

Endless 361

Chapter 361: I Just Want To Help Protect His Secret

Confident that he would be able to blackmail Vaan into submission with the secret she had hidden all her life, the Montclair heir's smile turned into a smug, greasy smirk.

But the young lady was set on defying every single one of his expectations. Vaan came to the Grand Hall with one thing in mind.

To break free from the shackles of her past, and face the person who believed he had power over her.

"You're not my fiancé," Vaan declared firmly. "Can you stop involving me in your delusions? How long must you embarrass yourself? Must I call the academy guards to have you kicked out?"

Her fearless voice was loud and clear, and her gaze was straight and true.

Victor's eyes were practically bulging out of his sockets. He'd anticipated Vaan's surrender, but not only had she not bowed down to his threat, she was not showing any signs of fear in her tone or expression.

For a brief moment, he wondered if he was talking to the same person whom he had drugged in the past. Was this really the behavior of someone being threatened?

Victor might not be able to tell, but Vaan's hand was trembling faintly in Alex's hand. Alex simply held her hand more firmly to reassure her that he was there to support her.

Victor was now faced with two choices.

One, he could announce the truth to everyone and destroy Vaan socially. Two, he could continue guarding this ill-gotten secret so he would gain the upper hand in future negotiations.

So humiliated was he that he came very close to telling everyone the truth.

But he also understood that once the secret was out, he would no longer hold any power over Vaan. Naturally, that would eliminate the option of seizing the Damne Territory through marriage.

“You’ll regret this!” Victor glared at Alex before storming out of the Grand Hall. He needed to be away from the crowd to calm down. At least, that was what he was telling himself.

Chuck and Dim Dim watched the arrogant noble leave, clicking their tongues in disapproval.

“Dim Dim, it looks like we can feed the fishes tonight,” Vaan said.

“Dim!”

Clearly, the two of them wanted nothing more than to toss Victor into the Arowana River.

Chuck agreed that Victor deserved such a fate, but he was unsure what the Rank 4 and Rank 5 monsters had done to deserve Victor.

“Good job, Vaan,” Alex praised his friend warmly. She had finally stood up against the thorn in her side. “You were amazing.”

“Thank you, Alex,” Vaan replied. “I’m glad that you’re here with me.”

The two smiled and held each other’s gaze for nearly a minute before they heard a light cough beside them.

Lavinia lightly poked Dim Dim’s cheek before looking at Alex.

“The musicians are about to play a song,” Lavinia said. “And I am in the mood to dance. Will you dance with me, Alex?”

"I'd love to," Alex replied. "Your dress is really gorgeous on you. But... you seem to have a lot of faith in your shoulder straps. Are those strings really, uh, structurally sound?"

The Catkin had dressed up for the occasion as well.

She was already beautiful to begin with, but after dressing up, she looked truly stunning.

The young lady of the Clawford Tribe was wearing a black party dress with a slit skirt, highlighting her shapely legs.

In truth, Alex was having a hard time looking at her because he didn't know where to look.

He was worried that the thin strings that held up her dress would come undone and cause a wardrobe malfunction.

If that happened, Alex wouldn't hesitate to take off his cape and wrap it around her to protect her dignity.

To his surprise, Lavinia simply laughed. "Yes, the dress won't fall off. Girls are not stupid. We have our ways."

Alex couldn't really discern what these ways were, so he could only take her word for it.

'The ladies seem to be a little bold tonight,' Alex thought because Lavinia's dress was truly captivating.

However, he couldn't possibly leave Vaan behind because he was worried that Victor would return to mess with her.

Fortunately, Prince Garen also asked Vaan to dance, which she accepted gracefully.

As the four of them headed to the dance floor, Princess Xenia grabbed Chuck's hand and dragged him alongside her to dance.

Seeing Xenia's straightforwardness, Charles took a deep breath before asking Nessia to dance with him.

"Can you dance?" Nessia blinked.

"A little bit," Charles admitted.

"I can't dance," Nessia said, embarrassed. "If we dance, I'll just step on your feet."

"I don't mind." Charles smiled. "I won't get hurt even if you step on me repeatedly."

After some hesitation, Nessia finally relented and allowed the young man to take her to the ballroom.

Only Dim Dim, Renard, Lotte, and Mary were left at their table. However, they didn't feel left out. Watching their friends try to dance was amusing enough as an activity.

Suddenly, Lady Celestria approached Renard and invited him to dance with her.

However, Renard hastily refused because he didn't know how to dance. Charles might not mind Nessia stepping on his toes, but surely a princess would mind a heavy man crushing her toes!

Renard was aloof, yes, but that didn't mean he was alright with hurting a lady with his clumsiness.

"Don't worry, I'll make sure that you won't step on my feet." Lady Celestria giggled. "I'm a Saintess, you know? Don't underestimate my abilities."

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim tapped Renard's hand that was resting on the table, catching his attention.

The little bun was encouraging Mr. I-Have-Trust-Issues to accept Lady Celestria's invitation to dance.

Just as the musicians readied their instruments to play a song, Renard finally agreed and accompanied the young lady to the dance floor.

Alex noticed this right away, and couldn't help but chuckle at how awkward Renard looked as Lady Celestria guided his hand to her waist.

"You and Renard don't really get along huh?" Lavinia commented as the music started to play.

"We do get along," Alex replied as he danced with Lavinia, who was a surprisingly good dancer. "In our own way at least."

"That's what you always say." Lavinia smiled helplessly as she effortlessly danced with Alex, enjoying their moment together. "By the way, Alex, what is your relationship with Vaan?"

"Close friends," Alex answered.

"Friends as in romantic friends?" Lavinia asked and moved closer to whisper in Alex's ears.

"Did you forget?" Alex whispered back. "I just want to help protect his secret."

Lavinia's gaze softened a bit because she didn't know what to believe. Alex had always insisted that Vaan was a boy.

But she and Latifa were starting to doubt that.

Vaan also refused to cooperate, never giving them a straight answer.

They'd tried different ways of wording the question, but Vaan always frustrated them with mischievous answers.

In the end, the young lady decided to just enjoy dancing with Alex, who was matching her skill on the dance floor.

She watched with great amusement as the young man winked at Charles, who was getting stepped on repeatedly by Nessia.

Alex guided Lavinia closer to Renard and Lady Celestria.

Clearly, he wanted to see Renard's awkward dancing so he could tease him at a later time about it.

Seeing this playful side of him, Lavinia felt both amused and a little sorry for Renard.

The poor boy was too stiff to move to the music, and was only swaying on the spot as Lady Celestria danced around him.

"Stop bullying him," Lavinia said softly as she moved closer to Alex, their chests touching each other.

"Whatever you say, Princess." Alex smirked before moving both of them closer to Vaan and Prince Garen.

Both were equally skilled dancers, so seeing them up close made Alex and Lavinia nod their heads in approval.

Not long after, the song came to an end. Every dancer bowed respectfully to their partner before returning to their tables.

Alex then took Dim Dim to the buffet area to get something to eat. Many ladies approached him and asked to dance, wanting to experience the Blackmail King's skill on the dance floor.

However, Alex tactfully declined and said that he planned to eat for the time being.

His goal for coming to the Grand Hall was the same as ever.

To make sure that he would be there to protect Vaan from Victor's entitlement and recklessness.

Chapter 362: The Pettiness Of A Noble [Part 1]

'Those bastards—how dare they look down on me?!' Victor clenched his fists in anger. 'Does Vaan think I won't dare to expose his secret?!'

He still couldn't forget the way Vaan had looked provocatively at him, as if daring him to tell everyone about the secret that he'd hidden all these years.

