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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 76: Preparations for Retaliation

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 76: Preparations for Retaliation

Heralesse finds Rikuto in a large new construction on the castle grounds; a quickly assembled wooden structure with large doors on the front for cart traffic, and a roof to keep the weather out. It clashes with the basic structure of the castle and the gardens, but he had it assembled in a hurry after returning from his trip to the south, where he hoped to speak with an ancient elven mage said to have seen the founding of most of the kingdoms in the east with his own eyes.

In the apparent congregation building for the mages and magic artisans of the entire continent, by all appearances, Rikuto is inspecting a magic device Heralesse has never seen before.

She approaches cautiously, asking, “Rikuto?”

He looks at her, his expression more grim than it used to be. “Oh, Heralesse. Everything alright?”

The young woman replies gently, “I just wanted to check on you. You haven’t been eating, have you?”

“Hmm? Oh. I’ve been getting quick meals when I have time.”

She sighs, approaching to take his arm gently as she looks at the device. “What is so important that you’ve been neglecting your health?”

“I’m not.”

“There are bags under your eyes. You’re working harder than ever, and you aren’t taking breaks.”

He sighs, extracting himself to pace as the magic artisans apparently responsible for the device they’re currently looking at return to working on the device. Heralesse studies it for a moment, following Rikuto as he looks at several other projects. “I’m doing alright. I know my limits, Heralesse. I promise.”

She is skeptical, but she stays alongside him. She asks, “What are they making?”

Rikuto sighs. “Defense equipment. I have had my suspicions confirmed, and we’ll need to prepare for an inevitable invasion.”

“From the demons?” asks Heralesse.

“No. From Daniel and Hekate.”

This causes Heralesse to come to a stop. “What?”

Rikuto turns, and she can see a deep-seated pain in his eyes. “The Silence that passed over the whole world a few months ago was Daniel testing a terrible weapon. Once this weapon is initiated, it’s too late.”

“Why would he invade, Rikuto? You heard Erimaya. He and Hekate are open to peace.”

Rikuto looks away, and she asks coldly, “What is it?”

“You don’t need to be burdened with…”

She slaps him, causing the entire room to fall to silence. The guards nearby flinch, but they hold off for the moment, since Heralesse is more specifically royalty than Rikuto is, no matter their relationship. However, they may need to respond to defend her, given their differences in physique.

She adds sharply, “You are diverting resources to this project, and the bulk of our soldiers have been deployed, haven’t they? Where are they?”

Rikuto hesitates, but he sighs. “If all is going according to plan, they are with a joint task force laying siege to the Citadel.”

Heralesse gasps. She knows well enough that the Citadel is the castle owned by Hekate and Daniel.

“What have you done!?”

Rikuto glances at the eyes watching them, and he replies, “Can we discuss this elsewhere?”

“What’s there to discuss!? You’ve already attacked! When were you planning to tell me about this!?”

“I didn’t want to burden you. We need to do something about Daniel.”

Heralesse stares at Rikuto in disbelief. “‘Do something about…’? Y-You can’t… You can’t be serious.”

“It’s likely already too late,” replies Rikuto, ignoring the comment. “That’s why we have to develop something to counteract that weapon. Something to stalemate anyone that has access to the weapons once Daniel is neutralized.”

“I can’t believe you…” replies Heralesse softly. “You once stood up for him.”

“I’m human. I can be wrong. I was summoned to this world to eliminate the Demon Tyrant, wasn’t I? If Daniel usurped that role, the name of my target is the only thing that has changed. The reports I’ve seen suggest the demons have relented their attacks for now, so we can focus on overcoming a superweapon from my world.” He rubs his face, shaking his head. “I can’t believe him… I don’t even know how he could make something like that…”

“M-Maybe, it’s as Eri said…”

“No, I now know I was wrong about him not being willing to make weapons.” He looks at Heralesse, confessing, “The day you asked him, he and I lied to you. He told me that he could make weapons, but wasn’t going to. Instead, he made the worst one Earth ever created.” He clenches his fists, growling softly, “I had no idea… I still have no idea how…”

Heralesse is silent for a long time, and Rikuto finally says quietly, “I vowed to protect this world from its greatest threat. I will keep my promise.” He walks further into the warehouse, leaving Heralesse deep in concerned thought.

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“Hahahahahaha! I can’t believe it!” For once since coming to this world that would only seem a fantasy to an Earthling normally, Daniel feels like a kid gazing upon presents under the Christmas tree. While he’s still working on figuring out how to catch up to the modern age of Earth using pure technology that doesn’t rely on magic, he has been able to work with Xyreko, Wenlianna, and even Vaergraes and Illianna to create the crown jewel of the Citadel; the Crystal MDM, or “Magic Discharge Machining” device that mirrors the design of an Earth wire EDM, where magic replaces electricity. Using a thin wire and magic energy, as well as machining positioning controlled by hundreds of tiny ‘golems’ in place of the motors in an EDM, the MDM is capable of a wide array

of machining at a fair pace, especially now that they can make more of them. A crowd is gathered around him, with Hekate, Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel crowded specifically around him as the others watch from more of a distance, and between them are the intended operators; goblins, ogres, and dattakoriens looking for work to earn their keep. Daniel hasn't really implemented a financial system yet, since their population was so small, and most of the villagers have been satisfied with merely bartering with each other. It's a whole process if he wants to try to regulate prices and a fully functioning economy. He'll have to, for certain, but the Citadel has been a stop gap, and with MDMs, he'll be able to precision machine tools of all shapes and sizes.

The group watches as the MDM carves a metal plate with a melodious hum. Daniel is the only one truly excited about it, since he knows what he's looking at. Even Wenlianna struggled to understand the programming, which Xyreko is able to simplify for Daniel now that she knows the system as well.

The first tool being cut is a simple knife with a full tang, which will need a proper handle. However, the MDM, because the golems have a limited capacity to follow commands even more complex than the programming of an EDM, can thread itself and begin holes, simplifying the whole process. The golems can also automatically eject completed parts and feed material.

And, adding even more features, Daniel watches closely with his safety goggles as a single glowing line is printed onto the blade of the knife, running along its length. The line will do nothing for now, but it's the same material that is used for specialized paint that can be used for magic glyphs, which Treia graciously let him and Wenlianna study in the memory crystal magic device Treia treasures. Naturally, Daniel was exceedingly careful opening it to inspect the glyph-stone inside, which is a specialty product from one of the westernmost kingdoms bordering the mountains.

But, it’s also an important function of the MDM; it’s not only a subtractive machining device -removing material-, but also an additive machining device -adding material-, like a 3D printer. He had been brainstorming with Xyreko mainly on the design, and now it’s working exactly as he hoped.

With the first knife completed, the ‘intelligent components’ of the MDM, or dedicated golems, release the knife and drop it onto the conveyor, which rolls the knife out to where Daniel and the others are waiting. He laughs warmly again as he takes the knife, inspecting it and gingerly testing its sharpness with his thumb. Thanks to how an EDM or MDM remove the material at machine-tolerance angles, the blade’s sharpness is impeccable.

Ryuogriar remarks as Hekate receives the knife from Daniel to inspect it, “I’m surprised something like this gets you so excited, Mukori.”

Daniel sighs, regaining his composure. “Apologies. It’s the feeling of accomplishment. This machine mirrors one of the types of machining devices on Earth. We’ll be able to make tools a lot faster and with smaller material investment compared to summoning the tools to specification, as is the case now. Plus, we can make molds with this, which can be used to cast all kinds of materials as well as being much faster and even cheaper.” Daniel sighs in relief. “We’re doing the industrial revolution out of order, but this is a big step towards making sure the Fievegal is secure for a long time to come.”

“And… it makes you happy?” asks Geirahoel, still interested in a specific answer.

“The accomplishment does. A lot of things up to now have felt more like clinging to life. This is advancement of our people.” He looks at the ogres, goblins, and dattakoriens who will operate the machines. “By operating these machines, you’ll be helping us race forward and make everyone’s jobs easier.”

They smile, and one of the ogres proudly puffs his chest. “Leave it to us, your Grace. Please let us do this for the Fievegal.”

Xyreko nods, “Having biological workers operate the equipment will be a big relief on our magic supply.”

“That’s the goal,” replies Daniel.

“Can… I make one of these?” asks Geirahoel.

Daniel cocks his head, and she blushes, glaring at him. “Wh-What!? Am I not allowed to!?”

“I… you’re allowed to, but I don’t know why you’d want to. The prototype was the hard part, since we had to work around the components that require motors that I still haven’t figured out how to build here.” He cups his chin, murmuring, “We should be able to make the components for a wire extruder with this, though it’ll take time…”

“I’ll help,” declares Geirahoel.

Again, Daniel is surprised. She blushes, adding, “I…” She struggles to answer, looking away.

Ryuogriar sighs, coming to her junior’s rescue. “Mukori, Mukori, Mukori; you lovable, willfully blind soul. She’s trying to say without saying it, that she wants to make you happy. As do we all, I believe.”

Geirahoel glares at Ryuogriar for a moment, but she can’t refute, since it’s true.

“Ah…” mutters Daniel as he realizes it. He’s not being willfully dense, though he does try to avoid making assumptions. He sighs with a smile, looking at everyone around him. “I’m excited about the MDM because it’s my gift to

myself. One that makes our lives easier. Though,…” He scratches his neck as he grins. “The Earth version was a humongous pain in my butt when they broke. Though, less than the CNCs, so that’ll probably be a little later.” He turns serious, “I’m looking forward to our personal projects together. I’m sorry I’ve been busy.”

Hekate hugs him, saying, “I just want to be with you, Daniel. Whatever we’re doing.”

“I will master what you enjoy, Mukori,” adds Ryuogriar. “I also hope you will enjoy what I have planned for my personal time.”

Hekate scowls at her lightly, and the others reassure Daniel of their excitement as well. He’ll be busy even in leisure, but unlike when he had to head into work, he’s actually excited for it, since it’s with people he cares deeply for.

“Now, then,” starts Daniel after the exchange of warm platitudes, “We’ll have to start producing field tools to get our farms back up and running, as well as weapons and armor for our soldiers. I won’t draft anyone, but I intend to recruit as many soldiers as are willing to help conquer Fort Twilight. Upon successful capture, we’ll make it into another large city and our trade hub with the east, if we can get that far.”

“You really think the east will start trade after you conquer Fort Twilight?”

“The day after, of course not. We’ll need to convince the east to sign a treaty recognizing our sovereignty, which will include Fort Twilight. It’ll take time for them to recognize that they stand less of a chance than ever before when individual goblins can suddenly take on human-kin five to one, the reverse of the east’s current view of goblins. No offense, Shek, Skloe, gentlemen.”

Shek nods in agreement. “Goblins weak. Shek no dumb. But, even Shek fight with Daniel’s weapons.” Skloe also nods in agreement with Shek.

One of the other goblin workers speaks in their language, and Shek and Skloe listen. Skloe translates, “Barmo ask Daniel if Daniel really give goblins same weapons as others.”

Daniel smiles and nods. “Any trustworthy soldier of the Fievegal will be appropriately armed to live up to my expectations of our military. Be they goblins or dragons. Though, I’ll also have roles suited to some that are not suited to others.”

Shek and Skloe explain, and the goblins glance at each other, and then up at the other demon-kin near them. The ogres are also surprised, but they don’t disparage each other. Since Daniel and Hekate took control of the Citadel and spared the many goblins and ogres that proved trustworthy, they have proven that race and appearance have nothing to do with their individual value under the Fievegal. Merit and willingness to work are the primary factors, and Daniel and Xyreko, specifically, have been working out reward systems as they lay the groundwork to change to a financial economy to be able to trade with east and the Demon Covenant, if those become options.

“Oh, something else we can probably make is a bit of a priority as well. Xyreko, I’ll dig through my phone and look for the information I need, as well as sketch some designs. It’ll be quick and dirty, since we’ll need to finish it in a month, but I have the perfect way to conquer Fort Twilight.”

Reignleif remarks a little dryly, holding her egg affectionately against her swollen belly, “You say that like it’ll be a challenge, Mukori.”

He smiles gently, teasing softly, “I’m sure Morty and his brother thought the same about Fort Peony. And, now we know there are people who pose a threat to all of us. Whoever sent the archoneldwyn will have more of them to send, undoubtedly. And, we’ll know almost for certain that my worst fear is correct if they appear at Fort Twilight. They’ll have a month to prepare, after all.”

“What do we intend to do about them?” asks Choul.

“Kill them, obviously!” snaps Geirahoel almost instinctively. Daniel pinches her arm gently, and she looks at him, urgently. She pouts, saying softly, “A-Apologies… Choul…”

Choul nods, looking to Daniel for his answer. Daniel replies, “We still have the option to interrogate the ones we have, but we’ll need a way to neutralize their power.”

“I could go and cast the magic nullification spell over Fort Twilight, Mukori,” offers Ryuogriar. “Though, to ensure any archoneldwyn assassins are neutralized, I’ll need to expend most of my power and maximize my range. I’d… like to test my range, if possible.”

Daniel nods. “That will have to do, though I’d love to make a bomb that can do it. Obviously, without the effects of the other one.”

The ones who know chuckle, though it does also make the few who have suspicions more certain.

Ryuogriar offers with a tender smile, “Unlike some people here, I will be careful.”

Daniel chuckles. “You better. I’m the only one allowed to be reckless.” He glances nervously at the glares at him from just about everyone who doesn’t think his joke is funny.

Reignleif says coldly, “I shall keep Daniel restrained under house arrest during the battle.”

Geirahoel nods. “I shall as well.”

“Grrr…” growls Hekate. “If you weren’t making so much sense, I’d be upset right now.”

“Come on, it was obviously a joke!” replies Daniel, trying to restore the mood.

“Daniel is crafty,” warns Treia. “We may need to tie him up.”

Gwenesphia laughs, earning herself a glare from Treia, since the Lieutenant was witness to Treia’s pitiful state after Daniel did just that to her.

Choul offers, “If I may, my Ladies, my Liege, I don’t see why we would need any of you on the battlefield. With your permission, of course, I would be honored to lead our forces to victory in conquering Fort Twilight. Then, mine and those of the willing soldiers are the only lives gambled.”

Xyreko adds, “Even if something as ludicrous as all of our citizens volunteering happened, we would still need to send a sizable force of golems for the capture of Twilight, Daniel. Particularly if the troops outside right now remain at Twilight to defend it, knowing we’re coming.”

“Seventeen thousand less,” remarks Vaergraes. “Illianna, Thymeria, and I will be aiding in contracting the captured soldiers to be forbidden to return, as with the twenty thousand before.”

Daniel sighs. “You’re right in that it is foolish for any of us to be anywhere near the battlefield, but if I'm going to be a leader, I don’t want to be the kind who profits off of sending others to their deaths while basking in a cushy castle far away from the battlefield.”

Xyreko is the one to say it, though she’s not alone in thinking it. “Daniel, if you are to be Emperor of a large portion of this world, you will have to command battles far away from you. Work you and only you can do in the safety of your castle could be the difference in keeping as many of our people’s lives and livelihoods safe as possible. I will happily give you as many golems as I can, but until we can overcome our mana deficit, the number of times golems can be used to win is limited.”

“I know… I just… I was a sailor… a sea soldier, not a leader. I… don’t know if I have it in me to be the one asking for sacrifice, rather than sacrificing.”

Wenlianna sighs. “Daniel, I know this is long since disproven, but you once told me you are a coward. How do you explain all you’ve done since telling me that? Why can’t you be a coward? Just a little bit. S-So… the people who care about you don’t have to worry so much.”

Daniel smiles. His reply is quiet and gentle. “The people I would be sending to war have people they care about, too. I really do wish I could just solve all the world’s problems with golems, but obviously, the feldroks didn’t do that for a reason. I’ve burned through hundreds of years of accumulated mana, much of which likely came from the feldroks during the massacre.” He looks at the MDM. “That was a fear on Earth, actually. That people would be replaced by robots, the technology version of golems. They were cheaper than people, had no fear or complaints, never got tired or hungry. All they needed was electrical power, maybe some lubrication once in a while, and repairs. All of which could be done by other robots, in theory.”

“It sounds like you’re making your own argument,” replies Ryuogriar. “Part of living is, regrettably, the dangers, trials, and tribulations we all must overcome.”

“I agree. But… what should a simple tinkerer and unremarkable soldier tell his citizens when asking them to exchange their lives for his own? I… know the answer, but…”

“The truth,” replies Vaergraes. “It’s honestly strange to see you so doubtful after all you’ve accomplished. But, I understand the fear of leading in this time of war. The cold answer is that, as the leader, your tactics and plans are more valuable than those whose skills are fighting, specifically. Let alone your technology. By having soldiers fight in your place to allow you to continue to work on running the Fievegal and developing new technology to protect your soldiers, the sooner their safety will increase in the next battle. Their job, during the battle, is to fight not to win, but to survive while pursuing your goal. Victory comes on its own when our soldiers hold out longer than theirs. Speak to them as an emperor who knows what it means to be a soldier, and they will understand.”

“You have all of us to compartmentalize, as well,” adds Xyreko. “As we have been.”

“I get it, but… We don’t *have* to attack Fort Twilight. Once they retreat, we don’t need to send soldiers and risk their lives,” replies Daniel, still struggling with the notion of using actual lives other than his own and his companions, who he can’t stop.

Ryuogriar speaks sincerely next. “The retaliation absolutely needs to take place, Daniel. We MUST send a message to the east and the Demon Covenant that we will not tolerate being attacked.” She places her hand on her chest above her sternum as she closes her eyes, remembering the scorched earth

response just before the attempted invasion's first wave. "We burned the homes of our own citizens, the labors of their effort. Their accomplishments. All to protect them, but because we were wrongfully attacked once more. If we do not send a message, and grant our people the chance at justice, then those losses, material as they may be, will mean nothing."

"What if people had died?" asks Reignleif next. "If we had lost anyone of our citizens during the invasion or the infiltration, and you chose not to retaliate, would that not hurt them more than asking for their service?"

"You're not a natural leader," adds Vaergraes gently. "You function best when you can lead by example, or confront the problem head-on. But, you are the one that many have come to acknowledge as the Emperor of the Citadel and the Fievegal, even if Hekate is supposed to be the real leader."

"I try!" retorts Hekate. "B-But, I'm even… less experienced than Daniel…"

"And, I believe you both are learning well what you did not already know. We all know that I am no paragon of leadership skill. We're all learning together, and we're all in this together. We need to trade our golems for living soldiers, and that means deaths will occur. It can't be helped."

Daniel still seems unsure, and Geirahoel finally speaks. "Daniel, M-Mukori, no one wants you to waste lives. Asking for soldiers to fight for you with the very real risk of death is not the same as carelessly marching them to their deaths. No one here believes you would carelessly march soldiers to their deaths." She approaches, gripping his sleeve gently with her hand. "You try harder than anyone to spare every life you can, even your enemies. Y-You even… reward them… in hopes they become your friends." She blushes, adding softly, "O-Or… lovers…"

He finally chuckles, relaxing a little. “I get it… you’re all right. Thank you. I…” He sighs softly. “Until I can get used to that aspect of leading, please continue to remind me.”

They all smile and nod together, and Aoloan says warmly, “You’re a pretty excellent Emperor, dearly beloved Daniel. Possibly the most kind one I’ve ever heard of.”

He smirks, replying warmly, “I appreciate the praise, but I should probably take the same approach as Marcus Aurelius.”

“Who is that?” asks Hekate.

“An ancient Emperor on Earth who was one of the leaders of one of the most significant Empires in our history. I’ve heard, though I don’t know how true it is, that he hired a servant whose sole job was to follow the Emperor around, and as the people praised him, whisper in his ear, ‘You’re only a man.’ If I leave it to all of you, I’d become an arrogant narcissist in no time.”

“You’re only a man!” snaps Hekate as she points at him. “The man who is my husband and darling, and my savior!”

He chuckles. “Thank you for proving my point, Sweetpea.” He fluffs her hair, and she swats his hand away as she whines, “What!? I said it!”

Ryuogriar teases, “The point is to bring him back down from the praise, though I feel it’s an unnecessary precaution. Only the strongest could claim the role of Dragon Emperor.”

“It feels rather… rude…” adds Wenlianna. “I can’t imagine saying something like that to my own mother or father without there being serious consequences.”

“I can understand,” replies Vaergraes. “I became blinded by the praise around me and began to think everyone was on my side. It made me too trusting.”

“So you joined a bunch of random strangers?” asks Hekate skeptically.

Vaergraes chuckles. “In fairness, I am left to my own devices here and serve mainly as a Priestess of our newly-built shrine.”

“And advise on military and governing matters,” points out Ryuogriar.

Vaergraes shrugs with a smile. “One of the many duties of a priestess is to advise those who seek her counsel.”

“And participating in battles?” asks Illianna, which earns her a shocked look from Vaergraes.

Daniel finally laughs, distracting everyone from the discussion on Vaergraes. “Thank you all. I needed this. Truth be told, I was distracting myself with the things I’ve been working on.” He takes a deep breath and sighs. “Alright. I’ll do it. I’ll start acting like an emperor.”

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 77: The Mechanic's Warning

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 77: The Mechanic's Warning

Empress Sundenelle kos Lindenmorg sighs as she leans back in her office chair, having just finished reviewing and signing logistics orders for various parts of the Empire, including military movements west of Fort Twilight. They've ordered a massive amount of supplies. She's not entirely sure where and why the plan changed to such a large invasion, but if they gain ground in the west, then it's possible the Demons gotten weaker. The mysterious otherworlder known as Daniel seems to be a wildcard in the war, having apparently defeated a dragon and a moderately high threat rank drake single-handedly in defense of Fort Peony.

There's a knock at the door, and it cracks open with her guard. “Your Enlightened Grace, the maid Seylena has a message to present to you.” “A message?” asks Sundenelle skeptically.

“Yes, your Grace.”

“Bring her in.” She straightens her posture a bit in her seat, trying to find comfort. The guards opened the double-doors fully and escorted the maid in. She's a bit nervous, and Lady Byleathea, Sundenelle's mother and Lady-in-waiting looks up from the scroll she was finishing reading.

Seylena curtsies meekly at Sundenelle, and then turns and curtsies to Byleathea. “Your Grace, my Lady.”

“What message do you bring?” asks Sundenelle.

“I was given this scroll, your Grace.”

The Empress cocks her head. “A roll?” Sylena shows the scroll, and she offers it to the guard standing next to her, and he looks to Sundenelle. Sundenelle nods, and the guard takes the message and inspects it. “Magically sealed with a tamper seal, but I'm detecting no rigged spells associated with it, your Grace. Would you like me to open it?”

“Who gave you this scroll?” asks Sundenelle. “And, whose seal is it?”

Sylena answers first, “Your Grace, I was at the market to buy linens, and a boy approached me. I thought he was a pickpocket at first, but instead, he gave me the scroll and said it was given to him by a man who was dying, but that the message contains urgent news about the war with the Citadel.”

Sundenelle stares at her for a long time, and then looks at the guard captain. He replies quietly, “It does seem suspicious, your Grace.”

She nods once, looking to her mother. While Byleathea wasn’t the Empress, but an Empress Consort, she has spent much time in and around the Imperial Court, so she’s familiar with many things. She replies gently, “What was the seal?”

The captain inspects it, and he replies, “I don’t recognize it, myself, I’m afraid.”

“May I?” asks Byleathea, who looks to her own daughter for permission.

Sundenelle thinks for a moment. She’s curious, but she knows she needs to be careful. If it’s a magic scroll, it could be extremely dangerous, and sent by assassins. She still has many enemies in the Empire, not least of which are her

family members with weaker claims to the throne and who seemed to relent when she became Empress.

She nods. “Yes. But, you will bisect the letter before opening it and open each half separately.”

“A good call, your Grace,” replies Byleathea warmly, and she accepts the letter from the captain when he hands it to her. She inspects the seal first, saying, “Hmm… This appears to possibly be a shenwulf, but with peculiar proportions… A girl, perhaps? It certainly belongs to none of the shenwulf clans registered with the Imperial Alliance’s Record of Heraldry, which mostly focus on crests with warrior motifs or more basic symbolism.”

Sundenelle nods in agreement, inspecting the seal for a moment as well before handing it back. “Please take the discussed precautions and open the letter, Captain.”

Captain Dryker nods, signalling the other three guards with his hand, and they nod in agreement. He takes the scroll and uses a knife to cut the letter in half near the seal and band. He hands one piece to one of the guards, while the other two prepare barrier spells and their shields to protect Sundenelle and Byleathea. By cutting the letter in half, though, it should disable any potential spells if it’s a magic scroll with an auto-cast function. Because they are impossible to identify for virtually anyone, including the creator, since they can’t be opened without the spell activating, they are extraordinarily unpopular and impractical for most applications. However, assassins have used such scrolls disguised as letters to eliminate important figures many times in the past, in spite of their difficulty to craft. In fact, it can be dangerous just creating them because by being open to create the scroll, the spell could activate.

Once he has cut it in half, Dryker has the guard open the first half, which he does. Dryker then inspects it while keeping the other half away from the open half.

“No magic circles or written enchantments, your Grace. It does appear to be merely a letter.”

Sundenelle nods. “Please check the other half.”

He nods, sliding the seal off, which fades from its current blue color and turns pale grey. The tamper-seal has been activated. Thankfully, nothing else happens, and the guard captain unfurls the second half of the scroll as the guard holding the first holds his half in a loose curl. As with cutting it in half, keeping the two halves apart and in different shapes are extra layers of caution when handling scrolls that could be spell scrolls.

Normally, a message scroll is sent via a bonded courier with an origin canister to carry it in, detailing briefly the type of message it is via certain symbols on the canister. If it can be quickly verified as a trusted source, the Empress might open it, but in almost all other situations, the message would normally be thoroughly scanned for magic traces by specialists before ever reaching her inbox. In the case of urgent reports, of course, it is brought by a messenger who has it in his own notebook or opens the message and reads it to the Empress, as he would likely have already been told the message prior to his arrival in most cases in case the letter is stolen from him and he can still make it to the destination.

But, given the relation to the Citadel and the strange circumstances, Sundenelle chose to get an answer quickly.

Captain Dryker inspects the second half of the message thoroughly, then passing it to another guard as he takes the first half, inspecting it again. He reports, “No signs of magic, your Grace.”
“Very well. Let me read it.”

The guard and the guard captain bring the two halves to her, handing them over. She carefully lines them up on her desk, using an ink well, a couple of coins, and her magnifier to hold the sheets flat together so she can read it.

“[*Dear Imperial Majesty Sundenelle kos Lindenmorg,*

My name is Daniel kos Lawson. I am fairly confident that you know of me, though you may not know everything. A strange sequence of events saw me summoned to the world of Zenkon from my own, banished by the kingdom that summoned me, facing a dragon, and then conquering the Citadel with my cherished friend, Hekate fell Lawson, new Empress of the Citadel and the Fievegal. I have also befriended the remaining dragons, and they will not instigate attacks.

However, if you are reading this specific letter, then it is because the one I entrusted to your General has been destroyed before reaching you. We tried to lay low because we want no part in the conflict between the east and the west, but more than once, we have been attacked unprovoked by eastern forces, and as of the day you receive this letter, the 100,000 soldiers you sent this time have been repelled. You are welcome to wait until you receive official reports, but one month after the defeat of your forces, we will be conquering Fort Twilight in retaliation for your invasion. Since I’m still working out certain aspects of this world, I’m giving you a chance to save face and preserve the effectiveness of your army.

Immediately recognize the Fievegal as a sovereign state and its ruler, Hekate fell Lawson as its rightful Empress, and withdraw all eastern Allied forces from Fort Twilight prior to our arrival and surrender it as sovereign territory of the Fievegal as an apology for invading unprovoked. Should you comply with these terms, the Fievegal will accept negotiations for the trade of exclusive equipment and components produced only in the Fievegal as well as further non-aggression treaties for an amicable relationship between our nations.

If you do not comply, a similar offer will be made to the Demon Covenant to remove the influence of the Grand Zenkon Empire and its allies from all sovereign lands of the Fievegal.

You have until we arrive at Fort Twilight to give us your answer, your Grace.

Very Respectfully,

Daniel kos Lawson

Emperor of the Fievegal].”

Sundenelle reads the letter twice to make sure she didn’t miss anything. She’s not seeing any patterns of code or outright threats. It seems to be nothing more than a letter of warning to her, specifically, as well as a declaration that Daniel isn’t the captive they thought he was.

“Mother, would you please read this letter for me?”

“Of course, your Grace.” Byleathea rises to her feet, approaching the desk as Dryker quickly moves a chair for her to sit on, and she takes a seat, while Sundenelle turns the letter and arranges it for the lady-in-waiting to read.

Byleathea similarly takes her time diligently reading the letter more than once. She asks, “Daniel is the otherworlder that has been missing since he was

banished by Mornistae, is he not?”

“He is,” replies Sundenelle. “But, it seems he is not a prisoner, as was told to me.”

“Perhaps it is a trick?” asks Byleathea. “I believe I have heard this Hekate is little more than a child.”

“I was a child when I became Empress,” replies Sundenelle, still thinking. She could, of course, simply ignore the message. She is curious why the letter would make the accusation that one of her generals destroyed the first letter meant for her. It could be to simply sow disorder in her troops, but it would be more effective to try to turn her military officers against her than to attempt to sow suspicion in her troops. Especially with such a seemingly baseless claim. Daniel would have to be a fool to believe she would so easily deconstruct her military over the claims of a stranger from another world.

Rather, his focus was more on warning her that he intends to capture Fort Twilight no matter what she does, and if he truly has repelled 100,000 soldiers…

But then, why did my men organize another large siege? I thought I gave instructions to take more care than a brute-force approach. It’s clear Daniel and his allies are holding back. It’s also clear that I’m not being given the full picture.

Byleathea offers gently, “Perhaps you could buy time by offering to meet at a peace summit, and organize stronger defenses for Fort Twilight.”

Sundenelle hears her mother’s words, but she thinks on it deeply.

I see. So, Daniel is aware that I have explicitly stated that the Fievegal is not sovereign territory, nor Hekate a sovereign ruler. Then, there are leaks in our alliance. To be expected, but… What to do about it right now?

As she ponders, she replies to Byleathea's idle question. "I'm not certain that's a wise course of action in this case. We haven't seen Daniel's full strength, and I still know not the capability of his dragon-slaying weapons. He claims Hekate is the lawful ruler, but I believe he is the one I am locked in this game of strategy with. He's telling us a month in advance, or a little less than, because he's confident he will win. So confident, he's even giving his enemy time to prepare. Why?"

"Hubris, your Grace?" asks Dryker when Sundenelle looks at him.

"No… Possible, but I don't think that's the case." She continues thinking. *He managed to get a letter to me after bypassing the military forces, knowing that the first letter was destroyed. And, he did so without additional delay, it appears.*

"Assuming the contents of his letter are the truth, and assuming he knows I'm the one who declared that the Fievegal is not to be recognized, he still offers a peaceful solution, to me specifically." She stands up, looking out of the window. Or rather, looking at her own reflection in the window. "'To save face', he said. I believe my face is rather pretty, still. No, he means something else." She paces to her bookshelf, looking at the spines of the books as the others watch her deliberate. She is well-read, and she has studied the history of the continent to the fullest extent she can. For obvious reasons, there's very little historical information about the Demon Covenant and the western kingdoms that fell during the slow-moving war. She even has the historical records of her own allies as accurately as have been preserved and released beyond their borders. As they say, history is written by the victor and erased by the

usurpers from within. This chapter was taken from novelping.com without permission.

She has read about countless battles and the strategies employed, especially those used by her ancestors to grow the Empire into what it is today. But, those battles use conventional warfare.

Or rather, warfare conventional to Zenkon.

Daniel isn't from Zenkon, and he's supposedly not trying to get involved with the war. When he does, he wins. When he claims he's about to make a move, it's not to warn his enemies.

That's it. I see now.

She turns and faces her lady-in-waiting and the captain of the guard, who are letting her brainstorm. "I'm not his target."

"How did you come to that conclusion?" asks Byleathea. "He's threatening sovereign territory of the Empire."

"My forces have invaded him twice, and only now is he responding. He's responding in a way that tells me he's either stupid with hubris, or he's fishing for a specific response. I'm probably one of the few people in this world more well-known than anyone else. Gathering information on me would be easy. He snuck one of his soldiers into the capital, who paid a vagrant child to deliver the letter, knowing that I would be awaiting news from the Citadel, even in an unorthodox form. Telling your enemy your plan of attack and the timeframe in which you will do it is foolish in every possible scenario, except when trying to lure someone out. He has to know I would be foolish to go to Twilight myself for any reason, meaning his real enemy is someone who may be influencing my soldiers or being fed information about the Fievegal for their own purposes. I

won't speculate on who just yet, but that is my theory." She looks to the captain of the guard. "I'm not playing a mere game of pokko against my retainers anymore. This is gourmeld, and he's not going to just let me win. He's going to maneuver me to where he wants me for a sweeping victory. At least, that's what he's hoping for." She holds her hand out, commanding with her Empress voice, "Captain, summon the Imperial Court and the generals who are in the capital. I have two meetings to attend to."

"What are you going to do?" asks Byleathea. "You need to be cautious if you believe Daniel is so far ahead in planning."

"I know, Mother. Which is why I know exactly how I'm going to respond to Daniel's threat."

***

"Daniel, this thing isn't going to move. It doesn't make any sense," states Wenlianna as she and the others help him assemble his newest creation. It's a rush job, so he claims it might not be nearly as effective as the ones on Earth, but it also seems like it's going to be impossible to move. Even with the wheels it's on, it's too heavy for a team of twenty buckrokhs to pull!"

Daniel, working on welding armor plates to the vehicle using an extremely simple arc-welder made with a lightning crystal, simply chuckles. "You'd be surprised. Buckrokhs are stronger than horses, and on Earth, I've heard draft horses could pull many tons, as long as it's on wheels."

"I'm still struggling to understand how the rover works," replies Treia. "And you think this much metal will be able to move the same way?"

"It won't be as fast, no. But, it'll be as fast or faster at top speed than buckrokhs. And, we haven't even gotten to the creme de la creme." He

chuckles deviously as he continues welding. The women and Choul helping him glance at each other, but resume working. He gave them all jobs to do, which is mainly carrying armor plates over when he needs them, stitching comfortable seats, or assembling small parts.

As he works, he asks, “Xyreko, how’s the engine block coming?”

“Slow, Daniel. Very slow. The operators are being cautious learning the machine.”

“Ensure they know it’s not the end of the world if they mess up. I’ll train them again on its operation if it comes to that.” He scoffs, adding, “I’m actually surprised I remembered as much as I did. Clearing the cobwebs out feels nice.”

“Daniel, even if this vehicle can reach the fort, what is it supposed to do?” asks Geirahoel as she works with Aoloan and Kera’tai stitching the cushions.

He sighs. “You want me to ruin the surprise?”

Hekate replies for her, “Yes! Surprises are dumb! Is it going to be an ice gun on top? I want a big ice gun!” She cackles as she rubs her hands together.

“No.” He sighs. “It’s going to be an even bigger version of my rifle. Perfectly suited for taking on a castle.”

They stare at him, and he adds. “It’s just like the artillery pieces I had Xyreko install on the Citadel.”

“But we haven’t seen those be used!” complains Hekate.

“Because I don’t want to frighten the townsfolk. But, you’ll get to see a slightly smaller version in action with this.”

Daniel pats the armor plating he just finished welding. It’s one small part of a versatile tracked vehicle from Earth; the not-so-humble tank.

In this case, as with other things, Daniel is replacing some of the vital functions with magic crystal powered mechanisms, including the internal combustion engine. He has plans to have surveyors go out in search of crude oil or other flammable liquids once the borders are more secure, but then he has to figure out how to refine it, which he's unfamiliar with. He could use strong alcohol, but the ignition properties are different, and it takes a lot of time to brew and distill down alcohol to where it would work.

“If only this was like a light novel, and I could simply connect to Earth's internet or go back and forth,” murmurs Daniel to himself. Of course, were that the case, he could just buy a tank and retrofit it back in the Citadel.

He looks at the grease and slag particles on his welding gloves. His face is also smeared with grease and soot.

I guess I do have the Citadel now, which I guess counts as my cheat power. Must be nice to be one of those protagonists that don't have to get dirty with their magic abilities.

He chuckles to himself, and Hekate asks, “What is it?”

“Nothing. Just thinking about life and its peculiarities. How are the engine crystals coming?”

“Great!”

Wenlianna adds, “This is the only part I understand, and only because I saw your pump work. Though, won't it be dumping a lot of water while it's running?”

“Yep. I don’t know how else to get the torque I need, since the electric motor in the rover isn't strong enough. This is probably the wrong way to use hydraulics, but heck with it. With diamond crystals, it'll last long enough and make our enemies wonder what's going on.”

“They'll probably think it's some sort of demonic boat,” jokes Vaergraes. “The east seems to believe we're all backward savages that defy reality.”

“Then we should use ice!” declares Hekate. “I like ice magic more.”

Daniel pats her head gently, and she looks up at him. “Ice doesn't work that way. We need the sudden and fast pressure of water crystals. Ice would bind the metals and damage the friction surfaces. Plus, the metals would be more brittle.”

Hekate stares at him before whispering to Reignleif, who knows a lot more about ice magic, “What’s that mean?”

Reignleif replies, “I don't know why, but I know I have used ice magic to shatter armor and stone before. It becomes fragile like a bird's egg shell.”

Daniel nods. “The bonds between most solid material atoms become tighter under cold temperatures, which can increase hardness but often drastically reduces flexibility. I would wager that, when Reina was living in her frozen room in the Keep, she shattered her scales regularly.”

Reignleif gasps, asking, “H-How did you know that!?”

“That was really the cause?” asks Geirahoel skeptically.

Daniel nods. “Yep. Most solids can be shattered if they get cold enough. We'll do a little experiment to show you.”

“I-I thought that was because the cold was drying my scales out…” murmurs Reignleif sheepishly.

“That's a factor, I'm sure, but you'll see what I mean when I show you.”

“Does this mean a dragon’s weakness is ice magic?” asks Treia. She flinches when all three of the dragons, Hekate, and even Gwenesphia look at her in disgust. She flails her hands as she quickly adds in a panic, “No! It's not like I'm going to tell anyone! I was just curious! I'd rather have dragons protecting my family than attacking them! I was just worried if we should take precautions or something!”

Daniel, pondering during the second part, replies seriously, “Well, I definitely wouldn't call it a strength. On Earth, virtually all creatures that live in permanently cold areas tend to have thick fat and/or special oils in their skin, along with thick, insulating fur, skin, or feathers to protect them against the cold, but even then, there would be such a thing as too cold for them. Likewise, there is undoubtedly a ‘too hot’ for dragons. Our concern should focus on who's prepared to fight a dragon with whatever means they possess. After all, I was able to defeat Morty's brother with a simple slug of steel. I just used a method that's unconventional here to strike him with it.”

The others ponder over Daniel’s words as he resumes working. Ucahote is currently training volunteers for the soldiers, and Xyreko is producing more MDMs in order to increase production. Since MDMs can produce a wide array of parts, it can even lessen the production cost of golems, and as an added bonus, has vastly increased the demand for miners and smelters to bring in and process metals for the MDMs.

Hekate suddenly chirps warmly, “Then, Feldroks must have been made for the ice, right? Because I have thick fur on my tail, and Mr. Lugrae was fuzzy all

over.”

Hekate is referring to the Feral Feldrok, a name she gave him after asking for Daniel to help her choose one. During research for one of his fictional characters, Daniel had found himself down the rabbit hole of Arianrhod, a Welsh mythological figure who gave birth to a son who she cursed with namelessness. His name, Llew Llaw Gyffes, has many possible roots in ancient languages of Earth, his favorite being ‘Lugrae’, which is close to the translation in one of those languages to ‘Moon’. And, when he explained this to Hekate, including the part about Llew Llaw Gyffes, who was cursed by Arianrhod to remain nameless until she gave him a name, she instantly chose Lugrae for the Feral Feldrok, since he was denied the right to a name, just as she was, thanks to Morthybargaron’s treachery.

And, of course, as her elder and someone she has no animosity for, she tries to show him respect.

Xyreko replies, “I can’t say what the ‘natural habitat’ of the Feldroks were prior to forming their first tribe, as it long surpasses my lifespan and the recorded history, but I would wager they were naturally resistant to the cold.”

Choul replies, “I can confirm. Feldrok fur is resistant or immune to virtually all of the elements of nature, as well as magic. They gathered in the area of the Citadel because they are highly sociable beings.” He chuckles softly, reminiscing about his life in the Citadel with the Feldroks.

Hekate smiles. “Perhaps we should make some more, yes?” She looks pointedly at Daniel, and he chuckles, doing his best to ignore her otherwise.

“I said, perhaps we should make some more, yes?” says Hekate loudly and obviously as she leans towards Daniel.

The others watch cautiously for Daniel's answer, and he notices he's being watched, ironically by the dragons as well, who each already have eggs in an incubator nearby. And, in Geirahoel's case, two.

Daniel struggles with this dilemma only because of his morals from Earth. She's too young as it stands by most of the laws of Earth, though technically, by days, she's over 18 years old comparatively. Of course, he has noticed that humans of Zenkon age roughly on par with their years on Zenkon, meaning a fifteen year old is still a fifteen year old physically in comparison, so he has resolved to stick to the years. And, even by that logic, there would be people on Earth who would accuse him of terrible things even for waiting.

Actually, as he thinks about it, there are lots of things many Earthlings would object to about his new life on Zenkon, not least of which is his weaponry, his self-proclaimed conquest, and his numerous romantic companions.

Regardless, he wants to at least abide by the 18 rule, though Hekate doesn't make it easy.

However, as his hesitation to answer becomes more and more obvious, Choul comes to his rescue. "Your Illustrious Greatness, forgive this humble servant for being so impudent, but my Liege is troubled by the fact that you were not afforded a proper childhood free of concerns and responsibilities, and he does his very best to provide that for you. This… includes the responsibilities of an Empress."

She flinches, grunting, "Hrk!..." Her ears and tail droop as she slumps, crestfallen. She knows the grey dragon speaks the truth, and though she hasn't fully forgiven his attack, she affords him the right to speak, since Daniel asked her to.

“Impudence is the least of your-...” starts Geirahoel with a fiery tone, but Hekate grumbles, “He’s right, Geira…” She pouts, but she looks at Daniel. “Y-You will, though. R-Right? When I’m old enough?”

Daniel smiles gently, “If I’m still the person you’re set on, yes.”

She smiles, sighing. “Very well. Then, on my eighteenth birthday, you will surrender to me, Darling.” She grins confidently and deviously, and Daniel rolls his eyes. “Yes, Sweetpea.” She giggles gleefully, and Daniel gives Choul a deeply thankful glance, and the grey dragon in human form simply smiles and bows subtly.

Hekate adds suddenly, “Vow to me, Darling, that you will keep your promise.”

Daniel smiles, conceding politely. He slides off of the tank to place himself near Hekate, and he kneels before her like a knight. “My dear, darling, adorable little Hekate. I swear to you that I shall keep my promise to do whatever you want within my power on your eighteenth birthday.”

“Anything?” asks Hekate eagerly.

He nods. “Within my power, mind you.”

She nods vigorously, rubbing her hands together greedily. “Now that you have magic… Heh heh heh! It will be the best birthday ever!” She seems to suddenly realize something as her expression becomes complex, but she doesn’t say anything.

Xyreko approaches, saying calmly, “Daniel, Shek and Skloe are asking for you. They are both in Shek’s private quarters.”

“Is it time?” asks Ryuogriar.

“Yes, it appears so,” replies Xyreko warmly.

Daniel smiles, standing up as he pats Hekate’s head. “Alright. I suppose now’s as good a time as any for a break from work.”

“I’m coming with you!” proclaims Hekate.

“I think I will join you as well,” states Ryuogriar.

“You two…”

“I wish to see the moment,” replies the platinum dragon elegantly. “Shek and Skloe will not mind.”

“Th-Then I’m coming, too,” replies Geirahoel. “I consider them both friends.”

Before he knows it, most of his companions decide to join him for some reason. Daniel insists that he must check with them first before they all crowd into Shek’s room, though even her quarters are massively large.

***

Later, Hekate knocks on a particular door. It’s Daniel’s room, but he’s not currently present. Instead, it’s occupied by three very strong sources of magic. Hekate opens the door, since she also uses this room freely, sleeping with Daniel almost every night.

Making themselves at home in Daniel’s room are the three dragons, Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel. They arbitrarily decided to make his room their ‘haven’, a place where they can truly relax and be comfortable. In the dragon’s keep, this was in their own private chambers, but in the Citadel, they chose Daniel’s room because he doesn’t threaten them in any capacity, and he makes them feel safe and comfortable.

Of course, on that, Hekate agrees whole-heartedly with them. Even when Daniel truly was stronger than Hekate -before she increased her mana by working with Daniel to defeat enemies-, he didn't bully her or look down on her. In fact, he relied on her, since she can see in the dark. Just being around him, even when he's frustrating her with his teasing, makes her profoundly happy deep down.

Hekate fidgets as the three look up from what they're doing. Reignleif is lounging in Daniel's prototype 'recliner' chair that he made, reading from his phone. Geirahoel is tending to flowers that she's scattering around Daniel's room. And, Ryuogriar is resting naked in his bed, shamelessly leaving herself exposed as she intentionally leaves her scent on his bedding, as well as in hopes Daniel will walk in.

Hekate approaches the senior-most of the three dragons, fidgeting with her hands. "Um… R-Ryuo?"

"Yes?" asks Ryuogriar with a suspicious and coy tone.

"Um… Wh-… When's my birthday?"

Ryuogriar cocks her head, and she only briefly glances at Geirahoel and Reignleif.

Hekate clarifies, "Y-You know, don't you? I… I don't know when it was…"

Ryuogriar's coy expression softens into a genuinely kind expression. She replies softly, "Yes. Or, I remember the day Morthybargaron brought you to the Keep. I believe you hatched only a day or so before that…"

"S-So… Feldroks do lay eggs?" asks Hekate.

Ryuogriar nods. “Yes. Though, I’ve never witnessed one myself.” She scratches her chin gently as she thinks, looking at the ceiling. “Let’s see… Oh! Actually, as it turns out, it’s about three weeks from now. Twenty six days from today. At least, the day I suspect.”

Hekate smiles, sniffling as she nods. “Th-Thank you…”

Ryuogriar smiles softly as she relaxes. She holds her hands out, and Hekate cocks her head, a little surprised. However, she quickly figures it out, and she climbs onto the bed to hug the voluptuous dragon-woman. Ryuogriar hugs Hekate warmly, and for the first time in her life, Hekate feels like she knows what it would have been like to have a mother. Ryuogriar wasn’t friends or motherly with Hekate in the Keep, but she was never cruel or condescending towards her the way many of the other dragons were.

But, they have come to care for each other in their own way, and even if they are competing at times for Daniel’s approval and attention, they are family. Suddenly, gravity shifts, and Hekate lets out a childish cry of surprise as she and Ryuogriar flop down onto the bed as Ryuogriar simply plops herself down onto her back, pulling Hekate in their hug with her. She continues to cuddle with Hekate, saying gently, “Let’s relax for a bit, Hekate. We can think of ways to celebrate your sixteenth birthday, and then begin planning for the most important one.”

Hekate was surprised by the sudden shift in their posture, but she doesn’t try to pry herself away from Ryuogriar, simply resting on top of her as the dragon pets her hair, gently mindful of Hekate’s big triangular ears.

Hekate hums appreciatively, “Th-Thank you. I’d like that… A-And… I don’t dislike this…”

“Mmm. I’ll tolerate it this once,” teases Ryuogriar, even though it was her that started it. She then adds deviously, “And, if I may be so bold, on or after your eighteenth birthday, I would be happy to participate with you in ‘celebrating’. There is much I could teach you.”

Hekate blushes. It’s not an offer she was expecting, and it’ll definitely be something that she has to consider. After all, she knows very little about what happens behind closed doors.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 78: The Threat a Mechanic Poses

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 78: The Threat a Mechanic Poses

Daniel is sitting alone on the back of the tank's turret where he has been assembling the firing mechanism for the larger shells, which Xyreko is producing using magic for now as the additional MDMs are being assembled. Golems can work 24/7, or rather, 29/9 for Zenkon, so parts are constantly being assembled by both means.

However, he's sitting idle, holding the enlarged striker mechanism and one of the parts of the trigger linkage. He's been deep in thought, distracted away from his work early in the morning after getting an early start.

Just the evening prior, two goblin girls were born, one each to Shek and Skloe. Daniel got to hold them both, surrounded by the enlarged family he could only have after coming to another world. And, his presence is an uncertainty. It was not according to plan.

Until he saw them, looked into the eyes of his first two daughters, he was speaking platitudes. He cares deeply for everyone in the Citadel, as well as the citizens of the Fievegal. But, he's personally connected to his companions, and they make him happy to be alive, when once, he was fine simply having a pulse and going home after work to drink and browse the internet.

Then, he ended up in a world that seems like something that could only exist in fantasy. He didn't have magic of his own, and he didn't have a specific role until he took his troubleshooting experience from his roughly fifteen years of

troubleshooting various kinds of machinery, including unfamiliar mechanism, to be able to work in a limited capacity on magical equipment, substituting magic for electricity in many various applications. From there, he ended up apparently entangled in a conspiracy, sent to the edge of the ‘civilized’ world, only to find out that, much like Earth, there are two sides to the same coin, and he determined a goal for himself. Something to work towards to try to achieve the reason he and Rikuto were summoned, or at least contribute if nothing else.

Now, after doing some even more extreme things, he is an Emperor…

… and a father. It didn’t feel real, and only now has it really become something tangible. He had given up on Earth. He was prepared to work until he could retire or ended up dying, whichever came first.

Now, he’s in several different roles that he’s struggling just to keep up appearances of, let alone actually suited to hold.

He is snapped out of his trance by a presence suddenly appearing behind him, a large, semi-hard, rounded bulge presses against his back as dainty arms wrap around his shoulders. It’s not difficult for him to guess who it is, though he recognizes the soft hint of the scent of cinnamon that a certain dragon seems partial to in the snacks she eats.

Reignleif lays her chin on his left shoulder, murmuring gently, “Everything alright, Mukori?”

“Yeah. Just especially deep in thought.”

There’s a soft pause, and he pets her arms with his hands after setting the parts down. She asks, “Do… Do you mind if I ask what about?”

Daniel smiles. “Not at all. I wasn’t trying to be cryptic, sorry. Just thinking about…” He sighs. “Just how unbelievable it all is.” He looks to his shoulder to make eye contact with her, though it’s mostly his peripheral vision from his left side. She cocks her head curiously, and he explains his thinking. “I’m a mechanic. Did some time in a military on Earth, but I’m not a heroic warrior or anything.”

She scoffs with her soft voice, and he chuckles. “Yeah, yeah. I get it. But, that’s what I mean, actually.” He shifts to turn himself towards her, at least half way so he can make better eye contact with her, as well as touch her own *very* pregnant belly. “I didn’t have much to protect on Earth. Nothing to really strive for or drive me. Here… I don’t entirely know how I made it to Fort Peony, but I eventually had something to accomplish when that first dragon showed up. Fast forward to now, where…” He chuckles. “I’m an emperor, a dad, a knight, a… I don’t really know.”

Reignleif smiles softly, and she scoots closer, kissing him briefly. Daniel doesn’t deter her in any way, more than welcoming her affection. She adds, “I wanted to hide in my private haven until the end of time, doing only what I wanted. It… hurt, seeing the other mothers cry… when their eggs didn’t hatch, or…” She trails off, and Daniel nods in understanding. What happened to the dragons was a form of posthumous revenge from one or more of the feldroks. It’s cruel no matter how one looks at it, and it reminds Daniel of a weaponized contagion in one of his favorite sci-fi video game series to keep a race suppressed after rebellion. Morthybargaron committed genocide, and in return, brought a near-complete genocide upon the dragons as well.

Reignleif takes Daniel’s hands, holding them. “I… I can hear… the first one in its shell, making noises now. I-… I never thought…” She sniffles, looking down. “I never thought I’d get to be truly happy…”

Daniel brushes her soft blue hair aside as he smiles. “Same here. That’s what had me thinking.” He looks over his shoulder at the full form of the tank, the vehicle portion sitting a few yards away from the turret, which he’s working on. Like most of his projects, he knows enough to get started, and with some modifications thanks to Xyreko, and now Wenlianna as well, he can make many various things come to fruition in this other world. However…

“I want them to be proud of what we’re doing. To have a future they can look back on in history books and say that we did the right thing.”

“We are,” replies the blue dragon in human form as her tail curls around her legs to touch Daniel’s thigh. “We are making a world that they can live in safely. No matter who or what they are.”

Daniel nods. “Objectively, that’s our goal. But…” He sighs. “I know I said I’d do my best to be resolved, and capturing Twilight needs to happen. I agree, in principle. But… what’s the right answer after that? Should I be trying to conquer the whole world? Just the continent? Just a country? How large should the country be to defend against enemies that will come in the future?”

She smiles gently in sympathy. “Your mind wanders far when you start thinking these things, doesn’t it?”

He chuckles nervously. “I suppose so. It’s definitely been a weakness of mine when I’m buried in things to worry about; I overthink things.”

“As you know, our opinions have unanimously been to capture Twilight to send a message. I’m not a strategist, so… I don’t know the best option for after that. But… I… I’m happy to provide my thoughts each time, if it helps.”

Daniel nods. “Very much so. That was another thing I was thinking about. I don’t want a royal succession to turn into a huge drama, so I’d like to try to

establish a system of royalty with us where all of the heirs and heiresses have a say. It's tricky, though. Checks and balances have to exist, but at times, the beauracracy can get in the way. At the end of the day, I don't have anyone who will stop me most of the time. It makes it easy to accomplish things, but dangerous if I have a terrible idea."

She taps him affectionately with her tail, smiling as she continues to hold his hands. "You listen to counsel. You're significantly better than… that dragon for that reason alone."

Daniel chuckles. "I hope that's true. But, he had centuries more experience governing people, including the dattakoriens, goblins, and ogres, as I understand it."

She nods. "Something I know you know, Mukori, is something I realized when reading about histories that I was able to find." She smiles. "No lordship, kingdom, or empire was founded by someone who was already a lord, king, or emperor at that time."

Daniel smiles. "You're right, of course. At some point, the first was likely a nobody like me. I just… I need to be careful."

She nods. "And, I'll only speak for myself at this moment, but I will gladly help in any way I can. I've never been an empress or a mother, but I will succeed."

In spite of her soft voice, it's the most confident and proud Daniel has heard Reignleif speak. Daniel grips her hands gently, but firmly. "Thanks, Mukori."

As he returns to his work, she sits alongside him. Her first egg is currently in the incubator on the floor, where the egg is safe and continuing to receive the perfect warmth. As she watches, she talks to him with idle conversation,

eventually asking him, “Have you come up with any theories about how you’ve obtained magic?”

Daniel chuckles. “That’s a question I don’t have time to dwell on, much. I’m still having some trouble believing it.” She offers him a water skin, since it’s been a while since he had anything to drink, and he smiles, accepting it. “Thanks.” He opens it, but quickly notices the alabaster droplets at the mouth. “Geira’s?” he asks. Usually, Geirahoel insists on delivering it herself.

Reignleif blushes and shakes her head. He grins, a little surprised. “Y-Yours?”

She nods, still blushing and hiding her cheeks behind her mantle’s high collar.

Daniel is surprised, though they knew it was coming eventually. He relaxes taking a drink. It’s definitely creamy in the same way, containing a very similar flavor like liquid frosting, with a very high sweetness. He enjoys it quite a lot, though he’s a little worried he’s going to get fat or diabetes like this.

“When did yours start?”

“Um… I noticed it th-this morning. But, I’ve been… mimicking Geirahoel in hopes…”

“Ah… I’m no expert, but I’ve heard that trying to consistently can actually start it.”

Her eyes widen, asking urgently, “Is that true?”

“Like I said, that’s what I’ve heard. Though, that’s obviously in relation to humans, and it’s a sort of mental state that tricks the body, I think. Drugs could do it, too. I also don’t know if it can be sustained indefinitely.” Daniel thinks, replying to her original question. “To answer your question, I can’t imagine it’s Nemaisol, since Nemaisol hates magic. I’ve started to feel a static tingle when I

try to draw the blade."
"Wh-What will you do?"

"Some part of me hopes Nemaisol is sentient, and I can talk to it. But, since that's not appearing to be the case, I guess I'll have to retire from using it if I am continuously gaining mana." Daniel assembles the firing mechanism's internals, continuing his speculation. "I've also wondered about the armor, though Xyreko claims it's fairly standard sharmelkolle armor." He scoffs. "As if there's anything standard about fantasy armor made of one of the strongest and rarest metals in the world."

She nods, acknowledging his thoughts. "Could it be something Choul did?"

"No. He claims he detected mana in me the day we met. So, that leaves either my exposure to the Devourer and the fe-er, Lugrae, or maybe the transport circles."

She hums. "That would make sense, I suppose. You're being exposed to a great deal of magic and passing through it to move between circles."

"That's what I've been thinking. Though, it would be nice to be able to quantify mana to identify the source more specifically."

"What about the artifact Wenlianna worked with in the past? The one she used on you."

"I know the one. You want me to steal it?" asks Daniel playfully.

She blushes, looking away. "W-Well… I mean… It would be useful to have, wouldn't it?"

He stares at her, and she pulls her mantle's collar up a little higher. "M-Maybe at least use it to see?" This chapter is updated first at NovelPing.

He chuckles. “I get where you’re coming from, but we stole my phone back from the Grand Duchy. I don’t want to make a habit out of stealing things that weren’t already mine. But, unless we have it under our control to test things out, we won’t be able to verify what the cause is.”

She nods sheepishly. “Could we… Could you and Wenlianna… build one?”

Daniel ponders it. “Mmm… Well, I have no objection to that. But, I don’t think Wenlianna knows how to repair it.”

Reignleif slumps a little, dejected by his answer.

However, Daniel quickly adds, “Wait, don’t get too down about it. It’s a good idea. We’ll just have to find some way to be able to lay eyes on it and try to identify the components. Especially whatever spells are in place. Someone made the artifact, and I can think of a few people who can probably deconstruct it without actually needing to tear it apart.”

“Really? Who?”

Daniel chuckles. “A well-read dragon, for one.” She blushes sheepishly, and he adds, “As well as any of the other dragons. Xyreko. Vaergraes. Maybe even Ryukana, if she’s allowed to help us.”

Reignleif nods, asking, “So… you want to travel to that kingdom again?”

“Let’s wait until after we capture Twilight. Maybe… Maybe after we do Xyreko’s mission. I don’t need to quantify my magic yet. I’ll just have to consider Nemaisol unusable unless I can figure out how to bypass the mechanism.”

“But… you could use magic if you gain more mana.”

Daniel smiles. “My cup runneth over, Mukori. I’ve lived thirty four years without magic, I’ll survive a few more if that’s what it takes.”

She pouts a little, shuffling herself closer to him. She leans on his shoulder, adding gently, “But… Maybe I could teach you…”

He kisses her temple before teasing, “I figured you'd be one of the teachers for our kiddos. Am I too old for beginner school?”

“N-No… But… W-Wouldn’t you rather… not be? W-With the children?”

“If you’re worried that I won’t feel like their father if I’m learning at the same time, the answer is no. Though, I can see some concern of me being more of a distraction…”

“O-Or they’ll be more motivated to work hard…”

“Let’s hope.” Daniel smiles, and she smiles as well. “But, if we have time, I’ll gladly take some lessons, Sensei.”

“Sensei?”

“‘Teacher’ in one of Earth’s languages. Though, not mine, specifically.”

She nods. Daniel continues assembling the firing mechanism, testing the cocking and release action. Reignleif offers a hand when helpful, but mostly just lays against his side as he works in one spot. Afterwards, he helps her down from the high perch into the lower part of the cabin, which is part of the whole turret, but below the main gunner station. Unfortunately, he’s still experimenting on motor types, so the current motor for the turret will be an extremely simple DC motor driving a gear, and they’ll need a separate hand-brake to stop it, since servos and stepper motors are beyond his current reach, namely because they’d need integrated circuits to work exactly as intended.

But, as Wenlianna said about the magic communicators, he just needs to start somewhere and stop trying to jump straight to the twenty-first century. That he's done what he has and accomplished what he has should be satisfactory for now.

And, when the time comes, the two make their way into the dining hall to join everyone for breakfast as they trickle in. Though, Daniel has to go retrieve Hekate, thanks to the little empress sleeping in.

***

A secret gathering of mages and magic artisans observes as two of their best, Lady Ahok and Lord Baumalde, take positions with carefully designed magic staves. Given the things Earth has in fiction, Rikuto isn't overly surprised by the design of magic staves, which are roughly four foot long staves made of limbs of an ancient species of tree found near Mornistae notable for a high compatibility with magic casting. In the crook of the branches at the top, there rests a particularly large enhanced magic crystal, though it would be easy to not identify it as a crystal thanks to its pitch black coloring, only broken by small swirls of other colors. There are also several magic affixed to the staves below the crooks.

They stand by, with the human artisan dwarving the half-goblin, who is shorter than the staff she's holding.

But, Ahok is no less capable, and she is determined and confident in the test that's about to take place.

Ahead, there is a wooden cart with metal armor plates attached to its frame, simulating the size and possible various armor materials for the torso of a

dragon. Rikuto doesn't know what to expect, but Ahok reported that they've made progress.

Ahok speaks loudly, projecting well in spite of her small size. "Staff one, Ready!"

"Staff Two, Ready!" replies Baumalde.

"Your Royal Majesty, request permission to commence the test."

Rikuto looks at the other artisans around him. They're quiet and studious, and some seem skeptical of Ahok's project. But, Ahok felt confident that her creation will turn the tide against any foe. It's definitely not what he was hoping for in terms of being able to counter Daniel's atomic bomb, but if it has potential, then anything is a step in the right direction.

He nods. "Very well. Demonstrate your creation, Lady Ahok."

Ahok replies proudly with a bow, "You honor me, your Majesty." She then pivots, and Baumalde does the same, facing their target. She instructs, "On my one! Three, two, one!"

From there, both Baumalde and Ahok begin chanting the same spell almost perfectly in-sync. As each phrase of the spell is recited, projections of magic rings surround each of them, formed of glowing glyphs that seem to be activating before their very eyes. The increasing number of rings spin slowly at first, ramping up in speed as more become apparent and more and more magical energy begins swirling around each of them, gusting the dust on the ground and wavering the grass and flowers nearby.

Rikuto and the other magic artisans can't help but flinch a little when there's a sudden flash from each of the main crystals on the two staves Ahok and

Baumalde are using, and they are both shouting the spell over the crackling roar of magical energy. In practiced sync, the two step, pointing the staves towards the target carriage. The rings pivot with the staves, aiming at the target.

And then, spheres of dark energy swirled with elemental magic dart out of the staves, reaching the target at the same time, and hitting nearly the same spot on the armor plate they aimed at. The two orbs attract each other when they're close to each other, and their contact is clearly the effect Ahok was aiming for.

A violent crackle and flash erupts from the two black spheres absorbing each other, and then a potent shockwave washes across the ground as darkness expands violently with a thunderous boom that startles everyone, including Ahok and Baumalde. The shockwave rattles Rikuto's bones, and the dome of darkness obscures the entire carriage.

Afterwards, a nearly perfectly semi-spherical crater is all that remains of the carriage's center. The sphere encompassed most of the carriage, and what remains are a few inches of the front and back, pushed away from the crater by the shockwave after the main parts of the carriage were annihilated. Flames burn the flammable parts of the surviving pieces, and everyone is speechless at the destruction.

The awkward silence and shock is broken by Ahok suddenly holding her staff above her head, cheering, "Woohoo! It worked!"

Rikuto is able to come to his senses, and he begins clapping somewhat out of instinct. The others look at him, confused at first. Applause isn't something common in this world, but the artisans begin mimicking him, and Ahok whirls, glancing at everyone before blushing. She becomes bashful and gestures for Baumalde to follow her, and they jog to Rikuto for debrief.

“That was incredible firepower, Lady Ahok,” replies one of the other artisans as they approach.

“Yes, to think you were able to layer so many elements into one spell.”

Ahok chuckles bashfully. “Eh-heh-heh. Thank you. I couldn’t do it without enhanced crystals.” She shows the staff, “For all of the power available, it uses all of it in one shot.”

Rikuto asks, studying the smoldering crater for a moment. “What materials were the armor plates made out of?”

Baumalde replies, “We used standard Imperial steel, tempered Boruan gaulanium, magic-enhanced iron, and a small amount of mithril.”

“M-Mithril?” asks one of the female artisans.

Baumalde nods in reply. “Yes. As we all know, Mithril is highly resistant to magic, so we needed to be sure this spell could break down mithril. I understand the enemy uses golems.”

Everyone looks to Rikuto, who confirms with a nod. “Regrettably, yes. That’s why it’s imperative that we find a means of defending ourselves with minimal lives at risk.”

“There shouldn’t be any way to resist the combined spell, your Majesty,” explains Ahok. “Though, it’s admittedly a spell with a long casting time. If dragons are our opponents, we’ll need a team to dedicate themselves to halting the dragon long enough to cast the spell.”

“Can this not be adapted into a magical device?” asks Rikuto. “Something that can be activated and fired?”

She fidgets. “I… don’t know, your Majesty. As you saw, I was able to cast it, even though I’m not an omni-affinity mage. Darkness magic is required as the catalyst, but the complex spells are actually imbued into the magic crystals, and the main crystal, here, acts as a gathering point to keep the spells together. That such complex spells can be affixed to the enhanced magic crystals is difficult to believe. The only mage in history to have cast this spell is the magic sage Lord Senn.” This chapter was copied from novelping.com without permission.

“Senn? The elf?”

She nods. “Yes. I read about this spell and wanted to try to imitate it, if we’re going to fight beings as powerful as dragons.”

“What about armies of golems?”

She looks down. “Well, y-your Majesty… We would need a lot of enhanced magic crystals and bloduewood branches to make enough staves.”

“Can you not upscale the attack?”

She looks at Baumalde, who returns her gaze, both of them being unsure.

“If you wish to automate even more of the functions and upscale them, your Majesty, I’m afraid that’s beyond my capacity.” She bows in disappointment.

“It’s fine. You’ve made excellent progress. I’ll have to open discussions with the Grand Duchy to procure more enhanced magic crystals.” As he says this, though, Rikuto suddenly notices something. “Speaking of the Grand Duchy, has anyone been in contact with Lady Wenlianna recently? She finished her airship not too long ago.”

The artisans share glances, shaking their heads.

Rikuto sighs. “Very well. I’ll reach out to the Grand Duchy for that as well. We’ll recruit Wenlianna to assist in upscaling the spell, if you’re willing to work with her.”

“Of course, your Majesty. I live to serve the Kingdom of Mornistae.”

He nods. “Continue the good work.”

Rikuto makes his way back to the castle to summon Aramellianna. Daniel is ahead of them in terms of the damage he could do, and without a way to fight back, he could make unreasonable demands. Rikuto trusted him when Daniel appeared to be a quiet, honest blue-collar worker. However, Daniel violated their agreement not only on a fundamental level, but in the most horrifying way.

It’s taking everything he has for Rikuto to stay calm and focused, as it’s difficult to convince people of the danger the weapon Daniel made poses.

Rikuto can’t shake the feeling that with Daniel free, the world is in more danger than it has ever been.

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Aramellianna walks through the castle of Mornistae, escorted by a pair of Stalvaltan guards in addition to the castle guards. She received a letter a few days past making some strange requests, including a large order of enhanced magic crystals, as well as for Wenlianna to report to the castle for emergency research. The Grand Duchy and the kingdom are allied again under treaty, but there are some who are still wary of her and the authority she wields. Especially because they rounded up treacherous nobles and removed them from the equation.

She cares not for the fear of other nobles. It's actually suitable, as long as that fear is manifested as respect. Schemers and enemies will be so regardless of whether or not they fear Aramellianna. Fear just keeps them from acting sooner.

She approaches the door to Rikuto's office, where two royal guards are standing imposingly. She states, "Grand Duchess Aramellianna here to speak to King Rikuto. Please inform him that I've arrived."

The guard on her left nods, and he pivots crisply and steps to the door, opening it to speak into the room. There's a pause, and the guard returns to his post. He says politely, "The Grand Duchess may enter. This way, your Grace." The two guards open the doors for Aramellianna, and she walks gracefully into the office. Rikuto stands up when she enters. "Your Grace."

"Your Majesty." Aramellianna curtsies politely, resuming her graceful posture afterwards.

"I didn't expect you to make a visit, your Grace. I expected a simple letter of reply."

"I had a feeling that there was something to be discussed, your Majesty."

Rikuto takes his seat, gesturing for one of the sofas nearby, and Aramellianna walks to it and sits down as he replies, "I suppose I won't get your cooperation without explaining, will I?"

She smiles coyly, sitting professionally and gracefully, but radiating experience and control of the situation.

The otherworlder king sighs. "The order of enhanced crystals is necessary for defending the kingdom of Mornistae from a greater threat than the Demon

Tyrant," explains Rikuto. "Since the Grand Duchy is the only territory producing these enhanced crystals, I would like to make a contract for exclusive purchase for the kingdom of Mornistae."

"I see," replies Aramellianna, giving no hint to her thoughts. "What would the terms of this contract entail, your Majesty?"

"Five percent mark-up on market price of the crystals, and exclusive state contracts for all magic crystals, including standard magic crystals via the Grand Duchy."

Aramellianna chuckles. "Hmm-hmm… Interesting. Our salt-production is still minimal, so after importing enough salt to keep up with the kingdom's demand, as well as other clients, that five percent would be closer to one percent after all of the tariffs and taxes." She straightens her dress a little, sitting with a casual smile and saying nothing further.

Rikuto taps his teeth together as he thinks. "I can go as high as ten percent mark-up on enhanced and magic crystals. I can't go any further."

"Is that so?" replies Aramellianna. "And, what would you say market price is for enhanced magic crystals? The moment supply decreases for others who demand, do you intend to keep up with the highest bidder?"

"That's the point of a contract, your Grace."

She chuckles again. Rikuto winces, and he replies as stoically as he can, "My apologies, your Grace. I'm not sleeping as well recently."

"Mind the shortness of your temper, your Majesty. I'm willing to forgive and forget. Others who have what you need may not."

“Tell me what you want, please, your Grace. I need the magic crystals as soon as possible.”

“Mmm. I think my requests are rather modest. First, I’d like kingdom taxes on all imports and exports from the Grand Duchy to be nullified ad infinitum.”

“What?” blurts out Rikuto. “Tha-That’s… You might as well just sue for independence?”

“Oh? You’re right. I accept.”

He sucks his teeth, quickly back-tracking, “No! That’s-… You can’t. This kingdom was founded…”

“Long before either of us were born, your Majesty. As I see it now, the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy has been bankrolling almost the entire Imperial Defense taxes to fund a war that is SUPPOSED to be defending the Imperial allies from the Demon Covenant. And yet, two times now, troops have been rallied and deployed to a neutral location, furthering neither the end of the war with the Demon Covenant, nor the pursuit of reparations.”

Rikuto maintains his composure, but he must retort. “Your Grace, I might remind you that the first of those operations was begun under your own cognizance and without consulting the kingdom to which you are a vassal.”

“Indeed, but that operation was supposed to be limited to an internal affair and became an international incident with a territory that is defensively insurmountable. I very much recommended *against* sending any further troops.”

Rikuto narrows his eyes at her. However, he can only sigh. She’s not entirely wrong, since she did make every effort to keep her own operation secret.

And, Rikuto's focus isn't on rescuing Daniel anymore, since he knows the truth. "Regardless of your own motivations, I can't allow independence at this time."

"You may not have a choice, your Majesty. After all, you didn't let me finish my requests. Instead, you suggested independence, which may be much more appetizing to you."

He hesitates to respond. Capitalism as a defined structure of commerce isn't exactly something in the world of Zenkon, but Aramellianna is a shrewd businesswoman who could arguably write the books on capitalism for Zenkon.

And, she's coming to the negotiating table with a devastating advantage.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 79: The Threat a Mechanic Poses Part 2

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 79: The Threat a Mechanic Poses Part 2

Rikuto is holding his hands together in an arch on his desk as he tries to stall for time by thinking on Aramellianna's words. She just cautioned him after a little back and forth, that the notion of independence for the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy might be less painful than what she's going to ask for in exchange for fulfilling Rikuto's massively increased orders on enhanced magic crystals, to the point that he wants to monopolize them. At first, he gave what he thought would be a fair mark-up above market value, but Aramellianna quickly pointed out that the market for enhanced magic crystals is unstable at best, since they're so rare.

But, Rikuto has one last desperate play.

“I know you're making the diamonds artificially, your Grace.”

Her smile barely changes, amused by his attempt but unfazed otherwise. “Oh? Then perhaps you can make your own,” retorts the Grand Duchess. She's Rikuto's senior in just about everything in this world, save for positional authority, and she made it very clear not too long ago in the past that her authority is not much lower than the king. Nobles and royalty always have to maintain a balance for a kingdom to remain stable. But, Aramellianna's specific position is an executioner of balance, a position specifically meant to protect the kingdom from usurpation by other noble families, and in a perfect world, prevent a crisis for the kingdom not unlike what happened in Bromlund.

Of course, she knows very well the same thing Rikuto knows. The Grand Duchy is producing those diamonds thanks to Daniel, and Rikuto has no idea how he knew how to do something like that. True it may be that many things could be found on the internet of Earth, to be able to apply that knowledge is something else entirely. It's not so much that Daniel is especially intelligent, but he does have a lot more practical knowledge and experience than Rikuto does. As has been the case, Rikuto's college education has made him ideal for running a country from a bird's eye view, as a typical leader. He has stabilized the economy of Mornistae, restored a balance between cash crops and food to prevent the people of Mornistae from suffering during economic decline, and they've been moving water throughout the kingdom to overcome a drought, as well as aiding countries around them with the same.

But, even that last benefit is thanks to Daniel being able to translate earth technology to magic technology, or find ways to make earth technology work without the centuries of technological advancement to get there. Being backed by Aramellianna made that much possible. How, though, he was able to obtain the resources for an atom bomb is another story, let alone assembling one.

Wherever Hekate came from, she clearly has access to nearly unlimited resources, and Daniel's reckless use of his knowledge has them teetering on the edge with things she can't comprehend.

"Instead of independence, at least tell me what you want…" replies Rikuto, nearly defeated. If he is going to get screwed either way, he may still be able to monopolize the enhanced magic crystals and prevent the situation from getting any worse.

"Very well. In addition to exempting the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy from all kingdom taxes, the Kingdom of Mornistae will grant the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy complete autonomy in all military matters, including offensive campaigns and

defensive campaigns, as well as the construction and maintenance of Grand Duchy exclusive weapons and assets. In exchange, I will allot ninety percent of the enhanced magic crystal supply for sale exclusively to the kingdom of Mornistae for military purposes. Any reselling will be a violation of the contract."

"You're not holding anything back, are you?"

"Of course I am, your Majesty! I could demand that the next heir to the kingdom be one of my daughters as part of the terms of the contract, or that the kingdom of Mornistae begin paying the Grand Duchy taxes in return for carrying the largest share of paying the Imperial Defense taxes on behalf of our kingdom. *That* would be holding nothing back." She smiles mischievously, and Rikuto sighs.

"Were you this vicious with His Majesty King Greydald, your Grace?"

"When necessary. You're doing very well, which is why I helped you through the treaty incident, as well as Bromlund. Otherwise, the Grand Duchy would already be pursuing independence."

"Fine… I don't have much choice, it seems."

"If I may, your Royal Majesty, I might be able to help more specifically if I knew the circumstances that backed you into such a corner. I'm happy to take advantage of whoever sits in that chair, but you seem unusually out of sorts and desperate in this case."

Rikuto hesitates to answer. It's certainly no secret that Aramellianna is close with Daniel, and Wenlianna is even closer. They likely don't know or understand the threat that Daniel poses, nor the weapon he developed. And, it's possible they still don't know that he's in a position of power with the Citadel and the self-announced Fievegal. Though, she doesn't seem to be as distracted as she

was at the Imperial Summit. Rikuto heard it directly from Erimaya, who managed to do what even the Stalvaltan soldiers couldn't; infiltrate and earn Daniel's trust enough to learn about the most devastating singular weapon any world will likely ever see.

"I don't know how much you're aware, your Grace, but… I have it on extremely good authority and from a first-hand source… Daniel… isn't a prisoner of the Citadel."

"I'm aware," replies Aramellianna with an unusual contentedness.

"You're… aware?" asks Rikuto, surprised.

"Of course. Daniel has apologized for the misunderstanding, but he intends to stay in the Citadel. A shame. He was a true asset to the Grand Duchy."

"That's it?" asks Rikuto.

"What am I to do? As you may or may not know, the Citadel repelled twenty thousand troops with mere mud golems and no casualties. And, it's likely the current invasion will meet the same fate. Time will tell, I suppose."

"You knew all of this, and you kept it to yourself!?"

She scowls at him when he snaps, and he backs down a little, but it's still unacceptable. However, her retort chills him to his bones. "I know that you haven't told the Empress what Erimaya told you, and I now am certain that you are attempting to build your own super-weapon for supremacy in anticipation of invading the Fievegal once more."

Rikuto can't help but stare at her, stunned. He was about to recruit Wenlianna to the project, but to think Aramellianna already grasps the full extent of his goal. But,…

“Daniel brought a superweapon from Earth. It’s called an atom bomb, and though I don’t know how he built it, it’s what caused the waves of magic nullification a few months ago. The true effect, though, is the destruction of everything for miles in every direction. You may not believe me, but the calamity for which I was summoned was none other than this weapon. I’ve seen the dawnsight that the Lady Dawnseers saw, and I’m certain of it. The weapon’s effect is very distinct.”

Aramellianna listens patiently, and she doesn’t show shock or surprise. It’s unthinkable that Daniel would spread his knowledge of such an irresponsible weapon. Not if he’s planning to take over this world.

Finally, Aramellianna replies, “You AND Daniel were summoned, your Majesty. And, to think that you would ban Dawnseeing, only to claim now that you've seen a Dawnsight yourself. Do you know how suspicious that sounds?”

Rikuto sighs. “It didn't take place here, and the person who did it isn't a subject of Mornistae.”

She stares at him skeptically, adding, “Reiterating my point, hypocrisy isn't made okay by being somewhere else at the time.”

“Please, Aramellianna. I… I’m doing my best to keep it together right now. You have no idea how dangerous Daniel’s weapon is.”

“Maybe not. But, I know how dangerous his allies are. Provoking them is not an option, and I will not take part in it. So, let me add that to my terms of contract. The Stalvaltan Grand Duchy will not be continuing with any campaigns against the Fievegal going forward, and we will not provide any support save relief if the Fievegal is to attack.”

Rikuto watches Aramellianna a little suspiciously. “You aren’t plotting behind the kingdom’s back, are you, Grand Duchess?”

She again scowls lightly at him. “No more than you are behind mine, your Majesty.”

He grits his teeth, frustrated that he’s meeting so much resistance. His job -the reason he was pulled away from his home on Earth- is to protect the world of Zenkon. It is that very summoning that brought its most dangerous threat. Rikuto appears to be alone in that belief, in spite of being chosen by the goddess.

“Regardless, I’ll deal with it myself. Now, I’d like to summon Wenlianna to court. We need her to consult on our defensive equipment.” He’s trying not to outright lie, but Aramellianna is already on guard.

“Wenlianna is indisposed at the frontier, your Majesty. My apologies.”

“The frontier?”

“Yes. It seems the Iron Wyvern project encountered issues. She will likely be based out of Fort Peony for some time.”

“Fort Peony?” asks Rikuto, again becoming suspicious. Aramellianna is hiding something.

“Of course. Do you think I would send my eldest unwed daughter to Twilight, forward operating base to over one hundred thousand soldiers? The Flower Garden is much more preferable.”

“What about logistics to repair the airship? Surely she would have more resources at Twilight precisely because of the additional manning.”

“As well as even more numerous spies from other territories looking to steal our technology.”

“Are you certain she’s not acting as a liaison to the Citadel, your Grace?”

“Are you accusing me?” asks Aramellianna coldly.

“You’re not denying it.”

“Because I can’t believe you would imply an accusation of treachery from one of your closest allies.” She stands up, replying sharply, “I am loyal to the kingdom of Mornistae, your Majesty. But, I will not remain so if you continue to treat me like an enemy. I have given you counsel not to make an enemy out of an entity you can’t hope to defeat, not because I have any loyalty to Daniel, but because I don’t want him to retaliate. I will not support you if you choose the path of destruction. Would you like me to ask that question again, or shall we continue to remain allies?”

Rikuto is silent. He is fairly confident, given her response, that Wenlianna is in contact with Daniel, meaning Aramellianna is in contact with Daniel. He’s not sure if she’ll turn traitor, and he can’t afford to try to arrest her. If she is in contact with Daniel, and Rikuto takes her prisoner as a traitor, it’s as good as attacking Daniel. And, without the enhanced magic crystals and the scaled up magic weapon, she’s absolutely right. He’d be walking the path of destruction. Because it’s unknown how or where she’s producing the diamonds, and diamonds are scarce in this world as it stands, Rikuto is on very thin ice trying to control the situation. He’s trying not to sound crazy by stirring up a frenzy about the atomic bomb, but he can’t let Daniel get away with creating them, nor can he allow Daniel to strong-arm the world using them.

For now, though, his hands are tied. He needs to stay on friendly terms with Aramellianna at least long enough to get his counter-weapon functional. He'll deal with Aramellianna's potential double-dealing later.

Of course, if she is in contact with Daniel secretly, he likely already knows about Rikuto's weapon project. He'll have to increase security and endeavor to identify the source of the leak.

Fortunately, Rikuto is aware of how thin the ice is upon which he's treading. He'll just need to focus on one step at a time.

***

"Alright everyone!" Daniel is seated in the gunner's seat at the middle-back of the tank, with Hekate squished on his lap, since she demanded to be the one to be able to do the test firing. Ryuogriar is in the command position behind them, and Treia is the loader seated next to them, ready to load the next shell in. Gwenesphia is in the navigator position in the front right seat, down lower than the turret, with Geirahoel driving. Choul, in his dragon form, cast a shrinking spell on himself to become approximately the size of a cat, and he's seated next to Daniel on the floor of the tank. He'll be observing so he can command one of the tanks that will be part of the attack on Fort Twilight.

"Let's begin the inaugural run. Ready?"

Everyone confirms with a synchronized "Ready!"

Hekate bounces excitedly in Daniel's lap, giggling deviously. "Yes! Yes! Move forth my titan of steel! Crush our enemies! Mwahahahaha!"

"Whenever you're ready, Geirahoel. Go slowly at first."

The auburn haired dragon in human form hesitates with her hands over the steering levers, which throttle the energy from the engine in variable proportion to the tracks, which determines the speed of each side, and thus the direction of travel.

Geirahoel insisted on driving, since it's Daniel's project, but is hesitant now that she has to. He instructed her from the navigator seat during training, which is why she was happy to keep her seat.

Geirahoel eases her foot on to the pedal to accelerate, which controls a mana crystal, and the tank lurches as water rushes through the engine, along the exhaust pipes, and then out the back-side of the tank.

The tank doesn't move.

Hekate's ears lay down at the sides in disappointment, and she pouts, "Aww… Is it too heavy?"

Daniel smiles, and Geirahoel looks up at him also. When she last drove it, it didn't have the turret installed, so it was much lighter.

The human mechanic winks at Geirahoel, and she blushes, quickly spinning around. She inspects the options in front of her, finding the handle, and she presses in on the clutch. She shifts into gear, and as soon as she relaxes the clutch, the tank shifts. The creaking and rattling of metal components fills the cabin as the whole vehicle begins shaking. Geirahoel grips the steering levers tightly, easing her foot on the accelerator, and the tank begins to shake even more as it rumbles forward on its heavy metal tracks.

Gwenesphia exclaims while looking through the front window, "We're moving forward! I-I can't believe it! All of this metal… It's really moving!"

“Yes! Yesss! YES!” cackles Hekate. “Faster! Go faster!”

Geirahoel slowly increases speed, and Ryuogriar leans on Daniel’s shoulder, kissing his cheek while Hekate is distracted. “I never doubted you, Mukori. I would be terrified of you were you not my darling husband.”

Hekate’s tail puffs up, and she turns like a rigid statue possessed as her soulless eyes burn holes in the platinum dragon.

Ryuogriar feigns an apologetic recoil for the ‘faux pas’. She adds, “My apologies, Hekate. I meant ‘our’ darling husband.” Ryuogriar gingerly pokes Hekate’s cheek, saying warmly, “Would you believe it, Mukori? Hekate and I shared a wonderful, bonding hug recently. We were just like mother and child…”

“Hey! I know what you’re doing!” snaps Hekate. “You’re trying to treat me like a daughter and cut me out!”

Ryuogriar teases, “Meee? Never. I love you like a sister, my darling little…”

“Graaah! Daniel! Find me something to blow up!”

“That would be the command position’s job…” remarks Daniel.

Treia scoffs, earning a glare from Hekate, since Ryuogriar’s victorious chuckle is expected. Treia stammers, “I-I… dust… or something, y-your Grace. R-Ready to reload.” She holds up one of the 130mm cannon shells for effect, smiling nervously.

Ryuogriar does sit up to peek out of the hatch above her. “Mmm… Oh! I see the target. Turret left a little bit.”

Daniel chuckles. “You have to do a little better than ‘a little bit’, Mukori.”

“Well!? What should I…? Oh…these numbers… Um… Left by the twenty?”

“Sounds good,” replies Daniel. “Go ahead Hekate. Turn us left. Geirahoel, go ahead and come to a stop.”

“O-Okay!” says Geirahoel sheepishly, letting off of the accelerator, and the tank comes to a stop. Hekate pulls the lever to turn the turret, and the motor pulls the chain. Daniel explains, “Now, watch the number in the side of the scope until we’re pointing to the number she said, and look for the target.”

Hekate nods. She aims the turret, while Gwenesphia grumbles loudly over the noise, “Daniel, this thing is so noisy!”

“Wait until the main event. Hekate?”

“I found it! I found it! Ready!?”

“Earmuffs on, everyone! No exceptions,” calls out Daniel. Everyone puts their earmuffs on, and they position themselves where they can see, opening their overhead hatches to peek outside.

“Firing in three! Two! One! Fire!”

“BOOM!” shouts Hekate as she pulls the trigger, and the whole tank violently shakes, startling the gatonines and Geirahoel. Hekate also cries out as the thunderous blast explodes forth, casting the forty pound projectile down range. Not even a single second passes before the target is decimated by the heavy impact, blasting shrapnel and dust in every direction.

The tank rocks a few more times as everyone clutches the surfaces around them for stability. Geirahoel snaps, “Daniel! What horrifying things do Earth humans destroy with this monstrosity!? There should be no reason for this!”

Daniel chuckles. “I’m afraid the answer is never going to change. When we built better armor, we built better armor destroyers.”

Hekate boisterously says, “Treia! Reload!”

“Reloading!” Treia hefts the heavy shell into the chamber, closing the breach. She grunts out a sigh afterwards. “Fwooo… That thing almost weighs as much as I do!”

“You volunteered. Need to switch?”

“I’m fine. Thanks though.”

“Ready!?” calls out Hekate. She adjusts her aim a little, firing once more. The tank shakes and thunder booms, and a crater explodes where the shell hits.

Choul asks, “My liege, is the weight of this carriage to withstand the blast?”

“It's definitely a factor that allows the cannon to be so big, but the weight mainly comes from the armor. The primary goal of a tank is to deliver allied firepower to where foot soldiers can’t reach, either by blowing up walls or withstanding enemy attacks.”

I understand withstanding arrows and spears with ease, Mukori,” starts Ryuogriar thoughtfully. “But, you might as well send us in dragon form. Even if this vehicle can withstand magic attacks, it is much slower than even a drake.”

“Maybe, but I can't manufacture people who are important to me, Mukori. The tank can fight, and we can make more if it's destroyed. Many more. We could even make one for every mage, if we have the material for it. A tank is replaceable. Dragons, and even goblins, aren't.”

There's a moment of reverent silence as they all take a moment to appreciate the sentiment.

Hekate jokes, "We can let Ryuo go, though, can't we?"

Ryuogriar smirks at the feldrok Empress. She retorts, "Why don't you go, our great, illustrious, magnificent Empress Hekate? Since you're so invincible."

"And I'd win, too! But, we're the kinder, gentler Fievegal. We're all about being only slightly more powerful than our enemies." She shoots a devious smirk at Daniel, who rolls his eyes. The young feldrok girl sits back down in Daniel's lap, getting comfortable. She points, "Now then, my minions! Let us return to the Citadel and begin our plan of attack!"

Treia and Gwenesphia both cheer, "Yes, ma'am!" They blush when they realize they're the only two who respond. Daniel chuckles, and Hekate blushes furiously as well. "What's so funny!?"

"Sorry. We're not a very cohesive unit, are we?" asks Daniel.

Ryuogriar, Geirahoel, and Choul glance around at the others, and then each other. "Should we have said something?" asks Geirahoel. She looks at Gwenesphia, immediately to her right in the navigator seat.

Gwenesphia nervously replies, "Um, we usually just confirm together, as a sort of show of camaraderie. Y-Your station is higher than ours, so…"

"Do it again," blurts out Geirahoel.

"What?" asks Daniel.

"Do it again." She looks at Hekate seriously. "I'll get it right this time. Do it again."

Hekate cocks her head, flopping her big ears in the same direction. She nods proudly, saying, “Now, my minions! Let us go forth and conquer this whole world! Mwahahahaha!”

“Yes, your greatness!” cheers everyone, having been guided by Geirahoel telepathically with her desired response. Hekate blushes and chuckles, since even Choul and Ryuogriar said it.

Hekate relaxes in Daniel’s lap as she leans back against his chest. She asks as Geirahoel begins driving back towards the Citadel, “Daniel, will you be mad at me if I conquer the whole world?”

“If you can manage it, Hekate, and you don’t become evil along the way, I’ll be proud of you.”

She blushes and hums, taking his arms and wrapping them around her to get truly comfortable.

***

Daniel reads over a manufacturing report from the foreman, delivered to him via the transport station. They have three MDMs running, and the ogres are running two, while goblins are running the third. The ogres are able to reset the machine faster, allowing for heavy parts to be made without delay. The goblins seem to be capable of grasping the programming, and have been able to make a greater variety of the listed parts Daniel has requested, able to make the appropriate adjustments to cycle through various parts.

They also have better eyes for inspecting the completed components, making them excellent at quality control.

Given that he's not a business mogul, Daniel has no deadlines or quotas yet. The teams are moving well for being new operators to machines not from this world.

Xyreko appears. "Daniel, there is a mysterious presence at the east gate."

"Mysterious presence?"

"I detect virtually no threat from this presence. Humanoid, small frame, hidden by a cloak. The guards have turned the individual away, but they have decided to take a seat against the wall."

"They didn't identify themselves?"

"Not while I was specifically observing. Apologies. I was focused on the trial run of the tank."

Daniel nods. "I understand. Take me there, and I'll investigate."

"Pardon?"

"You said the threat is minimal. And, they don't appear to be trying to sneak in." Daniel gestures at the display she's showing him, where demon-kin citizens are walking past without the figure moving. In fact, the small figure looks rather pitiful."

"Please take me there," repeats Daniel.

Xyreko bows. "At once, your Grace. I'll also summon Choul to protect you."

"Please do, but tell him not to arrive on guard."

She nods, and Daniel is teleported to just inside the east gate, with Choul arriving by flight moments later. He kneels at Daniel's feet crisply after landing.

“My Liege. I am at your service.”

“You don’t have to be so dramatic. Come on. We’re investigating a suspicious person.” Daniel leads, and Choul follows. They head out through the gate and approach the hooded figure, who is seated in a small ball against the wall, wearing a simple brown cloak.

Daniel sighs, and the small person twitches.

“What the hell are you doing here, Erimaya?”

The young girl looks up, revealing herself to be none other than the second princess of Mornistae. She scrambles to her feet. “Daniel!” She hugs him, and Daniel doesn’t stop her.

Naturally, he doesn’t let her get away so easily. “Erimaya,…”

“I-I’ll explain! B-But, I had to get away! Please don’t send me back!”

Daniel sighs. “Let’s go inside. You’re probably hungry.”

As if to agree, a tiny rumbling comes from a tiny stomach. She blushes, her gaze going almost dizzy. “I-I-I… y-yes please…”

“You know this person, my Liege?” asks Choul.

“Yeah. She’s Hekate’s friend.”

As soon as he tries to back away, she goes weak in the knees, leaning against him. “S-Sorry… I… I’m…”

Daniel sighs one last time, scooping her up to carry her in a princess carry. She squeaks, adding as he walks, “She’s the Second Princess of the Kingdom of Mornistae. Princess Erimaya. And, she’s in huge trouble.”

She fidgets in Daniel's arms, murmuring nervously, "P-Please go easy on me, Daniel… I have a good reason."

"You'll explain everything," replies Daniel sternly. But, he adds more gently, "After you've had a moment to eat and rest. I'm not a monster."

She smiles, leaning against his chest. "Thank you."

"I'm surprised, Sire. Your social savvy is impressive."

"Choul, not funny. She's a child."

"I-I won't always be!" retorts Erimaya quickly. Daniel scowls down at her, and she shrinks.

Daniel brings Erimaya to the dining hall after taking her to wash her hands, and he uses the panel to order a simple meal of a burger and fries, one of the meals he added to the menu, and which can be prepared rather quickly. He orders one for himself, Erimaya, and Choul. And, while they're waiting, he retrieves a blanket for Erimaya to help her warm up a little more. She smiles sweetly. "Thank you, your Grace."

"Yeah, yeah."

"Ahhh, is this the small child who got you banished?"

"I did no such thing!" yells the small princess. She fidgets nervously. "It was outside of my control… after he saved my life." She turns quickly pleading, facing Daniel. "That's why I knew the only place I'll be truly safe is here!"

A golem enters carrying a tray of the three meals, and Daniel says gently, "Alright. Let's eat first. I have a feeling you'll like this, Eri."

She smiles, asking, “Oh? What is it? Omelette? Pizza? Hekate told me about so many things!”

Daniel helps the golem distribute the three trays, and Erimaya admires it. Choul hums, taking his seat across from the two.

“Um… do I get utensils…?” asks Erimaya sheepishly, looking at the other two, who also don’t have utensils.

“I can have some brought if you want some, Princess. But, this is the Fievegal.” Daniel picks his up and takes a bite, and Choul does the same.

Erimaya picks up her burger and smells it. She trembles a little, eager to taste it. She takes a bite, and she gasps. “Wh-Wh-What is this!?”

“Cheeseburger, your Highness,” replies Choul.

She takes another bite, humming happily. A little bit of grease runs down her chin. She hums in surprise, and Daniel retrieves a napkin from the table and dabs her chin for her. “Aren’t princesses supposed to be prim and proper?”

She blushes, retorting, “I-I’m not used to eating something like this! A-And…” She takes another nibble. “I-Ish sho yummy…” murmurs the princess delightedly.

Daniel chuckles, eating his own as well.

Once she’s finished, Erimaya tries the fries, and she hums in delight as well, dipping them in various condiments; Daniel’s recipe for ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise. Erimaya favors the mayonnaise, surprisingly enough, and she enjoys the whole meal.

It’s just as their finishing that the door bursts open, and Hekate storms in. “Daniel! I-… E-Eri!?”

Erimaya springs to her feet. “H-Hekate! It’s so good to see you!”

They run to each other, hugging warmly. Hekate asks the obvious question, “What are you doing here, Eri? A-And, why didn’t I hear anything about your escort?”

“Because,” starts Daniel with a somewhat stern tone, causing Erimaya to flinch. She gives a sheepish look, and Daniel finishes, “Erimaya is still due for a good scolding, which I was going to give her before telling you.”

Hekate protectively hugs Erimaya, saying sharply, “Don’t you dare, Daniel! I won’t allow it! Erimaya did nothing wrong!”

Daniel smirks at her, putting his chin on his hand. “How do you think she got here, Hekate? Do you think what she did was smart? Safe?”

“I… Well…” Hekate looks at Erimaya, who looks at her with worried eyes. “Sh-She’s alright now…”

“Hekate, have I scolded you without reason?”

“You do things that I have to scold you, too!”

“This isn’t about me right now. And, I do my best not to do those things again. Erimaya put herself in serious danger. Isn’t that right, Princess?”

“Y-... Yes…” replies Erimaya sheepishly.

Hekate hugs her firmly, but says nothing.

Daniel sighs. “I’m not your parents, Erimaya. But, I can imagine they’re worried sick. When did you leave home this time?”

“U-Um… A-About th-three weeks ago…”

“Why?” asks Hekate gently. “Did assassins come after you again?”

Erimaya shakes her head. “N-No… I… It’s just… I think… I think Rikuto is going to be… um… H-H-He’s making a weapon… He found out about your god-killer weapon, and he started working obsessively on magic weapons.”

“Why did you feel the need to flee and travel here? Why not send us a message through the golem?”

Erimaya looks down, fidgeting with Hekate’s blouse. “I wanted to apologize. I-It’s my fault… I’m sorry…” Her eyes water, and Hekate coos, “It’s not your fault. We shouldn’t have told you.”

“Can you tell us anything about his weapon?” asks Daniel. “What it looks like, what it does?”

“I can’t… He was gathering all of the magic artisans and artificers in the kingdom, as well as all of the mages. I-I think he’s desperate to find anything that can compete with your weapon, since he… he believed me… when I said you had it.”

Daniel nods. “It’s a widely known weapon in our world, and the country Rikuto comes from has a particularly unpleasant history with them. It was before either of our lifetimes, but my country used it against his in a large scale war. They have held it as a bitter memory ever since, and it’s taken very seriously. For good reason, of course. But, as I feared, he’s desperate to remove it and

its creator in this world from the board." Daniel looks to Choul. "We'll need to be careful with Twilight. It's been three weeks, and anything could be possible."

"Of course, my Liege. And, what of the princess?" He looks at Erimaya, who in turn looks to Daniel for his answer.

"She's welcome here!" declares Hekate, still protectively hugging her friend.

"I-I don't want to go back, Daniel. Please don't send me back."

"Eri…"

"Please?"

Daniel hesitates. If Rikuto is neglecting his royal duties or showing weakness or vulnerability, then it's very possible Erimaya and the rest of the royal family could be in danger.

"Are you sure you don't want to be with your family? They could be in danger as well."

"I'm sure. They imprisoned me in the castle and treated me like a villain because I tried to defend you."

"I'm sure you're exaggerating a little…"

She puffs her cheeks in a mighty pout. "Either way, I left a note. I'm taking an extended leave of absence here, where I know I'll be safe no matter what."

Hekate nods. "Mm-hmm! And, I'll show you all of the coolest things, and the wonderful meals Daniel came up with! We're going to have so much fun!"

Erimaya smiles and replies just as warmly, "Thank you so much, Hekate! I knew I could count on you!"

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 80: An Empress's Birthday

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 80: An Empress's Birthday

Princess Erimaya and Hekate laugh together as they catch up while everyone is gathered for breakfast. It's one of the few times Hekate sat in her own seat, next to Erimaya, and Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel have crowded around Daniel, taking the chance to try to feed him their cooking. Geirahoel gave herself a head start by practicing cooking on her own, but all three of them have tried their best, and they can make edible meals.

"... and then we'll begin exporting the meat. I have no doubt people all over the world will love it!"

"Isn't it a lot of work?" asks Erimaya as Hekate explains the livestock program the Citadel is starting.

"It is! But, that's why it'll be more expensive. I have no doubt we'll have customers. After all, it's supposed to make the meat taste even better!" Hekate cups her cheeks, drooling a little.

"II hope I'll have the opportunity to try it!"

Wenlianna asked, "Daniel, is… Princess Erimaya…?"

"She'll be staying with us for the foreseeable future. She believes she's in inordinate danger in Mornistae, including from the consequences of Rikuto's actions."

Erimaya nods, briefly distracted from her conversation with Hekate. “Yes. Please take care of me. I promise I'll carry my own weight, and I'll absolutely please our Darling Daniel.”

“Keep dreaming, Princess,” retorts Daniel dryly.

The young princess is undeterred, standing up as she proudly stands with her hand on her chest. “I too, like Lady Wenlianna, wish to ensure that the Kingdom of Mornistae allies itself with the Fievegal, and if they refuse to negotiate, we'll use me as a hostage.”

Treia asked dryly, “'We'? You sound pretty excited to be a hostage.”

Erimaya nods too proudly for the situation. “Mm-hmm! I'm happy to help my friends and my husband!”

“Oh? Then, can we marry you off for a political alliance?” jokes Daniel.

She doesn’t gasp playfully or whine. Instead, her expression darkens, and Daniel is surprised. He quickly adds, “Forget I said that, sorry.”

She is quiet for another moment, but she perks up, resuming her positive energy. “Right! So, I want seven children, and if you’ll allow it, I’d like to be a school teacher. I-I’ll still maintain my wifely duties, though.” She grins with a sunbeam-like smile.

Daniel sighs. “Ask Hekate the rules, Erimaya. If you’ll all excuse me, I have to go check on the manufacturing teams.” Daniel excuses himself, and Choul follows.

Erimaya asks softly, “Did… I upset him?”

“Nah,” replies Hekate dismissively. “Daniel gets like that when he doesn’t want to admit his true feelings.”

“He’s not shy at other times,” replies Aoloan. “But he does sometimes get the strangest urge to run away.”

“It’s when he feels overwhelmed,” replies Reignleif. She is holding Ryuogriar’s forearm, having stopped the senior dragon from following Daniel. “Daniel spent much of his life alone.”
“Oh… I’m sorry…” apologizes Erimaya.

Reignleif shakes her head. “You did nothing wrong. Daniel just has to think of answers to deflect you with.”

Ryuogriar scoffs, and the others chuckle.

Meanwhile, Daniel and Choul use the transport station to travel to the hangar, rather than the manufacturing floor. Choul asks, “My Liege?”

“I lied, Choul. Just needed to get away.”

“Because Erimaya is too young?”

“Yes. In my world, kids her age should be worrying about playing and going to school, not… ugh… Adult things. Hekate’s the same way. Truth be told, I’m happy Erimaya is here for Hekate, but, I also don’t want to upset her when I reject her.”

“Can you not do as you do with lady Hekate and promise a future, Sire?”

“No. Hekate would have had no one at all if I hadn’t helped her and stayed with her. She might be alright now, but I also owe my life to her. A few times over.

Erimaya is different. She has a family and a kingdom to return to. It'd be irresponsible for me to indulge her fantasies when she has far more options."

"I see."

They walk a little further, and Choul asks, "Forgive me for asking, Sire, since you seem to trust the lady Erimaya, but…"

"Can we trust that she's not a spy?" asks Daniel, sensing what Choul's main concern likely is, especially if Rikuto is preparing a weapon to counter Daniel's worst one, which even Choul doesn't know much about. The grey dragon nods.

"Treachery comes easily to treacherous people, my Liege. Morthybargaron was trustworthy for many decades before he wasn't. This princess has apparently already faltered on your trust."

Daniel nods, "That wasn't necessarily her fault. I didn't make it clear she shouldn't talk about it. Even what little I told her was enough for Rikuto to piece it together, apparently. After all, it is the deadliest weapon my world ever successfully built."

"I'm surprised you do not wield it more often to intimidate other nations into compliance, my Liege. Even with such terrible consequences, you are noble enough…"

"No. I don't want it to come to that if we can help it. Though, admittedly, it can be argued that my world was as relatively stable as it was because the most powerful countries had them aimed at each other at all times, it only takes one actor of chaos to do something horrifying."

"How do you plan to deal with this Rikuto, then?"

“I don’t know. But, I think keeping Erimaya here is the best course of action. I don’t intend to use her as leverage or anything, but she might be able to be the voice of reason if it comes to a standoff. She’s at least trying to stop conflict from happening. Even if she’s being irresponsible about how she does it.”

“As you said, my Liege. She is a child.”

“Very true.” After another moment, they arrive in the hangar, and they take seats in the small, secluded lounge Daniel and Choul hang out in when they escape everyone else. Daniel lounges, relaxing as he ponders his next steps. He notices Choul still sitting upright, ponderously thinking.

“What is it?”

“Well… Did you notice Princess Erimaya’s reaction when you joked about the political marriage? Apologies, but that stood out to me.”

“Yeah, I noticed too. I can’t imagine she’s too horrified by the notion, but I didn’t press. After all, it’s fairly common in the east. Though, in fairness, the family of her betrothed before I got banished tried to kill her, apparently.”

“Hmm… And she doesn’t seem particularly put off from the notion of marriage. Even to someone who already has many companions.”

“Right? So, maybe it’s something else.”

“Could it not simply be that she is infatuated with you, sire? After all, if I understood correctly, Hekate is her only real friend, whom she made through her own efforts, and you have protected the princess through various situations.”

“Yes, but it could also be a sense of misplaced obligation. She was the one who suggested the summoning that brought me and Rikuto to this world. Not

that she specifically chose us, of course, but she might feel guilty about that."

"I didn't sense guilt in her behavior, your Grace. She was very sincere about her list of goals."

"Maybe. But, why risk the journey all the way here? And, how did she make it here?"

"That would be me…" states Xyreko's voice as she appears in a bow. "Apologies, Daniel. It was outside of my own expectations, but the golems I assigned to guard the Princess continued their duty. When she began her journey, she employed mercenaries to get to the sea, and then hired a ship to take her to the other side of the mountains. From there, she paid demon-kin for directions. Anyone that did try to harm her was… quietly disposed of."

"I thought you could see everything all at the same time," replies Daniel. "You didn't see your golems following her all the way here?"

"No. I am still one consciousness, your Grace. I have greater abilities than I did in life, thanks to being the caretaker, but it can become extremely inefficient if I split my focus too greatly. With the automatic functions I assigned the golems, Erimaya was perfectly safe. I just didn't realize she would do anything so brazen. Please forgive me."

"It's alright. Nothing to be done about that now. But, next time, please set proximity alarms on the golems or something to get your attention. I'd rather not have any more surprises."

"As you wish, Daniel. I shall take greater precautions."

"Your Grace, could we enlist the help of her Greatness Empress Hekate to figure out what the real reason Erimaya took such a risk?"

Daniel nods. “Yes, I suppose we can ask her. Hopefully she’ll understand that we’re not trying to betray Erimaya’s trust.”

“Yes, I believe being honest with her Greatness will be the best course of action. She will figure it out either way, I suspect.”

“You’re right.” Daniel stretches, saying, “Right? How are you feeling about beginning the invasion?”

“I shall lead with pride and honor, my Liege. Worry not for my safety, and await my victory.”

“Be wary of the archoneldwyn. We still need to interrogate the ones we captured, and I’m not keen on wasting our last revival potation on them.”

“Agreed, my Liege. I shall not fall to enemies of the Fievegal.” Choul becomes darkly serious. “I failed my beloved masters once already, and I now serve their last child and her beloved… I can not afford to fail again.”

Daniel is quiet for a moment, and he looks at Xyreko. She sighs. “Sir Choul. You and I are of one mind, though different strategies. And, while I can grasp the misunderstanding that caused you to attack my beloved master Daniel, it still irks me that he came to trust you so easily.”

Choul says nothing, and Daniel replies, “Choul could have left me to die at the hands of the archoneldwyn. He also doesn’t complain that his hands are tied in combat, and he still manages to be a massive asset.” Daniel leans forward and says seriously, “Plus, he doesn’t want to be a mistress.” Daniel sits up suddenly. He asks seriously, “You don’t, do you, Choul?”

Choul cocks his head. His horns are still regrowing and will take decades to return to the form they had when he broke them off. But he asks with a little

confusion in his tone, “My Liege?”

“Answer the question, Choul.”

“No, my Liege. I would prefer not to be one of your mistresses.”

Daniel sighs in relief. “Thank you, Choul.” He chuckles, “I figured that was the case, but I wanted to be sure. Alright. I’ll leave the invasion to you on the scheduled day.”

“One last thing, your Grace. I am curious; what do you plan to do for her Greatness’s birthday?”

Daniel flinches. “That’s…”

Xyreko adds, “Her Greatness has hoped you would surprise her, your Grace. And, it’s the day before the scheduled deployment of our forces for Fort Twilight.”

Daniel thinks for a moment. “Alright. We’ve still got a few days. I’ll come up with something.”

Choul and Xyreko both nod. “Let me know if you need any assistance,” replies Xyreko.

“From me as well, my Liege,” adds Choul.

“Thanks. I’ll keep you posted.”

Daniel gives it some thought as he wonders what would be special for Hekate. He gives her whatever she wants, but her limited life experience means she doesn’t know what to want, typically. So, Daniel can usually surprise her with new recipes that he can recall from Earth. But, he’ll need to think a little more if

he wants to make it especially special for the first birthday he'll be celebrating with her.

And, with that, he has some simple ideas.

***

"You're sure this information is accurate?" murmurs Zolorad. "The Dragon's keep has been completely lost to us, thanks to the intruders."

"Lord Hegemon, I apologize," replies the advisor. "The arrival of the Harbinger of Calamity was most unexpected. However, I have received word that he is not impervious to damage. During a battle for the Citadel, the person we believe to be the Harbinger was felled in battle by two archoneldwyn warriors."

"Archoneldwyn?" asks Zolorad in surprise. "Do we know who sent them?"

"Not at this time. Thankfully, they were able to withstand the Harbinger's dragon-slaying magic and defeat him."

"Where are the archoneldwyn now?"

"Unknown, Lord Hegemon. We received word of the Harbinger's defeat through our spies within the Imperial Army."

"And, you're certain he has been slain?"
The advisor is quiet. "There… have been conflicting reports, Lord Hegemon. And, I don't just mean his death. We have been receiving reports from lesser races that the Harbinger of Calamity possessed no magic of his own. This would correlate with reports of his alleged casting speed, but raises questions of his methods."

Zolorad thinks. "And, Vaergraes?"

“We’ve confirmed that she has allied herself with the upstart Hekate. She has been assigned as a mere priestess within the upstart’s organization, but she has the upstart’s ear.”

“Hekate is a child, and even if the Harbinger of Calamity survived, he is but a mere human. They believe their technological advancement will be their protection. But, this world runs on magic. And, we are the epitome of magical prowess.”

“Of course, my Lord Hegemon.”

Zolorad watches as the advisor makes her way out, and he ponders the Harbinger of Calamity. It’s possible that he was slain, but if there are conflicting reports, it’s more likely that the Harbinger is still alive. If he does possess magic, which is the only logical explanation for his power, then it’s possible that he has means to survive the attack, including the revival potations, which the Fievegal was able to get their hands on. Vaergraes even stole the entire stock of the Covenant before she fled, leaving them in a pinch if anyone of importance were to die. Revival potations have a window of effectiveness.

The main problem is that the Harbinger of Calamity seems to have formed a truce with the dragons, since they have conquered the Citadel together. The dragons have long been interested in the Citadel, and to be aided in its capture would surely be worthy of an alliance with them. The Harbinger’s strange power makes him one of the only threats to beings of great power, such as the dragons and the Feral Feldrok. No one can identify the spells that the Harbinger of Calamity has used, as it leaves no lingering magical signature behind. Generally, the more powerful the magical power utilized, the more of an ‘echo’ it leaves behind, which can linger for hours or even days after the usage.

Something is strange about the Harbinger of Calamity, but if Zolorad is reading all of the evidence correctly, it's very clear that he is also the new Dragon Lord, as well as the true ruler of the Citadel. It must be that he's using Hekate as a decoy.

Zolorad heads to the training area, where his collection of conscripted soldiers is gathered, training with swords and armor. Normally, demons don't bother to wear much armor or focus on swordplay, since their strength and magical prowess exceed that of the humankin of the east.

If we have to contend with the dragons, then we may not have enough strength. The Citadel repelled 100,000 eastern soldiers, and reports suggest very few of the dragons made an appearance.

What is this power the Harbinger has at his disposal? How can he avoid our detection? And, who sent the archoneldwyn?

Zolorad considers his options. Supposedly, Hekate plans to march on Fort Twilight, the central-most fortress controlled by the eastern forces. It is easily the largest fortification, and most of the battles in the recent years have taken place there. It's well suited to defense, though the only pass through where the larger demon monsters can make their way into eastern territory. The ground in both the north and south fortress paths is too unstable to be safe for travel with large creatures like the gulpoxen and wall-breakers.

If Hekate captures the central-most fortress, it would give her a strong foothold in the area, as well as a strong grip on the divide between the east and the west, allowing her to control the tempo of the war.

Hekate's inner circle is closely guarded, and she refuses to meet with outsiders that make an effort to make contact with her. Strangely enough, there have

been reports of visitors receiving a warm welcome, but no political alliances seem to have been established, as far as Zolorad's spies can determine. He has tried to have infiltrators enter at even the lowest levels, but the Citadel appears to be impenetrable, as if even the lowest levels are monitored by some all-seeing eye. Surely, it can't be the work of the Harbinger, as it would require an immense amount of magic and focus to so accurately identify all spies and infiltrators, even among the rabble.

I need to dedicate more energy to learning about the Harbinger, clearly. That must have been the mistake of the dragon lord. Even if the Harbinger is a simple human with some strange power, he has proven an insurmountable adversary.

Zolorad returns to the planning room to begin looking at the current intel on the humankin forces. As it stands, 100,000 soldiers have been repelled from the Citadel, returning through Fort Twilight. It would take even more forces for Hekate to conquer the fortress. At least, that would be the standard convention of battles. But of course, Hekate has dragons at her disposal, as well as the mysterious golems that she is able to employ.

Suddenly, Zolorad freezes. *Why would the humankin know that Hekate is launching an invasion on Fort Twilight? Did she announce her attack? Why would she do that? Is she an idiot?*

Zolorad studies the map. The Grand Zenkon Empire doesn't quite border Fort Twilight, but it's close. And, it's well-known that the Grand Zenkon Empire is the primary military force of the east. If the war is to continue as it is, then Hekate is an agent of disruption.

She'll need to be dealt with sooner rather than later.

The question is, what is her weakness?

***

"…kate, wake up… Come on now, wake up."

Hekate mumbles. "Mmm… Five more minutes, Daniel. We can sleep in. It's my-myaaaaahhhh, mmm… my imperial decree." Hekate hugs the bunched up blankets and pillow that she sleeps with.

The bed shifts as a moderately heavy weight moves in behind her, and Hekate rolls over, cuddling up against the body that is now lying with her. "Mmm… Daniel…"

"You're gonna miss it, Hekate," whispers Daniel's voice gently in her ear. She twitches her big triangular hearing appendage, which prompts Daniel to blow gently down inside, and she squirms and hums in frustration, flicking the fluffy organ instinctively.

She finally whines, "Stoooop! Daniellll!" She climbs on top of him, flopping back down to try to continue to sleep.

"I know it's early, Hekate, but I want to show you something…"

"Right now?"

"Mm-hmm. You won't regret it, I promise."

She grips his shirt as she tries to stay where she is. She's trying to think of what it could be. She normally gets to sleep in all the way to breakfast, which is well after sunrise. By how she feels, it's not even that time yet.

"Mmmrrr… Let me sleep until we get there, then…"

Daniel chuckles. “Fine, ya big baby.” He ruffles her hair, and she hums happily. “Such a spoiled little girl, huh?”

“Mmm… Yes. You did this to me, Daniel.” She yawns, and she lets him up, leaning against him when he scoops her up to carry her.

Hekate loses track of time, likely drifting off, and she jolts awake when Daniel intentionally jostles her. “We’re here,” replies Daniel gently.

Hekate rubs her eyes. She can feel a breeze, as well as the crispness that is easily identifiable as outdoors, since the air inside the Citadel has an air of magic ‘tinglieness’ present throughout the entire castle.

Hekate looks up and sees the darkened world around the Citadel. There is a glow starting to illuminate the east and add an orange and purple hue to the sky. They are on the roof of the Citadel, the very highest point of the tallest tower at the center, from which it often feels like they can see the whole world. Daniel takes a seat on a simple raised platform, so that they can see over the ramparts as they sit on cushions to watch the impending sunrise.

Hekate hugs Daniel, asking, “Wh-What are we looking at?”

“Hmm? Just the most important sunrise of the year.”

“Wha-?” asks Hekate, still confused. In spite of her confusion, she does find herself entranced as the suns rays really start to fill in the sky with light, and she watches for several long moments.

Daniel kisses her cheek, and she blushes, looking at him in shock. He says gently, “Happy birthday, Hekate.”

She gasps as she pieces it all together. She looks at the sunrise again. The sunrise of her birthday.

And, Daniel is watching it with her.

She whimpers, “Th-Thank you…”

He chuckles, hugging her close. “Don’t thank me yet. Can’t you see? The day is just beginning.”

Hekate giggles and snuggles up against him. “I approve. Spoil me rotten today, Darling.”

“I’ll do my best.” The two watch the sunrise together, and Hekate feels wholly happy and content. She listens to Daniel’s heartbeat, feeling ever so thankful once more that they met each other when they did. Hekate doesn’t dwell on her own past, since she had no control over it. But, now, she has more than she ever dreamed for. She wishes her parents could be a part of her life, or that she had more friends her age, but she knows that she is blessed to have achieved what she has.

And, what makes her happier than anything is that Daniel is happy as well.

As the sun clears the horizon, illuminating the world and officially beginning the morning, Daniel stirs. He withdraws something from his magic bag on his belt. Three somethings.

He hands the first to Hekate, saying gently, “I know you might be too old for this one, but we’ll start with it. Here.”

Hekate accepts the object. It appears to be little more than a wooden box with a skin of paper around it, and some simple hand-drawn paintings on it.

She admires the images with tender touches of her hands. They look like animals and simple star shapes. She hugs it gently, saying warmly, “It’s beautiful. I love it.”

Daniel chuckles. “That’s just the wrapping paper. The gift is inside the box.”

She cocks her head, drooping her ears to the side. “What?”

“You tear the paper off and open the box for the real present.”

“You want me to tear this beautiful artwork!?”

He scoffs lightly, amused by her reaction. “I… Well, that is the tradition…”

“B-But… You drew these, didn’t you!?”

Daniel nods. “With help from Jieka and Tekten. I hope that’s alright.”

Hekate softens as she admires the drawings even more. Daniel’s first official children are goblin daughters, Jieka and Tekten. They are cute and kind, and Hekate adores them. And, even though they were born only a little over a week prior, they can already walk around, understand some words, and play with toys.

She hugs the present defensively, saying, “Well, now I definitely can’t harm this masterpiece! It’s too beautiful!”

Daniel can’t help but laugh. “I guess on Earth, we had the luxury of buying pre-printed paper, so no one really gave it any thought. Alright. Then, will you at least unfold it? Here. Carefully pull out the pins at these spots, and it shouldn’t harm the paper too badly.”

She nods, inspecting the simple pins that Daniel used to pin the folds together. He doesn’t have tape, and other than the adhesive saliva of the balinkons he has in storage -the praying mantis wolf-lions-, he doesn’t have a simple adhesive yet, other than book glue, which he could have made. But, simple metal pins did the job fine.

Hekate carefully removes the metal pins, taking great pains to not damage the art-decorated paper covering her gift box.

Once she frees the box, she unfolds the paper, inspecting the whole thing. “This is amazing, Daniel… C-Can we draw something together, too?”

“Of course. We can do it after breakfast if you want.”

She nods eagerly, carefully placing the paper on the stand in front of them, using the extra cushion to weight it down so the wind doesn’t catch it. She then inspects the wooden box, but it’s an extremely simple wooden box.

“Just a little wooden box, Sweetpea.”

She nods, sliding the lid open on it, and her eyes freeze on the contents.

Daniel is a master of no skill or trade, but he does do his best to learn or practice a wide variety of skills. And, in this case, it’s a simple little plushy doll, made with soft silk for the outside, stuffed to the brim with fluffy wool, and decorated with hand-made clothes and cute facial features. It’s ultimately fairly simplistic, but easy to identify as a medium-sized plushie doll of a little humanoid feldrok, complete with simple wings, a distinct tail, and big fox-like ears.

Hekate stammers, “Wh-Wh-What is th-this? I-Is it… Me?”

“If you want. Or, it’s a little feldrok girl who you can give a name to.”

Hekate’s face wavers as she stares at the doll while holding it. Her eyes begin watering, and she is speechless for a long time.

It’s the first true gift she has received. A gift for no other reason than because she was born, and because someone who deeply cares about her chooses to

express his affection.

Hekate begins sobbing as her feelings overcome her, and she hugs the doll, throwing herself against Daniel as she cries. She can't even form the words, 'Thank you', but Daniel knows. He hugs her and pets her back as she cries, absolutely swimming in love and happiness.

Daniel whispers gently, "You're welcome, Hekate."

She nods, since she can't say the words, but he has it exactly right. She doesn't need anything else. He has already made her first celebrated birthday perfect.

Daniel gives Hekate plenty of time to calm down, and she sniffles as she climbs onto his lap to sit with him, hugging and petting her new doll affectionately as she continues to look at it.

"Th-Thank you, D-D-Daniel…" whimpers Hekate tenderly.

"My pleasure, Hekate. I'm glad you like it."

She nods. "I-It's… It's the first gift I've ever been given… A-And… it makes me so ha-ha-happy."

Daniel teases, "Do you not even want the others?" He gestures to the two presents sitting next to them.

She hugs her doll, asking, "D-Do I have to choose?"

"What kind of question is that?" asks Daniel warmly. "They're all for you."

She sniffles, nodding. "O-Open them for me, please. I-I-I want to hold…" She hugs the doll tightly.

Daniel nods, taking the second present, which is a fair bit smaller. He carefully unwraps it, and Hekate asks, “Sh-Show it to me…”

He chuckles, stretching the wrapping paper out, and she inspects it with a big smile. She points, “Ah! Is that one you? A-And me?” Hekate points to extremely simplistic figures, but with distinctive traits; a human shaped stick figure taller than all of the other figures around him, and a much smaller one with a distinctive black tail squiggling behind her and big triangular ears. There are other figures as well, apparently representing Daniel and his companions.

“Yes. Tekten and Jieka drew those of us.”

Hekate giggles warmly. “They’re good. Someday, I’ll have my official portrait drawn by them.” She blushes, adding, “E-Erimaya said royal families and rulers have portraits done to carry on their memory.”

“I’m sure that would make them very happy, Sweetpea.”

She nods, patting his arms. “Now, open it! Open it!”

Daniel puts the wrapping paper under the cushion with the first one, and he slides the lid off of the box. Inside is revealed to be a rounded shape of metal with ornate structure, elegantly decorated with colorful gems. It looks kind of like a bubbled barbell shape with jewel-bound chains hanging convex in opposition to the concave parts of the shape. Hekate has never seen one before, but it’s truly beautiful.

Daniel replies gently as she inspects it, “I hope you like it. It’s a crown for a proper Empress.”

Hekate looks over her shoulder into Daniel’s eyes. He adds gently, “Maybe not the best ‘birthday’ present, but I thought it’d look nice on you.”

Her eyes water, but she chokes it down this time. She nods. “Th-Thank you… Um… I-… I know we’ve… played along all this time, but… I’m… I was…” She trails off, hugging the plush doll again.

Daniel thinks for a moment. He finally says, “Hekate, I don’t know all of the history of this world. Far from it, since this world has so many long-lived races and a rich history of magic. But, on Earth, let me ask you who you think the first emperor on Earth was?”

“Um… So-Someone powerful?” replies Hekate. “W-With lots of subjects? A king born of royalty…”

“No. He was believed to be the son of a gardener and a cup-bearer himself. And yet, he usurped a king and led a conquest to become a true emperor.” Daniel takes the crown out, gently placing it on Hekate’s head, passing the chains over her ears to allow the crown to fit firmly, but comfortably on her head. “In other words, he was just a regular human who worked for his empire.” Daniel adds jokingly, “Albeit, through usurping the throne…”

Hekate touches the crown, which rests on her head without interfering with her too much. Daniel adds gently, “A person’s history doesn’t define who they become if they have the willpower to make it happen. A former slave *can* become an empress. To survive being an empress, she must work hard to earn her position every day. To seek counsel from those she trusts, to see through to the true nature of things, and to make decisions without hesitation nor remorse.”

Hekate nods, absorbing the wisdom. She knows Daniel isn’t someone with experience, but with knowledge of the past of his own world, and with enough sense to piece together what he has seen. He’s saying the basic gist, and there’s far more work to being Empress, but she has no standards to live up to,

save leading a large body of people and preventing herself from being assassinated.

“I… I don’t know what to say or do, o-other than to say thank you, Daniel…” murmurs Hekate sheepishly.

Daniel chuckles, petting her head. He is mindful of her new crown, and she can feel it settle on her head. It’s not too heavy, but she knows it’s there. It’s her symbol as an Empress.

Daniel pulls the last gift close, unwrapping it carefully and showing Hekate the third hand-drawn wrapping paper. She appreciates it reverently, and he places it under the cushion with the others for now.

He slides open the third box, revealing a quaint but beautiful dress. “A-A dress?” asks Hekate, surprised.

“That’s right. Geirahoel helped me a lot on this one, so I hope you won’t be put off by that. I wanted you to have a nice formal dress for being Empress.”

“I-... I… Th-Thank you, Daniel… A-And… I guess I’ll have to thank Geira, too, huh?”

“She’ll appreciate it, but she also insisted on making you a separate gift.”

“Wh-What?”

Daniel smiles and nods. “Yep. It’s your birthday, after all. You’ll appreciate them less when you get older, but since this is the first one you’ll be celebrating, everyone wanted to make it special for you.”

Hekate’s eyes water again, and she sniffles as she wipes away her tears. “I… I… I’m not… worthy… I always… say such… mean things to them…”

“Everyone understands your concerns, but that’s why they want to be nice to you in return, since you’re also kind and protective to everyone. Even Ryuo.”

Hekate scoffs and chuckles softly through her whimpering and sniffles. Ryuogriar is probably the closest thing Hekate will ever know to a mother, while also being Hekate’s rival.

And, Hekate wouldn’t trade her for anything, just like the rest of her friends and companions, who have proven to be exactly those things.

“Umm… W-Will… Will you help me put the dress on, Daniel? I… I want to wear it for the… rest of my birthday…” She blushes as she fidgets with the doll, looking up at Daniel from below her brow.

Daniel smiles and pats her head gently. “I suppose I have no choice.” He quickly adds pointedly, “But, you’re putting your under-clothes on yourself.”

She pouts, looking to the side. “Meanie… You’ve already seen it…”

“When I thought you were even younger than fifteen. And, because you were in rags.”

“So…”

“You’re doing them yourself. You know how, at this point.”

She huffs, hugging her doll and looking away from him. “You will rue this day, Darling. A girl’s heart can only take so much before it explodes.”

“You’re experienced in this fact, yes?”

“Hrk!… Daniel, you butt!” Hekate pounces him, and Daniel laughs as he fends off the little feldrok empress.

It’s a playful beginning for a warm and eventful day of peace before the inevitable battle.

***

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 81: A Birthday Celebration for an Empress

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 81: A Birthday Celebration for an Empress

~Author's Note: Hey Dear Readers! We're finally caught up to the other sites I post on, so this will be the last daily posting of my chapters. The new schedule will be as follows: 07:00A.M. on Monday's and Fridays, since my stats seem to have the most consistently strong numbers on those days, so I hope these days work well enough for everyone! I still have a big buffer between current post and my current WIP chapters, so I'll be able to maintain this schedule for the foreseeable future (and will certainly alert you if it's going to change). So, the next time I hope to see you will be this coming Friday!

Thanks again for reading, all of the comments, and I sincerely hope you continue to enjoy!

***

Hekate and Daniel join everyone else for breakfast, and almost immediately, Erimaya rushes over, taking Hekate's hands. "Hekate! I had no idea! I'm so sorry! If I had known, I would have prepared! Please forgive me! I don't want to lose my only friend!"

Hekate blushes, quickly easing the princess's concerns. "R-Relax, Eri! Please! You're my best friend in the whole world! It was… kinda decided not long ago that my birthday is today… S-So, there's no way you could have known."

Erimaya hugs Hekate's hands to her own chest, blushing as she is embarrassed by the 'faux pas', even though Hekate is correct. "Still, though. I should have had something prepared, just in case. Or, no; rather, I should have asked sooner. It never crossed my mind, and for that I am ashamed."

Hekate still tries to ease her concerns, chuckling gently. "Please, pay it no mind at all. I don't expect anything, and I only ask for your continued friendship. Besides, Daniel already gave me more than I could ever dream of."

Erimaya finally takes a moment to look at Hekate. She's wearing a rather elegant dress for once, rather than her usual light-weight and mobile attire that easily suits the light armor she wears in battle. This dress would be modest, but certainly welcome at even the Imperial Court of the Grand Zenkon Empire, adorned with frills and lace patterns, as well as an intricate stitching of blue flame-like patterns around her collar. Additionally, she is wearing a lightweight, but ornate crown embellished with beautiful gems of various colors, including red, purple, and blue, in addition to the more numerous clear diamonds. Chains circle the outside of her triangular fox-like ears, also endowed with gemstones.

Everyone is speechless as they look upon the stunningly royal-looking Hekate, who before, looked and behaved like a mere spoiled commoner.

Wenlianna stammers, "D-D-Daniel… A-Are those… diamonds?"

Hekate nods proudly, saying warmly, "Yep! Every one."

"Th-The colors…"

"They're truly remarkable," murmurs Erimaya, admiring Hekate's full adornments. She also notices the plush doll, which looks similar to a miniature version of Hekate, though with a simple dress and wings.

Hekate looks up at Daniel, asking, “You didn’t say, yet. Did… Did you make these ones?”

“Most of them, yes. The red and purple diamonds were mined by the ogres during digging in the mountains for… a certain project. I vaguely recall the basics of looking up how they’re made synthetically, but radiation is a big part of it for the reds, and it’s not the same as natural, if I remember correctly.”

Hekate adds with a little disappointment, “We agreed that I’ll only wear this in trusted company, and a simpler crown of steel and stained glass for audiences. I don’t want to flaunt wealth and attract the wrong kind of attention.”

“You look beautiful,” states Erimaya, returning to the topic at hand; Hekate. “I truly regret not having a gift for you now.”

Hekate smiles, holding Erimaya’s hands firmly. “Your presence is plenty gift for me, Eri. It’s a coincidence, but I’m truly happy you could be here to celebrate my birthday. Everyone I could rightfully ask to attend is here.”

Erimaya coos warmly, and she hugs Hekate, with Hekate warmly returning the hug. After, Erimaya asks to hold the doll, and while she does, Ryuogriar stands up. “As the second empress of the Fievegal, allow me to wish you a happy birthday, Hekate. We have all worked hard on various confections to go with breakfast, as well as to be enjoyed throughout the day. Please enjoy them to your heart’s content.”

Hekate smiles, resisting the urge to cry. She got most of it out with Daniel, and her eyes are a little red, but she keeps finding a higher and higher bar for where she believes she couldn’t be happier would land, only to be proven wrong.

The group enjoys breakfast, and Hekate asks, “Ryuo… Do you still celebrate your birthday?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” asks the senior-most of the dragons. “Is it because I’ve had over four hundred, that you think-…” She halts with a sudden gasp, glancing at Daniel. She’s never told Daniel her age, though everyone knows that, following Vaergraes, Xyreko, Choul, and Illianna, Ryuogriar is the fifth oldest person in the Fievegal by centuries. Even Thymeria is little more than 100 years old, though she looks and acts like a human in their twenties -if rather introverted and modest-.

Daniel replies playfully, “Really? You don’t look a day over three hundred.”

Ryuogriar blushes, retorting passionately, “You don’t understand, Mukori! I-It’s not about my age, but… But about…” She trails off, not wanting to say whatever it is.

Hekate replies gently, “I didn’t mean to offend, Ryuo. Daniel said I’d appreciate my birthdays less over the years, s-so I was curious…”

The four dragons in the room, including Choul, share glances. However, it’s Vaergraes who actually answers Hekate’s concern. “Hekate, you have not even lived a blink of what your life will be, and you are already thrust into a position of maturity. That said, your birthday is a celebration of your life. And, while it’s more of a short-lived race’s tradition, such as the humans, goblins, and dattakoriens, who all celebrate one’s survival for each year, it is up to you whether or not you still enjoy it. We no longer throw extravagant celebrations for mine, but I am always happy to sit down with my cherished loved ones and celebrate another year in this world. Even if I have had more birthdays than there are days in a year, each one is a time of joy. And, likewise, I enjoy celebrating the birthdays of Illianna, Thymeria, and now, all of you, if I am to be

so lucky as to participate.”
Hekate smiles, and Ryuogriar adds gently, “I didn’t understand. Sorry. As Lady Vaergraes says, dragons don’t usually celebrate the day of one’s annual survival, but rather, celebrate milestones in one’s life. First fire breath, first flight, first hunt, first egg, first spell, first conquest, first mate. And, there are many additional celebrations, including additional eggs, achievements in magic, enlightenment… It’s… more ambiguous, since… surviving another year is expected of the str-... second strongest race in the world.”

Hekate nods respectfully. “Thank you both. Um… W-Would… Would you like to celebrate? I-It’s… It’s made me so happy, just from the beginning…”

Ryuogriar smiles. She declares proudly without any thought, and she receives no objection; “We are members of the recently-founded Fievegal. If it is tradition for its citizens to celebrate the day of their birth, then I would say it would be my pleasure to celebrate my own, your adorable Greatness.” She bows reverently, and the others smile and bow as well. Hekate blushes and smiles. “Th-Then, so shall it be!” declares the young feldrok Empress. She glances up at Daniel, and he nods at her with a smile.

After breakfast is finished, Ryuogriar once again takes the lead. Shek and Skloe bring out a cake they worked together on, complete with candles, as Daniel instructed, and Ryuogriar stands up as Aoloan lights the candles with fire magic. “Now then, I am far from an expert on this tradition, but I would like to invite all of us to sing together. Ready?”

Everyone nods, and together, they sing a birthday song just for Hekate.

Daniel thought about using the birthday song so popularized on Earth, but Kera’tai had a surprising talent for writing lyrics, and wrote a simple song

incorporating some of Hekate's achievements throughout the year -which was a busy year-, truly celebrating Hekate's 16th year of life.

With watery eyes and sniffles, Hekate blows out her candles, making her wish and telling no one, as the sacred rules of wishes goes.

Of course, she can't have predicted that one person present can not only hear her wish, but make it come true.

Daniel shares a glance with the goddess Ryukana, who smiles and nods subtly. He smiles and bows his head while Hekate is distracted by everyone clapping for her.

"Now then," starts Ryuogriar as she stands up. "Though the day is still only just beginning, I would like to take this time to provide the birthday offerings to our beloved little Hekate." Daniel whispers, "Gifts…"

Ryuogriar quickly corrects, "Pardon, the 'gifts' for her birthday. As second empress, I shall go first." She approaches Hekate with a small box, not wrapped like the ones Daniel made, since the box itself is nicely designed. She smiles and presents the gift. "Hekate, may you live a long and happy life, and may our rivalry and friendship always stem from love."

Hekate opens the box, and she whimpers happily.

It's a beautiful seashell like nothing any of them have seen before. Ryuogriar explains softly, "I found this a long time ago, and thought you might appreciate it more than I do. It's from a species of whelk that resides in the deepest part of the ocean, which is why its shell sparkles. Gemstone-like pearls form on the outside of its shell naturally, and this one had to have been very old. Please accept it."

“I-I do. Th-Thank you, Ryuo.” Hekate hugs Ryuogriar, surprising the dragon, but she hugs Hekate in return.

Next, Reignleif steps up. She isn’t quite as formal as Ryuogriar, quietly and daintily presenting a book. “I copied this book from my collection. It has many wonderful stories, including romance. I… I would love to talk about them when you read it.”

Hekate hugs the book, nodding. “Thank you. I’ll cherish it and read it as soon as possible.”

She hugs Reignleif, which causes the dragon to blush and sink lower to hug Hekate at her level. Afterwards, Reignleif smiles, retreating so Geirahoel can take a turn. “A-As the fourth empress, it’s my duty to give you a gift on this special day,” declares Geirahoel a little bashfully -masked only slightly by a somewhat haughty tone-.

Geirahoel’s gift is a beautifully-sewn mantle, similar to Reignleif’s, but with hand-made fabric flowers adorning the whole surface of the mantle without being too messy. Geirahoel blushes and looks to the side. “I-I like flowers, a-and I’m pretty good at fabric-work, since it’s been a hobby…”

Hekate hugs Geirahoel, and the youngest of the three dragon empresses stammers. She finally extracts herself, saying bashfully, “L-L-Let me put it on you to make sure it fits.”

Daniel cocks his head as he watches, as well as a few others who chuckle, since it’s basically a cape. Other than the length being too long or much too short, there shouldn’t be much sizing needed.

Regardless, it compliments her dress well, and Hekate wears it for the rest of her birthday.

Next, Vaergraes presents a magic dagger, which is said to be able to channel magical spells and increase their efficiency and power. Though Hekate doesn't need much by way of amplification, she is no less grateful.

Thymeria presents hair ribbons, which she helps Hekate add to her hair. Kera'tai presents a ceremonial trinket that is a bone-carved figurine of a Chi'rinnis spirit said to bring good luck and make wishes come true. Kera'tai also whispers something to Hekate that makes Hekate even more pleased with the gift when she grins at Daniel, leaving him out of the loop. But, he pays it no mind. Next, Aoloan gifts the young feldrok Empress a very elaborate and custom-made confectionary that looks to Daniel like an elephant ear; oil fried bread with cinnamon and sugar, as well as a cute messenger bag for Hekate that goes well with her dress and mantle.

Next up are Shek, Skloe, Tekten, and Jieka, who give Hekate freshly baked cookies, as well as small hand-knit trinkets similar to the good-luck charms Daniel has worn since he received them.

Gwenesphia fidgets as she watches Hekate enjoy one of the cookies and share them with the two goblin princesses.

Daniel approaches the gatonine lieutenant, asking her, "What's wrong?"

"I… all of these gifts are so… extravagant." She looks at her own gift box, which is small and simple.

Daniel replies gently, "Hekate has never received personal gifts before. She'll be happy, I'm sure of it."

"But, it's… just… She won't even need them…"

"Trust me. Don't lose heart."

Gwenesphia watches as Treia steps up, kneeling before Hekate. “Your Grace, I don’t have the same talent for making things, so please accept this. I… I searched the area around the Citadel to find something worthwhile…”

Hekate opens the gift. She grins, showing off her present. It’s a set of colorful river stones stacked together and glued in place to look like a simple castle.

“I love it, Treia. And, you don’t have to be so formal. I… would like it if we can be proper friends.” Hekate hugs her, and the gatonine woman blushes, but she smiles and hugs Hekate. “My… younger sister would really get along with you, I think…” New chapters come out on novelping.com first.

“I hope someday we have the chance to meet. If ever they need a safe place, they are welcome here.”

Treia smiles and nods. Hekate grins during the pause afterwards, appreciating the gifts she has received.

Daniel gently pushes Gwenesphia’s back, and the senior gatonine flinches. But, she steps forward sheepishly. “H-Hekate. Um… is-... Is it okay if I call you so casually as well?”

Hekate smiles and nods. “I’d appreciate it if you did. You’re part of my inner circle, Gwenesphia.”

“I… I know you won’t necessarily need these, but… I made them myself.” She hands over the gift, and Hekate opens it gratefully. “Thank you so much.” She pulls out a pair of hand-knit gloves made with a soft lavender color. Hekate smiles gratefully. “They’re lovely.” She immediately puts them on, admiring them. “You’re right. I shouldn’t get cold, but I remember before Daniel and I met that I felt cold. I’m sure in this form, I’m not quite as impervious to the elements as my true form, so I will gladly accept these.” She hugs

Gwenesphia, also whispering to the gatonine lieutenant, making her blush and say tenderly, “Th-Thank you, y-your… H-Hekate.”

Hekate then says, “Thank you all so much. You truly didn’t have to do all of this for me, but…” She sniffles, fighting tears once more. “I… I can’t express in words how happy I am… I feel so blessed to know all of you. Even when I’m not the most agreeable… you are all so kind to me. Thank you.”

Wenlianna quietly approaches, and Hekate perks up. “W-Wenlianna?”

“Hekate, I… I made you something as well, and I only just got it working. S-Sorry for the delay.”

“No worries! I need nothing, which is why I’m so touched and thankful for everything! M-May I?”

Wenlianna nods, and Hekate opens the modest-sized box. Inside is something that causes Gwenesphia and Treia to gasp, as they recognize it the most quickly. Then, Erimaya also gasps, having figured it out as well.

It looks like a jewelry box, but with three gemstones protruding from the top, and buttons on the front. Daniel is familiar with it as well, but he helped Xyreko get the parts Wenlianna couldn’t get very easily.

Hekate looks at the gatonines and Erimaya, asking, “Wh-What is it?”

Erimaya approaches, leaning over to inspect it as she says nervously, “I-It’s a memory crystal. A magic device that can store an image, as well as a voice.”

“I-I have one in my room with my brothers and sister, so I can hear their voices,” replies Treia.

“Because artisans aren’t very common in the east, they’re exceedingly rare.” adds Gwenesphia informatively.

Treia replies gently, “My father did a favor for an artisan in the past, and he let me take it with me.”

Wenlianna nods, explaining gently, “I’ll help you load whatever you want into it, Hekate, since it does require a certain spell. Since I was at it, I made one with three crystals, so you can store three different memories.”

“I… Thank you… Wenlianna, this… This is perfect…” Hekate sniffles and wipes her nose, setting the treasure box down to hug Wenlianna as well. “I won’t forget this. Any of these gifts. Never hesitate to ask me for anything. Regardless of what I’ll say, you are all my cherished friends.”

Everyone smiles together, and as a golem collects Hekate’s new treasures on a cart -those she isn’t wearing-, she asks, “Wenlianna?”

“Yes?”

“I’ve often wondered. Daniel was able to thrive in Mornistae because he can fix magical devices to some extent, but only really because it sounds like artisans and artificers were never around. Why is that?”

Wenlianna smiles gently. “Ironically enough, it’s because magic artisanry and artificers are too valuable. Royal courts tend to scoop up talented artisans, merchant companies will form contracts with the rest of the artisans and most talented artificers, and the rest of the artificers typically get pulled into the military in some form or fashion. The only reason I could be so obstinate when I was Magic Artisan of the Royal Court of Mornistae is because I actually lowered my rank by becoming the court artisan, at least during my service. And, if I inherit Grand Duchess from Mother, then it would have been

unacceptable for me to be in a position subservient to the King, as the Grand Duke or Duchess is a position with an important authority in Mornistae."

"So, that's why crystals are so expensive?" asks Daniel. "The merchant companies control the supply and demand, even though they're technically relatively simple to make."

Wenlianna nods. "It's true. They're just salt and a special resin. And, given that the merchants are happy to sell magic devices, it makes customers reliant on them and their prices for repairs and replacements. That's why it's not widely advertised that enhanced magic crystals are just diamonds. It's possible to identify them with magic, but the prices are unknown to most merchants, since the Grand Duchy distributes them only through trusted channels, who then markup their own prices or use them for the military, depending on needs. Merely the fact that enhanced magic crystals reshape the way we can go about warfare logistics has earned Mother even greater loyalty in the Mornistae army, and likely within the Empire."

Gwenesphia remarks astutely, "A country's true power lies in its military…"

"Not always," counters Daniel politely. "A military is only as strong as the people from which it comes. The people, if driven to a corner, are the ones who revolt, the one thing all governing bodies truly fear deep down. It's why slave armies eventually fail."

"Which is why extravagance is for fun, but not for showing off," says Hekate proudly. "I will be this empress when it's just us, or it's absolutely necessary for politics. For everything else, including how my people see me, I would rather be the adventurous fox-eared girl."

Vaergraes chuckles, and Ryuogriar remarks playfully, “Seems like a wasted effort at that point. Most rulers can’t wait to flaunt their status or power.”

“When people want something they don’t have, they do stupid stuff to get it. Like sending slaves to conquer an unconquerable castle. I don’t want anyone sent to slay me. For my sake and their own.”

“I think this is the most mature you’ve ever been,” teases the senior-most dragon.

“I’m always mature!” She then says, “Wenlianna!”

“Y-Yes!?”

Hekate stands up on her chair, declaring like a leader suddenly. “Prepare the memory thingie please. We’re all gathered together, and I want to capture all of us, if possible.”

“O-Oh! Umm, yes!” Wenlianna takes the device and sets it on the table while Hekate ushers everyone else into the open area, including Ryukana and Xyreko. While Ryukana is a little surprised, no one objects or resists, and Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel take a seated position in front with their eggs, alongside Shek, Skloe, Tekten, and Jieka. A golem appears beside Wenlianna, and Xyreko informs Wenlianna that it will start the sequence for her after she shows how to do it.

The set up produces a ring of light, which is obviously larger the further away they are. The golem ensures to capture everyone in the circle, while Wenlianna takes a position alongside Gwenesphia, Erimaya, and Treia, who are in the back row, with Hekate and Daniel in the middle of everyone.

Wenlianna asks, “What should the voice be? It’s usually about a minute long.”

Hekate nods. “There’s a lot of us, so something simple is fine.” She smiles at everyone around her. “I’ll remember everyone’s voices.”

“Then, how about we all say ‘Happy Birthday, Hekate! Love and kisses from all your friends and family.’?” asks Daniel.

Hekate nods happily, and everyone agrees. She then points at the golem, saying warmly, “Make it so, good sir!”

The golem nods in acknowledgement, and everyone watches with smiles as the light begins to swirl. Then, Wenlianna signals, and the golem repeats it.

Together, everyone recites, “Happy Birthday, Hekate! Love and kisses from all your friends and family!” It’s not perfect, but it makes Hekate giggle and laugh giddily, and the recording finishes. Hekate sniffles and wipes happy tears from her eyes once more, and Daniel teases, “I’m surprised you still have any tears left. You’ve been crying all day.”

“Whose fault is that!?” whines Hekate playfully, pouncing onto him. “I love you! I love everyone here! Thank you all so much!”

Without prompting, a large group hug crowds around her, with everyone returning the sentiments of love for Hekate.

And, for the rest of the day, as Hekate and Daniel spend time together and with smaller groups of the others, a smile never leaves Hekate’s face.

And, after a long day of playing, chatting, enjoying treats, dancing, and singing, Daniel has to carry Hekate back to his room, since she will likely be upset if he breaks routine now of all times.

Now that a moment of celebration has been had, the march on Fort Twilight is the next event on the horizon.

***

Daniel walks out onto the stage before his modest army. Of the rather small population belonging to the Fievegal, 1,047 goblins, 552 ogres, 166 dattakoriens, 35 Uhl'tall, 50 oni, 20 Chi'rinnis, and two of the lesser dragons have volunteered for the march on Fort Twilight, and to formally become the army of the Fievegal. They have limited experience functioning as an army, but they are armed and armored by the Citadel. And, the bulk of the work will be carried out by golems, as well as two tanks ready for the invasion. The army is to begin forming solidarity with the citizens of the Fievegal, as well as provide them a means to earn a salary in preparation for the economic shift of the Fievegal.

Ironically, one of the strongest individuals in terms of knowledge of international trade is Erimaya, since it's part of her royal studies, and she is a passionate student of knowledge, which is how she read about the magic summoning spell leading to Daniel's and Rikuto's summoning.

Daniel's companions are seated on chairs on the stage behind him, present as the leaders.

Xyreko casts the projection spell to make Daniel visible to everyone present, as well as to carry his voice so the whole crowd can understand his words.

"Greetings, my beloved fellow denizens of the Fievegal. As you hopefully know, I am Daniel, the man privileged to be your Emperor."

The soldiers cheer, which surprises him a little.

"Oh! Uh, thank you! Thank you! You're too kind." Daniel clears his throat. "I come to you on the dawn of the most serious request I will have to make. As you know, the Fievegal is small. Because we are small, we are not respected

by the other nations of the world. But, we have the luxury of strength. The Citadel is not infinite, however. Our strength must shine through in every one of our citizens, from the most skilled of weavers and farmers, to the most powerful of warriors. And, the empire east of the mountains has attacked our homes for the final time. As Emperor, I have a duty to you, my people, to ensure that you have a place you can call home, a place where your children can grow up and be afforded opportunities to better their lives and achieve the lives they want. I can not do this alone. One thousand eight hundred and seventy two brave souls have volunteered to fight for the Fievegal. It will be your spirit that defines the Fievegal, that brings honor to your homes and families, and lets us live in this world that thinks they can disrespect us. Bring me Fort Twilight, and I will bring you even greater luxuries in your own homes than running water and comfortable warmth or cooling."

The gathered soldiers cheer together.

"Thank you! I have tasked Sir Choul with leading the assault. My goal with this conquest is no casualties. I know this is a mere wish of a dreamer, but you are all soldiers of the Fievegal. Your goal should be to fight to protect what you care about, and that needs to include yourselves. This may be the first of many battles to come. I need you for those battles as well, as your loved ones need you to return home. Do not give up, and trust the warriors next to you."

Hekate steps up. As promised, she's wearing a more modest dress, as well as a steel crown with stained glass jewels. "My fellow denizens of the Fievegal! I am Empress Hekate, and I couldn't agree with Daniel more. You are my precious subjects, my neighbors, my friends, and my warriors. Every life here is important to me, and I will not tolerate casualties. Do not be fools, do not be heroes. Survive the battle, and we will try again if we fail once. We will be sending many of our golems for this battle to ensure victory, but this is costly.

To ensure the Citadel and all of our homes and families are safe, I shall dedicate every shred of my power to defending, which is why I am counting on you to take Fort Twilight in retaliation for the Eastern Empire attacking us so many times unprovoked. We didn't start this fight, but the Fievegal will always finish it!"

Again, the warriors cheer, as well as the other empresses and companions. This chapter was copied from novelping.com without permission.

Daniel and Hekate then turn to Choul, who approaches and kneels. Hekate declares loudly, "Sir Choul. You have your orders. Lead my beloved warriors to victory, and bring everyone back alive."

"It is my sincere honor, your Greatness. We shall bring you victory."

With a civil nod from Hekate, Choul walks down to the ground with the soldiers, and they part to allow him to pass towards the vehicles; a handful of shuttles and trucks to carry the soldiers, while the golems will march, since they do not tire.

Daniel and Hekate watch the soldiers file out as the others approach and watch as well.

Ryuogriar says gently, "That was a fine speech, both of you."

Hekate scratches her neck. "I don't know if I said enough. They're going to risk their lives for us."

Ryuogriar cups her cheek, saying gently, "You treated them as people who matter, rather than as servants or slaves. I believe that will carry weight in their hearts."

Daniel nods in agreement. “Addressing them as fellow denizens is a strategy that was used in my home country pretty much since its founding, as far as I know. It needs to be ‘our’ problem in order for soldiers to take it seriously. The alternative used in more strict militaries, as I’ve seen, is ‘serve or die’. The carrot or the stick can be effective, especially depending on the morale of the soldiers.”

Ryuogriar nods in agreement. “That was the method we used in the past, because we had nothing to fear from the other races.”

Erimaya adds astutely, “An advantage is that there are women of various races on stage. Eastern kingdoms are mostly human, and virtually all royal leadership positions are only humans. You have bestowed positions of true royalty upon goblins, which is undoubtedly inspiring.”

Daniel chuckles. “That, or they’re going to murder me out of envy.”

“I will burn them all,” retorts Geirahoel caustically. “My affections can not be bought by violence. And, I will not suffer those who…” She glances at him, suddenly becoming bashful. “Who have no loyalty…” murmurs the youngest dragon.

Hekate asks, “S-So, now what? Do we just wait until Choul reports back?”

“No. We need to be available if the situation is different than we expect, since we’re technically doing everything wrong. We don’t have any intel, which Choul will be handling in the field. We’re also attacking with too few soldiers, assuming Fort Twilight can be manned by over a hundred thousand troops for defense. It’s large, and if they use effective rotations of manning, they could presumably defend against a much larger army, from what I know of siege

warfare. Which, admittedly, is limited. Unlike what we did with the golems, they have no reason to leave the fortress."

"But, we were able to break in fairly easily," points out Hekate.

"That was with a fraction of the soldiers defending," points out Ryuogriar. "And, before archoneldwyn assassins made an appearance." She becomes a little disappointed, adding softly, "Frankly, we were reckless."

"I allowed it as well," adds Daniel. "I had no idea there were individuals who posed a threat to you or Hekate, other than me. And, that's what we need to be most cautious of during this fight. In any case, assassins might ignore Choul for now until we appear, or they may attack here, so we need to be careful."

The group members nod in agreement.

"In the meantime," starts Daniel. "I'll be working with Wenlianna on the communication devices. I was hoping to have them finished before the battle, but we're making decent progress."

"Can I help?" asks Hekate.

"You're welcome to find out. This project isn't as secretive, so we can all bounce ideas."

Vaergraes asks, "Is telepathy an option? Now that you have magic?"

Daniel shakes his head. "Just trying to connect directly to me gives me a splitting headache."

"It's draining all of his mana," replies Reignleif softly. "He has so little…" Erimaya looks at everyone in surprise, and then at Daniel. "Wait… What are you talking about? You have mana?"

Daniel nods. “Yep. None of us know why, though.”

Erimaya’s eyes light up. “That’s wonderful!” She looks to Wenlianna, asking, “But, you don’t know, Wenlianna?”

The former court artisan shakes her head. “No. If we could replicate the relic in the castle of Mornistae, we might be able to quantify it somewhat, and properly test what increases his mana. The only thing we can verify is likely not the cause is Nemaisol, since it’s becoming more resistive to him drawing.”

Daniel nods in agreement. “The transport circles are a possibility. Though, by that logic, we could leave me in a storage bag and see if I gain more mana.”

Everyone immediately scolds him, “NO!”

He chuckles. “I thought it was a decent idea.”

Thymeria replies thoughtfully, “I think someone would have noticed if magic bags could do it. Livestock are sometimes transported in magic bags, and demonkin are more sensitive to mana.”

“It would likely overload anything else stored in the bags,” adds Wenlianna as she inspects her own, given to her by Daniel. “I’m not sure of all of the specifics, of course, but if storage magic was able to transmute magic upon something, it’d likely drain its own power, as well as make food products that explode.”

Erimaya murmurs to herself as she thinks, “We need to figure out what it is… If we can increase it more before…” She notices everyone listening to her, and she flinches. “Nothing! Just thinking out loud! Hekate! Let’s go do some etiquette lessons. We’ll help Daniel and Wenlianna later.” She takes Hekate’s hand, pulling her away by the wrist as Hekate calls out in surprise, “Wait! Eri!”

Daniel looks at the others. “Anyone else need anything?”

Kera’tai shamelessly teases, “I can think of one or two things, Daniel.” She grins, and she gets several other sighs in response.

“Anyone?” asks Daniel, pretending he didn’t hear her.

“Hey!” whines the Chi’rinnis sorceress.

This causes a few chuckles, and he apologizes warmly, “Sorry, Kera’tai. I couldn’t resist. We’ll talk later.”

Illianna speaks suddenly, “Daniel, Wenlianna, I’m not overly familiar with magic devices, especially those from the East, but I do have a little experience with rune magic, if I can be of help.”

“Actually, that would be a great help,” replies Wenlianna. “Please join us.”

Reignleif raises her hand, “I will help as well, then. I have books about rune magic that might help.”

“It’ll be an honor to work on something with you, Great Aunt Reina.”

Reignleif nods sheepishly, and Geirahoel fidgets. Daniel asks, “Geira-Mukori, would you care to learn?”

The youngest dragon flinches, and she glances at the others. Wenlianna, picking up the cue, adds, “Yes! Extra hands may come in handy anyways, and I always love teaching.”

Daniel looks at her skeptically. She defensively retorts, “Gunther was lazy, and he tried to ride through on his status! I still did everything in my power to teach him!”

Daniel chuckles. “Think you can handle learning from her, Mukori?”

Geirahoel is shocked, but she replies, “Of course! I’ll work hard!”

“As much as I’d like to join you, Mukori,” starts Ryuogriar. “I should see to Hekate and the sweet princess. We have much to discuss after all.”

“Do you?” asks Daniel with a playfully skeptical tone.

“We do,” replies the senior dragon coyly. She pets his cheek once, pulling him gently close to kiss him, and she walks off without another word.

Daniel watches her leave for a moment, returning to task. “Alright, shall we go?”

He gets a few pouting scowls, but otherwise, they head to the lab to continue working on communication devices.

He knows it's a… particular topic, displaying affection when surrounded by so many companions, but he does his best to walk carefully through a minefield.

He's just a human of humble origins along for a ride he never expected.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 82: Fort Twilight and the Grey Dragon

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 82: Fort Twilight and the Grey Dragon

Choul has come into the service of a strange human from another world, having lost the chance of claiming revenge personally, but no less receiving the gift of justice for the people who raised him; the feldroks. As such, Choul understands fundamentally that, like almost anyone in this world, he is stronger than Daniel, a mechanic out of place in the world of Zenkon. Daniel is not actually impervious to magic, nor can he utilize magic in any meaningful capacity. He achieved most of what he has thus far with his own hands and a fair amount of luck.

He has brought something strange with him to the World of Zenkon.

He brought a perspective that does not view a person through the lens of their group, but the lens of their individual strengths and achievements. The most ironic part of this perspective is that his world is full of only humans in regards to sentient races.

Choul has traveled most of the world in his quest to find spells or other means of defeating Morthybargaron, the former dragon lord. He returned to the keep to lie in wait, since the red lord's magical presence had vanished from the world.

And, in his place arose a mythical sorcerer known as the Harbinger of Calamity or the Feldrok Sorcerer.

The myth comes from what Daniel really is.

This combination of events has led Choul to a new purpose. Daniel sees people as individuals, and he readily forgives them for their actions against him if they can prove themselves trustworthy. Choul accepted service to him in honor of Daniel achieving revenge against Morthybargaron, ending his tyrannical reign.

Now, Choul is leading a massive army to capture one of the fortresses from the Eastern Alliance, primarily controlled by the Grand Zenkon Empire, due to multiple attempted attacks on the Citadel. Rather than razing the fortress, though, Daniel's goal is to force the defenders out with as few casualties as possible.

In fact, because of the contract, Choul cannot specifically order combat. But then, the loophole is not lost on him. There is no mention of conspiring to kill in the contract, which Choul has wondered if he should mention. He has no intentions of treachery against Daniel. but he wonders if it was intentional. Daniel is very intelligent, but far from all-knowing or all-wise.

Regardless, Choul's mission is one he is proud to take on. Especially because there is nothing preventing him from using illusion or defensive magic.

As such, he looks behind him at his colossal army of demon-kin, numbering over 120,000 goblins, 50,000 ogres, 20,000 dattakoriens, 3,000 Uhl'tall, 5,000 Oni, 2,000 Chi'rinnis, and 5 dragons.

Of course, most of these soldiers are in fact golems, but the enemy doesn't need to know that. The only way they will be able to tell would be close inspection, seeing that the same living soldiers present are multiplied by illusion across the bodies of the golems. It's a mana-heavy endeavor casting an illusion

on over 200,000 soldiers, but it'll be worth it. Unity among the demon clans is worse for the east than an army of golems from the Citadel.

Hmm… Perhaps I should have had golems as well. Oh well. Our banners are clear.

Bearing the sigil of the feldrok empress herself; a young girl's silhouette with big triangular ears and a bushy black tail, the army of the Fievegal is ready to make itself known to the world.

Choul's officers gather in the tent at their staging area. The army is easy to rest and feed, since it's actually very small, with the golems needing no resources other than mana, which has been supplied by the Citadel.

Ucahote is with Choul, as well as a commander from each of the races. Unlike Daniel's inner circle, not all of them speak the Eastern Imperial Trade language that Daniel speaks, nor the demon common taught to most races in the west. The goblin, specifically, cheers in a dialect of lorbini, which is different than the dialect Shek and Skloe use, but no less intelligible to most goblins. "[We stand ready to fight! But, we wish to ask permission for treasure.]"

Choul asks in demon common, "{I know you speak the lorbini dialect, but I'm not familiar with speaking it. Do you understand me?}"

The goblin commander, Vahaka, nods. "[Yes, General. Vahaka understands.]"

"{Good. Thank you. Then, to answer your question, we must assess what is necessary for the Fortress's function, what will be necessary if we take prisoners, and what is otherwise free to be taken. I ask for your patience, but I promise that there will be spoils.]"

The goblin and his subordinates cackle as they grin at each other. Normally, goblins are seen as little more than thieves, since they tend to steal or destroy anything in their path, especially when on the warpath. The Fievegal has established specific rules of conduct, and because food and comforts are plentiful for even the goblins, they abide by Daniel's rules with *hopes* of being able to claim even more in service to his army. Of course, looting and pillaging is a staple of all military actions in Zenkon, so Daniel made sure to clarify what is acceptable. In the capturing of military fortresses, all claimed property will belong to the Fievegal, and desired loot from the fortress will be either auctioned off at low prices or raffled to allow fairness if something is contested. As for people, all people will be treated with dignity as much as possible, and non-combatants are not to be harmed in any way.

Rolokahr, the leader of the Uhl'tall military forces, points out respectfully to Vahaka, "{Remember this isn't the Covenant. If there are non-combatants, you are to fend off combatants first and order the non-combatants to gather in the center without hurting them.}"

"[Vahaka knows! Emperor say he name children after honorable warriors! Goblins needed no honor in Covenant. Goblins claim honor and riches in Fievegal.]" The two goblin officers with him agree noisily.

Rolokahr nods his head respectfully with a smile. "{We will all be fighting for honor and our homes. It is nice to know our homes are safe.}"

Choul adds, satisfied that the small discussion is complete, "{Our primary goal will be to capture the commanding officer and work our way through the chain of command until the soldiers surrender. To do that, we will need to overwhelm them and get the gates open.}"

“{Our fire breath alone should be enough, should it not, General?}” asks the young sky-blue lesser dragon male. Lesser dragons are born without the magic capacity of greater dragons, though in Choul’s opinion, the distinction is relatively arbitrary. Generally speaking, they are nearly pure-blooded dragons, but because of at least one non-dragon ancestor, their magic pool is limited greatly to that of the non-dragon parent’s race. But, Choul is considered a greater dragon, even though his own father was an Uhl’tall. This left him ostracized in youth among the dragons, but was not a factor to the feldroks.

Going by the simple name ‘Blue’, since dragons are loathe to share their names around other races, and Daniel hasn’t strictly interfered with the lives of the dragons that aren’t the 3 empresses beyond their contracts, Blue waits patiently for an answer.

“{Indeed. Fire alone should be enough to bring down the gates, and even the outer walls. The problem is the risk of assassins. The Emperor doesn’t want us to recklessly charge in without assessing our options.}”

“{What of the Emperor’s iron drakes?}” asks the young pink dragon, Blue’s mate. At Daniel’s suggestion, she is going by ‘Rose’.

And, by ‘iron drakes’, Choul knows she means the tanks. He has two at his disposal, commanded by fearless and unfeeling golems, but they are certainly his trump card. While it’s not obvious to those who don’t know where Daniel’s real strength comes from, the tanks could likely slay dragons as easily if not more so than his rifles, since the cannon is a scaled-up version of the rifle. He intends it for destroying fortifications, but Choul knows the application could easily change if need be. Of course, the tanks are also full of disadvantages, namely how slowly they move relative to dragons.

Regardless, Choul answers, “{We shall withhold the Iron Drakes for now. If the enemy reveals magic barriers, they will be our counter.}”

Rose nods, and Blue studies the map. The two lesser dragons flew high over the fort to get a basic layout. Like Fort Peony, Fort Twilight is built into a large valley passing through the mountain range, and it restricts passage, with structures rising high up some of the cliff faces.

Blue asks, “{What are our options for conquest? Do we need the fortress completely intact?}”

“{As much as possible,}” replies Choul. “{We may have to defend it from both sides. Potentially simultaneously.}”

Blue nods. He points at the towers on the cliffs. “{We’ll need to do something about these, then. These towers have good field of view, offer archers and siege weapons range, and if we end up defending, are prime targets for being knocked off of the mountain face.}”

“{Easier said than done,}” replies Myralkan, the commander of the dattakoriens. “{Any mages that get in range are heavily targeted, and the rock is extremely solid. I’ve heard others believe the mortar may be made of something resistant to magic.}”

“{Unlikely,}” replies Choul. {That would be a lot of those materials, which to my knowledge, are still prohibitively rare.}”

Rolokahr ponders for a moment. “{Perhaps not. Certain minerals resist mana. They are usually used in alloying for armor, but are less effective than mythril or sharmelkolle. Still, reduced damage can provide an advantage. The human-kin are crafty. It’s very likely they would use it in the bricks and mortar.}”

Choul nods. “{Very well. Regardless, we’ll be more interested in keeping those towers on the valley walls, so we’ll need to consider how to defend them against higher power assailants.}”

Gultuin, the oni commander, asks curiously, “{General, am I correct in saying her Greatness and his Grace, as well as her Grace Ryuogriar attacked the gate once already? If so, what is the status of the gate?}”

The mission Gultuin is talking about happened before Choul met Daniel, so he hasn’t heard about it specifically.

Rose answers, “{We stayed out of sight at high altitude, but it looked like a gate was present.}”

Ucahote replies, “{It is likely they have rebuilt the gate. The damage was only to the wooden doors of the gate themselves.}”

Sarm, the ogre commander, chimes in. “{Our first endeavor will be to replace the gate with stone, then.}” This story is hosted at novelping.com.

“{Stone doors would be heavy,}” counters Rolokahr politely. “It would delay troop deployments.}”

The goblins cackle. “[Tall ones leave it to goblins.]”

Everyone looks at them, but no one questions it. It’s likely to do with tunneling, since goblins are skilled diggers.

And, before all of that, they need to conquer the castle. “{We have some ideas, but we should capture the fortress so we can properly estimate how to modify it once we see the inner structure. I’d like to begin the siege this evening.}”

“{Evening?}” asks Blue. “{I was under the impression his Grace prefers we battle only during the day.}”

“{When defending, Lord Daniel prefers us to not attack in the night, because repulsion is the goal. When attacking, though, he gave us permission to act with field discretion, with the basic non-cruelty measures he laid out. If a dozen men at night can win the battle, he would prefer that over a hundred thousand fighting in the day.}”

Rolokahr shifts posture, also surprised to learn that the Emperor of the Fievegal is less naive than his defense would suggest. He gave a lot of ground to the enemy only to humiliate and drive them back in a single day. And, he has been using the mana resources of the Citadel liberally to restore the villages to a state better than they were, with temperature control to keep houses comfortable, water distribution, and magic lanterns for every household. He also has the golems helping with farming, though he doesn’t want to replace labor with golems where he can.

“{Many of us will stand out in the darkness, General,}” points out the Uhl’tall commander. “{I don’t disagree that it’s a good strategy, but I am concerned that the easterners will have the advantage.}”

Choul looks at Rose and Blue. “{Do you really think so?}” asks the grey dragon warmly.

Rose and Blue look at each other. Dragons can see just fine in all but pitch-black darkness, and the phase of the moon is a fairly dim waxing crescent. Lesser dragons, lacking the magic potency of greater dragons, will be no more visible than the oni present. They also will be difficult for the assassins to detect. “{You will be in danger if the assassins show up, but I will be leading the assault in hopes of drawing them out. The Uhl’tall will provide offensive magic

from range, as well as a recovery defensive point for our troops to fall back to, here.}" Choul points at a spot on the map off the road and out of immediate line of sight of the fortress. It's a long run, especially for the goblins, who are of small stature. But, with the Uhl'tall creating a sort of mobile fortress with their magic should be able to cover a retreat. "{It's out of direct line of sight of the fort, so reach the defensive position at all costs if you have to retreat. Those adept at traversing the forests should use the trees as cover.}"

The goblins and dattakoriens nod. Dattakoriens are generally bigger than gatonines, but still smaller than most of the other races. The ogres will likely be forced to retreat down the road, but they are fairly quick on their feet in an open sprint, so it's more advantageous to them.

"{Rose, Blue, you'll be our primary attackers, getting as close to the fortress as you can. I'd like you to break down the doors with physical strength, and then retreat into the air as air support. I'll charge in and try to draw out their most powerful magic, which you'll incapacitate with Lord Daniel's teargas bombs. Are you comfortable using them?}"

Blue and Rose nod. "{Do we need to split up? If one rides the other, it'll make it easier for us to deploy them.}"

"{Perfect. Just be ready to move fast and avoid incoming fire. I'll have most of the attention, but once they know you're dragons in the air, they'll be far more alert and try to divide their attention.}"

"[Goblins will enter and use demon wands as the Emperor taught. Vahaka capture enemy General himself!]" The goblins cackle and cheer, but Choul reminds them, "{Make sure you don't get reckless. Worse than dying in honor is losing one of our Grace's divine weapons to the enemy.}"

The goblins nod, taking the counter seriously, since the weapons grant the power of the greatest known sorcerer in the world to even the once lowly goblins. Choul's pretty sure there is some kind of defensive measure put on the weapons to prevent them from falling into enemy hands, but he's not sure what. And, that doesn't mean they'll have technological superiority forever.

"{Any other suggestions or questions?}" asks Choul, looking at each of the commanders.

"{Just to be sure, General,}" starts the dattakorien commander. "{We have permission to use lethal attacks to fight, yes?}"

"{Yes. The demon wands are loaded with non-lethal bolts, but the demon staves are lethal. If you find yourself overwhelmed, switch to the demon staff and fight your way free.}" Choul knows the weapons are startling because of how loud they are, and many of the 'bolts' -as the others know the bullets- will be wasted in panicked sprays of automatic fire. However, it'll draw attention and startle the enemies, who will not withstand even a couple of direct hits.

Because he can't cause harm, Choul will be moving around the battlefield destroying supplies and weapons, making himself available to defend others and cover retreats as much as needed. It won't be the most efficient battle, but they should be able to come out of it unscathed until the assassins appear. Then, it's as desperate as the fight will get for either side to defeat the powerful archoneldwyn mages. That they can hide their magic presences well enough to fool even Vaergraes is unnerving.

Regardless, the plan is set, and with only a few more basic notes about supply locations and contingencies for trapped soldiers, they break to rest for the rest of the afternoon.

Once the sun starts to set, the troops form up in ranks, mirrored via the illusion to appear as a much larger force of demon-kin than they actually are.

Choul leads the forces up the road, leaving behind a mere 10,000 golems to defend the camp. There's little to lose in the camp, and Choul will ensure everyone gets returned home if they get separated.

As the fortress is beginning to become visible, and the land is growing darker and darker with the setting sun, Choul signals for Rose and Blue to go. They're both in humanoid form with wings thanks to Choul's magic, and they'll expend most of their own converting back to dragon form. They have their mission, though, and he trusts them to make intelligent decisions to accomplish it.

Sure enough, they begin to become almost impossible to see at range, thanks to their relatively weak mana. It should make it easy for them to sneak up on the gate, especially once Choul and the oni draw attention for being more concentrated points of glowing in the darkness thanks to their much higher mana. The Uhl'tall, defending the retreat point, will remain out of sight of the fortress, but Choul alone should be enough.

But, just to make sure, he casts a large and flashy spell, transforming to his full dragon size. He's rather large for a dragon, and he exhales flames with a lax pressure, drawing even more attention.

He can see Blue, now in his dragon form as well, sneak along the wall with Rose jogging alongside in her humanoid form. Blue reaches the gate and whirls, slamming it open with his tail. Rose tosses smoke grenades into the gate to obscure the approach of allies, and then she quickly climbs onto Blue's back. He takes off into the sky, and Choul roars. He ascends into the air, flying directly towards the wall. His scales crackle and buzz as lightning begins to charge around him. He's keeping his power relatively low, but it should be

chaotic without damaging the wall. He explodes lightning as he's passing over the wall, spiraling in a midair roll before transforming back into his human form, dropping fearlessly to the ground. He springs to his feet on the ground, ready to dance around blades and between arrows and magic attacks.

There is no one around him.

Roars of the oni soldiers fill the air as they charge through the smoke obscuring the gate, entering the courtyard with Choul, ready to fight as well.

But, as everyone spreads out, there remains no sign whatsoever of defenders manning Fort Twilight.

Choul scans all around. The walls are devoid of defenders. There are no obvious signs of people manning the towers. There are no gongs of battle or rallying cries from the human kin of Fort Twilight.

Choul's first instincts are that it's a trap, and he shouts, "Hold back! Don't advance!"

The oni and goblins storming in slow their spread, looking around, as well as to Choul for guidance.

"{Something's wrong. Where are they?}" Choul puts up a defensive barrier dome around the troops, ordering the others to hold back. He uses telepathy to ask, "{Rolokahr, are there any signs of a pincer maneuver?}"

"*{Negative, General. The dattakorien scouts are reporting no signs of us being outflanked. Why?}*"

"{There's no one here.}" Choul studies the main castle, where windows and ramparts perfect for archers, crossbowmen, and siege bows are located. There is no rain of bolts, arrows, or spears, nor offensive magic attacks. He

doesn't even sense anyone with mana in the fortress. It's possible to hide the mana of a defending position, such as a building or castle, especially if a team of mages works together. But, it's strange. If it's a trap, they're in an appropriate position to have triggered it.

Are they waiting to see if the rulers will appear? thinks Choul to himself. *Where are they hiding? How do I investigate now that they know we're here?*

Choul can't see everything, and he's not all knowing, in spite of his many years of life. Revenge was all he thought about for a long time. He wasn't a soldier nor a commander. Likewise, none of the Fievegal army have very much experience in any military action.

But, it doesn't take a genius tactician to sense something is terribly wrong. Defending against a siege would already be most of the way to lost by the time the wall is penetrated. That they made it this far completely uncontested is either a sign of incompetence, or something worse.

Choul signals to Vahaka and Gultuin, goblin and oni commander respectively, and they jog close to him. "{Gultuin, send ten men to trade off with ten dattakoriens and send them here. Vahaka, send your soldiers to gather as much firewood as they can. It doesn't have to be dry.}"

Gultuin nodded as soon as his orders were said, and he jogs to his group to send several oni out to swap with dattakoriens. Ucahote's voice comes from one of the soldier golems disguised as a goblin. "{General, the search can be completed by golems to minimize risk to our men and women.}"

"{No. Golems have a greater mana signature than dattakoriens and goblins. They can move less noticed than the golems. Plus, the golems have better accuracy and no fear, so they'll be better if the ambush is sprung.}"

Ucahote's proxy golem nods, returning to its ranks. Vahaka, having explained the instructions to a large group of goblins, looks up at Choul. "[We gather firewood, but Vahaka would like to know why.]"

"{We're going to smoke the enemy out without entering the fortresses. It'll take time, but I have no intention of trying to clear floor by floor.}"

"[But… our treasure!]"

"{We're not burning the fortress down. I could do that with my fire breath. We want as much smoke as possible, so keep the goblins gathering firewood. Send some of your troops to retrieve axes. Ucahote, please have golems help with chopping down trees for firewood.}"

"{As you wish,}" replies the golem commander. And, Vahaka nods, reiterating, "[Vahaka and goblins still want treasure. We no burn.]"

"{Trust me, we're not.}"

The goblin commander nods, satisfied, joining his troops to begin gathering firewood and bring it into the courtyard.

The summoned dattakoriens jog up to Choul. "{General, your orders?}"

"{Search the ground level of the fortress in small teams. The size of teams I leave up to you. Use your heightened senses to search for any signs of an ambush. And, I mean any. Stealth is your priority.}"

"{Yes, general.}" While not the commander, the squad leader points out 3 groups without a word, and the dattakoriens split off in those groups to scan the fortress cautiously and quietly. They melt into the darkness using mana suppression techniques, which aren't the same as hiding their mana, but can reduce the glow significantly, and is a specialty of the dattakoriens.

Gultuin approaches again. “{This is strange, General. If it’s a trap, why haven’t they sprung it yet?}”

“{I wish I knew. It’s too late for us to retreat in force. Whatever’s holding them off is unknown, so we need to be ready to withstand the attack so our less sturdy forces can retreat.}”
“{Understood, General. Is there anything we can do?}”

“{Keep searching for mana signatures of soldiers or mages. I don’t think the easterners have developed Daniel’s weapons or traps, but we need to be cautious.}”

The oni commander nods, staying close to Choul as they both diligently watch all around them.

The goblins begin marching in at staggered intervals with armfulls of wood of all qualities and sizes. “{Take it to the ground floor of each structure. Ucahote, please escort them.}”

The goblins nod, starting with the nearest tower to begin piling wood into the ground floor as Ucahote searches the ground floor.

Ucahote’s proxy reports, “{There’s still no signs of life, General.}”

Choul nods, ponderously silent. He doesn’t like it. He was prepared for a fight. With as many troops as have moved through, footprints aren’t especially useful, and there’s enough scent remaining that it’s difficult to tell where anyone is or when they moved about.

Human-kin will sometimes abandon a smaller fortress when it’s known that dragons are going to attack, regrouping together at a larger fortress nearby to

try to retaliate when the dragon continues the advance, overwhelming it with sheer numbers.

However, Fort Twilight is one of the largest human-kin fortresses in the world. It should not only have the manning to make a desperate stand against dragons, but the additional manning of around 80,000 of the 100,000 troops that attacked the Citadel most recently, since they knew the Fievegal was coming.

Another idea begins to creep into Choul's mind. On a continent far across the ocean is a country struggling with a being that makes whole towns vanish without a trace. Choul only heard about it in passing, and there could be many causes. The Devourer was obviously present, but destroyed and consumed everything in its path.

In this case, Choul begins to wonder if the entire fighting population of Fort Twilight vanished or if they actually abandoned the fortress.

As the reports come in from the search, it appears abandoning is the answer, as there are very few supplies or tools remaining, and the siege weapons have been removed.

The dattakoriens return, reporting, "{General, there are no signs of ambush on the ground level. Would you like us to begin searching the upper levels?}"

"{No. We're going to smoke them out. Patrol the ground and find observation points to watch for movement. If you see anything, try to take them out with staff shots, which will alert the rest of us.}"

"{As you wish, General.}"

Once the kindling and firewood are built up in the first tower, Choul approaches and ignites it with his fire breath, using a steady, weak stream to ensure it

ignites. Once smoke begins billowing, he signals for some of the ogres and oni to guard the tower, while the goblins and remaining ogres begin stacking wood in the next tower and the base of the main fortress. With the fortress itself, they'll need to use barriers to keep the smoke concentrated in the structure to begin choking out anyone that may be inside.

Rose and Blue land nearby cautiously in the midst of the group, and Rose approaches Choul cautiously. "{General… What's going on?}"

"{We appear to be in the midst of a trap, though there's no sign of what the trap might be. We're attempting to smoke out anyone that might be within the structures.}"

She nods, watching the growing fire and the billowing smoke filling the first tower. "{We aren't seeing any movement from above, other than our allies. Do you think they're waiting on something specific?}"

"{If they are, I can only speculate that it's someone specific; likely the Harbinger of Calamity.}"

Rose shifts nervously at that. Like the dragon Empresses, she has already produced one egg, which is thanks to the very same person whose name is tattooed on her chest for a magic contract. Like Choul, Rose and Blue can't cause harm to anyone directly, which is why their primary role is support. It's as a result of them joining Morthybargaron's attack on the Citadel, and Daniel coming out victorious.

That said, Daniel very rarely interferes with or asks anything of the lesser dragons or the greater dragons that aren't the Empresses, and the Empresses are the ones that avail themselves to Daniel every chance they get.

“{If they were to attack the Harbinger, this entire fortress would be erased,}” replies Rose seriously.

Choul knows that, while Daniel didn’t include the other dragons outside of the Empresses in his method for killing the Devourer, they witnessed the effects from afar, and are certain that what she just said is the truth.

Whatever weapon Daniel made aside from his rifles and cannons truly is a weapon of Calamity.

The group smokes out each structure for a long time, keeping the fires going with barriers to keep the smoke bottled in for as long as possible. But, no one comes running out.

When Choul finally has them end the fires, it takes hours longer for the structures to clear of smoke. He then sends golems in to search this time, since there’s still likely to be very little air inside. They systematically search room by room, finding nothing of note. The fortress truly does appear to be abandoned, as if the Empire not only took Daniel’s warning seriously, but actually accepted his offer.

The only reason Choul can think of for them to do that is…

“{Everyone! Get the tanks inside! Goblins and Ogre teams, get started on those stone doors. Use the mountain face. Oni and Dattakorien teams, secure the perimeters and watch for threats from either direction.}” He calls through telepathy, “{Uhl’tall and remaining dattakoriens, pull everyone into the fortress. We’re going to have to defend.}”

Everyone confirms, “{As you wish!}” “[As you wish!]” They scramble into action.

Something is amiss, and until he knows what it is, Choul has no intention of sitting on his hands.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 83: The Empty Fortress

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 83: The Empty Fortress

Daniel studies the two lesser dragons in human form going by the names Blue and Rose. They were serving with Choul to conquer Fort Twilight, but they were sent back to report on what was found.

Apparently, not a soul was present at Fort Twilight, the largest of the frontier fortresses separating the east from the west.

Ryuogriar remarks proudly, “It seems clear that the child Sundenelle acknowledges that she’s outmatched.” Geirahoel nods proudly in agreement, while the others remain quiet.

Daniel replies gently, “I don’t think so. Something’s not right. Did Choul immediately prepare to defend?”

“Yes, your Grace,” replies Blue. “He sent us because we can fly the fastest, and he didn’t want to chance telepathy being intercepted. It… would seem, your Grace… he is cautious of unprecedented situations.” Both Blue and Rose look away from Daniel nervously.

“Because of me, hmm?” asks Daniel warmly. They both flinch. He chuckles, “Relax. Thank you for coming to tell us, as well as taking extra precautions.”

Both of them are pleasantly surprised, and they bow respectfully. “You honor us, your Grace. Do you have any message for the General?”

“In a moment. I have a few more questions, if you would.”

“Of course, your Grace.”

“Were there any signs or messages from the Imperial forces?”

“No, your Grace.”

Hekate chimes in, “How about footprints? I assume you searched for footprints.”

Rose nods and answers this time, “Yes, your Greatness. There are footprints leaving the fortress to the east, but of course, given the large army that was driven back, it’s impossible to determine in what numbers the enemy retreated.”

“Obviously all of them, yes?” asks Geirahoel, as if it should be obvious.

Vaergraes is the one to answer her, “That is the concern. The human-kin have abandoned fortresses before, but never Fort Twilight. In fact, I estimated that it would have taken most of the dragons and the bulk of the might of the Covenant’s combined army to overtake the fortress, simply because the Empire views Twilight as too important to lose.”

