

Evil 167

Chapter 167 - 167: City of Sand.

Rasmus narrowed his eyes because of the sand that kept entering his eyes. He couldn't see anything but a vast desert as soon as he left the city's port, and the two suns made it worse. Fortunately, he managed to learn about manipulating nature after he grasped the principle of it. He could manipulate the heat in the air and get rid of it before it could touch his skin.

He no longer suffered under the sun's heat. Instead, he willed the warmth away, stripping it from the air before it could touch his skin. It wasn't magic in the traditional sense, no formations, no incantations. It was something more profound.

Mana itself could understand him. That was the revelation. As long as his comprehension of nature aligned with Mana's inherent logic, it would listen to him.

At first, it seemed like a mere coincidence, but Aris had confirmed his suspicions. Mana was not just energy, it was sentient in its own right. It was the very foundation of existence, the source of everything, including the race known as Orthias. Unlike humans, who bled when wounded, an Orthias's essence unraveled into pure Mana, reaffirming its connection to the world's core.

Even the cycle of life and death among the Aristoria, the chosen beings, supported this truth. When one perished, their essence did not simply fade. It was reborn as Mana, which in turn created the next Aristoria. And if an Aristoria rejected their purpose, Mana itself intervened, weaving a new soul to take their place. It wasn't just an unconscious force, it understood when something had gone astray and corrected it.

When Rasmus finally accepted that Mana was a sentient existence, everything changed. Harmony was the key. He no longer manipulated Mana forcefully like a mage crafting spells. Instead, it recognized him and responded to him, almost as if it had deemed him as its benefactor. The moment that bond was forged, he could bend nature itself to his will.

"You're getting good at it," Aris looked at the gentle flow of Mana around Rasmus. The flow looked natural, and he could manipulate whatever he wanted within his parameters. "Keep doing that, and you might be able to do something like what that sorceress did."

"Yes, but it still takes a huge toll on my body, especially my brain," Rasmus nodded as the headache kept bugging him because he had to constantly interact with Mana differently than he used to.

"You'll get used to it. You learned about Mana the wrong way, but you don't have to learn everything again from the very basics of it since you're already half correct of controlling Mana," Aris responded as she nodded with understanding. "Take it slowly."

Rasmus closed his eyes and furrowed his brows when suddenly the Mana around him dispersed. He couldn't handle how Mana could become so clingy in a sense that it kept coming to him without him gathering it. He needed to be in his prime since he was going to meet Uriel's master.

As the carriage they rented came in, they went in and rested. The inside of the carriage had a magic formation that made it cool and unaffected by the heat from outside. Rasmus was glad that he rented the most expensive one, knowing it would be worth the money.

The journey to the Druloem Kingdom would take them three days. The journey would be a long and boring one since there was nothing other than a vast desert all the way to the kingdom.

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"Yasser Arhat, a name that seems to not exist in a history book," Rasmus muttered as he looked at the desert after traveling for two days. "I was planning to be like that as well, but Lenin's scheme of putting me in the spotlight made it impossible..." He sighed, realizing that Lenin was preventing him from doing whatever he wanted unnoticed.

"What about Carrion and Videl? You don't mind them being well-known by others? They'll indirectly make you well-known as well if things are going well for them," Aris asked and noticed there were powerful monsters that were hiding in the depths of the desert.

"Since the cat is already out of the bag, I have changed my plans ever since Lenin put me in the spotlight. Everything has its own merits and benefits, so I'm creating a path that is both efficient and beneficial for me," Rasmus answered as he leaned back and tried to get some rest since they were about to arrive in the capital city of Druloem.

After a long and tiring journey, they arrived in the capital city of Druloem. The city was called the City of Sand, which lived up to its name because there were barely any roads in the city. Most of the area was covered in sand, and everyone there walked barefoot.

The beauty of the city was in its architecture and the colors of the buildings. They used dark wood for the walls, and the roof was a turquoise color, which made the city look beautiful. Not to mention they had tall and wide trees to make the city less barren and more leafy.

Rasmus immediately removed his shoes and put them in the ring to feel the sand with his bare feet. Aris looked at Rasmus and decided to join in because it looked and felt fun to walk barefoot in the sand since she had never seen or walked on sand her whole life.

They looked at the townspeople wearing black garments to cover their upper bodies and baggy pants up to their ankles. Most of them were covering their lower faces with a shawl to prevent the sand from entering their noses.

"It tickles..." Aris chuckled softly as she looked at her bare feet that she had buried in the sand.

"Yeah, it tickles," Rasmus nodded as he looked at his feet. "Want to go to a pub for a drink first?" He looked at Aris.

Aris nodded, and so they explored the city to find a pub.

As they explored the city, they found a mega-structure that looked similar to a colosseum. They wondered what it was for, and after they asked the locals, it was an arena where warriors from all over the world came to test their brute strength without Aura or magic. It was the ultimate form of warrior to win with only their fists and strength.

Once they entered a pub and ordered a drink and food, they kept staring at the arena because it looked so mesmerizing.

"You two came to watch the tournament as well?" A man with dark skin asked.

Rasmus and Aris glanced at the bald man with a ripped body, bigger than Eduard.

"Tournament?" Rasmus raised his brows.

The bald man tilted his head and saw white hair underneath the hood that Rasmus wore. However, he didn't care much about it and brushed it off.

"Yep, the 129th tournament. It's an annual tournament that South of East Neva holds. Strong people from around the world will be here to participate. The registration will be opened in a month, so there will be a lot of people come to this city," the bald man explained as he looked at Aris and noticed the white hair underneath the hood.

"What do you get from winning the tournament?" Rasmus asked and looked at the arena in the distance.

"Anything you want!" The bald man answered in excitement. "The sultans themselves will grant all your wishes, whatever it is, they will grant it for you," he added.

"Wait, you're here but not knowing about the tournament?" The bald man asked with his brows furrowed. "If it's alright, can I ask why you are here?"

"I'm here to meet someone in the Sand Tower," Rasmus answered.

The bald man's face became pale for a moment, and he became nervous when Rasmus mentioned the Sand Tower. Rasmus could see in the man's face that he felt uncomfortable after he heard about it, which made him curious.

"So you're a master, huh..." The bald man said with a nervous look on his face.

"Why do you say that?" Rasmus stared into the man's eyes.

"Well... It's because... The Sand Tower is a forbidden place that no one can enter without permission. The ones who can go in there are either someone important or a master in martial arts..." The bald man answered. "I uhh... I'll take my leave. Have a good day to you two," he said and then left hurriedly.

Aris watched the man leave the pub without looking back, as if he had just met someone that he shouldn't have.

"What was that?" Aris glanced at Rasmus.

"Who knows, but we'll find out once we get there," Rasmus shook his head and took a sip of his drink.