

Witch Monastery #Chapter 178: Temporary Alliance - Read Witch Monastery Chapter 178: Temporary Alliance

Chapter 178: Chapter 178: Temporary Alliance

Danche's current expression was as complicated as the turmoil within his heart.

He had just crossed the bramble-strewn ground created by magic, dodged the tentacles summoned by Theresa, and skirted around Anno's defensive line. After all this, he finally managed to approach Charles, intending to cleave him down and avenge his chimera. Yet before he could strike, demons suddenly burst forth from the cave and raided their formation from behind, putting their side in grave peril.

And now, at this moment of life and death, his foe—this man from Sein—had taken the initiative to draw enemy fire and helped alleviate part of the crisis?

As furious as he was, the taste in his mouth was indescribably complex, and his greataxe hung in hesitation.

"Help!—"

A cry came from behind—satyr matriarch Willo Green Vines: "Stop fighting each other, come help destroy the demons first!"

"The pollution is still spreading—your chimeras will all die at this rate!"

Hearing this, Danche clenched his teeth. As the future leader of the Chimera tribe, that identity prevailed over his personal vendetta, and he suppressed the rage surging from his bond with Barbary. "You've just bought yourself a reprieve, Sein-man!"

With that, he spun around and rushed at the demons. "Die, fiends—!"

Further back, Theresa dropped her spellcasting gesture and eyed Danche's retreating form, voice tinged with taunting: "Looks like you bought yourself a reprieve too, half-orc."

By then, the first hezrou struck by Charles had staggered across the bramble field to this side of the battle. Its feet were torn and dripping with demon ichor, toxic and vile, yet it strode straight through the agony, heading directly for Charles.

Danche, gripping his greataxe and ignoring the pain in his feet, launched himself into the air. The keen blade arced downward for the hezrou's head!

Slice—

The hezrou twisted aside, but Danche's waist snapped around, adjusting his posture at the last second; the blade carved open its shoulder, drawing fresh blood from the demon!

Landing, Danche tumbled through the scorched ground, barely avoiding a counterblow before rising to face this new foe.

With their leader setting the tone, the other half-orcs—still rampaging—turned against the demons, now intent on slaying fiends as the true priority. Charles continued to unleash Eldritch Blasts, drawing another hezrou toward him to prevent further casualties from these raging monsters.

The next moment, yet more Dretch surged from the cave—howling, they rushed at the battered chimeras and satyrs. Their numbers seemed endless and could barely be culled in time.

Behind, the sudden shift in alliances stunned Anno, but she rallied at once. Seeing demons pouring forth, she gritted her teeth, hefted her shield, and stepped forward—her longsword shining with golden light as she slashed at the hezrou locked in combat with Danche—

Slice—

Against this golden blade, the hezrou's skin—which mere axes could scarcely scratch—yielded like butter. The sword's radiant light scorched its flesh, flames burning deep into the demon's body!

Searing agony tore at its soul, and the hezrou let out a guttural, toad-like scream: "AAARGH—!"

Pain now whipped the demon into greater rage; it swung a claw the size of a human head at Anno's body—

CLANG—

Anno raised her shield and blocked the blow, a shriek of tortured metal ringing out. Had it been mere steel, the shield would have been mangled, but hers was a magic shield!

She staggered back a few steps, noting absently that this blow was lighter than the chimera's earlier charge. Confidence surged in her chest and she called, "Half-orc—!"

"Take your tribesmen and support the rear. I'll finish this one!"

Without waiting for an answer, she stepped forward—her longsword gleaming with golden fire as it cleaved the hezrou a second time!

Behind her, Danche—who moments ago burned with outrage at losing his prey—glanced back and, seeing the satyrs in dire straits, grudgingly growled, "It's yours!"

With that, he dodged past two charging hezrou, leading his warriors to reinforce the rear.

Meanwhile, Anno's Divine Smite fell blow after shining blow on the hezrou!

Earlier, when battling the half-orcs, she'd been frugal—not wasting a single spell slot or using Divine Smite at all.

Paladins are "half-casters", their spellcasting abilities only half that of a true cleric—they unlock 2nd-level spells at level 5, and their spell slots barely match a 3rd-level cleric.

Their limited casting endurance is one of their few weaknesses, requiring careful management to avoid blowing all slots in a flurry of righteous power—leaving nothing but sword swings in the final stretch.