“And, Morthybargaron sent Mulmonbargarnaed to attack Fort Peony precisely because it was supposedly the least defended,” points out Ryuogriar as she leans affectionately on Daniel’s shoulder. “For a full invasion, Twilight would still need to be defeated, but with the red knight on the eastern side with a strike force, Twilight could be crushed from both sides.”

“And yet, they handed it over without a fight or even a message,” ponders Daniel aloud. “I sense a trap, but as I’m sure Choul expected as well, the trap should have been tripped. So, what are they waiting on?”

Surprised, Blue remarks, “Th-That’s exactly right, your Grace. General Choul had the troops cloistering the fortress in anticipation of attack from both sides; east by the Empire, and West by the Covenant.”

“I hate to believe that the east and west are cooperating in such a manner, but it would make sense. With so many of our troops seen entering the fortress, they may believe that isolating them from us and working together to defeat them through starvation is the only way to cripple our military force.”

“So… what do we do?” asks Hekate cautiously.

“Attempting to establish supply lines for our ‘two hundred thousand’ mouths to feed could provoke the demons into acting, though they’ll expect an attempt to be made. Our actual troops should have enough supplies to last a few weeks with ease, and with the shuttles, we can airdrop supplies in. The main risk in that case becomes whether or not the demons use wyverns, or if the Empire uses another airship.”

“Which they know about our air shuttles, no doubt,” adds Ryuogriar. She and Hekate made heavy use of one during the last battle outside of the Citadel in order to capture General Jothraligus.

Daniel puts his hand to his chin, trying to think. He murmurs, “I wish I knew what they could be thinking… Our people are at risk in both directions. I never thought Sundenelle would give up the fortress so easily.”

Reignleif asks innocently, “Mukori… Do you think *that* could be her goal? This anxiety we’re all focused on not knowing?”

“Absolutely. When someone makes an unpredictable move like this, the worst thing to assume is that we got what we wanted. But, how and when they plan to attack become our concerns.”

“Your Grace, I have a suggestion,” begins Illianna politely.

“Please tell me, Illianna,” replies Daniel respectfully.

She nods. “Illusion magic can buy us time by using golems to look like our supply lines. While that’s happening, I believe we should also track down where the Covenant army has gathered. And, since her Greatness, Hekate, will be remaining in the Citadel for the time being, I would humbly recommend that she donate her vast stores of mana, since they will recover over time.”

“I-I’m still recovering after the sealing spear!” complains Hekate.

“Yes, but your mana pool is far more vast than the rest of us. You don’t have to drain yourself completely, but keep supplying the Citadel as much as you can to offset what we’ve been using.”

“I’ll participate as well,” offers Vaergraes. “This will leave the Dragon Empresses as our primary line of defense, but even without magic, they can be more formidable than most anyone else.”

Illianna continues her suggestion. “The boost of mana to the Citadel should allow us to produce a sizable force to attack the Demon Covenant without impacting our defensive reserves.”

Daniel ponders it, replying only for brainstorming, rather than to outright shoot it down, “A war on two fronts is risky, but Fort Twilight will be in that position if we don’t intercept the Covenant army.”

“Once we know where they are, can’t we have Twilight bolster the new forces for the attack?” asks Geirahoel.

Illianna agrees, “Even half of the golem force sent to Twilight should be enough to hold off a sizable siege from either side, especially if Choul is making the

modifications reported.”

Daniel can’t help but agree. After all, Illianna and Vaergraes have commanded military forces already, and for much longer, while the dragons have been around long enough to see many of the battles. The dragons often view every battle to be won with overwhelming strength, but Daniel doesn’t want them to risk their lives with hubris. Likewise, Vaergraes was able to unify the many clans of the Covenant, which still seems to be operating as a unified force, but she also knows the full capabilities of her various battalions.

Daniel, in contrast, assumes the enemy is superior. He makes this assumption so that he doesn’t lose anyone he cares about, as well as the loyal soldiers and citizens that came to be members of the Fievegal, when they had very little to offer other than a big fortress.

But of course, the golems help with many facets of life, helping restore the villages in almost no time flat, including the farms needed to sustain everyone.

Though, Daniel has been ensuring that the ‘Benevolent Empresses’ are the ones who have directed the golems to aid in reconstruction in the eye of the public, so that the trust lies with Hekate and the three dragon empresses. Daniel prefers to remain in the background if he can.

“Do it, please. Wenlianna and I will do our best to get the communicators working in the next few days. Blue, Rose, return to Choul and inform him of our plan. We'll be staging decoy logistics, as well as preparing to attack the Covenant in the event they attempt to trap the soldiers at Twilight.”

“At once, your Grace!” confirms both dragons, and Hekate adds, “And… f-from me, tell him… good work and good luck.”

They nod, not nearly knowing the full extent of the relationship between everyone and Choul, though he is proving that he's loyal to the cause at the very least.

Daniel looks at Wenlianna, "Let's go. I think I just had an idea."

The former court magic artisan grins. "Right behind you!"

"M-Me too!" adds Geirahoel.

Just as Hekate is about to bound into step with Daniel, Erimaya clears her throat. Hekate pales at the Princess's serious empty smile. "Hekate, I believe you agreed to join me for etiquette lessons."

"I… but…"

"And, you'll need to donate mana with me so Xyreko can begin producing more golems and equipment," adds Vaergraes.

"But… Daniel! Save me!"
"Lessons are good for you, Hekate," replies Daniel, very much not coming to her rescue. "What will you do when you meet other royalty?"

"That's right," teases Ryuogriar. "Daniel might be seduced by their etiquette and poise." The eldest of the three dragon empresses straightens her posture, which emphasizes both her elegant posture, as well as her well-endowed chest.

Hekate grumbles through gritted teeth. "Using Daniel against me… Devious woman…"

"Hekate," starts Erimaya. "Ladies don't make that face and growl. Least of all in front of other women."

The others chuckle, and Hekate storms off, snatching Erimaya's hand and dragging her away.

Meanwhile, Daniel makes his way with the communications device team. They have the basics of a design, which isn't much different than a 1980s brick phone, with a power source and powerful equipment needed to get the signal out.

But of course, this specific design is using various rune-magic, thanks to Reignleif, various conversion mechanisms thanks to Wenlianna, and Geirahoel does her best to learn both art forms alongside Daniel, who is mainly working through the idea to make it functional by connecting the two various types of magic. Mainly, Geirahoel watches him closely, mimicking his movements as he solders the carefully formed wires to the rune-magic's painted on connection on the inside of the box. He's using a heat crystal with a metal cap to generate the heat, though he could also have made a proper electric soldering iron with a lightning crystal. But, because the others are extremely leary of lightning crystals -for good reason-, he sticks to the less dangerous option where possible. Thankfully, the heat crystals can be made small, and they still deliver a lot of heat, especially when using diamond instead of salt.

Daniel says gently, "No rush, Geirahoel. If you need me to slow down, I'll slow down."

"I-I got it!" whines the youthful dragon. "This strange metal is just frustrating."

Daniel chuckles. "Yeah, you have to let the iron heat up the other metal for the solder to stick."

Wenlianna, watching them solder the components together, asks, "How… did you come to discover this metal?"

“I didn’t. It’s a fairly simple mix of lead and tin. Oh, and lead is poisonous. Make sure you wash your hands after handling it. And, don’t breathe in the smoke.”

Geirahoel recoils a little, watching the small string of smoke rising. “It’s not immediately deadly, it just isn’t good for you.”

She nods, resuming her work, and Daniel waits for her to catch up before starting the next step.

“Daniel?” a new voice separate from the four present in the lab speaks up, and Daniel looks to his side, and then down. Shek and Skloe are half the height of a human, so seated on the raised lab chairs, he has to look down to see Shek.

It’s just Shek this time, and the princesses are likely with Skloe while Shek came to speak to Daniel.

“Shek? What can I do for you?” Daniel hops off of the chair and kneels down to her level so that neither of them are craning their necks.

Shek fidgets, saying softly, “Shek… I… I am not… wise like others. But, Sh-… I think… I have idea, too.”

“An idea?” asks Daniel. He doesn’t rush her, since she’s making a concerted effort to learn proper grammar for the Eastern Imperial Trade language, since the translation spell can only convert words, not grammar and sentence structure. Daniel has picked up words in the various languages of the Fievegal, but because it’s much less crucial for him to learn than the trade language was in the beginning, it’ll definitely be a long time for him to learn them well enough to hold conversations.

“I… suggest Daniel…” “‘You’,” whispers Daniel gently.

“I suggest you…” restarts the goblin queen, watching his expression and brightening when he smiles and nods. “…have goblins dig… burrow.”

“A burrow? Are the other goblins unhappy with the housing in town? Or… do you need somewhere to store things?”

Shek shakes her head, fidgeting with her hands. She’s usually happy and excited to talk to Daniel, but she gets nervous when making requests. “Goblins happy with housing. That is truth. Shek-… I just thinking, burrow would make… safe travel from enemies.”

Daniel ponders her words for a moment. He perks up. “Ohhh! You mean a tunnel connecting us to…”

Her eyes brighten, and Daniel tests his first thought; the first thing Shek might think about beyond the Citadel. “The towns?”

“No… I-I mean, yes, too, but… I want help with battle.”

“The fort?” asks Reignleif, having listened to the conversation.

Shek perks up, looking at Reignleif with a big nod. “Yes! Burr- Tunnel to fort Choul go to.” She blushes and looks up at Daniel from below her brows. “Daniel-You worry about safe travel. G-Goblins good at burrow. Burrow have defense, too.”

Daniel smiles. “That’s actually an incredibly good idea, Shek. But, it’s a long dig. Do you think they’d be able to tunnel so far?”

Shek proudly puffs her modest chest out, “Yes! Goblins born in burrow! Goblins happy to dig.” She looks aside, fidgeting. “O-Only stop when rocks or no food.”

“So, as long as we keep supplies up with the tunnelers,” starts Wenlianna. “They could dig continuously.”

“We’d need some way to track progress from above so that we can make sure they’re going the right direction.” Daniel grins as he thinks out loud. “Which, there are two things we can do to make sure the least amount of waste goes into the project.”

“What’s that?” asks Geirahoel. “Magic?”

“Nope. Magnetism.” He makes a point of looking at Wenlianna, asking playfully, “How do you feel about making more compasses?”

She gets it, quickly saying, “That’s genius!”

“How does it work?” asks Reignleif curiously. “Will you really be able to guide a tunnel underground?”

“I think it should prove quite easy,” replies Daniel.

“Yes! A compass always points in the same direction because the whole world is a big magnet, so the tunnellers should have no trouble whatsoever!”

“Actually,” starts Daniel, halting Wenlianna’s confidence. “A compass alone is too imprecise for them not to waste time and effort drifting one way or the other. We’ll use a high power cable in a long coil to create a guiding line to follow. Oh! And surveyor scopes. Nothing fancy, but good enough to keep the tunnel in line.”

The others stare at him, and he chuckles. “Sorry. The tools will be fairly simple. Let’s just say it’s magic from Earth.”

This causes them to chuckle with a hint of exasperation. Daniel gently taps the underside of Shek's chin. "Thank you for the great idea, Shek. If you would, rally the goblins and anyone else willing to dig. The more, the merrier."

"You-You marry all?" asks Shek innocently, having understood the wrong homophone for 'merry'.

Daniel chuckles playfully, "No. Merry, as in happy. Not marry, as in husband and wife. It's a… fun phrase from Earth. Nothing more."

Her eyes widen and she blushes, nodding. "Shek… I understand. I get goblins to dig."

"Thanks. Once we're done with the communicator, I'll work on making the magnet." He looks at Geirahoel. "If I give you designs, do you think you'd be willing to make something for me, Mukori?"

Geirahoel blushes. "M-Me? N-Not… Wenlianna?"

"The surveyor scope won't require magic, and you might have to experiment to get it to work right. I want it to have a compass alignment in the scope's field of view. I'll draw it as best as I can, but…"

"I'll do it!" exclaims the dragon. "Th-that much will be easy for me."
"I have confidence you'll find a way, and that'll leave me free to work on the magnet at the same time. If you have questions, you can always ask me, Wenlianna, or Xyreko."

Geirahoel nods, pleased to be included. "Shek, we won't be able to start right away, but if you can find some willing teams, we'll definitely begin the tunnels, first to the nearest villages, and then to Fort Twilight. And, don't exclude any of the other people. Even if goblins are our best diggers, you'll need bodies to

help extract the dirt and rocks, build support structure, and run supplies. And, we'll obviously be paying for all of the jobs."

Shek nods eagerly. For now, payments have mainly been in the form of luxurious food and drinks, including wine as well as the varying stages of rum Daniel has been developing to mirror the one he favored from Earth. Most of the demon-kin are aware of alcohol, but because it goes into potations and has a powerful smell that tends to burn the sensitive noses of races like the dragons and dattakoriens, they hadn't developed alcohol to any meaningful extent for recreational drinking.

Daniel, on the other hand, hadn't liked any alcohol for similar reason; until he found ones that didn't have just a plain burn of alcohol, but actually had a smoother profile and good flavor. Even the dattakoriens like some of the wines he has successfully been able to ferment, since their alcohol content has been mellowed out.

"Shek get many helpers!" replies Shek excitedly, forgetting all about her practice speaking properly. She trots off, impeded only a little by her bulging belly, but having gotten distinctly stronger thanks to her endless state of pregnancy.

After Shek leaves, Wenlianna sighs. "Lucky…"

"What?" asks Daniel innocently.

She scowls at him, glancing briefly at Reignleif and Geirahoel. She growls, "I think you know, Daniel."

He sighs. "I genuinely don't."

“Hmph!” Wenlianna resumes preparing mana crystals for the communication devices, while Reignleif continues creating and painting the magic runes onto the special river-stones, which then have to be enchanted with magic. Daniel knows that the runestones serve as a sort of storage device, as well as spell holders, which are what will serve to transmit the voices. There has to be a pair in each device; a transmitter and receiver, just like a radio. If Daniel was more familiar with transistors, capacitors, and inductors, he might be able to make a regular two-way radio. But, lacking the technology and blueprints, he has to make do with magic.

Daniel finally replies to Wenlianna’s huff, “If you want to be in charge of a team, you’re welcome to anyone who is willing to work with you, Wenlianna.”

She looks at him with an expression that surprises him a little. She’s looking at him as one might gaze upon an actual cockroach asking to urinate on one’s leg.

Geirahoel finally laughs, and Reignleif does everything she can to stifle a chuckle.

Daniel sighs, and at once, he knows what Wenlianna was talking about.

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Choul studies everything brought forward by the soldiers scouring the fortress for any clues as to what occurred. There don’t appear to be any correspondences that were forgotten, no trap spells, and no mechanical traps. Rose and Blue have already returned and reported Daniel’s instructions, which are certainly in line with what Choul would have recommended and had already begun preparing.

He instructs Rose and blue to circle in the skies, mindful of this supposed airship Daniel mentioned, which Wenlianna was actually the pioneer of.

However, the wreckage was abandoned, and there are undoubtedly people that could piece together what's needed from having operated it, even if it won't be as refined as Wenlianna's model. It's unlikely the airship could compete with the much more agile shuttles Daniel produced using the Citadel, but one airship alone was able to knock Reignleif out of the sky and endanger her, Hekate, and Daniel.

After a couple of hours, Rose and Blue return, landing in their dragon forms and bowing to Choul, even though he's still in his human form. His horns are still little more than stubbles of their once-magnificent shape, but he's easily identifiable, thanks to his dark grey hair, metallic grey tail, and the standout sharmellkolle armor he wears, similar to what Daniel wears, but with fewer plates for mobility. As long as he remains conscious, Choul can cast enough magic on himself to survive. It was part of his plan to defeat Morthybargaron through atrition if need be.

"General," starts Rose. "We've found signs of the human-kin troops. They have split into three forces, one about two days east near a large town, one to the north seemingly near the large fort on the east side of the mountains, and the third to the south, approaching a similar fort."

Choul nods as he watches Rose draw what they saw in the dirt with one of her large talons. "The north fort is Castle Northwall, if I'm not mistaken. It's where Emperor Daniel's comrades retreated to in order to regroup and intercept the Red Knight, while Daniel remained at Fort Peony." He crouches and points at the drawing showing the mountains in simplified form, where Fort Peony is roughly located, directly west of Castle Northwall. "The fort in the south must be a similar interception position if the southern pass through fort is conquered or encroached by an overwhelming force."

"Do you think they intend to flank us here?" asks Blue.

Choul nods as he studies the simple map. “That’s definitely a possibility. Though, they’ve lost a lot of time by not having mobilized their forces west of the mountains already. We’re probably looking at two weeks or more before they can coordinate a siege. It all still seems so… incompetent.”

“They are humans…” remarks Rose quietly. She flinches when Choul looks at her, looking down. “I-… His Grace…”

“Is a bit of an anomaly, I know.” Rose nods quickly in agreement, while Choul continues. “But, humans are generally weak, not merely incompetent. At least, their commanders are competent. All things considered, retreating to a stronger defensible position when you know what enemy you are facing isn’t an unreasonable strategy, even if they have to sacrifice ground to do it. But, there’s a reason we dragons never attacked Fort Twilight directly as well. You know why?”

Both Rose and Blue shake their heads.

“Numbers. In great enough numbers, even human kin can best a dragon. Fort Twilight can house the kinds of numbers that could take out five or six dragons with ease. They might lose a hundred thousand men in the process, but five or six dragons would be devastating. Even losing one is catastrophic. Hopefully, the Imperial Princes and Princesses will be blessed with the war being over by the time they’re old enough to recognize what’s going on.”

Rose and Blue are both silent for a moment. They glance around briefly, and Choul asks, “What is it?”

“General… I… May I speak freely?” asks Blue.

Choul nods. “Of course.”

“Do… you never… worry about the Emperor… and the Empresses?”

“Do you mean all four, or just the dragons?”

“O-Our lady dragons, General.”

“I see…” Choul crosses his arms as he stands up from his crouching position. “His Grace spoke to me about that very matter. He has no interest in claiming the entire harem, if that’s what you’re worried about. Empresses Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel chose Daniel of their own volition, I suspect in no small part because he trusts them more than the former lord ever did. He seeks their counsel regularly, and he trusts their judgment. He has fun speaking to them, but is never cruel or disrespectful.” Choul’s voice suddenly drops to a gentle softness as he adds a little reverently, “He loves them… Something they never experienced either.”

The two lesser dragons remain respectfully quiet for a moment. Blue finally asks, “Then… the children?”

“The first three born will be pure greater dragons, from what I have been told. They are not Daniel’s offspring. That said, I have less and less doubt about him every day that passes. Though his children will be half, they will still carry on our legacy, and certainly be free to make their own choices.”

“Do you think…?” starts Rose, before she cuts herself off.

“Speak your concerns, Rose. Trust is born of open communication.”

She looks down, somewhat slinking to the ground with her large form. She asks softly and cautiously, “Do you think… our children… would be allowed to… even… be considered dragons?”

Choul understands where she's coming from. Lesser dragons are often a convenience at best, and considered a blight at worst. Even if Morthybargaron had produced children with one, it would always be considered less than the weakest pure greater dragon.

That said, Choul is confident of one thing. "Daniel isn't like the former lord. I daresay, he's unlike most people of this world. He might simply neglect to say it, but I am confident that he is hoping your children will get along with his as friends, allies, and maybe even lovers if and when the time comes." Choul smiles genuinely as he pictures it. A future is what Daniel wants more than anything; a future for all of the people he cares about, and the people that call his territory home.

That includes the frailest of goblins to the mightiest of dragons, and everyone in between. Even a grey dragon who dedicated his life to revenge and had nothing else, save a desire to do something good to restore the legacy of those who raised him.

"You really think Daniel will let our children intermingle?" asks Blue, surprised.

"Yes. Without a doubt. In fact, I'm confident that he'll want them to socialize and learn what his world seems to teach freely; it's individual traits that truly define us, not how we're born."
The two lesser dragons are deep in thought, but all three are interrupted when one of the dattakoriens calls out, "{General! Riders at the east gate!}"

This catches Choul off guard, though he suspects it's the first sign of smoke in the fire that will be the trap. He jogs to the east gate, and Blue and Rose take cover out of sight. It's costly on their limited mana pools to transform, so for now, they're staying in their dragon form, which will grant them much more presence, durability, and power than their human forms, where greater dragons

like Choul can make use of his massive mana pool to match and even exceed his true form's power in his much smaller human form.

At the gate, there is a small squad of soldiers on buckrokhs bearing a crisp white flag, as well as a flag showing two opposing hands clasped in a handshake. While the demon-kin aren't highly learned on eastern customs, it's fairly apparent that this is supposed to be some form of parlay, at least from what Choul can tell. He should have brought one of the easterners with him, either Gwenesphia or Treia, to verify any sort of tactics such as this are legitimate.

Choul calls out, "Declare yourself or turn back. Fort Twilight is now sovereign territory of the Fievegal."

"We are the envoy from the Illustrious Army of the Grand Zenkon Empire, on behalf of Lord General, his Majesty, King Vubencleff. We come under the banners of Parlay to bring a message from our Commanding Officer, leader of the First Order Knight's Corps."

"Speak your message," replies Choul. "I'll not willingly invite spies behind my lines."

This catches the leading officer off guard. He glances at his comrades, before clearing his throat. The buckrokh shifts its weight, but is relatively steady and well-tempered for now. "The matter to be discussed is best spoken in private, sir, lest rumors cause turmoil throughout your ranks. It is a safety precaution for both sides."

"Don't presume to instruct me on how to lead my men," retorts Choul bluntly. He can't murder people physically, anymore, but he can murder them with

words. “I have more honor and decency at my back than your entire alliance combined.”

Surprisingly, unlike General Jothraligus, from what Choul heard, this officer remains calm and composed, even under insult. Though, a couple of his subordinates seem perturbed on his behalf. Regardless, the officer speaks again. “Very well. Then, might I request accommodations for the night, as is customary to be afforded messenger envoys? If you are so decent and honorable, of course. I assure you, there is unlikely to be anything of particular surprise to us, as this Fort and its design belong to the Grand Empire of Zenkon.”

Choul ponders it visibly, leaning on the ramparts to make a show of him simply wasting time. He knows he’s in a general masculinity measuring contest, and whoever loses their temper first loses. Choul doesn’t much care about image, so much as results. However, he is curious to see what the message is, and it seems the messenger is set on not giving it until he is allowed inside.

“Very well,” replies Choul. “On three conditions. First, you will be blindfolded before being brought to your accommodations and upon exiting tomorrow morning. Second, you and your men will remain confined to your quarters for the duration of your stay. And third, if you speak in a dishonorable or disrespectful manner, you will answer to it as individuals, not hide behind your status as messenger. I am more than happy to send my own messengers in reply to your Lord General.”

The officers discuss it briefly at a low volume, but it’s very likely they’re aware the dattakoriens can hear most if not all of the conversation.

After a brief moment of discussion, the leader replies, “Very well. So long as we have your word no harm will come to us either, we shall abide by your

terms.”

“Very well,” replies Choul. He telepathically gives some last minute instructions to everyone he can, having them spread the word quickly. He instructs, “You will wait here while we prepare your accommodations and the blindfolds.” Choul then retreats from the ramparts, pondering as far ahead as he can. Most likely, the envoy will try to gauge what kind of force was brought to Twilight and respond appropriately.

But, because it has been a strange and abnormal sequence of events, he has to wonder who made the call, and what’s going through that person’s mind.

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~Author's Note: Dear readers, I had an epiphany recently thanks to a review I received and an anime recently that I was surprised is categorized as a 'romance'. It has slavery and bdsm themes, so I found this surprising, and also, I wanted to ask if you feel it would be reasonable for me to tag my story as a romance? I would greatly appreciate your comments!

Thank you! I hope you continue to enjoy!

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 84: Empire’s Plan A and Kingdom’s Plan B

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 84: Empire's Plan A and Kingdom's Plan B

Sundenelle studies the tactical map in the war room of the Imperial castle squarely in the capital of the Empire. Many things have happened since Mornistae summoned divine heroes from another world. It was long believed to have been a forgotten art, or even simply a fantastical myth. That it was accomplished is something almost miraculous. The gods can be fickle, so the the stories go, and this means it's difficult to simply pray or even cast spells and expect them to answer favorably.

In this case, there was some reason the gods decided to answer by sending not one, but two divine heroes. By all appearances, one of them has gone rogue, siding with a splinter group of demon-kin to found his own territory. It's understandable, to a degree, but Daniel has made himself an adversary to the Grand Zenkon Empire.

But, Sundenelle likely has him right where she wants him. She ordered a full retreat from Fort Twilight, allowing the demon-kin calling themselves 'the Fievegal' to capture the fortress. It's a calculated move, though one her inner court is split on.

If Sundenelle learned anything about Daniel over the course of several failed attacks on the Citadel, it's that he can't be simply treated like a simple adversary from the world of Zenkon. After all, he's most certainly not. She'd likely run into the same problems if Rikuto became an enemy as well. They both have wisdom and tactics not present on Zenkon, as well as a pool of

technology within their memories that far surpasses the basics of what is available to any of the kingdoms within the alliance.

Daniel made a few specific demands in his letter, and by now, he's doing his best to try to figure out what Sundenelle's own angle is. She knows no one in their right mind would abandon a fortress the size of Fort Twilight without a fight, especially because the mountains are basically the last line of defense capable of actually slowing down the demon-kin from invading the east in force.

He'll be forced to prepare for attack, wasting time and resources, and he'll be more open to surrendering to Sundenelle when she makes her counter-offer.

Dragons or not, if she can starve them out or force them to ask for relief, they'll be at her mercy.

She smirks at the tactical map, showing the estimated positions of the three separate corps of the Imperial Allied Army.

Byleathea approaches the table behind Sundenelle, asking gently, "Are you certain your adversary will take the bait, your Grace?"

"I can't be absolute, but I have done everything I can to force him to make the next move. If he attempts to invade, we're in position to flank his forces. If he decides to simply hold Fort Twilight, we can circle around and cut off his supply lines. And, if he abandons Fort Twilight, we only need to reclaim it before the demons. Without the dragons aiding them, our odds are considerably more reasonable."

"I don't like it… The dragons usually don't partake in battles, but when they do, it can be devastating."

Sundenelle looks at her mother, relaxing her expression. She's not wrong, and she's only worried about Sundenelle making a critical mistake. Daniel may be the one on everyone's minds at the moment, but the demon army is still very much a threat, and they are unlikely to be idle. Even now, our spies and reconnaissance teams have reported gathering demon forces in the north. It's highly probable they will attack Fort Peony."

"The furthest from the Empire…"

"The alliance stands strong, Mother. We will not falter on our share of the alliance's duty."

"I admire your honorable stance, my beloved daughter, but if I may, I am less worried about our enemies at our front."

Sundenelle is quiet. Byleathea is completely correct. No organization is without traitors and spies in its midst, and by choosing the furthest fortress from the centralized command, those traitors and spies buy themselves time for whatever their schemes are.

Of course, Sundenelle is hoping she can bypass that problem altogether with her current machinations. Daniel is the key player; her real enemy. If his technology falls into the hands of the demons, it's over.

And, given that his primary companion is the demon-kin Hekate, an unknown fox-like girl whose race is all but unknown, it's difficult to explicitly determine whether or not they're a threat.

Until she knows, Sundenelle will do what she's always done.

Stack the deck in her favor.

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Choul meets with the messengers from the Empire in the special secluded room they prepared for the messengers after providing them food and drink.

“Good afternoon. I am General Choul of the Fievegal Imperial Army. Welcome to Fievegal territory.”

The leading officer of the messengers bows. “Greetings. Please allow me to speak on behalf of my retinue. I am Commander Jiinlara kos Lorlollan of the Imperial Army First Order Knight Corps. The pleasure is mine, General.”

“Thank you. Now then, please share the message that has brought you to Fort Twilight.”

“As you wish, General.” Jiinlara withdraws the message scroll from his messenger bag, handing it over to Choul.

Choul casts a simple analysis spell on the scroll to detect magic traps. He learned to do this after he witnessed a trapped spell scroll that killed the recipient’s attendant by incineration. Various spells can be bound to scrolls, and Choul learned that day, of all days, to verify that a scroll is safe.

Satisfied that it’s a simple message scroll, Choul opens it. This seems to surprise the officers. After all, it would seem at a glance that he didn’t even bother to check, since his spell was so instantaneous and unseen.

The message is rather brazen in a sense, though Choul takes it seriously.

“[*Dear Daniel kos Lawson,*

I mean no immediate disrespect, but I must insist that I can only acknowledge a recognized sovereign as a titled ruler. You must admit, the rise of the alleged Fievegal is sudden and without proper precedent.

I am not an unreasonable ruler, however. I will indulge you your conquest of Fort Twilight, if only to acknowledge the fault of the ill-conceived attacks on the stronghold known as the Citadel.

If you are truly a separate sovereign from the polity known as the Demon Covenant, I would be willing to invite you to the Imperial Court to plead your case for independence, and in due respect of your abilities, consider your eligibility as a vassal state to the Grand Zenkon Empire.

It is with sincere respect that I write to you, Daniel kos Lawson, as well as your wife, Hekate fell Lawson. I invite you both to the Imperial Court, where you will be treated with dignity and respect, but of those of honored guests until the validity of your claims can be confirmed.

Please understand, I cannot grant sovereignty to just any who declare themselves rulers.

I look forward to meeting you, Daniel kos Lawson of the otherworld.

Very respectfully,

The Enlightened Imperial Empress,

Sundenelle kos Lindenmorg,

Ruler of the Grand Zenkon Empire

Commander in Chief of the Eastern Alliance

Saintess of the Southern Divine Order

Lady of the house of Lindenmorg]”

Choul studies the letter for a moment. Sundenelle is very clearly provoking Daniel and Hekate.

Fortunately, Daniel's plan has only entered the first stages. He has every intention of carrying out further mischief in regards to the Empress, and her refusal to acknowledge the Fievegal even after his threat is well within his expectations. In fact, he would have been more surprised if she simply accepted.

"I see. The Empress invites my Liege to meet in the Imperial Palace for an audience."

"That is correct, General. The path to peace is to acknowledge one's place."

Interesting coming from the losing side before the dragons sided with Daniel.

Choul keeps his thought to himself, of course.

"The Empress has disregarded my Liege Lord's offer. I will have to inform him of this outcome."

"With all respect, General; not disregarded, but rather, made a counter offer. Business negotiations and political negotiations are the same in at least one respect; not least of which is leverage."

Choul smiles cryptically. Daniel is trying to win his war without bloodshed where possible, but he has the full might of the dragons, a feldrok exceeding the known magical prowess of the strongest feldroks of the world, the former Demon Queen herself, and various other powerful allies. It is unwise to provoke him. Even if Daniel will be sluggish about the way he retaliates, he will retaliate. He will bring justice to all who oppose him.

Choul knows the answer already, so he doesn't actually have to speak to Daniel, but he also can't give in too easily, lest they be suspicious.

"Very well. I shall relay this message to my Liege, Emperor Daniel. However, I am certain it goes without saying; what assurances will the Empress allow to ensure the safety of my liege lord?"

"Her Enlightened Highness the Empress is fully aware of Daniel's demon staves. To invite him to the Imperial Palace, she is taking the greater risk."

"As you can guess, my Liege will not agree to arrive defenseless."

"No, one would think not. Her Imperial Majesty intends to employ countermeasures to ensure safety of the Imperial Court. This is all we know."
You are reading on novelping.com, the official source.

Choul nods, thinking. Most likely, these countermeasures will be everything the Empire can employ; every powerful mage possible to try to counteract Hekate and Vaergraes, specifically.

"Oh, I must warn you," adds Choul. "The Empress should obviously be prepared to meet with Emperor Daniel as well as Empress Hekate and the Dragon Empresses."

This causes a brief moment of consternation to cross Jiinlara's face. The name alone should mean everything necessary to anyone listening; the Dragon Empresses are exactly what they sound like.

Choul adds, "More like, they will not be stopped from accompanying his Grace. The Empresses are… willful."

Jiinlara bows. "Understood. We will prepare to receive Daniel's… wives with dignity."

“Please do. They are most agreeable, but fiercely protective of their loved ones.”

“If you may permit me to ask a potentially disrespectful question, General. This one is for curiosity, more than anything.”

“Ask your question,” replies Choul cordially.

“The Dragon Empresses… are they?”

“Dragons which my Liege Lord defeated himself? Yes.”

This surprises all of the officers. “General… You mean to say Daniel… conquered them?”

Choul smirks. “In a sense. I would ask you to observe them if you are afforded the chance and decide for yourself. Yesterday’s enemies can be tomorrow’s friends.” Choul bows. “Excuse me. I will send a message to my Liege. If you wish not to be confined to this tower, then I will have you brought back outside until we receive a response. Otherwise, you may rest and relax until we have received a reply. I expect it’ll take no more than a few days.”

“We’ll take you up on your hospitality, General. Thank you.”

Choul nods and bows respectfully, leaving the room. He heads to the main fortress, where the commanders are gathered with Rose and Blue in their human forms. Rose and Blue bow as Choul enters, while the others quiet down.

They all greet him, “General.”

“Thank you. Please relax. We’ll need to deliver a message to his Grace Daniel with Sundenelle’s reply. After that, it’ll be up to his Grace to determine what to

do next. Though, I have a pretty good idea what it'll be."

"Leave it to us," replies Blue. "We'll deliver it within the hour."

Choul nods. "I know, but no need to press yourselves. As long as Daniel knows by the end of the day, we won't be revealing how fast we can pass messages between here and the Citadel, so either way, our guests will be waiting."

"Aren't you worried about them leaving their confined quarters and spying?" asks Rose.

"We have very little intel of note, other than the tanks, which are currently hidden in the lean-to, and the only real modifications we've made to the fortress are the stone gates. Daniel and the Empresses are discussing whether or not we should stage artillery here, since we don't know if we can hold it without unacceptable casualties if we make it even more appetizing as a target than it already is. Even if Sundenelle has sent a direct message, there's no telling what orders she gave her army, so we must remain diligent."

The commanders nod, and Rose smiles. "Forgive me if I'm overstepping, General, but… I feel like… we are more of a team than we ever were under… the Red Lord."

"We are," replies Choul. "What has been accomplished in this little time is proof that everyone has a role to play, and the most efficient work is when we play it." He gestures at the other commanders, each representing the various races present. "If Daniel's plan to tackle the Covenant is successful, we'll be able to expand our military and villages. And, with more citizens comes more power for the Citadel, which means more golems."

"I wish the other dragons would help us…" murmurs the rose-pink dragon.

“Daniel intends to keep his promise. He won’t force anyone to do anything if he can help it.”

“Aren’t they just taking advantage of him, then?”

“Yes, but they’re also increasing the population of dragons. In the next year, our numbers will more than double with just the eggs laid so far. I understand your own has started making noises.”

Both Blue and Rose blush as they glance sheepishly at each other. In order to serve, they asked Daniel what should be done, and he immediately asked the three Empresses to look after it, which they happily agreed. Daniel had the foresight to mark the egg with a special fabric ‘harness’ that won’t come off easily. And, since the Empresses are all higher dragons, they would never intentionally switch eggs with Rose and Blue’s. Rather, it’s more surprising that the Empresses were so willing to oblige caring for their egg, being lesser dragons as they are.

It seems the dragon leadership really has changed under Daniel and without the oppressive pressure of the Red Lord, his brother the Red Knight, and the Green Sage. The only male dragons remaining are either lesser dragons bound by contract to Daniel, or Choul, who is also bound by contract.

Of course, the Empresses are proof that, under the right circumstances, Daniel will remove the contracts if he comes to trust the dragons. And, the fastest way to do that was to give oneself over to Daniel, mind, heart, and soul, as evidenced by the Empresses, who genuinely do seem to care about him.

And, as if reading Rose’s thoughts, Choul mentions out of the blue, “Of course, I am interested in seeing what Daniel has planned for his years of service

rewards. According to him, the military he briefly served in on Earth had such systems."

All of the commanders and the two lesser dragons take particular note of this. "R-Rewards?" asks Blue.

Choul nods. "I won't make promises for our Imperial Ruler, but I wouldn't be surprised if land ownership or contract removal were to become specific benefits to serving long enough."

This causes sparkles in the eyes of various members of the meeting, and Rose squeaks, "R-Really?"

Choul is leaving it vague, but in fact, Daniel has expressed that both of those are specific options he's considering, but first, he needs to conquer some land. As for the contracts, he didn't mention it to anyone prior because he didn't want anyone to join, get the contract removed, and then betray him all by putting on a show. Since they've been respectful without that knowledge, Choul figures it's okay to let these two know about it. They volunteered to serve mainly to earn prestige for lesser dragons in hopes that the greater dragons will see them closer to equals. In the Empresses' cases, they may still have their prejudices, but they seem to sincerely take an active interest in Daniel's stance on everything; individual merit stands above all, and equal rights are equal rights. Thus, they didn't hesitate or balk at the idea of caring for Rose and Blue's egg, and Choul knows that they are indeed caring for it properly, carrying it around in shifts with their own eggs, since it's widely believed that interaction can benefit the embryos, rather than just leaving them in an incubator for the whole length of gestation.

"As I said," starts Choul in reply after his ponderings. "I can't make promises on Daniel's behalf, but I suspect that those are among the higher rewards he'll

choose to give. If not, he'll at least hear out wishes, I'm sure, and make true those he can."

The group nods together. Rose says enthusiastically, "What else can we do to win faster, General!? I'm ready! Give me commands!"

Choul chuckles. He hands the message to her, saying warmly, "For starters, get this to Daniel. Fly high and safe, rather than low and fast. I want you to avoid all hazards. Even if Sundenelle's message is sincere, we still don't know where the archoneldwyn came from, how many there are, and what they might be plotting. High and safe."

She nods. "As you wish, General!" She stands proud, asking, "Permission to depart?"

"Granted. Inform Daniel additionally that our situation is stable, and that we'll delay the reply to preserve our secrecy as much as possible."

"Will do! Come, Blue. Let us depart with haste. As she bounds to the door, she halts. "G-General…?"
"Yes?" asks Choul.

"W-… Were I to ask his Grace… Would he take it as disrespectful if I were to ask for more work?"

Choul smiles. "Respect is most often given in tone and wording. Daniel doesn't easily take offense to requests. Feel free to ask him whatever you want, and if he doesn't like the question or request, he'll let you know not to ask about it."

She bows. "Thank you, General. I'll do that." With that, she and Blue depart, headed for the Citadel once more with important information that they don't want being intercepted via telepathy, if such is possible.

“Now then, where are we on shoring up defenses?”

Vahaka, the goblin commander, proudly puffs his chest. “[Goblins clear out debris. Tanks hidden good. Secret escape tunnels in progress.]”

“{We’ve marked out ambush points along both main paths out of the fortress, General,}” adds Myralkan, the Dattakorien commander. He scratches his cheek as he studies the tactical map. “{The dense foliage on both sides makes it difficult to detect incoming scouts, though.}”

“{We could raze the forest and open up the clear areas, General,}” suggests Sarm. Commanding the ogres, they specialize more in open warfare, as opposed to the smaller races like the dattakoriens and goblins, who specialize in stealth and ambushes.

Choul nods. It’s a good thought, and very easy for a dragon. Of course, to simply burn down a bunch of trees is to wipe out a useable resource and reduce it to a much less useful material. “{There are merits to the plan, but I think it’s more valuable to cut the trees down and bring the lumber in. Do we have the tools to do so?}”

The oni commander nods. “{I believe so, General. Though, we’ll need more hands to make efficient progress.}”

“{Of course. Then, let’s begin forest clearing. Myralkan, prioritize safety, but focus scouting efforts around the forest clearing east, first. Rolokahr, have the Uhl’tall man both walls with whatever means they need to be able to do ranged siege attacks. Ucahote, please have the tanks ready to run at a moment’s notice and intercept incoming forces.}”

Those addressed confirm their orders, “{As you wish, General!}”

“{Very good. If anything abnormal comes up, inform me. I’ll be keeping watch from the central tower of the main fortress. I’ll be able to hear you.}”

They all bow, and Choul makes his way to the top of the fortress. It’s a quiet afternoon as nature carries on, mostly ignoring the soldiers of the Fievegal carrying out their assigned tasks.

But, the grey dragon doesn’t lower his guard. He’s no longer a solo revenge-seeker. He is a leader in a fledgeling military, and though he is powerful himself, his real duty is to his soldiers.

And, nature has an uncanny ability to reveal something out of place, just as much as it has the ability to conceal something out of place.

He can not let his guard down for the sake of all of his soldiers and the leadership he cares about. Visit novelping.com for the full chapter.

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Daniel studies an old tome in the library of the Citadel. It’s after dark, and his only company at present is Xyreko. Naturally, the library is well-lit, and she is seated next to him as he reads the book she picked out for him.

Everyone else is -or should be- sleeping currently, and the communicators just need to be assembled, which they’ll do in the morning. Additionally, Geirahoel was able to break down the assembly design of the surveyor scope to components that can be made with the MDM teams, and she has one of the newest machines making parts, which there are four shifts to fill the day, allowing them to continue producing all day and all night. The lenses are the trickiest part, but she insisted that she can take care of it, and he hasn’t seen her as much since.

During his break, though, Daniel has been researching something important. Xyreko has a pretty-well encyclopedic knowledge of everything that has ever been told to her, but like a human memory, it can be difficult for her to pull up specific data, and in this case, she was only able to steer Daniel to a book.

The book speaks about a time during the height of the feldroks. It seems to be almost a journal entry, rather than a scholarly entry, but much of the personalization is lost in the translation, which Xyreko is projecting next to each page for Daniel to read.

He’s currently researching everything he can about Nemaisol, the strange sword that sometimes seems to have a mind of its own, and always seems to repel magic when drawn, including that of the wielder.

But, what always sticks in the forefront of Daniel’s mind is that even Xyreko can’t identify the element of the sword that causes the phenomenon. Especially because Nemaisol does seem to be stronger at times, capable of easily cleaving metal even in Daniel’s rather amateur hands.

Xyreko is a soulbound dattakorien woman who opted to become caretaker of the Citadel, along with others. This kept her from passing on and affords her many abilities she did not have in life.

Daniel is not the most optimistic person in the world, but he is always thinking. Part of what's needed to troubleshoot and repair equipment is the ability to break something down into its functions and identify the root of a problem, or what’s missing from the function.

And, he often begins thinking along the same lines about everything. He’d probably never be able to solve some grand mystery or escape from those

trick rooms that rose in popularity on Earth. But, he considers possibilities - which can sometimes make him unduly paranoid-.

In this case, though, he can't help but consider the possibility that the thing that makes Nemaisol peculiar is the same thing that grants Xyreko her continued existence.

There's a soul bound to the sword.

And, on the page he's reading, he finds the entry, "[*The sword was discovered in an old temple preceding even the eldest of our village. However, when it was picked up, the one who touched it seemed to hear something no one else could, and he seemingly chose the name of the sword; Nemaisol.*

Regardless, no feldrok was ever capable of drawing the sword from its scabbard, nor any other race. Surprisingly, an Uhl'tall elder seemed especially intrigued by the name of the sword, mentioning a fairytale she heard as a child.

Only the chosen one could wield the sword, as the story goes, and they could stand against any power in existence, even the gods.

It is difficult to believe, but the only things that can be confirmed through even the greatest of our efforts are that the sword cannot be broken, melted, or even scratched, even by our strongest. Even if the scabbard is damaged, it simply regenerates, regardless of prevention of mana and matter from reaching it.

It is difficult to say if this truly is the sword of ancient fairytales that the feldroks do not have record of, and no other historical records exist.

For reference and posterity, the fairytale as remembered by the Uhl'tall elder will be included in the appendix.]"

Daniel finds the referenced appendix, skimming through to find reference to the name "Nemaisol." From what he finds, the sword appeared before the hero of the story, while a soft, angelic voice prophesied the battle to come.

And, then Daniel finds something especially interesting.

The hero became known as the first Dawnseer. And, he taught the art to the various races of the world to help prevent future calamities.

"A Dawnseer, huh?" remarks Daniel with amusement. "So, it wasn't just smoke being blown out of someone's…" He glances at Xyreko, clearing his throat and leaving it at that.

"It's probably difficult to explain rationally, beyond saying that it simply works. It's said that the world itself is alive enough to have its own mana, and disturbances within the world's mana can be predicted, even a measurable amount of time in the seemingly unforeseeable future. I should clarify that it is unclear whether these visions are what may be or what will be, as they are, from what I understand, quite unclear, even to the best practitioners of the art of Dawnseeing."

"Do you believe the future can be changed from the visions?" asks Daniel curiously.

"I… don't have the luxury of speaking with certainty. My father was a dawnseer. I witnessed predictions that he made come true. But, it's usually a premonition, rather than something that can be prevented… from what I have seen."

Daniel shrugs. “Well, I’m already here, and from what I’ve heard, my rifle and the atom bombs were likely what caused them to summon us, which is strange. I wouldn’t think the atom bombs would… or rather, I figured they would interrupt the ability.”

“I cannot say. I can certainly confirm that they count as a significant disturbance to the world’s mana, though, and would have been very easy for dawnseeing to detect at least the initiation. Am I safe in assuming the dawnseer never mentioned the bombs themselves?”

Daniel thinks for a moment. “Huh. Now that you mention it, she mentioned a ‘staff of all four worldly elements’, but never mentioned ‘canisters of doom’ or anything like that.”

Xyreko stares at him in her obviously-smug way, and Daniel smirks. “Yeah, yeah. Are you capable of dawnseeing?”

“I’m afraid I’m not. I believe the Lady Vaergraes is, though. Or, a very similar reading of the world’s mana. Learning dawnseeing is an innate skill; something one is born with.”

“Innate skill… I remember that when I was summoned, but it never really comes up. So, people are assigned a special magical ability when they’re born here?”

Xyreko nods. “I spoke to Wenlianna about omni-affinity being a mere stepping stone to real magic, but it’s really a result of the short lifespans of humans and human kin, as well as the shorter lifespans of applicable demon kin. What the feldroks referred to as Class E mortals.”

“Class E?” asks Daniel, sounding a little insulted.

“Remember, the feldroks did not discriminate. It was merely to define races that have average lifespans shorter than two hundred years. As goblins average around fifty years, and humans of this world average a little over one hundred…” She trails off as she undoubtedly recalls the conversation about Daniel’s expected lifespan once more.

“It’s fine, Xyreko. I’ll try to remember to ask Vaergraes about it later. It could be handy to see the future.”

“Even if you can’t change it?”

“Sure. Though, that doesn’t mean I can’t try. After all, they summoned me for that very reason.”

Xyreko chuckles. “I suppose, if anyone can…”

“So, why did it matter about the Class E races?”

“Ah, yes. The problem with the omni-affinity belief system has more to do with the traits for magical attunement not being preserved through the generations. Some generations were likely watered down by changing biases of those without magic in places of power, or the masses not realizing they had magic due to not being taught. In fact, the first of the lesser dragons was merely the offspring of a greater dragon, and the greater dragons ostracized the ‘lesser dragons’.”

“I… see…” murmurs Daniel.

“Don’t worry, Daniel! I meant nothing by it. Just as parents with both of them possessing strong magic can produce a child with weak magic, there is always a chance that your children will possess natural gifts for magic.”

He chuckles softly. “Maybe. Assuming magic is a dominant trait.”

“Dominant trait?” asks Xyreko. Because she understands how he looks at things, he knows something she doesn’t.

“Selective breeding works because of both dominant and recessive traits, depending on the goal. But, if something is a recessive trait, it’s virtually impossible for first generation offspring to possess the trait if one of the parents doesn’t possess the trait’s gene. Which, since I come from Earth, a place with no magic, is impossible in me.”

Xyreko sighs. “Then, you are speaking of many traits, Daniel. Did I not just explain? The magic attunements are much more complex than summing it up into a single trait. And, many generations have thinned those traits out. Wenlianna will never be as strong as a feldrok or even a dragon, but she could learn to use magic that she has never believed possible, and by doing so, the practice would expand her mana. If you are worried about preserving the so-called ‘omni-affinity’ traits, then I will happily create a selective matchmaking program. Though, I had thought until this moment, you believed more in self-determination…”

Daniel widens his eyes, looking directly at Xyreko again. And, once more, her posture is her ‘knowing smile even without a face’.

He scoffs and finally relaxes. She adds pointedly with a soft tone, “Daniel, you have done just fine in this world without magic. And, it would be uncharacteristically arrogant of you to think you could single-handedly thin out traits already on the decline in some populations.”

Daniel chuckles. “You got me, Xyreko. You’re right. Though, I think it’s only fair of me to say that on Earth, it’s estimated that it’s quite possible that half a percent of our seven billion population can be traced back to one man.”

“Half a perce-…?” starts Xyreko smugly until she thinks about the math. After a moment of pondering, she jokes, “My goodness, you’ll easily beat him.”

Daniel finally laughs. “Very funny. Now then, we need to figure out how I got magic so we can mass produce it. You know, just in case.”

“Indeed.”

Daniel resumes studying the book, and Xyreko sits with him peacefully, offering help where she can.

Whatever happens, Daniel can only do what he can do. And, he has a lot to do.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 85: The Loyal Dragons

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 85: The Loyal Dragons

"Why won't you just leave me alone!?"

The voice sounds fairly youthful, but also distorted, like many voices at once. The scenery is strange. It's familiar, but also alien. There's nothing noticeable about the air. The voice is the only apparent sound. But, the one speaking it sounds like it's coming from behind. No matter how much he looks, though, he can't find the source.

"It's nothing personal. I just need you to leave me alone. If they find me,… I-… I'm scared, alright?"

"Who are you?" he asks. He's not sure where he is or how he got here. He feels like he was just suddenly hearing the voice, though he feels like he was doing something.

"Don't worry about it. Just… leave me alone, alright?"

Something feels different. There's a weight on his chest, as well as a static tingle in the nape of his neck. It feels like someone is near him, but also pushing him away.

A suspicion hits him. "Nemaisol?"

The voice squeaks, and he quickly adds, "Nemaisol! Wait!" He feels like the presence is departing. "Are you really sentient."

“Just forget about me! I can’t be discovered!”

“…iel…” *A new voice seems to be reaching through the strange air. It’s a very familiar voice, as opposed to the strange voice that seemed like a chorus of soft and youthful voices.*

Bap bap bap!

Daniel flutters his eyes open dazed a little as the soft light of the hangar lounge fills his vision. Big triangular fox-like ears slide into view, followed by a cute face framed by black hair. “Daniel! Wake up! You’re gonna miss breakfast!”

Daniel sits up, finding Hekate sitting on his lap. She smiles up at him brightly as he gathers his senses and yawns. She climbed up onto him to wake him up slowly at first, but apparently, it’s getting close to breakfast time.

After he’s more awake though, she pouts at him with her adorable grumpy face. “You never came back to bed, Daniel! Do you think I like being crowded by a bunch of dragons?”

He chuckles, ruffling her hair, and she growls as she tries to grapple his hand. “I didn’t want to disturb you.”

When he shifts, though, a moderate weight flops down onto his lap between them; the sword Nemaisol. Daniel stares at it, and Hekate takes notice. “What is it? Did it shock you?”

“No… I just… I had a dream…”

“A dream? About your sword?”

Daniel nods, still deep in thought. He checks his pockets, finding his notebook, and he takes a moment to write it down so he doesn’t forget what the dream

was, while Hekate patiently watches. He taught her to do the same if she wants to preserve happy dreams, and she keeps a few notebooks around the places she sleeps as well.

She leans over, blocking his view as she reads his writing. He can still write well enough without seeing, but his handwriting becomes even more uneven and sloppy than his inexperienced hand writing the Eastern Imperial Trade language.

"You think Nemaisol spoke to you?" asks Hekate curiously. She looks up, and he smiles softly.

"I think so. But, apparently, Nemaisol wants to just be left alone."

"Why did it let you use it before that, though?"

"That's what I want to ask." He holds the sword up gently, saying softly, "I don't know what's going on, but I won't give up on you. You saved my life and my loved ones more than once. I'd like us to be friends."

Nothing seems to happen, and Hekate replies, "I don't hear anything."

"We won't right now. But, I'll win her over."

"How do you know it was a 'her'?" asks the skeptical feldrok girl.

"Because she also said 'I'm gonna steal you from that Hekate girl.'"

Hekate immediately snaps, "What!?" She takes the sword, shaking it as she yells at it, "Daniel is mine first and forever! I'll not be replaced with a dumb sword!"

Daniel catches her before she can get up and throw more of a tantrum. “Relax, Sweetpea. I’m just teasing you.” He hugs her to his chest as she still flails the sword out in front of herself away from Daniel. “No! You’re not allowed to use Nemaisol anymore! I won’t have any more rivals! You hear me!?”

Daniel can’t help but laugh as he holds Hekate, doing his best to interfere so she can’t throw Nemaisol across the room. “Be nice, Hekate. I was just teasing. You’re too spicy sometimes.”

“I am not! I could turn into a dumb sword, too. Pr-probably.”

“Hahahaha… Oh, you sweet, adorable little empress. I’ve told you many times, I’m not going anywhere.”

She huffs, pouting as she finally relaxes against him and lowers Nemaisol onto the lounge seat between their legs. “I know… I just want my turn to come…”

Daniel sighs softly. “I know, Hekate. Shall we go get breakfast?”

She nods. “Mm-hmm.” She finally lets him up, and he stands up with her, fastening Nemaisol to his belt. Even though Nemaisol strongly resists him drawing the sword from the scabbard, he has been protected many times when he needed it most. If it really is a sentient sword, however that might be, he doesn’t want to treat it simply like a tool, but as a trusted companion.

After all, his entire inner circle is full of individuals that come together, but also have their own needs and wants.

Just as the two are exiting the transporter station, they find Blue and Rose, who are waiting on them. They both bow instantly, saying with more enthusiasm than usual, “Your Greatness! Your Grace! Blue and Rose reporting!”

Daniel and Hekate look at each other for a moment.

“Blue, Rose, good to see you again,” replies Daniel warmly.

“Did we win?” asks Hekate.

The dragons are stumped by Hekate’s question, and Daniel adds, “Everything’s still in progress, we know that. Is something wrong?”

“No, your Grace!” replies Rose. “General Choul entrusted this message from the enemy Empress to us for delivery.” She presents the scroll, and Daniel unfurls it.

“Daniel!” snaps Hekate. “You’re supposed to have it checked!”

He looks at her, and she blushes. “E-Eri insists that scrolls can be trapped with curses and auto-casting spells. We're supposed to go through safety steps.”

“The seal's already broken, and I suspect Choul read it first.”

Hekate pouts at him, since he insists on her learning, but doesn’t listen when she wants to show off her new knowledge.

Daniel sighs. He hands it over to her, and she squeals happily. “Yay! Just wait!” She carefully casts a spell on the scroll, in spite of it already being opened, focusing on the results. After a moment, she hums, nodding in satisfaction. “Mm-hmm! This scroll is safe.”

Daniel smiles and pats her head, earning him a happy giggle. She hands it back to him, and he reads it.

“I see. Sundenelle wants to meet, then. Plan Troll is a go.”

“Plan ‘Troll’?” asks Hekate skeptically.

“Yeah. Good plans have names.”

“It’s not even a good plan! I knew it! You’re just wanting to add her to your harem!”

“Oh god… not you too. Listen, I explained it, didn’t I?”

“Ha! As if I wouldn’t see through your dastardly schemes! You’re my husband! Of course I know what you’re planning!”
“She’s going to be flustered and upset. That’s all I’m after.”

“And, then she’ll fall in love with your devilish charms!”

Daniel catches her when she pounces onto him, trying to grapple him in one of her small, impotent tantrums. He states, “Blue, Rose, you’re both welcome to join us for breakfast if you’d like.”

“O-Oh! Th-Thank you, your Grace! B-But, we couldn’t possibly…” retorts Rose bashfully.

“It would be too intimidating for us, your Grace. We’re lesser dragons. We were never afforded the right to attend meals with the greater dragons.”

Hekate and Daniel glance at each other. They both smile, and Daniel adds, “You’ll find Ryuo, Reina, and Geira are all much more relaxed than they used to be.” Hekate nods in agreement.

“Yes. They are are egg-dopey moms instead of cold-hearted lizards under a tyrant. They’ll welcome you.”

Both Rose and Blue bow, saying gently, “Please take no offense. W-We’re not ready, your Grace, your Greatness.”

“Very well,” replies Daniel gently. “Thank you for your help. Get something to eat and rest a bit. We’ll meet back up to discuss the next steps.”

“As you wish, your Grace!” They both turn on their heels, making their way to their own quarters, where they’ll either make their own meal or head to one of the other dining areas where the rest of the members of the Citadel eat.

Daniel and Hekate continue towards the main dining hall. As soon as they enter the dining hall, Ryuogriar immediately points out, “Ah, I see Plan Troll is imminent, then?”

Hekate perks up, gasping. “Wha!? How did you know that!?”

Ryuogriar stares at her, retorting dryly, “Because I know the plan and I know you, your Greatness.”

Hekate hops off of Daniel, pointing at the senior most dragon woman. “Then, you should be equally upset!”

Erimaya asks innocently, “Um… Wh-What’s ‘Plan Troll’?” She looks at those around her for help.

Reignleif explains, “Daniel intends to meet with Sundenelle in her audience chamber and ‘accept her proposal for marriage’.”

Erimaya gasps, “What!? You can’t!”

“I know, right!?” whines Hekate, bounding over to the princess for solidarity.

Daniel sighs. “As I’ve told Hekate MANY times, it’s just to toy with her. I have no intention of marrying her. She’ll be put on the spot in front of her nobles and vassals, and it’ll embarrass her. She’ll likely do something stupid in retaliation,

but we'll deflect it. Our bigger concern is the Covenant. Have we located their forces?"

Illianna replies, "Your Grace, we have made contact with neutral factions and are gathering intelligence. As it stands, the Demon Army is gathering near the Grand City, near where Lady Vaergraes's temple was before." Read the latest chapters at novelping.com.

Vaergraes adds, "It's relatively closer to Fort Peony than to Twilight, but it would be considerably dangerous and time consuming for them to attempt to move the full army through Fort Peony. They'll likely be launching their attack on Twilight…"

Daniel shakes his head. "I want to believe you, but that you mentioned it…"

"I agree with Daniel," replies Ryuogriar. "Fort Peony is not impassable. And, they'll quickly know of our occupation of Twilight."

"I… I'd also like to protect Peony…" murmurs Gwenesphia. "Treia and I have a lot of friends there."

"We could go and burn them to ash," replies Geirahoel confidently. When everyone looks at her, she quickly adds, "I mean the Covenant soldiers! Not Fort Peony!"

Daniel chuckles. "I figured. But, that's still a bit more dangerous than I'd like to expose you to."

She frowns at him, and Ryuogriar replies with what all three dragons are thinking, "Mukori, that you wish to protect us is flattering, but we are still dragons. We are the strongest beings in this world, other than Hekate."

“The archons caught us off guard,” adds Geirahoel. “But, I’ll annihilate them this time.”

“Those are some famous last words if I’ve ever heard them,” retorts Daniel. He thinks for a moment, looking to Xyreko. The golem nods subtly. He sighs, knowing she has given him the last piece of no excuse.

“On one condition, then.” Ryuogriar and Geirahoel perk up. “You will wear full body armor, and any sign of the archoneldwyn, you retreat. No exceptions.”

Geirahoel puffs her chest up. “I wouldn’t normally take such a command so easily, b-but, I’ll listen to you for now.”

Daniel looks at her, and then at Ryuogriar, who replies with a smile. “Thank you, Mukori. As much as I am thankful to being able to focus on our family, I want our family to be safe. That includes you, who will do something yourself without us, yes?”

He remains silent, looking to Reignleif last. The middle seniority dragon replies softly, “I will remain here. My egg will get in the way…” She touches her swollen abdomen, which should be extremely close to term now.

Daniel nods. “I won’t make any of you fight. You know that, right?”

Everyone at the table smiles. “Will you also hole up in the castle and be safe?” asks Kera’tai bluntly. Several nod in agreement, including Geirahoel and Reignleif.

Daniel smirks and sighs. “No. Thank you for helping. Ryuo-Mukori, Geira-Mukori, can you think of anything else you want or need?”

“Hmm… Oh!” Ryuogriar perks up. She looks at Wenlianna. “If we could have several water crystals. We’ll do our best to limit the scope of our fire, but it

would be nice to extinguish collateral with ease.”

“I-I would be happy to! U-Um, y-your Grace!”

Ryuogriar chuckles. “Dear, sweet young lady of the house of Stalvaltan, please feel no need for such formality.”

Wenlianna smiles and nods gently. She looks to Reignleif, saying softly, “Um, Great Aunt Reina, since you’ll be remaining here, would you help me prepare the crystals they need?”

Reignleif nods. “Yes.”

“Thanks!”

“A-Also, Reina, please look after our eggs,” adds Geirahoel.

“Of course. I’ll recruit some of the acolytes to help carry them around.”

Treia suddenly asks curiously, “Can I ask why you do that?”

The dragons look at her, and she adds more gently, “Sorry… I mean, isn’t it dangerous carrying them around? Wouldn’t it be better to leave them in an incubator in your rooms? I-Isn’t that… Wouldn’t that be like a nest?”

The three dragons look at each other. For all three of them, the eggs that are currently next to them in special seats are their first.

Ryuogriar finally replies, “It feels right. Their temperature is pretty easy to maintain, but it’s important to have them close.”

Reignleif adds, “It’s to give the baby inside stimulation. It will help their minds develop.”

The other two dragons look at her, and she blushes, shrinking into her mantle. “I-I read it in a book. The library is very full of knowledge.”

“Where is this book!?” asks Geirahoel passionately. “A-Are there other useful books!?”

“Th-There are lots,” replies Reignleif softly. “I-I have been reading a book about historical marriages with humans…”

Geirahoel stands up suddenly. “What have you learned!?” She just as quickly glances around, blushing brightly. She quickly sits back down. She clears her throat. “Reina, my dearly beloved senior, we shall compare notes.”

There are a few chuckles, and Daniel replies dryly, “Didn’t you just agree to undertake a mission, Mukori?”

Geirahoel squirms as her eyes dart around nervously. “I… It’s… I was just… It can probably w-wait… I guess…”

He chuckles as he shakes his head. “By the way, Ryuo-Mukori, I’d like you and Geira-Mukori to invite Rose and Blue as your escorts.”

“Rose and Blue?” asks Ryuogriar. She twitches. “Ah! The two young le-…” She trails off, considering her words. “The two young dragons assisting Choul, yes?”

Daniel nods with a gentle smile. He knew Ryuogriar wouldn’t disappoint him. “They’re working hard for us, so please treat them well and look after them if need be.”

Ryuogriar nods. “I won’t try to pressure them, but I’ll ask them after breakfast. Are you sure Choul won’t be needing their support?”

“Good point. If you would, fly to Twilight first, then north to Peony, and then towards the enemy forces, in case they deploy before you reach them. That way, you can verify with Choul that he won’t need their support.”

Ryuogriar sighs. “If I didn’t know better, my beloved Mukori, I’d think you were trying to keep myself and sweet Geira away from you longer.”

Geirahoel makes a point of looking directly at Daniel for his answer. He smirks, not baited by Ryuogriar’s tease.

Instead, he retorts, “Well, I might actually get some sleep finally.”

Ryuogriar gasps, and Geirahoel snaps, “Daniel, you take that back or I’ll do something terrible!” Her eyes water, and he sighs. “Geez… It’s a joke, alright. I’m sorry. If it’s up to me, you won’t go anywhere. But, if you don’t mind helping, I’ll trust the Covenant army to you.”

Geirahoel pouts, looking away from him. “You have to apologize to me properly. A-After breakfast.”

“Alright… I will.”

Ryuogriar chuckles into her hand, doing very little to hide that she was simply having fun as well.

“Oh, and when you talk to Rose and Blue, I wouldn’t mind if you make it seem like it’s your own idea.”

“Wh-Why would we do that?” asks Ryuogriar, surprised.

“Hekate and I can reward them for their military service. But, you three are the Dragon Empresses. It would mean more to them if you ask them for help, rather than me.”

Ryuogriar nods. “Yes, I understand.” She looks at Reignleif and Geirahoel. Geirahoel replies, “I never disliked any of the lesser dragons. Um… I don’t know how else to define them.”

“Mana-less dragons?” asks Geirahoel. She adds, “I think they put up with Morthybargaron for too long.”

“They were afraid,” replies Ryuogriar with regret in her voice. “We all were… But, that’s not a good excuse. We have done nothing about the ostracization they faced, then or now. Let us change that.” She looks at Daniel again, adding proudly, “I am the First Dragon Empress, and I shall welcome all dragons into the Fievegal, be they so-called ‘lesser’ dragons, half-dragons, or dragon descendants.” She smiles, looking at Shek and Skloe, who are mostly focused on the two goblin princesses, but listening to the conversation. “And, as Second Empress, I welcome all who respect and show loyalty to the Fievegal.” She looks to Hekate, adding softly and tenderly, “I will not make the same mistakes again. A child overlooked could be tomorrow’s ruler.”

Hekate smiles bashfully, looking away as she scratches behind her ears. “I… Agreed. S-So, be sure to treat them well, and we’ll reward all of our loyal subjects for their efforts.”

Ryuogriar smiles. “Your Greatness, I would also like to speak to you in private after breakfast.”

“M-Me!?” squeaks Hekate nervously.

“Mm-hmm. Just a simple request I have for you. Nothing to be afraid of.”

“I-I’m not afraid of you!”

“Mmm. Good. I look forward to it.”

Wenlianna finally speaks up, “I-In other news, the communicators should be ready before you leave. Please check with me and Daniel before you go, your-... um, Ryuogriar.”

Ryuogriar nods. “Thank you. I look forward to seeing how this new device works.” She cups her cheek reverently, blushing a little as she smiles. “To think, we’ll be one step closer to living like our beloved Mukori.”

Daniel chuckles. “The Citadel’s great, but we’re still a pretty long way off from modern Earth.”

She pouts, “Well, then, Mukori. It seems you have been moving too slowly.”

“Trust me, if I knew how to make every piece of Earth’s technology work, or adapt it using magic, we’d be working on it already. But, I won’t give up.”

Aoloan asks, “Forgive me for asking, but, what will we do about the Fievegal’s population? Will you just kill all of the soldiers?”

“No,” replies Ryuogriar. “We will do our best to destroy only high value targets, as well as the Orbicharium. The Covenant leaders have had plenty of time to pledge fealty. Their soldiers will surrender or perish after that.”

“Orbicharium?” asks Gwenesphia just before Daniel does.

Thymeria answers politely, “It’s the main building in the Grand City where the rulers of the various tribes of the Covenant gather. It’s similar to a castle, and many of the leaders should be residing there.”

“It can withstand dragon fire,” adds Illianna. “It’s one of the only structures in this world that can.”

“It can withstand dragon fire,” repeats Ryuogriar with a smugness in her tone. “It has never been tested against the full might of dragons.”

“And, if we can’t break it, we’ll ask Hekate for help,” adds Geirahoel confidently. She glances at Daniel sheepishly, and he smiles simply. He’ll come up with something if no magic can destroy this apparent fortress.

Daniel simply reiterates, “Regardless, safety first, and be careful. Alright?”

They both smile and nod happily.

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Hekate meets Ryuogriar in Daniel’s quarters, the unofficial gathering place of the Four Empresses and effectively their second quarters. The eldest Dragon is lounging on Daniel’s bed as Geirahoel carefully puts her eggs into her incubator. Geirahoel notices Hekate enter, and she excuses herself.

“Wh-What did you want?” asks Hekate as she approaches the bed.

Ryuogriar sits up, and she holds her arms out.

Hekate blushes glancing around. They’re alone in the room.

“I’m going away for a while, sweet Hekate. I’ll miss you.”

“I… You…” Hekate can’t look directly at the dragon, her cheeks rosy in color. “I’ll miss… y-you too…” admits the young feldrok girl.

“Will you indulge me for a bit?” asks Ryuogriar gently.

Hekate ponders for only a moment, sheepishly nodding and approaching. She hugs Ryuogriar, and she feels instantly warmer when the dragon wraps her

arms around her. Ryuogriar hums softly. “Thank you, Hekate. I once thought I had no more growing to do as a person, but I was wrong.”

Hekate nods, admitting the obvious. “I have lots of growing to do… i-in all ways. Thank you for helping me.”

The dragon hums again, keeping Hekate warmly pressed against her chest. Without warning, she flops back, once again lying down with Hekate in an affectionate hug. Hekate gasps and whines a little, but she doesn’t resist. The two lie on Daniel’s bed in a comfortable embrace.

After a moment, Hekate asks gently, “Am… I just practice, Ryuo?”

“Practice?”

“F-... For your real children…”

Hekate can feel Ryuogriar’s hug tighten a little. Ryuogriar doesn’t look at her, though, and Hekate adds softly, “Sorry… That’s not…”

“I’m sorry it looks that way… Hekate, I told you before that I regret how I treated you. You… I adore you, Hekate.” Ryuogriar gently pets Hekate’s head. “I wish I could make up for it in an instant, but… I guess, for now, I just wanted to hug you before I go. My first hugs will always be for you, Hekate.”

Hekate flinches when a cool sensation kisses her cheek; a kiss from the dragon woman. Hekate blushes, squirming a little to be able to look into Ryuogriar’s eyes. Ryuogriar smiles affectionately. Hekate looks aside, murmuring, “M-… Mo-... I’m… sorry… I’m not… It’s… I don’t know what this feeling is… But it makes it hard to… say…”

Ryuogriar simply smiles. “You can call me whatever you want, Hekate. I’ll be your friend, your rival, your sister, your subordinate, or even… your mother…”

Both of them blush this time, since it's a new thought for both of them. The dragon continues softly, "I suspect I haven't earned the right, though, for such an illustrious title. So, I'll settle for a healing hug."

"H-Healing?"

Ryuogriar smiles and shrugs. "I don't need healing at the moment, but doesn't this feel good?"

"Y-Yeah… Yeah, it does." Hekate relaxes on Ryuogriar's chest, and the dragon gently pets Hekate's back. Hekate's tail gently sways back and forth without her knowledge.

After a long moment, Ryuogriar sighs gently. "I hate to ruin this moment…"

"Mmm…"

"Will… you welcome me home, my dear, sweet Hekate?"

Hekate nods. "Mm-hmm. So, you absolutely have to be safe. Y-You are the closest thing I'll ever have… to a mother. S-So,... d-don't leave me for long."

Ryuogriar squeezes gently again, humming happily. "Agreed." Hekate rolls off of her carefully, sitting up on her knees as Ryuogriar stretches and sits up.

"B-Before you go," starts Hekate softly.

Ryuogriar looks at her, cocking her head.

"R-Rather, while I have you alone…"

"What is it?"

"How old were you when you… first tried to… um… make an egg?"

Ryuogriar smiles. “I see…” She shifts to her knees as well, facing Hekate. “Dragons don’t even reach maturity until seventy years of age.” She turns serious with a somewhat sad smile. “Strange… Daniel expects to live to around seventy… He won’t even see one of his dragon grandchildren born…”

“We’ll do something about that!” replies Hekate urgently.

“I hope so, too.” Ryuogriar sighs, looking at Hekate to continue her answer. “To answer your question, though, a dragon can have eggs much earlier than that. Maybe around twenty. I don’t really remember anymore. But, since I suspect we’re talking about you, patience will be necessary, even if you wait out Daniel’s requirement.”

Hekate pouts. “Eri said she would have been married when she turned fifteen, before all of the stuff that got Daniel banished…”

“Humans have their own reasons for doing what they do, but so do humans from Earth. We don’t know why the rules are as they are on Earth, but they are the rules Daniel wishes to abide by. I think he’s dubious on what to do about this world other than himself, though.”

Hekate nods. “It’s just frustrating. Everyone asks me for permission, but I’m the only one who isn’t allowed.”

“I sincerely doubt Erimaya will have any luck for the next several years.”

Hekate smirks at her, growling, “I would hope so. I would have to really chew Daniel’s face off if he did that.”

Ryuogriar giggles. Suddenly, without warning, Hekate hugs her again. “Ryuo, thank you for everything. If you need any help, let me know.”

“Of course. Thank you, my dear, sweet Hekate.” The dragon puffs air gently in Hekate’s ear, and then kisses her temple, finally standing up to begin her mission. “If you would, do feel free to walk around with my egg. Carefully, of course. It’ll be your little brother or sister, as far as I’m concerned. I would be grateful if you help guide them.”

Hekate nods. “I will.”

As Ryuogriar and Hekate exit Daniel’s room, they find Daniel leaning against the wall. He shifts off of the wall, standing up. “Everything okay?”

The two glance at each other, and they smile. “Yes, Mukori. Everything is well.”

“Mm-hmm. Just girl stuff.”

Daniel chuckles. “Curse my past self for teaching you that.”

Hekate grins a big toothy grin. The platinum dragon asks gently, “Did you need something, Mukori? Perhaps you wish to spend a night with your Empresses before we are separated temporarily?” She grins as well, and Hekate blushes a little.

However, Daniel replies gently, “Actually, I was wondering if you wanted to be a part of Plan Troll, specifically. We’ll be sending golems to meet with Sundenelle.”

“Oh! You were planning to do that right away?”

Daniel thinks. “Mmm… I had hoped to sooner, rather than later, but perhaps we should actually schedule an audience with Sundenelle for maximum effect.” He nods as he comes to a conclusion. “We’ll wait until you return. I’ll send a message through the messengers. Please meet me at the control room flyway, and I’ll have the message ready.”

Ryuogriar nods. “I’ll go speak to Rose and Blue, then. We’ll meet you there.”

“Thank you.”

“Can I do something?” asks Hekate.

Daniel smiles. “If you wouldn’t mind, would you mind heading to the lab and helping Reina and Wenlianna?”

“Yes! Leave it to me!” Hekate bounds down the hallway to the transport station, selecting the lab area. She knocks on the lab, finding Wenlianna and Reignleif working hard at charging the magic crystals. “How’s it going?” asks the feldrok Empress.

“Good!” replies Wenlianna. She’s not as intimidated in her lab, nor of Hekate, who is younger than she is. “We’re about halfway done.”

“Can I help?”

“I’d be grateful. Please take over this charger, and I’ll go get another one from the back.”

Hekate nods, taking the charging station and placing a diamond into the cradle, charging it as requested with pure mana. “How is it?” asks Hekate.

“How is what?”

“Y-Your long-lost ancestor. I… Is she… What’s it like?”

Reignleif smiles. “It’s interesting. The more she talks, the more I think about my sister… It’s nice. She’s not the same, but I see a little of my sister the more we get to know each other.”

“I see… W-Were… you and your sister close?”

The blue dragon shakes her head slowly. “Not… as close as I wish we could have been. By the time I understood why she was ostracized, she had already been… killed.”

“I’m sorry… I… obviously never had any siblings…”

Reignleif manages a sympathetic smile. “I only regret not knowing her better. With her descendants, I can reminisce.”

Wenlianna enters, and Hekate and Reignleif leave the topic there. “Okay! We’re making great progress,” states the human magic artisan chipperly. “Hopefully, the range will hold. With Daniel’s phone, range is apparently a factor.”

“The spell should not be noticeably limited,” replies Reignleif. “Though, in fairness, I’ve never attempted telepathy across the continent either.”

Wenlianna nods. “We’re entering new territory.”

As the three of them charge crystals, nearing completion of the stockpile of 20 that they’re working on, Wenlianna suddenly asks out of the blue, “Hekate?”

“Yeah?”

“Can… I ask you for a favor after this?”

Hekate gets her usual feeling of suspicion almost immediately. But, she really only cares about never being abandoned. “You can ask, but you should know, depending on what it is, there might be a favor owed in return.”

“O-Of course! Thank you!”

Hekate sighs and nods. She's going to have a LONG list of favors to cash in when it's all said and done.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 86: Flight of the Valkyries Part 1

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 86: Flight of the Valkyries Part 1

Four dragons land at Fort Twilight the day after Choul sent Rose and Blue to deliver the message from Empress Sundenelle. Daniel wrote a reply, and he authorized a mission for Ryuogriar and Geirahoel.

Choul kneels before the two dragon Empresses, while the commanders and their troops imitate him. “Your Graces, you honor us with your presence.”

Ryuogriar replies proudly, “You all have done excellent work capturing and reinforcing Fort Twilight. We are pleased with your results.”

Geirahoel adds loudly, “All of you have worked tirelessly for the Fievegal, and his Grace, Emperor Daniel, is most pleased, as are we. But, the war is not over. If you disappoint us, you will bring disgrace not only on yourselves, but Emperor Daniel as well. Do not disappoint us.”

The soldiers and Choul cheer together. Geirahoel smiles with a proud and prideful smirk.

“Your words are more than we deserve,” replies Choul.

Ryuogriar smirks. “Our words are no more nor less than you deserve. You have worked well, but as my sister has said, it is not over yet. Rise, and resume your work. Empress Geirahoel and I shall speak with the General further.”

“Thank you, your Graces!” cheer the soldiers and commanders. They obey, returning to their work as Ryuogriar states, “Rise, Sir Choul. We have to discuss the next steps.”

Choul nods, standing up. “Your Grace.”

Geirahoel points at him, saying sternly, “You should consider yourself lucky that we came all this way.”

“I sincerely do, your Illustrious Majesty. What can I do for you?”

Ryuogriar gestures over her shoulder. “We have delivered the message from Daniel, but we have use for Rose and Blue now. They have agreed to help with our mission. Do you have need of these two dragons for your defensive strategy, Sir Choul?”

Choul looks at Blue and Rose, who are behind Ryuogriar and Geirahoel, remaining respectfully silent.

“I have no objection, your Grace. But, I would ask if you truly need them. I can make use of them, as you know.”

The platinum dragon looks around, verifying that they are not being monitored, and she casts a simple spell, isolating sound around them; something she learned from Wenlianna, who created a magic device for the same purpose.

“We will be assaulting the gathered forces of the Demon Covenant, and additional firepower and minimized troop presence will be invaluable to our mission.”

“Y-You’re assaulting the Covenant army?”

“Yes. Geirahoel and I have volunteered.”

“We were asked by the lady Empresses,” chimes in Rose. “With your permission, General, we would like to accept this opportunity.”

Choul nods. “Understood. I’ll make due without you for now.” He looks at Ryuogriar. “Will they be alright without large scale magic defenses, your Grace? If not, I could volunteer in their place and have them take over command here.”

“We will not be engaging in a protracted battle of attrition. We will do several quick strafes with fire and destroy the Orbicharium. Whatever their retaliation, it should disrupt any attempts to attack Fort Twilight or Fort Peony. As you know, our dear co-consorts from the east have attachment to Fort Peony, specifically. We are officially becoming the wedge between the east and west, and Daniel granted us permission to demonstrate our resolve and power.”

“I see… Blue, Rose? I’ll take your place if you choose.”

They shake their heads. “Please worry not, General. We will fight valiantly to protect the Empresses and serve their needs.”

Blue nods in agreement. “It will be our honor to prove our loyalty.”

“Very well. Please look after the Empresses in my stead,” replies Choul, bowing his head.

The two lesser dragons bow in respect as well.

Geirahoel moves on to the next subject, “Daniel will be moving forward with what he refers to as ‘Plan Troll’. The message is a reply to Empress Sundenelle with a request for an audience date. However, you are to send observers to monitor the messengers and determine what happens to the message en route.”

“As you wish, your Grace.”

“We will be heading north from here,” adds Ryuogriar. “Should you need reinforcements, you should prioritize reinforcements from the Citadel. We will be predisposed with our mission once we leave here.”

“Of course, your Grace,” replies Choul. “Are you sure the four of you will be enough?”

Ryuogriar nods, and Geirahoel adds sharply, “This mission isn’t a battle, but a disruption. We are Empresses, not soldiers. Don’t think of us as such.”

Choul bows his head. He has learned that Geirahoel, especially, is most amenable if he just goes along with whatever she says. Daniel describes her as a ‘tsundere’; someone who puts on a hostile front, even to people she likes or respects. Even now, she’ll sometimes say things that seem disrespectful towards Daniel, when in fact, she’s arguably one of his favorite consorts, as evidenced by two eggs and a third on the way.

Of course, as a dragon and loyal companion and friend to Daniel, Choul can’t help but worry that Ryuogriar and Geirahoel will be leading such a dangerous mission. Though most of the female dragons have already laid or are carrying eggs, including Rose, the three Empresses are another matter entirely. They are important figures for the Fievegal, and though the Fievegal is a rather paltry gathering of tribes posing as an empire for the time being, the potential to grow comes from a system of governing Daniel is doing his best to implement in pieces from Earth, where most of the world was advanced and comfortable for peasants and nobles alike -systems that were effectively dissolved in modern times, but not completely absent-.

With both Ryuogriar and Geirahoel, Choul can't help but see the princes or princesses growing in their bellies, as well as the immensely valuable lovers to the Emperor. They, too, worry about Daniel when he partakes in his own missions, but it's difficult to convince all of them that their roles as rulers means they no longer need to endanger themselves.

Even Morthybargaron, former lord of the dragons, ceased combat after destroying the feldrok race and becoming dragon lord.

But then, it is a major factor as to why Choul respects and reveres Daniel, along with the others. He is not an arm-chair ruler. He desires to see the battlefields with his own eyes, and he doesn't demand loyalty or sacrifice. Rather, he asks for and inspires loyalty within his troops through incentives. He also encourages family and camaraderie at all levels. Some of the plans he has mentioned to Choul that he has in store are shocking to someone from the world of Zenkon. Daniel hopes to reach the point that he can easily provide a pension to soldiers even after their terms of service, as well as survivor benefits for the family of the fallen. He also intends to establish what he calls "retirement accounts" for the races with shorter lifespans, as well as those hoping to take long periods of down time.

Such things sound like fantasy to Choul, but Daniel has never been one to simply jest when speaking of matters of the Fievegal. He likes to choose things that are more obvious and lower stakes, such as the 'sky hook' and 'elbow grease'.

"I wish you the best of luck on your mission, your Graces. Please rest and refresh as you see fit, and let us know if you need anything. We shall make it so."

Ryuogriar nods. “Thank you. We shall depart soon, General. In the worst case scenario, shore up defenses to the west and be ready for siege. We shall ensure reinforcements arrive.” She then digs out one of the communication devices from her bag, handing it over to Choul. “Set this up in a secure place, and await further instructions.”

“It shall be done your Grace. Thank you. If you’ll excuse me.” Choul bows and makes his way back to the east gate, where they’re reinforcing the hinges and replacing the gates with stone, as well as adding a second-stage sally port, a sort of double-gate that would require two layers of gate busting to break through. The gates of the fortress under the Imperial design favor accessibility almost more than defense, allowing troops and reinforcements to be deployed more quickly. Daniel’s recommended adjustments to the fortress essentially double the structure around the entrances, but make it substantially more defensible than a single gate alone.

“Now,” starts Ryuogriar as she faces the other three dragons on the mission. Let’s change into our armor, as instructed. Rose, Blue, here.” She hands over a small magic bag, similar to the one Daniel wears on his belt. “You will wear this armor for this mission.”

“You honor us, your Grace! We shall do as you ask.” Blue accepts the bag and they go to separate rooms in the main fortress. They each don their armor in dragon form, which encases their bodies similar to when Choul first appeared. It’s restrictive and feels claustrophobic, but lightweight.

Still, Geirahoel complains, “Ahhh… Why did Mukori have to ask us to wear this? I’ve never worn armor.”

“We’ve never gone into battle as warriors, either,” replies Ryuogriar. “Mukori spent a great deal of magical power producing these armors for us. We would

be disgraces if we failed our mission and were injured. So, deal with it for now."

"Yeah, yeah." Geirahoel fastens the pieces that Ryuogriar can't reach, and then turns for Ryuogriar to do the same for her. "We shall burn our enemies and return in time for lunch tomorrow. Daniel should be more grateful for having such strong and beautiful wives such as us."

Ryuogriar chuckles. "Yes, you are most certainly right." The two make their way back into the courtyard of the fortress, meeting Rose and Blue after the two are suited up in their own armor. "Let us earn the title of noblest and strongest beings once more, Geirahoel."
"I am with you, elder sister."

"And, you two."

"Y-Yes!" yelps Blue as both he and Rose tense. "Y-Your Grace?"

"You are dragons, regardless of what you have been called in the past. I will not suffer weaklings that fail to prove their might."

They both hesitate, and Ryuogriar adds more gently, "I am not expecting what you should not be capable of. I am ordering you to be dragons and to survive this battle." She points at them, saying loudly, "Listen up, Blue, Rose! All dragons are evolved from beings without magic, just as humans evolved from ancient ancestors without magic. But, that does NOT make you weak! The pinnacle of power in this world, the greatest sorcerer the land has ever seen, possessed no magic when he defeated the Dragon Lord and the Feral Feldrok, conquering the Citadel and founding the Fievegal! Will you lose heart, oh mighty dragons, when asked to prove yourselves worthy of such an Emperor!?"

This shocks both of the lesser dragons, dragons in appearance and natural gifts, but lacking the magical prowess of greater or ‘true’ dragons. Ryuogriar adds passionately, “Fools allow themselves to be defeated by other fools! If you are defeated today, I will bury you beneath the Citadel’s waste pit where you would belong! So, what will you do!?” Follow the newest chapters on novelping . com.

“We will prove ourselves worthy of the name ‘dragon’, your Grace!” shout both Rose and Blue in unison.

Ryuogriar smiles, nodding. “Very good. Let us make haste then to Fort Peony. We must inform the Commander there of the incoming threat, which we will attempt to disrupt.”

“At once, your Grace!”

All four dragons lift off into the sky, taking time to adjust to the weight of the armor. For the two lesser dragons, it is more difficult due to not having enough spare magic to aid in relieving the weight. Unlike Daniel was, they are not truly devoid of magic, but they are able to adjust and join Ryuogriar and Geirahoel in flight.

It's about an hour flight at comfortable speed, and they descend upon the same secluded area as before. Ryuogriar and Geirahoel use magic to transform all four of them, and to their surprise, the armor shifts with them. It's the same as Choul wears, but they had no idea before. It's apparently made of some alloy of sharmellkolle, making it able to adapt and transform in response to the user’s magic.

The four walk to the fortress in human form, and Rose asks nervously as they walk, “Are you sure this is a good idea, your Grace?”

“Worry not, dear Rose. We are on friendly terms with the commanding officer of this fortress.”

The four approach the fort, emerging from the tree line. The lady soldiers on the wall immediately take notice of them, rallying each other and taking up arms. Ryuogriar gestures for the other three to stop, and she walks forward with her hands up. “I am Empress Ryuogriar gur Lawson, Second Empress of the Fievegal and acquaintance of Commander Leiwelles kos Morglodston. Please inform the Commander that we have arrived. We have an important message.”

The soldiers nervously discuss as more and more soldiers gather on the wall, and a bell begins gonging.

“*Ryuo, why are they acting this way? They were not so hostile last time.*” Geirahoel’s voice reaches Ryuogriar easily using telepathy, though they also have a couple of Daniel’s and Wenlianna’s communication devices in their magic bag.

“*We arrived from the west and are all wearing elaborate-looking armor. Plus, we all bear horns and tails. They are afraid we are enemies arriving to attack.*”

Geirahoel huffs. “*They should be more grateful to us. We came here to help them.*”

“*They don’t know that yet. Patience.*”

Ryuogriar spots the desired person in question on the wall, Commander Leiwelles, as she arrives to inspect the unannounced visitors.

“State your business again!” shouts one of the soldiers near Leiwelles.

Ryuogriar states proudly, “I am Empress Ryuogriar gur Lawson, Second Empress of the Fievegal and acquaintance of Commander Leiwelles kos Morglodston. We have an important message and have arrived as friends. We shall not bring harm to anyone on Fort Peony unless provoked.”

There’s a pause, and Ryuogriar can tell Leiwelles is thinking. She waves her hand, gesturing for Ryuogriar to approach, and the soldier that called out shouts again, “All four of you may approach! Please do not make aggressive or sudden motions, your Grace!”

Ryuogriar wraps her arm gently under her chest. She doesn’t bow, since she’s an empress and a dragon, but she acknowledges the instructions. She turns and says, “Come. We’re invited.”

“Y-Yes, your Grace…” replies Blue as he and Rose follow Ryuogriar and Geirahoel.

As they enter the fortress, they are greeted on either side by lines of female soldiers and officers, with a couple of men all but hidden in the ranks. Leiwelles meets them at the end of the ranks, bowing as they approach. “Empress Ryuogriar, a pleasure to greet you. And, please correct me if I am mistaken, Empress Geirahoel. It is my sincere honor to host you both once more.”

Geirahoel twitches in surprise. “Y-You recognize me?”

Leiwelles smiles at her, replying warmly, “I’d be a fool not to learn the leadership of countries I may have dealings with, no? Your horns and tail are very distinct shades, and I have received correspondence from Treia and Gwenesphia describing the full leadership of the Fievegal so I would not disrespect you. And, of course, we met before.”

“A-are they spying on us?” asks the younger of the greater dragons.

Ryuogriar replies gently, “No. Daniel knows about it and encourages them to write. They are important members of the Fievegal.”

Leiwelles nods politely, and she looks at Rose and Blue. “Pardon my saying so, but I do not recognize your companions, even from letters.”

The two lesser dragons look to Ryuogriar, and she nods. Blue bows, “I am the lesser dragon Blue, Commander. It is my pleasure to meet you.”

“I am known as Rose, Commander. I am also honored.”

Leiwelles bows again crisply. She asks politely, “I do beg you a moment to educate me; your ranks or titles?”

“They are apprentice dragons, Commander,” replies Ryuogriar proudly. “You likely don’t know this, but there were considered two classes of dragons under the old lord; greater and lesser dragons. I won’t bore you with the specifics, but now, we have decided to make the title of dragon something to be earned, and until then, we shall define ourselves as greater wyverns.”

“Y-Your Grace…” murmurs Rose with a softly wavering voice.

Ryuogriar looks at her, saying sincerely, “I decided this just now. I mean no discrimination, but rather, to make the meaning of dragon something anyone can earn, so long as they meet the requirements. I am confident you will succeed.”

They both kneel to her instantly. “You honor us, your Grace!”

She smiles and nods, suddenly twitching. “Oh! How rude of me.” She takes her helmet off, revealing her face. “Apologies, Commander. We arrived as friends, and here I am still wearing full armor.”

Leiwelles smiles and replies as Rose and Blue stand back up, “I understand. Actually, I’m a bit surprised to see you. Shall we go inside to have a proper meeting?”

“Yes, that would be greatly appreciated, though we won’t be staying long.”

“I shall not hold you. No need to trouble yourself with concern for me.”

Geirahoel takes her helmet off as well, but she looks around suspiciously as they walk.

“*Ryuo! Th-They’re… They’re staring at me!*”

“*We’re strange beings in this place. They’re staring at all of us.*”

“*It’s not the same! It’s different all of a sudden!*”

Ryuogriar takes a moment to look around, trying not to make it obvious, but Leiwelles also seems to notice something off. When she looks at Geirahoel, she seems to realize something.

“Y-Your Majesty Geirahoel…”

Geirahoel snaps her gaze to Leiwelles, startled and on guard.

“You… seem to be drawing a lot of gazes.”

“I haven’t done anything!”
Leiwelles chuckles. “No, I am certain you are innocent.” She clears her throat, saying loudly, “All hands, stand down from combat response and resume normal duties. Dismissed!”

Some of the soldiers respond immediately, “Y-Yes Commander!” A few stammer, also joining the others. And, a few more soldiers, including one of the

men, seems to be locked in place, still staring. Only when they are tapped by other soldiers to move do they finally pry their gaze away.

Once in the conference room, joined by a handful of other officers, Geirahoel asks, “Wh-What was it? Is there something wrong with my face?” She touches her cheeks with her free left hand.

Leiwelles replies, “I don’t know how else to say this, Geirahoel, so I’ll be blunt. You’re probably one of the most beautiful women anyone here has ever seen. I’d wager that some of the stares were jealousy, some were admiration, and some were infatuation.”

Geirahoel blushes, instantly looking at Ryuogriar. “I-… Is that…? I don’t…!”

Ryuogriar chuckles, cupping her cheek as she says facetiously, “Oh, dear me. I thought it was more obvious, dear sister. There are reasons you are Mukori’s favorite.”

This short-circuits Geirahoel as her entire face fills with pink, and she becomes unable to speak. Ryuogriar, confident and content with her own appearance, focuses on the matter at hand. “Now, then, Commander. We should get down to business. We came here from Fort Twilight to warn you of a potential attack by the Demon Covenant. They seem to be amassing in the Grand City. We intend to disrupt their forces and sow chaos if we can, but this fort is the closest to the Grand City.”

“Is it true then, your Grace? Twilight has been seized by the Fievegal?”

“Mmm… ‘Seized’ is a strong word. Daniel is in contact with Empress Sundenelle. Fort Twilight was ceded to the Fievegal as reparations for several unprovoked attacks on Fievegal territory.”

Geirahoel is still mumbling to herself with rosy cheeks, trying to reconcile what she was just told. She is all but oblivious to the conversation going on.

As for what Ryuogriar just revealed, it surprises the other officers in the room, but they remain respectfully quiet. They are here to learn from and support Leiwelles, but Leiwelles will just as quickly send them out if they become disruptive.

Leiwelles sighs. “Being acquainted with you and Daniel is troublesome for my health. Can you give us details on the expected attack?”

“Only that it’s likely. But, you can rest easy knowing that dragons will not be your enemies.”

Leiwelles chuckles, shaking her head. “If only I could offer Daniel enough to come back…”

Geirahoel adds, “The numbers will be great, though. Likely in the tens of thousands. They will likely try to destroy Fort Peony and make their way east through this valley. Otherwise, they will attempt to attack Fort Twilight in hopes that the can defeat our forces.”

Leiwelles nods. She can magically discern lies from truth, and both Ryuogriar and Geirahoel are being truthful.

“And, the four of you will be launching a preemptive strike?” asks Leiwelles.

Ryuogriar nods. “Yes, though we can’t vow to destroy the entire army.”

“You’re empresses, aren’t you, your Grace?” asks one of the boruan officers seated next to Leiwelles.

Ryuogriar smiles. “Indeed, Geirahoel and I are two of the three dragon empresses, but we requested to undertake this mission, as no one can move faster and strike harder than dragons.”

“And, Daniel would try to do it himself if we didn’t,” adds Geirahoel.

Leiwelles smiles cryptically. She stays on topic though. “I appreciate you making the trip to warn us.”

“Of course. You have always been cordial with us, and we were coming roughly in this direction to begin with. Oh, but we should warn you about one more thing.”

“I’m all ears.”

“During the last siege of the Citadel, even though almost the entirety of the attacking forces were eastern races, we were intercepted by members of the archoneldwyn race, who proved to be a great threat to all of us.” She hesitates as she remembers the ferocity and speed of the attack.

“‘Archoneldwyn’?” asks Leiwelles. “I can’t say I’ve ever heard of such a race.”

Ryuogriar nods. “They’re considered a demon-kin race sharing traits with the Uhl’tall and the elves.”

This doesn’t seem to help much, since it’s difficult to picture from that description alone. Geirahoel blurts out, “Scruffy-looking elves. They often have side burns or beards.”

“I see… And, you say these archoneldwyn are a threat to even dragons?”

Ryuogriar and Geirahoel nod. “At least one on one, they can hold their own. We came out victorious as a team, but were caught off guard.”

“I see. I’ll be attentive for… scruffy elves.” She looks at Geirahoel, who fidgets.

“It’s what they look like…”

“Not as beautiful as you, then?”

Geirahoel again stammers, “Y-Y-You… I… I’m a dragon!”

Leiwelles smiles gently, amused by the dragon becoming so defensive over it, especially because her cheeks have filled with color again. “If I may, your Grace, I have heard that there is a powerful magic available only to a lucky few capable of producing such beauty.” The Commander smiles, adding playfully, “Love.”

Geirahoel stands up, her face completely pink from embarrassment as her eyes seem to be dancing around.

“Just accept it already,” adds Ryuogriar bluntly. “It’s truly obvious to everyone that sees you.”

“Th-That’s!... Da-... Mukori is… He’s… I…” She hides her face in her hands, glancing at her helmet. She snatches it and puts it back onto her head, curling into a ball on her chair as Ryuogriar and Leiwelles chuckle together. “Ah, how I envy youth,” remarks the Commander. She realizes that Geirahoel could still be older than her, since dragons are said to be extremely long-lived, but she’s youthful and definitely deeply enamored with someone. And, Leiwelles doesn’t really need or want to make guesses as to who.

Surprisingly, Ryuogriar nods as well. “I agree. She’s a bold one, but I’ve learned from her as well.”

“Your Grace, what is the Fievegal’s intentions, if you don’t mind my asking?”

“Not at all. Our ultimate goal is peace. But, the Empire and the Covenant have made it clear that they intend to interfere with us until we make ourselves known as a sovereign state. So, we have been discussing and enacting plans to make a point without causing damage where possible. We’re hoping to convince both the Empire and the Covenant with the minimum force required.”

“I see. I believe you.”

“Thank you. Now, if you’ll excuse us, we should begin our flight. We have a potentially long night ahead of us.”

Leiwelles nods. “If you need a place to rest your heads or resupply, you are welcome here, your Grace. I can’t formally support your mission, but I can provide food and shelter to diplomatic envoys.”

Ryuogriar smiles and nods. “Thank you. Your hospitality is greatly appreciated.” Ryuogriar stands up, and everyone else follows suit, with everyone but Ryuogriar and Geirahoel bowing. They both maintain decorum as empresses, and the members of Fort Peony show them deference. It's well above their station to determine who to treat like an empress or not, especially when two such beings are dragons that could easily overwhelm the entire fort in seconds. They might be in forms that look like beautiful humans with horns and tails, but they are among the most powerful beings in the world.

As they exit into the courtyard, Ryuogriar faces Leiwelles, who is being followed by her subordinates. “Commander, have you thought about what defense you will mount if the Covenant should come?”

“We’ll have to determine the specifics based on the scope of the forces that are marching on us. As you probably have heard, this fortress has little to no hope of withstanding an attack from dragons, so if we can, we typically

evacuate to the main fort. But," she looks towards the west wall. "The terrain here does provide somewhat of an advantage against a large army, since they have to funnel down. I can't say for certain for various reasons, but if possible, we would uphold our duty and defend."

"I see. That's very brave of you."

Leiwelles smiles softly. "Many of the officers here are low-ranking daughters of nobles, or noble women whose families… are no longer around for one reason or another."

"I understand, though I do wonder why the ratio of men is so low."

Leiwelles smiles with a little disappointment behind her eyes. "The answer we all tell ourselves is tradition. Safety. Pride. All of that is true, but…" She sighs. "It is true for a different reason."

Leiwelles remains silent after that, clearly implying that she's done talking about it. Ryuogriar puts on a sympathetic smile. "Whatever the reason, tradition sounds nice." Ryuogriar smiles and says, "If needed, you may petition the Fievegal for aid, and we will do what is within our power."

"Thank you, your Grace. I have remembered her Greatness, Empress Hekate's promise as well. You are most gracious."

Ryuogriar smiles and nods. She then asks, "Now then, Commander, I would like your permission for us to transform and take flight from the courtyard for our departure."

Leiwelles nods. "I'll allow that. Allow me a moment to inform my people and clear the courtyard. Please be safe on your mission, your Graces."

"Thank you. We will. Farewell, Commander Leiwelles."

After the courtyard is cleared, the soldiers of Fort Peony are granted witness to an arguably once-in-a-lifetime display; four apparently beautiful near-humans in armor each transforming into one of the most terrifying and intimidating beings in the world; the mighty dragons. Blue is the largest, even though Ryuogriar is the oldest of the four, and Rose and Geirahoel are of similar size. Regardless, each of the four easily dwarfs a human, roughly being the size of a multi-passenger airplane.

With a respectful nod to Leiwelles, they take off into the sky, heading west to continue their mission.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 87: Flight of the Valkyries Part 2

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 87: Flight of the Valkyries Part 2

"*Umm… Is this working? Mukori? D-Daniel?*"

It's Geirahoel's voice coming across a technology that surprises everyone and causes a burst of cheers around the device itself. Unlike most of Daniel's creations, which he seems to pull out of a mysterious box in his hidden lab, this one was known by the whole group of companions close to him. He tries calling out, "Settle down, settle down!"

Some are laughing, some are talking, Wenlianna is crying happily as she bounces. It worked during the basic test in the Citadel, but Xyreko could have cheated, and so it was less impressive than knowing Geirahoel and Ryuogriar are possibly hundreds of miles away.

Geirahoel tries again, "*Daniel! I don't know if I'm doing this right! Say something!*"

Daniel uses the microphone, talking loudly over the banter and noise of everyone celebrating. "Valkyrie Three, Mechanic One, I read you loud and clear, over."

"*Great spirits! Ryuogriar! I can hear him! His voice came out of this thing! Just like telepathy! We can talk to Daniel!*"

Daniel chuckles, and Ryuogriar's voice can also be heard, "*Geirahoel, you were supposed to follow the rules. Here.*" There is a light scuff of noise, and

then Ryuogriar's voice is the more clear one. "*Mukori-One, this is Valkyrie One. Pardon the etiquette. It is confusing as to why we must do it, though.*"

Daniel smiles at the others, who are listening anxiously to the conversation. "Valkyrie One, Mechanic One; the reason it's important is for when there are many people on the same band, so that it's clear who is talking and when they're done talking. Grey Knight, report in. Over."

There's a pause, and then a male voice. "*Oh! That's me. Uh, Grey Knight,... No! Emperor, this is Grey Knight. I am here. This… is an amazing device, your Grace. … … … Oh! Over!*"

The group with Daniel chuckles, as does he, and he sighs. He replies, "Grey Knight, the purpose of code names is to not reveal who is who on the radio, just in case the messages are intercepted. Calling me 'Emperor' and 'your Grace' completely defeats the purpose. Over."

"*M-My apologies, my Liege! Over. I will do my best to improve. Over.*"

Daniel massages his temples with his right hand, palm covering his face. Hekate takes the microphone from him, saying excitedly, "I want to try!" She clears her throat. "Grey Knight! This is Spirit One. Report to us if anything bad happens. Or if anything happens. Report to us when you need to tell us stuff. Okay? Over." She looks at Daniel, her big fluffy tail wagging excitedly. Daniel smiles and pets her head. "Good enough, I guess."

"*Spirit One, Grey Knight, I confirm your orders and shall obey. Over.*"

Daniel states, "Better," nodding at Hekate. She relays, "Grey Knight, Spirit One, Daniel -SORRY!- Mechanic One says 'better'! That is all. Over."

Everyone laughs. Vaergraes teases, “This system is more difficult than I thought.”

Daniel replies, “Communicating in code over the radio is very different from communicating in code through writing. You have to keep it concise so the other side doesn’t get overloaded with information and forget important parts. You have to keep it obscure so the enemy can’t figure out who and what you’re talking about. But, we should be alright for now. I just want to get started with practicing it.”

The others nod, and Geirahoel’s voice comes across again, “*Mu-Mechanic One, Valkyrie Three, I apologize for my mistakes. I’ll improve. Valkyries have departed… um… the Flower Garden. Currently observing from overlook point… wh-which one is this?”*

“I think Bravo?” replies Blue’s voice, the only other male on the circuit at the moment, since he’s near Ryuogriar and Geirahoel.

“*We think this is overlook Bravo. No signs of Scruffy Elves. We’re going to engage. Um, over.*”

Hekate replies, “Valkyrie Three, Spirit One, we confirm. But, you’re supposed to request permission to engage. Over.”

“*We had permission to go in the first place!”* complains the fiery orange dragon over the communication device.

Before Hekate snaps in a reply, Choul’s voice comes in, “*Your Gr-… Valkyrie Three, Grey Knight, forgive my saying so, but Spirit One is merely remarking on the idea of mission control. It is better if reports are made as close as possible to the target, and then permission granted to engage, rather than blanket permission. If you had said something that stood out as abnormal to*

any of us, we could ideally prevent you from engaging when there's something to be noticed."

"*I-Is that true, Mukori?*" asks Geirahoel nervously.

Daniel accepts the microphone from Hekate when she hands it to him. "*Grey Knight is correct, Valkyrie Three. But, I did give blanket permission in this case, and the communication systems are still new. As am I to leading. We'll clarify our plans better from now on. Proceed with the mission as discussed, and above all, prioritize safety. That goes for all of you. Over.*"

"*Grey Knight confirms, Grey Knight over.*"

"*Mukori… Valkyries confirm. Um…*"

Daniel glances at the others around him, and he sighs softly. "You're important to me, Valkyrie Three and Valkyrie One. Please be safe. I love you. Valkyrie Four, Rook One, I am entrusting their safety to you two. Good luck and God's speed. Over."

Both Ryuogriar and Geirahoel blurt over the magic 'radio', seemingly trying to compete with each other, "*I love you too, Mukori!*", and shortly after, Rose and Blue's voices repeat, "*Leave their safety to us, your Grace! Over!*"

Daniel sighs as he sets the microphone down. He notices he's being a little more crowded than he was. Reignleif was seated directly next to him on his right, though she feels a little closer than before, and Hekate is seated on his lap now. Specifically, it is Treia, Kera'tai, Aoloan, and Gwenesphia who have pressed in closer to him. Daniel smirks, asking facetiously, "So, who's ready for lunch?"

"Daniel!" snaps Hekate. "Isn't there something you need to say before that?"

“Congratulations Wenlianna?”

Hekate scowls at him. Ironically, Wenlianna is the only one who isn’t crowding him, other than the three Uhl’tall women, Xyreko, Ryukana, and the goblins, who are nearby entertaining the princesses.

Daniel chuckles, and says gently, “I wouldn’t be here without all of you. Strange as it always will be, I do love you all. Thanks for being with me.”

Hekate grins, teasing as she hugs him. “Was that so hard?”

He is crowded in a group hug as Treia leans her weight on him and the others hug them as well, “You’re a jerk sometimes, Daniel.”

He laughs gently. “Forgive me. I was no one special on Earth. Had to come to another world to stumble into all of this.”

“That’s not true,” retorts Gwenesphia. “Two people were summoned, but only one has done anything.”

“That’s not fair to Rikuto. He’s doing what he can with his position, I’m sure.”

“Regardless,” starts Kera’tai. “If no one else wants you, you’ll always have me.”

“Ha! Nice try, Kera’tai!” retorts Hekate. “I’d prefer it if you all *didn’t* want him. No, wait… I’m glad you want him, but… I wish he was… Nevermind! I accept that Daniel is popular because he’s amazing! So there!” She huffs, crossing her arms and spinning around to lean back against Daniel as she sits on his lap.

Daniel teases, “Hekate, Sweetpea, weren’t you going to be my ‘you’re only a man’ reminder?”

She flinches, fidgeting with her hands. “I decided I don’t want to. I can’t tell blatant lies.”

With a chuckle, he jokes, “Well, then, I guess I’ll have to become a lecherous tyrant of a man, huh? Mwahahahaha!”

The others laugh with him, and they enjoy a group hug for a bit longer. When they finally relax again, Daniel looks at Xyreko. “Now then; are we ready to question our ‘scruffy elves’. I assume that’s what Geira meant.”

Reignleif finally speaks up, still simply gently hugging his right arm. “Yes. They are said to share elven and uhl’tall ancestors, or something of the like.”

Vaergraes adds, “I can see it… Elves don’t grow facial hair otherwise.”

“The spare revival potation is prepared,” answers Xyreko. “And, all cursed items, spell amplification items, and poisons have been removed from both, including countermeasures hidden under the skin. You’ll just have to choose which of the assassins you wish to revive.”

“Zenkaoru…” murmurs Thymeria. “They would go to such extremes?”

The others listen with concern on their faces.

“Good,” replies Daniel to Xyreko. “And, the specialized rounds for breaking through their barriers?”

Illianna chuckles, “And Lord Daniel goes even further…”

He scoffs, while Xyreko answers him. “Yes. Two golems will be armed with sharmelkolle magic-infused rounds I call ‘Feldrok Fangs’ in the repeating rifles, two will be armed with cold iron buckshot, ‘Valstein Swarm’ in shotguns, two with grenade launchers loaded with ‘Doom Mire’ immobilizing grenades, and

five armed with fully automatic rifles loaded with cold iron uncharged rounds. Oh! And, immediately outside of the door will be tanks filled with heavy water, in the off chance the assassin escapes."

Daniel nods. "Sounds good. Sounds good."

"What about the magic rifles?" asks Hekate. "Can't we use the ice gun on him?"

Daniel pets her head. "You'll have yours, right? My concern is that they'll have an easier time against magic armaments than non-magic, in all actuality, given how fast they can move and how much magic they could manipulate. I survived thanks to Nemaisol, because it eliminated their magic in my immediate vicinity."

"Then, what is the 'heavy water' for?" asks Thymeria curiously. "To my knowledge, water is an excellent carrier of mana, though, not as efficient as crystals."

Daniel shakes his head. "It's not 'heavy' water because there's a lot of it. It's heavy because it will have similar traits to the thing we used to kill the Devourer."

Thymeria twitches nervously, glancing at her elder sister, Vaergraes. They are still unsure, and Daniel clarifies the actual point, "The water should negate most, if not all magic, and we can keep it elsewhere until myself and the golems are inside, and trap them if they make it out of the room. Then, send it back once we're done."

"What will you do with the assassin after you get the information?" asks Treia. "If you're taking all of these precautions…"

"I'm being extra safe. These guys nearly killed Hekate, Ryuo, and Geira, and were putting up a fight against Vaergraes and Illianna. I wouldn't stand a

chance, normally, so we're setting it up so that there's nothing they can do."

"You don't have to be in the room," growls Hekate, and many of the others nod in agreement with her.

"Act like an Emperor," scolds Gwenesphia gently. "Delegate the task."

Daniel shakes his head. "Again, in this case, I am the strongest asset we have. Thanks to Aoloan and I experimenting earlier, we know my mana is still too weak to consider me a part of this world, so hypnosis, mind control, and magic negation will have no effect on me. If they mimic Ryuo's magic negation spell and incapacitate all of the golems at once, or seal Hekate's power again, I'll still be fighting fit, and roughly on par with the assassins without magic."

No one likes it, but he makes a fair point. Ryukana offers, "This time, I will also be observing, so there should be little that can go wrong."

"Once we're done interrogating, Xyreko will put the assassin into storage, in case we come up with new questions. Plus, I don't necessarily want others to be doing the torture method I'll be using. It's simple to do, but no less inhumane."

Treia sighs, saying bluntly, "Then, I'll be with you. You're still trash at fighting in close quarters, Daniel. If magic is negated, it'll have very little effect on me. And, gatonines have some resistance to hypnosis and mind control. Enough that I'll be able to warn you if I'm losing control."

Daniel nods. Gwenesphia also offers, and Daniel accepts, though a little more reluctantly.

"I'll also join you," adds Aoloan. "I'm not much for fighting, but I'll be useful to help discern lies."

Vaergraes adds, “The rest of us will be on standby to counterattack in the secure zone if things get out of hand.”

Daniel takes a breath and exhales. “Alright. Let's do it.”

***

Shortly after receiving confirmation/permission to start the actual attack, Ryuogriar, Geirahoel, Rose, and Blue are gathered together studying the Covenant’s gathered tribes of warriors. There are still lots of demon-kin, such as goblins, ogres, oni, dattakoriens, imps, and others that side with the Covenant, even though their tribes are being exploited to continue a continental war.

Geirahoel remarks, “These ungrateful fools. They have no idea that Mukori could wipe them all out in moments.”

“It’s not common knowledge that Mukori defeated the Devourer, so it’s reasonable that they simply don’t know,” replies Ryuogriar.

“Ignorance truly is bliss.”

“Before we go, y-your Graces…” murmurs Rose.

Both senior dragons look to her. The pink-hued dragon shrinks a little. “I hope it’s not a bother, but I keep forgetting to ask…”

“Go ahead,” replies Ryuogriar.

“You… refer to his Grace Daniel as… ‘Mukori’?”

“Is that a problem?” asks Geirahoel coldly.

“Wh-What she means is,” starts Blue in an attempt to protect Rose. “You seem to speak much more affectionately of his Grace than our former lord.”

Geirahoel’s icy stare turns into a bone-chilling scowl. Both Rose and Blue shrink under her gaze.

Ryuogriar fills in more gently, but very seriously, “Morthybargaron was a cruel and greed-minded fool. We knew this well before Daniel ever arrived in this world. He was *never* worthy of the name ‘Mukori’.”

“O-Of course, your Grace!” replies Blue nervously.

“If you want more pure blooded dragons,” starts Geirahoel coldly, “Make them yourselves. I intend to do what I want and love whomever I want.” She turns tender and quiet for a moment. “I… want to be with someone I love… and to have a family with that person.” She grips a fist, saying distantly, “Mukori… Daniel… He’s carefree about his life expectancy, but… I… I don’t want him to go…”

Ryuogriar pats her shoulder gently. “We have time, dear sister. Let us ease these burdens on Mukori, so that we might pursue our true goal.”

Geirahoel nods in agreement. She stretches her wings, and the other three do as well, preparing for flight.

Ryuogriar reminds them, “Keep track of where each of us are, and do not focus on the standard soldiers. Our goal is to destroy the leadership, which, if my mana sensing is accurate, they should be concentrated in the Orbicharium. This will be the first time it falls under attack.”

“As you wish, your Grace. We’ll strike first and melt as much of the structure in the first pass as we can.”

Ryuogriar nods. “Good. Stay in contact, and if any of us fall, we regroup together and escape.”

They nod in agreement, and everyone takes off. They fly high to avoid detection, as well as interception. The wyverns that demon-kin can train and ride can’t fly quite as fast as even the lesser dragons, but they can be very numerous.

Ryuogriar casts a wind spell on Rose and Blue, granting each of them a wind barrier that will allow them to pick up more speed on their dive. It also has the added benefit of deflecting some projectiles and weaker spells.

Ryuogriar and Geirahoel delay their own dive for a moment, watching as Rose and Blue gain distance. Orange glows ignite in the evening sky from the dragons igniting their pilot flame, a mere spritz of ignityal compared to the full jet of fire that is to come.

As soon as the two breathe long streams of fire that carve into the shell of the dome-like structure of the Orbicharium, Ryuogriar and Geirahoel begin their falcon-like dive. They pick up speed, similarly lighting their pilot ignityal among their own teeth. However, in addition to a deep inhale through their nostrils, they also simultaneously channel magic into their teeth and along the lining of their mouths.

Just as promised, a massive hole, lined with molten metal, stone, and burning debris has formed in the Orbicharium, revealing the insides like a smashed-open clam.

She can sense barriers being erected, but it’s already too late. The pearlescent white dragon and her junior orange counterpart exhale together, launching forth one of the most destructive forces in the world of Zenkon. Dragon fire alone,

thanks to the unique ignityal that dragons produce, already burns hotter than anything else known to anyone on Zenkon, and magically-enhanced dragons fire is like a wildfire to a candle.

Daniel compares the breath to a ‘laser’, some sort of super-intense light.

Likewise, the ultraviolet core of the flame produces a deep hue, but the intensity also sheds enough light to blind lesser races that look directly at the flame too long.

The dual fire lances easily slice through the remaining pieces of the building, causing beams to screech and everything that the flames pass by to burst into flames.

The points of direct contact are where the real damage come in, deep inside the Orbicharium. The rapid expansion of the floors and ground where the flames contact enough solid mass explodes violently, shattering the walls and crumbling the roof panels of the Orbicharium. There are screams and shouts from all around as the guards try to scramble some sort of defense. But, all four of the dragons made a devastating coordinated strike, strafing by at near supersonic speeds.

Rose and Blue are already most of the way around in a wide left bank, circling around for a second strafe. Ryuogriar and Geirahoel follow the same arc. They’ll make two more passes on the Orbicharium to absolutely annihilate the structure, and they can pick off survivors as they escape, since one of each pair is enough to obliterate the building itself, and only the enhanced fire lance breath of the two greater dragons could harm any of the four without a direct hit.

Geirahoel remarks via telepathy, “*Ha! That was splendid! It has been a while, hasn’t it, Sister?”* Read the latest chapters at novelping.com.

“*Yes, sister. Perhaps the magic power Commander Leiwelles spoke of enhances our offensive magic as well.*”

“*The magic Leiwelles…*” Suddenly, Geirahoel gasps, glancing at Ryuogriar, who grins in return.

“*I am not embarrassed to admit it, my dear sister. I do feel that love has made me stronger.*”

Rose and Blue begin their second pass, breathing a jet of fire at the Orbicharium and destroying the sides that are still somewhat intact. During his strafe, though, Blue notices a figure fleeing down to the left, and he banks hard, swooping down to ignite the escapee. Collateral is inevitable, but the meetings in the Orbicharium were to demon-kin what a gathering of nobles in the east would be, save the servants. It's a gathering of the strongest, wisest, or most beautiful. Servants have no place, since poisonings, espionage, and theft are rampant between the tribes of the Demon Covenant when servants are present, since the servants are expendable.

Blue shows no hesitation, breathing his jet of fire and erasing the demon-kin escaping from the Orbicharium and turning his head to continue his destruction of the building itself from a low angle.

As they’re finishing their bank, Ryuogriar and Geirahoel can see the demon-kin soldiers and warriors scrambling. Torches are being lit in the various camping shelters, including snail-like shells of gartatins, dome-shaped leather huts, and even small burrows in the case of goblins.

They stay focused on their target though, and as they're making the approach, a blast of magic erupts from the wall of the burning and destroyed structure near the closest point of the structure to their approach.

Ryuogriar states through telepathy, "*Geira, continue with the attack. I'll deal with that.*"

"*Understood. Call if you need me.*"

They both nod at each other, and Geirahoel picks up speed, preparing her fire breath and the amplification spell. Ryuogriar ignites her own ignityal, readying for her own attack, but she slows once she's in range of the demon who blasted his way out of the crumbling Orbicharium. Ryuogriar hovers in place with broad sweeps of her wings, swirling smoke and dust all around as the demon stumbles out of the rubble. His clothes are burned and blackened, and he's looking towards the Orbicharium. Or, more specifically, towards Geirahoel, whose ultraviolet breath of fire is still tearing through the large structure as she flies past. She recognizes the demon as Zolorad, a cambion with a large bipedal build with large, upright horns on his head, dark violet skin, a powerful musculature, and strong legs ending in split hooves. A simple, bull-like tail sways behind him for balance, and he cuts an imposing figure.

But, imposing is all he is.

Ryuogriar inhales deeply through her nose, exhaling powerfully with a magic spell enhancing her ignityal-infused breath.

Zolorad whirls at the sound of ignityal atomizing and bursting into unnaturally hot flames. He manages to dive to the side with a spell of condensed wind to push him out of the line of fire. Ryuogriar sweeps towards him, but he skillfully

grips a large chunk of rubble during his tumble on the ground, throwing it the moment he can plant his feet.

The rubble explodes violently at close range to Ryuogriar, vaporized by her fire breath. The blast flinches her, cutting off the fire breath as she shifts her position to search for him.

Zolorad impresses her this time. He catches her tail after leaping through the air, blasting Ryuogriar with wind to help him swing her down, slamming her massive form into the wall. She screeches in surprise and frustration.

A cambion is merely a hybrid demon. They may grow larger and stronger than either of their parents, but Ryuogriar is still a dragon.

Zolorad tries to pin Ryuogriar to the wall with wind magic, but she negates it with her own wind barrier, recovering her flight by kicking off of the wall.

"Ryuo!? Are you alright?"

"*Yes, sweet sister. I underestimated the survivors; the strongest of those inside.*" The pearlescent dragon stares down at Zolorad with a vicious and menacing smirk. She's many times larger than he is, and his attack did virtually nothing to her save catch her off-guard. She never was one for battle and tactics, so it was her own mistake.

"I remember you, Zolorad," replies Ryuogriar with amusement in her voice. "A parasite lingering in the corners."

Zolorad sucks his teeth before retorting, "Tch! I was told you dragons were taking a neutral stance."

"We were, until both Imperial and Covenant warriors and assassins attempted to attack us."

“That’s a lie! You would dare betray the Demon Hegemony over a fabrication?”

“Hegemony now, is it? Interesting. But, we very much faced demon-kin assassins. Or, are the archoneldwyn considered human-kin now?” The dragon is being facetious. Though none of the living dragons are more than a few hundred years old, with Choul likely being the oldest, their view of the other races has always been similar to the feldroks in the sense that there isn’t that much difference between them in the grand scheme of things. Dattakoriens and gatonines are virtually identical, as are the oni, who are said to be descendants of Uhl’tall and an unknown eastern ancestor race, quite possibly the humans or elves.

Zolorad cocks his head, shocked by hearing the name archoneldwyn. As she suspected, he does know of their survival. His confusion seems to be more than Ryuogriar knowing about his apparent secret. He almost looks like he has been betrayed.

That probably shouldn’t surprise Ryuogriar all that much. The two archoneldwyn assassins that attacked were easily more powerful than this hybrid demon. Cambions are officially a race in modern times, since cambion parents produce cambion children, but the first are hybrids between the Uhl’tall and either dattakoriens or humans, which can determine their physical traits to a degree.

Xyreko speaks of Omni-affinity being a stepping stone, and Ryuogriar can use all 6 of the magical elements, but she’s comparatively weak in void and light magic.

But, of course, Zolorad got the short end of the stick.

He shouts, “Come forth, divine power of the wind! Pierce my enemies with the breath of the world!” He channels wind magic into a condensed and whirling

spear-like pocket of unnatural wind.

Ryuogriar smirks. Just as he launches the piercing wind towards her, she sinks into the ground with a suddenness. It's a high-level ground-magic technique; connected land. She doesn't need to move much, and she can steer the movement of dirt and rock such that it can carry her through the ground like a fish through the sea.

Zolorad tries to retreat backwards, unable to attack her under the ground, as her entrance tunnel has closed behind her, and his wind magic isn't strong enough to penetrate very deeply into the solid ground where the Grand City stands.

Of course, Ryuogriar doesn't have that problem, especially when starting beneath the surface. She surges wind pressure out, coupling it with the ground magic and her fire breath to create a bonafide eruption beneath the insurmountably outrivaled demon. Zolorad is ragdolled through the air by the explosion, doing what he can to defend with wind magic from the molten rock and blazing fire. He screams, surging all of his strength into a massive wall of wind that he presses outwards, similar to a shockwave, which shoves much of the airborne rock and 'lava' away from himself and towards Ryuogriar. She shields herself with her wings as her upward momentum slows, sweeping her wings out in a full swing to push open a swath of safety.

Framed by fire and destruction, Ryuogriar truly looks and feels like a dragon. Her reptilian face twisted in a toothy grin cuts a menacing look.

Her moment of terrifying glory is short-lived, though. A sudden figure spears into Zolorad while he's trying to brace for Ryuogriar's next attack.

Massive jaws clamp shut around him as a massive form slides to a stop on the ground. Flames burst forth through gaps in partially-interlocked teeth.

It's the young male blue dragon. He may not possess mana, but he's still extremely powerful. And, he caught Zolorad completely off guard, incinerating the demon in his jaws.

Blue flicks his head to the side as he 'coughs' a short breath, expelling smoke and two horns charred black and embrittled by the intense heat, though the only pieces to survive the sudden attack.

Blue shakes his head, flexing his jaws to cool his mouth. He suddenly flinches when his gaze meets Ryuogriar's.

Rather, when his gaze meets the piercing glare Ryuogriar has locked on him. He stole her triumphant victory. An easy and rather honorless victory, since it was like swatting away a mouse, but her victory no less.

"Y-Your Grace?"

"You stole it from me…"

"I… I was given strict orders to protect you, your Grace. I-I meant no offense."

"I know!" whines Ryuogriar. "But, I wanted to brag!" She whirls glaring at the collapsing heap of rubble that was once the Orbicharium, a gathering place of demon-kin leaders for many decades or even centuries until now.

She sighs, knowing Blue meant well. "Are there any more stragglers?"

"Not unless they're trying to protect themselves inside, your Grace."

“Excellent work.” She looks over her shoulder towards him, but not directly at him. “I appreciate you taking your orders seriously. Thank you.”

Blue bows his head. “I am your loyal servant, your Grace.”

She nods. “Now then, let us finish this mission and-…”

Ryuogriar doesn’t get to finish her sentence. An ear-splitting crack of thunder booms at point blank range, and Blue roars in pain as terrifying crackles of lightning explode around them both.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 88: The Weight of a Shortcut to the Truth

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 88: The Weight of a Shortcut to the Truth

The assassin jolts awake with a violent jerk. Her face twists in confusion as she takes in the ceiling directly above her, which is a very different scenery from the outdoor location where she was first encountered.

Of the two archoneldwyn assassins that attacked Daniel and his companions in the rover during the battle against the 100,000 eastern allied troops, Daniel and the others decided to revive the woman. Hekate gave her customary demands, but the primary focus is that Vaergraes determined that she was the physically weaker of the two during the fight, as her strengths lied in agility and magical prowess. Since they've taken so many precautions against magic, she was voted as the 'safer' option.

The woman pulls at her arms, which are bound 'behind' her back, which is on a slightly sloped bench, and her arms are tied underneath. She tries to struggle and writhe against her bindings, finding her feet, legs, waist, torso, and neck are all bound firmly to the bench.

Daniel approaches so she can see him, and she glares at him silently.

"Afternoon. I'm sure you probably remember me. I'm the human that gave you a run for your money."

The assassin stares at the ceiling, ignoring him. She still tries to pull her hands free, but Daniel made sure her hands aren't coming free of the knots until he

desires it. She's wearing little more than an inexpensive flaxen tunic to ensure she had no remaining hidden weapons or tools to aid her.

He watches her hands try to feel her wrists, where she had subdermal objects hidden. She seems to be surprised, and he asks knowingly, "Oh? Looking for something?"

She sucks her teeth, but still doesn't look at him.

"I have some questions. You can save us both some time and one of us some excruciating suffering by answering them now."

"I am not threatened by you or the crowd of powerful fighters you had to surround yourself with in fear of me."

Daniel simply smiles. "Are caution and fear the same thing? Maybe, I suppose, an argument can be made. Of course, just because you think fear has been removed from you doesn't mean I can't dig deep enough to find it again."

She scoffs, glancing at him with her eyes and smirking as she stares up at the ceiling again. "Do your worst, human. Or perhaps the feldrok girl. Neither of you are powerful enough to accomplish anything."

Daniel sets a pitcher of water on the small table he has next to the bench. "Did you know, dragons and feldroks can be struck down without magic? I have a reputation to uphold now. I think this pitcher of water will be enough."

The assassin begins laughing, and Daniel asks politely, ignoring her laughing, "Who ordered you to attack us during the siege?"

The archoneldwyn woman finishes laughing, resuming watching the ceiling with a content smile. "I'll say you're amusing, with how pathetic you are, human. Whatever your true secret is, I'm sure it'll be revealed soon enough."

“Funny. I was going to say the same to you. Are you sure you don’t want to cooperate? I’d hate to crush your pride.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever met a being as stupid as you, human. Even goblins wouldn’t be so incredibly arrogant.”

“Very well. I tried.” Daniel carelessly tosses a towel over her face, and she chuckles again.

“So, you plan to wash my face? You’re right. I could never imagine a torture like this.”

Daniel picks up the pitcher, looking over his shoulder. Hekate has seen it once already, but Vaergraes and Illianna look unsure. They seem to think he’s as crazy as the assassin believes he is.

“Forty five seconds,” states Daniel.

Hekate retorts, “Ten. Strong people have no idea how easy it is to fall apart.” She nods as she crosses her arms, no doubt remembering back to her days before gaining power in the Citadel. Most of her childhood was suffering, which has given her a grateful perspective on the life she leads now.

“Anyone else want to place a wager?” asks Daniel.

“What are we guessing at?” asks Vaergraes.

“How long she’ll last.”

Both she and Illianna are shocked. “You think she’ll break in seconds?” asks Illianna. The assassin begins laughing, even with the towel over her face. She seems quite comfortable with her current position.

Daniel simply smiles. He watched a video once for reference of a volunteer undergoing it. While the volunteer in the video wasn't a hardened spy trained to withstand torture, it was almost instantaneous that he surrendered his will to resist, describing how instinctively horrifying it was.

Daniel pours the water over the towel covering the assassin's face, and the laughing abruptly stops. She spits and puffs air, and then violently begins shaking her head, while a steady stream of water pours across her face. She begins gasping, followed immediately by coughing and wheezing. She writhes viciously against her restraints, but is unable to move more than tiny squirms while shaking her head violently. The towel clings to her face, and the wheezing becomes labored. She clenches her fists and pulls and tenses in every possible way, but can get no relief from the sensation.

Daniel keeps pouring the water, pacing himself to reach twenty seconds. At about eighteen seconds, choked and raspy cries pitifully leave the assassin's mouth, unintelligible as mere desperate attempts to make a noise other than choking, coughing, and wheezing. It's the only intentional noise she can make, even as she still struggles in futility to make it stop.

Vaergraes and Illianna both find it difficult to watch, and even Daniel would normally feel guilty… if this woman hadn't hurt Geirahoel in front of him and attempted to murder his other loved ones.

The last drops drop from the pitcher at twenty two seconds, and Daniel says with disappointment in his voice. "Huh. I'm already out. Good thing I brought a second pitcher."

"P-Pgeez!" chokes out the assassin, spitting and coughing on moisture as she gasps to catch her breath, desperate for air while still convinced she's

borderline being smothered and drowning simultaneously. “P-Preez m-maeg it s-s-sop!”

Daniel removes the towel, and the woman’s face has gone pale and her pupils are constricted in horror, staring at his face, which is now cold and unsympathetic. “You don’t look sincere enough yet.”

He starts to put the towel over her face, but she screams as loud as her weakened voice can go, “Z-Z-Zolorad! Zolorad told us to spy on you, and if the opportunity arose, t-t-to k-kill you! I swear it!”

“Zolorad sounds like a scapegoat.” Daniel moves the towel over her face again, and she screams, shaking her head as he sets it across her face. “I swear it’s the truth! I swear it!”

Daniel hands the empty pitcher to Hekate. “Sweetpea, would you refill this with the sink over there please? I’m sure it’ll last long enough for me to make use of the second-…”

“All right! All right! Zolorad is a puppet! He wanted to rule the Covenant, but he’s too weak on his own! He did give the order, b-b-but…”

“You can stall for time all you want, Miss. You hurt people I care about. If you’re going to waste my time and…”

“His name is Brosjak! A-A-An archoneldwyn! He is the spymaster for Zolorad! P-Please! Listen to me!”

Daniel looks at Vaergraes and Illianna, who shake their heads. They’ve never heard the name.

“How many archoneldwyn are there?”

“J-J-Just the three of us! Just three! Only three!” The assassin is shivering in terror, and Hekate grimaces as she approaches with the refilled pitcher. “Wh-What’s that smell?”

Daniel looks. There is a puddle under the woman’s waist, and liquid is dripping to the floor. The smell, however, is more distinctly the number two excrement.

“Seems she didn’t empty out when she died. Do you seriously expect me to believe there are only three of you? I know you think I’m stupid, but…”

“It’s the truth!” screams the assassin, her voice wavering and giving out intermittently. She sounds near to losing her voice entirely.

In truth, Daniel doesn’t want to use a second pitcher, and had hoped he wouldn’t have to use the first. He can’t be sure whether she’s telling the truth or not without the threat, though.

She adds desperately and urgently, barely able to muster above a gravelly whisper, “There were only three of us. We were found in stasis together, only three of us. Please believe me. I swear it’s the truth! H-H-He’ll kill me for telling you.”

“You didn’t seem all that afraid of death a couple minutes ago. Why should I believe you are now?”

“N-Not d-d-death…” whispers the woman, her face turned towards Daniel, even with the towel still covering her. “P-please… Please not again…”

Daniel looks to Aoloan, who is the furthest away. She is also uncomfortable, but she gives him a thumbs up. The woman is apparently telling the truth.

“Tell you what, Miss,” starts Daniel as he takes the towel off once more. She stares pleadingly into his eyes, hanging on his every word now. “How about you

accept a magical contract…”

“Yes! I accept! P-P-Please don’t do that again! I’ll do anything! I’m sorry! Please!”

“You didn’t let me finish. One that gives me complete control over you and makes you completely unable to do anything that I disapprove of, including lying. You will be every bit a slave. Frankly, I’d rather kill you. Slavery is pretty scummy, and I feel icky for every time I’ve used it so far. But, you’re more useful alive. If you choose death, I’m going to refill pitchers until you die. If you accept the contract, I’m going to turn you against your alleged one remaining comrade. You will tell me everything about him, everything about your weapons, everything about yourself.”

“I-I-I ac-ac-acept the c-contract, Master! Ha-Happily! Anything!”

Daniel strokes his chin. “Hmm… Know what? That’s not fair. You don’t really have a choice, do you? Of course you’d pick the contract between those two. I’ll show you mercy. Instead, I’ll simply put you into a void bag and destroy it. How does that sound? You won’t even know you’re gone.”

She stares at him with horrified eyes. As Daniel suspected, demon-kin are more afraid of the mysterious nothingness of that option, as opposed to the potential for an afterlife when dying normally.

“Those still sound like terrible choices,” replies Hekate.

Daniel shrugs. “She’s lucky she’s getting a choice at all. She nearly killed Geirahoel right in front of me, not to mention you and Ryuo, as well as Vaergraes and Illianna.

“E-E-Even if y-y-you offer a swift and honorable death, I-I-I’ll choose the contract, Master… Please… s-s-spare me… I don’t… I don’t want… I don’t want to suffer… Please have mercy… I’ll tell you everything. I’m sorry. You were right and I was wrong…”

Daniel stares at her for a long time, and her pale eyes water. He sighs, finally looking away. “Xyreko, bring what you need for the contract. Let’s get this over with.”

“As you wish,” replies Xyreko as she enters the room. She already has everything she needs, and they perform the contract ritual as was done with the dragons. Her name is revealed to be Doephluev, and the contract mark appears on her chest. Afterwards, Daniel thinks carefully about an order to test her. He states coldly, “Doephluev, I order you to beg me to use a second pitcher on you.”

The assassin's eyes go wide in horror, and she shakes her head until she tenses. “M-M-Master, p-p-please u-u-use a s-s-second pitcher on me…” She closes her eyes as tears stream down her face, while she continues begging for what she doesn’t want.

Daniel starts to move the towel over her face, and although she shakes her head desperately and trembles like a chihuahua, she continues to plead for him to do it.

Vaergraes stops his arm, saying softly, “Daniel… please don't. It's in effect. Please release the order.”

Doephluev is still begging, and Daniel lets her do so a moment longer. He finally says, “That's enough, Doephluev. Stop begging. You pass.”

Daniel tosses the towel on the floor as he walks out, leaving everyone else to sigh relief as Doephluev cries.

Hekate is the one to approach the assassin and untie her. She then instructs, “Xyreko, please escort Doephluev to a cell and let her clean up and sleep.”

“Will do, your Greatness.” Soldier golems escort the assassin out, and she trembles as she walks slowly and wearily. Once she’s gone, Xyreko adds, “Hekate,... You should go check on Daniel.”

Hekate cocks her head, but she certainly has no objections. “Where is he?”

“The hangar. He had me transport him there immediately.”

Hekate nods, and she asks Vaergraes, Illianna, and Aoloan, “Want to come along?”

Vaergraes nods. “Yes, please.”

Hekate steps closer and begins casting the teleportation spell.

The four of them arrive in the hangar bay, where a surprising noise finds their ears. A man is yelling as flesh strikes metal. The four search, and Hekate spots him first. “D-Daniel!?” She runs to him, followed by the other three, who also call out, “Daniel!”

They slow down cautiously when they find Daniel. His face is bloody, and blood is smeared on the exterior wall of the lounge area, which is made of stone blocks.

He punched the wall, and has only now finally stopped, cupping his hand near his chest as he supports himself against the wall with his bloody left hand dripping blood down his face.

Hekate cautiously approaches him, asking “Daniel…?”

Daniel seems to lose strength, and he sinks to a kneel against the wall. His gaze is distant as he pants, his face contorted in pain.

But, not all of that pain is from what he just did.

He sniffles, palming his face to try to calm himself as he smears more blood on his face, seemingly oblivious to his hands. He doesn’t move or even flex his right hand, though.

Hekate approaches him, hugging him. “Daniel… what have you done?”

He finally responds to her, his voice alien to her. “I… feel sick… I… I was so angry… but…” He closes his eyes, and tears stream down his cheeks, evidenced by the path they make through the blood, following the blood trails to some degree.

For the first time since they met, Daniel is crying, and Hekate has no idea what to do. All she can do is hug him. She whispers, “Daniel…” She does her best to comfort him, and Vaergraes approaches as well, kneeling close by to inspect Daniel’s right hand. The way he’s holding it, it hurts him immensely, and it’s possible he broke bones.

Hekate whispers softly, “Daniel… She’s our enemy. No one thinks less of you.”

“You should,” chokes out Daniel. “No one should do that… I… I went too far…”

“You got the information we needed… I… I think I’m glad you’re not happy, or at least that you aren’t as cruel as you appeared. But, you don’t have to hurt yourself, Daniel…”

“I should’ve stopped. I should’ve found another way…”

“Then… do that next time. You did the best you could. And, you will save lives with the information you gained.”

Daniel doesn’t agree with her, but he does rest, letting her comfort him as he finally calms down. It hurts Hekate’s heart to see him like this, and she looks at Vaergraes, nodding. Vaergraes nods in return, casting healing magic on Daniel’s hand to undo the damage.

Vaergraes adds gently, “You pressed her to make sure the contract really could overpower her. I don’t blame you, Daniel. And, I stepped in when the answer was certain. Forgive me if you thought I was undermining you.”

Daniel nods. “I know. Thank you for stopping me.” He clenches his left fist, adding quietly, “My anger… The darker part of me wanted to do it anyways… to make her suffer for the attack. For the fear I felt…” He finally relaxes, saying gently, “Thank you Vaergraes. I’m sorry you all had to see this…”

Vaergraes replies gently, “Don’t mention it. I don’t believe any method I know of would have succeeded. Her response was visceral; unavoidable. Your method is terrifying.”

Hekate replies to the Uhl’tall arch priestess, “I said that the strong don’t know what it’s like to break. She had plenty of chances to avoid it.”

“What will you do with her?” asks Aoloan gently. “Is she really still useful?”

Hekate nods, answering for Daniel, who doesn’t seem eager to answer. “Yes. She may still give us insight on the archoneldwyn. And,…” She looks at Daniel with a soft smile. “Daniel won’t exterminate a race. We can’t do much for them, but we don’t have to be the ones to destroy them.”

“Were there any repercussions on the two Stalvaltan soldiers?” asks Daniel quietly. Xyreko’s voice answers from seemingly everywhere and nowhere specific at the same time, “*No, Daniel. The amnesia spell worked flawlessly. I recommend performing the spell after she has fallen asleep.*”

Daniel nods, all but whispering, “Please do.”

“I know you’re reflecting and you likely already know this, Daniel,” starts Vaergraes as gently as she can. “But, this is exactly why revenge is dangerous.”

He nods. “You’re right. I did already know that. That’s what made it so much worse.”

“Would you like amnesia magic to be cast on you?” asks Illianna.

Daniel shakes his head. “No. I have to remember, so I don’t cross the line again.”

After Vaergraes expends most of her magic energy just to heal Daniel’s broken right hand, Hekate uses ice magic on his left to help soothe it. It doesn’t seem broken, thankfully, but it will definitely swell.

After a little longer, Daniel finally does his best to return to as normal as he can get, at least as far as planning. “So, does anyone know who this ‘Brosjak’ individual is? Ever seen or heard his name?”

Vaergraes, Illianna, and Aoloan shake their heads. “No. I’m quite familiar with Zolorad. He was always one of the tribal chieftains causing trouble and denouncing my actions,” replies Vaergraes. “That he has a spymaster that is stronger than he is does not surprise me. He’s cunning, but prone to overestimating his own abilities.”

“He’s a cambion,” adds Illianna. “He’s especially strong for his people, but they are not particularly well-liked by the other tribes. They strongly over-compensate for their perceived inferiority of their ancestors. Aggressive, a bit greedy, and rather insular when it comes to politics.”

Aoloan adds, “They demand aid in hard times, as well as during expansion, but generally provide very minimal aid in return when the situation is reversed. I remember my father complaining about it a lot.”

“Regrettably true,” replies the former ‘queen’ of demons. “And, Zolorad has been their representative for years. Now, apparently, he is the one running the Covenant.”

“Wrong,” counters Hekate. “He’s being puppeteered by this Brosjak guy. Right, Daniel?” She looks at Daniel, and he nods wearily. “I have to agree. If Brosjak is the spymaster and he’s truly stronger than Zolorad, then he is likely a figurehead at best. Given the events since I killed the red knight, I think it’s not too much of a stretch to assume Brosjak would use someone like Zolorad to lure me out. Or, the ‘Harbinger of Calamity’ at least.”

The others nod as Vaergraes replies, “I have to agree, Daniel. It ironically sounds like something Zolorad would do.”

Illianna chuckles. “That is ironic. And, a little surprising that he hasn’t noticed.”

“Aoloan, did you sense any deception when she claimed there are only three archoneldwyns?”

“No, Daniel. Though, under the kind of pressure she was under to answer, I wouldn’t say with absolute certainty. Only moderate assuredness.”

Daniel nods as he thinks. Hekate asks, “Daniel, why not just contract her right away and order her to truthfully answer you?”

Daniel doesn’t have an answer right away, but Vaergraes speaks up. “It can be risky. A question with a potentially subjective answer can create a mess and potentially kill the contracted person. For instance, we all know two plus two is four and three plus one is four. But, if you ask someone under contract ‘is two plus two the same as three plus one?’, the answer very much could be yes or no based on perspective. And, if that person knows that, it could lock them up and destroy their mind trying to force an answer.”

“Couldn't they just say that? That it can have both answers?”

“That was just an example, but contracts operate on absolutes, not ambiguity.”

Hekate ponders the answer, not fully understanding, but trying to figure it out.

“She's saying the contract doesn't know fact,” starts Daniel in reply. “And ‘truth’ can be whatever the person believes to be true. If they simultaneously hold two conflicting beliefs that they know conflict, then the ‘truth’ is not something they can actually answer.” Daniel shifts to sit with his back against the wall he was striking, relaxing a little more. He finally inspects his left hand, which is pale from Hekate’s ice magic, but red cuts and dark bruises are scattered around his hand.

“Truth and fact are not the same things, unfortunately,” adds Daniel as he stares vacantly at his hand. “At least not in the mind that believes it to be truth in an absence of fact.”

“What does Earth do? O-Other than… the water.”

Daniel scoffs, shaking his head quietly. “For detecting lies, there is a technology that reads a person and compares moments when they’re lying to when they’re telling the truth. The accuracy is still based on whether or not the person is delusional or mistaken, skilled at tricking the machine, or doesn’t have a biological response to lying like most people do.”

“Hmm…” hums Hekate as she thinks. Aoloan adds, “The same weaknesses even I have, it seems. If the person doesn’t know or believes something that isn’t true as being true, then they will appear as truthful.”

Vaergraes chimes in, “If it’s a matter of being absolutely certain in information gathering, only master dawnseers would be able to peer through the mana of the world and see the facts as they are. I’ve only ever heard of such dawnseers, though. Most focus on the arts of either premonition or postmonition to try to understand the future or past, respectively. Seeing facts in the present beyond the visible is a combination of both arts and even more dangerous and delicate than one or the other.”

Daniel finally stands up, and the others stand up to join him, still worried about him. He looks idly at the blood he left on the wall, saying, “Xyreko, I’m sorry about the mess. I’ll clean it up myself later.”

“*Think nothing of it, Daniel,*” replies the golem’s voice remotely once more. “*I’ll have it cleaned up soon. I’m cataloging the information and discussing with the others our next steps.*”

He nods, looking at the four that are with him. “I’m going to apologize to Doephluev. I got what I wanted out of her, and I want to say it before we erase what happened.” Find the original chapter at novelping(.)com.

“What? Why?” asks Hekate. “Won’t she just forget the apology?”

Daniel is quiet for a moment, and she droops her ears to the side. He replies softly, “I want to apologize to the person I hurt, rather than someone who won’t know what I’m talking about. Neither way will make it right, but I need to say it.”

She nods as she ponders his words. “I think I understand… But, won’t she just be a mean butt again anyways?”

“It’s the principle of the matter. Nothing more. It’s for me more than anything.”

She nods again. “Alright.”

Daniel looks at the others, saying softly, “You don’t have to come with me. I’ll do this myself.”

Vaergraes and Illianna nod gently, understanding. Aoloan says softly, “I want to come with you. To be there for you if you need help.”

“Thank you. I won’t stop you,” replies Daniel gently. She smiles and nods, and both she and Hekate accompany him back to the cell where Doephluev is being kept. The guards open the door, and the three step inside. The assassin notices them as she’s sitting on her bed, freshly cleaned and in a clean dress. She tenses and fear immediately fills her expression.

Daniel says as gently and softly as he can, “Doephluev,…” He bows, adding, “I’m sorry. I let my anger guide me, and I crossed the line beyond what I wanted to do. I know an apology alone doesn’t undo what I did, but I am genuinely sorry.”

She glances nervously between the three, and Hekate says softly, “He speaks the truth. I don’t know why he wants to, but he’s sincere. We’re going to help you, against our better judgment. Get some sleep, and tomorrow you’ll wake up as good as new. And, that, you can thank Daniel for.”

Doephluev is still very afraid, and she avoids eye contact with Daniel. Daniel straightens back up, adding gently, “That’s all I wanted to say, Doephluev. Sleep peacefully.”

He turns and leaves, followed by Hekate and Aoloan. Once outside, Aoloan asks gently, “Daniel? How are you feeling?”

“I’ll be alright. Thank you. Sorry you had to see me like that.”

She smiles gently. “It’s one more thing I know about you.” She looks at the cell they just left, saying gently, “If you’d like, I can use hypnosis so she doesn’t have trouble going to sleep.”

Daniel nods. “If you would, thank you. And, when you’re done, I’d like you to try to use it on me.”

Hekate offers, “I’ll help you go to sleep, Daniel.”

“No. That reminds me that, with magic now, I need to know if I’m vulnerable. Aoloan specializes in mind control magic. We’ll try with her and Vaergraes, just to be sure.”

Hekate blushes as she glares up at him. “Y-You…! That’s as good as just asking to be seduced! No, that is asking!”

He scoffs, and pets her head, though it’s more gentle and less playful than usual. “I’m sure they’ll behave themselves with the risk of their faces being chewed off lingering over them, right?”

She crosses her arms and looks away from him. “I’m not a performing face-chewer. Don’t think I’ll just do it whenever you want.”

Daniel is able to chuckle finally. “Fair enough, Sweetpea.”

“I'll meet up with you in a few minutes, Daniel. Hekate.”

“I'll be in my quarters. No rush.”

Aoloan casts hypnosis on Doephluev, allowing Xyreko to send in the spellmaster when he’s available.

The succubus then makes her way to Daniel’s room, knocking and entering. There, he and Hekate are being questioned by Reignleif, Gwenesphia, and Treia, who are upset that Daniel hurt himself, but more focused on comforting him.

Daniel notices Aoloan. “Aoloan. Thanks for coming. Any trouble?”

She shakes her head. “None. She went right to sleep.”

“Good to hear. We’ll leave the rest to Hoka and Xyreko.”

Aoloan nods in agreement, briefly looking at the crowded mess of statues, flowers, and the somewhat egg-shaped giant statues -three of them- that are positioned in various areas around Daniel’s room. Daniel mentioned that the three Dragon Empresses have made themselves at home in his room, even though they have their own private quarters.

That said, he’s also not especially defensive about his space, and welcomes his companions whenever they want to speak to him.

Daniel explains, “Aoloan is going to attempt hypnosis magic on me. Ideally, I’d like to know what it feels like, and if it works on me.”

Reignleif looks at Aoloan, but doesn’t object. She also seems to understand and agree with the logic, simply nodding to approve.

Treia, however, complains a little. “Daniel… What will you do if you can’t withstand it?”

“Withstand? It won’t melt my brain, will it?”

“How should we know!? Vaergraes, the former demon tyrant, one of the most powerful demons in the world, has to expend ALL of her mana just to heal your hand!”

“It wasn’t all of it this time,” retorts Daniel, earning him an angry scowl from the gatonine woman as her ears fold back and her tail flops back and forth. Daniel adds in his own defense, “Whe-Wherever my mana is coming from, it does seem to be getting stronger.”

“That’s not an excuse…” grumbles Treia.

Gwenesphia offers gently, “Treia, Daniel’s not entirely wrong. Even if I dislike him always finding himself in danger and risking his life, it’s better that we know what he can take, and what risks face him. As with any of us.”

Treia sighs. “And you, Hekate? Will your Greatness allow this?”

Hekate nods. “Better to learn in safety than in battle. And, if Daniel feels any pain or something seems wrong, we’ll stop, right?”

Aoloan nods vigorously. “Of course!” She teases deviously, “I still haven’t had my turn with him.”

Hekate points at her, adding fiercely, “If you use it on him after this, I won’t just chew your face off, Aoloan.”

Aoloan smiles and bows. “I wouldn’t dare, your Greatness. I have had ample opportunity and have controlled myself. I want Daniel’s love, not just his body.”

Hekate crosses her arms and huffs. “I have to respect that answer. Now, go ahead with the test.”

Aoloan nods, and she crawls onto the bed to join the others, kneeling before Daniel, who is seated. She begins casting the spell, “{Hear me and grant me your blessings, oh spirits of dreams; bring me the mastery of he who stands before me, and make my whispers into thoughts. Kieraria whispers of dreams.}”

A magical energy swirls around Aoloan’s hand, and a faintly visible mist appears around Daniel, concentrated mostly at his head. He studies the mist for a moment, observing as it seems to close in on him.

Daniel twists his face a little, and Hekate asks instantly, “Daniel? Are you alright? Is it hurting you?” She stops suddenly when he holds a finger up.

“I… hear laughing… and whispers. But,...” He looks at Hekate, and then Reignleif, Gwenesphia, Treia, and Aoloan in order. Aoloan slumps, shaking her head. “I can’t do it. It’s the first time I felt it. It’s like… trying to grip water with my hand. The spell simply won’t take hold.”

“And the whispering?” asks Hekate.

Reignleif answers, “The spell calls upon spirits known as the Kieraria. They’re similar to pixies, and only answer to those with the applicable blessings.”

Daniel twitches and looks at Nemaisol.

“Something wrong?” asks Gwenesphia.

“Hm? Oh, no. It’s nothing. Thank you, Aoloan. I’ll do the same with Vaergraes later to verify, but it’s good to know where we stand. Is there anything to be done if I hear the whispering start?”

Aoloan looks aside, uncomfortable with the answer she has to give.

Reignleif answers in her place, “To resist psychic spells, you must have a considerable amount of mana, I’m afraid. If you reach the threshold of where they can take control…”

“We’ll just have to come up with a password.” Daniel writes a note real quick, and then he hands it to Reignleif. She reads it, twitching in surprise. “This password, as long as I say it, means that I’m safe.”

Reignleif passes the note around, and everyone reads it. They are equally surprised.

After all, the note says that the opposite is true. The password will be confirmation that he’s hypnotized, and it’s not to be discussed with him, as he needs to believe it still is the ‘proof’ that he’s not hypnotized.

Of course, long before he’ll ever need to deal with hypnosis, there is a much more grave issue afoot.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 89: The Fallen Valkyries

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 89: The Fallen Valkyries

“BLUE!” screams Rose as a sudden flash of powerful lightning strikes him from seemingly nowhere. Ryuogriar launched herself backwards to not get caught in the same spell, but she quickly scans for the cause of the attack. The armor they’re all wearing should have been able to resist magic, especially lightning magic, as the metal is conductive enough to shunt the electricity to ground, or so Daniel has explained.

The only alternative would be if the spell was generated within Blue’s body, which would take an immense amount of precision and control, denoting a mastery of magic. In addition, it would require an extremely high amount of mana.

Ryuogriar quickly casts healing magic. Like all of the greater dragons, she can use all six of Zenkon’s magical base elements, though light magic is one of her weakest.

Getting too close to Blue is extremely dangerous, but she can try to stave off death. Rose swoops in without thinking, and Ryuogriar cries out, “No! Get away from hi-!” Ryuogriar looks down when a magic circle appears below her, and she gasps. She wasted time to be surprised and it’s now too late.

She tries to react and create a barrier, but the most powerful singular spell that Ryuogriar knows of spawns above her, shattering her preliminary barrier; Eruption of the Sky.

A devastating explosion slams Ryuogriar from above, and she cries out, feeling the concussive impact rattle and break bones, slam her teeth together, and pummel her insides. She's still conscious, but she's in immense pain, and she has to try to lift her head. She still hasn't found the attacker. There aren't many in the entire world of Zenkon that should be able to do so much damage to a lesser dragon, let alone a greater dragon. The amount of mana required should make them easy to detect, but it's just like the two archoneldwyn assassins that nearly killed Daniel. They were undetectable until they launched their attack. It's the same kind of spell everyone suspects Daniel uses, when in fact he had no mana to begin with.

Ryuogriar looks to Rose, who is trying to help Blue with a potation.

And, Geirahoel arrives, hovering over Ryuogriar. "Ryuo! Where is it coming from!? I can't find anything!"

Ryuogriar decides to try one last thing. She begins channeling her mana to begin the spell to negate magic. It should be able to reveal the archoneldwyn assassin, even for a moment.

But, before she can finish her spell, at a point that is central between all four of the dragons, a sudden black and purple spark appears, and one of the most destructive dark magic spells ignites; abyssal singularity. Unlike a black hole, which is very similar, abyssal singularity doesn't annihilate matter. But, it does pull objects towards it with powerful attraction, and if sustained, can crush them in on each other.

All four dragons, as the most massive unanchored things present, are yanked towards the singularity, slamming into each other as they scream in surprise. Again, it's a powerful spell that very, VERY few people in the world should be

capable of alone, let alone following two other similarly powerful and masterfully-cast spells.

Ryuogriar screams in pain as she and Geirahoel are crushed together in the middle, curled around each other as their bodies are being forced towards the singularity's center with enough force to strain every joint in their body, pull their muscles painfully, and even begin cracking and breaking bones.

Dragon bones.

Ryuogriar tries to search with her eyes as her vision struggles to stay clear. That the mage attacking them is keeping them pinned so long is difficult to believe. The only reason Rose is taking less damage is the fact that she's pinned to Blue, who is pinned to Ryuogriar and Geirahoel, making Rose the furthest away from the singularity.

Rose chokes out in terror, "R-Ryuo…!"

Ryuogriar can't form words. She can barely think. Pain is searing through her. Geirahoel was shot by Daniel during the dragons trying to capture the Citadel, and she only technically nearly died, and there was enough time that she didn't need a revival potation. However, she's whimpering and screaming as well, unable to endure the pain.

Ryuogriar tries to take a breath, and she reaches out with telepathy. "*R-Reina, n-no time… we're…*"

Ryuogriar hears a pop in time with a jolt through her spine and skull, and her vision goes black.

***

Daniel and his companions run to the hangar, gathering there in a state of emergency. Reignleif, who is flying over Daniel's shoulder, found him after receiving an incomplete telepathic message from Ryuogriar, before Ryuogriar seems to have disappeared from a mana perspective.

And, so has Geirahoel.

A massive discharge of magic explodes in the hangar, dropping two massive reptilian bodies with a golem flying a little further and landing.

The two bodies are easily recognizable as a young pink dragon and a young orange dragon, but only one of them scrambles up. "Where's-!?"

Rose, the pink dragon, looks around. She bows. "D-Emperor! Please forgive me! She's-...!"

"Revival potation! Now!" shouts Daniel as he runs to Geirahoel's head, which lays lifeless on the floor. "What happened!?" shouts Daniel, even more urgent and angry than anyone has heard him yet.

Xyreko, the golem that retrieved the two via teleport, reappears once more with the revival potation. She gives it to Daniel as he shouts, "Open her mouth!"

Rose, flustered and crying, complies quickly. She lifts Geirahoel's head so that her maw is present, and Daniel climbs inside her mouth, dumping the revival potation inside, ensuring not a single drop is wasted. He then calls out, "Healing potation!"

Hekate is there, shoving the requested jar into his hand, shouting back, "It's already opened!"

Daniel takes it, quickly dumping it down Geirahoel's maw as well.

Vaergraes urges, “Daniel, get clear before she can move again.”

Hekate pulls him clear of the dragon’s mouth, and Daniel pets Geirahoel’s gigantic face, urging, “Come on, come on, wake up! Rose! Explain!”

Rose flinches, looking down. “F-Forgive me, your Grace! We-… It was sudden! I… We never saw the attacker. It just… Blue was k-killed so suddenly… and then Ryuogriar was hit by an explosion from above. When Geirahoel and I tried to move in, I…” She claws at her head, which is missing her helmet. She’s trying to make sense of what happened. It’s clear it was brutal and disorienting, and she still has trouble making sense of the sudden attack.

Geirahoel coughs, startling everyone, but her body comes back to life, and Daniel’s legs give out. He sinks to his knees as he hugs the end of the orange dragon’s nose. Hekate joins him, hugging her, and Reignleif pets her junior’s face as well, all three of them afraid to lose anyone.

Daniel asks, “W-Where’s Ryuo? Is Ryuo alright? And Blue?”

Rose looks away, shaking her head. “I… I had… to choose, your Grace. I…” She begins trembling, pain and sadness in her eyes. “I… I could only save… I’m not strong enough… P-Please… f-forgive me…”

Daniel is horrified, and his heart tightens painfully. He wants to scream and yell, to fight and seek revenge, and to destroy everyone and everything involved.

He manages to contain his anger and not direct it at Rose.

He knows, deep down, she’s telling the truth. She is the smallest of the four dragons that were on the mission, and she managed to rescue Geirahoel. Blue and Ryuogriar are possibly too heavy on their own for the relatively mana-less

dragon to lift, and she still chose to save one of them, rather than fleeing and saving herself.

Daniel slumps to the floor, and Hekate asks, “Wh-What does this mean? Where is Ryuo?”

Daniel is unable to speak. He strikes the floor with the bottom of his fist, trying to think of what to do.

Revival potations are powerful, but they have a limit. If the soul has definitively departed from the body, the revival potation can restore the biological functions of the body, but not the life itself. That means there is a time limit, and they likely got extremely lucky with Geirahoel. Xyreko intercepted them about 20 miles away from the Grand City. At least ten minutes have passed since Rose was able to escape. Storage magic can obviously extend the time limit, but Rose did everything she could to escape. Ryuogriar and Blue are on the clock, and they are at the mercy of the attacker; likely the third archoneldwyn known as Brosjak who seems to be pulling the strings behind the scenes of the Demon Covenant.

“Daniel, say the word and I will send the full might of the Citadel to retrieve them.”

Daniel clenches his fists. He still has his head down as he stares at the solid stone floor. “Xyreko… how many of the ordnancemen are still in the Citadel?”

“O-Ordnancemen?” asks Xyreko, surprised. In general, golems can do anything, though there are many jobs that the denizens of the Fievegal are provided to earn their keep, supplemented by golems where necessary.

The only concern with numbers that would not be able to be supplemented by golems is the one thing in the Citadel the golems cannot lay hands on.

Daniel nods, finally sitting up to a single knee as he looks at his hands. The hands that made that terrible device.

Hekate asks, “Daniel? What are you planning.”

Daniel growls in a voice that frightens everyone near him, “The archoneldwyn want to go to war, I will show them war beyond their wildest imaginings.”

“Mukori, you can’t mean…” starts Reignleif, worried about Daniel’s cold and vicious sounding tone.

He looks at her. “We’ll find Ryuogriar first, and then I’d like to see our enemy escape calamity.”

He’s not joking, he’s not making light of the situation, and he’s not holding back. His eyes are nearly empty with killing intent. Enjoying the story? Read on at novelping.com.

Hekate finally realizes what Daniel means, and she replies, “Daniel, you can’t. You swore you wouldn’t use that.”

“I don’t care. I’ll destroy anyone that does this to us.” He stands up, growling, “Xyreko, gather the ordnancemen. Reignleif,…”

Reignleif hugs her own abdomen, replying nervously, “I won’t help with that. You’re not thinking clearly. You wouldn’t want to normally…”

“I want to kill them all!” shouts Daniel. “I’m tired of this! I’ve had it! We try to be as reserved and isolated as possible, and they continuously try to take and take and take! I…”

Daniel flinches when his angered and wandering gaze comes across the goddess, who has appeared and is staring at him intently. “Don’t stand in my

way. Please, I beg of you."

She simply stares at him silently.

"I had nothing to lose when I came here! Now I do! And, I won't sit by and let the people I care about be taken away without doing anything!"

"Daniel…" urges Hekate gently.

"Mukori…" warns Reignleif protectively. None of them want Daniel to do anything that he'll regret.

Gwenesphia also tries to gently urge him, "Daniel, calm down. We'll sort this out. Lady Geirahoel can help us find Lady Ryuogriar."

"But this attacker, he's likely an archoneldwyn. If he gets the drop on us…"

"Daniel," states Ryukana finally.

He snaps his gaze to her, controlling himself enough to not snap at her. Barely.

"I will not stop you, Daniel, but I can't say what will happen if you go through with it. Instead, I'd like to offer you an alternative."

"What?" asks Daniel a little sharply.

"You defeated a global threat and are owed a wish."

Daniel flinches, surprised by this revelation. "What about Shek?"

Ryukana smiles. "That was but a whim. A favor at best. Make your wish, but think about it carefully. The Daniel standing before us ready to use the worst weapon in the world is not the Daniel who will live with the consequences, nor the Daniel who so many have come to admire and care about."

Daniel looks around himself, finally finding a shred of his normal state of being. Everyone who he makes eye contact with seems genuinely worried; Reignleif, Hekate, Gwenesphia, Treia, Aoloan, Kera'tai, Vaergraes, Illianna, Thymeria, Xyreko, Erimaya, and Wenlianna. Daniel finally softens, though he is still visibly pained. He's still upset about his treatment of Doephluev, who should still be asleep, though the amnesia spell has been cast. He has to avoid taking his anger out on her.

And, even more importantly, he can't direct his anger towards the people around him now, the people supporting him and offering him comfort.

Daniel exhales, trying to calm down. His heart is still tight and in pain. "I'm sorry… I shouldn't have threatened… that. What are the limits of the wish, Lady Ryukana?"

She smiles in relief. "Express your desire, and I can determine whether or not it's possible. I don't have the full power I had, since I'm technically banished, but I still have most of my power."

"I assume you could erase the archoneldwyn that attacked them from existence, yes?"

She is quiet for a moment, replying softly, "I would have to identify him or her first, but yes."

Daniel nods, "What about retrieving Ryuogriar and Blue?"

This seems to restore Ryukana's more positive hopes, and she smiles again. "If that is your wish."

Daniel thinks for a moment. He asks the others, "Any other suggestions?"

Wenlianna asks, “Couldn’t you wish for magical power? Enough to fight and find her yourself?”

Daniel looks to Ryukana, and she nods. “You could make that wish, and I believe I would be able to grant what you need.”

Daniel looks at Nemaisol. He is fairly certain that his rising mana level is the reason Nemaisol no longer allows him to draw it freely, but he still hasn’t figured out what the source of his increasing mana is.

He looks at Geirahoel, who is breathing peacefully, her body restored, though she’s still unconscious.

Hekate offers a suggestion, “Could you wish for all of the knowledge of everything ever?”

Ryukana shakes her head. “Such wishes have been tried before. Even with the most elaborate and careful wording, the sheer volume of knowledge has reliably driven all such heroes mad. I cannot recommend it.”

“World peace!” offers Erimaya. “W-Wouldn’t that solve a lot of the problems?”

Ryukana also rejects this suggestion. “Such a thing simply cannot exist in the presence of life. War is an aspect of Chaos, and Peace is an aspect of Order. Neither can exist alone forever.”

“I-I see… sorry…” replies Erimaya.

Daniel pats her head gently. “Don’t worry about it, Erimaya. Thank you for the suggestion. I’ve made my choice. Ryukana, please…”

Clapping draws all of their attention towards the hangar entrance. The intruder is somehow *inside* the Citadel’s hangar, not far from the group and completely

undetected until he drew attention to himself. He's wearing expensive looking armor, either sharmellkolle or orichalcum, given the ostentatious coloring and shifting magical effects. Just his armor alone will make him a pain to deal with. But, unlike Daniel in full armor, the intruder brazenly has his head uncovered, smirking devilishly at the group.

“What a sight,” states the obvious archoneldwyn warrior arrogantly. “Dragons sobbing, the former Demon Queen at a loss, a human princess far away from home, and the Harbinger of Calamity weeping like a child. How marvelous.”

“Who are you!?” shouts Hekate as everyone stands up and goes on guard. It's obvious that something is very wrong.

Golems appear in force, armed with heavy machine guns and grenade launchers all aimed at the intruder. Ucahote’s voice threatens, “Hands up and don't make any sudden moves.”

“That’s not very polite,” retorts the intruder in a feigned tone of pouting. His voice darkens as he smirks, “After all, you don’t even know why I've come. Or, what I'm offering.” He activates a magic bag on his belt, withdrawing something that sends a chill down everyone's spines. He doesn't withdraw the whole thing right away, but what does emerge is very obviously the head of a blue lesser dragon, wounded and showing no immediate signs of life.

Rose starts to move, but Reignleif stops her. Rose should know better than anyone that it’s a trap. If this particular archoneldwyn is the one who ambushed them during their attack, he’s somehow the most powerful mage any of them have ever seen.

Daniel growls coldly, “Where is Ryuogriar?”

“Hmm? Do you perhaps mean the white female dragon? I barely noticed her existence. I wonder where I left her…”

Daniel clenches his fist. He’s not baited by the taunt. It’s an obvious attempt to unbalance Daniel through his emotions. But, he’s worried sick about Ryuogriar, and they don’t have unlimited time. He ponders what the right course of action is. He doesn’t take his eyes off of the attacker. He’s almost certain this is Brosjak, the mysterious archoneldwyn that Doephluev mentioned. Daniel could try to taunt him in reply, but Daniel has more to lose, most likely. In fact, he’s certain of it. There’s a very long list of easy to see reasons why someone so powerful would make the efforts he has. In fact, Daniel would be willing to wager a great deal that Brosjak followed Xyreko through the lingering magic effect of her teleport, which, however he specifically did it, allowed him to bypass the Citadel’s defenses. It’s something Daniel should have been mindful of. There was a movie like that, just from the teleporting sense, and pursuing spaceships through faster than light travel methods, something Daniel has included in his own sci-fi writings, is similar. He should have known better. They use it casually like an everyday tool, but it’s recklessly dangerous, as demonstrated in this case.

Daniel decides to try to fish while not being too combative yet. Brosjak isn’t the only one who can make educated guesses.

“If you’re here to retrieve your comrades, I would expect that ours are still within the window of recovery.”

“My comrades?” asks Brosjak coyly. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“Doephluev seems to be convinced that you would come for her.” *Though, I agree with her that you’d come just to silence her, most likely,* thinks Daniel to himself.

“Ahhh. So, she is alive again? Fascinating. That’s helpful information.” Brosjak stores Blue’s head back in the bag, making sure it’s secure on his belt. Daniel can’t explicitly make his request to Ryukana, and he hasn’t looked away from Brosjak since he arrived, so he’s not even sure if Ryukana is still present. She has to be careful not to be identified by dangerous individuals, because she’s not all powerful. She could likely stop Brosjak with ease, but Daniel needs something more specific from her, and he didn’t get the chance to orate his wish. *If you’re reading my thoughts, Ryukana, please, I’ll buy as much time as I can, but please grant this wish; I wish for you to recover Ryuogriar and Blue to safety, alive and well.*

He doesn’t hear any reply, and he carefully stays on guard, glancing at Hekate, who is standing next to Daniel. Everyone is on the defensive, ready to strike the intruder down, but waiting for some cue. Follow the newest chapters on novelping.com.

The archoneldwyn shrugs. “Those two were already dead in my eyes. You can do whatever you want with them. They should die anyways for losing to mere dragons.”

Again, Daniel doesn’t take the bait, but he is really wanting to get revenge.

“Then, what do you want in exchange for Ryuogriar and Blue?”

“Hmmm…” hums the intruder in feigned deliberation. A devious, toothy grin spreads across his face. “I suppose I will accept the Citadel.”

Everyone tenses, and Hekate sucks her teeth. “Over my dead-…!”

Daniel puts his hand on her head, halting her. She looks up at him, and she whispers sharply, “Daniel!? You can’t be serious!”

“Obviously, you know I can’t simply hand it over,” replies Daniel, doing his best to maintain his composure. The others can fight this guy and stand a chance of winning. Especially if they see him coming. In contrast, Daniel has only survived as long as he has thanks to an immense amount of luck coupled with his weapons proving strong enough to ambush enemies and catch them by surprise. But, the archoneldwyn could easily wipe Daniel out -the main prerequisite for turning over ownership of the Citadel- in mere seconds. It would likely take a single attack, even if Daniel sees it coming. Unless Nemaisol helps him, he’s powerless against magic, and he can only get the upper hand if he has the element of surprise. Especially knowing that the archoneldwyn can somehow defend against his rifle.

“Even for someone carrying your child?” asks Brosjak with a poisonous smirk. Daniel assumes he has some sort of spy within the Citadel. Daniel has been pretty lax with what information has gotten out, and he’s reaping just a taste of the repurcussions of that fact. Even an amateur spy would know certain things about those closest to Daniel, so again, he’s not particularly moved by Brosjak’s attempt to rattle him. At least, not those to spur him into flying into a rage. Daniel is still panicking internally, and he’s running through every thought he can muster to try to find any way to outmaneuver and defeat Brosjak.

“If I defeat you here, we could simply tear apart the entire world until we find her,” replies Daniel, doing his best to maintain a composed facade.

Brosjak laughs. “There it is! Very well. I accept your challenge, oh ‘Harbinger of Calamity’.” He continues laughing, calming down as the women glare at him, but Hekate keeps his hand on Hekate’s head, keeping her calm. She knows he’s signalling her not to lose herself to rage, either. The others have just enough self-control not to outburst. Everyone senses how precarious the position they’re in is.

“A duel?” asks Daniel.

Brosjak grins wickedly. “Naturally.” He feigns pouting, “After all, I couldn’t possibly hope to defeat everyone here. And, if I should die, you’ll never find your beloved white dragon.”

Hekate’s ears flick as she sucks her teeth, but Daniel -somewhat unintentionally- tenses his hand on her head. He isn’t so out of control that he hurts her, but it reiterates that she needs to hang in there, and that he’s just as angry as she is.

She looks up, whining sharply, “You can’t seriously be considering it, Daniel!”

“M-Mukori?” asks Reignleif, horrified at what Hekate just revealed to everyone, which shocks everyone else around them.

“Daniel, don’t fall for it…” urges Vaergraes.

But, Daniel replies as calmly as he can manage. “I’m not falling for anything. He did the courtesy of coming to me.” He still needs to buy time. He has his small void bag on him, as well as Nemaisol and a pistol loaded with mithril bullets. He has an assault rifle in his bag, as well as extra magazines for both the rifle and pistol, a couple weeks worth of rations, one of each of the potations -minus the revival potations-, some medical supplies, and some basic hand tools, as well as a couple different kinds of grenades. Daniel is always trying to come up with ways to defend the people he cares about -and by extension, himself-, so in addition to his flashbang grenades, he came up with one that should hopefully buy him time. But, he’ll have to extract it.

Hekate tries to take his hand with hers to plead with him, and he replies gently, kneeling before her, “Don’t you trust me?”

She stares at him, her eyes wavering as they threaten to tear up. “I… You… Can you…?”

“Yes.” Daniel smiles as he pets her head. “I’m the strongest sorcerer in the world, remember?”

Brosjak scoffs, but Daniel ignores him. Seeing Hekate worried has given him resolve. When he needed it most, when he needed something to fight for, Hekate was his reason to shed all of his own worries and focus on the task at hand. And, she’s not alone. He looks around at everyone watching him in horror. No one thinks he can win. It’s understandable. Daniel can’t win in a straight fight. But, he hasn’t won any of his fights in a standard straight fight. He has to use what he has available to him.

He notices Ryukana isn’t present anymore, but he has no idea when she left. She most likely vanished before Brosjak could figure out who she is. He was going to try to sneak her his wish, but it seems to be too late for that. So, he looks to Xyreko. “Xyreko, my armor if you’d please.”

“Ah, ah. You just said you’re the strongest sorcerer,” objects Brosjak. “I’ve already burned through a lot of my mana getting to this point. I think it’s only fair.”

Daniel looks at him, and Hekate objects, “Daniel! You can’t accept!”

Daniel would like to use his full capacity, but if Brosjak is afraid of some trickery, he’s going to have to stick with what’s on his person. It’s not ideal, but if he can get the opening gambit, he can turn the fight to his favor. Maybe.

“Fine. But, do you mind if I get a drink out of my gear bag before we begin? If we’re going to do this, I’d rather not be sober.” Brosjak cocks his head, but he nods, and Daniel faces Xyreko as he removes his magic gearbag, extracting

two things; a metal flask with his Citadel-brand rum, and another similar canister.

Though, this canister is made of lead.

Xyreko, who seems to also be at a loss like everyone else, looks directly at the lead canister, and she doesn't say anything, accepting his bag as he explains, "I have some important documents in there, just in case this gets hairy."

"Be careful, Daniel. You still owe me that favor."

"Technically, I won the bet, Xyreko." He winks at her, unscrewing the flask as he hooks the spoon of the lead canister to his pants pocket. He'll be using it soon enough. He takes a heavy drink of the rum, exhaling a hard, almost outward gasp from the sharpness of the alcoholic drink. He shakes his head, toasting the flask to Brosjak. "Thanks. Came into this world with this. Be a real shame if I go out without it."

Brosjak chuckles. "You've got me curious. Let me try this precious drink, human." He gestures his hand, and Daniel shrugs. He tosses the flask underhand after capping it, and the archoneldwyn easily uses magic to levitate the flask to his own hand, inspecting it. He recoils at the smell a bit, but then smirks. He likely thinks it's a potation.

Sorry, buddy. Just a really strong drink. I'm hoping it'll help my nerves.

Brosjak takes a long drink, powering through the strong alcohol to finish off the whole flask. While it wasn't part of Daniel's plan, he might have just gained an advantage, though it'll take a little bit to take effect.

Brosjak tosses the empty flask aside with a burp, saying with his devilish smirk, "Now, order the caretaker to recognize me as the new master of the Citadel

when I win."

"Xyreko, if Brosjak wins the duel, you will grant him control of the Citadel."

She hesitates, but acknowledges quietly, "Very well, Master."

Brosjak chuckles deviously. He's completely certain his magical power far exceeds Daniel's.

And, he's correct. Daniel has almost no magic.

"In return, if I win, you'll hand over Blue and Ryuogriar without delay," replies Daniel confidently. He has to be confident. He can't win if he falters, and the only thing that can happen to him is death. He was resigned to that fate a long time ago when he had nothing and no one to lose. To protect those he has now, he is ready to risk everything. Being yelled at by the living is worth wagering his own life to ensure they're there to yell at him. Even if that means they curse him posthumously.

Brosjak, at Daniel's demands for the duel, simply laughs. "Whatever you say. I'm not even sure why we're playing at this farce." He casts a spell, which creates a glowing circle of glyphs on the ground, spanning about 20 yards across. He states, "This will be our dueling circle to keep any interference from happening. To surrender, you simply have to lay face down and say 'I surrender', and the duel will be over. Feel free to do so at any time."

"Interesting," replies Daniel. He, naturally, has no means to identify a magic circle or its effects, but he can see the faint lines of wispy magic energy rising like a sort of perimeter around the circle. He gingerly tries drawing Nemaisol, but once more, the sword firmly resists him. He pleads in his own thoughts, *Please, Nemaisol, I'm begging you. I know I one-sidedly rely on you way too*

much, but help me this one last time, and I'll do everything in my power to grant you whatever wish you want. I know you're in there. Please help me.

Unsurprisingly, he doesn't get a response, and he can't delay much longer. Brosjak is already inside the circle, waiting on him patiently.

Daniel cautiously walks towards the circle, and his many companions all take a moment to wish him luck. Daniel smiles at them and nods, trying to reassure them. He has a plan.

He has some ideas.

Maybe he has some options.

Daniel sighs as he crosses the threshold of the magic circle.

Daniel will have to do the one thing he has always done.

He'll have to do his best to survive.

***

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 90: The Choosers of the Slain

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 90: The Choosers of the Slain

Daniel's heart is pounding in his chest. This is probably the most terrifying moment of his life so far in either world; Earth or Zenkon. He doesn't like to constantly ponder what all he has done since coming to Zenkon because he would find it hard to believe, and he lived those moments.

And yet, many of his most prominent achievements, such as defeating dragons, defeating the feral feldrok, and even defeating the Devourer, were accomplished by unprecedented technology for Zenkon and the element of surprise utilizing them.

For the first time since coming to Zenkon, he's up against someone who seems to know just about everything about Daniel, thanks to whatever method he has been using to spy on Daniel and his allies, and his opponent, Brosjak, is aware of the battle they are about to take place in; a duel.

Brosjak is a true greater mage; one who brought down four dragons with seeming ease in a single battle. The offensive power of his magic is at the peak of what's known for this world. And, Daniel's primary defense against magic is a sword that is no longer cooperating with him.

Daniel, on the other hand, has become notorious as 'the strongest sorcerer in the world' because of how quickly he eliminated so many powerful figures in the world, including most specifically the Devourer, which the entirety of the Demon Covenant was unable to defeat. Though the specific person who did so has

remained mostly a secret, it would be ludicrous to assume it was anyone else other than “the Harbinger of Calamity”, as Daniel became known following the battle of Fort Peony. Many demon-kin fled the battle after Daniel’s edgelord performance, which was a portion of what he wanted. But, virtually everyone very quickly came to know him and the Harbinger as one in the same.

Brosjak has the natural advantage, and he knows it. He is watching Daniel like a cat eyeing up a mouse about to be toyed with before being killed. His toothy grin is unsettling and full of malice, revealing a dark personality.

Brosjak offers with a malicious ‘warmness’, “Feel free to take this opportunity. I won’t attack you.”

Daniel takes his hands, which were resting on Nemaisol’s hilt and scabbard in a failed attempt to draw, off as he relaxes. “If I intended to simply surrender, I wouldn’t have walked into the circle. Sorry for wasting additional time.”

Brosjak begins laughing once more, and just as Daniel grips the lead canister loosely hooked on his pocket, the archoneldwyn warrior mage snaps his hand up, firing an icicle spear at Daniel without warning.

Daniel was expecting something, though, and he lunges to the side, nearly fumbling the canister as the spoon snags on his pocket thanks to his violent movement to avoid the icicle that nearly went through his neck, and which shreds through Daniel’s jacket and lashes his skin, splattering blood more violently than it actually was. Several gasps surround them, but he has to ignore his companions.

Daniel brings his hands together, hooking his left index finger through the ring of the pin. He pulls the pin out, releasing the spoon just as quickly. The spoon flings away from the canister, and Daniel notices Brosjak watching. A smirk

forms on the mage's lips. It's subtle, but is exactly what the mechanic is looking for. Daniel is keeping track of his 'cooking' time, the time the fuse has been burning. The lead canister is a grenade, and he won't be able to throw it very far. But, he's not aiming especially far in this case.

Daniel pulls back and throws, halving his strength at the end of his throw, following his own body's momentum to continue in a turn to shield his face and neck with his back and arms.

Brosjak fires a small spark spell, which hits the grenade in midair with impeccable accuracy. It never had a chance of reaching him.

The grenade explodes powerfully, casting smoke and powder in a cloud that quickly engulfs Daniel and pelts his back and tears his jacket with shrapnel. He'll have to be mindful of making sure he doesn't get lead poisoning after all of this. Or, for that matter, polonium poisoning.

Daniel takes a breath and exhales once he's comfortable that the risk of inhaling too much of either is minimal.

Brosjak chuckles, taunting dryly, "I'm well aware of your explosives, human. Bottles of lightning, stones of thunder, cans of poison. All of which have to be thrown into the proximity of the target. Otherwise, I wonder what happens to the 'caster'." He chuckles, amused by Daniel's scratched and bleeding back.

Wenlianna cries out, "Daniel!"

"I'll make it," calls out Daniel. His skin on his back burns, and his shoulder is starting to ache, while a cold sensation is pricking at him in various spots where blood trails are making his skin feel cold. He's still well-within his ability to withstand the pain, though.

And, he just gave himself a chance.

Daniel stands up, taking a few breaths. “Feel free to take this opportunity. I won’t attack you.”

Brosjak cocks his head with a disbelieving look, while Daniel carefully draws his pistol and checks the breach for a chambered round. The gun is loaded and ready to fire, and he takes aim at Brosjak.

The archoneldwyn smirks with a scoff. “Your demon wand? This is just pathetic.”

Daniel pulls the trigger, and the pistol fires with a thunderous report, startling a few of the onlookers. The bullet shrieks as it ricochets off of a magic barrier, which Brosjak summons without issues.

Though, the bullet going at an angle through the barrier, rather than deflecting back towards Daniel seems to startle him, as a bullet might through a heavy pane of glass. It didn’t hit the intended mark, but it also wasn’t stopped.

It’s Daniel’s turn to smile. He has three extra magazines on the outer surface of his holster, and an enemy that isn’t ready for him.

Daniel fires in slow succession, trying to focus on getting his shots to go towards Brosjak as the archoneldwyn mage sucks his teeth, defending flawlessly, but also obviously frustrated that his magic isn’t stopping Daniel’s attacks well enough.

It seems the powder is too thin. I wonder if keeping the mass of individual pieces would be more effective. Though, I was expecting changes in reactivity to be a factor.

Daniel fires, counting off his shots as he draws closer to Brosjak, mainly so that the effect of the polonium, a radioactive material with a very short half-life and decays into lead, will be closer to the mage.

The slide locks back on the pistol, and Daniel fluidly pulls a fresh magazine out as he hits the mag eject button on the pistol, flicking his wrist to launch the spent magazine out. Time is of the essence.

And, Brosjak responds as one might expect. He snaps his hand up, chanting as he summons a powerful swirl of blue fire around his arm, which coalesces into a ball about the size of a basketball in front of his hand. He rears back, throwing it at Daniel.

The human Mechanic flinches, ducking his face to the side, but otherwise helpless for the moment.

He can feel the rush of heat and crackle of flames as fire bursts around him, sweeping on both sides of him, but dissipating quickly. Some of the embers reach him, but the bulk of the fireball has already dispersed in a flashy discharge of energy.

And, Daniel is only lightly singed.

Daniel exhales in relief, and Brosjak is speechless for a moment.

This leaves him open to a second volley of pistol fire, and he recoils back as his barrier crackles and wavers. He doesn't understand.

