

## Shadow 671

### Chapter 671: No Hidding

Shocking, wasn't it? They were few among the goddess races that could match demons in pure physical strength.

Unfortunately, humans were not among them. Yes, humans were a tenacious species, but these hairless monkeys were more known for their persistence than their actual physical strength. While they weren't a weak race, they weren't as powerful as demons.

The difference could be narrowed by ranking up. Reaching a new class always boosted overall power, but demons also experienced that boost. Some classes leaned more in different directions as well: some toward speed, some magic, and some sheer power.

So why was a human able to punch a demon, one who was a whole rank higher, away?

This didn't make sense because Manata was a close-range fighter. He was not physically weak. He was also a whole rank higher than the human.

That was the question everyone watching was asking themselves, but sadly no one really had the answer.

Except maybe Damon got lucky, and the demon held back.

Damon, on the other hand, felt a headache. His vision blurred slightly, not from the impact of the attack but from his own wounds.

His vision was hindered. Damon dived to the side as a sharp bone spike shot out from the ground. He swung his sword, clashing with a demon heir who used a short dagger to slash at his back. Damon responded by punching her straight in the gut.

Shooting his omnidirectional gear, he pulled himself toward Waton, who was struggling against another demon.

With a slash of his sword, Damon cut deep into his back, blood spilling across his face. He was careful not to kill him. Flipping over his head, he kicked him toward another demon charging him.

He grabbed Waton, who was already injured, and leapt into a tree just as a massive bone hand shot from Kashi, the demon necromancer.

Damon climbed all the way up to a high branch and stopped, blood trickling down his nose. Waton dangled in his grip, held by the collar like a sack.

Kashi paused, staring at Damon. The magic orbs broadcasting to the outside world hovered as he raised his hand, signaling the other demon heirs to stop attacking.

"You're bleeding... but none of us managed to even touch you." His glowing eyes narrowed before a slight smile formed on his face.

"I see, so that's what it was. You're injured."

Manata narrowed his eyes with a grin.

"Haha, so his clash against me injured him."

Kashi shook his head slowly.

"No, that's not it. He was injured from the get-go. His soul is badly damaged. He was like that before we even began fighting."

He glanced at Damon, who was struggling to even see properly, his vision swimming under a wave of dizziness.

"Isn't that right... human?"

Damon chuckled, smiling faintly.

"You're not wrong... I am badly injured. But I think that's fair. Otherwise, you minnows would already be dead."

Manata sneered, his tone dripping with contempt. He felt this human was nothing but a boastful fool who had only gotten lucky.

Why else would he call them small fish?

"I promise you will die today, human."

Damon sighed, annoyed with this demon. He wasn't supposed to kill them due to his quest, however he had found a loophole that could be exploited... two actually, though the first one was less risky.

Reaching into his shadow storage once more, Damon pulled out an ordinary black blindfold.

"I am injured, that much is true. But even if I was one foot in the grave, you still wouldn't be a match for me."

He looked down at them with a small smile on his face.

"I feel sorry for you being born in the same era as me."

With those words, he moved the blindfold over his eyes and closed them. The sheer disdain in his voice shocked everyone watching.

The level of arrogance and madness it took to wear a blindfold when facing such powerful enemies was unthinkable.

But Damon wasn't doing it out of arrogance. His eyes were failing him, his head buzzing, and this was the only way. He had to rely on the one sense he could trust: his sixth sense, his shadow perception.

"Wagon, stay on the tree and just cast. No need to worry about anything, just blast any magic or skill you can."

He dropped Waton onto the branch.

The young prince trembled, his legs weak.

"Bu.... okay, okay...."

Damon nodded with a smile.

"If it looks like they'll get past me, you're free to fly away to another branch. Just don't leave the trees."

Waton nodded, suddenly remembering the wings folded on his back. After all, he was a fae.

Spreading them open, he watched as Damon jumped down from the tree. The blindfold covered his eyes, the broken sword released from his grip. Blood still coated its surface.

He sighed.

"Ahhh, this is annoying..." He scratched his head, knowing it was troublesome, but it was the only way he could fight without dying.

Running away was an option, but retreating like a coward wasn't. Not that the demons would let him anyway. They could fly. He could not.

He glanced at the hovering magic orbs, making sure he was visible and being broadcast to the outside.

"Finders keepers." He muttered to himself.

Manata sneered, charging Damon with two demons flanking him, one wielding a halberd.

"I'm about to make you go through some excruciating pain."

Yes, the quest said Damon couldn't kill them, but it didn't say anything about maiming or crippling them.

Naturally, he had the best anti-demon weapon. It was just troublesome to use. But he couldn't care less right now. That was future Damon's problem.

As Manata's fist came flying toward him, Damon rolled under the demon's arm, springing up behind another demon. His blade flashed silver, and the demon froze. His wide eyes stared down as his legs were sliced clean off.

"Ahhh... ahhhhhhggggggggghhh!"

The demon's scream of agony echoed as Damon stood tall, two silver blades gleaming in his hands.

This was the best anti-demon weapon.

As soon as Damon revealed it, the old man from the Silver Glades stood up, losing his composure completely.

"The Silver Blades... he has the Silver Blades!"

Paimon frowned, then let out a chuckle.

"The heirloom of the Halls of Steel... hmm, interesting."

Chapter 672: No, We Are Grey

[Silver Blades]

[Type] Weapon

[Description]:

Forged in wartime, the Silver Blades are passed from master to apprentice—heirlooms of the Silver Glades. Their power holds symbolic weight and ceremonial meaning.

[Effects]:

Hidden Blade – Can morph into swords.

Demon Slayer – Deals deathly damage to demons and dark entities.

Charm Caster – Can be used as a charm, giving other weapons its effect.

This was a weapon designed by the Silver Glades to kill demons, and its purpose was to do just that. It was forged after Ashcroft's invasion of the Verdant Continent.

The Silver Glades lay by the sea, so they were the first to feel the brunt of Ashcroft's attack, and thousands of elves died during his invasion. Till this day, the Silver Glades remained more of a militant region. Whoever held this weapon was, in a sense, carrying the burden of the Silver Glades.

It was passed from master to student, and Damon had gotten it from Back to Back, who had given it to him.

To put it simply, Back to Back was actually trying to screw Damon over by asking him to deliver it to the Silver Glades.

Damon hadn't gone to the Silver Glades, but the elves of the Silver Glades were here watching. Damon would be damned if he hid a weapon that could save his life just because some people might see it and cause trouble for him later.

He didn't want any smoke. No, Damon wanted an inferno.

For that reason, he had sliced the legs of the demon. This was an anti-demon weapon.

It didn't do much against Ashcroft when he had actually fought him, but it still helped a little.

Before the demon could react, Damon turned toward the girl with daggers in her hands.

She slashed at him, magic streaking past her blades. Her face contorted with fury as she closed in.

Damon fainted sideways then slashed at her, blocking her blade with his own before spinning. With a wounded tiger's desperation, he swung at her vitals.

Their two weapons clashed in split seconds, sparks flying.

Damon swept under her feet, following with a double kick as he tried to dodge her counter.

