

The Witch 861

Chapter 861: Sacred Among Wood Spirits?

It wasn't difficult for Vaan to guess that the Wood Spirits had noticed something special about Emerald.

However, they didn't seem to be exactly sure what was special about her.

That said, the older Wood Spirits appeared to have some insights after pondering for some time. Their sudden looks of surprise, doubt, and astonishment further aroused Vaan's curiosity.

Just what did they find out about Emerald?

"Little Fairy, where do you come from? Can you tell this Old Man about what kind of place it is?" Senior Sunflower Spirit asked nicely.

"Myu?"

Emerald tilted her head in doubt, unable to understand the intention behind Senior Sunflower Spirit's question.

"Myuu, myuu, myu, myuu," Emerald eventually answered anyway, telling the Senior Sunflower Spirit about the forest of her birth.

However, after learning about the little fairy's place of birth, Senior Sunflower Spirit could only frown and glance at his senior peers with the same doubt.

There was nothing special about the forest that she had mentioned to them.

In fact, it was so ordinary that it wasn't worth mentioning—at least according to what the little fairy told them.

"Please excuse this Old Man for a moment," Senior Sunflower Spirit informed Emerald before joining his circle of peers to discuss the subject of interest. "Something isn't right."

"Something isn't right indeed," a senior Purplelotus Spirit nodded and said, "The Little Fairy is obviously special, but her origin of birth sounds too ordinary to give a special Wood Spirit like her."

"Right, the information doesn't seem to match the description in our tribe's records. Even without the records, by logic, it shouldn't be possible for a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit to be born in ordinary forests," the Sunflower Spirit stated with a frown.

"Furthermore, we can't be sure this little fairy is a Heaven's Chosen," the Divine Vine Spirit continued, saying, "Although we can feel the influence of this little one's voice, it is rather weak for a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit."

"But there's no doubt that a Mid-rank Wood Spirit is influencing us, Divine Wood Spirits. Only Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits, who were blessed by the heavens, could possess such an ability," the Purplelotus Spirit reminded.

"Perhaps this ability was dormant at birth and was only awakened recently? Maybe that is why the influence is quite weak?" the Sunflower Spirit guessed.

"But that still doesn't explain the supposed origin of birth; this is what I don't understand," the Divine Vine Spirit frowned as she said, "A forest of such little life potential cannot birth a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit."

"With the Mother Tree in slumber, even a holy place like our Garden of Thyia has a low chance of giving birth to a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit, let alone a small forest with little life potential," the Divine Vine Spirit stated.

While the senior Wood Spirits discussed the legitimacy of Emerald's special status, Vaan gradually understood what was going on.

The senior Wood Spirits were greatly concerned about Emerald's special status—to the point that they had to have a heated discussion among themselves because they were trying to figure out how they should treat her.

If they believed her to be this so-called Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit, she would be akin to a sacred existence, more revered than royalty among Wood Spirits.

However, they couldn't confirm her status due to her weak influence and lowly origin of birth.

When Vaan thought that the Lord of Chaos might have played another hand in the matter, he couldn't help but feel grave about the current situation in Chaos.

After all, if the Lord of Chaos was heavily interfering with his life, planting opportunities for him left and right for him to encounter, it must mean that the Lord of Chaos required him to grow swiftly.

What kind of dire situation was Chaos in that it required the Lord of Chaos to prepare such extensive preparations for his growth?

Furthermore, if such a dire situation existed, wouldn't Hecate, considering her extensive knowledge, know about it?

That said, Chaos was infinitely vast.

Vaan couldn't expect Hecate to know everything outside the Eternal Darkheaven Sector.

As Vaan pondered these matters, he gradually came to one conclusion—Chaos's situation was not looking good, but it was also at a stalemate. That was why the Lord of Chaos was still using a roundabout method to let him grow on his own.

Otherwise, the Lord of Chaos might have just taken him away and personally assisted him in returning to the peak of his first life—Varuna's life.

Vaan didn't doubt that if the situation were that dire, the Lord of Chaos wouldn't hesitate to provide him with the best cultivation resources known to Chaos. In fact, the Lord of Chaos might even have the ability to restore his first life's cultivation instantly.

However, the truth was Vaan could only guess at this point.

His past life memories were still incomplete, and Beyond True Divinity Realm was still a vague concept to him. He wasn't quite certain what they could and couldn't do at such a high level of existence.

He felt like he knew, but he couldn't be sure; a persisting sense of uncertainty existed.

'Chaos's boundary barrier shields it from the invasion of Outer Beings, but it doesn't protect new chaosverses that have yet to integrate with it fully...' Vaan mused.

It was the greatest weakness of Chaos's boundary barrier that shielded it from the erosion of nothingness. The Outer Beings could enter Chaos through the integration of new chaosverses.

However, the Lord of Chaos would have, no doubt, slain every one of such Outer Beings who tried to enter Chaos through such a method—unless the invading Outer Beings were too powerful, even for him.

Did Varuna attract this disaster to Chaos from the fourth-dimensional world?

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While Vaan was deep in thought, the Wood Spirits continued their discussion as the Sunflower Spirit suddenly proposed a possibility worth considering.

"A normal forest is indeed incapable of birthing a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit. However, we have been looking at this from a wrong angle. The little fairy believes she was born in such a normal forest, but is that truly the case?"

"What if what she believed is not what actually happened? What if she was placed in such an ordinary forest by means of True Divinity Intervention, like how the Goddess of Life once planted the Mother Tree in this secluded world?"

"Moreover, we haven't thought about whether a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit's innate ability could weaken if it were forced to live in such a low-quality forest," the Sunflower Spirit suggested.

"Un, that's true," the Purplelotus Spirit acknowledged before saying, "I'm inclined to believe the little fairy is a Heaven's Chosen and treat her in the highest regard. But before that, we should inform the Elder Spirit about everything here."

"The Elder Spirit is the eldest and most knowledgeable Wood Spirit in the Garden of Thyia. He must know more about Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits and how to confirm them," the Purplelotus Spirit assumed.

"That... informing the Elder Spirit might not be a good idea," the Sunflower Spirit hesitantly opposed the suggestion after some thought.

However, his unpopular opinion was poorly received by his peers, as the Wood Spirits frowned at him.

"Hm? And why wouldn't it be a good idea, Old Sunflower?" the Purplelotus Spirit questioned.

Chapter 862: Elder Spirit

"Think about it, Old Lotus. The Little Fairy is protecting this human, but the Elder Spirit strictly prohibits Wood Spirits from leaving as well as other beings from entering," Old Sunflower mentioned before asking, "What do you think will happen when he learns about this human?"

"If a disagreement or conflict occurs between the Little Fairy and the Elder Spirit, who are we supposed to side with, Old Lotus?" Old Sunflower added.

"That's a silly question, Old Sunflower. Of course, we have to side with..." Old Lotus began to answer with confidence when he suddenly found himself at a loss for words and sunk into deep thought. "Hm... Who to side with, indeed."

The Elder Spirit has always been their spiritual leader.

Their way of life, their beliefs, and their knowledge; the Elder Spirit taught them everything. As such, the Elder Spirit was also a fatherly figure to every Wood Spirit in the Garden of Thyia.

For that reason, everyone was willing to listen and obey the Elder Spirit.

However, it was also the Elder Spirit who taught them about Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits and that they were the most venerated existences within the Wood Spirit Race.

