

The World 281

Chapter 281: Fourth Campaign (2)

The next day, we climbed up the hill, shadows lengthening as we moved. Demon Hounds lunged at us sporadically, their attacks fierce but few in number, and we dispatched them swiftly. The one leading us, the captain, took the front as always.

We were heading toward the nearly demolished mansion, its presence radiating an intense demonic essence. It wasn't just a faint hint of malevolence; the dark aura was so potent it swirled around us like a churning storm cloud, suffocating in its intensity. Whatever lay inside was clearly something to dread.

"Alright, we're almost there," the commander said, her voice steady despite the oppressive atmosphere.

We pushed on, the demonic essence thickening with every step. Strangely, apart from the captain and me, none of the others seemed to sense the dense, suffocating aura that clung to us like a second skin.

Finally, we reached the mansion. It stood in a grotesque state of disrepair, its walls ensnared by thick, pulsating vines that seemed almost alive. The surface was smeared with eerie graffiti, the desperate markings of those who had survived the Ruination and made their way here.

"Something is inside there," the captain said, her voice strained. The oppressive demonic essence clinging to the mansion was clearly affecting her. "Let's investigate and find out what's going on."

We advanced cautiously. The entrance was choked with grotesque, veiny vines that coiled around the gate and fences like monstrous tendrils. Inside, the ground was a disturbing shade of red, completely

devoid of grass or any signs of life. The place felt unnervingly alien, as if we had crossed into a nightmarish dimension.

"Let's burn these vines," the captain said decisively, her voice cutting through the thick, suffocating air.

One of the women unleashed a torrent of fire from the flamethrower, the flames roaring as they licked across the gate. The vines reacted violently, writhing and thrashing as if in agony, and I could swear there was a faint, otherworldly scream woven into the crackling flames.

After what felt like an eternity, the vines finally gave way, collapsing into a heap of blackened, smoldering remains. We forced the gate open and stepped inside. The captain shot me a look, her eyes searching mine, almost as if she was silently asking if I sensed it too.

I could feel it. Beneath us, something alive was lurking in the depths. It wasn't breathing, but I could almost hear a heartbeat—deep, slow, and powerful—reverberating through the ground, shaking our boots with each pulse. We were standing on it.

Despite the unsettling sensation, we pressed on towards the mansion. Inside, it was a complete disaster. The room was stripped bare, with not a single piece of furniture left. Shattered pictures were strewn across the floor, their frames splintered and glass shattered. Beyond that, the space was desolate.

The stairs were crumbling halfway up, barely holding together, while the walls were festooned with the same sinister red, veiny vines that had gripped the exterior.

"This place... is unnervingly eerie," the captain said.

The other women murmured their agreement. This mansion felt like a grotesque slice of the demon realm had bled into our world, blending the two realities in a nightmarish fusion.

We pressed deeper into the mansion, encountering an array of bizarre and unexpected items scattered among the debris. A rusty motorcycle, choked with vines, lay abandoned in a corner, its metal frame corroded and entwined with the creeping, pulsating growths.

We finally reached what appeared to be the mansion's lobby, a grand and eerie space. The massive, curving staircase dominated the room, its wooden railings worn but still standing. A faded red carpet lay in the center, stretching upward along the stairs. Above us, a chandelier hung ominously, strangely intact but tilted as if it had seen too much.

But the dilapidated state of the lobby wasn't what held our gaze. No, it was the gigantic, pulsating eye embedded in the floor. It was alive, its massive pupil darting around, veins as thick as tree roots spreading out from it, anchoring it to the ground like a grotesque parasite.

"W-What is that?" The captain's voice cracked.

This was unlike anything we had ever encountered. Demon zombies could mutate into grotesque forms, but they never grew this large. The only thing we'd seen that came close was a massive centipede-like creature, but even that paled in comparison to this monstrous eye. It was incomprehensibly huge, a nightmare given form.

Then, that massive eye suddenly snapped its gaze toward us, moving unnervingly fast.

"Eeek!" one of the women shrieked as the eye locked onto us, its enormous pupil fixating on our group.

Without hesitation, I fired at it, but the bullets were useless—they just ricocheted off the surface like pebbles against steel. The others followed suit, unloading everything they had, but it was all in vain. Nothing we did made a difference.

Suddenly, the ground beneath us began to tremble violently. The floor quaked, sending us stumbling as the enormous eye started to lift itself from the floor, as if something far more monstrous was trying to break free.

"Get out of the mansion!" the captain shouted urgently.

I quickly activated a smoke bomb, hurling it toward the eye, and then sprinted after the others as we bolted for the exit. We scrambled outside and kept running.

"We can't take that thing down with just guns," the captain said, breathless. "We need to get back to the carrier and grab some tanks!"

Just as we thought we were escaping, the monster finally emerged from the ground, dragging the mansion along with it. Its tentacle-like limbs writhed grotesquely, and its gaping maw was lined with sharp, jagged teeth, ready to shred anything in its path.

"Raaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaghhhhhhh!"

The creature roared at us, the force of its breath hitting like a gust of wind, pushing us back slightly. It then raised several of its massive tentacles and began slamming them into the ground, each strike aimed directly at us, trying to crush us beneath them.

"Avoid the tentacles!" the captain yelled.

The tentacles smashed down with terrifying speed, and one of the women with us wasn't quick enough. She was crushed beneath the monstrous limb, her bones and blood splattering with a sickening crunch, the sound reminiscent of a tomato being squashed. Her scream, sharp and desperate, still lingered in the air as we ran.

But there was no time to mourn. The tentacles kept coming, each strike a deadly threat as we desperately dodged, trying to stay one step ahead of the creature's relentless assault.

We sprinted across the uneven terrain, the monster's tentacles relentlessly pursuing us. The ground shook with every crash, sending debris flying into the air. We zigzagged through the wreckage, trying to avoid the lethal swings of the monster's limbs. The creature seemed to grow more enraged, altering its attack patterns unpredictably.

One moment, the tentacles swept in wide arcs, smashing down with incredible force, while the next, they struck in rapid, erratic movements. It was as if the monster was adapting to our attempts to dodge, forcing us to stay constantly on the move.

"Split up!" the captain yelled, trying to direct our chaotic escape. "Keep it guessing!"

We scattered, each of us weaving through the debris-strewn battlefield. The monster's roars echoed around us, blending with the relentless thunder of its tentacles slamming into the ground. The air was thick with dust and the acrid smell of burning wreckage.

The creature's attacks became more sporadic, as if it was struggling to keep track of all our movements. But this also made it more dangerous; the swings were less predictable, and the ground became a maze of craters and jagged debris.

As I darted between the fallen remains of the mansion's facade, I saw one of the women get trapped by a particularly vicious tentacle. She was hurled into the air, her scream abruptly cut off as she was flung into the remains of a shattered column.

We regrouped momentarily, catching our breath. The captain, panting heavily, looked at us with determined eyes. "We need to get to the carrier, now! The tanks are our only hope!"

With the monster's relentless assault on our heels, we pushed forward, weaving through the tentacles' deadly swings. The creature seemed to sense our destination, and its attacks grew more frantic, trying to block our path.

Finally, the outline of the carrier came into view. It was so close now; we were almost there.

But before we could fully escape, a blinding pinprick of light suddenly streaked down from the sky. It struck the carrier with explosive force, and a brilliant white light burst outward, spreading like a nuclear detonation.

As the white light faded, all that remained was the massive mushroom cloud rising into the sky, a chilling testament to the destruction that had just occurred.

"My, my," a voice echoed from above. "I was curious why my dear Bruno is so vexed today. It appears there are some insignificant ants beneath us."

A woman descended from the sky, her scant clothing barely concealing her figure. Horns protruded from her forehead, and a tail swished behind her, while bat-like wings unfurled from her back. She regarded us with a mischievous glint, as though we were mere playthings.

"That's...!" The captain's eyes widened in shock.

"Oh? Do you recognize me?" she purred, her grin widening. "Naturally, I am your conqueror. It seems the other two are unfamiliar with me, but no matter. I shall introduce myself."

