

Strongest 1001

Chapter 1001: Already Riding The Tiger's Back

The next day...

Vesta's eyes widened in shock when she saw the dozens of portals that William had summoned in order to help the One-horned Clan migrate inside his Thousand Beast Domain.

Polox had gotten the opportunity to enter it a few days ago, when he had become William's vassal. This was why he was very excited to have his entire clan migrate.

Unlike Vesta, Kira and Athrun looked at this scene with calm expressions on their faces. After signing the contract with William, the Half-Elf came clean and told him his real identity which shocked them to the bone.

Even after half a day had passed, their shock had still not waned, so when they saw the massive portals that allowed the One-horned Clan to migrate, they weren't in the right state of mind to be impressed by it.

As Demons, they had been told stories since they were young about the Dungeon Conqueror who was their mortal enemy. Even after several years had passed, this message was passed on to every generation to ensure that they would grow up knowing who their greatest enemy was.

When the Half-Elf removed his disguise and showed them his true form, both Kira's and Athrun's first reaction was to scramble away from him.

This move of theirs made Vesta roar in laughter because of how comedic they looked. The red-headed teenager didn't make any moves and simply looked at the two of them with a calm expression on his face.

After letting them know his true identity, the Half-Elf told them that he would give both of them until noon the next day to think about whether they would continue to accompany him or not. If they decided to part ways with him, all of their memories about him would disappear, returning them to a clean state.

That way, even if they were interrogated they would not be able to say anything. This was William's way of protecting them and himself from the repercussions that would come if his identity were to be exposed to the public.

"Have you two thought about what you are going to do?" Vesta asked after she had regained her composure. "We will be leaving soon, so it is best that you make your decision now."

Kira, who had a stubborn and straightforward personality, looked at her with a complicated expression on his face.

"You knew about his identity beforehand?" Kira asked.

Vesta nodded. "Of course. Do you think my father is blind? He knew who he was the moment he entered our Fortress City."

"If your father already knew then why didn't he do anything about it?" Athrun asked. "He is the son of his mortal enemy. Why didn't he arrest him back in Amberfang?"

Vesta crossed her arms over her chest as she eyed the two Demons in front of her.

"Back then, my father thought that it would be best to let him pass unhindered out of the Fortress," Vesta replied. "William's purpose here is to see his Master, and take her back to the Central Continent. Because of this reason, my father didn't think it was worth it to apprehend him."

"Are you mad that you've continued to let the son of the Dungeon Conqueror roam free through our lands?" Kira asked in disbelief. "You already saw what he was capable of. Do you think that letting him continue to travel through our domain is a good idea?"

Athrun remained silent on the side because, unlike Kira, he believed that the Demigod of the South had his reasons for letting William enter their lands.

Vesta smiled. "Yes. I had the same reaction as you, Kira. I thought my father was mad when he allowed him to leave our fortress unharmed. However, after seeing what happened between the One-horned Clan and the Greenskin Clan, I think that it would be best to observe him and truly understand what his goals are."

Kira clenched his fist. Although he wasn't as smart as Athrun, he also understood that William took a great risk in telling them his true identity. This was an unprecedented sign of trust, that the Half-Elf had risked in order to give them a chance to leave his side.

When he parted ways with William the night before, he had contemplated what he would have done if he was in the Half-Elf's position and felt ashamed.

Just the thought of Athrun and William calling him Bro and Big Brother, made him want to smack both of them silly. For a brief moment, he understood what the red-headed teenager was trying to tell them.

The Half-Elf didn't want the two of them to follow him blindly, only to be betrayed at the last moment. Kira was certain that if his respect and admiration for William grew to a higher level, the backlash of the betrayal would leave him damaged beyond repair.

It was then that Kira understood why William made them sign the contract to have their memories erased if they chose to part ways with him. This way, they wouldn't be burdened by the revelation they had been given.

In the end, Kira only breathed out a loud, and deep sigh as he scratched his head furiously, while trying to understand his real feelings.

Athrun had a wry smile on his face as he shifted his attention back to the migration that was taking place. He assumed that it would take a little more than fifteen minutes before all the members of the One-Horned Clan were safely inside William's domain.

That is also the amount of time left before the two of them needed to tell the Half-Elf their decision—if they would continue to follow him, or part ways with him forever.

Vesta no longer bothered the two Demons who were deep in thought. Right now, she was very tempted to sneak inside one of the portals to see what the black-haired teenager's Domain was like.

She had heard about portable Domains from her father in the past, but Joash said that they were very rare and very hard to maintain. Even a Demigod like her father didn't own one, so that proved that not everyone could have a Domain of their own that they could take anywhere they went.

A few minutes later, the migration ended and all the portals disappeared completely. Vesta had managed to convince William to allow her to enter his Domain because of various reasons, which made the Half-Elf chuckle with amusement.

Vesta pointed out that this was the least that William could do for dragging her into this territorial dispute, so the Half-Elf decided to let her have her wish.

Actually, this was also part of William's plan in order to get Vesta to take his side completely. He had arranged a powerful line up of Earth snacks, and desserts that would get the green-haired beauty addicted.

As a final push, he also asked Chiffon to take Vesta to the theme park and let her try out the different rides. William was sure that at the end of the day, the daughter of the Demigod would be unable to leave his side due to the luxuries that only he could provide her.

'Hmp, you thought that you could one-up me, Joash?' William chuckled internally. 'I now have a hostage in my hands. If you do something funny, I'll let your precious daughter understand what it means to go against me!'

Those were William's thoughts as he watched the curious Vesta enter one of the portals that led to his Domain. Optimus was monitoring her vital signs and making sure that she wouldn't do anything funny while she explored the world that she had never seen before.

After making sure that no one was left behind, William flew towards Kira and Athrun who were standing on the balcony of the Patriarch's main residence.

The Half-Elf didn't bother to take the crude city inside his Thousand Beast Domain because the Deadlands would be more amazing after it was properly rebuilt. This was one of the reasons why he asked the Clans to migrate.

With that amount of free manpower to help him fix the dilapidated city, it would only be a matter of time before he could enjoy Earth's specialities within the comforts of his own Domain.

"Have the two of you decided?" William asked as he landed a few meters away from the two Demons who were looking at him with complicated expressions.

"Before I answer, can I ask a question first?" Kira asked.

William smiled before nodding his head. "Sure. I don't mind."

"Tell me, do you plan to conquer the Demon Lands in the future?" Kira asked. This was something that had been troubling him ever since he saw William's display of absolute power a few days ago.

He hadn't seen how Demigods fight, so he had no idea how strong they were. However, when he saw William on that day, a brand new world had opened up to him. The young geniuses and prodigies he had known in the past couldn't even compare to the black-haired teenager that was standing in front of them.

It was then that Kira realized that he was still a frog in the well who didn't understand how the world worked. With such a powerful being wielding that gigantic golden staff in his hand, he wondered if there was any creature in existence that could beat William in a one-on-one battle.

"I don't think he is that interested in building a faction here in the Demon Realm," Athrun who had remained silent beside Kira spoke out his mind. "Also, he was the one that conquered the 51st Floor of the Tower of Babylon not long ago. He has his own territory to manage, as well as this Domain that he carries with him. I don't think that he would have any interest in dabbling in Demon Politics."

William smiled before nodding his head. "You're right. I don't have any intention to dabble in Demon Politics. It is not my style to settle down in the Demon Continent and expand my territory. Make no

mistake, I only came here for my Master. After my duty here is done, I will take my leave. Perhaps, we won't even see each other again once I've returned to the Central Continent."

After hearing William's answer, Kira gulped before he asked his second question, which had been nagging his mind since he became aware of the Half-Elf's identity.

"I know your father is the Dungeon Conqueror, and I understand that there can only be one person to have this profession at a time." Kira stared at William long and hard as he gathered up his courage to ask him the question that mattered the most to him. "Are you perhaps his successor? Are you... the new Dungeon Conqueror?"

William gave an amused look before nodding his head.

"Yes. I am the Dungeon Conqueror of this generation," William replied. "So, have the two of you made your decision?"

Kira and Athrun exchanged a glance before nodding their heads.

Both of them thought that since they were already riding the tiger's back, they might as well ride it all the way.

Chapter 1002 – Talking To The Big Boss

Caspian, who had retreated all the way back to his Domain, had locked himself up in his room, leaving his steward to manage the daily affairs of the Clan for the time being.

His confrontation with Raymond Parker (A.K.A William) had left a lasting impression on him. He didn't regret ordering a retreat because he knew that if he and his Clan had stayed even a minute longer, all of them would have definitely been charmed by the Incubus Progenitor that had appeared in front of them.

Looking at the mirror on the wall, Caspian forced himself to stand up from the bed and gaze at his own reflection. He could still hear the teasing voice of the black-haired young man, and it made him wonder if his subordinates had heard him.

“Tell me, are you a man or a woman? How are you able to command the Impundulu if you’re not a Witch? Don’t tell me, you’re a woman pretending to be a man?”

Caspian clenched his fist when this memory surfaced inside his head. The Impundulu was his greatest trump card, and for someone to recognize its true name only meant one thing. That person either studied Witchcraft or Dark Magic.

