

Master 2431

Chapter 2431: The One Left

Midnight and Walker watched as the ice blossom saber walked inside and went to a large stone basin. It was empty now but she still made as if she were to wash her hands. Walker made some water from the ambient water mana in the air and cleaned it using light mana.

To this, the ice blossom saber cleaned her hands and smiled slightly. She had started to feel the same thing that Walker had, but it was harder for her to accept it just yet. She also knew the normal traditions to follow when walking within these sacred places.

This was a place for rest. For slumber, often for the most powerful and elder vampires of their race. They would deserve the clean and respectful actions of all who entered here. This wasn't just a safe haven for when their city was attacked or when they needed to heal for long periods of time.

After saying a small phrase that Walker and Midnight did not catch, the ice blossom saber walked through a carved archway and in to a large open chamber.

This was filled with pillars, the rune formations on them were not working any longer but it was clear that they had been made to keep the air purified and the entire area clean. It was basic respect to those resting here to maintain this cleanliness.

She looked at some stone platforms which Walker and Midnight soon realized were open stone beds. While it could be seen that some of the cloth or other items that had been there rotted away to dust over time, the bodies were well preserved. But the life in them had faded.

The vampires were not like the monster that they had just seen. They could not last as long in slumber without some form of nutrients or awakening to eat and replenish their mana properly. This was the same for every race. There was a limit to what could and would be done when it came to how long someone could go without any form of food.

The reason that the other vampires had survived was simply because they had all been attached to a monster using them as slaves. That had allowed new mana to flow and somehow for them to survive better than if they had just slumbered entirely alone. Not necessarily a good thing at the time but for the future, it could be seen as better because the vampire race survived.

From even the greatest evil some good could come in a way shape or form that may not be expected.

Here, the vampires who had come to slumber or had already been slumbering were already off in to the next life. There was no mana flowing that could prove there was life left within them. Even using life mana, Walker was sure that nothing would happen. It was more than some gut feeling, he just knew it to be the case.

But as the ice blade saber made her way to a smaller stone bed, she knelt down and Walker could feel the entire area become icy. The chill was her accidentally releasing more of her mana and activating her battle skills.

"That's the one. I can use my mana to help." Walker conjured up another ball of water and started to clean his hands while he avoided looking at the ice blossom saber's eyes. She wasn't in the state that she wanted others to see.

It wasn't because there was a single vampire left here. Or even because it was some grand elder vampire figure. She was looking at a vampire child.

A boy potentially only twenty years in age, for a vampire, that was the same as looking at an infant.

Not only would there be no information that they could gain from him about the tamed familiars of the city when it was functioning, but it also perfectly showed the loss of the entire city. A loss for the vampire race.

It wasn't even that he was entirely intact, the child laying on the stone with a flicker of life in him was the small scars on his body from being rushed through the city as a monster attacked a massive guardian familiar. These scars lasted too many years and were still there. Unhealed and clear from the ice blossom saber to see.

"Some extra life mana and some healing. I will offer that while you take him to a new home." The ice blossom saber's body stiffened as she calmed her emotions and Walker placed a soft hand on the young vampire's chest.

Midnight gave them the time needed while it was important that this process moved properly. Only the ice blossom saber knew the ebay ways to awaken a vampire from slumber and Walker would do that with her.

However, Midnight had also noticed that most people here had not brought items. Instead, they were clothed in the remains of simple robes, regardless of how rotted or breaking avert the bodies or robes were, she could tell what they had been. She was in ancient undead ruins before and learned a thing or two.

Following this thinking, she made her way back toward the entrance and found the side hallways that went around the entire main chamber. Walking down them, she didn't needed to ask anything about what they were for.

Every sealed door was a room for storage. Not storing people or anything like that. No, it was for storing the items they brought. And In a time of great attack and rush, people would only grab the things most valuable to them, no matter their race.

Pushing the rough stone open, Midnight found that inside, there were breaking tapestries, old pieces of crafted items, and most of all, some stacks of books barely holding on that could be reclaimed if in the right hands.

Exactly what she had thought she might find.

The knowledge within every single one of those books could be what they were after and more. Could be everything that the vampires of today's age needed to know to bring back the familiars they had in their stronger generations.

Or, it could be secrets of ancient vampire magic or records of how they survived battles against ancient monsters. Even their fairytale books would be a valuable addition to the vampire history which was broken and lost due to a cruel monster.

It was something for them to revel in now, to bring their entire race higher rather than live in the feeling of mourning after discovering that nothing survived in a famous city once vibrant.

If Midnight could show just this, she could make it clear that she was able to handle more than just being a small time hero to a few races. She could also prove she was not a failure who could not protect and help the people of Genesis rise.

Feeling Midnight's excitement after he had helped a little, Walker left the ice blossom saber to finish her natural rituals to awaken the young vampire who would most likely still slumber as he was brought from this place.

He found Midnight examining the stacks of books in the first storage room and his mind raced. He knew exactly what Midnight had found. And was thinking.

"This is perfect. We can bring people here to recover all of this. We might have what the vampires want and need to keep growing." Just using the all around appraisal on some books, Walker knew that they were not so damaged that information couldn't be recovered.

The books were dirt and had started to rot in to dust, but the turns here had been damaged less over time since the runes just for storage of items and not protecting people. Therefore the pages might be recoverable if cared for well enough.

Otherwise, Walker soon heard a small gasp for breath before returning to calm breathing. He then herard the slightly joyful laugh along with tears form the ice blossom saber.

Even though Thais city was lost and so much was lost serially missing of their history, a single life had remained and been here waiting for them. It was enough to make every vampire glad, especially the one who wished to reclaim her power and lead the vampires once again.

"We will escort you." Midnight spoke out loud again. This time though, she sounded authoritative and clear. She would lead the survivor home before anyone could worry about books or knowledge or anything else.

This was her role now. Who she was and what she stood for. These people came first no matter

what.

This left Walker to take the back guarding position while also feeding a little extra mana toward the young vampire held carefully in the ice blossom saber's arms. Even a little help would be enough for this young vampire's future.

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Chapter 2432: Random Visit

"I'm sorry, but who are you?" Su was looking at the woman who had come to stand in front of her. She didn't look familiar nor did she appear to be from Genesis in general. For the most part, she was seemingly straight from the wilderness and came right to the alchemy building where she and Remy had been working together for some time now.

"I'm sorry for bothering you, I have come on behalf of my people and am new to this. I understood from what I have learned that I should look for one of the heroes and ask them for assistance. Some are away, others are busy, but you were the one I was recommended to speak with after asking around for help."

Now Syu was even more confused. She had no idea who would be coming to see her and why. Especially when it came to someone who ventured here from the wilderness and made their way to the alchemy building.

The woman was tall and appeared to be a demi-human with some lizard like traits. But, there was a feeling that Su had about her. It made her believe that everything was not what it seemed.

"I am Su, and you can ask me for help, but you seem to be right out of the wilderness, would you have not preferred to rest? Or are you in danger?" it was only natural that the first thought could be this.

Anyone that had come to look for her could be doing so for various reasons. But most of all it was people that needed some training with her or that were from the cathedral. To be honest, she asked that Alice would come looking for her sooner than later to help with developing some light related healing skills or protective skills by comparing the songs and Alice's usage of light magic to defend.

"What is it? Why are we not working on the next mix of dragon breath and the potions you asked for? I have a new..." Remy looked at the slightly dirty woman and grew confused as well. She could tell that

the woman had come there from somewhere in the wilderness and had no idea why she was with Su nor why she was at the entrance of her alchemy lab which was being changed little by little.