According to the teachings of the Elder Spirit, Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits held such revered statuses because they were fundamentally tied to the existence and continuation of the Wood Spirit Race.

So long as the Wood Spirit Race had a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit within it, the Wood Spirit Race would never die out.

In a sense, Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits were even more important than Divine Trees of Life. As such, all Wood Spirits instinctively revered and respected Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits.

Unfortunately, the Wood Spirits present weren't knowledgeable enough to know exactly why Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits were essential to the existence and continuation of the Wood Spirit Race.

"In any case, we have to inform the Elder Spirit. We owe the Elder Spirit that much, at the very least," Old Lotus stated before adding, "However, I'll ensure the safety of the Little Fairy and her human, regardless of the Elder Spirit's choice."

"Old Lotus has a point. I agree with him," the Divine Vine Spirit voiced her opinion.

After Old Sunflower pondered for a bit, he eventually agreed as well before returning his attention to Emerald.

"Little One, will you and this human accompany us to the base of the Mother Tree to the Elder Spirit?" Old Sunflower asked before promising, "This Old Man will guarantee both of your safety."

"Myuu?" Emerald turned to Vaan for instructions.

Vaan glanced around at the Wood Spirits and pondered for a moment before giving Emerald a nod.

Considering the Elder Spirit was the one who taught the Wood Spirits about the importance of Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits, he believed no harm would befall Emerald.

As for him?

Well, it was not like he had much of a choice, given he was surrounded by dozens of Rank 6 Divine Wood Spirits and several Rank 7 Divine Wood Spirits.

However, the original danger he had sensed from the surroundings had lessened when the Wood Spirits learned about Emerald and suspected her special status. As such, he was willing to take a gamble.

Perhaps something good was awaiting them.

Even if things went south, Vaan still had a backup card that he could use to guarantee his safety. But he also didn't believe he would need to resort to it due to the innate nature of the Wood Spirit Race.

That said, nothing was certain until they met the Elder Spirit.

...

Under the lead of the senior Wood Spirits, Vaan and Emerald made their way through the thick forest.

Divine herbs and plants could be found left and right; the entire Garden of Thyia was one big treasure trove.

If the humans of Pangea could utilize such valuable divine herbs and plants, their progress would advance by leaps and bounds. Even the pressure from Gehenna would become insignificant to the average Pangean Human within a hundred years.

However, Vaan didn't think about looting the divine herbs and plants. He was also careful with his steps, avoiding all the precious flowers and plants in his path.

Still, Vaan could feel the Kinggrass Spirit's piercing glance in his back with every step he took on the grassy land. Although the Kinggrass Spirit didn't say anything, his silence was certainly louder than words.

As such, Vaan ultimately hovered in the air instead.

Shortly after Vaan arrived at the base of the Mother Tree with Emerald and the Wood Spirits, an ancient treefolk immediately singled him out with his stern gaze.

The ancient treefolk was a humanoid tree spirit, but it wasn't much taller than the average tree in the forest.

However, its great wisdom and age could be suspected from its notable ancient aura.

"What is the meaning of this? Have you all forgotten my teachings?" the ancient treefolk frowned at the Wood Spirits and scolded them, "How many times have I warned you all to be careful of outsiders?"

"Not only did you not send the outsider away after wiping his memories, but you even brought him to the heart of our tribe. Do none of you have any sense of the danger you have brought to the tribe?"

"You are dooming us all!" the ancient treefolk stressed.

"Elder Spirit, there's a really good reason for this. Please have a look at this young Wood Spirit and enlighten us with your knowledge, Elder Spirit," the Sunflower Spirit quickly implored, directing the ancient treefolk's attention to Emerald.

Originally, the ancient treefolk felt sad and disappointed. But after it gave Emerald a better look, it quickly showed surprise and doubt. Shortly after, it frowned in deep thought.

At the same time, the Wood Spirits all felt nervous. They weren't sure what the Elder Spirit was thinking.

Even Emerald felt a little anxious with the silent attention.

After some time, the Elder Spirit softly requested, "Child, can you come closer so this Old Man can have a better look at you? You can also come here, too, Human Friend."

"This... Elder Spirit, I don't think that is..." the Sunflower Spirit hesitantly disagreed as he would find it difficult to protect Vaan and Emerald if they got too close to the Elder Spirit.

However, the Elder Spirit glanced at the Wood Spirits before sighing with a sense of loss and disappointment.

"What are you all thinking? Do you really think I will do something to harm this young Wood Spirit and Human? Is that what you all think of this Old Man?" the Elder Spirit sighed sadly again.

At the same time, his question left the group of Wood Spirit at a loss for words. What the Elder Spirit said made sense. Thus, they were unable to respond.

It seemed they were worried for nothing and complicated a simple matter.

Nevertheless, while the Sunflower Spirit and other Wood Spirits were stuck speechless by the Elder Spirit's questions, Vaan took the initiative to approach him with Emerald.

As the distance between them shortened, the Elder Spirit's ancient aura became more unfathomably divine to Vaan. It was far superior to the aura of the Rank 7 Divine Wood Spirits.

Could the Elder Spirit actually be a Rank 8 Divine Wood Spirit? The Garden of Thyia had been hiding such a powerful being?

Vaan was astounded.

Chapter 863: Senior Willowthorn's Extensive Knowledge

Nevertheless, although Vaan was astonished, he didn't forget his manners as he cupped his fist to greet the Elder Spirit.

"This Junior is called Vaan Raphna. How may I address you, Senior?" Vaan inquired politely.

The Elder Spirit calmly glanced at him before smiling with approval. Then, he pleasantly replied, "Hoho, since you acknowledge this Old Man as your senior, you can call me Senior Willowthorn, and I will also shamelessly call you Junior Vaan."

"Is that acceptable?" Senior Willowthorn asked amicably.

"It is," Vaan nodded, but he was briefly dumbfounded by the Elder Spirit's choice of words.

Shortly after, his pupils glinted with suspicion before he asked, "Why do you say it is shameless, Senior Willowthorn?"

"Oh? You don't think it would be shameless of this Old Man to address you as such, Junior Vaan?" Senior Willowthorn casually smiled.

Shortly after, his aura suddenly surged outwards, sealing in all sound from escaping to prevent others from hearing.

Evidently, he was prepared to mention some sensitive information for Vaan's ears only.

"I've heard that only True God-level beings and above possess Eternal Souls, and such great beings seldom abandon their True Divinity to enter the cycle of reincarnation and experience the mortal coil again," Senior Willowthorn mentioned shortly after.

"True Divinities are venerated existences that even this Old Man can only look up to. Goddess Thyia was also at such a level. Beings like them are normally far beyond our reach and almost impossible to meet at our level without special statuses or privileges."

"However, a person with such a brilliant Eternal Soul is standing right in front of me. No doubt, you were at least a True God in your past life, Junior Vaan. So, tell me. Given your distinguished past, wouldn't it be shameless of me to consider myself your senior?"

"Or have you not awakened your memories and still unaware of your prominent past?" Senior Willowthorn added with doubt.

Vaan silently agreed in his heart.

Indeed, if he were to take into account the ages of his past lives, hardly anyone was qualified to be his senior, let alone the Elder Spirit.

However, that was all in the past and didn't change the fact that he no longer wielded the accompanying might of his past lives.

"A competent man does not boast about his past achievements," Vaan calmly stated before humbly adding, "Since I am younger and less achieved in this life, you are naturally the senior, Senior Willowthorn."

