

The World 1001

Chapter 1001: The Rabbit Likes To Tease (1)

Tilde stared at me, that same insolent expression painted all over her face. She wasn't the type to throw herself at someone, not overtly—but the way she was looking at me now left no doubt what she wanted. It wasn't subtle. It was an invitation carved into the set of her jaw, the half-smirk, as well as the heat in her eyes.

She was basically asking me if I wanted to make her mine. And truth be told, I did. There was something about the idea—about the novelty of a rabbit woman at my side—that set a low, dangerous itch behind my ribs. My gaze betrayed me as it drifted to her legs, thick and firm, the kind that promised power in every step. Then it slid up to her chest, where her breasts strained at the fabric like ripe fruit barely contained. The sight twisted something hot and eager in me.

Her smirk widened, sharp and teasing, and the effect hit me harder than I expected. My pants tightened and my cock filled out the fabric and tented my trousers with an obvious bulge. I could feel the outline pressing, the pulse of blood beneath cloth.

"You know," she said, voice low and almost playful, "I might even consider giving you my whole life—if that's what you want."

For a heartbeat she looked like the hunter, not the hunted—predatory and confident. It flipped something in my head. Her words slid between us like a challenge and a promise. Then she leaned forward a fraction, half-accusatory, half-provocative. Like she was trying to make me fall.

"So since you beat me in battle, now you want to make me lose at something else, huh? Like sex?" I said.

She chuckled at me. "Fufufufu... What are you saying?" she said, tilting her head coyly. "Sex isn't a battle. It's procreation. It's sacred, not competitive." Her tone danced between teasing and sincere, which made the whole thing smell of instinct rather than thought.

I knew the background of the rabbitmen. They were bred for fertility, their bodies and instincts honed toward multiplication and sensation. In combat they might not always be the strongest, but in the other arenas they had their own weapons and that was endurance, appetite, and a natural, almost ritualized understanding of sex. The prey had learned to hunt in its own way, and with me standing there

victorious in battle, it made sense her instincts would flip into that mode now. She wanted to assert herself another way. That thought, instead of cooling me, lit me up.

"If that's really what you want," I said with a grin, keeping my voice casual, "why don't you try and give me a run for my money—right here."

Her eyes flicked to my pants and widened. A tiny, surprised shame colored her cheeks. "W-What...? Is that because of me?" she stammered, sounding equal parts intrigued and bashful.

Before I could brace myself, her hands—soft and furry at the knuckles—grabbed the sides of my trousers. With a quick tug she yanked them down. My cock leapt free, heavy and purple at the head, bobbing once in the cool air. The sudden exposure felt electric.

"W-Wooaaahhh..." she breathed. "This is my first time seeing one... I didn't know they were this big..." Her voice had a raw, almost childlike awe layered under the heat.

She closed her hand around my shaft, tentative at first. The sensation of her fur brushing my skin was bizarre and intoxicating. It was rougher than a human hand, warmer than I expected. It made me grit my teeth. Then she slid her tongue out, slow and exploratory, and started to lick. Each sweep sent a ribbon of heat climbing up my spine. It was intimate and shameless and utterly effective. The pressure around my cock tightened as she sucked, careful and thorough in a way that suggested either experience or instinctive aptitude.

The pleasure built fast. It felt like someone had set a slow fuse in my belly and lit it with every careful lick, every soft pull, added another flicker until I was humming with need. It was almost surreal—doing this out in the open, the morning light catching on her ears, her hands steady and efficient. She worked my shaft with a focus that made me wonder if rabbitwomen were just born to do this, whether it was biological or learned. Either way, it was working. My breath hitched. I felt close—too close.

After a while she rose, eyes scanning the area like an animal checking for watchers. We were somewhat hidden, but it was still a public place. She didn't seem to care. With a deliberate, unhurried motion she unbuckled her belt and tugged her skirt down over her hips. The fabric slid and pooled at her feet. Her tail—small and soft—peeked out at the base of her spine, twitching as if annoyed at being revealed. Her pussy glistened in the gap between her thighs, already wet and betraying the way she'd been tuned by desire.

She turned, arching her back and angling her ass toward me—an open, unapologetic invitation. The sight of her base, the gentle curve of her hips, the way her legs spread just enough to show her dripping slit, was an artwork of motion.

I didn't hesitate. The moment was clean and precise—the kind that leaves no room for second thoughts. I aimed my cock and slid it into her warm, welcoming heat. She was snug and slick, the walls wrapping around me like velvet, compressing with the first push. The wetness was immediate and delicious, a warm, sticky welcome that closed around my length and pulled me deeper.

Everything narrowed to that contact starting with the friction, the scent of skin and musk, and the soft rasp of her breathing against my neck. Her tail brushed my thighs as she instinctively pressed back, matching the rhythm. The impact of her body against mine, the hot clamp of her pussy, the soft thud of flesh on flesh—each reverberated through me, spike after spike of sensation that made my knees weak and my head light.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh...~ That feels good~...!"

She'd shifted roles from challenger to coaxer, and it fit. The contrast starting her fierce, hunter eyes and the gentle, almost reverent way she took me—made it feel charged in a new way. I buried my face in the crook of her neck for a second, tasting salt and fur and something wild, and started moving, driven by the delicious, raw momentum between us.

Chapter 1002: The Rabbit Likes To Tease (2)

"Fuuhh, ahhhnggh, ahh...~! Ahh, ahhh...! It's so big...~ W-What is this...? Hnghh, ahngh, ah, ahh, ah, ahhh!"

Tilde's moans tore out of her throat, raw and ragged, echoing across the open yard. The sounds were wet and hungry, the kind of moaning that said she'd stopped worrying about getting caught a long time ago. It was slipping toward winter, and already some beastkin were feeling heat under their fur despite the chill, sneaking to fuck behind closed doors. But we were out here, naked and open, making a scene. Not that I cared.

I kept driving into her, feeling that hot, tight grip—her hole clamping and releasing with every inch of my dick. The tiny beads of flesh along her inner walls rubbed and rolled against me, each ridge stroking in rhythm so that every thrust sent a spike of pleasure up my spine. It got to the point where everything else blurred and all I could focus on was the slick pressure around my cock.

"Nghh, ahh, ahhhnggh, ah, ah, ahhhnggh, ahh...~ You're going at it so hard, fufufu... Is it that really irresistible?" she breathed, throwing her head back to peer at me over her shoulder as I hammered into her.

Her voice was breathy and playful, half challenge, half plea. I leaned close and let the words slide into her ear, low and teasing. "I'd say your vagina's so-so," I murmured. "You haven't managed to make me cum yet."

Her rabbit ears twitched hard at that—tiny, erotic movements that made her shoulders shiver. I'd touched a nerve, it seemed, as she tightened instinctively, nails scoring my hips. The reaction lit something under her skin and she met me, rolling her hips in a quick, provocative counter.

"Fufufufu... Is that so? So it's just 'so-so' to you, huh?" she asked with a half-laugh, half-growl, and pressed her body against mine.

