

Strongest 281

Chapter 281: Isle Of Hope, Isle Of Tears

The Angorian War Sovereign and the members of the Aerial Cavaliers of Freesia hit it off pretty well. Since they all had something in common, the young knights asked the veterans in the Aerial Cavalry for some pointers about how to take better care of their dependable mounts.

The Aerial Knights had years of experience when it came to handling Hipogriffs, and the wisdom they shared made the Young Knights look at them in admiration. William was quite happy because the veterans were sharing their information to the next generation without asking for anything in return.

Because of this, his impression of the representatives from Freesia was raised a few levels.

The night was still young and guests were still arriving. Half an hour after William arrived at the banquet, the King appeared with the other two princes. William found an adorable loli holding Prince Ernest's hand. It was none other than Brianna, the granddaughter of the Great Chief of the Northern Tribes.

When Brianna's wandering gaze found William, the little loli winked at him and blew him a kiss. This gesture of hers made the prince holding her hand, pout, but Prince Ernest didn't make a scene. Instead, he gave William the "Stay away from Brianna" glare which made the Half-Elf chuckle inside his heart.

'Silly little shrimp,' William mused as he returned Brianna's wink and flying kiss. 'I worry about your henpecked future.'

William laughed at the young henpecked Prince in his heart, not knowing that he would suffer the same Fate a few years from now.

Like always, King Noah made his speech for everyone to enjoy the banquet. His words were greeted by loud cheers from the commoner students of the Royal Academy, who were visiting the palace for the first time.

While Wendy and William were talking, the Crown Prince went to stand at the podium and gathered everyone's attention.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen," Prince Lionel said with a flawless smile that made the young ladies feel their heart flutter. "Tonight, our special guest from Freesia has a humble request. She has long heard of the valiant Knight Commander of the Angorian War Sovereign and wishes for him to entertain her with a performance."

Princess Sidonie, who was looking at William, suddenly turned her head to gaze at the Crown Prince.

She didn't mention anything about asking William to perform for her. All she wanted was for the Crown Prince to introduce William to her. However, a part of her was also interested in finding out whether or not William could show her something interesting.

Morgana who was watching everything from within Princess Sidonie's sea of consciousness curled her lips up in a sneer.

'Such a petty person, but this is also good,' Morgana thought. 'We'll, I'm looking forward to an entertaining performance. Do your best, pretty boy.'

William's smile stiffened as he looked at the Crown Prince then at the veiled Princess in the distance. After that, he gave Wendy a glance and whispered something in her ears.

"Told you the princess was going to fall in love with me at first sight," William whispered.

Instead of answering him, Wendy pinched his waist with a sweet smile on her face. Feeling the pain of his lover's jealousy, William chuckled and gave her hand a light squeeze before standing up.

Since the Crown Prince decided to put him in the spotlight, the Half-Elf decided to humor him and make him regret his decision.

'It's times like this that make me glad I acquired the Bard Job Class,' William thought as he walked to the center of the hall and bowed to the Third Princess, who was looking at him from behind her veil with anticipation.

"I am honored that Princess Sidonie chose me to perform for her," William said with a smile. "Unfortunately, my skills are only subpar. I hope that her highness won't get offended if I don't meet her expectations."

Princess Sidonie was amused by William's introduction, so she decided to give him some encouragement.

"I've heard many things about Lord William even in our distant kingdom of Freesia," Princess Sidonie said with a voice that was akin to hearing an angel sing. "I look forward to your performance."

William smiled and nodded his head, "Since her highness wants to see me perform, this humble shepherd will sing you a song."

William summoned his Lute and strummed it a few times. At first, he just intended to sing the nursery song, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, but decided against it. This was the first time Wendy was seeing him perform, so he decided to get a bit serious.

His eyes subtly scanned the crowd and found his music teacher, Feyright, smiling at him from the audience. William gave the handsome elf a gesture, which made the latter's lips curl up into a smile.

It was the gesture that the two of them had made in Lont. When Feyright was to do the gesture, it meant that he wanted William to play with him as support and vice versa.

'Since this is your first bardic performance, I will do my best to make you shine,' Feyright mused as he summoned a flute.

Seeing that his teacher was all set, William then looked at the Third Princess of the Kingdom of Freesia.

"I dedicate this song to all the young ladies that are present in this banquet tonight," William said as he firmly held the Lute in his hand. "May all of you find courage even in your darkest hour. The title of this song is 'Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears'."

< Job Class successfully switched to Bard >

After hearing the system's notification, William took a deep breath and deftly strummed the strings of his instrument. The rich, and melodious sound of the lute, accompanied by the soft and gentle sounds of the flute reverberated within the hall.

William then started to sing. Everyone's eyes in the room widened, especially the First Years from the Martial Division. They were looking at the handsome Half-Elf as if seeing him for the first time.

They already knew that their Commander was a strong and brave person, but they didn't expect him to be a good singer as well.Â

William sang and serenaded everyone in the banquet hall and poured out his feelings to his song.

"In a little bag she carried all her past and history.

And her dreams for the future, In the Land of Liberty~

And courage is the passport when your old world disappears.

But there's no future in the past when you're fifteen years~

William's captivating voice and the melody of the instruments plucked the heartstrings of the ladies that were looking at him with infatuated gazes.

Princess Sidonie unconsciously placed her hand over her chest as she listened to the heart provoking song that William was singing.

Prince Lionel, who was paying close attention to Princess Sidonie's every action, cursed William internally and regretted his decision to ask him to perform. He thought that the Half-Elf was a crude person who only knew how to fight.

If the Crown Prince knew that William was also a good singer, he wouldn't have forced him to perform even if it killed him. However, it was now too late. Prince Lionel hoped and prayed that Princess Sidonie's expression behind her veil wasn't that of infatuation or admiration.

He was afraid that if he were to see her face right now, he might decide to ask The Organization to assassinate William in order to appease his jealousy.

William, who had immersed himself in the song, was not aware of what Prince Lionel, Princess Sidonie, and the rest of his audience were thinking. This was one of his favorite songs back on Earth, and the power of the Bard Class amplified his feelings of longing tenfold.

The result of this combination made those who were listening to him tear up. William continued to sing, and even though he was smiling, a tear still fell down on the side of his face as he sang the final lyrics of the song.

"Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears,

Isle of Freedom, Isle of Fears.

But it's not the Isle you left behind..."

The Half-Elf's rendition had captured everyone's hearts, making his teacher, Feyright, very proud of him.

William stopped playing and allowed his own voice to finish the final verse of the song, giving it a more soulful ending.

The handsome Half-Elf closed his eyes as he released the emotions from his heart. There was a brief silence before it was broken by a clap that came from Princess Sidonie. She continued to clap and it broke everyone out of their daze.

Cheers and applause reverberated in the Banquet Hall as all of the guests showered William with their praises.

Prince Lionel reluctantly clapped his hand, while using all of his willpower to keep the smile on his handsome face. If there was a medicine for regret, he would have already bought it all.

The Crown Prince knew that the little "interest" that Princess Sidonie had for William a few minutes ago, had now grown exponentially after this single performance.

Meanwhile inside Princess Sidonie's Sea of Consciousness...

The smile on Morgana's face had disappeared long ago. She had been enraptured by the song, just like everyone else, and closed her eyes to listen to it intently. After William's song ended, she kept her eyes closed as she basked at the lingering afterglow of William's voice.

When she finally opened her eyes, she looked at William as if he was the only man on Earth. Morgana unconsciously muttered something as her gaze lingered on the handsome Half-Elf in the distance.

Princess Sidonie, who was also looking at William, heard the words that her other half had said and it made her face redden. Fortunately, there was a veil covering her face, so no one was able to see her current expression.

"I want to make babies with him."

Those were the words that Morgana said that made Princess Sidonie want to dig a hole and bury herself inside it due to embarrassment.

Chapter 282: Lord William, You Are Loved

After bowing to Princess Sidonie and the audience, William returned to his seat. Everyone wanted him to sing more, but he made the excuse that his hands were suffering from arthritis and couldn't play the lute anymore.

Everyone laughed at his witty joke and allowed him to go. How could a fourteen-year-old-boy suffer from arthritis? Clearly, William didn't want to sing anymore and they didn't have the heart to force the handsome Half-Elf to remain.

They were still enraptured by his voice and melody that they didn't want to force him to do anything.

William returned to his table with a smug expression on his face, and the Martial Division Students clapped their hands once again to welcome their Commander's triumphant return.

After seating beside Wendy, the beautiful girl leaned to him and whispered in his ears.

"Sing for me when we get back to the academy, okay?"

"Okay."

The two were about to go into their own little world again when they were interrupted by a light cough from Ian.

"The two of you should do that when people are not around," Ian stated with a fed up expression. "Everyone's eyes are on the two of you, and you still haven't made your relationship official. Why don't you use this opportunity to make an announcement?"

William and Wendy reluctantly let go of each other's hands and looked at Ian with the "Fine, I get it" expression. The snot-nosed-pansy snorted before picking up the glass of fruit juice from their table.

After William's performance, two more performances were held before the musicians came up on stage. It was now time for the people to dance, and William took the lovely Wendy to the dance floor and danced without a care in the world.

After he finished dancing, Brianna came up to him and proposed to switch partners. William readily agreed and asked Wendy to dance with Prince Ernest.

Sincer her partner was a little boy, Wendy didn't have any objections and curtsied in front of the Prince. Ernest had no choice but to dance with Wendy as the Half-Elf and the Loli exchanged a knowing glance at each other.

"You're good," Brianna said. "How come you didn't tell me you could sing?"

"You didn't ask," William replied. "Don't make little Ernie jealous too much. He is a good boy, and I don't want him to hate me."

"This is just my way of warning him that if he ever cheated on me, I'd dump him and run to you," Brianna said in a mischievous tone. "As per the result of the duel, I belong to you. Although I know that Ernest has strong feelings for me, he is still young. In the end, the one who gets to decide who he is going to marry is not him, but the King."

Brianna's tone became cold as she remembered when her father and grandfather had almost forced her to marry the Prince of the Anaesha Dynasty. Back then, Brianna felt betrayed. The people whom she thought loved her more than anything in the world, were the same people who threw her into the jaws of a lion.

