the leading edge.

[A Paralysis Poison. Just as lethal, but it will slow him as he dies] Cain heard the voice of Vala in his mind, just before he saw her at the edge of his vision.

She was impatiently roaming the area around the edge of the Anti-Magic field, waiting for it to fall so that she could help Cain in the fight.

[Not Good, they dare to use our own spells against us.] Victor complained in a strange accent, and Cain saw large portions of the summons in the battle vanish.

If they couldn't get a fighter close to the mages or whoever had that anti-magic spell, the Farm's defenses could be in for a world of trouble. Even if the leader died, Cain had seen that many of the followers were zealots that truly believed in the cause, and they wouldn't stop just because the mind control had ended, they would keep fighting to take over the farm and then try to take leadership of the group.

Cain had one final trump card to play in this fight though, one that he never thought he would use. [Useful Dolls] allowed him to set his Puppets and any of his permanent summons free.

They would keep their current status, being level 500 Mythic Beings, of various classes and skills, but no longer would they be a summons, they would be independent life forms of their own. That would let them enter the battle directly despite the barrier against Magic effects.

It would be a great loss to Cain, he had always assumed that they would be behind him as long as he lived. But if he didn't they were going to lose a lot of innocent lives here in the battle for the farm.

[Useful Dolls, Free all Permanent Summons and Puppets] Cain directed the system as he fought the enemy General to a standstill.

The world around them seemed to stop for a moment as the spell activated, and Cain could feel that the excessive amount of energy released by the System activating to rewrite the status of so many Mythic Creatures at once had done something to the Ley Line nearest to the farm, but there was no time to consider that for now.

Cain grabbed the enemy general by the arms, stepping past his blades, and threw him to the ground, where he rolled away to get to his feet.

Cain picked up his weapons, using the second or two he had to make sure that the ability he used had worked and that the others understood what he had done.

Victor and Vala were the first to test the theory, charging into the enemy lines to massacre the mages that were dismissing the summons, then fighting back to back as the army surrounded them.

The enemy General didn't realize it as fast, thinking that the two were living beings and not summons, but either way, it didn't matter to their fight. He was a very skilled warrior before he gained the Mind Control type Spirit Rank ability he used to lead the army, and he wasn't about to accept that he was going to lose a sword fight to a summoner.

A low strike from his blade split Cain's leg open from ankle to knee, and he began to fall onto his right side.

The General pushed his advantage, stabbing a sword into Cain's left side, but his overconfidence cost him. Cain thrust forward with his spear, hurling it from his right hand for lack of ability to brace himself for a solid blow.

The spear flew the half meter to its target in a split second, sinking deep into the Demon's chest, while [Might of Many] enhanced its damage to ludicrous levels, letting the spear punch straight through both bone and armor, killing the demon in a single blow.

Cain breathed a sigh of relief as the body hit the ground. Then a roar of anger as it vanished in a flash of light.

"What the hell was that?" Cain roared, bringing Jessica running, already casting a healing spell.

"He had a resurrection item. When he died, the spell we cast ended, and the item activated, then he forcefully teleported himself to safety." Victor called back, as the clatter of falling weapons filled the air.

"The enemy army has surrendered. Well, most of them, we are killing the ones that didn't." Vala called happily, which made even more weapons fall to the ground in surrender, as the former army of Morgeth realized that they were doomed.

"Thank you, Jessica. I feel much better now." Cain whispered, petting the High Priestess's head in relief.

"Do we have any leads on his location? I hate loose ends. And someone please introduce the army of Morgeth to the real Morgeth already so we can end this idiocy." He shouted, loud enough for both armies to hear his command.

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

Chapter 559 559 Freed Companions

"Hello, hi, yeah. As you all can see by my System interface, I am Morgeth, the one that that imposter told you that you were fighting for. You all have realized now that the nameless one mind controlled you to fight, but please listen to what I have to say before you leave this place.

That was never what I wanted. I only want the cities to be safe, I don't want to control the continent, enslave the people, or tear families apart. That was never my will, it was that power-hungry warlord using my name as a shield to do horrible things.

Now that he has fled, he will be hunted to the ends of the world, by hunters with protection against his skills. I would ask you all one thing before you disband though. In the name of the armies of Morgeth, the real Morgeth, please, go home, take care of the people, of your families, and set things right. Make the Southern Continent a better place to live."

Morgeth's speech was very touching, and with the Bunnies backing her up, nobody doubted her sincerity. The Bunnies were many things, but tolerant of people lying to them they were not.

The soldiers would need to have a long talk, and take time to accept what had happened, especially the zealots who were all for taking over the continent just a few minutes ago. Someone would have to take charge of those ones and lead them in a productive direction so that they didn't become a wandering menace to society, but there was hope that the real Morgeth could manage it.

Their loyalty had been brainwashed to be to her directly and by name, so if she led them, they would most likely follow her to help maintain stability and justice.

Cain decided that he would talk to her later, and see if she was willing, but at the moment the emptiness in his head was jarring and putting him off balance.

[You aren't totally alone. I am still here, and the Watchers as well, but they have most of their thoughts blocked right now so that they didn't confuse each other during the battle.] Cyrene assured Cain when she sensed the direction of his thoughts.

That was a bit of a relief, and he still had the Record Keeper merged in his mind. It was a quiet sort, but Cain could still sense it there.

It was strange to think that not long ago, having other thoughts in his mind was a strange and disconcerting thing, and now that they were gone, he actually didn't feel whole without them.

[We can teach the others the spell to join the collective consciousness, now that they aren't in it by default.] Victor suggested.

That was a wonderful idea, and it would make organizing much easier than having everyone scattered all over the world and having to send messages back and forth.

[When you see them next, teach everyone who wants it the ability to join the collective thought. No, scratch that. Teach everyone who used to be in the collective how to rejoin it, and then add only the ones that you are certain would be a benefit to the group.] Cain directed the Watchers and Echoes, who were still in contact, due to their nature as ancients and inheriting his abilities.

Having them loose on the planet might cause a few issues later, Cain was certain, but it wasn't like he was trying to keep them under control, to begin with, so that wasn't really an issue. He hoped.

[Someone has to go find the clones of Evangeline and Laura that were looking for the Library though. They are just out in the middle of nowhere and now they're out of the loop. They can still send messages though, assuming that they remember and don't panic, or have to spend all their time chasing Laura out of candy stores now that nobody can force her to stop.] Lou pointed out, making Cain and the Watchers laugh.

[I would take the group and go find them right away, but I'm sure there will be chaos around here for a bit. Do we have any volunteers?]

[I will go. Learning the spell is really easy, as it turns out.] Moana joined the conversation, having known the trick in her last life, so she only needed a few seconds to activate it again in this one now that she was independent.

She was still pretty shocked about it though. She knew that Cain was intending to free them all, but she had expected seconds before death, and not just for convenience when a bunch of local civilians were in trouble.

[I blame the fluffy bunny ears. He has always had a weak spot for Bunnies.] Victor told her.

[Bunnies and Lamia. Such a strange combination of creatures to be weak against. But who would ever expect it? If you're going to have a weakness for your enemy to exploit, those are great options.] Moana laughed back.

Moana didn't need to search, she had the capability to go straight to the wandering pair and teach them the basics of the technique, and she already knew where they were. Or

at least where they were an hour ago before the battle. That should be close enough, since her Leviathan senses were very strong, and attuned to the two of them already. It was part of how the species located their friends and family in the wild since they traveled all around the entire planet looking for food and entertainment.

Her guess was spot on as well. Laura was inside a candy store near their hotel, interrogating the owner. Not about the Elf that they were searching for, but about the new flavors of Toffee. Ever since Neffie had been gifted a new type of sweets from another world, Laura had wanted to try them, but Evangeline hadn't let her. Now that she was free, this was the Opal Prismatic Dragon's first and most important act of rebellion before she got back to work.

Unfortunately, the candy shop owner had no idea what she was talking about, as the candy was from another world, and Laura didn't know the ingredients, only Neffie's description of the taste.

"Laura. If you want to know about the candy, I will take you to the Eastern Continent once you finish finding the Librarian." Moana yelled from the street outside the store, drawing the Dragon's attention, and bringing a sigh of relief from the shopkeeper.

He was absolutely certain now, no matter how powerful they got, the Youkai definitely weren't as scary as an excited dragon.

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

Chapter 560 560

Fifty kilometers from the Farm, a battered Demon with a gaping hole in the chest of his armor, right over his heart appeared and dropped to the ground with a solid thud.

"Damn that Ancient. My Resurrection Amulet was single-use, and that monster managed to one-shot me. I will have to find another before I face him again. And a more competent army. How they managed to lose to an army of summons after I put so much effort into giving the Mages a Mythic Anti-Magic barrier is a mystery only the Gods themselves know." He muttered.

The General of Morgeth's army was not in a good mood, especially as he only had one percent of his health left after the resurrection amulet took effect, and his everything hurt. Even parts inside him that shouldn't be able to hurt somehow did.

Downing a pair of Health Potions, he climbed to his feet and started making his way back toward the shore, where he would be out of the enemy territory and into a relatively safe neutral area.

He knew he had to come up with a plan quickly before that bimbo named Morgeth who he had been using as a shield against assassins got any bright ideas and started taking over the cities he had captured and turning them against him, using his own orders.

He didn't know yet that the effects had all ended the moment that he died, the General fully expected to come back to loyal and compliant populations. His skill was an amazing one but every skill had some sort of limitation, and this one required decisiveness. He couldn't give an order that directly countermanded one that he had given before.

He had made the cities that they captured loyal to the "Army of Morgeth", so if he was declared a traitor, he wouldn't be able to make them loyal to himself again without releasing everyone and carefully rephrasing his orders.

That was dozens of cities he would have to return to if he didn't act in time. Unacceptable, but he would find a way, he always did.

The Demon General wasn't the only one with a strong impression of the battle. On the far side of the Southern Continent, a blue-haired elven woman was watching the whole thing through a crystal ball with a shocked look on her face.

"What sort of Combat Power is that? You didn't tell me that an Ancient could one-shot a warrior a whole awakened rank above themselves." The young Elf told the equally youthful-looking woman sitting next to her.

"That's because it's ridiculous, nonsensical, and implausible. Don't judge your impression of Ancients by that one, he is the favored one of the Laughing God, and he has hidden tricks that even the treacherous scum that are called the Human Gods would be proud of." The Librarian told her protege with a vicious smile.

She had waited so long for the Ancient to return to free her from an eternal life as a Puppet, not knowing if he was ever coming back, and then today she was just suddenly freed with no warning, right in the middle of an epic battle for a single farmhouse in the middle of nowhere.

Nothing made any sense anymore, but she had seen enough to know that either Ancient Cain or his people would be here at the End Of The World portal soon enough.

Her viewing spell had already shown her what she needed to know. He knew what the End of the World was now, and he had dispatched a Seraphim and an insane young Dragon her way. Why he would trust them with such a mission was beyond her

understanding, but the Seraphim had a good reputation everywhere, so maybe the Dragon was just a bodyguard?

If he had sent that bloodthirsty Demon and the Leviathan, they would likely be here by now, and they could have brought that lazy Ancient with them.

"Where did he even go for a thousand years?" She complained, while her acolyte smiled, used to the Librarian's random outbursts after years of experience.

She had trained a dozen others in the ways of the Ancients as a failsafe over the years since Youkai and Elves lived for a millennium or longer if they didn't suffer a tragic death. The books themselves had all been painstakingly manually copied by each acolyte and securely hidden in various spots that they were certain would survive even if they didn't.

So long as one of them lived, the knowledge that the Ancient needed would live on.

The acolyte turned back to her entertainment in the Crystal ball and saw that the battle seemed to be cleaned up faster than expected.

"They paralyzed and put as many to sleep as they could so that they didn't have to kill them all." The Librarian told her, shaking her head at the excess.

"One day, I will be that cool. Just imagine, being able to actually use all of these spells and do things like that in a battle between Awakened." The Acolyte sighed.

She had learned soon after she started copying the Ancient Scripts that even though she had learned to read them from the Librarian, many of the spells simply couldn't be used by anyone but an Ancient, including the one that the Librarian was after which would revoke her status as a Puppet and let her resume a normal life span.

Cain sneezed and looked up from his work checking the damage reports around the farm, wondering who might be thinking poorly of him. It was a silly superstition from his past life, but he was quite sure that this time someone really was talking about him behind his back.

"Must be that General cursing my name. Hopefully, the patrols catch up to him. I will keep killing him until he stops resurrecting even if it takes me a year." Cain muttered, annoyed at his failure to kill a single Warrior.

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

Chapter 561 561

Now that Moana had joined their little group, life was getting much easier for Evangeline. The Leviathan was not only incredibly skilled at finding people and things with her magic, but she was also better at bribing and coercing Laura into behaving.

The Opal Prismatic Dragon had not taken her newfound freedom well, and was at a bit of a loss, filling in the emptiness in her thoughts with constant social interaction. Now that they were free individuals, even the clones couldn't communicate directly with each other without a specific skill allowing them to.

That was hard for Laura, who was used to constantly asking herself for advice, and balancing her ideas against the other copy of herself, just to make sure that she thought it was an entirely good idea.

None of the other Companions thought quite this way, treating their clones more like twin sisters, so it wasn't as bad for them, though Nila did find that the newfound inability to merge with herself was an issue. Now there were properly two of them, but they shared the same wife.

They would adapt quickly enough though, it would just take a little time to get everyone the skill to rejoin the shared consciousness.

"Now that we have a good idea where the End of the World place is, should I bring us there with a portal, so we can narrow down our search zone?" Moana asked, eager to get this mission completed so that they could return to other tasks, like harassing the Merfolk.

It had become one of her favorite pastimes. Teleport in, summon Leviathans into the ocean, watch everyone panic, and teleport out.

"We might as well. But once we find the right spot, you should bring Cain and the others to us and let them do the hard work. Wandering around the continent looking for one single elf is a lot of traveling and Evangeline won't let me stop for snacks." Laura suggested.

"Deal. I am going to bring us to the mountain pass that they described, since it's easy to locate, and then we can get better directions from the locals." Moana decided.

That was good enough for the others, and Evangeline happily flew through the portal, eager to get this done with the mission and get back to her own clone. She was beginning to realize that the reason she could keep up her polite and righteous Seraphim act was that she could constantly complain about the people she met in her mind. Without that outlet, she was in imminent danger of ruining her species' reputation.

Plus, the other one was comfortably back at the farm and she was stuck out here, forced to wear clothes all the time. Like, all day long, it was just ridiculous. Maybe the next village they came to would be clothing optional, or she could have Moana send her back to the Elves, they had a much more healthy view of the necessity of clothing than most species did, in Evangeline's estimation.

The mountain pass that they arrived in gave the group a breathtaking view of a large tropical valley, with a waterfall flowing out of the hills near them to form a five-branched river that flowed out of sight toward the ocean.

"Not bad. Plus, there is a guard patrol right over there, so we can ask them which of the villages in this valley might be the one that we are looking for." Laura cheered, transforming into her Dragon form for higher flight speed and racing toward the group of startled Youkai.

They were well within the borders of the territory, there shouldn't be interlopers here, but somehow, there were three of them, and two were even Mythic Rank creatures.

There was a Seraphim with them though, so the guards relaxed a little, assured that a dragon traveling with an angel wasn't likely to directly attack them, but they still couldn't identify the blue-winged Pixie creature. None of the creatures on this planet had seen a Void Clan Leviathan in tens of thousands of years, and it had been even longer since anyone had seen one in a humanoid transformation.

"Greetings, I am Laura, a Companion of the Ancient Cain. We are looking for a Librarian. Or an elf named Librarian maybe? Or even just an Ancient book would be a good start. Do you happen to know anything about that?" The hyper Dragon asked.

"The Librarian? Yes, she is at the End of the World." The guard agreed, nodding his head.

"And that might be where?" Laura asked.

"Oh, sorry, I forgot that there aren't any maps of this place, since we all know where everything is and visitors usually get an escort. It is almost directly in the center of the valley, near a dimensional portal that gave the location its name. The saying was that if anything ever came through from that portal it would be the end of the world, so eventually, the whole village got named after it." The Tengu explained.

"That makes perfect sense. But can I ask a question? Are most Tengu wings shades of gray? I have only seen black shades so far, did you have a Seraphim ancestor to make your wings lighter?" Laura asked before Evangeline grabbed her.

"Forgive the Dragon, her mental link to the collective was severed yesterday, and she has been in desperate need of someone to talk to." The Seraphim apologized.

"And then she looted a candy store and loaded up on more sugar than any living being should ever consume," Mona added, making the guards laugh.

"Oh, the joys of youth. Come with me young Dragon, and I will tell you a grand tale of the valley while we walk to the end of the world." The guard laughed, holding out his hand to signal his patrol to go on without him.

Though they could actually see their destination from here, it was nearly two hundred kilometers away. If they were walking the whole way, it was going to take a lot of time.

Moana quietly memorized the location so she could open a portal there, and then sent a message with the coordinates to her clone, so she could send Cain and the others, while the guard led the trio of Companions through the valley at a leisurely pace, telling the whole story of the valley, beginning over a thousand years in the past.

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

Chapter 562 562

Cain gathered up the other Avatars as soon as Moana got the message from her clone and got ready to head to the place known as End of the World to meet the Librarian.

They had been on this quest for a rather long time now, and it was time to get it finished. The reward should also give him something very good, and he was hoping that it would let him advance himself to Spirit Awakened.

At the moment, he had everything that he needed except for a Spirit Rank item, and he hadn't seen one of them anywhere on the planet up to now, so the quest might be his best and possibly only chance to actually acquire such a powerful item.

The real mystery was what the other Avatars had to do with anything though. Sure, they were fun to have around, but so far they hadn't had anything to do with the search for the Librarian that Cain's summons couldn't do as well or better.

That made him suspect that they would have a role to play in the interaction with the Librarian, or perhaps they would be destined to inherit a skill or something from one of the books that had been rescued from the Ancient City.

"Boss, where did my Bunny go?" Cain heard Kone calling from across the yard.

"Isn't she at the temple saying goodbye to her friends?" Cain yelled back, making Jin laugh.

"How do you even lose a person? Just message her and she will come back, I'm certain of it." The dragonkin pointed out.

"That is a possibility. But it doesn't work if she is working or too busy to check her messages. Hey, acolyte, can you find the High Priestess and bring her to me?" Cain responded, grabbing the attention of a passing Bunny child.

"No problem mister Cain. I will be right back."

The little boy ran off to find Jessica, while Jin just shook her head in amusement.

"You realize that now there are two lost Bunnies right? Jessica and the one you just sent on an errand in the middle of his chores?" She asked.

"But he won't be missing for long. Once he finds Jessica he can go back to what he was doing." Cain shrugged.

Since they didn't know how long they would be gone, their small group was planning to stock up, getting trade goods from the farm to deal with the Youkai on the far side of the Continent, plus Mythic Juices, specialty foods from the farm, and anything else that they thought might be important or interesting and help them complete the quest.

Honestly, they didn't know what it would take, so they were just going for a bit of everything.

"We should teach Jessica to join the collective. She is always busy with something, but we could tell what she was up to right away if her thoughts were open to the group." Kone suggested, coming over with a large backpack on and a clone of Moana sitting on her head.

Su had brought another large backpack full of things that didn't fit in her inventory, and the transformed Forest Dragon was even more excited about the journey than the rest of them.

Everywhere Kone went, she went, but lately, Kone had been spending her time training Larkin, so she hadn't been on any adventures at all. Now, she finally got to go on a journey, and it was just one new thing after another. New foods, Bunny Clerics, Mythic beasts, strange people at the farm, and now she would even get to see a real Youkai City, something that she had never experienced before, as she hadn't spent any time on the Southern Continent.

"I found the High Priestess." A small voice called. The acolyte had attached himself to Jessica's leg so that she didn't escape from him, but she was already heading to Cain, so there wasn't much for him to do.

"See, he wasn't lost for long," Cain told Jin, winking at the acolyte, who cheered for the recognition of his hard work before running away to finish his other tasks.

"The people from Morgeth's Army had a lot of injuries among them, so I was over there helping out. They have almost all left now, but it looks like some are going to stay by the real Morgeth anyhow, and don't want to accept that the movement is over.

She thinks that the best thing to do is to go around to the cities that they conquered and make sure that the people are doing alright. The army took almost all their awakened fighters away to speed up the process of expansion, so they might not have enough guards and hunters to defend themselves from the mythic beasts in the forests." Jessica explained.

It was a good idea, they had to do something with them if they weren't going to brainwash or kill them, so having them become proper defenders of their hometowns again would be a good start, and the real Morgeth could warn the people from the farm if the General showed up again and started causing trouble.

He should be easier to deal with the second time though. There wouldn't be any anti-magic barriers, no army around him, and Summons weren't easily affected by Mind Control unless you could break their link with their summoner. If he caused trouble again, the Echoes could send assassins again to deal with him in a more final manner and hope that he didn't have more escaping tricks.

The Oath Breakers were out looking for him right now, but so far they hadn't had any luck. They thought they picked up his trail earlier, but it was from his way in, and only led back to his army's last camp.

"Do we have everything? Is one spot open in the inventory in case of quest rewards? I hear it is annoying if your inventory is full and you can't complete a quest." Cain reminded the group.

Su moved a sword from her inventory to her hip with a very serious look, and Kone signaled Cain not to say anything about the fact that Kone would get the quest completion notice, not the Forest Dragon Companion.

"Good to go, Boss Cain. Now, let's go see the Library." Jin cheered.

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

Chapter 563 563 The Librarian

Being the only occupants of the city that weren't Youkai made Cain's little group stand out more than a little bit. The fact that they suddenly appeared in the middle of a town that never got strangers visiting likely didn't help either, though.

"First order of business. Find the Librarian. Second order of business, see if she has the books I need." Cain instructed his group right before a small golden Lion that looked like an animated statue came over to them.

Su's first response was to pet the creature, but Kone managed to stop the curious dragon before she could insult him. Or maybe it was her? She didn't know, but she was sure that it was an intelligent creature, her instincts as a Beast Lord told her so.

"What is your business with the Lady Librarian?" The Golden Lion asked curiously.

"I am the Ancient, Cain. She has some books from the ruins of an Ancient city, including one on child care that I am particularly interested in." Cain explained.

Luna gave him a curious look because she thought he was doing a pretty good job even without a book, but she didn't say anything that might mess up the Quest that he was on.

"Oh, you wish to study at the Library. Follow me, and I will try to get you on the waiting list." The happy statue informed them, running between pedestrians and through the streets.

The city known as End of the World wasn't busy at the moment, so the group had no trouble following the tiny creature, but they did have to avoid several unfortunate workers who were nearly tripped by the rushing statue.

The Lion eventually led them to a large palace, built in what Cain recognized as the Ancient style, similar to the Greeks of three thousand years past in his former life.

"Mom, dad, I found an Ancient, and he wants to read a book." The little Lion informed the two enormous golden beasts at the gate.

Unlike the little one, these seemed to be a form of chimera with scaled front legs and a Scorpion's tail on a Lion's body.

"How often have we told you that you shouldn't believe every silly story people tell you?" A deep but feminine voice reprimanded him.

"Before he gets in too much trouble, I am an Ancient," Cain explained, shifting his form to the three-meter tall version of his Ancient self.

"I am Cain, and I haven't seen the Librarian since before the Great War. I am told she saved a large portion of the books from the city, and I need a few." Cain explained.

His physical appearance was really drawing attention now, especially among the older Youkai.

Some of their species were very close to Immortal and had been born into families with relatives who were alive for the War Between the Gods.

"Someone inform the mistress. She has been waiting for you, Ancient Cain, but don't expect too warm of a welcome. You kept her waiting for a long time." An elderly Youkai told him with a smile on her face.

"A small matter of time displacement. I think I can make it up to her." Cain replied.

The angry stomping of tiny Elven feet running through the building echoed for everyone to hear, and the very disheveled Elf in question appeared before them, wearing a simple red silk robe with wet hair dripping on the floor.

"It is you. And you look exactly as I remembered." The Librarian gasped when she saw Cain standing by the door, then narrowed her eyes when she saw Luna.

"What exactly are you wearing? I have a book on the rights of sentient species if you need a refresher."

"Librarian, meet my daughter, Luna. Miss Luna was born at level 99 as a Lamia Progenitor and a Puppet Master. I don't suppose there's anything about that in the books you saved?"

I will also need to know a bit about Ancient species children since I have some on the way." Cain tried reasoning with her while Luna waved happily at the introduction.

"Come inside; we have a lot to talk about, it seems. First, you disappear for a thousand years, and now you're back with multiple children. But yes, I have books on the topics you want, both modern and legacy versions." The Librarian complained.

"You know, I recall you being much more cheerful, despite being trapped in a city for much longer." Cain pointed out, motioning for the others to follow them.

"That was a requirement of the Puppet Body. Whatever you did the other day freed me, so now I am fully capable of giving you a piece of my mind." She informed him, but her angry demeanor faded, and she looked exhausted.

"I wasn't sure you were coming back at all. I waited so long after the war, but I couldn't find any sign of you arriving back in this world. We only recently heard rumors of an Ancient, and that's when I started to track you." She said with a sigh.

"It looks like Moana using a portal to send us here caught you off guard as well. But I'm glad you survived everything. Did any others make it out, or were they destroyed in the War?" Cain asked, referring to the few Puppets he had fixed the last time he saw her.

"Oh, they're here. Nothing short of a Dragon could have destroyed them during the war, the human champions weren't strong enough, and most of the others didn't care enough to try. If you stay a while, I am sure they will come to say hello."

That was good news, though Cain wondered why he had lost his mental link to them. Maybe he had just needed to see them again after moving through time to fix the link, but they were free people now, so it wasn't an issue.

"First, this is the book you were reaching for when you vanished. I assume that's what made you finally come looking for me." The Librarian informed him, passing the tome over.

[Early Childhood Basics For New Parents] obtained.

[Quest Complete] Please wait for the rewards.

After all this time, that was definitely anticlimactic, but the announcement that he would be waiting made Cain think there would be more to this situation than simply claiming a reward and catching up on old times.

Things were never that easy when the Gods were involved, and he had assembled their avatars.

While Cain was looking at the book, Luna had crawled down his arm to greet The Librarian.

"You knew him all that time ago? Was he always weird, or did it happen because he's always talking to people in his head? Did you know Ancients do that?" Luna asked, crawling up The Librarian's arm to speak to her from Luna's preferred distance of ten centimeters away.

She had gotten so used to being wrapped around Cain that she almost forgot her voice could carry across a room, not only a few meters.

"It is part of being an ancient, little Lamia. They have too much power, and it changes the way they think. I see the System made you a Puppet Master, so you should be careful that you don't forget what it is like for regular people."

That made Jessica giggle, then move closer to pat the Librarian. "I don't think she has ever met a normal person. She hangs around Cain's neck all day, and her mother is the leader of the Darklight Host's Outreach Program."

"I thought he was paired with a human?" The Librarian asked, confused.

"He is, or was? Probably is. But the other Ancients took her away for the end of her Pregnancy, and later, he got with Lamia who was formerly an Oracle. The one he transformed." The Bunny God High Priestess explained, then jumped back in shock after touching the Librarian.

"Oh, I finished a quest. Everyone, come greet the Librarian, and it should finish the Quest for you as well."

"Oh, that's what that message was? I thought it was like a target reminder, telling me that we had reached our destination." Luna replied.

"Wait, you're one of the Avatars as well? Now I don't know whether we brought the right people." Cain muttered, carefully closing the book and setting it aside.

"Me too," Jin informed them, then Kone poked the Elf and smiled.

"That's all of us. But I have no idea which is which avatar. Well, except Jessica because that's obvious." Kone added.

"Can I be war? I would be a good conqueror; I'm pretty sure." Luna asked.

"The God of War is also the God of orphans. After you sure you still want it?" The Librarian asked the little Lamia Progenitor.

"I get to conquer and collect people?" Luna asked excitedly, making the Elf sigh.

"I almost forgot she is half Ancient. Of course, she would be fine with raising orphans; it's in her nature to collect, study and train living beings."

"She's way too cuddly to be a War Avatar, though. War shouldn't be that cute." Jin pointed out.

"War always seems reasonable and attractive on the surface, or nobody would ever agree to it." A soft voice came from the back of the room before an Elf in a maid outfit entered.

She was not one of Cain's Puppets, so she must be a worker here, Cain assumed until she bowed to the Librarian.

"Mistress, the restricted area has been dusted, and the maintenance spells have been refreshed." She informed the older Elf before bowing and leaving the room.

"I see that I am not the only one who collects people. Cute outfit, too, I approve." Cain told the Librarian with a wink.

"Of course you do. It's a replica of the ones you made for the other Puppets. But I am not collecting people; she is one of the other Librarians, hired to guard the books and save the knowledge, not a pet." The Librarian informed him with great dignity.

"Minor details." Cain shrugged.

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

Chapter 564 564 Big News

"Do you know why they call this the End of the World?" The Librarian asked, changing the topic.

"Because it's the last place anyone would look? Seriously, I checked most of the world before I found you." Cain replied.

"No, it is because of the portal in the middle of the valley. The Youkai have sealed it for ages now, but it leads to the world where the Human Gods were banished to.

They left that world millennia ago, but the power level there is much higher than here. It serves as a relief valve of sorts, preventing anything too dangerous from existing in this world.

Do you see what I am saying?" The Librarian asked.

"You think that if I learn what is in those books, I will advance and be forced through the portal." Cain sighed.

That was a risk he had considered. This world had many limits on it, and he was quickly reaching them. Eventually, something had to break.

"Close, I think that when someone or something is truly Spirit Quality the portal will open and won't close until the two worlds balance or the anomaly is gone."

Jessica looked confused at that. "But Djinn made someone spirit awakened without causing it."

"Not permanently. Since she's a transfer as well, she wouldn't know, but a Djinn wish only lasts a year and a day, then you die. The entire Djinn species is cursed, the wish is both their most powerful ability and their strongest revenge." The Librarian told them.

That was diabolical. You get what you want, but at a price. Their power was balanced in an unexpected way that allowed it to appear to be at a higher level than the caster.

That ends Cain's 'wish for all the things' plan.

"Do you have the next book after this first volume of Spell Crafting?" Cain asked, preparing for the inevitable. He could likely put it off for a while, but he was soon going to level out of the world like he did the Beginner's Valley.

Luna had just realized what they were talking about and she was starting to panic. "No, this is unacceptable. I am still new, they can't take him away yet."

"Relax, breathe, I'm not going to leave right away, there are preparations to be made before any great adventure, especially one to another world. First I need to finish things here, and then I need to study all these books before I go anywhere."

That, combined with gentle petting, helped calm Luna down. At least enough that she was rational again anyhow.

"Alright, fine. Let's see, it's been about a week. So I need to add the zero, carry the 1, and add the 4. I've got it.

If you prepare for just fifty more years I should be ready for you to go on an adventure." Luna declared.

That made the Librarian smile and stroke Luna's head. "I don't think you've got that long to prepare, but I can keep you busy for fifty years if you like."

"No thanks, if there isn't enough time, then I am going with him. Non-negotiable." She declared.

"We will talk about that later. For now, how about we all sit down and enjoy a good book for the evening? We are in the world's most esoteric Library after all." Cain suggested.

While Cain had solved the chaos in his immediate vicinity, his thoughts had caused chaos all over the planet. Until this moment, nobody knew what would happen if someone actually managed to make it to Spirit Awakened. There were a few Spirit Beasts on the planet, but in general, a single beast wasn't nearly as dangerous as a Transfer at the same ranking, so they hadn't caused any upset in the balance so far.

But Cain was a broken character, to begin with, he was insanely overpowered. If he reached Spirit Awakened and opened a portal that would dump mana into the world that

already had too much coming in from the Elemental planes, there were no good outcomes.

The fact that he would do it, or leave through the portal the instant that it opened to prevent that from happening seemed inevitable, and the thoughts of the Guild on that topic were mixed.

Could he still be the Guild Master if he was on a different Planet, in a different Plane?

If he was leaving for a higher plane, did that make him an actual demigod of some sort? Should they make shrines for him within the Temples to the Gods of Creation that they had created?

And most importantly, if he did exit through that portal, would it attract the attention of the Human Gods to the planet that they had failed to conquer and then forgot about?

The Consensus was that if the System didn't let him be Guild Master, one of the other Puppet Masters would have to take over the position. The Guild Skill was simply too powerful to be changed to something mundane when they had over five hundred active members doing daily Outreach work that relied upon the Guild Skill for both combat and humanitarian reasons.

The news of his impending ascension spread through the Guild not long after it spread through the collective consciousness, since a certain scaly someone forgot that the voices in her head and the ones beside her couldn't hear each other, and she informed the entire tavern by accident.

The Guild took it much better than the Watchers and the Companions did. They already viewed the Guild Master as an almost Mythological Being, so news that he would be going to explore another planet to keep himself entertained, which was the rumor that was spreading after the patrons of the tavern retold it, didn't shock the Guild as much as expected.

The only truly distraught ones were Cyrene and Luna.

But Cyrene had a plan. The Watchers and the Echoes were clones of Cain. They smelled like him, had his abilities, and could take on all the forms he used. So, if they needed a replacement Guild Master, one of them could step into the role, maybe even Victor, who had earned himself a proper nickname for his luck.

If she was really lucky, the replacement would transform into Cain's favorite human and demon forms and let her wrap it while Cain was away. Her scales were already getting lonely just thinking about him going on an extended trip. It might not be the real thing, but it would be a pretty good living hugging pillow.

Cain wasn't concerned with all the chaos in the collective at the moment though. He had an incredibly interesting second volume of the Spell Crafting book waiting to be started now that he was almost done with the first one and a distraught Luna in his hand. Literally, she had her arms wrapped around his hand and wasn't letting go.

"Would you like to read with me? I can get you something new and interesting and we can learn it together." Cain suggested.

That perked her up a little. Learning new things was fun, especially when she wasn't the only one learning them.

So, the Librarian was sent to find them a new book, something Cain needed to know, that both of them could learn from the start. What she returned with was a book called [Introduction to Runes] a textbook that taught how to make Rune Weapons, an Ancient alternative to the traditional Magical weapons that scaled with the power of the user, and could be used not only in a magical world but one that was based on the various forms of Cultivation powers as well.

There was a good chance that the world on the other side of the gate had very little or no Mana, so Cain would be starting nearly from scratch when he got there. He would still have his power, but without mana, and with his system possibly frozen due to the distance to the Laughing God, he might need to learn to fight without using his System Powers and weapons.

With the knowledge of Runes of Power, he would be able to make a scaling weapon out of whatever he could find, using only his own internal energy. That would let him survive almost anywhere.

Luna thought it was great for another reason. She was quickly leveling up, and she didn't want to have to replace her gear all the time to keep within her level, not undergeared, and not hogging the good stuff that was meant for someone much more powerful.

First up on the creation list for Luna: A Runic blow gun.

Simple, unsafe, and effective, given that she could inject a bit of her Mythic Poison into the tube with the dart and turn a simple poke into a deadly injury. There was just one minor issue. While she was learning the language with Cain, she had never actually held a pen before, and her handwriting was terrible. It was going to take some serious time before she could actually write the runes well enough for them to work.

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

Chapter 565 565

Luna stared at the bamboo shoot in her hand with great concentration, carefully painting over the runes that she had drawn on in pencil and then double checked. A Runic weapon needed to be perfect, both in form and in creation, or it simply wouldn't work.

Carving the tube for her blow gun proved to be rather simple, she only had to make it smooth and pick a straight piece, since bamboo was already hollow. But after that, the Runes had to be properly placed, balancing the location against the effect of the individual runes to have them all work together.

For now, she was making the simplest of runic weapons, an enchantment that would increase the speed of the projectiles. In the runic language, her inscription was all one word, and it just had to be spread down the tube so that the dart would increase in speed as it went.

In theory, that should be really easy, but Luna had never written anything before, and it had taken her more than ten tries to just get the pencil part right so that she could check that it was correct.

When they were properly placed, Runes gave off a feeling of power, which was enough to tell her that she hadn't made a mistake, but in order to get them to activate, they needed to be permanent, and a Pencil didn't meet the requirements.

First, she made the little snake with no head, then the one looped around to touch it's middle. Those ones she understood, and they were written easily. But the next one had an extra branch, and she wasn't sure how she was supposed to connect it so that it looked right.

Hard angles weren't easy for her either, especially with the paintbrush.

Again she referred to the Calligraphy book, memorizing the brush stroke order, and carefully put down the third and fourth matching runes. They still looked right, and Luna put extra focus into getting the final one right, so she wouldn't have to discard this blowgun in the making.

It was also a snake and should be easy to draw, but it had two hard angles. Luna checked the book again, trying to understand, then suddenly inspiration came to her. These weren't all snakes, some of them were more than one snake. This was a curved one, and a straight one and each was its own brush stroke.

Why hadn't Papa Cain explained it that way, to begin with? Now that she knew, this calligraphy thing was way easier to understand.

