

Strongest 1021

Chapter 1021: Will Of The Desert People [Part 1]

"Welcome to our humble residence, Lord Raymond." Kira's grandfather, and the Patriarch of the Sand Clan, bowed his head respectfully. "I have heard many good things about you."

"Really? What have you heard of me?" William asked back out of curiosity.

They were currently inside the guest hall of the Sand Clan, and several servants were busy placing dishes on the table for their VIP Guests.

"Although we are people in the desert, I have many friends all over the Demon Continent," Zeph replied. "One of them is Polox, who has become your vassal. We talked at great length how you suddenly appeared out of nowhere, and saved their Clan from being annexed by the Greenskin Clan."

"Truth be told, I am very impressed by how valiant you were for choosing to take the Minor Clans under your wing, and protect them from the slave-like treatment that they were enduring from their former Lords and Masters."

"Hahaha. I just did the right thing," William replied as he flipped his hair, "but feel free to praise me more. I like getting flattered."

"Your battle against the Rajah Clan has also earned you quite a bit of renown around these parts." Zeph was more than happy to stroke William's ego in order to form a good relationship with him. "At first, I thought that you were just some random newcomer, who was trying to make himself known, but after hearing of your achievements, I realized that you are indeed very formidable."

"Even the most formidable Myriad Beast in this territory is now your contracted monster, a feat that even the Demon Lord wouldn't be able to accomplish. You are truly an exception among exceptions, Lord Raymond."

William smiled in satisfaction after hearing Zeph's flattery. Although the name being praised was his father-in-law's, he didn't think much of it. After all, right now, he was Raymond Parker. The new Overlord of the Fortaare Desert.

"That gaze of yours Lord Raymond is like the sun shining upon the world with its radiance.

"Your presence is quite calming. Just sitting beside you makes me feel as if I have reached enlightenment.

"If only my grandson had half of your looks, I might already have several great grandchildren. Such a useless fellow."

The corner of Kira's lips twitched as he listened to his grandpa's flattering words towards William. Right now, Kira was more handsome than William when it came to the aesthetics department because the Half-Elf was using his previous appearance from when he lived back on Earth.

Even so, Zeph still said that if he only had half of William's looks, he would be surrounded by ladies. Kira didn't know if he should laugh or cry about his grandpa's antics, so he decided to consult his father who was beside him.

"Dad, is Grandpa unwell?" Kira whispered to his father, Favian. "The old man is really going above and beyond in his flattery. He is putting our family name to shame."

Favian sighed as he poured some wine into his son's cup, before raising his own cup to give him a toast.

"Flattery is a skill that not many can accomplish," Favian said in a volume that only Kira could hear. "You're still young and do not understand the hidden meaning behind his words. The moment your friend entered the residence, a subtle battle of negotiation had already begun between him and your grandfather."

"Really?"

"Yes. how do you think we were able to keep our neutrality till now? That's because the old man is willing to bend his back to make sure that our VIP guests feel good about themselves. That is how he's kept our clan safe all these years."

Favian drank from his cup before adding a few more words that made Kira realize how much his grandpa had sacrificed over the years.

"You have no idea how much he is ridiculed behind closed doors because of his attitude," Favian sighed for the second time. "But, even so, the fact still remains that we are able to enjoy our current standing because of his efforts. Remember this well, Kira, not all battles are fought with weapons."

Kira nodded his head in understanding. He then glanced at his grandpa, who was still praising William's good points. For a brief moment, he felt that even if Zeph spent an entire day praising the black-haired teenager, the old man wouldn't break a sweat at all.

William placed his wine cup on the table as he smiled at the old man beside him. He was sure that if his Grandpa James and Zeph met, the two of them would hit it off right away and become best buds.

"I want to ask a serious question to you, Lord Zeph," William said with a calm expression on his face. "If I unified the Clans in the desert, will I receive stiff resistance?"

"Are you planning to have all the Clans migrate, like what you did with the One-horned Clan and the others?" Zeph asked back. "If the answer is yes, I'm afraid that many will not take this in a good way, Lord Raymond."

William shook his head. "I don't have any intention of having the Desert Clans migrate. I know that all of you are rooted in this territory, and have long accepted your way of life. The desert is an unforgiving place.

"Those who wish to leave will leave, and those who want to stay will stay. Since the Clans decided to stay, this means that they are already satisfied with their current way of life. I have no intention of changing their culture. All I want is their loyalty."

Zeph played his beard as he digested the black-haired teenager's words.

"First, tell me why you wish to put all the Clans that live in the desert under your banner," Zeph stated. "Do you wish to create a civil war against the reigning Demon Lord?"

"Civil war? Not really," William answered. "I don't need the Demon Clans to fight my wars for me. What I want from you guys is to stay out of the hands of the Gremory Clan, as well as those of their allies."

"Ah... so, it's about that. I understand," Zeph crossed his arms over his chest as he pondered. "The Gremory Clan has indeed been quite active as of late to spread their influence beyond their borders. Since the Demon Lord is backing them, not many Clans have dared to resist the olive leaf that they were giving away. Only the Major Clans had the power to put a stop to their growing greed for dominion."

"I'm sure if you used the Fortaare Death Worm as a deterrent, the Clans will begrudgingly lower their heads in submission, but if a stronger faction appears, these clans will immediately jump ships to save their lives."

William arched an eyebrow. "Including you?"

"Yes," Zeph answered in a heartbeat. "Including us."

The Half-Elf nodded his head in understanding. He couldn't stay long in the Fortaare Desert because he still had to go to the North. Just like Zeph said, once he left the desert, the other Clans would change their allegiance if someone powerful were to appear in William's absence.

This was how they had preserved their culture all these years, and nothing would change that for as long as the Demons lived in the desert.

"What do you propose I do in order to keep the other Clans from aligning themselves with the Gremory Clan?" William asked.

His battle with the Demon Lord was inevitable because this was something that he had decided to do after watching how Chiffon had suffered while they were in the Tower of Babylon.

The Demon Lord was like the head of the spider, and William wanted to cut off his legs in order to weaken his forces. For this to happen, he would need to keep the other Clans from supporting the Gremory Clan, which was the Demon Lord's backer.

As long as he was able to do that, the title of Demon Lord would be stripped from Lucien, and another one would take his place. Such was life in the Demon Realm.

Only the strong were able to sit on the throne that lorded over all the Demon Clans, and turn them into a sword blade that could unite all of them under one banner.

A blade that was pointed at the Central Continent, where the majority of the people lived in peace and harmony.

Chapter 1022 – Will Of The Desert People [Part 2]

“Actually, the age-old way of making your neighbors your allies, is through marriage alliances,” Zeph answered. “If the use of force is left out in the equation, this is the most ideal method to use. So, how about it, Lord Raymond?”

William shook his head firmly. “No. Marriage is not an option. I don’t take relationships lightly. Do you have any other suggestions, Lord Zeph?”

Zeph pondered for a bit before voicing his thoughts.

“It is best to gather all the Patriarchs, and their heirs, in a conference,” Zeph suggested. “It would be better if Lord Raymond were to visit all of them, while riding on the Fortaare Death Worm. Once all the Patriarchs and their heirs have gathered, you are going to declare yourself the Head of the Alliance that would set corresponding rules that the people of the desert would follow.

“Although you are in a position of power, you do not resort to seizing their lands, or stripping their families of power. If you do this, they will be more than willing to listen to your conditions, as long as they retain their positions. This is the most ideal approach that I can think of.”

William smiled because he didn’t expect that Zeph would give him this kind of suggestion. “It’s that simple?”

