

Strongest 981

Chapter 981 – Can I Be Part Of Your World As Well?

Shannon shuddered as she hastily put down her brush. The scene that she had seen just now was something that she didn't want to see ever again.

"I didn't know you were this evil," Shannon cursed as she gazed at the canvas in front of her. "I misjudged you!"

The drawing of a teenager, who was caught in the act of thrusting the diabolical tool in his hands into the backside of the Flying Armored Elephant, was revealed on Shannon's canvass. The scene was so vivid that anyone who saw it would feel a sense of dread at the barbaric practice that would make anyone have the strong urge to cover their backside.

Shannon had seen more gruesome things, but she was sure that the vivid scene she saw would forever be retained in her memories.

"I need to burn this," Shannon muttered as she conjured blue flames in her hand. "I need to burn this fast."

As soon as the last word left her delicate lips, the entire canvas blazed in blue flames. The flames didn't burn the canvas into ashes. Instead, it slowly erased the image that had been painted on it.

A few minutes later, the entire scene disappeared and only a blank, white, surface remained. Traces of the barbaric and vile act were nowhere to be found, but Shannon was no longer in the mood to draw.

She had been following William's progress ever since he had returned to Hestia. Shannon would paint him everyday, and see his adventures unfold. It would not be an exaggeration to say that she could only see the world through the Half-Elf's eyes now.

Even so, she was fine with that. After witnessing his battle against the Pseudo-God, Apophis, the young lady who was sealed inside the shrine in Hesia Academy, her interest in William grew by leaps and bounds.

Although she had many other favorite subjects to paint, the red-headed teenager was now on the top of his list. She would go into a trance every day in trying to connect to him, so that she could become part of his journey and record these scenes on her beloved canvas.

Unfortunately, there were times when she connected with him at the wrong time, which allowed her to see things she didn't expect to see.

Like the time when William made love to Belle. It was a happy accident and Shannon felt the emotions that they shared pass through her heart.

Shannon drew that scene while her cheeks burned in embarrassment. As someone who couldn't leave her shrine, seeing these kinds of things made her realize that she knew very little of the world, and how lovers interacted with each other in private.

The young lady sighed as she stared at her paint-stained hands. Everytime she painted, she would be so immersed in her creation that she wouldn't notice that the paint had gotten on her hands.

Hands that created many wonderful things, and yet, those creations were not of her own. They were simply the lives of the people who were living in the world.

"It's not fair..." Shannon muttered as a purple smoke started to rise from her body. "Why me? Why me?! Other people can walk outside and play with their friends. They can sing songs, and dance to entertain people.

"They can swim in the rivers and seas, travel in the ocean, and fly in the sky. And yet, I am not able to do any of those. Why? Why must it be me? Why must I suffer such a fate?"

The purple smoke expanded and covered the entire room, as it continuously escaped her body like the smoke on a bonfire that was blazing brightly.

“Maybe, if I didn’t bear this sin... I would also be out there... with him,” Shannon said softly as she reached out towards the canvas. “It’s not fair. I didn’t ask for this... I didn’t want to be born like this...”

The moment his hand touched the white canvass in front of her, a small purple wormhole started to spin at its center. Slowly, but surely it expanded until the image of William’s camp appeared in her vision.

The Half-Elf was currently taking a nap inside his carriage, while lying on Charmaine’s lap, who was also asleep. William was sleeping peacefully, as if the scene where he had impaled the Elephant’s backside without mercy earlier hadn’t happened.

Shannon reached out towards the purple vortex until her right hand passed through it.

“If I didn’t bear this sin, would you have accepted me like the others?” Shannon asked as her hand crossed time and space to softly pat William’s head, who remained asleep.

A sad smile appeared on her lips as she caressed William’s face. “I wish you had talked to me more. I wish that you had visited me more.”

She then reluctantly pulled her hand back because she felt that the Half-Elf was about to wake up. Shannon didn’t want anyone to discover this special ability of hers, which could transcend great distances, and travel through time and space.

“Tomorrow. I will once again accompany you tomorrow,” Shannon said sleepily as she stood from her chair and walked towards her bed. “I hope that when that time comes, you will show me something wonderful. Something that will make me happy, sad, angry, and excited.”

As Shannon lay on her bed, the black smoke continued to rise out from her body. Her sin was flaring up, and she had no choice but to endure its effects on her own.

“Someday, I hope that there will be someone like you to help me when my Sin goes out of control,” Shannon muttered as she closed her eyes. “Just like what you do with my sisters when they suffer from the Sin that they carry.”

Tears fell from her eyes, as pain wracked her entire body.

Shannon had long been used to the pain, because she had been enduring this all of her life. Even so, she still hated it. The feelings of helplessness and loneliness were real, and she was longing for something real.

A memory that belonged to her.

A scene that belonged to her.

She, who spent her days watching other people live their lives, longed for the moment when she could live her own life.

She longed for the moment when she could walk and run under the sun. For the time when she could sing and dance to make the people important to her happy. More than anything else, she also wanted to feel loved.

Just like her sisters, who had chosen the Half-Elf to become their significant other, had. A person, whose existence could make her heart skip a beat, and make her forget that she was someone who was trapped inside a small shrine, unable to step outside of its boundaries.

‘Will.... Can I be part of your world as well?’ Shannon wondered as the pain in her body intensified. She didn’t know the answer to her question. All she knew was that the day she stepped outside the shrine that bound her in place, the world that she saw through her canvass...

Would finally be hers for the taking.

Chapter 982 – Flying Armored Elephants Perform Tricks?

“Will I see Big Brother soon?” a little girl with long red-hair tied up in a ponytail asked.

As she walked in a carefree manner, several ducks walked behind her like a small train. At the very end, a white goose had a resigned look on its face as he ensured that none of the ducklings strayed from the little girl.

“Perhaps,” a lady wearing the dress of a priestess replied as she walked beside her. “Your brother is busy as a bee. We’ll be lucky if we manage to bump into him along the way.

Not far from them, two men who were a little over six feet tall, followed in silence.

“Grandpa is also here, right? I miss him, too,” the little girl said as she continued to walk, holding her little staff in her hand. “Why did everyone leave Lont? Don’t they like it there anymore?”

“Of course they liked Lont. It is the place that they have protected for many years. Also, you’re supposed to call William, Uncle, and not Big Brother.”

“He doesn’t want to be called Uncle,” the little girl smiled when she remembered how hard William tried to tell her that she should just refer to him as Big Brother, instead of Uncle.

However, the smile disappeared after some time, as she asked her Master more questions.

“Then why did they leave?” the little girl asked. “They left me alone. It felt so lonely without them.”

The little girl pouted as she continued to trek the mountain alongside her Master. Back then, she was very happy because her Grandpa and Big Brother spoiled her rotten. Now that they were gone, she missed them terribly.

“Because... Fate has started to move,” the priestess replied. “All the powers in the world are now congregating in the Central Continent. This is also why we are here.”

“Fate?”

“You don’t have to worry about this, Eve. This is an adult matter. For now, let’s just focus on visiting the thirteen temples. After that, we can go and find your Big Brother and Grandpa.”

“Un!” Eve nodded as she gazed at the beautiful scenery in front of her.

Ariadne had taken her to the Central Continent to finish a pilgrimage that would make Eve one of the official priestesses of the God of Shepherds within the world of Hestia.

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After William successfully tamed Gluteus and Maximus, their journey became a lot faster. The Half-Elf’s entourage traveled in the air as they headed to the Northern end of the Demon Continent.

Fortunately, Athrun was quite knowledgeable and charted a course that would allow them to reach their destination as soon as possible. Even so, according to the handsome merchant, their journey traveling time should be around a month at best.

Athrun’s guess coincided with Optimus’ calculations. Both of them stated that it would indeed take them a month to reach their destination if they followed the merchant’s route.

Although a month wasn’t long, it wasn’t too short either. The Demonic Continent was three times bigger than the Southern Continent, and traversing its lands was very perilous. William’s group would have to use the teleportation gates of connecting cities to increase the pace of their travels.

The plan was sound, and didn’t have any loopholes in it. Unfortunately, even the best of plans could be thrown into disarray by unexpected variables that were out of their control.

“Sorry, but you can’t enter the city,” the captain of the guard stated as he glared at William’s group who had lined up to enter their territory.

“Eh? Why?” William asked. “We have travel permits here that were issued by His Excellency, Joash, himself. What’s the problem?”

The guard snorted and pointed at the two Flying Armored Elephants who made everyone in the vicinity back away completely.

“Don’t you know that it is illegal to use those elephants as mounts?” the guard captain asked. “The fact that I am even talking to you is giving His Highness, Joash, the respect he deserves. Let me make it clear to you. Not only will you not gain passage to this city, but you won’t stand a chance getting into the other cities as well.

“Those elephants are walking disasters. What will you do if their herd suddenly appears in this Domain and tramples our city to the ground?! You should just return them to the wild and save yourself the trouble of being barred entry to every city you come across!”

William frowned as he turned his head to gaze at the two elephants. He shot them the “both of you are no-good troublemakers” glare, which made the two beasts have the strong urge to step on him.