"I am here to be a representative. I did just come from the wilderness. It took me some time to change in to this appearance since I have remained outside for some years. I came from the northern snow fields. The distance to any city of humans was much greater than it used to be. However, I received the request to come because I was the most used to blending in with villages and other races."

Her introductions still felt limited but Su soon caught on to what was being said and why.

"Are you a member of the shifter race? I didn't expect to meet a shifter race acting as a representative now." The surprise on Su's face was clear to prove that it was definitely not something that was expected by any means.

"I understand. A few of those who knew we were prepared to bring me messages. I have several of my family members who enjoy flying around and meeting others to teach them or guide them to safe homes."

While they had all believed that the shifter race was unorganized, it was quickly proven to be mostly false. There was a simple fact now that some of them did work together to maintain their safety, but it was still minimal in the grand scheme since they did hide and that made it difficult even for them when they wished to come together.

"It was a very short journey after I took the form of an ice dragon I once met for a brief time. Then I mixed her appearance with a demi-human to acquire a partially unique look. This would allow me to fit in better on the council as needed. I have learned little of your Genesis alliance but I can tell it is a warm place. A few that have been attracted here wish to become one with the people here as well. I would need assurances though."

She seemed nice, but Su didn't doubt her strength. She had lived in the north where there was not much else but toughness and survival. This meant that she had survived long enough to be able to handle meeting dragons and whatever else up there. Beyond that, she had made it clear that there were many times she had blended in to different traces.

If this was the case then it meant she could hide away very easily while also managing to become strong enough and versatile enough to get right besides those of any race. Just looking at how she had managed to make it here regardless of her appearance was enough.

The guards might have questioned her or others she asked might have wondered why she was searching for Su and also why she was so dirty. Yet she had managed to make it here very easily.

"There's no way we are bringing you to the Genesis building to speak to any of the representatives right now. Have you looked at yourself? You're filthy and you have barely anything that makes you seem like a proper representative. You are coming with me and getting cleaned up. And if you try and argue..." Remy made it clear that she would make sure this new addition got cleaned up.

Su smiled a little roughly as she made it clear Remy was just being nice even though it sounded like a threat. "I can make sure that your people have a place. Walker is away and would normally handle this. But while we help you get cleaned up and relax a bit, why not tell me more about your journey? The north is dangerous and it's rare to hear that some meet the few ice dragons around there. Not many have come here yet themselves because they prefer the isolation."

With Su making it clear that Remy was just this way, the shifter woman seemed to get excited. She appeared to be an excitable and bubbly person compared to what some might expect from a race that shifted from appearance to appearance. Yet, that might be why she was the one that had connection to so many and so much experience.

"I am called Iona, I am one of the longest living shifters at the age of ninety three, the reason I can live this long is because when I was surviving I took the form of monsters first. Doing so I fought as one and managed to consume some of a dragon's heart. That is how I met a dragon and learned of rogue dragons. I lived with them for a short while before moving on."

"I lived with the elves who have various moving villages, an isolated town of dwarves who forge with ice, and even some other monsters who hide away on the mountains called blizzard tarantulas. But I eventually managed to find a talent for living with the humans who make their villages in the warmer days at the edges of the frozen territories."

"I have a class called battle diplomat now. It's interesting because it lets me take better forms to meet with those who wish to live in peace. It also lets me strengthen myself to fight for that peace if I so desire it. I hope we can work together." Su paused as she passed some scented soap made with various herbs that Remy had made up with alchemy.

The small room attached to the alchemy lab should be for cleaning off dangerous potions or preventing contamination of potions. However, Remey used it as a hidden spot to clean up and relax. She was very happy that this place could be so valuable right now.

The more that Su asked about the traveling and forms that Iona had taken, the more she began to understand the lives of the shifter race. The challenges and the ways that they had lived until now. Each and every form they took was so deeply connected with them that it shaped every form they took and every method that they took to survive in peace.

The fact that Iona couldn't tell her about a shifter race that had been purposefully going around to cause harm was amazing. But then again, Iona only knew of the shifter race that was intelligent. She didn't even put herself in the same thoughts as monsters like mimic or doublegangers. Those were monsters that couldn't even be considered within the same

species or type.

Nothing at all worth the thought because the shifter race would make sure they didn't even near the places they lived.

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Chapter 2433: From Here

"Midnight, was that the last group?" Walker saw that Midnight had just returned again. This time she was leading a group who had significantly less to carry and transport back to the camps that had been built for evaluating items.

Her nod made Walker understand that the storage areas in the slumbering hall had been handled and that everything there was handled for the most part. Meaning, that he could stay focused on the books and learn how to restore them.

Midnight came over and was watching from behind him as he followed some of the newer skills he had just learned.

"I was working with a few of the archivists and the restorers to figure out what I could do to help. But look at all this." His hands gestured to three books that he had worked on compared to twenty that another had worked on.

While Walker often found that he was not a master at things and needed to learn, he didn't think he would find himself so inferior compared to a restorer or a restorative archivist. Their speed and efficiency in recovering older books and scrolls is well above anything he had seen or was capable of.

"They use an ink transfer skill to get the words to come off the page and on to a new page. From there, they use a few other skills to make the ink more vibrant and then transfer on to a brand new book made with higher quality to resist the future wear and tear. Just the ink transfer skill uses earth, water, and even some light mana to make sure it doesn't degrade. It's a skill that uses multiple manas but isn't really bound to affinity."

He had been analyzing the skills and trying to grasp the how and why they worked. He could tell what manas were a part of the skills but also understood that the manas of those using these skills was not at all being changed to make the water, light, or earth mana a part of the skill. Their own internal mana pulled at those regardless of their own affinities.

While someone having affinities might affect the skill, he felt that it was all based on the understanding of books and the writing of them in the first place. Because the older archivists or restorers were the ones with the best efficiency and equality in their work. Proving that it was experience in doing so rather than affinity at all.

This played in to the idea that many people without mastery skills or rare classes could be better than those with those things, then again, people were less focused on those things since so many new classes and jobs were found every single day within genesis. Even other kingdoms who were not as up to date on the goings on within genesis were finding these new classes consistently.

"Break. Take a break." Midnight placed a hand on Walker's shoulder and he knew that he had begun to obsess a little too much. He also knew that if he didn't listen to Midnight that she might just take the books he was working on.

"I will, let me just show you the binding skill." He worked with a few needles, natural glues, and other materials to begin affixing the transferred pages together. The process was more physical but with the mana being moved in to it the parts seemed to be drying and tightening better than without.

This was another aspect that Walker understood now. That most people could halt the use of their mana in their skills to a degree now. It wasn't that people without the skills would be able to easily do them, but the fact that it could be more or less ignored did someone do something with worse quality because they didn't use mana.

From that, a master could make items that would be sold cheaper and be more affordable overall, but they could also use their mana to make a nearly perfect item. It was hard to grasp but Walker showed Midnight how he learned from start to finish how to bring one of the old books back to shape.

"Some of the books restored were basic or hand written journals so they will take a while to understand. But I was working on one about vampire history. It told about the founding of the city of Fields and how they wanted a place where they could see danger approaching. I understand that. But it's amazing that they managed to have a smaller above ground city at one point. That was washed away by time though."

He had thought it was strange that they only found an entrance but it was more than that. Apparently the city was above and below ground in case of a monster attack they could all retreat below the ground. Which had worked multiple times for them when they could not fight off the ancient monsters.

