

Full-Moon 991

Chapter 991 Space in Consciousness

Some time has passed since Rex was entangled by the tendrils of the Eternal Curse.

Rex was first introduced to the Eternal Curse in the bathroom of Faraday University, right before the start of his first inter-university tournament. It came suddenly and unexpectedly like a tornado.

He experienced no indication that he would be bound by its power.

Unlike the symptoms of a sickness that gradually worsened, he was hit bluntly by its effect.

It puzzled him ever since.

Naturally, equipped with the power of the System, he inquired about the Eternal Curse, only to be confronted with a ridiculous price that he needed to pay. Due to adversities that came one after the other, he put the Eternal Curse in the back of his mind.

Just like that, the Eternal Curse remains a mystery to him.

Soon he learned that he was bound to the Vampire Princess, Calidora Blodirra.

He was confronted with the truth by her.

Several assumptions raced inside his puzzled mind as the trigger of the Eternal Curse must have occurred during his encounter with Calidora. He did one thing that might've triggered the Eternal Curse, and that is giving Calidorra his blood.

That act must be the catalyst for the Eternal Curse.

At least that's the only thing possible.

However, this was nothing more than an assumption he made according to the facts.

Until this day, he only knows a couple of things about the Eternal Curse.

Firstly, his soul was tied together with Calidora which led to numerous connections between them. Secondly, it was a very powerful curse, reaching the twelfth epiphany. Third, the end result if he didn't take care of it would be death as stated by the System.

It should be quite problematic, but Rex doesn't know exactly how he will die because of it.

Now, he regretted not delving more into the Eternal Curse.

Then again, he wouldn't expect himself to rely on this curse to fight the Executor.

"Rex... Can you hear me?"

A voice crept into Rex's ears as he was meditating.

Rex was clearing his mind of worldly thoughts to start his meditation but was disturbed by this voice that he recognized to belong to Calidora. She was talking to him via telepathy, an ability that might come from the Eternal Curse.

"Yes, I can hear you" He replied in a hushed tone.

Soon, her voice came back again, "I see that you are already at the fifth epiphany, more than I expected. This will save us time. Feel my cursed source, right beside my heart, and try to make a connection with it"

Upon hearing this, Rex exactly tried doing that.

Focusing his attention on his own cursed source, he started manipulating the cursed energy.

Once again, his own constitution made it arduous to wield cursed energy. He was quite slow and sluggish in expelling it from his body and guiding it into the abyss. Within the confines of his consciousness, he found himself in an empty, dimly lit space.

Rex opens his eyes and finds himself at the center of the abyss.

He's in a meditative position, surrounded by darkness with only a bulb of light above him.

It was the only source of light, illuminating a small radius around him.

Where am I?

Observing that he was obviously not in the courtyard anymore, he frowned as it seemed his consciousness was transferred somewhere else. Before him was his cursed energy, hovering and slowly slithering away like a snake.

Remembering what Calidora said, he puts all his attention into searching for her.

He used his cursed energy to do it.

Inside this space, Rex also found that his senses were blocked as if there was some kind of limiter that was placed on him. Normally, sensing Calidora would be as easy as finding his own arm, but not in this place.

"Calidora! I don't know where you are! I can't sense you!" Rex shouted to inform her.

A brief silence enveloped the place.

Soon, her voice eventually came as if it took some time for her voice to reach him.

"Follow your intuition! Your cursed energy should guide you to me!"

Upon hearing this, Rex furrowed his brow and resumed his search with determination.

He has no time to idle and needs to pick up the pace.

Rex controlled his cursed energy and sliced through the enveloping darkness, seeing Calidora. It advanced blindly, and the deeper it delved into the obscurity, the more intense the coldness of the unknown that he could feel.

Moving the cursed energy is not that hard at all when it's already out.

It felt like an extension of his limb.

About five minutes in, Rex's eyes flashed when he suddenly sensed something was near.

Calidora has been repeatedly voicing out her words to help Rex in his search, there seems to be the need for him to be the one to search him in order to move to the next process. But as he followed his intuition, something happened.

Out of nowhere, Rex could feel his cursed energy was attacked in the darkness.

Like a slingshot, his extended cursed energy propelled back into him with immense force.

He was knocked back in the process of the cursed energy merging back with his body again, and Rex instantly grunted in a mix of shock and pain, he wasn't ready for what just occurred to him. It was so quick that he only realized what happened when he coughed out blood.

An excruciating pain infiltrates his flesh and nerves, stunning him for good seconds.

But it wasn't the physical pain that troubled him.

Following the slingshot back of his cursed energy, his mind was also rattled, the backlash aimed at the recesses of his mind, burning away layers of his consciousness. It was so bad that he was forced to grit his teeth with a stiffened body for a solid ten seconds.

When the pain receded, Rex clasped his head with a pained look.

"What was that?" He uttered while looking at the darkness, confused as to what happened.

It feels like something attacked his cursed energy.

But there shouldn't be anything in the darkness as this was his consciousness' space.

Rex wanted to ask the System but he realized that he couldn't, so he was forced to let out a shout again, "Calidora! Something attacked my cursed energy in the darkness, what was it and what should I do?"

"If something is attacking you, then you are close!" Calidora shouted back.

Upon hearing this, Rex couldn't endure the urge to curse silently as this was bad news,

One backlash was sufficient to make his mind throbbing painfully, the leftover taste was still lingering inside his head, and he didn't know if he would be fine if he got hit by another one of those.

My body should be stronger than my cursed energy, so I'll get in there myself.

Standing up, he ventured into the darkness himself.

He reached his hand inside the darkness and found the coldness biting his skin, it was far worse in the flesh compared to through cursed energy. However, it was still manageable so Rex stepped into the darkness bravely.

Relying on his memory, he went in the direction where his cursed energy was attacked.

In a moment, he seemed to reach the same place as before.

Should be close. Even if whatever attack me attacked again, I would be able to endure it.

Due to the horrendous pain he suffered from the backlash earlier, he believed that he would fare well if he was directly attacked. After all, he could endure a physical attack more than an attack such as before that aimed at his mind.

Just as he thought of that, a bronze light appeared in his view which caught him by surprise.

Rex prepared himself but turns out he overestimated himself too much.

"Haargghh!"

Knocked out of that realm, he woke up in the courtyard again before he fell to his back.

Even though he was confident in himself, the entity inside the darkness earlier was able to move even faster than his perception and split his body into two, effectively knocking him back to reality once again.

Rex wasn't even able to turn into his Werewolf form or react to the attack.

It was simply remarkable.

Despite the intrigue he had about the enigmatic entity, he lay on the ground, wailing heavily and painfully, enduring the searing pain that continued to disturb his mind, persisting even after returning to reality.

His chest felt like burning from the inside, and he in reflex, immediately ripped his shirt.

Looking at his chest, he found that his cursed source was see-through.

Rex found it was glowing visibly through his skin, and there were a couple of cracks on it.

As Calidora perceived Rex's expulsion from the realm, her eyes fluttered open. Swiftly rising, she beheld Rex sprawled on the ground, the malevolent result of his own foolishness was bare to see as she could see the seething cursed source in his chest.

"Idiot! You trespassed the darkness, didn't you?" Calidora yelled, cursing at Rex.

Out of anything, she didn't expect Rex to be this stupid.

Naturally, to break through his cursed source into the higher realm of curses, he would need to use his cursed energy. But he was stupid enough to enter the darkness with his own body, thinking that he would fare better compared to his cursed energy.

Despite wanting to check on him, the sunlight is still there, so she remains in the shadow.

Even though he was still in pain, Rex forced himself to sit up.

"I don't want to waste any time as I need to reach the ninth epiphany quickly. I was too hasty, that was my fault" Rex muttered through gasps, he deserved to be called an idiot as the fact that he had little time blurred his mind.

Upon hearing this, Calidora shook her head in disapproval.

Sitting back down again, she then said, "Okay, let's restart. Don't make the same mistake"

"Our natural body is not compatible with cursed energy. Regardless of the strength of the curse within, living beings would only reach at most the fifth epiphany. If you want to reach a high epiphany, then you need to force your body to be compatible, and this is the only way,"

"Whatever you do, you need to use your cursed energy. You need to get accustomed to your cursed energy. If you adapt well, you can definitely sense the entity's attack and dodge it. Do the same mistake again, then your cursed source will shatter" She explained, making sure that there was no more mistake.

Rex listened to this attentively and nodded his head.

He lacks the understanding of cursed power, so it's natural for him to make a mistake.

With newfound understanding, he then went back to meditate again.

On the other hand, while the two were hectic about the situation, Mavenna was still sitting beside Calidora. Not much time has passed, in fact, their meditation didn't even last more than five minutes.

So it's not surprising that Mavenna was still around.

During their brief banter earlier, she was all silent with her eyes fixed on Rex.

It almost feels like she was absent-minded.

As Rex and Calidora embarked on their meditation, a chill crept through the air, heralding the emergence of a shadowy figure that came out of Rex's corporeal form. Despite Mavenna's earnest attempt to comprehend the surreal scene unfolding before her, it was impossible.

The inexplicable nature of the phenomenon eluded the grasp of her mind.

Mavenna saw a translucent figure hovering in the sky, bringing about extreme uneasiness.

"W- What was that...? What's inside of him?"

Despite five minutes already passed, she was unable to snap out of her trance.

As a Demoness herself, something that could make her shiver and feel like this must not be ordinary at all. She was completely terrified, the overwhelming presence was too much. It would be a lie if she was not fearful of Rex because of this.

But then again, nobody would've guessed that Rex has a Goddess in his body.

Chapter 992 Growth of the Scarlet Baner

Days passed in a blurred fashion within the castle's walls.

Complete silence enveloped the entire place.

Both the owner of the castle, Calidora, and the visitor, Rex have been locked in meditation.

Ever since the mishap that happened yesterday, none of them moved from their spots even a little, remaining within the space of the courtyard. Had it not for their potent auras, one might assume that both of them were statues.

Turns out, breaking the limiter of the body to break through to the next epiphany is difficult.

Rex has already lost count of how many times he failed.

When Calidora said that the pain of breaking the limiter would be quite unbearable, she was not at all joking. In the first hundred tries inside the realm of his consciousness, his mind felt like it was about to fracture any moment now.

He thought that he already mastered the art of enduring pain, but he wasn't.

Out there, other sensations of pain are still waiting for him.

Amidst these failures to reach and make a connection with Calidora, Rex felt a subtle cue of emotions that he wasn't expecting. It was rage. He was furious at himself for not being able to match the pace of his growth when the System's features were still available to him.

It seemed that he had gotten softer.

But this builds determination inside of him, remembering his past of struggling in weakness.

Rex has never been special.

Prior to gaining the System, he wasn't even an Awakened, he was a normal human.

Despite his situation, he perseveres with only his will and anger, reaching the absolute peak of normal human prowess. He might not be special, but he's confident that he could outwork anyone to achieve his goals.

Now, that determination is slowly coming back to him, turning his will into steel.

Meanwhile, in reality, Mavenna was roaming about.

Since the two were locked in meditation, she decided to roam around the territory.

Having awakened recently from being sealed by the ancient Human, the only thing she wanted the most was to eat. She needs life essence, taken from living beings. Despite desiring to take human life essence, she dissuades from doing that.

Mavenna settled on searching for animals or mutated animals that she could find.

It was all thanks to what happened earlier.

Accidentally witnessing the ghostly entity that emerge from Rex's form, capable of inducing fear into her, left a deep impression. Due to that unsettling encounter, she decided to avoid doing anything that might displease Rex.

Even though she knows how strong he is already, the unknown makes him scarier.

"I really want to eat some life essence, but the thing is, ever since that thing came out, the atmosphere inside the castle is suffocating. Maybe I'll stay out and go back only when both of them finish their meditation" Mavenna mused to herself.

In a moment, she could be found wandering inside a mountainous valley.

Due to the special Blood Bunyas inside the courtyard, the water stream was dyed crimson.

Since mutated animals have become sparse, an effect from the First Breath which reverted most of them which are below the sixth-rank realm to their regular form, the lack of water source made the surroundings of the city to be devoid of animals.

Along the way, Mavenna only found a couple of birds that she could get her hands on.

Chirp!

Chirp!

On a dead tree was a crow, its head turned and scout the surroundings.

Even though crows were known for their high alertness, it wasn't able to react in time.

Mavenna appeared right beside it and used her index finger to poke the crow, and in that instant, the crow's entire body deteriorated in the blink of an eye until it was nothing more than a hollow carcass.