Her pussy was clamped around me like a vise, so tight it felt like she was trying to trap me inside forever. I grabbed her hips and switched my rhythm. No more straight pounding. I rotated my hips slowly, circling my cock inside her, tracing the rim of her cervix with the tip of my shaft as I angled each turn to press and widen her at the same time. It was a deliberate, teasing motion meant to shape her, to feel every contour.

"Nghhh, ahhnggh, ahh, ah, ahhh...! Nnghh, hhhnggh, ahhnggh, ahh, ah, ah, ahhh...! Nnghhh, nngghh ahhh, ah, ah, aaaaaaaaah...~"

Her face went slack with pleasure, mouth parted, eyes almost half-closed. She was dripping—slick and hot—so much that my cock slid in and out without friction, only the soft, wet suction of her folds and the internal beads working against me. The scent of her—musky and even sweet—wrapped around my nose and made the world feel fuzzy, like floating drunk on a slow burn. Her hips were a perfect cradle as well. I wanted to anchor my hands there and never let go.

I kept the circular motion a few long beats more, feeling her insides fold to my shape, then shifted back to a harder back-and-forth, letting my hips slam into the rhythm I wanted. The tempo changed, faster and heavier now.

"Hnghh, ahnghh, ahh... ahnghh, ah, ahhh...! Ah, ah, ahhh, ah, ah, ah, ahhh, ah, ahhh!"

Her pussy clenched tighter and tighter, shaping itself to me until it seemed to adopt the exact contour of my cock. It didn't want to return to how it had been. The pressure was incredible—sharp and impossible to ignore—and I couldn't help but keep moving.

"Hnghh, ahh, m-mooreee...~ hahng, ahhh, ah, ahhhnggh...! Moreeee~...!"

She cried out like a demand, the sound high and bright. Her small tail whipped and spun behind her in frantic little arcs, each thump a reflection of the tremors running through her body. Her back arched, breasts lifting, nipples hardening under the strain of pleasure. She was at the edge, teetering so close to falling.

"Nghhh, hnggh, ahnghh, ah, ahhhnggh, ah, ahhh, ahnghh, ahn, ahhh, ah, ah, ahhh...!"

Her breathing turned ragged, thin, and then it happened—I felt my cock tighten like it was about to burst. I couldn't hold back. I pulled free and unloaded, shooting thick, hot semen straight at her butt. The first hit slapped against soft skin, then another blast followed, and another—my nut emptied in a sudden, violent torrent more than I'd expected. My cum slicked across the curve of her ass, warm and wet.

At the same moment she convulsed, her own juices answered—sudden, powerful jets exploding out of her in a chaotic squirt. It was like a flood, coming in multiple streams that splattered the ground and soaked her legs. Her knees trembled and gave out and she slid down the slick puddle she'd created, collapsing onto her own wetness.

As she hit the dirt, a pale yellow wash leaked between her thighs—she'd pissed herself, the hot stream steaming into the cold air, mixing with the white gloss of my cum. The two liquids mingled along the small of her back, running together in a messy, obscene braid. She looked filthy and gorgeous with semen cooling on her skin.

Before I could think, she pushed herself up, lips wet and hungry, and leaned forward to take me in her mouth. She licked, tasted, and sucked with fervor, greedy for every last drop. Even though I'd just emptied and my cock was hypersensitive, the pressure of her mouth pulled at me like a second orgasm.

"Mchuu... mmm...~" she hummed around me, little wet noises that told me she relished the taste. A rabbit woman in heat was dangerous—reckless, insistent, and fiercely greedy—and she seemed determined to claim dominance through lust.

I decided to give her what she wanted, but not without setting the rules. Sex-battles with me weren't something she could win easily. I hooked an arm under her thighs and lifted her in a quick, practiced princess carry, muscles tense and sure. She tucked her arms around my neck as I carried her to the bed, her breath hot against my face.

On the mattress I set her down and tore at the last of her clothes, ripping them away until her breasts heaved free, nipples flushed and bouncing with the movement. She wore that lewd, triumphant smile again, eyes bright with want.

I aimed my cock back at her entrance and plunged in, feeling her warm walls yield and swallow me whole as I sank inside her once more.

Chapter 1003: The Rabbit Likes To Tease (3)

Tilde's pussy was absurdly wet—slick enough that there was practically no resistance when I slammed and thrust myself forward. The first impact felt like plunging into molten butter: hot, yielding, and instantly swallowing my cock whole. Every inch of my shaft disappeared into that heat with an almost greedy pressure, the way a hand closes around something it doesn't want to let go of. The initial shock of it—the wet drag, the tight clamp—was a delicious assault across my whole body.

Her face had gone completely slack, the fierce rabbit-warrior expression wiped clean away; what was left was breathless, unfocused, and raw. The fight had melted out of her features and been replaced by the messy, animal thing people turn into when they're being properly fucked. Her thick, powerful rabbit thighs—designed for spring and grip—wrapped around my hips and locked like iron bands. She leg-locked me with an insistence that made pulling back feel almost impossible; those legs weren't just muscular, they were a carefully built trap, cinching me into place and forcing every thrust to count.

I kept fucking her, starting slow and then building into harder, more relentless strokes, feeling her entire body clamp down around my cock like a living vice. She was wet enough that my skin slid deliciously with every move, but there was an unyielding tightness underneath—like a velvet glove that won't give—which meant every forward motion had to push through that resistance. That resistance turned each successful push into a little explosion of sensation; it stung in the best way, lighting up nerves I hadn't known I had. Her hips met mine, pressing back as if she were trying to keep my shaft exactly where it belonged.

Her mouth hung open, breath coming out in messy gasps. The warrior composure was gone; in its place, a hazy, glazed look had taken over—eyes glossy, cheeks flushed, the first edges of an ahgao forming as she lost herself in the feeling. Her long ears twitched with the rhythm, tiny signals that every deep hit landed. Every twitch, every shiver, made it clearer: she was close—dangerously close.

"Nhghh, ahhngh, ahh, ah, ahh, ah, ah, ahhh...~ You're stretching me so deep...~ I love this... I love it...~ Ah, ah, ahhh...!" she moaned, voice ragged and unintentionally pleading. The words came out raw, a mix of prayer and demand that soaked the room with heat.

Her moans were filthy and earnest; she sounded utterly debauched. I kept driving, watching her pussy clamp and squeeze around my shaft, feeling the muscles ripple under my palm until there was nothing left to hold back. The build inside me tightened like a coiling spring.

"Ahhhhhhhhh... Mark me...~ Mark me as yours!" she cried out—wanting to be taken, to be claimed, the words practically begging for ownership. Her tone had that desperate, urgent edge that made whatever shame might have existed dissolve entirely.

My restraint snapped. With a guttural sound I surrendered and poured myself into her—deep, hot jets of cum filling her until she was brimming. The sensation of my semen sloshing warm inside her was intimate and possessive in a way that hit both of us.