"Hoho, so you have awakened your memories and know about your past life... But you are neither arrogant nor overbearing due to your past glory either. Good, good... Only a reincarnated god with this kind of temperament can overcome their life tribulations," Senior Willowthorn commented approvingly.

Nevertheless, Vaan couldn't help but ask, "Senior, this Junior hopes to be enlightened on one matter. How did you find out about my Eternal Soul? Can you really see it?"

If any powerful divine being at the Elder Spirit's level could discover his Eternal Soul, wouldn't that be problematic for him?

"I know what you are worried about, Junior Vaan. However, you don't have to be too concerned over this," Senior Willowthorn assured before saying, "Seeing 'it' isn't as accurate as feeling it."

"The reason this Old Man can sense your Eternal Soul is because it possesses a very particular aura of life, which this Old Man is quite familiar with, as it resembles that of Goddess Thyia's."

"This kind of life aura can only be possessed by those who have nurtured or created countless lives. For that alone, you deserve the highest recognition and respect from this Old Man, even though I do not usually welcome outsiders in the Garden of Thyia."

"In any case, unless one were a Divine Lord and a Wood Spirit with familiarity with this type of life aura, one would not be aware of your Eternal Soul," Senior Willowthorn stated.

However, Vaan couldn't feel any assurance with the Elder Spirit's words, and he was right to feel that way.

"Of course, there are many other ways to sense a person's soul, let alone an Eternal Soul," Senior Willowthorn continued.

"Any True Divinity should be able to see through a person's soul easily. But outside of them, there are also special constitutions, innate eye abilities, ocular divine arts, soul formations, heavenly treasures, and so on that could spy on the form of a person's soul and determine their origins."

"There are simply far too many possibilities, considering the vastness of Chaos and the innumerable lifeforms living within it. You can assume that if you can think of it, then the possibility of it existing is true."

"However, the chances of you coming across another being who could satisfy these conditions and discover your Eternal Soul is quite low. It's quite unlikely to meet another one unless you travel to hundreds or thousands of low-tier star realms or even higher-tier ones," Senior Willowthorn patiently explained.

Vaan frowned deeply before inquiring, "Since there are many ways to detect a person's soul, are there also many ways to hide it, Senior Willowthorn?"

"Of course, there are," Senior Willowthorn confirmed with a nod and said, "However, the soul is a very special and complex subject. I'm afraid most methods are unavailable to you unless you are lucky enough to meet a great patron with specialties in this specific field."

"Perhaps the easiest yet equally the hardest method for you to hide your Eternal Soul is to learn the Divine Astral Soul Arts of Soul Masters. Unfortunately, even naturally-gifted Soul Masters will be confused in the way of the Divine Astral Soul Arts unless they had a teacher."

"More unfortunately, Soul Masters are very rare, to begin with. As such, finding a Soul Master to be your teacher can only depend on luck and fate," Senior Willowthorn said regretfully.

Vaan studied the Elder Spirit's expression and understood that he didn't have any methods to help him in this regard.

Even so, he noted the term 'Divine Astral Soul Arts' in his heart.

On another note, Vaan was quite surprised by the Elder Spirit's extensive knowledge despite living in such an isolated realm.

It seemed the Elder Spirit had already been a sentient being when the Divine Tree of Life and Goddess Thyia were still around.

Chapter 864: Vaan's Pleasant Surprise

After Senior Willowthorn finished talking to Vaan, he turned his attention to Emerald.

He may have given his attention to Vaan first out of respect for his noble past, but Emerald's existence was what truly mattered to him and the rest of the Wood Spirits living in the Garden of Thyia.

He had more knowledge than the rest of the Wood Spirits in the Garden of Thyia. Thus, he could quickly tell what she was.

However, like the other Wood Spirits, he also had the same doubt, albeit briefly.

Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirits had a unique power and influence over other Wood Spirits. However, their innate control over other Wood Spirits wasn't meant to make them rulers of the Wood Spirit Race but revered like its creators.

They weren't born to lead but deserved all the respect as one and more. They were sacred beings among the Wood Spirits.

Upon close inspection of Emerald, Senior Willowthorn gradually understood the underlying reason behind her weak influence despite being a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit.

At the same time, Senior Willowthorn couldn't help but sigh sadly. He understood that Emerald, being a Wood Spirit from the outside world, had suffered greatly in the past.

"Elder Spirit, do you know what this Little Fairy is? Is she truly a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit?" the Sunflower Spirit inquired shortly after Senior Willowthorn canceled his aura-infused sound barrier.

Although he wasn't sure what the Elder Spirit said to the human, the Sunflower Spirit, along with every other Wood Spirit, was more eager to learn the Elder Spirit's evaluation of the Little Fairy.

"Indeed, this Little Fairy is a Heaven's Chosen Wood Spirit, also known as a Holy Wood Spirit within our Wood Spirit Race, an existence more sacred than Royal Wood Spirits," Senior Willowthorn acknowledged before sighing softly and sadly.

"However, Little Fairy had experienced soul-and-body-splitting suffering in the past. Most likely, some vile being had captured her and refined her for their selfish benefit. It is a blessing that we can even see her back in one piece."

"Even so, much of her innate abilities had been lost or weakened to the point that you all see now," Senior Willowthorn explained.

"What!"

The Elder Spirit's words quickly made every Wood Spirit feel shocked, enraged, and also powerless.

They were taught that Wood Spirits were only seen as valuable cultivation resources in the outside world. Their only fate was to be refined if other beings caught them.

It seemed the teachings of the Elder Spirit were true.

Even so, they had been living within the Garden of Thyia all their life. They couldn't understand how anyone could be so cruel as to refine another living being, especially one as pure as Wood Spirits.

More importantly, it was even their most sacred type of Wood Spirit, the Holy Wood Spirit.

How unacceptable!

Suddenly, the Wood Spirits started glaring at Vaan with suspicion.

"What the hell are you all thinking? Banish the thought immediately! No one is to disrespect this Human!" Senior Willowthorn quickly scolded the Wood Spirits upon noticing their thoughts.

"But, Elder Spirit, you said the Holy Wood Spirit suffered refinement at the hands of another being....!" a Wood Spirit mentioned, feeling angry yet helpless.

The Wood Spirit wished it could have suffered in the Holy Wood Spirit's place instead.

"That is the undeniable truth," Senior Willowthorn acknowledged before sternly saying, "But what do you think body-and-soul-splitting suffering of refinement is? Do you think the Holy Wood Spirit would be one piece after such cruel refinement if not for an act of grace and benevolence from her savior?!"

"This Human has used his own soul force to patch up the Holy Wood Spirit's damaged soul and made her whole again! Without this act of kindness, the Holy Wood Spirit wouldn't have long to live in this world!"

"He is her savior, and that also makes him our biggest benefactor! He is an honored guest who deserves our utmost respect! Do you understand?" Senior Willowthorn strictly stated.

"W-We understand, Elder Spirit!" the Wood Spirits quickly answered.

At the same time, they looked at Vaan in a new light, and their attitude towards him completely changed.

Being the savior of a Holy Wood Spirit was on a whole different level of status than being the friend of one. The two couldn't be mentioned in the same breath, especially given the situation of the current tribe of Wood Spirits.