He rolled away just in time from bone spikes conjured by Kashi.

His danger sense exploded as he raised his swords and slashed behind him, barely in time for his blades to cross and block the fist of Manata. Using his attribute, the young demon made the ground in front of Damon rot and decay, but the Silver Blades held firm.

Still, the impact sent Damon skidding back a few steps. His arms shook from the force.

The other demons would have swarmed Damon, but it seemed Waton wasn't completely useless.

He unleashed his time magic, a minor nuisance but effective enough to slow the battle.

Randomly, he disrupted time around the demons, slowing some of them while boosting his own speed.

He leapt from tree to tree, gliding to avoid the demon chasing him.

Along with Damon's dealers hand supporting him.

The trees above Damon exploded, wrecked by arrows fired by the demon woman, each one detonating as Waton frantically darted away.

Damon gritted his teeth, shooting his omnidirectional gear upward.

The hooks latched, and he pulled himself into the trees, catching Waton midair while drawing in ragged breaths. A cough tore from his chest, blood streaming from his nose. He was at his limit.

At least with this body.

It was time for the second option.

Waton let himself be dragged by Damon until they landed on a thick branch high in the trees. But the demons were faster.

They flew after them, surrounding the pair on all sides.

Even the demon Damon had cut the legs off landed nearby, hovering midair with grim determination. He didn't need legs to fly. His tenacity was impressive, as was the hate burning in his eyes.

"You can stop time, right?" Damon asked Waton in a whisper, his gaze never leaving the circle of enemies.

Waton shook his head. His mouth streaked with blood, his soot-stained face trembling with fear.

"I... I can't stop time. I can slow it down on individuals, but the stronger they are, the more damage it does to me... I can also boost my speed by increasing my time."

His voice cracked, heavy with dread. He bit his lip.

"My... final skill is just a better version of my first one. It... I can't use that one...."

Damon grabbed him by the collar, dragging his face close.

"That's fine. I just need you to slow down time on that guy."

He jerked his chin toward Manata.

Weaving between two demons slashing at him, Damon swung away with Waton, bouncing off a tree branch with his gear.

Waton bit his lips until they bled.

"He's... he's too strong. I can't...."

Damon stabbed his blades into the side of a higher tree as he evaded another volley of attacks. He was a second too slow this time, and one graze cut across his side.

"Good. It means you can."

He glanced at Waton with a small smile, letting him fly on his own as Damon clung to the tree.

"I'll be counting on you. All I need is a moment... a moment after I beat him."

Waton was confused, panic rising. "If you can beat him, why do you need me to slow down his time?"

Damon chuckled, though blood dripped from the corner of his mouth.

"You'll see."

He inhaled deeply, crouching on a branch as if to loosen his muscles. He pointed his blades at Manata.

Pain jolted through his battered body as he activated his preparations. This was a gamble, but he was certain he would succeed.

He shot the hooks of his gear onto the branch beneath his feet, then propelled himself forward like a projectile.

Bones shot out from Kashi as he tried to intercept Damon. Spinning midair, Damon slashed them apart.

Blood poured from his nose as he collapsed into shadows, sliding through them until he appeared in the shadow of a tree directly beside Manata. The demon's eyes went wide.

"He can teleport...."

All he saw was Damon's dark eyes before a heavy kick smashed into his chest. Both of them plummeted.

Damon drove his blades downward, pinning Manata as they crashed to the ground with a violent impact. A thin translucent string of web line shot from Damon's hand as he grabbed Manata's head, forcing it down with him.

The ground shook as they hit.

When the dust cleared, Manata's body was twitching, his attribute still rotting Damon's armor in several places. Damon's breathing was ragged, his body broken.

Waton saw his chance. He clenched his fists and activated his magic, slowing Manata's time just as Damon had asked.

Damon gritted his teeth, holding the demon's head in both hands despite his ruined body. His aura surged, dread manifesting into reality.

[Omen Of Dread]

"I have vanquished you, Manata Astaroth. Your vessel is mine."

With those words, Damon activated his skill: Soul Conduit.

At the same time, the enchantment of his crown flared—Empty Throne.

Damon's body immediately collapsed, and Manata moved in, seizing him.

Waton's heart sank. Despair gripped him. Damon had been defeated.

Kashi descended with a triumphant grin.

"We... we won. It seems he burned himself out."

Manata smiled, but the smile was wrong. Twisted.

"I'm still here, fool."

The entire battlefield froze in horror. Even the spectators outside the barrier fell silent.

Kashi's face drained of color. His lips trembled.

"You... you... you aren't Manata...."

The demon raised his hand, and Damon's sword flew into it as if called.

"I am... no, we are Grey." Both voices spoke at once, cold and final.

#### Chapter 673: Arrogant Fools

It was easier than Damon thought. In fact, too easy. When he began, his seed of depravity had just forced Manata's soul quiet.

His soul was damaged to begin with, and he honestly didn't really stand a chance, but it turned out hiding his shadow clone in Manata's shadow would help. Now he could appear as Amon if he needed to.

[Skill: Soul Conduit]

[Description:]

From the depths of the soul, fine threads are spun — each a fragment of the weaver's will. These ethereal strands form an unseen network, binding every soul they touch. Once drawn in, escape is impossible — you are part of the conduit now.

[Effect:]

Souls ensnared can be guided, restrained, or possessed, their essence echoing the weaver's command. Freedom comes only by severing every strand.

[Cooldown:]

0 seconds

This was the skill he used to begin the mental invasion, then finished it off with the use of the Pale Crown's enchantment.

Empty Throne – Dominate the mind of the weak-willed, turning them into a puppet... or possess their body, creating extensions of your ego.

However, let's not forget Damon's soul was damaged. So the question was, how did he pull it off?

The answer was simple, it wasn't his main body that was controlling the possession. It was actually his shadow clone that he had hidden inside Manata's shadow when he body-slammed him from the air.

This was Damon's plan. He wasn't allowed to kill them, but he also didn't want to just run away.

Though he had nothing against walking away from them, maybe Damon underestimated the terror of what he had done. This had to be the single most terrifying thing a human had ever done to a demon.

In tales and folklore, demons were the ones possessing humans. So how could a human possessing a demon not be terrifying?

Kashi and the other demons subconsciously took a step back, while on the outside, the world was once again silenced by the sheer terror that was Damon Grey.

"By the Goddess..." someone gasped, their eyes wide with shock.

"He... he... how did he take over a demon's body?"

"He took the demon's body!"

"That's.... that's not possible!"

Confused and fearful voices echoed all around.

The Grand Duke narrowed his eyes, watching Damon carefully. His gaze was sharp and calculating.

Luna's eyes widened, but upon seeing the demons' weariness and expressions of horror, she smiled lightly, a faint gleam of amusement flickering in her eyes.

Paimon furrowed her brows, her expression showing a hint of confusion uncharacteristic of her then it turned into a knowing smile.

"Right, I remember now... that's the Crown of Lysithara."

"I believe it's called the Pale Crown."

Paimon smiled, showing off her knowledge in order to make the goddess races look ignorant.

"It supposedly has an enchantment that allows the user to possess or control the body of whoever they defeat."