"I thought the King was going to announce your betrothal to Ernest?" William frowned. "I was the one who proposed this to him. Didn't he tell you anything?"

Brianna leaned on William and said in a low voice that only he could hear. "The King is still on the fence because my grandfather might lose his position after four years. If our Clan isn't able to retain the position of Chieftain, marrying Ernest to me would hold no value whatsoever to the Hellan Kingdom."

The little loli sighed as she rested her head on William's chest. "You have to understand that Ernest is still young. Many things can happen in four years. Once I lose my value as his fiancée, I'll just be tossed aside like a used rag and would not be given a second glance."

William unconsciously tightened his grip on the hands of the young girl in front of him. Brianna was only eleven years old, but her mindset was that of an adult. It was clear that being around her grandfather had taught her how to pay close attention to her surroundings.

Because of this, she viewed the world with the eyes and thoughts of a Great Chieftain.

William softly patted her head. "Don't worry. If the King or Ernest bullies you, I will make them pay tenfold. This is my promise to you."

"Lord William, don't make promises you can't keep."

"This promise, I will keep."

Brianna just smiled and didn't say anything. The two danced silently until the song ended. When the adorable Loli walked towards Ernest, the Young Prince glared at William. The Half-Elf brushed it off and mouthed something towards the Prince.

Prince Ernest frowned, but he still nodded his head. He then held Brianna's hand and escorted her back to their table.

"That was very thoughtful of you," Wendy commented as the two walked towards their own table. "You even dared to threaten a Prince to ensure that Brianna would not be treated badly."

"She is my responsibility." William sighed. "I was the one that took her from her family and brought her here in the capital. The least I can do is make sure that the King and Prince Ernest know that there is someone on Brianna's side."

When the two were almost at their table, a young lady wearing a veil on her face blocked their path.

"Lord William, can you please give me the honor of this dance?" Princess Sidonie asked.

William wanted to say no, but there was no way he could turn down the "special guest" that had come with reinforcements to their Kingdom. He was not an ungrateful person, and knew that he had to accept this invitation even if it made him the target of every man in the room.

"It will be an honor to dance with you, Your Highness," William bowed. "Wendy..."

"I know," Wendy replied.

William was about to hold Sidonie's hand, when he felt a soft sensation touch his cheek. Wendy gave Princess Sidonie a side-long glance after she kissed William. She then headed towards the tables reserved for the Angorian War Sovereign without looking back.

Almost everyone in the room saw this and whispers started to spread among the guests in the banquet hall.

"Lord William, you are loved," Sidonie giggled as she placed her hand on William's arm. "I'm sorry if I'm being the third wheel on this occasion."

"You're not being a bother, Your Highness," William replied with a smile. "That is just Wendy's way of showing her thank you."

Princess Sidonie nodded her head. "Is that so? I'll keep that in mind, Lord William."

Like everyone in the banquet, William was also curious about the face that was hidden behind the veil. However, unlike others, he didn't have any strong feelings or desire to unmask the Third Princess of Freesia.

His was only pure curiosity, while the rest of the men looked at Princess Sidonie as if they were undressing her body.

Although her powers were sealed, her body still released natural pheromones that were strong enough to attract any man or woman that was too close to her.

"You're quite capable, Lord William," Princess Sidonie commented as the two of them arrived at the center of the hall. 'My power doesn't work on him.'

Currently, the one dancing with William was not Princess Sidonie, but Morgana. Although Princess Sidonie wanted to dance with William, she was in truth, a very timid person. She acted confident on the outside, but when push came to shove, she would take a step back and allow Morgana to take her place.

The longer the two danced, the sweeter Morgana's smile became. Princess Sidonie, who was also observing from within her Sea of Consciousness noticed the Half-Elf's expression.

Both girls could see the smile on Wiliam's face, but they knew he was just faking it. This made the two of them more interested in him and left them to plan what they might do so they could get to know more about him during their stay in the capital of the Hellan Kingdom.

"Looks like your Princess is captivated by a boy that is five years younger than you," Prince Rufus chuckled as he stood beside his older brother. "You need to step up your game, Big Brother."

"Shut up," Prince Lionel said in a voice that only Rufus could hear. His tone was so dangerously close to his breaking point that Rufus, who always bantered with him, raised his eyebrow in genuine surprise.

"You can have your little Ice Princess, Rufus," Prince Lionel smiled at his little brother like a snake that was about to strike. "But if you say another word, I swear by my name that I will make you regret it."

Lionel leaned close and whispered in Rufus's ears, "Annoy me and I promise that I will rape that b*tch in front of you. Let's see if you can keep that smug expression on your face then."

The Crown Prince walked away and left the banquet. He was afraid that if he stayed any longer, he would do something he wasn't supposed to do, and make a fool of himself in front of everyone.

"Since when did your threats scare me?" Prince Rufus watched his older brother's retreating back with a sneer. "You're not a snake, Big Brother, but a worm that I can easily crush under my foot. Your days of playing Crown Prince are already numbered."

Prince Rufus placed his hands on his back as he glanced at the corner of the room. A man wearing a noble's clothing met his gaze and gave him a brief nod. Prince Rufus nodded back and looked at his father, King Noah.

'The one who will get the key is me,' Prince Rufus vowed. 'After that, let's see what kind of face you'll be making... dear brother of mine.'

Chapter 283: Day Of The Inter-Division Battle [Part 1]

William glared at the giant Worm in front of him. He was currently in a weakened state and couldn't use his full power, but nevertheless the battle between the two raged on until the very world itself started to distort.

"Just surrender, Half-Elf!" the Worm said via telepathy. "Your resistance is futile! You can't fight the inevitable!"

William firmly held Stormcaller in his hands as lightning crackled from its spear blade.

"The only thing that is inevitable is your demise, Worm," William replied hatefully. "I will not forgive you for what you have done!"

With a shout William charged forward like a lightning bolt, while his opponent turned into a beam of dark light. The two clashed repeatedly, causing cracks within the world, but William didn't care.

He would kill the bastard in front of him, even if he died in the process.

William abruptly opened his eyes and sat up from the bed, panting for breath. He knew he had a very bad dream, but he couldn't remember everything that happened. The only thing he could remember was him lying on the ground in a pool of blood.

"Will?"

A sleepy voice sounded beside him, as Wendy rubbed her eyes and sat up from the bed as well. She was wearing a one-piece, black, nightdress. This was the first time she had worn something like this while sleeping beside William. Spencer would definitely faint in shock if he saw it.

Unfortunately, William was still too shaken by the dream to appreciate his girlfriend's nightdress.

"I'm fine," William replied hoarsely, "Just a bad dream."

Wendy moved closer and gave William a hug. The red-headed boy wrapped his arms around her and buried his head in her chest.

Wendy's whispered words of assurance in William's ear as she patted the boy's head to help him relax his nerves.

Five minutes passed, and William's breathing stabilized. Wendy's voice, warmth, softness, and the delicate hand brushing his hair helped him to calm down. He continued to hug her as the tension in his body disappeared completely.

"In a few hours, the Inter-Division battle is going to start," Wendy said after she felt William's body relaxing. "Are you perhaps anxious about the outcome of the battle?"

"Maybe," William answered. "I've been suffering from anxiety this past week."

"Don't worry. I promise I'll take it easy when we meet in the arena later." Wendy lightly pressed on William's ears, hitting the pressure points in them to help him calm down more.

"Mmm" William hummed as he enjoyed the sensation of Wendy's soft hands on his ears.

"Feeling better?"

"A whole lot better. Thank you, Wendy."

"You're welcome," Wendy replied. She then looked at the clock hanging on the wall. It was only two in the morning and there were still four hours before sunrise.

"Let's go back to sleep," Wendy proposed. "We will need it before morning comes."

William nodded his head as the two lay on the bed together. Wendy rested her head on William's shoulder and placed her hand on his chest. William, held her waist firmly and closed his eyes to sleep.

Wendy was right. He would need all the rest he could get in order to prepare for the Inter-Division Battle that would be held at the Grand Coliseum in a few hours.

Although it wasn't easy, the red-headed boy was able to sleep after an hour. This time around, he had a dreamless sleep and woke up at six in the morning.

When he opened his eyes, Wendy was no longer beside him. The Half-Elf almost panicked, but immediately calmed down after he heard the sound of running water in the bathroom.

'What is wrong with me?' William rubbed his face with his palms in order to remove the last dregs of sleep from his system. 'Get a grip. Everything is fine. All is well.'

William gave himself some assurance before talking to the system about Carter's activities. Like always, the system didn't find anything suspicious and reported Carter's actions throughout the night.

'Maybe I should just kill him and get this over with.' William's eyes sharpened as a faint killing intent oozed out from his body. He was seriously considering killing Carter today, but decided to push it aside until after the Inter-Division Battle.

A professor dying during this important event would surely cause a big ruckus and an extensive investigation would be conducted. Although William was confident that he could cover his tracks, he was still inside the academy.

There could be someone powerful enough to detect the faint traces he would not be able to erase and link the crime to him.

This was something that he didn't want to have happen because it would cause many complications and would affect the morale of his Knight Order, family, and friends.

While William was pondering about his next course of action, the bathroom door opened and Wendy came out with a towel wrapped around her body. She was using a hand towel to dry her hair as she walked towards William who was sitting on the bed.

William extended his hand, and Wendy handed the towel to him. The Half-Elf then took over the role of drying Wendy's hair while the latter sat beside him.

"Isn't it hard to maintain long hair?" William asked out of curiosity.

"A bit," Wendy replied. "By the way, what do you like more, long or short hair?"

"Long hair. Please, don't cut your hair, Wendy."

"Don't worry. I prefer to have my hair long as well."

After drying Wendy's hair, William went to the bathroom to bathe as well. Half an hour later, the two were fully dressed. They shared a parting kiss before leaving the room since Wendy still had to return to the Magic Division and wait for the tournament to start.

William, on the other hand, went to Dining Room of the Solaris Dormitory.

The majority of students were already there, but not all of them had an appetite. Anxiety could be seen on their faces, which was perfectly normal because they would be fighting against the Magic and Spirit Divisions. This time, they wouldn't be sparring, but fighting for real.