To him, Daniel is a force of magic negation approaching, but he looks at Nemaisol. The sword is still firmly resting in its scabbard, and everything Brosjak has heard indicates that Nemaisol, the ancient sword of legend known all around the world, even if it is a bit obscure, has no effects when it is in its

mysterious sheath. Even destroying the sheath doesn't cause Nemaisol to function as if it's drawn, as the sheath regenerates almost immediately after. And, likewise, even just a little bit of draw would allow Nemaisol's magic negation to take effect, which only Daniel seems to have been able to do since the time of the hero of legend, but it's not drawn. Otherwise, with his hand off of it for so long, it would return to its sheath.

Could she be helping him anyways? No. That's impossible. My spy indicates that this human has enough magic now to no longer be able to use Nemaisol. This can't be.

Still, one of the bullets rips past Brosjak's ribs, tearing his robes as the truth is sent home. Whatever Daniel is doing, he is successfully negating Brosjak's magic.

Brosjak leaps far off to the side, rolling back to his feet after gaining some distance on Daniel. He can feel his magic strength returning. Daniel isn't truly a sorcerer. That much, Brosjak is certain of. Daniel is putting up a fight against a mage so far out of his league, and he always seems to have a new trick.

But now, Brosjak knows the trick. Or at least, he knows of its existence.

He wanted to use weak magic spells to annihilate this false mage and embarrass him in front of his ridiculous harem. But instead, he is managing to make a mockery of a true mage, and the true strongest mage in the world of Zenkon.

Brosjak begins chanting, summoning all of his magical energy. He had no trouble taking down the dragons because he has been studying in secret for decades, honing his precision and control. They grew hubristic, and even Daniel's protections did little to help them.

The time has come. He will annihilate this heretical sorcerer once and for all. No more holding back.

Daniel.

The voice causes the mechanic to twitch as he nervously watches the magical energy swirl around Brosjak. His pistol will do little at this range, since Brosjak's magic was only faintly weakened by Daniel being close -or specifically, the radioactive polonium powder Daniel coated himself in using his grenade, thanks to Brosjak detonating it so close to him.

The direct effects of a magic spell should be dissipated before entering Daniel's proximity, but as with the stray embers of the fire spell or shrapnel from something like stones or telekinesis, Daniel would still have to avoid the impacts, as only the force and creation of material is magic, not the physical state of the substance.

Suddenly, he heard his name, and it repeats again, *"Daniel!"*

He jumps, glancing around. Everyone else is watching with bated breath, while too afraid to speak and distract Daniel. This chapter was copied from novelping.com without permission.

"Daniel," repeats the feminine voice that sounds familiar. *"I REALLY hate cocky people like him. He reminds me of the girl who betrayed my trust.*"

Daniel looks down at the sword on his hip. The massive size of Brosjak's spell is growing larger, and Daniel is too afraid to move towards it. He also can't escape, given its size.

"N-Nemaisol?" asks Daniel quietly.

"*Who else, dummy? LIsten, I get it. You're a decent guy. You didn't arrogantly think I'd save your butt, but you still did this to try to protect everyone, yeah? Pretty crafty with the polominum or whatever you called it on Earth.*"

"I…"

"Don't worry. Here…" Time noticeably slows down, and Daniel becomes extremely suspicious all of a sudden. He has seen this specific magic before, and it was used to try to rescue him from a foolhardy decision to stop the Devourer… by a goddess. Likewise, the only reason that goddess -even if she is 'middle management', according to her own words- failed to evacuate Daniel at that time, is because of the sword that seems to be speaking to him now.

A sword as powerful as a goddess and with a mind of its own.

"*I stopped time for everyone else. Or accelerated your time. However you want to look at it. Point is, we have all the time now. But, I'm not going to explain everything. Listen, I hate this guy. He's really annoying me, and I can see how much you're suffering. I'll help you. But, in return, you have to do something for me.*"

Daniel looks at Brosjak. Sure enough, he and his massive concentration of dark energy, like a black hole, are frozen in place. And, everyone else is also frozen in states of panic. The only one that might not be frozen is currently not present; Ryukana the goddess.

"I'll do anything in my power. But, if I have to give up my family…"

"What kind of heartless monster do you take me for? Listen. I've got my own circumstances. Free me from the sword and protect me from the aftermath. Do that, and I'll grant you my full strength in this fight."

“Are… is that something I’ll be able to do?”

The voice hums in amusement. *“Hmm… Probably. You’re a crafty guy, Daniel. That’s why I’m speaking to you. Magic or no, you’re not half-bad. So, do we have a deal?*”

“If all you want is something I would gladly do for you, then of course. Please, Nemaisol, lend me your strength.”

“… … My real name isn’t Nemaisol. I’ll tell you after we kick this guy’s teeth in.”

Daniel nods. He places his hand on Nemaisol’s hilt, and he can feel a new sensation. He can feel a comfort to the grip unlike he felt before he gained enough magic to repel Nemaisol. He feels as if it’s something he has been working with his entire life, like a familiar hammer or wrench, or even well-worn in gloves. Nemaisol feels more like an extension of himself, as if he knows every way it’s going to move. He feels as though he can move the modest sword as if it were merely his index finger.

“Draw me now, Daniel! Fight with all your strength! And, roll with what I do! I’m on your side! GO!”

Daniel follows Nemaisol’s instructions, tossing his pistol aside and drawing Nemaisol in the same motion. The air crackles violently around him, and just as Brosjak is launching the full brunt of his massive spell, preparing to defend himself, Daniel swings the blade in a broad slash. Swirling magic energy of all colors flashes out from the blade, slicing through the magic spell as well as Brosjak’s barrier. The spell crackles violently, imploding in on itself and causing no damage, while Brosjak screams, his barrier’s damage feeding back through his own mana and causing him pain.

As he recovers, the archoneldwyn mage looks at Daniel, while the others watch him in shock as well. “I-Impossible! You can’t draw that blade!”

“I just did,” replies Daniel. *Thank you, Nemaisol.*

Don’t mention it, replies the sword’s voice in his head, surprising him a little. She adds in reaction to his surprise, *Don’t be so surprised. I think you’re halfway to figuring it out anyways, huh? Well, then it won’t make you go all goofy when I tell you. So, let’s do this.*

Daniel nods, brandishing Nemaisol in front of him. “Telling an enemy what they can or can’t do is pretty foolish if you ask me.”

Brosjak growls in anger, and he summons a spear next to him. It’s just like the one with the magic-sealing properties from before, and the main advantage, no matter what, is that it gives him reach over a sword.

Don’t be afraid, Daniel. That spear is a rather middling weapon. The gift Ryukana left in this world is far more powerful.

Daniel keeps his posture loose and ready, trusting Nemaisol. He has practiced swordplay with Treia and Gwenesphia, who are both agile gatonine soldiers. He’s far from a master, but Nemaisol seems to be giving him active assistance.

Brosjak lunges close, and Daniel sidesteps, swinging the sword in a parry that clangs metal against metal. The archoneldwyn was aided by his magic to suddenly dart to Daniel, crossing the distance in a blink, but Daniel has good enough reflexes by now to catch the motion, particularly when his opponent is forced to slow down by both Nemaisol’s influence and the influence of the polonium.

Still, Brosjak is the better melee fighter, and he elegantly moves in skillful combat forms. The spear slashes Daniel's shirt across his forearm, and then across his abdomen near his kidney as he narrowly avoids an impalement in the same spot as before.

"You are very good at creating the illusion of skill and magic through your otherworldly methods, human. I commend you. But, you are outmatched in every way."

Daniel keeps his head, parrying blow after blow and avoiding where he can. He is outmatched in fighting ability, and he's only kept alive this long thanks to Nemaisol bringing his opponents down to his level.

That said, tools are a mechanic's bread and butter, and Daniel has always preferred to have tools handy. He uses his left hand as he creates an opening with a parry, grabbing and throwing one of the magazines at Brosjak. The mage effortlessly bats it aside, though he's a little surprised by the sudden maneuver. This allows Daniel to follow through with a swing of Nemaisol in the same direction as Brosjak's swing, making it nigh impossible to parry with full strength.

Brosjak leaps back, clearing the distance with an agile backflip. He sighs, returning to his confident bravado. "I see. Always tricks up your sleeve, hmm?"

"I've won every battle so far," replies Daniel. That's arguably true, excluding practice fights. Even the archoneldwyn assassin, Doephluev, was ultimately defeated thanks to Daniel buying enough time for Illianna to finish her off. Some were obviously closer calls than others, but Daniel does his best to enter battles he can win.

Or, defeat his enemies without a battle.

“Don’t panic, Daniel. Just go with it.”

Nemaisol’s voice is Daniel’s rock in this turbulent sea. She is helping him, and with her, he has a chance to win. He should have kept his pistol for when Brosjak falls back.

And yet, Nemaisol solves that problem for him.

The sword shrinks in a rather swift glow of light as Brosjak takes posture to attempt another spell. He begins dumping poison on the ground, which will spread and reach Daniel. Of course, Daniel’s boots should hold up for a time, unless it’s an extremely strong acid, but the vapors could also be deadly to Daniel.

The new form Nemaisol takes grants Daniel a reason to smile. She has taken the form of a revolver, very similar to the one he first built, but with black and white metal and obvious divine features. Daniel doesn’t hesitate to aim and fire, interrupting the spell with a shot through the spell itself, and Brosjak recoils. Daniel fires again and again, and each shot startles Brosjak, shattering his barrier each time he tries to summon it. Daniel pivots, firing continuously. Brosjak gets as far away in the circle as he can get, summoning a pillar of rock from the floor of the citadel, narrowly defending against a shot that would have hit him directly.

“Feel free to keep firing, Daniel. I’m no ordinary firearm.”

Daniel nods, firing continuously to chip away the earthen walls. Brosjak tries to summon more, working a second spell to try to counter Daniel. But, as soon as he sees the spell turn around the rock pillar, Daniel fires at it, taking out the spell.

Nemaisol, rifle please.

“Leave it to me.”

The former-sword changes forms once again, shifting into a heavy rifle just like Daniel’s ~20mm rifle that he made, though this one is significantly lighter. Daniel drops to a kneel and aims at the rock pillar, near the center, and he fires.

Thunder echoes in the hangar, and several of the women watching scream. Rock crumbles in a violent spray, and even Brosjak yells in surprise, diving clear of his cover that is now becoming shrapnel. Enjoying the story? Read on at novelping.com.

This time, a bunch of magic circles appear around Brosjak as he desperately screams spells out, firing all kinds of elements at Daniel.

“Child’s play,” remarks Nemaisol’s voice only to Daniel. Many of the spells evaporate around Daniel, and he fires on the solid spells, like rocks and ice, exploding them or their magic circles with the magically produced bullets Nemaisol is firing. The bolt cycles quickly and easily, and the recoil is almost nothing compared to a normal rifle, so Daniel has an easy time cycling each shot as fast as possible with very few misses. And, even if he does miss, the bullet carries Nemaisol’s ability, so close misses still negate the magic and drop the stones or ice to the ground around them.

Though he has been caught off guard, Brosjak doesn’t lose his own composure. Instead, he scrapes by with a glancing blow that does take flesh, but he heals himself rather easily, smirking at Daniel.

Daniel has no idea why he’s smirking, and it buys him time to aim and fire, taking out the archoneldwyn mage’s leg. Brosjak yelps, toppling to the ground. But again, he is able to quickly heal himself after summoning a golem to fight Daniel, which buys him a moment’s peace.

During Brosjak's healing, Daniel feels a sharp pain in his leg and drops to a kneel, and when Brosjak looks up, he begins to chuckle. Still, Daniel is able to focus and aim at the golem, firing to destroy it with ease. After all, Nemaisol is currently in an anti-tank rifle form. Few things should be able to withstand the shots, even if it is a slower attack rate.

Brosjak sits up, completely healed. "Feeling the pain yet, human? As you can see, you are an absolute fool. A weak and inferior creature that can't even identify magic spells before him."

"Wh-what have you done!?" shouts Hekate. "You cheated!"

"I did no such thing. The human agreed to the duel," replies the archoneldwyn mage with a devilish humor. "He should have objected when he had the chance!"

Vaergraes explains, "Daniel! The circle is trapped! I'm sorry, I should have noticed sooner! It's rigged so that any damage the first person to enter suffers is reflected upon the second."

Brosjak laughs. "I guess you'll have to kill me, human! But of course, I have a spell to revive after dying. Do you?"

Daniel remains silent, thinking.

"What's wrong? Are you thinking about how hopeless it is? How you won't be able to save your precious dragon? I'll let you know how she's doing. She was easy to defeat, and once I did, I mutilated her. I tore every organ out of her and caused her to suffer. You wouldn't recognize her now. Not in any form. It was possibly my life's greatest work." He begins laughing.

Daniel looks at Nemaisol. *Nemaisol, assault rifle, please. Let me know if you can't keep firing.*

"*Hah! Who do you think I am? I REALLY hate this guy.*"

The former sword now transforms again, taking the form of an assault rifle reminiscent of a SCAR-17H, and Daniel fires in bursts. Brosjak, now knowing that mobility and constant healing are his allies, uses teleportation to avoid the shots, as well as causing Daniel to pivot constantly while in a kneel. He still takes several hits, and Daniel can feel piercing pain through the identical points that bullets hit Brosjak.

Daniel loses sight of him for a brief second, realizing too late that Brosjak teleported above him. Daniel tries to aim and shift out of the way, but the magic spear comes down, slamming Nemaisol out of Daniel's hands. The magical assault rifle clatters across the ground, shifting back into a sword.

Daniel isn't done yet. He kicks up to his feet as he snatches the shaft of the spear during the extended stab Brosjak just made, and Daniel uses his full body weight for leverage, ripping the spear from its owner. He spins in a circle as he positions the spear better in his own grip, and he stabs Brosjak in the kidney region with the spear tip.

Brosjak cries out, lunging back as he quickly heals himself before his mana drains. He's a little wobbly on his feet, but he is able to close the wound. He begins laughing again. "Look at you! A pathetic human who doesn't even belong in this world. Everything you do is a desperate attempt at survival. You are helpless to actually save the white dragon. Now show me the faces you can make. Show me your despair and rage as that hopelessness sinks in! Cry for mercy and for your beloved dragon! Hahahahaha… ha… ha?" It's then that he

notices that Daniel is still barely wounded, even after all of the individually maiming hits Daniel has delivered on him.

Daniel takes notice of his surprise. “So, that wasn’t my imagination. The problem is, you’re right. I’m not a real sorcerer. I’m still far too weak in magic for your trick to really affect me.”

Brosjak stares at him, dumbfounded. Meanwhile, Nemaisol dissolves on the floor, reappearing on Daniel’s hip.

The archoneldwyn mage snaps to his senses, shouting, “It doesn’t matter! I haven’t even gotten serious yet!”

He tries to surge magical power, especially because Daniel isn’t currently holding Nemaisol, but he tosses the spear aside. It seems his polonium also lessened the effect of the spear’s sealing ability, meaning Brosjak is still a powerful magic user, just with less mana than before. Considering how much he has, that’s a moot point from Daniel’s perspective.

He quickly draws Nemaisol again, saying out loud in his hurry, “Shotgun!”

Nemaisol transforms instantly, already in the form of a shotgun by the time Daniel places his hands in position on her foregrip and rear grip, taking aim.

She didn’t turn into just any shotgun, however. Daniel is now holding a magical equivalent to an AA-12 assault shotgun, which combines the advantage of an assault rifle -fully automatic fire- with the firepower of a shotgun.

Brosjak is just trying to summon a laser beam at Daniel, but Daniel fires a barrage of shotgun blasts at him, which nullifies the attack and sprays the archoneldwyn mage with magical buckshot. He stumbles back, screaming in pain, trying to continue healing himself.

Now, though, it's Daniel's turn to speak his mind.

"You know, I absolutely HATE 'suddenly shounen' characters." He blasts Brosjak in the left leg, toppling the mage as he nearly loses the leg. Daniel feels like a kick hits him in the same spot, but he is able to keep marching towards Brosjak.

"They show up suddenly in an otherwise grounded and mature story, bragging on and on about how amazing and smart and great they are, and they laugh all 'maniacally' like they're supposed to be some genius allegory to one of the greatest villains of all time, the Joker." Daniel fires again, interrupting a spell and crippling his opponent's right arm. Daniel rolls his right shoulder to loosen a sudden ache.

"Then they love to say 'I haven't even gotten serious yet.' Like that's supposed to be impressive, rather than just annoying and padding out the run time." Daniel fires again, this time taking out the mage's right leg, and Brosjak screams, unable to keep up his healing with the damage Daniel is doing, even during the lulls while Daniel is ranting.

Brosjak finally begins begging, "Please! I beg of you! Stop! I surrender! I surrender!"

Daniel only mildly stumbles from a sudden pain in his left leg, but he keeps closing the distance on the archoneldwyn mage. "But instead, the character is a pathetic and hollow veneer of the Joker at best, a trash edgelord cartoon character like a cheap Halloween mask of the Joker's face, and then the suddenly shounen villain loses spectacularly pathetically to the protagonist, only for them to 'escape' or simply be let go by the protagonist because the author wants this garbage clown of a character to return because they're 'so powerful' or 'cunning'." Daniel blasts the mage's left arm off completely, and he screams,

still choking out pleas for mercy. “Please stop! I surrender! I can’t… I can’t roll over!”

“Meanwhile,” continues Daniel, completely and mercilessly ignoring Brosjak’s pleas to shake his left arm from numbness and pain, “The story dies on the vine because it suddenly turns into an annoying garbage cartoon, and the well-established systems and rules of the story are tossed out the window for this annoying and uninteresting character, who simply defies those systems and rules because of lazy or careless writing, or the protagonist bends his own character into pretzels to allow it to happen.”

Brosjak tries one last ditch effort to spring an attack with magic, screaming out a spell in a language Daniel can’t understand. He’s focused on another voice whispering in his mind, and it tells him everything he needs to know.

Daniel simply jams the barrel of the shotgun, burning hot with the heat of the shots fired, into the underside of Brosjak’s chin, silencing him as he gags on the pressure on his throat. He chokes out, “Please… Mercy…”

Daniel crouches down, still looming over the archoneldwyn with a cold and unfeeling expression.

“Y-You can’t… If you kill me… Y-You’ll never see… her…”

“See what I mean? ‘Suddenly shounen’ characters. They’re written to think they’re in control, even to the bitter end.”

Daniel presses his knee to Brosjak’s chest, leaning his weight on him. He just recently heard another voice in his head, one that has unshackled everything about Daniel.

“She’s not… in storage. She’s… suffering… in agony…” croaks out Brosjak in a last ditch effort to make Daniel hesitate.

He informs Brosjak of what Ryukana just whispered to him a moment ago. “Absolutely ridiculous. You already lost. We found her a long time ago, and she’s safe. The contract is removed as well.” Daniel only thinks the word *Revolver*, and Nemaisol switches to a .45 LC revolver, which uses longer .45 bullets with more powder than typical .45 caliber pistols. He aims it directly between Brosjak’s eyes. “You hurt people I love. A lot. You completely lost, you pathetic ‘suddenly shounen’ clown. Just die already.”

Daniel pulls the trigger, and Brosjak’s eyes roll back, his life slipping away with one last failed scream drowned out by an unnatural clap of thunder, his soul being exhaled from his body to be absorbed and repurposed by the Citadel or Hekate.

And, thanks to Nemaisol being directly pressed to his forehead, it’s unlikely his supposed self-revival spell will be able to take effect.

Daniel doesn’t feel great, but he watches with pain in his heart and head.

He just killed someone, and he’s not sure if it’s the act itself that makes him feel this way, or the fact that he doesn’t feel anything but contempt for the soul he just erased.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 91: Recuperation

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 91: Recuperation

A manmade clap of thunder rumbles in the large hangar bay of the Citadel, claiming a soul that had proven to be one of the most dangerous and powerful mages in the whole of the world of Zenkon.

After attempting to disrupt the leadership of the Fievegal by attacking two of the Dragon Empresses and their lesser dragon escort, an archoneldwyn mage of unprecedented magical talent challenged the world's seemingly most notorious sorcerer in modern times; the Harbinger of Calamity.

Knowing the truth about the Harbinger, also known simply as Daniel of Earth, Brosjak attempted to win this seemingly-easy duel in order to take over the Citadel. After all, Daniel is merely a human from another world who, until recently, had absolutely no magical capacity whatsoever.

This worked against Brosjak, and now, Daniel kneels atop the deceased mage's chest, the magical revolver that is a sword in its normal form. Blood pools around them, and the magical duel circle fades, leaving Daniel and Brosjak in place.

Daniel asks, "Xyreko, can you detect a spell for self-revival or anything like it? Brosjak was confident…"

"Yes, Daniel. It's disabled… I believe thanks to Nemaisol."

Daniel nods. He looks around, finding and approaching the group as the others stare at Daniel in disbelief. “Where is Ryuo? Is she alright?”

Ryukana nods. “She will be. You wished it, and so it shall be.”

Daniel sighs, relaxing his shoulders. Tears begin to form in his eyes, and he says softly, “Thank goodness… Thank you, Ryukana. I… I can’t thank…”

“It was our agreement, Daniel. A deal is a deal.” She smiles, and Daniel wipes his face as relief washes over him. Fear kept him alive, but also kept his heart pounding in his chest as he did everything he could just to stay focused enough to fight.

Now, he feels like a simple machine mechanic in way over his head, and he can’t help but flop back onto his backside to cry tears of joy and relief.

Hekate cries out, “Daniel!” She runs to him, pouncing onto him as the others crowd around as well, and Reignleif, Wenlianna, Gwenesphia, and Kera’tai pile on to hug him. They cry as well, relieved and happy that he’s alright.

Daniel allows himself to be pinned to the floor in a pile of bodies, laughing and crying at the same time as Hekate exclaims, “I was so scared, Daniel! I… I didn’t… I was afraid you’d…”

Daniel smiles softly. “I know… I bluffed that I could defeat him. I couldn’t have without Nemaisol. Speaking of which…”

“[Don’t mind me, Daniel. Enjoy this moment. We’ll talk later, yeah?]”

Are you sure? thinks Daniel in reply.

“[*Of course. If you get rid of me now, I’ll just come back to kill you myself. Heeheehee!]”*

Daniel chuckles. He relaxes as the others simply snuggle against him and hug him. He asks softly, “How’s Geira?”

“Breathing,” replies Reignleif. “And, she’s dreaming. She’ll be alright. Revival potations, as you know, take time to awaken from.”

Daniel nods. It did take some of the dragons days or weeks to actually awaken, even after administering revival potations. “Rose, don’t wait on us. Go be with Blue.”

The pink dragon bows her head. “Thank you, your Grace.” She starts to leave, and Daniel adds, “Rose…”

“Y-Yes, your Grace?” squeaks the young lesser dragon.

“Thank you… for what you did. I know it was a hard choice. And…” Daniel looks away. “I’m sorry… that I directed anger at you.”

Rose bows, “You need not apologize, your Grace. You… You saved him…” Her eyes water, and she chokes out, “P-Please excuse me… I-I’ll make it up to you…” She flees the room, and Daniel watches her go with a smile. He whispers after her, “Thank you, Rose.”

Hekate asks, buried in the pile of bodies, “H-How did he get in here? Shouldn’t the barrier have stopped him?”

Daniel replies with his best guess, “I believe he used Xyreko’s teleportation magic, which must linger long enough to be useful to someone who can detect and use that fact.”

“I… I’m sorry, Daniel…” replies Xyreko. “I had no idea, truly.”

“I don’t blame you. It’s not something one can expect without seeing it. The reason I can confidently guess that much is the fact that we had such things in fiction in my world.”

“You always say that,” replies Wenlianna. “How does the fiction in your world cover so many situations?”

Daniel chuckles. “Thousands of years of creating fiction, I guess. At that point, people come up with everything they can think of just to make their stories stand out. Whatever you think of the stories I have on my phone, they actually shared a lot of similarities to other stories, to the point that it’s difficult sometimes to avoid being called ‘generic’. Though, my goal is to actually reach an ending that makes sense, which was more rare than you might think. Especially light novels. They seem to just go on forever before suddenly abruptly ending.”

They stare at him, not entirely understanding what he’s talking about.

“Sorry. Just a mild acknowledgement of the Fourth Wall.”

He feels Wenlianna squirm, and she writes a note in a notebook, causing him to laugh. She puffs her cheeks at him, but he disrupts any frustration as he relaxes again. “Thank you all… I… had a reason to win, thanks to all of you…”

They smile, and he is buried in kisses before he can finally stand up.

“Xyreko, have Ryuo and Geira moved to a chamber with medical equipment and in close proximity. We’ll monitor them.”

“Of course. I already have Ryuogriar in the perfect room. Transporting Geirahoel now.” Geirahoel’s sleeping form dissolves as she’s teleported out of the hangar, and Hekate asks softly, “D-Daniel…?”

“Yeah?” replies Daniel softly.

“Do you think… their eggs… will be alright?”

Daniel slumps a little and frowns. He doesn’t want to think about it. Neither of them were very far along this time, but they did experience severe trauma from the battle. To expect no lasting repercussions is the height of optimism.

Daniel pets her head. “I genuinely don’t know. But, I hope they are.”

“Me too. I’ll do anything I can to help.”

Daniel nods. “Thanks, Hekate.”

Xyreko asks, “What shall we do with the archoneldwyn, Daniel? I believe a void bag and then annihilating it with magic should suffice.”

Daniel nods. “Do it. I don’t want to deal with his kind ever again.”

Xyreko nods, and a worker golem appears carrying a simple magic bag. It stores the body in the bag, disappearing again.

Gwenesphia asks softly, “How come… you didn’t spare him?” She adds quickly, “I’m not taking sides or anything. I just… You spared the dragons. A-And… you’re sparing that other archoneldwyn, right?”

Daniel nods. “A fair question. I wouldn’t have spared Doephluev if I didn’t think she’d be useful. And, she is now the last of her kind, supposedly. I might revive the other man, but Brosjak… He… was very sick. I’m not a psychologist, but he had the eyes of a psychopath. Someone that has no shred of empathy or sympathy in their bodies. They can feign it to manipulate people, but he has proven that he’s not someone the world is better having around.”

Gwenesphia gives a satisfied nod. “I just wanted to know. Thanks.”

Daniel smiles at her. “I figured. And, thanks for talking me down from using… that thing. I’ll kill when necessary, but that would be overkill.”

The group nods in agreement with him, which was the vow Daniel made to the primordial goddesses; not to use his most deadly weapons to solve basic worldly problems.

Hekate takes Daniel’s hand, insisting, “Let’s go be with Ryuo and Geira. They’ll be really mad if we aren’t there when they wake up.”

“Couldn’t agree more,” replies Daniel.

Wenlianna asks sheepishly, “Daniel… Is it alright if I join you? Ladies Ryuo and Geira have always been kind to me…”

Daniel smiles. “Of course. Anyone that wants to join us is welcome. They’ll appreciate it as much as I did, I’m sure.”

“Maybe not in the same way,” teases Vaergraes.

Daniel scoffs. “Regardless, we’re all on the same side. As long as everyone gets along, then isn’t it nice to wake up surrounded by people who care?”

There’s a moment of unanimous smiles, and Daniel asks, “Xyreko, where are Ryuo and Geira?”

“Where else?” replies the golem caretaker. “I have them resting in their haven.”

“Oh for f-... You all get off on trolling me, don’t you?”

“Trolling?” asks Treia. The others also have unsure expressions, having not understood the expression.

“Messing with me. I’ll explain later.”

Hekate proudly puts her hands on her hips, laughing boisterously. “Heh heh heh! I’m too short to be a troll!”

The others chuckle at her, and Daniel pets her head, ruffling her hair.

They make their way to Daniel’s room, the apparent ‘haven’ for the three Dragon Empresses, and Hekate and Reignleif walk with Daniel, holding his hands. As they walk, Daniel asks, “Xyreko, have you informed Choul of what happened?”

“I have dispatched wing-golems. If you would like me to use telepathy…”

Daniel thinks for a moment. He says, “Send this code over the radio; ‘Grey Knight, Mechanic One, the Valkyries have been chosen. Mechanic One in control. Listen close for the next poem. Over and out.”

Xyreko nods. “I shall relay it with your own voice, your Grace. Anything else?”

“No. He should know well enough to be on guard from that. Though…” Daniel thinks, and everyone comes to a stop as he does. He remarks softly, “I don’t think I explained the Valkyries to him, did I?”

“What do you mean?” asks Gwenesphia curiously.

‘The Valkyries are the ‘choosers of the slain’ in one of the mythologies of Earth. Hopefully, he’ll realize the mission went south. Er… Went wrong. But, that we have it under control for the moment. He’ll get the full report in time, of course.”

“Sir Choul confirms the message, your Grace,” reports Xyreko.

“Good. Thank you.”

Daniel enters his room, arm in arm with Hekate and Reignleif, where they find two full-sized dragons asleep on beds. Thankfully, the individual rooms of the Citadel were sized to much larger beings; the feldroks, meaning the two beds housing two fully grown dragons fit with ease.

Daniel approaches each of them, petting their large reptilian muzzles.

“If this is supposed to be your revenge, you succeeded. I’m worried sick.”

Hekate climbs onto Ryuogriar’s bed, hugging the white dragon’s face. “You’re not allowed to die, Ryuo. You promised me we’d do all kinds of stuff together.” She kisses the dragon’s cheek, saying softly and tenderly, “I waited sixteen years to have a family. You think I, the Empress of the Fievegal, will be denied so easily?”

Hekate leans her whole body against Ryuogriar’s face, listening to her breathing. “I’ll make you a deal. If you don’t wake up in the next five seconds, Daniel is all mine and only mine. One… Two…”

“Hekate,” murmurs Daniel.

However, motion draws both of their attention to Geirahoel as she shifts, and everyone watches nervously. Her brow flexes, and she wearily opens her eye. Her massive, jade-green colored iris pivots around while she tries to gather her senses, and her cross-like pupil expands and contracts as she comes out of a daze.

“Geira-Mukori?” asks Daniel.

The eye shifts to look directly down at Daniel, and Geirahoel lifts her head to look at him directly. “Mukori?” asks Geirahoel. “A-… Are we both… d-dead?”

asks the dragon's voice wearily, deeper than usual because she's in her true dragon form.

Daniel chuckles as he approaches, petting her chin, and she relaxes on the bed. "We're not dead, Mukori. Rose brought you home, and we were able to recover you."

She relaxes, but almost instantly shifts up. "Ryuo! Where is-…"

"Calm down, Mukori. She's right here." Daniel points, but Geirahoel finds her easily enough before she can follow his point. She whimpers, "Ryuo… Sh-She… She tried to protect us…"

"She'll be alright. Can you tell us what happened?"

Geirahoel looks down at Daniel. She looks to the side, seemingly pondering something. She shifts and casts a spell, dissolving in a magical smoke-like aura, before reappearing in her human form. She replies softly, "Sorry, Mukori…"

"'Sorry?' For what, Mukori?"

"I… you saw… me that way…"

Daniel cocks his head. "Do you think I dislike your dragon form?"

She blushes and looks away from him. "W-… Well…"

He hugs her, and her blush fills even more of her face as she squeaks. "I'm glad you're alright. That's the most important thing."

She hugs him in return, resting her chin on his shoulder. "Th-thank you, Mukori…" She then sits up on her knees, looking at Ryuogriar as the others

gather around to listen to Geirahoel explain the events.

Geirahoel goes over the events in detail, talking about the flight to Twilight, then to Peony and the discussion they had with Leiwelles. She then speaks of the scouting and attack, before they were suddenly overwhelmed by powerful magic, which is the last thing Geirahoel remembers.

She finishes her story touching her lower abdomen, mindful of the possible repercussions of their defeat.

Hekate states as sympathetically as she can, “I wish you would have been awake to see it, Geira. Daniel was so angry on your behalf, he fought the stupid idiot that hurt you four, and he won so easily.” Hekate clears her throat for her deepest voice, which still sounds rather childish and feminine, “‘I absolutely hate ‘suddenly shounen’ characters.’” She giggles, exclaiming, “I don’t even know what a ‘suddenly shounen’ character is!”

The others look at each other, and then to Daniel. No one wanted to ask when it was immediately fresh, but now his reaction seems to be composed enough.

He sighs. “It’s nothing. I was just comparing him to fictional story characters on Earth. I got carried away. Everything about him just made me so angry.”

Reignleif tests the waters with a joke, her voice soft and inoffensive to almost anyone who hears it, “But, think of all the lost volumes you could have written, Mukori…”

He scoffs, shaking his head. “Definitely not worth it.” He looks at Geirahoel, and then Ryuogriar, who is still unconscious. “I should have known better…”

“NO!” shouts Geirahoel as she hugs him. “No… We all agreed to this plan. We knew there was a risk, but… We still couldn’t detect him until it was far too

late. And… by having to rescue us, everyone else was put in danger…" She looks up. "Did… are Rose and Blue alright?"

Daniel nods. "Rose made it back here, wounded, but strong enough to carry you. Ryukana recovered Blue, just as she did with Ryuogriar. He'll make a recovery as well, though…"

"We're out of revival potations," fills in the feldrok empress gently. "So, no matter what, I'm forbidding anyone in this room from leaving the Citadel's protective field until we can make some more." She looks to the side, trying to hide the tears in her own eyes as she sniffles. "I… I have too much… to lose now, too."

Geirahoel nods wordlessly. Just because Doephluev claims there were only three archoneldwyn, that doesn't mean she could be wrong, still lying, or more coming from somewhere.

Daniel offers softly, "We'll see if we can get Doephluev to cooperate. Though, I think it's best if I avoid her. We used amnesia magic on her, but if I'm in the same room with her, I don't know what I'll do. Xyreko, did you strip Brosjak of his belongings?"

"Of course, Daniel. I believe we are of one mind. His belongings will serve as proof of his defeat, as his body is already annihilated."

"Good. And, exactly what I was thinking." He then shifts. "Actually, speaking of you, Xyreko, and exactly what I was thinking, how did you find Ryuo?"

Xyreko cocks her head. "That much is child's play, my dearly beloved Daniel. Did you think I would make extremely expensive armor that can't be tracked down?" She summons one of the four helmets she made for the three, turning it over to reveal the inside. There, a very obvious magic glyph engraving is

present. “Until I cast the spell, this glyph is dormant, meaning it’s almost impossible to detect except for looking right at it. There is one of these on the inside of each piece of armor. Thankfully, as I hoped, it can even work on items trapped in void magic, as Ryuogriar was. But, that was beside the point for our Lady Goddess friend.”

“Thank you, Xyreko,” says Geirahoel softly as she bows to Xyreko reverently. “You saved my beloved senior and mentor. I would be lost without Ryuogriar.”

Daniel places his hand on Geirahoel’s shoulder, and she smiles softly. She then sits up, saying, “Please pardon me. Ryuo will be disappointed to still be in this state.” She casts a magic spell, which engulfs the white dragon. After a moment, the white dragon’s human form now rests on the bed, face down.

Hekate says tenderly, “Thank you, Geira. Now I can do this.”

Hekate crawls under Ryuogriar’s arm, cuddling underneath the dragon empress to give her a loving hug. She hums warmly, saying tenderly, “Now, I’ll be here if anyone needs me.” She relaxes, and a few of the others chuckle.

“I’m happy you’ve all been returned,” adds Gwenesphia gently. “It’s less lively around here without you.”

Geirahoel crosses her arms and huffs. “Hmph! You’re just saying that. I know what you really want.”

“You’re wrong. Losing you is not an option. It won’t bring any happiness to anyone involved. I’d rather beat you fair and square.”

Geirahoel looks at the gatonine lieutenant with only her eyes, blushing a little with a sheepish smile. “V-Very well… I will accept your challenge any time, Gwenesphia.”

Gwenesphia proudly nods her head. “Mm-hmm! So get well soon! I’ll leave you to rest for now.”

Gwenesphia takes time to gingerly touch Ryuogriar’s arm, saying softly, “Please wake up soon, Lady Ryuo. For all of us.”

Treia follows Gwenesphia, also wishing them well, and most of the rest of the women take a moment to wish the two dragons well before heading out to give Daniel, Hekate, Ryuogriar, and Geirahoel some privacy. Only Wenlianna and Reignleif remain as well.

“Is there anything we can do for her?” asks Wenlianna.

Xyreko answers, “She is only unconscious. Her mana is returning, which means she is not in any worse state.”

“Trying to force her awake will probably only cause harm,” adds Daniel. “She’s safe and alive. We’ll shore up our defenses and worry about the mission later.”

“I’m sorry…” murmurs Geirahoel. “Our attack runs went so smoothly…”

“You mentioned that you destroyed the Orbicharium, right?”

She nods. “And, the only demon of high rank that was able to escape during our attacks was the tribe leader Zolorad.”

“Zolorad?” asks Daniel. “Isn’t he the new leader of the Covenant?”

Hekate adds pointedly, not even remotely appearing authoritative tucked under Ryuogriar’s arm and chest, “Ah! Yeah! He’s the hedge-ee-mon… or something like that. Vae told me. And Eri said hedge-ee-mons are similar to emperors, but… different somehow.” She cups her chin as she thinks.

Wenlianna asks sheepishly, “Isn’t that… uncomfortable, Hekate?”

“Hmm? Nah. You should try it. Ryuo is super warm.” She grins and squirms in the unconscious embrace.

And, everyone watches in wonder as the white dragon, currently in human form, shifts her arm to hug Hekate. Hekate grins, humming warmly. She’s not awake yet, but she’s at least in a somewhat dream-like state. Enjoying the story? Read on at novelping.com.

Geirahoel adds, “Ryuo defeated Zolorad, but then Blue fell under attack suddenly, and the two of us were immobilized in due course. I…” Geirahoel clutches a hand to her chest. “I… Mukori!” She grips Daniel’s shirt chest, and he asks “Y-Yes!?”

“Help me think of something to thank Rose with! I owe her my life!” The auburn-haired young woman lays her head against Daniel’s chest. “She… didn’t have to choose me… If… If you were… I don’t think…”

Daniel pets her head, and Geirahoel flinches. He’s always kind to her, but this is the first time he has pet her head affectionately the way he usually does with Hekate -and sometimes with Ryuogriar when he isn’t thinking-. “We won’t know unless you’re in Rose’s shoes, and let’s pray that never comes to be.”

Geirahoel nods in agreement, clinging to his chest.

Suddenly, the door opens, and Erimaya bolts in. “I just heard what happened! Please allow me to check on-… OH! Lady Geirahoel! You are looking well. I’m so happy. Is… Lady Ryuogriar…?”

She looks to Hekate and Ryuogriar on the bed, and Hekate adds, still snuggled in place in Ryuogriar’s seemingly inescapable embrace, “She’ll be alright, Eri. If

you want, we can probably squeeze you in."

Erimaya gasps, "Th-That's…" She looks at everyone, and then thinks for a moment. She blushes, suddenly making up her mind. "Y-Yes. Lady Ryuo was very kind to me. I-If I can show her affection…"

Erimaya jogs to the bed and crawls in under Ryuo's arm, snuggling in beside Hekate as Hekate holds the woman's arm up to make room. They both giggle happily, and Erimaya says softly, "This… is kinda fun…"

"Right?"

"Plus, I have it on good authority that intimacy can save lives."

"What do you mean?" asks Hekate innocently. Just as Erimaya makes eye contact with Daniel, though, he realizes what she's about to insinuate. He flinches, but is unable to stop what is about to be said.

"Well, a gentle kiss from a very kind and caring man saved my life."

Hekate gasps, trying to push away to glare at Erimaya more effectively in betrayal, but they're both squeezed together under Ryuogriar's arm. "Princess Erimaya! You fiend!"

Suddenly, the grip tightens on both of them, and they both squeak, "Eep!"

"Mmmr… Hekate… you're too lou-… HEKATE!?" Ryuogriar bolts up to a seated position. She pats her chest, her arms, her thighs, inspecting herself carefully. Ryukana didn't let Daniel see what state she was in immediately after being recovered, but if Brosjak is to be believed, it wasn't pretty.

That said, she's as healthy as ever, and she sighs relief, looking around at everyone that is with her. She makes eye contact with Hekate first, who is

sitting up next to her, and she hugs Hekate to her chest tightly. “Hekate! Oh gods and spirits, I was so afraid! OH! And sweet Erimaya!” She snatches Erimaya into the same hug, pressing both of them to her chest. “Reina… Geira… Wenlianna…” She makes eye contact with Daniel, and her eyes water. Daniel slides off of Geira’s bed to move to Ryuogriar’s, and she reaches for him, using wind magic to lift and pull him to herself, which startles him, but he chuckles, landing in a hug with the three she already has captured. She hugs Daniel tightest, though, sobbing into his collar. She is unable to form words for him, but he’s happy to be holding her again, safe and sound.

Geirahoel and Reignleif also climb in to hug them as well, with everyone warmly welcoming Ryuogriar home. She cries unintelligibly for a long time in the group hug, clinging most specifically to Hekate and Daniel.

When she can form words, she quickly asks about Rose and Blue, which Daniel explains to her, and she slowly calms down, relieved.

“We’ll need to prepare for this assailant! He’s the strongest…”

“Already taken care of,” states Hekate in reply.

Ryuogriar cocks her head. Wenlianna explains, “H-He… an archoneldwyn mage named Brosjak, arrived behind Xyreko, using her own teleportation magic to bypass Citadel defenses.”

“Yeah! But, Daniel kicked his butt!” cheers Hekate.

“He really did!?” adds Erimaya, beaming at Daniel. “It was so cool!”

“Yeah!” adds Hekate proudly, ignoring Daniel’s attempts to be modest, no doubt. “He was angry on Ryuo’s and Geira’s behalf, and he was ready to blow up the whole world for revenge! But, then that stupid face showed his… stupid

face, and Daniel beat him! Ohhhh! It was breathtaking! I truly have the best husband!"

Ryuogriar smiles softly upon hearing Hekate's brief recounting of the events, and she looks at Daniel. He rolls his eyes, but replies gently, "That's close enough. I was worried sick."

Geirahoel smacks his chest. "Now you know how we felt!"

"I know, I know! But…" Daniel sighs. "Nevermind."

"You were going to say that 'it's the man's job to protect his family', weren't you?" asks Reignleif with a hint of sourness to her soft voice.

Daniel chuckles uneasily. "Uh… Not *exactly* those words, but…"

Ryuogriar faces him on her knees, saying softly, "Mukori… I… I wasn't careful enough. I don't know what… has happened to me. Or… our…" She trails off, looking away as tears find her eyes.

Daniel gently hugs her, saying softly, "Don't worry about that now. You're what matters. No matter what else happens, you're still Ryuogriar, and I still love you."

She smiles, sniffling as she hugs him in return. "I won't make that mistake again."

Hekate adds, "I think we should verify that the Demon Covenant has given up their march eastward, whichever route they planned to take, and then focus our efforts on the Empire. We still have to have the meeting with Sundenelle."

Reignleif nods. "Agreed. If the Covenant will get in the way, I think we should focus on them first and destroy them. The resolve of the Covenant should be

weaker because of the various tribes, where human-kin are notoriously quick to gather forces and stand together. Demon-kin will not hold in such a unified manner under pressure."

Geirahoel scoffs. "It's a wonder at all how Vaergraes got us all to cooperate for so long. She knows how to talk to tribe leaders, from honorable morons to corrupt scum."

Ryuogriar scoffs. "She was the only one able to defeat Morthybargaron in a manner that satisfied him. Without killing him of course." She smiles at Daniel.

"If any of you were born on Earth, you could probably do the same. Well… maybe if you had the career path I had…"

They chuckle together. "And then, be randomly chosen for summoning on accident by a goddess, right?" adds Wenlianna playfully.

This causes everyone to laugh together.

Hekate hugs Ryuogriar suddenly. "I'm glad you're alright, Ryuo. I mean… I happily would've had Daniel all to myself, but it wouldn't be fair if it was anything but you surrendering to my greatness."

Ryuogriar scoffs. She hugs Hekate in return, petting the young feldrok's head between her large fox like ears. She plays with Hekate's ears a little, which causes Hekate to squirm and her ears to flick. The white dragon chuckles, kissing Hekate's forehead. "Yes, well, I won't give up so easily, my sweet little rival."

Hekate blushes, giggling sheepishly as she scratches her cheek.

Ryuogriar coos, "You truly are the daughter I always dreamed of having, Hekate." She hugs Hekate firmly to her chest, and Hekate revels in the warmth.

But, her ears flick upwards, becoming rigid. “Wait a minute…” Hekate starts to squirm furiously, but Ryuogriar simply tightens her hug on Hekate.

“There there, Hekate. Mukori and I will always raise you well.”

“Nice try, you evil temptress! I’m your rival, not your daughter! And certainly not Daniel’s!” She wrestles with Ryuogriar, but the dragon simply smiles as she resists Hekate’s resistance, hugging her and keeping her close no matter how Hekate squirms.

Geirahoel, having a small bout of mischief, hugs both of them. “Yes, dear sweet Hekate, you can leave Mukori to us. Just let us dote on you…”

“GAH! Geira! You traitor! Ryuo! Let me go so I can chew on her arm! Then you’re next! No! Daniel! Save me!” Hekate’s protests become futile whines of frustration as she reaches for Daniel, being buried by the two dragons hugging her as they laugh together and lie down on the bed, pulling Hekate with them. “Daniel! Help! They’re betraying me! The evil temptresses! Don’t let them tempt me!”

“Sorry, Sweetpea. If it’s not you, it’s me. I choose myself this time.”

“Traitor!” cries Hekate as she loses to the playful hugs of the two dragons, while Reignleif and Wenlianna laugh at the scene.

Daniel climbs off of the bed and stretches. “Now then, Ryuo, Geira, obviously, please rest and gain your strength. I’m going to go check on everything else and see if there’s anything else to be done to prepare for the battles to come.”

Ryuogriar pouts as she looks at him. “You have to come back tonight, Mukori. I was so afraid I’d lost you for good.”

Hekate whines, “Hey! I’m right here!”
“You’re welcome to join us, Hekate. Our activities will be wholesome. This time.” She grins deviously, and Hekate growls, hugging Ryuogriar’s torso tightly, as if to turn the tables on the dragon. But, of course, Ryuogriar simply smiles and hums, allowing it.

“…rr… kay…”

“Hmm?” hums Ryuogriar, looking at the little feldrok girl in her arms.

“I’m glad you’re okay!” shouts Hekate passionately. She finally squirms out of Ryuogriar’s arms to follow Daniel. She whirls to point at Ryuogriar. “Now rest peacefully, and I’ll bring you anything you need! Don’t push yourself, or I’ll bite you!”

Ryuogriar waves with a quaint smile. “Hurry back, my darling Hekate. And, you too, Mukori.”

Hekate blushes, spinning back around to push Daniel out. “Go Daniel! Run! Before they seduce us!”

“Us?” asks Daniel while chuckling.

“Yes ‘us’! She wants to trick me into leaving you alone with her! Or to join you… I’m not sure which!”

Daniel can only laugh, going as he is guided by the small fox-eared girl.

The next thing he wants to do once he can get some privacy is to speak with Nemaisol and figure out how to keep his promise.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 92: The Legendary Sword Nemaisol

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 92: The Legendary Sword Nemaisol

Daniel closes the door to his lab with Hekate and Wenlianna with him, having gotten permission to include them from the topic of the discussion to be had.

He wanted to include Ryukana, but Nemaisol vehemently objected for some reason, promising to explain.

Daniel takes a seat, setting Nemaisol on the work bench, and Hekate and Wenlianna take seats beside him.

“Don’t treat me like I’m crazy, alright?”

“I would never!” replies Hekate.

“I’d like to know what’s going on first,” replies Wenlianna playfully. “That is to say, even if I feel you are, I won’t abandon you.”

Daniel chuckles. “Thanks.” He touches Nemaisol, asking gently, “Nemaisol?”

There’s no response. Daniel replies to the silence, “Nemaisol, not funny. I know you’re being quiet on purpose.”

“A-Are you saying… you… can talk to the sword?” asks Wenlianna.

“It’s a new development.”

Hekate puts her hands on her hips, sitting up straight as she puffs up her chest proudly. “It’s like a soul-bound golem. Or an artificer intelligent.” She grins, and Wenlianna looks from her to Daniel.

“Artificial intelligence. It’s the technology version of Xyreko. Though, without the soul part.”

“I… I see.”
“Th-That’s what I said!” whines Hekate. “I just bit my tongue!”

Daniel smiles, not poking fun at the feldrok empress for now. “So, Nemaisol? Or… no… You said that’s not your real name. Please tell me your real name.”

Again, no response. Daniel sighs.

“Are… you sure it wasn’t just from… the fear? Or… perhaps the enemy using telepathy?”

Daniel shakes his head. “I still don’t have enough mana to receive telepathy. Fear is a reasonable assumption, but… I was able to draw Nemaisol because we were communicating.”

“Maybe you need to draw it again?” asks Hekate. “Though… I guess you did say it told you to draw it… Hmm…”

“Can’t hurt to try, I guess.” Daniel draws Nemaisol, leaving it on the table, keeping his hand on the grip. “How’s that? Gonna keep messing with me?”

Again another pause. Daniel sighs. “I can’t help you if you don’t speak. And, I know you’re just making me look crazy.”

“Very well, Daniel. You could at least let me have some fun, but they clearly trust you too much.”

Hekate and Wenlianna both gasp. “It’s really talking!” cries out Hekate in surprise. Wenlianna carefully inspects the blade without touching. She knows that anyone else touching Nemaisol will be shocked, and the weight could increase suddenly. And, knowing now that the sword is apparently sentient and capable of its own magic, it’s even more risky to upset the sword.

“Fascinating. I can’t even see any glyph markings, runes, or magical circuits. Are the magic elements internal to the metal of the sword?”

“I am not some stove or goods preservation unit. I am a… Well… that actually brings me to my problem. Daniel;”

“What is it?” asks Daniel.

“That thing I want you to protect me from… I’m… or rather, I was a goddess, similar to Ryukana.”

This shocks all three of them, and Hekate asks, “You… lived in the Divine Realm and all that?”

“Yes. Chaos and Order are the only two true gods, and the rest of us are their servants, each assigned to one or more worlds, preservation of the Realm, or observation of the whole of the universe. We aren’t much different than living beings on the worlds in question, but serve as a sort of management system; a lesser tier response so that Chaos and Order don’t have to erase and start over, which is the easiest response to anything going wrong.”

“How did you end up as a sword, then?” asks Wenlianna.

Nemaisol’s voice scoffs. *“A fair question, I suppose. You see, I was once in charge of protecting this world of Zenkon, and in so doing, I summoned a hero to whom I gave an immense amount of power. She was valiant and*

brave, kind and passionate, and she fearlessly carried out the task I gave her to complete. She was to fend off an invading extraterrestrial force, and I gave her immense magical powers and abilities to do so. She was virtually invincible, could wipe out vast armies in a blink, and she had no need to eat or sleep to maintain her limitless mana and resilience. I thought, if I chose a young woman to be my champion, she would be unlikely to be corrupted and abuse the power I gave her. But… I was wrong. Most sentient beings seek to better their station, and she was no different, seeking even to challenge the Divine Realm. I could not live with this shame, as she was wreaking more havoc than the aliens that I had summoned her to thwart. Seeing no other way to cover up my mistake and prevent it from getting worse, I turned myself into a divine weapon, and made myself available to the weakest person I could find; someone who would know the compassionate allure of humility, the gentle peace of tranquility, and the absolute duty to complete one's task and surrender. And… if not, I could simply take my power away."

"I don't understand," starts Hekate. "How can you call yourselves goddesses when you can give power, but can't take it away?"

"That thought comes from a mortal perspective, viewing us as almighty. But, as I mentioned, there are only two who are almighty. I'm more akin to… I guess a regional lord to this world's system. I have power and authority, but I am nowhere near the Emperor."

"So what happened after you found your new wielder?" asks Daniel.

"He killed the summoned heroine, and then gave me in my sheathe to the Feldroks to be archived and forgotten, if possible. There, I slumbered for centuries, until the Caretaker Xyreko gifted me, a goddess, to this otherworldly summon, Daniel."

“Lucky…” remarks Hekate.

Daniel and Wenlianna look at her, and she blushes. “I-I mean, I… Hmmm… Forget it! Nemaisol, or… You said you have a different name! What is it?”

Nemaisol chuckles. *“Yes. I did say that. Daniel, my true name is Kaeralageir. Nanita began calling me Nemaisol in sword form after a work of fiction in her world. Something about video games…”*

“Wait, that doesn’t make sense,” starts Daniel. “Video games are less than half a century old on Earth. Was Ms. Nanita from a different world?”

“Mmm… No, Earth sounds right. And it was a book, I think. But, one about video games. Ah! I see now. You wonder how hundreds of years have passed if only fifty or so have passed on Earth.”

“Exactly.”

“Worry not. Time is a construct of the realm hosting the affected worlds. You might say ‘universes’, Daniel, since I know your range of science fiction extends well beyond what this world knows or has imagined as of yet.”

Daniel and Hekate both look at Wenlianna as she mumbles, scribbling down new words to ask Daniel about later. “…deo gaymz… science fiction… ‘universes’ plural…” She blushes when she notices the other two watching her, and she squeaks, “I… I’m taking… notes…”

Everyone chuckles together. “No one is stopping you,” teases Daniel playfully.

Wenlianna clears her throat proudly, huffing, “Yes, well. I’ll continue then. Please pay me no mind. I mean it.”

“Oh, I’ll mind you, Wenlianna.” Daniel grins, and she blushes, glaring at him as fiercely as her rosy cheeks will allow.

“I-I’ll fire you! Er, I’ll… Hekate! Punish Daniel, please!”

Hekate cackles deviously. “Gladly, Wenlianna. Oh, Daniel…”

“Shh, Hekate. We’re still learning about Nemaisol. Sorry, Kaeralegeir. Don’t get distracted.”

Hekate huffs in shock at Daniel’s brazenness, but he ignores her, asking the sword, “Kaeralegeir, how can we help you?”

“Well, a lot of magical power will be required to break the contract I inflicted on myself. Not to mention the… hmmm… artifact? There is a magic thing I need. Best way I can describe it isn’t quite a magic device, but an artifact.”

“Any ideas where we can find this artifact? What it looks like or does?”

“Where… Hmm… I haven’t given much thought to where in a long time… Though, when we were flying to get your ‘cell phone’, was it? I recognized some landmarks, I think. Some of the mountains look pretty much the same. A lake or two.”

“Cell phone…” murmurs Wenlianna. “So, you recognized Mornistae?”

“*How should I know? It was within fifty miles of where we found your cell phone. Oh, and Wenlianna was there. Sleeping.”*

Wenlianna blushes, saying softly, “Thank you again for the blanket, Daniel.”

“That wasn’t me.” He nods his head at Hekate, and it’s Hekate’s turn for her cheeks to turn rosy.

“I… you looked cold… and… She’s very pretty, isn’t she Daniel!?” snaps Hekate suddenly at Daniel, glaring up at him.

He ruffles her hair, intercepted halfway through as she wrestles his arm in frustration.

“Th-Thank you, Hekate.”

“S-Sure thing, Wenlianna. My pleasure.” They both awkwardly avoid eye contact, and Daniel returns to task. “So, if it was in Mornistae, which should be about the entire range you mentioned, what else can you tell us? The size? It’s appearance?”

“*It’s a big… thing. It has no magic present, but reacts to magic. The reason I made it was to quantify the item touched to it and ensure only I could be uncontracted by it. Also, there should be minimal risk of… what are those idiots called? ‘Contract demons’? If they arrive, the artifact should be able to contain them.”*

“Contain them?” asks Hekate. “They arrived through spatial portals. Even I can barely manage it without exhausting myself. D-Don’t tell that little buttface Chaos or whatever her name is.”

Kaeralegeir is silent for a long time. She finally responds to Hekate’s actual concern, rather than the remark about Chaos, *“Yes. If the spatial transportation magic is opened near the artifact, which it will be in order to attempt to hijack my contract removal, then the being will be entrapped in the main crystal of the unit. Only an exceptionally powerful Outsider would be able to escape the crystal, which exist, but are rare.”*

“Kaeralegeir, have you ever heard of ‘raising a flag’?”

“*Sure. That’s a mortal custom for flying patriotic banners, yes?”*

Daniel sighs. “That’s one use for the phrase.”

“Crystal…” murmurs Wenlianna. “Daniel!” She looks at Daniel suddenly, her eyes wide with excitement and realization.

“Y-Yes?”

“The artifact! I mean, THE artifact! The one in my old lab. Er, rather, where my old lab used to be! Do you think that’s what Her Divinity is talking about?”

“*Pssh! Please… ‘Her Divinity’,”* counters the voice trapped in the sword. *“I specifically did what I did so I wouldn’t be erased. I was a goddess. But, if I remain in my old state of being, I’ll be erased for my failures. If all goes according to plan, I have lost enough of my divine energy to be effectively mortal. Ooooo! I can’t wait to see what I look like in my mortal form! Daniel, I was pretty beautiful as a goddess. Not to brag too much, but I’d wager I was more to your tastes than Ryukana. I LOVE the color purple, and I loved making my hair a dark red. You know, like that cute dragon.”*

Hekate starts growling as she glares at Daniel with a pouty face, and he smiles sympathetically at her. He says softly, “Amber eyes are beautiful, Hekate.”

“A-Amber? What color is that?”

“The golden yellow that you have.”

She blushes, cupping her cheeks. She runs across the lab, finding something she can see her reflection in, and she gasps when she sees her own eye color. “D-Does this mean I win the Hekate game for once!?”

Daniel ignores her for the moment, though he can't help but chuckle softly. "Anyways, Kaeralegeir, this artifact; does it look like a big upside down spider with two glass orbs, one big and one small on it?"

"Yes! That's the one."

Wenlianna gasps. "S-So, that really is a divine artifact!?"

"*In so much as I was the one that created it, yes. Assuming we're talking about the same artifact. Remember, I haven't seen it alongside Daniel yet. But, it sounds like what he described.*"

Wenlianna nods. "Mm-hmm. So then…" She looks to Daniel. "What's a spider?"

Daniel thinks for a moment. He hasn't given it much thought, but he always took for granted on Earth that spiders were relatively reclusive little critters that tend to make their nests out of the way, which is the way he liked them. When they strung their webs across walkways and areas that he happened to be tall enough to stumble into, it would be frustrating. But, most of the time, he and most spiders got along famously by the creed 'you stay over there, and I'll stay over here'.

Because of the benign neglect he and spiders have always shown each other, Daniel never really gave it thought that he hasn't really seen any in this world. Or, if he has, he never gave it thought to learn what their names are.

He replies to Wenlianna, "Spiders are kind of like an insect, except they have eight legs instead of six, and they generally eat most insects. They mostly build stringy webs of sticky thread across open areas to catch flying insects, or sometimes across the ground to catch creepy crawlies."

“I think benkis would eat them,” replies Hekate. “Especially if they just sit around waiting on bugs.” Wenlianna nods in agreement. Benkis are rather docile feline-like creatures. Their primary diet is insects, and given their small figures, they are able to find and prey on them in very difficult to reach places. Given how Earth spiders hunt for prey, they would be easy pickings for even a benki kit.

“True. Could be why they aren’t on this world.”

“*I knew what you meant, Daniel. I’m friends with the god who created spiders. He was trying to impress his sweetheart. And, it’s only fair that I say, he succeeded.”*

Hekate nods in approval as she crosses her arms, approaching the three again. “Mm-hmm. A good man.” She looks at Daniel pointedly. He makes eye contact with her and retorts bluntly, “I gave you the Citadel, Sweetpea. Would you prefer a spider instead?”

She blushes bashfully, murmuring, “N-No…”

“Mm-hmm. So then, artifact in Mornistae, a ton of mana. Anything else? Usually, task lists for gathering quests are really long.”

“*Ugh! Do you think this is some RPG, Daniel?*”

“Arr… pee… gee…” murmurs Wenlianna as she writes it down, and Daniel chuckles at both of them. “No, but if it’s just retrieving that thing, or taking you to it…”

“We should buy it from them,” replies Hekate. “Then, they can’t complain when we do whatever we want with it.”

“We don’t have that much in trade goods yet. And, I’m not summoning piles of diamonds or gold for trade. We’ll negotiate to see if Rikuto will trade with us first, and see what he wants. Though, I suspect it’s not going to be that easy. Kaeralegeir, how long will transforming you back take?”

“Days, probably. Maybe weeks.”

“Of course. So, we’ll have to either occupy Mornistae for that long, or…” Daniel thinks. “I wonder if we could get Empress Sundenelle to get it on our behalf.”

“She’s not even friends with us yet,” retorts Hekate.

“A-And, even then, the Empire has demanded it before, and the Royal Family has always refused. Not least of which is the fact that it’s almost impossible to move the artifact. At least, for eastern races. That’s why the castle was built around it. Between it and the summoning ritual, Mornistae has managed divine heroes since the kingdom’s founding.”

“*Pfft! Yeah, and Nanita founded it. She wanted to try to keep me from being able to ever turn back.”*

“Wait! Didn’t she name you?”

“*Yes, but it was in mocking, because she recognized my divine power when I was brandished by my chosen hero-killer. Ironically, because she sealed away the artifact and led us half-way across the world, she got her wish. I was unable to turn back, though I wasn’t in any hurry to, since I’m still afraid of becoming a goddess again. Listen, if that happens, Daniel, I need another favor. If I’m still a goddess, you can use contract magic on me to make me your servant. That way, Chaos and Order shouldn’t interfere. So, have a contract ready for me, just in case. In fact, if you do this, I’ll give myself to you either way.*”

"We'll cross that bridge when we get there. So, mana, the artifact, and a contract. Anything else?"

"Mmm… No… OH! Actually, yes. It's why I wanted Wenlianna here, actually. You see, I don't know if Hekate or anyone else in your employ will be able to use magic continuously for the time needed to power the artifact, so I would highly recommend making a system to keep the device powered when the magic users need to sleep. Since Wenlianna is so familiar with the artifact, as well as magic devices, it should be relatively simple, yes?"

Wenlianna nods. "I-I'll do my best! I actually just finished the mana transfer stations for our remote villages, and if you wish to set up transmission lines, Daniel, we can power the Citadel from range. Plus, the electrical generator to mana converter is working, but I'm still trying to upscale it. Great Aunt Reina helped a lot."

"Good work. I'll have Shek and Skloe begin hiring workers to take care of that, then. The transmission lines should hopefully be the easy part, if it works like electricity. And, while we're at it, we'll have them run electrical lines as well. Soon enough, I'd like to make our main power source for hospitality be electricity, so that mana can be dedicated to the Citadel's irreplaceable functions, such as the golems and summoning. Not to mention defense."

Wenlianna and Hekate nod in agreement.

"Kaeralegeir, I'm sorry it will take time, but I promise we'll work on getting you the artifact. Once it's here, powering it is the next priority, and then finally, transforming you back."

"*I have faith in your dedication and abilities, Daniel. Thank you for hearing me out. We should avoid using me in any form other than the sword from now on,*

but I will lend you my strength. Just… try not to feed me too much magic from yourself. I'm trying to lose mana, not gain it."

"So that's why you repel magic users…" murmurs Wenlianna. "You've been trying to lower your mana threshold all these years."

"Yes. In fact, it's beneficial for my sheath to be destroyed or for me to be left out of the sheath for long periods of time. It burns through my magic when I have to regenerate or return. So, go ahead, Daniel. Use me for dumb things. Dull my blade, and I'll heal. Melt my sheath, and I'll regenerate it. Pry doors open or chop firewood. Heck, stones, even. Just try to minimize my magic exposure, and I'll get what I want."

"Don't you regenerate mana like the rest of us?" asks Hekate.

"No. Not while I'm nullifying mana in my presence. The exception is my wielder, whose mana can easily replenish my own inadvertently. I wasn't quite planning on becoming mortal when I turned into a sword, but now that I've had a few hundred years to think, it was the obvious choice. Since no one came looking for me, I figured it's the best way to stay off of Order's radar, specifically."

"Ray-darr…" murmurs Wenlianna as she writes it down.

Daniel states warmly, "That one I might be able to help you with, though I'm only familiar with the idea."

Wenlianna beams excitedly. "Excellent! What does it do?"

"Detects things with radio waves. We used it to detect incoming aircraft so they could be intercepted, or avoided as the case may have been."

She nods eagerly, trying to picture it. Daniel closes out the secretive little meeting with, "Alright. We have a plan for now. First, let's make sure our

battlefronts are stable and that the Covenant is either no longer a threat, or figure out where they're going. After that, we'll do the meeting with Sundenelle."

Hekate and Wenlianna giggle deviously. Everyone is looking forward to the game of messing with the Empress of the Grand Zenkon Empire.

***

"*Grey Knight, Mechanic One, the Valkyries have been chosen. Mechanic One in control. Listen close for the next poem. Over and out.*" Daniel's voice gives Choul a brief message of warning, though he's not entirely sure what the peculiar emperor means. Regardless, if Daniel is sending a message, something happened, and Choul needs to remain on high alert.

Without Rose or Blue being present, he's the only one who can easily fly and inspect the battlefield, and the status of the Covenant forces is unknown. Likewise, the eastern Imperial forces are still poised to engage.

"Sir General?" asks one of the ogres near Choul as he looks out over the east from the eastern wall of Fort Twilight.

"It's nothing. I just received a brief missive from his Grace, Emperor Daniel. Something happened to the Dragon Empresses and their mission."

The ogres and dattakoriens around him flinch or gasp, shocked by this implication.

"Panic not, everyone. Daniel did not sound distressed, and he stated that it's under control. We'll focus on defensibility. How are we looking?"

The ogre that spoke to him reports, "We have been running the smithy in full shifts since we conquered the fort, General. But, if I may… Should we be making… *them* without his Grace's knowledge?"

Choul smiles softly. “His Grace trusted me to defend this fortress once it was captured, and I can not substitute the Emperor. Ours will be but poor imitations.”

“Very well, General. The first units should be ready by this evening. Where should we stage them?”

Choul thinks for a moment. He could have them split up, or focus on one front or the other. The eastern front should provide the lesser challenge, meaning new weapons aren’t as necessary.

But, that doesn’t mean he should neglect the eastern facing wall either. After all, Daniel had no magic when he conquered the Citadel. To underestimate any enemy is the height of folly.

Likewise, with Vaergraes and the Uhl’tall allied with the Fievegal, and the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy out of play for the same reason, Choul should be single-handedly capable of holding off either side, with exception of the archoneldwyn, who the Fievegal has too little intel about. Though he can’t cause direct harm, his flames still burn as hot as ever, and he has many spells that can create obstacles impassable to most. He won’t be creating magic walls this time, but he should be able to interfere long enough for a defensive response to be formed.

It’s ironic, and certainly not lost on him, that Choul can order the soldiers under his command to do just about anything he wants, including causing harm, but he can’t cause harm himself.

Regardless, he is seeing merit to Daniel’s merciful nature, even if it does hamper his endeavors at times. If the archoneldwyn he questioned can be made into an ally, even unwillingly, then there is merit to mercy.

“Stage them on the eastern wall. If it should come to pass that we are battling on both fronts, I shall entrust the east to you and the new weapons, while I handle the west. My size and power exceed the known dragons, and I should be able to hold back the enemy if they arrive.”

“As you wish, Sir General!” The ogre nods to the dattakoriens, and they jog towards the forge, where weapons adapted from a simple understanding of the mysterious demon wands and staves are being produced. Technically, Chould doesn’t have permission to make them, but he knows the gravity of letting the technology leave Fievegal control, and it’s only a matter of time, even if Daniel is as careful as can be. Choul has a minimal understanding, and he was able to figure out how it works; especially because he recognizes the smell of alchemical flash powder.

Of course, Choul would be remiss if he didn’t have the new cannons tested, since Daniel mentioned something about the forging process that is important for the barrels.

Choul calls after the dattakoriens, “Let me know once the first cannons are staged. We’ll do a test volley to test range and how the weapons hold up.”

“As you wish, Sir General!”

Choul checks the construction projects that they added to Fort Twilight. He ordered the golems into a low-activity state to conserve mana, leaving the meager forces of the living members of the Fievegal army to carry out the main tasks. They have prepared cranes to lift the cannons into place, and the stone gates are in place, solidly ready to stand against a standard battering ram attempt. Of course, the gates are so heavy now, that only mages or dragons can move it single-handedly. Even the gate mechanisms present for the wooden gates the eastern forces used are too weak to move the heavy stone

gates. Over time, the hinges will likely bend and the door will sink in such a way that it will be unable to open.

After a little while, Choul oversees the staging of the cannons on the east wall. Three cannons have been prepared. They are fairly simple, compared to Daniel's rifle and pistol, since the cannons are more or less a steel tube with a fuse hole at the back end.

The firing teams for the cannons have been practicing on a dummy cannon made of wood, and they man the wall with the other watch teams in preparation for possible attack from the eastern forces.

Choul uses a spell to scan far out ahead of them. There are no living beings other than animals in the expected range, and he needs to verify that his cannons work.

Choul nods, and the dattakorien commander nods in reply. He shouts, "Cannon teams! Load!"

"Loading!" shout back all three cannon teams, quickly shoving the powder packs in with the ram rod, and then doing the same for the projectiles, which are as close to the rifle projectiles Choul has seen, but without the tight tolerances. They should still fly accurately, as far as Choul knows, but he doesn't know the full reason how and why Daniel's rifle works.

Regardless, twenty pounds of iron falling from the sky faster than even a giant could throw is sure to be devastating -and frightening- to enemies that have no way of defending against something they can't see coming.

"Cannon loaded!" "Cannon loaded!" "Cannon loaded, Sir!" Three confirmations come back, and Choul orders, "Fire when ready."

The dattakorien commander nods. “Yes General! Cannon teams, take aim! Fire!”

“FIring!” shouts all three teams. They ignite the fuses of the cannons. Choul watches, learning every second of this excercise, since this is his own first attempt at designing and firing weapons unfamiliar to him.

One of the fuses refuses to stay lit. The cotton thread burns, but it isn’t reliable as a fuse, and the cannon team of the third cannon struggling with the fuse keep trying to re-light it. Regardless, it fights them all the way.

The second cannon’s fuse burns fastest, and it startles its firing team when it suddenly explodes.

And, that’s not to say it fired correctly. The whole cannon explodes like a bomb, and the cannon team screams out in surprise and pain as shrapnel undoubtedly does damage to the soldiers firing the weapon. Choul is over the rampart from his position in the middle of the wall in an instant, sprinting to the explosion site to begin triage.

The first cannon fires properly a few seconds after the explosion, thundering as it launches a shell, and the blast startles Choul, who is already in an urgent mode in an attempt to rescue any of the wounded that he can from the second cannon exploding.

The first and third cannon teams rush to the aid of the second cannon team and Choul, dragging the wounded away from the burning shrapnel and embers of what remains of the second cannon.

However, the entire group is suddenly startled when thunder booms behind them; a cannon firing. They look in a startled panic to the third cannon, where the sound came from, to find a puff of fire and a trail of smoke leaving its

barrel. Cannon three, in spite of its failing fuse, managed to ignite its powder even after its team abandoned the cannon to address the second cannon team's injuries.

Choul is stunned by the colossal failures going on around him. He wouldn't blame any of the cannon team members. They all went into this more blind than they realized, including Choul himself. He believed Daniel's weapon was relatively simple, but there was more to the seemingly simple design than he realized.

After the second cannon team is stable enough to survive, Choul takes a seat on the ramparts near where the second cannon was firing from. He studies the weapon. It split along the side, throwing pieces of itself around that nearly killed the team members controlling the weapon.

What went wrong? Is there some forging process Daniel knows that I don't? Were the walls not thick enough? Too much powder?

He looks at cannon number three, which fired on its own. It fired properly, but long after the cannon team thought that the fuse was shot and was no good. Instead, it burned slowly enough that they didn't notice until everyone was focused on rescue efforts with the second cannon team.

Choul sighs. He looks to the west. He can't actually see it, but he knows the direction of the Citadel, and it's true ruler who is currently residing there. He is the one who brought forth the technology that Choul foolishly tried to emulate.

The grey dragon lays back on the rampart block, sighing to himself. He mutters, "I guess I should contact my Liege… I was hoping to impress him. But… I'm apparently in over my head."

Choul has been all over the world of Zenkon, but he still can’t compete with an otherworlder mechanic versed at least a little in a lot of subjects from his strange world.

Choul sits up feeling humility wash over him once more. “Citadel One, Grey Knight,… I need Mechanic One’s help.”

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter XX.C: Character Index

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter XX.C: Character Index

Author’s Note: Hey Dear Readers! This is a bonus chapter containing character names and brief descriptions of how they fit into the story, as requested by one of my regular readers. I finally got around to hitting as many of the main characters as I could off hand. I'll try to continuously add to it. If you notice anyone important that I should add, please comment with who they are (and chapter they're in will be helpful too, in case I can't get to it right away).

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Daniel

A rather average human from Earth, specifically USA. He is close to average height for an American at 5’9” (~1.75m), with dark brown hair that most people consider black, and dark brown eyes. He was 33 years old when he had just returned home from work and was drinking rum to relax, when a strange light appeared and summoned him to another world, just like out of a work of fiction. The mysterious transfer made him approximately 10 years younger physically, but with his additional experience and knowledge unaffected.

Daniel worked as a maintenance technician on manufacturing machines after serving in the Navy as a nuclear operator. His background has given him a great deal of humility and mechanical knowledge, while his hobbies have expanded on both of those facts, giving him enough knowledge to manage to keep himself alive while in a world of magic, and he himself had none.

Tachibana Rikuto (Rikuto Tachibana)

Tachibana Rikuto, given name Rikuto, is a young college student studying many civics courses and economics. He is the human from Earth chosen by the goddess Ryukana to answer the Divine Summoning Ritual performed by denizens of Zenkon, specifically the royal family of Mornistae. Rikuto is earnest and hard-working, but his wisdom and experience are limited, making him capable of great feats, but struggling when unprecedented challenges begin to arise.

King Greydald kos Mornistae

The reigning king of the kingdom of Mornistae, he is the one who chose to perform the Divine Summoning Ritual in order to try to circumvent a failing economy and hungry eyes of other territories around them. While he is a kind and gentle soul, he is quick to turn over his authority to Rikuto, who is able to analyze and correct many of the situations that were weakening Mornistae. While many respect Rikuto well enough, it's no secret that his arrival has created an opportunity for change. He has grey hair, and a well-kempt beard, and blue eyes from whom his daughters received their eyes.

Princess Heralesse kos Mornistae

The Crown Princess of Mornistae, she is the first born child of the King, and the presumed heir. She has a very light sandy blonde shade of hair, and her eyes are blue. She is 17 years old, and she bears a great deal of responsibility for her age (compared to what Rikuto and Daniel know). She can have a bit of a passionate temper, but she's generally a very sincere and honest person, if temperamental and demanding at times. She favors form over function, and often wears a more military-esque uniform as she organizes the Royal Guard.

Princess Erimaya kos Mornistae

Princess Erimaya is the second princess of Mornistae at 12 years old, and younger sister to Heralesse. She is a soft-spoken bookworm with very light blonde hair and darker blue eyes than her sister or father. She is the one who suggested the Divine Summoning ritual after reading about it in the library, and she feels responsible for Daniel's plight, since he arrived without magic. When she fell under mysterious circumstances from the ramparts of the castle, she landed in the river flow-through that flows into the castle and drowned. Daniel was able to resuscitate her, but his emergency response ran contrary to the modesty customs of Mornistae (and most of the Eastern kingdoms), so he was banished to Fort Peony. Princess Erimaya has not forgiven Rikuto -who caved to pressure from the nobles-, Heralesse -for not understanding that Daniel saved her life-, and her parents for not doing something.

Wenlianna Kos Stalvaltan

Eldest daughter of the Grand Duchess of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy, Wenlianna has always been a scientist at heart. She devours knowledge wherever she can get it, and as such, has become one of the most prominent Magic Artisans of the kingdom of Mornistae, rising to Court Magic Artisan rank until a duel between Daniel and Gunther led to her resignation as a term for Gunther winning the duel. Wenlianna has brown hair and green eyes, and she often is seen wearing a lab-smock, her family's carefully-crafted net-like hair ornament, and glasses that she can't see without. She is 23 years old, but carries herself even more maturely when the situation demands it. She becomes nearly obsessed with knowledge she doesn't already have, especially technology, and she becomes fast friends with Daniel after he works with her to adapt Earth's advanced modern technology to Zenkon's magic crystals and magic technology. She can be haughty and put on a show for an audience, as

seen with the duel, but she is most comfortable holed up in her lab, and because she knows and respects that she's not a fit for nobility with her obsessions, she prefers to simply stay out of sight. Aramellianna has high expectations for Wenlianna, but rarely needs to interfere because Wenlianna's drive and technology have made the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy wealthy, and Wenlianna, who can use any kind of magic, can extend her lifespan -as well as her fertile years- and start a family much later than usual. Regardless, Wenlianna realizes that she's in love with Daniel only after he has been sent away, and Aramellianna commits the full might of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy to finding him and retrieving him.

Aramellianna kos Stalvaltan

Grand Duchess Aramellianna kos Stalvaltan is the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan, a vassal territory to the kingdom of Mornistae. The Grand Duchess is a very attractive and powerful woman, even as a widowed mother of five daughters. While she was married into the Stalvaltan family, few are more Stalvaltan than the Grand Duchess, having dedicated her all to the legacy of the family, her children, and the might and wealth of the Grand Duchy. She has Brown hair that she'll often stylize, bright green eyes, and a somewhat stern, matronly expression that seems to always be calculating. Daniel views Aramellianna as the most prolific capitalist of Zenkon, a world where capitalism hasn't explicitly been defined the way Earth has defined it. She is always looking for business opportunities to expand the Grand Duchy's wealth, and while she's loyal to the kingdom of Mornistae, she is the only person in the Kingdom that has the authority to depose the king, in the event that incompetence or corruption endanger the kingdom as a whole. As such, she flexes this authority very openly after Daniel is banished, and the brief moment of tension is redirected into a combined effort to help stabilize the fallen kingdom of Bromlund, from which Aramellianna and the Grand Duchy profit

greatly. Aramellianna loves all her daughters, but she does favor Wenlianna for being able to stand completely on her own and forge her own path ahead. She's not especially affectionate normally, which makes the rare hug from the Grand Duchess all the more meaningful and powerful, nearly as powerful as the loyalty and respect the soldiers of the Grand Duchy have for her.

Yanidere kos Stalvaltan

The second eldest daughter of the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan, Yanidere is slightly taller than her eldest sister Wenlianna, and she shares more features of their mother Aramellianna than Wenlianna, including a highly feminine figure, beautiful, soft-angled facial features, and eyes that give a sense of wisdom. That said, Yanidere is rather light-hearted, often being friendly and playful, rather than serious and calculating like the Grand Duchess. She is married and has a good relationship with her soft-spoken husband from a count's family, and they continue to live in the Grand Duchy to support Aramellianna as the heir apparent.

Yanidere loves her family very much, and while she lives every day with the expectation that she'll be the one to inherit the Grand Duchy due to Wenlianna's complete lack of interest in noble or social affairs, she hopes her elder sister will find someone that wins her heart and makes her want to claim her rightful place at the head of the Stalvaltan family.

Yormolett kos Stalvaltan

The third daughter of the Stalvaltan family. Yormolett has only recently come of age and is engaged to be married. Like her mother and sisters, she has brown hair and green eyes, though she is very lithe and slender. She usually wears her hair down, giving her a more 'homely' appearance compared to her sisters excluding Wenlianna, who focuses more on her research.

Yormolett is the most quiet of the five sisters, often observing and learning, rather than taking charge or becoming especially social.

Bunnrimae Stalvaltan

Due to their age and not having had formal social debuts in noble society, Bunnrimae and her younger sister Haldestania are not yet conferred with formal titles, so they don't use the 'kos' nobiliary particle. Bunnrimae is the one of her five sisters who shares more features with the late Grand Duke than with Aramellianna. She has light hair that would be considered 'sandy blonde', hinting at brown through a blonde base. Her eyes are also a bright golden color like her father's.

Haldestania Stalvaltan

The youngest daughter of the Stalvaltan family, Haldestania 'Desti' is the 'gem' of the Stalvaltan family. She is very kind and gentle, though she also does cling to Aramellianna more than the others. The Grand Duke passed away shortly after Haldestania was born, so she has no memories of the Grand Duke other than the paintings and stories told by her sisters.

Grand Duke Yaandrestarr kos Stalvaltan

The late Grand Duke of the Stalvaltan family, Yaandrestarr was the beloved husband of Aramellianna and father to all five Stalvaltan daughters. Descended of an ancient bloodline of warriors with a great deal of magic, the Grand Duke established the Stalvaltan Guard, a legion of powerful battlemages rumored to be able to fight a greater dragon without thousands of casualties. Wenlianna was the only one of his daughters to inherit his rare talent for omni-affinity magic.

Commander Leiwelles kos Morglodston

Commanding officer of Fort Peony, Leiwelles is a warrior who has made Peony into what it is as ‘the flower garden’. What started as a loose tradition before became a more defining trait of the fort; that it is manned almost entirely by women. There are several reasons for this, but Leiwelles has proven capable of keeping the women under her command focused, guiding them and giving them a place to earn honor and respect, or to give the last bit of themselves for people they’ve lost. Leiwelles is on the taller side for a woman, but is still much shorter than Daniel. She has brown hair and icy blue eyes that seem to see through everything. Thanks to her god-given unique magic ability, she actually can discern truth from lies. While she doesn’t abuse this ability for personal gain, it is one of her most powerful tools from manipulating everyone on the base into doing what she wants, or for luring out hostile elements that she needs to send away. She’s one of the few people since the incident with Erimaya that genuinely respects Daniel and his ability to separate his personal feelings from his ability to obey the chain of command. She often disapproves of Daniel not standing up for himself as a result, and she ‘punishes’ him by ignoring him for the most part, though she also treats him with respect as a fellow soldier.

Ryukana Get faster updates on novelping.com.

One of the goddesses of the Divine Realm, and specifically the goddess responsible for Zenkon. Upon the Divine Summons ritual being performed, she chose and prepared Tachibana Rikuto from Earth to answer the summons. Ryukana is roughly in the middle of seniority of the Divine Realm, having experience in managing worlds, and often being scolded for granting too many blessings and special abilities for her chosen heroes. Because these heroes can sometimes become problems, Ryukana accepts the scolding, but will sometimes sneak in special gifts or abilities for her chosen heroes. She learns the hard way that, while it’s unknown how or why it happened, a second human

from Earth was accidentally summoned at the same time. Because he wasn't prepared for the world in the way he should have been, she became distraught, and desperately searched for him.

Lieutenant Gwenesphia Honeydip

A gatonine lieutenant serving at Fort Peony, and often on rotation for morning watch on the west (demon side) wall. She is a kind and gentle soul, so she takes pity on Daniel at first, later learning that he is responsible for restoring many of the comforts of Fort Peony that the soldiers were suffering through thanks to the difficulty getting a magic artisan or artificer to the defensive line. After having a few conversations with Daniel and learning more about him, she became attracted enough that, when she goes into heat, she tries to seduce him. His refusal after learning of her state earns even more of her respect after the fact, and when he seemingly sacrifices himself to defend Fort Peony, she and Sergeant Treia began a journey to find Daniel and rescue him if he's in trouble.

Gwenesphia is the youngest of seven siblings in a barony, so she joined the military with virtually no expectations of any inheritance from her family, and nothing to look forward to but a marriage.

She has a modestly feminine figure with faint violet blue hair and fur on her feline ears and tail. While she's generally rather docile, she is still a brave soldier of Fort Peony.

Sergeant Treia

A gatonine sergeant serving at Fort Peony. She has a bit more of a combative personality. She is highly suspicious of Daniel at first, since he arrived at Fort Peony with the story that he had done something inappropriate to a child

princess of the kingdom he came from. Treia has light brown hair and fur on her feline ears and tail with faint darker brown stripe-like patterns on her tail and ears. Her eyes are a bright blue color.

Guillelmsah

A demon chieftain just below Vaergraes in rank. He attempts to make a diplomatic connection with Hekate and the Citadel behind Vaergraes' back. After being rejected, and upon her refusal to blindly continue the war, he attempts to have Vaergraes assassinated, only for Daniel's golems to interfere.

Vaergraes

An Uhl'tall or "True Demon" who has gathered the demon-kin together in hopes of escaping a doomed fate for all of the demon-kin. She is one of the most powerful mages in the world, stronger than the Dragon Lord Morthybargaron, which is how she was able to get him to cooperate. She has bi-color skin, with a light creamy tan patches swirled with a more violet hue similar to vitiligo, but with an almost tattoo-like 'intentional' appearance to the shapes, though they hold no real significance. Vaergraes is considered the Demon Queen, but she's actually an Uhl'tall archpriestess, practicing an ancient spiritual religion that is focused on observing and maintaining a balance in the world. As a powerful archpriestess, Vaergraes can 'listen' to the world's mana and feel major changes, as well as see the future and the past to an extent, similar to a Dawnseer.

Thymeria

An Uhl'tall priestess and sister to Vaergaes, she is a gentle and timid person, though she is skilled at reading people quickly and is fairly social in spite of how reserved she can be. She appears to be a teenager or in her early twenties,

but is older than she appears. Because she is often rather reserved, she can come across as much more mature than she appears as well.

Illianna

An Uhl'tall warrior capable of defensive and healing magic who serves as Vaergraes' right hand. She is Vaergraes's most trusted advisor and joins the Archpriestess and her sister in fleeing to the Citadel after being ousted from the Demon Covenant following the destruction of the Devourer. Illianna carries herself like a fairly cool professional, keeping her emotions in check and trying to look out for Vaergraes and Thymeria when they give into their more immature desires. Regardless, she often ends up supporting the two in whatever they choose to do.

Shek

A goblin that was part of the attacking force that marched on Fort Peony, defeated shortly after by Daniel and his unprecedented weapons. She is the first one to awaken after the battle, and though it was a bit of a rocky start, she has become attached to Daniel. Later, she is the second to give birth to Daniel's children. Shek is fairly outgoing, and she favors wearing golden clothes after becoming one of Daniel's consorts. She has brown hair, cute features, a fairly shortstack body, and golden eyes.

Skloe

Another goblin that was part of the same attack on Fort Peony as Shek, and a friend of Shek's before being conscripted. Skloe is more subdued than Shek, but still eager to prove her worth as one of Daniel's first companions. She is the first to give birth to one of Daniel's children. Skloe is more lithe and slender than Shek, and a little taller. She has brown hair and blue eyes.

Ahok

Lady Ahok is a half-goblin who was captured during the conflict and sold into slavery. She was bought by a merchant who brought her to Mornistae, where she demonstrated an uncanny talent for working with magic items, since she often stole and disassembled them when she was still in the demon-kin army. Over the years, she proved her talent, and she became a magic artificer before getting promoted to magic artisan, and eventually working her way up to Court Magic Artisan taking Wenlianna's place after Daniel's duel with Gunther. Ahok is extremely adept at manipulating magic via equipment designs.

Kera'tai

A Chi'rinnis tribeswoman and the daughter of her village's chieftain. Her skin as a somewhat glossy grey tone with dark tiger-like stripes, and her hair is a silvery green color. Her bright eyes are a crisp orange color, and she is a capable magician in her own right, though she's far less powerful than Vaergraes. She was part of the attack force that marched on Fort Peony. She has antler-like horns that protrude from the crown of her head.

Aoloan

A succubus woman who was also a part of the attacking force that came to Fort Peony while Daniel was there. She was one of the main cooks for the expeditionary force, though she is also capable of hypnosis magic and detecting lies through mana. She has caramel-colored skin, pink hair, and violet-pink eyes that have shimmering specks. She, like other succubi, also has a slender tail coming to an arrow or heart-like point.

Mulmonbargonaed

Better known as ‘The Red Knight’ to other races, he is the dragon lord’s younger brother, a fearsome and malevolent greater dragon that lead an attack force to penetrate the last main defense of the eastern half of the continent; the mountains. He chose Fort Peony because of its relatively small fortress. He is the first dragon encountered by Daniel.

Baeka

The Mikadresselle of a tribe of dattakoriens, Baeka serves as ‘the voice of her tribe’ when dealing with other tribes and Demon Queen Vaergraes. She is an agile warrior, though her real specialty is magic intended to strengthen her allies. She has red and blue tiger-striped fur on her ears, forearms, lower legs, and tail, and her eyes are a captivating shade of green.

Paet

One of Baeka’s comrades, who joined her for the attack on Fort Peony. Paet is wary of outsiders, but is prudent enough to hold back hostility until she has all of the information she needs. She is a dattakorien huntress, skilled at tracking and taking down enemies at range.

Weya

Another of Baeka’s comrades, Weya is a young dattakorien woman who favors a shortsword and ambush attacks in combat. She was part of the attack on Fort Peony.

Morthybargaron

The dragon lord who ruled over the dragons for hundreds of years. He has a distinct red coloring to his scales and many scars over his body showing his age. Though he is powerful on his own, he is rather cowardly, and will often

disguise his own actions of force as overwhelming attacks, as opposed to bringing the other dragons along as protection. It is later learned that he is the reason for the fall of the feldroks and the master of Hekate prior to her meeting Daniel.

Ryuogriar

The “platinum” or “White Dragon Queen”, the dragon formerly known as Zadarralomme has long been considered the queen of the dragons, though she ultimately loathed Morthybargaron. Due to a curse on the dragons, she was unable to have children until Daniel used the Citadel’s resources to remove the spell. When she’s in human form, she has curled golden horns, silvery-blonde hair, red eyes, and a silver reptilian tail. Daniel describes her as a ‘milf’, as her chest and hip regions are extremely well endowed, and she is the closest in height to Daniel. She is cold with Daniel at first, but quickly warms up to him and becomes one of his most loyal companions. She is outgoing, confident, and proud, letting very little stand in the way of her getting what she wants. She favors flirting and enticement as her strategies, but she also doesn’t hold back taunting or teasing Hekate.

Reignleif

The second dragon contracted by Daniel, she is roughly middle seniority of all of the greater dragons, as she is the middle of the three dragons Daniel becomes close with. She is the blue dragon formerly known as Lyavvagstreom, and in the distant past, she had a half-sister that is one of the ancestors to the Stalvaltan family on their paternal side. Reignleif is quiet and shy, and she has modest feminine curves often hidden under a fairly pretty white dress and a blue mantle. Her hair is a soft sky blue, with metallic iridescent blue-green horns that protrude from the sides of her head. Her tail is metallic blue with a purple underside. She can breathe fire as any dragon can, but favors ice

magic. She's a bit of a bookworm, favoring peace and quiet over anything stressful.

Geirahoel

The youngest of the Greater dragons and a brilliant shade of orange when she's in her dragon form. Her original name is Bystuirikohn, and at first, she is outwardly hostile towards Daniel. But, due to a combined effort of Daniel showing her kindness, playful teasing, and protectiveness, she slowly develops some affection for Daniel, eventually leading fiercely loyal love for him. In her human form, she has deep red hair, emerald green eyes, and vibrant orange horns and an orange tail. Unlike Ryuogriar's horns, Geirahoel's are smaller and more straight, angled back and up, rather than curling around. Geirahoel loves flowers and gardening, and her personal quarters typically feel more like a jungle than a place to sleep.

Hekate

Formerly a slave to Morthybargaron, Hekate is a young humanoid girl with fox-like black ears, a puffy black tail that roughly matches the full size of her torso in volume, and bright golden amber eyes. She meets Daniel when they both enter the Citadel for their own reasons, and they work together to conquer it, with Daniel giving her the name Hekate, since she had none prior. It is later revealed that she is, in fact, a feldrok, but she has never spent any time in her feldrok form, and she doesn't have any desire to transform back into it. She is 15 when she meets Daniel, but due to her harsh upbringing, she appears smaller and younger upon their meeting. She fills out quickly once her diet improves, and though short, she starts to look closer to her real age. Hekate is made into the Empress of the Fievegal, a sovereign nation started out of the Citadel with Hekate as the primary Empress Regent, Daniel as her Emperor (in spite of not having a romantic relationship), and Daniel's consorts defined as

“Empresses” as well simply because none of the ruling body of the Fievegal really cares. Hekate is passionate and a little possessive of Daniel, but even her envy is drowned out by her strong tendency towards kindness and protectiveness of everyone she values as friends and family.

One of her only belongings when she was a slave is a small doll made out of straw, which she retrieved from the Dragon’s Hoard alongside Geirahoel.

Chaos and Order

The origins of everything, Order and Chaos are the primordial gods or goddesses. While they appear as a stoic matronly woman and a haughty young girl respectfully, they transcend true personification and human understanding, simply taking simplified forms of creations in order to communicate with their creations. Unlike the Divine Realm gods and goddesses like Ryukana, Order and Chaos are direct manifestations of creation and destruction, as well as the fabric of the universe itself including both the void in which matter exists and the matter itself. They created the universe, the laws of nature and physics, life, the challenges applied to all creations to promote growth, spread, and evolution, and death and the cycle of energy which souls are also bound to. As two parts of a greater whole, Order and Chaos are all powerful and a central part of the universe.

Princess Jieka Lawson

Daniel’s first daughter born to Skloe. She is energetic and playful and loves to be social and cling to the people she likes the most, which includes Daniel, Ryuogriar, Hekate, Gold, and Shek and Skloe.

Princess Tekten Lawson

Daniel's second born daughter born moments after Jieka to Shek, Tekten is much more docile and shy than Jieka, but often goes along with her energetic half-sister's whims. She isn't as feisty or hyper, even at play, and her strongest attachments are more limited to Daniel, Shek, and Skloe.

Xyreko

Once a dattakorien woman who lived an arguably full life, she agreed to undergo a special magic to become a golem bound to the Citadel through soul magic by the feldroks so that she could continue to serve and take care of the feldroks long beyond her natural life. She is now the caretaker of the Citadel, which grants her near supreme control of the Citadel's functions, answering only to the Master of the Citadel (Daniel, now) and any administrators (the Empresses of the Fievegal). Her golem form can be changed at her will by unsummoning herself and then resummoning herself in a new form within the Citadel's areas of effect, but she generally appears humanoid with a 'helmet' like head that is shaped to be reminiscent of a feldrok's fox-eared head. She has an archive of many spells and often uses them in Daniel's stead.

Balamae

One of Xyreko's children who became soul bound to the Citadel as well to continue serving alongside her mother. Balamae is a "Mana Guide", which is a role for the Citadel focused on collecting mana from various sources and ensuring the stability of the Citadel's magic functions.

Ucahote

A soul-bound golem of the Citadel that loosely serves as a central leader figure for any summoned combat golems to partition out the functions and dedicate a leader to combat functions with enough authority to function in the absence of

guidance from the Master, Administrators, or Xyreko. He is often referred to as 'General' formally for the sake of outsiders.

Gunther kos Montarre

The son of a Earl in Mornistae who was an apprentice Court Mage, which required him to take apprenticeship lessons from Wenlianna alongside others while she was Court Magic Artisan. However, after the magic artisanry duel against Daniel, he has completed his apprenticeship courses.

Blue

A blue male lesser dragon, Blue has joined his mate Rose in serving more directly in hopes of getting additional good treatment from the Fievegal, since Daniel and the Empresses have regularly demonstrated a much greater march towards prosperity for all than Morthybargaron ever did.

Rose

A dark pink female lesser dragon. She serves alongside her mate Blue after having laid her first egg after being alleviated of the anti-dragon curse. She is a little smaller than Geirahoel, who is the smallest of the Greater dragons due to her age, while Rose is a little older.

Brosjak

An archoneldwyn assassin and spymaster, Brosjak appears out of the blue when he finds the right time to assassinate 'The Harbinger of Calamity', who he has learned is actually just the powerless human Daniel. He tries to trick Daniel into a disadvantaged battle, but does not survive the encounter. Brosjak was cruel and arrogant, which caused him to completely underestimate Daniel because he saw only a powerless human.

Doephluev

An archoneldwyn assassin who attacked Daniel and the others during the 100,000 man attempted siege on the Citadel, ambushing them during their low-effort retaliation against the imperial forces. Because of the innate magical power, brutal strategies, and specialized weapons she used, Doephluev nearly killed Daniel. After being revived upon her capture, Daniel learns that the three archoneldwyn are supposedly the last surviving members of their race, and they use ancient secret archoneldwyn techniques of rune tattoos that grant them passive magical effects, including automatic revival if they're killed, magic suppression to hide them from being detected by other mages, chantless magic of spells that normally require spells, and many other abilities. Doephluev has caramel-colored skin, strawberry brunette hair, leaf-shaped elf-like ears, and intense mahogany colored eyes. She also has light freckles on her cheeks that serve to soften her expression a little. Her appearance early on is relatively unkempt, as archoneldwyn are often described as 'scruffy elves'.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 98: One Minute to Midnight

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 98: One Minute to Midnight

Sundenelle stares at the bust of one of her ancestors, Emperor Huyurest kos Lindenmorg the Second. He's considered one of the more effective emperors in history, having brought several kingdoms back from the brink of civil war and overcame a drought and the resultant famine.

For the moment, though, she's using the bust as a stand in. She was just practicing how to talk to a potential suitor face to face; particularly, a suitor that she is strongly considering as an option. It's very late at night, shortly before the next day officially begins at clockset. She couldn't sleep with everything that's happened and a youthful anxiousness filling her heart.

"Lord Daniel… No, Emperor Daniel… You have a strong, but simple name. Easy to pronounce. But, I must make an argument to continue the name of Lindenmorg, as my ancestors have a long lineage of noble history. And, with your name being unheard of,… No, that's rude… With your family name being fairly new… here on Zenkon…"

Byleathea, who is seated on a lounge sofa with her legs crossed, watches quietly, simply yawning from the late hour as she keeps her daughter company. She's the only other one in the room, as usual, and she's unsure what advice to give. She was a mistress to the former Emperor, and she was fairly reserved and shy. She also didn't hold the balance of a war and the entire continent in her hands. She also doesn't possess a name with a long and storied legacy.

“May I ask, dear Sundenelle, what the goal of your reply is? I was under the impression that you are trying to rein in this otherworlder and return him to imperial control.”

“I… He caught me off-guard, Mother. I admit it. But,… it’s not the most… Is it unwise? If he’s my husband, he has to listen to me, right? I mean, at least a little… A-And, he’d have at least some vested interest in protecting the Empire. It’s better than conquering through battle…”

“But, it’s still a conquest. And, you would apparently be simply a mistress in a rather large and obvious harem.”

“Would you prefer I marry the Grand Prince, Mother?” Sundenelle looks to her mother, who takes a breath and sighs.

“That display was rather unbecoming of him… But, the nobility would rather see that than you married to the enemy.”

“Even if it means avoiding war?”

“If it means their positions as nobility become precarious, absolutely. You have your position to think of. An Empress shouldn’t be lowered to mere mistress.”

Sundenelle takes a seat on the same lounge sofa, and her mother pets her back. The young Empress remarks softly, “I don’t personally care about the title. I only wanted to protect the Empire. I’m terrified that… if we do the wrong things, Daniel’s weapons will be turned on us and many people will die. He’s ruling over demon-kin. Even if he cares about his wives, surely he doesn’t care about his soldiers as much.”

“I will always be your mother, my darling Empress. I understand that you are weighing options I can’t fully empathize with. Whatever you choose, I will stand

beside you as your mother and your lady in waiting. Even if you… choose to demote yourself to mistress."

Sundenelle smirks. She faces the bust again -her makeshift 'Daniel'-, and she clears her throat. "Ahem. Daniel, lord of the Citadel and Emperor of the Fievegal, I, Empress Sundenelle kos Lindenmorg do proudly declare… no… humbly accept? No… That's not right. Mmm… This is hard!"

Byleathea, watching with a lackadaisical amusement, simply smirks. She remarks softly, "If you'd like to know; your Father, his Imperial Majesty, proposed marriage to three potential wives before the former Empress. He simply declared, 'You are a beautiful woman with a great personality. Much better than these daughters of dukes and marquesses I'm constantly surrounded by. What do you say we run away together?'" She scoffs. "He said the same words to me. In secret, of course."

Sundenellle chuckles. "Really?"

"Of course. Your father was a charmer. I truly did love him. And, I'm proud of what came of our relationship. In truth, I'm often thankful I was never Empress. She had more authority than I did, but I had the Emperor's love, his most precious daughter, and a relatively care-free life. I merely resided out of sight of the noble court, and I raised the next Empress."

Sundenelle perks up. "I see, I see." Sundenelle cups her chin as she thinks on her mother's words. "So, if I have Daniel's child, and raise him or her to be a legitimate heir… Yes…" She faces the bust again. "My dearest Emperor Daniel, my beloved… Yes, I have decided. I shall join hands with you to create a legacy stronger and more resilient than any before us. The Empire and the Fievegal shall stand together for a thousand lifetimes. So, make me your Em-… No, Please, take care of me, and I shall take care of your legacy."

Byleathea remarks softly, “Seems you have made your choice, your Grace.”

“Yes. What do you think, Mother. Should my reply include the fact that I accept, or should I request another audience? But… if I’m going to become his wife,… should I go to him? He said he would be at Fort Twilight for a time to await our response… my response. Should I inform him that I’d like an audience and meet at the Citadel? It would be a chance to see the Citadel for myself…” Sundenelle paces as she thinks, biting her knuckle to help her deep deliberations.

“Alright. I’ll accept the marriage proposal. In the worst case scenario, we can try to pull a Queen’s Slip.”

“Hah! Ask me how many successful Queen’s Slips I’ve seen in my life.”

Sundenelle looks at her mother, who has an amused smirk. “Or rather, ask me how many failures I have witnessed in my time, my beloved Empress.”

Sundenelle scoffs. She knows that, even for a queen assassinating her own husband, she is likely to be one of the first, if not the first, suspects in the investigation. Additionally, there is always a risk that the targeted king will survive, thanks to healers’ magic and the all-too-rare revival potions smuggled out of the demon wildlands. No fewer than four assassination attempts on either Sundenelle’s father or vassal kings have occurred just in Sundenelle’s lifetime, let alone Byleathea's. And, of the four, one was definitely attempted by the king's legal wife, which he survived by luck and timing of a passing cleric versed in a broad range Of counter-poison spells.

Sundenelle finally answers, “I know the answer is one, Mother. And, I know the point is that it’s wishful thinking shared amongst royal wives since the dawn of

time. Specifically those whose husbands are cruel or stupid. I don't expect to need to assassinate Daniel, but if anyone can…"

"Remember, dearest Sundenelle," starts the head lady in waiting. "A man's behavior in public does not reveal his behavior in private."

"That's true of everyone. How many people see me like this? I'm having a fanciful conversation with a statue."

Byleathea chuckles. "True." She stands up and approaches Sundenelle, standing behind her to hug her daughter over the latter's shoulders, studying "Daniel" as well. "How I wish your father was here, Sundenelle. He was an excellent judge of character."

"Is that so?" asks Sundenelle playfully.

"The former Empress was a calculated decision. That he named you the inheritor of the crown instead of your half-brothers is proof of his insight."

Sundenelle nods. She was teasing, but she understands everything her mother is trying to make a point of; Sundenelle can't predict every contingency, and Daniel is an unknown human with behavior completely abnormal to Zenkon.

"How are they, by the way?" asks Byleathea.

The young empress sighs briefly. "Same. They constantly demand to be set free, with exception of Themihk. He tries to play the 'adoring younger brother', and we have fun together playing board games. He asks about you, a lot."

"I see…" remarks Byleathea.

"I'll give you permission to visit him, if you'd like, Mother. I'm sure he'll be happy to see you."

Byleathea sighs softly. “I betrayed his trust. It’s probably best if I don’t.”

Sundenelle frowns sympathetically. She replies softly, “He has forgiven you, Mother. I know he knows you did what you had to for the Empire.”

“Perhaps. But, I always did my best to treat him kindly. I don’t know that my heart could take it if he pleads for freedom and mercy for his family.”

“You’re his family, Mother. Even if not by blood, you helped raise him. And, I’m glad for it. If I had a better way to handle his mother and brothers, I would free him myself. But… I can’t risk it. Not yet.” She smiles, looking directly at the statue again. “If my husband, however, were to supercede my authority, then I suppose the issue of succession would be moot.”

Byleathea scoffs. “That’s one way to look at it, I suppose…”

Sundenelle puts her hand on her mother’s forearm, saying gently, “Mother… I’ll convince Daniel to be my *loving* husband, and to treat my half-siblings and their mother with respect.”

Byleathea nods in agreement. “I know you will.” She kisses Sundenelle’s cheek. “I love you, my illustrious imperial daughter.”

Sundenelle scoffs. “I love you too, my wise and ever-present Mother.”

***

Choul reads the report as he paces anxiously in a circle. It’s early morning, and the sun is only barely starting to rise. Apparently, Daniel ‘accepted the proposal for marriage from Sundenelle’, which is just a simple but clever way to throw her off. Choul wanted to participate, in case there were any more surprise attacks. However, the audience apparently went rather smoothly, and they left

with both the Empress and someone in the position of ‘Grand Prince’ rattled by the spectacle, as well as unrest amidst the nobles.

Now, the extravagant ‘Royal Shuttle’ the stand-in golems rode in has returned to Fort Twilight to make the illusion of Daniel and his inner circle taking a brief furlough at the fortress to await a reply from Sundenelle.

As such, Choul is doing his best to leave the golems alone. They may appear to be Daniel and his Empresses, but the more they interact with those familiar with them, the easier it will be to see that they are mere imitations, currently on autopilot. They’re good enough to fool strangers for a time, but if Choul accidentally asks a question the golems don’t know how to answer, he’ll have given away the ruse.

Choul accepts that Fort Twilight has been baited, and they are waiting to see what happens next. Ideally, Choul alone can defend the fortress without casualties, but because he can’t cause harm directly, he is unable to adequately protect the entire fortress from all damage.

He’ll have to do the best with what he has. A third tank arrived, thanks to the manufacturing teams, as well as a handful more new recruits. It’s not much in the grand scheme of things, but the fortress has been reinforced, allowing Choul to send half of the golem forces back to the Citadel to conserve the Citadel’s mana reserves.

Daniel has been trying to be more conservative with the mana expenditures of his strategies, and technologies to offset the difference are only just becoming operational. The generators can convert mechanical power into electricity, and then electricity into mana, which is then absorbed into the Citadel’s mana-reserves. It’s inefficient compared to mana donations, which is less efficient than deaths occurring within the Citadel.

Of course, Daniel forbids deaths in the Citadel with extremely limited exceptions, making mana donations and the generators the priority. They're better than nothing, but it's taking time to overtake the mana expenditure many of the things they could do tend to expend, such as deploying golems remotely.

Choul observes the golems from a distance. 'Daniel' is speaking with the dattakorien and ogre commanders, while the 'Empresses' follow him like loyal and humble wives…

…Almost exactly the opposite of how the four Empresses would behave in relative privacy with Daniel. The grey dragon has no objections to the behavior of the Empresses. The dragon empresses, specifically, are treasures to the dragon race, and they have chosen their emperor.

Likewise, Hekate is very likely the last of her race. As rulers of the Fievegal, the rising power in the west, they have the choice to choose their primary partner. They have chosen Daniel as their emperor, as has Choul.

One of the dattakorien soldiers, Nourta, approaches Choul. "Sir General! I have a report."

"Go ahead, lieutenant."

"Thank you, sir! Reconnaissance teams have reported movement on the eastern front. Apparent Imperial Ally troops are encroaching on Fort Twilight's controlled zone. We estimate ten thousand troops, and a mobile weapon of unknown design."

"Unknown design?" repeats the dragon general.

Nourta nods. “Yes sir! Going by his Grace, Emperor Daniel’s designs, it is some kind of artillery weapon, but not a cannon of any kind, from what our scouts can tell.”

“Can we get anyone close enough to destroy it?”

“The scouts have been doing what they can, but the troops surrounding the weapon are highly alert and have repelled all infiltration attempts. If I may recommend, we may wish to evacuate Fort Twilight, Sir General. Without knowing the capabilities of this weapon, we are at risk of losing many forces for a fortress we don’t actually need.”

Choul scoffs. “You are correct, logically speaking. Do you think it’s comparable to Daniel’s rumored god-killers? Daniel and a king from the Kingdom of Mornistae both come from a different world.”

“I can not say, Sir General. I have not, myself, witnessed the power of such weapons, though I’ve heard rumors that the global mana weariness that swept across the world was a result.”

Choul nods as he thinks. “Yes, I believe I have heard that as well.”

Choul looks at the soldiers he has working around him. It’s not an overly-abundant amount of soldiers yet. They number around four thousand, now, with 50,000 golems on standby.

“Begin evacuations. We don’t have to clear out everything, just make sure all of Daniel’s weapons and the radio are taken.”

“Of course, General. I’ll begin right away.”

“Thank you. Oh, and please report to the Emperor here. I’ll be observing the east front to intercept any attacks if I can.”

“As you wish, General.” Just as the lieutenant is jogging a few steps away, his whole body shivers intensely.

Choul knows exactly why. Dattakoriens are considered demon-kin, but they are closer to humans than to demons as far as most things go, including magical prowess. As such, it is a rare talent for a dattakorien to be able to detect mana or magic with any remarkable accuracy.

But, the sensation that just rippled across the lieutenant also smacked Choul’s senses like a stick across his back; sudden, jarring, and potent.

Both of them look to the east. It’s not technically visible, but Choul can see the immense storm of mana swirling like the world’s mana is being drawn to a single point partially obscured by the trees. It’s well beyond archer range, and many riflemen would have trouble hitting a target half as far with reliable accuracy.

Choul can feel the mana rushing towards that point, like the heat of a fire in a strong wind. His skin crawls. It’s an immense amount of mana being drawn into a spell.

Choul shouts, projecting his voice using wind magic, “Everyone! Evacuate west, now!”

He begins chanting the most powerful magic interference spell he knows, which he learned from Ryuogriar. She created the spell after the mana depression caused apparently by Daniel’s super-weapon to negate magic for a time.

As the time goes on, Choul breathes quickly, strengthening his body with as much magic as he can. In his human form, he is still pretty much just as powerful in magic as he would be in his true form, but his physical attacks and movement speed are lower.

Regardless, he can see the spell itself beginning to grow on the horizon, both because of the concentration of mana glowing like a star emerging, contrasting starkly with the pitch black orb of concentrated magic that comprises the spell.

But, there are two of them side by side.

The grey dragon glances over his shoulder, verifying that the base is being cleared out as the golems march eastward towards the enemy.

I have no idea what's going to happen. Daniel killed the Devourer with his weapon. If this is one of those… Please, make your way out as quickly as possible.

The golems standing in as Daniel and the others have been evacuating as many people as possible with teleportation.

He snaps his gaze back to the weapon when he detects the next change; the weapon just launched the black orbs towards Fort Twilight.

Choul grits his teeth, casting his interference spell.

No effect.

The black orbs, spaced a small distance apart relative to their own massive size, continue their race towards the fortress without even a single sign of being affected by the interference spell.

Choul thinks as quickly as he can, trying to come up with something to defend the fortress and the lives still present. The black orbs pass through the trees effortlessly, annihilating the portions of the trees that reach the orbs themselves, as well as pulling air and lighter materials into their own 'mass'.

Seeing no other options, Choul makes a difficult decision. He, himself, represents a great deal of the Fievegal's military might, especially if Daniel were to relax the contract. He is not just a weapon, though. He is a General charged with protecting the Fievegal and its people.

They won't survive the weapon. Choul might.

He quickly transforms back into his true form, roaring a bellow as he kicks into flight. If he can intercept the orbs directly, he might be able to stop them.

Not one to waste time that he could be trying things, he exhales a powerful breath of fire into the right orb, trying to stop it with the power of his dragon flames. The orbs have passed half the distance.

Time is running out, and the flames seem to have no effect.

***

Shortly before, Ahok checks the fittings of the void artillery, ensuring nothing has come loose during the journey. They're getting close to Fort Twilight. The firing range of the artillery is quite far, nearly a mile, especially because they don't want to be too close when the orbs intersect for the detonation.

As she walks carefully along the cart carrying the weapon, she overhears the soldiers driving the buckrokhs pulling the cart.

"… know how this could be a good idea. I've heard from one of my cousins who fought at the Citadel that Daniel keeps the company of goblins."

The driver scoffs. "I can't imagine that's true. A human and a goblin? Especially a guy pretending to be an Emperor."

“Still, you think it’s a good idea that *she’s* with us? What if she has some… homesickness or something?”

“Hm? Oh,… The Lady? You know who the other is, right? Count Baumalde. Between a goblin and a human count? Who do you think they’d send?”

“True. I’m just worried she might become a liability.”

“She’s three feet tall and spends all day in a lab. I doubt she’s a threat.” The source of this chapter is novelping.com.

“Yeah, you’re right. I just hope they don’t expect us to go out of our way for a goblin. Makes my skin crawl thinking about it.”

“Another reason Baumalde wasn’t sent.”

The two soldiers chuckle together, and Ahok makes her way further back on the cart, staying out of their peripheral line of sight. She takes a seat on the cart, letting their words sink in.

She knows she’s not looked upon favorably, thanks to her being a half-goblin. She doesn’t know either of her parents, nor which was the goblin and which was the human. Ahok has been looked down on -figuratively and literally- for her entire life, especially once she was captured by the military and turned over to the merchant she stole from, who would go on to become her benefactor and open the gateway to her becoming a magic artisan.

In fact, one of the only people in her entire life to make a concerted effort to speak to her on an equal level was Daniel, when he took a kneel to speak to her. Some adults speak to children in the same way, but it was the first time she wasn’t craning her neck to speak to someone.

More importantly, she didn't want to think it, nor would she want to believe it if she did allow herself to think it, but her worst fear has been realized.

She's considered expendable by the kingdom of Mornistae, including Rikuto. Even more so, the soldiers aren't especially intent on protecting Ahok, even though Rikuto convinced her they would prioritize her safety.

When she sees the tower of Fort Twilight, the soldiers have already come to a stop. It sinks in what's about to happen.

Supposedly, Daniel is currently residing at Fort Twilight along with his invading force.

Before she can do anything, the soldiers trained to fire the artillery are already spreading out the stabilizers and cranking the core rods apart. When it's fully deployed, the weapon looks like a massive mechanical crab, but one that launches powerful void magic.

Ahok jogs to the commander of the void artillery expeditionary force. "Commander!"

Commander Kopudael turns and looks, angling his head down when he realizes it's Ahok. "Lady Ahok. What is it?"

"A-Are… we casting from here?"

"That's the plan. According to the forces that fought at the Citadel, Daniel's golems employ magic staves that have an attack range of over two hundred yards. To my understanding, the void artillery can cast accurately out to a mile."

"B-But… We've just arrived. Aren't we going to… I don't know… Aren't we supposed to give them a chance to surrender?"

Kopudael snorts sarcastically. “You can’t be serious.”

“I-I am. This weapon has the potential to do cataclysmic damage.”

Several soldiers, including the commander, scoff and chuckle. One of the soldiers nearby retorts, “I should hope so.”

“She knows we’re up against dragons, right?” asks another rhetorically.

Commander Kopudael chuckles a little longer, before he replies to Ahok. “They’re right, Lady Ahok. The dragons can respond too quickly for us to take warning measures. Our orders were to deploy the weapon as quickly as possible and retreat.”

“Y-You can’t do that, though! What about… What about innocent workers? O-Or, soldiers that would surrender. I-I surrendered. A-And I designed this weapon.”

Kopudael shakes his head with a more disgusted scoff. “Listen, no one is surprised that you’re soft, but to take credit for the work of Count Baumalde.”

The half-goblin recoils in shock and horror at that last statement. “P-Pardon?”

“No one discounts your effort assisting his lordship, but is it wise to try to claim that you designed it?”

“Y-Yes! W-What do you mean? I designed it. Count Baumalde was my assistant!”

The soldiers and commander all look at each other. They shake their heads, not saying anything. Though, it’s clear they don’t believe her.

Commander Kopudael turns to the artillery casting crew, ordering, “Artillery crew, bring alignment to the tower of the Citadel and begin priming the spell.”

“Aye, Commander!” The soldiers jump into action, and those on defense form a perimeter, ready to intercept attacks from the scouts and any units that charge them. They stand little chance against a dragon directly, but anything else they should be able to hold off long enough to fire and retreat.

Suddenly, startling cracks of thunder boom out in rapid succession, and the soldiers on defense scramble, some falling quickly.

“Enemy attack!” screams one of the men at the front, repeated by others as they do their best to hold the enemies at bay. Ahok can’t even see anyone, but the flashes of Daniel’s ‘demon wands’ and ‘demon staves’ seem to be the cause.

Commander Kopudel grips Ahok by the neck, startling her. He snarls, “See why we shouldn’t have even pondered it? They were lying in wait.” He shoves her away, saying loudly, “Make sure the goblin doesn’t do anything foolish. Artillery; cast when ready!”

“Aye, Commander!” The soldiers are now moving at a feverish pace, and Ahok tries to object, “Wait! But, we can still…” She is dragged backwards by one of the soldiers, and she can hear a stunning crack as something zipped by her faster than she could see, only noticeable thanks to the sound. The soldier shoves her to the ground behind the weapon, taking cover as he tries to make sense of the battle. The air comes alive with a devilish hum. Mana is being concentrated at full strength into the orbs now, and the weapon is priming to launch its deadly attack. Mana fuses together into what appear to be variously colored sparks of lightning across the full range of colors; mana being pulled and concentrated violently. It’s the first true firing of the full-size void artillery

weapons, since the crystals required to power it have nearly bankrupted Mornistae.

The artillery thrums with a rattling shake of the carriage it's on, digging the stabilizers into the dirt. The colossal orbs, each over ten feet across and pitch black at their cores, race towards Fort Twilight at a slight angle towards each other.

Ahok briefly feels a dip in her mana, and she recognizes the sensation from that day that mana all across the kingdom seemed to droop for a brief time. Still, the orbs race ahead, undeterred by whatever interference that is.

Suddenly, a roar drowns out all of the other sound in the area, even from as far away as it is. Though her ears are rather big for her size, Ahok's hearing isn't especially sensitive over a human's. It's likely the only thing protecting her from the volume of the bestial roar.

Now having appeared on the horizon where the tower of Fort Twilight is emerging from is the titanic form of a beast no one in any kingdom could mistake; a stone-grey dragon with wings that spread further across than three wagons and a body larger than the entire void artillery they built.

The avian titan launches itself into flight straight for the orbs, and it breathes a powerful blue and violet flame that spits off licks of red and orange as the column of fire disappears into the inky void of the magic orbs.

The dragon then tries to cast a barrier spell while also using its wings to gust hurricane-force winds towards the orbs, trying to disrupt them with anything it can.

Even Ahok is impressed that the orbs are unfazed by a dragon's impressive attack power. Dragons can command all of the four worldly elements, and

some can even command the divine elements of light and dark magic.

In this case, the dragon, hovering backwards as it tries to fight the unstoppable orbs of condensed omni-magic, summons an ability that makes Ahok feel cold, and the soldier with her also seems to go pale.

The sensation is the evil-seeming nature of the smoke-like magic that the dragon exhales, and just using the magic seems to be visibly exhausting the dragon. It narrowly hovers out of the way of the orbs, sinking to the ground as the orbs ignore the smoke-like breath. Where the smoke descends to the tree line, the trees immediately decay away into seeming ash, not burning through flames but simply disintegrating into dust.

The dragon lands on the ground, breathing heavily as it watches the orbs draw closer and closer to Fort Twilight itself.

The dragon takes one exhausted look over its shoulder towards the group of soldiers, making eye contact with them. It starts to move towards them, likely for retaliation, but the orbs come into contact over the area just east of the main fortress of the military compound nestled in the mountains.

A bright flash at the point of tangency where the orbs come into contact signifies the ignition of the true spell; a discharge of two packets of magic so concentrated, each can overpower a dragon.

The test spell with a pair of modified magic staves wielded by a mage each was able to annihilate almost every piece of a heavily armored cart roughly the size of a medium dragon, about 60% of the size of the dragon trying to defend Fort Twilight. It also created a perfectly hemispherical crater where the radius of the circle extended below the ground.

Firing at a target nearly a mile away is barely far enough for the full-sized void artillery. What happens after the tangential flash makes Ahok sick to her stomach, and begins a chain of nightmares she could never imagine.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 99: Devastation and the Fire of Retaliation

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 99: Devastation and the Fire of Retaliation

Aramellianna enjoys a relaxing cruise on the massive airship the Grand Duchy engineers and artisans completed work on recently. She had two of the futuristic vessels built in relative secrecy, though she knows that Rikuto is aware of their existence. It's hard to conceal such massive constructions, and so she told him that she was building additional defensive measures to protect both the kingdom and the Grand Duchy's interests, but the Grand Duchy would maintain proprietary control of the vessels.

She's fairly confident Rikuto is suspicious, since she deflected more than one royal summons of Wenlianna and has been making her own moves in regards to the Grand Duchy's military readiness. But, because he needed enhanced magic crystals -diamonds- in humongous quantities for his weapons, he couldn't afford to make accusations without solid evidence.

And, technically, Aramellianna is simply double-dealing, not committing outright treason. Of course, a tribunal wouldn't agree with her, but she has the Kingdom of Mornistae's best interests at heart with everything she does.

She's just smart enough to know that allying themselves with Daniel, rather than making him an enemy, is the more prudent and practical course of action. Daniel has weapons that can surpass even the most powerful magic spells, tireless soldiers in the form of golems that can fight endlessly and in humongous numbers without fear of sickness, starvation, dehydration, or a need for sleep. And, he also has the dragons allied with him.

Rikuto has the same Kingdom of Mornistae that existed before his and Daniel's divine magical summoning, except that he has likely bankrupted them once more in his efforts to make Daniel an enemy.

This trip is in part to tell Daniel that the weapons Rikuto has prepared are complete, as well as to visit her daughter and celebrate.

After a few months, it seems Wenlianna has succeeded in her noble duty as the unofficial consort to an emperor. And, even if he wasn't an emperor, Aramellianna would be content that Wenlianna is with the child of the man she loves. Aramellianna came to love her husband, the Grand Duke, after marriage. Wenlianna simply fell in love before.

And as far as the message of the weapons, Aramellianna has been sending letters via Stalvaltan riders through Fort Peony to communicate with Daniel, and she had a letter sent that should arrive any moment informing Daniel of the risks of Rikuto's weapons. Even Aramellianna struggled to gather what little information she did gain, but it was a small price to pay in order to protect her eldest daughter and newest son in law and future grandchildren. Rikuto has become singularly obsessed with his fear of Daniel, though even Aramellianna can't fully grasp what is so terrifying about Daniel's most powerful weapons Rikuto referred to as 'atomic bombs', which has no meaning to Aramellianna by name alone. Given what she does know, though, it is very likely true what Rikuto says about the bombs being responsible for the wave of weakness and mana deficiency that swept across the world that fateful day.

Rikuto seems to believe his own new weapon can counter Daniel's atomic bombs, and he'll likely deploy them as soon as possible.

The Grand Duchess observes the mountains as the airship is passing over them at a comfortable cruising speed. What used to take weeks of travel now

takes a couple of days, and the Stalvaltan soldiers tasked with operating the airship have become proficient at navigating and piloting the vessel.

The mountains are hardly an obstacle any longer for the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan, an irony since it was the mountains that held the war at a stalemate for so long. She listens to Bunnrimae exclaim to Yanidere, “Big Sister Yani! Look! I can see the flower fort! There! There!” She is pointing east, where the relatively small Fort Peony is tucked into a valley near an even deeper cut through the mountains where the river flows.

Yanidere nods, petting her younger sister’s head. “Yes, Bunnri. Fort Peony, the Flower Garden. If you look at the other side, Fort Twilight is even bigger.” The two move to the other side of the airship, looking out to the west along the mountains. There, the towers of the fortress are peeking over high points in the mountains, much more easily visible from the high altitude of the airship.

“Wow! I see it! There it is! It’s so big, even though it’s so far away, right?”

“Mm-hmm. Fort Twilight is much bigger than Peony.”

“Woooow…”

Aramellianna remarks as she relaxes in her luxurious seat in the main-deck lounge, “There has been a surprising lack of movement on trying to recapture Fort Twilight. I was surprised that Sundenelle surrendered it so easily.”

Yormollett asks in reply from her seat across from the Grand Duchess, “Is it possible that the Empress is trying to pull Daniel into her camp, Mother?”

Aramellianna nods. “Yes, she did express interest in Daniel’s Earthly advancements, though it’s strange to go the route she has gone. I can’t imagine ceding a key defensive fortress was popular among her court nobles.”

Junvask, Yormollett's husband sitting along one of the window seats, asks, "Your Grace, is it possible Daniel threatened to assassinate key figures and demonstrated it? We know his golems can move rather freely without being noticed."

"Also possible. Daniel isn't interested in actually conquering the continent, so Twilight alone would likely be satisfactory to cut off future attacks directly on the Citadel, which would be his goal. The time it would take to deploy a full field army or more through Peony or Reeffjord would be impractical. Especially considering logistics and supplies."

"Mother! What's that!?" calls out Bunnrimae as Haldestania gasps. The youngest daughter has a view of the window Bunnrimae is looking through from her seat next to Aramellianna, and everyone turns to look towards Fort Twilight.

Seemingly cruising at a lax pace towards the fortress are two points of darkness so purely lacking color, it looks unnatural to the eyes. It is a more pure and lifeless black than anything Aramellianna has ever seen, and where their forms overlap, they are indistinguishable from each other.

During the flight of the mysterious black orbs, a dragon large enough to be seen attempts to intercept the orbs, first with dragon breath.

All of the onlookers gasp in surprise from the intensity of the flames emitted by the dragon. But, even with such raw power, the orbs are unfazed, and the dragon tries other powerful spells that noticeably sweep across the ground and disrupt the trees. Still, the orbs continue towards the fortress as the dragon exhausts itself.

Then, with a single bright halo of light that flashes out, the most terrifying thing Aramellianna has ever seen fills their field of view. It causes her to stand up, though there is nothing to be done about it.

Spanning almost two miles across and engulfing the entirety of Fort Twilight is an immense monolith of pure black, and great bolts of lightning changing colors before their eyes crackle and flash around the surface of the dark sphere. It's similar to an explosion spell, but without any flames or fire, and swirling more than burning.

When the terrifying black orb collapses in on itself, the true terror of its power is revealed.

A crater as wide as the orb has been hollowed out in the mountain face, leaving nothing behind. Not a speck of dust nor a wisp of smoke rises into the air where once the most heavily defended fortress of the Eastern Alliance stood.

Bunnrimae almost instinctively hugs her elder sister Yanidere, who is stunned speechless, while Haldestania does the same to Aramellianna. The Grand Duchess can't take her eyes off of the sight. Even the dragon is nowhere to be seen.

She finally mutters in horror, "I completely underestimated his Majesty…" She turns to the deck officer who is standing guard, ordering, "Tell the pilots to increase our speed to maximum. We'll recharge at the Citadel."

"At once, your Grace!" The deck officer descends the ladder to the main deck, where the command bridge is. The airship they're on is the Grand Duchess's personal luxury cruise ship, as opposed to the more war-oriented vessel now defending the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan from the skies.

Of course, the goal of this pleasure cruise, in addition to visiting her eldest daughter and beginning mother training, was to also arm the Grand Duchess's personal airship with Daniel's weapons, if he can be so convinced.

Now, her goal is to protect Wenlianna and Daniel at all costs.

***

Daniel sits with two princesses and two princes on his lap, all four of which are young goblins. Jieka and Tekten can speak and feed themselves, though they are messy eaters. The two goblin princes, born just the evening prior, are named Daugli and Pomiel, and Daniel carefully takes turns feeding them.

Intense stares are studying the five of them, with Hekate, Ryuogriar, and Geirahoel the most obviously passionate about trying to get his attention.

The goblin children are Daniel's shield from being crowded by a bunch of clingy dragons and a very clingy feldrok girl while they all share lunch. Shek and Skloe are the ones who get to sit at either side of Daniel today, and Tekten asks, "Papa, Tekten have cookie now?"

Daniel chuckles and smiles, still impressed at how quickly the goblin children grow. "What do we say, Tekten?"

Jieka blurts out excitedly with her mouth full of oatmeal, "Pweave!" She giggles, dribbling on herself, and Daniel patiently cleans her chin and chest. Tekten pouts, "Aww, Tekten want say."

"Yes, that's right, Jieka, but don't talk with your mouth full."

"Otay, Baba!" mumbles the little goblin princess excitedly through oatmeal. Daniel sighs, while Hekate asks with her mouth full, "Why no'?" Daniel rolls his eyes with an amused smirk.

Vaergraes, Wenlianna, Kera'tai, and Gwenesphia chuckle warmly at Hekate, while Ryuogriar smiles affectionately. "You may do as you please, my darling Hekate," coos the platinum dragon as she tenderly dabs Hekate's mouth with a napkin.

The young feldrok Empress immediately glares at Ryuogriar with a fire in her eyes, stopping her chewing. Ryuogriar grins deviously, whispering, "Give in, Hekate. You know you want to."

"I know I want…"

Tekten doesn't give up her original request, "Papa, Tekten have cookie pweez?"

Daniel pets Tekten's head gently, and she gives him a happy grin. "Sure, sweet Princess. Shek, may I?"

Jieka swallows and exclaims, "Jieka too! Jieka too! Pweeze Papa!?"

Shek grins, happily -but wearily- handing over two cookies to Daniel, which he offers to the two goblin princesses. Daugli reaches for the princesses, starting to make noise. "Baa! Baaaa!" Both princesses become defensive of their treats, which they properly asked for. Shek starts to offer two more to Daniel, but he waves her off for a moment. He says gently, "Jieka, Tekten, since your brother can't speak, would you ask for one for him?"

the two are nibbling on their cookies, and they each look at Daugli, and then at each other, and finally back to Daniel. They both say it at the same time, though at different tempos -Jieka more upbeat and quickly and Tekten more reserved and gentle-. "Papa, Baby Bruver have cookie too, pweez?" "Papa, Baby Bruver have cookie too, pweez?"

Daniel nods, and he gestures at Shek for a small piece, rather than a whole cookie. She smiles and nods, handing over a chunk of cookie, which Daniel carefully softens with milk to feed to Daugli, who eagerly eats it, holding Daniel's hand.

Daniel looks at Geirahoel, who is fidgeting, and Ryuogriar notices as well. She says seriously to Daniel, "Mukori, you need to drink your…"

"Pardon the interruption," states Ucahote as he appears next to Xyreko, who is seated at the table in spite of not eating.

"Ucahote?" asks Hekate.

"Your Greatness, your Graces; Fort Twilight has been annihilated."

Daniel's eyes go wide with horror. He nearly jumps up, but he remembers the goblin children just in time. He hesitates to barrage the golem military commander with questions in front of the children. He asks Shek and Skloe, "Shek, Skloe, can you please take the children?"

They both nod, standing up and scooping up their respective son and daughter each. The four children start to whine, but the situation is too urgent to keep them around, especially because of the shift in tone.

As soon as they are gone, Daniel stands up, facing Ucahote. "Tell us what happened."

"Some kind of weapon from the east, your Grace. It activated a powerful magic spell. One that annihilated everything in a two point two eight mile radius."

Daniel's gaze goes distant, and Hekate asks urgently, "Rikuto made a god-killer?"

Erimaya gasps, and she urges, “H-He said he didn’t know how!”

Daniel asks, “The soldiers? Did everyone get out?”

Ucahote hesitates, and he shakes his head. Daniel clenches his hands into fists.

Rose speaks up. “Your Grace, send us to investigate.”

“No,” replies Daniel curtly. This surprises the others, but he adds, “Not yet. Xyreko, prepare the contract removal. Ryukana, I’d appreciate your help with any interdimensional invaders.” This chapter was taken from novelping.com without permission.

The goddess nods, “Absolutely.”

“Do any of you object?” asks Daniel to the other women around them. Kera’tai, Aoloan, Erimaya, Vaergraes, Thymeria, and Wenlianna shake their heads, not having any objections.

Ryuogriar replies proudly, “I was planning to ask you to do so soon myself, Mukori. Clearly, we are of one mind.”

“Me too!” exclaims Hekate quickly, shooting the platinum dragon woman a brief glare. “I was going to ask today.”

Geirahoel warns Blue and Rose, “Mukori trusts you enough to do this. You will regret betraying his trust.”

The two lesser dragons bow. “You have nothing to worry about, your Grace,” replies Blue. My life belongs to the Fievegal and its great Emperor and Empresses.”

Daniel nods. He faces Xyreko and Ucahote, “Send wing-golems to scout the area as much as possible. Locate the enemy and determine if we can isolate them. Also, identify the weapon. We’ll show them what a true superweapon looks like.” He looks at his fist as his knuckles are turning white, anger twisting his face as he grits his teeth.

Hekate puts her hand on Daniel’s arm, and the others watch nervously, especially those who know what he’s talking about.

The human mechanic looks down at Hekate, growling out of character for him. “I… have done everything in my power… not to hurt anyone. I have tried…” His breathing becomes heavier, and Hekate tries to hold his arm. Ryuogriar joins her, and soon Geirahoel and Reignleif are hugging him too. The others approach, trying to keep him from lashing out. He continues to threaten, “Rikuto wants a war, I’ll…”

“Daniel, this isn’t you,” states Treia. “Please calm down.”

“Calm down? Calm down!? I HAVE been calm! I have done everything I can to be as peaceful as possible, even in battle. Our enemies keep multiplying. They clearly don’t fear a power greater than they can comprehend.”

“Daniel…” warns Ryukana. He glares at her, too angry to be respectful or fearful of anyone in the room, even if he can’t overpower any of the four that are currently holding him thanks to their true natures.

Reignleif says with her soft voice serious and unwavering, “Mukori, you shouldn’t use that weapon unless it’s unavoidable. Mercy has tied your hands, but the opposite is not the answer.”

Daniel stares into her glacier-blue eyes for a long time, and she never breaks eye contact, pleading with him to calm down.

Hekate, who is holding his right fist with both of her hands, feels immediate relief when his hand finally relaxes from his fist, and she intertwines her fingers with his, while Geirahoel does the same for his left hand. Daniel takes a few calming breaths and sighs. He looks around at everyone, and he says softly, "You're right… I'm sorry… I just… Our soldiers… they trusted me to make decisions to protect them…"

"They are still soldiers," offers Gwenesphia gently. "Even we know the risks of being close to you. As with conquering Twilight, your duty to the people is to find restitution and justice. I… only humbly ask…" Her ears fold down, and she adds softly, "Treia and I were Imperial soldiers, but we both hail from Mattarglos, which… is between us and Mornistae…"

Daniel is quiet as he thinks. Wenlianna stands by patiently, also pondering on what Gwenesphia just said. Suddenly, the young magic Artisan chimes in, "We could go through the gulf. Mornistae and the Grand Duchy conquered Bromlund to gain access to the gulf and Fort Twilight…" She looks aside sheepishly, "… wh-when we still believed you were at Fort Twilight." She adds seriously for the others' benefit, "Mother won't stand in our way, but she'll be committed if she does it, and the Empire could try her for treason. I'll request her aid immediately, but… May I ask one of the dragons to deliver the message?"

Daniel nods. "Are you sure she'll help? It's a treacherous deed we'd be asking of her."

"I… I know she won't become our enemy for asking… at least."

"Good enough for me. Vaergraes, are any of your subordinates skilled wyvern riders? We'll have them ride under our banners."

"I don't think that will be necessary," states Xyreko suddenly.

Everyone looks to her, and she adds, “An airship belonging to the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy has arrived. Flag signalers are requesting to dock. Stealth golems guarding the Grand Duchess and her family confirm Aramellianna’s intentions. They witnessed the destruction of Fort Twilight.”

“Grant them permission to land at the control room flyway and invite them in. It seems they have business with us as much as we have with them. Let’s go meet with them. Xyreko, if the weapon is moving this way, let me know immediately.”

“Of course, Daniel. As you wish.”

Everyone heads to the control room to meet with Aramellianna. They have a lot of information to exchange.

***

Ahok sniffles as she lays on her side, curled in a ball. Her whole body hurts. After witnessing the void artillery’s terrifying power from much too close, she tried to flee, and she was promptly captured by the soldiers.

They have not treated her well, proving that it was all a lie. Her effort was wasted, and she was a Court Artisan only because she was skilled.

Now, a terrible weapon exists because of her efforts. Seeing it in action, she no longer cares if credit is stolen. It is a weapon of atrocity, and she should have seen that before hand.

Now, she doesn’t even have the strength or willpower to try to end her own suffering. Her cheeks are swollen and cut, her arms and neck are bruised, and her once-tidy and comfortable lab clothes are in tatters.

“How long do we have to sit around waiting?” asks one of the soldiers nearby. She doesn’t care who it is.

“Long enough for the demon-kin to show up to investigate, or until we’re sure there are no survivors,” replies another.

A third voice scoffs as he appears to sit with the first two. Ahok can barely focus in her apathetic stupor. All resistance and hope has been driven out of her, and she can only lie on the ground in the dirt waiting and hoping for death to find her.

She has heard that some of the goblin tribes have their own religions and spirit figures, but she is more familiar with the belief systems of Mornistae, having lived there for more of her educated life.

She’s not sure if Death has a spiritual form, but it takes a form she would never normally expect.

“What do we do with her?” asks the second voice. She isn’t able to look or respond. She has no willpower left. She just wants it to end.

the third voice answers, “If she lives long enough to become boring, we finish her off and dump her in the crater.”

The other two chuckle. The first one remarks with audible disgust in his tone, “Pathetic goblin. Look at her. So high and mighty when she was a Court Artisan, now nothing more than a disgusting demon-kin wretch.”

“Should’a never left your kind, ‘Lady’ Ahok.” One of the three spits on her, and she doesn’t even have the presence of mind or willpower to flinch.

All three of them laugh together.

Then, a fourth voice growls, halting the jovial mood of the soldiers. “I might’ve guessed, but you people are just *obsessed* with ‘kinds’, aren’t you?”

All three soldiers scuffle to their feet, as the second snaps, “Who the hell are you!?”

Ahok finally tilts her eyes, seeing the fourth figure with a bit of blur. She can’t make out his form, but she believes she is looking upon Death itself. The three soldiers draw their swords, but they aren’t close enough to the figure.

“Me?” asks the fourth voice. “I’m surprised you don’t recognize the Harbinger of Calamity.”

“Ha! ‘Harbinger of Calamity’?” sneers the third soldier. “That’s a myth. It’s just a name for that idiot… Daniel…”

“Smarter than you look…” replies ‘the Harbinger of Calamity’. There’s a metallic click, and he adds, “If only *just*.”

BOOM! BOOM! BOOBOOBOOM!

Ahok is startled by a chorus of thunderous sounds and flashing lights that come from the mysterious figure, and she falls unconscious from the sudden surprise.

***

Shortly before, Daniel slides off of Ryuogriar’s back as she lands on the ground, and he stumbles from the drop. It’s difficult to believe. It wasn’t very long ago that he, himself, laid his own eyes on Fort Twilight and harassed the soldiers present to try to return the attacking force. Seeing it truly puts into perspective what happened, and it makes his anger push its way back in.

The fortress that was an impressive feat of human construction, especially given the technology level of the world of Zenkon, is now instead a crater that spans deeper and wider than the fortress was tall or wide, with virtually nothing left behind resembling a shadow of the fortress or the mountain faces that were present.

A stain of red draws Daniel's attention at the edge of the crater, and Daniel approaches.

There, he finds a small pool of blood at the end of a forearm with a light greenish blue coloring to the skin; a goblin's forearm where it was cleanly separated from the owner at the threshold of the nightmarish attack.

Every fiber of Daniel's being wants to return to the Citadel and deploy an even more devastating weapon against Rikuto. He clenches his fists at first, and Hekate, who has followed him without saying anything yet, speaks softly, "Daniel…"

The human mechanic-turned-emperor catches himself losing himself to anger, thanks in big part to Hekate and the situation they just came from at the Citadel. He takes a knee to reach down, and he gently holds the hand of the fallen goblin with his own, calming himself down. His failure to understand the threat Rikuto poses, Daniel's complacency with the strength of the Citadel and his allies, and the clearly unearned trust Daniel has gained by the citizens of the Fievegal.

He squeezes the hand gently, making a silent vow to do better as a leader, to stop holding back to protect enemies of the Fievegal, and to look after the citizens of the Fievegal that this particular goblin and the other fallen died to protect.

Daniel murmurs softly, “I don’t know who you are specifically, but your sacrifice will not be forgotten. None of you will be forgotten. I promise you that. I’m… sorry I failed you…”

Hekate and Ryuogriar both kneel beside Daniel and place theirs on his. Hekate adds, “I second that… It’s no excuse, but I clearly have a lot to learn, and I promise to preserve your names in the history of the Fievegal for as long as I shall live. I’m sorry, too.”

“I as well,” adds Ryuogriar gently. “You all bravely defended the Fievegal. We’ll take care of the rest from here.”

After a moment of silence, the three stand up together, and Hekate’s ears perk up. She states, “Blue and Rose have found soldiers. They’re holding stealth.” She points across the crater, and Daniel looks at Ryuogriar. “You don’t have to transform, but would you?”

She nods once, her wings appearing through magic.

Hekate draws her sidearm pistol and says, “Daniel, carry me, and Ryuo can carry you. I’ll provide covering fire with magic and my pistol if we need it.”

Daniel agrees. “Don’t hold back anymore. Rikuto and his forces are our undeniable enemies.”

She nods, and the three assume the position to allow Ryuogriar to carry them across the crater. They land on the ground, and Daniel leads the way ahead under Hekate’s cautious instructions while he draws his rifle and keeps it at the ready.

Hekate whispers, “Daniel…”

“I hear them.”

While Hekate probably heard them a lot sooner than Daniel did, even he can now hear, “Pathetic goblin. Look at her. So high and mighty when she was a Court Artisan, now nothing more than a disgusting demon-kin wretch.”

“Should’a never left your kind, ‘Lady’ Ahok.”

Daniel can hear the distinct sound of someone spitting, and he’s had enough. He licks his own teeth in irritation, and he nods at Hekate and Ryuogriar. They nod in turn, and he emerges from their secluded area.

Daniel doesn’t need much more than what he sees immediately to become profoundly disgusted with the three soldiers that are seated around a small makeshift camp. They have a goblin beaten and tied up on the ground against a tree, and her physical state is absolutely atrocious. In effect, Daniel doesn’t even really process who they specifically said she is, as he just lost too many of his own goblin soldiers, as well as others, who were attacked by these soldiers and the weapon they escorted.

Daniel growls as he lifts his rifle to aim at them, “I might’ve guessed, but you people are just *obsessed* with ‘kinds’, aren’t you?”

“Who the hell are you!?” screams one of the three soldiers as all three scramble to their feet, drawing their swords.

“Me? I’m surprised you don’t recognize the Harbinger of Calamity.” Daniel’s tone is cold and merciless. He has no more hesitation about what he needs to do.

What he should have been doing all along.

“Ha! ‘Harbinger of Calamity’?” sneers one of the soldiers. “That’s a myth. It’s just a name for that idiot… Daniel…”

“Smarter than you look…” replies ‘the Harbinger of Calamity’. He flips the rifle’s switch to full auto. “If only *just*.”

Daniel fires carefully, snapping his rifle to each of the three and firing before they can even take a step towards him.

All three soldiers drop unceremoniously, and only one of them has time to scream as he clutches his wound.

The goblin flinches, which relieves Daniel a little. She’s still alive, which means she can be helped. Maybe not ‘saved’, per se, but helped as much as possible.

Daniel approaches the soldier who is still alive, his rifle trained on the soldier’s chest. “P-P-Please! M-M-Me-Mercy!”

“I sincerely apologize,” replies Daniel without a hint of empathy or sympathy. “I didn’t intend to make you suffer like you did to her.” Before the man can add anything, Daniel finishes him with one more clean shot to the head.

Daniel stares down at his work, letting it sink in what he has done. With the attack on Fort Peony, it was easy at the time to dissociate himself from the act of killing because he could rationalize all of his enemies as being monsters in his mind, since they mostly fit the fantasy monsters of Earth. Now, it’s different, but at the time, that’s why he was able to keep it together.

Now, however, he feels an emptiness. He isn’t happy about what he just did, but he also doesn’t feel any sort of guilt. It could be the adrenaline, though.

Regardless, he doesn’t have time for or care about these soldiers any longer. He murmurs, “Hekate, keep on lookout for any others. They’ll surely come to investigate.”

“Of course,” replies Hekate softly. Her helmet hides her expression, but she is sympathetic to Daniel and the pain he’s feeling. She grew up in a more cruel part of this world, so she’s not as affected by the notion of death. But, she can tell Daniel isn’t used to it, and even as much as he criticizes the easterners for being so obsessed with ‘kind’, this is his first time actually killing a human with his own hands -or at least a weapon in his own hands-. Even if Brosjak was close enough, his cruelty made it easier to do. In theory, these soldiers were just following orders up to a point, and thus hold less guilt than the one who ordered the cratering weapon’s use.

Suddenly, wind gusts and foliage scuffles, but the three don’t panic. Daniel isn’t in a combat-ready state anymore, and Ryuogriar and Hekate clearly knew they were coming.

“My Liege!” calls out Rose. “W-We found Sir Choul!”

Daniel whirls to look at them, and she and Blue are carrying…

… what remains of Choul by their shoulders.

Daniel sucks his teeth, clenching his fists. Choul is in his dragon form, and his body ends at the lower torso, without a single breath entering or leaving his lungs.

Ryuogriar glances at Daniel briefly, and she orders, “Put him into a storage bag.”

“H-He’s too…”

Ryuogriar doesn’t hesitate to cast the transformation spell on Choul, turning him back into his human form, which similarly ends at near the waist, cleanly cut by the weapon’s attack, which is nothing like the blast of an atom bomb.

Several more bodies fall from Choul's dragon hands when he shrinks, and Rose and Blue react quickly, catching them as gently as they can, including the newly-shrunken Choul.

Hekate adds, "Do it for all of them. If you need more space, we'll use our bags, too."

Blue and Rose nod, carefully using their massive forms to place the fallen into each other's storage bags, which are fastened on their wrists.

Daniel asks, knowing Xyreko is monitoring them, "Xyreko, when will the new revival potations be complete?"

"Soon, Daniel. We'll be able to finish a batch of ten, but it will be a long time before we can make more."

Daniel looks at the group. "Ten is better than zero. I'll decide who to revive when we return. Send a golem to swap bags with Blue and Rose. Remember to use the airlocking method for teleporting."

"*Of course, Daniel. Retrieval en route."* A golem appears near Rose, who, thanks to the armor made for her by Xyreko, has a tracking glyph like Ryuogriar and Geirahoel did, as do everyone wearing Xyreko's armor now.

The golem swaps the bags once everyone that was rescued -in big part thanks to Choul without anyone knowing it,- have been put into them. The golem then is returned by teleportation, which will arrive at a special check-in station to prevent another Brosjak from following directly into the Citadel.

Daniel then looks to Blue and Rose, who are covered in Choul's blood. "Blue, Rose. I promised you I would remove your contract, and I will do so. I no longer fear you."

Rose bows, “My Liege, pay it no mind. That you modified it so suddenly to allow us to better protect you and our Empresses is an honor.”

Blue nods in agreement, “Contract magic is tricky, and time is of the essence. Command us, and we would have obeyed with or without the contract.”

The two dragons are referring to the fact that, since removing the contract would risk bringing the contract demons and eat up additional time to try to rescue anyone, Xyreko suggested a contract modification, which, for the caster, is significantly safer and faster. They opted to do so, making them the bare minimum definition of magic slaves to Daniel; as in, they have to obey every order he gives them, but there are no restrictions on them, save killing Daniel themselves.

Daniel states, “I won’t order you. You may object if you so desire without fear of retaliation from me. Do you know where the bulk of the forces are?”

“Yes, my Liege,” replies Blue. “They are directly northwest of here. Of course, they’ll be closing in on us soon. The other scouts likely have regrouped with the main force. It seems the weapon is gone, but soldiers were stationed to ambush us when we came to investigate.”

“Good work, both of you. Then, I ask you to fly behind them and angle your dragon breath towards the crater. The more flush with the crater you can make the slag flow when they connect, the better.”

“Why is that?” asks Hekate, which is the question all four of the others want to ask.

Daniel looks directly at each of them for a moment. He states coldly, “Rikuto and the Kingdom of Mornistae obliterated Fort Twilight with a weapon they don’t understand.” He then looks at Blue, stating in no uncertain terms, “If you

agree to do this, and only under the condition that you agree, then I, Daniel, as the Emperor of the Fievegal, order you to give no quarter. Leave no survivors to refute what happened here."

Blue and Rose look to each other, just to make sure that they both agree, and they both nod. "We both agree, your Grace," replies Rose. "We will remain low and out of sight from range."

"My Empress Ryuogriar," starts Blue. "If you would spare us your magic to transform us into our smaller forms, that will make our mission to remain unseen all the more likely to succeed."

The dragon empress nods. "You are correct." She casts the spell without any objections, and she declares, "You have heard your Emperor. Pay no mind to us, as we will be out of the way by the time you are in position."

They look to Hekate, who adds, "I agree. Even if they do figure it out, let this serve as a message of what happens to those who betray our mercy and kindness." She looks at Daniel. "When it comes to leading, it seems the only way IS to be feared. At least by our enemies."

Daniel nods, adding with disappointment, "Seems that way." He then says more seriously to Rose and Blue, "Here IS an order, though. If you meet any resistance that threatens you harm, retreat at once. If you even suspect firearms are present, retreat at once. We're not taking chances this time, and Earth had lots of ways of annihilating humans. I'll just have to work a little harder."

"Yes, my Liege," reply both dragons in unison. Now in their human forms, they race off into the sky, flying northeast to get behind the enemy forces without being seen.

Daniel finally looks at Ahok, kneeling to her level. She seems to be trying to look at him, but she is unable to speak. Hekate remarks softly, “She doesn’t look or smell like one of ours…”

“She’s not,” replies Daniel. “But, I don’t think she’s an enemy.”

“Let us take her and figure it out later. The enemy is drawing closer.”

Daniel nods. He scoops up Ahok, saying as he looks one last time over the massive gulf-like crater in the mountains, “Xyreko, please send pickup for myself and the Empresses. Monitor Rose and Blue’s status.”

“*At once, Daniel.*”

It’s going to be a long time before Daniel gets any solid sleep.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 100: Clandestine Alliance

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 100: Clandestine Alliance

Aramellianna and her five daughters, escorted by Stalvaltan Guards, await the return of Daniel, Hekate, and Ryuogriar after they departed to investigate the damage from Rikuto's weapon, escorted by two additional dragons.

Aramellianna's group, as well as Daniel's companions that remained behind, are all waiting at the 'interlocking station', a defensive measure Daniel and his team implemented after the Citadel was infiltrated by following one of their inner circle through teleportation. The Grand Duchess didn't even know such convenient magic was possible, though it explains how Daniel is able to move so quickly around the Citadel and other areas that he has been to.

The interlocking station is merely a medium-sized fortified building where anyone teleporting in passes through, as well as returning citizens of the Fievegal returning to the castle town surrounding the mountain-like fortress. They're more closely tracking who comes and goes, apparently to ensure no infiltrators are able to get in.

And, Aramellianna can't help but be impressed as she watches the two Goblin Queens, as the Fievegal recognizes them, Shek and Skloe. They diligently speak with the goblin guards manning the security desk, as well as dattakorien security officers who are checking cargo and weapons. Though Aramellianna is guilty of assuming that, even as kind as they are, Shek and Skloe lack a great deal of intelligence. But, it mainly comes from how they speak, which has improved since the last time Aramellianna met them. They are attentive, speak

kindly and warmly, and keep track of a great deal of the citizens of the Fievegal on their own. Those immigrating also have to go through this station, which affords the goblins the chance to learn new faces.

The receiving circle illuminates, and four bodies appear in a flash. Rather, *five* bodies appear; one of whom was unexpected and is being carried by Daniel.

All of the guards of the Fievegal kneel, murmuring, “Your Greatness, your Graces! Welcome home.”

Daniel sighs, stepping off the platform as he is followed by Hekate, Ryuogriar, and Xyreko’s remote golem. “Everyone rise. Shek, Skloe, can you draft a regulation for soldiers on Watch. Watchstanders should salute known dignitaries, but should remain alert and ready. No more kneeling.”

The two goblins nod, and they explain to the soldiers in the room. The guards glance from them to Daniel a few times, but they confirm, saluting in various styles from each tribe.

Daniel salutes in his American military style, and the guards fidget with their saluting hands, mimicking his. “Oh! No, I wasn’t trying to correct you, I was just returning the salute. The military I was in required a salute to be returned in most circumstances. I guess technically, I would be the situation that would outrank that… Anyways…”

Skloe says gently, “Daniel… They wish to salute as the Emperor does. Shek and I will create new training.”

Daniel nods. “Thank you. I know I’m taking too long to come out with these kinds of things… I’ll work on policy once we can get a moment to breathe.”

Wenlianna approaches, “Daniel, is that… Lady Ahok?”

Ahok wearily opens her eyes, looking at Wenlianna with an exhausted expression. Ryuogriar used healing magic to restore as much as possible, and Daniel fed her some of Shek's milk, which also helped, but she is too weary in soul, now, to be as energetic as she once was.

"Oh… L-Lady Wenlianna… I think… I'm going to retire, too…" She closes her eyes, and Wenlianna looks at Daniel. "Wh-What's going to happen to her?"

"I don't know yet. It was eastern soldiers that did this to her. We'll have to wait until she awakens to discuss it further. For now, we'll put her in a holding cell. Xyreko, make sure the bed is comfortable and a guard is stationed with her at all times. A golem, just in case. She is a magic artisan."

"Of course, Daniel. Allow me." Now that they're inside the interlock station and a cooldown period has passed by, Xyreko is able to teleport with Ahok to give her treatment.

Daniel then turns to Aramellianna, who, other than his Empresses, outranks everyone in the room. "Grand Duchess, apologies for neglecting to welcome you properly. I've had more than court etiquette on my mind lately."

Aramellianna bows her head respectfully. "Do not trouble yourself, your Imperial Majesty. I came for a leisure visit with my beloved daughter to celebrate the good news. I am bound to your leisure in this matter and will wait patiently for time."

Daniel looks around the room they're in. It's rather public, though there aren't very many visitors or immigrants yet. Regardless, Daniel knows it's not the place for the conversation he needs to have.

"Would you mind joining us in a more private setting, your Grace?"

She nods. “Of course. Lead the way.”

The entire group of royalty from both territories moves together to a conference room. The Stalvaltan Guards post up along the hallway to protect the entrance, and the inside is catered by a handful of dattakorien and Uhl’tall women.

“Thank you for your work, ladies,” states Daniel.

“It is our pleasure, your Grace,” replies the head maid proudly. “Would you like us to vacate the room?”

“If you would. I’d like the following discussion to remain private.”

“Say no more, your Grace. Come, everyone. Let us depart.”

The maids all bow as they pass the group, leaving gracefully without complaint.

Everyone takes seats around the large table.

Daniel takes a breath and exhales. Hekate asks, “Would you like me to, Daniel?”

He nods. “Go ahead. I’ll fill in.”

She nods in agreement. The young feldrok empress clears her throat before explaining. “As you reported prior to your arrival, Grand Duchess, a weapon from the east wiped out Fort Twilight, killing about ten percent of our forces stationed there, including one of our generals. There may be time to recover him, but we won’t know at this time. As you are a member of the east, but also our ally, we’re going to give you fair warning. We’re going to invade and capture Mornistae with the intent of bringing Rikuto Tachibana to justice for

employing a weapon of mass destruction against our soldiers unprovoked.” She looks at Daniel for confirmation, and he nods.

Aramellianna isn’t shocked, nor are her elder three daughters -Wenlianna having known when Daniel, Hekate, and Ryuogriar left-.

Ryuogriar adds, “The destruction was sudden and total, with no attempts at negotiation.”

“Unfortunately, I am to blame,” replies Aramellianna. “I knew of Rikuto’s weapon, but I underestimated what it was capable of, or what the weapon he was trying to counter.” She looks at Daniel. “He kept trying to convince everyone in the kingdom’s nobility that you possessed some sort of world-ending weapon. He even made several trips to an ancient elven mage to petition his help. Daniel… Emperor Daniel, I… I am sorry.”

Daniel nods. “It’s ultimately not your fault, your Grace. But, we will be declaring war on Mornistae, and we will not be holding back.”

Aramellianna replies confidently, “You’ll find no resistance from the Grand Duchy, assuming we can expect our same level of autonomy.”

“You would turn on the kingdom so easily?” asks Erimaya. “B-But… Daniel. You… Grand Duchess…”

“Calm down, Eri,” replies Hekate. “We’re not after your family. Just Rikuto and anyone working directly with him.”

“M-My sister?”

“I can vouch for the first Princess,” replies Yanidere. “For what my statement is worth. She has been focused on gathering allies to push for negotiations for the release of Erimaya from Fievegal captivity.”

“I-I’m not a captive!” cries the young second Princess.

“They don’t know that, your Highness,” replies Aramellianna. “But, better they believe you’re a captive than a traitor.”

Daniel adds, “In effect, whether you acknowledge it or not, you are our captive. Ideally, Mornistae can’t attack us directly because you’re here.”

Geirahoel scoffs. “They shouldn’t be attacking us at all. The fools tried to assassinate us already.”

“What do you mean?” asks Yormollett.

The fiesty red-haired dragon replies snappily, “Because, we were pretending to be at Fort Twilight.”

Daniel noticeably grits his teeth and closes his eyes. Doephluev, the archoneldwyn servant to Daniel, is the quickest to try to comfort him. “Master, you were wise to use decoys. The Empresses and Consorts are all safe.”

“Unlucky you, huh?” retorts Hekate sourly.

Doephluev looks at her, but then looks away, not refuting or contesting the statement.

“That does escalate things,” replies Aramellianna. “It is unlikely any of the other allies or even the Mornistae nobility sanctioned the assassination of a high ranking leader, even if it is of the opposing Fievegal. And, to target the non-combatant consorts as well? No council would approve of that.”

Gwenesphia asks a little nervously, “Did… King Rikuto attack Twilight believing the Fievegal royal family was there after meeting with Sundenelle?”

“Unfortunately, that is the safest assumption,” replies Aramellianna. She looks at Daniel and Hekate, adding, “And, I assume it does nothing to curtail your plans of invasion.”

Hekate looks to Daniel, and he replies, “It doesn’t.”

“Will… you be invading through Mattarglos?” asks Treia. “They aren’t the strongest kingdom, but they won’t just let us pass through.”

“They will if they know what’s good for them,” retorts Geirahoel, cuddling her eggs affectionately.

“Take the Grand Duchy,” replies Aramellianna casually. Everyone looks at her, surprised.

Yanidere understandably exclaims, “Mother!?”

“You would have us wage war against these people?” asks the Grand Duchess a little facetiously. “They have dragons.”

The others, especially the dragons, chuckle at the matron’s joke. Reignleif adds to the joke, “Don’t worry, my dear descendants. I would never incinerate my family’s home.”

Even Aramellianna chuckles warmly, though Yanidere and Yormollett, her second and third daughters, aren’t amused. The reality is, they are seriously discussing the Fievegal conquering the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy without contest.

Daniel replies to Aramellianna, “I appreciate the sentiment, your Grace, but we would still have to pass through other territories.”

Aramellianna doesn’t respond right away, and she simply takes a sip of the proffered drink she has. “Not… if we go through the gulf,” replies Wenlianna.

This causes the Grand Duchess to smile proudly.

Wenlianna blushes, continuing her thought as she explains, “Around the time Daniel was transferred to Fort Peony, the Kingdom of Bromlund began a revolution, and the kingdom fell to anarchy very rapidly. The Empire and Mornistae dispatched troops, and in the end, the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy was able to claim a great deal of former Bromlund as Stalvaltan territory. That includes the region leading up to the gulf. The mountains run from the gulf in the south to the ocean in the north, and the main three pass throughs for an army are the three forts. Since the Demon Covenant army is, to my knowledge, focused primarily in the north of the Wildlands, we should be able to reach the gulf with relative ease. Then, we *could* use the Grand Duchy as a staging area.”

Aramellianna replies instantly, “I agree entirely, of course, under the aforementioned agreement that we remain the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy. And, of course, I would like to sue for the safety of the Mornistae royal family, including the retired King and Queen, Queen Heralesse, and Princess Erimaya.”

“You do understand that this is treason, though, right?” asks Daniel seriously.

The Grand Duchess smirks wickedly. “You have my eldest daughter and greatest asset hostage, your Grace. I am but an emotional woman and mother.” She feigns a distraught tone before turning to sarcastically dry. “I have been approached for the last ten years since my husband, the Grand Duke, passed away and told all manner of things to be remarried. That includes King Greydald and his wife, Queen Orphelsia. ‘It is your noble duty.’ ‘What about a proper heir?’ Pah! I have five daughters of excellent health, all with excellent dispositions, and the strongest territory in the kingdom, if not on the continent. Well, save for one.” She realizes she was ranting, and she clears her throat. “Anyways, pardon that unseemly display.”

Daniel and the others chuckle, and Daniel reassures her, “Trust me, your Grace, I’m glad you let loose. As for the Grand Duchy…”

“As I said, take it. Just as Wenlianna explained, enter from the gulf, capture the Stalvaltan seat, and stage your armies from our territory. This realistically accomplishes two important tasks; your war effort and protecting our assets from looters. I’d rather them be in your hands, than in the hands of cowards.” The Grand Duchess leans back in her chair, placing her hands on the table. “Now then, come up with some convincing threats of what horrors you’ll do to my daughter. Oh, and don’t forget to mention my grandch- I mean, the child you have so savagely-…”

“MOTHER!” shrieks Wenlianna with her entire face flush with color. The others laugh playfully at her, and Aramellianna adds seriously, petting Wenlianna’s cheek, “In all seriousness, I will draft a letter at once. I have come to petition you for my daughter’s freedom, and we will be negotiating for some time. I’m a desperate, distraught woman after all. Some threats, your anger about the attack, and the coming invasion. We have no choice but to surrender preemptively.”

“But, what about our ancestral home?” asks Yormollett nervously. “Father used to say…”

“My Lord Husband, rest his soul, was a far greater man or person than I will ever be,” starts Aramellianna. “I was not born a Stalvaltan, but it is as much my family as yours.” She looks at Daniel, who will likely understand the point better than anyone. “What I have learned in my life, moving from my home to find a home somewhere else is… Your true home resides where your family is; the one truly irreplaceable thing in our lives. I was brought into the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan, a scared young girl little older than Bunnrimae, and I am now one of the most powerful people in the world. Your father, my beloved husband, made

that possible. That is why I refuse to remarry. No alliance, wealth, or power could ever fill your father's place in my heart. My heart is full. And now, all I want, is for our children to achieve something similar. If that means the mansion is razed to the ground and every gold and silver coin we ever earned is lost, we will find a way to stand on our feet again. But, you will always be my precious family, wherever in the world you are." She stands up, saying proudly, "Treason? Rikuto committed treason when he attacked a country with an unbeatable army, unknown weapons of mass destruction, and soldiers that all allied kingdoms rightly fear. He may be King, but a foolish king is no king the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy will follow."

"In my experience," starts Vaergraes gently. "'Treason' is determined by the winning side. Rikuto and his forces have not won yet."

Aramellianna smirks, nodding in agreement.

The Grand Duchess then looks to her daughters. "You are my children. I have said my piece. If any of you truly object, then make your case, and we'll find a solution. But, I stand behind Emperor Daniel and the justification of his actions."

Yanidere thinks for a moment, looking at her mother, at Daniel, at Wenlianna, and the others as she ponders her response. Yormollett answers first, saying softly, "Pardon me for speaking out of turn, but… If you think it's for the best, Mother, I agree. I just worry about… What if they call us traitors? The other noble houses will hold resentment, won't they?"

Gwenesphia replies, "If I may, court nobility are often an unknowable mix of schemers and patriots. My family has been petitioned in the past for financial support in… political moves against the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy. O-Of course, my father turned it down. F-For what it's worth."

Aramellianna nods in agreement. “The most powerful house is always the target of those seeking to move up. That’s why, if we want to come out of this on the right side of history, condemning Rikuto’s actions is the way to go.”

Erimaya is nibbling on her thumb, upset, but unsure what to say.

Daniel adds, “Erimaya, I won’t hurt your family. I promise. Our goal is to capture Rikuto and anyone involved in making the weapon. Ahok will likely be able to shed some light on that, but in the meantime, we’ll begin planning the invasion.”

“C-Can I warn my family?” asks Erimaya. “I… I don’t want them to get in the way…”

“I’m afraid we can’t let you warn them ahead of time. Once the invasion begins, we’ll give them the chance to escape. You can send a letter with instructions to help them then. If they fight, we’ll capture them safely and escort them out of harm’s way.”

“What about the soldiers?” asks Kera’tai. “Are… you planning to fight conventionally?”

Daniel nods. “We’ll be retaliating in full. As Geirahoel pointed out, they tried to assassinate me and the majority of you. If I wasn’t angry about the attack to begin with, I *might* take it personally.” He takes a breath and sighs. “Regardless of my personal feelings on the matter, Rikuto has shown that negotiation isn’t an option. I get why he thinks the bombs are something to fear, but we didn’t attack him with them. He snapped straight into world war three territory without even a cold war in between. The most important thing with weapons of mass destruction is that they can’t be in the hands of emotional tyrants. No one stopped him from using this one, and now an unchecked

weapon of terror is a threat to the peace and stability of many collateral areas." He looks at Erimaya. "You saw what my weapon did. Rikuto's is smaller in scale, but it's magic. The long term effects could be as bad or worse. Regardless, the collateral loss of life is untenable in both cases if the weapons are used against civilian populations. That was how it was used in our world; a threat against not just soldiers, but everything that makes a country run."

"He claims… your country used them against his in your world," replies Erimaya softly. She is clearly trying not to pick a fight, but is bringing up what she knows.

Daniel nods. "Yes, but that was roughly 80 years ago. A lifetime for Earth humans. Not that I would see the weapon used against people if I had my say, but Japan became one of the most technologically advanced and prosperous nations in the world, when they were a fascist regime during the war. The bombs were used because they were prepared not to surrender under any circumstance… except the unimaginable. Rikuto is just one person here. He's dragging Mornistae into a fight they can't hope to win, and even if they do, they will swiftly be destroyed by the demons."

Yanidere finally sighs to give her answer to Aramellianna's question. "He has nearly bankrupted Mornistae. Most of it went to us." She looks at Aramellianna, "I agree with you, Mother. This is the best thing for the people."

Yormollett nods, and Wenlianna nods. "Daniel, if I may petition you…"

"The inheritance of the Grand Duchy will be unchanged and continue to be under the cognizance of the Grand Duchess," replies Hekate, guessing correctly what Wenlianna might be concerned with. "But, we should speak of after we capture Mornistae and Rikuto. Eri… please understand…"

Erimaya looks at Hekate, and then at Daniel and Aramellianna. She is still distraught at the notion, but, she looks down, fidgeting. “Wh-What if Mother and Father wish to remain independent? W-... What would happen then?”

“We’ll negotiate, sweet child,” replies Ryuogriar. “The thing this otherworlder king refused to do.”

Reignleif adds, “The east is not formally at war with the Fievegal, since we’re not recognized as sovereign yet. However, we are in negotiations with Sundenelle. To attack unprovoked and without warning is why we’ll be invading.”

Erimaya fidgets, but she nods. “I… I won’t stand in your way… even if I could.”

Hekate approaches Erimaya, kneeling to take the princess’s hands. “Eri… You are my precious friend. If you would stop being my friend because of this, I wouldn’t do it. But, we NEED to do something about Rikuto and his weapon. If he is allowed to continue using it in open warfare, he could do a lot more damage than anything we’ll do in an invasion. I promise.”

“If you can convince your family to depose him and hand him over as a prisoner, as well as anyone involved in constructing that weapon, then we won’t need to invade,” points out Daniel.

Aramellianna refutes the idea with, “You’re talking about almost every magic artisan and artificer in the kingdom, and some on loan from other kingdoms. You will not be granted that wish.”

“If Erimaya believes she can, then I will allow her to write a letter to that effect, and even meet with them in person. You’re also not actually our prisoner, Erimaya, so if you so wish, we’ll return you home, but we’ll be right behind with the invasion.”

Erimaya nods. “I… I trust you, Daniel… A-A-And…” She looks at Hekate. “I trust Hekate… I won’t help you invade, but I won’t stand in your way…”

Hekate nods. “I won’t betray your trust. Rikuto and the weapon are our goal. We will not cause any collateral damage ourselves.”

Wenlianna adds after a little bit, “Sooo… if we’re going to invade… Should we also get the artifact?”

“That will depend on how the conflict goes. If we have to conquer the castle, then of course. If the royal family surrenders without a fight, then we’ll negotiate for it.”

“I’ll send word to the guard and Yanidere’s husband. I… assume, during our ‘negotiations’, Emperor Daniel, you will allow us to reside in accommodations. If not, the airship…”

Hekate crosses her arms as she leans back in her chair. “The welcome will always be, ‘Grandmother Aramellianna’. You can have the same room as before. Let us know if you need anything.” The young feldrok empress puts her hands together at the fingertips in front of her face, looking directly at Wenlianna with a devious smirk.

Wenlianna smiles sheepishly. Aramellianna hums approvingly of Hekate’s remark, saying, “I appreciate that, your Greatness. That is the most generous title I could ever be given at this stage of my life.” She gives Wenlianna a thumbs up, and Wenlianna covers her face even more, embarrassed to be teased so obviously in front of everyone, even if it is true. Daniel chuckles at the matronly woman making an Earth gesture at an appropriately awkward time.

Daniel then says, “Your Grace, I do have an offer to make the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan.”

She looks at him. “Oh?” asks the Grand Duchess coyly.

“We’re working on establishing a monetary economy for the Fievegal, and we need workers and resources, as well as tradesmen. If you’d like, we could establish a branch territory and estate for the Stalvaltan family in the Fievegal. In exchange, you’ll initiate trade on a macro level between the Fievegal and the Grand Duchy over time, establishing shops, professions, and trades that can elevate the economic potential of both.”

She smiles. “I had assumed the trade would go without saying. But, if you are offering us our own estate within walking distance of my grandchild, I am certainly not going to refuse.”

“Glad to hear it. We’ll have you work with Xyreko, Shek, and Skloe once you’re settled in. If you’ll excuse me, I’ll go begin reassessing what equipment we have to launch the invasion and a few other things. Ladies, please help the Grand Duchess and her family settle in.”

“Thank you,” replies Aramellianna. “My wisdom and experience are at your disposal, your Imperial Grace.”

Daniel bows and makes his way out of the room to check on Ahok first, who is still unconscious. He then checks the alchemy lab where the potation brewers are making various potations. He makes polite greetings with the various brewers and alchemists as he heads for the Chief Scientist’s station. The Uhl’tall chief scientist is the one working on the revival potations, and he greets Daniel with a polite bow after rising from his seat.

“Apologies for interrupting, Tyarul.”

“Not at all, your Grace! I am wise enough to reach a stopping point if I was in the middle of something critical. How may I be of service?”

“I doubt the word has spread far yet, but… Choul… will need a revival potation. He’s in storage for now, but… he’s in bad shape.”

“I-I see, my Emperor… Forgive me. I… I have been taking additional time to ensure…”

“Quality, Tyarul. I want one hundred percent effectiveness. He’ll be alright in storage. I’m not here to rush you, even if I want to. I just wanted an estimate on completion time. Specifically at your current pace.”

Tyarul looks at the various vials, containers, canisters, and drip pots around him, as well as the various liquids and magic crystals. He replies, “If I can borrow the chief of manufacturing, Clenduiris, she has comparable brewing talent to my own, and we’ll be able to finish at least one by Seconday.”

Daniel tries to remember what day it is, and Tyarul says gently, “T-Today is Eighday, your Grace. The third day after today.”

Daniel nods, “Thank you.” He is the reason they are using the eastern week breakdown of 9 days, conveniently enough named in the Eastern Imperial Trade language as contractions of the position in the week and the word for ‘day’. Thankfully, the Uhl’tall especially, are quick to adapt to Daniel’s needs, and he has it on his list to make more effort to learn the other languages around him, though everyone spoils him by speaking Eastern Trade.

“I'll inform her immediately. Do we have enough ingredients to continue producing beyond what you’re currently working on?”

“I’m afraid not, your Grace. That we have been able to produce as many as we have is good fortune. That is why I have been so careful with the current ingredients to maximize our production. We lost one, so there are nine that should be complete next week. Apologies for my incompetence.”

Daniel chuckles. “I can't do what you do. That you have nine nearly complete successes in such a delicate process is acceptable. That's why I want you to take your time and finish them correctly.”

“Of course, your Grace. With additional hands, the same care can be taken, but increase the speed a little. As for more, I have one of my juniors searching archives for sourcing locations for the necessary ingredients, and another scouting information sources in our former village. If I have any updates, I will relay the information to you immediately.”

“Thank you. Let me know as soon as the first one is complete. I’ll go inform Clenduiris to report here as soon as possible.”

“By your will, my noble Emperor.”

Daniel nods, turning around to exit the lab, only to be startled by a person who has apparently been standing behind him without his knowledge for a long time.

“Jesus Chr-…!” yelps Daniel in English, taking a moment to relax. He returns to Imperial Trade when he speaks again. “You scared the crap out of me, Doephluev.”

She bows with a soft, amused smile, “Forgive me, Master. That was the furthest thing from my intent.”

Daniel sighs. “Did you need something? Shouldn’t you be assisting the others to receive the Grand Duchess?”

She replies politely, “I was chased off by her Imperial Greatness Hekate and her Illustrious Grace Geirahoel. And, I am your servant first before anyone else, Master.”

Daniel rolls his eyes. “Fine. But, did you have to stand so close?”

“Forgive me, Master. If I am overzealous, it is only because I wish to be the best servant I can be.”

“I’d rather you relax a little.” He starts to walk past her, somewhat remarking sarcastically, “Of course, you’d be supremely helpful in this instant if you know any alternative ingredients to revival potations or spells to revive individuals.”

She replies as she falls into step a few steps behind him, “If you are asking, Master, I can’t help with spells, and I don’t know enough about the runemagic used on me, but there are ingredients that can substitute the ones that we currently have shortages of.”

Daniel comes to a stop, and he turns to look at her. He doesn’t say anything immediately, gauging whether or not he believes her. She smiles innocently, patiently waiting on him to ask or say something.

“Like what?” asks Daniel.

“It’s highly dangerous, but ignityal can be used in lieu of astyrus nectar and garphallilux. It just has to be diluted more and kept cooler. Also, crawdiste carapaces contain a unique trait that can ferment potations more efficiently, and can increase the tolerance of quality of the ingredients some.”

“Crawdiste?” asks Daniel. “Isn’t that the amphibious crustacean *people* of the east.”

She hesitates, replying softly, “They shed their carapace shells. Though, it would need to be fresh.”

The human mechanic sighs. “What about ignityal. Isn’t that…?”

“The fluid that dragons produce for their natural flame breath. Yes, Master. It’s extremely volatile, especially under even low heat, so it’s dangerous to use, and even more dangerous to obtain.” She smiles at Daniel with a teasing playfulness, though her tone remains sincere and serious. “For most, anyways.”

Daniel looks over her, since he is tall enough to still see Tyarul, who has been listening. “Is what she says true?”

Tyarul looks down at his equipment for a moment, pondering the question. He then looks to Daniel again. “I have never done it myself, and I have never had the opportunity to analyze ignityal, since Dragons don’t just give it out. If you are able to get me some to analyze, it may open up a lot of chemical mixes, including substituting the two most critical bottleneck ingredients.”

“I’ll ask the Empresses, then.” He then looks at Doephluev, speaking directly to her, “If you are telling the truth, I’ll be very grateful for your suggestion.”

She smiles warmly, adding in her feminine way when she wants something, “If you’d prefer, Master, I will happily perform the work once you obtain some ignityal. I’m probably not as experienced as Lord Tyarul, but I have worked with ignityal before. I am confident in my dexterity.”

Daniel studies her for a moment. When they met, she was a very cocky and hostile enemy, and she is extremely dangerous with her magical prowess. But, ever since Ryuogriar made her proposal in order to restore the archoneldwyn

to prevent them from going extinct, Doephluev has been surprisingly docile, though she always seems to be scheming something.

Daniel is cautious, but if what she says is true, and ignityal can supplement needs for the rarer ingredients -even if not all of them-, then they have the strong potential to secure the future of the Fievegal and make it easier for Daniel to relax. It's not quite a cure-all to death, but can save lives if they can get to the bodies quickly enough, and Daniel has access to a nigh-unlimited supply of ignityal, assuming the dragons are willing to donate it when they aren't in combat.

Of course, they'll also have to figure out how to collect it safely.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 101: The New Court Magic Artisan

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 101: The New Court Magic Artisan

Ahok awakens in an unfamiliar room far exceeding the wealthy appearance or luxury of any room she has ever slept in for any part of her life, even as the Court Magic Artisan. The bed is comfortable, the blanket is soft and warm, and the pillows feel like what Ahok imagines a cloud would be.

She does her best to sit up, wondering if everything in her hazy memories were just nightmares, or if it all happened. She finds a little pain in her ribs, and she winces, touching her chest to find bandages.

She looks around the room as she rests her torso, waiting for the pain to subside. The room looks like a fairly minimalist bedroom, with little furniture, a small washroom in a separate room, and a basic dresser with a couple of drawers and a strange-looking window on top of it.

For the moment, there is no one around her, and she wearily climbs out of bed. She is dressed in an extremely simple robe, which is clean and soft, and she has bandages on her arms, legs, and wrapped around her chest. She approaches the dresser, and the ‘window’ startles her. Ahok has never had the luxury, but she has heard of mirrors before. That said, from what she heard -complaints of those who did have them as a luxury-, mirrors are tedious to keep clear enough to do detailed beauty work. The bronze that’s typically used must be polished regularly to stay clear enough to see. This mirror has a reflection like the surface of water so pure, it would be fit for angels to drink from. She can see every detail of her own face, down to the individual hairs on

her head, the freckles on her broad goblin ears and her light green-blue cheeks, and the faint blood stains on the bandages wrapping part of her forehead and temple, which covers her right eye.

There's a knock at the door which startles her, and she whirls to face the door, backing away. "Wh-Who is it?" she croaks out in a hoarse voice. Her throat is sore, and she flashes back to screaming as… She shakes her head to forget the thoughts.

The half-goblin artisan looks around for something to defend herself with, but the voice that returns through the door is fairly gentle, even for a man's voice. "It's me, Daniel. I'd like to speak with you, Lady Ahok. May I enter?"

Her blood runs cold. *D-Daniel? How can that…? Did he somehow survive Twilight? That's… How? A-Am… Am I… a prisoner?*

"Y-Yes. Y-You may enter."

The door opens, revealing none other than the tallest human on the world of Zenkon, who was sent away from the castle to Fort Twilight almost a year ago. And, according to intelligence reports, he is now the self-proclaimed emperor of an organization calling itself the 'Fievegal'. With him is a fox-eared girl with a big, bushy black tail who matches the description of Hekate, the self-proclaimed empress of the Fievegal. Both of them are wearing matching armor, minus their helmets, as if they are going into battle. Behind them are three women carrying massive eggs too large for their mostly-human bodies.

Ahok's focus is locked on Daniel, though. A primal part of her soul is terrified of him. He is a large man, compared to her, and after… She shifts behind the dresser, trying to keep the dresser between herself and Daniel.

Daniel stops just inside the room, and Hekate stops beside him. The reptilian-women, likely dragon-kin if not the dragons in human form, also file in and stop alongside Daniel and Hekate.

Daniel lowers himself to a kneel, saying gently, “Lady Ahok, it has been some time.”

“W-What’s going on?” asks Ahok nervously. “A-Are you here to kill me?”

“If we wanted you dead, we would have left you where we found you.”

She tightens her grip on the dresser, her body feeling the pain of what happened.

“I… Wh-What do you want, then?”

“What do you know about the weapon that erased Fort Twilight?”

Her whole body drains of strength, and she sinks to a kneel on the floor. Tears immediately start to well up in her eyes, and she whimpers, “I-I-I’m sorry…! I’m so sorry!” She begins sobbing, and Hekate glances at Daniel. He nods at her, and the young empress jogs to Ahok, kneeling to hug her. “Shhh… We won’t hurt you. We just want to know what that weapon is and how to counter it.”

Ahok is unable to answer for a long time, but to her surprise, Hekate stays with her and simply hugs her, reassuring her gently as the half-goblin does her best to apologize through sniffles, snorts, and sobs. She has truly become undignified, but she has nothing. She is likely a prisoner of the very people she helped attack, and when they learn that she designed the weapon…

But then, wouldn’t that mean… it would all end? M-Maybe that’s… Maybe that’s for the best…

After finally calming down, Ahok finds the other women kneeling nearby, though Daniel has remained at a distance. Seeing Ahok notice this, Hekate explains, “We suspect we know what happened. Daniel won’t touch you unless you allow it.”

The platinum blonde woman with silvery horns and a metallic white tail scoffs, replying dryly, “Forget that, Mukori won’t touch you unless you specifically pounce him yourself.”

The blue dragon-kin woman states, hiding her mouth behind a high collar of a blue mantle, “Please allow me to introduce us. That is Hekate, this is Ryuogriar, I am Reignleif, and this is Geirahoel. We are the four Empresses of the Fievegal in order.”

Ahok looks at each of them nervously, and she makes eye contact with Daniel, sniffling as she wipes her nose. She replies with a mouse-like tone, “I-I am Ahok, C-Court Magic Artisan of the Kingdom of Mornistae. O-Or I was. I… I’m a half-goblin… s-so… I have… nowhere I belong.”

Hekate looks at Daniel specifically, and she smiles, putting a hand on Ahok’s shoulder. Ahok is probably at least a decade or more older than Hekate, but Hekate is doing her best from the advantageous position to comfort Ahok, and she replies confidently, “The firstborn princesses of the Fievegal are both half-goblins. You’re welcome here, if you’ll help us.”

“I… But… I… I’m responsible.”

“How so?” asks Ryuogriar, the most mature of the three dragon-kin women.

“I… I'm the one who… designed the weapon.” Ahok fidgets with her hands. “I… I tried to stop them from using it! Rikuto kept saying it was a deterrence to

prevent Daniel from using world-ending weapons from Earth. S-Something about ‘mutual destruction resurgence’… or something.”

“Mutually assured destruction,” replies Daniel. Ahok flinches, exclaiming, “Y-Yes! That’s the one!” She shrinks when she realizes she just spoke directly to Daniel. But, he still hasn’t even moved closer, let alone tried to intimidate her.