She glanced at the Temple representatives with a faint, taunting smile.

"During the Second Epoch, it is believed Lord Ashcroft fought against the Ruler of Lysithara, who used the enchantment. And after Lord Ashcroft defeated him, he was inspired to create Mind Dominate."

"Which was far better than the Empty Throne."

Aurelius Venn clicked his tongue, his pride pricked. He couldn't allow the Temple to lose face to a demon in front of everyone.

"However, Ashcroft didn't actually manage to defeat the Ruler of Lysithara, did he? And this armor was inherited by the goddess races as well as its great power. In fact, all the Ascendant Armors were."

He leaned back slightly, his posture confident, showing he was no fool when it came to the armor and its function.

After all, the Temple had offered Damon several billion zeni for his armor, but he refused. Aurelius had planned to make another after the war games anyway. And if the boy still refused... well, he might just get into an accident.

"Though it has some flaws when it comes to possession," Aurelius continued, "the resistance of the opponent's soul is a factor. And even if you got past that, using an unfamiliar body is difficult."

Paimon smiled but didn't say anything further. The Temple was now trying to make the armor sound like a holy relic, but this minor problem didn't know that the Ascendant Armors were designed in service of the Unknown God.

'Arrogant Fools'

"Damon Grey..." Paimon whispered his name softly. Her eyes glowed faintly as she watched him. He was a very interesting human.

'The boy with the Pale Crown and the Silver Blades... an anti-demon fighter... should I... kill him?'

Inside the arena world, Kashi watched Damon or rather, Manata's body with fear in his eyes.

"What... what the hell was that?"

He hadn't summoned any of his minions yet because he felt no need to. This enemy had completely rattled him.

Damon was still inspecting his new body, clenching and unclenching his fists. The muscles tensed with power, but the body was slightly damaged from Damon's previous attacks.

"Hmmm... I'm in some degree of pain..." he muttered, glancing at the blood pouring from Manata's body.

Then he smiled faintly. "Well, that's fine. I do pack quite a punch, after all."

He turned his head upward.

"Wagon, stop staring like you've never seen a guy possess a demon, and let's get going."

Waton was still stupefied, frozen in disbelief. He was too afraid to come down what if the demon was only pretending?

Damon sighed as his original body stood up shakily, waving his hand lazily at Waton.

"Come on, let's go."

Waton glided down, still trembling, looking at Damon and the possessed demon standing side by side.

Damon stretched a bit, his movements relaxed and careless.

"Well, I'm beat... I'll leave you guys to it."

With that, he turned around and walked away, a casual expression on his bleeding face.

Kashi raised his hand as if to stop him, confusion written all over his face.

Then Damon paused mid-step, turning back with a sinister smile.

"Before I forget... that Manata Astaroth guy is still in there. If you kill that body, well... he's dead."

His grin deepened. He knew he was planting chaos among them, knowing full well the political storm this would cause demons forced to kill one of their own.

Watson was eager to leave, disappearing alongside Damon from sight.

The demons turned toward the possessed Manata, unease spreading among them.

"Shall we begin, gentlemen? Let me experience... the body of a demon."

Before they could react, he slammed his fist into a demon, sending her flying across the arena.

He looked at his hand, dark energy rippling through it, carrying an aura of decay and rot.

"Hmmm... I can also use his skills and attribute. Interesting."

#### Chapter 674: More Heroic

Kashi was sure of it. This was troublesome. This guy was really terrifying. He could feel his hands trembling, but he wouldn't let that stop him.

"Tch, damn human..."

Damon smiled in Manata's body, raising his fist. Looking at it, he sighed with a disappointed expression.

"This body is so much weaker than mine..."

Kashi bit his lip as he pulled out a bone staff.

"Manata, if you're still in there, fight him!"

Damon chuckled softly.

"How hopeful. But he is quiet... he can't even resist... no, he dares not."

He spread the demon wings of this unfamiliar body and dashed toward another demon heir.

His fist collided with their magic, but Manata's decay attribute was powerful. The force of impact pushed them both back as the others regained their senses and began attacking.

Arrows flew toward Damon from an archer gliding through the trees.

Damon smiled coldly as he flipped and dodged, but an arrow still grazed him. He didn't have any of his usual skills since this wasn't his actual body.

'Think I understand how Ashcroft felt trapped in a goblin's body...'

He was unable to use any of his personal skills, only spells.

As soon as Damon reached that train of thought, he smiled. Yes, spells that weren't exclusive to his body.

He grabbed a tree, kicked it, and sent it crashing toward another demon heir who was preparing a flame spell. Damon waved his hand, unleashing a wave of decay that destroyed a wall of bones conjured by Kashi.

He glanced at the demon youth.

"I understand now why this Manata never used a weapon..."

Damon dodged a jaw of bones that lunged at him from the side as Kashi unleashed more spells. From the bones Damon shattered, Kashi forged soldiers made of bone, each wielding arrows.

Kashi's expression grew serious.

"Are you holding back?" Damon asked, noticing that Kashi hadn't unleashed his full undead army.

"You're afraid of killing poor little Manata... fine, it's your funeral."

Damon raised his hand, and from his fingers, a gray-black sphere of magic formed. With a loud crack, it shot forward, striking the wings of a demon in the back. The moment it made contact, the wings began to rot and decay, eaten away by the magic bullet's rot.

Damon's eyes flickered.

'Hmm, that was more destructive than mine... so this is what an actual offensive attribute can do when combined with my spell.'

His thoughts aside, his actions made each of them pause. The demon archer glanced at the others, her eyes wide.

"Manata couldn't do that..." Her voice trembled with fear. This guy had taken over Manata's body, but he was using it effortlessly. No, he was dominating.

Kashi bit his lip. "Surround him! We have to capture him!"

Before he finished his words, Damon vanished with a sonic boom. He appeared in front of the demon archer, raising his hand with a smirk.

"You're annoying... down you go."

The moment she noticed him closing in, she loosed a volley of arrows, but Damon unleashed Manata's decay magic. A wave of rot dissolved the projectiles midair.

Flapping his demon wings, he closed the distance. The archer tried to fly higher, desperate to escape, but Damon followed, evading attacks coming from below.

She gritted her teeth in fear, swinging her bow wildly at him.

"Stay away from me, you monster!"

Damon smiled maniacally as he caught her bow with one hand, the weapon crumbling in his grip as decay consumed it. The runes faded, and the metal turned to ash.

Her face paled as Damon reached for her, knowing what would happen the moment he touched her.

Death was here. Death came in the form of a monster who could wear other people's skins and use their power against their allies.

He reached for her, causing her to close her eyes in resignation. Tears touched the corners of her eyes as the fear of death overwhelmed her.

Damon grabbed both her arms and unleashed decay through them. Rot spread instantly, devouring her fair skin.

Her flesh turned moldy, her blood thickened into black sludge, and her skin shriveled like dried parchment. Bones snapped as her ruined arms failed to hold her weight. She crashed to the ground, screaming at the absence of her limbs.

Her eyes widened in horror as she looked up at the monster hovering above, staring down at her like she didn't even matter.