Luna drew the final rune on the blowgun and added a bit of mana, watching the carefully painted runes glow with blue light before the whole blowgun faded to a soft silver color, with blue runes engraved on it.

It was right, she was certain of it. That was what was supposed to happen, the Runes made the material stronger, and added an enchantment based on the strength of the creator, or the wielder if they added the mana after the initial charges had faded.

With a successful first attempt in hand, Luna slithered off her seat and went looking for the target range that the Librarian had promised was nearby.

It was made for archery, so it should be far enough for her to test her blowgun, and there were trained people there to help the rookies like her, who had never done it before. At least, she hoped that one of them knew how to use a blowgun. You just added the dart and blew, right? Simple.

She just didn't quite understand the aiming thing without the System helping her.

When she got to the courtyard, Luna found that there were a lot of people waiting around the archery field, so she slid between their feet and went to find out what was so interesting up at the front.

Two young elven archers were having some sort of competition between themselves, with an old elven man judging them, so Luna simply climbed up the old man's leg and onto his shoulder to take a look.

"Hello, don't mind me. My name is Luna, I arrived with the Ancient Cain." She whispered to the Archery Master who she had just climbed.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Luna. These young men only have a few shots each if you wished to train afterward." He responded with a warm smile.

"I made a Runic Weapon Blowgun, and I was hoping that someone could teach me to use it. It seemed like the easiest ranged weapon for me to learn, since I'm a bit small for a proper bow, and I'm not a mage-type class to be casting spells everywhere." She explained.

"I know the blowgun, and I can take some time to teach you the basics. Watch how the archers line up their arrows. Notice how they sight it, adjusting for the wind and the distance? That is also how you aim a blowgun.

Learning the wind and rate of drop takes a lot of practice, even the simplest weapons aren't easy to truly master, but if you watch the archers you will learn how to point the blowgun properly.

Like the bow, you want one hand at each end. Instead of the bow and string, one hand near your mouth, and one closer to the front. Don't move your far hand for everything, adjust the one closest to you for fine targeting. See how they're doing it?"

This guy was a way better teacher than Cain. If she had learned to draw letters from someone who taught this well it might not have taken her all day to figure out the trick to writing the runic alphabet.

If anyone had been listening to her thoughts, they would surely want the strange the tiny lamia. Since when does it only take a single day to master a new alphabet?

But Cain had gotten it right away since the Runic Alphabet was similar to one he knew from his past life, so Luna thought that was the normal and appropriate learning speed, and that she was a slow learner because Cain was bad at teaching people how to write.

Luna watched as the archers drew back their bows, then memorized how they fine-tuned their aim, checked the windsock and adjusted again, then let loose the arrow.

Both arrows flew true, hitting the target and touching the others that were already embedded in the straw block, and the whole crowd clapped. Archery looked like a lot of fun, but not the combat art for Luna. The bow needed to be drawn across the body, and that would block her other two arms.

The blowgun was different, it was up and out of the way, so she could use swords in her bottom arms while she aimed the blowgun. It would take work to get the hang of doing them all at once, but using swords came naturally to her, so she didn't think it would be that hard to adjust her style for times when she wanted to fight up close and at a distance at the same time.

The two archers fired one more arrow, tightly clustered with the others, and the referee leaned over to whisper to Luna.

"This is how elves measure their archery skills. The judges will go out with a string and wrap it around the cluster of arrows. Whichever group gives the shortest string wins."

All the arrows were in the same little red circle in the middle, so there had to be some way to score them, but Luna hadn't expected a piece of string to be the measuring tool to determine their total points.

"If you are here for a while, come back at midnight, the students do the challenge with moving targets in the dark, to make it more difficult. You could learn a lot, and it is fun to watch the new archers learn." The old Elf told her, patting Luna's head.

"I will for sure. Once I learn a little bit about the blowgun I will have some time before I start on another project for Rune Crafting, so I can come to visit." Luna agreed.

"Your guardian won't be upset at you moving about at midnight?" He asked curiously.

"Oh no, he is used to it. I eat until I fall asleep, then I am up again two hours later." Luna told the old elf proudly, making the nearest members of the audience giggle.

They didn't see many Demons, much less baby ones, so the thought that she was proud of an erratic sleeping schedule was highly entertaining.

"Doesn't he need to sleep at some point as well?" One of the Elves asked Luna, too curious to keep quiet.

"Not really. My Guardian is my father, the Ancient Cain. They only sleep a few hours a night, or not at all if they are busy, so one of the times when I fall asleep so will he, and then we are both ready to go again once I am awake. Maybe he will come to check out the archery too. He sees really well in the dark, so I think he would enjoy it." Luna informed him, drawing the attention of everyone around her, including the archers.

"The Ancient's daughter wants to learn from us? Now that is an honor. Here, I will set up a table for you, so you can fire from the same height as the others. Lots of us have learned the basics of the blow gun for dense woods where it is hard to pull back a bow." The winning archer told her, still holding the short red string that the judges had brought back to mark his victory.

"Thank you all for the help. People here are really nice, aren't they?"

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

Chapter 566 566

While Luna had been happy just to activate a speed enchantment on her blowgun the first day, Cain was going for something a bit more difficult. He was working on getting sharpness, durability, and Frost Damage all to work together on a spear. Since Luna had four arms and excellent reach, thanks to the body of a Lamia, Cain thought that she too would do well using a spear as her main weapon.

It was a test piece, just to see if he could do it, but since Luna didn't have any good weapons at all at the moment, he could hand it down to her and it would still be better than nothing. He could also make her a pair of scimitars, which might be a better option than the spear for her since her first instinct was to put a sword in all four hands to take care of her siblings, but that could wait until he really knew what he was doing.

The Runic Language wasn't that hard to learn, as it was similar to a written language that he already knew, but to make a runic weapon the order, spacing, and intent all mattered. That made the successful creation of a runic weapon unpredictable with Cain's level of knowledge, and he was still on the surface rune's basic level of crafting.

Once he managed to finish with this, the next step was to imbue the runes as the item was being created, layering them through the weapon or armor for a multiplied overall effect. Unlike what Cain had expected, it was not done while the weapon was being forged. Instead, the runes would be activated in alternating sequences multiple times, which would mesh them all together.

But that also required that the spacing and positions worked not only for one activation, but all of them that you wanted to attempt. It was a three-dimensional geometric puzzle of a truly Epic scale, and it was still only the second chapter of the book.

How he let the Librarian convince him that this was an essential skill, Cain did not know, but she still insisted that it was something that he needed to know before he started on the other things that she insisted that he absolutely needed to know, so he couldn't just abandon it, for fear of trying something else and ending up with missing knowledge because it was supposed to be learned while learning Rune Crafting.

Everything in the Ancient tomes seemed to be like that. It was meant to be learned in order and done in a certain way, so that the student would end up with a fully-rounded education, covering every possible aspect of magical knowledge.

If you had an eternity, that was likely a great thing, but Cain had things to do and people to see, he couldn't just take a decade or five off to spend at the Library with Luna and the Librarian before he awakened his Spirit Rank skills and was forced to move on to another world.

Thankfully the Quest Completion message was still holding off. He wasn't sure what would happen when it started handing out rewards. There was a Spirit Rank item involved, but more importantly, there was a random spin involved, and those could end up being almost anything.

He had even been offered living beings and beanbag chairs from the spin in the past.

Just like Luna, Cain was working in pencil, so that he could adjust his work before finalizing it, and he thought he finally had all three enhancements correct on this spear. So, he started on the painting, and optimistically reached the end and prepared to add mana to it.

"Double-check your work first. You only get one try to activate them." The Librarian reminded him.

She was an annoying teacher, but she had a point. If you failed to activate the runes you couldn't edit them and try again, it would just keep failing, thinking that you were trying to use the defective item.

On closer inspection, the item was perfect, so Cain added mana, watching as the spear went from light purple to ice white and began to emit a faint chill.

"I think it worked correctly this time Librarian," Cain called over to her happily, bringing the Elf jogging back over to his position.

"It seems so. You have a knack for this. If only you were as good at geometry, you would be an instant Rune Master." The words sounded snarky, but Cain could tell in her thoughts that she was being sincere, so he took it as a compliment.

Once the weapon was finished, Cain could feel the power in it the moment that he wielded it. It might be a simple construction, and therefore lacking in unique and powerful effects, but in simple raw damage it should keep up with anything that he had wielded so far.

"This is a truly impressive skill, it's a shame it was lost to the world. Why didn't you revive it in your city here, since you had the knowledge all along?" Cain asked the Librarian.

"As much as I wanted to, the Runes will only activate for someone with Ancient bloodlines. I could draw them all perfectly, but it isn't possible for me, or anyone else on the continent to activate them. The only ones who might have been able to do it are the Demon Kings of the Central Continent, and with as many generations removed as they are from their Ancient heritage, even they might not be able to use Runecrafting." The Librarian explained.

That was a shame, Cain had hoped that he could teach some of the Dwarves how to do it. They used a wide variety of carved runes and magical enchantments on their weapons, so Rune Crafting would be exactly the sort of thing that they would love.

Jessica was watching from across the room with an intrigued smile on her face, looking intently at the spear while Cain talked to the Librarian.

[Need it, must have it.] her thoughts were repeating, so Cain reached out and handed the spear to her, to see what the pacifist Bunny would do with the perpetually frozen weapon.

He should have expected what came next, but somehow, she managed to take him entirely by surprise when she pulled a jug of fruit juice from her inventory, wiped the spear clean, and dunked it in the drink.

Only a few seconds later she gave it a small twirl and then pulled it out, dripping with slushy, half-frozen mythical fruit juice. The liquid was carefully cleaned off into a cup, then the rest was portioned out, and the Bunny ran out with a tray full of fruit smoothies.

"That was unexpected." The Librarian laughed, having watched the whole silent exchange.

"You get used to it. The Bunnies are very creative when they come up with new ideas. Maybe I should enchant a spoon for her? Even a simple frost enchantment would do the same thing, and she could keep it with her to make drinks whenever she wanted."

That was all it took for Cain to get sidetracked, and end his progress on Rune Crafting for the day.

But downstairs, Luna was having an incredible time, learning to use the blowgun. Speed was a very basic direction for the weapon, and relied a lot on intent, so when she blew the dart through the tube, she only had to focus on it speeding toward the target and it would fly at incredible speeds.

Her aim was still a bit questionable though. There were darts everywhere in the wall around the target, as well as in the target block itself. At first, when she aimed the tube, she would aim from her eyes to the end of the tube and assume that was a straight line to the target.

If her darts had been moving more slowly, maybe they would have been, after accounting for drop over distance, but her very first attempt almost flew over the retaining wall.

"You've got this little snake. Just like the old man told you, visualize the tube and the path from your mouth to the target, breathe in through your nose, and then a sharp breath out.

[Ptooh]

The blowgun made an almost musical note when operated, and the dart thumped into the target, almost on the red bullseye circle.

"Very nice, little Lamia. I thought you would have a much harder time learning the basics, but with the darts flying so fast, this distance has become easy for you." The Master Archer commended her, then patted her head again.

Luna was much warmer-blooded than elves, and her hair was silky soft, very pleasant on the old man's hand, and the action was addictive. She would only let him do it though, as Luna had decided that head pats were a sign of appreciation by those in authority.

Cain gave them out all the time, and he was in charge, but nobody else did, unless you had been doing a task for them, so she was pretty sure that her assessment of the unspoken rules was correct.

"Now, again. When you control your breathing, you control your body. Steady your breath to steady your hands." The Master instructed her, leading Luna through another round of blowgun drills.

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

Chapter 567 567

The more Cain studied Rune Crafting, the more he began to understand that it was the predecessor to Inscription. What the Ancients could do with their innate understanding of Magic's properties, the other species supplemented with materials of various properties.

The end effect was very similar to the Inscription Runes placed on magical weapons to give them specific sub-stats, which gave Cain a clue as to where to start in his journey to make more detailed Rune weapons.

So far the proper spacing and Geometry had eluded him, but he had a bit of knowledge on regular smithing, and he could merge with someone who had a lot of it. If he added that knowledge to what he already had, and practiced until it became his own knowledge, Cain was pretty sure that he could make Rune Weapons that were not only as versatile as any other Magical Weapon, but also scaled with the power of the user.

It sounded like a ridiculous impossible thing, but the more he read the book, the more sure he was that it was actually correct. The Rune Crafting Manual was teaching the most primordial form of magical weapons design.

Not only that, but it was a technique that would theoretically work with any sort of energy that you could insert into the weapon to activate it. The Cultivators that had come from other worlds could activate Rune Weapons here if they had the internal energy, and Cain could use them there.

It truly was the superior crafting method.

So, Cain summoned the strongest smith that he knew of, a Mythic Awakened Youkai that had come to visit the farm some time ago, to see what the Echoes were up to.

[Greetings, what are we attempting today?] The voice asked in Cain's mind.

[Rune Crafting. I know that I need to arrange all the symbols so that they create effects, in a three-dimensional grid, but I'm not completely sure how to go about it.] Cain explained.

[Oh, a fun challenge. The reason everyone uses recipes is only that this step is a pain to get right, and can often backfire. You see, every link between runes is a pathway for the activation of effects. If any of them are nonsensical, the activation will fail. If any of them describe negative effects, your weapon will be flawed or reduced in effectiveness.

The problem is that the runes can be read in many ways when you put them in combination.

It is the same with standard smithing, even the runes are the same if it is a Youkai smith, but we still need the materials and processes to inscribe them, whereas an Ancient does not. You could simply draw them on with a marker and the weapon would work just fine.

For this next one that you are attempting, you have to link them like so, because if you link them in the normal order, you will end up with a pattern that says Deactivate, and the weapon will never actually work, do you see?]

Cain saw the vision in his mind of what the smith meant, both the correct and incorrect ways, and the links between runes started to make sense to him.

[Is that why Magical weapons have all sorts of odd secondary skills? Because the runes to make the main effect have multiple translations?] Cain asked.

[Exactly. they can be linked in different orders, and with various meanings, so you end up with secondary effects. You will get the hang of this faster than you think.] The smith encouraged Cain.

Come to think of it, there was a game like this in his past life. Letters were arranged in a square, and you had to make as many words as you could with them. It was much simpler than this, but the concept was the same.

That made the process seem a bit less daunting. If people made a game of it, it couldn't be impossible, he just needed to understand the theory and then he too could do it.

Cain got to work, using runes to enhance a segmented armor that would protect both the upper and lower body. Hopefully, when this was done, he could give it to Luna as a gift and have armor for her that protected her spine from injury if she was grabbed, like the way she was by the General not too long ago.

Not many armors would protect the whole length of a Lamia, and they couldn't equip items meant to be pants, though they could equip skirts. This was meant to be one long

piece, and Cain had hopes that it would protect more of her unique body style than most standard patterns.

The Youkai Smith that he had merged with couldn't say for sure, as he had never attempted it before, but he was definitely up for the challenge. New items and techniques were the highlights of almost every smith's life after all.

After an hour, and many mistakes, Cain finally had it right, and the runes on the armor activated. Getting them placed perfectly so that they didn't make unintended linkages was harder than he had thought it would be, and the initial plan had to be modified after the runes intended to increase flexibility had merged back onto themselves due to close proximity.

Now, he just had to find the Lamia.

She was usually so good about hanging out near him, but she had been gone for most of the day today. Cain had her in his party, so he knew that she wasn't hurt and that she was still somewhere nearby, but he had no idea what exactly she was up to that could be taking so long.

[Luna, are you almost finished with what you were doing? I've got snacks and a new armor for you to try on.] Cain asked.

[I will be back soon. The friendly people are teaching me how to use a blowgun. They wanted me to learn a bow, but I'm not built for that, so I've been practicing with the blowgun that I made this morning.]

That was unexpectedly studious of her, and it made Cain a little more proud of his daughter that she was taking the initiative to learn new skills on her own.

After a few minutes, she was back, wrapped around the arm of an elderly Elf, who was wearing some sort of martial arts training outfit.

,m "I am sorry if she bothered you today. I got busy with my studying and forgot to keep an eye on her." Cain apologized.

"It's not an issue here in the Library. There are many people around whose job it is to take care of guests, she was perfectly safe down at the archery range. She made great progress on her blowgun skills today, enough to impress even the elven archers." The old man replied with a smile, ruffling Luna's hair.

"Thanks for the help. I will be sure to come to visit you again soon."

Luna slid down his arm and onto Cain's shoulder, then looped around Cain's neck like a necklace before going for the snacks that were on the side table.

"Don't eat yourself unconscious yet. I have armor for you to try on." Cain reminded her, drawing Luna's attention away from the food.

"Pass it over then. I'm hungry after all that work." The little Lamia pouted, sneaking herself another bite-sized meat chunk with her tail.

Cain traded her the armor he had Rune Crafted and Luna equipped it, getting a chest plate and skirt-type Lamellar armor, but with a set of armor plates that ran down the back and almost all the way to the end of her tail, held in place only by the effects of the System.

"That's a bit better. Now if someone grabs you, the armor will help prevent them from stretching you and injuring your back. I know it hurt when you were tossed by the General." Cain told her, and Luna beamed with pride.

"It did, but I bit him good and I would do it again."

With that, she began to ignore Cain again, and busied herself with the food, eating until she was too full to move properly, then curling an extra loop around Cain and falling asleep.

That was when Laura and Evangeline, with the other copy of Moana, finally made it to the city limits. They had fully mastered the art of entering the collective thought now, so Laura was a bit less excitable and lonely, but there were too many new things to see, she would need some time to make it through the city so that they could come to say hello to Cain.

[Take your time, Luna is asleep anyhow. If you get here just as she wakes up I think she will have a lot of questions for you about your journey. We've been to a bunch of places, but we always use travel magic, so she doesn't have a lot of stories about a long trip on foot.] Cain suggested.

[See, I told you I wasn't stopping in too many places. Now, let's go see this shop, I have no idea what it sells.] Laura cheered, and Cain could sense Evangeline's exasperation along with Moana's amusement.

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

Chapter 568 568

It was a good thing that Luna slept longer than usual this time, as Laura wanted to do a lot of sightseeing inside the city, and not just shopping. They had a lot of unique and historical architecture that the Dragon hadn't seen before, from multiple cultures and even other places, including the Celestial Realm, which Evangeline helpfully identified.

The moment they entered the Library, Luna was already rushing towards them, barely slowing to wave at the archers as she passed them.

Luna took Laura and Moana into a side study room to talk, while an exhausted Evangeline came to see how Cain was doing.

"You know, even though Seraphim don't sleep, I don't think I have ever felt this exhausted before. I wonder if the Companion bond granted some sort of hidden bonus to mental fortitude?" The Seraphim complained, flopping down on top of Cain and letting her wings hang down over the side of the chair.

"You have had it hard for sure. But at least everyone is back in the Communal link now, so they have an outlet for questions." Cain tried consoling her.

"True, but it also meant that my twin has had ample opportunity to mock my luck, and the fact that I have had to wear clothes this entire time."

Cain took a moment to try to locate the other Evangeline, finding that she had been lounging in a lower level of the Blood Sands Castle underground with the Spider Queen and a few other free spirits. They had blocked the entrances to the areas that they were using so that nobody could bother them or tell them to get dressed, playing cards and having the kitchen staff transfer food into the Guild Bank so that they didn't have to get dressed and go up to eat.

No wonder this Evangeline was in a bad mood.

"I have made decent progress on the Rune Crafting portion of my preparations, enough that I have reached the level that the Librarian determined was essential before I reached the Spirit Awakening, so I'm going to switch topics now. Would you like to join me?" Cain asked.

"Sure, what's up next?" Evangeline asked, not getting out of his lap.

"Next up on the list is an introduction to Negotiating with Human Cultivators. That sounds like your specialty since you're so good with public relations." Cain informed her, taking out the book that the Librarian had left on the topic.

The world on the other side of the portal was supposed to be in a higher plane than this one, and almost entirely inhabited by Humans, with a few other sentient species hiding among the population. The Librarian said that he would have to pretend to be human, as if it was some impossible task, despite the fact that he literally used to be one.

That thought made all the Companions and Watchers in Cain's mind burst into laughter, and Evangeline laugh out loud.

"Have you not checked your own thought processes? Even if you used to be human, you forgot how to be one a long time ago, and Human Cultivators only respect strength. If you go to their world, you are going to have to learn to do things their way, at least until you finish whatever quest or task you need to do to get back home afterward. Or open a portal so we can come to visit, either one is fine.

"I'm not that inhuman in my thinking am I? I don't really feel like my thought processes have changed that much." Cain informed her, making everyone laugh again, including the Smith that he was merged with.

"You sent Mythic Demons to hunt down an enemy General, and then when you found out it was just a figurehead you sent her to the Bunny God temple for a massage." Evangeline pointed out.

"Extenuating Circumstances." Cain objected.

"You literally wear a Mythic Demon as an article of clothing." Evangeline continued, then corrected herself.

"More properly, you alternate between Mythic Demons to use as fashion accessories."

"But they like it." Cain laughed, seeing where she was going with this.

There was no objection from the demons themselves, he was right, they did like it, but that didn't change the fact that it wasn't really a thing that Humans do.

"You took over a Continent and started a Cult by accident," Vala added fuel to the fire.

"I claim no responsibility for that. The cult formed itself." That wasn't really even an objection at this point, and the former Companions knew that they had him.

"Finally, of all the things that a human has never done, you got another human pregnant with twin Tentacle Monsters." Nemu finished the accusations with a burst of humor.

"True, I can't say that any human has ever done that. Perhaps I really should put some effort into learning this guidebook on how to properly interact with humans from Cultivation Sects, whatever those are.

Oh, there's a bit about ones from Mage Guilds, Clergy Temples, and non-enhanced civilians as well. I think I should be good at dealing with at least one of those groups already." Cain encouraged himself, looking at the daunting thickness of the manual.

Most of the information in the dealing with Cultivators section was common sense things that Cain objected to on moral grounds.

"If you meet a Sect Master on your own cultivation level, you should bow before him and greet him with reverence... Who wrote this drivel? I mean, maybe don't attack him first, but grovel just because he has a few friends somewhere? I can call a thousand friends in a second." Cain muttered, making Evangeline sigh.

"You don't know that. We don't even know if that world has mana, which is why you're preparing for any eventuality so that you can come back safely and not get murdered by a random stranger or hunted down by the Human Gods when you cause a disturbance." Evangeline reminded him.

"Has anyone other than Laura ever told you that you're no fun?" Cain teased, making her laugh.

"No, just you and her. Everyone else thinks that I'm a lot of fun." Evangeline told him proudly, then mentally shushed Vala, who still took every opportunity to taunt the Seraphim. It was an innate instinct for the Demon, and Evangeline returned the favor, though they had long since become good friends.

"Alright, I think I have the part on Human Cultivators down. Now, on to the bit about Mage Clans." Cain sighed.

Downstairs, Luna and the girls were deep in discussion about the actual randomness of the Random generation function of the System.

Luna, Kone, Jin, and Jessica were all waiting on Cain to do whatever he needed to do to finish his part of the quest so that they could get their rewards, which were supposed to be randomized.

It was accepted at this point that "Random" meant whatever the Laughing God found the most entertaining, but beyond that, the pattern behind the creation of random rewards eluded them.

Surely a God wouldn't personally involve themselves in every single random creation, it would be too time-consuming, but there didn't seem to be a pattern to the bias that they could exploit to try to influence it into giving them the reward that they truly wanted, not the one that seemed the most or least likely to appear.

Just trying to decipher the pattern seemed to influence the pattern, and willpower had a randomly positive or negative reaction. If you really, really wanted something, you would either get something very close to it, or the exact opposite, but rarely something entirely unrelated, unless you had overlooked a factor.

"I still think that it was a drinking game. When the Laughing God created the random item generator, he was almost certainly drunk, that's why it's so strange. Like a drunkard, it gets randomly argumentative, fighting with what you want it to give you. But sometimes it just goes with the flow to see what is next." Kone suggested, having more experience than the others with the whimsy of the Random Generator.

"Well, we can make it an experiment then, you can all focus on an outcome that you really want, and see what the odds are that it happens. It's not often that a bunch of people have a random reward coming to them after all." Laura suggested.

"Not bad. Though the other Gods might interfere in this one, it's still worth a shot." Jin agreed.

Not long after, the girls went to bed, while Cain and Evangeline finished the etiquette and human interaction portions of the Librarian's random readings.

That left only one small section for him to complete, the combat styles guides. Fortunately, they were Skill books that he could copy, but couldn't use directly, so he just had to break out the desk and make a load of books to gain enough knowledge to recognize the major Human Martial Arts and fighting styles, so that he didn't come across as suspiciously ignorant if he should be approached by human warriors in the other world.

The Librarian seemed to have thought of everything, but she had overlooked one single important fact. Despite having all the knowledge in the world, Cain's life was still governed by Murphy's Law, which states that anything that can go wrong will go wrong, as well as the whims of the Laughing God, which can make almost any outcome possible.

With those two forces interacting, and Cain doing his best to pretend to be human and not an Ancient Watcher From Beyond and Flesh Crafter, there were endless possibilities for things to go horribly, magnificently off track in what should be a simple journey to acclimatize to his new surroundings and then get in contact with the other Ancients.

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

Chapter 569 569 Spirits Everywhere

Copying out the combat manuals was much easier now that Cain had some skill in the inscription field. No more taking days to copy the hard parts, like what happened to him with the Dark Elven Combat style books. Instead, he just had to copy them carefully and they were completed on either the first or second try.

Which was a relief, because they were the entry-level texts to dozens of different martial combat styles used by human cultivators, magical warriors, and War Mages.

Evangeline brought in lunch, as well as Luna and Laura, just as Cain was finishing the last one, and the Librarian followed soon after, to check over Cain's work.

"It looks like you have all the basics down now, so if you've got everything that you need in your inventory, you should be safe to complete the quest now and see what happens." The former Puppet informed him.

"Well, that's good news, but we can't be doing that on an empty stomach, so why don't you come and join us for lunch?" Cain offered.

The Librarian had packed up a small collection of books for him, all copies of the original texts so that nothing could get lost due to translation errors from the original Ancient Language if someone needed a new copy. She had packed child care books, advanced Rune Crafting, Part 2 of the Spell Crafting book, and an "Animals of the Human Worlds" book that Cain assumed was to help him tell monsters from wild animals, and know what belonged on a human-controlled world and what didn't.

He was starting to see that the Human World might be a bit boring. They were limited in species diversity, there were no beastkin to pet, and, they didn't have any of the high technology of his past life, at least not according to what could be seen through the portal.

"I know, humans are everywhere, but aren't those limits a bit too narrow? I mean seriously, the scan says there is only one Lycan pack on the planet, and it's on the far side of the world from the Portal, the rest is all humans and Magical Beasts." Cain complained, making the Librarian laugh.

"Not every world is like this one, you should remember that. The last world you were born into didn't even have magical beasts, just wild animals, and humans, and still, the humans managed to entertain themselves." She pointed out.

"By making technology for entertainment. I swear, the species must have been on the brink of dying of boredom without anything to do until they introduced better entertainment. If I recall right, they even started out by having mundane humans fight wild animals to the death just to quell their boredom." Cain replied sadly.

"I'm sure it won't be that bad, plus we found cultivation sects. If nothing else you can join one of them and have regular fights every day just to keep yourself entertained." The Elf joked.

When lunch finished, their whole eclectic group headed for the valley center to the Portal just in case something went crazy when Cain finished the quest.

[System, Complete Quest] Cain thought as soon as they arrived, not wanting to drag out the suspense.

[Generating Quest Rewards]

[Bonus XP granted]

[Cain has gained an item] Blade of the Heron

,m [Random Reward waiting, collect now?] Y/N

"Yes"

Cain was brought to the familiar sight of the enormous wheel with the prize slots all over it, only this one was a bit different. Most of the prizes seemed to be human-related, and not-so-obvious magical items.

"Pills? System, I'm not an addict, what on earth would I need so many selections of Pills for?" Cain muttered, and for once actually got a reply.

[Progression from Spirit Rank to Immortal Rank requires activation of a Core of sufficient quality.]

"So you're saying that I need to do like the humans we captured and cultivate a core if I want to become a true Immortal?"

[Correct]

"And I'm not going to have the chance to do that here, on this planet, where it would be done with Mana instead of pills and those Cultivation Techniques that I learned from the Librarian, am I?"

[...]

"Yeah, I sort of thought that might be the case. Alright, let's get this wheel spinning." Cain announced in his own mind, then grabbed the wheel and gave it a whirl.

The wheel raced around in circles as all the assembled Avatars received the notification that they too could complete their quests and receive their random rewards.

The first to complete was Luna, who saw a shiny spell book and only gave her wheel a tiny spin, hoping for the good stuff. It still spun a full three times around, startling the young Lamia, but as it slowed, with her desperately hanging off it to try to force the random result she wanted, it came to rest on a very different spell book.

[Luna has received a book of Inspiring Presence] Spirit Rank, range 1km per level. Inspires allied sentient beings into following the User. Increases likelihood of devotion to User's cause by 0.1 Percent per level.

The book wasn't as shiny as the first one she was after, but the ability looked pretty good to her. She wondered if she could make a copy of some sort as well because Neffie would absolutely love this ability.

[New Skill Learned] Beginning Spirit Awakening

"Dangblastit, it used the book right away, I wanted a copy first." She complained as she returned to the real world.

"What did it give you?" The Librarian asked, seeing that everyone else was still in their rewards interface.

"A Spirit Rank Inspiring Presence skill. It says I can convince my friends to do fun stuff, and the chance gets better as I go up in level." Luna explained.

The Librarian thought about that for a while. They had assumed that Luna was the War Avatar since the other seemed to be taken, but what if she was the Avatar of something else entirely? She didn't seem very warlike. But then, a Charismatic Leader, with the ability to convince an entire nation at a time to follow them in any sort of endeavor. Wasn't that how most large-scale wars started?

Every species had a version of the same saying "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

"That's a very useful skill, Luna. I'll bet your friends will be happy when you use it to convince everyone to get along and do fun things together." The Librarian assured her, wondering if she could steer the little demon away from an Obsession with War.

"Thanks, that means a lot from you, since you know pretty much everything with all these books. I finished the ones on Rune Crafting already, and I think I've pretty much got them down, but it seems a bit harder for me than it does for Cain, and I can't figure out what I'm missing." Luna complained.

"That's because you're only half Ancient. He does it naturally, but you're more in tune with the world, so it is harder for you to break the normal rules that the System uses and create items using Runes." The Librarian informed her.

"See, you're really smart. When I get a chance I'm totally having you explain these new class options to me, now that I've reached level two hundred." Luna declared.

The bonus experience from the quest had brought her to level 201, and when she came back she got the option to change classes, but put it on hold, so that she could celebrate with everyone else, only to find that they still weren't finished.

"Take all the skills from your current skill tree first. You don't want to miss out on any of the good things just because you got in a hurry." The Librarian realized that the Lamia had skipped almost an entire progression without doing anything with her class, thanks to the increased Mana levels in the world forcing her evolution, so there would be a LOT of points left over.

"See, you know all the things. There, all done. And I get new summon options, and these are some good ones too, I can summon Ancient Quality things now. Oh, and it says I have more new class options. But we can do those tonight when there is more time." Luna whispered to the Elf, not wanting to disturb everyone else's progress.

The other Avatars all returned at the same time with big smiles on their faces.

"I got a Spirit Rank item and a new Mythic Spell," Jin informed the group.

"Yep, same here." Jessica and Kone agreed at the same time.

"You guys got an item? I feel slighted now. But I got a Spirit Rank spell." Luna informed them.

That made everyone look at the portal, but nothing seemed to have happened so far, so Luna's Spirit Awakening wasn't enough to cause any problems between the two realms' balance.

The last one to finish was Cain though, and the sense that things were about to get very interesting sent shivers down the spines of everyone in the city.

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

Chapter 570 570 Mission Implausible

Cain stared at the wheel as it spun around and around, getting more and more nervous about what the Gods had in mind for him that could take so long for the spin to complete.

As it slowed down, Cain saw that an entire section didn't have any sort of representative symbols to tell him in advance what sort of ability they were. Or maybe that was a clue in itself, something that couldn't be seen or quantified in something as simple as an image.

"You know, a nice simple Spirit Rank Skill would do just as well," Cain called out into the nothingness, getting multiple voices' laughter in return.

"Yeah, I thought as much," Cain complained, waiting for the wheel to stop.

[Reward Gained. Immortal Rank Physical Upgrade] Dragon Core

Cain felt a sudden burning in his chest, before the feeling turned ice cold in an unnatural way, like a total void where nothing could exist, not even temperature.

Focusing on his body and System at the same time, he found the small round gem in his body and the description of the upgrade.

[Dragon Core] Allows the use of all forms of Energy.

[0 Percent refined] 100B experience to complete.

Cain could hear female cheering in the distance, and he realized that whoever was watching had been betting on the outcome after rigging the random roll.

"Um, thanks I guess? Now I have a clear path to Immortal Awakening, I just need to gather experience. Fortunately, I am very good at that." Cain told the void.

The sense of amusement that he got back told him that he shouldn't have said that. The Laughing God was totally going to mess with his chance at stacking experience. Hopefully, it didn't mess with his Class abilities.

When Cain opened his eyes, there was a Quest Notification waiting for him.

[Mission Implausible] Increase Body Quality to Immortal, then meet all of your children at once.

[Mission Cannot Be Refused]

That wasn't the only thing going on, the Portal next to him was going insane, pulsing power in and out, in danger of destroying everything in the area.

"I guess that's my cue. Everyone, please behave in my absence, since I have a mission to complete on the other side before I return to this side." Cain pleaded.

"No problem boss," Kone replied, while Jin and Jessica gave him the thumbs up.

"Luna, you too. Do you promise to behave while I'm gone?" Cain asked, and Luna appeared in front of his face.

"Of course, I'm the best-behaved Lamia ever." She informed him happily.

Cain stepped into the portal to stop the chaos and prevent the destruction of the valley, only hearing the screaming from behind him a second too late.

"Oh, this place is pretty cool looking. Did you say that there are only humans here? I haven't seen a lot of humans, where do you think the closest city is?" Luna asked, draped in her customary spot around his neck.

Now he understood what they were shouting. He was still wearing Luna.

Cain turned to put her back through the portal, but it didn't seem to exist from this side. All signs of energy fluctuations were gone, and he could see nothing but the forest around him.

Back at the End of the World, a group of Avatars stood staring in shock at the scene in front of them. Nothing could pass through the portal, it was one way, but it clearly didn't have an opening on the other side. Luna was still around Cain's neck, cheering him on to go find more humans, and there wasn't a thing that they could do about it.

Cain shifted himself to a human form, finding that it felt very strange to use energy in this world. It wasn't mana, but it was still workable for him. Then he looked down at Luna.

"You understand this is a human world, right? There are no Demons, you can't be here in that form. I will have to transform you." Cain explained.

"Oh, I've never been human either. That's two new things today, not bad." Luna agreed.

His human form was tall, muscular, and dark-haired with blue eyes, so he made Luna look the same, leaving her at the default size of a girl in her early teens.

She took a mirror out of her inventory and smiled at her new face. "I'm kind of cute still, in a human sort of way, if you understand what I mean. It's not bad. Good thing I learned all those new skills, I'm short two arms now."

"Alright, a primer on being in a human world, you can't talk about not being human, you never know who might be listening or what they will do if they find out. I also don't know

if you can use mana in this world, so that might be a problem, try not to use any abilities until we are somewhere safe to find out." Cain instructed her.

"Alright, I think I've got it. What are the policies on stabbing stupid people?"

On the other side of the portal, everyone was in tears laughing at the absurd situation, but Cain took the question very seriously, given that this was his own daughter, and he knew she would actually do it.

"Only if absolutely necessary and you know for sure that they don't have any friends or allies stronger than you."

That was pretty close to what the books taught him about what the Librarian called a Cultivation world.

Cain thought for a moment, trying to recall how the Librarian said that everyone got around. Did they use horses? No, that wasn't right. Flying Swords, that was what she said.

Cain called a pair of Mythic Blade Demons, whose natural form was that of a large two-handed sword, and lifted the childish form of Luna onto one before stepping onto the other.

"Now, don't let Luna fall off or I will be very upset with you," Cain instructed, and the demon glowed a little in response, forgoing talking for such a simple instruction.

"Let's head up into the sky and see what we find. If there is a city, we will go there and hope that the System can still create local currency for us to stay at a hotel or something until we know more about the world." Cain instructed them.

What he had failed to think of was that while a Mythic Demon was much faster, it would also give off a Mythic Aura, which human Cultivators were much more in tune with than the people of his world. They had only made it up to a good viewing altitude when they saw a group of five men in flowing blue robes flying their way, on swords similar to the ones he summoned.

"Oh, you're good. Their swords are just like your swords, you got it exactly right the first time." Luna commended Cain.

"We don't know if they are friendly or not though, so try not to upset anyone and let me deal with them as much as possible," Cain ordered her.