"Nhgh, ahhhhhhhhhhh...~! S-So hot...! It feels good...~ Ahhh, ahhh...! I-aaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh...!" she screamed, eyes rolling back until only the whites showed. She convulsed around me, utterly wrecked, the kind of collapse that looks like pleasure claiming every last part of her.

Seeing her like that—completely undone and gloriously debauched—struck something oddly satisfying in me. There's a raw, animal pleasure in watching someone fall apart under your hands: the way their breathing changes, the slackness in their limbs, the little sounds they can't control. No wonder mercenaries favored rabbit women in brothels before a dangerous job: their hips, the way their faces went from guarded to open when fucked right, the tight, hot pussies—everything about them made them a dangerously addictive choice.

"More...~" she whispered, a lewd, hungry smile pulling at her mouth even as her chest heaved. She wasn't finished. If anything, the orgasm had stoked a fiercer hunger; she locked her hips around my cock with renewed ferocity, clenching and shoving back as if to trap me inside her forever.

Even after cumming twice, my cock showed no sign of giving up. The sensitivity only made every friction feel brighter, crisper—like turning up the gain until every note cut through. I still had enough in me to keep going. I reached down, lifted her legs so she folded over at the hips, and drove into her from that angle, pressing my weight down until my shaft slid to the deepest part of her.

"Fuaaaaaaaaaaaaahh!" she howled as my penis slammed into that sweet spot, pushing and nudging against her cervix in a way that made both of us gasp. The contact sent a white-hot shock through my body.

"Nghh, ahh, ahhh...~ ahhh, ah, ahhh...!" I slammed harder, holding her ankles with both hands to steady myself while my cock pumped in and out of her pussy with a brutal, rhythmic insistence. The bed creaked, skin slapped, and the room filled with the wet, lewd music of fucking.

Her tongue lolled from her mouth; her eyes rolled back again. Her face had completely melted into something gloriously debauched—lost to the brutality of the sensation. She tightened suddenly, teeth clenched, and I had to grit mine against the squeeze. Her pussy felt like a vice trying to wring everything from me.

"Ah, ahhnghh, ah, ah, ahhhhh, ah, ah, ah, ahhhhhhh!" Her features were dissolving under the onslaught of pleasure, every line of her face softening into bliss.

My dick began that familiar, furious climb toward another peak—hot, grinding, impossible to stall. The edges sharpened until I could feel the precipice.

After a few more savage strokes—

"Nghhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...! C-Cumminggggggggggggggggggggggg~!!!" she screamed, and came so hard she squirted, a sudden, powerful spray of love-juices that arced out and splattered while my cock still sat inside her. The force of the orgasm shoved my shaft out of her entrance for a moment, and then she shot again, a second jet that painted the sheets.

"Haaa... nghh, ahhh...~" she panted as her juices spilled free, and some of my cum leaked out too, streaking across her skin in little white lines. She lay there panting, chest heaving, utterly wrecked—dazed and satisfied, yet with a filthy, fucked-out smile still clinging to her lips.

"T-That was really good...~" she breathed, breasts rising and falling with each sharp inhale. "M-Moree...~ I want moree...~"

Even though she was clearly spent, she still wanted another round—her stamina was ridiculous for someone who looked like it might be her first time. It was both exhilarating and a little terrifying. I let out a low laugh.

"Well, why don't you ride me and do it yourself then?" I said, half-teasing. "You did ask for more, right?"

Her eyes flicked to mine, heat still simmering in the way she looked. With a playful glint, she shoved me down onto the bed and straddled me, settling into position with that same hungry, possessive look—ready to take control and chase whatever high she wanted next.

Chapter 1004: The Rabbit Likes To Tease (4)

She laughed—soft, low, the sort of little "fufufufu" that dripped mischief—as she settled fully on top of me. The moment her weight landed, I felt it: the raw, physical strength of her legs pressing me into the mattress. She wasn't just sitting; she was pinning me, anchoring my shoulders with the natural power in her hips and thighs. Looking up, I could see it in her eyes—predatory, amused—like I was a trembling bit of prey she planned to devour.

"You know why Rabbitmen got called the apex predators of mating?" she asked, voice amused and teasing as she lowered her hands to my chest. "Because even the best lover can be cleaned out by a rabbit. Even an inexperienced one can run someone dry. I can tell you're good. I mean, really good. That's impressive. But can you keep up with me?"

She'd said at first this wasn't supposed to be a contest. Her tone and the way she moved made that a lie. This was a fight for dominance, only the weapons were bodies and breath and how fast we could break each other. Honestly? I didn't mind. If this was a battlefield, it was the most electric, addictive one I'd ever fought on.

Her hands flattened against my sternum, steadying herself, then she lifted and aimed that dripping pussy right at my cock. The sight of her lowering herself was almost obscene in how deliberate it was: slick lips opening, glistening wetness along her folds, and then my shaft swallowed by heat.

"Mmmm...~ Your penis looks big," she said, one hand roaming my length, coating it in her juices with slow, possessive strokes. "I don't see them often, so I can't be certain, but just looking at this is overwhelming. That's probably why you're so good at sex. Rabbitmen always say the bigger, the better." Her fingers dragged up and down, smearing her slick along my shaft until it shone.

I rolled my eyes at the old superstition—technique beats size—but God, I liked being stroked like that. The praise was a warm burn in my chest, and it lit something hungry under my skin.

She sank down, taking me fully. Her folds parted and clamped at the base of my cock; I felt the pressure settle along my hips as she locked herself around me. Her voice came out between a moan and a laugh.

"Nghhh, so good...~" she breathed, eyes heavy with pleasure. "Nghh, ahh... I can't get enough of this..." The look she gave me was filthy and eager all at once.

Then she started to move. It was fluid, instinctive: hips rocking, pelvis circling, a rhythm that seemed to come from the bones themselves. She rode me with the kind of natural motion that made the whole body register each delicious friction. Her cunt wrapped and unwrapped my cock like warm velvet, the base of my shaft pinched by her lower lips in a way that made my breath hitch.

"Nhhhg, hhaaa, hnghh, ah, ahhh...!" Her hips swung, chest heaving as she used it for balance, each drop and lift tightening her pussy around me in waves.

"You're making a face," she teased, the sound bubbling with amusement. "Is it that good?" She used her body like a weapon—pressing, squeezing, angling. I was a man made of tissue and want, and her attacks were melting me.

"Fufufu... Yes, that's right. Feel my body...~ It's good, isn't it?" she coaxed, voice low and sultry. Her wetness made every slide slick and almost effortless, but the grip she kept was merciless; slickness plus tightness equals a kind of torture that electrifies the spine.

She must've seen the tension in me because she leaned down and flicked her tongue across my nipple. The brief, teasing lick sent a lightning shiver through my ribs—so sharp I nearly came right there. I clenched and forced myself to hang on.

She didn't stop. Tongue on nipple, hips on cock, she drove me into a delicious chaos. My hand slipped to her ass, fingers digging into hot, firm flesh, and I started to thrust up to meet her. This was a sex-battle, not a surrender—so I pushed back.

