

The Witch 561

Chapter 561: Linetta and Lillias's Advancements

Being held in Vaan's arms, Linetta felt the familiar sense of security and happiness. The warmth from Vaan's touch calmed her heart and made her feel at peace.

Vaan's kiss of reassurance gave Linetta the determination she needed to move forward.

'Cherish your youth while it lasts; it'll disappear faster than you think. But fear not when it is gone, for a new journey awaits,' Linetta thought expressively.

Although the time she spent with Vaan was as fleeting as her childhood, she couldn't become fixated on the past.

No matter how fond she was of her memory, she knew she couldn't return to that time and stay like that – just like kids couldn't be young forever; they would eventually grow up.

Nevertheless, so long as she was alive, there would be chances to be with Vaan regardless of the situation.

Linetta was aware that Vaan's ambition wasn't confined to Pangea; it extended beyond the stars. Thus, in order to not be left behind, she was resolved to work hard and desperately on self-improvement to keep up.

As long as she didn't abandon herself, Vaan wouldn't abandon her either – Linetta figured.

Nevertheless, while Vaan and Linetta were clinging together, enjoying each other's warm embrace, Lillias pouted with discontent on the side.

"That's enough, sis. You've hugged him long enough," Lillias squeezed herself in between the two to separate them before clinging to Vaan's body. Then, she glanced back at Linetta and spat, "You're such a baby, sis."

Linetta could only smile wryly.

She had no excuse for herself. Indeed, even she felt like she had been too emotional recently. Perhaps because she was the elder sister, the ups and downs of past events weighed more heavily and took a toll on her mind.

That said, she was better now; she felt light and relaxed.

"Alright, settle down now, my two ladies. I have something to give you two," Vaan peeled the clingy Lillias away before pulling out several vials of Transcendent-rank Stalactite Milk.

Without a surprise, the semi-translucent glass vials filled with earth-attribute power immediately attracted the two ladies' attention.

Their eyes were glued to the vials like they were enchanted.

"You should have consumed quite a fair amount of Ten-Thousand-Year Stalactite Milk and improved your physique and talents previously, so I doubt it's effective anymore, even if you still have some left," Vaan casually mentioned to Linetta before glancing over to Lillias. "I also assume you had your fair share of consumption after repairing your mana veins."

"This is Transcendent-rank Stalactite Milk. It's equivalent to Hundred-Thousand-Year Stalactite Milk, quality-wise. Take them. They should improve your constitutions and talents even further," Vaan urged shortly after.

However, Linetta and Lillias didn't respond immediately.

Instead, they stared hard at the vials of Transcendent-rank Stalactite Milk for a while before asking simultaneously, "Can we give this to our mother?"

Vaan smiled with amusement.

Despite the exorbitant value of Transcendent-rank Stalactite Milk, the mother and two daughters of the Delarosa household only thought about the well-being of the other.

They put each other first and didn't prioritize themselves.

Their selflessness and willingness to sacrifice their self-interest for the benefit of their loved ones was part of what he appreciated about them.

"You two don't have to worry about your mother. I have already given her three vials. These are for you," Vaan calmly replied before urging two ladies, "So take them."

"Mm," Linetta and Lillias agreed.

Since Vaan had already said as much, it must be true. He had no reason to lie to them. After all, they could easily verify the truth, not that they need to.

Without further delay, Linetta and Lillias picked up their first vials of Transcendent-rank Stalactite Milk and downed everything in a single gulp.

Once they sensed the potent effects of the miraculous water coursing through their bodies, they instinctively sat down in a meditative position and adjusted their breathing rhythm.

It was the best way to absorb the potency of any medicine or power according to their knowledge.

While Vaan quietly watched over the two ladies absorbing the miraculous water's efficacy, he sensed the surrounding earth elements drawn to their bodies.

It was a sign of the Earth Spirit Body's blessing – absorbing the surrounding earth elements to strengthen the potency of the earth-attribute medicine.

Evidently, Linetta and Lillias had both acquired the Earth Spirit Body from consuming the Ten-Thousand-Year Stalactite Milk.

However, Vaan wasn't the least surprised by that fact.

After all, they had acquired far more than enough Ten-Thousand-Year Stalactite Milk to produce merely three Earth Spirit Bodies.

Nevertheless, there wasn't enough earth power to support two Earth Spirit Bodies at once without causing damage to the surrounding floors and walls.

Even the surrounding mana was being greedily absorbed by the two ladies.

Fortunately, the Delarosa's estate was supported by a large mana-gathering spell similar to Helia's castle.

As such, Vaan opened the windows and allowed more mana to flow inside the room.

At the same time, he took out some asteroid pieces that already had their divine energy crystals extracted and left them on the floor near the two ladies.

Time passed as the asteroid pieces cracked, splitting apart after having their earth essence extracted. Later, they completely crumbled into dust.

"Keep going," Vaan urged once he saw the two ladies reopen their eyes when the potency of their first vials ended.

"Yes!" Linetta and Lillias complied, taking up their second vials and drinking them.

Within moments, the earthly phenomenon resumed.

Linetta and Lillias' bodies continued to be strengthened and improved under the influence of the Transcendent-rank Stalactite Milk.

Despite being the Stalactite Milk, its quality was on a different level. Thus, their bodies haven't built immunity to it yet. No, they were still far from it.

Alas, the damage to the room eventually forced Vaan to move the two ladies to a different location, where they could continue consuming the Transcendent-rank Stalactite Milk and absorbing its efficacy.

By the end of their third vials, Vaan noticed the two ladies were close to a breakthrough.

Thus, he gave them another two vials each and helped them push their Low-rank Earth Spirit Body to Mid-rank Earth Spirit Body.

Chapter 562: Dinner with the Delarosas

Compared to Vaan's advancement to Mid-rank Earth Spirit Body when he consumed the Divine-rank Stalactite Milk, Linetta and Lillias's advancement took much longer during their absorption.

However, they consumed less Stalactite Milk and of lower quality on top of that.

In terms of overall resources expended, Linetta and Lillias consumed less than Vaan to achieve the same advancement in their Earth Spirit Bodies.

This was despite Vaan having the system to help him optimize the potency of the Divine-rank Stalactite Milk.

As expected, witches with natural earth affinity would reap more benefits with minimum expenses when they consume earth-attribute resources due to their innate earth talent.

Nevertheless, Vaan had nothing to complain about.

Everyone had their strengths and weaknesses, and his strengths were the biggest cheats in the world – a system and the heaven-defying ability for learning.

Given these two overwhelming advantages, it would be strange if he couldn't grow quickly.

Furthermore, it didn't matter if it cost him more resources to raise his Earth Spirit Body. He had more Divine-rank Stalactite Milk than he could use for himself.

By the time Linetta and Lillias finished raising their body's earth affinity to Mid-rank Earth Spirit Body, the darkness of the night had already covered the skies.

The two ladies had taken a third of the day to fully absorb the potency of five vials of Transcendent-rank Stalactite Milk.

"It's already dark?" Linetta uttered with astonishment, noticing the absence of sunlight.

When Lillias heard that, she also gasped with surprise. Neither of them had been aware of the passage of time.

At that moment, a line of servants could be seen carrying trays of extravagant food from the cookhouse to the main dining hall.

Perhaps due to the high demand to maintain Vaan's powerful body, the lovely fusion scent of spices and herbs easily whetted his appetite.

Rumble...!

Within moments, a person's stomach suddenly rumbled in protest of hunger. But it did not come from Vaan; it came from Lillias.

"Hehe, who's hungry?" Lillias asked, scratching the back of her head abashedly.