'Did he perhaps think his friends would protect him once his secret is out?!' Victor sneered. 'I bet they will be the first to distance themselves and look at him in disgust!'

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

In the past, whenever he had even hinted that he might reveal the secret, the delicate teenage boy would look anxious and fearful.

The feeling of having total control over someone's fate was very intoxicating to Victor. Unfortunately, Vaan had disappeared before he could take advantage of this.

He wasn't aware that around that time, Vaan—in his moment of desperation—had sought out the Demon Worshipers so that he could take revenge for his family.

Since he had been young and innocent, Willow had easily tricked him and assumed control of his body. She had used it to commit many heinous acts, which had gradually corrupted Vaan's untainted soul.

As the eldest son of the Montclair Family was fuming in the garden, a man and woman approached him.

"Sir, you called for us?" the man asked.

“You’re one of the Demon Worshipers here, right?” Victor asked. “I want you to do something for me!”

The man hastily looked at their surroundings before dragging the arrogant noble farther from the Grand Hall.

To ensure their privacy, the woman stayed behind to keep an eye out, ready to warn them in case someone walked into the garden.

“Sir, if you want to continue collaborating with us, you’d better be careful of how you address us here in the academy,” the man growled, unleashing a bit of pressure, which made Victor shudder. “Otherwise, you and your family need not exist.”

Victor understood that he had made a terrible mistake due to a moment of anger, so he quickly apologized and tried to pacify the man who had answered his summons.

“I apologize,” Victor replied. “It won’t happen again. I promise!”

“You better make sure it won’t happen again, or the Montclair Family will suffer the same fate as the Damne Family,” the man added. “We only cooperated with your father back then because it aligned with our goals.

“Remember, if your family no longer holds any value to us, you will suffer the same fate as them! Now speak, why did you call us at this time?”

Victor apologized for the second time before telling the agent of the Demon Worshipers his request.

“I want you to do something to make Vaan leave the Grand Hall on his own,” Victor said respectfully. “If he can’t go alone, having one or two of his friends accompany him is also fine.”

“You want Vaan Damne to leave the Grand Hall?” The man frowned. “And why should we do that?”

“Because if you do, I promise we will be able to annex the Damne Viscounty sooner than expected. Won’t that also benefit your organization?”

The man’s frown deepened. It was not hard to make Vaan leave the Grand Hall. However, he wanted to know where Victor’s confidence was coming from.

“Very well,” the man replied reluctantly. “Don’t disappoint us, Victor Montclair.”

After saying those words, the man left to realize the young man’s request.

The Montclair Family was a hidden supporter of the Demon Worshipers, so doing them this small favor wasn’t a big deal.

He was also curious how they would be able to gain control over the Damne Viscounty, which had practically lost its owner, just by convincing Vaan to leave the Grand Hall.

Once those lands belonged to the Demon Worshipers, they would be able to use it as a hub of operation and further expand their influence in the Kingdom of Avalon.

When Willow had still been possessing Vaan, the plan was to marry Victor so that the Montclair Family would be able to use the Damne Family’s resources to fund their operations.

However, after a year or two, Willow would kill Victor, making Vaan a widow. Willow would then take over both the Damne and Montclair territories at the same time.

That plan naturally got cut off after Alex had killed Willow in the Mistral Weave Forest.

So now, the Demon Worshipers were still collaborating with the Montclair Family in the hope that they could still salvage the situation.

“Are we really going to do what he wants us to do?” the woman asked. “Won’t this cause a commotion?”

“It’s fine,” the man replied. “I know of a way to make it look like an accident. We just have to wait to see if Victor really knows what he is doing.”

The woman sighed but made no more comments.

They would simply do their job and make sure that it couldn’t be traced back to them.

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Back in the Grand Hall...

Alex was once again dancing. This time, his partner was Lotte... At least that was what everyone thought.

As he danced alongside the beautiful Fox Lady, he couldn’t help but look at her eyes, which seemed very content as the slow and soft music played in the background.

“I know it’s you, Latifa,” Alex said softly. “Are you playing a prank on me?”

Latifa could easily switch consciousness with her Alters anytime she wanted to.

She had sent Lotte to the party to observe Alex and had gotten annoyed after seeing so many young ladies—who didn’t even belong to their club—asking him to dance!

Alex had accepted some of these requests, including dancing with Lady Celestria.

During the dance, the two of them had discussed a few things. The Saintess’ cheeks had reddened when leaving the dance floor.

Latifa didn't know what they had talked about, but the smile on Alex's face convinced her that she should take this opportunity to dance with him as well.

Chapter 363: The Pettiness Of A Noble [Part 2]

"I'm not playing a prank." Latifa pouted. "I just decided to enjoy the party a bit."

"Then you could've come with your original body," Alex replied.

"Too troublesome," Latifa explained. "It's easier to swap with Lotte. By the way, what did you talk about with Lady Celestria?"

"She was trying to seduce me, of cour—awww!"

"Sorry, my hand slipped. What did you say again?"

Since this song was meant for lovers, the two of them were practically glued to each other during the dance.

It was very easy for Latifa to pinch him without anyone noticing.

As if the universe had decided to join in on teasing him, a blue window screen appeared before him and gave him several options on how to answer Latifa's question.

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[Multiple Choice!]

"We just discussed theology. She wanted to convert me... into her boyfriend." "She said I had nice hands. I told her they're good for slapping liars." "She offered me a holy blessing... after proposing ten children. "She asked what type of girls I liked. I said 'definitely not foxes with attitude.'" Pretend to faint dramatically to avoid answering.

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“Like hell I’d choose any of that!” Alex said softly, but Latifa thought that the young man was answering her question.

“Choose what exactly?” Latifa asked, her right hand lightly caressing Alex’s waist, making him tremble.

“I-I mean, she was trying to invite me to transfer to Solara Academy,” Alex answered truthfully. “But I said I don’t have plans to leave anytime soon.”

“Good.” Latifa nodded before resting her head on Alex’s chest and closing her eyes to feel his heartbeat.

Alex didn’t expect his dance partner to pull off such an intimate stunt, so he was very worried that she could hear how fast his heart was beating right now!

And he was right.

Latifa could sense his heartbeat. Knowing that it was beating so fast because of her made her smile faintly.

The members of Endless Horizon noticed this scene and some of them praised Lotte for her boldness.

“Lotte really likes Alex, huh?” Chuck smirked.

Nessia nodded. “They’ve been quite close from the start. Only Lumi seems to be against him.”

“I think Lumi is just being wary of Alex,” Vaan replied. “But she has a very good and kind heart.”

“What do girls see in him anyway?” Renard asked. “He’s a schemer who treats others like they’re his servants.”

Nessia couldn't help but agree to Renard's words because Alex had treated her like some kind of Rune Factory!

Although he did pay her adequately, there were still times when the workload made her feel like she was working in a slave factory.

None of them knew that the one who was resting her head on Alex's chest was actually Latifa, who had momentarily taken over Lotte's body.

Suddenly, one of the servers passed by their table. One of the glasses that she was carrying "accidentally" toppled down, drenching Vaan's beautiful white dress in bright orange juice.

"I'm so sorry!" The server's face immediately paled because she had no idea what happened. "Please, forgive me!"

The lady was walking toward Vaan's table, planning to offer some drinks to the guests.

But just as she was about to open her mouth, one of her glasses suddenly tipped over and poured its contents on the beautiful lady before she could stop it.

"It's fine, Miss," Vaan replied, using her handkerchief to lightly dab the stain. "Accidents happen. It's not your fault."

