

## **Strongest 371**

### Chapter 371: The Leaders of Deus [Part 1]

"Please be careful, Big Brother," Brianna said as she hugged William. "If you need a safe place to stay, you can always come back here in the Kyrintor Mountains. I will welcome you with open arms."

William patted Brianna's head with a smile. He also felt reluctant to leave the adorable loli behind, but he couldn't stay with the Northern Tribes. There were still many things he had to do and people to protect.

Besides, hiding would not change anything.

"Don't worry, I'll be fine," William replied as he assured Brianna. "Make sure to follow your Sovereign's Decree. Also, look after your people. They need you right now."

William then shifted his attention to the Youngest Prince of the Hellan Kingdom who was a few meters away from them.

"Prince Ernest, stay here in the Kyrintor Mountains," William stated. "I already told you about the state of affairs in the capital. Going back will only endanger your life. Until the curse has been lifted, you are to stay here with the Northern Tribes. Do you understand?"

"Yes," Prince Ernest replied.

The Young Prince also understood that he couldn't do anything for the Kingdom at this point in time. His brothers had already aligned themselves with The Organization which was [an act of] treason.

Although he didn't have a bad relationship with his elder brother, the Crown Prince, he still couldn't accept the fact that Prince Lionel had betrayed his own Kingdom. This was something Ernest couldn't forgive.

Seeing that his message had been taken seriously by the Prince, William patted Brianna's head one last time.

"It's time for me to go," William said softly.

Brianna nodded and reluctantly let go of William. The Half Elf planted a kiss on her forehead before going towards the flying carriage which would take him back to Lont. He didn't look back, because she didn't want to see Brianna's sad expression.

Although they were not related by blood, he had long thought of her as his little sister. He didn't want Brianna to take part in this battle that would stain her hands with blood.

After entering the carriage, Dave and Lionheart prepared for takeoff.

Conrad, who had also been summoned to the Kyrintor Mountains, soared into the sky with his Wyvern to serve as an escort. Moments later, The Gryphon took off, pulling the flying carriage behind it.

Brianna looked at the flying carriage that was slowly going farther away from the North, with a sad expression. She then felt a warm and small hand hold hers in a firm grip.

"Although Sir William makes me jealous, I believe in him," Prince Ernest said with a serious expression.

"Why do you believe in him?" Brianna asked. She looked at the Young Prince beside her with expectations.

Prince Ernest smiled, "Because he is someone that my father has chosen. Also, he is the person that my Big Sister has chosen."

Brianna nodded because she also believed in William. She only wished that the red-headed boy wouldn't come to any harm when he took part in this war that would change the Fate of the entire Southern Continent.

Inside the flying carriage, William and Ashe had entered his Sea of Consciousness in order to allow the mermaid to make a detailed diagnosis of his body. The fight inside Avalon was quite intense and Ashe was worried that there had been some damage made to her lover's Spiritual World.

"Everything is fine," Ashe said after her inspection. "Your Spiritual World is still in a state of recovery. At most, it will take two to three months before it regains stability."

She was holding William in an embrace and the latter's head was resting over her chest.

"I told you that I'm fine," William replied while keeping his eyes closed. "You just won't believe me."

Ashe sighed as she placed her hand over the jewel on William's chest, "Of course I was worried. You were casting spell after spell without pause. Now, don't talk. I will start to transfer Spirit energy to your soul."

The gem on her own chest glowed and synchronized with the gem that was also glowing in William's chest. Soon, the two gems pulsed in a steady rhythm like the beating of a heart.

William was still tired from the recent battle, so he immediately fell asleep due to the comfortable sensation that was flowing inside his body.

It would take them at least two days to reach Lont where he would reunite with Matthew and Leah. He also needed to consult with Vlad to see if he would be willing to extend his hand to help William take care of the foreign invaders in their home turf.

Takam had already warned William that Vlad was someone who didn't want to meddle in the affairs of mortal men. However, there was still a chance to gain his assistance, so it was worth a shot.

Having a Demigod on their side would drastically increase their chances of winning. William just hoped that the Demigod of the Strathmore Forest would be in a good mood when he asked for his assistance.

Conner traveled day and night to reach the site of the Hidden Valley. He couldn't believe that the Domain he had been looking for had vanished without a trace. The subordinates that were left behind were missing as well. No matter what he did, he was unable to contact any of them.

The Domain was very important to him, so he set aside the pressing matters of the Kingdom and left it to his subordinates to handle.

'Just where did it go?' Conner thought as he surveyed the vast pit that had once housed the Hidden Valley. He couldn't think of anyone, or anything, that had the ability to make the valley disappear from the face of the Earth.

Calum and the rest of his subordinates had explored the surroundings and even explored the pit in order to find any clues that they could use to locate the valley that they were looking for. Unfortunately, their efforts didn't bear any fruit.

This piece of bad news made Conner very angry and helpless at the same time. He had spent a vast amount of time and resources in order to find the Undying Lands. He even had to instigate a war in order to ensure that none of the strong individuals in the continent would get in his way, so that he could explore the Domain's secret without any interference.

The loss of the Domain that held the secrets of immortality gave him a blow that he couldn't swallow and accept.

"Search the nearby towns and villages for clues," Conner ordered. "I will return to the capital and send more men to join you in this endeavor. All of you are not going to rest unless you have covered every inch of the Hellan Kingdom. Find the valley and find the monument! This mission takes precedence above all!"

The members of The Organization nodded and split into teams to investigate the nearby towns and villages. The members that had accompanied Conner from the capital had also been split to accompany these groups of investigators.

Conner remained even after his subordinates had left his position. He stared at the pit with a serious expression as if he was using his willpower to summon the valley back to its original position.

"So this is what you've been up to, Conner."

"That's one big pit. Are you trying to build an artificial lake? You sure have a unique taste."

Two teasing voices said from behind Conner.

The leader of The Organization in the Southern Continent snorted and turned to look at the two uninvited guests that had come to ridicule him.

An Elf and a Middle-aged man, who seemed like veteran warriors, openly sneered at Conner. They were the two leaders of The Organization who were stationed in the Silvermoon Continent and the Kraetor Empire.

Naturally, they didn't like Conner and were more than happy to make things difficult for him.

"Did the two of you come here to kill me?" Conner replied. "Or did you two foolishly come here to be killed by me?"

Conner held the handle of his short sword by his waist as he eyed his comrades in contempt. All of them were leaders of The Organization in their respective domains, but they didn't really get along with each other. More than anything, they were rivals, even enemies to a certain extent.

They all listened to the Supreme Pontifex and adhered to his orders at all times, but that didn't mean that the Branch Leader of each organization had to give each other face.

"The two of you came at the right time," Conner said as he pulled out the sword by his waist. "I've been in a very bad mood as of late, and I need to find an outlet to release some stress... why don't the three of us spar for a while?"

#### Chapter 372: The Leaders of Deus [Part 2]

"This is why I hate you humans." The Elf, Alessio, shook his head in disdain. "All of you are crude and barbaric. Can't we just sit down and talk like civilized people?"

Berthold, the middle-aged man who stood beside the Elf, spat on the ground. "This is why I hate Elves. You pretend to be so refined and elegant, yet every word that comes out of your mouths is rubbish. Do you all, perhaps, eat the deer dung in your forests for breakfast?"

"As expected of Humans, all of you are scum."

"As expected of Elves, all of you are hypocrites."

The two glared at each other, completely ignoring Conner who had his short sword at the ready.

Although the two were quarreling with each other, Conner didn't lower his guard. Backstabbing was very common among the leaders of The Organization. They would be more than happy to kick those that had fallen from the grace of their Pontifex and take all of his possessions like spoils of war.

"Speak, why are both of you here?" Conner declared as he pointed his short sword at the Elf.

The Elf frowned as he faced Conner's glare fearlessly. "Why are you pointing that thing at me?"

"It's really simple," Conner replied. "I hate Elves more than I hate Humans."