He also learned of the ancient monsters that attacked. Massive birds that could scoop up chunks of earth or larger sperents and bull headed creatures. All beings that did not exist today yet might return or appear soon because of the many wilderness areas now appearing around the world.

"I see that you have done great work. Thank you for that." The ice blossom saber looked at Midnight and Walker as they left the area and another person jumped to take the open work station. It was clear that many of the restoration staff wanted to move quickly and were waiting for the chance to get a hold of even more knowledge.

"I saw that there are several books detailing the raising of shadow wind wolves and even raising a few other unique familiars. I even saw one titled, the great guardian worm and its master. I believe we will know the secrets of that sooner than later. Because of this, my people will return even stronger than what they have been. I promise you, my saber will rain a flurry of ice upon the enemies that attempt to destroy the peace and prosperity you have planted." This pledge wasn't just to Walker but also toward Midnight. They both felt the heartfelt thanks as the ice blossom saber bowed slightly. She showed her respect because this was what they deserved as the driving force. However, she also spoke as a pledge to herself.

"It's not anything we would not do ourselves. I am just glad you managed to find someone surviving and that they can return to the city with the rest of your race to allow him a better future." Walker had checked in on the young vampire and found he was still asleep. The odds were he would remain as such for a long time while he gained the mana and nutrients he needed to awaken.

"I believe that with everything I have now. I have seen it myself. I wish that I could recover myself faster. When I can, I will show you the strength of my words and desires." the ice blossom saver said this and then moved away to begin organizing the vampires and demons who had followed her. She wanted to return with the knowledge in groups slowly to make sure that everything returned safely.

On The other hand, Walker and Midnight felt that their roles had more or less ended. It was a somewhat less violent endeavor since they did not face monsters actively attacking them. But that was a benefit of sorts. They had seen the other side of the world in a way. A peaceful exploration of ruins that led to positive outcomes.

Yet, Walker also understood that he and Midnight also had a little more freedom now. They could look in to some of the wilderness areas while they had the chance. Before they had to return to Genesis, they could potentially check out areas that were worrying them and the entirety of the Genesis council.

"We can explore a little of that endless night forest, or we can see what it is about that new river. Midnight, we could even go toward those new mountains that no one has managed to get in to since they are foggy and hard to maneuver."

Midnight's eyes flashed with excitement. She and Walker were alone and could explore just the two of them. It would be a fun experience since Walker would let her fight more to her heart's content and she also had no reason to remain here since she had already given orders of who the retreat from the area would go while a smaller camp would remain if the vampires wished to research even more.

In a month, this place would most likely be left for a new generation of vampires to venture to when they felt the desire to witness it. Otherwise, Midnight and Walker considered it a closed project until more routes had been created for travel around it.

"Let's explore!" She nearly tackled Walker before he laughed a bit.

Chapter 2434: Where To Go

With so many areas in the sights of Walker and Midnight, it was hard to decide what they would travel and check out. Walker knew that if he went back to Gneiss he would be bogged down with important meetings and such. Therefore, he wanted to bring information back that could help those meetings.

Information about the scouted areas that he and Midnight would travel to could be invaluable to the planning of exploration expeditions. Especially if he managed to find more dungeons or even monsters that had returned to the world.

The fact that they were seeing more and more reminiscences of ancient monsters was becoming very hard to handle. Especially when some of them were not just ancient monsters that roamed the world.

Some had been like the eggs that they found within the ruins here and there. Dormant eggs that had been kept alive by rune formations that faded or went dormant because of a lack of manas. Therefore, these eggs had a chance to return.

Meaning that even though they would be tamed monsters or familiars of sorts, these monsters were back to the world and growing again. It meant that inevitably, some would make their way out in to the wilderness again and finding the right environment for them would be imperative.

The group had already seen a monster species return that was harmful to every environment. There would be plenty of others that could and certainty would be like that as well. Adding in the fact that the world's mana was still adapting to be able to handle that sort of stress, well, it could mean that the areas destroyed would not be able to recover.

Walker had thought about this a lot when it came to the events within the volcanic area and the lava fields. That was a place that could have grown out of control very easily. He had needed to use natural mana to spur the life mana of the area itself. Meaning that not many would be able to recover the land in that way other than him and a handful of people still too weak to cover larger areas with natural mana they stored or gathered.

Midnight also had her own ideas of where they would travel. Walker had mentioned a few areas and she had also heard of them. The idea that they would head to another of the vampire's lands was interesting to her.

The forest of the endless night or the night forest, some were even calling it the pitch forest, was a place that seemed the most dangerous. She wanted to go there as a challenge to her strength since it would rely on her dark affinity which she had a little ahead of the other affinities that she possessed. It also meant that she could focus on the shadow wrapping skill and sneak around to hunt again, which she enjoyed because she had done a lot of good battles using this technique.

But that could be the same if she challenged herself in the foggy mountain, or a place called the great foggy mountain. The largest mountain range that had appeared since the world had adjusted and seemingly grown. It was even considered a place that no one could travel.

While the area was within the dwarven lands, it was avoided by the dwarves so far. They had realized that they could not easily dig efficiently in to it from their known caves. The cave systems they also found were more complicated and had signs of monsters already.

With all this coming together, Midnight understood that it was a place no one had set foot in at all, even the vampires had no idea about it which meant that she and Walker would be the first to go there. A very tempering potential discovery.

Then again, when the dwarves heard about what they found and got the information, then there would be a massive exploration with dwarven golem armies and everything. They would jump at the chance to be able to excavate whatever they could find and properly explore the

caves.

Might wasn't sure she wanted to head in to the fog and then roam caves for days on end, it was harder for her to fight to her heart's content in caves that might not be spacious. Meaning she would have to fight in her dragonkin form and that meant she would be holding back too much, she didn't want that.

"I was thinking about heading to that new river that was recorded on the map. The wind dragon that flew over it said that there was a frosty mist coming off of it but also that the river was not entirely

frozen. The way that the weather is, nothing should be frozen, so I have a feeling something special is underneath the deeper waters of the river itself."

This made Midnight turn her head, she hadn't really considered it, but the large river was taking a lot of space and she would be able to train herself in the water elemental breath attacks she didn't use as much. That and she had also seen that water could be used to form ice armor if the dragon was strong enough. She had also learned that some of the ice dragons which were water and wind elemental affinities could make ice armor tough enough to resist some earth attacks.

She wanted to be tough enough to do that too.

"The river apparently starts coming out from an underground cave, but from what it was seen as, there was no ice for frosty mist around it until later down the way. I think that there might be a naturally forming water rune or something else unique that causes the water mana to get dense enough to form ice. Or maybe there is a monster doing it. Whatever it is, learning about it will make traveling the entire river safer."

The other two areas in Walker's mind were able to be explored later, but since the frosty river was so long and cut through so many of the new areas on their map, it made sense that he would have to figure out the dangers first. Many people would have to cross it or move near it while they traveled. Even him.

Walker focused his mind on the map he had seen and pointed ahead while he and Midnight were taking to the sky. He was still amazed by how much longer Midnight's wingspan was now that she had grown. It seemed that all the denser and purer mana was just giving her more and more nutrients to grow. Not that he hadn't grown either.

He didn't even need to look at his stats to understand where he was in strength. It even felt that he didn't have the need to worry about his stats any longer. Mostly because he was in touch with the manas within his body and he knew them deeper than would be represented on his status board. Meaning that he believed he was transcending it in a way.

The thought lingered for a moment and made Walker wish to know more about the Origin race. But that was something he had to wait for. Especially with the fact that he knew he was still missing a vital understanding of various manas before he was even allowed to explore

the elemental planes again.