It fell like a stone and hit the ground with a light thud.

Playing with the small life essence she gained, taking the shape of a mystical green energy, her demonic eyes glowed before that green energy turned purple. It then slowly seeped into her hand before she rejoiced at the pleasurable feeling it brought.

"Childsplay, it didn't even last a second" She murmured in slight annoyance.

Only good prey would satisfy her hunger.

Going about with even more vigor, she only managed to find one mutated animal and it was near the end of the valley. If she went any further, then she would be going too far so she would only have to make do with small prey.

But as she was about to turn around, she sensed a couple of auras approaching her.

Realizing this, she turned back and fixed her eyes on a spot.

Despite the approaching people not being here yet, she already could tell where they would be appearing, and true enough, two bat-like figures came flying before turning into their true forms, Vampires in sleek black armor.

'Judging from their armor, they must be royal guards of the Vampires' She pondered silently.

Soon, another two figures also arrived.

Unlike the two Vampires, these two manifested from blood that squeezed out of the ground.

Additionally, the two revealed themselves as a pair of male and female.

Mavenna looked at the female Vampire and found that she didn't recognize her, however, the male Vampire is a familiar face. "A Demoness? I think you had lost your ways, and ventured too deep into our territory, I suggest leaving right away"

"Viscardi, I'm honored to meet with the dethroned Prince" Mavenna replied with a smile.

Casting a frown in Mavenna's direction, Viscardi, the male Vampire, found that she seemed to know him, it could be seen in her eyes. However, he fails to recognize Mavenna, his mind is still fuzzy from awakening.

It has been quite an adjustment since he recently woke up.

Deciding to ignore her mocking remark, he asked, "What brings a Demoness to this place?"

"Fear not, I am nothing more than a visitor. If this will help, I am Princess Calidora's guest, so there was no need to suspect me" She added, assuming that bringing Calidora's name would help her in dealing with this situation.

True enough, it did as the female Vampire stepped forward, "You are Calidora's guest?"

"And you are...?" Mavenna raised an eyebrow.

Standing upright, the female Vampire replied, "I am Nezera Blodirra, Calidora's mother"

Unexpectedly encountering Calidora's mother, Mavenna frowned, and now she understood that it seemed this group was heading to the castle. She was uncertain of their intentions of going there, but Rex and Calidora couldn't be bothered right now.

It would be dangerous, especially since Rex has already made a mistake the first time.

Disturbing his meditation right now would end up being fatal.

"I am Calidora's guest, and I will also tell you that she's unavailable right now. Better to visit her at a later time. If you want, I can even notify you when she's available" Mavenna replied, trying to dissuade them as soft as possible.

Nezera was surprisingly accepting of this as she looked at Viscardi, "We can come later"

However, it seems Viscardi has a different view.

"No, I need the Blood Devourer, and she has it. Getting accustomed to it needs time, and it's better to have it sooner" He shook his head, rejecting the idea of visiting at a later time. But from his banter, Mavenna knew what their objective was.

Coming from the ancient era, she naturally knows the Blood Devourer of the Vampires.

Seeing Viscardi's stubborn look, Mavenna sighed.

Forcing him to not go to the castle would do the opposite effect, it would anger him, so she decided to comply, "Okay, I'll lead you to the castle. But please, let me be the one to call her, let's not cause any complications"

Upon hearing this, Viscardi shrugged, "Fine, go and lead the way"

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Meanwhile, the Scarlet Banes Kingdom.

It has been completely peaceful inside the walls of the kingdom, nothing crucial occurred.

Because of that, the kingdom was in fact growing steadily.

More and more elder Werewolves slowly regain their consciousness and break their seal, bolstering the military strength of the kingdom. All the newly awakened Werewolves were instantly educated about the situation of the new era.

Starting from the dynamic of power, the overall condition, and ongoing events.

A new era that they awaken to.

Unsurprisingly enough, all of them have strong willpower, forged through the past's horrors.

Learning about the situation, none of them were shocked.

Due to the experience that they endured in the past, all of them were completely unified in the sheer understanding that to keep on living is to fight an endless battle. Even though the moment they woke up, they were told that there would potentially be a great war breaking out, none of them let out so much as a complaint.

For them, a war is like every Monday, the necessity of life.

Nothing much in life could bring shock to them, all of them are more or less very wise.

As the increasing number of awakened older Werewolves, many of them reunited.

Brothers, sisters, comrades, all of them reunite.

Ancient packs become whole again, reeling in the strength of a family. On the other hand, those who had lost their pack members or even their whole pack were absorbed by others who were in need of numbers.

Something that the higher-ups are delighted to see.

In the setting prior to the First Breath, the Werewolf Kingdom has the lowest head count.

Compared to the other races, they were unable to use the forbidden ritual.

Naturally, their number is lagging behind.

However, now, the Werewolf Kingdom slowly regaining its numbers once again.

Despite the good news of growth for the kingdom, Dorlus who has been standing guard in front of the throne room ever since the Hare Moon started was sweating, his countenance showcasing his worry clearly.

But then again, how could he not be worried when the Storm Prince hasn't come out yet?

It's been days, and there was no sign of the prince coming out.

He feared that the godly figure that visited did something to the prince.

Even though he was concerned for the prince's safety, knowing the godly figure, even if the deity harbored ill intentions towards the prince, he wouldn't be able to do anything, it would certainly be futile.

Additionally, the repercussions for attempting to harm the godly figure could be devastating.

Just then, at the peak of his worry, the door clanked open.

Upon hearing this, Dorlus' ears perked up and he turned to look at the door. His eyes then were bathed in relief when he saw the Storm Prince come out without a hint of injury, and better yet, he was alone.

No sign of the deity could be seen, he seemed to be alone.

"My lord, are you okay? What about the visitor?" Dorlus bombarded him with questions.

But as he said that, he noticed that something was off about the prince.

It's not that there was something physically weird about him, he looked normal in terms of appearance, yet the air surrounding him was different. Dorlus could tell that it was still the prince, he was not possessed, but he was obviously different.

Something happened to him, and he doesn't know what.

Reaching out his hand, Dorlus was hesitant to let the Storm Prince touch him.

However, there was no malevolence lurking within his gaze, so Dorlus decided to stay and got his shoulder clasped by the Storm Prince. Immediately after that, a sudden sting took him by surprise, leaving him flinching in confusion.

Taking a look at his shoulder, his eyes widened in utter shock.

"A herald mark...?" He muttered in a hushed tone, completely surprised by this sight.

Since the Storm Prince has the Storm Moon King Mark, it wasn't that surprising for him to be able to grant others a Herald Mark. What surprised Dorlus however was the fact that he was the trusted right hand of the Storm Prince, and he had already been bestowed a Herald Mark by the Storm Prince.

Due to that, a crucial question appeared in his mind. "Then what Herald Mark is this...?"

Chapter 993 Reactions to the Bat Wings

Kaboom!

As the question lingered inside his head, the dormant energy within his body suddenly rebelled and blasted a pale blue aura that was even able to crack the walls. Dorlus was flabbergasted at this occurrence.

Not because of the power from the Herald Mark, but the energy it contains.

He was sure now the source of this mark's power.

"Y- Yule Moon..." Dorlus uttered in absolute shock, his usual stoic countenance shattered.

It was too shocking for even his old self to handle.

Upon his realization, the Storm Prince smiled mischievously, one that would be able to make anyone shiver in their boots as he knew exactly what Dorlus was feeling, "Displeasing the Gods is quite a terrifying sin, the prince to pay for that surpasses even the relief that death could bring"

"Now, you've seen a glimpse of that" He added as his smile stretched wider.

Dorlus nodded his head in agreement, still in disbelief.

He realized the gravity of the situation almost instantly after he felt the energy within him.

Yule Moon.

Only one thing can make the Lunirich God of the Yule Moon act.

Werewolves that were born during the month of the Yule Moon are considered unfortunate.

It's an old tradition to always pity those who were born in the month of the Yule Moon, they are destined to be weaker in the long run. All of this started because these Werewolves were unable to gain their King Mark and reach the higher echelon of power.

A limitation they are born with, and none has managed to break this curse.

Not a single Werewolf in history.

Every single Werewolf knows that the Lunirich God of the Yule Moon has a special place.

Within the pantheon of the Gods, the Lunirich God of the Yule Moon is not the strongest like the Super Moon or the weakest like the Harvest Moon, but he possesses the natural power to counter the other Gods.

Similar to his power that was able to erase any Werewolf from existence, he's unique.

Due to that, he became the overseer of the Gods.

His task is to keep the balance.

Because of that very reason, his power has never been bestowed on a Werewolf in the form of King Mark. Not a single Werewolf has achieved his power. But at this very moment, Dorlus found that the Storm Prince had bestowed him a Herald Mark.

A Herald Mark that belongs to the Yule Moon which grants him power, unique to anyone else.

It was proof that the Storm Prince had been graced by the Yule Moon's power.

Now he understands why he felt immense fear that night.

Turns out, the Lunirich God of the Yule Moon was the one who visited that night.

Since the Yule Moon's power is to disintegrate any Werewolf that traverses under its light, it develops a natural fearful instinct deep inside the Werewolves' bodies. Dorlus was scared of him because of that, the fear of being erased.

Meeting a Godly entity, the feeling of reverence should be the one present.

But this Lunirich God gave off a different vibe completely.

"I don't know how this happened, considering I already have the Storm Moon, but something is going on in the pantheon of Gods. But it seems some of the Lunirich Gods were due for punishment. Dorlus, I am going to relay the sacred task to you. Bring the Betas, no matter how much you need, and go to this location"

Upon saying that, the Storm Prince tapped his index finger on Dorlus' forehead.

He instills his mind with information.

Dorlus deciphered the information and instantly knew the destination.

A frown appeared on his face when he realized the destination, however, that didn't last long.

"What do you want me to do? I'll follow your order" He asked firmly.

Clasping both hands behind his back, the Storm Prince answered, "Killing her is impossible for you, so it's not that. But there will be a group that will come there, that damn new era pack. I want you to kill them and let no one live. You are a pseudo-tenth-rank realm, I expect no failure from you"

Not even hesitation, Dorlus falls to one knee with reverence, "I will not fail you"

After getting his task, he quickly left with hurried steps.

Still standing in the hallway, the Storm Prince lay quiet for a moment before he flicked his fingers, summoning yet another Werewolf. Compared to the others, she has a way slimmer stature and curves, showing that she's a female.

Tara, that is her name, the Female Alpha of the Storm Prince's pack, the Galecrown Stalkers.

"You call for me?" She asked with her head down.

Glancing at her, the Storm Prince nodded and commanded, "Bring all the captured humans and kidnap more humans as much as possible. I will be waiting at the city square, and also, don't forget to call an Enchanter"

Upon hearing this command, Tara raised her gaze in surprise.

It was a specific command that could only point at one thing, and she was excited about it.

"Have you reached it already?" She asked again, her tone vibrant.

A spark of elation could be seen in the Storm Prince's eyes as he grinned, "I've surpassed him, and now, we can do the forbidden ritual for ourselves. So, yes, I already reached the optimal state. Go and get what I asked, I'm going to perform a mass transformation to bolster our strength and catch up to the other races..."

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Meanwhile, Mavenna leads Viscardi and Nezera back to the castle.

But upon getting there, she quickly turned towards the two of them with a stern expression.

"Wait here, don't follow me. I am going to call for Calidora and inform her that you two have come to meet with her" Mavenna said, her tone irrefutable, showing the two that she really meant what she said.

It feels odd for the two of them to be treated like this.

Mavenna is a Demoness, and they are currently within the Vampire's territory.

So the fact that the two were treated like a guest inside Calidora's castle while Mavenna was akin to a host didn't settle for them. However, despite their reluctance, they decided that it would be better to wait before causing trouble.

Both already sensed Calidora's aura.

Her aura was still present and strong, so they could rest easy as she was not in danger.

Along the way to the courtyard, she was hoping that the two somehow already completed their meditation. 'Sir Rex might not have a good relationship with the Vampires, as he was a Werewolf himself, so it's better to take the safer route'

Due to uncertainty, Mavenna decided she would not mention anything about Rex being here.

Cursed energy was surrounding his presence, so his aura was undetectable.

Upon reaching the courtyard, her expression sank as Rex and Calidora were still fixed on the same meditative position, with no sign of moving. Biting her lower lip, she heads over to the left, intending to wake Calidora up.

Out of the two, interrupting her would be less risky.

