

The World 171

Chapter 171: King's Game, Part 3 (1)

Meanwhile...

Julius's POV

There were only 20 people left on the island, signaling that the King's Game was nearing its conclusion. I'd heard of numerous deaths occurring, but it didn't concern me.

Throughout the duration of the game, I'd stayed hidden, not even bothering to participate. My strategy was simple: let the others thin their own numbers through conflict, then strike when the field was ripe for the taking.

However, as the number dwindled to just 20, I sensed eyes on me. Gradually, I felt two presences approaching, moving stealthily from above.

"It's quite unusual to see someone of your status mingling with the common folk, Your Highness. I must say, I'm rather surprised," remarked a woman, who was being carried by a dark-skinned woman as they descended towards me.

I was perched atop the largest tree on the island, my chosen base. Not only did it provide an abundance of food, but it also offered safety from elimination. Not that I was concerned about being eliminated if I stayed below, but conserving energy was key.

The dark-skinned woman settled onto a large branch of the tree, gently lowering the woman she carried. I recognized the woman immediately—she was the commander of the magic knights.

"Well, well, Commander Lilia," I greeted with a cheerful smile. "What a pleasant surprise. Last time we crossed paths was last year, on my 18th birthday, if I remember correctly."

"That's correct. It's your coming of age, so naturally, I had to be there," she replied with a smile. "Now then, Prince Julius, care to enlighten me on your motives? This isn't my directive; it comes straight from your father. He's been on edge lately due to your recent actions. He's practically sweating buckets."

"Father? I've already discussed my plans with him, haven't I?" I retorted. "Why would I need to repeat myself?"

"Well, it seems he's rather anxious. He needs constant reassurance, multiple times over, to put his mind at ease," she explained with a shrug.

I chuckled mockingly, "Is he that terrified of me snatching his precious throne?"

"That's correct," Commander Lilia replied matter-of-factly. As the head of the magic military, she was keenly aware of my father's state of mind. "That's why he tasked me with preventing you from winning."

"Will you stop me?" I inquired.

The commander simply smiled. "Why would I? I couldn't care less about the royal family drama or who ends up ruling the kingdom, or even the world, for that matter. All I care about is myself, my position, and all the wealth and privileges that come with it. That's all I want."

"Oh?" I exclaimed. "So you're suggesting that if I succeed, you'd like to retain your position?"

"Exactly," she confirmed.

As she spoke, I sensed a subtle energy emanating from her mouth. So she was attempting to influence me with her power, huh? Unfortunately for her, my clothes were equipped with a power dampener, rendering her control ineffective. Nevertheless, I didn't mind the idea of her remaining as the commander. She was cunning and manipulative—qualities I could appreciate in an ally.

"If you wish to retain your position as commander once I become king, I have no objections," I declared, extending my hand to her.

"Thank you, Your Highness," she replied gratefully.

After we released each other's hands, I inquired, "Is that all you desire?"

"No," she replied, shaking her head. "There are some pests attempting to undermine both you and me, Your Highness. I could simply command them with my power, but brainwashed subordinates aren't exactly reliable for important tasks."

I could feel her power at work again, attempting to exert its influence over me. However, this woman seemed unaware that there were individuals resistant to her manipulation. The Queen, Myrcella's mother, for instance, was immune to her control. Fortunately, my power-dampening attire provided me with a similar safeguard.

"So, you're asking me to deal with these pests?" I confirmed. For the time being, I had to agree. I truly desired this woman as an ally.

"Yes, indeed," she affirmed. "It will be much easier for you to seize the throne under those circumstances."

"Alright, I'll go along with your plan," I agreed.

With that settled, we clasped hands once more.

Robyn's POV

The island was sweltering hot, making me feel like I might keel over from the heat at any moment. I was certain I could get heatstroke from this relentless sun. Unfortunately, our captain, Angelica, was adamant about not allowing us to rest. According to her, the commander might strike at any moment.

Honestly, dying from heatstroke or getting killed by the commander felt like two sides of the same coin...

"Stay vigilant, Robyn," she warned me with a growl. "There's no telling when that woman will turn against us."

I sighed, feeling exasperated. It seemed like I had sighed countless times today. "Are you really certain she's out to get us, Captain? I mean, I know the commander is intense and a real sadist, but I doubt she'd go so far as to eliminate her own subordinates."

"You don't know her at all, Robyn," the Captain retorted. "That woman is far more sinister than you realize."

There was clearly tension between Captain Angelica and Commander Lilia. It didn't seem like the Captain's bitterness stemmed solely from losing her command position to Commander Lilia. I suspected there was more to their conflict than met the eye.

Maybe their history was much more deeper than I thought.

As I pondered this, I glanced back at the forest. The surge of powerful auras I had sensed within its depths intrigued me, especially one that seemed particularly menacing. I wondered whose auras they belonged to and what their intentions might be. Unfortunately, I couldn't investigate further as I was stationed here.

Three hours later, and I felt like I'd been roasted by the sun. The heat was so intense that I thought I might just melt into a puddle. All I wanted was to dunk my face into some cold water, or better yet, take a refreshing shower. If I weren't on duty right now, I'd definitely be taking a dip in the ocean...

As I pondered, a sudden wave of terror washed over me. Something was approaching, and fast.

"Something's coming!" I exclaimed.

The squad immediately snapped to attention as the source of the ominous aura drew nearer. It was a young man, exuding an air of royalty, with a smirk playing on his lips.

"Hey there," he greeted cheerfully. "Looks like I've got everyone gathered. Excellent." With a flourish, he gathered mana and conjured a fireball in his palm—a massive one, even larger than the Great Fireball spell. This was deadly.

"I figure it's best to have you all in one place for an easy slaughter," he remarked casually.

"Everyone, scatter!" commanded the Captain urgently. "That's Prince Julius. That fireball of his can incinerate an entire city! Run as fast as you can!"

But it was too late. Prince Julius had already completed the formation of the fireball. With a casual remark of "It's a shame, but oh well," he hurled it towards us.

In an instant, we were engulfed by the searing heat, both from the scorching sun and the fiery projectile launched by the Prince.

Myrcella's POV

As we prepared to retreat to our base, a sudden surge of scorching heat swept over me, its fiery tendrils licking at my skin and sending shivers down my spine. With a sense of foreboding, I turned my gaze towards the source, where ominous clouds of smoke billowed into the sky, painted crimson by the raging flames that devoured everything in their path.

"Julius..." I breathed.

Without hesitation, I began sprinting towards the inferno, with Johanne at my side.

"Princess, don't rush into things," he cautioned.

"I know," I replied, determination etched on my face.

We dashed through the dense foliage, the cacophony of our footfalls drowned out by the crackling inferno ahead. As we burst from the oppressive shadows of the forest, a scene of devastation greeted

us. Amidst the roaring flames stood my brother, a dark silhouette against the backdrop of chaos and destruction. His laughter, tinged with madness, echoed through the island.

His arms were outstretched, a twisted mockery of triumph as he reveled in the destruction he had wrought. The charred remains of his victims lay scattered around him, their flesh reduced to ash, leaving only skeletal remains behind.

It was a gruesome sight, one that sent a shiver down my spine. The flames danced in his eyes, reflecting the madness that consumed him. In that moment, he seemed more monster than man, a terrifying force of nature unleashed upon the world.

"Julius!!!!" I screamed, my voice cutting through the crackling flames.

My brother turned to face me, his grin widening into something sinister. It was a chilling expression, entirely unlike the uneasy smile I was accustomed to seeing on his face. This grin held a darkness that sent a shiver down my spine.

"Well, well, well, look who's here," he sneered. "Do you want to join them too, dear sister?"

Chapter 172: King's Game, Part 3 (2)

"Dear sister," young Julius spoke softly as he entered my room, clutching a stuffed bear tightly in his trembling hand. The ominous roar of thunder echoed through the castle walls as rain hammered against the windows, casting eerie shadows across the room.

I was immersed in the pages of a book, the flickering candlelight casting dancing shadows upon the pages. Despite the comfort of the warm fire crackling in the hearth, an unease lingered in the air. As members of the royal family, we each had our own chambers within the castle's vast halls.

While the protective presence of our royal knights offered a sense of security, the ever-present threat of assassination lurked in the shadows.

Julius's unexpected arrival in my room was prompted by his fear of the raging storm outside. His youthful innocence and vulnerability were evident in the way his wide eyes darted nervously around the room. It was moments like these that reminded me of his tender age, his place in the line of succession to the throne often overshadowed by his timid nature.

"What's wrong, Julius?" I spoke softly. We were practically the same age. Just three months apart, yet I often found myself looking at him as if he were much younger. It wasn't entirely unfounded, though. My mother, the Queen of Milham, often remarked that I possessed a maturity beyond my years. Perhaps that's why Julius tended to treat me as older than him.

"Trouble sleeping?"

"...Yes," young Julius replied, his eyes shimmering with unshed tears.

He always seemed particularly frightened during storms, and I couldn't blame him. After all, he was still just a child. Though I was a child myself, I wasn't afraid, likely due to being viewed as exceptional.

"Come here, then. Sit with me on the bed, and I'll read you a story," I offered, hoping to ease his anxiety.

Young Julius joined me on the bed, and I began recounting a fable from the book I had been reading. As the tale unfolded, his wide eyes followed the words with rapt attention.

After finishing the story, he suddenly spoke up. "You know, dear sister, you seem like you'll be a capable ruler someday. Much more capable than our older brother."

"Really?" I replied, surprised by his assessment. "But Brother Lucius is also quite capable, you know? He's only ten, yet he commands his own military. That surely speaks to his leadership abilities, doesn't it?"

Julius shook his head gently. "But having a military to command and the strength to enforce submission doesn't necessarily mean one is fit to rule, does it? Those are not the only characteristics of a true king. They're not the only things that make a true king."