She twirled gracefully in the air and declared:

"I am Satania of Wrath, one of the Seven Princesses of Hell!"

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The woman introduced herself as Satania. I knew her from the reports—one of the Princesses of Hell who had laid waste to this world a century ago. She was said to be the most formidable of all the Princesses, with magical power and strength that surpassed any normal human's capacity.

The sheer ease with which she obliterated the carrier with what looked like a simple spell was a testament to her might. Even the usually brash captain was visibly shaken, her bravado melting away as she trembled in fear.

Satania descended to the ground, her smirk radiating a chilling confidence. To my surprise, she was smaller than I had expected. Her fangs gleamed wickedly, and her tail, moving with a sinuous grace, flicked back and forth.

"So these are the warriors who've been slaying our soldiers, hmm?" she purred, her voice laced with contempt. "None of you seem formidable at all. Yet, considering our soldiers have not yet reached their zenith of power, this is to be expected. None of them have achieved the strength of my Bruno here, which is quite evident.

I must concede, I am somewhat impressed that the remaining of your insignificant kind still dares to defy us. But then again, it is only natural. Insects, after all, do not relinquish their fight so easily, do they?"

The power she radiated was leagues beyond the monstrous pressure of the tentacled beast. It was a crushing, ten-fold force, and far more terrifying. We could almost taste the suffocating demonic essence that coiled through the air, wrapping around us with an oppressive grip.

"The Hell is struggling to prepare for war against the humans in my world," she said. "They cannot do aught but send me here to discern why the lands we have conquered are being reclaimed and why our soldiers are being slaughtered. I loathe that I am the one chosen for this task, but it seems I am the only one deemed fit for this duty." She sighed, as if debating her fate.

"It appears it is time for you all to meet your end here, so I may return to Hell."

With a languid motion, she raised her hand and pointed a finger at us. A sinister light gathered at its tip, a dark, crackling energy that pulsed ominously. I acted swiftly, my gun blazing with a fierce resolve, but a shimmering, almost ethereal barrier deflected the bullets effortlessly, like they were nothing more than insignificant pests.

"That pathetic weapon of yours is utterly useless against me," she taunted, her voice dripping with disdain. "Humans from my realm ventured into this world, bringing their knowledge with them, and began crafting weapons such as these. They sought to use such contraptions to vanquish us. But, alas, their efforts were in vain. These weapons are mere trinkets, powerless against beings of our caliber."

With a swift, almost casual flick, she unleashed a searing, white light.

"Tank!"

"R-Roger!"

The captain's voice cut through the chaos as the woman with us sprang into action. She positioned herself in front of us, her metallic shield expanding outward with a dramatic shimmer. She drove the end of the shield firmly into the ground, bracing against the overwhelming force.

The white light collided with the shield in a blinding explosion, its radiant energy flaring fiercely but failing to breach the defense. We were shielded from the intense light, but the woman bore the full force of the attack. In a heartbeat, she vanished, leaving behind only half of her shield and her feet, smoldering on the ground.

Smoke hissed from the stumps where her feet had been, the air thick with the acrid stench of seared flesh and the eerie glow of her disappearance.

"Wow, I'm truly astonished she managed to block that," Satania said, her voice laced with a dark, amused sympathy. "I would have relished the chance to have her among our ranks, but alas, such is the cruel dance of fate."

"It's impossible..." the captain whispered, her voice choked with despair. "We can't defeat her."

Her face turned a ghostly white, and her knees buckled beneath her, collapsing as though she were facing the finality of her fate. For me, however, there was no flutter of fear or shiver of anxiety. My heart remained as unmoved as a frozen lake, untouched by the sight of our fallen comrades. The deaths of the two others failed to stir any emotional response within me.

They were not comrades but mere colleagues, mere bodies I had worked alongside in battle. Their demise was met with a cold indifference, even though I had shared meals and moments with them. I couldn't grasp why, but throughout my life, it felt as if I were missing something vital—something that should have ignited a deeper emotional connection.

There was one thing I could feel, though—a burning, primal urge to kill.

Kill. Kill. Kill. Kill. Kill. Kill.

Kill. Kill.

It consumed my thoughts entirely. I could feel the corners of my mouth twitching into a fierce grin.

"Oh? It appears someone's true nature is emerging," Satania said with a sly, amused smile. "Well then, why don't you unleash yourself and give it a try?"

I charged at her, yanking the battle knife from its sheath strapped to my leg, and aimed to slice through her throat. But as my blade cut through empty air, she vanished. In an instant, she reappeared behind me.

"You're too slow," she murmured with a sly, cruel grin, her voice dripping with malice. "But you're not entirely worthless."

I swung the knife behind me, but it was in vain. She was too fast. The relentless command to "Kill" echoed in my mind, pushing me further. My movements grew quicker and more forceful, my blade slicing through the air with increasing intensity. My muscles burned and strained under the pressure, every fiber of my being alight with the drive to destroy.

"Fufufu... You truly are skilled," she purred with a sly, mocking smile, her eyes glittering with dark amusement. "But even with all your effort, it remains utterly futile."

In a single, fluid motion, she sent my blade sailing away, the weapon clattering and skidding across the ground. The metallic clang echoed in the charged air, but I wasn't deterred. I spotted a sliver of vulnerability in her stance. Driven by the relentless urge to kill, I launched a sweeping kick aimed directly at her head.

She looked stunned for a brief moment, her hand flying to her cheek. Her eyes narrowed with fierce anger. "You...!" she seethed. "How dare you desecrate my beautiful face with your filthy kick?!"

In an explosive reaction, a colossal gust of wind blasted me backward, nearly toppling me. The air around her crackled with a surge of demonic essence, dark and swirling like a storm summoned from the depths of Hell itself. The power emanating from her was palpable, a suffocating force that seemed to bend reality. Clearly, my actions had ignited her wrath.

I stood my ground, undeterred and ready for the next clash.

I lunged toward her again. As I closed in, Satania's fingers began to glow ominously with the same dark magic she'd used before. Just as she was about to unleash another devastating blast, she suddenly froze

"What?! Why now?!"

I abruptly stopped, my senses screaming that something was horribly wrong. The world twisted around me; gravity seemed to invert, and I felt an unnerving sensation of weightlessness. For a brief, disorienting moment, I floated helplessly, as if the very laws of nature had been upended. Then, a violent gust of air blasted up from the ground, whipping around me like a storm.

"Fine!" she snarled, her voice dripping with fury. Her eyes blazed with a menacing fire as she fixed me with a glare that could pierce through steel. "Mark my words, I will hunt you down and tear you apart myself! You will live to regret daring to touch my beautiful face!"

Suddenly, a blinding light burst forth, engulfing her in a searing brilliance. It wasn't just her—the blinding radiance swallowed me up, too, along with the captain. The light was overwhelming, filling the space with a dazzling brilliance that obscured everything else.

I felt like a tiny blip, like a bug racing through an endless expanse at breakneck speed. But instead of a familiar field, I was hurtling through a cosmic void, where the only sights were shimmering stars and distant planets. My vision swirled uncontrollably, each shift more disorienting than the last.

Then, out of nowhere, a swirling purple portal materialized before me. Without hesitation, I hurtled toward it, and the next thing I knew, I was plummeting from the sky. The ground rushed up to meet me with a bone-jarring impact.

Chapter 283: Epilogue 6 - A World Different From Earth (1)

Shredica's POV

In my memories, I was forged from birth into a relentless warrior, trained rigorously from a young age. I fought in countless battles and wars against rival factions, far beyond the conflicts at Hope Island. I was shaped into a weapon for humanity, tasked with reclaiming humanity's lost dominion over Earth.

I surged through three grueling campaigns to retake islands, annihilated demon zombies from their strongholds, and rose to become the ultimate soldier humanity had ever envisioned.

In my memories, I was a beast driven by an insatiable hunger for combat. I was born to fight, my existence defined by relentless bloodlust. I never wavered in my belief; not for a second did I question that everything I endured was anything but real.

I loved everything, or rather, I was consumed by it. I didn't have feelings of love or affection for anyone or anything—not even Jess and Minerva, who had been my guardians for the last two years, or the weapons I wielded in countless campaigns. I didn't hate them, but love and affection were absent. My emotions were hollow, void of anything soft or warm.