They still felt that it was unfair that they were forced to become mounts when they were simply taking a detour to where they were to meet up with their herd. They thought they would be safe, because they were part of the Flying Armored Elephants race and no one in their right mind would look for trouble with them. Only idiots, and people who courted death, would dare to capture them as mounts.

Unfortunately, they came across someone who didn’t only court death, he even intended to capture their entire herd when they appeared to save them!

What was Madlad?

This was Madlad!

“You don’t have to worry about this,” William replied as he turned around to look at the guard. “Both of them are harmless. They can even perform tricks.”

“Tricks? Flying Armored Elephants perform tricks?”

“Of course! Gluteus come here.”

Gluteus' body shuddered when he saw William's devilish smile. He felt that he was about to be butchered, and had no choice but to be obedient and even thank the butcher for butchering him.

Maximus looked at him with eyes filled with pity. Both of them now belonged to William's herd, and their fate would depend upon their new Master's mood.

Gluteus stopped walking when it was only three meters away from William. The elephant who was once proud of his lineage looked at his Master with fearful eyes as he waited for his orders.

"Gluteus, use Giga Stomp and smash this gate to pieces!" William ordered. "If the guards stop you, or even attempt to do something to stop you, I order you to call your herd right away and tell them that the mayor of this city tried to make you his mount!"

The guard captain as well as the other guards who heard William's orders, all gasped in shock as they looked at the black-haired teenager who had the "since you want to die so badly, let's just all die together" smirk on his face.

They had never seen someone use this kind of tactic in order to brute force his way to gain entry to the city. However, everyone present, including the people that were waiting to enter the city, all felt a chill run down their spine.

If William were to really make his threat a reality then having the gates smashed would be the least of their worries.

No sane person in the Demonic Continent would take the threat of a herd of Flying Armored Elephants lightly.

In the end, William passed through the gates of the City of Ajento with a smug expression on his face. He was flanked on his left and right side by the guards, who escorted them towards the teleportation gate that would take them away from the city.

After an internal struggle, the Guard Captain knew that antagonizing William wasn't worth it. This was why he ordered his men to ensure that the black-haired teenager and his entourage left his city as soon

as possible, so that the two walking hot potatoes would no longer be a threat to his, and the entire city's, mental health.

Chapter 983 – Did Any Of You Ask For My Permission

"I've never seen a slave trader threaten an entire city all by himself," Kira said with a serious expression on his face. "Bro, you sure have guts."

"Of course I have them, you don't?" William replied with a smirk.

After the incident with the City of Ajento, William's infamy grew. News had started to spread throughout the different cities about a certain slave trader who owned two Flying Armored Elephants, and used them to get his way when the guards, as well as the mayors, refused him entry.

The status of the cities he had traveled through, especially those he had needed to use the Elephants as a threat to get his way, spread like wildfire and had been the talk for the past few days.

Currently, William's group was traveling through a mountainous area. This part of the Demon Realm didn't have any teleportation gates around, so they had no choice but to travel the normal way.

Suddenly, the flying carriages started to descend because something unexpected had happened in front of them.

They seemed to have been caught between what seemed to be a territorial war between two clans, and Athrun's coachman decided to signal the others to tell them that they needed to make an emergency landing in order to prevent a misunderstanding that could have them attacked by both sides.

William and the rest disembarked as they gazed in the distance where thousands of warriors from both clans faced off against each other. In the air, harpies and gargoyles formed their ranks. This was a standard battle formation that most demons employed when they were going to war because of territorial disputes.

“Any idea which clans are fighting?” William asked as he rubbed his chin. This was the first time that he had seen a war between demons, and his curiosity got the best of him.

“One-horned Clan and the Greenskins,” Vesta replied. “They have been at odds with each other and have been fighting over each other’s territories for the past few years. This will just be like any other war here in the Demon Realm. Nothing much has changed since then.”

“Since when?” William asked as he glanced at the green-haired beauty beside him.

“Since we lost the war in the Silvermoon Continent,” Vesta replied as she gave William a side-long glance. “A war that we lost to your father.”

The Half-Elf shifted his gaze back to the fight that was about to start. Although he had participated in war in the Southern Continent, he didn’t find it to his liking.

The tears that fell on the day when the curse had turned all the adults into crystals was enough to drown a kingdom.

ꞑꞑꞑꞑ ꞑꞑꞑꞑ. The death toll among the children and teenagers who had died in that war was staggering enough that even the number of Elves that died during that final battle was nothing compared to what the Southern Lands had lost.

What the Southern Lands had lost that day still lingered in William’s heart.

Although the ones fighting each other now were Demons, and not Humans, or Elves, the effect would be the same. Some of those Demons had wives, sons, and daughters, who would weep when they died in battle.

Suddenly, the sound of blow horns spread across the battlefield as both sides shouted their war cries. Soon, they all charged at each other. A battle on land and in the air was about to be waged and blood was bound to be spilled and dye the battlefield in the colors of war.

Vesta, Kira, Athrun, and the rest of their retainers watched from the side as spectators. Their blood boiled because they were a race that didn't shy away from war. They didn't care who won or lost because this was part of everyday life in the Demon Realm.

In some corners of the continent, similar wars were being waged. The current war between the One-Horned Tribe and the Greenskins was just a drop in the bucket, and no one would care even if both sides wiped each other out.

At least, that was how the battle should have played out.

As the two sides were about to formally clash with each other, something incredible happened, which made Vesta, Kira, and Athrun, as well as their retainers, look at the battlefield with widened eyes.

An individual appeared in the center of the battlefield and summoned a gigantic golden staff that swept away both sides in a domineering manner.

The Demons that were caught by the surprise attack were sent flying in the air like dried leaves being swept by a broomstick. The elders and experts of both clans were by no means weak. However, in the face of such overwhelming strength, there was nothing that they could do.

None of the people that William had sent flying were hurt. He had imbued Ruyi Jingu Bang with healing magic, so at the moment of impact, an instant regeneration spell would take effect.

The golden staff hit them like a truck, and it hurt like one, but this pain didn't last long as the injuries in their bodies started to heal.

In just a minute, the war that had just started, was brought to an untimely end.

Everyone gazed at the domineering figure that sat on top of the gigantic golden staff and felt their heart shudder.

"Tell me, you bastards... who asked you to start a war with each other while I am passing through?" William asked in a tone filled with arrogance. "Did any of you ask for my permission?"

His question was like thunder that rang in everyone's ears. The two warring clans had no idea who he was, so they were unable to form a coherent reply to his question. This was the first time that they had seen a Demigod who wielded a gigantic golden staff that could obliterate all of them with a single sweep.

"F-F*ck, are you for real?!" Kira stuttered as he asked the question that had appeared in his head.

Athrun took a deep breath as he stared at the black-haired teenager whose cape fluttered in the breeze, while standing on the tip of his golden staff. He didn't expect that the person he kept calling Big Brother was this formidable and it made his blood boil in excitement and respect.

In the Demon Continent, everyone revered strength. Those with the bigger fists dictated the rules. It was the law of the jungle, and everyone had accepted this iron-fist rule since time immemorial.

This was why the Demon Lord could only be a Demon Lord if he was the strongest of the Demons. The Demon Clans wouldn't recognize a weakling as their leader, and this was why the title of Demon Lord was not hereditary.

Although Felix was called a Prince, that title would only be his while his father held the throne. The moment Lucien, the current Demon Lord, stepped down, his title would be revoked and he would lose the influence he currently possessed.

Vesta, who had long wondered why her father didn't try to apprehend William back at the Fortress City, gazed at the Half-Elf with appraising eyes. As someone who had reached the Millennial Rank at an early age, she now finally understood why her father, Joash, decided to talk to William in a civil manner.

Right now, she felt that William's image in her mind had suddenly grown so big that it even surpassed the image of her father, whom she had worshiped ever since she had started to understand the rules of the world she had lived in.

Chapter 984: Looking At Things In Black And White

Hestia Academy...

After William had left Hestia Academy, Aila had been feeling uneasy. She had wanted to ask the Half-Elf a few things, but she just couldn't summon the courage to talk to him face to face.

Because of this, she decided to ask the person who was close to William, whom she trusted very much.

"Eh? You're having dreams about a silver-haired William?" Conan blinked one then twice after hearing Aila's story. Both of them had gotten along really well ever since William had introduced her to him.

Aila nodded. "I've been having these dreams. Seeing places I've never seen before. Also, I've interacted with the Silver-haired William many times."

Suddenly a blush crept along her face as she covered her cheeks with her hands. "We even kissed."

Her voice was so low that Conan wasn't able to hear her words properly. In the end William's familiar decided to ask Aila several questions in order to better understand the dreams she was having.

"Okay, so how old is this silver-haired William in your dreams?" Conan asked.

"He looked young. Perhaps not more than twenty?" Aila replied in a tone that was filled with uncertainty."

Conan nodded. "Can you tell me about names and places? Names of people will also work."