“Is he a Vampire or an Incubus?” Caspian muttered as he continued to stare at his reflection in the mirror. In the end, he shook his head to clear the thoughts that were starting to consume him.

“Vampires and Incubus can both practice the Dark Arts, so it is not impossible for him to know about Impundulu’s identity,” Caspian stated as if trying to reassure himself. “That’s not the real issue. He knows that I practice Witchcraft. There is also a possibility that he knows Impundulu’s weakness.”

Caspian sighed as he pressed his hand over the mirror’s surface. “I only have two options. One is to kill him, the other is to silence him...”

Caspian knew that the first option would be hard since his opponent could charm his army if given the chance. Even if he commanded three Myriad Beasts, he had a feeling that it would still not be enough to defeat the black-haired teenager who had pushed him into a corner.

“Silencing him might be the best option,” Caspian muttered. “I need to keep this secret and not let anyone discover it.”

After making up his mind, he decided to wash up and leave his territory under the cover of the night. He didn’t bring any of his men with him because doing that would be suicidal. He was confident that he could resist the Incubus Charm to a certain extent, but his subordinates were unable to do that.

“It is better to be safe than sorry,” Caspian said as he flew in the sky, while riding on the back of a winged tiger. Right now, the agents of the Demon Lord were scouring the lands in search for anyone who had an ounce of Dark Magic in them.

As one of the Patriarchs of the Major Clans in the Demon Realm, he was able to hide his ability well. If news reached the ears of the Demon Lord that he had evaded the selection for the candidates of the Dark Prince, things would become difficult for his Clan and he didn’t want that to happen.

Right now, the Rajah Clan was stable under his rule. However, if he was forced to go to the Ancient Ruins where the other wielders of Dark Magic were gathered, he would have to hand his authority over to one of his relatives, which would definitely be a bad idea.

Internal struggles in Clan Politics were quite common, and if those who had evil intentions managed to sniff out this piece of information, they would be able to use that excuse to send him away, and usurp his position while he was being detained in the stronghold where the chosen candidates were gathered.

He had no intention of becoming part of the prophecy. All he wanted was to secure the position of Patriarch that his mother had sacrificed her life for. Even if he had to plead he would do it. During the battle, one of the Patriarchs, as well as his aides, who now served under William was present during the battle.

He was afraid that William would conspire with these Patriarchs to send news about his ability, which would immediately make the sleeping vultures in his own Clan wake up from their slumber and swoop down from the sky to grab this juicy opportunity.

“I need to find him,” Caspian said with determination. “And I need to find him fast.”

Meanwhile inside the residence of the Greenskin Clan’s Patriarch...

“Oh? The Patriarch of the Gremory Clan wants to talk to me?” William arched an eyebrow when he heard Dozedar’s words, who was missing his left arm after Medusa had eaten it.

“Yes,” Dozedar replied hatefully. “His messenger is here, and waiting for you in the conference room.”

Dozedar then pointed at his three subordinates and ordered them to take William to see the messenger of the Patriarch of the Gremory Clan. After his arm was bitten off by the purple-haired girl who had appeared out of nowhere, his hatred for the black-haired young man grew to unprecedented heights.

However, since the gap in strength was so wide, he had no choice but to smolder the anger in his heart, and try his best to not provoke the Vampire who had barged inside his residence.

Unfortunately, the hatred in his heart could not be controlled so easily, so he wasn't able to stop himself from glaring at the man who could end his life with a single slap. He knew that this was complete suicide, but he wasn't able to stop himself, even though he tried to hide it.

He had never suffered such grievances in his life before, and he was finding it hard to adjust to his new circumstances. As one of the satellite branches of the Gremory Clan, he had received plenty of benefits from them.

This was why they were able to subdue two Minor Clans in a short period of time. The One-horned Clan was supposed to be his third conquest, but all of it came to an abrupt halt when the young Vampire appeared in his life.

He had become Dozedar's nightmare and, if possible, he didn't want to see him ever again.

William ignored the hate-filled gaze that was directed at him. If this was any other occasion, he might have slapped the Demon and sent him flying towards the wall. But right now, he wasn't in the mood for that.

After entering the conference room, a handsome demon with two small horns protruding on his head gave William a respectful bow before stating his name.

"I apologize that I am unable to give my name to you, Lord Raymond Parker," the handsome demon said with respect. "My Patriarch sent me a message that he wants to talk with you in private."

The handsome Demon then placed a round mirror on top of the conference table and bowed his head to William before leaving the room.

The Half-Elf glanced at the mirror and shrugged. Although he knew that there was going to be some kind of negotiation, he didn't expect that he would be talking to the Big Boss of the Gremory Clan.

Deep inside, William was quite curious to know the identity of the current Patriarch of the Gremory Clan, who had ensured that one of his own was seated firmly on the throne of the Demon Lord.

Depending on the outcome of their conversation, William might have to change his plans in order to reach the results he was aiming for.

Chapter 1003: There Will Be No Next Time

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Raymond Parker," Alvah, the Patriarch of the Gremory Clan, said with a smile. "I've heard of your grand exploits, and I am quite honored to talk to you face to face."

William gave Alvah a brief nod. He had expected that the Patriarch of one of the Major Clans, who the reigning Demon Lord's family belonged to, would use threats or intimidation to deal with him.

He didn't expect that the latter would treat him in an amicable manner, which made the Half-Elf click his tongue internally.

'This person is a schemer,' William thought. 'As expected of one of the Big Shots of the Demon Realm.'

Alvah observed the black-haired young man in front of him. He had been to several gatherings between prominent clans and families, and he was doing his best to try to remember the person in front of him, but no appropriate match came to his mind.

Seeing that the young man didn't plan on saying anything, Alvah decided to continue the discussion, and settle the matter with the Greenskin Clan as peacefully as possible.

"I've heard that the One-horned Clan had become one of your vassals," Alvah stated. "The only reason why the Greenskin Clan tried to make them submit to their rule was because they weren't affiliated with any Demon Clan."

"Now that they had their own Lord to serve, I don't see any more reason for the Greenskin Clan to provoke them. Don't worry, Mr. Parker. From this moment onwards, the Gremory Clan, as well as our Vassal Clans will no longer look trouble for them. All I ask is that you leave the Greenskin Clan alone. That way, we can continue to be good friends. What do you say?"

William smiled in his heart because Alvah still used a subtle threat to tell him that if he touched the Greenskin Clan, the Gremory Clan, as well as their Vassal Clans would not like it.

'In the end, he wasn't able to stop himself from using his position to threaten me,' William mused.

Dozedar, who was standing at the corner of the room, clenched his fist as he stared at the young man's face to see any kind of change in his expression. Unfortunately, William's calm expression didn't give him the answers he was looking for.

A few minutes passed in silence as William stared at Alvah without blinking. The latter stared back at him with a confident expression on his face. Alvah had dealt with all the Patriarchs of the Major Clans in their realm, so he knew that person in front of him was testing his resolve.

After who knows how long, William chuckled as the corner of his lips curled up into a smile.

"You blinked first," William stated.

"Excuse me?" Alvah replied.

The Half-Elf crossed his right leg over his left, as he gave Alvah a winning smile, which made the latter arch his eyebrow.

"I only deal with smart people," William declared. "Those who play dumb are people I despise the most. Being sour must be a trait of the Gremory Clan."

Alvah smiled after hearing William's words. He then briefly nodded his head as he eyed the young man in front of him.

"You're right. It is unbecoming of someone of my status to play dumb," Alvah replied. "I apologize, Mr. Parker. I did indeed blink first."

"A man who admits his wrongdoing is an admirable person. It seems that there is still a possibility for negotiations."

"If you have any conditions, I am willing to hear them, Mr. Parker."

William was quite impressed by how eloquent the old man in front of him was. Instead of saying he was willing to hear his demands, Alvah said conditions, which had a softer tone, indicating that he would listen to conditions and not demands.

'This is the type of person that my Grandpa likes to bully.' William's smile widened as he thought fondly of James, who disappeared after taking the two little pink-haired girls, Maple and Cinnamon, with him.

William lightly tapped his armrest before stating his conditions to Alvah, who reminded him of a traitorous snake that would sneak attack him if given the opportunity.

"First things first, I'd like to inform you that I no longer have an interest in the Greenskin Clan," William declared.

"Oh? That is quite reassuring," Alvah replied as his mood became a bit better after hearing William's words. "But, allow me to sate my curiosity. What made you change your mind?"

"Because they are weak."

"Weak? I don't understand what you mean, Mr. Parker. Can you elaborate?"

Dozedar, who was standing at the corner of the room, gritted his teeth in anger after hearing William's words. His clan was a rising force in the Southeastern Region of the Demon Realm. Although his Clan wasn't at the level of a Medium-Sized Clan at the moment, he believed that he would reach that status in two to three years time.

"I smacked him once with my staff and he was sent flying," William replied with a shrug. "I have no need for weaklings."

Dozedar's face turned beet-red after hearing William's explanation. He cursed the black-haired young man inside his heart up to his tenth generation for being shameless.