"Let's head to the dining hall. Food should be ready shortly," Linetta suggested with a relaxed smile before adding, "I don't think Vaan has tried our Delarosa Marquisate's signature dish, the honey-glazed flaming pork roast yet."

"It's something to die for," Linetta boasted.

"Then, I have to try it," Vaan calmly said with a smile, seemingly interested but actually wasn't all that eager.

Although he enjoyed good food, he wouldn't go out of his way for it unless it provided medicinal benefits that could improve physical conditions and mental states.

In other words, unless they were spirit food, food was nothing more than a nutritional necessity for survival.

After all, he used to live as a street rat, scavenging and fighting others for leftover food in the slums of Blackmoon City. Edibility was not a concern back then as long as the food filled the stomach.

Even if he no longer needed to eat garbage food to survive, the experiences of those times stuck with him.

If it was necessary, he could eat anything – Vaan believed.

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When Vaan and the two ladies entered the main dining hall, a large assortment of extravagant, high-quality food was already laid on the dining table.

At the same time, Belline Delarosa was already seated.

"You're all here. That's great. I was just about to call someone over to fetch all of you," Belline stated receptively, gesturing to the empty seats at the dining table. "Come, take your seats. Let us dine together."

"I had the chefs make the best dishes our territory has to offer. I hope you will find them palatable, Lord Vahn," Belline sincerely expressed.

The food on the dining table was already enough to feed half the people in the Delarosa's estate. Yet, more dishes were still being brought over by the servants.

Some people wouldn't even get the chance to look at so many mouth-watering dishes, let alone taste them.

It was certainly more than four people could finish.

However, Vaan was long aware that the nobles of every country usually upheld such tradition or standard of procedure.

The food that couldn't be finished by the master of the house and their guests would be given to the servants after they were done with it.

It was normal that the servants only dined after their masters finished.

"I'm sure everyone is famished, saving their stomachs for tonight's feast. There's no need to hold back or uphold any formality at this table. Please dig in," Belline urged Vaan and her daughters to start eating.

Despite Belline's permission, Linetta still maintained certain dining etiquettes at the table, eating neatly and cleanly with a fork and knife.

Lillias and Vaan, on the other hand, directly tore off drumsticks from a whole roasted chicken and ate with their bare hands, easily greasing them up.

They didn't hold back at all.

"Ahem!" Belline coughed awkwardly.

She didn't expect her youngest daughter to show such an unruly and unladylike side in front of their guest of honor. She feared her youngest daughter's actions would cause the person to lose interest in her.

However, seeing as their benefactor acted the same way, she couldn't really reprimand her youngest daughter on the spot.

"What do you think of the food, Lord Vahn? Is it to your liking?" Belline inquired with a wry smile.

"The food is great, Lady Belline. It's definitely the best food I've eaten in my life so far," Vaan honestly answered in a casual manner that was neither overly polite nor disrespectful after sampling twelve different dishes.

Unfortunately, despite all the food on the table being spirit food with medicinal benefits, none of them could improve Vaan's physical attributes like they did in the past.

His body had grown to a level that such a level of spirit food could no longer support.

"I regret not knowing of a better way to repay the great kindness you have bestowed upon my household, Lord Vahn," Belline suddenly said apologetically after noticing her best dishes weren't enough to amaze her benefactor.

"I'm well aware that a single meal is hardly enough to repay your favor, Lord Vahn. So, if you need us for anything, please don't hesitate to ask us. My Delarosa Household will do its best to meet your demand."

"Actually, there is something I could use your household's help with, Lady Belline," Vaan casually admitted with a slight smile.

Chapter 563: Vaan's Plan

"Pray tell, Lord Vahn. As long as we can do it, we will do it," Belline firmly said with resolution.

"You speak too seriously, Lady Belline. While it is an important task, it's not that serious," Vaan calmly dismissed the importance of the subject with a wave of his hand before explaining, "The dragons are planning to build a habitable colony on the moon."

"I wonder if the Delarosa household is willing to partake in the big project and assist them with the construction?" Vaan asked shortly after.

Almost immediately, Belline and her two daughters revealed their surprises and astonishment.

"The... moon? Surely, you're not talking about the one that can only be seen in the sky..." Belline wondered before quickly adding, "That place is unreachable, Lord Vahn."

"I assure you, it's not as unreachable as you think, Lady Belline," Vaan calmly stated with confidence, mentioning, "Why do you think we have been building the giant magic tower on the top of the Red Goblin Mountain?"

They weren't just building the giant magic tower to catch the great flow of mana and significantly increase their mana supply; they were also going to use it as a high launching point.

By having a very high launching point, the amount of magic power consumed to break the sky's barrier would be drastically reduced.

As long as the giant magic tower was high enough, it would be possible for even High Witches to leave planet Pangea.

Belline's eyes flickered with understanding after grasping the general idea behind the giant magic tower.

Although Vaan's plans were shocking, she was quick to accept them.

"I see... So the giant magic tower is being built for that purpose," Belline uttered with a nod before frowning. "Gravity and distance have always been the biggest hurdles to breaking the sky's barrier. As long as the giant magic tower reaches sufficient height, it'll be no different from a staircase to heaven."

Since the introduction of magic, countless witches have challenged the sky's barrier.

It was natural for everyone with the ability to fly to desire and experience the freedom of exploring the vastness of the land, sea, and sky. And in particular, the beauty of the sea of stars made it one of the most desired destinations for exploration.

Unfortunately, people always overestimated themselves and were ignorant of the dangers.

Among hundreds of attempts, at least dozens resulted in witches plunging to their deaths after exhausting all their mana in flight.

"But as far as I am aware, the giant magic tower is still far from the adequate height requirement for witches of my level to break the sky's barrier. Considering the distance to the moon would be even greater than that, I'm not sure how my household can assist the colony's construction, Lord Vahn," Belline mentioned her doubt.

"You're not wrong about the giant magic tower, Lady Belline. Indeed, it has yet to reach the required height for transferring witches into the sea of stars," Vaan calmly acknowledged.

"However, you don't have to worry about that. You won't be entering the sea of stars. After all, the moon has its own dangers. So, how could I ask you to go there? I'm only asking you to assist the dragons in creating individual components on Pangea."

"The dragons will then bring them into the sea of stars for assembling," Vaan stated.

Even for the Red Dragon Clan's dragon lords, reaching the moon was not an easy task. Unless they were adequately prepared, it would also be a one-way trip for them.

Only beings who have comprehended the laws, like Demigods, could travel between the moon and planet Pangea more freely.

But even then, they wouldn't be able to survive once their air supply ran out.

Before the dragons could build a moon colony, Vaan intended to have them construct a spaceport in the sea of stars for resupply and spacecraft construction purposes. Only after that was completed could he start the moon colony construction project on a large scale.

At the same time, Vaan wasn't in a rush to build the moon colony, not when the pure earth elemental worm was still a calamity-level threat.

"I see... If it is just producing individual parts on Pangea, my Delarosa household will be able to carry it out, Lord Vahn," Belline acknowledged.

Her household was full of earth-attribute witches. They were the most suitable for processing metal and stones.

Lord Vahn had asked the right people for the job.

However, Vaan didn't really require the Delarosa household's assistance with his construction projects.

The Red Dragon Clan was more than enough for the job.

He only asked the Delara household for help as an excuse to put them in a position of importance under the disguise of letting them repay his favor.

Nevertheless, perhaps because of Linetta and Lillias's presence, Belline avoided mentioning the main family over dinner. She didn't want to give a cause for concern.

As such, Belline only discussed the details of the parts her Delarosa household was required to produce.

At the same time, she offered to cover the material cost.

