

SPELLCRAFT 361

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 361: Diplomacy [Pt 1]

"Visitors, I once again thank you for your mighty efforts in subduing our enemies."

Freya was seated opposite me—no, all of us.

A desk separated her from us, and an empty chair was placed directly facing her. Our group stood behind the chair.

'That's for our representative, no doubt.' I observed silently.

Behind her were six Elves who served as her guards. One, in particular, looked slightly different, having a more distinguished armor.

'She's most likely the deputy.' I thought.

They were most likely organized in order to match our numbers. That made the members on both sides seven each—a total of fourteen.

I could sense their hesitation and skepticism despite how well they tried to hide it.

After saving Freya from the Demon Beasts and purifying the area, her guards arrived at the site.

They were initially wary of us, but Freya told them to back down and even treat us with absolute courtesy.

As strangers in Elven land, it wouldn't be strange if we were suspected or handled roughly.

However, considering the fact that we had just saved them from definite destruction, the Elves had enough common sense to be polite to us.

It wasn't just out of goodwill, but also caution—maybe a hint of fear.

'If they can defeat those monstrosities, and disperse that thick cluster of Miasma, how powerful are they?'

The Elves must have been thinking that way.

"I also apologize for the unsightly state you found me back then." Freya continued.

Her tone and expression were completely different from back then. At this moment, she indeed looked like genuine Royalty.

I smiled slightly and seized the initiative.

"It couldn't be helped, Princess. We also apologize for our abrupt visit." A bow accompanied my words.

I saw Freya smile a bit upon seeing my gesture. Nothing gave Elves a better impression of another than their etiquette.

Even if I was a human, my regard toward her and her people had earned me quite a high level of favorability. That much I was sure of!

"Thank you for your understanding. Apologies for my rudeness, but since this is a matter involving our two nations, I ask that your representative have a seat."

As I expected.

My smile widened, and I didn't move a single muscle.

"That would be me, then."

Fabian stepped forward from our composed row, and he flashed his royal smile at our Elf audience.

"Hm? Forgive my mistake. I thought your representative would be..." Freya turned in my direction.

"Ngh!" Fabian stifled an angry groan.

I nearly broke into a laugh, but I controlled myself. This was an important meeting between two sides of Royalty.

'Let's stay out of it...'

"Apologies for the confusion. I am a member of our Kingdom's Envoy. Our representative is none other than the man before you, Fabian Lestrome Indiavel. He is a member of Royalty—Prince and third son of His Majesty, King Albion Lestrome Indiavel himself." Still sticking to my polite speech, I did Damien Lawcroft's job and introduced our leader.

"Hmm, I see," Freya whispered, stealing a glance at Fabian.

"Indeed. As representatives of our respective Kingdoms, let us have a good discourse." The idiot Prince flashed yet another smile.

The other members of our team, as well as the Elves, were completely silent.

We all had to give reverence to Royalty.

"Then, please have your seat."

With Freya's permission, Fabian sat down and drew Damien closer to himself—same as how Freya had her deputy close by.

The rest of us were a considerable distance off.

"Now, then... shall we begin this meeting?"

We certainly discussed—if it could be called that—about a lot of things.

First was our motive for coming to the Elf kingdom unannounced, and the fact that they had not sensed our arrival since we came using Teleportation Magic.

Fabian did his best to answer properly, and his etiquette was considerably good.

When it came to Eastern Kingdom standards, he was impeccable.

His confidence and diplomacy were commendable. I had to admit, I was no match for his skills with words.

Unfortunately, he made one fundamental error.

'He's speaking to Freya as a fellow delegate... as an equal.'

Elf standards weren't so simple.

For humans, who had a great deal of pride and ego, when two representatives met, both sides would try as much as possible not to appear weak.

This is to ensure that the other side didn't look down on their Kingdom or have a condescending opinion.

Using this logic, Fabian spoke with quite a good amount of confidence and pride.

After all, he was a Prince speaking to a Princess.

'That's not how it should go...'

Elves already had their immutable opinions on humans.

While they weren't completely discriminatory, their racist qualities ran deep.

Just as how humans couldn't help seeing cattle or monkeys as what they were, Elves had their strict opinion of humans.

Of course, it wasn't as extreme as comparing us to animals, but we were still pretty inferior to them—in terms of culture and society.

Fabian didn't know this, so he ran his mouth without restraint.

'He doesn't notice how rigid her ears have become, and how they twitch at some moments...'

It wasn't just Freya, the other Elves also showed such signs.

That showed just how annoyed they were at Fabian.

If I didn't step in soon, perhaps things would turn out even worse. Which was why...

"Princess, I truly apologize for the brazen speech of our representative, as well as his lack of consideration in the tone he used. As we are only human, I hope you forgive us for this mistake."

As expected, the mood quickly switched.

"I accept your apology, Jared Leonard. Are you truly certain that you are not the actual representative?"

Her actions were rude to Fabian, a Royal in his own right, at best. But, who was I to judge?

I also quite enjoyed his flushed face as he stared at me with a "What the hell are you doing?!" look in his eyes.

"No, not at all Princess. I wouldn't be so rude as to lie to someone of your person."

"Understood. Then, I will keep your words in mind as we further our conversation."

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 362: Diplomacy [Pt 2]

Afterward, we proceeded with the discussion and talked about the proposed Alliance.

As expected, Freya was in no position to give a response, so she could only speak around the subject.

"You will need to have an audience with my mother, Queen of the Elf Kingdom. That means you will need to journey to the Elf Capital."

All of these were within expectation.

Usually, unwelcome guests would never be able to go beyond the Border City of the Elf Nation, but our positions were more favorable since they were in our debt.

"While you have properly emphasized the urgency of the situation, and we also see the danger of the Demons—as you have also stated..." The Princess said, staring at me for a moment.

I smiled faintly.

"... It will take some time before you are granted an audience with the Queen."

This was also expected.

"Ngh!" Another stifled groan came from Fabian.

I could tell that he was nearing his limits.

For someone who was so used to having his way, he probably wasn't very adept at being considerate.

'We saved them all, yet they're still being this stuck-up and uncooperative?!'

I was sure not only Fabian thought along those lines.

Personally, I also felt the Elves needed to be more open-minded, but their stance was respected. We Humans also had bureaucracies involved in our cultural and political affairs.

Why did it have to be different with the Elves?