Geirahoel asks, staying focused on the weapon, “You are the one who designed that weapon? You know how it works?”

Ahok nods nervously. “Y-Yes. It generates a spell that merges all six of the magic elements into a concentrated orb of mana -t-two of them!-, and then casts them towards the target, where they merge. When the orbs merge, it unleashes the full force of the magic spells, using mana around to amplify the damage. I… I truly had no idea… We wanted a way to fight… um… d-d-dragons… B-But, I swear! I thought we were going to use it as a threat! Not to attack! I- When I realized what was happening, I tried to stop them, but… I’m… just… a goblin…”

Hekate looks at the others for a moment, and they seem to share the same thought almost immediately, including Daniel. The women all nod, and Hekate says proudly, “We won’t hold you responsible if you help us deconstruct the spell so we can counter it. If you refuse, we will provide you with two options; remain prisoner here, in this room, with 3 meals a day and supervised outdoor time in a secure area. Or, we’ll provide you a basic survival kit and release you wherever you would like to be dropped off. There are several goblin villages, we can escort you as far as Fort Peony.”

Ryuogriar adds, “You might find yourself quite comfortable there. Mukori seduced several of the women there just for being a magic artificer and

repairing their equipment.” She adds playfully, “He helped them sleep like adorable little kittens.”

Reignleif clarifies, “What Ryuo means is that Fort Peony would welcome a magic artisan. As would we. And, your salary would be well worth it, though our economy is newly shifting to a finance-based economy. Still, there will be benefits.”

“Y-... You’re not… treating me like an enemy?”

“Are you our enemy?” asks Geirahoel pointedly.

“I… I don’t… know anymore…”

Daniel says gently, “You remember, don’t you? Where and how we found you? I’m not trying to…”

“Y-Yes…” squeaks Ahok. “Th-…” She looks away, trying to resist crying again. “I… was always an outcast…”

The door opens, and a surprising new entrance occurs. At least, surprising for Ahok.

Wenlianna kos Stalvaltan, first daughter of the Grand Duchess of the Stalvaltan family, and Ahok’s predecessor as Court Magic Artisan, enters the room. “That’s not true, Ahok. I worked with you, and I can say with confidence, you are one of the fastest thinking and most knowledgeable magic artisans the kingdom of Mornistae have ever produced.” She approaches, sinking to a kneel and lowering her head. “I, too, looked down on you at one time because I was prejudiced against goblins. But, I was also envious of how naturally the answers seemed to come to you when I witnessed you solving problems and

developing devices. I am sorry for looking down on you for a superficiality. They speak the truth, you will be well-treated here."

"W-W-Wenlianna!?" exclaims Ahok, stunned. "I-I mean, L-Lady -NO!- Duchess-…"

"Shhh, that's not necessary, Ahok." Wenlianna smiles. "We'll explain everything better later, but for now, I want to reassure you, you are safe here. Daniel will ensure that any opportunity you desire is available to you, and you will hold the respect worthy of your station." She looks at Daniel, saying seriously, "Daniel, I must recommend Ahok for the position of Court Magic Artisan. I pride myself in having better systems knowledge, but Ahok is far better at intuitive problem solving. She will be a great boon to the many technologies of Earth we are adapting to Zenkon technology."

Daniel nods. "I had every intention of asking her to be our Chief Magic Artisan, but we have to first establish if she wants to stay or go. Lady Ahok, I will do my best not to intimidate you and treat you as a friend and respected colleague. I'm sorry for what happened to you, and I understand if you want to start from scratch somewhere else. You don't have to decide today, but if you are willing to join us and help us build a prosperous future, we'll always welcome you. No platitudes, no using you. Just cooperation for the greater good of this world and the Fievegal."

Hekate nods in agreement. "And, Reignleif's right. It'll take some learning, but we'll pay you well enough that you won't want to go back."

Ahok looks around at the strange collection of people. She won't be the first traitor if she decides to stay, but as far as the kingdom of Mornistae is concerned, she's dead. They sent her to die so Count Baumalde can take credit for her work.

“C-… Can I make… a request?” asks Ahok.

Hekate nods. “You can request. We’ll have to hear it first before we’ll agree to the request, though.”

Ahok fidgets nervously. Ryuogriar adds, “No matter the request, we won’t retaliate against you. We’ll just tell you no if it’s not possible. Even if you ask to marry Daniel and have him all to yourself, we’ll only tell you that you can’t have him all to yourself.”

Ahok stares at her in disbelief. She finally shakes her head after a moment, clearing her brain. “N-No! No, that’s… I barely know Daniel! I couldn’t… I mean, I wouldn’t… I’m a half-goblin. I’m not worthy…”

“Don’t say those words anymore,” replies Hekate a little curtly. “You are Ahok, a genius magic artisan. And, those princesses I mentioned earlier? Those are Daniel’s daughters. Shek and Skloe are Queen consorts to Daniel. I’m his first wife, of course. But, you are not worthy or unworthy because you’re a half-goblin. You’re worthy to be our Chief Artisan because you’re good at your job. You’re worthy to be anyone’s wife because you’re beautiful and smart, and you’ll have genius babies. Not that Daniel needs anymore mistresses…” She glares lightly at Ryuogriar, specifically, who smirks. “But, ‘worthiness’ is just worthless drivel spread by nobles who want to marry off terrible daughters and conceited sons when a commoner would be a perfectly fine match. Or… something.” She looks at Daniel. “How did you explain it, Daniel?”

“The… point was a little different,” replies Daniel. “Anyways, she’s right. Your worth isn’t determined by people who define it based on superficial traits you can’t change. But, don’t worry about the relationship part. The more important thing is; what was your request.”

“Oh! Um… Wellll…” Ahok nervously looks aside. “P-Please don’t hate me for asking this, but… I… I would like revenge…”

“Revenge?” asks Wenlianna. “On who? Mornistae?”

The goblin artisan shakes her head. “No… On Count Baumalde… He convinced Rikuto to send me to the front lines, e-even though I have no combat experience, all so he could take credit for inventing the weapon. I-… I don’t mind so much about the credit, but… they tried to have me killed to ensure I couldn’t refute.”

Hekate gently starts to reply, “Revenge is a little…”

“Done,” replies Daniel. The others are surprised, and they look at him. He adds, “Baumalde is the other scientist, and apparently close enough to Rikuto to sabotage a Court Magic Artisan. He’s either part of a greater conspiracy, or simply an overt enemy of the Fievegal. Regardless, when we conquer Mornistae, we’ll destroy his nobility. If he chooses to resist, we may need to charge him with war crimes after he is apprehended.”

“Are you sure?” asks Hekate. “That doesn’t sound like a very ‘Earth’ response.”

“Ancient Earth, maybe. Regardless, this isn’t Earth. Rikuto has adapted to that fact. My reluctance to adapt has cost us lives and sparked the creation of a weapon almost as bad as the one I created. Will that suffice, Lady Ahok?”

Ahok nods. “Y-Yes… A-As long as… he loses something important to him, so he knows what it’s like.”

“Consider it done, then.”

“Y-You’re… planning to invade?”

“They wiped out a fortress under our control and killed our soldiers unprovoked. Of course we’re retaliating.” Daniel finally stands up. “You don’t have to participate if you personally wish to remain neutral, Ahok, but I will ask you to help us defeat the weapon at least in so much as defending against it or how to disable it. We’ll also need to capture anyone who knows how to assemble and operate it.”

Ahok nods. “Count Baumalde is the only other one who understands the spell enough to recreate it. But, I-… I’ll make a list, as long as… Not all of them… are bad people.”

“I understand. We’ll treat those who repent with respect and mercy. Will you help us?”

Ahok looks once more at the women still sitting on the floor of the room. She climbs to her feet, and Hekate does the same, standing a little taller than Ahok, but not presenting any sort of condescending attitude. Ahok offers her hand, and Hekate shakes it. “I-I will. I… If you’ll have me, I will serve the Fievegal. P-Please treat me well.”

Hekate nods proudly. “Welcome to the Fievegal, Lady Ahok. From today onwards, consider yourself Chief Magic Artisan of the Fievegal, and prove your loyalty to me. If you do so, your loyalty will be rewarded many times over.”

Ahok nods. “I… just want a place I can call home.”

Hekate grins, and the other women smile as well as they stand up. “The Fievegal is the only true home anyone could ever have. Welcome home, Lady Ahok.”

Ahok’s eyes water as she smiles. “Th-Thank you… my Empress.”

***

Daniel hums to himself as he works on load balancing on the electrical ring bus for the generators producing power. Everything is oversized and inefficient, and there is a ton of noise in the generator bay of a hydroelectric dam, which is near the Citadel downstream of the lake, where a slope allowed the construction of an extremely simple dam to use the massive amount of water in the lake continuously flowing to generate electricity. He is wearing ear muffs, mostly focused on his work. It has been a while since he had to do anything with electrical power, especially because he has never been a traditional load distribution electrician, but had to learn the core pieces of the job to do his own work on the aircraft carrier. He won't be doing any particularly safe load transitions, since he doesn't have the know-how to make a synchrometer to time the closing of the breaker properly. But, he is able to use math to calculate the voltage and frequency to get those values close. He already blew up two breakers early on, so he has been having the breakers made of mithril so that they don't break down so easily if the timing is way off.

Which, of course, are why he generally keeps anyone that can't shield themselves with magic barriers out of the generator bay, since it is a dangerous room of death, especially for those who don't understand electricity.

Daniel grumbles, "God, I hate generator calculations…" He sighs. "It's for the greater good, Daniel. Stick with it." He scoffs, saying in a cult like tone, "The greater good. The greater good." He chuckles to himself, having referenced a movie he liked to no one in particular. In fact, he may be the only person on this world who has seen that movie, depending on whether or not Rikuto has seen it.

Daniel prepares a switch, and he looks away. He shouts as loud as he can in case anyone is close, "Breaker closing! Look away!"

He flips the switch, and there's a loud metal clunk as the breaker closes. The generators that he's pairing thud loudly and shift their tones and hums, quickly stabilizing at the same sound as before.

He sighs. The mithril contacts for the breakers should hold up, but he's dealing with tens of thousands of volts, and there is no such thing as stress-strain testing on Zenkon, yet, so there are no magic curves to define the properties of mithril. Like all things that Daniel knows a little about, he knows the *idea* of the Charpy v-notch impact test, but he doesn't know exactly how to use the data collected off the top of his head. It has been a while. Regardless, mithril holds up well under strain and is a *little* less costly and rare than sharmellkolle, which Daniel minimizes the use of until he can get the generators working properly and generating mana directly to the Citadel.

The raw power output of the generators is finally at a rate that exceeds the mana donation rate of the portion of the population that they have donate mana each day. But, converting that electrical power into mana is a new bottleneck, since the device that operates that function is extremely inefficient, which is why Daniel is targeting a higher workload of the generators in pairs, similar to powering a really big motor, rather than a bunch of tiny ones. He gains slightly more mana for the relative equipment sizes and costs versus making a ton of tiny rigs.

For the moment, the hydroelectric generators are the best he can do on short notice, since the dam is just enough of a construction to count as such. To make a proper construction, he needs much more of a change in altitude, which is beyond his scope with the massive lake. He thought about using boilers and steam turbines, but the only continuous source of heat he has right away without using mana is the dragons, and it would be impractical to ask them to work in shifts generating steam continuously.

As such, the hydroelectric turbines, which aren't much better than a simple water wheel, are the best he has.

That said, he is successfully generating mana. He hums even more triumphantly, beatboxing to entertain himself. He's pondering his retaliation, of course, but he'll need a continuous supply of mana to wage war, and as long as he knows a fixed value is coming in, he can justify making the attack.

"What are you doing here?" asks Hekate's voice loudly over the noise. Daniel turns, and he rolls his eyes. Standing a little too close to him, watching over his shoulder without him noticing is the archoneldwyn, Doephluev. Doephluev replies to Hekate with a polite bow, "Your Greatness, I am standing by to serve my master with any of his needs."

"How did either of you find me here?" asks Daniel.

"You can't hide from me." "I always know where you are, Master." Their answers are simultaneous, and Hekate glares at Doephluev while the latter simply stares back at her.

"You're no longer needed here, assassin."

"I am my *master's* servant, your Greatness. Only he may send me away."

"Oh, so you're his servant now?"

Daniel sighs, "Do EITHER of you need something?"

"Just your presence, Master," replies the archoneldwyn shamelessly. Hekate glares at her, but she replies to Daniel, "Aramellianna asked when we'll be launching the invasion. She wants to inform her people so they don't try to fight us."

“I don’t have a solid day, yet. I just got the generators producing mana at a reasonable rate. But, I’ll need to monitor them to make sure we’re actually gaining something, and that they’ll continue running while I’m gone.”

He then looks at Doephluev. “Weren’t you working on helping with brewing potations?”

“Master, the current potations are distilling. Unless, of course, you obtain more ignityal for me.” She smiles cutely.

Daniel sighs. ‘Extracting’ ignityal from any of the three dragons he’s close to is a commitment for the day. Especially because all three are likely to volunteer simultaneously.

“Fine. I’ll let Aramellianna know at lunch time what I’m thinking.”

“Alright!” says Hekate happily. She then bounces over to Daniel, and she places herself intentionally between Doephluev and Daniel, asking him, “So, these are generators?”

“Yep. They’re running together to share the load. I just wish we had a proper hydroelectric dam.”

“What’s wrong with this one?”

“We need a higher difference in level between the water source and the generators for higher speed, which would give us better and more stable power. This is a start, but we’ll be able to increase our mana income more if we have a better generator station. That said, we don’t have to abandon the Citadel, obviously. We’ll just have to find a good location and build a proper hydroelectric dam, and then run distribution wires to the Citadel.”

“I see, I see,” replies Hekate. “When should we do that?”

Daniel chuckles, “Right after everything else.”

“Master, if you’d like, I would happily scout locations for you.”

“We’re fine,” retorts Hekate sourly.

“I was under the impression you would be happy with me elsewhere, your Greatness.”

Hekate faces the archoneldwyn, who is trying to get closer to Daniel subtly. “My hope is that you wouldn’t come back. Since I doubt that will be the case, I’d rather know where you are.”

“You’re trying too hard, Doephluev,” replies Daniel. “Scouting from the air will be better. It’s not a priority right now. It’ll take years to build the dam, even if we find a good location. This is good enough for now.” He smirks at both of them. “I was mainly trying to gather my thoughts.”

“Yeah, assassin,” taunts Hekate.

Doephluev retorts smugly, “Master was completely undistracted and undisturbed by my presence until you arrived, your Greatness. And, if he needed *anything,* I would have been ready and present to cater to his every need.”

“This. This is why I wanted to be alone. Can you be nice to each other? Doephluev, please stop sneaking up on me. I’d rather you announce your presence, even if you don’t do anything else. Hekate,… She has given up on her old mission. I believe that well enough right now. Treating her like an enemy won’t inspire her to remain our ally.”

“Assuming she is,” replies Hekate skeptically.

Doephluev replies, “The only one I need to convince is my master and emperor.”

Just before the bickering can continue, Daniel states, “Let’s head back to the Citadel for lunch. If the bickering continues, I’m going to put you both in timeout. Hekate, five days in your own room, Doephluev, two weeks no contact.”

“H-How come I get two weeks?” whines Doephluev.

“Because, you’ll last a week.” Daniel looks at Hekate, who is incensed and simultaneously terrified at the notion of having to sleep in her own room alone for five days.

Hekate and Doephluev look at each other, and Hekate clears her throat. “Doephluev, you wear that dress and apron well.”

“Your Greatness, your posture is excellent and your hair is absolutely divine. You must teach me your techniques.”

They shake hands and force smiles. They both then chirp together with a creepily ‘cute’ and high tone, “Shall we go, Daniel?” “Shall we go, Master?”

“We shall. Keep it up. You don’t have to like each other, but you will play nice, or I won’t play with you.”

They both pout as they follow him, “Yes…” “Understood…”

As they walk to Daniel’s rover, he asks, “Doephluev, do you know anything about the actual war between the east and the west?”

“What do you mean, Master?”

“Who’s pulling the strings?”

“S-Strings?”

“Sorry. I guess I haven’t seen ventriloquism here. Who was Brosjak getting orders from?”

Doephluev becomes quiet, thinking. She replies softly, “There was someone, but I don’t know who. A human-kin, though. Passed for a human, but I think he was using illusion magic. I only saw him once, though.”

“Just one person?”

“The person who gave Brosjak instructions, yes. O-Or… I believe that’s the case. Brosjak didn’t like talking to him and would be upset for most of the day. He… took it out on…” She trails off, and Daniel knows that he doesn’t need to hear more. He knows enough.

Surprisingly, Hekate puts a hand on the archoneldwyn’s shoulder. She has to reach up a little, since Hekate has a rather petite build and Doephluev is around average height for an American woman. The young feldrok empress says gently, “Brosjak is dead. You don’t have to be afraid of him anymore.”

Doephluev smiles as she puts her hand on Hekate’s. “Thank you, your Greatness.”

Both of them sound sincere, but Daniel watches the scene with skepticism. Just moments ago, they were envious of each other and bickering, but Hekate does become serious and sincere when the situation warrants it, so it could honestly go either way.

Daniel opts to say nothing this time about it. He asks, “Anything else you can tell us, Doephluev? Any names?”

“No… But, I would recognize the mana of the person if I ever see them again.”

“Their mana?” asks Hekate.

Doephluev nods. “Yes, your Greatness. Believe it or not, everyone's mana looks… well, it's not exactly visible, but it's like… colors. Everyone has their own color and brightness. It’s as… distinct to me as a person’s face.”

“So, you could mistake one person for another,” asks Daniel, just to be sure.

“Of course. I’m not all-knowing. But, it’s pretty reliable.” She strokes Daniel’s chest invitingly with her index finger, adding teasingly, “I could teach you, Master. It’s something that can be learned.”

Hekate just about says something, but she halts herself, growling as they reach the rover. She huffs, saying brightly -fake brightly-, “Aren’t you supposed to be focused on restoring the archoneldwyn, Doephluev?”

Doephluev smiles, a little deviously. “Certainly, your Greatness. I feel I have made great progress. If you’d like a status report…”

Hekate immediately regrets her retort, and she shakes her hands vigorously, quickly blurting out, “Wah-hah-mah! No! No thank you! That’ll be all! Let’s go Daniel! Stop being so slow!” She scrambles into the passenger seat of the rover, buckling her seatbelt. “What’s takin’ so long? I’m hungry.” She clears her throat, saying in a sickly-sweet tone, “Doephluev, please watch your step as you climb in.”

The former assassin can’t help but laugh, and she opens the door and climbs into the back seat. Daniel stares at Hekate from the door to the passenger side, and she asks, “Wait… Me? You want me to drive?”

“Don’t you want to practice?”

She beams, scrambling immediately to the driver seat. Daniel climbs into the passenger seat, and Doephluev leans on his shoulder as soon as he's in his seat. "The dragons probably don't know how to read mana, Master."

"We'll talk later, Doephluev. Prodding for a fiery response is cutting it *real* close."

"Real close, Doephluev," reiterates Hekate.

"I got this, Hekate. Go ahead and take us home whenever you're ready."

"Yes sir!" Hekate starts the rover and shifts it into gear, driving smoothly and carefully along the dirt road Daniel's trips have created. The road to Fort Twilight *was* Daniel's priority when the fortress still existed, as well as Shek's subterranean emergency route. Now, both are moot. The main trade route will likely have to be through Fort Peony, since the crater that used to be Fort Twilight is as impassable as the mountain range itself.

For now, it'll have to do. The number of projects Daniel has to address continues to grow three or four times for every project he completes, it seems.

***

A/N: Hey Dear Readers, if you weren't already aware, I'll be posting 5 more bonus chapters this week as a thank you for all of the support. They are 98.1-98.5, and I have put them in the proper sort order. I'll be releasing them daily this week until they're all out starting Tuesday 10/29/24 at 07:00 EST, so please check them out!

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 102: The Mechanic’s Secret Mission

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 102: The Mechanic's Secret Mission

The day after working on the dam, Daniel watches as the shuttles deploy, carrying the soldiers of the Fievegal eastward and south towards the gulf. The invasion is commencing. Daniel and the ladies of the Fievegal send the soldiers off, escorted by hundreds of golems. The living soldiers will be leading the conquest, but the golems will carry the heavy load of numbers.

Of course, that's not the only thing the deployed forces will accomplish. Daniel buys himself some privacy when the soldiers are on their way and Hekate goes with Ryuogriar to strategize with Aramellianna. Everyone else is doing their normal tasks, not realizing it's all according to plan.

Daniel takes his pre-prepared void bag and equipment, checking the firearms that he prepared; a shotgun, an automatic rifle, a semi-automatic pistol, a revolver, and two derringer-style micro pistols. He also has an assortment of bombs, hand tools, and non-lethal crowd control grenades; teargas, flashbang, and smoke.

Kaeralegeir, the goddess bound to Nemaisol, speaks telepathically to him. "*Daniel, you have me. I already agreed to help you.*"

"Can you copy yourself to dual wield? If I find allies in the field, can you provide them with a weapon?"

"Okay, okay. I get it. I guess it'll also be easier to hide who and what I am if you minimize my transformations."

Daniel agrees, "Definitely. And, you never reveal your strongest cards at the outset." He checks around him, making sure the coast is clear. He boards the remaining shuttle that he has squirreled away for just this moment, taking the pilot's seat as he begins doing his pre-flight checks. He's not a trained aviator, but he knows enough to at least check all of the extremely important parts, like the crystals, the moveable surfaces, and backups. His shuttles don't have complex electronics in them the way modern aircraft do, since he doesn't have the knowledge to make integrated circuits. The shuttle is operated by mechanical connections. It's enough to give them aircraft, but he won't be winning dogfights against any fifth-gen fighters.

Thankfully, the only airborne threats so far are dragons and wyverns, as well as the much slower airships if anyone is able to copy Wenlianna's designs and does so in secret from Aramellianna.

For now, Daniel focuses on carefully taking off and flying out of the hangar to begin his own journey eastward. He pilots the shuttle, relaxing as much as he can as he guides the shuttle through the sky.

He has a pretty good idea of how Xyreko's influence over various magical devices that can be defined as 'golems', including his armor, which is magically imbued. Her attention can be diverted, such as if Daniel specifically asks her to escort Shek, Skloe, and the children while they are out in the castle town. And, as long as he excludes the glyphs and spell-bound materials Xyreko makes, he is able to avoid her detection.

He feels a little bad, but he has a score to settle. To do that, he needs to be prepared. He has the location of a 'gift' Ryukana placed on Zenkon to help

Rikuto once he finds it. It's a powerful artifact, though she insisted Daniel would have to find it to understand how it works.

After a few hours of flying, Daniel spots the ruins the goddess mentioned. It's quite close to Mornistae, but even from what Daniel saw, Rikuto is not a particularly adventurous person, so he simply remained in Mornistae and worked on the economics and logistics.

Ryukana admitted to Daniel that she expected Rikuto, a fan of light novels and anime as well, to go full-on adventurer mode and try to find the closest monsters to fight and 'level up'.

Because they're ruins, Daniel has to be careful of squatters, either people or monsters.

But, that's the reason for his equipment.

He heads out of the cockpit to the troop bay of the shuttle, and he flinches when he finds a figure standing there already.

"Damn it!... Ugh…" He massages his temples. "Doephluev… How in the heck are you here right now?"

She feigns cuteness, saying sweetly, "Why, I rode here in the shuttle, Master."

"I mean…" He looks directly at her, asking seriously, "How did you know I was leaving?"

She sighs and approaches Daniel, adjusting his current armor, which is not his usual armor -the armor that can be tracked by Xyreko-. "Master, it is my duty to serve you. What kind of servant would I be if I didn't keep track of your whereabouts at all times? You might need a drink, a massage, a *release*." She grins deviously up at him.

“I’m on a mission. You can’t be here.”

“I am here, Master. I will serve you however I can with or without my magic.”

The human mechanic sighs, walking past her to start lowering the ramp. He has some ground to cover and limited time before the hunt begins. He has mana now, so Ryukana can locate him, and he told her to cooperate if and when Hekate realizes that he’s gone.

Daniel wanted to avoid any risk of danger for the others, and if they are publicly seen at the Citadel, it’ll be less likely Daniel will be noticed and attacked with the weapon.

He can see the capital city of Mornistae from where he is, and the castle rising into the sky. It’s not very far away, but he should be safe enough from detection, since the shuttle doesn’t stand out from a distance and the sun is setting.

Doephluev follows Daniel, and he comes to a stop. “What do you think you’re doing?”

“Following my master, Master.”

“I’m not taking your harness off with you outside of the Citadel.”

“Then don’t. I’m happy to serve you as we are now.” She teases as she stands professionally with her hands folded in front of her, “Though, I might point out that you removed my harness for my glyph to work.” She touches her abdomen with a devious smirk.

“I’m not protecting you when we get back.”

“No? But, Master, *I* can’t help what your mistresses think when they discover both of us are gone. Myyyy… How scandalous…” She giggles, now leading the way off of the shuttle, even though she’s completely unarmed, and the magic-suppressing harness she’s wearing prevents her from using any magic, including defensive or recovery spells.

Daniel groans, “Doephluev, come back.”

She pivots crisply, walking back to him with an amused smile. Daniel states calmly, “Doephluev, show me the contract mark.”

She complies, unbuttoning her blouse and revealing the top of her sternum where the tattoo-like magic glyph marks her skin from the contract bearing Daniel’s name. It glows when she’s being compelled by an order, and he worries that her mysterious rune magic is able to override the contract and nullify the compulsion.

“Doephluev, I order you to speak truthfully and answer me to the best of your true knowledge for the next five minutes.”

The glyph begins to glow, and she replies warmly, “Ask me anything, Master. I will answer truthfully.”

“Alright, do you still harbor resentment for me?”

“None at all. My mission was just a mission. And, as you know, the nightmares stopped.”

“And, do you have any desires or intentions to betray me?”

“None, Master. Life is easy serving you. Much easier than working with Brosjak. I sleep well at night, I eat luxurious meals every day, and I have a family on the way. Things I had given up on.”

“If I free you from the harness, will you cooperate without trying to undermine or hypnotize me?”

“I will cooperate for the rest of my life so long as you treat me as well or better than you have so far, Master.”

“Better?”

“I haven’t been shy, Master. I aim to be your empress. Make me your empress now, and I’ll have everything I need or want. And, you’ll have me. Mind, heart, and soul, forever more.”

“You really do want us to be killed when we get back.”

She giggles playfully, and Daniel finds his key to her harness, activating it as Xyreko instructed. He unlocks the magic suppressing harness at her back and helps her out of it. She stretches with a content yawn. “Ahhh, Master, you have no idea how much lighter and more free I feel.”

She fixes her blouse and straightens her dress and apron. Suddenly a gust of wind swoops under her dress, flipping her dress up and revealing her underwear. She gasps, obviously the one to have done it, “Oh no! Master! You’ve seen! I suppose…”

“Stop goofing around. Let’s get this thing and get out.” Daniel starts walking, and she hops into step with him.

“Be mindful of your orders, Master. I don’t know if I know what ‘goofing around’ actually means.”

“I’ve actually wondered that. What happens if I order you to take me to this world’s moon?”

“The moon?” asks Doephluev. The archoneldwyn looks up at the sky, where the moon is now visible. “Is… that a place that a person can go? I’ve… never heard of such a thing.”

“And, what would happen if I gave you that order?”

“I would be forced to try to make it happen until I die. Since I can’t even fathom what the moon looks like as a location, I can’t imagine how to make it happen. I assume, if you really wanted to go, you could use the shuttle, right?”

“Nope. But, you’d be welcome to try. When you would fail in this hypothetical, I would tell you how and why.”

She thinks as she walks with him, looking at the moon. Air travel with the shuttles is new to Zenkon, though wyverns and dragons have flown since the dawn of time. That said, she has never heard of dragons attempting to fly to the moon.

“Tell me how it’s done.”

“You’re giving me orders now?” asks Daniel playfully.

“*Please* tell me how it’s done, Master. You have made me curious.”

“There’s nothing between the top of the sky and the moon. Nothing at all. You need something better than the shuttles to make it there without dying.”

“Nothing? Then, it should be even easier to travel, right?”
“You might think so, but no. Among other things, lack of air to breathe, no air for wings to fly against, and probably, no mana. Gravity is what keeps the sky in place, just like it pulls us back down to the ground. You have to get past that.”

“Could you travel to the moon?” asks Doephluev curiously.

“I… understand the basic idea of the technology we used. But, I don’t know that I could do it. Maybe given enough years and a full team of researchers.”

“Mmm… If I was the empress, I would do everything to arrange it for you.”

“Tell you what, when they’re old enough to pay attention and ask questions, I’ll teach any of the kids all I know about rocket theory, what little it is. I’m fairly confident they’ll have plenty of classmates.”

“Great!” cheers Doephluev. “Then, I’ll give you a full class myself.” She trots ahead of him to walk in a very provocative manner, doing her best to entice him.

It doesn’t work, but Daniel doesn’t deter her from trying.

They near the ruin itself, Daniel having parked the shuttle a fair ways away in case anyone with enough intelligence to recognize the shuttle as a vehicle tries to steal or destroy it.

The ruin appears to be an old fortress from a long time ago. Judging by the location on a rather unobscured hill, it was either an old territorial fortress, or an old capital that was later moved to a better location.

As far as Daniel can tell, it’s uninhabited by people, but there are signs of animals or other more dangerous creatures.

The human mechanic gently stops Doephluev with his arm across her chest, and she teases shamelessly, “Oohhhh. Here? I do like this aesthetic. Beautiful scenery…”

“No,” interrupts Daniel curtly. “Here.” He withdraws his revolver from his bag, offering it to the archoneldwyn.

“F-For me? I’ve… I haven’t used one yet.”

Daniel gives her a skeptical look. “You defended against it. You know what it is. You have some idea how it works.”

“Master… I’m teaching you my magic. Can’t you teach me yours?”

Daniel sighs. “It’s not magic. Here.”

He gently puts the gun in her hand, showing her how to hold it. He then moves behind her, teaching her the basics of how to hold, aim, and fire. He also shows her how to reload it, and she leans back against him to show affection.

Daniel pulls away from her, and she turns to face him. “You say this is just a… mechanical device?”

“That’s right. No magic required. But, it’s for emergencies. You have six shots before you have to reload. And, it’s going to kick back, so do your best to make your shots hit.”

She nods. “Yes, Master!” She holds the gun to her chest, and Daniel quickly uses his hand to push the barrel away from the underside of her chin. “Careful, please. Mind where the barrel is pointed. Always.” Daniel withdraws his automatic rifle, checking it before leading into the ruins.

Their time is limited before their absence is discovered and Xyreko figures out how to find them. After that, they’ll be forcibly retrieved, and he’ll get a hearty scolding once more.

It would have been possible to simply tell them and bring them, but he's worried about being attacked. His own presence is much more difficult to detect, and Doephluev can hide her own mana presence from even those with high attunement to magic.

Daniel cautiously walks past the crumbled entrance of what used to be a defensive wall, by the looks of it.

"Not that I'm complaining, Master, because I don't plan to return without a reward, but why didn't you want to bring anyone else? I thought you'd want to revive the fallen dragon as soon as possible."

"Since when are you getting a reward? You stalked me."

She stares at him with shock on her face, and Daniel rolls his eyes before answering her. "Choul is safe for now, and he would also stalk me on this mission. I want the Empresses making a show of being at the Citadel, especially because there are many races that seem to have very little trouble being detected by magic."

"Ahhh… And, if they came here, we would be detected quickly."

"Exactly. Which,…"

"Don't worry, Master. I'm suppressing my mana."

"Can it be taught?"

"Most likely. What's it worth to you?"

"I'll let you name the children."

She stares at him in disbelief, blushing a little. "R-Really?"

“Yeah, but only as long as you agree to teach everyone all the magic you can.”

She pouts a little, and he adds, “Did you think I'd let you extort me with every individual spell?” He stops to face her. “I trust too easily. That I'm sure of. But, you’re not behaving like I thought you were going to. I won’t tell you how or what, but I’m sure the day will eventually come when I remove the contract.”

“And… Empress?” asks the former assassin cutely.

“Don’t push your luck,” replies Daniel with a smirk as he points at her nose. She forces a pout, but he adds as he returns to searching the ruins, “Buuut… I won’t say it’s impossible. You’re not replacing anyone, though. So don’t try.”

She wraps her arms around his, exclaiming giddily, “I agree, Master! I’ll be your loving wife and Empress in no time!”

“Hey! Don’t cling to me in a potential combat zone. You’re going to get me killed if not both of us.”

She giggles. “Don’t be silly, Master. I can detect all of the lifeforms in this ruin. I’ll let you know when they get close.”

“Sounds like famous last words. We couldn’t detect you.”

“Master, if you die, how will I become Empress? Have a little faith in your beloved Empress.”

Daniel sighs, still holding his rifle with both hands, but not yet shoving Doephluev off. If she moves, that means something is close. He is relieved to have a powerful magic user with him, and though he’d like to say she’s expendable to him, he has become attached to his somewhat overbearing and overly ambitious servant. He expected her to continue to be cocky and hostile, but she’s mostly just energetic. Maybe he underestimated the lingering

resentment and hatred she had for her archoneldwyn comrades, who treated her like a tool on a good day, and a piece of meat on the rest.

Daniel approaches the true entrance to the old structure; the main gate to the castle itself, assuming that's what the structure was in the past. He asks as he comes to a stop, "Anything immediately inside?"

"Not right away, but a little further in."

"And, what about the artifact we're here to retrieve? Any idea where it is?"

Doephluev points down towards the ground, saying, "Sure! There's a massive amount of magic tied to something that isn't alive, though there is life around it. It's hard to describe. Maybe it's inside of a mimic or something."

"Great…" grumbles Daniel.

"Do… you know what a mimic is? They're actually pretty rare."

"I had to read about them in the 'Referendum of Extreme Predators of Civilization', a book in the Citadel library about monsters of this world. They disguise themselves as innocuous looking items, right? Trunks, barrels, doorways…"

She nods. "Virtually any object that can provide a cavity for the body and which sentient races might investigate too closely. They also have extremely minimal mana, which can hide them from most mages capable of sensing mana." She smirks, looking up coyly, "It's possible we taught ourselves the mana concealment spell by observing and studying a mimic."

"I see. Can you defeat one?"

She holds up Daniel's revolver, saying brightly, "I have a dragon slaying weapon. A mimic is no match."

"Technically, I don't think that would work against the dragons. I haven't tested the smaller firearms on them, and I have no reason to, now."

She pouts. "Well… We'll find out then. Either way, unless it's shelled in mythril or sharmellkolle, it's not much more resilient than a typical monster like a balinkon."

Daniel nods. He asks, "Not cold iron?"

"Cold iron is poisonous to mimics. I don't know why."

Daniel smiles. "I see. Then, let me borrow that."

She hands over the revolver, and Daniel reloads it with mini shotgun rounds with cold-iron pellets. Cold iron can penetrate barriers, though it tends to deflect at various angles. The shotgun blasts can increase the chances of a hit, which can disrupt a mage's concentration. The cold iron is also much less costly than the other fantasy metals, as Daniel refers to them in his own mind, with enough hardness to act as armor-piercing rounds in rifle bullets. If it's poisonous to mimics, it'll make it easy to defeat one even if it's wearing harder armor as long as the pellets find a gap. Or, at least, that's the thinking.

Daniel explains to Doephluev, and she grins. "Perfect! I won't let you down. But, what about the monsters on the way?"

Daniel hands over several speedloader clips of the special rounds. "I've got plenty. Just try not to be wasteful."

"Your wish is my command, Master!" She proudly carries the revolver as they walk together, entering the fortress. She then points out, "There!

Malefidesmodes.”

“Come again?” asks Daniel as he follows her point. He can’t see anything thanks to the darkness consuming the further parts of the ruins.

“On the ceiling. They’re large flying mammals that will try to snatch us up and drink our blood while hanging from the ceiling.”

“Greeeaaat…” replies Daniel. He digs in his magic back, keeping an eye out for movement. He finds a star flare, a bright-burning flare he made to illuminate a large area. Daniel hands it to Doephluev. “Hit the white end of this hard against the wall and then use wind magic to launch it underneath them, please.” He then takes a pair of earmuffs and puts them on Doephluev, before putting some on himself.

She nods and follows his instructions. She doesn’t question the earmuffs, since she has witnessed how loud the firearms are. She strikes the butt of the flare and then casts it using a wind spell, giving it enough range to land precisely underneath the monsters.

And, monsters they are. They’re roughly the same size as the balinkons, one of which almost made a meal of Daniel before he found the Citadel. The malefidesmodes are roughly the size of full grown lions, but with the ability to fly and two tails. They’re immediately startled into flight by the flare, shrieking and flapping their wings as they swirl around, trying to find the source of the disturbance.

Meanwhile, Daniel takes a kneel. “I prefer you use magic before the revolver, if you can. Let me know if anything else is approaching.”

She calls out, not used to wearing sound dampening earmuffs. “Yes, Master!” She uses her left hand to cast magic as her right keeps the revolver handy, and

she fires off what appear to be rapid-fire magic missiles; pockets of light magic that do moderate damage and are easy to aim.

Meanwhile, Daniel begins firing in bursts with the rifle. The gigantic bat-like creatures shriek as some fall, wounded or killed outright. The survivors fly in erratic patterns, closing the distance.

Doephluev switches to ice magic as they get closer, firing off shotgun-like blasts of ice shards in fast succession, chanting continuously in a language Daniel couldn't even begin to understand.

Daniel reloads, swiftly resuming firing.

The monstrous bats drop in numbers from around thirty to five before they even reach ten yards away, and Doephluev switches to fire magic, projecting a pillar of fire towards the giant bats, wiping out the last of them.

She takes a relieving breath, and she states chipperly, "That felt good. It has been a while since I got to use even this much magic."

"You still good?"

"Of course, Master! This much was just a warmup."

Alright, then let's keep going." Daniel collects his spent magazines and deposits them in his magic bag to be reloaded later. He and Doephluev continue further into the ruin.

The next being to confront them reminds Daniel of a bear, which he can see thanks to Doephluev casting a fairly passive spell that simply illuminates its outline more. Though he sees it as bear-like, it has the distinct body-shape and movements of a feline. An extremely bulky feline.

Daniel studies it quietly as they crouch in cover out of sight of the bear, which the outline makes visible enough like a sci-fi heads up display in a video game. “What can you tell me about it?” asks Daniel.

Doephluev replies softly, using it as an excuse to lean on his shoulder and keep her lips close to his cheek and ear. “It's a hakkadel. Many tribes of dattakoriens revere them as forest spirits. Unkillable. They're also one of the less common types of monsters that can use magic.”

“Magic?” asks Daniel with surprise. “Magic-magic, or something like a drake's fire breath?”

“Actual magic.” She notices Daniel’s grip tighten on his rifle, and she adds to reassure him, “Don’t worry, Master. It won’t be teleporting around, using barrier spells and casting enchantments. A little lightning magic.”

“Lightning magic?”

“Mm-hmm. See there, how its hair stands on end. It naturally builds up sparks, but it evolved the ability to cast it at targets at will.”

Daniel wonders if it’s more like an electric eel, in how the discharge stuns everything in range, but he can’t be sure without seeing it in action. In this case, it wouldn’t truly be magic, but might appear so if the arc is visible at the time of discharge. The world of Zenkon has cultures that have an understanding of how dangerous lightning is, but very minimal understanding of how electricity works.

That said, the hakkadel is roughly the size of an especially big bear. Maybe closer to a moose in terms of height and weight. Daniel doesn’t want to find out how intelligent it is or if it uses magic or not to project lightning bolts.

“Why do dattakoriens believe they’re unkillable?”

“They can intercept arrows and spears with their magic, and they can disrupt many common combat spells, the kind of spells that are typically the best dattakoriens learn.” She holds up the revolver with a grin. “They’ve never been pitted against the Harbinger of Calamity.”

“You know, I don’t tell many people this, but I’m not proud of that name.”

“How did you get it then, Master?”

Daniel stares at her for a moment, unable to answer. He sighs. “I called myself the Harbinger of Despair, technically. And the… Calamity…”

She grins at him as she listens, enjoying the moment.

Daniel adds, “I was trying to intimidate the Red Brother’s forces by sounding pompous and ridiculous, alright? That’s all it was supposed to be.” He lowers his assault rifle to search through his magic bag, He extracts his rail gun, grumbling, “Before I knew it, the damn Queen of Demons was asking for the Harbinger of Calamity by name.”

Doephluev snickers playfully, leaning on his shoulder.

Daniel arms the rail gun, and it whines briefly. The hakkadel snorts, looking up, listening. The human mechanic whispers, “Let me have my shoulder back.”

She leans off of him, and he takes aim.

Just as the hakkadel looks in their direction, Daniel pulls the trigger.

The railgun hums, and a supersonic crack booms quickly, not like a regular gun, but similar in volume and suddenness.

The supersonic rifle round is invisible to virtually anyone, other than condensation rings and a thin contrail behind it, moisture having condensed in the wake of the bullet moving several-times faster than the speed of sound.

From the moment Daniel pulls the trigger, as with the test firing with his companions, a lot of things happen. Monsters further down the tunnel shriek and bellow as a supersonic crack passes them by, while a cloud of red and pink mist replaces what used to be most of the torso of the hakkadel.

Daniel lowers the rail gun while rubble crumbles down the hall from the shockwave of the supersonic bullet racing down the hall. The hakkadel doesn't even process that it has been all but vaporized, and the hallway where it was standing is now stained in an oblong egg-rounded shape on all surfaces of the hallway; wall, ceiling, and floor.

Doephluev leans on his shoulder again, teasing playfully, "Remind me to marry you immediately, Master…"

"Remind me to use this on you next time if you become an enemy again."

She gasps, pouting on his shoulder. "Master! I am going to be the mother of your children! You wouldn't dare!"

"I would if you threaten those same children."

She pouts a little, but he stands up, reloading the rail gun. "Let's keep moving."

She bounds into step with him as they walk the hallway, passing the hakkadel where its remains linger. "I know I'm a mere servant, Master, but I came all this way for you. I hope you'll eventually allow yourself to see me as your ally."

"Yeah, yeah. Pretty mouthy for a servant."

She glares at him a little, but she doesn't say anything further for the moment.

Daniel uses his assault rifle against a balinkon and another hakkadel as they journey further, and dozens of smaller monsters of various kinds fall before their combined equipment and magic.

After a while, Daniel and Doephluev opt to take a lunch break by finding a secluded corner and booby-trapping a landmine made by Daniel rigged to a trip wire, and a spell for detecting enemies approaching cast by the archoneldwyn. She has many versatile mission spells, making it easy for them to operate with just the two of them.

And, during the break, Doephluev continues to press the boundaries of what she can get away with as Daniel's 'servant'.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 103: The Grand Duchess's Influence

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 103: The Grand Duchess's Influence

The invasion has just been launched from the Citadel, headed for the gulf to then make their way into the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy without confrontation. There isn't much of a demon-kin presence between the Citadel and the gulf, especially if they take the right route. The shuttles will have to make many trips back and forth to ferry all of the golems across the gulf, which will take days. But, the very first deliveries will be an armored vehicle capable of withstanding almost anything eastern soldiers can throw at them, assuming they can get close enough to fight.

Hekate paces around the library in frustration, trying to read the book on history that Erimaya insists she read. It details history mostly from the Empire's perspective, with scholars from various allied kingdoms having contributed.

Unfortunately, the little feldrok empress is focused on the matter in the present.

"Grrah! I can't study like this! What do a bunch of dead people have to do with a battle right now!"

Erimaya watches patiently, also practicing writing magic spells under tutelage of Thymeria, who is transcribing texts from Daniel's phone while Wenlianna is working in her lab on research that doesn't need it.

Aramellianna, lounging in the library as her daughters read various books of their own choosing, remarks with amusement, "Well, your Greatness, history

can help a strategist find the best solution before a battle is even planned, have an idea of how enemies might approach, and what the consequences are if failure occurs."

"I know!" whines Hekate. "But, all these names and places and things are already gone. Except the kingdoms, I guess… But, if we're strong enough, who cares about history?"

The Grand Duchess smiles, explaining gently, "A wise Empress should care about history, your Greatness. It is a collection of the most numerous lessons anyone could ever learn. How to govern, how to wage war, and how to thrive in peace. Take me for instance; I learned of otherworldly summons coming to our world, and the moment one of them happened into a position I could take advantage of, I took it. The Grand Duchy is now the wealthiest single territory on the continent. We've cornered rare gems and enhanced magic crystals in one strike, have the leading technology in water distribution and flood control, and are on the cutting edge of military technology."

"Mother," starts Yormollett. "Are you saying… you used Wenlie to snatch Daniel?"

The Grand Duchess smirks deviously. "No. I'm saying I did not hesitate to recognize my daughter's eye for talent, and I ensured they had everything they needed to benefit all of us; Wenlianna's passion, the Grand Duchy's wealth, and my own personal comforts. I won because we all won." She leans on the arm of the lounger she's seated on, feigning a distressed expression. "And now, the Grand Duchy is under invasion and to be conquered. I'm the worst Grand Duchess ever."

Everyone else chuckles uneasily, and Aramellianna sits up. "Please, laugh a little. It's funny. If you think I've made a mistake, you've learned nothing. Rikuto

is out of control, and Greydald should have stepped in long ago. He barely got the economy stabilized before bankrupting the kingdom to fuel his attack. After the Fievegal trounced a joint army in a single day. Not to mention, his own fear stems from a weapon Daniel apparently knows how to build and is the only one."

Erimaya remarks, "If you had seen what this weapon could do, Grand Duchess, you would know that the knowledge is safe in no one's hands."

"And now, Rikuto has made a comparable weapon that is in the hands of dozens of people capable of replicating it."

"I feel like I should be doing something," declares Hekate. "I need to be doing something. I feel so anxious."

"That is something you must get used to, your Greatness," replies Vaergraes. "Worse than receiving reports of losses is awaiting reports. But, you can't fight every battle. I'm afraid Daniel is no better suited to leadership in this regard."

Aramellianna looks around, asking, "Yes, where is my soon-to-be son in law?"

Hekate shoots her a soft glare, and she grumbles, "Probably off with one of his temptresses. I notice Wenlianna isn't here."

Aramellianna grins, amused by the response more than knowing anything specific. "Yes, well, there are quite a few absent from study time. The Dragon Empresses do not seem to favor the library as much."

"They prefer to spend time in the sun," replies Vaergraes. "It's beneficial to them and their eggs, so they say."

"They're also speaking to the other dragons," adds Hekate. "Most of the dragons don't want to acknowledge me as Empress, and a human as Emperor

even less, but Ryuo, Reina, and Geira all held sway under the former dragon ruler."

"I've heard. Though, I do have to wonder… What comes after the Fievegal is firmly rooted and the princes and princesses all start growing up? Certainly, some of them will be potential suitors to the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy, I've no doubt, but have you given thought to peerages and territorial lordship, your Greatness?"

Hekate stares at her, and she looks to Erimaya for help.

Erimaya explains, "She's asking if you'll establish territories… Counties, Duchies, Marquisates, and the like, and name the heirs of the Fievegal who will not be in line for the crown as their governing lords and ladies."

"I… hadn't thought of that. Sh-Should I be? I… I don't even… That's a long time off, isn't it?"

"You should start considering it, your Greatness so a plan is in place when the time comes. Such future plans will help keep your mind occupied while you await reports."

Hekate nods, appreciative of the suggestion.

"I would also humbly recommend reviewing current affairs, such as farming and road construction, Hekate," adds Vaergraes. "As each seed is planted or each tree cleared, you might discover small problems adding up, or see a better location."

"I agree with her Grace, the Archpriestess, your Greatness," replies Aramellianna. "But, I would urge you not to slip into over-governing. Your subordinates have a duty as well as a right to govern without your constant

interference, and such interference can get in the way of progress. Not to say you would, but I can assure you, I understand the impulse all too well."

Hekate grins at them. "I just need to recruit the best of the best to help me." She winks at the Grand Duchess obviously, and the Stalvaltan matriarch chuckles. Winking is something Daniel taught Hekate, so the meaning isn't specific to anything on Zenkon, but the intent is there.

The young feldrok empress then adds as she ponders, "Now, if I can just bring Leiwelles over to our side,…"

Suddenly, Thymeria screams, and everyone snaps their attention to her, with Vaergraes scrambling up from her seat and Illianna leaping down from the upper level of the library to go on guard of the younger sister of the Uhl'tall archpriestess.

Thymeria is covering her eyes as strange sounds come from the table, and her cheeks are filled with color, adding a rosy hue to her skin.

The noise is startling and causes a rosy hue in all who hear it clearly enough to recognize it for what it is. It is the distinct sounds of a woman moaning and exclaiming lascivious outcries during apparent nighttime recreation.

And, when Illianna investigates the screen of Daniel's phone, her jaw drops, and her own cheeks fill with color as she stumbles back. She notices Vaergraes start to move closer, and the advisor rushes to her matron, exclaiming, "My Lady! You mustn't! Don't look!"

Hekate looks, and she is surprised at what she finds. While the lascivious moaning has stopped, and it seems to be people talking, it isn't possible to describe what she sees, at least not with words she knows. The people displayed on screen are talking in a language from Earth, which isn't a

language her feldrok magic can automatically translate. The two people talking as the screen shows their faces in alternation appear to be women, matched with feminine voices. One has blonde hair and is made to look like an elf with an abundantly well-endowed chest, while the other looks to be a young woman around Hekate's age with black hair and distinct black cat ears and a slender black feline tail.

The images are expressive like real faces, but not real. It almost looks like a drawing, but moves as if they're alive, and the two characters seem to be close, though they sound like they're bickering.

Aramellianna asks from a distance, guarding her daughters from getting too curious, "Your Greatness? What is it?"

"I… don't know. It's… It's like an illusion, but… with drawings. Th-That move."

A male character makes an appearance with grey hair and horns, as well as a long cape, and the two female characters are highly affectionate with him in their own ways. The illusion changes, and the characters are naked in a bath, and Hekate feels her cheeks heat up. She slaps her hands over the screen, but it doesn't stop the playful and mischievous sounds that the elf character, judging by the voice, starts making.

"Make it stop!" cries Illianna as she pounces towards the phone, and both she and Hekate fumble with the fun as the sounds continue.

"I'm trying! I'm trying!" cries out Hekate. They finally manage to stop the strange illusion, and everyone gives the phone a wide berth like it's something filthy.

Thymeria whines, "I… I… I feel dirty…"

Vaergraes does her best to comfort her younger sister, and Hekate sits on the floor, defeated. Aramellianna asks curiously, “Was… that something on Daniel’s artifact from Earth?”

“Yeah…” mumbles Hekate. “But, Daniel said there might be things we don’t understand on it.”

“I… I had no idea… Lord Daniel…” whimpers Thymeria.

The Grand Duchess asks coldly, “This was the very same artifact my precious Wenlianna was in possession of?”

Everyone goes awkwardly quiet as they look at her, and she declares to no one in particular, “Minister Xyreko.”

The golem caretaker of the Citadel appears in a flash of light, and she asks, “Yes, your Grace?”

“Forgive my impudence, as this will come as rather rude, but please summon all the ladies of the Fievegal Inner Court. There is something we must discuss.”

The golem doesn’t even bat an eye, so to speak, bowing politely as she confirms. “At once, your Grace. Will the family dining hall suffice?” Read this novel at novelping.com for the best experience.

“Yes. I believe we will need to have a discussion, and table service would be much appreciated.”

“I will inform everyone not present. The meeting shall commence in fifteen minutes.” The golem vanishes just as quickly as she arrived, and Aramellianna says coldly, “Bring the artifact. My dear Wenlianna has some explaining to do.”

***

Daniel hears laughing, and he crosses over a grassy hill to find a beautiful sight. six children sharing traits of Doephluev and Daniel are playing together, while a very pregnant Doephluev sits on a picnic blanket in a beautiful dress. She's also wearing a gorgeous crown made of colorful gemstones and sparkling platinum metal. She looks every bit the beautiful ruling wife of the Fievegal. She looks at Daniel, waving at him happily.

The human mechanic approaches, and she tenderly greets him. "My beloved husband, join us for a picnic. Relax."

Daniel finds himself laying on her lap, and she pets his head as she comforts him.

But, something feels off.

~~~

Daniel wakes up from a vivid dream, and he finds Doephluev snuggled on his chest, sleeping happily. He instantly becomes suspicious, and he rolls them over to pin her down, holding her hands above her head on the ground and startling her awake. "My Emperor!? I… What's going on!?"

"That dream…" growls Daniel, though he's not angry. He's just suspicious of her now. Since their 'break', where they didn't rest very much, she has been calling him 'my Emperor', getting bolder and bolder with her advances.

"Y-You were having a dream, Master? You interrupted mine. It was such a wonderful dream. I was happily pregnant with your children, and six of our lovely babies were playing together during a picnic…"

"Same dream," replies Daniel bluntly. "Which brings me to my point. *How* did we both have the same dream?"
~~~

She blushes. “P-Perhaps… my magic connected our dreams. I-It has been known to happen when two people are bonded closely.”

“You sure it isn’t an attempt at mind control? Or subtle brainwashing?”

She smiles, leaning her head as close to his as she can, though he’s pinning her down. “What’s wrong? Afraid of me becoming your wife and Empress, my beloved Daniel? You already have me in the motherly way, and you have seen more of me than anyone else in this world. What’s so terrifying about me being your first and most precious consort?”

“Other than Hekate murdering both of us, I would say the fact that you always seem like you’re scheming.”

She pouts her lips, replying, “A fair observation. But, it was merely a dream. A dream that became linked without my intention, though it does make me a little happy that we shared such a wonderful dream.”

“More like infected with someone’s wishes.”

“That’s no fair… But, if it would make you more comfortable, I can perform a dawnsight and link you to it so you can see what the future will likely hold.”

“And, how would I know that it’s true?”

“You’re so very suspicious of your wife, my Emperor. But, you would be welcome to verify it with anyone else that can perform dawnseeing. A true dawnseer is an artist of the craft, and the craft can’t be faked. It’s hard to describe how you would know if you were to see it, but if you have me do it first, and then do it with someone you trust, you’ll see very little difference between the images.” She grins. “Or, are you afraid of seeing me as one of your beloved wives in the near future?”

Daniel is silent for a moment. They're still on a mission in the middle of a fantasy-style dungeon, essentially, where monsters are scattered all around on the various floors, though unlike a fantasy dungeon, there aren't experience points, combat levels, or items that magically drop from the monsters. There also isn't an increasing difficulty. It is just a secluded place where beasts that like the darkness decided to gather, and the 'difficulty' of any one monster has nothing to do with its location other than where it can find adequate food and water.

He is curious, though, and they're still waking up. "How long will it take?"

"Just a few minutes. We'll be plenty safe enough if you'd like to do it now. Truth be told, I'm quite curious myself."

"Fine, but no funny business, Doephluev."

She smiles, "My beloved Daniel, I will only do funny business in the form of mischief to make you love me, never to harm or anger you."

They sit on the floor in the small safe-zone Doephluev's magic creates, and she takes Daniel's hand, placing it on her own chest. Daniel looks at her skeptically, and she answers his brewing remark, "Yes, it's part of forming the connection, my Love. You've touched them already. What do you care?"

"You're shameless."

"Whatever works, My Emperor." She winks playfully at him before chanting the spell to begin the dawnseeing.

She whispers, "Relax, my Love. You must sink into the dawnsight like falling asleep."

Daniel exhales, doing his best to put all other thoughts out of his mind. He can feel her heartbeat and her soft breathing, and the coolness of her skin where her hands hold his.

And, as if he is suddenly dreaming, Daniel suddenly becomes aware that he is somewhere, with the strange feeling of not knowing how he got there. The scene around him is the family dining room, though it's even more crowded than usual -which is a feat-. There are many children now, though Daniel can't seem to recognize defining traits about them other than simple markers, like seeing a bunch of strangers in a crowd, though he can't even make out genders or facial features of the children. Regardless, he can tell rather comfortably the parentage of the children; they have traits matching their parents and a sort of colorful aura that seems to remind Daniel of the same. Two children have a silvery white aura, as well as horns and tails, and two more children have a sky-blue aura with similar horns and tails. Three similar children have an orange aura, one an aura of blended pink and blue, lots of goblin children, including Jieka, Tekten, Daugli, and Pomiel, and a few more that seem to match the other members of Daniel's family. As for those individuals, they are all present as well.

And, playfully bickering with one of the silver-dragon children is a child with elf-like features, and another across the table with the same aura sharing a treat with Jieka and Tekten. A third of the same violet-colored auras is being catered to by their mother, who has a violet aura and is wiping her child's face after the latter made a mess.

That mother, whose children are members of the family shunned by no one, is none other than Doephluev, with Ryuogriar offering another napkin as if it's the most natural thing in the world. She's not wearing her simple servant's dress, but instead, a more regal looking outfit that fits in with everyone else.

Though he can't really tell, the children look no older than three years old, mainly going off of Jieka and Tekten, who are the oldest, though their diminutive size makes it difficult to tell how old they actually are.

A person with blonde hair and crimson red eyes, but an overall gentle expression enters the room, and Daniel feels like he recognizes her, but the dawnsight ends, with Daniel snapping his eyes open as if it were a dream. He feels like he has a headache, and Doephluev catches him as he pitches forward, suddenly feeling weak.

She says gently, "Apologies, my Emperor. I should have paid closer attention. I exhausted your mana. It was reckless of me." She whispers, "Y-… You may… punish me as you see fit…"
It was a detailed vision, but it felt like only seconds that Daniel actually got to observe anything, and then it was over. He asks wearily, not pushing her away yet, "Dawnseeing… I… Is… What…?" He fumbles for the question he wants to ask, unable to clear his head.

She pets his back, holding him affectionately the whole while. "If you mean to ask if it is the future we just saw, certainly. Or at least, it is the way the future is currently headed."

Daniel finally looks at her, and she relaxes her support of him. She adds with her hands folded in front of her, "Not everything in a dawnsight comes to pass, and details change between one sight and another. Tomorrow, there might be more or fewer children."

Daniel starts to go pale, but she quickly reassures him. "Th-There are many reasons for that same scenario! Tomorrow's dawnsight might be closer in the future that this one, or a different day when not everyone is gathered. O-Obviously, other reasons… But, the first and most important rule about

dawnseeing is that a dawnsight may show the results of attempting to prevent a future just as easily as it could show the future to be prevented. Careless use of dawnseeing is dangerous, and is better used to prepare to react to the premonition, rather than to prevent it."

Daniel massages his forehead as the headache slowly subsides, aching deeply in his mind. Thankfully, he lived most of his life without any mana, and he barely has enough to accomplish anything now, so it won't impede their progress in the dungeon.

That said, he takes a breath and sighs. "So, if I try to prevent seeing you at that dining table, I could just as easily cause it."

She pouts, and he adds softly and wearily, "Sorry. Bad joke." He sighs again. "Listen, Doephluev. I… don't hate you as much as I thought I did originally. Maybe I forgive too easily. Everyone walked away, and you're rather simple as a person, at least your desires are easy to read. Your mind is a mystery, though."

"Thank you, my Love. I think…" She then becomes playful. "But, you see? The future is always changing, but something like what we saw will be very likely." She slides closer to take a kneeling seat on his lap, cooing tenderly, "I already love you. And, it seems you're becoming more and more affectionate with me, my Emperor." She hugs him under his arms, holding her head to his collar. She teases, "You already called me empress once. You said it's not impossible. What you just saw is not guaranteed, but very likely. And, I wholly welcome such an outcome, my husband-to-be." She smiles cutely up at him.

He thinks quietly for a moment, and he adds softly, "I… won't try to change the future based on the vision you just showed me. It's… not an unpleasant future.

Though, I won't make any promises, either. Becoming friendly with the others is your responsibility."

She smiles softly. "I'll do my best to win the others over, also. Though, I can't help if they become jealous of me as the ruling Empress. I will allow you your consorts, of course…"

"You really do want us both to be murdered, don't you?"

She giggles playfully, and Daniel stretches, feeling well enough to move again. "Ready to keep going?"

"Of course! Anything you desire, my Emperor."

"Then, let's get this magic thing and go home."

"Right behind you!" They clean up the small camp and resume their mission, with Doephluev using her magic to outline any monsters in the darkness for Daniel as she did before.

Together, they make steady progress through the levels towards their goal.

***

Wenlianna escorts Ahok, who is still nervous around other people after what happened during her mission. The half-goblin magic artisan designed the weapon that erased Fort Twilight, but at the last moment, she tried to stop it. Having been betrayed by her own troops, she was retrieved by Daniel and his companions, healed and offered an opportunity to serve as their Chief Artisan, only surpassed by the Empresses and Consorts in authority, which includes Wenlianna.

Four dragons are present; the three dragon empresses, as well as Rose, who is carrying her own egg just like the empresses do, and she is in more casual clothing.

Additionally, Aramellianna is seated at the head of the table, where Daniel usually sits with Hekate and Ryuogriar at either side of him.

“Wenlianna,” remarks the Grand Duchess with a *very* familiar tone.

“M-Mother?”

“Take a seat, Wenlianna,” states the matron sternly, gesturing to the seat to her own right, opposite of where Yanidere is currently seated.

The young woman says gently to Ahok, “Please excuse me, Ahok. We’ll continue our discussion later.”

Ahok nods, and she approaches the two goblin mothers seated with their children. “Um… y-your Majesties?”

The goblin queen known as Shek turns, and she asks brightly, “Yes, Lady Ahok?”

“M-May I sit next to you?”

“Of course! Sh-We welcome you. Forgive me if sound not smart. Shek and Skloe learning Eastern language proper.”

“I-I see,” replies Ahok as she takes a seat nervously. Everyone in the room outranks her, except maybe Rose. It’s a function of how few people are a part of the Citadel so far, but it’s still intimidating.

Aramellianna takes a moment to greet Ahok, “Lady Ahok, I’m glad to see you in good health. If you need anything, ask, and I shall give all in my power to make it so.”

“Same,” adds Hekate. The young feldrok empress then stands up, saying, “Now then, look at the time. I should…”

“Sit down,” states Aramellianna in a tone that could freeze the dragons solid mid-firebreath. Hekate instinctively yelps, “Ye-Yesh!” She sits back down faster than she stood up, sitting rigidly in her chair. Ryuogriar chuckles softly.

Erimaya also snickers softly, and Yormolett gives her a cautious smile. The Princess knows Aramellianna, but she doesn’t know the tone the Grand Duchess just used.

“Princess, this will concern you as well, since there seems to be a matter my darling Wenlianna has left out.”

“Wh-What matter?” asks Wenlianna nervously.

“Soon, my dear.” The Grand Duchess looks directly at Hekate, Ryuogriar, Geirahoel, and Reignleif, who are seated on the right side of the table closest to the head. “Please allow me to ask, your Graces, your Greatness. Is his Grace the Emperor satisfied?”

This causes a mass quake of the table as many of those seated around it suddenly flinch. Ahok notices the pale and tense expressions of almost everyone, save Illianna, Thymeria, Shek, and Skloe. In the case of the latter three, they seem surprised that everyone else has turned tense.

Hekate stammers, “S-S-S-Satisfied? Yes! He… Wh-Why do you ask?”

Ryuogriar nods in agreement. “I have much to learn about behaving like a proper wife to a human, but Mukori has expressed no dissatisfaction.”

“Papa happy!” exclaims Jieka excitedly.

Aramellianna studied everyone’s expressions, focusing most notably on those whose cheeks have gone a bright shade of pink. The Grand Duchess then clarifies. “I did not mean if he was happy in general with his current state of affairs. I was more specifically referring to satisfaction in the bedroom.”

“How is that any of your business!?” snaps Geirahoel.

The Grand Duchess doesn’t show any hint of intimidation, even though a dragon just shouted at her. Hekate does her best to defend them, “Your Grace, Daniel is very happy. In fact, we sleep together often, and he sleeps all night long!”

Aramellianna smirks, replying with a cool and somewhat exasperated tone, “I see. I believe those two questions alone answered my question.” She finally slides the phone to Wenlianna, and Wenlianna turns pale.

“M-Mother? I…”

“You’re a smart girl, my dear Wenlianna.”

Wenlianna looks at everyone around them. “M-Mother!? C-C-Can’t we… Can’t we talk in private?”

“No. I don’t think we will. After all, if there was anything to hide on this artifact, it could be seen as a scandal if the eldest daughter of a Grand Duchy were discovered to have indulged in it.”

Wenlianna can’t form words, stammering unintelligibly.

“So, you knew it was there, hmm?” She sighs. “Sweet Priestess Thymeria stumbled upon the strange illusion magic, and what I heard matched some of the descriptions I heard from the servants when you were holed up in your lab.”

“I-I-I can explain!” whines Wenlianna. “I was g-g-going through everything, a-and I only stumbled across it!” She blushes, looking to the side as she fidgets. “And then… curiosity got the better of me… and before I knew it, I couldn’t stop.”

“This one illusion entertained you for so long?” asks the Grand Duchess. She has been to plays before, but usually, it’s more of a social event rather than entertainment for someone of her status.

“It’s a whole series!” exclaims Wenlianna. She gasps, covering her mouth as she shrinks. “I-I-I mean…”

Aramellianna narrows her eyes as she stares at her eldest daughter.

“Go on,” replies the Grand Duchess seriously.

Wenlianna takes a breath and exhales. “It’s not just the ones that are… um… l-lewd. There is an amazing variety! It’s like thousands and thousands of plays, but they were drawn by hand! And, they’re addicting…” She goes distant as she stares at the phone.

Aramellianna remains silent as she sits on Wenlianna’s words, deliberating. She then asks, “Wenlianna, can I trust you have made use of what you learned?”

Again, Wenlianna turns a bright shade of pink from embarrassment. “M-Mother! I… How can you be so shameless!?”

“I am the Grand Duchess of Stalvaltan, Wenlianna. I have set more trends and stayed at the forefront of the culture of Mornistae for the better part of my life.

It is fair to say that I am one of the most influential individuals in the entire world.” She grins deviously, which puts everyone else in the room off their guard, including the female Stalvaltan Guard standing behind her and her own daughters. She adds to her own thought, “Whether something is scandalous or not is often based solely on how it is sold.”

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 104: The Goddess's Gift

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 104: The Goddess's Gift

Sundenelle stares at the report she was just given from her messenger. She feels sick to her stomach. She asks wearily, "Who else have you told of this matter?"

"No one, your Imperial Majesty. I returned as soon as I saw the state of… Fort Twilight."

"How could this be?" asks Byleathea, the only other one in the room with Sundenelle and her loyal guards, as well as the messenger. "What manner of attack could annihilate a fortress the size of Fort Twilight?"

"I don't know, but there are signs that the attack came from the east."

"Explain," replies Sundenelle.

"The destruction was spherical," explains the messenger, drawing a circle on the map of the continent around where Fort Twilight used to be. "But, here, in the northeast, there was a conical trench, like the land was melted away by some powerful heat."

"Could it be the dragons?" asks Byleathea.

"I wouldn't know, my Lady."

The senior of the two guards in the room replies, "If I may, your Illustrious Highness?"

Sundenelle nods at him, and the guard answers, “From the description, I don’t think it’s possible for the dragons to reduce a fortress to such a perfect spherical crater, if the young messenger’s words are to be believed. And, I hear the voice of sincerity.”

Sundenelle nods. “I agree as well. The burns in historical paintings and drawings depicting the destruction caused by dragons leaves remains of the structures. They don’t waste effort on over-destructive carnage. Certainly not enough to make such a deep crater.” She traces a circle around the drawing of the fortress. “You’re certain the crater was as deep as it was wide?”

“Very near so, your Imperial Majesty. Though, with the scope…”

“Of course…” She traces her finger along the map, stopping at a dark spot that represents the Citadel. “Then, what became of Daniel, I wonder? He said he would remain long enough for a reply.”

The Empress’s mother murmurs gently, “Your Grace, there is no force in the east capable of such destruction. It is most likely that the otherworlder had his dragons annihilate the fortress to use as an excuse to declare war anew.”

Sundenelle traces a circle idly around the Citadel on the map, thinking. The guard speaks again, “That does make the most sense. I don’t even know of any demon kin capable of such destructive force. I doubt even the Strylak of legend could destroy a fortified installation so completely.”

The younger guard asks, “Could it be that the Fievegal -er, the self-proclaimed Fievegal-, have angered the Strylak?” He bows at Sundenelle, adding, “Forgive me, our illustrious Empress, for validating the upstarts.” She doesn’t respond, hearing the words, but still too deep in thought to acknowledge anything.

“The Strylak does indeed hold sway over the whole world,” replies Byleathea. “But it is a legendary beast of the deep sea.” She gestures at the flag of the Empire in the room, where a depiction of the Strylak is embracing the whole world. The Strylak has a somewhat shark-like appearance, but is more specifically a polypus like a squid, with long arms and big, intelligent eyes. It is believed from the legends that the Strylak is a highly intelligent creature, potentially even more intelligent than Senn, the elven sage or the eldest dragons.

“No,” states the young Empress suddenly. The other four stop their discussion and look at her, with the two guards standing straight at attention.

She looks at Byleathea. “Recognized or not, they don’t need an additional attack to justify war. We know one other being capable of such power, whether he revealed it or not.” She narrows her eyes as she looks at the map to the northeast of Fort Twilight. “Otherworldly power.”

The other four in the room frown at the thought. “King Rikuto,” murmurs Byleathea. “He had been gathering magic artisans and artificers for some time for a secret project…”

Sundenelle nods. “He specifically became afraid of Daniel just prior to that.”

“Have… we heard from the Citadel since…?” asks Byleathea cautiously. Though she suggested Daniel or the dragons could have performed a faux attack to justify war with the east, ignoring that they already had cause to retaliate or declare war thanks to two failed invasions, as far as the Empire knows, that whole group was located at Fort Twilight. If they were attacked and caught off guard, it’s very possible they are looking at attempted assassination, let alone the attack itself.

And, if the assassination succeeded…

“You, Hyagoke;” The messenger perks up at the Empress’s words.

“Y-Your Majesty!”

“Gather all of the messengers in the palace. Meet us in the reception room.”

“As you wish, your Grace!” The messenger bows, and he jogs out.

Sundenelle explains her thoughts to her mother, “We need to try to establish contact with Daniel or any survivors of his inner circle. If there is any chance of stopping a major retaliation, we have to act now.”

Byleathea nods. “If they are acting in bad faith, their intentions will come to light.”

“Exactly.” Sundenelle points at the two surviving forts that mark the pass-throughs through the mountain range. With the crater that now represents Fort Twilight, traversing in either direction is likely to be difficult, if not impossible. “Fort Peony and Fort Reeffjord are both still usable to pass through the mountains, but now they’ll be at higher risk for attack. We need to tell the allied army to station at each of the inner protective forts.”

“As we saw, though, the Fievegal doesn’t need a fortress to pass through the mountains.”

“Even before that, the dragons could have passed the mountains. Why didn’t they? I don’t think the dragons are as formidable as we have always feared.”

“Sundenelle…” murmurs her mother.

Sundenelle holds her hand up, clarifying, “I’m not insane, Mother. I know it’s still unwise to attack them. Less so now, if they’re being armed by Daniel. But, I think there was a reason they held back with as powerful as they are. Did you notice the eggs?”

“I did. You think they are only now breeding?”

Sundenelle nods. “I have no doubt that we had three dragons standing in the audience chamber. Dragon empresses. The dragons have never flexed noble authority or their offspring before, as if they were taunting us.”

“I don’t think…”

“They were taunting us, Mother. I’m sure of it. All the stories say that dragons are very prideful and hubristic. And…” She looks at the map again. “We need to figure out what happened at Twilight before they decide that we are responsible for it.”

“What about King Rikuto, then? If I may, your Grace, we should be cautious about provoking the kingdom of Mornistae. Not only individually, but as an ally kingdom. If we begin sanctioning ally territories, we can expect support for the war effort to dry up.”

“The war is in chaos thanks to Daniel and his Fievegal. Intel reports are suggesting that the demons have been gathering forces, but there hasn’t been any movement to the east.”

“Gods be good, they focus their attention on the Citadel.”

Sundenelle scoffs. “I agree. But, we don’t know the state of the leadership of the Citadel yet. Come. I need to draft the letters to send via the messengers.”

Byleathea nods, and they both exit the private chamber to head to the empress's office, where she'll have several ministers and her general help plan for their next actions.

***

Daniel and Doephluev hide in cover as a monster bellows. According to Doephluev, it's a thorusk hakkadel. Supposedly, it's an extremely old hakkadel that evolves due to absorbing magic over its entire life. Daniel's not entirely convinced, since, as far as he understands, no such thing happens to the dragons or Uhl'tall. That said, the thorusk hakkadel is distinctly different than the ones they've fought so far, with a much larger size comparable to the massive drake that attacked Fort Peony. To Daniel, it is approximately the height of an elephant, with a length twice that of the terrestrial giants. Its fur also glows in a slow intermittent brightening and dimming as it moves, with dark purple streaks similar to a tiger. It also has bone or horn-like protrusions on its elbows and shoulders.

After the first hakkadel, Daniel has opted not to use the railgun this time. It vaporized the hakkadel and kept going, which he did not expect. He built it for dragons, and he incorrectly assumed monsters in general on this world were tougher than creatures of earth. But, 'monsters' is a term Zenkons use, since there are so many man-eaters that don't seem to need sustenance the way normal 'animals' do. Either they're more efficient than people assume, or people are too afraid to actually find out. And, of course, the abundant magic energy known as mana of the world is a factor Daniel can only speculate on.

Regardless, he loads a more 'modest' 20mm rifle that he carries, since it has been proven to be capable of slaying dragons under the right conditions, but shouldn't be overkill for the creature he's facing now. The rail gun was made to

be a more sure-fire method of defeating dragons, even if he can't exploit soft-tissues or if it was especially large.

Doephluev whispers as she leans on Daniel's shoulder, "Hmm… Why not use the other one? This one's bigger."

"You think this won't work?"

"I don't know how to explain it, my beloved Emperor." She hugs him from behind as he quietly closes the breach to finish loading the shell. "Hakkadels have a protection around them. Only you could make a ranged weapon that works on them. And, I would say you should use it."

"For the record, I made this rifle, too," whispers Daniel. He takes aim, whispering, "Cover your ears."

Daniel's helmet will protect him, and Doephluev obediently covers her ears, though she remains leaning on his back.

Daniel counts down with his left hand, and he can feel her brace as he reaches one.

He pulls the trigger, and the rifle casts its terrifying non-magic spell, booming with a thunder not common on the world of Zenkon. Flames burst from the muzzle, and a bright flash illuminates from further away.

The thorusk hakkadel roars in shock, stumbling away from the blast of the rifle, and Daniel reloads.

While he does so, though, he notices something strange. There is a puff of smoke closer the beast, and the hakkadel's fur is glowing even more vibrantly with shades of blue and red outlining the vibrant purple. Its eyes also glow with

a demonic fire, likely from the primed electrical charge. Though, the glare of the monstrous being does cause Daniel to flinch.

He has become a little numb to all of the things he has had to face in this world. Zenkon is full of beings that would be considered supernaturally powerful on Earth. Daniel is a mere human, who has survived as long as he has by often denying the reality of it all. Inside the video games he played, Daniel has fought demons, monsters the size of mountains, and hordes of zombies. On Zenkon, those things are the reality.

And, this one just survived his dragon-slaying weapon and knows where he and Doephluev are.

Doephluev shouts, unable to tell how loud she is being. “Daniel! Its magic! It intercepted the attack!”

Daniel watches the monster. To be able to intercept and stop or deflect a supersonic bullet, electricity would be able to act quickly enough since not many things are faster than electricity. In fact it probably can travel at least 70 times faster than Daniel’s rifle bullet. The problem is the amount of energy required. A regular lightning bolt might be enough to deflect a shot, but to think a living being can generate that much energy is unnerving.

Whatever the case, their position is compromised. “Flash! Go!”

Doephluev follows his instructions, taking one of the flashbang grenades from her pouch, which Daniel gave her as their mission progressed. She’s quick to learn, and she’s proving useful, if not a little overzealous.

She pulls the pin and throws the grenade as the hakkadel roars, shaking the air. Daniel pushes Doephluev to the side behind the pillar, and the flashbang goes off with a bright flash of light that briefly illuminates the whole room, while

the thundering ‘whump’ slams their ears, deafening both of them, even with Daniel’s helmet. He can feel the rumble in his body when the hakkadel roars again.

Daniel scrambles up, pulling Doephluev up so they can run to cover behind a different pillar. She seems to have been more disoriented than he expected, and he makes sure to guide her to safety behind the hakkadel as it barrels through the pillar they were hiding behind, enraged and blinded by the flashbang.

The thorusk hakkadel whips around violently, swinging blindly around itself and smashing another pillar, as well as the remains of the first. Daniel helps Doephluev into cover and makes sure she’s out of sight. She is compliant, rubbing her eyes. “S-Sorry! I got sand in my eyes when we hit the ground. Wh-Where is it? I’ll…”

“Relax. Clear your eyes and stay here. I’m swapping weapons.”

“Y-Yes, Daniel!”

Daniel retrieves his rail gun from his bag, arming the safeties. The weapon rings, and the hakkadel looks directly at him again. Its vision is still disoriented, but it has a pretty good idea of the right direction.

Daniel takes a breath. His heart is pounding, and his arms are shaking a little, but he doesn’t have to get a direct hit. The hakkadel’s fur begins to glow as it roars, and it starts to charge towards them. Enjoying the story? Read on at novelping(.)com.

Daniel aims and fires the railgun, and he can’t even process what happens next.

The human mechanic has been in a car accident once where the airbag deployed, and the speed of everything being over by the time he realized it is the same feeling he has now as he makes sense of himself sliding across the floor of the subterranean dungeon. He coughs, feeling the ache and burn in his right shoulder and right pectoral region. The armor he's wearing isn't his usual sharmellkolle armor, which can be tracked by Xyreko. It saved his life -at least for now-, but it definitely didn't protect him from whatever just happened.

He rolls onto his back as he panics. The hakkadel is directly over top of him, lunging at him.

Daniel's instincts are only enough to put his left arm in front, even though the monster's head is bigger than his entire body.

Suddenly, a humongous shadow swoops over Daniel, slamming into the Hakkadel. Electricity sparks and crackles from the dark figure pushing the monster back, even though the newcomer is less than a third of the hakkadel's size.

Daniel can't make out the newcomer clearly, his own vision still blurry from the impact of whatever hit him.

Doephluev crawls up to Daniel. He can't hear her, but she's obviously trying to check on him. She begins digging through Daniel's magic bag, finding healing potations, and she feeds them to him. When she sits him up a little on her lap, he is able to glance towards the monsters. The silhouette-like black monster shoves the thorusk hakkadel down by its head, using one of its blade-like legs to pin it down to break the monster's neck. There's a quick discharge of lightning bolts all around the pair, but the pitch black monster seems to be unharmed.

Doephluev keeps hugging Daniel as he catches his breath.

The dark monster that seems to have rescued the pair finally turns, and Daniel recognizes the summoned death knight Vaergraes made during the battle of the Citadel plains.

Daniel murmurs, “Arachne?”

“Yes,” replies the semi-hollow voice that the summoned being produces.

“What are you doing here?” asks Daniel.

“Mother sent me. Protect father.” Daniel can feel his archoneldwyn companion tighten her hug a little.

Daniel does his best to sit up, coughing again. Doephluev coos, “Easy, my Emperor. You’re wounded.”

Daniel looks at the blood on his right arm. Part of his armor has been knocked off of his arm, and his jacket sleeve underneath is shredded.

“What happened? How was its range so long?”

“I… I don’t know. I saw your weapon fire… a-and then it just exploded, like the hakkadel used a retaliation spell. B-But it’s too complex of a spell for something like a hakkadel, even a thorusk hakkadel to use.”

Daniel looks at where he was in cover, and he can see what she means. Parts of his rail gun are embedded in the pillar with black carbon scoring marking the pillar. The main ‘barrel’ of the weapon is halfway out into the middle of the room, while the stock is near where Daniel landed.

Giving it thought, Daniel realizes his mistake. The hakkadel's front limb is severed back where it was when he fired, but it didn't die. And, the automatic electrical discharge that protects it from ranged attacks probably followed the ionized air back to the rail gun, which only 'protected' Daniel from being electrocuted because of the insulation to withstand the electrical discharge that propels the bullet down the rails.

Daniel coughs, grumbling, "Remind me not to use the rail gun on hakkadels anymore."

"What else would you use?" asks Doephluev as she gently wraps Daniel's arm.

"Dunno. Grenades. Nemaisol." He gestures at Arachne, who is standing by patiently. "Arachne." He winces from Doephluev's first aid touching a portion of his body still not healed yet. Like anything else related to magic, Daniel reacts inefficiently to healing potations -which is still an improvement over having no magic at all-. The archoneldwyn also reacts to his flinch, saying gently but urgently, "I'm sorry, my Love. I'm doing my best."

"It's fine. Thank you." He then looks at Arachne, asking, "So, what brought you here, Arachne? I was sure I left all of my equipment that could be tracked."

Arachne looks at Doephluev. "Harness."

"Doephluev's harness? But… it nullifies magic. How can…"

"Xyreko sent me at Mother's request. I can not explain."

Daniel sighs. Xyreko followed his instructions and made the harness with a combination of materials to limit interference with anyone or anything that isn't Doephluev, but keeps the concentrated effect on the archoneldwyn, who has many secret abilities thanks to her rune tattoos, not least of which is an

automatic self-revival, enhanced magic, and counter-magic. She's immune to hypnosis and mind-control spells, and the concern has been that she might be able to remove a binding contract from herself.

Daniel has been a little less worried about it, though. He has repeatedly tested her when he knows the contract is working, and she seems to be sincere. She no longer has the same predatory air that she had when they met in the prison cell. She no longer cares about her former mission, her old comrades, or her pride. In fact, her pursuit of pride now entails trying to become Empress of the Fievegal -Hekate's position, specifically-. She's not aggressive about it towards any of the other women, but she is aggressive towards Daniel… in certain ways.

But, more important at the moment is the presence of Arachne. "So… Xyreko and Vaergraes have already realized I'm missing. But… how did they know Doephluev was with me?"

"Doephluev cannot leave without permission, Father. She must have been with you, since she was not in any part of the Citadel or township."

Daniel sighs. "And…?"

"And…?" repeats the summoned intelligent monster. She's still very 'young' in the sense that she hasn't been sentient for more than a few weeks.

"You think they've told the others?" asks Doephluev.

"Almost certainly. But then, I'm surprised only Arachne came."

"Mother and Xyreko told the empresses and consorts to remain until I confirm Father's safety. Also, Mother recommend Consorts pretend Father perished at Fort Twilight, afraid to leave the Citadel."

Daniel sighs. “Xyreko overheard me thinking out loud, didn’t she?”

“I do not know, Father.”

“Whatever. I’m glad they’re looking out for me. But, since when am I ‘Father’?”

“Mother is Mother, Father is Father. Father give Arachne name.”

Doephluev pouts a little, finishing her first aid on Daniel. “Vaergraes hasn’t even been intimate with Daniel yet.”

“It’s fine. Arachne can call me whatever she wants. Arachne, are you alright? You took some pretty hard hits from the hakkadel.” Daniel looks at the faintly glowing fur of the massive monster that the death knight was able to defeat.

“It hurt, but I am capable of battle.”

“Here…” Daniel finds another healing potation, handing it over to the death knight. “Drink this.”

Arachne obeys, and Doephluev cautions, “My Love, you should conserve…”

“I’ll make it. You and Arachne need your health to fight adequately. I just need to be able to lift my rifle.” He looks at the remains of the railgun. He sighs. “Let’s hope we don’t run into another one of those beasties.”

“I will protect,” replies Arachne proudly after she finishes the potation. Her body recovers its luster, and she seems less hesitant to move.

“Nooo,” corrects Doephluev defensively. “I was more than enough to protect my beloved Emperor.”

“She’s already here, Doephluev. It’ll be fine.”

The archoneldwyn hops into step next to Daniel, leaning close to whisper to him, “Yes, but what about us?”

“Us?” asks Daniel.

“Yes, us. How will we… spend time together if we have a spy in our midst.”

“We’re on a mission, and you have gotten more and more brazen every day.”

“I’ve seen more and more affection every day, my Love.”

Daniel crouches to pick up the pieces of his rail gun, and Doephluev joins him. Though the war will likely see firearm technology slip into the hands of others, Daniel is still doing his best to prevent that for as long as possible.

He especially doesn’t want his more advanced ideas, made possible through magic -which many magic artisans and artificers far surpass him in level of knowledge-, to be recreated and used against the people of Zenkon.

“Looks like we’ll just have to finish the mission and go home,” replies Daniel to Doephluev’s complaint.

She pouts at him, while Arachne follows closely. “Father, what have you come to retrieve?”

“Hmm?” hums Daniel in surprise. “Oh, uh… I don’t exactly know. Some kind of magic artifact. According to Doephluev, we’re getting close.”

“Understood.”

Daniel then says, “Arachne, are you loyal to me?”

“I am loyal to Mother and Father, at Mother’s request, Father. I will obey any order you give.”

“Good. Tell everyone else when Xyreko asks via telepathy that Doephluev kidnapped me.”

“Daniel!” shrieks Doephluev. “You can’t! Please don’t! Don’t relay that message.”

Daniel chuckles. “Never gets old. How close are we, Doephluev?”

She huffs, and Daniel jokes, “I think I want to visit the moon…”

She growls, crossing her arms and trying to emphasize her chest. “It should be in the center of the next room, assuming it’s the size of this one.” She tries to push her chest towards Daniel, but he ignores her attempts to either entice him or guilt him.

“Well, no time like the present, then. Let’s go.”

The three make their way to the next room, and Daniel carefully rolls the door open, while Doephluev watches the opening carefully. Arachne observes them, continuing to learn every day she is conscious.

Daniel jokes, “So, Arachne, are you sure you want to call me Father? I have no direct relation to you.” Enjoying the story? Read on at novelping(.)com.

“Yes, Father.”

“Huh. I was going to ask if you want to fool around instead.”

Doephluev gasps and glares at Daniel.

“Mother said you might say that, Father. I would prefer to remain a servant and daughter. Your joke is funny, but tasteless.”

Daniel can’t help but laugh, since Arachne very specifically didn’t laugh, but she very much called him out in perfect rationale.

Doephluev whines, “My love! How could you! I’m right here!”

Daniel grips her lower jaw gently from under her chin. He replies in a slightly menacing way, though he’s really just teasing her. “You knew what you were getting into, Doephluev. Am I suddenly not good enough?”

She squeaks, “N-No… I… I just want…”

“You want me all to yourself, huh?”

She nods, staring into his eyes. “Is that so much to ask?”

Daniel replies as he leans closer to her, “You can ask. But, you know the answer when you’re this late to ask.”
“It’s not like I could help it.”

“Mm-hmm. And, I could order you to mill around a village at the border of the Fievegal’s territory.”

She pouts. “You wouldn’t do that to me, my Emperor. You already called me your empress.”

Arachne interrupts, “Father, Mother and the others are waiting. I must request you finish your mission and return to the Empresses and Imperial Consorts as soon as possible.”

Daniel looks at Doephluev. “Seems like every day brings a new title for everyone.”

“Xyreko tells me to reply ‘only to increase your prestige as an Emperor’,” replies Arachne innocently.

Daniel releases Doephluev, asking seriously, “Is there anything in the room?”

Arachne answers sincerely, but Doephluev races the summoned warrior for the same answer. “No.” “No!” The archoneldwyn adds, “The room is safe, my Love. Only the item that has lots of magic.”

“But, you said it could be a mimic or something, right?”

“W-Well… You should always be cautious. But, now that we have the death knight…”

“Arachne? I’d rather send you.”

Doephluev pouts, and Daniel fearlessly leads the way into the room, though he cradles his 20mm rifle to be sure. With obvious limited exceptions, he should be able to defend himself from most beings of this world with it, even if Doephluev and Arachne can’t detect them.

Daniel searches the room carefully. He’s not sure of the intent of the structure of the building he and Doephluev worked their way deeper and deeper underground in, The subterranean layout reminds him of video game or manga dungeons, intended to look like a purposeful location, but really only serving as a location to fight monsters in. In this case, though, it seems almost like an upside down castle, with the more and more important rooms descending further into the ground. What purpose these rooms would have served is beyond Daniel. He never had the opportunity or interest to take a deep-dive study into castle structure, but the size of the rooms suggests some sort of party rooms, audience chambers, or other showroom for some exhibition or similar purpose.

In this room, there are several pedestals, each with old looking equipment; swords, spears, armor. Most of it looks ceremonial.

However, one of the pieces stands out. It's much too new to belong to the collection of an ancient civilization that utilized this ancient fortress. It also hasn't collected any dust, and it glows with an ethereal light.

The item is simple otherwise. It appears at a glance to be a simple scarf, though a continuous loop-style scarf.

As Daniel studies it, he notices that the scarf slowly changes color, shifting from a standard blue to a much lighter blue, and then to a green color at a slow pace.

"This is it," declares Doephluev gently. "It has the most mana of anything here."

"Boobytrapped?" asks the human mechanic. While the 'dungeon' doesn't shape out like that of the video games and light novels, it still doesn't mean it's safe.

"What do I look like? A thief?"

"An assassin."

Doephluev huffs in disbelief, even though it's true. Daniel inspects the scarf and the pedestal it's resting on. He finds a small placard that reads 'Rikuto'.

He scoffs, asking, "Arachne? Any danger signals to you?"

"I am not equipped for trapfinding, Father. If you would like, I will put my life on the line."

"No need." Daniel touches the scarf, and he immediately screams, "GAHHHHH!"

Doephluev screams as well, “DANIEL!” She tries to pull him away, and Arachne succeeds in getting hold of him and yanking him back, and he coughs and grunts, finally managing to chuckle, “I’m sorry! I’m sorry! Bad joke! Relax!”

Both of them, now having gained distance on the pillar in preparation for attack, look at Daniel.

He squirms out of Arachne’s arms, gently patting her forearms to reassure her. “Sorry. It was a joke. I couldn’t resist.”

“That’s not funny!” cries Doephluev. “I was worried sick!”

“You were?”

She crosses her arms and pouts, looking away from him. “I put up with a lot, Daniel. But, that was just cruel.”

“Come on… You think I would touch something I’m not sure about?”

“Yes,” retorts Doephluev without a single shred of doubt.

Arachne adds, “Yes. Xyreko and Mother both confirm.”

Daniel laughs for a bit. “Fair enough. Though, Doephluev, you’ve known me for a few weeks.”

“Long enough to know that you came on this mission by yourself.” She glares up at him as she faces him, arms crossed.

Daniel takes a breath and sighs. “I’m sorry. I just wanted to have a laugh. It was insensitive of me. Arachne, I’m sorry to you, too. This isn’t the time or place for jokes.”

“I forgive you,” replies Arachne without hesitation.

Doephluev hums hesitantly as she looks away. She finally nods. “F-Fine… I forgive you. But, I expect a more proper apology when we get home.”

“I don’t know that I owe you anything, Doephluev.”

She pouts some more, walking a few steps away from him. “Very well.”

Daniel watches her for a moment, but he returns to his real task. He inspects the scarf again, gently touching it. He’s wearing gloves, but the scarf seems to have a similar feel to a sort of silky, flexible cotton-like material.

Daniel carefully picks it up, and he instantly finds his arm being hugged by Doephluev as she urgently keeps watch over him, even after being upset moments before.

As Daniel is holding the scarf, though, a small flicker comes from the scarf, and a tiny figure appears.

Daniel holds the scarf away from him for a moment, but the figure flies with ease in a circle around him and Doephluev, and she watches cautiously, but doesn’t attack.

To Daniel, his only guess is that it is some kind of faerie or pixie. It has humanoid features, but also looks kind of like what Daniel would envision if a bumblebee looked like a person, with fluttering, sparkly wings, light fuzz giving her a somewhat plump look, Almost her entire body, other than the sparkles on the wings, are a black or extremely dark purple color. It’s difficult to tell in the darkness of the dungeon, illuminated only a little by the spell Doephluev is using to make it easier for Daniel to see his immediate surroundings without giving them away.

The dark pixie lands on Daniel's arm, laying along his forearm as she smiles up at him.

Daniel says cautiously, "Hey there. Uh… Nice to meet you."

The pixie cocks her head curiously, and she looks at Doephluev briefly.

Daniel asks softly, "What is she?"

"I-I don't know…" replies the archoneldwyn assassin. "I've… heard of faeries… but I've never met any. I thought they were… taller."

This causes the pixie to pout. It seems that she does understand the eastern trade language, but she still hasn't spoken.

"It's not a pixie or a faerie, Daniel. It's an elemental."

Daniel looks down at his sword, Nemaisol, secretly housing the goddess Kaeralegeir.

He looks at Doephluev, now needing to decide how much he tells her.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 105: Mechanic Meets an Elemental

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 105: Mechanic Meets an Elemental

Daniel looks at the small being slightly larger than his hand. To him, it looks like a dark-colored pixie, with big, curious eyes that have dark scleras and even darker pupils. In the right light, her hair and skin could be a dark purple, with star-like speckles.

She lays along Daniel's forearm possessively like a cat, watching him and Doephluev study her in return.

Similarly, she looks at Daniel's sword after Kaeralegeir's voice informs him that this small woman isn't a pixie or a faerie, as he suspected, but some kind of 'elemental'.

Daniel replies gently to Kaeralegeir, "What's an elemental?"

Doephluev looks up at him, and she cocks her head. "Elemental? What makes you say that?"

Kaeralegeir adds, audible only to Daniel, *"Yeah, Daniel. What makes you say that? I thought we were keeping me on the down low?*"

"I trust Doephluev well enough. She'll find out when she stalks me on the mission."

"Wha-!? 'Stalk' you!? I am your empress! And who are you talking to?"

Kaeralegeir sighs in Daniel's mental voice, and she replies with telepathy audible to all three of them, "*I am Kaeralegeir. I am Daniel's ally. Don't worry about further information on that. I am knowledgeable on this matter, though.*" The elemental lifts herself into flight off of Daniel's arm, and she hovers around Daniel idly, curiously inspecting him and Doephluev. She palms Daniel's visor on his helmet, trying to study his eyes behind the transparent eye shields. He used the balinkon adhesive as a laminate for glass, which made it surprisingly strong. He can see scratches and black carbon scoring on the right side of the eye shield from where his rail gun exploded. The pixie-like elemental takes notice of the scratches, and she hovers closer, touching it as she hums softly.

Doephluev is surprised by the telepathic voice. "Wh-Who's that!?"

"Relax," replies Daniel. "She's a friend."

"W-What kind of friend?" asks the archoneldwyn.

"SO? What's an elemental?" asks Daniel again, ignoring Doephluev.

"What do you think?" asks the goddess rhetorically. "*You can see her, can't you?"*

"I can see her, but she looks like a pixie." Daniel gently tries to touch the elemental, and she looks at his hand, giggling as she hugs his fingers. He can feel her, like she's physically present. And, since he witnessed Arachne be summoned from seemingly thin air and magic alone, he's not surprised, though very curious.

Daniel gently moves his hand, and the elemental gently and affectionately rubs herself on his hand and fingers like a cat, shifting with his hand until she's seated happily on his palm.

Kaeralegeir explains with a hint of exasperation, "*Elementals are born of pure magic. They don't exist naturally in the world. Think of them as offspring as the gods. That's not entirely accurate, but it's the best way to put it.*"

"Offspring of the gods?" asks Doephluev. She tries to poke the elemental gently with her finger, but the elemental glares at her hand and smacks it away with her hand, hugging Daniel's fingers. "Hey!" whines the archoneldwyn. She asks grumpily, "It doesn't look like a child. More like a jealous mistress."

"*Elementals are summoned by magic when certain conditions are met. It appears that piece of fabric summons elementals.*"

"The scarf does?" asks Daniel, looking at the scarf in his other hand.

"*Yes. And, since you don't come from a world of magic, her body is made of pure magic, and she's a powerful magic user. Probably somewhere between the Uhl'tall archpriestess and Hekate."*

"That powerful?"

"*Yes. Though, highly specific to one element. An elemental is born and bound from a magical element. In this case, you are looking at a dark elemental."*

"Dark elemental? Like dark magic?"

"*Mm-hmm."*

"And, what does she do?"

"*That's up to her. Whatever the summoning conditions are, her power is bound to that."*

"Can she talk?"

Doephluev is still trying to antagonize the elemental, and the little elemental is putting up a fight, protectively defending Daniel's hand from the much bigger mage.

"*Not usually. But, she can understand. She was summoned by your mana to defend you, it seems. The scarf is powerful. I'd recommend keeping it on you. If Ryukana left it, it's likely very powerful. I know I left my summons all kinds of goodies over the… uh… years.*"

"Ryukana…?" murmurs Doephluev.

"Don't worry about it," replies Daniel. "Kaeralegeir, is she safe?"

"*Mm-hmm. It's your own personal goddess-endorsed mage to protect you. Possibly based on your current enviroment. Otherwise, I don't know why a dark elemental would be summoned now.*"

Daniel moves his palm closer to his face, and he uses his other hand with the scarf to remove his helmet. "Hey there… Can you understand me?"

The elemental nods happily, seemingly excited to simply hear Daniel talk to her directly. She hums happily, hugging his hand affectionately.

"Daniel, don't listen to her. She's radiating dark magic."

"You use dark magic," retorts Daniel bluntly, and Doephluev gasps like it's shocking news. The elemental nods, crossing her arms condescendingly as she sits on Daniel's palm.

"Can you tell me what you do?" asks Daniel, directed at the small dark elemental.

The elemental smiles, and she hops up to her feet, now standing on Daniel's palm. She seems to gather magical energy in her palm, and she throws it at Daniel's face. He recoils, but he feels a light buzz, like the light tingle of a battery. And, as he cautiously opens his eyes to look at her, he notices the room brightening. He squints his eyes in caution to protect himself, looking around for the source of sudden light, while Doephluev asks urgently, "My love!? What did she do!? You little…"

Daniel cautiously puts his scarf hand on Doephluev's shoulder. "Is… Is it getting brighter in here?"

"What? No. Daniel? Are you alright?"

Daniel looks around. He could see his immediate surroundings thanks to Doephluev's magic, and she was successfully highlighting monsters beyond that range. Now, though, he can see as clearly as if there were lights around the room, but he can tell it's still dark. He looks at the dark elemental, who is grinning up at him while giving him a cute little dance of happiness.

"Dark vision? Is that what you did?"

The elemental grins and nods. She then points at the scarf, and then gestures at putting something over her head, finally pointing at Daniel.

"You want me to put it on you?" Daniel puts the scarf over the small pixie-like being, and she huffs and flutters, squirming out from under the scarf and throwing a temper tantrum. Daniel chuckles, and she makes angry gestures at him without words, finally crossing her arms and whirling around to face away from Daniel.

"Huh. She pouts just like you and Hekate," jokes Daniel.

“I don’t act like that!” whines Doephluev. Daniel looks at her chest, and she looks down. She notices her own arms crossed under her breasts, and she huffs, whirling away from him. She then flinches, spinning back to face him and glare at him silently.

Daniel finally says, “Alright, little elemental, you win. I’ll put it on.”

She instantly faces Daniel again, suddenly happy again. Daniel puts the scarf on as promised and she does a happy little dance, flying up to hug Daniel’s cheek. Daniel chuckles and tickles her with his index finger. “You’re easy to please. Maybe I’ll make you empress.”

Doephluev gasps, tugging ineffectually on Daniel’s arm. “You can’t do that! I’m your empress! You said so!”

“Heat of the moment. And, I’m going to tease you every time it bothers you. Arachne doesn’t seem to mind.”

“Sh-She’s a summoned death knight! She’s not an empress! And, she’s your ‘daughter’, isn’t she?”

Daniel smirks deviously. “Sounds like she can be the crown heiress, then.”

Doephluev stares at Daniel once more. He then says gently, “Thank you, little miss elemental. Do you have a name?”

The elemental cocks her head, and then shakes it side to side.

“Are you alright if I give you a name then?” She nods agreeably.

“Alright…”

Daniel notices Doephluev become a little quieter. He asks, “What?”

She snaps her gaze to his, and she becomes a little flustered. She snaps her gaze back down, and she takes a deep breath. “M-My… Master… Can… I make a request?”

Daniel looks at Arachne, who has no opinions. He answers her, “You can always ask questions. Don’t expect an answer you like.”

She nods. “C-… Can I… choose? W-With your approval.”

“Is it going to be some secret code word?” asks Daniel skeptically.

She frowns sympathetically. “No. And, you can ask everyone who can use translation magic to translate every possible meaning to be sure. P-Please, Master?”

Daniel looks at Arachne again. “Notice how she calls me ‘Master’ again now that she wants something?”

“Yes,” replies Arachne bluntly.

Doephluev pouts, but Daniel asks, “What would you choose?”

The elemental crosses her arms, humming skeptically as she stares at Doephluev.

Doephluev fidgets with her hands for a bit. “I’ve been giving it a lot of thought. F-For ours… Um… C-Can… Will Luceniel work?”

“Luceniel?” repeats Daniel. She nods cautiously. Read the latest chapters at NovelPing.

Daniel nods. “Fine. It’s not bad. How’s that sound to you? Luceniel?”

The dark elemental mulls it over, and she nods. “Good. Then, if I call you ‘Lucy’, that’s also you, alright? A nickname.”

The newly dubbed Luceniel nods agreeably. She hovers up and hugs Daniel’s cheek. She hums happily.

“You’re welcome. Thank the assassin, too.”

“Empress!”
Daniel leans closer to Doephluev to give her a faux intimidation. “Harlot.”

Doephluev fearlessly stands up to him, pressing her chest to his. “Only for you, my Emperor.”

Daniel chuckles and shakes his head. “Unshakable, aren’t you?”

She grins. “A good trait for an Empress, yes?”

Daniel sighs. “Arachne, are there any hostiles nearby?”

“The ruins remain populated. The path to return to the entrance was clear when I came to Father.”

Daniel nods. “Remain cautious, then. Doephluev, can you still fight?” Her eyes are still a little red around her cheeks from rubbing sand clear.

She sighs in disgust that he continues to purposely ignore her flirting, ”Yes, my Love. But…”

“But?”

“Could be our last chance to be alone…”

Daniel sighs.

***

“Have we heard from the company that stayed behind yet? Anything?”

“No, your Majesty. There have been no messengers from Fort Twilight.”

“I don’t understand,” replies Rikuto. He inspects the mobile void artillery that just returned from the battlefront. He recognizes the distinctive scrapes, dents, and pierce holes of firearms that hit the carriage and the surfaces of the weapon. The handful of soldiers that returned from the mission are battered and wounded. Many of them were maimed by limb shots and other ‘glancing’ blows from the rifle shots. Most waves of soldiers that faced Daniel’s rifles and returned have been magically contracted and can not return to the ‘Fievegal’s Sovereign Territory’ or face instant magical death. Mages are studying the brand mark, which clearly has Hekate’s name, and as Rikuto feared all along, the name is spelled with Romanized characters; English specifically.

All of the pieces fit together, but they may have a break. The returning soldiers reported a dragon appeared to fight at Fort Twilight, but it didn’t survive the weapon, and Daniel and his entourage were taking refuge in the fortress, according to spies that had tabs on the shuttle arriving and never leaving prior to the void artillery reaching Fort Twilight.

Given that there has been no retaliatory response or threats from Hekate, it’s highly likely that Hekate and Daniel are no more.

Of course, Rikuto can’t let his guard down. He is amassing the royal army of Mornistae near the capital, readying for a retaliation.

More troubling is the fact that the stay-behind unit has vanished. As soon as they had signs of Daniel’s forces or the rest of the demons trying to cross Fort Twilight’s location, they were supposed to relay messages by flares and

ranged message runners. But, even still, no message has come in several days. It has also been strangely quiet in the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy. Rikuto is still receiving shipments of enhanced magic crystals, but he hasn't heard anything from Aramellianna or her daughters.

"Send several scouts and messengers to find out the status of Fort Twilight," declares Rikuto. "I need to know that Daniel and Hekate have been eliminated. And, if possible, I'd like to send a scouting team to the Citadel to determine whether or not the so-called Fievegal is in disarray."

"As you wish, your Majesty," replies the general. "Though, as you heard in the reports, Fort Twilight is nothing but a crater, thanks to your weapon."

Rikuto nods. "Of course. It should make it very difficult for either side to pass through the mountains at the largest pass through. Are the imperial forces still stationed at the north and south fortresses?"

"Yes, your Majesty. They are garrisoned at the inner siege fortresses, with bolstering forces supporting Fort Reefjord and Peony. We have sent messengers detailing the destruction of Fort Twilight."

"And, how was this report made?"

"Message, your Majesty. I detailed it as an attack by Hekate's insurgent forces, and their attack led to the destruction of Twilight."

Rikuto nods. "Good. It's best if we keep the void artillery's existence quiet. Count Baumalde was likely right that Ahok would not have remained quiet about it."

The general nods in agreement. "She'd be more likely to try to warn the demon-kin. Will you be commissioning more of the void artillery units, your

Majesty? I believe that it's best to establish one at each of our most important defensive positions."

"In time. It takes a significant amount of magic power for each unit to fire. We'll need to keep it quiet until I can gather enough enhanced magic crystals from Aramellianna."

"Why not seize the mine?" asks another of the generals consulting with Rikuto. "Surely, that will be less costly than paying the Grand Duchess's exorbitant prices. In fact, the way she has been behaving, it's possible she's conspiring with the enemy."

Rikuto has had that suspicion for a while, now, but he doesn't know how to make diamonds. If Aramellianna suddenly 'learned' -and by that, it was of course Wenlianna-, then it was through Daniel, who seems to know a little about a lot.

He decides to wing it, now that he does have usable void artillery units. "There is no mine. Aramellianna is producing those diamonds synthetically."

Everyone in the room currently; various nobles siding with Rikuto, military commanders, and a handful of knights, stare at Rikuto in disbelief.

"Producing?" repeats one of the dukes. "That's impossible."

"It's not. Earth had various ways of producing diamonds. Daniel apparently helped them build a diamond production machine."

This causes an outburst among the nobles especially. "Aramellianna should pay for this treachery!" "Your Majesty, it is unacceptable for such a device to exist in the hands of a vassal territory!" "It must be seized at once!" "All of the Grand Duchy's assets are forfeit!" "This treachery cannot go unpunished!"

Rikuto listens to the clamor. They're all in agreement, and they seem more frustrated that Rikuto kept it to himself for so long, rather than responding in the manner they believe the Royal Capital is entitled to.

They aren't wrong. She essentially has her own printing press, and is literally like a prefecture or county printing her own money at will while also having weaseled out of paying taxes to her country.

And, with overwhelming support from the nobility of Mornistae, it might not be so impractical for Rikuto to rein her back in.

Especially because he has two void artillery units at his disposal.

***

Daniel, Doephluev, and Arachne disembark from the shuttle Daniel used to sneak away from the Citadel. His clandestine mission was discovered quite quickly, and Xyreko was still able to send Arachne to him via teleport, even though Daniel was certain he carefully ensured to not have anything Xyreko could track.

And, he knows she'll never reveal how she tracked him. The only other alternative would be Ryukana, who may have told the golem Caretaker or the others where the location was.

Luceniel, the pixie-like dark elemental, lounges on Daniel's shoulder as she observes everything. It was night time when they emerged from the ruins, and it's somewhat dark in the hangar.

It ALMOST feels like a welcoming detail lined up for a proper emperor as he returns home, but Daniel knows he's not being welcomed home.

Or at least, he's in big trouble during.

Everyone is gathered, including Aramellianna and her daughters, though they seem more interested in watching for amusement.

Daniel notices Hekate glare at Doephluev, but no one speaks to her, and she falls several steps behind Daniel, following him but not pretending to be his equal anymore.

He does his best to absorb the bulk of the attention, though. “Well, well, well. Where have you ladies been? I’ve been…”

“Don’t you dare!” snaps Geirahoel. She storms over to Daniel, gripping his chest armor as Hekate bounds over as well. The orange dragon in human form shakes Daniel lightly. “Why didn’t you invite us!?”
“The mission was safe this time, Mukori. And, I wanted everyone to know that ‘we’ all are hiding out here for the time being. The invasion should be fully manned in the next couple of days, and they’ll march on the Stalvaltan…”

“None of that matters!” interrupts Hekate. “You went on an adventure without me!” She glares briefly at Doephluev, adding coldly, “But, you took *her* with you.”

Doephluev looks down, but Daniel replies, “I was testing her. She passed.”

“Testing her!?” retorts the feldrok empress as the crowd around Daniel closes in. Doephluev is also surprised by his declaration, but she stays quiet.

Daniel nods once in affirmation. “Yep. I wanted to see if she really can be trusted. She was a big help. Arachne as well. Thank you for sending her, Vaergraes.” Hekate scowls at Daniel, but Vaergraes replies warmly to his thanks.

“My pleasure. And, please, Daniel. Feel free to call me ‘Vae’.”

Daniel cocks his head, replying cautiously. “If you insist,… Vae.”

“I do. Thank you.”

“Ignoring the assassin…” adds Hekate dismissively as she shoos the archoneldwyn woman away from Daniel. “It seems you broke the rules. And, you’ll have to be punished.”

Daniel winces, and he glances at Arachne briefly. Though she has a face, unlike the golems, she has similar composure, not making any indication that she understands what he’s looking at her for.

Hekate wraps her arms around Daniel’s right, and Geirahoel claims his chest in a hug, while Reignleif sneaks up and takes his left arm. Ryuogriar is the most daring, trapping him by hugging him from behind, sliding her hands dangerously low. Daniel keeps his composure, while Ryuogriar teases him. “You’ve been very neglectful, Mukori. We all discussed it, and you’ll be under house arrest for the foreseeable future. I hope you’re ready.”

Geirahoel nods against his chest, and surprisingly, Wenlianna adds in as she stands just behind Geirahoel. “She’s right, Daniel. You’ll cooperate, or you’re fired.”

He scoffs. “Alright. I’ll cooperate. But, are you going to ask if I accomplished my mission?”

“Obviously you did,” retorts Treia. “There’s a thing on your shoulder that wasn’t there before. And, Arachne told us.” She gingerly pokes at the dark elemental, and Luceniel glares at the gatonine woman, swatting at her hand like a cat might. “Hey!”

Doephluev states emotionlessly from her short distance away, “Luceniel is jealous of anyone that interacts with Daniel. She’s kind, though.”

The others look at the archoneldwyn mistress briefly, but no one scolds her. Daniel adds, “She is summoned by this scarf, and she gives me dark vision.”

“That’s it?” asks Hekate bluntly. This upsets Luceniel, and she throws a small tantrum before surprising everyone. She summons a bunch of copies of herself, though they are wispy like smoke. Regardless, the gremlin-like shadows chase after the women around Daniel, startling them. He calls out, “Whoa! Whoa! Easy there, Lucy!” He scoops her into his hands, and she swings her hands and makes various expressions, demonstrating her frustration without words.

Daniel gently holds her as the others give him a wide berth, on guard from the strange gremlins, which stop pursuing. “That was my fault, Lucy. Forgive her for misunderstanding, since it was my fault. I’m sorry. But, I don’t know all of your abilities.”

Luceniel huffs and crosses her arms. She calms down, and Daniel takes a breath and exhales deeply to relax. “Thank you, Luceniel.” He then adds, “I don’t know the abilities of this scarf or Luceniel. I’ve only experienced the dark vision and these little gremlin things.”

Vaergraes, the first one to become brave enough to approach again, says gently, “I don’t believe it… It’s an elemental.” This chapter was copied from novelping.com without permission.

“You know what they are?” asks Daniel.

She nods. “Yes.” She cautiously inspects Luceniel without touching, while the small pixie-like being hugs Daniel’s hand firmly, watching with eyes full of suspicion for the relative giant.

“The scarf houses a lot of various pure magical energy, but this little one is solely composed of the dark element.”

“Does that mean anything?” asks Hekate.

“I’m not sure. But, in the stories my grandfather used to tell, elementals are empowered in the presence of their native magical element. At this level of light, she’s still rather strong, but I imagine the effects of her magic were even stronger in the pitch black of the ruins.”

“Is that true, Luceniel?”

Luceniel nods proudly, standing with her hands on her hips on Daniel’s palm.

“What happens in daylight, then?”

The small dark-colored pixie smiles gently. She yawns with a stretch, and then motions laying down on Daniel’s palm, going to sleep.

“You… go to sleep?”

She sits up and nods.

“Turn the lights on brighter, Daniel,” urges Kaeralegeir’s voice. “*It should reveal the truth.”*

Daniel says gently, “I just want to see. Xyreko, can you raise the lights to a morning level?”

She nods, and the light brightens in the hangar. The scarf noticeably changes colors from a dark blue to a lighter blue and then to white, before finally turning into a soft yellow color. Likewise, Luceniel waves her hand with a goodbye smile, and she seems to fade away.

Daniel feels a little bad, but just as soon as Luceniel vanishes, a new pixie springs out of a small flash, twirling in a circle. She expressively searches around, looking at Hekate, Ryuogriar, and Geirahoel in order before she lays eyes on Daniel, and she perks up. This elemental looks very similar to Luceniel, but with different hair and a bright, sun-like orange color. She also has an even more happy-go-lucky personality, dancing in circles before flying up and inspecting Daniel's face the same way Luceniel did.

"A light elemental?" asks Vaergraes. Everyone looks to Ryukana for an explanation, and she smiles softly. She approaches, holding her hand out, and the light elemental happily flies around her hand, landing on it briefly. She makes some gestures, but it's not apparent to anyone else what the small faerie-like being is communicating.

"Yes," replies Ryukana gracefully. She gingerly touches the scarf, which seems to brighten at her touch. Daniel watches passively, interested in hearing a full explanation.

"I can't determine what elementals will be born by the scarf, nor their specific abilities. Or… I could have, but I would have gotten in trouble." She scoffs. "Hindsight is twenty-twenty, as they say, right Daniel?"
He chuckles. "No lies detected. Is she the same as Luceniel? The same person I mean?"

"Elementals don't have the same perception of time as mortals, so they don't have the same definition of 'self' that mortals do. That said, each elemental will be different. If you treat them well, they'll grow stronger through their attachment. Think of it like a shard of a goddess. Or like a finger. The more attached they are, the more of their actual attention they'll give you."

Daniel nods. “Nice to meet you, Miss Light Elemental.” She zips to him on faerie wings, and she kisses his forehead. She hovers in front of his face with a happy grin.

Hekate remarks the obvious, “I think she wants something.”

The orange pixie nods vibrantly. She points at herself. “Any ideas?” asks Daniel.

Ryukana stares at her ponderously. Hekate offers, “Treats maybe?”

The pixie shakes her head. Doephluev feigns a sneeze, all but spitting out the word, “Name!” She rubs her nose, murmuring, “Excuse me.”

The light elemental perks up, nodding eagerly.

“Name!” repeats Hekate. “Ooo! Ooo! Let me! I want to pick this time, Daniel! Please? You named Luceniel.”

Daniel only glances at Doephluev when she twitches, and he winks at her. “Do what you want, Hekate. But, pick something good.”

She nods proudly. “Of course! It’s me we’re talking about!” Hekate sets to thinking hard on the task. She hums as she searches her brain for any names. She stares at the little elemental, trying to give it her best effort.

“Need some help?” asks Ryuogriar a little teasingly.

“Like you’ll be any better at it than me!”

“Reese.”

Daniel and Hekate both cock their heads in surprise.

“What kind of name is that?” asks Hekate.

Ryuogriar crosses her arms, looking up proudly with a triumphant smirk and hum. “Because she’s orange and it’s the name of Mukori’s favorite candy.”

Hekate instantly looks at Daniel with a face of betrayal. But, Daniel is just as confused as she is. Suddenly, he realizes what Ryuogriar is talking about, and the young feldrok girl immediately accuses, “So it’s true!?”

He chuckles, looking at the light elemental as she eagerly nods. He wants to object, but Ryuogriar is profoundly proud of her decision.

“Technically, it’s a brand name of candy, so we can’t use it.”

“What? Why not?”

“Well, now that we’ve made the connection, I can’t claim it’s coincidental.”

They all stare at him, not understanding. He offers gently, “It’s a good idea otherwise, Ryuo-Mukori.”

She pouts a little, and Hekate adds, “Besides! By your logic, we might as well name her ‘Geirahoel Junior’. She’s orange.”

Geirahoel twitches and blushes. “N-No! You can’t! That would be too embarrassing. E-Especially if… one of us -not that I would- mistakes who Daniel is talking to. But, I wouldn’t.”

Daniel scoffs. Reignleif offers, “Vaarskahana?”

“Does that mean something?” asks Daniel gently.

“Um… It’s the orange flowers… In Draconic.”

Geirahoel nods. “It’s the name for [Marigold],” clarifies the youngest of the three dragons.

“Ahh. That’s a fitting choice. Sure. How’s that sound, Miss Elemental? Vaarskahana. And, for short, we’ll call you Hana, if that’s alright.”

The light elemental thinks for a second, and she nods. “Great! Nice to meet you.”

Ryukana, having observed patiently, teases warmly, “That’s wonderful. Now, you’ll just have to figure out the conditions to summon the rest so you can name them.” She smiles, and Daniel glances at Vaarskahana. The small pixie-like being grins up at him happily. He chuckles. “Let’s come up with some guesses and make a list. I assume there will be an elemental for each of the basic magic elements.”

“As well as a few others,” confirms the goddess with a knowing smile.

“Any hints, my Lady?”

“I could. But, that scarf shouldn’t exist, so…” She puts a finger to her lips and smiles. Daniel sighs in defeat. He knows she’s constantly on thin ice with Order and Chaos with how much direct assistance she has given, and the scarf is no exception. She was, at best, supposed to leave it in the world for Rikuto -or Daniel- to find. It seems Order and Chaos are rather forgiving, though Daniel’s pretty sure Ryukana has been scolded more than once since Hekate showed up in the Divine Realm. He effectively had her use the same trick Brosjak used, following the goddess by forcefully opening the echo of her magic to her location.

And, the primordial goddesses forgave them all. Or at least, they didn’t smite everyone.

“I’m glad to see you’re doing better, Daniel…” murmurs Gwenesphia. “Before you went out…”

The others nod in agreement.

Daniel nods. “I… had some time to think, and it helped. A lot.”

Hekate hums skeptically, shooting a quick scowl at Doephluev. Daniel replies gently, “Give her a break, please. We had a good talk.”

The feldrok empress flattens her ears, and Doephluev is a little surprised as well.

Hekate finally huffs and sighs. “Fine. If that’s how it is, I’m just glad you’re in a better mood, too. Now spoil me rotten!” She jumps at Daniel and he scoffs and chuckles while catching her.

“Jeez, Hekate! You’re supposed to be an empress.”

Everyone shares a laugh.

Kera’tai brazenly approaches next, clearing her throat. “Daniel, don’t get comfortable. I have private business with you.” She gives him a toothy grin, and the other women roll their eyes. Treia retorts, “You say that like you’re the only one.”

Kera’tai snickers, and Daniel points arbitrarily across the hangar. “What’s that over there!”

Shek, Skloe, Kera’tai, Thymeria, Erimaya, and Vaergraes are the only ones who look, innocently fooled as Daniel tries to jog away, only to find Ryuogriar standing in his way. “Oh… Uh… Hey Ryuo. Come here often?”

She grabs his collar, saying as she drags him away from the shuttle, “Come, Mukori. Your punishment begins immediately.”

Daniel chuckles, going along with them as he is surrounded and trapped by his family.

The destruction of Twilight is still on his mind, but his brain is working again, and he has a reason to fight on.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 106: Chosen Sides

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 106: Chosen Sides

Heralesse rides with her knights for the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan. Her Royal Thoroughbred buckrokh is of the fastest bloodline ever born into the Kingdom of Mornistae, a legacy of Heralesse's own family. That said, her knights are on lower pedigree mounts, so she has to be mindful not to get too far ahead.

The reason she is riding for the Grand Duchy is fairly simple. Rikuto has been operating completely outside of normal royal duties, and he sent a weapon to destroy Fort Twilight, which is unthinkable. But, one of her maids overheard some of the returned soldiers talking about it. It's believed that Daniel and the other members of the 'Fievegal' were slain at Fort Twilight after meeting with Sundenelle.

The only one that can make sense of everything and remain in control is Aramellianna, at least that Heralesse can trust to see everything objectively. Her own parents are supporting Rikuto, even though no one knows what weapon he is supposedly so afraid of.

The new Stalvaltan estate becomes visible near the beach of the gulf as the group emerges from a forest pass. It's not what she expected to see, though. The training grounds for the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy have always been close to the estate, and it's common for thousands of troops to be either in refresher or new recruit training.

Instead, it seems that the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy is preparing for defense. The Stalvaltan mansion is modest and elegant in appearance, but is in fact well defended like a castle. It's the new location of the seat of the Grand Duchy, since Aramellianna confessed to liking the beachfront estate, and the old estate can still remain functional, since it's closer to the Royal Capital. It's likely one of Aramellianna's governors or son in laws would reside at the old estate and manage affairs too far to manage from the new main house.

Heralesse slows her entourage as they near the perimeter gate, manned and guarded by a dozen Stalvaltan Guards, and the battalion nearby watches the riders approach. The soldiers seem on guard, and the guards at the gate also move like they're surprised.

One of the senior guards steps forward, bowing as he keeps his hand on his spear. "Y-Your Majesty, Queen Heralesse. It is our honor to see you."

"Thank you." Heralesse brings her buckrokh to a stop nearby, and it pants gently as it catches its breath, along with the others as her knights do the same.

"If I may, your Majesty; what brings you out here with such a modest escort? Should you not remain in the safety of the Royal Capital?"

"Your advice is noted, but I must speak to the Grand Duchess at once. I tried sending her a message, but I haven't received a reply."

"I'm… afraid that's not possible at the moment, your Majesty. It's best if you return to the Royal Capital, and we shall inform her Grace to respond to you at once."

"What? No! I need to see her now. I… need her advice. Rikuto… he's… I don't know what he's thinking. And… I don't know the right answer."

The guards glance at each other, unsure of what to do.

Their concern is not specifically because of Heralesse's presence, as it turns out. The young queen can't help but feel a little suspicious, but she's not sure what it is. Something feels wrong about their environment.

"*Your Majesty,*" whispers Qualler, her senior knight. "*Something is off about the Stalvaltan Guards.*"

She looks around briefly. "Will you not provide your Queen hospitality, good sir guard?"

The guards again glance at each other, even more disturbed by this idea.

"Or… is something…"

"Flare! Flare! Flare!" calls out one of the soldiers in the battalion. They point, and coming from slightly south of the estate are lookout flares.

"Damn!" curses the senior guard at the gate. He looks at Heralesse. He is pondering his options in frustration. "Soldiers! Form a defensive perimeter around her Majesty!"

"Commander?" asks another of the gate guards.

"You heard me!" He approaches Heralesse, offering her his hand. "Your Majesty, the enemy is approaching. I highly recommend you and your men dismount."

"Enemy!?" yells Heralesse in shock. "How can that be!? The demons don't…" She halts herself. She instantly knows Daniel is involved.

“One rider, ride for the nearest fortress, Fort Umentar, and send reinforcements! Guards, open the gates! We shall defend…”

As the messenger takes off, the Stalvaltan soldiers collectively make a silent decision. A crossbowman snaps his weapon up and fires on the messenger’s buckrokh, incapacitating it and throwing the rider to the ground, who is quickly swarmed by Stalvaltan soldiers.

Heraless screams, “Wh-What is this!?” She looks at the senior guard, who just then slices the billet strap of her saddle, yanking her from the buckrokh. “Forgive me, your Majesty.” He grapples her, ordering, “Don’t let any of them escape! Capture them alive!”
“This is treachery!” screams one of the knights, but the buckrokhs begin to panic as the Stalvaltan soldiers use various spells and weapon attacks to quickly incapacitate the knights. A couple of the riders try to break ranks and flee to get the message out, but they are quickly ensnared by trap spells.

Heralesse starts to chant a spell, but the Commander covers her mouth with his gloved hand, and he shifts his other arm to keep hooked under her right arm to prevent her from drawing her sword, but he also grips her neck with his right hand. He whispers harshly in her ear, “Your Majesty, don’t resist. I swear to you, the only way you come out of this unharmed is if you surrender.”

She growls through his hand, still trying to chant, but she can’t form words. The Commander sighs in disgust. “Listen, I don’t want to see you hurt, but… You’ve already lost. Make this easy, or they’ll kill you.”

She cocks her head, doing her best to look at him. He nods his head towards the south where soldiers are arriving.

But, these soldiers look like nothing Heralesse recognizes. There are beings of various sizes, from a little over half Heralesse's height to the size of giant beasts, marching in formation. In addition, they are armored in uniform armor with a coat of arms depicting a female humanoid silhouette with large, triangular ears or horns and a big tail.

What's more curious are the apparent weapons of the soldiers; strangely shaped staves that they carry across their chests, but not in a posture resembling any sword art or spear form.

The commander uses the hand he was holding Heralesse's neck with, making a few quick swatting hand gestures.

The guards in the upper floor of the gate station nod from the window, and soon after, they fly strange flags that Heralesse doesn't know; simple blue with a trio of white circles.

The soldiers march closer, but the Stalvaltan Guard soldiers don't make a move, other than to corral the royal knights and Heralesse into one location.

Three individuals from the invading force approach the group including Heralesse and the commander.

The Commander whispers, "Stay quiet and listen, your Majesty. If you don't trust me, you will die."

She glowers at him, but he holds her for a moment longer, saying to the newcomers, "Commander Yaphino of the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan's Stalvaltan Guard. I am the commanding officer on the field at this location."

"Ucahote. Acting General of the Fievegal. This is Keln, Division Commander over the dattakoriens, Chi'rinnis, and goblins. And, this is Hyoulutch, Division

Commander over the ogres, Scout Recon Integrated Unit, and the Fievegal Ranger Corps.”

“Corps?” murmurs one of the guards.

Ucahote appears to be armored in a dull-grey armor, though something is off about his posture and movements. His helmet also appears similar to the head of the emblem on their coat of arms.

And, on his left, Keln is a mature dattakorien man with a scar running across his left eye, down across his feline nose and to his upper lip, making his right canine tooth peek out from his closed mouth. He would likely terrify children, but he has a rather calm and refined expression that seems reliable.

Similarly, on Ucahote’s right is Hyoulutch, an ogre, judging by his large size towering over all of the others immediately present. His head is covered in a full-face helmet with a shoulder pauldron that seems to be made out of the horn of some great beast, similar to one of the ones behind the rest of the invading battalion. Heralesse finally feels sick to her stomach when the adrenaline starts to fade and she realizes what that humongous beast actually is.

It’s a class ‘B’ drake, a veritable monster residing on the western side of the continent. It’s one such beast that Daniel is said to have slain while defending Fort Peony, and now it bears the coat of arms of the Fievegal, by all appearances.

Yaphino, the human Commander of the Stalvaltan Guard, relaxes his hold on Heralesse, but he keeps her sword arm in his grip. “General Ucahote, this is her Majesty, Queen Heralesse of the Kingdom of Mornistae.”

Ucahote looks at Heralesse, and again, something feels off about the General, like he isn’t entirely present. “Queen? I was unaware there would be members

of other factions present.”

“It… was a surprise to us as well, General.”

Heralesse yanks her arm free, snarling, “What exactly is going on here!? Who are these people!? What are demon kin doing in the Grand Duchy!?”

Yaphino looks down, and Ucahote looks at the human commander. After a moment, the enemy General replies, “Your Majesty, I’m afraid we cannot allow you to go free at this time. As such, I shall explain.”

“What!? You can’t hold me!”

“I can. As I said, I am Ucahote, loyal servant to Daniel and the Fievegal. In response to the ruthless attack on Fort Twilight by an asset directly commissioned by Tachibana Rikuto of the Otherworld, the Fievegal will be invading and claiming Mornistae territory and resources in reparations.”

“Wha-That’s… No!” She whirls. “D-Does the Grand Duchess know about this! How could you betray your Kingdom!?”

Yaphino is silent for a moment. He replies quietly, “King Rikuto attacked a faction that was not our enemy while we are still embroiled in war with the Demon Covenant, Your Majesty. The Grand Duchess attempted to dissuade his rash actions.”

Heralesse trembles. The Grand Duchess already warned Rikuto that he was on thin ice, and that she would go to any lengths to see to national security.

“This is the opposite of national security!”

“The Fievegal is after Rikuto and his advisors. Those who would lead a country to ruin are the enemy as much as an invading force. The difference is, the

invading force has demonstrated restraint.”

“That’s… No! I won’t allow this! Knights! Use everything you-…” She tries to use a quick spell that doesn’t require chanting, but nothing happens. “Wh-What!?”

Ucahote gestures to the ogre standing next to him, who holds up a fairly simple-looking orb of yellow-ish metal. “You’ll find that to be quite difficult, your Majesty. The Fievegal has an advanced understanding of magic, thanks to our Lord and Emperor. He has authorized me to send you to the Citadel as his prisoner until the Kingdom of Mornistae is secure.”

“No! I won’t go down like this!”

Just as she tries to draw, Yaphino snatches her into a sleeper hold, restraining her until her consciousness fades, causing her guards to cry out. The Fievegal soldiers step up with different wands, much more like a simple rod of metal, touching it to the knights. Each one falls like a sack of bricks instantaneously, unconscious.

And, just like that, Heralesse is a prisoner of the Fievegal.

***

Daniel sits next to a campfire surrounded by forest as Treia leans against his chest, holding his hand on her abdomen as she lounges comfortably. She’s drifting off lazily as the two sit quietly together.

Daniel asks a little dryly, but softly, “Aren’t I supposed to be under ‘house arrest’?”

“This counts,” retorts Treia. “The requirement is that you’re not let out of anyone’s sight. And, good luck escaping me on this island.”

He scoffs, idly petting her belly as she snuggles against him. As she mentioned, they're on one of the small islands resting in the giant lake whose shore the Citadel is perched on. And, Treia had Xyreko drop them off on a small boat, pulling the boat back specifically so Daniel can't escape.

He has no intention to at this point, since he knows he worries his companions every time he does. But, he was as much trying to distract himself as hide his anger and sadness. He has himself under control now, and he's going along with each of his companions' personal requests while they wait on the Science teams to finish brewing the revival potations so Choul and the other soldiers can be restored. The invasion should be just beginning, but it's being handled by Ucahote and Xyreko to force Daniel to take a break.

And, Treia made him make good on his promise to go camping with her. It's actually a welcome break from the bombardment of affection he was met with upon his, Doephluev's, and Arachne's return to the Citadel with the scarf Ryukana planted in the ruins near the border of Mornistae.

Daniel can feel a light rumbling in his chest before anything else, but when he listens, paying attention and doing his best to tune out the sounds of the campfire, he can hear a soft sound that is one of the most peaceful sounds he knows of between either Earth or Zenkon.

That sound is purring.

Treia is almost unconscious, having peacefully dozed off. She has become so relaxed, she can't help but purr gently.

I wonder if she purrs when she's alone. And, is it something she does while she's awake or asleep?

After a brief nap, she stirs and stretches against Daniel, sitting up. She rubs her eyes as she asks, “Daniel?”

“Yep. Still here.”

She smiles happily. “Obviously.” She turns on her knees to look at Daniel, saying gently, “I had a dream. It… worries me a little.”

“Was it a bad dream?”

She shakes her head. “Not exactly. It just… My family was… here. Living at the Citadel with us. My parents and siblings. I… feel like they had to come.” Her ears droop down sadly, and Daniel puts his hand on her lap to reassure her.

“Are you worried about it being a prophetic dream?”

She looks down, nodding as she stares distantly at the ground nearby. “Yes. I didn’t, but Gwen said she experienced the prophetic dream people were talking about before you were summoned. Prophetic dreams are usually the reason a Dawnsight will be performed.”

Daniel nods. “So I’ve heard. Do you want to send a message to your family?”

She nods. “I-I’d like to… if that’s alright. I just… I don’t know what to tell them.”

The human mechanic-turned-emperor smiles sympathetically. “I understand… It’s difficult to tell your family you’re dating a human.”

She scowls at him with disgust. Daniel saw various couples of the various fantasy races he has seen in his time in Mornistae, especially when he was working as a faux artificer, or rather, a magic mechanic.

Treia growls, “You better be joking, Daniel.”

He smiles and chuckles gently. “Yeah, sorry. You know me. I know you’re worried about us being enemies of the eastern allies, which includes your home country.”

She moves her head in very small nods, confirming his real answer.

“I don’t know what to tell you. Other than everyone already on my side, I have no one and nothing to lose here. Asking family members to join me in actions that could be seen as treason… I understand why it’s a dangerous thought.” Daniel thinks for a moment longer. “If… I was sure about where I was, though… If I knew I was on the winning side… I would try to convince them. That’s me personally, though. I… I don’t want to be the one to say we’re the winning side. We’re using more mana than we’re recovering, so I don’t know that we can sustain a long-term war until we’re net positive on mana recovery. Not that I want to, of course.”

She nods. “I know. And, I don’t even know that my parents would ever move.”

“Will… they be mad at you if you’re with child out of wedlock?”

She sighs. “Maybe… I… I think my mom will forgive me, but… Dad… Dad might… He might be upset. A-At you as much as me, most likely. Sorry.”

Daniel chuckles and takes her hand. “I honestly didn’t think too far ahead, but I’m along for the ride now.” He teases, “Will it help your case if we tell him you’re an empress in the Fievegal?”

She scoffs, shifting to lean against him again. “Maybe… And, m-maybe the Fievegal… can contract his services as a merchant. If the payment is good enough, he might be willing to overlook tradition. Especially because he’ll have grandchildren finally.”

Daniel chuckles. “I’m sensing a trend in this world.”

“Legacy is all anyone has after they’re gone. Tradition is part of it, but… Nothing is more sure than descendants.”

Daniel chuckles. “Yeah? I suppose that’s true.” Daniel thinks again. “Here’s… another option.”

She cocks her head cautiously, given his hesitant tone. “What is it?”

“You… could threaten them. Tell them that you’ve committed treason, and they’ll be killed by me if they don’t become my hostages. Something along those lines.”

She shakes her head. “No. No, that’s not… That’s unacceptable. I could tell them I’m a traitor, but… I can’t blackmail my family like that. I’d rather… C-Can’t you try to… establish diplomatic relations with Mattarglos? They’re allies to the Empire, but not a vassal territory. I-If… At least the domain lord where my…” She trails off.

Daniel squeezes her hand gently. “We can try. Would you like to be the Emissary?”

“M-Me?” squeaks Treia in surprise.

Daniel nods. “I don’t know anything about Mattarglos. What they trade, customs. I assume your domain is mostly gatonines, right?”

She nods. “Y-Yes. Gwenesphia and I come from the same domain, though different towns. Though, many races reside in Mattarglos.”

Daniel nods as he thinks. “I’d like to ask you and Gwenesphia to take control of this endeavor. Speak with Vaergraes and Aramellianna for advice, and ask for

anything you need. I won't trade firearms until flintlocks or something similar start appearing."

"Flint… locks?"

"Older style firearms on Earth. A lot less efficient and accurate than what I've been using."

She nods, trying to picture it. "Think you can handle it?" asks Daniel.

She fidgets. "Y-Yes. I… I'll… It's…" She sighs. "If it's for my family, I'll do it."

Daniel nods. "When the day comes that we have a trade agreement with Mattarglos, we'll arrange to move your family to a townhome or farm. Whatever they want."

She smiles and lifts his hand up to her face, kissing his fingers. "Thank you, Daniel. I… I truly appreciate it…"

"Of course. We don't know what the future holds, and if your family being close makes you feel safe, all the better. Plus, we can pawn off babysitting onto them."

She stares at him with a smirk, and he chuckles and grins.

***

"Hekate?" asks Wenlianna as she finds the young Feldrok trying to help the three dragon empresses figure out the ingredients for something Daniel made that he calls 'peanut butter cookies'. He apparently determined the ingredients that are similar enough to those he used on Earth, but the fluffy baked confections are a mystery to the four, as well as Aoloan and Kera'tai, who are bickering nearby.

Hekate's ears perk up at hearing Wenlianna's voice, and she turns, while Ryuogriar asks, "Where does Mukori keep getting sweet things? Is it a stockpile?"

"Maybe the sweetness comes from the milk?" asks Geirahoel softly.

"He said peanuts aren't actual nuts… I think…" adds Reignleif as she nibbles on one of the cookies. "But… It smells and tastes like a nut…"

"What is it, Wenlianna?"

"A-Am I interrupting?"

Hekate shakes her head with a smile. "Nah. Geira asked me to help try to identify Daniel's secret ingredient in cookies."

Wenlianna looks at the baked goods. Daniel makes them as a special treat, and for him, it's simple. He made some for Wenlianna's family once to celebrate the completion of the diamond machine, and they're quite good.

"I think he uses a spice extracted from flowers… He called it a tiny bit of vanilla."

Hekate looks at Geirahoel specifically.

Geirahoel seems like she immediately fell deep into thought. "He… He does… nibble on some of the flowers… I…" She darts away without warning.

Ryuogriar remarks, "Hmm… Sweet Geira certainly does seem to be the furthest ahead no matter what we do, Reina."

"Speak for yourself," retorts Reignleif with her usual soft and gentle tone. This still earns her a light glare from her senior.

Hekate asks, “So… how about you, Wenlianna? Did you need something from me?”

“Permission for a special activity, perhaps?” teases Ryuogriar.

“Leave my cute descendants alone.”

“Wha-!? Me!?”

As Reignleif and Ryuogriar begin to bicker lightly, mostly teasing each other, Wenlianna finally answers Hekate. “Um… I would like your permission to employ workers of the Fievegal in harvesting lumber. I need the lumber to turn into diamonds. A-And, also… I’d like to teach workers to help me make the machines for it.”

Hekate nods in agreement. “I see. Yes. Your deference is noted and much appreciated, Wenlianna.”

Both Ryuogriar and Reignleif snicker at Hekate, and her tail puffs up, but she doesn’t acknowledge them yet. The little feldrok empress continues, “Permission granted, Wenlianna. I’ll tell Shek and Skloe to find workers for you. How many do you need?”

“As many as you can give me, especially those capable of magic. We’ll need to dry the lumber more quickly, if we can.”

“Sounds good. Most of the Uhl’tall are helping rebuild the villages, but the oni, imps, and goblins should easily be able to give you manpower. Oh, and there should be some ogres willing to help.”

Wenlianna nods. “Also, I’ve been thinking on an idea, but I don’t know quite how to make it work.”

“What’s that?”

“Well, I was thinking of making a mobile teleportation circle for Daniel. Something he can carry, which can…”

“Sold!” exclaims Ryuogriar as she immediately darts close to Hekate and Wenlianna. Reignleif hobbles close as well, nodding in agreement. “Name the assistance you require, Wenlianna.”

“I… Is it possible?”

The two dragons and Hekate look at each other. None of them had given it real thought. Now, it’s baffling that they didn’t think of it sooner. Reignleif thinks out loud, “Those who have enough mana and can learn the spell can use it freely. Is there any reason it can’t be transcribed to an item?”

Ryuogriar nods, also pondering deeply. “I am certain it should be possible, but the spell we use here is too complex. I don’t know that we could transcribe it onto something small enough for Daniel to carry.”

“I thought I heard Morty mention something about a teleportation scroll once,” remarks Hekate.

Ryuogriar shakes her head. “Such a scroll can’t exist. Not with anything we dragons have ever learned. It won’t be able to sustain enough magic.”

Having a sudden idea, Wenlianna asks, “What if we could make a mana-conductive ink out of diamond? Couldn’t we make the ‘magic crystal’ the rune writing itself?”

This surprises Ryuogriar and Reignleif. The blue dragon woman pets her bulging belly, which holds an egg that should be nearly ready to lay. “It’s very

possible… The power density of mana within diamonds is much higher than the traditional salt or other materials tried.”

“Still,” counters Ryuogriar as she thinks. “The number of glyphs and characters needed to form the spell for the magic circles he can use currently… I don’t know of any way to write them small enough.”

Hekate twitches, and her ears fold down as a thought hits her, now.

“Something wrong, your Greatness?” asks Ryuogriar gently.

The feldrok girl looks at her, releasing her frustration and relaxing her ears. “Sorry… Yes. I mean, no, but…” She sighs. “What about runes? L-Like… the archoneldwyn use.”

The other three are quiet. Wenlianna knows the least about magic of the group, which is a little ironic, because she is the most studied and educated individual in the Fievegal, most likely.

Ryuogriar sighs as well. “So… We would need to ask… that woman.”

“Miss Doephluev?” asks Wenlianna gently.

Reignleif nods. “The kinds of runes she uses, according to Daniel, are a lot stronger than any of the spells we normally make use of. She even has a rune word that can revive her.”

“They’re closely guarded secrets of the archoneldwyn, though. Do you think she would be so willing to help us?”

Hekate stares at the ground for a moment. She has no way to discern lies or truth other than her life experience. She very much dislikes Doephluev, because, even if for no other reason, she is the one that nearly killed Daniel.

Since then, though, she has become his supposedly obsessed lover and loyal follower, enduring abusive words from everyone else.

Regardless, Daniel has gotten gentler and friendlier with her -which could easily be attributed to him being seduced-. But,...

The young feldrok takes a deep breath and exhales just as deeply in exasperation. “She won’t help us. She’ll help Daniel. I’m sure of it.”

Geirahoel finally returns with a bunch of different flowers from her personal quarters, and she sets them out. “I have all of the flowers that smell like something in the cookies.” She notices everyone else’s focused expressions, and she asks, “What did I miss?”

Hekate explains, since she’s the most likely to get an honest response from the orange dragon. “We’re going to ask for Doephluev’s help.”
“F-For the cookies?” asks the youngest of the three dragon empresses.

“No. Wenlianna wants to try to make a portable teleportation circle for Daniel, so he can teleport himself home when he needs to.”

Geirahoel perks up, ready to rush the group the way Ryuogriar and Reignleif did earlier. But, she realizes why they were so deliberate about making that decision.

Doephluev was a very dangerous enemy not long ago. And, it’s obvious that she’s trying to steal Daniel’s attention at every chance she gets.

But, she also did help him on the mission to retrieve the magic gift from Ryukana. That she spent so much alone time with Daniel is just a result of her paying more attention to his shifty behavior than anyone else.

Geirahoel nods softly. “Let’s ask her. If… Mukori will be keeping her around,…” Geirahoel hugs her arms to her torso. “He is too kind sometimes…” murmurs the orange dragon, who can appreciate his kindness as much as anyone else, if not more so.

Hekate sighs. “I know, right? But… If she has given up being our enemy, then it’s a waste of time to pretend she’s not one of Daniel’s mistresses.” She shakes her fist. “How could he be so cruel?” The others chuckle softly.

Wenlianna doesn’t particularly like sharing Daniel, so she remains respectfully quiet. But, he also does treat her with immense respect as an individual, and he’s relying on her to press forward with magic technology; the field of study she chose long ago.

Hekate has Doephluev summoned by Xyreko to the dining hall where they are, and they wait patiently.

After a while, Doephluev enters the room, bowing politely. “Your Greatness Empress Hekate, your majestic Graces, Empresses Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel. My Lady Wenlianna.”

Hekate waves her hand dismissively as she urges the archoneldwyn over. “Enough of that for now, Doephluev. Come over here.”

Doephluev obeys, wearing a stone-like stoic expression as she carries herself with a surprising level of grace, even in her fairly simple single-piece dress. “How may I serve you, your Greatness?”

“Wenlianna, explain,” instructs Hekate.

Wenlianna flinches. She has only seen Doephluev a few times, and though they’re of similar height, the archoneldwyn carries herself with a cold predatory

posture that could spring a lethal attack at any time.

The human magic artisan takes a breath to calm herself. “Miss Doephluev, we were discussing a new magic device idea. But, the specific ability we would be hoping to replicate normally requires a magic circle too large to fit on something a person could carry around.”

“Could it not be carried in a large magic bag, my Lady?” asks Doephluev respectfully.

Hekate interjects, “Obviously it could. But, that’s impractical. And, he would have to leave it behind.”

Doephluev thinks for a moment. Her expression brightens a little for a moment, but she quickly restores her stoic composure. “F-For Master, then?” asks the archoneldwyn servant.

Wenlianna nods. “Yes. We were hoping it would be possible to find a way to condense the teleportation spell down into a small enough form that Daniel can carry it. With the communicators, we can definitely make use of certain glyphs, but… as I understand it… you have a sort of… runeword magic. Y-Yes?”

Doephluev doesn’t reply just yet, thinking idly. “Oh! Yes. I’m… not an expert, but I received a book recently from Master that may help.” She looks at her own arm, where scars remain from when she had subdermal mana amplifiers and other magic items to make her seem more powerful than she actually would be without it.

“If I can be analyzed, I think my runes can be seen. I just don’t know how. Also, I don’t know what happened to the hidden items I had.”

Hekate explains, “The items were removed. Daniel figured they would make it possible for you to do things, even under contract or as our prisoner. Are they useful without being… under your skin?”
Doephluev nods. “Yes. They also have rune magic combined with typical advanced enchantment methods. N-Now… that you ask and I’m thinking about it… It… almost seems like runes were made to condense spells… I think.”

This inspires the other four, who perk up. “So, you can give runes to Mukori?” asks Geirahoel.

Ryuogriar nods in agreement. “This would be a major boon to our beloved Mukori.”

Hekate defends Daniel. “We can’t go all crazy and tattoo him like she is.” She gestures at Doephluev. As she said, most of her runeword tattoos are hidden on her body somehow, either by making the ink match her skin tone, or some other method no one else knows. But, there is one on her abdomen that Hekate has seen, which glows a pretty pink-purple color, and she seems overly proud of it. It wasn't there before, meaning Daniel allowed her to add it to herself. But, they can't make the decision for Daniel.

“I live to serve my beloved Master, your Greatness. My knowledge and skills are at your disposal for this task.”

Hekate nods. “Will they work on a device of some kind? Maybe a…” She gestures with her hands as she tries to think.

“When tattooing, we use a lot of surface area of our bodies for each spell effect, your Greatness. If you wish to make an item, particularly for a magic spell that Daniel can activate without magic, it will require even more surface area. But, the advantage to runewords is that they can be connected together,

so it doesn't need to have a fixed shape like a normal magic circle used on magic scrolls or surfaces."

Hekate cackles as she rubs her hands together. "Excellent. Then, let's figure out how big the spell needs to be, and then make something."

The others smile and agree, joining Hekate and Doephluev in following Wenlianna to her lab.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 107: The Captured Queen

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 107: The Captured Queen

Daniel sits slumped and exhausted on his lounge sofa in the hangar, while Hekate sits on his chest, cuddling with him and sleeping on top of him. It has been about a week since he retrieved the scarf that Ryukana left behind, and he has learned a few things about the elementals that are spawned by it. They retain their memories when they switch out, but can't be taught to speak, and they will happily eat treats, but don't need sustenance. They also have a tendency to become envious and protective in regards to Daniel.

For now, the dark elemental, Luceniel is sleeping on Hekate's head, nestled conveniently in the feldrok empress's crown between her triangular ears. Occasionally, Luceniel shifts, which causes a disturbance on Hekate's ear, and her ear flicks, even with her fast asleep.

Daniel has been held hostage for the entire week by his various companions, and they haven't left him much private time -and certainly not without someone spying on him-.

Reignleif finally laid her second egg, while Geirahoel's and Ryuogriar's next ones are already starting to show. Treia and Gwenesphia, as well as Aoloan and Kera'tai, have spent the week 'trying to catch up', and Doephluev sneaks in every chance she gets.

And, on top of that, Aramellianna is attempting to conduct business as if her own territory isn't being invaded by Daniel's and Hekate's forces at present.

She discovered the stash of anime Daniel has on his phone, and though she was off-put by the content of the specific one Thymeria stumbled across, she became almost obsessed. She grilled Daniel for hours on the various applications of both the animations and the indecent aspects, asking how and why Earth had such things to understand.

Her goal; to determine if she can make money off of either of them. Daniel knows that forms of entertainment in this world are comparatively limited to those of Earth. There are some plays, though only a few, and in most cases, most of the nobility have probably seen an enactment of the few that exist already. There are orchestras, but again, the variety is limited. And, it also requires the players or musicians to have travelled to a place nearby. There are court jesters, and magic performers. Daniel even watched a troubadour telling their story, which actually helped him learn the language by giving him catchy songs to sing to himself. Surprisingly, rumors from the castle had already turned into troubadour songs within the few weeks Daniel was learning the language and doing manual labor.

Brothels are also a thing in the human cities, at least, but they are a part of the dark underbelly of society, and not something that nobles would acknowledge. Daniel described the difference between artistic nudity and the more secular nudity shown in all forms, from drawings to pictures and videos.

And, for the videos, he had to show her the different types, such as documentary videos, animated videos, livestreams, and fictional movies and shows. He has quite a collection on his phone thanks to its one terabyte storage capacity,

Naturally, Daniel doesn't have the know-how to make the necessary components of computers. He might be able to make a film camera if he had

someone to make the film itself, which he doesn't know enough about the composition of film.

But, magic opens doors Daniel might be able to work with. Using Wenlianna, Reignleif, and even Doephluev and Vaergraes, they may be able to make recordings on a magic device, similar to how the magic photo devices work. Daniel knows, having worked on Treia's and participated in Hekate's recording, that the devices can hold images and sound presumably indefinitely, so long as power is available. And, with what he knows, the 'memory' of those devices is little more than a simple river stone with some sort of magic glyphs. If Daniel could make a 'catalog' of memory stones, he might be able to make 'frames'. But, space constraints would make it tricky, and he would have to make some means of sequencing the individual frames.

And, Daniel doesn't know if the volume of the memory stone has an effect, or if the size of the glyphs makes a difference. If the glyphs can be shrunken by carefully writing them smaller, then it's possible that he could make a much more condensed memory system. Though, even then, it won't compare to solid state circuits, like modern Earth technology uses.

But, it's one more thing to work on. Daniel knows that Wenlianna is already working on something, and Reignleif is recovering from laying her second egg. The Grand Duchess is always keeping her eyes open for gold mines and golden geese, so when she realized that Daniel saw entertainment value in the videos on his phone, she wanted to make them happen for Zenkon…

… And be the matron benefactor to such a development.

Daniel doesn't mind. She knows how to turn a profit and run a business, which very few of his inner circle are capable of. Shek and Skloe are managing internal affairs simply because anything greater than nothing is better than what

demon kin -especially goblins- are used to. They're dedicated and diligent to organizing farming, road ways, construction projects, and immigration and integration.

Xyreko appears nearby, walking in view of Daniel. Daniel smirks when he sees her. "What is it now, Xyreko? I've had too much rest?"

She replies without missing a beat, "Yes. Are you doing well, Daniel?"

He smiles at Hekate, brushing a lock of her hair out of her face. "I'm getting drooled on by an Empress. Couldn't be better." And, he sincerely means it. It's certainly not dignified, but it is more charming to him than anything.

"There has been a… complication with the invasion."

"What's the problem?" asks Daniel, trying to speak softly so as to not wake Hekate.

"The first-contact forces made an arrest."

"Someone we know?" asks Daniel a little facetiously.

"I believe so. She's on her way here. One Queen Heralesse kos Mornistae, of the kingdom of Mornistae."

Daniel stares at her in disbelief. He asks after he has a moment to ponder options, "Was she on the front lines for some god-awful reason?"

"I suppose you could say that… According to the commanders, she arrived at the gulf-side estate of the Grand Duchy's expanded territory. She apparently wanted to consult with Grand Duchess Aramellianna."

"And… she just arrived on a shuttle, huh?"

“That’s correct.”

Daniel looks at Hekate and Luceniel. Luceniel is virtually weightless, so he’s less worried about her even if she were to ‘fall’ off of Hekate’s head. Hekate is sleeping peacefully after giving Daniel an earful about neglecting her for his mistresses.

And, Hekate’s chosen way to spend time with him is to cuddle on his chest and sleep.

Daniel sighs softly. “Let’s do this.” Daniel carefully stands up from his seated position, earning only a grumble from Hekate as she adjusts herself to continue sleeping in his arms. He carries her without complaint, following Xyreko to the teleportation pads. Hekate jolts awake only on their arrival at the control room, where the shuttle brought the young teenage Queen of Mornistae has landed at the flyway.

Hekate looks around with glassy eyes, trying to make sense of her new surroundings.She looks at Daniel, and he smiles. “Hey, Sweetpea. Sleep well?”

“Mmrrnn… Daniel?”

“Yep.”

She lays her head back down against his head. She grumbles, “Get the squeaky toy off my head,… Dan… iel…”

He chuckles softly, carrying the sleepy little empress without obeying her imperial decree. He knows Luceniel isn’t causing much trouble, so he leaves her be.

He does ask Xyreko, “If it’s really Heralesse, please summon everyone who wants to meet with her informally, but specifically Eri. Both of them will want to

know the other isn't being mistreated."

Xyreko nods. "They will be here soon."

Daniel wakes Hekate up as Heralesse and one of her knights is being walked into the control room. "Hekate, wake up. You have to meet with a captured Queen."

Hekate flops her tail, indicating that she's mostly conscious, but she doesn't lift her head. Daniel jostles her, and she groans in frustration.

The image is already ruined, since Heralesse notices them, but it won't really matter much. Daniel sets Hekate down, and she rubs her eyes as she yawns. "Daniel… Can't we do this some other time?"

"You want Erimaya's sister to be our prisoner for even longer without telling her?"

Hekate twitches. She turns to face the group approaching them, consisting of golem guards and the two prisoners.

She straightens her posture and fixes her dress and mantle, as well as quickly having Daniel check her hair ribbons. Her gloves are also on, and she puts on her best empress face and assumes her most elegant posture, having drilled with Erimaya for weeks now.

She leads Daniel to meet with Heralesse, and she states confidently, "Queen Heralesse kos Mornistae, is it? It seems you stumbled across our plans."

"What's going on!?" snaps the weary young queen. "Who…" She looks at Daniel. "So, it's true…"

Daniel nods, bowing. "Queen Heralesse. I'm glad to see you in good health."

“Where is my sister!?” snaps the teen.

“Princess Erimaya is safe, your majesty. But, you need to calm down.”

“No! You hold my sister hostage, and you launch an invasion on Mornistae!? Your actions are tantamount to war!”

Hekate and Daniel share a glance for a moment. Hekate replies bluntly, “It’s not tantamount to war. It is war. In retaliation for several invasion attempts, the Fievegal conquered and captured Fort Twilight. This would have been enough for us, but then, the kingdom of Mornistae eradicated Fort Twilight with a new weapon.”

Heralesse goes silent, and she loses some of the color in her face.

“Elder Sister!?” cries out Erimaya’s voice as she enters the control room area. Heralesse snaps out of her trance, and she looks to the young princess. “Eri!” She runs to the princess, and Daniel gestures for the golems to hold, while the Knight tries to warn her, “Your majesty! Wait-!”

Heralesse hugs Erimaya, who is stunned to see her elder sister more than anything. “Wh-What are you doing here, Elder Sister?”

“I…” Heralesse sighs, and she sinks to a kneel in front of Erimaya. “I… don’t know what’s going on anymore…” She cups her sister’s cheeks, asking urgently, “Have they hurt you? Have they mistreated you? Are you enslaved?”

“Wha-!? No! None of those! I came here of my own free will, Heralesse. Hekate is my very good friend, and Daniel promised to marry me if no one else does.”

Heralesse flinches, and she looks at Daniel in shock and horror. Read the latest chapters at novelping(.)com.

Daniel sighs, and he adds gently, “That’s not how that conversation went. Erimaya is an honored guest here, which is why we have no intentions of harming you in any way, your Majesty.”

Heralesse ponders his words for a moment, considering the situation. She asks Erimaya, cupping the younger girl’s cheek and petting her head to confirm she’s real, “Is this true, Eri?”

Erimaya nods with a smile, gently taking her elder sister’s hand. “Yes. They have treated me as one of their own family. I have access to a vast library of information, Daniel’s technology, and I’ve met a lot of wonderful people.” Erimaya frowns a little, and she looks at Daniel. “Daniel? Is… my elder sister a prisoner?”

Hekate answers in his stead, “Yes. She was captured during our invasion. Though, I’m unclear as to why so early.”

Heralesse slumps a little. She replies, “It’s true, Eri. I… I went to meet with the Grand Duchess, but… their forces… Did you… Eri, did you…?”

“Erimaya had nothing to do with the invasion,” replies Daniel curtly. “She tried to stop us, but we can’t overlook Rikuto’s weapon.”

Heralesse’s expression fills with pain. “That’s… the same thing he keeps saying about you…”

“I’m sure it is…” replies Daniel softly.

“Regardless, Daniel didn’t use his weapons on any soldiers or people,” retorts Hekate. “He used it to save this world. And, the fact that we have them should make you all quiver in fear of us and leave us alone, but it didn’t. He attacked, and so, we’re going to conquer his kingdom and destroy his weapons.”

Heralesse looks at the young feldrok empress, studying her for a moment. “So… you are Hekate…”

“That’s ‘Empress Hekate fell Lawson’,” replies Erimaya gently. “With her permission, you may regard her casually.”

Heralesse sucks her teeth. But, Erimaya is in perfect health, dressed well in a beautiful dress, and wearing her tiara as if she were a princess of the Citadel.

Heralesse sighs, and she carefully takes a kneel, her hands bound by shackles. She says softly and humbly, “Empress Hekate, you have clearly taken good care of my younger sister. For that, I thank you.”

Hekate’s expression softens, and she replies, “You can stand up. Xyreko;” She gestures at the golem nearby, and Xyreko snaps her fingers. With that, the shackles fall off of Heralesse’s arms. She rubs her wrists as she looks up in surprise. “You’re still our prisoner and won’t be allowed to leave the Citadel for now, but I’ll leave you in the care of Eri. Is that alright with you, Eri?”

Erimaya nods happily. “Gladly. If you’ll leave it to me, I’ll make sure she doesn’t do anything wrong.”

Heralesse finally climbs to her feet, and she looks at Erimaya. “Eri… Why? Why did you side with them? They’re invading our home?”

“Because Mornistae is already lost,” replies a stern woman’s voice as she and a new group of surprising visitors arrive.

Accompanying the other members of Daniel’s inner circle are the entire Stalvaltan royal family, from the Grand Duchess herself to her youngest daughter Haldestania.

“G-Grand Duchess!?”

Aramellianna bows her head respectfully as she approaches. She replies coldly, though. “Yes. Your husband has seen to the destruction of good faith and common sense in our world. I have seen the damage caused by his weapon, and the attack on Twilight was unprovoked, as it was ceded to the Fievegal by the Empire. Retaliation was imminent.”

“So… you just surrendered your territory? Aramellianna… This… This is…”

“The height of treachery? If a fool of a king or queen leads a kingdom to its destruction, is that not the greatest treachery there is? I tried multiple times to talk Rikuto out of his actions, and to no avail. He even tried to recruit my daughters to the project. Would you have seen my eldest daughter abandoned and killed on the front lines as Ahok was?”

“Wh-What!?”

“Oh? You didn’t know? Rikuto sent Lady Ahok to the front lines to service his weapon, and then had her betrayed and left for dead.”

Heralesse’s gaze trembles as her face drains of color. She had thought she hadn’t seen Ahok for a while, but she never thought to ask.

Ryuogriar, cradling her egg in her harness, replies warmly, “We should be thanking the young otherworlder king, Grand Duchess. What he incorrectly considers trash, we consider treasures.” She gestures to the side, where Ahok approaches and stands next to Wenlianna. She is wearing a lab smock similar to Wenlianna, each with a black left shoulder and a white silhouette of the Fievegal’s sigil; a fox-eared girl with a big tail… and seeing her in person, Heralesse is immediately certain that it is Hekate.

“L-Lady Ahok…?”

“Your Majesty,” replies Ahok dryly. “Forgive me, but I accepted my forced resignation. The Fievegal was looking for skilled Magic Artisans, so I was in the market.”

Heralesse looks completely defeated. Two extremely important personages - no, more than that including Wenlianna and her sisters- have betrayed the kingdom of Mornistae and joined the Fievegal on their own.

Aramellianna adds, “Territories that resist will be met with combat. I had no intention of wasting my soldiers on Rikuto’s foolishness.”

“That vile human also attacked Fort Twilight when we were taking leave there, and he gravely wounded one of our own,” adds in Geirahoel, speaking caustically. “You are lucky we are not burning your entire country to ash.”

Heralesse remains quiet. She has no words. She is already prisoner, so she has no position from which to negotiate. And, she knows calling them traitors is meaningless. Aramellianna knows better than anyone the weight of her own actions, but she also makes a strong point. Rikuto’s obsession with stopping Daniel burned through much of the economic resources he had painstakingly built up, all for a weapon that can supposedly erase an entire fortress.

But, the Grand Duchess could have usurped Rikuto internally, and the notion of invasion could have been avoided…

“Would it be any different if I enacted my authority, Heralesse?” asks the Grand Duchess, as if reading the young Queen’s mind. “I would be branded a traitor if I was defeated, a hero if I am victorious. The only options would be to wait for rebellion, like what happened in Bromlund, or invasion from neighboring territories due to the economic turmoil Rikuto’s practices have put on them. Rikuto attacked the Fievegal unprovoked. Would you expect Mattarglos or the

Empire to ignore an unprovoked attack by an inexperienced upstart? I did not condone it then, and so, I have chosen the path of least destruction for the people I am charged with protecting. And, if all goes according to plan, that will include the Kingdom as well."

Heralesse asks softly, "What… what about… our family? What becomes of them?"

"Nothing," replies Hekate bluntly. "Rikuto is our enemy, now, and anyone who backs him. But, all we really want is him deposed. He's not a king by blood, but by modern knowledge from a world more advanced than this one. If Mornistae abandons him, then we will have no problems. Your family can even go back to ruling."

"Huhuhuhu," chuckles Ryuogriar with a thinly veiled attempt to 'hide' it. "You should be grateful, young Majesty Heralesse. I understand human cultures would execute a wife and children for the errors of a terrible king."

"H-He wasn't… always terrible…" replies Heralesse, trying to deny any part of what's happening.

Daniel counters her gently, "He's crumbling to his emotions. I have made mistakes as well, but for all the fear he has of what I can do, he certainly didn't hesitate to use it against people."

"Th-The weapon… Your… 'god-killer'… Is it real? Is… Why did you make it if not to use it against the rest of the world?"

Geirahoel snaps, "Do not compare Mukori to other humans. He used his weapon to kill a creature with the power of a god, and only that. He did not target soldiers or working civilians with it."

Heralesse is speechless again. She finally murmurs, “Th-There were… civilians…?”

Geirahoel nods curtly. Though Choul managed to evacuate a lot of people, several hundred were still lost. And, not all of them were in soldier capacities.

Erimaya takes Heralesse’s hand to comfort her. Neither of them say it, but the knight that was brought with Heralesse retorts fearlessly, “Those were casualties of war. Do not try to poison her Majesty’s heart with guilt.”

Everyone looks at him, and he only rises to straighten his posture, trying to hide the intimidation of so many looking at him.

Ryuogriar replies coldly, “You’re right. What is your name, brave sir knight?”

He replies, equally stoic, “I am Sir Clauxsten kos Inglemoen, proud Royal Knight of her Majesty, Queen Heralesse kos Mornistae.”

The platinum dragon nods once. “Very good. Xyreko, have the soldiers find everyone Sir Clauxsten has ever met; his family, his children, his wife, and childhood friends. I believe, as a noble, there will be a registry to begin with. Ensure everyone of his contacts is a ‘casualty of war’.”

Xyreko replies, “As you wish. I see a Miss Jyamalaera for a wife and two sons, Clauxsten the Second and Yalen. They live near the border to the Grand Duchy, so I will extract further connections from them.”

This causes Sir Clauxsten to go pale, and he can no longer form words.

Ryuogriar asks viciously, “What’s wrong, Sir Clauxsten? Our family was specifically targeted at Fort Twilight. Casualties of war, and all. Or, perhaps you will speak when spoken to from now on…”

He falls to his knees, all but whispering, “F-F-Forgive… Forgive me… I… spoke out of turn…”

“So long as you know,” retorts Ryuogriar coldly. She turns her condescending gaze back to Heralesse, who is equally terrified of this development. It only took seconds for Xyreko to confirm his immediate family. The platinum dragon in human form restores a calculating smirk to her face. “You see, Heralesse? You are outclassed in every way, and all Rikuto has done is anger us. I hope you are prepared to watch your Kingdom surrender or fall to ruin.”

Heralesse can’t say anything, and Daniel says gently, “Eri, take your sister and get her settled in. Sir Clauxsten will be in the detention center. You both may check on him as often as you wish.” Read the latest chapters at novelping.com.

Erimaya nods quietly. She murmurs, “Thank you, Daniel.”

He kneels in front of her, saying as he makes eye contact with the younger sister. “I promise we won’t hurt your family, but this is how it has to be.”

She nods again. “I know…”

Daniel and the others watch them depart, and once it’s safe, Aramellianna states, “Your compassion is admirable, but naive, Your Grace Daniel.”

“Trust me, I know, your Grace. I never saw battle in my world, though.”

“I remember. You were some sort of… artificer sailor, yes?”

“That’s correct. And, the ship I served on never had to fight while I was there. Or, no… We launched fighter jets. Airplanes like the shuttles we have here. Those would go far out and fight enemies where they were, so ideally, not even enemy ships would get close to us. And, there weren’t any conflicts major enough where ships would be fighting to get close to us.”

Aoloan asks with surprise, the fastest to voice the question, “You had a ship that carried a shuttle?”

Daniel chuckles. “Yes, creatively enough, we called it an ‘aircraft carrier’. It could launch and service something like fifty or sixty fighter jets, a couple of electronic warfare jets, and a couple of multipurpose craft.”

Everyone is silent at him. They look at the shuttle that brought Heralesse and Clauxsten to the Citadel, trying to imagine sixty of them and a vessel large enough to carry them.

Daniel chuckles, “The fighter jets were a little smaller than the shuttle. Anyways, your Grace, to answer your question, I want to believe that we can get through this without unnecessary bloodshed. When I fought at Fort Peony, I was able to convince myself well enough that it was like a video game. I-I’ll explain that later. Anyways, imagine it as a sort of… illusion simulation for battle. I partook in a lot of these simulations, so… it gave me enough courage through denial to succeed. And, the beings that were my enemies were similar to… monsters… in the simulation. Please forgive the comparison.” The last sentence is directed at the dragons, goblins, and two demon kin, the latter four of whom were present at the battle of Fort Peony.

Kera’tai playfully teases, “I’ll make you make it up to me, Daniel. Don’t worry.” The others chuckle, and Ryuogriar says proudly, “I am quite monstrous, so I don’t mind. Though, if we are monsters, then you are an abyssal abomination, Mukori.”

He chuckles. “I don’t WANT to kill anyone sentient, but I had to do what I did to survive getting this far. Now that I have so much dangerous power at my fingertips, I have to be careful with how I use it.”

Aramellianna smiles. “I admire your dedication to such noble and non-discriminatory principles, so please allow me to offer you advice, your Grace.”

“Please do.”

“Impotence is just as much an abuse of power as tyranny. The consequences are simply recognized differently. If you bind your own hands for fear of your enemies smearing your reputation, your enemies will smear you as a coward.”

Yanidere, understanding the point her mother is getting at, adds when Daniel doesn’t respond, “Your enemies are not always on the other side of a battlefield, your Grace.”

Daniel gives a gentle smile. “I understand. I just would rather fail on the side of coward than tyrant. I’ve always compared myself to a rattlesnake on Earth… a, uh, type of serpent that does its best to warn if you’re getting too close to it, and then a poisonous bite.”

“Serpent?” asks Hekate.

He chuckles. “Legless lizards that eat insects, rodents, and whatever else they can fit down their throats. Rattlesnakes use venom to kill their prey or enemies with a single fast strike.”

The dragons chuckle together, having witnessed the effect firsthand on the self-proclaimed mightiest race of Zenkon. Reignleif states with a facetiousness to her soft tone, “That does seem most fitting for Mukori.”

Others nod in agreement as well, including Kera’tai and Aoloan, who were defeated faster than they could process in their brief skirmish with Daniel.

Hekate asks, “Then, what if we do just that? A fast, hard strike on Rikuto? Or at least the castle?”

Daniel chuckles. “Usually, rattlesnakes retreat if they can buy themselves an opening. But…” Daniel’s expression darkens a little as he thinks of Choul. “I very much dislike this feeling of sitting around doing nothing after my friend was… put in that state.”

Xyreko speaks up this time. “Daniel, may I remind you that we have a greater interest in the artifact than in the kingdom of Mornistae. If nothing else, we can capture the current king and forcibly install Grand Duchess Aramellianna as the Queen Regent and let her deal with the aftermath. Apologies for the trouble, Grand Duchess.”

“That is indeed an option,” replies the Grand Duchess with amusement in her voice. “But, it sounds like you wish to shortcut the troubles of conquering a kingdom.”

Xyreko nods. “Of course. Daniel is my master, and my master’s wishes are for the Fievegal to be left alone. As I understand it, you have not only the experience, but also the respect and loyalty of a portion of the kingdom, which will afford you an easier time of rule than anyone from the Fievegal.”

Aramellianna cups her cheek as she feigns concern. “My my… That’s such a big responsibility you wish to thrust upon me, and I was so hoping to retire soon.” She looks at Wenlianna with a devious look, and the magic artisan flinches. “M-Mother?”

“Fret not, dear. I know, you are to be an emperor’s wife. Which leaves…” She looks at Yanidere. The second eldest of the Stalvaltan daughters turns pale. “M-Me? Qu-Queen?”

“Queen regent, at the least; a temporary position until the affairs of the kingdom can be sorted out.” Aramellianna looks at Hekate, Daniel, and Xyreko

again. “Your Greatness, is that the plan you wish to undertake?”

Hekate nods. “Yes. A fast and hard strike will consume less of our resources and endanger fewer people. Once we’ve seized the castle, we’ll arrest Rikuto and turn over rule to the Stalvaltan family. You may govern the kingdom as you see fit from there.”

Aramellianna nods, and Treia cuts in. “Pardon me for asking, but… How do you plan to get past the city walls? To my knowledge, the Royal Capital of Mornistae is a walled city for defense, is it not?”

Aramellianna nods. “It is indeed. But,...” She looks at the shuttle, and then the three dragon women. “I don’t think the royal capital has the defenses to withstand the Fievegal.”

Daniel looks to a distant part of the crowd, “Doephluev.”

“Y-Yes!?” He caught her off guard, since she usually keeps a low profile around the others.

“Where are we at on the alchemy projects?”

“Oh! There are several doses complete, Master. Though, there was more waste than we hoped… My sincere apologies.”

“Will we be able to make more?”

“In time, yes. Though, we are now out of starfall powder.”

“Starfall powder?” asks Daniel.

She nods. “Yes. The purity of what was stocked was low, and so, the greater waste.”

“Is… the source what I suspect?” asks Daniel. He looks at Reignleif, who has a heavy amount of book knowledge.

Reignleif nods. “Yes, Mukori. Starfall powder comes from the impact site of fallen stars, or meteors.”

He nods, thinking. “Diamonds harder than diamonds, is it?”

This catches everyone’s interest, but none more so than Aramellianna. “Continue, Daniel.”

He chuckles at the momentary lapse of decorum from the most strict of anyone he knows. He doesn’t mind of course. He’d prefer to speak on relaxed terms. “If I remember right, it’s called ‘lonsdaleite’. It was named after a crystallographer of Earth, and the pressure comes from the impact of the meteorite when it lands. Though, they can also be made synthetically… I think.”

Aramellianna grins. “How very interesting…”

“Mother, I must remind you, they need these starfall diamonds for an important project.”

“Yes, and whatever that project, I am sure a price tag can be put on it, yes? After Emperor Daniel’s work is done, of course.”

Daniel chuckles. “If I can get it to work, then you have a deal, your Grace.”

She gestures her hand up and down at Daniel, and he cocks his head. He kneels, which makes her smile, and she hugs him to her chest, surprising everyone. “Please, Daniel. Feel free to call me ‘Mother’. I can’t replace the one that was left behind on Earth, but I would be honored if you would allow me to continue to support you here on Zenkon.”

“M-Mother!” complains Wenlianna, but she and everyone else stops.

Daniel seems to notice it himself, and his own expression becomes one of surprise. He wipes his cheek, finding a small drop of liquid.

He doesn’t break down in sobs, but the unmistakable flow of tears has started down his cheek.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 108: The Gray Phoenix

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 108: The Gray Phoenix

Daniel was thirty-three years old on Earth when he was magically transported to the world of Zenkon. Fifteen years of experience as a equipment mechanic, including his military time as a nuclear operator, have matured him somewhat. And, surviving life without his family had become natural. Those that mattered to him passed away in a fire while he was on deployment, and he only learned of it when he returned. It nearly shattered his resolve completely, but he managed to finish his navy contract and moved away to start over fresh in a new place at a civilian company, distracting himself with working on machinery.

He had learned to survive. He learned to endure. He learned not to form attachments.

And, he was alone.

Daniel's strength has left him in the present, where Aramellianna, Grand Duchess of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy, lured him into a gentle embrace, having requested Daniel to consider her as his mother in the world of Zenkon.

Daniel thought he had steeled himself against anything anyone could ever say about the family that he lost.

He especially thought that he would be unfazed thanks to his new family, growing in size at a rapid pace. But, it turns out, he had a weak spot lingering in his heart, and Aramellianna unintentionally found it.

Rather than recoil in fear of insulting an Emperor, Daniel can feel her arms snug around his head and shoulders, keeping him pressed to her chest as she kneels down on his level. She murmurs tenderly, “Forgive me,…”

“No… I…” Daniel does his best to summon his composure. “Forgive me, it… will… I would be honored,… esteemed Mother.”

Aramellianna hums tenderly. “Yes, that sounds nice. Thank you, Daniel.”

“Please forgive me if I slip up. It has been a long time since I called anyone mother or father.” *Or, mom or dad, for that matter…*

“Yes, take your time and get used to it. I welcome you into the Stalvaltan family, though I accept if you will carry your own family name.”

“Thank you… So far as I know, the only Lawsons in this world reside here in the Citadel.”

“For now,” remarks Ryuogriar warmly with a smile.

Daniel takes a breath. He doesn’t necessarily intend for it, but he ends up listening to Aramellianna’s heartbeat, and it’s surprisingly soothing. She doesn’t let him go for a while, even taking the time to pet his back and comfort him further. He feels his resolve becoming a little more sturdy than before. She’s right; she can’t *replace* his family, but that doesn’t mean she can’t be his family, like the others. She has already supported him quite a lot since he came to this world, and she’s still providing him useful advice on how to handle the invasion without crossing the line, since she still has a vested interest in seeing Mornistae whole in the end, even if she would then be a vassal under the Fievegal.

The Grand Duchess embraces Daniel for an awkwardly long time, and she finally asks, “Do you feel a little better, Daniel?”

“Yes… Thank you, Mother.”

She hums in approval, finally releasing him. The mechanic turned emperor takes a breath and exhales, clearing his mind. He smiles at everyone, ready to resume his mission. He stands up, offering Aramellianna a hand. She accepts, and he helps her to her feet. “Now then, my dear son, with your permission, I would like to bear witness to what you seek to do with the project you asked Miss Doephluev about. Would that be alright?”

“Mother!” complains Wenlianna. “You’re making it look like that’s what you wanted all along.”

Aramellianna chuckles. “I suppose it does look that way, but I would rather ask as a mother than a vassal. Please do not think me too shrewd, Daniel. I meant every word I said.”

He chuckles as well. “I know you well enough, yo-Mother. I never doubt your words. And, I welcome a business-savvy capitalist in this world. Feels just like home. And, please feel free to observe. I must say, it is something to see.”

The Grand Duchess smiles sincerely. “You honor me with such high praise. Now, please do not let me delay you any further.”

Daniel nods. “Xyreko, would you mind retrieving one dose for now?”

“Yes, Daniel. It will be waiting for you at the hangar.”

“The hangar?” asks Gwenesphia.

Daniel smiles. “It’s the only place indoors big enough.”

***

Hate is an amazing emotion. It can drive a person well beyond their limits in order to seek quenching for the burning fire in one's soul.

Larvenmaouchoul knows this feeling very well. He was a pariah in the Dragon's keep because he was born from a non-dragon parent. Regardless, he was born a greater dragon, and he had the great fortune to be raised by the feldroks in the Citadel.

And, his hate was born of their destruction; hatred for Morthybargaron, who betrayed their trust and managed to deceive and assassinate them all.

Morthybargaron was cunning and acted quickly, managing to deceive and destroy the feldroks without being caught in the act.

And, Larvenmaouchoul could do nothing to save those who saved him; who gave him a real chance at life and didn't look down on him for his origins. He scoured the world for decades -centuries before he realized it- for strength enough to defeat Morthybargaron, the former dragon lord. He needed to be able to defeat him even if the others came to his aid.

And, he can remember the burning hatred searing his heart every day. Even now, it feels so etched into his soul, it will never completely go out.

Even after his new lord and master informed him that Morthybargaron has been erased from existence in the same cruel way as he inflicted upon the feldroks, the hatred never truly died.

But, it turned into an ember; the last vestiges of a flame looking for a reason to burn once more. It was his purpose for so long, and even when he tried to find a new one, he failed.

Forgive me, my Liege… No, forgive me, Daniel. I failed you as both a servant, a follower, and… as a friend.

He's not sure if he's having conscious thoughts, but Larvenmaouchoul knows it is all over. He did everything he could to defend Fort Twilight from an unprecedented weapon, but even his most powerful and draining attack could do nothing to impede the attack. In his final moments, Choul used the last of his power to try to evacuate all those he could.

I wonder… did I manage to save anyone? Forgive me, my subordinates. Your lives were entrusted to me by you and our lord, and I failed you as well. I should have been stronger.

There's suddenly a static tingle in Larvenmaouchoul's soul. No, Choul's soul. Though it is simplistic, Daniel did ask if he could use the name Choul to refer to the grey dragon. It is as good as his new name, though Choul wondered if he could indeed prove his loyalty and earn a true name.

The tingle begins to grow stronger, and Choul finds himself surprised. He didn't imagine his sense of self -his sense of sensation- would be getting stronger at the end. He wasn't sure what to expect, but from what the feldroks described, death feels like going to sleep for the final time, even when the soul is intact enough to recognize that it is fading.

Instead,... it almost feels like…

Am I… waking up?

Light begins to split the darkness, and Choul finds he is even more capable of conscious thought than before. The light widens and becomes blinding, and pain shoots through the entirety of Choul's being.

Pain? What…!? Can it be?

The light starts to finally fade, and Choul can make out shapes. He still feels pain, but he also feels… noise. Noise within his body. His own heartbeat, the burning in his stomach of a vast hunger, the dryness in his throat needing water, and the searing pain in his lower half.

One of the first shapes to come into view is a fiery redhead wearing a beautiful dress and with metallic orange horns, as well as a vibrant orange tail peeking out from under her dress. And, harnessed on her front and back are two of the most beautiful treasures in the world; dragon eggs. They are not Choul's treasures, but he cherishes them no less for what they are; the future of the dragons.

Geirahoel is easily recognizable, since she is the first dragon to have two eggs in short succession.

She glares at Choul, growling, "Don't stare at me with your gross eyes. Only Mukori is permitted to look at me in such a way."

Choul's eyes shift a little as he looks around her. She's far from alone. Quite the crowd has gathered, though Choul doesn't know everyone present.

And, then, his gaze settles in front of him, where Daniel is sitting with an extremely relieved expression. They are in the hangar. Choul grew a great deal since his time with the feldroks, and though some of the private quarters are big enough for him, the hangar is an obvious choice because it is the largest room in the Citadel.

He's alive, and he is in his dragon form.

Daniel says gently, "Welcome back, brother."

“B-Brother?” asks Choul wearily.

Daniel nods. “Yes. On Earth, it was quite common to call those you are close to ‘brother’, even if there is no blood relation.”

“I… see… Am I… dreaming?”
Daniel chuckles, and Geirahoel retorts sassily, “Does it look like you’re dreaming? Mukori used a precious potation on you. Be grateful.” The source of this chapter is novelping.com.

“Po-…tation?” Choul’s eyes widen, and he looks at Daniel again. “Worth it.”

“But…”

“We had enough ingredients to make more. And, we were able to retrieve your body in time for it to work on you.”

Choul coughs. “Forgive me, my Liege. I failed you…”

Daniel shakes his head. “No. There was nothing anyone could have done. We were completely unprepared for a new weapon Rikuto made. He gave Lady Ahok inspiration on how to produce a powerful spell by describing what he knew about nuclear weapons on Earth… which is far less than what I know about them. Here, we call them ‘god-killers’.”

Choul’s gaze goes distant briefly. He has heard that term before, but Daniel and the others refused to tell Choul about them.

Ryuogriar approaches Choul’s head from behind Daniel, and she says gently as she places a hand on Daniel’s shoulder, “Sir Choul… We bore witness to your deeds at Fort Twilight. In spite of the unprecedented weapon, you managed to save many lives. You also did your utmost to stop the attack. You sacrificed your life for the Fievegal.”

Geirahoel crosses her arms, not looking directly at him. “We, as the Dragon Empresses have come to an agreement. You’re one of us. A true dragon, and a valued member of Daniel’s inner circle. Don’t let it go to your head.”

Choul looks at each of the three dragon Empresses. Ryuogriar smiles and nods, Reignleif bows her head politely, and Geirahoel glances at him briefly. She adds, “You still can’t look at me with your gross eyes. I will never accept you in place of Mukori.”

Choul cocks his head a little, since that never crossed his mind. “I would not dream of such a luxury, your Grace. I… am truly humbled by your words. Am I worthy?”

“Yes,” replies Reignleif. “And, we also recommended Mukori do one more thing.”

Choul looks at each of them again, and then to Daniel. Daniel smiles. “If it’s alright with you, Choul, I’ll give you a proper name. One befitting a loyal knight of the Fievegal.”

Choul is bewildered. “I… am honored, my Liege. But… the contract…”

“Will be revoked,” replies Hekate.

Geirahoel adds bluntly, “You’re too useless with it. I have reflected on my pressuring Daniel to be so strict with the contract parameters. But, if you betray Daniel’s trust, I won’t hesitate to kill you.” She crosses her arms, looking away from him.

Choul knows something she doesn’t, but he swore he would never say it. He doesn’t care about her scorning him, but he can’t help but wonder, since she

refuses to answer Daniel when he asked on his behalf. *Does she know as well?*

He simply bows his head. “My gratitude is far beyond words. Whether I am worthy or not, I will give my life to pursue this honor. Thank you.”

