

Strongest 451

Chapter 451: The Dice Has Been Cast [Part 1]

"He did what?!" Conner slammed his fist on the table as he looked at a certain Parrot Monkey with bloodshot eyes. "Oliver, we've known each other for a while. Are you telling me that Floyd tried to kidnap William's family members in order to coerce Celine and make him submit? Are you telling me the truth, or are you just spouting bullsh*t?"

"So, you didn't order him to do anything of the sort?" Oliver asked back. He eyed Conner and used his Special Eye that could see through all things to know whether the Leader of Deus was lying or not.

"I didn't order such a thing." Conner denied firmly. "What I asked Floyd to do was to pass a message to Celine that I want to talk to her Disciple William. I didn't instigate him to kidnap his family members because I don't want to make Celine my enemy."

Oliver appraised Conner's soul and found out that he wasn't lying. This proved that what Floyd did was an unauthorized action on his part without the consent from the Leader of Deus.

"Then tell me, Conner, why do you want to meet William?" Oliver asked.

"I will only tell the boy the reason when I meet him," Conner replied. "Time is of the essence, Oliver. The sooner I talk to the boy, the sooner we can come to an agreement. I will give you the freedom to choose the time and place for our meeting. You can bring Celine or whoever else you want to bring along, but the boy must be there, period."

Oliver eyed Conner one last time before flying towards the window of his office.

"I will come to find you before this day is over," Oliver stated as flew past the window. "I will relay the boy's answer to you then."

Inside the Martial Division of the Royal Academy...

"So this is the Head Prefect's room," Celine nodded her head in appreciation. "Not bad."

The beautiful Elf sat on William's king sized bed as she scanned the room with an appraising glance.

"It's quite unfortunate that I wasn't able to use it for a year," William commented as he dragged a chair to sit in front of his Master. "I thought that I was going to have a happy academy life. I didn't expect that I would find myself in the front row seat of one problem after another."

Celine chuckled as she looked at the red-headed boy, who was looking back at her with a face filled with injustice.

"You are a magnet for trouble, aren't you?" Celine asked with a smug expression.

"Master, that is slander," William replied with a righteous tone. "Just look at how handsome your Disciple is. A magnet for trouble? No. I am a magnet for beautiful girls. Ah, I forgot to tell you, Master, I now have three girlfriends. Not bad, right?"

Celine snorted after hearing William's snarky reply. "Three girlfriends? What's so good about having three girlfriends? You can't even do anything to them with your small..."

The beautiful Elf covered her lips as she looked down on William's... before giggling.

"Master, you shouldn't underestimate your disciple," William raised his head in arrogance. "For your information I am no longer..."

William wasn't able to continue his words because he would sound like a loser if he told Celine that he had crossed the line and into adulthood in his dreams. If that counted then nearly all of the teenagers on Earth would have lost their V-Cards, right?

"You're no longer?"

"I-I am no longer the child that you know. I am very capable now."

"Right." Celine nodded. "I admit that you are now more capable."

William didn't want to continue the conversation because his lovers were currently inside his Thousand Beast Domain. Although they couldn't hear their conversation, he was afraid that Ashe would somehow be able to eavesdrop using the gem embedded on his chest.

The Half-Elf didn't want to take any risks because he had just suffered a beating due to the two blabbermouth Angry Birds who dropped a bomb when his lovers were around him.

William was about to change the topic when Oliver entered the room through William's window and relayed the discussion he had with Conner.

"Just as we suspected, Mistress. Conner wasn't involved in Floyd's attack in Lont," Oliver explained.

"Are you certain?"

"Yes."

"I see. Well then, Will, what will you do?" Celine shifted her attention to the Half-Elf who seemed to be deep in thought.

William didn't take long to give an answer because he had already decided to meet Conner the moment he headed to the Royal Academy.

"I want to meet him," William stated. "Master, make it happen."

Celine nodded. There was no need to prolong the issue because time wasn't on their side.

Five minutes later, Oliver flew out of the window to relay William's words to Conner. William decided to meet Conner inside the Royal Academy accompanied by Celine and Jekyll. He didn't fully trust the Leader of Deus and having his Master and the Dentist of Lont would ensure his safety.

An hour before sunset, Conner arrived at the First Year Martial Division. He came alone because he didn't want to sabotage this meeting with William.

Floyd had already made things difficult for him, so he didn't want to take any more chances and decided to show William and his Master, Celine, his sincerity.

They met in the conference room of the Solaris Dormitory.

William was surprised to find out that the Leader of Deus was a Half-Elf just like him.

Conner had short, dark brown, hair and green eyes that were not as clear as William's. Clearly, he had seen and done things that the boy had never experienced before. Although both of them were Half-Elves, the paths they chose were different from each other.

"Before we start this meeting, I would like to apologize for what my subordinate, Floyd, attempted to do," Conner said in an apologetic tone. "It was never my intention to kidnap your family members to be used as hostages."

William nodded because Oliver had already told him this. Still, he gave Conner ten out of ten for his acting skills because his words and actions clearly showed that he felt bad about what happened back in Lont.

'He sure knows how to take the lead in a conversation,' William praised the leader of Deus for his ability to make himself look like the victim.

Seeing William's acknowledgement, Conner decided to get straight to the point. He didn't plan to use flowery words to butter up the red-headed boy because Conner could clearly see the hidden dislike in William's eyes.

Although the boy tried his best to hide it, Conner was someone who specialized in dealing with people. He could read the body language of people. Conner knew when to advance and when to take a step back, which earned him the leadership role for the branch of Deus in the Southern Continent.

Right now, they were at the negotiation table. The Leader of Deus wanted to gauge William's character to see if he would be an ally or not. If this negotiation failed, he would contact Princess Sidonie again and try to negotiate other terms.

He didn't believe for a moment that he would lose in a battle of wits against a boy who had yet to reach adulthood.

Conner would open his cards one by one and make sure that William understood that his only chance of survival was to work with him in order to deal with the current threats that they were facing.

Chapter 452: The Dice Has Been Cast [Part 2]

"The reason why I wanted to meet with you is due to the two Foreign Invaders that are now right outside the borders of the Hellan Kingdom," Conner stated. "Depending on the result of our discussion, Our Organization may choose to leave the Hellan Kingdom and attach ourselves to one of these powers."

William's face remained calm even after hearing Conner's veiled threat. Celine had already predicted this outcome, so she had warned William beforehand that the Leader of Deus might jump ship if things didn't look good for them.

Celine and William both agreed that there was only one power that would accept the Organization in their ranks and that is none other than...

"So, you plan to go to the Kraetor Empire," William commented. "Not a bad choice."

Conner stared at William's face and he could tell that the boy wasn't surprised by his statement. He thought that he would get the upper hand, by saying that he would give up the Hellan Kingdom and become part of the Kraetor Empire's forces.

'I see, so he really is Princess Sidonie's ally,' Conner thought.

He didn't know that Sidonie was no longer a Princess, but an Empress that had dominion over two kingdoms. Although her little brother was the one currently ruling the Kingdom of Freesia, it didn't change the fact that she was the one that called the shots.

Conner thought that William's composure was due to the fact that he had found a strong backing. A backing that Conner wanted to have as well. Right now, only the Kraetor Empire had enough manpower to deal with the Elves and fight them on even grounds.

He had been informed by Calum that William's and Princess Sidonie's relationship seemed close. This was the conclusion that he had arrived at after observing the two from afar.

"So, you're saying that both of us should work together and fight against these two powers, correct?" William inquired.

"Yes," Conner replied. 'So you will not admit that you are Princess Sidonie's ally? Too bad that I am already aware of your relationship with her.'

If possible, Conner didn't want to become anyone else's subordinate. Becoming Princess Sidonie's lackey was his last resort. What he wanted to gain from this negotiation with William was to have the Half-Elf agree to work with him to deal with the Elves and have a Non-Aggression Pact with the Kraetor Empire.

He believed that as long as he was only fighting against the Elves, he would be able to wipe them out if it was a one-on-one battle. Conner was banking on the fact that the army of Super Soldiers would soon finish their final transformation.

"Since you are being open with your goal then allow me to tell you something about the recent event that transpired in the Zelan Dynasty," William said. "A few days ago, we went there to destroy their teleportation gates."

Conner wasn't able to stop the surprise from appearing on his face when he heard William's words.

"Did you succeed?" Conner asked. He waited in bated breath for William's answer.

If William had succeeded in destroying the Elves' ability to get more reinforcements from their homeland, then that would bring them one step closer in finishing them off. This was what Conner was thinking as he eyed the red-headed boy in front of him.