Shaking her body a bit, Mavenna called her, "Calidora, your mother is here to see you"

Mavenna tried waking her up a couple of times to no avail.

Each time she failed, she became more uneasy by the second as Viscardi and Nezera would probably be searching for her if she didn't come back soon. True enough, the duo came and walked into the courtyard with a steady walk.

Both completely disregard Mavenna's warning.

Glancing over her shoulder, Mavenna's expression stiffened as the two viewed the space.

Viscardi and Nezera locked their eyes on Calidora before eventually Rex.

A surprising sight instantly greeted them as soon as they entered the courtyard, they were greeted by the sight of Rex and Calidora deep in meditation, ensconced in the swirling hue of cursed energy.

However, Nezera's gaze honed in on a peculiar detail.

Squinting her eyes, she saw small, bat-like wings protruding near Calidora's waist.

Upon seeing this detail on top of the otherworldly glow that Calidora's body emitted under the shade of the Blood Bunya, Nezera's heart dropped to her stomach as she gasped in utter shock, not expecting to see this at all.

"No... It can't be..." She mused, her eyes began to swell and tear up.

Likewise, Viscardi frowned when he looked at Calidora, but when his eyes landed on the bat-like wings, his eyes instantly bulged and the blood energy that was lying dormant inside his body exploded like a tidal wave.

Instantly, his normal expression contorted into a hideous one.

Mavenna who saw their reaction couldn't help but smile wryly, somewhat expecting this.

'Yeah... There was the fact that Rex is here, and there's that. I was hoping that Calidora would at least consult her mother, but it seemed she didn't judging from Nezera's strong reaction' She pondered, shaking her head at Calidora's reckless behavior.

But then again, from the way she talked, it was obvious that she did what she wanted to do.

Nobody is going to stop her from doing it.

Pausing for a brief moment, Viscardi turned his gaze and saw Nezera breaking down in tears.

Judging from this reaction alone shows that she was not aware of this.

Seeing the clearer picture, the anger burning within him quickly reached the breaking point.

Viscardi's murderous eyes glared at Rex, meditating at the center of the courtyard, before he quickly made a blood dash towards him. In addition, as he dashed, there was this weird black pattern emerging that was shaped like a plus sign with sharp points in his pupils.

It was the Vampiric Eyes of Magnification, able to boost blood attacks' potency by 5 to 10x.

Following that, his claws blaze with violent blood energy.

Thrusting his claws like a spear, Viscardi aimed for the kill, aiming at Rex's defenseless neck.

Swoosh!

Splash!

Out of nowhere, Viscardi widened his eyes when he saw Mavenna blocked his attack.

Knowing that the attack would be a devastating one, she sprouted her beautiful, yet durable pink wings to block the thrust. She then peeked from behind her wings and asked, "Don't do this, you have to understand that it was Cali—"

Before she could finish, Viscardi had already done another swipe with his other hand.

It broke Mavenna's guard due to how powerful his attack was.

Exposed to a frontal attack, Mavenna gritted her teeth before her stomach got hit by a kick, hurtling her backward still on her feet before slamming to the wall with a loud crash, there was nothing that would stand between Viscardi and Rex now.

"Your sinful act will be paid with blood, Werewolf!" Viscardi shouted.

Pulling his arm backward, he did another thrust but this time, it was amplified with a skill.

"Black Blood Magic, Vlad's Impale!"

Swoosh!

Compared to the attack he did to Mavenna, this one was multiple times stronger as even the white sphere in the sky reacted to his power. He puts everything he has into this attack, eyes drowned in bloodlust as if Rex was the one who killed his parents.

However, the trajectory of his attack paused in the middle.

Viscardi was aghast as there seemed to be someone holding his wrist, and despite his tries, there didn't seem to be any way he could break free from this grip. He tried it a couple of times but ended in a total failure.

He couldn't move his right arm at all!

Mavenna who was about to head back paused when she saw this scenario.

Immediately after that, the surroundings turned chilly.

Soon, the onlookers realized that the one who blocked Viscardi's assault was none other than the translucent entity that Mavenna had seen earlier, the Countess of the Dark Lunirich herself was the one who blocked that attack.

"W- What in the Origin's name...?" Viscardi mused in utter surprise.

Little by little, the Countess' appearance started to appear which shocked everyone.

Even Viscardi who was fueled with bloodlust had his expression drained from all colors, he needed to look up to even see the Countess, and he was both mesmerized and horrified at what he was seeing.

Nobody needs to notify him that the Countess is a Goddess.

"Your attack in a fit of anger is a great offense, mortal... and I do not appreciate it"

Chapter 994 Brush of Insanity

In the presence of a God, Viscardi has his fighting will instantly stripped away.

He, like the others who were witnessing the same scenery, was not expecting that there was an entity living inside Rex's body and protecting him from harm's way. Moreover, this entity is actually a God.

Just her presence alone made their energies unwilling to be controlled by them.

Even an inanimate essence like their energies were fearful.

Mavenna tried to stop this from happening, she knew that disturbing Rex from his meditation would be fatal. Thus, she also knew that the entity within him wouldn't let that happen. Her assumption was proven right at this very moment.

Attacking Rex right now is a very bad idea.

Despite having the Vampiric Eyes of Magnification, he couldn't break free from this trance.

Viscardi stuttered apologetically, "M- My apologies. I-I- I didn't know..."

But the Countess kept on staring at him for a long moment before Viscardi saw a slithering dark energy on her arm, and in the next second, that very energy grasped Viscardi's hand which prompted him to look at the Countess in mercy.

No matter what comes from this, it must not be good for him.

"Your misdeed will not be put off unpunished, mortal" the Countess whispered threateningly.

Swish!

Under Mavenna and Nezera's eyes, both the Countess and Viscardi vanished into thin air.

It was so sudden that it took a moment for them to grasp what happened.

Realizing what had happened, both of them exchanged looks at each other as their feet turned cold. Even the thought of what was going to happen to Viscardi made them shiver, but they were sure that the possibility of death was very high.

Meanwhile, inside an ethereal realm, only adorned by a crescent moon in the sky.

Splash!

Viscardi suddenly fell from the sky and hit the shallow water.

He was quick to recover and cast a vigilant gaze across the expanse, his heart pounding like a war drum in his chest. To his astonishment, he stood at the heart of an infinite space where he was surrounded by nothing but shallow waters stretching as far as his eyes could see.

Sensing no presence of blood energy, he instantly realized that he was in another realm.

'Goddess! Have mercy!'

Despite trying to plead for mercy, his eyes widened for a second.

Although he was obviously attempting to shout, no sound escaped his mouth, it was silent.

It was unclear whether he couldn't produce any sound or his ears were not functioning. But now that he realized that, he inspected himself and found that his sense of touch was also robbed away from him.

Viscardi's sense of touch, hearing, smell, and taste was not working normally.

Only his eyes retained its function.

'Calm down, it's okay... I just need to calm down and wait for him'

Even though the situation was not at all pleasant, he reckoned that enduring until Rex was done with his meditation was a prudent course given that the Countess didn't seem to want to kill him for real.

If she did, then she could do it with a flick of her fingers.

Patience, he concluded, would be his ally as he remained seated, biding his time.

An unknown amount of time has passed with nothing happening.

But Viscardi who was seated at the center calmly earlier was now prostrating on the ground, tears dropped down from his eyes as he tried to shout as loud as he could. He could feel that his throat was hurting, yet he couldn't hear anything.

Losing one sense is enough to really get to someone.

In Viscardi's case, he didn't lose one but four of five senses which shattered his mind.

Due to losing four of his senses, he was only accompanied by his thoughts and the paranoia of not being able to get out of this realm easily made him crazy. He initially thought that he would be fine, but he underestimated the Banished Realm.

Even Rex, having a very strong willpower couldn't stand too long inside the Banished Realm.

Additionally, he was not aware of one small fact.

He didn't know that time flowed way slower inside the Banished Realm.

Just a mere moment inside the Banished Realm made him insane as he shouted and wept.

Oblivious to all of this, Rex was still in the space within his consciousness.

Persisting in his quest to locate the origin of Calidora's voice, Rex remained ensnared in the clutches of repeated failures, days ticking away. Undeterred, a resolute determination burns within him, steadfast in his commitment to see this through to its conclusion.

No matter what, he would finish this before stopping his meditation.

During his trial and error, he was suddenly interrupted.

Glancing to his side he found a figure materializing from nothing, and it turned out to be the Countess levitating eerily who was able to appear in his consciousness. He was surprised to see the Countess appearing here.

Since she rarely does this, then there must be something important.

"A Vampire tried to attack you, and I trapped him in the Banished Realm" She informed.

At the revelation, a furrow etched itself on Rex's brow as he knew that the only Vampire outside should be Calidora, and yet, she was meditating with him right now, "Are there visitors? To what end? And do you know who they are?"

"I don't know, but the Demoness was the one who brought them" the Countess replied.

Pondering for a brief moment, Rex found that there didn't seem to be a crisis in her tone.

He assumed that everything was fine, and it was, so he decided to not stop his meditation right now. The Countess would be able to protect him as she did, and he would probably send Amanir and Devo to protect him also, just in case.

But then, there's a question of what to do with the trapped Vampire.

"For the Vampire you trap, leave it there. I'll deal with it when I finish" Rex instructed.

Upon hearing this, the Countess nodded but she still hadn't left.

Rex raised an eyebrow as she seemed to have something more to say, and true enough, she eventually opened her mouth and said, "I don't think my fellow Lunirich Gods have recovered from the attack they did on you back then. Nonetheless, exercise vigilance, for my perception may err, and the threat may linger unforeseen"

After saying that, the Countess vanishes.

On the other hand, Rex was frowning when he heard her sudden advice.

I think it's not random advice, she wouldn't say that to me if something didn't happen.

Suspecting that the Countess might've had some intuition or saw something that made her think like that, Rex decided to heed her advice. He was going to fight the Executor, but he also must be aware of other things.

...

Meanwhile, Dargena City.

Out of the crucial people of the city, only Evelyn, Ryze, Prof. K, and Giana stayed behind.

Inside the hospital overseen by the Elves and other Awakened, there were a couple of people who were traversing its halls, seeking healing for the wounds acquired in the crucible of their labor. Most of them primarily hail from the weapons factory and farms.

Their tasks are quite arduous, so it's natural for them to sustain injuries here and there.

But overall, the hospital is quite empty, and that is good.

Intricate mosaic tiles depicting healing symbols adorned the ground, making the hospital look nice and fresh. Even the furniture was made of enchanted materials, woods, and stones, quite sturdy and robust.

Within one of the rooms on the second floor, Giana lay on the bed, recuperating.

Due to the rune that she was branded with, the effect of the full moon was amplified to her, and she suffered the most during each full moon compared to any Werewolf in the whole wide world, thus she needs rest.

However, she was starting to feel better now.

Aside from not having any memory from when the Hare Moon happened, she feels fine.

Groaning lightly, Giana sat on the edge of the bed and collected herself. She would need to go out and start helping around, especially when the nurse told her that there seemed to be a commotion in the castle.

'I need to check, they might need my help' Giana pondered and stood up.

Feeling confident that she already recovered fully with only a slight headache, she heads over to the side intending to change her clothes. Her usual clothes were beside the fresh ones, laid out tidily for her.

It was nothing much, only a plain tunic and leather pants.

Deciding to wear the fresh clothes, she grabbed them intending to lay them on the bed.

But as she did that, her eyes caught something flashing.

Giana looked at the flashing light, she reached out her hand to her usual clothes which were folded finely as the flashing light came from there. She took the clothes and found that there was a flashing symbol.

Only then that she realized what it was.

'Ninth-rank realm Awakened was given a specialized rune, made by a combination of rune and formation masters' intelligence. It's used to communicate and contact reinforcement. But the only one who could do this was other ninth-rank realm Awakened, so is it Brigitta?'

Seeing this flashing symbol, she assumed that it was Brigitta.

Denzel is completely out of the picture as he never used this method to contact the others.

Aside from that, she couldn't think of any other who would try and contact her, possibly thinking that she had gone missing. President Sebrof is another one, but he was dealing with the Executor, so he wouldn't contact her with that in his place.

Pondering for a moment, she snapped out of her daze and answered the call.

"Can you hear me, Giana?"

Upon hearing the voice, Giana had her eyes widened as it turned out, it was not Brigitta.

It was President Sebrof!

Giana stuttered when she heard his voice, her heart also began to thump faster.

