

## The Witch 51

### Chapter 51: Curse of the Purple Umbala

By luck, Vaan didn't mean he made a mistake in flirting with Lady Solana. Vaan knew Lady Solana was a Senior Witch thanks to his Magic Vision.

Furthermore, Vaan was adept at reading people's expressions and subtle body movements, allowing him to understand when a person is open or closed to more intimate interactions.

And from their short interaction, Vaan had learned that Lady Solana was open to flirting but closed to everything else beyond that.

Nevertheless, Vaan didn't always need to flirt with the intention of bedding a woman.

Vaan could also flirt to improve his impression and approachability, thereby building a closer relationship and engaging in topics that wouldn't be privy to strangers normally.

In other words, collect information.

Of course, the prerequisite is knowing when a person is open to flirting or not. Otherwise, it will have the opposite effect.

Lady Solana was someone who sashays her plump rear when she walked.

That's how Vaan knew he could flirt with her.

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A short while later, Lady Solana brought back a tray holding three mugs of mead before placing the drink on the table in front of each person.

Then, Lady Solana held the empty tray with both hands and stood at the side.

"Please take a seat, Lady Solana. It'll be easier for us to chat that way," Vaan gestured to the empty seats on the opposite of the table.

"Then, I will take you up on that offer, Handsome," Lady Solana replied with a smile and took her seat. Then, she mentioned, "I see you have already learned my name, dear customers."

"Thanks to that gentleman over there," Vaan raised his mug to the beer-bellied man seated two tables away from them.

The beer-bellied man returned the gesture with his own mug.

"Haha, your welcome, Little Brother. Just don't start saying anything weird about me to Lady Solana and getting me in trouble," the beer-bellied man chuckled and no longer bothered them.

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"Wow, this is tasty!" Lillias exclaimed after taking a sip of the mead.

"The food is delicious, and the drink is tasty. No wonder this place is the best in town," Linetta confirmed with her own drink before sighing, "However, it's a pity that not many people visit Sunpeak Town. Otherwise, the business would be blooming."

"Shall we talk more about this curse, Lady Solana? Can you tell us all about it?" Vaan brought up the topic of their interest.

"Of course," Lady Solana agreed with a calm nod.

Shortly after, Lady Solana took a moment to gather her thoughts.

"It started a few years ago, when my daughter, Aeliana, the Lord of Sunpeak Town, was still alive. There was no curse back then—"

"Wah—!" Lillias quickly covered her mouth in surprise.

The two Delarosa Sisters quickly understood why Lady Solana could enjoy such respect in Sunpeak Town despite just being an innkeeper who cannot use magic.

Lady Solana was the mother of the Lord of Sunpeak Town. In other words, Lady Solana was also the previous Lord of Sunpeak before she stepped down for her daughter.

Many people who frequent Golden Peacock Inn are Lady Solana's old friends, customers, and people loyal to her.

"Sorry about my little sister's interruption," Linetta apologized in Lillias's stead before requesting Lady Solana to continue, "Please continue, Lady Solana."

Lady Solana nodded.

"As you all know, there's a big mountain between Sunpeak Town and Redpine City by the name Red Goblin Mountain. Besides goblins and hobgoblins, the mountain also had a goblin shaman."

"This goblin shaman managed to cultivate a magic flower that was rumored to be capable of greatly enhancing a witch's mana capacity. As such, both my daughter and Lord Helia of Redpine City were both attracted by the rumor."

"However, the goblins of Red Goblin Mountain have always been a problem for both Sunpeak Town and Redpine City. No matter how many goblins and hobgoblins are killed, their numbers are seemingly endless."

"Most people won't know this since there are only stragglers outside the mountain from time to time. However, deep inside Red Goblin Mountain is a dungeon that no one knows the extent of. It's a bottomless pit of the unknown, waiting for people to explore."

"Although the danger was equally great, this didn't stop my daughter and Lord Helia from trying their luck."

"And you didn't try to stop Lord Aeliana from going, Lady Solana?" Lillias wondered with doubt.

"At the time, I didn't think much about the danger of Red Goblin Mountain. After all, the magic flower was reportedly cultivated in the outermost regions of the goblin dungeon," Lady Solana replied with a sigh.

"Furthermore, my daughter and Lord Helia led countless True Witches and Aura Masters to sweep the mountain for the magic flower, and they even succeeded. They found the magic flower and slew the goblin shaman for it."

"Of course, there was only one magic flower but two competitors. Thus, my daughter and Lord Helia competed for it. In the end, my daughter won and brought the magic flower back..."

Lady Solana fell silent upon reaching this point in the story.

"And then?" Lillias asked, eagerly anticipating what happened next.

Lillias found it strange that no one recorded such a big event down in a book to spread the tale. Unless they visited the town and heard from a local, they wouldn't have known about such an event.

"And that's when everything started to go wrong," Lady Solana stated with a sad look.

"My daughter showed me the magic flower, and I even confirmed the rich mana concentrated inside the magic flower. I was so proud of her back then. Who knew that everything would be turned upside down overnight..."

"What happened?" Linetta asked.

"My daughter was impatient with success. She didn't wait for a specialist to review the magic flower and consumed it directly. The magic flower indeed increased her mana capacity. However, she couldn't control it."

"Her mana went berserk and transformed her into a plant-type abomination that looked like a big purple rose. The pollen my poor Aeliana spread across Sunpeak Town that day is the source of our curse today."

"As such, we call it the Curse of the Purple Umbala," Lady Solana said with a sad look as she reminisced the memories.

"And what became of Lady Aeliana in the end?" Linetta asked shortly after.

However, Lady Solana didn't answer.

Chapter 52: Vaan's Doubts

Lady Solana's silence made Vaan narrow his eyes.

There were several possibilities for Lady Solana's silence. However, only two possibilities stood out on the list.

The first possibility is that Lady Solana did not want to recall the sad memory of killing her daughter or share it with others.

The second possibility is that Lady Aeliana is still alive, but Lady Solana doesn't want anyone to know about it.

According to the clues Vaan had gathered, of these two possibilities, the second possibility had a higher probability of being true.

"Lady Aeliana was said to be the youngest Senior Witch to become a lord. This created quite a stir back then, and you were the heart of people's criticism, weren't you, Lady Solana?" Vaan asked.

Lady Solana silently nodded while blaming herself for pushing such heavy responsibilities onto her daughter too early.

Lady Solana believed the tragedy was a result of her poor choice back then.

"It wouldn't be strange for a young witch to be drunk on success and make rash choices – is what others probably thought," Vaan said.

"Nevertheless, they wouldn't be wrong to think so," Vaan continued and said, "Lady Aeliana most likely wanted to quickly prove to people that Lady Solana's choice in making her the lord was not wrong."