"Oh, really?" I responded, genuinely surprised by his insight. It was rare to hear such wisdom from someone so young, especially considering that even our father, the current king, lacked many of these qualities. I couldn't help but wonder how Julius had come to understand the characteristics of a true king, given our limited exposure to such a role.

"Could you enlighten me on what you believe defines a true king, then? What qualities do you think a true king possesses?" I inquired, genuinely curious to hear his thoughts.

"Hmm..." Julius pondered for a moment before replying. "Personally, I believe a true king should be able to empathize with the common folk, rather than relying solely on their own abilities. They should also be wise, capable of understanding the perspectives of those they govern, and possess empathy. And of course, they should be competent."

After all, if a ruler is incompetent, it reflects poorly on those they govern."

"A profound insight," I remarked, gently patting him on the head. His understanding of what makes a true king was truly remarkable, and it made me consider that perhaps Julius was more suited to rule than I had previously thought. "Perhaps one day, Julius, you could ascend to the throne yourself," I suggested, genuinely believing in his potential.

That had been my honest belief at the time. However, as I observed Julius now, consumed by rage and unchecked emotion, it was difficult to reconcile this with the timid boy he had once been.

"Please, Julius, you must stop this," I pleaded with him. "What you're doing is wrong. You're taking the lives of countless people without remorse!"

"Oh, spare me, dear sister," he retorted, a mocking smile playing on his lips. "Why would I heed your orders? Do you still think I'm the same brother you can boss around like I'm your lackey? I won't blindly follow you like a little duckling anymore."

"You don't mean that, Julius," I insisted, my voice trembling with concern. "You're just confused right now."

"Enough!" he snapped, cutting me off. "I know exactly what I'm doing."

Clearly, Julius was acting out of heartbreak. A shattered heart could drive a man to irrational actions, clouding his judgment and blurring the lines between right and wrong.

"Is this what you believe defines a true king, Julius?" I questioned, my voice laced with disappointment. "Do you honestly think that murdering your own subjects and plunging your kingdom into chaos aligns with the qualities of a true king? Was everything you told me before just a lie? Is this truly what you meant?"

Julius responded with a mocking smile. "Oh, come now, dear sister," he scoffed. "Do you truly believe in the existence of a true king? Such a notion is nothing but a fantasy! Our father falls short of that ideal, and so do the rulers of other realms! But I still cling to the hope that a true king can exist.

Instead of waiting for someone else to embody that ideal, I will strive to become that true king myself. That way, a true king will truly exist!"

"Is that why you want to seize our father's throne?" I pressed, my voice tinged with disbelief.

"That's right!" he declared, his eyes burning with fervor. "And when the time comes, when I rise as a true king of greatness, I will unite this world under my rule. They will all kneel before me, praising me as the rightful ruler. Even you, dear sister, will bow before me. Even our brother, who has always looked down on me, will submit to my authority. All of you will bend the knee to me.

Then... and then... I...!"

He abruptly halted mid-sentence, as if the words he was about to utter were too much to bear. It was evident that whatever he wanted to say next was weighing heavily on him, rendering him unable to speak it aloud. I knew all too well what lay behind those unspoken words. My brother was chasing an ideal, lost in a fantasy world detached from reality.

It was this vulnerability that made him susceptible to manipulation. Those with fragile hearts were easily swayed by the promises of others.

In order to snap him out of his delusions, I realized I needed to push him further, to force him to confront the truth he was avoiding. I had to speak the words he couldn't bring himself to say, even if it meant causing him more pain. I had to say the words he couldn't bring himself to acknowledge. That's the only way to make him look back to reality. "Charlotte won't love you, Julius!

You need to accept that!"

My words seemed to ignite a raging inferno within him. His eyes blazed with fury, the flames dancing fiercely like an inferno unleashed. The intensity of his anger was palpable, searing heat radiating from his very being. Yet, I refused to back down. I knew that in order to break through his delusions, I had to force him to face the harsh reality.

Even if it meant enduring the scorching heat of his wrath, I pressed on, determined to make him understand that his pursuit was futile, for the woman he loved would never reciprocate his feelings.

"Even if you conquer this world, it won't make her love you, Julius!" I asserted firmly.

His fury intensified, flames raging behind him. "Shut the fuck up!" he snapped, conjuring a massive fireball in his hand. The searing heat washed over me, but I refused to back down. "Do you think I don't already know that?!" he retorted.

"Then why continue?!" I managed to choke out amidst the scorching heat of his fireball.

"I can't help it!" he exclaimed. "I love her!"

In the end, Julius couldn't let go of his feelings for Charlotte. She was his first love, and he couldn't see anyone else because his heart belonged solely to her. Unfortunately, Charlotte didn't see him as a potential romantic partner. At best, she viewed him as a little brother. To make matters worse, Charlotte had already fallen for another man.

Julius was still clinging to a fantasy, unable to face the reality where he wasn't chosen by her.

The fireball forming in his palm suddenly shifted to a purple hue before he hurled it at us.

"Princess Myrcella!" Johanne exclaimed.

Reacting swiftly, I activated my skill to erect a barrier and block his attack. The collision between his fireball and my barrier created a powerful impact.

Chapter 173: King's Game, Part 3 (3)

Leon's POV

As we made our way back to base, a deafening explosion shattered the air.

"Leon..." Hertrude's voice trailed off as she looked up, her gaze drawn to the source of the disturbance. Following her line of sight, I beheld a massive mushroom-shaped flame rising into the sky, illuminating the area with a brilliant flash. A wave of searing heat and blinding light swept across the ground. It felt like a nuke had just been detonated.

The devastation of the inferno reached us, engulfing the surrounding area and incinerating everything in its path. Trees crumbled into charred remnants before my eyes, consumed by the relentless power of the magic. I quickly activated Guardian to shield us from the onslaught. The protective barrier endured the intense heat and the force of the shockwave without faltering.

Once the wave of destruction had passed, I glanced back at the epicenter of the explosion, where a colossal mushroom cloud now loomed overhead.

"What the heck...?"

The sheer power of that blast could've wiped out all the contestants in this game. As I ventured inside the cave, I stumbled upon... a person.

"Ahhhh!" Hertrude's scream echoed through the cavern as she too witnessed the scene. Horror painted across her widened eyes.

One of our supposed allies, who had been uncooperative from the start and remained holed up in the cave, had fallen victim to the explosion. And now, thanks to that catastrophic explosion, he'd met a grim fate. The scorching heat wave from the nuke-like blast had seeped into the cave, burning everything in its path.

Harold lay before us, his skin blackened and his body burnt to a crisp.

"He's dead..." I murmured to myself, the evidence of his demise painfully clear.

"Does that mean... that everyone else is dead, Leon?" Hertrude's voice quivered with fear.

"I'm not sure. The Princess and her knight might still be alive thanks to her protective skill. The Knight could be shielded by the Princess's barrier too. As for Shredica, she's been on the brink of death before, so maybe she's somehow managed to survive. I hope," I replied honestly.

Truth be told, I wasn't confident that Shredica had made it out of that devastating explosion unscathed, if she even made it out at all. If she did, I could only imagine the extent of her injuries, likely severe enough to eliminate her from the game. I couldn't help but feel concerned for her...

"Let's go find the Princess, Leon!" Hertrude urged, her voice trembling.

"Alright," I agreed.

Hertrude and I rushed to the location of the massive mushroom cloud of fire, only to be met with a scene of utter devastation. A colossal crater marked the epicenter of destruction, surrounded by the charred remains of what used to be a lush forest.

In the midst of the scorched wasteland stood a young man, flanked by two figures—Johanne and Princess Myrcella. Both of them were badly injured, kneeling on the ground. Despite the protection of her Holy Barrier, they hadn't been able to withstand the full force of the inferno.

"Do you finally understand, dear sister? That you dare oppose me?" the young man declared. It was unmistakably the rebellious prince himself, Prince Julius. "If you do, then stop wasting your time and face reality. Leave me be. I don't want to harm the only family I have left," he continued.

It seemed that Princess Myrcella's attempt to reason with her brother had failed.

Suddenly, Julius turned his gaze toward me.

"Oh, look who's here," he remarked with a smile. "The prey has come to face the predator himself. Have you spared yourself the agony of running away and accepted your fate of being killed?"

"It's not like that," I replied with a shrug.

"Hmm? Why do you look like you haven't even been injured? Who are you? Oh, I remember now. You're the weakest student from the academy. The one without any skills," he said with a smirk.

"Looks like you managed to find shelter from the explosion I caused. Lucky you. But unlucky for you, because you've stumbled upon me. You'll meet your end here. Neither of you will survive this island, and when that happens, I'll be declared the winner of this game."

"Is that so?"

With a sudden shift in tone, Julius glared at me as if my nonchalant attitude infuriated him. "Why are you so calm? Do you think you can defeat me? Ha! You're pretty confident for someone so pathetic."

I couldn't help but grin. "Oh yeah? Then who's more pathetic? Me, the skillless one, or you, who couldn't even win over the girl you love?"

His response was a furious growl. "What the fuck did you just say?"

"Don't shy away from the truth. You heard me loud and clear," I retorted.

"Who told you that? Did you spill the beans, dear sister?!" Julius demanded, his anger palpable.

Princess Myrcella also glanced at me, confusion evident in her expression as she wondered how I knew.

"Don't worry. The Princess didn't spill the beans. I just managed to put the pieces together on my own. Even a child could do that," I replied confidently.

"There's no fucking way!" Julius exclaimed, disbelief written all over his face.

"Believe me, it's easy to see from the look of heartbreak on your face," I said. In truth, piecing together all the information to understand the full picture wasn't easy. I had the help of Gabrielle and the Shadows to gather information. But even without their assistance, I could still sense what was going on in Prince Julius's mind. His rebellion stemmed from a broken heart.

I couldn't blame him. I had been in his shoes in my past life, consumed by heartbreak to the point where I couldn't see beyond my own pain. I turned to the streets, seeking solace in fights and casual sex with upperclassmen who wanted casual sex, anything to escape reality.

