

## Endless 291

### Chapter 291: The Big Bad Wolf [Part 1]

After leaving the clock tower, Alex took a stroll around the academy without a destination in mind.

The chat he had with Latifa swirled around his head, and he wondered whether he should ask Dim Dim for advice.

Alex sighed. He remembered when he first arrived in this world, in the body of his game character, Alex Stratos. All he felt then was excitement and happiness, believing he had been given a second chance at life.

Now, he felt complicated. The body he possessed right now seemed to hold secrets that even he didn't know.

The fact that Latifa saw the memories of his game character instead of his memory proved that "Alex Stratos" had his own memories.

But what he found most peculiar was the memories Latifa saw of him as a baby, held by a King. Latifa also claimed seeing a young Alex, around nine to ten years old, being pursued by armed warriors and protected by a knight holding a shield with a Gryphon emblem.

He couldn't be certain, but the old knight whom the fox lady described perfectly matched the Guardian of the North, Luthor Vademont. He was Rowan's great, great-grandson, who had sworn to protect the Royal Family.

When Alex had played the game ELO for the first time, he chose the Aetherian Empire as the starting point.

There, he met the Unique NPC, Luthor Vademont, also known as the Guardian of the North. At that time, he wasn't Alex Stratos. He was still testing the game to have a feel of what it was like, so he had used a random one.

After playing the game for a while, he didn't expect to be so moved by Luthor's Story Quest.

A Guardian who wasn't able to protect the prince he vowed to protect.

As such, Alex decided to create a new character and named it Alex Stratos.

Inspired by the knight's storyline, he connected his character's lore to the plotline, citing himself as the lost prince of the Aetherian Empire, whose true name was Aetherius Alexian Vademont.

He explained his new name as a disguise for until the arrival of the prophesied time for him to fulfill his destiny. Before then, the world shall know him as Alex Stratos.

There were other things written in his lore, but the gist revolved around this setting.

Alex sighed deeply, now knowing that the Aetherian Empire did exist.

Its King was still in his prime and still commanded the strongest empire in the continent.

However, if what Latifa said was true, then things might become veeeeeeeeeeery complicated.

'Should I travel to the North during the summer vacation?' Alex thought.

If he didn't spend a long time in the North, he would be able to return before the start of his second school term in the academy.

Alex hadn't included the background of his character for his future plans during his stay in Arcana, but if he really was part of the Royal Family, he might need to change his approach moving forward.

He had also considered the possibility that he was a bastard child of the King, which might be the reason why he was being pursued by some armed forces and protected by the Guardian of the North.

'But the Guardian of the North had failed to protect the prince under his protection,' Alex mused.  
'Wait... if that prince is actually me—did I die?!'

Alex immediately tossed this idea aside. He couldn't possibly be the prince who died.

Why?

Because he didn't even know the name of that prince!

It was not mentioned in the story, so he just created the name Aetherius Alexian Vademont in his character's lore.

The chances of that being the name of the Prince was next to impossible, and Alex was more inclined to believe that the dead prince in the story had a different name.

'Yeah... I mean I have zero chance of having similar names with the prince, right?' Alex crossed his arms, while deep in thought as he continued to walk.

However, a second later, he bumped into something.

"Kyaaaah!"

"Ugooh!"

Alex felt as if all the air in his lungs was expelled from his body as he crashed on the ground after getting hit by something fast.

The young man groaned as he tried to prop himself up from the ground.

His gaze then landed on a young lady who was holding her head and kneeling on the ground, clearly in pain after colliding with him.

He was very tempted to tell her to watch where she was going, but since he was also guilty of not paying attention to his surroundings, he couldn't really blame her.

Alex even thought that it was his fault that the young lady got hurt, so he immediately tried to help her, and apologize.

"I'm sorry, I wasn't looking," Alex said as he endured the pain in his chest. "Are you hurt?"

The young lady finally raised her head, and looked at Alex with teary eyes.

"Ah!"

"Huh?!"

Alex came face to face with a young elf lady with long silver hair and a pair of blue eyes that could melt anyone who gaze at her.

"You are..." Lapis blinked.

"Your future husband," Alex completed her sentence without hesitation.

"... No. You're Alex Stratos."

"That's right. That's the name of your future husband."

"..."

Alex, who had finally regained his senses, wanted to smack himself silly. What was wrong with him!? How could he mention something absurd in front of the young lady again?

He had forgotten that the main reason he ran away from the clock tower was due to this very same dialogue!

Alex lightly coughed and offered his hand to help Lapis stand up. He wasn't expecting for her to take her hand since they weren't that close.

But to his surprise, the young elf reached out and grabbed his hand firmly.

After helping her to stand up, Alex reluctantly let go of her hand and looked at the young elf who had collided with him out of the blue.

"Are you alright?" Alex asked.

"Yes," Lapis replied, still rubbing her head with her left hand. "I'm alright. It's my fault for using wind magic to increase my speed and running on the academy grounds."

Suddenly, Alex's eyes widened in shock because he remembered this exact same scene in the game.

Lapis was running away because she and her sister had an argument, and she hurriedly left their dormitory in order to find a place to think.

'If I remember correctly, this is the time when Lapis decided to quit Obsidian Fangs, believing she's not qualified to be part of it,' Alex thought as he recalled the event.

However, there were no multiple-choice answers for this event.

It would simply be Lapis having a one-sided hit-and-run event with the Protagonist, which would be the spark of her romance route at a later time.

But seeing how hurt she looked right now, the young man couldn't possibly be shameless and take advantage of her current state of weakness.

"I don't know what's bothering you, but do you want someone to talk to?" Alex asked.

"... My sister said I shouldn't interact with the Blackmail King," Lapis replied. "She said that if we cross paths with each other, I should run away in the opposite direction."

'Damn you, Aeris!' Alex cursed one of the Main Heroines in his heart. 'You're my future sister-in-law, and you're doing this to me? Hmph! Just wait until the Third Arc. I'll get back at you!'

Lapis had no idea what Alex was thinking, but for some reason, she thought that the young man in front of him was like a big bad wolf, who was about to eat her whole.

#### Chapter 292: The Big Bad Wolf [Part 2]

While Alex was grumbling deep inside, he remained calm on the surface.

"Right, I have a bad reputation," Alex said in a sad tone. "People call me the Blackmail King, but that was my only choice to protect my club members. Is that a bad thing?"

To his surprise, the young lady in front of him spoke the words he never expected to hear from her.

"No. You did the right thing," Lapis stated. "Back then, I thought you looked really cool... even though you were wearing a mask."

Alex did two fist pumps internally. It was a big win if Lapis had a good impression of him. Because of that, he decided to help the young lady for a bit.

"With my reputation as the Karaoke King and the Blackmail King, I, Alex Stratos, promise to help you with your problems." Alex patted his chest with confidence. "So, who bullied you? I'll make sure that they regret making you cry."

"But I'm not crying?" Lapis blinked.'

“Ahem! So what’s the problem?” Alex brushed off the fact that he made a mistake with ease. “Did you have an argument with someone? I’ll spank them for you!”

“... You’ll spank my older sister?” Lapid blinked a second time. “Are you courting death?”

“I’ll spank anyone who makes you sad,” Alex replied fearlessly.

“You’re strange, Mr. Alex.”

“Don’t call me Mister. I’ll only be eighteen in two months. Eighteen is still young, right?”

Lapid smiled faintly because the notorious Blackmail King wasn’t as scary as people portrayed him to be.

Even during the Battle Royale, Alex didn’t do anything to harm or eliminate her. His little companion, Dim Dim, even guarded Lapid when the Demon Worshipers suddenly appeared in the Mistral Weave Forest.

“Um, should we go somewhere to talk?” Alex asked. “A cafe perhaps? I don’t know what happened, but sometimes, eating sweets can make you feel a little better.”

Alex didn’t know if this was the right thing to do, but if Lapid had really left the Obsidian Fang, like what happened in the game... There was no need to guess. Obviously, he would invite her to his club, so she could be in a safe place where she could grow as a person.

Her older sister, Aeris, was hailed as the Perfect Heroine because she was truly perfect in every sense of the word.

Lapid developed an inferiority complex thanks to this. She was talented in her own right, but no matter what and how well she did, she would always be compared to her perfect sister, whom she couldn’t surpass in any way.

Aeris was indeed a wonderful person, at least on the surface. But the perfect Heroine wasn't really perfect.

She was just better than others when it came to hiding her true character. This was one of the reasons why Alex never put her in his list of Queens.

He preferred the hardworking Lapiz, who would cry silently inside her room whenever she made a mistake that made her feel inferior to her sister.

Lapiz lowered her gaze, her silver hair cascading over her shoulders like a curtain, hiding the flicker of emotion in her eyes.

"I'm fine, Mr. Alex," she muttered. "But I'll take you up on your offer."

"Great!" Alex did a victory pose in his heart. In his eyes, he had just won a small but important battle.

They walked side by side toward the nearest campus cafe, a cozy corner spot that smelled faintly of cinnamon and fresh bread.

Inside, the quiet chatter of students created a soft background hum. Alex ordered two cups of steaming herbal tea and a plate of sugar-dusted pastries, placing them on their table with a flourish.

Lapiz cupped her tea with both hands, letting the heat seep into her fingers. Her shoulders relaxed ever so slightly.