Berthold laughed out loud as he saw Conner antagonize his Elven Counterpart. He already knew of Conner's hatred for Elves, so he wasn't surprised at his current action.

Alessio also knew of Conner's hatred for the elves, but the same was mutual so he wasn't backing down as well.

Ironically, after a standoff that lasted for a few minutes, it was Berthold who took the lead to pacify both sides.

"Calm down, both of you," Berthold said. "Conner, we didn't come here to fight. At least for now. Our real fight will start soon. But, since we are acquaintances, we decided to come here to give you a chance to surrender."

Conner grinned as he looked at his acquaintance with disdain. "Surrender? Me? What nonsense are you talking about?"

Alessio chuckled as he crossed his arms over his chest. "Aren't you wondering why the two of us are here?"

Conner gave the Elf a side-long glance. Naturally, he was surprised when his rivals had suddenly appeared in the Southern Continent. However, knowing that the two were opportunistic bastards, his surprise didn't last long.

Since all of them were members of the same organization, it was highly possible that his plans were leaked out by the spies that his two guests had planted in his own men.

Seeing that Conner wasn't planning on saying anything, Alessio gave an exaggerated sigh as he continued his explanation.

"Simply put, the Elven Army and the Kraetor Empire have invaded this continent." Alessio smirked. "We are just giving you an opportunity to surrender before our armies trample on your men during our conquest of this Kingdom."

Conner snorted at the Elf's arrogant words. "Conquer this Continent? You make it sound so easy. Do you really think that you can do that?"

"Of course. What can a few scum Humans do to our mighty Elven Army?" Alessio raised his head arrogantly. "No matter how many subordinates you have, do you think you can beat a tenth of the Silvermoon Continent's Army? I'd love to see you try."

Berthold, who was keeping quiet earlier, yawned as if the Elf's bravado was just the boast of a five-year-old child.

"Maybe a miracle will happen and you can beat these weak Elves, but you cannot do anything about the forces of our Kraetor Empire," Berthold stated. "You already know what kind of Army we have, right?"

Conner frowned. He didn't know how many men Berthold and Alessio had brought to the Southern Continent. However, their confident words made him understand that both of them weren't joking.

"Frankly, I don't mind if you cut the ears of some of these Elves and take them back as trophies. Their arrogance had been rising as of late. The kids in my army are looking forward to capturing some Elven beauties to be raised as their pets."

"Barbaric brutes, I'd like to see how you do that under my watch. It's about time you realize that the time when you can enslave our race is now over."

Conner watched the two men bicker with each other as he thought of their plans to invade the Hellan Kingdom. If one of them invaded, he might be able to resist, but if the two of them were to work together...

"What if I refuse?" Conner asked.

Alessio and Berthold exchanged a glance before laughing together. Their laughter rang out freely which irritated Conner's ears.

"Do you dare refuse?" Alessio asked with disdain. "Do you dare?"

Berthold had also stopped laughing and his expression became serious. He wanted to know if Conner had the guts to fight the two of them at the same time.

"Why shouldn't I dare?" Conner challenged. "Both of you came here, uninvited, in my domain and you think I will just bow and allow you to have your way? I am the leader of The Organization in this continent. Both of you are mere trespassers."

Berthold and Alessio didn't deny Conner's accusation because he was correct. Both of them were trespassers, but in the face of such a juicy opportunity to gain more lands, they were unable to resist wanting to take a slice of the cake as well.



Within The Organization, it was not forbidden for the leaders to fight against each other. The strong will lead and the weak shall have to submit. This was a rule that their Supreme Pontifex had decreed.

Even Conner, Berthold, and Alessio had to fight against the former Branch Leaders before they were able to gain the position they had now. All three of them were ruthless individuals, which allowed them to become the leaders in their respective territories.

"Since it has already come this far, we have nothing more to discuss," Alessio replied. "We will just have to fight and see who becomes the top dog between the three of us."

"I agree. I have long wanted to punch your face, just once, Alessio." Berthold nodded his head in agreement, "This is a good opportunity to do that."

"Hahaha! Fine. I'll give you an opportunity, just make sure that you don't die in your attempt," Alessio commented. He then turned towards Conner and smirked. "May the best Elf win."

Berthold scoffed. "It's time for you to wake up from your daydream."

Conner ignored the two men's bickering and walked away with steady steps. He still had many things to do and one of them was assigning men to find the Undying Lands before the Elves, and the Kraetor Empire, got wind of the real reason for bringing the entire continent to its knees.

### Chapter 373: The Betrayer Of The Hellan Kingdom

Est, who was currently in the capital, was inside the house where he had stayed with his mother for many years.

Just like all the adults, his mother had also turned into a crystal statue while seated in her favorite chair.

Herman, Nana, and the three maids who stayed behind to watch over his Mother's safety, had suffered the same fate as well.

"Young Master, dinner is ready," Isaac said as he finished arranging the dining table.

Currently there were only the two of them inside the house, and both of them worked together to do the house chores while waiting for the promised date when all of the students of the academy would return to the capital and discuss their next course of action.

Frankly, Est believed that not all of the students who had returned to their domains would come back on the promised date. Most of them were the heirs of their territories, so it was up to them to take care of the welfare of the survivors that were left behind.

Also, he was quite worried about William. After the Crown Prince gave everyone permission to return to their hometowns, Est went to the academy to check on the Half-Elf's condition.. However, when he arrived, William and Ian were nowhere to be found.

Est was very tempted to go to Lont, but he was worried about his mother, so he decided to stop by their residence back in the capital of Gladiolus.

"Is the food not to your liking, Young Master?" Isaac asked after seeing that Est did not seem to be in the mood for dinner.

Est shook his head as he gave his loyal retainer a smile. "Sorry, I was thinking of other things. The food you make is always delicious."

Isaac sighed in relief after knowing that it was not his cooking's fault. The two talked as they ate because the house was very quiet. It made them feel like they were in a ghost town, because they could not hear any noises in the vicinity.

Est's house was located in the Second Level of Gladiolus. This was where the residences of important people, and nobles of the Hellan Kingdom, were located. Naturally, there was a certain distance from every household and all their properties held considerable space.

This gave each household some privacy, which also made the current situation so dark and gloomy.

"Do you think Will and Ian are in Lont?" Est asked.

Isaac finished chewing the food inside his mouth before he answered his Young Master's inquiry.

"I think that is the case, Young Master," Isaac replied. "I can't think of any other place where the two of them could have gone."

Est nodded in agreement. Ian wouldn't take a risk when it came to William's safety, so the town of Lont was the safest place to go during these chaotic times.

"We still have a week before the gathering will take place," Est said softly. "If William is not there at that time, we will go to Lont and visit him."

Isaac nodded.

Currently there was nothing they could do in regards to the people that had been turned into statues. Fortunately, each residence was protected by special runes that prevented intruders from entering them.

Only those that had a certain imprint could enter and leave the premises unimpeded without facing the high-level spells that could potentially give them serious injuries. For now, Est's mother, Nana, Herman, and their maids were safe inside their residence.

"Tell me, what do you think about the current situation?" Est asked with a serious expression.

Among the three of them, Isaac was the least vocal, but he was the one who liked to plan things and ensure that they had everything they needed whenever they went on an expedition. Est trusted him to give insights on certain things, especially when he needed a second opinion.

"It's fishy," Isaac answered in a heartbeat. "All the adults have turned into statues, but those black-robed men that appeared inside the Fortress were perfectly fine. Not only that, they seemed to have a close connection with the Crown Prince."

"I didn't want to say this at first, but it's possible that they were the ones responsible for the incident that had[s] turned all those who were above the age of twenty into statues."

Est's expression turned serious. He had been thinking of the same thing, but he lacked the evidence to back up his suspicions. When he went to see the statue of the King for the first time, the Crown Prince didn't react as strongly as he had at that time.

It was as if Prince Lionel had already anticipated that something would happen to his own father. The other suspicious thing was the way he greeted the black-robed men that had appeared in the fortress after the incident.