'Anyone who got hit by a staff that was as big as a castle would be sent flying! Even Polox suffered the same fate as me back then! You shameless bastard!'

Those were the words that Dozedar wanted to shout so badly, but didn't have the courage to do so. In the end, he almost suffered an aneurysm for holding his anger in, making the muscles on his head bulge under his skin.

"I only came here to inform you guys that I don't plan to take this second rate Clan as one of my vassal," William stated before standing up. "Well then, I am a busy person, I will be taking my leave."

William didn't even bother to hear Alvah's reply as he left the room, leaving the Patriarch of the Gremory Clan deep in thought.

'Raymond Parker... this person is not simple,' Alvah thought as he watched William's retreating back. The happiness he felt earlier had long disappeared because it was replaced with uncertainty.

He had tried to probe William's goal in the Demon Continent, but the latter ended the talks on his own accord without even giving Alvah time to gauge his character.

"Dozedar."

"Yes. My Lord."

"Don't provoke this person again," Alvah ordered. "There will be no next time. Do I make myself clear?"

Dozedar felt cold sweat stream down his face because Alvah's expression was menacing. He bowed his head in fear, and was only able to breathe in relief after the connection was cut.

William boarded his carriage, and a few seconds later, it soared in the air while being pulled by Maximus.

Flying beside him were Vesta's, Kira's, and Athrun's carriages.

The two Demons had decided to continue their journey with William because they wanted to know more about him. The Half-Elf didn't mind their company because he could tell that the two were sincere in their decision.

With this small incident finally over with, their group once again returned to their journey to the North. They were not aware that the rumors of William's deeds had already traveled far and wide. This made the Major Clans weary, while the Minor Clans felt hope.

In the end, this small interlude had caused the Major Clans to treat their vassals better, so they wouldn't choose to rebel against them. Although it was a small change in the policy of these Major Clans, it still made the lives of the Minor Clans more bearable.

The weak and oppressed Clans then started to worship William, and prayed fervently that he would one day cross their paths. That way, they would be able to ask him for his help, and allow them to live better lives, that were free from the daily suffering that they were forced to endure.

Chapter 1004: Making Vesta Fall

"What is this?!"

"What is that?!"

"How is this possible?!"

"How can this possibly exist?!"

"This tastes so good!"

Vesta had been asking questions left and right after she was taken to the theme park by Princess Sidonie, according to William's orders.

After experiencing the things that the theme park had to offer, as well as the delicious food that was unique to Earth, the green-haired beauty suffered a case of culture shock, which blew her common sense away.

"Fufufu, just a little more, and she will fall," William grinned evilly as he held Princess Sidonie's hand. "Good job, Sidonie. This little girl will soon be in our hands."

They glanced at Vesta who was currently eating a cake with Chiffon, which was baked by the Elves using a recipe book he had given them with devilish looks on their faces.

"Fufufu, I'm very happy that you think that way, Will," Princess Sidonie replied. "How do you want me to train this girl? Do you want her as a pet? A slave? Or a bed warmer? As long as you wish for it, I will make it happen."

"Hahaha... I think I'll pass," William replied because he could feel Ashe's and Princess Sidonie's fingers resting on his waist. He was sure that if he said the wrong answer, his succubus and mermaid wives would pinch and twist the skin on his waist, making him feel a world of pain.

"Seriously, are you planning to make her your wife as well?" Ashe asked. "She's the daughter of a Demigod from the Demon Continent. You might be biting off more than you can chew this time, Will."

"I agree with Ashe," Princess Sidonie replied. "I'll be fine if you treat her as a pet, a slave, or a bedwarmer, but a wife's position musn't be taken lightly."

"Don't worry," William said as he kissed both of their cheeks in order to pacify them. "Even if she begged to become my wife, I won't even consider it."

"Awww, I love you, Darling!"

"As expected of my husband. You understand me."

Vesta, who was eating her cake, almost choked because the three were talking about her, while sitting right across from her. They didn't even bother to lower their voices, and let her hear everything, which pissed her off.

Chiffon giggled as she offered Vesta a cup of water, which the latter gratefully accepted.

"Don't mind them, Vesta," Chiffon said with a smile. "They are just joking."

"R-Really? It felt as if they weren't joking, especially the part about me becoming a pet, a slave, or a bedwarmer."

"Haha, don't worry. I promise you that I will eat you before that happens. So, rest assured."

Vesta looked at the smiling, adorable pink-haired girl that had accompanied her since she entered William's Thousand Beast Domain.

After introducing herself as one of William's wives, she took Vesta on a tour of the theme park, which was still closed to the general public. There, the green-haired beauty enjoyed the rides, and ate the unique foods delivered to them by the Elves like chocolates, potato chips, crepes, and milk tea.

"Eat me?" Vesta blinked. "How?"

Chiffon covered her lips and giggled. "You will only need to worry about that if you fall in love with my husband. So, don't fall in love with him, okay?"

"Fall in love with him? How is that even possible? I have high standards, you know?"

"I'll believe you for now. However, if you ever feel that you are starting to develop feelings for him, come and see me. I'll eat them for you, okay?"

"Um, I don't really understand what you're saying, but okay?"

Vesta asked for another slice of chocolate cake, which she found quite delicious. She had eaten many desserts in the past, but this was something that she had never tried before. As someone that had been born with a golden spoon in her mouth, she enjoyed the best of everything in the Demon Continent.

This was why seeing and eating things that she had never tried before was a luxury that made her happy.

"Vesta, after you finish eating that cake, you need to return to the outside world," William replied. "Your two servants were pestering me earlier to let them see you, but I refused. You have to come out and deal with them yourself."

The green-haired beauty sighed as she nodded her head. She had asked earlier if she could bring her two shield maidens, Ali and Ari, with her to the Thousand Beast Domain, but William refused.

The Half-Elf only allowed Vesta to enter because she was a potential ally that he could work with while he was in the Demon Realm. Although he didn't mind letting her shield maidens enter the Thousand Beast Domain as well, he needed to make an impression that only "his" people could enter it.

Since that was the case, the two shield maidens were forced to remain in the outside world and look after the flying carriage, while their Master was away.

Half an hour later, Vesta finally left the Thousand Beast Domain, in order to pacify her two retainers, who had been worried sick about her because she had been gone for almost a day.

After the Greenhaired beauty left, another presence appeared inside the Villa, which made William smile.

"Lilith," William stood up as he walked towards the Amazon Princess, and gave her a hug before kissing her.

Lilith returned his gesture because she was quite happy with the reception she was getting.

She was currently in the Amazon Empire taking care of her duties as one of its Princesses. She had also talked to her mother about the good news, and asked her to not send any more Amazons to William, with the goal of taking his seed, so that they could give birth to strong children.

Empress Andraste was quite happy that her daughter was able to snag William and make him her fiance. Although she was a little disappointed that she couldn't let her warriors enjoy the Half-Elf's affection, she still respected Lilith's wishes, and promised that she would no longer insist on having her warriors sleep with her daughter's fiance.

"Is everything settled in your end?" William asked.

Lilith nodded. "Yes, but I have to stay in our empire for the time being. The recent movements of the Demons have also alerted my mother. Our warriors are preparing for any unexpected moves from the Demon Continent. The Elven prophecy isn't helping either, and the Aiur Empire, which is closest to the borders of the Demon Lands, is currently on high alert."

William nodded his head in understanding. Lilith then took this opportunity to whisper something in his ear, which made the Half-Elf grin mischievously.

Lilith blushed before burying her head on William's chest. She had told her beloved that she missed him terribly, and asked if he would be staying in the Villa later in the evening, so that they could spend some quality time together.

William was more than happy to shower his Amazon Princess with his love and make sure that she is watered properly. Lilith still hadn't given up on her desire to give birth to her daughter, Raizel, as soon as possible.

While the two were whispering words of love in each other's ears, Princess Sidonie cleared her throat, which made Lilith glare at her.

The two of them still hadn't fully worked out their rivalry with each other. In fact, it had even intensified after Lilith became William's fiancée. Only Ashe and Chiffon treated Lilith as one of their sisters who loved William just as much as they did.

"Oh, before I forget, Mother asked me to pass a message to you," Lilith said with a serious expression on his face. "In the North of the Demon Realm, an ancient ruin was unearthed recently.

"According to my mother's informant, all those who wield Dark Magic have been brought to that place. It seems that it was some kind of Holy Land for users of Dark Magic in the past. She added that you should stay away from that place as much as possible."

William nodded as he kissed Lilith's forehead, and thanked her for the news.

He then bid his wives, and lovers goodbye before returning to the real world. Truth be told, the moment he stepped into the Demon Continent's borders, there had been a faint, but steady, feeling of attraction coming from the North.

After hearing Lilith's news, he finally understood the reason for the weird sensation that he was feeling out of late.

'Holy Land for Dark Magic users?' William thought. 'Sounds like a pain in the butt.'

Although he was curious, he had no intention of visiting that place, which was now heavily guarded by the forces of the Demon Lord.

As for the movements of the Demons? He didn't care much about these things either. William didn't think of himself as a hero, or a policeman, that was responsible for keeping the peace of the world.