"However, there are some dubious points in your story, Lady Solana. I wonder if you don't mind clearing my doubts?" Vaan inquired.

Linetta and Lillias glanced at Vaan, wondering which point in the story was dubious to him.

It wasn't obvious at first, as they were swayed by the flow of Lady Solana's storytelling. But when Linetta thought back on the story, she quickly found one dubious point.

On the other hand, Lillias was still wracking her brain in confusion.

"Of course, this is why we are chatting," Lady Solana agreed with a nod before gesturing to Vaan, "Please ask away. I will answer to the best of my ability."

"My first doubt is the rumors of the magic flower," Vaan mentioned.

"Even if the magic flower could increase a person's mana capacity, how did people find out about this? Someone had to appraise the magic flower up close to learn its true properties. Otherwise, it is just a blind rumor at best."

"However, this blind rumor managed to mobilize two lords and numerous subordinates to search for it. Thus, there must be some validity or truth to the rumor. But then, this raises another question."

"If someone indeed appraised the magic flower, why didn't that person take the magic flower for themselves? Why go through the trouble of spreading the rumor? Surely not to pass the opportunity on to others, right?"

"Under these conditions, it makes me doubt the person's motives in spreading the rumor. And even worse, it makes me doubt the true properties of the magic flower," Vaan raised his points.

Lady Solana didn't think much about Vaan's doubts at first.

But after hearing Vaan talk, Lady Solana could not help but start to think that her daughter had fallen for someone's wicked scheme.

Lady Solana was visibly shaken by the possibility.

Unless someone was meticulous, they might not have noticed the points Vaan raised.

Even Linetta was astonished.

It wasn't the same dubious point that she had found.

Furthermore, it was clear that Vaan had found more than one dubious point in the story, according to his words.

Linetta was curious how Vaan's mind works.

"Looking at Lady Solana's reaction, I will boldly assume that you don't have an answer to the questions I raised. I will continue to raise my other doubts, Lady Solana," Vaan said.

"Sorry... This is quite the shock for me," Lady Solana replied with a forced smile before fixing her expression. "Please continue. I want to hear your other doubts."

"My other doubt would be the competition between Lady Aeliana and Lady Helia," Vaan stated.

"Lady Aeliana is a newly-ascended Senior Witch, while Lady Helia is someone who can be considered as your peer. I don't want to discredit Lady Aeliana's talents. However, it is baffling to hear Lady Helia losing to Lady Aeliana in a duel."

"I can only think that Lady Helia lost to Lady Aeliana on purpose. As for a reason why; I am not privy to the details, nor is it my place to speak," Vaan stated.

Lady Solana nodded.

"Lady Helia isn't a name that we can utter carelessly. You can be charged for disrespecting or defaming a lord if rumors spread. Let us end this topic here," Lady Solana calmly stated.

However, doubts had already sprouted in Lady Solana's heart.

Lady Solana suspected someone had plotted against her daughter. And Lady Helia must have something to do with this someone—or she could be the mastermind herself!

But even Lady Solana understood that; she could not guess what the person could gain from this.

"Can you tell us more about the curse, Lady Solana? Who else does it affect? Or is it limited to Sunpeak Town?" Linetta inquired.

"The Curse of the Purple Umbala is limited to the regions hit by the spores. This includes Sunpeak Town and roughly five miles to ten miles of its surroundings. Everyone inside this spore domain will not be able to use magic or aura."

"However, you will all be fine if you leave the spore domain within three days," Lady Solana stated.

"What happens if we stay for longer than three days?" Lillias asked.

"If you stay inside the spore domain for more than three days, you will contract the curse. When that happens, Lady Helia will forbid you from leaving Sunpeak Town like everyone else," Lady Solana answered.

"Everyone fears the Curse of the Purple Umbala will spread to other cities, huh?" Vaan rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"The spores of this Curse of the Purple Umbala interfere with magic but don't directly involve magic. If we think about it, it's closer to an illness than an actual curse..."

"Anyhow, on the topic of abominations, I wonder if Lady Solana recently heard of a Wyvern-type Abomination flying past this region?" Vaan inquired.

This is what he really wanted to know.

## Chapter 53: Night Visit

"Wyvern-type Abomination, huh? Indeed I have heard and seen one such thing flying over the town the other day," Lady Solana affirmed.

"Though, I don't know whether it had flown past Red Goblin Mountain or found refuge on the mountain. You shouldn't have any problem if the thing left. But if there's any chance it stayed on the mountain, you should all take extra precaution while traveling to the next city."

"Nevertheless, the sudden interest in the Wyvern-type Abomination?" Lady Solana asked curiously after advising them.

Linetta and Lillias also glanced over with curious looks.

Nevertheless, Vaan had anticipated the chance of such a question being asked. His expression remained unchanged, calm as it was.

"The Wyvern-type Abomination came from Blackmoon City, which we came from, and headed northward. I asked out of precaution for potential dangers on the road that we may need to consider," Vaan calmly said.

"Furthermore, Wyvern-type Abominations are all classified as B-rank threats. Thus, it's definitely not something we can ignore considering our destinations require just to head in the same direction, north."

"That makes a lot of sense," Lady Solana nodded and said, "Sunpeak Town did receive the warning from Blackmoon Academy ahead of time."

"Nevertheless, I'm surprised that this question wasn't raised by one of you two ladies. Instead, it was raised by your paramour. How envious it is to have such a meticulous person about travel safety."

"If I was traveling with this young man, I'd feel quite safe and secured," Lady Solana chuckled softly.

Linetta and Lillias could not refute Lady Solana's words, nor did they need to.

Vaan did give them such a sense of security.

"Vaan isn't our paramour... at least, not mine yet," Lillias said quietly, while Linetta didn't even bother trying to correct such a simple misunderstanding.

"Oh? My apologies. It certainly seemed that way. Anyhow, I think you have all learned everything you needed to know about Sunpeak Town. I should get back to work now. It was a good chat," Lady Solana stated as she got up from her seat.

"Indeed it was," Vaan nodded and said, "Also, we're sorry for having you recall some unpleasant memories. If there's another chance, I would like to chat with you again."

As Vaan said that, he gave Lady Solana an eye signal that implied there was more he wanted to talk to her about and blinked once, followed by another two blinks after a short pause in between.

Lady Solana was baffled at first but then silently nodded with a smile.

"Please enjoy your meals while they are still warm," Lady Solana stated before bidding her leave.

After Linetta and Lillias saw Lady Solana off, they resumed their meals with Vaan.

Just as they finished and intended to retire to their rooms, Captain Rhys and the rest of the escort group finished their errands and entered the inn.

"There you are, my Lady. Are you planning on staying here for the night?" Captain Rhys inquired.

