

The Witch 381

Chapter 381: Interrogation

Although a majority of the Kingdom of Black Rose's population and military power was concentrated in Blackthorn City in the far north to guard against the invasion of Gehenna, the kingdom wouldn't leave its other borders completely unprotected.

Queen Henrietta would have set up at least two methods to grasp the situation of her entire kingdom.

"Does Queen Henrietta not know what's happening here, Astoria?" Vaan wondered.

"That shouldn't be possible." Astoria shook her head, trying hard not to smile after hearing her name so she could answer Vaan's question seriously. "Her Majesty's palace is the tallest magic tower in the kingdom."

"Even if it takes two weeks of traveling by foot, it can still be seen from Redpine City. Although the Red Goblin Mountain completely blocked Sunpeak Town from view, Her Majesty is a fire specialist."

"Considering the power of the blue flames, there's no way she hasn't felt it. So unless something big is happening on her end, Her Majesty would be coming in person to investigate," Astoria stated.

"Since you said that, then that is likely the case. Perhaps, Queen Henrietta is not in Blackthorn City. Or something is obstructing her from sensing abnormalities outside of the capital city," Vaan guessed before saying, "In any case, we have other things to deal with now."

Vaan peered outside the lord's estate before Astoria followed her gaze and saw the crowd of merchants gathering outside.

Just as Vaan suspected, the merchants took the initiative to turn themselves in to plead for forgiveness.

The powerful wall of blue flames cutting off their paths of retreat had weighed down on their minds throughout the night.

Nevertheless, the crowd of merchants was hesitant to approach the lord's estate after seeing the state of High Witch Beth and Lord Annette of Wolfwater City.

Considering the two High Witches were reduced to such states even though they had just arrived the other day and took no major part in Sunpeak Town's matters, the merchants could only imagine things would be much worse for them.

Some of them started to wonder if it was better to have hidden in Sunpeak Town and waited for the other merchants to take all the blame.

However, everyone was already familiar with each other's faces. If they were ratted out, perhaps an even worse fate awaited them.

As such, after they hesitated for a bit, they came forward and prostrated on the ground.

They didn't know if groveling in front of the lord's estate would appease the other party's anger. Still, they couldn't think of a better idea.

In front of the blue flames, they were all just insignificant ants.

The sounds of footsteps were soon heard inside the lord's estate as Solana and Aeliana made their way down the stairs and met up with Vaan and Astoria.

When Aeliana saw Astoria locking her arms around one of Vaan's arms, she immediately waltzed over with a glum look and hugged Vaan's other arm.

On the other hand, Solana simply gave Vaan a wink before focusing on the crowd outside the estate.

"Well, isn't this quite the sight to see?" Solana uttered with a pleasant smile when she saw the crowd prostrating on the ground in fear. They had given her quite a headache.

Nevertheless, she couldn't help but frown when she saw Beth and Annette in their humiliating and defeated states.

"Please release those two, Aeli."

"Yes, mother."

Shortly after Solana made the request, Aeliana obliged, removing the tendrils and vines from Beth and Annette. Still, Aeliana wasn't too happy with her mother's decision.

"You two got off easy. You should thank my mother for that," Aeliana quietly spat.

Beth and Annette could only reply with forced smiles. They were mentally worn out from being in a state of tension throughout the night, not knowing whether they would be spared or not.

"Thank you for having mercy, Lady Solana," Beth and Annette said tiredly.

They exchanged a few words before putting the matters behind them. At that point, Beth and Annette did not care about revenge, nor did they have the strength to carry it out. Instead, they just wanted to go home and sleep it off as if it was a bad dream.

Nevertheless, after Beth and Annette's matters were set aside, Solana focused on the merchants. Vaan and the others also came out and joined her as they stared at the groveling merchants.

When the merchants sensed their gazes, their bodies shivered in fear and felt like huge weights had been placed on their backs. They didn't even dare to lift their heads for a look.

"How should we deal with them?" Solana asked the others, seeking their suggestions. She thought of multiple choices but couldn't decide which would be the best course of action to take.

"We should kill them all," Aeliana immediately stated. But then, she soon added, "...Or not. They're not very useful if they're all dead."

The merchant felt great relief after hearing the second part. They almost had heart attacks during the first.

"We should interrogate them first. Then, decide after," Vaan suggested.

"That makes sense," Solana agreed with a calm nod before she glared at the merchants with a fierce gaze. "Tell me, who gave you all such audacities to act lawlessly in my town? You couldn't have been that stupid without people backing you."

"Tell me who they are!" Solana strongly demanded.

However, the merchants did not answer. They only shivered fearfully in silence. Despite coming forward to be punished, they didn't sell out the people backing them.

Evidently, they feared their backers more than they feared Solana.

"After what they put you through, you're still being too soft on them, Lady Solana. This is not how you should interrogate them. Also, you are asking the wrong questions."

Vaan shook his head as he stepped forward to take charge of the matter, grabbing a female merchant at the Peak-stage Senior Witch rank by the throat as he picked her up and raised her body in the air.

"Who was involved in Dahlia's ambush?"

"L-Lady Solana is one thing... But, you? How dare a man treat me like—"

Ka-cha!

Vaan tightened his grip and broke the female merchant's neck, cutting off her lifeline and killing her almost instantly, before tossing her lifeless body aside.

"Wrong answer," Vaan uttered indifferently.

Shortly after, he proceeded to pick up another female merchant by the neck and asked the same question.

"Who was involved in Dahlia's ambush?"

Chapter 382: Interrogation (2)

Ding!

<You have hunted a Peak-stage Senior Witch>

<You have completed an unassigned Elimination-type Witch Hunt>

<Please make contact with the deceased Peak-stage Senior Witch to reap your rewards>

...

The system sounded in Vaan's mind, but he was not in a hurry to collect his rewards.

Meanwhile, after the other witch merchants watched the first witch merchant die, they all entered a state of shock.

A few nearby witch merchants slowly glanced at the dead witch merchant lying on the ground and also saw the expression of disbelief that remained on her face.

Although there were instances where men rebelled against witches and killed them, they rarely happened and only occurred in the dark, far from other seeing eyes.

However, Vaan blatantly disrespected and killed a Peak-stage Senior Witch in front of several dozens of witnesses, not to mention they were mostly Peak-stage Senior Witches with various connections.

Even if they were to be killed for their crimes, it shouldn't have been done by a man.

Vaan's action was no different from openly and arrogantly challenging the authority of witches. However, only he could do so because he had the strength to back it.

Astoria didn't condone killing. Thus, she was affected by Vaan's killing. But for his sake, she decided to turn a blind eye to it. She only hoped he didn't kill too many.

Meanwhile, the second witch merchant in Vaan's grasp stared into his indifferent eyes with horror. She did not want to be like the first witch.

"I-I don't know much about Lady Dahlia's ambush...! I wasn't a part of it!" she denied her involvement. But when she saw Vaan's disappointment, her fear intensified. She quickly added, "But! I did hear Dorothy's group was plotting something before Lady Dahlia was ambushed!"

"Dorothy's group, huh?" Vaan muttered before he gave the witch merchant a nod. "You've earned the right to keep your life."

Shortly after, Vaan released his grip and spared the witch merchant. The person thanked him profusely for his mercy before moving out of his way.

Still, she did not dare to go too far away from Vaan. Although her life was spared, it didn't mean she could leave.