"No," William answered. "We failed in our mission. Also, I have more bad news to tell you. Two Guardians from the Silvermoon Continent managed to pass through the gates in the middle of the battle. One was the Qilin, Eneru. The other is the Ancient Golem, Drauum. Have you heard of them?"

Conner's face immediately went pale when he heard the name of the two Guardians from the Silvermoon Continent. He knew who Eneru was because he had access to the information network of Deus.

As someone who hated the Elves, he had collected a significant amount of information about the forces that were present in the Silvermoon Continent. This included the Seven Guardian Beast of the Silvermoon Continent.

The Qilin, Eneru.

The Ancient Golem, Drauum

The Winged Serpent, Drakon Nalzig

The Ent King, Myrendor

The Guardian Deer, Zyphon

The Golden Dragon, Ezkolor

The Demigod, Sepheron

These are the Seven Guardians of the Silvermoon Continent. Sepheron was a Demigod that was bound to the Silvermoon Continent. It rarely left the land of the Elves to go into hibernation for hundreds of years at a time.

The Ancient Golem, Drauum, was the second most powerful being among the Seven Guardians. Although it was only two-meters tall, no one dared to underestimate its strength because it was a golem that could even fight against Demigods.

"Boy, are you joking or what?" Conner asked in disbelief. "Are you telling me that Drauum is already in the Zelan Dynasty. Celine, your Disciple sure knows how to crack a joke."

Conner shifted his attention to the beautiful Elf that was seated beside William.

"I'm afraid that he's telling the truth," Celine replied. "I was there when Drauum appeared. We barely escaped with our lives in that single confrontation with it."

Conner rubbed his face in order to calm his nerves. Now that Celine had confirmed that the Ancient Golem was indeed present in the Southern Continent, he felt like running away was his best course of action.

It didn't matter how many Super Soldiers the Organization had. Against Drauum, these near immortal warriors were like eggs being thrown at a boulder.

"So, what are you going to do now?" William asked. "Are you going to seek protection from the Kraetor Empire, or will you stay in the Hellan Kingdom and fight against the Elves?"

The reason why William mentioned the appearance of the Qilin and the Ancient Golem was to test Conner's resolve. He wanted to know whether the Leader of Deus would choose to flee or remain to fight.

Right now, what William needed was allies, and not people who would run away during the crucial moment. He was even willing to set aside their differences, so they could sit down to talk to one another.

If Conner decided to hide under Empress Sidonie's skirt then there was nothing he could do about it. Frankly, he was also tempted to do the same thing. However, there were a few individuals on their side that might be able to extend their help when all hope was lost.

One was Takam, the Demigod of the Kyrintor Mountains.

The other was Vlad, the Strongest Demigod in the Southern Continent.

If these two Demigods decided to stand on William's side then even Drauum would have to think twice before making a move on the Hellan Kingdom.

Jekyll had already told him straight up that William shouldn't put his hope on Vlad because his father didn't care about the fate of the Hellan Kingdom. The only thing he cared about was James.

When William asked Jekyll if Vlad would come to his aid if he went to the battlefield carrying James' statue as a shield, the Dentist of Lont laughed out loud before telling William that it was a brilliant idea.

However, Jekyll flatly told him that Vlad would definitely kick William's bum, sending the boy to the Stratosphere if he were to do that. Just like William's reverse scale was his family, Vlad's reverse scale was James.

Messing with a Demigod was a very stupid thing to do.

After hearing Jekyll's claim, William scrapped the idea of using his Gramps to instigate the Demigod to help him fight against the Elves. If James could have heard William's plan, he might have spanked the boy silly for using his old bones as a shield to fight against his enemies.

William stared at Conner and waited for his answer.

The dice has been cast.

He only waited to see whether Conner would choose to fight, or choose to flee when the odds were stacked against him.

Celine observed this battle of wits from the side and a smile appeared on her face. She was quite satisfied with how William dealt with Conner and felt proud because he was her Disciple.

'If only he was given a few more years to grow up, I'm sure that he would have been able to surpass my expectations,' Celine thought.

She sighed in her heart knowing that in a month or two, war would be upon them. A war where many lives would be lost, never to be seen again.

Chapter 453: Dungeon Upgrade

William's and Conner's meeting ended, but no promises were made between the two. The Leader of Deus asked for a day to think things through and William agreed. Their talks would resume at noon the next day in the same conference room of the Solaris Dormitory.

An hour after Conner left the Royal Academy, William showed Celine some of his secrets, and they were none other than the Thousand Beast Domain and the Dungeon of Atlantis.

William had a smug expression on his face when he saw Celine's usually calm expression crumble after seeing the Domain and Dungeon that were available to him.

"H-How?" Celine asked as she stared at William.

Her stare was so intense that William had a feeling that the beautiful Elf was fighting the urge to dissect him, to see what other secrets he was hiding from her.

"Master, isn't it obvious?" William replied as he raised his chin in arrogance. "It's because I am so handsome, and so awesome, that I always have fruitful encounters. Don't be surprised if I suddenly acquired a Divine Artifact or Weapon in the future."

Just as William was boasting, a rainbow-colored Anteater walked past him.

Celine's gaze immediately landed on the adorable and unique creature that had fought beside her in the underground cavern.

"I want this," Celine said as she picked up the Demigod who was minding its own business.

Kasogonaga glared at the beautiful Elf in front of him in annoyance. The only reason why it didn't attack Celine was because she was William's Master. If any other Elf had picked it up, it would have already rolled into a ball and smashed their face without showing a shred of mercy.

"Unhand me, Woman!" Kasogonaga shouted. "I am a Demigod. You dare treat me like some kind of toy?!"

Celine's eyes sparkled when she heard that the adorable anteater was a Demigod. She thought that Kasogonaga was just a Rare Beast that William had picked up along the way.

"You are a Demigod?"

"Yes! Now, unhand me, Woman!"

Celine looked at William with a serious expression. Even without saying anything, the Half-Elf could understand what his Master was trying to tell him.

"Sorry, Master," William said as he shook his head. "Kasogonaga is not a pet. Also, he is not my subordinate. He is my special guest."

"That's right!" Kasogonaga said as it wriggled its body to get away from Celine who was holding it in a vice grip. "Hey! Let me go!"

Celine clicked her tongue as she reluctantly put the rainbow-colored Anteater on the ground. Kasogonaga gave her a hateful glare before walking away to join the others in clearing the Twenty-Second Floor of the Atlantis Dungeon.

The Dungeon Monsters that were located on this floor consisted of Nagas. They were serpentine hybrids that were similar to demihumans.

All of them were Class C (Low) Monsters and were proving to be a worthy challenge for most of the members of William's Herd and Legion.

Scadrez, the Blood Eagle, gave a mighty shriek as it descended from the sky. It unleashed crimson wind blades at the Naga that it was fighting, slicing it to pieces.

The Naga wasn't able to offer much resistance because the Blood Eagle's rank was now Class B (Mid).

Scadrez landed on the ground and happily ate its prey. It was a Beast similar to the Blood Wyvern that was able to strengthen itself, and gain new abilities, by eating monsters.

William glanced at the Blood Eagle in the distance. If he had more God Points, he would have purchased more Hyperion Trees and created a squad of Blood Eagles that would serve as William's Elite Air Units.

Celine was very interested in the Thousand Beast Domain and the Dungeon of Atlantis. Because of this, she flatly told William that she would be staying in his Villa for the time being.

William was about to agree when he suddenly remembered that his Villa was now his personal "Love Nest". He would spend the nights there with his lovers, and it would be awkward if Celine did some experiments inside it.

Because of this, He immediately asked the system to buy a spacious residence with a make-shift laboratory in it for Celine.

God Points: 642

The System bought a residence with a built-in laboratory for 50 God Points and placed it near the Villa. It was close enough for Celine to visit William, but far enough to give both of them privacy.

Celine was surprised when she saw the residence that hadn't been there when she toured the Thousand Beast Domain with William. She eyed her Disciple, who was looking back at her with the "I'm so awesome" expression, and decided to not ask him anything.

The beautiful elf had many secrets of her own, so she wouldn't force William to tell her things that he didn't want to tell her.

"Thank you for this comfortable residence," Celine said with a smile. "I'll be staying with you for the time being since I have nothing to do in Lont. In return, I will help clear the Atlantis Dungeon and use the monster body parts in my experiments."

"Thank you, Master," William replied. "Having you here will put me at ease."

William was quite happy that Celine chose to stay with him for the time being. Having her around would help greatly as the work of clearing the Dungeon continued. It would also give him the opportunity to ask her certain things when it came to alchemy.

Celine liked to do research and experiment on things, which was what William was currently doing. He hoped that with his Master's wisdom, he would be able to make the things that he was unable to make--like the powerful acid that would be strong enough to melt armor made from precious metals.