"Do you mind if I peruse your library, Lady Belline? I would love to read your unique collection," Vaan inquired at the end of his meal.

Every reputable noble surely had a stash of knowledge that was unique to them.

And for someone with a constant hunger for knowledge, Vaan wouldn't miss the chance to learn something new.

"Of course, I won't mind. You don't even have to ask. Just treat this place as one of your homes, Lord Vahn," Belline Delarosa replied straightforwardly before asking, "If you're staying the night, would you like me to arrange a dual-practice partner in your room later—"

"Mother! Vahn does not need any other dual-practice partners!" Linetta exclaimed with agitation as she stood up in protest.

However, she quickly realized what she said before she shrunk back into her seat and covered her flushed face in embarrassment.

"Well, it seems I won't have to concern myself with this matter then," Belline slightly chuckled with amusement before excusing herself, "I won't intrude in the younger generation's matter. You'll have to work hard, though. I want to hold a grandchild soon—"

"Mother!" Linetta roared with greater embarrassment.

Meanwhile, Lillias quietly thought of something interesting before smiling vaguely. It seemed like she was planning something that was up to no good.

Chapter 564: Lillias's Scheme

After dinner with the Delarosas ended, Linetta guided Vaan to their library with a flushed face, still embarrassed by her mother's teasing.

On the other hand, Lillias didn't accompany them; she left on her own, heading off somewhere else.

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Inside the private library, Vaan stopped by the exploration section and started perusing books related to Perilous Lands.

The Thousand Fog Mountains was one of the largest Perilous Lands in the seven witch kingdoms, but it was not the largest.

In fact, it was the Great Ashfallen Forest.

Ever since Gehenna's Gate appeared inside the Great Ashfallen Forest, access to the northernmost parts of the Pangea continent had been cut off.

That said, the Great Ashfallen Forest was a vast wilderness even before the appearance of Gehenna's Gate. Few had ventured into its depths, let alone pass it.

Thus, little to nothing was known about the northernmost region.

Some suspected the demons of Gehenna had already turned it into their haven. Others believed some backwater tribes lived there. As far as Vaan was concerned, even the remnant survivors of the advanced civilization could be hidden there.

Of course, he had already seen the northernmost region from the sea of stars – there was nothing there except dense trees.

The Great Ashfallen Forest stretched all the way to the northern coastline.

Despite the absence of civilization from an outer planet view, Vaan didn't rule out the possibility of the northernmost region being home to intelligent lifeforms – whether they be demons, primitive humans, or survivors of the advanced civilization.

After all, the Great Ashfallen Forest hid everything within it.

Furthermore, Vaan wouldn't completely trust his eyes when it involved remnants of an advanced civilization, considering they could possess optical illusion technology that granted invisibility.

As such, they could be anywhere.

Vaan wouldn't know where the survivors of the advanced civilization were hiding unless their cloak of invisibility entered the range of his Omni-Sense.

On another note, he was very wary of the remnant advanced civilization because he didn't know if it could be a friend or if it absolutely had to be an enemy.

However, he would certainly prefer to befriend the survivors of the advanced civilization if it was possible.

Their technology and knowledge could be extremely useful against Gehenna.

Furthermore, the survivors of the advanced civilization could have a clearer understanding of the events in the distant past that led to their destruction.

Unfortunately, Vaan failed to find any substantial information or suspicious points of interest while perusing the books on the Great Ashfallen Forest's explorations.

The authors only recorded the fierce magic beasts and exotic plants they encountered.

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While Vaan was reading in the private library, Lillias returned and dragged Linetta away for a serious talk in her bedroom.

"Exactly what do you want to talk about that we have to go all the way back to your room, Lily?" Linetta asked, feeling a little frustrated that she couldn't keep watching Vaan.

Vaan was also charming when he was reading seriously.

That said, Linetta only paid attention to Vaan's serious reading face and not his inhuman reading speed as he flicked through the pages.

"Of course, we have to talk in my room; it's very serious!" Lillias firmly stated before saying, "We have to decide who gets to spend the night with Vahn! Obviously, you want to spend the night with Vahn, sis."

"However, I also want to spend the night with Vahn! And I'm not giving up, either! I didn't get to receive his affection yet!" Lillias said defiantly.

Seeing the stubborn look in Lillias's eyes, Linetta knew she couldn't deny her little sister of her fighting chance with words alone. It seemed if she wanted to spend the night with Vahn, she had to earn it.

"Fine, how do you want to settle this?" Linetta asked with a soft sigh.

"Surely, you must have thought of a solution, knowing I wouldn't back down so easily, either, right, my dear little sister?"

"Of course!" Lillias bluntly admitted before pointing at the only two glasses of water on the table in the room.

"One of these glasses of water is laced with a sleeping drug. Whoever drinks it will be knocked out until morning. So, whoever doesn't get knocked out will be the one to spend the night with Vahn."

"How's that? Do you dare to bet with me, sis? I am willing to give you the first pick," Lillias goaded with a confident smile.

Linetta frowned at the two glasses in silence.

"Why wouldn't I?" Linetta boldly replied before adding her own conditions, "However, we have to get a servant to swap the glasses randomly for us. After all, you already know which one is laced with the sleeping drug."

"Wouldn't I fall for your trick if I had readily agreed?" Linetta added, thinking she was smart.

However, Lillias was a little speechless.

"But, sis, I said you can have the first pick. So, why would it matter if I know which one is laced or not?" Lillias replied, giving her sister a weird look.

"Ah... You're right," Linetta suddenly felt stupid as she smiled with embarrassment. "Then, I will pick first, okay?"

"Go ahead," Lillias affirmed confidently.

Linetta gave a hard look at the two glasses but didn't notice any difference; they were completely identical.

The sleeping drug was already fully dissolved into the water. Thus, it was impossible to tell the difference.

Nevertheless, she reached out her hand and hovered over the glasses while watching Lillias's previously confident expression alternate between relief and concern.

Surely, her little sister wouldn't make it so obvious.

"You know what? I'm feeling generous. I'll let you drink the first cup, my dear little sister," Linetta said graciously.

"Really?! Then, don't mind if I do!" Lillias uttered excitedly, reaching for the left glass of water.

However, before her hand could reach it, her elder sister's hand flashed past and snatched the glass of water in the blink of an eye.

"You..."

Gulp!

Linetta downed the glass of water before smacking her wet lips smugly, saying, "Sorry, my dear little sister. Hehehe, all is fair in love and war. I'll be spending the night with..."

Linetta suddenly wobbled, failing to stand straight as she felt lightheaded and drowsy, followed by hearing Lillias's soft sigh.

"Sorry, sis," Lillias apologized before admitting, "Actually, I laced both drinks with sleeping drugs and took an antidote beforehand. You were bound to lose, regardless of which glass you drank, sis."

"Hehe, but as you said – all is fair in love and war. So, you can't blame me for this. I knew you wouldn't play fair, so I wouldn't play fair either," Lillias giggled happily.

"Y-You...! You brat, I will remember this when I wake up...!"

"Goodnight, sis," Lillias laughed harder.

Thud!

Linetta fell asleep on the floor.

Chapter 565: Lillias's Night

Back in the private library, Vaan continued reading through the books one after the other, absorbing everything they had to offer. Although the contents were mostly recurring knowledge he had already learned from other books, there were also a few exceptions.

For example, Black Bristleback Bears were known to be commonly found in the outer regions of the Great Ashfallen Forest. A fully grown Black Bristleback Bear generally had the strength of a High-level Rank 2 to Low-level Rank 3.

However, one of the books recorded encountering a Low-level Rank 4 a little past the boundary of Gehenna's Gate in the Great Ashfallen Forest.