The moment William entered the Dining Hall, all eyes locked onto him. He gave them all a brief nod as he walked to his seat and ate heartily. Unlike the rest of the Martial Class, he was confident that he could beat anyone he faced in the arena.

Seeing that their commander was enjoying his meal, the rest of the students also regained their appetite and started to eat. The instructors, who saw the change in the students' mood, nodded their heads in relief.

They had already tried earlier to cheer the students up by offering rewards, but it didn't help their cause. Fortunately, William's confident actions inspired them to eat their breakfast in preparation for the big fight ahead.

Another hour passed as the students of the Martial Division walked towards the Grand Coliseum of the Royal Academy. Each Division had their own Coliseum, but the Grand Coliseum was the biggest of them all.

This was where the major events of the academy were held and it could easily seat more than three-hundred thousand spectators.

William was in the lead and he walked with even steps and radiated confidence. Soon, he stopped and stood still at the entrance of the Grand Coliseum that was reserved for the First Year Martial Division students.

William turned around to face the students under his wing and smiled.

"Are all of you ready to beat up some snot-nosed pansies?" William asked.

Only a handful of people said Yes, and they were mostly the officers under William's Knight Order. Clearly, the majority of the students were not confident in their chances of winning. William crossed his arms over his chest and decided to give them some encouragement.

"Sons and daughters of the Hellan Kingdom," William said in a confident manner. "And also comrades that came from foreign lands. My brothers and sisters in arms."

William placed his hands behind his back and scanned the anxious faces in front of him.

"I see in your eyes, the same fear that would take the heart out of me.

"A day may come when the courage of men fails, when we forsake our friends, and break all..."

< Ding! >

< New Title Acquired! >

< Title: Copyright Infringement! >

"People die if they are killed."

-- Receives +5 Enhancement Bonus to Agility

-- Receives +5 Enhancement Bonus to Vitality

-- Receives +5 Enhancement Bonus to Intelligence

William almost choked on his saliva when he saw the notification that appeared on his status page. He then cleared his throat and continued his speech.

"In life, we will encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated," William said firmly. "A few years ago, the disciple from the Misty Sect defeated me in a duel. Back then, I felt really depressed and was on the verge of giving up."

The ears of the students perked up because they remembered the day when William arrived at the academy for his Knighting Ceremony. There, he duelled the disciple of the Misty Sect, Kingsley.

"I trained hard. Very hard...," William raised his chin in arrogance. "Even if all of you combined all the training that you have done in the past four years of your lives, I daresay that you wouldn't even come close to the training, and suffering, that I experienced in those four years."

"Because of this training, I was able to easily defeat that disciple of the Misty Sect in our rematch. I will not lie to all of you. Punching that bastard felt good." The Half-Elf smiled evilly and it made the students of the Martial Division smile as well. "Did you see how far he flew after taking a single punch from me? That my brothers, and sisters, is the sweet taste of revenge."

William then turned around to face the Grand Stadium. He still didn't move from where he stood because he was still not finished with his speech. "Today, we may encounter many defeats, but you must never be defeated."

"Just remember the name of the person that beat you. We will gang up on them after the tournament, and drag them to the back of the academy to beat them until their parents won't be able to recognize them anymore.

"Let's go. Make sure to raise your chins and show them the might of the Martial Division. "

William walked proudly towards the entrance of the stadium, while the students of the Martial Division cursed him silently. After saying all those encouraging words, their shameless commander ruined it all with the ending of his speech.

Ganging up on a single person? How shameless!

Kenneth chuckled as he walked towards the entrance of the Grand Coliseum. Priscilla sighed while holding her forehead, as she, too, walked towards the entrance. Spencer and Drake exchanged a glance at each other with a smile, before following their shameless Commander.

It didn't take long before the rest of the Martial Division marched towards the entrance as well. They were no longer feeling anxious. Instead, they were now looking forward to the great battle that was waiting for them.

Their commander was right. They may suffer losses, but they must never be defeated.

Chapter 284: Day Of The Inter-Division Battle [Part 2]

Carter carefully checked his professor's uniform as he looked at his reflection in the mirror.

He didn't know how it happened, but he felt something foreign inside his body and went on high alert. Carter was sure that the foreign entity had appeared the day that he had met William face to face.

Because of this, he decided to play it safe and just stayed inside his residence. Fortunately, the entirety of the students in the First, Second, and Third Year students of the Magic Division were already under his command.

He ordered these students to complete the tasks he had left for them to do.

Deep down, Carter was feeling incredibly excited. He tried to remove the foreign invader inside his body, but none of his methods worked. He assumed that this was done by William's God Essence and his interest in his future vessel grew exponentially.

'I wonder what other secrets are waiting for me to uncover,' Carter thought as turned his head to leave his room. 'Time to start the first phase of my plan.'

The professor activated the suggestion spell and gave out a command. He was looking forward to seeing the expression on William's face when he saw....

"Wendy, come with me for a while," Est said with a smile. "There's something that I forgot in the Magic Division and I will need your assistance."

Est then turned to look at Ian who stood beside him. "Ian, stay here and take command of the students while I am away. I will return as soon as possible."

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"Understood, Young Master" Ian nodded his head.

Est left the Grand Coliseum with Isaac and Wendy following behind his back. The system didn't detect anything suspicious with their conversation since Wendy was the Magic Division's Secretary, and one of Est's officers

Upon arriving at the premises of the Magic Division, Est took Wendy to the garden. It was the same garden where Wendy had brought William, when he accidentally wandered inside their Division.

Wendy was quite familiar with the path because it was the same path that led them to her "Secret Place". Just as she expected, Est stopped in front of the statue.

"Head Prefect, what are we doing here?" Wendy asked.

Est looked at the statue as if he was admiring its beauty. A few seconds later, a sigh escaped his lips as he said the words that had been locked up inside his heart for a very long time.

"It's not fair," Est said with his back still facing Wendy. "I was the one who saw him first. Why must you get in the way?"

"Head Prefect?"

"Wendy, why must you get in the way? Can't you just find other boys to become your boyfriend? Why must you choose William of all people?"

Est then turned to look at Wendy with a hateful expression. "Why?! Why must you get in the way of my love?! Answer me! Why?!"

Wendy was shocked by the sudden change in Est's expression. She didn't expect to see the hate-filled look on the handsome boy's face, and she could tell that he really hated her to the bone.

"I-I don't understand," Wendy stuttered. "What does the Head Prefect mean by getting in the way of your love? What does this have to do with Will?"

"You don't understand?" Est laughed in contempt. "What is there to not understand? I was the one who saw him first. I was the one who loved him first. For four years, I always thought of him. Then, someone like you came along and snatched him from me! Tell me? How should I deal with this hate I am feeling right now? Answer me!"

Aside from the Mind Weaver spell, Carter had also added another spell called "Dark Desire" in the latest batch of candies that he had distributed among the students of the Magic Division.

Like the name suggested, it is a spell that would bring out the deepest and darkest desire within a person's heart. Est's love for William was distorted due to the corruption of his Sea of Consciousness and the spell Dark Desire multiplied this corruption tenfold.

Right now, Est hated Wendy with a vengeance. The only reason why he hadn't attacked the young lady in front of him was due to Carter's absolute order to keep her alive.

"H-Head Prefect, you love Will?" Wendy asked. "B-But, both of you are..."

Before Wendy could even finish her words, she felt a sudden pang of pain behind her neck before her world descended into darkness.

Isaac was there to support Wendy's body and prevented her from falling on the ground. After the deed was done, the statue moved aside revealing Carter with his hands behind his back.

"Bring her inside," Carter ordered.

Est and Isaac nodded and brought Wendy inside the secret passage. The two spells had firmly taken hold of their Sea of Consciousness and they thought that what they were doing was the right thing to do.

After the three children were inside the secret passage, Carter then looked in the direction of the Grand Coliseum and sneered.

"I don't know if you can hear me or not, but if you don't hurry, I might get impatient and have fun with your girlfriend. I'll only give you half an hour to get here." Carter smiled in a lecherous manner. "Don't keep me waiting, or else..."

Carter chuckled as he entered the secret passage. Not long after, the statue moved to block the entrance as if the earlier incident had never happened.

'I'll kill you!' William screamed internally as he rushed towards the Magic Division. The moment Isaac attacked Wendy, the system immediately informed William of what was happening.

William's eyes were already bloodshot as he used his movement technique to its limit. The Grand Coliseum was not that far from the Magic Division. At most, it would only take him five minutes to reach his destination.

However, every second that passed felt like years to him. For some reason, the system's trackers weren't working inside the secret cavern that was hidden in the garden of the Magic Division.

What William and Wendy didn't know was that the Underground Lake had another secret exit near the teacher's residences. The moment Carter stepped into that place, the system's tracking on him had been cut off.

Naturally, the system had reported this anomaly to William, but as the Head Prefect of the First Years, he just couldn't leave them when the tournament was about to start. He planned to investigate Carter's whereabouts after the opening ceremony had finished.

However, William and the system didn't expect that the Professor had this trump card hidden up his sleeve.

The Half-Elf had never run this fast in his lifetime. He was pushing himself to the limit just to arrive a second sooner, so he could save Wendy from the clutches of the lecherous professor who had been targeting her from the start.

When William arrived at the garden, he immediately moved the hand of the statue to allow him entry into the secret passage.

A few seconds later, he arrived at the underground lake and saw Wendy tied up on one of the walls of the cavern with steel chains. William breathed a sigh of relief because aside from being unconscious, she was completely unharmed.

"Well, that was faster than I expected," Carter said with amusement. He was leaning on the cave wall not far from where Wendy was chained.

Est, and Isaac, on the other hand, stood beside Wendy with their weapons drawn and pointed at her body.

"What do you want?!" William roared. "Release Wendy right now!"

"Okay. I'll release her," Carter replied with a smile. "That is what you wanted to hear, right?"

Carter sneered. He then waved his hand and erected a Magic Barrier around Wendy, Est, and Isaac. He didn't want to take any chances, and he knew that he had the upper hand in this situation.