William parted with Celine for the time being because there were a few things that he needed to handle as well.

Dungeon Points: 158,865

The last battle against the Elves had killed hundreds of Goblins. Although the Goblin Crypt could spawn more of them, William felt that he shouldn't treat the Goblin Army as Cannon Fodders.

Currently, the leader of the Goblin Army was none other than the Hobgoblin Witch Doctor whom William nicknamed as Xerxes. His assistant was the Hobgoblin Chieftain whom William called Rex.

Together, they were the two leaders that led the Goblins to battle. William had already tweaked the Goblin Crypt and stopped the production of low-tiered Goblins.

He replaced them with stronger Goblins that would become the main bulk of his army. William had also increased the numbers for:

Hobgoblin Hunters

Hobgoblin Warriors

Hobgoblin Berserkers

Hobgoblin Leaders

Hobgoblin Shamans

He purchased more floors and placed the prison that held the Elves on the Forty-Fifth Floor. William was surprised when he found out that he had gained a lot of points after killing many of Elven Prodigies in the battle to destroy the teleportation gates.

This allowed the Half-Elf to add more floors to the Goblin Crypt and give it another special upgrade. Originally, the Thirty-First floor and above only spawned Danderous Goblin Dogs. Now, William changed the Dungeon's setting and made the new floors spawn Scavenger Goblin Dogs.

These were the evolved form of the Danderous Goblin Dog, and were powerful Class B (Low) Monsters that would now serve as the mount of his Goblin Army. William increased their production rate to ensure that every member of the Goblin Army would have a mount of their own.

Although he had already prepared himself for losses in this war, he wouldn't let his Goblin Army serve as cannon fodder. He would ensure that they would be properly equipped so that they would be able to terrorize his enemies the next time they met on the battlefield.

Chapter 454: The Fate Of The Two Princes Of The Hellan Kingdom

Prince Lionel and Prince Rufus arrived at the capital of the Anaesha Dynasty, Veritas.

Both of them were dressed according to their rank because Conner didn't want to give Empress Sidonie a bad impression. The young warriors of the Kraetor Empire escorted the two Princes to the throne room to meet with the young Empress who had full command of their army.

Prince Lionel walked the wide hallways of the Palace with anticipation. At first, he thought that The Organization finally decided to dispose of him, but was relieved when he was told that he would be sent as a hostage to the current ruler of the Anaesha Dynasty, Princess Sidonie.

'I knew that the Princess cared for me,' Prince Lionel thought as he walked with a spring in his steps. 'Perhaps she finally understands that I am the only man that can match her intellect and beauty.'

Walking behind him was Prince Rufus who had a solemn expression on his face. Unlike his older brother that was infatuated with the Princess, the Second Prince of the Hellan Dynasty only felt dread.

He felt much safer staying inside a cell in one of Deus' Prisons, rather than having an audience with the most beautiful young lady in the continent. Prince Rufus already knew about the power of Empress Sidonie's Charm.

Since she was the one that his older brother adored, the Second Prince had also gathered information about her. The two of them were rivals who fought for the throne. It was only natural to know your opponent's weaknesses.

For Prince Rufus, meeting Empress Sidonie was similar to walking to the gallows for an execution. Once he was Charmed, he would no longer have a will of his own and would only follow Empress Sidonie's every order.

'No matter what happens, I will not make eye contact.' Prince Rufus vowed in his heart. 'I don't care if this stupid brother of mine becomes a mindless puppet. I still want to see Rebecca. I refuse to be Charmed!'

When the two massive doors of the Throne Room were opened, Prince Lionel immediately saw the lady of his dreams.

Empress Sidonie sat on a golden throne and looked at the Crown Prince with a sweet smile on her face. She even made a gesture for the Prince to walk forward, so that she could get a better look at him.

Prince Lionel didn't need someone to tell him what to do. He walked towards the Empress with confidence and returned her smile with a smile of his own.

Prince Rufus, on the other hand, kept his head bowed and stared at the floor as if his life depended on it. One of the guards that had escorted the two Princes gave Prince Rufus a push on his back to make him walk forward.

Knowing that he had no choice but to obey, Rufus walked forward with even steps. He only stopped when the guard told him to stop, where he, and Prince Lionel were forced to kneel in front of their Empress.

"It has been a while, Prince Lionel," Empress Sidonie said in a tone that was as smooth as silk. "I pray that you have been well since the last time we saw each other."

Prince Lionel's smile widened. "I'm afraid that not everything went well after the two of us parted, Princess Sidonie."

"That's Empress Sidonie to you!" Prince Jason commented from the side.

Prince Jason didn't like the fawning expression on Prince Lionel's face because he was blatantly showing his adoration to the Empress whom he had already claimed as his own in his heart.

"Of course," Prince Lionel nodded apologetically. "Forgive me for my rudeness, Empress Sidonie. It was wrong of me to address you improperly."

"You are forgiven, Prince Lionel," Empress Sidonie replied as her eyes glowed with power. "Do you remember the order that you gave the members of Deus back at the Ravenlord Citadel?"

"How could I possibly forget?" Prince Lionel eyed the young Empress with a loving gaze. "I asked them to capture you and bring you to my room, so that I can shower you with my love."

The Crown Prince of the Hellan Kingdom had been completely Charmed and he couldn't lie even if he wanted to.

"Bastard!" Prince Jason exclaimed in anger as he drew his sword from his scabbard. "I'll end your filthy life!"

Prince Jason was about to cut off Prince Lionel's head when a single word stopped him in his tracks.

"Wait."

Empress Sidonie's order contained a hint of her Divinity, which made Prince Jason's heart shudder, forcing him to stop his attack.

"You wish to shower me with your love?" Empress Sidonie asked.

Prince Lionel nodded as he felt his heart strings being plucked one by one by her sensuous voice. "I've always wanted you to be my wife. For so many years, I have waited. Ever since I saved you during that hunting expedition, my heart has belonged to you, and only to you."

Prince Lionel's voice was so filled with his overflowing feelings and passion that the people inside the throne room looked at him with various expressions. Some admired him, some loathed him, while some pitied him.

These young men and women had also fallen in love with the young Empress and they treated each other as love rivals. Seeing the Prince openly admit his love, which had lasted for many years, made them feel envious.

"I see," Empress Sidonie's eyes returned to normal as he looked at the Crown Prince with amusement. "Thank you for loving me all these years. Right now, we are in the middle of a war against the Elves and, to a certain extent, the people of your Kingdom. Do you wish to serve and fight for me?"

"Of course." Prince Lionel pressed his fist over his chest as he bowed to Empress Sidonie like a knight swearing his fealty.

"I, Prince Lionel Arthur Vi Hellan, hereby swear upon my honor that I will fight for you, Your Majesty, till I draw my last breath," Prince Lionel said with determination. "Your enemies will be my enemies, and I will use my heart, and body, to ensure that no harm will fall on your body. This I swear with my life."

Empress Sidonie nodded her head in satisfaction as he made a gesture for Prince Lionel to stand.

"From now on, you will be part of my Royal Guard," Empress Sidonie declared. "You will accompany me wherever I go and protect me from all harm. You will do this for me, yes?"

"My life is yours to command, Your Majesty." Prince Lionel bowed his head.

"Stand five steps to the left side below my throne. From this day forward, that will be your place."

"Yes! Your Majesty!"

Prince Lionel walked towards his designated position with a smile. Several other young men and women stood along the steps that led to Empress Sidonie's throne.

Standing on the right side of her throne was the Archmage of the Kraetor Empire. While two Sword Saints stood behind her throne.

On her left stood Priscilla. She was Empress Sidonie's loyal retainer and one of her most trusted advisers.

Prince Jason, on the other hand, stood farther away to prevent himself from being too affected by Empress Sidonie's charm.

After Prince Lionel stood in his place, the young Empress shifted her attention to the Second Prince of the Hellan Kingdom who had his head bowed and looking at the floor.

"Prince Rufus, do you want to regain your freedom?" Empress Sidonie asked.

Her soft, yet teasing voice made Prince Rufus' heart tremble.

'Even without looking at her, my heart can't stop itself from beating wildly inside my chest,' Prince Rufus thought with worry as beads of sweat started to appear on his forehead.

"Your Majesty, I would like to regain my freedom," Prince Rufus replied. "The two of us have no grudges to each other and I pray that you show your mercy upon me."

Empress Sidonie rested her right cheek over the palm of her hand. To be perfectly honest, she didn't know what to do with the Second Prince of the Hellan Kingdom. Unlike the Crown Prince, Prince Rufus had been very polite to her when she was the guest of their Kingdom.