'I remember how some Nobles also looked down on me and my idea when I was at the Royal Court. This is basically the same thing playing out...'

The only difference was that, this time, the humans were on the losing end—something Fabian couldn't handle.

I wasn't entirely unsympathetic, though. I had also experienced my fair share of the Elves' stubborn disposition toward humans.

Still, with enough smarts, and a well-established impression, it was possible to make them compromise.

But, that required patience.

"A backup squad will be arriving here within a few days. Once they arrive, and the entire matters pertaining to this incident have been settled, I will personally escort you to the Elf Capital myself."

That was a generous offer, to be honest.

It may have seemed like a common course, considering just how much we had done for them. Still, things could have gotten more dragged out if an immature Elf was in charge of this discussion.

'She's one mature Elf. How old is she? A hundred? Maybe older...'

I was initially a bit worried about the fact that a Royal Elf was the one in charge of the Eastern Border.

Who would have thought that it would play out even better than I thought?

"I see. Is there no way to quicken the process? We are indeed pressed for time, and the proper preparations for battle are also factors to consider." Fabian spoke.

From his tone, he was trying to find a means to shorten the time given to us. It wasn't a bad move.

However...

"Our lands have been devastated, and the surviving citizens need refuge, as well as a chance of hope. Unless you have a better suggestion concerning raising the morale of the very Elves you're thing to recruit, I would advise that you accept our reasonable offer."

Technically speaking, we weren't supposed to be having an audience with the Princess, and neither were strangers permitted to venture deeper into the Elf Kingdom—to the Capital for that matter.

Freya was being very understanding of our situation, but she was already getting quite agitated with us.

Both sides weren't wrong, but the cultural and oriental gulf between both races would inevitably lead to disagreement.

This was a Cultural Clash!

"Pardon my interruption, but I have a suggestion, Princess."

This time, everyone looked in my direction.

Freya's annoyed expression melted upon staring at me.

Clearly, she thought I was more reasonable and easier to deal with than our dear Prince. In fact, the reason for most of the Elf Princess' consideration toward our group was most likely because of my strong impression on her.

"Speak." Her tone was concise as she attempted to hide her satisfaction with me.

If she showed preference toward me, it could begin to send the wrong message to both sides.

"What the Princess has said is right. In consideration of the Elves, it would be best if we wait for the Backup..."

Elves had no Communication Magic Technology. While they could use Telepathic Magic, an effective range was required for it to function.

Therefore, they indeed had no choice but to wait for their brethren to arrive.

However...

"... What if we could shorten the waiting period?"

Freya controlled herself, so no surprised expression was made.

"What do you mean?"

"If you grant us—no, just me—permission, their arrival would be much faster than you have estimated."

It sounded preposterous and downright suspicious, but I could tell that Freya was interested.

"How?"

"Using Magic, Princess. As you are aware, we are able to utilize Teleportation Magic, and we have access to the technology that you do not."

Plus, they knew we were capable of defeating the Demon Beasts and purifying the city of Miasma.

Clearly, the Elves present—Freya especially— were aware that our capabilities far exceeded their own.

"Why should we trust your words?"

Her next question did not come as a surprise to me.

Readily offering to basically fetch their backup was altruistic, but also incredibly suspicious.

What if we simply used the opportunity to intrude on their territory?

Still...

"It would also be in both our best interests if they arrived on time. The advantages of an Alliance with the Elves far outweigh any merit gained by forcefully gaining access to your territories."

Judging from her expression, she agreed with me. Still, doubt lingered in her eyes.

"I believe we have proved some measure of our goodwill to you by coming to your aid. I ask that you put your trust in us once more. Besides, if you are still not certain of our sincerity, then, by all means, confine all the other members of my group here and let only me handle the transportation."

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 363: Grudge

"What?"

Even Freya had her limits. I had just said it was enough for just me to bring transport their backup.

Even if Teleportation Magic was possible in a group, it was too difficult for her to believe that a single Magic User—especially a young one like myself.

Still, my earlier efforts to earn her goodwill weren't in vain.

"I am also willing to have an escort from your end to accompany me, so they can monitor my activities. Surely, I wouldn't do anything as foolish as going against a representative of yours in your own Kingdom."

Freya's eyes faltered. She was calmly analyzing my words, no doubt.

'Shall we wrap this up?'

"For the future prosperity of our races, as well as a more efficient means of handling the current challenge that faces us, I humbly ask that you consider my suggestion."

After all, even though the Elves were trying their hardest to hide it, they also knew the truth.

'Time is of the essence!'

"Fine. We'll go along with your suggestion, Jared Leonard."

After a great deal of silence, deliberation, and counter-deliberations, Freya finally cracked. But, even with that—

"However, I shall personally accompany you to monitor your activities, and just how you plan on bringing them all here."

—She still gave conditions.

"Fair enough. I understand, Princess."

Freya smiled at me, and then turned to our leader—Fabian the Prince—to continue their conversation.

"Now, then, where were we?"

Even though Freya was now looking at Fabian, he too must have known at this point. No, not just him. Everyone in the room had to have been aware.

That, the two who were actually conversing as representatives of their respective Race were Freya... and me!

As soon as the both of us finished our discussion, there was nothing left to be said by the likes of Fabian.

And so, even if no one officially said it, the meeting had already come to a close.

"THAT BITCH!" Fabian growled, seething with pure rage.

His eyes glowed with malice, and the look on our Prince's face spoke volumes of his wounded pride.

"Who does she think she is? After we saved her from dying! After we helped with everything! She should just shut up and listen! Shit!"

Now that we were alone, Fabian was finally showing his true colors—revealing his emotions to his fellow humans.

He wasn't worried about being heard since Damien had already coated the room with interference Magic.

That way, no one could hear what was going on in the Private Waiting Quarters they gave us.

Since Elves didn't have Magic Technology, there was also no way the room would have been bugged.

Because of that, the Prince ran his mouth and openly displayed his frustrations.

It wasn't just him who was annoyed, though.

Every member of our group had some sort of dissatisfaction written on their face. Well, except Maria.

I could also see it in Serah's eyes that she too was a bit upset. For someone who reigned supreme, it must have been difficult to control herself when others looked down on her.

'I'm surprised she controlled herself so well...'