He had waited for this moment for days, and he would not allow William to escape his grasp. As long as he had a hostage, the Half-Elf would be forced to listen to his demands.

"What do you want?" William said through gritted teeth.

The Half-Elf had been secretly calculating the best way to save Wendy, but the Professor's magic barrier prevented him from doing anything reckless. It was at this moment when he realized that he wasn't dealing with a small fry, but a cautious person that had planned this scenario in order to lure him into a trap.

Carter appraised William from where he stood. The longer he looked, the more satisfied he was with the new vessel that he would soon be inhabiting.

"Drink this first," Carter said as he threw a vial that contained a purple liquid towards the boy. "Only by drinking this will we start our conversation."

William caught the vial and appraised its contents. He hesitated after reading the information of the vial, but he still drank it in the end.

Soon, William felt his world spin around him as he fell down on his knees. Carter's smile widened as he walked towards the fallen boy who was suffering from the effect of the special serum that he had made.

"Such strong willpower," Carter said as he lifted William's chin with his finger. "Very admirable."

"Fck you!" William said through gritted teeth.

Carter didn't seem to be offended by William's words, instead he took out another vial from his pocket. He then used his hand to pry open William's mouth and poured its contents inside it.

"I know that you're not an ordinary person, so I'm not taking any chances," Carter stated. "Here, have another."

After emptying the second vial, Carter took another one and forced William to drink it.

William's eyes rolled into the back of his head as he lost consciousness completely. After checking the boy's vital signs, the professor lifted the boy's body with one hand. The Half-Elf hung limp in Carter's hold like a puppet waiting to be manipulated by a puppeteer.

"The two of you guard the entrance," Carter ordered. "Do not leave your spot until I tell you. Understood?"

""Yes."" Est and Isaac walked towards the passageway and left the underground lake. Est gave the unconscious William a brief glance before turning his head away. As he walked towards the exit of the cave, a single tear streamed down the side of his face.

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He wiped it away in a casual manner as if it was a nuisance. Carter didn't see this because he wasn't paying attention to anyone aside from the boy in his hand. The reason why he ordered Est and Isaac to leave was because he would start the process of taking over William's body.

Although the two teenagers were under his spell, there was a small chance for the both of them to regain control over their senses after seeing Carter's true form.

When Carter felt that the two kids were now outside the cavern and guarding the entrance, he then activated the spells embedded in the students inside the Grand Coliseum to proceed with the next phase of his plan....

'Go on my little pets,' Carter said as he empowered the spell that lay dormant within the consciousness of the students under his command. 'Start a massacre. Kill as many as you can! Cover the Coliseum grounds with the blood of your friends and acquaintances! Kill for me! Offer your lives as a sacrifice for my rebirth!'

Carter's laughter echoed off the walls surrounding the underground lake. The moment he had been waiting for was finally at hand!

Chapter 285: Start Of A Massacre

King Noah walked towards the podium and scanned the thousands of students that were gathered in the Grand Coliseum. There should have been more, but they had fallen due to the Dungeon Outbreaks that had suddenly erupted in many places in the Kingdom.

That event greatly saddened him, and the Dean of the Royal academy, for the students were the seeds that they were supposed to nurture in order to keep their kingdom strong.

After taking a deep breath, King Noah stood in front of everyone and started his opening speech.

"For many years, our kingdom has stood tall within the Southern Continent," King Noah said in a voice that was magnified using a magic artifact. "Four years ago, we withstood the Beast Tide that dared to threaten the people of our lands. We were victorious in that battle at the price of many of our brave countrymen.

"A few months ago, another major event happened without warning. This time around, we were forced to seek the help of every able bodied young man and woman to protect the land that we call our home."

King Noah paused and a profound silence fell upon the students that were standing in the Coliseum Grounds. The First Years, up to the Fourth Years of the Martial, Magic, and Spirit Divisions were all gathered and looking at King Noah with sad expressions.

Some of their good friends had fallen during the Dungeon Outbreak, leaving only their memories behind.

King Noah raised his voice as he commended the bravery of the students that had stood their ground, so that many of their countrymen could keep living a peaceful life.

"Hellanians are strong," King Noah said firmly. "We will never cower. We will never surrender. We will face all that threatens our lives and freedom!"

The students raised their hands and roared in unison. King Noah's speech made their blood boil with determination to protect their kingdom.

"This tournament is a way for you to know your strengths and your weaknesses. A way for you to experience fighting against many different kinds of people," King Noah explained.

"Naturally, all of you will be rewarded. Not just the winners, also those who fought bravely. I look forward to the exciting matches that I will see today. Without further delay, I now declare the start of the Inter-Division Battle of the Hellan Royal Academy!"

Suddenly, an ear piercing screech resounded inside the Grand Coliseum as a red portal appeared on the East Side of the spectators gallery.

Thousands of Stone Gargoyles flew out of the portal and started to attack those who were seated near it. The audience screamed and scattered in fear as the demons started a massacre.

"Knights!" King Noah roared. "Protect the citizens!"

""Yes!""

The Knights of the Kingdom immediately charged towards the Eastern Side of the Coliseum, while the Grand Archmage hurried towards Noah in order to protect him.

"Magicians! Protect the Citizens!" Matthew ordered the Fourth Years. "Fight in groups of four and protect each other's backs!"

The Fourth Years immediately moved out towards the East to help the Knights subdue the threat that suddenly appeared in their Inter-Division Ceremony.

The Head Prefects of the Martial, and Spirit Divisions also ordered the students under their wing to reinforce the defenders.

"Damn you demons!" A Third Year student from the Spirit Division summoned spirits in order to fend off the gargoyles that were flying around them.

"Be careful," a lady cleric summoned a barrier to prevent the barrage of stone bullets from hitting his companion.

At that moment, a Second Year from the Magic Division appeared beside them.

"I came here to help," the Second Year Magician said as he stood beside the two Third Years.

"Good! Make sure to support our healer, I'll handle the rest!"

"Understood."

The young spirit user was about to summon more spirit beasts when he was blasted away by a fireball that came from the Second Year Student.

"Mark!" the healer shouted. She was about to deploy a barrier to protect himself, but the Second Year Student was faster than her and knocked her unconscious, using the back of his sword.

A gargoyle then descended from the sky and scooped the unconscious healer from the ground and flew back towards the portal in haste. Their role was to bring back the talented ladies of the Royal Academy to become the broodmares of their Demon Race.

"What are you doing?!"

"Stop!"

"Traitors!"

Shouts of anger, and disbelief reverberated on the Coliseum as the First, Second, and Third Year students of the Magic Division "backstabbed" their fellow students.

"The Magicians are in league with the demons! Kill them!" An enraged Swordsman from the Fourth Year Martial Class roared as he charged towards a Fourth Year Magician that was standing not far from him.

"Wait! We are on your side!" the magician raised his hand to prove that he had no intention to fight.

Unfortunately, the widespread "backstabbing" of the magicians had already made it impossible for anyone to believe his words.

"Die!" The swordsman pierced the Magician's chest, killing him instantly.

The magician died and fell on the ground with shock written on his face. He couldn't believe that his friend had attacked him without showing any shred of mercy.

Soon, he, along with the rest of the people that had died in the Coliseum turned into particles of light.

"Fourth Years! Rally to me!" Matthew shouted in order to recall the Fourth Years of the Magic Division. "Defend yourselves, but do not attack anyone! I repeat. Defend yourselves, but don't attack anyone!"

Leah who was standing beside him created a water barrier to protect the two of them from the attacks that were coming from the Spirit and Martial Division. Just like the rest of the students, both of them were caught by surprise by the unexpected turn of events that decimated almost a third of the students within the coliseum grounds.

The Fourth Year Magicians hurriedly went towards Matthew and resisted the combined attacks of their fellow students, while also defending against the gargoyles that were firing stone bullets from the sky.

Tens of thousands Gargoyles suddenly appeared in the battlefield, and it was almost impossible to wipe them all out using an Area of Effect Spell. What made things even harder was that the "Magicians" had turned coat and attacked the defenders from all sides, increasing the chaos in the battlefield.

"Angorian Knights! Attack the younger magicians, but do not target the Fourth Years!" Priscilla commanded after killing one of the magicians with an arrow. "Remember, target only those that are actively attacking the other students!"

""Yes!""

Brutus' and Bruno's eyes were bloodshot as they attacked their classmates who were wantonly killing the students from the other divisions. They didn't know what was happening, but all the people that they knew were acting like berserked spellcasters who couldn't distinguish between friend or foe!

"What is happening to your classmates?!" Spencer shouted as he fought his way towards the twin brothers who were in the middle of the crossfire. "Where's Wendy?!"

Brutus summoned an Earthwall to defend against a fireball that came from a Third Year Student. The fireball exploded, but the stone wall remained firm and stable.

"Wendy left half an hour ago with the Head Prefect," Bruno answered as he fired multiple fire bolts at the Third Year that attacked them. Unfortunately, the Third Year was well versed in Fire Magic and easily neutralized Bruno's attack.

"Where did they go?" Spencer asked as he channeled his aura on his spear. He then threw it towards the Third Year Magician without waiting for Bruno's answer.

Spencer's Weapon Aura allowed him to increase the speed of his attacks exponentially. Whether it was thrusts, slash, or throwing attacks. All of them were multiplied tenfold once he imbued his aura into his weapon.

The spear flew like a bullet and pierced through the Magician's Chest ending his life in the process.

"The last thing I heard from the Head Prefect is that they left something in the Magic Division," Bruno answered as he fired several fire bolts at his classmates who were running amok. "Maybe they're still there."

"I got it! Both of you stay alive!" Spencer ran towards the fallen magician to retrieve his spear.

As soon as he retrieved his spear, the magician turned into particles of light, which made Spencer sigh in relief. He then hurried towards the exit of the arena in order to find his twin sister and protect her from the demons that had suddenly invaded their academy.

Just as Carter ordered, the First, Second, and Third Year Magicians had positioned themselves among the members of the Spirit Division. These students were rich in spirit powers and would be the perfect incubators for the next generation of demons.

This was why Carter ordered them to only knock the girls unconscious, while killing the boys using a surprise attack.