Although it was not an overly warm reception, one could tell at a glance that they were on good terms with each other.

Not only that, they were the ones who volunteered to gather the statues of the King and other high-ranking nobles and officers of the army for safe keeping.

Est didn't think much about this in the past because his state of mind back then was filled with confusion. Back then, all he cared about was the King's safety and the eradication of the Soldier Ants that had been paralyzed due to the Purple Aurora Borealis that descended from the sky.,

"Are you implying that the Crown Prince has betrayed the Kingdom?" Est asked in a voice that only Isaac could hear.

Although the residence had soundproofing magic, this kind of discussion was something that shouldn't be known by other people.

Isaac firmly nodded his head, "Of course, this is only my assumption. I would rather be wrong than right about this matter, Young Master."

Est didn't say anything and allowed Isaac to clear the dishes on their table.

Just like his trusted retainer, Est wished that the Crown Prince wasn't part of this conspiracy. Because if that was true then Prince Lionel had not only betrayed the Hellan Kingdom, but also betrayed his own family.

Est clenched his fist as he held back the anger that was rising in his chest. He had never liked the Crown Prince, but he didn't hate him to the extent of wanting to cause him harm.

'I need to know the truth,' Est thought as he raised his head to look at the ceiling. 'I need to know if he really betrayed His Majesty.'

Meanwhile, inside a tower that served as a prison located on the East side of Gladiolus...

"Hahaha! I bet you didn't see this coming, didn't you, dear brother of mine?" Rufus laughed hysterically as he looked at his older brother's swollen face.

The two of them were locked in different cells, but Rufus' condition was way better than the Crown Prince's.

After barging into Conner's room when the latter was in a bad mood, the Crown Prince received a beating which had broken some of the bones in his body. Naturally, after regaining his composure, Conner ordered the healers of The Organization to treat his injuries.

However, Conner prevented them from healing Prince Lionel's face which made the latter mad with anger. Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do but swallow his anger in the fear that Conner would come to his cell to beat him up again if he made a scene.

For Prince Lionel, who adored the beautiful Princess of Freesia, he cared about his face just as much as he cared about his life. He hated the fact that his loser brother was mocking him, but there was nothing he could do, but endure.

Conner had stationed guards to watch over the two of them, so the Crown Prince ignored Rufus' ingratiating taunts.

'Conner, you bastard! This prince will make you pay for this offense!' Prince Lionel swore as he glared hatefully at Rufus, who was currently rejoicing at his current state. 'You, too! After I get out of here, I will ensure that you will not be able to ridicule and laugh at me again!'

The Crown Prince's heart was filled with hate and anger. For someone like him who wanted to stand above others, being treated like this was a stain on his Ego. If given the chance, he would definitely turn back time, and tell his father the whereabouts of The Organization that had made his life miserable.

Unfortunately, there was no medicine for regret. Prince Lionel knew that his options were limited.

For now, the only thing he could do was wait. He would wait for the time when he could reclaim what was rightfully his and make everyone who dared to look down on him, kneel on their knees and beg for his forgiveness.

#### Chapter 374: Visitors From Outside The Borders Of The Hellan Kingdom

A four meter tall Lamassu soared through the sky, while pulling a flying carriage. Thirty more Lamassus flanked the flying carriage, serving as their escorts.

< Lamassu >

-- Protector of the Divine

-- Human-Headed Winged Bull

-- Threat Level: A (Low)

-- Can be added to the herd

-- Success Rate: 5%

-- Lamassus are often called the Protectors of the Divine because they were fierce and loyal guardians of the Bull God that had walked the land thousands of years ago.

-- They have the body of a bull, the facial features of a man, and the wings of an eagle.

-- In the Zelan Dynasty, most houses--that have a certain kind of influence and power--have a pair of carved Lamassus beside the entrance of their gate. They believed that as long as the Lamassus stood guard to protect their house, their safety was assured.

Inside the flying carriage, the Crown Prince of the Zelan Dynasty, Alaric Sol Zelan, watched over his brothers and sisters, who were currently asleep. When the Elves invaded the outskirts of their Dynasty, the minotaur race immediately reported it to their Sovereign.

Minos, the Myriad Great Bull of the Zelan Dynasty, knew that it would be impossible to stop the advance of the Elves at this point in time. Just like the Ant Colony of the Anaesha Dynasty, the Bovine Beast Protectors of the Zelan Dynasty were also weakened by the Continental Spell.

In order to preserve the lineage of the Royal Family, he ordered a platoon of Lamassus to immediately gather the surviving members of the Royal Family and take them to a place where the Elves couldn't reach them.

He then ordered all of the remaining Bovine races to gather at the Palace of Knossos where he resided. It was located in a Labyrinth that was ten miles away from the Capital of the Zelan Dynasty. This Labrinth was protected by powerful runic formations that even the Elves wouldn't be able to break through in such a short period of time.

This was Minos' last resort to protect the Royal Family and his own subjects from getting captured and enslaved by the Elven Race.

Minos left Prince Alaric a special artifact that would allow the Prince to summon Minos' two sons, Icarus and Daedalus. Both of them were Millennial Beasts, but their powers were currently halved due to the effect of the Continental Spell.

Even so, the Great Guardian of the Zelan Dynasty told Prince Alaric that he could summon them during critical moments to aid him when he and the lives of his brothers and sisters were in danger.

After escaping the capital, Prince Alaric ordered the Lamassus to head West. His goal was to reach Lont where his distant cousins resided. Right now, there were very few places in the continent where they could run and hide.

The reason he could pinpoint the location of Lont was due to the bracelet that he had given his Half-Sister, Princess Aila, before parting ways in the Kyrintor Mountains. Prince Alaric was wearing the same bracelet on his wrist, and it allowed him to pinpoint the location of his sister by using the ability that was imbued in their bracelets.

Finally, after more than a week of traveling, the town of Lont was seen in the distance. At the same time, one of the Lamassu flying beside the carriage roared. It had detected another flying carriage being pulled by a Gryphon and escorted by a Wyvern.

Since their numbers were greater, the Lamassu guarding the carriage wasn't the least bit worried of the two magical beasts that were also headed in the direction that they were going.

Alaric had already told them that they were forbidden from fighting against anyone because he was currently in a different kingdom.

"Who goes there?" the lead Lamassu asked. "State your name and affiliation!"

Since the Lamassu had the head of a man, it was capable of speaking the Human language.

William who just returned from the North frowned when he saw the mighty force that was currently hovering a hundred meters away from them.

Lionheart and the Wyvern screeched in defiance, but the Lamassu didn't pay them any attention. They were very intelligent creatures and knew that the two magical beasts weren't the ones that they needed to talk to.



"My name is William Von Ainsworth," William replied with pride. "All of you are currently within the airspace of our territory. State your name and the reason why you are headed to my hometown."

Although they were currently outnumbered, William recognized the flying beasts that were all looking at his carriage with serious expressions. This was also why he ordered Dave to intercept the flying platoon that was headed towards Lont.

He wanted to know if his hunch was correct.

"Well met, Cousin," Prince Alaric replied. The Lamassu pulling his flying carriage moved forward. "Is my sister, Princess Aila, doing well?"

William nodded and even smiled when he saw the devilish looking Prince of the Zelan Dynasty. Seeing his mighty entourage, he had a feeling that he already knew the reason for their arrival.

"Did you perhaps come here to visit her?" William inquired.

Prince Alaric shook his head firmly. "Actually, we came here to ask you and your family to shelter us for the time being."

"Um? Shelter? What do you mean?"

"It's a long story. Can we resume our talk once we have arrived at your residence? We've been traveling for many days and we are very exhausted."

Naturally, William knew that the Elves had invaded the Zelan Dynasty. However, he pretended to be unaware of this fact. First off, he hadn't known Crown Prince Alaric long enough to trust him completely.