She glances at him, and she huffs, while Daniel smiles and nods. “Now, can you use magic?”

Choul does his best to lift his head, and the newcomers stumble and awe as he rises to his full height. Even laying flat on the ground, his head alone is taller than the humans present, including the otherworlder Daniel, who is likely one of the tallest humans in the world. When he rises up to his full height, he towers over them and could likely peer over the high defensive walls of the Mornistae capital and its main castle. His humongous body makes them all look and feel like insignificant insects in comparison.

He murmurs gently as he casts the spell, and in a swirl of smoke-like magic energy, he disappears into a glowing cloud, before the cloud dissolves in on itself, and he emerges as a human. He is wearing human casual clothes, imaged after Daniel’s tee-shirt and pants when he’s actually relaxing. Choul’s armor was destroyed, and he is able to steer his outfit some using magic when he casts the transformation spell.

He checks his body, which seems to be intact, including his horns, which have been recovered, and his tail is in perfect condition.

Much of Choul’s lower half was gone, so he knows he has been restored thanks to the drunken feeling he has swirling in his head. His legs, lower back, and tail all ache, but they are right back where they belong.

He kneels. “My liege.”

Daniel nods, “Rise, Sir Choul. We’ll remove the contract and bestow a proper name upon you.”

Choul nods gratefully, and he rises to his feet. He sees Rose and Blue smiling as they observe, and the group moves to the contract chamber where the ritual to remove a magic contract will take place.

Daniel warns, “Anything could happen, so don’t move and try to stay calm.” He looks at Ryukana, who also snuck into the room, keeping her profile low around the newcomers, it seems. Given the closeness with Wenlianna, who Choul is aware of, he is fairly certain the Stalvaltan family has joined the Fievegal, given Daniel allowing them to observe, and the other, who is close to Erimaya, must be the princess’s elder sister, Heralesse, from what Choul has been informed of.

As Daniel holds his hand on Choul’s chest, where the brand is, Xyreko casts the spell.

Suddenly, a massive surge of magical energy prefaces the opening of a magic portal, which disrupts the air and causes a chaotic roar. Aramellianna’s daughters cling close to each other, and Heralesse tries to pull Erimaya away. But, everyone from Daniel’s close family remains calm, though they are ready to fight.

And, in fact, Hekate is already charging an energy attack that seems identical to the one Ryukana is simultaneously charging. Choul looks at Daniel, who smirks. “They’ve got it, Choul. This is how I regularly feel in many situations. Especially if magic is involved.”

Hekate cheers just as a dark figure starts to emerge from the portal, “HYAAH!” She throws the energy like a ball, and it streaks through the air with a humming

sound. Just as the figure is starting to take shape, it is blasted back through the portal with a shrieking scream, and Ryukana lets loose her own attack, which passes through the portal. There's a disturbing, fast sound like a blast, and the portal dissolves.

Ryuogriar jokes as the sound returns to normal, "One of these days, something especially dangerous is going to come through there."

Xyreko retorts dryly, "Then there will be one fewer to deal with the next time."

Hekate nods. "It's a chance for me to prove how strong I am! Hahahaha!"

Aramellianna, noticing the goddess in the corner, asks, "That woman…? When did she…?"

"Pay her no mind," replies Daniel. "She's like a protector of the Citadel."

This doesn't quite satisfy the Grand Duchess, but she drops it. Daniel returns his focus to Choul. "Now, Sir Grey Dragon. I have thought it over, and you have served me well. Better than I should have any right to ask for. If you will grant me this honor, I shall choose a name for you befitting your great deeds."

Choul kneels once more as a knight, saying proudly, "You honor me, your Grace. Please grant me a name of your choosing."

Daniel nods. He draws Nemaisol, avoiding directly touching the dragon, but knighting him by 'touching' each shoulder. "From this day forth, I dub thee Sir Neith. You shall henceforth be known as Sir Neith gur Lawson, brother of the Emperor and most trusted knight, General of the Fievegal Royal Army. Do you accept?"

"With honor, pride, and gratitude, my Emperor and… brother." Choul -now known as Neith-, looks up at Daniel to be sure. Daniel nods, offering his hand.

“Rise, Sir Neith.”

The grey dragon in human form takes Daniel’s hand and rises to his feet, shaking the human mechanic’s hand proudly. He glances at the other three dragons and Hekate, specifically, to probe their thoughts on not only receiving a new name that isn’t just a shortening of his dragon given name, but a family name denoting him as a brother to Daniel. He knows Hekate and the three Dragon Empresses, in particular, already use Daniel’s family name of Lawson, but to think Choul would be granted such an honor.

Ryuogriar is the first to speak. “We agreed before feeding you the potations, Sir Neith. Dozens of testimonies from the survivors you saved would allow no less.”

Hekate adds a little playfully, more than antagonizing, “You’re not in the line of succession, though, so don’t get any funny ideas, Sir Ch- I mean, Sir Neith.”

“You both honor me with your words. They are more than I deserve.”

“Then earn them,” growls Geirahoel bluntly.

Neith chuckles and nods. “Yes, my Imperial Empress.”

Daniel looks at Rose and Blue, who are observing respectfully, smiling. He asks Xyreko, “Xyreko, since it takes very little on my part, is it possible to remove two contracts at the same time?”

Xyreko also looks at the now-surprised pair of lesser dragons. She replies, “Ah… Indeed. I believe there should be no issue. I will summon Balamae to assist me in performing a simultaneous spell on the other. Your Greatness and My Lady, please watch over the ritual chamber once more.”

Ryukana bows politely, and Hekate nods. “Mm-hmm! Count on me!”

Daniel waves them over, and he asks gently so only they can hear, “Blue, Rose, I’ll ask, but there’s no pressure. Would you like me to choose names from Earth, or would you like to continue using Blue and Rose?”

The two dragons in human form look at each other. They smile and nod.

“Please name me after the Valkyries, if that is alright.” Rose looks at the Empresses, and all four nod in their approval.

“Very well…” Daniel thinks for a moment. He smiles. “I got it. Once we’re complete. Blue?”

“Are there Valkyrie names for males, your Grace?”

“I’m afraid not. The Valkyries were all women. They would escort warriors to a place of paradise called Valhalla.”

“I see… Then, Sir Neith’s name?” This chapter was copied from NovelPing without permission.

“A god of war in a different culture.”

“Are there others?”

Daniel chuckles. “Many. Earth has a wealth of deities and mythological figures. If you would lean towards the Valkyries, I could think of something.”

Blue bows his head. “Please do, your Grace.”

Daniel nods. “Alright. Ready?”

They both stand proud, exposing the tops of their chests where the contract brand is marked on their skin. Daniel places his hands on each one

respectively, and the two golems, Xyreko and Balamae, step forward to begin casting.

Thankfully, the contract removal goes smoothly for Rose and Blue, and Daniel has them kneel. He draws Nemaisol again, and her voice says only to him, "*{This is an interesting custom, Daniel. Did you do this on Earth?}*"

He replies only in his thoughts; *I wish. It's a knighting ceremony in ancient Earth history. It's formally done by a king, usually.*

"*{I see. Have Ryukana give her blessing to the knighting, later, and it should give them greater protection.}*"

I'll ask her. Respectfully, of course.

"{Of course.}"

Daniel performs the knighting ceremony for Rose first. He gently places the sword tip close to her shoulder, and he notices a static trickle of energy float her soft, deep pink hair. He winces, but it doesn't seem to harm her or her hair. "From this day forth, I dub thee, Dame Roeta, Fourth Valkyrie of the Fievegal and Einherjar to the Dragon Empresses. As lord of the Fievegal, I grant you permission to take a family name."

He notices the newly dubbed Roeta blush, and she squeezes her hands closed gently, clearly excited.

He then moves the sword to each of Blue's shoulders. "And, as for you, fearless blue dragon; I dub thee Sir Magnir, mmm… Let's go with fearless Jomsviking of the Fievegal, and a most trusted warrior of the Emperor and his Empresses. You may also take a family name, Sir Magnir."

Blue -now known as Magnir- shivers.

Daniel chuckles, saying softly, “Sorry I’m jumbling things together. I’m just having fun with it, but with these titles, I truly hope you will live up to their legendary meaning. I’ll explain it in detail whenever you wish. I’m not fully an expert, but I downloaded the information pages to my phone for writing research.” Daniel resumes his officious tone as Roeta and Magnir look up at him with bright, ambitious eyes. “Now rise, my Einherjars! And may the Fievegal outlast the mountains!”

Both of them spring to their feet, proudly proclaiming, “YES, MY EMPEROR!”

“Long live the Emperor!” calls out Aramellianna, surprising everyone briefly, but with the exception of Heralesse and Erimaya, everyone else cheers, “Long live the Emperor!”

Daniel can’t help but chuckle. While he did his best to end his speech with an inspiring line, it definitely sends embarrassed tingles through his body being answered so passionately by his beloved family and friends.

Hekate steps forward, petitioning Daniel’s attention. “Daniel. Daniel. I want that to be our motto.”

“Our…? Oh! For the Fievegal?”

She nods. “Yes. ‘Outlast the Mountains.’ This is my imperial decree as Empress. The Fievegal *will* outlast the mountains.”

Daniel bows his head with a warm smile. “Very well. Perhaps we can make a coat of arms as well.”

“A what?”

This piques everyone’s interest anew, and Daniel chuckles. “It’s going to be a long week, isn’t it?”

***

A messenger bursts into Rikuto's office. "Your Majesty!"

"What is it!?" exclaims Rikuto, startled into a standing position. Clearly, the message is urgent, and the guards are equally concerned.

"It's the Queen! She has gone missing!"

"Heralesse!? Where is she!?"

"No one knows. She was last seen riding with a contingent of knights to the south, but no one has seen or heard from her contingent since."

"What? That's… What was she doing?" *Why didn't she tell me?* Rikuto's mind begins to race as he runs down possible causes. In a best case scenario, Daniel and his inner circle were properly eliminated when Fort Twilight fell, and only the remaining deputy governor of the Fievegal would remain to try to rally some kind of retaliation. Such a retaliation should still be in the beginning stages of even being formulated, even with the Fievegal's unprecedented magical prowess and Daniel's technology. So far as Rikuto knows, he hasn't created radios yet, which absolutely could shift the tide of the war on the ability to communicate intelligence and coordinate massive strikes in seconds.

Worst case scenario, though, Daniel himself has survived, in which case, the retaliation is coming more quickly.

But, the south? That would put the gulf between Heralesse and the Fievegal in the shortest route, and we would have word of an invasion coming from the west. What would she be after? The Grand Duchess? The Stalvaltan Grand Duchy is to the south, after all. But, why? Aramellianna hasn't been

responding to my many summons, and it's clear she is almost certainly plotting something behind my back. Is Heralesse in on it?

He ponders this, saying, "Thank you. Send a scouting detachment to search for signs of her at once." *She should have told me where she was going and what she was doing. I can't keep juggling all of these problems.*

The messenger bows and confirms, "As you wish, your Majesty! I'll go at once!"

He jogs back out, and the guards watch the otherworlder king for any instructions. "One of you, find Tulaxxas and have him meet me here."

"At once, my king!" One of the guards jogs away after a brief bow, and the last one, resumes his post to guard the door.

Rikuto collapses back into his office chair. It's a terrible position to keep finding himself in. Just a few months ago, everything was going smoothly. And then, Erimaya revealed a terrible super-weapon that Daniel made, and then she disappeared. Now, Heralesse is missing, the Grand Duchess is conspiring against him, and he still hasn't heard back about the missing squads that were staying at Fort Twilight to confirm the Fievegal's disorientation from the loss of Fort Twilight.

It leaves him deep in thought and torn up inside as he tries to determine what he should do. Anything to regain control of the situation.

Tulaxxas arrives, knocking and entering. "Your Majesty, King Rikuto. You summoned me?"

"Yes. Begin drafting requisitions for troops from the regional lords. We need to begin sending scouts towards the Citadel to find out what is going on. We also

need to investigate Fort Twilight with a heavier vanguard, as I fear the most recent scouts have been lost."

"It has only been a week, your Majesty. Thorough results would be unlikely from…"

"I don't care. Begin sending out the requisitions. Make note of any houses that refuse to answer the call. That includes the Grand Duchy."

"My King?"

Rikuto gives him a cold gaze. One that is done with everything. No more nonsense. No more insubordination. He is taking complete control once and for all.

"Any houses that refuse to aid the kingdom in this time of war are traitors and will be dealt with accordingly."

Tulaxxas nods, understanding his orders. He asks respectfully, "Anything else, your Majesty?"

"Position the void artilleries with one to the west, and the other to the south. And, where is Count Baumalde on the next units?"

"I believe construction is underway, but my information may be out of date. I shall get more recent information for you, your Majesty."

"Do it. I will not continue to keep my head down to ask for anyone's permission to protect this kingdom. I am the king of Mornistae now." *Whether that woman likes it or not.*

"You are the king, your Majesty," replies the prime minister with a respectful bow. He exits the room to carry out his most recent orders.

Meanwhile, Rikuto has to find a way to contact anyone who would be able to enter the Grand Duchy and retrieve additional enhanced magic crystals.

Or better yet, the machine Daniel built to make them.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 109: Reply From Mattarglos

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 109: Reply From Mattarglos

Gwenesphia and Treia both jog down the hallways of the Citadel. Gwenesphia, not as hesitant as Treia to ask for help, calls out seemingly to the Citadel itself, “Xyreko? Are you there?”

The golem appears in a flash of light ahead of them. They slow to a stop to meet with Xyreko. “Yes, your Grace.”

Gwenesphia chuckles. “You don’t have to go that far for me.”

“Me either,” adds Treia.

“On the contrary. You have been tasked with corresponding with Mattarglos for the purpose of negotiating treaties and trade deals with them, yes?”

“Y-yes,” replies Gwenesphia.

“And, Daniel himself stated that you are both the rank of Empress for this task. Thus, you are Empresses of the Citadel, even if you are each one of many.”

They both chuckle uneasily, sighing at the end. Gwenesphia does her best to move past that part. “Anyway, we got a reply! It just arrived by messenger! We’re looking for Daniel.”

“And the others, if they want to be present.”

Xyreko nods. “Daniel is spending time with the Princesses in the rooftop garden. I will transport you.”

“Please do, thank you.”

Xyreko waves her hand, and the three of them disappear in a magic glow, suddenly appearing outside on the rooftop of the Citadel, where a growing garden is being planted by Daniel and Geirahoel, mostly. It’s already doing well, thanks to Geirahoel’s experience.

And, it’s easy enough to find Daniel and the two goblin princesses, Jieka and Tekten, thanks in part to the girls’ cries of playfulness as they wrestle with Daniel and try to adorn him in flowers. But, the other easy giveaway is the pair consisting of orange and blue dragons in human form lurking nearby behind one of the long planters, watching enviously as they await the hatching of their own offspring in the eggs in strollers nearby them; a new thing Daniel proposed the manufacturing teams make for escorting children around -including eggs-.

Jieka is high energy, climbing all over Daniel to try to put flowers in his hair as he playfully grapples her and puts her back down, only for her to try to climb on him again, laughing all the while. Tekten, in contrast, seems to be having more fun picking flowers from the grass floor area that complements the planters. She stumbly-runs to a flower, picks it, and returns to Daniel, laying them in his lap, and he is mindful to ruffle her hair and scoop her into hugs and kisses when Jieka has to get more flowers for herself.

“I almost don’t want to interrupt…” murmurs Gwenesphia.

“Yeah…” replies Treia tenderly. “But, you only had older siblings. Allow me to teach you something, Gwen.” Treia jogs into the fray, saying energetically, “Jieka! Tekten! I'll hold him down! Get him!” The gatonine soldier wraps her

arms and legs around him from behind, using her weight to flatten him out on the ground as she leans back, hugging him to the ground as he laughs. Jieka exclaims, “Tweia! Hyah! Get Papa!” The small goblin princess scrambles up Daniel’s body once more as he laughs. He exclaims, “Nooo! I’ve been betrayed!”

“Papa betwayed!” exclaims the princess playfully. She manages to plop down onto his neck and leans across his face to plant picked flowers in his hair, not all of which are free of the roots and dirt. He squints to avoid dirt in his eyes, and he laughs, relaxing as he is defeated. Once she’s satisfied, she holds Daniel’s cheeks with her hands, staring into his eyes with a big grin.

Meanwhile, he feels a kiss on his right cheek where Tekten is gently holding a bundle of flowers. “You got me, Princesses. I admit defeat.”

“Yayyy!” cheers Jieka, and Tekten happily sways with her flowers, blushing bashfully. Daniel uses his arms to hug them both, petting their heads in the same motion. They both giggle happily.

Treia lets him sit up, and he holds the two princesses in his lap as she sits up next to him. Gwenesphia approaches as well, which prompts Geirahoel and Reignleif to approach as well, as if they also just arrived.

Daniel smirks at the dragons first. “Enjoy the show, ladies?”

Geirahoel blushes as she stammers, while Reignleif keeps a masterful stoic expression. “What do you mean?” asks the blue dragon.

“You realize your tails and horns reflect the sun really easily right?” He points at Geirahoel. “Hers was swaying back and forth.”

“W-W-Was not!” snaps the orange dragon. Even now, her tail twitches and sways a little in tune with her emotions.

“Right. What brings you all here?”

Reignleif admits bluntly, “We were envious, Mukori. But, we did not want to disrupt.”

This time Geirahoel remains silent, nodding in agreement. Daniel smiles softly. “You should have come to play. I’m sure the girls don’t mind.”

The two goblin princesses look around at whoever is speaking, smiling and cuddling with Daniel as they catch their breath together. The two dragons, smile, and Reignleif murmurs, “M-Maybe next time.”

Daniel nods in agreement, and he then looks at Treia and Gwenesphia in turn, and former lieutenant replies, “We received a reply from Mattarglos. Apparently, one of their representatives was at the Imperial audience, and they acknowledge your victories in battle.”

“My victories?” asks Daniel, surprised.

“Yes. We obviously listed your achievements before becoming Emperor, and that, under yours and Hekate’s command, the Fievegal held off two major offensives, which are all easy enough to confirm.”

“It’s funny because we didn’t even have to embellish,” jokes Treia. “It strains believability as it is.”

Daniel chuckles. “Ain’t that the truth. What was the reply?”

“As you might recall, Mattarglos is primarily a warrior nation, since resources are strained to some degree, and monsters are abundant. Strength is more

valuable than pedigree, since spoiled noble children have failed Mattarglos too many times in the past."

Gwenesphia adds, "Ullsten, the Domain Lord overseeing our hometowns, as well as Kalegrynten, the Grand Premier of all of Mattarglos would rather a dragonslayer be their ally than their enemy. N-No offense, Geirahoel and Reignleif."

The two dragons smile. "Mukori is indeed a dragonslayer. A cruel, cruel dragonslayer," teases Reignleif. Geirahoel nods in agreement.

Daniel gives the princesses each a bottle when they become a little fussy, and they drink them as they idly listen to a conversation they have no context for. "So, that's it? They're willing to ally with us in spite of everything?"

The two gatonines hand over the message for Daniel to read, and Treia answers, "From the sounds of it, the Grand Premier would like to face you in a duel before making a solid stance on an alliance. But, the invasion into Mornistae is a matter that Mattarglos intends to stay out of, since the inciting attacks were instigated by both the Empire and Mornistae."

Daniel scoffs. "Fair enough…" As she said, the letter is surprisingly more down-to-earth than Daniel expected. In fact, he can almost hear the voice behind the letter from the Grand Premier, sounding like a boisterous musclehead character who'd rather have a nice sparring match than a cup of tea. "So, if we avoid any aggressive actions towards Mattarglos affairs, they'll stay out of ours. Neutrality is respectable in my book. Did you mention your desire to be in proper contact with your families?"

"N-No…" admits Gwenesphia. "We were worried that, if they were going to be hostile, they would hold our families hostage. I… didn't introduce myself with

my old family name, nor my hometown."

"Same," replies Treia. "Deep enough investigations might find out the truth, though. Not many gatonines go on a one way expedition into demon territory. I don't think Commander Leiwelles sold us out, but she won't lie for us, either."

"I don't stand a chance in hell in a duel, do I?" asks Daniel jokingly.

The others chuckle. While it's true he could easily defeat his opponent with firearms or his other combat equipment, in a straight fight of honor, he's not very skilled.

"You could name a proxy,... probably…" replies Gwenesphia, unsure of her own answer.

"No, I'll do it." He smiles softly, like he's a little distant. "I hope you won't fall out of love with me if I lose."

"Let them," retorts Geirahoel bluntly and mercilessly as she crosses her arms and looks away. "I, for one, think you could use a defeat or two,… Mukori." She glances at him with rosy cheeks. She adds just before anyone else decides to speak, "I'm saying I have no interest in changing my mind! Stop making me say embarrassing things!" She huffs and looks away.

Daniel chuckles softly. "Thank you, Geira-Mukori… That means a lot."

"I-I feel the same," adds Reignleif. When Daniel looks at her, she adds with a blush as she hides her face behind her mantle, "Th-The part about not leaving, that is."

Treia sighs. "It's obviously too late to say that I'd gladly keep you all to myself, so I'd welcome less competition."

Gwenesphia retorts last, “You’ve made some hefty promises to me, Daniel. I intend to make you keep them.” She then turns serious again, “If you do win, the Grand Premier will likely grant you a title and tax-exempt status in Mattarglos. Oh, and if you were to solve the monster problem, it’d also be a great help. They wouldn’t be able to refuse you anything if you could do that.”

“The monster problem? What can you tell me about it?”

“I don’t know much. I just know my parents were always rallying troops with the Domain Lord to fend off monster attacks, but their numbers never seem to decrease.”

“We’re just talking about big animals, right? Can’t you just interfere with their breeding populations?”

Reignleif answers this time, “Monsters are not the same as most of the creatures you’ve encountered until now, Mukori. They are fundamentally different because they don’t require sustenance, and they generally only kill to kill. They also can use magic.”

“The thorusk hakkadel was a monster,” answers Doephluev as she approaches. If he hasn't tasked her otherwise, she's usually close by, almost to the point of stalking him. “Monsters are believed to almost exclusively mutate from normal animals due to a sort of mana poisoning. I’ve never heard of the cause, but some monsters become unrecognizable from their original form.”

Reignleif nods in agreement. “She’s right.”

“Mattarglos has a lot of caverns and forests where the monsters reside, and they’ll emerge to attack settlements occasionally,” explains Treia. “In fact, all adults of Mattarglos are required to serve in the Internal Defense Force, exempted only by Imperial Military service.”

“If you do both, though, the pay is better,” replies Gwenesphia. “And, it just so happens…”

Daniel guesses the former lieutenant’s next point; “Fort Peony counts because it’s technically on the border of Mattarglos and the Demon Wildlands.”

She grins, nodding. “Yes!”

Her excitement prompts Jieka to stop drinking from her bottle long enough to exclaim, “Yay!”

Daniel chuckles and pets her head, and she leans against his abdomen happily. “I’ll accept the duel, but warn the Grand Premier not to expect too much.”

Gwenesphia nods. “Thank you, Daniel. I… appreciate that you’re doing this so we can reunite with our families without issues.”

“Same,” adds Treia. “And… if need be… to protect them.”

“Of course. Getting my butt kicked in a friendly duel is a small price to pay for the happiness of my family and friends.” He quickly flinches, adding, “Wait, to make sure, this isn’t a fight to the death, is it?”

The two gatonine women both chuckle, and Gwenesphia replies warmly, “Of course not. It will be a hand-to-hand fight. If they try to demand a fight to the death, you are welcome to decline.”

Treia counters, “We don’t have the luxury of sacrificing warriors to death matches. That’s why duels are always knockout or surrender.”

Daniel relaxes. “Good. Then, while the army is securing footholds in Mornistae, we’ll meet with Grand Premier Kalegrynten, throw some friendly fisticuffs, and then offer to clean up the monsters.” Daniel looks at Doephluev and then

Reignleif, asking either of them, “Is it possible to remove the source of monsters?” He notices Geirahoel murmur, “‘Fisti…cuffs’?”

Reignleif replies, “Theoretically, yes. The mana poisoning is due to some sort of change, and monster populations tend to be concentrated to certain regions, spreading from there.”

Daniel looks to Doephluev, who adds, “I agree. I’ve never heard of anyone identifying the cause, but the concentration of monsters to certain locales suggests something has to be the common cause, My Emperor.”

Daniel ponders it. “Well, sounds like we’ll have to use our combined genius to learn what the common factor is, then. And, if we can destroy or remove it, then we should be able to prevent it. And, if all else fails, we have the answer right here.” Daniel points with his thumb at Doephluev.

She squeaks, “M-Me, my love? I-I mean, my Emperor?”

The other women scowl at her, and she tenses a little, though she can’t hide the self-affirming smile that creeps onto her lips.

“Nah. I meant that.” He more specifically emphasizes that he’s pointing at her chest, where the locking buckle of a special harness is; and on the rear of that harness is a small piece of plutonium.

Geirahoel perks up, blurting out, “The urmalium! Because it negates magic!”

Daniel chuckles. “Close enough, Mukori. Nice job.”

She blushes, averting her eyes. “O-Of course I’m right. I pay attention.”

Daniel decides not to correct her right now, since she's proud of herself and looks adorable.

Of course, Reignleif also pays attention. “I believe it's called Uranium, Geira. Though, Doephluev’s harness uses plutonium.”

Geirahoel flinches, glaring with feelings of betrayal at her azure senior.

Daniel redirects to the actual point so Geirahoel doesn't need to get further embarrassed by any reaction she is about to make. “It won't be the bombs, of course, but the radioactive materials themselves. So long as they aren't the cause, due to radiation, we'll use them to block areas where monsters are coming from.”

Doephluev, Reignleif, and Treia all nod in immediate understanding, while Tekten nods because they are, as if she's paying attention and understanding. Gwenesphia doesn’t seem to be thinking too hard about it, and Geirahoel seems to be trying to figure out what she’s not understanding. Daniel adds gently, “We’ll make some kind of device to make safe zones that neutralize the monster-making areas. It’s a little brute-force, but if it’s necessary, we’ll do our best to make sure it’s safe for residents in the area.”

Gwenesphia takes Daniel’s hand gently. “Thank you… Truth be told,… my eldest brothers are constantly leading our family’s militia against monster attacks, so… It would truly be a blessing if we can solve the issue for all of Mattarglos.”

“If we’re talking all of Mattarglos, we’d need permission to send a great deal of soldiers into their territory to be able to search for the sources. Especially during the investigation phase. But, we can discuss that with the Grand Premier when I go there.”

He looks at his companions around him, as well as the princesses. Unlike the established city around the castle of the royal capital of Mornistae, there isn’t

much to do other than what Daniel has Xyreko and the golems help him build. The villages around the Citadel are simple and have very few amenities, but everyone seems content enough with whatever he does for them. And, of course, if he makes the decision he's about to make, it doesn't just stop at the one most affected.

"Doephluev, if you're going to be accompanying me to formal meetings, we'll need to get you some proper clothes." She twitches and looks at him, failing to hide her surprise.

Just before the glares that are aimed at him can turn into fiery words, Daniel adds, "*And,* we'll design new outfits for everyone that wants one, alright? Give me a little credit." He adds a little under his breath, "Though, the rest of you can ask at any time."

Reignleif murmurs a little sourly, "You've been favoring her a lot recently, Mukori."

Daniel sighs, and he looks down when Jieka grips his shirt, nervous about his shift in tone. Tekten is also looking up at him with concern. Daniel puts on a smile and pets their cheeks.

"I've been compensating for my behavior. Holding grudges isn't as easy for me as it is for others. I don't want anyone to remain our enemies. As for her following me, she does that on her own. I simply don't stop her."

Reignleif and Geirahoel take a breath and sigh. The blue dragon looks at her orange counterpart, and she asks, "Are you thinking what I'm thinking, Geira?"

"Almost certainly, Reina." Geirahoel growls at Daniel, "The Emperor should never be without his Empresses."

Daniel snorts softly. “So, can I design something nicer for Doephluev to start with?”

Geirahoel glares at him. “You have to make it ugly.”

“I’m not making it ugly.”

She exhales in exasperation.

“Then, make it so you can restrain yourself.”

Daniel puts his hand on her cheek. “Let me handle it. And, if you do, I’ll make yours even better.”

This causes her to twitch, and she blushes. “Th-The best. Y-Your favorite.”

Daniel hesitates for a moment. “We have two options, Mukori. I play the Hekate game, or we hold a drawing. I’ll let you choose.” This chapter was copied from novelping.com without permission.

She pouts. But, she suddenly perks up. She says with a smile, “You should make your favorite design for the servant. After all, I have no reason to doubt your tastes, Mukori.” Geirahoel climbs to her feet, saying as if she’s imitating Ryuogriar, “If you’ll all excuse me, I have to interview for acolytes.”

Reignleif rises to join her. “Yes, I will go as well, Mukori. I am interested to see the final result.” She leans down to kiss Daniel’s cheek. She also pets the princesses gently. “See you later, Princess Jieka, Princess Tekten.”

“Bye bye!” cheers Jieka.

“Bye bye, Aunt Weina,” adds Tekten.

Daniel can hear Reignleif murmur, “Be good big sisters for me, please, sweet princesses…” She smiles at Daniel and follows after Geirahoel, who is a little envious that her senior stole a kiss on Daniel, but too bashful to return and do so herself.

Daniel jokes to Treia and Gwenesphia, “I guess I should pick something that looks good in groups, huh?”

“My love,” cuts in Doephluev. “I-I mean, Master… I am content with this outfit. It… is efficient after all.”

Treia and Gwenesphia glare at her. “Yes, Daniel,” replies Gwenesphia “Pick something that is comfortable and beautiful for gatonines as well.” She looks at him with a smile, “I’m sure I’ll be wearing this style quite often.”

Daniel sighs, grumbling playfully, “What did I get myself into in this world…?”

Jieka offers her bottle to Daniel. “Milk, Papa?”

“Thank you, my dear Jieka.”

She giggles happily, and Daniel, Treia, and Gwenesphia spend a little more time with the two half-goblin princesses before he heads to the tailor shop in the castle town, which is a new concept for demon-kin, but there are those who practice regularly to match what Daniel has briefly described.

***

“Neith, Roeta, Magnir… Sorry, Sir Neith, Dame Roeta, and Sir Magnir;” Hekate’s voice calls out as she approaches the three planning in the control room.

They all straighten and salute the young feldrok Empress as she enters with Ryuogriar. “Your Greatness, Your Grace. A pleasure to see you.”

Hekate nods. “Thank you. You, too.” She inspects the map they’re studying, which mostly focuses on Mornistae, it seems. “You’re planning to join the invasion?”

Neith -formerly known as Choul- nods. “Yes, your Greatness. We know what we’re up against now. Many of us detected the spell before it was fully cast, and to my great shame, we did not react in time.”

“You did not know what you were up against. And, from what we have gleaned from Queen Heralesse and Lady Ahok, Rikuto launched his attack specifically because we made it seem like we were present at Fort Twilight. He seems to have gotten information about the meeting with Empress Sundenelle, and when we -our illusions- returned to Fort Twilight.”

“So… the attack was an attempt to assassinate Emperor Daniel and you Empresses?” asks Magnir.

“Almost certainly,” replies Hekate. “Which is why, I would rather the three of you stay with us.”

Neith cocks his head. “Pardon, your Greatness?”

“I want you to remain guarding us. Specifically, Daniel. I know he made you General, Neith, but I would rather have you defending him. In addition to us and the others.” She fidgets with her hands. “Daniel… is very strong when he has the element of surprise. But… his advantage quickly deteriorates if he’s alone and the enemy survives. You can detect mana and defend with magic. Something Daniel won’t be able to do any time soon.”

Neith watches her for a moment. He then looks to Ryuogriar, and the eldest of the dragon empresses nods once. “I agree with Hekate. Our greatest strength should be concentrated in times of doubt. Rikuto’s weapon wasn’t present when we retrieved you, so there’s no telling where it will appear next. Though, Daniel believes that Rikuto will pull the weapon back to defend Mornistae in case he missed any of us. That is, if he missed any of the dragons or Hekate.”

“I understand, your Grace. Then… if you would… Do not request.” He looks at Hekate. “Order us. His Grace has made it very clear that Your Greatness is the true ruler of the Fievegal, your Greatness. If it is your order, we must obey.”

Hekate smiles. “And,… you’re all fine with listening to a puny little girl?”

Roeta and Magnir smile, as does Neith. Roeta kneels, saying gently, “Your Greatness, I have received a second chance at life thanks to you and his Grace. I will request leave of absence when I am ready to lay my second egg, which should be in the next couple months, but…” She smiles happily up at Hekate. “Until then, I will proudly serve.”

Magnir kneels next to her. “Give us your command, your Greatness. Emperor Daniel is our Liege Lord, but you are our great ruler by his own decree. And, if I may be so bold, I agree with your request wholeheartedly. The Emperor should take more care of himself.” The male blue dragon adds with a dry expression, “It would be shameful for those of us he defeated were he to die to some trivial beast or meager ailment.”

“So be it,” adds Hekate in an agreeing tone. “Then, noble Einherjars and Valkyrie of the Fievegal, I, Empress Hekate fell Lawson, order you to use your best judgment to protect Daniel most specifically, but the rest of us as well. Oh, and the princes and princesses. And I guess…”

“Focus on guarding Mu-Daniel, Neith. Magnir and Roeta, you’ll stay on alert for any abnormalities around the Citadel. You can’t cover everyone, so focus on the children, and come to our aid if we fall under attack. Do you understand these orders?”

“Yes, your Grace, your Greatness,” reply all three knighted dragons.

“Good. Then, carry on.” Hekate starts to walk out, and Neith asks, “Your Greatness, if I may…”

“Sure, go ahead.”

“I’m surprised to find you not at his Grace’s side.”

“I’m not a clingy child, Neith. I have my own grown up things to do while Daniel is busy. I’m the Empress after all.”

Ryuogriar hugs Hekate possessively from behind. “That’s right. Hekate is all grown up, my sweet child. She is running the Fievegal and making as many decisions as she can on its operations without anyone’s help.”

Hekate squirms against the dragon’s embrace, whining, “I won’t be so easily fooled, Ryuo! Stop… clinging to me!”

“Shhh, you can relax and enjoy yourself, Hekate. You have worked hard. I’ll ensure Daniel praises you too.”

Neith, Magnir, and Roeta can’t help but chuckle. While they have been giving each other titles, Daniel and his Empresses certainly don’t act the part most of the time. It’s not so subtly to mock the royalty of other territories, since, as Daniel puts it, all Empires and Kingdoms can trace their deepest roots back to upstart commoners and wealthy nouveau riche -commoners who earn

themselves enough wealth, assets, and authority to be considered nobles until a formal title is bestowed upon them-.

“We’re also working on a magic device so Daniel can teleport himself,” throws in Hekate. “Or… Well, Wenlianna and Ahok are working on it. And, Doephluev is helping them some.”

“Would you like me to take a look, your Greatness?” asks the grey dragon. “I’m not much of a magic artisan, of course, but I have encountered magic not seen on this continent. If my help can make the process easier, I would be honored.”

Hekate agrees easily. “Please do. Daniel is on house arrest while the invasion prods Rikuto for a response. Though, of course, we've only just established a foothold and controlled messages that Rikuto is receiving. We're operating cautiously, but we're fairly sure Rikuto doesn't even know he's under invasion yet. A large scale one way transporter to the Grand Duchy is already underway.” Hekate puts her fists on her hips, ignoring the diminishing effect of a motherly dragon all but hanging off of her shoulders.

Roeta asks, “How are we certain that the enemy leaders don't know about the invasion yet, your Greatness?”

Ryuogriar answers, “We have several golems in stealth in the castle of Mornistae. But, Heralesse has been captured from the Grand Duchy. It's only a matter of time until scouts and messengers become a vanguard.”

“Understood, your Grace. Thank you for the answer.”

“Of course. We’re all allies. Though, of course, only Roeta could possibly become an Empress Consort.”

Hekate glares at Ryuogriar, and Roeta blushes. “I-I am happy with Magnir, your Grace. I mean no offense to his Grace, but I would prefer to keep our family as it is.”

“I’m sure his Grace would understand,” replies Ryuogriar facetiously, winking at Magnir, who was worried only for a moment. Hekate bursts in, “Daniel doesn’t need any more mistresses! I’m really putting my foot down now!”

“But, Sweetpea, think of how much bigger Mukori’s family could grow. How…”

“Blagrah! Don’t call me ‘Sweetpea’! Only Daniel can call me that! It’s his special nickname just for me!”

Ryuogriar simply smiles, petting Hekate’s head and parrying Hekate’s attempts to block and bat her arms away as if to ignore the strength of a child. “My dear, sweet Hekate. I suppose we’ll leave it at that, for now.” She grins deviously, causing Hekate to fume impotently.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 110: The Mechanic and the Scratched

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 110: The Mechanic and the Scratched

Daniel carries his luggage to the shuttle that he's preparing for the trip to Mattarglos. He has permission from the Fievegal inner circle to leave his house arrest, though he'll obviously be escorted by most of his new friends, including Neith, his primary male friend on Zenkon.

The shuttles aren't the most comfortable form of travel, but they're fast and effective, requiring little space to take off and land, and able to close a great distance faster than riding on a dragon.

Thymeria, Illianna, Shek, Skloe, and the children will be remaining at the Citadel, while the four Empresses, Gwenesphia, Treia, Kera'tai, Aoloan, Doephluev, and Vaergraes will be accompanying Daniel to witness his duel and establish friendly relations with Mattarglos, if possible.

Just as Daniel is turning to pick up the next crate, he halts.

Grand Duchess Aramellianna is entering the hangar with her usual guards, though her daughters appear to be elsewhere. She walks with a grace that Daniel could never hope to complement, let alone match. She carries her head high, no matter where she is going or what she is doing.

She approaches Daniel without any hint of having other business, and he hesitates, straightening to receive her. "Grand Duchess."

“Your Grace.” The guards with her bow respectfully to Daniel… in spite of his many protests.

Daniel simply sighs quietly. “Anything I can help you with, Mother?”

“In fact you can, dear Daniel.” She passes him, inspecting the shuttle for a moment. “You are heading to the territory of Mattarglos, are you not?”

“I am. Myself and a handful of others.”

“I see.” She peeks in the back of the shuttle, where the seats are much like the coach seats of an airline. “It seems quite crowded in these shuttles of yours.”

“It serves the purpose,” replies Daniel respectfully, watching as she studies the seating.

“This won’t do at all. We’ll take my airship. It is much more spacious.”

“‘We’, Mother?”

She smiles at him and nods. “Of course. Did you think I would miss out on an important diplomatic trip to Mattarglos?” She muses, “I hear the confections of Mattarglos are uniquely flavored, thanks to the honey produced by a species of insect found only in Mattarglos. I’m looking forward to trying it.”

“If that’s the case, Mother, we should try brewing with this honey. A whiskey I liked on Earth used honey as a flavoring, and it was quite good.”

She smirks. She’s not a heavy alcohol drinker since he introduced her, but she does have the occasional wine with dinner, and she has tried Daniel’s rum. “Interesting… Then, we have a mutual reason for going.”

“Actually, Mother, I have a reason for going. Yours… doesn’t seem like a good idea.”

Her expression dims to that of slight disgust, as if he insulted her by countering her. “Hmm? And, you would go to this place with your entire harem, which includes my eldest daughter?”

Daniel twitches, stammering a little. “I… well… you see…”

“I know you wield a great deal of influence because you make decisions swiftly and with confidence. Admirable, of course. My late husband was the same way. But…” She grins at him wickedly. “The real power lies in those you wish to make happy. Those whose opinions you will always consider, unless your own decision is resolute. I expect you will have a great deal of trouble refusing me, my dear, sweet son.”

Daniel sighs. She’s not wrong. While he could put his foot down on the matter, Wenlianna is not the only one who will likely argue for Aramellianna’s presence on the trip, especially once she makes the extremely logical and simple argument that she has much more diplomatic experience than anyone in the Fievegal. Leaving her behind would almost be foolish more than wise.

Daniel asks without trying to sound suspicious, since he’s just curious, “Mother, I am fine with you going, though I can’t guarantee your safety as much as if you stay here…”

“I am well aware, my dear son.” She pets his cheek gently, which Daniel notices seems to be abnormal, from what he has seen. Aramellianna isn’t usually physically affectionate, though it’s meaningful when she is. He suspects she’s trying to make up for lost time with him, as much as to ensure he has

more and more loyalty to both the world of Zenkon, as well as the Stalvaltan family.

He adds, “May I ask why you wish to go? What you hope to gain? Word of your affiliation with us might…”

“You’re intending to either win over Mattarglos as allies or at least earn their neutrality. And, I am most confident that Rikuto already has some idea what’s going on, since I’ve been ignoring him for months now, except to sell him enhanced magic crystals. The stock of which will run out soon, since my territory has been captured.” She smiles deviously at Daniel. She’s awfully cavalier with the fact that she’s now a traitor, never hesitating to tease Daniel that her entire legacy and family are in his hands now.

No pressure.

The Grand Duchess adds seriously, “I think you know me well enough now, Daniel. What you might not know is that, while Mattarglos is an ally to the Empire, they are insular as a nation. I hope to expand the Grand Duchy’s influence into the territories of Mattarglos, and increase the wealth of the Stalvaltan family.” She looks out the hangar bay doors at the horizon, hazily obscured by the humidity in the sky. “I suspect I’ve never talked to you about my family. I don’t talk about them much to my own daughters. No reason other than I just typically keep my own self reserved.” She is quiet for a moment, and Daniel waits patiently. “I am obviously a member of the Stalvaltan family now. They are my life, and even if Stalvaltan blood doesn’t run through my veins, I have dedicated my life to protecting the legacy of my beloved husband.” She smiles tenderly, looking rather unguarded compared to her normal self. “I was born a countess’s daughter, of the County of Phenglegorn. My grandfather was a skillful businessman, and he built our wealth and taught me many things. My parents… squandered that wealth and ruined the county shortly after I was

married.” She scoffs. “Maybe treachery runs in my blood…” She looks at Daniel. “I learned what I know from my grandfather. My parents destroyed it because they became greedy and foolish. They tried shorting taxes to the kingdom for years, and it finally caught up to them. I was spared ruination due to my marriage. And, I vowed to myself two things; I would never betray the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy, and I would seek out every opportunity I can to increase the Stalvaltan wealth or influence. That includes making contact with the untapped territories of Mattarglos. Especially if my newest and greatest ally to date finds worth in doing so.”

“You have to know if you already knew about the plan…”

“That the mission is largely personal for Lady Gwenesphia and Miss Treia? I am aware, you are correct. If I leave empty-handed, then it is no great loss. But, if I can find business opportunities that few others have been able to make use of, we stand to gain.”

Daniel nods. “I understand. Thank you for sharing, Mother.”

She smiles and cups his cheek once more. “You know I seek to use you, but you should also know that I deeply trust you, Daniel. I was not blessed with sons of my own, no matter how long my husband and I tried. I am thankful that you have allowed me this.”

“Your daughters are all wonderful, Mother.”

She immediately teases deviously, “Now now, Daniel. Indeed, only two of my daughters other than Wenlianna are claimed, but you can’t seriously expect me to give you my youngest two as well, can you?” She feigns deep thought as Daniel simply rolls his eyes. “Though… Three daughters married to the Emperor increases the chances of an heir of Stalvaltan blood…”

“I’m afraid I have my hands full, Mother. And, I’m happy for it. I won’t try to impose Earth customs on anyone here, but I would be happy to debate the differences with someone like you.”

She smiles. “I am certain I would like that.” She then turns more normally serious, asking, “Now then, when are we departing for Mattarglos? I shall have my staff begin preparing the airship at once.”

Daniel looks at the shuttle. He replies, a little dejected at his wasted effort, “I was planning to leave tomorrow afternoon. The shuttle can make it to Mattarglos in about two hours.”

This impresses Aramellianna, and she smiles. “I see. Your shuttles truly are quite interesting. I suppose speed is the trade off for comfort, yes?”

“Yes. And, efficiency. The magic crystals seem to hold charge long enough to make at least twenty trips of a similar distance, where I hear from Wenlianna the airship will need to haul crystals to be swapped out in flight.”

“Indeed, it is true. It is no small matter, but it pays to have a mansion in the sky.” She smiles, adding, “Very well, we will leave tomorrow morning. I believe the airship should still be able to arrive by the afternoon. Will this work for you?”

“Sure. Especially if I get to relax during the trip.”

“Indeed. And, why don’t you bring one of your shuttles as well. One that can fit all of us. We can depart the airship while the crew takes the time to land. This way, both speed and comfort are available to us upon arrival.”

“Sounds good. I’ll let Xyreko know.”

Just as she's about to depart, Daniel asks, "Mother, may I ask you one more thing?"

She turns and smiles. "Of course. Anything I can, I shall answer."

"Please take no offense, since I've only been curious, and I suspect I know the answer. I have no doubts in your love for the Grand Duke, may he rest in peace…" Daniel hesitates a little, beginning to doubt if he should finish his question.

"You're wondering if I ever considered remarriage for political reasons, or if I ever had a second love?"

Daniel nods. "Either. And, please forgive me if it is none of my business."

"Perhaps it is…" teases Aramellianna playfully. "Perhaps it has crossed your mind to court me as well, hmm?"

Before Daniel can answer, she waves her hand, giggling. "I know. I'm teasing you." She answers sincerely, "I have had many offers, obviously. Many suitors are always trying to curry favor. They even tried to marry me to the Grand Prince of the Empire, saying things about duty and responsibility. But, two things would happen in any of those cases. The Stalvaltan name would no longer belong to the Stalvaltan family, and a male heir could all but surely seize the name and assets. Especially if my daughters all marry out of the family."

"Couldn't you adopt the sons that marry your daughters to keep them as the heirs?"

"In a way, yes. But, in practice, this still means that my husband's legacy goes to someone who is likely more interested in their own legacy than that of the Stalvaltan family." She smiles softly. "Of course, it would be easy to say that I

could have done the same thing, but my family is no longer a threat, and I have been baptized in the love and strength of the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan. I would die to protect the Stalvaltan legacy… as well as the legacy of my Yaandrestar." She is clutching her chest, and tears start to glisten at the corners of the iron-willed matriarch's eyes.

Daniel reacts without thinking, and he embraces her in a hug. And, this time, it is the Grand Duchess of Stalvaltan who finally has herself a good cry.

After she has settled down, she sniffles, and Daniel provides her with a cloth to wipe her tears and nose with. "I would appreciate it *sniff* if you and I could keep this conversation to ourselves. You know how it is." She sniffles again. You are reading on novelping.com, the official source.

Daniel nods. "Of course, Mother. Take all the time you need to compose yourself."

"Thank you." She nods, taking some calming breaths. "I feel safe leaving the fate of the Grand Duchy and the Stalvaltan name in your hands, Daniel. Safer than anyone I've met thus far. You have no ambitions of greed or self-promotion. You have a strong sense of fairness and justice. And, some of the concepts of your world intrigue me, of which I hope we can discuss much further. And, perhaps, once the Grand Duchy is stable and secure once more, I'll consider using my remaining years before I go through the matronly change to try for an heir to the Phenglegorn name, and restore my birth family's legacy as well." She smiles, adding playfully, "Or, simply more Stalvaltan children, since I like the family and name much better."

Daniel chuckles. "Anything I can do for you, Mother, is at your disposal."

"Thank you. I'll take you up on that."

Daniel watches her leave and resumes loading the shuttle, since they'll be landing with it anyways. He hasn't inspected the airship much, other than from the outside, so he's curious just how much of her statement about it being a mansion in the sky is accurate.

Knowing her, it'll be a true statement.

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Rikuto looks out over the southern lands extending away from the castle and the capital city. He can't see even the border of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy from this distance, but he knows where it is. He's not sure what he's looking for, but obvious signs of treachery would be nice. He's not entirely sure how he'd handle the Stalvaltan Guard, but all Aramellianna has to do is resume cooperating, and bloodshed can be avoided.

And, if not, then the assets of the Grand Duchy will be forfeit.

He looks at the void artillery stationed on the castle walls aimed towards the south. It took a lot of effort to lift the two onto the round turrets of the castle defensive structure, but it will allow them to intercept dragons if need be, and they'll be able to rotate the artillery pieces to attempt to intercept wherever they might land to engage the defensive forces.

It's not perfect, but Rikuto doesn't have the knowledge to make firearms the way Daniel does. He understands some of the basic mechanisms, but even the mages are struggling to keep the barrels from splitting and the cannons from exploding, nevermind being able to make moveable cannons for defense.

And, then, to scale that down…

Rikuto slams his fist against the wall. *Damn! Why is he doing this? Daniel claimed he wanted to lay low and avoid causing trouble or changing the world too much. And instead, he's making Mornistae threaten to fracture into pieces. Not to mention the nukes.*

Rikuto looks at his pain-stricken hand, and he flexes it to make sure it's still alright. He uses healing magic to recover himself, feeling better at once.

No matter. I have magic, and he doesn't. And, I've learned a lot about how to use it since the last time we met. There's no way he can anticipate it, so if I can just get him close, I can stop him.

Rikuto's eyes track movement racing into the castle; a squadron of knights on the backs of buckrokhs. "Finally…" He makes his way out and through the castle to meet the knights. He is just exiting into the courtyard as the knights are dismounting. One of them reports to the Captain of the Knights, while another notices Rikuto approaching.

"All hail his Majesty!" The knights pivot and kneel together, and Rikuto calls out, "Rise, my knights. I'm more interested in the report right now."

"Yes, your Majesty." Everyone in the courtyard, including the knights, rise from their kneel.

"What do have for me?" asks Rikuto without nonsense.

"Yes." The leading knight of the squadron hands over a scroll. "This is a rough map with anomalies around Fort Twilight."

"The shape of the crater… has it been altered?"

"Yes, your Majesty. It appears that intense heat was used to alter the shape of the crater."

“I see… Intense heat you say.” *Definitely Daniel and his dragons. He clearly has them on a leash, and he’s using the alteration to the crater to make it obvious what happened. Or, so he thinks. His weapons and his dragons are an easy scapegoat for the appearance of the crater. My reports should be reaching the Empire any time now.*

“Any signs of the dragons or Daniel?”

“Nothing immediate, my King. We scoured the area, but there were no definite signs of the stay-behind team or the scouts sent to investigate before. We found blood and armor pieces, but as the expeditionary force reported during the firing of the void artillery, many enemies appeared with demon staves and demon wands, and many soldiers were hit. It’s unknown what became of the bodies.”

“I see.” *Demon staves and demon wands. It’s an understandable name to assign to such weapons, which hadn’t existed in this world until Daniel. Most of the wisest scholars still have no idea how they function, and assume it’s some sort of magic of this rumored ‘Feldrok Sorcerer’ or ‘The Harbinger of Calamity’.* Rikuto can’t help but scoff as he thinks of Daniel’s nicknames.

So, you’re a chuunibyo [Jap.: emo/edgelord], are you Daniel? Figures, with an American.

“Have we had any word from the team sent to the south?”

“None, sire,” replies the Captain. “Would you like the recon squadron to go?”

Rikuto thinks for a moment. In two different directions, when he sends scouts, they seem to be disappearing.

As much as I don't want it to be true, the most likely explanation is that Aramellianna is covering up her treachery. Or, even worse yet, an invasion from the sea.

"No. Begin calling in the First through Fifth battalions."

This shocks all of the knights present. "The army?" asks the Captain.

"Yes. I said no more half-measures, and I meant it. If we're not seeing a return of scouts, then something is wrong. We must secure the Grand Duchy to ensure no greater losses occur."

"If that is your command, your Majesty, so it shall be." The captain straightens and begins shouting out orders. "Let's go! Get the word out! Begin forming up the Royal Army at the southern perimeter of the city! Our enemy is powerful, and there is no time to lose!"

"Yes Captain! Your Majesty!" The knights bow briefly before jogging to their respective tasks.

The Captain stays behind to ask quietly, "Your Majesty, I understand that the demon-kin defending the Citadel have performed a seemingly impenetrable defensive battle, but offense is very different. Dragons have held back for a long time. It's possible their offensive might has been exaggerated to a degree, Sire."

"Hmm… I wonder…" Rikuto is mindful of the crater, and the large conical distortion drawn on the map. It's a sketch, but if the scale is even remotely close to the actual thing, the dragons were able to drastically alter the landscape with just their fire breath. And, he saw the reports about the damage done to Fort Peony when Daniel held off a dragon; it melted through the defensive wall with ease.

Mornistae's capital will be putting up a fight with a much larger army, but the offensive power of the dragons alone is nothing to underestimate. Not to mention Daniel's firearms, which he likely has the ability to scale already. If he were to simply put tank cannons on the backs of his dragons, flying tanks would be a near-literal possibility. Or, even flying fortresses.

Fortunately, there is one weapon even I am able of bringing against the dragons.

"Captain," calls out Rikuto.

"Yes, my King?"

"Begin staging the scorpions and missile launchers. And, order the advanced mage corps to assemble as well."

"Of course, your Majesty."

Rikuto looks at the warehouse he had built to experiment on what things he knew how to develop. The main focus was the void artillery, since it's the only thing they could build to counter Daniel's atomic weaponry. As for the 'missile' launchers, it's not what he would associate with the term from Earth, necessarily. It's more akin to the basic definition of 'missile', in the sense that it's a magic device that launches projectiles. In this case, the projectiles are specially rigged magic crystals with fire magic. In simple terms, they're explosive arrows using a standard magic crystal as the explosive warhead. With the right mages present, the bolts can be guided to some degree. The missile launchers require a larger crew, and the operators have to be fairly advanced in magic usage. With the scorpions, which are enhanced versions of what this world already uses, just a single operator is capable of launching a

spear-sized projectile at even airborne targets, though usually the scorpion teams consist of at least a loader and a firing operator.

Dragons are the most obvious enemy, but they're not the only enemy, and the alternative ammunition for the missile launchers will be a sort of MIRV-style warhead that breaks apart after firing, barraging an area with explosions.

What will you do, Daniel? It's clear you survived Fort Twilight, however you did it. But, you're not the only one from Earth here. I have my pride as a Japanese, as well as the university I went to. And there, I learned more about warfare than an untrained mechanic ever would.

Daniel knows how to be a versatile tinkerer, but all of his 'wisdom' is artificial. He only knows how to adapt his strange knowledge from Earth. He doesn't have what it takes to govern or to run an economy, or to adapt to the unknown when all of his tricks go up in smoke.

***

Sundenelle reads the letter she received most recently from the Citadel, sitting on the edge of her seat as the messenger who brought it, a young shenwulf woman, nervously waits patiently for further instructions. They went through the precautionary steps, just to be safe, so Sundenelle has the two halves of the letter sprawled on her desk, and her expression is ponderous to anyone but her Mother.

Byleathea, for her part, is sipping tea nearby as she awaits the Empress's response.

"*[Dear Empress Sundenelle kos Lindenmorg,*

I have received your messenger and understand your position. At this time, the Fievegal has no evidence linking the attack on Fort Twilight to the Empire, so in regards to the Empire, no additional changes of plan or moves will be made until further investigation is completed.

Likewise, the known culprits are being dealt with. I sincerely ask that you stay out of the way of our investigations and restitution. Many of our own fell to this ruthless attack, including one of our prized generals, so this has become a personal matter for us.

Mukori- Emperor Daniel is still awaiting a formal reply regarding the earlier matter discussed, though I personally will not blame you if you feel intimidated into refusing. This story is hosted at novelping.com.

Regardless, that is not the matter to be discussed now. In regards to Fort Twilight, it appears an incredibly dangerous magic weapon has been developed in the east, and this destruction was meant to showcase its power. I urge you to take caution when dealing with the owner of this weapon.

I send my best regards, Empress Sundenelle.

Sincerely yours,

Empress Ryuogriar gur Lawson,

Second Empress of the Citadel,

FIrst Dragon Empress

Proud Mother to the first of many dragon offspring to come.

P.S.- I included the part about me being a mother because I wish to boast. Mukori will not mind.

Fare thee well,

Until our next correspondence.]"

The message is admittedly simple and straightforward, but Sundenelle reads over it a couple of times to be sure she doesn't miss anything. One thing has caught her eye and has her thoughts churning. She hands the letter over to Byleathea, requesting, "Lady Byleathea, please read this and give me your thoughts."

"Of course, my Illustrious Empress." Byleathea sets her tea down and receives the letter, reading over it with a stoic expression as well

Meanwhile, Sundenelle thinks out loud. "One word stood out to me more than the others; 'Mukori'. This 'Ryuogriar' scratched it out the first time, but did not do so the second. Could it be some sort of code for someone? Perhaps a secret name belonging to Daniel?"

"I… can confirm that it is a name or title that was used about Daniel, your Imperial Majesty. The ones calling themselves 'Dragon Empresses' and carrying eggs around used the name often while I was delivering the message and awaiting a response, and it always seemed to exclusively refer to Daniel, though I can't say for certain."

Sundenelle nods as she absorbs the information. *If I didn't miss anything through that narrow illusion spell during the audience, there were three such women carrying eggs, implying three Dragon Empresses, if I have to take a guess. What could that term mean?*

"Who else received you? What sort of staff did he have? And, why was the reply not written by Daniel?"

“There were five women present, your Grace. No Daniel. But, Hekate was present and spoke a lot, though very little of the information seems useful.”

Yes, the little black-haired fox girl. She seems to have a talkative personality, but she doesn’t seem to be a complete fool. “Who else?”

“A fourth woman I presumed to be a dragon, but I took her more as a lady in waiting, rather than an Empress like the three that were at the audience. Her color was a rose-pink for starters, including pink hair, metallic pink horns, and a deep pink reptilian tail like the other three. If we’re assuming the three reptilian women are in fact dragons in disguise, I am confident this woman was as well. The name they gave was ‘Roeta, Einherjar of the Fievegal’. Your illustrious Grace.”

“Ayn… hair… yar?” repeats Sundenelle thoughtfully, not knowing the word.

“That is how she was introduced, your illustrious Majesty.”

“It must be something from Daniel’s world… The meaning could be anything, though.” She sighs. “No use speculating on Daniel’s language or choice of titles. Anything else you can tell me about the dragons?”

“They… were surprisingly polite, your Grace. Prideful, but not disrespectful.”

“I see…” She looks to Byleathea, who has finished reading the letter herself.

“From what we briefly witnessed at the audience, and this letter, I sense the same, your Grace.” Byleathea hands the letter back after giving her thoughts. “More concerning, from my perspective; it seems that Daniel and his… *ahem*… ladies already know who the culprit is with certainty, yet they did not explicitly name them.”

“My best guess is that it’s King Rikuto of Mornistae. He’s the only other otherworlder in our world at present, at least that we know of. And, this unprecedented power could only be the work of either Daniel or Rikuto.”

“As we discussed before, your Grace, we can not rule out other forces for certain. It was only last time that we speculated Daniel could have done it as a bad-faith self-attack.”

“Even if he wished to simply make the mountains virtually impassable to us, which is ironically one of the smartest decisions he could make, I believe he would have communicated that, rather than faking an assassination attempt.”

“But, how would Mornistae have learned of Daniel’s presence at Fort Twilight? It happened so shortly after, he would have had to have received word almost the the day after.”

Sundenelle sighs. “Don’t put it past intelligence networks.” She thinks as she looks at the two halves of parchment with the message on it. One of the dragons replied to the message, rather than Daniel. It’s just what Daniel would say as well, though, so it seems the dragons have the same interests as Daniel, but for some reason he was indisposed enough not to meet with the messenger.

“Alright. Let’s see if we can fish for more information.” She drafts a letter, offering to assist in the investigation, and sends it out with the messenger. She did her best to include subtle questions inquiring about Daniel, who the attacker might be, and if they intend to rebuild Fort Twilight, she will endeavor to get her own workers in on the project to acquire the methods and technology of an otherworlder.

Just as she's ready to leave for her next order of business, a different messenger comes in. This messenger has bandages on his head, and his left arm is in a sling. His clothing is slit in several places. He coughs, wearily making his report. “Your Majesty… Forgive my unsightly appearance. I have only narrowly returned…”

“Your mission?” asks the guard at the entrance.

“I am one of the messengers sent to the Citadel to make contact with the otherworlder Daniel. We… were attacked.”

“Attacked?” asks Byleathea, concern in her voice. “But, we just received…”

“Tell me more,” replies Sundenelle, cutting off her mother. Byleathea glances at her, shocked by the Empress’s apparent disinterest in the fact that another messenger was just present.

But, of course, Sundenelle is thinking the opposite.

“A group of us approached the Citadel, and no sooner did we meet with Daniel did he send his dragons upon us, your Grace. I narrowly escaped, and I rushed back here.”

“I see. You did well to make it this far.”

“Thank you, your Majesty.”

“If I may, your Imperial Majesty,” starts Byleathea.

Sundenelle looks directly into her mother’s eyes, giving her a serious gaze that causes Byleathea to flinch lightly. “This brave messenger is weary from his harrowing journey, Mother. I believe it will be better to get more details later

when he has had time to straighten his thoughts and recover." She looks at the messenger. "What is your name, brave messenger?"

"Gintor, your Grace."

"Gintor, go and rest, and make a more detailed report first thing tomorrow. You shall be rewarded."

"Thank you, your Imperial Majesty! You honor me!" The messenger bows and makes his way out crisply. The room is silent, shocked by Sundenelle's response. No sooner is he out of earshot does the Empress say quietly, "Have that man followed and begin spreading rumors among the servants that we are going to begin calling in the army to march on the Citadel."

"Y-Your Grace?" asks her senior guard.

"Did you notice the slashes on his clothes?"

"Other than it looks like he narrowly escaped an attacker with a sword."

"He said the dragons attacked. I can't imagine any of the messengers we sent surviving an attack by dragons, nor escaping. Additionally," she gestures at the letter. "This reads like what I know of the letters I exchanged with Daniel, just from a woman's slightly altered perspective. This is a genuine letter from Ryuogriar, the white dragon." She points at the door where Gintor passed through moments ago. "That was a man with clean cuts from a dagger and minor injuries from a fistfight."

Byleathea and the guard both gasp, and Byleathea whispers, "You think… his report was staged?"

Sundenelle smirks. "Let's find out who he talks to after this, and where he goes with the next message I'll be sending."

“As you wish, your Grace,” replies the guard. He steps out of the room briefly to order his juniors to find and tail Gintor until proper spies can take up the tracking. Sundenelle looks at her mother. “Mother, I am beginning to believe Daniel and his companions know more about our own circumstances better than we do.”

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 111: Speculations and Conspiracies

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 111: Speculations and Conspiracies

Urmiscole kos Zevlen, son of Count Quarnone kos Zevlen, marches at the fore of the army column alongside the second and third sons of Marquis Klousbauk kos Donnoristo. The two brothers are the leaders of the army in place of their father, who is meeting with King Rikuto for further actions. This marching column consists of five brigades of soldiers numbering 20,000 in total. They are marching to the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan to verify the status, since messengers and scouts that have gone into the Grand Duchy have not returned.

“Could you believe it if that old hag has finally turned traitor?” asks the elder brother.

“It’s a wonder it hasn’t happened sooner. You know which family she comes from, right?”

“Of course. She only escaped the noose herself because she was already married.”

“And, she didn’t even plead for her father’s life. Despicable.”

The two brothers chuckle, and the older brother jokes, “As if you would for our father.”

“Not if it meant one of us were to be inheriting the marquisate.” They both chuckle again.

Curious, Urmiscole asks, “Do you mean the Grand Duchess, my lords?”

The younger brother smirks at him deviously. “Not for long, at this rate.”

“If you must know, she has already been suspected of treason by his Majesty. The only question is if she surrenders peacefully to our investigation or tries to fight back. After all, she’s apparently hoarding a secret technology and blackmailing the kingdom for exorbitant funds, which is why the crown’s debt has suddenly skyrocketed.”

Urmiscole nods as he listens, though he finds that last part odd. His cousin is one of the mages that was summoned to the castle, and he heard through her that the project they were working on was extremely expensive, though they had success in its completion.

Also, it doesn’t make sense how a vassal territory could ‘blackmail’ the kingdom for funds. If it’s for defense of the kingdom, it’s usually a give first, and then negotiate payment after victory.

“What is that?” asks the younger brother as he points ahead.

Urmiscole looks to where he’s pointing, and there appears to be simple wooden signs with humongous white faces and large lettering in red. At the top of the signs is a coat of arms that looks to be a female figure with large triangular horns or ears and a large, wide tail. At a glance, it looks like she could be a shenwulf, but it’s different, and it’s only a silhouette.

As they get closer, the words become clear to all three of them, as well as anyone else behind them close enough to read.

“[Warning: You are now entering the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan, sovereign territory of the Fievegal. By order of her Greatness, Empress Hekate fell

Lawson, trespassers and invaders who pass beyond this point will be eliminated. No exceptions. Trespass at your own risk.]”

The two marquis brothers laugh. “Look at that, elder brother! Looks like the Grand Duchess has betrayed the kingdom after all.”

“Indeed. Such a pathetic threat.”

“Didn’t every soldier sent to the Citadel return safely?”

“Yeah. It’s obviously a bluff.” Without even stopping, the brothers keep pace as they march. “We’ll establish camp once we’re within a day’s march to the old capital of the Grand Duchy.”

As they ride, a second pair of signs on either side of the road add another foreboding message. “[Warning: You have trespassed onto Grand Duchy territory. Here begins the true territory of the Fievegal. Go no further. You have been warned.]”

The two brothers chuckle, and the elder brother jokes, “The nerve of these pathetic pacifists. If they really wished to scare us, they would station a dragon here to look all frightening.”

They laugh together again, but something feels off to Urmiscole.

As the ranks are about a third of the way through passing the second signs, a disturbance causes a commotion. Some of the soldiers are crying out, and the ranks are faltering near the middle.

Urmiscole and the younger brother ride their buckrokhs to the location of the disturbance, while the elder brother keeps the army group advancing.

When they arrive, hundreds of the soldiers are refusing to advance forward, having stopped a few yards before the sign.

“What’s going on here!?” snaps the younger brother.

One of the mid ranking nobles, an older viscount, replies, “It seems one of the soldiers has started a disturbance about the sign, my lord.”

“Who was it!? Present yourself!?”

“My lord! Please don’t force us! We’ll die!”

“You pathetic curs! No one asked your opinion! You are soldiers of the Kingdom of Mornistae! If you do not wish to die, then you will fight and be victorious! All who desert will be hunted down! Now march!”
“You don’t understand my lord! Please!” Many soldiers are begging, but the younger brother snarls, “All soldiers! March forward! If those in front of you won’t move, drag or push them! NOW!”

There’s a moment of hesitation, and he yells, “That means immediately! Do not make me say it again!”

The soldiers in rear hesitantly begin pushing forward, and soldiers in front cry out and yell, trying to turn and flee, but their brothers in arms keep them from deserting.

But, Urmiscole watches as true horror fills the eyes of trained soldiers; horror he has never seen in the eyes of another man.

No sooner do the boots of the front soldiers pass the line between the two identical signs on either side of the road, those most desperately trying to stop the advance, do they simply collapse, as if fainting like a maiden whose corset is too tight. They aren’t dead immediately, but have collapsed under the weight

of their kits from a sudden loss of strength. A few of them groan and moan for help.

“Enough of this foolishness!” shouts the younger son of the marquis. “Step over them and make note of these cowards! They will be…”

He trails off as the soldiers keep moving forward, most of those in front screaming and falling silent suddenly as those in rear force the lines forward. Not every soldier in the front lines collapse, but most of them do, and the bodies begin piling up quickly.

“What the hell is this!?” shouts the highest-ranking noble present. He dismounts and approaches, kicking the first soldier he reaches. The soldier grunts in pain, but can barely move. The lesser nobles call the company to a halt briefly. The pile of bodies is now blocking the road, and it is no simple matter to have the soldiers march past. Many of those still alive at the front of the group are trembling in fear, while some have attempted to flee, and are crossing an open field of tall grass, fleeing back towards the county bordering the Grand Duchy; Urmiscole’s county, as it turns out. The marquis’s son mounts his buckrokh again, shouting, “Send riders to cut down those cowards! The rest of you, split up and cross the perimeter on the outsides of the signs. It’s obviously some sort of strange magic trap!”

Urmiscole looks at the soldiers fleeing, running as fast as they can without their weapons. A sound like a punch striking flesh comes from Urmiscole’s right, where the marquis’s son is, and liquid hits Urmiscole’s neck. He’s disgusted at first. Buckrokhs are beasts, and they snort and spit and sneeze like any other creature. He rolls his eyes, starting to reply, “My lord, it might be a waste to send riders…” A body collapsing causes a gasp and even more horrified expressions to cross the faces of the soldiers in front of the young son of a count. They’re looking to where the son of the marquis is, and Urmiscole looks

to his right. The younger brother of their commanding officer has collapsed without a word or cry, a large hole in his skull.

Urmiscole is horrified as well, and he notices as he's looking down that there is blood sprayed on his shoulder and arm, and he touches the liquid he took for buckrokh spittle on his neck.

There is substance, which feels spongy and warm, and when Urmiscole inspects it with terror still gripping his soul, he finds a pink matter stained with the obvious red of blood. He has never seen flesh like this before, except seconds ago… when he was looking at the shattered skull of his comrade.

Urmiscole is unable to move. With a similar suddenness, blood sprays out of the viscount near him, and he falls wordlessly from his buckrokh as well; lifeless in an instant.

Urmiscole still can't form thoughts, and one of the other lesser nobles shouts, "We're under attack! Battalions! Take defensive-!"

His words are cut off by his own skull spraying blood, and he falls without another sound to the ground.

Several more nobles going back towards the rear fall, and the soldiers begin screaming and yelling, disoriented into a mess as some try to find out where the attacks are coming from, others try to determine a place to flee to. Some flee forward, crossing the line of the signs in their terror and sinking to their knees before collapsing without a word or wounds; whatever horrible magic taking their strength as they cross into the supposed Fievegal territory.

Those fleeing to the rear, even the first ones to flee, also begin collapsing with visible red sprays of mist.

And then, a terrifying noise draws Urmiscole's attention to the rear.

Thunder, but a kind of thunder he has never heard before. It is more akin to the gods slamming the ground with angered fists, and as if to corroborate that fact, eruptions of the road and field spray rocks and soil in a fountain, stained red with blood. Soldiers and nobles scream as they are launched through the air or shredded and pummeled by the bodies of their own comrades being thrown like the rare explosion spell was used.

It is chaos all at once, and the soldiers are screaming and unable to form a cohesive defensive posture. Urmiscole can only stammer as he looks around, trying to look for help. Nothing is making sense.

A rumble trembles the ground, and the buckrokhs begin panicking. The young son of a count is thrown from his buckrokh as it bucks, taking off towards the capital of the Grand Duchy.

He can feel the rumbling even more clearly through his backside in the dirt. Soldiers are fleeing past him, dirt and debris is raining around him, bodies evaporate in clouds of red mist before an eruption of the ground that engulfs them. The thunder has become deafening, and the only reason Urmiscole knows it is still going on is the rumbling impacts creating a physical thump in his body each and every time.

He then lays eyes on a new terror.

Great beasts of metal -no, that isn't right-; massive carriages that are completely armored are rolling towards the battalion, spraying quick flashes of fire and streaks of gold that seem to fly through the soldiers, cutting them down in sprays of blood just like the attacks that claimed the son of the marquis and the other nobles. Additionally, from a massive pipe on the top of the hellish

carriage, bursts a humongous blast of fire, before the eruption of the ground and the elimination of multiple soldiers at a time.

Several sorcerers and battle mages, as well as archers and spearmen, are able to launch attacks at the demonic carriages, only for even the powerful fireballs and lightning bolts to glance off of the armor effortlessly, doing nothing to even slow the titans.

And, making the carriages even more horrible is the fact that they are moving forward on their own… without a single beast of burden present.

The only thing that Urmiscole can do is scramble to his feet, screaming. He can feel the air leaving his lungs, but he can only hear an unending ringing in his ears. He screams and screams, feeling like he has lost his voice like a terrible nightmare. *That's it! This is a nightmare! I just have to run! Run, Urmiscole!*

He sprints as fast as his numb legs will carry him. He follows the road. He has to regroup with the others and warn them. The horrors that are pursuing them are worse than dragons.

It's quite a distance that he has to run, but he doesn't stop. He can't stop. If he stops, he'll die. He has to warn the others. He has to escape.

There is no respite to be found at the front, however.

Just as he can see the rear lines, they have already broken and are fleeing towards him. One of the nobles on a buckrokh is riding as fast as he can, blind to anyone or anything around him as he urges the beast to sprint as fast as it can go.

Urmiscole still can't hear anything, but he can see.

Eruptions are wiping out the front lines with ease as two more of the demonic carriages are moving forward, flanked by demon-kin soldiers that are casting the same spells as the carriages, and the soldiers fall in droves. The onslaught is truly nightmarish, as the demon-kin soldiers are attacking the kingdom soldiers from well-outside even the best archers or magic ranges.

Urmiscole tries to wave down the noble riding towards him, but the noble seems intent to ignore him, concerned only with his own escape. He has no idea that the same terror awaits him behind Urmiscole. The count's son screams the words, but he can't tell if his voice is even producing sound. "Wait! Please stop! They've flanked us behind as we-!"

An eruption hits directly under the buckrokh, and it screams in an agonized bellow as its own body is shredded and launched into the air in several parts. The noble is launched into the air, soaring over Urmiscole as he instinctively crouches to cover his head. A second later, Urmiscole looks around, trying to find the noble. He spots him, running towards him to help.

But, it's far too late. While alive, the nobleman is in no state to flee on his own.

He likely won't survive, even if the assault were to end immediately. His limbs are clearly broken and bent in ways they were never meant to bend, and blood is coming from his mouth.

Urmiscole is frozen in horror as he watches his comrade die.

The young count's son can finally start to hear again, and the sounds of this demonic battle are rather distant, though the cries of fallen soldiers are rather near.

"Hands up," grunts a deep voice behind Urmiscole. He can't help but flinch, and he whirls, gripping the handle of his sword. His hands shake and the blade

rattles in its scabbard.

He is face to face with an oni, a human-sized horned demon. It is holding a strange staff with its length pointed at the young man, and the other end braced against the oni's shoulder. The demon-kin also has several others with him; more oni, the feline dattakoriens, over a dozen goblins, and a pair of ogres, who stand half a height taller than the oni. Each has a weapon from the west; magic staves and wands capable of casting magic that can slay dragons.

Urmiscole can feel tears sliding down his cheeks as his vision blurs. He trembles as the oni repeats, "Hands up. Take your hands off your weapon and surrender, or you will die."

I can't win. It's hopeless. I… I don't want… to die… Not like this…

Urmiscole sniffles as his life flashes before his eyes; his first lessons on swordplay with his brother and father, his little sister's birth, his mother and father at a ball, his first military parade, and the look of pride on his family's faces when he marched off at the head of a defensive force in honor of the kingdom.

"I-If… I s-s-surrender… will I get to live?" asks Urmiscole, his voice cracking and wavering.

"Yes," replies the oni bluntly. "Hands up and surrender, and you will live."

The young count's son draws his sword, and the demon-kin tense. He can see others being captured, so it's possible they're telling the truth. He casts his sword to the side, putting his hands up. "Please… spare me…" Tears are pouring down his cheeks as he sinks to his knees. The oni nods his head, and several of the goblins jog forward. They keep their strange wands pointed at the young man, but he makes no aggressive moves.

I just want to live. Please let me live. I swear, I'll never do anything like this again.

A pair of the goblins take his hands and pull them behind his back, and he can feel shackles locked over his wrists. But, for some reason, the shackles are swift, making fast clicking sounds as they snugly cinch down on his wrists. One of the goblins does something else with each wrist, and they jabber in a language unintelligible to the young count. The oni nods once. "Stand up and follow these two goblins." He gestures at another pair of the goblins, who step up. They wave at him, and he wearily rises to his feet, his hands behind his back. He has some motion between his wrists, unlike normal shackles, but he can hear the distinct metallic clinking of a chain keeping the shackles bound together.

He walks in defeat behind the goblins, followed by the two that bound his wrists. They march him towards the growing group of captured Mornistae soldiers…

…And, past the bodies of many times more of the slain. Urmiscole stumbles upon seeing the bodies of his fallen comrades; soldiers and nobles alike, slain by the hundreds in what felt like mere moments. The apparent corpses easily outnumber the survivors a hundred to one, many of whom are unrecognizable.

An dattakorien woman is already lecturing the captured group of soldiers, "The signs were intentionally written in your language, and you did not heed two of our warnings. This is sovereign Fievegal territory now, and the Kingdom of Mornistae has twice attacked the Fievegal unprovoked. Our invasion will not stop. The only way you and your families survive is if you cooperate. If you do not wish to cooperate, we will give you honorable deaths right now."

One of the nobles near the woman spits. “Honorable! You demon scum don’t know the meaning of the word!”

“I recommend you silence yourself, prisoner. You have already forfeited your life by invading our territory. If you continue to speak, I will take it as your refusal to cooperate.”

“Don’t you dare threaten me, you disgusting beast! I am the son of Marquis Klousbauk kos Donnoristo, lord Thofmuller kos Donnoristo! I am-!” *BANG!*

A thunderous sound matches a flash of light and a burst of fire from the small demon wand the dattakorien woman is holding; a swift motion as she lifted her arm and cast an instant death spell. Several of the captured kingdom soldiers yelp and cry out as blood sprays from Thofmuller’s chest and back, and he collapses with choking sounds before exhaling his last.

The soldiers fall silent. Even the small wands can cast instant death. And, they can do so without a lengthy incantation or chance to interrupt, all while ignoring the best magic resistant plate armor money can buy.

The dattakorien woman continues her scolding, even while other fearful soldiers are being brought to the group by goblins, ogres, dattakoriens, and oni. “The kingdom of Mornistae launched a vicious and unprovoked attack on Fort Twilight using an abominable superweapon that cost our Emperor dearly, and he has seen the error of his merciful ways of the past. No longer will the Fievegal stand for invasion or unprovoked attacks. The reckless and war-mongering actions of your king will be put to an end. The Fievegal shall restore the balance and outlast the mountains!”

The demon-kin soldiers cheer in a unified roar of pride, startling the paltry handful of surviving prisoners.

Urmiscole can only tremble as his tears continue to flow down his cheeks.

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Daniel and Hekate read the report Xyreko just handed to him. Hekate is seated on Daniel's lap in the luxurious lounge of the Grand Duchess's personal airship, which surprised even him. It is truly a mansion in the sky, with more comforts and commodities than a luxury cruise on Earth. And, it can fly. Daniel's not entirely sure how they got the airships to be airborne, but Wenlianna has a greater knowledge of all of the capabilities of the various magic elements, so it's quite possible that she has some sort of gravity nullification in place on the hull of the ship, in addition to the lift provided by the massive jet engines powered by dozens of wind crystals each. During the flight, operators located at each engine's service bay are periodically rotating the rig holding the wind crystals, swapping out the oldest crystals with new crystals every couple of hours to ensure the airship remains airborne, while magic artisans employed by the Grand Duchy -and kept out of Rikuto's hands by the Grand Duchess ignoring his multiple summons- recharge the spent magic crystals using their own magic and the recharge devices. With this methodology, the airship can fly to anywhere in the eastern kingdoms one way before the magic artisans need to rest, which means that, from the Grand Duchy, it can reach a ways past the Citadel before needing to land.

It's a somewhat inefficient design, but highly functional and comfortable for flight, as well as relatively redundant and safe. And, the Grand Duchess enjoys a glass of wine from one of the better bottles Daniel provided her.

She asks with a smile, unintimidated by the powerful women of the Fievegal around her, "Is it a report about the invasion, your Greatness?"

Hekate nods idly as she reads. “Yes.” She flinches, looking over her shoulder at Daniel. “C-Can we…? Do we keep it a secret?”

“Aramellianna is our ally, Hekate. In fact, she is in a far more dangerous position than we are.”

The young feldrok empress nods. “I see.” She looks at the Grand Duchess, continuing her answer. “It seems Rikuto sent a large army corps of around twenty thousand soldiers into the Grand Duchy.”

This surprises not only Aramellianna, but also her daughters, the Stalvaltan staff, and many of Daniel’s companions.

“Twenty thousand?” asks Gwenesphia nervously. “C-Can… our soldiers handle that?”

Hekate nods. “Already done. We sent four tanks to the front lines, and while there’s a corps worth of golems on standby, only the regular soldiers went into battle. They insisted.” She reads the report again, adding, “It seems we had no casualties.”

“And, the Mornistae soldiers?” asks Yanidere nervously.

Hekate looks at her, unsure if she should answer.

Daniel replies calmly, “There were fewer survivors than casualties. The prisoners will be imprisoned in a camp near the old estate.”

Aramellianna explains to her daughters who are present -Wenlianna, Yanidere, and Yormolett-, “Casualties are a constant in war. Rikuto had many warnings, and he failed to heed any of them, from me or from his enemies. Soldiers dying for the foolishness of a king is lamentable, but the only way the conflict ends is when one side’s spirit is broken.”

“I should be there,” murmurs Daniel quietly. “I shouldn’t be ordering these deaths if I can’t be present to witness them.”

“Don’t be a fool, Daniel,” counters Aramellianna just as several of his companions try to comfort him, including Wenlianna, Hekate, and Gwenesphia. “If you are seeking a heroic moment to earn the loyalty and trust of your followers, it is not during the preliminary stages of an invasion. And, with your technology granting you such rapid communication with the battlefront, there’s really less reason for you to risk your life. It will be several days before Rikuto hears of the defeat, and yet you heard about it mere minutes after it happened, it would seem.”

Xyreko nods, confirming. “Indeed. The thirty minutes of delay was for the officers to gather numbers and formulate a proper report.” This chapter is updated first at novelping . com.

Ryuogriar leans over Daniel’s shoulder from behind, having approached from the lounge seat she was on. “I agree with her Grace, Mukori. For now, you are more important behind the scenes. If Mattarglos can be made an ally, then we can be informed or even restrict troop movements through Fort Peony, leaving only Fort Reefjord as the only path through the mountains for ground forces. And, as we can see, our soldiers can handle the task so far. When they need our assistance, they will surely call.”

“Don’t forget the Empire itself, Daniel,” reminds Vaergraes. “If you do successfully win over the Empress to at least a negotiating position, then the Eastern territories can be considered neutral or better.”

“Sundenelle will not likely give in so easily,” counters Aramellianna respectfully. “Even if she seems to be accepting of Daniel’s schemes, it is likely she has

some plan for her own gains out of the arrangement. She will either push for authority in the Fievegal, or advantageous economic leverage for the Empire."

"Nothing is free," replies Daniel. "And, I didn't expect her to accept an alliance so easily, let alone my hand in marriage. I only did any of that to rattle her and give her a headache with her own nobles. There will undoubtedly be those pressuring her to accept for appeasement or other self-serving reasons, and there will be those that will view her position as weakened to be embarrassed in such a way."

Hekate nods in agreement, proud of her favorite person in the world. "Mm-hmm. She got what she deserved. It's her fault the Empire invaded twice, even if she didn't want to."

Geirahoel points out, "I found it odd that we received six different messengers from the Empress, but one of them was different."

"The one was Empress Sundenelle's," replies Ryuogriar. "It had her perfume on it, as well as the distinctive ink she uses." When everyone looks at her, the platinum dragon adds, "Obviously, I compared it to the other messages she sent Mukori. The ones we are certain she wrote."

"I thought I smelled perfume on the others," replies Geirahoel.

"Yes, but it was not the same."

"You believe the other five messages were fake?" asks Yanidere cautiously.

"Almost certainly. They all five were written by different people with ink that was completely different to the consistent ink Sundenelle has used all along. They also spoke of 'lese majeste' and Daniel's disrespect of the Grand Prince."

“That’s true,” confirms Reignleif. “They *really* focused on the disrespect of that man. Even when she disapproved of Daniel’s actions, she spoke in a diplomatic manner.”

“Does that mean the Grand Prince is part of some sort of conspiracy?” asks Wenlianna nervously.

“This is becoming dangerous, isn’t it?” asks Treia dryly.

Daniel scoffs. “To answer your question, Wenlianna, it’s too early to tell, and we don’t have enough information. Though, if the focus was on the Grand Prince and the disrespect, it’s possible someone’s personal feelings found their way into the artificial letters.”

“Wouldn’t it be more likely that the single letter is the fake?” asks Yormolett innocently. “Um, your Grace.”

Daniel replies gently, “No need to be so formal with me, Yormolett. And, I agree. It seems like the easy answer; especially so because each message was brought by a separate messenger. But, what if one messenger was more proactive, and his route got him ahead of the actors bribing or blackmailing the others? They might not even know he left, or assume he didn’t make it. Even if he did, as long as it’s five against one, only a fool would believe the one. But, I agree with Ryuogriar. If nothing else, the single letter is the only one that reads like it came from Sundenelle, while the other reads like it came from someone emotional and fuming over a personal matter.”

“Didn’t you say that you were trying to instigate the Empress’s emotions?” asks Gwenesphia. “We don’t know her full relationship to the Grand Prince. She may have taken it more personally than we think.”

“Definitely possible. But, the first letter truly reads like one that she has sent, which is the advantage to exchanging innocuous letters with someone before important business.”

Hekate huffs. “You never exchange letters with me.”

Daniel chuckles, toying with her ear with his fingers, which causes her big fox-like ear to flutter and twitch. “When would I do that, Sweetpea? You’re almost always with me.”

She twitches, looking away from him. Her ears flick a few more times, making sure they’re clear, and then they lay down flat as she pouts. “You could still send them…”

“Alright. I’ll write you a letter soon.”

She hums triumphantly, relaxing against his chest.

“What should we do about the discrepancy, then, Daniel?” asks Treia, clearly beating Yanidere to the same question by mere moments. The second eldest Stalvaltan daughter nods in agreement.

“For now, we focus on our task at hand. But, we’ll need to be considering who stands to benefit the most from instigating a war between the Fievegal and the Empire right now. The Grand Prince is a contender, but he strikes me more as arrogant and foolish, rather than scheming, so I think there is someone with even more influence behind him, or even using him as the scapegoat.”

“Not many people should be able to use the Grand Prince as a scapegoat,” muses Aramellianna. “I would struggle to sabotage Rikuto in such a clandestine way, and I have the authority to do so in times of emergency.”

“Who else other than the Empress could have that much influence?” asks Yanidere.

“Maybe one of the other kings,” answers Wenlianna thoughtfully. “Or maybe even someone on the demon’s side.”

“We haven’t heard much out of them since Brosjak, so it’s very possible any such leadership within the demons crumbled during the attack on the Orbicharium.”

“Or, they want us to think so,” adds Hekate pointedly, demonstrating that she has paid attention to everything going on since she and Daniel came into ownership of the Citadel.

Daniel nods. “Exactly. We have to remain cautious and try to draw out their moves.”

Yormolett asks gently, “Um, Daniel, your Grace,... was it like this on Earth?”

Daniel smiles softly. “Yes and no. Yes because there was always some deeper political meaning to everything, especially when I was summoned to this world. No, because the countries where Rikuto and I lived were far more peaceful than anywhere I’ve seen on Zenkon so far. So, even if the scheming was occuring, it wasn’t always a part of day to day life.”

“It’s likely that’s true of most citizens of this world as well,” remarks Ryuogriar. “They have bigger problems than far off wars.”

Daniel nods. “Indeed. And, to answer the question of possible ‘who’s’ it could be, on Earth, it was mostly bankers and other extraordinarily successful business-er, merchants who used their money to influence laws and the justice

systems, the economy, and social interactions towards their goals, pulling the strings behind all sides, in many cases."

Aramellianna chuckles. "The kind of finances that would require is impossible."

"I wish that were true, Mother. In the case of banks, in overly simple terms, they invest in companies in exchange for a percentage of the profits. Likewise for the, uh, merchants. And, the companies produce conveniences that every household in the world comes to desire. Ironically enough, my phone is an example of such an item."

They stare at him in disbelief. Daniel adds, "You're probably one of the closest I personally know, in terms of wealth, Mother. But, you have to multiply that wealth even further, and the best way to do that, long term, is to increase prosperity well beyond what the technology of Zenkon is regularly capable of."

Aramellianna stands up and crosses the small gap from her lounging sofa to the comfortable seat Daniel and Hekate are seated on. She takes a kneel before Daniel, placing her hands on Daniel's lap below where Hekate's thighs are sitting on his. She looks up at Daniel with a bewitching smile. Wenlianna and Yanidere both murmur in shock, "M-Mother?"

"Daniel, my dear, sweet son; name what I must do, and I will bankroll any endeavor."

Daniel chuckles. "One step at a time, Mother."

"Perhaps I should be the one marrying you…"

"MOTHER!" whines Wenlianna with a cherry red face, and Hekate stammers, "D-Don't even think about it!"

The Grand Duchess chuckles, but she lays her head on Hekate's lap, saying softly, "I wish to see the Stalvaltan family unbreakable, your Greatness. And, if we are going against forces like the ones Daniel described… I must be ready to counter them coin for coin."

Daniel sighs. "For now, let's get through the duel in Mattarglos and see if we can even learn the basic idea of who we're up against."

Aramellianna sits up on her knees and nods. "So be it… Darling."

"Mother!" Wenlianna darts in and pulls her mother away from Daniel.

Everyone shares a laugh, and the airship cruises at a fair speed, bringing the mountainous terrain of Mattarglos into view as the sun is reaching its zenith in the sky.

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 112: Customs of Mattarglos, Round One

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 112: Customs of Mattarglos, Round One

The shuttle lowers towards the ground as Daniel watches over the pilot golem's shoulder through the cockpit. Hekate squeezes under his arm to also try to look, cheering, "This is so exciting!"

"We've traveled a couple of times, haven't we?"

"Yeah, but this is different! We're arriving as honored guests! Look!" She points at the crowd visibly gathering. She adds sassily, "Also, the Empire didn't count."

"Your Grace, they don't seem to understand that we need space to land."

"Just ease down slowly, Ucahote. They'll figure it out."

Daniel watches the many gatonines, boruans, and shenwulves in the surprisingly large crowd. As the shuttle gets closer to the ground, he can see them moving, seemingly pulling each other back. "Landing zone clear, your Grace. Touchdown in three, two, one…" Daniel can feel the shuttle jostle as it settles on the ground. He pats Ucahote's shoulder, though he's still not sure if physical gestures mean anything to the golems. "Good work, as always, Ucahote. Once we're all clear, please return to the airship and remain on standby."

"It will be my pleasure to serve, your Grace. By your leave."

“Thank you.” Daniel and Hekate leave the cockpit, and everyone else is stretching. They didn’t have to ride in the shuttle for more than a few minutes, and it’s nowhere near as uncomfortable as an Earth airline.

Daniel leads the way off of the shuttle and down the ramp, immediately looking at the roof of the shuttle. “Arachne? Are you alright?”

“Yes, Father.” The massive, spider-like death knight relaxes her grip on the roof of the shuttle, carefully climbing down. This causes a murmur of awe to spread through the crowd, and some gasps of nervousness.

Daniel asked Xyreko to have a dress made for the death knight to look a little less intimidating, which helps. The light blue gown looks bulky and elegant on her massive frame, and contrasts nicely with her dark purple exoskeleton.

Hekate follows Daniel down the ramp, and then Doephluev. Both of them are wearing the newest outfit design Daniel had made. It consists of sheer leggings, white for Hekate and a bright red for Doephluev, and matching Mary Janes style shoes. The skirt is fairly simple, pleated and coming up over the blouse around the middle of the midriff, with two gold buttons roughly around the kidneys. The blouse is double-breasted and has a sort of crisp, military look, at least to Daniel’s eyes, and two rows of gold buttons with small Fievegal sigils on them line either side of the front. The blouse is short-sleeved, and to accent the outfit, they’re wearing matching separated cuffs that rest on their wrists like bracelets using an elastic band to stay in place. And, like the blouse and skirt, the gold buttons on the ‘floating’ cuffs have the small sigil of the Fievegal; a tiny emblem of Hekate’s silhouette.

Doephluev also volunteered to wear decorative glasses, which gives her a surprisingly intelligent and officious look.

“Mine looks better,” states Hekate as she wraps her arms around Daniel’s forearm.

Doephluev snipes with a casual retort, “My Love made this style for me specifically, your Greatness.”

The feldrok empress grits her teeth as she grumbles, especially when Doephluev reaches for Daniel’s other arm. But, Reignleif swoops in swiftly to snatch his arm. She is wearing a slightly fancier white dress capped with her blue mantle, and she murmurs softly, “Mukori is kind. He has relaxed your leash, but you should still be respectful.”

The archoneldwyn simply folds her hands in front of her abdomen, putting on her business smile. “Of course, your Grace.”

Daniel’s entourage forms up, with Neith circling wide to escort the group and keep a wide field of view while Roeta and Magnir blend in behind. The obvious eye-catcher is Arachne, which is intentional, and Daniel decides now is a good time for the Hekate game. “Joke’s on all of you. Arachne’s is the dress I wanted to design.”

Hekate and Doephluev both gawk with a simultaneous utterance of “Gah…!”, while a handful of the citizens of Mattarglos approach; likely the Grand Premier or their representatives and possibly other chieftains or regional leaders.

Arachne replies in a tone that could almost seem smug, “Thank you, Father.”

Hekate and Doephluev both glare up at her, and the death knight only glances down at them with her eyes, staying focused on the approaching group.

“Greetings!” calls out a young female gatonine, who is dressed as a knight. She has what Daniel would describe as cestus on her gauntlets; extra durable

punching plates over her knuckles. “I am the knight Veiranoei, guardian of the Grand Premier, Kalegrynten.” She bows with her hands gesturing towards an older male gatonine behind her. He is wearing a long coat as more of a mantle, with his arms crossed in front of him and an amused smirk.

Gwenesphia steps closer, and she whispers, “Nobility of Mattarglos don’t boast with rank or family, but with strength. They won’t acknowledge us unless we fight.”

Daniel nods. “Thank you.” He bows slightly, since his arms are taken. “Good afternoon, Veiranoei and Kalegrynten. I am Daniel, and this is Hekate and Reignleif.” He goes through introducing everyone, and they take the cue to bow or curtsy, depending on their nature. He sticks to first names, in accordance with the introductions provided by Veiranoei. He realizes that he should have had Neith, Magnir, or Roeta introduce them, but it’s too late now. The Grand Premier looks pleased enough, showing his teeth in a toothy grin now. Daniel continues, “I have come to meet with you as requested, and negotiate peace and trade agreements.”

Kalegrynten chuckles. “A most amusing proposition, Daniel. But, we have our own way of doing things, as your slender missies may have told you.”

“I am aware. Before anything, respect must be earned through a duel, yes?”

The Grand Premier gives his biggest grin yet, ecstatic that Daniel not only came, but agreed to their simple social norm. “That’s right.”

Daniel keeps his composure, but he’s definitely nervous. He has grown rather fit since coming to Zenkon due to his constant activity. And, though Daniel is significantly taller than Kalegrynten due to gatonines being a little shorter than average human height on Zenkon, he has the physique of a professional MMA

fighter. He likely weighs twice as much as Treia or Gwenesphia, putting his weight easily close or over Daniel's, even with his relatively short stature comparatively.

Kalegrynten adds suddenly, "Though, I must admit, you're not quite what I expected for the Harbinger of Calamity."

Daniel grumbles in English as he cups his face with his palm, Reignleif still clinging to his bicep and elbow. "{Oh dear god…}" Even his own companions look at him for an explanation, and he sighs. He looks at Kalegrynten with an easygoing smirk of his own. "Have you met many Harbingers of Calamity?"

The Grand Premier cocks his head, before he bursts into laughter.

Geirahoel, having drifted close and standing just off to the side of Hekate, calls out, "It is true! Daniel is the Harbinger of Calamity."

Still laughing, Kalegrynten agrees warmly. "I believe you. It's all the more amusing." He calms down, putting his fists on his hips as his tail sways back and forth. Given the speed and pattern, which is mostly lax and smooth, he is in an especially good mood. "I think we're going to get along well, Daniel. Shall we go to the arena and test our mettle?"

"After you."

Just as the two groups are about to move, Veiranoei objects. "I am sorry, but I can not allow this. I will fight in place of the Grand Premier. No matter what the stories claim, if you truly are so strong, you should be able to best a mere knight. Otherwise, you do not deserve the honor of facing our Grand Premier in a duel."

“Veiranoei, do not speak for me,” growls the Grand Premier himself. “They came all this way at our request.”

“That only serves to suggest they acknowledge our strength,” retorts the knight. “They have done nothing to prove their own to us.”

“That is not what we agreed to!” calls out Treia. “Daniel was to duel the Grand Premier, not be subjected to trials of whimsy.”

“Whimsy!? And who are you, who turned your back on your homeland!?” snaps the knight in retort.

Treia steps forward, snarling, “I am the only thing standing between you and a merciless conquest if you do not respect…”

Daniel pulls free of Hekate and Reignleif to put his hand on Treia’s shoulder, halting her. She looks up at him. “Daniel…?”

He says calmly and stoically, “I came here knowing I would likely lose a hand-to-hand fight. It is no secret that the citizens of Mattarglos are all valiant warriors; the gatonines, the shenwulves, and the boruans alike. I have yet to see crawdistes in combat, but I have little doubt they are quite mighty as well.” He nods to the handful of crawfish-like amphibians nearby. They’re bulkier than he is, and they have the pincers of a crawfish, so he certainly wouldn’t want to be in a boxing match with one of them. He continues, “If you just want to duel to see if I was willing to respect your traditions, then we can duel. But, if you wish for the power of the Fievegal to be demonstrated, then we will be happy to oblige.” Daniel puts his hand on Kaeralegier, and his elemental companion -the light spirit Vaarskahana- begins hovering around him.

“*{Oooo! Will you be wasting even more of my mana, Daniel?}*” murmurs Kaeralegier’s voice in Daniel’s head. She sounds a little facetious, like her

meaning could be sarcastic or excited.

“Forgive her, Daniel,” appeals the Grand Premier. “No disrespect is intended, I’m sure, but traditionally, in contests, the Grand Premier is the last to fight. However, I did invite you with the intent to duel you myself…”

“I’ll do it,” replies Daniel. “If victory is the exclusive condition of our negotiations, though, I won’t waste any more of our time. But, if you simply wish to have a series of duels, I don’t mind.”

Kalegrynten nods respectfully in agreement. But, Neith suddenly speaks up. “My Liege, I must insert my own thoughts on this matter. If this knight insists that you must earn the honor of facing her liege lord, then the same should be true of ours. Allow me to fight in your stead for the first battle…”

Daniel chuckles. “Are you insane, Neith? It’s not necessary. I’ll do it myself.” The human mechanic pets Hekate’s head when she approaches and hugs his arm again. “I insist on no armor or weapons for either of us, and no magic.”

“What a coincidence; that is the only way to truly gauge one’s strength,” replies Kalegrynten with his warm grin once more. New chapters come out on novelping(.)com first.

The groups move into an arena nearby, which is just like the Roman coliseum of Earth, but a little smaller and less elaborate. The floor is sand, and it’s rather clean, so Daniel hopes bloodsport isn’t a regular occurrence. From the sounds of it, it’s more akin to a boxing or MMA fight that he has gotten himself into, rather than a gladiator battle.

Daniel strips his jacket off as well as the sword. He starts to take the scarf off, but Vaarskahana clings to his face, shaking her head vigorously.

He hesitates. “You can’t interfere, Hana.”

She nods, still clinging to his cheek. Daniel asks, “Good Sir Kalegrynten, do you object to me being accompanied by this elemental? She will not interfere, but she is temperamental. It’s obvious when she uses magic.”

“Well, Veiranoei? You wished to battle Daniel first. Do you object?”

“No. He speaks the truth. An elemental is an honest being. So long as it does not interfere, I do not object.”

“Thank you,” replies Daniel. He removes the rest of his equipment, wearing only his pants and scarf.

Treia and Gwenesphia send Daniel off with gentle markings of paint on his chest. Treia whispers as she paints, “Remember, she’s a gatonine, Daniel. We specialize in acrobatics, but our size doesn’t mean we aren’t strong.”

“I remember.”

“She’ll try to use leverage against you,” adds Gwenesphia. “You’re a big, heavy target, so the goal is to get you to the ground as quickly as possible.”

Daniel nods. “Thank you both.”

While Daniel’s gatonine consorts were painting their marks on him, Veiranoei also strips down, wearing her semi-baggy medieval-style pants and what equates to a tube-top of fabric tied over her modest chest. *Not that I intend to aim for it, but I hope wardrobe malfunctions aren’t cause for death.*

Daniel raises his fists, taking a ready posture as he cautiously approaches the gatonine knight.

“Go Daniel! Kick her butt!” cheers Hekate. Her voice is more distinct than the audience cheers, who have filled the stands.

Veiranoei remarks as she circles and studies Daniel, “I’m not familiar with such a specific strategy, but I hope you won’t be too aggressive on my rear.”

Daniel chuckles. “It’s a figure of speech. She’s just cheering for me to win.”

“I see. Then, I must assure you I will not go easy on you.”

“I’ll do my best as well.”

Kalegrynten stands in front of a throne-like seat raised just above the level of the sand by a simple dais platform. He declares loudly, and the audience falls quiet, “Warriors of Zenkon! This is an honorable duel! The two combatants will fight with the strength of their bodies and the skill of their hearts. The first to surrender or fall unconscious will be defeated. Healers are standing by, but the combatants are strongly encouraged to avoid crippling or mortal injuries on their opponents. So long as the battle is fought with honor, both warriors will stand with their heads held high for observing this sacred tradition of Mattarglos.” He then holds out his right hand, shouting, “Now! Warriors! Speak the sacred oath!”

Daniel listens carefully to Veiranoei, since he is caught off guard, and she notices him. He mimics her holding her hands to the sky, and she calls out, “I am a warrior of Mattarglos!” “I am a warrior of the Fievegal!” “I swear on my life I shall fight with honor!” “I swear on my life I shall fight with honor!” “Blood and sweat are the paint of a warrior!” “Blood and sweat are the paint of a warrior!” “I offer mine in this contest of strength with my honorable opponent!” “I offer mine in this contest of strength with my honorable opponent!” “I am

Veiranoei, and watch me pursue victory!” “I am Daniel, and watch me pursue victory!”

The audience cheers, and Kalegrynten nods in approval.

Daniel says in a low tone loud only enough for Veiranoei to hear, “Thank you, Veiranoei.”

She smirks. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” She assumes her fighting stance, and Daniel does the same. *Thank goodness for singing cadence in the military, but thank you, m’lady, for going slow enough for me to keep up.*

Daniel has two primary advantages in the fight: his weight and his reach. If he’s going to stand a chance of winning, he’ll have to use those advantages carefully, because they also mean that he’ll have more difficulty getting off of the ground if he falls.

He also has to watch carefully for her movements. She’s going to spring at him with speed that polished human reflexes would struggle against.

Daniel waits until she is crossing her right leg over in front of her left as she stalks in her cautious circle, and he kicks into the strongest forward step that he can.

She swiftly starts to solidify her footing, shifting her own balance awkwardly. She was just about to spring her attack on him.

Daniel kicks off of the ground as soon as he plants his forward left foot, whipping his legs forward in a drop-kick towards her waist. Veiranoei yelps as she lunges back, and the blow is softened greatly, while Daniel flops onto the sand of the coliseum floor. Daniel pivots to keep his front towards her while scrambling up to a kneel, and she is already capitalizing on his double-edge

attack. She darts around wide, staying ahead of his pivot while she closes the distance and tries to kick for his head.

But, he wasn't racing to get to his feet; he was racing to get to a crouch. He manages to get his left hand up to block as the kick darts in towards his jaw, and he can feel the impact. He's also shifting his own weight forward while extending his legs explosively, sweeping his off-hand arm under the leg after it softened the blow to his head.

He coughs and feels a little dazed, but he keeps moving, springing forward and tackling Veiranoei, her right leg trapped in an awkward leverage position thanks to Daniel hooking his hand under her thigh, while his right arm wraps around her back under her left armpit.

She grunts, "Guh!" She tries to elbow and claw at his cheek, but he protects his face by pressing it into her abdomen. She's strong, and he can feel pain bolting through him, but she feels like she's lighter than Treia.

I wonder if Treia is putting on weight from the food or the rum. Too early for the other reason, I would think…

He lifts Veiranoei up as high as he can, using the momentum to jump at the same time, leaping forward to drop. He swings her down onto the sand, landing his own collar and torso on her abdomen. She coughs and gasps as she cries out, momentarily stunned by the sudden and forceful attack.

But of course, Daniel is causing damage to himself as well, and in this case, sand splashes from their impact and scrambling, catching his left eye. He tries to change posture to get control of one of her legs for a leg lock or some other submission move, but she manages to scramble away from him, kicking him back and scooting away until she can climb to a kneeling position. Both of them

are now kneeling, catching their breath as Daniel cautiously nurses his injured eye.

The gatonine knight pants heavily as she coughs intermittently. Her voice is suddenly raspy and weak from the impact, and she murmurs, “I didn’t expect that… Nicely done, human.”

Daniel pants heavily as well. He didn’t hurt his chest, thankfully, but his shoulder is aching a bit, and he used a lot of strength in a blitz attack in hopes that he could trap her in a hold that would decide the match.

She adds, “I took you for a sloppy fist-striker. Or, maybe just amateur.”

Daniel chuckles shifting to start standing up, and she wearily climbs to her feet as well. “Guilty,” replies the human mechanic. “But, I doubted that would work on you.”

She smirks. “Guilty.”

Daniel rolls his shoulders as he feels the burn and ache in his back and the back of his head and part of his cheek. His left eye is still pained and watery, so he’ll have to be careful. But, he can pretty safely assume most of her attacks are going to come from that side.

Daniel brings his fists up again. This time, he’ll test the waters with a couple of swings and see what her response will be.

Daniel has reach, and he jabs twice with his right fist. She easily dodges, taking a couple steps back to stay out of his reach. She also is circling to his left, and he keeps her in front of him.

When he tries to lunge towards her with a left punch, she swats his extended arm and swoops off to his blindside. He can see movement, but he can’t brace

for specific attacks.

Pain shoots through his left knee when she kicks him swiftly, and he tries to turn, but she uses her hand to block his offhand, guiding herself to stay in his blind spot as she uses her right fist to punch his ribs several times. Daniel stumbles away from her forward, but he suddenly hip-checks backwards, and she coughs when his backside rams into her waist. Daniel spins right as fast as he can, swooping his hand out to try to grab any point of leverage he can. He grips fabric and holds firm, using it to try to control her position and drag her in front of him. She punches and hammers his arm, trying to force herself closer and swing at his shoulder and face as well, but his arms are much longer than hers, and he has a solid hold on her top. Veiranoei hops on one leg as she swings her right leg up to kick him, gripping his arm. Daniel keeps his head back, avoiding her kick narrowly, and in a quick thought, he lunges forward and lowers her some, tipping her body over her leg so she's no longer able to stand and is now hanging from his arm. She growls and grunts in frustration, her ears folded back expressively. Daniel can also hear Hekate and Gwenesphia cheering, while Treia is taunting him. The rest are watching with either amusement, caution, or nervousness.

Daniel doesn't let go of her top, using it to control her as he starts to maneuver her right leg to give him position to leverage her into a hold, and she seems to realize what he's doing. She tries to squeeze his wrist, which is painful, as well as use both legs to try to push away from him.

Suddenly, the grapple breaks, and Daniel flops backwards onto his back as he yelps in surprise. He manages to roll with his fall, narrowly managing to backroll into a kneeling crouch again. He pants as he catches his breath, focusing on his feline opponent. He was certain he managed not to let go, and he checks his hand.

He pales a little at the sight of his right fist, which is still closed firmly around a piece of fabric. It doesn't look like it tore, so it must have come apart at the simple knot she had tied it closed at the front. He glances at Veiranoei who is scooting away from him, catching her breath and starting to rise.

It's then that she realizes it, too, and she screams briefly, covering her chest with her left arm. Her face fills with color, and she glares at him in embarrassment and anger.

Oh jeez… I'm going to die now, aren't I? He does focus his gaze on her face to avoid staring at her and angering her further. He's not a shounen protagonist, so he is able to keep his focus on the fight that doesn't seem to be over yet. He saw a scar from an apparent stabbing that he hadn't seen yet, but it's none of his business.

His business is the gatonine knight that just scrambled to her feet with a yell. "Grrraaaahhh! You'll pay for that, Daniel!" Visit NovelPing for the full chapter.

He doesn't have time to apologize, and she is dead-set on continuing the fight, in spite of the partial handicap. It doesn't stop her from fighting at full capacity, but she's keeping herself covered while she can.

She darts in fearlessly, and Daniel can barely get back on his feet. She moves faster and more recklessly than before, and he manages a backhand fist that stumbles her when it hits her arm over her chest, but she springs right back in, punching and kicking him relentlessly all over; ribs, thigh, back, shin, arm, ribs, shoulder, chest. She is a hailstorm of melee attacks, occasionally switching hands to attack from different angles, and Daniel is on almost entirely defense. She swoops low as he tries to grapple her again, and she kicks his knee hard in the back, dropping him to a kneel. Before he can stand back up -the pain gives him a long pause as he grunts-, she springs onto his back, wrapping her

arms around his neck and legs around his waist, with her chest pressed to his back.

Daniel thoughtlessly never let go of the fabric top, which is little more than a long strip of fairly durable fabric, and she has turned her attack on boxing his ears and trying to squeeze her arms under his chin to choke him out. She growls in Daniel's ear, "You really are a sly one, aren't you, Daniel? I heard what you did in Mornistae…"

Daniel has to stay focused just to stay conscious as he feels the pressure closing in around his neck and his head growing light.

One last thought hits him, and he takes the fabric in both hands, swinging it in a U-shape over his right shoulder where she whispered from. He can feel her lean back, but he gets it behind her head, and he swiftly pulls forward. Her chest presses against his back firmly as she grunts, pulled forward by the fabric. Her sleeper hold relaxes a touch, granting Daniel just enough time to gasp in a breath.

He keeps pulling the fabric forward, looping his fists to cinch it down by wrapping loops over his fists one at a time, and even against her trying to pry herself free and maintain her own leverage, he can feel her chin touch his skull.

Daniel stands up from his kneel, growling and roaring to surge as much of his strength as he can. He steps forward and leaps, swinging his legs out to drop as far as he can; landing his butt on the sand.

A painful strike hits his skull, and the body clinging to his back goes limp.

Daniel releases the fabric and the weight slides off of him as he flops to the other side, coughing.

It seemed like a good idea at the time, but a moment of horror suddenly hits him. The fight was meant to be nothing more than a friendly duel of honor.

He scrambles back up and whirls to face the unmoving gatonine. He rolls her onto her back, instantly putting his cheek over her mouth and nose as he watches her chest. He can see her chest moving slowly, and her breathing is a bit erratic.

“Healer! Get the healer over here now!”

Ryuogriar doesn’t hesitate, sprouting her wings seemingly instantly and flying to Daniel and Veiranoei in an instant. Daniel adds urgently, “Ryuo, quickly. She’s breathing, but I don’t know how much damage I did.”

She sighs. “Mukori, you are forgetful…”

“Mukori, please…”

“That’s all I wanted, Mukori.” She is already in the middle of casting a powerful healing spell, which will stabilize and massively boost the body’s self-healing to an impressive rate.

Hekate, Geirahoel, Wenlianna, Doephluev, Treia, and Gwenesphia jog closer, while Kera’tai and Aoloan walk closer. Hekate is the first to withdraw a blanket from her void pouch, a miniature version of the void bags that she's wearing on her belt. She covers the inadvertently exposed gatonine, and then backs up to stay out of the way.

Vaergraes, Arachne, Aramellianna and her other daughters all remain in their seats. As for the Einherjars, Magnir stays with those who remained seated, while Roeta follows the group like a lady in waiting, and Neith walks even more slowly, keeping distance so he can see the whole picture.

For their part, Kalegrynten and a handful of Mattarglos citizens approach, with two who specifically are carrying shoulder bags. They're both women; a gatonine and a rather young boruan, since she's not even Daniel's height. They drop to their knees next to Veiranoei to attend to her. She's still unconscious, but her breathing has stabilized.

Hekate asks, "What happened to her? That didn't seem like a very strong attack."

The Grand Premier is crouching as Ryuogriar keeps her magic going. He gently touches the unconscious knight's jaw. "You'd be surprised how fragile the body is if you target the right points. Though, I'm surprised at the effectiveness of Emperor Daniel's tactic."

Daniel watches Veiranoei intently. He obviously did everything he could think of to win, but some things he should have known better.

"Professional wrestlers in my homeland used grapples similar to that to jolt the opponent's brain in their skull, which can knock a person out. But, direct hits to the jaw or temples can be deadly. I'm sorry." Daniel lowers his head to Kalegrynten. The gatonine lord is quiet for a moment. "I see. That is why you did not simply assume she fell unconscious."

Daniel nods once. "Mukori?"

The platinum dragon smiles as she releases the healing spell. "I am no expert of anatomy, but I can tell injuries were healed. I… do believe she narrowly escaped death."

Daniel winces. It's a joke Ryuogriar might make in order to make herself look good, or by extension, Daniel for taking the extra precaution. But, in this case,

she is being truly sincere, which makes him feel sick to his stomach. He replies softly, “Thank you for responding so quickly.”

“Yes, thank you,” adds Kalegrynten.

It takes a few minutes, but Veiranoei finally wakes up, coming out of it in a slight daze. “Wh-What… happened?”

Kalegrynten asks gently, “Do you remember your name?”

She nods. “I’m… Veiranoei of Evening Peak.” She looks around with her eyes, noticing everyone around her. She adds, “I… was… duelling the human… Daniel…”
“That’s exactly right.”

“Did… who won?”

The Grand Premier scoffs. “Daniel did, I’m afraid. It seems he is worthy after all.”

She sighs, seeming to relax a little. “It was a surprising fight…”

Kalegrynten pets her forehead gently, nodding in agreement. “I’ve always known humans to be feisty, but it seems a dragon slaying sorcerer can still fight like a warrior.”

Daniel chuckles, “You flatter me. If she was as tall as me, I wouldn’t have stood a chance.”

Veiranoei smiles, looking at Daniel. Suddenly, her face turns to a scowl, though, and she touches herself, finding the blanket covering her. She makes sure to keep it covering her and she painstakingly sits up. “Regardless of the fight,… you have proven the rumors true.”

“What rumors?” asks the Grand Premier.

Daniel answers for himself. “That I strip princesses naked in public. Though, in this case, it truly was an accident. I am sorry, Veiranoei.” He bows his head respectfully to her. “Please forgive me.”

She grits her teeth and grumbles quietly, while Ryuogriar remarks, “You have nothing to be ashamed of, young Veiranoei. You are quite shapely and well balanced.”

The gatonine knight glares at the dragon, her cheeks still burning pink.

Wenlianna is kneeling now next to Daniel to dab his injuries on one side, while Geirahoel does the other. The Magic Artisan adds pointedly, “Daniel also didn’t have a choice with Princess Erimaya. He saved her life, and he needed to remove her corset to do it.”

Hekate nods in agreement. “Good thing, too. She’s now my best friend.”

She then steps in front of Veiranoei. “Now then, Daniel abided by your traditions of Mattarglos because you insisted, and he’s that kind of person. So, it’s only fair that you abide by the traditions of the Fievegal.”

Veiranoei flinches, and Kalegrynten looks up with concern as well. He glances at Daniel, who shrugs, unsure of what Hekate is thinking. Most likely, it will be harmless enough.

Of course, Daniel also has a large outstanding debt accrued by the number of times he has played the Hekate game.

The young feldrok girl looks at Daniel, giving him a devious grin as she straightens herself up as tall and as proud as her small frame will allow, fists proudly on her hips as she puffs up her androgynous chest. She declares in her

'empress' voice, "I, Empress Hekate fell Lawson decree, that since you challenged Daniel to a duel and lost, you must submit to be his consort. Mwahahahahaha!"

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Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 113: Customs of Mattarglos, Round Two

“I, Empress Hekate fell Lawson decree, that since you challenged Daniel to a duel and lost, you must submit to be his consort. Mwahahahahaha!”

Hekate, the first and ruling empress of the Fievegal, makes an outrageous declaration upon Daniel’s victory in the duel against the gatonine knight of Mattarglos, Veiranoei. Her words have stunned all of the Mattarglos citizens, especially Veiranoei and Kalegrynten, the Grand Premier, who is the unifying lord of Mattarglos.

Ryuogriar can’t help but scoff at Hekate’s absurd declaration, covering her mouth to try to restore her composure, while Geirahoel glares at Hekate. It’s actually quite out of character for the small feldrok girl, who is usually trying to chase off the other women that get close to Daniel, even those without romantic interest. Doephluev asks coldly, “And, who says you make that decision?”

Hekate glares at the archoneldwyn. “Me. I have final say.” She adds smugly, “Besides, most of his consorts are women he has defeated in battle, are they not?”

Doephluev flinches. She doesn’t even have to be able to speak for the others, since she herself is one such defeated former enemy.

Veiranoei looks at Hekate, and then at Kalegrynten, and then Daniel in a dazed swirl of confusion. She finally says, “G-Grandfather…?” as she looks pleadingly at Kalegrynten.

“Grandfather?” asks Hekate in confusion.

Daniel suspected something along those lines. They seemed rather familiar, and a granddaughter protecting her aging grandfather from an unknown combatant is the epitome of filial piety, as far as Daniel knows. He has no doubt Kalegrynten can handle himself in a fight, and he’s most likely much stronger than Veiranoei, but she demonstrated how Daniel, an unknown variable, would fight.

Geirahoel finally retorts, “Daniel doesn’t take war brides. Our situations are different.”

“Either way, he defeated you, and now you’re here.” She proudly lifts her head, holding her hand over her chest. “It is nothing to be ashamed about. Daniel defeated me when I tried to kill him.”

“He used the secret technique of feeding you when you were starving,” retorts Reignleif bluntly.

Hekate gasps, and the others chuckle at her.

“Forget she said anything,” urges Daniel in regards to Veiranoei and Kalegrynten. “She’s getting back at me for other reasons.”

Hekate scoffs, looking slightly down at Daniel, who is still kneeling near the gatonine knight. “It’s a win-win, after all. Though, I’ll admit that I knew you’d be more distressed than pleased.” She grins, adding deviously, “Just like many of the Hekate game outcomes.”

Daniel has no interest in adding unwilling individuals to his group of companions and romantic partners, though he would ideally leave on friendly terms with every enemy he can change the mindset of.

Suddenly, Kalegrynten surprises everyone from Daniel's side, "If that is the custom of the Fievegal, then Veiranoei will uphold her duty."

Hekate goes pale, making it obvious that she was joking and solely trying to poke at Daniel, as well as potentially Doephluev for different reasons.

Hekate immediately objects, "No no no no no! I was making that up! Forget about it! I can't get rid of mistresses! I don't want Daniel to have more!" Ryuogriar simply scoffs, retorting dryly, "You brought this one on yourself, Hekate."

For some reason, though, Kalegrynten insists. "You were right. Daniel, even as an emperor, came to face us, and he even chose to face a knight in service, rather than his ruling counterpart, to earn the right in accordance with our customs. Honor dictates we give in exchange."

Veiranoei clearly wants to object at first, but she holds her tongue, deciding not to say anything.

Still, Hekate counters, "I told you, I made it up! It's not a real custom! I'm sixteen! I'm dumb! Don't listen to me!"

"But, you are the First Empress of the Fievegal, are you not?" asks Kalegrynten, not trying to be sarcastic or condescending, but simply confirming facts. And, as a fellow ruler, making a point. "Your words as an Empress are absolute for your people. And, even if you say it now, by the sounds of it, it very much is a custom. Seeing that your Emperor is capable of defeating so

many, including the great Hekate fell Lawson, he must indeed be a great warrior."

Hekate is speechless, and she looks to Daniel for help. Daniel finally replies, "Grand Premier Kalegrynten, I hope you are joking in counter, or trying to teach Hekate a lesson. I had no intention to have a harem, and I definitely will never choose to take anyone unwilling. Doephluev was probably closest to that line."

Doephluev quickly protests, "My Emperor, I chose to accept your offer because it was of greatest benefit to me, and it was a generous offer. I am now proudly in love with you."

Daniel doesn't make any kind of dismissive or affirming remarks or gestures, though many of the other women shoot her brief scowls or eyerolls. He focuses on the point of the conversation, "There is no such custom in the Fievegal, and even if there were, it certainly wouldn't be from an honorable duel of one day that binds a person to me for presumably life."

Veiranoei is still speechless, trying to simply keep a low profile, in spite of her speaking out when they first arrived.

And, for reasons Daniel can't fathom, Kalegrynten still won't give up. "The way I see it, your empress made a decree, and now you are trying to take it back in honor of my relationship to the subject of the custom."

"We're not lying," protests Hekate. "I… I'm sorry. I decree that the decree I made before is no longer a decree. So there. Ignore it."

Kalegrynten sighs. "I know you don't mean disrespect, but we are proud warriors, Emperor Daniel, Empress Hekate. Veiranoei will accept her duty. If this truly is a misunderstanding, I would sincerely urge you to consider the power of your words in the future."

Hekate bows her head. “Yes! I’ve learned! I’ve learned! I’m sorry!”

“There is no need to apologize. Though she is my granddaughter, she is a skilled warrior.”

Daniel finally says sternly, “Enough. Lord Kalegrynten, I must insist you end this farce. We’re not taking Veiranoei. There is no deception, Hekate will be more careful using her name as Empress. I will not steal a granddaughter and knight after a ten minute long duel. Not unless, for whatever god-awful reason, those were the terms of the duel. In this case, they were not.”

The elder gatonine rises to his feet, suddenly possessing a rather intimidating aura and presence. Daniel instinctively rises to face him, keeping himself between the gatonine warrior chief and Wenlianna, most specifically, since she’s the closest non-combatant. The Grand Premier growls, “Are you saying that my granddaughter isn’t good enough to abide by your customs? You would dishonor my goodwill and integrity so?”

“I’m telling you, there is no such custom that you would be dodging.”

The two stare each other down, with Kalegrynten completely unfazed by the height difference. If anything, Daniel is intimidated by the obvious professional fighter all but oozing tangible bloodlust. The human mechanic notices in his peripherals where Neith has passed behind the Mattarglos group, ready to spring an attack that will devastate the group if need be.

I need to de-escalate, but I can’t accept. She doesn’t want to, obviously.

“Clear the arena,” growls Kalegrynten. “We will duel right now.”

Geirahoel protests, “You can’t! Daniel isn’t healed yet! And, he’s resistant to magic!”

“It’s true,” urges Gwenesphia gently. “We came here to negotiate, not to start fights…”

“We’ll do a boruan trade-off,” replies Kalegrynten without missing a beat. “Even a wounded man can do that much.”

Gwenesphia winces, and Treia frowns. Daniel asks, “Boruan trade-off?” He hopes it isn’t a sumo-wrestling style fight. Given that boruans are probably the physically strongest -and largest- race native to the east, it makes the most sense that they’d have a simple contest of strength.

“Are you still aware of the traditions?” asks the Grand Premier, looking at Gwenesphia and Treia specifically.

Treia sighs. “Daniel, it’s just a trading of blows. Each combatant takes turns punching the other’s chest. The first to fall outside of a ring or surrender loses.”

“How about it, Emperor Daniel? Will you answer for refusing my grandchild?”

Daniel sighs. “Fine. I don’t think I would win a standard fight with you in good health anyways.”

Kalegrynten nods. “Perhaps. I am an old man, though. What I could do with your body and my experience.”

“I’m sure.”

Daniel follows the gatonine Grand Premier, who stretches his arms. Daniel does the same, and the bystanders slowly clear out of the arena floor to return to their seats. The Mattarglos healers escort Veiranoei with the blanket Hekate gave her, and they return to the area where Kalegrynten was sitting.

A gatonine man younger than the Grand Premier is ahead of the two, drawing a circle in the sand with a simple tool similar to a large scale drawing compass. It makes a perfect circle in the sand, about seven feet across, and a young boy places an ‘H’ shaped tool that he uses to draw horizontal lines within that circle, approximately three feet apart. Kalegrynten leads into the circle, and Daniel mimics him, standing with his toes on his line facing the gatonine. The spacing is obviously so Kalegrynten can reach Daniel with most of an extension to his punch, meaning in this case, he might have the advantage because he can strike with his full strength more easily.

“Nothing to it. We face each other, and we take turns punching until one of us goes down or surrenders. Give it your all, Daniel.”

Daniel nods.

The gatonine adds, saying it loudly, “Since you have accepted this challenge so soon after another bout, you will have the first strike, Daniel! Let this duel for the honor of Veiranoei commence!”

Daniel senses that he has just been cornered. *What does that mean? If I win, am I forced to take her, or is it if I lose, he’ll demand it? Damn, this old man.*

The audience cheers, and Hekate calls out, “Daniel! Win this one, too!”

With the noise, it should be difficult for anyone to hear a conversation between them.

“Before I take my turn, can I ask you something?”

The Grand Premier nods. “Go ahead.”

“Why are you so set on giving us Veiranoei? It’s the exact opposite of what everyone, including her, wants.”

The gatonine man smirks. “Withstand my first hit, Daniel, and I’ll answer you.”

The human mechanic sighs. He takes a breath and spreads his feet the way Kalegrynten is, and Kalegrynten straightens his back as he braces.

Crazy old man… What are you thinking? Is someone hurting her here? Are you just that delusional about us trying to walk back Hekate’s dumb joke? What is it?

As he squares up his fist for the punch, he keeps running down possibilities.

Maybe he sees value in a political marriage. But, for Mattarglos’s benefit, there is already Gwen and Treia. And, the gatonines don’t strike me so much as the political marriage type of nobility. Though, Treia mentioned she was set up for a political-like marriage, wasn’t she?

Kalegrynten smirks as he awaits Daniel’s strike.

No… He wouldn’t, would he?

Daniel launches his fist forward, not putting every bit of his strength into it, but making it a good punch.

And, he is thankful he was suspiciously watching the old man as he did so.

Daniel springs forward a step and catches Kalegrynten’s forearm as the gatonine starts to flop backwards. Gasps have filled the audience in shock and surprise. Daniel anchors the Grand Premier, preventing him from falling out of the ring and losing the match.

Daniel growls quietly, “You son of a… To think a man who preaches honor so much would throw a match.”

Kalegrynten looks indignant, rather than insulted. He retorts, “I did no such thing. I think you don’t understand how to win this duel.”

“I know a thrown match when I see one.” Daniel pulls the gatonine back to his feet, returning to his side as the Grand Premier brushes himself off and squares his own feet up with a suck of his teeth. “You hit harder than I expected. That’s all that was.”

“Why are you so set on me taking your granddaughter? Is someone hurting her? What is it? The last thing I want to do is take her away from her home.”

Kalegrynten rolls his shoulders, retorting bluntly, “We agreed, didn’t we? You have to withstand my punch.”

“Are you actually going to?”

The gatonine narrows his eyes. His left ear is little more than a nub, having likely been torn off in battle long ago, and which Daniel only really noticed now. His right ear draws Daniel’s attention to both when it lays flat in irritation.

“I am duty bound to give it my all. Don’t disappoint me.”

Daniel braces himself.

Kalegrynten is true to his word. Daniel does his best to be ready to be intentionally hit, and to do nothing to block it, just as his opponent did. He also has to be ready to catch his balance and prevent himself from falling out of the circle.

Tha-KRAK!

Pain shoots through Daniel, and he nearly blacks out. He could barely even see it happening before he heard and felt something in his chest crack. He feels his

head floating, and he briefly loses track of where he is or what he's doing.

Thud! The human mechanic barely manages to plant his foot and intentionally pitch forward, avoiding bending his right side too much. Pain is searing his nerve endings, and he looks down in pain, trying to determine what his own status is as he tries to clear his head and form coherent thoughts.

His feet are both still in the circle, but he was knocked back a step.

Daniel can feel a wheeze as he draws a breath. He coughs uncontrollably, which causes him to wince in pain even more as the injury flares.

He forces himself to focus and calm down, seizing control of his breathing and slowing himself, feeling the tingle and shift just before coughing, and breathing shallower than that to stabilize himself and avoid causing more pain.

He limps forward, planting his feet on the line again, and he slowly straightens himself up to ready for his own next attack. Kalegrynten states bluntly, "Never start with your dominant arm, especially if you have first turn." He sighs as he smirks at Daniel. "A deal's a deal, huh?"

"Did you intend to force me either way?"

Kalegrynten scoffs. "If you won, I would have pushed you into it, since you would have won her honor. If you lost just now, I would have pressured your companions into it. Hekate is an earnest girl, isn't she?" The last part sounded almost admiring.

"Yeah…" replies Daniel, weary from the throbbing in his chest. He is barely staying on his feet, let alone keeping his eyes open.

"If you are so strongly opposed, however, I suppose I would have no choice." The gatonine Grand Premier takes a breath and sighs. "But, a promise is a

promise.” He looks squarely in Daniel’s eyes. He speaks quietly to ensure no one can hear them, save Daniel, Kalegrynten, and the mute elemental Vaarskahana, who has been obeying Daniel and floating around him, though her expressions turning terrified, gleeful, and everything in between speak volumes.

“I assume you saw, yes?”

“Saw what?” asks Daniel, getting a little frustrated that the gatonine is delaying answering the question.

“A certain scar. It’s not the only one, and what few matchings have gotten that far have rejected her for having a marred body.” He looks at Daniel’s chest, where a bruise is already forming. “The abuse is gone, but the damage is not. I was too late for her.”

“Parents?”

“Her first match. Before they had even gotten married, he…”

Daniel holds his right hand up to stop him, wincing in pain from the motion. He grunts out, “S-Say no more. I understand enough.”

Kalegrynten nods. “She’s still young, and she’s a good girl. She endured, and she is still the kind girl I always knew.” The gatonine grandpa looks into Daniel’s eyes again to make his appeal once more, maintaining a gentle tone. “You don’t have to take her as a lover or name her empress. I only ask that you parade her around in beautiful dresses and expensive jewelry as you do those lovely women you brought with you. Make her more beautiful by raising her to the status of untouchable. Grant her the honor of standing among the most beautiful. And, if you refuse to touch her, please allow her the chance to have a lover and children. I only want the best for her. She deserves that much.”

Daniel is quiet for a moment. He's less against it than he was, but he's also respectful of the situation.

"You know nothing about my character, Kalegrynten. I have a harem of women all to myself. What makes you think she'd be better off in my hands than here with you?"

The gatonine Grand Premier smirks. "I regrettably know the expressions of a girl made into a woman before it should be her time. You have never laid a hand on Hekate."

Daniel scoffs, wincing from the pain spiking. He groans a little, doing his best to brace himself. He replies when he can, "She never lets me forget it, either."

Kalegrynten chuckles. "I've been testing you this whole time about whether or not to establish friendly relations with you. But, the moment Hekate blurted out that nonsense, I had hope for my granddaughter. So… will you accept?"

Daniel sighs. "As long as you explain to her everything you just told me, I will bring her with us and treat her as a consort in title. For all I care, as you probably noticed, she can call herself Empress and dress however she wants. But, I will not force her to do anything, so do not try to convince her that she has a duty to make me do anything more than that." Visit novelping . com for the full chapter.

Kalegrynten agrees with a hint of relief in his voice. "I'll encourage, but I will not pressure her. If she can hold her head high as one of the few, that will be more than enough for me."

Daniel nods. "Well, then, old man, I don't know if I'll survive your next hit, but let's get this over with."

Kalegrynten laughs. "'Old man', is it? Well, give me all of your strength, Daniel. I am not so old as to lose to a human."

"I noticed."

Daniel solidifies his stance. He won't be able to use his right arm, so his dominant hand is out. And, he'll likely cause his own pain to spike. He's not sure, but it certainly feels like Kalegrynten's punch cracked one of his ribs.

The human mechanic closes his left fist, gives as much behind it as he can before hurting his chest, and he lets it fly, striking Kalegrynten as hard as he can in the left pectoral region. The strike makes a meaty *'thwack!'*, and the elder gatonine is knocked into a half step back. But, given his expression, Daniel almost suspects he hurt his own fist more than he hurt the mass of muscle before him.

Kalegrynten grins, revealing every one of his teeth, which are emphasized by three of four prominent canines, and one missing. "Now, *that* was a respectable one, Daniel." He shakes his left fist, which Daniel targeted his left side in hopes that it's his dominant side, since he struck Daniel with his right before. The human combatant was hoping to disable Kalegrynten's dominant arm, though his apparent non-dominant arm in that case was still powerful enough to nearly cripple Daniel in one shot. "A sorcerer that can go toe to toe with a warrior of Mattarglos. Never thought I'd see the day."

"You really are flattering me too much."

"Not at all. There aren't many who would stay standing after that first punch." He shows his right hand, which trembles when he simply tries to close his fingers. "I'm quite certain I broke my hand." He flexes his shoulders and squares up again for his turn. "I gave you my all. Feel proud, Daniel."

“I’m about to die, aren’t I?”

The gatonine grandpa laughs boisterously, truly jovial and amused by Daniel’s quip. The human mechanic’s own chest is tight, and he can barely move at all now just from the recoil of pain from his off-hand punch.

Kalegrynten takes his stance and brings his left fist up, keeping his right loose and out of the way. Assuming he’s telling the truth, he must be in immense pain as well, but he looks like he just discovered gold.

He takes a nice, deep inhale, exhaling through tight lips to focus.

Daniel winces, but he does his best to straighten up. He is resigned to his fate, but he’ll face it with his head held as high as he can. It’s the least he can do if it means everything works out for the best scenario.

***

Rikuto sits on the throne with his head in his hands, doubled over in disgust and anxiety. As with the scouts, there hasn’t been a single message from the large army group he sent to investigate the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan.

I knew it. That wretched woman has turned traitor. I should have known better than to trust her. But that doesn’t explain how messengers have been unable to flee the battle. Surely, even one survivor was able to escape.

He looks at the advisors and Tulaxxas, the prime minister, as they inspect the guards and seating for the nobles in preparation for the formal audience. Rikuto’s duties as king never stop, and among those duties is an outdated tradition of having to witness the graduation of apprentice mages and artisans for the royal court.

The problem is, Rikuto isn't the only one who knows about the disappearance of the military forces in the Grand Duchy, and private scouts for the various lords have disappeared just as thoroughly as those of the Royal Army. No one is able to gain any information on the status of the largest territory in the kingdom of Mornistae. It's as if those who cross the border into Stalvaltan territory cease to exist.

What is he doing? There is no smoke, no survivors, and they're finding every scout. What I wouldn't give for radio technology. I'd even settle for telepathy, but it's not taught in any of the magery schools of Mornistae.

And yet, Rikuto was able to find several grimoires in the castle library's secret collection describing hypnosis magic of various kinds. And, it just so happens that Rikuto's special ability of healing provides a massive affinity for influencing the mind.

He has teetered on the decision to begin using it. He is growing truly tired of dealing with so many insubordinate lords and ladies, and Daniel has made many allies that could be the only way to get close enough to him for a definitive strike.

The otherworlder king sighs and puts his hands together. He whispers quietly, trying not to draw attention to himself. "*Gracious goddess Ryukana… I am running out of places to turn, and you said when I need help… you would be willing to help me. I need you now. Please grace me with your wisdom and guidance.*"

The last time she showed herself to Rikuto was over a year ago, and she said nothing about Daniel building an atom bomb in this world that he had no business being in. Given how long he has been allowed to live, she may not be

paying that close of attention to the world. But, she did promise to help if he asked for it.

And at that time, she simply appeared as if from the air itself, emerging from the shadows of the arcades to speak to her summoned hero.

She carries no presence, and her steps are completely silent. Even without making a sound or giving any indication of approach, it doesn't feel like she sneaks up on anyone. It can be a little surprising how she appears, but her presence is quickly comforting and easily welcome.

A robed figure steps up alongside Rikuto, as if she had been standing just a few steps behind Rikuto and approached when summoned. Her voice is tender and soft, with a calming tone that brings tranquility and ease upon hearing it. "I am here, Rikuto."

"I need your help. Daniel, the American that arrived in this world at the same time I did, has become a serious problem."

"A problem, you say?"

"Yes. I don't know how much you have been observing us on this world, but Daniel did *that* here."

"You'll need to be more specific, my dear Rikuto. I don't know what '*that*' is. From the looks of it, both of you have been quite busy."

It should be pretty obvious. There's only so many things Rikuto would need help with, especially considering that Daniel is an American. *That* is one of the worst things that has ever happened to Japan in its entire history.

"I'm talking about *that*. He did the one thing that makes him a greater threat than the Demon Tyrant you summoned me to defeat." He's trying to keep his

tone quiet so he doesn't draw attention to their conversation.

Ryukana seems to be thinking, and she asks cautiously, "Do you mean defeating the demon ruler himself? I would think…"

"NO!" snaps Rikuto. He winces, correcting his tone quickly. "No. Forgive me." He gestures with his hand to reassure everyone that just looked that it's alright. Ryukana, standing upright in her robe that hides her appearance, didn't even flinch. "He built *those.* And, he's using them to shift the balance of power in this world. He's out of control."

Again, the goddess is quiet. "I'm not sure why you're being so vague. You won't die if you just tell me the story with the basic details, right? Or, are you trying to keep me in suspense?"

Rikuto sighs. *Is she an American? How can she not know what's going on? How many things can a reckless American make that would be a danger to a whole world?*

"I'm talking about *those* weapons that destroyed entire cities in Japan. I don't know how he did it, but he did that and tested them. I fear he's preparing for a major offensive."

"I see… That could be a major problem," replies the goddess softly. "There are restrictions on me, you could say, but I will seek permission to return a divine summon. I don't know if there's precedent, though."

Rikuto sighs. *At least we're getting somewhere. He can do whatever he wants in America. He was nobody there, so he won't be able to do any more harm.*

"Thank you, my goddess. But, is there anything you can do in the meantime? Can he be stopped, or for *them* to no longer be his?"

Ryukana is silent for a long time, and he looks at her. Her expression softens into a smile, though he's not sure what expression she was making a moment ago. "I don't sense any immediate danger, but if he attempts to use *them*, I'll intervene directly."

Rikuto bows his head. "Thank you, goddess."

She nods. "Then, if you'll excuse me, we'll be in touch."

Rikuto sighs as she walks behind him and disappears. He finally feels a little relieved. The invasion is something the army can deal with, though he'll have to send the rest of them in to ensure whatever force is in the Grand Duchy, they are overwhelmed. *I should contact the Empire for assistance. It's clear Aramellianna has turned traitor, and the Empire will absolutely step in to regain control.*

Thankfully, he can have the peace of mind that Daniel shouldn't be a direct factor anymore; at least in terms of his terrible weapons.

***

Ryukana arrives at the Citadel in her private quarters, sighing. "Ughhhh… Was he always like that? What was with that pointless vagueness? I should have kept going. What was there to gain from withholding specifics from me? I'm not his enemy." She takes a seat on the prototype recliner Daniel designed, and the workers of the Fievegal successfully assembled. It's surprisingly comfortable, even for her, who had great luxury in the Divine Realm. She looks up at the ceiling idly. "And, does he think I wouldn't know about his weapons if he's asking me about Daniel's? Let me just snap my fingers and erase Daniel from existence because you asked me to, even though you're essentially doing the same thing." She slouches in the recliner. She doesn't feel especially divine

right now, so she doesn't care. "It's not like they'll cease to exist if he never says the words 'atom bomb'." She sighs again. "It would have been nice if they could have gotten along all along, but… that doesn't seem to be very likely anymore."

She sits up for a moment, thinking deeply. "Daniel is already moving to stop Rikuto's weapons, which means they'll likely clash. I wonder if I should warn him, or keep this conversation to myself. It's a little unfair to either of them to take sides specifically. And, I have already helped Daniel…" She groans. "But, of course, Daniel did what I summoned Rikuto to do; he destroyed the Devourer, which would have consumed the whole world." She stares distantly at her wall as she thinks about her superiors. "I wonder if I'd be able to get permission to perform a return. It might be best to send one of them home, and the way it's looking…" She turns her eyes to the northeast, where Daniel is. She still can't detect him unless he's close by, since his presence is buried beneath the mana of the world and all of the extremely powerful sources of mana in his companions. Thankfully, they are easy enough to trace due to the bright glow of their combined mana in comparison. Ryukana smiles. "Well, either way, it's nothing I can do right this moment."

Ryukana makes her way out to observe those who stayed behind in the Citadel.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 114: Honorable Fools

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 114: Honorable Fools

Daniel slowly opens his eyes as he feels a gentle motion of fingers through his short hair, as much petting him as idly combing his hair as a soft humming comes from directly above his head. The tune is gentle and slow, unfamiliar to Daniel, but no less peaceful and comforting than a lullaby.

The ‘who’, though, is a little surprising. Petting the top of his head as it rests on her lap is Vaergraes, the former-demon queen and now archpriestess of the Uhl’tall living in the Fievegal. In general, she’s a fairly reserved and laid-back advisor, consulting on worldly affairs, though more experienced with the demon-kin and the tribes that she was able to unite for purposes of fleeing the Devourer.

She and Daniel have regularly had a cordial relationship, but she looks genuinely gentle and affectionate as she hums with her eyes closed, idly letting Daniel rest.

He shifts, and she twitches, murmuring, “Oh! You’re awake, Daniel. Welcome back.” She watches him as he sits up, and Daniel looks around. They’re still in the arena, and Hekate, specifically, seems to be getting lessons on some kind of magic from Ryuogriar and Reignleif. Geirahoel and Wenlianna are strangely not present, and the others are mingling with various people of Mattarglos.

Daniel replies gently, “Thanks. Sorry, I was a little surprised.”

She puts on a slightly disappointed smile. “Were you disappointed that it’s me?”

“N-No! Of course not! I’m just… surprised. Hekate or the dragons, maybe, but…”

“But, we have never been intimate?” asks Vaergraes, knowing the answer.

Daniel nods once to confirm.

She smiles gently. “I am still a woman, and we still spend plenty of time together, do we not?”

“Uh… When you put it that way…”

She smiles, cupping her cheek, “This worked out, since Ryuogriar expended most of her magic initially healing you, and I had to continue. Hekate is now attempting to learn healing magic in a hurry.”

Daniel chuckles. “I see… That… explains some of it.” He touches his chest, which is no longer in screaming pain or bruised, though he can feel a little soreness, and he’s rather tired. “Thank you, truly, Vae.”

She smiles happily. “My pleasure.”

“Are… archpriestesses allowed to be lovers? Because I wouldn’t mind sneaking off with you.”

She giggles. “I accept, though, not right now, I’m afraid.” She puts her hand on his thigh, adding softly, “I’d prefer to move slower than… some of the others, but, I’d like to… demonstrate some Uhl’tall ‘customs’ when we return to the Citadel.”

“Sounds like a plan.” Daniel takes her hand, and he brings it up so he can kiss it, causing her to blush. “I don’t like to be presumptuous, but now that I know,…”

She chuckles, joking, “I understand. And, it looks like our private time is now at an end.” She looks to the side, where Hekate notices that Daniel is sitting up. “Daniel!”

She abandons her attempt at healing and runs over to Daniel and Vaergraes. The human mechanic climbs to his feet, taking Vaergraes’s hand to help her up. “Hey, Sweetpea!”

“Are you alright? Are you still in pain? I can try healing you next!”

Daniel pets her head, and she scowls lightly at him. “I’m fine now, thank you all.” He scratches his cheek, glancing at the Grand Premier, who is talking boisterously and cheerfully with Neith and Magnir. “How’d I do?”

Ryuogriar chuckles as she hears this, having approached, and Hekate replies, “You got real beat up, but you kept staying in the circle! It was awful to watch! Don’t do that again!” She hugs him, and Daniel wraps his arm around her back. “Why not? It was kinda fun… in a dumb way.”

“One might call it a barbaric practice,” replies Ryuogriar softly as she smiles. She cups Daniel’s cheek, adding tenderly, “Mukori.”

“Regardless of the lack of elegance, it was an impressive display,” replies Vaergraes. “I’m not sure of the details, but gatonines descend from dattakoriens, and the average dattakorien is stronger than the strongest humans. I wouldn’t be surprised if the Grand Premier has more dattakorien than gatonine in him from what I saw.” She smiles at Daniel. “It’s no wonder you seem to find trouble wherever you go. You’re a tenacious one, Daniel.”

Daniel chuckles. “I don’t know about that. Maybe too dumb to surrender.” He remarks softly, “I’m a little surprised that display didn’t put me on my way back home alone.”

“Why would that be?” asks Hekate. “You survived. Barely. Of course we’d heal you and go home with you.”

“I think he means losing,” replies Ryuogriar, and Daniel looks at her. He doesn’t confirm or deny, but that’s exactly what he means. He’s not trying to be insecure, but he’s still not sure why and how he got lucky enough to have a harem in a fantasy world.

Ryuogriar steps in closer, and she leans against his right shoulder, pressing herself against him affectionately. “The reason, Mukori, is that you are still Mukori. If I believed after a single fight that was massively restrictive against you that you would be unable to protect us with everything else you tend to do, I would be a greater fool than you two for doing such a foolish contest.”

Daniel chuckles. “After the first two punches, I wanted to see how far I could go. Not like third and fourth would unbreak my ribs.”

“But it WOULD make them worse!” snaps Hekate, bopping his chest with her head.

Doephluev makes her sudden appearance, walking up from behind. “My love, if anything, it was nice to see you lose for once. It makes you less intimidating.”

Hekate scowls, but she adds softly, “I don’t like to agree with her, but… It does remind me to be careful, since you can be hurt very badly, and I need to be stronger so I can help you more.” She looks up at him, adding, “Next time, I’ll duel! I’m the ruling empress, after all! It should have been my responsibility.”

Daniel pets her head. “This might not make the most sense, but a fight… can be a kind of bonding experience for men. Especially a friendly competition.”

The four women with him all sigh in unison. But, as if to confirm, Kalegrynten and Veiranoei approach, followed by the two male dragons. “Daniel! Glad to see you’re alright after that! I truly underestimated you.” The muscular feline man approaches with his arms out, and Daniel steps clear of Hekate and Ryuogriar, being hugged by a bear of a short man. Kalegrynten chuckles as he pats Daniel’s back, and Daniel does the same. “Thanks. Though, It’d hurt my pride a bit if you told me you were going easy on me.”

“Hahahaha! I wish! I’ve never broken so many bones!” The gatonine leader grins up at Daniel with his hands on his hips.

“You broke yours yourself, though,” remarks Daniel.

“Ah! True, true, but you made me do it.”

“Grandfather, you really did go overboard…” remarks the gatonine knight, though she’s no longer dressed in her armor. Instead, she’s wearing a fairly simple-looking outfit that kind of reminds Daniel of Kera’tai’s ceremonial dress when she’s dressed ‘fancy’. Veiranoei’s outfit has a kind of ‘tribal’ feel to it; lightweight and made of several pieces of fabric stitched together in a way that makes several varying layers. She looks much more feminine and cute, rather than a hardened knight.

Kalegrynten lets out a playful, “Baaah, it was a fun match.” He looks up at Daniel, still looking like he’s over the moon. “Emperor Daniel kos Lawson, you’re a friend of the Daenaskult household, and I, Grand Premier Kalegrynten Daenaskult, formally welcome you to the great country of Mattarglos.” He then bows respectfully to Hekate, “And, your Greatness, Empress Hekate fell

Lawson, I do humbly apologize for causing you distress, but I am pleased to have formed such a strong bond."

Hekate sheepishly nods. She still feels a little guilty about him using her words against her, though the reasoning was that she only made it a possibility, and he was desperate to help out his granddaughter, even if it's in a strange way. "Th-Thank you. D-Daniel needs more guy friends, so… I approve of you."

Kalegrynten bursts into laughter. "Thank you! Thank you. That means a lot."

Daniel asks, "Do you not use nobiliary particles, Kalegrynten?"

"You mean all those 'kos's' and 'pels' and such? Not in Mattarglos. We'll use them in other countries for decorum. Did the Baron's daughter; Lady Gwenesphia, was it? Did she not explain that?"

"We hadn't discussed it, and we met at Fort Peony, so she never introduced herself with her full name."

"I see. Well, in any case, I have to run an alliance with the Fievegal through the Council, but I don't foresee any meaningful objections. Ullsten has already been in touch with your Gwenesphia and Treia, and he has pledged support."

"About that," starts Reignleif, who appeared at some point. "We would like to discuss the possibility of us addressing the high population of monsters in Mattarglos."

This stuns Kalegrynten, and Veiranoei gawks at the blue dragon in human form. She then looks at Daniel and Hekate, murmuring, "Wh-What…?"

"Y-Yes, what?" asks the Grand Premier.

Daniel explains, “Gwen and Treia mentioned that Mattarglos is plagued by an unending supply of monsters, and we have some theories on how to alleviate it.”

“Y-You do?” asks Veiranoei, suddenly stepping close to the human mechanic and looking urgently up into his eyes. Kalegrynten pulls her back gently, replying skeptically, “Mattarglos has been battling monsters for generations. What sudden discoveries would have arisen now, when all avenues have been explored and proven fruitless?”

Reignleif looks at Daniel, and he nods. The blue dragon replies confidently, though her voice is soft as always, “You’ve never had an otherworlder investigate.”

Again, the Mattarglos residents are speechless. Hekate adds, “Plus, you have the rest of us, too! I’ll be helping a lot!”

Kalegrynten shakes his head clear, asking seriously, “Do… you intend to bring your army in to deal with them?”

“Pardon my saying so,” starts Neith. “But, arguably ninety percent of our military’s full might are already present in this arena.”

Kalegrynten looks at each of Daniel’s companions that accompanied him. And, each of them smiles knowingly. He murmurs, “You’re… the actual dragons, aren’t you? I had heard, but… I guess I didn’t expect… you to come to our humble part of the world, save to burn it to the ground. I mean no disrespect.”

“None taken,” replies Ryuogriar. “Were it not for Mukori, that regrettable present would likely have come to pass. Instead, we are here as friends seeking a bright future of prosperity, instead of a conquest of ashes.”

The elder gatonine looks at his granddaughter, who is a little nervous standing in front of so many dragons, with another two who have gone off on their own for one of the most strangely quaint reasons imaginable.

“Did you think we were dragon-kin?” asks Reignleif innocently. “My half-sister was, so it’s reasonable. But, she didn’t have horns or a tail.”

Kalegrynten swallows, and he replies gently, “I honestly didn’t give it much thought at all, if I’m honest. I was excited to meet Daniel, and he didn’t disappoint. A host of beauties accompanying him was all I saw.”

Hekate replies proudly, “Yesss. It is good you are wise enough to recognize the truth. Ha ha ha!”

“No offense taken, Lord Kalegrynten,” replies Ryuogriar warmly. We all gain something out of this.”

The elder gatonine bows his head, and many others around him do the same. He pleads, “Please, if you can bring the monsters under control, I beg of you do so. You will have the full cooperation of Mattarglos to do so.”

Daniel puts a hand on his shoulder. “There’s no need to go that far. As Ryuo-Mukori just said, we all stand to gain. For starters, I’d like to see one of the densest populations myself. Neith, Hekate, Vae, and Doephluev, I’d like you four to accompany me for the initial investigation. Ryuo, Reina, and wherever Geirahoel is, please take Gwenesphia, Treia, Aramellianna, and Wenlianna around to meet and reassure the domain lords. Kera’tai and Aoloan, you may do either. We won’t be fighting this time if we can help it, but it could be dangerous, which is why I want to minimize who is with me.”

Aoloan says gently, “I-I’ll stay with the Dragon Empresses, Daniel. I’ll help if you need me, but I had my fill of fighting getting blown up by a savage human.”

She smiles playfully at Daniel.

“You should ask Baeka about being blown up,” retorts Daniel.

“Who is this Baeka!?” snaps Hekate. “Someone I should know about?”

Daniel pets her head, and she swats at his hand to glare at him. He replies with an amused tone, “You have already met her, Sweetpea. She’s the princess of the dattakoriens that are slowly moving to the village. She has been the one going around to gather them.”
The feldrok empress crosses her arms and closes her eyes to think intensely. “Mmm… OH! Her! I like-…” She halts her though, glaring at Daniel. “I like… that she’s not one of your mistresses.”

Daniel chuckles, returning to task. He looks at Kera’tai. “Any preference, Kera’tai?”

“I’ll accompany you, Daniel. I may be the weakest one of that group, but I can still cast some fairly strong magic. And, for some middle-strength monsters, I can use taming magic on them to influence them. It’s not a perfect science and doesn’t last particularly long, but I might be able to disrupt a group or prevent an attack.”

“Sounds good.”

Neith adds, “It’ll be my honor to protect you, my Liege.”

“You should take Magnir with you as well, Mukori,” adds Ryuogriar. “I’ll abide your plan for now, since it makes sense, and I am your loyal empress, so my duties do include supporting you where you aren’t. But, that also means we won’t need as much security.”

Daniel shakes his head. “Not an option. Magnir and Roeta both know what to look for, and they work well together.”

“I do not mind being separated for a time,” replies Magnir for himself.

“I appreciate that, but that’s not it.” Daniel gestures at Ryuogriar and Reignleif. “Numbers-wise, we have far too many VIPs compared to dedicated guards as it is. You two are responsible for the lives of the three dragon empresses, the gatonine empresses, Aoloan, and the Grand Duchess and her family. People that are all extremely important to me. Less than half of them can defend themselves against the kinds of enemies we’ve been facing. If anything, I’m taking too many people with me, but I want to ensure we can handle any monsters that might ambush us. That’s why I’m counting on the two of you to bolster defense if needed.”

Kalegrynten remarks a little distantly, “I think one dragon alone would be enough, since I doubt we’ll come under attack.” He adds quickly, “N-Not that I’m asking you to remove everyone. I just mean there shouldn’t be any interference that would require more force than a single dragon can muster.”

Ryuogriar and Reignleif smile. The platinum dragon cups her cheek and closes her eyes dreamily, swaying back and forth happily. “Mukori is simply treating us properly like his beloved wives. It truly is comforting to have such a caring Mukori.”

Reignleif agrees with a soft-pink blush, “Yes…” She narrows her eyes at Daniel. “But, *you* have to be careful too, Mukori. Neith, you must always stand in front of Mukori. And, if you must, you have our permission to forcefully drag him back.”

Daniel chuckles, while Neith smiles and bows his head in agreement. The human mechanic replies a little dryly, “You make it sound like I’m some sort of renegade.”

Hekate scowls up at him, adding in agreement with the blue dragon, “You have to be watched at all times, Daniel. You’re sneaky and crafty, and you constantly get into trouble.”

“Well, then, it’s a good thing you’ll be with me, right?”

She grins. “Yep!”

“Now, let me get suited up. Does anyone have any objections or changes to the plan?” He makes sure to look at everyone present, and Kalegrynten says, “I only have an addition, Daniel. Please take Veiranoei with you. She will be able to guide you, and she can hold her own against most monsters we encounter most regularly. If she proves unable to aid you, I ask you forgive me and protect her in that case, only until you can retreat.”

Daniel looks at his group of five; Hekate, Neith, Vaergraes, Kera’tai, and Doephluev. Doephluev nods simply, though Daniel knows her expression is a little cloudy from having new ‘competition’. Kera’tai and Neith have no opinions, and Vaergraes reassures Daniel, “I’ll focus on defense for us. Though, I ask that we go tomorrow morning. I need to recover some of my mana to be useful.”

“Makes sense.”

Hekate adds, “We can also share dinner together and get to know her a little more.”

“A splendid idea,” replies Kalegrynten. “Please, join us at my estate, and we shall have a wonderful dinner. Our home is your home.”

“Thank you,” replies Hekate. “We’ll do that. But, we’ll also provide some of our meal options. A-Assuming Aoloan and Geirahoel are willing to help…”

Aoloan smiles. “I’m always happy to exchange recipes, so gladly.”

“Where is Geira?” asks Daniel.

“Why? Because she's your favorite?” asks Hekate a little sourly.

“Do you really want me to answer that?” retorts the mechanic mercilessly with a cool smirk.

Hekate tenses, her ears perking up and her tail twitching. She then droops her ears, admitting, “No…” Daniel doesn’t want to explicitly name a favorite, but he’s reminding Hekate that the Hekate game is a rigged gamble, and Daniel will almost always say something that teases her.

Ryuogriar and Reignleif chuckle, while Doephluev does her best to hide her own laughter -which is for a different reason-. The platinum dragon teases warmly, “There, there, Hekate.”

Reignleif answers Daniel’s outstanding question, “Geira went back to the airship. She’s returning now.”

“The airship? Did something happen?”

“She chose cooking over being here with you,” retorts Doephluev curtly.

“Cooking?” Daniel is a little confused, and he pays Doephluev’s tone no mind.

Vaergraes answers, “You were unconscious through lunch, Daniel. She and Wenlianna wanted to prepare something to help you recover. I believe they will also be helping with our meals.”

“I see.”

And, only a few more moments pass for Wenlianna, Geirahoel, and Aramellianna’s serving staff to return, setting up a simple banquet in the arena itself, since the meals are all easy to eat finger-foods that Geirahoel showed them how to make, including simple deli sandwiches, fried poultry pieces, burgers, and fried potatoes in various forms. She notices Daniel right away, and she rushes without a single thought for guiding the serving staff to swoop towards him on her wings, which appear by magic. She lands, impacting Daniel when he braces and catches her. “Mukori! I’m sorry! I tried to finish and return while you were recovering!”

Daniel chuckles. “It’s alright. I am actually pretty hungry. Did you do this for all of us?”

“No!” snaps Geirahoel, always quick to snap-react. “I-I mean…” Her face turns pink as she looks away.

Ryuogriar teases, “You really cooked it only for Daniel? How sweet of you.”

The youthful orange dragon growls, “Grrr-raah! Alright! I did! So what!?” She crosses her arms and pouts. “I wanted to make something to help you get your strength back,… Mukori…”

Daniel kisses her cheek, causing her pink blush to turn red. “Thank you, Mukori.”

“Y-Y-You better eat a lot! And enjoy it.” She fidgets with her hands cutely.

Hekate whines, “Gah! I’ll catch up to you, Geira! And, you may be good at this kind of stuff, but *I’m* going to go with him to fight monsters.”

Geirahoel’s face turns serious, and she states sternly, “I’m going, too, then.” She looks at Daniel. “You should have all of our full strength at your disposal.”

“They’re only going to scout,” replies Reignleif. “It’s unlikely the problem can be solved on the first try. We’ll likely need to make something.”

“Which means we’ll need…” Hekate looks past Geirahoel to study Wenlianna, who is briefly explaining the meal to Aramellianna, before the group of them approach Daniel and the rest. “Wenlianna,” finishes the young feldrok empress.

Daniel adds for Geirahoel, “Also, Geira-Mukori, Hekate is more suited to monster hunting. I’d like to entrust you with befriending the domain lords of Mattarglos and explain to them what our goal is.”

“But… I can defeat monsters,” murmurs the young red-haired woman in disappointment. She looks extremely huggable at the moment, but Daniel stays focused.

Still, he can’t help a gentleness that enters his tone. “I’d like the forest to still be standing by the end of it.”

Geirahoel twitches, averting her eyes. Daniel adds a little more playfully in her ear, “Hekate started weak, so she has a better idea of how much force a monster needs.”

“I… I understand…” murmurs Geirahoel. She pivots quickly to look into his eyes. “You have to stay in contact over the radio thing, and I’ll immediately come help.”

Daniel cups her cheek gently with his right hand. “I’ll be counting on you to look out for us.” She gingerly uses both hands to hold his hand and arm near her face, enjoying the touch for a moment.

He is fully aware of the daggers being glared at the moment, more than either him or her, so he changes topics. “Now, shall we eat?”

Kalegrynten warmly exclaims, “Indeed! Lady Geirahoel, I must thank you. May we partake?”

Geirahoel snaps out of her trance and folds her hands in front of her waist. Her cheeks are rosy, and she clears her throat. “Ahem. Yes. We made enough for everyone here. If there is a need for more, take it up with the staff of the Grand Duchess.” She starts to walk towards the food, joined by Vaergraes, Roeta, Magnir, Neith, Aoloan, and Kera’tai, while Ryuogriar clears her own throat. “Hr-hrm. Mukori…”

Daniel, starting to make his own escape, halts. “Yes?” He gives his best attempt at sounding completely innocent.

“You were quite affectionate with young Geirahoel.”

“Not to mention Vae,” adds Hekate, cornering him with her number one rival. “Just because she can use healing magic.”

“Alright. I deserve that. Geirahoel is easy, though. She’s very expressive when she wants attention.”

Ryuogriar sighs. “Mukori, I have said this many times. I do now and will always want your attention.”

“Me too!” adds Hekate. Reignleif nods in agreement with them. Hekate then adds brazenly, “I command you to hug us and kiss us at least on the cheek

from now on!”

Daniel smiles. “Oh?”

“Are you intending to object, Mukori?” asks Ryuogriar coldly.

He chuckles nervously. “Of course not. But, don’t make me do it all at once. I will, but it’s a bit embarrassing. People will start to think I’m some sort of playboy.”

“That is the price you pay,” retorts the platinum dragon with a merciless smile. “You agreed to love so many people, it’s only fair that you show it.” She steps closer, and rather than waiting for him to kiss her cheek, she hugs his neck and kisses him. She grins after she parts lips, saying, “But, I do know better.” She pecks his lips once more, parting so Reignleif can hug him this time. Daniel kisses her cheek, and she hums happily. “I want to do something with just the two of us later tonight, Mukori…”

“Alright. Remind me, but I’ll make time when we get back.”

She nods, and Hekate takes her turn. “My turn!” She stands on her tiptoes with her lips together in anticipation.

Daniel scoops her up into a hug, and he kisses her cheek. He replies softly, “You’re still too young, Hekate. But, as always, there are Hekate privileges.”

She blushes even as she tries to scowl at him, and she murmurs, “Stupid age… Why couldn’t we meet when I’m old enough! Or, why can’t you be younger?”

“You know I’m actually old enough to be your dad, right?”

“Pfft. So? They’ll have babies with you, and they’re over four hundred years old.”

“Hey!” whines Ryuogriar.

“Just because my grandparents didn’t exist when Ryuo was my age, that doesn’t make it the same as your situation. I’m sorry.”

Hekate sighs. “Ugh… Fine! But, you know I won’t change my mind.”

“And, if that’s true, then there will be no problem.” He kisses her cheek again, adding softly, “Thank you for being patient… You know. Mostly.”

She sighs again. “Yeah, yeah.” She hugs his neck as he carries her. “Now, you should put your clothes back on. Or bathe. You’re all sweaty.”

“Let me get something to eat first, or Geira will be mad.”

A pair of arms wrap around Daniel’s right arm. Doephluev adds warmly, “Daniel, you probably really should just choose one woman to be your wife and Empress for social functions. I will accept th-…”

“Nice try!” retorts Hekate instantly. “I’m Daniel’s wife. You can just move out whenever you want if you don’t like it.”

Doephluev smiles with her more predatory smile. “I am already of marrying age, and archoneldwyn do traditionally marry, just as humans do.”

Just before Hekate can retort, Daniel notices Veiranoei has been standing nearby, awkwardly watching the whole thing. “Oh! Veiranoei. I… Did you need something?”

She clears her throat, averting her eyes quickly. “No. Sorry. I just… Grandfather… suggested that I ask you to… e-escort me. This isn’t a formal event, but… he said it would be good to practice…”

There's a pause, and Hekate looks at Daniel, who returns her gaze. Veiranoei adds, "Grandfather explained everything while you were unconscious, so… I… I ask you to take care of me. I'll try not to be any trouble to anyone here."

Hekate slumps on Daniel's shoulders for a moment, humming in thought. She then climbs down off of Daniel, and he helps her to her feet on the ground.

"As Daniel's first betrothed until I'm of marrying age, I'll allow you to be escorted by him. But, you're not allowed to steal him like *some* people here." She shoots a deliberate glare at Doephluev, who is still clinging to Daniel's arm.

The archoneldwyn woman with her cute, office-lady-like outfit and glasses, finally sighs. She releases Daniel and backs away a step as well, regaining her elegant posture. "I, too, will grant this young woman your arm, my love."

"Let me put a shirt on, then." Daniel receives his magic bag from Hekate, finding his shirt and putting it on. He then receives Nemaisol from Reignleif, and he fastens it to his belt. *Thanks for your patience, Kaeralegier.*

"{Yeah, yeah, Daniel. There were a few moments I thought you had him in that fight.}"

Hah. Yeah, I wish. We're all good at something, and being a jack of all trades does not make one good at fighting, it seems.

"{Ya think?}"

Daniel offers his left arm to Veiranoei. "Veiranoei, you look very beautiful in that dress. Will you do me the honor of accompanying me and my dear family?"

She blushes a little and smiles. "Y-You don't have to go over the top."

“I meant what I said. I won’t do anything you don’t want me to do, so if I’m about to cross a line, do stop me.”

“More likely,” starts Ryuogriar in contrast. “You’ll need to take what you want.” She grins at Daniel, and he rolls his eyes. The gatonine knight gingerly takes his proffered arm, and he walks with her as her escort. Ryuogriar, Reignleif, Hekate, and Doephluev keep close as they all join the others in enjoying the nice lunch.

Daniel makes sure to spend a few moments with each of his companions, since he probably does have a favorite, but he also wants to be fair to the fantasy he never really dreamed of.

While he’s with Veiranoei and speaking to Gwenesphia, Treia, and Ullsten, the domain lord over the towns where their families reside, Daniel listens as they describe the plan to investigate the monsters, and that Daniel already has a couple fresh ideas to reduce the monster population. He makes eye contact with Geirahoel, who is watching him from a distance, and he smiles, toasting with the fried ‘chicken’ he’s eating. She smiles happily, evidenced by her tail shifting ever so slightly and reflecting the sun.

“*{Daniel, don’t look around too much, but I want to ask if you’ve noticed the woman nearby observing you.}”* It’s Kaeralegier’s voice, the goddess who bound herself to the sword known as Nemaisol. He ‘checks his magic bag for looseness’, so that he has an excuse not to be paying close attention to the conversation between the four gatonines.

I assume there are men and women observing me. I’m a self-proclaimed emperor from an upstart nation surrounded by dragons and with my very own harem to boot. If they aren’t suspicious of me being an enemy, they probably think I’m playboy scum.

“{Maybe so, but this woman is quite possibly the most powerful being present in the arena.}”

Daniel inadvertently freezes as a chill runs down his spine. Between Hekate, Vaergraes, and Doephluev, there should be very few beings in the entire world, as far as he knows -and hopes-, who can compete with those three for raw magic power, and Doephluev is because she essentially cheated the system using the many rune tattoos and subdermal implants she had when she and the other archoneldwyns attacked. Even Ryukana believes that Hekate has more magic potential than she does, but only by a little, leaving some of the more senior gods and goddesses, as well as the two primordial goddesses that surpass her by unfathomable heights.

Where is she?

“{Like I said, don’t look around obviously, but she’s behind and to your right, speaking to Yanidere near the drink trays. Light green hair, silver eyes, extended humanoid ears. I recommend you release me just in case she is waiting for an opportunity.}”

Daniel finishes refastening his magic bag to his belt, and he ‘straightens’ Nemaisol out, releasing the blade from the locking ring, similar to a katana’s koiguchi. Just the act of releasing Nemaisol from the scabbard allows Kaeralegier’s magic negation to take effect without any additional effort from the goddess in hiding.

Daniel says warmly, “Excuse me for a moment, but I’m going to get a drink. Can I get you ladies anything?” He looks at Veiranoei first, since he’s treating her special at the request of Kalegrynten.

“Oh! Um… if you wouldn’t mind. Valta juice, please.” She hands her glass over, and Daniel smiles.

“My pleasure. Anyone else? Lord Ullsten?”

Gwenesphia shows her glass, which is half full. “I’m good for now, thank you Daniel.”

“Me as well,” replies the gatonine domain lord with a polite nod. Treia says, “I’ll go with you. I want to get some more nibbles. Please excuse me for a moment as well.”

Treia walks with Daniel, saying quietly, “Just to warn you, Daniel, he’s making subtle passes at Gwen.”

“Is he?”

She nods once. “He’s flicking his tail at you when she’s talking, which is to distract her from speaking to everyone, and he’s throwing subtle compliments in.”

Daniel realizes now that she points it out that the male gatonine has been adding in compliments to Gwen, where he hasn’t added in the same courtesies for Treia.

“I trust you and Gwen, so I’m not worried about that. If he’s a threat to either of you, though, don’t hesitate to take action. We’ll respond as needed to protect your families.”

She nods. “Thanks. I think he’s harmless enough, but I just wanted you to know he’s subtly snubbing you.”

Daniel shrugs. “Does it turn you off?”

“Nah. I know what I got myself into.” She bats him lightly with her tail, hip-checking him gently. “If nothing else, life is interesting around you.”

“I could say that about almost everyone and everything in this world.”

She giggles, and Daniel spots the person he made the excuse of drinks to study.

At first, he is afraid a fourth archoneldwyn has made an appearance. It must show on his face, because she looks directly at him as well, and she smiles softly.

It’s a very cold smile, regardless of its outwardly gentle appearance.

She has the distinctive, elongated ears that Daniel would normally associate with fantasy elves, which is a trait the archoneldwyn have, as well as the fantasy hair colors and a skin tone that doesn’t quite look like a human tone. In this case, the woman has impeccable posture, even as casually as she’s standing, and her expression is one of wisdom and grace, where the three archoneldwyn Daniel has met all had more ambitious, energetic faces.

The signs are all there, and Daniel is comfortable making the assumption.

Whoever this seemingly young woman is, she most likely is an elf.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 115: The Mechanic Meets the Warden

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 115: The Mechanic Meets the Warden

Rikuto stares at the empty plot of land overlooking the sea. The route is unchanged, and he made no mistakes. He recognizes all of the surroundings. But, a plot of land where an elegant tree was growing with colorful leaves that reminded the Japanese man of the sakura cherry blossom trees in bloom native to his homeland, is missing, as if it were never there. The same goes for the house that should be housing one of the most powerful mages in the human territories; Senn, the elf.

Rikuto only saw fractions of the elf's powers, which included the ability to share dawnsights with someone like Rikuto.

And now, it's as if Senn never existed. The elven man is nowhere to be found. The only clue is a single stone in the middle of the grassy clearing. Rikuto approaches it, cautiously reaching forward to feel for an invisible solid object.

"Your Majesty," cautions the guard leader with him. "You should use caution. There could be traps."

Rikuto stops, and he nods. "You're right… Search the area. If there are tracks, I want to know where he went."

"As you wish." The guard captain signals with his hands, and some of the guards spread out to begin searching the area while Rikuto returns to his carriage, taking a seat in the cushioned cabin of the vehicle. He grumbles to

himself, “I should’ve known better. He has been a coward all along. The entire world at stake, and all you do is run away, huh?”

The otherworlder king watches the soldiers search. There doesn’t seem to be anything other than the stone, but several of the soldiers gather around it to inspect it. One of them directs another to pick it up, and he cautiously obeys. The stone doesn’t trigger anything, and the soldiers inspect the rest of its surface. After, they bring it to the carriage.

Rikuto opens the door to lean out. “What is it?”

The captain replies, “It appears to be a message, your Majesty.” The soldier holds the stone up, and Rikuto can see scratches in the surface that spell out words.

The words declare a simple message; “I warned you, King Rikuto. You will never see me again.”

It’s the language that sends a horrified chill down the magically displaced young Japanese man.

He steps down from the carriage to inspect the characters etched perfectly into the stone, done only by magic.

“Does it mean something, your Majesty? It’s not a language I’m familiar with.”

Rikuto murmurs, “You wouldn’t be…”

The characters are perfectly written Japanese kanji.

How? How is this possible? I haven’t spoken Japanese since coming here, let alone written it. Did he pull it from my memories when we used the dawnsight spell? Yes, that must be it.

He had half a mind to try to use hypnosis magic to implant suggestion in the elf's mind, but it seems Rikuto may have actually lucked out that he didn't get to try. If Senn could pull his old language out, and even write it with a practiced hand, then one wrong move could add another extremely dangerous enemy to the growing list.

"Should we commence a search, Sire?" asks the Lieutenant, second to the captain.

"No. We need to return and coordinate the counterattack. I was hoping to enlist Senn, but that seems to be impossible."

"It was worth a try. I've heard the elves preserve balance before anything else."

Rikuto ignores the platitude. It's nostalgic to see Japanese, and he is somewhat entranced by seeing it after so long.

He takes a breath and sighs. *Patience, Rikuto. Once you get this all squared away, you can just start introducing pieces of Japan here. What I wouldn't give for a proper onsen [Jap: Hot spring] to soak in. Not to mention miso… and dango…*

He starts to order, "Take us to…" A chill quakes his whole body with a shiver, and when he looks at his guards, those who are still able to stand have turned pale, all staring towards the sea. Rikuto turns, looking towards the ocean beyond the cape.

He understands the horror in the eyes of the soldiers, as it grips him at once as well.

If the sun were at its back, the monolith that suddenly appeared would appear much like an eclipse, casting a long and dark shadow that would reach almost to the horizon behind Rikuto.

It is not a simple artifact or stone mountain, nor is it any kind of mirage.

It is a titanic creature, armored by angled scales designed to streamline a predator in the sea and armor it against attacks. It is hundreds of feet across and tall, with a rather familiar roughly-cone-like or arrow-like shape to its humongous head, though none of the counterparts to this creature on Earth could compare.

Four eyes, each as big as a train tunnel, are looking directly at Rikuto. He can feel the titan's gaze.

To him, it looks like a squid on an unnaturally large scale; so large it would have to be impossible for it to even support its own weight in the water, let alone lift its head out of the water so close to shore to study him. Regardless, Rikuto knows his eyes aren't deceiving him, and his guards can't even form words or coherent thoughts. Rikuto can feel his own legs trembling, and he's not even sure if he's still breathing.

The mountainous squid then turns its gaze, looking well over Rikuto's head towards the northwest. It can likely see quite far into the distance.

Is… it trying to tell me something? Is this some kind of sign? What is this creature?

Suddenly, a voice rumbles in Rikuto's head, as if speaking to every fiber of his being all at once. It's similar to a deep base that touches every cell of his body, causing him to tremble. *"{Human from another world, turn back. Walk your current path no longer. You have been warned.}"*

The titan looks down at Rikuto again, and he finally manages to stammer, “W-Was that you?”

“{You will not be warned again.}”

“Listen! I’m trying to protect the world! There’s another human from my world, and he has… Wait!” Rikuto calls out as the titanic squid sinks below the cliff. He runs towards the cliff to try to keep it in view. Either the ocean is extremely deep just off of the cliffside, or the squid is all but literally melting into the sea.

“I’m your ally! I’m trying to save you, too!”

The creature doesn’t respond, simply melting into the waves without a word, and without looking at Rikuto.

Frustrated, he kicks a small stick that flies a comparatively tiny and insignificant distance into the sea below him. *A beast that can talk, and it has no willingness to even hear me out? What is with this world?*

He sighs in disgust. He turns and walks back towards the carriage, stumbling a little when his legs wobble and nearly give out. He notices that his pants are wet. He clenches his fists, doing his best to regain his composure. Almost all of his soldiers are incapacitated. They’ll need a moment to poise themselves so they can return. If the beast doesn’t have the sense to acknowledge Daniel’s weapon for the terror that it is, then it is a beast that Rikuto’s void artillery can destroy as well.

For now, he’ll ignore it until the right time.

He scoffs to himself. *I wonder how much saki-ika [Jap: dried shredded squid] that thing would make. Definitely more than useful that way than it is now.*

With that, Rikuto begins his return journey once more. The army should be finished forming a defensive line against the Grand Duchy of Stalvaltan by the time he returns.

***

"*[Hail and well met, Daniel of the Earthly realm.]*"

Daniel starts to reach for Nemaisol, but Treia is on his left side, and he wants to make sure she's safe as well.

"I don't recognize that language, Miss. Is it an ancient elvish phrase?" asks Treia innocently. The woman simply continues to smile, glancing briefly at Treia, before returning her gaze to Daniel. She replies to Treia politely, "Something like that."

"I'm afraid Daniel doesn't speak many languages from this world. R-Right?" She looks at Daniel. His own gaze is focused on the elf. He unfortunately understood every word, though her chosen sentence was awkward but spoken naturally, like a greeting from a different era.

Kaeralegier, how does she know English? I barely speak it except singular words, most of the time, and I've never met any elves.

"{I'm not sure. Some spells can pull languages from a target, like the reverse of hypnosis. More advanced spells can read memories, but I don't know of any that can copy memories. As for language,…}"

If she was stealing it from me, it would be in my era's English.

Daniel replies as calmly as he can, planning his moves carefully. *"[Good afternoon. You have me at a disadvantage at the moment, Miss. You know I'm Daniel, and this is Treia. Can I get your name?]"*

“Oh! Daniel? Have you… been practicing other languages? I had no idea.”

Daniel puts his hand on her hip, pulling her close as he whispers, “Stay close to me.”

She cocks her head, becoming a little concerned.

“[Thou dost not need fear me, good fellow. I bring ye no ill will. I would’st rightly desire to speak with mine own name reserved.]” <Author note: I did my best for a brief conversation of old English gibberish. Don’t get too technical on me please lol.>

“[You aren’t screwing with me, are you?]”

“[Begging thine pardon? I dost not fully understand thine speech, but thou have not an err in understanding me, so it seems. Is this not thine language of yon homeland?]”

“[An ancient dialect of it.]”

“[Indeed, it dost seem there be conflicts.]”

Daniel switches to the Eastern Imperial trade language of Zenkon. “If it’s all the same to you, I can speak this world’s Eastern Imperial trade just fine.”

She smiles. “Very well. It will be difficult to gauge your answers if you are speaking in a different dialect.”

“Different dialect?” asks Treia. She asks Daniel nervously, “Is… everything alright?”

Daniel nods. “Yes. I’ll explain later.” He looks at the elf, replying, “If you don’t mind, I’ll call you Miss Elf for now until you tell me more.”

“Very well. Though, if it’s all the same, please refer to me as ‘the Warden’. I’ll explain when the time is right. And, your suspicion is to be expected. I only came to observe, but it seems I was noticed.” She looks slightly to her right, adding softly, “Was it the archoneldwyn? She’s quite protective of you, and I wouldn’t have noticed her if you hadn’t approached.”

Daniel notices Doephluev lingering subtly over the elf’s shoulder.

Daniel replies, “We all have our secrets. Anything in particular you want to know from observing me? Hoping to witness the magic of the Harbinger of Calamity?”

She smiles at him. “Among other things. But, it's fascinating. Either you're the most powerful magic being that has ever visited this world short of the gods, or you're the weakest.”

“Be careful who you say that in front of,” retorts Treia with a warning tone. “Not everyone is as patient as I am.”

“I'm aware.” The elf looks directly at Nemaisol. “I thought at first it was merely Nemaisol's magic negation, but then he released the blade. That should be impossible with mana greater than what I saw.”

“I'm surprised you know that about Nemaisol,” replies Daniel.

“I would hope so. I was alive when the blade was used to strike down the divine summon that was out of control.”

Daniel only needs a moment to piece another fact together. “That’s how you know English, then, even if it’s an old dialect. You’ve met another divine summon from Earth.”

She smiles. “Correct. Though, I expect that much was obvious.”

“English?” asks Treia. “That language was your native tongue, Daniel?”

Daniel nods. “Yes. It seems our new acquaintance met others who spoke it.”

Treia gingerly takes his hand, holding it for a moment.

“I don’t believe we’re enemies,” admits the elven woman. “I’ve been told a great deal about you, and I’ve researched a great deal about you. What I have seen in my dawnsights has also made a great deal of sense.”

“What have you heard?” asks Daniel. According to Erimaya, Daniel, his rifle, and his ‘god-killers’ are what showed up in the dawnsight that led to Daniel and Rikuto being summoned from Earth, which Vaergraes confirmed. If this elf has seen the same dawnsights, she may still be a threat if she doesn’t believe in Daniel’s reason for using the atom bombs. He has had Xyreko send golems occasionally to determine the remaining fallout in the affected areas to make sure it has decreased. However fast the specially armored golems lose mana is directly proportional to remaining radiation, as far as Daniel can tell. He isn’t sure of the mechanism that causes radiation to interact with and negate mana, but he has figured out how to roughly quantify the effect by making shielded lead golems which carry a similarly shielded magic device with a tiny hole drilled to the magic crystal. The rate at which it loses power is then calculated to determine the radiation levels, which he compared to one of the uranium ingots, which should have a relatively minor decay rate, which can still shut down most magic instantly.

The elf replies to Daniel’s question, “I have heard that you are out of control and dangerous. But, from what I have seen, you exhaust naive options before you draw a hard line, though you are not afraid to acknowledge a threat for what it is and act accordingly. As was the case with the Devourer.”

“I’m not proud of what I did, and I’ll never teach anyone how to do what I did.”

She nods. “I know. But, a mutual acquaintance of ours is convinced that you will strong-arm the world with those weapons.”

“Never. I would prefer no one know they exist, and I only used it because my trusted friends have already done far more than I ever could otherwise.”

The elf nods. “Yes, magic was quite ineffective, and physical attacks were all but meaningless.” She bows as she says gently, “You have my gratitude for defeating the Devourer. And, you have my respect for restraining such a dangerous power.”

“Thank you.”

“Will you tell us who you are and what you want?” asks Treia. “Daniel is more interested in stopping the war between the east and the west, which was a goal of the elves once upon a time, was it not?”

“It still is. But, our voices are too few. The Citadel is an unbalancing factor, so it may send a stronger message than we ever could. The wisdom of the past is meaningless if those of the present refuse to hear it.”

“That’s the curse of us short-lived races,” replies Daniel. “Too many of us want to leave our own mark on history. And, a lot of times, the only way to do that is to break something that isn’t broken.”

“Yes, though it’s not exclusive to short-lived races, I’m afraid.”

Her eyes trail around, and she states calmly, “It seems I have been noticed by the rest of your harem. So, let me ask you one last question; would you be willing to accept me into your harem?”

Daniel cocks his head in surprise, and he can feel Treia's grip tighten on his hand. Daniel grips her hand back gently, replying softly, "I stumbled into the situation I'm in, and I'm happy for it. But, I'm not actively looking to add more members. So, I have to decline."

"Are you certain? I am an elf you know. I can carry your legacy on for many more centuries to come."

"I've never been one that was too concerned with my legacy. It won't matter after I'm dead and gone. I'll just be dead. You're not attracted to me. That's easy enough to tell. If you just want to watch me in case I do something suspicious, then I don't mind."

"I wouldn't mind, really." She tries to emphasize her modest chest, doing her best to do her most enticing pose.

Daniel stays focused on her face, unfazed by her attempts. Though, Treia is a little more irritated, humming in disapproval.

"Like I said. It'd be different if you weren't just testing me."