"Vanaheim, Asgard, oh... I also saw Wendy in my dreams," Princess Aila replied. "She had these wings. I think she was called Captain Wendy, and that silver-haired William belonged to her squadron."

Conan was about to bite on the potato chip in his hands when he suddenly dropped it after hearing Princess Aila's words.

"C-Come again?" Conan stuttered. "I think I didn't hear you properly the first time."

"Oh. I said that the name of the place where I stayed was Vanaheim, and we had these allies that came from Asgard. William was one of those so-called Einherjars and he belonged to Wendy's squad, who was called a Valkyrie Captain."

"Hold that thought. I'll be right back!"

Conan hurriedly left Princess Aila's room as he flew off to find Elliot. He felt that he wouldn't be able to handle this revelation alone, so he decided to call for backup.

Twenty minutes later, Elliot and Conan arrived in Princess Aila's room and the angelic familiar pressed the Princess with questions in regards to the dreams she was having.

"Is there anything else that you want to add?" Elliot asked with a serious expression on his face. After hearing Conan's explanation, he decided to accompany him right away to return to Princess Aila's room.

If what his twin said was right then Aila might be one of the people that William had interacted with when he was still an Einherjar back in Asgard.

Princess Aila shook her head because she had already told the two familiars everything. Elliot and Conan exchanged a glance and both of them had the same expression on their face.

"Okay, let me get this straight," Elliot crossed his arms over his chest as he stared at the Princess in front of him. "You and the silver-haired William had a romantic relationship, but your parents and the elders of the Vanir didn't approve of it. Because of this, you were forced to erase all of his memories of you, or your race would torture him until he gave up, correct?"

"Yes," Princess Aila replied. "I know it sounds crazy, but I also don't understand what is going on. Am I sick or something?"

"Well, I don't think you are suffering from a sickness," Conan replied. "At least, not the sickness that you are thinking of."

Elliot remained silent as he pondered the next words he was going to say. As someone who fully understood William's current situation, the angelic familiar was a hundred percent sure that what the Princess was dreaming about was her past life before the time of Ragnarok.

After a few minutes of silence, Elliot finally voiced his thoughts.

"Let's say that what you saw in your dreams was real," Elliot stated. "That they are memories you have of your past life that are surfacing in your subconscious mind when you are asleep. The question is, what do you plan to do with it?"

"Do you plan to pretend and let things continue the way they are, or do you plan to talk to William about it?"

Princess Aila lowered her head and bit her lip. She was currently unsure of what she wanted to do because, even she, didn't understand her current feelings towards William.

Her Big Brother, Crown Prince Alaric, of the Zelan Dynasty, asked her to form a good relationship with William, and if an opportunity appeared, she would seduce him so that the two of them could be tied in marriage.

This would strengthen their kingdom as well as open new opportunities for them to expand in the Central Continent through her marriage with William.

Princess Aila was conflicted because she wasn't a very courageous person. Even if someone gave her a push, she would abruptly stop her feet and not dare to take another step. The Half-Elf was an existence that she had respected during the war in the Southern Continent.

. A person that had turned the tide of battle and avenged the heartache of all the citizens which had been caused by the Elves. Now, William was surrounded by many beautiful women, and all of them were either his wives or lovers.

Princess Aila felt insecure because the hurdle that she had to jump over was very high.

"To be honest, I don't know what to do," Princess Aila answered after organizing her thoughts. "I was hoping that the two of you could give me some advice on how to approach this matter."

Elliot chuckled. "Advice? If I tell you to jump on top of the Bell Tower of this academy, would you do it?"

The angelic familiar shook his head. "Princess, what you need isn't advice, but understanding of what you really want."

Elliot pointed to his chest, where the heart was located. "What does this want? If you give yourself some time to understand what you really feel, without caring about responsibilities, or how other people would perceive you, that is when the answer will come to you."

Conan nodded his head in agreement with Elliot's words.

"In the end, the one who has to make the decision will not be us, but you, Aila," Conan stated. "Just know that whatever you decide, I will give you one hundred percent of my support. However... you need to hurry a bit. Am I right, Elliot?"

"Right," Elliot replied with a smirk. "You see, William had limited slots in his heart. According to the current status quo, there is only one spot remaining."

Princess Aila tilted her head in confusion. She didn't understand what the two familiars were talking about.

Seeing the confused expression on her face, Elliot explained William's current circumstances. After hearing everything, the Princess became quiet because she didn't know that she was already running out of time.

Inside Celeste's room...

"Chloee, let me ask you something," Celeste said as she looked at her familiar who was busy eating a chocolate bar, right after she had finished eating dinner.

"Whaz izz eatt?" Chloee asked in between a mouthful of chocolate.

Celeste placed her palms in her lap as she eyed Chloee with a serious expression on her face.

"If William really is the Prince of Darkness, do you have the resolve to kill him?" Celeste asked.

As one of the bride candidates of the prophesied Prince, she had already considered the possibility of the Half-Elf becoming the Prince that everyone had been dreading to arrive.

Chloee swallowed the chocolate inside her mouth and put the chocolate bar down as she stared back at Celeste whose current mood was unreadable.

"I can't kill the person I like," Chloee replied. She was Celeste's familiar, so it was impossible for her to lie to Celeste even if she tried.

"This 'like' of yours, what kind of like is it?" Celeste asked. "Like between a Master and her student? Or that you like him as a friend?"

Chloee smiled. Instead of answering Celeste's question, the little familiar asked her Master a question of her own.

"If William really is the Dark Prince, can you find it in your heart to kill him?" Chloee asked.

"Yes. If it is necessary then I will kill him."

"Good answer, but you're thinking too much. William is not the Prince, your sister has already confirmed it."

Celeste couldn't refute Chloe's words because she was the one that personally inspected Celine's body for the Prince's markings that were said to appear on their bodies.

"Maybe I made a mistake back then." Celeste insisted. "Let's just say that William is still suspected to become the Prince. If I were to fight him, which side would you be on?"

Chloe pondered for a bit before answering Celeste's question. She believed that they had reached a crossroad, and indecision wasn't an option.

"Celeste, I am not very smart. However, when I make a decision, I will follow my heart," Chloe answered. "If the time comes where William and you are about to fight to the Death, I will choose what my heart tells me."

"So, you will side with him?"

"I didn't say that."

"So, will you side with me?"

"I didn't say that either."

Celeste pouted because Chloe was being stubborn. Her violent familiar had a straightforward personality, so she wanted to have a concrete answer from her.

"Then, what is it?" Celeste asked. "What choice will you make when that time comes?"

"Celeste, you are looking at this in black and white," Chloe answered as she picked up the chocolate bar that she had put to the side. "There is always a gray area. Who said that the Dark Prince is an evil being? Granted, if it were anyone aside from Will, I would not hesitate to go for the kill."

"However, Celeste, you haven't seen the things I have seen. You haven't seen the battles that we fought together. If that person were to really turn into an evil being as everyone is assuming, then I can only use these small hands of mine to break the chains that binds him."

Celeste shook her head helplessly after hearing Chloe's answer.

"Is that the answer of a familiar that is in love?" Celeste asked.

Chloe ignored Celeste's question and bit into the chocolate bar in her hands. Seeing that the little fairy didn't plan on answering her question, Celeste sighed and left her alone.

As she walked into the hallway, Chloe's sincere and heartfelt words echoed inside her head.

"I'm looking at things in Black and White?" Celeste muttered. "Perhaps, I am. But, that doesn't change anything. I will do everything to protect my sister and me from our fate. If William is really the Prince in the prophecy, I will not hesitate... and go for the kill. I just hope that when that time comes, we won't clash with each other, Chloe."

Chapter 985: In Pursuit Of Happiness

Chloe sat on top of the giant sword of Hestia Academy as she ate the snacks that William had given her before he left for the Demonic Continent.

After her short talk with Celeste, the little fairy's mood suddenly took a nosedive, so she resorted to the one thing that could make her feel better, and that was to eat!

As she was munching on potato chips, chocolate bars, and cheese curls, her sister, Claire landed beside her.

"You know, Celeste only said what she did because she wanted to know your stance in regards to William," Claire said as she sat beside her sister, whose cheeks were bulged outwards like a hamster whose cheek pouches were full.

After chewing and swallowing everything inside her mouth, Chloe glaced at Claire and offered her a chocolate bar, which the latter politely refused.

"You know, back then, this Prince thingy was more simple," Chloe said as she tore off a portion of the chocolate bar and ate it. "If he appears, we just need to beat the crap out of him until all of his insides turn to mush. But, after these past few months, I've placed more thought on the matter and thought about it carefully."

"Oh my~ my sister actually used her brain for once and thought about something important?" Claire said in an exaggerated tone as she placed a hand over her forehead. "Is the sun going to rise in the West tomorrow?"

Chloe only smirked at her sister's blatant teasing. Just like Celeste, Claire understood her better than anyone else.

"I hate it," Chloe stated as she waved her chocolate bar as if it was a weapon for war. "This whole prophecy mumbo jumbo thing."

"You only hate it because William is one of the candidates right?"

"Yes."