Vaan glanced at the other witch merchants and asked, "Who is Dorothy? And who is part of her group? You have five seconds to answer before I start killing indiscriminately."

"T-They are part of Dorothy's group! Her too! And her!" the crowd of witch merchants didn't hesitate to rat out six Peak-stage Senior Witches after hearing Vaan's threat.

As expected, the threat of death worked very effectively after Vaan made an example out of them. However, the accused witch merchants vehemently denied their affiliation.

"What?! They're all lying! I am not a part of Dorothy's group, I swear! I've only talked to Lady Dorothy a few times, that's all!" said one of the desperate witch merchants.

"Is that so?" Vaan uttered coolly before requesting, "Please force the truth out of her with a confession spell, Astoria."

"Alright," Astoria obliged.

After she used a confession spell on the witch merchant, the truth came out of the person's mouth. The witch merchant was indeed a part of Dorothy's group.

"W-Wait...! I can explain—" the witch merchant revealed a look of horror after Astoria's confession spell expired.

However, she wasn't given a chance to make any excuses.

Puchi!

An arrow of blue flames pierced right through her head, scorching everything in its path and killing her instantly.

Ding!

<You have hunted a Peak-stage Senior Witch>

<You have completed an unassigned Elimination-type Witch Hunt>

<Please make contact with the deceased Peak-stage Senior Witch to reap your rewards>

...

"What the hell! If you're going to interrogate us with confession spells, why don't you just do so from the start?!" another Peak-stage Senior Witch affiliated with Dorothy's group questioned with outrage, indignance, and fear, knowing she could die at any moment.

Puchi!

Another arrow of blue flames shot her way, piercing through her head like the last Peak-stage Senior Witch and killing her similarly.

Ding!

<You have hunted a Peak-stage Senior Witch>

<You have completed an unassigned Elimination-type Witch Hunt>

<Please make contact with the deceased Peak-stage Senior Witch to reap your rewards>

..

The system notified again.

Unfortunately for the Peak-stage Senior Witch, she was correct about thinking she could die at any moment.

After the third witch merchant died, no one else dared to raise their voice. They could only tremble with fear in silence after realizing Vaan wielded the blue flames.

"You don't get to ask the questions here. I ask, and you only answer. And if you lie, you die. Simple as that," Vaan coolly stated. "Understand?"

While most witch merchants repeatedly nodded with obedience, a few inwardly felt vengeful and hostile in their hearts due to Vaan's arrogance and domineeringness.

However, Aeliana, who was sensitive to hostilities directed at Vaan, felt them. As a result, she killed another two Peak-stage Senior Witches with wooden spikes.

"If you bear even the slightest hostility towards Lord Vahn, you will also die by my hands," Aeliana coldly stated.

After the remaining witch merchants heard that statement, they felt their hearts turn icy cold. Then, they quickly became completely obedient and cooperative.

Vaan went through two rounds of interrogations with the Peak-stage Senior Witches affiliated with Dorothy's group and learned only half of them were present. The other half went into hiding somewhere within Sunpeak Town with Dorothy.

Dorothy's full name was Dorothy von Helion. She was a member of a small merchant guild situated in the neighboring witch kingdom, the Kingdom of Verdant Woods, and also the guild leader's daughter.

In other words, she was a foreign merchant with some status.

"If you want to live, bring Dorothy Helion and the rest of her group to me for some questioning," Vaan directed the last four present members of Dorothy's group after he finished interrogating them.

According to their confession, Dorothy's group was not involved in Dahlia's ambush as far as they knew. Still, Vaan could gain some useful information from Dorothy Helion and figure out her motive in Sunpeak Town.

"There's still you lot," Vaan focused on the remaining witch merchants, causing them to shiver with fear and feel suffocated.

His simple gaze seemed to possess crushing pressure on them.

Chapter 383: The Stick And Carrot

"You can't keep killing merchants like this, Vaan," Astoria stepped forward to speak, fearing Vaan would kill more. "Merchants are needed to continue the extensive network of exchange of goods and knowledge across the seven witch kingdoms."

"If you kill them, you won't be able to use them to develop Sunpeak Town," Astoria stated.

"We don't need all of them alive. We'll only need to keep the ones we deem useful. As for the useless ones, we don't need them," Vaan spoke for the merchants to hear, but he didn't intend to kill too many of them.

He just wanted to scare them.

After all, as Astoria said, merchants played a vital role in the extensive network of exchange of goods and knowledge between the seven witch kingdoms. They were responsible for bringing in rare supplies of goods that may not be found in the Kingdom of Black Rose.

Killing too many could cause a problem in the economy and affect the development of Sunpeak Town.

"Considering what these merchants have done in Sunpeak Town, what does the Lord of Sunpeak Town have to say regarding their punishment?" Vaan casually asked Aeliana.

"Aggressive price raising of sellable goods, unlawful manipulation of the market, extortion, willfully instilling unrest and disturbing public order, disrespecting local authority... I would say their crimes are punishable by death several times over," Aeliana stated.

She stared at the merchants with an evil grin to intimidate them, playing along with Vaan's ploy after sensing what he was trying to achieve.

"However, we can't execute them all, can we?" Vaan continued with a seemingly exaggerated expression. Then, he asked, "What should we do then? How should we punish them without killing them, Lord Aeliana?"

"As the Lord of Sunpeak Town, I can waive the death penalty," Aeliana casually said. Then, she made a money gesture with her fingers and added, "However, they must fork out their wealth to buy back their life. And if they want to conduct business in Sunpeak Town, I suppose a fifty percent yearly tax on their revenue for ten years would be justified."

"Even fifty years would be justified, so ten years sounds pretty fair to me," Vaan nodded in agreement before turning back to the witch merchants. "Well? Do you want to pay for your life? Or do you want to die?"

"You want to tax fifty percent of our revenue for ten years, and we also have to pay a downpayment to buy back our lives?" The witch merchants almost puke blood after hearing the extreme conditions.

It was not a fifty percent tax on their profit, but their revenue!

If the production or acquisition of their goods and wares cost anywhere close to fifty percent of their sales revenue, it would mean they would earn next to nothing due to tax!

Although they could do business elsewhere to avoid the hefty tax in Sunpeak Town, they still had to pay a downpayment for their lives!

The other party did not mention how much of their wealth they had to fork out for that! If it was everything, they might just be better off dead!

After all, even if they could live, their life onward would be no different from a slave's.

"Why don't you just go and rob instead?" a witch merchant asked frustratingly, deciding to risk it all. Even if she ended up killed, she had to negotiate more acceptable terms.

However, Vaan's following reply left her speechless.

"Aren't we doing that right now?" he said.

Ultimately, the witch merchants decided that living difficult lives was still better than dying. So long as they were alive, there was still the hope of things taking a turn for the better.

After the witch merchants accepted Aeliana's harsh conditions, they soon discovered the buying price for their lives was far greater than they could afford.

Even if they forked out all their wealth, they could not pay it all off at once. As such, they all gained enormous debts.

The only good news was that they did not have to fork out all their wealth to pay a deposit straight up. Instead, they were allowed to keep their wealth in order to run their business in Sunpeak Town, paying off their enormous debts slowly.

To ensure the witch merchants did not run away, Vaan had Aeliana cast a binding contract magic on their hearts and force them to accept the contract of guaranteed repayment.