"That's right," Linetta calmly nodded and said, "We've already eaten, so we'll be retiring to our rooms first. Don't forget about our schedule."

"Understood, my Lady," Captain Rhys nodded before bidding them goodnight.

As Vaan walked past Captain Rhys, he patted him on the shoulders and casually said, "Enjoy the night, Brother Rhys. But don't party too hard. Otherwise, it might be difficult to get up in the morning."

"Alright," Captain Rhys nodded with a smile, not putting too much thought into Vaan's words, and told the young warriors to grab themselves some drinks and enjoy themselves.

However, after Captain Rhys grabbed his own drink and meal and sat, he was suddenly bugged by Vaan's words.

Their schedule was to leave the town at midday. Why did Vaan need to mention the morning?

After some thought, Captain Rhys decided not to drink too much that night.

"Captain, why aren't you drinking much tonight? This isn't like you," a young warrior mentioned.

"Haha..." Captain Rhys chuckled lightly before saying, "You, young lads, should just enjoy yourselves and not worry about me. I'm just getting old."

"Besides, we are still on the job. It won't be too late to let loose once we complete our escort," Captain Rhys stated.

The young warriors felt like their captain spoke a lot of sense.

However, they had just survived a dangerous journey. As such, they decided it was fine, even if they just enjoyed themselves a little bit.

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Near the east gate that connects to the Goblin's Road, Old Merchant Ronnie and his group settled their accommodation at Rainy Bell Inn.

While Old Ronnie had lost interest in Linetta's group after finding out they didn't have noble backgrounds, it was also true when he said he wanted to travel with them for safety.

As such, he chose the closest inn to the east gate in case he missed them.

"Sleep early, everyone. We may need to get up early," Old Ronnie said to his people.

"Do we really need to? Didn't that escort group say they were leaving the east gate at midday? Surely, we can sleep in a bit," a group member mentioned.

"Well, the two witches didn't seem all that interested in our small merchant group. If they decide to leave earlier, wouldn't we be forced to take Goblin's Road by ourselves?" Old Ronnie stated.

"Oh, that makes sense..."

"So sleep early."

"Understood."

Shortly after, the small merchant group's people split up, each retiring to their own room.

After Old Ronnie retired to his room, he tucked himself into bed to sleep right away. His unfit body was ill-suited for long-distance travels. Thus, he was easily tired compared to other people.

But as soon as Old Ronnie closed his eyes, he suddenly heard the windows creak, and a gust of wind blew into the room.

His brows furrowed before Old Ronnie reopened his eyes unwillingly.

However, a blurred shadow immediately dashed over, covering his mouth and pressing a sharp dagger at his throat.

"I have a few questions to ask you. If you answer them obediently, I will let you live and may even reward you. However, if you don't and try to scream for help... Well, you can guess what will happen."

"Nod your head if you understand," the black-clothed figure stated.

Old Ronnie nodded his head fearfully.

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## Chapter 54: Night Visit (2)

Back in Golden Peacock Inn, Captain Rhys finished his meal and drink and intended to book himself a room.

However, all the available rooms in Golden Peacock Inn had been occupied. Vaan and the two Delarosa sisters had taken the last two rooms.

"The rooms are booked out, huh? I should have figured. No place is better than Golden Peacock Inn when it comes to food, drinks, and even security," Captain Rhys rubbed his forehead wryly.

"I apologize for the inconvenience, Esteemed Customer," Lady Solana curtsied with a forced smile.

"Nothing to apologize for, Lady Solana. Besides, I don't dare to accept the apology of a Sword Master such as yourself," Captain Rhys waved his hand noncommittally and said, "I'll just find another inn to stay the night."

"Thank you for your understanding, Esteemed Customer," Lady Solana said.

Shortly after Captain Rhys bid farewell, he returned to his young warriors' table.

"Why did you return, Captain? Did you change your mind and decide to join us for more drinks?" Caelan asked.

"I'll just grab one drink, but that's not the main reason," Captain Rhys shook his head and said, "The rooms are booked out here, so we will have to find another place to stay the night."

"Ah, bummers. I knew we should have settled our accommodation first," another young warrior said.

"With what money? The money we just earned by selling the beast carcasses at the butcher stores?" Caelan retorted before adding, "We wouldn't have luck booking a room for everyone anyway."

"True that. I guess it can't be helped. Let us continue to drink. The last one to hold it is the winner," another younger said while raising her mug of mead.

Nevertheless, after Captain Rhys finished his second mug of mead, he retired to another inn.

On the other hand, the young warriors continued to compete in their drinking game. As they downed one mug after another, they subconsciously shook their feet to hold their bladder.

In the end, Caelan was the first to be defeated.

"I'm out. I can't hold it anymore. I'ma piss and retire for the night. Later, boys."

After throwing out those words, Caelan immediately rushed to the restroom to relieve himself. He enjoyed a brief period of bliss before washing his hands and finding the next nearest inn to stay the night.

Little did Caelan know, another person was hidden in the room with him.

As soon as Caelan crashed into bed and closed his eyes, the black-clothed figure exited his stealth and snuck upon him with a dagger while pressing his head down into the pillow and preventing him from shouting.

However, not only could Caelan not shout, he couldn't breathe either.

"If you don't want to die, you will answer my questions. Comply, and you will live. However, if you shout, you will die. If you run, you will die. And if you resist, you will also die. Is that understood?" the black-clothed figure stated.

Caelan immediately stopped struggling and nodded his head compliantly

Shortly after, the black-clothed figure released his pressure on Caelan's head, allowing him to lift his head from the pillow and gasp for air.

"If you turn around, you will also die," the black-clothed figure added.

Caelan's body immediately froze with his hands raised in surrender. Fear gripped his heart at the possibility of dying at any moment.

"What do you want to know? I will tell you everything you want to know. Please spare my life. I will even cooperate if you want to kill someone," Caelan pleaded with a desperate look.

"Oh? You'll cooperate with us to kill? Even if our targets are young witches?" the black-clothed figure asked intriguingly.

"Yes! My life is more important than theirs," Caelan declared.

"Interesting," the black-clothed figure rubbed his chin thoughtfully without dropping his guard before he asked, "Then tell me, where is your escort group headed with the two witches? What is your schedule?"

"Lady Linette and Lillias are headed for capital to seek a Healing-type High Witch," Caelan answered.

"However, we won't be taking Golbin's Road to the next city like most people. Instead, we are taking the Hobgoblin's Road at midday tomorrow."

"Oh? Why Hobgoblin's Road? I heard you were taking Goblin's Road at midday with a small merchant group, though? Are you trying to fool me? Do you want to die?" the black-clothed figure threatened.

Caelan's body trembled with fear.

"Not at all, Sir Assassin!" Caelan quickly denied the accusation.