Zeph nodded his head. "Majority of the Desert Clans don't want conflicts with each other. Most of the time, there is an internal struggle for the seat of the next Patriarch, but that's it. We have an unwritten rule here.

"The Major Clans can only deal with their vassals. If they wish to attack the Clans outside their domain, the other Clans will gang up on them and bury the offenders' dead bodies in the desert sands. Lord Raymond, this is 'The Will of the Desert'."

"Now, what you need to do is revise that 'Will', and make it so that no outside interference is allowed. Of course, if you are proficient in making binding contracts, this issue will be wrapped up in a very straightforward manner."

"Understood," William nodded his head. "I guess I'll be leaving your residence for a bit, Lord Zeph. Let's continue our talk after I've visited the Major Clans. Will it be fine to hold the conference here in your city?"

"Of course," Zeph answered. "It would be our honor to host this historical moment. Please, allow the Sand Clan to handle everything. We will not disappoint you."

Zeph then turned at Kira who was happily chatting with his father and called out to him.

"Kira, accompany Lord Raymond to visit the Major Clans," Zeph ordered. "Make sure that all three of them are notified. If you don't do this properly, I swear that I will make you marry a Desert Iguana upon your return."

William had to stop himself from chuckling after seeing Kira's face, which resembled someone who had just eaten a fly.

Cassey watched this from the side and stood up from her chair. She was quite curious about the geopolitical state of the desert, so she planned to accompany William on his visit to the three Major Clans that ruled over the barren sands.

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“Brother, what are we going to do?” Orryn asked. “If we return to the residence, father will have us flogged to death for losing our family’s protector beast.”

“Regardless, we must return as soon as possible,” Walric said through gritted teeth. “I’d rather received the family’s punishment, than let our family be caught by surprise by that bastard!”

After washing themselves clean of filth, they immediately left the Sand Clan’s City in order to return to the Stronghold of the Rhanes Clan. They needed to tell their father what had happened, so they would be able to create some contingency measures for how to handle the black-haired teenager whom they offended.

They were currently riding two Desert Wyverns to hasten their return back to their Domain. Both of them had taken the exclusive teleport gate that was reserved for their family, within the City of Altan, to shorten their journey.

However, it would still take them another hour to reach their family’s residence.

Suddenly, they heard a powerful roar coming from behind them. Both brothers turned their heads to look behind them, and immediately froze when they saw where the roar had come from.

“Dammit! He’s already here!” Orryn shouted in anger and frustration. “What do we do, Brother?!”

Walric was at a loss for words. Although he had anticipated that the black-haired teenager would visit their Clan’s residence, he thought that he would do so the next day.

He could only watch helplessly as the Great Death Worm closed the gap between them in the span of a few seconds.

Contrary to its gigantic size, the Fortaare Death Worm moved very fast, especially in the desert. It was like a sailfish in the open seas, as it glided on the sand, headed towards the residence of the Rhanes Clan.

Half a minute later, it had already passed the two brothers who were desperately urging their Wyverns to fly faster. However, neither of their mounts dared to get near the monstrous beast because it was one of their natural predators in the desert.

“Bye bye,” William said as he casually waved at the two brothers with a smug expression on his face.

Walric and Orryn glared at him hatefully. This was the only thing they could do as the Giant Death Worm widened the gap between them. They had no choice but to eat the dust that was being sprayed at them from behind the monstrous beast.

“Brother, what should we do?” Orryn asked worriedly. “We can’t catch up to them no matter what we do.”

Walric’s expression remained the same as he stared at their protector beast, whose image was slowly getting smaller. Looking at it from behind, he felt like his hope to become the next Patriarch was also getting farther and farther away.

He regretted the fact that he had used such a high-handed method to show the power of their family through forceful means.

Even so, he still decided to return to their Clan’s residence. He believed that as long as the delegations of the Gremory Clan, who were currently resting in their residence, said the word, then this nightmare that he had woken up to would disappear completely.

Chapter 1023 – Times like this, I Wish You Were Here, Grandpa

“Is what you say true, Old Man Zeph?” a sickly old man asked as he leaned on his chair. “My sons did that?”

Zeph sighed before nodding his head. “It is true, My Lord. Young Master Walri and Young Master Orry offended someone that they shouldn’t offend no matter what.”

Kira's grandfather had a serious expression on his face as he gazed at his Liege, whom he had sworn loyalty to for the past few decades.

As soon as William left the City of Altan, Zeph immediately contacted his Lord through a communication crystal to tell him of William's impending arrival, as well as what had happened in his territory.

"My Lord, I'm afraid that the balance of power in the desert has tilted," Zeph said with a sigh. "The best we can do is support Lord Raymond, and ensure that the two other Major Clans will not use this opportunity to divide the Fortaare Desert between the two of them."

Lorcan Di Rhanes, the patriarch of the Rhanes Clan, sighed as he closed his eyes. All these years, he did his best to keep the status quo among the three Major Clans, by using the Fortaare Death Worm as a deterrent.

Now that it was no longer under his control, the two clans would certainly use this golden opportunity to shake the delicate balance that he had maintained all these years.

"I've grown old, my friend," Lorcan replied. "If I hadn't fallen ill, the Gremory Clan might not have been able to entice my grandsons to join their ambitious plan to reign in the other Clans in the continent."

"My Lord, while it is presumptuous of me to say these words, I am afraid that the Demon Lord is preparing for war," Zeph said with a serious expression on his face. "For this to happen, he needs to get the approval of the Major Clans. Ever since we lost the previous wars, our race has licked the wounds of failure, and decided to just remain in our respective territories.

"Our numbers have also decreased, and continue to decrease due to the infighting. Only the Gremory Clan had retained their strength because they have kidnapped talented individuals from the other continents, and used them as stud and breeding horses, to keep their bloodline strong and their population in check."

Lorcan opened his eyes as he gazed at the old man that had refused to become his right-hand man on the surface, but agreed to become his trusted agent in the shadows. In the past, both of them just wanted a place to call their own home.

Because of this, they had endured the hardship of living in the desert because very few Clans would dare to live in such a harsh environment.

If he wanted to become its Supreme Overlord, he would have done it long ago, but he didn't. Doing so would only make him a nail that stuck out too much, and the Gremory Clan would stop at nothing to make them bow their heads in submission.

"I think this is Fate as well," Lorcan commented. "Tell me, Old Friend, Is this person's name really Raymond?"

Zeph shook his head. "My Lord, this person, who will soon come knocking on your door, is a very special individual. If we play our cards right, we may be able to benefit from this misfortune."

"Who is he, Old Friend? Why do you think so highly of him?" Lorcan inquired.

Zeph smiled bitterly as he faced his Lord and told him the truth.

"He is none other than the son of the mortal enemy of the Demon Lord," Zeph answered.

Lorcan's eyes widened in shock as he looked at his sworn brother in disbelief.

"You mean he is that man's son? Old Friend, please, don't tease this frail old man."

"How can I possibly do that, My Lord? Even now, this young man is riding on top of the strongest Myriad Beast in the desert and headed to your residence. The Dungeon Conqueror's and the Saint of the Worldtree's one and only son.

"The one who conquered the 51st Floor of the Tower of Babylon, as well as one of the candidates for becoming the Prince of Darkness. He is none other than... William Von Ainsworth."

“So, this is the city of the Rhanes Clan.” William arched an eyebrow when he saw the gates wide open and several men, wearing the Rhanes Clan clothing, lining up along the sides of the gate, as if they were waiting for his arrival.