"And you, Jared, what were you trying to do, uh? This is a diplomatic visit! You made our Kingdom look weak by acting all subservient like that! No wonder she was able to push us around despite how much merit we incurred!"

At this point, everyone looked in my direction. Not all of their eyes contained malice.

In fact, other than Damien and Fabian, the rest probably just needed a proper explanation.

"You were warned against insubordination, yet you interrupted the Prince's efforts many times. Not only did you disgrace our group, but also the entire Kingdom. We will be seen as incoherent and docile, even though we are better in terms of power!" Damien Lawcroft spoke, glaring at me intensely.

The two idiots who spoke so grandly didn't even do anything worth mentioning while saving the Elves.

Everything was due to Serah's efforts in combination with mine.

I could have also handled everything myself, so there wasn't much difference. Yet, they ran their mouths and tried to assume roles of importance.

The truth was that these two were merely extras. They were diplomatic symbols of the Eastern Kingdom, plain and simple.

I did have my plans going forward, but none of these two were pertinent to the mission, other than to do what they were told.

But, I didn't have the time or energy to waste trying to make them understand. It was worth no merit to me.

'I'll just let them think what they want.'

As for their complaints about my actions, it was clear they only spoke out of spite. Anyone with eyes could see that the situation only improved anytime I chimed in.

It went to show the Prince's incompetence, and that wasn't my fault.

'You can't blame me for insubordination, when the leader is pathetic.'

I tried to give Fabian a chance, but he simply wasn't qualified. To make everything run smoothly, I would just have to take over at some point.

'Telling them will be a chore...'

So, I ignored their inquisition and addressed everyone present.

"Do not forget that I was the one who submitted this plan to his Majesty, and he approved. I will not ruin a plan that painstakingly made an effort to get approval for."

My eyes focused on each of them, one after the other.

"I know what I am doing. I only ask that everyone trusts me."

Serah. Ivan. Maria. Bradford.

As long as these four had their faith in me, that was more than enough.

"You know what you're doing, eh? Fine. That's fair enough..." Sarah finally spoke, staring at me with her ruby-like eyes.

I nodded with a faint smile.

"... Then, I hope you haven't forgotten your promise to me concerning this trip."

'Ah, that one...'

"I'm not having fun, Jared. I'm being as considerate as can be, but... I have my limits."

For a moment, I got a shiver upon hearing those words.

"All the more reason to hurry up with things." I laughed slightly.

"Good. We're all counting on you."

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 364: The Elf Princess [Pt 1]

Fortunately, Serah was on my side. With that in mind, I looked at the other three. They also nodded in response, flashing me their looks of support.

'Alright! Looks like I still have their trust.'

"Fabian Lestrome and Damien Lawcroft, I would advise that you control your dissatisfactions. Believe it or not, the Elves are also doing their best to control themselves."

Fabian instantly made to attack me with his words once more, but I raised my hand to shush him.

"I've had enough time to relax and collect my thoughts. I'll be heading off to fetch the Elf Backup. That way, we can quicken the process of seeing the Queen."

Fabian glared at me at that moment, but Damien quickly tapped the shoulder of his prince.

Somehow, that was able to shut Fabian up, as he only kept glaring and gritting his teeth at me.

"Now, then, if you'll excuse me..." I opened the door to the room and left everyone behind.

For a moment, I got a slight headache, causing me to grab my head a bit.

'Sigh...'

It had been a while since I functioned in a group where I had superiors and equals serving for the same cause.

The last time that happened was in my past life—when I was a member of the Heroes' Party.

After getting reincarnated, I had established groups—especially during the Demonic Disturbance—but, I was the leader.

No one could question my orders, and they had no choice but to follow my rationale.

Unlike back then, things weren't so simple.

'I thought I would be able to handle it, but... I'm a bit rusty.'

Either way, I just had to endure for a while longer.

'Let's go find Freya...'

After walking down the corridor and turning to the right, I arrived at the lounge where I was told to stay once I was ready to depart.

When we concluded our meeting, they decided to show us to a temporary resting area where we could rest before a better place could be provided.

However, I told them not to bother preparing anywhere better.

After all, we weren't going to be spending very long here.

Once that was settled, they took us to the area where everyone currently was. Freya told me to converse with my fellow group members, as well as gather my thoughts, before we headed to fetch the Backup that was sent.

I would have loved to go immediately, but I understood that her advice was also in consideration for her own end of the discussion.

She was probably also exhausted and needed time to prepare.

With that in mind, I decided to waste precious time doing nothing but listening to Fabian's words of complaint, as well as Damien's incessant support of his tantrums.

'Well, maybe there was a little advantage of being there...' I secretly smiled.

Once I entered the Lounge, I found no one there, so I sat and waited for the Princess. Since Freya heeded my suggestion, we would be going together.

Not long after, she arrived.

"I apologize for being late. Did you wait long?" She flashed me a smile.

It wasn't entirely sincere, but the face behind it held no malice. That was enough for me.

"You should have been able to detect that, right? Is there any point in asking that, Princess?" I spoke, rising from my seat.

My question shocked her—both my brazenness and the truth I had just stated.

"What do you mean?" As expected, her words hardly faltered as she maintained her position.

"Please, Princess. I understand these things well enough. The Elf Race has a deep connection to their environment. Your connection to every nook and cranny of this place is more than enough to detect even the slightest movement."

She must have been aware of how long I was waiting. That was most likely why she was already here so soon.

But, that wasn't all...

"I have to apologize as well. Forgive my comrades for their rude statements concerning you and your people." I bowed slightly.

I could sense it more clearly now—her flustered emotion.

"So, you knew...?" Freya whispered.

"Indeed."

Since Elves had a special connection with their environment through Mana, they could easily monitor and listen in to conversations.

Damien's Interference Magic was absolutely useless in the face of their deep connection to Mana.

As long as this was their territory, and Mana existed all around them, they could sense everything!

"Then, why did you not try to warn them? If you had used Telepathic Magic to warn your allies, we wouldn't have been able to listen in to your conversation."

Freya knew her stuff indeed.

That's right! The Elves were listening to every single word spoken among us. All of Fabian's complaints, every single inciting statement of Damien.

They heard everything.

"You are right. I could have... but didn't."

"Why? Are you not afraid to lose our goodwill?" Freya narrowed her gaze.

Sure, this was a perfect diplomatic card she could use against us. We couldn't exactly say it was wrong for them to listen in to our conversations, considering the fact that we were in their territory.