After Vaan cross-referenced with his existing knowledge, it was clear that the deeper one ventured into the Great Ashfallen Forest, the stronger the beasts they would encounter.

It was common knowledge that beasts were more physically endowed than humans. Thus, without training, beasts were stronger than humans.

Nevertheless, beasts were still living beings; they weren't free from the limitations of life.

As such, unless they had an extraordinary bloodline or were blessed by the heavens, it was unlikely for ordinary beasts like the Black Bristleback Bears to grow into a Low-level Rank 4 being naturally.

Vaan was curious how the Black Bristleback Bear became a Low-level Rank 4 being.

Considering the region near Gehenna's Gate was blessed with rich mana, he suspected there were plenty of high-quality magic plants north of it. Perhaps the Black Bristleback Bear could become a Low-level Rank 4 being from eating these high-quality magical plants.

Nevertheless, Gehenna's Gate was like a giant rift, dividing the Great Ashfallen Forest's south outer regions from its deeper parts.

People couldn't cross over it by normal means without stumbling into Gehenna.

At the very least, it wasn't possible on foot within the boundary of the Black Rose Kingdom. After all, the Black Rose Kingdom faced the largest part of the dimensional crack.

On the other hand, the easternmost witch kingdom, the Darkwater Kingdom, faced the thinnest area of the dimensional crack.

Many people could leap over Gehenna's Gate from the top of the trees in this easternmost region to access the deeper depths of the Great Ashfallen Forest.

Speaking of the Darkwater Kingdom, its Perilous Land, the Black Swamp, was another point of interest to Vaan.

Supposedly, the Black Swamp was comprised of toxic water that only existed in the Boundless Sea, which lay far beyond the Eastern Sea to the east and the Treacherous Sea to the west of the continent.

The Boundless Sea also had another name – the Sea of Death.

Due to the toxicity of its seawater, it was publicly known to be incapable of nurturing or accommodating any life.

However, Vaan wouldn't be surprised if it secretly hid the most terrifying and poisonous sea monsters known to Pangea.

After all, while it was true that the toxic seawater would kill all life, life also had a way of adapting.

As long as sea creatures in the Eastern Sea and Treacherous Sea weren't exposed to the full brunt of the seawater's toxicity from the get-go, they could build immunity or even acquire its toxic traits over time.

There were many unknowns in the world, and the vast unknown of the ocean depth was one of the places Vaan would like to explore at some point.

The more he traveled, the more he would discover – the world had its fair share of dangers and beauty.

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After spending several hours in the private library, a pair of tender, fair hands wrapped around Vaan's waist and hugged him from behind.

"Ever since we've met and journeyed together, there's been a growing fire in my chest that can't be quenched without your magical touch," Lillias softly mentioned, resting her head against Vaan's back.

"I've been longing for you day and night, Vahn. You have always been on my mind; I couldn't and wouldn't think of anyone else. I don't need anyone else, just you. I am in love with you, Vahn."

"So, won't you make me one of your women tonight, Vahn?" Lillias requested while trembling nervously after her confession.

"Don't you think you are mistaking admiration, gratitude, and dependence for love, Lady Lillias?" Vaan casually asked with his back still facing her, not in a hurry to agree.

"I can't deny there's admiration, gratitude, and dependence, but isn't that enough?" Lillias replied willfully as her heart shuddered with a growing fear of rejection. "I don't desire a complicated or meaningful love. Your comfort and security are all I need."

"Are you saying your feelings will change one day if I can no longer provide this comfort and security?" Vaan continued to ask.

Lillias's body shuddered.

"It won't!" Lillias shook her head stubbornly and tightened her arms around Vaan before saying, "Once my heart has been set, it won't easily change!"

She believed someone could like another for their character, but their feelings would not become love in the absence of support and trust.

Having stayed in the capital for a period of time, she had seen the stark difference between Vahn and the young masters who tried to court her and her sister.

Flowery words and gifts were only a fraction of the value of trust and support.

She needed someone who could lift her up when she was down, not someone who only knew how to say what she wanted to hear.

Vaan knew how to care for his women and support them; she had already seen it. That was also why she was willing to share him with other women.

People like him were few, and many women needed a person like him.

She couldn't be greedy.

That said, while it was true that Lillias needed Vaan, he didn't need her. His acceptance was just a matter of choice, not a necessity.

"...Is that a no?" Lillias suddenly lost hope after failing to hear Vaan accept her feelings. Her arms slowly lost strength and slipped from their grasp.

There was nothing she could do if Vaan didn't want her.

Lillias was on the verge of crying in despair after jumping to a conclusion when Vaan suddenly grabbed her wrist and pulled her back into his embrace.

The suddenness made her heart thump immediately.

"Could I call myself a man if I refuse a fine lady after all the courage and preparation she put into her confession?" Vaan softly whispered to Lillias before warning her, "However, you'll have to steel yourself."

"My affection isn't easy to take," Vaan boldly stated.

Lillias felt something hard poking against her little sister, causing her body to shudder with weakness. It also incited the heat in her body.

"I-I can take it all!" Lillias claimed unconfidently.

Chapter 566: Lillias's Night (2)

Looking into Lillias's determined eyes, Vaan smiled before responding to her feelings with a kiss.

Regardless of whether Lillias could endure his affection or not, he would give it to her as she desired. He had to reward her efforts, at the very least.

He wasn't oblivious to Lillias's scheme to trick her big sister into drinking a sleeping drug or the fact that Linetta was still sleeping on the cold, hard floor in her bedroom.

It was all within the range of his Omni-Sense.

"Mm..." Lillias uttered a sweet, muffled sound under Vaan's sudden kiss.

At the same time, her body instinctively tightened with tenseness. But as she savored Vaan's gentle kiss, her body slowly relaxed.

Being held intimately by Vaan warmed her heart and melted away her uneasiness and unfounded fears.

Lillias quickly familiarized herself with Vaan's kiss before she began taking the initiative to kiss him back. Her inexperience was immediately shown in her clumsiness to maintain her breathing.

Nevertheless, her feelings and intent were conveyed.

Vaan gave her a taste of his higher-end kissing technique as he slipped his slithery tongue past her supple, moist lips. He sensually contacted Lillias's tongue with light greetings before caressing it playfully like a kid that had just come over to play with the neighbor's kid.

As such, it all felt smooth and natural; there wasn't the slightest sense of forcefulness or invasiveness that would cause Lillias to feel repulsed.

She immediately marveled at the sensational delight she could feel from their contact.

By the time their lips separated, Lillias finally remembered to breathe. She panted and gasped for air with flushed cheeks, feeling lightheaded.

She felt like she was floating while Vaan supported her body with his arms.

"Ehehehe... weow~!" Lillias exclaimed dreamily at the magical experience.

She glanced at Vaan's handsome face, then looked away, blushing shyly. Then, she glanced at him again before looking away again, giggling foolishly to herself, seemingly drunk on happiness.

The third time she glanced at Vaan, she reached out her hands, wanting to grab hold of Vaan's head and bring their lips together.

She wanted to experience the wonderful sensation brought by his kiss again.

"Vahn, kiss~!" Lillias demanded, spoiled yet adorably.

"As you wish, my Lady," Vaan casually acknowledged, gently lifting up her chin before stealing her lips more aggressively but differently from the last.

No kiss was the same as the last.

Even if kissing was nothing new to Vaan—No, it was precisely because it was nothing new to him that he knew he should never repeat the same kiss pattern.

The element of surprise and unpredictability were what made kisses exciting.

In a sense, kissing was like a mixed game of tag and soccer – there should be one tagged attacker and one running defender. The struggle of not getting caught by the tagged attacker was what made the game fun and exciting for the running defender.