But now, facing demons, Anno had no need to hold back. Blow after blow, Divine Smite lashed out without reservation!

"ROAR—!"

Divine light is anathema to fiends; the hezrou howled in agony, and the war-god-like monster was already teetering after just moments in Anno's path!

Witnessing this, Charles could only marvel—against demons, Divine Smite truly was the most cost-effective, irreplaceable source of direct damage.

It struck him all the more because he had, before, gained the system's gift of a 4th-level spell: Staggering Smite. That spell could add both great psychic harm and a terror effect for a full minute.

Yet against demons, Divine Smite easily rivaled it for raw damage. While it lacked the terror effect, Staggering Smite cost six spell slots, while Divine Smite required only two!

Three times the spell slot expenditure was no contest.

Moreover, Staggering Smite was a spell—easily countered by spells like Counterspell (3rd-level) or Globe of Invulnerability (6th-level).

But Divine Smite wasn't a spell, but a paladin class feature, learned at level 2...

The strength of paladins was truly enviable.

Thinking this, Charles strode forward, let loose four more Eldritch Blasts to bring the hezrou near death, then called out: "Anno, don't kill it—leave this one for me!"

Danger still loomed, but he desperately needed Purification Points!

Before him, Anno raised her golden longsword, ready to strike, but at his words, she held back: "Understood!"

She let the golden radiance fade from her blade, raised her shield, and hurried off to engage another hezrou.

Charles strode up, summoned his own longsword and shield, closed in and drove his burning blade at the hezrou—

Shink—

The flaming blade bit deep into demon flesh; though demon hide was resistant to fire, Charles's killing edge was more than just heat. His eyes flashing, he roared: "Purified!"

Buzz—

"Raaa—?!"

Gentle, purifying white light enveloped the wounded hezrou. The hulking demon, its body already battered, recoiled in a primal terror—here was pain that struck straight to its soul, a horror it had never known!

It lashed out with its claw at Charles's back—

CLANG—

He raised his magic shield and blocked the blow, though a second claw punched through layers of protective force. Armor of Agathys froze the demon's claw, but the hezrou—along with the bonus from False Life—vanished into nothing!

The destructive power of a hezrou, Charles realized, was even more terrifying than he'd expected!

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Fortunately, the hezrou had no more strength left to muster.

"ROAR—"

The monster tried to lash out again, but already grievously wounded, it could no longer resist the force of purification.

Its massive body was swiftly dissolved into black mist, then swept up and purified by white light, vanishing without a trace. Only the poisoned blood that burst from its ruptured boils remained on the ground as evidence it ever existed.

"Whew..."

Letting out a long breath, Charles didn't have time to check how many Purification Points he gained from this round. He turned, eyes finding the next formidable adversary.

At this moment, the second hezrou had crossed the magical bramble field, streaking the earth with demon blood. Anno was locked in combat with it, but unlike before, she no longer flared Divine Smite power about as if it were free.

Instead, she relied on her shield and the defense of her plate armor to block the creature's claws, counterattacking carefully with her longsword.

The demon's talons, sharp as steel knives, raked again and again across Anno's shield, helmet, and armor, ringing with metallic clangs and leaving white gouges. Yet, save for a bone-jarring impact, the beast could hardly harm Anno at all!

At this point, Charles suddenly realized the plate armor she wore was no ordinary ware—it was also imbued with magical power.

So even if her shield missed a blow and the hezrou struck directly, the thick iron left only a white scrape without harming the knight beneath.

Suddenly aware of this, Charles felt a chill of awe.

Anno was truly wealthy!

A standard set of plate armor alone cost fifteen hundred gold. To enchant such a massive suit with protective magic would be another astronomical sum: exaggerating only slightly, Anno's armor probably cost well over ten thousand gold!

As expected of a noble-born paladin, when it came to her own protection, Anno spared no expense!

Of course, mere unbreakable defense was not alone enough to avoid being overwhelmed one-on-one with a hezrou. Offensively, her prowess remained formidable.

Though her sword was mundane, all paladins could learn "Magic Weapon," a 2nd-level spell to imbue ordinary arms with magical power.

Although that spell's might was less than the 3rd-level "Elemental Weapon" Charles had mastered, it was enough to cut through demonhide.