These were factors well within my calculations.

"Not exactly. While we operated as a group, the ones who actually rescued you are Serah Crimson and me. Besides, only two members expressed dissatisfaction with you and your people."

"But, one of them was your leader."

"I admit he made an error in judgment, but I would like to appeal that his aggravated emotion was a severe misunderstanding on his part. I am certain your end also has some dissatisfactions with us as well."

Once I said this, Freya gave me a piercing smile.

"You have quite a way with words, don't you?"

For the first time since the conversation started, I was finally seeing the Elf beyond her diplomatic mask.

Her gaze was sharp and fearless, and her smile was brazen.

It wasn't a bad look.

"Not at all. I just want what is best for everyone..."

"Really? And how exactly should we go about that?" At this point, Freya began moving closer to me.

'Welp... there's no going back from this point on. I might as well go for it!'

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 365: The Elf Princess [Pt 2]

"Good should be paid with good. Same as evil. One should also not go back on their word, especially one made at a diplomatic meeting—as a representative of your people."

"Oh?" Freya drew even closer as I said this.

"Even if my people have made some errors, I would like to bring to your remembrance that you have already given your word concerning an audience with the Queen."

The Elf Princess was now barely an inch away from me. I could feel her gaze on me. I could feel her breath.

'She smells nice... like flowers...' My thoughts shamefully added.

Why did I have such a weakness for this Race?!

"How do you know so much about us, anyway." She spoke, looking directly into my eyes.

Her green irises penetrated my brownish-yellow ones.

'I can't exactly give her the details, can I?' My lips nearly broke into a smile.

Deciding not to back off from her, I returned her gaze with full-on confidence.

If I took a slight step forward, our bodies would clash. Even if I was avoiding that outcome, we were already plenty close to each other.

"Legends and stories. Elves are quite popular among humans. We have a high opinion of you. It's a shame your kind doesn't share the same sentiment toward us."

I was being a bit loose with my speech, but Freya didn't seem to mind at this point.

Since our conversation had become informal, bothersome formalities had long been discarded.

If she could move closer than she already was, Freya would have done that. Her face was already a slight millimeter from touching mine.

"Why..." She whispered.

I gulped instantly, feeling the pressure of having an Elf so close to me.

Unlike the time with Ana or Maria, who were very young compared to my mental standards, I was dealing with an Elf here.

The impure thoughts I wasn't allowed to have when I was with the young girls began manifesting.

Elves simply had that kind of charm, and this one, in particular, was very bold.

"... Why can't I read you?" She asked, narrowing her gaze on me.

It felt like she could eat me alive with her eyes of extreme fixation. Freya's green-colored irises were a gem to behold, but not enough to cause me to falter, especially after that question.

"I wonder..." My response was vague.

Another advantage of being a member of Freya's blessed race was the ability to understand the surrounding Mana.

Unlike simply listening in and observing an area thanks to the Mana, they could completely break down the Mana around a person.

Using that, Elves could easily understand the intentions of anyone in close proximity to them.

Anger. Happiness. Malice. Pride. Humility.

Simple emotions were understood, and a facade put up by another party could easily be torn down.

This was one of the reasons Elves didn't think too highly of humans.

Having understood our nature and basic tendencies, they simply relegated us to a lesser standard and had very low opinions of our Race.

Even while Fabian was conversing with Freya, she was observing him thoroughly while using this special ability.

'That's most likely why she was so pissed at him...'

Of course, their capabilities in this field weren't unlimited.

Elves could only 'read' targets who were not as adept as them in utilizing the surrounding Mana. In essence, mostly humans.

Even among humans, there was one exception.

—Me!

Not only was I an expert at Mana Manipulation, but I could freely control Mana in my surroundings thanks to Spellcraft.

My skill in Mana Manipulation (Both internal and External) had far surpassed the natural advantage Elves had over humans.

As a result, even someone as skilled as Freya couldn't get a good read on my emotions or motive.

"I could have fooled you by showing you what you want, you know? But... I chose not to." My tone was low, and I kept staring passionately into her eyes.

By controlling the wavelength of my Mana, it wouldn't be too hard to produce a result that would give Freya whatever impression I wanted.

I could have also stopped my fellow humans from slighting the Elves. I had enough power and information to completely control this situation.

But...

"I don't want to manipulate anything. Consider this a part of my sincerity, Princess Freya. My goal is simply to bring about an alliance between humans and Elves."

After I said this, there was silence on both ends.

Only the sounds of our breaths could be heard. Human and Elf stood face to face, none budging or flinching.

"Fine. I'll believe your words." Freya said, finally stepping away from me.

'Huu...!' I nearly heaved in relief.

The intensity between the Princess and me nearly brought back some awkward memories.

"I will keep observing you, though."

She meant every word. I could tell since I could read her Mana and discern her intentions.

'Unlike me, Elves haven't actively trained to mask their true intentions...'

Why would they—especially someone like Freya—need to do something like that?

They were more adept at Mana than nearly every other Race, and humans could not dream of reaching their connection with nature through Mana.

I was simply an exception.

"That is more than enough for me, Princess."

"Hmph! Enough with the 'Princess' business. Call me Freya! I will also call you Jared. Do you object?"

'That's what I was hoping for. Thanks for bringing it up yourself.'

Still, who would have thought I would be able to get this close to her in such a short span?

"Then, I will do as you say... Freya." I smiled as I said her name.

"Urgh. That's a disgusting smile. Humans never change, do they?"

"Have you ever met a human before?"

"Uh? W-what are you suddenly talking about? Of course, I have!"

'Pfft! Lies. Pure lies!' I mused.

"Then, shall we get ready to depart?" I smiled, changing to a more pertinent subject.

"Huu. Sure. But, how exactly do you plan on reaching the Envoys? Even we don't know their exact positions..." Freya asked, looking at me with curiosity.

"Well, that's no problem."

After all, as soon as Freya permitted me, I had ordered a few of my Automatons on standby to scout for the Backup force.

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 366: The Elf Princess [Pt 3]

My constructs were quite fast since they were built for scouting purposes, so it didn't take them very long to scour every possible route leading to the Eastern Border—our current location.

And so...

"I've already spotted them. As you indeed estimated, it would have taken them about three days to arrive here."

"E—eh?! No way!"