Fear consumed her entirely, a suffocating dread that left her frozen.

With a thud, she hit the ground, coughing. Then she went still, not because she was dead, but because she was too terrified to move. She didn't want to live. She just wanted to escape this nightmare.

Damon didn't pay her any mind. His quest didn't allow him to kill them anyway, and the world was watching. He had to maim them, then lose convincingly so it wouldn't look like he had spared the demons.

He looked at his hands thoughtfully.

"I can see why he didn't use weapons. Any blade he holds would decay."

He smiled, glancing at Kashi.

"It's not like I have an indestructible weapon lying around..."

He raised his hand, and a broken sword flew into his grip as if answering his call.

"Good thing I happen to have one."

Before their horrified eyes, the broken sword began to channel the decay attribute through its edge. Damon smiled, laughing like a sinister devil.

Well, his dealer's hand was used to channel Ashborn's power. No surprise it could also handle decay. Besides, it would never break as long as he lived.

With a single motion, he swooped down and released a gray-black slash. The sword cut through the air, slicing their wings and limbs apart in one strike as they fell.

Damon landed softly, his expression cold.

"[Dark Blade]."

Their bodies followed, groans echoing through the forest.

Kashi stood there in horror, his hands trembling.

"Ho... how... that was one strike..."

He looked down at his allies, still alive but mutilated.

"I... I see now... you aren't trying to kill us. You want to disgrace and mutilate us. You find amusement in cutting us to pieces, don't you? You must really hate demonkind..."

Damon didn't say anything. If anything, he was grateful to Kashi for giving him such a convenient explanation for his actions.

Now no one would suspect why he wasn't killing them.

Damon smiled faintly, his face twisting into one of hatred. Yes, this was the perfect script for him as a hero.

"My parents were killed by demons. Do not hope for a quick death from me... suffer as they have."

He held his dealer's hand tightly as the magic orbs captured the deep, hateful voice of an avenger.

"I wish to slaughter all demonkind... and you are next."

Damon almost patted himself on the back for such momentous acting. The world was watching after all.

Kashi bit his lip.

"You want to slaughter an entire race... that's genocide."

Damon chuckled, knowing his next words would earn him favor with the Temple.

"No. It's purification."

Kashi gritted his teeth.

"I see... then I must fight you with all my power. Someone like you has to be stopped... I will stop you!"

'Wait hold on a minute...why does he sound more heroic than me?'

Chapter 675: Bone Legion

Damon's declaration was heard by all the people outside, and to no one's surprise, everyone cheered for him.

"Kill them all... yeahhh!"

"Wipe out the dirty demons!"

"I always knew he was a tragic guy. Turns out his parents got killed by demons."

"My brother too... I hate them so much."

"We need people like him, someone who isn't all talk but actually wants to kill demons."

"Yeah, he's a true hero of the goddess races!"

"Burn them, burn them all, even the little demons... they should never grow!"

Sentiments that were too cruel even to touch those who were innocent. How much had the public perception of demons been skewed?

Paimon narrowed her eyes, her expression turning grave.

The goddess races were still as cruel as she remembered. Someone like Damon Grey was even crueler than the rest.

In the floating pavilion, Luna smiled faintly as her brother maimed the demon heirs. Even though he was in a demon's body, at least he was destroying them.

She was sure he hated demons. After all, these creatures had been the reason they suffered.

On the temple's side, Father Dantalion's eyes narrowed slightly; however, Aurelius Venn laughed with a hint of approval.

"Yes, we goddess races will cleanse the world of the impure demons."

The cheers and claps soon turned into a chant.

"Death! Death to the demon race! Death! Death!"

Damon didn't realize his actions had now led to a wave of anti-demon sentiments, and he had massively succeeded in making himself a great enemy of demonkind.

The world was watching him, watching how he would bring down his fury, driven by hate, upon demons.

Damon had always wondered why heroes were always those who wielded weapons and went to war. Why were they the ones who got statues built for them and had large pages in the history books?

Why didn't those pages go to the kind healers who mended wounds? Why not to the great alchemists who made potions that healed people?

Why not to the wise sages who spread their knowledge and banished ignorance?

This world was so twisted.

Paimon, coincidentally, shared the same train of thought.

But more importantly... she glanced up at the sky.

"Why have I been made to come here..."

Paimon seemed to be clicking her thoughts together, but she didn't know why she had been made to take such a risk. All she could do was watch.

Damon tasted the blood in his mouth as he faced off against the last demon still alive. He saw a righteous anger in Kashi's eyes.

"You want to kill all demonkind because your parents died in a war? Tell me, if a Fae killed your parents, would you want to kill all fae kind?"

Honestly, Damon didn't really care for Kashi's words. His parents' killer was actually a human, and he had already gotten his revenge. All this was just theatrics.

Still, he had to play the role. Not long ago, he was sure Lilith had made the same argument, but back then, he didn't know his parents' killer, only believing they had died in the war.

"Humans are of the goddess race. I will allow the goddess to punish them. Your kind are wretches who worship an imaginary god that may not even exist."

Kashi sneered as his aura flared.

"I see, so in the end it all comes down to religion. We are killing each other over religion. Is religion more important than a person's life?"

He pointed his staff at Damon, his voice trembling with fury.

"We don't even worship the Unknown God. He has no temple. Even the snake temple that bears his symbols is just a temple of the goddess! So why the hate? You say demons killed your parents... that's laughable!"

He gasped, his heart speeding up with raw emotion that Damon could almost hear in his voice.

"My whole family was slaughtered by you goddess races! My mother was violated by your kind... even after she was dead... my sister, my father, my brother... you think your hate is justified?"

Damon clenched his fist. He had never heard a demon speak with so much emotion.

Kashi squeezed his staff tighter.

"I can't allow you to win. If I do, more people are going to end up like me."

Damon narrowed his eyes with a thin smile, doing his best to make sure it didn't falter.

"So what, you want to wipe out all humans?"

Kashi shook his head as magic seals began to spread all around them.

"No... because I do not hate. I have learned to let go. I have forgiven... not because they deserve it, but because I want peace."

His words struck a chord in Damon's heart.

He forgave? What did that even mean? Damon had never forgiven. He had never forgotten, and he had never been able to let anything go.

Why was this person, who had watched this horror happen to his family, able to let go?

'Peace... no conflict... this is a world of war. How can he know peace?'

Damon squeezed his sword in his hand tighter. It had broken when his father died against the claws of a lesser demon.

"You remind me of someone I know. She was a girl I thought foolish for her ideals. Justice without strength is a lie, and so is forgiveness. You only perpetuate the weakness that allowed them to hurt you."

Damon felt irritated by his words.

"All that talk about forgiveness, and here you are holding a weapon of violence. Hypocrite."

Kashi's eyes were cold, as though he was holding back his fear.

"My first class is Corpse Collector. I gained it from picking up the remains of my family."

He took a step forward, his staff glowing faintly.

"My second class is Grave Keeper... because I couldn't leave them behind."

With his third and final step, he raised his staff.