Alex observed her, painfully knowing the internal battles that she fought everyday.

Lapiz was in Class A like Princess Xenia and Mary, proving that she was a very talented student.

She excelled in Archery, and Wind Magic.

However, she had a secret.

She was also very proficient in Black Magic.

The one magic Elves hated the most.

For them, Black Magic was vile because it was something that the Demon Race specialized in.

Of course, Elves hated other races too, but the hate they had for Demons surpassed their hatred toward the other races combined.

This deeply rooted prejudice was the reason Lapis's family hid her talent to wield Black Magic. The young lady was forbidden from practicing it, and she obliged out of fear that someone might discover this secret.

Lapis also hated demons very much. After all, the power she possessed was synonymous with them. If she were exposed, she'd be branded a traitor of her own race despite doing nothing wrong.

Alex knew about this and also knew about an episode where Lapis would be used as a sacrifice to summon the Demon Lord inside Frieden Academy.

That was one of her Bad Endings, and he didn't wish to see no matter what.

"Can you tell me what happened?" Alex asked softly. "Maybe I can help you?"

The young lady had just finished drinking a bit of her tea, which calmed her a bit.

She then looked at Alex, who seemed to be at the center of many important events that were happening in the academy with a solemn gaze.

Truth be told, she had no idea about what to do after leaving the Obsidian Fang.

Her sister said that she wouldn't accept Lapiz's resignation and would still keep her as a member whether she liked it or not.

Now that she was calmer, she pondered if any other club would accept her.

Many knew she was Aeris' sister, so no one really dared to antagonize her.

The influence of Obsidian Fang within the academy surpassed that of the other Crest Clubs, with the exception of the Merchant Alliance.

In short, Lapiz was considered as one of the "Untouchables" in the academy purely because Aeris got her back.

But she didn't want to always rely on her sister. She wanted to carve her own path.

As Lapiz stared at the young man in front of her, she realized that Alex might be one of the people whom even Aeris wouldn't want to mess with.

He had single-handedly brought the downfall of the Lionheart Society and almost made the Merchant Alliance lose their credibility within the academy.

She wanted to ask if Alex was still recruiting members for his club, but she was too shy and embarrassed to ask him.

While she was thinking on what to do next, the young man brought down his tea cup and asked her a question.

"Lapiz, would you like to join my club?" Alex asked. "We have a special promo right now. If you join, I, the President of Endless Horizon, will grant you one wish."

Lapiz didn't know if Alex was joking or not. But she felt that if she didn't take this opportunity to take a leap of faith, she would forever be in the shadow of her older sister, Aeris, who made her feel that she was a failure at life.

#### Chapter 293: A Tale As Old As Time

"A wish?" Lapiz looked at Alex as if trying to see if he was joking or not. "If I join your club, you're going to grant my wish?"

"Yes," Alex replied. "As long as it's within my means, I will grant any wish. Just don't ask me to give you the moon and the stars. I don't think I can make that possible anytime soon."

Lapiz stared into Alex's eyes, and the young man didn't back down.

Before Lapiz had been permitted to leave the Elven Kingdom of Faelarun, Elven Instructors thoroughly taught her the art of detecting lies. And so far, no matter how long she stared at the silver-haired young man, there was not a single hint of lie in his words and body language.

"Okay, I'll join your club," Lapiz said. "As for my wish, can I ask for it at a later time? I can't think of any right now."

"Understood." Alex nodded, casually pulled out a registration form from his storage ring, and handed the paper over to Lapiz. "After you're done filling up the form, just hand it to me tomorrow. You can find me at the clock tower after class. That is where our club room is located."

"Thank you." Lapiz smiled faintly. "I'll hand it over tomorrow."

They chatted for a few more minutes before the young elven lady bid Alex goodbye and returned to the Vermillion Crest Dormitory, temporary home to the children of noble families.

The young man watched her go until her back faded into the distance.

Just as he was about to leave, a hand held his shoulder from behind, holding him in place in a vice grip.

“Oi, what did you and my sister talk about?”

The most perfect heroine of ELO emitted a powerful killing intent as she held Alex in place.

“Nothing much,” Alex replied, not even bothering to remove the hand on his shoulder. “I just asked her if she was interested in joining my club.”

“And why would she join your club, huh?” Aeris asked coldly. “She’s already in my club. Don’t get near my sister, Alex Stratos. If you do, I will end you.”

Alex scoffed before turning his head to look at the gorgeous lady, whose beauty could bring down the downfall of a nation.

But unlike most students in the academy who all wished Aeris would give them even just one glance, Alex wasn’t charmed by her beauty.

He fearlessly met her gaze, not backing down from the pressure she was exuding.

“Do you know why Lapiz wants to leave your club so badly?” Alex asked.

“Of course!” Aeris replied. “It’s because I’m not giving her enough attention, right?”

“Wrong,” Alex shook his head. “It’s because you have gorilla-like strength... awww!”

The young man had forgotten that Aeris was still holding on to his shoulder, and due to his words, the beautiful elf applied more pressure by accident.

Realizing what she had done, she immediately let him go and took out a potion from her storage ring, offering it to him in a hurry.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to hurt you,” Aeris said. “Please take this.”

Alex accepted the flask and chugged it down.

When he felt that the potion had finally worked, he also apologized, knowing that he was also in the wrong.

"I'm sorry," Alex replied. "I didn't think my words through either. But if you're willing, I have a little advice, Senior Aeris. The more you try to control your sister's life, the more she would distance herself from you.

"If you're not careful, it will affect her mental state of mind until it goes past the point of no return. I'm sure that you of all people don't want your sister to have a mental breakdown, right?"

"Of course not." Aeris' expression became solemn.

Alex knew that Aeris really loved her sister.

But too much love could also hurt someone, especially for Lapis who was constantly being compared to her perfect older sister.

"Senior Aeris, let Lapis join my club," Alex said. "What she needs right now is a place where she can independently grow and develop her true potential."

"Do you really think your club can do that?" Aeris asked, still in doubt of whether she should trust Alex or not.

"Yes," Alex replied without hesitation. "She's in good hands."

Aeris' gaze never left Alex's face since their talks had begun.

Just like what Lapis had done earlier, she was looking for any signs of falsehood in his words.

But she saw none.

Alex's words were sincere, and even though she didn't want to admit it, the members of Endless Horizon had proven themselves to be very capable individuals.

"Then tell me one thing," Aeris said in a serious tone. "Is my sister beautiful?"

She just wanted to be sure. What if Alex had a malicious intent for inviting Lapid to join his club?

After hearing Aeris question, Alex chuckled as if he was hearing a joke for the first time.

"Beautiful?" Alex asked in contempt. "A single word is not enough to describe all of Lapid's good points.

"Not only is she beautiful, she's also dependable, trustworthy, diligent, modest, elegant, humble, kind, caring, reliable, honest, hardworking, generous, gentle, talented, selfless, disciplined, graceful, radiant, and has a smile that could make demons rethink their life choices."

Aeris blinked. "...That many?"

Alex nodded firmly. "I'm not even done yet. She's noble, loyal, supportive, thoughtful, and—above all—she has the rare gift of being the perfect little sister anyone could wish for. If you asked me to make a list of her good points, I can confidently write three hard cover books and publish them for the entire world to see!"

If she were being honest, she found Alex's words impressive. So much that she was tempted to lock Alex up so the bastard would never see her sister ever again.

"Well, I do agree that she is the best little sister in the world," Aeris nodded.

“Right?” Alex smiled. “So, sister-in-law—errr, I mean, as her older sister, you should not be too overprotective of her and allow her to spread her own wings to soar in the sky. Don’t worry—I, Alex Stratos, promise to protect her in your stead!”

“... Is it just me or do you look like a bad person right now?” Aeris narrowed her eyes because she could sense that Alex seemed to hold some feelings for her sister. “Can I really entrust my sister to you?”

“Of course.” Alex patted his chest with confidence. “Senior Aeris, please trust me like you trust your relatives.”

Aeris blinked. “... I don’t trust my relatives.”

Alex froze. “Oh. Uh... then trust me like you trust your sword, then!”

Aeris tilted her head. “My sword once broke during a duel.”

“Okay, okay, bad example,” Alex coughed lightly. “Then trust me like... like you trust a good pair of shoes! You walk with them every day, they support you, never betray you—”

“My last pair of shoes got destroyed during our last dungeon expedition while we were being chased by a high-ranking monster,” Aeris commented.

“...Wow. You have a rough life,” Alex muttered before quickly recovering. “Alright, new analogy. Trust me like you trust gravity. Always there, always dependable, keeps you grounded!”

The young lady was about to say something, but Alex would probably not run out of analogies, so she decided to hold back.

“Fine,” Aeris sighed. “I’ll trust you just this once. But if something happens to my sister, I’ll make you regret it for life. Do I make myself clear?”

“Loud and clear,” Alex replied. “Thank you for giving me and Lapis a chance. I will not let you down.”

"You better." Aeris glared before walking away.

When the young lady was finally out of sight, Alex was finally able to breathe a sigh of relief.

'I guess I'll return to the dormitory for now,' Alex thought.

The young man walked away, not knowing that Lapis had witnessed a huge chunk of their conversation, left unnoticed as she hid behind a tree.

