

Strongest 211

Chapter 211: Would You Like To Join My Knight Order?

"You sure know how to make a ruckus," Est said as he stared at the handsome Half-Elf who was lying on the couch.

"I missed you, too, Est," William replied as he looked at his good friend, whom he hadn't seen for a month. "How is everything in the academy?"

"Nothing much has changed, but the academy will resume their lessons a week from now," Est reported. "Are you sure you want to get on the bad side of the Misty Sect? They're quite a strong faction in the Central Continent."

"They attacked me first," William countered. "I was minding my own business, but they just had to annoy me. Do you think I will just stand there and allow them to humiliate me? Not happening."

Est sighed, but William was right. If Kingsley hadn't made a scene, everything would have ended smoothly. Ian and Isaac stood behind Est and nodded their heads in agreement.

"By the way, are you guys interested in joining my Knight Order?" William asked. "If you join now, I'll throw in a Wyvern as a freebie."

Est snorted, but still felt happy that William invited him to join his Knight Order. Unfortunately, he couldn't due to some complicated reasons.

"Although I can't join you, I'll ask around my Division to see if there is anyone interested," Est replied.

William smiled and nodded his head. He was a little disappointed that Est didn't join him, but he didn't allow it to show on his face.

It was then when a knock was heard on the door and William raised his lazy bum to answer it.

"Who is it?" William asked while his hand held the handle of the door.

"It's me, Wendy," Wendy replied. "I came here because Thor wants to see you."

William grinned and opened the door. Immediately, the beautiful blonde girl appeared before his eyes. It had been a month since he last saw Wendy and it made him want to tease her.

"Are you sure that it is only Thor that misses me?" William inquired with a mischievous smirk.

Wendy lowered her head as a blush crept on her face. She could still vividly remember what happened an hour ago. William's arrogance made her see a side of him that she hadn't seen before.

For some reason, seeing her crush's "bad boy" image made her heart skip a beat.

"I guess I missed you a little as well," Wendy compromised as she forced herself to answer.

William didn't want to bully her so much and decided to stop his teasing. He then opened the door wider and invited Wendy to come inside the room.

"Head Prefect, you're also here?" Wendy asked as soon as she saw Est.

"I just arrived ten minutes ago," Est answered.

William pulled Wendy along as he made her sit on the couch beside him. Seeing the two of them this close made Est's and Ian's hearts itch, but there was nothing they could do.Â

Both of them know that Wendy was a good girl. They also knew that she had a big crush on William. Even so, they still felt envious that Wendy got to spend some time with William in a carefree manner, without worrying about anything in the world.

Wendy picked up Thor from the floor and placed him on her lap. She then started to pat his head. The beautiful lady was trying to build up her courage in order to ask William if he would like to dance with her tomorrow at the banquet that was prepared in his honor.

While she was organizing her thoughts, William casually held her hand, which made her raise her head to look at him.

"Tomorrow, at the banquet, can you be my first dance?" William asked. "I'm worried that because of how handsome I am, the ladies will fight for the chance to dance with me. In order to prevent this calamity from happening, I will have to ask you to accompany me for the duration of the banquet."

""Huh?!""

Est and Ian were dumbfounded by William's proposal. He asked it so naturally that it didn't sound out of place. Also, he gave a valid excuse in order to make Wendy agree to his request.

It never occurred to the two of them that William could be this smooth when interacting with the ladies. Their gazes locked on William's and Wendy's hands that were clasped to each other.Â

"O-Okay," Wendy replied. "I will accompany you tomorrow and make sure that none of the girls bother you."

"Great." William grinned.

After taking his revenge on Kingsley and showing the old hag her place, William was in a very good mood. He was not afraid of the Misty Sect because their area of influence was in the Central Continent. Also, he was the Commander of the Second Knight Order in the Hellan Kingdom. Miriam would think thrice before messing with him again.

William's strategy was for the Misty Sect to focus their attention on Rebecca and help her become strong, so that she would be able to defeat him during their promised battle. The Half-Elf was confident that the Misty Sect wouldn't allow their reputation to be tarnished so they would not make any foul moves on him for the remaining duration of the agreement.

It was also William's own way to tell the nobles that he was not a pushover. If they thought that they could belittle him, just because he was young, they had another thing coming for them.

"Although I'm fine with accompanying you tomorrow, is it really fine for me to do that?" Wendy asked. "There are many girls who want to form a connection with you at tomorrow's banquet. I don't think I will be able to hold them all off."

"Don't worry." William assured her. "I have a Plan B."

"And just what is this Plan B of yours?" Ian asked.

He wasn't able to stop himself from asking the smug-faced boy who was still holding Wendy's hand. If looks could maim, William would have already been castrated a hundred times over.

William glanced at Ian and snorted. "You'll find out tomorrow. I'm not telling you anything."

Ian clicked his tongue, but didn't continue the argument. He had come to know that arguing with William was pointless because the red-headed boy has a thick skin.

"Ah! Why didn't I think of this sooner," William said as he returned his gaze to Wendy. "Would you like to join my Knight Order?"

Wendy's eyes widened in surprise. Truth be told, she was hoping that she could join William's Knight Order, so she could become closer to him. "Can I?"

"Of course you can. If you like, you can be assigned to my personal Knight Squadron." William glanced at Est who had a frown on his face. "Will you allow her to join my Knight Order?"

Est reluctantly nodded his head. He didn't have a reason to stop Wendy from joining William's Knight Order because he knew that William needed more talented people under him. However, he was worried that William and Wendy would become closer if the two were left alone, so he decided to use a method to prevent them from taking their relationship to the next level.

"Can you let Ian also join your Knight Order?" Est asked. "He's a very capable warrior. I'm sure that he would be a great addition to your ranks."

"No." William replied in a heartbeat. "Why would I allow this snot-nosed pansy to join my Knight Order? No way!"

Ian raised an eyebrow but he kept his silence. He was wondering what Est was up to, so he decided not to make a move that might jeopardize his Young Master's plan.

"Listen, the way things are right now, it would be hard for you to move around without people proficient in magic," Est explained. "Also, even though the two of you argue a lot, Ian would not do anything that would put your Knight Order into chaos."

William leaned back on the couch and considered Est's proposal. It was true that although he argued with Ian a lot, he had a feeling that he could put his trust in the snot-nosed pansy who was always trying to pick a fight with him.

Having Ian around was better than having complete strangers become part of his personal Knight Squadron.

"Fine, but I have a condition," William stated. "From now on, you are not allowed to purposely anger me again. Also, after you join my Knight Order, you will call me Sir. If you can agree to these two conditions then I will allow you to join my organization."

Ian glanced at Est and the latter nodded his head. Est's loyal retainer knew that he had been entrusted with an important mission by his Young Master. Although he didn't know the full details, it would be best to agree to it for now and consult with Est later when they returned to the Magic Division Class.

"Very well, I promise," Ian replied. "I will do my best to be of service to you, Sir."

Est looked at his trusted retainer while sighing inside. This was the only thing he could do to monitor William's actions. As a new Knight Order under the King's Banner, there were a lot of expectations that were placed on William's shoulders.

Est was hoping that by adding Ian as his supporter, he would be able to ease his friend's burden even if it was only by a little bit.

Chapter 212: Beauty And The Bestie

William looked in the mirror and smiled. He then turned his body left and right to see if there was something wrong with his attire. Seeing that everything was in place, he struck a cool pose and faced his Mama who was lying on the floor, along with Dia, Thor, and Ragnar.

"What do you think, Mama?" William asked. "Am I handsome, or am I handsome?"

"Meeeeh."

"How about my clothes?"

"Meeeeh."

"Right? Aunt Helen gave these to me before we left Lont."

Ella bleated softly and assured William that his clothes looked good on him.

Dia, who was resting on Ella's head, slithered towards William. She then climbed his body, and coiled up around his neck like she usually did. Thor, and Ragnar on the other hand, barked in order to show their support to their Master.

"I'm sorry, I can't take the three of you to the banquet," William said as he gently rubbed Dia's head before removing her from his neck and placing her back on Ella's head. "Mama, please, look after them for me."

Ella nodded her head in understanding. "Meeeeh."

William knew that it would be a bad idea to bring the three kids to the banquet. Although he was not worried that other people would try to capture them under the watchful eye of the guards in the palace, there might be powerful individuals who would be able to discern their monster breeds.

Were that to happen, he knew he would have just invited trouble to come knocking on his door. Hence, why he decided that it would be best to let them stay under Ella's care.

William looked at the clock hanging on the wall and decided that now was as good a time as any to leave the academy. He waved goodbye to his small family as he walked towards the door.

It was at that moment when a notification from the God Shop arrived and caught William's attention.

< God Shop Mail >

"Attention to the Devout Followers of the Gods from the Ten Thousand Temple. Great rewards are waiting for each and everyone of you!

The God of Alchemists has issued a commission that is open to everyone.

He is currently looking for extremely rare and potent ingredients that he will use for his experiments. If any of you are able to acquire the items on our list, please, send a message to me, Mercurius, the Manager of the God Shop, directly.

I will assist you in transporting the materials to the Alchemy God free of charge! However, anyone who sends me troll messages will immediately be banned from using the God Shop for a hundred years.

Here is the list of materials that the Alchemist God is looking for and the rewards associated with them.