He had his hands full with his wives and the people important to him. Worrying about the affairs of the Central and the Silvermoon Continents was not his problem. That was the responsibility of those who wore crowns on their heads.

For others, they would jump at any opportunity to gain riches, influence, and power. William was not one of those people. If possible, he wanted to live a simple and happy life free from the struggles of war with his wives.

This was the wish he had wanted long ago, but the circumstances had forced him to fight again, and again, for the sake of those he held dear in his heart.

William sighed as he stepped outside of his carriage. Their journey to the North would be a long one. He just hoped that when he arrived at his destination, he would easily find his first crush, after reincarnating in the world of Hestia.

Chapter 1005: Welcome To The Isle Of Desolation

"Is everyone here?" Felix asked as he stood on the platform overlooking all the Demons that were lined up in front of him.

All in all, they had gathered over eight hundred users of Dark Magic, and had brought them all to the stronghold that was built at the outskirts of the Ancient Ruins.

More than half of them were the young geniuses and prodigies of the Demon Realm, while the remaining were the people who had taught them Dark Magic.

It was not only the members of the young generation that were drawn to the Ancient Ruins. Even those that had studied the Dark Arts for a very long time were being called by the Ancient Ruins, so that they could take a pilgrimage and visit the Holy Lands that were made for them.

Some of these geniuses and prodigies had Masters of their own, who had taken them to the ruins, to better understand the sensation that was urging them to head North.

Of course, there were exceptions to this rule like Adam.

Contrary to what people believed. Some wielders of Dark Magic weren't taught by Masters of the Dark Arts. There were several individuals who were born with this attribute, and being able to wield this power was as simple as breathing to them.

Adam was one of these people, and this was why he believed that he was superior to the rest. Unlike those that were forced to learn it the hard way, he had been able to use Dark Magic ever since he was a child.

As luck would have it, his Grandfather was also a wielder of Dark Magic, so the latter took it upon himself to raise, and train, Adam until there was nothing more he could teach him.

This led Adam to believe that he was the lucky one. A person that was born to be great because life had been smooth sailing for him.

The only time where he felt a danger to his life was when he entered the Ancient Ruins using the backdoor and met the Dark Wraith. Since then, Adam had become more cautious and hadn't gone into the Ancient Ruins again.

Instead, he had intensified his training, which made Prince Felix, as well as the other users of Dark Magic, admire him.

"Everyone is here, Your Highness," one of Felix's subordinates replied.

Felix nodded as he continued his speech. "I'm sure that you already know that none of the people that have been sent to explore the Ruins have returned. The Demon Lord and I both agree that they might have died inside while doing their duties.

"Because of this, we have no choice but to send teams in greater numbers to explore the Ruins. This way, you will be able to help each other if something unexpected happens. I believe that if all of us work together, we will be able to unravel the mystery of this Holy Land."

Felix paused as he let his words sink in for a minute before continuing his speech.

"All of you will be divided into twenty teams with around forty members each. The Masters will move alongside their disciples, so make sure that both of you are in the same team. In order to make things easier for you, the members of the young generation will count one to twenty.

Those of the same number will form a team together. The Masters will go with the team their disciples are in. Now, please start counting, so that we can start our exploration."

Right after Felix finished his speech, the forming of groups began. An hour later, all twenty teams had been formed.

Felix made sure to choose the team Adam was in to enter the ruins. Adam felt both excited and afraid at the prospect of returning to the Ancient Ruins. Last time, he went alone with no one to help him.

However, this time, he wouldn't be alone. There would be plenty of people that he could use as shields, and cannon fodder, if something that would endanger his life arose.

"To the teams that have been chosen to enter first, go to the warehouse and accept the rations that have been prepared for all of you," Felix ordered. "To those that have not been chosen, all of you are on standby until I deem it appropriate to send you in. For the time being, you may return to the stronghold and do whatever you want."

"Everyone, dismissed!" Felix added as he made a gesture for the teams that were not included in the selection to return inside the Fortress, where they would wait for his next orders.

A few minutes later, Felix found Adam and gave him a communication crystal.

"If something happens, tell me right away," Felix said. "I will send someone to rescue you as soon as I can."

"Thank you, Your Highness," Adam replied as he took the communication crystal and placed it inside his pocket.

Felix smiled as he patted Adam's shoulder. "I wish you the best of luck. May you have a fortuitous encounter inside the ruins."

Adam nodded. This time, his words were sincere when he replied to Felix. "I wish for that as well."

"Good. Keep me updated." Felix winked before walking away. In his mind, Adam was one of his subordinates, so he needed to ensure that he would be safe during the exploration.

After the three teams had finished their preparations, they all moved to the main entrance of the Ancient Ruins, which could only be opened with Dark Magic.

Those who didn't possess this affinity would immediately be sent flying away by the rune inscriptions at the entrance.

Felix had learned this the hard way, when he tried to send some of his elite warriors to explore the Ruins when they were first discovered.

After the last member of the three teams entered the Ruins, a black barrier covered it, in its entirety.

"What is going on?" Felix asked his subordinate who was looking at the Ruins with a surprised look on his face.

"I don't know, Your Highness," the subordinate replied. "This has never happened before."

Felix knew that his subordinate was telling the truth because he had spent most of his time inside the stronghold since the ruins had been discovered. This was the first time he was seeing this phenomenon, and it made him feel restless because he didn't know what was happening.

"I'm going to check the Ancient Scrolls that pertain to these ruins, and see if I can find the reason for this incident," Felix declared. "If you see anything strange, you are to report to me at once. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Your Highness!" the subordinate replied.

Felix glanced at the dark dome that had encapsulated the Ancient Ruins, one last time before hurrying towards the stronghold. He hoped that after reading the Ancient Texts that had been taken from the Royal Library, he would understand why the dark dome had appeared.

Meanwhile, inside the Ancient Ruins, the three teams found themselves in a wide open plain that extended for miles. All of them had no idea what was happening, or if they were still inside the ruins.

Adam, who was scanning his surroundings, felt a chill run down his spine as he hurriedly looked to the East where the dreadful feeling was coming from.

He was not the only one that was looking towards the East. Those who had a very high affinity to Dark Magic also felt that something ominous was headed in their direction.

Adam narrowed his eyes, as he used the power of his Dark Magic to see farther than what was humanly possible. Soon, his gaze fell upon the Dark Wraith that he had met when he entered the Ancient Ruins for the first time.

As if sensing that someone was spying on him, the Dark Wraith shifted its head to look straight at Adam before laughing.

It had been hundreds of years since he had opened the Isle of Desolation to those who wielded the power of Darkness, and there was a menacing excitement that could be seen in its glowing green eyes that looked at Adam as if he was a delicious delicacy.

"Welcome... to the... Isle of Desolation... young man," the Dark Wraith said in the same hoarse voice that made Adam's skin crawl. "I hope... that this time around..., you will... enjoy your stay."

Before Adam knew it, he was already running.

His instincts were telling him to run as far away from the Dark Wraith as possible. He had a feeling that if the Dark Wraith were to catch him a second time, something very bad was going to happen to him.

Chapter 1006 – Wait For Me. I Am Coming For You

Not many noticed that Adam had run away, but those who did, followed him immediately. Those that had been blessed with a higher mastery of the Dark Arts knew that whatever was headed in their direction wasn't something that they could handle with their current strength.

Even the Masters, who had accompanied their Disciples in exploring the Ancient Ruins, hurriedly ordered them to run and follow the people who were running in the opposite direction of where the fearful presence was coming from.

"Hey? Where are you guys going?" one of the prodigies shouted as he looked at those who were running away without any explanation.

A third of the overall number of Demons that had entered the ruins had fled, moments after they had passed through the gate, which confused those who were left behind.

Just as they were about to ask each other what was going on, they found themselves unable to move from where they stood.

It was at that moment when they heard a hoarse, yet powerful voice that made their hearts tremble.

"Tell me... children," the Dark Wraith said as it hovered above the immobilized group of Demons who were looking at it in horror. "Do you... believe... in... Dark Magic?"

The Dark Wraith made a gesture and several dark whips wrapped themselves around the waists of the Demons who could not muster any kind of resistance against it.

Tugging one of the whips, a Demon who was in his early twenties was pulled towards the Dark Wraith, whose glowing eyes had traces of amusement in them. It was as if it was a child that had found a new toy to play with.

“Your... answer?” The Dark Wraith asked as it raised the face of the Demon by placing its finger under his chin.

“Forgive me! Have mercy! Please!” the Demon pleaded. “I will do anything! Just don’t kill me!”

Right now, he finally understood why the others had run away. He regretted that he didn’t react fast enough and followed behind them. Unfortunately, it was now all too late, and all he could do was ask the Dark Wraith to spare him.

“Wrong... Answer,” the Dark Wraith replied as it pulled the Demon close to it.

Everyone watched in fright, as the Dark Wraith started to suck the Dark Magic out of the young Demon’s body, making the latter convulse as if he suffered from epilepsy.