Everything else aside, Walker could sense the distant manas. He could feel the potent earth mana coming from the mountain he could see in the vast distance. With how sharp his eyes were, he knew that exploring the mountains would not be something he would even make a scratch in. his mind leaned toward what he could do more for helping everyone than just one

area.

He also understood the vampires would want to explore the endless night forest and discover things about it. So, the river just made more sense regardless of the other areas. Before he forgot, Walker sent a message to let everyone know what he and Midnight were doing before venturing back. He was sure that Alma and Gil wouldn't mind since their focus was still on the spirit tree. They were working hard to make sure the long process finished earlier and perfectly.

Otherwise, Walker pretended not to see Remy reply since he knew she would be angry for being left out. She also still wanted help with her alchemy lab and he had dodged that a little.

When he saw Su reply though, he was surprised that she had met a representative for the Shifter race. The woman named Iona seemed to have a lot of knowledge and have a small set of secrets since she was the oldest shifter and also able to exceed the age limit of shifters which was much younger than other species. He wanted to ask about it but knew he would have to wait.

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Chapter 2435: Chilling Water

While Midnight was enjoying the movement through the sky, she sensed the cold air coming from the river before she could see it. While she was sensitive to manas, she could feel the change in the wind currents. Nothing unnatural, but it was very clear.

The larger river had a decent amount of frosty fog coming off of it which was then carried in to the natural wind currents of the area. Some birds and a few other insect type monsters were using the warmer air currents to move about while avoiding the colder air currents.

"So it's definitely fitting in well with the environment. That makes me think there is a naturally forming water rune down below that water." A small huff came from Midnight as she agreed with Walker. Her thoughts were that this would be a little more involved if it was naturally forming runes.

This was because she knew how determined Leon and the other merfolk were when it came to studying and exploring the water ways around Genesis. They had already become very up in arms when they heard a new river altogether had been found. This wasn't even with the waterways, ponds, and rivers they had been requested to explore for the Sigil continent. The angels had made many requests which had piled up. The demi-human, merfolk, and underwater dwarven golems were too few to handle all of the request so only the most important were being taken in to account right now.

That was why having Walker and Midnight look in to the potential dangers of this new river would help immensely. Just removing any ideas of dangers or risks was enough to put that request further down the ladder of requests.

So far the most dangerous had proven to be a large pond with a dark mana drifting around in the water proven to be a monster called the venom jellyfish which lived in caves underneath it. The angels had gotten the information from the merfolk and managed to make the entire area known as dangerous.

Therefore, that protected the angels and those nearby who were working on their homes and villages. Beyond that, two small streams had been found to be connected to a river which had toxic plants growing within which was able to prevent people from getting sick while taking water from there.

All of this seemed to be small but as the Sigil continent also grew and the plans to make a second Genesis city was being put in to motion, it needed to be done. Safety for the growth of the people was the mandatory focus before anything else.

"Look at that." Walker stopped in the air and Midnight flapped her wings to halt herself. The two watched a larger log floating down the river accumulate ice. It seemed to have fallen naturally from the river bank which happened over time, but the ice forming on it only started to happen after a certain point. Proving something was causing the change of the underground water from a warmer to an extremely cold temperature.

The two were looking at an almost clear cut line where the water seemed to start giving off the colder mist. It was also easier for them to sense the density in the water mana and also for Walker to realize this isn't cold caused by wind mana mixing in.

"I don't think this is the same kind of cold that comes from wind mana and water mana mixing to make snow or blizzards like we know. That might mean we have a more natural and dense mana for water." He almost hoped this was the case.

He would be able to understand the changes in the world to a higher degree while also relating that new understanding to the ways of the elemental planes. He had not spent a lot of time in the water elements plane meaning that he had not been able to grasp some new understandings that would allow him a better method of travel through it.

After a few moments of analyzing the mist coming from the water, Walker was not at all surprised to see that the sides of the river banks had frosty ice crystals forming on it. It made it seem that the river itself was too cold for the environment and might cause some plants to die.

Yet, it also presented another new instance.

There could be herbs and species of monsters that could live here because of this. They might need the colder temperature of the river bank and the herbs that could grow there to survive. Some monsters even specifically left volcanic or desert areas at certain times of the year to feast on herbs that would internally cool their fire mana affinity so that they could survive better,

With that in mind, Walker watched and saw a small squirrel that was moving around the edge of the river. In just a few moments, he saw it leap at a tiny white beetle.

"Frozen jade beetle

This small beetle lives in frosty grasses and eats the frozen dew from the morning. It will often be hunted by smaller monsters because it is cooler and possesses potent water mana. While not often a pest, it will cause some damage to fire elemental herbs and plants if it accidentally rests on them due to its colder body temperature.

It is an ideal ingredient for certain potions utilizing strong water mana affinity...' Just seeing the small white beetle was proof that some of the tiniest insect type monsters were already recovering or adapted to this and awakened a more ancient aspect of what they were. Besides that, other monsters

were hunting it and would begin to change accordingly because that was part of a more ancient aspect of their diet.

The smallest changes were able to begin a larger and more progressive change for bigger monsters over years to come. All would be recorded and explain to intelligent races the mystery of the world they lived in. The time was all that was needed. Along with sharp eyes and an open mind.

"I buffed us to resist the water and cold and used the underwater breathing skill I have. We can make our way under the water now." Walker wanted to avoid changing the flow of the river so using water mana and a bunch of buffs to be able to swim better was the best bet here. He also knew that being able to breathe under water would be the reason he spent a lot more mana over time.

Not that he and Midnight couldn't hold their breath for a longer time than most others. But that would wear on their mentality and also mean they couldn't take a sling to evaluate the underwater environment.

The good thing was, as soon as they plunged in to the chilling water, they both realized that there was a fairly clean and clear aspect to it. Less sediment floated about because the water came from under the ground rather than off of mountains or lakes. Helping them see more

right away.

The rocks and a few of the plants on the river bottom were growing fairly well but had coatings of ice on them. The rocks were easily able to gather the ice with their rougher textures, but the plants were attracting the water mana and causing the ice to form better on

them.

The small monsters crawling about were species of crabs that Walker wanted to gather information on until he saw a larger piece of ice moving underwater.

'Frozen hermit

This is a species of hermit crab monster that specifically crafts icy shells to protect itself. It also covers its claws in ice to be able to fight others for their icy shells which they can add to their own as they grow. Their violent nature is due to their greed for more defense on their shells. It also comes to the fact that they are always trying to absorb more water mana to collide with their surroundings.

They will only ever leave their homes within frozen waters during the coldest times of the year when they can travel around and find mates. This is also when they are hunted the most by certain monsters that are after the water mana and nutrients within their videos...' The large size of this monster was perfect for how large the river was. These monsters could easily live here. They also had the fact that they enjoyed the temperature of the water for the time being. But as Walker watched, he followed the fight between the two of them for what seemed to be rocks on the bottom. Not just rocks, but a place to make a resting nest around

these rocks.

Midnight moved ahead to clear the way. She had the same thoughts as Walker to figure out why these monsters wanted this space on the river floor.

Chapter 2436: Underwater Ice

Midnight swam through the water by using her tail to whip side to side increasing her swimming speed. It was an impressive example of how she was able to handle many terrains with her natural dragon instincts because Walker, nor anyone, had ever taught her how to swim like this. Yet from the first time the party went under the water, she was able to do this.

The two frozen hermits were fearful as soon as they sensed that midnight was not just moving past them like some other predators within the large river would. Instead, she was heading right for them.