Spring of Life - 100,000 God Points

Baphomet's Horn - 50,000 God Points

A liter of Empyrean's Blood - 20,000 God Points

Ink of Krakens - 10,000 God Points

William checked the materials listed by the God of Alchemists one by one, in the hope that there was something that he could exchange for God Points. After reading the entire list, the Half-Elf scratched his head because everything that was written there were extremely rare materials.

"Ink of Krakens?" William snorted. "I'd die before I could even approach that thing."

The list was long and there were over a hundred ingredients listed in it. Although he was tempted, there was nothing he could do about it.

William put the matter of the God of Alchemists to the back of his mind. Right now, he didn't have the time nor the ability to hunt for these materials. For now, he needed to focus his attention on the banquet that was prepared in their honor.

As he walked outside the Solaris dormitory, William noticed that all the members of the Angorian War Sovereign had lined themselves up to welcome him. All of them were mounted on their Hipogriffs.

Conrad and his Wyvern stood beside the Flying Carriage like a bodyguard waiting for the VIP to arrive.

Kenneth, Priscilla, Spencer, and Drake stood near the carriage, and each of them looked amazing in their attire.

Dave stood beside the carriage door and waited for William to step close enough, so that he could open the door for his Commander.

Since they were the main stars of the banquet, all of them would accompany William to show their faces to the nobles and other influential figures of the Hellan Kingdom.

The commoners who were part of the Knight Order, couldn't hold back the grins on their faces. This was a dream come true for them. With the help of their new rank, it would not be difficult to marry into the nobility and enjoy a few luxuries while they were at it.

The students of the Martial Classes that had left during William's invitation meeting couldn't help but regret their decision. They watched this scene from afar with jealousy. However, what was done was done. The only thing they could do now was to wait for another opportunity to hug William's thigh and never let it go again.

When William and the rest of the officers were safely inside the carriage, Dave returned to the coachman's seat and nodded his head to Conrad.

"Let's go." Conrad patted his partner, and the Wyvern flapped its mighty wings to soar to the sky.

The Hippogriffs followed suit and joined their Knight-Captain in a V Formation.

They circled the Martial Class Division once before William's flying carriage joined their ranks. As usual, he was in the center of the formation, protected by an impressive aerial platoon of magical beasts.

"Circle the academy once," William ordered. "Show them how impressive our Knight Order is."

""Yes, Sir!""

With Conrad at the lead, the Angorian War Sovereign paraded around the Hellan Royal Academy before flying towards the palace, leaving sighs of envy and admiration in their wake.

When they arrived near the air space of the palace, three Gryphon Riders appeared to guide them to the special area that was designated for the members of the Angorian War Sovereign.

"To think that I'd be going into the palace like this, it feels like a dream," Drake commented as he looked down from the carriage window.

"Same here," Spencer commented. Even though he didn't like William getting close to his twin sister, he had to admit that the red-headed boy's achievement was very impressive.

William was seated comfortably in his seat with his eyes closed. He was doing his best not to act smug in front of his subordinates. As the Commander of a Knight Order he had to show a refined, elegant, and charismatic side of him to the people in the castle.

Fortunately, Feyright taught him a lot about interacting with nobles and how to act like a VIP during special occasions.

When the carriage had safely landed on the ground, Dave opened the door and allowed the officers to disembark first. Just like they had done during the Knighting ceremony, Kenneth and the others lined up on the side of the carriage and waited for William to step outside.

They were met by the butler of the King as well as over fifty palace maids wearing white clothing. The palace servants simultaneously bowed their heads to show respect to William and his entourage before leading them to the main entrance of the Event Hall of the Palace.

As soon as the name of their Knight Order was announced, all the eyes inside the venue locked onto the handsome Half-Elf. William had an angelic smile on his face that made all the young ladies look at him with great interest.

Some of them were even blushing because William looked so suave in the princely attire that his Aunt Helen had made for him for this very occasion. With the grace of a dancer, and the elegance of a prince, William led his entourage to the special seats that were reserved for them.

Just like most banquets, several tables and chairs were grouped in an orderly fashion. These separated the different factions within the Hellan Kingdom.

William scanned the surroundings and found a few familiar faces among the crowd. Aramis gave him a brief nod before averting his gaze. He was the head of the Southern Faction of the nobles and he had to play his part as one of the pillars that supported the kingdom.

He then looked towards the Western Side of the hall and saw Lawrence raising a wine cup to him. The Old Fox of Griffith was the head of the nobles in the Western Faction of the Kingdom. Ironically, the Duchy of Armstrong, where Spencer and Wendy were born, was also part of this group.

William didn't know anyone from the Northern and Eastern Faction, so he merely gave them a brief glance before shifting his attention to the beautiful young lady who was looking at him shyly from afar.

Wendy was wearing a pink, ruffled, princess-ball-gown dress that made her look like an innocent fairy that had wandered into the human kingdom.

She was seated beside a middle-aged man who was looking at her with gentle eyes.

The man then turned his head to look at William. His gentle gaze became as sharp as a sword as it bored through his body.

William smiled and gave Wendy's father a brief nod before winking at the beautiful lady whose face started to turn red.

"Commander, please, don't ogle my sister," Spencer commented from the side. "Or else, my father will stab you with his sword."

William ignored Spencer's snarky comment and continued to scan the room. His gaze then landed on the brown haired beauty wearing a purple, sleeveless, ball gown dress that was adorned with countless shimmering stars.

Feeling William's stare, Rebecca turned her head to meet his gaze. As if reaching an agreement, both of them simultaneously nodded their heads at each other before averting their gazes.

The Half-Elf had to admit that his Ex-Fiance was indeed a very beautiful girl. If not for the intervention of her mother Agatha, and her Master, Eleanor, the two of them might still be betrothed to each other.

William sighed internally as he tried to remember the outcome of similar "arranged marriages" in the novels that he had read in the past. All of them led to the Main Character having some sort of fall out with his fiancée.

There were even cases when the two became enemies and tried to kill each other on various occasions.

William planned on breaking the agreement between his Grandpa and Lawrence after he beat Rebecca in their duel three years from now. He had no intention of forcing someone to marry him.

Wendy saw everything that happened and felt her heart ache. She gave Rebecca a brief glance before lowering her head to look down on her skirt. Her two slender, and delicate, hands rested over her skirt as she tried her best not to ball them into fists.

She felt a bit intimidated by Rebecca because the girl was more beautiful than her. While she was feeling down, a firm and eloquent voice reached her ear.

"My lady, would you give me the honor of dancing with you?"

Wendy raised her head when she heard the familiar voice.

A pair of light-green eyes, that shone like emeralds, looked at her with a gentle gaze. William posed in a gesture of invitation and patiently waited for Wendy's reply.

Ironically, the one who answered William's invitation was not Wendy, but her father, Joaquin Armstrong. The current Duke of the Armstrong Duchy.

"Go on, Wendy," Joaquin commented. "The Knight Commander is asking for a dance. It would be impolite to reject his invitation."

"Y-Yes," Wendy stuttered as she placed her hand over William's.

William smiled and nodded to Joaquin while giving him two thumbs up in his heart. The reason why he approached Wendy was to know what her father thought of him. After hearing Joaquin's comment, William was sure that the latter didn't hate the idea of his daughter having a relationship with him.

As a newly appointed Knight Commander, William had very few allies within the nobility. This short exchange with Wendy's father allowed him to test the waters and have a better grasp of the man's personality.

Everyone was paying close attention to William, and they were surprised when he guided a beautiful girl to the center of the vast hall.

It was still too early and the musicians were still in the midst of tuning their instruments. They were wondering if William was doing this to make a fool of himself.

As they were about to start whispering at each other, a soft, slow, and beautiful tune reverberated inside the vast hall.

Feyright, William's former teacher, and second best friend, stood on an elevated platform and began to sing while playing his lute.

"Tale as old as chime,

Song as old as Lime

Beauty and the Bestie~"

Chapter 213: The Princes Of The Hellan Kingdom

Everyone watched as the pair danced in the center of the hall with great interest.

As the only daughter of a noble household, Wendy was taught many things when she was young, and among those was dancing. She was a very good dancer. But, even she was amazed at how good William was when it came to dancing.

William, who had been trained by Feyright, not only excelled in singing, but dancing as well. The bard made sure that William would be able to dance properly even if he was dancing with princesses and queens.

"I didn't expect that you would also be good at dancing," Wendy commented as the two danced on the dance floor.

William held her waist firmly as he guided Wendy to do a twirl. He then smiled and stared at Wendy in the eyes which made the young lady's heart beat wildly inside her chest.

"I'm a Jack of all trades," William said with pride. He then playfully lowered his head to whisper something in her ears. "There are plenty more things that I can do that you don't know about."

"Like what?" Wendy whispered back. William's confidence was starting to rub off onto her and she was feeling bolder with each passing second.

"This and that," William replied.

There was no way that William could tell her that he could be whatever he wanted to be. If not for the fact that his powers were sealed, there was a high chance he would have become the Head Prefect of the Magic Division, instead of Est.

Although the two were just whispering at each other, those who were watching thought of their actions as a sign of intimacy. Lawrence gave Joaquin a side-long glance before shifting his gaze towards his granddaughter.

Rebecca wasn't looking at the two. Instead, she had focused her attention on controlling the snowflake in the palm of her hand. The Old Fox of Griffith sighed in his heart as he shook his head helplessly.