... My spies had successfully spotted an army of a hundred thousand Elves steadily approaching the Western Border.

'That's quite a lot of them. Is it because the Princess is here?'

If there were to be a similarity between the Human and Elf Races, it would be their value for Royalty.

Freya's importance to the Kingdom, as well as then potentially losing a Border, must have been what prompted such a large army to have been dispatched.

"Now, then, shall we go fetch them?"

"J-just like that? I don't understand..."

It seemed she was losing her composure the longer she spent with me.

As much as I would love to test down her defenses and make her completely harmless, we were pressed for time.

"Let's go!" I swiftly approached her and closed our distance in a flash.

"Hold o—!"

Before she concluded her statement, a bright blue light enveloped both of us, and an intricate Magic Circle appeared on the ground.

>VWUUUUSSSHHH<

In a flash, we vanished from the Lounge.

Claudius rode upon his Magic Beast, diligently staring ahead.

His focus didn't waver in the slightest as he kept moving atop his loyal steed.

His hair was pure white, and his purple eyes seemed to possess some urgency.

The Elf's entire body quaked in anxiety, and he could not control the rising discomfort in his heart.

'Sister, please be safe!' Prince Claudius' thoughts were occupied with that single thought.

His Magic Beast, known as an Earth Dragon, belonged to the mightiest of Beasts when it came to transport.

Its strength and stamina were on another level, and it also belonged to a subspecies of the mighty Dragon Race.

Even though they weren't particularly recognized as a Major Race in the world thanks to their abysmal population, no one could dispute the fact that they were recognized as the strongest beings in existence

The Earth Dragons inherited some of their traits, and were also considered the mightiest of steeds.

Prince Claudius rode atop his personal Dragon—Drake—as he trod upon the Elf plains.

He wasn't the only one, though.

Behind him was an army that caused a great uproar and quake upon the ground as they marched.

While none were on Earth Dragons—since those were rare—they all rode Warhorses and charged behind their Prince.

Even though they were at full speed, none of the horses could even catch up to the Earth Dragon's steady pace.

In all honesty, Claudius could have easily overtaken them and gotten to his destination sooner, however...

"I have to be patient... I have to be..." Claudius muttered under his roughened breath.

He tried to avoid displaying his desperation, anxiety, and most of all... his powerlessness!

Despite his skill and tenacious spirit, the Prince was no fool.

He was well aware of his limits, and the fact that he alone couldn't defeat a horde of Demon Beasts.

That was why he made sure to keep a good pace with the rest of the Elf forces.

Unless he wanted to die a meaningless death, Claudius had to be patient and deal a deathly strike to the enemies that plagued their Borders.

Plus... he had promised his mother, the Queen, that he wouldn't be reckless.

That was the condition he had to fulfill so he could be allowed to join the Backup Force.

'Freya! Just hang in there!' He gritted his teeth, even more, staring into the far distance.

>BZZZZZTTTZZZ<

"... Uh?!"

>VWUUUUUMMMMM!!!<

Before Prince Claudius could fully comprehend the surge of energy that had just manifested, a spatial rift appeared, and two people came out of it.

The bright sparks of light vanished, and the warp dissolved, leaving only the two newcomers standing in the path.

"Who are those—?!" The Elf Prince gritted his teeth, wondering who would be so reckless as to appear in the way of a stampeding army.

His mind forgot about the fact that they had teleported thanks to his anxiety, and he gazed at them with ferociousness.

'Get out of the way!!!' He raged.

After all, his mission was important! If he didn't hurry, then... his sister—!!!

"Hold on..." The Prince squinted his eyes at the two people a small distance from him.

Sure enough, one of them was perfectly identical to the one he so desperately sought. She looked just like—

"F-Freyaaaaa!!!" He screamed.

Drake—his loyal steed—instinctively knew that his queue had arrived.

Slowing his pace, the Earth Dragon came to a halt, making sure it stopped a couple of inches from the Elf Princess.

"Freya, i-is that really you?!" Prince Claudius jumped from the Earth Dragon and dashed toward his sister.

This was too good to be true.

It was actually pretty impossible, Claudius was well aware.

However, at this moment... nothing else mattered.

The fact that he was looking at his sister at the moment was more than enough for him.

Then—

"Brother, you came!" The white-haired Elf raced toward him and buried herself in his arms.

Her warmth was real, the palpitation of her heart couldn't have been an illusion. Her flowery scent hadn't changed.

This was indeed his sister!

"You're... you're safe..." Claudius nearly broke into a sob at this point.

The girl, his sister Freya, nodded as she hugged him even tighter.

The atmosphere of a brother reuniting with his sister was so deeply emotional that both parties made sure to control their overwhelming emotion.

Family was important, so important that both members of royalty were shamelessly displaying such intense affection in front of so many witnesses.

Claudius didn't care, though. He was just happy to see Freya again.

And so, before the Elf Prince knew it, the tight feeling of anxiety and fear that was plaguing his heart... suddenly vanished.

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 367: Seething Emotions

It was a bit—no, who am I kidding? Extremely—awkward.

I simply stood there, watching as the siblings smothered themselves with love, not caring about those who watched.

The Prince was wearing silver armor, similar to what his sister had on. The design was intricate, and I could tell that it was meant for Royalty.

Behind the Prince, was the army my Automatons spotted.

I could see the uncomfortable and impatient looks on their faces. The General—a woman—was especially not very thrilled by this development.

Her brown hair and sharply earnest looks reminded me of that deputy I saw back when our group was talking with Freya.

Her emotion, same as that of the other Elf Soldiers, was seething.

I could understand why.

'They're worried about what happened to the Eastern Territory.'

The fact the Princess was here meant that she either abandoned the Borders, or that it had been obliterated.

I found it hard that someone with Freya's personality would abandon anything in her care, and I was sure the other Elves shared my sentiment.

But, fear and anxiety could often make a person think the worst of another.

In this case, it was more plausible that Freya fled.

At least, that would give the army some hope that there was still an Eastern Border to rescue... as well as someone to direct their negative emotions to.

'Many of them should have families, friends, or acquaintances there. It's no wonder that they readily mobilized even though they would be fighting Demon Beasts...'

Watching both brother and sister snuggle it up must have been quite agitating for the other Elves.

'Then... should I interfere?'

Fortunately, I didn't need to. The General beat me to the game.