The banner of the Rhanes Clan fluttered high on the walls of the ramparts, as all the officials, as well as the Walric’s and Orryn’s two remaining brothers, stood just within the gate with their heads bowed in respect.

“Welcome Lord Raymond to the Rhanes Clan,” a young man who seemed to be in his late teens greeted. “My name is Hector Di Rhanes, and the Patriarch has asked me to welcome you to our humble city.”

Cassey who was standing beside William giggled. “It seems that they were waiting for your arrival. The Patriarch of the Rhanes Clan is truly formidable.”

Kira gulped as he nodded his head in agreement. He thought that the scene he would see when they arrived was the entire city panicking, but looking at the current situation, it seemed that everyone had been briefed of their arrival.

“Yes. Truly a formidable man,” William commented with a smile. ‘For him to be able to gain the loyalty of Zeph already proved that he has at least some backbone. It seems that I am about to meet someone very formidable.’

William understood that he was the dragon that was riling up the local snakes. However, the fact still remained that this was their Domain. He was just a passerby, who decided to play politics on a whim.

Compared to the old foxes who had spent their entire lives in politics, he knew that his abilities were not on par.

‘Times like this, I wish you were here, Grandpa,’ William thought. ‘I wonder what he is doing right now?’

Deep within the void...

James chewed on a gummy bear as he traveled the vastness of the void. He had parted ways with his great granddaughters a few days ago, and resumed his journey.

As he was passing through one of the countless pathways of different worlds, he saw a hundred giants marching together along a path that was several layers below his own.

James frowned as he hid his presence. He waited until all of the giants had passed before removing his camouflage.

“Just where are these giants headed next?” James muttered. “Also, that robed man standing on the shoulder of that giant... he is at the Pseudo-God level. I have a bad feeling about this.”

James pondered for a bit before making his decision.

“Sleipnir, follow them, but make sure we are outside of their detection range,” James ordered.

Sleipnir nodded its head as it descended towards the lower layers in order to stalk the giants from a distance. James had always been blessed with unnatural instincts, and his gut instinct was telling him that the giants he had seen passing just a moment ago might be headed to a place that was very dear to him.

Chapter 1024 – William’s Unexpected Proposal

“Are we on the Demon Continent?” Princess Aila asked as she stared at the vast expanse of land that looked no different from the Southern Continent, where she had grown up.

“Yes,” Shannon replied. “I can’t be wrong. I drew this very place not long ago.”

The place where they were currently standing was the location where the One-Horned Tribe and the Greenskin Clan almost fought due to the latter’s declaration of war.

“Hmm... we are indeed in the Demon Continent,” Elliot said as he gazed towards the North. “I can sense William’s whereabouts in that direction. However, the distance between here and there is great.”

“We forgot to bring a carriage,” Conan commented from the side. “We can’t possibly let Aila and Shannon travel by foot, right?”

Shannon smiled as she summoned her paintbrush. “There’s no need to worry. I have us covered.”

The young lady with silver hair and fox ears, started to draw something in the air. A minute later, an image of a carriage appeared, and it was being pulled by a Gryphon with its wings spread wide.

“Veni ad vitam!” Shannon made a final brushstroke and the image she had painted came to life.

An ink-like carriage, and Gryphon, appeared in front of everyone. Elliot couldn’t stop himself from whistling because he didn’t expect Shannon to have this kind of ability.

“Everyone get in,” Shannon said as she opened the carriage door. “Let’s try to catch up to Sir William soon.”

Princess Aila nodded her head as she boarded the carriage. Conan, Elliot, and Chloe followed after her. Shannon was the last to board, and the carriage started to move as soon as all of them had taken their seats.

The Gryphon flapped its wings as it ran across the ground in order to gain momentum. Soon it started to rise, carrying the carriage behind it.

“Aila, it will be best if you wear a robe at all times to cover your face,” Shannon said as she glanced at the angelic beauty in front of her. “You possess strong life magic, and are also very beautiful. If the Demons see you, they won’t think twice about capturing you and making you their plaything. Be very careful.”

Princess Aila nodded. “Thank you for the advice. I will do my best to not stand out.”

Conan crossed his arms over his chest, and simply sat on Princess Aila's shoulder. He would do his best to ensure that the Princess would get the opportunity to meet William, and tell him about the dreams she was having.

Deep inside, Conan understood that Princess Aila already had feelings for William. She was just not bold enough to take that final step to make her feelings known.

Elliot sat on the ink-like couch in a carefree manner. Chloe had done the same. But, unlike the angelic familiar who had a relaxed expression on his face, she busied herself with eating a chocolate bar.

Shannon watched this group with a sweet smile behind the mask that she wore. These were her benefactors, and she would do her best to ensure that they were safe during their journey. She just hoped that they would be able to catch up to William as soon as possible.

She no longer wanted to be a spectator who drew his adventures from a distance. Shannon wanted to become part of that scenery, and experience what it was like, to live in a world that she had only seen through the eyes of others.

"I apologize for not being able to stand and show you my respects, Lord Raymond," Lorcan, the patriarch of the Rhanes Clan said apologetically.

"It's fine," William replied as he gave Lorcan a brief nod. "There's no need for formalities. I already knew of your circumstance before I came here."

Hector, and his young brother, Horace, sat beside their grandfather with their heads lowered. Although they had been warned beforehand, they still felt vexed when they saw their Protector Beast being commanded by others.

Because of this, they didn't dare to raise their heads and look at the black-haired teenager in front of them for a very long time. Both of them were afraid that they might not be able to control their emotions, and get in the way of the discussion between their guest and their grandfather.

"May I know your purpose for coming, Lord Raymond?" Lorcan asked.

"Hasn't Zeph told you everything already?" William asked back.

Lorcan smiled, but still made a gesture for William to speak his purpose for coming.

"Although I have already been informed, the others have not been," Lorcan replied. "It would be best to let my sons, grandsons, as well as my aides, hear what you have to say personally."

Lorcan didn't even try to deny William's allegations because playing dumb in this critical moments would just invite unneeded trouble. As someone that had kept the balance of power in the desert for decades, he knew that what he should prioritize right now was gaining William's trust.

Only by gaining his trust, would they be able to reach a result without the need for shedding blood.

William nodded his head in understanding. Just as he was about to say his purpose for coming, two men burst into the hall with determined expressions on their faces.

"Grandfather, please, punish me for my stupidity," Walric lowered his head and knelt on the ground. "I have done a great sin to you and our family. I will take full responsibility for my actions."

"Grandfather, punish me as well! We have committed a grave mistake!" Orryn kneeled as well. But, unlike his brother, he didn't lower his head and met his grandfather's gaze. After that, he pointed his finger at William, who didn't even bother to turn his head to look at the two newcomers.

"Grandfather, I ask that you punish this person as well!" Orryn shouted. "Not only did he not show respect to our Clan, he even dared to oppose us openly. Someone like him should not be shown any mercy!"

Right after he finished his words, he felt a hand on the back of his head. Not long after, Walric pushed his brother's head down, until it was only a few inches away from the ground.

"Shut up!" Walric said with a serious expression on his face. "This is the Great Hall of our Ancestors. Do not further disgrace our family's name!"

“But, Brother!”

“I said, shut up!”

Orryn felt wronged as his forehead was forcefully pressed against the ground by the brother that he trusted and loved the most. However, he no longer uttered a word and simply gritted his teeth in frustration.

Lorcan stared at his two grandsons and sighed. He then looked at William apologetically, and the latter simply shrugged to let the old man know that it wasn't a big deal to him.

“Lord Raymond, I apologize for the sudden disturbance,” Lorcan said. “Please, let us know your reason for coming to our Domain.”