Even though she did this in order to make Rex help humanity against the Executor, doing anything he wanted to win his favor which made her end up becoming a Werewolf, there is still some lingering guilt inside of her.

Now that she heard President Sebrof's voice, that guilt resurfaced.

Deep down she knows that if President Sebrof knows what she becomes, then it's all over.

She would gain treatment similar to Rex and be exiled.

"I know you can hear me, Giana. Answer me" President Sebrof said again.

Being called once again, Giana snapped out of her trance and cleared her throat, "Yes, I can hear you. For what purpose are you contacting me right now, President Sebrof?" She asked, trying to keep a calm tone.

"No need to be so stiff with me, I know that you are with Rex right now" He answered bluntly.

Giana felt her throat tighten when she heard this.

From the very first day, she became one of the pillars of humanity when she reached the ninth-rank realm, President Sebrof has always been her supervisor. She always looked up to him as the leader of Ratmawati City.

A chosen leader from the Elpida Alliance.

Due to that very reason, it would be a lie if she was not feeling uneasy right now.

"How do you know...?" She eventually asked.

Upon hearing this, President Sebrof quickly cut to the chase, "How I know is not important, what's important right now is that you went missing and were now with Rex. Usually, this would cost a hefty punishment as a traitor, but I will pardon this"

"W- What...?" Giana was stupified.

She never really thought that President Sebrof would drop the matter just like that.

Pausing for a second, he continued, "You know that I always kept an eye on you the most, right? You are the youngest, and you always contribute to humanity greatly. For that, I am thankful, you've done a great service for us"

Giana kept silent when she heard this, but deep down, she was touched.

At least one person appreciates her sacrifice.

"However, I'm regretful to say that I want you to contribute more. I have something for you to do, and only you can do it" President Sebrof finally dropped what he wanted, which was already as expected.

It was the nature of the work, but the compliment came from him genuinely.

Calming her breathing for a couple of seconds, she eventually asked, "What do you need?"

Listening to what President Sebrof was about to say, Giana's eyes widened fully, she was surprised by what he said. But there was a brimming smile that bloomed on her face, "Are you sure?! Do you really want that?! If that's the case, I will do it! Don't worry, I will make sure that he will never know until the final battle..."

Chapter 995 Mother and Daughter Talk

Focused within the grasp of meditation, another day had passed.

Contrary to the time scale that Rex anticipated to spend in cultivating his cursed source, he was already three days longer. Despite his best, there was absolutely no chance for him to reach his intended epiphany on time.

Traversing the path of Witches was not as easy as he initially thought.

He underestimated the difficulty.

During his trial and error, attempting to reach Calidora's voice, she said that if he didn't have any help, then he would be searching the Cursed Beacon in the dark by himself. Calidora had already erased that problem for him.

Since she has a higher cursed epiphany, she can traverse the darkness easily, unlike Rex.

Because of that, she could help tell Rex of the location.

Even then, reaching the Cursed Beacon and making a connection with it is very difficult.

Rex pondered that Calidora must've meditated for months to complete this.

Knowing that Rex doesn't know much about curses, and the fact that he is still stuck in going past the monster inside the darkness, Calidora uses this opportunity to educate him about cursed power, or at least what she knows.

In short, a cursed epiphany could reach all the way to the twelfth.

From the first to the fifth cursed epiphany, there would be no bottlenecks and easily passed.

However, starting from the sixth cursed epiphany, things started to change.

Due to his several encounters with cursed creatures, Rex knew that curses above the fifth epiphany were able to summon Cursed Zone. Calidora explained to him that the creatures were able to do that thanks to reaching the next stage.

Like Awakened which would need the heart media or elemental tattoo, curses also have one.

In the cursed world, there were three cursed bodies in order to climb higher.

Anyone who has a cursed source would instantly reach the initiate cursed body, which would allow them up to the fifth epiphany. Next, one would need to achieve a greater cursed body in order to climb up to the tenth epiphany.

Rex is currently in the process of achieving the greater cursed body.

He would need to connect more with the Cursed Beacon, and doing that would need heavy mental power, dedication, and cursed energy control which he was currently trying to reach, failing multiple times in the process.

If he managed to make the connection, the limiter of his body would be lifted.

Like a beacon, the connection will help his cursed energy adapt to the nature of his body.

Only then he would be able to break the bottleneck and climb higher.

Upon achieving this body, there would be two paths which would be available to proceed.

Calidora mentioned that there was the zone path and the mind path.

Naturally, cursed creatures that don't possess high intelligence, if they achieve the greater cursed body, don't have the choice of going with the mind path. Only the zone path was available for them which is why Rex has never heard of the mind path.

Zone path would create some sort of domain that provided numerous lethal effects.

On the other hand, the mind path is a defensive one.

Rather than eliciting potent effects on others, the mind path will create a mind barrier, able to nullify most curse attacks or induced effects. Its defense efficiency will heavily depend on the epiphany and the curse that backed the individual's cursed source.

Considering the levels of chaos that cursed energy could induce, the mind path is enticing.

Lastly, there was the divine cursed body.

Even though Calidora knew the name of the body stage, she was only aware of its name.

As for its power, she has absolutely zero clue about it.

But then again, she was currently at the ninth epiphany, so she still had one more epiphany before needing to think about reaching the divine cursed body. Then again, the Witch would probably know about this, so she knew where to search.

"Rrgghhh...!" Rex grunted heavily with his eyes bulging in vexation.

Once again, the monster swatted him away, severing his cursed energy in the process.

Despite feeling immense pain earlier, his pain tolerance and adaptability started to take full effect as he now could endure the backlash pain he sustained from having his cursed energy severed in the darkness.

However, it doesn't mean that he's not feeling the pain.

Breathing heavily, his eyes gazed into the darkness with anger mixed with frustration.

"Countess, can you bring me to the Banished Realm?" He suddenly asked.

Upon hearing this, the Countess within his body quickly replied, "If you desire, yes"

Since he wasted too much time already, he needs to play it smart or he would be running out of time soon enough. Even though being inside the Banished Realm while doing this would be way worse, he doesn't have any other choice.

"Okay, bring me there. I'll manage..." Rex decided with a heavy sigh.

Pausing for a second, the Countess then said, "I'll just create a dome for your body"

"Dome? Why a dome?" He frowned in confusion.

Putting him inside the Banished Realm wouldn't be a problem as he's already prepared.

However, the Countess seems to have another plan in mind, "Of course, the sensation would still be the same as if you are inside the Banished Realm. But, it would be cost-efficient. It would save me energy which we will need later"

Rex doesn't have a problem with this so he decided to go with the Countess' way.

On the outside, the sky was already golden.

Mavenna couldn't be seen anywhere in the courtyard, she's not here.

Like she initially planned earlier, the atmosphere inside the castle was not great because of the Countess, especially now that she has seen the Countess' wrath for the first time. So she was now sleeping soundly nearby, waiting for Rex and Calidora to finish meditating.

On the other hand, Nezera still stayed behind in the courtyard.

After witnessing Viscardi being devoured by the Countess, she stayed because she wanted to plead with Rex to let Viscardi go. Despite his foolishness and impulsive behavior, he's still the son of a notable Vampire Family.

If she went back without him, there would be trouble ensued towards her.

Due to that, she can't go back.

But as she waited for the two to finish meditating, Nezera sensed a chilling godly energy.

Upon sensing this energy, her body tensed up instinctively.

When she turned to look at Rex, she found the same energy that the Countess used earlier seeped out of his skin and created a black transparent dome around him. It only covers him, Calidora is not affected.

Just after that happened, Calidora's eyes moved underneath her eyelids.

Soon, she blinked open her eyes.

Adjusting her vision to the surroundings, she eventually laid her gaze on Rex who was now enclosed in a black dome. She didn't question what he was doing and just stretched. She already helped him tell the rough location of the Cursed Beacon, so he can take it over alone from here.

Leaning back to the Blood Bunya, she wanted to rest but sensed another presence.

Turning her gaze to the side, her eyes widened at the sight of Nezera.

Calidora instinctively folded her small bat wings to the back and faced her mother, trying her best to hide them. But of course, that was a futile attempt as Nezera had already seen the small bat wings from the moment she arrived.

Both daughter and mother pair exchanged uneasy looks with each other.

It stayed like that for a solid ten seconds.

Just their eyes alone seemed to exchange a million silent words in that quick moment.

Soon, Calidora liquified into blood and emerged beside Nezera.

"Mother... How long have you been here?" Calidora cleared her throat and asked.

Looking at her daughter with more silence, Nezera looked down, clutching the edge of her robe, seemingly troubled before she raised her gaze again, "A couple of hours. Viscardi, the son of the Salizar Family asked to use the Blood Devourer. He could unlock its multiplication abilities and split it into two, so we came here to see you"

Upon hearing this, Calidora furrowed her brows.

Out of anything, she wanted to be the one to hold the Blood Devourer herself.

She wasn't going to hand it over like that.

Dividing it into two would not be a bad idea, but its power would undeniably be reduced. It wouldn't be so much as reduced by half, however, it's still a considerable amount. She didn't want to do it, not when she was already starting to get used to the Blood Devourer.

Instead of arguing, Calidora noticed that Viscardi was nowhere to be seen.

"Where is Viscardi then?" She asked in confusion.

Nezera only replied with a glance at Rex who was still in meditation, and that look alone tells Calidora that something happened to Viscardi after he presumably attacked Rex. But she was not surprised, considering that Viscardi had also seen her bat wings.

After exchanging the pleasant banter came the actual heavy conversation.

"Care to enlighten your own mother, Calidora? Why are you doing this without a word to me or your father? Do you not respect us?" Nezera's question began with a measured calmness, but her composure swiftly crumbled, and teardrops welled in her eyes. "There are traditions and respect that demand adherence before taking such steps, yet you did it without a moment's consideration. Is this why you asked Elder Nolacula for the castle?"

"Is it because of your Eyes of Terror?" She continued, her shoulders visibly trembling.

Upon hearing this, Calidora was muted, her lips were sealed tight.

She hoped Nezera wouldn't say anything, but she realized that it was too much to ask.

Not wanting to see the tears that came down from her mother's eyes, Calidora pivoted her body and let her back face Nezera. Eventually, she sighed and replied, "If I were to ask you or Father, both of you wouldn't let me. So I decided to do it without anyone knowing"

"I hope you understand, Mother..." She whispered, not expecting to be forgiven at all.

Listening to the conviction in Calidora's voice made Nezera's heart ache.

Unable to contain her tears anymore, they broke down as she covered her mouth with her trembling hands. But even then, no whimpers could be heard, she cried silently, not wanting Calidora to hear her cries.

It was silent after that before out of nowhere, Calidora snapped her face to the right.

She sensed something coming from the west.

Knowing what she sensed, she slightly cloaked her body with blood energy before a creature descended from the sky and hovered in the courtyard. It was a bat creature but completely made of blood.

Just earlier before Rex arrived, she already sent over a hundred bats.

All of them were dedicated to roaming around the territory, the extension of Calidora's eyes.

This one is the main bat, it was connected and shared the vision of other bats.

Gracefully, the bat landed on Calidora's stretched hand before it closed its wings and eyes.

Calidora was also doing the same thing, the main bat was interacting with her blood energy and now she could use the vision of the other bats. Her eyes blaze with blood energy as she did this.

On the other hand, Nezera stopped her sobs when she noticed what was Calidora doing.

Soon, she returned to normal and the bat flew away again.

"What's wrong? Did someone trespass the territory?" Nezera asked with a raised brow.

Upon hearing this, Calidora nodded her head in confirmation.

Gazing to the west still, she replied, "Yes, the Blood Bunya on the west didn't only sense someone trespassing, but it was also scratched. I know who it is. Mother, you wait here, Rex should be finishing soon"

"Wait, the sun is still up. Wait until it gets dark before going out" Nezero advised sternly.

Calidora wanted to rebut, but she was met with Nezero's sharp eyes.

Despite the option to ignore her counsel, she chose to heed the advice, particularly in her current state which she was experiencing for the first time. "Very well, I'll wait until nightfall. However, I insist on being the one to be there, it's important"

Chapter 996 Breaking the Traditions

Aoooouu!!

Perched atop the closest mountain peak that he could find, Flunra drew a deep breath and unleashed a resounding howl that sent forth a reddish-hued soundwave. It was the same howl that he used to locate Rex during his initial awakening.

By far, this howl was the best method to find Rex in the Vampire territory.

Flunra doesn't need to ask Evelyn to know where Rex is, he already has an assumption.