And as an Oath of Vengeance paladin, she could also learn "Hunter's Mark," usually a ranger's 1st-level spell, to mark a foe's weakness—making Anno a practiced demon-hunter, her blade always striking true.

With all this, even without Divine Smite, she could battle a hezrou alone and not falter!

Paladins were indeed powerful.

A wealthy paladin—without doubt—even more so!

Reflecting thus, Charles wasted no more time. He drew his sword, strode forward, and flanked the hezrou from behind. Working with Anno, they attacked from front and rear. Regrettably, his purification could be triggered only by his own hand; otherwise, he'd never willingly engage such a foul demon in melee combat.

Still, even a nearly three-meter giant, a hezrou had no eyes at its back. Hemmed in on both sides, it grew ever more frenzied, and Anno's burden lessened considerably.

While the two closed in, others were busy too. Nidalee cast another incantation, carpeting the cave mouth with brambles. The Dretch, being short, were soon slashed on legs and feet as they emerged, left limping, then promptly cut down by half-orc axes with barely a moment's resistance.

Hattie, meanwhile, was casting spells—but seemingly at random, lazily launching cantrip ice bolts and otherwise edging away from the chaotic battlefield. Her eyes narrowed in realization. Glancing back, she called to Theresa, "Aren't you casting anymore?"

Theresa, who'd been doing nothing for some time, replied with a small smile, "Letting the demons kill a few more half-orcs isn't the worst outcome, is it?"

Hattie shook her head, thinking farther ahead. "At least pretend. Not long ago we had the upper hand, and Master insisted on helping defeat the demons. Clearly he wants to work with these half-orcs."

"We should at least cast a couple of spells. Even if it's just for Master's sake, it's better than doing nothing, right?"

Theresa tilted her head, pondered, then nodded. "You make sense. Besides, I've got spell slots to spare..."

So she lifted her hand and cast a 5th-level Color Spray, flooding the third hezrou—the one Charles lured across the brambles—with dazzling light.

The demon was instantly blinded, its threat greatly diminished. On the other side, as Charles's sword flashed with purifying white light and he cleansed the second hezrou, the pair advanced on the newly blinded third hezrou.

Before long, that creature too fell to their combined assault.

Meanwhile, through the combined effort of the half-orcs and satyrs, the last hezrou was finally slain.

They lacked magical weapons, so even with great might, their greataxes merely scraped the demon's hide; lacking heavy magic plate armor, they had to dodge constantly while attacking, badly hampering their effectiveness.

Most of the satyrs were low-level spellcasters, able only to use 1st-level "Entangle" to summon vines and cantrip Fire Bolt to harass the hezrou. They knew demon skin was resistant to fire, but they had little else in their arsenal.

Fortunately, resistance was not immunity, and a slow trickle of damage could still be fatal in the end.

At last, the battle was done.

With the third hezrou purified, Charles and Anno quickly withdrew, regrouping with Hattie and the others, only then relaxing and bringing up his system panel to tally the gains.

Seeing the numbers, his brows shot up and delight lit his face.

Nineteen hundred!

Not a mere total of nineteen hundred points, but each single hezrou had yielded a massive 1,900 Purification Points!

Altogether, that came to 5,700, and counting his earlier rewards, his Purification Points surpassed 6,000!

Just three more hezrou and he could level up again—or raise the monastery to tier three!

He had not expected these fiends to grant so many Purification Points—even more than his first purifications of Ruth and Sephera. Joy swept away his former gloom.

Anno, meanwhile, began a silent prayer, guiding Divine Power to restore spent spell slots. As they hurriedly recovered and checked their spoils, their adversaries were also regrouping.

The satyrs chanted healing nature magic to tend to the gravely wounded half-orc warriors and chimera. Their mana was weak, but it was enough to rescue comrades from death and get them up to fighting with mere minor wounds, ready for another round if needed.

The less-wounded, axes in hand, stood by warily, eyeing Charles and his group, prepared for any renewed conflict.

Danche was no different. With the demons destroyed and his people safe, he had fulfilled his duties as the tribe's heir. But with his beloved chimera dead, his anger surged back, and he glared at Charles.

But to his surprise, suddenly a sweet fragrance passed his nose, and he saw satyr matriarch Willo Green Vines hurry forward, rushing up to Charles and Anno.

"My lords paladin, and mages—please, help us!"