Chloe had no reason to lie. After making William her Disciple, and spending some time with him, she started to understand him better. The little fairy had known what was sacred to the red-headed teenager, and the things that would make him go ballistic.

Because of this, she found him very "human-like". Back then, Chloe thought that the Prince would be an arrogant and merciless individual who would just use force if he didn't get his way.

Whenever she thought about William being one of these Prince candidates, she became very irritated. She wanted to shout to the world that her Disciple wasn't a psychotic person, and shouldn't be lumped up with the rest of those hooligans that the academy had listed as candidates for the Prince.

"I think this all started when the two of you fought for the first time," Claire said as she stared in the direction of the Demonic Continent. "Did you fall in love after he fought you fearlessly knowing that he was still going to lose in the end?"

"I think he is the only one aside from the Demigod, Tarasque, who has met your full-powered attack head-on. Did his performance move your heart? Isn't this also the reason why you made him your Disciple even after he had lost to you?"

Chloe continued to eat her chocolate bar in silence. She could still remember the first battle she had with William as if it was only yesterday. Back then, the red-headed teenager had used his Einherjar form in order to compensate for the disparity between the two of them.

For their last exchange, William used his World End Tempest to meet Chloe's Overwhelming Strike without backing down, resulting in a powerful explosion that gave both of them serious injuries.

Even so, Chloe's ability to recover was stronger than William's, which made her the winner of the match.

"He was so beautiful back then," Chloe said softly as she looked at the moon. "Like someone who was burning his life in order to win an unwinnable battle. Although he didn't shed any tears, I felt his heart crying. It was as if he was losing many important things just by existing."

"The attack he gave was very heavy. It was as if he was carrying the burdens of all the people in the world in that one strike. At that moment in time, I sincerely felt that I was fighting against the strongest being in the world, even though he was far... far weaker than me."

The little fairy sighed as she drank a mouthful of the hot chocolate drink that she had prepared earlier.

"When I went to look for him in the Forbidden Grounds, I found myself in a world that is different from our own," Chloe continued her explanation. "It was a world deprived of magic, with many tall structures that are even taller than this sword we are sitting on. There were metal birds, that they called airplanes, flying in the sky, and metal carriages on the ground that didn't require any mounts to pull them called cars."

"According to Elliot, the name of that world is Earth. That was where William lived in his past life, before being born in our world."

Claire listened in fascination as her sister described the world called Earth to her. She was quite surprised when Chloe mentioned that William had once lived there as a sickly person before being born again in Hestia. For her, the concept of Reincarnation was a tricky thing. Although she was still doubtful about her sister's words, she decided to believe in her for the time being.

"In that world, there is this person named Belle," Chloe continued. "She was a very ordinary girl. She's pretty, but not as beautiful as Celeste or Princess Sidonie. In fact, I am more beautiful than her."

Chloe's tone was filled with confidence, which made Claire giggle. Since her sister had said that Celeste was more beautiful than the girl named Belle, it was only natural that Chloe was more beautiful than her because she was an exact copy of Celeste, the only differences being her hair and eye color.

"That girl is so frail, that a normal monster here in our world could kill her without fail." Chloe sighed. "But, she was still someone that William had loved in his past lifetime. Even now, he still loves her. Did you know? When William married her, these snot-nosed people called politicians came to attend their wedding?"

"In my understanding, those prime ministers, kings, and presidents were the rules of their respective countries. Yet, they still went out of their way to personally attend a marriage between William and that ordinary girl, Belle. It was a sight to see. Ah, the food I had during the wedding party was very good. It's quite unfortunate that I can no longer eat them in this world."

Claire shook her head helplessly because her sister had suddenly drifted away from the topic because of her memory of the food she ate. Fortunately, it didn't take long before the little fairy once again talked about William.

"When I found out that William loses his memories whenever he uses that Einherjar form, I felt very sad. Although the memories he loses are all about that girl, Belle, I still felt a bitter aftertaste in my mouth, you know?"

"If I was in his place, and I started to forget about you and Celeste, I wouldn't know what to do. If using that kind of power would make me forget about the Headmaster then I wouldn't mind it one bit. But,

you and Celeste are two of the most precious people to me. Fortunately, when I use my abilities, the backlash isn't that severe. As long as I don't use more than seventy percent of our powers, I will definitely not die."

Claire sighed. Both her and Chloe could only use up to 70% of their abilities. Going above that and their bodies wouldn't be able to accept the load and break into pieces. In truth, Chloe and her had already resolved themselves that, if they were to face the Dark Prince in battle, they would sacrifice themselves and use 100% of their powers in order to bring him down with them.

If that was the only way to keep their Master, Celeste, safe then they didn't mind ceasing to exist. They had been born for that sole purpose, and no one would be able to stop them from doing what they needed to do in order to get the job done.

"I can't do it, Claire," Chloe said after a few minutes of silence. "I can't fight against William. I just can't do it."

"Then, I will fight in your place," Claire replied. "If I die then you should take Celeste and escape. Can you do that for me?"

Chloe shook her head. "You also know that I can't do that. Although I can't fight him, I can hold him in place so that you can deliver the final blow. I just want you to promise me one thing, Claire."

"And that is?"

"Kill us together. I don't want to live in a world without him. Maybe, I can be his lover in his next reincarnation. When that happens, I will probably be happy."

Claire patted her sister's back who had returned to eating her snacks. Both of them were familiars, so she understood that it was impossible for Chloe to be together with William. Even so, if her sister wanted to die with the person she loved then she would respect her decision and wouldn't hold back.

For the first time in her life, Claire prayed to the heavens. She prayed that her sister, Chloe, who only knew how to beat people up, would one day find the happiness that she rightfully deserved.

Chapter 986: I Don't Mind This Petty Move Of Yours

Adam was currently in the midst of training as he tried to push the memories of his encounter with the Dark Wraith to the corner of his mind.

Ever since he had returned from the Ancient Ruins, he had never ventured inside it again. The things he witnessed inside it was more than enough to chip the confidence he had when he first arrived at the stronghold.

Back then, he thought that the world revolved around him, and he was the one that was said to become the Heir of Darkness. It wasn't only the Elves who had a prophecy in regards to the Dark Prince, the Demons had one as well.

Surprisingly, the Oracles of the Elves and the Demons received the prophecies on the same day. While most of the contents were similar, there was also differences as well.

In the Elven Prophecy, they called the chosen one the Dark Prince.

In the Demon's Prophecy, they called the chosen one the Heir of Darkness.

Adam didn't care whether he was hailed a Prince or an Heir. The only thing that mattered to him was power. A power that would make everyone submit to his will. Unfortunately, his arrogance had been taken down a peg after his brief encounter with the Dark Wraith that could have easily ended his life if it wanted to.

For now, he just focused everything he had into training the Dark Arts while Felix waited for the report of the explorers he had sent inside the Ancient Ruins.

Adam didn't bother to report to Felix that the explorers wouldn't be coming back, because it would reveal that he had taken a little excursion inside the Ancient Ruins. This was something that Adam didn't want to happen because he didn't want to become the center of attention.

He was already being eyed critically by Felix, as well as the nobles of the different factions. As one of the candidates, and most talented user of the Dark Arts among the prodigies that were gathered all over the

realm, they assumed that his chances of being the one in the prophecy were higher than everyone else's.

Several days later, Felix finally gathered all the candidates inside the Stronghold in order to relay the decree of the Demon Lord, who had become very impatient with the slow development of the exploration of the Ancient Ruins.

"Three days from now, the Great Demon Lord has decreed that I send several elite warriors, as well as some of you to explore the Ancient ruins," Felix stated. "It has been more than a week since the explorers entered the ruins, and none of them had returned. I am assuming that all of them are now dead, so waiting for them will just be counterproductive.

"Of course, your safety is my utmost priority. This is why I decided to send a few of my elite bodyguards to accompany the team that will enter the ruins in three days time to ensure that none of you will be harmed.

"All of you are the prized geniuses of our realm. I expect that each and everyone of you will cooperate with the people that will explore alongside you, and bring glory to our race. Do any of you have questions that you would like to address?"

Felix scanned the surroundings, and saw a hand shoot up in the air.

The Demon Prince nodded his head and made a gesture for the Demon who raised his hand to speak his mind.

"If ever we made important discoveries inside the ruins, will we gain rewards for our troubles?" the Demon asked.

He was not the only one that had thought about this. Several of the other prodigies had been thinking about this as well. They were quite glad that one of them took the initiative to ask this question, so they didn't need to bother to ask it themselves.

Felix smiled and nodded his head. "Of course. Those who make significant merits in the exploration will be given rewards befitting of their contribution to our cause. I promise that the rewards will satisfy all of you, so do your best and try to bring back as much information about the ruins as possible."

The Demon nodded in satisfaction. Although they didn't show it on the surface, all of them were competitors, so it was only normal for them to look for benefits when doing something very dangerous.

Just like Adam, all of them could hear a voice calling out to them inside the Ancient Ruins. Unfortunately, they weren't aware of the secret entrance that Adam had used to enter it. If they knew, then they would have snuck out of the stronghold in the middle of the night and explored it on their own, just like Adam did several days ago.