"Child, I know you are one of our most sacred Holy Wood Spirits even if you have been weakened, but I still have to check. Do you have the [Plant Compendium] ability?" Senior Willowthorn inquired.

The [Plant Compendium] was the unique ability of the Holy Wood Spirits and the most distinct proof of their sacred status. After all, it was an ability that could create the seed of new life for plants and Wood Spirits alike.

Even one-of-a-kind plants or Wood Spirits would not face extinction after death as long as the Holy Wood Spirits had their genetic information in the [Plant Compendium].

"Myuu!" Emerald answered.

Senior Willowthorn's eyes lit up with ease and relief before announcing, "This is a day worth celebrating. With the arrival of the Holy Wood Spirit, our Mother Tree has hopes of revival!"

"Everyone is to treat the Holy Wood Spirit and her savior with utmost respect during their stay," Senior Willowthorn instructed before adding, "Is that clear?"

"Yes, Elder Spirit!" the Wood Spirits answered.

Even without the Elder Spirit's instruction, they would have done so either way since they had confirmed the Holy Wood Spirit's status and understood what the Human had done for her.

"Please follow me, Junior Vaan. I'm sure you still have a lot of questions, but allow me to show you the hospitality of our Wood Spirit Tribe," Senior Willowthorn requested before mentioning, "This Old Man can see that you are in a [Spirit Contract] with the young Holy Wood Spirit."

"However, you have yet to achieve a Wood Spirit Body to provide a suitable dwelling for her. This is rather unacceptable to us, Wood Spirits. As such, please let this Old Man help you with that first," Senior Willowthorn said.

Vaan was immediately pleasantly surprised by this.

He had been wondering how he could acquire some precious magical plants from the Garden of Thyia to forge his Wood Spirit Body without offending the Wood Spirits.

However, he didn't expect the issue to resolve itself by meeting with the Wood Spirits.

Chapter 865: The Epitome of Healthiness

"Thank you, Senior Willowthorn," Vaan expressed his gratitude after the Elder Spirit offered to help him achieve the Wood Spirit Body for Emerald.

Given each magical plant in the Garden of Thyia was like an unborn Wood Spirit, it wasn't an opportunity the Elder Spirit would give to just anyone.

After all, it was no different from killing an unborn Wood Spirit to raise his body's wood affinity to the Wood Spirit Body level, no matter whichever magical plant the Elder Spirit picked for him.

However, Vaan had underestimated the Elder Spirit's values; the Wood Spirits would never harm one of their own.

When Vaan arrived at the Elder Spirit's humble dwelling spot, the latter suddenly inflicted self-harm to extract a portion of wood essence from his humanoid body.

"Senior Willowthorn, you..." Vaan uttered with surprise.

"Hoho, you didn't expect this Old Man to do this, did you?" Senior Willowthorn chuckled before casually saying, "However, this Old Man's wood essence is the most potent elixir in the Garden of Thyia."

"This Old Man couldn't think of a better gift to repay you for what you have done for the Holy Wood Spirit and our Wood Spirit Race as a whole," Senior Willowthorn said.

"Even so, this is too much. Repaying favors shouldn't be done at the expense of one's well-being," Vaan stated.

"Hoho, you don't have to worry about this, Junior Vaan. Wood Spirits can recover from this little loss of wood essence, especially if we can have the Mother Tree blessing us again," Senior Willowthorn assured before sighing.

"Unfortunately, other beings have no considerations for Wood Spirits when they catch our kind. They just consume or refine all our wood essences for short-term gains; they don't think about the long-term benefits."

"That said, it's not okay for other beings to regularly extract our wood essence either. Even so, it's still better than dying."

As the Elder Spirit spoke, he refined his extracted wood essence into the form of a small green pellet. Once the wood essence pellet was completed, he finally offered it to Vaan.

"Although I have only extracted a tiny portion of my wood essence, it is far too much for someone at your level to absorb at once," Senior Willowthorn stated before continuing, "Thus, I have refined it into a pellet for you."

"After you consume this wood essence pellet, it will steadily release its potent energy throughout your body over time, slowly transforming it. The initial release of wood energy should be enough to help you achieve a Low-rank Wood Spirit Body."

"By the time the energy in the wood essence pellet is fully released into your body, you should be able to achieve a Peak-rank Wood Spirit Body at the very least, even if your body's absorption ability is poor," Senior Willowthorn explained.

Vaan silently nodded in understanding.

Indeed, the wood essence of a Rank 8 Divine Lord was truly potent beyond belief for someone at his level.

With the system and Heaven-Swallowing Space, Vaan did not have to worry about losing a single wisp of energy from the wood essence pellet. As such, he was bound to achieve an even higher level than a Peak-rank Wood Spirit Body.

"Thank you, Senior Willowthorn. It would be disrespectful if I do not accept the wood essence pellet after you went through such efforts to extract and refine it," Vaan said before popping the wood essence pellet directly into his mouth.

"This..."

The Elder Spirit was quickly stunned by Vaan's action.

Even though the wood essence pellet was something he had casually refined, it was still considered a top-tier miraculous elixir to other races. As such, it shouldn't be consumed recklessly.

One would need to condition the body and mind to ensure they could absorb the wood essence pellet effectively with minimal waste.

At least, that was supposed to be the standard procedure.

However, Vaan was someone who didn't follow the norms, nor could he be measured by them.

Due to the Elder Spirit's keen sense, he was further stunned by the rapid changes that immediately took place in Vaan's body.

Ding!

<A significant quantity of wood energy has been absorbed>

<Your wood affinity is rapidly increasing>

<Your body has reached the epitome of healthiness>

<Your body has become impervious to all natural diseases and illnesses>

<Your body has become resistant to poison below Rank 7>

<Your lifespan has slightly increased>

...

Ding!

<Your wood affinity has reached a threshold (50%)>

<You have acquired a Low-rank Wood Spirit Body>

...

<Your wood affinity is rapidly increasing>

<Your wood affinity is rapidly increasing>

...

True to the Elder Spirit's word, Vaan acquired a Low-rank Wood Spirit Body with the first round of energy released from the wood essence pellet.

However, due to his perfect absorption, he had almost acquired a Mid-rank Wood Spirit Body in one go.

Naturally, the Elder Spirit could sense the state of Vaan's Wood Spirit Body and felt speechless. He had never seen such a heaven-defying being.

Significant improvements were guaranteed, but how could it be so perfect and quickly achieved?!

The Elder Spirit almost suspected that Vaan was a Divine Spirit in human form.

After all, how could a non-spirit absorb such an astonishing amount of energy so casually, like as if they were just breathing air?

Nevertheless, besides Vaan's rapid improvement and the Elder Spirit's amazement, Emerald was undoubtedly the most excited in that instant.

"Myuuu!" Emerald cried happily.

Shortly after, she immediately dived into Vaan's body before popping back out occasionally to express her approval and content. It was like she was inspecting a new home and found it to be to her liking very much.

Her happiness could be easily observed by the way she tilted her head left and right repeatedly with glee.

"Seeing the Holy Wood Spirit so happy makes this Old Man's little sacrifice worth it," Senior Willowthorn smiled.

Vaan couldn't help but agree.

Emerald's happiness was contagious and brought smiles to everyone lucky enough to witness it.

Now that Vaan had acquired the Wood Spirit Body, he could finally put one worry to rest. He no longer needed to feel guilty for not providing Emerald with a suitable living space.