I could see parallels between Julius's destructive behavior and my own past actions. While I had spiraled into destructive behavior, Julius seemed to be even worse off, completely consumed by his own turmoil. When I reached that point, even the words of the woman I loved didn't penetrate my mind. However, it was my sister who ultimately saved me.

Julius had a sister too, and she was trying to help him. But it seemed her efforts were in vain. Perhaps it was already too late to pull Julius back from the edge. Moriarty had inflicted such deep wounds that Julius seemed beyond repair. That man might just be the most formidable enemy I've ever faced. If I wasn't careful, I could end up being stabbed in the back without even realizing it.

I needed to start taking everything seriously from now on.

"Heh. You sure are full of yourself," Julius sneered. "From the look on your face, it seems you don't realize what's about to go down. Do you honestly think you'll make it out of this alive?" He hissed, a trail of drool escaping from the corner of his mouth. He appeared ready to go berserk.

With a sudden surge of mana, he gathered energy in his palm. The mana transformed into a swirling vortex of red, drawing in heat until it coalesced into a fiery ball.

"Die!" he spat, hurling the fireball at me.

Reacting swiftly, I dashed toward him, channeling mana to form a sword. As the fireball hurtled toward me, I swung my blade, cleaving the fiery projectile in half. The split halves continued on their trajectory, exploding in two separate areas as they passed me by.

"What?!" he exclaimed in surprise. "What the fuck did you just do?! How the hell is that even possible?!" he babbled, his expression akin to someone who had just seen a ghost.

Undeterred, Julius began to form another fireball in his palm, this one visibly more powerful than the last due to the sheer amount of mana gathered.

"There's no way you can survive this!" he declared as he hurled the fireball at me once again.

It was clear this was trouble. If I split this fireball and it exploded, it would endanger everyone in the vicinity. I couldn't take that risk. My only option was to absorb the mana from the fireball and make it vanish. Enveloping my hand with *Guardian* to protect myself from the flames, I dashed forward and caught the fireball in my bare hand. Then, I absorbed the mana until it disappeared completely.

"Huh?" Julius was utterly gobsmacked, his eyes widening in disbelief. It was only natural; I had just absorbed a powerful fireball, an act that defied all logic. Even Johanne stood nearby, his jaw hanging agape in shock as he beheld the impossible feat.

"You know," I began, my voice tinged with pity, "I can't help but feel sorry for you, Prince Julius. If circumstances had been different, perhaps we could have been friends. I regret that our first encounter had to unfold in this manner."

My words seemed to penetrate Julius's stunned demeanor, dawning comprehension slowly etching across his features. The realization dawned not only upon him but also upon Johanne, who gazed at me with newfound respect. They understood now that I wasn't just another insignificant figure. I was a force to be reckoned with, far beyond their initial assumptions.

"How dare you!" Julius's voice trembled with indignation, his eyes ablaze with fury. "I am a prince! I am Prince Julius Milham! You are supposed to bow before me, you insolent wretch! How dare you regard me with such disdain! You will pay dearly for your insolence!"

He then began conjuring another fireball, pouring every ounce of mana and energy into its formation. The fiery orb seemed to draw in the heat from the atmosphere and even the oxygen itself, swirling with such intensity that it took on a vibrant purple hue. This wasn't just any ordinary fireball; it had transformed into something akin to a plasma ball, crackling with volatile energy.

"I'll kill you!" he roared, hurling the blazing sphere at me with ferocious intent.

But just like before...

"Huh...? N-No way..."

I absorbed it.

Chapter 174: King's Game, Part 3 (4)

"What?!" Julius exclaimed, clearly taken aback and confused. My ability to absorb such a high amount of mana must have shocked him.

Johanne looked equally puzzled, as did Princess Myrcella. Even Hertrude, who knew I wasn't ordinary, was stunned.

"T-There's no way you just did... That's a huge, powerful fireball, you know? There's no way someone, much less someone without skills, can do something like that." -verified

"But I did," I insisted. "You saw it, didn't you?"

"But there's... There's no way!"

Indeed, what I had accomplished was virtually impossible. Even if it were achievable, it would likely require less than just a handful of people. My feat was incredibly rare, if not unprecedented.

Actually, what I did was pretty simple. If you grasp the flow of mana and master its control, you could achieve numerous feats with it. You could focus it to enhance your mana blade's power, concentrate it into a fireball equivalent to a nuke, or absorb someone else's mana. Mana was the essence of everything in this world—it held limitless power.

The reason why most people remained unaware of mana's true potential was their lack of understanding of science. Mana operated on principles similar to the law of conservation of energy,

which states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, only transformed from one form to another. For instance, you convert mana into a spell, then shape it into something like a rock or fireball.

And if mana can be turned into a rock, then vice versa, a rock can be transformed back into mana.

The products of Leonamon, like the Leonamon's smartphone, were all created using mana. Mana could generate energy and light, even power the gas for the cars we were planning to produce. Many seemingly impossible things became achievable with mana.

If people bothered to understand it, they could transform this world into an innovative one. Unfortunately, most researchers didn't bother. If only they did, countless possibilities would open up, just like what I had accomplished.

"Damn it! What the hell are you, really?!" Julius demanded, his fury evident.

"I'm just an ordinary guy. Nothing more, nothing less," I replied.

I glanced at Princess Myrcella, sensing a pleading look in her eyes. It was as if she was silently begging me not to harm Julius. I hadn't planned on killing him, but I did intend to rough him up a bit, just for old times' sake.

Concentrating even harder, I formed my mana blade, drawing in as much energy from the atmosphere as I could muster. Meanwhile, Julius conjured another fireball in his hand. This time, it wasn't as explosive or powerful, but it was still enough to incinerate a person alive. Plus, smaller fireballs traveled much faster, making it likely that he intended to hit me before I could absorb it.

As Julius hurled the smaller, faster fireball at me, I reacted quickly, dodging to the side just in the nick of time. The scorching heat grazed my shoulder, leaving behind a searing sensation.

Without skipping a beat, Julius conjured yet another fireball and aimed it at me.

Acting without hesitation, I countered with a swift slash of my sword, slicing through the air and cleaving the fireball in half. Sparks flew as the flames scattered, extinguished by the force of my blade.

Julius summoned yet another fireball, this one much larger than the previous ones. But I was prepared. With a swift maneuver, I spun away, closing the distance between us in a blur of movement.

My mana blade crackled with power as I surged forward, aiming a decisive strike at Julius. He barely managed to conjure a weak barrier in defense, but it shattered upon impact, leaving him vulnerable to my attack.

With a swift and decisive motion, I brought down my blade, targeting his shoulder. But just as the edge of my sword was about to connect, Julius dashed away, narrowly evading my blow.

For a prince, he sure had impressive reflexes.

"Grrr...!" Julius growled, shooting me a furious glare. He was clearly livid. "I'm fucking this close to getting what I want, and then some douchebag swoops in and messes everything up!"

"Yeah, life can be a real bitch sometimes," I replied nonchalantly, my tone dripping with sarcasm.

Julius clenched his fists, his anger palpable. "You think you're so clever, don't you? Ruining everything just for kicks."

I shrugged, unfazed by his hostility. "Hey, I'm just playing the hand I was dealt. Can't blame me for being good at it."

His eyes narrowed as he took a step closer, his voice lowering to a dangerous growl. "You won't get away with this. I'll make sure of it."

At that, he unleashed another fireball. I sliced it in half with my mana blade. Another fireball came, and I cleaved it. Another, and then another, each met with the same fate.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck! Why?! Why can't I hit you?! Just drop dead already!" he growled, hurling a barrage of fireballs at me. But I deflected them all.

"Julius! Just give up already!" Princess Myrcella shouted. "This isn't how a true king behaves! You know the qualities of a true king, don't you?! You're better than this!"

"Shut your fucking mouth, you worthless sister of mine!" Julius's voice echoed through the island, filled with rage and frustration. "You don't get it. You don't understand the weight of being a true king. You've

always had everything handed to you on a silver platter! But me? I'm at the bottom of the pile, clawing my way to the top just to catch father's eye.

I have to resort to this madness just to get a moment of recognition! You don't know the struggle because you've never faced it!"

"But what about Charlotte? Have you even managed to win her affection?" the Princess retorted, her voice laced with concern. "Even if you continue down this dark path, it'll lead to nothing but ruin! You need to let go of this madness!"

"I said shut your fucking mouth! I don't want to hear another word from you!" Julius bellowed, his patience wearing thin with his sister's interference.

"You should listen to your sister," I urged earnestly. "She's the only one who can truly help you."

Julius and I shared a similar fate. We both knew the sting of betrayal from a childhood friend who chose someone else over us, leading us down a path of self-destruction. I had spiraled out of control until my behavior bordered on destructive, but it was my sister who pulled me back from the brink. Without her, I might have become irredeemable, beyond even divine forgiveness.

Julius was headed down the same dark path, but unlike me, he seemed unwilling to heed his sister's advice. I didn't want him to suffer the same fate as I had. I'd walked in his shoes, and I knew the darkness that awaited him if he continued on this path.

"How about you mind your fucking business, you worthless, skillless fuck!" Julius spat, his anger boiling over. "You don't know us, especially not me!"

He unleashed another barrage of fireballs, but no matter how many he hurled at me, they were either slashed in half or reduced to nothing. His skill was overwhelming, yet futile against me. The only thing that could stop him might be something akin to Irene's Atlantis, but when his Inferno clashed with its opposite, he was powerless.

That's why he remained stuck in the silver class of the second year. It's also why he was deemed the worthless prince.

Realizing his fireballs were useless against me, Julius sank to his knees and punched the ground in frustration.

"Damn it... Damn it! Why is nothing going my way?! Why?! Why am I always a failure?!" Julius raged, his fists pounding the ground in frustration.

Suddenly, someone appeared behind him and swiftly pinned him down.

"Julius!" Princess Myrcella cried out in alarm.