What I did feel was an obsession with the raw, visceral nature of it all. I loved the scent of that world—the stench of post-apocalyptic destruction, the reek of demon zombies, the blood and sweat of monsters, and the thrill of battling rival factions. My love was tied to violence, war, murder, and everything that existed in the savage in-between. That was who I was.

So, when that thirst was ripped from me, I spiraled into a frantic, desperate state.

I woke up to the sight of a bird gracefully landing on a thick tree branch, sunlight streaming through the dense canopy of leaves. The tree was enormous, its towering presence almost surreal in this post-apocalyptic world. But wait—how could there be a tree like this in a land ravaged by destruction? Was this Hope Island? No, it couldn't be. I'd never seen anything like this in all my time there.

This tree was far too massive, too ancient to belong to the forest of Hope Island.

Could this be part of the main islands? But that didn't make sense either. The main islands were littered with demons, scorched by the Ruination, leaving no room for life like this. So where was I? Was this some undiscovered island? If so, it must have somehow escaped the Ruination's wrath, untouched by the devastation that consumed the rest of the world.

I remembered falling into this place, though I had no clue where "here" actually was. I stood up and made my way out of the forest, only to stumble upon a village. Finding a village in this post-apocalyptic world felt surreal. The place looked like it had been frozen in time, isolated from the rest of the world.

The houses were crudely built from wood and thatch, and the people didn't look the least bit modern.

If this wasn't a dream, they might not have progressed beyond a primitive lifestyle.

I advanced towards the village with caution. Given the possibility that this place could be under the control of a rival faction, I gripped a knife tightly in my hand, ready to strike. I could effortlessly slice through anyone's neck, even with my eyes shut.

As I stepped into the village, the villagers' gazes met mine. The scene before me was even more rudimentary and backward than I had anticipated.

The villagers were engrossed in collecting wheat and fruits, their entire livelihood clearly dependent on farming. Their curious and wary eyes followed me, with particular focus on the knife I held.

"C-Call the Leader...!" someone shouted, panic clear in their voice.

Reacting swiftly, I darted towards the source of the shout. I tackled him, pinning him beneath me with a forceful shove. My knife hovered menacingly over his neck, its blade catching the light in a cold, threatening gleam.

"What is this place?" I demanded, my voice low and harsh.

"U-Uh..."

"Speak, or I'll slice your throat."

"N-No, please! I have a son and a wife!"

My eyes narrowed, my gaze growing colder as I stared him down, unfazed by his pleas.

Suddenly, a wave of bloodlust crashed over me. Before I could react, a powerful force slammed into my side, sending me flying backward. I managed to roll with the impact, landing on my feet, my grip tightening on the knife as I turned to face whoever had attacked.

"Who the fuck are you?" she growled, her expression twisted in anger. I was used to wearing an angry face myself, but hers was something else—something that could probably outdo mine on any given day.

She was an older woman, probably in her late twenties, with wavy red hair cascading down to her waist. An eyepatch covered one of her eyes, adding a menacing touch to her already fierce appearance. In her hand, she held a whip, coiled and ready.

I pushed myself up from the ground, straightening my posture and meeting her fierce gaze head-on.
"What is this place?"

"Don't answer my question with another question," she snapped back. "If you want answers, you'll give me some first. And start by explaining why you attacked one of the villagers."

She seemed reasonable enough to talk to, so I lowered my blade slightly. "I am Shredica, known as the strongest soldier in humanity. You must have heard of me before," I said.

"That's all news to me," she replied, her eyes narrowing with disdain.

"You don't know me? I'm sure someone from a rival faction of Hope Island must have heard of me," I said, locking my gaze with her fiery crimson eyes. "Or at least heard rumors. There's no way you haven't heard of me, given that I've reclaimed demon-occupied lands three times. If you truly haven't heard of me, this place must be so isolated that it's not even aware of major events."

"So, Shredica, the so-called strongest soldier in humanity, why did you attack one of our villagers?" she demanded, her glare as sharp as her whip.

"I was just trying to find out where I am," I shot back, my own glare matching hers. "This place looks untouched by the Ruination, and I needed answers."

"Ruination?" The woman tilted her head, her expression one of genuine confusion. "That's news to me too."

"What?" I asked, bewildered. "You've never heard of the Ruination?"

"I don't know. Never heard the term before," she replied, her hand resting on her hip with a casual air.

Was this land so isolated that not only had the Ruination failed to reach it, but the very word hadn't even made it here?

"Where the hell am I, really?" I demanded, frustration seeping into my voice.

"The village of Rakan, part of the Bethlan Kingdom," she replied with a smirk.

The name meant nothing to me. I was certain no one would be reckless enough to establish a kingdom in a world overrun by demon zombies. This place made no sense. Where in the hell was I?

The red-headed woman explained that the kingdom I found myself in was currently torn apart by civil unrest. She was here because she had been hired to put an end to the insurgencies and keep the various rebel groups from tearing the kingdom to shreds.

Not long after, I discovered that this world wasn't Earth. There was an acrid feel of demonic essence clinging to everything, but another energy hummed beneath it—something they called mana. Here, magic was a weapon, and swords were wielded by those who could handle them.

The red-headed woman filled me in on the things I had no clue about, covering everything from the basics of this world to the intricacies of mana. Surprisingly, she was pretty lenient with me, despite the fact that our first encounter involved me pressing a knife against one of the villagers she was supposed to protect.

They assigned someone to keep an eye on me—a woman named Arianne. She had orange hair and looked like your average girl-next-door type, the kind who might work as a waitress in her father's bar.

The red-headed woman told Arianne that my mind wasn't quite right, that I needed someone to watch over me. That someone was her.

It pissed me off, being labeled as some kind of mentally deranged person who needed a babysitter. But I couldn't deny that I needed the help, considering I still didn't have a clue about this world. So, I swallowed my pride and accepted it, even if it grated on me.

At some point, Miss Eris, who was the red-headed woman, had made the group that she was in a rebel group that wanted to go against the monarchies of the Kingdom of Milham. I had no idea why she wanted to dismantle the monarchy ruling, but I have heard that it had something to do with what she heard with the conversation with one of her colleague that was working at the castle.

The other reason was that she also discovered the many laundries that the nobles of the kingdom that hadn't been aired yet.

The Silver Blade, originally just a mercenary group in the Underground society, had morphed into an insurgent faction aiming to topple the monarchy. They started recruiting those left behind by the Kingdom, and Miss Eris, their leader, was known as "Leader."

She invited me to join the Silver Blade. I was getting bored with the peaceful situation I found myself in. I was a bloodthirsty person who craved the rush of battle. I wanted to fight, to clash with someone who could match my skills. I'd tried to ambush Miss Eris several times, hoping to face off against her, but she never took me seriously.

That's why I joined the Silver Blade—I needed to feel the rush of combat again, to sink my teeth into the chaos of battle once more.

Chapter 284: Epilogue 6 - A World Different From Earth (2)

Miss Eris was a seriously lascivious woman. She would constantly flirt with other women, even though she was one herself, and she wasn't shy about trying to touch them in places she definitely shouldn't. But as much as she'd say suggestive things, she never actually followed through with any of it. She liked to tease, make it clear what she was thinking, but nothing more.

I couldn't help but scowl every time she tried to flirt with me, or anyone else for that matter. I didn't understand why she was so determined to be into women, but I figured that made her a bit odd. Miss Arianne told me it was best to just ignore her.

The Silver Blades was basically a group of mercenaries and outcasts—people abandoned by the monarch, those abused by nobles and hungry for revenge, or those who knew the dirty secrets that hadn't been exposed yet and decided to take action. Most of them didn't join with pure intentions; they had their own agendas, which sometimes led to a lack of coordination.

But Miss Eris—no, I should call her Leader now—somehow managed to turn this ragtag bunch into a team that was finally making the Kingdom take notice.

The Kingdom we were aiming to topple was Milham, the very one we were currently entrenched in. The reason behind this collective drive, including that of the Leader, stemmed from the Kingdom's abhorrent practices. They sought to transform Milham into a democratic state to abolish the entrenched hierarchical discrimination.