"Nghhh, hnghh, mnchuu... mmnghh, mmm...~" Her moans were thick, messy, and completely honest.

Her cunt tightened around me as if molding to my shape, ridges and rings inside drawing themselves along the length of my cock. The pressure built like a vice up my pelvis—the good kind of pain that made the head buzz and hands shake.

"Nghhh, I'm cumming...~ Nghhh, p-please, cum with me..." she begged, voice wobbling.

I grabbed her harder—thumbs pressing into the soft meat of her ass—and answered by driving upward with everything I had. Her torso rose, hips lifting to meet me as I slammed into her hot hole, riding a rhythm that pushed straight for the cliff.

"Hnghh, ahh, hnaaaa... ahn, ah, ahhh, ah, ah, ahhhngghh, ah, ahhh!!!" She screamed and it sounded like the world narrowed to that single sound.

I let go. I shot my semen upward and into her, filling her to the brim again. The rush was violent and intimate; being buried in that warm, wet place as my cum flooded her was almost a sacrament.

"Hnghhh!!!" Her scream was animal and pure. She folded in on herself, arms clamping to her chest like she couldn't hold the feeling inside. Her face contorted into the most complete ahgao I'd ever seen—eyes rolled, pupils lost, cheeks flushed—utter surrender to sensation.

Whatever the moment was, it smashed into her like a wave. She lay there, breath ragged, trembling under the aftershocks—spent and beautiful and completely wrecked.

When at last the tremors slowed and the room settled into noisy quiet, Tilde was a gorgeous mess. Her breath came ragged and uneven, limbs loose. My cum had smeared across her body—white streaks catching in the light across her skin, small pools in the hollow of her thighs.

"I guess I've won," I said, breathless, feeling the warmth of victory and exhaustion in equal measure.

Chapter 1005: Shredica's Winter And The Final Piece (1)

Attending the academy felt like a damn drag these days. It wasn't that it was exhausting or anything—it just didn't have the same spark anymore. The lessons that once felt interesting now just blended into white noise. Every hallway felt the same, every lecture dragged on like it was testing my patience. The excitement I used to have for learning had fizzled out completely, replaced by boredom that crept into me like a slow fog.

Rose and Irene still looked as radiant as ever. No one except me knew about their pregnancies. Their bellies hadn't started to show yet, so nobody had even a clue about what was going on. They still moved around like normal—talked, smiled, laughed—but there was a quiet, hidden glow about them that only I could notice. It was like they carried a secret warmth inside them that only I could see.

Irene, though, had started to look a bit chubbier lately. Her face had grown softer, her body rounder in certain places—but to me, that only made her more beautiful. It gave her this gentle, mature allure that hit differently.

"Really?" she asked me, her brows slightly furrowing as she placed a hand over her stomach. There was a faint tremble in her voice, like she was afraid of hearing something she didn't want to hear.

As her man, I couldn't exactly say anything that'd make her feel insecure. Whether she was slim or a little chubby didn't matter to me. She was gorgeous either way. It was natural for me to tell her that. But I could tell from her expression that she thought I was just being nice, maybe just humoring her. She probably thought I was saying it just to make her feel better, not because I meant it.

And yet, in her eyes, I could see it—she wanted confirmation. She wanted me to tell her, not as a sweet lie, but as something real.

"Really," I said with certainty. And before she could even respond, I leaned forward and kissed her.

Her lips were soft and warm against mine, and I could feel the tension melting off her shoulders. That kiss wasn't just to calm her down—it was to remind her that she was mine, and that nothing about her could ever turn me away.

When we finally pulled away, her cheeks were a soft shade of pink. "I-If you really say so..." she murmured, looking flustered but clearly comforted. "Still, I can't believe it's been months since you got me pregnant. I'm kind of scared and excited at the same time. I honestly have no idea how to take care of a child... much less be a mother. I wonder how Gabrielle does it?"

I chuckled a bit at that. "Well, if you ask me, she's just doing what she's always done. Gabrielle's not exactly the 'by-the-book' type. She's a mother by instinct, not practice. You don't need to worry. I think you and Rose will do just fine. I guarantee it."

And I meant that. Parenthood wasn't something you learned from a manual—it was something that came from the heart. Knowing Irene, I knew she'd be an amazing mother.

She smiled faintly, though she still looked uncertain. "I don't know if you're just flattering me or actually mean that," she said, half teasing, half shy. "But thanks anyway." Then she tilted her head and asked, "By the way, why aren't you attending your lectures as much lately? Are you busy with something?"

"Yeah," I admitted, leaning back in my chair. "I've got a lot going on politically."

My focus lately had been on unifying the Great Forest—a task that was slow as hell but steadily moving forward. I had already secured the cooperation of the Beast King and a few influential tribal leaders. On top of that, the Elven Kingdom had decided to back me up. It had taken me an entire season—four long months—to get this far, but the progress was real. Still, there was a mountain of work left to climb.

How long would it take? Years, probably. I'd only managed to convince two rulers so far. The Titans, Centaurs, and Dwarves still remained, and none of them were known for being easy to deal with. Lionel had warned me plenty of times that the Centaurs were stubborn as hell, damn near impossible to reason with. But Solaris had shared some insight that might just work on them.

Irene smiled faintly, her eyes shining with both admiration and amusement. "You really are working hard, huh? Politics, alliances... are you really planning to take over the whole world?"

I laughed softly. "Well, it's not gonna happen unless I work for it. I've got to put everything I've got into this if I want it to work out. Otherwise, I'd just be wasting my time doing something complicated for nothing. And besides—if I didn't work hard, I wouldn't be here right now, kissing you like this."

I leaned in and kissed her again. Her breath hitched, her face flushing red.

"You're hopeless..." she whispered with a small smile before kissing me back. And when she did, she started pulling off my clothes, her hands trembling slightly with desire. Soon after, we fucked and it was a slow, deep, and full of the kind of warmth that made time stop.

For that moment, nothing else mattered. It was just her and me with our breaths, our bodies, and the sound of our hearts syncing together. It was a reminder of everything we'd built and everything that was still to come.

After leaving Irene's office, I made my way back to my dorm. The air outside felt sharp and cold, the kind that nipped at your skin the second you stepped out. The wind carried a faint chill that whispered of the coming winter—a long, harsh one by the feel of it.

I took a deep breath, the air stinging my lungs a little, and exhaled slowly. A small white wisp of fog escaped my mouth, vanishing into the cold night.

When I reached my dorm room and pushed the door open, silence greeted me. Empty. Not a single soul inside. My girlfriends were probably out shopping again, laughing somewhere in the city.

I let out a quiet sigh and tossed my coat on the chair. "Guess it's a lonely night tonight..." I muttered to myself. Maybe I should've stayed a bit longer with Irene—but it couldn't be helped.

It had been a while since I last spent a night alone. The quietness of the room felt strange but not unpleasant. In a way, it was kind of refreshing... like taking a breath after everything that had been going on.