"Got it. They don't look like bad guys though, they're so eager to come to say hello that they're still in their pajamas." Luna pointed out.

"I think those are cultivation robes, intended for daily wear, and extreme comfort." Cain corrected.

"Hmm, I need some. We should buy some when we get to town."

Traveling with Luna was definitely not going to be boring, everything was new and exciting to her, and she had no fear of death or comprehension of the truly vicious nature of humanity.

"Welcome, Mighty Daoist, to the city of Dacia. We appreciate your advance warning before arrival. What brings you to our home?" The leader of the group asked very politely, and Cain checked his status, wondering if the System would still translate for him.

[Name] Steve

[Level] 191

[Class] Martial Cultivator

[Species] Human

Finally, a bit of good luck after a System prank, his interface still worked and told him about the people around him.

"A minor mishap shifted me and my Daughter into this world during my advancement. Tell me, is your home visitor friendly? I would appreciate a warm bed and a safe place for us to stay." Cain replied, equally politely.

"Of course. The city is as safe as can be expected, and your Daughter seems strong. I can't sense your realm, but that is normal if you have Awakened beyond the Mortal Realm." Steve, the leader replied with a kind smile.

That made Cain think that they were judging based on Aura, which helped him since he could manipulate his Aura with relative ease. This place might just be somewhat enjoyable.

"If you have a less valuable method of transport, that might be advisable as well. You can see the city is only forty kilometers from here, and openly using Mythic Treasures is inadvisable in such an impoverished region." The Cultivator informed them.

Cain hadn't thought of that. So, he summoned the Lesser Demon version of the Sword Demons and held Luna's hand as she stepped from one to the other before dismissing the others, and watching as his Mana pool refilled with the strange energy of this world.

It wasn't affecting that Dragon Core though, so he would have to find a way to gain experience if he wanted to finish the quest before Luna forced him to explore the entire planet, looking for new things.

"That should do. I suppose it was too much to ask for one as powerful as you to have items as lowly as ours." Steve told him with a bow.

But they were the lowest Grade he could summon. It took Cain a few seconds to realize that it was the level that was throwing things off, he could only summon things his own level, and level five hundred and change was a bit too far above the level of this city. It was like being back on the Central Continent again.

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

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Chapter 571 571

When they arrived at the city, their escort only waved at the similarly dressed guards on duty at the gate and flew over the wall, landing them outside of a building marked with a pint of Ale on the sign.

"The best Inn in town. Well, the only Inn in town, but it's not bad. The owner is a retired bigshot from one of the major Sects, so he shouldn't freak out about having you two as guests." Steve told them.

"Thanks," Cain told him with a smile, then tossed him a trash amulet from his inventory.

It was a failed Rune Crafting project that increased attack speed, but the guard seemed overjoyed to have it.

"Dad, why is he crying?" Luna whispered.

"He's just happy that someone was nice to him. My gift is a foreign one, and it is possible that he likes new things as much as you do." Cain whispered back, making the other guards laugh quietly before taking their leader away.

[Note to self, Even Epic Grade random failure items are valued in this region of the planet. I need a notepad, does anyone have one?] Cain thought into the mental collective before remembering that there was nobody else there.

They stepped inside and found the Innkeeper wiping down a table in a heavy leather apron over plain gray robes.

"See, I need those, they look so comfortable," Luna told Cain, making the old man smile.

"I can order some for you if you have the coin." The old man offered.

"Umm, do you take these ones?" Luna asked, taking out a handful of gold coins.

They were the same ones from the Southern Continent, so the exchange must not be working on this planet, but the man didn't seem to mind. He took them from her one at a time and tested them between his teeth, then nodded.

"You can get three sets of good silk robes for one coin. How many do you need?" He asked.

"Um, three different colors seem good?" Luna asked hesitantly, unsure what would happen when she equipped them, as she had never tried other gear as a human.

"The same for me. Our travel clothes seem to stand out a bit too much here." Cain added, and the man handed back all but three coins.

"The last is for room and meals, I'm sure you're planning to stay at least a few days, yes?"

Cain nodded his agreement and led Luna to a table, where they could talk.

"I will bring you something to eat, and would the little lady like juice or milk?" He asked.

"Juice! I love juice." Luna cheered while the Innkeeper went to the back room.

He came back out a few seconds later with a pint of ale and a large glass of juice, which Cain barely grabbed before Luna took it as a single shot.

"Like this." He sent her a Mental Message, taking a sip of his ale.

Luna caught on quickly to the fact that she couldn't drink like a Lamia in a human body, and she happily slurped away at her juice while they waited for food.

"Sorry, I almost forgot." She whispered when the Innkeeper went in the back again, and Cain patted her head.

"That's fine, just remember your table manners from now on and you should be fine. Once we get some clothes that match the locals we can go explore the town and see

what they have for interesting things." Cain suggested, keeping her from getting bored now that she couldn't just nap while hanging around his neck.

The clothes got there faster than the food, with a little human boy running in carrying an armload of cloth.

"Master Moon, I have your order." The boy called as he skidded to a stop.

"Just leave it on the counter and take the coins to your master. Good work boy." The Innkeeper called back, then returned with bowls of stew, fresh bread, and a stack of sliced fruit pieces.

"Thank you. This smells really good." Luna thanked him.

"What if I told you that this was made with Magical Tiger meat?" The old man asked curiously.

"Magical Tiger? That sounds tasty, and they're pretty mean, so they wouldn't run away the same way that the Panthers do. They're so good, but so hard to catch." Luna explained.

Cain nodded in agreement, and the old man smiled.

"You have good taste. It's a low-level Tiger though, the harvested stuff from town is too expensive, so I pay one of the local hunters to go get me meat every week." The Innkeeper explained.

"You must not get many visitors in town, back home at the farm, we got dozens coming through every day on their way to the cities and trade routes, so we were always looking for more meat," Luna told him happily while trying to navigate her spoon in a way that didn't involve dumping food down her throat.

"It sounds like a lively place, what brings you so far from home?" Moon asked.

"There was a portal, but it only opened from one side, so we couldn't go back through," Cain told him, shrugging off the dangers of traveling through portals between worlds.

"That doesn't happen often, but at least it won't last long. That sort never does. Part of my duty here in town is to collect news of dangers that might threaten the town and keep them from getting out of hand." Master Moon looked like the sort who could handle himself, despite his advancing age, and Cain admired his dedication, even in what was likely Semi-Retirement for him.

"Once we know a bit about the area I would be happy to go hunt something for your stew. A good cook is a blessing no matter where you travel." Cain offered.

"No need, unless you're taking the little one to do it. The beasts in the area are barely her match, if you helped it just wouldn't be sporting." Master Moon laughed.

"I think that could be fun. But if there are no challenges for Dad in the area, we should move on, once we know more." Luna said very seriously.

"Good kid you've got there, but don't let her ignore her own training just because she's got to travel with you for a while. It would be a shame to see such a prodigy fall behind just because of circumstances." The Innkeeper told them.

"No worries, I will keep working hard, so that isn't a concern. I'm getting really good with the blowdart gun too." Luna told him proudly.

"The blowgun? Are you training as an assassin, little one?" Moon asked curiously.

"Nope, it's just easier to work than a bow, you know, because of my arms," Luna told him, then realized that she only had two now. Fortunately, the man took it as meaning the length of her arms, not the number, because the thought that she might have more than two wasn't the first thing through a human's mind.

"What do you use as poison though? Good poisons can be hard to come by." He asked.

"I have a small supply of snake venom that paralyzes. It's pretty good stuff, and it doesn't kill things you don't want to die. Like that weird guy with the blue hair that kept running behind the targets when we were at the Library." Luna explained.

Cain assumed that it was some sort of Library servant that Luna wasn't waiting to let finish his job before starting her shots, so he just let the topic die without explanation, he didn't make her look bad after all.

A group of guards came in and broke up their conversation with the Innkeeper, ordering drinks and soup, then starting in on the usual complaints about the boredom of their job, and the lack of travelers recently, even though they should be seeing more travelers now that the dry season has come and the roads to the mountains were getting better.

"There are mountains? I've never seen mountains. Are they huge? Is there snow? It was really hot at our house all the time, I would like to see snow." Luna rattled off questions for the guardsmen.

"Indeed there are mountains, and there is snow at the top of them all year round. If you had come here a few months earlier, we got some snow even this far down into the valley last year." One of the guards explained, and Luna gave Cain her patented begging face, now a bit different, and matched with a human body, but no less effective.

"Are there any Sect Compounds in the mountains? I wouldn't want to step on anyone's toes as a lowly traveler." Cain asked.

"Stay away from Dragon Mountain, and the three black peaks, and you should be fine. They're all a ways into the mountains, so you should be safe near the road, even as a wandering cultivator." The Guard told them, gesturing towards landmarks they couldn't see from inside the Inn.

"Thank you, I will keep that in mind. Luna here needs to keep up her training, so we will head out into the wilderness in a few days, once we have rested up again." Cain told them with a smile that set the guards at ease.

He was huge and looked pretty scary with all those tattoos, but the traveler seemed to be a decent guy, and with a kid that cute he couldn't be a terrible person, at least in the guard's minds. Master Moon had a much broader view of the world and knew full well that even an adorable wandering cultivator was still a wandering cultivator, and that little one specialized in poison.

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

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After they finished dinner, Cain and Luna retired to their room and tried on the cultivators' outfits. They were as comfortable as expected and equipped without issues as decorative clothing over their armor, which vanished from sight the same way it did when a regular costume was equipped.

"Oh, so comfy. I like it, they're all-purpose." Luna cheered.

"Did you learn all the available skills before we left?" Cain asked.

"Yep, I've got them all mastered. Do I need to use one?" Luna asked.

"Yes. You need to Merge with an Ancient Oath Breaker and Ancient Su. I don't know if you will recover energy the same in this world, so those two defensive skills will be essential."

That would grant her a healing aura, Dragon Breath, plus the Oath Breakers speed buff, and area damage passive skills. None of them needed mana to activate, so if her Regeneration wasn't working she could still fight.

Her mana dropped to three-quarters and seemed to stay there, but Cain saw that it was recovering at about a point a second, meaning she would need about twenty minutes to fully recover unless he used a mana totem.

"Once we explore town tomorrow, why don't we go practice your fighting techniques in the woods? The energy here is different enough that you will need to learn to conserve it as you fight. I will be fine though, so don't worry too much about running low if it is necessary." Cain suggested.

"Okay. As long as we can see the mountains later. I want to know what snow is like." Luna agreed.

She fell asleep not long after, with her arms and legs wrapped around his leg, mimicking her usual wrapped sleeping position. Cain set a defensive spell in the room that would tell him if anything moved or the number of living things inside changed and fell asleep himself.

The spell's overly sensitive nature ended up being a mistake, it woke him up an hour later for what turned out to be a very mundane field mouse. Cain tossed it out the window and got almost two more hours of sleep before getting a proper warning.

A human was touching their windowsill. Being on the second floor, there was no reason for that, so Cain waited to see what the intruder would do.

"I don't sense any Qi, are you she this is the room?" A voice whispered.

"Yes, I was hunting in the woods and saw them change from Epic to regular flying swords, but they don't feel strong at all. Grab the little one and the father should pay the ransom without complaint if he knows what's good for him."

Both Cain and Luna had exceptional hearing, and the pair outside had woken the sleeping girl up. She had her Runic blow gun out, and was ready to kill someone for disturbing her sleep, but Cain signaled to wait.

The two wannabe robbers climbed in the window and Cain gave Luna the go-ahead.

She didn't have her venom, but she had Su's Dragon Breath, which coated the blow darts that the tube created when used very nicely.

The two men screamed in agony as the Dragon Breath on the darts met their flesh and began to dissolve a chunk of their necks.

"You're getting very good with that aren't you? I suppose we should either heal or kill these idiots before people get the wrong idea about us." Cain congratulated her, looking at the low-level intruders with disdain.

Forest Dragon Breath worked quickly though, and the two were close to death already, with their necks turning to ash.

Cain grabbed them by the hair and disintegrated them with a short burst of Dragon Breath just as the Innkeeper jumped down from the roof to see what was going on.

"Disintegration? That's a pretty nasty ability, even for a wandering cultivator." The Innkeeper greeted them.

"But it's tidy. I do hate a messy room." Cain disagreed.

"Well, the patrol heard enough that they won't bother you if they don't have to clean up the mess. Those two had been in plenty of trouble long before they planned to rob travelers." The old man shrugged and went back to his room.

"These people are weird. Who thinks taking a kid will end any way but badly for them?" Luna asked.

"They thought we were alone and helpless. Bad people always try to attack that kind of traveler first, because they are the easy ones to steal from. They just didn't understand our strength." Cain explained.

"I see. So if you look weak, humans are extra mean. Tigers do that too, they eat the weak ones first. Maybe people make more sense than I expected." Luna said happily then yawned and laid back down.

"Wake me up when it's bright out."

The city started getting loud just as the sun came up, and Luna reluctantly let go of Cain, then changed robes to a new color. These were made from rich black cloth with silver trim, so Cain changed to match and brought her downstairs to breakfast.

There were a large group of cultivators in blue robes eating when they came downstairs and Luna smiled and waved at the friendly-looking young acolytes with them.

"Sect Elder, look, travelers. Do you think they will know a new style? The teen boy asked.

"No harm in trying. Hello fellow Daoists. We have been searching for a new style to add to our Sect Library, a Quest assigned by our great Elder. Do you perhaps know a style that uses two short swords or twin Scimitars?" The older man with a long white beard asked Cain.

"I know a few that use those weapons. The Blood Sands, the Poisoned Tongue, and the Profound Blossom Style." Cain offered.

The first was the Dark Elven Combat Style, renamed because he couldn't just tell these men about Elves without sounding crazy. The other two were from the Library and regarded as common styles The Librarian thought he should know.

"The last two the Sect has heard of, though I do not practice either. Do you know the Lightning Dance style?" Cain thought a moment, then realized it was also on the list he had rapidly learned for this quest.

"I am a bit familiar with it, but it's not a two-bladed style," Cain answered.

"Exactly. It struggles against double blades, so our Great Elder wants to expand our knowledge to forge a new style of our own. Do you have time for the acolytes to spar? I believe we could learn a lot from an exchange." The Elder offered.

"Is it far to your Sect? Fighting in town might be a mistake, but I believe the youngsters would enjoy a bit of a challenge."

In fact, all of them looked very eager to show off their skills and they were evenly matched in level, though Luna was Spirit Awakened while the other acolytes were unawakened.

"It is a two-day journey." The Elder replied, and Cain frowned. That was too far, they wanted to explore the city over the next few days.

"Innkeeper, is there a place for the kids to spar here?" Cain asked.

"There is an arena in the market that is open to the public if you don't mind an audience. If not, there is one outside town a little, but it's in ruins at the moment."

Cain nodded his thanks. "It is your Call, I don't mind. Either way, Miss Luna won't give away any secret techniques in public."

"Then here in town is fine. All of the local cultivators know our Sect very well. We have struggled to build respect for many years, to the point we now ask travelers for help to expand our knowledge." The Elder agreed.

Cain felt a bit bad for him, a Sect Elder was like a Guild officer, and he should have more pride in his people.

Cain also wondered if he could trade with these cultivators. Skill Books were still readable books if you didn't have a system to use them, so they might want them even if it was in a foreign language.

That would let him get all the trinkets and cool stuff Luna could want while they were here in this world.

They all chatted happily as they ate, making plans to stop and see some interesting shops on the way to the arena. The Acolytes didn't get to see the city much unless they were on a Quest, so this was a fun new experience for them as much as it was for Luna.

"They're friendly sorts, but don't cross them if you're not ready for a fight. They both practice forbidden arts." The Innkeeper whispered to the Sect Elder before they left.

"I understand, but if they know a blade technique we need, I don't mind what else they do in the course of their cultivation." The man answered resolutely.

Cain understood that sentiment. More than a few of his Guild Members had questionable reputations, but they were good and loyal Guild Members, and that's what really counted.

"Look, there's a guy selling nothing but rings. How strange is that?" Luna asked the moment they got outside.

Cain had forgotten that there was a storage ring vendor mentioned during the morning conversation and had no idea how to explain that item to Luna, who had only ever known the System. He was saved by the Sect Elder's frugality this time though.

"There's no budget for such frivolous items, keep moving if you want to get to the sparring arena before it gets busy."

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

Chapter 573 573 Challenges

"Oh, this is nice. Look at these shoes." One of the young cultivators called, showing Luna a set of high-heeled women's shoes with a frilly top.

She looked down at her own feet, safely encased in a pair of well-fitting rangers boots that laced to the knee, and then shook her head.

"Not enough ankle support. That pointy heel looks like it could be pretty good if it hit a delicate part, but I don't know a style that fights like that."

That made Cain and the Sect Elder chuckle. The concept of fashion totally escaped Luna. She wore whatever was comfortable and practical and didn't really care what it looked like.

"You have a point. The lady in the window of that shop was wearing them though, and they looked nice." The young cultivator explained.

"Oh, this shop is actually good. Three spiced veggie kabobs for a silver coin."

The boys all looked at Luna in shock. They literally just finished eating, how could she be hungry again?

Luna handed the man a few coins and tossed the bag full of kebabs in her inventory for later, whistling happily as she thought about having a new food to try after the sparring matches.

"There is the arena. It looks pretty quiet today, so we should be able to get a few rounds in before challengers start arriving." The Sect Elder nodded happily.

"So you can just stand here and wait for people to challenge you to a sparring match? That's a bit strange, but a good way to make new friends." Luna observed, looking at the few people having breakfast in the lower bleachers.

"Should we draw straws or does someone want to go first?" The Elder asked his group.

"Bentley is the easiest to fight, he should go first." One of the cultivators volunteered his compatriot.

"I'm not the weakest. But I will go first, and show you all that you're wrong." The boy in question said proudly.

"Luna, remember, just the Blood Sands Style, and try not to burn too much energy." Cain reminded his daughter.

Being Spirit Awakened, he wasn't too scared for her safety, but she was still a baby Lamia at heart and was likely to go overboard at some point.

"Also, this is a sparring match. If they're not as strong as you, don't hurt them too much." Cain added.

Luna nodded, then gave him a thumbs up and jumped into the ring with a Scimitar in each hand, twirling them idly to get used to only having two arms.

Her opponent jumped down to meet her, and the people in the stands whistled over to someone outside the arena, bringing dozens of locals over.

"Is it a grudge match, a duel, or a sparring match?" A burly woman with a tattooed face asked Cain.

"Sparring. The young fellows needed experience against a dual-wielding fighting style, so they will be facing my daughter there."

The Woman looked down at Luna with a concerned frown. "I hope she doesn't get hurt too badly. These sparring matches often end in real violence, and the rules forbid the Elders to interfere."

Hopefully, it wouldn't come to that, it would be good to leave here on decent terms with at least one group in this new world.

A referee in golden robes wearing an armband marking his job entered the ring. "This is a sparring match with blunted weapons, fought to first blood or forfeit. Do you both understand?"

Both contestants nodded, intensely observing their opponent, waiting for a chance to strike. The referee used an ability that coated their blades in energy, dulling the edges without changing the balance, and signaled the fight to start.

"Good. Begin. "

Luna was never a patient person, and a split second later, her blades were streaking for both sides of the boy's neck. He swayed back and parried the attack as Luna frowned at her lack of reach. She had momentarily forgotten she had legs right now.

But she followed up with a series of gracefully flowing strikes that kept her opponent frantically dodging and evading. He was totally overwhelmed, but so far he hadn't taken a hit.

Luna was holding way back on her maximum speed though and had realized that despite being a similar level, she was many times faster while merging with Oath Breaker on top of possessing a much stronger and faster body, to begin with.

"I had thought she was going to be a Magic Type fighter, but she isn't. That level of physical prowess is impressive." The Elder congratulated Cain.

"She is a born natural. You should see her when she really gets going." Cain agreed.

Luna made a double overhand chop that everyone but her opponent could see through the moment she started it. But nobody warned him when the foot flicked up at his tender bits.

He managed to sway his hips back to save his family jewels, but that put him off balance and the swords drove his upper body down into the kick which Luna had turned into a knee strike, knocking him out cold.

Nothing would be damaged but his pride and the crowd roared in appreciation of Luna's victory.

She was basking in the glory, so Cain decided to increase her difficulty level a little bit for the next fight.

"Elder, this style is best against multiple targets. If you want to really see how it works, could you send three acolytes down there?" Cain asked and the crowd fell silent.

"Are you sure? It could be dangerous." The Elder hesitated.

"She should be fine. Three is the same as one with the right fighting style. You can do this, right Luna?" Cain asked.

"No problem dad. It would be a pleasure to really get to go all out." Luna agreed.

The Dark Elves Royal Guard Combat Style was indeed meant to fight while outnumbered and use both blades and feet independently.

The three strongest acolytes jumped down and helped their friend out of the ring, then bowed to Luna, who returned their greeting.

"Please teach us, Junior." They asked.

"It would be my pleasure," Luna replied happily, not sensing the hostility.

The referee started the fight and the boys all lunged forward, while Luna flipped into the air, spinning her blades below her to drive the incoming attacks to the ground, then kicking one boy in the head.

"The way the damage echoes to the others. I've never seen a Blended Mystic and Physical style like that before. I see why you said it was best against a group, they all have to defend or they all take damage." The Elder said excitedly.

Cain had a skill that could do the same, but less effectively. If the Elder really liked it, Cain might work a deal to sell their Sect a copy.

Luna dashed between blades, nimbly dodging attacks with a cat-like grace that reminded Cain of Nemu. The first shared attack made the fighters nervous, and they initially flinched away from her blades, slowing themselves down to avoid hurting their allies if they got caught.

"What a deviously beautiful style. So incredibly fast as well, it's that part of her training?" The burly woman asked Cain.

"It's essential to the style. If you're too slow you'll just get beat up before you can land a blow. It's not all physical speed though, there are skills involved as well. Just wait, she's losing the rhythm now that they're working together and she's going to either blink or cloud dance soon." Cain replied.

The big woman grinned. "Cloud Dancing with twin blades? Was she training to take on an entire army?"

"No. I have a wide variety of skills and it takes at least that much just to keep up. She's always been a Daddy's Girl." Cain laughed, making the big woman's grin turn into a warm smile.

Finally, the boys managed to get in sync and force Luna on the defensive. Then, she used the Oath Breaker's movement skill and blinked behind them, smacking two on the backside with the flat of her blades and laughing as they tried to turn around without letting her target their legs.

Two of the three fell in a tangled heap while the third disengaged and tried to get on the offensive again.

Moving at her full speed, Luna unleashed a flurry of blades and drove him to the ground, earning a whistle from the referee to mark the end of the fight.

"Excellent match. I haven't had that much fun in forever. Would you like a Kebab?" Luna asked happily, handing out some of the skewers that she bought earlier.

"You're a bit odd, but you're a really good fighter. What I don't get was how you actually damage your opponents. I didn't see any serious attacks in there anywhere." The strongest of the boys asked.

"Just add a bit of energy to the regular strikes like so," Luna said, using [Chop] and an energy blade extended around her regular sword.

"So you suddenly increase the reach, and bypass your opponent's guard? What if they don't fall for that?" He asked, eager to learn something new.

"Then you start with the advanced skills. Shield Breaker, Crushing Blow, Disarm, and such." She explained.

"So, we didn't force the Inner Sect techniques out of you. Well, at least we learned something. Thank you for the kebab." Everyone jumped up out of the arena, and a middle-aged cultivator with a mask on his face came over to talk to Cain and the cultivators around him.

"I don't suppose you would consider selling the acolyte?" The man asked Cain.

"Zero percent chance of that." Cain agreed.

"Then I challenge you to a duel. Winner takes all." The man demanded, and the crowd roared in anticipation.

[Name] Uriah

[Species] Human

[Level] 496

[Awakened] Spirit

That could be a tough fight, but Cain was quite sure that he could come out victorious, even if it meant fighting a little dirty.

"I will oversee this match since the mortals want to fight so much." A booming voice came from above and Cain saw a man riding a sword wearing the same gray robes as the Innkeeper approaching.

[Name] Ezekiel

[Sect Master of the Divine Light Sect]

[Species] Human

[Level] 602

[Awakened] Immortal

"Crap, it looks like I really will have to fight today." Cain sighed.

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The Immortal that was flying above them softly landed in the arena and gestured for the two combatants to come down and join him. Cain gave a meaningful look to Luna, who would be left unattended and unguarded, and the Immortal took out a token from his robes, speaking softly for a moment before the Innkeeper and a small group of other old cultivators joined her beside the ring.

"Hello, little one. How about I explain the rules of this match to you? That big man there wants to take you as his disciple to train you. The rules say that if he can beat your current master, he is more qualified, so he is allowed to do it.

If he loses, your Master will take over the disciples that the other man is currently responsible for. The match only ends if one of them surrenders or dies. Once there is a surrender, the powerful one in the middle of the ring will stop the fight, and force the loser to leave town so that they don't cause trouble for others.

I should warn you though, most of the time, these fights go until death." The Innkeeper explained.

"I see. So it is like that General that attacked us at the farm before we went to the Library. I understand now." Luna nodded.

"You don't seem too concerned. Have you seen this before, or do you not really understand?" Another of the gray-robed guardians asked.

"I've only seen a challenge once before. But it wasn't this formal, and people tried to interfere. I don't think the old guy will allow that today, so I'm not too concerned that Dad will lose." Luna shrugged.

"Is he really that powerful?" The Innkeeper asked.

"You will see. He left most of his power back on our homeworld but fighting someone his own level has never been an issue for him. He is a legend on our homeworld." Luna said proudly.

The Immortal heard their conversation and turned to Cain before the match could begin. "Your daughter has interesting things to say. Where did you originally come from?"

Cain could sense that lying would be detected instantly by this powerful man, so he decided to lie with the truth.

"I was born on a rather normal and boring planet called Earth. More technology than this world from what I could see, clean water, good air. Overall a very nice but boring place to grow up." Cain informed him.

The world that he was sent to didn't really have a formal name, since there was only one and they couldn't leave, so the System translated every language's word for it to "This World".

"Earth? I know of that Mortal World. It is a strange and dangerous place, but I suppose to one who grew up there it would all seem normal and commonplace." The Immortal agreed, nodding in understanding.

Luna assumed that this man actually knew about their world, but before she could let any secrets slip she remembered that rule one was not to tell anyone here that she wasn't human. Even if they knew that other species exist, they probably hated and wanted to kill them.

"It should be interesting to see how a Magical Cultivator from Earth fights. The Mage type is exceedingly rare in this world, and I haven't seen such a spectacle in decades." The Immortal declared happily, then looked between the two combatants to see if they were ready.

"When the barrier around the ring goes up, you may begin." He announced, rising into the sky and forming an impenetrable dome around the thirty-meter diameter of the ring.

The challenger launched himself for Cain, who met him not with swords, but with Dragon Breath, then summoned a pair of Mythic Seraphim to assist him.

The challenger screamed in agony, then released a pulse of energy that blasted the Dragon Breath against the walls, and quickly blocked the first strikes of the avenging Angels.

The crowd all gasped in shock, though they believed the images to be illusions formed of energy. Just being able to create an illusion so realistic that it could damage people was an incredible talent all on its own.

Cain thrust his spear at his opponent, barely nicking his hand, and the other man screamed in agony as the additional damage effects on the Mythic Spear took effect. It was a Rune Crafted one that Cain had created, and it had turned out rather well. Nothing too complex, but it dealt a good bit of extra damage, and granted Cain some decent combat bonuses to make up for anything that he might lack.

His body was already at the very peak of the Spirit Realm, thanks to his Skills, but every bit of advantage was worth taking, including using [Primal Echo] and Merging with the new clones of his Ancient self. Each Echo had always been half as strong as Cain was, so the doubling of his strength, in addition to the powers of the Dragon and the Oath Breaker that he was already merged with was an overwhelming advantage, physically.

Trying to steal his daughter was a mistake that couldn't go without punishment though, and Cain wasn't satisfied with simply stabbing this man a few times and letting the Seraphim beat him up. He needed something that would really make his point.

Using [Versatility] would let him activate a single skill at his current maximum power level, and Cain knew just the right one for the situation.

[Crushing Tentacles] filled the arena, grabbing the startled Combatant and beginning to stretch his limbs as the Seraphim Stabbed blades covered in holy light into him.

The moment that he opened his mouth to speak, Cain ordered a Tentacle to fill it, silencing him before he could have a chance to forfeit the match and anything else that he might own.

The challenger was no slouch though, and it wasn't his first duel.

Flooding his body with energy, he bit off the tentacle, and muttered an ability name, causing the energy around him to turn to vicious spikes, tearing at the Tentacles as they endeavored to rip him into pieces.

Once he had a hand free, the fight began in earnest, with him momentarily holding off the Seraphim and the Crushing Tentacles dismissed.

He hadn't counted on Cain's strength in physical combat though, and when Cain used the Oath Breaker's ability to step behind him, he was almost caught off guard. He knew Cain could use it, as he had seen Luna use it, but the speed of the attack was almost impossible to manage. Plus, the blow that he took to the energy barrier around his body was much stronger than the first one he had taken to his hand, almost knocking him to his knees.

Cain stepped forward, pushing his advantage, using the Scimitar to block multiple strikes, then striking the back of the man's leg with the spear, attempting to knock him off balance.

The Cultivator turned that unexpected motion to his advantage though, skewering a Seraphim through the heart, dropping the lifeless body to the ground in a heap, and enraging the other, who Immolated him in Holy Fire.

It wasn't burning through his armor, but Cain could see the man starting to sweat as the effort of keeping the barrier active wore at his stamina reserves.

"Shouldn't there be taunting? I feel like there should be trash talk, insulting of mothers, or the quality of their opponent's combat style." Luna asked the Innkeeper as they watched the life and death struggle between the two powerful combatants that was causing even the prodigious barrier erected by an immortal with an Immortal Grade barrier treasure to waver with the pulses of energy being released.

"Insults are for casual fights. Today, someone is going to die in that ring." The Innkeeper told her, very seriously. That was her father in the ring after all.

"Hmm, so save your breath and fight wasn't just a casual bit of advice, but a very serious rule for duels. I understand now." Luna replied happily, now understanding one of the lessons that she had been taught back in Long Fang Valley as Tamii, the Jackalope-type Lieutenants had trained her and the Blood Dancers to fight.

"Who taught you that, little one?" The Immortal asked casually, not taking his eyes off the fight.

"Tamii. She is a quadruplet and works for my Dad. They teach combat skills to the youngest kids in the Valley where I was born." Luna explained, carefully not mentioning nonhuman things, just like she was told.

The Librarian would be very proud of her attention to detail, Luna was sure.

The challenger was getting exhausted now, and Cain began to prepare for the inevitable last-ditch effort to survive this fight or escape. But what he hadn't expected was self-destruction. His opponent suddenly popped a Pill in his mouth and glowed with a violent red light, leaking flames from his every pore.

Cain used Versatility again, burning through Mana to summon a full set of Spirit Rank copies of Laura into a merger with him and activated their Ice Breath. Even with the stacked bonuses of a dozen Opal Prismatic Dragons, the Ice still melted under the fiery onslaught for a moment before Cain's spear pierced through it, taking advantage of the effects of [Might of Many] and destroying both the man's cultivation core and his heart at once.

"Winner, Master Cain, Spirit Rank Magical Cultivator of the Planet Earth." The Immortal declared in a resounding voice that echoed through the city, bringing everything to silence as the spectators stared at the frozen figure inside the block of ice in the arena.

A fight between Spirit Rank cultivators was rare for these common folk to see, but one to the death was a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence inside the small town, one that most spectators couldn't believe that they had seen. They had thought that certainly whoever the defeated party was would flee to save his own life.

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"So that is the might of a Magical Cultivator, is it? You were wise to seek his assistance for us, Sect Elder. That man is a terrifying force in Combat, and as he said earlier, his style only gets stronger as it faces more opponents." The strongest of the Acolytes in blue robes told the shocked Sect Elder that they were traveling with.

"It gets stronger? What does that mean?" The Immortal asked Luna, as Cain caught his breath after a hard fight.

"We learn skills to share the damage between nearby enemies, as well as area attacks, and Summoned Helpers like the two Seraphim," Luna explained.

"Plus they know the skills of Dragon Breath." The Innkeeper informed the Immortal as if the man could have forgotten the epic finale or mistaken its origin.

"That is expected, of someone from Earth. The Dragons have a strong presence there, and many Human fighters learn techniques from the Dragon churches. Their powers can be terrifying, but he is still a human after all, so there are limits. Did he say what he wanted here?" The Immortal asked.

The Innkeeper nodded. "He and his daughter passed through a one-way portal and couldn't return home, so they are looking for a challenge to build their powers, and then a way back to where they came from." The Innkeeper nodded, and the Immortal smiled happily.

"Wonderful. There are many appropriate challenges for a pair of promising Humans here on the Immortal Plane.

I do hope that they don't come across something that they can't handle before they have a chance to truly temper themselves and build their strength. Humanity always needs promising new talents.

If their skills were more compatible with ours, I might have offered to take them in myself."

"We could still be friends. The Librarian told me it was good to have friends everywhere that you go." Luna informed the old man very seriously, then offered him a spiced veggie Kabob, the ultimate peace offering in the little Lamia's mind.

"You have a point young one. Take this token, and if you see others wearing the same symbol that we do, you may show it to them to let them know that you are not our enemy." The Immortal decided, handing Luna a small golden token on a string necklace in exchange for the Kebab.

"Thank you very much. It means a lot to me to have made a new friend in a strange world." Luna told him, giving the Immortal a surprise hug that made the Innkeeper laugh.

The Immortal Sect Leader was not someone that most people would casually hug, the people of this region held him in the highest of reverence due to his status, but clearly, the protocol in Luna's mind wasn't the same as the ones that they lived by here.

That made a number of the spectators wonder if maybe these two might have come from a kinder and more peaceful world, one where hugging strangers wasn't such an

unthinkable thing, and was more likely to be taken as kindness rather than a lack of respect for their station.

Fortunately for her, the old Immortal understood the customs of Earth and their children. He gave Luna a pat on the head and she smiled happily up at him, now assured that she had a new friend.

"The challenger's storage items and weapons, Master Cain. As far as we are aware he did not possess anything else of value other than a few disciples." The man who refereed the sparring matches informed Cain, handing over a pair of rings.

"Thank you. It is a shame that it had to come to that." Cain sighed.

"Congratulations on your victory. I think we caused enough of a spectacle here in town, why don't we retire back to the Inn for a few drinks, and I'll tell you all about the area around the city." The Blue Robed Sect Elder asked, not wanting any more excitement in his day, and needing time to process all that he had learned about this new combat style.

When they got back to the Inn there were three beautiful women waiting for Cain with despairing looks on their faces.

"Please Master Cain, we have been left with nothing, you must take responsibility." An exceptionally delicate and petite dark-haired woman begged while the two larger blonde ones nodded in distraught agreement.

Luna burst into laughter, and all eyes turned to her. "Sorry, sorry. In my mom's romance books that phrase is used in a very different situation. Unless, Dad, you haven't been here before, right?"

That made Cain and the Innkeeper both snort in amusement before Cain shook his head.

"You ladies must be his disciples, right? Since the deal was winner take all I suppose I am somewhat responsible for your well-being. Why don't we find a seat and a drink and we can talk." Cain suggested.

"She wasn't kidding about us being left with nothing. After he bound us to obedience he confiscated all our belongings. The clothes we are wearing are all we have." A blonde explained in a more powerful than expected voice.

[Name] Penny

[Level] 205

[Species] Lycan

She wasn't even awakened, but she was the strongest of the three. Cain wondered if her former Master had deliberately withheld the good skills, or if he was keeping them for reasons other than cultivation.

"That's not a problem Penny, I will make sure you three are taken care of, even if you want to go your own way and find a proper Sect," Cain explained.

"You killed him and you don't even want what he had?" Penny asked, confused.

"As much as I like good girls like you three, I am a traveler in this world, and that life isn't for everyone. Plus, your former teacher and I wouldn't have ever fought if he hadn't issued a challenge to try and take my daughter."

The dark-haired one was looking at Cain suspiciously. "Forgive me, but you don't seem like the sort who associates with good girls."

Luna was openly laughing now. "He just loves to pat their head and feed them snacks. On the other hand, my mother started a cult and conquered half a Continent on his behalf before she won his favor."

While technically true, she could have phrased that better, and Cain suspected that she was talking about herself when she mentioned good girls.

Cain took a soft candy from his inventory and popped it in her mouth, then tousled Luna's hair while she happily chewed the caramel.

"What I meant is that if you would like to study under a proper Sect I will return your belongings and break the curse that was placed on you." Cain offered.

"You know the skills of a Curse Breaker as well? What an interesting combination." The Blue Robed Sect Elder observed.

"A small benefit of Magical Cultivation." Cain lied smoothly.

"I heard you're not from this world, is that right?" The blonde Lycan named Penny asked.