"It was something I overheard when the witches were talking with Vaan. They are aware that assassins are targeting them. As such, they decided to take the more dangerous path to Redpine City despite telling the small merchant group otherwise."

"This was to throw Sir Assassin off track. Should you secretly interrogate the merchant, you would have obtained the wrong information and been misled into setting up a vain ambush in Goblin's Road, which is also ideal for ambushes."

"However, on Hobgoblin's Road, it's a highland path with little obstacles, which isn't ideal for ambushes. This is why they decided to take Hobgoblin's Road despite its increased level of danger."

Caelan spilled everything he knew.

"Interesting. Although it's a well-thought-out plan, how do I know that you are not lying to me?" the black-clothed figure pressed further.

Despite being half-convinced, he didn't want to be careless.

"That is because I don't dare to gamble with my life in front of a commissioned assassin, Sir," Caelan stated.

"Furthermore, I have some grievances with the witches. Some of my brothers had indirectly or directly died due to Lady Linette."

"So if you have any method to kill the witches without getting caught, I am willing to cooperate with you and make your job easier, Sir," Caelan declared.

"Kekeke, now this is very interesting," the black-clothed assassin chuckled eerily before saying, "But why do I feel like you are willing to cooperate because of another reason besides your fear for your life and revenge?"

"This... This is because..." Caelan stuttered.

It was not easy to hide his greedy intentions from a skilled assassin.

Chapter 55: Night Visit (3)

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Shortly after Vaan and the two Delarosa sisters headed towards their rooms, Linetta dumped Lillias in the double bedroom before dragging Vaan out with her.

"You can sleep first, Lillias. Don't wait for me."

"Sister, you have no sense of loyalty! How can you ditch your own blood sister for a man you just know?! I know Vaan is amazing, but... Ugh, he is too amazing...!"

Lillias squatted on the ground inside the double bedroom right by the door, feeling depressed.

If only she wasn't born with a damaged magic circuit, she wouldn't be missing out on so many fun things with Vaan.

"Just stay in this room for now. I will join you later when I'm done. Kids should stay out of adult matters," Linetta said with a soft chuckle.

However, Lillias immediately rolled her eyes.

"Who are you calling a kid?! I'm already eighteen! Not to mention thirteen is still the age of adulthood in many countries!"

"No matter how old you are, you'll still be my kid sister."

Linetta softly chuckled as she heard Lillias throw a tantrum on the other side of the door.

Nevertheless, Linetta quickly dragged Vaan into the single bedroom next door and locked the door behind them.

In the next moment, Linetta threw herself onto Vaan, causing Vaan to fall back and crash on the soft single bed with Linetta on top of him.

She immediately started kissing him impatiently while undoing the lace strap on her top and removing her dress.

Afterward, her hands reached down for Vaan's belt and undid his buttons, removing her clothes before feeling his warmth through their bare body contact.

Her kisses, while still carrying a hint of inexperience, was intense and passionate.

Vaan guided her with his tongue, and they soon enjoyed a sensual and stimulating kiss that left Linetta breathing haggardly with a quickened heartbeat.

He flipped her over, reversing their positions with himself on top before meeting her tender gaze full of desire and impatience.

Shortly after, Vaan worked his magic on Linetta's soft body, full of warmth, as he made his way down to her honey pot that was already oozing in love nectar.

As such, he decided to skip the additional foreplay and inserted his hard sword into her wet sheath with a single thrust, causing Linetta's body to quiver with joy.

"Ahn~!" Linetta's soft, seductive voice echoed throughout the room.

Her arms tightened around Vaan's neck, pulling his face into her bosom.

Vaan immediately took that chance to attack her supple twin peaks with his tongue, sending another wave of pleasure through her body.

They battled on the bed for seven rounds, each with a different position and increasing intensity, causing the bed to creak louder and louder as its four legs shook—almost like they were clinging onto dear life, not wanting to snap apart.

Eventually, it managed to pull through and not become a casualty of the couple's battle as the motion died down.

Linetta lay in bed with her head resting on Vaan's chest and arms around his body; satisfaction and bliss hung on her still-red face.

"Thank you for the treat. I will miss these moments when we part ways," Linetta softly said while drawing circles on Vaan's chest. "Are you sure you don't want to follow me to the Capital?"

"Yeah, I plan to stay in Redpine City for a few days. However, you don't need to feel disappointed, my Lady. We will eventually meet again in the Capital, so don't feel too down by a momentary separation," Vaan said.

"However, if you're going to miss me that much, keep me close to your heart until we meet again. As they say, distance makes the heart grow fonder."

"I'll be disappointed if you find another man to ease your loneliness during our separation," Vaan added.

Linetta smirked at his words and said, "If you're going to feel jealous about something like that, you should just follow me to the Capital. That way, I won't have any reason to look for anyone else."

Though she said that, the thought didn't cross her mind.

It'd be difficult to find another person as skilled as Vaan in the art of pleasuring. She would only be disappointed and unsatisfied if she tried to settle for someone with sub-par skills in the art of pleasuring.

"As much as I would like to, I still have things I wish to do in Redpine City," Vaan said regretfully.

"Well, let's leave it at that. I won't force you to come with me. But do know that I will be waiting for you and won't look for anyone else," Linetta said determinedly before adding, "It's been a short time, but I think I like you very much."

Linetta suddenly got up from the bed and said, "Anyhow, we still have some time together until we have to part at Redpine City. I will go back to sleep with my sister now."

Without giving Vaan the chance to reply, Linetta quickly grabbed her clothes and darted out of the room with a red face the next moment, feeling too embarrassed to stay.

After Linetta was gone, silence returned to the room as Vaan enjoyed the single bedroom to himself.

"Haiz, even I fear my charms sometimes," Vaan casually commented.

"Oh, I didn't know you were such a narcissist," Lady Solana suddenly spoke with a calm smile shortly after entering the room. "We're finally alone now."

"That, we are," Vaan calmly nodded.

Despite being naked in front of Lady Solana, Vaan remained nonchalant as if he had no shame and allowed her to look to her heart's content.

Lady Solana had to silently admit that Vaan's tool was rather impressive.

"If you're suddenly curious, I can show you my skills, my Lady," Vaan said teasingly, causing Lady Solana to snap out of it.

"Ahem," Lady Solana coughed and solemnly said, "If you only called me here for this, then I'll be mad. You know that, right?"

"Of course," Vaan replied as his casual expression turned serious. He quickly got up and dressed before they could continue to talk.

"And so? What else did you want to talk to me about? That's what your signal was for, was it not?" Lady Solana asked.

Vaan confirmed with a calm nod.

#### Chapter 56: Vaan's Conjecture

"It might be impudent of me, but may I borrow any books or research you have on abominations, Lady Solana?" Vaan stated his purpose.