William rubbed his chin for a brief moment before asking Lorcan the question that he had thought on the spot. This was not his original purpose for coming, but for some reason, he felt that he was in the mood to ask this question.

“Tell me, Lord Lorcan, what do I need to do in order to become the Demon Lord of this realm?”

Gasps of shock speared throughout the hall as William finished asking his question. Even Cassey and Kira, who was seated by his side, looked back at the black-haired teenager as if he was someone crazy.

William, on the other hand, remained calm as he stared at Lorcan who was looking back at him in disbelief.

Although he only thought of it on a whim, he realized that this was the most effective method to make the Gremory Clan, as well as the current Demon Lord, Luciel, suffer a setback that they didn't see coming.

Chapter 1025 – How Can I Become The Demon Lord?

After that brief moment of surprise, a pin-drop silence descended into the entire hall.

No one dared to speak.

No one dared to shift their attention away from William.

For they knew that anyone who dared to entertain the black-haired teenager's words was akin to treason.

Two minutes passed before the rustling of robes broke the tense silence inside the room. Lorcan, who had been seated in the seat of honor, stood up, and walked towards William. He had a pale expression on his face, and yet his steps were steady and firm.

When he was only half a meter away from William, he lowered his head until his face was mere inches away from the black-haired teenager.

"You wish... to become the Demon Lord?" Lorcan asked.

"I am considering it," William replied. "Well, is it possible?"

Lorcan stared long and hard at William before walking back towards his seat. A long sigh escaped his lips the moment he had sat back down.

With just a glance, one could tell that he seemed to have grown several years older, as if William's words had caused this sudden change in his physical, emotional, and mental state of mind.

"If you are asking if it is possible for you to become the Demon Lord then the answer is yes," Lorcan replied. "However, this is easier said than done. In order to become the Demon Lord, you need to have the support of seventy, out of the one hundred major clans. Then and only then would you be able to challenge the current Demon Lord in a duel. If you win then you will take his place and sit upon the throne as the strongest amongst us."

William crossed his arms over his chest as he gazed at Lorcan with a smile.

“Sounds like a tedious thing to do,” William commented. “Perhaps after I complete my purpose for coming here, I’ll consider this massive undertaking. But, tell me, Lord Lorcan, what is the fastest way to make the other Major Clans support my cause?”

‘Well, the first thing you need to do is to hide your true identity from the rest of us,’ Lorcan replied to William via telepathy. ‘Do you really think that the Major Clans would agree to support the son of the man that made all of us return to this continent in defeat? You’ve got guts boy.’

William chuckled. “How did Old Zeph know?”

He couldn’t talk back to Lorcan using telepathy, so he decided to just ask in a casual manner.

‘He has a lot of connections, and has forged friendships with many people... including the Demigod that guards the South,’ Lorcan replied. ‘Joash and him go way back, and both have a mutual understanding of each other.’

“I see. So, that is how he knew,” William muttered. He had placed Kira under a powerful contract, so he was sure that his “Bro” hadn’t betrayed him. The only other explanation was Kira’s grandfather, Zeph, who had flattered William non-stop with his spittle flying in every direction.

‘Do not mention this matter again in a casual manner,’ Lorcan stated. ‘The eyes and ears of the Demon Lord are everywhere. I’m sure that the moment everyone leaves this room, the news will travel to the delegates that are currently staying in this residence.’

“I see.” William nodded. “Well that’s fine, too. I have no time to look for him, so it would be better if he looked for me instead.”

Everyone in the room could hear the beating of their heart as they listened to William’s solo monologue. Although they assumed that their Patriarch, Lord Lorcan, was communicating with William in some manner, unless it was proven, no one would be able to use it as evidence against him.

This gave Lorcan's sons, and grandsons, some peace of mind because this might cause problems for their families in the long run. The people of the Gremory Family were currently inside the Rhanes' Clan Residence. If they were to get wind of what was being discussed inside the hall, heads would start to roll.

'Did you find them, Optimus?'

< They are on the second floor of this residence, and currently on their way here. It seems that they have heard the news of your arrival. >

William laughed internally because he was quite curious about what these delegates had to say. Right now, everyone inside the hall was under Optimus' observation. Even their heart rates and their blood pressure were constantly being monitored.

An awkward silence descended inside the hall as William stopped talking on his own. The minutes passed, and yet, no one dared to move from their spot. It had been a rule of the Rhanes Clan that without the Patriarch's explicit orders, no one would be able to leave the Ancestral Hall once a meeting had started.

Two minutes later, six people entered the hall in an arrogant manner. The two in front announced their arrival as they walked towards Lorcan, who gave them a brief nod.

"Lord Lorcan, I apologize for barging into your discussion, but I am quite curious about this guest that has arrived in your residence," a middle-aged man with tattoos of skeletons on his bald head stated crisply. "I hope that I am not disturbing anything?"

"Well, I don't particularly mind," Lord Lorcan replied. "But, I can't say the same for my guest."

The bald man turned around and looked at William with a smile. His Patriarch, Lord Alvah of the Gremory Clan, had already told him about the black-haired teenager's current route. Since he was already in the territory of the Rhanes Clan, Lord Alvah had asked him to meet this person personally.

“You must be Lord Raymond,” the bald man said with a smile. “My Patriarch, Lord Alvah, had many good things to say about you. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jasper, pleased to make your acquaintance.”

Jasper extended his hand for a handshake, but William arched an eyebrow as he voiced his opinion.

“I am currently having an important discussion with Lord Lorcan,” William stated. “Do you mind sitting on the side and just listening to our discussion in silence?”

“Of course,” Jasper replied as he returned his hand to the side as if he hadn’t tried to initiate a handshake. He then made a gesture for his subordinates to move to the side of the room, where they sat on the seat cushions that were provided for them.

“Now, let’s go back to business, Lord Lorcan,” William said after giving Jasper and his cronies a side-long glance. “How can I become the Demon Lord?”

The hearts of the members of the Rhanes Clan almost jumped out of their throats, as the black-haired teenager purposely asked a question that could condemn their entire clan for treason.

Lorcan’s hands shivered as he grabbed the walking stick beside him with the intention to smack the good-for-nothing Half-Elf who currently had a devilish smile on his face.

Lorcan’s sons immediately grabbed hold of their father in an attempt to stop him from whacking their guest. However, deep inside, they wanted to steal their father’s walking stick and smack the black-haired bastard with all of their might!

Kira and Cassey moved their bums to the side, in order to distance themselves from the troublemaker, who was trying to bring them down with him.

Walric, Orryn, Hector, and Horace—the four candidates to become the heirs of the Rhanes Clan—looked at William with horrified expressions on their faces.

They thought that William getting their Protector Beast was already a big blow to their family, but they were wrong.

The only thing they could do now was glare at the smiling Half-Elf, whose eyes were telling them that if they didn't want to jump into the frying pan, he was more than willing to cook them in an open fire.

Chapter 1026 – Days Of Bitterness And Suffering [Part 1]

Jasper frowned after hearing the black-haired teenager's words. At first, he thought that he had just misheard things, but after seeing the reaction of the Rhanes Clan Patriarch, as well as his family, he knew that something was amiss.

"Sir, I think he just asked the Patriarch how to become a Demon Lord," one of Jasper's trusted subordinates whispered in his ear.

Jasper nodded and looked at William with narrowed eyes. He was currently a guest inside the Rhanes Clan, and had already forced his way inside the Ancestral Hall, where an important discussion was being held.

However, he didn't expect that the discussion involved something similar to an uprising. Truth be told, he knew that some of the Major Clans were very disappointed with their current Demon Lord, Luciel.