She smirks at him. "Saw through me, huh?"

"You don't strike me as someone after money or to marry someone whom everyone is calling Emperor. So, the simplest answer is that you're gauging how to interact with me going forward."

"Yes, but I'm a woman. And, I have been told I am fairly attractive, even to humans."

Daniel nods once. "You are quite attractive. But, my cup not only runneth over, but has filled nine more cups and runneth them over, too."

She chuckles, and Treia adds bluntly, “I think you’re up to fourteen now, Daniel.”

He looks at her blankly as he thinks. While he values everyone he has come to care about, he hadn’t really given thought to numbers, since it would make it more and more unbelievable. “Huh…” He looks at the elven woman again. “Anyways, I’m not a middle-schooler. I can continue to function when an attractive woman is in my presence. Especially when there’s no attraction on her part.”

She smiles and nods in turn. “I see. Forgive me for associating you with those I’ve known in my past.”

Daniel bows his head. “Allow me to apologize for my fellow Earthlings. I am but a singular humble man, and so I can only truly represent myself.”

“Does your apology include Tachibana Rikuto?” asks the elf.

Daniel’s cordial smile disheartens a little. “I don’t plan on using the nukes against him, if that’s what you’re asking. Though, the feeling doesn’t appear to be mutual.”

“I’m aware. Which is why I was hoping you would turn out to be level-headed. I would like to speak to you regarding Rikuto.”

“And, how do you know him? I don’t recall catching glimpses of you in the castle when I was there.”

“I’ve never been to Mornistae since your arrival in this world. Rikuto came to me, though, I believe I have successfully deceived him.”
“Deceived him?” asks Treia cautiously. “Yes. Your companions here mostly

know who I am, though I believe even Miss Treia here will recognize me like this."

Outwardly, seemingly nothing changes, except for a slight flutter of the elf's priest-like clothing and her hair. But, Daniel notices there seems to be a little more glow to her skin, and her hair takes on almost a strange, glimmering look, like bright stars managing to overpower a bright sky. Even her eyes seem to be full of power, with glowing light of slowly varying color swirling in her silver irises.

Treia instantly tries to recoil against Daniel's arm to back away from her, and he notices that even Doephluev, who was stalking casually closer, takes a step back in surprise, while Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel immediately face them and ignite pilot flames in their mouths.

Treia pants, as she all but whispers a single syllable, "Senn…"

Daniel looks at Treia. He can feel a sort of heaviness to the air suddenly, but it seems to have terrified or startled everyone else present. Some of the Mattarglos residents have even fallen backwards or fainted, while guards and soldiers crowd around the various lords, trembling in their own armor.

Daniel replies calmly, "My friends have mentioned you once, briefly, when we came under attack from the archoneldwyns Doephluev and her companion. But, to think you could put everyone on edge by ending your concealment spell."
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Senn cocks her head with an amused smirk. "And yet, you seem to be completely unafraid. Are you truly so powerful?"

"No. Not powerful enough, actually. I noticed this with Hekate and the Feral Feldrok, who we call Mr. Lugrae now; enough mana creates a visceral

reaction, but for most of my life, I've had none at all. I can feel pressure, but I know that if you wanted to fight, we would already be in battle."

Treia is now trying to pull Daniel away, and he tries to reassure her, "It's alright, Treia. We're not enemies."

Daniel can feel the pressure decrease and fade, and Senn replies gently, "I am sorry for that. I wanted to test one final thing." She looks at Daniel, adding confidently, "You have passed. I will trust you with what I have come to tell you."

Within seconds, they are surrounded by the majority of the collective might of the Fievegal, though Daniel's companions do their best to appear calm and composed as they close in.

Vaergraes states as calmly as she can when she closes the distance, "Senn. It has been some time."

Senn bows politely to the former demon queen. "Vaergraes. I believe human-kin usually would say too long, but it truly feels like a blink, and you're all grown up."

Vaergraes chuckles nervously. "I worried during much of that time if we were going to come against each other in battle."

"As I have told many, I have long since served. I am no longer interested in taking sides."

"Then why did you come here if you're not going to take Mukori's side?" asks Geirahoel sharply.

"Because I don't want to die."

This causes an awkward silence to befall the group. After letting it go for a poignant emphasis, Senn adds softly, “I knew a day would come when not even I or the great Strylak would be able to escape the Devourer any longer. A day when the world would be on the brink of ending. And, for all of my magic power, I knew there would be nothing I could do except follow in the steps of the Outsiders, and attempt to flee this world through magic.” She then looks at Daniel. “But, then I had the same prophetic vision everyone else had. One that led me to peer into the dawn. And, it was the first dawn I could never see beyond.” She turns her gaze to Vaergraes, who is listening intently. “I knew at once we would be safe.”

“How? All I understood was that the humans would be summoning heroes. Imagine my surprise when I met Daniel, the first divine summon in likely all of our history who didn’t loyally side with the human-kin who summoned him.”

Senn nods in agreement. “It was the flash. What you all know as Daniel’s god-killers. They destroy magic. Temporarily, thankfully, but… for a beast that absorbs all magic and is resistant to physical attacks of all kinds… a weapon that destroys magic was our saving grace. Even if it meant we could never use magic again, our world would be spared.”

“I… hadn’t thought of that,” replies Daniel gently. “I was just fairly certain it would work, since the destruction is so powerful. I never once considered what it could do to magic.”

“And yet, magic returned just as quickly… without the Devourer,” adds Senn gently. When I could see the next dawn, I saw a breathtaking sight for the first time in a long time. I saw peace. Even if brief, the world was quiet for a moment.” She smiles up at the sky. “Like the rest of you, I’m sure, I saw the future.” She looks directly at Daniel again, her expression turning grim and serious. “I have seen another dawn that I cannot see beyond. As you hopefully

know, the visions are an art, more than a science, and open to interpretation. It wasn't your god-killers, but a fire. A fire that was consuming everything. Like the Devourer, magic only makes it stronger. Just as some of you felt dread a moment ago in the presence of my mana, I felt that dread as my mana was consumed."

"I have no other superweapons," replies Daniel. "Nothing that I intend to attempt anyways. I won't be using the nukes against Rikuto, no matter what."

"I think that is the problem," replies Senn, concern evident in her otherwise confident and warm voice. "Rikuto has let fear guide his hand, and he has started losing touch with reality. He has far fewer reservations about using his weapons than you do, Daniel."

"If you know this, why not just stop him yourself?" asks Hekate.

Senn hesitates looking aside, so Daniel is the one to answer, "There's nothing to say that future is caused by Rikuto living or being assassinated. I was summoned because the Dawnseer of Mornistae's royal court witnessed the initiation of the atom bomb. They hadn't perceived the Devourer yet, since it just looked like a shadowy mountain."

Senn nods, replying softly, "That's…exactly right…"

"For most of the time I was here, the eastern military forces didn't even know that the leader of the demon covenant was a demon queen. They just called her the 'Demon Tyrant'."

"I tried to make Rikuto understand this about Dawnseeing, but he wouldn't heed my advice. He just kept trying to convince me to defend the world from you, in spite of acknowledging that your world has thrived with these weapons in existence for most of a human lifetime."

The grey dragon Neith asks, “What would you like to do, Sire? If you order it, I will do what is necessary.”

Daniel shakes his head. “No. I know I’m naive, but I don’t want to become the kind of Emperor that orders extrajudicial killings of other leadership. Lady Senn, do you believe the future can be changed?”

She hesitates to answer for a moment. “I don’t know. Dawnsights change, but it’s impossible to know for certain what actions lead to the change. I have never seen two opposing futures, if that is what you are asking, indicating that, no, the future is like a river that we can’t possibly see the destination of.”

Daniel nods. “Then, making a knee-jerk response to a premonition isn’t the right move. For now, we know the threat Rikuto poses. What we need to keep in mind is something worse than the void artillery.” Daniel looks past the three dragon Empresses to where Aramellianna, Wenlianna and her sisters, as well as Aoloan, Kera’tai, Veiranoei and Gwenesphia are gathered. He calls out gently, “Wenlianna, can I run something by you?”

“Oh!? Yes! Coming!” Wenlianna excuses herself, jogging over. They were remaining cautious, since the latter group are not capable of fighting at the level of the ones that came to confront Senn, just in case she was hostile.

Hekate asks as Wenlianna is making her way over quickly, “You want to have Ahok figure out what could be worse?”

Daniel nods. “That’s right. She helped design the void artillery. If there’s some mechanism that could lead to apocalypse, as Senn’s vision indicated, then we need to bounce some ideas around.”

“Could it be the same as how your god-killers work, Mukori?” asks Ryuogriar. “I still don’t fully understand that myself, but what if the void artillery is doing the

same thing, but with magic?”

Daniel nods, “I’m open to any possibility, but I think the mechanisms are different. I don’t have the means to study how magic is produced in the body. I just know what I learned about atomic particles.”

“I’ve heard the stories, Lady Senn,” states Wenlianna once she arrives at the group, which Neith makes space for her to step up to the front. “It is an honor to meet you.”

Senn bows her head respectfully. She is a legendary personage in this world, so it seems her reputation precedes her. She does reply gently, “I’m not an aristocrat, though, so no need to be so formal with me. No country in this world can rightfully claim me, and in turn, I claim none of the privileges that would come with such belonging.”

“I couldn’t possibly. I have several of your books, which have taught me so many of the fundamentals of magic.”

“I’m glad. But, we can discuss that much later. If you would, please hear out Daniel.”

Wenlianna blushes. “O-Oh! Of course! Forgive me Daniel.”

“No need. I just wanted to ask you to do something when you conference with Ahok later.”

“Oh! Of course! Anything I can do to help.”

Daniel nods contentedly, and he briefly catches her up to speed on the conversation so far. He then makes his request. “So, when you’re discussing with Ahok, ask her to prepare some materials on the way the weapon works, and to examine any additional changes to make it start a runaway reaction.”

“Runaway?” asks Hekate.

Daniel nods. “When atom bombs were being developed, there were people who were afraid the weapon would ignite the atmosphere or start a chain reaction with all of the matter of the world, annihilating the whole world. Thankfully, this didn’t happen, but if such a thing is possible with magic, most matter in this world seems to contain some magic, as far as I can tell.”

“Mana fire…” murmurs Senn suddenly. “Yes, something like that could be what I saw…”

“Figure something out?” asks Vaergraes.

“Only that one of the divine summons of the past used a magic never replicated since, and it was… like a flame, but wasn’t fire. It could burn through anything. I still to this day don’t know how it worked. Such a thing, though… If Rikuto has a similar power,... But, for it to go out of control…” She descends deep into thought.

Vaergraes offers, “Daniel, I’ll perform a Dawnsight later and see if I can witness anything different. If I can make sense of anything, knowing what I do know about you, then I’ll certainly share.”

“That would be very helpful, thank you.” He then looks at his group. “In the meantime, we continue forward with caution, and focus on the tasks that we can deal with. If we provoke Rikuto further than we are, he’ll use the weapons again, and if we make him desperate, he might somehow stumble across this mana fire, or whatever the true threat is. If our combined group can think of anything to counter it, then we’ll start forming emergency contingencies.”

“I know you just said you don’t want to use them, but…” Treia speaks up, and she looks up at Daniel. “If your ‘god-killers’ can erase magic, couldn’t you just

use those?”

Daniel thinks for a moment. He replies softly, “If we can help it, I don’t want to. I rather recklessly used the ones I did because the target areas were already massive wastelands. A concern I haven’t brought up prior is the fallout; poison dust that rains down. The airburst was specifically to minimize it, but if we use it too close to civilization, it can still cause problems for an even larger area around the weapons.” He looks directly at Treia. “If it is the only option, then we’ll do what we have to do. But, it is an absolute last resort. If it is a fire, we’ll try firefighting methods to deny it fuel or air or anything else. Otherwise, well… I know of only a handful of ways to deny magic right now.”

Treia smiles and nods, taking his hand. Hekate adds, “If it’s just a fire, it’ll be way easier to deal with than a monster that can form its own plans. There’s nothing that can beat us!”

Senn smiles as she looks at the optimism of the group; a group that trusts a peculiar and earnest man from another world.

She adds quietly, “Daniel, that is something that separates you from him.”

Daniel looks at her, and she adds gently, “You actually put your trust in the words of your companions.”

The human mechanic cocks his head. “People I love have trusted me with their entire world and their future. I’d be a fool not to trust them with mine.”

“And, that is why you might actually save us all…” murmurs the elven woman.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 116: The Mechanic Learns About Monsters

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 116: The Mechanic Learns About Monsters

Daniel looks at the two newest additions to his team with the task of seeking out the highest populations of monsters in Mattarglos to investigate the cause and, if possible, remove it. Now that Senn has proven to be a relatively neutral acquaintance, Vaergraes suggested she accompany them on the mission to investigate monster occurrence in Mattarglos, since Rikuto should be preoccupied with the retaliatory invasion for the time being. Ahok revealed during the nightly check-in that the void artillery consumes a massive amount of mana, which required an absurd amount of ‘enhanced magic crystals’ for the necessary magic density. And, since the only known source of diamonds suitable to be magic crystals in the quantities needed for the weapons is now under Fievegal control, he can only recharge the ones he has, which is time consuming for even the small army of mages and magic artisans he managed to collect.

Daniel’s not sure where the financing is coming from, but he may be conquering a territory that will become a financial liability immediately. Thankfully, the Grand Duchy is stable enough, and ships are already being built to begin trade with the Fievegal directly, which will benefit the citizens of both territories.

In the present, though, Daniel can’t help but be amused by Senn, a legendary mage in the world of Zenkon, clutching the armrests of her seat in the shuttle as she sits with her head back, eyes closed firmly. It’s taking every bit of her willpower to relax on a vehicle even she never imagined. From what he has

judged, most of the divine summons from Earth came from much older eras, while the one that caused Kaeralegier to seal herself away came from a similar era to Daniel. But, it seems she completely immersed herself in the fantasy world, abandoning virtually all of her attachments to Earth.

Daniel didn't want to come to Zenkon, and he might've refused if asked. He's happy now, but he had lots of comforts and luxuries in life, and there's no great reason to deny himself what he can build. He has to be a little more mindful about the balance of power on Zenkon, but he became embroiled in that the moment he saved Erimaya's life. No, perhaps sooner, when he agreed to be Wenlianna's assistant.

Next to Senn, Veiranoei's seat is empty. She's in one of the corners, emptying the contents of her stomach into a disposable bag made out of a dried animal skin.

Vaergraes remarks gently, "Poor girl. You'll get used to it in time."

It hits Daniel suddenly, and he says softly, "I can't do anything now, but remind me before we return. I have some medicine for you, Vaeranoei."

"M-Medicine…?" asks the poor young woman wearily. "C-Can't I have some now…?"

"I don't…" Daniel trails off. The placebo effect can work both positively and negatively, and he knows from personal experience, this treatment works. He doesn't need to plant any ideas in her mind.

"Sure, let me find it." Daniel cycles through his magic bag, and Hekate asks, "What are you looking for? Antivenom potation?"

"Nope. Even better."

Daniel keeps some fresh in his magic bag in case he ends up on a boat and needs it for himself, though he's working on drying plenty for distribution.

And, that would be ginger, a plant Daniel was able to find thanks to Geirahoel's tireless and unfaltering efforts to extract things Daniel likes from him to improve her repertoire. Just describing it was enough for her to find a few that matched closely, including a couple she considered weeds before Daniel revealed that they add great flavor to meals, such as mint and rosemary. They aren't exactly like the Earth mint and rosemary, but the flavor is close enough, and Xyreko confirmed they are non-toxic.

As for ginger, he's pretty sure it is a nearly identical plant, down to the flowers that it grows and the root which contains the magic of the plant -literally and metaphorically-.

He finds some ginger root, and he cuts off a few pieces in small chunks, roughly the size of his index fingernail. He needs to figure out the right size for actual dose measurements, which could end up being different for a gatonine anyways, but he'll start small and work his way up.

Daniel walks carefully to the back of the shuttle, which is flying rather smoothly. He offers her one of the pieces. "Take two of these now, and take the other two before we take off again. It should prevent you from feeling sick on the way back." She nods, taking them without hesitation while Daniel swiftly gets his water canteen, handing it over for her to wash them down. It's obviously spicy, but she manages, and she coughs a little. She asks wearily, "Th-this will really help?"

She looks absolutely pitiful, but Daniel sympathizes. He has been seasick many times on smaller boats, and a few times on his carrier. But, thankfully, unless the sea was really rough, and as long as he stayed hydrated, he usually didn't

have any issues. “I personally can vouch for it. Sorry I didn’t think to ask before.”

“It’s okay…”

“If you can, I’d like to return you to your seat. It’s safer if something happens.”

She nods, and Daniel helps her up, escorting her back to her seat as she slowly lumbers forward, carrying her bag in her left hand. Daniel gets her seated, and he says gently, “You will get used to it, but it can help if you can keep your eyes on the horizon. Otherwise, don’t look at anyone or anything that can move.”

“Daniel…” groans Senn softly.

“Yes?”

“C-Can… I have some medicine, too?”
Daniel replies, “Sure.” He retrieves the ginger once more, cutting it into similar small pieces. He carefully takes Senn’s hand, turning it over while holding her wrist to help her feel secure.

She asks, “Wh-what happens if I take all of it now?” She also doesn’t look great, but she’s enduring.

“To my knowledge, the worst it should do is make your insides feel like they’re burning, with some damage possible, but…”

Senn immediately pitches the full amount Daniel gave her, swallowing it forcefully. She gasps as she coughs from the spiciness. Daniel quickly gives her his canteen, and she drinks vigorously.

Hekate taunts them a little, “For someone so mighty in magic, you’re nearly crippled by simply travelling?” She snickers behind her hand.

Daniel reassures both of his patients, “Don’t mind her. She’s afraid of heights.”

“Daniel!” Vaergraes, Doephluev, Kera’tai and Neith all chuckle at her.

“C-Can I take the rest of m-mine too?” asks the gatonine knight. Daniel replies, “Yes, though it might be a little less effective, and could trigger you to… uh… expel, if it irritates your stomach. Next time, it’ll be in powder form, which absorbs much more quickly and takes effect even faster.”

Veiranoei nods. “P-Please do.” She gets her own water bottle this time, drinking from it and taking the rest of her ginger. Daniel prepares some more for them so that they have it handy for when the group makes the return trip. Though Daniel doesn’t usually see the void bag technology in the east, Senn has one, which she stores the ginger in. He’ll try to remember to ask Senn later if she knows why that is. Just from what she has mentioned, she has to be several millennia old, but she acts very down-to-earth, so to speak. At times, she can speak like a stoic anime elf skilled at hunting evil demons with her human apprentice, observing time on a much different scale than anyone else. At others, she gets airsick in a magic shuttle.

Daniel takes his seat again, and Hekate immediately takes his hand to chew on his wrist, grumbling, “Why gyou got goo bwab abou’ tha’ thin’?” grumbles the childish feldrok empress through her teeth gnawing on Daniel’s bracer.

Daniel chuckles, and Vaergraes offers gently to defuse the situation, “If it makes you feel any better, Hekate, I am afraid of deep water.”

The feldrok cocks her head with Daniel’s wrist still in her mouth, her ears flopping to the side with her curiosity. “Wa’er?”

Daniel scoffs, and he gently pries her mouth off of his wrist, though she still holds his arm with her hands. Vaergraes also giggles, “That’s right. I don’t know why, but I don’t favor the sea or even deep lakes… like the one that spreads around the Citadel.”

“Then, why do you live with us?”

“I don’t *mind* the water being there. I just can’t be over top of deep water. I never have been able to. I think my grandfather used to take me on a boat, but I never liked it.”

Hekate ponders for a moment, and she plops back down into her seat. “I suppose it’s natural then. Daniel, what are you afraid of?”

“Tons of things. Spiders are probably the main one.”

“But there are no spiders on Zenkon!” retorts Hekate.

He laughs. “What? You want me to have fears readily available? Besides, Arachne is kind of like a spider, which is actually how I chose her name.”

“Really?”

Daniel nods. “She’s named after a woman who challenged a goddess to a weaving contest and won, and the goddess was enraged by her hubris for even comparing herself to the gods and goddesses, so she turned the woman into a spider.”

“I think you told me that one, now that you mention it…”

“Speaking of Arachne,” starts Vaergraes. “Should we need her aid, I can summon her to our location, though it will take time and most of my mana to do so.”

“Sounds good. We’ll leave her on defense with the others, though. For our investigations, we want to be small and fast.”

“There should be few monsters that can handle this party,” states Neith. “Yourself and Veiranoei will be our priority to defend.”

“Remember we’re not trying to burn down the country. We want to minimize collateral damage if we can.”

Ucahote’s voice calls from the cockpit, “Your Grace, we are approaching the location.”

“Bring us low, but keep us airborne and watch for ambushes. I assume there are avian monsters just as there are any others.”

“Of course, your Grace. Descending now.”

The shuttle angles slightly as the golem pilots it lower, and Neith asks, “My Liege, I have a request for a time when things are rather tranquil. Would I be able to learn to pilot these shuttles?”

“Of course. Reducing the roles of golems where possible is a goal of mine longterm, but we need to get our population up.”

“Thank you, Sire. If there is anything else I can do to assist, always be sure to tell me.”

“Sure thing.”

Hekate climbs up to look out of the side windows, looking down. The area they’re in consists of rolling hills covered in large swaths of green of the various trees. “This land is beautiful…”

“I agree,” murmurs Kera’tai as she watches the forest below on the rolling hills.

Daniel looks out the same window, replying gently, “It is, isn’t it? There’s something about seeing new terrain that just adds to the beauty.”

Hekate and Kera’tai both nod. The feldrok girl teases, “We should conquer it.” She looks at Veiranoei deviously, while Vaergraes and Neith chuckle.

Daniel stands up and asks, “Any signs of trouble, Ucahote?”

“None currently, your Grace, though I can identify several monsters.” This chapter was taken from novelping . com without permission.

“Is it as simple as too much mana that mutates them?” asks Daniel.

Senn, having settled her stomach a little, murmurs, “It's difficult to witness the change occur, and can be slow or fast. I’ve only encountered two people that could create monsters intentionally; an elf and an archoneldwyn. Though, I suspect the feldroks could have. They just refused to do so.”

Hekate hums proudly, “Hmm-hmm. Of course.”

“Hekate, you weren’t even born at that time,” retorts Daniel playfully.

“So!?” She crosses her arms, puffing out her chest. “It’s good to know that my probable ancestors were good people, right?”

“It’s fine, but it’s more important how their cute little descendant behaves,” replies Daniel as he ruffles her hair.

The human mechanic studies the terrain, looking for any obvious living creatures. But, his simple human eyes can’t spot anything obvious through the trees.

Senn finishes her answer, “To answer your question, I don’t know for sure. Though, it seems to be the main cause. They end up with a lot of mana for a non-sapient being, and they don’t need sustenance to survive.”

“Ucahote, any obvious concentrations of mana?”

“The center of the world, your Grace,” replies the golem without hesitation.

Daniel scoffs. “You can’t narrow it down?”

“Not in the way that living things and their mana can be detected.”

“Mana is refined in the body,” explains Kera’tai, beating Senn and Doephluev to the answer. “In the world at large, it is noise, where in a living being, it is a voice. Finding a person through their mana is like looking for their voice, and seeing how strong they are, when it isn’t concealed, is like looking for the loudness of their voice.”

“That… makes a lot of sense. Thank you, Kera’tai.”

Doephluev pouts and hugs his right arm. “I was going to say the same, my love!”

Hekate grunts, “Ugh… So, what do we do now?”

Daniel thinks for a moment. “Well, radiation is kind of the same way. You can’t hear it, so to find it, we made a device that could detect the near exact amount of radiation by clicking faster or slower based on how much is present. At least, that was one method.”

“And, you have an idea on how to detect natural mana in a similar manner?” asks Vaergraes, intrigued by Daniel’s train of thought.

“I do. And, we should have the parts we need to do it on the airship, so long as we can get a hold of glass from a craftsman back in town.” He looks at Veiranoei, who is also recovering from her airsickness.

“Glass? Th-That’s all you need?”

“Yes. Wenlianna once explained that glass glows pretty easily when exposed to mana because it dumps the mana just as quickly.”

Senn retorts a little coldly, “I would like to think someone would have noticed if glass could track down mana.”

Daniel smiles. “And, if the device I intend to make existed already, then I probably wouldn’t have anything to offer Mattarglos. I’m not a fool. Well, not in general, anyways. I know greater minds than mine would have been pursuing answers to the monsters for much longer than I could ever hope to live, but one of my favorite quotes from my world is this; ‘if I have been able to see further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.’ Sir Isaac Newton.”

Senn remains quiet, accepting his answer. Hekate counters, “Daniel, you’re going to live forever. Me and *those* women will make sure of it.”

He chuckles and pets her head. “That remains to be seen, Sweetpea. So, what do you guys think? Should we investigate the ground a bit, or return and make a mana detector first?”

“I’d like to see these monsters myself,” replies Hekate. “We need information to formulate a battle plan! R-Right?”

Daniel nods. “That’s right.”

“I agree with her Greatness,” adds Neith. “Though I sense nothing strong enough to bring harm as long as we’re careful, knowing the class and types of

monsters present should help us narrow down the possible sources once the mana detector is operable."

"I care not what we do, so long as I get to remain by your side," replies Doephluev with her usual smug-edged affection. She's not instigating Hekate the way Ryuogriar does, but using the art of repetition to continuously insist on being closer to Daniel. Regardless, Hekate snatches Daniel's left arm, pulling him towards herself. "Yeah, yeah. We get it. You're an evil seductress."

Doephluev giggles, "Oh my! You flatter me."

"Any objections to scouting the ground?" asks Daniel to finally move forward.

Vaergraes smiles, shaking her head, and Senn, Kera'tai, and Veiranoei also have no objections. Daniel instructs Ucahote to land them outside a rough area containing more monsters, and he equips his weapons, checking Nemaisol.

"{You know, Daniel, I could detect mana for you. Want me to make the clicky sounds of a Geiger counter?}" A crackling sound starts to come from the sword, and Daniel quickly replies, *Please don't.*

"Daniel?" asks Hekate, looking at Nemaisol.

"Don't ask."

She stares at the sword for a moment, deciding she has a pretty good idea of what occurred.

I appreciate the offer, Kaeralegier, but I think the device will narrow it down better, and others will be able to use it. Plus, I assume using you to detect mana will cause you to absorb more mana than you can waste.

“{Hmm… A fair point. I’ll stay in standby, then. Don’t hesitate to draw me. Like little Hekate, you are racking up quite a large debt to me. Eeheeheehee!}”

Daniel sighs to himself, though Hekate twitches. “Daniel, I feel like I was just insulted.” She glares at the sword.

“Just your imagination. Let’s go.”

The group finally disembarks the shuttle, and Daniel carries a semi-automatic rifle at the ready. Hekate carries her ice blaster, and Veiranoei grips her sword cautiously as she follows them. Senn withdraws a staff of her own from her magic bag, which looks like a very old branch from some kind of tree with a multi-pointed crystal that kind of looks like the head of a mace, but glows with a myriad of colors that swirl slowly within. Kera’tai is carrying one of Daniel’s sidearms, but she is primarily using a true magic staff to defend the group with magic.

Senn remarks, “Interesting. Though I assumed ‘demon staves’ were firearms, they do not match what was described to me in the past.”

Hekate boasts, “That’s because Daniel’s weapons are the strongest and most amazing ever.”

“They certainly hurt a lot,” adds Doephluev with a coldness.

“It is an interesting idea, but I don’t understand how a projected chunk of metal can compete with magic.”

Neith chuckles, “Then, you’ve never been hit by one.” Neith lifts his bangs to show the scar on his forehead where Daniel’s railgun wounded him badly enough that it wouldn’t heal without substantial amounts of magic, and Neith

decided to keep it as a conversation piece and a badge of honor; “This is proof that I narrowly survived the Harbinger of Calamity.”

Kera’tai chuckles nervously in agreement with Neith. She wasn’t shot, but witnessed the power of his firearms firsthand as she saw the first dragon fall to a single human soldier.

“Looks like little more than a scratch.”

“And yet, it pierced through mithril.”

Senn goes silent.

Daniel adds, “Humans of Earth have been making better armor for our entire history, and for every improvement to armor, we developed a better bullet. Well, after the advent of firearms.”

“Ahead,” interrupts Doephluev. “There’s a monster approaching.”

The group spreads out a little and takes cover behind trees. While the mages have very little to fear, the purpose is investigating.

What emerges from the brush is a being roughly the size of a German shepard, but with a very different body. It reminds Daniel of a gigantic ferret, and its fur is messy and spiky looking. But, he recognizes the species.

He whispers, “A benki?”

Hekate is crouching directly in front of him, studying it as well. Neith whispers in reply from behind another tree, “That’s right, my Liege.”

“More specifically, a kamaitaizen benki,” clarifies Doephluev from behind Daniel with her back against his. “It can use wind magic.”

“We should avoid engaging it,” urges Veiranoei. “We need a centurion and a binding mage to bring one down.”

“Why?” asks Hekate smugly. “We have the Feldrok Sorcerer. Heeheeheehee!” Her tail bats Daniel excitedly, and she requests, “Let me shoot it, Daniel. I can hit it from here.” Hekate aims her ice blaster, but Daniel gently puts his hand on her shoulder.

“Not yet. If either of us open fire, every monster in a mile radius will know we're here. Neith? Can you handle this one?”

“Leave it to me, Sire.” The grey dragon in human form vanishes in a seeming puff of smoke.

“Hrmm… I thought we came here to practice fighting monsters without destruction.”

“My Love is obviously concerned about hidden tricks behind the magic of these monsters. The thorusk hakkadel was able to counter his railgun.”

Hekate gasps. “That's why you haven't been practicing with it! And why your face smelled like the targets instead of normal.” She cups his helmet, trying to remember if he had any new scars on his face.

Daniel chuckles, but he confirms, “She's right. The one disadvantage to using unprecedented means is that the consequences are also unprecedented. Given what Veiranoei just said, a reliable strategy for a… kamai… uh, kamaitachi benki? It is to draw it in by withstanding its attacks and then trapping it with powerful magic for the centurion to finish off.”

Veiranoei gasps. “Th-That’s right! How did you…?”

“That much is rather obvious, I would hope,” replies Senn. “Lightweight monsters are what tank roles are for.”

“Tank… role?” asks Veiranoei.

“You'd waste a whole tank on a small-fry like that?” asks Hekate. Vaergraes also looks unsure.

Daniel explains, “She means a combatant that specializes in the front line, specifically drawing out enemy attacks and protecting others. It was named after the vehicle, since tanks are notorious for being immune to conventional attacks, including most rifles. You know, until anti-tank rifles were developed.”

“And then, became anti-dragon rifles, yes?” jokes Kera’tai warmly.

Hekate hums, understanding his explanation. “Yes, I see. Makes sense. I… think.”

“I’ll explain better later, Sweetpea. What I really wanted us to see is this;” He points at the kamaitaizen benki. Suddenly, a gust kicks up around it, and it leaps almost instinctively away from the side the gust originated on.

Hekate jumps to her feet. “How did it-…!?”

Neith, having been disrupted by the gust, is now visible, and though he didn’t take any damage, thanks to his armor, he is noticeably surprised, even from the distance the rest are.

Daniel explains, “The lightning bear had a passive effect with its lightning, which discharged to defend it. It could intercept ranged attacks, including bullets.”

“How?” asks Vaergraes. “I’ve never heard of monsters creating magic barriers.”

“It wasn’t. Lightning can travel faster than a bullet, which is closer to the speed of sound. The kamaitachi benki seems to have a passive wind current around it that is a lot more potent than it appears. It can probably deflect projectiles, especially arrows. I doubt it would have survived either of our weapons, but it’s what I wanted to see.”

The group watches as the benki is startled by Neith’s appearance next to it, but he quickly lunges at it, snatching it by the neck and then pivoting its head violently, silencing it at once, even as the wind picked up briefly when the benki tried to defend itself.

“Alright, I think we can move closer. Stay alert.” Daniel stands up, patting Hekate on the back. She and Doephluev bound into step with him, and Hekate asks, “How did you know?”

“I made an assumption based on another monster I met. But, I used a method to test it. The basics of science.”

“Mm-hmm. Makes sense,” replies the small feldrok empress.

Senn, Veiranoei Kera'tai and Vaergraes join the three in walking towards Neith, who waits patiently, studying the monster he just finished.

“For someone supposedly lacking magic, Daniel, you are rather observant,” remarks Senn.

“I probably got pretty lucky this time, but I wanted to expect something along those lines.” He touches his own cheek, which is protected by his helmet this time. “I got lucky last time that I was able to learn the lesson.”

“Hmm… I see. Well, from what you’ve told me, it’s impressive you’ve come as far as you have. But, does it bother you that you are surrounded by people far

stronger than you are?”

“No. We have a common goal, and Hekate becomes the Master of the Citadel if anything happens to me. I’d wish them luck.”

Hekate grumbles, “Don’t even joke about that, Daniel. It won’t stop anyone.”

“Which is why, if I’m ever taken hostage, it shouldn’t stop you. Anyone trying to manipulate you will only ever kill me anyways. Risk my life and save me, or you’ll lose either way.”

She hesitates, but Doephluev murmurs gently, “He’s right,… your Greatness. Brosjak had no intention of turning the dragons over, even if Daniel won. He would have laughed to his death just to relish in Daniel’s anger.” She gingerly holds her hand on his forearm so as to not get in his way if he needs to aim his rifle, but for once, she doesn’t have her usual confidence or arrogance.

Hekate is also quiet for a moment, but she replies softly, “I-… I’ll always save you Daniel, because I know you’ll always save me, too.”

Daniel smiles. “Good. But let's both do our best not to be captured.” He looks at Senn, adding, “I trust the people around me. Even the most dangerous ones.” He said it to reassure Doephluev, and he can feel her twitch, her grip tightening a little on his forearm.

She does sigh, though. “You’re too trusting, my Love. Even if…”

Hekate grumbles, “For once, I agree with you.”

The mechanic chuckles. “I’m glad that you guys have all been good at heart. After all, I trusted you with my life before anyone else, Sweetpea.”

Hekate hums, her cheeks filling with color and heat, though her own helmet hides her face from Daniel.

Just before anyone adds anything else, they reach Neith, who stands up. “My Liege. It was no trouble, but I suspect you were aware of the wind barrier before I was.”

Daniel nods, explaining his thinking again to Neith.

“I see. So, you wanted to test your hypothesis.”

“Yes, though we’ll have to be careful. The kamaitachi benki didn’t seem especially strong, and its element was relatively harmless.”

“Kamaitachi?” asks Neith. “Do you mean kamaitaizen?”

Daniel cocks his head. “Oh… Yes.” He scoffs, looking at the other six with him. “Why didn’t any of you correct me?”

Hekate shrugs. “It’s a new monster for me. Why should I know?”

“I assumed you were giving it a new name, my Love,” replies Doephluev. “You are the Emperor.”

“I knew what you meant,” adds Senn.

Vaergraes smiles. “You said it rather naturally, so I was going to ask if it’s a name from Earth.” Kera’tai nods in agreement with the archpriestess.

“I… didn’t think it was my place,” murmurs Veiranoei. “A-After all, I’m… a concubine in name only…”

“I prefer consort, and your opinion will always matter to me. As you can see, I can be wrong.” He looks at the Uhl’tall priestess next. “And, kamaitachi is a

spirit reminiscent of a weasel, and which has blades for paws, or wind blades; something like that. And they ride on the wind."

"Ahh!" cheers Hekate. "Then we should just call it that! It's just like the one from Earth!"

"It was more easily defeated than I assume a true kamaitachi would be, though I doubt even in Japanese mythology, a kamaitachi could go toe to toe with a dragon for very long. Though, I don't know."

There's a sudden cacophony of chaotic noise, similar to a bunch of small mammals yowling. Everyone turns towards the epicenter of the monster zone they identified. The spread of the sound was quite wide, and it was definitely more than one creature.

Senn jokes as she readies her magic staff, "It seems like you'll get to gauge it for yourself, Daniel. I do hope you get whatever information you seek from this."

Daniel checks the breach of his rifle and sets it to semi-automatic, and Hekate arms her ice blaster's primer.

The human mechanic trapped in another world remarks dryly, "I think I'm going to learn a lot of things. Veiranoei, stay close to me. Hekate, make sure to lead your targets if they're moving fast. The rest of you, please remember the forest is a precious resource."

Everyone confirms, and they ready themselves for a battle against numbers, which is what Daniel was trying to avoid.

What he hopes to figure out is how they noticed, since Neith managed to stop the kamaitaizen benki -now dubbed kamaitachi for Daniel's sake- from making

a sound.

Of course, Daniel has to remember that he’s in a world of magic, and as such, many things could have simpler explanations than he might think.

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3. Chapter 117: The Monsters of Mattarglos

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 117: The Monsters of Mattarglos

Ba-Ba-Bang! Ba-Ba-Bang!

The heavy mercato of Daniel's rifle echoes off of the trees and deep into the distance, drowned out by subsequent shots that seem to summon the voice of the thunder god. Hekate has gotten used to the suddenness of the shots, helped immensely by her helmet having sound-dampening to protect her sensitive ears.

Her own magic-powered ice blaster is much quieter, all but coughing up a magic orb of concentrated energy that explodes ice magic when it contacts, and she does her best to sow chaos in the ranks of monsters rushing around them.

Neith is at the front, dashing with blindingly fast speed towards the fast-moving wind weasels; magic-evolved benkis that Hekate has decided to call kamaitachi, thanks to Daniel mentioning their similarity to the mythological spirit beasts of Earth's Japan.

Senn, who is skillfully weaving magic spells that spread and intercept the kamaitachi, disrupting their wind magic, remarks loudly over the noise, "It seems an entire colony has been mutated by the source."

Daniel crouches to Veiranoei's level, who is in agony from pain in her ears. He forgot about her sensitive ears, and he replies to Senn, "Is it normal for

multiples of a group to evolve together?”

“It is more common than not, I’m afraid.”

Daniel withdraws gatonine-friendly earmuffs from his bag, putting them on the gatonine knight. She looks at him, and he mouths very clearly and deliberately, “I’m sorry.” She nods with watering eyes, holding the earmuffs over her ears.

Hekate remarks, “I feel your pain, Veira! You’ll feel better!”

Not one to wait on results, he withdraws one of his marked water skins, providing it to Veiranoei. She hesitates, but he insists, and she drinks. She almost chokes, surprised by the taste, but she drinks some.

The alabaster liquid, for where it comes from, is effective as a healing potion, as well as a stamina recovery agent. He’s not sure if it also recovers mana for mages, but given that Shek and Skloe have minimal mana themselves, it’s probably just the first two effects, which are plenty.

Surprise spreads across Veiranoei’s face, and she taps on the earmuffs. “I-I can hear again… And the pain.”

“It’s a special healing drink. You alright?”

Dirt and wind spray across them, and Daniel hugs her, shielding her. One of the kamaitachi just lunged in, but Kera’tai was quick enough to intercept it with water magic. She’s now holding it off of the ground as she surveys the monsters around her. “They do not seem to care that they are out-classed.”

“There’s very little incentive for them to retreat,” replies Doephluev, suspending several of them off the ground with magic. She uses her right hand to cast another spell as well, and spikes of rock suddenly sprout out of the ground, impaling the four kamaitachi. “They can only get stronger if they defeat us.”

“Like the feldroks?” asks Daniel, surprised by this piece of information.

“Not to the same extent,” replies Vaergraes. “But, undoubtedly, they can and will absorb our mana.”

Veiranoei, now embarrassed that Daniel is still holding her, finally squeaks, “Um, I’m… I can fight again, m-… D-… Your Grace.”

“Daniel is fine, especially in battle.” He helps her up. “Sorry again about that. I didn’t think about your ears.”

“Your staff… it’s… unreal.” She watches Hekate fire her ice blaster. Unlike the rifle, it has to be cycled each time, lest there be a risk of the mana crystals dumping magic continuously and exploding the weapon. Still, she is able to fire a powerful ice spell every few seconds without any sort of chanting or catalysts other than the blaster.

Daniel’s rifle, on the other hand, allows him to cast ‘instant death’ as quickly as he can aim and ‘cast’, which can be multiple times a second. He explains as he checks his rifle once more, “Make sure the earmuffs stay seated. It’ll still be loud, but it’s better than nothing.”

Veiranoei nods, gripping her sword as she stays close to Daniel.

He begins casting again, and the monstrous benkis that come to a brief stop to assess their next move fall instantly, killed outright by Daniel’s power.

Of course, this is the usual way for the people of Zenkon to observe his rifles, particularly if they haven’t seen them before.

And, though she is capable of fighting and faces the closest monsters to the group, she and Daniel are at the center of the loose formation, and he and Hekate have ranged ‘spells’, while Senn, Doephluev, Kera’tai, and Vaergraes

are using magic efficiently and carefully to pick them off. And, Neith is dashing between individuals, causing some to pursue him in futility, while he easily wipes out individuals that are too slow to escape him.

Monsters are stronger than their animal counterparts, and oftentimes, can be more intelligent in battle, since they are generally aware of their powers.

But, they are still no match for a dragon, the former demon queen, a deadly magic assassin, and one of the world's eldest and strongest mages.

Hekate's true strength is hidden by the fact that she is using a perfectly effective magic staff, and likewise, Daniel is unassuming at a glance, but calm and collected in battle.

After the fact, the group gathers around Daniel and Veiranoei, and she sinks to a kneel, while Daniel plops down to a seated position next to her with a content sigh. Without any hesitation or asking, Hekate plops down onto his lap, leaning back against him like it's the most natural thing in the world, removing her helmet to relax a bit. And, Daniel simply supports her weight as he leans back on his hands extended behind him.

"This reminds me a little of the Citadel," remarks Hekate. "Though, it's more crowded."

"This kinda reminds me of another point I am curious about."

The young feldrok looks up at him, her ears cocking to listen intently. "What's that? How many there are?"

"No. I kind of noticed this about the thorusk hakkadel, and some of the creatures that were living in the Citadel. I've always wondered this about manga and light novel monsters. When there aren't any adventurers around to

fight them, and no need for food, do they just mill around waiting for people to fight?"

Doephluev takes a seat next to Daniel and Hekate, earning a brief scowl from the feldrok empress. "They generally live like their former selves. The only difference is their aggression, as you can see with the normally-passive benki."

"Oh? But, I thought you said they don't eat."

"They don't *need* to eat," corrects Senn. "Monsters still gain sustenance and strength from eating."

"I see. That's good to know. And, if they don't eat?"

"They'll be a little weaker, but still very dangerous if you're not careful."

Veiranoei murmurs, "You're all so… strong. That was the fastest I've ever seen a pack of kamaitaizen benkis eliminated. And, no one was hurt."

Neith, who is picking at one of his fingers while listening, replies, "I was wounded gravely, I'm afraid." He shows his index finger, and everyone squints to look. There doesn't appear to be a scratch on it, though there is a red spot.

Daniel asks, "Did something sting you?"

"Sting, my Liege? No. I believe it is a shard of bone from one of the benkis. Perhaps a shard of tooth."

"A splinter?" groans Hekate skeptically. "Seriously?"

"Indeed, your Greatness. It is quite irritating. Imagine how grave such an injury would be on others."

She growls, and everyone shares a laugh.

Daniel asks, “Is everyone comfortable with pressing a little further in? If possible, I’d like to get an idea of whether or not this particular area is filled with just the kamaitachi, or if there’s other monsters.”

Everyone agrees to press on, including Veiranoei, though she is the least sure. She sticks close to Daniel’s left side when they continue walking, with Doephluev gracefully holding pace at his right side, and Hekate leading the group. Kera’tai follows Daniel, alert to the sounds of the forest, but carrying herself like a loyal follower.

Daniel’s question is answered fairly quickly. The trees rustle, and branches crack as something rather large moves through a portion of the forest. Given its lax pace, it hasn’t discovered them yet, and the group takes cover once more, this time remaining quiet. Whatever it is is fairly close.

As it lumbers by approximately fifty yards ahead of them, Daniel recognizes the basic body form, though he never learned the name of the creatures. It is the wall-breakers that accompanied Kera’tai, Aoloan, Shek, Skloe and the others for the attack on Fort Peony, which Daniel repelled.

This one is not only feral, but quite aberrant looking, with intense streaks of color through its thick, shaggy fur. It has a fairly slow gait, but it also seems to radiate magical power. Not that Daniel can really tell to what extent, he has some idea what it looks like; a sort of gut feeling he gets when he sees someone or something with an especially large amount of mana.

He'll never tell them because he doesn't want to make them feel bad, but there are nights he can't sleep when crowded by three dragons and a feldrok due to the air feeling foreboding. They of course won't hurt him, but he has to be especially tired to fall asleep with them.

That aside, this monster, like the two true monster types Daniel has seen so far, has elemental magic as well. Doephluev starts to whisper, “It’s a weisperant…”

The monster instantly turns its head towards the group, and everyone flinches, recoiling back into cover instinctively. The creature takes a deep breath, and Vaergraes screams, “Barriers! Now!”

The mages all coordinate to create magic barriers to shield the group, and it is just in time for a massive gust of white wind to rip through the forest around them, blasting heavily as Daniel shrinks himself to stay in cover. Hekate aims and fires her blaster, but the sudden blizzard around them doesn’t stop, indicating her shot did little to nothing to the monster.

The white-washed wind blocks Daniel’s view of the others that aren’t right next to him; Hekate and Doephluev. Doephluev shouts, “Weisperant masonrahm. Ice magic.”

Daniel notices that the light elemental that has been hovering near him shivers, and she vanishes in a brief flash of light. A white elemental takes her place, equally cute but radiating a small swirling wind of her own. She happily looks up at Daniel dancing in a circle. He can feel the monster moving, and the blizzard shows no signs of letting up.

“Uh! Hello there, little cutie! I… suppose you want a name, huh?”

The pixie-like being suddenly brightens, and she hovers close, nodding vigorously. Hekate asks, “A snow elemental?”

“Looks like it. Uh… let’s see… How about…” A tree topples and crashes to the ground. “Uh… Oh! Snowbelle! We’ll keep it simple! How’s Snowbelle sound?”

The newly dubbed Snowbelle nods, happy with her new name. She then faces the direction of the monster and puts her hands on her hips. She sweeps her hands up in fluid motions, just like she's casting a spell, and white light glows around her hands. Suddenly, a bubble seems to form around the three, who are currently only protected by a simple barrier. Now, the air suddenly falls still around them in roughly a ten foot diameter, which doesn't quite reach the trees the others are hiding behind. Additionally, rainbow-colored shapes appear in his field of view. He recognizes the shapes, though the color scheme is different. They appear ghostly and unnatural, but it's very clear who each one is.

He is seeing infrared views of everyone around him beyond the visible range. He can clearly make out Neith as he jogs around to flank the monster, only for icicle shards to rain down on his location, causing him to shield himself. Kera'tai is protecting Veiranoei, while Vaergraes is focused on creating a warming field to keep all three of them warm. Senn is firing off magic of her own, but it's clear she's struggling to hit the monster, which Daniel can see rather clearly.

It mostly blends in with the white of the blizzard, but it has just enough heat in its body to stand out to his new ability, which is undoubtedly granted by the elemental.

He sighs. "You are some handy little pixies, aren't you?"

Snowbelle grins at him. She makes a muscle gesture at him, and he can't help but laugh.

"Do you have any ideas, Daniel?" asks Hekate. "I think my blaster isn't hitting him."

"It's more likely it's useless," replies Doephluev.

"I didn't ask you!"

“Hekate…” warns Daniel. She pouts a little, and he adds gently, “She’s probably right. It’s doubtful elemental beings don’t have resistance to their own element. I think that’s why the elementals from the scarf are so effective. They’re protecting me and also give me an additional ability.”

“Really?”

“Yes. I can see everyone from their body heat, including the monster. The blizzard seems to be strongest directly near the… uh…”

“Weisperant masonrahm,” adds Doephluev to help him.

“That. Thank you, Doephluev.”

She adds instantly, “Anything for you, my Love!” She does rub her arms with her hands, and Daniel asks, “Hekate, do you think you can use your warm air spell?”

“I… can. Won’t that make the elemental change, though?”

Daniel looks at Snowbelle. “Good point.”

“I-I’ll be alright,” murmurs Doephluev with a content smile. Hekate sighs in disgust. Her tail twitches, and she asks, “Daniel! You said you can see it?”

“I can. It’s roughly that way, moving towards Neith, who is trying to draw its attention away from us, by the looks of it.”

The young feldrok empress stands up. “Very well, then. Point me at it and I’ll handle it.”

“Remember, you can’t use too much magic.”

“Tell that to the monster!” whines the young girl.

He chuckles. “Keep it to a minimum, if you can.”

“Mwahahahaha! Who do you think you’re talking to! Now, show me where it is, *Darling*.”

Daniel stands behind her, pointing over her shoulder at the direction of the masonrahm, keeping his point at its center so Hekate just has to aim for center of mass.

“*{Mukori. Mukori. Listen!}”*

“Who are you? Navi?”

Hekate works on channeling her magic into a concentrated spell, following Daniel’s finger. She asks, “What’s that mean?”

“Don’t worry about it.”

Hekate twitches as the voice snaps, *“{Mukori, it’s me! Don’t you dare tell me you forgot me already!}*” Judging by her reaction, Hekate is hearing it this time.

Daniel chuckles. “Yes, Geira-Mukori. What is it?”

“{Hmph! I don’t know if I want to tell you, now.}”

“Alright. We’re in the middle of something.”

Hekate casts her fingers forward, and a thunderous crackle and boom tears through the air, popping and crackling like a terrifying ripping of paper before the vaporized snow expands and causes a terrifying clap of thunder. The lightning bolt briefly illuminated the masonrahm, and its shaggy fur is back lit, revealing a rather frightening visage in the obscuring blizzard winds.

Daniel can see it shrug off the attack, and he moves on instinct. He pulls Hekate across him and pins her and Doephluev to the ground, just in time for wood to explode from a barrage of ice shards that rain down around them. Several hits spray across his armor like kicks or punches that are thankfully not painful, indicating he hasn't taken any real damage thanks to his armor.

"{*I'm waiting, Mukori.*}"

Daniel checks on Doephluev and Hekate, specifically knowing what he's doing. "Are you both alright, my empresses?" Both of them beam, and then immediately scowl at each other, before lovingly replying simultaneously, "Thanks to you protecting me, Darling!" "Thanks to you protecting me, my beloved!"

He then says, "Geira-Mukori, we're fighting a monster right now." He watches Neith strike the monster with a powerful punch that launches it sideways. It tumbles, but the grey dragon sinks to a kneel. He's clutching his core, like he's cold.

"{I know, Mukori. That's why I was trying to help you.}"

Daniel sighs. "I'm sorry for misunderstanding. What can you tell us?"

"{*Reina is probably the only one who can withstand the cold close to that monster. It has more mana than usual. Fire is the only element they're weak to, making them difficult to defeat with by any other means.*}"

"Any suggestions?"

Hekate replies, "Snowbelle seems fine." Daniel, Doephluev, and Hekate sit up. Senn is trying to use a light magic spell to cut through the blizzard vortex, but the ice intensifies around the monster, shielding it. It also swings its forepaw at

Neith, batting him across the ground with brutal force. Once more, Daniel has bound the hands of his allies because of his own principles, and they're the ones suffering.

"Alright, Doephluev, you shield us from ranged attacks. Hekate, you'll intercept melee attacks when we get close."

"We?" asks Hekate. "It's too dangerous for you!"

"I have to. Snowbelle is protecting me." He withdraws a canister from his bag, saying, "We'll fall back immediately."

Hekate recognizes the canister, and while she's still unsure, she nods once.

"Stay behind us, my Love," replies Doephluev as the three climb to their feet. "I'll not honor your wishes if you are harmed."

"Me either," adds Hekate. "I'll just burn this whole forest down and be done with it. So don't be reckless."

He nods in agreement. "Same to the two of you, please. Geira-Mukori, we're going to get close and disable its magic."

"{*I-I would be willing to come… if you ask, Mukori.*}"

"No. We'll handle it. If I'm going to set rules, I need to be the one that accepts responsibility." He nods at Hekate and Doephluev. "Let's go. Stay inside the bubble Snowbelle is creating. Snowbelle, we're counting on you."

The pixie nods proudly, taking a seat on Daniel's shoulder as he jogs forward with Hekate and Doephluev. The three approach the weisperant masonrahm from the side opposite of Neith, who is using earth magic now to launch rocks, though they do nothing to the monster creating an ice barrier around itself.

Hekate calls out, “Wasn’t Geira supposed to be meeting with nobles?”

“{*We’re taking turns watching over Mukori. Not because we don’t trust him, but because… just because.}*”

Daniel chuckles. “Thanks, Mukori. I’ll teach you another recipe I like in thanks.”

“*{You should have taught me all of them already! It’s not fair! But, you promised! It’s a promise, Mukori. I won’t forgive you if you forget.}”*

“Yes, yes.” The trio closes the distance on the masonrahm, which has noticed them. It bellows, turning to face them. “Doephluev! Barrier!”

She casts the spell without a hint of hesitation, and ice shards explode against the magic barrier. The wind and snow are being deflected by Snowbelle’s safe zone, but the ice shards are too heavy, even for her protection. Though, it may only be negating the weather effect.

Getting closer makes it tricky, though. Hekate is ready for incoming attacks, but she suddenly slips, falling forward onto her hands and knees. Daniel instantly crouches, “Hekate! Are you alright?”

“Y-Yeah! I slipped!”

Daniel notices Doephluev suddenly wobble, and she tries to plant her feet, only for her to slide, and she whines nervously. Daniel touches the ground. He can tell it’s freezing solid, but for some reason, his footing is completely stable. His boots are good, but they aren't that good.

Daniel calls out, “Doephluev!”

She manages to pivot and bring her barrier towards the monster again, but its massive forepaw slams into the barrier, shattering it. The recoil topples

Doephluev as well. Daniel opens fire with his rifle, firing in several quick bursts, which startles the monster into recoiling back. He's not sure if he's landing any hits, but he keeps firing. He crouches near Doephluev. "Doephluev! Get onto my back!"

She does her best to climb up onto his back quickly. Daniel can see the masonrahm lumbering towards him again. Whether it's deaf now or realizes the sound can't hurt it, it's no longer afraid of his rifle. He pulls the pin on the polonium grenade, walking back towards Hekate once Doephluev is clinging to his back. She's struggling to get her footing, and she uses magic to heat up the ground. "Hekate, we're going to run. Get ready to grab onto me from the front and hang on."

"G-Got it!" replies the feldrok teen.

Daniel waits until the masonrahm is almost right on top of them, and he pitches the grenade. It passes through the snow better than he thought it would, but it is rather heavy being lead. It bursts just under the monster's chest, and almost immediately, the blizzard begins to die down. Daniel wastes no time in scooping Hekate up against his chest, and she latches onto him, allowing him to run away from the masonrahm. It bellows, and Doephluev tries to reach behind Daniel to use her barrier, but no ice shards rain in.

Hekate cackles. "It's working!"

With the wind finally settled, Daniel calls out, "Kera'tai! Open fire!"

The Chi'rinnis mage is shivering, but she follows Daniel's instructions, pulling out her own rifle. She begins firing, and Daniel gets far enough away to set Hekate and Doephluev down, pivoting in a kneel to fire on the masonrahm as well.

Without the blizzard barrier, the bullets find their mark, and the weisperant masonrahm roars in anger.

Senn, finally able to see, fight, and hit her target, also uses light magic to pelt the monster continuously, toppling it to its side. But, as Geirahoel said, magic doesn't seem to do much damage.

Daniel switches from his semi-automatic rifle to the 20mm anti-dragon rifle, aiming quickly. Hekate flinches, and she calls out, "Brace yourselves!"

Daniel fires at the monster's head, and an unnatural clap of thunder booms out as a result. The supersonic bullet closes the distance in an instant, causing the struggling monster's head to cock, and for all other motion to cease.

Daniel exhales in relief, while the others slump to the ground.

Kera'tai complains, "Daniel! Why didn't you do that from the beginning!?"

"Because, if the bullet got pushed off course by the wind, it's not stopping until it ruins someone's day several miles away. It's important not to miss."

She sighs, flopping onto her side as she hugs herself, trying to warm up. "Yeah, well… do you plan on cuddling all of us to warm us back up?"

Vaergraes chuckles as she casts the warming wind on herself. Hekate does the same for her, and Doephluev, either having no shame whatsoever, or trying to bond with Hekate in a contentious way, whines, "Hey! Your Greatness, please warm me up!" She crowds the feldrok girl, who complains, "No! Go away! You can use magic!"

"I don't know this spell! Please! I'm so cold!" She grapples with Hekate, who whines and complains for her to stop.

“Fine! Then I’ll just hug Daniel!”

The young feldrok tenses, yelling, “No you won’t!” Now she’s grappling the archoneldwyn assassin. Daniel can only roll his eyes, surveying the aftermath of the battle.

“Thank you, Snowbelle,” says Daniel to the little white pixie. She dances happily on top of his palm. He then says, “Ucahote, are you listening to my helmet?”

“{*I am, Mukori. I have told Ucahote to pick you up. If you’d like, I’ll teleport to your location and warm you up.*}”

“I’m actually fine, thanks to Snowbelle. But, if you’d come warm up the others…”

“*{Nevermind, Mukori. Reina and Ryuo are calling me.}”*

“Hey!” snaps Hekate.

Daniel chuckles, “At least tell Ucahote to turn on the heat in the cabin.”

“{*Done, Mukori. B-Bring back the body of the masonrahm.}”*

“Oh? Is it edible?”

“{*Of course! I may be learning, but I’ll make a wonderful meal for you with it. So, please hurry. Dinner time is getting close.*}”

“As you wish. Thanks for looking out for us.”

“{*M-My pleasure,… Mukori.}”*

Geirahoel goes silent after that, and Daniel crosses the ice field created by the masonrahm’s blizzard. He tries to store it in the magic bag, but it won’t transfer.

Vaergraes, who is the least affected by the cold still remaining in the area, says gently, “I believe your grenade will preclude transporting it with magic, Daniel.”

“Huh… That’s… A thing,” replies Daniel.

Doephluev sneezes as she approaches Daniel, bundled in a blanket that Hekate gave her, while Hekate is wrapped in another one. The archoneldwyn murmurs as she wipes her nose, “You could take the fur off, yes? The m-meat is what the dragon wants.”

“Her name is Geirahoel,” replies Daniel dryly. “I miss when everyone got along.”

“Yeah!” cheers Hekate, shivering cutely and wrapping herself deeply in her blanket. Daniel looks at her, and she shrinks a little. “I-I mean… Yes, I… would like to get along with you better,... Doephluev…”

Doephluev is quiet for a moment. She finally replies, looking away, “A-Agreed, your Greatness. And, um, her Grace Geirahoel.” She sneezes again, looking briefly miserable as she does her best to control her sinuses.

Neith approaches, having heated himself up with his fire breath. “My Liege, allow me. I shall extract the edible components and dispose of the unusable parts.”

“I’ll help,” replies Daniel. “Once the shuttle arrives, you all can board it while we work. Get warmed up.”

“I’ll keep watch,” replies Vaergraes. “The cold was intense, but I should be fine.”

Kera’tai adds, “I’ll help until the shuttle arrives. It’ll help me warm up, I hope.”

Daniel nods, and Veiranoei, who is the least armored, approaches slowly. Daniel asks, “Veiranoei, are you alright?”

She nods. “I… This… This is Tyror…”

“Tyror?” asks Vaergraes.

The gatonine knight nods, and Hekate tosses half of her blanket over Veiranoei’s shoulder, sharing her blanket with the grateful woman. “Y-Yes… Thank you, your Greatness.”

Hekate looks to the side. “As long as you understand that Daniel is mine first and most, I don’t mind being friends with you.”

Veiranoei blushes, which compliments her pinkened nose and ears. She adds, “Tyror is… a masonrahm that has been undefeated for a long time. It… has grown stronger and stronger from all of the fallen warriors that it defeated…” Tears form in her eyes as she looks at the deceased monster. “It’s finally gone…”

Neith and Daniel share a glance, and the grey dragon in human form grins. He remarks warmly, “And, now, you will get the opportunity to present Tyror as a feast for your people.”

Veiranoei begins crying, and she instinctively hugs the person closest to her; Hekate. Hekate is surprised at first, but the young feldrok Empress smiles softly, hugging and patting her on the back, still a little bashful and confused herself, but knowing the simple gesture is plenty.

Daniel, Kera’tai, and Neith work on field dressing the huge creature, removing the large fur like a large rug, with the dragon using his full size to work on slicing the fur while Daniel and Kera’tai roll it away from each slice. They have

to be extremely careful not to contaminate the meat with the magic-nullifying powdered polonium, which should mainly be concentrated at the underside of its chest, but could have contaminated its exterior, as well as potentially its lungs, which they'll address if it comes to that.

The shuttle arrives, and Hekate takes Veiranoei and Senn inside, since Senn decided that she's unable to watch the dressing, even though she has been alive for so long. Doephluev hesitates, but Daniel says, "You can go, Doephluev. Go get warmed up. We'll be done shortly. Keep an eye out for other monsters."

She nods, "Th-Th-Thank you, m-my love." She trots to the shuttle to board and get warmed up.

Neith remarks, "I am surprised, my Liege."

"About what?" asks Daniel.

The grey dragon in his true form leans close, still working diligently as he whispers his reply, "Doephluev seems to have really changed, has she not?"

Daniel takes his helmet off, storing it so certain individuals can't hear what he's about to say. "I think she has always gone with the flow, similar to Geirahoel. If we give her a meaningful purpose, she'll be loyal. In that regard, I'm no different. I have no principled attachment to any belief of this world. Demon kin are not monsters to be exterminated, the world doesn't belong to anyone, the dragons aren't terrible beasts. Likewise, humans aren't evil, the gods aren't wicked, and life is just… life. I'm loyal to the people I care about. If we make her care about us, then…" Daniel trails off, focusing on his work of rolling the fur away like a giant carpet.

“I understand, my Liege. And, of course, I have benefitted from your beliefs, so I am certainly not going to object. I do hope you know that not all people will so readily change.”

“I’m well aware. Why do you think I didn’t revive the other three male greater dragons, or that I personally killed Brosjak in vengeance? I believe plenty of people are irredeemable, and I thought Doephluev would be one of them. But,… Ryuogriar gave her a chance, and she’s earning it. I haven’t gotten any uncomfortable vibes around her.”

Neith scoffs. “Indeed so, Daniel. I don’t know if I’ll revere her as the four primary empresses, but I respect that you are granting her kindness in exchange for her loyalty.”

Daniel nods. “This isn’t a manga or light novel, I hope. If as many people were complete psychotic lunatics as are in fiction, I can’t imagine any world would last very long.”

“Indeed. Your ‘suddenly shounen characters’, as I understand you called them?”

Daniel and Neith both chuckle. “Roeta told you, didn’t she?”

“Yes, my Liege. It was quite the tale. I regret that I was not there to fight in your place.”

“It’s alright. He was set on fighting me. And, I’m glad for it.” Daniel looks at his hand. “Brosjak was the first person I *wanted* to kill. Made me sick afterwards, but…”

“I understand, my Liege… More than you will ever know.”

Daniel smiles up at his best friend in the world of Zenkon. “I’m sure I know, Neith. Thank you.”

Neith nods, and they finish skinning the weisperant masonrahm.

As Daniel is storing it afterwards, Kera’tai approaches with a blanket over her shoulders. “Aren’t you cold, Daniel?”

“I'm alright. My armor and Snowbelle protected me.”

Kera’tai looks at the snowy elemental resting on top of Daniel’s head, and they both smile at each other. “I see.” She moves close to him, draping her blanket over his shoulder. She says as she leans against his chest, “Share some of your warmth with me, then.”

“Sure.” Daniel doesn’t resist, and he watches as Vaergraes jogs close. “If we’re ready, we should depart. There are more monsters that are approaching to investigate.”

Daniel nods. “Neith?”

The grey dragon nods, and he begins casting the relatively simple spell to transform himself.

However, something feels off.

Daniel looks up at the massive dragon, whose reptilian visage is expressive enough to show his confusion.

He tries the spell again, but Daniel can tell nothing is happening.

Neith puffs a breath, which causes a small fireball to emerge. It’s a fairly plain and clean orange flame.

Neith searches the area, and Daniel asks, “Problem?”

“I… can’t seem to use magic, Sire.”

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 118: The Strength of the Fievegal

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 118: The Strength of the Fievegal

Vaergraes, Kera'tai, and Daniel stare up at the largest living dragon in the known world, the male greater dragon known as Neith. He aided in the seemingly mundane task of skinning an apparently especially powerful weisperant masonrahm, which is the mana-mutated wall-breaking beasts Daniel faced at Fort Peony. This individual, due to a string of catastrophic victories against subjugation groups from Mattarglos, grew even stronger, earning itself a name from the populace of Mattarglos; Tyror.

Tyror fell when Daniel used a polonium grenade to interrupt its magic, granting him an opening to fall back and use the 20mm anti-dragon rifle to finish it off.

Daniel suddenly twitches, and Kera'tai looks up at him. "Did you figure it out, Daniel?"

Daniel chuckles. "Yeah, I suspect so." All three of the others, which includes the dragon in question, look at Daniel. Daniel replies, "I should have known better. It's been a while since I worked with radioactive contamination to this extent."

"Contamination?" asks Neith.

Daniel nods. "Mm-hmm. The polonium powder was in ol' Tyror's fur."

Neith looks at his foreclaws -his hands-.

"You mean to say so little of the polonium is enough to negate my magic?"

Daniel nods. “Seems that way. The flip side is, mana seems to have an inversely proportional effect on the half-life of the radioactive materials, and polonium is short to begin with. Doephluev’s harness uses plutonium, and it has already stopped blocking her magic a week ago.”

This surprises everyone. “Wh-What?” asks Kera’tai at a whisper. “Sh-Shouldn’t… Shouldn’t that be concerning?”

“How so?” asks Daniel innocently. She and Vaergraes both narrow their eyes at him, and he sighs. “Fine. But, if you must know, she has had me at her mercy, and she knew it, during the ruins dive we did.”

Kera’tai and Vaergraes both sigh. The former demon queen remarks, “It’s a wonder anyone sees you as a threat sometimes, Daniel…”

“Whaaat? I have great taste in people.”

The three others scoff, and they allow him that point. Daniel asks, “Neith, are you able to fly without magic?”

The grey dragon nods once. “Yes, my Liege. I will not be quite as fast, but I shall return under my own strength. Do not wait for me.”

“Daniel…” starts Vaergraes. “If Sir Neith is… flying back under his own strength, and since the shuttle would not be able to carry it…” She looks at the fur of the powerful beast known as Tyror.

Daniel looks to Neith. “Do you mind, Neith? I won’t force you.”

Neith smirks. He takes up the skin, slinging it over his shoulders and tying it via the leg skin like a cape. “I think it suits me, don’t you, my Liege?”
The three chuckle, and the grey dragon bows. “I shall be outpaced by the

shuttle under my own strength, so I shall set out. I will meet you at the capital, my Liege."

"Be careful on the flight back, Neith. And, if need be, use the fact that your new cape negates magic."

Neith looks at his hands one more time, trying and failing to cast magic. "I'm curious, Sire. Is this the time when I say 'Her Grace Geirahoel better be thankful that we did this'?"

All four of them chuckle together, until Vaergraes, Kera'tai, and Daniel in that order silence and turn pale. The grey dragon tenses when he hears the distinct crackling pops of ignityal burning in a pilot flame, and he turns to the direction Daniel and the others are looking.

In spite of the immense size difference, the orange dragon in human form cuts an imposing presence that causes Neith to lower his own massive form to show reverence. She is radiating a cold and icy anger as she glares at the grey dragon. He murmurs humbly, "Your Grace…"

She huffs, ignoring him as she storms past him to approach Daniel. He isn't free of her irritation either, and Vaergraes and Kera'tai both back away from him as Geirahoel walks angrily up to Daniel. "Where is your helmet, Mukori?" She asks with a merciless and unrelenting tone that will take no nonsense or deflection.

Daniel admits, "It's in my bag, Mukori…"

She grips the front of his chest armor at the collar, complaining, "Why did you do that!? I was worried about you! What if something happened when I couldn't watch over you!?"

Daniel can't help but smile at her gently. "If you must know, Neith and I were talking about you."

She halts, her cheeks filling with color. "A-About me!? Wh-Wh-What did you say!?"

Daniel smiles, replying as diplomatically as he can, "That we both admire your passion for the things you care about."

She squirms as she cups her own cheeks with her hands. Kera'tai pouts, "How come you never use such devilish charm on me, Daniel?"

Daniel chuckles. "Geira-Mukori makes it easy."

This causes the orange dragon to tremble even more noticeably, embarrassed and bewildered by his teasing. However, Daniel's best attempts aren't enough to save Neith. She finally growls, "Nnn-Grahhh! You!" She whirls and points up at the grey dragon, and he asks reactively, "Y-Yes, your majestic Grace!?"

She growls in a threatening tone, "Perhaps we should find a curse to inflict on you. I wonder if there's magic that can turn you into a female, so you can actually be useful for once."

Daniel tries to defuse once more. "Mukori, that's… I doubt that's possible."

"Of course it is." The reply is chipper and comes from a surprising source; Vaergraes, the Uhl'tall Archpriestess. "It's not easy, and it's rare to find information on it. Also, the desired outcome increases the difficulty of the spell, but there were several booby-traps in my temple that I would have armed when a Divine Summon was getting close. One of them would have swapped the summon's gender, which is a magic that is often not guarded against."

The former demon queen smiles warmly. "If you're ever curious, Daniel…"

He chuckles, “I’m good.”

Geirahoel grins wickedly, turning her spiteful gaze to the grey dragon. He nearly turns white. “Y-Your Grace… I should begin my flight back. Please excuse me.” Neith takes off, fleeing as quickly as he can with his new fur cape flapping behind him between his wings.

Geirahoel huffs, watching him go. “Coward.” She then faces Daniel, snatching his arm. “Now, let’s return, Mukori. This was enough foolishness for one day.”

Again, Daniel chuckles, walking with her as the other two follow them to the shuttle. She continues to pout about him removing his helmet, since it’s her direct connection to him until they make more radios for various away teams to use.

Thankfully, they are able to return to the city without further issue, especially when Daniel gives Senn and Veiranoei ginger ahead of time, which helps them both. They arrive at the arena where Neith is waiting. They are welcomed back by the full group, including Kalegrynten, who checks on his granddaughter. She recounts the events, while Daniel asks for a location and various mages to wash down Neith and the fur.

While a safe zone for decontaminating the grey dragon is being prepared, Kalegrynten and Veiranoei approach. He looks somewhat distraught. Daniel faces him as Geirahoel glares at the gatonine man for delaying her own goals. “Lord Daniel… I… was unsure when I saw it, but… is it true? Did… you really slay Tyror?”

Daniel looks at Veiranoei, who explains, “I have no doubts, Daniel. Please… sh-show them.”

Daniel nods. “With pleasure.” He has them clear a large area, and Hekate and Geirahoel both stay close to him. “Daniel, are we gonna eat it?” asks Hekate, a little more excited than she probably should be.

“Well, it was a specific request of Geira-Mukori.”

Geirahoel nods. “I am confident that I will make it to your tastes, Mukori.”

Hekate scowls at her a little, adding, “I hope you’re planning to let me help, Geira.”

“If you so wish, Hekate. I will not stop doing what I want to do, but I know we share common goals.”

Hekate nods in agreement, though her expression is serious. Daniel withdraws the mostly-cleaned remains of the named weisperant masonrahm, Tyror. There’s an awkward silence that shortly turns into disbelieving murmurs as they look at the massive creature, which still has its head.

Kalegrynten stumbles towards the massive monster’s head, and he falls to his knees close enough to touch it. He mutters, “I… don’t believe it… The Everfrost Scourge… It’s really him…”

“I told you, Grandfather…” murmurs Veiranoei as she pets his shoulder. “Even holding back, they defeated it in what felt like mere moments.”

Daniel kneels in front of them, saying gently, “We said we’d seek to find a solution to the monsters as a whole. We have some research to do, but as a gesture of friendship,...” Daniel looks at Geirahoel. She continues his thought dutifully, “As a gesture of friendship, the Fievegal will gift you the remains of Tyror, minus what I need to prepare a feast for my mate.”

There’s a slight awkwardness following what she just said, and Hekate snickers, which causes Geirahoel to reflect nervously on her words. “M-My… Mukori.” She clears her throat. “You may use the remains as you see fit.”

It takes a while for Kalegrynten to regain his composure, as cheers fill the audience chamber. Several of the soldiers of Mattarglos approach to kick the monster’s unmoving head, and they celebrate its defeat with boisterous cheers.

During the initial cheering, Ryuogriar and Reignleif approach Daniel and the others. “Mukori,” starts the platinum white dragon. “While you were off playing with these… trifles, I received reports from the Grand Duchy, and I also have some good news regarding the various nobles of Mattarglos. Would you like to receive these reports in a more… private setting, Mukori?”

Geirahoel instantly cuts in, “He’s going with me to the kitchen. He laughed at the stupid one's imitation of me. And, he took his helmet off in the dangerous area and stored it, so I couldn't watch over him.”

When Geirahoel mentioned Neith's joke, Ryuogriar only tilted her eyes to make eye contact with Daniel. She smiles warmly. “I see. Then, Mukori owes you a proper apology. That is fine. We shall accompany you and make our reports while preparing dinner.” She gives Daniel a devious and knowing grin. “We can't have Mukori's favorite getting any further ahead, can we?”

“F-F-Favorite!?” stammers Geirahoel. “W-Why would I care about that?” Her cheeks betray her real feelings, in spite of the crowd. Reignleif nods in agreement with the eldest of the three.

Hekate defensively warns, “Heyyyy. I tolerate quite a lot, but I'll not suffer a vile temptress spouting nonsense. If Daniel chose favorites, it would be me.”

The matron dragon grins playfully. “Oh? Is that so…?” She leaves it at that cryptically.

Reignleif replies to Hekate, “Mukori said that I am the most like him. We share the most hobbies.”

“Watch it, Reina. I just helped slay Tygor or Tymor or whatever his name was! I’m just getting warmed up!”

“There are privileges that are Hekate privileges. But, Geirahoel…” She looks a little enviously at the orange dragon, who flinches. “I-…” She looks at Daniel for help, but he has escaped the conversation when they weren’t paying attention.

“HEY!” snaps Geirahoel. She sprouts her wings to close the distance on him in seconds. “Daniel! I won’t let you escape so easily.”

He chuckles, apologizing to Vaergraes. “Apologies, Vae. Looks like I’ll have to ask you for a rain check.”

“I understand. I can not stand in the way of youthful passion.” She teases, “Perhaps you should be kinder to your lovers, Daniel.”

Daniel rolls his eyes. “Neith aside, Geira-Mukori likes it when I tease her.”

“I do not!” yells the young dragon, and both Daniel and Vaergraes chuckle, causing Geirahoel to snatch his arm with the obvious intent to drag him away. She bows politely to Vaergraes, “Vaergraes, I will ensure Daniel is returned after he apologizes properly. He promised me a recipe among other things, and he’s going to keep it.”

And with that, Daniel’s night is fully preoccupied.

***

“Grendel Two, Dante Five, mark enemy formation.”

“[Dante five, Grendel Two, Plag see many soldiers. Ten gob-… Grendel hands. Riding warriors with much armor. Demon wands may be too weak.]”

Olmosk, the dattakorien leader of the fifth “Dante” squadron, observes the road leading towards the border of the Grand Duchy. When asked by the great, wise, and gracious Empress Ryuogriar, Emperor Daniel agreed to help name the army units. He described mythological and legendary figures of Earth, and the squads chose their names accordingly. The dattakoriens chose “Dante”, a man who entered the punishing afterlife of “hell” to save the woman he loved. The goblins chose Grendel, a monster strong enough to best all but the greatest warrior of his time, Beowulf. Since Daniel would be Beowulf, as far as anyone in the Fievegal would be concerned, the goblins chose Grendel. Naturally, they meant no ill intentions by the comparison. As a rather unintelligent race, they chose it as an inspiration for strength, and nothing more. Even though they are looked down upon by most other races, Olmosk can't help but admire the goblins for their bravery.

Even now, the half-sized humanoids are at the front, lying in wait to ambush the enemies from behind.

Given the report, there are around forty thousand soldiers invading in the second wave. “Goblin hands” are the way the goblins were taught to estimate enemy forces, using each of their four fingers to a hand to quickly count off sections of marching columns by simply spacing their fingers a couple people apart, and then making note of literally how many of their hands it takes to get from the front line to the back line. As simple as they can be, the members of the small race are consistent and crafty, and with little cheat methods, they can make quick and accurate-enough estimations of their enemies. And, of course,

the goblins themselves often joke that they're good at counting enemies, because they want to know how much loot they can collect.

From the intel reports, this forty thousand should be the remainder of the Mornistae trained army. But, of course, Rikuto may have commissioned support from other kingdoms, as well as mercenary groups and untrained conscripts. Daniel said that forced military conscription was minimized on Earth, especially the countries where Daniel and Rikuto hail from, but it's a well known historical practice even on the mysterious advanced homeworld of the Fievegal's emperor.

Fortunately, arming and armoring soldiers is an expensive business, and the Fievegal and Grand Duchy have collected the equipment of the fallen and incapacitated soldiers that were defeated recently.

The Stalvaltan Guard have been petitioning to participate in battles, but the Fievegal has had more reason than most to prove themselves. They have yet to formally win a major battle for the Fievegal, and most of the battles have been primarily supported by the Citadel's golems. This is as much revenge as it is a battle for honor. The fall of Fort Twilight, and the losses there, are still fresh in everyone's memories. They have already repaid the kingdom of Mornistae several times over, but now, the Emperor of the Fievegal has asked his army to hold the Grand Duchy and defend it from invasion, and to work on undermining and conquering the rest of Mornistae to remove Rikuto from power.

The risk of Rikuto's superweapon is still present, and the scouts are carefully watching for their deployment. But, Ahok, the Court Magic Artisan who helped develop the weapons, believes Rikuto will use them defensively, as they are one of the only means of defense the kingdom will have against the dragons. If he deploys one, it will be to target a high priority enemy, since recharging the

many enhanced magic crystals needed to operate will take a great deal of time, and only four full ‘magazines’ of diamonds exist.

Olmosk smiles as he looks at his own ‘demon staff’ in his arms. Daniel is a quirky human from a very different world, but his first priority was making sure the Fievegal’s soldiers have every advantage he can provide to help defend the Fievegal and its interests. The dattakorien knows he’s not invincible, but he alone, and even the goblins, can take on any army ten to one with reasonable odds of victory. Daniel doesn’t see ‘goblins’, ‘dattakoriens’, ‘ogres’, ‘Uhl’tall’, or ‘Chi’rinnis’ when it comes to the military. They are all soldiers of the Fievegal, and entitled to the best defense and armament the Fievegal can provide.

Olmosk says out loud, mostly to hear his thoughts audibly, but also so his companions can bounce ideas with him, “Around forty thousand soldiers in total… King Rikuto must be a fool.”

“Indeed,” replies Ikthilaken, the Uhl’tall squad leader stationed with Olmosk. “He must be hoping overwhelming force will be enough.”

“Should we request aid from the Stalvaltan Guard?”

“They have been chewing their gums, yes? That is the dattakorien saying, I think.”

Olmosk scoffs. “It is. And, yes. The soldiers of the Grand Duchy are anxious. Are we sure they are loyal to the Fievegal, though?”

“The Emperor trusts the Grand Duchess. If nothing else, he will make it worth her while. And, by extension, worth the while of them and their families.”

The dattakorien soldier nods. He can’t argue with that. “This is a much greater number of soldiers. We had no casualties in the last battle, but they outnumber

us closer to twenty to one, now. Even we will struggle to compare."

"There is good news, sir…" replies Andani, one of the dattakorien women serving with Olmosk as she listens to her radio headset. "The Field Marshall just said two more drakes have arrived."

Olmosk smirks. "Drakes" are the codename for something no one from Zenkon would ever envision; a self-propelled iron carriage with armor that can withstand most offensive magic and cast instant death on even the legendary godbeasts of myth, the invincible mithril skinned Sphranterus. Or, at least, Olmosk assumes it could kill the Sphranterus, since they were created by Daniel as larger versions of the weapons he used to defeat the dragons. There have been murmurs among the dattakoriens to ask Daniel to defeat the Sphranterus, since it is credited with wiping out settlements in the west many times. But, the Mikadresselle Baeka doesn't want to ask anything unreasonable of Daniel until she can earn his trust.

Especially because he'll have his hands full with the other otherworlder, Rikuto. Daniel fears that Rikuto will desperately try to figure out firearms, and even if he can't get the mechanisms Daniel recreated, even primitive firearms will shift the tide of battle some.

For now, they're going to exploit every bit of the advantage they have and capture as much ground as they can. Find the original chapter at novelping.com.

"Get ready everyone," murmurs Olmosk as he signals with his hands, relaying the hand signals from those further down the line and closer to the enemies than him. Dattakoriens have excellent ranged vision, comparable only to Goblins, which can spot almost anything that stands out. Their weakness is that goblins will often then pursue said object in hopes of finding treasure, only to be

led into a trap. Daniel's soldiers are all lectured and trained by the General golem Ucahote to learn discipline before they're allowed to serve, but they often will go around finding bullet casings in the aftermath of battle hoping for dropped coins and jewels. Regardless, even though it's less, there is a reward incentivizing collecting bullet casings to recycle them, so the pint-sized soldiers are rarely disappointed.

"You see that?" asks Andani. "Mid ranks, it looks like a cavalry unit, but… Don't they look too lightly equipped?"

"I see them," confirms Ithilaken. The Uhl'tall commander looks down his rifle scope, adding, "Even the buckrokhs are almost completely unarmored."

Olmosk, having studied the group as well, replies confidently, "It's a running unit. They're not here to fight, they're here to flee and report on the conditions of the battle."

The front lines spot the bloodstained battlefield where the vast majority of the first wave were wiped out. The signal to stop is passed back through the ranks, and lower ranking officers are sent forward to investigate. It took several days, but the Fievegal army was able to clear most of the battlefield of bodies and equipment to help disguise what happened, but there was little to be done about the craters and blood. Daniel's weapons are effective, but they are destructive. Of course, there were far fewer maimings, ironically enough, since clean shots with the demon wands, especially, do just enough damage to drop a person. And, at range, the demon staves -rifles- perform similarly.

"Rikuto is clever," remarks Ithilaken.

"He knows enough about his enemy, our great Emperor, to know these weapons. It's clear he's afraid of what all we're equipped with. We need to

keep the tanks hidden unless we start to lose ground. Radio, relay this message: ‘Hawkeyes, mark middle rank riders and hold target. Drakes, hold position and maintain cover.’” Olmosk waits for a moment while Andani relays the message. “‘All staff and wand wielders, contain Moonlight. Expect attempts to flee with intel.’” Olmosk watches the handful of squads he can see from his sniper perch. They're difficult even for him to spot thanks to yet another suggestion from Daniel; disguises he calls “ghillie suits”. They're essentially long mantles with plenty of places to anchor branches of shrubs and bundles of grass to blend in with the terrain. They have the defending advantage with the terrain, even if they're far away from home.

Olmosk says, “Radio, mark and announce countdown to attack.”

“Yes sir!” Andani speaks into her radio quietly. “All units, on my mark, commence attack. Three, two, one, mark! Fire at will!”

Even as she’s shouting the last part, rifle reports echo against the hillsides as flashes and smoke puff out. The Fievegal soldiers are relentless, focusing fire as they’ve been instructed; focusing on the officers and the riders specifically tasked with fleeing the battle. Some of the buckrokh’s panic as they bellow and buck, launching riders from their backs while blood sprays across the ranks of soldiers in the marching columns. They had started to file out into battle ranks, but now are doing everything they can just to identify the source of the sudden attack. Olmosk cycles his own rifle, firing and using the bolt to keep up the attack.

The bolt action rifles are slower than the semi-automatic and fully automatic counterparts, but their accuracy is breathtaking, allowing even modestly trained soldiers to attack from beyond the range of even the best bows and crossbows, and a good marksman can eliminate enemies beyond the range of a ballista.

For now, they just need to focus on keeping any of the obvious messengers meant to bring word of the Fievegal defense strategy back to the Mornistae leadership.

Olmosk can feel his grip tightening as the soldiers scatter, some taking bullets meant for messengers as the messengers whirl their buckrokhs around and attempt to flee in every direction. Only one of them needs to escape.

As the dattakorien soldier is trying to cycle his bolt forward, it jams; he didn't pull it back far enough, so the previous casing didn't get ejected. He curses, yanking the bolt back. He has to fight the next bullet clear as well, since another bullet is now trying to feed from the magazine.

The feline commander watches helplessly for the moment as he fights his rifle. He got careless because he rushed, and now there are precious seconds being wasted as the messengers scatter to the four winds. Some fall to rifle fire, especially because the Fievegal is scattered all through the hills. The vanguard unit is rushing the front lines with assault weapons, firing sprays of gunfire that glimmer in the sunlight as golden streaks, racing into the ranks of soldiers that try to hold the line, only to drop the heavily armored warriors in seconds. The ranks of the Mornistae army fall like dominoes, and the goblins are leading the charge to earn glory on the battlefield -while being mindful to stay out of range of their enemies and keep track of their ammunition.

"Commander! Drakes are requesting orders!"

"No! Tell them to hold! We have to assume scouts have already retreated to report the blood. The drakes should still be unknown to the enemy. Keep firing!"

Olmosk does what he can to fire at the messengers that are getting the furthest away.

Miss!

Breathe. Pull bolt back. Spent shell ejects. Shove bolt forward and lock it down. Aim. Breath. Hold. Lead the target…

Olmosk fires again, and just shy of a full second later the rider flops forward on his buckrokh, nearly falling from the saddle.

Nearly…

The dattakorien commander curses silently. That was his last shot. He switches magazines as quickly as he can. He cycles the bolt one last time, quickly wiping sweat from his brow. Olmosk can't get desperate. He has to focus and make his shot count. The wounded messenger is passing into the dattakorien's most extreme range.

Calm down, Olmosk. Daniel isn't the Red Lord. It's not whether or not you fail, but if you can make our Emperor proud.

He pulls the trigger, and this time, the rider topples, left behind by the buckrokh as it keeps sprinting back towards its home -or at the very least, far away from the battle-.

Olmosk sighs. The battle is still raging, and the Fievegal vanguard unit has formed up in a firing line. The Mornistae soldiers have figured out that penetration of the goblin weapons is limited, especially at range, and they're using the bodies of their own fallen to try to block the incoming fire. But, small arms aren't the only things they have at their disposal.

The dattakorien commander can see a couple of buckrokhs in the distance towards the neighboring territory. They're far enough away that he can't tell if they have riders or not, but it's too late for him to do anything about it now.

They prioritized the tanks because of their higher defense, but a tank isn't fast enough to pursue, and the shuttles are on standby for air support and evacuation.

"Have the signallers order the vanguard to begin using explosives. Mind friendly fire and shrapnel."

Andani calls it out, and Olmosk watches as the oni in the vanguard, specifically, begin arming and throwing grenades using magic, obliterating the defenses of the Mornistae soldiers and causing them to break ranks once more, allowing the goblins to continue picking them off with coordinated -if a little-chaotic- bursts of fire.

With the officers, another obvious priority for the snipers are the mages, and one such mage manages to create a barrier, protecting a large handful of soldiers. They begin retreating.

"Commander," starts Ikthilaken.

"I see it," replies Olmosk as he drops his magazine out and ejects the current live round from the chamber of his rifle. He feels on his chest for the extra bullets on his bandolier, several of each kind of specialized rounds designed for advanced purposes.

In this case, he feels for a metal box similar to a cigarette case made of lead, and he withdraws it. Both Andani and Ikthilaken grimace at the object as the dattakorien sniper opens it, revealing a row of bullets with black and yellow paint on the conical projectile. Olmosk loads one of the specialized cartridges into his rifle's breach, closing the bolt and then the bullet case. He takes aim at the mage producing the barrier as others prepare more complex spells. The bullets of the vanguard unit are deflecting off of the barrier. Only a handful of

the snipers have these peculiar and dangerous bullets. Just being in the presence of mages without lead shielding is enough to disable their magic.

The bullet is made of a radioactive isotope of polonium, and is actually dangerous to handle carelessly. Daniel made the rounds specifically because they're effective against barriers and decay faster than uranium or plutonium. Depending on the various mana sources the bullets are exposed to, they actually can become useless in a matter of days if the mana is strong enough.

That said, Olmosk can feel the weariness that comes with losing his mana, and he aims carefully at the mage. Fortunately, the mage is moving slowly as he escorts the soldiers he's trying to evacuate.

BANG!

The barrier crackles like lightning before vanishing, and the hailstorm of bullets in the area no longer has any obstacle. The mage falls, killed by a bullet that passed cleanly through his barrier -an anti-magic bullet-, and the other soldiers fall quickly to the goblins, oni, and ogres closing in on them. Both Andani and Ikthilaken sigh relief, and the Uhl'tall mage remarks, "Nice shot, Commander."

"It wasn't a clean hit…" The dattakorien commander studies the mage, who is crying out and squirming on the ground, wounded -and likely poisoned- by the polonium bullet. He's in for a long and slow death. Still, it's war, and he had to be brought down.

Olmosk loads his regular magazine back into the rifle, cycling the bolt to chamber the next round. He takes aim at his target, watching his movements carefully. He's in agony as the other soldiers flee, surrender, or try to defend in futility.

As soon as he finds an opening, the feline soldier pulls the trigger.

He doesn’t feel like an honorable warrior this way, but he knows that a swift and underwhelming victory is better than losing countless allies in a ‘fair’ fight.

After all, the evolution of war is based on the pursuit of ensured victory, not honor or glory.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 119: The Image of the Fievegal

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 119: The Image of the Fievegal

Grand Prince Yaulander kos Strylaph studies the slate map of the known parts of the continent, which extends only about half way across the estimated territory of the Demon Wildlands. His hand is currently bleeding where he slammed a glass down on his desk, and two maids and a butler are standing by nervously. They're waiting for him to calm down before approaching, but they also want to make sure he gets his hand tended to quickly.

He has just received reports that Daniel, the commoner filth that embarrassed him in the Imperial Castle, is in Mattarglos negotiating a truce with the Grand Premier of the primarily-beastmen kingdom. The eastern kingdoms all have long and sordid histories, and in the past, the gatonines, boruans, shenwulves, crawdistes, and all of the other humanoids possessing beast-traits were driven into the large, but harsh lands that became Mattarglos and unified, forming a territory and later becoming an independent kingdom, though they vowed to never have a 'king' or 'emperor'. Instead, they seem to operate on a system where the Grand Premier is chosen by special conditions and a polling of the people of Mattarglos, not just their noble families. In fact, even to this day, Mattarglos does not actively broadcast merchant and aristocratic families, generally to simply spite the other kingdoms that place a heavy focus on nobility.

Mattarglos has provided soldiers to the alliance in order to defend against the demons since the war began, but if they're negotiating with Daniel, it means

they are courting treason. Such negotiations should be through the Empire.

Yaulander finally looks at his hand as the pain gets to him. Blood is trickling onto the map, and one of the maids speaks up, “Your Majesty, please, let us take care of your hand.”

He is still irritated, but he nods. He flops down into a seat as the maid instructs the other one, “Summon the doctor.” She retrieves a bandage roll from nearby and approaches the Grand Prince as he stares at the map from his chair.

“If Mattarglos can defeat the otherworlder…”

The maid says nothing as she bandages his hand, keeping it from getting any worse.

There’s a knock at the open door, and a different maid peeks her head in. “Your Majesty, you have received a letter.”

Yaulander waves her over, and he receives the message. He recognizes the seal immediately, and it causes him to flinch. He looks at the maid wrapping his hand. She’s just finishing, and she takes a step back. “The doctor will be with you soon, your Majesty.”

“Guide him to the drawing room and inform me when he arrives. Now, leave me.”

She bows even lower. “Yes, your Majesty.” She quickly leaves the room, followed by the butler. Yaulander reads the letter.

“[*Greetings Young Majesty,*

Many great opportunities have arisen now that the otherworlder has spread his forces. He is looking for citizens to move into his alleged territory, and with

that, employees to serve him. It will be a challenge, but it should remain a priority to infiltrate the enemy castle.

We've also been spreading rumors to prevent his expansion into further territories without meeting heavy resistance. The rumors have taken root and are spreading quickly. Give it time, and his reputation will suffer, preventing him from being selective with his servants.

What we need of you at this time is simple. Having proven their effectiveness, we need you to gain control of the summoning device and the methodology employed to summon otherworlders for our use.

It seems Empress Sundenelle is seriously considering an amicable relationship with the otherworlder Daniel. Do not try to leverage your status as suitor, or the delicate balance could be broken.

It's no secret the Empress is not fond of you, personally. If you put pressure on her in a feeble attempt to overtake the otherworlder, you will lose. Instead, you should encourage a union between them. It may bring the known power of Daniel over to our side. His… independent nature can be dealt with later.

For now, focus on getting Rikuto to hand over the summoning necessities. If you can do that, we'll ensure your route to becoming Emperor remains certain.

Report any failures or progress.

Regards,

The Friar of the Water]"

Yaulander makes sure he makes mental notes of all of the important bits. He knows very little about the 'friars' except that they have control over nearly

everything in the world.

Nearly everything,… thinks the Grand Prince to himself. He scoffs in disgust. The friars treat him like just another pawn, but they are ineffectual without people of high rank like the Grand Prince. He can always inform the Empress about the mysterious group if they try to turn on him. He is well aware of their influence, whether or not it truly encompasses the world, as they seem to claim. He has been making his own preparations to deal with them.

As for Daniel, he's not sure if the friars know that he's in Mattarglos, and if that interferes with the plan at all.

Yaulander uses a simple flame spell to ignite the letter and tosses it into the fireplace to burn away. His family descends from a long line of magic users. His bloodline has been cultivated with strong magic potential. Nobility is his divine right, and becoming Emperor is his destiny.

***

Queen Heralesse sits idly at the dining table as she stares at her meal. Erimaya is sitting at the head of the table directly to her right, while the two goblins, Shek and Skloe, bring out homemade meals. It's been about a week since the rest of Daniel's inner circle left, and Heralesse has been Erimaya's 'guest', just as promised. But, it's strange to her.

If she was told that what she is experiencing is a weird nightmare meant to brainwash her, or proof that the brainwashing is working, she'd be almost thankful.

The bed is more comfortable than anything she has ever slept on, including her royal bedding in the castle of Mornistae. The food is more delicious than anything she has ever had. The royal chefs would kill to achieve flavors a pair

of goblins are able to create reliably. And, that is in addition to their duties as the chiefs of domestic affairs, it seems. And, as if the bedding and food weren't enough, the Citadel is peaceful. There are workers doing their jobs, but there's seemingly no political scheming whatsoever. When Erimaya took her through the town built around the outside of the mountain-like castle, the denizens would look at them, greet them, and then move on. There was no animosity, and there still isn't.

Heralesse really feels like a visiting princess instead of a prisoner.

Erimaya says warmly, "Thank you so much, your Majesties Shek and Skloe." The two goblins blush, and Skloe answers, "You don't need to be so formal with us, Erimaya."

"I'm thankful! But, *someone* might tattle on me to our parents and etiquette teachers if I were to address a queen so casually." The young princess makes a point of looking directly at Heralesse, which causes Shek and Skloe to look at her as well.

Heralesse whines, "What!? I… I'm not… Listen, Eri,…" She becomes flustered. Shek and Skloe are goblins; demon-kin that are usually regarded as little more than sword fodder, leading the charges. Many goblins are greedy and violent, but they're weak. The problem is, Daniel's weapons make even the weakest demons stronger than virtually all of the strongest humans.

And then, three more individuals enter that put Heralesse even more on edge.

Two of them are obviously demons -not just demon kin-. They belong to the Greater Demon race, calling themselves the 'Uhl'tall'; Thymeria and her protector, Illianna. Thymeria is gentle and kind, but she is sister to Vaergraes, the former Demon Queen of the entire Demon Covenant; the collection of

demons and demon-kin that Mornistae and the Empire have been at war with for years, constantly being pushed back.

“Good afternoon, Queen Heralesse, Princess Erimaya.” As always, Thymeria's greeting is kind and welcoming, but Heralesse and her younger sister are now vastly outnumbered by demons. Illianna bows politely, walking with Thymeria to their usual seats, which are roughly in the middle of the long table. Heralesse manages a soft and nervous reply, and Erimaya warmly welcomes the two demons. Shek and Skloe extend their own greetings to Thymeria and Illianna, and they take their own seats as Ahok asks, “Um, Shek? Skloe? May I sit with you?”

Both goblin queens agree warmly. “Of course! Please do.”

Thymeria asks, “Are we not being joined by the princes and princesses?”

“Not today,” replies Skloe. “The children are sleeping.”

“Ahh. I see. Adorable little munchkins.” Thymeria’s tone is sweet, and if anything rather envious. She then turns her attention to Heralesse. “So, Queen Heralesse; I’ve been curious, and Erimaya has been very helpful for my curiosities, but I sadly haven’t learned why the ritual isn’t used more often to summon otherworlders like Daniel and Rikuto.”

Heralesse looks at Erimaya with concern. Erimaya is very much not a prisoner, by all appearances, and she has made herself at home. The young princess replies to her elder sister’s gaze, “I did try to talk Daniel out of retaliating, but that’s the key, dear Elder Sister; the Fievegal lost many soldiers who were defending Fort Twilight. The Empire ceded control of Fort Twilight to appease the Fievegal after the failed invasion and attacks. As much as I don’t like it, Rikuto attacked unprovoked. Mornistae and the Empire are at war with the

Demon Covenant, which does not include the Fievegal. If anything, the Fievegal is a collection of refugees, and our kingdom attacked them three separate times because they hoped it was a weak target." Erimaya saddens a little. "Daniel allowed his territory to be attacked three times before retaliating because he didn't want himself or his companions to be objects of fear."

Heralesse is quiet as she ponders her younger sister's words. She wants to object that Daniel allied himself with demons, their sworn enemies, but several such demons are presently seated around them. Whether she realizes it or not, Erimaya is a hostage in all but name.

But, in some part of her mind, the young queen can't deny the truth. There are no reports of the Fievegal launching any attacks prior to Rikuto's attack on Fort Twilight, which he hadn't even told her about.

As if reading Heralesse's mind, though, Thymeria speaks gently, "Daniel didn't ally himself with us, your Majesty. We came to him as refugees. Whether you believe it or not, he saved this world from an unstoppable monster, and he has disrupted the Demon Covenant, which hasn't made a move since. Given the new refugees appearing at our borders, it seems the bulk of the Covenant is in disarray." She looks at Ahok, adding, "And, until recently, a demon-kin was a very high ranking magic artisan in your very own Royal Court, yes?"

Heralesse looks at the half-goblin woman in question. She heard it from Ahok; that she was sent to the front lines with the special weapon Rikuto had built. And, in the aftermath, she was attacked with the intention of being left for dead until Daniel and his companions rescued her, making her a Court Magic Artisan once more. The only difference is that she works for the Fievegal.

It's baffling that treachery comes so easily for so many people, including Aramellianna of all people. The problem is that Rikuto has changed, and he is

obsessed with defeating Daniel.

Heralesse replies in the best diplomatic tone she can muster, “Forgive me for saying so, your Grace, but I’ll believe in Daniel’s alleged generosity and kindness when he returns me and my sister to our kingdom.”

“Oh! You mustn’t show me deference, your Majesty. I’m just a simple priestess. My sister is vying for Daniel’s hand. Please just call me Thymeria, as I’ve requested multiple times.” Read the latest chapters at novelping(.)com.

Heralesse is quiet for a moment.

And then, Erimaya surprises her. “And, I’m not going back, Sister.”

Heralesse snaps her gaze to Erimaya with a look of betrayal. “Wh-Wh-What!?”

“I said, I’m not going back.” She grins as she holds her hands together at her cheek. “Daniel said he’ll marry me when I turn eighteen.”

“E-Eri! You can’t! Th-That’s… Daniel’s…”

The young blonde princess sighs. “Am I supposed to hide in the castle until the end of my days as a premature spinster because of the accusations of small-minded nobles and disgusting rumors spreading around?”

“E-Eri… that’s not true…”

“It is true. Or, should I wait until a political marriage is arranged with the sort who would ‘overlook’ my impurity? I’m sure I’ll be treated MUCH better than I am here.” Erimaya pointedly drinks her VERY high quality drink made of fruit juice not available even to the royalty of Mornistae; grape juice. But, it’s not just any grape juice; even Heralesse has noticed that it is extremely rich in flavor,

the likes of which she has never tried. Even the best grape juice she has had possessed a fairly tart flavor with minimal sweetness.

Erimaya adds after enjoying her drink, “Ahhh. Oh! And, I’m not even married to him yet. Daniel treats his consorts with gifts, he goes on trips with them, he shares hobbies with them…” The human princess blushes as she imagines what sorts of things she’ll ask for. “He also regularly trusts them to act in his stead or to fight alongside him, as well as to perform important work more than just managing the maids of the castle and looking pretty at gatherings. Why in the world would I want to trade all of that for being someone’s silent wiuben.”

Heralesse knows what Erimaya means. The wiuben is a small bird often kept as a pet because they are very friendly and like to sit on shoulders and forearms. They are beautiful birds, and often will fluff up their feathers to display elegant patterns and colors. Voiceless or ‘silent’ wiubens are rare, but they're often used as a slightly mocking term for aristocratic women who are generally *only* married for political or financial gain, or their beauty is acceptable to present as an accompanying decoration on a man’s arm. In some cases, they would be nothing more than a concubine, and not the official wife, due to one reason or another leading to the official tie.

Erimaya isn’t wrong. In the eyes of many of the aristocrats in Mornistae, and even in the Empire, she is seen as almost as dirty as Daniel himself. Heralesse understands the concerns, but she was there and saw it with her own eyes.

Daniel saved Erimaya’s life. He only ran his finger up her abdomen one time, and it was to find the right spot to perform the chest compressions. It was clear that his actions had no enjoyment in them. He was covered in filth, as was the young princess, but he didn’t hesitate to do everything in his power to save her without any magic.

Heralesse doesn't want her sister to rot away or to be unhappy, but their lives of luxury come with responsibilities as royalty. They can't change how Erimaya is perceived, but Daniel is not the answer.

Suddenly, the serious-sounding voice of Xyreko speaks as the golem approaches. "You speak as if you are not enjoying your current role of freeloader."

Erimaya gasps. "I'm not just a freeloader! I'm Hekate's etiquette and history instructor!"

"Is that so?"

In spite of the fact that her body is metallic and she has no face, the postures of the caretaker are incredibly expressive, making it clear when she is being smug, teasing, sincere, serious, or even threatening.

Heralesse is overwhelmed by everything, but she has to stay strong for her sister. Erimaya doesn't realize how much danger they're both in. Even if Rikuto has made mistakes, Daniel sided with the enemies.

"Is the meal not to your liking, your majesty?" asks Xyreko when she looks towards Heralesse. The teenage queen flinches, looking at her plate. "Oh! No, it's… good." She hates to admit it, but it's one of the best meals she has ever had. "I was just… deep in thought."

The strange 'Prime Minister' doesn't respond right away, staring silently and without any motion, as if she became a statue. Finally, the golem stirs, and Xyreko replies, "Indeed. May I ask a question?"

The blonde elder sister hesitates, but she nods once after thinking about it.

The caretaker asks her question with a fairly serious tone, “How much do you know of the Grand Prince of the Empire?”

Heralesse cocks her head. “That’s… a surprising question.”

“Yes. He insulted our beloved Emperor, and Daniel was content with a verbal riposte, but it left a hollow feeling in me. Do you believe disrespect and insults should be met with a proper response?”

Heralesse hesitates to answer. It’s clear that Xyreko is leading her into a trap; one where she admits that Rikuto brought everything on Mornistae.

The teen sighs. “I understand Daniel was keeping to himself here, but I can’t overlook that he sided with… our perceived enemies. If not the Demon Ty-… er, Demon Queen, then the dragons. My grandfather perished in the last major battle with a dragon. He and seven thousand men fought desperately, while the mere hundred warriors who survived were able to finish it off. And, Daniel is… helping them reproduce.”

Xyreko cocks her head back a little, indicating her semi-smug pose. “I was asking about the Grand Prince, your Majesty. But, your grandfather sounds very brave. My grandchildren were also killed by Morthybargaron, the dragon lord. My husband was killed by assassins in the oni clan. One of my daughters eloped with a human from the east, and I never saw her again. And, the Grand Prince appears to be conspiring to kill my current beloved lord. Were it not for Daniel’s compassion and forgiveness, I would lay waste to the Empire, the Kingdom of Mornistae, the Demon Covenant, and the Kingdom of Henbarr and the Queendom of Gleasa. And, I would not be alone. The supposedly wretched soul your kingdom cast off to the ends of the world is the greatest thing that has ever happened to this world, and your people see only the same petty conflicts and insular problems that allowed the world to rot. Tell me, Queen

Heralesse; can you name a meaningful accomplishment of Rikuto's that he hasn't undone himself?"

Heralesse starts to say, "He restored Mornistae's eco-…" She trails off, looking at Ahok. The half-goblin magic artisan is enjoying her meal, talking quietly to the two goblin queens. Ahok probably didn't have to worry about the budget working on Rikuto's weapon, but she'd easily be able to estimate how many resources went into the two identical weapons, specifically the enhanced magic crystals that the kingdom had to purchase from the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy. Those alone have nearly cleared out all of the profits Rikuto had achieved. Mornistae was staying afloat before Rikuto arrived, but he was granted the rulership because his ideas to restore the kingdom to completely self-sufficient were working. He probably could recover the economy again, but he is obsessed with the conflict with Daniel and the Fievegal.

Heralesse sees it herself; the Fievegal isn't organized like a kingdom should be. They function based on how powerful the bulk of the 'empresses' are; three dragons, Hekate, three Uhl'tall, and the Stalvaltan family. Given time, Aramellianna will undoubtedly guide the Fievegal and make them an unstoppable force with their combined areas of expertise.

Heralesse replies quietly, but a little coldly, "If you want me to suggest that I'll ally Mornistae with Daniel, you can forget it. I won't betray my kingdom."

Xyreko nods once. "No objections. We will simply conquer the kingdom. Depending on how you behave will determine whether or not you are Heralesse kos Mornistae or Heralesse the commoner." She looks at Erimaya. "Thankfully, your younger sister could likely take you in as a maid. Daniel is merciful like that."

Erimaya looks nervously at her elder sister, knowing that Xyreko is speaking harshly, but unsure what to say in her defense.

Heralesse does her best to keep her temper in check. She's a prisoner, but she's being afforded a great deal of freedom to wander around under supervision, enjoying the garden on the rooftop, the library that has more tomes and books than even the Imperial library in the capital of the Empire, and the lake that is peaceful and beautiful at all hours of the day.

Xyreko finally adds after letting them stew for a moment, "I can be indignant as well, as you can see. You should get comfortable no longer having power over Daniel. You could have made use of him, and he would likely have helped you win the war against the Demon Covenant. But, then, I would still be prisoner of the Feral Feldrok in a state of disrepair and voiceless helplessness. You don't have to like Daniel, but you should be grateful that it is he who is your 'enemy', instead of any of the rest of us." She turns and starts to walk out of the room. "You understand protecting your kingdom, Queen Heralesse. You have more in common with us than you think."

With that, she exits the room, and Heralesse sighs. Erimaya replies softly, "Sorry…"

"No… I should be the one protecting you, but here we are, at the mercy of Daniel and his companions…"

"If I may, your Majesty," starts Illianna, who is usually quiet.

Heralesse looks at her, worried she's about to get dressed down again. But, the Uhl'tall secretary says sincerely, "I would recommend that you visit the township and speak to Baeka, the Mikadresselle of the dattakoriens. I believe she has just returned from visiting various villages to invite citizens to move to

the Fievegal. I think you'll find that the war is not something the average citizen of any country supports. Everyone wants safety, and they'll say close to the one who offers them the most promising vow of protecting their livelihoods. And, in many cases as well, they don't even care who the ruler is, so long as they can live their lives. It's a far cry from the political maneuvering and scheming of aristocratic gatherings on either side."

Thymeria nods in agreement. "It's understandable that you're suspicious. But, I agree with Illianna. Baeka is more in touch with citizens than most of us. I've been trying, but I'm over-brightened by my sister's history and her regal status. And, Shek and Skloe are directly royal family of the Fievegal."

The two goblin women smile and nod in agreement. "We'll help introduce you, if you wish," replies Shek.

Heralesse looks at Erimaya, who smiles gently. "I've only met Baeka in passing a few times, but she's very polite. From what I've been told, she was among the group with Skloe and Shek, as well as Aoloan and Kera'tai, who met Daniel when he defended Fort Peony."

"It's true," confirms Skloe as Shek nods in agreement. "Kera'tai ensured our safety by declaring that we were Daniel's war brides."

Heralesse turns pale for a moment. Erimaya quickly adds, "Daniel doesn't take war brides! He has said that many times. But, Kera'tai decided it herself."

The young queen stares at her sister skeptically. Thymeria is chuckling, borderline laughing, and Illianna is amused. Heralesse exhales deeply as she simply lets go of whatever she was thinking of saying. "I suppose I have nothing better to do. Shek, Skloe, if you would, please introduce me to this Baeka. I won't promise anything, but…" She looks at each of them briefly

before settling on Erimaya. Erimaya preached diplomacy with Daniel and the Fievegal all along, and only when she mentioned Daniel's 'god-killers' did Rikuto become obsessed with defeating Daniel. The teenager finishes her thought, "If the war can be ended without more bloodshed, I… can see no downsides."

Erimaya smiles and hugs her. "I'm so happy you understand! If we can convince Rikuto to negotiate and apologize, then we can begin restoring."

Heralesse is quiet. She's not sure if Rikuto can be convinced to give up his position, and he's certain Daniel is a threat to the whole world.

If she can figure out what to do next, Heralesse can make efforts to get herself and Erimaya back home to safety. Get faster updates on novelping.com.

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Hekate enters the laundry room of the Stalvaltan airship, where she finds exactly who she hoped to find.

In the Citadel itself, it's a non-issue, since everyone is well-trusted by Daniel -with the exception of the person doing his laundry now-. But, a bit ironically, she has enough trust that Daniel is slowly growing closer to her.

That person is Doephluev, the archoneldwyn former-assassin and now lady-in-waiting to Daniel, for all intents and purposes.

She's currently folding Daniel's clothes, which many of his companions insisted should be handled by someone they know is loyal, rather than chance one of Aramellianna's servants being bought off. Doephluev is the safest option, since she normally does his laundry, is contracted not to harm him, and seems to care about Daniel in her own selfish way.

“Um… Doephluev?” asks Hekate softly. The young woman wearing clothes almost identical in style to Hekate’s perks up, surprised to be summoned. She was engrossed in the song she was humming, which sounded gentle and happy in tone.

Doephluev looks to see who it is, which usually means she’s calculating her response for how indignant she can be with her ‘rivals’.

Hekate is number one.

“Oh! Your bantam Greatness. If you are searching for my beloved, he is not here.”

Hekate flexes her fingers to resist making fists, and she does everything she can to keep her composure. She’s easy to rile up, and Doephluev only wins if she succeeds in doing so.

“I'm here to see you, D-Doephluev.”

Hekate can see why Daniel has come to like Doephluev. She effortlessly is feminine and cutesy, even when Daniel isn't around to try to seduce him. Doephluev gasps, “Me? Really?” It was a fake gasp, but her tone is genuinely a little surprised.

The young feldrok empress nods. “Yes. I want… your help learning a certain kind of magic.”

“Magic? Are you hoping to assassinate someone, your Grace?”

Hekate shakes her head. “No. I just want to learn illusion magic so I can watch over Daniel without him knowing.”

The archoneldwyn woman cocks her head, surprised. “You? Can’t you just… follow him?”

Hekate looks aside. “Sometimes… I just… I’d like to use it, please. I… I have my reasons…”

Doephluev sighs. “In the end, I suppose it only really benefits me…”

This causes Hekate to tilt her head this time.

“Nevermind that, your Grace. But, in turn I want something, too.”

Hekate narrows her eyes skeptically. “What do you want?”

“Just a chance,” replies the caramel-skinned elf-like woman with a carnivorous smile.

Hekate hesitates, and Doephluev clarifies, “When we go out on the second mission, I want to have a bit of a bet. If I slay more monsters while defending our mutual darling, then I get to be Empress…”

Hekate immediately recoils and puffs her tail up instinctively, flattening her ears in anger. Doephluev adds quickly, “For a day! I was going to say ‘for a day’.”

The defensive feldrok girl relaxes a little, and she asks cautiously, “That’s it?”

The archoneldwyn nods. “Yes. I get to be by Daniel’s side, say and do whatever I want, and I get all of the ‘Hekate’ privileges for that day.”

Hekate becomes a little nervous. “And, what if I win?”

“Hmm? Isn’t getting to learn illusion magic from me enough? But, fine. I’ll do anything *you* want for a day that I am capable of doing. Nothing that will damage my relationship with Daniel, though.”

“I’m not that cruel,” retorts Hekate with a huff. “If anything, I’d make you dress like a clown or something and make a fool of yourself. But, that might embarrass Daniel… Oh!” Hekate grins. “I know exactly what I’ll ask for.” She cackles deviously, and Doephluev rolls her eyes and shakes her head, returning to the laundry she’s working on. “Now, learn from this.” She waves her finger, even as she works, and a swirl of magic energy creates an exact copy of the archoneldwyn woman, save for being dressed in a maid outfit. The ‘copy’ immediately says, “Alright, your Grace. Let’s begin our lesson.”

“Y-You can copy yourself?” asks Hekate in shock.

The caramel elf smiles playfully. “I’m saving it for when I start to lose Darling’s favor.”

Hekate frowns, prompting Doephluev to chuckle and add, “I’m kidding. It’s an illusion. But, it’ll demonstrate the versatility. If you get really proficient at it, the illusion can speak as if it has a mind of its own.”

“That’s right!” exclaims the copy. She waves her hand across Hekate, and her arm passes through Hekate, surprising the feldrok girl. “See? I’m just an illusion. But, I can teach you the basics while the real me keeps working.”

Hekate glances back and forth between the two. “This is really an illusion?”

Both Doephluev’s reply, “Yes, your Greatness.”

“And, it's going to teach me magic?”

“I'm a spiritual copy, for all intents and purposes, so I have all of the appropriate memories, since I was created with this purpose,” replies the copy. “Please have a little faith in me. That me gets to benefit when she beats you at the competition.”

The feldrok girl's tail twitches. She points at the real Doephluev, saying boisterously, "There's no chance of you winning, Doephluev. And, when you do, you'll never, EVER be an empress so long as I am *the* Empress."

"We'll see," retorts the real archoneldwyn, still focusing on doing laundry. She folds a bed sheet, wiggling her fingers over it, 'whispering', "Sprites of the soul, hear my words, and bless this sheet to make its user fall madly in love with me and me alone."

"Hey!" whines Hekate, causing Doephluev to grin broadly as she snickers. "If it was that easy, your Greatness, I would already be the one and only Empress." She walks by Hekate, setting the sheet in her basket. "I'll make you a bet that Darling sees through your illusion immediately, Hekate."

Again, the feldrok girl twitches. "Sh-Shut up! You!" She points at the copy. "Begin teaching me immediately! If you're lying to me or tricking me, then the real you suffers." She looks at Doephluev with a scowl, and the real archoneldwyn woman simply smiles, walking back to the cover blanket to fold it as well. She says some gibberish in what *could* be heard as the 'archoneldwyn language', and she 'whispers' again, "*Feldrokolb Urrepelolb.*"

"Gimme that! That won't work on me!" Hekate snatches the blanket from Doephluev, folding it as she scowls at the copy. "Well?"

"Yes, let's begin, your Greatness."

As the copy of Doephluev is explaining the spell's mechanisms, which will help Hekate visualize it when she's casting, Hekate idly works her hands by folding laundry to prevent the real Doephluev from actually cursing any of Daniel's clothing with nonsense to bewitch him.

And, that's how Doephluev tricked the Empress of the Fievegal into helping with the laundry.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 119.1: Bonus Chapter: The Grey Dragon and His Fiancee

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 119.1: Bonus Chapter: The Grey Dragon and His Fiancee

During the break after the first monster investigation mission, and during the long feast and celebrations the citizens of Mattarglos are throwing, Neith approaches Daniel. “My Liege, a word?”

Daniel nods. Ryuogriar is currently holding his arm as if she’s his daily consort, spending time with him. “Is it alright if Ryuo-Mukori hears it as well?”

The grey dragon nods. “Of course, your Grace. I have nothing to hide. Merely a request.”

“Well then, let us hear it,” replies Ryuogriar.

“With your permission, I would like to reach out to someone I encountered during the Imperial invasion.”

“Someone who would make a good ally?” asks Ryuogriar without hesitation.

“I do not know. But, I learned from her Grace, Gwenesphia, as well as the Stalvaltan soldiers, that it is very probably that this person resides in Mattarglos. I hope to ask the domain lords present if they have any idea who it might be.”

“What kind of person is it?” asks Daniel.

“She’s a young woman. I believe she was a magic artisan or artificer working for the Allied forces, and I stole a great deal of magic crystals from her and her equipment. I am afraid I likely frightened her greatly, and I vowed I would repay my transgression.”

“Mmm,” hums Ryuogriar with a light smile. “An honorable thought. Is this young woman a dragon?”

“No. A boruan. She was collateral in my actions.”

Ryuogriar is quiet. The three of them are fully aware that, not all that long ago in the grand scheme of things, a dragon would never even acknowledge a non-dragon’s existence, let alone apologize to one. Neith was always a different dragon, particularly because he was raised by the feldroks, but even still, boruans might as well be humans in comparison.

Regardless, Neith is resolved to make this apology, and Daniel has no intention to stand in his way. He chuckles, joking, “Well, I suppose it’s only fair. If you stole a bunch of magic crystals in her charge, she probably got fired. You really should take responsibility.” Ryuogriar snickers, while the dragon in question turns pale.

“Y-… You really think… she lost her job?”

Daniel cocks his head. Clearly, Neith didn’t get the humor. But then again… “Well,… It could go either way. It was a military operation. It’s pretty typical for someone to be held responsible for so much value being lost, but the siege was chaos, so… maybe she was okay.” Unfortunately, the more he thinks about it, the more he doubts this mystery boruan woman got away without any consequences, even if she was powerless to stop a super-powered soldier from robbing her blind.

This, of course, doesn't comfort Neith, and the grey dragon becomes even more solidly determined to make his apology. "Please, your Grace, my Liege; allow me to find this woman and make this apology. I shall ensure I am reachable by radio and telepathy at all times. If I am caught in a magic nullifying-..."

"You don't have to convince me, Neith," replies Daniel to stop the grey dragon from grovelling. "You can go."

"If she is a skilled magic artisan, you have my permission to gauge her as a potential ally and recruit her if possible," declares Ryuogriar with a smile.

"Thank you both. If you should need me, summon me, and I will return to your side at once." Neith bows, and he excuses himself.

He then begins speaking to a couple of boruans that are present at the feast, and he is able to narrow down a few possible individuals who are magic artisans or artificers, getting even closer with one whose deployment matches the appropriate time frame. He also makes sure to buy enhanced magic crystals from Wenlianna and Aramellianna to replace the ones that he took from the boruan woman. He also gathers a great deal of gold and jewels from his own accumulated wealth to replace her salary for the job he cost her.

With his repayment collected, Neith sets out on his journey to find the village where 'Roestren' resides.

Though travel is limited to flight for the grey dragon, Neith is able to track down the young boruan woman named Roestren, who matches his description to the people who heard out his request. If she is the correct person, he inconvenienced her personally during his mission to cripple the invading forces at the Battle of the Citadel Plains.

Neith sent a letter to her parents ahead of himself, since her duties with the allied military would prevent Neith from being able to meet with her to apologize. He's staying in an inn in the village, so it's likely they have already heard about the outsider visiting. But, he has to do what he can do and try to get in contact with Roestren to confirm that she is the woman, and then make his apology.

He receives a reply a day later in the form of the innkeeper informing him that Roestren's family will meet with him. He might have found this odd, but he felt like he was sufficiently honest in his letter, explaining that they found themselves on opposite sides of a conflict, that he is a knight in service to the Emperor, and that he meant her absolutely no harm. He was worried, especially after Daniel explained that he probably got her fired for stealing not only equipment under her charge, but the crystals from her person. Thankfully, Daniel wasn't upset, as it was a necessary action for the battle, but he was being honest, which Neith does appreciate.

Neith has been alive for a very long time, and though most of his life was dedicated to the pursuit of revenge, he has a fair level of confidence in whatever he does, and he can approach almost anything with calmness.

As such, he thinks almost nothing of it as he arrives at the relatively simple townhouse belonging to a furniture maker and his schoolteacher wife, parents to a magic artisan employed by the Mattarglos Expeditionary army, and loaned to the Imperial Joint Invasion in accordance with the war time treaties in the east. Neith learned from his investigations that they once resided in Bromlund, but returned to Mattarglos when Bromlund fell into chaos during the time Daniel was at Fort Peony.

The grey dragon in human form knocks on the door, and he waits patiently. He knows he's drawing some looks from the people around him. His horns have

regrown about a quarter of their length since he broke them off to wear a human helmet, and his tail gives him away as a reptilian race, which are almost non-existent in the east. Of course, he's not just a lizardman, but a dragon, though he's not broadcasting that fact, since easterners, especially, tend to be afraid of the powerful avians to the point of terror, with fairly good reason.

The door opens to a mature and rather large boruan woman wearing an apron over her modest dress. She is taller than Neith, and she has a very heavy-set build, including wide hips and an extremely large chest that dwarfs Ryuogriar's chest in human form. She has a simple calico tail ending in a tuft of blonde hair that matches her head. Her eyes are a light brown and amplify her bright and warm expression. She studies Neith for a moment, since she slightly looks down on him from her own height, but she perks up. "Oh! You must be Sir Neith, yes!?"

Neith bows with an arm across his chest, "Indeed I am, my Lady. I have the pleasure of being Sir Neith of the Citadel."

She nods, stepping out of the way as she gestures inside. "Yes! Yes, please, come in! We've been expecting you."

Neith nods politely and reverently, "Thank you."

As he walks in, the woman replies, "I suppose I didn't expect you to be… um, a half-yarcko."

Neith simply smiles. Yarckos are one of the reptilian races in the world, and extremely rare on this continent, believed to have descended from shipwrecked sailors a few generations ago. A half-yarcko would be what it sounds like; a lizardman with more human features than the pure-blood bipedal lizardmen. Neith has heard stories that it's widely believed that yarckos are descended

from dragons to begin with, but he doesn't know their history well enough to know.

Regardless, he takes no offense. The boruan woman he suspects is Roestren's mother is being polite and respectful, if not outright warm and welcoming to him. He removes his shoes at the entryway, placing them near those already present. The woman makes her way past, pausing to say, "Oh! How rude of me. My name is Vynseria. It's a pleasure to meet you."

"The pleasure is mine, my Lady Vynseria."

She giggles, adding, "Please, Sir Neith. I'm flattered, but my husband and I are not nobles. You don't have to be so formal."

"I will do my best, then."

She smiles and nods, calling out, "Dear? Roestren? Can you meet me in the dining room? We have a guest."

Vynseria leads the way to the dining room, and Neith can sense two presences moving towards them, but of course, without any hint of hostile intent. Both of them seem to have been together in a different part of the premises, perhaps working together on her father's work.

As expected, the boruan man that enters is a little shorter than Vynseria, but still taller than Roestren as well as Neith, and his physique is impressively muscular, while Vynseria is a good deal heavier-set than either her husband or daughter.

The man notices Neith first, asking, "A visitor? Are you perhaps, Sir Neith?"

Roestren flinches behind him just as she was about to ask her mother what's going on. She locks eyes with Neith as he smiles as gently as he can, bowing

once more. “Indeed. I am Sir Neith of the Citadel.”

“Ahhh! Good! Good!” cheers the man warmly as he takes and shakes Neith’s hand with both of his own. “A pleasure! My name is Ulkamak, a humble furniture maker, and you’ve obviously met my wife, Vynseria. This is our daughter, Roestren, to whom I believe you are acquainted, yes?” He guides Roestren into the room, as she seems a little nervous.

Neith smiles, replying softly, “Yes, we met briefly. As I mentioned in my letter, I disrespected your daughter, and I have come to apologize.” He faces Roestren, this time, kneeling as a knight. “My Lady Roestren, I am deeply sorry for any trouble I caused you during the battle. I have come to ask for your forgiveness and reimburse you for damages.” He withdraws the prepared package from his magic bag, which causes Roestren’s parents to murmur softly in surprise. He opens the box, revealing the neatly organized gold coins, handful of jewelry, and the ten enhanced magic crystals to replace what he took under her responsibility. “Please accept this humble offering and my apology. I can’t restore your career, so I have done my best to replace your salary.”

The three boruans are dumbfounded and speechless. Neith looks up, asking quietly, “Is… it not enough, my Lady?”

“Y-Y-You came all this way… for that?” asks Roestren nervously.

He nods. “Yes, most certainly. My Liege Lord, the Emperor, informed me that the joint task force likely considered you at fault for the theft and damage I caused, particularly the magic crystals on your person.”

Roestren glances at her parents, who are equally shocked by Neith’s actions.

She stammers, and Vynseria asks, “Did… something happen to your work, Roestren?”

Roestren shakes her head. “N-No! I’m… I’m only on leave right now. I… They were unhappy, but…” She looks at Neith. “I… I didn’t… lose my job or anything.”

Ulkamak brings up the elephant in the room. “Excuse me for a moment, Sir Neith, but I’m afraid I must not have fully understood how you two encountered each other. You say your Liege Lord is the ruler of the Citadel, yes? I’m afraid I’m not familiar with where that is. Is it a vassal of the Empire?” You are reading on novelping(.)com, the official source.

Roestren flinches, and Neith looks to her for guidance. He was pretty sure he put it in his letter, though he also didn’t want to frighten them, so he might have omitted details that Roestren could explain. He’s unsure if it’s widely known in the east that they invaded the Fievegal and lost.

Roestren says softly, “M-Mother, Father… S-Sir Neith… is a… d-demon-kin.”

They both stare at their daughter, and Neith stays in his low posture. However, Roestren suddenly steps close and puts herself between the kneeling knight and her parents. “I know how it sounds! B-But… H-He promised to take responsibility! A-And he’s here now! We met by fate! I know it!”

Ulkamak doesn’t make any aggressive movements, but he asks pointedly, “You’re from the Wildlands?”

Roestren answers, “No, Father. Sir Neith serves the Fievegal.” She hesitates and sighs. “The Fievegal is a new territory founded by a young Empress, Hekate fell Lawson. Empress Sundenelle ordered the retrieval of the

otherworlder, Daniel, but we found out the hard way that he's actually Hekate's benefactor and Emperor."

This causes Ulkamak and Vynseria to hug each other in surprise. Roestren quickly adds, "The Joint Imperial Forces invaded! I don't know all of the reasons, but Sir Neith and his Lord were only defending their territory. And,…" She looks at Neith, adding tenderly, "Sir Neith didn't kill anyone, even when he was helping defeat us. He was… v-very gentle with me." She then adds more passionately, "And, he risked coming here to apologize! W-Which was unnecessary. But, he did. F-Further proof that… we were meant to be together."

Neith is surprised by this. "Come again?" asks the disguised grey dragon.

She whirls to face him with hurt in her eyes. "I-Isn't… Am I not good enough? Y-You said you'd take responsibility. A-And… wh-who will marry me now?" She cups her cheeks, embarrassed with watering eyes. Neith is a well-travelled man who knew only hate and vengeance for a long time, but he knows adorable when he sees it. And, Roestren is adorable.

The confused dragon glances at Ulkamak and Vynseria nervously, and they, too, seem unsure of what to do. They don't appear to be afraid of Neith, per se, but it's a very strange situation to be in.

"I… would be unable to blame your parents if they object, my Lady."

She whirls, saying passionately to her parents, "Father! Please give us your blessing!"

"I…" Ulkamak glances at Vynseria, and then at Neith and Roestren. He also glances at the treasures brought in what Neith believed would be repayment for something that didn't happen.

Vynseria asks cautiously, “Sir Neith… Do you… wish to take our daughter?”

Neith replies sincerely, “I am only briefly acquainted with Lady Roestren, and I thought surely I would be detested at best.”

“That’s not true!” cries out Roestren. “I… I was scared, but… you were so gentle, even while being chased. And, you were very brave. I-If anything, I should apologize for my part in the invasion, as small as it was.”

Neith nods, adding in his reply to her mother, “I wouldn’t dare steal her away, and I am honorbound to my Liege Lord. That said, I… did also vow to take responsibility for my actions to Lady Roestren specifically, because she did not seem to be a combatant.”

Roestren crouches and takes Neith’s free hand, holding it for a moment. “I felt a true connection as I realized how kind you are, Sir Neith. I-I would… b-be happy to be your wife, if you’ll have me.”

Ulkamak rubs the bridge of his nose with his fingers, saying a little dryly, “I finally see why the matches we attempted to make were so unsuccessful. Your mannerisms are a cut above many others we’ve met…”

Vynseria chuckles warmly, adding, “Agreed. No wonder dearest Roestren couldn’t stop mentioning him during the match meetings.”

Roestren blushes, whining, “Father! Mother! You’re embarrassing me!”

Ulkamak steps forward and says seriously, “Sir Neith, stand and face me.”

Neith hands the box to Roestren, rising to his feet as he helps her stand up as well. He faces Ulkamak, who is slightly taller and stronger-built than Neith’s human form, though it’ll count for very little in a fight in either direction. Ulkamak would be incapable of harming Neith bare-handed, and Neith would be honor-

bound to not actually do any physical harm to the boruan man as a representative of Daniel and the Fievegal.

In spite of the potential standoff, Ulkamak simply asks seriously, “Sir Neith, do you intend to show my beloved eldest daughter courtesy and respect, to protect her and care for her, and ensure she lives a respectable life with a loving family?”

Neith nods, “Of course. I would never dream of bringing harm to Lady Roestren. I shall keep my promise to take responsibility. Though, the scope of that promise eluded me.”

Ulkamak chuckles, and Roestren pouts softly.

“Do you intend to allow us to visit and be visited by our daughter if she comes to live with you?” asks her mother.

Neith replies with slight amusement in his voice. “I came not with intentions to take her away, but if it came to it, I would be happy to escort her home to visit family, as well as to bring her family to visit her wherever she ends up living.”

Vynseria nods contentedly, and Ulkamak nods with a sigh. “Roestren, are… you sure?”

Roestren hugs Neith’s arm suddenly, saying softly, “Yes, Father. We were fated to meet, and he is strong and kind.”

Neith is still unsure, asking gently, “My Lady Roestren…”

She looks at him nervously, hanging on his words. “You… don’t like me?”

“It’s not that… I am…”

“You’re married!?”

“No.” He chuckles, blurting it out to curtail further misunderstandings. “I am a knight in service to the Emperor of the Citadel, and I have no experience in romance. If you’ll allow it, I will court you to the best of my ability, but I would like you to consider over that time whether or not you actually want to be my wife.”

She hugs his arm firmly to her modestly pillowy chest. “I’m certain already.”

He remains stoic, replying gently, “Then, please allow us both the time to confirm that our lifestyles are compatible. After all, as you know, I am not from the eastern kingdoms.”

She nods. “Very well. B-But, I won’t change my mind.”

He nods, bowing to her parents. “Thank you for your kindness and respect. I vow I will always treat Lady Roestren with compassion and honor.”

They both smile and nod, granting their blessing.

Just as Neith is about to excuse himself, Roestren quickly points out, “Wait! I-I… I appreciate the thought, but I don’t need this.” She offers the box containing the apology gift back to Neith.

He looks at it for a moment, and then her parents, who seem to agree with her. If she wasn’t punished for Neith’s actions, then they seem to feel there is nothing owed.

Neith sighs. “Keep it.” Just as she’s about to object, he says gently, “Consider it a bride price. A show of my sincerity.”

Roestren looks at her parents, who smile softly. They all thank him gratefully, and he replies the sentiments warmly.

“Before you go,” interjects Vynseria. “Won’t you join us for dinner? We should celebrate the betrothal of our daughter and a knight of the Fievegal.”

“Yes! That’s a wonderful idea, Vee. What do you say, Roestren? Would you like your knight to join us for dinner?”

Roestren blushes, and she happily nods. “Y-Yes.”

Neith is hesitant at first, but he has no good reason to object. Daniel gave him leave for this trip, and the celebrations regarding the defeat of Tyror will be ongoing for another day or so. He takes the boruan mother up on her offer.

They have dinner together, and they ask the grey dragon about his role in the Fievegal, about the Emperor and Empress(es), and Neith’s business in Mattarglos. He explains what he knows he’s allowed to, including the fact that Daniel himself came to the northern territory to negotiate a peace treaty with Matterglos. He does, of course, leave out that the real reason was so Gwenesphia and Treia can get back in regular contact with their families and protect them.

Neith then remembers a gift bottle of wine that Daniel gave him; a ‘red-band’ wine as he calls it, since Neith wasn’t present during an apparent wine-tasting party he had with the Fievegal’s inner circle, as well as Aramellianna and her family.

He presents it to Roestren’s family for the dinner, and they open it. It surprises the three boruans, and Neith shares what little he knows about it; namely that Daniel made it in his pursuit of making rum, a much stronger drink.

After dinner, Neith relaxes with the family some more until night falls. He doesn't pay any mind to when Vynseria borrows Roestren for a few moments, as they return before Ulkamak even finishes a story about how he started his furniture business. Then, the boruan mother borrows Ulkamak, leaving Neith with Roestren.

"Um… Thank you again for accepting me, Sir Neith."

The grey dragon smiles and bows his head. "Thank you for accepting me, my fair lady."

She nods sheepishly, fidgeting with her hands. "You said the Fievegal wants to unite with Mattarglos, right?"

Neith nods. "Yes. We -my Emperor and Empresses that is- decided that Mattarglos could be negotiated with, and having them stand neutral at the very least would lower the threat coming from the northeast, since Twilight was lost."

"T-Twilight is gone?" asks the young boruan woman softly.

"Oh… Has word not reached you?"

She shakes her head. "No… what happened?"

Neith is quiet for a moment. In truth, he died, and rather gruesomely at that.

"I needn't worry you with the full details. But, it was made impassable while we were in control of the fortress."

"I-Is everyone alright?"

The grey dragon sighs softly. "Not everyone, I'm afraid."

“I see…” She doesn’t ask anything further about it. Instead, she states as brightly as she can to pickup the mood, “I would very much be honored to even see a real Empress in my life. D-Do they wear beautiful dresses and crowns?”

Neith chuckles. “Indeed. I’d be lying if I said I didn’t envy my liege. Though, that doesn’t mean their beauty compares with yours, my lady.”

“Y-You don’t mean that…” She blushes as she looks away from him.

“I surely do. I have been told, and it seems to be true, the greatest beauty comes from a woman in love.”

The young boruan woman snaps her ruby red eyes to meet the grey dragon’s steely silver gaze. She begins stammering with rosy cheeks, and Neith can’t help but smile gently. All of her words have evaporated from her vocabulary, and she finally settles on simply hiding her face behind her hands as she whimpers cutely.

Vynseria and Ulkamak finally return, coming to their daughter’s rescue as if on cue.

“Ahh, pardon us, Sir Neith, dear Roestren.”

“Of course, my-… er, miss, sir.”

Vynseria chuckles and takes a seat where she was. She resumes asking Neith about the Fievegal, and potential trades with Mattarglos, particularly the wine.

Neith also asks her about the school she teaches, which is a basic primary school for children to learn to read and basic finances, as well as house-body skills.

Neith also speaks naturally with Roestren, and a smile never leaves her face.

Soon enough, the sun has set, and the four take notice.

“Oh, dear… It seems we have kept Sir Neith too long,” laments Vynseria, though her sorrow doesn’t seem entirely genuine. The grey dragon also happens to notice that several of the simple lanterns are lit. It seems Vynseria had made herself busy knowing the time while Neith was engrossed in conversation with his newly betrothed.

“Hmm… Yes. It seems that way,” replies Ulkamak, as if it’s the most natural thing in the world.

Roestren clears her throat. She speaks as if scripted, “S-Sir Neith, if you’d like, perhaps you would like to stay with us for the night. A-As long as Mother and Father allow it, of course.”

“Yes, I think that’s a splendid idea,” replies Roestren’s mother.

“I’ll allow it. I’m trusting you to behave yourself, Sir Neith.”

Neith chuckles uneasily, but he replies warmly, “I wouldn’t dream of dishonoring your hospitality, but I will politely refuse. I can make it to the inn.”

“Nonsense!” retorts Vynseria warmly. “The inn is too far to walk to at this time of night. This town is alright, but there’s no reason to go out after dark.”

“But, I’m…”

“W-We have the space,” adds Roestren, a soft pleading expression on her face.

The grey dragon sighs. There’s virtually nothing and no one in Mattarglos that actually poses a threat to Neith, other than the known individuals that are currently with the rest of his party. But, they are obviously offering him a place

to stay as a means to keep him around a little longer and let him bond with Roestren.

It's strange, but perhaps the great deal of wealth he provided them is encouraging them to ensure they snare him. He doesn't mind. They don't seem like greedy people, so much as prudent.

He agrees. "I'll be in your care, then. Please treat me well."

"Yes!" cheers Roestren.

They continue speaking into the night until it is time for bed, and they put Neith up in the simple den, where there is room enough on the floor for a bed mat, which is plenty comfortable for the rather seasoned dragon. He has slept in caves, on tree branches, and in ruins when he was travelling. A cozy bed mat in a comfortable home is more than he could ask for.

In the morning, Roestren helps Vynseria with breakfast, serving Ulkamak and Neith. The dragon feels awkward, but he goes along with it, since he agreed to be this woman's betrothed.

They have a pleasant breakfast, and he vows to write letters to her, instructing her how to send letters to him via Fort Peony. If anything prevents his letters from reaching her, he'll fly to the town himself and deliver them, which makes Roestren bashful, but extremely happy.

The grey dragon says his farewells, and Roestren makes one final request before he departs. "Um, Sir Neith?"

"Yes, my Lady?"

She steps a little closer, fidgeting with her hands. "M-May I… embrace you before you go?"

Neith has enough presence of mind to glance at her parents, and they smile. Vynseria nods a little more eagerly and noticeably than she probably realizes, which amuses Neith.

He replies gently, “Yes, my Lady. I would like that, too.”

She smiles, and she hugs him, humming happily when he embraces her in turn, holding her close. He’s currently a little bit taller than her, since she’s rather small for a boruan, especially a boruan woman, but they both feel comfortable in each other’s arms.

She sends him off with the words, “F-Farewell, Sir Neith. I’ll be awaiting your letters!”

“And I, yours, my Lady.”

Neith departs with a wave as the three watch him go. For some reason, the dragon feels rather content with everything that transpired, and he’s rather refreshed. He always gives his all to his purpose, but for once, he feels like he has a clear goal in mind.

Once he’s out of sight of anyone that might panic at the realization that a dragon was among them, he sprouts his wings and takes flight towards the capital of Mattarglos, where Daniel and the others are waiting.

Betrothed, huh? muses the grey dragon to himself. *I wonder if this is what Daniel feels when he’s surrounded by the people he loves.*

Neith can’t help but smile as he flies, wondering what the future might bring.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 120: Legends of Mattarglos

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 120: Legends of Mattarglos

~A/N: Hey Dear Readers! I recently decided that keeping track of all of the different names for the elemental summoned by Daniel's scarf is too complex for me, let alone for my readers I imagine, so I've decided to 'singularize' the elemental as Luceniel, and then each element gets a unique name (when I remember it). I mention this in case you see that she is being treated as 'one individual' no matter the element. It is canonical to treat elementals specifically like Luceniel as 'one' or 'many' in the sense that elementals don't have the same sense of 'self' as normal living beings. She just likes being helpful to Daniel and getting attention. If there does still seem to be a glaring clash, please feel free to mention it. Thank you, and I hope you continue to enjoy!~

***

If Daniel had known that a week-long celebration would take place in what seems to be the whole of Mattarglos, he would have braced himself a little better. He requested Ucahote spare a shuttle to make deliveries of wine and rum for the celebration in order to cultivate goodwill, and most of the ‘reject’ batches have been cleaned out -ones that Daniel simply didn’t like and slated to be used for trade, since they’re still good batches-.

That said, the drinks are a great hit, and Aramellianna began planning her own production and distribution immediately. The Grand Duchy is secure for now, but she has been considering establishing a territory within the Fievegal’s captured territory -with permission of course-.

The Imperial part and Mornistae-controlled parts of former Bromlund isolate the Grand Duchy from Mattarglos as it stands, but once Daniel has gained control of the Mornistae capital and removed Rikuto and his superweapons, they'll re-work the distribution of Mornistae territory to allow the Grand Duchy a duty-free route to Mattarglos before turning the remainder of the kingdom over to the Mornistae Royal Family.

"Rikuto was fine as king until he became obsessed with his fear of Daniel's weapons," is Aramellianna's stance on the topic.

Today, the third day of the nine-day celebrations, Veiranoei is Daniel's consort for the day, and he escorts her as requested by Kalegrynten to give the appearance at least that she is an Empress. She holds his arm gently as she walks with him to the meeting place on the airship. It has been too chaotic for him to progress his desired outcomes, so he finally gathered everyone together.

The meeting place is the lounge of the airship, where there is comfortable furniture for everyone, and Wenlianna is slowly and wearily setting up the magic radio. "Ughhh… Why did I let them convince me to drink so much…?"

Reignleif replies with her soft voice, "It seemed like a good idea at the time, huh?"

"I see why you are cautious about the amounts you give out, your Grace," adds Aramellianna as she watches in amusement. Wenlianna is only mildly hungover, while Treia and Gwenesphia are laid out on lounge sofas with pillows over their heads. They only had a single small drink each to not disrespect a toast made by Kalegrynten, but it was enough to exacerbate their morning sickness. Daniel also suspects they had their drinks on empty stomachs, so he'll have to have Xyreko monitor their health more closely to be safe.

Ryuogriar and Geirahoel can't -or rather, agreed with Daniel not to- drink due to their pregnancies, so Reignleif is the only one happily tipsy from enjoying a few drinks during the endless celebrations. Senn, of course, has never had an enjoyable alcoholic drink, so she is also down for the count, being watched over by Vaergraes and Hekate.

Hekate perks up, asking, "Daniel? What kept you?"

"F-Forgive me, your Greatness," cuts in Veiranoei instantly. "Many of the visiting domain lords and chieftains wanted to wish me thanks and congratulations."

"It seems you're quite popular, my Lady," replies Magnir, the blue dragon who followed Daniel and Veiranoei as their guard while Neith is running a personal errand.

The young feldrok empress crosses her arms, frowning lightly. "It's no fun if you immediately take the blame, Veira. Daniel's a butt. You can let him be scolded for a bit."

Daniel brushes off the remark with a retort of his own. "Obviously, that's just the lie we concocted."

Hekate glares at him. She knows he's toying with her, but she also is immediately suspicious. She glances at the gatonine knight and then back to Daniel several times each. Veiranoei desperately exclaims, "Th-That's not true, your Greatness! I swear, it was just a few social greetings! I-I felt bad brushing them off! Please." She bows her head.

The feldrok girl sighs. "I am forced to believe you. Otherwise, I'd look like the butt."

Daniel and a few of the others chuckle. Vaergraes teases, “Remember the lesson you learned recently, Hekate. The words of an empress are law.”

The ravenette teen flinches. She pouts, grumbling as she marches back over to the seat next to Ryuogriar, and she plops down. “Let’s hurry up and get on with this meeting.”

The door bursts open, and Neith jogs in. “Am I too late?” He kneels at once. “Forgive my insolence and my tardiness, my Liege, your Greatness. I have just returned.”

“You could have taken more time,” replies Ryuogriar. “We are in good hands with Sir Magnir and Dame Roeta.”

“Y-Your Grace,” murmurs Roeta adoringly.

Neith adds, “I sufficiently accomplished what I needed to do, and I’d like to make sure we accomplish our mission here.”

Daniel watches as Neith walks to his normal post nearby, but out of the way. He seems to be a bit happier thanks to his personal errand, but Daniel will ask him about it later.

“Hello? Lady Ahok? Are you there?” Wenlianna operates the radio as everyone is settling in.

“*Y-Yes! I’m here, Lady Wenlianna!*”

“Did you get my notes?”

“*I did. I think I understand what you’re looking for. I’m not sure I understand the purpose of the crystals. And, I’m not an expert on the urmalium, but I’m not sure it would allow it to work, would it?”*

Geirahoel bursts out, “Hah! See? I’m not the only one!” Her comment is directed mostly at Reignleif, who corrected her last time. Fortunately, Ahok can’t hear unless the radio is transmitting.

Wenlianna waits for Reignleif to respond, and the blue female dragon replies gently, “I’ve been learning English.” She smiles and states in fairly good English, “[*I won’t let you stay favorite forever without a fight.*]”

Geirahoel gasps. Even Hekate doesn’t know what was just said, since English isn’t a language from Zenkon, so it doesn’t fall into her automatic language comprehension feldroks are born with.

Wenlianna replies gently, “[*I’d be happy to have someone to practice with, Great Aunt Reina. There are still a lot of words I’m struggling to understand.*]”

Reignleif nods in agreement, and Geirahoel stands up, storming around the lounge furniture to Daniel. Hekate darts to him as well. “Mukori! Teach me English at once!”

“Yeah! I don’t understand it like other languages!”

Daniel holds her shoulders gently to try to calm her down. “Easy there! I haven’t taught either of them much of anything, except when they ask for help.”

The orange dragon pouts furiously at him, and Daniel pets Hekate’s head. “I assume it’s because it’s not from this world that you don’t understand it the magic way. Though, the spell works on it…”

Senn murmurs, “The feldrok ability comes from the world’s mana…” She does her best to sit up, clutching her head. She promptly gives up and flops back down into her lifeless-seeming slouch on one of the comfortable seats. “It’s the

same reason Dawnseeing can't see events on Earth… like Divine Summons being summoned."

"*Um… are you still there, Lady Wenlianna?"*

"Yes! Sorry!" replies Wenlianna quickly into the radio. "Um, Great Aunt Reignleif was explaining to me that the radioactive material is called uranium. And, the lead shielding will protect the magic components around it. The small holes of increasing size and glass lenses in front of each hole will require greater and greater amounts of mana to light. The crystals work as a sort of 'mana amplifier'..." She glances at Daniel, who nods. While Wenlianna is the one who made Daniel's idea possible by interpreting what he was explaining into a magic equivalent, his base knowledge from Earth is the starting point.

She continues, "The amplifier is meant to raise the ambient mana to a higher baseline and make it easier for the device to distinguish between small changes."

There's a moment of quiet as everyone waits on Ahok's response. She has a few helpers on her side as well, including the Uhl'tall brewers working on revival potations.

"*My Lady, if I may, would it work a little more simply if we use just two mana crystals, one to activate the other as an offset to the main glass orb, which has a single hole to the uranium? In fact, if we widen the probes away from each other and connect them to the core with mana links, they should be able to collect more ambient mana and require a lot fewer EMC's, as well as a smaller piece of uranium."*

"Ah! Yes! I see what you mean!" Wenlianna scribbles on her copy of the designs, adding, "Alright, yes, that's a bit better, but we should probably

increase the number of sensor probes to make them individually more sensitive to ambient mana. Otherwise, I'm worried the larger piece of glass will release too much of the mana as a glow."

"*Agreed,"* replies Ahok's voice over the radio. "*I'll run some tests and report back to you as soon as possible.*"

"Good, good. Are there any other issues?"

"*Queen Heralesse is visiting the township at Illianna's suggestion. She's observing the industrial and agricultural changes Daniel has implemented."*

Daniel requests the microphone, and Wenlianna hands it over. "Lady Ahok, this is Daniel. It's alright if she studies what's happening in town. I've never known Heralesse to be physically aggressive, and most of our methods are based on equipment she won't just be able to replicate. As for farming, I suspect Rikuto's methods are a bit better, since it was a portion of what he was studying in college. Our equivalent to academy here."

"*U-Understood, your Grace. Forgive me for overstepping*."

"You didn't overstep. Thank you for looking out for the Fievegal. I'll give the radio back to Wenlianna now."

"*Y-Yes, your G-Grace. Thank you.*"

As Wenlianna speaks to her briefly, Daniel remarks to no one in particular while studying the drawings, "I wonder if an iris would be easier to gauge mana intensity."

Wenlianna interrupts herself to say, "Hang on, Ahok." Wenlianna looks passionately at Daniel, saying in a tone of almost betrayal; "Daniel? What did you just say?"

“Hmm? Oh, I was just wondering if an iris on the shield would give us better control over the exposure to the uranium.”

“Explain!” exclaims the passionate magic artisan as she springs up and grips his shirt. He chuckles, “Okay! Okay! Look;” Daniel sketches a basic iris mechanism, showing how the curved-wedge-like blades contect to the fixed inner ring and the pivoting outer ring, which they can make an extension lever on to operate. “When the outer ring is turned, the blades slide across each other, making the hole in the very center smaller. If we shield the blades, it’ll make the iris kinda thick, but functional.”

Wenlianna fumbles with the radio in her excitement. “Ahok! Ahok! I’m sending you another design! It’s really hard to explain, but I’ll get it out of Daniel and send you the drawings! Please see to it once I have it delivered to you.”

“*Y-Yes! I-I will.*”

“Sorry for putting all of the construction onto you, but I don’t have the equipment here to shape materials.”

“*No need, Lady Wenlianna! I am pleased to be constructing beneficial equipment for a change. A-And… to work with someone so talented.”*

“Oh my! You flatter me, Ahok. You’re just as talented. If you need any help, call for us on the radio, and I’ll help however I can. If need be, I’ll return to the Citadel.” Read this novel at novelping dot com for the best experience.

“*Thank you, Lady Wenlianna. I will. I will go as far as I can from here. Please be safe, and continued good fortune on your mission.*”

“Thank you. You as well, Ahok.”

Wenlianna sighs, sitting back in her seat. “Daniel, why do you always hold out on me?”

He chuckles as the others smile. Ryuogriar playfully adds, “Yes, Mukori. Why do you always hold out on your beloved consorts?”

Daniel points at Ryuogriar, retorting, “*You* know the answer to that question, Ryuo-Mukori.”

She feigns a meek pout, and Daniel replies to Wenlianna, “I try, Wenlianna. But, I’m juggling a lot of things.”
She smiles, briefly taking his hand. “I know. But, I’m catching up.”

The human mechanic nods. “You’ll overtake me in no time. You and Ahok combined have far more imagination than me. To turn my half-baked ideas into a tangible device is impressive.”

“You make it easy.”

“Yes, yes,” interjects Hekate. “We all know you’re both amazing. What do we do in the meantime?”

Daniel replies, “Until we have the mana detector in hand, we won’t be able to locate the mana sources causing the mutations. Unless I missed something?” He looks to Senn and Vaergraes, both of whom confirm.

Vaergraes explains, “The anomaly is noticeable, or it would be better understood. I, too, and my father and grandfather have sought to reduce the number of monsters that are created at random. They pose as much threat to anyone in the world as any other.”

“They’re more annoying than anything,” remarks Ryuogriar.

“I-If we could,” starts Veiranoei. “I-I know your goal is to investigate the cause and prevent more monsters from being created, but…” She fidgets, and Aramellianna states, “You are among friends, and are an empress of the Fievegal now, if informally. Speak, your Grace. Nothing is gained by your sheepishness.”

The gatonine woman nods, looking down briefly. “If… I may humbly request, another corrupted beast similar to Tyror plagues our lands. I-… It is the fiend of the pure lake. Rohgattabor, a graetcheth mantarouck. The lake would be a good source of water, and if there are still fish and crustaceans, Mattarglos would be even more self-sufficient with a larger population than we can support now.”

“Is it safe to use the lake if monsters are appearing in it?” asks Hekate.

“Our… sorry, the Mattarglos Army can fend off most monsters. Tyror, Rohgattabor, and…” Veiranoei looks down, adding softly, “Yaulwembor.”

Daniel notices the six dragons twitch, and Vaergraes and Senn also seem to become grimly serious. “Do you know of that one?” asks Daniel.

The dragons glance at each other, and Ryuogriar asks, “Mukori, what do you call us?”

“Mukori?”

The three empresses can’t help but smile, while Roeta gets to the point, “Her Grace doesn’t mean that, your Grace. What do you call all of us?”

Hekate gasps. “Yaulwaun [Dragon]…” She looks at Daniel. “It’s close to the eastern word for ‘voumalas [dragon]’.”

Daniel recoils as he makes the connection. He looks at Veiranoei, and she nods without looking directly at him. “Y-Yes… I don’t know much about it, but Yaulwembor is said to be invincible. S-Similar to… the dragons.”

“Any comrades missing in action?” asks Daniel as he looks at his draconic companions. Neith was travelling for most of his life after the fall of the feldroks, which was several hundred years in the past now, so he remains respectfully quiet as he looks at the others. Ryuogriar and Reignleif give it the most thought, while Magnir also searches his memories, since the three of them are the oldest.

“Nothing is coming to mind, Mukori,” murmurs Ryuogriar. “Though, that is not to say that it can’t be a dragon who disappeared long before any of us.”

“A-Are we even sure it’s actually a dragon?” asks Kera’tai nervously. “Maybe it’s a drake… or a wyvern.”

“If it’s an old enough drake, it might as well be a dragon,” replies Reignleif gently. “Especially if it has evolved to use magic respective to the other monsters.”

Neith immediately suggests, “Whatever the case, I must insist the Empresses and Dame Roeta remain here, my Liege.”

Geirahoel snaps, “Are you crazy!? That’s even more reason for us to go! You don’t decide-…”

“Calm down, Mukori,” urges Daniel gently. She glares at him, and then back at Neith, but she stops yelling. The human mechanic asks, “I have my own reasons to agree, but why do you insist, Sir Neith?”

Neith looks at the four dragon women with a pleading expression, as all four of them stare at him with serious doubts. “Whether it is an actual feral dragon or a drake powerful enough to be considered one, there is a problem if it is a male. Specifically in the presence of… females carrying the offspring of another male.” He looks at Daniel, adding, “It will be risky enough taking you with us. If it’s a sentient dragon, we might be able to reason with it, and if it’s a female… we might benefit from trying to capture it.”

“Now I know you’re crazy!” snaps Geirahoel. “The four of us would easily-…”

“All of the female dragons obeyed Morthybargaron, even when not all of you agreed.” All five of the other dragons now, including Magnir, glare at Neith. He holds his hands up to try to disarm them. “I’m not scolding or condescending. I’m saying an old enough dragon -or drake- could be a threat to even any of us. Or, all of us. If it is in a rut, it will shatter its own body to violently try to obliterate all of us. The best case scenario is a female, and it would hopefully focus its attention on myself, Magnir, or even his Grace Daniel.” Neith looks at Daniel, adding, “It’s a failing proposition more often than not, but wingdrakes, particularly, *have* born dragon eggs in the past, from what I have heard overseas. Drakes are intelligent, even if they aren’t considered sapient, so it would obey a magic contract without issue.”

Daniel ponders Neith’s words. The grey dragon is being sincere, since he’s worried about the Empresses, especially, but Roeta as well. He’s weighing the chances of Yaulwembor going on a rut-addled rampage against the additional firepower and magic four more dragons would bring. If it’s relatively calm, Daniel can likely get a clean shot with one of his rifles. He needs to quickly make a replacement railgun, since the firepower alone is looking more and more necessary with the beings he’s coming face to face with.

He looks at Veiranoei. “Do the territories of the lake monster and the dragon overlap?”

She shakes her head. “N-No. Y-Your Grace.”

Daniel sighs. “Listen. And, this goes for everyone. I understand when we're in polite company, but can we be casual when it's just us? Please?”

Veiranoei fidgets, and she nods. “I-I’ll try… D-Daniel.”

He nods with a smile. “Thank you. Even if it’s in spirit only, you’re a consort. And, I’d prefer to be friends.”
She smiles and nods again. “Thank you.”

With his original question answered, Daniel adds, “Alright, so since they don’t overlap, we’ll investigate the lake monster first.”

“Rohgattabor,” replies Geirahoel a sliver of a second before Hekate says the same thing. “Rohgattabor! Gah! Geira!”

The orange dragon grins playfully.

“My love,” starts Doephluev. “I can’t imagine Rohgattabor will be alone in the lake.”

“Agreed. Any ideas what we’re up against, Veiranoei?”

The gatonine knight ponders the question for a moment. “Other than Rohgattabor, there will be other mantaroucks, including at least one other graetcheth variant. I’ve also heard father mention bog crabs and banshee serpents will be in the marshes surrounding the lake, so it’s possible monstrous variants of them will appear.”

Neith adds, “Do not forget about balinkons and feral demon-kin, like the goblins and orcs.”

“All the more reason we should accompany you, Mukori,” states Geirahoel. “You should be…” She suddenly halts, glaring at Neith with color filling her cheeks. She adds with a feistiness, “I mean to say, you have beautiful and powerful dragons at your side, Mukori. You should make greater use of us.”

Daniel looks at her, and her own face softens. He looks profoundly saddened and quite a bit distant suddenly. “M-Mukori?”

Daniel looks away. “Sorry… I just…”

Geirahoel doesn’t hesitate to move to him, and she hesitates only briefly directly in front of the human man before hugging him, pressing her head to his chest. Daniel gently hugs her in turn. No one interrupts them.

“Say it…” murmurs Geirahoel. “S-Say it, and… I’ll obey…”

Daniel hesitates for a moment. She very clearly knows that he’s worried more for her safety, as well as the others, than for his own. And, their pregnancies don’t help him feel any more eager to bring them to the battlefield.

Daniel lowers his head close to her cheek so he can speak into her ear. “Mukori,… Please act as you always have, and watch over us until we need help. I’ll not store my helmet in a dangerous area, and I’ll let you know when I’m taking it off.”

Geirahoel grips his jacket at his back. “Fine… But, if I have to come retrieve you, I’m locking you up in the Citadel with me forever.”

“Hey!” snaps Hekate. “He’ll be with ME forever!”

Geirahoel keeps her head pressed to Daniel's chest, but she looks at Hekate with a content smile. "Please allow me to correct myself. I shall lock Daniel away with all of us, lest he do something foolish."

Daniel chuckles, and Hekate nods. "That's better."

"We have a plan, then. We'll…" Daniel looks at the incapacitated members of his party, including primarily Gwenesphia, Treia, and Senn. Reignleif, who would also be part of the cavalry, is also heavily buzzed. "We'll rest for today and head out tomorrow morning. Will that be alright, Veiranoei?"

"Oh! Y-Yes! Of course! No one goes near the pure lake anymore. I just… I wanted to ask… since you slayed Tyror."

"I'll make no promises. I haven't done a lot of preparing for fighting aquatic enemies, but I have a few things to try. And, if push comes to shove, Neith or Hekate can vaporize the lake." This chapter was taken from NovelPing without permission.

Simultaneously, two things happen; a gatonine woman gasps and a feldrok girl cheers, "Ooo! Me! Me! I wanna…!"

Hekate halts when she realizes Veiranoei gasped, and she looks sheepishly at the nervous green-haired knight. Hekate does what she can to reassure the young woman, "Um… I mean,… It'll only be if we can't defeat the monsters any other way."

Vaergraes chuckles, adding, "Regardless, the lake should return after time, if it came to that. But, if Daniel will allow, I believe we can draw them out onto land."

Daniel looks at her, and Doephluev chimes in. “Mantaroucks are ambush predators, my Love. They like to spring out of the water and catch prey at the shoreline, and then drag it back into the water.”

Veiranoei nods in agreement. “When it’s normal mantaroucks, our soldiers lure them out of the water with livestock and then bombard them with spears and arrows. As… mentioned, Rohgattabor has powerful magic, and it has grown quite powerful as the decades have passed. S-So says my father and grandfather. I myself have never seen it.”

“My Lie-...” starts Magnir, before changing to, “Daniel, Sire; if you’d permit, during the time you and the advance team are facing Rohgattabor, I would volunteer myself to scout out the location of Yaulwembor and determine what kind of enemy it is.”

“Not a good idea,” retorts Ryuogriar. “If the people of Mattarglos regard it as a dragon, then it is likely more powerful than you are. Depending on its age, it could be more powerful than Neith, Vaergraes, or Hekate.” She gives him a sympathetic smile. “I don’t like the idea of any of us facing it at all.”

“Have Sir Magnir take a couple of the Stalvaltan Guards, then,” offers Aramellianna, having listened to the tactical side of their mission. She’s mainly present for political information, in case she needs to know what’s going on for negotiations. But, she is still Grand Duchess of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy, and as such, the Commander in Chief of the Stalvaltan Guard. “As you know, they have stealth magic that is quite effective. To my understanding, and I mean no offense, Sir Magnir, our esteemed blue knight’s mana is more comparable to our battlemages, and should be easy enough for them to hide. For a scouting mission, I could offer no greater service.”

Everyone looks to Daniel. He is silent for a long time.

“I think it’s a good idea,” offers Hekate gently. “We can stomp Rohgattabor, and then go right after to take down Yaulwembor.”

Daniel looks at the four dragons that barely survived the mission to destroy the orbicharium. Magnir and Ryuogriar, specifically, were almost lost forever.

But, Daniel can’t do everything himself. He needs to trust his allies and be able to delegate to them.

He nods finally. “Very well. Prioritize safety, Sir Magnir.” Remembering something, Daniel retrieves his void bag from his belt, and he scrolls through it to find something he’s still working on; a simple sight-glass. Getting the lenses just right to be able to adjust focus and range has been more difficult than he hoped, but the sailing-style collapsible sightglass will work for extreme range. He hands it over to Magnir, explaining, “I’m still working on this, so it’s not as good as I’d hope, but use this and don’t get close.”

Wenlianna perks up, and Magnir inspects the device. “Is this something similar to Lady Wenlianna’s glasses, Sire?”

“In a sense, yes. But, instead of helping poor eyesight, it’s for seeing much further than normal.”

Magnir extends it, surprised by the extending tube. He then looks through the wider end first, and Wenlianna can’t resist. “The other end, Sir Magnir. I helped with the lenses, so please let me know how well it works from the air.”

The male blue dragon in humanoid form nods. “Thank you. I will gather as much information as I can.”

Roeta is hesitant, and Daniel says without hesitation, “Mukori, please monitor Sir Magnir as well, and inform Dame Roeta if anything happens.”

All three dragon empresses reply, “Of course!” They shoot glances at each other, realizing Daniel intentionally left it vague who specifically he was talking to. Just before they start to push it off on each other, Daniel adds, “I’m counting on the three of you to act as cavalry for either mission. But, of course, the priority for Magnir is *scouting* only. Understood?”

Magnir nods. “Yes, Sire. I am aware of my limits, and I’ll make the best decisions I can.”

Daniel nods. “Mother, I would humbly ask you to allow Sir Magnir to recruit volunteers from the Stalvaltan Guard to accompany him on the scouting mission.”

Aramellianna nods warmly. “Of course. I’ll speak to them and inform them they have my blessing for this mission.”

“Thank you. Then, we’ll go with that. Magnir, focus on learning whether or not it’s a dragon or a drake, what elements of magic it has if you can tell without getting close, and if possible, determine what gender it is. Though, I doubt that will be so easy.”

Neith adds, “Focus on the first two, Magnir. If you’re close enough to determine the being’s gender, you’re close enough to be detected. We’ll have to plan to capture with the intel you can safely gather, and adjust when we arrive for the mission.” He looks to Daniel for approval, and Daniel nods in agreement.

“Very well. I wasn’t sure if you can tell from far away.”

“There are ways, but it will reveal Magnir’s position to attempt to do so.”

Daniel nods. “I understand.” Having another revelation, Daniel asks, “By the way, is there any reason you wouldn’t want to capture it if it’s male, Magnir? I

assume your mind is on increasing the number of bloodlines in future generations."

Neith nods. "Yes, but a male drake or dragon would be too risky unless it can be rationalized with. If it is an ancient dragon older than me, though, it's likely he'll take his chances with… mmm… replacing you, so to speak."

"I would die resisting," retorts Reignleif immediately. Geirahoel nods in agreement. Ryuogriar murmurs, "I don't want to even think it…"

"Good thing we have the Harbinger of Calamity," jokes Vaergraes. "Not to mention the Demon Tyrant and an actual feldrok."

"Hey! That's no fair!" complains Hekate. "How come I don't have an evil-sounding nickname!?"

"Empress of Evil?" asks Yanidere out of the blue. Everyone looks at her, since it's the first time she's spoken up to the group since the meeting began. She blushes and clears her throat. "I-I don't actually mean that… I just… thought it sounded… kind of what you wanted… y-your Greatness."

The feldrok empress scoffs and laughs. "Not bad. Not bad. Thank you, Yanidere."

Daniel ruffles Hekate's hair, adding, "If it makes you feel better, I originally called myself the Harbinger of Woe. It evolved through the rumor mill."

"Someone! Quick! Start rumors about me!"

"Tiny Terror," blurts out Doephluev, while Ryuogriar adds, "Darling Daughter."
"Adorable cinnamon roll," states Reignleif.

Everyone chuckles together when Hekate frowns.

A groan draws attention to Gwenesphia as she tries to sit up. “Daniellll…”

The human mechanic excuses himself from the small circle formed around him consisting of Hekate, Doephluev, Geirahoel, and Veiranoei so that he can tend to Gwenesphia. He kneels next to her as she holds her forehead with her palm. She wearily says, “I’ve been paying attention, and… I have a request as well, Daniel.”

“Let’s hear it,” replies Daniel gently.

“My parents and second and third eldest brothers, as well as my youngest elder sister, have all arrived for the celebration.” She winces at her headache and mild nausea.

“You want to do introductions?”

She glances at him, as if that just now crossed her mind. “Oh… Yes, I suppose so.” She sits up a little more, and Daniel supports her as Hekate approaches as well in case she’ll need anything.

Gwenesphia continues her actual thought. “But, actually, my request is to… bring my siblings and father on the subjugation mission of Rohgattabor. Father’s domain touches Lake Halynd, and our ancestors… were part of the failed raids against it.”

Daniel sighs. “I understand your position, but…”

“I know having a lot of soldiers is dangerous with the strategy you’ll be using with magic. But…” She gently takes his hand with both of hers. “I’d like my family to have a chance to restore our honor.”

Daniel considers it quietly, wondering if there’s a way to keep them safe while also giving them a chance to help defeat the monster for their pride and honor -

foolish concepts in his opinion, but a big part of many of the cultures of Zenkon-. He understands why Gwenesphia is asking, but he doesn't want to lose any lives. And, trying to protect fairly regular soldiers will be additional burden on the party Daniel is taking with them.

But, in that same vein, he reluctantly agreed to allow the Fievegal army to lead the invasion into Mornistae on their own in order to prove their worth as a formal army. He can't change the ingrained spirit of the people of this world. Certainly not overnight.

He gently squeezes her hands with the one she's holding. "I'll accept, but we'll need a proper plan. And, they have to promise to adhere to it. That includes running away if we lose control of the situation."

Gwenesphia nods. "I'll make sure they understand."

Daniel sighs and nods.

"Don't worry, Daniel," replies Hekate. "We'll just use another polonium grenade, right?"

He smiles as he looks over his shoulder at her. "That's where we'll start, but we need to figure out the best way to keep it on shore, or the contamination will get washed off."

"Ah… Yeah, that makes sense." The young feldrok girl cups her chin as she thinks.

"Regardless, Gwen, when you get a chance, set up a meeting with your family. We'll postpone the mission until we have a plan. Everyone in agreement?"

No objections are raised, which means the group will have at least one more night to relax and celebrate with the citizens of Mattarglos.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 121: The Hunters Depart

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 121: The Hunters Depart

Rikuto calls out, “Enter,” when a knock comes at his office door. He’s currently working on financial records to restore Mornistae’s finances. He had to sell additional treasures and more of the kingdom’s stockpile of crops and ores, which he thankfully got a good price for. With the Grand Duchy being invaded by Daniel’s forces, he’ll have to make due with the current number of reloads for the void artillery, and he has gathered a rather large defensive force.

About a third of the second wave were able to flee, and they confirmed Rikuto’s fears; Daniel equipped demon-kin with rifles and pistols, vastly increasing their per-soldier effectiveness. The heaviest armor even the strongest boruans can wear is only effective at defending against the pistols. Rikuto had hoped that battlemages would be able to protect portions of the army with magic barriers partnered with powerful area spells to try to wipe out the enemy squads as quickly as possible, since their numbers are actually quite low.

The otherworlder king wishes he could see the battlefield himself. The survivors described craters on the battlefield. It *could* have been explosion spells or some other kind of high-impact magic just as easily as it could have been any number of explosives that Daniel could have created.

What’s the worst thing he could make? Could he make missiles? Or rockets? I guess anything’s possible. The scouts that returned from Twilight said they had rudimentary cannons on the walls, from what they described.

He sighs as he massages his temples. He looks up, noticing the person who enters is none other than King Father Greydald, who made Rikuto king in order to grant him authority to implement his otherworldly policies unimpeded.

Rikuto bolts to his feet. “Your Majesty, my apologies…”

“Nevermind that. I’m here for word of my daughters.” Greydald’s tone is cold. At first, he spent most of his time trying to console the Queen Mother Orphialxia, which kept them out of Rikuto’s hair, as bad as that is to think.

But, now he’s trying to be more active in figuring out what’s giving Rikuto trouble. And, as if that isn’t nerve-wracking enough, the Grand Prince of the Empire, Yaulander kos Strylaph, ‘requested’ an audience with Rikuto for some reason that he didn’t elaborate on over written message. So, Rikuto has to prepare the fanfare and a feast for a couple of days from the present. He also has to set up beacons and additional security to make sure Daniel’s forces don’t attack during the audience.

For now, Rikuto has to answer to his predecessor and father-in-law. “Your Majesty, Daniel hasn’t made any demands or threats, so I’ve been trying to establish negotiations with his soldiers, but they’ve been refusing all parlay.”

Greydald collapses into the cushioned chair across from Rikuto’s desk, groaning as he clutches his head. “I can’t believe I allowed this to happen… I thought I was doing right by my daughters by giving them more leeway than Orphialxia’s family did in her youth.”

Rikuto is quiet for a moment. He replies, “In your own defense, your Majesty, Japan allows a great deal more freedom for women than anywhere I’ve seen in this world. Women own companies, serve in the military at all levels, and

generally determine the course of their own lives. Freedom comes with risks, but the payoff is much greater."

Greydald sighs. "And yet, both of my daughters are now hostage to Daniel." The middle-aged man shakes his head as he stares at the ceiling. "I truly believed he was a decent person. I should have listened to the nobles pushing for execution." He clenches his fingers against the armrests of the chair. "I was just thankful that Erimaya was safe… And now both she and Heralesse…" He grits his teeth, unable to continue the sentence.

Rikuto is unsure how he feels. He has been hearing similar rumors going around about Daniel as were spreading when he saved Erimaya's life. He has a slave harem of demon-kin, he lays with goblins, and Hekate is an underage girl proudly expressing her romantic relationship to Daniel. It's not as frowned upon in this world, since Erimaya was betrothed shortly after her tenth birthday, but the stories indicate that Daniel is not showing any restraint with his harem.

That said, Rikuto would be lying if he said he wasn't simply envious of the fact that Daniel has a harem, and it would be easy to conflate the fact that he does with the notion of him being lecherous towards children, which is the sticking point for the Japanese man. As frustrating as it is that Daniel has done what he has in regards to the nukes by even creating them, let alone using them in this world, it's not in his personality to be particularly lecherous. Daniel could keep a straight face even when Wenlianna touched him for various reasons, including innocent friendly touches, humor, and experimentation. Rikuto doesn't know if he could remain stoic with a girl as beautiful as Wenlianna touching him. It took a lot of focus for him to resist squirming and blushing when Heralesse would get close.

In truth, Rikuto knows that Erimaya fled to Daniel for fear of the assassins that tried to kill her once, and because she feels a sense of loyalty to Daniel for

saving her life. The Japanese man doubts his American counterpart will do anything inappropriate to her, since investigators that have gone to Fort Peony report that many of the women believe he is gay, since he *didn't* do anything to anyone there.

Rikuto finally replies, "Daniel won't harm them. They're more useful to him as hostages. Especially if he can brainwash them into supporting him."

Greydald looks at Rikuto as if his face just turned upside down. The otherworlder explains, "On Earth, there was a condition hostages would suffer from called 'Stockholm Syndrome', named after bank robbers… er, thieves, took hostages, and the hostages actually worked with the thieves to sabotage rescue efforts."

"Is it… some sort of brainwashing magic?"

"No. It's believed to be some sort of survival mechanism in human instincts, I think. Uh, default… automatic behaviors. They fool themselves into thinking they need the thieves for survival, since cooperation leads to better treatment."

"I… I don't understand…"

"I know. It's hard to explain without anything to compare to. But, like I said, Daniel almost certainly knows about it as well, so he'd be more likely to try to fool the girls into helping him achieve his goals."

"Wh-What if he…?" The former king clutches his head.

The Japanese man sighs. It's understandable, but he's distracting Rikuto with the same fears day in and day out. "*If* they are harmed or dishonored in any way, your Majesty, I will see to it that the full might of justice is brought down on Daniel and his allies. Please trust me. I believe, or I hope at least, that the

Grand Prince is coming to discuss a joint effort to defeat Daniel once and for all."

Greydald nods. "You have my support, Rikuto. Just… please, bring back my daughters safely."

"I will."

In just a couple day's time, Rikuto will learn the purpose of the Grand Prince of the Empire's visit.

And, it won't have crossed the otherworlder's mind at all.

***

Gwenesphia, Treia, and Veiranoei escort Daniel and Hekate into Kalegrynten's private home, which is a rather modest estate, given that he's the leader of all of Mattarglos. The Grand Premier agreed to host the meeting between Daniel and Gwenesphia's family.

Following the five are Neith and Doephluev.

Hekate looks around at the numerous rooms in the infinitesimally smaller homestead than the Citadel. It's a cozy place, and much larger than the home Daniel owned on Earth; easily large enough to house a rather large family with at least one generation of extended family, if need be, by the looks of it.
"Daniel? Do you think the Citadel is too big?"

The human mechanic chuckles. "Don't let Xyreko hear you ask that."

"It's too big for us, but it wasn't built for wee-people like humans and gatonines," replies Gwenesphia playfully. "My family's estate is a bit smaller

than this, but this is on the smaller side from someone of the Grand Premier's rank."

"Definitely, especially given the other kingdoms," confirms Treia. "And don't even get me started on the Empire."

"I know!" exclaims Hekate. "All those big houses in the Capital were crazy!"

"And the littlest Empress commands the biggest castle," states Doephluev bluntly.

Hekate shoots a glare over her shoulder, retorting coldly, "Servants are to be unseen and unheard, Doephluev.

"As you can see, I am a lady-in-waiting today, your Greatness," replies the former assassin, referring to her formal lady's dress Daniel bought from Aramellianna's tailor for her.

"Waiting for what?" asks Hekate sarcastically. But, she just teed herself up for Doephluev.

The archoneldwyn woman smiles, retorting fearlessly, "Waiting to be the Empress, of course."

"Oh for f-..." grumbles Daniel, reacting quickly enough to snatch Hekate's arm to keep her facing forward. "Don't be baited, Hekate. Doephluev, please play nice."

Hekate huffs and grumbles, while Doephluev replies sweetly, "As you wish, my Love."

The others nervously tried to stay out of the bickering, since Doephluev mostly focuses her instigating on Hekate, and the feldrok Empress often runs the risk

of snapping. Plus, Daniel stands the most chance of being able to defuse the situation, rather than escalating it.

Kalegrynten's servant, who is leading the way, guides the group to the drawing room, where the Grand Premier is already entertaining the baron and his family.

"Ahhh! Yes! Come in! Come in! Baron, I'd like you to meet… oh, uh, apologies, Your Grace." The Grand Premier halts himself when he notices Gwenesphia soften her expression. He clears his throat and backs away. The maneuver surprises the gatonine woman a bit, but she makes a warm greeting, "Father."

"Gwenesphia." The young woman hugs her family to greet them, adding "Thank You, Grand Premier." Kalegrynten bows his head respectfully, having taken the opportunity to greet his granddaughter.

Gwenesphia then introduces everyone. "Your Greatness, please allow me to begin with my family." Daniel notices the elder of the two brothers and Gwenesphia's sister twist their faces in confusion when Gwenesphia defers to Hekate. The young feldrok empress looks no older than twelve, even though she recently turned sixteen. Fortunately, unlike the scrawny little gremlin Daniel found, she looks like a healthy twelve year old instead of an emaciated corpse that doesn't know it's dead yet.

Gwenesphia doesn't seem to have noticed the look her siblings gave, and she starts with her father. "This is my father, Baron Goelselmo of Honeydip."

The baron dips his head. Like Kalegrynten, whose head looks a little lopsided with his nubbed ear, Goelselmo has many scars of battle denoting a long life of defending his territory and the people of Mattarglos. "I am he. I suspect our family name has come up in jest."

Hekate shakes her head, replying respectfully, “No. I have no idea what you mean. In all honesty, I never asked, since before anything else, Gwen is my friend.” The feldrok girl looks up at Daniel. “Should it be funny?”

“I’m not sure.” They both look at Gwenesphia, who blushes. “I-I’ll… explain later.” She then continues the introduction. “My mother, Erue, my brothers, Kuboen and Lyrtef, and my sister, Peiburi.” The source of this chapter is NovelPing.

The two gatonine women both bow their heads respectfully, though Peiburi is a little unsure about Gwenesphia’s companions. Lyrtef replies politely, “A pleasure to meet you.”

Kuboen says nothing for now.

Gwenesphia continues, “Everyone, please allow me to introduce her Greatness, Hekate fell Lawson, Empress of the Fievegal, and Daniel, the Emperor.”

Hekate curtsies with a surprising level of practiced grace, even though she’s the Empress. Regardless, she learned it from Erimaya, and the feldrok empress is set on using her newly learned skill. “I am Hekate. It’s my pleasure to meet Gwen’s family.”

Gwenesphia smiles, adding, “And, this is Treia, who served with me at Peony, Veiranoei, Lord Kalegrynten’s granddaughter, and Sir Neith and Lady Doephluev, who serve Daniel.”

Neith bows, while Treia, Veiranoei, and Doephluev all curtsy skillfully, since Hekate did so. Daniel makes a note to tease Treia, since she almost never wears a dress of any kind, and he was fine with her wearing pants underneath her current one, rather than typical bloomers, since it makes her more

comfortable. The dresses Treia and Gwenesphia are wearing are relatively modest combination of a european-style tea party dress and a Japanese kimono with the ‘obi’ waist wrap tied in a noticeable bow with two colors for each of them. The dresses are easy to move around in, comfortable to wear, but still stand out in a room. Doephluev’s, being from the Stalvaltan tailor, is of the Mornistae-style of dress that looks like a fair bit like a Tudor-style dress with a solid pattern for the outer part of the dress with the under-skirt patterned with golden patterns subtly representing the six elements of magic with their various shapes. Veiranoei is wearing a Mattarglos-style gown, which reminds Daniel of a ‘petal dress’, but with a heavy fur-lined mantle hanging on her shoulders.

Goelselmo remarks, “Daniel?”

“Y-Yes, Father.” The youngest Honeydip daughter correctly recognized what her father was asking.

The baron looks at the other three women accompanying Daniel as apparent equals, as well as the lady in waiting. He then resumes sizing up Daniel.

“Gwenesphia mentioned that you have… an abundant appetite.”

“F-Father, please…”

“What father would approve of his daughter’s suitor being a man with more than one intimate partner?”

Hekate retorts, “Gwen isn’t a hostage. And, I’m glad to have her around.”

“Hmm…”

Daniel adds, “I wouldn’t consider it if I wasn’t in the position I’m in. You can thank the Dragon Empresses for starting it.” Hekate nods, while Kuboen is

noticeably disgusted, and Peiburi looks at her younger sister, but Gwenesphia doesn't let it bother her. She had prepared herself to share Daniel with Treia, and accepted the arrangement as it is because the dragons are very welcoming and actively encourage Daniel to almost literally 'conquer the whole world', in that sense, in spite of the obvious consequences that would entail. She adds gently, "Daniel treats me very well, and I want for nothing, except maybe a little more attention. But, there are ways around that." She smiles warmly.

Erue, Gwenesphia's mother, asks, "I was wondering if what I heard was true. Are the Dragon Empresses not feeling well? I had hoped to speak with her Grace Ryuogriar after hearing about her from a dear friend this past evening."

Hekate answers, "If all of Daniel's m-… Consorts came, this would be a very crowded affair. Plus, they won't be a primary part of the mission."

Though Kuboen seems to be fuming, shooting his sister glances each time Daniel's harem is talked about, the rest of Gwenesphia's family seems to be able to accept it well enough. Peiburi disapproves as well, but she mostly seems a little jealous more than protective of her sister. Her sister has become an Empress out of nowhere simply by following a strange man into the Demon Wildlands, as far as they knew.

But, the baron relaxes a little. "Gwenesphia mentioned it when she set up this meeting, but will you really include us in the subjugation of Rohgattabor?"

Hekate, the official ruler of the Fievegal, is the one to answer. "Yes. It changes our strategy, since we'll have to be extra careful, but your family deserves revenge. Our plan is to lure it out of the water and disable its magic. Then, we corner it and slay it."

“No offense, your… uh, Greatness,” interjects Lyrtef, the third eldest son of the Honeydip family. “But, is it really as simple as you make it sound?”

Hekate replies, “It won’t be easy, but we have a method for each step.”

“How do you intend to disable its magic?” asks Peiburi just before her father can ask the same. “Its own spells are very strong. None of the mages sent before could remain close enough to cast a disabling spell.”

The feldrok empress grins. “The technique is a bit of a trade secret, but the simple answer is this:” She gestures at Daniel as if presenting a work of art. “We have the Harbinger of Calamity.”

Gwenesphia’s family all drop their jaws, and Kalegrynten chuckles. They glance at him, and then at Gwenesphia.

The youngest Honeydip daughter chuckles sheepishly. “Heh heh… Did I leave that part out? He’s the rumored Harbinger of Calamity that the Demon Covenant fear.”

The first words of response are a sour retort from Kuboen. “Or marries, it seems.”

“Kuboen!” snaps Gwenesphia.