But at the same time, the running defender also had to defend their weak spots and prevent the tagged attacker from scoring points.

As such, Vaan couldn't let his partners know his next move while going after their erogenous zone. He would bore his partner if his moves were repetitive and predictable.

Lillias was like a lost little lamb – she didn't know how to play the game, let alone protect her objectives – the weak spots.

No, she didn't even know where her weak spots were.

As such, Vaan freely attacked her erogenous points and stimulated her body through his kisses, sapping away her strength in the process.

Lillias quickly became soft and hypersensitive – every casual touch would produce a sensual response from her squirming body.

She began panting with heavy and haggard breathing; her fast-beating heart made her body feel hot like fire. She glanced up at Vaan with an irresistible desire burning in her eyes from strong arousal.

Although Lillias wanted Vaan to make love to her on the spot, she still managed to grip his clothes and input a request as she resisted her carnal desire with sheer will.

"L-Let's go back to my room..." Lillias suggested.

At the same time, Vaan couldn't help but smile with amusement after hearing the content of her request.

"You mean the room where you left your sister to sleep on the cold, hard floor?" Vaan asked for confirmation despite knowing the answer.

He was teasing her.

"Yes!" Lillias answered with a heavy blush of embarrassment, realizing Vaan had been aware of her sneaky little scheme the whole time.

Nevertheless, after Vaan carried her to her room, he placed her on the large, soft, white bed before proceeding to pick up Linetta and set her beside Lillias.

"I can't wait anymore. Please give it to me, Vahn~!" Lillias requested, proactively removing her loose yellow gown in a sloppy manner.

Nevertheless, the loose yellow gown was easy to remove. Thus, her white rabbits easily slipped out for display before Vaan helped take it off entirely.

Her fair, slightly undeveloped, but well-proportioned body was quickly exposed for Vaan's eyes to feast on.

Vaan's gaze trickled down to her sopping-wet cave down under while appreciating the vulnerable beauty.

Lillias suddenly felt self-conscious and shy.

Her cheeks flushed bright crimson as she covered her private area with one hand and looked away shyly.

"Don't stare too much~!" Lillias weakly complained with mixed feelings. She wanted him to keep looking, but at the same time, she didn't.

"Alright," Vaan agreed, nonetheless.

Shortly after he stripped himself bare and whipped out the big dragon, Lillias's casual, passing glance quickly locked onto it before she received the biggest shock of her life.

Her mind immediately became alert, fully awake; she also retreated several paces on the bed and backed herself against the wall in fear.

"W-W-What the hell is that?!" Lillias exclaimed with intense dismay.

She had never seen a man's prized jewel before, but she figured it certainly wouldn't be as big as the one she saw before her.

That thing was supposed to enter inside her?

Would it even fit?

Various thoughts raced through Lillias's mind as she wondered how to get herself out of the situation.

She wasn't mentally prepared for such a sight.

"Are you getting cold feet? We can end it here."

"No!"

Although Lillias thought of escaping, she immediately strongly refused Vaan's suggestion. She couldn't let it end there.

Absolutely not!

"Go on, Vahn. I'm ready," Lillias said, trembling in a vulnerable position that made things easy for Vaan's big dragon to enter. She did her best to contain her fear.

It was what she wanted, and yet when the time came, she became extremely nervous.

Chapter 567: Lillias's Night (3)

Lillias was like a young flower that shriveled under harsh weather; she required tender care before fully blooming.

Vaan slid into the bed with her and started tending to Lillias's cherry lips, causing her to close her eyes subconsciously. At the same time, his dexterous fingers slid down her silky-smooth body, caressing her fair, delicate skin.

From her neck to her chest and from her chest to her belly, he pressed several acupoints along the way, stimulating her erogenous zones.

The surge of pleasure made Lillias's body alternate between tensing and relaxing as she squirmed with delight and calmed after its end.

"Ahh..." a cute moan involuntarily escaped her mouth.

Nevertheless, Vaan continued stimulating Lillias's acupoints, making her body more sensitive to his magical touches. The waves of pleasure produced eventually drowned out her trembling of fear.

Before the main dish was served, he made her climax five times.

"Haa... Haa..." Lillias huffed and puffed, feeling short of breath.

The repeated stimulation increased her heartbeat and blood pressure, causing her body's temperatures to become hot but not enough to sweat. It was at a perfect level of heat, which enhanced the smoothness of her skin and made it pleasant to the touch.

At the same time, Lillias felt extremely comfortable.

Whether it was the warm, manly touch of Vaan's firm hands or the soft, silky fabrics of the bedsheet and blanket, she felt everything clearly.

She never imagined her body could feel so good by contacting everyday objects. She couldn't help but rub her arms and legs against everything, especially herself.

The sensation of contact between the flesh was comfortable and delightful.

At that point, Vaan's huge dragon no longer scared her. It no longer looked like something that would tear her apart. Rather, it was a tool that could allow her to experience a higher state of pleasure.

"I'm not scared anymore, Vahn. Please continue," Lillias said with a soft, tame, and alluring voice.

She wrapped her arms around Vaan's neck and brought his head closer to her chest like she was hugging something dear to her.

Having him close to her chest and letting him hear her beating heart made her feel reassured and safe.

Without further delay, Vaan slid his raging dragon through the drowning cave and tore open the entrance.

"Ahhh~!" Lillias cried, feeling something hot and big entering her.

The pain was short and instantaneous but not as bad as she had previously imagined, considering the terrifying size of Vaan's erected rod. Still, before she could savor the one-in-a-lifetime pain, Vaan's dragon slid out for a second thrust.

Ram!

Upon Vaan's second thrust, Lillias's entire body tensed and quivered with inexplicable delight that couldn't be compared with anything she had felt until that point.

The rush of pleasure came quickly and abruptly, shooting straight up to her head; she wasn't the least bit prepared for it. The sense of fullness made her mind blank for a few seconds. She saw nothing but white light.

It was as if the pleasure had transcended her mind from the physical world and brought her into a brand-new world.

Then, the third thrust brought her mind back to reality, allowing her to feel the sensational joy of becoming a woman more clearly.

"Ahhnn~!!" Lillias gave a clear, euphoric moan of sheer bliss once the pleasure was registered in her mind.

"Ahh... Ahn.. Mmm~!"

Lillias's heart-stirring, captivating cries resounded uncontrollably and in shorter intervals according to Vaan's increasing tempo.

Her body squirmed and shuddered helplessly, completely at the mercy of Vaan's whims as he savored her young, blooming body as he pleased.

The otherworldly pleasure was unstoppable and irresistible – Lillias couldn't endure it for a short moment without climaxing her own. She wanted to climax together with Vaan, but she couldn't.

It felt too good.

She couldn't stop the overwhelming urge, nor could she resist it.

She simply had no defense against it.

"It's so good~! I love it so much~!" Lillias cried with all her remaining strength, climaxing for the nth time. Her vision blurred with sheer happiness, feeling a load of warm energy filling her little sister.

She felt fulfilled and satisfied. She lay in bed in complete relaxation.

But after a moment, she glanced down at the white fluid oozing out of her tingling cave and felt another surge of happiness welling up inside her.

It would be best if she could bear Vaan's child.

However, she also knew it would take a miracle to be impregnated in a single shot. After all, many people have tried for years without a single successful insemination due to the incredibly low fertility of witches.

Lillias swiped at the thick, white fluid with one hand and brought it closer for inspection.

Just when Vaan wondered what she intended to do with his white essence, Lillias smeared it on Linetta's sleeping face.