As such, even if the witch merchants traveled to other witch kingdoms to acquire goods, they had to return to Sunpeak Town to conduct business and pay off their debts. Otherwise, the spell on their hearts would activate, causing their mana rings to explode and kill them.

Furthermore, if they even had the slightest intent to dispel the contract magic, the spell would also activate pre-emptively to kill them.

To guarantee the witch merchant would become devoted to working and paying off their debts, Vaan threw them some bait by promising to extend their lifespans during the repayment of their debts.

Their lifespans would not expire before their debts were fully paid. And if they fully repaid their debts, Vaan would help them advance to the High Witch rank, greatly extending their lifespan.

Of course, the price for Vaan's help in their advancement would be adding more debt to their name.

In order to prove his capability, Vaan picked out the most cooperative witch merchant and had her form her third mana ring with the support of mana stones supplied by him.

The witch merchant easily formed her third mana ring and advanced to Early-stage High Witch within fifteen minutes, thanks to Vaan's assistance and guidance.

After he saw how Jergag assisted Hester in her High Witch advancement, he devised his own method to help witches advance.

He could use Kinetic Energy Manipulation powered by his Demigod-rank dragon soul to reduce the strength of the repelling force in the witch's heart, which ultimately lowered the difficulty of forming the mana ring.

After the others saw the witch merchant advance to the High Witch rank smoothly without an issue, all forms of ill feelings for Vaan disappeared without a trace.

Even if they gathered all the resources required for their advancement on their own, there was no guarantee that they successfully advance to the High Witch rank.

However, if they worked hard to repay their debts, they would be given the opportunity to advance to the High Witch rank risk-free at the expense of increasing their debt.

The witch merchants were no longer afraid of the exorbitant debt. In fact, they feared not having any debts to repay instead. It would mean no opportunity to receive Vaan's assistance and advance risk-free.

"With this, we've secured the funds needed to develop the central town area and Sunpeak Town overall. At the same time, we've gained some useful slaves—I mean, subordinates," Vaan mentioned to Aeliana and the others.

"Yeah..." Solana glanced at the obedient witch merchants kneeling on the ground.

After receiving hard flogging of the stick and being shown the heavenly carrot, the witch merchants became devoted to the cause of making money to repay their debts and getting on Vaan's good side.

To them, he was like the chicken that laid golden eggs.

Chapter 384: Discovery

Although the witch merchants became obedient and no longer had ill feelings toward Vaan's party, the same could not be said the other way around, especially for Aeliana.

She definitely planned to milk them for what they were worth.

"I will stay here and deal with Dorothy's group once they return. You can go ahead and screen these merchants again and ensure we didn't miss anything from them," Vaan said to Aeliana.

"Once they are cleared, you can discuss the redevelopment project with Dahlia. She will know what building materials are needed and which location in the central town area to prioritize. Also, there's no need to fetch common building materials like timber and stones from the merchants. We can acquire plenty of those from the surrounding forest and nearby mountain."

"Sunpeak Town is bound to undergo expansion to accommodate the increasing population, so there's no problem with little deforestation," Vaan added.

Aeliana was a wood and light specialist anyway. Thus, even if they couldn't collect enough wood from the surroundings for Sunpeak Town's development, she could just cultivate a new forest to acquire more.

Still, Vaan didn't want the surrounding forest completely gone. In fact, it would be even better if the forest thrived, becoming taller and denser.

He intended to build a dragon outpost in the Red Goblin Mountains. Thus, the cover of the forest was necessary to keep it hidden.

"Understood, Lord Vahn," Aeliana complied, taking the witch merchants with her after receiving Vaan's instructions.

She possessed the power of a Mid-stage High Witch, so she could handle several dozen Peak-stage Senior Witches on her own even if the witch merchants suddenly decided to rebel—not that they would.

"You let them off surprisingly easy. It almost seemed like a reward for them," Astoria commented.

"It was necessary since we need merchants to develop Sunpeak Town. If we punished them too hard, they would rather fight to the death than let us take advantage of them," Vaan casually replied. "Furthermore, they have many connections."

"It's too troublesome dealing with all of them. I would rather not waste my time with meaningless conflicts or be guarded against their schemes so that I can focus my energy elsewhere."

"Since it's more effective to use them than to kill them, this was the best choice if we were to disregard personal feelings. You don't like me killing too many witches either, no?" Vaan mentioned, glancing at Astoria.

"Mm," Astoria nodded with a smile.

Nevertheless, she wondered if she was responsible for Vaan's decision. His reasoning was too logical for her to know if she played a part in it.

She would be happy if she were, but it also wouldn't matter if she weren't.

More importantly, as long as Vaan acted within the boundaries that could be tolerated, the chances of conflicting with Her Majesty's interests would be unlikely.

She would rather hope they could work together than be at odds. After all, even though Vaan would be the ultimate winner in their conflict, the kingdom would be torn apart, and the casualties would be unimaginable.

Nevertheless, Queen Henrietta was never the problem. Being a close friend of Her Majesty, Astoria was familiar with her ideals. Queen Henrietta would wish for a peaceful co-existence.

The real problem was the supremacist faction.

"Do you think those four Peak-stage Senior Witches would be enough to bring the rest of Dorothy's group back to us, Sir Vahn?" Solana asked, changing the topic.

"That would depend on the loyalty of Dorothy's group members," Vaan casually replied.

Covering the entire Sunpeak Town with his Omni-Sense allowed him to track all movements and conversations inside.

Besides following the tracks of the four Peak-stage Senior Witches sent to Dorothy's group, he was also searching for rats and spies.

He had already locked onto many witch merchants in hiding, but none of them appeared to be part of Dorothy's group.

Fortunately, the four Peak-stage Senior Witches seemed to know where Dorothy's group was hiding. They headed directly toward a specific destination in mind and did not search randomly.

They eventually reached a newly established five-story building situated on the edge of Sunpeak Town.

When Vaan watched the group of four enter the basement floor, they suddenly vanished from his senses. The basement floor was still there, but the people were gone.

'A high-rank illusion spell and sound-cancellation spell?' Vaan guessed as his senses sharpened.

If it was just a high-rank illusion spell overlapping with the original basement, he should still be able to hear the four Peak-stage Senior Witches.

However, their footsteps went silent as soon as they disappeared.

Although the possibility of a hidden spatial portal also existed, Vaan determined its possibility to be on the lower end. He would have sensed the spatial distortion if there had been a spatial portal.

Of course, there was also the possibility of a high-rank anti-sensory spell being used.

But the odds of using so many high-rank spells simultaneously were even lower. Dorothy's group would need at least a Mid-stage High Witch or the assistance of multiple high-quality magic tools.

That said, the odds might be low, but Vaan couldn't wait and find out. He had to visit the place in person to grasp the full picture.

Waiting would be too late if Dorothy's group escaped.

"I'll be back," Vaan informed Astoria and Solana.

Shortly after, he headed to the specified building to investigate the basement. Upon his arrival, he confirmed it was indeed just illusion and sound-cancellation spells being used in the area.

There were a total of eleven witches inside, Dorothy Helion included.

Nevertheless, Vaan's timely arrival shortly after the four Peak-stage Senior Witches returned caused Dorothy's expression to change abruptly.