She initially came back because she had a question to ask Alex only to encounter such a surprising scene. While she may not have heard the entire conversation, she at least heard the part where Alex described all of her good points.

As someone who had an inferiority complex and was always compared to her sister, she felt warmth spread inside her chest as she recalled everything that Alex had said.

It was as if someone had given affirmation to all the hard work that she had done in the past, making her tear up a bit.

"What a strange human..." Lapis muttered as she left her hiding place and looked in the direction of the Ironheart Dormitory.

She then looked at the registration form in her hands with determination before heading in the direction of her own dormitory.

The young lady was still hesitating whether she should join Endless Horizon or not. But after hearing Alex's words, she felt that she should at least give it a chance.

Somewhere in the academy, in the tallest tower that belonged to the Headmaster, a young lady wearing a fox mask was holding a crystal ball in her hand.

Within it, Lapis's image could be seen as she walked back to her dormitory.

"The threads of fate tremble," the young lady said as she traced her hand on the crystal ball. "Should her heart falter, darkness shall claim her soul. The gentle little sister... will become the vessel of calamity. Do you have what it takes to save her... Alex?"

The light on the crystal ball slowly faded, its soft glow dimming until only the faint outline of Lapis remained.

Then—

Darkness consumed the room.

From within that darkness, a laugh that belonged to a devil echoed, as if enjoying an amusing tale that was as old as time.

Chapter 294: Your Wish Is My Command, Your Highness

After suffering a humiliating defeat against his brother, Caspian had become a laughing stock among the circle of nobility.

Quoting Chuck, some of them even called him "peasant" behind his back. Some of the mocking didn't slip past his notice, further infuriating the young man.

"Damn it!" Caspian clenched his fist so hard as he looked for a place to avoid the judgmental looks of the people around him.

At first, he thought of going to the Lionheart Society club room.

But he decided to toss this idea aside, for even his own club members looked at him with contempt a few days after the sparring match ended.

"I wish you had never been born!" Caspian muttered angrily as he walked the empty hallway of the academy. "How dare the child of a mere commoner call me a peasant?! That filthy half-blood, a shame in our noble lineage!"

The more he thought about Chuck, the angrier he became.

Perhaps having stomped his way randomly throughout the academy with no destination in mind, the young man soon found himself in an unfamiliar place.

"Where is this place?" Caspian muttered as he stared at the dimly lit but spacious room filled with books. "Am I in the library?"

But after a careful glance, he confirmed that he wasn't inside the academy's library.

Not only were there no tables and chairs for students to rest on, there was also not a single person around.

Suddenly, the young man felt something stir inside the room, prompting him to glance at the top of a bookshelf.

There, he saw a beautiful young lady, looking at him with a smile.

Her skin was lightly-tanned, and her shoulder-length silky blonde hair seemed to shimmer inside the dimly lit room.

But what caught Caspian's attention was her red eyes, which gazed back at him with amusement.

"I didn't expect that I would have a guest today," the young lady said. "What are you doing here, Caspian?"

"Shouldn't I be the one asking you that question, Eleanora?" Caspian asked. "What are you doing here? And where am I?"

Eleanora smiled faintly. "This is a place where lost, pitiful souls end up while staying here in the academy. Since you are here, it means that you are one of those pitiful souls."

"I can say the same about you." Caspian sneered. "Since you're here as well, doesn't that also make you a pitiful soul?"

"Not really." Eleanora jumped off from the top of the bookshelf and slowly descended on the floor. "I came here to look for something to eat. And although you don't look tasty, I guess you will do for now."

Caspian subconsciously took a step back as the young lady, who was in the same class as him, walked in his direction.

"W-What are you planning to do?" Caspian asked.

"Didn't I tell you?" Eleanora smirked. "I came here looking for something to eat. Although you are not my type, you're still of noble blood, so you should taste just fine."

Caspian couldn't avert his gaze from her charming red eyes, which seemed to hold him in place.

He didn't think much of Eleanora in their class because she preferred to be alone and always looked outside the window during class.

She often looked like a gloomy, sickly person, but the young lady in front of him was the opposite. Although they shared the very same features, the one before him looked so charming and lively, making him wonder if she was really the same lady he knew.

"Are you scared?" Eleanora asked softly as she reached out to touch Caspian's cheek, which made the young man feel goosebumps all over his body.

However, he felt stuck in place, unable to move away from the cold and soft hand caressing his face.

Caspian tried to scream, but no voice escaped his mouth.

Eleanora giggled after seeing his reaction.

“You were so arrogant and proud,” Eleanora said as her head moved closer to the young man, who was paralyzed by fear and her beauty. “Oh gone is the confident Caspian who look down on commoners as if they were pieces of trash.

“And now, behind your back, people call you a peasant and a mongrel. The tables have turned, and this is the price you will need to pay for your arrogance.”

“S-Stop... please... stop!” Caspian pleaded, his voice hoarse as he forced himself to speak.

“Don’t worry,” Eleanora whispered in his ear. “I will make the pain go away. I will make you forget...”

A moment later, she sank her fangs into the neck the helpless young man, who was unable to even resist the young lady as she fed on his warm blood, rich in vitality and mana.

Soon, his eyes glazed over, and his hands hung loosely at his sides.

Eleanora drank slowly, relishing the taste of the young man’s noble blood, which was tastier than she imagined.

When she finally had her fill, she licked the wound on his neck before using her power to heal his injuries.

She then hugged the young man, supporting his body, who had lost its strength.

“You should be more careful, Eleanora.”

A voice filled with disapproval echoed through the dim room, cutting through the silence like a blade.

Eleanora stiffened in place, her red eyes narrowing as she slowly turned her head in the direction from which the voice came.

From between the rows of towering shelves, a figure emerged.

Her steps were calm, deliberate, and heavy with authority.

“Well met, Your Highness,” Eleanora said in greeting, still holding Caspian, who had fainted in her arms.

Evangeline looked at the young man before clicking her tongue in annoyance.

“You play some dangerous games, Eleanora,” Evangeline frowned. “Of all the people you choose to feed on, why did you choose the son of a Duke of this kingdom? If someone discovers, you will be in big trouble.”

“No one will know if you don’t tell anyone, Princess,” Eleanora replied. “At most, Caspian will feel more tired than usual. That’s it. I have already erased the memory of our meeting, and when he wakes up, he will just think that he fell asleep while looking for a quiet place to pass the time.”

Evangeline didn’t say anything anymore. There was no point—she had never won against Eleanora in a battle of words.

“I’m sure that you didn’t come here to chastise my feeding habits, Princess,” Eleanora said with a smile. “Do you need me for something? Or would you also like to feed on this young man? Don’t worry. Although he has a bad personality, his blood is more tasty than expected.”

“I have no interest in drinking his blood or the blood of any of the students here in the academy,” Evangeline stated. “I’m here to ask you if you are sent here by my father to spy on my movements.”

“What if I am, and what if I’m not?” Eleanora answered with a smile. “All you need to know is I’m not your enemy, Princess. I am even prepared to sacrifice my life for you, if ever you will need it.”

"Just tell me one thing," Evangeline said in a serious tone. "Are you in command of the Demon Worshipers in the academy?"

"I'm not," Eleanora replied. "I'm just here to enjoy my academy life to the fullest, Your Highness."

"You really think I'm that gullible huh?" Evangeline sneered.

Eleanora giggled before lightly patting Caspian's head.

"You don't have to look at me like that, Your Highness," Eleanora smiled. "I am on your side. If you need me to do something for you, I will do it without fail. You can let me do the dirty work for you, and I promise not to involve you even if I get caught. All I ask is that you don't judge me with my... hobbies."

Evangeline glanced at Caspian before shifting her gaze back to Eleanora. "Very well. Since you said that you are on my side, I ask that you keep me updated on the movements of the Demon Worshipers in the academy.

"If they are planning to do anything, inform me beforehand, so I will not be involved in their actions."

"Your wish is my command, Your Highness," Eleanora replied. "I will do my best to carry out your orders."

Evangeline gave Eleanora a nod before disappearing in a red mist.

She then reappeared in the deserted hallway before walking toward the Vermilion Crest Dormitory.

The young lady didn't care whatever happened to Caspian as long as it didn't affect her daily life in the academy.

While she couldn't fully trust Eleanora, a subordinate of her father, the other party was the only person she could get news from at the moment.

Sometimes, Evangeline wanted to question her decision to enroll in Frieden Academy.

She knew that this academy was a prime target of the Demon Worshipers, yet she still wished to enroll here out of curiosity.

As she neared the Vermilion Crest Dormitory, she saw Lapis walking toward its entrance in a daze.

Seeing that the young lady was spacing out, Evangeline reached out to hold Lapis's collar, so she wouldn't hit her head on the closed gate.

"Ahh!" Lapis, who finally broke out of her daze, cried out as she looked behind her.

"Oh, it's you, Evangeline," Lapis said with a smile.

"Lapis, it's dangerous to walk while daydreaming," Evangeline replied in a serious tone. "Pay more attention to your surroundings next time."

"Y-Yes, I am sorry!" Lapis apologized. "And thank you for helping me."

Evangeline gave the young lady a faint nod before noticing the registration form in her hand.

"Are you joining a club?" Evangeline asked. "Aren't you already a member of Obsidian Fang?"

"Oh... I quit today." Lapis replied softly. "My sister and I had an argument, so I left the club."