A black Gargoyle that was three times bigger than the rest stood near the portal and observed the mayhem that was happening.

His name was Atos, the right-hand man of Commander Zagal. The Demon Commander ordered him to carry out the plan and ensure that Carter would be able to safely leave the academy under his watch.

So far, the plan was proceeding smoothly as the students of the Royal Academy died left and right. This was all in accordance with their Commander's order to start a massacre.

Atos was extremely happy that in a short span of time, hundreds of girls had already been captured by the gargoyles, and were taken to the red portal to be brought back to the Demon Continent.

'Just where are you, Carter?' Atos thought as he scanned the crowd, looking for his comrade at arms. 'At most, we can only stay here for ten more minutes. If you're not here by then, we are going to leave you behind.'

Although Atos was ordered by Commander Zagal to bring Carter back safe and sound, he had long hated the sly worm for sucking up to their Commander. Although he was the right-hand man of the Demon General, Carter was always given special treatment by his superior which made Atos hate Carter to the bone.

He just pretended to be civil on the surface, but if there was an opportunity to backstab his rival, he would not miss the opportunity to do so.

'I can always say that we were forced to retreat because the human reinforcements arrived quickly,' Atos thought. 'Yes. Let's go with that plan.'

The Black Gargoyle smirked because it thought that it had found a good excuse to leave his comrade behind in the academy. What he didn't know was that his "comrade" had no intention of returning to the Demon Continent.

Instead, the Professor was busy stuffing potions inside William's mouth, in order to weaken the Half-Elf's resistance. He intended to personally enter William's Sea of Consciousness to devour his soul and completely take over his body.

Chapter 286: On The Verge Of Collapse

While the massacre was rampaging in the Grand Coliseum, a few individuals had appeared inside the academy grounds and scattered in different directions. No one saw them come, and no one would see them leave.

"Princess, rest assured, none of these foul beasts will touch a single strand of your hair." The Knight Captain of the Aerial Cavaliers stood in front of Princess Sidonie with his sword drawn.

The rest of the Knights also didn't move from their position and created an impenetrable defense to protect the young lady seated behind them.

"I'm not worried," Princess Sidonie replied. "As long as the Knights of Freesia stand before me, I will not be afraid of anything."

The magic Knights among the Aerial Cavaliers fired their long range spells in order to attack the gargoyles that flew near their location. Even though they wanted to help, their Princess' safety was their top priority.

Also, their flying mounts were not with them at the moment, so they couldn't engage the flying monsters in the sky. Since that was the case, they focused on the one thing that they could do and that was to protect Princess Sidonie at all cost.

When the attack started, Prince Lionel was seated beside Princess Sidonie. However, after seeing the traitorous magicians attract their classmates, the Knight Captain of Princess Sidonie's Royal Guard, politely asked the Crown Prince to return to King Noah's side.

In fear that Prince Lionel would suddenly turn coat and attack the Princess, they used a diplomatic approach to make the Prince evacuate.

Seeing that the Knight Captain was firm in his decision, Prince Lionel decided to take a step back and agree to their request. However, deep inside, he was feeling irritated because an opportunity to "save" Princess Sidonie was lost due to the Knight Captain's interference.

< I wonder what he would think, if you told him that you'd rather let a gargoyle snatch you away than chat with him for a minute longer? >

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'Although I agree with your words, I can't possibly say that to a Crown Prince of a Kingdom. Big Sister, what are your thoughts about this incident?'

< Something is very fishy about this incident. Sidonie, swap with me for now. I want to be ready just in case of an emergency. >

'Okay.'

Inside the Underground Cavern...

William lay on a small altar, near the lake. A black liquid dripped from the side of his lips, as Carter poured the contents of an eighth vial in the Half-Elf's mouth.

This vial was specially made to weaken a person's soul, forcing it into a lethargic state. Usually, Carter only used two of them whenever he changed vessels, but William was special. The Professor wouldn't underestimate someone that had God Essence in them, so he prepared a dozen "Soul Suppressing Serum" to make William's soul unable to even lift a finger to stop him.

After emptying the twelfth vial, Carter ran a diagnostic spell into William's body. Soon, a triumphant smile appeared on his lips as he prepared to leave the vessel he had been using for the past few months.

Carter opened his mouth, and a two-foot long purple worm emerged from it. It had three eyes on its head, and the blood-red pupils gazed at William as if he was the most delicious meal that it had seen in its life.

After successfully disengaging itself from Carter's body, the "Professor" fell on the ground. Although the body was still alive, it was now an empty husk, bereft of any spirit. The Astral Worm had devoured the soul of the original "Carter" months ago and had stayed in his body up to this day.

The Worm thought that it would be using the Professor's body for many years to come, but William's sudden appearance made it change its plans completely.

It then flew towards William's mouth, and forced itself inside it. The Half-Elf was in an unconscious state and was unable to offer any kind of resistance. Soon, the Worm arrived in William's Sea of Consciousness and immediately felt the Divinity that it had longed for in its dreams.

'Yes! Yes! Yes! Finally!' the Worm happily screeched as it flew toward the center of William's Sea of Consciousness.

There, he saw a boy, kneeling on the ground, and gasping for breath. The worm didn't waste a single moment and immediately attacked the boy. It planned to devour William's soul and take over his body completely.

William's eyes stared at the seven-meter-long Astral Worm that was rushing towards him, and activated his appraisal skill.

< Astral Worm >

-- Soul Devourer

-- Spirit Beast

-- Threat Level: S (Low)

-- Centennial Beast

William tried to stand, but his legs refused to move.

< Host, your soul has been weakened by 80%. Currently, you don't have the capability to fight this Spirit Beast. Even in your peak power, you are still not a match for it. >

'I know.' William replied. Even communicating with the System was hard because his spirit energy had decreased drastically. He gathered all the magic power that he could currently muster in his current state.

At most, he could use it to initiate one full powered attack, and hope that it would work.

'We will proceed with the last resort.'

< Host, that is suicide. >

'I'd rather commit suicide, than be devoured by this bastard. Activate it, now!'

The System knew that William was right. Now was the moment of life and death. Both of them had no other choice, but to confront the Centennial Beast with everything they got.

< Forcefully Merging Job Classes >

< Ice Mage >

< Dark Mage >

< Archer >

< Monk >

< Spearman >

< Thief >

< Disciple of Thunder >

< Fighter >

< Cavalier >

< Sun Knight >

< Merging... Failed. >

William clenched his fist as he summoned Stormcaller in front of him. The spear of the Ainsworth Family shone with defiance as lightning snaked around its body.

"Lightning God War Art, Thirteen Form..."

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

"Go for the kill...," William said through gritted teeth. "Gaebolg!"

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William also channeled all the magic power he currently had and boosted Stormcaller's power as much as he could.

The lightning spear charged towards the approaching Astral Worm like a railgun. It roared and thunder followed in its wake. It was a weapon that had gained sentience long ago, and was only waiting for someone that had the affinity of lightning to wield its powers.

After William unlocked the Disciple of Thunder, the Ainsworth Family Heirloom once again appeared on the battlefield, like it did, thousands of years ago. It had realized William's current situation, and the threat that was fast approaching its current Master.

Empowered by William's Lightning God War Art, and his magic, it flew towards the Astral Worm like a raging lightning bolt.

It was the only thing that stood between the Devourer of Souls, and a helpless Shepherd, that was on the verge of collapse.

Chapter 287: Took You Long Enough

Mordred arrived at the Grand Coliseum and immediately transformed to help deal with the demonic invasion.

After a brief moment, a six-meter long red dragon appeared inside the Grand Coliseum and started to obliterate all the gargoyle in its path. After its initial rampage, the dragon targeted the gargoyles that were carrying the girls towards the portals.

It grabbed the gargoyles in the air and crushed them with its powerful claws. It then caught the falling girl and placed her on the ground before continuing its battle with the gargoyles in the air.

Matthew glanced at the red-dragon and sighed in relief. He had recognized his father, so the burden in his heart eased. With additional reinforcements helping them, he ordered the Fourth Year Students to focus on the girls that were falling out of the air to prevent them from falling to their doom.

After the initial confusion, the other divisions now knew that the Fourth Year Students of the Magic Division were still on their side, so they stopped attacking them. They now focused on the First, Second, and Third Year Magic Divisions, who were still helping the gargoyles capture the students of the academy.

Atos narrowed his eyes and personally engaged the red dragon in an aerial battle. The commander of the demons used an artifact that Commander Zagarl had given him that would boost his strength by five times for a short period of time.

The Gargoyle's strength immediately soared up to Millennial Rank and he faced the red dragon head on. Their collision sent shockwaves through the air and repelled the gargoyles surrounding them.

The Red Dragon was only at the peak of the Centennial Rank, so the Gargoyle managed to push it away in their initial clash. Even so, it didn't back down and engaged Atos in a dogfight. Each time the two beasts collided, powerful gusts of wind would blow, sending Demons and Humans in every direction.

Aside from Atos, there were five more Centennial Ranked Gargoyles that were sent to oversee the operation. Although they were in the middle-ranks, they were still Centennial Rank creatures which made them a grade above ordinary fighters.

"Man... this is quite exciting. The last time we had this much fun was when we went to the South to help the Young Master," Damian said.

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"Let's go, it would be bad if the Boss thought that we were slacking off," Gideon commented.

Suddenly two portals appeared behind the two men.

Above Damian, a giant portal appeared and one of the Apex Predators of the sky screeched as it made its entrance. It was none other than a Roc. It was a Flying Beast that was at the peak of the Centennial Rank.

Damian appeared on the back of the giant bird with his arms crossed over his chest. The Roc flew towards one of the Centennial Ranked Gargoyles and engaged it in combat.

"Let's go, Partner!" Gideon shouted.

A giant beast slithered out of the portal and bowed its head, so that Gideon could ride it. The name of the snake was Bashe, and it was Gideon's most powerful Beast Companion. It was a half Dragon half Snake creature, and was also at the peak of the Centennial Rank.

Without waiting for Gideon's order, the snake zoomed in on the other Centennial Gargoyle in the distance. It leaped into the air and lashed its powerful tail, bringing the flying demonic creature to the ground.