She approached the reunited Elven Royalty and spoke up.

"Prince Claudius, Princess Freya. I think it's best to ascertain what exactly has happened to the Eastern Border." She bowed respectfully as she spoke.

As expected of the poise of an Elf. It never ceased to amaze me.

"O-Oh, that's true..." The Prince, addressed as Claudius, finally detached himself from his sister.

Freya too, realizing how thoughtless both their actions had been, took a few steps backward.

For some reason, she even looked at me with an embarrassed expression.

Like, what was my business with their family reunion?

'Don't drag me into this!' Was the stance I strictly took.

"What happened, Freya? The Demon Beasts. The danger... how are you here? What about... him?" Claudius shot me a glance, as though telling me he hadn't forgotten about my existence.

As expected of Elves. This discrimination is just a bit...

"A-ah, yes. Don't worry, the Eastern Border issue has been completely resolved. In fact, that's one of the reasons we came here..." Freya said, signaling me to draw closer to her.

'Aye, aye, captain.' I thought to myself, swiftly obeying her.

I stood a little behind her, bowing to both the Prince and the General behind him.

"May the Spirits bless our meeting."

They nodded, hiding their surprise at my etiquette.

"This man is a human from the Eastern Kingdom. He was sent alongside an Envoy to deliver a message of goodwill. They rescued our people from the Demon Beasts and even purified the entire area."

At this point, the General and Claudius couldn't hide their surprise.

They both knew better than to doubt Freya, so they could only stare at me with shock and awe.

"We teleported here to inform you about this, and also to resolve some pertinent matters."

As she rushed them with a lot of information, Claudius changed his gaze when staring at me.

Even the hardened General's face softened up once she realized that everything was fine.

It was supposed some time to explain to them, but thanks to Freya's articulate speech, she summarized the incident.

The whole thing didn't even last ten minutes.

Of course, the Princess made sure to omit some sensitive matters that could only be heard by Royalty, or those of importance.

Since the whole Army was present, it wasn't exactly the right time to divulge matters concerning the proposed Alliance.

Claudius and the General understood this, so they didn't ask about the several holes in Freya's story.

By the time she was done, everyone was looking at me differently.

Their gazes, initially filled with slight skepticism and suspicion, morphed into gratitude.

Claudius and the General especially thanked me, even going as far as bowing to express their gratitude.

"Please, don't do that. As we are still on existing protocol, let us meet somewhere more private to have an informal conversation." I smiled.

Both were surprised by my consistent utilization of manners, granting me more prestige.

Having no choice but to agree with me, the Prince and General decided to trust Freya's words and my judgment.

"Since Freya has demanded that the Backup Force reached the Eastern Border before any further action on your part is made, I will be ensuring you arrive there as soon as possible."

"H-hold on, you still think you can teleport this many people?!"

The moment Freya asked this question, I stared at her with a confident expression playing on my face.

"After spending so long with me, do you still believe any of my words are empty?"

"That... I just..."

She was at a loss for words.

Common sense and even advanced logic made it blatantly clear that it was impossible to achieve such Mass Teleportation.

It wasn't that she didn't believe me, but it was just beyond understanding; which was why I had to show her concept of what was possible and impossible was flawed.

"Then... show me." She smiled defiantly, gazing at me with a piercing gaze.

"Prove me wrong!"

A part of her appeared to be hopeful, excited even, to see what kind of miracle I would pull off.

That part was plenty for me to work on.

"Very well. Let's do this."

The other Elves probably thought I was crazy, but they couldn't refute Freya's words and my unhindered confidence.

So, they just fell silent and watched.

Their eyes were fixated on me, ready to witness a miracle.

'A hundred thousand, uh? I've never transported so many before...!' A smile formed on my face as I glanced around.

'... Is that what they think?'

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 368: Heading For Elf Capital

The Elf Kingdom had an abundance of Mana, so Spellcraft was even easier to use.

Gathering all the Mana and focusing it on a single location—that is, another Spell Card infused with the Teleportation Formula of the Tower Arcana—I activated the Transcendent Spell.

>VWUUUUUSSSHHHH<

The spectators were astonished, to say the least.

I smiled, watching them gawk at the brilliant display of white and blue light.

A massive Magic Circle appeared beneath everyone, enveloping the entire area in the Spell's Area Of Effect.

Before long, the one hundred thousand Elves were in my effective range, and all that was left...

"Brace yourselves."

... Was to activate the spatial warp.

The matter concluded rather swiftly.

I won my wager with Freya and got to see her speechless expressions. It was very well worth it.

The Elf Soldiers were equally amazed.

The General and Prince were also quite amazed. I could tell from the glints in their eyes that they wanted to have further conversations with me concerning my Spell Card and the concept behind the Teleportation Magic I used.

It wasn't the time and place for something like that yet, so I was able to avoid any direct confrontation.

As for the soldiers, they were told to rest from their long journey. The impatient ones were handled by the Border's military, and were allowed to see the survivors of the demonic onslaught.

Hopefully, their friends and families were among those who weren't killed.

To my surprise, Maya—Freya's deputy—was actually the General's daughter. I had spotted their resemblance, but who would have thought they had that kind of relationship?

'They look more like sisters...'

But, this was simply the disadvantage of the Elves' long life.

They all looked young and healthy. It was hard to tell who was older.

Once the touching reunion was done, it was time for a private discourse between me and the important Elf figures.

Freya and I agreed it was better not to involve any other member of our Envoy, so only I represented everyone.

It was basically insubordination, but for things to run exactly according to my wishes, I needed to be in control of certain situations. Since I couldn't completely control Fabian's actions, this was the best course of action.

We went to the reception, and discussed at length; Princess Freya, Prince Claudius, General Clara, and me.

The General—whose name I found to be Clara—gave me her thanks several times over before the meeting began.

Claudius did the same as well.

It turned out Freya was one of the more intense ones among the Elves. The other Elves were more receptive to me.

Could it have been because of their initial desperation?

'No. It's probably their personalities. This isn't too bad...'

And so, with an amicable atmosphere, we began our conversation.

Fortunately, things went more smoothly this time around.

I wasn't overly formal—it wasn't necessary—and we were able to resolve matters pretty quickly.

After I was done with my piece, I was excused from the meeting since the Elves had to discuss certain matters with one another.

I had a pretty good guess on what the subject would be.