Their ice covered claws did nothing to deter her and Midnight easily swatted them away by adding some water mana to her own claws and swiping at the two. Walker didn't wait for her to finish the small fight and bring him the two bodies for him to bring back to Genesis as examples of aggressive monsters they would face within the river. Instead, he focused on the rocks.

The icy rocks that he was looking at were not the same as the others. Compared to the river rocks at the bottom mixed with sand, these rocks were rounder and definitely more reminiscent of egg or ball shapes. He even thought that they were the eggs of some underwater monster at first.

It would have made more sense that the two frozen hermits were fighting over food than just some nesting material. Then again, they had built up other rocks, sand, and some sunken wood here to make nests. So, he wasn't sure what to think of them right now.

'glacial rock

This is a unique stone that has spent years affected by the densest water mana. While many would find these rocks in the glacial tundra frozen in massive glaciers or used by ancient monsters as nesting material in the furthest reaches of the frozen wastelands, this rock was left within a river.

Through the changing of the world during ancient times, this glacial rock was left behind as glaciers were moving or broken in the area for one reason or another. Due to this, it has managed to release some of the extremely potent water mana in to the surrounding area and become an intricate aspect of the ecosystem.

While the water mana within is so pure and dense, it is the fact that it is to the level that naturally forming pure water runes may form on some if only temporarily. Those who managed to find these would bring them to their homes and be able to utilize their unique traits for generations before the water mana ran out.

Crafting with them in any form or fashion is both challenging and also extremely dangerous. This is because if failed, the condensed and pure water mana which is so potent it forms ice all around it will explode out if failed. Causing a very dangerous ice effect to move through the entire area. If successful, powerful items can be made that perfectly channel water mana and allow it to become glacial ice which is much tougher and resilient compared to normal ice. The best methods...'

With the sheer amount of these rocks around, Walker could tell that the river was more than just affected by it, the only reason that the entire river had not frozen was the large amount of water that moved. Halting the way for the ice to actually form. Whoever, he could also see that if he were to halt the water for even a few moments, that the water would freeze in to a slush and then float on wards toward the eventual outlet in to the oceans.

Knowing that it wasn't a monster causing these things made Walker a lot more comfortable with the river than if it was a monster. He would not need to worry too much about those that came to explore. However, he had to worry about the people who would foolishly try and take these glacial rocks to make items out of.

Yes, they would be able to craft powerful items, but the risk without skill was too high. Especially within Genesis where the people could easily be caught up in these things.

It was a different kind of water mana within. Neither the normal water mana nor the dense water mana purified and condensed within Genesis. This was a more dense ancient level of water mana that came from being trapped within glacial ice for hundreds, if not thousands of years.

The potency allowed for pure naturally forming water runes to form on them. Not just water runes, pure. The key world that made it much more dangerous since the pure aspect of any naturally appearing mana would be stronger than just about any gathered mana right now. While Walker had been thinking, Midnight had finished her small fight and brought the two frozen hermits through the water to him. He easily stored them away and she nudged him to get his attention. He hadn't expected that Midnight would switch back to her dragonkin form, but he realized why when he looked where Midnight had her eyes focused.

On the side of the nearest river bank that they could see were holes. Not just dug out with dirt, but larger and frozen with ice. This proved that it was much more than just naturally moving water or a monster digging them out. Of course, they both thought it was some sort of monster, but not just that.

Moving carefully, Walker examined the larger holes in the side and realized that some of them were connected. The water was moving through them and he could also sense movement within. They were just holes made to make larger underwater ice coated caves.

With confidence, he and Midnight swam in to them toward whatever might be living within. He knew very well that he would be able to handle whatever it was, but he was surprised when the movement he had sensed halted. A soft glow of light also focused his senses.

'Glimmering eels

This monster is an ancient monster known for creating very intricate ice tunnels wherever they live. Some of the larger species even inhabit the very ice that makes up the frozen wastelands of the blizzard swept tundra.

They use the potent ice mana they get from swallowing a glacial rock and keeping it near their heart to craft the earth they cut away the earth and then freeze the tunnels in to ice so that

they do not melt.

They also glow due to the fact that they often move toward the surface of the water and absorb the light mana to heal the damage being done to their bodies by the glacial rocks. They are able to absorb and handle the mana but it causes damage due to the high purity and

potency.

However, some are able to adapt to it entirely and lose their light affinity entirely to become a glacial eel king known for being large enough to consume small parts of floating glaciers in the oceans. Those species can not survive within rivers any longer.

Using their blood and slim skin, unique water resistant and cold resistant potions or amro can be made. Using their teeth very dangerous arrows can be made which cause frostbite to their targets and can even freeze isolated limbs. The difficulty of this is much higher because of the potency of the water mana within the materials and the decay rate of the materials due to not having a light healing mana affecting them...'

Walker looked at the long slim eel body glowing like first in the sun. It didn't move much and made Walker realize that it was sleeping. There behind it were several as well, all seemingly resting before they would venture out to absorb the light mana that they needed to counteract the damage from the purer water mana inside by their hearts.

Using the dangers of the glacial rocks to enhance strength and even potentially grow beyond their average species was amazing. However, the constant damage made it very odd but it also strengthened their abilities to use light mana to heal themselves. An intricate balance.

Midnight moved and started to fight the eels that were larger while the smaller ones rushed away as they woke up. They would make good research materials to see what else could be

found.

Meanwhile, Walker kept looking out for anything else that might be a threat. He didn't think they had seen enough of the frosty river they had just entered. While they knew the source of the cold, the pure and dense water mana had to have more effects than just some ancient or unique monsters. There was just a gut feeling telling him this was the case.

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Chapter 2437: Sharp Little Ice

There was so much below this frozen river to be able to keep track of. Walker and Midnight had been letting the current take them down the river while they focused on what they could see. Various species of monsters swam through the water, some didn't mind them and others went after them.

The blue salmon was an interesting monster that lived there and was barely the length of Walker's arm. It would rarely leave the river except when the ocean waters grew colder then it would head out to hunt for larger prey and grow seven times its size.

An interesting monster that would be a great source of food for hunting that he would be able to report to the merfolk who would frequent the area in this case. Otherwise, they saw more species of ice and water specialty crabs, and even another species of herb called false ice.

The herb grew in sharper pointed shapes which made it seem like it was ice, however, when touching it the herb was actually very soft and partially clear. It was valuable for treating the injuries that came from water type mana infiltrating the body because it actually could absorb the water mana from wherever it was used as a wrapping on an injury. The other uses would be found and discovered by herbalists and alchemists.

Regardless, these were just examples of things that Walker had seen. He expected to find a lot more but was somewhat disappointed. Not that this was a bad thing. It was good that he didn't find any more threats even though he was having the internal worries that a more dangerous monster was there.

The pair had floated in the river for an hour at this point and traveled a decent distance. With the way that things were, he was ready to allow others to be able to travel here and begin their own expeditions without a single fear that the danger would be too great for them.

That was until Midnight made a jerk to the right and dodged the sudden attack from the sands of the river beneath them.

'Ice pistol jelly

This little jellyfish uses its own body as a projectile. It covers itself in extremely dense ice then uses potent water mana to pierce its foes and use their body as a warm and safe nest to be able to lay eggs, grow itself larger, and even sometimes just to hide while it rests.

This makes it one of the most dangerous fresh water monsters that utilize potent and pure water mana to create ice. It will often be known as the hidden killer for this group of monsters. While they rarely are found in groups if at all, that is the opposite of when many of them are grouped together during their hatching season when the waters warm up just enough.