"You dare lead the enemy back to our base?! Have you betrayed the kingdom?!" Dorothy roared at the four newly arrived Peak-stage Senior Witches.

At the same time, Vaan narrowed his eyes, noticing the keyword in Dorothy's sentence. She didn't refer to herself but mentioned the kingdom instead.

In other words, whatever Dorothy's group was plotting in Sunpeak Town didn't represent the will of their small merchant guild but the kingdom behind them.

"We..."

The four Peak-stage Senior Witches didn't know how to reply to Dorothy's accusation. After all, they were also surprised by Vaan's appearance. They did not sense him trailing behind them at all.

"Dorothy Helion, I take it? I have some questions for you. Come back to the lord's estate with me," Vaan commanded.

Chapter 385: Repeated Beating

"How audacious! I might not be from this kingdom, but I am still a witch with some status! Who the fuck do you think you are to tell me what to do?" Dorothy snarled coldly at Vaan, exerting the pressure of a Peak-stage Senior Witch.

At the same time, two other seemingly Peak-stage Senior Witches behind also stepped forward and coerced Vaan with their pressure.

However, their pressures were even greater than Dorothy's. They were actually Early-stage High Witches posing as Peak-stage Senior Witches.

Nevertheless, Vaan stood his ground, seemingly unaffected by their intimidation and pressure.

On the other hand, the four Peak-stage Senior Witches in front of him stepped aside and sweated nervously.

"He is the master of the blue flames..." One of the witch merchants explained.

In that instant, the multiple pressures on Vaan all fluctuated; Dorothy and the others were shocked by the information.

"Will you all follow me back obediently for interrogation, or do I have to use force?" Vaan calmly asked, taking a step forward and revealing his vigor and aura.

Dorothy and the other members of her group wore uglier and grimmer expressions after they felt the pressure of his powerful body.

They immediately recognized him as the one who fought with the group of black cloaks last night. It was too shocking that he possessed mighty physical strength and wielded powerful blue flames beyond their imaginations.

He didn't seem to have any weaknesses.

"Please escape, My Lady. This person isn't someone we can win against," one of the High Witches advised as she stood in front of Dorothy protectively along with the other High Witch. "We'll buy you some time."

"Sorry," Dorothy uttered with a heavy look, taking out a rank-five spatial-type magic tool from her Magic Domain.

As the leader of the group, she carried important information that she could not afford to spill to the other kingdom. Thus, she didn't hesitate to abandon her people while they bought her time.

They were willing to die for their mission. Unfortunately, they didn't understand Vaan's strength.

When Vaan saw the rank-five spatial-type magic tool appear in Dorothy's hand, he immediately burned it with his blue flames.

The rank-five spatial-type magic tool became too hot for Dorothy to hold, causing her to drop it instinctively.

"Oh no!" Dorothy cried.

"Did I say you could leave?" Vaan asked coolly before shifting his gaze to the two High Witches. "If you value your lives, step down. Reaching the High Witch rank shouldn't have been an easy feat."

"Run, my Lady!" the High Witches cried after gritting their teeth with resolution.

They immediately blasted Vaan with their most powerful magic simultaneously. Coincidentally, they were both fire specialists. Thus, their fire spells were widespread and highly destructive.

"No—!"

The four Peak-stage Senior Witches closest to Vaan cried in horror at the incoming wave of scorching-hot flames.

Even though they stood to the side, they were still caught within the range of the High Witches' fire spells.

The High Witches did not care about their lives, thinking they were traitors!

At the same time, Vaan narrowed his eyes and took on the fire blasts head-on without bothering to put up any defense.

Boom!

The large wave of fire swept past him and the four Peak-stage Senior Witches, burning their half of the basement and everything behind them.

It smashed into the stone walls and ceiling, destroying everything in its path and blasting a hole right through to the surface.

At the same time, the passerby outside suddenly saw a thick pillar of flames surge out of the building, shooting toward the sky like a beam of fiery light.

However, Vaan wasn't hurt in the slightest.

Even the four Peak-stage Senior Witches were unharmed as Vaan's timely flame barriers protected them.

The High Witches' most powerful flame spells didn't come close to hurting Vaan. In fact, they were so weak that they even powered him up momentarily.

Ding!

<You have been struck by weak sources of flames>

<You have been blessed by the fire>

<You have temporarily gained 220 points of strength (20% increase)>

<Your stamina and vitality recovery has increased>

...

Nevertheless, the buff only lasted a few seconds before disappearing.

Vaan's eyes flashed with a cold light before he took a step forward and disappeared in front of the High Witches' eyes.

However, he didn't really disappear; he simply moved too fast for the High Witches to catch his figure with their eyes.

Even so, they instinctively conjured their strongest shield to protect themselves.

Vaan's figure reappeared right in front of them in the next split second before he extended his hands out and breached their shields like shattering glasses.

The two High Witches attempted to retreat but failed to escape Vaan's hands as he gripped their throats and slammed the back of their heads into the ground.

"Take a nap for me," Vaan said.

However, the two High Witches did not respond. They had passed out after receiving the heavy and concussive blows to their head.

Dorothy retreated a few steps from Vaan while the rest of the witch merchants in the basement cowered in the corners.

Each time Vaan took a step, Dorothy would also retreat a step.

Eventually, Dorothy was backed against a wall before she glanced at Vaan and noticed his amused smile.

"Since you don't want to be interrogated, it shows you have something important to hide. Now that you don't have anywhere to go, what will you do? Too scared to take your own life?" Vaan commented.

Dorothy stared at Vaan's smug look before she used anger to overcome her fear and took a step forward.

"I refuse to be bullied and humiliated by a man! Do you know who my father is?! You better let me —"

Pak!

Vaan abruptly backhanded Dorothy's left cheek before she could finish speaking.

The force behind his smack was so strong it shattered Dorothy's facial bones, disfiguring her face, shifting her upper and lower jaws, and paralyzing her from the neck down.

Her face swelled with blood, and her eyes blurred with semi-consciousness, still unable to process what had just happened.

Nevertheless, Vaan force-fed her a drop of his blood, healing her body and bringing life back to her eyes.

"You dare raise a hand against me...!" Dorothy glared at Vaan and spat furiously, "A swine of a man like you dare to touch—!"

Pak!

Vaan smacked her back to a near-death state before restoring her grievous wounds with his blood again.

"Are you trying to anger me into killing you because you don't have the courage to end your own life? Well, it won't work on me," Vaan said with a soft chuckle.

Nevertheless, Dorothy remained stubborn. She continued to threaten him after her recovery. In return, Vaan also smacked her to a near-death state and brought her back each time.

The repeated process of torment and pain whittled away Dorothy's stubbornness and broke her spirit, making her obedient and fearful.

Vaan picked up a familiar hairpin off the floor and grabbed Dorothy by the hair to drag her back. The hairpin had fallen out of Dorothy's hair from the repeated smacks, but he knew who its original owner was.

"Will you follow me back obediently, or do you need to be beaten and dragged back too?" Vaan asked the rest of the witch merchants in the basement.

They shivered with fear and gave him the obvious answer.

"W-We'll follow you, Your Excellency."

Chapter 386: Ulrich Salazar

"That's what I like to hear," Vaan nodded before directing bring the two unconscious High Witches with them, "Carry those two things with you."

"Yes, Your Excellency," the witch merchants obeyed fearfully.