"Ah..." Evangeline could somehow relate to Lapis. Just like her, she also had sisters who were a little too bossy for comfort. "Just be careful next time, okay?"

"Yes!" Lapis nodded. "Thank you again, Eva! See you in class tomorrow!"

Lapiz hurriedly entered the gate, and headed to the main entrance of the dormitory.

Evangeline watched her back calmly. "So she plans to join Endless Horizon."

The image of the handsome young man with silver hair and blue eyes appeared inside Evangeline's head.

She was certain that the Demon Worshipers had placed a bounty on the young man's head after the incident that happened in the Battle Royale.

But since the Headmaster and the Professors had been more active as of late, the agents of the Demon Worshipers inside the academy were all keeping a low profile.

However, Evangeline knew with certainty that this peace would only last for a short while.

They would once again strike once an opportunity arises, and this time, they would learn from their mistakes and create a better, more elaborate plan.

They would ensure that Frieden Academy and the young Heroes that it was fostering would all fall to ruin, allowing the Demons to make a comeback and take over the world they had nearly conquered in the past.

Chapter 295: The Headmaster's Announcement

A day after Alex invited Lapiz into Endless Horizon...

"I gathered all of you today for an important announcement," Professor Rowan declared to the entire student body of Frieden Academy.

"As you may already know, the annual Dungeon Expedition for the First to Third Years will commence in a month." The Headmaster then glanced at the Professors who would personally lead the students to their respective dungeons.

After the incident during the Battle Royale, Professor Rowan decided to play it safe. Even he would accompany the students, specifically the Fourth Years, who would be exploring a Rank 5 Dungeon. It had twenty-five floors, and the strongest Monster within was a Rank 5 Boss Monster.

Alex was also not a stranger to this upcoming event. Recalling a certain plotline, he glanced at the grumpy Renard, who was listening to the Headmaster with his arms crossed over his chest.

'She will finally be here,' Alex thought. 'Should I play matchmaker?'

Alex had already cleared the Story Mode of all three Main Heroes and three Main Heroines of ELO.

Although Renard wasn't someone who really liked romance, all the ladies in ELO could still potentially become his romance partner.

While his severe trust issues remain, the young man could still open his heart a little, especially to those whom he deemed as true friends.

The idea of the stubborn Renard falling in love was also rather novel, so Alex decided he'd extend a helping hand during the upcoming event the Headmaster was about to elaborate.

"In a few days, the representatives of the Kingdom of Solara and the Kingdom of Faellarun will arrive," Professor Rowan announced. "They will stay here for a month as exchange students, and I hope that everyone will treat them well.

"These exchange students are the elites among the First Years in their respective academies, and we old folks understand that there will be a sense of competition and rivalry. So, while unofficial duels will result in punishment, I will approve any and all duel requests."

The Headmaster then grinned fearlessly and raised his hand.

"I'm sure I don't need to tell you this—if there's a duel, make sure to crush them silly," the Headmaster said. "Bonus academy points will be given to the students who win the duels against our guests!"

""Yeah!""

The students all cheered, while the Professors shook their heads helplessly. Headmaster Rowan was already so old yet still as hot-blooded as the young ones, even encouraging them to fight against the exchange students in duels. But it was understandable. Duels were one way to let them get closer to each other.

After all, a good duel can sometimes lead to lasting friendships that would be tested through time.

Alex glanced at Renard, who was now grinning fearlessly. Clearly, Mr. I-Have-Trust-Issues was looking forward to smacking some of the elite students of Solara and Faelarun Academies.

"Hah... things will become troublesome in a few days," Vaan, who was standing beside Alex, muttered. "Are you also going to participate in the duels, Alex?"

"No," Alex replied. "I'm a pacifist."

Vaan giggled. In his eyes, Alex was never a pacifist.

'You're not a pacifist, but an opportunist,' Vaan mused. 'But that's what I like about you!'

The Headmaster then continued his announcement, telling everyone that the exchange students would also join the Dungeon Expedition.

"There will be a Ranking System based on points gained from the dungeon expedition," Professor Rowan stated.

"I'd better see a group from Frieden Academy in the top spot. If not... well... I'll toss all the First Years in the Chrono Maze for a week. Let's see how you like being trapped in that maze. Kukuku!"

The Headmaster's threat made the First Years, with the exception of Alex, turn pale from fright.

They already heard how dangerous the Forbidden Dungeon was, and staying a week there wasn't something they would like to experience.

Alex's eyes sparkled because he had run out of magic crystals. A week-long stay inside the Chrono Maze was something he welcomed with open arms!

Lotte, who was hovering above Latifa, glanced at Alex and saw the grin on the young man's face.

She had been there when he had saved Lucius from the dungeon, and she believed that Alex would be more than happy to be sent there for failing to take first spot in the dungeon expedition.

The Headmaster said a few more reminders before dismissing everyone.

As Alex and his classmates headed for their classroom, Chuck approached him from the side.

"This is the perfect opportunity to earn academy points!" Chuck smirked. "I'm going to farm them by beating those exchange students to a pulp!"

"Don't let your guard down against them, Chuck," Alex replied. "They are elite students, so fight them seriously, or you will lose badly against them."

"Relax." Chuck patted his chest with confidence. "I'm so handsome, so suave, and so charismatic. My charms alone will make me win any battles."

"Wow..." Vaan, who was walking beside Alex, couldn't help but praise Chuck's confidence. "You can do it, Chuck. I believe in you!"

"Thanks, Vaan!" Chuck flashed the pretty lady—err, boy a winning smile.

Alex no longer said anything, but he also looked forward to Chuck getting humbled by the exchange students who would stay at their academy for a month.

As an ELO player, he already had an idea about the roster of students coming to the academy, especially the delegation from the Solara Kingdom.

Truth be told, he was more worried about things that wouldn't follow the progression of Story Mode, especially after he had changed the destiny of many people.

Alex knew about the butterfly effect, which was something that couldn't be avoided as he tried to navigate the delicate balance between what must happen and what he believed was the right thing to do.

He had no regrets about saving Charles and Vaan.

But he was still trying to understand which character's Story Mode was in effect.

Renard, Cassian (Astrea's Brother), and Prince Edward were the three Main Heroes.

Astrea, Nessia, and Aeries were the three Main Heroines.

Each of them had a different story progression, but some events intertwined with each other, especially for Nessia and Astrea, who were both First Years.

The same could be said for Renard and Prince Edward, who were also First Years.

'The worst-case scenario is if all of their story arcs are active at the same time,' Alex thought. 'It will be so chaotic in the future.'

Earlier, Alex had glanced at a young lady with unkempt blonde hair, wearing glasses. She looked very timid and probably treated like a pushover, but the young man knew that this lady was hiding her true identity in her miserable form.

As if sensing his gaze, the young lady glanced back at him. Her blue eyes met his, as if appraising the reason why he was staring at her.

Alex averted his gaze and shifted his attention back to the Headmaster as naturally as possible, so she wouldn't suspect him of anything.

That young lady was none other than Eleanora. A vampire hiding her true identity among the Second Years of Class A.

Right now, her eyes were blue, but the moment she activated her vampiric powers, they would turn red, making her one of the Mini Bosses in Cassian's Story Arc.

She wasn't a very powerful antagonist, but she's a very annoying one.

As long as she had drank someone's blood, Eleanora could manipulate them. Her ability caused a lot of trouble for the protagonist, as well as the Student Council.

The damnable part of it all was that she had managed to keep her identity hidden until the end and kept a low profile when her Story Arc was over.

She remained an agent of the Demon Worshipers, but no longer played any major role in the following arcs.

Alex was very tempted to crush her now. But without her, Cassian would have no catalyst for his character growth, so he had to let the story progress as intended.

Also, he was afraid that changing too many things would result in an unknown future that even he couldn't predict despite playing the game for nearly six years.

'Well, it's not that bad, I guess,' Alex thought.

After all, there was already one thing that never happened in the game—Lapiz joining the Endless Horizon Club.

Alex's main goal for inviting Lapiz into his club was to prevent her from falling into the hands of the Demon Worshipers, who would use her as a sacrifice to summon The Devil.

If it succeeded, it wouldn't be a normal devil that would come but the Major Arcana itself, one of the twenty-two deities of the world.

Some interchanged Devils and Demons, but there was one clear difference between them.

Demons were chaotic creatures, not caring about the method they used to do whatever they wanted to do.

Devils, on the other hand, were lawful and followed rules and order.

The Devil in the game of ELO wasn't purely evil. However, it thought of everyone in the world as actors and actresses meant to entertain it.

It schemed in the shadows, using demons, humans, elves, dwarves, and the other races alike as chess pieces to sow discord, leading to war and chaos.

The Devil was also the leader of all demons, so all of them worshiped it fervently.

Alex had no intention of letting them use Lapiz as a sacrifice, which would lead to her bad ending.

The young lady had lived a life of suffering, so an ending filled with suffering was something that Alex didn't want her to experience.

'But for now, I need to confirm if the delegations are the same personalities in the game,' Alex thought. 'If things changed, that would be a clear indication that the story is going off-course, which is a bad thing.'

The young man was feeling anxious and excited at the same time. After all, the month-long stay of the exchange students was an important time in the academy.