"My third class is Merciful Necromancer... because I couldn't let them go. I chose to bring them back. I am the one who unveils death.... I am the healer who is always late. "

With those words, the magic seals all began to open as different entities began to appear from the glowing circles.

Undead. One by one, they began to fill the forest.

"This is my skill... Bone Legion."

Chapter 676: Familiar Title

It was an expression of his will, a proof of his path. This was why he had earned a unique class, because when it all came down to it, when everything in his life had fallen, Kashi had learned. He had grown. He was the healer who never made it in time, all he could do was bring back the dead.

In a sense, was that not what a necromancer was? Someone who did what a healer could not, bring back the dead.

While he did not have the power to completely undo death, one day he hoped he would have access to the legendary resurrection spells Lady Paimon had told him about.

Beyond the veil of the world of Aetherus, out there in the heavens in the realm of gods, there was a magic that made resurrection... possible.

Perhaps that was why he found the ability to forgive. But there was also a chance he would never achieve it. That was fine.

"At least I gave it my everything..."

That was more than enough, knowing he had fought with everything he was.

"Manata, I'm sorry I couldn't save you..."

Damon watched as legions of entities emerged from Kashi's magic circle. The face of Kashi grew paler as mana was drained out of him at a frightening rate.

This legion of bones could not be maintained for long, not with his mana levels.

Skeleton soldiers wielding low-level weapons rose from the circle. Undead corpses shambled forward, monsters of all sizes and races, their hollow eyes glowing faintly.

But what truly stood out to Damon were the specters and shades. On a side note, what made him uneasy wasn't their numbers, it was the undead knight and the goddamn lich.

It didn't seem to be a low-tier lich either. Its phylactery was damaged, sealed under a complex rune structure, which made it evident that Kashi hadn't sealed it himself. Someone had helped him. Still, he had some degree of control over it.

That was his trump card.

Kashi pointed his staff forward. His voice shook slightly but carried firm command.

"March, Bone Legion."

The sounds of bones clanging echoed out as Damon watched the small army begin their march toward him. In truth, he was surrounded.

There was no smell of decay, even with so many undead crowding around him. Damon sighed, his eyes narrowing in mild annoyance.

This was troublesome. He didn't have the firepower right now. If this was his body, he would simply spam his Ashborn skill and burn everything down. But this body belonged to Manata, and Damon was finding out the hard way...

This body didn't have enough mana. That was the problem. Damon never really thought about trivial things like conserving mana in a fight, simply because he always had so much of it.

Fine.

Now, well... he was having a hard time.

'Hmmm... I can't launch the Magic Gatling, but maybe I can improve... the spell... no...'

That wouldn't work.

'What if I use the next level of Brightwater sword techniques...'

He moved to the side as arrows whistled through the air toward him, grazing his cheek.

'No... I just need to take down the necromancer.'

Damon smiled with dark glee.

"Let's see how powerful this body is."

With a reckless charge forward, he met the army of undead head-on. The lich raised its hand, a blast of ice magic shooting toward him. Damon raised his hand and punched through it.

"I have ice resistance..."

Oh... it was only after he did that he realized this wasn't his body. It didn't have ice resistance.

Well, that didn't matter. He unleashed the decay attribute, shattering the ice and plowing through the ranks of the undead.

This body was slower than his own. He couldn't teleport. However, he could still fly, and he could still decay everything around him.

Damon swung his sword.

[Dark Blade]

Even without his body, Damon was still someone who knew Lysithara's swordplay.

Within the reach of his blade, nothing could touch him. His eyes were wide, focused, and alive with destructive will as he pushed Manata's body to its limit.

Bones cracked and muscles tore under the strain of Damon's brutal combat style, forcing the fragile vessel beyond human capacity... or in this case demon capacity.

As Damon spun around, blocking and attacking in the same motion, his arms and abdomen began to bleed. The bones groaned, the muscles ripped. Even with demonic vitality, this was simply abuse.

Damon slammed his fist into a large four-armed undead beast, its rotting fangs biting into his arm and ripping it clean off.

He laughed as he destroyed it.

"Don't you know, Kashi... the dead rot faster than the living..."

Kashi gritted his teeth as he watched Damon close the distance. Even as he was swarmed, the undead army was tossed aside like paper before a storm. The sheer intensity in those eyes sent chills down his spine.

Those were Manata's eyes, his body, but the gaze was unfamiliar. This arrogance... this domineering will... this was not Manata.

"You... you usurper... leave Manata's 's body and I'll let you leave!"

Damon grabbed the skull of a skeleton and crushed it in his hand. One of his eyes had been slashed by a stray blade, he hadn't dodged fast enough.

"You'll let me go? How cute... you're next."

Raising his hand, he prepared to cut through the final few meters, the lich still hurling ice blasts that froze everything around them. Damon raised his hand again.

[Magic Gatling]

Around him, not just from his hands, but all around his body magic bullets began to appear.

The beads of destruction blasted forward with deafening explosions, tearing through the undead ranks.

The wave of bullets carved a path of ruin and decay straight toward Kashi. That was all Damon needed.

With a massive sonic boom, he shot forward, astral winds flaring behind him. His sword slashed, kicking the lich aside as he appeared in front of Kashi, sword poised to strike off his head.

"The difference between me and you is that I don't forgive. I always get my recompense. You hesitated because you didn't want to kill your comrade. That hesitation is why you'll all die."

Kashi bit his lips and closed his eyes, the sword coming down on him.

He couldn't dodge, this was his death.

Ahhh... he heard a groan... but it didn't come from him.

He opened his eyes, and what he saw shocked him.

Someone was standing there, his hand gripping the back of Manata's head.

The entity was incomprehensible—a faceless being, its form a shifting mass of light, mist and shadow.

Then it spoke, still holding Manata's head.

"Be gone from this vessel, foul creature."

With a snapping sound, he dropped Manata's body. The presence of Damon Grey vanished instantly.

It happened so quickly that Damon, within Manata, wouldn't even have seen who struck him out.

Full of fear and awe, Kashi trembled, staring at the indescribable entity.

Manata groaned as he opened his eyes, having regained his body and will. Kashi's fear deepened even more as he looked at the being standing over them.

"Wh... who are you..."

The entity did not react. It stood there, still and silent, like a lone ruler.

Then it spoke.

"I am Amon."

Chapter 677: Nay

Somewhere a fair distance away from where he had been fighting, Damon had made significant headway with Waton flying them past the dangers.

The region began to change, the forest growing thinner. Suddenly, Damon stopped, snapping his head in the direction they had come from. He fell to his knees, coughing up blood and clutching his chest.

Gritting his teeth, the blood soaking his hands red, he groaned as the mock pain burned through his body. Waton quickly rushed to his side, panic showing in his wide eyes.

"Ar... are yah okay? Did your injuries get worse?"

Damon swallowed hard, the metallic taste of blood thick on his tongue. His magic orbs hovered beside him, broadcasting his condition as his voice turned cold as ice.

"Someone managed to destroy my hold on that demon."

His dark eyes flared with fury, the killing intent within him making the shadows around seem darker, heavier.

Watson paled, finding it hard to breathe under the weight of Damon's presence.

"Sh... should we go back?"