Afterward, she caught Vaan's gaze from the corner of her eyes, prompting her to glance at him and chuckle foolishly as if to look innocent despite getting caught doing something bad.

"This is payback," Lillias explained, justifying her action.

Naturally, Vaan understood the reason. He couldn't help but smile with amusement.

After all, he was the culprit behind shooting his load on Lillias's sleeping face back in the underground cave. And yet, Linetta was taking the blame.

But then again, Linetta was also partly to blame for readily agreeing to dual practice when her little sister was sleeping next to them.

As such, Lillias wasn't exactly wrong to replicate the event, returning tit for tat.

Nevertheless, Lillias soon noticed Vaan's little brother still standing strong despite shooting such a big first load. She quickly felt something was wrong.

Vaan wasn't finished? No, he was just getting started!

Lillias was aghast at that realization.

"What's wrong? You didn't think I'd be done after shooting once, did you?" Vaan asked with a smug yet ominous grin, knowing what Lillias was thinking. "The night is still young, my Lady."

"Since you knocked your sister out with a sleeping drug, of course, you'll have to keep me company, right?" Vaan asked rhetorically, spreading her legs for round two.

"W-Wait, let's take a break, Vahn~!" Lillias suggested anxiously, covering her dripping, feminine cave with one hand. "Let's talk about this—Ahhn~!"

Unfortunately, Vaan didn't listen to her plea. After removing her hand, he slipped his homeless dragon back into its warm, cozy cave.

The sensation of his skillfully controlled, well-timed thrusts sent Lillias back into a state of euphoria.

Chapter 568: Lillias's Night (4)

Helpless as she was to resist Vaan's advances, Lillias could only let her body be used by him for his pleasure. In fact, she was happy if she could make him feel good with her body.

However, she was also painfully aware that she didn't have the stamina and energy to keep up with him.

It was her mistake to put her sister to sleep.

Vaan wasn't a man who could be satisfied or monopolized by one woman. It would take a group of women to tame him in bed—or so Lillias originally thought.

However, she quickly doubted her judgment.

Vaan's art of pleasuring had transcended human understanding. If he truly went all out with his skills, there wasn't a single woman in Pangea who could last long against him.

That said, Lillias had to think of a solution quickly.

She had already exhausted all her stamina and definitely didn't have the energy to keep Vaan company through the whole night.

Lillias weakly turned over, intending to escape by crawling away with her sluggish body, but her plump rear was quickly caught by Vaan's firm hands.

The lewd position immediately made her sense imminent danger.

"Nooo~!" Lillias weakly cried with sheer delight as Vaan's hungry dragon charged into her honeypot, soaking itself in her overflowing love nectar.

The sensation she received from the behind thrust was even more incredible than all the other positions she had experienced.

It was incredibly pleasurable and dangerously addicting.

Lillias's eyes rolled back, and her body shuddered in ecstasy as her mind blanked out again from reaching a high climax.

It was an unforgettable experience.

Vaan inserted his fingers into Lillias's mouth and rubbed her insides with one hand while pressing her body down with the other.

"Heuk...!!"

Lillias violently quivered with an even greater delight following Vaan's forceful thrust in her adjusted position.

Each climax was a different, new experience for her.

She couldn't imagine if there was a ceiling to the height of pleasure. She kept experiencing a higher and better state of it.

It felt boundless to the point that she could lose her mind in it.

Nevertheless, Vaan knew how to control his strength and not go overboard; he wouldn't break Lillias's mind, nor did he have any intention to.

He just gave her a little taste of higher-end skills to punish her for being mischievous.

A gardener had to know how to tend to his garden and care for his flowers—not only so they could be beautiful individually but also as a collective group. As such, it was necessary to prune the bad parts that prevented or got in the way of their peaceful coexistence.

Nevertheless, it wasn't Lillias's scheme itself that was the issue, but Lillias leaving her sister to sleep on the floor.

As such, Vaan had to fix her behavior before it developed into a habit and eventually a problem.

"I'm sorry for being greedy, Vahn~! I shouldn't have tried to put my sister to sleep and have you all to myself. It's too much for me," Lillias apologized without Vaan needing to mention anything before pleading, "Please spare me~!"

She could hardly think straight when she was drowning in the sea of pleasure.

Still, she regretted not having her sister's backup.

Nevertheless, her apology won her some breathing time as Vaan paused his piston-like movements to give Lillias a break.

Lillias did not hesitate to use that chance to wake her sister.

"Sis, please wake up and take over! I can't do it~! Vaan is too much for me to handle by myself~!" Lillias struggled to shake her big sister awake due to a lack of strength.

She forgot the sleeping drug was strong enough to put her sister to sleep until morning. Thus, no external force could rouse her sister awake, at least not in the first few hours when the effect was strongest.

She still had some antidote, but it was also too far for her to reach.

It was only after a short while before she remembered she could use magic. Light magic wasn't her specialty, but for a harmless, low-level medicine like Dream Dust, curing it with her non-proficient Cure spell was more than enough.

Cure! Cure! Cure!

Lillias cast the Cure spell on Linetta repeatedly to remove the potency of the dissolved Dream Dust in her system.

...

"Uuu... Lily?" Linetta grumbled while rubbing her sleepy eyes as she woke up, then asked, "Is it morning already?"

"I'm sorry for leaving you to sleep on the floor! I was too excited to have Vaan to myself! But I've recognized my mistake and learned he is too much for me to handle alone!" Lillias quickly explained before pleading pitifully, "So please take over! I'm so tired..."

"You did what, now?" Linetta furrowed brows at the first line before skipping over it due to the abruptness of all the information she had to digest suddenly.

Still, seeing her little sister's pitiful look quickly softened her heart.

"Alright," Linetta readily agreed despite not grasping the situation. She had just woken up and wasn't in the state to think properly.

Nevertheless, her heart started beating faster when she glanced over and saw Vaan's bare, masculine body. She quickly became aroused as she recalled their past experience and missed his touch.

"Vahn, me too... Give me some love..." Linetta lazily demanded with outstretched arms to welcome him over.

"Of course, my Lady," Vaan readily agreed with a soft smile.

The sleepy state of Linetta made her especially seductive yet adorable at the same time. Seeing her like that would make men subconsciously want to pamper her.

...

That night, the sleepy Linetta quickly became wide awake under the strong stimulation of pleasure. Her soft moans rang like chiming bells throughout the room.

Lillias only got a short break before her exhausted body became aroused again from watching Vaan dual-practice with her big sister.

Nevertheless, her sister only lasted three hours before she got her turn again.

However, this time, Vaan showered her with gentle affection. As such, Lillias enjoyed a state of happiness a little longer.

Vaan took turns tasting each of the Delarosa sisters throughout the night until they were completely satisfied and left them sleeping soundly in each other's arms when the sun rose high in the sky.

Chapter 569: Resolving a Small Problem

After leaving the Delarosa Marquisate, Vaan passed Blackmoon City and stopped by Sunpeak Town. Actually, it should be called Sunpeak City now.

During the time Vaan was away, Sunpeak City had rapidly expanded and shed away its former shell.

It was no longer a desolate town with broken buildings but a major trade city with over a hundred thousand residents, which was still increasing by the day. As more people heard praises of Sunpeak City, more people decided to visit and eventually settle down.

Even people from Blackthorn City have moved to Sunpeak City to seek new opportunities.

After all, Sunpeak City was a growing trade city with constant changes and lower costs compared to Blackthorn City, which had an oversaturated market and high cost of living.

Sunpeak City was a place that guaranteed profit, even with small investments.

Furthermore, the strict laws implemented in Sunpeak City ensured that no honest resident would become a victim of crooked business practices, scams, coercion, and other crimes.