Atos frowned when he saw that the reinforcements had arrived faster than he had anticipated. They had only been around for five minutes, and yet, his forces were now being decimated at an alarming pace.

"Retreat!" Atos ordered. "Protect those carrying the broodmares at all costs! Head towards the red portal as fast as you can!"

After issuing his orders, Atos joined both of his hands and pummeled the head of the red-dragon, sending it crashing towards the ground. He then flew towards the gargoyles that were carrying the girls to protect them from those who were trying to save the students.

The two remaining Centennial Gargoyles followed Atos' lead and helped their subordinates resist the frenzied attacks of the Knights and the students of the academy.

'Since you're still not here then I'm leaving you behind,' Atos sneered as he and the rest of the Centennial Gargoyles entered the portal.

Thousands of gargoyles were still flying within the Grand Coliseum. They were brought here as suicide fighters, and their role was to kill as many people as they could while their superiors escaped through the red portal.

They were beings created from magic cores, so Commander Zagarl didn't care whether they lived or died. For him, they were disposable cannon fodder that could be replaced at any given time. Their only value was to capture their targets and defend the portal until their superiors, and the girls, had been safely delivered to the Demon Continent.

"Stand back!" Emrys, the Grand Archmage of the Kingdom, ordered. He raised his hand in the air and activated a 7th-Circle Spell to obliterate all the demons that were blocking the portal.

"Firestorm!" Emrys shouted after a short chant.

Roaring flames surged above the Grand Coliseum as giant fireballs fell down like rain. Everything that it touched was reduced to ashes. The students hurriedly protected themselves with defensive magic in order to protect themselves from the explosions that were happening in front of them.

In that single spell, thousands of Gargoyles died, but a few thousand still remained. After realizing that they didn't have much time left to live, the gargoyles went into a frenzy and descended from the sky en masse.

They were like suicide bombers that were planning to take anyone they could with them to the afterlife. Screams of anger and pain resounded within the stadium as several students turned into particles of light after the collision with the gargoyle horde.

While this was happening, Atos and the rest of the demons were flying through the warp tunnel that would send them back to the Demon Continent.

It didn't take them long before they saw the exit of the tunnel.

Atos had a big grin on its face as he left the tunnel behind. He was already imagining the praises he would receive from the Demon General, Zagarl, and the rewards that would be showered on him after a successful mission.

Atos' grin stiffened when the familiar scene of the Demon Continent didn't appear in his sights.

After exiting the tunnel, the first thing he saw was a bald monk, drinking a jug of alcohol, while sitting on the shoulder of a Giant Golden Ape.

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"Yo! Took you long enough," Dwayne greeted the gargoyles with a smiling face. He then drank the jug of alcohol in his hand and burped afterwards. "I was getting bored, you see."

Above the giant golden ape, several Wyverns flew and looked at the Gargoyles in disdain. They had already killed the gargoyles that had appeared before them and all the girls that they had captured had all been saved.

Atos looked at the ground. Pieces of stone had been scattered everywhere. They were the body parts of his subordinates who had died after encountering Dave, the Ourobro, and the Wyverns after exiting the portal.

The Commander of the Demon Invasion roared in anger. He thought that his mission had been a complete success. He thought that what was waiting for him were the praises and rewards from the Demon General.

Instead, what waited for him was the giant, golden, fist of the Ourobro that didn't give the Gargoyle Commander a chance to vent his frustration.

Chapter 288: The Power Of The Jack Of All Trades [Part 1]

Lightning and thunder roared in fury as Stormcaller charged towards the Astral Worm in a straight line.

The Astral Worm was a demonic creature and had a distinct weakness against the lightning element. Even so, it didn't decrease its speed and faced the spear head-on.

"Your resistance is futile," the Astral Worm said via telepathy. The disdain in its voice echoed throughout William's Sea of Consciousness as it looked down on William's last struggle. "I've already devoured the souls of more than fifty powerful people in my lifetime, and I have also absorbed their powers. You will suffer the same fate, so just submit and allow me to devour your soul!"

A protective barrier covered the Astral Worm's body as it collided with Stormcaller.

William gritted his teeth as he urged Stormcaller to pierce through the Worm's barrier, but it was to no avail. The faceoff lasted for a full minute, before the power behind the spear's charge dissipated, the Worm lashed out its tail and sent it flying towards the East side of William's Sea of Consciousness.

It then charged-full speed at William in order to devour him once and for all.

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

"Soleil, come forth!" William pleaded.

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The ring transformed into a golden spear and stood in front of William. The red headed boy held the spear and channeled his aura into it.

"Go!" William ordered.

Soleil flew towards the East where Stormcaller was sent by the Astral Worm's attack, leaving William behind.

When the Astral Worm was only ten meters away from William, the boy activated Soleil's special ability and instantly teleported to where the spear was.

The Worm's jaws slammed down on the location where William kneeled a few seconds ago and chewed aggressively. Tasting nothing inside its mouth, it then turned its head to look towards the East and saw the boy grasping the golden spear for dear life as it sped off into the distance.

"Resistance is futile!" the Astral Worm roared and lunged towards the East.

In a span of a few seconds, it had already closed the gap by half as it used another ability that it had taken from one of its previous victims.

The Astral Worm had activated a skill called "Windrider" that allowed it to fly in the air with short, powerful bursts. Its eyes locked on William, making sure that he wouldn't be able to escape its sights.

Suddenly, the weapons that were embedded in William's consciousness flew into the air and attacked the Worm.

William was using every trick he had, but the Centennial Ranked Worm didn't bat an eye and just used its magic barrier to repel the attacks from the weapons.

"Intent fusion!" William said softly as his body glowed. This was the second stage of his Weapon Intent which allowed him to merge with his weapons.

Soleil's body blazed as it curved sideways to attack the Astral Worm that was hell bent on catching it.

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

Two rays of light, one dark, one golden, zigzagged across William's Sea of Consciousness. Everytime the two beams of light intersected, cracks would appear in the sky.

The sea below the two combatants churned as if it was boiling, heralding that the end of the world was at hand.

The Astral Worm was impressed by William's willpower, but it knew that it was only a matter of time before the boy burned out the remaining power in his soul. The destruction that was happening around them was proof that William was nearing his limit.

Deep inside, the Soul Devouring Worm was happily anticipating the moment when William's soul power would run out. When that happened, the new vessel that it had dreamed about would finally fall into its hands.

The four Gods that were watching William from the Temple of Ten Thousand Gods had grim expressions on their faces. They watched helplessly as William fought with his life on the line, but they also knew that it was all for naught.

Gavin clenched his fist as he watched one of his two followers about to meet his end by the jaws of the Astral Worm. After watching for half a minute, the God of All Trades unclenched his hands as he made his decision.

Power gathered in Gavin's body as he locked onto the Divinity that he had given William many years ago. Lily, Issei, and David looked at him with serious expressions, but they didn't do anything to stop him.

What Gavin was attempting to do was to forcefully possess William's body using the power of the God Contract. This act allowed the believers of the Gods to use their powers for a short period of time.

However, doing this was not advised if the God's follower was in a severely weakened state like William. If Gavin made a mistake, he would shatter William's Soul the moment he descended into the Half-Elf's Sea of Consciousness.

"God...," Gavin said with determination. "Descent!"

"Gwark!" William's blood spurted out of his mouth as his soul's connection with Soleil disengaged.

He wasn't able to endure the last clash between himself and the Astral Worm which dispelled the effect of his "Intent Fusion."

William's body fell helplessly from the sky and the Astral Worm didn't waste any time and immediately rushed towards him.

"Hahahaha!" the Astral Worm roared in laughter. It then opened its jaws to devour William's soul. "It's over Half-Elf! Your soul is mine!"

"Not on my watch!"

A booming voice slammed down on the Astral Worm's consciousness which made it flinch in pain, momentarily stopping its charge towards William.

Suddenly, a golden beam shot down from the heavens and covered William in a radiant light.

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

William's eyes widened in shock as he saw a familiar figure standing before him.

Gavin, his Patron God, stood with his hands behind his back and a sorrowful look on his face.

"Will, do you want to experience the power of the 'Jack of All Trades' before you once again cross into the afterlife?" Gavin asked.

Gavin and William both knew that he couldn't be saved anymore. The damage to his soul had already started and Gavin's descent made its demise even faster.

During William's and Celine's training, the Half-Elf had died many times within his Sea of Consciousness. However, he still revived because it took a very powerful attack to destroy a soul.

Unfortunately, his opponent this time specialized in "devouring" souls. There wouldn't be a second chance once the Astral Worm had eaten its prey. All that waited for the soul that got devoured was a slow and painful absorption.

The Astral Worm would then acquire that soul's powers and become stronger.

Gavin's descent was not done the proper way. It was a forceful possession that disregarded the will of the follower that had chosen him as their Patron God. However, Gavin would rather personally escort William's soul back to the afterlife, than have it devoured by the Astral Worm and be used as its nourishment.

William smiled and nodded his head. "I'm sorry, Gavin. I tried. Unfortunately, this is as far as I can go."

"I know." Gavin nodded.

"I'm sorry."

"It's fine. I pray that you will have a better life after you reincarnate."

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

< Merging... Failed. >

"Let me experience it once," William said softly. "The power of the Jack of All Trades."

"As you wish," Gavin replied with a sad smile.

He then pressed his palm against William's head and channeled his divinity.

"System Force Override," Gavin ordered. "Forcefully upgrade all Job Classes!"

< System Force Override Initiated... >

< Job Classes Selected... >

< Upgrading... >

< Ice Mage -- Ice Wizard >

< Dark Mage -- Dark Wizard >

< Archer -- Ranger >

< Monk -- Zen Master >

< Spearman -- Templar >

< Thief -- Rogue >

< Disciple of Thunder -- Prince of Thunder >

< Fighter -- Weaponmaster >

< Cavalier -- Dragoon >

< Sun Knight -- Champion of the Sun >

"Merge Job Classes!" Gavin ordered.