Damon closed his eyes, forcing himself to stand with a cold, distant expression. He reached into his shadow and pulled back his dealer's hand despite the vast distance between them.

"No, there's no need. Whoever it is will have to meet me soon... before this part of the war game ends."

He touched the blood on his lips, staring at the red stain on his palm.

"Besides, I'm in no condition to fight. I must recover... and hopefully push myself into the third class before then."

Watson watched him closely, his lips trembling.

"What happens if we don't meet any of those conditions?"

It was clear to Watson that his own safety heavily depended on Damon being able to fight.

Damon shrugged, glancing at the magic orbs hovering beside them.

"Nothing to me. Well, you might die," Damon said with a faint grin, half a joke, half a truth.

"Huh...."

"Relax, I'll protect you. So leave it all to me. After all, I'm a merchant in blood, dealer in death."

Watson followed as Damon began to walk away from the scene, his heart filled with a strange mix of fear and gratitude for the man who had saved his life.

Damon paused mid-step.

"Ahem, hey... you wouldn't happen to know how to discover your third class, right? I can see the way, just don't have the right class."

Watson blinked, confused.

"Huh? You don't know? Try meditating."

Damon rolled his eyes, clearly not taking him seriously.

Outside, while the world watched the overwhelming mystery that was Amon...

"What's that... I can't tell what it is."

"Is it a person... a faceless entity?"

A collective gasp spread through the spectators.

"I know! I heard the rumors. That's the thing that killed Lord Godric Ravenscroft, in Ravenscroft domain no less!"

"I heard it was right in his chambers!"

"The Grand Duke supposedly destroyed this Amon... but clearly, that was a lie!"

"Amon must be a demon!"

Grand Duke Godwin Corbin Ravenscroft stood up with trembling hands, his voice thick with venom.

"Amon!!"

How much anger must he have felt seeing this entity? He took a single step forward, and within the same breath he was above the arena. With a massive echo that shook the sky, he slammed his palm against the barrier.

It didn't break.

"Calm yourself." Kronos stepped forward, his tone sharp.

"It is unwise to break that barrier. If you do, the whole dungeon gate will collapse and everyone inside will die—including your one grandson who is still alive."

Corbin gritted his teeth, realizing he had lost himself to rage. His breathing slowed as he forced himself to calm down.

His gaze turned toward Paimon. She was the only logical answer as to why Amon was there.

"Was this your plan, Paimon? To sneak one of your demon lords inside the arena?"

Paimon was just as confused as they were. She didn't even know this Amon. His name indeed belonged to one of the demon lords, but coincidences like Lilith Astranova already existed.

"Hahaha... my, I have no idea what you're talking about. If Lord Amon can enter, then it means he had his own means. Who am I to stop him? I came here on my own, yet you suspect me?"

She turned to Corbin, her tone laced with mockery.

"Tell me, Godwin the Singularity, do you really think a lowly woman like me can command all the demon lords? I can't stop them from acting on their intents. And even if I could, Amon may not even be one of us."

Her words neither accepted nor denied anything. First, she called him Lord Amon, then distanced herself completely.

The crowd continued to buzz with speculation, feeding on the little information they had. Paimon gained nothing from their noise. She was as lost about Amon as anyone else.

Grand Duke Brightwater appeared in a spark of radiant light.

"Corbin, I understand how you feel. Losing a child is painful, but we must not let our anger consume us."

He glanced toward the projection, clenching his fist tightly.

"I understand this anger... to fail to kill an enemy in your own home. I too have failed to kill this Amon. However, he is not immortal, of that I am sure."

His words nearly made Paimon gasp. Two Grand Dukes failed to kill him.... Was this the reason she had been made to come here? Was Amon her true goal?

'Unknown God... what is your will?' she thought.

Corbin took a deep breath as his son, Aspen, shook his head, silently urging his father not to cause any more of a commotion.

"If he's in there, then his power would be restricted to the third class at most," Aspen said calmly. His face was stalwart, the expression of a man who only spoke when necessary.

"We are unable to determine his identity or rank, but seeing him being unkillable, he must have a true body hidden somewhere. If we find it, we will kill it."

His gaze fixed coldly on Paimon, who chuckled softly.

"If," she replied mockingly, her tone sharp despite her serene, nun-like appearance.

The emperor, Kronos, picked up an artifact, his expression hardening.

"I shall make a declaration to those participants... a bounty on Amon's head."

"Whoever kills the unknown ruler shall be rewarded. Are we all in agreement?"

"Aye."

"Aye."

Everyone present who was a ruler agreed and cast their vote.

"Nay."

Paimon smiled faintly, raising her hand. All eyes turned toward her. She chuckled softly.

"Oh, sorry, sorry. I forgot I wasn't one of you. My apologies."

Chapter 678: Avatar Of Calamity

Damon, or rather in this case Amon, did not know what was happening in the outside world, but from his guess, it was chaos.

He wondered how Xander's family and everyone else would react to it, especially the Temple.

Now the question was how much of his domination power he would reveal. Did he want them to think he was Ashcroft? Or someone with similar power? Or better yet, let them think he was a fragment of Ashcroft.

Being Ashcroft was troublesome, so Damon decided to just do his thing as Amon. If they figured it out... well, so be it. It wasn't like they could actually deduce the true identity of his main body.

Until then, he would become what the demon lords could never be. He would be the immortal inheritor of his name Amon, who could not be killed.

Until then, he had a plan, a way for his main body to earn some clout.

'I have to reach third class first.'

Kashi froze there, staring at him. His hands trembled slightly as his eyes darted between Amon and the ground.

"Amon... a-are you one of us?"

Damon smiled, looking at Kashi. His expression was calm, unreadable. He didn't answer. Instead, he turned and walked toward Manata, who was badly damaged from all the abuse he had taken while Damon used his body.

'Hmmm, I didn't realize how demanding Lysithara's Swordsmanship was. My party and I were taught by Valarie from the basics, so we built up the right muscles. But without that, a body can get torn up this bad.'

He squatted down. The mysterious, faceless entity placed a hand on Manata's body, and before Kashi's wide eyes, the wounds began to close. Flesh reformed, bones mended, and color returned to Manata's pale skin.

Kashi could only watch in awe and fear.

Meanwhile, Damon's heart was bleeding. He almost felt like crying.

This was a high-quality potion in fact, one of the highest he had. It could recover wounds almost instantly.

The greedy capitalist inside him screamed. He wanted to shout at the demons to hand over all their money for the healing.

But Amon was a mysterious ruler, one who would not care for such trivial matters. No one saw him use the potion they only saw him touch Manata.

The young demon regained movement, his eyes opening weakly. He stood up as his arm regrew, leaving only dried blood on his skin.

"Th... thank you, your eminence."

Damon glanced at the other demons. His heart ached again. What was he thinking, doing so much damage to them?

If he'd known he would lose potions, he would have maimed them more gently.

'Why do I have to be so good at beating people?'

Just like with Manata, he healed the rest of them without anyone seeing how. To them, it looked like Amon had the ability to heal wounds with a touch.

Damon walked forward without saying a word, as if healing them was something he'd done casually, without thought.