"Oh?" Lady Solana furrowed her brows and said, "Books, I have. But what makes you think I have any research on abominations?"

"For starters, you did not outright deny it, my Lady," Vaan stated.

"This is proof that you do indeed have some research on abominations. However, you are in doubt why I know or even suspect it. That is why you chose to ask me first. Thanks to that, your curiosity let me know for certain, my Lady."

"Secondly, Lady Aeliana is still alive, thanks to you sparing her life even though she turned into an abomination. This shows you hold great love for your daughter and can't bear to end her life. Now, if you tell me that you aren't interested in finding a way to return abominations back to their former appearances after I know all that, I find it hard to believe."

"Should I continue, Lady Solana?" Vaan asked with a smile shortly after.

However, rather than being astonished, Lady Solana was alarmed and weary. Her eyes flashed with killing intent.

"No need to be alarmed, Lady Solana. I understand your feeling, but you don't need to worry. I am not interested in spreading news of Lady Aeliana's survival," Vaan calmly assured.

"And why should I believe what you are saying is true?" Lady Solana asked sharply.

"Because you and I are the same. We are both people who have experienced a loved one turning into an abomination and want nothing more than to turn them back," Vaan said seriously. "Don't you think you will have a better chance if you have someone aiding your research, my Lady?"

Lady Solana was astonished by Vaan's words before she uttered, "The Wyvern-type Abomination is..."

"My woman," Vaan firmly asserted.

Lady Solana's eyes flickered.

"Interesting," Lady Solana smiled shortly after and said, "If what you said is true, then I can indeed trust you to keep the secret about my daughter's life status."

"I can even let you borrow all the books and research I have on abominations. However, are you sure you have enough to read them all? Are you not leaving town tomorrow?"

"Indeed I am, my Lady," Vaan nodded.

"However, you don't have to worry about when I can read everything in time or not, my Lady. Unless you have entire bookshelves on the subject, I believe I have time. I absorb information unlike anyone else."

"Is that so?" Lady Solana wore a contemplating look before she said, "Before I bring the materials, I have a question that I want your honest opinion on."

"Do you think Lady Helia has anything to do with my daughter's berserk transformation?" Lady Solana asked seriously. "You can answer freely. There is no one eavesdropping on us."

Vaan nodded.

If there were eavesdroppers, he wouldn't have waited until now to speak with Lady Solana, let alone speak so much personal information that could be used to trace his identity back to Blackmoon City.

Nevertheless, he believed that much honesty was needed to gain Lady Solana's trust and cooperation.

"There's a 70% probability that Lady Helia orchestrated Lady Aeliana's berserk transformation to happen, my Lady," Vaan stated.

"Oh?" Only a 70% probability? Why only a 70% probability?" Lady Solana frowned.

She was quite certain Lord Helia of Redpine City was involved in the matter.

"That's right, my Lady," Vaan affirmed with a nod before saying, "Everything I heard from you is your side of the story. I have not heard everything there is to the story, every detail that may have been missed, and coupled with a lack of information, I have to consider the factor of human error."

"But in all honesty, I am of the same opinion as you, my Lady. I believe Lord Helia schemed against Lady Aeliana," Vaan added his personal opinion.

Without understanding Lord Helia's motive behind such a scheme, Vaan could not offer 100% certainty.

"I see. Given how meticulous and thorough you are, a 70% probability from you might as well be 100%," Lady Solana thought before saying, "Wait here. I will be back shortly."

Lady Solana left for several minutes before returning with a stack of books and papers.

"This is all the books and research I have on abominations," Lady Solana stated.

"It's good that you only asked for abomination-related books. Had you asked for anything else, I would be unable to provide it."

"All the other books in Sunpeak Academy had been handed over to Redpine Academy since Sunpeak Town had practically become a deserted town," Lady Solana added.

"Oh?" Vaan was slightly surprised before adding, "In that case, the probability just went up by another 10%. I am starting to understand Lady Helia's true motive now."

Lady Solana's eyes flashed with sharpness and attention after hearing that.

"What motive could she have? She doesn't have her eyes on Sunpeak Town, does she?" Lady Solana thought with ridicule.

However, Vaan confirmed it, "That is the most likely possibility, given the present information I have."

"That's impossible," Lady Solana denied.

"By Her Majesty, the Witch of Black Rose's orders, all territorial wars between lords are prohibited in her holy witch kingdom. Even if Lord Helia wants to expand her territory, she cannot."

"Changes in the borders between territories will not be recognized by Her Majesty. And those found disordering Her Majesty's law will be stripped of their lord status," Lady Solana stated.

"That's true," Vaan acknowledged what Lady Solana said with a nod.

"However, there is a way around these set laws. That is when the lord of a territory passes away without assigning a successor. You might have been the previous Lord of Sunpeak Town in the past, but even you cannot reclaim the lord status without Lady Aeliana's will or Her Majesty's approval, my Lady."

"This is why the current Sunpeak Town is without a lord. Even so, it is only a matter of time before Her Majesty assigns a new lord to Sunpeak Town. And when that happens, your chances of being reinstated as the lord are not very high. After all, you are considered retired, my Lady."

"Comparatively, if Lord Helia has any outstanding Senior Witches in her household, they would all be potential candidates for the lord position due to the wealth of knowledge Lord Helia's territory holds, " Vaan stated.

After hearing that, Lady Solana's mood became dark and gloomy.

Chapter 57: Requests and a Promise

Neighboring territories being ruled by lords affiliated with the same household is no different from a single bigger territory.

Although Lady Solana couldn't believe it. But she didn't have any way to refute it either.

She couldn't believe that the tragedy that befallen her resulted from someone's greed for power and authority.

Anger burned inside Lady Solana's heart, but she had no way to vent it, nor did she dare to. She still had things she had to do.

She can't lose control of her emotion and go berserk.

Absolutely not.

Shortly after Lady Solana gave a long sigh to calm herself down, she handed all the books and research papers on abominations over to Vaan.

"Take it. You don't have more time until morning, so you better start reading immediately," Lady Solana stated.

Nevertheless, she did have much hope that Vaan could read everything in a single night—or so she thought.

However, Lady Solana was quickly dumbfounded by Vaan flipping through the pages every half-breath to two breaths.

That was certainly not enough time for a normal person to read through each page. It seemed more like Vaan was simply skimming through the pages to find something very specific.

Despite her strong doubts, Lady Solana chose to believe in Vaan.

The young man shouldn't have spoken so much just to put on a show about his reading speed in front of her.

Several minutes later, Vaan finished his first before noticing Lady Solana had no intention of leaving the room. She appeared intrigued by his unusual reading speed.

"Are you planning on watching me all night, my Lady?" Vaan asked.

"So what if I am?" Lady Solana replied before asking, "Did you really just finish reading that entire book?"