Chapter 1006: Shredica's Winter And The Final Piece (2)

"Come, Leon!" Titania's voice rang out, bright and melodic, as she clasped my hand and began leading me along with that familiar air of excitement she always carried. Her fingers were soft, yet firm—her grip almost teasing, pulling me with a confidence that told me she had something special in mind.

I didn't resist. Instead, I let her guide me, step by step, wherever she wanted to go. The warmth of her palm against mine, the subtle sway of her hips in front of me, and the mischievous glint in her eyes made it impossible not to be curious.

I had no clue where she was taking me, but the way she looked back at me from time to time, smiling with that mysterious charm, told me it was definitely a surprise.

"Close your eyes, Leon!" she said suddenly, her voice carrying that playful, commanding tone of hers that always managed to make my heart skip a beat.

Well, since she asked, I did. I trusted her. Still, I couldn't help but grin a little. My mind, of course, went straight to the obvious. Knowing Titania, this could only mean one thing. It was probably something sexy—her way of making the night unforgettable. After all, it was her turn now, and she definitely knew how to keep things interesting.

But still, her doing this in such a dramatic way made me more intrigued than usual. What kind of surprise did she have prepared for me? The suspense was killing me, honestly. My chest felt light, almost fluttering, as we continued walking. I was... excited. More than I wanted to admit.

When we finally stopped, Titania's fingers slipped away from mine. Her voice came again, gentle but filled with anticipation. "Okay, you can open your eyes now."

I blinked and slowly opened them.

And then—

"Surprise!" Titania yelled, her tone full of energy. A burst of confetti exploded into the air, showering down in shimmering colors that danced under the lights.

For a second, I just stood there, stunned. My eyes darted around, trying to process what was happening. I wasn't expecting this at all. My birthday? That couldn't be right—it already passed months ago. There wasn't any special occasion I could think of that deserved something like this.

So... what was this about?

Then I noticed them. Every one of my lovers—Titania, Trill, Yr, Isiliraiellyn, Myrcella, Johanne, Tris, and even Gabrielle—standing there together. And with them, our daughter, Kana. Even Rose and Irene were here too.

The sight honestly threw me off for a moment. All of them together in one place, smiling, waiting for my reaction. Whatever this was, it had to be special.

"Fufufu, it seems we really caught you off guard, huh?" Titania said, her grin widening. The way she looked at me—like she was proud of pulling this off—made it impossible not to smile back, even through my confusion.

"More than surprised," I said, rubbing the back of my neck, "I'm just... confused."

Gabrielle stepped forward, her golden hair shining softly in the light. "You don't need to think too hard," she said with that gentle, motherly smile. "It's a belated birthday celebration for you."

"O—Oh... really?" I blinked.

So that was it. A belated birthday. Come to think of it, I never actually got to celebrate it before. I'd been so busy that day and the days after that, because I was too caught up in many work and responsibilities. But to them, that didn't seem to matter.

"Considering how busy you've been since the start of our third year at the academy, we figured we'd just celebrate it later," Titania said, brushing her hair back as she stepped closer to me. "And since

you're finally not drowning in work, we thought now would be the perfect time. You really didn't see this coming, did ya?"

"Well, yeah, actually," I said, chuckling a little. "I didn't expect you'd still bother celebrating something that already passed."

"Of course we would," Irene said from behind Titania, her voice soft but firm. "We couldn't possibly ignore the birthday of the man we love, could we? So, with that said—happy birthday, Leon."

I felt my chest tighten slightly as I looked at all of them. It was... heartwarming. Seeing everyone gathered like this, smiling genuinely, just to celebrate me—even if the actual date had long passed.

And really, there's no rule that says you can't celebrate something late. Some people have Christmas dinners after New Year, others hold belated birthdays just because life got in the way. This was one of those moments. And honestly... it made me happy.

I didn't even realize how much time had passed. It had already been twenty years since I came to this world. Twenty years. That realization hit me harder than I expected.

Time... it just kept moving, didn't it? Whether we liked it or not. It never waited. It just went on, silently, steadily, uncaring of what we did or didn't do. If we kept holding back, if we didn't act now, then one day we'd find ourselves looking back, wondering what could have been.

I was twenty now. Twenty years of existence in this world. And I couldn't tell if I should feel proud, or restless, or... something in between. All I knew was that things felt like they were finally falling into place.

I didn't know then that someone from my past would soon come knocking again—but that's a story for another time.

Shredica's POV

The weather was merciless here.

The wind howled through the endless white, carrying shards of ice that bit against my skin like tiny blades. Every step crunched against the frozen ground, echoing faintly through the silence of this desolate land.

All I could see—everywhere I looked—was ice. Ice and snow, stretching endlessly, swallowing everything in its path. It felt like the world itself had been frozen still, untouched for centuries.

I wasn't sure if trusting someone like Claire was a good idea. But the information she gave me—the clue about the final piece of what we'd been searching for—was too important to ignore. That was the only reason I followed her here.

The northern region of this world was practically uninhabitable. The air burned from the cold, and even breathing felt heavy. There was no way any normal person could live here.

And yet... Claire insisted that the last piece, the second book of the spell, was hidden somewhere within this place.

It sounded absurd. Unreal, even. But what choice did I have?

Still, I couldn't shake off the doubt gnawing at me. What if this was a trap? What if she led me here just to finish what others couldn't? But deep down, something told me she wasn't lying. Claire wasn't the kind to go through all this trouble just to betray me.

"There's a connection between the dungeon in the underworld city and this one," Claire said, her voice slightly muffled under her scarf as we trudged through the snow. "They're linked. The reason you couldn't find any trace of the spell fragment before... is because this one is part of it."

She turned, her breath forming a pale mist in the freezing air. "And inside this place... is what you're looking for."

Where she led me next was a cave—small, narrow, and dark, barely wide enough for a single person to pass through at once. Its entrance was shrouded in mist, and from inside, I could feel an unnatural chill seeping out, colder than the wind outside. It was like the cave itself was alive—breathing frost.

I stared into that darkness, my instincts screaming both warning and curiosity at once. My breath fogged in front of me as I took a step closer.

This was it. The final piece we'd been chasing for so long.

Or... maybe the beginning of another trap.

Chapter 1007: Shredica's Winter And The Final Piece (3)

I ducked my head and slipped into the cave. The entrance was ridiculously narrow—so tight that every inch I moved forward felt like squeezing through stone itself. My shoulders scraped against the jagged rock, and for a moment, I thought I wouldn't fit. But after some struggling, twisting, and forcing my body through that tiny slit, I finally managed to get inside.

The moment I stepped in, I could feel the biting cold that had been clinging to my skin outside suddenly faded, melting away like frost under sunlight. The air inside was still chilly, but nowhere near the kind that could gnaw into your bones. It was strange, almost unnatural, but I didn't care. I needed the warmth. The cave's stale, heavy air felt like a damn blessing compared to the world of ice outside.