The entire process only took fifteen seconds, but after the Dark Wraith had completely drained the Demon of his dark powers, he was tossed aside, and fell to the ground like a puppet whose strings had been cut.

Everyone’s eyes fell on the Demon who was lying motionless on the ground. Those who were near him immediately noticed that he was no longer breathing, which meant that the latter had died after the Dark Wraith had sucked his Dark Magic out.

“Nooo! I don’t want to die!”

One of the Demons cried out in fear, which broke everyone out of their daze. Just like a domino effect, everyone started to scream alongside him and begged for forgiveness.

“Wrong... answer!”

The Dark Wraith shouted as he pulled the Demons to him one by one. He then started to drain them of their Dark Magic, as well as their life force, to make itself stronger.

Soon the screams of fear, despair, and unwillingness spread throughout its surroundings, which made the Dark Wraith laugh because it had never felt so full and powerful these past thousand years.

“Weak... all of you... are weak!” The Dark Wraith words were like a death sentence as it harvested the lives of the immobilized demons one after the other. It didn’t stop devouring their powers, until only one Demon remained.

The Dark Wraith chuckled as he moved towards the Demon whose tears, and urine, had already stained his clothes out of helplessness.

“Tell me... child,” the Dark Wraith pulled the last demon to it, until their faces were mere centimeters apart. “Do you... believe... in... Dark Magic?”

“Yes! I do! I believe!” the Demon answered like his life depended on it. “I believe in Dark Magic!”

The Dark Wraith nodded as a noticeable smile appeared on its face. “Good... now... prove it.”

Without saying another word, the Dark Wraith’s right hand pressed over the chest of the young man, infusing him with the Dark Magic that it had collected earlier.

Soon, the Demon’s face contorted as he struggled with all of his might. Unfortunately, it was useless because the Dark Wraith was stronger than him.

After a minute passed, the Demon stopped moving.

The Dark Wraith chuckled evilly before tossing the Demon to the ground. Soon, the Demon’s skin started to change to a black color at a very fast rate. It only took half a minute before his entire body had turned as black as charcoal, and black mists oozed out of his eyes and mouth.

“Go... hunt them... all down,” the Dark Wraith ordered. “You... have... one hour.”

The black-skinned demon nodded its head before giving a frightful war cry. Surprisingly the Demons who were running away heard him, and even redoubled their efforts to gain as much distance as they could, from the threat that endangered all of their lives.

William's eyes abruptly opened as he propped himself up into a sitting position. His breathing was ragged, as he tried hard to regain his composure from the sudden dread that he had felt deep inside his entire being.

'What was that?' William thought as he subconsciously looked towards the North, where the Ancient Ruins were located.

"Sir William?" Charmaine asked with a concerned expression on her face. "What's wrong? Did you have a bad dream?"

The Half-Elf had been resting his head on her lap for nearly an hour, as he took his afternoon nap inside the flying carriage. Charmaine was quite happy to give William a lap pillow, while humming a lullaby, and lightly petting his head while he slept.

William's sudden action alarmed her, because she initially thought that she had done something wrong to disturb his rest.

"It's fine, Charmaine," William said after regaining his calm. "I just had a bad premonition."

"A bad premonition?"

"Yes."

William couldn't explain it well, but the Dark Power that was inside his body was getting restless. The hairs on the back of his neck were also standing on end, which alarmed him greatly because having this kind of reaction was never a good thing.

Fortunately, the ominous feeling vanished after five minutes had passed. However, William was no longer in the mood to enjoy Charmaine's hospitality.

He was currently in his Vampire Progenitor Job Class, which meant that his current strength was at the peak of the Myriad Rank. Very few things could make him react in this manner. Even Apophis didn't give him this feeling of dread that could be felt deep inside his bones.

'Lilith said that the Demons had discovered Ancient Ruins to the North, which seemed to be the Holy Land for those who practice Dark Magic.' William inwardly shuddered as he recalled the warning that Lilith had given her a few hours ago.

'I should stay away from that place,' William pressed his hand over his chest, and took deep breaths in order to calm his wildly beating heart.

Although he didn't want to admit it, whatever was happening in the North was making him feel restless.

'Master, I hope you are safe,' William thought as he clenched his fist in frustration. 'Wait for me. I am coming for you.'

Chapter 1007: This Is Why You Are A Late Bloomer

Celine's delicate hand, that was about to drop a red crystal to the cauldron, stiffened as she glanced in the direction of the North.

The Dark Magic inside her body started to stir, and it made her feel slightly uneasy. A few seconds later, an ugly hag with a wrinkled nose, and skin barged into her room without even knocking on the door.

"Did you feel that, Celine?" Baba Yaga asked with an anxious expression on her face. When she saw Celine's shaking hand, hovering her cauldron, she waved her hand extinguishing the flames to stop the alchemical process that her Disciple was performing.

She then pulled Celine to her arms and gave her a hug.

"Are you alright?" Baba Yaga asked as she patted Celine's back. "Don't worry. I am here. I will not allow anything to harm you."

Celine's shaking hand dropped the crystal as she hugged her Master's back. Her whole body started to shudder, as she tried to calm the powers inside her, which were starting to run amok.

Baba Yaga hummed as she unleashed her own Dark Powers, creating a protective dome, shielding both of them from the influence of the Ancient Ruins, which was several miles away from their location.

A minute later, Celine was finally able to regain full control of her powers as beads of sweat formed on her forehead.

Baba Yaga who had extended her senses on the outside world, removed the dome of darkness after the ominous feeling had subsided. As the strongest Dark Magic user in the entirety of Hestia, she had discovered the Ancient Ruins many years ago.

However, she didn't do anything about them, and simply allowed them to remain buried under the ground.

However, a year ago, a strong earthquake shook the entire land, allowing the Ancient Ruins to rise to the surface. It created a bizarre phenomenon in the sky, which alerted the nearby Demon Clans, forcing them to investigate the area.

When they found the Ancient Ruins, their first reaction was to explore it on their own. But, their plans were thwarted after they read the runes of the entrance, which said that only users of Dark Magic were allowed entry.

Of course, they attempted to break in by force, but it was futile. In the end, they were forced to report the incident to the Demon Lord, who had sent his son, Felix, to investigate the ruins under his name.

Felix was immediately fascinated by the ruins and decided to build a stronghold on its outskirts to better study it. After understanding how the Ruins worked, the first son of the Demon Lord asked his father to issue a decree, calling those who could wield Dark Magic to come to the North and cooperate with the great undertaking of exploring the Ruins.

Of course, Felix also went to Baba Yaga's place to respectfully ask for her help, but the Great Witch refused him.

Baba Yaga even warned Felix that he and his father shouldn't mess with something that was beyond their control. However, both turned a deaf ear to her warnings, and left her alone when they deemed that she didn't want to cooperate with them.

Baba Yaga then placed a protective barrier around her Domain, to prevent anyone from entering without her permission, with the exception of her one and only disciple, Celine.

Baba Yaga had received her message that she was planning to visit her, so the strongest Demigod of the Demon Realm left her home, and went to fetch her, after Celine had passed through the stronghold of the South.

Since then, Celine had been living with her.

Seeing that her Disciple was finally feeling better, the old hag made the beautiful Elf stop whatever she was doing. She then prepared tea for the two of them before sharing the news that one of her subordinates, who were scattered about the Demon Continent, had reported to her earlier that day.

"There is some news going around in the South," Baba Yaga said with a smile on her face. "A Vampire who goes by the name Raymond Parker has just poached a few Minor Clans, and it is causing a stir among the Major Clans in the area."

Celine listened with half an ear as she drank her tea. Frankly, she didn't care about the affairs of the Demon Realm. Baba Yaga also knew this, but the smile on her face didn't disappear as she told her beautiful disciple about the things that had left her quite interested in this troublemaker who had appeared out of nowhere.

"According to my subordinates, the daughter of Joash is accompanying this person," Baba Yaga said like an old Auntie who was on the lookout for juicy gossip. "Out of curiosity, I used a long distance call to talk to that black lizard and heard some veeeeeeeeeeeeery interesting things about this Vampire."

Celine continued to sip her tea because she knew that her Master really liked gossip. When she was still training with her when she was younger, the Old Hag would often tell her what was happening in the Demon Continent.

This was how Celine had become knowledgeable about the Major Clans that ruled it, as well as the geopolitics that were shared when it came to each Clan's borders. It was one of the things they did to pass the time while they took breaks from training.

"This Vampire has black hair and light-brown eyes, and is very young too," Baba Yaga stated while looking at Celine's indifferent expression. "What do you think? Do you want me to catch him and pair you up with him?"

"Master, don't be silly," Celine replied. "Don't make things difficult for other people."

The Old Lady knew that her Disciple was not really interested in what she was saying, but the old hag was sure that her current expression would change after she finished relaying the news to the Elf who was about to finish drinking her tea.

"Don't be so quick to turn him down, Celine," Baba Yaga said while shaking her head. "This is why you are a late bloomer. Now, where was I? Oh yeah... you see, this young man originally didn't have black hair and light-brown eyes. His name is also not Raymond Parker, but William..."