If he could form alliances with the elite students of the Solara and Faellarun Kingdom, some future events would be easier to deal with, which would also guarantee a higher chance of success in saving his friends, who were now part of Endless Horizon.

#### Chapter 296: New Club Member

Lapiz lightly fixed her uniform as she looked at the door of the clock tower in front of her.

After taking a deep breath, the young lady knocked on the door to announce her arrival.

A second later, it opened by itself. Before her stood Alex, wearing a butler uniform.

“Welcome to Endless Horizon, Ms. Lapiz,” Alex said with a smile.

“Y-Yes. Thank you for having me,” Lapiz stuttered.

“Please come in,” Alex made a gesture for Lapiz to enter. “Everyone else is waiting for you in the club room.”

The young man had wanted to greet Lapiz normally, but after telling his club members that they would be having a new member, Vaan proposed that Alex wear a butler uniform and make sure that their new club member would feel at home.

To his surprise, Lavinia and Chuck approved of Vaan’s proposal.

In fact, Vaan already had the butler uniform in hand. Alex had genuinely felt confused at the time, wondering why the pretty boy was carrying such an item inside his storage ring.

But since it had already come to this, he decided to play along and wore it.

Lavinia even helped him smoothen his uniform and fix his bow tie with a sweet smile on her face.

She said that it looked good on him, and asked Chuck to take a picture of her and Alex, which she planned to send to her grandfather, Ramza.

After Lavinia took the picture, it was Vaan's turn to take a picture of him, which Chuck happily took.

Just remembering that memory made Alex sigh. He had a feeling that his dear club members would be treating him like a servant for the entire day.

But if it would make Lapis comfortable, he didn't mind playing along with everyone for the time being.

"We can use these stairs to climb up the tower, but in order to save time, please step on the magic circle over there," Alex pointed at the magic circle located at the center of the first floor of the tower.

When Lapis finally stood in place, the young man approached her and activated the magic formation, which teleported them inside the club room.

""Welcome to the club!""

The members of Endless Horizon happily greeted Lapis, except for Renard, who simply sat with his arms crossed over his chest.

Renard had always been antisocial, and this was his definition of being social—being present during the welcome for their new club member.

"Thank you, everyone." Lapis smiled. "Let's all get along."

Everyone clapped, including Renard, officially welcoming their new member.

"Now, let me introduce you to everyone," Alex said. "This is—"

“You don’t need to introduce us. We can introduce ourselves,” Chuck stated before flipping his hair. “My name is Chuck No Rizz, the most handsome First Year in the academy. I am a Fire Mage, but I plan to become the Flame Emperor in the future!”

Lapiz blinked, already knowing Chuck without introduction. He had a bad reputation for being a troublemaker, and her sister had repeatedly told her to stay away from him.

“My name is Vaan,” Vaan introduced himself before grabbing hold of Alex’s arm. “I am Alex’s fiancée.”

“No, you’re not,” Alex gave Vaan’s head a karate chop, but it didn’t have enough force in it to really hurt.

So instead of rubbing his head, Vaan only giggled and gave Lapiz a wink, which made the young lady smile.

Vaan had this playful atmosphere that made everyone lower their guard around him. Also, due to how delicate and cute he looked, many believe that Alex was a really lucky guy for having a cute girl around him.

Of course, they had no idea that Vaan was actually a guy and that Alex was just playing along so nobody would find out about the pretty boy’s true gender.

The only reason the noble families around the Damne Territory refrained from targeting Vaan was their belief that, through marriage, their heirs could lawfully acquire his domain.

The Damne Family was a Viscount Family, so it was only normal that many would like to claim that title for their own.

This was especially true for the third and fourth sons of Noble Families who couldn’t inherit the title of their parents.

Lastly, the King had also stopped any attempt of the Noble Families from forcefully taking over the Damne Territory by declaring that he recognized Vaan as the sole and rightful heir of the family.

Alex had asked Princess Xenia and blackmailed Prince Edward to convince the King to do it.

So now, Vaan should be able to enjoy his school life... at least for the time being.

"My name is Nessia Varr," Nessia said. "We are already acquainted. So I hope we get along, Lapid." "

"Yes, Nessia. I look forward to working with you as well," Lapid replied with a smile.

Lapid had always wanted to befriend Nessia since the latter was very approachable, kind, and polite.

She wasn't like those stuck-up nobles who only showed respect to Lapid because she was Aeris' sister, whom they couldn't afford to antagonize.

"I'm Charles Lambert," Charles bowed respectfully. "I'm just an ordinary person, so don't mind me."

"No, you're not," Lapid shook her head. "My sister wanted to scout you to become part of Obsidian Fang. I also saw the video of your performance in the Battle Royale. You are an All-Rounder, so I can understand why my sister wanted to poach you."

Alex smirked because what Lapid said was true.

Obsidian Fang had tried to poach Charles in exchange for the cure to Eris' disease. But Charles decided to stay because he owed a debt to Alex for helping him enroll in Frieden Academy.

Thanks to this show of loyalty and trust, Alex didn't hesitate to buy the pill, Aurelia's Tear, which could cure Eris' disease after he gained millions of academy points from the Crest Clubs who harassed his club members.

"The sleeping girl over there is Latifa, and the lady that is guarding her is Lotte," Alex explained. "There is also one more lady who looked just like them, and her name is Lumi. But her character isn't really the best, so if she says anything bad to you, please, don't pay it any mind."

“What did you say?!”

Lumi who suddenly materialized out of thin air, pulled Alex’s ear and berated him for badmouthing her.

She had already planned to take a good look at their new club member but decided to keep herself invisible for the time being.

This was why Alex casually told Lapiz about the attitude of one of Latifa’s most aggressive Alters, who specialized in physical combat.

“Lumi, stop hurting Alex,” Latifa ordered.

“E-Eh?!” Lumi gasped, not expecting that Latifa would protect Alex from her.

Lotte smiled faintly and motioned for her sister to come next to her.

Although she was reluctant, Lumi obeyed and stood quietly beside Lotte, while glaring at Alex.

Alex lightly rubbed his ear before glancing at Princess Xenia and Mary.

“I’m sure I don’t need to introduce you to Her Highness, Princess Xenia, and her maid, Mary,” Alex said.

“The three of you are classmates, right?”

“We are.” Latifa nodded.

Back then, Latifa was curious as to why Princess Xenia joined a newly established club. But after the incident with the Crest Clubs, Lapiz finally understood that Endless Horizon wasn’t as ordinary as she thought it would be.

Finally, Alex glanced at Renard. He was wondering if he should introduce Mr. I-Have-Trust-Issues to one of his Queens.

But before he could do anything else, the teenage boy took the initiative to introduce himself.

"My name is Renard," Renard said. "I don't really like getting along with people. But if someone bullies you, I don't mind beating them up."

Alex arched an eyebrow because this was a development that he didn't expect.

Although he didn't want to admit it, Renard had started to care about his club members and was now willing to lend them a hand.

'Well, it's a start,' Alex thought. 'At least we now have a bodyguard.'

The young man then glanced at the final member of his club, who was carrying a small banner that was fluttering in the breeze.

The word "Welcome" was written in it, making Alex give his little partner a thumbs up.

"Well then, let me introduce you to our last member," Alex said. "He is none other than..."

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim introduced itself with an innocent smile.

"It's nice to see you again, Dim Dim," Lapis picked up the little bun, and gently squished its cheek, making the latter giggle.

"Well then, let's talk about the agenda for today," Alex said as he personally pulled back a chair, so Lapis could sit on it. "It's about the exchange students who will be arriving from the Solara and Faellarun Kingdoms."

The moment everyone was seated, Mary poured everyone some tea and handed them the snacks she had prepared for Lapiz's arrival.

After she was done, she remained standing behind Princess Xenia and listened to Alex's explanation.

"Actually, the Student Council President has sent a letter to all the club presidents, telling them to ensure our members are on their best behavior when our visitors arrive," Alex explained. "But he also urged us to test the capabilities of the elite students of Solara and Faellarun."

"That said, all the clubs are required to prepare representatives for spars and duels if the need arises. Since our club is one of the most popular clubs in the academy right now, we must participate in this event at all costs. At least, that is what I should be saying. But that's not entirely true."

Alex then glanced at his club members with a serious gaze.

"This is just a guess, but these exchange students might target our club," Alex stated. "So, if you don't feel like accepting an invitation to a duel or a sparring match, feel free to reject their invitation. Do I make myself clear, Nessia and Vaan?"

"Understood, President." Nessia fixed her glasses. "I will not fight unless it benefits me."

"I'm a pacifist, so I will reject any invitation to spar with anyone," Vaan said without hesitation.

Since Latifa was always sleeping, she wasn't in any danger of being challenged by anyone.

Alex then glanced at Lavinia, Chuck, Charles, Renard, Princess Xenia, and Mary.

He wasn't too worried about these people since they were strong enough to protect themselves.

"You shouldn't worry about us," Renard commented. "You should worry about yourself. Since you are our president, the chances of you being challenged are much higher than ours. Make sure that you don't lose. If you do, I'll beat you up."

“Alright, but if you are the one to lose, you will listen to what I say for a week, okay?” Alex smirked.

“Very well, it’s a deal.” Renard nodded.

“Good.” Alex chuckled. ‘Let’s see if you can win against my Matchmaking Strategy.’