They did not want to be beaten up like Dorothy, who had her face reduced to an unrecognizable state, even with the miraculous healing properties of Vaan's blood.

Sometime later, Vaan and Dorothy's group returned to the lord's estate, where Astoria and Solana waited for them outside.

Vaan filled Astoria and Solana in on the details before he asked them to interrogate the rest of Dorothy's group with truth-confession spells.

As for Dorothy herself, he intended to take her to the dragons for information extraction. An anti-confession spell protected her mind. Thus, he required the assistance of experts.

Just like his last prisoners, Vaan took Dorothy north of Sunpeak Town into the mountains, crippled her vision and hearing, and knocked her unconscious before he activated the black cube and entered the spatial gateway.

"Welcome back, Supreme Leader," Astarot immediately greeted as if he had anticipated his visit ahead of time. Then, he handed over a white orb. "The information extracted from the prisoners has been compiled inside this memory crystal."

"How do you want us to deal with these four prisoners, Supreme Leader?" Astarot asked shortly after, glancing at the four unconscious members of the Assembly of Silent Night beside him.

"I still have a use for them, so I will be taking them back with me." Vaan accepted the memory crystal and brought the unconscious Dorothy forward. "I will have to trouble you again to extract information from this person."

"It's no trouble at all, Supreme Leader." Astarot shook his head and said, "We managed to learn some vital information from the prisoners you've brought us."

"Humans have grown much stronger than we've expected. I'm afraid there are many more Rank 5 beings among humans now. However, this growth also seemed to be the work of the demons. So, it's hard to say they side with humans," Astarot added.

After Vaan read everything recorded inside the memory crystal, his knowledge of the Assembly of Silent Night's strength and world powers increased significantly.

Besides the seven witch kingdoms, there were three empires, twenty-four other kingdoms, and a hundred and eight city-states grouped into multiple alliances.

Altogether, they make up the supercontinent, Pangea.

Vaan wouldn't have realized how much information the seven witch kingdoms had kept from the public until he saw the information for himself.

In the past, the seven witch kingdoms were the most powerful forces on the Pangea supercontinent. But after three hundred years, the three empires, several other kingdoms, and a few city-states have risen to rival them in power.

For example, the three emperors were all High-level Rank 5 Aura Kings. Although they weren't as powerful as the Transcendent Witches, the standard power of their military forces eclipsed the seven witch kingdoms.

In a war between the seven witch kingdoms and the three empires without any of the Transcendent Witches and Aura Kings' involvement, the three empires would win without a doubt.

The three empires didn't just have bigger armies; their soldiers were also stronger and better equipped.

Their countries were simply more developed than the seven witch kingdoms over the past three hundred years.

However, this wasn't because the empires had better management than the seven witches. On the contrary, being patriarchal societies, they were just as bad as the seven witch kingdoms.

But at the very least, they had access to more developed countries that did.

On the other hand, the seven witch kingdoms were cut off and alienated from the rest of Pangea due to their sharing borders with the three empires.

Nevertheless, the most interesting piece of information Vaan learned was about the Holy Knight Empire's imperial family.

They were called the Bravehearts.

Moving onward, dark organizations like the Assembly of Silent Night were small in numbers, but they boasted a high number of experts.

Even if Vaan killed off two of their S-rank Witch Hunters, they still had five others on the same power level and even more A-rank Witch Hunters.

Vaan being able to decimate a third of their whole force showed how much importance the Assembly of Silent Night placed on their mission in the Sunpeak Region.

Still, the most crucial information about the Assembly of Silent Night concerned their leader, Ulrich Salazar.

The world knew there were six Devil's Contractors hiding in Pangea, and they also knew of an Ulrich Salazar. The person was a Marquis in the Holy Knight Empire and the Lord of Equinox City.

However, the world did not know Ulrich Salazar was one of the Devil's Contractors. They also did not know the same person controlled the Assembly of Silent Night.

Nevertheless, after learning the Assembly of Silent Night was backed by a Devil's Contractor, their strength became understandable.

They had the wisdom and support of Gehenna.

"It is said that Ulrich Salazar's strength is estimated to be around Peak-level Rank 5. Do you think you can defeat such a person, Lord Astarot?" Vaan asked.

"If Ulrich Salazar is purely borrowing a Great Devil's divine power to be a Peak-level Rank 5, I should be stronger, Supreme Leader. Dragons are innately stronger than their peers," Astarot stated.

In other words, they might be at the same level but not the same strength. There were more factors than just power that determined one's overall strength.

"That's good to hear," Vaan acknowledged.

Shortly after, Vaan went around the Red Dragon Clan, checking on the dragons' progress, settling some matters inside the Trial by Fire, and supplying the dragon lords with resources.

Once Vaan finished his business, he left the Red Dragon Clan with the four crippled prisoners.

Then, he packed up the black cube and killed off the prisoners shortly after, storing them inside his Heaven-Swallowing Space and saving their blood for later.

He also collected the bodies of the dead witches outside the lord's estate upon returning, but he did not summon the blue flames to seal off Sunpeak Town again.

Development and trade would stagnate if Sunpeak Town continued to be sealed off from the outside world.

"Have you finished interrogating them, Astoria and Lady Solana?" Vaan asked, seeing how Solana was viciously stepping on one of the curled-up Peak-stage Senior Witches from Dorothy's group.

"You bet we did, Sir Vaan! This bitch was part of the group that ambushed Dahlia!" Solana stated.

Chapter 387: Updating Information

Vaan had already suspected Dorothy's group's involvement when he found Dahlia's hairpin, but Solana's words turned his suspicion into a certainty.

Still, the whole group wasn't involved in Dahlia's ambush; only a few were aware of it, including the two High Witches.

"We've also procured a pile of items from their personal storage spaces. There are mostly rank-three to rank-four magical plants and magic tools among them. Still, there's even a rank-five item," Astoria mentioned.

"High Witches possessing this much wealth isn't unheard of and is even truer for flourishing lords and merchants. However, I have never seen or heard of these two from the Kingdom of Verdant Woods before."

"On top of that, they aren't even the leaders of this merchant group; they are only subordinates of the witch called Dorothy Helion. So I'm afraid they didn't come to Sunpeak Town purely for trading," Astoria added.

"I've also suspected as much," Vaan agreed with a nod before saying, "We'll know more details once we acquire the information from Dorothy."

"That said, do you know much about the Helion Merchant Guild, Astoria? For example, is the guild leader some renowned or powerful man?" Vaan asked shortly after.

"Is the guild leader of the Helion Merchant Guild a renowned or powerful man?" Not just Astoria but even Solana expressed a confused look when they heard Vaan's heard.

"You should already know the situation in the seven witch kingdoms, Vaan. Men don't have much sway here, even if they are witch descendants. The only exception is if they are the offspring of the kingdom's ruler or some very powerful and respected High Witch," Astoria replied.

"I don't remember hearing Maude Helion ever getting married or even having a partner, for that matter. That said, I don't have much contact with the Kingdom of Verdant Woods; I might be behind on the news."

"Is that so?" Vaan uttered with a thoughtful look, recalling Dorothy's threat.

The person was obviously a proud witch and had a natural disdain for men. And yet when she was backed into a corner, the person she mentioned wasn't her mother but her father.

Even if Dorothy were a hypocrite, she wouldn't talk out of her ass for no reason.