This is when they can activate a skill similar to the slime family's rare skill, assimilation. The skill, hive assimilation will allow the strongest to take core control over nearby newly hatched ice pistol jelly. In this case, the weaker ones will begin fusing and giving nutrients to that one causing them to lose individuality and become a great ice queen jelly.

If this is the case, then it is easily able to wrap massive prey with tentacles that can inject a potent pure water mana in to the prey as venom. This action will freeze the blood of the prey and allow for a perfect place to rest and nutrients for the grand ice queen jelly

Its body can be harvested to use as various alchemy ingredients, however, it is best known for the value that comes when feeding it to a water type monster being tamed or used as a familiar. It has an almost mystical quality to assist that monster in resting and understanding its own water affinity and purifying it. While not possible for most races, this causes mutations, bloodline awakenings, and various other effects extremely valuable to the monster or familiar in question...'

Now Walker was looking at the threat that he knew he had felt in his gut. The tiny little jellyfish covered in ice had shot forward and attempted to pierce Midnight's scales. Even though she had dodged, Walker could tell that the density and the sharpness of the ice actually had a chance of breaking in to her scales if even slightly.

That was just the potency of the ice it could create. A dangerous monster that could become even more dangerous if it was able to grow during the egg hatching times. It also meant that any dead monster within this rover could and most likely would be a home for them. Allowing for a potential grand ice queen jelly to be born.

That was all leaving aside the fact that when one such monster existed, that tamers and vampires with familiars would be ready to hunt them for all that they had. The value in these monsters to assist their own tamed monsters or familiars was exceptionally high. To the point that their strength could double or multiply many times over if successful in eating the body of the grand ice queen jelly.

In a swift motion, Walker used his higher ability to manipulate the water mana and halt the small jellyfish. He and Midnight left the water where he quickly used the change of scenery to kill the little monster and store its body away. There would be many who were interested in this and many who would take careful note of how to protect themselves from this.

"I'm glad we found this before we gave up and left." Walker had thought that they would leave this place as a safe area to explore. If they had not found this, many would have perished while exploring before they all knew of the dangers behind it. In the future, he would have to be more careful. It was like nature checking him to ensure he was being careful enough.

"Ah, looks like someone has been sending us updates on Genesis. I knew that a few people would be busy but we have three communication crystals to look at." Midnight hopped up near him while Walker also used some fire mana to create a few balls of flames to help dry them off. Midnight was very happy with this since she knew her scales would have frost in them and it did not look as good as she liked.

"It sounds like we are getting more information about the shifter race and how to help them. Apparently a few have come forward to show their skills in a small way here and there to make people more comfortable. That's great." Midnight nodded her head at Walker. She and he both understood that there was a lot of danger of another perishing and they become an undead. Therefore, the information being open and clear would help the people accept them. There were also the methods that used this information to share the cultures of the shifter race so that people would accept them overall. Allow them to comfortably settle and begin to become one with Genesis overall.

"The carpenters have managed to partner with some herbalists lately and found a method to grow a certain tree in to shapes that need menial carving. This can be used to create multiple weapons, structural works, and even used to make smaller and lighter general goods." Walker had asked for information like this to be sent to him. That way his mind could always work on these things and share them with people he believed would use the information for the best of all of Genesis.

"And lastly..." He trailed off while his eyebrows furrowed. Midnight turned her head looking at him with curiosity. She knew if he was already thinking like this that he was not reading something good or reading something easier to understand.

"The expedition of the endless night forest is moving up regardless of the vampires once living in part of it or training in part of it." Not Midnight's confusion matched the confusion Walker had. Until she noticed Walker looking even more focused.

"Something called the twelve covens has been found and a witch has contacted someone explaining that anyone who ventures beyond certain limits in to the forest of endless night will be killed on sight." Midnight tensed her muscles hearing that the prowl of Genesis were

threatened.

Yes, it was a scout that was caught and threatened, but Walker could care less if it was a scout or a flea. It was a member of Genesis who was threatened. Someone he had pledged to defend.

The same with Midnight.

Both of them were now very focused on the people calling themselves a witch of the twelve covens. Were they an enemy? Or something else brought out from ancient times through unique means?

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Chapter 2438: Scout's Meeting

Both EWalker and Midnight were in the air moving at a rapid pace. They knew where the endless night forest was and they also knew that going back to Genesis would be pointless since they would both be moving toward the forest anyways.

It was also clear that there was a large group of elves making a move to enhance their borders since this forest mixed with their natural territory as well.

This wasn't just a precaution against an unknown group, but also a simple fact that they knew Akma, Gil, and their own queen would not be able to venture in to this area to help or fight. Alma and Gil were both occupied with the spirit tree and were not even told about this event. Simply to ensure their focus and lack of stress.

The current queen of the forest elves was focused on her own territory within the forest. She could not travel far due to the fact that she had bound herself to the forest as a whole. Even the root systems she had been growing toward Genesis through connections with many trees planted along roads had been broken due to the expansion of the world as the manas returned.

Therefore, the queen of the forest elves could not even choose to visit Genesis as it was right now. Nor could she visit any other kingdom's territory until she managed to grow that path of roots and trees which would allow her to have a connection to the first to keep herself healthy and the forest attached.

What was amazing was the control that was being held during all of this. Many races, including the elves and demi-humans felt that they had been threatened by being told they were unable to explore or venture anywhere past a certain point.

It was not something unknown to think that the witch class existed. Many witches had existed in the past when there wasn't classes and just system holders. That was a fact, but they were rare and often had unique methods of utilizing mana and skill.

Yet, the fact that a group of them now showed themselves and claimed to be the twelve covens made another question arise.

How did they survive the loss of manas to the world?

Walker had been thinking about this and wondered if there was another god class holder that had managed to protect this group the same ways that the cloud pirates had been protected. But he was also considering the unique nature of the witches themselves and what he had read about.

When it came to myths and legends about witches, there was a lot of strangeness. Whether it was potent magic that was hard to compete with, or it was magic that was just impossible to explain, a witch could do it. This made him believe that it was some focus on these twelve covens coming together and managing to survive because of the mana growing thinner and the world becoming smaller.

Waiting so that they could return when the time was right.

This also made some sense that they were in an exceptionally dangerous area. They would be able to rest there without fear that anyone would come bothering them. They just had to set up proper safety measures from any monsters around, if any left at all due to the changes in the world.

Their movements were not separate from Su and Remey who had arrived with several dragon elders. This didn't exclude Ventus, Current, Ignus, and Mordant who were available. Rise was still recovering and controlling her newfound strength while Terron was defending the eggs that had finally been laid by the earth wyvern queen. All of which had been more than just born earlier than scheduled.

That entire situation was something to celebrate since she had eggs which waited for a much longer time prior, and now another clutch which would be born in to a new hope within Genesis. A massively positive event that Walker knew would happen sooner than the normal and planned time because of the changes in mana to the world. Everyone was growing quicker

now.

The scene of a large army of Genesis forces who specifically followed the dragons did not shock Walker. He knew they would be the ones that came to put themselves up front. They were prideful, but they also understood that when it came to the strongest of Genesis they would be the pens standing at the top point.

Otherwise, the forces that would be coming behind would be the demi-humans, the vampires, and then a mixed forces of the other races. This was because the vampires had a connection to the endless night

forest and the demi-humans were the larger population of battle ready forces within the entire world for all everyone knew.

Not that having everyone here was a bad thing at all. Walker was actually glad to see them since he knew he would be treading in to an unknown territory to face an unknown force which deterred their own scouts and threatened them for entering the wrong territory.