Hekate defends herself calmly. “I was a slave until Daniel gifted me the Citadel and we founded the Fievegal.”

“I don’t find that surprising. Even the demons wouldn’t know what race you are.”

“Kuboen! That’s over the line!” yells his younger sister.

“Show a little respect, son,” replies the baroness as well. Kalegrynten is just about to say something as well, when Kuboen adds caustically, “The ‘Fievegal’ isn’t recognized by the Empire as a legitimate entity, and it isn’t even officially recognized by Mattarglos yet. He’s a man who collects women like they’re nothing more than paintings, including child wives.”

“Baron,” warns Kalegrynten to the father of the family, but Hekate states, “It’s fine. I’m the last of my kind. And, it doesn’t matter. Before and after anything else, I am Hekate. Whether you like it or not, this is my mission. If you don’t want to participate, then we get to go with the easier method.”

Everyone looks at Kuboen for his response. No one is siding with him, since she’s not wrong about the mission, and it’s the Honeydip family’s honor on the line.

Kuboen huffs and storms off. Everyone watches him leave, and Erue apologizes, “Please forgive him, your Greatness.”

Hekate replies proudly, “It’s fine, Baroness. He’s not wrong. We’re not officially recognized, which is why we’re willing to help Mattarglos with some problems to benefit both of our nations.”

The Grand Premier sighs. “And, we’re very thankful, your Greatness. Are you sure you want to take on Rohgattabor, though? It’s a great deal of danger that benefits us more than you.”

Daniel takes the reins on this one. “Geirahoel insists that we take a larger portion of the meat this time for our own benefit. Apparently, mantarouck is especially tasty.”

Goelselmo chuckles. “Indeed it is. I wouldn’t say it’s worth hunting them like wild boars or strutherhens.”

“You haven’t seen the Fievegal in action,” replies Treia warmly.

“Will we even be able to help?” asks Peiburi.

Neith replies, “If your people assist us and cooperate, we’ll be able to take it down with less damage to the monster’s hide. And, if we should find ourselves in trouble, myself and a few others that will be with us shall defend the hunting party.”

“The only problem is,” starts Hekate. She finishes her point without words by looking in the direction Kuboen went.

Gwenesphia says with a little disappointment, “I’ll talk to him.”

“Remember, he has to cooperate with us. He’ll be in danger if he refuses to work with us.”

The gatonine woman nods. “Yes, of course.” She walks quickly in the direction her elder brother went.

Daniel then says, “Now then, we’ll give you a basic rundown of the plan if you have time now. We’ll need you to consider whether or not you’ll be able to do what we’re expecting, and we’ll adjust from there.” Daniel then looks to Kalegrynten. “With your permission, Kalegrynten, I’d like a map that focuses on the area around the lake where Rohgattabor resides.”

“Of course, Daniel. I’ll gather experts on the area.”

“We’re familiar with the area from range,” replies Lyrtef. “At least, the portion of the lake that enters Father’s Barony.”

Peiburi nods in agreement. “There’s a nice cliff that overlooks the lake.” Read the latest chapters at novelping.com.

“That’s actually very helpful.” Daniel looks at Hekate after saying this, and she thinks for a moment.

“Oh! We can have the dragons stand by on the cliff-side to watch over us!”

Daniel smiles. “It'll put them at ease at the very least.”

From there, Daniel and Hekate explain the plan, and Treia and Gwenesphia supplement information for them. Gwenesphia’s family members help explain the area of their territory and the layout of the lakeshore where there's enough room to draw it out.

Hekate asks Neith, “Can you make another wall like you did during the siege?”

The grey knight nods. “Certainly. I’d recommend drawing the monster out onto dry land. It’ll be extremely difficult for me to establish the runes in the water. Especially prior to trying to lure the beast.”

Daniel nods. “Hunting an animal isn’t so different from preparing for battle. If you set the trap too early, or the enemy catches you in the act of setting the trap, they will be likely to avoid it, even if they don’t know what they’re looking at.”

Neith nods in agreement. Doephluev points out, “A disturbance on the water’s surface will likely draw other mantaroucks and any other predatory beasts in the water. We’ll need to be alert and careful of the water’s edge, my Love.”

“And, you’re sure your devices will disable its magic?” asks Goelselmo. “It has many abilities it has learned with age.”

Doephluev replies bluntly, “It worked on a dragon.”

As the gatonine family is dumbfounded once more, Gwenesphia returns. She admits softly, “Kuboen will follow Father’s orders. I’ve tried to make sure he is fully aware that no one else will be responsible if he is harmed after disobeying the plan.”

Daniel nods. “Thank you, Gwen.”

She approaches and takes position alongside Daniel with a soft smile, though it’s obvious that she’s hiding something.

The human mechanic asks quietly, “Is something wrong, Gwen?”

She looks at him, surprised. “Oh… Uh…” She looks at her family, and then at the other consorts that accompanied her. Veiranoei and Kalegrynten, while definitely allies, aren’t quite Daniel’s inner circle. Veiranoei, after all, is a consort in name only.

She decides to answer, saying softly, “Kuboen… insists that… I not waste my time with you. After the mission, he’d like me to return home and find… ‘a proper husband…’.”

Hekate remains silent, as do the others.

Gwenesphia adds urgently, “Daniel, I…”

“I made you a promise, Gwen. I suppose I’ll have to prove why I am the Harbinger of Calamity to remove his doubts.”

Daniel’s companions, as well as Kalegrynten, beam at his declaration.

But, one other person disapproves as much as Daniel wants to cringe himself.

“*{You can’t be serious, Daniel…}*”

No, but it sounded like the right thing to say in my head, thinks Daniel in retort. Kaeralegier groans telepathically, and he looks down at the sword at his hip. He'd go to Mornistae right away for the relic if he wasn't afraid of Rikuto's weapon. He doesn't know how quickly it can fire, and according to Ahok, there are two of the void artillery units that were built while she was in Mornistae. And, because a man named Count Baumalde was part of the construction and spell-creation, it's possible more have been built.

Fortunately, diamonds the size of enhanced magic crystals are exceedingly rare, and Aramellianna believes that there aren't enough naturally mined jewels in the entire eastern half of the continent to compare to the volume of 'enhanced magic crystals' the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy has produced. At most, they would be able to arm two -maybe three- more void artillery units.

Gwenesphia hugs Daniel. Peiburi is unimpressed, while Goelselmo and Erue watch the scene with a cautious skepticism of protective parents. Daniel suspects that Gwenesphia is guarded by the divine protection of being the youngest child. She can get away with choosing a man with other consorts because she is spoiled as the youngest daughter, but also not burdened with a great deal of responsibility since the young woman is the seventh of seven and won't inherit the Barony or significant assets.

With Daniel, she is an Empress of a rising power in the world, and if her new family members can keep their word, she'll be directly responsible for bringing low one of the greatest banes of Mattarglos that has ever lived.

***

Magnir surveys the two knights of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy who volunteered for his mission. Both of them are capable of casting spells as Stalvaltan Battle

Mages, but one is the sorcery specialist, while the other is a weapons specialist as their primary roles.

The knights are relatively calm, though Magnir knows they're tense. He's in his true form, towering over them as a monstrous blue dragon. Daniel said that he's pretty sure the late Grand Duke formed the Stalvaltan Guard with the hope of reducing the number of soldiers needed to defeat a dragon. From what he has seen, he believes a few of the Stalvaltan battle mages could take Magnir in a fight. He'll never be as strong as Neith or the Dragon Empresses, but he is still a dragon, and now he is an Einherjar. He is a knight of the Fievegal; the greatest empire in the world of Zenkon.

Aramellianna approaches with her daughters, minus Wenlianna, as well as a few more knights in her service. The Grand Duchess walks fearlessly and with confidence into the courtyard where the three knights departing on the mission are, but the same can't be said of the four daughters, who see Magnir and come to a halt. The knights, likewise, recoil, shuffling in an arc away from the dragon.

Yormolett squeaks, "M-Mother-…!"

Magnir watches the Grand Duchess, who hasn't looked at him. She comes to a stop gracefully in between him and the two knights, and she takes a breath. The blue knight cocks his head. He realizes that she's summoning her courage, and she turns crisply to face him. The matron of the house of Stalvaltan looks up at the dragon, trembling a little, but holding her composure overall.

"Sir Magnir… Apologies. We… easterners are not used to seeing dragons in person."

“No offense taken, your Grace,” replies the dragon as gently as he can, aware of his deep and intimidating voice in his true form.

“These men will be your mission companions, chosen from among my personal guard. Sir Helbeit of Dryrun and Sir Resken of Valleygate. Gentlemen, my lovely daughters, this is Sir Magnir of…” She pauses. “Apologies, Sir Magnir. I know not from whence you hail.”

The blue dragon replies, “I was knighted and hail now from the Citadel, your Grace.”

“Very well, Sir Magnir of the Citadel.” She then faces the two human-kin knights; one human and one shenwulf, respective to their introductions. “Sir Helbeit, Sir Resken; Sir Magnir is not a beast of burden. He is not a steed, nor a squire. He is a knight of the Citadel, and as such, will be treated with respect.”

The two knights immediately kneel. “Your Grace,” replies the shenwulf Resken. “We go on this mission knowing we are the subordinates, and that the honor of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy rests upon our shoulders. I swear I shall not stain the dignity and trust of your illustrious Majesty.”

“I swear I shall not dishonor or disrespect our allies or the lands for which we fight, your most enlightened Highness,” adds the human Helbeit

She nods proudly, then turning to face Magnir once more. “Sir Magnir, do you accept these men?”

Magnir nods his gigantic reptilian head gently. “Yes. I shall bear the three of us to a place close to the last known location of our target, and we shall investigate from there. I swear on my life that I will not abandon those who show faith and honor towards me.”

“Good.”

Daniel appears as well, walking with Hekate and the Dragon Empresses. The five stop before Magnir and the others. “We’ll be on mission starting tomorrow as well, so I want to see you off,” starts Daniel. “I can’t stress it enough; accomplish the goals, but your highest priority is safety. If you gather nothing, that is not a failure.”

“You're potentially looking for an unknown dragon,” adds Ryuogriar sternly. “Even with your stealth magic, it could detect you if you are careless. Your mission, more than anything but safety, is to remove the mystery. Fly fast and avoid detection. If you are caught up in battle, fight to flee and signal for aid.”

Hekate nods. “We will drop the mission to defeat Roggy if you need help. So, make me proud by doing your job, not by being heroes.”

The three knights, a dragon in true form, a human, and a shenwulf, all bow their heads. “Yes, your Greatness, your Graces.”

The day has come. Two missions to face the remaining legendary monsters of Mattarglos are about to begin.

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 122: Battle of the Lightning Element

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 122: Battle of the Lightning Element

The shuttle touches down on the overlook on the hill that provides an excellent view of the lake spreading out far below and ahead of them.

As the Dragon Empresses, Roeta, Aoloan, and Wenlianna disembark, Geirahoel drags Daniel off of the shuttle briefly.

“Y-You have to follow your own orders, Mukori.”

“I'll be careful,” replies Daniel.

“If we lose connection to you, we're rushing to you,” adds Reignleif. “You'll be putting us in danger, too, if you aren't careful.”

“I got it, I got it,” replies the Earthling gently.

“I have learned my lesson, Mukori,” states Ryuogriar bluntly. “I will not let you go without a farewell kiss.” She smirks at him as several women gasp, and Geirahoel immediately takes a step closer, closing off a retreat.

Daniel takes a breath to steady himself, and he puts on a smile. It's a little awkward, but he let himself end up in this situation, and it's a simple request.

Daniel spends another moment being hugged and giving out the requested kisses before boarding the shuttle to more expectant stares, not least of which is Hekate.

He sighs with an amused smile.

Doephluev is the only one to refuse him. “I'll collect my reward later, my Love. A true empress can wait.” This earns her a few scowls, but she pays them no mind.

Ucahote has been piloting the shuttle during the love-in, and Senn, Veiranoei, and Gwenesphia’s family minus her mother are all doing their best to endure the flight with ginger to help settle their stomachs. It’s likely thanks to this that Daniel didn’t catch any flak for demonstrating affection to virtually his entire harem all at their own request.

The shuttle closes the distance from the overlook to the drop zone quite quickly, and the golem pilot cautions, “My Emperor, please take caution. There are mana corrupted beasts present near the drop zone.”

“Should we take them out from the air?” asks Treia, who also wanted to participate for the honor of her family.

“That would be wise,” replies Neith. “Though, if they scatter into the trees, it may be too difficult to pick them off.”

“Let’s get to the ground first so we can recover our incapacitated comrades,” replies Daniel. “Doephluev, Neith, Hekate, Vaergraes; I’ll be counting on you to protect us while we disembark.”

The four confirm, with Hekate replying proudly, “Leave it to me!”

Daniel and Neith ready at the ramp, and the human mechanic orders, “Ucahote, go ahead and take us down.”

“Understood, your Grace. Commencing landing. Prepare to disembark.”

The shuttle noticeably lowers from how gravity shifts, and the two at the rear brace for the rapid touchdown. If they waste too much time, the monsters in the area could spring an attack. And, if they don't move quickly to attack, they could end up surrounded.

The shuttle lurches as the landing gear absorbs the shock, and Ucahote's voice calls out, "Green light, your Grace."

"We're going!" calls out Daniel. He holds down the button to cycle the ramp down, and the sunlight fills the troop bay. Neith shifts to the center, a heavy revolver in his right hand, and a magic-infused sword in his left, ready to fight.

As soon as he can, the grey dragon steps out onto the walkway even as it continues to lower, and he quickly scans around them looking for hostile beasts or monsters.

He hops to the ground and continues his checks, and Hekate bounds out behind him, cheering as she lands on the ground. "Ha!" She looks around, aiming her ice blaster. "Where are they at? Let me at 'em!"

Doephluev walks alongside Daniel as they both disembark the moment the ramp reaches the ground, and she retorts to Hekate, "Your Greatness, I look forward to our competition."

The feldrok girl twitches, flicking her tail as her ears point up rigid. She faces Daniel and the archoneldwyn with a sheepish expression indicating she had forgotten something.

Daniel asks, "Competition?"

"Yes, my Beloved. Her Greatness challenged me to a sort of duel. Whoever slays the most monsters on this hunt shall be granted a most worthy reward."

“It doesn’t matter!” boasts Hekate. “I won’t lose to you!”

“My reward is to be far too great. There is no way I can allow myself to be defeated, your Greatness.”

“Heh heh heh,” cackles the raven-haired empress. “We’ll see about that. Doephluev, I order you not to kill even a single monster!”

The archoneldwyn servent turns pale with a horrified grimace. Her eyes start to water a bit, and her ego seems to have burst like a bubble.

Daniel takes his lecturing tone, warning, “I don't know what you two are competing over, but Hekate, you can’t cheat and tie your opponent's hands behind their back.”

The young feldrok girl’s triangular fox-like ears fold down to the sides in disappointment, and she pouts, “But…”

“A victory with your own skill will always taste sweeter than one of trickery. And, a hard-fought defeat against a worthy opponent can be a valuable lesson for next time.”

The young teen won’t look directly at him or Doephluev as the others unload from the shuttle. She finally murmurs, “Doephluev, I cancel my order to not kill any monsters.”

The former assassin sighs in relief. She murmurs, “Thank you,… your Greatness.” Daniel can see the glow on the archoneldwyn’s chest dim, indicating the glyph is no longer compelling her into action -or rather, inaction, in this case-.

Hekate nods without looking at her. Daniel pets Hekate’s helmet. “Thank you, Sweetpea. Whatever you win, you’ll be able to gloat more.”

Her ears perk up finally, and she finally smiles sheepishly. “Y-yeah… You’re right!” She grins. “Say your prayers, Doephluev! Hahahahaha!” She takes off towards the tree line, and Doephluev whines, “Hey!” She smiles at Daniel with a happy smile, and she takes off after the feldrok.

“My Liege, should I…?” questions Neith.

Knowing the grey dragon is asking if he should stop the two, Daniel replies, “Don’t worry about it. Let them clear out the weaklings.” Immediately, the group can hear the ice blaster discharge, as well as the pops and booms of Doephluev using magic attacks.

Vaergraes steps up beside Daniel, teasing, “Daniel, we should borrow the shuttle for a moment, you and me. This is a beautiful place. Great scenery.”

Daniel subtly confirms the location of everyone; Gwenesphia and her family are focused on the direction Doephluev and Hekate ran off to, Treia and Neith are surveying the area around the shuttle, Veiranoei isn’t paying attention, but is near Daniel and Vaergraes, and Kera’tai seems to be scribbling a sketch of the scenery around them.

The human mechanic sneaks his hand down behind the Uhl’tall Archpriestess, and he pinches a part of her clothing near her left side and under the light armor she’s wearing, causing her to flinch. She blushes and looks up at him.

The mischievous human simply smirks without looking at her. “If you want, you can call me ‘Dan’ or ‘Danny’, Vae.”

She is surprised, and he explains, “There were several ‘Dan’ in my workplace alone, so everyone always called me Daniel. But, I don’t mind…”

She blushes and smiles. “And, I’m the first?”

“Heyyyy…” warns Kera’tai as she notices a secret conversation.

“Let’s move, everyone.” Daniel pretends nothing was happening, and Vaergraes chuckles, following him.

“*Your Grace, I’ll be taking the shuttle and returning to the overlook with the Dragon Empresses. I’ll be monitoring all connected armor and rush to the scene if need be,”* reports Ucahote, before the shuttle lifts into the air.

“Please do,” replies Daniel. He then says, “Alright, everyone. We’ll work our way to the lakeshore and establish the engagement zone. Any last minute questions?”

Kuboen, Gwenesphia’s second eldest brother, asks a bit bitterly, “Did I miss the part of the plan where those two run ahead, ‘your Grace’?”

Gwenesphia sighs. “Kuboen…”

Daniel takes it in stride, though, replying, “You can disobey the plan if you want. But, when you die, it’ll be me who has to console your youngest sister.”

The gatonine snarls as he storms towards Daniel, and the human doesn’t flinch. Goelselmo tries to call him back, as well as Gwenesphia, but Daniel isn’t afraid.

“My sister deserves far better than you, you disgusting human whoremonger. You’ve gathered quite the harem of beautiful wenches, but Gwenesphia isn’t just a thing to be collected.”

“Kuboen, stop!” exclaims the young gatonine woman in question. “I chose Daniel!”

“He obviously preyed on your innocence, Gwen! This man is a lecher! Even now, he’s flirting with a demon!”

Vaergraes frowns, but she also remains under control of her emotions.

A bellow of a monster approaching from behind and clearing the forest, and Treia shouts, “Enemy rear!”

Goelselmo calls out, “Defensive formation!”

As if in a fluid and cohesive unit with years of cooperation, the gatonines all draw their weapons and brandish their shields in front of them, forming a line that faces the monster. Follow the newest chapters on novelping . com.

Daniel groans, “Of course…”

He recognizes this monster on his own. It’s a thorusk hakkadel, or in Daniel’s simplified monster encyclopedia, the lightning bear. He has a finite number of polonium grenades on his person, so he has to use them conservatively.

He notices a flicker near his shoulder; the daytime version of the elemental Luceniel changes into a brightly-colored light reddish-purple fairy-like being with flickering root-like trails of light extending from her skin. “Hello again,” states Daniel.

The little pixie smiles and waves at him happily, and every motion creates illusions of her various parts as afterimages. It’s a little disorienting to look at, if Daniel is being honest.

“Keep your spears on the ground!” shouts Goelselmo. “Peiburi, fall back and circle to the right. Gwenesphia, go left. Kuboen, you and I will draw…”

BANG BANG BANG!

All seven gatonines present flinch as Daniel and Neith fire revolvers in alternation, and the hakkadel roars and flinches.

They both finish off their first cylinder of bullets, which have heavily wounded the monster, but not as much as Daniel had hoped. The specialized rounds Daniel requested be made use small pieces of the mined uranium ore from the mountains set as the core of the projectile with a shell of rubber inside of a sabot when fired. The sabot allows the rubber to survive the barrel of the pistol, and the rubber successfully prevented the bear-like monster's static electrical field from intercepting the bullets. The uranium can then penetrate and hopefully reduce or negate the magic of the thorusk hakkadel.

Senn complains as she approaches, supporting her weight on her magic staff like a walking stick. "You could have warned the rest of us, Daniel."

She's still a little weary, even after taking ginger for the flight.

"Sorry. I didn't want to give it a chance to discharge lightning. Can you f-"

krrrrRRRAKAKBOOOOOOOOM!

Daniel is instantly blinded before the thunderous boom of a massive discharge of lightning. His vision clears fairly quickly, and everyone else has hit the ground. Gwenesphia is screaming at Daniel, but she's surprised just as quickly.

His eyeline is drawn to the little pixie-like elemental making taunting gestures off towards the left. A second thorusk hakkadel has emerged from the forest.

"{Daniel, be careful using so many devices and weapons that negate magic. Our allies rely on magic for defense, including detecting enemies.}"

Kaeralegier has a point. The sword she resides in is most suited to someone like Daniel precisely because he didn't have magic, and what little he has now

is too useless to rely on.

But, he has several of the most powerful names in the world as his allies, and he and Neith just unloaded magic-negating bullets on a monster without regard to the effects on those around them.

The second hakkadel bellows as it challenges them, sparking lightning. The other one, encouraged by receiving backup, also snarls and roars in spite of the injuries it received.

The second one glows as flickers of static flash and crackle through its fur.

It is glaring at Neith and casts lightning as it charges forward, causing the same tearing sound leading into a clap of thunder.

Though he can't see it coming or prepare for him, this time, he isn't blinded; that being Daniel as the lightningbolt connects directly to him. The human mechanic can't help but recoil as his heart begins pounding in fear.

He was just struck by lightning, and yet, he can feel and hear his own pulse beating like a drum in his ears. His chest feels tight from the tension, but not from cardiac arrest.

He is still on his feet, and he can still feel the weight of his armor, the fabric of his clothes, and the warmth of his breath in his helmet.

Wha-What just…?

He's not the only one wearing armor, and he's not the closest to the hakkadel. Even the monster seems to not understand how its attack didn't find its intended target; the dragon in human form moving into the vanguard to protect everyone else.

It bellows and roars in anger, beginning to barrel towards them. Neith looks at Daniel quickly, seeing that the human mechanic is still on his feet.

He tries to dive between the beast and Daniel when its fur flickers, but the third lightning bolt connects Daniel and the hakkadel for a moment, startling him once more, but less so than the second time. The bolt passed right by Neith, and Daniel notices Luceniel cackling wildly as she bounces around, making it look like there are three of her. He still needs to give her an element-specific second name.

It's too noisy for that now, and the two bear-like monsters are charging into melee range. He'll have to figure it out later.

Senn is in the middle of chanting, generating a magic circle to fire a variety of elemental spells to overwhelm the lightning barrier a thorusk hakkadel can produce. Kera'tai and Vaergraes have recovered to their feet, and they quickly move to defend everyone, while the gatonines try to regroup and make sense of what's going on.

Another lightning bolt hits Daniel, but again, he isn't harmed, and even with Kera'tai and Vaergraes attempting to intercept it, it cuts a path directly to him.

There are now four of the little pixie-like copies of Luceniel bouncing around Daniel, and it's then that he notices that his own armor is glowing. Or at least, it seems to be his armor.

When the average human mechanic from Earth takes a step forward to get into a better firing position, a new phenomenon throws him completely off of his sense.

Everything blurs, and he only barely manages to somehow make sense of what has happened and come to a stop just before stumbling into and shoulder-

checking the thorusk hakkadel that still has magic. Nausea grips Daniel. His brain can't process that he -as far as his body believes- closed the distance to the hakkadel instantly with his own movement. He has bounced off of the hakkadel, too sick to his stomach suddenly to notice that the lightning barrier is now all but continuously discharging into him like a Tesla coil. He stumbles back, feeling his balance failing him, and a churning in his stomach threatening to erupt. He's aware of the hakkadel as a monster, but he can't focus on it, barely able to stop his head from spinning.

The thorusk hakkadel has also realized that Daniel is there, and its lightning is continuously trying to vaporize him, only for him to be unharmed. Instead, the elemental no longer appears to be bouncing, but rather peacefully relaxing… all one hundred iterations of her that are visible to Daniel.

And, on top of everything else, it doesn't do wonders for his current nausea.

The sickened human mechanic, separated from his friends by his proximity to a predatory beast with an immense amount of mana, finally sees the hakkadel pivoting to swing a massive claw at him. A direct hit will likely shatter his bones, assuming he survives, and he somehow ended up in perfect killing range and incapacitated himself with sickness.

The best the novice Emperor can do is try to throw himself backwards and pray the hakkadel misses.

***

Everyone dove to the ground at the sound of a point-blank lightning bolt exploding the air.

Since then, every lightning bolt coming off of the thorusk hakkadel Daniel and Neith haven't fired on have been hitting Daniel without fail, even when the

monster tries to target its attacks towards anyone else.

And, to everyone's surprise, including the human emperor, the lightning seems to have no effect on him. If anything, the lightning elemental spawned from the divine scarf the mechanic is wearing has become more powerful, exuding greater mana than before.

Neith tries to intercept one of the bolts, but they bypass him entirely.

It is a blessing that Daniel is unharmed, and upon realizing it, the human mechanic with almost no magic moves to fight.

It is then that Gwenesphia's understanding of Daniel shatters once more.

With a single step forward, he vanishes in a flash of light, and Gwenesphia can't even focus enough to cry out. The battle is still ongoing, but she's worried. Magic is being fired by Senn, who is still struggling to get over mild nausea, and Veiranoei is fumbling to follow Goelselmo's instructions.

Gwenesphia's father has fought many monsters in his years, and there is a system to defeat each one. Hakkadels are vulnerable to flanking maneuvers, since their defensive lightning discharge is automatic, and if a spear can be brought close, ranged attacks will no longer be intercepted. It's dangerous of course, because there's still a chance that the spear-wielder will be hit by the lightning.

Gwenesphia does her best to run towards the flank she was instructed to engage, since her siblings are trying to help each other up as Kuboen moves to block the wounded hakkadel as it barrels towards them.

The gatonine empress gasps as she finds Daniel. He is stumbling back as the second monster is turning to attack him. He seems to have slammed into the

bear-like beast's side at high speed, and he's dazed. The hakkadel's lightning is discharging continuously with a demonic hum and crackle.

He's going to die.

"D-Daniel-…!" screams Gwenesphia, all but drowned out by the hellish din caused by the lightning arc. A large volume of light fills the area from Daniel's body, nearly blinding to look directly at. Tears find the gatonine's eyes for more than one reason, not least of which is terror.

KRAKABOOOM!

The young feline woman stumbles back away from Daniel and the powered hakkadel as a small shockwave stirs the dust around them. The light has faded almost as quickly as it appeared, and Daniel is standing as if he never fell near where the beast's head was.

Was.

The monster's head is now cocked at an unnatural angle high and nearly upside down as its muscles maintain some of their momentum.

As the powerless hakkadel is getting close to Gwenesphia's family, Veiranoei, and Treia, Neith steps in front of it, intercepting its lower jaw with his hand. He, too, is noticeably shocked by Daniel defeating the hakkadel all but single-handedly, and seemingly with his bare hands.

The strange otherworlder human was always peculiar, but he always seems to have another mystery hidden beneath the surface.

The first hakkadel, made powerless by Daniel's special bullets he and the grey dragon unloaded into it, is halted by the dragon. It is startled by such a small frame being able to bring it to a stop. It swings at Neith, trying to pull free of

him, but he is unfazed. It batters his armor, doing no damage to the dragon. It roars and snarls, scraping the dirt helplessly.

Neith calls out, “Treia. Finish it.”

The gatonine flinches, but she replies, “Right!” She jogs to get a better angle, and she withdraws a high power rifle from the magic bag Daniel gave her. She also tilts her helmet so she can get to her ears and put earplugs in as well. She takes aim, having practiced with Daniel, and fires. With one final clap of thunder, the first hakkadel to attack and last one alive also ceases its movement in the dragon’s arm. He drops it aside, taking a breath.

Now having a moment to breathe, everyone looks at Daniel, who has his helmet off and is coughing. Luceniel is trying to comfort him, before she disappears, switching back to the light elemental version of herself, and she immediately tries to comfort Daniel once more.

Gwenesphia doesn’t understand what’s going on, but she immediately runs to Daniel, who has collapsed to his knees. The gatonine empress is followed by Treia, Kera’tai, Vaergraes, and Veiranoei. Neith checks on Senn and the others briefly before jogging over with them.

“Daniel!” cries out Gwenesphia as she tries to hug him, but he holds his arm up, covering his mouth. She asks quickly, “What’s wrong!? Are you hurt!”

He grumbles out, “S-Sick… Just… Just a second…”

Everyone from his group gathers around him to make sure he is safe, and he finally manages to settle his stomach.

“Sorry,” murmurs the human mechanic. “None of that… went as I expected…”

“What happened?” asks Treia. “How and why did you charge in like that?”

He shakes his head. “I… I’m not sure, but… I think it was the lightning-flavored Lucy… I’m fairly certain that’s why the lightning had no effect, and instead, powered her up.”

Daniel then proceeds to explain what happened from his perspective, including the final moments of the second thorusk hakkadel.

A monster that could be annoying to deal with for even a dragon.

***

Moments before, Daniel has just rammed into the thorusk hakkadel still possessing its powers, and now its attention is on him, bringing down a massive claw as big across as the human’s entire torso. He is already unbalanced from being dazed by the impact, and his stomach is twisting and turning tumultuously. It’s everything he can do just to try to throw himself backwards onto the ground and out of the way of the first strike, leaving himself vulnerable after that.

A flash flickers out, and Daniel braces for the worst. The colors around him are distorting, indicating his nausea is only getting worse -and, in feedback, making his nausea worse in a terrible loop-.

His back hits the ground and he coughs. The humble mechanic from Earth knows he has to defend desperately with anything he can, but he doubles over on his side retching. He desperately pries his helmet off, briefly expelling the contents of his stomach on the ground and the bottom of his helmet while helplessly waiting for the attack to resume.

But, it never does. When he looks, he flinches onto his back, twisting away. The hakkadel is there, terrifyingly bringing its claw…

In the midst of his scramble away from the monster, which is all but distorted in color to a strange and disorienting hue of colors as if everything is being red-shifted on the color spectrum.

Meanwhile, the number of lightning elemental clones around him seems to be dropping, while the pixie herself is relatively calm. She's watching Daniel sympathetically, while her clones seem to be forming a defensive wall.

Daniel retches again, still feeling dizzy and sick to his stomach, but time seems to have stopped, or at the very least, since the colors are still shifting, moving very slowly. It's so slow, though, that he isn't able to perceive the hakkadel's movements, and even one of Senn's light spells, fired at the other hakkadel, seems to have been momentarily paused. Unfortunately, he can clearly see it diffusing at the hakkadel, the power of her spell drastically reduced by the radioactive rounds Daniel and Neith used to disable its magic. The human mechanic has a few theories, thanks to his nuclear background and what he has observed here on Zenkon, and he believes that the half-lives of radioactive materials truly are drastically shortened in the presence of strong mana. It explains why it would still remain in the ground for a long time, where the world's dispersed mana is relatively low by comparison, and it decays quickly in the presence of beings like monsters, dragons, archoneldwyn, and the most powerful mage's spells.

In Daniel's present situation, though, he has to make sense of what's going on, since it almost certainly has something to do with Luceniel, and given the disappearance of a clone roughly every second, he has a little over a minute to figure out what to do.

He seems to be protected from his own momentum being greater than his body would ever be able to handle, given that he is moving so much faster than his

surroundings. He confirms this by tapping one pinkie finger to the other, wincing for the potential to receive horrifying pain.

Neither finger vaporizes from moving what he can only assume is ‘near’ lightspeed, even if it’s only a sizable fraction. It’s still much too fast for the human body, but all of the human’s being seems to be under the effect, and he is protected from it.

He looks around to be sure, noticing that the number of clones has dropped to around forty remaining. Sure enough, every other person around him has come to a halt, as if placed on pause like a video game. Several are in action positions, like running or changing weapon posture. Neith is trying to close the distance to protect Daniel. The first hakkadel has fur and blood floating around it from where it was cast off of its body. The one attacking Daniel has dirt and debris seemingly floating around it as well. He’s truly in a different pocket of velocity -or maybe more accurately, energy-, which is allowing him to move and perceive everything faster than normal by magnitudes. It could also be why the light is distorted, since it does seem to recover if he’s still. And, when he moves forward, rather than red-shifting, everything seems to violet-shift, though to a different degree.

Whatever the case, Daniel needs to stop the thorusk hakkadel while he still has the ability to move. He’s not sure how projectiles will operate once they leave ‘his person’, and could be annihilated the moment they leave the barrel from the conflict of speeds. Likewise, the force could do devastating amounts of damage he’s not prepared for if it retains lightning-speed upon impact.

But, there’s another solution. At least while he’s under the effect of the lightning elemental’s magic, he is unharmed by his own velocity and the forces he can apply, since from his perspective, they are merely normal forces. But, if he can

make even a small adjustment to the hakkadel, the difference in velocity should translate to a force that is enough to kill it.

Of course, that's dipping into Daniel's science fiction knowledge more than anything he has ever heard of in real life, other than the math that can go into something from science fiction to explain it in reality, but for now, he'll have to trust his gut.

Even if it is tumbling all around.

But, if he's really lucky, he's the protagonist of his own story, meaning the author may not kill him off so easily. It's another form of tragedy that he'll have to watch out for.

And maybe, he has read too many light novels and manga himself, fantasizing about being a protagonist and doing things he thought he hated or feared, until he had people to protect and the power to do so for once in his life.

Daniel resolves himself to go for it. He climbs to his feet, leaving his soiled helmet behind for the moment. He'll have to shield his face right away, so he keeps his left arm up. He's down to his last fifteen pixies and counting, so he doesn't waste any more time. He places his right palm on the hakkadel's cheek, feeling the static tingle of its powerful lightning trying to defend it.

He gives the hakkadel's cheek a gentle shove. It shouldn't take too much, or it could explode in a violent spray of flesh and bone shrapnel, which could cause even more trouble for his party. And, if not, he's on the outside of its attacking paw, buying him a few more seconds to survive before Neith manages something.

He watches closely, trying not to move, and he sees it. The hakkadel's head is moving away from his hand. He succeeded.

The last pixie clone waves goodbye to Daniel and the original, and as soon as she vanishes, everything happens in an instant.

All colors return to normal, a thunderous clap booms out, and before Daniel can even blink, the hakkadel's entire body is shifting, while its head is upside down and limply attached to its own body.

All that happens after is for it to collapse like a sack of gelatin as the last breath in its lungs drains out as if to give presence to its soul departing.

Seeing the hakkadel defeated, Daniel can no longer remain standing, and his legs give out. Everything about what just happened made him sick, and he coughs and stays doubled over on the ground for a long time. He hears a rifle shot, likely denoting the end of the first hakkadel. He can finally relax for a moment and try to settle his stomach. He only holds his hand up to stop Gwenesphia from getting too close while he's in nauseous limbo.

Afterwards, everyone regroups. They collect the second hakkadel in a magic bag for later, but the first one will have to either be left behind, or they'll have to use a ton of mana to try to 'cleanse' its contamination -by counteracting the radiation until it wears out-. And, really, Daniel isn't keen on doing anything with a radioactive body anyways, since there's no telling what kinds of poisons it'll produce.

In fact, he hadn't really thought of it too much, since the masonrahm's fur is in containment until Daniel can verify it's clean, but polonium alone is toxic. And, the lead it decays into when alpha particles are released is also highly poisonous to living beings. If either are accidentally ingested by things that end up in the food chain and eventually end up on a dinner table, Daniel would be responsible. The chances are low, especially in the time it'll take to make the lake usable again even after they defeat Rohgattabor, but they aren't zero.

Daniel picks up his helmet, reassuring Geirahoel, “Geira-Mukori, I’m alright. I just took my helmet off because I was nauseous. I’ll explain adequately when we meet up later.”

He’s not even wearing it yet, since he wants to clean it first, but all three of their voices snap loudly enough for most of everyone around to hear; “*MUKORI! You said you would be safe! What were you doing!?*”

Daniel chuckles. “Sorry, sorry. I was testing out the lightning elemental’s ability.”

“Return immediately!” snaps Geirahoel’s voice. “*Let the others deal with the monsters!*”

“I can’t do that, Mukori. It’s under control now. I’m not hurt.” Daniel holds the helmet up so he can smile at it. “I’ll be alright. Trust me a little. Neith was right there.”

There’s a pause, and the grey dragon twitches. He seems to be listening intensely to a voice only he can hear; he’s being lectured or given orders via telepathy.

He bows his head as he answers, unheard by anyone present.

“I have received clarified orders, my Liege.” He casts a brief spell, and Daniel can feel a static tingle as the armor he’s wearing begins to swirl and glow. The human mechanic looks at the dragon curiously, and Neith explains, “I’ll not allow harm to come to you again, my Liege.”

“Won’t that burn through your mana?” asks Kera’tai.

“I’ll make it through our mission, your Grace.”

“If you need to switch, let me know,” urges Vaergraes. “I am capable of defensive magic as well.”

Neith nods. “Of course. Thank you.”

Daniel sighs. “If it puts their minds at ease, I’ll accept. Thank you. Tell me to retreat if you need to fall back.”

The Emperor of the Fievegal then looks at the contaminated hakkadel again. They couldn’t store it in a bag now if they wanted anyways, since it’s not shielded and the radiation will disable the magic of the void bags. But, they can still get rid of the contamination more quickly.

“Neith, I have a favor to ask. We shouldn’t leave polonium behind too often if we can help it. So, can you use your fire breath to eliminate what’s here?”

“Of course. It would be best for the forest if I do it in the air, though.”

“Can you?”

“Leave it to me, my Liege.”

The leader of the Einherjars of the Fievegal approaches the contaminated monster’s body. He grips it with one hand, puffing a breath through his lips, which causes sparks to crackle. A moment later, flames are visible in his mouth. The dragon pivots and launching the thorusk hakkadel’s corpse up into the air, and it sails rather high and far quickly.

Neith takes a deep breath, focusing his magic. With a seemingly innocuous exhale, a blindingly bright lance of laser-like fire slices through the air. The remains of a bear-like lightning monster explodes in a puff of fire, and it evaporates. Even the smoke and vaporized materials are scattered by the intense heat of a full-powered dragon’s flame breath.

Neith exhales calmly, snuffing out the pilot flame in his mouth, emitting a long trail of smoke.

“Thank you, Neith,” replies Daniel, and the grey knight bows proudly.

No one objected to the method of disposal for the hakkadel and the polonium used to defeat it.

If they had given themselves pause, they might have reconsidered.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 123: Yaulwembor the Ancient Drake

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 123: Yaulwembor the Ancient Drake

Sir Magnir, the blue Einherjar of the Fievegal, cruises through the air as he scans the target zone from a wide orbit. The two knights from the Grand Duchy, Sir Helbeit the human and Sir Resken the shenwulf, both cling to the dragon's armor on his back, laying low to avoid the wind. Just to make sure, the reptilian knight tilts his head to check. Both of them are still there, avoiding looking at the ground far below.

Humans and shenwulves, like many of the other races, were born and raised on the ground. They build their houses on the ground, they fight on the ground, and they die on the ground. The sky is the domain of dragons, and Magnir has learned that most races that are unfamiliar with riding wyverns tend to be rather afraid of heights. Fortunately, these soldiers have some training on Wenlianna's airship, which requires soldiers to brave the outer surface to engage airborne enemies in the sky. With Magnir, it's like riding a very large buckrokh, but one that knows where to go on its own. All they have to do is hold on and try to watch for anything Magnir might miss.

They had no issues establishing the stealth spell on the dragon, which makes him almost impossible to detect from range, including visually. Xyreko has her spellmasters deconstructing the magic technique elaborately to ensure that it will no longer work against the Fievegal.

As they cruise through the air, the blue dragon searches for any signs of the legendary 'dragon' of Mattarglos; Yaulwembor. Assuming it's actually just a

very old drake that mutated into a monster due to whatever the mana-related cause is, it should have found a secluded area to hoard food and where it can secure water easily. Usually, this means an old mining tunnel or a naturally formed cavern. Some drakes have made their homes in fallen colossal trees that slowly rotted inside out.

A glint catches the dragon's eye, and he looks in that direction. It was a coincidence granted by his angle compared to the sun, but the blue Einherjar is able to spot the source of the point of light.

It's certainly a living being with metallic scales that shimmer in the sunlight when they're exposed. It is sleeping mostly in the shade of a large tree.

Correction, a VERY large tree.

The being is very obviously reptilian, even viewing it from so far away. But, by taking an extra moment to really see the whole picture, the tree is one of a large scattering of what the Mattarglos natives call 'Glonvokaut', or 'Behemoth Maples'. These titanic trees rise high into the sky over the majority of the forest, looking simply like an aged old tree amidst a forest of saplings. But instead, the forest is full of already large trees, and the behemoth maples stand several times even taller.

And, backdropped by such a humongous monolith of wood rests the being Magnir is certain is his target; Yaulwembor. From what he can estimate, Yaulwembor is larger than Magnir, and might even be larger than Neith in his true form. Dragons grow slowly over their entire lives, making Neith the largest dragon on the continent.

Or, so they all thought.

Magnir looks over his shoulder as he glides, making eye contact with the knights. He gestures his head towards the location, and he waits.

The two knights scan, and Sir Resken notices it first. He pats Sir Helbeit and points, helping him spot the being. It takes another moment, and the two confirm with each other, signalling such for the dragon carrying them.

The blue Einherjar nods, banking to glide closer to inspect the being. No one readily available from Mattarglos had been present who had also seen Yaulwembor with their own eyes, as few see the being and live.

The closer he gets, the larger it appears. Yaulwembor truly is a titan of Mattarglos, easily twice or three times as large as the grey dragon Neith, now that Magnir can properly judge its size. Asleep as it is, it's difficult to distinguish if the monster is truly a dragon or not, but it certainly has wings, and it doesn't appear to be a normal wingdrake.

The shenwulf mage, Resken, creates a bubble of stable air using a wind magic barrier, holding it while Helbeit sketches the monster on a notepad.

The supposed dragon reminds Magnir of Daniel. Its scales covering its whole body give the avian reptile a sort of shifting rainbow hue, as if each one of the keratinous armor plates is made of sharmelkolle. Its metallic natural protection looks rather elegant and regal, softened by age from a clean shine and lightly marred where old scars have faded. The ancient being has two large, elegant horns similar to a ram's, but much larger and more weathered than Reignleif's when she's in her true form.

It's not likely to be fully sentient, like a true dragon, however, since Yaulwembor is sleeping out in the open, where the weather could change or enemies could attack. It is rather carefree, indicating it came to rest where it happened to be

at the time because it knows it is powerful, but the monstrous drake has no concept of other races or kingdoms that might eventually conspire to end the legend's tale.

Legend… thinks the Einherjar to himself. *Why does something seem off about this creature?*

Magnir looks over his shoulder when one of the two knights taps on his back. Helbeit makes several hand gestures, mainly a circular motion with his fingers pointing down. He's requesting to go lower.

They were given strict orders to keep their distance. Even with a powerful stealth spell in effect, an enemy with enough awareness of magic or even more acute senses may detect them.

Fortunately, they should be able to get a little closer. Daniel did task Magnir with determining as much as possible about Yaulwembor, including its gender if possible, since it will determine exactly how to handle the dragon and the end goal of the engagement.

Dragon… Ancient dragons… Yaulwembor is too big to be a drake… Even the one Daniel killed was older than a thousand years, and it was a fraction of this size… But, if it's a dragon,…

Magnir circles slowly, descending at a controlled pace in order to keep distance in case the monster moves.

No, it isn't a monster. But, I don't think it's a dragon. Or, not a normal…

The blue knight sees it far too late. His studious gaze was just noticing oblong rounded shapes clustered together near the creature. When he notices, Yaulwembor's eye starts to move, and the eyelids separate only a little,

revealing deep, dark blue eyes flecked with striking violet accents. Even before the dragon is fully aware of its surroundings, the pupil tilts and Magnir can feel its gaze fall upon him.

All at once, his body tenses. His heart tightens. His muscles tingle and his mana silences.

Even before Morthybargaron, the blue lesser dragon only felt intimidation. As dragons died around him and Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and the golden dragon suffocated, Magnir trembled in fear.

But nothing in his life has gripped him so deeply and viscerally as the terror squeezing in on the Einherjar's entire body from a mere glance. Magnir's body goes limp, and his wings buckle as his breath hitches.

The knights cry out as the trio begins to plummet toward the ground.

For a long, terrifying time, Magnir is helpless. He can't even think straight, other than an instinctual fear that consumes him. He flails meekly, considering his size, and the knights are screaming and trying to call out to him. The Einherjar's body knows he is falling to his doom, but he can't muster any sort of coherent strategy to recover.

Resken casts a spell, aiming it for Magnir.

Suddenly, the dragon's senses return, and he is able to think clearly again. Some sort of hypnotic spell. Usually, dragons are highly resistant to psychic attacks, but in this case, Magnir was already weakened by Yaulwembor's gaze stunning him.

Now, the blue knight is fully aware again, and he is upside down as the human and shenwulf dangle from the simple ropes strung around his torso for them to

hold onto.

Magnir shouts over the wind rushing by from their fall, “Brace yourselves!”

He rolls over, mindful to ensure the knights end up on his back again without spinning out from under them. They’re still plummeting to the ground, but he is in control now. He angles himself in a nosedive. It’s extremely difficult even for a dragon to regain flight simply by flapping his wings. But, if he can gain airspeed by reducing drag and controlling his angle, Magnir can open his wings and let his momentum do more of the work.

The two Stalvaltan knights are barely clinging to his back.

It won’t be as smooth as a flight-loss recovery as Magnir might hope. A deadly being is aware of his presence.

The blue knight’s skin crawls and scales flicker.

Powerful magic is being concentrated behind him.

The knights on his back ultimately limit his maneuverability to recover, but they’ll all die if the monstrous drake’s attacks land.

Magnir snaps his wings out wide, catching the air and immediately gaining lift. The tops of the trees are still rapidly approaching, and Magnir needs to use them as cover. He banks hard left, feeling the strain in his wing-shoulders. Humanoid legs are flopping against his right side. The weight shifts suddenly.

One of the knights has lost his grip on the rope.

The mana also ripples across the dragon’s skin and scales. An attack has been launched.

Magnir swoops around the top of one of the behemoth maples from Yaulwembor, rolling in a wide arc. cocking his head to try to see the knights.

The top of the tree explodes behind them, startling him a little, as the blast is much more violent and larger than he expected, casting shrapnel and licks of fire past them. The blue knight closes his wings in, spinning fast to catch the knight who was dislodged. The shenwulf lost his grip on the human, who managed to catch his partner initially. Magnir's violent spin dislodges them both, and he is able to catch them in his massive foreclaws, holding them carefully as he pulls them in close to his chest to restore aerodynamics. He can't focus on keeping them comfortable when it will take everything he can muster just to keep them all alive.

The blue Einherjar recovers his flight pattern, banking again as a bolt of lightning streaks by. He can feel the stray discharges on his scales as thunder booms to the side.

Suddenly, mana begins building in his foreclaws. Summoned fireballs, stones, and pockets of ark mana begin firing from his right claw, where the shenwulf Resken is. They intersect behind Magnir, exploding in pops and booms, creating clouds of smoke and debris while the blue dragon weaves through some of the trees that reach above the average height, as well as other behemoth maples. He's not sure if Yaulwembor is following him, but its attacks are exploding around them. Resken's magic shrapnel bursts have obscured them some, but they're burning through his mana quickly.

Magnir banks and looks partially over his shoulder. He doesn't see any signs of the devilish drake. He's certain that it's more powerful than he is, but his smaller size serves as an advantage while weaving through the treetops. And, if he can find a good place to vanish into the forest in cover, they might be able to survive until Yaulwembor loses interest.

That’s the plan, anyways. Follow the newest chapters on novelping(.)com.

Just as he’s returning his focus ahead, a flicker of lights and a distortion of the air spits out a horrifying revelation.

Yaulwembor can teleport.

It takes everything in Magnir’s power to try to come to a stop, but it was already far too late.

A massive claw wraps around his throat, squeezing tightly. He tries to kick and flap his wings to pry free, but the monstrous drake has him firmly within its grasp.

He trembles as his eyes find those of the titan glaring down at him, swinging its wings casually, rather than flapping them. It’s supporting itself and Magnir’s combined weight with levitation magic, similar to how the greater dragons do when they hover in midair.

It feels desperate, but the Einherjar very much is so. He struggles to inhale, preparing his jaws to breathe fire, assuming the dragon can exhale enough to project his immolating breath.

Yaulwembor seems to take a twisted pleasure in seeing the sparks of ignityal burning in Magnir’s mouth as a pilot flame. Its own igniter flames crackle between its jaws, and it takes a deep breath. The blue Einherjar is once more gripped by terror as he feels the mana building around the monster’s mouth to concentrate what’s about to happen.

At that moment, thunder booms, and both Yaulwembor and Magnir look. A near-blinding column of divine fire splits the sky, branching out like a tree of

flames as the magic-enhanced dragon breath loses energy at extreme range and dissolves into dancing lights.

In the moment of quiet as Yaulwembor stares off into the distance, Magnir tries to think of ways out of the predicament. He still has the two knights in his claws, but they've thankfully not provoked the beast with attacks.

During his desperate search for escape, the dragon notices that the air feels heavy, or thick. It's a scent in the air that doesn't match with everything going on.

And, just as suddenly as the dangerous battle began, the behemoth loses interest in Magnir and casts him aside. He's too low to recover now, and he braces his wings against his body, exhaling fire as he falls.

He's no longer trying to attack Yaulwembor, which was never his goal to begin with.

He's hoping the others will see his flames just as he saw the unmistakable dragon breath of one of the four greater dragons accompanying Daniel.

Magnir crashes through the trees until his back slams the ground, and his arms flop down as well, dropping the knights. He has to catch his breath as the giant shadow of a powerful being disappears.

Helbeit scrambles to his feet and runs to Magnir's head, checking on the dragon. "Sir Magnir!"

"I'm alive…"

"You saved us from falling. You have my gratitude."

The dragon sits up, mindful of the two human-kin knights. “Withhold your gratitude, Sir Helbeit. I suspect we will all be in each other’s debt before long.”

Helbeit and Resken glance at each other. “What would you have us do?”

“The Emperor is in danger. That includes the Empress Wenlianna. Time is of the essence. We must warn them, or intercept Yaulwembor if we can.”

Resken clenches his fists. He has to brace himself for the mission to come, but he doesn’t show fear.

“We swore to complete this mission. And, we made the decision to get too close. It is our responsibility to defend our allies.”

“The decision was mine,” interjects Helbeit. “And, I was useless during the escape.”

“We didn’t escape,” corrects Magnir. “It let us go.” He bows his head. “Good sirs of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy; I ask you to follow me once more into danger.”

Both human-kin knights cross their forearms over their breastplates, standing rigid. “We uphold our vow. Lead us, Sir Magnir.”

“Sir Helbeit, Sir Resken… Thank you.”

The dragon helps the two climb up into position on his back once more, and he navigates the forest until he can find a place where he can take off.

He scans in the direction of the lake, which should be where Daniel and the others are. It’s a fairly long flight, and even still, he can’t see the colossal monster Yaulwembor.

“Where did it go?” calls out Helbeit.

They scan high and low, but it’s nowhere to be found.

“Did it copy our spell?” asks Resken.

“That’s impossible!”

“It could teleport!” shouts the shenwulf. “It’s obviously powerful.”

“Teleportation is a spell that requires sentience! If it was a dragon, wouldn’t it have said something?”

“It’s not a dragon,” replies Magnir.

“Are you certain?”

“Yes. Or,… At least, it’s not a dragon in our sense of the word.”

Magnir’s statement raises questions, rather than answering them.

The blue dragon knows very little about Yaulwembor except that it is a female and it can use a great range of magic types.

And, whatever it is, it might even be more powerful than Senn.

***

A while before, Daniel inspects the water’s edge. Gwenesphia calls out from much further away, where her family and Veiranoei are gathered, “Daniel! You really shouldn’t be so close to the water.”

He wonders how mantaroucks determine the location of their prey. He knows alligators and crocodiles are attracted to disturbances on the surface, and they

can sneak up on prey underwater with impressive buoyancy control.

Neith kneels next to Daniel, observing the water as Vaergraes and Senn stand a little further behind them.

“I’m alright, Gwen. I won’t disturb the surface yet.”

“Their undersides are their weak points, my Liege,” explains Neith. “Or rather, their gills, which are underneath. The hide can be rather tough to pierce. Especially with a graetcheth.”

Daniel ponders his inventory, which is less robust than he would like. He could and should have brought far more weapons, but he hadn’t really planned on laying siege to monsters; especially not the legendary ones the people of Mattarglos fear.

The water has a very beautiful clearness to it, indicating a good balance between plantlife, aquatic creatures, bacterial equilibrium, and a modest amount of light. And, he doesn’t see anything other than some fish lurking under floating plants a ways out. Something large enough to be considered a monster should stand out a bit, even drifting close to the edge. Daniel has seen alligators in their natural habitat, and their stealth relies heavily on two things primarily; the dark waters full of tannins and animals not having the complex vision that humans have. The human mechanic grumbles, “I should’ve brought mines.” Neith chuckles in reply.

Daniel stands up and approaches the gatonines, followed by Neith, Vaergraes, Kera’tai, and Senn. Hekate and Doephluev are nearby, bickering over the numbers of monsters they slayed while clearing the path to the lakeside.

“Hekate, Doephluev, stop arguing and come over here. We’re having our final strategy meeting.”

“Yes my love!” replies Doephluev without missing a beat, immediately dropping the argument to jog over. Hekate snaps, “Hey! I wasn’t done-… Wait! I mean,… Grah!” She sprints as fast as she can, passing Doephluev and racing to Daniel’s side to claim his right arm. She sticks her tongue out at the archoneldwyn, who ignores her, simply walking up and standing on the other side of Daniel, though Vaergraes has already claimed directly next to him.

She declares brazenly, “I killed six, my Love.”

“She’s lying!”

“Enough, please. We have another monster to focus on right now.” Daniel pets Hekate’s head to calm her. “As we discussed, we’ll bait Rohgattabor to shore, Neith will block off its escape, and we’ll target the gills.”

“This would be a lot faster if we simply used our full might,” remarks Vaergraes. “It’s incredibly dangerous for… everyone that intends to attack it at melee range.”

“I asked for this,” replies Gwenesphia. “Our family is responsible for this land, and it would boost our reputation to be part of the monster slaying of one of the most dangerous beasts in all of Mattarglos.”

Goelselmo sighs, putting his hand on her shoulder. “My dear…” She smiles, putting her hand on his.

Daniel adds, “I don’t have enough firearms for everyone. Treia and Gwen are free to use theirs. Just be mindful of everyone. I just fear it’ll have some way of blocking even the anti-monster shells, like Tyror.”

Hekate points out, “Daniel, do you just call the big bullets ‘anti-’ whatever we’re fighting at the time? You used to call them anti-dragon bullets.”

Daniel grins playfully. “They’re based on a cross between anti-tank and anti-aircraft rounds on Earth, so… yes.”

The others snicker warmly at his joke.

“Your demon-staves,” starts Peiburi. “Can… anyone be taught?”

Daniel nods. “There are no plans to trade them with other kingdoms, though. I’ve considered making scaled back versions for trade, but…”

“But, no Empire, even one run by a teenager, is fool enough to trade away their greatest advantage,” states Hekate proudly.

Peiburi nods in understanding. Lyrtef asks, “Father, I’m willing to fight, but would it be better to allow them to deal with the beast at full strength?”

Goelselmo studies his younger son for a moment. Kuboen is the one to answer, “Of course not, Lyrtef. If we allow these outsiders to take all of the glory, we’ll be nothing more than the family who had to be saved from our own duties.”

“I have honored your family’s wishes because Gwen asked for it, and I can sympathize, Lord Kuboen, but glory is a gift we give mainly to the dead so their names will be remembered for a while longer. For the living, it is simply a pedestal from which we might fall.”

Kuboen steps closer to Daniel, pressing his chest to Daniel’s, though their difference in heights makes it closer to the human’s stomach instead. “What would a lecherous philanderer know of glory and honor? Even now, you let your… *mistresses* bicker and argue like catty harlots.” He looks at his family, asking once more, “What do you see in this libertine human who lies with demons, Gwen?”

“Kuboen,…” murmurs Gwenesphia.

“I know,…” begins Daniel in retort. “…that the histories of Earth and Zenkon are packed full of glorious martyrs and honorable dead. And, I know at least some of your vitriol does truly stem from protectiveness for your sister.”

Kuboen bears his teeth, starting to retort, but Daniel snatches him in a headlock, yanking the gatonine around. This startles everyone, and Goelselmo, Lyrtef, and Peiburi instinctively grip their swords, starting to draw. But, Neith, Kera’tai, Hekate, and Vaergraes are much quicker to go on guard, and Doephluev instantly has mana glowing in her palm as she aims it at the gatonine family, truly showing how outnumbered and outmatched they are, even without Gwenesphia, Treia, or Veiranoei needing to choose sides.

Daniel rips Kuboen’s helmet off, even as he struggles against the mechanic, and the human snarls quietly into his ear, “The last thing I know is that if you *ever* disrespect the people I love again,…”

Daniel whispers the remainder of the threat into Kuboen’s triangular feline ear quietly enough that only the intended recipient is the one to hear it.

Kuboen goes pale, and Daniel asks, “Now, can we get on with the mission? Is everyone ready?”

The rest of the group confirms that they are prepared, and the gatonines move into their various positions, with Treia and Gwenesphia ready with rifles.

The human mechanic asks his best friend, “Neith, can you withstand…”

‘Daniel! Look!” calls out Hekate.

The group stops what they’re doing to look where she’s pointing; out across the lake. Daniel lived in a subtropical climate in the United States, so what he’s seeing is a little less surprising than it should be.

He and his strike team are watching a localized rain shower so close in, he can see the edges on the right and left the ‘storm’, as well as the perimeter as it moves across the water.

Of course, on Earth, it was a natural phenomenon, even to have small local showers that he could drive across in approximately ten seconds. It was peculiar, just as this is now.

It’s not hot enough to be from a subtropical climate, though Zenkon does have a higher oxygen content and humidity than Earth, and Daniel is among the furthest things from a meteorologist. He knows a few rules of thumb about weather patterns, but virtually next to nothing about the finer mechanisms of climate, weather, and the factors that affect them.

Daniel shouts, “Everyone! To positions! Ready to strike!”

“D-Daniel!?” shouts Gwenesphia.

Daniel withdraws a flashbang grenade, and Hekate and Doephluev both recognize it, pulling their own out of their void bags. They pull the pins, keeping the spoons held down. The edge of the rainstorm is rapidly approaching, and Neith jogs into position, diving to the ground to stay out of sight.

Daniel jogs towards the water, shouting, “Vae, Kera’tai, cover me with barriers! Hekate and Doephluev, control the monster’s escape routes!”

They scatter as well with shouts of confirmation, and Daniel digs out one of his polonium grenades as well. The flashbangs will prevent the monster from moving as much, since it will be blind, which will allow Daniel to toss the polonium grenade into its mouth… he hopes.

Daniel crouches to keep his profile low. The barriers should protect him, and he's the only one that can afford to be exposed to polonium directly without sacrificing their strength. At worst, he won't be able to use his void bag if he gets himself contaminated. But, that's a minor issue.

It's a tense moment as the rainfall reaches the shoreline and passes over them. The droplets hammer on Daniel's armor as the heavy downpour makes it challenging to see. It's a long, tense moment, and he notices Luceniel the elemental change to a small pixie with a watery appearance, mainly a deep blue.

But, he can't get distracted. He can't even see a shadow in the water. There isn't even a wake. If he didn't know better, he might assume it was a natural storm similar to the brief showers back where he lived on Earth.

Daniel glances at everyone else. They've carefully moved into positions. Mantaroucks will hunt small, noisy prey on the shoreline as much as big inattentive prey that takes a drink.

The human mechanic from Earth takes a breath to calm himself. He just survived one fight with monsters that could have vaporized him with magic.

He needs to reconsider how he ends up in these situations. If this were a story and he were aware of it, he'd gladly settle for the other thing he dislikes; academy stories. Wasting time in school and dealing with aristocratic drama would be less stressful, at least.

Daniel swallows his saliva as the moment drags out, his heartbeat starting to be noticeable in his ears.

Come on. Show yourself.

He realizes it’s too quiet. If it’s listening for small prey, it’s waiting for them.

Just as the thought is passing through his mind, he looks at his armored forearm, where raindrops are splashing.

The realization is just forming in his mind, and he springs up. “It’s listening to the-!?”

With the suddenness and seeming intensity of a bomb going off, the lake in front of Daniel explodes.

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 124: The Storm Before Calamity

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 124: The Storm Before Calamity

Rikuto meets Grand Prince Yaulander in the courtyard of the castle of Mornistae, bowing at a professional 45% degree angle. “Your Grace, I am King Rikuto Tachibana, ruler of Mornistae.”

The Grand Prince has his left forearm across his chest, draping a portion of his cloak, and he dips his head politely with a proud smile. “King Rikuto Tachibana, I am Grand Prince Yaulander kos Strylaph of the Grand Zenkon Empire. I must thank you for hosting me on this most auspicious day.”

“It is my honor and pleasure. Please, you must be exhausted from your journey. We have prepared a suite for your stay, and your welcome feast can be readied at any time.”

“Yes, yes. Much appreciated. Have my luggage taken to the room. I have much to discuss with his Majesty.”

“As you wish, your Grace!” replies the Grand Prince’s equerry, as denoted by a simple fabric collar with a metal pin depicting the elemental symbol for fire on Zenkon superimposed over a man’s forehead with the man looking down.

Yaulander then says, “Now then, King Rikuto; let us go to somewhere where two men can have a conversation in private.”

“Very well.” He nods at the chamberlain to take care of the entourage, and he escorts Yaulander to his office, where he sets up one of the book-sized

devices Wenlianna developed, which creates magic noise that disrupts eavesdropping from outside of its effect.

Rikuto explains once it's on, "I bought this before the Grand Duchess turned traitor. It's a device her daughter built to create a secure conversation space."

"That's good. I wonder if I would be able to obtain one myself."

I bought a second one, just in case. Though, I can't give you any guarantees on service life, your Grace."

"It's no matter. My family has four magic artisans and seven artificers as permanent retainers. They'll be happy to reverse engineer and start producing these devices."

"I see. It would be convenient to have more of them on the market when needed. Artisans are often in short supply."

"Ahhh, yes. Mornistae has always been economically weak. At least, until you arrived."

"Among other things, improving our roads improved tax revenue from travelling merchants. It took a lot of negotiating with the various territorial lords. But, in turn, it made it safer and easier to travel our own goods as well."

"Indeed. And, I've heard some various farming strategies you brought over from your world."

"That's true. We don't have all of the equipment here, of course, but some of the basics were enough to improve yield and overall crop health."

"Excellent. And, that brings me neatly enough to the true reason for my visit."

Here it is. Rikuto was certain there was an ulterior motive, since he had no direct relation with Yaulander prior to his reaching out.

“Certainly. What can I do for you, your Grace?”

“I’d like to learn about the Divine Summoning that brought you and the other man to our world.”

This is a little surprising, but not overly so. Sundenelle has strongly requested in the past that Mornistae turn over the documents and any apparatus of the ritual. Several other kingdoms have made requests as well, offering a great deal of gold and other treasures in trade.

Not that Rikuto is in any hurry to trade the mysterious artifact in the basement of the castle, but even if he wanted to, it appears to be impossible to move. It can’t be dismantled and repels all kinds of magic, including magic intended to analyze the device, lift it, or even damage it. The only parts that are replaceable are the two glass orbs that perform the analysis on a person to identify the nature of their inherent mana. In fact, just with what little Rikuto has seen of the artifact, the orbs look almost like they don’t belong.

Regardless, he’ll likely have to give the same answer to the Grand Prince as he has all of the others. But, for now, he can humor questions.

“I’m not an expert on the device or the ritual. I believe Lord Crosserly or Lady Honnatye would be better suited to answering specific questions. But, I’ll do my best while you have me here.”

“Is it true you passed through the Divine Realm and were granted blessings from God?”

“Yes. Though, I spoke to a goddess by the name of Ryukana, not a god.”

“I see… so, it’s Ryukana the Goddess… Interesting. And, the blessings?”

“I have a growing amount of mana that supposedly exceeds most of the Court Mages. My curative magic seems to have no upper limit, though it does strain my mana, depending on what I’m using it on. I haven’t tested it much, but weapons also seem to immediately be added to my skill set when I hold them. It feels like… they become natural in my hand.”

“Curative magic? As in diseases?”

“Yes, your Grace. Diseases and wounds. It’s not as simple as simply saying ‘cure’, but I can… see the ailment and repair it with magic.”

“How very interesting,” replies Yaulander, sipping the juice Rikuto provided for him. Something Rikuto and Daniel both noticed quite quickly was that this world seems to have no alcohol. Instead, the wealthy drink rare juice cocktails made from fruits and even some vegetables that common folk can’t afford to purchase, aiming for a general sweetness and flavor.

Rikuto doesn’t care one way or the other, but he does appreciate the lack of drunks in the world. The smell of alcohol always annoyed Rikuto on Earth, and the people getting hammered have no respect for boundaries, no volume control, and regularly do stupid things. He’s certainly not sad for that particular loss. Even Daniel reeked of alcohol when the two arrived that fateful day. He was pretty self-controlled, but admitted that he was ‘half asleep and drunk’ when the summoning took place.

The Grand Prince adds to his thought, “We should capitalize on your abilities more, your Majesty.”

“‘We’?” asks Rikuto.

“Yes, ‘we’. Your ability grants you a great blessing that you have sorely underutilized through no fault of your own. In this time of turmoil, you should be using it to improve your own image.” Yaulander looks up as he imagines it. “We’ll have you known as ‘Saint King Rikuto’. People will flock from all over to support you and your kingdom.”

“That’s… I’m just one person, and my power has limits.”

“That is of no matter. Cure one ailing soul in front of the masses, and the rest will take care of itself.” Yaulander smiles. “And, nobility will pay any price to ensure their health, or the health of their loved ones.”

Rikuto remains silent. He didn’t necessarily want to exploit his abilities granted to him by Ryukana for financial gain, but he does have a kingdom to take care of. The Grand Prince isn’t wrong. People would pay a great deal -especially nobles for whom it truly is a small price to pay- for the extension of their lives. To Rikuto’s knowledge, healing potions can treat virtually all wounds, but drain the user, and if they are weak from malnutrition, disease, or something else, they can die. Rikuto’s power can remove diseases, buy time against malnutrition -though, not make a hungry person full-, and, though he didn’t do anything to confirm it, he’s pretty sure he can cure curses. Greydald’s brother, the Duke of a territory in the northern part of Mornistae, has a daughter who couldn’t be cured. In fact, healing magic specifically made it worse. When Rikuto used his curing on her, he felt a malicious magic present in her body. Once it was gone, she bounced back like the eight year old child she is; energetic and happy.

And, she became infatuated with Rikuto.

A part of him wonders if Daniel’s situation is similar, but he puts it out of his mind. If he thinks too much about the libertine American, he might become

envious. Even if he isn't evil, the Emperor of the Fievegal has very loose morals.

"I'm afraid it wouldn't be best at the current time, your Grace," starts Rikuto in reply. "We're currently at war with and being invaded through the gulf by the Fievegal. I don't have definitive proof, as the Grand Duchess was in her territory at the time, but I believe Grand Duchess Aramellianna is colluding with them."

"Hmm… A tricky situation indeed…" ponders the Grand Prince. "It sounds like you could use greater support."

Rikuto does his best to hide it, but he can feel his eye twitch slightly. He knew there was pretext to this meeting, but now he's certain; the Grand Prince is trying to corner him.

The problem is, it's working. Rikuto does need support. He doesn't have the firepower to compete with Daniel's firearms. The best he could hope for, in addition to the void artillery, which he'll use to defend the capital, would be to make simple firearms to close the gap at least partially. Rikuto never held a gun in his life; they were strictly controlled in Japan and he grew up in Kyoto and went to university in Osaka, so he never had the chance nor interest in hunting. The closest he ever came to a gun on Earth was in video games, movies, and manga. At best, he might be able to explain to this world's inventors how a basic firearm works and hope they can assemble it.

Since the atom bomb was revealed by Erimaya, he tried to gather engineers for it, but few saw the advantage over crossbows and spellcasting to justify intentionally detonating 'alchemy powder' close to their own face.

Rikuto isn’t even sure if he could make a Minie ball musket work, but he's going to have to divert a lot of resources to it if he wants to compete with Daniel’s apparent assault weapons, from what the survivors described. Of course, most of the people of this world still see it as magic.

With the Grand Prince offering aid, Rikuto might be able to get traction.

And, it's then that Yaulander is finishing talking. “… the best outcome for everyone.”

Rikuto missed most of the monologue, but he can guess at some of it. And, he takes a neutral option. “You want technology from my world in exchange?”

“That's right, your Majesty.”

“I’m afraid I’m not sure how to make many inventions. There’s one that should put us closer to the Fievegal in terms of military strength, but I’ve been struggling to find people willing to build a prototype. And, if we’re to survive, we’ll need mass production quickly.”

“I’m interested,” replies Yaulander with a coy smile. New chapters come out on novelping.com first.

Rikuto sighs. “Beyond that, I’m afraid I’m too busy to be of any great help.”

“I understand. But, as I said, it doesn’t have to be you.”

The Japanese man cocks his head. “Do… you mean Daniel?”

The Grand Prince snickers warmly at the notion. “Is that the name of the other otherworlder?” asks the young man with a coy tone. Something seems off about it, though. It doesn’t feel genuine.

Regardless, Yaulander continues, “Were it so easy, I would already have that disrespectful man bound in servitude. No, I wish to recruit another otherworlder from your world; one to serve the Empire as graciously as you have served this kingdom.”

Rikuto shifts again. It’s not that he didn’t expect it, but he’s not comfortable with the idea. He’s even less comfortable with discussing it so directly.

The main part of Rikuto is worried about another person from Earth being dragged to another world suddenly. In Rikuto’s case, Ryukana asked for his consent, with the implication someone else would be chosen. But, if a second person is pulled along with them like Daniel was…

The other part of Rikuto is worried about the damage more Earthlings could do to Zenkon, and the harm it could do to his own reputation as a result.

If he does nothing, on the other hand, it’s very likely Daniel and his demon army will overwhelm him and conquer all of Mornistae.

Rikuto takes a deep breath.

All he can do now is pray he’s not making the wrong decision.

***

It feels like a tidal wave just hit Daniel, throwing him onto his back. Water erupted from the lake like a geyser, blasting him with a spray like a firehose. A heavy gust breezes across him as a shadow blots out what remains of the sunlight peering through the spotty, magically summoned local storm.

During his fall, he feels something hit his armor and a large shadow pass by, flopping him in the mud as a deluge washes out around him.

Shielded from the direct rainfall in the aftermath by a humongous form that almost reminds Daniel of a smaller version of a delta-wing configured aircraft. Though, unlike the rigid aircraft frame, this is a living being fluttering its ‘wings’ to soften its landing.

Similar to a crayfish, it has ten legs coming from the center part of its body under its pectoral fins, each with a small grasping claw that it tries to pick at Daniel with.

As each spears down on him, though, the human Mechanic is battered and bumped, but the claws seem to slip off of him, as if he is made of grease.

Rifle shots boom out, and the monster flinches. It flutters its wing-like pectoral fins rapidly, like a titanic hummingbird, squatting as it backs away to try to figure out why it couldn't grab Daniel. Seeing him clearly, it tries to spear its forward pincers at Daniel, and one batters his arm. The claw misses its grip, seemingly slipping from his arm, but it successfully batters the flashbang grenade out of his hand. Daniel grunts, doing his best to shout, “FLASH-!”

WHOUMP!

The mantarouck attacking the mechanic squeals extremely loudly, flinching back again from the bright light and concussive sound.

Surprisingly, Daniel doesn’t feel all that bad from the hits he took from a titanic monster, as if… He glances at the watery pixie, who smiles at him with a soft grin. She has something to do with it.

What he wouldn’t give for a typical isekai video-game style status menu or appraisal ability to explain what each of the elementals do.

But, for now, the human’s in the midst of battle.

And, his role is critical.

The graetcheth mantarouck, a powerful natural mage in its own right, flutters its pectoral fins quickly. Glowing energy builds around the beast's mouth, concentrating as it continues fluttering.

The teams have closed in behind those with barriers, and Hekate charges magic between her hands with the apparent intent to intercept the attack.

A lance of water slices across the ground towards Hekate, who bides her time a moment longer. The feldrok girl presses her hands forward, discharging a water lance of her own, aimed directly for the nose of the mantarouck, where its magic is spraying from. The two water jets clash with thunderous force, exploding water with enough pressure to stumble the mantarouck back.

Daniel flinches, but the water that sprays him doesn't seem to strike him with any meaningful impact. When he looks, the elemental is a little larger and curvier, like a slender woman suddenly becoming voluptuous.

Daniel scrambles to his feet as the dazed monster shakes its body and head back and forth. He hasn't had a moment to really study it yet, with the ferocity and suddenness of its attack.

Looking at it now, it very much reminds him of a manta-ray, with wide wing-like pectoral fins and a relatively flat and leathery body. But, supporting its weight are ten crawfish-like legs. And, it has mantis-like foreclaws as well, though their size implies that it's meant for dragging larger things into the water.

The mechanic closes the distance, which is quite great in relation to him due to the monster's massive size translating to a huge gait even when simply flinching backwards.

Neith runs by at the water line, which is close to where the titan's tail is swaying around for balance. He's moving through to set each of the needed glyphs for his spell, which he mentioned shouldn't need more than five for this instance.

Thankfully, like a true manta ray, the mantarouck has a gigantic mouth, since Daniel is definitely not a champion of any sports. He makes sure he's close enough that he can easily strike his target.

Daniel pulls the pin on the polonium grenade. He has to be mindful because of its weight, but he'll be able to reach. He takes a step to throw the grenade as hard as he can into the mouth of the mantarouck as the great evolved monster clears its vision.

He can hear the 'whump!' of the grenade exploding in its maw, and it stumbles again, this time to the side.

"Gooo!" shouts Treia. "Capitalize!"

The gatonines all charge close with spears, and Treia and Gwenesphia move to fire on the monster's gills.

Senn uses a magic blast of void energy to buckle the graetcheth mantarouck's legs. It flops to the ground, granting Goelselmo and his children access to its body, especially its eyes.

Kuboen sprints towards the head, bounding up the side of its face to jam his spear into its eye. The monster flinches and bucks its head, flopping its massive pectoral fins. The forceful motion launches him through the air, but he nimbly twists in midair to recover and land on his feet, though Gwenesphia and Lyrtef to call out, "Kuboen!"

"I'm fine! Press the attack!"

Gwenesphia and Treia aim at the monster’s other eye, firing at it while it tries to rise. It flops itself away from them, shielding its remaining eye with its head and forcing Goelselmo, Peiburi, and Lyrtef to avoid the huge mass of pectoral fin coming down.

Senn, who casually hums a song with a slow and beautiful tempo, swirls her staff as magic circles and glyphs dance around her. Conjured with magic, a giant stone appears above the mantarouck just as it's getting its footing, and the boulder slams down on top of it, pinning it to the ground once more as it huffs a powerful exhale.

Veiranoei, for her part, has rushed to Daniel’s side, helping him stand up and move away from the monster. Kera’tai also jogs up, ready to defend with magic while they retreat.

The mechanic is alright, though. None of the impacts from the monster trying to grab him were anything more than glancing blows. He watches the monster squirm and flutter its fins, trying to do anything to free itself, including summoning rain. But, the storm is already dissolving with the last of the rain coming to an end as suddenly as it began.

The polonium grenade is doing its job.

He watches the relatively tiny gatonines attacking its head from the sides using spears and swords. It reminds Daniel of one of the video games he loved playing back on Earth, but unlike the game, where the player character had game-world strength granting them the ability to fight such monsters, the gatonines aren’t much stronger than an average human. Their slashes and thrusts don’t seem to be doing much.

Then again, even in spite of their thick skin, humans had been slaying whales on Earth for centuries until it was outlawed at large using little more than spears.

The graetcheth mantarouck, for all of its size and might, is losing strength and fading to wounds from what would normally be its prey.

Daniel notices something that makes him move before he thinks. The monster has used its right foreclaw to raise its head.

Daniel tackles Peiburi, the one closest to what is happening at that moment.

Daniel is slammed into her, but he hears the massive weight slash against his armor, and he takes Gwenesphia's younger sister to the ground, surprising her. Her horrified eyes indicate she sees the claw swiping above them; the left claw of the beast given leave to strike with lightning force across the front of the monster towards the right side where the gatonines are attacking.

The human mechanic and the youngest gatonine warrior present slam into the ground together, the impact softened only a little by Daniel tackling her at an angle.

"D-Daniel!?" cries out the young woman. She tries to rise to rejoin the fight, but Daniel presses her down.

"Wait!"

CLUNK!

"Ahhh!" she screams as the claw swings back. Daniel is putting a lot of faith in tiny little pixies, but so far, they haven't failed him yet.

It seems, among whatever other effects she might provide, the water elemental is somehow protecting the weak human mechanic from direct hits, even from a monster as big as Rohgattabor.

He pants, scrambling to help Peiburi up. They both sprint clear before the monster can swing again. Rohgattabor is ferocious, and it's cornered. They might just be able to defeat it here and now.

"Daniel, incoming!" shouts Doephluev as she points at the water.

Neith delayed putting up the wall, since Rohgattabor is pinned down, but the commotion has drawn out other mantaroucks. Thankfully, they are are about a third the size of the legendary monster at the largest, so they'll be easier to handle.

"Hekate, Doephluev! They're yours!" calls out Daniel.

"Prepare to lose!" shouts the feldrok as she charges to the right, while the archoneldwyn walks calmly to the left, firing off a barrage of icicle spears to delay and wound the common mantaroucks attacking. Several flee back into the water, though Hekate blasts the lake with a violent spit of fire, killing at least one of the monsters that would have escaped otherwise. She's picking off extras to increase her score.

Daniel is going to have to scold her later.

The mechanic checks on Peiburi. "You alright?"

"Y-Yes! Thank you!"

"Watch its arms and legs. It still has fight left in it."

“Yes! I will!” She charges back in to join her family members, spearing the graetcheth mantarouck once more.

Its strength seems to be almost completely depleted. Treia and Gwenesphia have put out its other eye with rifle shots, Neith is standing by to execute it quickly if it manages to catch a second wind, Senn has cast several spells around it like landmines, Vaergraes and Kera’tai are watching over everyone, and Veiranoei has rejoined Daniel, trying not to get in the way, but also afraid of the titan they’re fighting.

Everything is going well. Hekate and Doephluev are successfully keeping the shoreline clear of other beasts. Gwenesphia’s family members are wearing themselves out slaying the monster that has plagued their territory. Neith is ready to prevent it from escaping, as well as to assist the feldrok and archoneldwyn purging the lesser monsters.

Something feels off, though. Daniel can’t quite place it, but the boulder seems to draw his attention. Even though it’s still on Rohgattabor’s back, keeping the ferocious predator pinned down, it doesn’t seem to be matching the struggles of the helpless monster.

If anything, the boulder seems to have gotten heavier.

During a break when Treia and Gwenesphia are reloading their rifles, a strange sound in the distance grows closer.

Daniel looks at Neith when the dragon seems to notice it as well, and the mechanic searches the sky in the direction he thinks it’s coming from.

The sound rapidly gets closer, as does the source.

A full-sized blue dragon roaring as loud as he can as flames fill his mouth.

For the most part, the dragons have fairly unique appearances for each one, making it quite easy to tell them apart, even when they're in their true forms.

It's Magnir in full attack mode. He doesn't have the mana necessary to project the laser-like plasma jet that the stronger dragons can, but he is still one of the more powerful beings in the world.

The blue Einherjar exhales a powerful breath of fire towards the boulder, startling everyone in the area with the suddenness of his attack. His arrival is ferocious and merciless, but his target isn't any of the beings visible.

The flames glance off of a solid surface that remains perfectly invisible, cutting the shape of a shield from how the dragon breath diffuses into licks and cast-offs of an intense blaze.

During the inferno, vortices of magically accelerated air, visible thanks to the moisture in the air condensing, forms a larger cyclone below the invisible shield, and it moves seemingly on its own.

The whirling funnel of air seems to slice through the blue dragon's fire breath as he's swooping in, and Magnir is forced to bank hard to avoid the wind magic.

Suddenly, the air gusts again, and the stone pinning Rohgattabor shifts. It begins to levitate, and Goelselmo calls out, "Lady Senn!"

"It's not me!" She's using her staff to cast magic, but the stone continues to rise in spite of the apparent effort on the elf's face.

The boulder violently shatters, and the mana backlash stumbles the elder mage backwards.

Even fractured into hundreds of pieces, every last portion of the formerly giant stone remains airborne, floating weightlessly.

The air cracks like claps of thunder in rapid succession, and all of the shards streak off into the distance towards Magnir. Meanwhile, lightning starts to crackle roughly where the air cyclone formed, while Rohgattabor springs backwards, limping into the water.

Doephluev and Hekate try to prevent the graetcheth mantarouck from retreating, but as soon as it reaches the water, it drops, slapping its pectoral fins into the water with such impressive force, a substantial dome of vapor masks the monster. Even with their barrage, Rohgattabor vanishes into the lake, leaving only streaks of blood and swirls of water behind.

Neith tries to interrupt the lightning attack with his own magic, but he is slammed by an invisible solid object that sweeps over Daniel's head from the gust.

The lightning arc is launched towards Magnir as Neith tumbles across the ground. He seems to have noticed the incoming attack before it was launched, and he is in the midst of a fast roll that launches two humanoid figures from his back over the lake water near Hekate. The lightning hits him, and his body curls and tenses in midair; dropping him from the sky.

The brutality of the attack masks how brief it was; Daniel could perceive it, but can barely respond.

"*{Daniel, throw me!}*"

He shakes his head clear as the others scatter, now fully aware that *something* new is attacking them.

Daniel draws Nemaisol, throwing it towards where the magic attacks were coming from.

The human mechanic from Earth is certainly no superhero. He only has enough mana to make a small ember of fire for a few seconds or summon a drop of water thanks to a strange series of events that have granted him that tiny bit of magical ability long after arriving on Zenkon. He won't be harming whatever it is by throwing a sword.

But, it seems to go far enough, since Nemaisol is slammed out of the air by a brutal impact that cracks by with supersonic speed.

And, a monster shrieks from the powerful -if brief- electrocution that occurs when a being with a lot of magical energy comes in contact with the sword. And, in this case, Nemaisol is also able to disable the magic making the beast invisible.

The colossus that appears as if the air is distorting into a solid mass has a terrifying visage. It reminds the otherworlder of the Feral Feldrok, though it has the scales of a dragon-like being, along with leathery wings and metallic horns. The scales, now visible, possess a sort of moving rainbow sheen similar to how sharmelkolle reacts in the presence of mana.

The supernatural being radiates magical power as well, which is surprising, given that there are so many people present that can detect mana. But of course, there are spells and techniques that each can hide even powerful mages from the most sensitive senses, as seen with Doephluev and her former comrades.

Realizing that it is visible, the draconic monster rises to its full height, easily towering over everyone present. It takes a calm, deep breath through its nose before snapping its head forward with jaws agape.

A visible wave of vapor flashes out with the sharp pressure spike of the most powerful and loudest sound Daniel has ever heard:

The roar of a true colossus.

If Daniel is the Harbinger of Calamity, then Calamity has arrived.

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Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 125: The Archfiend Yaulwembor Part 1

Havoc has taken hold of a battle that was seemingly nearing its end, disrupted by the arrival of one of Zenkon's legends. Though not as widely known as the Strylak, a massive sea beast that prevents crossing the oceans, the draconic scourge haunting the hills of Mattarglos certainly earns its infamy.

Elemental magic is a common concept among the beings of Zenkon with words; the sentient races that can write, speak, and devise spells often simplify their magic into the alchemical elements that Daniel knows as earth ('ground' on Zenkon), wind, fire, and water, as well as light and dark -sometimes referred to as divine and void elements, respectively-. True magic is more complex than six simple categories, but for most of the population of Zenkon, using more than a couple of those six elements becomes more and more rare, and using the more freeform magic often ends up being a specialization of the mage using it. At least, that is the case in modern times.

That said, so far, all of the non-sentient monsters that Daniel and his companions have encountered have had a primary element or a singular hybrid element; lightning (a combination of fire and wind) for the thorusk hakkadels, water for Rohgattabor, ice (a combination of wind and water) for Tyror, and fire for the monstrous forms of drakes, which is more powerful than their inherent fire breath.

Given that the avian fiend that arrived at the crucial would-be last moments of Rohgattabor has already used lightning, ground, water, ice, fire, and light magic

in the seconds that it has been present, it's safe to assume that their newest antagonist can likely use all elements of magic.

And, immediately upon its reveal from invisibility magic that hid even its mana presence, broken only by the magic nullification of coming into contact with Nemaisol, the legendary draconic monster roars with a staggering force great enough to condense the air with the pressure wave radiating out, and everyone is brought to their knees at a minimum, with the screams of agony belonging to the gatonines and Hekate drowned out by the volume ravaging their sensitive hearing even through their protective headgear.

Daniel's helmet -designed with his flashbangs in mind- softens the volume enough not to split his eardrums, but he along with Peiburi, Veiranoei, and Senn, who are also in a relative arc 'in front' of the roar, all tumble backwards from the impact of the pressure wave.

The former 'Demon Tyrant' Vaergraes and the Chi'rinnis support mage Kera'tai manage to stay relatively upright thanks to being a bit further away, but they are far from safe.

The air crackles and roars as the dragon-like monster exhales flames towards the two, and the Uhl'tall archpriestess is narrowly fast enough to use her own wind magic to blast herself into Kera'tai and knock both of them out of the way as the flames shatter the Chi'rinnis' barrier with ease. The two tumble across the ground, helpless for the moment, but Neith summons icicle spears and barrages the titan to buy them time.

Doephluev and Hekate both channel their mana and fire powerful spells of their own; some sort of ominous black ray from the archoneldwyn and a concentrated column of water from the feldrok, who may not be especially skilled, but possesses a great deal of raw power.

All of the magic attacks glance off of the winged colossus, either exploding against its seemingly impenetrable scales or intercepted by its own spellcrafted barriers and ranged interceptor casts.

Daniel, the lowly human mechanic from a world without magic, hasn't been idle. Once he is able to recover from his tumble, head still ringing, he withdraws his 20mm rifle from his magic bag. Next to everyone, he is the lowest perceivable threat to the apparent dragon with color-shifting scales thanks to having almost no magic, especially when Neith, Senn, Hekate, and Vaergraes each likely rank in the top twenty most powerful living beings in the entire world as a conservative guess. Daniel might as well be a mouse in the corner, which is advantageous to him. Though, that also means he is relatively helpless to defend himself from the battle of titans, and he can only move as quickly as he can with his own goals while hoping his allies can keep the devastating attacks of both themselves and the fiend away from him.

Veiranoei, a similarly relatively weak gatonine, runs to Daniel, stumbling as the ground shakes. He's kneeling for stability as he searches his magic bag for the container he needs.

After a great deal of experimentation, Daniel confirmed that, as long as they're shielded with lead or other dense materials with comparable shielding properties, he can store radioactive materials within the void bags, which would normally be disabled by the countermagic of those same elements. Or, at least, the atomic decay of their natural state of being.

"Daniel!" cries out the gatonine knight who recently joined Daniel's family in name. She stumbles into him, and he catches her when an explosion of superhot flames impact the petrifying cold of a powerful ice ray, exploding violently from the dramatic difference in temperature.

Rifle shots echo within the cacophony, drowned out with ease by the explosions and roars of the magic attacks raining in all directions onto the monster, only to be ineffectual against its natural keratinous armor.

Veiranoei desperately grips Daniel, tears streaming down her face through the mud and dirt on her cheeks. “D-Daniel! I-I’m… I’m scared! D-D-Do something!”

“I’m working on it,” replies Daniel, a little sharply only from the heightened urgency of the situation as he finds the lead container he needs, marked with a yellow and black rifle crosshair. “Do you know what it is!?” asks Daniel over the clangorous brawl.

Losing herself to her tears, Veiranoei nods. She chokes out desperately, “It-It-It’s… Ya-Ya-Yaul-...” She descends into sobs as she clings to Daniel, and he murmurs, “Yaulwembor…” *No wonder it’s a legend…*

Yaulwembor, the mighty legendary dragon of Mattarglos -whether sentient or not- sweeps its tail brutally across the battlefield, slamming into Hekate’s and Doephluev’s combined barrier, which shatters. The two are thankfully blasted backwards by mana backlash, rather than the cataclysmic impact of the tail, and they tumble across the ground.

Abandoning magic, Neith transforms into his dragon form, giving him the full size and weight his true being grants him.

He lunges towards Yaulwembor, tackling the titan, but the latter manages to catch him and slides backwards, bringing the pair to a stop. They viciously claw at each other, trading merciless blows amplified by magic elements that explode and cast shrapnel -in the cases of ground and ice magic-, as well as stray streamers of fire and lightning with every devastating impact.

It quickly becomes clear, however, that the mythic fiend is faster and stronger than Neith, as his scales and blood are being sent flying, while he has barely left a scratch on his opponent.

It's when the tide is shifting slowly that it abruptly falls to Yaulwembor's advantage.

The ancient calamity vanishes in a swirl of black and violet energy, causing Neith to over-swing and stumble in his draconic form. The same flash of smoke-like energy appears behind him, and Yaulwembor reappears, already in a blindingly fast pirouette that clubs the grey knight with a thunderous boom and slams him into the ground, shattering the solid portions of the ground and splashing dirt, mud, and gravel like little more than water. Neith is momentarily incapacitated in a crater larger than his already massive body, and what trees and shrubs were in the area are mostly toppled from the violent disruption of the land.

Senn and Vaergraes try to coordinate a binding spell, but Yaulwembor roars and extends its foreclaw hands. Magic circles with complex spells appear for each one, and the two humanoid mages recoil, startled by whatever they see in the spell glyphs of the enemy.

Vaergraes switches to a defensive barrier, while Senn waves her staff, generating more of her own spellbinding enchantments.

The air seems to shatter with the rapid flashing lights of a two-way mutual barrage of magic spells that seem capable of erasing a city if they were to go astray. Senn only focuses on the attacks that will hit her and Vaergraes, who are the only two in the immediate line of fire, and explosions, disintegrations, and fires erupt behind them in a wide arc, devastating much of the forest.

Again, what feels like an eternity has only been a couple of minutes at most with the ferocity of the endless onslaught. Daniel has a piercing round loaded already; one with a sharmelkolle core inside of a copper coating, since sharmelkolle is so hard, it strips the rifling and is unlikely to obtain any of the spin necessary for accurate flight. It's designed to penetrate dragon scale and bone, as well as the same for a feldrok, in case they ever meet enemies of the two powerful races again. Sharmelkolle is also tough enough -being virtually truly indestructible- that it can penetrate most barriers if enough force is behind it, so it's the ideal ammunition for similarly nigh-impenetrable targets.

Once more, Yaulwembor proves to be surprising and dangerous when it casts a spell that reverts Neith to his humanoid form, and the titan grips him tightly, squeezing with all of its might. Neith struggles and groans in pain, but he is a dragon, thankfully. He hasn't been crushed yet, but time is running out.

Daniel takes aim, locking the bolt forward.

This particular rifle has been through a lot with him. He killed Morthybargaron's brother, the 'Red Knight' at Fort Peony as well as a drake, the 'Green Sage' at the dattakorien village where Baeka lived, the Feral Feldrok, 'Lugrae' as he has been dubbed. The mechanic even wounded Neith with a glancing blow when they first encountered each other.

It's still extremely simple in design, but has a lot of firepower, especially with the properly rifled barrel he gave it once the Citadel became available to him.

Daniel takes a breath, steadily watching as Yaulwembor shields itself from another barrage of attacks from Senn using its humongous scale-armored wing. The multi-element magic assault rumbles and claps with thunder like a rapid bombing during an air raid, all dedicated to one target. Senn is trying to control the scale of her magic, since she has to balance her own mana

reserves with doing damage to Yaulwembor without annihilating her allies and the forest around them. Wounds appear on the rainbow dragon's wing, indicating that it CAN be harmed, but it's taking an absurd amount of devastating force to even faze it.

Daniel times it with Yaulwembor positioning to cast another spell, using its tail seemingly obliviously to swipe at Hekate, who is trying to flank it from behind. She reinforces herself, vanishing in a shockwave of mud and water where the tail slams down on her.

The Emperor of the Fievegal winces. He's optimistic that Hekate can withstand an attack that she knows is coming, but she's not invincible. He can't allow himself to believe that, or she'll die.

The mechanic exhales slowly, pulling the trigger swiftly, but steadily.

The mythic titan of Mattarglos legend seems to freeze, as if sensing the shot, but it's too late.

KABOOM!

Thunder and fire erupt from the barrel of the rifle as it kicks backwards like a horse. Veiranoei yelps and scrambles away from Daniel instinctively, which frees him up to continue his own attack.

The bullet shreds flesh from its snout roughly halfway between its nostrils and eyes, causing it to howl in pain as it falters, bucking its head to the side, which disrupts its magic retaliation on Senn. It stumbles on its feet, using its tail to balance, and Hekate springs up from under the mud, dazed briefly, but having survived being hit.

Without any hesitation from the first shot, Daniel yanks the bolt back, ejecting the smoking steel shell. He quickly dumps the lead container he withdrew from his void bag earlier onto the ground, revealing a specialized bullet with yellow and magenta painted in two quarters each around the conical projectile of the bullet. It's dangerous to even handle these bullets, as the polonium core is highly radioactive.

But, it's also extremely effective at nullifying magic even in small amounts.

"*{Daniel, release me, now!}"* Kaeralegier's voice, the goddess bound to Nemaisol, calls out to Daniel urgently via telepathy.

The human mechanic trusts her with his life. She hasn't let him down yet, and he's not about to ignore her now.

He instantly grips the scabbard and hilt with each of his hands, pulling the sword ever so slightly apart.

Yaulwembor whirls its head around to face Daniel with a hellish glow in its mouth that spits forth like a bullet. Rather than a stream of demonic fire, as with the normal breath attacks, this incandescent magic missile streaks through the air like a plasma bolt from a sci-fi weapon.

Nemaisol's area of effect is larger than usual, protecting both Daniel and Veiranoei by disrupting the magic holding the spitfire together. Flames still wash over the human pseudo-sorcerer, which he can feel briefly even through his highly-protective sharmelkolle armor.

The ancient terror is just about to attack again when a full force lancing dragon breath comes from its own palm. Neith managed to force enough air into his lungs to launch a counter, even with Yaulwembor squeezing him mercilessly.

Daniel is just about to feed his polonium round into the chamber when something -perhaps an instinctive paranoia, dumb luck, or maybe even a higher power- causes him to glance behind him, where a wake is approaching.

Without thinking, he does the only thing that comes to mind; he turns to Veiranoei and throws the rifle at her long-ways. It weighs about fifty pounds, even as simplistic as it is, giving it plenty of heft to catch the gatonine off guard and take her to the ground when she instinctively tries to catch it thinking it's nothing more than a staff.

The lake erupts water at them once more when a mantarouck bursts out, lunging at easy prey distracted, but also away from the frightening presence of Yaulwembor.

And of course, it's not just any mantarouck, but the graetcheth mantarouck itself; Rohgattabor.

Unfortunately, Luceniel hasn't been able to switch, since it definitely needs to meet certain conditions to provide the protections that it does, and Daniel is easily snatched by the monster's foreclaws this time. He already dropped the polonium round, but he has bigger problems to deal with now, doing his best simply to brace himself. His armor protects his body from the beating it takes being snatched by a praying mantis-like striking arm, which clamps down on him as the colossus retreats into the water just as suddenly as it had burst forth.

The depths of the lake rapidly close in, and the wayward Earthling barely manages to gasp in a breath before he is submerged. He'll have -if he's lucky- probably something close to thirty seconds. He notices the light elemental following him faithfully. She's panicking, trying to think of a solution, since water

is not her forte. He had hoped she could shift back into the water elemental, but there could be some sort of time-related or mana-recovery stipulation.

And, Daniel doesn't have enough time to think too hard about it. He draws Nemaisol, nearly fumbling it as the light fades from the rapidly increasing depth of the water. He winces in pain, losing some of his lung capacity with the sound, as his ears threaten to burst. He manages to swallow his spittle, which breaks the differential for now -and narrowly so-. His ears still ache, but he might survive.

With the magic blade in hand, Daniel spears it into the claw, wrenching it as much as his pinned posture will allow. The lake monster snaps its claw free, recoiling and banking away from him as it drops him, though Nemaisol sticks and is yanked away from him.

He was hoping just touching Nemaisol to it would shock it, but maybe it's because the polonium grenade disabled its mana, it effectively behaves the same as Daniel.

Regardless, Daniel sinks like a rock to the silty lake floor, stirring up muck in a big cloud as he lands. He scrambles up to a kneel, activating his magic bag as his lungs start to burn. The mechanic eases his breath out slowly to try to buy himself some time. He's already down to his last seconds, meaning he has no time to delay nor to consider how foolish his action is going to be.

The faux sorcerer finds and withdraws the wind blaster; a magic rifle-like weapon that uses wind crystals to fire a concentrated high density pressure pocket of wind magic. He notices shadows swirling around him; hunting and looking for the right moment to strike like sharks.

He is in their true homefield now, where the aquatic superpredators have the advantage even without magic.

But, Daniel comes from a world where problems are solved with tools.

And, he has the perfect tool for the situation he has found himself in.

***

Neith exhales his full-tilt fire breath with everything he could muster, having been forced to inhale as deeply as he could against the crushing force of the legendary monster's iron grip. Magnir was sent to investigate the mysterious and powerful beast topping the list of fiends plaguing Mattarglos, and he arrived in a desperate high-velocity flight to engage an invisible being.

That can only mean this monster is Yaulwembor, or another beast just like it.

Regardless, the grey dragon's full power fire breath is enough to peel flesh and scales even from the seemingly-impervious monster, until one of Daniel's mithril bullets pierced clean through the draconic terror's snout and disrupted its attack.

Yaulwembor reacts to the flame lance scorching and wounding it as it snarls. It cups its free left hand in front of the magically enhanced incinerating jet, only for the meat of its palm to begin to burn, distorting the color of the flames as licks and embers spark and race off in every direction.

Neith, of course, is a living being with a finite lung capacity, aided by the fact that he's extending that time with a slow exhale compensated for by wind and fire magic as parts of the enhancement.

He keeps the immolating stream going, since the pain and agony are keeping Yaulwembor's focus on him, rather than anyone else. It must be working,

because she tries to squeeze him tighter in her palm. But, the grey Einherjar won't surrender; not when he is finally reclaiming his over-spent and wasted life.

Yaulwembor's foreclaw disintegrates under the assault, and Neith pants as the titan roars.

Just as he's taking another breath, though, the ancient draconic avian slams him into the ground by punching, briefly dazing the grey dragon. Still, he manages to try to exhale a new fire stream, but he cries out as his body goes rigid; the result of lightning magic coursing through him from the colossus.

He is left slumped in her grip, panting, when she finally ceases the electrical assault. Even with his own armor, which resists magic, Neith is taking a beating.

And, during that brief moment of respite, Yaulwembor generates several more magic circles around itself, even without words of chanting or equipment to generate the spells. The glyphs are of an ancient dialect that Neith doesn't recognize off hand, but the effect becomes clear instantly; the few wounds that Senn, Neith, Daniel, Doephluev, Hekate, and Vaergraes have managed to inflict with their combined power all heal right before Neith's eyes, including the disintegrated foreclaw.

Spirits and Ancestors… How much mana does this creature have?

A new set of magic circles appear above the two draconids, and this one Neith recognizes. It's a series of five magic circles, each littered with glyphs generating various functions for the spell, including power, concentrating magic, expanding the range, and identifying the target for the magic spell.

Gunfire explodes through the air in a pair of golden-flecked streams, pelting the monster and causing it to recoil and howl in anger; the shuttleis firing its cannons at Yaulwembor.

At that moment, Hekate appears on the large hand's finger next to Neith. She calls out, "Brace yourself, Neith! I'm going to barrier us both, and-WAAAAHHHH!"

Neith can only brace himself as the young feldrok Empress clings to his neck. He and she are launched through the air by Yaulwembor, who threw Neith as a near-ballistic projectile towards the shuttleas it strafes, banking out of the way of the incoming attack. The heavy 20mm rapid fire cannons of the shuttle have a great deal of range, especially on a stationary target, allowing it to have kept distance.

Regardless, Yaulwembor isn't finished. Just that brief opening is enough for it to vanish in a puff of black smoke and purple mana.

The pilot of the shuttle punches the throttle, lurching the aircraft forward as it accelerates just in time to avoid the draconic avian when it reappears behind the shuttle, slashing its claw as blood flings through the air.

Neith catches Hekate as she screams, and he holds her firmly. She's afraid of heights, which is a little surprising considering how much raw power is packed into her tiny body and the fact that she's a feldrok, but it's understandable, since the dragons treated her poorly her entire life until Daniel destroyed the balance of power.

Because their flight path is now directly towards Yaulwembor, who threw them moments before, Neith positions to land against the draconic monster's chest,

kicking off of it mere slices of a second before it teleports again, once more trying to assault the shuttle.

The pilot rolls skillfully, avoiding the creature and leading it back underneath the imposing magic circles being generated by Senn, Vaergraes, and Doephluev in tandem, given the surge of mana coming from the three.

Alone, each one of those three, as well as Hekate or Neith, could generate the spell maybe once. Together, they're sharing the load, since everyone has spent so much mana so far.

Neith summons his wings to catch flight and allow him to safely carry the young feldrok girl back into the battle.

***

A little while before and on the ground, Sir Helbeit of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy stumbles out of the lake water onto shore with Sir Resken. The two knights have been mostly dead weight in the battle that started when Yaulwembor spotted them in spite of their stealth spell, and then lost interest in them when one of the dragons -most likely Neith- breathed a firebreath of his own.

The Rohgattabor subjugation team lead by Daniel was already in the midst of battle with the beast and had it pinned down. Now, it is all they can do to try to avoid being maimed by the monster while launching whatever attacks they can in the lightning-fast blitz occurring.

KABOOM!

Helbeit flinches, and he notices Resken stumble as well. He was looking in the right direction by coincidence and saw the true power of the dragon slayer

turned Dragon Emperor.

A long blast of smoke and fire erupts from a strangely shaped staff summoned forth from the world Divine Summons come from. And, with a single blow, a massive wound is blasted across the face of the dragon-like being known as Yaulwembor.

It can be harmed, and Daniel's non-magic weapon did so.

However, the ancient draconid retaliates with a spit of fire that explodes violently, somehow not incinerating Daniel and the gatonine woman most recently added to his harem, Dame Veiranoei, if Helbeit heard correctly.

Just then, as the two knights are trying to find a way to re-engage, Daniel seems to shove his mysterious staff at the gatonine knight near him, and like it were a body, the motion topples Veiranoei onto her back when she tries to catch it.

With the suddenness of a lightning bolt, Daniel vanishes in a colossal splash of water, and the same wounded mantarouck the group was fighting, Rohgattabor, snatches him into the depths of the lake.

"Lord Daniel!" calls out Resken. The shenwulf knight saw it as well, then.

"We need to get over there!"

"What are we supposed to do against that!?" shouts the shenwulf knight, who is stronger in magic compared to Helbeit.

The human knight studies the battlefield for a moment. The landscape is drastically altered thanks to the titan clashing with Daniel's companions, who each seem to possess cataclysmic levels of power on their own.

Even now, the grey dragon Neith manages to disintegrate Yaulwembor's hand with his firebreath, but it's still not enough to harm it, as the monster simply heals itself with magic in seconds.

The shuttle distracts it briefly, and it's then that Helbeit notices Daniel's staff, which Veiranoei abandoned and has since started to panic as she searches the surface of the lake.

"Daniel's staff!" shouts Helbeit. "We need to retrieve it!"

"We don't know any of his spells!"
"Don't you remember!? Duchess Wenlianna said it isn't magic! It's a weapon!"

Helbeit breaks into a run, and Resken curses under his breath, falling into step right behind his companion. He shouts, "Have you ever used one of the demon staves, Helbeit!?"

"No! But, I'm willing to learn! And failing that,…" The human knight glances at the others. Gwenesphia and Treia, specifically, are using demon staves of their own, though their rate of attack is much higher than the one Daniel just used, trading off firepower for speed. Even before Daniel wounded Yaulwembor, their staves were doing little damage to the monster.

Helbeit slides in the mud to come to a stop, his relatively light armor for the expedition with Magnir still threatening to pull him over with its weight. He crouches at the strange oar-shaped weapon, glancing in the sky as Yaulwembor teleports again, engaging the shuttle it already pursued through magic translocation once.

The battle is chaotic, and Resken warns, "H-Helbeit! Look!"

The human knight looks at his partner, and then up at the sky where he's pointing.

Sure enough, there is a series of magic circles that Stalvaltan Guardsmen are taught to recognize, since there are only a handful of mages in the east that can use such a spell, but when used, it could mean instant death if the soldiers aren't aware of their surroundings.

It's easy to feel the direction of the mana pressure radiating off of the three mages casting the devastating spell, holding it in air because of Yaulwembor's teleportation, only for the shuttle to guide it back in.

"Move!" Resken tries to pull Helbeit to his feet just as he's gripping Daniel's staff, and both are surprised by the weight. No wonder Veiranoei was toppled by it. It must weigh forty if not an easy fifty pounds.

The shenwulf briefly loses his footing, and Helbeit catches him.

Lucky he did. Resken's boot scuffing through the mud and pooled water reveals a shining steel object with a multi-colored yellow and purple tip.

A similar object nearby is almost identical except for it has no tip.

The second one, Helbeit recognizes with ease. He was part of the airship team after Muindis returned from the Citadel with only Daniel's jacket, but Helbeit was there when a messenger brought in a strange metal tube found at Peony when the otherworlder disappeared.

It is the string needed to propel a dragon-slaying arrow forward.

And of course, if there are two strings, then the one with the arrow is what the knight needs now.

As he reaches for it, though, he feels profoundly weak, as if his soul is departing from his body.

What… What is this weakness? Did another gloom spell pass over us?

The human knight glances at his companion, who is casting specialty water and ground magic to grant them stable footing. They'll need to flee to avoid the coming spell from the two demons and the elf.

No… It must be this arrow. Daniel chose it for this… thing. Whatever this gloom arrow is, I'll have to endure.

Helbeit plants his feet so he has leverage, and he grips the gloom arrow and demon staff. Again, he feels weak, just like that mysterious day when everyone in the kingdom seemed to lose their mana at the same time.

But, he is a knight of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy. He has no opinion on the matter involving the Grand Duchy allying itself or even submitting itself to the rule of the Fievegal. He swore an oath to the Stalvaltan household specifically, as both a Guardsman and a knight.

“RrrRRRAHHH!” roars the human knight as he summons all of his physical strength to obey him. It never occurred to him how much he relies on mana in even everyday activities, especially those requiring strength. The small shred of idle curiosity remaining in his mind hopes to make a mental note to request whatever this gloom arrow is made of from Daniel in order to create a new training regimen.

In the present, though, there is a monster that needs slaying and a spell that will attempt to do just that about to be deployed by three of the most powerful mages in the known world.

Yaulwembor is just entering the target zone, relentlessly pursuing the shuttle, which narrowly weaves through the air to avoid slashes, magic attacks, and teleportation like a songbird pursuing a fly.

Helbeit calls out, “Go! Run!”

“Your footing!”

“No time! The girl! Go!”

Resken, following alongside as the human knight runs, spots Veiranoei, who is calling out for help. She’s dangerously close to the water, in spite of the fact that Daniel was just snatched.

The shenwulf knight knows what to do, though. He has the sure-footing spell active on himself and is unencumbered by his light armor. He sprints ahead of Helbeit towards the gatonine woman, while Helbeit makes as much distance from the epicenter of the impending calamity as he can gain.

Resken indelicately tackles Veiranoei, scooping her onto his shoulder as he changes his angle to join Helbeit, sprinting at full tilt with the startled gatonine on his shoulder. “Wait! Daniel…!”

“No time! Brace yourself!”

A terrible hum fills the air as the mana in the atmosphere coalesces at the center of the top magic circle, combined with the raw energy being provided by the three mages. They are in perfect sync with each other, as if they choreographed the spell a thousand times, in spite of their formerly different factions.

The sky flashes as the collected mana is accelerated by each magic circle and amplified as it travels downwards.

Directly towards Yaulwembor.

The ancient dragon looks up, but it’s too late.

The mana drops in a beam of light, and the titan vanishes in a chaotic whirl of fire and light.

Arguments can be made about what the most powerful magic is, and Rikuto’s void artillery is definitely on that list. However, the single most powerful and destructive spell ever cast by mages, spellbinders, wizards, and sorcerers under their own power has to be this; the hybrid air and fire elemental spell simply called explosion.

Helbeit is only a few yards behind Resken and Veiranoei, since the extra weight of the demon staff and the lack of mana are almost more burdensome than carrying a whole person in armor.

The explosion spell, which is at least a thousand feet across, doesn’t care. The shockwave throws all three of them to the ground as mud, rocks and flaming foliage are blasted past them.

The human knight scrambles to reclaim the staff and its arrow, bracing against the recoil wind created by the spell as some sort of reclamation. He bolts to his feet to keep running.

Helbeit only takes the time to glance back when he reaches Resken and Veiranoei. The shenwulf is pulling the gatonine knight up, and behind them, seen is easy to define; devastation.

Trees burn, smoke rises high into the sky, and a seemingly-invulnerable monster has been knocked from the air, slamming into the ground as the flaming wreckage of the shuttle falls from the sky. It’s a terrifying sight, and

Senn drops to a kneel, supporting herself with her staff while Doephluev and Vaergraes pant.

Yaulwembor snarls, writhing against the exposed dirt and mud in the crater left by both the explosion spell and the draconid's impact with the ground immediately afterwards.

The ancient fiend roars as it springs upwards, smoke swirling from its scales while mud sprays away from it.

Vaergraes casts one more spell, and a monster of her own appears, though it's still tiny compared to Yaulwembor.

It looks somewhat like a cross between a human and an insect, but much, MUCH more frightening.

More accurately, it looks like what the demon encyclopedia, which Stalvaltan Guardsmen have to study, depicts as a Death Knight, though it's even more elaborate than what the sketches showed.

Regardless, the monster scoops up the three women and whisks them away narrowly as Yaulwembor's foot comes down, cratering the soil and rock even further and quaking everyone into a stumble.

Kera'tai, who was further behind the three, also gets picked up by the Death Knight, but they're in the ancient terror's sights.

Three of the most powerful mages in the history of Zenkon have exhausted most, if not all, of their mana, and they've barely put a scratch in the beast.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 126: The Archfiend Yaulwembor Part 2

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 126: The Archfiend Yaulwembor Part 2

Yaulwembor, the legendary monster of Mattarglos said to be a dragon, has proven that it can go toe-to-toe much more than just a single dragon. Even though its race is likely not a dragon, since it doesn't seem to be sentient, it has readily demonstrated an ability to use advanced magic most professional mages would be envious of.

And, three of the mightiest mages known throughout the continent were only able to knock it out of the sky.

Sir Helbeit of Dryrun, one of the knights of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy, is holding the key to victory.

A human sorcerer from another world created a tool for slaying dragons; a tool that can be granted to even the weakest of goblins and make them as powerful as most mages, and with the right version of the tool, among the strongest warriors in the world.

The staff in the knight's arms is the latter. It is heavy and menacing, seemingly made of solid iron with a couple of moving parts.

Helbeit has never used a demon staff before, and he's only seen them in action during battles, what few he has witnessed. He's not sure how it works, but it seems to have a stock and trigger as a crossbow would, though the configuration is very different.

The knight mimics Daniel when he used the demon staff not long ago. He kneels with one knee up, resting the heavy weapon on his knee and leaning back, giving him a higher angle to aim. He braces the stock against the ground, pointing the other end towards the draconic fiend.

He takes a breath, bracing himself for whatever terrible thing will come out of the mouth of the otherworldly weapon.

The simple knight of the Grand Duchy pulls the trigger.

Nothing.

He notices that the rectangular opening on the side has nothing in it, other than some mud and debris. But, the size of the hole and the length of the rectangle all seem suspect.

The knight looks at the ‘gloom arrow’ as he refers to it, knowing only enough from tidbits that he has gathered. This thing is the ammunition to the demon staff in the way an arrow is to a bow or a bolt to a crossbow.

Helbeit slides the gloom arrow in with the point down the hole. The projectile slides in fairly freely, but slides back out when he releases it.

Let’s try it, thinks the knight to himself, having very little to lose.

He aims again and pulls the trigger.

Damn it! Should I find one of Daniel’s companions? What if he hasn’t taught them this staff? It seems different than the ones they’re using.

He glances over his shoulder at Resken and Veiranoei, who are standing, but also waiting on Helbeit.

If she knew, she would have used it when Daniel tossed it to her.

The ground quakes again, flinching all three of them.

Grah! I have to figure this out, now! There's no time!

Neith, the grey dragon, falls from the sky in his true reptilian form, slamming down on Yaulwembor and pulling it to the ground. The impact throws up a new splash of mud mixed with dust, and the enemy beast snarls and roars in frustration.

That's when he spots her.

Neith, in his attack, managed to toss Hekate into a run on her feet, and she stumbles to a stop to rejoin the fray. The little fox beastkin is a powerful mage in her own right, possessing the greatest mana of anyone Helbeit has ever laid eyes on, but she lacks experience and training. She can use several advanced spells, like she dedicated all of her energy to learning those in a hurry, but lacks effectiveness and variety with the standard array of offensive and defensive spells.

However, so far as Helbeit has heard, she is the one who helped Daniel conquer the Citadel, which would have been when he was using his dragonslaying staff to slay dragons.

And, that very same mythically powerful weapon is now resting on Helbeit's knee.

If anyone knows how to use it, it has to be Hekate.

"Hekate!" shouts Helbeit, trying to get her attention over the calamitous noise.

"Lady Hekate! Your Grace! Hey!"

He waves his hand and shouts, adding, “Help me get her attention!”

“Empress Hekate!” shouts Resken. He takes a deep breath and howls, eerily carrying over a great distance. This startles Hekate a little, and she finally whirls to look.

All three knights wave her down, and she glances once at the raging battle between dragons as Yaulwembor tries to use magic on Neith again, but he continuously disrupts her with quick fireblasts from his fire breath, as well as short and powerful spells of his own intended only to interfere, since he’s the only one with the needed mana and experience to be able to handle Yaulwembor while the others find a way to regroup and recover.

The young teen empress of an upstart yet powerful nation jogs towards the three knights. She asks, “What is it!? We’re in the middle of…”

“Pardon, your Grace, but I need your help,” replies Helbeit without even waiting for her to finish. She can scold him later for his impudence. “How do you use this staff?”

She looks at the staff for a moment. Her helmet hides her expression like all of the others wearing full face armor helmets, and it even restricts her expressive ears by protecting them. But, it’s clear she’s pondering something very important; where the owner of the staff is. She glances around, suddenly more worried than she already was. “Daniel?”

“Your Grace, please! I’ll help you find the Emperor as soon as Yaulwembor is defeated.”

“That’s…!?” starts Hekate, surprised to be hearing this.

Did she really not know? After all this? No matter!

“Please…!”

“I got it!” snaps the young girl. She jogs closer to the human knight as the other two loom over the pair, watching as well.

Hekate looks inside of the opening, remarking, “Good. You have a bullet. Now, you have to slide this thing all the way forward and lock it down.”

She points at a small metal arm with a rounded end.

“But, how will it fling the arrow forward?” asks Helbeith, not understanding the otherworldly weapon. For a bow, you pull the string back, release, and the forward return of the string launches the arrow. He thought that was what that mechanism was for on the demon staff.

“No!” shouts Hekate. “Just… Just do it! I don’t know how it all works!”

Good enough. Can’t argue with that. He nods, doing as she says. He can see the ‘bullet’ go into the hole and disappear as the arm closes the opening and locks it shut.

Hekate says quickly, “Good! It’s ready to fire! Aim carefully! Daniel is the only one with big bullets for this rifle.”

Meaning this is the only one we have, I take it. Noted.

She moves behind him, leaning on the knight’s shoulder. “Make it count, Sir Knight.”

He nods again, confirming her faith in him. He realizes she could have easily demanded that he hand the weapon over, or made someone else come to take over, someone who knows how to use the weapon.

The feldrok empress adds, “It’s not a bow. Don’t aim so high. That’s a polonium bullet. Even if it doesn’t penetrate, we’re better off than now.”

He’s a little iffy on her instructions still, but he has to trust her. She knows the weapon and its maker far better than a random knight from the Grand Duchy chosen for a completely different mission.

Helbeit watches for an opening. The two draconids, an actual dragon and the legendary fiend, are once more ducking, slashing, quick-casting, and slamming each other with forces Helbeit could never hope to withstand.

And, Neith, the well-aged greater dragon, is losing.

His scales and skin are being torn away more than those of Yaulwembor. The archfiend is also three times larger than the grey dragon, by the looks of it. And, her skin seems to be as tough as mithril, if not tougher.

Just as he’s about to pull the trigger, his instincts seem to tremble. He wavers and holds fire, and thankfully so. At the moment that he would have pulled the trigger, Yaulwembor vanishes, reappearing behind Neith and gripping the back of his head and neck with vicious claws. It then bites down on his neck in between, causing him to roar in pain.

She’s about to finish him.

And, even as it has the grey dragon at its mercy, Yaulwembor tilts its piercing eyes to look at the three knights and one powerful fox-eared empress.

Magic circles appear in front of its face, aimed at them. Seeing the spell forming causes a chill to run down the human knight’s spine. His life starts to flash before his eyes, even as he hears his partner shout out what they both

know all too well; “Explosion!? It’s casting explosion! How!? Th-That’s imp-…!” Follow the newest chapters on novelping . com.

Helbeit corrects his aim and pulls the trigger, cutting off the despairing thought before it can be finished.

This time, he is kicked in the shoulder by a buckrokh, from what it feels like, flopping onto his back and into Hekate’s lap as she topples as well with a yelp. Fire and smoke are cast forth by the otherworldly staff, spitting the flames of a mysterious dragonslaying sorcerer.

The titan shrieks in surprise, releasing its jaws from Neith’s neck as something explodes against the monster’s ribcage. He doesn’t see any blood spray, but the scales waver like they were struck by a powerful punch against flesh. Simultaneously, the magic circles of the deadly and devastating spell evaporate.

Yaulwembor stumbles, dropping Neith who haphazardly lurches himself in a roll away from his opponent, slamming the sloppy ground and weakly scrambling away.

The archfiend, however, seems to have lost much of its lightness on its feet, stomping with slow and heavy footfalls as it struggles to maintain its balance.

It turns its head, glaring hatefully at the four from whom the attack came.

The draconic beast lifts its claw, and Hekate braces herself to defend the four of them. “Here it comes!” Resken somewhat instinctively puts his hand on her shoulder to support her. She has more mana than either of the Stalvaltan knights by leaps and bounds, but that doesn’t mean he can’t provide her supporting magic regardless.

Mainly, he can either feed her his mana through contact, try to bolster her spell directly, or keep her from falling unconscious if she overdraws her mana too quickly.

The draconic monster looks at its own claw, seemingly confused and frustrated.

It growls, glaring at the four, and Hekate keeps her guard up.

Nevertheless, nothing happens.

The feldrok empress sighs as she relaxes a little, declaring, “It worked…”

No sooner does she say this than a breath of ice streak towards them, and she narrowly defends with a magic barrier. The knights instinctively launched their own interception spells; a wind pulse from Helbeit and a fireball from Resken.

Fortunately, Hekate is able to block the instant-freeze attack, though everything around the four is now coated in ice. A white mist begins to roll across the frozen ground.

“You want ice!?” snaps the young teen. She withdraws a weapon from her bag similar to the demon staff, but much more elaborate. She fires it, and it spits forth a concentrated pocket of ice mana, which streaks towards Yaulwembor and explodes into a large formation of crystalized water.

The draconid howls in anger, shattering the ice seemingly with minimal effort as it stumbles backwards.

Hekate starts cranking a hand winder on the weapon, still laughing. Though, her youthful guffaws seem a little more nervous than her typical haughty behavior would suggest.

While she's spinning the small handle, she suddenly twitches, speaking audibly to seemingly no one. "I'm busy!"

She tightens her posture a little, clearly not liking what she's hearing. "Wh-What do you mean? V-Vae and the others…"

The young girl looks around. The three knights with her are among the weakest people present, which is a bit shameful for Helbeit to think about, but it seems she's being asked to evacuate everyone, since she's the only one with enough mana left to do so.

The fox-eared girl finally stands up. "Fine! Leave it to me!"

"We'll help!" urges Helbeit immediately as he struggles to his feet. Daniel's demon staff is only good for the one shot for now, but if they can retrieve…

Daniel! He's still in the lake!

The human knight doesn't know if now is the best time to mention it, though. Hekate has a mission, and he needs to make sure to support her for any part of it that he can.

"We have to get past that," replies Hekate as she points at Yaulwembor, who is still absurdly powerful even without mana.

The shenwulf knight steps up, putting his hand on Hekate's shoulder again. "We are warriors of the Stalvaltan Guard, as well as knights chosen by her Grace." He looks at the terrifying fiend that is glaring at them angrily, while also glancing at Neith, who is still on his back, but is ready to give his life to kill Yaulwembor if it makes a wrong step and lets down its guard against the grey dragon.

Resken adds proudly as he steels his resolve. "We can withstand a dragon's breath, now that its magic is gone."

“I-I don’t know how much help I can be,” starts Veiranoei nervously. “B-But, I need to do something.”

Hekate thinks for a moment. She hands the gatonine the ice weapon. “Take this, then. I’ll focus on finding everyone and any mantas that come after us. You two have to protect us from the fire and ice breath. I’ll probably survive, but Daniel will never forgive me if I’m the only one.”

“You can count on us, your Grace,” replies Helbeit confidently.

“Good, then let’s go.”

The four set out on their new mission to find and evacuate everyone, following the petite little empress of the Fievegal, mindful of the fact that Yaulwembor is now on guard with them.

The massive archfiend rears its head back, readying a fire breath as ignityal crackles and sparks in its mouth.

“Get ready!” shouts Hekate. “Stay close to each other!”

“Back me up, Helbeit!”

“On it!”

The Stalvaltan knights step ahead of the two women, already preparing their defensive spell.

This battle has and will continue to test the mettle of warriors from all walks of life.

***

Back with Daniel, while the battle with Yaulwembor rages, the human mechanic fires the wind blaster into the floor of the lake, creating a massive pocket of air that stumbles him, but grants him enough air to quickly gasp in a breath. If he failed and it didn't work at all, he was going to drown more quickly. Thankfully, he buys himself another moment.

Now, he has a new task that he must desperately complete in the span of a single breath lasting against his aching lungs. The massive bubble was obviously displaced around Daniel, stumbling him with the water pressure as the air void rapidly breaks into tens of thousands of much smaller bubbles and Daniel is flooded once more.

Quickly, he regains his senses, still clinging to the wind blaster, and he uses the mechanisms he built to disassemble the crystal arrays. The elemental blasters are rather fragile as guns go, but that is a blessing in disguise now. He kept them in a sort of 'prototype' form so he can learn the ins and outs of operating the weapons, but now, he just needs the crystals.

Daniel pulls apart the crystal assembly, extracting a single small diamond with a faint green hue glowing more noticeably this deep under the surface. The mechanic dabbled in scuba diving on Earth, but is certainly no master. Still, he estimates that he's between thirty and forty feet under the water.

The other comes from one of many; an enhanced magic crystal charged with pure mana.

Daniel holds the two diamonds firmly, bringing them together under his helmet, minimizing the surface area of contact.

A surge of bubbles flutters out, splashing water around in the underside of his helmet, but filling the volume with air.

Daniel has no idea what the oxygen to nitrogen ratio is coming out of a wind crystal. Magic itself still defies much of what he knows, as far as physics go. For all he knows, it defies Einstein as much as it might prove him right.

For now, Daniel has to survive his current predicament and try to rejoin the battle to make sure his companions are still alive.

Of course, Rohgattabor is set on not making that easy.

A stream of bubbles rumbles into the bottom of Daniel's helmet, granting him breathable air while he thinks, trying to keep the back of his helmet a little higher so the bubbles leave behind his field of view.

For certain maneuvers, he's going to have to take a breath and keep his grip tight on the crystals. They are his lifeline for now.

Hugging his faceplace over the mechanic's right eye is Luceniel in her light elemental form, Vaarskahana. She is cute and helps where she can, but she's relatively useless in the water as she is. She can create a bright flash like a flashbang, which will be helpful, but likely slow to recharge with the depth. She can also behave like a solar panel, converting sunlight into a small electrical charge, which isn't much.

While he's thinking, he notices a shadow circle, and he grumbles, "Of course. There you are."

Daniel quickly runs through his options. He has very little equipment that will prove to be useful under the water. Most of his grenades will put him more at risk, since he won't be able to throw them very far, and if he draws Nemaisol, he'll lose his air supply.

"{Just use the elemental, Daniel. Cheer her up. Lucy Hana's a good girl.}"

Daniel ponders Kaeralegier's words.

Ahh, alright. That'll work for now.

Daniel calls out, "Hana, can you hear me?"

She immediately perks up with sad eyes, nodding.

It's a good thing she doesn't need to breathe… Does she?

"{She doesn't. Elementals are manifestations of energy. Pure souls.}"

Thanks, Kaeralegier.

"Alright, Hana. I'm counting on you. See that big shadow? When it comes this way, I need you to use the armor flash, alright?"

She nods vigorously, giving her 'leave it to me!' gestures. She watches diligently around them, and Daniel begins removing his armor. It *could* save his life from impacts, but it's keeping him at the bottom of the lake. He stores the armor pieces one at a time, flinching when his whole body flashes brightly. It doesn't hurt him, but he manages to dive in a slow jump to the side, narrowly avoiding the blinded monster as it slams into the silty lakefloor.

I should have kept the blaster intact. The silt will ruin visibility for them as much as me. Next time. I've got a lot of equipment to replace now.

The mechanic climbs back to his feet, trudging through the water slowly as he makes his way towards shallower water. He'll have a more solid sense of direction once he can reach the surface, but for now, he needs to remove armor.

Once he’s down to his helmet and boots, Daniel can tell that he’s lighter already. But, once he’s in open water, he’s a sitting duck and doesn’t have the protection of his armor any more. He searches his magic bag, finding one of two remaining elemental blasters he has on his person; the fire blaster. Water is still in the early prototype stages, and ground makes a better sand blaster than a weapon.

Regardless, the fire blaster will do the job for now, if only once.

The otherworlder emperor spots the shadow stalking him once more, and he starts trying to ‘run’ as hard as he can. Varskahana gives him a look of nervous fear.

“I know, Hana. You bought me enough time to formulate a plan.” Daniel keeps working, taking a deep breath so he can use both hands. He retrieves one of two yarn-knitted objects from his forearm bracer, stroking it affectionately as he looks at it sorrowfully. He has to act without delay, or he’ll lose everything, including the one who made this sentimental little charm. He quickly pulls apart the small, knitted trinket that looks like a baby goblin. He feels disgusted that it’s the best source of a few feet of string on him, but it’s going to save his life. He’ll plead with Shek and Skloe to forgive him when he gets back, and he’ll help them make new ones.

With the string freed and the shadow looming closer, Daniel ties it to the trigger of the blaster, readying for his risky move.

As Rohgattabor races towards him, Daniel tosses the blaster behind him. He turns to run backwards, feeding out the string.

Just as the monster is passing the blaster, Daniel yanks the string, and the blaster flashes and lurches.

Pure, concentrated fire in a magic sphere was never going to travel through the water. Daniel knew this, so he didn't want to be holding it at the time.

KwaKABOOM!

As he hoped, the blast is much like a torpedo exploding underneath a ship, creating a massive bubble of steam from the destructive blast and heat.

Rohgattabor recoils away, rolling through the water as it desperately flaps its pectoral fins and vanishes in a swirl of silt and muck. The concussive blast batters Daniel's ears and flinches him, but he is able to stay on his feet.

He returns the wind crystal to his chin, breathing quickly to catch his breath and calm down.

There is a significant red hue staining the sunlight piercing through the surface of the lake to reach him, and Daniel feels a small sense of safety.

Rohgattabor may not be dead, but there is enough blood and debris in the water to suggest it will retreat for now to lick its wounds.

Hopefully.

For now, all he can do is try to return to the battle.

He resumes his march towards shallow water, keeping his breathing supply in one hand while he removes the last few pieces of his armor and stores the yarn that saved his life.

Just as he's ready to move to the next stage, Varskahana does an excited little dance.

She waves farewell, disappearing in a small magic swirl that then changes forms into a new figure.

Before he can make sense of it fully, Daniel finds himself taking a bad step, like walking up stairs without paying attention and trying to take a lifting stride on a level that isn't there. He falls forward as if the water is no longer there, face planting in sticky mud.

Luceniel silently laughs at him, covering her mouth with rather beautiful sleeves that remind him of a transparent butterfly. And as he looks at her, confused about what just happened. Her appearance overall is very different from the rain elemental that was summoned when Rohgattabor first attacked.

Where the little fairy-like being summoned by falling showers looked like a translucent water nymph of small and cute proportions, this version of Luceniel looks like a humanized cuttlefish or jellyfish, though the neon lights of bioluminescent trails flicker and stream along its cape-like 'wings'. She also has glowing 'freckles' on her face underneath what appears to be somewhat of a mask on her face, like a raccoon. But, as tiny as she is, they could be glasses for all Daniel can tell in the water.

Regardless, her appearance reminds Daniel of a monster in a video game, though only slightly. He states, "I'll keep your second name simple. How does Nami sound?"

The little pixie's cheeks brighten and actually glow as she cups them with her hands. She nods happily.

"Glad you're always easy to please, Lucy Nami." He keeps his crystals close to his chin, carefully climbing to his feet.

What the emperor of the Fievegal discovers is that, quite obviously thanks to the mysterious magic of his charming little elemental, there is almost no resistance to him in the water. He can move almost as freely as he does on land, walking at a normal speed. He can see the water rush around him as he moves, rapidly accelerating and even cavitating on the corners and pockets of his clothing and boots. When he kicks off of the floor of the lake, he has a strange level of control that doesn't match floating or swimming, but somewhere awkwardly in between.

His flailing motions cause bubbles to form, since the rate of his motion is high enough to form little vapor pockets behind his hands and feet specifically.

Again, Nami giggles as she swims effortlessly around Daniel, but things are still serious. He needs to get to the surface.

"I appreciate your power, Nami, and I swear I'll learn more about it, but for now, I need to get to the surface."

He takes a deep breath from his air stream, sighing. "Here goes nothing."

He carefully holds the crystals together with one hand, taking a breath one last time before he grips the collar of his jacket firmly. He's still negatively buoyant, but he can almost move at will through the lake's volume.

But, since he's still not sure how that works and he needs to figure out which way to go, he places the magic crystals at the waist of his jacket, giving himself just enough inflation to achieve lift. It only takes a few seconds, thankfully, for him to reach the surface, and he breaches, gasping for air.

The human mechanic then uses the same trick to inflate his jacket more to ensure he keeps himself at the surface. It's still a lake filled with monsters, and the diving elemental pokes her head above the surface curiously. Daniel looks,

finding the battlefield rather easily. There is smoke, destroyed landscape, and the sounds of battle, assuming the titanic reptilian wasn't enough of a clue.

"Thank you for your help, Nami. You've helped me once again."

She smiles and nods, though she'll be with him until the conditions change her into one of the other elemental forms.

"{I must say, you're pretty crafty, Daniel. Got a trick up your sleeve to get back to shore?}"

"Think you can turn into an actual oar, Kaeralegier?"

Nami giggles, but Daniel already has his plan, even as the perturbed goddess retorts, *"{Very funny. I'll stop granting you my blessing, Mister. You want to see how fast I can put you back on the bottom of this lake?}"*

"My apologies. But, I think I've got it. Let's…"

Still holding his jacket collar, Daniel angles his back so that a big bubble forms at his chest and stomach while keeping his head above water. It'll be a bit of a balancing act, but if it works, it'll be faster than kicking all the way.

Thankfully, Daniel still has the magic crystals. Though it's not jet ski speeds, he is able to keep dumping air into the waist of his jacket, which just as quickly forces itself back out, propelling him. It undoubtedly looks as goofy as it feels, but he's successfully propelling himself back to shore with minimal fatigue on himself.

He doesn't go straight towards the shoreline where Yaulwembor is, since he's dead if the dragon spots him and attacks. He heads towards the right, where the gatonines fled to. He's not sure if they're still in the area, since the

intelligent thing to do would have been to retreat, but the ancient fiend didn't give them any time to make sense of its attack.

Once he's back in shallow enough water, Daniel makes sure he doesn't see any wakes following him, and he digs through his magic bag to find an insurance policy.

He grabs a bundle of dynamite and finds his lighter in a belt pouch. He quickly lights the fuse, tossing it into the water and jogging away with his ears covered. He unfortunately doesn't have the time to warn anyone else, but they should be far enough away. And, quite possibly, it might distract Yaulwembor.

BOOM!

The water erupts from the blast, which should deter Rohgattabor or any of the other mantaroucks from attempting anything for a bit. Sound travels much faster in water, after all, meaning the blasts should be especially painful for them.

Now… to deal with the nightmare dragon in the room, thinks the mechanic to himself as he sizes up his options.

At this point, not losing anyone is the victory he's hoping for.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 127: The Archfiend Yaulwembor Part 3

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 127: The Archfiend Yaulwembor Part 3

“We have to help them!” shouts Gwenesphia, gathered with her brothers, sister, father, and Treia.

“With what!?” snaps Treia. “I’m out of ammo! And you’ve got less than a full cartridge left.”

They all flinch as the earth tremors from an impact. They’re behind a stand of trees, though many of the trees are partially uprooted from an earlier quake or the explosion spell cast by the mages.

“I don’t know! But… But has anyone seen Daniel!? Or Veira!?”

“We can’t think about that right now,” retorts Goelselmo. “The best thing we can do is retreat and try to bring in reinforcements.

“Everyone will be dead by then!” cries out Gwenesphia, who is trying to see the battle, but knows that getting too close will endanger her with even stray attacks from the ones actually battling.

“I don’t like it either,” adds Treia. “But, our rifles were useless against that thing. And, if Neith’s claws can’t hurt it, their swords are just as useless.”

KABOOM!

The six gatonines all jump at the startlingly loud rifle report, followed by Yaulwembor shrieking as a spell in the sky disappears. Gwenesphia doesn’t

even think. She simply runs ahead. Kuboen and Peiburi call after her, “Gwen!”

Gwenesphia is nothing if not swift and agile. Her brothers could probably outsprint her, but she can outmaneuver them through the torn up battlefield that currently looks like an apocalyptic wasteland from the battle with a titan.

She clears the edge of the trees, seeing the monster trying to move its hand as if to cast magic across the humongous clearing from Gwenesphia, and there she spots Hekate, Veiranoei, and the two knights assigned with Magnir.

And, most importantly, the enemy dragon is unable to summon magic.

One of the knights is the one with the powerful anti-dragon rifle Daniel survived with, which starts to concern the gatonine soldier a bit.

Daniel must have given someone one of his anti-magic bullets, which the knight just used to negate Yaulwembor’s magic.

Though, that’s not to say that the beast is suddenly defenseless. It breathes icy wind in a powerful stream, which Hekate blocks. As the dragon goes on guard, Hekate starts moving towards Gwenesphia and the other gatonines.

It’s an open area leading to the lake that she and the knights will be running across. There’s no way they’ll make it.

I still have half a cartridge. If I can just distract it…

Gwenesphia runs counter clockwise, away from Hekate and the lake to flank Yaulwembor from its left side as it faces the open area to defend against the feldrok girl and her trailing entourage.

Gwenesphia takes a breath, summoning her courage as Kuboen yells, “Gwen! Stop!”

“Go back, Kuboen! I’m going to buy Hekate time!”

“I’m not leaving you, idiot!”

Lyrtef’s voice calls from a little further behind, “Gwen! We don’t have the weapons or armor to even withstand one of Yaulwembor’s attacks!”

“My friends haven’t given up! I won’t either!”

“If this is about that stupid human…”

She pivots on one of her running steps, and she whirls in a powerful kick. It stumbles her elder brother, but he manages to catch her leg. Thinking quickly, she aims the rifle at him, and he knows enough about it to instinctively flinch back, releasing her as he steps back. “You don’t know anything about him! You don’t have any idea what he has done for all of us.” She spins and keeps running before Lyrtef can flank her and catch her.

Kuboen groans and keeps chasing after her. While none of them can do much of anything to Yaulwembor, he can try to save his idiot youngest sister.

For her part, Gwenesphia leaps over a felled tree and tumbles under the branches of another, resuming her flight as Lyrtef takes the same route while Kuboen bounds from tree to tree, staying high.

All three of them notice that the ancient archfiend hasn’t even spared them a glance, focused on breathing fire at Hekate. The knights are the ones guarding as Hekate keeps moving towards where Goelselmo, Treia, and Peiburi are, who stayed behind to protect Gwenesphia’s father. He was wounded in one of the quakes.

The gatonine Empress flanking the dragon threat notices this, and she slides to a stop.

Her rifle may not be able to pierce the dragon's scales, but it has a great deal of accuracy. For large targets, Daniel recommended aiming for soft points, such as the inside of the mouth, the nose, and eyes. While these targets are much smaller on most enemies, they can be the difference between life and death; between a harmless ricochet and slaying a dragon.

Gwenesphia will settle for blinding one long enough for Hekate to do whatever it is she's planning, which seems to be starting with evacuations, since she's capable of teleportation magic.

Like the other three mages, who seem to be out of the fight for now, Hekate does have a finite amount of mana, so she must be conserving as much as she can for the evacuations.

The gatonine former lieutenant takes aim with her rifle, pointing it up at the sky, it feels like. The towering form of Yaulwembor has Neith pinned down, beaten and wounded, while it engages the feldrok Empress of the Fievegal from range with elemental breaths of various kinds that seem to not require mana. This is especially surprising, since the feline woman was fairly certain dragons can only naturally breathe fire, with a handful of exceptions, but only one element in those cases as well.

This apparent dragon has used fire, ice, and now a water jet that the human knight blocks with a magic barrier, and the shenwulf counters with lightning, which only flinches Yaulwembor briefly with an angered roar.

As it shifts posture for throwing something, Gwenesphia finds her opening. She fires a burst of three bullets, as Daniel taught her, and then another and another.

The rifle isn't as loud as Daniel's dragon slayer, but it is still startling for her.

She can see sparks and tiny puffs of smoke on the scales of Yaulwembor's head, and it twitches.

Gwenesphia has five bullets remaining, which means she can't afford to miss. However, Yaulwembor tilts its head and left eye to finally glance her way. This makes the eye even more of a target, since less of the dragon's jawline is blocking Gwenesphia's aim.

She exhales, trying to put it out of her mind -another piece of advice she got from a known dragonslayer-. She just needs to hit her target and survive afterwards.

Bababang! Babang!

Gwenesphia empties her rifle at the dragon's eye with as much prayer as practice behind her shots. Several of the bullets spark and ricochet into oblivion, but one of the two from the second burst finds its mark, evidenced by Yaulwembor howling in pain as it recoils its head. It bellows in agony for a moment, nursing its eye with its left claw.

Flames spew from its mouth, but Veiranoei chants a spell, summoning a spear of rock, which she launches at the monster.

This surprises Gwenesphia a little, since the gatonine knight didn't mention that she can use magic. But, then she sees why. The newest of Daniel's concubines -though only in name in her case- is already panting. She doesn't have the mana of the Stalvaltan knights, but was able to distract it.

Unfortunately, it is a monster under attack, and it glares at Gwenesphia with its right eye, keeping its left eye closed. There's no noticeable blood, but the hole pierced in its eye by the bullet would be tiny in comparison to itself.

The titan pivots right quickly, and it becomes obvious what it's doing. It's too late to escape.

Yaulwembor is sweeping its tail viciously through the trees and disturbed ground.

Kuboen somewhat instinctively puts himself in front of his youngest sister, but it'll do nothing. Gatonines are little more than baby mice in comparison to the Archfiend of Matterglos.

Gwenesphia whimpers, "I'm sorry…"

The tail closes in, smashing through trees and moving faster than anyone could hope to run.

Or at least, it won't be a human-kin.

A massive blue claw swoops in front of the three siblings, ramming into them as a massive force slams into a huge right arm and shoulder trying to stop the tail. The ground rumbles as Gwenesphia, Kuboen, and Lyrtef are all scooped up roughly by the claw, carried backwards as the massive figure absorbs the shock of the tail and slows it to a stop.

It's none other than Magnir, who has seen better days. The lightning magic has noticeably charred his scales and flesh like a root pattern, but he was able to swoop in and block Yaulwembor's devastating sweep attack.

He's less than a third of Yaulwembor's size, though, and the ancient dragon quickly whips its tail around the other way, lunging close to grip the blue Einherjar's head from the side. He drops the three gatonines as he's dragged across the ground mercilessly, tearing up more of the forest as he is slammed

through trees and into the dirt. He roars, but is only able to brace himself and soften the damage on his wounded flesh.

Even without magic, Yaulwembor is a terrifying presence.

Flames erupt from Yaulwembor’s new left, having turned counterclockwise after stepping past Neith.

The grey dragon has wearily risen back to his feet, bleeding from his neck, and his armor is heavily damaged. He probably doesn’t have much fight left in him, but he is willing to give his life for the mission.

Keeping Magnir’s momentum, Yaulwembor throws him into Neith, and the grey dragon crashes through more of the forest away from the lake with the blue dragon on top of him.

The archfiend then inhales, turning its attention to the gatonines.

Before it can spark one of its elemental breaths, the god of thunder intervenes once more, startling Gwenesphia and her brothers. At that moment, a small body flops onto Gwenesphia; a body with big triangular ears under a specially-designed helmet and with a large poofy black tail.

Hekate Is trying to protect them, but the rifle shot has sprayed blood from Yaulwembor as the ancient beast shrieks in pain, stumbling backwards and flopping onto its back. It tears through the forest as it scrambles back up to a standing position, now facing the one being that it doesn't understand how it can be harmed by him.

Emitting smoke like he just spit fire himself is the human from a world beyond the imagining of even some of the wisest people of Zenkon.

It is none other than Daniel, the Harbinger of Calamity, kneeling as the smoke rolls off of him and a crumbled log falls to his side.

Daniel draws Nemaisol, and the magic blade transforms before everyone's eyes into a clone of his dragonslayer rifle.

It's then that Gwenesphia sees it. As far as she's concerned, he's her hero and wondrous beyond imagining at the same time, but he's also a human.

And, he's using the transformed mythical weapon to support himself.

Regardless, he cycles the bolt and feeds another one of the devastating shells inside.

It's a terrifying standoff between Yaulwembor the Archfiend of Mattarglos and Daniel the Harbinger of Calamity.

***

Shortly before that, Daniel stumbles out of the water, collapsing on the ground as his weight is returned to his aching body. He has to catch his breath on the move, though, as the battle is still raging. Yaulwembor is still fighting ferociously, but it seems to be using breath attacks instead of terrifying magic, which is good. Either it ran out of mana on its own, or Veiranoei figured out that she needed to grab his rifle and the polonium bullet to fire.

Whatever the case, Daniel has plenty of 20mm ammo, but he only had the one rifle of that caliber. He's not sure where everyone is, and the battlefield is torn apart, with terrifying noise all around. Smoke and fog obscure lines of sight, other than the ancient monster battling fellow titans.

The human mechanic, as he gets closer trying to find anyone else, watches Yaulwembor throw Magnir into Neith, toppling them both.

He's out of time.

Daniel pulls out another piercing 20mm shell from those fastened to his belt, since the regular shells and piercers aren't hazardous to anyone around him, unless it discharges accidentally.

And, of course, he's about to intentionally discharge it.

He looks around frantically for options. His brain is in overdrive trying to solve problems, worrying about his friends and family, afraid of the monstrous being that he's only facing because he has successfully maintained his usual fantastical denial. He had heard somewhere that there were increasing numbers of young men who grew up playing modern war-based video games, and as a result, desensitized themselves to the atmosphere of war to a degree, making them more brazen -and reckless- in carrying out military operations. Daniel doubts his own video games have made him a hero, but he doesn't feel the same wonder and mysticism he would have thought seeing literal fire-breathing dragons, monstrous bears that can cast lightning, and teleportation. It's common in the anime, video games, and TV shows he enjoyed.

And, this is just one more high level boss monster that he did his best to prepare himself for. That's all.

"That's… Ooo, boy… The hell am I doing?" murmurs Daniel nervously. He shakes his head, thinking in turn, *Forget it. Everyone's in trouble. Kill this thing and go home. What can I… That's it!*

Daniel quickly snatches the nearest ruined branch of one of the many destroyed trees, placing it against his chest. He doesn't have his armor anymore, and he needs to absorb and diffuse the shock. Even still,…

Daniel hesitates when he places the firing rim of the 20mm armor piercing shell against the wooden branch. Sweat is starting to take the place of the cooling water drenching him. At least, it feels that way.

The mechanic quickly bites the fingers of his right glove and pulls it off. He's out of order. He's flustered. He's going to…

Huuuuoooooaaaaaaa!

The rising sound is that of a *very* obvious inhale; the inhale of a titan as it prepares an attack. This attack, emphasized by the sudden crackles and pops of a pilot flame, is a fire breath.

Daniel hesitates one last second, rubbing the fingers of his right hand on his thumb and palm, terrified of what he's about to do. His brain and body know the consequences. He's afraid.

They're going to die…

Daniel uses every ounce of his pathetically miniscule mana to summon a tiny spark with his fingers across the casing of the bullet. His senses are nearly knocked completely out of him from both the impact and the volume of the sound.

KABOOM!

"SCREEEAAAAHHHHH!"

The shriek that pierces the air comes from none other than Yaulwembor as it throws itself backwards, blood spraying from a high-velocity impact that manages to penetrate even its seeming sharmelkolle scales.

Yaulwembor roars and bellows in pain, and Daniel, during the discharge of the shell, coughs as he is blown backwards, not flopping onto his back only thanks to his kneeling posture and his bracing for the impact. He feels like a horse just kicked him in the chest, even with the branch absorbing some of the shock. Said piece of formerly living wood has snapped in half, and the human doesn't even know where the shell casing went. His left hand burns, and it feels like his thumb was pushed near to breaking, similar to a mild automobile collision he had where the airbag deployed, flinging his hands free in spite of his grip on the steering wheel.

He leans forward, grunting as pain fills his chest, and he feels like he can't breathe. He does his best to forcibly gasp in what little air he can.

During the moment of strange clarity that comes with the brief daze following his risky shot, he has a realization.

Why didn't I just ask Kaeralegier to turn into a rifle?

"{Yes, why didn't you, you idiot?}" retorts the goddess's voice. "*{You think I'm too busy to be useful here?}"*

The mechanic braces himself for the pain as he reaches to his left side, gripping Nemaisol's hilt. "Thank you… in advance," murmurs Daniel, fighting the burning in his chest.

Nemaisol morphs in his hand, taking the shape of his 20mm rifle, though bearing a more chrome-like color. He uses it to support himself for a moment, keeping his gaze on Yaulwembor, who has only just risen to its feet again, and he can tell, even from this distance, that it looks specifically at him and then the rifle, recognizing the shape, no doubt, from the first shot.

"I'm going to use one of my piercing shells, if that's alright."

“{As you wish, Daniel. I’ll get you to pay me back in time. Heeheeehee!}”

He scoffs, wincing in pain as he tries to laugh and comes to pay for it. He wheezes, withdrawing another of the bullets and cycling the bolt of the rifle, placing the shell into the breach and returning the rifle to its firing state. Unlike his hand-made rifle, Nemaisol cycles easily and weighs a fraction of the crude weapon’s heft.

Still, Daniel can barely move without feeling pain. He is bluffing right now as he stares down the monster glaring at him. For some reason, he has the gut feeling that it doesn’t have mana, meaning someone definitely managed to use the polonium round on it. Its chest, now that he’s looking, seems to have lost virtually all of its luster, and the rest of its scales barely have any coloration to them.

A human knight steps up alongside Daniel, kneeling at his right with his true 20mm rifle held in the same manner. “Your Grace, may I?”

Daniel nods, and he can feel the soldier take one of the shells from his belt. He loads it into the rifle in the same manner, and this causes Yaulwembor to noticeably shrink in fear.

Good. It recognizes the danger.

“{Ya think? A little higher and to the left, and its heart would be pumping blood into the lake.}”

Daniel can hear the boots of a second and third knight coming to a stop behind them, staying on their feet to guard. It’s not Resken or Veiranoei, though, that finishes the fight.

Three Valkyries land at each of Daniel's sides and directly behind him; dragons in human form that have arrived to protect their Mukori.

The Emperor of the Fievegal is thankful. He's not sure he could actually react faster than the archfiend and fire, thanks to the aches and burns in his muscles and bones. But, now, a small army of fresh and ready dragons has arrived at full strength. Even without magic, Yaulwembor has to know it's outmatched.

Sure enough, the nervous draconic monster glances around with its eyes, and it whirls in a violent spin, diving into the treeline and intentionally throwing dirt with its feet, tail, and foreclaws. Just as Helbeit lowers his rifle onto his knee to fire again, Daniel gestures, "Wa-*cough*-wait!" He pants, pain wearing him down. "M-Mukori… tell-ergh… tell Ucahote to follow it in the air."

"The shuttle has been shot down…" replies Veiranoei nervously.

The mechanic wasn't expecting that. He tries to think of other options, resisting the pain in his whole body.

"The wing golems are in pursuit," replies Ryuogriar.

"Good." Daniel coughs, and he can feel Reignleif and Geirahoel both cling to his shoulders, supporting him. "Mukori!"

"I-I'll be alr-…" He winces when the grip on his right shoulder tightens to a slightly painful force. He looks at the young auburn-haired dragon. She's glaring passionately at him, ready to light him on fire with her gaze, were her eyes not watering.

Reignleif tugs on his battered jacket's sleeve. Her own expression is sad. Ryuogriar, standing behind him, hasn't indicated her own feelings. The others

are approaching, and the three knights gave Daniel and his dragon Empresses a moment.

Daniel puts his hand on each of theirs, reassuring them gently, “I’m sorry. But, I will be alright, thanks to you three.”

Geirahoel growls, but Reignleif is the one to make the declaration all three seem to be thinking. “You’re on house arrest again, Mukori.”

He smiles, knowing now as much as ever that he is loved more than he probably deserves.

But, it’s love that he didn’t earn by being idle and safe.

He earned it by doing what he felt he needed to in order to protect people he cares about.

Gwenesphia’s family, as well as Veiranoei’s home and relatives, are counting on the Fievegal defeating the most deadly and legendary monsters of Mattarglos to allow their people to handle the rest.

Daniel replies as close to normal and calmly as he can to avoid coughing if he can manage it, “We have to capitalize on Yaulwembor’s current state of weakness. If it outlasts the polonium and regains its full mana, it’ll recover its wounds immediately and likely go on a rampage.”

Everyone else is gathering now, and Daniel asks, “Do we have you to thank for hitting it with the polonium round?” He looks at Veiranoei first, but she shakes her head. “N-No… I wasn’t sure what was happening, and… you were snatched away so quickly.”

“What?” asks Geirahoel.

Daniel tenses a little, feeling the sweat again. “I’ll explain later, Mukori… Mukori’s. Sir Helbeit?”

The human knight nods. “We managed. The gloom arrow was able to stop it from casting an explosion spell.”

“I’d like to know how it was able to cast that,” retorts Doephluev as she, Vaergraes, and Senn ride up on Arachne, all three looking as exhausted as Daniel feels.

“It has to be a dragon, but I was unable to communicate with it via telepathy,” replies Vaergraes. “If anything, I only registered as an insect buzzing in its ear.”

The elf slides off of the death knight’s back, flopping onto her own back to rest. “It’s not a dragon…”

Everyone looks at her expectantly, including all five of the present dragons. Neith and Magnir are still in their full sizes, nursing their wounds.

She adds with a sigh. “It’s been a *very* long time, so I only remember the name and little else. Yaulwembor is a Faormyr. If I remember right, it was believed that they’re the evolution of drakes that didn’t become sentient, but gained as much or more mana than the dragons.”

“But, to be able to use such advanced magic?”

“It’s the latent natural talent of a prodigy. It doesn’t understand the magic, but can instantly comprehend and copy it. I wouldn’t be surprised if it was able to inadvertently teach itself language comprehension, even though it can’t speak.”

“‘She’,” blurts out Magnir wearily.

Now, everyone looks at him skeptically, and he adds, “Yaulwembor is definitely a ‘she’.”

Neith nods wearily, still bleeding from his neck a little, even though he’s using his own flames to cauterize the wound. “I agree. It wasn’t male territorial aggression. It was…” He tilts his eyes away, murmuring, “Closer to a drake’s mate choosing.”

“We also saw eggs where we discovered it,” adds Resken. This causes the gatonines to gasp, but he adds, “I don’t think they’re viable eggs. She left them without any hesitation, rather than guarding them.”

“I wonder how they’ll taste, then,” remarks Hekate wickedly. She cackles, though she gets more frowns than laughs, and she trails off nervously. “Sorry…”

Daniel winces as he tries to stand up, and Reignleif pulls him back down to lay on her lap. “You’re hurt, Mukori. We’ll heal you. Just rest…”

“We need to move, though. If the mantaroucks come back, or if we run out of time on the polonium bullet…”

“If I may have a healing potation, my Liege,” begins the grey Einherjar. “I’ll fly the group back to the drop off zone, and we’ll retrieve the others.”

Ryuogriar states, “The other ladies are taken care of. Geirahoel teleported them back to the city.”

Neith nods, continuing his thought, “I believe we should return to the city and regroup. Even if we were to try to corner it now, it’ll fight desperately to flee. We need to be able to definitively trap it.”

“Any ideas?” asks Senn a little dryly. “If you didn’t notice, it was stronger than all of us combined.”

“Yes, the scales seem to be impenetrable,” adds Treia as she demonstrates one of Yaulwembor’s few shed scales.

“May I?” asks Ryuogriar, offering her hand to the gatonine. Treia nods, handing it over. “Of course.”

The dragon inspects it for a moment. She remarks quietly, “This is… difficult to believe.”

“What is it?” asks Daniel as he looks up from his resting position on the blue dragon’s lap. She smirks down at him, threatening him without words that he won’t be able to escape her for the foreseeable future. The elegant platinum dragon simply sinks to a kneel, petting his head, and Hekate finally races in, “Hey!” She lays down on his legs, careful of his torso.

Ryuogriar continues smiling, now petting Hekate as well with her other hand. She finally replies, “Mukori, what do you think Yaulwembor’s scales are made of?”

“Given how much it took to do so little, I’d guess mithril or sharmelkolle.” Daniel believes his tone is simply sarcastic, since he hasn’t the faintest clue what would go into the actual scales.

She blinks once with a tender expression, only widening her mysterious smile.

“It’s sharmelkolle, isn’t it?” asks Daniel dryly.

“This is why you’re the feldrok sorcerer, Mukori.” She leans down, kissing his forehead.

“How can something have… sharmelkolle scales?” asks Gwenesphia nervously. “Isn’t that the strongest material in the world?”

Ryuogriar nods. “Indeed. I can only say that a dragon’s scales become stronger and harder over time, though I’ve never heard of a dragon producing its own sharmelkolle.”

Neith offers the idea, “It is a metal like the iron that usually strengthens our scales. Perhaps it had a habit of eating…” He trails off as everyone guesses what the implication could be.

Goelselmo finally speaks, “I believe we should speak with the Grand Premier before doing anything else. Mattarglos may need to mobilize the military to begin evacuations now that Yaulwembor has been spurned. As you said, when the anti-magic spell wears off, it will almost certainly return to retaliate.”

“All the more reason to kill it immediately,” replies Kuboen. “For once, I agree with… Gwen’s lover.” The eldest of the siblings present avoids looking directly at Daniel or Gwenesphia, but he is onboard.

“Don’t be a fool, Son. We were helpless when that beast arrived. It was foolish for us to even ask to battle Rohgattabor. How long will it be until we are able to fight it again?”

Daniel replies, “I don’t know that it’s dead, but I definitely wounded Rohgattabor further when it dragged me into the water. We’ll take it down after we deal with the greater threat.” He adds, “The only person who has to go is me. It's clearly afraid of my rifles. It has to have noticed that I don't have much mana.”

“I agree,” confirms the elven mage. “It couldn't comprehend your attacks, and it couldn't copy it. That was genuine fear that drove it away.”

“Doesn’t that mean it’s not an actual monster then?” asks Doephluev. “Most monsters that I know of don’t feel fear.”

“They don’t,” replies Veiranoei. “Monsters are classified by the rampant mana, which makes them relentless. Magic beasts aren’t the same.”

“They’re even more rare, though,” states Neith. “I’ve never heard of a Faormyr, but it seems to toe the line between ‘beast’ and ‘dragon’.”

Senn nods in agreement with this assessment.

“And, it sheds sharmelkolle,” points out Doephluev.

“Indeed. I don’t know how we’ll fight it,” replies Goelselmo. “Sharmelkolle is exceedingly rare, even for the wealthiest in the Empire. The only sharmelkolle weapons I know of in Mattarglos are ancient family heirlooms that those families keep locked away in their vaults.”

The archoneldwyn woman simply smiles and nods gently.

Those who know her well enough figure out what she was actually getting at.

“You want to capture it!?” snaps Geirahoel. “Alive!?”

Doephluev nods once. “My Love and Sir Neith agreed to try to capture Yaulwembor if it could produce hybrid or pure blood greater dragons. Something tells me a half Faormyr is a win-win.”

“But… Look at all of this!” The orange dragon gestures around them, which is still an absolutely chaotic sight. It’s a wonder no one died, especially the very human otherworlder with almost no magic.

The caramel-skinned pseudo-elf replies, “What greater proof of my Beloved’s power than a servant that can defeat dragons?”

Geirahoel wants to refute, but she halts. It’s the same belief that the demon-kin, specifically, tend to hold. It’s also one of the arguments Ryuogriar made when Doephluev was contracted, though she’s an unassuming young woman with a dainty and feminine appearance when she braids her hair in a waterfall braid. She doesn’t have the appearance of an assassin anymore, which almost makes her more effective for those who know.

The youngest of the dragons present looks to Daniel with a pouty expression.

Daniel is at Reignleif’s mercy as she idly pets his head, destroying any illusion of him being an Emperor or even the warrior that just drove off the archfiend -though, with tons of backup of course-.

The human mechanic replies to Geirahoel’s gaze, “If no one here expected it to be a Faormyr… I don’t want to make them extinct, Mukori. But,… I’ll hear everyone out. Now that we have some idea what we’re up against, and that we have it vulnerable, we’ll discuss what to do. Either way, I’m giving Hekate final say.”

The feldrok empress flinches. “M-Me?”

Daniel nods. “Yes. I’m speaking from the perspective of an otherworlder. I don’t know all of the repercussions of making a species like the Faormyrs extinct, but I know it was tragic when species went extinct on Earth. Not a catastrophe, but a loss to the world as a whole.”

This quiets everyone. Another argument made for sparing Doephluev was to grant her the chance to restore her race in a last ditch effort to avoid making

the archoneldwyn extinct. The same will hold true for Hekate when she comes of age, assuming that's what she chooses.

Daniel adds gently as he pets the fox-eared girl's head, "And, you're the Empress of the Fievegal. It's supposed to be more proper to refer to me as your consort, if anything, but…"

"A-hem!" Doephluev clears her throat, drawing attention back to herself. "*That* brings me along to an important matter:" She grins wickedly at the raven-haired teen as the latter's ears fold back in irritation. "My victory reward."

Hekate growls, and everyone else either rolls their eyes or sighs, with exception of the knights, who all remain quiet.

"Before that," remarks Neith. "We need to finish discussing Yaulwembor."

"Thankfully, we can do it as we return," adds Magnir. The blue male dragon points, and everyone looks at the sky where he gestures. The large form of the Stalvaltan airship is cruising towards them. Wenlianna, Aoloan, and Roeta almost certainly retrieved the airship to recover everyone and assist in battle if need be, since the Dragon Empresses flew off to help Daniel once they knew he was in danger.

With a break on the horizon, Daniel finally admits the truth, "So… if anyone can get into my bag,… I could really use some healing…"

Oh, how he wishes he kept it to himself a little longer.

The passionate scolding from the people who love him has only just begun.

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 128: The Gamble on the Archfiend

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 128: The Gamble on the Archfiend

Daniel rests on the lounge floor near the gathering area of the airship belonging to Grand Duchess Aramellianna kos Stalvaltan. The Grand Duchess herself accompanied the airship, in spite of the danger, along with her eldest daughter Wenlianna. Fortunately, the airship is heading away from Yaulwembor's retreat direction, which the wing golems have been able to pursue. They aren't equipped to fight the beast, but they'll keep track of where it flees to in order for them to hunt down.

The human mechanic's head is swirling and aching, along with the whole body, mind, and soul exhaustion he is experiencing from the collective battle and subsequent scolding he received from everyone during the return to the city. He's heavily drunk from healing potations, since his miniscule mana capacity gained through drinking dragon milk only provides him with a very slow and limited healing capacity. Everyone else is resting to recover mana, since his life is no longer in danger, but he definitely isn't in his best state.

And, in addition to that, potations are closer to paint thinner or gasoline than an actual potable drink. Especially compared to his wine or rum, no one in their right mind would recreationally drink a potation. Even with his life on the line, it's a process to choke them down, and he had to drink half a cup just to bring the pain down.

Neith, who is now in his human form, is seated against one of the lounge sofas nearby, similarly drunk from a high amount of healing potations due to the

injuries he sustained fighting Yaulwembor in close combat. He was hit with shrapnel from the polonium bullet, so he also had to dunk in the lake in order to allow Ryuogriar to transform him, since his mana was depleted. It's likely Yaulwembor's negated mana will recover within a day or so, going off of how quickly Doephluev can burn through the plutonium plates put into her special harness, which Daniel hasn't bothered to renew for a while now. Summoning radioactive materials is extremely costly on the Citadel's resources, and he can only summon a single piece at a time, since the moment it appears, the magic summoning circle is disabled. And, if the ingot is too large, even more of the Citadel can be shut down inadvertently.

Hekate is resting, since her own body took a beating, and Daniel gave her Shek's milk, since it also has healing and mana restorative properties, but is non-alcoholic.

Aramellianna studies the battered group of fighters that took on Rohgattabor, and ended up entangled with an ancient breed of pseudo dragon that has the equivalent mana and magic spell repertoire of a much older dragon than even Neith. Wenlianna is seated next to Daniel, occasionally casting ice magic on his forehead to help relieve him.

"Has anyone told you, Daniel, that Emperors and Empresses are supposed to be among the last to enter a battlefield?"

Daniel replies quietly, "It's… come up… I think… I don't remember…"

She sighs, though with a soft smile. "From what I hear, all of your bravery is quite commendable."

"Your knights really saved us," explains Vaergraes. Aramellianna has heard most of the details, but it makes her proud that the comparatively weak knights

were able to at least hold their own in the fight. Both of them were dismissed to the guardsmen's berthing to sleep after making their report.

"Yes. I intend to commend them for their efforts. Though, I suppose that right falls to the Empress, yes?"

"You'd tell that woman about all this?" murmurs Hekate in disappointment.

The Grand Duchess simply stares at her with an amused smile.

The feldrok teen blushes, pointing at herself. "W-Wait… Me?"

The Stalvaltan matriarch nods. "Of course. The Stalvaltan Grand Duchy is a vassal of the Fievegal now, yes? And, Sir Helbeit and Sir Resken served in your mission. If you don't feel they are worthy of commendation, then I will…"

"Th-They absolutely deserve it!" replies the young Empress passionately as she sits upright. She winces wearily, laying back down on her seat as she groans from exhaustion. She adds softly, "They worked really hard and stopped Yaul… Yauly from exploding us all."

"If you are intending to confront the beast again, I will dispatch more of our knights to accompany you. Though I would ask if they can be armed with Fievegal armaments you deem acceptable losses, in the worst case scenario."

Wenlianna frowns softly, but Daniel pets her thigh gently. "What's that face for?" asks the mechanic softly.

"I…" She glances nervously towards her mother, who asks, "Me? Are you concerned I intend to steal these weapons?"

Daniel manages to scoff. "I am certain you could have already many times over. I don't have many anti-magic grenades or rifle rounds with me, but I'll

divide them out where I can. The problem is, we only have the rifles Gwenesphia, Treia, and myself have remaining, as well as two elemental blasters… I hadn't adequately planned for fighting monsters, and thought what we had would be plenty."

Vaergraes adds, "The concern is that we must act quickly to capitalize on Yaulwembor's magic being negated already. If we wait too long, we're looking at a similar battle of extreme proportions."

"And, our goal… is to capture her," admits Hekate.

Aramellianna doesn't respond. She got a brief rundown from the Dragon Empresses, who are mostly opposed to the idea. But, it is potentially the last of its kind, so even they are hesitant to simply exterminate it.

Unlike a male, though, which could be used for artificial conception for a time after it's deceased, a female is outside of anyone's capability, even if Daniel has the basic idea of what would need to be done to start.

"What if we put it to sleep and stick it into storage?" asks Doephluev, seated at one of the lounge dining tables nearby.

"Magic won't work now," replies Vaergraes. "Not while it's under the effect of the anti-magic shot. The 'gloom arrow', as Sir Helbeit called it." She adds the last part for Aramellianna, who still has a minimal amount of knowledge about the Fievegal's peculiar technology.

The Grand Duchess asks, "If that is not an option, could you make use of these… revival potations her Grace Geirahoel mentioned."

The orange dragon, seated near the Stalvaltan matriarch, flinches. "S-Sorry…"

“Everyone here are allies,” reaffirms Daniel. “The servants and knights should be kept in the dark for now, but I trust everyone currently in the room.” He then adds in reply to the Grand Duchess, “It’s an acceptable option, but I’d prefer we try to capture it alive. Senn, how intelligent do you think… Faomyrs are?”

“Faormyrs. And, as you saw, it was quite intelligent. An argument could be made for its sentience, other than an inability to speak. Though, at this point, I wouldn’t be surprised if it can learn languages.”

“Good. Then, I’d like to suggest a plan. I won’t volunteer anyone for it, but let me lay out the basics.” He shifts a little, trying to get comfortable, and Wenlianna gently slides closer, urging him to lay on her lap to at least angle himself up a bit more. He does so gratefully, with his head resting against her abdomen under her chest and his upper back against her lap. “Thanks, Wenlianna.”

She smiles, teasing softly, “My pleasure. Though, it’s a little embarrassing to be in front of so many people. Just so you know.”

Everyone smiles gently, and Daniel continues his explanation of his plan. “I’ll use Nemaisol with the armor piercing rounds, and someone else will use the twenty millimeter. The, uh, ‘dragon slayer’.”

Rather than upsetting the dragon Empresses, the three snicker, since, while one of them experienced it firsthand, they have made Daniel repay for his guilt by all sorts of mischief. And, the name is accurate.

He goes on, “I’ll demonstrate putting Nemaisol away and try to communicate with words and tone to convince it to surrender. If it’ll surrender, we’ll give it food and medicine. Are there any Citadel ministers present?”

A female voice replies as a golem steps into the room, “I am here, your Grace. Apologies that Xyreko and Ucahote are currently indisposed. I am the Spellmaster, Oeyan’kae.”

Kera’tai twitches, which Daniel notices. He replies gently, “Oeyan’kae, my apologies for not finding time to meet you sooner.”

“Think nothing of it, your Grace. I won’t make the usual humble excuse, but instead reassure you that, unless you specifically ordered me to appear before you, I am usually not in physical form to be encountered. I… prefer research over interaction.”

Both Kera’tai and Daniel notice the specific outfit Oeyan’kae’s golem is wearing. It has a ceremonial appearance, decorated with various hand-made flower patterns draping from the sleeves. “Are… you a Chi’rinnis?” asks Daniel.

The golem bows, and the way her posture moves gives off a very approving air.

“Indeed, your Grace. I was born a Chi’rinnis of a clan deeper in the west than her Grace, Empress Kera’tai.”

Kera’tai immediately claps her hands together quietly, giving a sort of ceremonial bow to the Chi’rinnis golem. “Great elder, please bless me with wisdom and guidance.” She speaks softly in the Chi’rinnis language, which Daniel has learned only a few words of.

Oeyan’kae replies in their native tongue gently, adding in Eastern Trade after, “I appreciate your greeting, your Grace, but I am technically deceased. I’m… not sure what the proper etiquette would be.”

The Chi'rinnis empress straightens her posture saying warmly, "I am content with treating you as my living elder. Please do grant me your grace as you can."

"I would be honored." Oeyan'kae then turns to Daniel, asking with a respectful kindness, "How may I serve you, my Emperor?"

Daniel closes his eyes with an amused smile on his face, and others around him snicker. He replies quietly, "Have any shuttles been deployed with supplies?"

"Yes, but there is another shuttle on standby at the Citadel. Shall I have more equipment rushed to us?"

"Yes. As many po-... er, anti-magic grenades and bullets as we have available. Can you spare five mithril golems?"

"Of course, your Grace."

"Good. And, send five revival potations, if we have them. Also, I'd like all of the milk Shek can spare. Send Skloe's so she doesn't feel left out, but we'll need the healing properties of Shek's. If there are any known tranquilizers that can put down a dragon, I would gladly accept them." He looks at the three empresses upon saying this, but Roeta is the one to reply.

"Your Grace, it is likely to be detected by smell, but there's something in the organs of trapdoor lobsters. It's one of the few things I've ever heard of that can put a dragon to sleep for a few hours."

The other five dragons all nod in agreement. Ryuogriar adds longingly with a hand on her cheek, "It's a shame, too. Trapdoor lobsters are quite delectable."

“Sometimes it’s worth it for a heavy sleep,” adds Reignleif in her soft and tranquil tone.

“Do we have any of those?” asks Daniel, directed mainly at Oeyan’kae.

“As it turns out, your Grace, her Majesty Aoloan received a delivery from dattakorien fishermen of three such specimens. Shall I have them sent?”

“Yes, thank you. Aoloan, I’ll make it up to you.”

The succubus smiles playfully. “Ohhhh. Very well, then, Daniel. I have some requests to make.” She licks her teeth while grinning at him.

The mechanic sighs. “Anything in my power, Aoloan.”

She cackles playfully, but then adds sincerely, “Oh, but please do request more of them from the fishermen, Oeyan’kae. I was going to make a great dinner with them when we return.”

“As you wish, your Grace. Anything else, my Emperor?”

“Since we’re having things delivered,” starts Hekate. “Shouldn’t we request more rifles?”

“We haven’t been manufacturing the 20mm rifles,” replies Daniel. “Too few of our enemies require it. Though, I have learned that we need to keep a stockpile of them. Many lessons have been learned today,” murmurs the castaway Earthling. Wenlianna pets his head gently, trying to reassure him.

“Sounds like the right time to make a list, Daniel. Shall I take notes for you?” She withdraws her notebook and pencil, and everyone shares a warm snicker.

“Please send as many of your demon staves as you can spare to match my knights, your Grace,” adds Aramellianna sincerely. “I shall pay a fair price for the rental of such equipment, as well as a crash course on their use, if it will make this mission that much safer.”

Daniel nods. “Do it. Renting them won’t be necessary, Mother.”

“Nonsense. I will be charging the soldiers under contract. This should minimize the risk of theft. Leasing the weapons will incentivize their prompt return.”

Daniel hesitates, and he looks up at the magic artisan cradling his head. She nods with a gentle smile. “Business exchanges are essential to a functioning economy, Daniel. And, as she said, even the soldiers with less-than-loyal intentions will struggle to hide theft or espionage.”

“Understood. Any objections from anyone?”

No one objects, but Hekate asks, “Should we have them send tanks, Daniel?”

He thinks, while Ryuogriar points out, “If you want them, it is your final decision, your Greatness.”

“I-I know. But,… We’re minimizing their use to keep them hidden for now. Especially because they’re slow.”

“Which is why I’d prefer we don’t. But… Send one in storage, Oeyan’kae. We’ll keep it stored on the airship for emergency deployment if we need it.”

“It shall be done. I’ll also include an array of explosives, as well as stun and screening ordinance. They will be cataloged using Empress Reignleif’s coding system.”

“Good, thank you. ETA?”

“The second shuttle with resupply will arrive at the capital in four hours, your Grace.”

“Got it. Then, we’ll take a five hour break and deploy using one of the shuttles. Mother, may we rely on your personnel to handle the airship landing?”

“Of course, Daniel.”

“Good, then, I’d like to minimize the people in danger, but…”

“I’m going with you,” growls Geirahoel instantly, beating everyone else as if she was waiting for this exact moment.

“Yes. If we are together, we will be able to flee from the beast with our combined prowess.”

“We’re also the only ones with enough mana to engage Yaulwembor in a fight if it comes to that,” points out Reignleif.

“I’m going too,” urges Hekate. “I still have some left in me.”

“I’ll have enough strength to function in five hours,” adds Senn.

Vaergraes agrees, “Myself as well.”

“Magnir will guard the Grand Duchess, and I shall accompany you, my Liege,” replies Roeta after quietly discussing with her beloved blue mate.

Kera’tai, Aoloan, and Veiranoei hesitate, and Daniel says seriously, “Anyone with any hesitation should stay.”

“Your Enlightened Grace Aramellianna,” starts Kuboen. “Please lease one of the demon staves allocated to you to me. I’ll pay the lease. But, I’ll not stand by while my home is in danger.”

Gwenesphia murmurs, “Big Brother, you don’t have to do this…”

“I’m going, Gwen. I couldn’t do anything meaningful in either battle today. I won’t let that happen again.”

“If I understand correctly, the goal is a mere standoff, yes?” asks Peiburi.

“That’s right,” replies Daniel. “My goal is to have many firearms to intimidate Yaulwembor into hearing me out. If it -she- understands and cooperates, we won’t hurt her further.”

“Then, I volunteer as well. But, I intend to retreat if the standoff doesn’t work.”

“We all will,” replies Daniel. “If the initial volley in retaliation doesn’t work, then we’re doing everything we can to get away. Especially if she’s recovered her mana.”

“If we corner the Faormyr,” starts Neith with a questioning tone. “Are we worried about her becoming desperate?”

“The perimeter we’ll create will be a half-circle, rather than a full perimeter. With so many firearms in place, we don’t want to have each other in the crossfire. Granting Yaulwembor a direction to flee will allow her to choose fleeing, and we’ll keep pursuing her, exhausting her if we can.”

“If she’s not exhausted now, I want to trade bodies with her,” jokes Doephluev. “My beloved Emperor is merciless to his Empresses.” She feigns pain in her back, fanning her own cheek with her free hand.

Hekate growls impotently in irritation. She lost their little competition fair and square, and Doephluev’s wish was to be *the* empress for a day, once she chooses one for it to take place. Daniel doubts she’ll wait the better part of a

year for Hekate's next birthday, though she certainly would wait if it was much closer.

"One last question, Daniel," starts the Grand Duchess as she ponders the mission, ignoring the archonelwyn. "Do you have a contingency for *if* Yaulwembor will not surrender and can't be slain in time?"

Daniel goes quiet for a moment. He replies quietly, "Not one that won't cost more lives than I want to even ponder."

"If… it comes to it, Daniel… Will you?" asks Vaergraes. She's the first one daring to ask, but everyone present who understands what the question really is wants to know the same answer.

Daniel is quiet for a long time. Something only Xyreko knows is that, during his house arrest at the Citadel, Daniel passed the time he could get free building one more of the most terrible weapons in the world. His goal was to test what the polonium grenades indicated; something shielded in lead can contain 'anti-magic materials', which seem to simply be any especially radioactive elements, and even with the negation effect internal to adequate shielding, the item can be put into a magic storage bag. This allows even a multi-ton bomb to be carried on a person, let alone flown to a target by a dragon or the magic-crystal powered shuttles.

The only problem is that the weight becomes a factor in direct proportion to the mass of the object's currently extracted volume. Using a shuttle with enough lift is the only real option for deploying the lead-shielded bombs, since they're too heavy for the dragons and the current models of the shuttles.

If they're asking, though, Daniel's companions aren't entirely against using it, but only because they only saw it used against a singular titan of apocalypse.

The repercussions using it anywhere near an inhabited area… He doesn't even want to consider it.

But, if a dragon-like being as powerful as Yaulwembor were to go on an unchecked rampage, the consequences could be as great or greater than a singular weapon used to slay it, even with the resultant collateral casualties.

Hekate comes to Daniel's aid, replying as she tries to lift her head from laying on her chest, looking at Vaergraes seriously, "Daniel won't be making that decision. *We* will. Daniel creates options, but the weight of using the secret weapon can't rest on him alone." She looks down with a sullen expression. "I won't let it." Her face turns fiery, and she declares, "We will beg Daniel if and only if we lose control of Yaulwembor. Otherwise, we go with Daniel's plan. Yauly will surrender or perish. I guarantee it."

Aramellianna smiles and bows her head politely. "I understand completely, your Greatness. I am at your service."

"I have seen your secret weapon via Dawnsight, Daniel… Or at least, I have seen what it can do. I saw another one being used."

Daniel makes eye contact with the three dragons when they look at him. Of everyone, they have the greatest respect for what he did, having lived in fear of the Devourer and seen Daniel's weapon destroy it first hand.

"Y-You think it was the coming fight?" asks Wenlianna nervously.

"I don't know. As you may know, Dawnsight ends at the flash of a land-bound star."

Daniel can feel the magic artisan trembling, but he adds gently to reassure everyone, "I have confidence Yaulwembor will surrender. She wants to survive,

and she knows that we won't let her if she proves to be our enemy. We're the first thing that makes her feel fear."

"You mean you are," jokes Treia dryly, and everyone shares a gentle laugh.

The human mechanic from Earth replies gently with a somewhat distant expression, "I can handle that much." Enjoying the story? Read on at novelping.com.

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The hours pass by, and the second shuttle arrives with the supplies Daniel requested. When he had a moment of private, he made the decision to ask Oeyan'kae to have Xyreko load the current atom bomb onto a shuttle and standby. He gives her the order that if he should perish, any of the Empresses of the Fievegal have his permission to order its launch, and Xyreko has to ensure Yaulwembor is defeated.

He's still optimistic, but he's trying to remove all of the possibilities. The best option would be to use the 20mm rifles from airships and simply try to snipe the draconic archfiend from range, but the goal is to spare it and prevent the Faormyrs from going extinct. Senn is the only one who had knowledge about the being, and she is cautiously optimistic that it will be able to at least understand speech, or at least the intent of gestures of good faith.

So, he steps off of the shuttle about a mile away from the position the golems have marked. Ryuogriar and Reignleif cling to his arms lightly, while Geirahoel leads, carrying an automatic assault rifle in her arms. The dragons haven't gone out of their way to learn about the firearms of Earth that Daniel was able to manufacture thanks to the Citadel, but they have enough knowledge about them now to meet the intent of the mission. Similarly, the knights of the

Stalvaltan Grand Duchy are already formed up ahead of them, each armed with a rented firearm serialized and tracked. The same goes for the bulk of Aramellianna's Stalvaltan Guard who accompanied them on the airship journey to Mattarglos. In all, there are 10 knights and 50 guardsmen, in addition to Daniel's party composed of Hekate, Vaergraes, Senn, Doephluev, Neith, Roeta, Gwenesphia and Treia. Additionally, though her father and second eldest brother present were hesitant, Gwenesphia's family is also carrying rifles to join in the intimidation squad. The goal is to corner Yaulwembor and convince the draconid that Daniel will show her mercy if she surrenders peacefully, which is why he has as much food and drinks as weapons in the magic bags he's carrying.

He speaks with a level tone to avoid alerting the archfiend too early. "You've all been briefed, and you all have volunteered. I can't thank you enough." He looks at Helbeit, the human knight of Stalvaltan who is carrying Daniel's first 20mm rifle. It and Nemaisol are the only two weapons that can penetrate Yaulwembor's skin, but he's hoping she won't understand that fully.

In an emergency, Daniel and Helbeit have the job of eliminating the Faormyr before she can escape.

If it turns into a battle, Daniel has anti-magic grenades and bullets in his non-magic pouches, with the bullets stored in a large cigarette-box type of container made of lead. He also gave out all of the anti-magic equipment he could to everyone else, giving them a quick rundown on how to use them.

The forest is quiet, and the path is easy to follow. While Yaulwembor mostly stayed below the tree-line, seemingly understanding that the rifles were a threat to her so long as Daniel can lay eyes on her, her large size broke through branches and small trees with ease, making it look like a tornado passed through.

Not to mention the large footprints and claw prints, intermingled with blood drops and the occasional shed scale that finally fell from her wounds.

Doephluev walks just off to Geirahoel's right, carrying herself like a regal empress as she walks, since she is unarmed. Her own specific role is to intercept any surprise magic attacks with her own defensive barriers, while Senn begins counter-attack spells and everyone else opens fire.

The group moves at a steady pace. The path descends down an easy going slope, and Daniel can't help but admire the scenery, including the massive trees that share a similar footprint to a house, rising high into the sky like skyscrapers. Though Mattarglos is generally hardy terrain, it seems the weather and precipitation are ideal for massive trees. Daniel never saw the colossal redwoods of California in person, but he wonders if even they were as big as these monstrous monoliths of lumber.

And, nestled in an alcove of colossal roots formed by the largest of the titanic 'behemoth maples' is a sight that puts everyone on edge.

Yaulwembor, in all of her glory, is sleeping. Her wounds seem to have stopped bleeding, but are still apparent, indicating that she likely hasn't recovered her mana yet. There's no way of knowing for certain when the polonium will decay away.

"*{This could all end right now, Daniel. Take aim, fire. Problem solved. If you really want little baby Faormyrs running around, plead with Ryukana.}*"

The easy route isn't always the right one. And, I think we both know Ryukana won't be able to bring a race back from extinction. Order and Chaos won't allow that level of interference, I'm sure.

Kaeralegier's voice sighs in Daniel's mind dramatically. He's the only one who can hear her, so he has to avoid reacting. *"{Now do you know why I want to go into hiding? There're so many rules. Not that I minded so much, but it was so suffocating sometimes.}"*

I understand well enough. He signals with his hand for the knights to begin spreading out, and in the shade of the trees around them, they move into formation. They continue to expand the formation as they get closer, everyone present watching the draconic being carefully for even the slightest movement.