Kashi's eyes glimmered. This kindness... he had to be a demon. A human or anyone from the goddess races would never be this kind to demons.

"My lord, may we know who you are?" Manata asked. His voice was hesitant. He didn't know anyone named Amon.

Damon didn't respond. Instead, he waved his hand. Something emerged from within the faceless entity's form, a creature with closed, red, feral eyes.

Amon didn't have a shadow, his body was the shadow.

The demon heirs tensed at first, but their fear soon turned into relief when they realized what it was.

A lesser demon.

It was a ferocious creature, one with an open evolutionary path that could lead to becoming any type of demon beast if it was lucky.

Such creatures were known to be tamed only by the legendary demon lord of domination.

Demons capable of controlling them through magic were venerated as tamers and served in wars, branding these creatures with special marks that compelled obedience.

Each mark carried the crest of the demon lord they served, visible only to demon eyes.

But this one had no mark. It was simply obedient utterly and completely loyal to Amon.

The demon heirs looked at each other silently. None dared to speak.

Damon continued walking forward as the lesser demon followed close behind. His posture was composed, regal.

In his heart, though, he felt pleased with himself.

Surely he must have farmed some serious aura by now.

Just as he reached that train of thought, a sudden sound thundered from the sky. The familiar voice of Emperor Kronos of Valtheron echoed across the arena.

"Amon, the unknown ruler... we see you, and we see your arrogance. If you are trying to make a statement, so be it. We will respond in kind."

Kronos' voice was cold, resounding across the skies like divine judgment.

"We do not care why a demon lord would stoop so low as to assassinate our young. It matters little now. Your strength at the moment should only be at the third class, regardless of how powerful you originally are."

Damon raised his head to the sky, wondering what they were planning. He was sure they couldn't come in otherwise, he wouldn't have done any of this.

"I, Kronos of Valtheron, call upon all those who are in the World Dungeon... for the death of this avatar of calamity!"

Damon didn't even know what to say.

'Avatar of calamity goes hard, not gonna lie... I like it.'

That was his first thought to Kronos' words, until he heard what came next.

"Whosoever kills Amon will receive a reward of half the overall medallions in the arena."

Damon almost chuckled. Didn't they just call him a calamity? The reward sounded lackluster...

But Kronos wasn't done.

"You will receive twenty billion zeni as a reward."

Damon almost gasped. Actually, he didn't but his true body somewhere far away definitely did.

Kronos continued without pause.

"You will receive the title of Count of the Empire, a hundred million mana stones, a hundred million magic ores, a holy relic from the Temple, a hundred thousand vials of healing potions, and a class change scroll to a rare class."

Damon's mouth went dry from greed.

"Lordship of land two hundred thousand square miles wide. And finally, you shall earn the title of Hero, granted by the Temple."

Standing there as Amon, Damon felt the sudden urge to cut off his own head and offer it up just to claim all that money.

Far away, Damon's true body was already salivating with greed when the realization struck, a lot of people would now want to kill him.

'Who... who did I offend? I've never done anything.... Oh well, it's not like they can actually track my avatar.'

Kronos' voice echoed again.

"We shall provide a live location of Amon for all to see. Slay the menace and obtain these rewards."

Chapter 679: Ohh This Old Thing

'Well, things just got interesting,' Damon thought as he saw a projection of his shadow clone begin to show, along with a massive beam of light visible from many miles away, pointing directly at his location.

Xander heard the declaration, his spear slick with the blood of a demon beast he had just slain. His expression twisted into one of rage, his blue eyes flaring with fury.

"Amon...."

He glanced far into the distance, to where the beam of light was shining. The distance was far too vast; Xander wouldn't make it there on time.

Simply put, he was not going to be able to reach Amon but he didn't care. With a deafening sonic boom, he launched himself forward, tearing through the terrain as he ran toward the light.

Damon looked up at the sky with a calm expression, almost amused. Did they really think this would be able to track him?

He could simply disappear into the shadows. Spreading his shadow perception outward, he noticed a few figures moving in his direction, but Damon didn't really care. The big question was how he could take advantage of the situation.

'I can't guarantee a win if I'm still in second class... I must advance.'

His gaze lifted again toward the sky, where something began to shimmer it was the barrier that encompassed the combat zone. It was getting smaller.

That meant sooner or later, everyone would have to reach the center, where the world dungeon gate was located. They would be forced to stop and fight for medallions, which meant it would take time. Reaching the center wouldn't be easy.

Damon turned to the demon youths who were staring at him with a mix of awe and fear. Without another word to them, he began walking away, his voice echoing through the open field.

"All who wish to face me... can come to the dungeon gate. I welcome all... I will be waiting."

"Let it be known."

He left them with this simple message as his figure faded away. The beam of light disappeared as he dissolved into the shadows. Since he was no longer visible to the magic orbs, they couldn't track him anymore.

Kashi watched him with awe. This was a different kind of power from Lady Paimon's. This was an overwhelming will one that made everyone around feel the instinctive urge to kneel before him.

Meanwhile, Damon's true body was feeling woozy from blood loss. He had really pushed himself. The arena was a miniature realm, filled with different areas and dangerous creatures, both monsters and demons.

However, Damon wasn't particularly interested in fighting them. While he still needed to gather medallions, he already had a plan for that.

First, he needed to complete this quest for that, he decided to hold out for the full twenty-four hours.

They found themselves in a ruin. Damon looked around at the crumbling structures, the half-destroyed buildings covered in vines and dust, with faint growls echoing from within the shadows.

Still, Damon was sure this was the right destination. As soon as he stepped into the ruins, he blew a whistle. The sharp sound echoed through the empty walls. A few moments later, the fluttering of wings descended from above, and a raven landed gracefully on his shoulder.

"Hmm, where's the other one..." Damon asked, glancing at the bird perched on him.

"Caw, caw!" Croft called out, its tone sounding irritated as it began to explain.

Although it wasn't much of an explanation, Damon understood enough. The squirrel Scarlet, or Scar for short had indeed been with the raven when they were teleported into the arena. However, not long after, the squirrel claimed to have picked up a strange scent and disappeared.

After that explanation, Croft began to bad-mouth the squirrel for running off, muttering about it chasing nuts or something similar.

Damon sighed, rubbing his forehead in mild frustration.

"That's fine. She'll come back anyway."

He glanced at Waton, who was looking at him with a strange expression clearly unsettled by the sight of him talking to a raven as if it were a regular person.

"I'm not crazy. I can talk to animals," Damon replied, though even he found his words hard to believe.

Waton nodded slowly, obviously unconvinced.

"I see... you're a druid."

Damon clicked his tongue.

"Let's go. I need to rest and recover."

He didn't feel entirely at ease not seeing the squirrel, but so be it. He glanced again at the raven.

"I have a job for you, Croft. I need you to go and find Renata, then bring her to me."

The raven cawed in acknowledgment, raising its beak proudly before soaring into the sky, vanishing into the distance.

Watson looked up at it as it disappeared.

"What now... do we head further into the ruins? And better yet, shouldn't we be looking for medallions?"

Damon stepped forward into the ruins with a thin smile on his face.