The Leader was fiercely committed to this cause, hoping to dismantle the oppressive structure and replace it with something more equitable.

It was evident that the Leader harbored some deeper, more personal vendetta against the Kingdom, though she kept these motives shrouded in secrecy. I sensed there was more to her story than met the eye, but I refrained from asking. It was clear enough that her personal agenda was none of my concern.

Fighting as a member of the Silver Blades felt strangely flat compared to the wild thrill I used to experience back on Earth. Here, the excitement was almost non-existent, and I barely felt a rush. On Earth, the freedom to slice through everything in my path was intoxicating.

The sensation of my blade carving through the necks of enemies—whether they were human or demon zombies—was a visceral pleasure. Pulling the trigger and hearing the sickening crunch of skulls as my bullets tore through them was a primal thrill.

In this world, I had to be just as brutal, but the pervasive peace here drained the combat of its edge. It felt like something vital was missing, leaving me with a nagging sense of emptiness.

That's why, despite my deep hatred for studying, I forced myself to dig into research, desperate to find a way back to my world. It took years of painstaking effort, but I finally stumbled upon something—a legend hidden within the old, dusty history books of this world. The tale spoke of humans from another realm who were summoned here during the brutal Human-Demon War.

The Milham Kingdom's royal family had used a secret spell to pull these humans into their world, calling them heroes from another world.

A realization struck me then—if there was a spell powerful enough to summon people from another world, then maybe, just maybe, there was a way to send them back. The texts didn't mention anything about those summoned ever returning, but it was possible the writers were simply ignorant of it. The possibility was there, and that was enough for me to keep digging.

"So I guess I have to go to the royal castle to find that spell," I muttered to myself.

But that was the real issue.

"How am I supposed to get into the royal castle?"

I could always try to force my way in—it might be the simplest route, but it was hardly the best plan. I knew all too well the sheer number of guards, magic users, and swordmasters stationed there. Even with my bloodthirsty instincts, I'd be outmatched if I tried to take them all on alone.

I had an idea, though.

"What did you say?" the Leader slurred, her words thick with alcohol. She'd been gambling and drinking all day, and the stench of booze was heavy around her. "You want us to ramp up the attack on the royal family? No fucking way we can do that. We need a hell of a lot more preparation. Besides, we're already tangled up with those fucking bastards called the Eclipse."

Toppling the monarchy is going to be a massive undertaking. It could take decades."

Her speech was muddled by her drunken state, but her mind was sharp as ever. As expected, she wasn't about to go through with it.

"Why the hell do you want to get into the castle so badly?" she asked, taking a long swig from the bottle of beer she was clutching. The liquid sloshed around, mirroring her careless demeanor.

"I figured I might stumble upon something interesting," I answered. "I'm especially intrigued by this spell that's supposed to summon people from another world."

"Heh~... Is that so?" she purred, a mischievous smirk playing on her lips. "You know, why don't you come to my bed tonight? I'll make sure to entertain you a lot better than your fascination with that spell."

I scowled at her, and she burst into laughter at my reaction.

"Hahaha! I'm just messing with you," she said. "But if you're serious about getting into the castle, I've got a plan. It might not be what you want, though."

"What is it?" I asked, my resolve firm. I was ready to do whatever it took to find my way back.

"Apply to the Milham Academy of Magic Knights," she said, propping her chin on her palm and flashing a mischievous grin.

"You want me... to study?" I asked, my scowl deepening. She knew how much I loathed studying.

"Milham Academy is apparently opening its doors to those without skills, so you could apply as a first-year student," she said, her grin turning sly.

"I'm asking why you want me to study?" I pressed.

"Well," she began, her voice dripping with casual confidence, "if you want to get into the castle, you'll need to become a magic knight. That's the only way you can enter the castle legally and investigate whatever you're after without someone constantly breathing down your neck."

It actually sounded like a pretty solid plan. If I wanted to uncover the spell, I'd have to get into the castle, and that meant becoming a magic knight.

"So, how the hell do I become one?" I asked.

She grinned wickedly, "You've got to rank in the top 100 of all the students there," she said. "In other words, you need to make it to the gold class."

Chapter 285: Epilogue 6 - A World Different From Earth (3)

???'s POV

I jolted awake, staring at an unfamiliar ceiling. The sight of it, made of rough, bundled hay, made me roll my eyes at the sheer cliché of the situation. But there was no denying it—this was happening to me. The ceiling wasn't much more than a patchwork of straw and twine.

"Um..."

A faint sound drifted in from the side, and my instincts as a soldier and protector kicked in. I sprang upright, blade in hand, and aimed it sharply at the source of the noise.

"Aaaah! N-No...! I'm not bad!" she cried out, her voice quivering with panic.

"Who are you? Where is this place? What am I doing here?"

The noise came from a plain-looking woman in a simple, worn tunic. Her eyes were wide with terror as she scrambled back from me, clutching her chest.

"Y-You fell from the sky all of a sudden and landed here! You've been out cold for three days!" she stuttered, her voice shaking. "I've been taking care of you!"

"What...?" I asked, utterly baffled. I couldn't wrap my head around what was going on. "Wait, what happened to Satania? Where is she?"

"Satania?" The woman's face clouded with confusion.

"Come to think of it, where the hell am I? This isn't Hope Island, is it? Are you from some rival faction?"

"R-Rival faction? What?" Her bewilderment only grew.

I jumped out of bed and dashed outside. What I saw was a stark contrast to what I'd known. The surroundings were lush grasslands, stretching out into the distance, with mountains and forests dotting the horizon. I'd never seen anything like it. Given how dilapidated the world was due to the Ruination, this place must have been untouched by it.

"Um, Miss...!" the woman who claimed she'd been taking care of me stammered. Her voice was filled with concern. "Y-You're not fully recovered yet. There are a lot of injuries on your body from the fall. I need you to rest for a bit."

I fixed my gaze on her, struggling to piece things together. "Where exactly am I?"

"Uh... You're in a rural part of the Empire, in a small village called Velase," she said, her tone hesitant.

The name of the village felt bizarre, and the concept of an Empire being established was completely foreign to me. Where the fuck am I?

And where the hell is Shredica?

Shredica's POV

I dreamt of the past—the first time I was yanked into this strange world, the first time I laid eyes on the Leader and Miss Arianne. And weirdly enough, Mr. Leon showed up in my dream too. Was this some kind of sign that my time here was coming to an end? That I'd finally be dragged back to my own world? God, I hoped not.

I'd been trying to keep my distance, not letting myself feel anything for the people in this place since I'd be leaving it all behind eventually. But maybe, deep down, I was just fooling myself.

Now that I was officially a magic knight, I found myself stationed in the so-called Barracks—a place meant for those of my rank. But this wasn't your run-of-the-mill barracks. Oh no, this was something else entirely. Each magic knight had their own room, and these weren't just any rooms—they were decked out, the kind of luxury that screamed power and status.

Everything about this place was sophisticated, dripping with opulence, like it was designed to remind you just how high up the ladder you'd climbed.

I climbed out of bed and stretched, groaning as I looked at my reflection in the mirror. I was a mess. My purple hair was a tangled, chaotic mess, as if a full-blown war had been waged in it. I'd never bothered to fix my bedhead before—Jess had always handled that. Even after I'd arrived in this world, Miss Arianne had been gracious enough to tame it for me.

I gave my hair a quick, half-hearted attempt at taming, but it remained unruly and wild. With a resigned sigh, I left my room and stepped outside into the crisp air for my daily training. It had become my routine since I'd been initiated as a magic knight. Two months had passed, and each day of training was now a part of my life.

After working up a solid sweat, I noticed Miss Laurel walking toward me.

"You're up early," Miss Laurel said.

"I figured, since I don't have anything else to do, I might as well put my time into training," I replied, sweat glistening on my skin from the exertion.

"Your form is impressive, and your aim with a firearm is spot on," she remarked, her gaze sweeping over my technique. "You've been trained your whole life, haven't you?"

"Yes," I said, nodding. "From the moment I became aware, training has been my constant companion."