A few seconds later, Claire squeezed in behind me. Honestly, I thought she'd use her phasing ability and just pass through the solid rock instead of forcing her way in. But no—she crawled through the same crack, pushing herself in like any normal person.

She noticed me staring, of course. "What? I can't exactly phase through something like this without losing my clothes," she said, frowning. "And if I did, I'd freeze to death the moment I step out. You know how cold it is out there."

Right. That actually made perfect sense. Whenever she phased through solid matter, her clothes never went with her. If she did it now, she'd appear completely naked on the other side. And considering how harsh the cold was out there, she wouldn't last a minute. The chill outside was like a living thing—it bit, clawed, and sank its teeth into your flesh until you couldn't feel your body anymore. Going naked in that would be suicide.

I shrugged, letting the thought go.

Still... something about this cave was bothering me. The deeper I went, the heavier the air felt. There was this strange, suffocating pressure lingering all around, like something ancient was watching me from the shadows. Every step echoed in a way that made the sound feel wrong—like it bounced off walls that weren't quite there. It was eerie. Too quiet. Too still.

Even so, I pressed on, my blade already drawn. The caves beneath the underground city weren't exactly known for their danger—most monsters here were low-level trash—but that didn't mean I could let my guard down. The last thing I needed was to die because I got too comfortable.

Besides, I didn't trust Claire. Not completely. She was still unpredictable—an anomaly. Someone who could turn on me the moment it suited her. For all I knew, she could stab me the second I looked away.

"It looks like this might be an ancient ruin, don't you think?" she said, running her hand along the wall.

I glanced around. The walls were covered in old carvings—inscriptions etched deep into the stone, weathered and faintly glowing as if the symbols themselves were alive. I couldn't read them, but just looking at them gave me chills.

Claire mentioned earlier that this cave was somehow connected to the dungeon from the underground city. But honestly, I wasn't so sure. For all I knew, this could've been something far older, something she didn't want me to know. Maybe she was lying. Maybe I was just walking straight into a trap.

And yet... I followed her anyway. Like a fool.

I guess desperation does that to people. This was my last lead—my last hope of finding the final piece. The one thing I needed to complete the ritual. The only way to open a rift through time and space—to summon heroes from another world. The last key to getting home.

"Shredica," Claire said suddenly, breaking my thoughts. Her voice echoed faintly through the narrow passage. "Can I ask you something?"

"What is it?"

"That boy you were with during your academy days... do you know more about him?"

The boy from my academy days? I stopped walking for a moment, confused, until realization hit me. She was talking about Leon. The one I got close to back then.

"I..."

Do I really know him? The more I thought about it, the more I realized how little I actually understood him. Leon was... strange. Always quiet, but never harmless. There was something unsettling about him—like he was always thinking three steps ahead, always aware of something no one else could see. No matter how much I tried, I could never read him. He was like a locked door with no keyhole.

Could I really say I knew him? Probably not.

"It seems like you don't know him that well," Claire said quietly. "But out of everyone I've met... no one else has ever made me feel fear. Real fear."

That caught me off guard.

Leon...? She met him? They fought? When? How? I had no clue what could've led to that, but the way she said it—there was a chill in her voice that didn't sound like exaggeration.

"It's baffling, really," she continued. "I've never felt fear like that before. Not the kind that comes from danger or death. It was... ancient. Like something primal inside me was being dragged into the dark. It's terrifying, yet somehow... fascinating, don't you think?"

"I wouldn't know," I said, shaking my head. "We weren't close. I just used him to get what I wanted."

And that was the truth—or at least, that's what I kept telling myself. Our connection had always been shallow, built on convenience. I never saw him as anything more than a means to an end. He was useful, that's all. Nothing deeper.

But... as I said it, something in my chest tightened. My heart ached—not from guilt, but from something else I couldn't explain. It felt wrong, hollow, like I'd lost something I didn't realize mattered.

Why did it hurt to say that?

That feeling—it reminded me of the dreams. The ones where I saw a man named Tsubasa. Someone I didn't know, someone who only existed in my head... and yet, every time I dreamed of him, my chest would tighten the same way. That same quiet pain that never really went away.

"It's best if you don't get involved with that man, Shredica," Claire said at last, her tone firm, cold. "Even if we came from different places, I don't want you turning into someone who ends up in our way."

Chapter 1008: Shredica's Winter And The Final Piece (4)

I had absolutely no idea why she said something like that. Her words lingered in my head, unsettling and vague, like a riddle that refused to make sense no matter how hard I tried to piece it together.

Was she part of something bigger? Some hidden organization? Maybe Leon was in their way somehow? I couldn't tell. I honestly didn't have a damn clue what was going on anymore. All I knew for sure was one thing and it was that I needed to get that final piece. Whatever it took.

After walking for what felt like forever, we finally reached somewhere different.

We'd gone even deeper now. We were far below the point where sunlight or warmth could ever reach. The air here felt heavy, cold, and thin, like every breath I took was scraping my throat raw. I hadn't seen a single monster so far, but the ground was covered with skeletons, scattered like a field of bones. Some were crushed into the dirt, others still in the shape of the people or creatures they once were.

It made me wonder... maybe there had been monsters here long ago. Maybe this place was once crawling with life until the harsh environment drove everything away. The air was stale and lifeless. I

thought monsters would evolve to survive this kind of place, to change, adapt, and become something more terrifying, but judging from all the bones, I guess not.

Up ahead stood a massive double door, tall enough to make me crane my neck just to take it all in. It looked ancient, with strange engravings all over its metallic surface. The faint glow from my torch flickered against it, revealing old claw marks and dried stains that looked disturbingly like blood.

It gave off the feeling of a final gate, something straight out of a dungeon where the boss was waiting at the end.

"What's this place?" I asked, my voice echoing faintly.

"Probably the boss room," she said, her tone calm, almost too casual for a place like this. "It's likely where the thing you're looking for is being kept."

So this was it. The place where the final piece was hidden.

"Are you going to go inside? Alone?" she asked, tilting her head slightly, her expression unreadable.

"Well, it's me, so... yeah," I said with a half-smile. "Doesn't look like I've got much of a choice. Unless you're planning to tag along?"

She let out a small laugh and shook her head. "I don't have anything with me right now except my body. I have no weapon with me. I'm practically defenseless—and offenseless." She gave a faint shrug. "More than that, I just wanted to guide you here. That's all. If you're willing to risk it all, then go ahead. I'll wait here. But if three days pass and you don't come out... I'll assume you're dead and leave."

"Sounds fine to me," I said.

I took a deep breath, tightened my grip on my sword until my knuckles turned white, and looked at the door. It was enormous—so tall that I couldn't even see where it ended in the dim light. I reached out and pressed my palm against the cold metal. It was icy to the touch, smooth but solid, and for a second, it felt like the door itself was breathing faintly beneath my skin.

I pushed.

The doors groaned, then gave way surprisingly easily. Despite their size, they opened without much resistance, as if they'd been waiting for someone to push them open. Almost like something—or someone—was expecting me.