Due to the berserk incident, he definitely considered moving in with Calidora.

It was the way Rex was with his condition.

Even the mightiest Werewolf, the Origin himself with all his formidable powers still needs to be cautious during the full moon. Ultimately, no Werewolf has ever lived was capable of fully severing the tether of the full moon's influence.

With the right time and situation, all of them could go berserk and cause destruction.

In the past, many Werewolves succumbed to this pain.

Lower-rank Werewolves went berserk more.

However, they could be suppressed by other Werewolves rather easily.

On the other hand, high-rank Werewolves were different.

Every time they went berserk, it was even more troublesome as they couldn't be suppressed by others as easily due to their innate strength. Because of that, whenever one of them goes berserk, another Alpha from other packs would need to come to help.

But more often than not, when the other Alpha came, the damage was already done.

Despite their tribal nature, killing their own pack members hurts.

Flunra has seen countless Alphas kill themselves from the immense guilt they suffered.

Such is the life of a Werewolf, the curse will forever haunt them.

It was a common occurrence for high-rank Werewolves to experience this fear of hurting their pack members, and Flunra, with the knowledge of this situation happening over and over again, already anticipated Rex would eventually go to Calidora.

Adding to his tragic past, Flunra was a hundred percent certain that he go to Calidora.

Flunra had been following Rex's light presence that he could sense when he reached the border to the Vampire territory and reached quite deep, but now, that light presence was suddenly gone without a trace.

Now, he was left with no direction.

Scanning the surroundings from the mountaintop, Flunra frowned.

"No reaction..." He murmured, finding that his howl wasn't able to expose Rex's location.

Flunra doesn't know that Rex is cultivating his cursed energy.

With the unique nature of cursed energy enveloping his entire being, combined with the fact that he was confined within the Banished Realm's dome, it was not a surprise that Flunra's absolute method failed to produce any result.

Rex is simply unreachable right now.

Just as he scanned his eyes around, he laid his eyes on an eye-catching tree nearby.

A Blood Bunya.

Catching sight of a Blood Bunya, also known as the Vampire Trees, he quickly dashed there.

Landing right beside the Blood Bunya, he use his claws to scratch it.

Despite not knowing where Rex is, Flunra knows that he must be nearby, so he assumes that this is Calidora's territory, and he would be right about that. He did it a couple of times, and eventually, he sat down and waited for any Vampire to come to him.

Since he howled earlier, there should be Vampires heading to him right now.

It was already the first streak of darkness.

Flunra waited for a little bit over an hour and found no Vampires appearing.

"Hmm... All of them must be evacuated, which is why no Vampires came to me. But Calidora should be here, or am I mistaken?" He pondered out loud, expanding his senses, attempting to see whether there was anyone nearby.

Idling for more than an hour is already bad enough for him, and he needs to get going.

The Ice and Snow proposal is time-sensitive.

Considering that the Ice and Snow Lunirich God is the most uncaring and cold-hearted, the fact that she reaches out means a lot. If they didn't give an answer in haste, then she might change her mind and put Kyran back to slumber again.

Due to that, Flunra needs to inform Rex and ask him how they should approach this.

After all, Rex and the Lunirich Gods have something going on.

'Judging from the fact that he broke the Countess out of her edict, I don't think it's good'

Soon when he was about to move, a streak of crimson crossed his vision.

Upon seeing this, he promptly straightens his posture and turns into his Werewolf form as the arriving Vampires might attack him out of spite, launching an assault, especially if the Vampire is an older Vampire, hailing from the ancient era.

However, he quickly lowered his guard when he realized that the Vampire was Calidora.

"Why are you hiding there, Calidora?" Flunra asked.

On his right was the foot of the mountain, and there was a jutting piece of rock about two hundred meters high that spat down some sort of waterfall of sparkling red light. It was a famously known place within the Vampire territory called Red Rejuvenation.

A place used by Vampires to satiate their thirst, if there's no blood to be consumed.

By bathing in it, a Vampire's thirst will be satiated momentarily.

Calidora was at the center of the Red Rejuvenation, only her pair of eyes could be seen.

"You wanted to see me, what do you want?" Calidora asked back.

Instead of following his lead, Flunra was back on alert mode again as he wasn't going to talk with Calidora when she was hiding herself like that. "Come out of there, or I will be forced to assume that you have hostile intentions, Princess..."

Upon hearing this, there was a brief pause that enveloped the two of them in silence.

Calidora could see that Flunra was not messing around.

"First, I will ask you this. What is your impression of the Luna, Evelyn?" She asked lightly.

Flunra was caught off guard by the question.

His eyes squinted in confusion before he replied, "The Luna is the Luna, and she's a crucial person to the Royal Black Prince. As for my impression of her, she's in the stage of proving herself to be a worthy Luna, an inexperienced juvenile Luna at best"

Listening to his answer, a hidden smirk crept to Calidora's lips.

"Is that so..." She mused in a hushed tone. "If I may, is her position shaken right now?"

Remembering what had happened during the time Rex went berserk in the city, his eyes flashed before he scoffed at the question, "Out of all people, I think you know the answer to that question, Princess. Stop idling and come out"

Abiding in Flunra's command, she walks out of the Red Rejuvenation.

Calidora exposes her figure, her bat wings flapping which causes Flunra's eyes to widen.

At the sight of this, Flunra was at a loss for words for a good moment.

Flunra thought that it was weird for her to hide herself like that when he clearly knew who she was already. But now, he understands the reason behind that, and he, for the first time, lost his composure as this was nothing to scoff at.

To his surprise, he even lowered his guard as his mind was shaken right now.

Something uncharacteristic of him to do.

But soon, he collected himself and forced out a question with a low tone, "Is it his?"

"Yes, it's his" Calidora replied without a moment of pause.

Crack!

Almost instantly, Flunra lunged in ferociously with his claws stretched forward, intending to rip Calidora to pieces. His reaction was impeccable, and the power behind his attack was as strong as his reaction to this news earlier.

Even then, Calidora stood on her spot without moving an inch, a smirk on her face.

Swoosh!

It was then, a blast of wind gushed to the surroundings as Flunra stopped right before her.

His claws were an inch away from touching Calidora's face.

To an observer, it appeared as though Calidora had wielded her power to stop Flunra in his tracks, but in reality, she hadn't employed any such manipulation. Her smile widened as she gazed at Flunra, tilting her head with a provocative question, "Do you truly intend to harm me, Flunra...? Someone as old as you should know that you can't hide the truth, even if you try so hard to conceal it"

"Your life and death is dictated by your next move" Her sentence was dripping with threat.

But even then, she was right, and Flunra couldn't do anything about it.

Flunra rose to his full height again, towering before her with eyes ablaze with hostility.

Clearly vexed by her actions, by what she did, he voiced his extreme disapproval, "I am well aware that your parents vehemently oppose this, and you think that it's fine, but it's not. What you did not only broke your kind's sacred traditions but also mine, the Werewolf's tradition..."

"Only the Luna can do this!" He continued with his tone raised.

Looking at him, Calidora replied, still with her provocative smirk, "And yet, the deed is done"

Growl!

Upon hearing this, Flunra growled and turned around, pacing left and right in contemplation.

"You forced him into this, and he will not accept this" Flunra rebutted.

Calidora shrugged her shoulders nonchalantly, she even had the time to sit on a nearby rock with a graceful demeanor, rubbing the fact to Flunra's face, "Are you sure about that? Will you bet your life on the assumption that he would not accept it?"

Roar!

Crash!

In a fit of anger, Flunra roared and punched the tree right behind Calidora, blasting it away.

"You don't understand, you created an abomination!" He barked viciously.

Seeing that there was no change in Calidora's expression, Flunra backed away, heavy stress burdening his mind. He made some distance to calm himself down, trying to ponder about the situation with a clear mind.

On the other hand, Calidora sat sweetly on the rock, waiting patiently for him.

Eventually, Flunra was able to grasp the situation properly.

"Don't be stressed about it too much, Flunra. Traditions are as it is, traditions. In due time, it would change. We are in the new era, there's no need to follow the traditions of the old. Even Rex wasn't following the normal traditions of Werewolves" Calidora eventually said.

Naturally, what she said was the definite truth.

Rex has never considered the tradition of the old Werewolves, he didn't abide by it.

So there's no need for him to fret about this too much.

"It wasn't only a tradition, there's a bad effect, but I guess we can prepare for it," Flunra said, massaging his throbbing forehead. "Let's focus on the present first, there's still time to think about your situation"

"To be clear, I will never do anything to harm it" Calidora replied, making his stance clear.

Upon hearing this, Flunra waved his hand in annoyance.

He didn't want to hear about this right now, there's another thing that needed his attention right now, "I need to see him. Take me to him right now, there's an urgent matter that he would need to know"

"Tell it to me, and I'll deliver it to him" Calidora instructed lightly.

Although he wanted to rebut, there was no use in fighting Calidora, so he decided to comply.

Flunra told her about the situation with Kyran and the Ice and Snow Lunirich God.

Even though he knows that Rex is busy preparing himself for the fight against the Executor, as the plan is already in motion, he needs to give a clear answer on what to do about this. A mistake to the Lunirich Gods would bring a heavy backlash after all.

Listening to what he said, Calidora went silent, seemingly contemplating the information.

"It's indeed a troublesome situation, there's no guarantee that the Ice and Snow Lunirich God will fulfill the other end of the deal," Calidora said, voicing out her opinion. "But then again, I know one thing for certain, and you should know already too"

Upon hearing this, Flunra raised a brow in question.

Gazing at him, Calidora continued, "If there's any chance of helping Rex in his fight against the Executor, then what's there to hesitate? He will need it. Go and complete what it wants, and see what would happen, there's no harm in trying"

Chapter 997 Art of Motivation

Flunra listened to what Calidora said before he was taken aback.

He wasn't expecting her to give him advice.

"If I made the wrong choice, considering his problem with the Lunirich Gods, the end result might be fatal. I'm taking the safer route to consult the situation with him first before making a move myself" He rebutted, conveying his reasoning.

Despite his argument, what Calidora said is not completely wrong.

Rex would really need help against the Executor, he's simply at a complete disadvantage.

Since the Executors are entities that were made to fight against Supernaturals, the fact that he was a Werewolf greatly lowers his chance of winning. He would not only reach their level, but he needs to surpass them completely to win.

A task that is quite impossibly difficult, even for him.

Naturally, he would need as much help as he could get in order to fix his triumph.

Once again, Calidora shook her head in disagreement, "Are you really Arnulf the Special? Or have you become a different individual ever since you got turned and became Flunra? Cause if you're not, this way of thinking greatly stained your reputation"

Upon hearing this, Flunra's body tensed as his brows dipped into a frown.

"Since when did one win by taking the safest route?" She added with contempt in her tone.

Calidora looked at Flunra in disappointment and strode forward, keeping eye contact along the way. She stopped a couple of steps away with her chin tilted up to stare Flunra right in his eyes, "Where is your courage, Flunra? You've seen countless battles, and you became hesitant at the sheer mention of a Lunirich God?"

"Did you forget that the Alpha you served domesticated a Lunirich God?" She asked again.

At the sound of her words, the frown on Flunra's face ceased.

Out of everything, he never thought that he would be reprimanded by a young Vampire.

'Perhaps the fact we've never beaten an Executor, and the looming likelihood under Rex's of doing that under Rex's plan has softened me, unconsciously opting me to always take the safest route' Internally, Flunra berated himself for unintentionally succumbing to such a weak and cautious mindset.

He, more than anyone, should understand that this kind of mindset will not survive.

Things only align with what you want when you assertively shape their course, and avoiding risks is the surest path to defeat. Thus, opting for the safest route is futile, he must embark on risks as long as the reward is worth it.

In this situation, the reward is definitely worth it.

Had he completed the proposition, he would have the Ice and Snow Princess to help Rex.

Stepping closer again, Calidora pointed at Flunra's chest with her index claw, "You are Flunra the Special. It's you who would complete the proposition from the Ice and Snow Lunirich God and get the help needed. Let Rex prepare for his fight while you help from the sideline"

"Isn't that your job as a guardian of the Prince?" She added which is the last straw for Flunra.

A flash of determination sparked in his eyes.

Even though initially he wanted to ask Rex about his opinion on this, he realized now that he doesn't need to do that. He and the others could handle this as the worst that could happen is the Ice and Snow Princess awakened and refused to help.

Under no circumstances that she would be siding with the Executor, so it's going to be fine.