"If there are no more questions then I advise all of you to make the necessary preparations for your exploration," Felix stated. "Everyone, dismissed!"

After the Demons had returned to their dorms, Felix returned to the Commander's Office and activated a long distance communication crystal to talk to his father. He reported that he had passed his decree to everyone in the stronghold, which made Lucien nod his head in satisfaction.

"I have heard about your little antics in the stronghold," Lucien said. "It is not a bad strategy to pull the Demon candidates into your faction. As expected of my son, you sure know how to take advantage of the situation."

Felix felt a chill run down his spine as he saw his father's deathly gaze locked onto his body.

"Relax, I don't mind this petty move of yours," Lucien stated. "As long as you are able to produce good results, I am willing to turn a blind eye on this small transgression. You will produce good results, right, Felix?"

"O-Of course, Father," Felix stuttered. "I will not disappoint you."

"You'd better not, because if you do..." Lucien smiled and left the words hanging in the air. He was the one that raised Felix, so he already knew that his son understood what he was trying to say.

Just as he expected, Felix affirmed once more that he would do his best to meet his expectations. Lucien then ended the call because he still had other matters to address.

"Joash, just what are you doing behind my back?" Lucien muttered as he read the report of the subordinate that he had placed in the Fortress City to spy on the Demigod's movements. Although he and the Black Dragon were allies, he understood that Joash was quite displeased with how the war in the Silvermoon Continent had ended.

Although the friction between the two of them wasn't enough to burn their bridges, it still made their relationship a little shaky. A shakiness that had continued to be present ever since.

There was a time when the Demon Lord had proposed that Felix marry Joash's daughter, Vesta, but the Demigod politely declined his offer. Lucien didn't make any further moves because he understood that the Demigod wasn't interested in deepening ties with him.

Since that was the case, he made sure to send several spies into the Fortress City to regularly check his movements.

When his subordinates reported that Vesta had left the city alongside a slave trader who was carrying Elf Slaves, Lucien's interest was piqued.

Anyone who was able to bring Elves into the Demonic Continent was not a simple character, so he sent men to secretly monitor where the slave trader was headed.

Fortunately, Vesta's entourage didn't do a good job in keeping a low profile. Several complaints had arrived in the Capital City, which all pointed to a black-haired slave trader, who managed to tame Flying Armored Elephants.

According to the reports, the slave trader was using the beasts to threaten their cities if they rejected his request for safe passage.

Lucien found this overbearing slave trader to his liking, so he sent several of his best agents to look for his whereabouts, with the intention of offering him an opportunity to work exclusively for him.

For the Demon Lord, risk takers were worth befriending, especially those with the guts to make Flying Armored Elephants mounts.

Each of these monstrous beasts were led by a Myriad Elephant that served as their Alpha. They were existences that would give anyone a hard time because of their overwhelming strength and abilities.

Whenever a Myriad Beast went on a rampage, the assistance of a Demigod was vital in ending the conflict. This was why not many people dared to tame an Elephant and use it as a mount.

Only those who were prepared to face off against a Myriad Beast, which was considered to be at the peak of the food chain, would dare to make one of the Elephants their own.

"A Vampire named William?" Lucien read the documents that his subordinates had gathered about the slave trader with an amused expression on his face. "It might just be a coincidence, but it doesn't hurt to be careful."

Lucien made a gesture and several shadows materialized in the air in front of him.

"Find this person and investigate him," Lucien ordered. "If he is really the son of that man, I want all of you to bring him to me alive. Do I make myself clear?"

The shadows nodded before disappearing.

Lucien allowed himself to smile as he set the documents down on the table. Deep inside, he hoped that his suspicions were true.

That way, he could personally torture the boy whose father had made him face the greatest humiliation in his life, after he had lost his battle against him in the Silvermoon Continent, many years ago.

Chapter 987: Tell Me, Who Is Stronger, Your Demon Lord Or Me?

"Your Excellency, may we know who you are?" a middle-aged man with a single horn on his head asked. He was the Patriarch of the One-horned Clan. In truth, he was quite relieved when William had appeared and stopped the war.

His Clan was the one being attacked by the Greenskin Clan, and was only forced to fight against them because they had been backed into a corner. If possible, he didn't want the war to continue because he knew that the ones who would lose in the end would be them.

Opposite him was another Demon, who was the current Patriarch of the Greenskin Clan. They were the aggressor in this conflict, and declared war on the One-horned Tribe for the sake of expanding their own territory, and making the opposing Clan their vassal.

"Your Excellency, my name is Dozedar, the Patriarch of the Greenskin Clan," Dozedar said politely. "I would like to invite you to our residence after this war is over. I promise upon our Clan's name that you will be treated as an exalted guest and will be given everything that you wish for. If possible, I humbly ask, His Excellency, to let us handle our differences and settle this within the laws of the Demon Realm."

William glanced at Dozedar who was looking at him with an amiable smile. He had jumped in to stop the war out of instinct, without knowing the reason behind why the two Clans were having a conflict. Even so, since he had already made his move, he would be damned if he allowed the fighting to continue.

"Dozedar, was it?" William smiled as he gazed at the two-meter tall red-skinned Demon, whose bulky body wouldn't lose to a body builder. "Who gave you permission to start this war?"

"Your Excellency, this war was started based on the laws of the Demon Realm. We are merely doing what our ancestors did long ago," Dozedar replied. "Wars in the Demon Realm don't need anyone's permission. Only the Demon Lord can intervene in conflicts against Clans."

"I see," William smiled. He then smashed Ruyi Jingu Bang into the face of the Patriarch of the Greenskin Clan and sent him flying hundreds of meters in the air.

Soleil, that was floating in the air, smashed Dozedar back to the ground, making him crash in front of William. The Half-Elf then grabbed the demon's hair and pulled his head up, so that he could stare at Dozedar's bloody face.

"You just said that wars in the Demon Realm didn't need anyone's permission, right?" William asked with a devilish smile on his face. "Since that is the case, how about I declare war on your Clan? How does that sound?"

He was still in his Heroic Avatar Form. An existence that transcended the limit of mortality, and had stepped into the Demigod Rank. In the Demon Continent, there were only four Demigods.

Each of them was capable of destroying entire kingdoms if they wished for it, so William's words were like the roar of thunder that passed through everyone's ears. The Greenskin Clan stared at William in horror because there was no way that their Clan could resist such an existence.

If he really wanted to wipe out their entire Clan, they would all be wiped out without having the strength to resist.

"M-Mercy, Your Excellency," Dozedar said through bloodied lips. "I didn't mean it that way. We are only..."

"You are only, what?" William asked back. "Be careful what you say next. I am itching to cause a genocide. Your Clan will be a good place to start."

Dozedar gulped down the words he was planning to say. He couldn't possibly say that they started this war just to annex their neighbor and hold a bigger territory. With nothing good to say, he was forced to keep his silence.

William tossed Dozedar to the ground and glanced at the Patriarch of the One-Horned Clan who had kept his silence through the entire ordeal.

"Tell me the real reason why this war started," William ordered. "If you lie, I will kill you and wipe out your entire Clan."

The patriarch bowed as he introduced himself. "Your Excellency, my name is Polox and I am the Patriarch of the One-horned Clan. This war was declared upon us by the Greenskin Clan in the hope that they can annex our territory and make us their vassals."

William arched an eyebrow as he gave Dozedar, who was lying on the ground, a side-long glance before shifting his attention back to Polox.

'Optimus, what do you think?'

< He isn't lying. >

The synchronization level of the system had been upgraded after William's adventures in the Deadlands and on Earth, right now, its synchronization rate was at 62%, which allowed the system to unlock more of its capabilities.

Right now, Optimus was a portable lie detector that William could use to interrogate anyone, similar to how the Demigods knew if the person they were speaking to was lying.

"I see." William rubbed his chin in understanding.

Suddenly, an absurd idea popped inside William's head as he scanned the faces of the One-horned Clan, as well as the Greenskin Clan. He didn't know if it would work, but there was no harm in trying.

"You see, I am planning to build my own influence in the Demon Realm," William stated. "Would you guys like to become my vassals?"

Kira, Athrun, and Vesta who were observing the discussion from a distance almost couldn't believe what they heard. They all exchanged glances before looking back at the black-haired teenager who had a devilish smile on his face.

"Your Excellency, are you asking if we want to become your vassals?" Polox inquired in a respectful tone.

"Yes." William nodded. "Your enemies will be my enemies. Any Clan who dares to create conflict with you must go through me first. How about it? Are you interested?"

Polox stared at William as if he was a Messiah that had descended from the heavens to save them. Only a fool would reject being a vassal of a Demigod.

The Patriarch of the One-horned Clan was no fool. The moment William offered to become their Lord, he thought he was just mishearing things, so he decided to ask for confirmation. Now that William had made his intentions clear, Polox was more than happy to hug his thigh and never let go!

"The One-horned Clan pays respects to our Lord!" Polox knelt to pay homage to William.