Urgent as she was, the satyr matriarch had still not forgotten to make herself presentable before beginning negotiations, hoping to leave a good impression. Of course, the battlefield was no place for elaborate grooming, but with a quick Druidcraft, she cleaned away dirt and corruption, appeared refreshed and tidy, and then hurried straight to Charles.

During the recent battle, she had witnessed with her own eyes this man of Sein take the lead, propose an alliance, and use his spells to attract the hezrou's attention, saving two chimeras and at least four or five half-orc warriors in the process.

Thus, she judged he was a paladin with a spirit of justice, keen insight, and adaptable methods—and from the way the others changed their tactics at his word, he appeared to be the team's true leader.

For this reason, Willo firmly believed that if she negotiated directly with him, they could form an alliance and resolve the demon pollution at minimal cost.

After this, she hurried to add a brief self-introduction: "I am Willo Green Vines, the current matriarch of the Green Vines tribe. We've joined with our allies, the Chimera tribe, to destroy the sources of pollution laid by demon-worshipping cultists in these mountains."

Finishing her simple introduction, she dived straight to the urgent matter: "There are traps and magical mechanisms the cultists planted in this cave. Now the portal to the Infinite Layers of the Abyss has been opened, and an endless stream of demons and pollution is pouring into the material world..."

Her emotions mounting, she brusquely bowed to Charles. "I beseech you both—please help us!"

Here we go again, mistaken for a paladin.

Charles put away his system dialogue, gazing at Willo with complex feelings. After so many such encounters, he didn't even bother explaining anymore; he simply examined the satyr matriarch before him.

Her appearance suggested a woman of about thirty, yet she possessed the elegant polish of a noblewoman, strikingly beautiful and with ivory skin like cloud-pure silk.

As a satyr, she had a mane of snowy, curly short hair—not that silvery-white of Charles, but closer to actual sheep's wool. As a female, she lacked horns, and two soft, sheep-like ears hung at the sides of her head—almost enticing to the touch.

She wore a robe woven from autumn-yellow leaves. In the rush of battle, it had clearly suffered some damage, and now, as she leaned down to bow, her full bosom and deep cleavage—unrestrained by undergarments—were briefly laid bare to Charles's view...

He realized these mountain folk women did not wear anything like a corset. Instantly, Charles felt his blood pressure spike.

Beside him, Anno had no such distractions. Seeing the satyr's earnest attitude, she exhaled and raised her visor to show her face, offering, "There's no need for that formality, Green Vines madam. I am Anno Amcastra, this is Nigel Charles. We are sent from Blackstaff Tower specifically to investigate and resolve the demon pollution."

"We need your help and support as well—after all, fiends are the enemies of every creature in the material world."

Her attitude was positive, and Charles, frowning slightly, continued, "An alliance is natural, but before that, we need a foundation of mutual trust."

He glanced toward Danche, his meaning clear.

In the distance, Danche gritted his teeth, his heart smoldering. His beloved chimera Barbary had just met its end at the hands of these people—how could he be calm?

Yet when Willo Green Vines turned her gentle, questioning eyes on him, and he recalled his responsibilities as heir, he clenched his teeth and felt his heart bleed. "The

Chimera tribe came for the same purpose. Of course, we are willing to unite with anyone fighting to end this demon pollution. As for before...please forgive us."

In this moment, responsibility overpowered personal emotion. Finished, he let out a sigh and seemed suddenly spent, his whole posture wilting.

The Green Vines tribe was probably the only group amid the mountains composed entirely of spellcasters, with prized healing magics among them—making them invaluable allies for any tribe, especially small, elite ones like his own.

So, to maintain Willo Green Vines's goodwill, he would have to endure.

Patience, Danche, go along with them—for a half-orc, vengeance may wait ten months and not be forgotten! First, eliminate the demons... then settle accounts with these outsiders!

So he silently vowed. Beside him, Willo, seeing him so reasonable, breathed a quiet sigh and turned back to Charles with a warm smile. "Rest assured, Mr. Charles, Lady Anno, when it comes to fighting demons, we are unwavering allies."

Charles blinked in confusion, and Anno's cheeks flushed red: "Uh... you're mistaken, I'm not his wife..."

She immediately realized she sounded awkward and shot Charles a pleading look, hoping he would offer some explanation.

Charles, too tired to bother, just caught Anno's shyness and gave a small laugh, replying, "You misunderstand, Matriarch."