Both teenagers smiled at each other, fully confident that they would not lose to anyone.

Lapiz looked at Alex and Renard, wondering if the two of them were good friends or enemies that were simply waiting to stab each other’s back and go for the kill.

#### Chapter 297: A Win-Win Situation

With exchange students coming from the Solara and Faelarun Academies, the campus grounds had to be at their best. Guided by the Student Council, the student body all helped with cleaning and repairing.

For the Student Council President, the timing was perfect. He’d been wanting to use free manpower—err, ask for volunteers to help with fixing the facilities, but the plan had to be put on hold due to the succession of events that kept everyone busy.

Coincidentally—or not—some of these events had something to do with Endless Horizon Club, the Battle Royale and Alex’s public blackmail and extortion of most of the Crest Clubs.

Even the Headmaster and the Professors agreed to cancel all classes for a week. They wanted everything to be orderly and flawless by the time their guests arrived, and that could only be achieved if all students were exempted from classes and “voluntold” to be ordered around by the student council.

(A/N: Voluntold is military slang, which is also used in corporate/organizational settings, that means: “You didn’t volunteer, but your superior volunteered you anyway.”)

The students didn’t mind this exchange. After all, they had collective pride for the academy and wanted to ensure that the elite students wouldn’t find anything to nitpick.

"I gathered all of you today to discuss who will act as a guide for the students of the Solara and Fealarun delegation," the student council president, Theo Asborne, said with a smile.

Inside the conference room were the representatives of Class A and Class C.

Alex wondered how he even got included in the list of representatives drafted by Theo.

He didn't know if the Third Year was just trying to get back at him for his previous offenses or what, but since he didn't want to make a scene, he simply glanced at the other people inside the room with him.

Standing by his side were Nessia and Vaan, also chosen as the representatives of Class C.

For Class A, it was Astrea, Lapid, and Prince Edward.

"Can I make a suggestion?" Nessia raised her hand. "I think Class C should be the guides of Solara Academy's delegation."

Theo pondered for a bit before nodding in agreement. "You're really smart, Ms. Nessia. I'm assuming you proposed this because of Ms. Lapid. Am I right?"

"Yes," Nessia replied. "Ms. Lapid is most suited to guide the students from Faalarun. After all, she knows more about their culture."

Theo glanced at Lapid and asked her if that arrangement was fine with her. The young lady hesitated for a bit before glancing at Alex, as if asking him for help.

'Oh, right. Lapid is not very social, so asking her to be a guide might be a stretch,' Alex thought.

After some careful consideration, Alex thought of an idea that was a win-win situation for him.

“How about we do something like this, Mr. President,” Alex said. “I’ll team up with Ms. Lapiz and Ms. Astrea to become the guide of the delegation from Faelarun. Then Prince Edward will team up with Nessia and Vaan to guide the students from Solara Academy.

“Since the Kingdom of Avalon is closer to them, having the Prince as their guide is a much better choice. Nessia and Vaan are also well-versed in socializing, so they can effectively assist him without problems.”

Of course, Alex didn’t add the true reason for this arrangement—that it was coincidentally convenient that he could form a team with Lapiz and Astrea, his two Queens.

For Alex, this was a win-win situation that he wouldn’t want to miss.

His class was different from theirs, so he rarely had the opportunity to talk to Astrea without having her older brother, Cassian, treating him like some kind of pest. Since his chance basically approached him and even knocked on his door, how could he not accept it? Wasting blessings was rude!

“Hmm...” Theo narrowed his eyes as he gazed at the young man, who was looking back at him with a smile.

He then shifted his attention to Prince Edward and asked for his opinion.

“I think that’s a very sound proposal,” Prince Edward commented. “I also want to have an opportunity to form closer ties with the delegates from the Solara Kingdom.”

“Very well, we will go with this arrangement.” Theo took a few documents from his table and handed them out to Alex and the others. “This is the program we have prepared for them. Take them to some of the major attractions of the academy.

“If they insist on taking a stroll in the city, inform us in advance. The Student Council will ask some Sentinels to act as escorts. Also, ensure they clearly hear the rules of our academy lest they use it as an excuse when caught breaking them.”

Nessia skimmed the document and found nothing wrong with it.

Just as she expected, they were meant to guide their guests to the Training Grounds, Spellcasting Halls, and Alchemy Tower, as well as the other major attractions of the academy.

"I see. So we are meant to guide them to the places where they can freely spar or hold duels against our fellow students," Alex said.

"That's right." Theo nodded. "Although I don't think they will challenge you as their guides, the discretion to accept their duel is up to all of you. You don't have to worry about winning or losing. Just do your best.

"Also, Alex, please don't do anything to hurt our guests, okay? I don't want them leaving our academy thinking that all our students are just like you."

Alex blinked in confusion. "Is that your way of praising me, Mr. President?"

"Of course." Theo smiled. "You are a model character of the academy."

The main reason Theo chose Alex as one of the representatives to guide the exchange students was his ability to adapt to the situation.

A person who could blackmail the Crest Clubs and stop the Demon Worshipers' plan of slaughtering the students would certainly not lose to the provocations of their guests.

At least, that was Theo's firm belief. So, against all opposition, he added Alex to the list of representatives of the First Years.

After saying a few more reminders, he wished everyone good luck and escorted them out of the door of the student council room.

When Theo returned to his office, his secretary, Cassandra, poured him some tea.

“Are you sure letting Alex guide our guests is a good idea?” Cassandra asked. “Won’t they have a bad impression of our academy if that First Year were to blackmail them or something?”

“It doesn’t matter, Cassandra,” Theo replied after taking a sip of his tea. “I’m sure the delegations only came to spy for the Inter-Academy Tournament that will be hosted in half a year.

“Alex is good at finding the weaknesses of others, so I’m hoping he will allow us to see what our guests are capable of doing.”

“You haven’t changed, Theo,” Cassandra sighed. “You’re a prince of the Solara Kingdom, yet you are too hard on your own subjects.”

Theo shook his head before sipping his tea.

He knew he didn’t have a chance of becoming the Crown Prince of his kingdom unless his two brothers decided to step down and reject the crown.

Because of this, he simply wanted to enjoy his academy life while he was still at Frieden Academy.

“I came here without any expectations,” Theo said. “But being here made me feel complete. Maybe I should consider being a professor here when I graduate. What do you think, Cassandra?”

Cassandra didn’t say anything. Instead, she walked closer to Theo and hugged his head.

“It doesn’t matter what choice you make, Theo,” Cassandra replied. “I’ll be with you wherever you go.”

“Thank you, Cassandra,” Theo replied, feeling her warmth and softness. “Meeting you is the best thing that has happened in my life.”

The two then glanced at each other and smiled faintly.

When they first met at the academy, the two didn't really get along with each other. Only after experiencing many trials together did their relationship grow closer until they became inseparable.

— — —

Somewhere in the academy...

A sigh escaped Eleanora's lips as she finally stopped feeding on Caspian's blood.

"I'm still surprised that the blood of someone as arrogant as you has such a refined taste," Eleanora said. "I wonder, does your brother taste the same?"

"Don't speak of that half-blood in front of me." Caspian glared at Eleanora, who only giggled back at him.

"Oh dear, are you feeling jealous?" Eleanora asked in a teasing tone, caressing the young man's cheek. "Have you forgotten how much you bullied me in the past?"

"I'm sorry for bullying you," Caspian replied apologetically, while gazing at Eleanora's red eyes, which glowed faintly in the darkness. "I won't bully you again."

"Of course, you won't bully me from now on." Eleanora smiled sweetly. "After all, my wish is your command, yes?"

"Yes..." Caspian allowed himself to be pulled closer to Eleanora's embrace.

The vampire lady had used a subtle charm skill on Caspian, making the latter think that he had fallen in love with Eleanora on his own accord.

Having a willing blood donor would solve most of her problems, so Eleanora planned to keep Caspian until she got bored with him.

'It's a shame, but I need to keep a low profile for now,' Eleanora thought. 'I feel sorry for Eva, who only consumes blood pills as nourishment. Should I help her find a willing donor?'

The image of a certain student appeared inside Eleanora's mind.

'Alex Stratos,' Eleanora thought. 'I wonder what your blood tastes like? I hope it will be to Eva's liking.'

The young lady smiled faintly while her new toy hugged her gently, as if he wanted their bodies to merge together and become one for all eternity.

#### Chapter 298: The Arrival Of The Solara and Faelarun Academies

A few days of hectic preparation passed, and the time for the arrival of Solara and Faelarun Academies' delegates had come.

Professor Rowan, the Student Council, the professors, as well as the entire student body, all waited at the Flying Port of the Academy, which was meant for their guests.

They had even laid down a red carpet to receive their guests, making it a grand event.

"They're here!" one student pointed at the sky, where a grand flying ship floated in their direction.

The ship's sails were painted red, and on its surface was a striking symbol—a blazing sun made from gold leaves. Solara Academy's ship was admittedly awe-inspiring, drawing awe and admiration from Frieden Academy's students.

The ship slowly descended from the sky, soon landing perfectly on the spot reserved for them.

All the students watched as the elite members of Solara Academy disembarked from their ship and stepped onto the red carpet.

"They're still as flashy as ever," Professor Gareth muttered, prompting his fellow professors to nod in agreement.