Gaining a newfound determination, Flunra turned around.

Pausing for a second, he looked skywards and took a deep breath to rejuvenate his lungs.

Before he goes, he casts one last look at Calidora's bat-like wings before he nods, seemingly convincing himself about something, "As for your situation, it was clear to me that you are the one who won. I'll... I'll kill the Luna for you"

Calidora's eyes flashed in excitement when she heard this.

Despite not knowing much about the ancient era, she knew some of the traditions.

She knows that Luna's position can change, unlike in the human books.

Out of the raid that was done by the Vampires a while ago, they also retrieved some human things, and a portion of them were books. Calidora read some of the folklore and found that the new-era human thought that the Luna in a Werewolf pack was permanent, and the Alpha couldn't help but be attracted to her.

It's a miracle bond of some sort.

No, that was not the case for the actual Supernatural, the actual Werewolf.

Although it was true that the actual Luna has some sort of a miracle bond that sprouted when a Lunaless Alpha took a liking to a Werewolf, the position of Luna can change. It was up to the Luna to maintain her position by protecting it.

Finding that Flunra offered to do this was not a surprise to Calidora.

It's natural as she failed to defend her position.

'Hahh~ As much as I want to let him do that, he can't' Calidora shook her head in response.

Since Flunra is an old Werewolf, this is nothing special to him.

Calidora was even willing to bet that he had killed numerous Lunas of the Dark Prince in the past. But in this scenario, he couldn't, or else that would defeat the entire purpose that she was trying to achieve right now.

"No, don't do that. Rex will kill you. Let me handle it" Calidora replied with a firm tone.

Upon hearing this, Flunra simply nodded and left.

Looking at his back fading away in the forest, Calidora smiled before she raised her hand.

Blazing on her hand like flames is a purplish energy which is the Luna energy that she has robbed from Evelyn, its essence trapped in a perpetual blaze of enchanting power. She was using the energy the whole time during her talk with Flunra.

Knowing that he might attack, she would need to utilize that energy for her safety.

Moreover, it worked miraculously, way better than she anticipated.

Even though what she said earlier makes sense, the effect that it induced on Flunra was so great that she could see the change in his emotions directly through his eyes. "I have Flunra on my side, but getting rid of Evelyn and Adhara is not done yet. I could get rid of them right now, but the method will create a strong backlash from Rex"

"All I need now is to be patient. My goal is in sight, and it's only a matter of time" She mused.

Nodding firmly, Calidora liquified again and disappeared.

...

Meanwhile, Rex remains struggling inside his consciousness.

He already lost count of how many times his cursed energy was severed by the monster inside the darkness, the last time he remembered was at the two thousand. It was also unknown to him how much time had passed within the domain of the Banished Realm.

All he knew was that it was a long time already, and he never ceased his attempts.

Pant...

Pant...

Rex breathed heavily and took a moment to stop.

I managed to dodge its initial attacks thousands of attempts ago, but it's still not enough.

Peering into the darkness, he clenched his jaw unwillingly.

Out of desperation, the urge to get inside the darkness once again appeared a couple of times inside his head. But he remembered Calidora's warning and refrained himself from doing that lest his cursed source break completely.

However, he really needs to do something about this, or else he will be stuck here.

My reservoir of cursed energy is running low, it's nothing short of a miracle that I've been able to fail and try again this much. Undoubtedly, Calidora must've played a role in supplying cursed energy, but now I fear I have only a few, perhaps even just one more attempt left before my reserves are completely drained.

Instead of having a go again, he sat down in contemplation.

About a minute in his contemplation, his eyes widened in a sudden realization.

How can I forget about that? I have that skill!

Shaken by what the Executor has done, his mind is not in the right place, and he forgets that he has one cursed skill that could help him in this endeavor. It was the Damned Specter skill, the only cursed skill that he currently has right now.

Calidora said that whatever he does, he would only need to rely on his cursed energy.

Using the Damend Specter skill is using his cursed energy.

Realizing that fact, he quickly stood up again before he cast the Damned Specter skill, summoning another copy of himself in the cursed realm. He closed his eyes and looked through his copy's vision.

Surprisingly enough, the blackness was not as thick through his copy's vision.

It was somewhat discernible.

Initially, the profound darkness enveloped everything, even defying his nocturnal eyes, which effortlessly navigated through the darkest depths. However, a discernible change happened—the impenetrable blackness was gradually thinning.

Moreover, he also regained his full senses in this form which was highly appreciated.

Now that he's in this form, he becomes more confident.

Observing his original body standing before him, a faint stream of cursed energy seeped out before he glanced at the blackness and strode forth, guiding the slender thread of cursed energy to prevent any attack from coming its way.

Even though he needs more focus on doing this simultaneously, he has no problem.

He's already used to controlling multiple energies at the same time.

Almost in every engagement he entered, he deftly wielded a dual combination of energies, often consisting of the interplay of moonlight energy and red force. However, he hadn't pushed his control to the limit as he still possessed other elemental mana inside of him.

If his control was compared to others, he would be like a God.

Coursing through the blackness, his vision was restricted to fifty meters ahead.

But that is way better than nothing at all.

Rex went in the direction he had traversed countless times and finally reached the border of it. He counted by the steps, and he knew that beyond this step the monster inside would notice his presence and stalk him.

Only when his guard was lowered that this monster would attack.

Sweeping his eyes around, he couldn't sense the monster nearby, the coast was clear.

Keeping his guard extremely high, aware of the monster's incredible speed, he took a step forward before the air around him suddenly turned colder. Now he was inside the monster's territory and would need to be on alert.

Following closely behind him was the thread of cursed energy, slithering like a snake.

Come on, let me see what you really are.

Expecting the monster to come soon as he was already halfway to his destination, he darted his eyes left and right warily. Rex's alertness was even higher compared to when he was in the encampment of the Executor right now.

From Calidora, he knows that the monster is the embodiment of the Eternal Curse.

But she doesn't know what it looks like.

Rex gazed forward and could see a faint beacon of cursed energy in the far distance, that was the place that he would need to reach. He controlled the thread of cursed energy to move in front of him while he looked around cautiously.

As he did that, he snapped his neck to the side, sensing a very fast projectile approaching.

It was aiming at his thread of cursed energy.

Even with his insanely quick reflex, he was barely able to stand in its trajectory.

Clang!

A spark was produced in their clash.

With a sweep of his claws, he deftly intercepted the projectile, revealing a small creature the size of his thumb, resembling a pale blue marble. Its grotesque, monster-like visage was an eerie sight to behold.

Upon being blocked, the small creature ran back to the direction where it came from.

Its small legs were moving lightning fast.

Rex could only see a glimpse of it before it disappeared into the darkness once again.

But as he traverses his eyes towards the blackness, his senses send danger alarms to his mind, telling him that there is something lurking beyond the blackness. Naturally, the monster, the embodiment of the Eternal Curse made its presence known.

Coming out of the blackness, the monster gazed directly at Rex.

Even though he was in the form of a Damned Specter, he was not invisible to the monster.

"I knew that it was a monster, but this...? This thing can even give nightmares to monsters"

Chapter 998 Personification of the Eternal Curse

Since being outcasted by humanity, he has been living within the Humming Damned Forest.

It was an unnatural forest lurking with cursed creatures.

Most of them were mindless cursed creatures below the fifth epiphany, but there were some who way surpassed that, reaching all the way to the ninth epiphany. Only thanks to the aegis of the castle that Dargena City was protected from their grasp.

Additionally, the stronger cursed creatures were thankfully, also docile in nature.

None of them ventured out of the forest.

Rex and the others have seen countless cursed creatures and their hideous visage, uglier than mutated animals or even the Orcs. Because of this constant exposure, they were not influenced too much by cursed creatures' appearances anymore.

Looking at cursed creatures daily is capable of making even the cowardly brave.

But the cursed creature before Rex is a complete anomaly.

A haunting creature, whose appearance could instill fear in even the most resolute, emerged like a vision from nightmares. He had not anticipated encountering such a cursed being, one that should be the personification of the Eternal Curse itself, in this fearsome form.

Standing before him is a creature with the body of a chaotic tangle of razor-sharp limbs.

Dark, chitinous plates, slick with a cursed sheen, cascade over its body. Its appendages arch menacingly, poised like scythes of the reaper, ready to rend the fabric of reality and sow fear in the hearts of those whom it came across.

Rex marvels at this nightmarish entity.

Even with its odd form, it had a face that was a white mask, showing a blank expression.

He also saw the small creature from earlier sprinting back to this nightmarish creature and merging back with its body, akin to a droplet of water merging with a body of water. Such a sight made Rex lower his stance in alert.

No wonder it's hard to reach the cursed beacon, it has multiple limbs.

Smiling wryly, Rex went into his battle stance.

Despite confronting the physical embodiment of the Eternal Curse, the very source of his afflictions, he deftly manipulated the thread of cursed energy to press forward while he tried to stall this monster enough until the thread reached the cursed beacon.

In his specter form, he couldn't use his moonlight energy, red force, or elemental mana.

Rex could only rely on his own cursed energy.

Swish!

At the sight of his thread of cursed energy moving, the cursed creature didn't stay passive. It unleashed a piercing screech and surged forward, trailing a wake of bronze smoke. It was so gnarly to see that it move that it caused Rex to flinch instinctively.

He quickly snapped out of his trance before a frown etched across his face.

I was hoping that it couldn't sense me, but it obviously could.

Since the Damned Specter skill created a clone in another dimension, he was hoping that it would not be traced by this cursed creature. But he was dead wrong as the cursed creature slashed directly at him with its razor-sharp limbs.

Clang!

It sounded like metal, the clash between them produced a clanging sound.

On top of that, the force was also cataclysmic.

Receiving one strike from the cursed creature forced out a painful hiss from Rex's body, the cursed energy it possessed was straining his mind with a touch and was very hostile. Just one parry is enough to produce a heavy backlash for him.

Desperately standing his ground, he clashes against the cursed creature.

Its nightmarish limbs were stabbing at him repeatedly.

Had he not been an expert in close-quarter combat, able to adapt from offense to defense as smooth as water, he wouldn't have been able to dodge this assault. Rex dodged every stab with his elusive movement, backflipping and rolling expertly.

Every move he made was effective and efficient, there was no waste of energy.

But he knew that he couldn't stay on the defensive.

Screech!!

Concentrating intently on the thread of cursed energy, the creature immediately shifted its target as it observed Rex leaping aside. Its priorities were clear, leaving Rex with no option but to abandon a defensive stance.

If he wanted to complete this stage, he would need to protect the thread with his all.

One hit from the cursed creature would send him back to the starting point.

He only had one more chance, he couldn't fail again.

Swish...

Marshaling all his strength, Rex's form radiated with a surge of cursed energy, enveloping him in a vaporous shroud. With sudden velocity, he dashed forward, closing the distance between them in an instant, as quick as a shadow.

However, reaching the cursed creature's back, he was greeted by an eyeball.

It appeared out of nowhere on the back of its body.

Rex, though taken by surprise, managed to evade one of the creature's limbs that sought to impale him in that moment of distraction. He vaulted upwards and, with a predatory quickness, elongated his nails into sharp claws, sinking them into the cursed creature's back to secure a hold.

Despite him mounting on its back, the cursed creature ignored him and pushed forward.

But Rex wasn't going to let it ignore him and started stabbing wildly.

He tore the cursed creature's body, taking chunks out, causing it to be in pain before with his strong muscles, slammed the cursed creature to the ground. Not wanting to let it reach the thread of the cursed creature, he swiftly grabbed ahold of its two main arms.

<You have obtained Hexbane Mindshield level 1!>

<Hexbane Mindshield>

Due to the constant mental stress inflicted by cursed energy, the user has adapted to its influence, providing a small resistance to curse attacks on the mind. It's a passive skill that can be upgraded through the allocation of skill points once the System Relaying Bet quest reaches completion.

Although touching the cursed creature was horrendous, Rex was able to persevere.

It was all thanks to his will to see this to the end.

From his relentless attempts to achieve the greater cursed body, he was able to manifest a resistance to cursed energy that attacks the mind. He was still in pain, but the pain was way more bearable thanks to this passive skill.

Just as he did that, his eyes widened seeing its other arms were able to elongate.

Rex was quick enough to kick them away.

Even though the cursed creature was supposed to be strong and very fast, he was able to keep up thanks to his strong physique. His instincts in this form were also working, so he has no disadvantages anymore in this realm of consciousness.

But as he did that, the cursed creature was starting to become angry.