"That's right. We got here yesterday. Until your former Leader arrived, everyone here had been quite pleasant." Cain agreed.

"Then you don't know how hard it is to find a suitable Sect at our power level. This is not the Mortal Plane, only compassionate oddballs like the Lightning Dance Sect treat unawakened acolytes as more than slaves, and they're an all-male Sect." Penny informed him.

"Then we just need to awaken you. That's easy." Cain shrugged and again became the target of confused stares.

"Oh, it's that not a thing here? Forget I said anything." Cain mumbled.

"Oh no, no chance. I think we all need to know how exactly that works." The Immortal Sect Master laughed, appearing in the middle of the room without warning.

"For a Mythic Awakening or First Awakening, I am not sure what you call it here, you just need to implant the knowledge of a Mythic Skill and it will force your body to adapt and awaken."

The Sect Master thought deeply about that methodology for a moment. "And if the influx of energy kills them?"

"Why would death be an issue? I mean unless they explode or something?" Luna asked Cain quietly but got shushed for the moment.

"I have a Technique to bring the recently dead back to life," Cain explained.

"So the man you killed?" The Innkeeper asked.

"In the first few minutes, he could have been saved, yes. But on moral grounds, I decided against it." Cain shrugged.

"Interesting. I have pills that do the same thing. Put them in the mouth and add energy to revive the recently dead, as long as they're intact." The Sect Master looked enraptured and took a seat across from Cain.

"I could write a tome for you to study later. I can't guarantee that you personally would have an affinity, but the technique is very useful to anyone who cares for their comrades. In fact, I can make two copies, one for either Sect present." Cain suggested.

"What about us?" The dark-haired little human woman asked.

"I will teach you personally if you like."

Luna looked excited and stood up from her chair. "Should I go ask that friendly guard if there is someone we can stab for a little while?"

"Sit down and eat. They don't need a test subject until they have mastered the skill. You know how long it takes to learn them manually." Cain told her, placing Luna back in her chair.

"I like your daughter, Master Cain. She's always so eager to help." The Immortal Rank Sect Master laughed, watching the two of them interact with fatherly amusement.

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"We should leave Master Cain alone so he can work and rest after his duel today. I'm sure he has a lot to talk to his new disciples about as well." The Sect Elder from the Lightning Dance Sect informed his acolytes, intending to lead them up to their rooms.

"The copy work shouldn't take too long. How about we meet again this evening? I'm sure Miss Luna will be bored by then, and ready to have more people to talk to after her nap." Cain suggested.

"Excellent plan. I will return later unless you need a guard on the Inn so you aren't disturbed?" The Sect Elder asked.

"I will be here all afternoon, talking with my former disciple. They will be safe." The Immortal Rank Sect Master answered with a dismissive wave.

Nobody in the city could deny that he was the strongest one here, but Cain suspected that in the grand scheme of things, in a Realm that was called the Immortal Realm, the Sect Master was actually a small fry to some degree.

The man was clearly stronger than Cain was, even with the Echoes buffing his abilities, but the name of this place implied that he was at its power level, not the half step above it that Cain would expect the true powerhouses to be.

While Luna went down for her afternoon nap, still not fully adjusted to a more human sleeping schedule, Cain worked on the creation of the skill books for the two Sects and talked to his newly acquired disciples.

"So tell me, how did you all end up following a man like that? You don't seem like the sort that would follow just anyone for the merest chance at power." Cain asked as he took out the Inscription Desk and began to write.

"It's fairly simple really. We were all traveling together with a few others, looking for a rumored female sect that takes in Mortals when we were caught, attacked, and bound with a Legendary device that prevents you from breaking an oath willingly.

After that, we literally couldn't leave him. In terms of our survival, he required that we promise to follow his orders and learn his techniques. But he never taught us any

decent techniques, and the orders only got more and more demanding as he tried and failed to add more women to his group.

He had a grand dream of creating his own all-female Sect as his personal harem. Obviously, he wasn't nearly strong enough to manage that, as Female Cultivators are in high demand everywhere. Usually, as wives, since the more powerful live longer and can have more children with greater ease due to their stronger bodies, but also as assassins and bodyguards."

Penny's explanation made a lot of sense to Cain, it was the same sort of thing he had seen all over the last world he was in. The only thing he wondered was if the System's level ranking and the extended lifespans it granted in the other world matched up with the amount of extended lifespan that an equivalent level assignment that it gave to Cultivators did.

Obviously, that wouldn't apply to Immortals, but below that it still made sense.

The power level of this world was incredibly high as well, even just sitting here, Cain could feel himself get stronger. That made him wonder if things were still basically the same, and if they just needed to make a breakthrough in body quality to advance and used some sort of meditation technique to speed up the process.

That could be very useful to Cain. The faster he could cap out his level, the less danger he would be in, and the more easily he could refine this Dragon Core and finish his quest.

Before he noticed, his thoughts had stretched to a rather awkward silence, so he finally remembered to respond.

"This world is very different than the last one I was in, and even more different than the one I was born in. But I think I might be able to help you. Not as much as an actual Immortal, but I think I can help you reach a reasonable power level for a Mortal, enough that decent Sects would take you in as acolytes. It might take some time though if you're willing to travel with me." Cain suggested.

"We are still bound by our oath. He promised the winner of the duel would get everything he had, and we are required to obey, so we can't actually refuse you." Penny told Cain bitterly.

"You know what, that is annoying. Let me find that stupid trinket once I finish with this book." Cain decided.

It proved to be easy to find, the man didn't have much that was of value in his bag other than a huge amount of pills that made Cain wonder if this world had a rather serious addiction issue. The Librarian said something about them helping you level up, but this guy had enough to open his own pharmacy.

"Ah, here it is. [Rod of Oath] forces compliance with an oath until released. Now, how does this thing work? I, Cain, release all oaths bound by this device." Cain tried, adding a few mana to activate the rod.

The result was not at all what he expected though. The device pulled his entire mana pool dry, over two hundred thousand mana all at once. There was no way that anyone else had enough to actually activate it if it took that much to bind a few low-level fighters.

Penny leaped over the Inscription table and gave Cain a huge hug, knocking him backward onto the bed in the small room, which woke up Luna.

"Oh, we're cuddling? You could have woken me up before you started." Luna said sleepily, then attached herself to Penny's back and closed her eyes again.

"I know you're thankful, but keep Luna entertained for a moment. She is still adjusting to the time zone differences, so she needs her sleep. But I need to finish up this other book for the Sect Elder." Cain informed her, making the other two girls giggle at the Lycan's plight.

"Can you really help us level up? I have been stuck at this bottleneck forever, and I just can't seem to understand how to move past it." The small, dark-haired member of the group asked Cain suspiciously.

"That's seriously not an issue." Cain agreed. Level 100 was the first class change, but these people didn't have classes, so Cain assumed that they just needed a skill that was good enough to be from a first awakening class and they should begin to progress again on their own.

If that wasn't enough to get things moving, he could always just use [Modify] and tweak their bodies to a higher quality level and save everyone some time.

Penny had crawled into the bed, pulling the blankets up over her and Luna, who was now snoring softly and mumbling about candy, but she was staring directly at Cain.

"Yes, you too. It won't be an issue to get you past that blockage you are facing. In fact, there might be something in idiot's inventory that would help." Cain agreed.

Looking through the piled pills and random objects, Cain found a small chest inside the storage ring that had a stack of books. None of them were all that good, but Cain sifted through them carefully looking for something that could at least get her moving past the Second advancement blockage.

Second advancement classes had pretty good innate skills, at least one that was A Rank or better, so Cain hoped that that would be enough to fulfill his promise.

"How about this one? [Divine Strike] deals holy damage to your enemies while using a sword." Cain recognized it as an essential Crusader Class skill, so maybe it would be enough to push Penny past her breakpoint.

"He had something that powerful in his inventory and he never taught it to us? How stingy could he be? If I hadn't managed to learn [Quick Steps] on my own, I would have remained stuck at the first transition bottleneck the same as the others." Penny whispered so she didn't wake up Luna.

"In that case, here, put this somewhere that all three of you can read and memorize it, and then you can practice the skill as we travel until you have it mastered," Cain told them, passing the book over.

To Cain's eyes, it required a Warrior Skill book proficiency, but that should mean pretty much everyone in this world, he assumed. Once both books of [Emergency Resurrect] were finished, Cain looked them over, noting that they completed as A Rank Skill books, the same as always. Emergency Resurrect was the lowest grade of resurrection the system offered. It brought people back at one HP, without curing them or closing their wounds, so you needed a potion or healing spell ready almost instantly to prevent the recipient from simply dying again.

It would do the job to fulfill his promise to the Cultivation Sects without giving away the good stuff though.

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Luna woke up two hours later, just as Cain had expected her to. She rarely napped for more than two hours at a time, and in a human body, she shouldn't have needed much more in the middle of the day. The only reason her Lamia form needed so much sleep was that it was growing so fast, and Human bodies didn't get a mass growth spurt every time they had a snack.

"Oh, I am so keeping this one. Penny makes an incredible pillow. She's much softer than you are, and not as warm." Luna informed Cain happily as she woke up and realized that she was holding a stranger.

"You should try the others before you decide, they are just as soft, and different sizes, so one might fit you better," Penny told her very seriously.

"Then we can try that out later. Unless they're already planning to hold each other." Luna agreed, making the girls all give her a strange look.

"Luna never sleeps alone, it's not in her nature. She is a very cuddly sort of person." Cain told them with a laugh.

"There are worse fates I suppose. It's normal for travelers to share beds, to keep costs down and because of the limited space inside the Inns, so having a little Luna hold you isn't that out of the ordinary." The blonde human told the group.

"We should go down and meet the Immortal Sect Master though. He has been downstairs waiting for a rather long time, and I don't want to seem rude." Cain sighed, standing up and putting the desk away.

"I don't think he expected the book that fast. I've never seen someone transcribe a tome that quickly before, usually they spend days carefully doing the transliteration of the runes and diagrams so that there are no mistakes." Penny informed him.

"Oh, yeah, the diagrams are a pain, but I am fluent in these runes, so that part is easy. I have fast hands, and a pen that doesn't smudge, so I can move through the pages in a hurry." Cain said, showing her the neatly written pages near the front of the book.

It didn't actually matter what pen he used, the Inscription Desk prevented the runes from smudging and increased the speed of transcription, writing entire lines in a second, which the others had passed off as Cain simply writing quickly.

Cain took a good look through the pills in his new inventory space and decided to give some of them a try. The lowest quality ones were blue quality magical pills, while there were also a lot of Epic Grade and Legendary pills in the collection.

The girls seemed to have been deprived of the resources their technique took, so Cain offered them all a single magical pill, having no real idea what they did. The System identified them as [Elite Quality Advancement Pills], which should be right for the two who were at level 100.

"Here, take these as you study, and they should help you along. How is the reading coming?" Cain asked, handing over the pills to three happy fighters.

"This is an incredible skill, and it can be used in so many ways," Penny told him happily.

Of course, it could. [Divine Strike] only added holy damage to your attacks. It could be used in conjunction with almost any type of attack skill.

"I'm glad you like it. If that one doesn't work out for you, I will try to come up with something better. From what I could see it was the best one that he had stored in his ring."

Cain double-checked the items that he was given, and in the secondary bag inside the ring, where the referee had stored the man's clothes, jewels, and other miscellaneous items, Cain found a rather grisly but interesting item.

[Spirit Core] Removed from the body of a Spirit Rank Cultivator who died with his core intact. Allows use of Qi at a Spirit Rank efficiency.

[Cannot be Used, Higher Quality Core Equipped]

Cain was almost certain that this was not intended to be an equipable item, but a trophy or a source of energy, since it seemed to be loaded full of this world's strange power. That did make him wonder if Luna, who didn't have a core equipped to use this world's energy could make use of it.

He couldn't very well ask right now when there were prying eyes nearby who would freak out at that sort of spectacle, but once they had some privacy, Cain would ask her to try equipping it and see what happened.

That might be the great shortcut to leveling up in this world. Bring in someone with a System, murder a cultivator, and equip his core. Instant Awakened Cultivator. At least in theory.

Cain gave everyone a while to finish the bit of the book that they were working on, and then picked the book up and closed it.

"Study later, we should head downstairs now." He informed them, pocketing the book back into the storage ring he kept in his inventory.

"We've got all night, and we can teach Miss Luna to Meditate instead of sleeping so that she can advance more quickly. It must be your interference that leveled her up so quickly, but it is best if she starts Cultivating under her own power." Penny insisted.

It wasn't his interference, but she was close, and it would do Luna a lot of good to do things for herself in this world. It would teach her responsibility and work ethic.

"You ladies head down and grab us a table, I will get Luna ready and follow a few minutes behind you," Cain instructed them, and the three left without complaint, too used to being forced to obey their former Master to even try resisting now that they were free to do it.

"Here is an item, that should let you use this world's energy. Why don't you equip this and we will see what happens. If there are any issues, you can unequip it and we will find a better way." Cain told Luna once they were alone.

Cain polished off the small round object before handing it to Luna, who still scrunched her nose at the smell. She reached into her inventory, pulled out a bit of Dwarven

Whiskey, and then poured it over the orb before smiling happily, satisfied that it was clean.

"I didn't want to smell like some stinky guy," Luna informed Cain, then equipped the item.

"Oh, it's an inside thing, but it seems to be working, my Mana is recovering properly now," Luna told Cain happily.

"What message did it give you?" Cain asked, wondering if she had to refine hers like he did the Dragon Core.

"It said. [Integration 1 Percent Complete] 100 Million experience to finish." Luna replied, then frowned at something on her interface.

"That's too much. It's like fifty levels worth of experience." She complained, then sighed and straightened her clothes.

Cain looked at his own integration, to see how it was coming along. [Integration 5 Percent Complete.]

That was surprisingly high, given how much he had to gather, so he checked his logs a bit further back.

[Challenge Quest Accepted: Defend Luna's Honor] Reward 5B experience.

That explained the progression, it was almost all a quest reward because someone tried to steal Luna from him.

That meant that their way forward wasn't to kill everything that they see, the way they usually gained levels, but to complete the world quests and stack up the big experience numbers.

That was both much easier and much more annoying.

But since the Core could be equipped by Luna, even if she had to integrate it into her body the same way that Cain did with the Dragon Core, they were off to a good start, and Luna could start defending herself to some degree. She was a Spirit Awakened Puppet Master after all, with a fair number of combat skills in her repertoire.

Luna followed Cain downstairs, opting to walk for a change instead of being carried. These new legs were a wonderful thing, and the body was much bigger than her old one, though still child-sized by human standards. It was enough to let her keep up at most movement speeds with the adults though, and she was large enough that she didn't have to worry about being stepped on, which was a huge relief.

"Sect Master, it is good to see that I caught you before you left for the day. I have the book you requested, a tome of [Emergency Resurrection]." Cain informed the old man.

"So quickly? I am impressed by your skills, do you perhaps already read the runic language?" The old man asked.

"It was considered essential by the Librarians of our homeworld, so I learned to read and write it quite well. It is the diagrams and such that slow the process down the most since they have to be so meticulously sketched to avoid teaching the user an incorrect technique." Cain explained.

The old man opened the book, flipping through pages every few seconds, with a smile that was growing larger and larger.

"Oh, I do believe that this technique is worthy of the Sect Library's reserved section, truly a wonderful technique. I even have some affinity for it, I can sense it just from a read-through, which makes it even more valuable to us. What would you like in exchange?" The Sect Master asked.

"I only ask for goodwill. We will be traveling a lot to seek out experiences that will help us advance, so avoiding hostility along the way will make our lives much easier." Cain explained.

"It's a high price for just a bit of goodwill, but I can agree to that, and I have the first bit of advice for you. If you're heading into the mountains, everyone will tell you to avoid Dragon's Peak.

It is full of dangers and a very easy to upset Dragon, but it also has an opportunity. The Dragon is halfway into the Divine Rank from the Demigod Rank and likes to issue quests to visitors that it deems worthy. It has the gift of foresight, so the quests are always good for your advancement.

If you think you can impress the old beast, feel free to go visit, just don't attack anything on the way up the slopes."

"Intriguing. I think I will take you up on that one, a quest from a Draconic Demigod sounds like just the thing to make our time in this world more interesting." Cain agreed, while the three women turned pale at his confident assertion.

Both Cain and the old man made it seem so sane and normal, but who had anything that could impress a Dragon, much less one that was already a Demigod?

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

Chapter 578 578 Gifting Books

Cain had forgotten one vital fact about the books created using the Inscription desk. They became unusable texts an hour after they were created. He had never waited long enough to see what happened once one timed out, but as he ate dinner and the Sect Master worked on memorizing the tome, the hour-long time ran out on the first book that Cain had created.

[Time Limited Item has expired] Tome of Emergency Resurrection

Cain saw the notification and realized his mistake, but the Sect Master was still reading without any issues.

Cain checked his inventory and removed the second tome, seeing that it still had most of its hour left, so the Sect Master definitely had the older one. He marked his page with a bit of silk, closed the book, and set it down to take a drink, so Cain used his System interface to check on the status.

[Tome of Emergency Resurrection] Expired, cannot be equipped.

It was definitely out of date, and no longer usable, but the old man opened it, and the pages were still full of writing, so he kept reading, never noticing the difference. It appeared that the book was just that, a book, written in Cain's handwriting and sitting on a table in the Inn's restaurant.

Fortunately for Cain, these Cultivators would never notice the difference. They didn't have a System, so they didn't try to use it, nor would anyone else they gave the book to, so it was just another bit of information for their library.

Cain and Luna had both learned skills that way while under the tutelage of the Elven Librarian on the Southern Continent, and it was incredibly annoying. A single skill could take days, or even longer to master without the system's assistance, but the old man didn't seem to mind at all.

"I can't read all these runes, but I have a general idea now. Resurrection isn't a simple topic after all. I would ask though, are you planning to sell, these tomes regularly along your travels?" He asked.

"Not really. If someone is particularly worthy, I will grant them a useful skill that I know, but I'm not here to make a business out of selling skill books to strangers." Cain shrugged.

"That is a good attitude. Skills in this world are jealously guarded by their owning Sects, and the punishment for selling a secret skill outside of the Sects can be particularly severe. You won't be able to hide the fact that you know far more skills than most wandering cultivators from everyone, but it is better if they don't all know that you can create copies of them to hand out." The old man explained.

That was good advice. Scarcity also helped increase the value of items, so Cain could come up with a few mediocre skills in advance and use them in an emergency, or simply give out the ones that were on the Cultivator he killed once the three students all learned the ones they were compatible with.

"How long does it take to travel to the Mountains from here, the five of us? Luna wanted to go to see snow for herself, and I think a visit to the dragon could prove fruitful once I have either found or created something that would be unique enough to entertain them." Cain asked.

"With the three of them on foot? About a week. If they had flying swords, they could get there in a day." The Innkeeper told Cain with a shrug.

"Do you know the technique?" Cain asked hopefully. If he only had to give them a sword to save a lot of time, life would be much easier.

"Unfortunately no, it needs an Awakened to be able to use the skill, we don't have the power to maintain one," Penny explained.

"I take it your version is different?" The Innkeeper asked.

"Yeah, a little, but it's not something that I can teach to just anyone. It takes a very specific affinity in order to use those particular swords, but we will figure something out, even if it means taking a leisurely stroll through the mountains."

Cain's optimism got Luna excited again. Walking through the mountains sounded like it would be way more fun than flying over them.

At the speeds that they were traveling, even if there was a Mythic Beast below them they wouldn't have bothered the two humans flying over them. That didn't make for an exciting story to tell everyone when they finished their adventure and went home. It wouldn't even be a great one to tell people in the next town that they went to.

"We walked a week through the mountains, fought these monsters, camped in a tent under the stars, and made great food." was an infinitely better story than "Oh, we just flew over here from that city in the valley this morning."

Luna was beginning to wonder if her dad was losing his sense of adventure, or if it was just that the monsters in this area were closer to her level than his that he had overlooked the potential of this traveling adventure.

"Innkeeper, we will also need a second room for the evening. Five of us in one large bed is a bit too crowded for comfort." Cain requested, tossing the man another gold coin.

"I appreciate your patronage, and I suspect that your new followers will appreciate not having to sleep on the floor." He agreed, heading into the back room to check on his cook.

The three new disciples were looking through the book that Cain had given them, intrigued by the possibilities, and getting closer to being able to use it to a minor degree. Learning from a regular book wasn't like actually using the skill book, it took practice and study to get it right, instead of simply being able to use it the moment you acquired it.

Later that evening, the Sect Elder came in again with his disciples and a hopeful look on his face.

"I've got a present for you. I think the Sect Master over there has already almost learned the technique, but here is your copy." Cain explained.

The book was long expired by now, but it opened like any standard book, all of its magic having been previously dispersed.

"This is incredible. You have very steady handwriting Master Cain, and the book is so well described that I don't think anyone would fail to learn the skill given time. Many of the skills that we get are incomplete, and the users need to try to piece together the missing parts to make it into something useful." The Sect Elder explained.

"Is that normal? Or are people messing with you?" Cain asked, confused.

"Most skill books are truly Ancient, since nobody alive now can fluently read the runes, so if they are damaged, only the remaining parts can be replicated. Translated versions exist, but they never convey the multiple meanings of the original runes correctly and can often make the process even harder instead of easier." The Elder sighed.

If that was the case, Cain could make a killing just reading bedtime stories to Cultivators, but he suspected that the System wouldn't give him a quest to do anything that easy.

Luna perked up at the mention that he couldn't fluently read the runes. "So, you're saying that you read the bits that you can and guess at the other meanings of the runes until you get it perfect?"

The Elder nodded happily until he realized that Luna didn't mean that she hadn't ever used one, but that she could in fact read the runes fluently. He frowned at the pitying

glance she was giving him, as though he was an injured animal she had spotted on the side of the road.

The Immortal Sect Master noticed the look as well and decided to take a jab at his junior from the blue-robed Lightning Dance Sect. "The younger generation truly is fearsome, even unintentionally, aren't they?"

"You have that right. At my age, I never thought I would be subject to that look from a young child." The Elder agreed with a sigh.

"I think I kept a primer in here somewhere. Dad, can you copy it if I find it? My writing isn't good yet." Luna asked, forcing the Immortal to hide his face to avoid openly laughing at the Sect Elder.

"I'm not sure we will have time for that. The primer won't help if you don't already know what all the runes mean and how they are pronounced." Cain explained, knowing that she meant the book that she was assigned to improve her language comprehension since the written language didn't get automatically translated perfectly for her the way it did for Cain.

Like Rune Crafting, the Ancient Language was only innate to those with pure Ancient bloodlines.

"Oh, that's a good point. That would take too long, like years. I'm sorry Sect Elder, but if you have a question now, I'm here. Unless there is dessert, then I will likely fall asleep again."

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

Chapter 579 579

Much to everyone's surprise, the old man actually took her up on the offer, asking her multiple questions in the first few pages to test her knowledge of the multiple meanings of some runes. To the shock of everyone but Cain, she managed to explain them all well enough for the others to understand both the meaning and some of the nuance behind them when used with other runes.

That sped up his initial comprehension at first, but the Sect Elder soon found that while his affinity to Lightning was quite strong, he simply had none at all for divine-type Abilities such as Resurrection.

"I wonder what it is that makes this book easier to comprehend." He pondered, wondering what Sect Disciple or fellow Elder should have the next chance to try to comprehend it.

"I think it's cuteness. The cuter they are the more favored they are by the divine." Luna insisted.

"I am fairly sure that's not right. The old Immortal managed to learn it with relative ease." One of the disciples whispered, forgetting that the old man could hear him anyhow.

"On the contrary, see the beard, the flowing lines of his shoulders? I bet he was a truly handsome man in his youth. The favor of the Life Goddess wouldn't have faded that much just because he got old." Luna countered.

"You know, I'm thinking that she might actually be a good fit for our sect. Forget her existing skills, she has the right sort of ass-kissing attitude that will get a Cultivator far in this world." The old Immortal laughed.

"The best part is she honestly means it. If she thought you used to be ugly, she would have said so." Cain agreed.

While they were talking the three disciples Cain gained today went outside to practice their new skill, lighting up the darkening street outside the Inn with holy light surrounding plain sticks from the kindling pile.

"That's an impressive skill that you taught them, do you specialize in Divine Magic? Resurrection, Seraphim Guardians, and that Holy Smite are all from the same school of study." The Sect Master asked.

"That one was actually from their former master. I didn't need it so I let them study it right away. My field of specialty is actually the Guardians as you called them. I have the use of a few different types to assist me in combat." Cain explained.

"Unique. Not many would think to try to fight that way, controlling conjurations while fighting in close combat. Usually, Magic Type Cultivators try to fight from a distance with their skills and never actually engage with the enemy." The Sect Master informed him.

"Oh, that reminds me of a phrase I heard from Vala telling a story when I was little. How did it go again? [Fist] is a specialty spell that not many mages can cast?"

The room burst into laughter at her joke, making Luna grin wider than Cain thought a human face could.

"I once had a Sect Brother of the same mind. He was a martial cultivator, well versed in physical skills and enhancement, but he insisted that he knew a high-level stun

technique that was nothing more than him punching people in the face." The Innkeeper told her.

"The elusive Magic using Barbarian. I have only heard of such legendary fighters." Luna giggled, glad someone got her sense of humor.

They were still joking around when a runner from the Gate Guard came running in. "Master Innkeeper, there are hostile cultivators at the gate. We have taken multiple casualties, and they seem intent on raiding the city."

The Innkeeper's face turned deadly serious in an instant, and Cain picked up Luna on his hip and stood to head for the door.

"We will assist you in defending the city. As guests here, it is the least we could do." Cain informed them.

"Wait at the back unless we are in trouble. It will cause you trouble later if you step forward to defend the city and someone gets away. If you only wait in the background, nobody will fault you and your daughter for watching a fight you are not involved in." The Sect Master informed him.

The old man joined the Innkeeper in heading for the door, and they were joined by dozens of other blue and gray-robed cultivators.

It looked like the guards were far from the only defense that the city had, and they had responded in good time to the warning from the guards. But that couldn't be right. Only one Guard had left his post, and he had come to the Inn. These people didn't have a System, how did they all get the message so quickly? Perhaps they had some sort of magical device that let them communicate. There were a number of items in the dead man's inventory that Cain hadn't tried to identify yet.

"Are you ready to turn the city over to a proper sect yet old man? You know you can't stand against us forever." The leader of the other group sneered as the Immortal approached their group.

"Bunch of upstart children. You say I can't stand forever here, but you're still a hundred years too early to challenge me." The Sect Master replied.

[Oh, sick burn. This is going to be a great Young Master Beatdown] The Echoes in Cain's mind thought in unison.

Cain noticed that most of the fighters here were Mythic or Spirit Awakened, with only three Immortals among the group, including their leader. That was still two more than the defenders had, but it was possible that the Innkeeper was hiding his power level. Cain didn't see any interface information from him, but he did say that he defended the city.

"What, do you think the old cripple Moon will be able to save you?" The leader of the attackers asked.

"Why don't you ask your Sect Master?" Master Moon, the Innkeeper chuckled, making the man's eyes narrow in rage.

"Attack!" The Young Master screamed, leading his men into battle.

The leader bypassed the Guild Master, who didn't try to stop him, and Power flared to life around Master Moon.

[Name] Park Jun Moon

[Level] 699

[Species] Human

[Awakened] Immortal

[Crippled, soul damage cannot heal naturally]

So that was the Innkeeper's deal. He had been injured in Combat and they lacked the abilities here to heal the damage that was done to him. Cain called a Spirit Rank Seraphim into [Merger] with him and asked the important question.

[Can you fix the soul damage to Master Moon?]

[Of course. So can you. Any Divine type of healing will recover it without an issue. The status debuff that was making it resistant to repair has long since dispersed if there ever was one. Just use Holy Light and he will be good as new.] The Seraphim informed him.

Cain could see that the fight was going to quickly turn against Master Moon. The enemy was lower level and less skilled, but he was uninjured, and the Soul Damage already had Moon coughing blood as he fought and started to get exhausted.

Cain activated [Superior Mental Domination] and extended it over the whole battle so that everyone would hear and obey his words.

"Halt. Watching a child beat a cripple is no fun. I will make this fight more entertaining." Cain declared, while the fighting momentarily paused.

[Holy Light] shone down on Master Moon, and his opponent, returning both to full health and essentially restarting their fight.

"You may continue," Cain commanded, and the two sides momentarily looked at each other before resuming the fight. The only one that seemed hesitant to continue was

Master Moon himself, but he soon realized that the lingering old injury was gone and he could fight again.

"Popcorn?" Cain asked Luna, sitting down again to watch the fights.

"Oh, I love popcorn." Luna cheered, digging into the bag that Cain took out.

"Damn you old man, bringing a healer. How did you even find someone who could heal the damage that the Sect Master's Soul Devouring Ultimate Power Bomb Blast did to you?"

Cain almost choked on his popcorn before giving thanks to the Laughing God for his tasteful naming sense when he made the Skill names for the system. He couldn't take his progression seriously if he had to tell people that his ultimate skill was named something that ridiculous.

"Ultimate Soul Devouring Power Bomb Blast." Luna giggled in a mocking tone, making Cain laugh.

"You just wait healer, I will tear you apart as soon as I am done with this decrepit old man." The attackers' leader snarled.

"You couldn't beat a crippled old man, and you expect me to take you seriously? Master Moon, how about you let me teach this fool a little lesson about how Chunni names don't make skills better?" Cain suggested.

"I don't think that is a good idea, Master Cain. He might sound ridiculous, but he is in fact quite strong for his age." Master Moon replied, after disengaging from combat with his opponent.

"Seriously? You're going to kill two on the same day? This place is better than I thought it was." Luna whispered to Cain.

"He might get smart and back down. His men are mostly dead now that the Sect Master has been left unattended so long." Cain pointed out.

"I, the mighty Kurgath, destroyer of continents, Heir to Immortality, Crusher of Souls, and Disciple of the Ascendant Divine One Kurgon will never back down from a challenge." The leader declared.

"He deserves to die just for that introduction," Luna told Cain, with a very serious look on her face.

"No, he needs to repent and learn humility. Dying teaches nothing." Cain disagreed.

"Well, at least stab him a little bit or something."

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

Chapter 580 580 Kurgath The Annoying

The mighty Kurgath, destroyer of continents, Heir to Immortality, Crusher of Souls, and Disciple of the Ascendant Divine One Kurgon was as good as his word, and he didn't back down from a challenge, even when Cain stood up and summoned Dozens of Spirit Rank Seraphim Inquisitors.

The remainder of the battle stopped in shock, staring at the spectacle, but Kurgath seemed convinced that they were all fakes, or that at best one was real and the rest were illusions, designed to distract him from the healer in front of him.

[Just Purge him with Holy Light or something, he is incredibly annoying.] Cain directed his summons, and the body of Kurgath lit up with bright white light.

Taking that spell directly to the face, with no protection was usually a death sentence for a Transfer of the same level back at home, so Cain knew that Kurgath was hurting and that [Might of Many] was stacked up with damage now.

As the Cultivator was hoping, Cain charged with a sword in his hand, which the Immortal contemptuously batted aside. But Cain's spear appeared in his hand at the last second and stabbed the man in the leg, nearly severing it with the enhancement from [Might of Many].

Kurgath and Master Moon were both seriously injured by their battle, and the last few strikes weren't easy for him to withstand, but his pride would never let him submit to this incredibly rude man called Cain in front of him.

The pain and humiliation proved too much for him though, and he began chasing Cain mindlessly around the area, roaring in frustration every time Cain slipped into the shadows and disappeared.

Cain wasn't fast enough to actually catch him with another strike though, and it just turned into a game of cat and mouse, until the cooldown timer was finished and the Seraphim hit Kurgath with another Holy Light spell.

"Young Master!" A surviving attacker called, racing for the fallen and scorched Cultivator before Cain could react.

They vanished in a flash of black light the moment that the follower made contact with Kurgath, and Cain sighed.

[Oath Breaker, leave without being noticed and see if you can finish them.] Cain ordered.

If he was lucky, the leader would still be out cold from the Holy Light spell, and easy pickings, but Cain wasn't keeping his hopes up as one after another the survivors grabbed the fallen attackers and disappeared.

"You really know how to make a man want to stab you to death, you know that, right?" Master Moon asked.

"Like the guy back in the Valley that tried to call you a Tyrant and almost got murdered by the door guard before you could stop him." Luna agreed.

"Rage blinds the mind. A man and a beast are on different levels because of intelligence, eliminate the intelligence and you can slaughter them like beasts." Cain informed him, trying to sound wise.

"Not bad advice, but they are still going to come after you at some point. Not soon though, now that I am healed. I owe you for that by the way. Was that truly Seraphim Magic you used?" Moon asked.

"Yes. It works especially well against evil humans, so I thought it would be more appropriate than anything else." Cain replied, dismissing the Seraphim Inquisitors before anyone could realize that they weren't a trick or an illusion.

"Well, you've met the Glorious Sons of Prophecy now, so you've officially been welcomed to the city. They're idiots, but they are dangerous idiots, who think they have a divine calling to rule the valley." The Sect Master informed Cain.

"Just the Valley, not the world?" Cain asked, confused.

"Just the valley, and the three towns in it. Nobody really knows why, since they're not even from here, but they routinely attack the cities and then flee south out of the valley toward the ocean." The old Immortal sighed.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same. There were raiders like that near the Kingdom of Skyview where I lived for quite a long time. They would raid routinely and annoy the locals, steal some women if they could, and then run away again.

But they didn't have any grand goals or aspirations, they just wanted to raid and get women, since they couldn't convince any of the ones that were born into their tribe to stay of their own free will." Cain explained, making the Sect Master chuckle.

"I'm glad you understand. Can you do anything about these fallen guards? It has still been under ten minutes since the battle started?" Master Moon asked.

"First, we should let the Sect Master try. He has made great progress, and it would be a shame to waste this opportunity for him to give it a shot without having to harm anyone to get the chance." Cain suggested.

The Sect Master focused for a while, and slowly a white light built up until it surrounded his hands. He placed them on a fallen guard, and released the light, bringing the man to life, then feeding him a healing pill.

"It's best if the pill is in their mouth when you cast the spell. As you can see, the initial ability only brings them to life, it doesn't heal them, so if they're still bleeding or internally injured they will just die again right away without additional healing." Cain reminded the Immortal.

"Good point. Let me try again." The Sect Master Nodded.

This time he put a pill in the guard's mouth and cast the spell, causing the healing to start immediately as the pill was absorbed. It was a much less stressful method of resurrection.

"Give me a moment to reassemble these injured men and I will resurrect the rest of the guards who can still be saved," Cain informed him, then walked to a nearly decapitated guard, fixing his severed neck and moving on to a man missing an arm and his head, sticking both back in place and mending them.

"What is that? Only the highest level of healing pills will regrow a limb. It is basically a death sentence to a cultivator to lose his sword arm, but you make it look easy." Master Moon asked.

"Flesh manipulation is an extension of Earth skills. Once they are dead, it isn't a big deal to stitch the body back together. Then you just need to resurrect them, and they should heal.

At least that's the theory. We will have to see once they are alive again. But we're running short on time, it's almost been ten minutes since the ambush." Cain informed him.

Cain used a Holy Light, the all-purpose Seraphim area spell of choice, to bring the guards back to life once he had as many of them patched up as he could, and the Sect Master stared at him in envy.

"A bit of Seraphim Magic goes a long way. That was the same spell all three times, but the way Seraphim Magic works will differentiate between friends and enemies, so it can either heal, damage, or both." Cain explained.

"I don't suppose you can make a book and teach that ability?" The Immortal Sect Master asked hopefully.

"You would have to ask a Seraphim for that one. Learning it is hard, but getting permission to learn it is much harder, nearly impossible for most." Cain sighed.

That was true. Cain himself wouldn't know it at all if he couldn't summon them, or have Evangeline as a Companion. Meeting Seraphim was a rare occasion in most worlds, and they weren't big on teaching their secrets to random power-hungry strangers like him.

"How are you feeling? Does your arm feel fine? Has your cultivation been damaged?" Master Moon was asking a repaired and resurrected Guard as they talked.

"How am I not dead? I swear I actually died back there. But you are right, there is something wrong with my arm still. It is there, and it is my arm, but it is like someone severed the flow of energy through it. I will have to try to fix it later, but for now, it's like having a mortal arm attached to me." The guard replied, clearly in shock.

"Interesting, so there is lingering metaphysical damage that the ability doesn't fix, but you can only expect so much. I will have to ask the local Earth specializing Sect if they can do something like that at a higher level. I don't know if they have ever tried if it only works on corpses, but I heard that they are the ones that make the pills for reattaching a living cultivator's severed limbs, so they might be the best ones to go to for an option to upgrade the ability." The Sect Master said thoughtfully.

"Different worlds really do have different ways of thinking. I like it here, we can do so many fun new things that nobody would have thought of back home." Luna agreed, looking out into the forest in anticipation.