Chapter 866: Goddess of Life's Inheritance?

After Vaan and the Elder Spirit enjoyed Emerald's moment of happiness, the latter gathered his thoughts before saying, "Junior Vaan, if you don't mind, this Old Man has a favor to ask."

"Senior Willowthorn wishes to ask the Holy Wood Spirit to revive the Divine Tree of Life?" Vaan guessed.

"That's right," Senior Willowthorn confirmed with a nod.

However, Vaan wasn't in a hurry to agree. After a moment of silence, he replied with a question instead.

"Reviving the Divine Tree of Life isn't impossible. However, how much do you know about the world outside the Garden of Thyia, Senior Willowthorn? Are you aware of the situation outside? Would it be wise to revive the Divine Tree of Life blindly without knowing what's going on?" Vaan asked.

The Elder Spirit immediately paused before sighing, "I've assumed that since you were able to come to this place, the great disaster had passed... But, perhaps that is not the case?"

"I'm uncertain which great disaster you are referring to, Senior," Vaan shook his head.

"However, I can tell you that the Garden of Thyia is located deep underground in the Purpleflame Territory, which was originally known by another name but changed as such due to its surface turning into a sea of eternal-burning flames."

"The lush green woodlands and all its fauna and flora that once existed within them are no more. Only an endless horde of fiery spirits wander the surface aimlessly now. Moreover, it is only one of nine territories under the Gehenna Star and ruled by six Great Devils."

"If the Divine Tree of Life is revived in this hidden realm, the burning surface will undoubtedly be affected, and that may draw unwanted attention and curious investigations, leading to this place."

"Are you sure such a choice is wise, Senior?" Vaan asked shortly after.

"The Six Great Devils? Is that what they call them now? Not the Seven Deadly Sins? Or are they a new generation of Divine Knights?" Senior Willowthorn wondered before asking, "How are their strengths?"

"They are all Peak Rank 6 Divine Beings, Senior," Vaan answered.

"Only Peak Rank 6 Divine Beings?" Senior Willowthorn uttered before snorting, "So they are only Divine Soldiers, not even Divine Knights. The Gehenna Star sure has declined."

"Even back during the generation of the Seven Deadly Sins, who were all Divine Knights, none of them would have been able to do anything to the Garden of Thyia even if they learned about it."

"After all, this Old Man is a Divine Lord. Although I don't partake in violence and killing, stopping a few trifling Divine Knights from trespassing and committing atrocity in this sacred land is a simple matter."

"That said, exposing the Garden of Thyia is indeed unwise," Senior Willowthorn acknowledged.

Vaan nodded.

Even if the Garden of Thyia was exposed to Gehenna, its denizens weren't capable of threatening the Wood Spirits with the Elder Spirit around.

However, it was a different story if the Great Devils sought assistance from beyond their star realm to uncover the hidden treasure trove known as the Garden of Thyia.

"Also, I heard sinister creatures of dark affinities have made the Divine Tree of Life's crown their nest. Wouldn't the revival of the Divine Tree of Life provoke them and subject the Garden of Thyia to unpredictable risks of conflicts?" Vaan mentioned.

He didn't know what was up there, but he could vaguely sense that the dark creature lurking in the darkness of the tree's crown was a force to be reckoned with.

There might even be a Divine Lord-level being among the dark creatures.

"Ah, you are talking about the Death Eaters. You have a point, Junior," Senior Willowthorn acknowledged and said, "The Mother Tree and the Death Eaters are of mutually opposing attributes."

"If the Mother Tree is revived, the Death Eaters would likely be wiped out by the overflowing life energy. But before they succumb to that fate, they will indeed retaliate for a chance at survival, and the Garden of Thyia will most likely face catastrophic devastation as a result."

"However, reviving the Mother Tree has always been the dearest wish of our tribe of Wood Spirits, as we are all her children. As such, you can see how much the arrival of a Holy Wood Spirit means to us," Senior Willowthorn said.

"I don't understand, though. What are these Death Eaters? And where do they come from, Senior?" Vaan asked with doubt.

After all, the Garden of Thyia was supposed to be overflowing with life energy when the Divine Tree of Life was "alive."

As such, how could such dark creatures emerge?

"Death Eaters are dark spirits that feed on death energy and spread death. As to where they come from, that is a question even I don't have an answer to," Senior Willowthorn replied before adding, "However, this Old Man does have a strong guess."

"The Mother Tree was originally the guardian of Goddess Thyia's inheritance, and when the Mother Tree abandoned her main body and retreated into a deep slumber with all her power, the Death Eaters emerged shortly after."

"This Old Man guesses that the Death Eaters must be related to Goddess Thyia's inheritance. They may even be the new guardians chosen to guard it," Senior Willowthorn guessed.

"Goddess Thyia's inheritance?" Vaan couldn't help but glance up with strong interest.

The inheritance of a Rank 6 Divine Being had already helped him immensely. Thus, how much could he gain from the inheritance of a Rank 11 True God or above?

Nevertheless, Senior Willowthorn noticed Vaan's thoughts and quickly said, "I strongly recommend that you don't even think about searching for Goddess Thyia's inheritance, Junior Vaan."

"Even if Goddess Thyia's inheritance is hidden deep inside Crown's Nest, it is infested with Death Eaters. Moreover, there is even a Divine Lord-level Death Eater among them. You will only be throwing away your life by venturing into that place."

"I don't mean to sound rude or condescending, but you are not even at the level of a Divine Soldier yet. Even Divine Knights will lose their lives to the Death Eaters, let alone someone at your level," Senior Willowthorn discouraged him.

"What you say makes sense, Senior," Vaan acknowledged before arguing, "However, if the Death Eaters are truly related to Goddess Thyia's inheritance, surely there is also a way to get around them?"

"Unless... Goddess Thyia had no intention of letting anyone obtain her inheritance when she left it here?" Vaan added with doubt.

Chapter 867: News About Chaos's Situation

If Goddess Thyia's inheritance was called an inheritance, it should be something Goddess Thyia intended for her heir or successor to inherit.

Even if she wished for the most qualified heir or successor to obtain her inheritance, she wouldn't make her inheritance trials impossible to pass.

That said, Vaan noticed several points of interest and mystery related to Goddess Thyia.

"Senior, since Goddess Thyia is the Goddess of Life, why would she have something like the Death Eaters guarding her inheritance? Moreover, since Goddess Thyia left her inheritance here, does that mean Goddess Thyia knew her days were numbered and is no longer among the living...?"

Vaan wondered somewhat hesitantly due to the insensitiveness of his question.

However, Senior Willowthorn didn't mind. He had a lot of respect for Goddess Thyia, who gave life to the Mother Tree. But apart from that, he wasn't particularly close enough to be offended over trivial details.

"You've raised a valid point, Junior. Even this Old Man cannot understand why dark beings like the Death Eaters would emerge from Goddess Thyia's land of inheritance," Senior Willowthorn admitted before continuing, "As for Goddess Thyia's life status, I'm afraid I'm not knowledgeable enough to make a statement."

"However, I was around when Goddess Thyia stayed in the Garden of Thyia to leave behind her inheritance. Now that I think about it, I do recall a particular conversation between Goddess Thyia and the Mother Tree. Ah, yes, the memories are returning to me."

"Goddess Thyia mentioned she was going to partake in some grand war over Chaos to save as many lives as she could," Senior Willowthorn mentioned.