Celine's hand that was holding the tea cup shook briefly as she gazed at her Master in disbelief.

Baba Yaga chuckled as she clapped her hands happily

"Well then, my little Princess, it seems that your Prince has come to get you," Baba Yaga said in a teasing manner. "Are you going to wait for him, or should I kidnap him and bring him back here? Your call."

"Master, are you sure that you're talking about my Disciple?" Celine asked. "Could there have been any mistake?"

"Well, I don't really trust that lizard, so I might as well see this troublemaker for myself," Baba Yaga replied with a smile. "Also, I've heard that he is traveling with Vesta, Joash's beloved daughter. It seems that the black dragon is trying to fish in troubled waters, using his daughter as bait. What do you think we should do about her, Celine?"

Celine had a complicated expression on her face the moment she heard that William had appeared in the Demon Continent. Half of her was happy that William had come to the continent that treated his father as their mortal enemy to find her.

The rest of her was very worried because once his identity became known, he would be besieged on all sides, with no place to escape to. Baba Yaga knew how deep the hatred of the Demon Lord was to the enemy that had stood in his way.

Although William wasn't even born when the great war between Lucien and Maxwell was fought, his fate was sealed the moment he became the Dungeon Conqueror's son.

"Master, I have a favor to ask," Celine said with a serious look on her face.

"Well, I'm all ears," Baba Yaga grinned as she eyed her Disciple with a mischievous gaze.

More than anything else, the Old Hag wanted to see the son of the Dungeon Conqueror, as well as the man that had conquered her Disciple's heart and body.

Celine wore a cold and indifferent persona in the outside world, but deep inside, she was a warm and loving person. As someone who had raised her, and treated her like her own daughter, Baba Yaga swore to protect her from those who wanted to take advantage of Celine.

Since that was the case, it was only natural for her to see this possible son-in-law that had come from distant lands to find Celine.

Baba Yaga had heard many things about the Half-Elf from Celine, and she could tell that her Disciple was very fond of the red-headed teenager who had become the talk of the land, ever since he conquered the 51st Floor of the Tower of Babylon.

Baba Yaga wanted to know if William really had the ability to protect her Disciple, as well as daughter, from the Prophecy that bound her mind, body, and soul. If the Half-Elf didn't meet her standards, she would then take Celine and leave the Demon Continent with her.

Everyday that passed, the darkness inside her body was getting stronger, and the Old Hag knew that these happy days of theirs were numbered. In truth, she wished that the Bride of Darkness was Celine's twin sister, Celeste, and not her Disciple.

That way, the beautiful Elf who had lived with her during her younger years, would not be involved in the struggle that was brewing within the Demonic Lands.

A struggle that would make their happy, and peaceful lives... come to an untimely end.

Chapter 1008: The Secret Of The Holy Land

The sound of explosions reverberated in the surroundings as spell after spell landed on the Dark Abomination that had been hunting them for the past three days.

Forced into a corner, they all ganged up on the Demon, who had somehow transformed into a berserked beast whose sole purpose was to kill any Demon that it saw in its sights.

In the end, those who had managed to survive from its onslaught numbered fifteen. It was at that moment when they realized that no matter where they ran, the dark abomination would just hunt them down, until none of them were left.

Out of necessity, they all banded together to make one last stand against their enemy, whose power exceeded theirs by an incredible margin.

"Don't stop and keep on bombarding it with ranged attacks!!" Adam ordered. "If any of you run, it will just hunt you down again and, by that time, you will be fighting it alone! Now is the only opportunity we have to kill it! If you want to live then fight!"

Adam summoned two Dark Whips in order to lash at the Abomination who had charged in his direction. The fiend also summoned its own Dark Whip and clashed with Adam's, but at the moment of impact, the Abomination's Dark Whip sliced through Adam's Dark Whips, just as easily as a hot knife cut through butter.

All the Demon candidates noticed that the monster they were fighting against also wielded Dark Magic, but its Dark Magic was different from theirs. For some reason, they felt that the fiend's Dark Arts were purer, and higher in quality, making their own Dark Arts no match against it.

"Is this the true power of Dark Magic?" one of the candidates trembled as he summoned Dark Clones in order to grab hold of the fiend who was nearing their location.

Adam, and the other candidates, imitated his move because they understood that it would help delay the monster that was aiming to take their lives.

Each of them were able to summon two or three dark clones of themselves. These clones were only half as strong as their Masters, but in this kind of warfare, it was more than enough to gain a decent number advantage... or so they thought.

Adam, who was able to summon three clones of his own, bombarded the Dark Fiend with several Dark Bullets. These attacks managed to push back the Fiend, preventing it from advancing forward.

The other candidates also did the same. They were like a bunch of armed soldiers firing at a single target with a gatling gun. The Fiend was forced to use its hands to defend its body as the powerful bombardement rained on its body.

The ground under its feet was obliterated, creating a cloud of smoke that blocked their view. Even so, they didn't stop firing spell after spell because they felt that if they stopped, the Dark Abomination would continue its deadly offensive.

Suddenly, three dark spears shot out of the smokescreen, hitting two of the candidates in the chest, making them collapse on the ground in disbelief. Not long after, they died with their eyes open.

The third spear almost took another life. Fortunately, the Demon that had been targeted by the fiend had higher awareness. At the last moment, he was able to turn his body to the side, making the dark spear graze his shoulder, leaving a minor injury.

One by one, the Demons stopped attacking as they panted for breath. They had used almost all of their mana, and were on the verge of mana deficiency.

They stared anxiously and waited for the smoke to clear up, to see if they managed to subdue the beast that had plagued them for the past three days.

When the cloud of smoke disappeared, the abomination lay on the ground with a dark spear embedded on its chest. This was the spear that Adam had thrown with all of its might, which had miraculously pierced through the fiend's chest.

"Is it over?" a young lady whose clothes were in tatters asked. If this was an ordinary situation, she would definitely feel embarrassed about her current attire, because her clothes could no longer be called one.

However, due to the life and death battle they were waging against their enemy, she had no time to worry about embarrassment, and fought hard like everyone else.

No one dared to answer her question, because they were afraid that if they said yes, the fiend laying on the ground might stand up, cutting apart their last shred of hope.

Adam gritted his teeth as he moved closer to the creature that lay unmoving on the ground. When he was only a few meters away from their enemy, he summoned another dark spear, as he braced himself for the worst case scenario.

Meter by painful meter, Adam closed the distance, while the other Demons watched him with anxious expressions. When he was only three meters away from the fiend, Adam threw the dark spear in his hand, which pierced the Abomination's lower half.

Everyone waited with bated breath to see if the monster was going to react to Adam's attack, but it remained unmoving on the ground.

Adam didn't want to take any chances and summoned another spear, which he used to cut off the enemy's head.

Suddenly, the head that was cut off turned into ashes. Not long after, its body slowly turned to ashes, until the fiend that had become their nightmare disappeared in front of their eyes.

"We did it!" one of the Demons shouted as he raised his hand! "We beat it!"

Some of the Demons sat on the ground in relief after their legs gave way under them. They had fought tooth and nail with the Dark Abomination, pushing themselves to the limit.

Even Adam sighed in relief as he glanced at his comrades who had fought alongside him. He had fought many life and death battles before, but he had to admit that this particular battle was the closest he came to actually dying.

While everyone was celebrating their victory, the Dark Wraith suddenly materialized above them. Their earlier shouts of victory, turned into cries of fear and despair.

'This is it,' Adam thought as he stared helplessly at the Dark Wraith, which had used its powerful presence to immobilize all of them. 'I am gonna die now.'

It was not only Adam who felt this way. All of the Demons shared his thoughts, as tears streamed down the sides of their faces. They no longer had the will to fight, and even if they did, the end result would be the same.

The Dark Wraith was an existence that they couldn't beat because its strength was at the Pseudo-Demigod Rank.

"All... of you... passed... the first test," the Dark Wraith announced in a hoarse voice.

A few seconds later, all the survivors felt a burning sensation on their arms. Adam endured the pain and looked at his left arm, which was giving off a black smoke.

When the smoke disappeared, he saw a small, black, inverted, five-pointed star that looked like a tattoo on his shoulders. Adam was not the only one who received the mark. All of the survivors were branded with the black inverted star.

"I'll... wait for your... return... in three days," the Dark Wraith laughed. "Only those... who manage... to pass seven trials... will become... the heir... of darkness.

"Farewell... challengers. If... you are not... here... in four days... you... will... die."

The Dark Wraith laughed once more before waving its hand. That was the last scene that Adam saw before his world was covered in darkness.

Felix, who was inside his office, read the documents of the Ancient Ruins with a serious expression on his face. It had been three days since the first batch of candidates had entered the ruins.

He believed that with so many people taking part in the expedition, their chances of discovering the secrets of the Holy Land were quite high. Just as he was about to take a short break, a loud knock was heard on the door.

Felix frowned because he had given explicit orders that he didn't want to be disturbed. Even so, he still decided to see what was happening just in case and called out to his subordinate who was waiting for his reply.

"Come in," Felix ordered.

Just as soon as the door opened, Felix's subordinate knelt on the ground and gave his report.