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

Chapter 581 581

Now that they had an unpleasant introduction to the other sects in the area, Cain was a bit more concerned about going wandering in the woods, and what might happen out there. Not so much for himself, but Luna was still at a rather low level, and they both needed to improve the cores that they had assimilated so that they could level up again and match this world's power level.

Luna was still extremely excited to see new things though, so waiting for more than another day or two before they began traveling would just become an annoying series of "When are we leaving" type questions, rephrased to see if they worked better than last time.

"Sect Master, I don't suppose that the annoying children of prophecy are likely to have patrols into the mountains are they?" Cain asked, making the guards chuckle.

"Not likely. They don't care much about anything but the valley, and the Sects in the mountains have leaders that are much more powerful than anyone down here. If you find the Divine Dragon Sect during your travels, be careful not to insult their gods. Their leader is very close to the borderline to Divinity and they take that sort of thing personally.

Other than that, as long as you don't interfere with their training, or get too close to their sect compounds, as I marked them on the map, you should be able to travel without too many issues." The Sect Master explained.

"Then I think we should head out in the morning so that we can get as much distance covered in the daytime as possible. Luna here wanted to hunt at least one Mythic Beast while she was out, and that will be easier in the daylight." Cain decided, making Luna cheer and hug his waist.

"Then we need to stock up. I saw more good stuff when we were on our way to the Arena before. There is a cute dress that is almost like this outfit and looks really comfy." Luna insisted.

"Oh, the female Cultivation Sect robes. They're like a dress, but they still have pants so you don't embarrass yourself while fighting. There are a lot of options, and you can pick almost any color. The only ones that they won't have in stock are the ones that are reserved for the local Sects." Master Moon told her.

"Sweet. I haven't seen many female fighters, so there should be lots of options. Back home I was always wearing armor and stuff, so I didn't change clothes often. But these are too great not to wear." Luna informed the now-healed Immortal.

"I am glad you like our world's fashion. Should we send one of the young Acolytes with you to help you shop?" Master Moon asked.

"What do boys know about clothing anyhow? One of them tried to get me to buy shoes with heels." Luna scoffed, making all the elders laugh at her way of seeing things.

"I have just the person for you then. Why don't you take Master Moon with you? He has over fifty female grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He should be almost an expert now, right?" The Sect Master asked.

"Oh, are they here in town? Don't they come to visit you? Let me talk to them, I'll make sure they come to visit more often." Luna told the Innkeeper.

Her very serious look made the Innkeeper laugh and pat her head. "That's alright. They all live up at the Sect, it is a long journey. I go to them now and then so that I can see them all at the same time."

Luna nodded in understanding. "Oh, like the farmers. They go visit family every holiday because they're too busy to see each other all the time."

"Innkeepers are very busy people." Master Moon nodded in agreement.

"Then let's go shopping before you have to go back to work. We can pick something for your favorite grandchildren while we're at it."

"Now young lady, it's not good to play favorites among children." Moon insisted.

"Why not? I'm clearly Dad's favorite. The quadruplets are just tiny and boring." Luna asked, not understanding.

Master Moon thought that the quadruplets must be younger, possibly still infants, the way that she referred to them as tiny and boring, so he chose a way to explain that would make it more logical for the sheltered Luna.

"The ones that you spend the most time with and the ones that have the most in common with you might seem like the favorites, but the others are still special, even if they aren't ready to head out into the world for training yet."

Luna thought a while about that then shook her head. "Pretty sure I'm still the favorite. But we should go shopping before they close. They're not closed yet, right?"

Cain did his best not to laugh and waved farewell to Luna and Master Moon, confident that the old man wouldn't let anything happen to her.

He was very close to the peak of Immortality himself, like the leader of the Divine Dragon Sect was supposed to be, so there shouldn't be too many people in the valley that could pose a threat with him around.

While they shopped, Cain returned to the Inn with the Guards and the Sect Master, finding a young woman working the bar, filling in for Master Moon while he was out.

"Did you bring Master Moon back?" The woman asked hopefully as she looked around the packed dining room.

"He is out shopping with my daughter. She wanted some comfortable dresses in the local fashion." Cain explained.

"And they didn't think to send me with her? I might not be an Immortal Cultivator, but I am still a woman." She complained.

Cain could see that her clothes were stained with various colors, so he assumed that she was either the Inn's cook or a local alchemist that the Master had asked to fill in for him. She was right though, she likely would have been the better option to take Luna shopping.

"You're so mean to us that we forget that you might have womanly charms to strangers." One of the guards joked, giving her a wink.

"You know I make your food, right? Better watch what you say." She retorted, before pouring another round of drinks for the Guards.

"Very sorry Little Moon. We are all in awe of your womanly charms and gentle demeanor." The guard apologized, catching an empty pitcher to the head for his insincerity.

"Little Moon here is Master Moon's personal Disciple. She has made incredible progress with her combat skills, but her social skills are still a bit lacking. I'm afraid we might have left her alone around an almost all-male Cultivation Sect for too long." The Sect Master laughed.

"Introduce yourself to Luna when she returns, I think you two would get along very well. Her first reaction to meeting Kurgath was to have him murdered for being obnoxious." One of the guards informed Little Moon with a laugh.

"She didn't?" The woman asked incredulously.

"And then when her father told her that the man needed to learn a lesson instead, she suggested just stabbing him a little as an alternative." The guards confirmed the first man's words.

"She's just like that." Cain agreed.

"Does she take after you or her mother?" Little Moon asked.

"That's a toss-up. I like to think I'm an upright and honorable man but her mother is a cult leader, so it's only natural that she would inherit some of the obsessive personality traits." Cain shrugged.

"Didn't Luna say that her mother had started a cult dedicated to you, and took over an entire continent in an effort to win your favor?" The Elder of the Lightning Dance Sect asked from his seat in the corner, where he was studying the Resurrection book that Cain gave him.

"That doesn't make you sound very upright and honorable. But I understand now where she got her personality from. Her mother is a very devoted woman, and her father is

very hard to impress. Of course, she would naturally end up going to extremes, it's the only way she ever got any attention." Little Moon suggested.

"On the contrary, she can't possibly get enough attention. Even if she is with me every hour of the day, awake and asleep, doing what I'm doing, it's not enough attention." Cain countered.

"You just don't understand a woman's needs. Being near you isn't the same as having your attention. No wonder her mother had to conquer an entire continent before you got the point." Little Moon sighed, making the Sect Master laugh.

"You've got it hard. I don't pretend to understand women either. I understand eternity, and I'm beginning to understand divinity, but not mortal women." The old man sighed.

"That's what is holding you back. Talk to Moon, he understands women, but not eternity. You might do each other a lot of good." Little Moon told the Guild Master with a slight smirk.

"What's this about me not understanding Eternity?" Master Moon asked when he got back over an hour later, looking weary while Luna looked even more energetic than before.

"It was a joke Master. I didn't mean it in a bad way." Little Moon insisted.

"Of course, you didn't. Did you forget that I have a listening enchantment on the Inn so I know when someone comes in?" Master Moon asked, making the Guards who were still present laugh.

"Sorry Master. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to talk to Miss Luna for a moment." Little Moon declared, grabbing Luna and escaping the room, headed for the kitchen.

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

Chapter 582 582

Little Moon took Luna back into the kitchen to ask her some questions about her situation here in this world. She had heard that Luna didn't intend to enter another world with her Father and that they couldn't go home on their own, so she was concerned about the girl's preparations.

Clearly, Cain didn't understand much about women, so Luna might be missing many important things that he wouldn't have thought of.

"Did you get everything that you needed? I can go with you if you need to pick up any more items that you were embarrassed to pick up when there was a man accompanying you." Little Moon suggested.

"I think I got everything. Everything on the travel checklist that the Lady Librarian made for me is filled now, and I even got some extra stuff like pretty dresses and spare comfy shoes, when only spare walking shoes were on the list." Luna shrugged.

"Do you have some sort of security enchantment? I know it's not safe for a lady to travel in a small group, so you should have something to protect your sleeping spot, just in case your dad also isn't awake, or is just too deep into his meditation. The Immortals are really fast, so he might not be able to catch up if one grabbed you." Little Moon pointed out.

"Hmm, that's a good idea. Nobody in our old world would be that stupid, but here we're just random travelers. I also have some summoning skills, like the Seraphim that Cain called, but what would be good for the protection of a sleeping spot? Poisonous snakes? Or would they be too slow? Maybe something incorporeal, so that they don't get noticed right away?" Luna asked.

"I was actually thinking more along the lines of an alarm spell, that made noise and alerted everyone around you if someone got too close." Little Moon told her.

"Oh, we have those all the time anyhow. Even here in the Inn, we set an alarm to warn us when someone tries to enter the room. It worked really well on the first two who tried to sneak in."

"Someone tried to break into your room? Are you alright?" Luna could see that Little Moon was genuinely concerned for her, so she smiled and hugged the small woman.

"Perfectly fine. They weren't strong, I could have killed them both myself, but they woke Cain up before I had to do anything at all. He was expecting someone to do something stupid the first night we were here, and even Master Moon showed up to see what the commotion was, so I think we were pretty safe."

Hearing that her master was on watch helped assure Little Moon that Luna was safe, but she still worried about such a cute little kid wandering the forest with only one guide.

"Alright, if you think you've got things well prepared, that's enough for me. Just be careful. Life is hard for female cultivators in this world, and the general rule outside of the cities is that might makes right, so mean people will try to do bad things if they think they can get away with it." Little Moon sighed.

"Got it, I will keep my daggers poisoned," Luna replied, taking her advice as a hint to be prepared, not a general warning about the difficulties that women face in the world.

The two women returned to the front of the Inn, where the men were going over a route that would lead Cain by some simple challenges for Luna, and then into the mountains.

"Just avoid this spot if you don't want trouble. There is a dungeon there that the Sects protect. It is off-limits so that the monsters inside escape into the area and repopulate the ones that their acolytes hunt. The whole area is a trial ground, so it is best if you stay well away, just in case someone thinks that you're there to interfere with the students." The Sect Master told Cain, pointing at a spot on the map.

Back at home, the monsters didn't escape dungeons, but that seemed normal here if they weren't dealt with, so Cain made a mental note that anywhere they found a dungeon portal might be a hunting ground for a sect, and not a great place for them to train, as it might seem when they first arrived.

"Are there other off-limits areas, other than the mountain slopes themselves?" Cain asked.

"If you get that far in, there is a crystal lake. It is just a regular clear mountain runoff lake, but the bottom is covered in opal-colored shells and gems. It is beautiful but strictly off-limits. I don't know why, but nobody who goes there looking for treasure ever returns alive. Even the ones with escape talismans are dead when they appear on the other end." Master Moon said, pointing to the mark on the map.

"Then there is the city of Demons. Not literally, but they are evil cultivators. It's a good spot to get questionable goods, but it's also a good spot to get killed, so I don't recommend going there." Little Moon pointed to the city, which was clearly marked as unsafe.

"Alright, that should be enough to get us going through the next few months, and then I think we will go see this Lycan City by the ocean. I've had good luck with beastkin races in the past, so I think we should be fine. If they don't want visitors, we will turn and head back along the ridgelines, which will bring us close to your sect territory." Cain detailed their planned route, in case they met up with some of these people again.

"Do you have proper weapons for dealing with Spirit Beasts, if you should find some? Most of the monsters will be Mythic Awakened, but there might be some Spirit Rank ones out there as well that haven't been found and hunted by the Sects for training yet." The Sect Master asked.

"We have that covered. It's only Immortal Cultivators that we are concerned about at this point. The beasts we can deal with relatively safely." Cain agreed.

"Humans are always the most dangerous of opponents. In that case, I will return to studying this wonderful text that you provided. I think I might learn another secret of the universe from it, not just the skill that it is intended to impart. My intuition tells me there is more to this knowledge."

The Sect Master turned back to his studies as soon as he finished talking, so Luna turned to Little Moon for entertainment.

"I don't suppose you have a book, do you? I always liked finding new things to read." Luna asked.

"I have one you can read for tonight, but you can't take it with you, I'm not done with it yet." Little Moon agreed, pulling a small book from her storage ring.

It was some sort of a knife technique, and Luna was instantly engrossed in the details, forgetting that there were still people around her.

"She's like that with knowledge. How about I loan you one for the evening since everyone else has left and there isn't much left to do?" Cain offered to Little Moon.

"Oh, no, I have to prepare the kitchen for the morning and clean up, then meditate to absorb the knowledge from the book on kitchen knife techniques I had been working on."

They all sat quietly for a while, reading books and drinking the local ale until Luna jumped up on her chair and cheered.

"That's it, the piece I was missing. Now I know how the [Disembowel] technique is supposed to work. You have to make a little twist of the wrist when you get to the anus for the innards to fall out smoothly." She cheered.

Little Moon was certain now that Luna was a lost cause to womanhood. She was far too excited about the ability to smoothly gut something to ever become the delicate flower of maidenhood that most sects expected female cultivators to keep as their public persona.

She had the looks for it, but she might find the personality impossible to emulate, even if she trained to master it for infiltration purposes. That was almost a relief, she would never end up as a honey trap assassin.

Luna returned the kitchen knife technique book before heading to the room to meditate for the evening. That was how these people built their cores, so she and Cain had decided to give it a try, in case it provided the experience needed to integrate the ones that they had used.

If nothing else, it gave her a reason to focus on this new body and get used to not having enough arms.

That had become an issue while shopping. You couldn't store items until you paid for them, but with only two arms, and short ones at that, it was nearly impossible to hold all the things she wanted. If she didn't have Master Moon there to hold things and help her

sort out what was good and necessary, she might have never managed the clothing section of her shopping trip.

As it was, she had bought over fifty new outfits, in every style that this city had to offer, and the storage crate in her inventory was now half full. A few more cities and she would be putting things in her regular inventory for lack of storage.

That would never do, she would have to sort out the ones that she liked the most. Unless they found some creatures to fight. Regular clothing got destroyed incredibly easily in a good fight, so Master Moon had warned her that she would go through them much faster than she might think.

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

Chapter 583 583 Time To Explore

"Did you manage to make any progress on your core?" Cain asked Luna in the morning, setting down the book on Cultivation Techniquet that the elven Librarian had made him copy out as essential knowledge for this world.

"Nope, zip zero nada. Not a single point." Luna sighed.

"But meditation was really relaxing, we should do that more often for sure." She added, snuggling deeper into Cain's lap.

That's what Cain feared. The cores they were working with were already formed, they only had to integrate them, and the system had set a goal of how to do that, which didn't include leisurely meditating in a hotel.

"Alright, after we eat, we will head out into the forest and see what we can find for entertainment. There should be some beasts out there that might taste better than expected, and we definitely need the experience." Cain told her, placing her on his hip as he stood up to go down to the dining hall.

"You take care of this precious creature, you hear me? This world is dangerous, don't let her out of your sight unless she has a powerful escort you trust." Little Moon demanded when they were almost ready to leave the Inn.

"She's not just my disciple, she's my daughter. You don't need to worry about me neglecting her, I'm watching her at all times." Cain replied honestly.

Even if not physically, he would usually send a Summon to keep an eye on anyone who was important to him, and Luna didn't like being away from him, to begin with.

They had decided to stay on the ground, so they didn't miss important things on this trip, and the air in the forest was an incredible change from the city. They still used fire for everything there, so it constantly smelled of smoke and infrequently washed bodies.

How the sensitive noses of the others could deal with it, neither of them knew, but after spending a few days in the city you did kind of get used to the constant smell.

"Can we play tag now that we're out of sight of the city? Wait, do we have to pretend to be normal humans out here or just human-shaped?" Luna asked.

"Human species, but you don't need to hold back to regular human speeds, the people here are very fast when they get powerful, so you can run if you like, just don't leave my sight, I haven't had time to send anyone to check the area to make sure we weren't followed," Cain instructed her.

"Oh, that's good news. You're it first." Luna cheered, running through the trees with Cain chasing her.

Both of them had their senses open waiting for something to happen, but they didn't hear any other people in the area, much less any monsters. It was only later that afternoon when they got to the foothills of the mountains that ringed the valley that they found signs of magical creatures and humans.

"Was there supposed to be a Sect near here?" Luna asked, pointing to a spot where it was clear that someone had butchered a large animal and left the offal for the wildlife.

"Not according to the map, but you never know if there are things hidden in the world that the locals don't know about. Stay close for now." Cain told her with a wink and a nod toward the trees where he had heard something moving.

"Got it. There's nothing of value left there anyhow. But I smell a river nearby, that might be a good spot to sit down for a while and have a snack." Luna suggested.

She led the way to the river, while Cain listened to the unknown person following them. They were pretty good, but not perfect, and occasionally he could hear a branch crack. Unfortunately for them, they weren't actually invisible, and the vision of an Ancient picked up much more than a human did.

Even Luna, with the sight of a Lamia that included thermal images, had no problem spotting their pursuer once they started moving. It was only one person, and they seemed content to remain at a distance for now, so Cain thought they might be a scout or border patrol guard for something in the area which hadn't been marked on the map.

"Oh look, there is a waterfall. You don't mind if I have a quick shower, do you? I want to get the smell of the city off me." Luna suggested.

"That's fine. I will keep watch while you get clean. Don't forget the special shampoo for wilderness travel, the stuff without the extra scents." Cain reminded her, and Luna gave him a pleading look.

"You can smell like fruit and herbs when we get to the next town. For now, we don't need to deliberately attract everything within five kilometers of us. The waterfall is nice, but it's not really sheltered for a good night's sleep." Cain reminded her.

Their delay seemed to be enough to make the follower impatient, and Cain could see them circling through the trees, getting in a position where they could easily attack the waterfall.

"You're too close. I can sense you in the tree even without looking at you." Cain called out to their follower, who immediately froze as if that would stop them from being detected.

"Are you going to come out, or am I going to throw rocks at you until I've chased the peeping Tom away?" Cain tried again, and the mysterious follower made their move, leaping out of the tree with a talisman in their hand.

After seeing the other cultivators teleport away with a similar token, so far that not even the Oath Breaker could find them, Cain was extra cautious. He didn't need to start a rescue Luna quest this early in their trip.

He sent the Oath Breaker out to intercept, letting it appear between the two of them. The token was a stun talisman, and the Oath Breaker simply shrugged it off and let the Cultivator bounce off him with a fleshy thud.

"Immortal Wanderer, I challenge this mortal to a test of arms. Please don't interfere." The young man demanded.

"You want to fight Luna? Seriously?" Cain asked.

The man wasn't even awakened, but he was close to her level. From his perspective, they might be somewhat evenly matched and a good combination for a fight, but in reality, he was signing up for a painful death.

"I accept," Luna called out happily, always up for a bit of entertainment, and not realizing how lopsided this fight was about to be.

She already had two short swords in her hands to use the Dark Elven Combat Techniques, and this time, she was regenerating mana fast enough that she didn't really have to hold back on anything but [Cloud Dancing] to keep her reserves up.

"I am Nathaniel of the Crimson Blade, might I know who I am facing?" The challenger asked.

"I am Luna of the Darklight Host," Luna told him proudly, assuming that Guild names were the same as Sect names.

The man frowned at the unfamiliar name, then got an extra large smile when he realized it meant that this was an opponent he would be entirely unfamiliar with.

The two of them bowed to each other and began circling while an Immortal Cultivator dropped from the sky to land beside Cain.

"I see the young ones have found themselves a fight. What did he ask for?" The long bearded man asked.

"He wanted a test of arms. As I understand, that's not a death match?" Cain asked.

"It is not. The tradition is to forfeit before serious damage is done that will affect their future. The acolyte wandered a way out of our training territory looking for a challenge, and I was sent to find him before he insulted someone or was caught trespassing." The Immortal explained.

"I think he's in for a bad day though. Luna is a tiny savage, and it looks like he underestimated her due to her size." Cain pointed out, making the man smile.

"Oh, I hope so. These children on the cusp of the first Ascension are so obnoxious, it's good for them to get taken down a little bit."

So, he was on the verge of Mythic Awakening then. That made sense why he would be looking for a challenge. From what Cain knew, challenges were the best way to break through.

The fight went just as poorly for him as Cain had imagined. Luna was half his size, but many times his strength with a Dragon and a Greater Demon merged with her.

Her first strike broke his sword, then she kicked his legs out from under him and threw him into the river, where she could fight him without getting dirty. It didn't matter at all to Luna that she was soaked, or that she had to jump out of the water to breathe, she was much happier fighting here than in the mud, and she could hold her breath for nearly fifteen minutes, thanks to her high constitution.

The water was hindering the boy's energy attacks, blunting them before they made it to Luna, who moved through the water like a fish, always seeming to be behind him and hitting him with the flat of her blade until he used a movement technique and jumped out into the trees.

The giggling Demon chased him around for the next ten minutes until he ran out of energy and collapsed to his knees, with her blade at his throat.

"I surrender. Your evasion skills are incredible, Miss Luna, I am not your match." He admitted.

His clothes were shredded, and there wasn't an inch of his body that wasn't bruised from her attacks, but at least Luna looked satisfied, so Cain wouldn't have to restrain her from doing anything stupid.

"It was a pleasure to play with you. Come back anytime you want and we can go again." Luna agreed, helping him to his feet, and dusting some of the leaves off of him.

"Well, that was unexpected but enlightening. That Combat Style is an insidious one, so fast and agile. It was a pleasure seeing you here today." The Immortal informed Cain before leaping into the air and flying off on top of an enchanted sword, leaving his Sect's disciple behind.

"Your Elder said to head back into the training territory before you get yourself in real trouble Nathaniel. Luna, you're plenty wet now, and dirt free, so let's get going again, I have a spot picked out for tonight." Cain called, then turned to leave when Luna joined him.

The boy was exhausted, but Cain didn't sense anything else in the area, so he should be fine until he recovered.

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

Chapter 584 584

Cain was careful to stay away from the edges of the training grounds, now that he knew some of the students were willing to wander beyond them in search of accomplishments. He didn't want to keep running into them and causing difficulties for Luna, since the rules of this world said that he shouldn't interfere in a challenge, and they weren't looking to assassinate or cause trouble with the members of the local Sects.

Master Moon had marked a cave that was supposed to be a safe spot where they could stay the first night, just ahead of them a few kilometers inside the first major mountain.

As they got close, it was obvious that they weren't the only travelers who had chosen this spot tonight though. The smell of campfire filled the air, and he could hear happy voices echoing out from the cave itself.

The details they had were that this was a safe neutral ground between sect territories, and he didn't want to camp in the open their first night, so Cain decided to risk seeing if these people were the decent sort before making up his mind whether to leave or not.

"Hail to the Camp. Is there space for two more travelers?" Cain called from the path just as he came into sight.

"Come in, come in. You've got the right spot, this is the meeting ground." A man's voice from the camp called back.

That was certainly a good start and proved that their map was roughly correct, though it was hand drawn. Maps back home were terrible at best, and usually incredibly inaccurate, which made finding anything you didn't already know the location of nearly impossible without asking for assistance.

They even had the cartography skill available, and nobody took it, they just let whoever wanted to make a few coins draw up crude maps for travelers. That was one thing Cain would gladly have changed if he had more time.

The group in the camp were almost all wearing the same yellow robes, four older men, with three young women who seemed to be of lower rank washing robes in the stream and preparing food. The only one not in yellow was a gray-robed man in the back, quietly swearing at a scroll of paper.

Cain used his interface to inspect them all, finding that the men in yellow were all spirit awakened, and near his level, in the low 500s, but the female acolytes were all under level 100. Surprisingly, the man in the back was not a human at all. The system called him a black dragonkin at level 505 and Spirit Rank, meaning both his body and skills were at the Spirit level, the same as Cain.

The dragonkin was clearly disguised as a Human using magic, since Jin was of the same species, and looked almost entirely reptilian. Like beastkin, Cain was sure there was variation, but with no horns, tail, or visible scales, it was almost certain that he was in disguise.

"Oh, a man of true culture I see. Come in and introduce yourself and your young traveling companion friend." The leader of the yellow-robed men welcomed Cain with a friendly smile on his face.

"I am Cain, of the Darklight Host, and this is my daughter Luna," Cain replied, so they didn't get any suspicious ideas.

That made the dragonkin in the gray robes smile but seemed to make the other men a bit sad. Cain would let it slide for now though. If he didn't have to, he wouldn't explain to Luna about Lolicons until she was much older.

They had a stew pot set up over the fire, a tradition Cain was familiar with from the valley's farmers. When they were working overnight in the fields, or moving livestock, they would gather together for extra manpower and make stew from a communal pot, where everyone added an ingredient.

"What's in the pot so far?" Cain asked, taking a seat, while a curious Luna went to visit the Dragonkin who was having issues with his scroll.

He shouldn't be much trouble. They had a token from his sect, and they had all seemed like decent people so far, but it was best that Luna stay away from these others until Cain was sure about them so he didn't object.

"We've added some Thunder Chicken, herbs, and cheese." The man with the stirring spoon informed him, offering Cain a cutting board.

Cain set the board on a stump beside him and pulled out a collection of carrots, potatoes, and an onion.

"Root vegetables from my home valley. They go very well with a chicken and cheese stew." Cain informed them, dicing the vegetables and pouring them into the pot.

"You travel well prepared." The leader said, giving Cain a curious look. Most travelers didn't bother with such fancy things and lived mostly on dried rations while they focused on gaining power.

"It has always been my way. It helps balance the mortal energies and improves digestion. If you like a bit of spice to your meal, I have a bit with me." Cain offered, but the man waved him off.

"We live an ascetic life. I am afraid that the spice might not be so kind to us as those more used to it." The man politely refused.

Now that Cain had added a generous portion of vegetables, the stew looked much more filling. If they had intended for it to serve the entire group, they must have been planning to add a lot of water once it was cooked.

The idea was that everyone put in a portion large enough for themselves, in something that the stew was lacking, so with eight people already here, Cain had expected the pot to have more in it, even if magical beast meat was very filling.

Once they were finished with chores, the junior cultivators returned with more fresh water and a collection of leafy greens.

They added them to the stew when everything else was almost ready, and the air filled with a pleasant fragrant odor.

"Excellent choices." The Elders approved, nodding happily, and the youngsters retreated over to where Luna was sitting and discussing the kick technique described in the scroll that the dragonkin was studying.

[Quest: Vengeance] Help the Juniors pay their seniors back for inequality in living conditions.

[Quest Reward: Random Item, Bonus Experience]

That was an interesting requirement, so Cain started thinking of good ways to mess with the seniors that wouldn't be noticed. His first thought was the food, but messing with it when someone else was already stirring would be too obvious.

The first thing to do was to retract his healing aura from the four men, in case the juniors had something planned of their own. The quest was to assist them, not to do it all himself, so they should have some sort of plan.

"In our Sect Tradition, the Elders eat first. Please, do fill your bowl." The leader of the yellow robes asked Cain.

The stew was incredibly good, and the final batch of leafy greens added a depth to the flavor Cain hadn't been expecting. It also gave a minor status debuff, which numbed the taste buds. If Cain hadn't had his interface visible, he would have never noticed it.

"Masters, would you like some tea?" A blonde-haired acolyte asked.

The Elders of her sect seemed a bit suspicious, so kindness from the Juniors must not be normal, but Cain took the offered tea anyhow, in a clear crystal teacup, and drained it in one long swallow.

"Thank you, that was lovely." Cain commended the girl, who was doing a poor job of hiding her shock, but fortunately was facing Cain, so the others didn't see her hesitation.

She carefully poured him another cup and then went to the other Elders, who took the tea without hesitation now that they had seen Cain drink from it.

It took about four seconds for the effect of the Aura he had gained from the merged Forest Dragon to cure the lethal toxin they had introduced in the tea, but the paralysis was cured much more quickly.

These juniors were really savage, with paralysis plus a lethal toxin so that the Elders wouldn't be able to feed themselves a healing potion. But who was he to judge?

Perhaps it was a custom of their Sect. Plus, the quest said that they were mistreated, or at least out for vengeance over their living conditions.

Unlike him, the Elders only sipped the tea, and the effect wasn't as instant. Cain was concerned that the girl would be found out, so he summoned a pair of Spirit Rank Rattlesnakes into the trees behind the cultivators. They didn't see anyone as an enemy yet, so they didn't attack, but the noise of them moving around did alert the Elders.

"Dammit, snakes. They must have snuck up on us." One called and began to move, but his movements were sluggish, and the attack made the snakes target him as an enemy.

Magical Beasts had a wide variety of abilities, and area paralysis wasn't uncommon, so none of the Elders suspected the tea when they were slow to respond. The girls grabbed Luna and retreated into the cave, while the Gray-Robed Dragonkin drew his sword and stood guard at the entrance, protecting the young ones.

He himself was level 500 and Spirit Awakened, making him much stronger than the ladies present, including Luna. He shouldn't have too many issues against a few magical beasts, even if they were fast and stealthy.

Luna had realized right away what was going on though and was playing along since the snakes were clearly Cain's summons in her vision.

The first man that was bitten began to convulse almost immediately, and then the second, but the third managed to kill one of the snakes. The leader managed to eat some sort of medicinal pill, and his status cleared to unaffected, right before Cain lunged forward and pretended to obliterate the remaining snake with an energy attack, while actually dismissing it.

"Thank you, traveler Cain. Some of the creatures in this forest are incredibly stealthy. Might I ask a small favor of you? I have to return to the Sect to report this tragedy to the Sect Master. Could you watch over the disciples until I return?" The remaining Elder asked.

"I am certain that between myself and the Disciple of the Divine Light who is guarding the cave entrance we can manage to keep them safe until your return, even if it should take a week or more." Cain agreed.

"In that case, I will take the bodies with me, and you can send them home with the Divine Light Disciple. Our sects are close to each other, and he will know the way." The last surviving Elder agreed, then picked up the bodies and leaped into the air, summoning his flying sword underneath himself.

"That is such a cool technique, I need to practice that instead of summoning it and hopping on." Luna sighed, sticking her head around the gray-robed dragonkin to see what was going on.

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

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[Quest: Vengeance] Complete

[Generating Random Reward]

For once it didn't bring Cain to the spinning wheels, but casually created the reward in the background. This was how most people got their rewards, but Cain had rarely experienced it, and the feeling was a bit strange after getting used to being able to spin the wheel.

[Reward Generated] Bottle of Awakening Pills

Cain had absolutely no idea what that was supposed to be, so he was going to have to check the description before he could make any sort of use of this reward. But the best part was the experience, not the random items.

[Bonus Experience Granted]

[Core Integration 16 Percent Complete]

Now that was more like it. He just had to get this Dragon core working and he was out of this strange world. At the rate that they were going, it wouldn't actually take him that long at all. He just needed a bit of the Laughing God's luck to find fortunate situations so that he could earn enough quest reward experience to keep the rate of growth up.

Now that he had his experience calculated, Cain looked over the reward item and found that it really was an odd thing. It looked like the system was giving him things that existed in this world, instead of things that were useful to him, like they used to.

Perhaps there was a range on how far from an item it duplicated for a quest reward he could be? Or perhaps these were more useful to normal people of this world, just not him.

[Awakening Pill] Strengthens a partially formed Core to improve the user's strength and increase their chance of an Awakening of Spirit Rank or lower.

Totally useless to Cain and Luna, but to 90 percent of the people that he met, they were likely very valuable.

"They left their cooking implements behind, so you might as well all come to eat. I can guarantee that the food is safe, I have tested it myself." Cain called over to the group in the cave, which brought Luna running. Luna would turn down a lot of things in life if she was more interested in something else, but Cain had never known her to miss a meal.

The ladies looked more than a little nervous as Cain sipped his tea and smiled.

"It's actually quite good, the poison doesn't even have a flavor. But I'm not that easy to poison." Cain told them.

Luna stuck out her hand and put a gloating look on her face. "See, I told you he knew that you'd poisoned them all. He just didn't care because it's really hard to poison him. Come here and eat, then you can pay up."

That was enough to bring them all out from behind the man from the Divine Light Sect with bowls in hand.

"Friend Cain, I should tell you that I am not headed back toward my Sect at this time. I cannot lead these ladies back home." The dragonkin informed him.

"You didn't honestly think I would make them go back, did you? They can go wherever they want for all I care. I might not know everything about this world, but I do know that a young cultivator's loyalty to their Sect is only as deep as their robes until they have learned the Sect's secret techniques." Cain informed him, making the Dragonkin chuckle.

"You might be easier to get along with than most. If you keep on the path that you came from, they will think you're fulfilling the request, for at least the first few days. I doubt that they will care to come to check on the girls though, not with three of their Elders dead.

They don't bother to teach them anything useful, to begin with, they just keep them around as domestic help, hoping that they will be fed a few crumbs of knowledge." The dragonkin told Cain with a disinterested look back toward where their sect probably was.

"That's good news. Luna likes having people to talk to. How do you ladies feel about hunting magical creatures?" Cain asked.

"We actually don't even have weapons. But other than that, we have picked up enough of the combat style now that we should be able to do it as long as they're not awakened beasts." One of the girls told Cain proudly.

"Excellent. Luna can teach you more, and I will give you some swords or something later. Maybe clubs. What do you even train with in your Sect? The Elders didn't have time to really fight back."

"Mostly the staff. The Elders are stingy with metal weapons, they only give them to the better class of disciples, so we all train with wooden weapons, mostly staves because they're easy to make."

"Oh, can we make them some good staves? I haven't had a chance to show our new friend Draco my handwriting." Luna suggested.

That clearly wasn't his name, Cain was looking right at his status screen, but the man didn't object, so that must be how he introduced himself.

"Alright, we can do that. Everyone, go and get a stick suitable to be a staff. I don't have any good stuff in my storage." Cain instructed.

"I have a collection in the cave that I was using for decorative carvings. Hardwood branches about two meters long, and sized to be firmly held in a small hand, right? There should be at least four of them." Draco said, pointing back toward the entrance.

Once the girls were back in the cavern picking out weapons, Cain decided to ask Draco a few questions.

"Do the others know about your unique heritage? Or is this world too particular to be told?"

Draco shook his head. "No, even with the obvious nickname they don't have a clue. They wouldn't respond well either, so I would prefer you not mention it. Clearly, we can't talk about what you are, the humans freak out at the very mention."

Cain nodded. "I'm glad we're on the same page, fellow human cultivator."

That made them both laugh because the entire sentence was a lie. Neither were humans or cultivators, and they didn't even know each other's true forms and appearances, so even calling each other fellows was a stretch.

It didn't take them long to return with their chosen sticks and start peeling the bark to smooth them out with small knives. They kept them in a pouch at their waist, so they likely didn't have anything as fancy as a storage ring, which would be a small annoyance, but at least staves were also useful as walking sticks.

Luna had picked a shorter one, given her height, just a bit taller than she was, the same as the others had chosen, and more slender. She had studied a few combat styles that used staves while they were preparing in the Library, so she should do alright. If nothing

else, she could summon and Merge with a Monk-type fighter and let them guide her actions.

The summons couldn't actually move the body, but if you focused on them you could mimic what they wanted fairly easily.

Luna likely hadn't learned that trick yet, but the Oath Breaker would show her soon enough, they always had fun new ideas on how a fight should go, and they were experts with most forms of weapons, despite rarely using them when they were summoned.

Draco and Cain only watched intently and sipped on a fruit juice cocktail, provided by Cain, as the Acolytes and Luna made their staves and showed them to Cain, who took out a wood carving tool from his inventory and placed the first one on his lap. All he had to do was to engrave a few runes on it to improve strength so it wouldn't break and then decide on what additional abilities they might need.

"What Element does your fighting style use?" Cain asked the acolyte who had handed him her staff.

"We all use Lightning. It's the easiest to work with for beginners." She explained.

So lightning and strength runes, so they could channel more power through the weapons without worry. It was a total of fifteen runes and took all of ten seconds to write on the staff, then charge with energy.

"Luna, you should be able to do this one right? They're all in a vertical row since it's a staff, just the two words." Cain asked, and Luna nodded, carefully drawing the runes on the staff before she carved them, so she didn't make mistakes.

"You know, an artificer is a valued sort of person in this world. How did you end up wandering alone with a little girl?" Draco asked as Cain finished enhancing the weapons.

"She really is my daughter. We stepped through a portal on our homeworld and then realized that it was a one-way trip. There was no opening on this side, so we're a bit stuck.

Now, we're going to build up strength until I am satisfied with our progress, then find a way back home, or to another world where we could safely travel and enjoy a few more adventures." Cain explained, leaving out anything resembling actual details.

"That happens. I was thrown here by a spell, and the Divine Light Sect took me in after seeing my potential. You should look us up if you need some time to relax." Draco suggested.

"We met Master Moon and the Sect Master back in the city in the valley. I managed to cure the injury that Old Moon had taken as well, so expect him to be a bit more energetic the next time you see him." Cain laughed.

Draco wasn't heading to the sect, which meant that he was likely heading into the valley and would find out for himself soon enough that the old Innkeeper was in much better condition than he was a few days ago.