The uniforms of the students from Solara Academy were also red, with golden linings around their edges.

These were their ceremonial uniforms, not the regular ones they usually wore at their academy.

It was simply worn to impress others because they believed that first impressions last.

Alex's gaze softened a bit when he saw a familiar young lady disembark from the flying ship.

She had long golden hair with streaks of fiery red, which symbolizes the Solara Kingdom's Royal Bloodline.

Her warm amber eyes scanned the surroundings, as if looking for someone.

Unlike the rest of students, who were wearing red ceremonial uniforms, she wore white and gold robes adorned with sun motifs, making her stand out like a beautiful white flower among the red roses filled with thorns.

She also carried a magical staff shaped like a blooming lily, which matched her beautiful features.

The young lady radiates a gentle, noble, and charismatic aura, making others feel calm as they gaze upon her.

She was none other than Celestria Dawnflare, daughter of the Duke of Dawnflare.

Alex knew her as the Radiant Lily of the Battlefield, one of the Unique Characters in the Story Mode of ELO.

With most of everyone focused on the beautiful lady, they failed to notice that another person disembarked from the ship.

Similar to Celestria, he was also wearing white and gold robes adorned with sun motifs.

His golden hair also had faint streaks of red in it, proving his royal bloodline.

He was none other than Fifth Prince of Solara and Theo's little brother, Garen Ashborne.

Seeing that everyone's attention was focused on his cousin, the young man couldn't help but sigh internally.

'I should have disembarked first,' Prince Garen thought.

He had planned to wow everyone with his knightly charm and overflowing confidence.

But since he and his cousin, Celestria, got along very well, he decided to just smile and allow everyone to gaze at the beautiful lily of their Academy.

As if waiting for that moment, another ship appeared in the sky of the academy.

A magnificent Elven flying ship, adorned with green sails, slowly descended from the heavens.

When the flying ship neared the ground, many students saw something fluttering around its sails like silver butterflies, leaving trails of white shimmering dust behind their wake.

The emblem that was embedded on its biggest sail was a Crescent Moon, shining faintly despite it being daytime.

"Wow," Lavinia couldn't help but sigh at the beautiful ship that represented the Faelarun Academy.

When the drawbridge connected to the ground, the first to disembark was an elven boy who seemed to be around twelve to thirteen years old by human standards.

He walked straight and confidently with his hands clasped behind his back.

Following behind him in neat order were the elves of Faelarun Academy.

All of them wore high-collared tunics of deep forest green, with a small crescent moon embedded on their right chest.

Although their clothes weren't as eye-catching as the ceremonial clothes of the Solara Academy's delegation, they still showed the elegance of the elves, who all had a close relationship with nature.

"Welcome to Frieden Academy," Professor Rowan said with a smile.

The students of Frieden Academy gave their guests a resounding round of applause, welcoming them as their special guests.

The professors who accompanied their delegations greeted Professor Rowan and shook hands with him.

"I know you all had a long journey, so please, come and refresh yourselves," Professor Rowan said, gesturing for the professors and their respective students to follow him.

The Solara and the Faelarun Students glanced at each other before following behind the Headmaster of the academy.

Theo, who was assigned to manage the rest of the student body after receiving their guests, made a gesture for everyone to return to their respective dormitories for the time being.

Everyone already knew the drill, so they all complied without any complaints.

Alex and the other representatives of the First Years remained, tasked to be the guides of these guests from afar after the Headmaster and the professors had finished a meal with them.

“Are you okay, Alex?” Vaan asked the young man, who seemed to be deep in thought. “Do you feel butterflies in your stomach?”

“No,” Alex replied. “Don’t mind me, Vaan. I’m just thinking about a few things at the moment.”

Alex was a little surprised because there was a person within the Faelarun Delegation who shouldn’t be there with them.

It was none other than the twelve to thirteen-year-old elven boy who led the delegation to disembark from the ship.

‘I don’t remember seeing him in my playthroughs,’ Alex thought. ‘Who is that person? He seems to have a high standing among their delegation.’

The young man was starting to think that the appearance of the boy was due to the changes that he made in the story progression of ELO.

Although it might seem like a minor change on the surface, he believed that it wasn’t as simple as it looked on the surface.

Then, an idea struck him, which made him lightly tap his head in frustration.

‘How could I forget something so simple?’ Alex thought as he glanced at Lapid, who was walking beside him.

Since she held a high position in Elven Society, Alex believed that she would have the answer to his question.

“Lapid, can I ask you a question?” Alex said.

“Okay.” Lapid nodded.

“That little boy who led the Faelarun delegation earlier, do you know him?” Alex asked.

“I do.” Lapid smiled, and her gaze softened a bit. “He is my little brother, Prince Kaelen Eryn Sylvarin.”

Alex blinked once, then twice, before his hand trembled after hearing the name that made him recall a memory of the past.

Kaelen Eryn Sylvarin was the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Faelarun, and also the future husband of the Saintess of the World Tree.

He was a genius Elf Sorcerer who specialized in Nature and Earth Magic, which earned him the title of the “Sylvan Guardian.”

‘It seems that a future big shot has appeared,’ Alex mused. ‘I just hope that nothing dangerous happens during this time.’

He wasn’t aware that among the other students who were slowly leaving the scene, a young lady with disheveled hair and wearing glasses lowered her head to hide the smile on her face.

A few ideas were swirling inside her head, which she believed would make the month-long stay of their guest a very memorable experience that they would remember for a lifetime.

Chapter 299: The Superior Race [Part 1]

After the reception ended, Theo met with the delegation from the Solara and Faelarun Academies.

“I’m Theo Ashborne, the Student Council President of Frieden Academy,” Theo said with a smile. “If any of you require assistance, please don’t hesitate to look for me at the Student Council Room.”

“Really?” asked the Fourth Prince of the Kingdom of Solara, Garen Ashborne, in a teasing tone. “Are you sure you’re not going to ignore me, Brother?”

“I won’t,” Theo answered firmly. “So behave yourself, Garen.”

“Heh...” Prince Garen was about to say more, but his cousin, Celestria, tugged on his uniform and shook her head.

In the end, the arrogant prince crossed his arms over his chest and no longer said anything.

“During your stay, these students will be your guides in the academy,” Theo introduced Alex and the others.

It didn’t take long for the Student Council President to notice that one of the guides was missing.

As if waiting for that moment, they heard someone running in the hallway, prompting everyone to look in the direction from which it came.

The moment Prince Garen saw the newcomer, the annoyance he felt earlier disappeared completely.

A cute young lady with long black hair tied in a ponytail ran in their direction.

“I-I’m sorry, Mr. President,” Vaan said as he panted for breath. “I forgot something in the dormitory, so I had to go back to get it.”

Theo nodded. “Be careful next time, Ms. Vaan. Also, you shouldn’t run in the hallways.”

“Understood,” Vaan replied apologetically. “It won’t happen again.”

Vaan then glanced at the Solara delegation, which was assigned to him, and gave them his sweetest smile.

Prince Garen’s body shuddered as if an arrow had struck his chest. He couldn’t avert his gaze from the young lady’s face and her beautiful purple eyes that captured his heart.

Fortunately, everyone was still listening to Theo's explanation, so no one seemed to notice the change in Prince Garen's expression.

"Ms. Nessia, Ms. Vaan, and Prince Edward will guide the students from Solara Academy," Theo stated. "Mr. Alex, Ms. Astrea, and Ms. Lapiz will be the ones to guide those from Faelarun Academy."

The twelve-year-old prince of Faelarun, Prince Kaelen, frowned when his gaze landed on Alex.

The human boy stood way too close to his sister, which made him feel uncomfortable.

But since he didn't want to make a scene, he decided to keep silent for the time being.

"Well then, Alex and Prince Edward, please look after them," Theo said.

"Understood." Alex nodded.

"They are in good hands," Prince Edward replied.

Since they had already had a planned route to take the exchange students, the two groups separated from each other.

Alex took the lead and guided the Faelarun Students to the Combat Mage Training Grounds.

"This is the place where the mages of the academy do their training exercises," Alex explained. "As you can see, there are no students at this time. But starting tomorrow, you can visit here if you want to exchange notes with the students of our academy."

Although he said "exchange notes," it was his subtle way of telling the Elves that if they wanted to challenge the mages of Frieden Academy, this was the place they needed to go to.

“By the way, the name of our most talented prodigy is Chuck No Rizz,” Alex said with pride. “Feel free to challenge him anytime.”

The young man laughed internally as he painted Chuck as a genius only born every three hundred years.

Astrea and Lapiz looked at Alex and wondered what kind of weed he was smoking.

Nearly all the First Years knew of Chuck as a troublemaker, and even his previous victory over his brother and a few other students failed to offset his bad reputation in the academy.

“Oh? Then how about you?” Prince Kaelen smiled faintly. “Are you strong?”

“I’m not, so don’t waste your time to duel with me, Your Highness,” Alex replied. “It’s not right to bully the weak.”

Prince Kaelen clicked his tongue. “I don’t like you, so please stay away from my sister.”

The twelve-year-old boy pushed Alex to the side and stood in front of Lapiz, as if protecting his sister from the filthy human.

“Kaelen!” Lapiz was shocked to see his brother push Alex away. “What do you think you’re doing?!”