'At least their marriage agreement is not officially void,' Lawrence thought. 'Many things can happen in three years. Maybe I can help the two get closer during that span of time.'

William and Wendy danced happily until the song came to a close.

After the two made a curtsy at each other, a round of applause reverberated in the hall. Wendy's face immediately turned red because she had completely forgotten that they were inside the palace and not the academy.

William, seeing his partner's reaction, came to the rescue and guided Wendy towards the tables where his Knight Order was stationed.

The banquet was held in order to honor him and his subordinates, so it was perfectly normal to have Wendy join his table because she, too, was an official member of his Knight Order.

William's plan was simple, Wendy sat on his right, while Priscilla sat on his left. With two beautiful ladies at his side, it would deter other girls from approaching him.

The boys looked at William with jealousy, while the girls looked at Wendy and Priscilla with envy.

Mordred, who was seated among the Western Faction, was laughing internally. He was thinking that his father, James, would be over the moon if he saw how popular his grandson was.

'Still, you're far too naive, Will, if you think that the two girls beside you will be able to prevent others from making their move,' Mordred thought. 'You're a hot potato right now and everyone wants to form a connection with you. I bet the old geezers are going to send their daughters and granddaughters over to try to honey trap you. The only question is, will you bite?'

Mordred looked at the winecup in his hand and smiled. This was why his father moved to the farthest edge of the Western Regions. He didn't like mingling with the nobles of the Hellan Kingdom and only dealt with his old acquaintances like Lawrence.

While everyone's eyes were still focused on William, the butler made an announcement and everyone in the room stood to welcome their King.

Noah wore majestic attire worthy of his rank. Three boys trailed behind him. They were the three princes of the Hellan Kingdom. The oldest prince was nineteen years old. The second prince was sixteen and the third prince was only nine. Just like their father, they had all inherited his good looks and many of the noble ladies looked at them with admiration.

Of course, among the three princes, it was the Crown Prince that garnered the most attention.

Lionel Arthur Vi Hellan, the Crown Prince of the Hellan Kingdom, was the object of affection for most noble ladies in the kingdom. As the Crown Prince, he would be the future king when his father retired from the throne.

Naturally, such a position of power was irresistible to the noble households, and all of them wanted one of their daughters to become the lucky girl that would catch the prince's attention.

The second prince, Rufus Patrick Vi Hellan, was younger than him by three years. However, the second prince was a bit special. Just like Rebecca, Rufus was also hailed as a rare genius. As a prince of a kingdom, all the necessary resources were given to him in order to ensure his growth.

He was a genius Battle Mage that had been trained exclusively by the kingdom's Grand Archmage, Emrys. There were even rumors that after his coming of age ceremony, the title of Crown Prince would be switched to him. Although these rumors were unfounded, the King himself didn't put a stop to these rumors.

It was as if Noah was still thinking of who, between the first and second prince, would be worthy of becoming his successor.

The last Prince, Ernest Louis Vi Hellan, shared his father's name. The young prince was born with Grade S Talent in Magic, and had been under the personal care of the Dean of the Hellan Royal Academy, Simon.

Perhaps due to him being the youngest, the Queen spoiled him more than his older brothers. Ernest was a young scholar and his craving for knowledge was well known to the King and his ministers.

Simon even proposed that when Ernest reached the age of twelve, he should be sent to the most prestigious academy in the Central Continent, which was the Saint Hestia Academy where the geniuses of the world gathered.

The Dean was hoping that his pupil could be away from the conflict between the First and Second Prince as they subtly battled for the throne in the shadows.

Noah gazed at his subjects with a smile. He then raised his hand and asked everyone to sit down and enjoy the banquet.

At the corner of the banquet hall, Est stared at the King as well as the three princes by his side. His face was as calm as a still lake, but inside his heart, faint ripples started to move across the water.

Ian and Isaac looked at their Young Master with worried faces, but none of them moved to comfort him.

"Don't worry," Est said without turning his head to look at his two royal retainers. "I'm fine. This is nothing."

Yes. This was nothing.

Est told himself repeatedly as he lowered his gaze to look at the floor. He was afraid that if he looked any longer at the smiling Crown Prince, the emotions inside his heart would come to the surface, and that would not be a good thing.

"It looks like your crush is here, Rufus," Lionel said with a smile. "The musicians are going to start playing any moment. Why don't you ask her for a dance?"

The way he acted was like a kind older brother who really cared for his younger brother's well being, but Rufus knew better. It was all just an act in order to taunt him.

Lionel knew that Rufus had a big crush on Rebecca because she was the genius "Ice Princess" that had a Perfect Grade Talent. A lady that his younger brother had admired for many years, but didn't dare to talk to.

"If you don't make your move then shall I make mine?" Lionel asked. "She's very beautiful and suits my taste perfectly. Who knows? She might also be my future Queen when I feel like it."

Rufus calmly looked at his older brother with a smile. "There's a reason why Sir Lawrence didn't join your Faction. It's because he knows that you are a snake. Do you really believe that he'll allow his beloved granddaughter to fall into your hands? Keep dreaming, Big Brother of mine."

"So, are you going to dance with her or not? You say so many things and yet, you can't answer a simple question."

"..."

Lionel snorted. He knew that Rebecca was Rufus' weakness. As long as he used her in an argument, Rufus would never win against him.

Ernest just sat at the side with his head lowered. He had no intention of joining his brothers' conversation, and the two didn't intend for him to be caught in their quarrel. Although Lionel and Rufus didn't get along with each other, they still treated their youngest brother in a civil manner.

The Youngest Prince then suddenly felt a warm gaze looking at him. He slowly raised his head to look at the corner of the room. There he saw Est who was looking at him with a kind smile.

Ernest returned his smile briefly before once again lowering his head. Happy memories of his childhood emerged inside his mind as he recalled all the times that he and Est had played with each other in secret in the garden behind the Royal Palace.

Chapter 214: A Key That Would Bring The World To Ruin

A few hours later, the party was in full swing. Performers, and other entertainers, wowed everyone with their amazing display of skills and talent.

Even though William had two beauties by his side, he was unable to refuse the invitations of the ladies from the powerful families. The reason? It was because the King had personally walked up to him and whispered something in his ear.

Because of that reason, William was not able to refuse the advances of the ladies and interacted with them as politely as possible. He didn't make any promises, nor did he entertain any kind of subtle agreement when it came to marriage.

If James was there, he would have definitely pulled all of these ladies into a corner to tell them that he approved of all of them. He would even go as far as to set a grand wedding so that William could marry them all. Fortunately, he was not here, and that saved William from a future marriage calamity.

As a stopgap measure to prevent the more aggressive girls from taking things a step further, William shamelessly used Rebecca as a shield and told everyone that his "Fiance" and him were still engaged and would settle their dispute in three years.

Although those present in the ceremony had witnessed William's declaration to Rebecca, many still didn't know the reason behind it.

Since the favorite pastime of the young ladies in the kingdom, when they gathered, was to gossip, William's and Rebecca's "Seven-Year Duel" became known to all the nobles in the Hellan Kingdom a few days after the banquet was over.

Of course, this was also part of William's plan in order to prevent anyone from making moves on him. If they wanted to make a move on him, they needed to go see Lawrence and his Grandfather first.

Yes. The Half-Elf dumped all the responsibility onto the two old geezers who started all of this mess!

In order to escape further advances from the ladies, he once again invited Wendy to dance with him and the latter happily accepted his invitation.

As William and Wendy danced together, Carter eyed them from a distance.

"Is she the young lady you spoke of, Charlotte?" Carter asked. His eyes had locked onto the beautiful young lady that was currently in William's arms.

"Yes," Charlotte replied. "She's Wendy. A very good friend of mine and the only daughter of the Duke of Armstrong. She's one of the bride candidates that I was talking to you about."

"Do the two of you get along well?" Carter inquired.

"I have known her since she was eight years old." Charlotte smiled. "She calls me Big Sister and the two of us are very close. If possible, I want her to be Professor's future wife as well. Ah! I almost forgot. She also likes your candies very much. Two days ago, she asked me if she could have more. Professor, you'd better make more of those candies so I can share them with her."

"I see." Carter caressed Charlotte's hand affectionately. "You did a good job. Also, thank you for thinking of me. I promise that I will give you plenty of love tomorrow."

Charlotte blushed because Carter had praised her. She didn't know that she was very close to becoming Carter's "evil accomplice" due to the power of the suggestion spell that had almost consumed her entire being.

Charlotte didn't even know that she was going to make her good friend, Wendy, fall into the hands of a demon that would ravage her heart and body inside and out.Â

Carter gazed at his "bride candidate" with lecherous eyes. Although Wendy was still young, her body was developing in the right places. The professor could feel the fire of lust fanning his loins as he stared at the pure, and innocent, girl in the distance.

'In two or three years, that young lady will grow to be a peerless beauty,' Carter thought. 'I guess I'd better increase my "candy production" so that Charlotte can share it with her.'

Carter had a special ability of absorbing the life force of anyone he kissed. This strengthened his magic power as well as increased his own life force. However, if he were able to make love to a lady, he would be able to control them remotely because he was able to implant his seed deep inside their wombs.

That way, he could order them to do anything he wanted. They wouldn't even bat an eye when commanded to kill someone once they had fallen completely under his control. Although this same kind of deed was possible with the suggestion spell, those affected by it could still resist if they had a strong willpower.