Willo looked surprised. "Ah? You aren't married? Pardon my assumption... I just thought—you make such a fine pair..."

Anno hung her head, beet red, both embarrassed and a little pleased; her opinion of the satyr matriarch shot up several notches.

Behind, Hattie and Theresa stifled giggles, and the latter kept sneaking looks at Nidalee.

Nidalee, biting her lip, felt a pang of discomfort. After a moment, she strode forward, wrapped her arm around Charles's, and announced, "That's right—I'm his fiancée."

Anno was stunned, but Nidalee wasn't finished. Clinging to Charles's arm, she turned to Willo: "A pleasure, Matriarch Green Vines. I am Nidalee, daughter of Archdruid Ilarode of the Mountaineer tribe. I've heard so much of you—what an honor to finally meet!"

Willo gaped anew and shook her hand. "Nidalee? But your father said you were off on another mission..."

Nidalee nodded, lying without hesitation. "Yes, and with it, I brought Mr. Charles and Lady Anno, two powerful paladins, as well as Miss Hattie and Miss Theresa, both formidable mages."

She released Willo's hand, resting her head on Charles's shoulder. "And I found the love of my life as well—a most fruitful journey in every way."

Nearby, jaws clenched. Willo sensed something was odd, but as a fundamentally ingenuous satyr, she could only nod in bemused fashion. "Congratulations, Miss Nidalee."

Nidalee's satisfied smile deepened as she watched Anno's reaction, her own spirits soaring.

Charles surreptitiously squeezed Anno's hand for reassurance, then hurriedly changed the subject. "I suspect all the demons from the cave are out now—that portal was unstable and seems to have closed."

As a seasoned adventurer, he knew how these makeshift demon portals behaved: they started small (letting only a handful of Dretch through), then rapidly expanded (allowing larger demons like hezrou), before quickly collapsing after reaching maximum size—at the end, several more Dretch would tumble out.

What had just unfolded fit this pattern exactly, and so most likely, the portal was now sealed and they were safe.

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Chapter 180: Chapter 180: Chthonian

"I see everyone is injured, and our mana reserves are nearly depleted. Why don't we all take some rest, recover our strength, and then explore this cave together?" Charles suggested.

Willo naturally had no objection and soon took her leave, returning to her own tribe. After hearing her plan, the satyrs pulled out medicinal herbs from their packs, applying

them to the wounds of lightly-injured warriors, then settled into meditation, each restoring a little stamina and spell power however they could.

Charles glanced at the dark, stormy expression on Anno's face. Once Willo was out of earshot, he quickly extricated himself from Nidalee's arm and grumbled, pretending to be dissatisfied, "What was that about? Was that really necessary?"

The corners of Nidalee's mouth curled into a secret smile—she was delighted—but on her face, she wore only innocent confusion. "Willo Green Vines, the satyr matriarch of the Green Vines tribe. I've never met her, but I've heard much about her."

"Their entire tribe are spellcasters, extremely rare. My father has always wished to ally with them. Now that the Alliance of the Mountain Purifiers has formed, I suspect they've joined it as well."

"And those chimera-taming Chimera tribes are likely members of the alliance too. This time, it's a joint operation."

Anno had heard about internal matters of the Alliance of the Mountain Purifiers and Nidalee's Mountaineer tribe. But as Charles could attest, she'd joined the monastery long ago and was unaware of its specifics, so she didn't press Nidalee further.

"So, to escape my father's arranged marriage, it's absolutely necessary for me to play this role." Nidalee looked at him with puppy-dog eyes. "Priest, you'll help me, right?"

"Lady Anno, you don't mind, do you?"

She said it deliberately, making Charles lightly pinch her in retaliation, deciding he'd give her a proper lesson later.

Theresa quietly massaged her forehead; she didn't particularly enjoy this sort of dispute. Hattie, meanwhile, hid her giggles behind a hand, finding these humans' scheming and rivalry quite amusing.

When she realized the opposition was part of a military alliance openly hostile to Liberl Port, the female paladin's expression changed; any jealousy was forgotten as she immediately shifted into professional mode: "They're part of the Alliance of the Mountain Purifiers? And I just revealed my identity... Isn't that dangerous?"

Nidalee was a little disappointed but shook her head. "Of course not. Satyrs originated in the Feywild, and they're emotional creatures, very sensitive to moods. By nature, they're drawn to positivity and happiness, disliking grief and pain."