They had sent many of their elite warriors, only to have them die on the battlefield, and no form of compensation was granted to their Clans or their families. This had given Luciel incredible pressure in the past, so he was forced to not do anything too reckless, that would give the Major Clans cause to look for the other faults that he had made.

As the years passed these hidden grudges started to simmer, which worried the Gremory Clan. This was why they had sent several of their ambassadors to each Major Clan in the continent in order to negotiate, and reach a compromise.

To those that didn't want to budge, they would then issue mild threats, using Luciel as deterrence. Although he had lost an arm in the battle against the Dungeon Conqueror, the fact still remained that he

was one of the strongest demons in the continent. This was enough to make the other major clans think twice about rebelling against his orders.

As if sensing his gaze, William glanced at Jasper and gave him a mischievous smile filled with killing intent. It was at that moment when Jasper realized that he and the delegations of the Gremory Clan were in danger.

Without missing a heartbeat, Jasper took out a round mirror and activated it. This created a dome of protection around him and subordinates.

“What’s wrong, Jasper? Why did you call for me?” The Patriarch of the Gremory Clan, Alvah, asked as his image appeared on the mirror’s surface. “Did something happen to the Rhanes Clan?”

“Lord Patriarch, the Rhanes Clan is planning to rebel!” Jasper said anxiously, while looking at the black-haired teenager, whose smile widened after hearing his words.

“Properstrous! Who dares to rebel against the Demon Lord?!” Alvah asked.

“Raymond Parker,” Jasper replied. “He is here in this room, My Lord!”

Jasper turned the mirror around to make it face William, which made everyone inside the hall feel their heart tremble inside their chest.

Lorcan could only curse William and his ancestors for putting his entire family in this mess, but he didn’t dare to voice his frustrations out loud. While the Demon Lord was indeed powerful, he was very far away from their location.

Right now, William controlled the Fortaare Death Worm and he was sure that even before the forces of the Demon Lord could arrive in the desert, their family would have long been wiped out, if they annoyed the black-haired teenager whose smile was giving him an aneurysm.

Alvah’s expression became serious as he stared at the pale-faced vampire whom he had met not long ago.

“Lord Raymond, what is the meaning of this?” Alvah asked. “Are you planning a rebellion?”

“A Rebellion? Nonsense,” William replied. “This is the law of the Demon Realm. Are you saying that you don’t conform to the laws set up by our ancestors?”

Lorcan held back the strong urge to spit at William. He didn’t expect the son of the Dungeon Conqueror to be this shameless!

Ancestors? What ancestor? You’re not even a Demon, damn you! Pitui!

“Lord Raymond, this is a serious matter,” Alvah’s tone became cold and chilly. “If what you say is true then I have no choice but to report this to the Demon Lord. He will be the one to make you understand that there are some things that you shouldn’t joke about.”

“Wow, I’m scared,” William sneered. “Do you think I’m afraid of that crippled loser? If I see his face, I’ll clap his cheeks so hard he will start seeing stars.”

“Just because you managed to acquire some Minor Clans, you already think you’re a Big Shot?” Alvah sneered back. “You have no idea who you are dealing with, mongrel!”

William chuckled. “Well then, I guess we’ll just have to see who among us doesn’t have any idea of who he is dealing with.”

William stood up and walked towards Jasper and his subordinates who were currently protected by a barrier. He then raised his hand and punched it, causing cracks to appear on its surface.

“Lord Alvah! Save us! Please save us!” Jasper pleaded as he looked at William in horror.

The Half-Elf laughed like an evil villain as he punched the barrier for the second time.

“That’s right, Alvah, save your subordinates,” William mocked. “Show me how powerful you are.”

"Raymond Parker, I can still turn a blind eye to your actions if you leave my subordinates alone," Alvah said with a serious expression on his face. "Do you really want to wage war against the Gremory Clan?"

"Yes," William replied as he smashed the barrier, making it shatter like crystal glass. "Let's rumble!"

Without another word, William smashed the mirror in Jasper's hand, making the members of the Gremory Clan scream in fear. They had long enjoyed their status as members of the family that was backed by the Demon Lord, and had abused their power wherever they went.

Now that someone dared to rise up against them, they were caught by surprise and didn't know how to respond.

William easily knocked all of them unconscious and threw them one by one inside his Thousand Beast Domain. Medusa had long pestered him for Demons to eat, so he didn't mind letting the little Gorgon have her fill with the members of the Gremory Clan.

Chapter 1027: Days Of Bitterness And Suffering [Part 2]

"You were too reckless, Lord Raymond," Lorcan was finally able to regain his composure and voiced his thoughts out loud. "By declaring war against the Demon Lord, you will turn this land into a battlefield. Tell me, do you hate us Demons this much?"

William shook his head before sitting back on his cushion. "No. I just intend to put a new person in charge of this continent. Don't worry. None of your family members need to fight. All you need to do is sign a contract."

The Half-Elf smiled as he took out a contract from his storage ring and made it fly over towards Lorcan.

The patriarch of the Rhanes Clan grabbed it and read its contents. A few minutes later, he looked at William in disbelief before shifting his gaze back to the contract and read it a second time.

A quarter of an hour passed before Lorcan placed the contract on his lap and stared at William with a serious expression on his face.

"If you do this, there will be no turning back," Lorcan said. "Also, by doing so, you are forcing the Demon Clans to make a hard choice."

William shrugged as he rested his right cheek over the palm of his hand.

"We both know that the Demon Lord is already preparing to launch an attack on the Central Continent," William replied. "Sooner or later, your people will also be conscripted into the war, whether you like it or not. I don't know when Luciel will attack, but I'm sure of one thing. It will certainly happen, and it will happen soon."

The frown on Lorcan's face deepened because he couldn't refute his words.

"Did Zeph tell you that?" Lorcan asked.

William nodded. "He had no choice after I told him that if he didn't confess everything he knew about the Demon Lord, I would bury him in night soil, just like I did to your two grandsons."

The corner of Lorcan's lips twitched as he glanced at his two grandsons, who had lowered their heads, not willing to meet his gaze.

"Then, let me ask you this. According to the contract, we don't have to help you fight against the Demon Lord," Lorcan stated. "All we need to do is continue to remain neutral and not meddle in politics."

"That's right."

"Also, those who have signed this contract are not allowed to fight against those who have signed it as well? Including their vassals?"

"Yes," William replied. "There will be a permanent non-aggression pact between those who have signed this contract of mine. He may be a Demon Lord, but if he didn't have the support of more than seventy Major Clans of this continent, he can't start his selfish war against anyone."

"True, but even if I sign this, you will just have one Major Clan supporting your cause," Lorcan argued. "That will not be enough."

"That's fine. Just leave the rest to me," William said as he patted his chest. Originally, he only planned to take Celine and leave the Demon Continent. However, after hearing Zeph's confession, he knew that this was something that he couldn't turn a blind-eye to.

Wars were never a good thing. As someone who had taken part in one, he knew the devastation and loss that war could bring to the people. He didn't want that to happen again, so circumstances had forced him to take a stand.

When he visited the Rhanes Clan, he already planned to make them the first Major Clan to join his cause. In truth, William didn't know if he was playing right into Zeph's plan, but he didn't mind it one bit.

The main reason why he declared his intention, while the envoy of the Gremory Clan was there, was to bait Luciel to come to him. He was very confident that he could fight the Demon Lord in a head-on confrontation.

The spider may have many legs, but if you cut off its head, all the legs would shrivel up and die. With so many trump cards in his disposal, William was confident that he could take Luciel down.