"Don't worry, Your Highness," a voice reassured from above. We all looked up to see who it was. "We don't intend to harm Prince Julius. We just need to restrain him and bring him to your father."

"You're..." Princess Myrcella began, recognizing the figure.

"That's right. The Commander of the Magic Knights. The one and only," the woman confirmed, carried by another woman who flew through the air. The dark-skinned woman gently lowered her companion to the ground. "No need to be alarmed, Princess. Our only task is to bring your brother to the King."

"Will Father... the King... do anything to him?" Princess Myrcella inquired anxiously.

"I don't think he'll take severe action, considering he's his son, but it's best to prepare for the worst," Commander Lilia replied. "Now, let's get you up, Your Highness. You're now cuffed with power dampeners, so you can't use your skills anymore. Don't struggle. Veronica, carry him back to the boat, and then we'll proceed to the palace."

"Yes," Veronica confirmed who, after cuffing the Prince, hoisted him up in a princess carry. Veronica met my gaze before turning away, carrying the Prince with her. We watched as they disappeared from view, taking the Prince with them. And just like that, he was officially out of the game.

Chapter 175: King's Game, Part 3 (5)

Julius's POV

I found myself thrown into the jail cell of the magic knights' boat, my arms still cuffed with the power dampeners, rendering me powerless. The commander of the magic knights stood outside my cell, wearing the smuggest grin imaginable.

"Too bad, Prince Julius, your ambitions were short-lived," she taunted.

I remained silent, my gaze fixed on the wooden floor.

"I was hoping you'd put up more of a fight. Oh well," she continued. "I should thank you for taking care of those pests for me. But who the hell was that boy? How could he absorb all of your skills like that?"

That was the burning question indeed. Who was that guy, and how could he pull off such a feat? No matter how much I pondered it, there seemed to be no answer.

After the commander left me, a young boy suddenly appeared before me.

"Hey there, Prince," he said with a chilling grin. "Seems like you're in a bit of a pickle. But no worries. If you fail at the King's Game, there's another route to the throne."

With that, he laid out his next plan for me.

Leon's POV

It was official: there were no other contestants left on the island besides us. The survivors included me, Princess Myrcella, Johanne, Hertrude, Shredica, and Hereon.

Shredica and Hereon emerged from Prince Julius's nuclear-like blast unscathed, which was nothing short of astonishing. Shredica revealed that they sought refuge underwater as the explosion's shockwave approached. I couldn't fathom how they managed to survive. I mean, taking cover underwater doesn't typically shield you from the devastation of a nuclear explosion, does it?

The shockwave from the explosion hitting the water meant trouble. In normal science, water being relatively non-compressible would crush you with its force. It'd act like a compression wave, destroying your organs. Being underwater during an explosion would likely be more lethal than being above water.

It's weird that it didn't happen that way, but I'm kinda relieved Shredica made it out alive, even though it defies logic.

Sadly, one of our team members had died. Harold got burnt to a crisp, his corpse teleported to the Church along with the others who perished in the blast. I said "sadly," but truth be told, I didn't really care about Harold. He didn't do anything to earn my sympathy, so whether he lived or died was irrelevant to me.

However, the death of an academy student would undoubtedly tarnish the academy's reputation.

"As promised, we're bowing out of the game and allowing you to claim the prize," Princess Myrcella declared.

The game was still ongoing, as only one winner could emerge. It would persist until there was just one left on the island. Princess Myrcella had vowed to withdraw once she thwarted her brother, Julius, from winning. With that goal accomplished, she and Johanne were opting out of the game altogether.

"I... I'll also bow out," Hertrude announced. She had her own agenda in this game—to protect Princess Myrcella. She aimed to alter a certain future where Princess Myrcella met her demise. Despite her efforts, the future she foresaw hadn't been averted. Fortunately, it turned out that the person Hertrude saw on the vision wasn't actually the Princess all along.

This revelation highlighted the limitations of Hertrude's Clairvoyance skill—it could only reveal fragments, not the whole picture.

With that, three of us had decided to withdraw from the game. I raised my hand and added, "Count me out too."

Princess Myrcella looked surprised. "Are you sure about this, Leon? Don't you have something you desire?"

"I'm not particularly after anything," I replied. The sole reason I joined this venture was to assist Shredica. There was nothing more to it.

"Is that so?" Princess Myrcella still looked puzzled, but she flashed a smile. "Well then, would you mind accompanying us somewhere? I'd like to have a private chat with you."

"Sure," I agreed. It seemed like she wanted to inquire about how I managed to thwart Julius. Well, I couldn't blame her for being curious.

I followed the Princess and her knight to a secluded spot where no one could overhear us. Once we were alone, the Princess broke the silence.

"I want to express my gratitude to you, Leon, for stopping Julius. Without your intervention, I fear I wouldn't have been able to halt his plans," she confessed.

"Are you more concerned about that than how I took him down?" I inquired.

"Well, it's not like I'm not curious about your true skill, but considering that you've been hiding it for so long, I figure you must have your reasons, so I won't pry," the Princess remarked.

"I see," I responded. "I appreciate that."

The Princess smiled at me before continuing, "Well then, may I make a request? Feel free to decline. I won't pressure you into accepting it."

"What is it?" I inquired.

The Princess turned to Johanne. "I'd like you to engage in a no-holds-barred duel with Johanne, giving it your all. Are you up for it?"

I had no clue what prompted this sudden request. I glanced at Johanne, who wore a serious expression. Was he angry with me for concealing my strength? But that didn't make sense. I wasn't particularly close to Johanne.

"Please, Leon," Johanne urged. "Agree to the duel."

It seemed he was adamant about facing off against me. Then it hit me—I could best Johanne, and his first step toward submission was losing a duel. Was fate orchestrating events to facilitate my dominance over Johanne? Not that I had any intention of dominating him; that much was a given. He's a guy, and I wasn't interested in adding a guy to my harem. Why was my route veering into yaoi territory?

It's not like I found it repulsive, but it wasn't my cup of tea either.

I couldn't handle the thought of two handsome men locking lips. And I certainly couldn't bring myself to engage in yaoi activities either. However, I didn't want to reject his challenge for a duel. He wanted something from me, and if agreeing to this duel fulfilled one of his requirements, then so be it.

As long as I didn't entertain any more of his requirements, there was no chance of him being dominated.

The fujoshis weren't going to have a field day with this one.

"Alright, Johanne," I conceded. "I'll take you up on that duel."

Preparations for the duel commenced as soon as I agreed. Johanne and I positioned ourselves five feet apart. I had already summoned a mana sword, while Johanne stared at me with unwavering determination—a look I hadn't seen from him before.

He held his sword diagonally, a stance I'd never witnessed before. It resembled the stance of someone well-versed in multiple sword styles. If I recalled correctly, Johanne was the son of the Sword Saint, explaining his exceptional swordsmanship.

"The duel will commence once I give the signal," the Princess declared. "The objective is to disarm your opponent or land a critical hit. Killing is strictly prohibited. If I sense the duel taking a dangerous turn, I'll intervene, even if there's no clear victor yet. Skills are off-limits for Johanne, as Leon possesses none. Only blade work and magic are permitted.

Are you both prepared?"

"I'm ready," Johanne affirmed.

I, however, remained silent.

"What's on your mind, Leon?" inquired the Princess.

"It just doesn't sit right with me that skills are off-limits, Princess," I replied. "You mentioned no-holds-barred, right? Then I urge you to remove the restriction on Johanne using his skill. If he refrains from using his skill during a duel, it implies he's not taking his opponent seriously."

I'm not suggesting that Johanne wouldn't take me seriously, but I dislike the notion of him holding back just because I lack any skills."

The Princess appeared taken aback. "Are you certain about this, Leon? If Johanne slips up even slightly, he could end up injuring you severely."

"I'm willing to take that risk," I affirmed. "Besides, in a duel where killing is prohibited, accidents are bound to occur."

"Are you absolutely certain about this, Leon?" Johanne's voice carried concern this time.

"Don't worry, I'll manage," I reassured him. As I spoke, I could swear I saw his pupils dilate slightly.

The Princess turned her attention to Johanne, who met her gaze and nodded.

"Very well, if you both insist, I'll lift the restriction on Johanne using his skill," the Princess announced. "However, the prohibition against killing remains in place. Now, are you both ready?"

"Absolutely," Johanne affirmed.

"Definitely," I echoed, confirming my readiness as well.

Time seemed to slow to a crawl as our gazes locked. Despite myself, I felt a surge of excitement. It was a rare opportunity to duel someone with such formidable sword skills. The five-foot gap between us seemed to shrink gradually. Every movement as we adjusted our stances felt agonizingly slow. I could hear the Princess's breath, as well as my own heartbeat.

The grip on his sword tightened, while the mana coalescing in my mana sword grew more concentrated.

The Princess, acting as the referee, raised her hand and glanced at both of us.

"Now then, begin!" she announced, bringing her hand down.

With that cue, we both dashed forward.

Chapter 176: King's Game, Part 3 (6)

The moment we closed in on each other, our swords clashed. The sharp sound of metal meeting, one blade real and the other made from concentrated mana, echoed through the air. When our blades collided, I felt the full force of his strike firsthand. So this was the power of someone trained in swordsmanship since childhood, huh? Just as expected of the Sword Saint's son.

Despite his strength, I stood my ground. As soon as I created some distance between us, I stepped back, but Johanne was right on my heels, relentless in his pursuit. Closing in again, he launched another slash at me, which I managed to block. I countered with a sideways strike, expecting him to retreat, but instead, he countered with a sidelong sweep of his own.

His reaction time was impressive, far beyond what I had anticipated. And his footwork was impeccable. It was hard to believe this guy was only 19.

Typically, mastering a single sword style takes around ten years, but as I observed Johanne's movements, it became evident that he hadn't just mastered one, but four distinct styles. One prioritized defense, another focused on relentless offense, one aimed at swift and decisive strikes, while the last integrated the surrounding environment seamlessly into combat.