"You can feel free to test me if you want, my Lady," Vaan said politely while offering the book to Lady Solana.

However, Lady Solana didn't accept the book even though she did want to test him.

"No, it's fine. I believe you," Lady Solana said after shaking her head.

"I wonder if Lady Solana can listen to another request of mine?" Vaan mentioned while picking up his second book to read.

"Speak," Lady Solana stated.

She wasn't in a hurry to accept, but she would at least to his request first.

"If Lady Solana doesn't plan to sleep, I hope you can guard Lady Linette and Lillias in the other room for me. Assassins have been commissioned to take their lives," Vaan stated.

"Oh?" Lady Solana smiled intriguingly before asking, "Even if there are assassins after those two ladies, what makes you certain I can stop them without my magic?"

"There are six reasons for that. The first reason is that you did not outright deny the request. This proves that you possess certain confidence in yourself, even without your magic, my Lady," Vaan replied.

"Second, this is a world where the strong prevails. Golden Peacock Inn is renowned for its food and service. Even if it wasn't implicitly mentioned, security is definitely included in the service. Thus, Lady Solana has something to rely on other than your old status to protect your guests."

"Third, the calluses on your hands aren't normal calluses that one would gain from the work of running an inn business. They are the calluses of someone who rigorously trains in a two-handed weapon like the long sword hung on the wall behind the counter."

"Fourth, even without magic, witches have stronger physiques than ordinary people even if they don't improve their physique through physical training. If they do undergo rigorous physical exercise, their physical strength would even exceed Aura Masters."

"Given those reasons, I'd estimate your strength to be comparable to a Rank 3 Aura Master. Should I continue, my Lady?" Vaan asked shortly after.

However, Lady Solana shook her head with a wry smile.

"No need." Lady Solana stood up from her seat on the bed and walked towards the door before turning her head back and saying, "You're a terrifying young man, you know that? I will protect the two ladies for the night, so you can rest easy and just focus on reading."

"Nevertheless, since I agree to listen to one of your requests, you should also listen to one of mine," Lady Solana stated.

Vaan nodded with understanding before he asked, "What is your request, my Lady?"

"When you reach Redpine City, I want you to secretly investigate and confirm whether Lady Helia had truly orchestrated everything that led to my daughter's berserk transformation. You can do that much for me, right?"

Vaan considered Lady Solana's request carefully for a moment before he eventually agreed with a nod.

"It can be done."

"Great!"

Lady Solana was overjoyed by Vaan's agreement.

She was prepared to honor his request even if he was to turn her down. She was indebted to Vaan for opening her eyes to the truth surrounding her daughter's incident.

If Lady Solana had not met Vaan, she might have continued to be ignorant about it.

"Oh right," Lady Solana suddenly paused just as she was about to leave the room and said, "You know I am kind of disappointed that your request wasn't about spending a night with me."

"You didn't show any interest, and I am not one to pressure the other party if they are unwilling, my Lady," Vaan calmly replied.

"That was before. Now, I am kind of interested," Lady Solana expressed herself. Her meaning couldn't be more clear.

Alas, Vaan still shook his head with a wry smile and said, "I am also interested. Unfortunately, I do not dare to cross that line while you are still under the effect of the curse, my Lady."

"Perhaps when I find a way to undo the curse without harming Lady Aeliana, of course, it won't be too late for us then," Vaan added.

"It's a promise then," Lady Solana smiled alluringly.

"Un, it's a promise," Vaan nodded and said, "Goodnight, my Lady."

"Goodnight, Vaan."

Shortly after, Lady Solana finally left the room, shutting the door quietly on her way out and letting Vaan continue his reading without further distractions.

#### Chapter 58: Abomination Study

Focusing on the research materials in front of him, Vaan's eyes did not blink.

No, Vaan's eyes did not even dart from left to right as Vaan flipped the page every couple of breaths. Sometimes, not even two breaths passed before the pages were flipped.

Even a talented reader wouldn't be this quick, even if the person was just skimming through the source materials.

However, Vaan was indeed reading everything in its entirety without moving his eyes. Everything that entered his vision was captured, imprinted, and absorbed.

Even the seven Transcendent Witches of the seven witch kingdoms didn't have Vaan's capacity for learning.

Vaan was simply built differently.

Nevertheless, since Vaan gained awareness of his transmigration, he hadn't always had such impressive reading speed, memory retention, and comprehensive ability.

Although they had been above average, they were still within the realms of human capabilities.

Only after Vaan started working in the red-light district and gaining the benefits of servicing the witches did his abilities sharply improve by leaps and bounds.

Vaan had always known it had something to do with his particular physique, but it wasn't until he awakened the system did he finally put a name to his special physique.

Heaven-Swallowing Physique, a physique capable of swallowing the heavens.

Although it was still far from such a feat, at the very least, Vaan confirmed it could swallow anything—whether intangible like mana and knowledge or tangible like weapons, tools, equipment, or anything material object between heaven and earth for the matter.

Nevertheless, as Vaan absorbed all the knowledge from Lady Solana's research papers and books, his understanding of abominations deepened.

'Why do witches form magic circles around their hearts?'

'It is because mana is highly conductive with blood, and blood is pumped and circulated through the heart. It is simply easier to channel mana from there; blood flow would carry mana to its destination.'

'However, the process of going berserk and transforming into an abomination is a result of Mana Reflux, the most dangerous situation that can happen to a witch—no, anyone in possession of high mana.'

Mana Reflux, as its name implies, is when mana flows backward, which conflicts with the flow of blood and all other mana it carries.

'But why is that considered the most dangerous situation? Because when mana clashes, it invokes magic—uncontrolled magic without clear purposes and intent that is normally backed by the user's will.'

'But during a berserk transformation, most witches usually feel rage—uncontrolled rage with a strong desire for the destruction of someone or something. As a result, the countless magic invoked during a witch's berserk transformation are mostly related to strength and destruction...'

'From past incidents to present ones, no witch had ever adopted the exact same form after becoming an abomination. They may belong to the same category, but they will never be the spitting image of one another.'

'Seems like Lady Solana didn't advance very far on abominations. But fortunately, the published books of other researchers in her possession contained more insight on the topic of abominations...' Vaan mused.

'But... despite the more in-depth knowledge they possessed, the researchers of those published books didn't research deeply enough into potential solutions on reverting abominations back to their original forms either...'

'They all deemed it 'too difficult' or 'simply impossible' to do, huh?' Vaan thought.

It was the same conclusion from all the other abomination-related books Vaan had read back in the Blackmoon Academy's library.

Nevertheless, Vaan could understand why all these researchers came to such a conclusion after studying the abominations.

After all, how can anyone possibly know many magic was invoked on the body at that exact moment? Or the specifics of what those magic were?