Also, she could somehow tell that the Prince already had someone in his heart. As someone who was pursuing the meaning of Love, Empress Sidonie felt that she shouldn't tamper with Prince Rufus' feelings and grant him amnesty.

Even Morgana, who was usually the one who was thirsty to turn everyone into slaves, remained quiet within their shared Mindscape. Empress Sidonie's other half was giving her silent approval to whatever she decided to do with the Second Prince.

"Right now, the Southern Continent is ridden with danger," Empress Sidonie said after careful consideration. "You will remain here as my guest and will be treated according to your rank and

standing. From this day onwards, you will stay at the Left Wing of the Royal Palace. You will also be given a maid and an attendant to care for your daily needs."

Prince Rufus breathed a sigh of relief in his heart because he could tell that the Empress had decided to spare him.

"Thank you, Your Majesty, for your mercy, and generosity," Prince Rufus replied. "I promise to abide by your wishes and stay in my quarters. In the future, if Fate permits, I swear upon my life to return this kindness."

"Good. May you honor your word, Prince Rufus."

"I will, Your Majesty."

Empress Sidonie made a gesture to the guards to escort the Second Prince to his new quarters.

Only when the two great doors of the throne room had closed behind his back, did Prince Rufus breathe a sigh of relief in his heart.

'Brother, the lady you chose is a fearsome person.' Prince Rufus' body unconsciously shuddered as he was guided towards the Left Wing of the Royal Palace.

The Second Prince of the Hellan Kingdom knew that his older brother's fate was now sealed in stone. Although there was no love between them as brothers, he still felt a pang of pity for his brother who had done everything in his power to claim the throne of the Hellan Kingdom.

Now, he was no longer a candidate to become king.

He was now a slave who had lost his freedom.

A slave that was similar to a dog, whose only wish was to lick his Master's foot.

A slave whose fate would be decided by the mood of the beautiful Master he now served.

Prince Rufus said a silent prayer in his heart as his composure returned. He prayed that if Empress Sidonie ever decided to end his brother's life, it would be a swift death, and not a slow, and painful, one.

Chapter 455: Conner's Choices

Conner stared at the map of the Southern Continent that was plastered on the wall of his office. It had been two hours since his talk with William and he was thinking long and hard on what his next course of action would be.

To the West lay the outskirts of the Hellan Kingdom.

To the North the Anaesha Dynasty.

To the South was the Zelan Dynasty.

Lastly, the Kingdom of Freesia in the Far East.

The four powers that shared the Southern Continent and had each other in a deadlock. After the Continental Spell was activated, these four powers had lost their leaders and fell into chaos.

Right now, the Kingdom of Freesia and the Anaesha Dynasty belonged to Empress Sidonie. She was backed by the Kraetor Empire, and held considerable forces of her own thanks to the Myriad Ant Queen.

Right now, she occupied half of the playing field. One can even say that, when it came to military might and resources, she stood at the apex of power at this point in time.

Then there were the Elves who occupied the Zelan Dynasty to the South. Although William's Alliance had failed to destroy the Teleportation Gates, they still gave the Elves a crushing blow.

It was quite unfortunate that two powerful Guardian Beasts were able to pass through the Teleportation Gate before it was destroyed by Empress Sidonie's Ant Army.

Eneru, the Qilin, and Drauum, the Ancient Golem. Both of them held considerable power, especially the Ancient Golem who was the biggest threat among the two. It alone had the power to destroy fortifications and topple cities.

Even though there would be no reinforcements coming to aid the Elves anytime soon, Drauum was more than enough to deter any further moves against the Elven forces stationed in the Zelan Dynasty.

Then there was the Hellan Kingdom. Among these three powers, it was currently the weakest of them all.

Conner sighed as his eyes landed on the kingdom where he currently was and shook his head helplessly.

'If only the Hidden Domain hadn't disappeared,' Conner thought with regret. 'The resources inside would have been more than enough to create tens of thousands of Super Soldiers that could be used as the main bulk of our vanguard.'

Conner already understood that the greatest threat they were facing was Drauum. If he could somehow convince Empress Sidonie to keep the Pseudo-Demigod at bay, he was confident that he and William would be able to overwhelm the Elves if they worked together.

'The problem is that I don't know the strength of the forces that Celine's disciple has,' Conner mused. 'Since they launched a preemptive strike to destroy the Teleportation Gate, that means that they have an army or something similar that is strong enough to defeat the Elven Defenders that are stationed to protect their means of calling for more reinforcements from the Silvermoon Continent.'

Conner had a feeling that even if he asked William to tell him how many forces he had under his banner, the latter would not tell him anything. If he was in the same position, Conner would have done the same.

'I only have two choices,' Conner mused as he looked at the Anaesha Dynasty. 'Swear my allegiance to the Empress Sidonie, and have the backing of the Kraetor Empire, or stay in this Kingdom that has no hope of defeating the Elven Army.'

His subordinates, who were responsible for escorting the two Princes to the Anaesha Dynasty, had reported that the beautiful princess was now an Empress. Conner knew what that meant and it made him frown.

'I only talked to her using a communication crystal, but it was more than enough to tell me how dangerous she is,' Conner's fists unconsciously clenched when he remembered the talk he had with Empress Sidonie.

Conner had a nagging feeling that if he ever allied himself to the Kraetor Empire, the Young Empress would not take any chances and use her Charm Ability on him. The Leader of Deus wasn't too confident that he would be able to resist her, even if he used artifacts that would increase his resistance against Charm.

Conner laughed wryly as he rubbed his forehead with his hand.

'If you think about it, what other choice do I have?' Conner gritted his teeth as his gaze landed on the lands of the Hellan Kingdom. After organizing his thoughts, the Leader of Deus activated the ring on his finger and relayed his order to his right-hand man Calum.

Now that he had made a decision, he would see it through no matter what the result would be.

William focused on controlling the Flames of Purification as the ingredients inside his Yin Yang Cauldron merged together.

Although he looked calm on the surface, he was also feeling anxious about what Conner's decision was going to be. He never thought that there would come a time when he would be forced to put aside his differences with The Organization and work towards a common goal together.

In order to not dwell on this anxiety, he decided to just increase the level of his Alchemist Job Class by concocting acid bombs for his Rainbow Bird Aerial Brigade. For now, he had only been able to create an acid that was strong enough to melt reinforced steel.

It was a far cry from what he had envisioned, but William knew that it couldn't be helped. He was only an amateur that was throwing things at the wall to see what stuck in place.

Two minutes later, the Yin Yang Cauldron glowed indicating that the concocting process had succeeded.

< Experience Points Gained: 5,000 >

William wiped the sweat on his forehead using the back of his hand, before siphoning the newly concocted acid to small bottles that he would later distribute to the Angray Birds. The rainbow-colored birds were currently helping his forces clear the Dungeon of Atlantis.

His lovers were in the Dungeon as well because they didn't want to disturb William when he was crafting things on his own.

William had just sealed the last bottle of acid when the door of his room suddenly opened.

Celine looked at her disheveled disciple and the bottles of acids that were neatly arranged on the floor beside him. She sniffed and her nose immediately wrinkled when she detected the foul stench of acid in the air.

"I didn't know that you also knew Alchemy," Celine said as she crossed her arms over her chest. "Is this one of those Job Classes you told me about in the past?"

William nodded as he placed all of the acid bottles inside his ring of conquest. He then used his Water Magic to clean his Yin Yang Cauldron before storing it in the ring as well.

"Is there something you need, Master?" William asked.

He knew that Celine wouldn't come find him unless it was something important, so William focused his attention to her and waited for her answer.

"Conner contacted me a few minutes ago to tell me that he wanted to talk to you. I'm guessing that he has made his decision."

"I see. By the way, Master, what time is it?"

William had been too busy with his experiments to check the time, but he was sure a day hadn't passed since he had his meeting with the Leader of Deus.

"The clock just struck midnight," Celine replied. "Conner is someone that doesn't want to waste any time after he makes a decision. Go take a bath first before meeting him. We don't want our possible ally to change his mind because of your disheveled state."

Celine smirked before leaving the room. Although she wasn't a hundred percent certain, she had a feeling that Conner would agree to the temporary truce and join their alliance.

William watched his Master go before he breathed a deep sigh of relief. He was hoping that Conner wouldn't wait until morning before making a decision, and it seemed that he had read the man right.

The red-headed boy headed to the bathroom to take a bath as per his Master's wishes.

'Well then, I wonder what choice he made?' William thought as he turned the knob of the shower, allowing the cold water to sprinkle over his body.