I stepped inside. Behind me, Claire stayed where she was, leaning slightly to the side and waving her hand at me in a lazy motion, almost like she was saying goodbye.

I didn't look back. I just kept walking.

Almost instantly, a heavy pressure filled the air around me. It wrapped around my chest like a giant invisible hand, pressing down, making it harder to breathe. The darkness ahead swallowed everything. It wasn't just dark—it was alive. It felt like walking into the belly of something enormous.

Thankfully, I had picked up a torch from one of the skeletons outside. The faint orange glow from its flame flickered weakly against the endless black, and I started lighting the torches along the walls one by one. Slowly, the room began to take shape.

The more I lit, the more uneasy I became. Even with the light spreading across the chamber, the air stayed thick, heavy—like the shadows themselves were watching me. I could feel it... something massive was here. Something that was breathing, alive, and aware of me.

Each step echoed faintly, bouncing back in strange rhythms. It almost sounded like... a heartbeat.

I stopped.

That's when I saw them—two faint golden lights floating in the darkness ahead. At first, I thought they were reflections. But no, they moved. Slowly. Rhythmically.

Eyes.

Something alive was staring back at me.

That breathing I'd been feeling—it wasn't the walls. It was it. The mist curling in the air ahead was its breath. Deep. Heavy. The sound of something huge inhaling and exhaling filled the room.

My heartbeat quickened, but I forced myself to stay calm.

I needed to get that piece. No matter what was waiting for me, I couldn't back down now.

"Grrrrrrrrrrr..."

The growl came low and deep, rumbling through the air like thunder. I could feel it vibrating in my bones. My knees started to shake, but I bit down hard on my lip until I tasted blood.

When did I become such a coward? I wasn't like this before. I'd faced worse—at least, I thought I had. Maybe this was the echo of the person I used to be. A memory. One tied to Tsubasa, maybe.

But I wasn't going to let that hold me back.

I tightened my grip on the sword again and took another step forward.

Then—

"Graaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

A roar exploded through the chamber, so powerful it felt like the whole place was collapsing. Dust fell from the ceiling, and the shockwave almost knocked me off my feet.

The creature charged forward, and for the first time, I saw it clearly.

A massive beast with wings for arms, its body covered in shimmering blue scales that glowed faintly in the torchlight. Its golden eyes burned with intelligence and fury. A wyvern.

It towered over me, wings flaring wide, the sound of its breath like a storm rolling through the cavern.

For a second, I thought I'd freeze. But I didn't. Somehow, all the fear that had been clawing at me just... vanished.

I dashed forward, blade drawn, letting instinct take over.

The sound of steel clashing against scales filled the air, sparks bursting in all directions. But when I looked at the result—my blade had barely left a mark.

This thing's skin was like armor.

And as I stepped back, chest heaving, I realized something—this fight was going to be way tougher than I thought.

Chapter 1009: Shredica's Winter And The Final Piece (5)

The wyvern's roar ripped through the cavern like a thunderclap.

"Graaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!"

The sound was so loud that it felt like the air itself was shaking apart. Dust fell from the ceiling in streams, scattering through the faint orange glow of the torches. My ears rang, and for a moment, I couldn't even hear my own heartbeat, though I could feel it pounding in my chest, fast, hard, and panicked.

Then came the gust... its massive wings flaring wide, stirring up a violent rush of wind that nearly blew the torch flame out of my hand. The air stank of sulfur and burnt stone.

"Kh...!" I gritted my teeth, lowering my stance. My boots slid backward from the force of the gust as the wyvern took a step forward, its claws scraping against the floor, sparks flying with each heavy movement.

The beast let out another guttural growl, deep and rumbling, grrrraaaaahhrrrrhhhhh, the kind that vibrated straight through my ribs.

I lunged forward, swinging my sword at its neck... or at least, I tried to. The blade made contact, but the moment the steel struck its scales, there was only a sharp metallic clang.

Clang!

The blade skidded uselessly across the wyvern's armor-like hide, leaving behind nothing but a faint silver streak.

"Tch...!"

Before I could retreat, the wyvern's tail whipped around like a hammer. I barely saw it coming. There was only the rush of wind and the blur of movement.

BOOM!

The impact slammed into my side, sending me crashing against the wall. My back hit hard.

I felt the air shoot out of my lungs and the sword nearly slip from my hand. For a second, the world spun, my vision blurring into streaks of red and gray.

"Gah—!" I gasped, clutching my ribs. It felt like something cracked.

The wyvern let out a snarl, dragging its claws along the ground as it turned to face me again. Each step it took made the ground tremble. It was massive with it towering over me like a mountain that had decided to walk.

But I wasn't going to give up that easily.

I forced myself to stand, biting down the pain, and charged again. My blade gleamed faintly under the flickering torchlight. I swung upward, aiming for its face this time. The wyvern jerked its head to the side, my sword missing by an inch. I followed up with another strike, slashing horizontally, but it blocked the attack with its wing.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

My sword rebounded off its scales again and again. They were useless and powerless, like I was hitting steel with a stick. The wyvern's growl deepened, echoing through the cavern.

Then it lunged.

Its jaws opened wide, and for a brief second, I saw the fiery glow forming deep within its throat. It was a swirling red-orange light building in intensity.

"Shit—!"

I jumped backward just as it unleashed a torrent of fire.

FWOOSH!

The flames roared past me, a wall of heat and light that swallowed everything in its path. I dove to the side, rolling across the stone floor. The heat licked at my skin and even though I avoided the direct blast, I could feel my face burning. The fire hit the ground and erupted upward, washing the entire area in a blinding orange.

When the flames faded, the air was thick with smoke. My lungs screamed for air as I coughed, waving a hand in front of my face.

"Ghh—!"

I could barely see, but the wyvern was already moving again. The sound of claws grinding stone echoed from somewhere within the smoke. Then came a thud, followed by another low growl.

"Grrrrrrrrhhhhh..."

It was stalking me.

I tightened my grip on the sword, squinting through the haze. My heartbeat thudded in my ears, and sweat trickled down my temple.

The smoke shifted suddenly, and before I could even react, the wyvern's tail burst through it, slamming straight down toward me.

CRAAASH!

I threw myself forward, the tail smashing the ground behind me, breaking it apart like brittle rock. Shards of stone scattered through the air, slicing into my arms and cheek.

I rolled over my shoulder, coming up to one knee, and swung my blade again. This time, I aimed for its eyes.

CLANG!

I managed to land a hit, a glancing one, that made it flinch slightly, the tip of my sword scraping against its golden iris.

It wasn't deep. But it hurt it enough to make it mad.

"Graaaaahhhrrrrhhhhh!!!"

The wyvern roared in pain, its voice shaking the ground. It snapped its head forward and slammed its jaws toward me.

BANG!

I barely dodged with its teeth biting into the stone where I was just standing, crushing it into powder. I felt the shockwave hit me as I tumbled back, landing on my side. My arm screamed in pain, my shoulder throbbing like it had been wrenched out of place.