""The One-horned Clan pays respects to our Lord!""

Just like Polox, every member of the One-horned Clan was very happy to have a sturdy umbrella that would protect them from the wind and the rain. They gazed at William as if he was a God, and offered their sincerest gratitude to him.

"Well, now that all of you have recognized me as your Lord, it is time for me to do my role and protect you from these Demons that want to take your lands," William stated as he turned his head to look at the Greenskin Clan, who all had panicked expressions on their faces.

"Y-Your Excellency, please, have mercy," an old man from the Greenskin Clan walked forward and bowed to William in a respectful manner. "We do not wish to have any conflicts with you. Our Clan will pull back from this war and compensate the One-horned Clan for the transgressions we have made."

The old man was one of the Elders of the Greenskin Clan, and his words carried a lot of weight. Right now, they didn't dare to offend William because it would mark the end of their tribe.

Challenging a Demigod was akin to suicide. They would rather lose face, and compensate the One-horned Clan than face total annihilation.

"I refuse," William said as he crossed his arms over his chest. "You only have two options. Become my vassals or be exterminated. Also, your position would be second to the One-horned Clan. If you don't accept my condition then all of you can go pack up and go back home to wash your neck. I will be visiting you shortly, so be sure to prepare your coffins."

William then released the overwhelming presence of a Demigod to give the Greenskin Clan a fright. Some of them even fainted because this was not a force that ordinary mortals could face headon.

"T-This, Your Excellency, I'm afraid that the Demon Lord will not agree to this," the Elder of the Greenskin Clan commented. "We are one of the many vassals of the Gremory Clan. If we change our allegiance, the Demon Lord will surely come to wipe us out."

The Half-Elf chuckled after hearing the old man's attempt to save his Clan by using the name of the Demon Lord in order to make him backoff.

Truth be told, William had long wished to whack Lucien's and Felix's heads for what they had done to Chiffon. With the power and army he had at his disposal, the Half-Elf was not afraid even if he had to face the Demon Lord whose current rank was at the peak of a Saint.

A Saint could barely contend with a Myriad Beast at its peak, let alone a Demigod who could slap a Myriad Beast to death.

"Tell me, who is stronger, your Demon Lord or me?" William asked with a smile that didn't reach his eyes. "Tell me, if you have to choose between your whole Clan being exterminated right now, or being exterminated later by the Demon Lord, what will you choose?"

The old man gulped because this question reminded him who he was dealing with. Between the Demon Lord and a Demigod, who would he choose? Both had the power to wipe their entire Clan off the face of Hestia. Both were beings that they dared not offend.

However, if he was really forced to choose between the black-haired teenager and the Demon Lord, he would definitely pick the former. After all, even the Demon Lord had to tread carefully when dealing with a Demigod.

"O-On behalf of the Greenskin Tribe, and our vassals, I hereby pay respect to our new Lord," the old man declared as he shakily knelt in front of William.

The other members of his Clan glanced at each other before kneeling on the ground to pay tribute to him as well.

""The Greenskin Clan pays respect to our Lord!""

Dozedar grit his teeth as he glared at William. However, he too knelt in front of him because in the face of absolute strength, all tricks were meaningless.

William knew that the Patriarch of the Greenskin Clan was still reluctant to submit to him.

'It doesn't matter,' William thought as he gazed at Dozedar. 'I'll just feed one of his arms to Medusa later.'

The Patriarch of the Greenskin Clan shuddered after William gazed at him. He instinctively felt that if he made the wrong move, his life would come to a horrifying end.

Chapter 988: Did You Forget Who I Am?

The sound of merry-making spread in the darkness of the night as William sat in the seat of honor at the table of the One-horned Clan.

Vesta, Kira, and Athrun were seated at a table not far from him, and they were also treated as VIP guests.

As the Patriarch of the One-horned Clan, Polox had recognized Vesta instantly. There had been a gathering of the different Clan Lords within the Demon Continent, and three of the Demigods, excluding Baba Yaga, had attended the festivities.

This was where Polox had seen Vesta, and discovered that she was the daughter of the fearsome Black Dragon Demigod, who guarded their Southern Fortress.

Although he knew that meeting the green-haired beauty would be a rare occasion, Polox still made sure to remember her features, and tell his Clan members to never offend her, if they ever crossed paths with her in their territory.

Right now, he didn't know what kind of relationship William had with Joash, but after seeing Vesta in his entourage, he thought that the two Demigods had a good relationship with each other.

"Lord William, if there is anything that you want, just tell me," Polox said in a respectful tone. "As long as it is within the ability of our Clan, we will do it without fail."

William nodded his head. "For now, I have no need for anything. This feast is already good enough. I thank you, and your Clan, for your hospitality."

Polox smiled, and it was a smile that came from the heart. William was very different from the domineering person that he had encountered on the battlefield, which surprised him. He thought that after becoming one of William's vassals, the black-haired teenager would start to demand things of them.

As the Patriarch of the One-horned Clan, he was prepared to make the necessary sacrifices, but William didn't ask him for anything. This was why he decided to hold a feast in his honor, to better understand their new Lord, and see if he had any hidden agendas in regards to their Clan.

It was at this moment when a One-horned young lady, with light-brown hair and green eyes walked inside the gathering hall.

Every member of the One-horned Clan bowed respectfully at her as she made her way towards Polox, who was currently chatting with William.

"I greet His Excellency, Lord William." the young lady bowed respectfully. "May your grace fall upon our Clan, and your courageous stories be spread far and wide within the Demon Realm."

The young lady then bowed to Polox before going to the table right next to him. This was the respect that the Patriarch of the One-horned Clan deserved, and she would not forget to do this, even in front of a Demigod.

William's gaze followed the familiar young lady whom he had seen alongside Vesta when he was still in the Deadlands.

Polox, who noticed William's gaze, gave his granddaughter two thumbs up in his heart for doing a job well done. He had told her earlier that she should make a good impression on their new Lord in order to strengthen the ties between their Clan and him.

Seeing that William seemed to be interested in his granddaughter, Polox thought that the possibility of forming ties with him was already in the bag.

"Lord William, forgive my granddaughter Anh for not introducing herself earlier. She's not used to socializing with people outside of our Clan, and I spoiled her too much," Polox stated. "I hope she didn't offend you."

William smiled and shook her head. "No. I wasn't offended. I just thought she looked familiar."

"Is that so? Perhaps both of you were fated to meet. They said that the Gods allow people to find their soulmates in their dreams."

"Hahaha. Isn't that a bit too convenient?"

William didn't know how to react to this sudden meeting between him and Anh. Just like Vesta, she was one of the young ladies that he had seen in the Deadlands. He still didn't understand why he saw them there, but one thing was certain.

'There are no coincidences in this world,' William thought. 'Maybe we really were fated to meet.'

Just as the Half-Elf was entertaining this thought, Vesta walked to his table and dragged him to where Kira and Athrun were seated. William didn't resist and followed the green-haired beauty to know what she wanted with him.

"Bro, that was the best thing ever!" Kira said as he looked at William with sparkling eyes. "Can we become sworn brothers? Please? If my parents hear about this, they might push me to become the next patriarch of the Sand Clan."

"Do you want to be Patriarch?" William asked. He had spent a good amount of time with the handsome Demon, who always called him bro, and didn't mind extending his hand to help him rise in the ranks if he really wished for it.

"Actually, I don't," Kira answered before drinking a glass of fruit juice. "Knowing myself, I don't have what it takes to become a Patriarch. I'm a free spirit. I prefer traveling the world to being stuck at home handling the family's affairs."

Athrun nodded in agreement. Unlike Kira, who wanted to have complete freedom, what he wanted was to make a name for himself. He wanted to build a merchant group that every other merchant would look up to.

However, he knew that this was a long-term project, and couldn't be rushed at this point in time. Even so, he also understood that if he formed connections with a Demigod, no one would dare cause trouble for him as he slowly built staircases towards the sky.

William sensed Athrun's passionate gaze and gave him a brief nod. He knew that this scholarly fellow was similar to Sha, and wouldn't really talk unless it was necessary. Since that was the case, the Half-Elf decided to take the initiative to offer an olive branch to him.

After all, aside from bandits, the Ainsworth Family's second best friends were rich merchants whom they could extort when needed. Making Athrun one of his future golden geese was not a bad idea.

"If you ever need help, just say a word," William said to Athrun with a smile. "I don't mind calling the wind and the rain to pave the path to greatness."

Athrun bowed his head respectfully as a reply to William's words. His promise was more than enough to give him courage to be more daring in his approach when it came to building his merchant empire.

Vesta stared at the three boys with an impatient look before tapping William's shoulder to get his attention.

"I don't know your reason for doing this, but I think you went overboard when you forced the Greenskin Clan to become one of your vassals," Vesta said with a serious expression on her face. "They are indeed

one of the vassals of the Gremory Clan, which belong to the Demon Lord's family. Are you trying to make the Demon Lord your enemy?"