"Way ahead of you. I already have a plan to get medallions that's not an issue."

The real issue was Damon's third class. Until he solved that mystery, things would only grow more troublesome.

The ruins almost reminded him of Lysithara. They were vast at least the size of a city and they were only in the outskirts.

He wasn't certain about the dangers that lay deeper within the city, but he knew the outskirts would be safer for now.

With that thought in mind, Damon approached a building that was half-collapsed on the outside, with a single narrow entrance barely holding together.

The interior was relatively intact, though several interior walls and roof had fallen. Still, there was enough space for humans to move freely.

Due to the large walls surrounding the place, they had a sense of temporary safety.

They were greeted by a few demon beasts of the first class, which Watson swiftly dispatched. From their remains, he managed to obtain three medallions.

He looked quite pleased with his prize, but Damon barely reacted when Watson offered the medallions to him.

Damon accepted them but didn't care much. He had bigger plans, and hunting for small profits like this was a waste of his time.

"Let's camp here for the night."

Watson nodded as the magic orbs continued to hover above them, transmitting their every move and word to the outside world.

"I'll go gather some wood and start a fire," Watson offered.

Damon looked at him like he was an idiot.

"There's no need for that."

He waved his hand, and from the shadows, a large tent appeared within the building, bearing the crest of the imperial household.

Watson's eyes widened instantly. He recognized the tent immediately. This belonged to his sister, Abellona. It was one of a kind a personal gift from the emperor himself after her first expedition, given so she wouldn't have to suffer any hardships in the field.

"This... this... how did you get this?"

Damon brushed his hair aside with a casual expression.

"Oh, this old thing...."

Watson was left completely stupefied, his mouth slightly open as he stared at Damon in disbelief.

## Chapter 680: Why Do You Have My Squirrel

"Well, allow me to show you inside," was what Damon had said, and Waton stupidly followed.

The inside was exactly as he remembered. This was definitely Abellona's war tent.

The chandeliers, the golden aesthetic, the ornate design, even the weapons used as decoration everything was Abellona's.

Then the question arose. How did Damon Grey come to obtain them, and why was he acting like this belonged to him?

Waton followed Damon as he relaxed in the large throne at the center of the tent, pulling out a few potions and drinking them one after another.

'My sister wouldn't give this to anyone....'

Without realizing it, Waton was burning with curiosity.

"Why... I mean, how did you make an exact replica of Abellona's war tent?"

His question seemed to confuse Damon, who looked at him as if he were crazy.

"A replica? This is Abellona's war tent, you know, the original one."

Waton's eyes widened. His hand lifted slightly but froze in midair, unable to form words as he tried to regain himself.

"How did you get it?"

Damon placed his hand on his chin, closing his eyes as the floating magic orbs adjusted their focus toward him.

He raised his head dramatically, like a tragic and poetic protagonist forced to relive his trauma.

"Sigh... sigh... it's a long and traumatic story. But the long and short of it is... she's aware that I have it."

Watson's hands trembled. He recalled how this bastard seemed close to Lilith Astranova, the Princess of the Moon Glades, and even spoke playfully to The Seras Blade.

Now even his sister was giving her treasures to him....

"Sir... eh... how... how did you do it?"

Damon looked genuinely confused.

"How did I do what? It's not a big deal really. The princess was awed by my talents and mannerisms, calling me an honorable and noble champion of the goddess race. That's why I have this tent."

Watson blinked in confusion.

"Ooh... I see. I understand now."

He didn't understand shit.

Damon smiled teasingly.

"And she's sort of a few billion zeni in debt, so this is kind of collateral interest."

"Huh!!!" Watson gasped in disbelief.

"What? I said it was a long story. If anything happens to her, her family pays. I have it in writing."

Damon's lips curved into a wicked grin. When the war games ended, he would be a billionaire. His plans were beginning to take shape.

"Go get some rest."

Damon leaned back into the throne while Waton moved to a sofa and sank into it with a sigh, clearly exhausted.

He glanced at the young prince, finding him slightly amusing now that he wasn't annoying.

"Now... back to my third class. What is it?"

Damon rested his elbow on the armrest, his expression turning thoughtful. He kept trying to figure out how to reach the third class, but nothing came to mind. For his other classes, he had always gone through a mental or emotional upheaval, a deep shift in his state of mind before achieving them.

His first class had come in the Duhu Mountains, when he decided to stop running and slay the War Trolls. That resolve had earned him the Death Dealer class.

For his second class, he had watched Matia die, letting her fall into the deep chasm in Lysithara so he could kill the Face Stealer and save Sylvia.

His mindset then had been one of guilt, which fueled a self-destructive desire to die. That desire had earned him the Death Seeker class.

All his classes had come from philosophical change each a reflection of his evolving will.

Which made him think of his most recent opponent, Kashi the Necromancer.

He had earned the Merciful Necromancer class from his desire to bring his family back.

'First he was a corpse collector, gathering their remains. Then, for his second class, he was a grave keeper, guarding their graves....'

Damon wondered what would define his third class.

"Hmm... he accepted their deaths, and so he tried bringing them back as a necromancer."

He gazed into the distance, dazed.

"Acceptance...."

'What is it that I need to accept? Or do I have to change something?'

This was difficult. Damon might use Kashi as a reference, but his experience could never be the same.

Therefore, while Kashi chose acceptance, that might not be the path for Damon.

"What is my path... what is it that I'm on the cusp of achieving...."

He didn't know how long he sat there pondering, but he knew he was going in circles trying to touch something that felt so close yet so far away.

At some point, Damon realized Waton wasn't wrong. He really did need to meditate on his choices to find the right answer.

He turned to the young prince, only to realize Waton was already fast asleep, likely from exhaustion.

Damon closed his eyes and began to reflect on his most recent endeavors.

The name that came to mind most was Ashcroft. That was who haunted his thoughts.

Just as he felt like he was reaching something, a sound broke the silence. Someone was outside the tent.

Damon's eyes snapped open, his irritation flaring. His aura surged, and a thin stream of blood trickled from his nose.

Outside, his shadow perception picked up a lone figure.

The figure wore tattered fabric, mixed with monster hides woven into makeshift garments that covered the whole body.

It appeared to be a woman. She had small antlers growing from her head, marking her as a beast-kin from some distant tribe. Though she gave off no aura, Damon could tell she was at the peak of the third class.

Her hair was dark, long, and unkempt like strands of wet seaweed. In her hand, she held a bone blade.

The woman's eyes were dark like Damon's, her gaze unreadable. Without waiting to be invited, she pushed open the tent flap and stepped inside, standing silently at the entrance.

When her eyes met Damon's, they flickered with something familiar too familiar.

This woman was... well-endowed, in ways that were impossible not to notice. Even beneath those rough hides, Damon could tell she was a walking honey trap, her figure defying reason.

She opened her mouth, revealing two sharp fangs, and spoke in a slow, almost incoherent way, as if she was not used to speaking.

"I se... e... see you...."

Then Damon heard a familiar squirrel's squeal from within her large makeshift clothes.

"Huh? Who... why do you have my squirrel?"