"But..." The server was both relieved and fearful because Vaan's dress looked like something she couldn't afford to repay even if she were to save every bit of her salary for a year!

"It's okay, I'll deal with it," Vaan assured the lady before excusing herself to go to the washroom.

"I'll accompany you," Prince Garen offered.

“No need, Your Highness,” Vaan replied playfully. “Besides, if you go with me to the lady’s washroom, people will look at you weirdly.”

“She’s right, cousin,” Lady Celestria commented. “I’ll go with her instead.”

“You don’t have to, Your Highness.” Nessia stood up. “I’ll go with Vaan.”

“Thank you, Nessia.” Vaan smiled and allowed her friend to accompany her as they headed toward the main exit of the Grand Hall.

Since she needed a change of clothes, she decided to return to the Vermillion Crest Dormitory meant for nobles, so she could change into her uniform and return to the party.

Dim Dim decided to follow them secretly, worried about Vaan.

Five minutes later, Alex and Lotte returned to their table.

After seeing that Vaan, Dim Dim, and Nessia weren’t there, Alex asked the others where they were.

On the surface, the situation seemed harmless enough, but he couldn’t help but feel suspicious and worried.

“I’ll go and check on her,” Alex said. “I’ll be back as soon as possible.”

Without hesitation, Alex left the Grand Hall to look for Vaan.

But just as soon as he left the venue, a man and a woman blocked his path.

“Good evening, young man,” the man said. “Are you perhaps Alex Stratos? We’ve heard many good things about you.”

“Indeed,” the woman commented. “The stories we have heard make you look like a Hero in a fairy tale. It is an honor to meet you in the flesh.”

“Sorry, but I’m in a hurry.” Alex gave a respectful nod to the two before trying to walk past them.

The man’s smile was polite, but there was a faint sharpness in his eyes that made Alex frown as he once again blocked the young man’s path.

“I’m afraid it would be rude to leave without entertaining us for a bit,” the man said smoothly. “After all, not everyone gets the chance to meet the famous Alex Stratos. Also, we have traveled from afar just to attend this event.”

The woman giggled softly, covering her lips with her fan. “I guess those stories are true. You’ve already accomplished feats that most adults wouldn’t dare attempt. You must be quite proud of yourself.”

Alex’s eyes narrowed. Something about the way the two spoke didn’t sound like admiration. It was as if they were doing their best to keep him in place.

“I appreciate the compliments,” Alex replied carefully, his tone calm yet firm. “But my friend needs me right now, so if you’ll excuse me—”

The woman subtly shifted her stance, and Alex found himself blocked once more.

Alex’s lips curled into a thin smile. ‘I knew it. These guys are doing this on purpose.’

Suddenly, he remembered something that Melodina had once told him in private.

“If someone annoys you, just sing a bit. Just make sure that there are not many people around. I guarantee that they will leave you alone afterwards.”

Alex thought that the fairy had been just teasing him, but for some reason, he was in the mood to sing right now.

“Do you guys know that I’m also known as the Singing King of Frieden Academy?” Alex asked with a smile.

“Really?” The woman smiled. “I’d love to hear you sing! Isn’t that right, darling?”

“A hero and a singer? Are you perhaps a bard?” the man asked, amused. “It will be an honor to hear you sing, Mr. Alex Stratos.”

“Okay.” Alex nodded before singing the lyrics of his favorite song.

To his surprise, the man and woman suddenly started convulsing in front of him before hurriedly running away as if their lives depended on it.

Alex frowned. He had the strong urge to run after them so that they could hear the rest of his song.

But since he was worried about Vaan, he decided to just leave them for the time being.

He was not aware that, aside from the man and woman, another person was watching him from the shadows.

This was none other than Eleanora. For now, the two-faced vampire was busy retching, having been within the range of Alex’s so-called singing.

Chapter 364: The Pettiness Of A Noble [Part 3]

“Fancy meeting you here, Vaan.”

Victor stood at the path leading to the Vermillion Crest Dormitory, a smug smile hanging on his face.

“Why am I not surprised?” Vaan replied, returning his smile. “It seems you haven’t learned your lesson back in the Grand Hall.”

“Oh, please. A gentleman knows when to back down,” Victor scoffed. “Still, you and I should have a little talk.”

Nessia immediately moved to stand in front of Vaan, ready to defend her friend against this insufferable noble.

“I don’t understand why you mingle with such filthy commoners, Vaan,” Victor said after noticing that Nessia was only wearing her school uniform. “You should just come along quietly while I’m still being nice. You don’t want your friend to get hurt, do you?”

As if waiting for that moment, four men appeared and surrounded Vaan and Nessia, cutting off their escape routes.

“Do you really think you can get away with harming students while still on campus grounds?” Nessia asked. “Noble or not, the moment you hurt us, you have to answer to our Headmaster.”

“I think you’re misunderstanding something, young lady,” Victor replied. “I’m not here to hurt anyone. I just want to talk to Vaan. However, since you’re getting in the way, I have no choice but to summon my servants and have them escort you away politely.”

Vaan frowned. After a quick glance, he noticed that the four men Victor must’ve hired to protect him were at least Rank 4 Bodyguards.

Not wanting to involve Nessia in this mess, he decided to deal with Victor himself. He promptly summoned his spear.

Seeing that Vaan seemed prepared to fight, Nessia took out a few magic crystals from her storage ring and held them between her fingers.

All of them were inscribed with Rune Magic. A commotion would definitely ensue even if she only tossed one of them.

She just hoped the explosions would be loud enough to attract the attention of the Professors and the Headmaster.

“It seems the academy has yet to teach you not to bite off more than you can chew,” Victor sneered. “Neutralize them, but don’t hurt them too much.”

Just as the two sides were about to clash, a voice reached everyone’s ears.

“All of you, freeze!”

Victor and the four men immediately turned to the sound.

What greeted their eyes was an unusual creature flapping its wings as it hovered some distance away from them.

“A Parrot Eagle?” Victor frowned. “Where did such an ugly creature come from?”

The Parrot Eagle glanced at him before unleashing the presence of a Rank 5 Monster. The scoundrel’s face instantly turned solemn.

“Dim Dim!”

Hearing the familiar voice, Vaan and Nessia looked to their right. Dim Dim was perched on top of the Doom Cow, Daisy, a Rank 4 Monster.

Right beside them was Rex, the Forest Wolf. It growled lowly to warn of its readiness to fight. Although the bodyguards were two ranks stronger than it, it showed no fear.

Several other beasts appeared. One by one, a Rank 5 Blood Hound, two Rank 3 Scarlet Pigs, a Rank 4 Pooka (White Horse), six Rank 2 Horned Rabbits, and a Rank 3 Blood-eyed Rooster showed up to surround Victor's bodyguards.

These were the Beasts from Fran's farm, all of whom Dim Dim had befriended on his visits. As soon as Dim Dim's call for help reached them, they wasted no time to come running.

"You fools better back down while we're still being nice," the Parrot Eagle, who went by the name of Captain, said calmly. "If not... all of you will regret it."

"Damn beasts!" Victor cursed. "You're just monsters! Is Frieden Academy raising monsters to hurt distinguished guests?"

"Dim Dim!" Dim Dim raised its little stubby arm, as if reprimanding Victor for those words.

Victor would keep glaring at the little bun till the end of time, but the sound of hurried footsteps interrupted him.

It was none other than Alex rushing to the rescue!

A glance was all he needed to deduce what was happening.

With all eyes on him, he punched his cheek as violently as he could.

Ignoring everyone's gasps of shock, Alex used the back of his hand to smear the blood seeping out of his mouth across his entire cheek.