"Some grand war over Chaos? Do you happen to know more about this and what it is about, Senior?" Vaan inquired with interest.

"I do know a little bit," Senior Willowthorn nodded before saying, "However, I have lived within the Garden of Thyia all my life, so what I know is what I overheard from the Mother Tree and Goddess Thyia's conversation."

"I heard Chaos has been split in two by the Lord of Chaos and an immensely powerful foreign invader from beyond the border of existence. Supposedly, these two supreme beings would destroy all of Chaos if they fought all out."

"However, that is also something neither side wanted. Thus, they somehow reached an agreement and turned Chaos into one big game of chess. Neither side would personally intervene in the war if the other didn't."

"In other words, the battle for supremacy over Chaos has been left to those under the two, or at least that was what Goddess Thyia told the Mother Tree," Senior Willowthorn stated.

Vaan's heart grew heavy after listening to the Elder Spirit.

The situation in Chaos was just as he had feared. The Outer Beings had slipped their way inside Chaos through the merging of new chaosverses in the last two or three chaos cycles.

Moreover, for the Lord of Chaos, who could borrow the power of Chaos itself, to be trapped in a stalemate with the Outer Being, the latter must be an existence above Outerverse Originators.

Suppose such an unfathomable entity was also intelligent. In that case, it might even have the ability to track and learn about any denizen of Chaos to review their potential and threat level.

'Perhaps this is the biggest reason why the Lord of Chaos avoids direct contact with me?' Vaan thought with a heavy heart.

He felt even more pressure after realizing this, considering his identity as the Lord of the Boundless Seas and Skies.

There would be no peace for him if the Outer Beings learned of his identity and his importance to the Lord of Chaos.

He couldn't even begin to imagine what kind of forces would be sent after his life.

Everything was much simpler when he thought his only past life was the one back on Earth.

'Even seemingly supreme beings can be helpless in the face of greater, uncontrollable forces, huh?' Vaan mused ruefully.

Meanwhile, Senior Willowthorn silently observed Vaan's heavy expressions and thought that he was overwhelmed with concern due to Chaos's precarious situation.

"There's no need for you to be weighed down by this, Junior. People at our level are far too weak to even dream of joining this grand war. The followers of that powerful foreign invader will not even look at us. They will only go after the True Divinities," Senior Willowthorn assured.

However, Vaan didn't feel a hint of comfort from his words. He could only smile wryly in response.

If the Elder Spirit knew who he actually was in his first life, he would definitely be shocked silly.

After all, he had been calling the Lord of the Boundless Seas and Skies a junior.

Shortly after shaking his head, Vaan asked, "Do you know what kind of beings serve that powerful foreign invader, Senior? Are they all foreign invaders like it? Or are there also lifeforms from Chaos under it as well?"

"Your guess is as good as mine, Junior. This Old Man is not privy to such information. I apologize for not being able to provide you with a satisfactory answer," Senior Willowthorn said regretfully.

"You don't need to apologize for that, Senior," Vaan shook his head and said, "I was expecting too much despite knowing you have been living in this enclosed realm all your life."

"I appreciate your understanding," Senior Willowthorn replied gratefully with a smile.

However, his smile abruptly disappeared when something above suddenly attracted his attention.

Vaan also followed his gaze and glanced up at the Mother Tree's crown. The Death Eaters lurking within its darkness appeared restless, but that was the extent of his sense.

He could neither see the Death Eaters nor tell what they were doing.

"What do you see, Senior?" Vaan asked.

Senior Willowthorn frowned before muttering with doubt, "Something seemed to have agitated the Death Eaters. I have never sensed such hostility and killing intent from them before in all my years here..."

Vaan was immediately astonished.

Since it was something that had never happened before, it had to be related to his arrival.

Moments later, the sea of darkness from the upper garden descended, hiding a swarm of Death Eaters within it. Moreover, the sea of darkness dropped on a very specific location—the hole Vaan dug to enter the Garden of Thyia.

In that instant, Senior Willowthorn and Vaan were both stunned.

'Oh no!'

Chapter 868: The Key to Goddess Thyia's Inheritance

Realization dawned upon Vaan as he could guess what had attracted the Death Eaters' aggression.

After all, Hecate would have known where he went or at least had a general idea of it. Thus, if he suddenly disappeared due to the Garden of Thyia's powerful restrictions, it would prompt her to investigate his whereabouts.

However, his arrival did not draw the attention of the Death Eaters. So, why would it happen to other visitors?

Thanks to his earlier conversation with the Elder Spirit, Vaan gained a lot of valuable information and could speculate likely reasons for the Death Eaters' sudden movements.

For example, the Death Eaters weren't just guardians of Goddess Thyia's inheritance but also the protectors of the Garden of Thyia itself.

After all, the Wood Spirits were vulnerable beings due to their nature.

As such, Vaan doubted Goddess Thyia would leave them to fend for themselves—should the Garden of Thyia ever be exposed to the greed of the outside world.

Surely, Goddess Thyia would have prepared something to protect the Wood Spirits from such a cruel fate.

'The Death Eaters must have been aware of my arrival, especially if there's a Divine Lord among them. However, the reason they haven't done anything to me should be related to Mera,' Vaan figured.

Perhaps Wood Spirit Contractors were qualified to challenge Goddess Thyia's trials and pursue her inheritance?

Various thoughts flashed across Vaan's mind in an instant the moment he realized the destination of the descending cloud of darkness. After glancing at the Elder Spirit, he immediately headed towards the same location.

However, Vaan didn't travel very far before the Elder Spirit quickly stopped him with a gentle cloak of wood-attribute divine power.

"Please wait a moment, Junior!" Senior Willowthorn appealed.

"The Death Eaters have never left Crown's Nest since the time of their emergence. Their current course of action is unprecedented and unpredictable. Approaching them would be unwise and far too dangerous."

"Please reconsider your choice, Junior," Senior Willowthorn requested.

However, Vaan shook his head, saying, "I understand the danger, Senior. Even so, I must head over there and find out what the Death Eaters intend to do. Whether they are planning to leave or eliminate some other intruder, both are disastrous outcomes for my side."

"If you are concerned about my safety, please accompany me, Senior," Vaan suggested.

If it was truly Hecate's arrival that resulted in the Death Eaters' sudden movements, it was crucial to ensure her survival. Her death would put him and Pangea in an extremely unfavorable position.

After all, she was the mediator between him and the Great Devils of Gehenna.

As such, her undesired death would trigger an all-out war between him and the Great Devils, no matter how well he tried to explain the cause of her death had nothing to do with him.

Although his life wouldn't be threatened due to his life-saving means and the protection of the Garden of Thyia—should he use it for refuge, Hecate's death would still affect those around him and inconvenience him.

In essence, Hecate could not die.

"Alright. However, if I think it gets too dangerous, I will take you away from the area," Senior Willowthorn agreed with a condition after seeing Vaan's resolute look.

"Thank you, Senior," Vaan replied gratefully.

A few moments later, Vaan and the Elder Spirit arrived in the vicinity of the hole, which had been completely covered in darkness. Death Eaters roamed within, screeching and screaming in agitation.

"The Divine Lord-level Death Eater didn't come. There are only Divine Soldiers and Divine Knights among the Death Eaters here," Senior Willowthorn informed with relief.

The level of danger was within his control.

Unfortunately, Vaan didn't share the same sentiments. Instead, his expression became grave.