"So, they're definitely in the anti-war camp. My father's actually the same, though to gather allies, he puts on a radical face at first, then always finds reasons why war is unwise..."

Her answer eased Anno's worries. But Charles, eyes narrow and thoughtful, was staring at the half-orc leader among them—the young, burly, and highly skilled half-orc. His mind was busy at work.

This chimera-rearing tribe is probably on the radical end. They've been openly hostile from the start.

Better be careful...

He made a mental note, though for now, an uneasy alliance prevailed and outward harmony was maintained.

Both sides sat down to rest and recover. Charles handed Anno a mana recovery pearl—a magic item that restores five spell slots instantly and recharges itself every twenty-four hours—perfect for paladins unable to rely on steady supplies.

The only downside: a person can only use one per day without risking permanent mental damage. Otherwise, Charles would have bought ten of them at once.

Ahem.

Anno accepted without hesitation, expending its charge, then drank a Potion of Mental Clarity. This could be consumed repeatedly in a day, but after each dose, the user must meditate in silence to absorb its effects—any movement or sweating wastes the potion.

For each ten minutes of meditation, one spell slot is restored, up to five in total. Drinking multiple potions at once gives no additional benefit—only wastes them.

So, after drinking, Anno began to meditate and pray, slowly restoring her channelled Divine Power. Nidalee did the same with a mana pearl, then entered her own deep rest—not for spell slots, but just to recover energy and stamina.

Charles didn't use or drink anything. He renewed his magic buffs, drained his own spell slots, then started meditating to absorb mana from the witches.

Thus, an hour quickly passed.

When Charles and his team finished, they were all essentially back to peak condition. The half-orcs, due to their many wounded and their low-level spellcasters being nearly out of mana, managed to send only five people to accompany Charles and the others into the cave; the rest waited outside.

The five selected were: the satyr matriarch Willo Green Vines, the Chimera tribe's young chieftain Danche, the elderly priest capable of spellcasting, a male satyr, and a stout middle-aged half-orc barbarian.

Charles made no objection, but he could clearly sense the difference in attitude: Willo and the male satyr were approachable, but the three half-orcs—especially the old priest, Danche, and the middle-aged barbarian—couldn't hide their enmity and resentment.

He remained extremely polite, but subtly kept his distance. Even cooperating for this joint move, they all acted as if they were two separate teams entering the cave side by side.

The cave entrance itself, two meters high, was almost perfectly circular. Walking inside, Charles couldn't help but frown repeatedly, finding that it felt less like any natural cave and more like... a subway tunnel?

Too regular—although there were some pits and rough spots, the passage as a whole was a perfectly straight, cylindrical void...

He grew wary, and at his side, Willo—who'd been closely observing his expression—suddenly spoke up: "Mr. Charles, did you notice something as well?"

Charles nodded and didn't deny it. "Yes, this place... doesn't seem natural, nor like something beasts or miners dug. It's more like..."

He wanted to say it looked like a drill, but realized there were no machines like that in this world. He hesitated, searching for a better comparison.

Willo picked up his unspoken thought: "More like the tunnel of a giant worm, isn't it?"

Charles nodded. "Exactly—that's the feeling this cave gives me!"

Willo gave a faint smile, but her eyes soon darkened with worry. "Mr. Charles, and all of you—since you're learned mages from Liberl Port, I imagine your knowledge is broad."

A little flattery at first; Charles and Anno hastily offered modest responses. Behind them, Danche's brow furrowed, a little uncomfortable. He couldn't help but feel the implication was that all these mountain folk were a pack of ignorant rubes...

But he had to admit he truly didn't know what Willo brought up next.

"Have any of you heard of a colossal monster called a... Chthonian?" Willo asked cautiously.

At once Charles and Anno's faces changed. Hattie and Theresa stopped dead in their tracks, eyes wide with shock. "Chthonian?"

Only Nidalee stared in wide-eyed confusion, not understanding what they were talking about.

Seeing their reaction, Willo sighed in relief. "Good, you know about them—saves me a lot of explaining."

Charles mastered his shock, adopting a solemn expression. Of course he knew about Chthonians. These ultra-giant monsters—like a mixture of worm and squid—were not beasts, nor even true monsters, but, just like the Great Old Ones, Outer Gods, and the witches, were the result of loopholes in the fabric of the material world itself!

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