Secondly, he wanted to know the Crown Prince's next course of action now that he had left his Dynasty behind. William had experienced what desperation could do to people. The red-headed boy wanted to know if Prince Alaric was one of those people who had succumbed to that kind of pressure.

William glanced at the Prince who had bags under his eyes and nodded. "Let's go to Lont. I'll lead the way."

Prince Alaric sighed in relief. "Thank you. I will return this favor in the future."

"I'll take your word for it." William grinned as he made a gesture for Dave to depart.

Lionheart screeched and flew in the direction of Lont. Conrad didn't lag far behind and flew alongside the flying carriage.

The Wyverns and the Ourobro were alerted when they sensed the arrival of beasts that they hadn't seen before. If not for the fact that the one leading them towards the town was William, they would have immediately attacked them.

Jekyll, who also sensed the arrival of a sizable force, was waiting on top of the town's wall as he gazed at them from afar.

He was quite familiar with the Bovine Race because he had stored them inside his stomach before he left the Fortress that was facing off against the Zelan Dynasty. He didn't eat them because James had told him in passing that William had an uncanny ability to tame Beasts that belonged to the Herd.

Although Jekyll was unsure if Minotaurs, and the other Bovine Beasts could be considered part of the Herd, he still took them in to allow William to tame them at a later date. It was supposed to be a surprise that he would give him after they finished investigating the Undying Lands, but something unexpected had happened, which delayed Jekyll's surprise for the red-headed boy.

"Well, I guess this is fine as well," Jekyll muttered as he looked at the two flying carriages that were slowly descending from the sky. "Perhaps our visitors will be able to give us news of the things that are happening outside the borders of the Hellan Kingdom."

Chapter 375: Dark And Difficult Times

Princess Aila was relieved to see that her brothers and sisters were safe and sound. However, she was also sad about the series of events that had transpired in their own kingdom. Prince Alaric had gone to the conference room where William, Matthew, Leah, Ian, Jekyll, and Celine were waiting for him.

They wanted him to give them a detailed account on how powerful the Elven forces were.

Prince Alaric was shocked when he saw that Jekyll and Celine were unaffected by the Continental Spell. He wanted to ask them how they were able to resist the curse, but he knew that now was not the time for that.

In order to gain their trust, he must first show that he was worthy of it. Prince Alaric had been tutored at an early age on how to govern the Zelan Dynasty. He was taught the art of negotiation and intimidation.

Naturally, he didn't plan to use the second option because he was not on his home turf. He was a guest, and a guest should act according to his role, and not antagonize the host. Prince Alaric didn't want his brothers and sisters to suffer, so he was willing to take a step back and lower his standing in order to form a partnership with William and the two adults who were with him.

Vladimir didn't participate in the meeting because he had no interest in it. His only mission was to protect Lont and that was it. Whatever happened outside of its borders, was none of his business.

Even if the entire Hellan Kingdom were to turn to ashes, Vladimir would not even bat an eye. For him, the fall of Kingdoms, Empires, and Dynasties was part of a natural cycle. He couldn't be bothered to care about the lives of the short-lived Humans who held no importance in his heart.

"I didn't get to see them personally," Prince Alric started, "but according to the Minotaurs, that rushed to the palace, the Elves were all above the Platinum Rank. No one in the Zelan Dynasty is their match because the survivors are only teenagers and children.

"Although we have promising geniuses in our ranks, most of them are only at the initial stages of the Gold Rank. The Elven Prodigies outclass us in both rank and battle proficiency."

Prince Alaric sighed as he rubbed his forehead with his hand.

"I am embarrassed to say that I wasn't able to bring them with me in our escape. The Elven invasion was too sudden and most of them had flying mounts that flew directly towards the capital. If not for Sovereign Minos' timely help, we would have been captured long ago."

(A/N: This is a little recap of the Power Rankings in this novel. The Metal Ranks are for the Humans, and the Class Ranks are for the Beasts.)

Copper = Beginners / Amateurs

Bronze = Class E

Silver = Class D

Gold = Class C

Platinum = Class B

Mithril = Class A

Adamantium = Centennial Beast

Black = Millennial Beast

Saint = Myriad Beast

As for Magic Ranks, they are ranked by circles.

First Circle, Second Circle, Third Circle up to the Tenth Circle. I added an Auxiliary Chapter for the rankings, so check it out in order to have a recap about the ranking systems of this novel.

William raised an eyebrow as he glanced at his Master, Celine. His beautiful Master had told him long ago that the Elven Prodigies were stronger than Humans. He just didn't know how strong they were because he hadn't faced any of them in battle.

William's current power level was at the middle stages of the Platinum Rank. However, if he unleashed all of his abilities, his battle prowess could easily reach the late stages of the Mithril Rank.

Celine returned her Disciple's gaze coolly because she understood William's line of thought.

"Don't worry, with your current level of strength, even normal Elven Geniuses aren't your match, Celine stated. "The ones you should worry about are the Captains and Commanders of this Elven Expedition. If I'm not mistaken, they have already reached the Adamantium Rank."

Matthew's, Leah's, Ian's, and Prince Alaric's expressions turned grim when they heard Celine's declaration.

Currently, Matthew's and Leah's battle prowess were at the initial stages of the Platinum Rank. The same could be said for Prince Alaric who was proficient in both Martial Arts and Magic Combat.

"What are your plans now, Prince Alaric?" William inquired.

The Crown Prince of the Zelan Dynasty raised his head to look at William. "There's no way I can reclaim my Dynasty with the current forces in my possession. The thirty Lamassus that accompanied us in our escape are the current fighting force we, of the Royal Family, have.

"If possible, I'd like to stay here in Lont while I think about our next course of action. I apologize because I haven't thought about anything else aside from reaching this place."

Prince Alaric looked at William with a serious gaze. "Will you allow us to stay?"

All the people in the room glanced at William. Although Matthew, and Leah were older than him, William was the Knight Commander of a Knight Order. His rank was higher than them because, during war time, Knight Commanders had the rank of a General.

"Of course you can stay," William replied with a smile. "However, it will not be for free."

William knew that letting Prince Alaric stay was the right thing to do. However, he also understood that if he allowed him to stay for free, the Crown Prince would think that he had underlying motives for his hospitality.

It was better to establish some conditions to their cooperation so that both sides would be able to rest easy.

"I want Ten of the Lamassus under your command to work for me," William stated. "Right now, I am lacking in manpower. Just like what happened to your Dynasty, the Hellan Kingdom is under siege by an Organization called Deus. I need all the fighting forces that I can get."

Prince Alaric nodded his head. He was already expecting this outcome, so he had prepared himself to compromise and transfer up to twenty Lamassus to help William's cause. Fortunately, William only asked for ten, which made the Prince breathe a little easier.

"William, later, spare me some time," Jekyll said with a mischievous smile. "I want to show you something."

William eyed the Dentist of Lont suspiciously because Jekyll had always given him the creeps.

The red-headed boy felt goosebumps when he saw the mischievous smile plastered on the Dentist's face. He felt as if he was going to have a transaction with a scammer, and he had no choice but to allow himself to be scammed without any form of resistance.

"How did your meeting with Sir William go?" Princess Aila asked as soon as her Big Brother, Prince Alaric, appeared in the house that William had designated to be the temporary residence of the Royal Family from the Zelan Dynasty during their stay in Lont.

It was a house that was built for VIP guests who decided to visit Lont. This house had two stories and was only a hundred meters away from the Ainsworth Residence.

"It went well," Alaric replied as he sat on the comfortable couch in their living room. "They are good people."

Princess Aila nodded in agreement. Ever since she had arrived in Lont, the Ainsworth family had treated her kindly. Her Master, the Life Archon, Owen, had taught her a lot of things. Even his young wife had treated Princess Aila like a family member and would often invite her to have lunch and dinner with them.

"Big Brother, do you think we will be able to reclaim our Dynasty?" Princess Aila asked with a sad expression on her face.