"You must have had a rough childhood," she said. "But you can ease off on the training now. The Vice Commander says you're ready for the mission to retrieve the spell."

I stopped my training and turned to her, eyebrows raised. "Really?"

"Yes," she confirmed, her voice steady and authoritative. "The preparations on her end are complete. It's time for you to go and retrieve the summoning spell."

Meanwhile...

Robyn's POV

"Uuuuu..."

I stirred awake, my vision initially foggy and indistinct. Gradually, the haze lifted, revealing my surroundings. I was in an immaculate white room, the walls and floor devoid of any blemish or mark. The room's stark whiteness was almost blinding, with nothing breaking the endless expanse of sterile, unblemished surfaces.

"Oh, you're awake."

A voice drew my attention to the side, and I saw a man standing there. He had black hair and piercing red eyes.

"You've been out for months," he said, his tone matter-of-fact. "You were in a coma due to the severe injuries you sustained. Your skin was burned badly. Fortunately, the doctors here are exceptionally skilled—they managed to patch you up, and the burns have healed into closed wounds. But that didn't wake you from your coma. Thankfully, you're conscious now."

Do you remember who you are?"

I nodded, though confusion clouded my thoughts. What... happened to me?

Chapter 286: Classmates (1)

Leon's POV

Over the past two months, I've accomplished quite a bit.

First, we rolled out multiple branches of Leonamon across the Kingdom and extended our reach to other countries, including the Empire and beyond. This rapid expansion was a testament to our relentless effort, establishing us as the largest corporation in this world. Hell, if we were on Earth, we'd be towering over any competitor.

Second, we introduced cars and got people accustomed to using them. This move didn't just boost our profits from gasoline sales; it also lined our pockets from the tolls on roads built by the AED. We constructed bridges to ease trade and enhance international relations, further fueling our revenue growth.

Third on the list was the phenomenal rise of the Starry Knights, which saw an explosive increase in both their fan base and album sales. Alongside this, Gabrielleon's novels, entirely authored by Gabrielle, also experienced a surge in popularity. Leonamon expanded beyond basic needs, establishments, devices, and vehicles to delve into the world of entertainment.

We planned to transform Gabrielleon's novels into grand theater adaptations, turning them into spectacular stage productions. This move made entertainment one of Leonamon's most significant ventures. It wouldn't be surprising if we started branching into movie theaters and adaptations soon.

Fourth on the list was resourcing and financing. We didn't just become one of the largest banks in this world; we were pioneers in securing massive resources across various sectors, from agriculture to industrial projects.

But aside from the company's impressive growth, there were other personal achievements that outpaced even that success. Let's delve into those.

The first major achievement was the number of women I've dominated and the skills I've acquired from them.

The first one was Maya.

"Aaaah..."

I finished letting his mouth suck down every last drop of cum from my urethra, then positioned my dick just above her eyes, its shadow looming over her as she lay there with her mouth wide open and her pink tongue dangling out.

A panel appeared before me, signaling that I had completed dominating her and could now copy her skill. I accepted, and the skill Perfect Eyesight was mine.

I also managed to conquer Erica of the Starry Knights.

"Hnnn... Ah..." She lay sprawled on the bed, her body slick with a thick sheen of semen that oozed from both her asshole and her pussy.

Another panel flashed before me, offering the chance to copy her Spell Melding skill. I accepted without hesitation.

I let out a slow breath, surveying the scene. With these two, that brought the total to five women I had conquered. But Lilith still hadn't shown up. Not yet, anyway. It seemed I'd need to dominate even more women before she decided to make her next appearance.

I climbed out of bed after conquering the two of them simultaneously, heading straight for the bathroom. Gabrielle joined me for the bath, since we were both heading to the same destination. She started by washing my back, but I couldn't resist when the heat rose between us. My hands wandered over her body, and, naturally, we ended up fucking too.

"Ahh... You're as ravenous as ever..." she moaned, breathless after I pounded her. Semen dripped from her pussy, her ass in the air, legs spread wide, pressed against the cool, wet tiles. The shower continued to spray over us, mingling with the sweat and the cum that coated our bodies. "Didn't you just fuck two women all night?"

"Well, as you say, I'm quite ravenous," I said with a grin. "And I'm getting more ravenous by the day."

After cleaning up and finishing my shower, I headed to the academy on foot. Gabrielle, however, drove there in her car. It wasn't far-fetched to imagine we might have car sex someday.

As I reached the academy entrance, I saw a woman standing by the gate. Her beautiful blonde hair caught the light, and although she had the look of a gal who might bully you, there was a genuine wholesomeness about her.

When she spotted me, her smile erupted like a burst of sunshine, brightening up everything around her. The people nearby couldn't help but blush, but her dazzling smile was for me and me alone.

"Leon~!" she called out with a playful lilt, her voice tinged with excitement. She rushed towards me, wrapping her arms around my arm and pressing it against her full, soft breasts. "Hehehe... Caught you~!" she teased with a cheeky, satisfied grin.

My relationship with Titania had been flourishing ever since that summer vacation when we had sex. Our affection for each other was skyrocketing, even though we hadn't had sex again since then. But we had been kissing—lots and lots of kissing.

"Let's head to the first-year building together!" she exclaimed, her excitement palpable as she tugged me along.

I went along with her without hesitation, a warm, content smile spreading across my face as she pulled me by the arm.

After we shared a lingering kiss and parted ways, we headed to our separate classrooms.

Just as I crossed the threshold into my classroom, I was jolted by a sudden collision with one of my classmates.

"Oh, sorry, Leo~!" a sultry voice purred, pulling me from my thoughts. The beast woman in front of me was an eye-catching sight. Her uniform was unmistakably gyaru, hugging her curves with a seductive flair. Her blonde hair framed a pair of furry cat ears that twitched with her every movement, and a tail swayed playfully behind her.

Her skirt was so short that her ass cheeks were practically on display.

Her name was Trill Felianne, the princess of the Felianne clan—a powerful and prestigious feline beast clan that led the hierarchy among beast people. Though she held a royal title, she didn't conform to the typical grace expected of her. Beast people weren't required to be delicate. Trill was one of the women I was intent on dominating.

She didn't even glance back as she sped off, heading toward wherever she was cutting class. These days, Trill was notorious for ditching her lectures, her rebellious streak as visible as her outfit. Her look screamed trouble, and she wore it with a brazen confidence.

"My name isn't Leo; it's Leon," I said under my breath, my gaze lingering on her retreating figure. Each step she took sent her skirt fluttering up, exposing a tantalizing view of her t-back. The thin string of her thong was wedged snugly between her ass cheeks, giving a provocative glimpse of her bare flesh.

I was at a loss on how to capture her attention. Trill was like a storm—wild and untamed. Getting her to notice me seemed like it was going to be a daunting task.

Chapter 287: Classmates (2)

The morning class had wrapped up, and the afternoon sun cast a warm glow over the campus.

Trill had vanished entirely from the lecture. Not a trace of her all morning.

"It looks like she's really committed to skipping class," I muttered to myself. "I wonder what's going on with her..."

"Who?" Titania asked, her cheeks stuffed with a sandwich that made her look like a squirrel hoarding nuts.

"I'm talking about Trill," I clarified.

"Hmmm... Wait, you mean Trill Feliann, the princess of the Feliann Clan? You're going after her too, Leon?" Titania asked, her eyes sparkling with genuine curiosity.

She already knew I was involved with multiple women and was targeting even more. When I shared this with her, she didn't react with anger but accepted it with a joyful, almost mischievous grin.

"Well, her skill seem pretty valuable, so I want to get my hand on it," I said.

Titania's smile broadened as she leaned in closer. "I know you can do it, Leon. After all, you're my boyfie~!" she purred, rubbing her cheek against my shoulder with a playful affection.

The onlookers surrounding us clicked their tongues in clear irritation. It was obvious they were pissed off seeing the princess doting on me like this. They were probably fantasizing about being in my position.

"Oh, by the way," Titania said after a moment, her tone buzzing with excitement, "I heard from Shreddy that she's heading back to the dorm to collect her things. I've missed her sooooo much. It's been two months since I last saw her! Do you want to meet her too? I bet you do. I mean, you two were pretty tight before, right?"