"Your Highness! The exploration party has returned! They are at the entrance of the Ruins, and are currently being tended to by the soldiers we stationed there," the subordinate replied.

"Wonderful!" Felix replied as he stood up. "How many returned?"

"Thirteen."

"Excuse me?"

The Demon raised his head and repeated his answer to his superior. "Thirteen, Your Highness, and they seemed to have suffered minor to serious injuries. All of them are unconscious right now, and are being carried to the infirmary."

Felix frowned before nodding his head. He then left the room and headed straight to the infirmary.

He couldn't believe that after sending over a hundred people inside the ruins, only thirteen managed to return alive.

'Just what did they see inside the Holy Land?' Felix thought. 'No matter. I'll find out as soon as one of them regains consciousness.'

This was a very important matter, and he needed to know the answers to his questions as soon as possible.

'I hope that Adam is one of the survivors,' Felix thought as he increased his pace. 'After painstakingly making him my subordinate, the least he can do is survive and tell me everything that he saw inside the Holy Land.'

A smile appeared on Felix's lips as he thought of a way to keep the treasures within the ruins to himself. Just like his father, he was also very ambitious. He didn't care about the process. What he cared about were the results.

Even at the cost of many lives, Felix wouldn't bat an eye as long as he benefited from it. Such were the ways of the Demon Realm.

Always had been, Always would be.

Chapter 1009: Promises Of The Past, Present, And Future

After three days of traveling, William and his entourage arrived at the outskirts of a city that belonged to one of the Major Clans in the Demon Continent.

The Half-Elf gathered, Zhu, Sha, Kira, Athrun, Vesta, and her two shieldmaidens, to discuss their next course of action.

"I plan to rest for a day and resume our traveling tomorrow at noon," William said. "If you guys want to explore that city then you may do so. I will stay in the Thousand Beast Domain for the time being."

Vesta immediately crossed her arms over her chest, as she looked at William with a serious expression. "I don't want to enter the city. I plan to visit the Thousand Beast Domain as well."

William arched an eyebrow at the green-haired beauty, but he didn't reject her. He then glanced at Kira and Athrun, and both of them nodded their heads in agreement with Vesta's words.

In truth, both of them were dying to enter William's Thousand Beast Domain. When the two of them were allowed to enter it for the first time, the Half-Elf only took them to his villa, and didn't allow the two Demons to wander around.

This left them feeling quite helpless because they were hoping to do some exploration, to better understand the portable Domain that belonged to the black-haired teenager, who still remained a mystery to them.

"Um, Bro, I want to go there as well," Kira said with a smile. "Can I?"

"Big Brother, I also want to visit your Domain," Athrun stated. "Can you accommodate this request of mine?"

William rubbed his chin as he pondered if he should allow the two Demons to enter his Domain a second time. He didn't mind taking Vesta in because he planned to make the green-haired Demon an ally in the future.

After making her two shieldmaidens sign a contract with blood, they were allowed to follow Vesta inside the Domain. Only Kira's and Athrun's retainers were barred entry, because William had no intention of letting too many people wander around the Thousand Beast Domain, because they might accidentally stumble upon things that they weren't supposed to see.

"Fine," William answered after a few minutes. "Kira, Athrun, tell your retainers to rest inside the city. We will meet with them at the North Gate tomorrow to continue our journey."

"Understood."

"Very well."

Kira and Athrun went to their men and issued their orders. Right now, William was a wanted person, and several Clans had their eyes on him. Going inside the city wasn't exactly the smartest thing to do because it might cause tension with the local warlord.

After the battle against Caspian, and the Rajah Clan, he deemed that it wasn't worth it to show his face in public.

He also didn't plan on absorbing any more Clans. There were already nine Minor Clans inside the Thousand Beast Domain that were starting to orient themselves with their new environment.

William did his best to provide them with good living conditions by spending God Points to add lakes, rivers, as well as fertile lands that they could farm, and a forest that had many fruit bearing trees.

The Half-Elf had also created white sand beaches, where people could take a swim, and enjoy the sunset.

In fact, the Minor Clans fell in love with the Thousand Beast Domain, and never wanted to leave it. Although they were surprised at first when they saw several beasts loitering around the Domain, they all understood that all of them belonged to William.

The Clans were also forbidden to hunt any of them, and the consequences of killing one of them would be expulsion from his Domain.

Everyone took this seriously because they didn't want to give up this wonderful place where they could live in peace. Besides, there were plenty of places to fish, forage, and plant vegetables that they could eat.

William's ultimate goal was to make the Thousand Beast Domain self-sustainable, so that it would truly become a miniature world where people and beasts could live in peace.

The first thing that Vesta did after entering the Thousand Beast Domain was to go to William's Villa and invite Chiffon to go with her to the theme park.

She had become addicted to the gaming arcade that William had expanded during his free time. The green-haired beauty was particularly invested in mastering the songs in the Let's Dance Revolution, in order to set the highest record for all of the songs on it.

Chiffon and Medusa were more than happy to accompany her. The three had become something short of rivals, and often challenged each other in arcade fighting games like Takken, and King of Fighters.

They also enjoyed the multiplayer shooting games like House of the Dead, and Taym Crisis.

There were times when William regretted taking the girls to the arcade because all of them had become gaming addicts.

While everyone went their own ways, the Half-Elf returned to the Villa. There he found Kenneth sleeping in the hammock that he had built recently outside the residence.

Ever since the silver-haired Elf had accompanied him in his journey, all he did was sleep. This was why William tossed him inside the Thousand Beast Domain, so he could rest as much as he wanted.

"All you know how to do is to sleep," William said as he approached the sleeping Elf.

After looking at his peaceful sleeping face, the Half-Elf noticed a small book that was lying on Kenneth's chest.

Out of curiosity, William picked it up and opened its pages. He was quite curious about what kind of book Kenneth liked to read, so he decided to take a peek.

Third Day of the Month of the High Priestess...

The stupid Human tried to pull on my hair, so I decided to teach him a lesson. Hehehe... he looked like a stupid monkey hanging from a branch after I tied him up.

Fifth Day of the Month of the High Priestess...

It's raining... I hate rain. Sleeping on muddy ground is the worst.

Eight Day of the Month of the High Priestess...

Why is this Human so annoying? Since I'm too tired to walk, he decided to pull my hair and drag me along, so that we could continue our journey. This is why Humans have no class, they are barbarians.

Hehehe, I'll just tie him up in a tree again. This will teach him not to mess with me.

Fifteenth Day of the Month of the High Priestess...

Not bad. He decided to carry me this time. I don't think I'll mind if we travel as long as he carries me like this.

Twenty-secondth Day of the Month of the High Priestess...

The Human is burning up with a fever. This is not good. All he does is sleep on the ground. Is he trying to compete with me? If yes, I won't lose. Sleeping is my specialty!

Twenty-third Day of the Month of the High Priestess...

This is bad... I think this Human is actually dying. Should I do something? But I'm too lazy to move. Okay, I guess I'll just let him die then.

Twenty-fourth Day of the Month of the High Priestess...

So scary! After pinching, flicking, and pulling on that scary worm, I think I got pregnant! I'm starting to regret helping him recover. This is why Humans are so detestable... but, having a baby doesn't sound bad. At least, I won't be alone, right?

William closed the diary, which he thought had been a book at first, before placing it back on Kenneth's chest. The other entries that were written in the book were simply someone cursing the stupid Human, which seemed to be up to no good.

The Half-Elf scratched his head as he gazed at the sleeping Elf before walking away with a smile. In truth, William was feeling restless the past few days, so he decided to take a day of rest from traveling because there was a nagging feeling in the back of his mind that wouldn't go away, no matter how much he tried to ignore it.

The diary he had read a while ago amused him enough to momentarily forget the thoughts that were inside his head.

Once William entered the villa, he closed the door behind him. The silver-haired Elf who was sleeping on the hammock opened his eyes.

He then summoned the silver-ballpoint pen that William had given to him as a gift, and opened the diary. He turned several of its pages.

Kenneth then started to write his latest entry in the diary.

Fourteenth Day of the Month of The Lovers...

The stupid monkey read my diary without my permission. I was forced to fight the urge to wrap my hair around his waist and hang him up in a tree because of his crassness. Doesn't he know the meaning of privacy?

Well, I guess it is my fault for sleeping here with my diary out in the open. Next time, I will make sure that I put it in my storage ring before I sleep.

After admiring his work for a minute, he returned the diary and ballpoint pen inside his storage ring, and closed his eyes to sleep.

A smile hung on his delicate-looking face, as he once again entered his dreamworld, where a silver-haired man, with blue eyes, stood while carrying an Elf in a princess carry.

Both of them looked at the picturesque scenery in front of them, that made his heart skip a beat. He had seen this scene a few times already, but he didn't get tired of it. In fact, he even anticipated it.

"You see that, Acedia?" the silver-haired man asked the beautiful Elf with long-blond hair, that he held firmly in his arms. "That's our destination. The Violet Ever Garden."

"Beautiful," the long-haired Elf replied. This was one of the very rare occasions when she didn't feel sleepy. Because of this, her memory of the view was quite vivid.