William blinked once then twice before raising his hand. Without warning, he flicked Vesta's forehead which made the latter cry out in pain. The Half-Elf didn't put much force into it, but it was still enough to inflict pain to Vesta.

Just like always, this attack was imbued with regeneration magic, which instantly healed any injuries that she received.

"What did you do that for?!" Vesta asked angrily as she held her forehead.

"Because you asked a silly question," William replied. "Did you forget who I am?"

This time, it was Vesta's turn to blink. A few seconds later, a dawn of realization fell upon her as she covered her lips.

William was Maxwell's son, who had thwarted the Demon Lord's ambition to conquer the Silvermoon Continent. Not only that, the Dungeon Conqueror had also cut off his arm, which the Demon Lord had taken as the greatest humiliation of his life.

The Half-Elf being the Demon Lord's enemy was an understatement. The moment that the Demon Lord knew of William's existence, he would send his army to kill him!

As if reading her thoughts, William just chuckled and whispered something in her ear.

"Don't worry, when I meet face to face with the Demon Lord, I'll tell him that me and your father are in cahoots with each other," William whispered. "No need to thank me."

Vesta hurled profanities at William inside her heart, while holding back the strong urge to give him a slap.

Not only did he offend the Demon Lord, the Half-Elf also wanted to drag her father into the quagmire that he created. If William wasn't stronger than her, she would have already summoned her whip and lashed out at him repeatedly for thinking such a thing.

Unfortunately, William was stronger than her, so the only thing she could do was glare at him, which made the Half-Elf feel very smug about himself.

Just as he was about to ask Vesta the real reason she'd dragged him away, one of the members of the One-horned Clan entered the room.

Polox had a surprised expression on his face after hearing his subordinate's words, and immediately ordered his subordinate to do something.

After the one-horned man left the room, Polox walked towards William with a big smile on his face.

"Lord William, I bring you good news," Polox said with a face filled with excitement. "The Clans within the neighboring territories have come to swear their allegiance to you. They also want to become your vassals!"

Kira dropped the chicken leg that he was about to take a bite of, while Athrun almost choked on the fruit juice that he had just drank.

Vesta covered her face with her hands while mumbling "We're dead! We're dead!". Clearly, she didn't find Polox's good news, well, good news. Instead, she knew that William had caused an unprecedented event, whose consequences she didn't dare to imagine.

If the One-horned Clan, Greenskin Clan, and the other clans who planned to become William's vassals, came to know his true identity, they would definitely dig a hole in the ground, and bury themselves inside it.

Not only had they knelt in front of their hated enemy, they even swore allegiance to him. If their ancestors were to know what they did, they would have risen up from their graves and slapped all of their descendants for being silly.

Not only did they allow themselves to become slaves, they even helped the slave trader count the money to ensure that he was not being cheated upon!

Vesta knew that things were getting out of hand, but she was helpless to stop it. The only thing she could do was to tell William the consequences of his actions, and hope that the Half-Elf would have enough common sense to understand that what he was doing was simply throwing these ignorant clans into the Lion's Den.

Chapter 989: From This Moment Onwards, All Of You Will No Longer Be Alone [Part 1]

Vesta dragged William to a vacant room in order to have a serious discussion with him. Because of this, the delegations of the other clans had no choice but to enjoy the feast and have a chat while waiting for William's return.

Inside the vacant room...

"Listen, do you know what you are doing?" Vesta asked as she pressed her hands on the wall as she stared directly at William's eyes, whom she had pinned on the wall, so that he wouldn't be able to escape her grasp.

"Um? Adding more vassals under my name?" William replied as he blinked innocently at the green-haired beauty.

"No, you numbskull!" Vesta snapped. "What you are doing is akin to poaching clans from under the Demon Lord's nose! Are you planning to start a civil war?!"

The Half-Elf's eyes widened in surprise as he finally understood what Vesta was trying to tell him. Frankly, he never thought about starting a civil war in the Demon Continent, But, after hearing Vesta's words he started to have the strong urge to do it!

"Sounds like a good idea!" William answered with great enthusiasm. "Why didn't I think of that?! Listen, how many clans are here in this territory? I want them all!"

"Bastard! What happened to being lowkey?!" Vesta gnashed her teeth in anger. "Isn't the reason why we are traveling the Northeastern edge of the continent to prevent your identity from being exposed?!"

"Have you forgotten that my father only allowed you to pass safely from the fortress, so you could fetch Baba Yaga's disciple and take her back to the Central Continent with you?! Why are you creating problems as you go?!"

The black-haired teenager lowered his head, before answering her questions.

"You got meat stuck between your teeth," William replied.

Vesta almost lost it as she kned the Half-Elf and aimed at his lower half. She'd had enough of William's bullsh*t and decided to teach him a lesson.

Fortunately, William was stronger than her, so he managed to block her knee with his right hand.

"You idiot!" Vesta shouted as she backed away in exasperation. "Are you trying to get my father involved in this? If your identity is known, he would be labeled a traitor by the Demon Race!?"

William then pressed his closed fist on the palm of his hand as if getting a good idea.

"Vesta, you are a genius!" William exclaimed. "Let's do that. I'll tell the Demon Lord that your father and I are in cahoots with each other if my identity is discovered."

"F*ck you!" Vesta summoned her whip and lashed at William in anger. This time, she was really enraged when she heard his moronic words that would destroy everything her father had built all these years.

This was the real reason she was trying to stop William from integrating more vassals under his command. If the Half-Elf really declared that her father was on his side then the reputation that Joash had built over the past hundreds of years would have been in vain.

William smiled as he grabbed Vesta's whip and held it firmly in his hand. Although Vesta's whip was a powerful magical weapon, his current strength could overcome it easily.

"I was just joking," William stated. "Calm down."

"You'd better give me a proper explanation about what you are planning to do, or else!" Vesta glared at William as the latter let go of her weapon.

"Fine," William replied as he raised both of his hands in surrender. "Although he said that he was just joking, the truth was that he was not. Even so, he still had to give Joash some face because the latter did help him pass through the Southern Fortress without harm.

The two stared at each other for a full minute before Vesta unsummoned the weapon in her hand.

"What are you really planning to do?" Vesta asked. "Do you have another agenda in coming to the Demon Realm?"

William shrugged as he crossed his arms over his chest while leaning on the wall.

"My only purpose is to get my Master back to the Central Continent," William answered. "What happened today was something I didn't plan to happen. I just went by the flow, okay?"

"And... that's the problem!" Vesta scoffed. "Maybe this is why my father asked me to accompany you. He probably wants me to do damage control while traveling towards the Northeastern Regions with you!"

William chuckled because he didn't believe that Joash was that bored to send his own daughter to do some "damage control" for him. He was sure that what was happening right now, was being relayed directly to the Demigod.

Although he wasn't sure about it, his gut instinct was telling him that he was right on the mark. Since that was the case, he decided to sound out what Joash had in mind in regards to William having vassals of his own in the Demon Realm.

"Okay, calm down. Breathe slowly," William said with a smile. "Tell me, Ms. Vesta, how do you propose I handle the current situation?"

The green-haired beauty forcefully tried to calm herself after hearing William's words. Now that the Half-Elf had taken the One-horned Clan, as well as the Greenskin Clan, under his wings, he couldn't possibly toss them aside.

Vesta knew this, and she had no intention of letting him do something so careless. Even so, other clans becoming his vassals was something out of her expectations.

The Gremory Clan, who was the previous Lord of the Greenskin Clan, was one thing. However, if William assimilated more clans under his banner, the other Major Clans would lose their retainers, and thus, weaken their authority over their dominion.

This would create an unprecedented upheaval in the lands, which would make all the clans who had deserted their former Lords face the wrath of a united union of clans under the Demon Lord's banner.

"Just reject them," Vesta stated. "Right now, the only conflict is with the Gremory Clan. The Greenskin Clan is just a minor clan among their vassals, so losing them would not deal a big blow to their authority.

"Although it might cause some grievances, the Gremory Clan isn't stupid enough to provoke an unknown person whose strength is equivalent to a Demigod. As long as you do not create more troubles in the future, we can put this incident under the rug and be done with it."

William rubbed his chin because Vesta's argument was very sound. His main purpose was to find Celine and not raise a faction of his own in the Demon Realm. Also, standing out like a sore thumb would make things difficult for him in the future.

As long as he stopped accepting the allegiance of the different demonic clans, the problem would not escalate to the point of no return. This was the best choice at this point in time, and the Half-Elf understood that Vesta was right.

"Understood. Let's go back," William said as he walked towards the door. "We will follow your plan. No more accepting vassals for the time being."

Vesta sighed in relief as she placed her right hand over her chest. She was quite proud of herself for taking the initiative to talk William out of his plan of accepting the Patriarchs who wished to serve under him.

'Father, I did it,' Vesta thought. 'I prevented the worst case scenario from happening.'

Joash, who was seated on his throne, looked at a mirror that was floating in front of him. The mirror was over three-meters tall, and the image of the Half-Elf was reflected on its surface.

He didn't tell his daughter, Vesta that he had placed a powerful spell on her body, which allowed him to see, and hear, what was going on around her. Because of this, he was well aware of the events that were happening around the Half-Elf.