Prince Alaric looked up at the ceiling and didn't give an answer. He and Princess Aila both knew that recovering their Dynasty from the hands of the Elves was merely a pipe dream. Right now, the only thing that they could do was hope that a miracle would happen.

Prince Alaric knew that the only way to have a chance of winning was to wait for the Minotaur Race to regain their strength. Then and only then would they have a chance to challenge the Elves.

The only question was...

When would King Minos and his subjects recover their strength?

This was a question that Prince Alaric couldn't answer. Perhaps, even King Minos himself didn't know the answer to this question.

However, one thing was clear. These were dark and difficult times.

A time where hope was fleeting, and salvation was nowhere to be found.

Chapter 376: Quick Shot Shepherd Skills

"Sir Jekyll, where are you taking me?" William asked.

Jekyll just smiled and placed a finger over his lips. "It's a secret. You'll know when we get there."

The two of them were currently riding one of the Wyverns that had become one of the protectors of Lont. William didn't know why they had to do their talk away from Lont.

Deep inside, he hoped that Jekyll wouldn't use him as a specimen for his experiments. Because this was a private affair, Ian wasn't allowed to accompany William. This made the Half-Elf think that whatever the Dentist of Lont wanted to talk about, had to be done in secret.

Soon, the two arrived at a familiar place.

This was the Silent Forest where William had trained under the Sentinel of Lont, Trent, and his Drunken Monk Master, Dwayne.

The Wyvern landed in the clearing beside the lake and allowed his two passengers to disembark.

Jekyll then crossed his arms over his chest as he looked at the red-headed boy in front of him. "Your Grandpa said that you can tame Herd Type Beasts. Can you really do that?"

William nodded. In the past, he had used contracts to make the Spire and Psoglav become temporary members of his herd.

The reason?

His Shepherd Job Class didn't have a Taming Skill!

The method he used to make the Hippogriffs and the Trollhounds become part of his herd was to invite them using promises and compromises. He promised the Hippogriffs that he would regrow their limbs if they became part of his herd.



Due to this agreement, the Shepherd Job Class was somehow able to tame these magical creatures and add them to his herd. What he didn't know was that the King's Chesspiece Divinity was subtly helping him in the background.

Jekyll smirked, "Well then, why don't you give that taming skills of yours a try. Turn around for a second."

William obediently obeyed Jekyll's command and turned around. Suddenly, the stillness of the Silent Forest changed and the ground trembled as if there was an earthquake.

The red-headed boy was about to turn his head around when a hand held his head in place.

"Did I tell you to turn your head around?" Jekyll's voice, that was laced with intimidation, made William unable to even move his head.

The vice-grip that was locking his head in place was the real deal. William had a feeling that even if he used all of his strength, he wouldn't be able to release himself from Jekyll's hold.

A few minutes passed, and the tremors finally stopped. Jekyll let out a loud burp as he released William's head.

When the red-headed boy finally regained his freedom, he still didn't dare to look behind him. He was afraid that the Dentist would once again grab his head and, this time, snap it off from his body.

"Okay, you can turn around now," Jekyll stated.

William gingerly looked behind him and his jaw dropped instantly at the sight that was right in front of his eyes.

More than a hundred Beasts of varying sizes lay on the ground panting for breath. There were at least twenty Lamassus, fifty Red Minotaurs, over a hundred Inferno Bulls, and a Giant Demihuman Ox that was over six meters tall.

Jekyll chuckled when he saw William's dumbfounded face. He didn't expect that his surprise would be able to make the narcissistic, red-headed, boy speechless, which made him think that his effort was worth it.

"Go on, do your best to tame them," Jekyll urged.

William nodded his head as he walked over to the Giant Ox that was radiating the aura of a Millennial Beast.

If he hadn't evolved his Shepherd Job Class, William believed that there was no way he would be able to add this powerful creature to his herd.

He was still feeling regretful about the Titanic Green-Scaled Trollhound that had refused his invitation. Because of this, William wanted to have a taming skill that would be able to capture any Herd Type creature with increased chances.

When he gained the Quick Shot Shepherd Job Class, William didn't expect that this new Job Class of his would allow him to create twelve skills of his own choosing with the power of the System.

Each of the trials that he had passed allowed him to create a single ability. This made William very happy, so he and the System had collaborated to design the most optimal skills that he could use to strengthen himself and the Herd under his command.

Right now, the Quick Shot Shepherd had Twelve Skills in total.

< Quick Shot War Art >

(Active Skill)

-- Allow the Quick Shot Shepherd to Employ his own War Arts

-- The maximum number of War Arts that can be created is thirteen.

### < Beast Taming >

(Active Skill)

- Throw an orb of light to any Beasts that can be tamed.
- The chances of Taming will increase if the Beast is weaker than the Shepherd.
- The chances of Taming will increase if the Beast has a good impression of the Shepherd
- The chances of Taming will increase if the Beast is in a weakened state.
- Only applicable to Herd Type Beasts

### < Beacon of Hope >

(Passive Skill)

- Every member of the Herd under the Shepherd's command receives +50 Enhancement to all stats.Â

### < Shepherd's Blessing >

(Active Skill)

- The Shepherd may choose one blessing to bestow upon the entire herd. Each spell gives a corresponding +20 Enhancement to their respective stats.
- Only one blessing can be active at a time.

-- Ox's Strength

-- Feline's Grace

-- Hawk's Splendor

-- Wolf's Cunning

-- Turtle's Wisdom

< Freedom Striders >

(Active Skill)

-- All members under the Shepherd's herd gain the freedom of movement in any kind of terrain. They will not suffer any kind of restrictions that would hinder their movement.

-- As long as this spell is in effect, the Herd will be able to move underwater as if they were walking, or running on land.

< Heroism >

(Passive Skill)

-- When members of the herd are fighting against opponents that are a Rank or several Ranks higher than them, all of their stats will increase by 50%

< Herd Immunity >

(Passive Skill)

-- All members of the herd gain all of the Shepherd's natural resistances.

-- If the Shepherd has an immunity to status ailments or diseases, all members of the Herd would share this immunity.

< Underwater Breathing >

(Active Skill)

-- All members of the herd gain the ability to breathe underwater.

< Guardian of the Herd >

(Active Skill)

-- Allows the shepherd to transform into any Beast that is a member of his Herd.

-- This skill will last for an hour.

-- This skill can be cancelled anytime.

< Healing Wind >

(Active Skill)

-- The shepherd calls upon a gentle breeze that heals up to 2,000 Health Points in a twenty meter radius.

### < Kinship Evolution >

-- The Shepherd may choose one Beast to form a pact with them and allow it to evolve to a more powerful form.

-- Only one Beast can use Kinship Evolution at any given time.

### < Unstoppable Thousand Beast Charge >

(Active Skill)

-- When charging towards the enemies, all members of the Herd gain 80% resistance against ranged attacks.

-- When charging towards the enemies all members of the Herd gain 80% resistance against magical attacks.

-- Each member of the Herd will receive a magical barrier that can endure up to 100,000 Health Points of damage.

-- Any member of the Herd that receives damage that surpasses 100,000 Health Points will immediately lose the effect of this buff.

-- This skill can only be used if the Herd has a thousand or more members.

Because of this set of skills, William was confident that he would be able to strengthen his Herd to the next level. Right now, he was only lacking in skill points. This was why he couldn't upgrade all of them at the same time.

However, he knew that, when all of these skills were unlocked, his Herd would be able to reach their full potential. These skills would give William the power to make a difference in a war where he was greatly disadvantaged.

## Chapter 377: Fight For Me, And I Shall Hold Your Vows Fulfilled

The Millennial Beast, Erchitu, felt an unfamiliar, yet warm, force wash over its body. It felt very comfortable, and yet, its instincts told him that it mustn't allow itself to be lulled by the power that was slowly binding it to someone's will.

The Erchitu was a Giant White Ox that was almost as tall and as broad as the Diabolic Hell Ape that once helped William during the Dungeon Outbreak. Its two horns were massive, which made it very imposing.