However, the moment he made love to them, they would be his slaves forever.

Lionel stared at William like a wolf.Â

When he heard that a new Knight Order was going to be founded in the Kingdom, the first thing that came to his mind was to make it his private force.

His father, Noah, had the Knight Order of Gladiolus under him. They were a very powerful organization that only answered to the King. They also carry out "special missions" for the kingdom that would impact the lives of its citizens.

Lionel had always thought of himself as the next King of the Hellan Kingdom. He was the Crown Prince, so this mindset was perfectly justified. The only problem was that Lionel had a vice--an overwhelming greed for power.

Whenever he heard that a talented individual had appeared, he would immediately send his subordinates to bribe them to come under his wing. If not for the fact that the Misty Sect had sought out Rebecca first, he would have done everything in his power to put the beautiful lady under his command.

Unfortunately, even if there was no Misty Sect blocking his way, the Old Duke of Griffith, Lawrence, would not allow him to do as he wished. Lionel still wondered why the old fox was opposing him. The prince couldn't remember any incident that made the two of them clash, and yet, Lawrence would always treat him in a cold manner, even if he tried to be chummy with him.

'Truly a shame,' Lionel thought. Although he was not in love with Rebecca, he had to admit that she was a lady worthy of his rank. As a rarely seen genius that was born every two-hundred-years, who had a body that was blessed with a Perfect Grade Talent, it was impossible not to be moved.

Truth be told, the lady that Lionel wanted to marry was none other than the Third Princess of the Kingdom of Freesia. When he met her during a conference of the Four Kingdoms, he had fallen in love with her at first sight.

The Third Princess always wore a veil to cover her face. If not for that hunting accident when she had fallen off her horse, and he had saved her, he wouldn't have had the opportunity of seeing the face behind the veil.

Lionel had only seen her face for half a minute, but it was more than enough to make him hopelessly in love with her. This was another reason he had for wanting to seize the throne. He wanted to negotiate with their long-standing ally for a marriage between their two kingdoms.

A few years ago, an unknown organization had approached him and asked him if he was interested in becoming the Emperor of the entire Southern Continent.

They even promised that they could make any girl he fancied become his woman if he worked with them in secret.

Their leader even vaguely hinted that the Beast Tide, that almost brought the Hellan Kingdom to its knees, had been their doing. The man even respectfully advised him to accept his offer before they changed their mind.

Lionel was not a fool. He didn't accept their offer, but didn't reject it either. All he said was that he would only seriously consider their proposal if the organization could show him what they were capable of doing.

The man agreed and left. But before they ended their conversation, he told Lionel that he wasn't the only candidate that they were planning to make the Emperor of the entire Southern Continent.

Although the man didn't give him some kind of ultimatum, Lionel understood what the representative of the organization was trying to say.

If he was of no use to their cause then they would not waste their time on him.

What the Secret Organization wanted from him was a key that was under Noah's safekeeping. Once he gave them the key, they would serve the Southern Continent to him on a silver platter.

'The key that would open the treasure vault in the Undying Lands,' Lionel thought as he glanced at his father who was talking to the Sword Saint in the distance. He was already leaning towards the idea of betraying his kingdom and becoming an agent of the organization.

Lionel leaned back in his chair and stared at the nobles gathered in the banquet. All of them thought that he would become their King once his father retired from the throne. What they didn't know was that he was secretly laughing at all of them.

Why would he settle to be a King, when he could become the Emperor of an entire continent?

After he was crowned the Emperor of the Southern Continent, he would then set his sights on the Central Continent and use the organization's backing to subdue anyone that blocked his way.

Lionel's smile widened.

The Crown Prince could already imagine his bright future. Surrounded by riches, beautiful women, and the one girl he desired the most in the world.

And all that was stopping him from achieving it all was a key. A key that would open the doors of Hell and bring the world to ruin.

Chapter 215: That Slave Collar On Your Neck Suits You Perfectly

It was getting late, and most of the nobles had their fill of the activities, food, drinks, and gossip.

Lionel, the Crown Prince, thought that it would be very interesting to see his brother's reaction if he took Rebecca to the dancefloor for the last song of the night.

With this thought in mind, he rose from his seat and walked towards the tables where Rebecca and her grandfather were seated. The moment he made his move, the eyes of the ladies locked onto him and prayed in their hearts that they would get the honor of dancing with him.

It didn't take long for them to realize that Lionel was making a beeline towards Rebecca.

The second prince's expression suddenly became serious when he realized what his older brother was about to do. He hesitated, but in the end, stood up from his seat to follow behind his brother. Rufus would rather invite Rebecca to a dance than let his older brother have his way with her.

When Lionel was only ten meters away from Rebecca, the prided genius of the Misty Sect stood up and walked towards the table of the Angorian War Sovereign.

Lionel's brow rose and Rufus stopped in his tracks.

Rebecca walked with grace and confidence until she reached the table of the Half-Elf who was busy chatting with her good friend, Wendy. Naturally, William felt her presence and turned his head to look at her.

The beautiful young lady wearing a sleeveless, purple gown, adorned with glittering stars, that made everyone around her feel insecure, made a curtsy. She then stared at William with her light-green eyes that were as clear and beautiful as his and invited him to dance.

"Lord William, will you give me the honor of sharing this last dance with you?" Rebecca asked with a smile.

Looking at his "Fiance", William nodded his head and bowed respectfully at her. "It will be my honor to dance with one of the beautiful jewels of the kingdom."

William extended his hand and Rebecca accepted it. Together, they walked towards the center of the hall like a couple that was made in Heaven.

He, a dazzling prince with red-hair that made the ladies sigh in admiration.

She, a celestial princess that came from the night sky to break the hearts of men.

The guests in the ballroom parted to let them through. The beautiful pair took center stage with grace and confidence that made everyone wonder if their "Seven-Year-Duel" was just a ruse in order to hide how deeply, and madly, in love they were to each other.

When the music played, William's hand firmly rested on her waist, while Rebecca's rested on his shoulder. Their other hands held each other as they slowly swayed from side to side. The last dance was a dance for couples. It was slow and allowed the dancers to have an intimate moment with their loved one.

Rebecca moved closer and rested her head on William's chest, which made Wendy, Est, and Ian unconsciously clench their fists in frustration.

William's expression didn't change. In fact, he even smiled and rested the side of his face against hers, which made the ladies and men, who were trying to get closer to the two of them, have second thoughts.

Lionel awkwardly returned to his seat and watched William and Rebecca with a serious gaze. Rufus, on the other hand, had a calm expression on his face, but a fire was burning brightly deep inside.

He felt envious of the boy who was able to share such an intimate moment with the goddess in his heart. However, he would rather have William dance with Rebecca than let his older brother have that chance. Although his heart was aching, he begrudgingly accepted the result.

'What is your relationship with Wendy?' Rebecca asked via telepathy.

She was wearing a special artifact that allowed her to communicate with another person as long as she was touching him. Rebecca had already explained to William why she invited him to dance, while they were making their way towards the dance floor.

'Wendy is a good friend of mine,' William answered. 'The two of us are close.'

'Did you feed her some wild mushrooms?' Rebecca inquired. 'I've known her for years and many boys have already proposed to her for marriage, but she rejected them all. With a glance, I can tell that she really likes you.'

'The reason why she likes me is because she has good taste. Unlike some people who think too highly of themselves.'

'What a petty man you are.'

'Thank you for your praise,' William replied as he danced along with the music.

Rebecca quieted down for a few minutes as if organizing her thoughts. When she spoke again, her voice was filled with determination.

'First, I would like to thank you because Lady Miriam is now dead set on making me use the best facilities in the Main Sect to ensure that I will step on your head when you climb the peaks of the Misty Sect.'

'You're welcome.'

'Second, I intend to continue to use you as a shield so that all my suitors will be kept at bay,' Rebecca stated. 'Know that I don't really like you and I have no intention of becoming your fiancée. Not now, not in the future.'

'What a coincidence. The feeling is mutual,' William commented. 'Cultivate well inside the Misty Sect and wait for this Sir to give you a spanking.'

'You're quite confident. I wonder where that confidence of yours is coming from?'

'My confidence comes from my good looks and bloodline. With a face like mine, let alone you, even the Goddess of Beauty would squirm in the heavens while saying my name.'

Rebecca scoffed inside her heart, 'Aren't you afraid that the Gods will smite you for being arrogant?'

William let out a light chuckle that tickled Rebecca's ears, 'You don't know anything about the Gods. Me and them are best buds. Now that you mention it, I'd rather kiss Lily than kiss you.'

Rebecca didn't know who this Lily was, but comparing her to another girl somehow made her irritated.

Somewhere in the Ten Thousand Temple...

Lily, who was busy handing contracts to the new arrivals at the temple, sneezed. The men who were lining up in her stall gasped because the way she sneezed was so "cute" that they felt like they were melting.

The Loli Goddess tilted her head to the side and an adorable smile appeared on her face. This new round of cuteness made the guys excited as they anxiously waited for their turn to sign Lily's contract.

As the song was coming to a close, Rebecca took a step back and lightly dragged William towards the balcony.

William didn't resist, and allowed himself to be led by the brown-haired beauty.

When the two of them were finally out of everyone's sights, Rebecca stared at William with a serious gaze. 'Although I don't like you, I will give you some very important advice. Do not allow yourself to become part of the Crown Prince's Faction. He is a snake, and cannot be trusted.'