Joash didn't mutter a word, and simply observed. He wanted to see with his own eyes how William was going to settle this matter. Truth be told, he found the Half-Elf's decision quite bold and daring.

For a brief moment, he even saw the arrogance that had appeared on Maxwell's face, on William's when he had stopped the war between the One-Horned Clan and the Greenskin Clan. It made him wonder if the Half-Elf would follow in his father's footsteps, as he tread upon the lands of the Demons, whose sense of unity was starting to erode.

Chapter 990: From This Moment Onwards, All Of You Will No Longer Be Alone [Part 2]

Five minutes later inside the main hall of the One-horned Clan...

"Everyone, I am very happy that you have traveled many miles just to see me," William said as he sat on his seat of honor. "Unfortunately, I have no intention of expanding my faction at this point in time. There are places I need to go, and I will not stay in this Domain for long. It is best if you seek protection elsewhere."

The other clans who had come to offer their allegiance to William lowered their heads in disappointment. Just as Vesta, Kira, and Athrun had done during the battle, some of the elite warriors of the different Clans had gathered to spectate in the battle between the One-horned Clan and the Greenskin Clan.

When they saw William's overwhelming might, they knew that this was a golden opportunity to break free from their previous Masters, who treated them as cannon fodder whenever they declared war on their rival Clans.

This was a very common occurrence in the Demon Realm, and only the Major Clans, as well as those powerful and influential families, had this privilege.

Polox sighed internally when he saw the grief on his acquaintance's faces. He understood their suffering because their own clan had desperately fought against this fate when the Greenskin Clan decided to declare war on their domain.

"Lord William, I beg of you, please, we will do anything, just please, take us under your wing!" a demon whose arms were encased in metal bowed his head and pleaded. "We won't ask much of you. You can go anywhere you like. We will not ask anything of you, so please, just accept us. This is the only way that our clan will survive from oppression. Have mercy on us, Your Excellency!"

"Lord William, please, we beg of you."

"We are willing to pledge our lives, just please, have mercy on us."

"Lord William... Please, make us your vassals."

"Give us a way to survive in this world, Your Excellency!"

The pleas of over a dozen patriarchs, who were begging for William's mercy, reverberated inside the room. The previous festive atmosphere disappeared, and was replaced by a heavy presence that reeked of desperation, and agony.

William closed his eyes, as he crossed his arms over his chest. Before he appeared in the hall, he had asked Polox to have a private talk with him, so that he could become aware of the different clans' circumstances.

Although he had promised Vesta that he wouldn't accept them as his vassals, he found their situation quite dire. The clans who had begged for him to take them under his influence were former Nomad Clans.

These were the Clans that would travel the Demon Continent in search of a place that was not under anyone's rule. Unfortunately, during their travels, some of the patrols of the Major Clans discovered them and forced them to choose between submission or Clan extermination.

Since then, they were treated like dogs. Their young women were taken by force, their sons drafted as conscripts, and their unborn childrens' fates were sealed before they were even born.

This was not a life that anyone wanted, and yet, they endure it with each passing day.

As William was deep in thought, Optimus, who had been keeping his silence proposed a bold idea.

< Why don't you just take them inside your Domain? >

'Are you mad?' William replied. 'Why would I bring them inside my domain?'

< The Deadlands is uninhabited at the moment, and it could easily fit twenty million people. These Nomad Clans wouldn't even number half a million even if they combined their Clans together. Also, they would become free manpower.

Right now, you have over thirty million God Points as a reward for clearing the 51st Floor of the Tower of Babylon, stopping Morax's plans in the Deadlands, and dealing with Apophis. You can easily buy several hectares of land that they could use to cultivate and plant crops. This would allow your domain to become more self-sustainable. >

William smiled because he understood that Optimus was just trying to find a way to make the Half-Elf agree with him, in order to prevent him from feeling guilty for abandoning the Demon Clans who were on their last legs.

< Chiffon might be a glutton, but she is a Demon Princess. Who knows? Maybe she can become a future Demon Empress if she gains enough vassals under her command. >

'You're like a merchant doing some hard selling right now, Optimus,' William chuckled internally.

However, he didn't dislike the idea of having his pink-haired wife, who was almost always stuck in the Thousand Beast domain, supervise the demons who were suffering under her father's rule.

Minutes passed before William opened his eyes. The patriarchs were still kneeling on the ground and pleading for his help. Even Vesta was now feeling sorry for them because of their current predicament.

"Very well," William said with a serious expression on his face. "However, I have a condition."

"We will accept any condition!"

"Lord William, just say the word, and it shall be done!"

"We will go above and beyond to satisfy your wishes, Your Excellency!"

The Patriarchs raised their voices one after another, and made promises to fulfill whatever condition he had in mind. It was as if they were afraid that the black-haired teenager would change his mind, so they did their best to appeal to his good grace.

Vesta looked at William with the "Don't you even think about it, Mister" glare that made the lips of the Half-Elf curl up into a smile.

"You wish for salvation? I cannot give all of you what you want," William stated with a devilish smile on his face as he looked at the kneeling patriarchs of the clans in front of me. "There was a time when my back was facing the wall, and there was no other option but to grit my teeth and fight for my survival.

"Tell me, Demons of the Demonic Continent. When the time comes, when I no longer have the power to shield you from the wind and the rain, will you find other Masters to pledge your allegiance to and break all the vows you have made to me?

"Remember this, I have the powers of a Demigod. Lies won't work on me. So, save your flattery. I am no different from your current masters. I will also treat you as dogs, playthings, as well as cannon fodders to fight my wars for me. Are you sure you want that kind of life? If not then you may leave this place unharmed.

"I swear on my name that I will not find any trouble with you and your Clan. All of you will be able to live your lives as if we didn't have this conversation. So, who among you wants to become my dog? Who among you wants to bark for me?"

William was not a fool. If these Demonic Clans could turn their backs on their previous masters, they could easily do the same to him. He wasn't running a charity, and he had faced so many things in life, that he wouldn't just take things at face value.

Perhaps, they saw him as someone so powerful that he could intimidate their oppressors with a single glare, and make them run away with tails tucked in between their legs. The current Half-Elf was indeed capable of doing such things, but he would not do it for everybody.

Only those that had earned his acceptance, would gain this privilege.

One by one, several of the patriarchs left the hall, while shaking their heads. They came so that they would no longer become lackeys, and yet, what waited for them was a similar fate. If that was the case then they would rather be chained to their current masters, and let their lives continue the way they were.

Although it was a very difficult life, they had more or less gotten used to it over the passing of many years.

In the end, out of more than a dozen Patriarchs who had come to plead for William's help, only five remained.

William looked at the remaining patriarchs with an indifferent expression on his face.

"Are you sure you don't want to go?" William inquired. "You can still change your mind."

One of the Patriarchs sighed and shook his head. "Our clan has nowhere to go. The Demon Continent might be vast, but we are merely sheep waiting for the wolves to sink their fangs into our flesh. Since that is the case, we would rather serve someone who had decided to personally step in to stop a battle between two rival clans who were hell bent to fight each other to the death."

The other Patriarchs nodded their heads in agreement.

"Although I do not sense the power of a Demigod in your body right now, I believe that if it's you, I can bark like a dog in contentment," a middle-aged looking Patriarch said with a serious expression on his face.

"You did not have any reason to stop the war between the One-horned Clan and the Greenskin Clan, and yet you still did it. Even going so far as to resolve the conflict by forcefully absorbing both clans as your vassals.

"I can tell that it was a decision made on a whim. A decision that was made because of the current circumstances, and yet, I feel that it was done in good faith, and sincerity. I, the patriarch of the Steel Fist Clan, hereby pledge my allegiance to you, Lord William."

"I also pledge..."

"By my Clan's name..."

"We are honored to become your retainers..."

One by one, the five Patriarchs, and the subordinates who had accompanied them, made their pledge.

Polox became teary-eyed as he saw this scene, because although William's words were crude, and indifferent, he sensed humility in it. It was at this moment when he really got a better understanding of his new Lord, and rejoiced for being the first clan to be able to pledge their loyalty to him.

Vesta sighed, when she saw this scene as she drank the cup of wine in front of her. She no longer cared about what was going to happen to the future. This was all William's responsibility, and she had nothing to do with it.

Kira and Athrun both had solemn expressions on their faces. It was as if they were having an internal battle inside their minds as they watched the patriarchs pledge their loyalties to William.

In the end, William stood up from his seat and walked towards the Demons who had decided to become his vassals.

He then rested his right hand on the shoulder of the Patriarch of the Steel Fist Clan, who had taken the initiative to pledge his clan's future to him, which made the middle-aged man raise his head to look at his new Lord and Master.

"Whatever life holds in store for me, I will never forget these words that were spoken to me by my father several years ago," William stated with a devilish smile on his face. The memory of Maxwell's domineering smile when he said these words to him had been etched in his very soul.

"I. AM. NEVER. ALONE. And from this moment onwards, all of you will no longer be alone."