It was not only Conner who was at the crossroads, William was there as well. If Conner decided to ally with him then he would have no choice, but to set aside the Condition of the Titanic Trollhound, who was hellbent to have its vengeance against the man named Floyd--who was responsible for its mutation.

If Conner decided no to ally with him, but to flee then he would be forced to take full command of the Hellan Kingdom.

In the absence of the King, The Princes, The Prime Minister, and the Commander of the First Knight Order, William automatically became the new regent of the Hellan Kingdom. Prince Ernest could have that role as well, but the Young Prince was currently at the Kyrintor Mountains, away from the conflict of the different warring factions that ravaged the land.

If possible, William wanted to let the Prince stay under the protection of Takam. That way, there would still be a chance to reclaim his right, if ever the Kingdom fell into enemy hands.

Chapter 456: Taking One For The Team

The flying carriage carrying the insignia of the Angorian War Sovereign landed in Lont. three days after William and Conner finalized the conditions of their alliance, he decided to go back to his hometown to inform Prince Alaric about the details of their cooperation with Deus.

Just as he expected, Prince Alaric wasn't happy about working with The Organization who was responsible for this whole mess. However, the Crown Prince of the Zelan Dynasty also understood that it was their only chance of winning against the Elven Army.

"Very well," Prince Alaric replied. "We will travel to the City of Gladiolus to coordinate with Conner. How about you? What are you going to do?"

"I will keep on looking for allies to aid us in battle," William stated. "Although the current threat we are facing are the Elves, we still don't know what the Kraetor Empire is thinking. It is also possible that they have plans for complete dominion of the Southern Continent."

Prince Alaric sighed. This was also one of the worries in his heart. It was not only the Elves who were planning to call for reinforcements from their homeland. The Kraetor Army was doing that too.

William and Prince Alaric shared a knowing glance at each other. It was highly possible that the Kraetor Empire was only waiting for the Hellan Kingdom, and the Elves, to exhaust each other before they moved in for the kill.

They were currently in an advantageous position and once they made their move, it would send waves rolling in every direction.

"How resilient are you against Charm?" Prince Alaric suddenly inquired out of the blue.

William smirked because he already knew what the Crown Prince was thinking. "You want me to visit Empress Sidonie and ask her for help?"

Prince Alaric nodded. "As fellow Humans, it is only natural to unite against the threat of a different race. If we can get her aid to wipe out the Elven Army then it would still be a victory on our side."

The Crown Prince was about to say more when he suddenly remembered that William was not a fellow Human and was considered to be a member of a different race.

"Cousin, I apologize if I have offended you." Prince Alaric hurriedly apologized because he had forgotten that William was a Half-Elf and not part of the Human Race. "It was not my intention to include you in the race that I want to be wiped out."

William waved his hand in a casual manner because he understood what Prince Alaric was trying to say.

"There's no need to apologize," William replied. "About your proposal, I think it is also a good idea to visit Empress Sidonie. This way, we will know if she is hostile towards us or not."

Prince Alaric nodded his head. It was better to know who their enemies were. Although both teenagers didn't want the Kraetor Empire to become their enemy, they had to prepare for this possibility as well.

'Should I take one for the team and give the Empress my babies?' William thought seriously. 'If I could get her help then I am willing to make this sacrifice.'

If Prince Lionel and Prince Jason could hear William's thoughts, both of them would join hands to beat the crap out of the red-headed boy and feed his remains to the fishes.

They would refuse to believe that their beloved Empress would extend her help to William if the latter agreed to give her his babies. In fact, they would definitely hack him to pieces before the Half-Elf could even touch a strand of her hair.

Meanwhile in the Northern Regions of the Zelan Dynasty, an important meeting was taking place.

"Only the Myriad Ant Queen of the Anaesha Dynasty could have commanded the Warrior Ants to attack the Teleportation Gate," Elandorr said with conviction. "Right now, they are the greatest threat that we are currently facing."

The Elders of the different clans, who had accompanied Elandorr on this mission, nodded their heads in agreement. Alessio, who was the leader of Deus in the Silvermoon Continent was also in the meeting and quietly listened to the conversation.

The meeting was being held in an open place because The Qilin, Eneru, as well as the Ancient Golem, Drauum, were also there to participate.

Drauum had already informed them that it could sense the presence of powerful beasts in the direction of the Anaesha Dynasty that had the ranks of Myriad Beasts and above. What greatly alarmed Elandorr and the officers of the Elven Army was that Drauum concluded that there were more than three of them.

"Three is the minimum and five is the maximum."

These were the words that Drauum had said when someone in the meeting proposed that they attacked the Anaesha Dynasty with the help of their Guardians.

Although Drauum was strong, it was not too keen about fighting two factions at once. Although Jekyll was weaker than it, the Taotie wasn't a pushover. Drauum knew that if it forced Jekyll into a corner, the latter would throw caution to the wind and fight back with everything he had.

As one of the Four Evils, a desperate Jekyll was not someone that Drauum would want to face. Drauum knew that the Taotie would risk his life to devour him, or die trying. The Ancient Golem was not confident that it would be able to escape if Jekyll decided to bring it down with him no matter what.

"Your Excellency Eneru, Your Excellency Drauum, is it possible for us to launch an attack on the Hellan Kingdom with our current forces?" Elandorr asked.

The Qilin snorted as he looked down on the young Elf with contempt before glancing at Drauum who was seated on top of a large boulder.

"We can, but I will advise against it," Drauum replied. "If we leave the Zelan Dynasty, the Kraetor Army will move in to conquer it. It is also possible that they will ignore conquering the Zelan Dynasty completely, and cooperate with the Hellan Kingdom to trap us in a Pincer Attack."

Elandorr bit his lip helplessly. He had already witnessed William's battle abilities and he had no choice but to admit that he fell short of the Half-Elf who was also the son of their Saintess. Also, what truly made him despair was that his connection with his Beast Companion had been severed.

It could only mean that the Silver Dragon, Deoldreoss, that was given to him by the Patriarch of their Clan had been killed.

Back in the Silvermoon Continent, Elandorr was envied by his peers, not only because he was strong, but also because of the Silver Dragon that had become his Beast Companion.

Now that he had tasted the bitter taste of defeat in William's hands, the commander of the Elven expedition finally understood that he couldn't underestimate his opponents. Although William was a disgrace to their race, he was still Half an Elf, which gave him racial advantages as well.

Half-Elfs were beings who had the best of both worlds. They were born with the best traits of both of their parents, making them far superior than a normal Human and, at times, more powerful than an Elf.

Elandorr didn't believe this in the past, but now he believed it. His greatest wish was to personally step on William's dead boy and spit on his face.

This was the only way that he could rid himself of the humiliation that he suffered in the Half-Elf's hands.

"Then, what should we do now?" Elandorr asked after reigning in his emotions. "Should we hole ourselves up in Briar Glen until a new Teleportation Gate has been built?"

Although it was shameful, this was the only course of action that would allow them to preserve their forces while waiting for reinforcements.

The Elders were unhappy with Elandorr's proposal, but they also knew that this was the best course of action for now.

Being attacked by the forces of the Hellan Kingdom and the Kraetor Army would be too much for them to handle.

"Building the Teleportation Gate is something that has to be done," Drauum replied. "I will personally oversee its construction and make sure that the last incident will never happen again. As for what you should be doing next, isn't that already obvious?"

Elandorr clenched his fist as he reluctantly nodded his head.

There was only one thing they could do and that was to negotiate with the Kraetor Empire. Only by doing so would they be able to build their Teleportation Gate safely and bring in the reinforcements that were waiting in their homeland.

As for the price that they would have to pay for such an agreement, Elandorr didn't know. All he knew was that he needed to do his best to negotiate with whoever was in charge of the Kraetor Empire. This was why he was chosen to lead the Elven Expedition and bring glory to their Clans.

He needed to endure the humiliation until the Teleportation Gate was completed.

That is the only way that he could ensure that the mission that was handed to him by his Patriarch would be carried out without fail.

For that to happen, Elandorr was willing to do anything, with the exception of bowing his head to the race whom he hated the most in his life.

He would rather die than bow to the filthy Humans that used their race as slaves. A race that they used to warm their bed, do their bidding, and breed the filthy Half-Elves that were a stain on their pure and noble bloodline.

Chapter 457: In The Midst Of Chaos, There Is Also Opportunity

Empress Sidonie looked at the capital of the Anaesha Dynasty from the balcony of her room. So far, everything had been moving smoothly and in accordance with her plans. If she wished for it, she could give an order to attack the Elves and she would win without fail.

However, she didn't wish for that.

"I do not wish for dominion... is it?" Empress Sidonie muttered as she remembered the red-headed boy who had refused her offer to make him the Sovereign of the entire continent.