Were Shredica and I really that close? With the way she used to boss me around and treat me like her personal lackey, it made sense that people would think we were close. Even Hereon had shown jealousy over our so-called bond. But in reality, our relationship was more of a business partnership than anything personal.

"I don't think I have the time to meet her. But do pass along my congratulations for becoming a magic knight," I said, my fingers lightly massaging my girlfriend's hair.

"Hehehe..." she giggled, her laughter bubbling up as my touch glided over her head.

That's right. I couldn't afford to spend time with Shredica now. Besides, with her dream achieved, our connection was finished. It was finally time for me to concentrate on what really mattered.

Specifically, seizing control of this world.

The next day, Trill cut class again.

It had become a relentless routine, and Professor Irene was growing increasingly frustrated. This pattern had started at the beginning of the second semester and showed no signs of stopping. As the semester drew to a close, Trill's absences had taken a severe toll on her ranking. Once sitting comfortably in the top 20 of the bronze class, she now languished near the very bottom.

The following day, she was absent once more. And again the day after that.

However, on the next day, she finally showed up to class. She appeared completely unchanged—her demeanor and appearance were as normal as ever.

After the morning class, Professor Irene didn't waste a moment and pulled her aside for a private conversation.

"Bernadette," I murmured, and instantly, a woman clad in a sleek ninja costume materialized beside me, taking a respectful knee.

"Yes, Master?" she replied, her voice a soft whisper.

"Can you eavesdrop on their conversation and let me know what they discuss?" I instructed her.

"Affirmative, Master," she said with a nod, and then she vanished into thin air again.

Irene's POV

"I'm not going to beat around the bush, Miss Trill," I said, my voice cutting through the air. The woman before me was a vision of provocative fashion, her skirt barely covering her thighs, and her uniform daringly unbuttoned to expose her deep cleavage. Her acrylic nails were painted a bold color, glinting under the light. "Why have you stopped attending lectures and persistently cut classes?"

She barely looked up, her gaze fixed on her manicured nails as if they held the answers. "I thought whatever I do is none of the academy's business, Professor," she replied with a dismissive tone.

"There are certainly aspects of life that the academy can't meddle in, such as personal matters," I countered, my tone firm. "But when one of our students continuously skips class, it becomes an issue we can't ignore."

"I don't really have any reason," she said, her voice casual. "I just want to, you know, cut classes and do whatever I please. Honestly, I'm getting bored with studying. I'm a free-spirited girl, you know? I can't just sit still in one place."

"This is an institution," I responded firmly. "You're supposed to adhere to its rules."

"Can't I have some freedom that the academy shouldn't meddle with?" she countered. "I mean, I'm a princess of my people, and essentially, I'm the princess of all beastfolk. I should be able to do whatever I want."

"And you're essentially a student at this institution," I said firmly, my voice cutting through the air with conviction. "Here, the boundaries of status vanish. We're supposed to treat all students equally, regardless of whether you're a commoner, a noble, or royalty. Societal hierarchy doesn't matter here."

I took a deep breath, trying to keep my composure. "Look, Miss Trill, I don't want to drag this out. I need you to stop skipping classes and start showing up. If you continue like this, you'll end up at the very bottom of the rankings. I'm sure King Leonelle, your father—the king of the beastfolk—wouldn't want that."

"I don't really give a damn what my dad thinks of me," she said with a casual shrug, her indifference palpable. "Well, if that's all you wanted to say, I'm leaving now. Bye, Professor. See you tomorrow." She spun on her heels, her dismissal clear, and walked out the door with barely a glance back.

"Wai—!" I tried to call after her, but the door slammed shut with a final, decisive thud. I let out a frustrated sigh, pressing my forehead into my palm. "The students assigned to me this year aren't just oddballs; they're a real handful."

One had suddenly become a magic knight without even graduating, another was a troublesome one who skipped lectures, and then there was the troublesome fuck boy who took my virginity and then

ghosted me. I was certain that by the end of this school year, my hair would be completely white from the stress.

Leon's POV

"And that's the entire conversation that took place," Bernadette said, kneeling in front of me.

She had vividly replayed the entire exchange between Trill and Irene, capturing every nuance with remarkable precision. Her mimicry was so spot-on that it felt as if she had become them in the telling. I couldn't help but be impressed by her skillful portrayal.

Despite the detail, I didn't get everything from their conversation. The main takeaway was that Trill had gone full rebel. Not only was she challenging the academy, but she also seemed to have a serious beef with her father. Still, it was valuable information.

"Bernadette, come here," I said, patting my thighs.

She stood up and hesitantly walked over, then settled down on my lap, her soft butt pressing against me.

"Good girl," I murmured, my fingers gently caressing her head.

"Hehehe~" she giggled with pure, unfiltered joy, her cheeks glowing with warmth.

It was clear that indulging Bernadette with this kind of attention was a key part of her domination needs. That's why I intended to continue showering her with praise and affection, pushing her deeper into that submissive, eager space.

Chapter 288: Classmates (3)

Today, I discovered just how draining it could be to stay in class. I'd experienced this in my past life, but it was surprising to feel it all over again.

"I guess schools are pretty much the same, even in another world," I muttered to myself.

As I walked back to my dorm, something caught my eye.

"Mmmmm~"

I glanced over to see a strange woman sprawled on a bench, her body curled up tightly as if trying to ward off the cold. It was no surprise, really, given the chill in the air—winter was just around the corner. She was clad in a short skirt, her bare legs exposed to the icy breeze that nipped at her skin.

The woman in question had silver ash-colored hair that framed her face, and her eyes, when open, were a striking blue. Her name was Yr.

I recognized her immediately—she was one of my classmates, and someone I had my sights set on dominating.

"Mmm... Mn?"

Her eyes fluttered open, revealing their vivid blue hue as they locked onto me. As she stared, a thin stream of snot began to trickle from her nose and slowly ran down her face. She didn't even flinch, leaving it there as she closed her eyes once more. Then, with a slight opening of her mouth, she muttered,

"...Pervert."

I felt a vein throb violently on my forehead. Who the hell does she think she is, calling me a pervert? I was just—well, a bit concerned, that's all.

"Hey," I said, trying to keep my voice steady. "If you stay here like this, the patrol will find you and punish you. You know that, right?"

"I don't want to talk to a pervert," she shot back, her voice muffled.

The vein on my forehead bulged even further, almost like it was about to burst. I decided it was better to just walk away. But as soon as I spun around, I heard her sneeze loudly.

"Achoo!"

I sighed and then went toward her.

"Why would you sleep here especially since winter is coming?" I said to her. "And don't call me a pervert for asking. I'm just wondering since it's pretty ballsy of you to do it here. I know you like sleeping, but I can't just believe that you love it so much you'd risk getting a cold."

She remained silent, ignoring me completely.

I sighed again, the exasperation clear in my breath. Without waiting for a response, I began stripping off my uniform. I still had a white long sleeve underneath, so I wouldn't be completely exposed. I carefully draped it over her, hoping it would offer some warmth. The moment I covered her, I heard the distinct chime of a metallic bell, signaling that I'd managed to pique her interest.

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

Name: Yr

Race: Demon-Human Hybrid

Requirements to dominate Yr:

1. Make her sleep on your lap for five hours straight

2. Unlock

3. Unlock

4. Unlock

....

--

Her first requirement was quite challenging, but I figured it was something I could handle later. As I scanned over her list, I noticed her pulling my uniform tighter around her shivering frame. Her eyes, once half-lidded, were now wide open, staring at me with a mix of gratitude and desperation.

"Once you've had your nap and the sun sets, make sure you head back to your dorm. Otherwise, you're going to catch a cold," I advised, turning to walk away. But before I could take another step, I felt a soft tug on my sleeve. The way she held onto it, so delicately, made me stop in my tracks and look back at her.

Her gaze was locked on me, snot still trailing from her nose, adding a bizarre contrast to her otherwise innocent expression.

"Can I sleep in your dorm?" she finally murmured, her voice thick with drowsiness, barely able to stay awake.