Unfortunately, its strength was currently halved due to the power of the Continental Spell that had affected every creature in the continent that had the rank of Centennial and above. The only ones that didn't get affected by the spell were the extremely powerful ones like Pseudo-Demigods and Demigods.

Minos, the Sovereign of the Minotaurs, and the Ant Queen had been affected by the spell. However, since the Ant Queen's main purpose was to lay eggs, her threat didn't diminish. Only Minos, the King of the Minotaur Race, suffered heavily from the spell.

Because of this, it had no choice but to seal off their Palace to prevent the Elves from capturing his subjects.

The Erchitu resisted William's taming spell with all of its might. Although its current strength had dropped down to the initial stages of the Centennial Rank, it was still a very powerful monster. Moments later, the Taming Skill failed and the Giant White Ox panted heavily from its effort to resist William's spell.

"Curse you," the Erchitu said through telepathy as it opened its eyes to glare at William. However, the moment its eyes landed on the boy, a hint of surprise passed over its beastly features.

"Y-You!" Erchitu gasped in shock as it eyed William with disbelief. "N-No. Impossible! This cannot be!"

The Giant White Ox tried to prop itself up, but was unable to move its body. Due to the Continental Spell and being starved inside Jekyll's stomach, it was too weak to even stand up. However, its eyes remained strong as it stared at the red-headed boy in front of him.

"Come closer, boy," Erchitu stated. "I promise I won't hurt you. I just want to confirm something."

William didn't bat an eye and walked forward fearlessly. Jekyll, who was standing nearby, frowned and prepared himself to defend the boy if Erchitu tried something funny.

When William was only two meters away from the head of the Giant Ox, Erchitu sniffed the boy's body as if trying to confirm its suspicions.

"Your name?" Erchitu asked.

"William." William answered.

Erchitu narrowed its eyes then asked the most important question it could think of. "What is your profession?"

William smiled because he understood the real meaning behind the Giant White Ox's question. He then remembered David's short lesson before he was sent to the Heavenly Domain to partake in his thirteen trials.

"I am...the Eternal Guardian of the Herd," William said with pride. He then looked at the Giant White Ox that was lying on the ground with a serious expression. "Will you honor the Oath made by your ancestors?"

Erchitu chuckled, but coughed a few moments later. Its weakened body was still sore from being held up in Jekyll's stomach and the chuckle it did only made matters worse.

"Earlier, did you try to form a contract with me?" Erchitu inquired.

William pondered a bit because he knew that the proud beast in front of him demanded an honest answer. After organizing his thoughts, he decided to just tell the truth.



"Yes and No," William replied. "Yes, it is a form of contract, similar to that of a Beast Companion, but different. What I attempted to do earlier was to add you to my Herd. In short, I am adding you to my own private force."

William then looked at the Lamassus, Minotaurs, and Flaming Bulls that were also lying on the ground.

"Not only you, I plan to add them in my herd as well," William continued. After looking at the fallen beasts for half a minute, he shifted his attention back to the Giant Ox that was looking at him with a serious expression.

"Ercitu, I ask you to fight for me," William stated. "Fight for me, and I shall hold your vows fulfilled. What say you?"

All of the Beasts that were currently in a weakened state had been listening to William's and Ercitu's exchange. They had also noticed something very different about the red-headed boy's aura and Ercitu had confirmed their suspicion.

William was the Eternal Guardian of the Herd and the Minotaur Race had made an oath to serve the God of Shepherds and his chosen disciples who would don his mantle in the mortal realm.

The Beasts that protected the Zelan Dynasty now had to make a choice. Fulfill their oaths and follow William, or reject him and remain loyal to their King.

"Tell me your goal," Ercitu demanded. It wore a complicated expression on its face as he asked the Half-Elf another question. "Although we made an oath to the Eternal Guardian, we cannot betray our King and the citizens of our Dynasty. What is your plan regarding the Zelan Dynasty?"

William knew that he was now at the turning point of a subtle negotiation between him and the Commander of the Minotaur Race. Depending on his answer, Ercitu and the rest of the Beasts would either join his side or resist him with everything they had.

"I do not wish for dominion." The red-headed boy placed his closed fist over his chest as if to make a pledge. "My goal is to fight against The Organization that has brought chaos to this continent, as well as to fend off the foreigners that have invaded our lands. This is my goal."

"And what will you do after you complete your goal?" Erchitu asked. "What of our Dynasty?"

William scratched his head as he gave the Giant Ox a sheepish smile. "Ah, you don't need to worry about this. Don't you know that the Crown Prince is a distant cousin of mine?"

"... Distant cousins?"

"Yes. In fact, Crown Prince Alaric is currently in Lont. Ah! Lont is my hometown and just a few miles away from here. You can meet him later after we are done with our business."

William summoned his shepherd staff and held it firmly in his grasp. He then pointed its tip at the Erchitu's face. Although David had told him that the Minotaur Race was the guardian of the Shepherds, this was a vow made thousands of years ago.

He didn't know if the current Minotaurs would still honor this ancient oath. One thing was for sure. Whether they honored it or not, William was determined to add Erchitu and its subordinates to his herd whether they liked it or not.

"I'll ask again. Will you fight for me?" William inquired. There was no threat in his words. But he radiated an imposing aura that wouldn't take no for an answer.

Erchitu knew that the time to make a choice had come. The beasts lying on the ground looked at their leader and waited for its answer. Whatever Erchitu's decision would be, they would follow it as his loyal subordinates.

"My answer is..."

## Chapter 378: The Calm Before The Storm

"To think that James was right," Jekyll said with undisguised curiosity. "How do you do it? No, don't say anything. Just let me dissect you. I promise I'll put you back together as if you were brand new."

William hurriedly hid behind the Erchitu who was now standing on its feet. After adding them to his herd, William made them eat Lily's Pink Lollipops to remove the status effects that had been plaguing their bodies.

After that, he used Healing Wind to help them recover from whatever injuries they had suffered. When William asked Erchitu in a discreet manner how they got here, it said that they were swallowed by Jekyll and stored inside his stomach.

This made William become even more wary of the always smiling Dentist of Lont. He also made a vow that he would never again meet with the Dentist alone. Jekyll's latest outburst of wanting to dissect him made William realize that the Dentist was half serious with his teasing.

If given the opportunity, he really would dissect William to find out what made him tick!

Jekyll grinned when he saw the boy's reaction. However, since the matter with the Minotaur race was done, it was now time to return to Lont.

Jekyll rode the Wyvern and returned first because William said that he wanted to talk to Erchitu in private. Although he was curious, the Dentist decided to give William some privacy and left him to deal with his own business.

William and Erchitu discussed for an hour before making their way to Lont. When the procession of over a hundred beasts appeared within their area of responsibility, Lufie and the Wyverns immediately went to intercept them.

However, when they saw William sitting on the shoulders of the Giant White Ox, the defenders of Lont lowered their guards and allowed their new allies to pass through. The kids who saw the, never before seen, Beasts for the first time looked at all of them with wonder.

The corner of the Erchitu's lips twitched when William left it near the Entrance of Lont where Lufie usually sat. The two giant beasts sat opposite each other while the children of Lont played beside them.

"Does this always happen?" Erchitu asked Lufie through telepathy.

Lufie nodded its head and gave his new comrade a grin that said "You'll get used to it".

"Cousin, I thought I had already overestimated you, but this..., how did you do this?" Prince Alaric asked in disbelief. When William had returned to Lont, Prince Alaric was one of the people that went to meet with him because there was something he needed to discuss.

However, when he saw William sitting on Erchitu's shoulders, the Prince was unable to hide the shock spreading across his face. After his escape from their capital, he ordered the Lamassus to go to the battlefield where Erchitu and the other beasts were stationed.

When he arrived there, none of the beasts could be found. All he saw were the soldiers that had turned into statues, still holding their weapons and wearing their armors.