"Damn you, Victor! How dare you attack a student of Frieden Academy?!" Alex shouted in anger.

The arrogant noble was still wondering what kind of weed Alex was smoking when the young man summoned Everguard and activated his skill, Shield Charge.

“Shield Charge!”

One of Victor’s bodyguards immediately blocked Alex’s path and summoned a hammer to smash his shield.

The blow of a Rank 4 Warrior stopped the young man in his tracks. Even the shield in his hand was blown away by the impact.

Another bodyguard threw a punch at Alex’s face. He managed to block it with his arm, but he was still sent flying by the impact.

When Alex crashed to the ground, he groaned loudly and secretly glanced at one of the trees nearby.

Doh, the fairy, peeked out from behind the tree and gave him the okay sign.

The young man smirked briefly before groaning loudly again. In between his exaggerated groans, he downed a black potion that he’d taken out from his storage ring.

A few seconds later, to Vaan’s and Nessia’s horror, Alex started coughing blood.

Both of them sprinted towards him, not understanding what was happening.

Although Victor felt that something didn’t seem right, he no longer hesitated and gave an order to his bodyguards.

“Take Vaan, now!” Victor ordered.

Immediately, two of the bodyguards moved to apprehend their target. But just as one of the men was about to reach Vaan’s arm, he felt something hit his side. Before he could recognize what had hit him, he was blown away by the impact.

Daisy had joined the battlefield by unleashing a charge attack to defend the students!

The Bloodhound and the Forest Wolf howled at the same time before joining the fray.

The Horned Rabbits, the Scarlet Pigs, and the Pooka also went after the bodyguards.

Dim Dim, on the other hand, jumped towards Victor and slapped his face with a wooden sandal.

Hidden from sight was another fairy, Reh. And in her hands was a recording crystal, positioned to capture this moment perfectly so that Victor would never be able to hide his ugly and embarrassing side ever again!

Chapter 365: Best Actor And Best Actress

“La Chancla!” Dim Dim shouted as it slapped Victor’s face without holding back.

A series of loud and crisp smacks spread through the surroundings. Reh couldn’t resist the urge to smirk as she thought about all the people she could share this recording with.

Although the sandal didn’t deal much damage to Victor, getting slapped by “La Chancla” was still a very painful experience.

“You little fiend!” Victor growled as he raised his hand to summon a water ball, intending to blast Dim Dim into oblivion.

Fortunately, before he could do that, one of the Horned Rabbits tackled him from behind and hit where the sun didn’t shine with its horn.

A grunt escaped Victor’s lips as he momentarily lost his concentration, failing to execute his attack properly.

Getting hit in that place by a horn was not something that someone could just shrug off easily.

Dim Dim took this chance to summon a shield under its body so it could propel itself towards Victor for another strike.

“Ei!” Dim Dim shouted as it whacked Victor again.

The little bun’s attack connected with Victor’s cheek in a resounding slap.

During all of this, the Blood-Eyed Rooster crowed loudly and repeatedly to draw attention to their location.

“Alex, are you fine?” Vaan asked, panicking. “There is so much blood!”

As Alex continued acting like he was at Death’s door, Nessia noticed the potion in his hand. She recognized it, and it was all she needed to make sense of her observations.

At the start, she didn’t understand why Alex punched himself to draw blood before charging at Victor.

Although the bodyguard’s hammer strike was strong, she didn’t believe that it was strong enough to disarm Alex of his shield.

The young man had fought stronger opponents before. Not once had he ever let go of his shield.

Lastly, when the bodyguard punched him, Alex didn’t dodge. He simply blocked it while jumping backward.

The young man had clearly used the momentum of the punch to send himself flying.

Nessia was smart, so it didn’t take her much time to figure out the bigger picture.

Since Dim Dim had rallied the farm animals for help, Victor could easily blame any outcome on unruly beasts that had attacked humans without provocation.

To prevent that from happening, Alex had to make sure that justice was on their side.

Nessia's and Alex's eyes met, and the Blackmail King smiled faintly.

'I knew it.' Nessia didn't know if she should laugh in disbelief or praise Alex for his quick thinking.

But this plan was still lacking something.

Nessia knelt down beside her "dying" president. "Have you," she asked in a volume that only Alex could hear, "secured proof?"

"Of course," Alex replied. "And the cavalry will be arriving any moment now."

He had asked the Fairies to use a recording crystal and capture anything that would imply that the students were being attacked by Victor.

Doh and Reh had volunteered to do just that. Meanwhile, the other fairies had gone to the Grand Hall and relayed the situation to the Professors and the Headmaster.

Once the members of Endless Horizon had learnt of Victor's machinations, all of them had moved into action.

The first to arrive were Renard and Prince Garen. When they saw the battle, they didn't hesitate to help their friends.

"He's mine!" Prince Garen growled as he pointed at Victor.

"I'll deal with the others," Renard replied.

Renard was a commoner, which meant he could get into a lot of trouble for fighting a noble.

But Garen was a prince. At most, he would just be reprimanded. The Kingdom of Avalon was unlikely to sour relations with another kingdom just for the sake of a viscount's son.

"Wait!" Victor, who saw the Prince running in his direction, raised his hands. "This is a misunderstanding!"

Unfortunately, Prince Garen had no patience to hear his excuses! The Prince unleashed a barrage of punches that targeted almost every part of the noble's torso.

The stomach, the chest, the arms, the face... He made sure to hit them all.

He did hold himself back, but only because he wanted Victor to experience the pain of every hit. What good would it be if Victor fainted?

Only when the noble was on his knees with bloody lips did the Prince of Solara stop hitting him.

The Professors had finally arrived at the scene. They immediately went to check on Alex, who was still on the ground and trying to give his last words.

The young man could have won an Oscar Award for Best Actor there and then with his moving performance. And who else deserved the Oscar Award for Best Actress better than the young, bespectacled lady weeping beside him like she was truly terrified of losing him for good?

Professor Rowan had also arrived at the scene, but he didn't make any move to stop Prince Garen from beating the crap out of Victor.

Instead, he lit his pipe and smoked while he listened to Melodina's account of what had happened.

Truth be told, the Headmaster already knew what had transpired.

He had placed many surveillance artifacts around the academy and was ready to deal with any situation that arose.

The Headmaster had already marked the man and the woman whom Victor had schemed with to get Vaan to leave the Grand Hall.

But the Headmaster hadn't interfered, wanting to see how Vaan would deal with the situation.

He was one of the handful of people who knew the secret of the last member of the Damne Family.

In fact, the Headmaster had personally made a move to assign Vaan a room all to himself, so he wouldn't have to worry about hiding his gender from a roommate.

'This kid really knows how to stir trouble,' Professor Rowan noted, unfooled by Alex's gasps for air and Nessia's crocodile tears. 'I pity the Montclair Family. I'm sure they will get blackmailed after this. And that will be the least of their worries.'

The other Professors had neutralized the bodyguards and tied them up properly before asking the Headmaster what they should do next.

"Throw them into the Disciplinary Hall," Professor Rowan ordered.

"Headmaster, how about Victor Montclair?" another Professor asked.

"Take him there too," Professor Rowan replied coldly. "I want to know just where he gets the confidence to attack my students while in my academy."

Since Alex had decided to stage such a show, the Headmaster had no qualms about using it to the academy's advantage.

He would make sure that the Montclair Family properly compensated Alex and Vaan.

The Montclairs also seemed to have ties with the Demon Worshipers. Professor Rowan intended to forward this information to the King of Avalon as quickly as possible.

If Victor had known that this incident would result in the Montclairs being stripped of their noble title, he wouldn't have dared to make any moves against Vaan. In fact, he would have been on his best behavior.