What did she just say? No, I heard her loud and clear. She was actually asking if she could crash in my dorm.

"Why?" I asked/

"I lost the key to my room," she admitted, her voice muffled by the thick, runny snot dripping down her face. She didn't even bother to wipe it away; she just sniffled it back up, only for more to trail down in a continuous stream.

"You lost the key to your room?" I repeated. "Why not just ask the dorm mother for a spare key?"

"I've lost my key more times than I can count," she admitted. "The dorm mother made it clear that this was my final warning. She practically bit my head off the last time I asked for a spare key. But... I lost it again."

I almost face-palmed right there. Seriously? This woman was on a whole different level of scatterbrained. It was almost absurd how she managed to find herself in these situations. But what really threw me off was her next request—no, demand.

"You told me if I didn't get to my dorm before sunset, I'd catch a cold out here," she continued. "I don't want that, but I can't get into my room because, well, I lost my key again. So, since you're the one who decided to be all concerned, it's only fair that you let me stay in your dorm. You've got the responsibility now."

Now she was trying to shove the responsibility onto me.

"Well, it's not really a problem," I said. "I barely spend time at my dorm anyway, but don't you think it's a bit off to ask me instead of your friends? Even though the academy is pretty lenient about sexual relations, it's still risky to crash in someone's room, especially when it's the room of the opposite sex."

"I know you're a pervert," she said. "But I don't think you're the type to take advantage of someone while they're asleep."

That was an unexpectedly accurate description of me. Yr must have a sharp eye for reading people if she could figure that out, especially since we barely interacted.

"Besides, I don't have any friends to ask to let me stay in their room anyway."

Her words struck a chord with me. It was true—Yr was pretty much a loner. She spent most of her time sleeping through class and often looked so disconnected that it felt like she was in a different reality altogether.

I sighed deeply. I was prepared to offer her a temporary spot in my dorm until she managed to get a new key. Just as I was about to agree, she interrupted me with a sudden remark.

"If you let me sleep in your room, I'll tell you a secret. Something about the girl who likes to skip class."

I had been ready to let her stay without any strings attached, but now she dangled a juicy tidbit in front of me like a carrot on a stick. It made me even more inclined to agree. I had no idea how she knew I had an interest in Trill, but then I remembered Yr's skill. She had the ability to gather information effortlessly, even from a single spot.

It was a powerful tool for uncovering details that even the most skilled information brokers would envy.

Chapter 289: Classmates (4)

"Your room could definitely use a bit more decorating," she remarked as we stepped into my dorm. "It's so starkly plain, it's almost painful to look at."

"You really don't hold back, do you?" I shot back, a smirk tugging at my lips as she dissected my room.
"I'm a minimalist, so I keep things simple. Besides, as I've told you, I barely ever sleep here."

Yr wasted no time heading straight for my bed. In the Bronze Class, the dorms were bare-bones: a single room with just a bed, a tiny couch, and a cramped bathroom. Each class had its own level of comfort—Silver Class offered a bit more space, and the Gold Class? It was practically a noble's private quarters.

Yr leaped onto my bed with an almost childlike enthusiasm.

"Soft bed..." she murmured, sinking into the mattress before slipping into sleep almost instantly.

It was so quick, I had a hard time believing she hadn't been asleep earlier. Does this woman never get enough rest? She seemed to be constantly snoozing.

"And she said she'd give me useful information on Trill," I said to myself, watching her as she snored softly on my bed, a tiny streak of saliva pooling at the corner of her mouth. She was so deeply entrenched in slumber now that it would likely be a while before she stirred.

For now, I decided to take a break myself. I settled onto the small sofa, letting my body gradually ease into rest.

The moment I woke up, it was still evening, and I saw Yr sprawled haphazardly on the floor, having apparently tumbled out of bed. It was almost comical how she could sleep in such an unceremonious heap, oblivious to her surroundings.

I carefully lifted her, her body limp and relaxed, and placed her back on the bed. She remained completely undisturbed, lost in her deep sleep. Up close, I couldn't help but notice how endearing she

looked, her soft curves and the gentle rise and fall of her chest adding a touch of unexpected warmth. As I was absorbed in these thoughts, a sudden knock at the door jolted me out of my reverie.

"Huh?"

Who the hell could be knocking at this hour? I wondered as I made my way to the door. When I opened it, my surprise was palpable.

"Didn't think you'd show up here," I said, eyeing the woman standing before me.

It had been two months since I'd last seen her, and she looked as unyielding as ever. Her eyes were sharp, glaring with a barely contained irritation, and her mouth was set in a tight frown. She was the woman who had recently become a magic knight, despite still being short of graduation. She was only the second person to achieve this rank through recommendation.

"You don't seem as excited to see me as I thought you would be," she said, her glare heavy.

"I don't think anyone would be excited to see you," I said, though I knew there were exceptions—Titania and maybe Hereon might feel differently. But for me, excitement was off the table. I just couldn't see her that way.

With her arms tightly crossed over her chest, she looked at me with a mix of frustration and resolve.
"Can I come inside?"

"Uh, why?" I asked, puzzled.

"It's not exactly appropriate for a woman like me to be seen hanging around outside a man's room," she said. "If someone caught sight of me here, it could spark all sorts of rumors and misunderstandings. I'd rather avoid that mess and just come in, if that's alright."

The timing couldn't have been worse. Someone was already nestled in my dorm room, sprawled out and snoring loudly, completely out of it.

"What? Is there someone in there you don't want me to see? If it's the Princess, she won't mind me being here. She knows we don't think of each other like that."

"That's not the problem," I said. "Can we just move this conversation somewhere else?"

She gave me a scrutinizing glare before exhaling sharply and relaxing her arms. "Fine. Where do you suggest we talk?"

"I think the fountain should work," I suggested.

With that, we both headed towards the fountain.

"So, what do you want to talk about?" I asked as we reached the fountain. The soothing wooshing of the water created a calm backdrop to our conversation, but the tension between us was palpable.

Shredica turned her back to me, her posture rigid as she stared at the fountain's rippling surface. After a beat, she spun around to face me, her eyes narrowed with frustration. "Why are you rushing this? If you don't want me around, that's one thing, but can't we at least have a decent conversation? I'd appreciate some closure rather than just being dismissed."

"I don't want to waste a magic knight's time," I said, my voice edged with a hint of sarcasm. "It's surprising you got a recommendation to become a magic knight so quickly. Who would have guessed you'd hit your dream so fast? I suppose your hard work paid off, even if it meant resorting to less savory methods—like blackmailing people."

"You're still mad about that?" she told me with a raise of her eyebrow.

I raised both hands in surrender and said, "No, it's not that. I do find it annoying when you boss me around, but honestly, I'm not angry. In fact, I actually enjoyed your company, even if it was brief."

Shredica's eyes widened a fraction, as if my words had struck a chord. "I can't believe you actually feel that way," she said. "I'm actually relieved, because the real reason I wanted to talk to you is to apologize for what I did."

"Huh?" I blurted out. "Wait, did I hear that right? You want to apologize? For blackmailing me?"

"Is that really so shocking?" she said, a hint of bitterness in her voice. "I don't usually apologize for anything, and I didn't feel any guilt at the time for using you. But I understand what an apology means, and I know that what I did was completely unacceptable."

So she really did mean it—she actually wanted to apologize to me? Shredica, of all people? It seemed like becoming a magic knight had softened her edge a bit. Even her once-intimidating scowl was now just a faint shadow of its former self.

"It looks like you're faring well out there," I said. "Especially if you're back here to apologize."

"Well, it's not all sunshine and rainbows where I'm at," she said. "I just couldn't leave things between us unresolved, so I came here to make things right. It's okay if you don't forgive me. Honestly, I couldn't care less if you don't. I'll be moving on, and I doubt we'll cross paths again."

I could tell from her expression that she genuinely thought we'd never cross paths again, which was why she felt compelled to offer an apology if that was truly the case.

"You must be incredibly busy, then," I said, my voice steady as I took a deep breath. "Honestly, you didn't need to apologize. You were just doing whatever it took to chase your dream. I can understand that. I mean, I'd use any means necessary to achieve my goals too, even if it involves unsavory methods."