The city was flourishing under a solid order.

Nevertheless, Sunpeak City's booming momentum was bound to end eventually. After all, Blackthorn City was about to undergo major reforms. The great changes in the capital would draw attention back to it.

That said, once the giant magic tower on Red Goblin Mountain was completed, Sunpeak City's growth momentum would be unstoppable. Even Redpine City would benefit from its location and flourish.

When Vaan arrived near Sunpeak City, he could see it had grown to four times its original size.

Such rapid development within such a short time could only be possible due to the convenience of magic and the abundance of resources the land had to offer. Many trees had been cut down for land clearance and construction materials, but wood wasn't something the region lacked.

Furthermore, the new residents seemed to understand time was money. Thus, they didn't hesitate to settle down quickly to do business – another factor that contributed to the city's swift progress.

Vaan could also see that Sunpeak City had expanded northward into the Red Goblin Mountain, and a new city lord manor was built on the elevated land.

"Teacher!"

"Vahn!"

"My Lord!"

"Sir Vahn!"

When Vaan quietly entered the new city lord manor, multiple voices called out to him excitedly. Cyrena, Dahlia, Aeliana, and Solana were found gathered together, seemingly in the middle of a meeting.

He could understand the presence of Dahlia, Aeliana, and Solana when it came to city planning. However, it was slightly surprising to also see Cyrena with them.

After all, her strength lay in Potioneering.

"Hello, ladies. Did you all miss me?" Vaan greeted them with a charming smile, causing a couple of hearts to skip a beat. "Where's Eniwse?"

"Lady Eniwse is..."

Shortly after he asked, Aeliana briefed him on the development of the Shadow Witch Order, the intelligence network they were building together.

Vaan soon learned Eniwse had already left to establish the branches in the Holy Knight Empire.

Eniwse figured she was the most suitable person for the job since Aeliana was still the lord of Sunpeak City. As such, Aeliana was required to stay back; Sunpeak City's development and order still needed her despite it being co-managed by her mother.

Hester, on the other hand, was still training in the Red Dragon Clan.

Nevertheless, knowing Narvim and Khaleesi secretly assigned some new dragon elites to protect Eniwse, Vaan wasn't worried Eniwse would have an accident during her mission.

"Teacher, will you be sticking around for long?" Cyrena asked Vaan with a hopeful expression as she hugged his arm.

At the same time, she secretly wished to be praised for becoming proficient in concocting Rank 3 potions.

In other words, she had already become a Rank 3 Potioneer.

However, it was nothing surprising to Vaan, considering her talents and his solid teaching. In theory, his principle of equivalent exchange could be applied to even Rank 5 potion recipes.

As such, it shouldn't be difficult for Cyrena to become Rank 5 Potioneer on her own without further teachings. The only prerequisite was that her cultivation kept up with her potioneering advancement.

After all, higher-ranking magic potions required the application of magic in its concoction process.

"I can stick around for a day or two," Vaan replied, caressing Cyrena's head with a smile before glancing at the other ladies.

The sudden flickers in their eyes did not escape his notice.

It was clear what they were thinking.

Once his women experienced his magic touch, it was hard for them to resist the desire to experience it again. He anticipated his room would have visitors at night, should he stay.

Of course, Vaan had no intention of avoiding them or refusing their advances should that happen. After all, he needed to satiate their carnal hunger and keep them satisfied; he couldn't let them keep starving.

Otherwise, they could start looking for other men to fulfill their needs.

"Do I have a room? I will leave the door open at night, so there's no need to be sneaky," Vaan casually said, sweeping a thoughtful glance at the ladies.

Dahlia and Solana coughed awkwardly with embarrassment, realizing their plans had been seen through.

Meanwhile, Aeliana's eyes beamed.

There was nothing embarrassing about desiring her lord's affection. Since her lord permitted it, she would definitely pay her lord a night visit.

"Ahem," Solana cleared her throat before suggesting, "Why don't you join our meeting since you are here, Sir Vahn? We could use your wisdom."

"Sure, then I will, Lady Solana," Vaan nodded.

He separated from Cyrena and took the empty seat at the round table, where Dahlia, Solana, and Aeliana were gathered.

Shortly after, their meeting resumed.

During their discussion, Vaan quickly found the issue they were addressing – sanitation. Witches had the convenience of magic to clean after their messes, but not everyone in Sunpeak City was proficient in lifestyle magic.

More importantly, not everyone was a witch.

It wasn't much of an issue when their city's population was small. Unfortunately, the large increase in residents made them realize the inadequateness of their water systems.

They didn't have enough water-attribute witches to support the ever-growing city.

Covering drinking water wasn't an issue; everyone had access to it. However, water wasn't only needed for drinking. There was a far greater demand for cleaning water than drinking water.

As such, Cyrena was invited to the meeting in case she had valuable insights on how they could recycle the wastewater.

Vaan wasn't surprised to hear they saw recycling wastewater as their only option.

Geographically, Sunpeak City wasn't close to any large rivers, and groundwater was limited. Water-attribute witches were in shortage, and hiring them to support the city's water supply wasn't cost-effective.

Naturally, they would turn to recycling wastewater – it would solve their water shortage once they figured it out.

Nevertheless, purifying wastewater was easy; doing it on a large scale effectively was difficult.

Fortunately, they had him.

After Vaan requested a pen and paper, he drafted the design blueprint for a water reservoir and distillation plant. Then, he wrote down several recipes for soap, sanitizers, and hair-washing products.

They were each divided into three grades – low, middle, and high.

Low-grade products were cheap, affordable, and easily manufactured on a large scale. Middle-grade products were less common but more effective and pleasant to smell. Lastly, high-grade products were rare but very effective and aromatic.

After he wrote down everything, Vaan softly sighed.

The existence of magic brought wonders to the world. But at the same time, it took something fundamental away.

The people's heavy dependence on the convenience of magic resulted in a lack of development in other areas.

Fortunately, this issue was only prevalent in the seven witch kingdoms, where witches were dominant and the majority.

It was less evident in other countries.

"I don't know how I should feel about this... Even if we could purify the wastewater and turn it into 100% clean water, we will still think it's impure, knowing what it had been, Teacher," Cyrena mentioned with mixed feelings before adding, "I'm sure many people will feel this way too."

"That's not an issue," Vaan casually stated.

"Clean water is still clean water. They can still use pure water if they don't want to use recycled water. It's not like we will stop using water-attribute witches to create more pure water. However, we have to adjust the prices. Set recycled water prices low and affordable and increase pure water prices."

"There won't be any more complaints once people adjust according to their needs and preferences," Vaan explained.

"Interesting..." Solana uttered thoughtfully, thinking it was a simple yet incredible plan. "Raising the price of pure water would have easily caused outrage. But if we do it like this, they will have no choice but to accept. The value of pure water has changed."

"This is both sustainable and profitable," Solana added with bright eyes.

Once they constructed the water distillation plant and implemented the changes, they wouldn't just resolve their water shortage but also increase their revenue. That would give them more funds to hasten their development plans.

"Well, that settles that," Vaan acknowledged the issue had been resolved before expressing his intent to leave, "I'll be heading out to check on the giant magic tower."

"I'll be back later. Don't worry," Vaan added after seeing a few dull looks of disappointment.

Their reactions slightly amused him. After all, he had already told them he would stay for a day or two. He wasn't going to change his mind.

"Please let me accompany you, my Lord," Aeliana requested, standing up from her seat with a hopeful expression.

Vaan saw no reason to refuse, so he accepted with a nod.

"Alright."