Unfortunately, the die had been cast. It was now too late for him and his family to escape the wrath of the Kingdom of Avalon, which had designated the Demon Worshipers as enemies of their nation.

Chapter 366: Getting Disowned Should Be The Least Of Your Worries

News of what happened to Vaan, Nessia, and Alex quickly spread throughout the whole academy like wildfire.

Partygoers left the Grand Hall in a hurry, eager to watch the show in real time. However, by the time they arrived, Victor and his bodyguards had already been taken away.

The only gossip-worthy sight was Alex—skin pale and clothes bloodied but still exuding the charm of a martyr prince.

"Alex, are you alright?!" Latifa, who was still possessing Lotte, rushed to his side.

"I'm fine," Alex replied.

Seeing her reaction, he couldn't help but feel guilty. His injuries were fake, but her concern and anxiety were real. Still, he couldn't give up on his act, for this was the only way that the academy could keep the upper hand in this incident.

A student was attacked and seriously injured by a noble guest at the party meant to send off foreign royalty!

As long as Frieden Academy could maintain this narrative, it would have an easy time in any negotiations.

Also, Doh and Reh had managed to capture the fight with their recording crystal. They'd also conveniently edited the recording to show Victor and his bodyguards in the worst possible light!

For the time being, the noble and his subordinates were held at the Disciplinary Room, a fate that usually awaited students that the Disciplinary Squad had to handle.

"Vaan, you should first go back to your room and get a change of clothes," Alex said.

"How about you?" Vaan asked. "Will you still return to the party?"

"Of course," Alex answered with a quick wink. "We shouldn't let this incident get the better of us."

The young man wanted to say more but couldn't.

Prince Garen, Lady Celestria, and some of the academy's VIP Guests were already at the scene, so he had to be careful with his words.

"Nessia, can you please escort Vaan back to the Vermillion Crest Dormitory?" Alex requested.

"Leave it to me," Nessia replied as she helped Vaan to his feet.

Although he was reluctant to leave, Vaan also wanted to quickly get out of his stained dress so he could return to the party with Alex.

Once Vaan and Nessia had left, Charles and Chuck approached their club president.

"Let's go back to the dormitory," Charles said as he supported Alex so he could get up.

As someone who had fought side by side with Alex, Charles knew his friend wasn't the kind to go down so easily even when up against someone stronger.

But according to the fairies—who had meticulously refined their story to ensure that no one would question whether it's the real deal—Vaan and Nessia were about to be kidnapped by force when Alex showed up to save the beauties, sacrificing himself in the process.

The Fairies also made sure to praise the Beasts from Fran's farm, citing their timely appearance for Alex's success in thwarting the arrogant noble.

The students and the Professors already knew that Daisy and Dim Dim regularly patrolled the academy, so this story wasn't far-fetched.

Not to mention, now that the Beasts had actually protected some students from danger, they would now officially gain recognition not only from both the staff and the student body.

This was one of the reasons why Alex had willingly let himself get hurt.

If Victor and his men had been the only ones injured, witnesses might easily accuse Vaan and Nessia—as well as the Beasts of Fran's farm—of harming a noble.

Professor Rowan also understood this, so he wordlessly allowed Alex to continue giving the performance of his life. Not only did Alex's "victimhood" conveniently protect the other students, it also gave the Headmaster more leverage when the city's investigators came knocking.

Just as Alex was about to leave, Professor Rowan rested his hand on the young man's shoulder, subtly holding him in a vice grip.

"You did well," Professor Rowan stated in a low voice with no change in expression. "I'll make sure to reward you a few days from now."

"I only did what I had to do to save a friend, Professor," Alex said in a righteous tone. "I don't need any rewards."

"Are you sure?"

“Yes, Sir.”

“Then, I’ll just give it to Chuck.”

“ ... ”

The corner of Alex’s lips twitched when he saw Chuck step forward and thank their Headmaster in advance.

“I’ll humbly accept the rewards, Headmaster,” Chuck stated. “Thank you very much!”

The troublemaker then proceeded to approach the other guests, telling them how he bravely arrived just in time and punished the evil noble who had tried to hurt his friend.

Renard watched this farce with his arms crossed over his chest.

He had fought against one of the bodyguards and overpowered his opponent pretty easily.

Since he had a good head on his shoulders, Renard understood that his Club President must be up to something again. By the looks of it, one of their members seemed to be targeted by the noble, so Renard did not expose Alex. He kept mum and continued observing Alex from a distance.

“Your Club President is a schemer through and through,” Lady Celestria commented in a volume only Renard could hear. “He handled this incident properly.”

“That’s what he’s good at,” Renard replied, careful to neither confirm nor deny the Saintess’s suspicion. “He’s more slippery than an eel.”

Lady Celestria giggled. “Are you complimenting him or insulting him?”

“Both.”

“I knew you’d say that.”

The Saintess could tell that Renard and Alex had a very unusual relationship.

Renard treated him as a rival, which spurred the former to grow stronger as fast as possible.

As for Alex, Lady Celestria had no idea what he thought of Renard. But something was telling her that he wasn’t a bad person and cared about Renard in his own weird way.

A few minutes later, the Professors and the Student Council asked everyone to return to the Grand Hall and continue the festivities.

Everyone knew that practically every noble—even those elderly dowagers who had not left their estates in a few decades—would soon learn of this incident.

It was only a matter of time before the Montclair family found themselves in a bind. Not only had their Eldest Young Master grievously hurt a Friden student, but he also attempted to kidnap two young ladies while under the Headmaster’s nose!

Having three students directly affected naturally didn’t sit well with Professor Rowan, who planned to make the Montclair Family pay for this intrusion.

Meanwhile, at the Disciplinary Room of the Academy...

“Damn it!” Victor cursed, angry and frustrated and helpless. “I’m finished! I’ll be disowned by my family!”

He was separated from his bodyguards, placed in a room of his own. This was why he no longer held back and started to shout, curse, and kick the walls to vent his anger.

But just as he was in the middle of his tantrum, a voice stopped him in his tracks.

“Getting disowned by your family should be the least of your worries.”

Victor turned around in shock.

At the locked door was a shadow with red eyes looking right at him.

Although it was hard to tell from looks alone, he was fairly certain that the intruder was a lady due to her voice.

Victor might have many enemies, but most of them couldn't easily enter the place where he was being held.

Because of this, he felt a growing sense of dread. Something told him that this being had come to silence him forever.

Chapter 367: You Shouldn't Make A Deal With The Devil So Easily

“Who are you?!” Victor asked after summoning dozens of Water Spears and pointing them at the stranger who had entered the room without his notice. “Did the Demon Worshipers send you?!”

“You don't need to know,” the Shadow Lady replied. “Because soon, you don't have to worry about anything.”

She then took a step forward, prompting Victor to direct a barrage of Water Spears at her. He had a suspicion that he was hilariously out-classed, but surely he couldn't passively wait for this person to make the first move when she seemed to be after his life!

The Water Spears pierced through the shadow, with none seeming to deal any substantial blow.

“N-No!” Victor shouted. “Don't come near me! Stay away! Spare me! I don't want to die!”

His words failed to even slow down the Shadow Lady, who simply stabbed his chest with her bare hands, piercing through his heart.

The greasy hair was then engulfed black flames, making him shriek in pain and fear.

“Don’t worry, I won’t kill you,” the Shadow Lady promised. “Others will do it for me. All I need are your memories.”

Whether Victor could still hear the lady’s words or not, no one knew.

He was too busy screaming his lungs out from the horror of having his memories ripped away from him.