"Dorothy made it sound like she had a very powerful father. But in any case, we won't learn anything new until we receive more information," Vaan mentioned. "So we should focus on other things for now."

"How should we deal with these witches, Sir Vahn?" Solana enquired.

"Since they ambushed Dahlia, we'll let her deal with the ones involved in any way she sees fit," Vaan replied. Then, after some thought, he added, "As for the rest, it seems like a waste to kill them. They have been quite obedient."

"Perhaps, we can train them to serve us," Vaan suggested.

Solana and Astoria were skeptical of Vaan's suggestion, thinking it wouldn't be easy to acquire the witches' loyalty even if they trained them.

However, the witches didn't seem to have a strong sense of attachment to Dorothy of the Kingdom of Verdant Woods; the Peak-stage Senior Witches did not try to protect Dorothy as the Early-stage High Witches did.

They cared more about their own lives than their loyalty. As such, it was possible to use them after some training.

Coupled with Vaan's methods, it wasn't impossible to acquire their absolute loyalty.

Nevertheless, after Dahlia was called over to deal with her assailants, she simply killed them all. She didn't bother torturing them to her satisfaction.

This wasn't because she was soft and didn't want her enemies to suffer; she simply felt like it was a waste of time.

She would rather focus her energy and time on Vaan's development projects.

Seeing Dahlia's devotion, Vaan decided it would be best to raise her power with some intense training. She would be safer once she had the power to protect herself.

Still, they could only save the intense training for nighttime. There was still much to do during the day, and mana was also richer at night.

Nevertheless, after Dahlia returned to work with Aeliana, Vaan collected the bodies of the three witches she had killed.

Even without the system, he could still collect the witches' mana to upgrade his Heaven-Swallowing Space.

He wouldn't waste the mana of two Early-stage High Witches and one Peak-stage Senior Witch.

Sometime later, the group eventually dispersed.

Solana took the remaining witches from Dorothy's group to the old training ground next to train their obedience. Astoria also accompanied her at Vaan's request to ensure nothing unexpected happened.

Meanwhile, Vaan headed into the mountains not too far from Sunpeak Town and created a big cave to focus on his training.

He did not bother pursuing the remnant witch merchants that might escape Sunpeak Town during this period.

There was no need to stop the spread of information. But, more importantly, Vaan didn't want to continue obstructing traffic flow to Sunpeak Town.

No information leaving Sunpeak Town also meant no new information entering it.

After Vaan sealed himself inside the new cave, he illuminated the darkness with fire and took out the bodies of the witches in his inventory to reap his rewards.

However, his body had grown so strong that mana from Peak-stage Senior Witches and Early-stage High Witches had little effect on his body.

Thus, he simply used the mana to upgrade his Heaven-Swallowing Space, expanding its size.

Ding!

<All mana has been consumed by the Heaven-Swallowing Space>

<Your Heaven-Swallowing Space has been expanded>

Although Vaan could sense how much space had been expanded, he felt the system notifications lacked some information.

As such, he inputted some commands into the system.

Ding!

<Notification changes have been confirmed>

<Future expansion to the Heaven-Swallowing Space will be measured in metric units>

<Host's status has been updated with new information>

...

=====

[Heaven-Swallow Space (High-rank) (Upgradeable)]

[Subspace size: 514,230km³]

[Status 1: Unable to support life]

[Status 2: Uncultivated world]

[Status 3: 0 population]

[Status 4: 10,759 inventory]

=====

Since the system was bound to Vaan's soul, he did not need to explain the metric units to the system for it to understand.

Nevertheless, Vaan updated the information on his Heaven-Swallowing Space because he believed he could construct a habitable world inside one day.

Chapter 388: Achieving Equilibrium

After Vaan was done with the witches' corpses, he erased them with fire. Then, he took out the bodies of the Assembly of Silent Night's members.

Fortunately, the cave he created was large enough to accommodate them all, with more room to spare.

He settled the bodies on the edges of the cave for the time being, then made a large hole in the center with Earth Manipulation, followed by transmuting the earthen surface into metallic substances.

This was to avoid the ground soaking up the blood once he drained the bodies.

Once the preparations were ready, Vaan picked up the first body of an A-ranker, beheaded it, then placed the headless body on the edge of the empty pool, letting the blood flow out of the neck and into the pool.

Vaan repeated the process with each body until the blood pool was surrounded by headless bodies and ran out of space. Then, he started stacking the remaining headless bodies on top of the existing ones.

The additional pressure helped squeeze out more blood from the headless bodies getting pressed underneath.

As Vaan carried out his preparations, it looked like he was preparing some sort of blood ritual to summon a great demon, making him appear more demonic than any known demonic humans.

Nevertheless, Vaan did not feel any mental burden from the gory scene he created.

It was a dog-eat-dog world where strength reigned supreme. It didn't matter if his enemies were demons, witches, humans, or beasts. If they stood in his way and threatened his existence, he would remove them and use their remains in whatever way he saw fit to improve himself.

More importantly, Vaan didn't intend to waste Fuhengir's blood—or, more precisely, the Immortal Lycan's blood essence found in their bodies.

Unlike the B-rank Witch Hunters, who only had Fuhengir's blood essence, the A-rank Witch Hunters and S-rank Witch Hunters were more fortunate to have absorbed some of the Immortal Lycan's blood essence.

The A-rank Witch Hunters and S-rank Witch Hunters were able to grow more powerful than B-rank Witch Hunters as a result of the Immortal Lycan's blood essence they possessed.

Naturally, the two S-rank Witch Hunters possessed more drops of the Immortal Lycan's blood essence than the A-rank Witch Hunters.

After Vaan finished draining the hundred-odd bodies of their blood, he entered the blood pool without his clothes and soaked his whole body in the blood.

Ding!

<You have come in contact with Rank 5 Fuhengir's Blood>

<Would you like to absorb it? Y/N>

'No!' Vaan refused.

Fuhengir might be a Rank 5 Demon Wolf, but he had no interest in its bloodline nor mixing up his bloodline further.

Fuhengir's blood's only value was to stimulate the Immortal Lycan Bloodline.

Ding!

<You have come in contact with Rank 5 Fuhengir's Blood>

<Would you like to absorb it? Y/N>

'No!'

Ding!

<You have come in contact with Rank 4 Human Blood>

<Would you like to absorb it? Y/N>

'No!'

Vaan continued to reject a series of options as he soaked in the blood pool.

Out of the entire pool of human and wolvern blood, the Immortal Lycan's blood only made up a minuscule fraction of it.

However, even if he only acquired a single drop of the Immortal Lycan's blood essence per body, it would still be a fruitful harvest for him.

After all, that was at least a hundred drops of the Immortal Lycan's blood essence.

Nevertheless, the normal process took too long. It was uncertain when Vaan's body would make contact with a drop of the Immortal Lycan's blood essence in the blood pool.

Thus, he steadily raised the temperature of the blood pool to a boiling point with fire.

The inferior human blood was the first to reduce in volume after the water inside it evaporated, leaving behind a thickening blood paste.

As a result, it became easier to distinguish the human blood from Fuhengir's blood and the Immortal Lycan's blood.

Ding!

<You have come in contact with a drop of the Rank 6 Immortal Lycan's blood essence>

<Would you like to absorb it? Y/N>

'Yes!'