Picking out Remey's voice right away, Walker and Midnight found her speaking with a black robed man, thin and having black fur covering him, a scout from the demi-human side and clearly was the scout who had entered this forest in the first place.

Walker had already noticed the black leaves of some trees along with the purple and other dark colored grasses or shrubbery which began here on the edges. It wasn't the endless night forest because of a myriad of dark mana but the fact that the plants also existed in a darker variety causing the light to be dimmed overall and not make it inside the entirety of the forest, especially deeper within where the plants became denser and stronger.

"Walker, you got here too slow, this is the scout who got bothered by that witch. We are getting him to tell us where the lines are and how we can break through them to make sure these people know we aren't some push overs." The scout looked at Walker asking for help

with his eyes.

"What do you have to report?' Ignoring Remey's pushiness, he asked and waited patiently. The scout seemed to see this as a way out and fell on to the duty driven side of his profession.

"There was a line of small brambles and thorns, all seemed to grow a little too straight so I believed that it was some form of monsters or unique herb. As I moved to study it from both sides so that I could report it, I was caught by iridescent vines and held for a moment before strange rune like patterns flashed. That was when a cloaked figure appeared and spoke out." "Just one then?" This seemed important and Walker was confirmed as the scout nodded.

"Sir hero, I also noticed that the entire area began to smell very strongly of herbs, it was just like the alchemy labs. There were also many different strange rune patterns on the cloak, almost clear. I believe that they were allowing different manas to be drawn toward the witch in question. I do not understand

the term, twelve covens, however, I believe it could be related to the twelve forces or groups that format them as we are Genesis and formed of races."

"I understand. Thank you. Remey, I know that Ignus should be ready for a flight, why not have every dragon fly around and let it be known we are here. If the witch was willing to speak, maybe she will come out to speak with me as I walk in followed by you and Su. Midnight will hide away in the shadows just in case while the dragonkin holds down a camp here. It is safer

that way."

The simple idea to make a camp and also make their presence known was to show that they had the force to fight if needed and that threats might not be wise. However, Walker also wanted to make it clear that conversations could happen if done properly. Both a lesson and a warning for the twelve covens group that was here in the endless night forest.

"Now, I want to hear the report on what monsters are around and what else I might need to worry about when it comes to the outskirts of this forest. Also, bring the other scouts to me and have them start to examine the atmosphere of the edges of the forest. I want all the information possible about what this forest is and how it keeps itself separated from the

other forest."

The scout moved off and began following his orders. Remey smirked since she knew Walker

was invested and already focused. She also saw that Midnight's eyes hadn't changed at all, she even looked more determined. A mystery to solve and a group to lead. This would be extremely interesting.

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Chapter 2439: Darker Forest

"No monsters have been found whatsoever since that witch has been spoken with." This stumped Walker. He was expecting to hear that the monsters might have been riled up

because of everything that has happened.

Just the idea that there was a powerful force that could maintain some form of magical barrier which used a plant coursing with unknown magic skills to move it was in effect was hard enough to wrap his head around. Now he was finding out that suddenly monsters were nowhere to be found?

There should be a lot of monsters that were worked up because of a skill and set of magic plants like this. If it captured or attacked anything, then it would use a lot of mana that would stir up monsters in the area regardless of them being hunted by witches or anything else. Meaning that there should be fearful or aggressive monsters being found.

Yet, there weren't.

"I was told that the area has multiple species of dark affinity monster. Even a few light affinity monsters that rely on the moon or starlight. There are also monsters that use illusions or sound based attacks using wind mana. Otherwise it's a strange place that also has plant monsters which use poisons and a few which also use venoms."

For Walker to hear that Remey had managed to find more information than what he had in just a short while he realized that he might be losing his touch. That was until she also made it clear that the report in her hands was from the earliest scouting report before anyone had actually gone within a few minutes into the trees of the endless night forest.

She had managed to grab the oldest report since she found that she couldn't get anything useful in the first few moments of asking what was happening. Especially since she was trying to figure out what she wanted to do when it came to the endless night forest itself.

She wanted the information about the poisons and venoms so she could make the antidote potions she had with her specifically for them. Unfortunately, she wouldn't be able to do that without finding the poisonous plants, plant like monsters, or the venomous monsters. All of that was required to make sure she solved the dangers.

"This means we have to just walk in all the way. That is fine." Midnight huffed in agreement with Su who stood up and was ready to make her moves. She knew that a few healers wanted to follow them since

there was a lot of risk with the venoms and poisons. But she also knew that without Allcie here she did not trust to bring healers less experienced in actual battle.

The combat healers would be more valuable to be in the other groups since Walker could make up for the healing they needed and so could Remey since she could make most potions with the herbs that she and Walker carried.

"Then I will be coming with you as well. Without Rise here someone with a specialty for dark mana would be perfect for your group. Ventus is surveying the forest and keeping a lookout for changes in the trees. She has seen a few odd movements but she could not land safely enough to handle them. Ignus is going to come as well whether we like it or not."

Mordant returning from flying about and letting his superiority over dark mana clear was enough to also make a few flying monsters retreat from sight. But he was also feeling that the lack of monsters in the immediate area was abnormal.

"I have found some water flowing nearby. A small stream here and there. I will monitor them while following the feeling of underground waters that the trees are all connected to for survival. I may be able to learn more." Current said this before also leaving. He had his focuses and Walker believed that Current's focus on how the water flowed in various areas was more valuable to them.

This was because the massively complicated underground networks of waters was even hard for the dwarves, heart infinity dragons, or anyone else to keep clear. But for Current, it was like asking a master to follow the simplest of mazes. Easily handled and the best choice for studying it. Beyond that. It was also helping Current expand the understanding of water mana in the world as a whole.

"Before he and I got to you again he did mention the water underground flows from the elven territory in to the endless night forest. Meaning that any potential poison or dangers from the endless night forest won't flow back in the underground water supply." Mordant's head shook as he wondered who Current was. This intense focus on the water mana had made Current a different person.

It wasn't a bad thing though, Current had been responsible for the rapid growth of the water affinity dragonkin and water elves recently. The binds with the merfolk and water affinity demi-humans also were progressing rapidly as well. All good things.

With this, Walker and his formed group began leaving and moving in to the endless night forest. He looked at the trees already and had gleaned some information from the all around appraisal skill.

"The purple oak and purple maples are the two most common trees here. But they are able to use the dead wood and leaves all around them to grow faster since they are dark affinity trees. But their wood isn't that useful unless you need to make dark mana resistant items."

"Those shrubs there are called purple juniper, the berries are extremely toxic if you eat them but can be used to repel insect monsters since the smell is so potent. And that small tuft of grass is called wilting grass, it's dark affinity and if it looks wilted it means that the area is perfect for dark affinity herbs to grow, if it's straight up and not turning a brown and yellow color it means that it is too full of light mana for it to grow properly and poor for dark elemental herbs."

Memorizing every word, Remy followed Walker more closely than usual. However, she was also looking for what Walker said would be valuable for her to take as seeds, roots, or even just as samples of herbs. Just the fact that they had to get to a line of strange thorns and vines where an enemy might be didn't mean she wouldn't take advantage of the chances she had to gather herbs and learn more about alchemy.

"Do not approach. This is the territory of the twelve covens. You are not welcome here."

The emotionless voice echoed through the air. Walker could tell it was magical skill. However, he could also tell it might not be the voice of a normal person. Mostly because there was no motion in it. Almost like someone had sent something using a communication crystal and replayed it over and over until it sounded like nothing but words and not the person who started it.