"Divine Soldiers and Divine Knights..." Vaan softly uttered.

In other words, there were Rank 6 and Rank 7 Divine Beings swarming within the cloud of darkness.

Although Vaan wasn't sure how many Divine Knight-level Death Eaters were attracted, he didn't believe Hecate could deal with so many Death Eaters at once. He could only hope she sensed the danger early and retreated before the Death Eaters arrived.

The only good news Vaan had found out after arriving at the area was that the Death Eaters didn't seem to be entering the hole and chasing after the intruder.

Even so, the situation beyond the hole was unclear to him.

Just when the Elder Spirit was about to warn Vaan about getting too close to the cloud of darkness containing the Death Eaters, the words were suddenly glued to the tip of his tongue.

The moment Vaan approached the cloud of darkness, he witnessed the Death Eaters retreating from the area along with their protective darkness.

However, it wasn't Vaan's presence that forced the Death Eaters to retreat; it was Emerald's.

"This..." Senior Willowthorn was quickly surprised by the discovery.

At the same time, Vaan's eyes flickered with renewed confidence, feeling more certain about his speculations regarding Goddess Thyia's inheritance trial.

Nevertheless, the ability to ward off the Death Eaters wasn't limited to Emerald. The Elder Spirit soon realized that he, too, possessed such an ability when he approached the Death Eaters.

Thanks to the Elder Spirit's interaction with the Death Eaters, Vaan also noticed the Death Eaters avoided him more strongly than they did with Emerald.

Moreover, the Death Eaters didn't avoid the Elder Spirit because they viewed him as a threatening existence. In fact, they didn't seem particularly conscious of his presence, as if they couldn't see him.

Rather, it seemed more like the Death Eaters treated Elder Spirit's aura-covered area of influence like how they would treat the ground, wall, and ceiling: a type of obstruction they couldn't pass.

As such, it was the Death Eaters' instinct to move around or away from them. They were practically blind to Wood Spirits.

Although Vaan wasn't sure if this type of blindness was natural or related to Goddess Thyia, he understood one thing—Wood Spirits were essentially the key to Goddess Thyia's inheritance.

Goddess Thyia's inheritance couldn't be obtained if people slaughtered the Wood Spirits and refined them for their potent wood essence.

Nevertheless, Vaan set aside his thoughts on Goddess Thyia's inheritance for the time being.

He needed to clear Death Eaters from the area and check on Hecate's situation.

Chapter 869: Goddess Thyia's Other Law?

Shortly after Vaan circled the hole area for a few moments, the Death Eaters and their shroud of darkness departed the surface. They returned to Crown's Nest quietly and ghostly.

Since their target had fled the Garden of Thyia, the Death Eaters lost their reason to linger around the hole.

"I need to go and check on the person who came through this hole, Senior. I'll be right back," Vaan promised.

"Alright," Senior Willowthorn readily acknowledged with a nod.

The Elder Spirit didn't seem to have any misgivings about Vaan possibly leaving—only to return with a strong force to plunder the Garden of Thyia's treasures and its innocent residents.

Clearly, the Elder Spirit trusted Vaan despite their short meeting. More accurately, the Elder Spirit trusted the karmic aura of Varuna's life on him and Emerald's choice.

Shortly after Vaan entered the hole and left the Garden of Thyia, it didn't take him long to locate Hecate, a short fifteen kilometers away from the garden's surface. Her face was visibly pale, having recently experienced the shock of her life.

However, Vaan couldn't blame her for having lingering fear after such a close encounter with the Death Eaters.

After all, Hecate had been a Great Devil for thousands of years; she was one of the strongest beings in Gehenna, and few things could threaten her life. Moreover, such things only existed in places like the uninhabitable territories or the Sea of Darkness.

Who would have known that she would encounter grave danger from looking for him in the subterranean region?

"Are you alright, Lady Hecate?" Vaan inquired.

"Sir Vaan? Thank goodness, you are alright," Hecate uttered with surprise before doubtfully asking, "But... those Death Eaters didn't hunt you when you entered the secret realm?"

"Fortunately, no," Vaan answered with a shake of his head before seriously requesting, "I hope you will keep everything you discovered in the hidden realm a secret, Lady Hecate."

"That much, I can do, of course," Hecate readily agreed, saying, "Since you discovered the hidden realm first, everything inside naturally belongs to you, Sir Vaan."

"Moreover, the opportunities within will undoubtedly be of great assistance in raising your strength to stand on equal footing with the other Great Devils sooner rather than later."

"I have no reason to share or sell such precious information with them," Hecate honestly declared.

Even if Vaan encouraged her to, she still wouldn't dare to do it.

After all, she couldn't imagine what kind of disaster would befall Gehenna if the Death Eaters were unleashed as a result of others trying to unearth the treasures within the hidden realm due to their greed.

"Thank you, Lady Hecate," Vaan said gratefully.

Although he knew she wouldn't do such a thing and his words weren't nice to hear, some things still had to be said and made clear due to their sheer importance.

After all, if the existence of the Garden of Thyia were exposed to the outside world, at worst, he would only lose the chance to monopolize the opportunities within. So long as he was alive, countless opportunities awaited him; he could do without one.

However, it was a matter of life or death for all the Wood Spirits living within the Garden of Thyia.

As such, he would rather not risk it and had to make sure Hecate was on the same page.

"Still, I can't believe there would be such powerful Death Eaters hiding in such a secluded realm brimming with life. It is rather contradictory and unnatural," Hecate suddenly mentioned.

"I'm afraid those weren't even the most powerful Death Eaters you encountered from there," Vaan commented before asking with interest, "Are these Death Eaters common in Chaos, Lady Hecate?"

"Common?" Hecate's lips curled with amusement before replying, "More like extremely rare. Within the whole Skymagia Star Kingdom, I can't even name one place that hosts such deathly beings."

"In fact, the Shadowcage Territory's Sea of Darkness is probably the only place within the entire Skymagia Star Kingdom that could possibly nurture and accommodate Death Eaters."

"After all, these deathly beings are said to be paranormal existences born from pure death energy. Unless it's in a place like the Sea of Darkness, they wouldn't even exist, let alone survive for long."

"Of course, help from a user of Death Law or a special storage treasure of death energy could allow them to thrive outside of such places. That said, I have never heard of any Death Eaters dwelling in the Sea of Darkness or that Lord Thanatos was raising them..."

"Thus, it was quite unexpected to find them here, of all places," Hecate frowned.

Vaan could guess Hecate's thoughts and couldn't help but share the same feeling.

It was quite baffling that someone called the Goddess of Life would have anything associated with death, let alone have an entire hive of Death Eaters guarding her inheritance.

Evidently, there was more to Goddess Thyia than what the Elder Spirit knew about her. She couldn't just be the Goddess of Life.

Perhaps Goddess Thyia had also comprehended the Death Law.

After all, learning the Death Law would be far easier than learning any other law if she had already mastered the Life Law.

It was just like how a doctor could save lives but also take them just as easily or how medicine could also be poison.

They were two sides of the same coin; the only difference was the application.

"As far as I am aware, you haven't always been a resident of Gehenna, Lady Hecate," Vaan suddenly mentioned before guessing, "Perhaps there's a part of its history that even you don't know about."