She had stared straight into his eyes when he said that, and only a pair of beautiful clear, green eyes, with her own reflection on them stared back at her.

There was no falsehood in William's words, only genuine sincerity. Also, when she saw herself in his eyes, when she saw that he was looking at her, and only her, she wasn't able to stop her heart from skipping a beat.

< Back then, you wouldn't say these words, Sidonie. You have changed. >

'I'm not the only one who changed. You did as well, right, Big Sister?'

< Well, I guess this is what they call growing up. Still, we sure have the favor of Advantage. Are you sure you don't want to serve the continent to our darling on a silver platter? >

Empress Sidonie shook her head. Giving over the control of the continent might solve William's problems, and make him happy, but it will not make him love her. He would feel gratitude, yes, and she could guilt trip him, and she could probably succeed, but what of it?

In the end, she would only feel hollow and empty inside.

"It's funny," Empress Sidonie said as she faced Morgana inside their shared Mindscape. "I could literally pick any man in this continent, and perhaps the entire world, and all of them would happily open their heart to me.

"They would say they love me. They would offer me the moon, and the stars, just to show me how much they love me, and yet... I can't even make a shepherd my lover. Isn't that ironic?"

< Yes. It's the biggest joke ever. If our Charm had only worked on Darling then I would have already tied him on the bed and... >

Empress Sidonie could only shake her head, because she could already guess what Morgana was thinking of doing to William. Of course, she would be lying if she said that she wasn't curious. However, since they shared the same body, she had to set certain rules so that her other half wouldn't get carried away and do things that they might regret in the future.

< Sidonie. I may not be as smart as you, but the way I see it, the Elves, Conner, and probably Darling have no choice but to seek an audience with you, in order to negotiate. What will you do when that time comes? >

Sidonie nodded because she had also thought of this. Since she was the one with the bigger share of the pie, and a strong army behind her back, the one that would decide the outcome of this war was her, and only her.

With a wave of her hand, cities would be trampled. With a smile, a nation would fall to ruin. This was the power she possessed, and yet, she, too, didn't want dominion.

In the past, she dreamed of being the sole ruler of the Southern Continent, but now, her goal was different.

What she wanted now was love.

Love that would melt her heart and make her the happiest woman in the world.

A love that would make her feel complete... and a love that could sate her Sin.

A Sin that knew no bounds.

No boundaries.

A sin that could bring the world to ruin.

"They said that behind every great man is a great woman," Sidonie said softly. "However, the person we chose isn't someone great."

< Yes. He's not that great. >

"He's arrogant and a narcissist. These are the people I hate the most."

< That's right. We hate people like this the most. >

Empress Sidonie smiled as she looked in the West, where the sun was supposed to set. However, due to the dark clouds that hung in the sky, she had almost forgotten how beautiful a sunset was.

The most beautiful lady in the continent sighed. What she planned to do was difficult, and the rewards were uncertain. However, she was sure of one thing.

"All is fair in love and war," Empress Sidonie said. "In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity."

< Sidonie. Whatever route you choose, I will always be on your side. >

"Thank you, Big Sister."

Night came, and the countless stars twinkled in the sky. The two moons of Hestia cast their light upon the world, and yet, within the Southern Continent, their beauty couldn't be seen.

One by one, the lights, powered by magic crystals, illuminated the city. They were like small candles in the night. Candles whose light would disappear, as long as she wished for it.

Two flying carriages soared in the sky. They were being pulled by two green dragons of the Centennial Rank. In front of these two dragons was the Qilin, Eneru.

They had just left the capital of Briar Glen and were now headed towards the Anaesha Dynasty.

Elandorr and Alessio brought six of their trusted subordinates to accompany them on this journey to Veritas, the capital city of the Anaesha Dynasty.

They were the envoy of the Elven Race who would negotiate with Empress Sidonie in order to reach a compromise.

Only a handful of people knew that Alessio was the leader of The Organization, Deus, in their continent, and among those individuals was Elandorr's Patriarch.

Elandorr had made Alessio his adviser in this expedition, so the latter also enjoyed the limelight in the Elven Army. The reason why he accompanied Elandorr in this mission was due to his counterpart, Berthold, who was also a big shot in the Kraetor Empire.

He was afraid that if he didn't accompany Elandorr in this mission, Berthold would make his move and put the Elves at a disadvantage. There was also the threat of the young Empress using her Charm on Elandorr.

They had already brought several artifacts that would prevent them from getting Charmed. There were also Elves that had this unique power, so they had developed ways on how to deal with it.

Eneru came with them as insurance that the Kraetor Empire wouldn't do anything funny. Although the Qilin was weaker than the Ancient Golem, that didn't mean that he was not powerful in his own right.

Also, Eneru had the unique ability that could instantly teleport all of them away as a last resort. A Myriad Beast couldn't be charmed so easily. The Ant Queen was only charmed by Sidonie due to the side effects of the Continental Spell that descended upon the land.

If not for it, Empress Sidonie wouldn't have been able to charm it as easily as she did.

"Remember, do not act arrogant in front of her," Alessio advised. "We are the one seeking a compromise, so you'd better control your temper, Lord Elandorr."

"Thank you for your reminder, Sir Alessio," Elandorr replied. "I will play my part well. Even though bowing my head to a Human makes my skin crawl, I will do it for the sake of the bigger picture."

"Good." Alessio nodded. "As long as you understand."

The two flying carriages travelled swiftly, but it would still take them a week to arrive at their destination.

Meanwhile, a four-tailed fox landed on the ground, a few miles away from Lont. riding on its back was a delicate looking boy, who seemed ill suited to traveling alone at night.

"Let's rest here for the night, Luna," Kenneth said as he dismounted his loyal companion. "I will go alone to Lont when morning comes."

The Black Fox nuzzled its partner. "I understand. I will remain with you until morning, to make sure that you will be able to rest properly. We have been traveling for days, and I know that you're very tired."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

Kenneth brushed the side of Luna's face as the image of William, doing the same to Ella, appeared inside his mind.

"It's been so long since I saw you, Will," Kenneth said softly. "I pray that you're doing fine."

Chapter 458: If Worse Comes To Worst, I'll Just Give Her My Babies

"We can't do that." William shook his head firmly.

"Why not?" Kasogonaga tapped its small foot on the ground. "It's the perfect plan."

The beautiful Elf, who was seated beside William, nodded her head in agreement with Kasogonaga's plan.

"I also think this is a good plan," Celine said with a smile. "As long as Kasogonaga captures the Myriad Ant Queen, that young Empress would be willing to compromise."

"No, Master," William once again shook his head. "If we do that, we will lose any chance of reaching an agreement with her. Also, that will not make us any different from The Organization who tried to kidnap Big Brother Matthew and Eve, in an attempt to use them as leverage. I don't approve of this plan."

The three were currently having a casual meeting in the Thousand Beast Domain while William made healing potions using the herbs that were gathered inside the Dungeon of Atlantis and the sap of the Dragon Blood Tree.

< Experience Points Gained: 500 >

While William busied himself in dividing the mixture into several bottle containers, Kasogonaga once again proposed something.

"Then let's just ally with them and crush the Elves together," Kasogonaga proposed. "This is a good alternative, no?"

William nodded his head. This was why he had decided to travel to the Anaesha Dynasty to talk with Empress Sidonie. Right now, they had just landed on the ground to take a short break.

After eating their lunch, William ordered Dave and Lionheart to rest for three hours before they continued their journey. It was not easy to take long journeys, even when one was flying in the sky.

While Dave and his Beast Companion, Lionheart, rested, William returned to the Thousand Beast Domain to craft potions. Est, Ashe, Wendy, Isaac, and Conrad returned to clearing the Dungeon, while Celine decided to check on how good William was in doing Alchemy.

Kasogonaga saw the two near the Dragon Blood Trees, so it decided to have a short chat with them to pass the time.

However, due to the purpose of their journey, the small chat transformed into a strategy meeting with Kasogonaga proposing that they kidnap the Myriad Ant Queen and use it as a hostage to force Empress Sidonie to cooperate.

William knew that the Kasogonaga was only half serious in planning to kidnap the Ant Queen. What it really wanted to do was to eat the Ant Queen, so that it could increase its rank in the fastest way possible.

"How long before we arrive at the City of Veritas?" Celine inquired.

"If we continue our pace, it will take us three more days," William replied as he once again threw the herbs inside the Yin Yang Cauldron to make another batch of healing potions.

Celine nodded her head as she watched William use the Flames of Purification to start his Alchemy.

"Will, do you have some kind of plan to convince Empress Sidonie to join our side?"

"I don't have any concrete plans in mind. If worse comes to worst, I'll just give her my babies."