William retained the calm expression on his face when he heard Rebecca's warning, 'Is this the advice of your grandfather or your personal one?'

'It's a message that my grandfather asked me to pass to you. However, I share the same opinion. The Crown Prince is a greedy person. He has already set his eyes on you, so be careful in dealing with him. Believe me when I say that you don't want to become his enemy.'

'Oh? Sounds scary.' William smiled. 'Then who is your grandfather pinning his hopes on?'

'No one, is what I'd like to say, but that would be a big fat lie,' Rebecca answered. 'However, our ideal choice for the King of this Kingdom is hard to achieve. Not only is he young, he also doesn't have anyone backing him. We don't dare to actively declare our support to him in fear that it would break the delicate balance that the Princes' have on the surface.'

William didn't say anything because he already had a hunch on who the Griffith's were supporting. Of course, he didn't ask to confirm his suspicion, because it would be meaningless.

Right now, the Kingdom was about to fight a war on two fronts. William had no spare time, or energy, to worry about the battle for the throne. Besides, Noah, the current king of the kingdom, was still in good health.

At the very least, everyone in the kingdom would have to wait a decade before the King would step down from his position.

'Please, pass my thanks to your grandfather,' William replied. 'I will take his words to heart and distance myself from the Crown Prince. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?'

Rebecca looked at him for a good while before speaking out her mind.

'Yes, there's one more thing that I would like you to know,' Rebecca smiled in a teasing manner. 'Three years from now, I'll make the world know that no one can decide what I want to do with my life. If anyone tries to block my path from reaching the peak of the mortal realm, I will erase them from the face of the earth.'

'Also, that slave collar on your neck suits you perfectly,' Rebecca sneered. 'Even if a dog was dressed in expensive clothes, at the end of the day, he is still a dog.'

The beautiful young lady walked away without giving William a second glance. The latter, however, looked at his "Ex-Fiance's" retreating back with a devilish smirk on her face.

'A dog?,' William sneered. 'What an interesting idea. I guess I'll just have to see how you will bark and wag your tail in the future.'

(A/N: In order to not create any misunderstandings, William's enslavement period is now over. Even if he is wearing the slave collar, he is no longer Celine's slave. Right now, the collar on his neck is nothing more than an accessory that held no power to control him.)

Chapter 216: The Lady Behind The Glasses

A week after the Banquet that was held inside the Palace, the Royal Academy resumed their classes. However, something in the air was different. The usually cheerful hallways, although not devoid of laughter, were more solemn compared to before.

The students that had experienced the baptism of the Dungeon Outbreak now understood how fragile their lives were. They had seen how even a small mistake could cause them to lose their lives at the jaws of monsters that were many times stronger than them.

Because of this, everyone took their studies seriously which made the professors double their efforts to teach them the lessons that would give them the highest chance for survival, if they found themselves in similar situations.

Even the arrogant top students in the past were now doing their best to further increase their strength.

Many students had died during the Dungeon Outbreak and all of their names were written on the newly erected monument in the main plaza of the academy to honor their bravery and sacrifice for the kingdom.

Their friends would often look at these names and shed bitter tears. Partly blaming themselves for being afraid and for not being strong enough to make a difference.

They were not strong enough to save them so, because of that, they poured their hearts into their lessons. They appreciated that the teachers had to come up with more effective training regimens in order to accommodate their drive to become stronger.

"The Werehyenas are class C beasts that hunt alone or join with others to form a 'Cackle'," Oswald Hartelle, the Bestiary teacher of the First Years said in a calm manner. "Among the Therian Groups, they are often called opportunistic beasts because they don't care whether they steal their prey from others, or eat the remains that are left after other creatures have had their fill.

"Although they are weaker than Werewolves, they have characteristics that Werewolves don't have. For example, they can transform anytime of the day, while the Werewolves are limited to only being able to transform at night."

Everyone was paying close attention to Oswald's lecture. Even William, who had the chance to face off against these beasts, was listening properly to the professor's explanation. He was quite amazed by how strong these beasts were and the scary part about them was that they could transform into humans.

Fortunately, there was a clear identification whenever a Werehyena transformed into a human. The iris in their eyes had a yellowish tinge, which identified them as the notorious therian creature.

Due to this distinction, that couldn't be hidden even when using spells, Therians stayed away from human cities and only lived on the outskirts, fearing that someone would be able to see through their identity.

Kenneth, who was seated beside William, was also paying attention to the professor. After experiencing the great battle in the Southern Regions of the Hellan Kingdom, his thirst for knowledge about Magical Beasts had also increased.

"In our next lesson, we will be talking about Wendigos," Oswald ended his lecture with a smile. "Until then, make sure that you stay away from Werehyenas until you are strong enough to fight them."

With that final reminder, Oswald left the room. Classes for the day were now over.

The classes inside the Royal Academy started at nine in the morning and went until two in the afternoon.

Surprisingly, the names of the days in Hestia were similar to the names of the days back on Earth.

On Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays, they attended the more physical lessons. Lessons like Equestrian training, archery, swordsmanship training, spear training, axe handling, throwing weapons mastery, etc.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, they attended the more lecture focused lessons like History, Bestiary Lessons, War Strategies, and Topography.

Over the weekends, some of the students would go out to complete missions and commissions, while others would go explore the dungeons and domains that were currently available.

After their lessons, the entirety of the First Year Students headed towards the Equestrian Field of the Martial Division.

After the impressive Aerial Performance of the Angorian War Sovereign, many students from different Divisions had applied to become part of the Knight Order.

The majority of those who applied were commoners who were hoping to become official knights.

William didn't discriminate and put them all on a "Probationary Period".

The commander of the Angorian War Sovereign understood that some of the members who joined them were merely the nobles' spies sent to keep an eye on their actions. Nevertheless, he took them in because he had the confidence to make them his own double agents.

Information was a very powerful tool and it went both ways. The nobles had a very famous saying, "Everyone has a price".

For the most part, this was true. Everyone had a price. However, William was not everyone. During the banquet, the nobles did their best to bribe him to work for them, but he politely turned all of them down.

The Crown Prince even subtly hinted that it would be best for the Angorian War Sovereign to become the personal Knight Order of the future King of the Hellan Kingdom.

William just smiled, but didn't agree or disagree with the Crown Prince. He took a neutral stance and the Crown Prince was smart enough to take the hint.

"Ride your mounts!" William ordered. "Make sure that all of you stay in formation!"

Since only the original members of the Knight Order had magical beasts, the rest of the new members had no choice but to ride on Mountain Horses that were bred in captivity.

Aside from William's officers, and the thirty-six original members of the Knight Order, one-hundred-twenty new recruits had joined their ranks.

"Captains, you take the lead!" William ordered.

""Yes!"" His officers replied in unison.

Dave, Conrad, Priscilla, Spencer, Drake, and the newly appointed officer, Samuel, took charge of the formation. Each of them had Six Knights, and nineteen probationary members under them, forming a platoon.

Samuel was the noble that gave William the spear in order to force the Gryphon, Lionheart, to submit into becoming Dave's contracted beast.

The young noble was already sixteen years old, and the third son of their barony. Since he had no magic powers, his family didn't care much about him and pampered his older brother, who had a Grade B Talent in Magic.

This was also why he did his best to enter the Hellan Royal Academy to make a name for himself. He was always looking for an opportunity to raise his status, so when William formed a Knight Order he hurriedly joined it, thinking that it was a golden opportunity to make a name for himself.

When William asked for a spear, he had presented it without a second thought. He had long decided to hug William's legs and follow him as a loyal subordinate.

William recognized him because a person who took the initiative was someone worth grooming. Since Kenneth refused to lead a team of his own, the role landed on Samuel's head, which made the young noble ecstatic to show William that he hadn't made a mistake in choosing him to be one of his captains.

When William asked Kenneth to lead a squad of his own, the delicate looking boy firmly rejected his offer. He insisted that he would stay by William's side to assist him in his personal squad.

William didn't reject his proposal and allowed him to become a permanent member of his six-member team. Spencer tried to join them, but William kicked him out. The shameless shepherd even insisted that if Spencer couldn't even create and manage a squad of his own, he would be expelled from the Knight Order.

Facing such a threat, the siscon had no choice but to begrudgingly obey William's order.

As the Commander of the Angorian War Sovereign, William had his own private squad which was composed of Kenneth, Wendy, Ian, and the twin brothers, Brutus and Bruno McKaesar.

'I'm only missing a healer then our team is good to go,' William thought. "Wendy, do you know of any healers that could join our team? It would be best if they are a person you trust."

Wendy thought for a while before answering William's inquiry. "I only know of one person, but she's a Third Year in the Spirit Division."

William became curious and asked Wendy for more information. The latter was very weak when it came to William's request, so she decided to accompany him to the Spirit Division after their equestrian training had ended.

Since William was the Commander of the newly established Knight Order, the guards in the Spirit Division didn't block his way.

Right now, William was like a celebrity inside the Hellan Royal Academy. Everyone wanted to form a connection with him, so it was very easy for him to gain access to the different Divisions in the academy.

"Big Sister Amelia, are you here?" Wendy knocked on the door. "It's me, Wendy. Can I have some of your time?"

The door slightly opened and a girl with long green hair, and wearing eyeglasses, peeked out from inside the room.

"Wendy?"