"I bet Little Moon isn't happy about that. He works her hard enough as is. Giving him more energy to keep up with her might actually make her break." Draco laughed.

The acolytes looked horrified, but Cain waved off their concerns. "He's actually training her, and she's doing quite well, but Master Moon is the sort of person who doesn't believe in idle time. Now that he's healthy again he stopped taking afternoon naps, so there isn't a moment of peace around the Inn where he isn't doing something."

"An old busybody. I know the sort." The lightest-haired of the acolytes agreed. Cain would almost call her hair color strawberry blonde, but it seemed to be more orange than anything and he wasn't sure if it was the light or a bad bleach job.

"Now, go try out your new weapons. They should be able to take a fair beating once you channel a bit of energy into them." Cain ordered, sending the girls scampering into the clearing to practice as soon as their bowls were empty.

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

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Once the staves were activated with a bit of energy, they stopped being a plain bit of wood and were surrounded by a field of crackling blue energy, lighting up the combat forms that the girls were practicing like a set of glow sticks.

That would make life so much easier for instructors. The bright lights made every mistake extra obvious, especially in the fading afternoon light. Done at night, it would make for an impressive show, Cain thought.

They practiced for a half hour as they discussed their future plans, then returned to Cain and Draco with looks of determination on their faces.

"As you have likely guessed, we have no intentions of returning to our Sect. But we would still like to travel with you. Since Master Draco is heading for the city, the two of

us would like to go with you. We will disguise ourselves when we arrive and try not to cause trouble for anyone." One of the cultivators asked, pointing to the girl on her right.

"And I would like to travel with you, Master Cain. Unlike the others, I would prefer a challenge to help myself get stronger so that I don't end up in a situation like that, or a boring life as a shopkeeper." The one with the very light orange hair asked.

"It's true that I'm going on an adventure, without a destination, but are you sure that is what you want? It is going to be dangerous, that is the point of this adventure." Cain reminded her.

"Strength only grows with adversity." The girl agreed, unshaken from her choice.

"Alright. I can disguise the two of you for a while, a week or two at most." Draco agreed, looking at the two who wanted to go with him.

"I can do better than that. I can give you a permanent disguise if you like. Just tell me what you would want to look like. Think hard, because your appearance can cause additional issues." Cain suggested.

Draco looked shocked at Cain's offer, and his thoughts said that he thought Cain was going to use a very valuable medicine on them to cause a permanent disguise, but really, he was just going to use [Modify] to change their appearance.

"Can you just like, make my hair darker and change my face to be a bit cuter?" The girl named June asked.

"Not an issue." Cain agreed, tweaking her appearance until Draco started laughing.

"No, I didn't laugh at your appearance. I just realized where Master Cain got his skill set. You really did have a fortunate encounter today young lady. That disguise is very permanent, in fact, it will age with you, so you can consider it to be yourself." The dragonkin told the confused woman.

"It must take some sort of monstrous talent to teach such a thing with just energy manipulation." June agreed, looking at her new face in the mirror with a shy smile.

Draco was nearly in tears now and trying to hide his amusement at the word Monstrous, but the second young Cultivator that was going with him, Summer, stepped up to get Cain to modify her appearance.

She looked over herself with displeasure then turned to Cain and whispered her instructions in his ear.

"Can you make me sexy? Like really sexy? I've always been better at earning money off my feet than on them if you follow me." She whispered, too low for the others to hear.

Cain smirked, then began to work, tweaking her appearance into a polished version of the stereotypical White Lotus that shouldn't exist without a lot of makeup and some camera filters. Long, dark hair, absolutely flawless skin and a slender, pert figure no woman was naturally born with.

"Fit for an Emperor if I do say so myself. Give me one more second and I can keep it that way." Cain muttered as he worked.

[Draconic Regeneration] granted.

[Mythic Awakening Triggered]

That was the last bit needed, though Cain realized that he went overboard with the quality of the healing factor. He had only picked Draconic Regeneration because it stopped the physical signs of aging and could heal almost any wound without a scar, leaving the skin blemish free for life.

A dragon had to take a truly horrific wound to be left crippled or scarred for life.

A vortex of energy formed over her head, as the world tried to fix the power imbalance that Cain had created with his modification, and everyone present could feel the strength of her presence skyrocket as the vortex was absorbed.

"All Done." Cain declared once the energy whirlpool faded to nothing, receiving a thump on the head from Draco for his troubles.

"Did you forget that we aren't the only ones that can feel that? I think every warrior within fifty kilometers will have felt that breakthrough, and I wouldn't be surprised if the Immortals twice that far away noticed as well." Draco informed him.

"People break through all the time, right? Why would they be surprised?" Cain asked, not getting why anyone would care.

"Yes, it happens at least once a week. Inside a Sect Compound. But never out in the middle of nowhere, without any sort of warning." Draco clarified.

That was something that Cain hadn't thought of. This world didn't really have wandering adventurers, they were all organized into Sects, so they went to safe spots when it was time to advance, they didn't just do it at random when they had a few minutes to spare like he had been doing.

"Well, nobody is coming yet, so I will pretend that nobody noticed. If you three leave in the morning, there shouldn't be any issues, and they can find work in the city while you go on about your business. Nobody will suspect them of being the missing disciples now, they're not even at the same power level."

"His logic is always like that. You get used to it." Luna whispered to Tena, the girl who wanted to go with them.

They couldn't pretend that nothing happened for very long though. Master Moon himself came to the cavern at full speed on his flying sword to see what the commotion was.

"I felt someone take a step toward the Immortal. A First Awakening I believe." The innkeeper greeted them.

"That would be Summer. She will be looking for work in the city if you know someone who might be hiring. June over there will be needing work as well. They have decided to follow your Sect's Disciple back to the city and settle down.

"Are those disguises? Not bad, but you need to add a few flaws, or they look unnaturally beautiful." Master Moon informed Cain, looking over Summer's appearance.

"Go ahead and try to dispel it. It is a permanent change, a secret technique from my homeworld, usable only by a very specific specialization." Cain explained.

Specialization was a good enough word for Class and didn't lead to more awkward questions, except perhaps if Master Moon wanted a facelift or something.

"I can take them back with us, that's not an issue. I don't suppose you ladies know much about serving drinks, do you? Having some friendly faces around might help with business at the Inn. Little Moon is too mean to the customers." Master Moon suggested, nodding happily at his idea.

"They know the whole Tea Ritual, if you want to get all fancy with the Inn, old man," Draco suggested.

"Hush you, I'm still your Sect Elder, until you catch up to my Cultivation." Master Moon told the dragonkin, who didn't seem to mind the barb.

"Let's not waste time. The inn will start getting busy soon, and I left Little Moon alone without warning. Hop up on the sword and I will take you back to the city." Master Moon offered.

Draco summoned his flying sword as well, and June stepped up behind him, but Summer hopped up into Master Moon's arms with a wink.

Cain could have sworn he heard June mutter the word 'shameless' but it was drowned out by Draco's warning.

"Don't let Little Moon see that. You know how she feels about you flirting with women more than a century your junior." Draco informed Master Moon in a very serious voice.

"I swear, if I hadn't seen them together, I would think that disciple of mine was my own mother reincarnated. Always picking at me for the little things." Master Moon sighed.

"Don't let him fool you with his innocent Elder act. Master Moon has over thirty children scattered around the continent." Draco warned the young woman, who looked startled at the news. Most of the men who made it to his power level dedicated their entire lives to mediation and avoiding distractions, not to spreading their lineage all over the world.

"It seems that I have a lot to learn about the world. What was her name, Little Moon? I will have to ask her about things when my shift is over."

That made the old man look a bit sad, but he recovered quickly. "Off we go. I will introduce you to everyone when we get back. Good to see you again Master Cain. If anyone asks, I didn't see you when I came to collect our Sect's Disciple, and I don't know what went on here."

With that the two men flew away with their passengers, leaving only Cain, Luna, and Tena behind.

"I thought it was only our sect, but the Elders are all a bit strange aren't they?" Tena whispered as she watched them leave.

Cain would pretend that she wasn't including him in that assessment.

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

Chapter 587 587 Back In The Library

After Cain and Luna left through the portal, chaos reigned in the Library. At first, the fear was that the Spirit Rank weapons and influx of awakened skills would cause a disruption, but after Cain had left the energy in the area had settled, and the portal had returned to normal.

"We have just been abandoned, haven't we?" Jin asked Kone, who only shrugged.

"You could go through that portal after them, but I don't think it would be a very good idea. If you don't want to study here, we could go back to the Farm and relax in the orchard?"

Jin considered that for a moment then turned to look at the Librarian. "I'm not going through a one-way portal to the gods only know where especially when it's full of

humans. Could we study here a bit longer? Getting everything ready for his return seems like the best call."

Moana nodded her agreement. "He wanders away now and then, but he always comes back when he is done. At the very least, he will likely send Luna back to us when he finds an appropriate portal."

The Librarian knew that this was the only portal on the planet that led to that particular Realm, but she wouldn't try to change their minds. They were probably right, Cain would come back at some point, at least a portion of him. He had to gather his whole family together at some point to complete the last quest that the Laughing God had set him before he left, and that meant he would need to at least open a portal to collect the rest of the Lamia he had left on the Central Continent.

"Plus, now that I know where here is, it's no problem to move back and forth from the Farm, or even Long Fang Valley. We can come to visit all the time, or the Librarian can come to check out all the fun things that we have made at the Farm.

I think as an elf you would probably appreciate the variety of Mythic Fruit Juices more than most species would, and they all love them." Moana continued.

"I do like good juice. Perhaps we could work together to get things organized here in this world. It would give the Ancients less reason to come and reorganize things after they meet up with Cain. That wouldn't end well for any of the other species, and might even trigger a new war between the Gods, so avoiding that outcome should be a priority." The Librarian agreed.

"But do we try to solve the Cult of Cain that Cyrene has created within the Darklight Host, or should we just keep spreading it? Trying to change their minds now might not be possible, and they almost control a whole continent. Even the Elves of Serrah Woods have started to accept the Outreach Workers into their cities." Kone asked.

"They're just missing information. Once we give them more details, they should start to accept the Creators Pantheon again. Then we can work on getting things up to a standard that the Ancients would find to be acceptable.

The Power levels around the planet are still growing slowly, but it looks like they have stabilized in most regions of the world. We just need to do something about the Northern Continent, and the West.

The Elemental Realm Portals are a big problem, but getting the giants back on track after they lost the Gnomes to guide them shouldn't be too hard. As long as it's in their interests, the Giants are fairly easy to get along with. At least they are if you are stronger than they are."

The Librarian's suggestions gave the remaining Avatars something to plan around. It might be too simplistic to reduce their issues to only a few problems, but the Southern Continent would fall in line fairly quickly now that the General who was pretending to be Morgeth had lost his influence, and the effects of the Djinn's wish would kill him within a few months anyhow.

If they could prevent someone like him from rising up again and get all the Guardians of the major cities to at least ally together they could get the Southern Continent on track to truly civilized living again without too much work.

"We need a proper plan. You know, coordinated efforts everywhere all at once, so that we don't end up messing with each other's ideas." Jessica suggested with her ears twitching happily at the chance to make real change without violence.

Everything in the world was too violent for the disciples of the Bunny God, so having actual input into the plans to make the world better was a golden opportunity for the High Priestess of the Bunnies to shine.

If she could just convince them that peaceful transition was the answer, then she should be able to get them to do the work to make the world a bit closer to actual civilization, not a peaceful version of "Might Makes Right".

"The first thing that we need is academies in the cities. The youngsters with Systems have Guilds, Trade Alliances, and Tradesmen to teach them, but what about the commoner without a trade or system? If they were more educated, they could learn better skills and contribute more to making their neighborhoods better places to live." Jessica suggested.

"More educated populations do tend to be more peaceful and more innovative, so they would soon start making improvements on their own, without waiting for a leader to guide them through every small step simply because they lacked the knowledge to make the changes they wanted." The Librarian agreed.

Kone tapped her chin for a moment, then her eyes lit up with excitement as she got an idea. "We already offer daycare at a lot of our outposts in the cities, so that families who have lost a parent in the wars have it easier. If we hired more teachers and expanded them, we could make those into academies. The Guild could fund and staff them, that shouldn't be an issue."

Moana chuckled. "What would we even teach them though? Most of our Guild members only know fighting and crafting, in case you forgot."

The Leviathan had a point. They didn't actually have a supply of well-educated teachers to staff the academies even if they had no issue building a lot of them.

"You forget, we still have one very valuable asset left to us. The Watchers and the Echoes. They can make puppets with a wide collection of skills and knowledge. If one of them came here, they could copy the knowledge of one of the teachers here and drop a copy or three at every academy we build." Laura suggested, looking up from the book on candy making that she had found.

"Nice save. Alright, so we need to ask them really nicely, and we can get them to create teachers. What about the smaller villages? We can't make that many teachers, and we can't just ignore them either, or the problem won't get any better." Jessica pondered.

"That could be a long-term solution. But if we train more teachers, we can send them out over the next few years until we have enough to put one in each village." The Librarian suggested.

"Bunnies. Teach the Bunnies and send them out to every village. Most of them don't have a system, but if we can get one of the Watchers on board, we can make them all healers as well. Every town always needs a full-time healer, and everyone loves Bunnies, so they can teach school as well." Jin declared and Jessica sighed.

She might have just volunteered her people for something even more troublesome, but they did love to be useful, so she would likely get a huge number of volunteers if she suggested lessons to have them all be teachers.

"And then we just need the Library here to make a curriculum. What do mortals need to know to become more civilized, like me?" Laura asked, making Evangeline laugh.

"If you're the standard of civilized, we might have a very strange future ahead of us. The Seraphim Inquisitors do our teaching, so they have a good grasp on what is needed for Seraphim children to know so that they don't stray." Evangeline explained.

That was enough to get them started on larger-scale plans, pulling in everyone else who had access to the communal thought process.

The Watchers were all on board with the idea, since they would get a whole generation of test subjects out of it, so they could test the changes that education brought to the commoners. Their idea was that the academies in the cities and the Bunnies in the villages should teach different things, for different lives, with a common base, like reading and other essentials.

The only conflict they ran into was what was considered essential. The Watchers thought that some simple things like Architectural theory and Protective Rune creation should be on the list, but that seemed excessive to others. Evangeline thought that they needed the strict morality of the Seraphim, but Kone was pretty sure that the world wasn't ready for casual public nudity.

Cyrene's idea that they should be taught history so that they would know how things got so messy to begin with, was the only idea that didn't meet with resistance. Those among the group who started as transfers all understood very well that most of the world had no idea what they were doing, or even what went on more than a day away from their home. In the Beginner's Valley, they barely knew the outside world existed, and what they knew of the past was all distorted rumors.

Cyrene's intentions might be to glorify Cain, but the idea that if people knew what didn't work, they could work on things that might work was a sound one in the minds of the rest. Even if it did spread the Lamia's Cult all over the world.

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

Chapter 588 588 Build A Guild Workshop

"Now that they're gone, we can get the good part started. Becoming my disciple comes with benefits. I will give you a disguise of course but name one power that you always wished you had. It doesn't matter how ridiculous it is, I know a lot of things." Cain offered.

"How insane are you talking? Could you teach me the Holy Sword or the Shadow Step?" Tena asked.

The shadow step she was thinking of was a rogue technique, far inferior to the one used by the Oath Breaker, and Holy Sword was a basic Crusader ability.

"Either one. But think about what sort of fighter you want to be. You only get to use this option once in a lifetime." Cain explained.

"Yeah, and catching him again isn't easy if you want to ask questions." A new voice called out in the distance.

That voice was Familiar, but Cain wasn't sure where he had heard it before.

Three women came into sight, led by a blonde in her early twenties.

[Tall, blonde, smells like Wolf. Penny.] Cain realized who had found them.

"You left us at the Inn, waiting for you." Penny pointed out.

"I may have forgotten you were waiting for me?" Cain asked, wondering if it counted as an apology.

"Fortunately, we saw Master Moon coming from here, just after leaving the city trying to track you, so it must have been where you were. And I see you've gained another disciple." Penny reprimanded him.

"Well, now that we are all together, let's do this as a group. Everyone needs to think of a signature skill they want. One which they could build a lifetime of combat techniques around. Once you have that, I will begin everyone's education as disciples."

Cain's decree caught them all off guard and he heard faint laughter in his mind that wasn't from anything he currently had Merged with him. He needed to pay better attention to the little details now that he didn't have so many people around to cover for him.

Penny was the first to answer. "Can you teach me a better transformation? Lycans are tough, but a huge wolf would be more deadly."

Cain considered that for a while. He did owe them an apology for leaving them flat-broke in a strange city after killing their former Master and taking his stuff.

[Primal Form] was a Druid-only Mythic Skill, which should do exactly what she wanted. Four more Mythic cultivators shouldn't be an issue. Chances are nobody but them would even notice the difference.

[Skill Granted]

"There, you should have an influx of knowledge, right? Activate that spell." Cain instructed.

Penny was about to protest that she wasn't a magical cultivator, but then her eyes opened wide and her body made a grotesque transformation as she shifted into a four-meter-tall Wolf with massive canines extending past her lips and bright white fur.

"Oh, pretty. And she looks extra cuddly. Good job." Luna congratulated Cain, giving Penny a predatory look.

"Why is everyone so small?" Penny's voice came as a garbled snarl that made her look at her body, then freeze as she saw something.

[Welcome to the Wandering Cultivator System]

[Class: Druid] Assigned

[Adapting Level]

[Awakened: Mythic] Active

[Please Choose Skills]

Cain saw the moment that she gained a class and smirked at the others. This world was never going to know what happened.

"While she recovers, who is next?" Cain asked.

Everyone could feel her power level grow as she transformed, and not just because she changed forms, so they all wanted to pick something equally impressive.

Tena spoke up next. "There was a man who came by our Sect once who fought empty-handed or with a staff and could channel his energy into Dragons that followed his movements.

I don't know what it is called, but can you teach that?"

That one took Cain a lot of thought. Duke Chen of Skyview could do a similar attack but it was low-level. If he enhanced it to cast at his power level it would be Spirit Rank, which might be overkill at her level.

Cain searched his summons until he found a monk among the beastkin who had a similar ability at Mythic Rank.

"Go practice that until you can do it correctly," Cain informed her after granting the Skill.

Like Penny, once she tried activating it, she gained an interface, but she was given the class Dragon Monk.

Jen, the blonde human had more simple desires. "Can you expand on the [Holy Sword] we have been learning from the book? I love that fighting style."

With that, their group gained a Paladin, though how the world would react to a woman in heavy armour was anyone's guess. Cain hadn't seen anyone here in the armour of the sort that a Paladin would wear.

Last up was Sabbat, the brunette human.

"Fine, put me on the spot with your fast choices. I want something mysterious but flashy. Like a way to do unexpected attacks that didn't need me to have a lot of strength."

That was incredibly vague.

[Ask Record Keeper, he lives for nonsense like that.] Oath Breaker suggested.

[Thank you, I have just the right idea now.] Cain agreed.

[Warped Reality] created an area of psychedelic mutated plants or tunnels, and was the basis of the Change Mage, a Demonic Cleric class whose very name was misleading.

They were versatile, and their spells were all weird and unexpected. They could use basic healing, but also Balefire, and a unique version of [Polymorph] that made random mutants of its target for a few minutes.

Sometimes that was great, sometimes you got an angry four-armed ogre coming for you.

"Try that and see what happens," Cain suggested after granting her the skill.

The Change Mage class activated as Cain had hoped, and was Mythic Awakened, though she was only level 95. That would force the core she had formed in this world to adapt quickly and should boost her level since it seemed tied to their overall power.

At least, that was Cain's theory.

One after another they recovered from the shock of seeing the System appear, and Cain assumed that like him, they had started in the character creation screen. He had no idea that there had been changes made, or that they had gotten a very different intro prompt than he had.

"Did everyone follow the instructions? Good. Then you should have several fun new skills to work with, that will be the basis for your future endeavours, just like I promised."

Cain chuckled at their stupefied looks, then looked at his interface and realized that he was no longer Guild Master of the Darklight Host.

The title was still there, but it was shown with [Legacy] next to it and seemed to be inactive.

If he couldn't bring them into the Host, they could always make something else.

[Please Select Sect Name]

So that was why. The system was Adapting to the new world.

"Since there are six of us now, we should become a new Sect. Maybe it will keep Master Cain from forgetting us when he leaves town next time. We only spent two days cultivating a new technique and we had to chase you down." Penny suggested.

"I can form one, but I'm not picking the name. I'm bad at names." Cain agreed, making Luna laugh.

"Before you forget, I still need a disguise. Can you make me cute like Luna?" Tena asked.

"Oh, that's easy. Done. No takebacks." Cain agreed.

Not only was she cute like Luna, but they could also be twin sisters, both appearing to be alabaster-skinned, dark-haired, blue-eyed young beauties, on the cusp of puberty.

"Yes, that is perfect." Luna cheered and showed Tena herself in a mirror.

"Why are the most powerful pair of us both turned into small children? Do I just not get the joke?" Jen asked.

"Don't try to understand him. Trust me. But look at it this way, Tena gets to grow up again, and everyone will think she's a prodigy thanks to her extreme power level at such a young age." Luna consoled the transformed cultivator, who was seriously considering attempting to beat Cain senselessly.

"We will discuss this issue later. But for now, nobody would believe I was the same person, and that's the point of a disguise." Tena reluctantly agreed.

"What do we call such a strange group though? None of us are normal anymore, and since it's his fault, I feel like the name should reference Cain, but we don't want other people to know about something this extreme."

Penny growled her suggestion, then transformed back to her normal form, then to Lycan and back to human, to make sure she was still herself.

"I feel like we should get a cute name. I mean, we're all women, and female sects usually have pleasant names. Something about flowers or something." Sabbath suggested.

"With two fake children and a Lycan, something about longevity might be good as well," Tena added.

That brought them all to a stalemate as they tried to come up with a proper name for a group like theirs. Cain thought they made a pretty good Adventurers group, but he was staying out of the naming process this time.

[They should call it the Divine Rosebud. Because you're an asshole who drops random miracles on people.] Oath Breaker suggested.

[If you hadn't explained, that might have been the best idea we have come up with yet.] Cain mentally muttered at the demon.

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

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Cain sat down and started making something for everyone to eat while they waited and thought of better ideas for their band of wandering misfits to be called.

"Did you consult the Oath Breaker? It always has good ideas." Luna asked after an hour of trying to come up with something really good.

"Oath Breaker says the Divine Rosebud is the name he would go with. But the reason is enough to make me not want to use it." Cain explained.

"Regardless of the reason, it's not a bad name. It flows rather well." Penny shrugged.

"I was thinking of the Mystic Blossom, but that's not perfect either. Too boring." Tena sighed.

"Can we be the Cleansing Sword? I think it would fit really well." Jen, the new Crusader suggested.

"It fits you really well. Two of us don't use swords at all though." Tena pointed out.

"This is harder than expected. Maybe we should just go with the first idea." Luna tried, not knowing enough slang to get the joke about Rosebuds until Oath Breaker explained in her mind.

That didn't stop her though. Luna was always a realist, she knew how Cain's activities might come across as less than pleasant and honorable, so the name still fit them.

They went back and forth the entire time that dinner was cooked, and in the end, they still couldn't come up with anything that just shouted "Amazing" at them.

"We should just call it the Natural Law Sect." Sabbath joked.

"No, that one is pretty good. It's exactly what we stand for. The purity and sanctity of the Natural Laws of the world and the sacred cultivation paths." Cain agreed, barely managing to keep a straight face through such heavy sarcasm.

"What about the Forbidden Treasure Sect? It's got a nice double meaning to it, referring to both the members and the System. Plus it has a female Cultivation Sect sort of feeling to it without being too obvious. Words like Lotus, Jade, and Blossom seem to just draw the creeps out of the woodwork." Penny suggested.

"Yeah, we were looking for the Divine Blossom Sect before we were captured, and look what got us." Jen sighed.

"That works in a third way as well. As Tena here already knows, I can make simple Runic Weapons for everyone to use. Another Forbidden Treasure, at least in that they are hard to come by, and harder to gain the knowledge to make." Cain offered.

"A new sect and fancy weapons? Now we're talking." Sabbat cheered.

Luna grabbed Tena in a hug. "Did you hear that? We're Forbidden Treasures, and not just because we're kind of stabby."

"Well, that's one vote for the name. How does everyone else feel about it?" Cain asked.

There were no objections, so Cain updated the name and waited for a System update.

[Sect Created: Nearby System Users invited.]

[Congratulations Sect Master Cain]

[Please Select uniform colors.]

[Choice made by System]

Cain stared at the message for a moment, unsure what he had done to warrant the decision being made for him. Did they take too long to choose a name and time out?

The system shouldn't have let them pick a duplicate name, so being stuck with someone else's colors and identity seemed unlikely. At least, they should not be a duplicate of someone in this world.

The girls' robes had all changed to beautiful peach and gold hanfu dresses, with loose pants underneath, as Luna had discretely already checked.

"Are we going to a beauty pageant? What happened to our robes, and dang Sect Master, who knew you were hiding all that?" Penny asked.

Cain's robes had become a pair of loose black pants, cut above the ankle and tucked into soft leather boots, with a Peach sash and a translucent black coat Cain could only call a dressing robe for a gigolo, which was currently hanging open, showing off his magically chiseled physique covered in tattoos.

"I'm not sure what impression the System has of me, but it picked these automatically as our Sect colors," Cain explained.

"Well, I like it. This outfit is adorable." Luna chimed in.

"It really is. And the splits in the side, hidden within the layers, let you move and fight without hindrance, as long as your sleeves are out of the way." Jen agreed.

"Before I forget, put these on. They're armor for Paladins." Cain informed her.

Cain handed her a plate chest plate, gauntlets, and pants, which vanished onto Jen's body after a few seconds.

The chest plate became an overbust corset under her dress, and the gauntlets became delicate silk gloves with golden scales on top. Any female Paladin in the other world would kill for armor that is fashionable instead of bulky silver plate suits, but that's what she got by default here.

"The corset is flexible, I can still move properly. It's this what they call artifact armor?" Jen asked.

"Something like that. I have more for the others as well, and Luna is already wearing armor."

Cain handed out the rest of the armor, but the only thing that visibly changed was the addition of gloves and the trim on Sabbath's robes. This world had a very structured aesthetic, Cain realized, and the equipped items were being redesigned to blend in with the people of this world as they were equipped for the first time.

"Alright, Tena already has a staff to fight with, so she is good there, and Luna has a collection of weapons, but I should give each of you something. I'm not sure if the stuff from my homeworld will work properly, and weapons are important, so I will make you all something that fits your personality." Cain declared, then began sorting through his bags for random items, so he didn't have to start from scratch.

"You know what, let's try it first. Now that you have a System, you should be able to use the weapons as well as you did the armor and get the benefits from them. For Penny, our Druid, a Mace that adds to your healing spells. For Jen, a battle ax and shield, and for Sabbath, a staff that adds Arcane damage."

None of the items were the very best, but they were all Mythic items, which made Cain feel a bit bad about the crappy staff that he gave to Tena.

"Here, a secondary weapon. Clawed Gauntlets. You should be able to use your staff with them on, and Monks should be focusing on evasion, so their armor doesn't matter as much." Cain explained.

Their team was looking much better geared now, and with them all in uniforms, they looked like a real and proper sect already, despite not having a place to call home.

With the bad reputation that Wandering Cultivators seemed to have in this world, he was pretty sure that a wandering Sect wasn't really a thing, but after they explored for a while, they could find a nice empty spot and tell people that was where they were from.

It might even impress anyone who came looking for them if they couldn't find the Sect compound at all.

"Now that we have wasted most of a day again, I want everyone to go out to practice your skills together and bring me back dinner," Cain suggested after he sensed a magical beast moving in the woods.

Between them, they should be able to take it down. Or at the very least, Luna would be able to if she summoned something to help them. It would be like a group bonding activity for the girls.

The five of them jogged off into the woods, in the exact wrong direction, since they didn't hear the beast, so Cain followed them, using Cloud Dancing with a stick in his hand as a weapon to activate the skill so he could move through the trees silently and not need to summon a flying mount.

The woods were living up to their reputation today though, and they didn't have to look for long before they found something worth hunting. A level 150 Boar. It wasn't awakened, so it shouldn't be much of a fight, but the thing was huge, nearly as tall as Penny's new wolf form and even before it was cooked, Cain was sure it would taste delicious.

"Alright, I will summon a group of Forest Golems, and they will attack first to take the damage of an angry boar. Penny, you try not to nom the good parts in advance, and the rest of us will all attack. Sound good?" Luna asked.

Penny looked a bit offended that Luna suggested she would eat the pig raw, but in Wolf form, the idea didn't seem to be a terrible one. The Treant-shaped Golems flickered through the woods, using their vines to advance in a flash of brown and green, surrounding the Boar, who was sniffing at the base of a tree for something.

The Boar attacked, and the golems tried to bind it, holding it in place until Penny could bite at the boar's throat, causing a cascade of blood to flow out, right before a spell from Sabbath scorched its head and killed the beast instantly.

"That was amazing, it is way above our power level, but with these new skills, we can take it down anyhow. If we keep training until we're as strong as the average mercenary, we might be almost unstoppable." Sabbath cheered, admiring her handiwork as Luna ordered the Golems to butcher the boar.

"Good work. I don't think we have time to smoke or cure it today, but you should have an inventory now, like a storage ring that nobody can take from you. Split up your prize

and place it in your inventory, nothing goes bad in there, so you can keep fresh food forever, but your space is limited, so don't go overboard." Cain explained.

"This System just keeps getting better and better. Forget getting a real job, I'm a magical cultivator with all the benefits." Jen giggled, brandishing the sword and shield she didn't even have a chance to use in this fight.

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

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"As you get stronger, the food gets better too. A lot of people don't know, because they only eat for nutrition, but Mythic Beasts are secretly really tasty." Luna told the others once the boar was split up between them.

"Really? Aren't they still the same creature?" Penny asked, being the second most interested in good food, behind Luna.

"I've got some Mythic Leopard I brought from home. Give me a few minutes and we can have a snack." The transformed Lamia agreed.

Some of the others looked to Cain to see if he was in a hurry, but he was well acquainted with Luna's eating schedule, so he had been expecting this, especially after they had butchered and shared the boar.

"It only takes a few minutes to fry up the strips to medium rare. Trust me, the giant purple Leopards might be a nasty piece of work, with that speed and the lightning affinity, but once you manage to kill them, it is all worth it." He explained.

Luna piled up a collection of dry sticks to make a fire and waited until they were burning to her satisfaction, then pulled out a stand and a frying pan, planning on having the meat ready in under ten minutes as promised.

"Humans need well-rounded meals. Add this to the mix." Tena informed her, passing over some cabbage and local vegetables that Luna didn't know.

"What do I do with that? Are you sure it is edible? Is it as good as meat?" Luna asked, making the other girls laugh.

"See, this is what happens without female supervision. Yes, it is edible and important to your growth. You can't just eat meat all the time, no matter how good meat is." Tena explained.

"So, you're saying it's not as good as meat? Well, I suppose we can eat it too." Luna sighed.

Tena took over the cooking, and Cain took a seat on a fallen log, watching the two small girls work, looking like twins showing off for their Sect family. Penny seemed to have the same idea, and Cain noticed that she had taken out a sketchpad and was drawing the scene of them making dinner and arguing about the merits of adding vegetables to your diet.

Everything that they had could be fried, but the vegetables took longer to soften than the meat took to cook, which in Luna's mind proved their inferiority as a food product.

With Mythic Beast meat, you didn't actually need anything else, it nourished the entire body, including your energy needs, but it was still good to have more than unseasoned meat as a snack.

As far as Cain could tell, he was the only one that knew that little fact though, as the argument was firmly on the side of having proper meals, and not just snacking on roast meat all the time.

"Dinner is served. Or an afternoon snack? What meal are we even on at this point?" Tena asked.

"I think it's afternoon? I kind of lost track of time while we were hunting." Luna shrugged.

The Mythic Leopard meat was a big hit with everyone, starting an intense discussion about the best ways to obtain more of the unique meat since there were no similar creatures in the vicinity. There were many other forms of Mythic Beasts though, so there was hope that they would be able to find something just as good in the near future.

"Once we are done, we will head deeper into the mountains until it gets dark. I know it means sleeping in the open, but we should get further away from the disturbance before someone comes looking and tries to find out what happened to the Elders that Tena and her group were traveling with. That would just be awkward, and they wouldn't be happy with the answers." Cain informed his new Sect.

"Yes, the fewer people that we meet in the next few days the better. Maybe we should get some more nondescript travel clothes as well though? The Sect Uniforms are beautiful, but wearing our plain travel outfits would help us blend in." Sabbath agreed.

"Hopefully you can. If not, I have outfits with me that should be the same for everyone who puts them on. The System has a habit of changing the appearance of everything that you try to wear to suit its ideas of what you should look like. The fact you all came out looking so similar was actually a surprise to me. I had expected a very eclectic group with such different classes." Cain explained.

"What are you thinking?" Luna asked and Cain took out the Darklight Host tabards, which should make for a thigh-length sleeveless dress on the ladies, which would be relatively normal looking in this world if they had a long-sleeved shirt and pants underneath. Nobody really went sleeveless here, they liked long flowing robes with wide sleeves all day every day.

"If only we had Lickity with us, she could make an assortment of normal clothing for us." Luna sighed.

That reminded Cain, he still had an entire chest full of women's clothing in his inventory. Now that they had a System, the fit didn't matter, it would adapt, so he could dress them up however he liked.

[You know, that sounds more than a little suspicious, right?] Oath Breaker asked.

[Possibly. But I don't think that they would object. There are plenty of normal things in the box.] Cain shrugged off the Demon's concern.

Luckily, their traveling robes in boring shades of brown and green didn't change at all when they equipped them. Even the sets that Luna bought from the shops in town came out with their original colors. It was just the one set of robes that the System created for them when they joined the Sect that was so flamboyant.

It was a shame though, the peach colors and fancy design were adorable. Much better than these tunic and pants travel robes.

Cain changed back into his customary Dark Elven suit, in black with a Peach-colored shirt, unbuttoned to the middle of his chest, which made Penny give him a thumbs up.

"I don't think I've ever seen an outfit like that before, but it looks good. It makes you look very civilized." The Lycan commended him.

"I will have you know, I am a proper Noble back on my homeworld and not just a cult leader. Looking dapper is in my nature." Cain replied with a wink.

"I can see why it was so easy to get people to follow you. A lot of powerful people are aloof or really rude to those who are weaker than themselves, only ever thinking about a challenge or improving themselves, but you're very different." Jen told him, polishing her new sword before they headed out.

"We just need a better travel method eventually. You can walk the length of the mountains in a season, but much further and it will be an issue." Penny sighed, looking out into the woods.

That didn't sound right to Cain, he had a map, and he had guessed at the scale by looking from the city to the nearest peaks which were marked on the map.

"A whole season to cross the mountains?" Cain asked.

"Oh, I forgot that you're not from here. If we're headed across the mountain range to the coast from here it is three thousand kilometers." Penny informed him, and Cain took out his map, adjusting his estimation of the distances.

It seemed that this world was at least five times as large as the one he came from because that would make the valley four thousand kilometers long, and the Divine Light Sect, which he had thought was close, over a thousand kilometers from the city, up in the mountains.

"We will hunt here in unclaimed territory for a few days, and I will make everyone some flying swords at night, so you can keep up when we want to head to a new area. They will take some energy to keep active, but that shouldn't be too big of an issue for any of you." Cain decided.

That brightened everyone's mood, and Luna decided not to mention that she could just summon swords for everyone. Even now that they knew about the System, that might take some explanation, and Luna was hoping that they could find another beast to hunt today before the sun went down.

She had stockpiled as much as possible for the trip, but their new companions only just now got an inventory and didn't have storage rings, so they couldn't have much with them, and Luna didn't want to run out of food.

Cain shook his head as he heard her thoughts. Even if everyone ate out of her inventory and didn't replenish anything, they would have a season's worth of meat. Luna was just a bit too focused on her food supply, which Cain couldn't really explain since he knew she had been fed regularly all her life.

[Carnage is the same way. He is a War-type Demon, though a Wrath Demon, not an obsession Demon. His instincts tell him to stockpile enough for the entire army to eat for a year, or he doesn't have enough food.] Oath Breaker explained.

That made sense. A Commander was in charge of keeping their troops fed, so wanting to have a huge amount of food on hand was only logical, if your nature was to want to start an army.

[Good thing I've got you with me. Raising children isn't easy.]

Oath Breaker Laughed as Cain followed the group into the mountains, keeping his senses open for anything that might be a threat.

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

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When it started to get dark, Cain picked out a spot near a cliff face and decided to set up camp. Here, their fire would only be visible from one direction, two if you counted straight up, and they had a solid cliff at their backs, that they wouldn't likely be attacked from.