It would have required a person to be present when the berserk transformation took place, possess a special vision that saw all the magic invoked within the person, and remember everything down to the finest detail.

'It's unrealistic to reverse each spell one by one, but there must be another way to reverse an abomination's form. Recovering an abomination's former appearance is not that important. There are magic surgeries for that; the importance is to recover their minds.'

Vaan pondered.

'According to the knowledge I compiled on abomination, one thing stays consistent in all cases of berserk transformation; the heart, veins, and meridians become a jumbled mess. Introduction to Abominations written by Scholar Sabrine Blackwood, page 73, also provided an example of a dissected Wolf-type Abomination,' Vaan recalled.

The magic circuit, which was the essence of a witch, was indeed a jumbled mess. Everything was tangled and twisted in ways one cannot normally imagine.

An abomination might feel differently, but an average human would be in unimaginable pain with even the slightest movement, let alone shock from an attack on their body.

'If I compile this information, I can infer that an abomination's berserk nature isn't the result of degradation in their intelligence as most witches have assumed. No, it should be insanity brought by the torment of overwhelming pain,' Vaan's eyes flickered.

'An abomination also has many more mana veins than the average witch. But if I can untangle their messy mana veins and rearrange them in a way that is natural, I can relieve them of their pain.'

Alas, Vaan lacked information on precedent cases of anyone attempting such treatment on the abominations.

Furthermore, there was no guarantee that relieving the pain would end an abomination's berserk state and bring back their minds.

'The longer the abomination exists, the lower the chance of success and the higher the difficulty of bringing them back... But as long as the chance isn't zero, it's not impossible,' Vaan summarized his research.

No matter how deep a witch's mind had fallen into the abyss of despair and torment after becoming an abomination, they can still be saved.

However, it would be a different story if their mind was broken—or at the very least, the chance of recovery would be much more difficult.

Sometime later, Vaan closed the last book with a soft sigh.

'Even if there's a viable treatment plan, it won't be possible to carry it out if I lack the capability to perform it. I need to improve my abilities,' Vaan determined.

## Chapter 59: Unnamed Fairy

After settling his thoughts, Vaan glanced out the window and saw the beautiful night sky with cascading moonlight to estimate the time.

The night was not young, but there were still several hours before the first ray of sunrise arrived.

'I've finished collecting all the information from Lady Solana's research papers and books, but I still have this much spare time, huh? Seems like my ability improved again,' Vaan mused.

Although staying at the Golden Peacock Inn guaranteed protection, Vaan didn't intend to sleep.

Given his mental level, he could stay awake for a whole week without an issue. Of course, this excludes factors brought by mental workload.

If Vaan overworked his mind, he would require rest much sooner due to the built-up mental fatigue.

'With Lady Solana's protection, there's no need to worry about Lady Linetta and Lady Lillias,' Vaan thought.

Although the internal conflict within Delarosa Household was a nuisance, building a connection with the Delarosa Household through Linetta and Lillias shouldn't be a mistake.

After all, the Delarosa Marquisate occupied a vast amount of land in the south. A mere Redpine City is insignificant compared to it.

Furthermore, it was closer to the southern borders.

'There must be more powers than just the seven witch kingdoms on this continent. Unfortunately, all information on existing powers outside the seven witch kingdoms is not readily available—No, should I say they were restricted from public access instead?' Vaan mused.

He could understand why, though.

Nevertheless, Vaan quickly shelved aside the thought and scanned his surroundings with Magic Vision.

The material buildings seemingly fell into the background as the clusters of mana belonging to people, the environment, and even the minuscule spores of the Plant-type Abomination all entered his sight.

Interestingly enough, the spores had a tendency to absorb nearby mana.

'Despite the city being full of mana, none of it can be used. The spores are responsible for this. If too many spores entered the body, they would attach to the mana veins and magic circles like leeches and interfere with the activation of magic...'

Vaan understood the secret behind the Curse of the Purple Umbala, but his expression remained calm like the lake of still water, serene and without ripples.

'Fortunately, these spores cannot affect me,' Vaan slightly smiled with amusement.

He was aware of it the moment he entered the vicinity of Sunpeak Town due to the string of silent notifications in his mind back then.

...

=====

Ding!

<Parasitic substances have invaded your body>

<The Earth Spirit has been forcefully awakened from her peaceful slumber>

<The Earth Spirit has expressed discontent for her interrupted slumber>

<The Earth Spirit is displeased by the parasitic substances intruding on her personal space>

<The Earth Spirit has removed the parasitic substances from your body>

<The Earth Spirit has resumed her slumber>

...

Ding!

<Parasitic substances have invaded your body again>

<The Earth Spirit has been forcefully awakened from her slumber again>

<The Earth Spirit has become unhappy>

...

<The Earth Spirit is enraged>

<Parasitic substances have been destroyed>

<Traces of unrefined mana has been discovered roaming inside of your body>

<Compiling list of options for the unrefined mana>

...

Ding!

<[Error]: the traces of unrefined mana has disappeared>

<The Earth Spirit has licked her lips in satisfaction>

<The Earth Spirit has gone back to slumber>

...

Ding!

<The Earth Spirit's information has been updated>

-

-

-

[Spirit Contract]: Unnamed Fairy (Low-rank Earth Spirit)

Unnamed Fairy's Mana Capacity: 120/100 (Excess mana)

-

-

-

<The Plant-Type Abomination has become aware of your existence>

=====

After Vaan received the last notification, he had not received any more news of the parasitic substances invading his body.

Vaan smiled wryly as he recalled the system log.

After Vaan confirmed no one was spying on his room, he retrieved a few materials varying from Rank 1 to Rank 2 from his Heaven-Swallowing Space.

'Now that I've gained Earth Manipulation through my contract with the Earth Spirit, I no longer require blacksmithing tools to forge a weapon,' Vaan mused.

Ideally, a weapon with close combat and range capability like a gunblade would give him more versatility in battle.

However, the twin fang daggers had already been seen by others. Altering their appearances with the additions of gun barrels would invite questions from others.

'I need to forge a gunblade from scratch and keep it secret as one of my trump cards,' Vaan determined.

Earth Manipulation!

A lump of Rank 1 Obsidian Iron was lifted, deformed, and reshaped according to Vaan's will.

After the Rank 1 Obsidian Iron changed, the Rank 1 Meteorite Iron, Rank 1 Blackstar Iron, Rank 0 Carbon, and Rank 2 Tungsten followed.

They fused and formed a stronger alloy under the right proportion before undergoing further reshaping and refinement.

Sometime later, a black blade was created.

The black blade lacked the suppressive aura of a powerful Crimson Direwolf against Dark Hellhounds, but it was sharper, sturdier, and more durable than the twin fang daggers.

Nevertheless, it was just a blade without a handle.