"It is me, Big Sister."

Amelia looked at the boy behind her good friend and recognized William instantly.

"What does the Commander of the Knight Order want from me?" Amelia asked.

William gave a light bow, "There is something that I would like to ask of you, but can we talk in private? I don't want to discuss this matter in the hallway."

William glanced at his left and right and saw several girls that were chatting in the hallway. All of them were curious about why the commander had visited their dorm so they trailed after him.

Although some of them had guessed William's intention, without getting the confirmation from him, their guesses would remain as guesses.

Amelia reluctantly nodded her head and invited the two inside her room. She also didn't want to make it difficult for Wendy because the two of them were good friends that had known each other for years.

The moment the door closed, the girls in the dormitory flocked in front of Amelia's room and tried to eavesdrop on their conversation. Unfortunately for them, William had come prepared and made sure that not even a single word of their discussion would be heard outside of the room.

Chapter 217: Condition For Joining The Knight Order

Amelia looked at William, rather, looked at the scroll his hand was holding. The red-headed boy smiled and presented the blank sheet of paper to Amelia.

Curious about what would happen next, she accepted the scroll and looked at it.

Suddenly, sentences appeared on the surface of the scroll. It explained William's purpose for coming. It also included the proper way on how to reply to William without anyone noticing.

William wasn't taking any chances. Since he was inside the Spirit Division, he knew that certain abilities could be used that would allow others to spy on their discussion.

Although he didn't mind saying his request out loud, he didn't want to make a scene and make the "leaders" of the Spirit Division think that he was poaching the talented students under their noses.

Five minutes later, Amelia handed back the scroll to William.

This was the magic scroll that Ezio had used to communicate with William when he was doing his missions. Only the person whom the user wanted to see the writings would be able to see it. Even the most powerful deciphering spells wouldn't be able to crack the special magic that was transcribed in the making of this scroll.

'Sorry, but I am not interested in joining your Knight Order.'

William sent his thoughts to the scroll and returned it to Amelia. The latter accepted it and frowned when she read William's question.

'Why?'

Amelia sighed and returned the scroll to William's hands.

'I don't want to get into trouble.'

The two exchanged the scrolls several more times until William finally understood why she was rejecting his offer.

'So your hometown is having some difficulty and you're worried about your family, correct?'

'Yes. A horde of Trollhounds led by a Class A Beast is terrorizing our barony. I have already sent a request to the academy for help, but the barony's commission was not enticing enough for the students. Besides, we just finished facing a Dungeon Outbreak and no one is in the mood to fight strong monsters.'

'If I accept this commission and succeed, will you join our Knight Order?'

'If you succeed and save my hometown, I will agree to join your Knight Order.'

'Very well, I will accept the commission, but you will have to come with us as a guide to your barony.'

After reading the last message on the scroll, Amelia nodded her head. She gave William the "I will go with you" stare which made the Half-Elf nod his head in acknowledgement.

Before leaving, William told Amelia that they would depart on Friday night to deal with the trouble in her hometown. Of course, the red-headed boy also reminded her not to tell anyone about what they had discussed, to which she readily agreed.

Amelia couldn't possibly turn down the help of the Commander from the Agorian War Sovereign. She even felt relieved that her constant worry about her parent's safety was about to be solved... that was until she met William again on Friday Night.

"Um, Lord William, where are the rest of your knights?" Amelia asked.

"They won't be coming with us," William replied. "It will be just us, My Mama, Dia, and Ragnar."

"Meeeeeh."

"Hissss."

"Ruff!"

Amelia looked at William to see if the newly appointed Knight Commander was joking. However, the Half-Elf only gave her a smile filled with confidence. This made the green-haired lady massage her forehead in frustration.

"Lord William, please, this is a serious matter," Amelia said with a serious expression. "Lives are at stake. I would greatly appreciate it if you stopped joking around."

William blinked innocently and gave Amelia the "Am I a Joke to you?" stare.

Seeing that William was dead serious in completing the commission with just the two of them, Amelia felt like she had wasted her time. All the hope and excitement that she had felt while waiting for this moment vanished into thin air.

Of course, William could understand what Amelia was thinking at the moment. However, after careful consideration, he determined that it would be best to do this mission without bringing the rest of his Knight Order along.

The reason?

After consulting the system, William found out that Trollhounds were beasts that he could tame. Since that was the case, William was sure that he and the Trollhounds could have a dialogue for negotiation.

If the negotiation didn't work, it wouldn't be too late to bring his contingent plan into play and force them out of the region.

"I know that you are having doubts, so how about this. The two of us are going to check the situation first," William proposed. "If it really requires military intervention then I promise you that I will use the full power of my Knight Order to drive the Trollhounds away from your Barony. Do we have a deal?"

Amelia pondered for a while before reluctantly agreeing to William's proposal. She was really worried about her family and the townspeople who had treated her well during her younger years. If possible, she wanted to do everything in her power to return the care that they had given her.

William had accepted the commission earlier in the day and registered it at the Quest Hall of the Academy. They used the portal of the academy and headed towards the Eastern Regions of the Hellan Kingdom.

As a Knight Commander, William was given certain privileges and one of them was the right to use the portals for free. They used the portal to teleport to the nearest gateway to Amelia's hometown. However, it still took them two hours to reach the green-haired girl's hometown riding on Ella's back.

"It's more serious than I expected," William frowned.

Along the way, he found light traces of miasma that reminded him of the Dungeon Outbreaks that had happened recently. The flora of the barony were wilting and the ground was cracked and dry.

There was an oppressive atmosphere that could be felt in the mountains in the East and William had a hunch that was where the Trollhounds were currently staying.

"Let's meet your parents first," William said as he guided Ella towards the main gate of the town. It was currently closed and several soldiers were stationed on the town's wall. Torches blazed on the ramparts and illuminated the surroundings.

It was as if the soldiers were expecting a night raid and all of them looked at William, and his party wearily.

"Halt!" A man wearing silver armor shouted from on top of the town wall. "State your name and purpose for coming to Thornshire!"

Amelia poked her head out from behind William's back and waved at the man standing on the ramparts.

"Uncle Mark! It's me, Amelia!" Amelia shouted. "Let us in!"

Mark's eyes widened as he recognized the young lady of their barony.

"Open the gates and allow Lady Amelia to enter!" Mark ordered.

It was at that moment when barking sounds reverberated in the night. The soldiers manning the gates made a small opening for Ella to enter. William and Ella knew that now was not the time to dilly dally and entered the town in haste. As soon as the goat had safely entered the town, the guards closed the gate in a hurry.

Mark barked orders from the ramparts as the guardsmen loaded bolts onto their crossbows. William and Amelia exchanged a glance before making their way towards the ramparts to assist in defending the town.

A series of long howls from the Trollhounds echoed in the night. From the center of their formation, a giant Trollhound with dark-green skin, stared at the town wall with unrestrained hunger. It only had one thought in its mind and that was to break through the town's defenses and feast on the humans that were hiding within.

Chapter 218: The Baron Of Brandford

Hundreds of green eyes glowed in the darkness, but William wasn't too concerned about them. What he was concerned about was the towering figure that stood at the center of the Trollhound Army.

< Titanic Green-Scaled Trollhound >

-- Mutated Variant

-- Threat Level: S (Mid)

-- Centennial Rank

-- Can be added to the herd

-- Success Rate: 1%

-- This creature is born from a sorcerer's experiment that has gone wrong.

-- Has a very powerful regeneration ability that would not lose to Hydras.

-- Its jaws are strong enough to crush steel with ease.

-- Has the special ability "Doom Hound" that allows itself to coat its body with the flames of hell and burn almost everything that touches it.

-- This creature will regenerate its body parts even if you destroy its head and heart.

-- Even if you use powerful attacks that would instantly disintegrate it to nothingness, this creature will come back to life once again.

-- This creature's ONLY weakness is Acid strong enough to melt Adamantium.

'This is troublesome...,' William thought as he narrowed his eyes. 'Although it is a Centennial Beast, its ability alone is too overpowered. Whoever made this creature was planning to use it to do something nefarious.'

The red-headed boy wasn't able to stop himself from clicking his tongue at the sheer amount of effort that would be required to subjugate one of these beasts. Although there were some powerful spells that could create acid, only a handful had the strength to melt adamantium.

William gave the rest of the monster horde a scan. Fortunately the majority of them were Class E, and only a few dozen were Class D. Even so, like most trollhounds, they had strong regenerative abilities and were only weak to fire and acid.

"Aim!" Mark ordered. "Fire!"

Hundreds of crossbow bolts rained down on the Trollhound army. The arrows hit their targets and embedded themselves into the bodies of the hounds. Unfortunately, it only made the trollhounds shout in pain, but there was no way they would die from such simple attacks, even if they were only Class E Beasts.

While the battle was going on, a fireball lit up the night as it slammed at the center of the Trollhounds that had almost reached the town's wall.

"The Baron has arrived!" Mark announced. "Everyone, just hang on for as long as possible. Don't let any of those hounds breach our defenses!"

""Yes, Sir!""

Another fireball fell from the sky as Philip, Amelia's father, and the Baron of Bradford joined the battle.

He was a Fifth-Circle Magician that was loved by his subjects. He was once a Sixth-Circle Magician, but due to an accident, his rank had regressed and was forced to retire from the Red Tower of the Mage Guild.