As Rex threw a punch to propel it away, making a safe distance between it and the thread of cursed energy, his fist was ensnared by its arm that had liquified. He was then swiftly drawn into the cursed creature's body and consumed entirely.

"Kaarrghh!" Rex lets out a shout when the pain in his mind instantly becomes unbearable.

It was akin to having his mind squashed into meat paste.

Had it been others who was the one experiencing this pain, they would find their minds fractured beyond comprehension, turning them into mindless disabled. Even Rex had to admit that this cursed creature was not a joke.

The cursed creature is the strongest he has ever seen.

Despite its power being restricted in this stage to the fifth epiphany, it was still a problem.

Rex couldn't imagine what would happen if this creature was summoned outside, into the real world. But he was confident that a mass delusion would happen, rendering everyone that encountered it has their minds devoured.

Upon devouring Rex, the cursed creature quickly moves toward its target once again.

In a few seconds, it would definitely sever the thread.

Meanwhile, tormented in the mind, Rex teetered on the brink of losing consciousness, and the cursed creature's body induced greater effects on him than before. Tendrils of cursed power infiltrate his mind which only serve to grow the pain.

Slowly, he was starting to lose his focus, his vision began to blur.

Hold on. I- I can't pass out.

He was still determined to collect his strength and persevere, but the effect was too strong.

Gathering his focus and strength was out of reach.

Like being drowned in the ocean with the view of the surface going further away, his mind began to succumb to the pain. But in that fraction of the moment, his tortured mind reveals the true horror that was capable of suppressing the pain itself.

Rex saw the visions of his fear coming true.

Fears that would transpire one by one like a domino effect if he lose against the Executor.

Dargena City flattened and crumbled to nothing but stone and dirt, the remnant of the city that was once teeming with newfound hope of a better future. His pack members are under the mercy of the new ruler, the Executor.

Adhara, Evelyn, Flunra, Kyran, Ryze, everyone he loved lying amongst the rubbles, lifeless.

While he could only watch from the sidelines.

Rex watches as the blood from their corpses flows slowly and reaches his feet.

Having his powers taken away by the System, he was once again powerless to do anything.

Even though the cursed creature's power was intent on torturing the mind with an eternal perpetual escalation of pain, the inadvertent flaw in its design lay in the fact that the pain it induced brought forth vivid flashes of Rex's fears.

It was a critical miscalculation, causing the complete opposite.

On the brink of losing consciousness, Rex's eyes suddenly jolted open with a fierce glint.

"Raaaarrghh!"

Suddenly, his heart pumps adrenaline into his bloodstream and gives him power seemingly out of nowhere. Rex ripped the cursed creature's body from the inside, making his way out as the cursed creature screeched in surprise.

Despite having a good portion of its form split into two, the cursed creature was not dead.

It turned its face angrily at Rex.

Manipulating its cursed energy, its body tried to latch together again.

However, Rex's eyes gleamed red as he turned into his Werewolf form. He had a maniacal smile on his face, baring his sharp fangs, "Are you also trying to kill me and those I love?! Do you also want to take them all away from me?! Haha~! HAHA~!"

"Anyone that tries to stand in my way, I'll send them all to an express straight to Hell!"

Rex, having his broken mind and possessed by his anger, started clawing like an animal.

He lost his mind and became even fiercer.

Under his barrage of claws, he caused damage faster than the cursed creature was able to stitch itself back together. It screeches and turns from trying to overwhelm Rex's mind to impaling him with all of his sharp limbs.

Rex coughed a disturbing amount of blood as he got impaled six times.

But the maniacal smile never left his face.

Forcing his regenerative abilities to exert more output, the holes across his marred body started to close rapidly. He grabbed the sharp arms of the cursed creature that were still stabbing him before he broke them with a twist of his hand.

None of them suffered permanent damage, both could regenerate extremely fast.

However, that makes the fight more brutal.

Due to their regenerative abilities, they were trapped in a perpetual bloody and gore fight.

It was now a blur which one of them was a monster.

While this was happening, the thread of cursed energy kept on trailing forward until it finally reached its destination. A dome of bronze energy with a core at the center, the core that it would need to connect with to evolve Rex's body to a greater cursed body.

Moving without hesitation, the thread pierced through the dome, the cursed beacon.

It then quickly latches onto the core.

Almost instantly, after it connects with the core, it emanates a blinding glow.

Rex who was still locked in battle with the cursed creature, eyes opened like a lunatic and laughing uncontrollably, suddenly got pulled away. He wasn't able to retaliate and instantly got separated from the cursed creature.

Only the next second, he opened his eyes and found that he was back in the courtyard.

Chapter 999 Greater Cursed Body

Opening his eyes, he was greeted by the starry night sky.

Despite having been pulled back into reality, his mind was still in the same condition and he was hardly in control. He scanned his eyes around the place and found a couple of figures, watching him with curious eyes.

At this moment, Rex could feel immense exhaustion, gripping his body tight.

"C- Calidora...?" He uttered in a hushed tone.

Standing on the side was Calidora and Nezera who were waiting for him to finish.

Noticing the gasping breaths, sweat, and trembling pupils, Calidora almost instantly realized that there was something wrong with him. As she heard her name being called, she decided to approach him but Nezera grabbed her arm.

Looking at her daughter sternly, she said, "Don't get close to him, I have a bad feeling"

Just as she said that something happened.

Rex growled in anguish before his entire body started to steam with cursed energy, carving intricate glowing lines across his body. His cursed source poised within his body started to emanate a radiant glow.

It forces him to prostrate on the ground with his entire muscles flexed.

Splash!

Under the pressure from his cursed source, his skin started to break and splurged out blood.

At the sight of this, Calidora didn't sit still.

Breaking free from Nezera's grip, she disregarded her own mother's warning and went to Rex's side, a frown etched clearly on her face. She knelt down and checked Rex's cursed source and found a surprising realization.

"It's the Eternal Curse, it's rejecting him, but why?" Calidora uttered in sheer confusion.

Something like this shouldn't be happening.

During her time of breaking through this bottleneck, she found that the Eternal Curse was not as hostile to the host as other curses that she knew of. Even though it was hard and mentally draining to bypass this bottleneck, when she did, the Eternal Curse accepted her without a hitch.

Rex being rejected by the Eternal Curse is very shocking because of that.

However, it was then she thought of something.

Observing Rex who was pressing his forehead to the ground with veins bulging across his body, she harbored suspicions. "Considering him, I wouldn't be surprised if he confronted the Eternal Curse directly instead of following the conventional path, thereby incurring its wrath and causing him to be rejected"

Biting her lower lip, she channeled her own cursed energy of the ninth epiphany.

Calidora suppressed Rex's rampaging cursed energy, attempting to help him regain control.

Meanwhile, Rex could feel his cursed source thumping maliciously inside of him.

It was akin to a beating heart, pulsating the cursed malice into his very own blood, trying to devour him from the inside out. Had the System still been active, he would have been surely drowned in warning notifications, stating that his cursed source was about to shatter.

Additionally, his vision was also impaired by the Eternal Curse's power.

He could see illusions of the cursed creature attacking him, causing him to flinch every time.

Rex was in the throes of excruciating pain, his eyes were a tableau of agony, the veins within them bursting, turning the white part of his eyes vivid red. Even though it looked worrisome, the reality was far from it.

Amidst this extreme ordeal, the corners of Rex's lips curled into a defiant smirk.

Even in this state, he was unyielding.

You're slowing down, bastard. At this rate, you're not going to be able to break my mind.

In the recesses of his mind, he derided the futile attempts of the Eternal Curse to shatter his mind. Rex's inner strength proved too formidable to succumb entirely to the pain, and with each passing moment, his advantage in this mental struggle only strengthened.

A game of tug of war between them transpired without anyone knowing.

Rex would need to keep his mind from breaking apart while the Eternal Curse would need to shatter it before he has gotten used to the pain again, and from the looks of things, Rex is the one winning this silent game.

<Hexbane Mindshield has been upgraded to level 2!>

With the appearance of the notification, Rex's eyes flashed before he pushed himself up.

Now, the time is up, and the Eternal Curse loses in this struggle.

Rex swiftly reined in the rampaging cursed energy, drawing it back into his body. With calm precision, he solidified his cursed source, meticulously mending the cracks resulting from his earlier error that almost shattered his cursed source.

It was then, a grunt escaped him, heralding a subtle shockwave that erupted from within.

A trail of cursed energy courses through every nook of his body.

For a moment there, his body was glowing bronze from the inside before returning to normal.

Only then that the situation instantly de-escalate, and he could breathe easily.

Manipulating her cursed energy to disappear, Calidora looked at him from the side and shook her head in disbelief, "Harmony is the essence of Witches, you must create harmony with the curse inside of you to grow strong as a Witch, and you certainly didn't take that route, didn't you?"

"It's faster to fight it, so that's what I'm going with" Rex replied, slightly panting.

He then lay on the ground, trying to catch his breath.

Based on Calidora's revelation, it became apparent that to access the greater cursed body linked with the Eternal Curse, he must engage in some sort of game with the personification of the Eternal Curse itself.

He would only need to avoid it to establish a connection with the cursed beacon.

If he did, then he would be the winner.

Rex, on the other hand, went the extra mile to fight against it to protect the thread.

Obviously, he wasn't supposed to do that.

From the Eternal Curse's perspective, it's probably considered cheating. So it was definitely furious at him for taking that extra mile and causing this to happen. But then again, the utter blackness and senselessness are too much advantage for the Eternal Curse.

Rex would eventually win if he heeded the rules, but it would take too much time.

He doesn't have time, so he creates a shortcut for himself.

Calidora stood up again with her eyes still glued to Rex, there was a hint of surprise in her eyes which she didn't want to be seen. 'I can't believe it, he used all of his cursed energy reservoir to the very last drop. I thought his mind would need to rest first before continuing, but he went straight until the very end'

'Such willpower. Compared to the Executor... He's definitely winning' She smirked in approval.

Oblivious to what she was thinking, Rex focused on recovering.

To think that even with my ninth-rank realm physique, I couldn't beat the Eternal Curse which has its power limited to the fifth epiphany easily, cursed realm is really weird. Or maybe, that cursed creature is the one that's weird.

Even though he succeeds, he acknowledges the Eternal Curse's power.

Had he found himself in the eighth-rank realm or even the early ninth-rank realm, prevailing against the Eternal Curse back there would have been impossible, even with the aid of his adrenaline which gives him a momentary boost of power.

Cursed power, distinct from the normal realm of strength, operates in its own spectrum.

Soon, Rex sat up and felt his new body.

<You have achieved the Greater Cursed Body>

<Cursed energy control and power output have been increased dramatically!>

Upon seeing the notifications, Rex puts on a wry smile.

At the very least, whenever I gained a power of my own, the System is still there to notify.

Taking a feel of his new body, the foremost sensation was the pronounced density now emanating from his cursed source. Furthermore, he discovered an enhanced mastery over his cursed energy, encountering minimal resistance from his Werewolf physiology.

Reaching the greater cursed body made his cursed energy adapt to his body.

Allowing for maximum efficiency.

Nodding his head, he wanted to ask Calidora what the next step was but found another individual was with them in the courtyard, and it was not Mavenna. Rex squinted his eyes while he sized Nezero up and down.

She seemed to be a strong Vampire, and her face was also familiar to him.

"Who are you?" Rex asked shortly.

Realizing that he was addressing her, Nezero took a step forward, delicately pinching and lifting the edge of her dress gracefully—a regal gesture. With customary poise, she then introduced herself, "I am Nezero, the former Queen of Vampires and the mother of Calidora"

"Solomon's wife?" Rex raised his brows in question.

Nezero nodded in response, affirming that his assumption was correct.

I have a way higher standing than her, but since she's Calidora's mother... Fine.

Even though he was too exhausted for courtesy, he decided to bow slightly in respect and introduced himself back, albeit she probably already knew who he was. "Nice to meet with you, Queen Nezero. I am Rex Silverstar, the Alpha of the Silverstar Pack"

"Calling me simply Nezero is enough, Lord Rex" Nezero replied with a polite smile.

Putting the pleasantries out of the way, Rex looked at her in question.

Under the weight of Rex's inquisitive gaze, Nezero pressed on, realizing his curiosity, "I have come to retrieve the Blood Devourer from Calidora. However, I hadn't anticipated you to be here. It's evident that both of you are busy, so I won't linger. Yet, there's a minor predicament I hope you might assist me with"

"Can you pardon and give back Viscardi? He's impolite, but he's an important individual"

After pausing for a second, Nezero eventually asked.