"Are you suggesting that the Death Eaters in this hidden realm might have been part of the Sea of Darkness in the distant past, Sir Vaan?" Hecate asked with interest before frowning in wonder, "But who would move them to such a wood element-rich secret realm, and for what purpose?"

Vaan was silent for a moment before asking, "Lady Hecate, have you ever heard of Goddess Thyia, the Goddess of Life?"

"Goddess Thyia...?" Hecate blanked for a moment before her casual expression greatly changed with great astonishment and alarm as she exclaimed, "Did you just say Goddess Thyia?!"

"...!"

Vaan was immediately taken aback by Hecate's strong reaction to the name. However, he also got his answer thanks to it.

It seemed Goddess Thyia had been quite a prominent figure.

Chapter 870: Dark Fae God Clan

Vaan only asked a simple question, but Hecate was able to derive crucial information from it and understand many things between Goddess Thyia and Gehenna.

Her realization and discovery made her even more astonished.

"It seems Goddess Thyia is very famous?" Vaan speculated.

"Famous?" Hecate shook her head and said, "Famous is an understatement, Sir Vaan. Goddess Thyia wasn't just famous; she belonged to the upper echelons of Chaos itself."

"Although Goddess Thyia was only a True God, even ordinary Empyrean Gods had to give her respect. That was how great and special of a status she held in the distant past."

"Just who was Goddess Thyia exactly?" Vaan asked.

"Funnily enough, I don't exactly know. Such information has only been privy to True Divinities, the elites of Chaos. People at our level wouldn't have many chances to learn about the True Divinities," Hecate stated.

"However, there was an unconfirmed rumor that Goddess Thyia had once been a maidservant for Chaos Royalty. Although no one could guess which member of the Chaos Royalty she served, anyone who received the opportunity to serve Chaos Royalty would also obtain great status by default."

"This is why a True God like Goddess Thyia is so respected among ordinary Empyrean Gods and renowned throughout the Eternal Darkheaven Sector—or so everyone believed in the past."

"I'm not too sure about now. After all, it's been thousands of years since I traveled far and learned any popular news," Hecate commented.

"I see," Vaan uttered thoughtfully.

It wasn't hard to guess that Hecate was referring to descendants and family members of the Lord of Chaos when she mentioned Chaos Royalty.

Of course, Varuna's family and descendants would also be a part of Chaos Royalty.

On that topic, Vaan couldn't help but feel a headache when he thought about Varuna's family. Because he didn't recover any memories of them, he had no idea how many wives and children he had from that first life.

He was afraid that the family would be very big, given how long Varuna had lived. As such, he could only hope that he wouldn't have to meet them too soon.

Neither he nor his women were ready for them.

"You know, Lady Hecate, I'm quite curious," Vaan suddenly mentioned, attracting Hecate's own curiosity.

"Curious about what, Sir Vaan?" Hecate replied.

"Just as you said, matters related to True Divinities are hardly known to those at our level. Thus, I'm quite curious how you know so much about them," Vaan mentioned with a smile.

"I don't think ordinary people would be knowledgeable enough to begin speculating Goddess Thyia's relationship with Chaos Royalty, right? Of all the roles to serve Chaos Royalty, why do your sources believe Goddess Thyia was a maidservant, specifically?"

"Perhaps there was actual truth in these rumors? On that note, I'm quite curious where you heard these rumors, Lady Hecate."

"It couldn't have been just anywhere, right? The Dark Fae God Clan, perhaps?" Vaan sounded.

"How do you know about the Dark Fae God Clan?" Hecate's eyes widened with surprise for a moment.

There were countless Dark Fae Clans across Chaos, but only one could be called the Dark Fae God Clan. Moreover, it was the ruling clan of the entire Eternal Darkheaven Sector.

Although most star travelers within the Eternal Darkheaven Sector would know this, such information had never reached Gehenna, which was only a vassal star realm of the Skymagia Star Kingdom.

Thus, it was even more impossible for its name to ever spread to Pangea.

As such, Hecate was quite surprised to hear Vaan mention its name.

Meanwhile, Vaan was baffled by Hecate's reaction.

"Hm?" Vaan briefly paused before replying, "That's a strange question to ask, Lady Hecate. How can I not know about the Dark Fae God Clan when I obtained a drop of Dark Fae God Origin Blood from you, a member of it?"

"You can tell what blood essence you refined, Sir Vaan?" Hecate became even more astonished after receiving Vaan's nod.

Since she had never mentioned the Dark Fae God Clan to Vaan before, her blood essence would indeed reveal her background if he could figure out its origin.

She just didn't expect Vaan to have such an ability. But then again, she shouldn't be surprised either—if he was who she thought he was.

Nevertheless, another matter also amazed her.

Although she had studied the Everlasting Blood Mantra before and understood what it claimed to be capable of, she was still awed to learn that Vaan had refined a drop of Dark Fae God Origin Blood from her Dark Fae Bloodline.

The Everlasting Blood Mantra was truly a heaven-defying primordial technique.

"You are mistaken about one thing, Sir Vaan," Hecate suddenly mentioned before continuing to explain, "I might have the Dark Fae God Bloodline, but I am not a part of the Dark Fae God Clan."

"You see, my great-grandfather made a grave mistake while carrying out an important clan mission. Thus, our family branch got cut out of the Dark Fae God Clan as punishment."

"Moreover, a cultivation seal was also placed on our family branch, the Darkstar Aristocrat Family, making it difficult for current and future generations to tap into the true potential of their god bloodline and advance like the direct members of the Dark Fae God Clan."

"Despite that, no one from my Darkstar Aristocrat Family resents the Dark Fae God Clan. Instead, it has been their deepest wish to be allowed to return to the Dark Fae God Clan," Hecate mentioned, feeling strange.

She didn't plan on revealing this part of her background to Vaan so soon, and yet, somehow, she did it anyway.

"Anyhow, this wasn't what we were talking about, were we?" Hecate smiled wryly before returning to the main topic, "You were right that I didn't hear the rumors about Goddess Thyia from just anyone."

"I actually overheard it from my great-grandmother and grandmother, who used to live in the Dark Fae God Clan," Hecate confessed.

"I see," Vaan uttered thoughtfully.

Although he didn't know what positions Hecate's great-grandmother and grandmother held in the Dark Fae God Clan before their exilement, he figured they were probably part of the few powerhouses holding up the current Darkstar Aristocrat Family.

After all, they had been members of the Dark Fae God Clan before receiving the cultivation seal. They shouldn't be weak.

At the very least, he guessed they were at least Divine Lords or stronger.

"Since you heard about Goddess Thyia from your grandparents, and they came from the ruling clan of the Eternal Darkheaven Sector, could it be that the Dark Fae God Clan also serves Chaos Royalty?" Vaan asked curiously.

Although Hecate never got the chance to be a part of the Dark Fae God Clan, she still felt a hint of pride when Vaan raised such a question.

"You're quite sharp, Sir Vaan. That's right, the Dark Fae God Clan serves Chaos Royalty," Hecate admitted with a smile before adding, "However, I heard that even among god clans that serve under Chaos Royalty, the Dark Fae God Clan is said to be among the very top of the list."

"Apparently, the Dark Fae God Clan has a history with Chaos Royalty that could date back to the Primal Chaos Era—or so my great-grandmother said," Hecate mentioned.

Vaan was astonished after hearing this.

The Dark Fae God Clan was truly formidable for it to endure such a long test of time and remain firmly rooted in its position of power and influence.