After finding the love of his life, he settled down in the territory granted to him by the King and lived a peaceful and happy life with his family. Unfortunately, his quiet life had been disrupted by the dungeon outbreaks that ravaged the land.

He had just returned from the Dungeon Subjugation in the nearby Duchy when he discovered that his own Barony was in trouble. Philip understood that the Kingdom's manpower was stretched thin, but he still asked for help from the surrounding nobles.

However, none of them had the manpower to help him. His only hope was to send a commission to the Royal Academy where her daughter, Amelia, was staying, but no news returned to him.

He wasn't expecting to see his own daughter defending the town walls along with the town's guard. Philip knew that he couldn't lose focus now because the greatest threat to their Barony was currently in front of his eyes.

He calmly chanted a spell while his subordinates faced off against the wave of monsters besieging their defenses.

"Summon Creature!" Philip shouted. "Come forth, Flame Elemental!"

A five-meter tall Flame Elemental crashed down outside the city walls. It instantly incinerated the Trollhounds that were unlucky enough to be on its landing spot.

The soldiers cheered when they saw the powerful ally that appeared to help them. Philip made his way towards his daughter as he stared down at the burning corpses on the ground.

"When did you arrive?" Philip asked.

"Just now, father," Amelia replied. "I brought the commander of the Angorian War Sovereign to help us deal with the threat to our Barony."

Philip gave William a side-long glance before staring at the Titanic Green-Scaled Trollhound in the distance.

He had already heard about William from his peers, and they said that he seemed like a promising boy. However, after seeing him in person, Philip thought that his acquaintances were exaggerating their praises.

Philip was unable to attend the knighting ceremony because he was busy handling the aftermath of the Dungeon Outbreaks that ravaged the kingdom.

In his eyes, William didn't look strong. Aside from being a good looking boy, he didn't have any strong presence that could be found on outstanding individuals like the First Commander of the Knight Order of Gladiolus.

Still, he had to be polite because a Knight Commander that was personally appointed by the King was still a Knight Commander, even if he was still a boy.

"Commander William, I'm sorry, but I am unable to extend to you the hospitality of our Barony at this time," Philip said as flames danced in his fingertips. He then hurled them at the Trollhounds that tried to jump over the defensive walls.

The Trollhounds' bodies immediately exploded in a shower of sparks, lighting their surroundings in a reddish hue.

"Mmm." William hummed as he watched the battle unfold.

Right now, the only one that had the ability to kill the Trollhounds was Philip. Although a Fifth-Circle Magician was strong, he was still alone. Also, the greatest threat on the battlefield was only weak to Acid.

Even if Philip was able to disintegrate it with one full-powered-spell, the Titanic Green-Scaled Hound would just revive once again.

Seeing the changes on the Battlefield, the "Boss Hound" finally made its move and charged towards the rampaging Fire Elemental.

Fire Elementals were corporeal incarnations of the element of fire. Being one of the most destructive elements in the world, Fire Elementals were very aggressive creatures. Seeing that the Titanic Hound was charging towards it, It didn't hesitate to face it head on.

The Titanic Hound immediately used its ability Doom Hound and coated itself in Hellfire. When the two flaming abominations collided, a heat wave swept to the battlefield, incinerating anything within a hundred meters around them.

Beads of sweat were forming on Philip's head as he channeled his energy to the Flame Elemental to extend the duration of its "summoning life". Because of this, he was unable to focus on the other Trollhounds that were using each other as stepping stones to breach the town's wall.

'It's quite unfortunate that this battle happened at night.' William sighed as he looked up at the night sky.

Although he couldn't beat the Titanic Hound that was currently battling the Fire Elemental, he was still capable of dealing with the small fries that were threatening Amelia's hometown.

'System, switch my Job Class to Sun Knight.'

< Job Class has been successfully switched to Sun Knight! >

A warm feeling spread across William's body, as the passive skills of the Sun Knight activated. He then extended his right hand and smiled.

"Show them your power, Soleil."

The ring that was given to William by Noah during his knighting ceremony glowed in his right hand to answer his summon. It was as if it was celebrating the fact that it was about to once again show its presence in the World of Hestia after sleeping for hundreds of years.

Chapter 219: Soleil, The Flower That Blooms In The Battlefield

A golden spear appeared in William's hand that shone brightly in the night. From the handle, up to the tip of its blade, everything was golden. If William didn't know better, he would think that Soleil was simply a mythical weapon meant for showing off. But he knew, with utmost certainty, that the spear, that was slowly getting hot in his hands, was a weapon of mass destruction.

"Let's go, Mama."

"Meeeeh!"

Ella jumped off the town wall and a portal of light opened up behind William's back.

Thirteen Angorian War Ibex emerged from it and formed a protective circle around Ella and William.

"Blergh! Trollhounds," Psoglav, who had just emerged from the portal, spat in disdain. "Disgusting!"

"Don't whine, you still owe me from the cores of the Werehyenas." William snorted at his demonic "Business Partner".

"Fine." Psoglav glanced at the direction of the Titanic Trollhound that was fighting in the distance. "But, I ain't touching that thing."

William nodded his head in understanding. He knew that Psoglav wouldn't do anything that could potentially harm its own life. This was one of the rules that they had established when they made their business deal.

The Angorian War Ibexes were like little children that had found new toys to play with. They kicked, tackled, and sent the Trollhounds flying wherever they went.

Of course, they didn't just "play". They kept their formation steady because they were completely outnumbered. The only reason why they were able to overwhelm their opponents was due to the difference in ranks.

Even the few dozen Class D Trollhounds stayed away from the War Ibexes who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere and started their rampage.

At first, William planned to start a massacre, to thin the ranks of the Trollhounds. However, for some reason, something in him was preventing him from going through with his plan. This was a very weird feeling, because this was the first time that it happened to him.

It was as if he was an adult that was about to bully babies which made him feel confused.

While William was still deciding what to do, a notification suddenly appeared on his status screen.

< Ding! >

< Special Quest Acquired! >

< Defeat the Titanic Green-Scaled Trollhound >

-- The Trollhound Horde will disperse after its leader is defeated.

-- Reward: 2,000 God Points

William frowned as he looked at the battle of the Titanic Trollhound and the Fire Elemental in the distance.

From what he could see, the Titanic Trollhound had the upper hand and the Fire Elemental was on the defensive. This didn't bode well for them because the Fire Elemental was the strongest ally they had that could faceoff against the biggest threat on the battlefield.

William then shifted his attention to Philip who was now leaning on the ramparts. With a glance, he could tell that he was nearing his limit.

Soleil, that was being held in William's hand, was no longer golden in color, but was completely dark red. Like steel that had been soaked in flames, by the blacksmith, it was nearing its limit before its might could be unleashed.

'Ten more minutes,' William thought as he observed the battlefield.

Because of his presence, the Trollhounds' attack completely stopped. None of them dared to move forward because Psoglav and the Angorian Ibexes were too strong for them to handle. Also, they felt that their strength was halved under William's presence.

What William didn't know was that his Shepherd Job Class had a deterrent effect when fighting against certain creatures that fell under the Shepherd's protection. Only Beasts with Demonic or Dark Properties, would be able to resist this "debuff" that was radiating from William's body.

This was also why the Alpha Hipogriffs, and the Centaurs, didn't want to get into a conflict with William. They could tell that they would be greatly weakened if they tried to fight against the heir of their Eternal Guardian.

(A/N: Although dogs belong to a pack, they were a Shepherd's trusted companion, which also made them vulnerable to William's Job Class.)

Trollhounds were not demonic, or dark creatures. They were beasts that were born from the fusion of alchemical troll blood and wild dogs. This new and ferocious breed gained the power of regeneration, and resistance to almost everything except fire and acid.

The Trollhounds growled at William, and his party, but made no further movements to attack. This made the defenders on the wall sigh in relief as they looked at their Guard Captain for his next order.

"Standby, but keep your crossbows loaded," Mark ordered.

Amelia had an anxious expression as she used spirit magic to help her father keep the Elemental Summon on the battlefield.

After weighing the pros and cons, William decided that he had no other choice but to show one of his trump cards to end the battle.

"Lord Philip, can you sacrifice the Fire Elemental to summon a Solar Flare?" William asked. He knew that time was crucial and every second counted.

"I can," Philip replied. "However, the Fire Elemental will immediately disappear after that."

As a Pyromancer he could, at most, use Solar Flare twice a day. However, he had already summoned a Fire Elemental and his magic was almost depleted. In order to perform William's request, he would need to order the Fire Elemental to use its ultimate move and burn itself until nothing was left.

This would send the Fire Elemental back to its Elemental Plane where it would stay for some time to regain its strength.

"Amelia, you are a Wind Spirit user, right? Can you bestow someone the power of flight?" William inquired. He was hoping that Amelia was skilled enough to use this support ability.

"Yes, but it will only last for ten minutes," Amelia answered.

"That is more than enough. Please cast your flight spell on the Fire Elemental," William ordered. "Lord Philip, command the Fire Elemental to fly as high as it can while hugging the Titanic Trollhound!"

Amelia and the Baron nodded as they used their magic power to carry out William's orders.

Soon, the angry howls of the Titanic Trollhound reverberated in the night as the Fire Elemental rose slowly in the air. It only stopped when it reached three kilometers above the ground.

"Now!" William shouted.

Philip clenched his fist as he gathered the last dregs of magic power in his body.