Each style showcased Johanne's remarkable talent and versatility in swordfighting.

However, even with his impressive skill set, he couldn't best me. Despite only wielding one sword style, I had refined it to perfection, crafting it into my own unique creation. This was more than just a technique—it was an extension of myself, a lethal art form honed to flawlessness.

When Johanne realized he couldn't gain an edge against me, he backed off and closed his eyes. The moment he reopened them, I could feel mana emanating from him. It wasn't chaotic, but it was definitely stronger than usual. Johanne had unleashed his skill, Limit Breaker, in our duel. That meant things just got serious.

We clashed again and again, and I soon realized just how powerful his Limit Breaker truly was. It shattered all his limitations and unleashed his true potential. Normally, humans are held back by limiters in their bodies, but with Johanne's Limit Breaker, he could tap into his full power. With this, his swordsmanship reached heights even greater than before.

We grew faster and faster in our swings, the clang of our swords echoing relentlessly through the air. Our strikes were so rapid that before one sound faded, another strike followed. It was as if our swings surpassed the speed of sound itself. Yet, despite our escalating pace, neither of us faltered or showed signs of exhaustion.

There was no need for words. Just strike, block, swing, and parry. We continued without pause, leaving the Princess speechless at the sheer speed of our movements. I had never before showcased such mastery of swordsmanship, and it felt exhilarating to unleash half of my true skill in combat for the first time.

However, like all fights, this one had to come to an end as well. So, I aimed my sword at the weak joint where a sword typically lacked force, knowing a strike there would force Johanne to release his grip. Sure enough, his sword flew out of his hand, spinning through the air before clattering to the ground.

There was no need for this final move since Johanne was already disarmed and defeated, but I couldn't resist pointing my sword toward him.

"That's enough!" the Princess declared, bringing an end to the duel. "Leon is the victor!"

In that moment, a metallic chime reverberated in my head, signaling the fulfillment of one of Johanne's requirements.

--

You've captured the interest of Johanne. You can now proceed to dominate her.

Name: Johanne Whitlock

Race: Human

Requirements to dominate Johanne:

1. Win against Johanne in a duel (Completed!)

2. Kiss another girl in front of Johanne

3. Unlock

4. Unlock

....

--

What the heck? Johanne's requirements for domination are raising some eyebrows. I mean, was Johanne really a guy? His domination checklist is throwing me off, but I can't deny I've seen firsthand evidence of his manhood. But still, what the hell?

Anyway, dwelling on that isn't getting me anywhere.

I sheathed my mana sword and observed as Johanne deactivated his Limit Break and retrieved his own sword. With a grateful expression, he then approached me.

"Thanks for indulging me in that, Leon," he said. "I've got to hand it to you, you're good with a sword. I'm no slouch myself, so I can spot talent when I see it. Your sparring match with Miss Zeruel was nothing short of impressive, and this duel, along with that fight against the Prince, confirmed it for me. I'd love to pick your brain for some pointers on how to improve my own skills."

What do you say, Leon?"

So, he's asking me to train him. I've gotta say, Johanne's swordsmanship is pretty damn impressive. If he keeps at it, he could easily climb up the ranks and be among the top ten strongest swordsmen. I'm genuinely intrigued to see just how far he can push himself and what his true potential is, even without tapping into his Limit Breaker.

I'm itching to offer him some pointers, but I can't shake the feeling that I might not be the right person to mentor him.

"I'm not really much of a teacher," I admitted.

"Aw, come on, man," he chuckled. "I'm not asking you to tutor me or anything. Just give me some advice here and there, tell me what I'm lacking. That's all I'm after, just your input."

Well, if he only wanted my advice, then I guess I could give it a shot.

"Alright," I conceded. "But don't expect too much. I'm not exactly known for my sage wisdom," I warned.

With that, we shook hands, sealing our agreement.

After our duel, we returned to where the others were gathered. Upon our arrival, we found Hereon on the ground, kneeling, with Shredica holding a blade dangerously close to his throat. Hertrude swept her hand and declared, "The winner is Shredica!"

"Wait, were they having a duel too?" the Princess asked, clearly confused.

The three of us approached them, and as we drew nearer, we overheard Hereon click his tongue and concede, "Fine. You win."

Turning to Hertrude, I inquired, "What's going on?"

"Oh, Shredica and Hereon were in deep discussion about what it would take for one of them to concede and let the other win in the game. Since the King's Game is meant to have only one victor, they decided to settle it with a duel. And I, well, I ended up being appointed as the overseer," Hertrude explained.

"Really?" I responded, intrigued. So, that meant Shredica emerged as the victor of the game. Good for her, I suppose. And good for both of us. With this outcome, we were safe from being expelled from the academy. "It's quite surprising that you ended up as the overseer.

You seemed rather disinterested in this whole affair."

A faint blush tinted Hertrude's cheeks. "I'm not that disinterested. I'm just like any other woman my age. Some things do excite us, after all," she confessed.

I cast a sidelong glance at Shredica. She remained unchanged, a constant presence in my life. Funny how I never planned on getting entangled with her, yet here we were, partners in crime of sorts. Our unlikely alliance stemmed from her blackmailing me. As for her relentless pursuit of becoming a magic knight, it remained a mystery to me.

But one thing was certain: Shredica was destined to be the protagonist of this tale.

Every captivating story demands a villain, and I willingly accepted that role. However, for now, I would bide my time and observe her journey. Despite her limited character growth, the joy radiating from Shredica's face now spoke volumes. With each step she took toward her goal, her determination shone through.

And though my disdain for Shredica ran deep, I couldn't deny the sense of happiness that welled within me for her triumph.

We all headed to the port and decided to call it quits on the game. Everyone, except Shredica, that is. She was officially declared the winner and given an audience with the King to make a wish. However, there were some limits. The King could only grant wishes within his power, and since he wasn't the direct boss of the magic knights, Shredica couldn't wish to become one.

But she could request a meeting with the Headmaster of the Academy. From there, she could ask for a promotion from her current rank above bronze or at least put a stop to the administration blocking her path to higher ranks above bronze.

Shredica was slowly but steadily working towards her goal. It would take another three years before she finally achieved her dream of becoming one of the magic knights.

But that's a story for another time. With that settled, the King's game finally came to an end.

Chapter 177: Epilogue 3 - Next Stage (1)

When I returned to Leonamon, I was incredibly horny. Can't blame a guy for that. I was bursting with energy, the kind of guy who could go all night without stopping, leaving five women knocked out cold. Yeah, I was overflowing with energy, so not getting any action for three days straight had me feeling pent up. I needed to fuck. And I needed it now.

The moment I stepped into the office where I usually checked on the company's status, Maya was there, as always, holding a bottle of wine.

"Welcome back, Master," she greeted me with a bow.

"Is anyone else free right now, Maya?" I inquired.

"Uh, I think Miss Amon is tied up with preparations for the Idol group's tour, and Miss Gabrielle seems to be occupied with something in the Duchy of Sierra. The other girls are busy with their own tasks at the company. Um, do you need something from someone, Master?" Maya responded.

So, none of the girls were available at the moment, huh?

"Well, are you free right now, Maya?" I asked.

"I..." When I said that she instantly blushed. It seemed that she knew what I came here for. "I'm always available for you to be take, Master."

With a sultry movement, she lifted her skirt, revealing her tantalizing thighs wrapped in white stockings. The creamy, voluptuous flesh spilled over the edges of the stockings, adding to her seductive allure. The stockings climbed upward, meeting a delicate lace garter belt that accentuated her curves, leading the eye to her pristine white underwear.

Maya exuded undeniable sex appeal, her busty figure belying her age. It was impossible not to feel a surge of arousal at the sight.

"Now, Maya, place your hands on the table and turn your ass towards me," I commanded.

"Yes!" she eagerly agreed, ready to fulfill my desires.

She obeyed my command, turning around and placing her hands on the table as instructed. Slowly, I shed my clothes and approached her, my dick proudly standing at attention. It had been days since it last tasted freedom from its constraints, and now it throbbed with anticipation, eager to penetrate a warm, inviting hole once more.

Just as we were about to proceed, the door swung open, interrupting us.

"Maya, is Master here?!" The voice belonged to Sandra.

"Oh, Sandra?" I greeted, turning my head to look at her over my shoulder. "You're back from your mission, I see?"

"Master!" she immediately went in and hugged from behind. "I'm so glad to finally see you! Listen to this. We—"

"How about we discuss that in the Dungeon?" I suggested. "You, me, and Maya over there?"

"R-Right now? But I haven't washed yet," Sandra hesitated.

"Don't worry about that," I reassured her, glancing at Maya. "Are you fine with that arrangement, Maya?"

"I'm fine with it," Maya affirmed, turning around to face us.

I glanced at Sandra's domination requirements, contemplating our next move.

--

You've captured the interest of Sandra. You can now proceed to dominate her.

Name: Sandra

Race: Human-Beast Hybrid

Requirements to dominate Sandra:

1. Have sex with Sandra and stop the effects of the aphrodisiacs (Completed!)
2. Give Sandra a job (Completed!)

3. Purchase a dog's collar for Sandra (Completed!)

4. Participate in a threesome or more with Sandra (Completed!)

5. Bring Sandra to climax five times in a row without allowing yourself to reach completion (Completed!)

6. Appoint Sandra as the leader of a significant endeavor (Completed!)

7. Arrange for Sandra to observe you fucking another girl while she's bound and restrained

8. Unlock

9. Unlock

10. Unlock

--

With my decision made, I led them both to the basement to continue our session.

"Sandra, go to that cross, and I'll tie you up," I instructed.

"You want to fuck me while I'm restrained?" Sandra's excitement was palpable in her eyes. She was a huge masochist, and S&M sex was right up her alley. She was the type of woman who would cum from being deflowered, after all.

With that, she eagerly stripped down to her last piece of clothing. It had been days since I last saw Sandra's body, and the sight of her naked form ignited a fire within me. I couldn't wait to be inside her pussy once again. Her arousal was evident, her pussy dripping with honey as she eagerly anticipated our encounter.