The wyvern turned its head, molten drool dripping from its fangs, sizzling against the ground. It exhaled, and small embers spilled from its mouth like burning snow.

I forced myself to my feet again. My body was shaking, not from fear anymore but from exhaustion. Every breath burned in my chest. Every muscle felt heavy.

But I raised the sword again anyway.

"Come on... you bastard..." I muttered under my breath, steadying my stance.

The wyvern spread its wings wide again, stretching them to their full span... They nearly reached both sides of the chamber. The sound they made when they moved was deafening, a low and heavy whoooooom that sent waves of wind through the room.

Then it took to the air.

BOOM!

The force of its takeoff knocked me backward. Pebbles and dust flew everywhere as the creature soared upward, circling me like a vulture. I tried to keep track of it, but it moved too fast for something its size, gliding through the air effortlessly, shadows sweeping across the floor.

Then, with another shriek, it dove.

"Shit—!"

I tried to dodge, but its claw grazed me as it passed, the edge cutting through my shoulder armor like paper. Blood splattered across the ground. I stumbled, gripping my arm, the pain sharp and hot.

The wyvern swooped back up, then slammed down hard in front of me.

THUD!

The ground shook violently. Cracks splintered outward from its claws. It spread its wings again and roared straight at me. A furious, guttural GRAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!! that nearly deafened me.

I felt my knees buckle.

Chapter 1010: Shredica's Winter And The Final Piece (6)

No matter how many times I swung, it didn't matter. My sword couldn't pierce its scales. My attacks were nothing but scratches.

And yet, even knowing that, I refused to stop.

"Haahhh—!" I yelled, charging one more time. My blade clashed with its claws, sparks bursting where steel met scale. The wyvern struck downward, its massive wing slapping the air with a sound like thunder. I dodged under its arm, sliding along the floor, then slashed at its leg, only for my sword to glance off again.

CLANG! CLANG!

Then... the tail again.

I saw it too late.

BOOOOOOOM!

The impact caught me full in the chest this time. My body flew backward, slamming into a broken pillar. I felt the air leave my lungs in a single, agonizing breath. My vision blurred, colors blending together.

I dropped to one knee, coughing violently. Blood dripped from my mouth.

The wyvern approached again, its golden eyes burning like molten suns. It growled low, grrrrrrrrrhhhhhh, and lowered its head, the heat building in its throat once again.

Firelight flickered across its scales. The entire chamber glowed red.

I raised my sword, but my arms were trembling. My body wouldn't move the way I wanted it to. My legs felt like lead.

I realized, in that moment that there was no winning this fight.

The power difference was too massive. My attacks didn't even make it flinch. Every swing, every dodge, every desperate breath, it was all meaningless.

The wyvern inhaled deeply. The air shimmered.

And then—

FWOOOOOOOOOOOOOSH!

Flames erupted once more, swallowing everything.

I dove behind a crumbled wall, the heat scorching the ground where I stood seconds ago. The air turned into an inferno. It was dry, suffocating, and deadly. The light was so bright it burned my vision even behind closed eyes.

When it finally ended, I could barely move. My sword slipped from my hand, clattering against the stone.

I panted, gasping for breath, every muscle screaming in pain.

The wyvern stood there, still, smoke rising from its nostrils. It didn't even look tired.

While I... could barely stand.

My knees gave out, and I dropped to the floor. My hands trembled as I tried to reach for my weapon again, but I couldn't even lift it.

"...Dammit..." I muttered weakly, looking up at the towering beast. Its golden eyes glowed down at me.

The fight was over.

I had lost.

However, I saw something beside me. It was on top of what looked like a small column, half-covered by broken stones and ashes that glowed faintly from the wyvern's fiery breath.

I squinted through the smoke and dust. My eyes widened.

It was a book.

A single, worn-out book resting perfectly on the small pillar, as if untouched by the chaos around it. The faint golden glint on its cover shimmered through the smoke. That aura... I could feel it.

The energy that resonated with everything I had been searching for.

"This... this might be the final piece..." I muttered under my breath, almost not believing my own words.
"I finally found it."

After all this time, after all the wandering, the fighting, the near-deaths, there it was, right in front of me. I could almost reach it if I took a few steps forward. But the massive wyvern was still there, blocking my way, its eyes blazing like molten magma. Each exhale that came from its nostrils sent waves of hot wind slamming against me, carrying the scent of sulfur and burnt stone.

It growled. It was a deep, rumbling sound that shook the air.

"Grrraaaaaaaahhhh!"

The ground trembled under its roar, cracks splitting the earth around its feet. Sparks burst from its scales like embers, and its massive tail slammed against the ground, BOOOOM, sending debris flying everywhere.

I raised my arm to shield my face, sliding back a few steps as the shockwave hit me. My heart was pounding against my ribs, the edges of my vision blurring from exhaustion.

Still, I couldn't stop now. The book was right there. I just needed an opening.

The wyvern lifted its head, spreading its wings wide. The air howled as the massive wings cut through it, WHOOOOOSH, before it lunged toward me with its jaws wide open. I jumped to the side as its fangs smashed into the stone floor where I'd been standing a moment ago. Shards of rock exploded upward, slicing my cheek. Warm blood trailed down, mixing with the dirt and sweat.

I clenched my teeth.

No matter how much I hit it... it doesn't die. What should I do...?

The wyvern turned its head toward me again, eyes narrowing, flames seeping through its nostrils like it was mocking me and daring me to try again.

Then, I noticed it.

When it moved, one of its wing joints faltered for just a split second. It wasn't much, but it was there. It was a small twitch, like the muscle wasn't functioning right. The skin around it looked slightly different from the rest of its body. It was slightly cracked, uneven, and pulsing faintly with mana.

"That's it..." I whispered, my eyes locking onto the weak point.

But getting close was another story. The wyvern's wings alone were wide enough to sweep an entire building. I needed to bait it... force it to expose that spot long enough for me to strike.

The wyvern hissed, crouching low, tail swinging menacingly behind it. SWISH... THUD... SWISH! The sound of its tail slicing the air was deafening. I narrowly avoided one hit with the ground behind me erupted in a wave of shattered stone and dust. I leapt forward, drawing my mana blade as I rolled to the side. The edge flickered weakly, the energy almost drained, but I poured the last bit of my focus into it.

It roared again, rearing back before letting out a torrent of fire.

FWWOOOOOOOOOSH!

The flames were blinding, swallowing everything in front of it in a sea of orange and red. The heat was suffocating. I dropped to one knee, sliding under a broken column for cover as the wave of fire washed past, scorching everything in its path.

I couldn't keep this up. My body screamed in pain.

But that weak point... I couldn't ignore it.

When the fire subsided, I burst from the smoke, sprinting toward it. My boots scraped against the scorched ground as I dashed through the ashes. I yelled out, summoning the last remnants of my mana into my blade. The air around it crackled, blue sparks dancing along its edge.

The wyvern turned, too late to react fully and I jumped, pushing off a fragment of stone mid-air and swinging my blade with everything I had left.