A few minutes later, the young noble collapsed on the ground, drool and snot dripping freely down his chin.

With a puff, the Shadow Lady vanished from the Disciplinary Room and reappeared in a tower that overlooked the northern part of Frieden Academy.

In her hands was a blue orb containing all of Victor’s memories.

As she walked, the shadow covering her body parted away and revealed a lady with long black hair wearing a fox mask.

A devilish chuckle echoed inside the room as a sinister shadow rose from behind her.

“Here is the payment.” The Fox Lady handed the blue orb to the shadow. “You can keep the change.”

“Good,” replied the shadow with the wings of a devil, amusement evident in his tone. “You have fulfilled a contract. You have ninety-nine more to go.”

“You really are a Devil,” the lady wearing the fox mask commented.

“That’s why you shouldn’t make a deal with the Devil so easily,” the Shadow Devil pointed out. “Are you sure doing this is the right thing to do? The Headmaster might get angry later when he finds out you’ve done something without his permission.”

“It doesn’t matter,” the lady answered. “I’m sure Professor Rowan will not mind. After all, if we had been too slow, we would have been left with Victor’s corpse. The Demon Worshipers would have surely eliminated him to make sure he couldn’t implicate them.”

“Well, you’re not wrong.” The Shadow Devil nodded. “Since you’ve completed one of my contracts, how about I reward you? What do you want?”

“Are you trying to make me sign another contract?” the lady asked.

“No.” The Shadow Devil shook his head. “This one is a freebie. So, what do you want?”

The lady thought for a while before saying the thing she wanted the most.

“A dream,” the Lady said. “A happy dream since I’ve only been having nightmares as of late.”

“Same as always?” The Shadow Devil smiled evilly.

“Yes,” the Lady answered. “Also, give me some pocket money. I already used up the funds you gave me.”

The Shadow Devil chortled. “You sure are one high-maintenance client. I’m not sure who is the one benefiting more from this arrangement. Don’t you think you’ve been treating me too much like a personal butler?”

“Isn’t that nice?” the lady asked, smiling behind her mask. “After all, no one is more faithful and more loyal than you.”

The Shadow Devil sighed before patting the lady's head with one of its shadowy hands.

"Fine, a good dream and some pocket money," the Shadow Devil replied. "I can't believe I signed a contract with such a slave driver."

Even so, the Shadow Devil still chuckled with amusement, seemingly enjoying its life at the moment.

When the Shadow Devil disappeared, the lady wearing a fox mask looked in the direction of the Ironheart Dormitory.

She then summoned a cape that was a little bit dirty.

If Alex had seen this, he would have instantly realised that this was the cape he had left in his room after changing into his uniform.

"You fool," the lady muttered as she pressed the cape closer to her chest. "Acting like a prince in front of other girls. You still haven't changed after all these years."

A moment later, the lady wrapped the cape around her body, as if seeking the warmth that she had lost since what felt like a lifetime ago.

— — —

Alex stopped in his tracks and looked toward the north.

For a brief moment, he felt as if someone had called out to his name. And yet, no matter how much he strained his ears to listen, the voice he heard never spoke again.

'Am I just imagining things?' Alex thought.

"What's wrong, Alex?" Charles asked. "Did you forget something?"

“No,” Alex replied. “It’s nothing.”

The Headmaster had given him a High-Quality Potion, healing all the injuries on his body.

In truth, Alex was not really seriously injured. Everything was just an act, but they had to keep up the act!

As such, he gratefully accepted the precious potion, only to secretly stash it inside his storage ring when no one was looking. He then consumed an ordinary potion to heal himself.

The potion revitalized his body, but traces of the punch he’d given himself still lingered.

He wanted everyone at the party to see the bruise on his face so they could badmouth Victor more. Alex would not be satisfied until everyone knew what a sleazy good-for-nothing Victor was!

As the two young men neared the Grand Hall, they noticed that their friends were waiting for them on the way.

Vaan, Nessia, Lotte, and Lavinia stood in their way like they were a toll gate that refused to grant access unless Alex paid up.

“Nessia told us everything,” Lavinia said calmly.

Lotte moved closer to Alex.

“Latifa returned. She felt so embarrassed for worrying about you when you’re not really hurt,” Lotte murmured in his ear, her voice low but sharp. “You better clear up this misunderstanding after the party. She cried for real, you know?”

“Tell her I’m sorry,” Alex whispered.

"I won't." Lotte shook her head as she took a step back. "You tell her personally," she said, her volume normal again.

Alex pursed his lips briefly. "I understand."

It had been necessary to keep them in the dark, but that didn't mean he didn't feel guilty about it. Lotte was right. He did owe Latifa an apology.

However, since he knew that the fox lady wasn't the only one who had freaked out over his condition, he also apologized to Lavinia, Lotte, and Vaan for causing them needless worry.

"Good," Lavinia said, pleased that Alex was asking for their forgiveness so sincerely. She did understand his considerations, but nobody liked a leader who disregarded everyone's emotions for the so-called greater good. "Let's go back to the party. But, first things first."

She took out a healing balm from her storage ring and personally applied it to the bruise near Alex's lips.

"You don't need this anymore," Lavinia stated. "The Fairies have already shown everyone the recording of how hurt you were. Besides, a bruise doesn't suit your face."

Alex was touched by her words, so he didn't resist and allowed her to apply the healing balm to his injury.

A few minutes later, all traces of the bruise disappeared, returning the young man to his handsome self.

"Much better," Vaan commented after seeing the bruise fade away. "Well then, shall we go back?"

With a wide smile, he took Alex's hand and pulled him gently toward the Grand Hall.

Lavinia reached out to hold Alex's other hand and pulled him away as well, leaving Charles and Nessia behind.

“Shall we go as well, My Lady?” Charles asked, raising his arm in an attempt to escort Nessia the way he’d seen gentlemen do all night.

“Let’s.” Nessia smiled and accepted his offer.

The two walked side by side as they entered the Grand Hall, where the continuation of their memorable night was about to begin.

Chapter 368: Fake Boyfriend [Part 1]

As soon as Alex and his friends returned to the Grand Hall, they were met with a round of applause.

Dim Dim happily waved at the crowd as Chuck hurried to his friends’ side to share the spotlight.

The troublemaker then started to wave like he was the Hero who saved the day.

Alex was fine with Chuck and Dim Dim getting the spotlight because the only thing he wanted to do was to eat.

However, a minute after the group returned to their table, a gorgeous young lady walked up to Alex with a smile.

“I have a request, Mr. Stratos,” Evangeline said. “Can I talk to you in private?”

Alex stared at Evangeline and wondered why she came looking for him. The lady before him was one of the three Main Heroines of ELO. She also happened to be a Half-Vampire.

Well, technically, it’s more accurate to call her a Dhampir because she was the offspring of a Vampire and a mortal human.

She was also the heroine who was more prone to going to the Dark Route or the Anti-Hero Route in the story because of her background.

“Okay,” Alex replied.

Deep inside, he was quite surprised after being approached by Evangeline first.

He couldn’t feel any hostility coming from her, and downright rejecting her invitation was a very bad move.

Right now, Alex was very wary of Evangeline’s faction, especially since Eleanora was keeping an eye out for her.

Evangeline led Alex to a balcony on the second floor of the Grand Hall.

Although there were a few students there, it was spacious enough to have a private chat without being overheard by other people.

“There is something that I have been wanting to ask you since the first time I saw you, Mr. Stratos,” Evangeline said. “But, I never had the chance to do it until now.”