In a short instance, Vaan absorbed ten drops of the Immortal Lycan's blood essence as they squeezed through his pores and entered his body.

Ding!

<Ten drops of Immortal Lycan's blood essence have been acquired>

<Would you like to resume the incomplete bloodline fusion of the Fire Dragon God Bloodline and Immortal Lycan Blood? Y/N>

'Yes!' Vaan accepted.

Ding!

<Devil (10%) → Devil (15%)>

<Human (70%) → Human (65%)>

...

<Attempting bloodline fusion of the Fire Dragon God Bloodline and Immortal Lycan Blood>

<Bloodline fusion has failed>

<Equilibrium in the two bloodlines has not been achieved>

'What?' Vaan frowned.

Shortly after, he quickly commanded the system to update his race ratio measurement to two decimal places.

Ding!

=====

[Status]

«Race»

[Human (64.56%)]

[Devil (15.12%)]

[Dragon (15.32%)]

[Spirit (5.00%)]

=====

After seeing the numbers, Vaan immediately understood the problem.

The Fire Dragon God Bloodline and Immortal Lycan Bloodline were quite close to each other, but they couldn't be considered balanced.

In order to achieve a complete fusion, he needed a perfect balance between the two bloodlines.

As such, Vaan absorbed a drop of Immortal Lycan's blood essence from the blood pool. He also swallowed a drop of the Fire Dragon God's blood essence.

After he measured the changes in their two values, he absorbed another drop of each blood essence and measured the changes in values again.

He repeatedly studied the process, recorded the information, and calculated the future changes in value.

Once he gathered enough data, he finally dissected the right amount out of each drop to absorb and achieve perfect balance in the two balance.

By that point, dragon and devil bloodlines were already close to twenty percent each. Thus, he pushed for the whole number.

Ding!

<Devil (19.01%) → Devil (20.00%)>

<Dragon (19.26%) → Dragon (20.00%)>

<Human (56.73%) → Human (55.00%)>

...

Ding!

<Equilibrium in the two Divine-rank bloodlines has been achieved>

<Reattempting fusion of the two Divine-rank bloodlines>

...

Ding!

<Perfect fusion has been achieved>

<You have successfully created the complete Celestial Dragonwolf Bloodline (Divine-rank)>

<Recalibrating status information...>

...

Chapter 389: Solana's Visit

=====

[Status]

«Name»

[Vaan Raphna (Vahn Cadieux)]

«Race»

[Human (75%)]

[Dragonwolf (20%)]

[Spirit (5%)]

«Bloodline»

[Spatial Bloodline (Heaven-rank)]

[Celestial Dragonwolf Bloodline (Divine-rank)]

«Age»

[20 (Body), 31 (Soul)]

[Estimated Lifespan: 6200 – 11200 years]

«Unique Physique»

[Heaven-Swallowing Physique (Heaven-rank) (Upgradeable)]

[Celestial Dragonwolf Physique (Low-rank) (Upgradeable)]

«Sub-physique»

[Earth Spirit Body (Low-rank) (Upgradeable)]

[Fire Spirit Body (Mid-rank) (Upgradeable)]

«Cultivation»

Aura Circulation Method: The Way of the Formless Dragon (High-rank)

Cultivation Level: Peak Rank 4 Aura Lord

Aura Power: 1050

Special Trait: Dragon Aura

...

Soul Trait: Dragon

Soul Cultivation Method: N/A

Cultivation Level: Demigod Rank

Soul Strength: 5000

...

«Law»

Law Comprehension Method: N/A

Fire Law: 5%

...

«Skills»

[Expand]

«Abilities»

[Expand]

...

=====

«Physical Attributes»

[800 Defense] [Mid-level Rank 4] [1050 Aura Power] [Total Defense: 1850 (Mid-level Rank 5)]

[1100 Strength] [Peak-level Rank 4] [1050 Aura Power] [Total Strength: 2150 (Mid-level Rank 5)]

[450 Speed] [Low-level Rank 3] [1050 Aura Power] [Total Speed: 1500 (Low-level Rank 5)]

=====

«Celestial Dragonwolf Transformation»

Effect: 50% (↑20%) base physical attributes increase.

[800 → 1200 Defense (↑400)] [Mid-level Rank 4 → Low-level Rank 5] [1050 Aura Power] [Total Defense: 1850 → 2250 (↑400) (Mid-level Rank 5 → High-level Rank 5)]

[1100 → 1650 Strength (↑550)] [Peak-level Rank 4 → Low-level Rank 5] [1050 Aura Power] [Total Strength: 2250 → 2700 (↑550) (High-level Rank 5 → Early Demigod)]

[450 → 675 Speed (↑225)] [High-level Rank 3 → Low-level Rank 4] [1050 Aura Power] [Total Speed: 1500 → 1725 (↑225) (Mid-level Rank 5)]

Dragonwolf Scale Armament: (Mid-level Rank 5 → High-level Rank 5 defensive power)
(Durability: 100%)

Enhanced Dragonwolf Claws: (Mid-level Rank 5 → High-level Rank 5 offensive power)
(Durability: 100%)

=====

«Elemental Affinity»

[Earth: 55%]

[Wind: 13%]

[Lightning: 12%]

[Light: 5%]

[Wood: 25%]

[Fire: 80%]

=====

After the Fire Dragon God Bloodline and Immortal Lycan Bloodline were perfectly fused, Vaan lost both Divine-rank bloodlines and their physiques.

However, in return, he completed the Celestial Dragonwolf Bloodline and Celestial Dragonwolf Physique. He also regained the ability to use Celestial Dragonwolf Transformation.

Even the Celestial Dragonwolf's divine ability, the Blessing of the Sun and Moon, had been enhanced, reaching ten percent blessing from only one percent.

Furthermore, the ten percent blessing was further amplified by fifty percent due to the effect of the Celestial Dragonwolf Physique, allowing his sunlight and moonlight blessing to reach a total of fifteen percent.

In other words, he would receive an additional fifteen percent increase in his base physical capabilities during daytime and nighttime, wherever sunlight and moonlight reached.

The benefits of the Celestial Dragonwolf Bloodline were clear to see.

If Vaan could retain such a fixed amount of blessings, even at higher ranks, he would always have an advantage over other beings at the same power level.

Nevertheless, completing his objective, Vaan collected the leftover Immortal Lycan's blood essence and stored it in a potion bottle.

He also did the same for Fuhengir's blood essence

After all, it was still the blood essence of a powerful rank-five demon wolf. He might not have a use for it, but it didn't hurt to hoard it. Perhaps, it could be useful in the future.

As for the gooey human blood, he had no use for it.

Vaan stepped out of the blood pool, which had become a blood paste, and cleansed his bare body in a veil of flames. All the dried sweat, blood paste, and impurities stuck to the surface of his skin were purged in an instant before he donned a new set of dragon silk clothes.

By the time Vaan set fire to the cave, erasing everything else inside, and then returned to Sunpeak Town, it was already late into the night.

'It seems the bloodline fusion process took longer than I anticipated,' Vaan thought as he glanced up at the night sky.

He had lost track of time while undergoing the bloodline fusion process inside the cave.

Nevertheless, on his way back, he habitually swept the entire Sunpeak Town with his Omni-Sense to check on its situation, which seemed to have calmed down a lot.

Everyone appeared to have gone to bed and didn't stay up plotting anything, including all the ladies in the lord's estate.