"I am Walker, I will continue on my path whether you like it or not. You will be meeting with me." The booming voice Walker used held significantly more wind mana than what he had heard. He made sure it also sounded a little like a dragon's roar since he had the skills to do that. It carried a complete and irrefutable tone that made it clear of his intention without any desire to retreat.

As he stepped forward again, he heard nothing. He knew that they were still some ways away from the line of thorns and vines he had been warned about. This time though, he could sense that the forest was a little stiffer. The manas were not flowing the same ways that they had just been flowing a moment ago. Even the natural mana appeared unsettled like it was being drawn on to gather somewhere else.

Since he felt it was best to keep himself prepared, Walker also gathered a little more natural mana in to his body. He could feel Fleur stir a little since she had been resting recently in his

spirit mark.

To make things easier, he changed the eternal codex in to a staff to gather manas faster. He wanted to ensure that he would be taken seriously and not ignored when he decided to meet with this witch representing the twelve covens that had threatened his people.

He had a nagging feeling that he would struggle with mana though. Not in controlling it but in utilizing it in the same ways that he normally did. Not that it was a bad feeling, but more of a sense that there was a powerful force elsewhere nearby able to also manipulate manas to a higher degree than average. It made him wary.

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Chapter 2440: Facing A Witch

The creaking of trees came as a larger breeze moved through the area. This drew Walker and the other's focus. The manas were slightly more unsettled as a divide appeared within the endless night forest.

It wasn't as if the trees had been cut away or moved. Intead it was like they had been guided to just simply not grow in the way of the thorny bushing growing in a perfect row. The vines within the bushes were curled up and protecting the toots. Seemingly as if they had been prepared to guard against being cut down in any way shape or form.

'Servant vine

This is a vine made by a witch, it is not a true plant but actually a familiar monster known to serve witches by feeding on their mana. Up to a hundred witches can be found to the same servant vine which allows it to grow powerful guardian abilities. Often, the servant vine will be able to protect their territory so that young witches are not threatened by monsters. Because of the witches defending this ancient monster and binding with it for hundreds of years, it was able to give up its violent natural tendencies and become the servant vine. Its ancestor was known as the mountain breaking thorn, often using its ability to temporarily draw in mana around it to dig in to and absorb nutrients from the very mountains themselves. While it is not used for any medicinal effects, it is very hard to handle since it can

absorb the manas surrounding it and use them to enhance its speed, strength, and toughness. As such, it is an ideal guardian for when larger groups of monsters attempt to invade passed it...' "That's not a plant or a monster, it's a familiar that is bound to the witches. It is a servant vine that can temporarily absorb the manas around it. I believe that will come at some cost since that is dangerous. Most likely the cracks we see on the outer bark are the damaged parts of it that can not handle the amounts of manas it has used."

"I should be able to halt that from happening." Ignus wanted to just burn the thorny vine wall ahead of them entirely. He could manage that easily and would give them the pathway to break in to the endless night forest which was the area for exploration and scouting planned for them anyways.

"Are you dumb? We aren't just burning it all down. Walker just said it's attached to witches as a familiar. You wouldn't go around killing the tamed monsters or familiars in Genesis, right? So let him deal with it." No one looked at Remey as she threatened to smack Ignus, Mordant also held himself back since he knew that Remey was not joking. She wasn't afraid at all of anyone fighting her back.

It was a fair point though, Walker could handle things right now since force was not the first option needed.

Su prepared her shields just in case as Walker began to reach out with his mana senses. When he found the powerful manas attached to the servant vine, he wasn't surprised whatsoever. He knew that powerful magic users should be around and his gout feeling had told him the

same.

The moment his mana touched on the core manas flowing through, Walker felt he had been pushed abc. The entirety of the thorny vine bushes began to move and shiver. It was like they were getting a hundred calls immediately from elsewhere. It made them begin to unravel their vines and prepare.

"The servant vine will attack if it feels a risk has come. Is that what you have warned us of?" Mordant had also seen the danger here and begun preparing himself. Dark mana condensed on his hands, dragon talons extended. He was prepared to take his full dark dragon dominator form if needed. He could easily use a potent dark decaying attack to handle the bushes here.

"This territory is not for you to walk through. Your show of threatening might will be repelled if you dare set foot within the lands of the twelve covens." the words that held a large amount of mana radiated through the air and Walker picked up on the strength of dark and wind mana in them.

He could sense that the one who spoke them had a very powerful hold of their dark and wind affinity. Also that they could provide that mana to the servant vine which was right below her. "So you are one of the witches that threatened our scout when they came looking in to this area. I understand you may have some sort of feelings about your home territory, especially since the mana is returning to the world as it should be, but you made a threat to the entirety of the joined races we gathered. I do not take that lightly."

There was an equal push of dark and wind mana that Walker pulled on to use in those words. He made it clear that he could also influence them and that using those manas to show him force would not have an effect.

"You do not understand. Those who were not buried away by the world's protection do not understand. The flow of manas from the days of creation are flowing. Nature and it's combined-"

"I understand plenty of nature and natural mana. I am even able to influence manas you can not fathom! Grand speeches and assuming force will not tell me what you and your twelve covens is to my people." Walker took a step and pulled at space mana to the best of his ability. When he appeared in the air where the witch was, she dropped her jaw unsure what to say. Looking at her black robes, he could feel the unique mana runes carved on them channeling the dark and wind manas. They were rune formations altered to be easier for this witch to absorb and use mana rather than for general mana to be directed at her. It was a type of personalized rune carving that was very hard to do and few masters could make easily. Meaning that the witches of the twelve covens would be masters in their own right of this art.

"My name is Walker, I am one of the heroes who managed to return the world to the true flow of mana and connect the word to existence properly once again. I have personally assisted in the travel between the elemental planes and the world. I have helped return races from slavery, servitude, and slumber to the waking world. I have assisted in the development of new magic towers and discovery of naturally forming runes. And I, am here to speak with the one you call your leader."

He spoke with the strength and pride of a dragon. Ignus and Mordant raised their heads a little higher understanding that Walker was even being a little humble by not mentioning the myriad of titles that he held. They would have preferred that he spoke and mentioned himself as the nature dragon, but this was fine for the time being. This made the point clear. Another shiver moved through the servant vine

as Walker sensed mana being sent to it. The familiar didn't move though. It calmed down and the witch in front of Walker changed her expression. Her slim body appeared to straighten as if she was a soldier getting an order.

The high witches of the twelve covens accept your entrance in to the the endless night forest. The dragons may not enter. The others with you can not enter. Only the one who can call forth the will of nature is allowed." The way she spoke and a tinge of fear in it. Not for Walker but for those who gave this order.

Just like that, Walker felt he was at an impasse. He had brought everyone with him for a reason. Not to just stand here and wait.

"I will bring three with me. Su, the half dragon true draconic guardian and Remey the dragon soul alchemical brawler. They are Al's hero title holders." Walker gave a glance to Midnight, she could tell what he was asking her.

"Stay and lead the camp." She spoke softly but Walker saw the slight glint in her eyes that told him she understood he wanted her to examine the entirety of the outer edges of this forest. To gain as much information as possible. She knew him well.

"Swear it on your hero titles to come in peace and hold yourself in balance with nature." The voice again came with a slight tinge of fear.

Whatever connected them, Walker knew must hold greater authority. This witch felt the

power of who was ordering her.

"We swear peace while we travel here. That's a pledge from the one who holds the title of true hero." Walker showed through the air and glanced at the witch waiting for her to guide him. It was easy to feel the tension grow in the air.