""Huh?!"

Celine and Kasogonaga both looked at William with dumbfounded expressions on their faces. They didn't understand what the red-headed boy meant when he said that he would give the Empress his babies.

"I'm just joking." William chuckled as he controlled the power of his flames. "To be honest, I don't know what kind of reception we will get from the Empress. I just hope she doesn't hold a grudge against me because of what I said before the two of us parted."

"What did you two talked about?" Kasogonaga inquired.

It had seen the Princess before she became an Empress. Kasogonaga was a deity that once stood on the side of Humans during the Era of the Gods. Because of this, it had learned a few things from the Humans and among them was forming good relationships with each other.

"She wanted to know what Love is," William replied. "I said, I cannot give her what she wanted."

The image of the beautiful Princess flashed inside his head. He could still remember how Princess Sidonie looked at him with a pleading gaze, and yet, he chose to turn her down because he felt that he couldn't return her feelings.

"Eh? Isn't love just Mating?" Kasogonaga tilted its head to the side. "You Humans procreate all the time. What's the big deal about making her your partner? Ah, I keep forgetting that you are a Half-Elf. Still, didn't the Human part of you feel anything about her? Based on Human standards, she's quite beautiful, right?"

Celine who was just quietly listening to the side eyed William with a calm expression. She had already found out that, aside from Wendy, Ashe and Est were also her Disciple's lovers.

The beautiful Elf was also shocked when she found out that William's first friends were not real boys, but girls who had been cursed by a Goddess.

When William showed Celine the gem embedded in his chest, as well as the story behind it, her impression of Ashe grew by a good margin. She had heard that when Mermaids give someone half of their heart, it meant that they had chosen that person to be their partner for life.

Although the circumstances behind it were complicated, it didn't change the fact that Ashe didn't hesitate to save William during his time of need. This was more than enough for Celine to approve of her as her Disciple's lover.

To be honest, Celine felt that William was growing too fast. Not only in strength, but his outlook toward life as well.

'A baby bird can't stay in its parent's nest for the rest of its life,' Celine thought. Somehow, she felt a little sad because she felt that William was moving farther away from her.

Perhaps, in the next few years, the boy would go on an adventure, where he would be away for several years before they saw each other again.

'This is the natural order of things.' Celine sighed, but there was nothing she could do about it. 'This is how it should be.'

She had one last lesson to teach William, but that would have to wait until he had come of age. After that, Celine would leave Lont, and go to the Demon Continent to visit her Master. It had been many years since she last saw her and Celine missed her terribly.

Celine's mother had died when she was still very young. The one who played the role of her mother was none other than the notorious Ugly Hag that lived in the most seclusive region of the Demonic Lands.

The only reason why Celine had postponed her trip was due to her having a Disciple of her own. She would not leave William until he had come of age, and imparted to him the secrets of those who wield True Dark Magic.

'For that to happen, he needed to survive the war first,' Celine mused.

William and Conner had made a temporary alliance in order to fight against the Elven Army. Conner would be responsible for strengthening the defenses of the kingdom in preparation for war, while William would look for other potential allies to help them resist the Elven Invasion.

The red-headed boy had already informed Conner about his mission to visit the Anaesha Dynasty and the latter only gave him a smile as if he had already expected that William would do this.

Conner had already established in his mind that William and Empress Sidonie were in cahoots with each other, and simply kept this a secret in order to fool him and the Elven Army. Calum agreed with him on this point, but decided to not expose his secret.

The Leader of Deus believed that even if the Kraetor Empire didn't extend their hands to help them vanquish the Elves, they wouldn't attack the Hellan Kingdom either.

This was the reason why Conner was adamant about making William his ally. As long as the red-headed boy was on his side, he could focus all of his attention in the faceoff against the Elves.

Although the two Guardian Beasts were powerful, they were not invincible. As long as there was a chance, Conner would seize it with both hands. Just like he did many years ago when he became the Leader of Deus in the Southern Continent.

Chapter 459: We Will Cross That Bridge When We Get There

A few days later, the Elven Envoy arrived at the Capital of the Anaesha Dynasty, Veritas. Since they were the ones seeking an audience, the Elves had curbed their arrogance. Even Eneru, didn't make too much fuss because he could sense several presences that were in the same league as him.

"You may proceed." The Kraetor Guard stationed at the city gate gave them the go signal after communicating with his superiors, who were already waiting for the envoy to arrive.

The Qilin and the two flying carriages were led towards the palace by four escorts mounted on flying ants.

After landing in their designated area, The Qilin, Eneru, transformed into a white-haired man, who seemed to be in his early thirties. As a Mythical Beast, he had the ability to take on humanoid form, just like Jekyll.

Elandorr, and Alessio, led the way, while Eneru walked in the rear. It was the formation that they had agreed upon beforehand, just in case something unexpected happened during their mission.

It didn't take long before they arrived at the doors of the throne room where the Young Empress was waiting for them. Elandorr stepped forward with confidence as the guards guarding the door pushed it open.

The moment his eyes landed on the Young Empress, the Commander of the Elves felt his heart shudder. The artifacts he was wearing were already activated, and yet, he was barely able to resist the gaze of the young lady who was looking down at him with a teasing smile.

A light cough broke him out of his daze, as Eneru unleashed some of his aura, to shield Elandorr, as well as the rest of the Elves from Sidonie's Charm.

'That was close!' Elandorr gasped internally as he tried to forcefully calm the beating of his heart. 'This woman is dangerous!'

Elandorr had to admit that even without the power of her Charm, he couldn't stop himself from being attracted to the beautiful lady in front of him. The rumor of the Young Empress being extremely beautiful was already well-known to them.

However, knowing and seeing her in the flesh was completely different. Elandorr knew that even if he hated Humans to the bone, he wouldn't mind making an exception, and make Empress Sidonie his woman.

"Greetings, travelers who came from far away lands," Empress Sidonie said with a smile. Her soft and silky voice once again made Elandorr's heart tremble. The Commander of the Elves still had a calm expression on his face, but inside, his emotions were a mess.

"Although we have traveled many miles to get here, your smile alone made the trip worth it, Your Majesty," Elandorr replied as he gave a brief bow.

Empress Sidonie's smile widened as she gave Elandorr a slight nod. She then leaned on her throne as she waited for the Elves to state their reason for their visit.

< Oh my, the Elves sure live up to their reputation for being good looking. This specimen is not bad. Although he still falls short compared to Darling, he will make a good pet that I can rest my foot on. >

'Didn't you say the same thing about Prince Lionel a few days ago?'

< Sidonie, humans have two legs. Having two footstools is perfectly acceptable. One for the left, the other for the right. >

'Then how about my cousin, Prince Jason?' Empress Sidonie inquired.

< Him? Well, I guess he can be a good chair that we can sit on. With the looks he has been giving you, I'm sure that he is nearing his limit. Too bad, the one we plan to have first dibs on us is none other than Darling. >

Empress Sidonie and Morgana looked at the Elven Envoy with great interest. They already knew that the good looking guy with white hair was the Qilin of the Silvermoon Continent. Aside from him, there was also one adult in the group of teenage boys and girls who were looking at Sidonie with varied expressions.

"Your Majesty, I am the Commander of the Elven expedition here in the Southern Continent. Our reason for our visit is to seek an alliance with you," Elandorr said in a voice that reeked of honey. "The two of us don't have to fight each other, we can split the Southern Continent in half and become good neighbors with each other."

"Good neighbors?" Empress Sidonie raised an eyebrow. "I like having good neighbors. However, why would I settle to having neighbors when I can have the entire continent as my property?"

Elandorr smiled as he appraised the Young Empress' bearings. He had been trained to look for the tell-tale signs that he could exploit during negotiations. So far, he hadn't seen any openings in Empress Sidonie's posture or words that she had directed at him.

"Uniting the land under one banner is good, but can the Kraetor Empire really do that?" Elandorr questioned. "The moment the Continental Spell loses its effect, the barrier that prevented the other forces from advancing here will collapse. By then, several strong factions from the Central Continent will arrive and stake their claim in these lands as well."

Elandorr paused as he scanned the officers of the Kraetor Empire who were also present inside the throne room.

"The Kraetor Empire alone will not be able to stop their advance. However, if we become allies, we can work together to protect our domains," Elandor stated. "If we work hand in hand then this land is as good as ours. How about it, Your Majesty?"

Empress Sidonie nodded her head in agreement. A day before the Elven Delegation arrived, they had a high level meeting at the palace and discussed the future plans of the Kraetor Empire.

Prince Jason, Berthold, as well as the other High-Ranking officers of the Kraetor Empire had urged Empress Sidonie to conquer all the lands of the Southern Continent.