'What will be their next step going forward?'

The Eastern Border had been severely damaged, and the Elf citizens who had survived were forced to live in harsh conditions as a result of most of the habitable houses being destroyed.

Not only infrastructure, but also supplies, had been devastated.

As a result, matters as simple as food began to become an issue.

Magic could do many things, so certain Spells existed to grant nourishment and alleviate hunger. But, those were only temporary measures.

Ultimately, food was a necessary element in the life of every living being.

The supplies in stock wouldn't last a few days, according to what I had observed from my scouts.

Temptation fell on me to listen in to the conversation they were having. Hearing valuable information would allow me to gain more useful cards in bargaining with our potential allies, after all.

But, I decided against it.

'I'll just let things flow naturally. Be patient, Jared... you've got this!'

The decision was made unanimously.

We would be leaving for the Elf Capital along with Freya and Claudius.

General Clara, and about a quarter of her backup squad would remain in the Eastern Border to protect the innocent Elves of the Border.

They would also ensure the security of their territory.

Though, after I offered to help transport the Elf citizens to the Capital, the initial plan was altered.

Since it was currently very dangerous in the Eastern Border, my suggestion was adopted. I was going to transport three-quarters of the Elf Soldiers, the Eastern Border citizens, our Envoy, the Prince, and also the Princess, to the Capital.

Freya had been initially concerned about me pushing myself too hard, but her worries were all for nothing.

With my current Mana Capacity, as well as the rich aid of the Elf Kingdom's Mana supporting my Spellcraft, using Magic had never been easier.

Leaving some of my Automaton to watch over the Eastern Border, I bid farewell to the area and focused on my mission in the next place we were heading to.

Then, using yet another dispensable Spell Card, I activated the Teleportation Magic.

"WHAT?!" An aggravated voice echoed in a massive tent's interior.

The owner was a bulky being who had a scaly appearance and obviously didn't look human. He was easily the size of a giant, and the peculiar look he had belonged to the Greens of the Demon Race.

There was most definitely no one in the Demon Army who didn't know of his identity.

Zenkiel Of Vert!

He was one of the Demon Lords, and his role was the most central of all of them.

As Commander-In-Chief, Zenkiel was responsible for the entire well-being of the Army.

Logistics. Strategy. Assault. Defense. He had to manage all of those affairs.

Even though he was busy with many things, Zenkiel never faltered. His task was performed with immense swiftness and accuracy.

Which was why he was able to receive this new report as soon as he did.

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 369: A Demon's Strategy

"H-how...? This is sooner than expected." Zenkiel growled, staring at the report before him.

According to what was written there, the forces of Demon Beasts sent to the Elf Kingdom had all been vanquished.

Not an ounce of Miasma could also be sensed in their territory.

"What's happening? This shouldn't have been resolved yet."

While the report hadn't mentioned the details concerning the incident—like how it had occurred or who the perpetrators were—basic facts like the utter annihilation of their Demon Beasts, as well as the dispersal of Miasma, were mentioned.

It was incredibly worrisome, to say the least.

Zenkiel had also heard of how the Eastern Kingdom was also able to eliminate the Demon Beast threat sooner than expected. Both their opponents were more troublesome than expected.

As a prime General, as well as an extremely intelligent Demon, the Lord was beginning to question his initial assertion of their opponents.

Underestimating one's targets was a fatal move, but the same could also be said concerning overestimating them.

According to the information he received from Blanc and her agents spread across the Eastern Kingdom, it was very obvious that the humans weren't major threats to them.

In fact, most of them were utterly mediocre.

Appropriate countermeasures had been placed for the few who could stand up to them, so they were no problem either.

Still, it was quite upsetting that the Elves were also betraying his expectations.

The Whites hadn't been able to invade the Elf territories thanks to their opponent's troublesome discerning abilities.

The intensity and purity of Mana there also prevented them from keeping a low profile while there.

That was why the probe attack had been to determine the Elf Kingdom's level of power.

The initial results had been satisfactory, but the sudden destruction of Demon Beasts made Zenkiel worried.

"What should I do...?" He murmured, gritting his teeth.

He needed more information, that was for sure.

"I should launch another probe attack on both parties," Zenkiel murmured.

The only way to get accurate reports was to experience them personally.

While he couldn't leave his position, due to several reasons, he had several trustworthy servants who could serve as his eyes and ears.

"Yes. I should send four of my Nine Stars. If they each lead an army of one thousand Demon Beasts, and launch assaults and multiple places at once, I'll be able to gain more intel."

Allocating two of his direct subordinates to the Eastern Kingdom, and two to the Elf Kingdom was the best step to employ.

'I'll make sure they attack separate spots so I can get more information...' Zenkiel's thoughts were in overdrive.

Now, all he had to do was acquire the pawns for the task from Kyron—the Demon Lord in charge of their Beasts.

While Demon Beasts were disposable soldiers, conscripting four thousand of them out of the blue wasn't exactly a simple matter.

However, as Commander-In-Chief of the Demon Army, he was allowed this much leeway.

"I'll just draft an order for him... or should I see him in person?"

As Zenkiel pondered on his options, the image of Kyron appeared in his mind.

If he was being frank with himself, the Vert Demon Lord didn't really like Kyron's personality. He had tried to get rid of this bias, but nothing worked.

"It always seems like he's planning something ominous..." Zenkiel murmured.

He despised people with conniving personalities the most. They weren't loyal, and their selfish actions often destabilized the much larger group.

Perhaps Kyron was different and he was just being paranoid. But, Zenkiel's instincts kept telling him he was right.

Which was why he was hesitant to visit his colleague in person.

However, after considering it for a bit, the Commander-In-Chief decided that a direct request would be much faster.

After all, they didn't have much time left.

"Huu... I better resolve this quickly."

For the greater good of the Demon Realm, and also for his King, Abellion, Zenkiel steeled himself for his decision.

The light around me flashed, and everything became blurry as we all warped.

As the scenery changed, a smile formed on my face as I swiftly replayed the expected incidents that would soon occur.

After Kahn informed me of the current ranks of Demon Lords, and I knew Zenkiel was now among them, it became a near-certain win for me.

I knew his Superior's methods inside and out, and Zenkiel was bound to follow the same route.

Everything that had happened so far was exactly as I predicted, which meant the next move would also fall within expectations.