“Wait,” Alex interjected. “Just call me Alex like my friends and acquaintances do. Being called Mr. Stratos doesn’t sit well with me.”

“Understood.” Evangeline nodded. “I just want to ask one thing, Alex. Do you have a girlfriend?”

“Huh?!” Alex assumed that he must have misheard her. However, Evangeline repeated her question after seeing his reaction.

“Do you have a girlfriend?”

“... I don’t have a girlfriend at the moment.”

Evangeline smiled faintly before she moved closer to whisper in Alex's ear.

"Then, can I be your girlfriend?" Evangeline asked.

The young man blinked once then twice before looking at the beautiful girl in front of him in surprise.

"Is this some kind of prank?" Alex had finally regained enough composure to assess the situation more clearly. "We haven't even talked, and you want to become my girlfriend?"

Evangeline was a Heroine who had both brain and brawn.

She also had a very bold personality. But being bold didn't mean asking a guy she didn't know to be her boyfriend! Something about this gave Alex a bad feeling.

"That's right," Evangeline replied calmly.

"Why? Did you fall in love with me at first sight?" Disbelief was written all over Alex's face.

"You smell delicious— I mean, looking at you makes me want to bite you," Evangeline teased.

Anyone else would have brushed aside this remark as an awkward but endearing attempt to flirt, but not Alex.

He knew for a fact that Evangeline was a Dhampir who was doing her best to refrain from drinking blood.

However, she was still her father's child. The scent of blood called loudly to her.

During the commotion, she had decided to trail behind the Professors. When she had arrived, the sight of Alex lying on the ground, drenched in his own blood, greeted her.

The moment she'd smelled his blood, Evangeline had sensed something within it.

Something familiar, like something that she had tasted in the past.

Something that stirred memories of her childhood.

Something that she wished to possess as her own.

Truth be told, the reason she had even dressed up for the party was to form a connection with Alex. It would be a waste if someone as talented as him was killed by her organization.

After racking her brains on what to do, she suddenly remembered what her handmaiden had said to her in the past.

According to Eleanora, guys were weak to beautiful girls. It might be difficult for guys to woo girls, but for a beautiful girl to woo a guy, all she needed to do was make the first step and confess first!

Of course, this would not work every single time, but the chances of them becoming lovers were still very high.

The more she mulled over it, the more Evangeline thought that this was a very feasible plan.

She was quite popular in the academy. A few nobles had even tried to court her.

But she didn't like the smell of the blood flowing inside of their veins.

To her, they smelled rotten, just like how corrupt their families were.

But Alex was different.

Just the scent of his blood made her throat feel parched. She longed to carefully savor that one thing that she had refrained from drinking.

He might be shameless, but he cared deeply for his friends and would protect his club against all odds.

This was something that Evangeline could appreciate. In a dog-eat-dog-world, someone like Alex was a rarity.

There was also a mysterious side to him that attracted others, and she was one of those drawn in.

'According to Eleanora, if a beautiful girl confesses to a guy, there is a high chance that they will accept her proposal,' Evangeline thought. 'She also claims that no one in this academy can resist my charms.'

Alex had foiled the plans of the Demon Worshipers not once, not twice, but thrice.

Technically, it was four times, but Evangeline wasn't aware that a Demon Worshiper had kidnapped and impersonated Lucius in order to infiltrate Frieden Academy.

That wasn't something that any ordinary student could do, which made Alex look very capable in her eyes.

By now, the Elders as well as the Executives of the dark organization were paying close attention to him. It was only a matter of time before he was targeted by them. Evangeline assumed that they were simply waiting for him to leave the safety of the campus for a mission.

First Years would need to complete several missions. They had a quota to fill if they wanted to pass their midterms.

Everyone was required to do that, and Alex was not an exception.

The moment the young man left the academy, the Demon Worshipers would not hesitate to retaliate against him and acquire the bounty that was put on his head.

His bounty was a million gold coins.

The highest bounty given to a member of the young generation.

But what a pity it would be if someone who smelled as delectable as him was killed just like that! Evangeline had always been rebellious, but after getting a whiff of the scent of his blood, she was more set on interfering with the organization's plans.

It was a scent that stirred the memories of her childhood, when she had still been happy and surrounded by warmth.

Chapter 369: Fake Boyfriend [Part 2]

'I'll make him my fake boyfriend so the Demon Worshipers will think twice before harming him,' Evangeline thought. 'Also, my father likes talented people. If Alex manages to become his subordinate, I'm sure other factions will back down as well.'

There was also that sense of familiarity that she couldn't explain. The more she looked at him, the more she felt that this wasn't the first time that they had met each other.

After careful consideration, she concluded that her plan was very sound.

On one hand, she could save Alex and investigate more about his past. On the other hand, she was finding a talented person to add to her father's faction.

She wasn't aware that, hiding in a spot that couldn't be seen easily, Eleanora was eavesdropping on their conversation.

When she realized what Evangeline was planning to do, Eleanora almost had a panic attack.

She wanted to go there and pull her mistress away from the young man, who now occupied the top spot of the Kill List meant for geniuses and potential enemies of their organization.

The individuals on the list must be nipped in the bud before they could grow stronger and totally threaten their organization.

'Mistress, I don't think you know what you're doing!' Eleanora screamed internally. 'Oh no! If her father catches wind of this, I'm going to be in trouble!'

Although her "Boss" had asked Eleanora to get close to Alex, it didn't mean he was alright with Evangeline getting close to the young man!

But before Eleanora could pull Evangeline away from Alex, the young man finally responded.

"I'm sorry, but there's already someone in my heart," Alex replied firmly. "I can't be your boyfriend."

'Phew!' Eleanora wiped the sweat on her forehead and even gave Alex the thumbs-up in her heart.

However, Eleanora's response made Eleanora do a double take.

"Then how about becoming my fake boyfriend?" Evangeline suggested. "Since our relationship is fake, you don't have to take it seriously."

""Huh?!""

Alex and Eleanora gasped at the same time.

Both of them were wondering what Evangeline was talking about. It was as if she was an alien and there was a communication gap between her and them.

However, Eleanora's reaction gave her away. Alex turned and found her crouching at the corner of the balcony, hiding behind some ornamental plants.

Evangeline frowned after seeing Eleanora but didn't hesitate to reach out to hold Alex's hands.

"Hey, did you once live in the northern part of the continent?" Evangeline asked. "The place where the 'Empire' is located?"

The young man was about to pry her hand away but stopped after hearing her question.

The "Empire" Evangeline mentioned was the strongest empire in the continent. It was also the place where Alex had first entered the world during the Beta Test of ELO.

Back then, he hadn't used the name Alex Stratos. Instead, he'd simply called himself Alex.

After he'd met the Guardian of the North, which had inspired him to add the surname Stratos, the game Endless Leveling Online was officially launched.

He then came up with a backstory for his character that revolved around the empire, even making himself a prince who wasn't listed on the royal family tree due to circumstances.

Seeing Alex's strange expression, Evangeline pressed even further.

"Do you remember when you were ten years old?" Evangeline asked. "You saved a little girl who was almost dying. You took pity on her and then... gave her food."

"I'm sorry, but I've never been to the nor—" Alex wasn't able to finish what he was going to say because a stinging pain assaulted his head.

A moment later, a memory suddenly appeared inside his head.

In that memory, he saw a little girl collapsed on the snowy ground near the villa that he was hiding in.

He watched as a ten-year-old boy ran out of the house and tried to help her.

Everything was in black and white, so he wasn't able to see the hair or eye color of the little girl. He could only tell that she had light colored hair.

But there was a striking resemblance between the little girl and Evangeline.