Vaan proceeded to forge the individual parts required to form the gunblade envisioned in his mind—one that had spiral grooves within its barrels to make projectible objects rotate.

Time slowly passed, and the Earth Spirit's mana reserve decreased. But despite the complexity of Vaan's work, the mana consumption was surprisingly low.

Unknowingly, the Unnamed Fairy had awakened from her slumber. She materialized outside of Vaan's body and flapped her tiny wings around him, inspecting his work curiosity.

'Looks like I've caught your interest. You're not going back to sleep after, right?' Vaan slightly smiled as he commuted with the telepathic ability shared between them.

'Kyu!' The Unnamed Fairy nodded vigorously at first, then shook her head to his following question.

Nevertheless, Vaan divided some attention from his work to focus on Unnamed Fairy.

Now that they could hold a conversation, Vaan could learn of her name—and if she didn't have one, he could also give her one.

However, that being said, it was clear that the Unnamed Fairy didn't speak the human language.

'Fortunately, I can still understand you through telepathy,' Vaan thought.

Chapter 60: Naming Incident

'Kyu?'

The Unnamed Fairy tilted her head at Vaan's comment with a confused look that seemed to say, 'Of course, we can understand with telepathy. Or how else are we going to communicate?'

'I suppose you're right,' Vaan responded with a wry smile.

Although the Unnamed Fairy possessed the appearance of an adorable young human girl, she also had fairy wings, brownish-golden eyes, rock horns, and a brown furry dress that seemed to be part of her body.

After Vaan started communicating with the Unnamed Fairy, he learned that she had been alone in the dark stalactite cave since she gained awareness of her existence.

'Kyuukyuu,' the Unnamed Fairy conveyed her thoughts.

The Unnamed Fairy was an Earth Spirit, a spirit born from the earth element-rich cave. She never had anyone to talk to. Thus, she never learned to speak.

Although she could produce sounds with her mouth, they don't have any meaning in any language. They were just sounds that helped her convey her thoughts better.

'It took hundreds of years to give birth to a Low-rank Earth Spirit... I wonder how long it would take to give birth to Earth Spirits of a higher rank...' Vaan mused.

Nevertheless, the Unnamed Fairy that Vaan had contracted appeared to be young and lacking—but that also meant she had a lot of room for growth.

After Vaan finished producing his black gunblade, he created two dozen rounds of simple sharp-pointed pellets and three eight-round magazines to hold them.

Once they were all completed, Vaan stored everything inside the Heaven-Swallowing Space and gave the Unnamed Fairy his full attention.

'You've been alone ever since you were born, so you were quite excited to meet finally someone who was also attuned to the earth element, huh?' Vaan thought.

Otherwise, he didn't think it would have been easy to enter a contract with an Earth Spirit.

'Kyu,' the Unnamed Fairy replied as she flew unto Vaan's palm and rubbed her cheeks against it. She completely treated him as one of her kind.

Vaan slightly smiled and asked, 'Do you have a name?'

'Kyu?' the Unnamed Fairy tilted her head.

Although the Unnamed Fairy understood the meaning behind Vaan's question, she didn't understand the need for one.

Was a name necessary?

'So you don't have one. No surprise there,' Vaan thought. He had already expected as such when she was called the Unnamed Fairy. 'You want to know why a name is necessary?'

'Kyu,' the Unnamed Fairy nodded.

'A name is necessary because it is a form of identity. We name to identify, symbolize, refer to, and describe things. It gives us the power to simplify, organize, and even forge connections; to bring things closer to us.'

The power to tame.

People might underestimate it, but naming also had such power.

'Kyu?' the Unnamed Fairy asked if possessing a name would also bring the two of them closer to each other.

That being said, they were already as close as they could get due to the contractual bond they shared.

'Of course,' Vaan smiled with a nod, nonetheless.

'Kyu!' the Unnamed Fairy eagerly asked Vaan for a name. She wanted him to name her. No, only he can name her.

'I'm not very good with names, but I will try and think of a good one since you insist. Hmm, since you're an Earth Spirit, giving you a name that has a simple earth meaning behind it won't do you justice...' Vaan contemplated.

As Vaan stared into the Unnamed Fairy's small yet big brownish-golden eyes, she also stared back at him silently with anticipation.

'You have a pair of beautiful and pure eyes that seemingly possess the boundlessness of the earth. As I have hopes that you will also embrace the earth's boundless love and affection...how about Topaz?' Vaan wondered.

'Kyu!' the Unnamed Fairy happily accepted the name, not thinking too deeply into it.

Nevertheless, the moment Topaz accepted her name, something unexpected happened. Topaz winced as she felt like something was branding her soul.

At the same time, Vaan also felt power getting drawn from his body, making him feel weak and lethargic like a sick person. The situation startled him greatly.

Even so, Vaan could do nothing but watch it unfold.

Although Vaan said there was power in naming things, he spoke metaphorically. He never expected the power to manifest literally.

'Kyu!' Topaz cried.

Topaz felt something sinister attaching to her soul. But even though it felt sinister, it didn't harm her in any way.

In fact, it felt like it was enhancing her existence.

Ding!

<The Earth Spirit's information has been updated>

<[Spirit Contract]: Topaz (Named Spirit) (Mid-rank Earth Spirit)>

<[Topaz's Mana Capacity]: 17/ 200>

...

Ding!

<You have been blessed by the Earth Spirit>

<Your Earth Spirit Body's blessings have increased>

...

=====

[Earth Spirit Body (Low-rank)]

...

Effect 2: When you are in touch with the earth, you will receive a 20% buff in overall defense and natural regeneration.

Effect 3: When consuming earth-attribute medicine, you will receive a 20% buff in its effects.

Effect 4 (New): When you are in touch with the earth, all earth-related magic will receive a 20% decrease in mana consumption.

=====

Vaan's lips twitched as he heard the notifications.

'This exaggerated change that only occurs after bestowing a name onto another existence... Isn't this one of the Great Devils' abilities?!' Vaan's gaze turned serious after analyzing the situation.

Only the Great Devils possessed the ability to give other existences a power boost or chance at evolution by granting them a name.

Furthermore, it was said that the Great Devils only used it on their most faithful followers.

'Kyuu!' Topaz flapped her wings around Vaan excitedly. After the initial discomfort, she felt inexplicable joy and comfort.

After all, she did upgrade from a Low-rank Earth Spirit to a Mid-rank Earth Spirit.

Although Vaan was happy for Topaz, he could not help but frown at himself. He didn't doubt that he had paid a certain price to make that change happen.

He would have to think twice before bestowing more names in the future.

'To possess one of the Great Devils' abilities... Don't tell me I did become the seventh Great Devil Contractor? But that doesn't make sense either...'

Vaan furrowed his brows in thought.