(A/N: Just in case some of you may have forgotten, Berthold is the leader of the Organization that is stationed at the Kraetor Empire.)

The Young Empress listened to their proposal, but still shook her head in the end. The reason? It is because they would not be able to retain these lands once the Continental Spell lost its effect.

Just as Elandorr had said, it would be impossible for the other forces in the Central Continent to remain quiet. They would definitely feel the itch to try and grab some of the lands that belonged to the Kraetor Empire.

The worst case scenario was for these factions to band together to form an alliance. Although the Kraetor Empire was strong, it was only one of the strong factions within the Central Continent.

They, too, had enemies that would love to make things difficult for them. If these enemies had found out that an entire continent had become their property of the Kraetor Empire, they would face the united opposition of the factions that considered them an eyesore.

Due to Empress Sidonie's wake up call, Prince Jason, Berthold, as well as the officers of the Kraetor Army, realized that they had not thought about the aftermath that would follow when the Continental Spell lost its effect.

True, they might have united the entire Southern Continent under their banner, but the repercussions they would receive afterwards were something that they might not be able to brush off like a passing breeze.

Empress Sidonie covered her lips and gave an angelic chuckle that made the Elves who had sensitive hearing almost prostrate themselves in front of her. If not for the constant aura that Eneru had been releasing to protect them, the Elven Delegation would have already succumbed to the Young Empress' charm.

"What happens after the Continental Spell loses its effects is of no concern for me and the Kraetor Empire," Empress Sidonie replied. "We will cross that bridge when we get there. Commander Elandorr, tell me, are you confident that you will still be alive to see that day happen?"

Empress Sidonie's statement was like a Guillotine Blade that hung over the Elven Delegation's head.

It was true that after the Continental Spell lost its effect, the other forces in the Central Continent would also make their moves. However, that was still a few years away from happening. At the present time, Empress Sidonie could conquer the lands and unite them under one banner because she had the strength to do so.

Elandorr understood that for that to happen, the Kraetor Empire would have to deal with them first. And frankly, he wasn't confident that their army would be able to endure her army's beating.

They had already lost thousands of Elves under William's hand and more were lost under the surprise attack that was aimed at their Teleportation Gate. If not for the fact that the Archmage guarding the

Teleportation Gate had reacted in time and called for help, Eneru and Drauum wouldn't have arrived to turn the tide in their favor.

Elandorr stared straight at the eyes of the beautiful Empress who was looking down on him with disdain.

He knew that if he couldn't convince her into becoming their ally then their desire to conquer the Southern Lands would meet its end.

Chapter 460: What Can You Offer Me In Exchange For An Alliance?

"There's no need for us to be hostile to each other, Your Majesty," Alessio stepped forward. "Like what our Commander has said, we came here to seek an alliance. Naturally, we are willing to agree to certain conditions and pay proper compensation to make this a reality."

Alessio gave Berthold a side-long glance before shifting his attention back to the Young Empress who had the entire negotiation under her thumb. He felt irate about the fact that he had to act submissive in front of Humans, but this had to be done in order for his race to have a chance at survival.

"Your Majesty, do you desire something?" Alessio inquired. "Something you want the most in the world? Perhaps we can help you acquire it."

"Are you confident that you can give me what I want?" Empress Sidonie answered. She was half tempted to tell them what Morgana had whispered to her inside their shared mindscape, and that was to bring a certain red-headed shepherd to her, all tied up, and ready for some whip lashing.

This thought almost made her laugh out loud, but she managed to hide it well by giggling like a little girl that was about to receive a present from her parents.

Elandorr sucked in a deep breath as Sidonie's giggle passed through his ears. He was starting to doubt if the artifacts he brought along to counter Charm were working, because the Young Empress' simple gestures were enough to make his heart skip a beat.

"Of course," Alessio nodded. "We are more than capable of making this happen. Tell me, Your Majesty, what is it that you want the most?"

Before Empress Sidonie could even answer, the doors of the throne room opened wide.

A handsome, red-headed boy, swaggered inside with a dazzling smile on his face.

Everyone in the throne room looked at the new arrival with curiosity.

Elandorr's face broke out into an expression of anger when he recognized the boy that had appeared in front of him.

The Corner of Sidonie's lips curled up into a smirk as she gazed at the Shepherd who had rejected her not once, but twice.

Morgana, who was looking through Sidonie's eyes, was half tempted to take over her other half's body, and order the Elves to knock William unconscious, so that she could tie him up on her bed.

"You! What are you doing here?!" Elandorr roared in anger.

His weapons had been confiscated before entering the throne room, so he could only glare hatefully at the Half-Elf who was not even paying any attention to him.

Alessio raised an eyebrow as he appraised the Half-Elf in front of him. He had already heard of William's existence because Alessio had exposed his identity in the meeting they held before coming to the Anaesha Dynasty.

'So, he is the son of the Saintess as well as that Human Hero, Maxwell,' Alessio mused as he eyed William from head to foot. 'He has his mother's eyes and that man's distinctive red hair.'

Alessio glanced at the seething Elandorr by his side before shifting back his attention to William who had his arms crossed over his chest, and was looking at Empress Sidonie with a fearless gaze.

"Well, this is an unexpected surprise," Empress Sidonie said in a mischievous tone. "To what do I owe the pleasure of having Sir William personally come for a visit?"

Elandorr's expression paled when he heard the subtle happiness in the Young Empress tone. With this alone, he could tell that William and Empress Sidonie knew each other and seemed to be on good terms as well.

Prince Jason also didn't miss this subtle change in his cousin's tone and directed his attention to the handsome Half-Elf who was now busy looking at a hand mirror while combing his hair. If not for the fact that he had an image to maintain, he might have already grabbed the mirror from the boy's hand and smashed it on his face.

The Grand Archmage, who was standing beside Sidonie's throne, glanced at the Young Empress before staring at the red-headed boy who had stolen the limelight. His curiosity was instantly piqued because he had been paying attention to Empress Sidonie since she had arrived in the Kingdom of Freesia.

Although Empress Sidonie hid it well, she was unable to conceal it from the Grand Archmage who had already seen many things in his lifetime.

This was the first time he had seen the Young Empress struggle to contain her emotions when looking at a person. It was fairly easy for him to know that the Half-Elf in front of them was not someone ordinary in Empress Sidonie's heart.

After making sure that his hair was properly combed, William faced Empress Sidonie and gave her a princely smile that made Morgana squeal inside their shared Mindscape.

"Your Majesty, I have come to seek an alliance with you," William said in a suave voice that made everyone in the throne room want to drown him in their spit.

"Interesting," Empress Sidonie replied. "The Elven Delegation has also said the same thing. They are even offering to give me what I want. How about you, Sir William? What can you offer me in exchange for an alliance?"

Elandorr sneered because he was confident that the hateful half breed wouldn't be able to meet the Empress' condition.

William looked mildly surprised as he glanced at the Elves who were looking at him with a glare.

"What? These long eared bastards promised to give you what you wanted?" William asked with a dumbfounded expression. "Can they even do that? I think not."

'You are also a long eared bastard,' Empress Sidonie cursed William inside her heart.

< You are also a long eared bastard, but I still love you, Darling! >

The Elves looked at William in contempt. They were very close to ganging up on him to erase the smug smile on William's face.

"What do you mean that we can't meet Empress Sidonie's demands?" Elandorr challenged. "You are just a filthy half breed whose only good point is being born as the son of our Saintess!"

Due to his hatred towards the Half-Elf, Elandorr wasn't able to stop himself from exposing his identity.

Empress Sidonie, Morgana, The Grand Archmage, Prince Jason, as well as several officers of the Kraetor Empire now looked at William in a different light. They have heard about the Saintess of the Elves that watched over the World Tree, but none of them knew that she had a son, and a Half-Elf to boot!

William shrugged as if Elandorr's revelation wasn't a big deal to him. He didn't mind others knowing about who his mother was.

The reason he came here was to negotiate with Empress Sidonie, not to discuss his heritage in public.

"Empress Sidonie, I am willing to give you what you want in order for you to ally yourself with the Hellan Kingdom," William said with a determined look on his face. "I am willing to give you..."

"My babies!"

The entire throne room became eerily quiet before exploding into a commotion. Prince Lionel, and Prince Jason, had already unsheathed their weapons as they stared at William with bloodshot eyes.

Elandorr, Alessio, and even Eneru, couldn't wrap their heads around why William would say something so vulgar, in front of the beautiful Empress who could decide the Fate of the entire Southern Continent.

If this wasn't courting death then what William was asking for was a one-sided beating from the young men and women who adored Empress Sidonie from the bottom of their hearts.