The silver-haired man chuckled. "Well, it's not as beautiful as you, Acedia."

"Mmm," Acedia hummed. "Will, are you going to leave me once you bring me there?"

The smile on William's face stiffened, and the happy expression he had was replaced with a sadness that made Acedia's heart ache.

"If I told you that I don't want to leave you, would you believe me?"

"I believe you, but you will still leave me, right?"

William sighed as he forcefully tore his gaze from Acedia's tear-filled gaze that made his knees weak. Acedia wiped the tears from her eyes with her hands, before shifting her gaze to the promised land where she would spend her eternity by herself.

"I wish we didn't go here," Acedia said softly. "That way... this journey of ours, would never come to an end."

William closed his eyes, as he held the lady in his arms tighter. For a brief moment, he also wished that their journey would never end.

But, all journeys had an end. Both of them understood this, and yet, the thought of parting made them feel uneasy.

Acedia pressed her hand over the silver-haired man's chest, as she listened to his beating heart.

The beautiful scenery, which both of them loved, faded away. But, before that happened, William had made a promise to her, and she made a promise back.

Kenneth's lips moved, as he muttered something in his sleep. It was also at that moment when a tear streamed down his eyes. The memories of the two people slowly faded away, turning into a storm of flowers.

"This time... things will be different," Kenneth muttered softly with his eyes closed.

Suddenly, he felt something pressing lightly on his face, near the corner of his eyes.

Kenneth opened his eyes, and saw William using a handkerchief to wipe the tears that streamed down from his eyes.

"What's wrong?" William asked in a teasing tone as he continued to wipe Kenneth's tears away. "Did you get pregnant in your dream and cried due to the pain of childbirth?"

Kenneth blinked once then twice, before his hair extended and wrapped itself around William's body, turning him into a Half-Elf spring roll. The silver-haired Elf then hung William on a tree branch upside down, with an annoyed expression on his face.

"Stupid monkey," Kenneth said before closing his eyes to sleep again. He completely ignored William's pleas to let him down, and just left the Half-Elf dangling there without a care in the world.

On top of the roof of the villa, a giggle escaped Ella's lips. It was very rare for her to see William in such a state and it was pure eye-candy in her eyes.

"Oh Will... I wish these days could last forever," Ella said softly with a smile on her face. "That little baby of long ago, is now a very handsome and dependable young man."

Ella looked fondly at William. Although she didn't know what choice her adopted son would choose in the future, she would give him her full support regardless of what it was. That was her duty, and the reason why she transformed into a constellation.

To give the helpless, and dangling, teenager, who was wrapped up like a spring roll, a chance to make a choice that would affect the unfulfilled promises of the past, present, and future.

Chapter 1010: The Price For Freedom

Hestia Academy...

Princess Aila was walking back and forth inside her room while contemplating many things.

The first one was her duty, as the princess of the Zelan Dynasty.

The other was her feelings towards someone who was making her feel restless. Although she already had feelings for him in the past, those feelings only became stronger after she started having dreams about her past life.

Night after night, she would dream. Dreams of days long forgotten, in a world that had long ceased to exist. After talking to Conan and Elliot, she found out that William only planned to have nine wives (10 including Belle).

Right now, only one spot was missing, and Conan told her that if she didn't hurry, that last spot would be taken by another.

'What should I do then?' Princess Aila wondered as she pressed her head against the wall of her room. 'I'm not a strong warrior. The only thing I can use is Life Magic. If I go to the Demon Continent, I'll only get in his way.'

Princess Aila knew this. She had told herself these words for the upteenth time already. The angelic beauty had forced herself to accept that it was impossible, and there was no way she could cross that gap between her and William, who only treated her as a fellow Disciple of Owen's.

Although the Half-Elf didn't call Owen one of his Masters, he treated him as one in his heart. Without the old cow "who liked to eat young and tender grass" to train his stamina, and teach him "da wae" to fight and win battles in the bedroom, he might have not been able to satisfy his wives and lovers.

Although it might sound ridiculous, William was very thankful that Owen and the Goddess Eros, taught him how to be peerless in the arts of love making.

Princess Aila didn't know these details because when Owen taught her, he was a wise, and dedicated, teacher who could do no wrong.

'Master, I wish you were here,' Princess Aila thought as she remembered the hen-pecked-old-man, who couldn't say no to his beautiful, and young wife, who was fifty years younger than him.

It was at this moment when she heard a soft knocking sound on the window. Princess Aila smiled when she saw Conan waving at her from the window.

"Is there any news?" Princess Aila asked after opening the window to let the devil familiar in.

Conan smiled as he landed on Princess Aila's shoulder. Due to her request, Conan and Elliot decided to help her better understand her feelings, while there was still time for her to secure the final seat in William's heart.

"Well, Elliot managed to convince Chloe to come with us to the Demon Continent," Conan explained. "The only hurdle is trying to convince Celeste to agree to let her go there."

"I see. Thank you," Princess Aila replied. "If she comes with us, we will be able to overcome most obstacles."

Conan chuckled and nodded his head in agreement. If they had Chloe by their side, even if a Myriad Beast, or a Pseudo-Demigod appeared, they would be able to stand their ground, and beat it to a pulp.

"Are you sure about this Aila?" Conan asked. "The Demon Continent is a dangerous place. Once we step on it, there will be no turning back for us."

"Yes. I am sure," Princess Aila answered. "I'm sorry for making things difficult for you and Elliot."

"Kekeke. Indeed, it is a very difficult thing to do." Conan chuckled. "But, if you don't do it, you will regret it for the rest of your life."

The little devil then sighed. As a being born from William's soul, he knew the regrets, and unfulfilled promises that William carried from his two previous lifetimes. This was why he didn't want Princess Aila to suffer with the same.

Sometimes, one must take a leap of faith, and push ahead regardless of the outcome. By doing so, they would not remain in the same place for eternity. A life of stagnation was a life worse than death.

"But, there is still one more problem," Conan stated. "Even if Chloe comes with us, going to the Demon Continent will not be easy. We have two options. One of them is to travel the Black Sea, and the other is to use one of the teleportation gates that leads to the Demon Continent."

"If we don't want to get detected, traveling by sea is ideal, but the journey is longer. If we use the teleportation gates, we will be able to arrive faster, but getting past the stronghold that protects its borders is quite hard. Not to mention, you are very beautiful, Aila. If those Demons see you, they will definitely do their best to capture you. Are you sure you want to do this?"

Princess Aila nodded. Just like Conan said, she didn't want to have any regrets in her life. Even if she failed in the end, at least, she did her best. She would be able to accept this kind of outcome, unlike the one where she did nothing and simply waited for a miracle to arrive.

"You want to go to the Demon Continent? I can help you, you know?"

Princess Aila and Conan almost jumped in fright after hearing a soft, and silky voice behind them. The princess immediately turned her head to look at what was behind her, but she saw nothing.

Conan immediately summoned his deathscythe and stood in front of his best friend in order to protect her. However, both of them saw nothing.

"Where are you two looking at?"

The voice once again came from their back, so the two immediately faced that direction with grim expressions on their faces. But, just like the first time, they saw nothing behind them.

"We can do this all day, and the result will be the same," the voice said in a mischievous tone. "Worry not. I meant neither of you any harm. I just overheard your discussion and thought that I should lend a hand."

Conan hovered above Princess Aila's head as he scanned his surroundings.

"Who are you?" Conan demanded. "Show yourself!"

A giggle sounded inside the room, which made Princess Aila feel like the person talking to them was doing this on purpose in order to make them feel anxious.

"I am willing to show myself, but you will not be able to handle it," the voice replied. "So, for your sake, how about we just chat instead?"

Conan frowned, but he no longer said anything. Instead he whispered to Princess Aila that she would be the one to talk to the voice, while he guarded her from any possible sneak attacks.

"Will you really help us get to the Demon Continent?" Princess Aila asked. "What do you want in return?"

The voice didn't reply right away. It was as if its owner was pondering on what it really wanted. A few minutes passed in silence as both Conan and Princess Aila kept their guard up. Although they had not been given any reply, the two of them were sure that the person talking to them was still inside the room with them.

"Well, I guess you can say that what I want is freedom," the voice said after a long sigh. "Although I can go anywhere I want to, my hands, and feet are tied. That's why, you will take me with you when you go to the Demon Continent."

"And if we refuse?" Conan asked as his eyes, and ears scanned the room for any signs of the elusive person that was talking to them.

"You can refuse if you want to," the voice replied calmly. "But, your chances of catching up to him are slim. With my help, I can bring you to exactly where he is without fail. This offer isn't too bad, right? All I ask... is for you to help me gain my freedom. Is it too much to ask?"

Princess Aila and Conan glanced at each other. They could hear the traces of sorrow, and loneliness in the voice that was talking to them.

After pondering for a moment, Princess Aila gave her answer, which made the owner of the voice smile.

"Thank you, Princess Aila of the Zelan Dynasty," the voice said. "I will forever remember this favor."

"Don't thank me yet," Princess Aila replied. "So, tell me. Where can I find you?"