I kissed her lips hungrily, my tongue exploring the depths of her mouth. Maya, eager for action herself and now stripped down to her undergarments, embraced me from behind, pressing her ample breasts against my back as she began licking my neck.

With attention divided between them, I positioned Sandra on the X-cross. Securing her wrists and ankles to the cross, I observed the hunger in her eyes with amusement.

I chuckled at her enthusiasm, but we were just getting started. It wouldn't be wise to start fucking just yet. After all, there was still plenty of time to explore.

"Maya," I addressed her, still feeling her tongue on my neck.

"Yes, Master," she replied eagerly.

Without needing to be told, Maya dropped to her knees in front of me.

"Master?" Sandra looked confused.

"Relax, Sandra," I reassured her. "You'll get your turn. But for now, how about you enjoy watching me fuck Maya?"

"W-What...? B-But Master, I thought..."

"No can do. Maya was here first, you know. Gotta prioritize her," I explained. "Come on, Maya, suck my dick."

With that, Maya gently enveloped my dick with one hand and began stroking it. Her technique was a bit clumsy, but it felt nice nonetheless. As she stroked, she licked the tip, eliciting a soft moan from me. Sandra watched with an envious gaze.

"Don't worry, Sandra," I assured her. "Your turn will come soon enough. Now, Maya, why don't you place your hand against the cross and present your ass to me again?"

Maya obeyed, standing up and turning to face the cross. As she placed her hands on the cross, her voluptuous breasts pressed against Sandra's stomach, eliciting a soft gasp from her. Her ass was just as curvaceous as her breasts, and a cute little ram tail peeked out from the top of her white underwear. The fabric was soaked at the base, a clear indication of her arousal.

Locking eyes with Sandra, Maya conveyed a mixture of excitement and desire through her gaze, igniting a spark of envy in Sandra's eyes.

Meanwhile, I positioned myself behind Maya, my fingers trailing teasingly over her body before slipping beneath her soaked underwear. Her pussy welcomed me eagerly, the slick walls yielding to my touch without resistance.

"Nnnhh~"

A soft moan escaped Maya's lips as pleasure surged through her, her tail wagging excitedly in response. Her eyes, filled with lust and longing, met Sandra's gaze, silently inviting her to share in the pleasure.

Withdrawing my finger, I shifted aside the fabric covering Maya's dripping pussy, exposing her glistening folds to the cool air. My cock throbbed with anticipation as I aimed it at her moist entrance, ready to plunge deep into her waiting depths.

I inched forward, savoring the sensation of her velvety folds parting to accommodate my girth.

"Nnnnh... ahh..."

It was as if my dick was a searing blade, effortlessly slicing through molten butter. The heat radiating from Maya's pussy was intoxicating, enveloping me in a haze of lust. With each inch I penetrated, the world around us faded away, leaving only the primal connection between us.

As my tip fully plunged into her depths, I abandoned her waist, opting instead to grasp her horns firmly.

"Ahh, M-Master..." Maya's voice quivered with anticipation, her body trembling beneath my touch.

With a firm grip on her horns, I unleashed a powerful thrust, driving my cock deep into her core in one swift, decisive motion.

"Nhaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa?! Aaah, ah, ah, ahhhhhhh!"

A primal scream tore from her throat as I buried myself deep inside her in a single stroke.

"Does that feel good, Maya?" I grunted.

"Auuu... i-it feels so goood.... hiinh, ah, ah, ahh..." she moaned in response.

Listening to her moans only fueled my arousal, so I pounded into her even harder. With Maya no longer a virgin and familiar with my roughness in bed, I wasted no time in ramping up the intensity.

"Ahh... Yes, Master... I-It feels so good when you... ah... when you go rougher in me.... Ahhhh, fuahhh, nhii...!" she cried out in pleasure.

With each forceful thrust, Maya's body was pushed forward, her curves rippling like waves. She pressed even closer against Sandra, who watched with envy.

"Nhhh, ahhh! Aaahi,aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!!!" Maya's cries reached a fever pitch as I continued thrusting into her.

Her voice suddenly shifted in tone, her eyes tightly shut and her teeth clenched. Both hands gripped the cross she held as if for dear life, while her vaginal walls tightened around my dick, urging me to release my seed into her. It was too early for me to cum, but after three days without release, my body demanded satisfaction.

"Are you going to cum, Maya?" I asked her, feeling the pressure building.

"Yes, ahhh! M-Master, I'm going to cum! I'm cumming!" she gasped out.

"I'm going to fill you with my seed, okay? Enjoy every drop," I instructed her.

With a punishing thrust, I slammed into her, causing her body to lurch forward and press even closer against Sandra.

"I-I'm cumming! Cumming! Cumming, cumming, cumming, cumming, cumming! Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhh!" Maya screamed at the top of her lungs, her back arching as her vaginal walls clenched tightly around my cock.

With a grunt, I released my first load of semen inside her.

"Fuaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhh!"

The hot torrent surged forth, swirling around the base of my cock before flowing deep inside her.

"Uah... ah, it's so hot, ah, ah, ahh, hyaaa!" Maya moaned in pleasure as she felt my warmth flooding her insides.

After filling Maya with my semen, I heard a metallic sound within my head. That meant the 7th requirement for dominating Sandra was complete. At the same time, her 8th requirement had been unlocked:

8. Fuck Sandra in S&M roleplay.

And it was an easy one to fulfill.

Chapter 178: Epilogue 3 - Next Stage (2)

I gently pulled my throbbing dick out of Maya's slick pussy, releasing my grip on her horns. As I withdrew, she sank to her knees, her trembling butt a testament to the intensity of her climax. From her glistening pussy, a torrent of creamy semen spilled forth, cascading like a pristine fountain of desire—a breathtaking sight to behold.

After a moment, Maya regained her composure and sat upright, her lips curling into a sultry smile as she reached for my still-aching member. With eager determination, she licked and sucked away the traces of semen. Sandra watched us with envy in her eyes, but there was something more there—lust. She too was quivering, as if she'd just had an orgasm.

"Sandra, did you cum just from watching us?" I asked, a grin spreading across my face.

Sandra seemed embarrassed by the admission, but she eventually nodded. She was a true masochist through and through. Just the sight of me fucking another girl in front of her was enough to make her cum.

"Did you enjoy watching us?" I asked.

She nodded again, "Yes, Master. When you were fucking her, I felt jealous, but at the same time, it was incredibly hot," she confessed.

"Well, well, well, look who's getting all lewd," I teased. After Maya had thoroughly cleaned my cock, I approached the bound Sandra. "Do you want to feel my dick impaling you while you're strapped to that cross, your limbs spread apart, wrists and ankles restrained? You won't be able to do anything except take it and moan," I offered, a wicked grin playing on my lips.

"Y-Yes, please..." she whimpered, her beautiful pussy now dripping with arousal, juices flowing freely down her thighs and onto the floor.

"Maya, fetch a leather whip from the closet. Oh, and bring me a ball-gag, a feather, a candle, and a blindfold while you're at it," I instructed.

"As you wish, Master," Maya responded obediently, rising from her seat to retrieve the requested items.

"M-Master...?" Sandra's voice trembled with anticipation, a mixture of anxiety and excitement palpable in her tone.

"This is what you want, isn't it?" I affirmed, my gaze locking with hers as I prepared to indulge her desires.

Sandra nodded eagerly.

"Well, you'll get it. Consider it a reward for your... loyalty to me," I declared. My hands found the back of her neck, pulling her into a deep kiss. After our lips had explored each other's for a few tantalizing moments, I pulled back and asked, "By the way, what did you want to tell me earlier?"

"Oh, right," she replied, her expression shifting from debauched to serious in an instant. Sandra was like Gabrielle in that regard—she knew when to prioritize business over pleasure. "We had a meeting with the leader of the communist party, the Silver Blades..."

I spoke with their leader, and one of the Fangs, the Red Lioness as we call her in the Black Market, mentioned she wants to speak with Mephisto. She wants to talk to you, Master."

"Oh..."

I recalled the woman well. That fiery redhead named Eris—leader of the Silver Blades.

"And what does she want to talk to me about?"

"About Moriarty, Master."

Now she had my attention.

"Moriarty?"

"Yes. From what I've gathered, nobody wants anything to do with that guy. They say his network is so vast, it's hard to tell friend from foe. The Red Lioness wants to meet with you because she's heard rumors of your clash with Moriarty. I think she's gearing up to take him down, sensing trouble on the horizon with him at the center of it all."

I knew Moriarty posed a serious threat—not just to the Black Market, but to the world at large. His skill in manipulation was unparalleled, as evidenced by his ability to ensnare even the prince. What's more, he'd managed to uncover my where I lived and true identity. Moriarty wasn't someone to be underestimated. I needed to take this seriously.

If Eris wanted my help to take him down, then I was all ears.

"I assumed as much, Master that since you're always so busy, I told her that if she wanted your time, she'd have to offer something in return," Sandra remarked, a sly grin playing on her lips. "That's why I made it clear to her that if she wants to meet with you, Master, she'll need to bring something to the table."

"And what might that be?" I inquired.

"Her body, of course," Sandra replied. "When I suggested it, she looked at me with disgust, but ultimately agreed. It was the first time I saw her vulnerability. She always acted so high and mighty, you know? And she played up the whole 'lesbian' persona to ward off men, but in reality, she was just a scared virgin kitten hiding behind a facade.

I thought she could be a valuable ally, an intellectual one at that, so I thought you might be interested, Master."

So Sandra wanted me to assert my dominance over Eris? That didn't sound too bad. I'd heard plenty of rumors about Eris myself—mostly negative, but sometimes, you find a gem among the rubble.

"Well done, Sandra. As expected of my loyal slut," I praised, before capturing her lips with my own once more.