The sooner he dealt with him, the better. Also, he knew about Cassey's ambition as well. Although she tried hard to hide it, her hatred for the Gremory Clan was obvious.

Since she was already powerful, and had enough Myriad Beasts to create problems for them, he decided to push his plan to deal with the Gremory Clan forward, while also enacting his plans for the Demon Lord.

"Can I refuse to sign this?" Lorcan asked with a serious expression on his face.

William nodded. "You can, but do you really think that the Gremory Clan, as well as the Demon Lord, will believe that you are not part of this scheme to bring them down?"

"I can make them believe if I try hard enough."

"Well then, suit yourself."

William stood up and walked towards the exit of the hall. However before he left, he glanced back at Lorcan with a smile.

"If things go south, don't come running to me for help," William stated. "I can also guarantee that if your Clan joins the Demon Army in their attack on the Central and Silvermoon Continents, I will show you no mercy when we meet on the battlefield."

After saying what he had to say, William finally left with Kira and Cassey in tow.

Only after one of the family members confirmed that they had left the residence did Lorcan sigh deeply.

"I'm too old for this," Lorcan said as he gazed at the contract in his hand with a bitter expression.

"Regardless of the choice I make, the Rhanes Clan will have no choice but to take part in this battle for supremacy."

Lorcan glanced at the desert sky, which was now covered in storm clouds. Rain was very rare in the desert, especially raging storms.

Whenever the parched land received a sudden burst of rain, a flood would happen and sweep away everything in its path. More than anything else, Lorcan didn't want to be swept away by this sudden change which was outside of his control.

The only thing he wanted was to live a calm and peaceful life, free from politics. Unfortunately, the one sitting on the top didn't want to live a peaceful life.

Yes. The Demon Lord, Luciel, had stopped licking his wounds, and once again decided to restart a war that would allow him to regain his honor and prestige.

However, this was not a simple war, but a war that had been prophesied by the Oracle of the Demon Race. The Heir of Darkness would be born and would make the entire world his kingdom.

None would be able to stand against his might, and those who dared would only suffer a devastating defeat at his hands. Luciel was waiting for the promised day to arrive, as he started to rally the Major Clans under his banner.

Unfortunately, very few answered his call, and the majority of the Major Clans didn't want this war to start. This was why the Gremory Clan had tasked their subordinates to go to the territories of these Major Clans in order to reach a compromise.

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Back in the City of Atlan...

Zeph leisurely sipped a cup of tea as he glanced at the round mirror by his side.

"Your Excellency, should I inform the rest?" Zeph asked as he stared at the person who had told him that Raymond Parker was just an alias that William Von Ainsworth used to fool the people of the Demon Continent.

"Yes," the man answered. "The time is near. The prophecy is about to be fulfilled. We'd better make our own preparations."

"Your Excellency, are you sure that he is the one?"

"No, but I'd rather think that he is the one."

Zeph sighed as he shook his head. "And, if he really does end up not being the one in the prophecy?"

The man on the surface of the mirror quieted down before crossing his arms over his chest.

"If he isn't the one in the prophecy then we will go with Plan B," the man replied. "However, without my signal, none of you are allowed to make your move. Do I make myself clear?"

Zeph nodded before finishing up the tea in his cup. The man in the mirror also gave Zeph a brief nod before cutting off the connection.

Kira's grandfather walked towards the window of his room and stared at the storm clouds that had covered the entirety of his city.

"I sure hope that you are right, Your Excellency," Zeph muttered. "If he is not the one then I'm afraid that our days will only be filled with bitterness and suffering."

Zeph sighed deeply. He couldn't count how many times he had sighed after meeting William. For him, his appearance in the Demon Realm was both a blessing and a disaster. A blessing because with him around, they had a chance to make a difference.

A disaster because he also brought trouble wherever he went. The son of the Dungeon Conqueror and the Saintess of the World Tree was no ordinary young man. It was also because of this fact that his life had never been easy.

"I don't know what is happening at the Rhanes Clan right now, but I'm sure that My Lord is suffering from a headache at this very moment." Zeph allowed a bitter smile to appear on his face as he thought of his currently ill Sovereign. "May the Gods have mercy on us all. Or else, all of us will take the fall."

Chapter 1028: So, What Do You Think About My Proposal?

Two days after William visited the territory of the Rhanes Clan...

William gazed at the Demons who were currently partaking of the feast that the Sand Clan had prepared for them.

The Patriarchs, of the three Major Clans, as well as the Patriarch's of their Vassal Clans all gathered today to talk about an important matter.

After visiting the Rhanes Clan, the Half-Elf swaggered towards the territories of the remaining two Clans and gave them an invitation to attend an important meeting in the City of Altan. When the Patriarchs of the two Major Clans saw the giant Fortaare Death Worm, they immediately accepted William's invitation, and agreed to meet him on the promised date.

The spies of the two Major Clans inside the Rhanes Clan had reported that the giant Death Worm was no longer in Lorcan's hands. The two even communicated with each other and proposed a plan to collaborate and annex the territory of the currently ill Patriarch, who had lost the protection of his Guardian Beast.

Unfortunately, before they could even execute their plans, William came knocking on their doors. Because of this, they were forced to put their agenda on hold and go to the City of Altan to hear what he had to say.

William casually sipped his tea as Charmaine fanned his body with a feathered fan. He was wearing a black-suit, which gave his slightly above average appearance more depth and sophistication. This was a suit that he had brought back from Earth, and many Demons wondered where he had procured such clothes.

When he had deemed that everyone's gaze was now locked onto his body, he placed the teacup on the table and addressed the Demons that had traveled far to meet him.

"Before we start, all of you have to sign this contract," William said as he waved his hand. "Don't worry. This contract only states that whatever you hear, and see, in this meeting will not leave this room. Whoever breaks this rule will be killed instantly, so if you don't want to die, make sure to zip your lips when you return to your respective Domains."

The Demons grabbed the contract that had appeared in front of them and read its contents. Just like William told them, it only stated that whatever was going to be discussed during their meeting would be kept a secret from those who were not involved in the discussion.

Seeing that there was no harm in the contract, everyone signed it using a drop of their blood, which was quite common for contracts made in the Demon Realm.

After the contracts had been signed, it merged with the Demons' bodies, which proved that the contract had started to take effect.

William nodded in satisfaction before starting the meeting.

"I'm sure that all of you are wondering why I have gathered all of you here today, the reason is really simple," William said with a smile. "I am here to propose two things. The first is a non-aggression pact between all the clans living in the Fortaare Desert. This means that after this meeting is over, none of you are allowed to fight amongst yourselves.

"The second proposal is that none of you will take part in the Demon Lord's call for mobilization against the Central and Silvermoon Continents. As long as the two of you can agree to this condition, all of us will get along well. Are there any questions?"

As soon as William gave permission, an old man stood up on the right side of the room and eyed the black-haired teenager with a serious expression on his face.

"I don't want to sound rude, but we who live in the desert abide by our own rules. I don't think it is appropriate for an outsider to order us around," the old man said.

William smirked. "If I remember correctly, you are the Patriarch of the Ryder Clan, Fergus. Since you spoke in this manner, I assume that you don't agree with my proposal?"

Fergus shook his head. "I agree with the part on where we don't have to answer the Demon Lord's call to rally to his aid in declaring war on the Central and Silvermoon Continents. However, the distribution of territories in the desert is an internal thing. I hope that Lord Raymond understands what I'm trying to say..."

"Yes. I understand," William replied. "Is there anyone else who thinks this way?"