After retrieving some important supplies from the army camp like food, water, and clothes, Crown Prince Alaric headed straight to Lont to ask William and his family to shelter them.

Never in his wildest dreams did he think that he would meet their Dynasty's Beast Commander in Lont.

"It's because of my overflowing charisma," William replied as he flipped his hair. "For the time being, Erchitu will work with me to fight off The Organization in the Hellan Kingdom. I'm sorry, but I can't make you any promises that we will help you take back your Dynasty. We can't defeat the Elves with our current forces."

Williams sighed as he looked at the Giant White Ox in the distance. 'One Millennial Beast won't make a difference at this stage.'

Although the Erchitu was strong, and had recovered its power to the peak, it alone was not enough to overthrow the Elven Army that had stationed itself within the capital of the Zelan Dynasty.

William was worried about the teleportation gates that the Elves were currently building, but there was nothing he could do about it. Before he worried about the affairs of others, he needed to fix his own problem first.

For now, he planned to get some resources from the Undying Lands to strengthen his own private force. Now that he had obtained the Flames of Purification, the Dracolich would definitely beef up the defenses of Avalon.

It didn't expect that William would steal one of the priceless treasures that was hidden inside the Fortress. The Dracolich thought that it could easily capture William using his minions and force him to release his seal.

What it didn't know was that a certain System had already fully mapped the interior of the fortress and labeled the locations of the treasures that would be beneficial to William's goal to fight against The Invaders.

The Dracolich may be powerful, but it couldn't do anything in its current state. The attack it formed to prevent William from taking the Undying Lands was a one-time thing. It had used the accumulated Dark Energy that it had gathered over the years to kill the boy, but it was all for naught.

Instead of taking his life, the System happily absorbed the dark energy and turned it into experience points!

"Now that you have a sizable force by your side, are you going to take control of the Hellan Kingdom?" Prince Alaric asked. He wanted to know if William was finally planning to fight The Organization that was responsible for all of this mess.

"Not yet." William shook his head. "One Millennial Beast is not enough. I need more help."

"I will give you command of all the Lamassus that are with me right now," Prince Alaric said decisively. He knew that the sooner William dealt with The Organization, the sooner he could deal with the Elves, who were the nearest threat to the red-headed boy's kingdom.

William carefully considered Prince Alaric's offer before nodding his head. "I accept your generous offer, but leave five of them behind. Also, continue to stay here for the time being. As long as you are here, I can guarantee your safety."

"Guarantee my safety?" Prince Alaric raised an eyebrow. "Just where is that confidence of yours coming from?"

William didn't answer the Prince's inquiry and simply smiled. Even if he were to tell the Crown Prince that a Demigod was currently safeguarding Lont, he had a feeling that Prince Alaric wouldn't believe him.

Since that was the case, he just decided to play it cool and give a mysterious vibe.

Seeing that William didn't plan to answer his inquiry, he decided to ask.

"What now?"

Although the Prince's question only consisted of two words, its meaning was conveyed properly.

"I need to leave Lont," William said with a determined expression. "I need to look for allies while I still have time."

"While you still have time?" Prince Alaric asked. "Do you have some kind of deadline?"

William nodded. "Three months. After three months, the current situation will escalate. The calm before the storm will have passed and a powerful force will sweep across the land. If we don't want to get blown away by the powerful winds, we need to brace ourselves for the impact."

The red-headed boy looked at the gray clouds that were hanging in the sky. The clouds that had cast a gloomy atmosphere into the hearts of the survivors in the Southern Continent.

If possible, he wanted to sweep them away and allow the light of the sun to warm the hearts of everyone. Unfortunately, this was not possible at this point in time.

The only thing he could do was to gather as many allies as possible. He only had three months to do it, and even William himself didn't know if he would succeed in this endeavor.

"I'll be leaving tomorrow, see you later, Prince Alaric," William said softly. He then walked towards the Ainsworth Residence to tell Matthew, Leah, Celine, Ian, and Jekyll the plan he had in mind.

Although he would like to stay in Lont for a few more days, time wasn't on his side. He already had some ideas on whom to invite to fight with him. The only question was, what price would he have to pay in order to gain their help.

#### Chapter 379: This Child Is As Good As Mine

"Take care of yourself okay?" William said as he hugged his adorable niece, Eve. "Always listen to your Big Brother Matthew, and Big Sister Leah, okay?"

"Un!" Eve replied as she happily hugged William back.

William sighed as he reluctantly pulled back from the little girl's hug. He then summoned a small wooden staff that David had attached to his mail containing 200,000 God Points.

"This is my gift to you," William handed the small wooden stick to the cute little girl who had already grabbed the stick from William's hand. "Always carry with you when you leave the house."

Eve almost always saw William carrying a wooden staff around. There were times when she would even ask him to let her play with it. Because of this, she became happy when she was given a stick of her own.

Eve waved the small wooden stick that was only twenty-four inches long. She giggled as the ducklings chirped beside her feet, while looking at her playing around with the stick.

William couldn't help himself but smile when he saw this scene. Although he didn't know why David wanted Eve to become his disciple as well, he knew that his adorable niece would be safe as long as the God of Shepherds looked after her.

"I'll be leaving now, Master, Big Brother, and Big Sister," William said. "Take care of yourselves while I am away."

"Oliver will accompany you," Celine said as she patted William's head. "He's been bored as of late and wants to go on an adventure. Do take him along with you."

William nodded his head. Having Oliver with him was a great thing because his Second Master was a very dependable ally.

"Make sure to take good care of yourself." Leah hugged William after Celine had stepped back. "Remember, we will always be waiting here in Lont. If it gets difficult, you can return anytime you want."

"Okay," William commented and hugged her back. He then sneakily whispered something in Leah's ears which made her face turn beet red.

"Now is not the time for that," Leah playfully pounded William's head with her closed fist. "Rest assured. After all of this is over, I will consider it."

William chuckled as he gave his Big Brother Matthew a thumbs up. Although they were cousins, the two treated each other as siblings, so William wanted the best for him.

Matthew was unaware of what his mischievous Little Brother had whispered in his wife's ear, but knowing William, it was certainly something not good!

"I will not tell you to stay out of trouble, because this is exactly what you plan to do," Matthew said as he patted William's shoulder. "However, just like Leah said, you can always return here when things get out of hand. As long as HE is here, we will be safe."

William agreed with Matthew's words, but he also knew that he, himself, was not meant to be where it was safe. Currently, there were still treasures that he needed to retrieve from the Undying Lands. However, in order to get those treasures, he needed additional help.

He had a feeling that the Dracolich wouldn't make things easy this time around, and he would have to fight an uphill battle if he were to return to the Undying Lands. Even with the addition of Erchitu and the Minotaur Races, William was not confident that it was enough to turn the tides in his favor.



"I'd like to come with you, but there are a few things that I need to do here in Lont," Jekyll said as he walked towards William. He then handed William some of his Regeneration Potions that were filled with Troll's Blood.

"Take these. Maybe they will come handy in whatever you plan to do."

"Thank you, Sir Jekyll."

"Don't thank me... just let me dissect you once."

William's body unconsciously shuddered as he took a few steps back. Clearly, he couldn't let his guard down with the smiling Dentist for even a second.

Lionheart descended from the skies pulling the flying carriage behind him. Conrad's Wyvern circled the skies because they, too, would be accompanying William in his travels.

Before he climbed into the carriage, William glanced once more at his loved ones and waved his hand. He didn't know when he'd be able to return to his hometown. He hoped that when that time came, everything would have already been settled.

With a mighty screech, Lionheart soared towards the sky. The Lamassus that were now part of William's herd flew in a formation to protect the Flying Carriage. Erchitu and the other beasts had entered the Ten Thousand Beast Domain because it would be impossible for them to catch up with William while traveling on land.

A few hours after William Left Lont...

A white goose flew in the sky as it escaped from the Eastern Part of the Hellan Kingdom. It had just recovered its strength a few days ago and decided to flee its territory to find a safe place to wait out the impending war.