At that moment, Alex clutched his head because the pain had become unbearable. It was like his head was being split open.

Reaching his limit, his consciousness started to fade. But before he was consumed by darkness, he saw the little girl reaching out to the boy and sinking her fangs into his tender neck.

That was the last thing that Alex saw before he lost his consciousness.

Evangeline was able to support the young man's body before it collapsed to the ground.

The commotion had caught the attention of the other students on the balcony, who began loudly wondering what happened to Alex.

Suddenly, Dim Dim arrived at the scene, bringing Chuck and Charles with it.

The little bun had sensed that something had happened to Alex. It had informed his friends and insisted that they should go and check it out.

"What happened here?" Chuck asked Eleanora after seeing her behaving suspiciously behind some plants.

"I-I don't know," Eleanora replied. "He suddenly seemed to be in pain then lost consciousness."

Due to her contract with Chuck, she was unable to lie to him and could only tell him everything that happened.

Charles took Alex from Evangeline and thanked her for helping his friend. He noticed how pale Alex's face was. This time, he couldn't have been faking.

Worried, Charles hurriedly left the balcony to look for someone who knew healing magic so that they could examine Alex.

Evangeline looked at her hands before clenching them.

That brief moment when she had caught Alex, the strong urge to bite his neck had almost overtaken her senses.

Fortunately, her willpower was strong enough to resist the sudden craving for blood. But she still felt regret for the missed opportunity.

If she had drunk even a drop of Alex's blood, she would be able to confirm her suspicions.

Evangeline could never forget the taste of the blood that she had drunk in the past.

'Is it really him?' Evangeline thought. 'But his hair color is different.'

The young lady then reminisced about the little boy who proudly introduced himself to her.

"Aetherius Alexian Vademont," the little boy said with pride. "That is my name! Remember the name of your Prince!"

A lofty prince who was forced to hide his identity because of a prophecy that endangered his life.

Chapter 370: I Wish All My Dreams Were Like That [Part 1]

“... Where?”

When Alex opened his eyes, he found himself lying on a beach chair.

The sound of waves crashing against the sandy shore reached his ears, filling him with confusion.

‘Wait, wasn’t I talking to Evangeline at the party?’ Alex wondered. He pinched the bridge of his nose as he tried to organize his thoughts. ‘Then... my head started to ache. I saw a memory.’

As he tried to recall what had happened, fuzzy, fragmented scenes surfaced in his mind, but none of which he could make sense of.

‘Maybe I can’t recall it because I’m in a dream,’ Alex mused. ‘Recalling memories inside a dream might not be possible.’

While Alex was deep in thought, he saw something move out of the corner of his eye. He turned to his right for a better look.

“Good. You’re finally awake.”

Alex blanked out for a brief moment as his head tried to process what he was looking at.

A beautiful young lady with long black hair was wearing a red bikini. Without thinking, he swallowed the saliva that had welled up in his mouth.

“G-Guildmaster?!” Alex stuttered. “What are you wearing?”

“D-Don’t ask dumb questions, fool!” Noelle complained as her face reddened. “We’re on the beach. Is it so odd that I’m wearing a swimsuit?!”

Alex blinked. Well, wearing a bikini on the beach was indeed perfectly normal.

After that simple misunderstanding, the young man pressed his hands together in prayer.

(Note: The Fan Service God heard your prayer and gave you a thumbs-up. “I got you, Fam!”).

Alex returned the thumbs up to the sky before looking at his beautiful guildmaster solemnly.

However, just as he tried to come up with a compliment that would not come across as creepy, a small portal appeared above his body and, to his shock, two ladies fell on top of him.

“Damn, so heavy!” Alex groaned. “What are you, a pig?”

“You’re the pig!” A Fox Lady smacked Alex’s face without holding back. For a few seconds, all he saw was stars.

When Alex finally realized what had happened, he saw Latifa glaring at him.

But her expression was too extreme, uncharacteristic of Latifa, so Alex quickly made an accurate guess. After all, there was only one Alter with an explosive personality.

“Lumi?” Alex asked tentatively.

“Tsk!” Lumi clicked her tongue, not even bothering to answer him.

Instead, she helped the real Latifa—who had also fallen on top of Alex—stand up.

“Where are we?” Latifa asked as looked around.

When her gaze landed on the beach, then on Noelle in a bikini, things finally clicked into place.

“Hello, Latifa,” Noelle greeted. “Fancy seeing you here.”

“Noelle, just where are you taking Alex without my permission?” Latifa asked.

“Um?” Noelle smirked. “Permission? Since when did Alex belong to you?”

The guildmaster of Endless Horizon approached Latifa and gave her a hug.

“Fufufu, you look so cute in your swimsuit, Latifa,” Noelle commented. “I’m sure Alex will like it.”

The fox lady’s eyes widened in shock as she looked down, only to be greeted by a frilly two-piece orange swimsuit that complemented her hair color.

Lumi, on the other hand, was wearing a white bikini and still glaring at Alex as if he were a disgusting worm she had accidentally stepped on.

“Okay, everyone. Calm down,” Alex said. “I just want to know where we are, and why we are here.”

“Alex, did you forget?” Noelle asked. “You promised to go to the beach with me the last time we met.”

When Alex, Noelle, and Latifa had gone to the karaoke bar together, the young lady had mentioned that she wanted to go on a vacation.

Alex had recommended the beach since it hadn’t seen the sea for years.

Noelle and Latifa had agreed, setting their vacation venue in stone.

He just didn’t expect it would really push through. After all, the discussion had taken place in a dream, and it wasn’t like he could control his dreams!

“What are you looking at?” Lumi glared at Alex, her arms crossed over her chest. “Want me to stab out your eyes?”

She stood between Alex and Latifa, making sure to use her body to block the young man’s line of sight.

“I just didn’t expect that a swimsuit would look good on you, Lumi,” Alex answered.

“It’s not like I’m wearing it because of you,” Lumi scoffed. “Don’t get the wrong idea, stuuuupid!”

Noelle smiled as she watched this scene from the side.

She thought that she and Alex would be able to spend some quality time alone together in this private beach that her family owned.

Although she had half-expected Latifa to appear, she hadn’t expected that Lumi would literally drop down from the sky too.

Watching the two of them banter was quite amusing, but her time was quite limited, so she decided to approach Alex and take his hand.

“Let’s go for a swim,” Noelle suggested. “Let’s see who’s the better swimmer between us.”

Alex didn’t resist and allowed Noelle to pull him toward the sea.

Latifa and Lumi watched on with conflicted expressions.

Still, they didn’t make any move to stop Noelle and Alex from having fun together.

Of course, neither of them would ever admit that there was a deeper reason behind their non-participation.

“Can you swim, Lumi?” Latifa asked.

“If you can’t swim, then I can’t swim,” Lumi replied casually. “Maybe you should practice swimming instead of sleeping all day, Latifa.”

Indeed, Latifa didn’t know how to swim. Bodies of water that were six feet or deeper were dangerous for her.

In the end, they had no choice but to wait for Alex and Noelle to return to the beach. From the looks of it, they were having too much fun swimming in the water to return soon.

An hour later, the two finally returned to shore, with Noelle sporting a smug look on her face.

Clearly, she was enjoying her time with Alex without any interference from the two ladies who had barged into the young man’s dream without notice.

Not wanting the two fox ladies to feel left out, Alex decided to propose a game of volleyball.

Since Latifa and Lumi weren’t aware of the rules, it took Alex some time to explain the basics to them.

Once the two ladies finally got it, an intense battle of volleyball followed, where a certain Fox Lady found herself enjoying the game more than she ever thought possible.