A middle-aged man stood up and gave William a brief nod.

"I agree with Patriarch Fergus," the middle-aged man stated. "This is an internal affair, so I hope that Lord Raymond respects our laws."

"Renon of the Blythe Clan." William nodded in understanding. "Is there anyone else?"

As if waiting for that moment, all the vassals of the two Major Clans stood up to show their support to their Masters.

Lorcan, and his vassals remained seated as they looked at the two Clan leaders who had smug expressions on their faces.

'Idiots,' Zeph thought as he sneered internally at the fools who thought that they could run their mouths in William's presence.

William scanned the crowd of Demons that had decided to go against his proposal. He had already expected that this would happen, so he had made plans beforehand.

"Understood," William said. "Then, I'll give you all a few minutes to change your mind."

Fergus snorted. "I'm afraid that even if you give us an hour, our answers will remain the same. Please, let's not waste each other's time and end this meeting. We still have important matters to attend to."

"My friend Fergus is right, Lord Raymond," Renon commented. "It is in our best interest if we stop wasting each other's time."

William smiled and nodded his head. "Both of you are right. It is best if we don't waste each other's time."

The Half-Elf then snapped his hand. Immediately, all the Demons who were standing disappeared in a blink of an eye.

Lorcan and Zeph glanced at William at the same time and looked at him with suspicion. Both of them didn't know what just transpired and wondered if the Half-Elf could give them an explanation.

William didn't say a word, save to ask Charmaine to refill his cup, which the pretty Elf was more than happy to oblige. Several minutes passed as William drank leisurely, while waiting for his Succubus Wife's signal.

Ten minutes after the Demons had disappeared in the room, William finally received the answer he was waiting for. With a wave of his hand, the Demons reappeared inside the room, under everyone's gazes.

"So, what do you think about my proposal?" William asked. A confident smile was plastered on his face, as he waited for everyone's answers.

"It is a wonderful proposal!" Fergus answered and gave William a respectful bow. "The Ryder Clan will follow and obey Lord Raymond's orders from this day onwards!"

The Ryder Clan's vassals also bowed their heads respectfully as they pledged their loyalty to William's cause.

""We will obey Lord Raymond's orders from this day onwards!""

Renon took a step forward and also proclaimed his allegiance to William's cause, along with his vassals. To the eyes of the outsiders, he seemed to have a complete change of heart as he promised to support William in whatever he wanted to do.

Lorcan's and Zeph's expressions became serious when they noticed the sudden changes that had come over their rivals. They had known them for many years, and they had never seen them act this servile to anyone, even the Demon Lord wasn't given this kind of treatment when he visited the Fortaare Desert to ask for their help.

"Well then, I guess that settles it," William said as he waved his hand and a new set of contracts appeared in front of everyone in the room. "Please sign it, so that all of us can return to our happy everyday lives."

"As you wish, My Lord," Fergus replied.

"By your will, My Liege!" Renon declared.

Lorcan and Zeph glanced at each other with bitter smiles on their faces. Clearly, William did something to the Demons, which made them submit to his will. They secretly rejoiced because they hadn't rejected his proposal for a united front in the Fortaare Desert.

If they had, they, and their vessels, might have also suffered the same fate as the other two Clans, who now seemed to be under some kind of spell, making them William's loyal followers and unable to say no to any of his demands.

Chapter 1029 – The Call Of Darkness [Part 1]

"While things are proceeding according to your prediction, the methods he has used have surpassed my expectations," Zeph said to the round mirror in front of him. "To be perfectly honest, I'm a bit scared of him. He is young, foolish, and maybe reckless as well. Are you sure we can proceed with our plans in this manner?"

"He is just bait," the man in the mirror replied. "All he needs to do is lure Luciel away from the capital. I will handle the rest."

"The question is, will he take the bait?"

"Perhaps."

The man in the mirror smiled as he looked at Zeph, who had a worried look on his face.

"You have to remember that he is still the Demon Lord," the man stated. "He is the strongest fighter, and schemer. He would not be easily swayed to leave the capital unless it was an emergency."

Zeph sighed. "So, we need William to cause more trouble along the way to rile him up? I'm sure that as long as he continues his path towards the North, he will stop at the locations of the Major Clans and make them submit to his will, using force and spells if he has to."

The man in the mirror nodded. "For him to be able to make Fergus and Renon submit so easily might be due to some kind of charm spell."

"But, that is what confuses me," Zeph replied. "The Patriarchs undergo a blessing from the Temple of the Gods after they had been assigned to their position. This blessing gives them a very strong resistance against Charm, as well as similar spells that affect the mind. How did he manage to do it?"

The man chuckled as he gave Zeph a teasing smile. "Do you really not know, or are you pretending not to know?"

"I have a hunch," Zeph answered. "But, I don't know if my hunch is right."

"Alright. I know that you are just waiting for me to confirm your suspicion, so I'll tell it to you straight since we are allies," the man stated. "The blessing of the Oracle might be strong, but it is simply no match against something that contains the power of a strong Divinity."

Zeph pinched the bridge of his nose because his guess had been confirmed. Rumors had been flying around the Demon Continent, but for him, rumors were just rumors. Unless he got confirmation from a trusted source, he would not even bother to entertain such a possibility.

"So, the Sin of Lust is with him," Zeph muttered. "Are there others?"

"Yes." The man nodded. "The boy is surprisingly a very capable individual. The Sin of Greed, as well as Luciel's own daughter, Chiffon, who hold the Sin of Gluttony are his women. If they could unleash the full power of their abilities then very few individuals would be their match... especially, the lady who holds the Sin of Lust."

"I'm starting to pity the Clans that he will meet along the way."

“Don’t pity them. We need him to cause as big a disturbance as possible. Then and only then will Luciel leave the capital and when that happens... I will make sure that he doesn’t return alive.”

Five flying carriages flew in a formation with William’s carriage at its center. After dealing with the affairs in the Fortaare Desert, the Half-Elf resumed his journey with the intention of making the other Demonic Clans along their route, submit to his will.

Right now, he had a hostile relationship with the Gremory Clan. He intended to let the other Clans deal with the forces that they had spread out across the continent in order to weaken the Gremory Clan’s power and prestige.

As they continued their journey, William realized that the teleportation gates in the Demon Realm were very rare. In fact, even the city ruled by the Patriarchs didn’t have them.

When the Half-Elf consulted Zeph about this matter, the old man told him that Demons didn’t trust each other. For them, building a teleportation gate inside their city, or near their city, was a very risky thing to do.

As a race that liked to actively expand their domains, each Patriarch was afraid that these teleportation gates would be used by their rivals to invade their lands. So, as a precaution, they didn’t allow any teleportation gates to be built within their cities or anywhere near their cities.

If one wanted to travel the Demonic Continent, they would have to use the normal means of transport—such as by land and flying carriages.

‘I’m taking too many detours, but I need to do this if I want to ensure that the Demon Lord’s plans for invasion will be foiled,’ William thought as he stared outside his carriage window.

Charmaine was peacefully resting her head on his lap with a smile on her face. William had just finished drinking her blood, and he told his personal maid to take a nap for the time being. The pretty Elf was more than happy to obey William’s command and slept like a baby without a care in the world.

It was at this moment when he once again felt a strong attraction coming from the North. Something was calling out to him from beyond the horizon, and it was giving William a headache.

Sometimes, the call was like that of a lover, gentle, and kind. However, there were also moments when it was domineering, as if forcing him to submit to its will. The Dark Magic inside his body would more often than not go into a chaotic state whenever these sudden outbursts happened, and William couldn't do anything aside from endure it with everything he had.