Rex frowned when he heard this.

He remembered that there was a Vampire who was now trapped inside the Banished Realm, and the Countess specifically said to him that this Vampire attacked him while he was in the process of meditation, which was very dangerous.

It was a matter that couldn't be taken lightly.

For the current Rex, what the Vampire did was akin to looking at him with killing intent.

Had the System is still active, there would be a killing intent quest.

Even though in the end, he was not injured, the fact still remains that if the Countess hadn't stepped in, he would have had his cursed source shattered. It would then destroy his entire plan against the Executor.

Something like that is not easily pardoned.

She wants me to pardon him despite his assault attempt while I'm meditating? A random attack when I didn't even do anything wrong to him? Not a chance.

Looking at Nezera sternly, Rex shook his head, "No, I can't do that"

Just as Rex was poised to elaborate the grounds for his refusal, Calidora quickly intervened, "I understand that his rash actions might anger you, Rex, but just this once, could you please consider letting him go? If not for his sake, then at least for mine"

Upon hearing this, Rex was at a loss for words.

He didn't think that Calidora would actually stand up for Viscardi.

Albeit reluctant, he would need to be on Calidora's good side for now and comply with her demands, "Okay, I'm only doing this because you asked me to. Don't think that I pardoned what he tried to do to me"

Rex flicks his fingers, summoning a heavily suppressing dark portal before him.

Coming out of it was Viscardi in a disheveled appearance.

Nezera was surprised to see him in this kind of state, the royal air around him vanished and was replaced with an air of insanity and desperation. At the first stroke of realizing that he was out of the Banished Realm, he quickly crawled back to Nezera.

It was a pitiful sight, he was acting as if he was not trained in royal etiquette in his life.

On the other hand, Nezera looked at Rex blankly.

She was not surprised because he could summon a literal portal to another dimension, a godly dimension that emit a horrendous strain to the mind, but she was surprised because he actually let Viscardi go.

At that moment, she turned her gaze to Calidora with an explicable gaze.

'Is my mind playing tricks on me or has Calidora... My daughter has truly been able to compel the Rex Silverstar to do something he resists?'

Chapter 1000 Taste of the New Era

Nezera stood rooted on her spot, she was in disbelief at what she had just witnessed.

It was worth mentioning that even Nezera herself knew that she was now in a position way lower than Rex, there was no comparing them. Back then, during the first news of an issue about an Alpha in the human territory, she was in a higher position.

Donning the nobility rank of a Queen, she could destroy Rex in a heartbeat if she wanted.

But now, the complete opposite applies.

Elder Nolacula has mentioned Rex a couple of times in his talk with Solomon.

Although she couldn't hear what they were talking about, and wasn't going to eavesdrop, she could hear Elder Nolacula talking as if Rex was his equal, there was evident respect in the way he talks about Rex.

Just that fact alone shows that he was in an unreachable position.

Out of the old noble families, the Blodirra Family was one of the lowest if not the lowest.

Compared to Elder Nolacula's bloodline, the difference was too much.

So the fact that Rex was considered an equal or at least regarded as a person with power by Elder Nolacula further confirms that Nezero was a pebble compared to him. But now, that very person was surprisingly heeding her daughter's plea.

A shocking scene that caught her off guard.

'I am aware of Calidora's relationship with the Royal Black Prince, albeit a discreet one, but to imagine that she holds a position where her plea is taken into consideration and was even accepted by him exceeds my expectations' Nezero contemplated in astonishment.

Despite what he had done, Nezero thought that Rex simply didn't care.

Like any man in power, having offspring or affairs was not something that they ponder.

But it seems Calidora has managed to engage emotionally with him.

Nezero was spacing out into the voice as she was greatly in shock at the fact that Rex let go of Viscardi who tried to attack him just from Calidora pleading with him to, she didn't realize that Calidora and Rex had their eyes on her.

At the sight of her mother being silent, Calidora nudged her arm a couple of times.

Only then that she blink and snap out of her trance.

"Oh—You have my gratitude Lord Rex, I will bear this benevolence to heart and make sure to pay that in the future" Nezero quickly showed her gratitude, going as much as bowing slightly to show that she was being genuine.

However, Rex waved his hand as he felt uncomfortable seeing Nezero being this courteous.

Despite their positions, she was Calidora's mother.

Since Calidora has his respect for what she did for him, there is no need for Nezero to act like this. "Don't be too stiff in front of me, Queen Nezero. Calidora has helped me a couple of times, so be at ease before me"

"Yes. If that's what you want, then I will do that" Nezero nodded in understanding.

Deep down, she was proud of Calidora.

Casting her gaze downward, she observed Viscardi trembling on the ground, hiding behind her with eyes locked onto Rex with evident fear. Imagining the things he went through sent a shiver down her spine, for it shouldn't have been so easy to reduce Viscardi, an outstanding Vampire of nobility, to such a state.

"Let's go. We'll come back for the Blood Devourer at a more proper time" Nezero whispered.

After saying that, she helped him up and supported him.

Just then, a semblance of Viscardi's intact mind resurfaces, attempting to quell the violent tremors racking his body, yet he can't. He was escorted away by Nezera, and as he neared the entrance to the courtyard, he stole a fleeting glance at Rex.

In that glance, there was malicious intent.

Realizing this glance, Calidora gave him a warning look with her Eyes of Terror.

Despite the extreme luck that he had for coming out of this situation unscathed, considering the ruthless fate met by others for doing less than what he tried to do to Rex, Viscardi still seemed to toy with the very precipice of death and gave this glance to Rex.

It would be wise of him to not instigate Rex any further.

On top of the fact that Viscardi tried to kill him, Rex was also in a shaken mood right now.

Calidora's warning look is a silent message for him to keep looking forward and stay silent until he is in the clear, as Rex was already slightly annoyed by his taunting glance. She had already helped him, so he better be grateful for that.

From the looks of it, a tragedy is bound to happen if he didn't know when to stop.

Even the air around Rex starting to become unfriendly.

Only when Viscardi turned forward that Calidora could breathe easily, the tension instantly lessened greatly. 'Good, nothing happened. I really don't care about Viscardi, but Mother is going to be in trouble if he doesn't come back alive'

Just as she sighed a sigh of relief, her eyes jolted open when a whisper crept to her ears.

"Tch! Had not for that Goddess, a new era brat like him would be nothing to me"

At the sound of this sentence, Calidora raised her gaze.

Shock mixed with disbelief could be seen marring her countenance as Viscardi couldn't stop his mouth from whispering a mock, albeit very light, could be heard by her. If she could hear what he said, then there's no doubt that Rex could hear what he said.

Nezera also cast a shocked look at Viscardi.

Her heart instantly dropped to her stomach when she heard this.

In a stiff manner, Calidora turned to look at Rex and found his expression hideous.

"Stop... Stop right there"

Upon hearing the command, the entire atmosphere turned extremely tense once again, the air became so thick that it felt like it was able to choke a person to death. Rex's words held a strong bearing, capable of stopping Nezera and Viscardi's steps.

Despite wanting to keep on moving, their legs were not listening to them.

"He's a fool, Rex. He doesn't worth your—"

Contrary to earlier, Calidora, despite utilizing the Luna energy she stole from Evelyn to help calm Rex down was met with a raise of his finger, gesturing for her to not say another word, there was no stopping him this time.

Rex strode towards the entrance slowly, his steps thudding against the cobblestone floor.

Every step rings louder than an explosion.

Additionally, his menacing presence, though unseen as both Nezera and Viscardi maintained their forward gazes, bluntly hinted at the awakening of the monster that was now awakened. It was dormant before, but now, it was stirred to life.

Stopping right behind them both, Rex whispers, "Do you have something to say again?"

Upon hearing this, Nezera lightly shook her head, signaling to Viscardi to not say another word or else he would be in bigger trouble. Taking a deep breath, Nezera turned around, about to attempt to be the one to apologize again.

But she could feel the words she was about to say got stuck in her throat.

Rex's bearing tongue tied her mouth.

Looking at Viscardi, who slowly pivoted around, swallowing hard under Rex's piercing gaze, Rex inclined his head, throwing another question laden with veiled menace, "I've heard the brutality of the ancient era and clashed with entities of higher standing than yours from that time. But you... I wonder, do you even know the taste of the new era?"

"How—Wh- What do you mean?" Viscardi stuttered, sweat trailing the side of his face.

Unconsciously, he was backing away out of fear.

Although he said what he said earlier, he was saying that out of spite.

Realizing that he had been reduced to such a state by a mere new era Werewolf wounded his pride, fueling an urge to release his frustration, even if only for a brief moment. But now, he regretted doing that as he found himself cornered against the wall, with no more room to retreat.

At that moment, Rex stood before him and raised his fist.

"No?" He pulled his arm back, poised for a strike, and replied, "Let me give you a direct taste"

Crippled with fear, Viscardi's eyes widen at the sight of Rex slowly turning into his Werewolf form, starting from his arms gaining muscles before his entire body. A gathering of moonlight energy and red force could be seen, illuminating his fist with an otherworldly glow.

In the next fleeting second, Rex's arm moved in a blur as he punched Viscardi in the mouth.

Crack!

Bam!!

Under the force of his punch, Viscardi's head slammed into the wall behind him.

Nezera who was standing directly by him flinched when the loud sound penetrated her ears.

It was an attack that was completely out of his league.

On the other hand, Viscardi tried to defend himself by creating a blood barrier.

Boosted with his Vampiric Eyes of Magnification, the blood barrier becomes even sturdier.

However, it was still not a match for the punch Rex threw as it penetrated through the blood barrier easily and connected with his face. Such brute strength was even capable of splitting open an Elder Vampire's skull.

A web of fractures marred the wall due to the devastating impact.

Accompanying it was a very unsettling requiem of bone cracks and fleshy thuds, painting a vivid image of the extensive harm Viscardi endured from that punch, and also a splash of red that stained the walls like a flower bloom.

Rex's eyes glistened with ferocity as he looked at the sight he caused.

In a slow and collected manner, he pulled his fist away, exposing Viscardi's condition.

Due to the forceful blow that struck Viscardi square in the mouth, his upper jaw was gone, obliterated entirely. Not a single tooth remained, all were swept away. Furthermore, his lower jaw hung precariously by slender threads of flesh, swaying grotesquely.

Eventually, that fragile connection snapped, causing his lower jaw to plummet to the ground.

Viscardi slid to his knees, with eyes opened wide.

Surprisingly, even though the extensive damage he endured was devastating, he was still able to retain his consciousness. A disturbing amount of blood was gauged out of the non-existent mouth as he was utterly destroyed by a single punch.

With a cold look, Rex slowly sinks to a crouch.

"How was it... the taste of the new era, do you like it?" Rex asked fiercely.

Upon hearing this, Viscardi kept his eyes facing the ground, muttering a light inaudible voice.

"Rex..." Recognizing that Viscardi could still survive, Calidora quickly stepped closer and said from behind, persuading him to stop right here. "You don't have much time, and he isn't even close to worth your time. Shall we continue your cultivation?"

Keeping a fixed gaze at Viscardi for another moment, he eventually raised to his feet.

"Get him out of here" Rex said in an icy tone.

Nezera nodded her head repeatedly before she laid her hand on Viscardi's body before both liquified into blood and seeped to the ground, vanishing from the place. It would be best for her to take Viscardi away when she still had the chance.

His idiocy would only serve to push more trouble into her place if he stayed any longer.

After both of them left, Rex turned to face Calidora.

Calidora could see that he still retained some of the anger from earlier, but before she could say anything, Rex already beat her to it. "Say, Calidora... The Blood Devourer, the Origin-grade weapon, is it still with you?"

Upon hearing this, a frown appeared on her face.

'Is that what makes him in this hostile mood? The Blood Devourer?' She wondered.

Eventually, she nodded, the Blood Devourer now in her possession after Solomon briefly wielded it. "Yes, the Blood Devourer is with me. Is the anger you're feeling right now a result of recalling that woman, Rex?"

Knowing who she was referring to, Rex's expression turned grim.

It was still a scar that had recently healed.

"Truth be told, I delayed her from being sacrificed as long as I could, hoping you would reach her first. Unfortunately, you were too late. Don't blame my parents either, without them, she would have been exploited by other Vampires in worse ways"

"However, you can be at ease. It was a swift death. It's her fate as the chosen one, Rex"

"It's hard even for you to defy fate..."