On the outside, it looked like an ordinary goose that one could see anywhere. However, it was actually a Millennial Beast in disguise.

This particular Millennial Beast was a very sly creature and would often eat unsuspecting Humans who thought that it was a wild animal that they could roast for lunch. It loved seeing the despair on the faces of the Humans that it had eaten alive due to their stupidity.

When it arrived at the air space of Lont, it was shocked when it sensed many powerful beasts residing in the small town. This piqued its curiosity, so it decided to investigate.

The white goose landed near the most imposing residence because it had studied the customs of Humans. It knew that those who ruled a territory always lived in the biggest house in every city.

That was when the white goose saw Eve. Since the White Goose was a Millennial Beast, it had a very strong perception. It had immediately sensed the unbelievable Spiritual Power that was hidden within the little girl.

This made its mouth salivate. Magical Beasts ate the Beast Cores of others in order to increase their strength or to evolve. This also applied to special Humans whose Magical and Spiritual powers exceeded the norm.

In the goose's eyes, Eve was like a very potent Elixir that would help it increase its strength. It also understood that Eve's power would further increase as she grew up. Because of this, it hatched a plan to kidnap the girl and raise her until she had reached the right age before it feasted on her flesh and absorbed her powerful Spiritual Essence.

'Only that Giant Gold Ape is a threat,' the White Goose thought. 'However, it can't fly, so it will not be able to catch me. This child is as good as mine.'

The White Goose approached Eve with a mischievous look in its eyes. It was looking forward to raising the child that would allow it to step into the ranks of Myriad Beasts after a few years.

The adorable girl, who was playing with her ducklings, was unaware that a dangerous threat was fast approaching her. Leah had gone back inside the house to cook lunch and left Eve in the garden for the time being.

She was not worried because Eve was a very obedient girl and only played in the garden, never venturing outside their residence. This gave the White Goose the perfect opportunity to strike.

It walked with steady steps because it was sure that no one in this small town was capable of snatching its prey away from its grasp.

#### Chapter 380: Bad Birds Needs To Be Punished

The ducklings that surrounded Eve felt something amiss and looked at the approaching Goose with caution.

All of them stepped in front of their Mama and spread their little wings while chirping at the White Goose that was releasing malicious intent.

""Chirp! Chirp!""

The Goose stopped three meters away from the ducklings and gave a light honk. It then waved one of its wings and blew the seven ducklings away with a gust of wind.

"Honk!" (You brats are lucky that we are distant relatives. I will spare your lives just this once!)

Eve turned her head to look at the ducklings that lay on the ground tens of meters away from her. They had all lost consciousness and were not moving.

"Bad!" Eve shouted as she pointed her wooden stick at the white goose. "Bad bird!"

The White Goose ignored the little girl's words and stepped forward. It did not care about its food's opinion.

'It seems that I'm right,' The White Goose thought as he neared Eve. 'She is indeed a rare human with strong Spiritual powers.'

The White Goose drooled as it approached the little girl. It had already confirmed that it wasn't mistaken in its assumption and its determination to kidnap Eve and raise her until she grew older became stronger.

Eve was a kind girl. Even though the White Goose had harmed the ducklings, she didn't use the stick in her hand to hit it. More like, she was unfamiliar with the concept of hurting others because she had been raised with love, and care, every single day by her family.

"Bad bird! Bad!" Eve shouted as she took a few steps back. Even though she was young, she felt that the Goose was very different from her ducklings and the adults who were always by her side.

When the Goose was only a meter away from Eve, its body stiffened when it felt a strong pressure press down on it like a mountain.

Eve looked up to see a white-haired old man with a long white beard standing right behind her.

"Who?" Eve tilted her head as she asked this question. This was the first time she had seen this old man, but for some reason, she didn't feel any bad feelings coming from him.

"I'm one of your Big Brother Will's friends," David said with an award winning smile that would put all of the Oscar's Best Actors to shame.

"Will?"

"Yes."

David gently patted Eve's head before looking at the Millennial Goose who planned to kidnap and eat his new chosen Disciple. The God of Shepherd was smiling, but his smile never reached his eyes.

(A/N: Yes. William is Eve's cousin, but our Half-Elf didn't want to be called cousin so he insisted on being called Big Brother by Eve.)

"I'm going to give you a choice," David stated. "Become my Disciple's contracted beast or I'll roast you, right here, right now."

The White Goose started to shed bitter tears. It wanted to cry foul because it was being bullied by a God. It had completely forgotten the fact that its plan was to kidnap a defenseless little girl with the intention of eating her to increase his Rank in the future.

"I see, so you reject my offer? Okay time for you to..." David sneered and raised his hand.

"Honk!" (Wait! I accept!) the White Goose hurriedly replied because it knew that the God in front of it was serious.

"I see! It's good to see that you are smart enough to understand your predicament."

\*Sob Sob\*

The Goose could only cry bitterly as the God of Shepherds bound him with a contract spell. It didn't dare resist because resistance was futile. How can a Millennial Beast possibly fight against a God?

Also, David was the God of Shepherds. Aside from managing the Herd, Shepherds also managed the Flock!

Almost all bird type creatures were regarded as members of the Flock. Meaning, the White Goose was also under David's jurisdiction which made it unable to do anything but submit to his will.

After completing the contract, David lightly pricked Eve's finger to gather a drop of blood and flicked it at the head of the White Goose. Soon, the goose glowed and Eve's body shuddered unconsciously.

She felt a connection with the Goose in front of her. It was the first time she felt something like this and it made her confused. David, who saw the girl's confusion, patted her head once again and told her that the White Goose would follow her from this day onwards.

He even added that she could treat it as a pet if she wanted. David then waved his hand and the seven unconscious ducklings that were on the ground regained their consciousness. He even healed all of their injuries so that his new Disciple wouldn't cry when she found out that they were injured.

The ducklings immediately ran towards Eve and chirped at the White Goose as if telling it to go away. The White Goose was very tempted to eat the seven annoying pests, but held himself back due to David's intimidating aura.

After finishing his task, the God of Shepherds gave the White Goose the "You better take good care of her or else..." glare before bidding his goodbye to Eve.

Eve looked at the old man and waved her hand, which David returned with a gentle smile. Soon the God of Shepherds turned into particles of light and returned to the Temple of the Ten Thousand Gods.

Usually, Gods didn't descend to the Mortal Realm without a very good reason. Since David had chosen Eve to become one of his Disciples, it gave him the excuse to come to her aid three times.

All Gods were given this privilege, so he didn't break any rules. When he saw the White Goose making an attempt to kidnap his future Disciple, David didn't hesitate and immediately descended to Hestia.

He had already sensed Eve's Spiritual Powers and called dibs on her, before the other Gods could make her their Oracle or Priestess.

Another reason why he chose the little girl to become his Disciple was because Eve was William's family. Naturally, all good things must belong to the family, so he decided to make Eve a shepherd as well.

William commanded the Herd, while Eve now commanded the Flock. It was the perfect combination and David was very satisfied with this happy coincidence.

An hour after David left the world of Hestia, Eve returned to the residence with her seven ducklings and the White Goose walking behind her. The Millennial Beast had a dejected expression as it followed behind Eve with its head lowered.

That was when it met another strong presence that made its body shudder uncontrollably.

Vladimir looked down at Eve and the chirping ducklings who had once again raided his room. He then looked at the Millennial Beast whose feathers were standing up, as if it was prepared to flee at any given time.

After appraising the new addition to Eve's small flock, Vlad sighed and took out a few grapes from his storage ring.

'I'd better lock the door next time,' Vladimir thought bitterly. He didn't mind fighting against strong opponents, but against James' cute grandchild, he was completely powerless.

Eve had once again come to extort him for food to feed the ducklings. As for the Millennial Beast? Eve didn't have any intention of feeding it!

The reason?

Because it was a Bad Bird, and Bad Birds need to be punished.