'Zenkiel must be getting worked-up from the Denise of the Demon Beasts. Knowing him, he'll want to swiftly correct his mistake.'

To do that, he would need to acquire dispensable tools to test the waters and re-determine the level of threat both the Elves and humans posed against the Demon Army.

If I was right, he would launch simultaneous attacks on the Eastern and Elf Kingdoms—at a much more dangerous scale than before, no doubt.

Since I wasn't in the Eastern Kingdom currently, I was leaving the matter in capable hands.

As for the Elves, this was simply a better opportunity to score more points with them.

'I'll make you overestimate your enemies, Zenkiel. And, when you do...'

A broad grin formed on my face as I remembered the younger green Demon General from my Past Life.

'... You'll be playing right into my hands!'

>VWUUUUUSSSHHHH!!<

As soon as I concluded my thought, the bright light around me shimmered once more, and the landscape was completely different from before.

I now stood before a very massive gate, laying my eyes on tall walls that stretched for a long distance. They encircled a city, and the materials seemed highly fortified, as well as beautiful.

Behind me were the Elf Soldiers. Beside me were Elf Royalty.

So, even though I was a mere human, my sudden appearance before the massive gate didn't instigate violence from the wary Elf Guards who manned the city's garrisons.

I smiled, looking at the polished stones that made up the fortified City walls.

Memories came flooding in as I looked above me—witnessing a towering structure that seemed to sink into the clouds.

Bittersweet experiences flooded in, and I clutched my aching chest, softly whispering to myself.

"After so many centuries... I'm finally back."

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 370: Land Of The Elves [Pt 1]

The clear skies, glistening road, polished walls, massive gate, and the immensely powerful Mana in the atmosphere.

This could have only been one place.

"Welcome, humans, to the Elf Capital." Princess Freya and Prince Claudius took the lead as they addressed us with smiles.

Our team, with Fabian at the center, all marveled at the glorious display before us.

The Elf Capital had tall walls of polished stone, and the gate was large as well. One could only guess how amazing the City would look like within.

"I'll handle the Elf denizens and our soldiers, you handle the delegates," Claudius spoke to his sister.

She nodded instantly and bid her brother a temporary farewell.

"Come with me. I'll lead you to your guest quarters." Freya urged our group.

One look from her was enough to tell the garrisons to avert their suspicious glares and open the gates of the Capital.

Royalty was feared and respected among the Elves.

Not only were they longer-lived thanks to their closer proximity to the Sacred Tree, but their superior genes also made them more adept at Mana.

And so, even if the guards were wondering what mere humans were doing at the Capital, it wasn't in his place to question Freya's authority.

The City gates slowly opened, welcoming us to the glorious civilization of the Elf people.

"Alright. Shall we get going?"

Within the City were busy roads and large buildings.

It was amazing that they were able to build so many intricate structures without the use of Magic Technology.

It just went to show how very skilled the Elves were at the use of Magic.

Many people would have the mistaken idea that our long-eared neighbors were primitive and perhaps lived in thatched huts so they could be closer to nature.

However, their assumptions would be flawed.

Elves indeed were close to nature, and they also avoided technologies because of this very fact.

However, that simply meant that they found alternatives that were just as good as utilizing technology.

Mana was the very essence of the life of Elves, and unlike humans, these beings utilized it very freely.

Magic was as easy as breathing.

Thanks to that fact, and their immensely long youth, they were able to build a strong civilization for themselves.

Freya led us down the streets, and we walked behind her--well almost all of us did.

For some reason, the Elf Princess made me walk beside her and also began conversing with me about the earlier Teleportation Spell I performed.

I didn't know if she was just playing dumb, but, several Elves were already shooting us surprised looks.

Of course, the Princess still had the respected gaze of the people, so that meant I was exempt from the icy stares of the Elves since she was talking with me.

I kind of felt bad about the others who were behind us.

'Sorry, guys. This is all for diplomacy!' I apologized internally and made sure to engage the Princess in whatever we were discussing.

Even though I wasn't getting as many icy glares from the Elves, I could still feel a very strong one coming behind me.

It felt so close, and the fact that I was talking with Freya made it rude for me to avert my attention elsewhere.

But, upon using my sensory abilities... I found out it was actually coming from our diplomatic group.

As for the person responsible, it was none other than Maria.

'A-ah, I almost forgot... damn...'

Even though I had wanted to ask her lots of questions, it was quite difficult to approach her so I postponed the matter.

Now that things had gotten quite busy, I no longer had any free time to talk.

'Just hold it in, Maria. This is for the greater good. You understand, right?'

I knew she was most likely jealous since Freya was snuggling me all to herself, but who would have thought the stoic Maria would have such a side to her?

Her jealousy was unwarranted, though.

Humans had no appeal to Elves.

We weren't as smart, mature, or skillful as them.

They also kept their youth even after hundreds of years, but we were quick to age.

Of one added all the factors of being human, Elves would rather find members of their race attractive.

I mean, sure, I was handsome. But, I was only human, right? Give me a couple of decades, and then old age would catch up.

That was how things were.

For an Elf like Freya, who was over a hundred years old, what good would having a fifteen-year-old boy do to her?

'She'll still live for about three hundred years, or more. Compared to that...'

Still, even though my analysis of the Elves was perfectly logical, there remained some weird ones among their bunch...

... Just like one I used to know.

'Na. No one can be as crazy as that one!'

An Elf that would fall in love with a human. A weak-ass inept human for that matter.

There could be no Elf as crazy as her.

"I apologize for the rude behavior of my people." Freya broke me out of my thoughts.

I stared at the white-haired Elf with surprise written on my face.

It was rare to see an Elf apologize to a lowly human.

"Your comrades are receiving quite the number of stares, aren't they?"

Now that she brought it up, it was the perfect time to score more points.

"It can't be helped. I understand well. Humans suddenly walking through your capital are bound to attract attention. Based on your perception of our kind, this was the inevitable outcome."

I had offered to teleport us straight to our destination, but Freya told me it was better if the public knew of our arrival.

Since we would be forming an Alliance, they had to be aware at some point.

The sooner the better.

"Why did you single me out, though? Shouldn't it have been our leader?" I asked with a smile.

Freya's green eyes glimmered a bit as she returned my grin with hers.

I liked how she wasn't fazed at all.

"That's because I like you, Jared. You're a different case."