Sandra looked incredibly sexy in her restrained state, her limbs spread wide, wrists and ankles bound, her golden pubic hair matching the locks on her head, her pussy exposed for my pleasure. With a ball gag muffling her moans and a blindfold hiding her sight, she was completely at my mercy. Maya stood nearby, ready to assist me in ensuring Sandra's experience would be unforgettable.

"Maya, hand me the whip," I commanded.

"Yes, Master," Maya complied.

She passed me the whip.

The whip resembled a horse's tail, but it was crafted from a rubber-like leather material. It was designed to deliver intense pain without leaving any lasting marks.

"Now then, let's get started, shall we?" I declared.

With a flick of my wrist, I delivered the first slap to her thigh.

"Auuuu...!" Sandra's cry echoed through the room as her thigh reddened from the impact. I continued to administer slaps, each one leaving a beautiful red mark on her skin.

Sandra seemed ecstatic, despite the blindfold covering her eyes and the gag muffling her cries. It was clear she was enjoying every moment of it, her body reacting with pleasure as she squirmed and even squirted from the stimulation.

After that, I decided to up the ante by bringing out the candle. I asked Maya to light it up, then I twisted the cross so she was restrained lying down instead of vertically. I ran the candle along her body, letting the melted wax drip onto her skin. Every drop made her shiver and moan, clearly enjoying the sensation. But we weren't finished yet.

After making her body hypersensitive from the pain, it was time to switch things up. Enter: the feather.

Pain and tickling both amp up those nerve endings big time. Plus, since she couldn't see what I was up to, her skin was on high alert from the anticipation.

After that, I rotated the cross again so she was lying vertically. I played with her breasts, squeezing them in my hands and sucking on them one by one until I left my mark on them. Once that was done, I positioned my dick at her entrance. She was so wet that with just a little movement, I could slide right in.

"Mmmfff... mfffffff!!!"

As I plunged my dick inside her, she let out a loud muffled scream, and her pussy squirted juices everywhere.

Sandra's insides were drenched, almost unbelievably so. It felt like I was delving into a cavern slick with moisture, the sensation so intense that there was scarcely any friction at all.

How many times had this woman cum?

"Mmmmm...! Mnnn..."

I kept pounding her while she was tied to the cross. I stared at her face as I thrust, even though I couldn't see it through the blindfold, I could tell she was loving it. And I was loving it too, which is why I picked up the pace.

The sounds of flesh slapping and muffled moans filled the room. I also heard a moan from behind me. Maya, who had been following my orders, was masturbating while watching us, wearing a totally debauched expression. I silently ordered her to join us with just a look.

She came up to me, starting by licking my nipple while gazing up at me with those cute eyes. I couldn't resist pulling her in by her silver hair for a kiss. Our tongues danced together, exchanging saliva as I continued thrusting into Sandra, who was climaxing with each movement.

While pounding Sandra, I couldn't help but start fingering Maya's pussy. She was still dripping wet, so my finger slid in effortlessly. I fingered her while fucking Sandra, and it felt like a connection was forming between us as I sensed their pussies tightening around my fingers and dick.

"Nnnhh... mmmm!"

"Ahhh, mnnn...!"

I pounded Sandra even harder while my fingers delved deeper into Maya's soaking pussy, the sensation sending waves of pleasure coursing through me. I could feel the tension building in my loins, the anticipation of release mounting with each thrust and stroke. We were all on the brink of ecstasy, teetering on the edge of that euphoric climax.

And then, it happened. With a primal roar, I let go, releasing everything I had pent up inside me.

"MmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmMmmmmMmMmmMmmmmmm!!!"

"MnnnnnnNnnnNnNnNnnnnN!!!"

With that, Sandra's 8th requirement was fulfilled, and now it was onto the 9th.

9. Double Penetrate Sandra

Chapter 179: Epilogue 3 - Next Stage (3)

Maya lay on the bed wearing a strap-on dildo, while Sandra hovered uncertainly above her.

"Am... Am I really gonna do this, Master?" Sandra asked, her voice tinged with uncertainty.

The strap-on Maya wore wasn't as big as mine, but it was enough to reach her cervix in a cowgirl position. Sandra would take it in her pussy while I fucked her ass. It was a shame I didn't have an extra dick to double penetrate her myself, but this would do.

"Yes," I replied. "Lower yourself onto that dildo, and I'll take you from the rear," I said, touching her anus. It quivered with anticipation.

Sandra followed my instructions, guiding the strap-on dildo to her pussy and slowly easing herself onto it.

"Ahhh..." Sandra moaned, her body trembling as the dildo slid all the way in, causing her juices to overflow around it. As it reached the hilt, she arched her back in pleasure.

Meanwhile, I licked my forefinger before sliding it into her asshole. It wasn't Sandra's first time with anal, but since she wasn't quite a pro yet, getting it nice and wet was essential.

"Nnng..."

Sandra's back arched even more as my finger entered her tight hole.

"Do you like that?" I asked.

"Y-Yes," she replied.

"Well, you're gonna love what's coming next because something a lot thicker is about to enter you," I said. "Now, lean forward and give me good access to your ass."

With those words, Sandra leaned forward, pressing her breasts against Maya's voluptuous chest. Both women had curves in all the right places. It was hard for me not to get excited just thinking about having these two women all to myself.

I ran my hand along the connection of her pussy and the dildo, scooping up some of her juices. Then, I rubbed her wetness all over my dick, ensuring every inch was coated for smooth entry into her ass. It acted as a natural lubricant, perfect for what was to come. Once I'd smeared every nook and cranny of my cock with her juices, I aimed the tip at her eagerly awaiting asshole.

I pushed forward, and the tip slid inside.

"Nghhh!"

Her ass was incredibly tight, making entry a challenge. But little by little, I made progress. Inch by inch, my dick penetrated her, feeling the resistance slowly give way. There was something else I could feel too—a sensation of my dick and the dildo inside her hitting together, even though they were in separate holes.

"Ahhh, M-Master... I..."

"Does it feel good?" I asked. I could sense her pleasure, but I needed to be sure. "Having two dicks inside you, I mean?"

"I-It feels amazing..." she replied, her tongue starting to loll out of her mouth and her eyes rolling upward. "I'm being fucked in both holes... Ahh..."

Turning to Maya, I instructed her, "Sync your hips with mine, got it?"

"Yes, Master," Maya replied obediently.

"Ahhh, yesss..." Sandra moaned, the pleasure evident in her voice as she was filled from both ends. Each thrust sent waves of ecstasy coursing through her body, driving her closer and closer to the edge of bliss.

Maya matched my rhythm perfectly, her movements synchronized with mine as we worked together to bring Sandra to the peak of pleasure. The room was filled with the sounds of our moans and the slick, rhythmic slapping of flesh against flesh, creating an intoxicating symphony of desire.

"Gnnnh... Mmmmh! Ahhh, ahhh, nooo, ahhh. It feels so good! It feels so good, it feels so good. I'm cumming, cumming, cumming, cumming!!!"

Sandra's moans grew louder and more desperate with each thrust, her body trembling with overwhelming sensations. The feeling of being completely filled, of being taken so thoroughly by both of us, pushed her arousal to new heights.

"Nnnggh...! Ahhh, fuaah, nnhhh, aaAaaahhhHhhnnn~!!!"

With every movement, she felt herself teetering on the edge of climax, the pleasure building and building until it felt like she couldn't hold back any longer. Her breath came in short, ragged gasps as she surrendered herself fully to the pleasure, lost in the intoxicating ecstasy of being double penetrated.

After a while, I unloaded my cum deep inside her ass. As I did, her 9th requirement was fulfilled. Simultaneously, her 10th and final domination requirement appeared:

10. Bring Sandra to climax ten times in a row without allowing yourself to reach completion (0/10)

It seemed entirely achievable in our current state.

Four hours had passed since I began my intense session with Sandra. With her domination nearly complete, I decided there was no better time than now to assert my dominance over her. Currently, I had her in a mating press position, folding her in half with her feet resting on my shoulders as I relentlessly pounded her with my dick.

"Aaaahhhh! M-Master, I'm... I'm!!!"

"Are you gonna cum again? Then do it!" I encouraged her, thrusting into her relentlessly, hitting her cervix with each stroke.

"Ahhhh! Cumming!"

Her eyes rolled back until they were all white. She seemed to be on the verge of losing consciousness, her body twitching uncontrollably. I grabbed her legs and pounded her like a pile driver, determined to make her climax for the fifth time. But it was only halfway through her requirement. This was proving to be my toughest challenge yet.

If I came before she reached ten orgasms, we'd have to start over from scratch. And when she was on her sixth climax, I couldn't hold back any longer and released my load, resetting the count back to zero.

I realized it was tough to make her climax ten times without losing control myself. Now that we were back to square one, I had to start the whole process over again.

"Ahhh, M-Master, please... Ahh, no more... I'm... Ahhh..."

With the count resetting every time I came, it meant we had to repeat the cycle all over again. It was taking a toll on Sandra, pushing her to her limits. The number of orgasms she'd had was probably equivalent to the number of fingers and toes combined. It was an insane amount of pleasure, and the bed was drenched with evidence of our intense session.

Despite her pleas for mercy, I pressed on. I had to keep going, driven by the need to acquire more skills. The threats were mounting—Moriarty, the commander of the Magic Knight Lilia, and the seven princesses of Hell Elise mentioned were all out to get me. My enemies were multiplying, and I needed to be prepared. So, even though I felt sorry for Sandra, I continued to pound her relentlessly.

Maya also lent a hand in bringing Sandra pleasure, masturbating her clit and suckling her tits to help her reach climax more easily.

After a while, I finally achieved it. When she orgasmed for the tenth time, I pulled out my cock and spurted my sperm all over her body. At the same time, I heard a different metallic chime, one that I wasn't used to hearing often like the chime that accompanied gaining the interest of women or completing domination requirements.

Curious, I looked and saw this.

You've successfully dominated Sandra. You've acquired her skill, Lady Luck.