“Sister, I know you pleaded for our parents to study here,” Prince Kaelen replied. “But, you shouldn’t allow this filthy human to stick too close to you. Oh... the only one who is filthy is Alex. It’s fine if Ms. Astrea stays close to my sister.”

“Thank you?” Astrea blinked. Just like Lapiz, she was surprised by the sudden hostility coming from the Elven Prince.

Alex, who had been pushed away, simply scratched his head. This was the first time he met the elven prince, and now he knew that the younger boy had a fiery personality.

"I'm sorry, Alex," Lapis said. "My brother is still young, and this is the first time he left Faelarun."

"It's fine, Lapis," Alex replied. "It's not a big deal."

The young man made a mental note to not accidentally call Prince Kaelen "brother-in-law" lest it triggered the elven prince into biting him.

After that short episode, Alex continued the tour of the academy.

As they were about to head to the library, the Elves suddenly took a fighting stance, which made Alex, Astrea, and Lapis look in the direction where they were looking.

A Doom Cow was walking in their direction, and a little white bun was perched on top of her head.

"Don't attack her!" Alex immediately stood between Daisy and the Elven Students.

"This Doom Cow is part of the security personnel of the academy," Alex said in a serious tone. "Her name is Daisy, and this little guy over here is Dim Dim."

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim waved its little stubby hand at the Elves, which made them lower their guard.

"Is your academy short in manpower that you have to resort to having a monster patrol your academy grounds?" a handsome elf, who goes by the name Caelum Veyra, asked.

He was an Elven Prodigy, and was second-in-command of the students from Faelarun.

Caelum was seventeen years old, and specialized in illusion and spirit binding.

"You should be more understanding of these 'short-lived' children, Caelum," a beautiful elf commented. "As a member of the superior race, you should be more gracious in dealing with them."

"You're right, Serenya," Caelum replied. "I just can't stand looking at ugly monsters like that cow."

Dim Dim frowned because it didn't like the way Caelum spoke about its friend, Daisy.

Daisy mooded as if telling her little friend not to get angry at the pompous "tree slug," who was nothing more than a brittle twig acting all high and mighty.

Dim Dim found Daisy's words funny, so it giggled, which, for some reason, made Caelum feel insulted because he thought that the little strange creature was mocking him.

"Please behave yourselves!" Lapis was no longer able to take it and glared at the elves who had just arrived at the academy.

"I apologize, Your Highness," Caelum immediately backed down after Kaelen glared in his direction.

"I apologize as well," Serenya bowed her head respectfully to Lapis. "Please forgive me, Princess."

"I'm just a student here, so don't call me Princess," Lapis replied. "All of you are representing Faelarun, so I hope you stop insulting the students here in the academy."

"Sister, don't be mad." Prince Kaelen held Lapis's hand. "I'll make sure to talk to them properly after the tour ends. For now, don't be angry, okay?"

Seeing that her little brother was doing his best to prevent the situation from escalating, Lapis decided to take a step back as well.

"I think this month is not going to be peaceful," Astrea whispered in Alex's ear.

"Right." Alex nodded.

He could already envision the Elves challenging the students of the academy tomorrow and showing them what a superior race was like.

However, he was also looking forward to this development.

The month-long stay of the exchange students was an important time for the Main Heroes and Heroines of ELO.

It was the time to learn from them and form connections, which would become very important in the future.

Alex also wanted to secure some friendships with the Elves since the second half of the Chain Quest from Mount Heracle was within the Kingdom of Faelarun.

Although it would be a bit difficult, he planned to get along with his 'future-brother-in-law', and ask him to help him get close to Lapiz.

But judging from the hateful glare that he was receiving from Prince Kaelen, Alex knew that this mission wasn't going to be a walk in the park.

Chapter 300: The Superior Race [Part 2]

The corner of Caelum's lips twitched as he distanced himself from the Doom Cow's swaying tail that was whipping the side of his body.

For some reason, Daisy and Dim Dim decided to join Alex as he guided the Elves to the different attractions of the academy.

The handsome elf's gaze then landed on Dim Dim, who didn't hesitate to stick out its tongue and make faces at him.

The little bun still held a grudge against the tree slug that dared to call its friend ugly.

If not for the fact that Alex had told Dim Dim not to throw brittle vials at Caelum, the little guy might have already waged war against the entire elven delegation on its own!

Serenya couldn't help but smile, aware of Caelum's usual arrogance. Seeing him control himself was enough for her to feel entertained.

"Do I look like a joke to you?" Caelum asked Serenya. "What's so funny, huh?"

"You're funny," Serenya answered fearlessly. "If you want to vent your frustration, you can go to the training grounds tomorrow and ask the humans to spar with you."

Caelum clicked his tongue and no longer paid attention to the beautiful elf, who was also a prodigy just like him.

Caelum and Serenya were both Rank 4 Arcane Archers, making them the elites of the First Years of Faelarun Academy.

But they weren't the only ones who were strong.

Although Prince Kaelen was only twelve years old, he was already a Rank 3 Nature Savant, whom even they would have a hard time fighting in one-on-one battles.

The Prince was quite gifted, and his Mastery over Earth and Nature Magic was the highest among the Elves of the current generation.

An hour later, Alex led the delegation to one of the private cafes within the academy.

Everything on the menu were organic and natural, so he thought that this was the perfect place for the elves to drink some fruit juice and eat some apple pie.

Unfortunately, he had underestimated their arrogance, which made the Wolf Girls, who were the waitresses in the cafe, almost cry.

"I won't eat or drink anything that is made by these animals," Caelum declared.

"E-Excuse me?!" The pretty wolf girl was taken aback by the elf's shout. "Who are you calling an animal?"

"You, obviously," Caelen frowned. "The mere thought of having fur on my food and drink is enough to make my skin crawl."

The wolf girl bit her lip, her eyes misting as she tried her best not to cry in front of the arrogant elf.

Alex immediately went to talk with her in order to calm her down.

"Don't mind him," Alex said softly. "He was kicked by a donkey in the head when he was born, so he has a mental issue. Don't take his words to heart."

"Oh... is that so?" The Wolf Girl wiped the corner of her eye and gave Caelum a look filled with pity. "The poor thing. That must be why he looks like an imbecile from up close."

"I know right?" Alex smiled faintly. "Blessed as we are, we should be more understanding with the less fortunate. Please continue to serve the other guests."

"Thank you." the Wolf Girl smiled. "Can I now take your order?"

"One slice of pineapple pie and pineapple juice please," Alex replied.

"Okay, I'll add a freebie just for you, Mr. Blackmail King." The Wolf Girl winked at Alex before moving toward the counter to pass his order to the kitchen.

"You... did you just say I got kicked by a donkey in the head?!" Caelum growled.

Alex didn't reply to the elf. Instead, he looked at the table where Lapid, Astrea, and Prince Kaelen sat.

"Lapid, this guy over here is glaring at me," Alex shouted. "Can you do something about it?"

Caelum almost coughed out blood then and there as he hastily sat straight and looked at the slice of the apple pie in front of him.

The handsome elf's fists trembled under the table, but the sight of Lapid watching him with a faint frown kept him rooted in place.

He swallowed his pride, stabbing his fork into the pie in front of him as if it had personally wronged him.

However after reluctantly taking a bite, his expression changed and he continued to eat the rest of the pie, making Alex smirk.

Serenya giggled after seeing this scene, and the gaze she gave Alex was one filled with amusement.

She had heard the Wolf Girl call the young man the Blackmail King, and it piqued her curiosity.

"Say, why did she call you Blackmail King?" Serenya inquired. "Do you always blackmail people?"

The fact that Alex didn't hesitate in calling out to their Princess in order to keep Caelum in line was enough to tell her that they had a close relationship.

Of course, Prince Kaelen and the other elves felt a little annoyed with how the human was acting like he and their princess were very close friends.

"Here. Try this, brother," Lapid said as she handed a slice of pineapple pie to Prince Kaelen. "I love this pie, so I want you to taste it."

"If you love it, then I love it too, sister," Prince Kaelen replied before taking a bite. "Oh. It is indeed delicious. No wonder you like it very much."

"Our older sister also likes this pie," Lapis said proudly. "Let's visit her later once the tour ends."

"Good." Prince Kaelen nodded. "I also want to meet older sister."

Similar to Lapis, Prince Kaelen also looked up to his older sister, Aeris.

She was his idol.

In his eyes, his older sister was the role model that every elf should follow.

"By the way sister, did you know that this trip was almost canceled at the last moment?" Prince Kaelen said.

"It did?" Lapis frowned. "Why?"

Prince Kaelen moved closer and whispered in his sister's ear.

"Father and mother are worried that the Demon Worshipers might use this opportunity to harm me," Prince Kaelen whispered. "But I convinced them that since both of my sisters are here, I would be safe. After all, the two of you are here to protect me."

Lapis's gaze softened as she reached out to hug her little brother.

"Yes, I will keep you safe," Lapis promised. "So just enjoy your stay here in the academy, okay? I missed you very much."

"I missed you, too, sister," Prince Kaelen replied. "Let's do many fun things together."

“Un!” Lapid nodded.

Alex and Astrea looked at the brother and sister pair with smiles on their faces.

However, the two teenagers had a feeling that they would need a lot of patience in dealing with their guests, who thought of themselves as superior to the other races.