"Do you guys have any sort of camping gear? Cain asked, and the new Disciples mostly shook their heads. Only Tena had gear, the rest had been left with nothing.

Going through the dead cultivator's gear, Cain didn't find much either, only some blankets, no tents or hammocks.

"What did you do when traveling before? I know he held onto everything you had, but I don't see camping gear among his stuff." Cain explained.

"Blankets on the ground. That's pretty standard for camping when it's not raining. But mostly we meditate instead of sleep, so sitting in a soft spot on the ground is fine." Penny shrugged.

"In that case, here they are. You can keep those in your inventory since I don't see any spare storage rings. Personally, I prefer a hammock to sleep in, if I'm not going for a proper bed. I know, I'm spoiled, but using the system, there is much less meditation required in the daily schedule, since it's no longer the only method of building strength." Cain explained.

In fact, he didn't know if they could still build strength that way at all.

"I will keep it in mind. There should be a large oilcloth tarp in there somewhere as well, it will shelter the fire from being spotted by those flying overhead, so we can string that up before we settle in for the night." Penny added, and Cain dug through the bag again.

The one that they had was pretty trashed, with a lot of holes in it, but Cain had brought a number of tarps of his own, so he pulled one of them out instead along with a length of rope to tie it overhead. He also brought out a hammock for himself and strung it between two trees near the fire, where it was immediately appropriated by Luna.

"I know you're planning to make swords all night long, so you can wake me up to get your spot back when you're done." She insisted, spreading a blanket over herself with a sigh.

"You know, I think I need to get one of those. With the experience rate from the monster kills, we will be able to progress fairly rapidly without spending weeks and months in cloistered cultivation. I think I understand now why you get so energetic about seeing

new places, you don't need to spend months alone and focused to reach a new milestone, you can just wander around doing what you please and this experience bar will fill up." Sabbath told Cain as she settled in next to the small fire that was taking the edge off the cool mountain night.

The scent of humans in the mountains, or perhaps their dinner, drew a number of Magical creatures to their camp, despite the light being hidden safely from sight. The sense of power coming from the group dissuaded any of them from approaching during the evening, but Cain noticed that some got close enough that he could get to them in only a few seconds if he wanted to hunt.

That would make their travels much easier. They just needed to do what they were doing and not try to hide, and food would come to them.

The swords were simple to enchant, but Cain found himself short on material since he didn't have a forge to rework the random swords that were in his inventory. What he did have nearby in abundance was trees, so he took one down and used an ax to slice it into planks that he carved into crude swords and spent the evening polishing to respectability.

He didn't have any sort of varnish or paint, but once he engraved the Runes onto them they should be remade into a new design anyhow, so the fact that they were raw wood wouldn't matter, only their design.

Cain went for a blade the width of his foot, and two meters long, with a two-handed hilt. As a sword, it was ridiculously impractical, but as a perch to stand upon while flying, it was much more comfortable than many of the ones he had seen the guards in the city using.

The enchantments were simple, just flying, speed, durability, and finally flaming. Because what is cooler than a flaming flying sword? Getting the four of them to work together just right took a bit of planning, but Cain had all of the swords finished by the time everyone else woke up, looking like translucent red crystals now that he had activated them for the first time.

With four Runic Enchantments working together, they were all Legendary items, and would certainly be conspicuous around other humans, but there wasn't anything that he could do about that for now. One thing that Cain never learned to do before he left was to make lower-level items that he could give to people as gifts or use to hide his capabilities.

He did have a copy of the book for Runic Weapon creation though, so he might still be able to learn the trick when he had some time to kill.

"Are those flying swords? Did you really manage to make so many in one single night?" Jen asked when she woke up, seeing all the new blades stuck tip down in the ground around Cain.

"They are. It would have been faster if I didn't have to carve blades to enchant, but hopefully, these will work for everyone. They are enchanted for flying and speed, so they should be good at it in theory, I just don't know if you will actually be able to make them work, since I've never done them this particular way before." Cain explained.

Jen walked up to admire them, then pulled one from the ground with a much more forceful than necessary tug.

"It's really light for its size. What sort of Crystal is this?" Jen asked. She wasn't a big person, to begin with, and the sword's blade alone was a bit taller than she was, but it hadn't taken much effort at all to lift the blade.

"It's not Crystal. The Runes change the appearance of the material when you activate them for the first time, I carved them from one of those lightweight trees growing to the side of the camp." Cain explained.

They had been almost as light as Balsa wood, so Cain assumed that they were equally fast-growing, and wouldn't be missed even if he had taken a dozen down and not just one.

Jen held the sword out and equipped her shield with a smile. "I don't know about flying, but this thing would terrify anyone in combat."

"Focus on it and add energy. It should have the ability to burst into flames as well as fly." Cain explained.

The paladin giggling and waving around a greatsword one-handed woke up everyone else, who had no idea what had triggered this strange sight.

"Come grab some flying swords. As you can see, they also have the ability to be an actual swords, but I'm more interested in if everyone will be able to fly on them, so we can use them as transport. Since we will all have matched ones, we should be roughly equal in speed. At least that is my hope." Cain explained.

The first to brave the new blades was Luna, grabbing one from the ground, waving the comically large object over her head, and then ordering it to float so she could hop on. The blade seemed to pulse with red light when Luna was giving it verbal orders, making it look like it understood, though the effect was actually caused by inserting mana into the blade to keep it flying.

It took Luna a moment to get the hang of the blade so that she could move around, but the process was intuitive, just add mana and think about where you wanted to go.

"Pack up camp and get some practice in before breakfast. I will go grab us something to eat while you learn to fly." Cain ordered, leaving the group behind to head a few dozen meters into the forest to capture a small Mythic Beast. It was some sort of deer that Cain didn't recognize, but it should do them well enough for breakfast.

The pure glee on their faces when he got back to camp was well worth the effort of carving wooden blades all night. Even the imperfections in his work were positive to the Disciples since the rough edges made it easier to stay on the blades without using energy to link themselves to the blade, a technique that Luna was having trouble mastering, since she was flying on a demonic sword last time, and it did all the work for her.

The commotion hadn't gone unnoticed though, and they had visitors before they were ready to leave camp after cooking the small deer.

"Greetings Fellow Daoist. I see you have brought a fine group of disciples with you on your journey today, perhaps you would like for me to relieve you of the burden of traveling with such a large and underpowered group?" The old man asked, his black robes fluttering in the breeze.

"Are they all like this? I swear, this is the third time in a week that someone has come by looking to take my Disciples away." Cain asked with a sigh, looking to the girls for answers.

"Yeah, pretty much. They don't really get out much, so their social skills can be lacking." Tena agreed.

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

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Cain could sense that the man had at least a half dozen companions further back into the trees, so he signaled the others to get ready for a fight.

"Fellow Daoists, I am afraid that their studies have not progressed far enough for them to start all over learning new techniques.

The man didn't seem nearly as interested in the actual cultivators as the flying swords though, and Cain started to wonder if he had simply moved from the world with no information network, to the nation of broke old guys. The first sign of anything valuable and the people of this world were all over it.

Or maybe they were part dragons and only the innate need to hoard things remained?

"You brought them out into the mountains of trials before their basic training was finished? Surely there must be some compelling reason for such a rash move?" The man asked, suddenly confused.

"It wasn't really a choice. I was traveling with my daughter and was challenged by a fool in front of an Immortal Sect Master. He demanded that the winner took all of the loser's possessions right down to his disciples, so when he died, I inherited a following. But I am still far from home, and I do have some business that couldn't wait the years needed for them to be prepared to my satisfaction."

Cain tried to convince the man to just go away without a fight, and it looked like it was working, his face showed understanding at the very least.

"Ah, I see. Then you likely aren't familiar with the customs of the Mountains. Every sect is short on new disciples, so we all challenge those we see to bolster our own numbers. Even if it takes five or ten years to teach them our ways instead of the ones they were starting with, it all evens out in the end, as long as we keep collecting more." The old man informed them.

"So, I can expect to be challenged by pretty much every group that we pass? Perhaps it would be easier to circle around the head to the coast and then follow it all the way around the mountains. It would be much longer, but possibly less bothersome." Cain suggested.

"I doubt that. At least the challenges have structured rules, and the disciples won't be harmed much. Outside the mountains, it is free for all, where only the standard of not attacking those below your realm holds among the majority.

You don't look like the sheltered sort, how far from home are you?"

Cain smiled. "Further than I would prefer. We passed through a portal between worlds only to find that it was a one-way trip and now I have to find us a route back to my homeworld." That was the same set of minimal details that Cain was giving everyone so that if they happened to run into people more than once, their story added up.

"In that case, I will give you a piece of advice. Either stay well away from the borders of the sects that you know about or fearlessly cross the boundaries. Skirting around the edges is suspicious, and makes them think that you might be a rival come to scope out their defenses.

If you approach straight through, they will be more likely to believe that you didn't know where their boundaries are and send you on your way without a fight.

But if you head to the river just north of here and follow it upstream, you will find a neutral city near the lake a few days' travel from here. You can rest and get more details there." The black-robed cultivator suggested.

"I appreciate the advice. But we should be going." Cain sighed, looking out at the rising sun.

The disciples all hopped on their swords and rose into the sky, drawing one last envious glance from the cultivator, and Cain discretely activated [Superior Mental Domination] so he could listen in on the group's thoughts as he left.

[Master, why didn't you attack them? Those swords are extremely valuable.] Cain heard one of the disciples in black ask.

[There is something off about that group. Couldn't you feel it? When approached by Forbidden Technique Cultivators he wasn't the least bit nervous, he didn't even ask his disciples to put away their valuables.] The Master responded.

[And the way he casually mentioned murdering a man inside the city for his disciples. Seriously, who would believe that anyone would challenge that man with an Immortal watching, instead of assassinating him? Even if he was impossible to sneak up on, the right answer was to walk away, not issue a challenge to a stand-up fight.] A Disciple agreed.

[Do you think he might have a Mind Control type technique? That would explain the lack of fear, and traveling with all the pretty girls.] Another suggested.

[Hiding his power and living out the Family Man fantasy that he never had time for while he was cultivating? That would make sense. It doesn't make him any less dangerous though.] The first disciple to speak agreed.

[He's on his way to Lakeside though, which is a good start. If he really is just a wandering cultivator who has been collecting beauties, he might be interested in staying for the Tournaments, and then we can gather more information on their techniques.

Befriend them if you see them again, if possible. I want to know what makes that Spirit Awakened Wanderer so certain in his safety, for the good of our sect.] The Master instructed his followers.

"Perhaps they are not all as stupid as they look. It took them a second to catch on, but they're starting to make good choices now." Cain informed Luna, who was watching him as he listened in on their visitors.

"So they're not following us?" Penny asked, tensing for a fight.

"They're going the same way we are, toward the city of Lakeside. There is some sort of event going on there soon, but that group isn't planning to attack us anymore." Cain told her with a smile.

"Oh, thank goodness. We haven't even had a chance to get used to our new skills yet. Having to use them in a serious fight would be a mess."

"We will find somewhere for you all to practice soon. I just need to find a nice empty area with some beasts or something. That should be enough to at least let you start learning your skills." Cain agreed.

After flying for half a day, they were only seeing more and more travelers following the river toward the city. Whatever event the black-robed cultivators had sent them to go see must be a big deal here in this territory.

Cain listened in on the thoughts of everyone they came close to and learned that jogging on the ground, they were only a day away now, thanks to the high flight speed of the swords he had made, so he changed his strategy for their journey.

"Everyone to the ground and store your swords. It is getting busy here, and we are attracting attention. I have found us a good travel group to accompany all day tomorrow into the city, assuming that they don't attack us when we approach." Cain instructed his disciples.

He had found a group of white-robed women traveling together, nearly sixty in total, and they were relatively strong, each of them at least level 300. In this world that might not be much, but being awakened, they at least weren't at the bottom of the totem pole of power, even here in the Immortal Realms.

"Greetings travelers. Might we accompany you to the city? The roads are getting crowded, and a small group like mine is just getting in the way of the larger Sects." Cain greeted the white-robed sect when he approached, with the Disciples behind him and Luna at his side.

"The Lotus Blossom Sect doesn't normally welcome male cultivators, but it looks like you are in a unique predicament today. So long as you keep yourself away from our disciples, I see no reason why we cannot welcome your disciples on our journey." The Matron of the group, an Immortal named Ling informed Cain.

"That is agreeable to me. I see you travel in your uniforms, should I ask my disciples to change? We found that the bright robes attracted too much attention." Cain asked.

"Pride in your sect is important, even when traveling. It is good to be prudent, but not at the expense of the Sect. Are you perhaps a very small Sect?" Ling asked.

"You're looking at the Forbidden Treasure Sect. For now, this is all that there are." Cain agreed.

"Forbidden Treasure? Interesting name. The precious item that a man wants most, but is unable to obtain. Very fitting for your group." Ling told him with a smile.

That was a fun way of interpreting the name, Cain thought.

"Everyone switch back to your Sect Robes and join the fine young ladies of the Lotus Blossom Sect for the day. I will be nearby, keeping an eye out for trouble." Cain informed them, then took to the sky again and floated along above their convoy as the ladies jogged through the loose rocks that lined the riverbank.

There were a lot of sects in the area, and most had at least one or two Elders floating above the disciples, keeping an eye out for trouble, and establishing their presence in the area. It was somewhat tense, but not openly hostile for the most part. Only when two Sects crossed paths and challenged each other for space did things get hostile.

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

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Ling flew up beside Cain, using her own powers, not a sword to fly on, which intrigued Cain. Flying with energy control and not wings or an enchanted item wasn't something that he thought the people of this world were capable of.

"You don't need to worry so much. Very few would dare to attack our group, the Lotus Blossom is a very large Sect, and close to the city." Ling told him.

"I still worry about them. I inherited most of them very recently, and I haven't had enough time to properly train them, thanks to our travels." Cain explained.

"Hmm, that explains a lot. Their energies all feel very different from each other. If I hadn't seen them all arrive as friends, I would have thought they were strangers, and not from the same sect at all." The Immortal told Cain with a raised eyebrow, waiting for his answer.

"That is actually a feature of my teaching, not a defect. Every disciple learns a different path that is best suited to them, instead of teaching them all the same core technique.

Once they have mastered one, they can start on another, though it is easiest if they are closely related."

That should explain the classes well enough without making the old woman even more suspicious.

"You should stay in the city for a while. There will be a lot of challenges, trials, and seminars held here beginning in a few days. Every Sect is interested in new techniques, and it seems that is the specialty of your Sect." Ling told him.

"Yes, the Lightning Dance Sect said the same thing, they were very happy to get a chance to spar with my disciple so they could begin to understand combat against a dual-wielding combatant without risk of death."

"Oh, the Lightning Dance. They're a bit of a joke, thanks to their incomplete technique and low power, but they are good people." Ling replied with true fondness in her eyes.

"They just need knowledge. Knowledge is power, and those wise enough to seek it out first usually end up the furthest ahead at the end." Cain agreed.

"If you want to stay in the area where our sect is, I can arrange it. Your little Sect will be safe there, you just need to watch out for the Elders. Men are not allowed near our disciples unsupervised or without previous permission, and the Lotus Blossom is very strict about that." Ling offered.

"I am sure the disciples would enjoy that. I will stay close by in case there is trouble. Since I arrived here, I have met an incredible number of idiots, and it is better than I deal with them than to leave it to become a mess." Cain told her with a conspiratorial wink.

"The best defense is a good offense? That can work. But how do you plan to distract them if they are after the disciples? I hate to break it to you, but you're not exactly the type that the lechers drool over."

She had a good point there. "Is this world really so short on women that they have to resort to such things?"

Ling shook her head no. "There are far more women than men. But most of them don't build up their power. Power is everything to most of these Immortals, so they want an equal that can potentially keep up with them and spend eternity with them, so they are only interested in the ones that belong to a Sect. The commoners at the taverns and such are mostly immune to their more annoying tendencies."

"Hmm, then I am glad I brought the girls to you. One of them is my own daughter, and I hold a similar view to your sect about the idea of her being involved with a man." Cain chuckled.

Not that Luna would be interested. She wasn't mentally mature enough to be wanting that sort of relationship, and any boy who tried would be more likely to get stabbed than kissed. That was just how Luna was at this point in her life, and possibly always since she was an Avatar of the War God.

The two leaders of their respective groups flew along in peace for a while, Ling's white robes and Cain's black suit with a peach-colored sash around his waist drawing odd looks from travelers who knew how the Lotus Blossom felt about males in general.

The rumors that Cain could hear were that they weren't just a female cultivation sect, but a Sect of Man Haters. Unlike other Female Sects that held social events every few years for their disciples to meet potential partners, the Lotus Blossom never did any such thing. Even seeing them come out to an event like this one was a rarity.

The words didn't seem to bother Ling, despite the fact that Cain was certain she could hear them as well as he could as they approached the city and the Sects traveling started maintaining a careful ten-meter radius around their disciples to prevent sneak attacks or unwanted interactions.

The Lotus Blossom Sect stopped at a clearing that was already filled with ladies in white robes, and Ling led Cain to greet the other Elders of their Sect.

"This is Master Cain of the Forbidden Treasures Sect. The disciples in Peach are all his, and I have offered them a safe spot to stay while they are in the city. Master Cain understands to leave our disciples alone, and he promises he won't cause any trouble." The Immortal Ling began.

"Look at him, how could he not be trouble? He's got half the sect drooling over him from across the clearing. Tell me, Cain, what sort of Sect Master are you? Do you train the Demon Techniques? Divine Tomes?" A very powerful Immortal with one eye scarred over and blinded asked him.

"I train my disciples in individualized techniques. I value knowledge above all else, so each of them has a very different fighting technique. Only Luna fights in a similar way to my own. But let me ask, was that a Curse that took your eye? Might I take a look at it? I believe that I can fix it." Cain replied.

"You can fix an eye blinded by a cursed weapon? That I would pay to see." The old Immortal snorted in amusement.

[Cursed Wound] Mythic Rank Curse. Scar tissue reduces healing to the area by 100 percent.

The curse wasn't that bad, only Mythic, but with their limited healing abilities, that was more than they could hope to deal with. He wouldn't even need to use [Modify] to fix this, just remove the curse and heal her.

Cain brought a Record Keeper into his [Merger] and used [Nullify] to break the curse and any lingering debuffs on the Elder then used [Holy Light] from the Seraphim Inquisitor still merged with him to heal up her face.

The effect made her look years younger, giving an ageless appearance suitable to a proper immortal. If it wasn't for the white hair, it would be hard to place her as young or old, simply indeterminate around middle-aged.

"You can open your eyes now. Sorry, I should warn people about the light before I do that. It's a unique technique that I learned from the Seraphim, and it can heal most things once the curse is broken." Cain explained.

"That is incredible. Can you teach that technique to others? There are many events here for learning, and an energy control technique that can heal blindness would be in high demand, even if there aren't many magical cultivators around." Ling gasped.

"That one you would have to ask the Seraphim for, but I can teach other healing techniques, and I occasionally do. I gave the Divine Light Sect Master a tome on how to resurrect the recently dead when we were in the valley." Cain told her.

"So that's why he announced that he was canceling his attendance and that Master Moon would be taking over his position while he was in seclusion. He must be working to master the technique before he comes out again." The Elder that Cain had just healed told her companions.

"Master Moon is coming here? Oh, that will be a treat. I didn't think he would leave the valley, with the attacks and all, but it will be good to see him again." Cain laughed, being the only one here that knew that he was no longer crippled.

"Sect Master, we have arranged the extra tents, as you instructed." A disciple whispered from the doorway, not wanting to interrupt their conversations.

"Excellent. Follow me, Master Cain, and I will show you around. Once you have seen the layout, you can call your disciples to one of the tents, and take the other for yourself. It might be a bit loud, being right beside the kitchens, but at least it will be warm." The Immortal informed him.

It would also ensure that there was no point when he was not under surveillance, thanks to the busy nature of a kitchen in a crowded compound like this one.

The problem was that he had at least one devoted foodie with him, and being next to the smell of cooking food all day could be an issue.

Especially if their sect weren't good cooks. Luna would never stand for that and would bother him constantly until he got the Lotus Blossom to give her permission to help out.

How well she herself could actually cook was a mystery, since she only ever wanted to eat meat, but if it was about meat, she was a true connoisseur.

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

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The camp was very well organized, making three concentric circles in their allotted space outside the city itself. The outermost was for the lowest ranked disciples, with higher rank guards patrolling, then the core disciples, with the Elders interspersed, and a core circle of essential functions like the kitchens, some sort of Alchemy Labs, and a training ground.

It was on the border between the second and third ring that Cain had been placed with his disciples, next to the kitchens, and the tour took him to the middle first.

"That is the triage area for the medics, we also make a wide variety of pills if you happen to need anything. Here are the Kitchens, though it might be wise if you eat in your tent and send the disciples out for anything that you need.

The saying that our disciples are all Man Haters isn't that far from the truth, though most of them would deny it. The training area is open to all disciples, so feel free to have yours use it if they aren't shy about their techniques. If you're fighting a duel, it is to first blood only. Sect rules prohibit other sorts of duels, as well as demanding a price for losing.

As they passed the Inscription station, where the Sect Members were making some sort of enchanted scroll that would activate an ability when used, they found Luna entranced by the process.

"Does she not know about Inscription?" The Elder escorting Cain asked.

"She does, but I make skill books, not whatever those things are. She is also a rather skilled artificer, so she might be learning new runes and patterns to add to her own techniques." Cain explained.

"So young and already learning a trade? Are you sure that won't interfere with her advancement?" The Elder asked.

"It shouldn't be an issue. It's more of a hobby and doesn't burn up too much of her time unless she finds something new and exciting. Just watch, once she decides that it's not

more interesting than what she already knows she will move on to the next thing that she finds interesting." Cain joked.

He was right though. Luna shook her head in disappointment once she realized that they were just single-use enchantments and didn't even last for very long. She was pretty sure that she could do better even with her limited knowledge of Rune Crafting. With that in mind, she was heading for the forges to see what they were doing, and the Elder led Cain along behind her, curious about what the little one was up to.

She watched the disciples work for a while as the Elder in charge of the forges oversaw their training, and then sat down and pulled a large tree branch out of her inventory.

"And what might you be making?" The weaponsmith asked as Luna rounded off the stick into the rough approximation of a baseball bat.

"A display piece. They are overthinking their work. Don't try to micro-manage, but capture the overall essence of what you want the item to do." Luna explained, but the smith didn't seem to understand.

"See, like this. What would you put on this club to make it better?" Luna asked.

"Hmm, let's see, a strengthening enchantment, force amplification, possibly weight adjustment so that you could strike harder, and some elemental damage?" The smith suggested.

"Not bad, that would be a very good weapon, but very hard for a new trainee to make. The cute girl at the Library where I learned taught me this. The essence of a club is Bonk. So, now that I have this carved, all I need to do is focus my will on the runes, and carve them."

Luna carved one single word into the weapon, which turned from light pine to a darker tone of hardwood, with some sort of rosin on the handle area.

"Test it out. I think you will be happy with the true essence of a club." Luna told her proudly, as the woman stared in amusement at the simple wooden bat.

She clearly wasn't taking Luna seriously, but when she channeled energy into the bat it came to life in her hand, and she could feel the power behind the simple enchantment.

One of the disciples was misbehaving, and without much thought she tapped the girl on the head, causing a flash of blue light and the girl dropped unconscious.

"Behold, the true power of Bonk." Luna declared, making Cain and the Elder with him burst into laughter as the others in the room stared in shock at the club that could knock out an awakened disciple with a tap.

"It is a stun-type enchantment? Incredible. Tell me, girl, what do you want for this? I would love to duplicate it." The smith asked.

"You can have it, I can always make another one. But you will only gain frustration trying to duplicate it without a master. The Runes don't bend to the will of just anyone using them any which way." Luna shrugged, not concerned about the simplest of Rune Weapons she had ever created.

"Then why display it for everyone?" One of the disciples asked.

"As a lesson. You are all making things way too hard. Just put the broadest form of the enchantments on and shape the way they interact as you make the weapons. It creates a fun and new item every time."

That was exactly the opposite of what they were taught. They forged weapons to do exactly what they wanted, not something whimsical or vague. The disciples didn't seem to appreciate her wisdom, but the Elders did and seemed deep in thought about the concept.

"Did you teach her that?" The Elder asked Cain.

"No, a particularly harassed Librarian who was sick of chasing away an ardent suitor did. Luna just picks up on the strangest bits of everything that she hears and never forgets them. We actually learned the Runes from the same Expert Mistress." Cain explained.

"A female Rune Smith who wasn't part of your sect or lineage as your teacher? How interesting. You impress me more and more, Mister Cain." The Elder smiled back.

That was all it took to change her impression of Cain. The knowledge that the most impressive of his skills had been learned from a woman and not a man was enough to endear him to the leaders of the Lotus Blossom Sect for his open-mindedness.

They would probably change that opinion very quickly when they found out that the teacher was an Elf, made a Puppet by the Ancients, who he had given no choice but to teach him, but that was beside the point.

"Tell me, Sect Master, what other secret skills do you have?" Elder Ling asked, coming up to see how the tour was going.

"Quite a few actually. But that is part of the joy of being me. Now, Miss Luna is headed for the Kitchens, and I don't want to miss it. Could we head there next?" Cain replied.

Even from where they were standing, Cain could tell that whatever the kitchen was making was an incredibly bland stew. He could smell it, and while it wasn't unpleasant,

Luna's reaction to what she would view as an abomination against meat should be pretty funny.

"Come to lend us a hand little one?" The chef asked as Luna approached from the back side of the kitchen, not the serving side.

"If you will have me. I am a big fan of food. The right food is everything when it comes to growth." Luna replied, making Cain chuckle at the inside joke about a Lamia's growth cycle.

The meal was simple, stew and buns. The buns looked fluffy and well-baked, so Luna overlooked them and approached the stew, which was currently just a pile of simmering ingredients.

"What bones are you using for the stock?" She asked the chef, confused by the lack of scent that the huge pots had.

"Oh, we don't bother with all that. It's just the evening stew." The cook shrugged off her concern and a look of horror overcame Luna's face.

"Please be joking?" She asked desperately.

"Hardship strengthens the soul." The cook replied sternly.

Luna spent a moment considering that bit of wisdom, and Elder Ling burst into laughter as she watched the look on Luna's face go from confused, to horrified, back to confused, then to a devout rejection of the information that she had just been given.

"A poisonous environment poisons the Soul itself. Everything in life needs balance. Hard work should be rewarded with good meals, so the souls of the disciples don't turn sour about their lives. That is the path that the Forbidden Cultivators take to ensure loyalty in their corrupted followers." Luna replied after a whole minute of consideration.

[That was an Oath Breaker quote wasn't it?] Cain asked the Demon that he was merged with.

[Very philosophical isn't it? It is a truth that the Obsession Demons focus on so that they don't fall down the path of Carnage that so many of the Wrath Demons do. Balance lets us keep our focus on the target of our obsession, instead of on the injustices of life.] The wise, but genocidal demon replied happily.

Turning Luna, even in human form, into a true follower of the ideals of the Obsession Demons was clearly making the Oath Breakers happy.

"There is something odd about her logic and I feel like I've heard it before somewhere. But that little girl is wise beyond her years." Elder Ling congratulated Cain.

Cain was about to reply with a generic platitude, but Luna had chased the befuddled cook out of the kitchen and was beginning to modify the stew with ingredients from her bag, namely a large bone from a Mythic Beast and a collection of spices.

"Luna, they're not used to spicy food. Keep it very mild or you will give a hundred people a stomach ache." Cain reminded her.

"Got it. Mild flavors and apologize to the cook." Luna replied, but Cain noticed that she was not so subtly positioning herself to keep the woman away from the pots.

"Sorry, my disciples are a bit lively. I hope that doesn't make you reconsider our accommodations." Cain told Elder Ling, who only shook her head in dismissal.

"It is fine. The disciples will be happy about it and they will work harder tomorrow. Life isn't all about suffering after all. I am well aware that we don't have much of a food culture within the sect, it helps maintain the ladies' figures.

Ah, the ever-present struggle against weight gain. A battle Cain himself had long since forgotten about since he could just change his form at will.

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

Chapter 595 595 Unexpected Friends

While Luna took over the kitchen, under the supervision of the other disciples, who were eager to see her cooking skills, the Lotus Blossom Sect Elders took Cain to see the practice grounds.

Most of the disciples were training in the early stages of the Sects own style, but Cain noticed that one was trying to learn the Holy Sword technique.

"Is that technique actually very popular? I see it everywhere I go lately." Cain asked.

"For those with the Affinity, it has tremendous potential. Did you have one among your disciples who was attempting it as well?" Elder Ling asked.

"In a way. Jen has become quite Adept with holy attacks already, though her style is somewhat different than most, as she uses a sword and shield." Cain explained.

The shield was essential to many of a Paladin's defensive techniques and could be effectively used as a secondary weapon once you had enough skill points into the appropriate trees.

Cain watched the disciple struggle a bit longer then turned to the Elders "Do you mind if I go give pointers? I've seen the technique used enough that I have the energy flow memorized."

That wasn't even a lie. The Affinity activated the same way, except for the source of the energy, and the Ancients were very good at deciphering energy flows.

"If you think she will listen, feel free." The Elder chuckled, reminding Cain of the Sect's reputation as man-haters.

This disciple looked like a very competitive sort, so Cain decided to start with a challenge. After rummaging through his crate full of random items to be reworked, he came up with a ring that had some dexterity and added holy damage to it.

"Disciple, would you care to take on a challenge? Follow my instructions and activate Holy Sword, that's it. If you can complete it, I will give you this ring that will improve your holy abilities, but if you lose, I ask for a small price." Cain suggested.

"What sort of price, you old pervert?" The disciple retorted, while her Elders smiled at Cain's misfortune.

"If you lose, you will wear this as a hat until the end of the day." Cain teased, taking out a conical hat that appeared to be made of rolled newsprint.

It was actually an item to improve intelligence and comprehension, it was just hideous, in the fashion of dunce caps everywhere.

"Can you even teach me anything? Or do you just get off on having strangers wear hats?" She asked.

Cain picked up a wooden training Sword and activated the skill, laying it flows with intense white light and drawing the attention of the whole training ground.

"Now, do you accept the challenge?" Cain asked.

"Fine, but you had better make good with the reward when I win."

Cain tossed the prize ring to Elder Ling and turned back to the disciple. "The Elder will referee. Take your Sword in your right hand and follow my lead."

[Record Keeper can you use an illusion on my arm that will show the mana flow as Holy Sword activates in spite motion please?] Cain asked his introspective Merged Demon.

[On your cue.]

Cain took his shirt off and faced the disciple.

"Alright, gather energy and move it to your shoulder in the shape of this symbol, then spread it like this, so it moves down your arm in a blade-shaped wave that will flow into your sword. That's how Holy Sword activates."

As Cain explained, the record keeper cast the illusion, and white lines flowed down Cain's arm in slow motion. She already knew the sigil, so all she had to do was follow the pattern for activation.

The first attempt was a failure, as she just pushed energy across the surface of her arm in one wave.

"Not on top, that was just for demonstration. Use the pathways in your arm in that pattern." Cain tried again.

"Like that's so easy." She muttered.

A teen girl in the simple uniform of the uninitiated acolytes who were still working toward becoming disciples while doing the Sects chores, was watching carefully with a simple wooden sword in hand, and as Cain repeated the demonstration she followed his lead exactly and the blade faintly lit up.

"Haha, it really works. Hey Mister, do I get a reward too?" She asked, with a smirk on her face that said she had been looking forward to getting one up on what Cain assumed was her Rival.

[Quest: Reward the Faithful] give the one who pleased the Laughing God a token.

When the Quest appeared a small silver pendant also appeared in Cain's hand.

"Good job. How about you take this? It will bring you good luck and fateful encounters," Cain offered, patting her head as he gave her the token from the Laughing God.

"That brat." The first disciple muttered but continued the practice for another minute until she finally grasped the final step and activated the skill.

"Yes. I win, old man." She gloated.

"Excellent work. That was indeed the Holy Sword. Hold the feeling and it will stay active for a while, and not just for one strike. You can collect your reward from the Elder." Cain agreed with a smile.

The successful disciple bowed politely to the Elders and collected the ring that Cain promised before going to show it off to her friends.

"Those two started at the Sect during the same recruitment, and the little one had no base at all, she is one of our charity cases, still too weak to be a full disciple.

It was kind of you to encourage her despite her lack of talent." The Elder told Cain.

"Lack of talent can be overcome with hard work and the right attitude. Even if they lack the ability to make it far on their own, they can still make it further than those who close their eyes to opportunity." Cain shrugged.

"That's an interesting take on it. Do you not vet your disciples by talent?" The Elder asked.

"No, only by tenacity. If they want to follow me I find them a good opportunity elsewhere. If they still follow I will give them a chance."

Cain's description made a few of the disciples smile. He didn't seem like a bad person, and he wasn't forcing his disciples to follow him, which was unusual for a Sect Master. Normally they put a lot of effort into growing and building their power base.

"Since each of them is learning a unique style, motivation is important. Take Tena for example. She is learning the ways of a Dragon Monk. If she wasn't self-motivated, there wouldn't even be a similar style around for her to emulate." Cain continued.

"A Lycan, a Holy Power user, and a Dragon Monk? That's quite the skill set to be teaching. Might I ask how you learned all that yourself?" The Elder asked.

"Good fortune and the will of the Divine. It keeps my days interesting. Especially with Luna following in my footsteps."

The dinner bell cut their conversation short, and a very happy Luna made her way back to Cain, leading the other disciples.

"Just like you asked, no spice in the stew. But it turned out pretty well. The kitchen lady says we can eat as soon as you finish talking to the Elders."

"And that explains why you came searching for me with such vigor. I think we have covered the essential areas already, perhaps the Elders would like to join us for the evening meal?" Cain asked.

"As Immortals, we don't require much physical sustenance anymore, but I will gladly join your odd band of travelers for a meal today." Elder Ling agreed, dragging her counterpart along with them.

When they arrived back at the kitchen area, the whole Sect was abuzz with gossip. Not about the stew, though it was getting very good reviews from the ladies of the Lotus Blossom Sect. Instead, everyone was talking about the acolyte who learned a skill in a single try.

Even for the true geniuses of the sect, that was unheard of, and the Core Disciples who were looking to take on a Disciple of their own to prove themselves worthy of becoming Elders were very eager to see if the girl could do it again.

"Mister Cain, could you repeat your performance for us tonight? Everyone is very eager to see if your rumored Divine Teaching Method can really teach a skill in one attempt." One of the Elders, a scar-faced woman with more than a few extra pounds on her body, both of which were a rarity among cultivation sects, asked politely.

"I don't see why not. Is there a technique that you had in mind?" Cain asked.

"Our Lotus Blossom Style emphasizes fire skills once it reaches beyond the beginner levels, do you know much about fire manipulation?" The Elder asked.

"Ooh, teach them [Meteor Strike]," Sabbath suggested, with an eager gleam in her eye.

As a Cleric of the Magic Aspect Demons, various types of fire were her specialty. That wasn't quite a fire element class, as most of them were Demonic in nature, but some of the basic ones were plain old flames.

"I suppose we could start them out with something simple. Do many of them know the ability commonly called [Flame Arrows]?" Cain asked. It was the fire element version of Magic Arrow, a rank D spell that pretty much every mage would take before they hit level 5 unless they were going for the Ice Element and needed to avoid fire skills.

"All of the Inner Disciples have the power to accomplish it for certain, but external energy manipulation isn't as easy for us as it is for a Magic Type Cultivator like yourself and most of your disciples." The Elder sighed.

"That's fine, once you know, you know. Learning it might even help their progress, if some of them are stuck at the breakpoint between using their power to build their own body and learning to release it." Cain suggested.

A whole army of Low Level Martial Artists using Flame Arrows to start the fight sounded like a great prank to play on the next people to bother the Lotus Blossom Sect.

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

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After dinner, a small group of ladies from the Lotus Blossom Sect, most of them outer disciples or the Acolytes they had brought as servants for the Sect, had gathered to watch Cain's attempt to teach the Flame Arrows to skill in a single day.

"Alright, who here thinks that they have a good Affinity for the fire element?" Cain asked as he prepared to get started.

"What do you mean? It's just a way to shape energy, isn't it? Why would the form it takes matter?" One of the outer disciples asked.

"Every one of us is unique. Not just our body, but our mind as well. So naturally, some ways of thinking are easier for us to understand. Fire is an aggressive element, less suited to the devious and scheming.

For those people, shadow skills would be easier to learn, because they suit the way you think. For the detached and stoic, ice might suit you better and so on.

So, I ask again, who feels that fire is easy for them to learn?"

Cain's speech seemed to startle a lot of the younger cultivators. They learned techniques because those were what their Sect knew how to teach them. There weren't many options, because knowledge was jealously guarded by those who had it.

A small group stepped forward, confident in their skills, and then a few more who were uncertain but willing to take a hit to the pride to get a chance at preferential treatment.