As I spoke, I saw Shredica's lips twitch into a tentative smile. It was awkward and, to be honest, a little unsettling, but there was no mistaking the genuine warmth behind it.

"That's a relief," she said, her lips curving into a faint smile that seemed almost alien on her usually hard face. It softened her sharp, intimidating features, but the smile itself was a bit unsettling in its awkwardness.

I was taken aback by the unexpected warmth but kept my surprise hidden behind a neutral expression.

"Well then, Mr. Leon," she said, her voice taking on a casual tone as she prepared to leave. "Until next time. Although, honestly, I have no clue when that will be." She turned to walk away but paused and glanced back over her shoulder, adding. "Oh, and if you could tell the Princess that I'm sorry for not meeting her, I'd appreciate it. The truth is, I came here so late specifically to avoid her.

She can be a bit of a handful sometimes. If she's upset, just explain things to her, alright?" With one last look, she walked away, her silhouette gradually fading into the night.

I watched her figure as it slowly disappeared into the distance.

"I guess she can smile like that too, huh?" I muttered to myself.

It was the first time... and probably the last time I'd ever see her smile like that.

Chapter 290: Classmates (5)

I returned to my room and found Yr still fast asleep. Her face was buried in the pillow, a trail of drool spilling from her mouth and soaking the fabric beneath her.

"At this rate, she's not waking up until tomorrow," I muttered to myself. "Should I just crash here instead?"

If I did, though, I'd miss out on my nightly fun—a good wrestle with one or two, or maybe even a whole bunch of my women. But I guess that could wait. I didn't want to leave Yr alone in my dorm room.

"Where the hell should I sleep, though?"

There wasn't much space to sleep. The sofa was the only alternative, but curling up there would probably leave me aching all over by morning. I guess I had no choice but to make do with it.

As I was contemplating this, Yr stirred from her sleep.

"Mmmmm..." she moaned softly, her eyes slowly fluttering open. She fixed her gaze on me, and then her stomach let out a loud, rumbling growl. "Hungry," she said.

I couldn't help but crack a smile at the sight. It felt like I was dealing with a spoiled daughter.

"Alright, alright. What do you want?"

"Something appetizing," she mumbled, her voice still heavy with sleep.

"Okay," I said, "but don't expect a gourmet meal. I'm not exactly a master chef, and the stuff I've got in storage isn't exactly five-star cuisine. So, don't judge too harshly."

I walked over to the storage barrel—a small, unremarkable container that functioned like a primitive fridge. Inside, a constant chill was maintained by a spell that cast a steady stream of ice magic. It wasn't the most advanced setup, but it kept the food from going bad. I rummaged through it, hoping to find something halfway decent.

I gathered the ingredients and moved to the cooking area, which shared space with the bedroom since it was a compact, single-room dorm. Normally, cooking here would result in smoke filling the room, but thankfully, despite it being a bronze-class dorm, the ventilation was impressive. Magical vents swiftly drew the smoke away, keeping the room clear and fresh.

Magic really did make everything work seamlessly.

I set to work on my meal: smoked monster meat and monster soup. The meat came from a monster bird—edible and generally safe, though some monsters were too toxic to consider. As I seasoned and sautéed the meat, the aroma of spices mingled with the rich, gamey scent of the monster bird, promising something both hearty and satisfying.

I employed a few culinary tricks to elevate the flavors, aiming to make the dish as delicious as I could. It might not be five-star cuisine, but I hoped it would hit the spot.

The savory scent of the meal swirled through the room, intensifying as I served it. Yr's stomach growled loudly, a clear signal of her hunger, and I could almost feel her anticipation behind me.

Once the food was ready, I arranged the succulent monster meat on a plate and poured the steaming, aromatic soup into a small bowl. Yr's eyes lit up with primal hunger, and drool pooled at the corners of her mouth as she fixed her gaze on the meal.

I placed the food in front of her, and she wasted no time. With a near-animalistic fervor, she attacked the meal, shoveling it into her mouth without a word or a hint of gratitude. If I had a daughter, I imagined she might act just like Yr—unfiltered and ravenous. While I wasn't in the mood for children now, the thought of someday having them with my women stirred a thrilling sense of anticipation.

Imagining them growing up, perhaps mirroring this unrestrained hunger, sparked a curious excitement within me.

After finishing her meal, Yr let out a burp so loud and raucous it felt like the room itself was shaking.

"So full. Gotta go back to sleep," she mumbled, then flopped back onto the bed with a sigh of contentment.

I stood there, my jaw practically hitting the floor, staring at her in utter disbelief.

"Hey, you can't just leave me hanging like this," I said, trying to rouse her from her lazy stupor. "Wake up!"

"Nooo... five more minutes..." she whined, barely opening one eye.

"You've been out for six hours already," I insisted, trying to sound exasperated. "Wake up and tell me what you know about Trill."

"Five more minutes, I say..." Yr's mouth twisted into a pout.

I sighed, realizing that no matter what I did, I wasn't going to get her up anytime soon.

I gathered up her dishes, the clinking and clattering echoing in the quiet room as I washed them. The warm water did little to ease my frustration. Once the dishes were clean, I made my way back to the sofa and threw myself onto it, the cushions offering minimal comfort.

As I started to sink into the worn fabric, Yr's voice cut through the silence, surprising me.

"I'm sorry, but truth be told, I don't have any information about her," she mumbled, her voice carrying a hint of apology. "I can't give you anything..."

I stared at her.

"I figured as much," I said, not expecting Yr to have any real insights about Trill. Given her laziness, she hardly seemed the type to stay up and stay alert, especially when her skill required constant mental engagement. That meant she had to be awake and focused all the time for it to work, which wasn't exactly her strong suit.

"But you're not going to leave me completely in the dark, are you?" I asked.

Even though Yr was notoriously lazy, she wasn't one to outright lie. I had to believe that if she promised to provide information about Trill, she would, even if it wasn't today. Maybe it would come in the days ahead.

"Mm..." she murmured, her eyes still closed in lazy contentment. "I caught on to your little scheme to dig up info on Trill because I overheard you chatting with someone about investigating her. I happened to stumble upon it while drifting around the school with my astral form, hunting for a cozy corner to nap in after Professor Irene's class wrapped up."

That explained why she had an inside track on my clandestine efforts regarding Trill.

"I'll dig up the dirt you want on her," Yr said. "But you'll need to cough up something in return."

"I'm all ears," I said, ready to hear her price.

But after everything that had gone down today, I already had a good idea of what her conditions would be.

"I want you to cook for me," she demanded with a lazy drawl.

Cooking wasn't exactly my forte, but fine. If that was the price for getting info on Trill, so be it.

No sooner had she laid out her terms than I heard her start snoring again. It seemed she was back to dreaming away without a care.

The next day...

I awoke on the sofa, feeling like every bone in my body had turned into a block of cement. My muscles were stiff and sore.

I glanced at my smartphone and saw it was already late afternoon. The sunlight streaming through the window made the room feel like a warm, lazy cocoon. Thankfully, there were no classes today, so I didn't need to fret about being late. I must have been so exhausted from taking care of Yr last night that I'd slept through most of the day.

The woman in question was still sprawled across my bed, her body tangled in the sheets like a cat that had claimed a sunlit patch. Her snoring was rhythmic and peaceful, with occasional drool dripping from the corner of her slightly open mouth, dampening the pillow beneath her.

I sighed, getting up with a creak of my stiff bones, and headed over to shake her awake. I had things to do, and I wasn't keen on letting her laze around my room all day.

"Wake up, Yr," I said, shaking her gently to rouse her from sleep.

"Mmm..." she moaned in response, barely registering my attempt.

It was clear waking her up wouldn't be a simple task.

"Wake up," I repeated, a bit firmer this time.

"Mrgghh... I don't want to... I want to sleep more... I don't function well this early..." she mumbled groggily.

"It's already afternoon," I said, but I sighed, realizing she wasn't going to give me the time of day.

It seemed like getting this woman out of my dorm room wouldn't be an easy feat.