The feeling finally subsided after a quarter of an hour had passed, and by this time, William's forehead was already covered with sweat. It took a lot of willpower for him to resist that powerful call that seemed to be hellbent to make him travel towards the North.

'This is the third time that I have experienced such strong attraction,' William thought. 'Am I the only one feeling this way, or is everyone who has Dark Magic in the same boat?'

William didn't know the answer to his questions. He just hoped that as long as he resisted the powerful beckoning call from the Ancient Ruins, nothing unusual would happen to him.

Chapter 1030: The Call Of Darkness [Part 2]

Inside the Wicked Thorn Forest...

Celine gritted her teeth as she crumpled the bedsheet with her hands. She felt very faint as if her consciousness was about to fade at any moment, but her willpower was strong, so she endured the call that was coming from the North.

A quarter of an hour passed, and her suffering finally ended. She lay limply on top of the bed, gasping for breath. Ten minutes later, Baba Yaga entered the room with a pale expression on her wrinkled face.

As the very embodiment of Dark Magic in the Demon Realm, she was also affected by the power of the ancient ruins. However, she was a Demigod. Her resistance was stronger than Celine's so, aside from looking exhausted, she was mostly fine.

"I've decided," Baba Yaga said with a determined look on her face. "Pack your things. We will travel to the South. Maybe we can meet up with that William boy along the way. According to Joash, the boy will

take two to three weeks to arrive here, but we can't wait that long. The attraction is getting stronger each time, and I'm afraid that you will not be able to withstand it before long."

Celine weakly nodded as she forced herself to stand up. Although everything she owned was inside her storage artifacts, there was some stuff that she had procured inside the Wicked Thorn Forest that she planned to bring with her as well.

Suddenly, Oliver, the Parrott Monkey, entered the room through the window with a tired look on his face.

"The dark magic candidates entered the Ancient Ruins a third time not long ago," Oliver reported. "The best case scenario is that less than twenty of them will be able to return alive. The worse case scenario, on the other hand, is a complete wipeout, leaving no survivors behind."

Baba Yaga nodded her head in understanding. "The first time there were less than fifteen survivors from the first group, and eight survivors from the second group. All of them are taking turns to challenge the ancient ruins, and get its guardian's approval."

"I'm afraid that those with weaker willpower wouldn't be able to run even if they wanted to," Oliver added. "It seems that the Holy Land is seriously taking its time to pick its heir. Mistress, we need to leave this place. We are too close to the Ancient Ruins."

Celine nodded. "Master already planned to leave with me. Oliver, do not wander off. The three of us will leave this place together."

"Understood." Oliver closed his eyes to rest. He had been spying on the movements of the Demon candidates for the past three days. The Parrot Monkey didn't even bother to sleep because he was afraid that he would miss something important if he closed his eyes.

Because of this, he was dead tired, and decided to take a short nap, while waiting for Celine to finish her preparations.

An hour later, a giant wooden house, propped up by two giant bird legs, started to traverse the Wicked Thorn Forest. This was Baba Yaga's personal artifact, which she called Domus Mactabilis.

It was a mobile house that could go anywhere, as long as Baba Yaga willed it. Although the old hag usually traveled using a giant flying mortar, the giant wooden house was her home, and she didn't want to leave it behind.

As they broke away from the vast forest where she had stayed for more than a century, Baba Yaga felt a weariness deep inside her bones. As a Demigod, this was not a good sign because it meant that something bad might happen to her in an unforeseeable future.

"Oliver, that boy, William, can you find him?" Baba Yaga asked the Parrot Monkey who was currently perched on the nest that Celine had made for him, after arriving at her Master's house.

Oliver nodded. "I can."

The Parrot Monkey had supported the Half-Elf when he was still young and inexperienced, because of this, he had left a mark on the boy's shadow that allowed him to sense William's general direction.

"Good," Baba Yaga replied. "Tomorrow, at first light, go and find him. I will put a tracker on you, so that I will be able to know where you are. Once you find him, notify me right away. We will head to his direction as soon as you find his location."

"Sounds like a plan. Consider it done," Oliver nodded before shifting his attention to Celine who was still feeling under the weather. "Mistress, your Prince has come for you. Are you ready to meet with him?"

"He is not my Prince," Celine replied. "Even if he is, I will not recognize him as such."

"This is why you are a late bloomer, why must you play hard to get?" Baba Yaga chuckled. "You and the boy have already rolled in the sheets. He's already your man, and you his woman. Why make things difficult?"

"I agree, Your Excellency," Oliver commented. "I can vouch for my boy, Will. I was the one that taught him his moves."

Celine and Baba Yaga looked at the smug faced Parrot Monkey with amused expressions on their faces. Both of them knew that Oliver was just exaggerating, but they didn't call him out on his bold antics.

"It's quite unfortunate that my scrying doesn't work on the boy," Baba Yaga said as she sat down on her chair. "Whenever I try, all I see is a gray mist that can't be penetrated by my keen eyes. This can only mean one thing.

"The boy has a very strong protective charm that prevents anyone from spying on him, or someone else is spying on him and preventing others from doing the same. Truth be told, I am leaning on the latter. However, if that is true, this is a very concerning matter."

"Why is it a concerning matter, Master?" Celine inquired as she gazed at her Master's wise and wrinkled face with worry.

"Celine, I am a Demigod. The strongest Demigod in the Demon Realm," Baba Yaga replied in a confident tone. "I can see anyone if they are in the Demon Continent. For me to not be able to pierce that misty veil means that the one who is blocking my sight is someone stronger than me."

Oliver and Celine exchanged a glance and their faces turned grim because they finally realized what Baba Yaga meant.

"Someone stronger than Master is..." Celine's hands trembled as they rested on her lap.

"A God." Baba Yaga smiled wryly as she finished her disciple's words. "I don't know if this is a good or bad thing, but for him to attract someone of that rank is simply amazing. Celine, I advise you to always be on your guard once the two of you reunited. You don't know who is looking, so make sure that when you pin him down... you do it inside the artifact Eternity, okay?"

Celine lowered her head, which made Baba Yaga chuckle like the witch she was. Even Oliver had a happy expression on his face when he saw Celine's flustered expression.

The beautiful Elf sighed internally as she thought of the red-headed teenager that had taken her first time. She had done it on a whim because she wanted to confirm if William was the Prince in the Prophecy.

She knew that her sister, Celeste, planned to kill the Prince once his identity had been discovered. This was why Celine needed to know and sacrificed her chastity to confirm her suspicion.

If, at that time, a mark had appeared on her body then her worst fears would have become a reality.

She had steeled herself to take William to a faraway place where no one would be able to locate him. Celine would do this to protect him from Celeste, as well as the other forces that planned to use him to fulfill the prophecy.

Fortunately, William wasn't the one that would cover the world in darkness. Because of this, her worst fears disappeared. However, another worry started to grow in her heart. If William really wasn't that person then that only meant one thing.

'Whoever it is, it doesn't matter,' Celine thought as her purple eyes glowed briefly with power. 'I will be the one to kill him, and end this hateful destiny that made me and my sister suffer during our childhood years.'

Baba Yaga stared at her disciple and sighed internally. Although she couldn't see Celine's face right now, her clenched fist that was filled with hate was enough to tell her all that she needed to know.

'Don't worry, child. As long as I am around, I will not let anything harm you,' Baba Yaga vowed.

This was the promise that she had made long ago after learning about her Disciple's ill-fated fate. As someone who had treated Celine as her own daughter, she would stop at nothing to ensure that she would be able to live a peaceful life, out of harm's way.