"Good, Everyone who came forward please sit down so those behind you can see and we will begin."

The Elders chuckled at Cain's way of sorting out the packed crowd, but let the disciples organize themselves, as was their tradition.

[Record Keeper, can you create a copy of the sigil to activate the spell above my head, large enough for everyone to see?] Cain mentally asked.

The sigil was also the icon for the skills in the skill tree, so everyone who used it regularly would be familiar. Even the strange folk who visualized pressing the icons for skills to activate them.

"That is the basic formation for [Flame Arrows]. This is the name, and that is the sequence to activate the skill. Just follow the instructions like this and you get Arrows."

Cain fired a few dozen into the air and let them dissipate so that he wouldn't alarm the Sects nearby.

"Wait, the rest of the sigil is just secret directions on how to use it?" A disciple asked incredulously.

"Of course it is. See, from the center, increase heat, then the pattern to lengthen into Arrows and how to split the energy into multiples."

In truth, the System translated all the writing for Cain and the others who had a class, but if they weren't trying to read it, they could still see the intricate patterns of the beautiful script.

The crowd had gone silent as everyone, even the Elders stared at Cain.

"What? Did I not explain it well? Okay, I will do it in slow motion. Like this, and that, we get the Arrows forming, now split them to increase the number, and will them to fly out."

"I think you confused them more." Luna whispered, watching the crowd.

"When we get into the city, maybe I should teach something simple. Like hairstyles for any occasion. Even the men here usually have long hair." Cain whispered back.

"All day having my hair braided? Oh yes, please. That is much better than teaching random techniques." Luna agreed, nuzzling into Cain's side.

The stronger-minded had recovered already and were studying the glowing sigil above Cain's head.

The first few began their attempt, and Cain gently corrected them as they went. "No, they need to be longer or they won't stabilize. Yes, like that. You can make just one if you like, but higher numbers are harder to evade."

Within five minutes they had a success. Within thirty minutes they had a half dozen more, almost all from older Disciples who already had experience shaping fire.

"It is such a rigid technique, but so easy to learn. What a strange style you have, Mister Cain." Elder Ling commended him as another disciple managed to create an arrow.

"Think of it as Fire Skills for beginners. The harder abilities all build on things like this, but since nobody knows the basics they have to struggle through the advanced steps without guidance." Cain explained.

[What a load of nonsense. Their Elemental attacks have nothing in common with the Flame Arrows spell.] Record Keeper snorted in amusement.

[They probably will now that so many know it though.] Oath Breaker laughed, as he noticed even the Elders were memorizing the skill, which wasn't part of their style's techniques.

There wasn't much for Cain to do now that they understood the basics so he simply sat down and pulled Luna into his lap to braid her hair for bed. A nice loose but secure braid prevented tangles in the morning.

When he was done, Cain stood up to address the Elders, carrying Luna on his hip. "It seems that the lesson was a good one, but it is time for us to get some sleep. The little one gets very excited about new cities you see."

"Yes, of course. Normally it is curfew soon, but I think we will let them practice a few more hours tonight. I will lead you back to your tent." Elder Ling agreed, gathering Cain's whole group.

"Here you are. The two tents are connected by that flapping door. If you need anything, just call for an acolyte."

"Thanks. I think we should be good for the evening." Cain agreed and the Elder left to go back to supervising the disciples learning Flame Arrows.

"How did you mess up your hair already?" Cain sighed, seeing Luna's mass of black curls in front of him and casually fixing them again. It was only when he heard the laughter that he realized his mistake. He made Tena look like Luna in her disguise, and it was her hair that he had just brushed and braided.

"Well, your hair is ready I guess. Does anyone else needs their hair brushed?" Cain asked, hoping that downplaying the event would help with Tena's embarrassment.

"I think we are good. Maybe in the morning, you can get us all ready." Penny joked, winking at Cain.

There was only one bed in this tent, so Cain assumed it was his room. The girls opened the flap to the other room, ready to call it a day after all the excitement, only to find the other one completely bare except for rugs on the ground, with the assumption that disciples would bring their gear.

They all had camping gear, but there were a few longing looks sent toward the single bed in Cain's side.

"We can get you some more luxurious accommodations once we get into the city. I didn't pack for this contingency." Cain told them apologetically.

"Wait, I have the solution. Penny, lay down in the middle of the floor and transform. The room is big enough." Luna suggested.

"While that works for me, where would the rest of you sleep?" Penny asked.

"On top of you of course. You're huge and fluffy in wolf form. There's no way you can be uncomfortable to sleep on." Luna announced with a smile that showed just how pleased she was with her idea.

While the disciples retired to their tent, Cain made himself comfortable and extended [Superior Mental Domination] out so that he could catch more information about what was going on in the city.

Most of the thoughts were predictably on their own training, but it didn't take long to find some gossip.

Various tournaments were running all week, but the most important part of the event was the so-called Symposiums where Master cultivators could show off their skills and new ideas to gain respect and disciples.

That's why it was held here, in neutral territory. It let wandering cultivators and small Sects attend, both to recruit and be recruited. The number of purely research-oriented individuals was much lower, but with so many people around, even they had a significant presence, according to what he could learn from the Sects and guards near him.

A lot of the nearby Sects thought like the last group they found in the woods. To make friends with those stronger than them and to learn about those they planned to target later.

Nila would have loved this place. It was like a gathering of Pirates, all pretending to get along for their own benefit and profit.

Cain woke up early, before first light, and meditated while he waited for the sounds of the camp coming to life for the morning to begin.

Now that more of the influential people were awake and active, Cain's mind reading could pick up much more than he learned last night. It seemed that the Sects brought two sorts of disciples here. Ones that they wanted to show off and ones that they subtly hoped would be led away by promised benefits from other Sects.

Either because of compatibility with the techniques or their personality, not every recruit they got was a great fit. Unlike the entry exams, this event let them get to poach disciples who already showed promise.

Just because their old Sect didn't want them didn't mean nobody did, especially the evil and assassin Sects.

"Disciples of the Forbidden Treasures Sect are ready, Master Cain," Tena called from the other tent just after the sun came up, and after much rustling and giggling from Cain's own disciples.

"Good, let's go see what the city has to offer."

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

Chapter 597 597 City Of Knowledge

When they came out from the other room, everyone was dressed in their lovely new dresses representing the Forbidden Treasure Sect and looking like the sort of virtuous maidens who would get along well with the Lotus Blossom Sect.

"I believe that Elder Ling will be leading a group into the city this morning if you want to go with them," Penny suggested, having overheard the Disciples talking last night.

"We can go with them if they agree, or we can go alone to explore the city at our own pace. The decision is up to you ladies." Cain agreed while working with the Record Keeper to adjust his aura.

That sort of illusion was child's play to the greater demon, and a simple act like hiding his power level, or the nature of his power was no problem at all. Cain wanted to keep any of the Immortals that they met from seeing through his disguise as a Magic-type cultivator and realizing that he was, in fact, just an ancient in disguise.

That would not go over well here, from what Cain understood about this world being under the purview of the Human Gods, and it would be a tragedy if his nature got his disciples in trouble as well.

Once both of them were satisfied that his aura was properly tweaked, and could be instantly adjusted to something more threatening if there was an issue, Cain nodded to the girls, who were looking out of the tent with an expectant look.

Elder Ling was already headed their way, with a large group of the Inner Disciples, some of the strongest that the Sect had brought with them here, and a small cart carrying items that must be too bulky for their storage rings.

The System Inventory only needed one spot per item or a stack of identical items, and a storage ring worked on total volumes, like the enchanted chests that Cain used to keep miscellaneous items in his inventory.

"Greetings to the Forbidden Treasures Sect. I see now why you chose that name, they truly are lovely aren't they?" Elder Ling asked.

"They truly are. And they're off-limits. I know what men are like." Cain joked, making the Elder laugh along with him.

"Let's go see the city. The first day of lectures is today, but they won't start until after lunch, so you can go check out the signs from everyone who has arranged a spot to teach from, as well as check out the vendors in advance before the crowds get really crazy later this week." Elder Ling informed them.

"How long does this run for, if it only starts getting busy later in the week?" Cain asked curiously.

"An entire season, every other year. You came at the perfect time, especially if you're looking to teach your followers a wide range of eclectic techniques. You will have the maximum amount of time, and you are free to stay with us as long as you like, we will be here for the duration."

"I do appreciate that. I'm not sure how long we will be here for, but I would like to see what sort of event they have organized, and Luna wants to know all about the new types of food."

Luna looked offended for a moment, then just shrugged in acceptance. He wasn't wrong, that was the part of visiting the city that she was the most interested in. The people they had met so far had all been envious of even simple items, and they only trained in one set of identical skills for the entire Sect, so it was a bit like having shown up to the wrong Class's gathering, only to find out that not only were they not your class, they were all broke and boring.

People at home were way more interesting, they all had different classes, there was new food in every city that they visited, and she could wrap Cain instead of walking. All in all, this new world was pretty underwhelming, even if there were some shining moments where she found fun things to do.

The sight of so many women together drew everyone's attention as they walked through the gathering of Sects outside the city itself, and Cain got a rather devious thought. If he just transformed, he could blend right in with the group, and the idiots who were giving thirsty looks until they spotted him would lose their visual deterrent.

He was absolutely certain that it would end in violence, and the more he had to put up with them leering in his general direction, the more appealing violence became.

"There really aren't a lot of female cultivators are there?" Cain asked Elder Ling.

"In total, about one for every four men. At the lower levels, the numbers are closer, but many give up the path of cultivation in order to grow old with their mortal family, or suffer a traumatic experience that makes them retreat from the world." The Elder shrugged, turning her warning glare at another group of cultivators, these ones shirtless and in tight leather pants.

Every Sect seemed to pick an outfit that matched their technique, either in element or in personality, so Cain wondered what sort of technique those guys were training, or if it was just a one-off among the crowds of loose-fitting robes.

Cain listened in on their thoughts to get his answer and found that they were a form of Rangers. They specialized in whips and archery and trained a variety of beasts to assist them. That explained the outfits. Many magical beasts had uncomfortable hides, and a casual rub from them could tear the soft cloth robes.

"You look distracted, Mister Cain." Elder Ling whispered as they walked.

"Sorry, I had a funny thought, and got lost in it for a moment," Cain replied, and she gave him an interested look.

"If I disguised myself as a twin to one of my Disciples, do you think the idiots would still turn away as fast, or do you think the ladies would get a chance to let out some frustrations?" Cain whispered back.

"That's both funny and evil. I can almost guarantee there would be a fight. They don't recognize your sect, for now, so they don't know if it's a blended sect or an all-female one. But if they only saw women, they would assume that you were a small sect under our protection, and they would definitely act more brashly." Elder Ling informed him.

"No picking fights out here. They turn into a huge spectacle, with every Sect in the area coming to watch and referee the battle, and a penalty being imposed on the loser. That's why everyone outside the city walls moves around in the largest group that they can." One of the disciples told him, clearly not interested in a fight first thing in the morning.

"You could make Elder Ling a Jade Beauty though. I would pay good money to see the first time an old pervert tried to make a move on her." One of the others chuckled softly, assuming that it was too low for the Elders to hear.

She was mistaken, and the look that Elder Ling gave her was enough that even Cain thought he felt the air turn frigid, despite the woman not releasing any energy.

Their luck didn't hold forever though, and as Elder Ling led them around a large group of Gold Robed Cultivators, a loud voice called out to stop them.

"I don't think it's safe for so many pretty ladies to travel without companions. Why don't you just stop right there and let us have a real good look?" The balding man announced, stepping out in front of them with a group of lackeys.

"I know I am particularly lovely, but I don't think that your concern is warranted," Cain told the man, making the nearby cultivators from other sects burst into laughter at the bald man's expense.

Cain stepped to the front of the group, with the peach sash at his waist fluttering and the gossamer black coat showing off a finely toned torso, covered in tattoos. Elder Ling was certain that some of them weren't in the same position she had seen them in yesterday, but passed it off as her memory failing her in this moment of tension.

"And who might you think you are to challenge us? Head Disciple of a group of weaklings and children who need the protection of a group of Lesbians." The bald man sneered.

"Oh man, he is so screwed." Luna laughed, drawing amused glances from the bystanders.

Cain didn't feel threatened in the least, but in a place like this, that was also a bad thing. When threatened, the usual response was to puff up and try to make yourself seem more threatening so the opponent would back down. If you didn't at least try, it usually meant that you didn't even consider them worth your attention, and would almost always make things worse.

"Ladies, do you recall how I showed you the introductory technique of [Flame Arrows] last night?" Cain asked, looking back at the Lotus Blossom Disciples.

"Yes, Mister Cain." The nearest few responded.

"This unfortunate-looking fellow seems to want to volunteer to test it. Should we not thank him for his selfless sacrifice?" Cain asked.

This was what the crowd had been waiting for, the trash-talking and veiled insults, the true weapons of an argument between cultivators.

The bald man had a much shorter temper than expected and instantly attacked when Cain called him unfortunate looking, with the first strike flying past Cain's rapidly evading body even as Cain finished his question.

Using [Versatility] to increase [Flame Arrows] to Spirit Rank, Cain sent the maximum of one Arrow per level at the attacker, whose arms turned to a blur of motion as he frantically tried to parry them with his twin short swords.

Cain varied the targets, making the man spin, twirl, and jump in an intricate dance to avoid death, while the crowd cheered at the spectacle. When the barrage ended, Cain gave a grand bow at the man who was now nearly thirty meters away, thanks to his efforts to avoid the arrows.

"After [Flame Arrow] would come [Fireball] It is much more versatile as it explodes at the target destination," Cain explained to the ladies of the Lotus Blossom Sect, who laughed at the unfortunate cultivator as his friends grabbed him and frantically pulled him away.

Cain hadn't hit the man one single time, but that wasn't the point. The crowd had gotten the point of the lesson, and they were happily throwing coins at Cain's feet.

When they stopped and the attention turned back to what they were doing, the Disciples picked up the coins, filling their empty pockets with some spending money for the day.

"So that's how impromptu lessons go? Maybe this place is more fun than I thought." Luna told Elder Ling, who only shook her head at the girl's naive outlook on life.

"It doesn't go nearly as well if you're not as strong as the one who challenged you. Stay in the group until we're in the city and under the protection of the guardians and don't attract attention at any time. Your father is our shield, he can be outlandish to drive people away, but it's not good if anyone else does it." Elder Ling explained softly.

Luna made a note of that. Strength is the great difference between a moment of amusement and a bad ending. That was valuable insight.

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

Chapter 598 598 Playing Tag

With the excitement over, the group started making their way to the city again. It looked like their incident wasn't a one-off or due to the presence of so many women though. Almost every group that wanted to enter the city gates was challenged on their way in, for some minor slight, or even no reason at all, just someone challenging them to a sparring match.

As far as Cain could tell, it was a combination of establishing some sort of informal ranking among the Sects that had gathered, and attempting to recruit for the Sect of the challenger, should they put on a suitably impressive show.

Their method of determining their opponent's potential seemed to be rather flawed though, and the matches were often one-sided blowouts, where the group being challenged simply stomped their challenger into the mud.

It was the same thing he had done, hiding his aura, and making them underestimate his group, but it looked like an awful lot of people fell for that trick. Not that Cain blamed them much. Without an interface to show their levels, there really wasn't much to go on but their aura, which would give you a vague sense of their awakening state and progression, but was very easy to manipulate.

"It looks like we won't see any more troubles during the first days of our stay here. You did a fine job of embarrassing him without hurting him back there. As tempting as it might be, and as common, it is still considered rude to bully and cripple the weak in public." Elder Ling whispered to Cain as they reached the city.

"Anything it takes to make this a pleasant stop. My disciples need the training time, and I need to make a plan for the next leg of our journey. The method I use requires experiences, adventures, and such to help speed along their progression, simply staying in one place forever won't work." Cain sighed.

"You could let them enter the challenges here, but that might not be enough for them, and they are mostly meant as a recruiting tool for the larger sects. Our girls will be showing their strength there, in an attempt to draw more to our Sect." Elder Ling suggested.

"Stealing all the women from the other Sects, I see. You should see the state of some of them, it's quite sad, not a woman in sight, and they wouldn't know what to do with one even if they found them.

Watching their disciples try to flirt with mine was just painfully awkward." Cain replied with a laugh that made Luna giggle.

"Like the shoe guy," Luna added in understanding.

Elder Ling seemed confused, so Luna launched into a long story about her first attempt to make new friends, other than the Innkeeper, after they arrived in this world, and the fact that one boy had actually thought she would like to wear the high heels that the local ladies of the evening had been wearing when his Sect arrived the previous night.

"You can't let them out anywhere, I swear. Did anyone actually explain the problem to him, or is he going to try again the next time he gets to talk to a woman?" Ling asked.

"I think we explained well enough. Though if she's not a cultivator, he might do it again, he wasn't very bright. Or strong. Or fast." Luna replied, making all the other girls laugh at the boy's described lack of redeeming qualities.

The guards looked them over for a moment before silently taking their entry fee and letting the group through the gates into the city. They all wore a bright orange banner on their backs, so they could be easily seen from anywhere in the city, policing the ruling Sect's decrees prohibiting random fights inside the city, and any other laws that visitors might want to break.

They were limiting the number of visitors at a time, to keep the streets from becoming too overcrowded, but Cain heard that would change when the events started. For today, they were off to see the sights and listen to a few of the sages preaching their cultivation wisdom.

Selling talismans and magical items seemed to be the staple for most of the vendors in town, each with their own particular benefit. There were also signs up all over the city about how to rent a spot for the day, and how only full-time city residents could reserve a spot.

To Cain, that meant that he could set up at some point and sell Skill Books if he wanted, even though these people couldn't use them properly. They could still read them as books, and that was enough for them to pay huge sums for the secret wisdom.

"Boss Dad Cain. Um, what should I call you in public? Never mind, there is a game over there that I want to play." Luna begged, pointing to a strange game of tag where the contestants were using [Shadow Step] and [Cloud Dancing] to play capture the flag with a ribbon tied on their opponent.

There were other skills in use as well, but those two were the most effective, and the Disciples using them had the highest win rates. Each win got them a mystery reward, to be collected when they left.

"Fifteen minutes. We will be watching you, and anyone else who wants to play." Cain agreed.

"Remember, no violence in the city. Even if they deserve it." Elder Ling reminded her.

"Got it. I don't think they will be able to even touch me though." Luna said proudly, catching the attention of the Elder running the game.

"Confident in your speed are you?" The old man asked, turning his chair to face Luna.

"My agility as well. How much to play?" Luna asked.

"One silver coin to enter the game. If you can get a flag, the prize is guaranteed to be worth more than that. Put every flag you collect on your sash, as you can take every flag that a player has. When you decide you're done, just come back out." The old man told her with a smile.

"Got it. See you all soon." Luna cheered, flipping the man a coin from the ones that were tossed at Cain earlier.

"What about your friend? You look like sisters, and you study under the same master, so perhaps she would like to play as well?" The old man asked, looking at Tena.

"I followed a different path. Dragon Monks don't have as much mobility without using attacks." Tena disagreed, and the man gave a snort of amusement.

"No, I suppose they don't, and they wouldn't be well suited to this game, since you can't eat or burn your opponents."

He hadn't realized but Luna was already in the building that they were using for the game, a five-level structure, with open walls. As a Spirit Rank Demon, her stats were far above what simply awakened humans were, and that didn't change when her body was modified to look human.

Even without using [Shadow Steps] or [Blink] from the Oath Breaker she kept merged, following Cain's example, she was far too fast for the others to catch, bouncing off support pillars, floors, and ceilings in her attempts to get a grab on the flags tucked into sashes.

"She's a tiny monster that one. Look at all the disciples running away when she gets close." The old man laughed, drawing the attention of a few passersby.

The true draw to this event, from the operator's point of view, was the top two levels, where some of their disciples were working together. It showed off their skills, while still letting the lower-level cultivators play the game on the lower levels for mediocre prizes.

There was a shrill screech from the fourth level, followed by a high-pitched giggle, and then a flying bit of cloth.

"My bad, I was off by a fingertip." Luna apologized, then vanished again as the unfortunate man crumpled to the ground.

She had used the Oath Breaker's transport skill to move to the fourth floor, intending to grab a flag and look for more victims, but she had gotten a handful more than she had intended and quickly retreated, tossing the flag in the air in her hurry to get her hand off the stranger.

"That will teach him to get complacent. Stretched him out like a bowstring." The old man taking the fee laughed, not even looking up at the event. Cain assumed he had some sort of sensory ability that made it unnecessary, but he was more interested in the game of cat and mouse they were playing now, trying to get revenge for their fallen comrade.

"Whoop! That's six more flags all at once." Luna cheered a few minutes later, as an older boy cussed and came back to the main floor to grab a new flag from his Master.

"I don't understand how she's not out of energy. Using Cloud Dancing for that long shouldn't be possible." The boy complained, then was grabbed by the old man.

Stop here and watch. You were too close before but watch now. She's not using a skill, she's using the building as leverage to keep her speed up so that it looks like she is using one. She only activates anything for a split second when she needs to change trajectories."

"Hmm, I see now. Congratulations to her Master, she is a true genius of movement skills." The Disciple responded, bowing to both his master and Cain before returning to the game.

"Luna, that's fourteen minutes. Start making your way back." Cain called, earning a groan of complaint from the top floor.

"But I won't catch this guy that fast. Fine, I'm coming." She responded, then appeared on the ground by the operator.

"Seventeen flags in total. Is the prize food? Maybe Candy?" Luna asked, making the bystanders laugh.

"I think that we can do better than that for seventeen flags." Here you go, young lady." The old man responded with a smile, and passed Luna a small box.

"Thanks. I will come back and play again if I get a chance." Luna told him with a polite bow, then jogged over to join the group.

"Where to next? I can hear someone talking about Fire control."

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

Chapter 599 599

The lecture that was ongoing about Fire Elemental Control was actually a rather simple one, intended to draw in new disciples that were interested in the art. It was perfect for most of the younger folk who were watching, but it was a bit too simple for the disciples of the Lotus Blossom Sect, who already had more knowledge than that.

If they weren't from a sect that used the Fire Element, it would have been much more valuable. Cain could see others giving similar lectures on other elements, but those didn't interest anyone in their traveling group at the moment.

"Why don't we grab a snack? Everything is better with food, and we have a lot of walking ahead of us." Cain suggested, making Luna cheer.

"She looks for snacks the moment that she arrives anywhere. Even if we're just stopping in the middle of the woods for a break, she looks for something edible in the area." Tena informed Elder Ling, who seemed a bit confused at Luna's enthusiasm, barely an hour after breakfast.

They managed to find Kebabs, which was about right for the group, who only needed a light snack at best, and they were back on their way, looking through the assorted shops and vendor stalls as they slowly made their way through the city.

They hadn't been looking long when a note on a stall caught Cain's eye. Many of the shops were looking for specific items to trade for the ones that they already had, but this one was looking for something very specific.

He wanted items that had been created based on the Crown Jewels of the Unifier, and the description that he had of them was exactly the same both in appearance and effect as the [Regalia of the Beloved Leader] that Cyrene had found for Cain in the other world.

In this place, where a Sect Master could have tens of thousands of members under him, all wearing his symbol, it would be incredibly powerful, increasing every aspect of the Sect Master's power, from stats to healing and energy regeneration.

Many of the people who passed by took it as a joke, thinking the man was looking for a legend or myth, but Cain understood that not only was the set of items very real, but it also wasn't completely unattainable.

If the System had created a copy, that meant there was still an original somewhere, and the pieces probably weren't destroyed. None of the man's items drew Cain's interest, though they were quality magical jewelry. He had enough to give all his disciples better items once they were settled into their classes and he knew what bonuses they would need to compliment their preferred fighting style.

"Keep looking, old man. You will find them eventually. I saw a replica set not too long ago, and not too far from here, so there is a good chance that someone will know about the original." Cain assured him before walking away.

That cheered him up, and his calls to sell his wares became much more lively as Cain inspected the next booth over, a book vendor who was looking for the missing pages of a tome.

It was a book of [Petal Rain], the Druid's area of attack spell that was apparently very popular here in this world, though most Sects didn't have a full copy unless it was part of their core style. Flower-themed attacks were said to be quite popular for their beauty and effectiveness, as being natural they were easier to envision properly.

Cain looked at the list of missing pages and saw that the first one that was missing was page 4. One of the very introductory steps that would likely make it impossible for anyone to learn the skill with such a flawed tome.

"Do you have a pen and parchment?" Cain asked, assuming that the man would have some available at a bookstore.

"What sort of pen would you like?" The shopkeeper asked politely.

"It doesn't matter. I will write you out page four of that book you're working on in exchange for four random talismans." Cain told him.

He hadn't had a chance to really examine the talismans, so getting his hands on them would give him a better idea of what he needed to do to recreate them with [Inscription] or if he could do it at all.

"You have a deal mister. Here is my own pen and as much parchment as you need. There is sand to dust the page when you are finished as well."

Cain had forgotten about that. Inkwell pens dried slowly and had to be sanded so they didn't smudge when you were done. It would be much easier to use his own gear, but he had asked, and it would be rude to turn the man down now.

With Cain's luck, page four was all text, and not one with a large diagram that would be easier to draw, so it took him a few minutes to finish and collect his payment, while a number of cultivators watched with great interest.

"You can write out skill tomes from memory? That is quite the talent." A very gaudily dressed young man said to Cain with a fake smile on his face.

"I just happen to know that one quite well. It's not as impressive as you might think." Cain shrugged, then noticed that the man's overly decorated robes had a flower pattern Sect marking on them.

He had almost certainly caused himself a headache now, and all for four useless talismans that he only wanted to fulfill his curiosity.

"You may call me Young Master Gu, and I have a business proposal for you, wanderer. If you know that skill, you must know others of the same type, and we are intensely interested in filling in the gaps in our library. How about you come back to our Sect and we can arrange payment for your services?" The gaudy man suggested.

"While I do know a few more techniques in the same style, you overestimate my skills. Let me know what you need and I will attempt to procure them for you, for a price of course." Cain suggested.

"Should we go get the Disciples?" One of the man's followers whispered, unaware that Cain would be able to hear him.

"No, the assassins said that there is something strange about this man, and if we anger him, we might not be able to contain him or convince him to work with us." The Young Master whispered back.

He was smarter than most, even if he had been warned.

Cain had expected the group they ran into in the woods to try to befriend him directly, but it seemed they were doing it through their contacts in the city, making it less suspicious that so many people were trying to be his friend, thanks to their seemingly unrelated nature.

The other man with Young Master Gu passed over a scroll, which the young man passed to Cain.

"These are the skills that we find ourselves very much in need of. They are somewhat obscure, but I am of the belief that for a man of your widely traveled and learned nature, they might not be impossible to locate." Young Master Gu told him.

They were all nature skills, and all related to flowers in some way. [Draining Vines] [Hypnotic Lotus] [Blossoming Strikes] and [Field of Petals]. All of them were druid spells from their core skills, if they went the nature magic path, instead of straight healing or transformation. Not that there was anything stopping a druid who didn't change classes right away from taking every possible skill.

"Hmm, this doesn't look impossible, but [Field of Petals] is a rather advanced technique, finding an intact copy of the skill book might be a very expensive proposition," Cain informed the young man.

"That is fine. We will be here for the entire season, and then we will be heading back toward the opal lake, where our sect is located in the mountains nearby. If you find them after we leave, the Sect will honor our deal at any point in the future." The Young Master agreed, then bowed and backed away to return to his shopping.

The Opal Lake, supposedly covered in gemstones and full of crystal clear water, and a forbidden location that nobody returned alive from, according to Master Moon back in the valley. That wasn't on his top places to visit list, but perhaps he had a better idea why nobody returned alive if the local sect specialized in Nature Magic.

"Master, there seems to be an issue. Some bullies are trying to challenge the Lotus Blossom Sect to duels in the arena, and we don't know what to do." Penny whispered to Cain as soon as she reached him.

Her face was shining with sweat, so she must have run through the crowd to get back to where he had been distracted.

"Alright, let's go and see if we can settle this peacefully." Cain agreed. It was the least they could do for the Sect who was kind enough to give them a safe spot to sleep in this madhouse.

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

Chapter 600 600 Duels Are Sacred Tradition

Cain followed Penny back to where the rest of the group was, with Luna standing in front of the rest of his disciples, giving the challengers a look that promised violence.

"What seems to be the issue?" Cain asked the moment that he arrived, drawing the attention of the spectating crowd.

"These hussies turned down our generous offer even after I paid. I demand satisfaction." A middle-aged man in green robes insisted while Elder Ling rolled her eyes at him.

"Well, that's easy. I saw a fellow just up the road that will give you satisfaction for a few silver coins. Good luck with that, now are you done blocking the road?" Cain asked.

The crowd roared with laughter while Cain's disciples all came to his side, whispering about how the man and his friends made lewd requests of the Lotus Blossom Sect and wouldn't give up because they actually wanted a duel as an excuse to beat and injure them.

"You know that's not what I meant. I demand a duel to repair the damage to my honor from your insults and slander." The man insisted.

"Is there an arena here? The one in the Valley proved very informative, and the guards tell me that fighting isn't allowed in the streets." Cain responded, making the man and his disciples turn evil grins his way.

"Excellent, you accept then? Once we are finished with the do-gooder, we will deal with the rest of you." The man gloated, while the crowd's laughter slowly turned to murmurs of excitement.

Cain was about to ask again where the arena was when a powerful presence above them began to rapidly approach.

Two forms, one in Gold and one in Silver, landed between the two sides, each bearing the mark of a Sect Master.

"You, with the peach sash, explain what happened here." The man in gold demanded of Cain.

"I missed the start, but these gentlemen seem offended by my kind offer to find them a companion for the afternoon and demand a duel for the satisfaction of their honor." Cain shrugged.

"You, Disciple Hmong. Did you see everything?" The man in silver asked a young man in robes that matched his own.

"The men in green were harassing the ladies in white and the ones in peach, demanding favors the ladies refused. I was going to step in, but the Sect Master in black and Peach intervened to suggest that they would be happier with a male prostitute from the slums, and they didn't take it well." The disciple explained.

"Are you willing to duel them to allow them to restore their honor?" The Sect Master in Gold asked.

"One at a time or all at once, it makes no difference to me. I will happily show the world their Sect has no honor to redeem." Cain agreed.

Even Elder Ling went silent at that, and the tension in the crowd built rapidly until a loud burst of laughter echoed through the city.

"Master Cain, imagine that. I come to pick up a few essentials for the Tavern, and what do I see? You, goading another man into committing suicide in public." Master Moon laughed as he flew over.

Both Sect Masters nodded politely to the old man, recognizing his power and position.

"I do believe I spoke only the truth though. If they want satisfaction in the arena, I will oblige." Cain agreed.

"It is your right to duel for your honor, but I will warn you, it would be wise to simply walk away and take the loss." Master Moon told the man in green, who actually growled at him.

Cain checked his status quickly, to see if the man was a Lycan, but no he wasn't.

[Name] Dong Ma

[Level] 520

[Species] Human

[Awakened] Spirit

The others with him were only Mythic Awakened though, so if there were to be a fight, it would have to be in rounds against the disciples, or Cain would be accused of bullying the weak. Nobody would suspect that the two smallest girls in the group were also Spirit Awakened, so he should be fine on that front.

"I have decided. The Gods honor the strong. The challenge will be decided by a single matched strike between the strongest of each side." The Sect Master in Gold announced, and Master Moon shook his head in disappointment.

"Just try not to kill this one, it is hard on the reputation if you kill them every single time." Master Moon told Cain softly before jumping back into the air on his flying sword and gesturing to the arena.

Cain realized that he was in a bit of a conundrum. He didn't know how strong his opponent was, as he had never practiced telling them apart. Physically and mentally, it was Cain, but the other man might have a very strong hidden technique that could be an issue for Cain to match and beat without going overboard, or possibly even failing to overcome.

This wasn't the sort of fight that he usually had, so Cain wasn't entirely sure what to expect.

"You could use Cousin Neffie's Magic Punch," Luna suggested.

Fake a punch and kick him in the crotch? Tempting, but not very honorable.

"No, I think we will make this one a learning moment for Tena. I will use the twin dragons of light and dark to attack since they can stop themselves without killing the opponent." Cain decided.

The dragons did primarily Soul Damage, so the target would usually be left catatonic but not dead, and could be recovered with a couple of healing spells and a bit of time. It was among the finest of nonlethal attacks, though Cain had never seen a need for it, or had a Dragon Monk around before to see it in action personally.

He wouldn't have even thought of it if Tena hadn't gained the class and refreshed his memory.

"You don't have to do this, we can sort our honor on our own." Elder Ling whispered to Cain as they approached the arena, walking under the flying form of Master Moon.

"It is both my honor and my pleasure to fix stupid people," Cain told her happily.

That was only half true, the real reason had just appeared on his interface.

[Quest: Defend the honor of the Lotus Blossom Sect]

[Quest: Defend the honor of your disciples]

[Quest: Defend Luna's honor]

Three quests at once, all with bonus experience. Picking this fight was possibly the most worthwhile thing that Cain had done since he arrived in this world. Or it could be, depending on the amount of bonus experience that he gained from each quest.

The whole group in Green Robes had gathered in the arena when Cain arrived, and Master Moon was looking at them in dismay.

"What is this nonsense? That is not how an honor duel works." He muttered.

"I did tell them that I would happily whip them all at once if they so desired," Cain replied, but the Gold Robed Sect Master was already shooing the lower-ranked ones out of the arena.

"You morons, if you stand around for this fight, you will just die. One strike at full power from a Spirit Rank Cultivator is more than your bodies could withstand, even just the collateral damage." The Sect Master informed them before they finally left.

"If they really want to fight afterward, I can let them spar with one of the children. That should be close to a fair fight." Cain suggested, and a vein on his opponent's forehead began to throb.

Cain took a moment to wonder if it was actually possible for someone to get so mad that their head exploded, but that seemed a bit ridiculous, so he ignored the vein and focused on the fight.

The two contestants stared each other down as the two Sect Masters took their places on the walls, erecting a barrier that would keep the spectators safe.

"On the count of three, you may begin your techniques. Strength and speed both matter." The Gold Robed Sect Master decreed.

"3, 2, 1, GO." The other Sect Master counted, and Cain's opponent began shouting.

"Soul Devouring Immortal Power Bomb Blast" The man screamed, while Cain burst into laughter so hard he almost forgot to counter.

Using Versatility and dumping half of his mana into the [Twin Dragons] attack, Cain sent two dragons racing toward the growing black ball in the man's hands.

Black Energy met Black Energy, then the White Dragon surrounded the whole mass, opening its maw wide to swallow both its partner and the energy ball before continuing on to strike the enemy, who had raised a barrier in front of himself in defense.

His eyes rolled back, and blood began to pour from his mouth, eyes, and nose, but the two black energies canceled each other, limiting the effectiveness, and the Green-Robed man was still standing.

Well, sort of. He was clearly unconscious, all cognitive function destroyed by the attack, but he was still on his feet.

"That is the Twin Dragons? I have never seen them used that way before. Do you think the Dragon will want to see him in person?" Cain heard the Silver Robed Sect Master ask Master Moon.

"Possibly. He has a lot of secrets to him. He used Ice Dragon breath, or possibly Opal Dragon Ice breath, to shatter an equally matched cultivator in a single strike when he was challenged back in the valley.

I suspect that like Ancient Dragon, he is simply bored with the mundane passing of his life, but instead of curling up in a mountain to wait, he has started to wander in search of entertainment." Master Moon replied.

"So you think he is holding back?" The Sect Master asked.

"His Core is damaged. I think this is as strong as he is now, but if he is given time, he will quickly match my own level, and perhaps become much more deadly, thanks to the amount of knowledge that he possesses." Master Moon whispered, and Cain would have missed it if he had not been reading the men's minds.

The man in green raised a shaky hand to his mouth and swallowed a pill, bringing color back to his skin and clarity back to his eyes.

"We both stand. The first strike was a draw." The man declared, silencing the crowd.

Was he serious right now? They all thought he was a dead man for the first ten seconds after the strike. Or did he not realize he was unconscious on his feet for that long? But the crowd did admire his courage to try again.

"Was it enough to satisfy your honor? We can try again, or I can pick another skill. Perhaps Divine Lightning?" Cain suggested.

Divine skills were a hard counter to shadow skills, it would rip through his greatest attack like wet rice paper.

"You have proven your point. My Sect apologizes to your disciples for our uncouth behavior." The man said very formally, ignoring the blood still pouring from every orifice on his body.

"Likewise. I will endeavor to have my Sect show a more cultured and civil side to the world." Cain responded with a polite bow and left the arena so that the man could receive medical attention from his followers.

"There we have it, Master Moon. He is most definitely alive. Though I didn't expect him to remain on his feet, that is some impressive willpower." Cain told the Innkeeper, who shook his head in dismay and flew off to return to whatever errands had brought him so far from home.

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