Lady Luck (Upgraded) - A skill that passively triggers, enabling the user to narrowly escape certain death. User's mana doesn't deplete when this skill is used. However, Lady Luck can only be used three times a day. When the new day starts, the number of times Lady Luck can activate resets. This skill also increases the user's luck by 99% in gambling.

This was a significant upgrade to the skill. Unlike the original Lady Luck, which drained all your mana upon use and could only be used once per full mana cycle, this version doesn't deplete mana and can be used multiple times a day. Waiting for mana recovery was a hassle with the original, but with this upgraded version, it resets daily, which is much more convenient.

Plus, the added luck boost in gambling makes it even more valuable.

While pondering the many possibilities of using my new skills, I heard another chime. It caught my attention, so I checked it.

You have gained three skills. Your skill, the Succubus Goddess's Heir, is metamorphosing.

Metamorphosing completed.

The Succubus Goddess's Heir has been upgraded. This allows you to communicate with the Succubus Goddess.

Do you want to talk to the Succubus Goddess?

Yes/No

What is this all about?

I accepted and suddenly felt like my brain had been transported to another dimension.

When I came to, I found myself on a beach—or rather, in the middle of the ocean. There was no shoreline in sight, just water all around me. I stood there alone, my feet touching the water's surface as if standing on solid ground. As I looked around, I spotted her.

A woman, small in stature, perhaps even smaller than Marie, but undeniably a woman. I could sense it from the energy she exuded. She wore a scanty black outfit that barely covered anything, revealing just enough to be tantalizing. Her hair was a deep, dark purple, adorned with two pairs of horns—demon horns, unlike Maya's ram horns.

That woman was seated at a table fit for a tea party, except this table was in the water, as if the ocean itself was the floor.

As if she had just noticed my arrival, the woman turned to me with the widest grin I'd ever seen, revealing teeth that were noticeably sharp and angular.

"Oh." she exclaimed. "Thou hast finally arrived here, little one!"

Chapter 180: Epilogue 3 - Next Stage (4)

"Be seated, little one, and join me for a spot of tea," the woman smiled at me, her appearance reminiscent of a succubus. It was clear she was the Goddess of the Succubus.

Still, I needed to confirm if she truly resided within the skill. "Are you the Succubus Goddess?"

The woman chuckled. "Aye, that title hath been mine for far too long, though it feels strange to be addressed as such now. But indeed, I am she. No need to be so formal, little one. Thou canst simply call me Lilith."

"Lilith."

The name sparked a memory. Lilith was rumored to be the Church's nemesis, the demon empress herself. So she was also the Goddess of the Succubus, eh?

"Finally, thou hast arrived. I've waited eighteen years for thee to come hither, thou knowest? I cannot believe it hath taken thee eighteen years to conquer three women," she said with a resigned sigh. "I understand thou taketh thy time, fearing to make a misstep, but 'tis rather frustrating. I have longed to converse with thee for a great while."

"I see..." I replied. "If you've been inside me for 18 years, does that mean you know my past life?"

"Hmm? Oh, indeed I do. I am the one who hath reincarnated thee, after all."

I had already figured as much. My skill was awakened even before I arrived in this world. That meant this woman was likely the one who bestowed upon me the skill, and the likelihood of her being the one to reincarnate me here was high too. This confirmed my suspicions.

"What do you wish to converse about?" I inquired.

"Come hither first. Partake of tea with me."

I obeyed her command, seating myself at one of the chairs arranged around the table. Suddenly, a teacup filled with tea materialized before me, conjured with a snap of her fingers.

I took the cup and brought it to my lips. The tea... was exquisite. Whether it was real or illusory, I couldn't discern, but it was undeniably delicious.

"What exactly is this place?"

"'Tis the spiritual realm of thee, little one," she replied. "Here lies the depths of thy consciousness. And here do I dwell as well."

She took a sip of her tea, then regarded me with a mischievous glint in her eye. She seemed like the final boss of some fantasy world, or perhaps the harbinger of apocalypse. Yet, not quite as dire. If I were to place her in a fantasy story, she'd be like the final boss of an eroge game.

"Well, now, since time is short, I shall impart upon thee some wisdom," she spoke.

"What is it?" I straightened up involuntarily, sensing seriousness in her tone.

"It's nothing too grave, rather more of an advice," she explained. "Little one, I require a favor from thee."

She smiled at me, a proud motherly expression crossing her face.

"Just as thou hast saved those women, save me as well, alright?"

With that, I felt my consciousness return.

I awoke to the sight of the sun rising on the horizon. Two women were using my arms as pillows, sound asleep. I couldn't blame them. After the night we had, it was no surprise they were out cold.

Normally, I'd wait for them to wake and suggest a morning session, but strangely, my libido wasn't cooperating. My member showed no sign of life. I just wasn't in the mood. Perhaps it was because that voice was still echoing in my head.

What was that all about? Why did Lilith tell me that? I had no clue, but it felt like something significant was on the horizon. I didn't know where the feeling came from, but my gut instincts had never steered me wrong before. How was I supposed to save Lilith? What could I even do to rescue her?

She didn't provide any specifics, just a plea for salvation. Maybe if I dominated another group of women, I could commune with her again and gain more insight. Yet, I couldn't rush into dominating women just to satisfy my curiosity. Like any relationship, it needed to be built on a solid foundation. Blindly dominating women for the sake of conversing with Lilith would be despicable.

That wasn't the kind of person I wanted to be.

I needed to investigate this matter further, but in a different manner.

That afternoon, news reached me. The nobles' dirty laundry was now on full display, with Duke Sierra himself in the headline. It was a massive scandal. This meant that Gabrielle had finally taken down the nobles. The revolution would soon begin.

James's POV

News spread rapidly about the downfall of Duke Sierra's family, shaking the entire kingdom to its core. People voiced their dissatisfaction and disappointment, protesting for the Duchy to be stripped of its position. Crowds gathered outside the Duke's estate, shouting and brandishing torches. Despite the dark night, the multitude of torches illuminated the scene, revealing countless angry faces.

From my vantage point, I could see the mass of people below, all chanting "traitor."

Duke Sierra had been exposed as a human trafficker and rapist. For years, he had deceived his subjects, kidnapping women from his own Duchy, assaulting them, and selling them into prostitution.

The news about him was so vile, you couldn't even see him as human anymore. He was nothing but trash, garbage that needed to be thrown aside. It was astonishing that his knights still protected his estate and himself, pushing back the enraged civilians from attempting to breach the gates. Though, I wouldn't be surprised if these knights were also involved in the rape and kidnapping of the daughters.

The Duke couldn't have done it alone, after all.

They were outnumbered, and it was only a matter of time before the citizens breached the gates.

"How long have you been deceiving us, Duke?! You've been lying to all of us this whole time, promising to find my daughter! But it's been you this whole time who kidnapped her?! How dare you do that to my daughter?!"

"That lying, evil, sniveling piece of shit doesn't deserve to be called the Duke. He raped our daughters and sold them into prostitution! Someone as trashy as him doesn't deserve any title!"

"Traitor!"

"Traitor!"

The citizens were seething with rage, a natural response given the circumstances. I couldn't blame them; I'd be just as furious if it happened to me.

As I observed the tumultuous scene below, I pondered the cause. If I had to guess, it could possibly be linked to Mephisto. I didn't have any concrete evidence, just my gut feeling to rely on. But confirmation might come soon enough, possibly from someone. And that someone arrived after a while.

"You seem rather melancholy, James," someone said from behind me.

Instead of turning to face the person, I kept my gaze fixed below.

"It's only natural to feel melancholy when witnessing something like this, great aunt," I replied, addressing her as such. "Anyway, do you think Mephisto has anything to do with this?"

"Mephisto's not the only one pulling strings, James," my great aunt remarked. "That man has many hands, just as many as yours. While Mephisto may have played a role in this, it wasn't his sole doing. Someone from within orchestrated this. Someone very cunning."

"Gabrielle, huh?" I muttered to myself. "That woman is truly troublesome. I'd love to take action against her, but with Mephisto protecting her, I'm limited in what I can do. I'm not eager to meet my end just yet."

"Well, that's a prudent choice. Despite my keen insight, I've never been able to fully grasp his true capabilities. It's like staring into the abyss. I must admit, he's quite resilient. If I'm not careful, I might find myself among those women fawning over him like he's a celebrity."

"You be careful around him, great aunt," I warned. "That man has the ability to ensnare women."

"I know," she replied. "That's why I'm wearing a skill negation on my person, so he can't use whatever his skill is on me."

Great aunt and I still hadn't uncovered his true skill, but if we had to guess, it involved ensnaring women.

"Now then, James," said great aunt. "How long do you plan on continuing all of this? It's been years since you started. Isn't it time for you to return home? To our world?"

"I still intend to build an empire in this world, great aunt," I explained. "After investing almost a century into this, I can't just quit. I'm not ready to go back yet."

"We're not immortal, James," she said solemnly. "Despite our skills making us seem immortal, we're not. We're just postponing our deaths. We can't die in a conventional manner, but we're still susceptible to death in other ways."

"I'm aware of that," I replied.

"Then why won't you return to our world, Jamie?" she pressed.

"Don't call me that, great aunt," I retorted, finally turning to face the diminutive woman who had been speaking to me. "I inhabit the body of a young boy now, so being called Jamie feels a bit odd. As for your insistence on my return, I won't go back until a future alongside him is secured."

"Just how long are you still going to keep averting your eyes from the truth, Jamie?" she persisted, using that name again. "How long will you hold on to that future? Tsubasa is already dead. Just accept reality."

"The only reality I accept is the one with him," I declared. "By conquering this world and unraveling its mysteries, I can have a future with him again."

With resolve, I turned away and gazed down at the crowd. Enveloping myself in darkness, I emerged transformed. My body felt different, taller and burdened with a weight around my chest. This was my true form. From this vantage point, I surveyed the people.

"Even if I have to eliminate everything and everyone in my path to secure a future with him, so be it."