"Solar Flare!" Philip opened his hands to unleash one of the strongest spells he could cast with his current level of power.

A dazzling light erupted in the night sky that momentarily turned night into day. It only lasted for a brief moment because the radiance was immediately absorbed by the spear in William's hand that was burning like molten lava.

Without the Fire Elemental holding onto it, the Titanic Trollhound fell from the sky with black smoke coming out of its body. Even though the Sun Flare lasted for only a few seconds, it still dealt grievous injuries to the ferocious beast. However, due to its strong regeneration ability, it's injuries were slowly getting better as it fell down from three kilometers above the ground.

"Bloom in the battlefield!" William roared. "Fleur Du Soleil!"

William threw the Mythical Spear towards the Titanic Trollhound with deadly accuracy. The moment the spear embedded itself on the monster's chest, a powerful explosion similar to a small nuclear missile sent shockwaves on both the sky and the ground.

After the explosion ended, a beautiful flower bloomed and illuminated the night sky. Although it was not bright enough to turn the night into day, like the Solar Flare, it still could be seen for many miles around the Barony of Bradford.

The defenders on the ramparts had already been blown away by the blast, including the Trollhounds on the ground. Fortunately, Amelia managed to cast a windshield to neutralize the shockwave and kept her father from being blown away by the impact.

The father and daughter pair looked at the radiant flower in the sky in awe and admiration. Philip felt a tingle ran down his spine as he looked at the youth that had unleashed that unbelievable display of power.

If he had any misgivings about William being the Knight Commander of the Kingdom, all of them were erased by the deadly flower that illuminated the sky of his barony.

William raised his hand and a shining golden spear flew down from the sky to appear before him. It then transformed into a golden ring and returned to his right ring finger. The red-headed boy looked at the flower in the sky, before shifting his attention to the Baron of Bradford.

Philip looked back at William and nodded his head.

It was his way of thanking William and acknowledging his mistake in underestimating his abilities. He should have known better. The King wouldn't appoint someone who was not qualified to become the Commander of a Knight Order that served directly under him.

Chapter 220: He Who Dwells In The Marshes

A mile away from the hometown of Amelia, the Titanic Green-Scaled Trollhound was slowly reforming its body.

Currently, the only thing that it had regenerated was its head and neck area. Its muscle tissues pulsed like the beating of a heart as it continued to reconstruct its missing body parts. If someone were to see this scene, they would think that it would perfectly fit the setting of a horror film.

"So there you are," William said as he approached the two-meter long head while riding on Ella's back.

Behind him were over five-hundred Trollhounds that looked like little puppies that had lost their Master. These were the ones that didn't run away after the battle ended. The majority of the hounds scattered after their leader was obliterated in the skies of the barony. William didn't bar their way because it was too much of a hassle.

Instead, he used his authority as the Shepherd to make the remaining Trollhounds obey his orders. Due to the shock they had received and the fact that all of them were Class E Beasts, they didn't have the strength, nor willpower, to disobey William's orders.

"Can you talk?" William asked.

The Titanic Trollhound snorted and closed its eyes. The one who created it was a Human, so it hated Humans to the core. Although William was a Half-Elf, the Titanic Trollhound was not interested in talking to him.

William scratched his head because he could tell that this Beast was one tough cookie. If possible, he wanted to add it to his Herd because it was the strongest creature that he could tame with his current strength.

"How about we make a deal," William said with a serious expression. "You tell me what you want most in the world. If I can grant it, you will join my herd. How about it?"

The Titanic Trollhound remained indifferent to William's proposal. The red-headed boy talked to it for half an hour, but the creature didn't even bother to give him a glance. William tried to entice it with different benefits, and also told it countless reasons why it should join his herd, but the Boss of the Trollhounds was resolute in ignoring him.

Left with no choice, William turned his attention to the hundreds of Trollhounds that had survived the battle behind him.

"Who among you wants to follow me?" William asked. "I promise that those who follow me will never go hungry again. You will have food to eat everyday and have the opportunity to grow stronger. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, those who want to become part of my herd, step forward!"

At first there was no movement, but among the hundreds of trollhounds, a single Trollhound walked towards William.

This particular Trollhound was so skinny, that it was almost bonelike. Clearly, it was suffering from malnutrition and was on its last legs in life. Although Trollhounds had powerful regeneration abilities, they were creatures that still needed to eat.

They could still die if their bodies didn't receive any nutrients. Once a Trollhound died, its corpse would be eaten by its fellow hounds until not even a single bone was left. Such was the life of Trollhounds who lived in a group.

The Trollhound made a low growl laced with extreme hunger. William didn't know if what he heard was the beast's growl or the growl of its stomach. In any case, one thing was clear, it was starving and asking William if what he said earlier was true.

William waved his hand and the Trollhound was automatically added to the members of his herd. He then tossed a huge chunk of meat that was taken from the body of the Werehyenas that were killed in the Whimsical Forest, to the Trollhound.

Seeing the piece of meat in front of it, the Trollhound hungrily devoured it to sate its hunger. Its companions started to salivate and even thought of snatching the meat from the skinny hound. Some of them had even stepped forward to do just that, but a glare from William froze them in their tracks.

"Only those that join my herd will be eligible to eat the food I provide," William grinned evilly. "How about it? Just say yes and you'll be able to eat your fill. All of your lives will be easier."

The Trollhounds were starting to waver. Their gazes shifted from the chunk of meat that their comrade was eating back to William. The red-headed boy knew that he was so close to luring the Trollhounds into becoming his subordinates, unfortunately, the Titanic Trollhound behind him chose this time to ruin his parade.

'All Humans can't be trusted!' the Titanic Trollhound said via telepathy. 'They will only use you as experimental subjects and throw you away once your usefulness is over!'

"Correction, I'm not Human," William scoffed. "I'm a Half-Elf."

'You still can't be trusted!' The Titanic Trollhound glared in anger. 'You have the same expression as those greedy sorcerers who only think about themselves!'

William turned his back on the Titanic Trollhound because it was useless to talk to it. It was filled with hate towards Humans that it was impossible to tame it even if he wanted to. Since that was the case, he would just poach its subordinates right under its nose!

The shepherd chuckled internally as he tossed more chunks of meat on the ground. He didn't believe that the hungry hounds would be able to resist the temptation that he was offering them.

Soon, a small mound of meat laid in front of the Trollhounds that made their eyes become bloodshot. Their instincts for survival were leaning towards William even though the Titanic Trollhound still had its hold over them.

"I'll be honest. I intend to turn everyone who chooses to join me into my own private force," William said as he crossed his arms over his chest. "I will ask you to fight for me when I am faced with difficulty. Some of you may die in the process, but I don't see any difference between my offer and your current situation.

"If you are planning to invade Human territories, you are bound to face strong warriors. You already saw what I am capable of doing and, sorry to say that there are humans far stronger than me."

William's words made the Trollhounds shudder. William was the strongest person they had seen so far, and he was saying that there were Humans far stronger than him. If that was the truth then wouldn't that mean that they were just courting death?

The Trollhounds glanced at each other. Soon, more of them stepped forward and joined the skinny hound in eating the mound of meat that was in front of them. They had completely submitted to William and the latter didn't even have to add them to his herd because he knew that these hounds were now loyal to him.

The Titanic Trollhound glared at the weaklings that were enticed by a few pieces of meat. Deep down, it disdained the Trollhounds that rebelled and cursed them.

'All of you will regret this day,' the Titanic Trollhound growled. 'Don't come running back to me when you see his true colors!'

William turned his head to look at the Beast that was looking at him in disdain. "Don't worry. They will not regret their decision."

Out of the hundreds of Trollhounds, only seventy decided to join William's side. Although it was far smaller than his initial estimate, he was still happy with the result.

'System, can you now modify the Ring of Conquest to perform the task I wanted?'

< The Host will need to pay 3,000 God Points for the modification of the Ring of Conquest. >

< Do you want to proceed? Y / N >

'I choose yes,' William replied.

Although his precious God Points would be consumed in the process, it was a necessary investment in order to achieve his goal.

< Understood. >

< Modifying the Ring of Conquest...>

< Modification complete! >

< A new feature has been added to the Goblin Crypt! >

< Bestiary Barracks has been successfully integrated as a feature of the Ring of Conquest! >

William dismounted Ella and faced the first trollhound that had taken the initiative to join his party.

"Come here," William said softly.

The skinny Trollhound walked towards him. When it was only two meters away from William, it knelt on the ground to show its servitude.

William summoned Rhongomyniad and rested it on the Trollhound's head. He didn't know if it would have any effect on beasts, but he decided to still give it a try.

"I bestow upon you a name," William announced. "From the skinny dog that couldn't even eat scraps of meat, to an Overlord that will be feared across the land. I give you the name of the World Wolf that once ate a God that ruled among many other Gods."

William raised the lance in his hand as a golden light fell upon the trollhound's body.

"Rise, Fenrir," William ordered. "Devour all my enemies until none of their bones are left!"

The King Chess Piece inside William's Sea of Consciousness glowed three times before returning to its normal state. It had recognized William's choice and shared its divinity with the skinny dog who would become part of the red-headed boy's Ten-Thousand Beast Army.

< "He Who Dwells In The Marshes" has been registered >

< Name: Fenrir >

< Bestowing Title....>

< Appropriate Title Found! >

< Fenrir: Beast of Conquest >