< Merging Job Classes...>

< Ice Wizard >

< Dark Wizard >

< Ranger >

< Zen Master >

< Templar >

< Rouge >

< Prince of Thunder >

< Weaponmaster >

< Dragoon >

< Champion of the Sun >

< Merging Job Classes... Success! >

< New Job Class Acquired! >

< Job Class: Argonaut >

< Argonaut (Temporary) >

"Heroes are not born, they are made."

-- In a time long forgotten, when the Gods still played with the lives of mortal men. A group of the strongest, and bravest, heroes banded together and rose up among the masses to challenge their reign. They completed the many quests that the Gods had imposed on them and finally gained their approval.

-- In the end, this group of Heroes were hailed as Argonauts. Mortal men and women who had won humanity's freedom and ushered in the dawn of a new era for mankind.

-- Increase Magic Damage Resistance by 50%

-- Increase Physical Damage Resistance by 50%

-- Increase Physical Damage +50%

-- Increase Magic Damage +50%

< Host has learned skill: Charge of the Argonauts >

< Ding! >

< New Title Acquired! >

< Jack Of All Trades >

< Jack Of All Trades (Temporary) >

"A Jack Of All Trades is a master of none, but oftentimes better than a Master of One."

-- Increase Magic Damage Dealt by 100%

-- Increase Physical Damage Dealt by 100%

-- Receives +500 enhancement bonus to all stats

Great power surged over William's soul as Gavin's Divinity empowered his entire being.

"Go... Will," Gavin said softly. "Crush this worm and make sure that it will never hurt anyone again from this day onward."

Gavin turned into particles of light as he returned to the Temple of Ten Thousand Gods.

When the blinding light receded, the Astral Worm glared in William's direction. A sphere of light glowed in the sky like a miniature sun.

Soon, the light faded and William appeared wearing a golden suit of armor. The Half-Elf was wearing a winged circlet, and holding a spear in each hand, namely, Stormcaller, and Soleil. On his back, several tendrils of light that were similar to a golden "Aurora Borealis", fluttered like a cape.

William stared at the Astral Worm with a calm expression on his face. The "Giant" that seemed to be undefeatable a while ago, now looked like a little worm that he could crush if he were to simply step on it.

"Lightning God War Art, Twelfth form," William said as he raised Stormcaller and Soleil at the same time with the intention to strike. "Strike with precision, Gungnir!"

William threw both spears towards the Astral Worm.

Fire and lightning criss-crossed across the skies with a vengeance.

The Astral Worm instinctively knew that it wouldn't survive if he got hit by the two spears that filled it with dread. It immediately moved to the side in order to evade, but it was all for naught.

"Your resistance is futile," William muttered as he gazed at his adversary's last struggle. "You can't fight the inevitable."

Soon a scream filled with fear and pain echoed within William's Sea of Consciousness. It was only the start of the Astral Worm's suffering, for William intended to kill it countless times, until its soul ceased to exist.

Chapter 289: The Power Of The Jack Of All Trades [Part 2]

Name: William Von Ainsworth

Race: Half-Elf

Health Points: 170,300 / 282,500

Mana: 168,200 / 290,000

Job Class: Shepherd (Lvl 30)

Sub Class: Argonaut (Max)

< Strength: 55 (+545) >

< Agility: 50 (+520) >

< Vitality: 30 (+535) >

< Intelligence: 60 (+520)>

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< Dexterity: 45 (+550) >

Titles:

< Giant Slayer >

< Domain Master >

< Jack Of All Trades >

The Astral Worm exploded into a thousand pieces as Stormcaller and Soleil pierced its body simultaneously. Blood and flesh fell down in William's Sea of Consciousness like rain, but the red-headed boy didn't bat an eye and just stood perfectly still.

Soon, Stormcaller and Soleil descended towards the ground and activated their powers.

Lightning scattered into the sea, followed by roaring flames that wanted to burn everything in existence.

The Astral Worm planned to play dead and reform its body once William lowered his guard. It thought that it was a perfect plan because not many knew that the souls inside the Sea of Consciousness wouldn't be destroyed so easily.

Unfortunately, it didn't know that this was not the first time that William had fought inside his domain. He knew, more than anything else, the rules behind the battle of two souls.

"Curse you!" the Astral Worm hatefully roared as its body parts were incinerated to ashes. Soon, its Giant Body reformed, but there were certain parts of it that were missing. Clearly, the damage it took from William's empowered attacks were not easy to regenerate.

The Astral Worm hatefully charged at William with the intention of bringing him down with him. This was a mistake on its part because it still thought that William had merely recovered to his former peak of power--before he drank the Soul Suppressing Serums that the Astral Worm forced him to drink at the start.

"Ice Prison," William said and the Giant Worm was enclosed in a giant block of ice. He then raised his hand and a black sword made of pure Dark Magic appeared in front of him. William casually slashed at the block of ice, splitting it into two, killing the Astral Worm for the third time.

It didn't take long before the Astral Worm materialized once again. However, this time, it didn't choose to fight. Instead, it chose to flee!

William watched it with disdain and allowed it to run away for a brief period of time before uttering two words.

"Duel-Ex!"

The Astral Worm stopped mid flight and was forcefully dragged back towards the Half-Elf who had a devilish grin plastered on his face.

"You can run, but there is no escaping the inevitable." William summoned Rhongomyniad and pointed it at the shrieking Giant Worm that was doing its best to escape. "Lightning God War Art, First Form..."

"Illuminate the World! Rhongomyniad!"

A blinding beam of light erupted from the tip of the spear and enveloped the Astral Worm in its entirety.

A few seconds later, the Astral Worm reappeared once again. Half of its body was already gone and failed to regenerate.

"F-Forgive me! Please, have mercy!" the Astral Worm pleaded. "You can treat me as your subordinate! I promise, I won't betray you! If you like, you can even make me your slave! I don't care, just please, spare me! Have mercy!"

William summoned his bow and quiver. He then nocked the Holy arrow on his bow and took aim.

"When your victims pleaded to you for mercy, did you spare them?" William asked. "You didn't, right?"

"Lightning God War Art, Eight Form..." William sneered. "Exterminate, Khyrselakatos!"

"Noooooooooooo!" The Astral Worm tried to run away once again, but it was already too late.

The Holy Arrow arrow multiplied not in the hundreds, but a thousand replicas and descended on the Giant Worm's body like rain.

William didn't stop his barrage and kept on firing one arrow after another.

Thousands...

Tens of thousands...

Hundreds of Thousands...

Stormcaller and Soleil joined the fray and turned William's Sea of Consciousness into a stormy world of lightning and fire.

William's domain was near collapse, but he didn't care. The end was already at hand, and he had already accepted his fate.

"N-No more, I beg you," the Astral Worm begged, this time, only its Centennial Core remained.

William tilted his head as a mischievous smile appeared on his face.

"You like to devour souls, right?" William gripped the Centennial Core firmly in his hand and smiled. "Did you ever wonder if there would come a day when your own soul would be devoured? No? I bet you didn't think that far."

'System, switch the experience points allocation to the Shepherd Job Class.'

< Experience allocation has been successfully changed! >

The Centennial Core trembled in William's hand as it sensed a bad premonition. It immediately struggled continuously to break free from William's hold, but the Half-Elf had it in a firm grip.

"Core Absorption."

< Core Absorption Initiated! >

"Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo! Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh! Spare meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

The dying screams of the Astral Worm were like music to William's ears.

He watched as the Centennial Core slowly, but surely, shrink in size because William told the system to absorb it as slowly as possible. He wanted the Soul Devouring Worm to experience what its victims had felt during the last moments of their lives.

Two minutes later, the core was absorbed completely, bringing an end to the Astral's Worm reign of terror in the world of Hestia.

< Ding! >

< Gained Exp: 950,000 >

< Congratulations! You have slayed a Centennial Beast! >

< Special Monster First Kill Bonus Exp: 500,000 >

< Ding! >

< You have absorbed a Centennial Core >

< Gained Exp: 950,000 >

< The Shepherd Job Class had reached its Max Level! >

< Would you like to Advance to the next Job Class? Yes / No >

"Sorry, Sir David," William sighed as he softly landed on the ground. "I guess I will not be able to see the advancement of the Shepherd Job Cla..."

William wasn't able to finish his sentence because the effect of the Jack Of All Trades had ended. His body fell backwards and laid on the ground without moving. All the strength in his body had left him, but his consciousness remained.

The Half-Elf stared at the sky that was slowly crumbling apart.

'I guess, the end of a world would look similar to this scene,' William thought as his eyes slowly closed. 'I'm sorry, everyone. This is as far as I can go.'

It was at that moment when he vaguely felt a pair of hands wrapped around his body. Due to his current state, William was only able to open his eyes half-way.

"Don't worry, everything will be alright," a familiar voice said softly. "You owe me one, Will."

'Snot-nosed-pansy?' William stared at Ian who was carrying him towards the underground lake. He didn't expect that when he opened his eyes, he would be looking at the real world, instead of his inner one.

Without any warning, Ian jumped into the lake, carrying William in his arms.

His body glowed and transformed right before William's eyes.

Not long after, William saw a girl with long hair that was as blue as the ocean. An unfamiliar, yet beautiful face appeared before him. Even so, he instinctively knew who it was. No matter what form Ian took, William believed that he would be able to identify the snot-nosed-pansy even if his mortal enemy were to turn into a mermaid.

A pair of purple eyes stared back at him, and they were looking at him in an affectionate manner, which was completely different from the gaze that Ian always gave him.

William stared at the otherworldly beauty in front of him and recalled the warning that Belle had given him not long ago.

While the Half-Elf was lost in thoughts, Ian's face moved closer and gave him a kiss. She transferred air into his body as she dove deeper towards the center of the lake.

After passing the Trial of Enlightenment, Ian gained the ability to temporarily unlock the seal that was placed on her by the Goddess Astrid. William had already lost consciousness at that point because his soul was nearing its limit.

When Ian finally arrived at their destination, she used her spiritual power to temporarily maintain William's current condition. After that was done, she placed a hand over her chest and started to sing.

Ian sang an otherworldly song and the magic power within the lake swirled around her and William.

The underground Lake that was hidden in the Magic Division was not an ordinary lake. It was the exposed part of a Ley Line that supplied magic power to the Royal Academy. Ian, in her mermaid form, had the ability to convert Magic power into Spirit power, and use it however she wanted.