Chapter 570: Sea of Stars' Challenges

Shortly after Vaan grabbed Aeliana's shoulder, they both disappeared from the new city lord manor with spatial shift. They appeared in front of the giant magic tower on top of the Red Goblin Mountain within moments.

Aeliana's vision only blacked out momentarily before she quickly realized her new location.

Immediately, she glanced at her lord on the side with greater awe and worship. Her lord had become even more unfathomable and powerful.

'That was a spatial ability...' Aeliana understood.

The restriction of magic for men did not apply to her lord; he was beyond it. An extraordinary man like her lord would not be subdued by common sense.

Although Aeliana didn't know how Vaan achieved spatial shift, she was relieved it wasn't through wizardry. If he had given up his prized jewel for magic, it would have been considered a tragic and great loss for all witches.

Nevertheless, while Aeliana was feeling amazed by Vaan's new ability, he focused on the towering black building before him.

Ever since the Red Dragon Clan revealed their existence in the war between the Kingdom of Black Rose and the Holy Knight Empire, several young elites had been openly helping out with the giant magic tower's construction.

As such, the Red Goblin Mountain's surrounding regions didn't just become popular sightseeing spots to observe the giant magic tower in the making but also to see the majesty of the red dragon race.

"Sup—Err, Sir Vahn."

"Sir Vahn."

Two Rank 5 Red Dragons descended from the top of the magic tower to greet Vaan, one of which nearly exposed his true status in public.

His status as the supreme leader of the Red Dragon Clan was something they had to keep secret to protect the Red Dragon Clan and Pangea from Gehenna.

After all, if word of the Red Dragon Clan acknowledging a human as their supreme leader spread, it was equivalent to declaring the death of their Fire Dragon God to Gehenna's Seven Great Devils.

Losing one or their only deterrence against Gehenna would only hasten the war if it didn't outright start one.

As such, Vaan was only the Red Dragon Clan's friend in public.

"How's the progress on the magic tower, Esteemed Lady Emi and Lady Zeni?" Vaan casually inquired from two Rank 5 Red Dragons.

They were both female dragons.

Supposedly, female dragons were more meticulous with the finer details of construction work than male dragons.

As such, they were assigned the task.

However, that was just a stereotype. Not all female dragons were meticulous – just like how dragons were believed to be wise, but not all were.

The intelligent dragon race wasn't much different from humans.

Dragons weren't wise because they were more intelligent than humans; they were wise because they had long lifespans and time to accumulate their knowledge. Newly born dragons weren't any more knowledgeable than human babies.

As such, between humans and dragons, age and experience were the only true factors in their difference of wisdom.

...

"As you can see, Sir Vahn, the tower has reached sixty-thousand feet high. We are almost at two-thirds of the revised project's goal," Zeni reported after glancing at Emi.

It was Emi who had almost called Vaan by his true title.

"Sixty-thousand feet, huh?" Vaan muttered.

He distanced himself from the region and studied both the giant magic tower and the Red Goblin Mountain before confirming with a nod.

The total height of the two combined was indeed roughly sixty-thousand feet above ground level.

Once they achieved a hundred thousand feet, they would reach the great river of mana flowing in the high atmosphere. From that point onward, their mana shortage would cease to exist, and the city's rate of development would improve significantly.

"Who can accompany me to the sea of stars?" Vaan returned to the two Rank 5 Red Dragons and asked.

"I can, S-Sir Vahn. I should have more magic power remaining than Zeni," Emi volunteered before hesitantly adding, "But I won't be able to stay for long."

"You don't have to worry about that, Esteemed Lady Emi; it won't be a problem," Vaan calmly assured, knowing the female dragon's concern.

Meanwhile, Aeliana softly sighed to herself, knowing she could not accompany her lord beyond this point. She was aware she still lacked the ability to travel where they were heading.

"Then, let us head off."

"Yes, Sir Vahn."

Shortly after Vaan's urging, the two took off into the sky, first heading to the top of the giant magic tower.

At this height, there weren't many members of the Red Dragon Clan that could reach purely by the strength of their wings. This was due to multiple factors such as gravity, body weight, and lower air density.

But as a Rank 5 Red Dragon, Emi had no problem flying to sixty-thousand feet altitude with just the strength of her wings.

Vaan brought Emi along to collect data on a Rank 5 Red Dragon's ability to enter the sea of stars.

As such, after he explained the details to Emi, he observed her attempt to ascend the high heavens and break past the sky's barrier.

Without any surprise, Emi entered the sea of stars without a problem when she had the support of her magic power. Coincidentally, she was proficient in spatial magic. Thus, she consumed far less mana than she would have needed to cross the same distance with thrust power.

Vaan released oxygen from his Heaven-Swallowing Space and locked it within their region of space, allowing both of them to breathe in the sea of stars.

The biggest challenge for the red dragons to stay in the sea of stars was the lack of air. Thus, once Vaan resolved their breathing issue, the duration of their stay in the sea of stars would drastically increase.

In other words, they would have more construction time.

Emi had only consumed a tenth of her mana to enter the sea of stars through spatial magic. She also estimated it would have cost eight-tenths of her mana reserve had she done the same with fire magic.

With that information, Vaan understood it was possible for every Rank 5 Red Dragon to enter the sea of stars.

Nevertheless, he only needed a dedicated team to build his space station – a place to supply oxygen during people's stay. It also had to be large enough to accommodate both humans and dragons.

Such a large space station would take time to construct.

Furthermore, he couldn't accompany them throughout the construction process. After all, he had other things to do. Thus, he had to come up with another solution to their breathing problem to replace him.

Vaan immediately thought of the simplest method and couldn't help but feel amused.

'Dragons with space helmets... That's probably a first in history,' Vaan mused.

As long as the Rank 5 Red Dragons wore space helmets specifically designed to trap oxygen inside, they would have no issue breathing in the sea of stars.

Furthermore, they were also proficient in producing interspatial storage. Thus, there wouldn't be a problem stocking up on a tremendous amount of oxygen to support them in the sea of stars.

Interspatial artifacts were far better for storage than any oxygen tanks.

'Supreme Leader, if we want to build a large space station according to your requirements in this region, we'll need an enormous amount of resources. I also estimate it would take around three months to complete... but if you give me a full team, one month is doable,' Emi mentioned telepathically.

'Time and resource is not the issue; it has to be done,' Vaan decisively replied.

'However, we won't be building the space station right away. We need to set up a space gate first. Once we have an active space gate deployed, it'll be more efficient and convenient to send resources and people to this region of space.'

'That should also greatly cut down on travel time and mana reserves for construction,' Vaan added.

Emi blanked for a moment before performing her own calculations. Once she got the results, she blinked with surprise.

"You're right, Supreme Leader," Emi acknowledged excitedly.

'If we have a space gate set up, we could greatly cut down on magic power expenditure. In that case, I can confidently say it won't take longer than two weeks to complete this space project with a full team.'

'However...' Emi suddenly became discouraged before mentioning, 'But if we want to reach the moon to commence the colony construction, we'll need to build at least ten to twenty Rank 5 Space Gates between Pangea and the moon.'

'That's right,' Vaan acknowledged before further adding, 'And that's not the last of the problems either.'

The Red Dragon Clan's Space Gate needed to be powered with mana. Without mana, it was just pretty scrap metal.

Although they could supply mana from the giant magic tower, it would only be limited to the first Space Gate they intended to set up for the space station.

The subsequent Space Gates they had to set up further away from Pangea would require manual maintenance.

After all, the Space Gates could also potentially drift away from their ideal positions, increasing the distance beyond their capable function and disabling the entire path to the moon.

As such, the subsequent Space Gates required constant realignment to give them a straight path.

The sea of stars was definitely not a place for the ill-prepared.