Out of everyone sleeping inside the lord's estate, Dahlia was the only one that didn't sleep on a bed. Instead, she appeared to have fallen asleep while reviewing some building blueprints by her study desk.

Vaan paid her room a visit first upon his return. He placed her hairpin on her desk before he gently picked her up, tucked her into bed, and then left.

Dahlia did not wake up at all, which showed she must have been quite tired.

Nevertheless, after leaving her room, Vaan picked a spare room to use. He intended to sort through his inventory of rank-four and rank-five items and modify them to suit the ladies.

Granting them better gear and weapons would boost their strength and provide some protection.

Still, he also understood that valuable items would only attract greed and danger instead. As such, he planned to apply camouflaging effects to the gear and weapons.

However, Vaan didn't get very far into his work. He only took out a few items from his Heaven-Swallowing Space before a visitor knocked on his door.

As such, he could only put his stuff and answer the door.

"Aren't you too eager, Lady Solana?" Vaan asked after opening the door. Then, he said, "I know we have a promise, but you could have waited until you got some proper rest. You haven't gotten much chance to rest the past few weeks, no?"

"Kukuku, there's no time to wait, Sir Vahn. The early bird gets the worm," Solana softly chuckled before saying, "If I wait, it's hard to say when I will get another chance like this. I know my daughter is head over heels for you."

"There's also Lady Dahlia and Headmaster Astoria. Young Cyrena also seems to be interested. You have a whole line of women interested in you, Sir Vahn. If I waited, when would I get my turn?"

"Fair enough," Vaan acknowledged Solana's point with a nod before he asked her confidently with a smile, "But who did you say is a worm?"

"I was talking about this worm—"

Solana boldly grabbed Vaan's groin area with a playful look when she suddenly retracted her hand the next instant out of fright, startled by what she felt.

"W-Why does it feel so big?"

Chapter 390: Solana's Night

"If you're already this surprised by the sleeping dragon, won't you run once it wakes up?" Vaan casually asked amusedly.

However, Solana became even more startled after hearing him.

"What? That's still its sleeping state?" Solana softly cried, subconsciously taking a step back at the same time. She may have made a mistake.

Nevertheless, it was too late for her to leave. Vaan grabbed her wrist and pulled her inside, shutting the door shortly after.

"Since you already came to play, don't think about leaving so soon, Lady Solana," Vaan chuckled, picking her up and carrying her over to the bed. "I'll make sure you'll be a High Witch by morning."

"W-Wait..." Solana uttered in resistance, but her body felt weak.

Vaan's casual touches sent electrifying yet delightful sensations running throughout her body. It felt so good; it was numbing.

Solana felt like her body's switch had been turned on, making her hypersensitive. Yet at the same time, she wondered if it was because she hadn't experienced a man's touch in a long time.

Nevertheless, after Vaan laid her down gently on the bed, Solana felt her heart racing like a young maiden again. She was strangely nervous and excited at the same time.

However, she shook her head and mustered her strength to resist Vaan's gentle care.

Although Solana could already tell Vaan was highly skilled in the pleasure arts, she didn't come to his room to be tended like a flower.

"I said wait," Solana uttered with a slightly firmer voice.

After Vaan heard that, he stopped. With his extensive experience and skill, he did not need to force himself on Solana or doubt his skill.

Solana didn't want him to stop because she was unwilling. If that were true, she wouldn't have paid him a visit in the dark of the night.

"Let me take the lead," Solana requested wishfully. "I know you're skilled, but I want to be the one to serve you. So just lay down and let me take care of the rest."

"Alright," Vaan agreed with a slight smile, understanding Solana's intention.

Solana's wish was quite simple; she wanted to show her appreciation and gratitude.

Vaan didn't just save her; he also cured her daughter. Giving him the whole of Sunpeak Town still wouldn't be enough to repay such acts of kindness.

As such, servicing Vaan was hardly enough to repay him at all. Still, she could repay it slowly by doing things within her capabilities, one step at a time.

After Vaan laid down on the bed with both hands resting behind his head, Solana pulled down his pants and exposed his sleeping dragon.

Gulp!

Solana swallowed hard on her saliva.

The seven witch kingdoms and various countries outside had all conducted different research on ways to increase humanity's crippling fertility. Studying the size of a man's tool was a byproduct of such research.

As such, even though Solana didn't have many partners during her young days, she still knew what was considered average and big since she had read about the research.

Vaan's tool was definitely on the bigger side—if not the biggest. And yet, this was only its sleeping state.

Solana was a little scared to put such a thing inside her.

Could she even handle it?

Nevertheless, she could only take things one step at a time as she worked up her courage. She couldn't let Vaan's impressive size discourage her.

Meanwhile, Vaan studied Solana's expression and could vaguely guess her thoughts.

To begin with, he was already well-endowed in his nether region. But after various strengthening and improvements to his physique, his height, weight, and little brother had also grown proportional to his growth.

"Are you just going to stare, Lady Solana?" Vaan asked amusedly.

"Ahem," Solana coughed dryly, snapping out of her own thoughts, then said, "I will start now."

Shortly after, Solana softly stroked Vaan's sleeping dragon and played with it, attempting to excite and wake it up. But even after several dozen strokes, the sleeping dragon refused to wake up.

Solana felt a blow to her confidence.

She wasn't exactly skilled like top masters in the field, but she wasn't so inexperienced that she didn't know how to pleasure a man and make him excited.

That said, whether it was Vaan's tool or the person himself, they weren't exactly ordinary.

Solana bit her lips, realizing that perhaps her hands weren't good enough. Thus, she used her tongue, licking around the tip and lubricating the head of the dragon before taking it deep into her mouth.

Several minutes passed, but Vaan's rod only became a little harder.

Solana almost felt defeated, seeing how she couldn't even fully wake up the sleeping dragon. She wondered if she was just lacking in charms.

Was she not attractive anymore since she became a mother? It's not like her appearance changed much in the past few hundred years.

Then, was she just out of touch?

Nevertheless, Solana stubbornly continued to please Vaan's sleeping dragon, unwilling to give up. She also stripped off all her clothes and used her voluptuous figure to increase her attraction.

She even played with other parts of Vaan's body to make him feel good.

Considering how diligent Solana was working to please Vaan, he decided not to tease her anymore as it was discourteous towards her good intentions.

After Vaan allowed blood to rush down to his nether region, the sleeping dragon finally woke up.

Roar!

Vaan's large rod grew in size, becoming stiff and straight from its semi-limp state. It was like a dragon raising its head to make a mighty roar, albeit silently.

Its fully grown state was majestic and fearsome. Solana would have been intimidated earlier, but now, she could only feel excitement and joy, ecstatic that her hard work had finally paid off.

"You've worked hard, Lady Solana. Let me reward you now," Vaan said with a soft chuckle before he suddenly flipped her over and reversed their positions. "You've done more than enough."

"Wait, Vahn. I can keep going. No—Ooohhh—!"

Solana was given no time to resist before Vaan slid his bulging hot rod into her already slopping wet honey cave.

Even though the bulging hot rod threatened to tear her delicate cave apart, the surge of euphoria overwhelmed any pain she felt and sent her mind off into a dreamy world of pleasure.

...

If Vaan had let Solana pleasure him all night, there wouldn't be any chance for him to help her advance.