When the battle in the Grand Coliseum started, she assigned her duty to Brutus and Bruno and went to find Est and Isaac.

Luckily, she also had the ability to sense the location of her twin and headed towards the garden in haste. After Carter was defeated in William's Sea of Consciousness, his hold over the students vanished as well.

When Est and Isaac recovered their sanity, they immediately realized the terrible things that they had done. Ian arrived just in time to see the two of them enter the secret passage to the lake and hurriedly followed behind them.

After the trial in the Kyrintor Mountains, Ian was able to sense spiritual power once again. Because of this, she was able to tell that William's soul was on the verge of collapse the moment she laid her eyes on him.

Ian didn't waste any moment and immediately came to his rescue.

Dense spiritual power swirled and gathered around Ian and William. Ian continued to sing until she reached the limit of her control over her spiritual powers. A blue gem, the size of a pigeon's egg, appeared on Ian's chest and started to absorb the spiritual energy swirling around them.

The dense spiritual energy flowed towards the gem on her chest, as if it was a small blackhole that was greedily sucking in everything around it. Soon, all the spiritual energy had been absorbed and Ian's singing stopped.

"You better take responsibility after you've recovered," Ian said with a hint of exhaustion in her voice. "I will give you the most precious treasure of the Mermaid Race."

Ian braced herself as she plucked the blue gem out from her chest. Blue blood gushed out as soon as the gem was taken out from her body, but she ignored it.

The blue-haired beauty endured the pain and pressed the gem over William's own chest. She watched as the gem embedded itself into William's skin and merged with his body. Only after the gem disappeared from her sight, did she manage to breathe a sigh of relief.

The wound on her chest gradually healed by itself, but the luster in Ian's blue hair, purple eyes, and body dimmed as well.

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What she had given William was half of her spiritual core. In essence, she had given him half of her heart. It was the only way that Ian could think of to prevent William's Spiritual World from being destroyed completely.

"Sleep and recover," Ian whispered softly. "Quarrel with me again after you do. I will be waiting for you, Will."

Ian leaned close to kiss the unconscious Half-Elf one more time to give him some air to breathe. She then swam towards the surface, where her love rivals were anxiously waiting for the red-headed boy's return. Deep inside her heart, Ian hoped that William would treat her better when he woke up.

When she had seen William lying on the ground, dying from having his Spiritual World destroyed, she finally realized that the feelings she had for the boy were just as strong as the feelings that Est and Wendy had for him.

Because of this, she decided to throw caution into the wind and let her true feelings burst forth. As to what the consequences of her actions would be, she didn't care. After all, she would make the Half-Elf in her embrace take full responsibility for getting into a situation where she was forced to give him her heart.

Chapter 290: Are You Also In Love With Will?

The battle in the Grand Coliseum continued for another half an hour after Atos entered the portal.

After losing their commanders, the Gargoyles decided to use suicide attacks in order to bring as many people as they could with them to the afterlife. Most of them succeeded before shattering into pieces, while others were destroyed by the strong fighters on the Human side.

King Noah and the Grand Archmage, Emrys, looked at the scene with grim expressions on their faces.

"Fortunately, we were forewarned," King Noah muttered softly. "If James hadn't shared this information with us, many lives would have been lost today."

"Not only that, Your Majesty," Emrys commented. "All the students that the demons captured would have lived lives far worse than death."

"True." King Noah agreed. "It is impossible for the Demons to have staged an event like this on their own. Perhaps The Organization is also behind this incident."

"The chances are very high, Your Majesty," Emrys frowned. "Unfortunately, I'm afraid that this is not yet over."

"Simon did well in connecting the entire Academy to his personal domain. Although we used many resources, the results are still satisfactory."

"I'm sure that the Demons will think twice before they set their sights on the Hellan Kingdom again after this incident. They've suffered many losses in this mission of theirs."

Both men looked at the Knights, and the students of the other Divisions, that had surrounded the First, Second, and Third Year students of the Magic Division. Although Carter's Control over them had dissipated, their minds were still unstable due to the effect of the spells inside their Sea of Consciousness.

For now, they were rounded up at the center of the Grand Coliseum where everyone could keep an eye on them. Although this treatment seemed unfair, no one wanted to take chances. Especially after the backstabbing incident that happened not long ago.

"How is he?" Est asked anxiously as he looked at William's face that was as pale as a candle.

"He's safe, for now," Ian replied. "His 'Spiritual World' has collapsed, but his life is no longer in danger. It's just that..."

"Just what?" Est gazed at Ian who was still in her mermaid form.

Ian took a deep breath before she continued her explanation. "It might take him months to fully recover. However, if I stay by his side to constantly gather spiritual energy to help restructure his Sea of Consciousness I can shorten it, but that would still take a minimum of three months."

Est felt something sour inside his mouth as he looked at the Half-Elf who had almost died after fighting with Carter. To make things worse, Est also felt guilty because he played a role in luring William to the place where Carter had set a trap for him.

"Is there anything that we can do to hasten his recovery?" Est inquired. "Is there anything that I can do?"

Ian shook her head firmly. "I have already given him a dense amount of Spiritual Energy. Giving him any more at this point will cause harm to his body. I intend to help him repair his Sea of Consciousness from the inside. That is all that we can do for now."

"Can I help? Is there a way that I can help him?" Est looked at Ian with a pleading gaze.

Ian didn't have the heart to say No, so she reluctantly nodded her head, and told Est that he could come with her when they entered William's Spiritual World.

"Will?"

A voice sounded from behind Ian and Est. Wendy had regained her consciousness and looked at her lover, who was currently cradled in Ian's arms.

"What happened to him?!" Wendy ran towards them as she held William's shoulder anxiously. "Who are you?! What did you do to him?!"

Est took a deep breath and explained the situation to Wendy. He told her everything that happened right after she was knocked unconscious by Isaac. How Carter forced William to drink an unknown serum and the battle that happened within the Half-Elf's Sea of Consciousness.

Wendy listened calmly to Est's explanation from start to end. After hearing that William was "temporarily safe" the anxiousness in her eyes lessened, but it was soon replaced by sadness.

"I'm sorry, this is all my fault." Est bowed his head in apology. "If I was only strong enough to resist the spell, all of this might have been prevented. It's all my fault."

Wendy shook her head as she looked at her Head Prefect who was stricken by guilt and grief.

"Head Prefect, it's not your fault," Wendy replied. "I'm sure that Will also doesn't blame you for the things that happened. If there was someone to blame, it would be none other than that hateful Demon who instigated all of this!"

Wendy gnashed her teeth in anger as her eyes locked on "Carter" who was lying on the ground, unconscious. Now that the Astral Worm had left his body, all that remained was an empty, living husk.

Est followed Wendy's gaze and shook his head. Clearly, he didn't want Wendy to do anything reckless and harm the soulless body lying on the ground.

"Let the King handle this," Est stated. "Someone has to take the blame and preserving the professor's body is a must because it will serve as evidence. Also, the original owner of that body is innocent. He was just one of the many victims of that Demonic Worm that devoured people's souls."

Wendy reluctantly nodded her head as she looked at Ian. "You still haven't answered my question earlier. Who are you?"

Instead of answering Wendy, Ian undid her transformation. The blonde beauty's mouth opened wide in shock as she stared at Ian who was looking at her with a serious expression.

"Y-You're a girl!" Wendy's grip on William's shoulder tightened as she stared wide-eyed at the boy in front of her. "Why are you pretending to be a boy? Are you doing this to get close to Will? Wait..."

"I'm not pretending to be a boy," Ian replied. "I was originally a girl, but was placed under a powerful curse. This is the reason why I am currently a boy. And just so you know, I also like William."

After almost losing William to the demon, Ian felt a heart-wrenching pain inside her chest. It was then when she truly realized that the boy whom she always quarreled with had already taken a place inside her heart.

Wendy gazed straight into Ian's eyes and understood that she was dead serious.

Wendy then turned her head to look at Est who was standing beside her. "Earlier you said that I got in your way... are you also a girl?"

"Yes." Est nodded.

"Do you also like William?"

"I've liked him for years."

After getting the answer to her question, Wendy shifted her attention to Isaac. "Are you a girl as well?"

"Yes," Isaac answered.

"Are you also in love with Will?" Wendy inquired. If not for the fact that the poor Half-Elf was already in a "Half-Dead" state, Wendy would have definitely smacked his head to vent out the frustrations that were welling up inside her heart and called him 'Womanizer'.

"Me?" Isaac pointed at himself with a surprised expression. "No. I'm not in love with William. We're only friends."

"Okay, good." Wendy patted her chest in relief. "That's one less problem to deal with."

She then looked at her pale-faced boyfriend, before reaching out to take him away from Ian's embrace.

The blonde beauty took a deep breath, before glancing at Est and Ian who was looking back at her with complicated gazes.

"Let's talk about this messed up relationship later," Wendy proposed. "Let's have the clerics take a look at William first. After that, the three of us need to have a proper talk about how we will proceed from here."

Est and Ian nodded their heads. Since Wendy now knew their secret, there was no reason for the two of them to hide their feelings for William any longer.

Oliver watched this scene from the shadows and sighed. He arrived just in time to witness the three girls that liked William make their feelings known to each other.

Fortunately, the Half-Dead-Half-Elf was still unconscious, and was spared from the messy relationship that he had unknowingly created.

Oliver subtly entered William's shadow in order to protect him from any further threats that might arise out of nowhere. His mistress, Celine, would have also come to the academy, if not for the letter from The Organization that mysteriously appeared at her doorstep.

The letter explicitly told her not to interfere with The Organization, and in return, they would not target her one and only Disciple. The leader of The Organization had personally placed his seal on the letter, which forced Celine to stay in Lont.

However, the letter didn't tell her not to send anyone to look after the boy, so she immediately sent Oliver to ensure William's safety.

The Organization had its members scattered across every part of the continent. If they were to set their eyes on targeting William, the Half-Elf would definitely not be able to resist their assault. Because of this, Celine decided to compromise and not interfere with The Organization's attack at the academy in order to spare her Disciple from having additional enemies who specialized in schemes and deceit.