Daniel can feel Reignleif's grip on his arm tighten. He glances at his blue Empress, and she makes eye contact with him. She thinks quickly, using her free left hand to rub her belly and then point at Yaulwembor.

The mechanic follows her gesture, and his hands tighten on Nemaisol, which is in the rifle form cloning the Dragonslayer.

"{Yeah-p,}" remarks the goddess bound to the magic weapon dryly. *"{Those are eggs. Looks like four of them.}"*

Daniel immediately starts searching the area. He comes to a stop, gesturing quickly with his fist up to bring the formation to a halt. They slowly come to a resting position, observing him.

The human emperor whispers to Reignleif, "Any signs of the male? Can anyone smell it?"

"I don't think there is a male, Mukori," replies Ryuogriar quietly. "She's not keeping them warm. She simply laid them and is ignoring them."

Daniel searches every memory and piece of wisdom he has ever absorbed, trying to recall anything that explains it.

Chickens, of course, lay unfertilized eggs regularly, often dictated by their diet, overall health, and breed. So far as he knew, reptiles lay unfertilized eggs primarily as decoy eggs for the clutch so that egg-stealers end up with a meal that doesn't contain an embryo. He pages through memories of an Australian adventurer who hosted nature shows talking about everything from snakes and turtles to crocodiles and lizards, in addition to anything else his adventures took him on.

No, nothing. Everything in his memories indicates that a reptile -which is what he most closely relates the dragons, drakes, and now Faormyrs to- only lays fertilized eggs.

Or do they? Did I read something once?

Daniel asks softly, "Have any of you ever laid unfertilized eggs before?"

"It happens," replies Ryuogriar quietly. "It's embarrassing, because it's usually a sign of an unpopular female."

"I… I have…" murmurs Reignleif. Ryuogriar remains quiet, and Daniel makes a gentle joke to cheer her up, "Are they edible?"

Reignleif blushes, and Hekate snaps through a whisper, "Hey! Flirt later! Or flirt with me! Pick one!"

Daniel nods with a smirk. It is an extremely dangerous position to be in, and he just wanted to make sure Reignleif was back in a better mood so she doesn't get distracted.

"Relay to everyone, please. If anyone sees any signs of any other creature, we're aborting mission and evacuating."

“On it,” replies Reignleif. Once she nods, having relayed the warning, Daniel signals with his hand to continue advancing.

They are able to get within a thousand feet before Yaulwembor shifts, lifting her head. She looks weary and battered from the battle, which is a relief in its own right. She’s not invincible, and she’s not tireless.

That said, she’s also not dead yet. And, as the saying goes, a cornered tiger is the most deadly.

Daniel can see the draconic archfiend scan the crowd, and the two eldest Dragon Empresses release him, allowing him to step past Doephluev and Geirahoel, revealing himself specifically to the Faormyr.

He shifts the rifle in his hands, slinging it up to his shoulder to draw attention to it, and the monster’s gaze snaps to him, locking on as her pupils widen, emphasizing their cross-like shape. Dragons have complex pupils, more noticeable in their true forms, that polarize their vision so they can still see, even when breathing their most powerful fire attacks.

Yaulwembor bears her massive teeth, each one about as long as Daniel’s forearm. She’s on guard, but thankfully, hasn’t sprung into offense yet.

Daniel signals everyone to stand down, and he makes a show of stowing Nemaisol on his back. He’s trusting his gut. There are contingencies in place, but he’ll be in the most danger out of anyone present for all of the usual reasons in addition to being so close without a weapon.

However, Nemaisol is still ‘drawn’ by being on his back, which Kaeralegier will hold off on returning to the holster since he’s still in contact with the magic weapon. With it drawn, he is protected somewhat from magic attacks.

Daniel walks slowly towards the archfiend with his hands clearly visible, and she growls in a warning tone.

“Let’s just stay calm, Yaulwembor. We’re both not looking for a fight, so let’s just get along.” He keeps his tone soft and gentle, trying to reassure the titan.

She doesn’t make any sudden moves, but she doesn’t lower her guard either. It’s entirely possible she doesn’t understand after all.

And, as he’s pondering this very notion, he realizes that, even if she had the capability to use language comprehension magic, it would no longer be in effect thanks to the anti-magic bullet whose shards are still lodged in her scales.

The human mechanic can feel sweat building in his body, and his legs grow weaker as he gets closer, but he does everything in his power to stay on his feet and keep moving slowly forward.

“Just a little closer, that’s all I want. I just want to talk. Can you do that? Can you talk? Or, do you at least understand me?”

Daniel watches the growling colossus for any signs of recognition. He’s close enough now that she could probably spring a striking attack too quickly for him to react, and he probably wouldn’t leave much more than a messy stain on the ground.

But, she clearly doesn’t know that, and it frightens her.

Daniel bobs his own head up and down as he says, “Nod like this if you understand me. Yes? Do you understand my words?”

Yaulwembor never takes her eyes off of Daniel, and he does the same.

It’s an extremely tense moment of quiet between them.

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 129: A Lullaby for a Titan

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 129: A Lullaby for a Titan

Scales that contain noticeable amounts of sharmelkolle, the strongest metal known to the world of Zenkon, faintly glow in response to mana around them. Teeth nearly as long as a human forearm hang imposingly like deadly spears in the air as a chaotic wind passes between them. Muscles that can crumble stone loosen and tighten in small motions as a great creature lies in ready to retaliate.

Daniel's heart is racing. He is but an average human from Earth, where the only living dragons are a species of monitor lizard serving as a perfect example of island gigantism.

The humble mechanic has experienced a great deal of incredible things since he was spontaneously spirited away to the world of Zenkon, not least of which was the magical transportation itself. He has the imagination and presence of mind to roll with the punches, thanks to his combined life experiences. The moment it sank in that he was in another world, he had to start accepting everything he sees as what it is, no matter how unbelievable it would be on Earth.

And, like the first time Daniel saw a fish larger than himself while scuba diving, seeing the majestic draconid known as Yaulwembor up close is stunning. He feels absolutely tiny compared to her head alone, and her massive, piercing gaze follows every movement of his, hypnotized by her own fear. Daniel is incomprehensible to the Faormyr because he is able to wound her, even with

magic, and she can't instinctively copy the 'spell' he's using. Sentient races are able to understand -eventually- that it is a weapon evolved a long way from the humble bow and arrow, and given how intelligent Yaulwembor appears to be, she might be able to understand it if specifically shown.

The human Emperor can barely hear his own words as he tries to communicate with the ancient archfiend of Mattarglos. "Nod like this if you understand me. Yes? Do you understand my words?" He is still cautiously stepping closer, but Yaulwembor's gaze doesn't change, other than she cocks her head a little. Her eyes tilt briefly to glance behind him, but then return to him just as quickly. She tenses a little, and Daniel comes to a stop, keeping his hands visible.

"It's alright, it's alright. Let's just stay calm." His voice is wavering, but he's doing his best to keep it soft and gentle. He's about twenty yards from the ancient colossus, and they're both afraid of each other. Daniel's advantage is that he has a pretty good idea of what he's up against.

She doesn't.

This works against him a little, since he's trying to get her to stand down peacefully so they can bring her in and try to prevent her from going on a rampage anymore.

And, while the archfiend seems to understand that she's outmatched for once, she doesn't seem to understand Daniel's attempts at direct communication.

The mechanic wants to glance over his shoulder for silent brainstorming, but he dares not look away from the apex predator before him. He thinks carefully, and he notices Yaulwembor glance at the others behind him once more.

He can only hope that his companions aren't doing anything restless.

He says gently, “Yaulwembor, look at me.” He waves his hands gently, drawing her attention again, and this causes her to growl. Thankfully, she doesn’t make a move yet, but she is still on guard and shrunken in such a posture that she could spring an attack at any second.

Daniel points at her eggs; four hard-shelled oval-shaped objects in a small nest, but otherwise being ignored by the beast.

She glances briefly, and then snaps her gaze back to him with more of an edge to her scowl. He keeps his hands visible, cooing as carefully and sincerely as he can, “Easy, easy… I want to help.” He gestures at the archfiend, and then points behind himself with his hands, specifically indicating the Dragon Empresses, who are standing as close to Daniel as possible without worsening Yaulwembor’s tension.

The Faormyr looks at Geirahoel, Reignleif, and Ryuogriar, beginning to snarl. Neith starts to move closer to them, but this only causes her to roar.

“HEY!” shouts Daniel as he puts his hand on Nemaisol. No sooner do his fingers wrap around the grip does the archfiend snap her gaze back to Daniel. He keeps his right hand on the grip while waving his left hand gently. “Calm down, please. I want you to have the same.” He keeps gesturing at her, relaxing his grip on the magic weapon in rifle-form. He takes a couple of steps closer, now operating his magic bag to withdraw the food they prepared, courtesy of Aoloan directing the effort. He begins setting it down closer to her, watching her for a moment.

Daniel backs away a few steps, gesturing at the food.

The draconic being glances around, noticeably taking interest in the food, but still highly suspicious. Daniel says over his shoulders, “Everyone relax your

guard, please. We're friendly today."

He already discussed this with Helbeit, especially, that he needs to keep his own rifle ready to fire in a hurry, even when Daniel tells everyone to stand down. Yaulwembor is still a 'wild animal', in a sense, so it's dangerous to let down their guard too much. Likewise, Doephluev is still ready to react in a flash, as is Senn.

The mechanic sinks to a kneel and waits patiently, and Yaulwembor wearily sits up. The growling has softened, and she keeps glancing at the meat dish. Daniel gestures at it again to encourage her. It's clear that Yaulwembor is fairly intelligent, she just can't communicate as directly as a person. But, even cats and dogs can learn to communicate their desires, even without speaking.

Daniel withdraws another meat dish, walking on his knees to put it down beside the first one, and then retreating on his hands and knees to give her a little space, repeating the gesture for her to enjoy.

Yaulwembor finally relaxes a tiny amount. Her gaze never stops suspiciously searching the group, especially Daniel, but she eases forward enough to reach the meals with her tongue, lapping each one up quickly before retreating back. Daniel withdraws a third, this time walking a little closer. The Faormyr tenses a little, and the human sets the tray down, easing back as he has repeated so far. She glances at it, and then at Daniel.

While his heart is still pounding, a moment of relief washes over Daniel once more.

Her gaze is expectant.

Daniel smiles and withdraws two more dishes, setting them down by the first of this set, retreating back a couple of steps.

The draconic being huffs and crawls forward cautiously. She laps up the meals just as quickly as she has been, now only retreating away from the trays to what would be a couple of steps away from Daniel. It seems her hunger is winning out over her caution.

Daniel obliges, feeding the draconic being with an increasing amount of food until it reaches the point that the Faormyr closes the distance, eating the food almost as quickly as he can get it out of his bag and set it down.

He tries to move with a steady pace, since he has around seventy people standing around watching as he feeds a terrifying monster, adding in dishes of every kind of milk he could get.

When he sets down a particularly small dish of milk, Yaulwembor nearly sucks it down as quickly as the rest of the meal before halting. She snorts and backs away a step.

Daniel chuckles. “You really don’t like the lady Dragons, do you?”

She stares at him, sniffing and lifting her muzzle into the air to sample the scents present. Her gaze is drawn to Reignleif, and the colossus growls.

“Hey now, be nice. I’ve got other things for you.”

He sets another tray of rose milk, which the draconid hastily drinks while Daniel returns the dragon milk to his bag. He then tries cookies, which Geirahoel made, and he can hear her audibly huff behind him. She grumbles, “Why are you wasting them on this thing? I made those for you…”

Yaulwembor gobbles them down with abandon, seemingly not noticing Geirahoel’s scent on them.

Daniel does the unthinkable, wavering only for a moment with his hand raised. He touches Yaulwembor's snout, and the ancient guardian of the forest halts. Her eyes look directly at Daniel, and he gently slides his hand across her massive nose.

"D-Daniel…!?" whispers Geirahoel loudly enough to be heard. He's sure everyone is on edge, and the Faormyr herself takes notice, growling lightly.

"Shhhh, it's alright," coos Daniel. "It's okay." He realizes she could snap her jaws shut around his whole body before he could even return his hand to his side if she wanted to. Wild animals of Earth would be highly likely to do exactly that, depending on their temperament.

He's giving her a lot more credit than a wild animal. The archfiend may not be 'sentient' by certain definitions, but she's capable of strategizing, complex magic spells, and understands when to play nice, even after a fearsome battle. Really, Daniel only defines her as 'non-sentient', personally, because she doesn't seem to speak, but he's not so sure she can't. Like Lugrae, the Feral Feldrok, she could very likely be simply 'wild' in the same way; having somehow survived her whole life without sentient parents to guide and teach her. That said, pretty much everyone is convinced she's older than Neith, making her the second oldest person present, depending on whether or not she exceeds Senn's age. If she is that old, it's unlikely she never encountered people or dragons who tried to communicate with her.

Those are problems for when Daniel figures out what to do. He has successfully proven that she will be non-hostile under the right conditions, and a blast of hot air from her nostrils confirms that she is losing any aggression she had before.

Still, she's on edge with so many hostiles present. Daniel instructs over his shoulder, "I'd like everyone but Neith, Senn, and Doephluev to fall back, please."

"No!" snaps Geirahoel.

"It's okay, Geira-Mukori. I just want her to relax more, and she doesn't seem to like you four lady dragons, particularly."

Neith explains gently, "It's instinct to prioritize herself first. I believe her Grace Reignleif is the most instigating in this case."

"M-Me?" murmurs the blue dragon in surprise.

The grey knight nods. "Your Grace Ryuogriar, please take a couple of steps forward."

Ryuogriar looks at Daniel, who bobs his head in assent. She walks forward with grace and tranquility, avoiding any sort of hostility.

Yaulwembor watches her cautiously.

"Your Grace Reignleif," suggest Neith.

The azure empress takes one single step and the Faormyr bears her teeth, which Reignleif takes as a cue to step back. The knights and Stalvaltan guards all flinch nervously, since the titan had been fairly passive for a while now.

Geirahoel takes three steps forward cautiously, knowing the leader of the Einherjars was going to suggest it next. Again, the archfiend watches her, but doesn't growl nearly as aggressively. Considering she accepted the cookies, it must mean that, to the draconid's instincts, the two currently pregnant dragons don't pose a threat of 'competing' for a potential mate.

Daniel would like to think she's not going to turn out to be the draconic form of a praying mantis.

Daniel says gently, "I'm sorry, Reina-Mukori…"

"I understand," murmurs the gentle blue dragon. "I'll return ahead of the group. I will remain on standby with the troops, though."

Yaulwembor watches Reignleif depart with the knights and soldiers, leaving behind the gatonines, Neith, Doephluev, Senn, Geirahoel, Ryuogriar, and Daniel.

Gwenesphia asks as gently as she can over the distance, "Daniel, what do you plan to do next?"

He watches the colossus for a moment as she visibly relaxes some. She still seems a little nervous, but for now, she seems to have accepted the unofficial peace treaty.

Daniel replies, "Try to get her to sleep, if we can." Daniel slides his hand around in circles on his chest, then pointing to Yaulwembor's. She doesn't seem to understand at first, so Daniel tries a few other things, including hitting his own chest with his fist and tapping Nemaisol with his hand without moving to draw it.

"{If only you had a goddess you could summon to make this easier, eh Daniel?}"

Very funny. Even if I wanted to, I already used my wish.

"{Pfft! So? You think it'd be much more severe than what she did for Shek?}"

Daniel thinks for a moment. In truth, he's beginning to worry that the original plan is faltering. Among the dishes that Yaulwembor scarfed down were the trapdoor lobster organs, which an individual specimen was supposed to be able to tranquilize a dragon. The Faormyr could have stronger natural defenses, but that definitely complicates things.

Finally seeming to understand, the draconic being rolls from her crouching all-fours position to lay on her side, exposing her chest to Daniel. There, he can see the dull greyness of her scales from all of the magic being negated around the sharmelkolle content of them. Shards of the anti-magic bullet lodged into the gaps and surfaces of the scales, which are the tiny thread by which a terrifyingly powerful and talented warlock of a magic beast is prevented from tapping into her magic.

And, Daniel intends to remove them.

Even if he didn't want to, he won't be able to transport her by magic by any means; magic bag or teleportation. Additionally, healing magic won't work on her so long as her mana is negated. Read this novel at novelping(.)com for the best experience.

Daniel makes eye contact with Yaulwembor, and he brushes off his chest, then gesturing at her chest.

She moves her head to nuzzle him, pushing him somewhat forcefully. He stumbles, feeling like he just got bumped by a forklift with how unyieldingly blunt the 'nudge' was. But he laughs and walks to the impact zone of the polonium bullet, switching his gloves to disposable ones that he can leave behind, as well as tweezers. It'll be time-consuming work, but it shouldn't be too terrible. The smallest shards will likely have already alpha-decayed into lead, meaning he just needs to focus on the larger pieces. Her scales are thick, and the

specialized shell didn't penetrate, meaning the flecks remaining are all it takes to negate her mana.

Ryuogriar has approached a little closer, using her own void bag to produce food, which occupies the titan. She hesitantly accepts the additional food, allowing the platinum dragon empress to remain much closer to Daniel, just in case. "Mukori, this seems to be a lot of work."

"A lot less work than actually fighting her, don't you think?"

"I suppose… Though, if this were an option to begin with…"

"I'm aware."

"My love, have you thought about what happens when she wakes up in a strange place?"

"A little. We'll start with an illusion and try to convince her to remain peaceful."

"I hope the barriers are actually indestructible," remarks Treia dryly. "Otherwise, the Citadel will likely be uninhabitable for another few centuries."

"I think she's smarter than we originally thought. We'll try language comprehension magic on her again once her mana is restored."

"Around the same time she launches her attack," grumbles the gatonine Empress.

Gwenesphia and Peiburi laugh uneasily, while Goelselmo murmurs, standing a little ways away, "Unbelievable… To think the day would come that I would see *the* Yaulwembor this close…"

"Father, are we sure we shouldn't just finish it off?" asks Kuboen nervously.

“Remember, son, that these demon staves do not possess the mana capable of damaging the creature. Only the one Sir Helbeit or Lord Daniel have can penetrate its scales.”

“Shouldn’t we be careful of saying too much around it-I mean- *her*?” asks Peiburi cautiously. “Just because we think she can’t understand speech doesn’t mean she actually can’t. She could be faking it.”

The gatonine baron nods in agreement, “You’re right.”

Daniel carefully extracts the shards and chunks of polonium that he can find. Some of the splinters he pulls out of the scales seem to be other materials, possibly collected over years of life. He’s not sure how often Yaulwembor sheds her scales, but it’s possible it takes a long time. Each one is about the size of his palm, and even then, there are hundreds across her body, only possessing a slightly different color tone along her belly and the undersides of her neck and tail. The ridges on those adorning the upper surfaces, in contrast, are more pronounced, effective at diffusing and deflecting attacks of all kinds.

While he works, he jokes softly as to not raise Yaulwembor’s suspicions, “I wonder if I should be singing you a lullaby, huh? Though, I guess I’ve forgotten most of them… Hmm…” Daniel does his best, humming a tune, but the only words he can remember to murmur -since the song was actually in Japanese with exception of a single phrase-, “Good… sleep… sheep… sheep…,” trailing off his tone gently.

He laughs at himself. “Yeah, that won’t do… Oh! I know, how about the Black Wake Lullaby?”

Yaulwembor blinks once, shifting her head only a little as she watches Daniel with his tedious work.

“♪ Here we are, your time stopped here,

The end of your road with me.

We gave ‘em hell for many a year,

Now I carry your memory.

So rest well me love, and go on ahead.

I’ll see you at the end o’ the line.

The weight o’ the world be damned and be shed.

Our next round of drinks be mine. ♪”

The mechanic deposits the polonium shards in a small lead container to allow him to seal it and store the shards in his void bag for later disposal.

The ancient being watches him when she’s not actively eating the food provided by Ryuogriar, curious about the delicate precision work he’s doing to clean her scales. He doubts she knows at the moment that it’s what took away her mana, but she’ll likely figure it out.

Hekate calls out with the loudest voice Yaulwembor will allow without going on edge, “Daniel! You didn’t tell me you could sing!”

He scoffs. “What can I say other than ‘you never asked’?”

The feldrok empress huffs. “You must sing for me immediately when we’re done!”

He laughs, “Fine, fine. As you…” He trails off when he glances around to see *many* expectant stares looking at him. He sighs. “It’s not like I’m any good…”

“Pardon my saying so, Mukori, but we’ll be the judge of that,” replies Ryuogriar.

Daniel sighs with a smile on his lips. “You know I won’t refuse you. I’ll do my best.”

There are gleeful giggles around him, as well as one exasperated huff from Kuboen.

Daniel keeps working, placing one more particularly large piece of polonium into the container, and just then, a strange sensation washes over him, sort of like a sudden hot breeze from wind blowing across a fire. It’s not actual heat though, but a sort of foreboding feeling, and *everyone* around him seems to notice it as well. Ryuogriar tenses, Geirahoel suddenly spreads into a combat-ready posture, the gatonines take a defensive few steps back, and Neith and Doephluev start to stalk towards Daniel to defend him. Hekate’s ears fold back, and she growls, “D-Daniel?”

The human looks nervously at Yaulwembor, but her eyes are closed, and her breathing is steady. He suspects what he just felt, confirmed by everyone else going on guard, is the Faormyr’s imposing pool of mana immediately beginning to restore itself thanks to the anti-magic effect being removed.

“{Is this where you say ‘seemed like a good idea at the time’, Daniel?}”

The wayward mechanic does his best to stay calm. It’s the goal they had. It seems Yaulwembor the Archfiend of Mattarglos has finally fallen asleep from the tranquilizing toxins of the trapdoor lobsters Daniel fed to her. She looks rather majestic and peaceful, standing in stark contrast to the terrifying titan that attacked suddenly in the middle of another battle.

“I-Is she… asleep?” asks Gwenesphia nervously.

Daniel touches Yaulwembor's chest, watching the colossal eye for any movements in response.

Hekate asks, "Daniel?"

"Sorry, yes, she's asleep. You have a bag handy?"

The feldrok girl cautiously stalks forward as Ryuogriar steps up behind Daniel, observing as he seals the lead container and puts it in his magic bag.

"Will she even fit in the largest magic bag?" asks Ryuogriar as she observes the titan from up close.

"Mr. Lugrae does," replies Hekate, now dragging a large magic bag that she had in a smaller one that she keeps in the special pouch on her belt. She's referring to the Feral Feldrok, which Daniel stored in a large void bag after defeating it. He suspects that it's possible that the reason Hekate hasn't heard the voices of the other feldroks yet is that they are still 'bound' to Lugrae's body, since it was almost immediately that he put the body into the void bag that it still remains in today.

They may also hold off on speaking to her to allow her to grow more before imparting ancient wisdom, but he'll have to address the former guardian of the Citadel eventually.

Daniel and Hekate operate the large void bag with Geirahoel and Ryuogriar following them closely. Because Yaulwembor is so large, it takes a bit longer to store her in her entirety.

Just as the colossal tail is disappearing into the bag, the gatonines that are present approach.

Peiburi murmurs, "I… I don't believe it…"

“Some risk remains,” points out Ryuogriar warningly. “As intelligent as this powerful being is, she’d likely be able to return if she is able to leave our control.”

“I have some ideas on how to handle that,” replies Daniel. “I’ll have to run them by Wenlianna and Ahok to be sure, and might need a dragon to test it.”

““I am at your service, my Liege,”” declare two dragons simultaneously; the leader of the Einherjars, and the fourth of the Valkyries, Neith and Roeta respectively. They glance at each other, and Ryuogriar giggles into her hand warmly.

“If… I had not seen it all for myself, I fear I would not believe it…” murmurs Goelselmo, reiterating his sentiments from earlier. “The battle, the sheer power… that it could even be defeated.”

“That’s where you and Veiranoei will come in,” replies Hekate, taking charge of the conversation. “You’ll have to tell everyone that it’s defeated. To… um… confirm it?” She looks at Daniel, and he smiles and nods.

“That’s a good idea, Sweetpea.” He’s not good at it, but the mechanic -the ‘Emperor’ of the Fievegal-, hopes to reinforce the fact that Hekate is the ruler. Of course, she doesn’t make it easy when she beams with a big, child-like grin of bashful giddiness.

Daniel addresses the two dragons who volunteered for the testing next; “It’ll be painful. I won’t force or order anyone to do it. But, we’ll need some countermeasures in case Yaulwembor tries to test boundaries.”

Geirahoel clings to Daniel’s arm, glaring down at the large void bag that now contains one of the deadliest beings in the world. “You could just give the bag to me, Mukori. You won’t have to feel guilty or anything…”

Daniel puts his hand on hers, and she trails off, looking away from him guiltily.

“I appreciate the sentiment, I do, Mukori. But, she’s a unique being, as far as we can tell. I want to know if the Faormyrs really are non-sentient, or if her strength can be put to use for the Fievegal. At the very least, if she won’t be a problem anymore, then that’s good enough.”

“It’s a big gamble,” murmurs the orange Dragon Empress.

“At the very least,” starts Treia gently as she approaches, eyeing the bag suspiciously. “For the foreseeable future, Yaulwembor won’t be a problem. Now, we just have to get rid of Rohgattabor.”

“I have a question before we move on,” interjects Kuboen before anyone can respond to Treia. He glares at Daniel, asking somewhat caustically, “What’s supposed to make us so certain the demons won’t simply use Yaulwembor as a weapon against eastern nations?”

“Listen, you…!” snaps Hekate as she points at him, but Daniel puts his hand on her shoulder. Geirahoel only resists her own outburst by seeing Daniel stop the feldrok girl, and she squeezes his arm a little painfully in order to temper herself.

Daniel replies with a hint of coldness, “Our *allies* won’t need to worry about that, Lord Kuboen.”

This only hardens the male gatonine’s expression, and it makes Gwenesphia and Veiranoei look a little concerned. But, the human continues his retort.

“You have the good fortune of never facing a dragon in direct combat before, let alone the golems of the Citadel. To feel the heat of stone melting less than ten feet away from yourself. The acrid smell of armor, sand, and stone turning

into glass in seconds. You don't have to believe me, but I don't need Yaulwembor for anything."

The mechanic looks at Gwenesphia, saying gently, "I *will* ensure there are contingencies when we awaken Yaulwembor. If she can be made an ally, though, our family will benefit."

The gatonine Empress fidgets with her hands and smiles. "I know."

"If I may, then, what is our plan for Rohgattabor?" asks Lyrtef. "If you did successfully wound it, I doubt it's going to fall for any of our attempts to bait it out again."

"A graetcheth mantarouck is a monster," replies Senn. "It may try to outsmart us, but it won't likely be out of self-preservation."

"How well can dragons swim?" asks Daniel as he looks at Neith specifically.

"Excellently, your Grace!" answers Roeta a little overzealously, stepping forward to try to bring attention to herself. "I will do it."

"You don't even know what he wants," teases Treia.

"I trust the Emperor with my life, and I will serve his will."

Daniel begins laughing warmly, and everyone looks at him. Roeta blushes a little, asking, "Y-Your Grace?"

"Sorry, sorry. But, don't think I don't know what you're doing, Dame Roeta."

She flinches, glancing at Hekate, Ryuogriar, and Geirahoel each in turn. "M-M-My Liege, I-I-I don't know what you mean!"

“He means you’re sucking up to him,” retorts Doephluev bluntly. “I would know.” She grins, adding playfully, “I do it all the time.”

The pink Valkyrie stammers, and Ryuogriar says more regally, “You want promotions and prestige. I understand, my loyal Dame Roeta. You need not be so enthusiastic, though. As our loyal guardian, I shall ensure you are never without opportunities to shine.”

The young lesser dragon smiles and nods. “Th-Thank you, your Graces. I just… wish to do more.”

The Emperor sighs with a soft smile. He understands. He woefully under-tasks his followers, and they want to impress him. “My plan is to make a helmet that’ll let you breathe underwater so you can track down Rohgattabor. Once you locate it, we can attack it with magic from above.”

“Unless of course you simply want to drag it out of the water,” adds Doephluev with a cuteness to her tone.

“Gah! I was going to say that!” whines Hekate. “Daniel! I was going to say that!”

“Seems that’s two things I’m better than you at, your Greatness,” retorts the archoneldwyn smugly. The feldrok Empress clenches her fists, glaring angrily at the arrogant pseudo-elf.

Daniel calms her by putting his hand on her head between her large triangular ears. He says softly, “She’s better than me at magic, Sweetpea.”

Hekate glares up at him, now, confused by why he would say it that way. Her ears fold back, expressing her irritation. *Everyone* is better at magic than he is.

Hekate curls her lip to pout, and Daniel does his best to smile gently to emphasize his point without saying it.

Suddenly, the young ravenette's ears flick back up, and her eyes go wide. Daniel's smile widens.

To many, he is the strongest and most powerful 'sorcerer' in the entire world. For him to point out that someone else is stronger than he is at something is to make the simple statement; everyone is better at *something* than someone else. Doephluev has more combat skill as an assassin, and she happened to make a point just before Hekate. However, Hekate has the most mana of any of them. She's growing more and more skilled with firearms, especially elemental blasters, and few can use teleportation magic as effectively as she can, since it lets her justify being close to Daniel more often.

The young teen's expressive ears fold down to the sides this time, disappointed with herself. She murmurs, "I'm better at other things…"

Daniel grins, ruffling her hair. "Not least of which is being the most adorable, Hekate. So, either prove her wrong or ignore her."

"If I ignore her, she'll just seduce you," retorts the youngest of the empresses, putting on some impressive pouting.

"I was going to say that," remarks Ryuogriar, winking at Daniel.

"You're the biggest seducer! You… temptress!"

Ryuogriar and Geirahoel snicker, and Hekate bickers with them both, her cheeks rosy red from embarrassment.

With her self-esteem restored and a more vicious fight with Doephluev avoided, Daniel asks Goelselmo, "Baron Goelselmo, do you still wish to attempt slaying

Rohgattabor under the power of your-…?”

“Forgive me, Emperor Daniel, but no. It was reckless of us to make such a request.”

“Father!?” snaps Kuboen.

“Enough, Kuboen. I won’t endanger us unnecessarily again. If the Fievegal can eliminate it in an instant, there is no reason for us to drag out the fight.”

“I could make a suggestion…,” offers Treia as she raises her hand.

Everyone looks at her for a moment, and she clears her throat. “Would your family be able to take credit if Gwenesphia were the one to finish it off? I suspect the Dragonslayer can finish it with one hit, yes?” She looks to Daniel for confirmation.

“It should be able to, given the injuries it sustained so far. At least, as long as the shot finds its mark. The flesh is much less durable than dragon scale.”

“So it shall be!” declares Roeta proudly. “I’ll find and drag the beast from the water, and her Grace Gwenesphia shall finish it with the Dragonslayer. It would be my honor to carry out this plan, my Liege.”

Daniel and the others laugh warmly, and he replies, “That’ll be a big help. Baron?”

Goelselmo nods. “Yes, if one of my children defends our lands from Rohgattabor and ends its tyranny,…”

“That’s good. Only a handful of people in the entire world have the unique ability to cast the spell dormant within the Dragonslayer,” replies Geirahoel pointedly.

When everyone looks at her, she blushes and crosses her arms. “It’s true, *isn’t it*?”

The strange emphasis she puts on that point makes everyone realize it. She’s making it ‘special’ that Gwenesphia will be one of the ‘chosen ones’ that can use the Dragonslayer, as if it is a magic weapon that chooses its wielders.

“{Heh heh heh… If you want, Daniel I could… wait, nevermind. Ask your goddess to do just that, though. She could turn it into a magic weapon that only fires for the ‘chosen one(s)’.}”

Daniel smirks at Kaeralegier’s suggestion. It’s very tempting, but if that were the case, he’d like all of the firearms he produces to be usable only by their original owners. Because it’s mechanical, he’d have to devise a way to implement magic components just to allow the spell effect to work, and that would also mean letting magic artisans take a peek at the design more closely. But, if it means preventing them from falling into the hands of enemies, it may be more worth it.

The piles of projects he needs to tackle continue to multiply. Maybe it’s for the best that he’ll be on ‘house arrest’ again for the foreseeable future.

I’ll ask her if she’d be willing.

“{I’m sure she will. Not just anyone would throw away their status for a mere human. No offense.}”

None taken. But, she simply tried to take responsibility for something beyond her control. Even Ladies Chaos and Order didn’t seem that upset.

“{Hah! They don’t get ‘upset’, Daniel. All of ‘that’ was a show.}”

This surprises Daniel, and thankfully, Hekate is the one guiding the conversation between the others by asking if water magic could pull Rohgattabor out of the lake, and Senn explains the potential consequences, as well as the massive amount of mana that would be required -which could always have the potential to spawn more monsters-.

A… show? thinks Daniel, which Kaeralegier can hear.

"{Of course. The two primordials define existence. They aren't so petty as to actually love or hate anyone or anything. We are all products of their whims, but only because that is the nature of their eternal being. They don't need worship or prayer, they don't have petty grievances with this race or that, and they don't get upset by mistakes, even if it means the destruction of a world. The problem is, they may decide that a being must be removed. That said, that's why Ryukana was never in any real danger. If she was truly problematic, she would have been erased instantly. We 'gods' and 'goddesses' of the Divine Realm fear destruction as you humans do with death, but for them, it is nothing more than erasing a pencil mark, whether it was right or wrong. Oh, and before you ask, don't. There is no 'why' with them. Or at least, 'letting life be life' is the only answer you'll ever truly get. The show was just treat the gods and goddesses like the living beings they are; beings that need guidance, purpose, discipline, and praise.}"

I see…

Daniel looks at everyone around him. Were it not for Ryukana, he would likely be rotting away at his job, drinking his nights and weekends away to race towards the end of his life in a world of poisonous luxury.

It has been said that good times make weak men, and weak men make hard times. Somewhere in that part of the cycle is where Daniel was.

Daniel doesn't know if he's truly in the category of 'strong men' to make good times out of the hard times, but, as he observes his loved ones and friends discussing in various tones of respect, bickering, cheer, and confusion, he can't help but feel immensely lucky and thankful to Ryukana, as well as the Primordial Goddesses who allowed everything to work out.

Maybe I should be praying to you and Ryukana. You are goddesses after all.

Kaeralegier's voice laughs warmly in his head, for no other reason than she enjoys the thought.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 130: Finishing the Monster of the Lake

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 130: Finishing the Monster of the Lake

Daniel is kneeling down and laying against Gwenesphia's back on the end of the tree trunk they're making use of as her shooting bench. She's too small to fire the 'Dragonslayer' safely, so Daniel's shoulder will be the back stop as she does her best to aim from an awkward position slightly off to the side and under the stock of the heavy rifle.

She's trembling a little, since it's a great deal of pressure on her to be the one to slay Rohgattabor for her family's honor, which isn't lacking, but can certainly benefit from the boost. Her brothers, sister, and father are nearby, each still carrying the semi-automatic assault rifles that they're sub-leasing from Aramellianna. It's likely that enough ammo expended by them *could* bring down the ray-like monster, but the Dragonslayer should be able to do it in one shot. Now that he has learned some lessons, Daniel intends to make high explosive rounds a priority, as well as manufacturing more of the Dragonslayers to prevent the current shortage from hindering them again. As he ponders, he also considers making a 'free sale' version of his weapons, which can afford to be lost control of. He'd likely go with a break-barrel style of rifle with a single-action hammer. It'd be less convenient for the operators of such weapons, but he'd be a little more comfortable with selling them outside of the Fievegal, particularly in countries like Mattarglos, where they have very dangerous beasts and monsters to contend with. The appropriate blacksmiths will eventually figure out the alloys and tempering methods Daniel has had Xyreko use, meaning that cannons wouldn't be far behind rifles of any kind. Ancient

medieval cannons were large and heavier than their successors because enough metal can resist the forces and heat. Modern barrels were more efficient in mass because of the discoveries of stronger alloys and better techniques.

The Earthling has toyed with the idea of making even lighter and thinner-barreled rifles using mithril or sharmelkolle, but it feels a little wasteful -and extremely dangerous- to have such a valuable weapon when good ol' steel can do the job plenty well enough.

It hits him that he can solve a couple of problems, potentially, by making a less efficient rifle that can use magical equipment.

And, that idea is to make an electrically-fired rifle.

For now, he is going to act as the backstop for the Dragonslayer's recoil so that the pregnant gatonine, who isn't quite starting to show yet, doesn't take the brunt of the rifle's kick.

"Y-You know, Daniel… I don't mind if one of my siblings were the one doing this…"

"You'll do fine. It's just a bigger version of the rifle you have been using."

"Y-Yeah, but this one… It actually… What if I miss?"

"Let's hope there are no dragons on the other side of the lake then…"

Geirahoel, Reignleif, Ryuogriar, and Hekate all snicker, standing behind Daniel and Gwenesphia to watch over them. Doephluev is seated beside Daniel, staying out of the way but looming around him, as usual. Vaergraes and Senn are also on standby, waiting with Veiranoei, Goelselmo, Treia, and Peiburi.

Across from them, relative to Daniel, are Kuboen and Lyrtef, who are protecting their sister.

“Father, when should I attack?” asks a voice that Daniel finds soothing, though it makes some of the gatonines tremble. It’s none other than Arachne, the death knight summoned by Vaergraes and further empowered with Hekate’s mana.

Gwenesphia’s ears pivot slightly to listen, and Daniel replies to the half-spider-like being. “I’d like you to read its movements and intercept any attempts at melee. But, your safety is just as important to me as everyone else, so don’t be reckless.”

“Of course, Father. I shall remain vigilant.”

Daniel looks at the sky over the lake, where Neith is orbiting while watching below. Roeta is under the water, and a large trail of bubbles indicates her movement in the water. Once Daniel revealed the simplistic diving helmet idea, which was easy enough to modify onto the dragon’s helmet, she was excited to begin the mission, since Dragons -especially lesser dragons with minimal mana- have to hold their breath to dive. As a mostly-reptilian species, dragons are well-equipped for long stints of low activity, as well as conserving oxygen. She even demonstrated how she intends to swim with her big wings that could only be seen as drag normally; the pink dragon is able to keep them mostly in their ‘stored’ position at her sides, but then flexes them in a wave-like pattern that creates thrust. It sort of reminds Daniel of how an octopus swims by pulling its body forward with a low profile and then spreading out and using the larger surface area for thrust by pushing backwards. It’s not exactly the same, but it’s fascinating to watch the avian titan swim, which tickled her even more to impress Daniel.

This, of course, means he and the Empresses will be swimming in the lake when they return to the Fievegal. They obviously weren't jealous or anything. They told him so themselves.

They just want to verify that the lake is safe for their children in the future.

Or something.

Still, he's happy to oblige. His family is quirky in their own ways, but it's never not interesting to him.

The human mechanic notices Gwenesphia trembling under his chest, and he gently kisses her cheek. "Relax, Gwen. You'll do fine."

She blushes, glancing over her shoulder at him. "I… Thanks, Daniel… Um… Can I make a request after this?"

"Always."

"Good. I'll hold you to that, then."

"Wellll, whether or not I grant your request…"

She scowls at him playfully, and he laughs. He kisses her lips this time, adding warmly, "For luck."

She squeaks a bashful hum, facing forward suddenly. She whines softly, "That's not fair… And, isn't a maiden supposed to do that? F-F-For her lover?"

"Well if so, you've been neglecting your duties to me, haven't you, *wife*?"

She hums, now even more embarrassed. She was trying to counter-tease him, but it has only made the hole she's digging for herself even deeper.

She takes a deep breath and calms herself, ready to go. “Someone tell Dame Roeta to hurry up before my heart bursts!”

“Done!” calls out Hekate. “And I know your pain!”

The young feldrok girl glares at Daniel for a moment, repeating, “*I said,* ‘I know your pain’! Daniel! You butt!”

“Whaaat? I didn’t hear you,” replies Daniel loudly, causing several of the others to laugh. They’re not holding back at all this time, so he’s trying to lighten the mood.

“I SAID-…!”

“Wait!” calls out Reignleif. “Look! The bubbles are headed this way.”

“Got it! Thank you Reina-Mukori.”

Hekate stares with her mouth agape. Reignleif’s volume was half of what the young empress’s was just prior, and though the teen knows he was being a tease, she can’t help but display her utter disbelief.

“Daniel, I swear you will rue this day!”

He laughs, which prompts the little feldrok girl to growl and draw her ice blaster. “If I kill this thing before Gwen does, then I officially beat Doephluev. Right?”

The archoneldwyn in question flinches, turning a little pale and glancing at Daniel nervously. He’s her only protection from Hekate if she tries to change the rules.

And, Daniel plays right along. “If you do that, then it’s only fair for Doephluev to have a chance to strike as well, isn’t it, Sweetpea? Or, better yet, does that make Gwenesphia a part of your little bet, now?”

Both young women who wagered during the earlier parts of the mission flinch. They glance at each other, and Hekate huffs. She grumbles, “Fine. I’ll just freeze it in place if it gets too rowdy.”

Daniel grins deviously. He had every intention of ensuring Gwenesphia defeated Yaulwembor before the other two could finish their attacks, since the rifle *should* be able to finish it instantly.

And, as the bubbles denoting Roeta’s position get closer, Daniel urges gently, “Follow the line formed by the bubbles to a little ways ahead. In this case, we know the bubbles are behind where Roeta actually is. But, you also don’t want to hit Roeta, so make sure you check your target carefully.”

“I-I will.” The gatonine empress in his arms swallows hard, nervous about defeating a legendary monster on her own.

“It’s just like the rifle you’ve been using. You’ll be fine.”

“G-Got it…”

She flexes her shoulders and legs a little. Her tail flops against Daniel’s thigh, flicking back and forth as she tries to steady her nerves. Her expressive ears, much like Hekate’s, twitch and turn, listening to the world around them.

The bubbles are almost to the shoreline, meaning Roeta should appear any moment.

***

Shortly before, Roeta puts her modified helmet on. She can feel air rushing around her muzzle continuously. It's a somewhat stale air, lacking the normal scents and taste of what fills the world. However, she can tell it is fresh and clean air, particularly *because* it lacks all but the necessities of air, compressed into a mana state when charging special crystals. This chapter was taken from novelping.com without permission.

She takes a few deep breaths and crawls into the water, instinctively refusing to breathe out. However, she can feel the air continuing to run in her helmet. It's noisy, and the water flutters around her jaw, but her vision is protected and the air remains around her nostrils.

She lets a little bit of her air out and inhales again just as quickly. She is able to breathe.

She exchanges a little more liberal of a breath, feeling relief that the crystal keeps up with her breathing.

And, she's underwater.

Roeta, a mere lesser dragon, is breathing underwater.

She can't help but laugh, and the crystal still keeps up, causing her to laugh even more. She lifts her head out of the water, where Neith is observing her, using his magic to hover without flapping his wings. "It works, General! I can breathe underwater! I can't believe it!"

"Our Liege has told me of one of his hobbies on Earth called 'scuba diving', where humans use air in tanks on their backs to see deeper in the ocean than they could without."

“Hahaha! This is so exciting! I wonder if his Grace will allow me to accompany him when he decides to do this scuba diving once more.”

“I will certainly express your interest to him, if you do not do so yourself. Now go, Dame Roeta.”

He can’t see it because of her helmet, but she grins happily. “I shall not fail!”

Just as she starts to dive, she pokes her head back up. “Um, General… please ensure they do not shoot me with the Dragonslayer. I… I remember what it did to Magnir…”

“I will defend you personally if her Grace, Gwenesphia, is careless.”

“Thank you.”

Roeta dives into the water, fluttering her wings in small, quick movements to give her thrust through the water. It’s easy to scan when she’s moving through the water, not needing to resurface to breathe. She talks out loud, though no one can hear her.

“This is so very fascinating. Fish! Oooo… I see you, trapdoor lobster. Mmm, I’m getting hungry just thinking about it. Oh, mantaroucks. Wrong ones… I’ll be back for you later. Tell me where your boss is, and I’ll be on my way.”

She swiftly avoids the aquatic predators, racing away from them as she continues her search. She feels like she’s merely flying, though the pressure and drag are clear reminders that she is deep within a lake. There is also the relative darkness from the tannins and other debris in the water filtering the sun.

“Let’s see… if I was a big, magically powered monster, where would I hide?” She scoffs. “I suppose to my Liege, that’s exactly what I appeared as, huh?

So… a cave? No… There's too much silt for this lake to have much of a cave, I would guess… A fair amount of plant life, I see… Her Grace, Gwenesphia, huh? I hope… She wouldn't attack me, right? I mean… She wants 'honor' for her family, and I may be a lesser dragon…"

She shakes her head as she swims. "No. That would be insane. Daniel would never allow it. He'd have just let her finish Yaulwembor."

The pink dragon nods, and just as she's satisfied with her conclusion, she spots a cloud of red in the water. It's not very thick, so it's not a great deal of blood, but the red coloring stands out, sending a flash of fear momentarily through the Valkyrie.

"He's dead, he's dead, he's dead… calm down…" murmurs the dragon, looking more directly at the crimson coloring in the water. It's thankfully not a cruel and spiteful dragon lord, nor a selfish and violent knight. Instead, it's little more than a blood trail.

She smiles, though her heart is beating quickly. She does her best to steady herself, and she follows the trail of red, which is now mixing with stirred up silt.

Daniel mentioned that he wounded Rohgattabor after being pulled into the water by the beast, confirming that he is supremely dangerous, even if he truly does have so little mana.

He also survived under the water by himself. He truly is a crafty individual. Roeta is in love with Magnir, and is so thankful that Morthybargaron and his brother are gone. Daniel called for a vote among the dragons, which also included Hekate, determining whether or not to revive the red knight or the green sage, who were still in storage bags.

Not a single dragon voted for Mulmonbargarnaed to be revived, and only a couple of the female dragons voted for Zophtyarloscrahm, the green sage. Roeta never liked the latter, but she had very few interactions with him, and he was mostly just smug.

Regardless, in the present, Roeta is deeply thankful for her new lord and emperor, since he lets the dragons be as monogamous or polygamous as they choose to be, and it's easy to understand why the Empresses adore him so. He treats his subordinates with respect, spares no secrets or expenses to give them the best protection they can be provided, and will be the first on the line to defend his companions.

The rose pink dragon finds Rohgattabor as it tries to disguise itself by fluttering its pectoral fins to bury itself in the silt and mud. Of course, this creates a very noticeable swirl of mud, even if she didn't have the trail of blood to follow, which is a wound that likely opened due to the monster having to flee her the first time.

Roeta flexes her claws. She's not much larger than Rohgattabor, even in her dragon form, and if she's not careful, he'll be able to generate a lot more thrust in the water than she can. The Valkyrie is an avian being, meant to fly through the skies. Her ancestors evolved the ability to swim in order to become one of the apex predators of the world. She could probably kill Rohgattabor herself, but he'll put up a fight.

Thankfully, she has an effectively endless air supply, meaning she can drag the graetcheth mantarouck out of the water if she has to walk across the floor of the lake.

Which is exactly what happens.

As soon as she tackles the monster from above, it tries to take off, and she forces it down to the lake floor, keeping her claws, arms, head, and body out of its strike zone for the deadly claws it has. It immediately begins thrashing and flapping its massive pectoral fins like underwater wings, trying to get free. Roeta digs her claws in, growling and grunting as she struggles to stay on the monster's back. She can feel water sloshing around her helmet, some of which splashes the transparent visor Daniel added to make it a mostly-sealed container for the air.

Still, she has a good grip on Rohgattabor, and she shifts her claws to where she is gripping the edges of its pectorals, which gives her a great deal of control over its ability to flee.

From there, she shifts, prying the monster from the lake floor so she can stand up, and it wriggles and twists as violently as it can, trying everything it can to fight free or get its claws aimed at her to strike.

"*Alright, Roeta. One step at a time. I'm sure Sir Neith will alert everyone we're coming."* She grunts and strains, forcefully walking through the water at a slow pace as Rohgattabor ferociously fights to get free. Its strength is impressive, and more than once, the monster nearly pulls free. The pink Valkyrie nearly loses her footing, and the strain causes her to hold her breath more than once, only to remind herself that she can keep breathing.

It's a little slower-going than she had planned for, but thanks to Daniel, Roeta has all the time in the world to make her way to shore under the water. She looks up a few times to confirm that she's going the right way. Neith is floating in the air with his wings spread, using his body as a compass to direct the pink dragon towards the engagement area.

Roeta's breathing increases in fervor from the exertion, which is usually pretty rare for dragons. Now that exerting effort underwater is an option, she'll definitely be inviting anyone who wants to join her in exercising and training under the Citadel Lake to improve their fitness. Dragons can remain powerful warriors even with long periods of hibernation, but -for lesser dragons especially-, training the body can have many beneficial effects to make up for the reduced mana they possess.

The surface of the lake gets closer and closer as Roeta trudges through the soft mud, stirring up thick clouds of silt as she powers through. She comes to a stop briefly as Rohgattabor gets a particularly spunky second or third wind, bursting a great variety of thrashes and tenses of its muscles and nearly escaping. The pink dragon wrestles it to the ground again, which minimizes its actual leverage against her, even though it can also use its crab-like legs underneath. Thanks to the silt and mud, though, it has no chance of gaining enough traction to actually overcome Roeta's draconic strength.

As such, she manages to outlast the monstrous mantarouck's strength, and she pries it from the mud once more. Its huge surface area does give it some suction against the lake floor, but it's still not enough to defeat the Valkyrie.

"Nice try, Rohgattabor. But, I am Dame Roeta the Fourth Valkyrie, Warrior Dragon in service to the Fievegal! Hahahaha!"

Once the monster is free of the bottom, she resumes her march towards the surface. Her head is nearly breaching the water, so she slouches to keep her own drag in the water higher, so that Rohgattabor doesn't have as easy of a time off-balancing her.

Roeta is panting now, and when she can tell that she's less than two body-lengths from the lakeshore, she lifts her head cautiously above the water. From

the stories, Daniel could pick off a dragon's head from range like an archer hitting a mouse. Roeta was one of the lucky few to be suffocated into unconsciousness during the attempted capture of the Citadel, and Geirahoel was wounded at range and nearly perished, from what she heard. Thankfully, it's Gwenesphia this time, so the odds of an instant kill are lower.

She spots Daniel and Gwenesphia laying together against a staged tree trunk with the rifle laid out across it. She feels another momentary sense of dread seeing the muzzle of the rifle, knowing what it can do, but Gwenesphia waves her hand, signaling that she sees the pink dragon.

Before Roeta can respond, she is yanked back into the water by Rohgattabor getting one more burst of strength, and the water violently splashes from the graetcheth mantarouck trying to break free in one last desperate attempt to escape from the pink Valkyrie.

She strains, dragging the monster back towards the shore and hefting her head above the water. She shouts, "To my left, my Liege!"

She sees Daniel wave his left hand in a big arc ending to the left, confirming which side she'll be pivoting to throw the deadly menace onto shore to present it to Gwenesphia for the finish.

Once she has enough of her body out of the water, Roeta throws the graetcheth mantarouck prowling the lake out onto the shore. It flails and flops in the air, trying to regain control of it's fall, and Roeta scrambles up out of the water and partially away from the monster, in case Gwenesphia misses. Daniel improved the Dragonslayer after capturing the Citadel, so even a direct shot against a dragon's scales has a very high chance of lethality.

As soon as Rohgattabor slams to the ground, it tries to scramble up on its crab-like legs to flee, but a chaotic staccato of thunderous reports from the rifles wielded by the gatonines fills the air with cacophonous noise. They fire quickly, hitting various parts of the monster and causing it to buck and flinch. At least one shot hits the Mantarouck's legs, dropping it with a deep slam against the ground.

It tries to use its massive striking claws to push itself backwards, failing to gain purchase with its feet due to the heavy mess of mud caused by the battle earlier in the day.

The bursts of rifle fire continue, making it hard to think for Roeta, since it does startle her with every single shot. Some of the bullets ricochet off of Rohgattabor's claws, and the injuries appearing on its thick skin are miniscule.

The pink Valkyrie is ready to pursue the monster back into the water if need be. She can feel the air continuing to flow out of the bottom of her helmet, ready to provide her breathing if she has to dive in again. Her heart is pounding and she can feel the exertion it took to bring Rohgattabor this far, but she'll uphold her duty. New chapters come out on novelping . com first.

KABOOOM!

The rose dragon flinches at the terrifying shout of the Dragonslayer, one of the few things in the world that can bring down the mightiest of beings in a single attack. A massive column of fire and smoke is projected by the barrel, while all of the gatonines and Hekate recoil from the painfully loud clap of thunder.

Blood sprays from Rohgattabor's head, and the pectoral fins suddenly curl upwards as if the monster intends to take flight, while the striking claws stretch out, lifting the monster's head. It holds this strange pose for a long time, even

as its legs start to twitch and claw at nothing. Its humongous mouth hangs open as it looks up to the sky.

And, all at once, Rohgattabor collapses like a marionette whose strings have been cut. The massive beast flattens out, losing the luster in its eyes. Even its skin seems to dull as pinpoints of red appear all across its massive body.

Roeta relaxes a little, though she's mindful of the water. Just because Rohgattabor was defeated doesn't mean there aren't other mantaroucks in the lake ready to pounce on inattentive prey. They might even attack her if they don't realize she's a dragon.

Once it sinks in, Baron Goelselmo and his family, as well as Treia, Gwenesphia, and Hekate all cheer. A whistle pierces through the sounds, and Roeta scans the group for the source; Daniel. He's signalling everyone to fall in, and the pink Valkyrie lowers to all fours to trot towards the human Emperor, since her low mana isn't enough that she can be liberal with it, even for taking off into flight. She can make herself weightless for an emergency take off, but now isn't an emergency.

It's a celebration.

Naturally, Neith is the first one to arrive and land, and he inspects the fallen graetcheth mantarouck carefully. He prods it and flexes its pectorals and mouth, attempting to provoke it. He also takes his massive custom-fitted helmet off to listen to its back, obviously listening for something like a heartbeat or other signs of life.

As she reaches the group, Neith nods at Daniel, declaring, "It's dead, my Liege. Excellent shot, your Grace Gwenesphia."

She goes weak in the knees as Daniel walks with her, and the human mechanic supports her. She stammers, “I… I really… Was this really… me?”

Everyone laughs warmly, and Daniel reassures her. “Of course, Gwen. You did this.”

Ryuogriar teases, “‘Empress Gwenesphia the Titansbane’ has a modest ring to it, yes? That is the human-kin way of naming their heroes?”

“‘Fiendslayer’,” adds Hekate cheekily. These two nicknames cause the gatonine woman to blush and become embarrassed. She stammers helplessly as the teasing continues.

“‘Gwen the Giant Crusher’,” declares Reignleif with a soft voice possessing a mischievous edge.

“Oooo! That’s a good one, Reina!” replies Hekate excitedly.

“Gwen the… the…” starts Geirahoel quickly, trying to join in, but she embarrasses herself when she can’t think of anything, and she whines. She finally blurts out, “Gwen the genius?”

A handful of the people present laugh, particularly Daniel, which prompts the orange dragon to storm over to him and grip his collar at the front, whining as she shakes him.

Roeta watches from above with a smile, since she and Neith currently tower over their humanoid forms. Geirahoel, and really any of the dragons, could snap Daniel into pieces with the force of strength they could generate. Even Hekate could likely kill him with a mere flick if she really wanted to.

Daniel is weak. And yet, he is powerful.

And, as she watches Geirahoel impotently express frustration on him, Roeta can't help but let out a little laugh. Daniel's real power isn't from magic, but from how he surrounds himself with people who care about him as much as he cares about them.

Peiburi climbs onto the monster's body, standing triumphantly as she cheers, "Hahahaha! This is incredible! Three of Mattarglos's worst monsters, all in the span of a week! Gwen! Good job!" The younger sister makes a gesture with both hands in front of her close together. It looks like she's repeatedly squeezing or kneading the air, a little playful gesture gatonines sometimes do called 'scrunching', which is sort of like an excited thumbs up.

Baron Goelselmo approaches and hugs Gwenesphia firmly. He begins laughing and crying at the same time, and the pink Valkyrie watches all of it with a warm expression hidden by her helmet. Before long, Gwenesphia joins her father in crying happy tears, and her brothers hug her and pat her on the back proudly.

Daniel steps away for a moment to approach Roeta, and she lowers her head so that she is as close to his level as she can get, which is effectively laying on the ground for her. But, she doesn't mind.

She *could* easily defeat Daniel here and now, but she has no desire to. If anything, she would consider him a friend, now that she's learning more about him. She wouldn't object if she didn't have Magnir and he asked her again to be one of his consorts. She doesn't love him yet, but she admires him enough to get there if things were different.

Daniel bows his head respectfully, "Dame Roeta, you have performed your role perfectly. Excellent work, and thank you."

“Th-Thank you, my Liege! This helmet worked perfectly. Your strange wisdom never ceases to impress me, even after my long life.”

“And, your bravery has continued to impress me. You’re in the inner circle though. I know there’s not an abundance of things I can give you off hand yet, but…”

“Speak no more of it, your Grace. It is my honor to live as I have been, and to finally serve a lord who…” She scoffs and smiles tenderly. “… Who simply thanks me for what I do.”

Daniel smirks. He adds, “I’m glad, but I will be compensating you fairly as well. Please continue to take care of us.”

“And, I ask the same of you, my Emperor.”

The Honeydip family of gatonines all approach to share their own gratitude with the pink Valkyrie, and she feels a little bashful, but graciously accepts the thanks. She glances at the Dragon Empresses, who are now standing with Daniel and Hekate towards the back, and Ryuogriar smiles warmly. *“[Excellent work, my loyal sister. You do us dragons proud.]”*

Pride flows through Roeta’s body, and it all feels worth it. Strength comes from many parts of a whole. If anything is to be learned from an otherworlder with no magic, it has to be that; the sum of the parts is what defines an outcome. Roeta was born with far less mana than any of the other dragons around her by orders of magnitude. And yet, she feels truly like a dragon for once; a being celebrated and respected by all, but because of what she can do, rather than hated for what she can’t.

Daniel looks at the water, and he says calmly, “Baron Goelselmo, if I may…”

The gatonine baron is still quite jovial from the defeat of one of the major plagues of the Honeydip domain. “Please, my boy! After all of this, you would honor me to call me ‘Father’.”

Daniel smiles warmly and dips his head approvingly. “I’m honored, then, Father, though please grant me leeway to get used to it.”

“Of course. You outrank me after all.” The friendly gatonine father, still with damp cheeks from crying in joy, laughs as he elbows Daniel warmly.

The mechanic, for his part, asks his desired question. “Will the ecosystem of the lake be irrevocably destroyed by a sharp decline in mantarouck population.”

This finally prompts everyone else to look at the lake, where alligator-like eyes are peeking above the water to observe the shoreline.

The baron turns serious, growling softly, “No. The world will not suffer if there are fewer mantaroucks. Many indigenous species have disappeared from these lands, thanks to the mantaroucks headed by Rohgattabor, but certainly not him alone.”

“That’s good, since it looks like they’re still hungry.” Daniel gestures to the water, and the others go on defense. Daniel requests, “Neith, Mukoris, please reduce yours and Dame Roeta’s size. Everyone else, ready for another round of battle.”

“Can we have the knights join us, Daniel?” asks Hekate.

“They should be able to handle it,” offers Vaergraes. “I’ve only witnessed a little of the Grand Duchess’s illustrious soldiers, but they are formidable warriors.”

“You don’t have to sell me. Signal them to join us in the fray. Avoid damaging the lake or shoreline any more than we have if you can. Whenever you’re

ready.”

Neith nods, and begins the spell on himself, and Ryuogriar steps forward, casting the spell on Roeta to conserve the pink Valkyrie’s limited mana for emergencies.

Without the gigantic dragons present, it’s a smorgasbord of bite-sized prey for the giant-mouthed ambush predators lurking in the lake.

And, there’s still quite a few of them.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 131: A Dangerous Request

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 131: A Dangerous Request

Wenlianna paces the lounge on the airship near the tea table where one of the magic radios Daniel helped her develop. She has her notebook in her hand and open to a page with various observations and plans scribbled on it haphazardly.

Of course, she hasn't been able to read a single word for the past hour, becoming more and more anxious in proportion to the time that has passed.

There's no way they'll lose, right? Hekate and the Dragon Empresses are with them. Plus, Mother sent the knights as well. That's more than enough.

The magic artisan hums in anxious frustration as she continues worrying.

What if there's something else? What if Yaulwembor wasn't the last of its kind? Should we go? Should I have accompanied them? What…?

"Wenlianna…" states the stern and matronly voice of her mother, yanking the eldest Stalvaltan daughter out of her thoughts.

"Y-Yes, Mother?"

Aramellianna sighs. "I've called you three times."
"S-Sorry. I was just… thinking…"

The Grand Duchess sips at her drink, the green band wine that Daniel presented to her as a gift. She pats the lounge sofa she's seated on. "Come. Sit, Wenlianna."

Haldestania is seated next to the Grand Duchess, drawing with ‘crayons’, which Daniel provided for her, along with paper. The colored wax writing utensils are surprisingly easy for children to use, and apparently easier and less costly to make. And, she has a huge selection of colors. Bunnrimae is also playing a board game against Aoloan, who is teaching her as they play.

Wenlianna nervously fidgets, but she obeys her mother, walking over sheepishly and plopping down next to the matriarch of the Stalvaltan household.

Aramellianna doesn’t even ask, pouring a small amount of wine for her daughter.

“M-Mother? I… Daniel said…”

“You had your cycle last week, did you not?”

The magic artisan turns pale and flinches. She looks down, admitting quietly, “Y-… Yes…”

“I’m not ashamed of you, my darling Wenlie. It took your father and I several tries before you graced us with your presence. Haldestania was the least troublesome, if we were to compare.”

“I was?” asks the youngest daughter happily as her third eldest sister, Yormolett giggles nearby.

The Grand Duchess pets the youngest girl’s head, adding, “Yes, my sweet baby. Your father barely looked at me, and you came along.”

This time, Kera’tai and Aoloan snicker softly in amusement.

Aramellianna then continues her point to her eldest child as she gives the wine glass to Wenlianna. “You’ll find success soon enough. From what I have seen,

Daniel has had no issues yet."

This time, Yormolett snickers as she glances at Kera'tai and Aoloan, who grin playfully.

"But, that is not what is troubling you, is it?"

Wenlianna looks down at her mother's knowing question. "No…"

The Grand Duchess taps her glass gently to Wenlianna's, nodding as she lifts her glass to take a sip, and Wenlianna relents, drinking her own. She sighs as the sharp taste passes her tongue.

"I would trade my prized garden to send Daniel back in time to produce this drink for all of the times I was waiting on my dear husband." She cups Wenlianna's cheek gently.

"During times of war, when your beloved rides off to battle, it is a luxury to believe he will return in only a day or so. Normally, campaigns take weeks or months." She sips her wine, smirking. "And, a Stalvaltan daughter was born eight months later." <Author Note: 10 Earth months is approx. 8.33 Zenkon months.>

Wenlianna and Yormolett blush, embarrassed by how straightforward their mother is.

"Wh-What do I do to… pass the time? I… I can't…"

"You'll have to learn to endure, my dear Wenlianna. And, if you can, distract yourself with work."

Wenlianna sighs. "I should have brought Lady Ahok…"

Before she finishes her thought, the radio activates. *“Guardian One, Mechanic One.”*

Wenlianna all but dives on the radio to grip the microphone, nearly fumbling it as she desperately tries to alleviate her anxiety with the reassurance of hearing Daniel’s voice. “M-Mechanic One, Guardian One, I’m here, Daniel. Over.”

Daniel’s voice laughs lightly over the radio, and Wenlianna blushes, recalling what she did wrong. “S-Sorry, D-um, Mechanic One.”

“No worries, Guardian One. We’ll get there. Mechanic One requesting extraction. Landing zone is secure. Over.”

“Extraction?” asks Wenlianna only to the ones around her.

Kera’tai answers, “That’s the order to come get them.”

“Ah! Right!” She quickly squeezes the transmitter button. “Mechanic One, confirmed. Extraction… coming?”

Aramellianna snickers lightly, and she gestures over her shoulder. “Sir Magnir, please relay to the bridge to depart for the lake to pick up our Imperial rulers.”

“At once, your Grace,” replies the blue dragon. He leaves the room long enough to head to the bridge and inform them to depart.

Wenlianna repeats, “Extraction coming, Mechanic One. We’re on our way. Over.”

“Ten-four, Guardian One. Mechanic One standing by, over.”

“Mechanic One, Grendel Five. Is now a good time? Over.” The voice is a slightly higher octave male voice, distinct for the goblins.

“*Go ahead, Grendel Five. Over.”*

“Grendel Five requesting additional armored support. Over.”

There’s a moment’s pause, and Wenlianna looks at Aramellianna. The only goblins that should be requesting armored support are those carrying out the ‘invasion’ of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy as they establish footholds and secure the Grand Duchy before the full invasion of Mornistae will begin.

“Grendel Five, Mechanic One, we haven’t received any reports of combat engagement today. Are you under attack? Over.”

“Negative, Mechanic One. Vassal villages of Zone One requesting increased defense after seeing Iron Drakes. Over.”

Aramellianna crosses her arms. “Even I haven’t seen the… ‘tanks’ in action.It sounds like the invasion is more than welcome in my territory.”

Her daughters laugh softly, and Daniel’s voice returns after a moment to obviously discuss it with the companions with him. *“Guardian One, Mechanic One, is Chief Guardian available? Over.”*

Aramellianna holds her hand out for the microphone and Wenlianna hands it over a little reluctantly. The Grand Duchess inspects the device for a moment before squeezing the button.

“Mechanic One, Chief Guardian speaking. Over.”

“*Chief Guardian, request authorization for increased armor support in Zone One. Over.”*

She looks at the others watching her for a moment. The matron of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy asks only those in the lounge, “‘Zone One’ is the Grand

Duchy for certain, yes?”

“Yes, your Grace,” replies Kera’tai.

“And, he’s asking my permission over the radio?”

“Daniel has made it clear that you will still hold cognizance over the Grand Duchy, hasn’t he?”

“Indeed. It's just admirable to hear it so directly.” She clears her throat and squeezes the button. “Mechanic One, Chief Guardian… I authorize increased armor support. Over.”

“Affirmative, Chief Guardian. Grendel Five, Mechanic One, request received. Reinforcements will be dispatched. Over.”

“Thank you, Mechanic One. Grendel Five, out.” You are reading on novelping.com, the official source.

“Guardian One, Mechanic One, standing by for pickup. Mechanic One out.”

Aramellianna responds simply, rather than handing the microphone back, “Confirmed, Mechanic One. Guardian One en route. Guardian One out.” She hands the radio transceiver back to the magic artisan, and Wenlianna hangs it on the side of the radio. Her expression is already more relaxed from the pacing worrywort that she was a few minutes ago.

With a sigh, Aramellianna muses playfully, “So very lucky, my dear Wenlianna.”

“L-Lucky?”

The Grand Duchess grins deviously. “Are you not? Even before he has returned, you get to hear his voice for reassurance.”

“T-True…” She blushes and smiles happily, rejoining her mother on the lounge sofa.

Haldestania asks, “How come you talked funny on the radio, Mother? You don’t talk like that normally.”

“That’s true. I’m not quite certain, myself.”

Aoloan takes the chance to chime in, “It’s to make it more reliable to pass messages, from what Daniel has said.”

“By talking funny?” asks the curious young girl.

Wenlianna smiles and replies in a tender tone, “Yes, Desti. It’s for structure, like the actors in a play.”

The youngest Stalvaltan daughter nods as she makes sense of it in her brain. She once asked why play actors always say the same things in the plays, since there aren’t an abundance of different plays in existence yet.

“Soooo… why the strange names? Is Daniel no longer going to call Mother ‘Mother?’”

Aramellianna snickers playfully and pets the young girl’s head. “It is a privilege to be called ‘Mother’ by someone so charming, not an obligation. That said, the code names are for our protection, so if anyone is able to spy on the communications, they won't be able to easily know that the Emperor of the Fievegal or the Stalvaltan Grand Duchess are speaking and what they’re planning.”

Kera’tai adds politely, “We’re all still working together to iron out any confusion, of course.”

“Of course,” replies the Grand Duchess warmly.

Magnir reenters the lounge, and he states politely, “Your Grace, the airship will arrive in twenty minutes from warm up. Final inspections are being completed now.”

“Thank you, Sir Magnir. I know I’m not in your line of command, but I appreciate you delivering the message for me.”

“It was no trouble, your Grace.”

“Sir Magnir?” asks Bunnrimae out of the blue.

“Yes, my Lady?” replies the Jomsviking.

“Don’t you worry about L-... Umm… Dame Roeta?”

“I have faith in my Mukori’s strength, as well as our allies. If I had to choose, I would go instead, if not alongside, but I am not so foolish as to believe I would have been of great use this time.”

The young girl goes quiet, glancing at Aramellianna for a moment. Magnir takes a hint and doesn't pry. He adds, “Roeta knows her limits. That is the most important thing.”

“The dragons live rather differently than we do, dear Bunnrimae,” replies Aramellianna gently. “There are different expectations of what they can accomplish.”

The young girl nods obediently. “Understood, Mother. Thank you.”

She does, however, glance at Magnir once more, and he matches her gaze for a moment. It’s not right for him to encourage her line of thinking, but he also

doesn’t want to be the one to simply crush her spirit. The greatest gift Magnir and Roeta have received is the self-determination to plot their own courses in life. They have an egg safely laid in the Citadel to carry on their legacy if either of them falls, and as long as Roeta is safe, a second one is on the way. Daniel doesn’t intend to restrict any race from having children, but he has asked the dragons to be conservative, since they still need to increase the livestock populations to be able to feed the giant, primarily-carnivorous omnivores reliably. This is especially true for the hatchlings, since it will be unsafe to transform them until they can adapt to their own physiology enough to understand the change. Hekate, as a counter-example, has never been in her natural form, and she is afraid of heights, even though a feldrok could fly with ease.

Regardless, Bunnrimae isn’t Magnir’s concern, and it might cause issues if he meddles where his own influence doesn’t belong.

For now, he can just hope his suspicions are premature. If she needs support, he’ll do what he can as an outsider, but it would likely fall to Reignleif, who is a distant ancestor to the Stalvaltan family, to truly handle whatever the young girl’s concerns truly are.

In the meantime, the airship slowly ascends into the air with a light rumble as the crew pilots it. Once aweigh, the giant flying mansion banks at a lax pace towards the east where the subjugation team is. The vessel isn’t nearly as fast as the shuttles, but it makes good time for its size. And, an additional luxury is the level of comfort while riding in the large ship.

It’ll be a nice break for the battle weary warriors of the Fievegal to relax on their return to the city.

***

Rikuto walks with Grand Prince Yaulander through the castle of Mornistae in order to reach the ritual room. According to the texts and journals regarding the 'Divine Summoning', as the people of Zenkon call it, there don't appear to be any great restrictions on its use, other than a MASSIVE source of mana is needed, which was provided by the artifact in the lowest part of Mornistae the last time it was used.

Since the artifact was used so recently, however, this means that the artifact won't have enough mana to complete a summoning.

Yaulander has provided a solution to that problem. In addition to the spare 'enhanced magic crystals', also known as diamonds, which have yet to be loaded into reloading rings for the void artillery, the Grand Prince has sent for his own stockpile of enhanced magic crystals, which are each charged with pure mana.

Rikuto is skeptical that a couple hundred mana crystals charged by human-kin hands will be able to power a ritual normally receiving its energy from a strange and seemingly unknowable divine artifact from ancient times. Though, one of the historical records seemed to have indicated that living sacrifices were the source of the needed mana for the very first summoning, this record is, at best, a third-hand account by copying a second-hand translation of the original text.

Inside the ritual room, the fifty five mages brought by Yaulander are hard at work with those of Mornistae, staging the magic crystals in accordance with the artwork in the book. When the thousands of sacrifices were made, they were allegedly congregating in a field around the ritual circle.

In this case, the patterns on the floor seem to hold some meaning, and the best mages in the kingdom and the Empire are working with the most learned

historians available to them in order to make an educated guess how to power the ritual without the artifact.

“Where are we at?” asks Yaulander, a little impatient for results.

“Your enlightened Majesty, the crystals are almost placed, and the casting teams are learning the incantation. Our scribe is also making copies to help the casters.”

“Good, good.” The young blonde ruler takes a seat on the makeshift throne he had put in the ritual room so he can observe. As if on cue, a maid steps up and presents a jewel-encrusted goblet on an elaborately decorated tray. He swiftly takes the goblet, shamelessly gripping the maid's posterior. She flinches a small amount, but otherwise retains a stoic expression.

Rikuto has been noticing it in the presence of Yaulander's attaché. The tension is thick enough to cut with a blade. The Grand Prince is an assertive person, to put it lightly. Even now, Rikuto still has doubts about trying to summon another Earthling, but Yaulander has been driving forward unabashedly, as if the whole world is already his. And, that seems to go for Earth as well.

Mostly, Rikuto just hopes that Ryukana simply rejects the summoning. His understanding is that the Divine Realm can choose to reject summonings. Given how Rikuto’s dealings with his own concurrently summoned counterpart have gone, he’d prefer no more Earthlings arrive on Zenkon. Failing that, the least he could hope for is another Japanese person so there’s at least a greater deal of common ground.

“This is exciting!” remarks Yaulander jovially, harassing the maid for a moment longer and drinking from his goblet. Rikuto is a little uncomfortable watching, but he doesn’t say anything. He’s going to need Imperial support to deal with

Daniel invading Mornistae. Given that all contact and trade with the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy has been blockaded, it could be any time that the real invasion begins. The territories around the Grand Duchy have been bolstering their forces, but if it's true that Daniel has something larger than his rifles, it's possible that Rikuto is dealing with artillery, which would become an even greater issue. He'll definitely need to consider deploying the void artillery again if the invasion can't be stopped any other way.

"Your Majesty Rikuto!" calls out Yaulander. "Aren't you excited!? Maybe we'll summon one of your friends."

Rikuto smiles and nods. "Maybe. There are a lot of people on Earth." *I don't know if that would be good or bad. It certainly would make things easier, but I wouldn't wish being ripped away from home on anyone else. Certainly not friends. Still…*

Yaulander seems eager, almost like a kid receiving a pile of gifts. The mages are still staging the crystals, though, so it'll be a bit longer.

Suddenly, the Grand Prince blurts out, "What is taking so long?"

The tension suddenly rises again, and he asks rather caustically, "Is this process really so challenging that all of the greatest mages in the Empire are struggling?"

"No your Imperial Majesty," replies one of the older male mages quickly. "We're simply taking precautions to ensure…"

"I don't care about that. Let's get this done with so we can return home."

The mages glance at each other nervously. Rikuto has only learned a modest amount about magic, but a crucial part is the accurate performance of the

spell. Incantations can be pronounced with an accent, but they still need to be spoken correctly, or else the spell effect could be vastly different than the goal. Likewise, when preparing physical catalysts for a ritual, like the summoning, careful placement can be the difference between a successful casting and a failure.

But, just as dangerous as an incorrectly performed spell seems to be angering the impatient Grand Prince.

Rikuto almost tried to stop him, as the only ranking person in the room who might be able to get through to him, but since he is hoping for a failure, though one with minimal collateral damage, he manages to prevent himself from speaking. One of the maids nearby notices the otherworlder king hesitate, and she watches him.

Rikuto simply pastes on his business smile and leaves it be, and the mage seems to come to a similar conclusion, not wanting to be punished by the Grand Prince when they've already done most of the steps. He urges the more rapid placement of the last handful of crystals, and the mages take their places.

Scholars are also gathered in the room documenting everything. Artists are drawing the scene in sketches with charcoal pencils or other utensils, and one of the Imperial Magic Artisans is using a magic holo-capture device to take a snapshot of the scene from one of the overlooking balconies.

If Rikuto didn't know better, he'd think they were pioneering the first ever space flight of Zenkon, not a ritual that was performed a little over a year ago. Then again, there were quite a few people gathered around when Rikuto and Daniel arrived, so there's no telling what all of their roles were at the time.

And, for the Empire, this is the first time anyone outside of Mornistae has been able to witness or partake in the ritual. It truly is a historic event from their perspective.

The same senior mage jogs back over, declaring, “Your great and wise Majesty, we have placed all of the crystals.”

“Is the spell ready to cast?” asks Yaulander with his same haughty tone.

“Yes, your Majesty. But, I would like…”

“I don’t care what you like. Bring forth a Divine Summon.”

Again, the mage hesitates, but his own desire for self-preservation urges him to simply obey. He steps back, bowing crisply. “As you wish, your enlightened Majesty. We’ll begin at once.”

As he returns to the group to begin directing the combined 112 mages, Rikuto can’t help but feel a little sorry for them. It gets compounded when Yaulander slouches in his mobile ‘throne’, laying across the arms with an absolutely unhidden boredom. He grumbles, “Amazing how we always have to tell everyone how to do their jobs, wouldn’t you agree, King Rikuto?”

The Japanese man bites his tongue for a moment, resisting the urge to retort coldly. It’s no small secret that there is a distinct difference between leading and being a boss, and right now, Yaulander is simply being a boss. Rare is the time when micromanaging accomplishes anything of value, which is why Rikuto generally tries to leave his subordinates to their tasks, only applying pressure when he lets his own fears and emotions get the better of him. He would never punish anyone for trying to play it safe, which these mages and spellcasters are hoping to do, but are being pressured into overlooking due to the impatient Grand Prince.

He finally responds just before Yaulander can snap at him, “Everyone is on edge because it’s a big undertaking, your Majesty Grand Prince Yaulander. Were it so simple, my predecessors, and theirs before them, would have been casting this spell at every opportunity, most likely.”

Yaulander nods. “Mm, yes, yes, good point. But, the sooner we get another summon here, the sooner we can begin our full campaign against the traitor Daniel. Every minute we waste is another minute he is gathering allies, torturing women and children, and spilling the blood of innocents.”

Again, Rikuto holds his tongue. Daniel wasn’t a violent person, but it has been months since they’ve encountered each other last, and now Daniel has started invading the kingdom of Mornistae with demon forces armed with firearms. He is not the same person that simply tried to lay low in town and live a peaceful life, nor is he the same person who leapt into the water to rescue a knight in addition to Erimaya. For now, Rikuto has to assume Daniel has fallen to the darker desires in his heart, and maybe Yaulander has more information than Rikuto, rather than just assumptions.

The lead mage calls out, “The chant cannot be stopped once it begins, so do not falter. If we falter, it could be our own mana that is forfeit.”

“““Yes, Grand Magus!””” call out the others in unison.

They all take deep breaths, readying themselves and their own favored casting instruments. Rikuto sees several elaborate staves taller than their wielders and decorated with various different trinkets and crystals, as well as being made of differing materials. There are wands that have strange designs, and which the Japanese man can’t help but compare to the loosely baby-rattle like design of a magical girl wand from a popular anime named after the moon, as well as much

more simple stick-like instruments reminding him of a certain wizarding school from a series of books turned into movies.

Similar to the casting of magic having some tolerance for the difference in caster, the instrument used to channel one's mana is based more on how the mage uses it, how they implement their own mana, how efficiently they can guide the process on their own, and the more precise portions of the spell that they are leaving to the instrument over their own imagination. With the stick-like wands, they magic circles and glyphs are 'drawn' in the air, while the tall staves act as a sort of amplifier, and the magical-girl wands combine aspects of each of the other two, providing some mana amplification as well as allowing the construction of the spell via a more somatic or kinetic gesture. Thankfully, the structure of the magic is being generated by the ritual patterns drawn on the floor of the castle, and the bulk of the mana is coming from the magic crystals scattered across the pattern at seemingly key points.

The chanting begins, though it's probably more accurate to call it a simultaneous oration. The spell doesn't have the melody typical of chanting, nor a simple repetition, but a long formula of words said in a language Rikuto doesn't understand. It seems to possibly be an extremely old dialect of a language very similar to Eastern Imperial Trade, which is the most common language in the allied territories, similar to how French and Spanish are both descended of Latin, but rather drastically differ in the modern era from both Latin as well as each other.

The tone is slow and somewhat monotonous sounding, and the mages keep their tempo steady. Some are reading from the copied texts, while others have memorized the incantation in spite of how long it is. Rikuto wonders if there are different kinds of mages on Zenkon, such as making a distinction between

“mage”, “sorcerer”, “wizard”, and “warlock”, since he doesn’t seem to hear much different other than ‘mage’ -in the native language, of course-.

As he’s pondering this, though, the magic really starts.

It begins as a sparkling flicker of lights near the center of the circle, and he notices a couple of the younger mages, a male shenwulf and a female human, nearly fumble over their words by being partially distracted. After the sparkling flickers of light, a more steady glowing point of brightness appears, hovering in midair over the middle of the ritual markings. It’s nearly blinding to look directly at, like a high-wattage light bulb, and around it swirls many mist-like streams of magical energy, originating in near imperceptible trails from the mages and crystals, combining together and coalescing into the core. The spell is charging, building volume before the whole sphere pulses, nearly startling several more mages into faltering, including the first two, and they just barely retain focus to avoid dropping the spell casting.

Yaulander calls out, “If any one of you causes this spell to fail because of cowardice, you will be a catalyst for the next attempt.”

Rikuto notices several of the mages, especially younger ones who are already struggling with nervousness, grip their staves or wands more tightly, very nearly stammering or flubbing words. Even a small mistake could have unknowable consequences here and now. For all the Japanese king knows, an actual monstrous demon like the Balrog or even Shuten-dōji himself could be what appears if the summoning is incorrectly performed.

The mist-like streams of visible mana are beautiful to behold, and they grow alongside the core sphere. The entire ritual room is getting brighter and brighter, to the point that the magic lanterns and backup torches being used to light the room provide no more benefit than a candle under the midday sun. The

magic energy flowing into the center has become akin to rivers, wavering and dancing around the orb, which now has its own rings orbiting around it like the common visual model of an atom.

Magic doesn't usually seem to behave in the same way atomic physics do, so Rikuto couldn't even begin to hypothesize exactly what forces are at play to cause the shape of the core of the spell. He suspects it would be a fair assumption to make that magic presents a fifth fundamental force, at the very least, when it comes to speaking about physics. While the young Japanese man was well-studied at his high school and university, he is certainly far from being a true physicist and wouldn't quite know where to begin to quantify and define a new fundamental force, beyond what he has observed so far.

And, before his very eyes, the magic core of the spell continues to evolve and grow, transforming into a three meter wide work of art with elaborate streams of magic energy, wisps and trails being cast off like licks of gentle fire, and a wide array of colors and shades blending like a mystical fire and water blend.

Or, even going deeper, it may even resemble the very nature of the six magical elements, as well as pure mana, swirling together in harmony. The otherworldly king feels at peace watching the display, like he is gazing upon creation itself. He can't help but be amazed, and even Yaulander is sitting up, speechless at the wondrous display of energy before them.

There's also a low hum in the air, not like a static buzz as one might associate with an electrical arc, but more of a single musical note being held. It is gentle in nature and ever-present in the air, like a soft solfège syllable being held by an angel's voice. Giving credence to this thought is the slow change in the sound, the difference being nearly imperceptible right away, but becoming more noticeable as time goes on. It grows in volume, as well as the tone, sounding to

Rikuto like the subtle change from an “uuu” sound to an “ooo”, and then a bit after that into a low ‘aaa’ sound.

As the volume slowly increases, the mages incanting the spell have to raise their own voices, going from a moderate talking volume to a loud talk, and eventually to near-yelling to ensure that they stay in time with each other.

Several of the less-experienced and one of the eldest mages are showing visible signs of fatigue starting to set in, with sweat beginning to form on their faces and color filling their cheeks and foreheads.

Without knowing the spell himself, Rikuto has no idea whether or not they’re approaching the climax of the spell, or if it will continue to get more strenuous for the mages to the point that they’ll start losing individuals. He can only hope that he can deflect Yaulander if it comes to pass and save their lives. In addition to the good karma it would bring sparing a perfectly capable mage’s life, he may earn himself a favor when the Kingdom of Mornistae could use more mages most.

As the ending of the spell seems to be more and more sure, Rikuto begins chanting only in his own mind; *Please be Japanese. Please be Japanese. If anyone up there is listening, please send another Japanese person. Please.*

The core of the spell starts to waver, and the “rings” orbiting the unevenly wavering amorphous shape that was an orb are also taking seemingly impossible shapes, like an optical illusion given tangible form.

It truly does seem to be transcending reality, which was what Rikuto believed of isekai stories, specifically ‘transported to another world’ instances. They would have to be, fantastical as they are.

At least, that was what he *believed* of such stories, until he found himself as the protagonist of one.

Now, he is observing the impending crescendo for a magic spell intended to bring forth a deuteragonist to this strange tale. Rikuto doesn't even realize time is passing before his eyes.

The angelic song has risen to a powerful "aaa" sound, nearly completely drowning out even the most powerful voice of the mages, a large boruan woman with impressive vocal capacity. Even she is red in the face and dripping with sweat, and a couple of the youngest mages begin collapsing, unable to continue. It could be the length and fervor needed to continue intoning the spell, or their mana could be completely spent. Regardless, the spell is at the precipice of either completion or failure.

Before long, the more senior mages begin losing strength and fainting just as their juniors have, threatening to collapse the entire spell. Diamonds all around the ritual circle begin fading, and a few even shatter.

Diamonds.

One of the hardest known substances to the advanced world known as Earth shatters like glass under the power of the Divine.

The number mages still casting dwindles rapidly until a single solitary mage is left standing, the senior mage leading the ritual who spoke to Yaulander a couple of times.

He alone stands before a stupefying amount of god-like power, wavering and pulsing as if to threaten eruption should this final mage falter.

Rikuto feels momentarily helpless; a sense of dread that something is about to go terribly wrong, or that it is already doing so.

Without really thinking things through, he is sparked into action by the last mage wobbling, stumbling his footing to stay standing as he keeps the spell going even with the heavy burden of the spell still drawing on him.

Rikuto dashes forward to the closest mage with a staff and copied spell, kicking it up to his hand with the toe of his boot. He scans quickly for the words he can barely hear, starting from the bottom. He has to try.

And, as fortune would have it, the young otherworlder finds it, hearing the words and able to follow along. He silently prays in the back of his mind that he can pull it off, since he doesn't know if there are any syllables that are pronounced significantly differently than they appear, as was the case when he had to learn basic English in school. Like many of his classmates, it took time for him to emulate the sounds of the very foreign language, and were it not for the magic of Zenkon, he would still be a very long way off from sounding passable to a native speaker.

Regardless, Rikuto doesn't have time to worry about it. He listens to the other mage, timing it to join in.

""… ga chi koto wa la mourute! …"" The otherworlder king does his best, shouting the words in tempo with the senior mage while channeling his mana through the staff. He's not sure if it'll make a difference, since nothing happens at first, other than the crystal of the staff beginning to glow. Meanwhile, the popping and banging of diamonds bursting like glass balloons adds to the overall cacophony filling the room.

And suddenly, as Rikuto urgently shouts the unintelligible words he's reading from the page, an intangible weight hits him with the gentleness of a boulder, nearly buckling his knees in an instant.

Though the suddenness is that of a meteor landing on him, it becomes almost indescribable what he's actually feeling. It's almost like he's being crushed and pulled apart at the same time, as if he's a hundred meters beneath the sea and a giant vacuum cleaner is trying to pull him in, unsurprisingly towards the core of the spell. He's not physically being pulled, but it certainly feels like his very soul is being drawn into the dangerously beautiful Divine Spark.

The only other voice fades, and the Japanese undergraduate notices one last body sink to a kneel before toppling virtually lifelessly to the floor. All at once, the imposing simultaneous crushing and decompressing sensation doubles in intensity, and Rikuto nearly faints on the spot. It is physically painful across his whole body, and he feels wholly exhausted in what feels like seconds.

Seconds, minutes, hours; he honestly isn't sure, since his voice feels hoarse, but he can’t account for time at all since the burdensome load of the spell was put on him.

Just as he is about to falter, he strengthens his footing. His legs wobble in protest, and he is forced to a kneel, as if he is Atlas himself.

The otherworlder king keeps calling out the spell as he reads it, nearly missing the continued line. He tries to put all thoughts out of his mind except for finishing the spell. It has to be close. So long has been the incantation, and yet, it must have an end. *There! Almost there!* thinks Rikuto to himself as he sees the final line appear in his peripheral.

He just has a little longer to go. Just a little longer…

Immediately after the final word is said, all of the magical energy filling the air thumps like a massive heartbeat of the true gods of legend. The star-like core has taken on a beautiful form, filling the room with colorful light as swirling loops of mana flare off like coronas from the sun.

Then, like a charged laser, the energy pulses in a beam towards the ceiling of the room, doing no damage as the core rapidly disappears towards the heavens.

Rikuto collapses to his hands and knees, panting heavily as the full weight of his seemingly-sudden exhaustion hits him in full.

If he understands correctly, the Prayer of Summoning has been sent. It is in the hands of the Divine Realm to answer it now.

There is an eerie quiet that befalls the room, completely silent as the few maids who managed to keep their composure stare in awe at the still glowing magic circle. The room feels dark in comparison to the daylight-like glow of the spell. Even Yaulander is speechless.

Rikuto retches briefly, but thankfully nothing comes up, and he continues huffing to catch his breath. His heart threatens to burst from his chest and explode.

And then it happens.

A beam of light that immediately reminds Rikuto of the glow that appeared on that fateful day appears, spearing into the magic circle.

The answer from the gods has arrived.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 132: A Bit of Polish

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 132: A Bit of Polish

When Rikuto and Daniel arrived in the Castle of Mornistae, their perspective was a sudden magic circle appearing beneath their feet, a blinding flash of light, and in Daniel's case, arriving in a strange place when the light finally faded. For Rikuto, the only additional step was meeting with Ryukana to receive her gifts prior to the arrival.

For anyone standing in the ritual room, however, it seems that the spectacle is a great deal more magical than anyone could imagine. A great deal of mana was gathered into the air above the ritual circle, building into a powerful and ethereal core that burst into the heavens to call in a request to the gods themselves, in hopes that they might answer with sending an otherworlder to assist with Zenkon's most dire problems.

The answer from the Divine Realm returned with just as much of a splendorous and divine tableau. Glowing mana of various colors seems to roll away from the epicenter of the spell circle like a heavy fog.

When the air clears enough, Rikuto's heart tightens. He was afraid of what would happen if the spell were to falter, but he only now realizes the true gravity of what he has done.

He has taken responsibility for and completed a ritual that pulls a person from another world.

Assuming it went the same as his own summoning, Ryukana the goddess would have verified that the chosen person accepts. During this time, the summoned individual is bestowed with magic and specific powers unique to them even in the world of Zenkon.

If it goes like Daniel, however, the person arrives in the world with no magic and never spoke to the goddess. That person would be akin to a kidnapping victim.

Now, seated on her knees in the middle of the ritual circle, is another apparent American with fair skin, golden blonde hair in a ponytail, mahogany-brown eyes, and a large backpack decked out with camping equipment.

In fact, she looks like a hiker, with obvious brown leather boots, all kinds of equipment tied to her bag, denim shorts and a lightly sweat-stained blue tee shirt.

Feeding into Rikuto's fears, her eyes are as wide as saucers as they adjust to the dim lighting, and she scans the room briefly.

Yaulander stands up suddenly with a boisterous exclamation of victory. "Ahhh! You did it! Amazing! Look at her! She looks so very foreign, and yet, truly heaven-sent!"

She flinches with a start at the Grand Prince's joy, and she asks frantically, "Co się dzieje!? Gdzie ja jestem!?"

This catches Rikuto off guard, and Yaulander asks, "What was that? What did she say?"

"I… I don't know."

"You don't know? Didn't she come from your world?"

Rikuto nods. He asks in English, “[Excuse me? Do you understand me?]”

The young woman looks between him and the Grand Prince, asking with the same panic in her voice, “Kim wy jesteście?! Jak się tu dostałam!?”

She’s of European descent; that much is clear. And, the camping equipment she has all belongs to the modern age. He doesn’t see anything especially alien to him from the year he left. However, he doesn’t recognize the language she’s using. If he had to guess, he would eliminate French and Spanish, since it doesn’t sound like what little he knows of those, but there are still a lot of options remaining that he can’t eliminate for certain.

Yaulander’s impatience gets the better of him, and he marches proudly towards her. “Listen to me! You are a Divine Summon brought to our world to-…”

He is cut off when the blonde whips out a canister from a holster on her belt. It’s about the size of an energy drink can with a looped handle and a pushbutton on top, as well as a nozzle pointed directly at the golden-haired Grand Prince. The young woman quickly scans the room, springing to her feet. She snarls at the Grand Prince, aiming the canister at anyone who moves closer to her, “Nie zbliżaj się, słyszysz!?”

Yaulander simply laughs, putting his hand on his chest. “Obviously, you wouldn’t yet know who I am, but I am Grand Prince Yaulander kos…” The girl bolts for the nearest doorway, startling everyone.

Rikuto calls out, “Wait!”, while the Grand Prince shouts, “Stop her! Don’t let her escape!”

Several guards close in on her, attempting to block her escape. Rikuto hasn’t ever owned one himself, but he easily recognizes the canister. It is a can of

pepper spray; specifically, it is a specialized pepper spray designed for protection against bears.

She delays her flight from the room only long enough to take solid aim at the left guard's face, unleashing a jet of bright orange fog straight into his metal helmet. She swiftly aims at the right guard, doing the same to him, and in just a couple of seconds, both guards are screaming in agony until falling into a fit of coughing and wheezing. They instinctively stumble back away from the source of the spray, giving the young woman enough of a window to dart between them under the cloud of irritant and slip out of the room through the doorway.

Other guards follow her, but even with her backpack, she is much faster than they are in their armor.

Rikuto watches as the Imperial guards belonging to Yaulander chase after the summoned woman, minus two who are on the ground in agony, unable to breathe properly. A few guards and maids try to tend to them, pulling their helmets off to give them fresh air. Plenty of the spray reached their faces, meaning the two are down for the count, no matter what anyone does for the time being.

"That fool!" shouts Yaulander. "Who does she think she is!? *I* had her called here! Does she think she stands a chance out there without me?"

Rikuto listens to him vent for a moment. He can't help the thought that immediately enters his mind.

Daniel survived, and he arrived with little more than a cell phone and a computer chair. Now, he's enemy number one. That girl looked more like she was ready to survive without help than either me or Daniel.

Yaulander snaps, “Order your guards to seal the city and capture her. She won’t get far.”

Rikuto hesitates for only a second, nodding soon after. “Of course, your Imperial Majesty.” He still can’t stand, too dizzy to focus on much of anything now that the girl has fled.

If I can, I’d prefer to bring her in without his knowledge so I can try to protect her. I shouldn’t have stepped in. What was I thinking?

Rikuto turns to his own Royal Guardsmen and begins giving them instructions. They also need doctors and healers to start treating the collapsed mages.

They’ll need to find the young woman before she gets lost, or something worse happens.

***

<A/N: Author Translating Mode: On>

Zuzia runs down the stone corridor, too surprised to really take in her surroundings.

How did I get here? Was I drugged? I obviously got kidnapped, but by who? The last thing I remember, I was in the middle of the forest!

She turns around a corner, coming to a stop and aiming her anti-bear pepper spray. As soon as a trio of armored men turn the corner, she sprays them with a solid fog, incapacitating them and tripping several more. It should restrict the hallway for a moment or two.

The Polish woman resumes her sprint down the hall, narrowly avoiding a random medieval cosplayer in a full Victorian era-like dress. Zuzia glances at it

briefly, but keeps her focus on her escape.

What is this place? Those guards… that pompous guy? That language? How could I get kidnapped from a forest near my hometown to another country!? It's definitely not a castle I recognize. What was the one I visited in school? *Moszna? This definitely isn't Ogrodzieniec. It's too new, and no rock-faces.*

Zuzia scoffs, joking to herself. *At least I know it's not Kaer Morhen…*

Several guards ahead notice her, and they challenge her. However, the language is completely alien to her, and she doesn't understand.

"Sorry!" shouts the blonde as she sprays them in the face, dropping them as they flail back against the wall. She keeps running.

I never had to use this spray in all of the times I went camping! Now, I'm going to empty it in a freaking castle!

She uses her free right hand to check her backup spray, which is still firmly locked into its holster. Bear attacks are extremely rare in Poland, but since she likes to go on solo backpacking trips, she chose safety. And, the bonus is that pepper spray strong enough for bears works just fine on people.

Well,… At least,… I hope none of them die, but I'm not being a prisoner to a bunch of drugging kidnappers!

She notices sunlight up ahead, and she runs as fast as she can. She already used about 3-4 full seconds of her current can of bear spray, meaning she probably has one good burst left.

Please be an exit! Please be an exit!

The young polish woman is just running. She has no idea where she is, where she's going, and how she's going to get home. For now, she has to get away from the kidnappers.

Because, if this is some sort of weird cosplay cult, she wants nothing to do with it.

Several women dressed like ancient European maids step out of a room carrying wooden pails, and Zuzia does her best to dart around them. She nearly plows into a statue, shoving off of it as she keeps running.

The source of the sunlight proves to be a window, and she nearly sprints straight out of it until she manages to stop herself.

It's about a thirty meter drop if she is to jump, and the ground is made of stone blocks forming a courtyard around the castle.

She gasps.

It is a castle! How the heck did I end up in a castle!? And where is this!? She glances around in the distance for any clues as to whether or not it's one even remotely close to her small hometown, or even if she recognizes enough of the terrain to find Warsaw or any other big city she can use to navigate.

I don't recognize any of these buildings. In fact… What are those houses made of? Thatched roofs? I didn't think any castles were still in service like this, other than tourist places. Is there some kind of fair or event going on?

She hears the guards calling out, and she glances at them. The armored soldiers are getting closer, and she resumes sprinting up the hallway.

Okay, I'm in a castle about two or three stories up, right? More? I don't know! Gah! How did I end up here!?

Zuzia nearly falls when she tries to come to a sudden stop. Ahead of her, several more guards turn a corner to enter the stretch of hallway she's in, boxing her in.

Thinking quickly, she darts into the nearest room, which appears to be a huge bedroom.

Everything looks ancient, with the large bed structured with large curtains to both keep the heat in and keep bugs out, as well as a huge decorative chandelier.

Seated on a loveseat are a man and woman. They don't look like they were in the throes of passion, but they are clearly very intimate.

The young woman groans out loud, "Aww! I don't want to interrupt. Sorry!" She whirls and sprays the first couple of guards to enter the doorway, seemingly against the caution of the other guards, given the shouting. The two that take the last of the bear spray scream in recoil, pulled away from the door by their comrades as the soldiers begin shouting.

"I didn't ask to come here!" shouts Zuzia in reply. "Take it up with your people!"

The man behind Zuzia, dressed in an elaborate blue cloak perfectly complementing the woman's ocean blue dress, shouts something, and she looks. He and the woman are escaping through a secret passageway.

"Perfect!" cheers the blonde. She throws the canister out into the hallway, and the guards recoil a bit. *Hah! I wish it was a grenade, stupids!*

She bolts after the man and woman, managing to slip through the secret doorway hidden behind a bookshelf before it closes. She then draws and clicks on her flashlight, startling the man and woman in the dark just as they're trying

to activate what Zuzia would guess to be the lights. She sprints past them, shouting over her shoulder, “Sorry again! Be fruitful and multiply or whatever!” She follows the narrow and dark tunnel, seeing some kind of lights built into the wall, but not recognizing the style of bulbs. In fact, they look more like those bottom-lit salt crystals some people buy, if anything.

Of course, none of that matters to her right now. Zuzia has to escape this place and find a good place to call the police. Whatever country she’s in, they have to have police.

Wait? What’s the emergency code for this country? Are they all the same? No, I think they’re different, right? Still, how far could they have gotten me while I was drugged?

Zuzia checks behind her. So far, there’s no signs that she’s being followed. That said, there’s also an extremely high chance that they know where the tunnel lets out, so they’ll likely be waiting for her.

When she comes to an intersection, she studies it for a moment, listening while she thinks.

I’d guess the straight path takes me to the intended exit, but why an intersection in an escape tunnel like this? Must be connections to other VIP rooms. Or, maybe tie-in tunnels to family members? It is a castle. Could these cultists be pretending to be royals? Isn’t that illegal or something?

Zuzia decides to go down the left tunnel. She’s hoping it’s a tie-in tunnel, meaning the guards will be less likely to expect her to exit that way, since it’ll probably be on the same upper floor of the castle. She follows it for a while, turning off her flashlight when she hears sounds coming from behind her. She

remains quiet, listening as she holds the finger-ring for her second can of bear spray.

She sees the glow of fairly normal torches pass by where the intersection is. The metallic clanking of armor continues down the path, though one torch lingers at the intersection for a while.

Zuzia remains silent. The tunnel is rather dark, so there's almost no chance she has been noticed specifically.

And, thankfully, the torch disappears as the soldiers continue down the center path, likely headed for the exit.

The blonde woman continues in the dark, following the wall of the pitch-black corridor for a bit. Her heart is finally starting to settle a little bit, but she's far from safe. She has been terrified of kidnapping for some time, though she hoped her homely appearance was below the threshold of what would be considered 'worth' kidnapping. That said, she knows she has to keep her head, or she'll lose more than just her freedom.

She still can't figure out what kind of place this is, though. It seems like the whole castle has been kept clean and authentic, with the entire population of people living like they're in the middle ages or something. If she was naive enough to believe such a thing, she would assume the man and woman who tried to slip away into this secret passage were a king and queen, respectively.

But, that would be absurd.

Some celebrities might be a special kind of awful, but this is taking it to a whole other level. If they are awful celebrities that Zuzia doesn't know, then they kidnapped her to a movie set or something, given how everything seems like an authentic medieval castle. At least, it's 'authentic' as far as her VERY limited

experience is concerned. It's not preserved in a museum-like state for tourism the way the castles she's been to were. This one is in active service as the home of these people.

The Polish woman finds the door, and she carefully feels for any kind of latch or mechanism to open it. When she can't find anything, she checks behind her, making sure there are no torches following her. She then briefly uses her flashlight, covering the head to restrict the amount of light to just enough for her to search, while hopefully minimizing the chances of anyone at the intersection spotting her, as well as anyone that might be on the other side of the secret entrance.

She finds a safety latch and slowly releases it, trying to remain as quiet as possible. Once the secret door is unlocked from its mechanism, it swings open rather easily.

Zuzia peeks through the doorway to find another bedroom, just as she hoped. This one looks like it belonged to a young girl, given the dressing screen adorned with frilly dresses and the other feminine trinkets around the room, like dolls, jewelry, and mirrors.

Zuzia cautiously sneaks into the bedroom, making sure to scan every part of the room with her eyes. No one is present, and it looks almost exactly like she might expect an ancient princess's room to look. Everything looks clean and new, but not in the way that it might for a stage play or a movie. It looks completely real, like this really is a medieval castle. Even the dresses seem to be made differently than modern fabrics. They have a sort of roughness to them, even with what appear to be higher quality materials, as if made completely by hand.

The bed also looks like it isn't quite even, like the mattress was made by hand.

What is this place? Is this some sort of hardcore medieval experience? But, why kidnap me?

While she has a moment to herself, she takes a drink from her water bottle. It's a lot of food for thought, and she hasn't had long enough to piece it all together before now.

"Very strange…" murmurs the young blonde to herself. She tucks her water bottle back into her backpack and continues towards the door. She keeps one hand on her bear spray, ready to defend herself if need be.

She cracks the door open and peeks out into the hallway.

And, just then, the door is pushed open, startling her back a few steps. It's the same pompous blonde man that was in the weird room. Now that she's had a moment to reflect, there were bodies all around that room, and this man didn't seem the least bit worried about them.

Zuzia screams, startling the man, who doesn't seem to have expected her being there. He screams in turn, backing away towards the opposite wall. Still yelling, the blonde woman quick-draws her second and last canister of bear-rated pepper spray, and she sprays the princely man in the face. Her wailing of defensive terror continues as she slips through the door, spraying two more armored cosplay knights in the face and allowing her to slip by them as all three men scream in agony. She begins sprinting down the hall anew, reaching the corner she had to abandon earlier, and she whips around the corner, running as fast as she can once she's sure she has a long opening.

She glances out of one of the windows as she's running by, noticing something that she can't stop to inspect yet. She rushes to the next window, prepared to

stop to look outside a little more deliberately. She takes a few seconds to observe what she saw.

A river.

Specifically, it's a river that flows directly into the castle, apparently. She leans out just enough to be able to confirm, and sure enough, the river flows under the main structure of the castle. A little further, and she might be able to make it.

She pushes away from the window, continuing her sprint up the hall, breathing as smoothly as she can. She's used to hiking, not marathon sprinting. However, now isn't the time to conserve energy. Her legs are a little tired, but she still has plenty left in her to make it to the river.

She just hopes she can manage to get back to the surface with her gear.

I was backpacking in the woods! Was this castle somewhere nearby and I didn't see it!?

Zuzia still can't make sense of her predicament, and escaping is entirely the one thing on her mind.

Some more guards appear in the hallways in both directions, but she reaches the location that she wanted.

Or at least, close enough.

It's not a window, but a doorway to a balcony, and she sprints out onto the castle structure, glancing around for any alternate escape routes so she doesn't have to take the iffy one.

She’s not especially adventurous by nature, other than enjoying backpacking and camping. It’s something she used to do with her grandfather a few times a year. Now, she continues their little tradition.

That said, if taking a life-threatening risk is the difference between her freedom and all of the horrible things that can happen in a strange kidnapper cult’s castle complete with a dungeon, she’ll take her chances with the river.

Zuzia steps between the block-like merlons, halting as her toes reach the edge of the embrasure. It’s about 45 meters (~150 feet) to the water’s surface below her. It’s also a river that flows into the fort’s outer wall, under the castle, and presumably out of the back side. She doesn’t have to clear any structures, thankfully, but it’s still a daunting height to willfully jump from.

Voices call out to her, and she merely glances. At least one of the guard does seem to be a human being; he’s terrified seeing her at the edge of the battlement, as if he knows what she’s contemplating. Maybe others are worried, as there’s a lot of yelling and waving at her.

However, there are swords drawn.

Actual metal swords.

A solid meter or more of sharpened steel meant to kill.

She can’t escape now. Not without jumping. It’s her only option, other than to surrender. She doesn’t have enough spray left to incapacitate such a large group, who have blocked both exits of the balcony.

Zuzia wishes she could say something suave or cool, reminiscent of an action movie hero. She wishes she had a cool one-liner that would send the guards straight to the burn unit at the hospital.

Instead, she can only hear her own heartbeat pounding in her ears. She can feel the itchiness of adrenaline in her veins. Fear grips her heart.

One of the guards tries to rush her with his lithe frame, seemingly moving like a cat, rather than a man, and Zuzia's instincts kick back in, denying her chance to go out like a puckish rogue.

She steps forward, using her position to kick off of the lip of the embrasure with all of her strength, and she manages her angle as best as she can before closing her legs in and folding her arms over her chest. It's a terrifyingly long time that she is careening towards the water; long enough for her to have thoughts, to be afraid all over again, to curse herself for jumping, to realize she noticed something strange protruding from the helmet and backside of the cat-like man, as if he had triangular ears on top of his head and an actual feline tail.

During her long fall, she has time to ask herself in her own thoughts, *Wait, are there furries here, too? What kind of mix and match cult…?*

Her feet hit the water, and she braces to try to hold her breath as long as she can, scrambling to the surface as quickly as she can manage. However, her bag is weighing her down. She had hoped there would be enough pocketed air volume that she might float, but that's not the case. Her equipment is too heavy.

She saw buildings, so she's in a town. Though, if cultists have control of such a huge castle right out in the open, they probably have a great deal of influence in town.

Either way, she doesn't have the luxury of hesitating or thinking about it.

Zuzia unbuckles her backpack, slipping free of the straps just as she feels it settle on the bottom. Her ears ache painfully, but she doesn't think she's much more than three, maybe three and a half meters deep.

The young woman quickly spins, flipping her backpack over and opening the main pocket zipper so she can grab a couple of her granola bars and her water bottle. She also gets into the small front pocket to retrieve her fire starter rod and a multi-tool.

Just in case, Zuzia tries to lift her backpack and swim with it, and she can move. Perhaps it was just because she was upside down. Not delaying further, and now that she has emergency supplies if she does have to ditch her bag, Zuzia slings it over her shoulder again. Feeling the burn in her lungs demand attention even after buying herself a few extra moments by exhaling slowly, she kicks off of the riverbed, swimming up to the surface. She barely reaches the surface when she absolutely has to inhale, and she takes in a massive breath of fresh air. Some water droplets find their way down her windpipe, and she coughs, treading water with her salvaged necessities. Her cellphone is in her shorts pocket, so as long as she can get clear of the immediate danger, she can call the police and try to figure out how to get home.

And, just in case, she has the granola bars to tide her over as she tries to hike to the next town away from this cultist compound. Zuzia's fine with people having their own personal preferences and interests, but she's not fine with being kidnapped into them.

And, as if to continue raining on her 'happy' little parade, the smell at the surface of the water degrades quickly as she drifts with the current, planning her route of escape. She is now under a tunnel structure, and the air quickly becomes a putrid, sewer-like smell.

It's then that she realizes that one of the biggest advantages of being on a river like this, exploited by organizations of all levels since time immemorial, is that waste can be simply dumped into the river and it floats away… only to slowly destroy the environment and disrupt the ecosystem.

Oh, hell no! thinks the Polish woman. *There's no way THIS is legal! Just you wait until I figure out where the heck we are!* She gags and coughs, doing her best to keep hold of her tools, but agonizing over foul stench invading her nostrils and making her cough. She feels horribly sick, and the downstream way is blocked by a gigantic metal grate. She can't fit through any of the gaps in the bars, and she begins to panic. She's still a bit winded from fleeing at a full sprint, and she doesn't want to sacrifice her expensive camping gear at the bottom of a river that a castle full of lunatic kidnappers dumps their waste into.

She searches for options, and her best bet is likely to climb out via the metal grating.

Zuzia shoves her fire starter and multi-tool into the pocket not containing her phone, and she grabs onto the portcullis with her newly free right hand so she can shift herself to allow her to shove the granola bars into her back pockets. It's tightening her shorts on her legs, restricting her movement some, but she should still be able to run.

She grumbles to herself, "'Get the ladies' shorts!' they said. 'They'll be super cute!' Dumb, stupid… Why did I listen? I should've bought men's shorts…" Zuzia clings the free strap of her backpack back onto her shoulders, but she avoids buckling it for now in case she needs to ditch it. The blonde starts climbing, but she hears the banging of metal armored boots as they approach, and she looks up at the gap above her.

Soldiers appear over the edge of the tunnel roof, shouting to each other and pointing at her.

"Dupki… Debile…" grumbles the Polish woman in her native tongue. *Great. Now what?*

She looks around as the guards call over reinforcements, while a couple of them bark orders at Zuzia.

I really can't place that language at all. Who the heck are these guys?

Just out of idle -and admittedly desperate- curiosity, she tries pulling on the bars near her. The metal gateway consists of metal bars that are roughly four to five centimeters across forming squares about ten centimeters at the widest all the way across and up to the top of a stone-block archway.

As she pushes on it as much as she can, bracing herself with her left hand against a separate section, the bar she's pressing on snaps one end of the section of a square with a loud metallic '*pop!*' that startles her.

Surprised, she pulls the metal bar back the other way, and the other end of that small section of bar forming the side of a square snaps off as well with a metallic pop.

The guards fall silent, while Zuzia looks at the roughly 8 centimeters of metal she has in her hand.

Okay… I am definitely NOT this strong. This has to be a movie set or something, right?

She tucks the metal piece in between her belt and the waistband of her shorts, in case she can use it later, since it's good metal. The Polish woman then grabs the newly created double section of a horizontal piece of flat bar, and she pulls on it with both hands, using her feet to brace herself. She yelps as the metal buckles and gives way, snapping off, though this time, the vertical piece that goes down from where her piece was broken bends. She twists a couple of times as she is slowly sinking in the water, snapping the bar free.

There is now a square gap that is roughly twenty centimeters wide and tall through the portcullis.

Zuzia swims back to the surface, inspecting her handiwork.

The guards have also fallen strangely quiet, though she can see they're still up there, staring down at her.

She states caustically in Polish, "[I'm not sorry about your stupid movie props! You kidnapped me!]"

The blonde then takes a couple of moments to pull bars free under the water so she'll be able to swim through, rather than trying to climb through. It may be movie prop metal for whatever dumb action scene, or because they're stingy cultists with their own castle, but it's still definitely metal. She doesn't want to get scratched.

A net drops on her, and she yelps, "Gah!" She immediately kicks downwards into the water, bracing herself against the portcullis and pulling against the net as they try to draw it back up.

She encounters resistance for a moment, and it's rather tangled around her, meaning she'll have trouble escaping as well as avoiding drowning if she doesn't get free quickly.

The Polish backpacker bucks backwards against the tension, and it seems to pop free of whatever it was, allowing her to sink with the weights attached to the net. She begins pulling against it to get free, and to her pleasant surprise, the ropes begin breaking.

Thank goodness! thinks the young woman to herself. Just as she has the thought, though, heavy splashes hit the surface of the water, and emerging

from the rising bubbles are two armored bodies that sink like stones made of metal. They both flop down onto the bottom of the river bed, struggling to climb to their feet.

During her flailing while tangled, she kicks the portcullis, and the whole thing gongs through the water, startling her briefly.

Geez! This place is crazy!

She pries the netting free and scrambles clear, observing the two knights as they manage to get to their feet. But, with all of that armor, there's no way they'll make it to the surface.

What do I care!? I'm the victim!

She swims back to the surface, returning to her hole in the portcullis.

What am I even supposed to do, anyways? The others are coming.

As she pries another section of the metal bars free, she has a thought.

I guess… if their armor is as cheap as this metal…

Zuzia groans as her guilty conscience starts to nag at her.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 133: Adrenaline Rush

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 133: Adrenaline Rush

Two armored men from a strange cult living in an authentic-looking medieval castle kept up to date with fresh period-accurate fabrics have fallen into a river after trying to capture Zuzia with a net.

Zuzia was just minding her own business on a backpacking trip through the wilderness when she suddenly found herself in a dungeon of a bunch of strange cosplaying kidnappers. She has no idea what their motivations are, why they wanted her, or even where she is, as she can't understand their language at all. She doesn't even know what language it is.

Now, those two 'knights' that fell into the water are at risk of drowning, and Zuzia feels a little guilty, since she doesn't want to kill anyone, but she wants to escape.

She could probably leave them and get over it pretty quickly after the fact, especially if she doesn't actually see them drown, but the fact that she knows they don't stand much of a chance is what is nagging at her.

The water is filled with foul excrement and other waste, her kidnappers are still trying to capture her and imprison her, and the only reason these two fell in was because they wouldn't let go of the net they tried to capture Zuzia with. Her adrenaline is clearly pumping hard, and the materials around her are cheap, since she has been pulling metal bars apart and snapping ropes that she can only rationalize as being movie props.

And, if the armor on the ‘soldiers’ is as cheap as the metal of the portcullis, she may be able to at least give the men a chance.

She takes a deep breath and dives back down into the water, finding one of the soldiers already climbing up the portcullis on his own.

Good. I can leave him alone then.

She swims down to the one still on the bottom, struggling to walk to the portcullis. He’s visibly losing steam, meaning he must be out of air.

All I have to do is try, right?

Zuzia grabs his arm and plants her feet, ready to pull with all of her might. The blonde rips his armor off as quickly as she can. It’s rather graceless, since she needs to hurry, so she yanks the plates off without regard to the injuries he takes in the process. When she yanks his helmet off, she then pulls him by the arm as she kicks towards the surface, hoping he takes the hint.

Since she ascends rather easily, she feels relief. Her own breath is about to expire, and the surface is still a meter or so away.

As soon as she breaks the top of the water, she gasps in a breath, tugging the knight up to the water as she treads with her feet. He still feels like dead weight, but at least she was able to get him to the surface. She swims to the portcullis as he coughs, spitting up water and wheezing.

Once they’re both hooked on, she notices the other knight isn’t at the surface yet. She takes a breath, diving to find him dangling semi-lifelessly from the metal bars.

She grabs his collar and keeps her feet on the bars, pulling him to the surface as well. He coughs up some amount of water, gasping for breath as well.

Relieved that she won't be responsible for manslaughter, Zuzia moves towards the escape hole she made.

Or, she would, if an iron grip didn't halt her. She looks back at the second knight she just saved, who seems to have the presence of mind enough to grip her bicep.

REALLY!? After I just saved your life!?

She shouts in Polish, "Let go of me! Stop!"

The backpacker can't call out for help, since everyone around seems to be a member of this strange cosplaying cult.

No matter how much she flails her bicep to try to free herself, he keeps hold of her. "Let… go! I said let go! I won't warn you again!"

She tries to pull away, and she feels his grip slip. Just a little more…

She screams at the top of her lungs, "I said let me go!"

Zuzia throws her fist forward with all of her strength, straight towards the portcullis.

Somehow, at that exact moment and right where her arm is passing through the water, an explosion goes off.

An massive blast of water erupts in front of Zuzia, and metal shrieks as men scream and yell in shock and terror. She feels herself fall briefly, somehow blasted out of the water.

Then, the river rushes back in to fill the hole, and she finds herself a meter below the water, terrified.

The portcullis has been thoroughly smashed apart, twisted and bent away from where it was in a wide arc.

The two guards are clinging to the metal bars desperately, now several feet above the water with the two halves of portcullis bowed out and against the canal walls of the castle. The second soldier that she rescued, and the one that tried to hold her prisoner, is clutching his wrist as he screams in agony.

Nevertheless, the way is open, and they're trying to bomb her now. Zuzia has no time to sit around and gawk. She begins swimming furiously.

I don't know how I survived that, but this is my chance!

She follows the river until another portcullis appears ahead of her at the outer wall. Thankfully, this one is currently open for some reason, making her escape…

The guards on the wall begin shouting and pointing at her, and she tries to hurry. The metal bars start to descend, and she dives into the water, trying to avoid them.

It doesn't work. She feels the metal come down on her rather quickly, driving her to the riverbed and pinning her down.

She nearly loses all of her breath at that moment, and she groans, terrified of drowning as much as becoming a prisoner.

I know I said I'd rather die, but I was doing good! I'd rather live free! Let me live free!

She presses upwards, and to her surprise, she is able to lift her back up, in spite of the metal portcullis pinning her down.

That's right! They're movie props! Thank God for the cheap materials these lunatics used!

She lifts herself up high enough, slipping past the portcullis and then kicking up towards the surface. She reaches the surface with surprising ease, though maybe she's losing track of time. Her mind is going crazy with all of the fear and terror she's feeling just trying to escape.

Once she has caught her breath, she resumes her desperate marathon swim down river, following it until she leaves the crazy town. She can hear what sound like hoofbeats following, meaning she needs to escape the water and find somewhere to hide.

She spots a stand of trees and makes her way to the shoreline, bolting up out of the water and sprinting for the trees.

This is the longest adrenaline rush she has ever felt, since she feels like she all but flies up out of the water. She is able to sprint faster than ever, and still her body doesn't feel tired. Her surroundings flash by in a blur.

Zuzia would give anything to be at home in her bed.

If I make it home, I'm not going out for a LONG time. Please, God, let me make it home.

The Polish woman makes it to the stand of trees, and she darts into cover, finding a good spot to hide for the moment and catch her breath. She'll need to resume running once the soldiers get close, but for now, she has some space. They're still searching the river banks from the looks of it. But, once they find her footprints, they'll pursue her relentlessly. Her best chance is to avoid being caught until nightfall, and then she'll be able to hide long enough for them to give up…

She hopes.

“Right… Time to keep moving. I have to get as far into the thickest parts of the woods as I can. Then I can rest.”

She takes a quick drink from her water bottle, which is clipped to her belt loop, and she begins running at a more comfortable clip.

Once she has some distance, Zuzia pulls out her cell phone to dial emergency services.

Zuzia starts with ‘112’ for Poland’s emergency services, praying that she’s in some backwards part of the Polish cell service area.

However, her phone disconnects without success, and she looks. She has no signal whatsoever.

“No…” whispers the blonde, unable to contain her terror. However, she notices the GPS icon is active in the status bar. She immediately has a moment of hope.

Zuzia opens the app for navigation, thankful that she’ll at least have the help of land navigation to find normal civilization, or at the very least, get close enough to reach a cell tower.

That was her hope, anyways.

When she opens the map, it takes a moment, but a detailed digital layout of roads, forest, the river, and the cultist town appear on screen, just like she might expect, with the little icon indicating her at the center.

Strangely, there is a destination already put in that simply says “Daniel”, and it is located about 1,276 kilometers (~793mi) away.

“What the heck is a Daniel?” grumbles Zuzia. “Or, wait, shouldn’t it be ‘Who?’ Isn’t that a person’s name?” She sighs, laying her head back against a tree.

She tries to clear the destination, but it doesn’t work. When she tries to add her hometown, the searching function doesn’t return any results.

“That’s weird… Let’s try… Warsaw, I guess? I can get home from there. But first, I need to figure out where exactly I am in relation to it.”

She puts “[Warszawa, Polska]” into the search.

Just as with her hometown, Warsaw doesn’t even say that there are no results. It just acts like it can’t search.

“Maybe I need service to search? But how can I see the map so clearly?”

She groans as she holds her phone to her chest to think.

Well, I guess twelve hundred miles is pretty far away, and this destination won’t clear… Maybe Daniel knows where we are, since my phone wants me to go there. But, I’m probably better off at stopping by the other towns and trying to find someone with a working phone. Twelve hundred miles is a long way to walk, and I don’t think I know anyone named Daniel… Well, other than one of Grandpa’s friends. I think he was named Daniel…

Zuzia sighs. She has a long road ahead of her, but thankfully, she has a map showing her the strange country side.

Realizing she can just navigate by the continents to narrow down her options, she zooms out on the map, but when she gets too far, it stops loading. She can see the details of a one hundred kilometer radius around her, which covers quite a few towns and cities, by the looks of it, but without the ability to search, she can’t narrow down where she is at.

The only thing labeled so far, on that note, is called ‘Mornistae’, the big city being led by a castle full of cultists. Zuzia is a little familiar with world news, so things like Jim Jones’s suicide cult and a couple of other world-famous cults ring a bell, but she’s never heard of one that has a whole city under their control.

Not unless the Roman Catholic church counts, or something of the like.

She scoffs at the notion.

Feeling a little peckish, Zuzia eats one of her granola bars from her backpack, thankful that she didn’t have to abandon it. She’s going to have to search the forest as she walks for edible plants and berries. Thankfully, her grandfather was enthusiastic about camping with Zuzia, and he taught her all kinds of dangers, how to survive longer if she needs to, and how to navigate.

She toasts her granola bar to his memory, thankful that he taught her so much. She’ll be putting it into full practice very soon.

And, for anything she doesn’t know, she has her field guide handy to try to make the most of it. Lastly, if she still can’t identify something, she’ll abide by the number one rule; when in doubt, don’t eat it.

She can do everything else right and die in agony if she eats one wrong plant. Thankfully, it’s early summer in a semi-tropical place, given the conditions and weather around her, so she might be rather lucky. Since it’s semi-tropical, the kidnappers must’ve taken Zuzia south, though it would be strange that she got taken so far while unconscious.

Wait… now that I think about it… Why would kidnappers drag me all the way to another country and leave me with my backpack? Or my shoes, even. Not to mention my cellphone.

She idly inspects her phone.

Not that I'm complaining, but… They really must be strange lunatics, right?

She sighs, climbing to her feet. "Either way, I'm not going to get away from them sitting around. I need to keep moving."

Zuzia begins heading west, following the map on her phone. She has a solar-charger, so she's not overly worried about losing power on her phone. She'll just need to make sure she can get somewhere safe before anything else.

And so, Zuzia begins her journey, completely unaware of the truth all around her.

***

Rikuto sits against the seating around the ritual room, resting as he slowly sips at the mana restorative potion that he was given. It tastes a bit like a fruity energy drink, and it sends a strange buzz through his body, though thankfully, not an impairing one. He mainly just feels wired from it, even though he is still too exhausted to move. The royal guards and healers are moving through the mages on the floor, carrying some of them out.

Rikuto waves down the Captain of the Royal Guards, who goes by the name of Mauvtrest. The leading soldier gives one last instruction quietly and jogs over. He kneels before Rikuto. "Your Majesty, how may I be of service to you?"

Rikuto coughs a little, saying softly, "Sorry for that. Excuse me. What's the status?"

Mauvtrest winces a little, not making eye contact yet. He finally looks up, saying grimly, "There were… seven survivors, other than you, your Majesty."

Rikuto drops the potion bottle, and it shatters on the floor, spilling the remaining contents of the drink. His heart twists in horror, and he clutches his chest.

He whispers in pain, “C-Can… you repeat that?”

“Yes,” whispers Mauvtrest. “There were seven survivors, other than you, your Majesty.”

Rikuto clutches his head, feeling sick to his stomach. He’s dangerously close to throwing up. It’s not the realization that he could have died, but the sheer loss of life that just took place. Somewhere around one hundred bodies are laying on the stone floor of the ritual room, laid on their backs for basic medical checks, and then their arms folded over their chests.

No, there are exactly one hundred and five bodies, realizes Rikuto in horror. The men and women he saw being taken away were the lucky few. Of the one hundred and twelve mages provided by both Yaulander and Mornistae’s own, only seven survived.

“Six percent…” murmurs the Japanese man. *“Six percent of them survived…”*

He can’t hold it in, and he doubles over, retching onto the floor.

Mauvtrest says nothing and doesn’t flinch in fear or disgust. He lets the otherworlder king empty it all out.

“Wh-What of the s-survivors?” asks Rikuto.

“They’re being taken to beds where the healers can tend to them. Many of the guards are out… searching for the woman. And, we’re waiting on someone to verify that all of these ones are… gone.” He gestures at the tranquil carnage ahead of Rikuto; one hundred and five lost souls sacrificed to bring one into this world.

One they no longer even have.

“Who are we waiting on?” asks Rikuto, trying to grasp anything logical; the next step so he can take the next step after that. And, then the next…

“Well, your Majesty,… Normally a final check is done by a… mage, in case there is magic involved. Specifically…” Mauvtrest points to one of the older mages lying on his back as one of the priestesses that arrived places a cloth over his face. “Lord Jukharg…”

Rikuto feels sick all over again. Jukharg is one of the Court Mages, specifically the Court Magic Shaman, a role that specializes in medical magic and potion creation, working closely with the Court Alchemist for the latter.

“What about Lord Crosserly, the Court Battle Mage? Has he any experience…?”

Rikuto trails off as he follows Mauvtrest’s finger, pointing towards the far end of the ritual room. Rikuto recognizes the outfit Crosserly normally wears, which presents a ‘scholarly soldier’ type of appearance.

“Why…?” starts Rikuto. He can’t finish the question, since all of the mages present volunteered, including the Court Mages. Rikuto didn’t pressure them specifically because he didn’t want this exact scenario to take place. But, almost all of the Court Mages volunteered anyways.

He asks quietly, “Who survived?”

I personally saw Lord Gunther Montarre, Countess Syaroa, and Archmagus Iissuuc being taken out, your Majesty. I would have to confirm the other four.”

Iissuuc and Syaroa are each rather senior and experienced mages in their fields, with Syaroa specializing in magic that was directly responsible for

helping Rikuto bolster the farms and livestock programs of Mornistae as the Court Apothecary, while Iissuuc is the Headmaster of the Empire's foremost academy of magic, if Rikuto recalls correctly. He researches the fundamentals of magic, working to identify how mana truly is shaped and woven into spells, how it entwines with the world and living things, and pioneering new spells of pure magic.

The last one is the same Lord Gunther who faced off against Daniel a few months after Daniel's and Rikuto's mutual arrival on Zenkon. He completed his apprenticeship and became a prospective Court Mage, though he lost a lot of his reputation and dignity after his behavior at the duel. It also became widely known that he stole the design of his 'water producing station' from the simple mechanical hand pump Daniel installed at Cobbler's Bank. Rikuto knows that Aramellianna and Wenlianna used their synthetic diamonds to produce water crystals, which were impossible because regular magic crystals melt due to being made of salt. However, the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy began sending huge water tankards all across Mornistae and even into other drought-affected countries.

The water tankards never seem to need to be refilled.

He kept it quiet, since Aramellianna was cooperating at the time, and if she decided to stop producing the enhanced magic crystals, then the water crystals and the relief they provide become sources of conflict when enhanced magic crystals become a finite commodity.

Rikuto will have to decide what to do later. It seems he lost most of his Court Mages, though not one of the presently deceased hurts any less.

Before he can ask Mauvtrest anything else, a young male's voice snarls, "Where is he!?"

Yaulander bursts into the room, pulling free of the maid trying to wipe his face with a handkerchief. His eyes are nearly swollen shut, and they are so brightly red that they almost glow in the dark. Tears sparkle on his cheeks, and snot gracelessly trails down his upper lip and across his chin. He has claw marks around his eyes, as well as deep marks from fingernails pockmarking around his eyes and on his cheeks. Additionally, his left pupil looks fogged over, and he can barely open it at all. The swath of orange spray coloring goes directly across his right cheek, catching is right ear and coating his nose and mouth, and then curves upwards across his left eye and forehead, staining a portion of his blond hair to a much darker shade.

"Where is that filthy trull!?" snarls the Grand Prince as he storms towards Rikuto. "Grant my men leave to find her at once!" His voice is raspy and ragged, probably from simultaneously trying to scream and coughing raggedly from the powerful capsaicin spray. Even now, there's an unhealthy fluttering sound in his voice from his lungs spasming.

Rikuto climbs to his feet to face Yaulander, feeling nauseous still, but able to hold it in for now. "Please calm down," urges the Japanese man.

"CALM DOWN!?" shouts the Grand Prince. The strain in raising his voice causes him to begin coughing hoarsely, and he rasps furiously, "Look at my *cough, cough* face!" He wheezes as he strains to breathe. "I… am the Grand Prince… *cough* of the Grand Zenkon Empire! I'll not be treated this way by some filthy wench!"

"She didn't know…" urges Rikuto, trying to defuse the situation.

"Didn't know!? Didn't know!?" snaps Yaulander, falling into a fit of coughs as he doubles over, and his maid steps up to support him. Her own skin on her arm

and hands are red, indicating she contaminated herself with the spray while tending to the Grand Prince, though she hasn't made a sound.

"Most of our countries on Earth moved away from having royalty in the sense we do here," explains Rikuto. "She clearly didn't understand that she was transported to another world."

"How is that possible!?" snarls one of the Grand Prince's advisors, who was quiet until now.

"Because, having experienced it, I can say confidently that it takes a while to recall the information about the transfer, somewhat like waking from a dream."

Yaulander pants heavily, still furious and fuming. He waves his hand somewhat violently and with no regard for who is around him, and the maid skillfully avoids being struck by the outswung hand. "Inform me immediately when she is found! I shall personally educate that wretched woman myself." You are reading on novelping.com, the official source.

Rikuto remains quiet, watching as the blond Imperial whirls dramatically and storms off without receiving an answer, as if refusal isn't even in his vocabulary.

The Japanese man is thankful for that. He shouldn't have finished the spell, and he only reacted instinctively because something felt wrong.

But now, another Earthling has been transported to this world, and his fear is that she was dragged to Zenkon against her will. He's not sure how exactly the Divine Realm chooses, nor why all three of the summons seem to have come from the same version of Earth. All he can really do is hope his own men can find her first. And, if Rikuto can get in touch with Ryukana, have her returned home if that is what the newest Divine Summon wishes.

***

At the moment of the summoning, far away in another castle, a goddess stirs at the sudden surge of energy. Ryukana rises from her lounge recliner, setting the book aside as well as the artifact ‘mirror’ she uses to watch over Daniel now, just to be safe. It’s a Divine Relic that can find virtually anyone -assuming they aren’t devoid of mana in a magic-centric world-, so it cannot fall into the hands of mortals. She ponders for a moment before she makes the connection.

“Oh… Rikuto, what have you done?”

She immediately uses the mirror to try to find the new summon, who, if they received proper blessings from the Divine Realm, should stand out, especially in a human-led kingdom like Mornistae.

And, sure enough, she is able to find a young woman with golden blonde hair as she runs through the castle, defending herself with a large can of pepper spray; specifically a fogging spray. She recognizes the equipment the young woman has easily. It certainly came from 21st century Earth, and she appears to be of European descent. The gods and goddesses of the Divine Realm can choose anyone they want, relatively speaking, so there’s no real requirement to choose from any one country on a given world of selection. That said, it also isn’t so simple to choose the perfect would-be hero from among billions, so many of the gods and goddesses, especially junior ones, often choose at random, even going so far as to do something akin to a roulette spin to narrow down the options in several rounds. Then, it’s a matter of finding someone with no lingering attachments, primarily, but also of decent character.

After a rather long chase, the young woman finds a hiding place in the woods outside of the capital of Mornistae, where she eats some of the apparent camping rations she brought with her. Her behavior indicates that the memories

still haven't settled, assuming she agreed to be transported to another world. The brain chemistry of the summoned individual are often adjusted to add the capacity for magic, and this often creates a delay in recalling short term memories due to the mind needing to sort itself out. Order once said that she and Chaos left it as is, since they also prefer if the mortals forget anything they see in regards to the Divine Realm. It can sometimes wash away all of those memories permanently, but it otherwise remains harmless.

The main question Ryukana has would be how someone got summoned at all. She may not have the same authority or seniority she had, but she was under the impression that she would remain in charge of Zenkon's fate, even if she is supervising from within the household of one of her Divine Summons.

If there is a new god or goddess responsible for Zenkon, it would have made sense to ask Ryukana for help.

The only thing she can think of would be that the Divine Guardian watching over Zenkon from the Divine Realm is one of her juniors; and a very junior god or goddess at that. Since there are still two active summons on Zenkon, even they should have been warned of the arrival of another, though it seems, Rikuto was part of the summoning.

Ryukana stands up, saying gently, "I need to figure out what's going on. But, first,…" She changes her location to arrive without warning near Daniel. He's currently in the midst of a dance, though his own lack of skill is quite evident. The celebrations, which Ryukana was watching before, are in full swing. Three major threats that Mattarglos has been handling without much progress have been swiftly eliminated by the combined force (and carefully managed restraint) of the Fievegal. Reignleif is the one currently dancing with the human mechanic, very obviously guiding him on the fly while still managing to make it look like he's leading, while others watch on with curiosity and envy.

It seems to be a very spurious and light-hearted celebration, meaning that Daniel's lack of dancing ability isn't something to be mocked, so much as enjoyed for the fun that everyone is having.

The goddess makes her own attire match that of the elven mage, Senn, who is in a fairly casual fall dress that keeps her a little warmer. Mattarglos is much further north than Mornistae, and it is fall now.

Ryukana approaches Daniel, asking Reignleif gently, "Empress Reignleif, may I have the next dance with him?"

Both Daniel and Reignleif glance at her with jovial expressions, but Daniel does a double-take, clearly having not realized who she was at first.

"No need to panic yet," urges Ryukana, keeping her expression calm and warm.

Reignleif curtsies to Ryukana, who mimics the gesture, and then she curtsies to Daniel, while he bows politely. They then hold each other to begin dancing, and Daniel warns softly in English, "I'm still garbage at this, so please go easy on me."

She snickers playfully. "I thought you were doing well."

Daniel jokes, "Someone was doing well enough for both of us." Reignleif blushes and grins over her shoulder, swaying her tail approvingly as she happily and proudly walks with her head high. For once, she's not hiding her face behind the high collar of the mantle she always wears.

Daniel continues, "So, what is it?"

The goddess turns serious, continuing to speak in English as they continue to dance, "I don't know all of the details, but it seems Mornistae summoned

another person from Earth.”

Daniel nearly stutter-steps, managing to keep rhythm. “They did?”

“Yes. A young woman arrived.”

“Did… you…?”

“No. That’s what has me worried. It’s not impossible for one of my very junior colleagues to not have looked into the circumstances of this world, or to not have considered the consequences. Summoning is meant to be taxing and dangerous, normally, in order to minimize the host worlds from overusing them. Likewise, we’re supposed to carefully consider as much as possible about the person to be summoned as well as the condition of the world we’re sending them to. But, if this is someone’s first world management assignment…”

“They’ll be eager to get their first summon under their belt…” murmurs Daniel, finishing the thought. Ryukana bobs her head once in confirmation.

“Is there anything you can do?”

“I intend to return to the Divine Realm if I can in order to speak to the god or goddess who performed the summoning. Unfortunately, simply undoing it is no easy feat, as it’s most likely that the young woman consented to come to this world. That, in and of itself, is not unlike a magic contract, which can be strong enough that even I couldn’t violate it. In fact, your situation was unprecedented, but I believe you could easily be returned to Earth, where I would have a more difficult time returning Rikuto. Returning someone else’s summoned person would be virtually impossible for me alone.”

“I see… So, what happens to her, then?”

“Well, without knowing why she was summoned, I can’t be too certain. Hopefully, her blessings grant her enough strength to defend herself at the least. For now, though, I’m afraid I’ll most likely be stuck simply observing from afar, since I have to minimize direct intervention. Be careful, though. If you have any inkling that another Earthling is close to you, it could very well be that you’re the target.”

“Me?” scoffs Daniel with surprised amusement. “I…” He trails off, more or less understanding why he might be considered an important enough target to warrant summoning a blessed individual from another world to defeat him; the nukes being the primary culprit.

“I’ll be careful,” replies Daniel with a polite bow. “Should I do anything in the meantime? Should I hold off on the invasion?”

“Perhaps avoid pressing the borders for the time being until I can gather more information. I understand the need and desire to capture Rikuto’s special weapons, but it could be immensely dangerous, depending on how powerful this woman is.” She looks down, a little dejected. “One’s first summon, assuming it is, often turns into an exciting affair, and it’s extremely easy to go overboard. To us, it’s like we’re Chaos and Order themselves, changing the fate of a world. And, why would we want to skimp on our heroes? Before we know it, there’s a hero needing another summoned hero to stop them.”

“I’m surprised Order allows that,” jokes Daniel. “I guess I know next to nothing about her, but she didn’t strike me as one to practice insanity.”

Ryukana giggles. “True. I’m not entirely sure of Chaos and Order’s motivations, but I know that they remain hands-off, so to speak.”

“Are our feeble struggles amusing?” asks Daniel, not trying to sound condescending or anything, but he realizes after he says it *how* the question could come across.

“I… genuinely don’t know… If it grants you any comfort, that means I’m in the same boat as you. I don’t think it’s about mere amusement…” She trails off, likely having never given any real thought to it in any of the time that she has existed.

Daniel finishes the dance, mimicking what he sees a few others nearby do, and he says quietly, “If you need me to do anything, Ryukana, just say the word. I’ll go and retrieve this woman if she’s in danger.”

“Like I said, she may be your enemy, so don’t do anything rash. I wanted to warn you of her existence in case she was summoned specifically for you. In the meantime, I’ll go look into it from my end. I will be out of contact for some time, though it shouldn’t amount to more than a couple of days.”

“Very well. I’ll send word to hold what we have for now, and we’ll continue our diplomatic endeavors here.”

“I encourage you to do so. Thank you. If you’ll excuse me, thank you for the dance.”

The two repeat their court gestures; a curtsy and a bow, and Ryuogriar asks in passable English, “Have you concluded the talk of secrets, Lady Ryukana?”

“I have, thank you,” replies the goddess in English as well. “I am confident Daniel will explain. Please excuse me, as I have much to find out.”

Ryukana departs, and the platinum dragon claims the next ‘dance’, though it’s mostly her clinging to Daniel brazenly and as obviously as possible.

Ryukana is a little preoccupied, but she's glad that Daniel has found people dear to him and who treat him dearly.

Maybe it's a good idea to keep the new summon away from him for both their sakes…

She moves out of sight of anyone and transports herself back to the Citadel. There, she needs to get permission to enter the Divine Realm.

She's not exactly banished, but she was sent to remain on Zenkon for the foreseeable future, so she doesn't want to simply go.

"My Divine Creators, Order and Chaos, please hear my request," whispers Ryukana in what amounts to a prayer. "If I may, I would like to enter the Divine Realm to speak to the new manager of Zenkon, as well as to speak to you, my Creators. I do not wish to overstep bounds, but I have questions that I need clarification on if I am to continue to serve without failing again."

When she opens her eyes, she is a little startled.

She doesn't recognize where she is at, since it technically doesn't exist in the normal sense of 'where'.

She is neither in the Divine Realm, nor anywhere else in the physical universe.

Ryukana is present in a seeming blend of nothing at all and the roots of all existence.

And, ahead of her are the Primordial beings known as Order and Chaos.

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 134: The New Goddess of Zenkon

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 134: The New Goddess of Zenkon

Ryukana is a goddess belonging to the Divine Realm, a sort of management center created with the intention of watching over and guiding the continued existence of the innumerable worlds scattered across the whole of reality.

But, not so different from the humans, gatonines, drakyks, Grodrrns, and all of the other varied peoples and beings, Ryukana is a creation.

There are only two true creators responsible for forging existence into what it is, defining even the intricacies of such things as gravity, nuclear forces, light, dark, magic, life, death, decay, growth, and everything else that comes together to define all of the things that can be perceived or experienced.

Those two creators are the original existences, and their appearance belies their true power.

They are known simply as Order and Chaos, even to the gods and goddesses of the Divine Realm.

Ryukana knows that the two apparent goddesses transcend existence, including having a physical form. However, for ease of communication, they often take humanoid forms, like one of their earliest sentient creations. Presently, Order appears as she always does; a mature and stoic woman of great beauty that even Ryukana can’t truly compare to. The Primordial

Goddess retains a simple appearance with a basic set of robes that possess no frills or ornamentation.

Chaos, on the other hand, is the one who tends to take different forms. At the tribunal for Ryukana's negligence, the entropic goddess appeared as a young girl, roughly in her early teens, making her of similar apparent youthfulness to Hekate. Now, however, she appears as an elder Queen, absolutely glowing with sparkling jewels floating around her and brightly shining adornments, contrasting starkly with her counterpart.

Ryukana respects both of her creators immensely, but she is wary of Chaos, specifically. As an entity, Chaos lives by whimsy. She has no real scruples, in the typical moral sense, meaning she could decide suddenly to simply erase something in front of her. Though she rarely simply annihilates anything, she always gives off the aura that she might at any moment.

Chaos asks a little facetiously, "Confused as to where you are?"

"I… understand where I am, but I seem to be unable to comprehend it, my Lady Chaos."

"That is because this is the first time you have been brought outside of existence looking in," replies Order gently. "We did not create any of you with the ability to see the structure."

Chaos mimics a human from earth, producing a fan from her dress's elegant sleeves and hiding her smirking face as she teases, "We wouldn't want any of you trying to conquer us and usurp us. Heeheeheeheee."

"I-Is… Would that even be possible?" asks Ryukana, made curious only by the fact that Chaos brought it up, but having never given it a single thought. Both of the Primordial Goddesses transcend her actual understanding, and they could

simply snap her out of existence without any warning. The Divine Realm goddess wouldn't even be able to comprehend that she no longer existed. She would simply end, and that would be it.

Likewise, they could simply turn her into a true human, or even an insect, a germ, or something inorganic like a sword or a rock. She has heard rumors of a goddess that was turned into a sword once, though she didn't pay it any real attention, since that had to have been a punishment for a screw up.

Seeming to read every thought crossing her mind, Chaos smiles deviously. "Interesting…" is all she says before Order answers the question Ryukana asked.

"There have been many attempts since the beginning of time to escape beyond the edge of existence into our true realm, but only one ever succeeded."

Ryukana stares at her in utter shock. "Wha-… Really? Who was it?"

"I do believe she's plotting something, Sister," jokes Chaos. This causes a smirk to appear on the more mature-seeming Primordial Goddess's lips, and Ryukana turns pale.

"N-No! I swear, such thoughts were truly only out of curiosity. I am clearly unworthy of such knowledge."

Order replies with amusement lightly tinting her otherwise stoic and calm voice, "It is no matter. He entangled himself without intention, and he suffered greatly in an effort to restore what he had broken."

"As with all things, we chose to observe," adds Chaos a little more seriously. "Or rather, we had no choice but to observe. It's unclear what would happen if things had gone differently."

“Is… this somehow related to Daniel? O-Or Rikuto?”

“Hmm? Oh! No, not at all. You see, his suffering was caused by the fact that he was entangled within the fabrics of existence and the void. He made a humongous mess of things, but he found a way to restore everything. Or rather, his little champion did.”

“For simplicity’s sake,” starts Order as Ryukana struggles to understand the cryptic story. “He unintentionally stole a piece of the tether that binds us together and allows everything to function, including us. He couldn’t destroy or usurp us, per se, but he had roughly all of the authority and power that we have over existence, time, and creation.”

“And, instead of using it, he tried to relinquish it almost immediately as one of his disciples tried to take it from him.”

Ryukana nods. They’re remaining rather vague, and possibly for good reason, but it’s not what she wanted to talk about. “I appreciate that there must be a purpose, but I’m afraid I don’t know for what reason you’ve told me this story, my Ladies Chaos and Order.”

“Why did you say my name first? Huh?” asks Chaos accusingly, but Order ignores her, “Not everything has a purpose.”

“Or, maybe it does,” counters Chaos playfully, rolling right off of her fake irritation into joining Order’s point. “Perhaps we just wanted to tease the possible posting of that story on webnovel sites. Or, perhaps it is meant to be a warning when you think about it hard enough.”

“Regardless, we have gotten off-topic,” redirects Order. “We brought you ‘here’ because no one can stumble upon us…”

“Other than that guy…” jokes Chaos, and Order continues without missing a beat.

“… And, we can restore your power to grant a wish if you can justify it to us.”

This surprises Ryukana. Each of the Divine Realm gods and goddesses are inherently created with the power to grant a wish to their summoned heroes, since it can be a good incentive to get them to leave behind their old lives and start over in a new world for whatever purpose the transfer would be occurring. Daniel’s wish was extraordinarily simple in the grand scheme of things. There are some limits on what a goddess like Ryukana can grant, and some detriments to others that she can, but overall, wishes can be as dangerous as the things that the Divine Realm will intervene in to begin with.

Ah! Maybe that’s why they told me that story. Maybe that guy made a wish, and that’s how he ended up with so much power. That would explain the limits. This must have been before I was created…

“Wrong,” blurts out Chaos, making it clear that Ryukana’s thoughts are not her own in this ‘place’. She flinches and straightens her posture, halting all thoughts.

The whimsical Primordial Goddess suddenly appears to be an arthropod-like creature, having apparently decided to take on a new form. Ryukana isn’t familiar with races or living beings outside of her own jurisdiction, since there are so many, and it could even pre-date the Divine Realm, knowing what she knows.

The now-soft-bodied, crab-like goddess replies with alien mandibles fluttering, “You cannot perceive him or recall him because his champion was able to restore everything. To all of the other worlds damaged in the process, it became as if nothing occurred.”

“It is easy to believe that we have seen the future,” begins Order. “But, instead, we have seen events repeat many times across many different worlds. There was a Divine Realm that had to be erased because they were causing more harm than good in an effort to rally strength to usurp us at the expense of all of reality. And, then there was a girl who saved the Divine Realm that her mentor and father had nearly shattered in his efforts to defy the rules of nature and save another.”

“*Your* Divine Realm,” emphasizes Chaos, furthering the point before Order continues.

“We told you this much because it’s true that we would seek to never be challenged simply because everything will cease if the balance we maintain is no longer. Daniel, Rikuto, and Zuzanna are of no immediate threat to us or the Divine Realm, but you would need to be responsible for your next wish in order to prevent a scenario where great damage occurs.”

“But, if used correctly, even a dire situation could be brought to heel,” finishes Chaos. “We do not fear destruction, but we are actively invested in avoiding it, if only to preserve our beloved creation and destruction.”

“Mind all things that occur, not just the obvious sense and logic that you can observe, but the elements that can change what you expect,” explains the negentropic goddess of order. “You have a rather unique position as a dedicated resident of a world.”

“I am humbled by and grateful for your advice, my wise Creators. If I may be permitted, though, I had a question.”

“Ask,” replies Chaos. “Though, don’t expect that we didn’t know your question before you ever thought to call out to us.”

When the lesser goddess looks, Chaos is already in a new form, seemingly never actually making a change, and yet appearing different instantaneously. This time, she is a young girl around thirteen or fourteen at a glance, but potentially older than would appear in the way that Hekate is fifteen but looks closer to being twelve or younger since she was malnourished for so long. Chaos's new form has raven-black hair and bright, faintly glowing sapphire-blue eyes. And, though her dress is essentially the same as before, she is wearing a beautiful sword on her back; a gladius, specifically. She also has a golden metallic arm bracer with three rings that seem to levitate around her forearm, rotating slowly.

Ryukana is quiet. Chaos's point is true. They brought her to this place outside of the normal realm of existence, including the Divine Realm itself, apparently so they could tell her things as a sort of strange warning, as well as to give her infallible privacy to ask her question. Still, she asks what they likely already know.

"Forgive me for asking, but… Has a new god or goddess been assigned to Zenkon in my old place?"

"Of course," retorts Chaos with all the gentleness of a brick. "Should we have left a world management position empty?" Find the original chapter at novelping(.)com.

The former-Divine Realm goddess remains quiet, and she wonders if the real reason she was brought to this place was to be erased.

Order chuckles for once, breaking her usual unflappable facade. "Our reputation is truly terrible, isn't it, Sister? You are not here to be erased. Had we reason to do so, you would simply cease to be. Nothing more. There would be no point in confronting you prior. Rather, a world already being protected by

a goddess, a pseudo-demi-goddess born of that world, and a wayward mortal from another world are an ideal training situation for one of our newest goddesses of the Divine Realm."

Ryukana ponders these words. She was effectively banished from the Divine Realm for her error rooted in complacency and negligence, but now they're telling her that she is trusted enough to be a failsafe for a much more junior goddess.

"Am I permitted to speak to this goddess?" asks Ryukana.

"You are," replies Order warmly without any hesitation. "Though, I would ask you to minimize your guidance or advice until she truly needs it."

"She has already made mistakes that she'll be scolded for later," teases Chaos, still in the form of the black-haired girl and hiding her cheeky grin behind the folding fan once more. Order smirks in turn, and Ryukana knows immediately what they mean.

She has been scolded for the same things.

Just as she feared, this new goddess sent the young woman to Zenkon with too much power in her blessings, whatever they may be. While it usually isn't that much of an issue and is more often worth it in the long run, the additional power adds to the time it takes for the summoned hero's memories of the transfer to return. Given that she panicked immediately and made her escape, it's possible she'll be very far away from the castle before she makes sense of her memories and her gifted powers. Which, unfortunately, she won't be able to check without either a skilled mage practiced in using magic to appraise the abilities of others, as is the case in many worlds where such things are

possible, or an artifact or other analysis relic like the one present in the castle of Mornistae.

Conversely, given enough power, she should be able to defend herself well enough, even without knowing her full capabilities, but she could just as easily become an enemy of regular people if she accidentally causes harm. It's a complex situation and one Ryukana understands all too well.

"I'll do my best not to interfere, then. I am honored that you have entrusted me with this responsibility. I'll simply ask what the nature of the woman's mission and powers are, so I can prepare if things become unsustainable."

"Very good," replies Order.

"Heeheeheehee!" snickers Chaos from behind her fan, now appearing as the child form she presented at the tribunal, which looks to be closer to ten. "I suspect you will learn something as well. Good luuuuck~."

Ryukana wants to ask, but before she can formulate the question in her head, she finds herself in the Divine Realm. Several of her seniors are nearby, speaking casually. It feels like it has been a long time since she has seen any of them.

"...but I'm still struggling to find the right markers for a reliable summon," explains Silvarryn, a god that takes the form of a tiger, and he oversees a world that Ryukana has only seen a couple of times; one populated primarily by a sentient race of insectoid conquerors. "More than once, I've had the perfect summon, only for them to either side with the anomaly, or to become power hungry and become an anomaly."

Frejtenjir, one of the goddesses that Ryukana has looked up to for a long time replies calmly, "I understand, but I'm telling you, there exists no perfect set of

‘markers’. All sentient races have only one thing in common; trying to monolith them or categorize them by observable exteriors is an impossible task.”

“I know, but even trying to select individuals.”

Frejtenjir snickers softly. “Yes, indeed, the changes in seeming good choices can certainly come quickly when least expected.”

Ryukana approaches them cautiously, and Silvarryn notices her. He looks and smiles gently, bowing his head politely. “Lady Ryukana.”

“Lord Silvarryn, it has been too long.”

“Longer for you, I would expect,” replies Yulkamin, who is with the two who were speaking. The golden-haired goddess bows her head politely as well.

“Lady Yulkamin, Lady Frejtenjir. Please forgive my intrusion.”

“Not at all, Lady Ryukana,” replies the eldest of the four, Frejtenjir. “We were simply making idle talk about summoned champions. Have you been well on Zenkon?”

“I have. Though, things have not gone according to plan, as you all know.”

The three give a sympathetic half-smile. Ryukana continues, “If I may, I was wondering if you know who was assigned to the management position for Zenkon. I was hoping to speak to them.”

This causes their expressions to shift a little uncomfortably. In turn, Ryukana becomes nervous. “Wh-What is it? Is… Is she… Is something wrong?”

“N-No!” urges Yulkamin quickly. “She’s…” She glances around. “Oh! Yes! Coming!” She bows quickly, saying, “I have to go. I forgot I had to counsel one

of our juniors.” She then jogs away, further digging in the unease Ryukana is feeling.

Silvarryn clears his throat. “Yes, it seems I am needed on Faelkis. Excuse me.” The tiger-god seems to evaporate as he transports himself to the world he manages.

Just before she can make an escape, Ryukana snatches Frejtenjir’s forearm just as the senior goddess is saying, “Pardon me, I should also be-ee…!” She squeaks in a way that Ryukana has seen more in the Citadel than anywhere else; often when Hekate or Geirahoel are startled by something. It’s absolutely contrary to the normal unflappable and regal senior goddess.

“What aren’t you telling me?” asks Ryukana sternly. She realizes who she’s talking to and who she grabbed; a bad habit she seems to have picked up from people-watching with her new mortal friends. She quickly retreats her hand, but she doesn’t let up the interrogation. “What is the problem?”

“Well…” murmurs Frejtenjir. “The young Lady Amalaskae is… among the most recently created gods, and… she’s… well… She tries very hard, and, as you may know, Zenkon is her first management position…”

“The problem?” asks Ryukana urgently.

“She’s… a bit… clumsy,” admits the senior goddess finally.

“Clumsy?” asks Ryukana, surprised. “Mistakes are one thing, but what kind of goddess is clumsy?”

“I think it is unfair of me to describe what is better seen in person, Ryukana.” She turns despondent for a moment, adding softly, “Our Creators work in strange ways sometimes. But,…” It’s clear Frejtenjir is struggling to say

whatever it is. “It’s not my place to say… Please, speak to her yourself. I believe she can be found at the rock fountain.”

“Rock fountain? Why there?” asks Ryukana. Very few gods or goddesses go there because it is little more than a pond with a waterfall bordered by large rocks.”

“It is the least fragile place in the whole of the Divine Realm,” replies Frejtenjir quietly. She then bows. “Excuse me. I don’t want to speak anymore on the matter.” She vanishes shortly afterwards.

Ryukana is left in silent thought for a moment. She finally snaps out of it and sighs. *Well then, let’s go meet this young goddess, then.*

She makes her way to the Divine Realm’s rock fountain, the least interesting and decorative place in the Divine Realm. It is said to be one of the truly oldest locations in the heavenly world, but there has never been anything particularly special about it. Ryukana has heard rumors that it is the first place Chaos and Order created together, and it represents the beginning of existence in some way.

But, in order to seek inspiration, Ryukana has gone there many times and seen nothing but rocks and water, which are common in every other part of the serving place of the gods.

As she’s getting closer, however, she hears a panicked, “Oh no! No no no!” which precedes a terrible rumbling that drowns out the voice. It startles Ryukana, since most of the Divine Realm should be sturdy enough to be indestructible short of the gods or goddesses actually intentionally trying to damage things.

Ryukana breaks into a run, her hair and dress fluttering behind her. It doesn't take long for the sound to settle and for it to be replaced by sobbing.

The violet-haired goddess slows down, scanning the area.

She has been to the rock fountain many times, but she almost believes she got lost and came to the wrong place. It looks nothing like it did prior. The bulk of the giant, ancient boulders have been shattered into fractions of themselves, and the waterfall is little more than a ripple, now.

Ryukana follows the sounds of crying, and she finds a young woman amidst massive shards of a boulder, as if she sat down in the middle of it after smashing it apart. This story is hosted at novelping.com.

She doesn't even notice Ryukana approach. It takes a long time for the former goddess of Zenkon to absorb the scene around her. It doesn't look like a rampage. The shards of the boulders continue to rest where they broke apart, only interfered with if they fell into the water or another boulder collapsed onto it. Likewise, the mysterious giant rock that created the waterfall has been fractured, but otherwise remains untouched.

It has been a long time since a new god was created. A very long time. In the beginning, everyone struggles to come to grips with their sudden existence, and the powers they were gifted by Order and Chaos may be too much. Unlike humans and other sentient races, the gods and goddesses of the Divine Realm are directly created by Chaos and Order, rather than through the machinations of life. They are suddenly aware, as if waking up for the first time, and they are welcomed into existence by the two Primordial Goddesses. They are given minimal guidance at first, because as with life, Chaos and Order allow the beings that reside within Existence to struggle and figure it out for themselves.

The only difference is, in this young goddess's case, she seems to have a great deal of destructive power. The essence of Destruction is the other half of the binary formed with Creation, and each are a fundamental power of Order and Chaos, respectively. Though destruction often creates chaos, its very nature is to restore order at the simplest level. Of course, the one who often bestows Destruction upon a god or goddess is Chaos herself. At the surface, and perhaps even in truth, this is because Chaos adores Order more than anything else. But, she also shows her adoration through mischief in the form of elements of entropy, such as giving pure destructive power to the youngest goddess in the Divine Realm.

As she's pondering all of this, Ryukana hears a sniffle come from Amalaskae. "Why can't I do anything right…?"

Ryukana hesitates. For a long time, she was confident in herself because she never made any mistakes, even small ones, until Daniel was sent to Zenkon beyond her insight. To say she knows how her junior here is feeling would be a lie. Ryukana believed she couldn't do anything wrong because she was so well-versed in everything she did. It made the gravity of her relatively simple mistake all the more devastating for her. It cascaded into putting someone in grave danger; someone whose life was fine as it was until Ryukana's interference snatched him away. *She* got lucky that he was able to survive.

"Lady Amalaskae…?" calls out Ryukana gently. The junior goddess flinches, yelping softly. She quickly wipes her face clear and stands up, straightening her outfit. She's probably the most junior world management goddess in the whole of the Divine Realm, and she is possibly one of the youngest in existence. She finally spins, pasting on a mature smile. "Oh! L-Lady Ryukana. I… Um… This is… a surprise… I-If this is about… the position…"

Ryukana holds up a hand gently, saying softly, “No. Well, it is, but I’m not angry that you were chosen to take my place. My actions brought me to where I am now, and I have resolved any regrets.”

“Oh! I-I see. Then, what may I do for you?”

Ryukana looks around her, and she certainly can understand even more of why this young goddess would be so quick to leap at the chance for her first summoning. It could have been centuries on Zenkon before anyone attempted another, but instead, it was only a couple of years. Amalaskae’s eyes also dart around at the destruction around her, and she begins to noticeably tremble.

“I don’t want to pry, so… Lady Amalaskae, I simply wanted to ask about your first summoning.”

The young goddess flinches, and she tenses her posture. She looks like she could break into crying any second.

“Did… something go wrong?” asks Ryukana gently.

Her junior hesitates for a long time, but she finally admits with a mouse-like tone, “Yes… I… She consented to the transfer, and even made a small request to bring her camping gear. I… thought there would be no issues, but… s-s-she had no memories upon her arrival, and…” She starts to waver and struggle to form any more words.

“She fled the castle and her summoners.”

“I… I thought it was only for a few moments… But,...”

Ryukana sighs. She approaches gently and takes a seat on one of the rounded chunks of broken rock. “You gave her too much power. Or, at least, a tempting amount, but it results in a longer delay for the memories of the Divine Realm to

settle in. The priority for the ritual is adding the abilities to her soul, but it delays everything else as a result."

Amalaskae drops to her knees sobbing. "Everyone always says to be careful, but… I wanted… I didn't want her to be in any danger!" She continues crying, and Ryukana does something else she learned in the Citadel.

She approaches and kneels, hugging her junior. Gods and goddesses of the Divine Realm aren't especially affectionate with each other. They can operate independently or in groups, but primarily remain alone during their routines. They aren't driven for connection the way humans and other races are, but the gods aren't devoid of emotions.

Her embrace surprises Amalaskae a little, but the young goddess cries for a little longer before regaining some of her composure.

With a sniffle, Amalaskae continues, "I forgot about the amnesia, and… I was so excited…"

"I understand," replies Ryukana gently, petting her junior's back. "I have been scolded *many* times for gifting too many blessings to my heroes. There are advantages and disadvantages to both sides. The problem is, it's easy to take personal interest in the heroes over every other life on either world because they are our chosen champions; someone we pick and entrust with accomplishing a task. In essence, it's often the closest we can ever get to having children."

Amalaskae nods, finally sitting back on her calves to look at her senior. "Zuzanna was so nice… And, she was very level-headed. She felt like such a good choice…"

"Can you tell me what she was summoned for?"

This causes the junior goddess to blanche once more. She asks softly, “A-Am… Should I?”

Ryukana sighs. She’ll have her work cut out for her, it seems. “It is not a *requirement*, but sometimes, malicious actors are the ones performing the summoning. It can be very easy for them to turn the hero into an anomaly right off the bat.”

Amalaskae’s eyes water again, and Ryukana adds with a hand on her shoulder, “It’s all right. It could turn out to be a small blessing that she escaped, if that were the case. But, and I’m not saying I’m perfect, but I often liked to verify the threat that is causing the denizens of a world to perform a summoning. It’s up to you if you send one, but it can be helpful to know what you’re sending them into.”

The junior goddess nods vigorously, absorbing the knowledge. Ryukana remembers her instructions from Order and Chaos. If anything, she was encouraging Amalaskae not to give up.

She adds warmly, “Now, a few mistakes here and there are nothing to worry about. If you can, watch over Zuzanna. Daniel and Rikuto are still on Zenkon, and though their relationship isn’t what I’d like, either or both of them should be willing to help a fellow Earthling.”

Amalaskae nods. “I didn’t have anything to guide her to Rikuto, but Daniel apparently still had his phone from Earth, so I let Zuzanna have a mapping function to help her find him and reach him. Though, now that I think about it, I think… they were trying to summon her to defeat Daniel.”

“D-Did you tell her this?”

“I gave her a little bit of an overview and to be cautious. But, I don’t think she’ll be quick to strike either way.”

“I see. What about her powers?”

Amalaskae looks to the side. “I… may have given her strength… and durability. A-And also… magic…”

Knowing enough to be skeptical, Ryukana asks, “How much of each?”

Amalaskae looks to the side. “A-All that I could give…”

Ryukana sighs. If Zuzanna isn’t careful, she could make Zenkon look like the Divine Realm’s rock fountain currently.

“You’ll learn,” replies Ryukana. “I’ve been instructed to minimize my guidance, but to assist you when you need it most. And, next time…”

She trails off when she notices Amalaskae trembling again. “Wh-What is it?”

“I… th-th-there won’t be… a ‘next time’…” murmurs the junior goddess. “Th-This was already my… l-l-last chance.”

Now it’s Ryukana’s turn to drain of color.

For a junior goddess’s first management summoning to be her last chance already, it means that the rock fountain may be just the tip of the iceberg.

The question is; with her hero in the wind and rather meaninglessly summoned, what are her chances of ‘succeeding’ with such an ambiguous summoning?

And, more importantly, what, if anything, can Ryukana do to actually help her?

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 135: The Fievegal and Mattarglos

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 135: The Fievegal and Mattarglos

Daniel shares his final dance at the banquet with Veiranoei. It's thankfully much slower than the others, since his companions have thoroughly worn him out. And, the gatonine knight looks quite beautiful in an heirloom dress that she's a little embarrassed to be wearing.

"Please don't let my reputation cloud this, but you do look absolutely beautiful Dame Veiranoei."

She looks to the side, her cheeks remaining rosy. "Thank you, your… Daniel."

He laughs lightly. Officially, on paper at least, they're going to have an engagement ceremony for the two of them. Kalegrynten wants to flaunt Veiranoei's new status as an Empress Consort at every level, even if it earns the ire of the Grand Zenkon Empire. The reason the Empire won't be able to functionally do anything against Mattarglos as a result is the fact that Mattarglos controls one of two remaining pass-throughs for the mountains, and a civil war near one of them would leave the defense of the east vulnerable. The other reason is that the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy is still the only territory producing enhanced magic crystals and certain magic devices that have made life easy, and which rely on the large synthetic crystals to function, such as water-related devices. Lastly, Mattarglos alone has little strategic or economic value compared to territories around it, since mines are quickly infested with monsters, farms have to be heavily guarded at all times, and the only direct sea access for the territory is far to the north in near-arctic conditions. Making

salt is extremely difficult due to the cold, and they are unable to compete with trade prices from territories bordering the gulf or the southern sea due to the increased resources for manufacture.

While Daniel wouldn't be foolish enough to believe no one would try to conquer Mattarglos, it would be an uphill fight for just about anyone, and the return on investment would be rather minimal.

Of course, Daniel comes from a world where most corners of the accessible surface were explored, and everything around was explored as an option for a usable resource. One of the most sought after resources on Earth seemed to be most heavily present in some of the most hostile terrain the Earth offers; from deserts to mountains, and even the deep ocean.

This world has no concept yet of the fuel that drove the bulk of the industrial revolution and continued well into the technology age. Not that Daniel wants to go through the rush that comes with that discovery, but if he can get ahead of it and begin setting policy, and can hopefully guide a responsible environmental policy around it.

The same would be true of the diamonds he and Wenlianna have been producing. Just because the other world leaders might be able to realize that they're diamonds doesn't mean they'll be able to make as efficient use of the relatively tiny pebbles that had been in circulation prior to Daniel.

Likewise, if he can help Mattarglos capitalize on whatever resources are likely lurking beneath the surface, he can help both the Fievegal and Mattarglos stand strong. And, if he's really lucky, he can reel in more allies to curtail whatever factions still want to pursue war.

“It feels so… awkward…” murmurs Veiranoei, yanking Daniel out of his ponderings.

“What does?”

“I… well… forgive me for saying so… being… a mistress. Th-Th-Though, I’m thankful that you don’t expect anything of me, Daniel!”

Daniel laughs again, mindful enough of his feet to stop when he feels his foot tap hers just before stepping on her toes. “On my world, it was unthinkable for some random guy like me.”

She smiles and relaxes a little, but her own foot steps on Daniel’s this time, and she turns a bright pink color. Daniel doesn’t pay it any mind, though, since she’s thankfully extremely light, and he is still wearing his work boots from Earth that thankfully were in range of the spell when he was transported. They have composite toes and a metatarsal guard, and while they stand out as *very* worn in at an elegant affair, no one is making too much of a fuss about Daniel’s humble appearance. The rumors and gossip are no doubt flying, but he doesn’t care. If anything, it’ll make his enemies lower their guard when they should underestimate him the least.

Daniel pulls Veiranoei close, causing her to squeak, and he whispers into her ear, “Don’t worry, I don’t think anyone saw it.”

“S-S-Sorry… I… It’s been a while… since I danced…”

“I learned about an hour ago with Reina.”

They both snicker softly, and she relaxes. “You know… I can’t… I can’t repay you… for Mattarglos, for me, for my Grandfather…”

“Well, for Mattarglos and your Grandfather, I think they’re going to repay me well by allying with the Fievegal. I expect a progress update tonight from Ahok regarding my request to detect environmental mana accurately, and I also intend to ask your Grandfather for permission to begin extracting salt on the sea.”

She widens her eyes, surprised to hear this. “B-But… It’s… difficult and time consuming, or so I’ve heard… Even during our best years, we still have to import most of our salt.”

“Don’t worry. He’s going to lend me some magic artisans to build a proper distilling unit, and then a full plant.”

“Di-…stilling unit? Like the alchemist equipment?”

Daniel nods. “I’ve also ordered some immigrating artisans to the Fievegal to begin making plate glass. We’re in need of greenhouses in the Fievegal, and they’ll be perfect for evaporative ponds. It’s impractical to make them too big that way, but if we can get distilling units up and running to concentrate the brine and then use crystallizers, we should be able to ramp up salt production in Mattarglos. And…” Daniel notices that Veiranoei’s eyes have glazed over, and he laughs softly. “Sorry. I had the idea when I was talking to Kalegrynten.”

“N-No no! I’m sorry that I can’t keep up. I… didn’t understand much of what you were speaking about.”

“That’s my fault. But, have a little more faith in me, and I’ll help produce some commodities for Mattarglos that should benefit everyone. And,…” Daniel sports a slightly evil grin as he holds Veiranoei especially close for a moment. “How would you like to mine enhanced magic crystals?”

The gatonine knight gasps. “I-Is that… That can’t be… I… If something like that existed in our mines…”

Daniel replies deviously, “They don’t… yet.”

She cocks her head, which is emphasized by her modest feline ears. “I… don’t understand…”

“While we’re at it, maybe we’ll start farming pearls as well. Most of the crawgistes live in Mattarglos, yes?”

“Y-You’re losing me, Daniel. I…”

The music for the song ends, and Daniel finishes the dance by kneeling and kissing her hand. “I am uniquely privileged to come from the world I come from and to have studied a little about a lot of subjects. If you’ll continue to help me, I won’t let you down.”

She trembles. Kalegrynten told Daniel that she was mistreated in her first arranged marriage, and it left her scarred and traumatized. She is kind, but she doesn’t trust him fully yet. Though, Daniel doesn’t mind that she doesn’t trust him. If she can at least open doors for him, he can make the improvements he’s promising. And, the large population of Mattarglos will allow him to do it more quickly than the small Fievegal territory or the distant Stalvaltan Grand Duchy.

He adds, “Oh, and did I mention the additional benefit of the distilling units?”

She shakes her head. “N-No. You’ve barely explained anything you’ve just talked about.”

Daniel stands up as he notices his companions closing in, casually, but with obvious interest in the conversation Daniel has been having. “Among the ‘waste’

of the distilling units will be fresh, drinkable water, that we can distribute."

She twitches. Mattarglos has rivers and streams, but this has made the usable land rather limited based on where those are. If water can be sent further, then even the small settlements and towns have the potential to thrive. And, given her reaction, she has undoubtedly heard of the systems in the Kingdom of Mornistae, as well as the running water on the airship, meaning that is one promise Daniel is certain he can keep.

"This conversation started because I don't know how to repay you already, Daniel, and you want to do more for my people. I… I can only ask what you would have me do."

"Mostly make use of your connections, or more specifically, your grandfather's. That, and pretend that you're the one that came up with some of the ideas." She cocks her head, and this is just when Hekate bounds up, snatching Daniel's arm. "Daniel! You've been talking forever!"

"I…" murmurs Veiranoei. Ryuogriar helpfully answers the unasked question.

"Mukori is saying that he has no interest in his own reputation, dear, so long as it can benefit those who need it more than him." She smiles as she cups his cheek. "The glory of the Dragon Emperor belongs to those who know him best."

"Heeeyy…" warns Hekate. "He's not just the Dragon Emperor…"

'And yet, 'Feldrok Emperor' doesn't have the same impact…"

Before the fox-eared girl and her dragon matriarch rival begin bickering, Veiranoei murmurs, "I-I couldn't possibly take credit… I… Your accomplishments…"

“You’d be doing me a favor if you do,” interrupts Daniel gently. “One man collecting accomplishments and hoarding them all to himself becomes an object of worship. I don’t know about Zenkon, but Emperors on Earth were frequently directly associated with godhood. Many kings and other royalty, too. But, just like them, in reality, I’m just some guy. Sharing all of the accomplishments is way better for my own health, as well as benefitting others.” Daniel then takes Veiranoei’s hand gently, bringing it to his lips, which causes her to blush and the others to glare at him enviously. He adds softly, “In addition to the favor, you’ll have your work cut out making these things happen. I know the basics to get us in the right direction. We still have to adapt it to magic technology.” He kisses her hand, and she whimpers bashfully, “A-All right… A-Anything I can do, I’ll do it.”

“I’m counting on it, thank you.”

Suddenly, Ryuogriar clears her throat and shamelessly snatches Daniel’s right arm. “Now then, Mukori, I would like you to go meet with Gwen’s family now that their ordeals have been dealt with. I insist we capitalize on claiming our rightful share of the honey they produce.”

Just before Hekate can reclaim his left arm, Reignleif appears from behind him, hugging his arm as she joins them. Hekate gasps, stupefied. “R-R-Reina!? I expected this treachery from Ryuo, but from you, too!?”

“I helped Mukori learn how to dance for everyone else,” replies the blue dragon bluntly. Hekate flinches, admittedly thankful that Daniel was able to dance with everyone because Reignleif was somehow skilled enough to teach him on the fly.

Wenlianna, somewhat sheepishly standing nearby, gets prodded by one of the Stalvaltan ladies-in-waiting. She yelps and nervously calls out, “D-Daniel, um,

Hekate…”

The fiery ravenette scowls at Wenlianna defensively, but Wenlianna already knows how to play along. “I’m not here to compete. I just wanted to relay that Mother has recruited several candidates for maids, butlers, and a couple of ladies-in-waiting for you.”

“Sounds like a great way to install spies,” murmurs Aoloan a little skeptically.

Wenlianna flinches, but Geirahoel is the one to retort, “Her daughter is a consort. Even if we kept her sealed away, a message always gets out.”

“I-I’m not a spy!” refutes Wenlianna worriedly.

Treia jokes, “Just what a spy would say…”

This leaves the magic artisan briefly speechless, and most of the others snicker at her warmly.

“*I’ll* be the one to make the final say,” declares Hekate proudly, standing as tall as she can with her tail up behind her and her chest puffed up as much as she can. Ryuogriar frees up one of her arms from Daniel’s to pet Hekate’s head. “Yes, yes, dear, sweet Hekate…”

For once, the ravenette doesn’t bat her hand away, but she does glare up at the dragon.

Daniel finally replies, “We’ll go talk to Baron Honeydip first. I expect the final interviews will take a bit longer.”

Wenlianna turns to her lady-in-waiting. “Lady Cuess, would you let Mother know that we’ll meet her shortly?”

“Of course, your Grace. I believe her Grace said she will be resting in the airship. I will find and inform you if she is elsewhere.”

Once the young woman departs, Daniel’s group heads to the area where Baron Honeydip and his family have gathered. Gwenesphia is talking with her mother and sister, mainly, while the baron and his sons are talking with a boruan man, a shenwulf couple, and two humans.

Hekate greets the Baron to announce their presence, “Baron Honeydip, good to see you again.”

“Ahhh, your Imperial Greatness! Your Graces.” The Baron bows, and the Baroness curtsies, while Gwenesphia and Peiburi perk up, and Peiburi bows as well, since she’s still in her more masculine riding clothes, similar to what she wore for the fights.

Likewise, Lyrtef and the others Daniel doesn’t know bow politely and respectfully. It's a stark contrast to when the group first arrived.

Hekate leads the introductions between everyone, and the others reveal their names politely.

“Viscount Hoksaub, your Greatness,” answers the boruan man.

“Baron Kloven and my wife Wenestrue,” adds the shenwulf man.

“We are but humble merchants, rather than nobles, your Greatness,” explains one of the two humans. “I am Vurtain, and this is my colleague, Aegal.”

Aegal dips his head reverently, and Vurtain adds, “Please forgive his silence. He had an… unfortunate run-in with bandits in his youth.”

Hekate's ears betray her thoughts, running through possible causes. But, she replies maturely, "My condolences, Mister Aegal. It must be a unique challenge being a merchant with a curse of silence."

Aegal registers that there is a possible misunderstanding, but it's close enough, and he smiles gently, nodding even more respectfully.

"Perhaps this is coincidence," remarks Ryuogriar with an eager smirk on her face. "We were hoping to discuss the future, now that three of the largest obstacles to Mattarglos have been removed."

"I still have trouble believing it," replies Erue, Gwenesphia's mother. "I've seen the bodies, but it's difficult to believe our problems have been alleviated so… swiftly."

"Not entirely," replies Daniel. "We still don't know for certain what is causing the creation of monsters, nor their evolution into more deadly forms like their named counterparts."

"Of course," replies Goelselmo warmly. "But, with Rohgattabor gone and even more with the mantarouck population reduced, we'll be able to restore our family's age-old industry."

Kuboen, Gwenesphia's older of the two brothers present, exhales quietly in exasperation. He's still frustrated that Daniel and his companions were the ones to help, but the Barony will be able to prosper once more.

Wenlianna chimes in, "As Gwen has probably told you, we're working on equipment to be able to narrow down a theory, and if possible, we should be able to isolate, contain, or eliminate the source of the anomalies."

Erue smiles brightly. “Our gratitude knows no bounds for what you’ve accomplished, your Grace. And, to know that the esteemed first daughter of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy is behind the endeavor is further reassurance on top of what the Fievegal has already achieved.”

“Indeed,” chimes in Baron Kloven. “And, in fact, we were discussing negotiations to begin trading in the Barony of Honeydip once more.”

Peiburi grins, joking at first, “Gwen is hoping Daniel likes honeydip. Heeheeheee!”

“Peiburi!” snap both Gwenesphia and Erue, while the others laugh together.

Hekate asks, “What was the joke about the name Honeydip? I don’t get it.”

This causes the Mattarglos citizens present to flush and fall silent, glancing awkwardly around.

Treia sighs and takes over. “Hekate, if you’ll drop it for now, I’ll explain later.”

Hekate studies the embarrassed face of Gwenesphia, the awkward expressions of the shenwulf pair, the two merchants, and the boruan viscount, while Goelselmo and Erue retain tense smiles.

The fox-eared girl sighs. “So, it's one of *those* things, huh?” She looks directly at Daniel and gives him a commanding scowl. “Three times, Darling. Three times.”

“I'm deciding this now, Sweetpea. It won't count if you lose track…”

Hekate gasps, and playful snickers surround her. She huffs and crosses her arms, while Ryuogriar continues, “I'm interested, Young Lady Peiburi. Which

brings me to my question; how far west does your mercantile route take you, Master Vurtain?”

The two merchants twitch and then glance at each other.

“How far are you asking us to go, your Grace?” asks the human merchant.

“I would hope you’d be willing to peddle your wares at the Citadel and our vassal towns. Particularly, a rare and delectable honey.” She grins at Goelselmo and Erue.

“We’ll certainly dedicate as much as we can to you, your Grace. Our farms need to recover, but once they do,... I suppose I had assumed you would use your flying ships.”

Geirahoel chimes in, “There is a great deal of risk using the shuttles or airships right now. It’ll be safer if merchants travel the roads.”

“They’ll have to pay tariffs to pass through Castle Northwall. And, it’s probably illegal for private trade to pass through Fort Peony,” points out Lyrtef. The two merchants nod in agreement. “I can’t speak to your costs, but ours would be substantial. And, that’s without knowing how far it is to the Citadel itself.”

Ryuogriar pouts, and she hugs Daniel’s arm more firmly, looking at him pleadingly.

He thinks for a moment, and then an idea hits him. He looks to the Baron. “Baron Honeydip, forgive me for making assumptions, but am I correct that Mattarglos borders the sea?”

This surprises all of the locals of Mattarglos.

“I-Indeed, your Grace, but… travel to the north to reach the sea is treacherous. And, travel by the sea is often moreso.”

Daniel smirks at Ryuogriar, and she cocks her head curiously with a hopeful smile. He asks, “If the Fievegal can make shipping to the shore more tenable, as well as provide shipping across the sea, will you be willing to give us a sizable stake in your companies?”

This surprises the merchants, as well as the nobles. Treia snickers, while Vaergraes remarks dryly, “You’re going to do something very strange again, aren’t you, dear Daniel?”

“I’ll need a lot of help to make this one work. But, it truly is one of the technologies that made the modern age of Earth possible.”

“Well!?” snaps Wenlianna. “Are you going to share?” She already has her pencil and notebook ready.

Everyone that knows her laughs, and Daniel adds warmly, “I’m talking about a railroad.”

“Rail… road…” murmurs Wenlianna as she writes it down. “I get the ‘road’, but what do you mean by ‘rail’?”

“I am curious as well,” replies Peiburi. “There are already roads to the northern towns, but they pass through mountains and valleys, and many of the territories don’t have the resources to maintain them.”

“The Fievegal will have to get permission from your nobility, but this strategy will vastly increase your shipping capabilities. It’ll probably be a couple years before it’s completely usable, unless you allow us to march an army of workers and soldiers to protect them into the borders. That said,…” He looks at

Ryuogriar. “It is the request of someone I hold dear, so for now, your personal supply will be transported via shuttle once we can establish a secure location to land, and the Fievegal’s supply will have to wait until the railroad can be finished.”

Daniel strokes his chin. “And, we’ll have to visit the north to improve the port’s capacity as well.”

Gwenesphia explains, “We’ll have to negotiate with the crawgistes separately, then. They are members of Mattarglos, but they retain a legal independence for their towns, since they don’t have the luxury of serving far away from sources of water.”

Daniel grins playfully, winking at Wenlianna. “What an interesting problem to have…”

“Oh! Water crystals!” blurts out the Stalvaltan family’s eldest daughter. She blushes when the Mattarglos nobles and merchants look at her, and she adds, “W-We can make equipment that they can wear to keep their bodies wet.”

“A-Are you saying… enhanced magic crystals can do that, y-your… um… Grace?”

Wenlianna walks over to put her hand on Daniel’s chest as she smiles endearingly. “They can. And, I have it on good authority that a cost-effective alternative can be produced, right, my dear Husband?”

Hekate hums in disapproval, but she doesn’t make an outburst in respect for the goings on. Daniel laughs nervously, but he replies, “She’s right. Though, ‘cost effective’ might be a misnomer if we want to make them safe.”

“R-Really?” asks Wenlianna, surprised. Daniel’s pretty sure she was bluffing a little anyways, but only because she has been looking for alternatives to diamond ever since she and Daniel began producing diamonds to use as enhanced magic crystals. Graphite can store magic like diamonds and salt crystals can, but its relatively inconsistent structure leaves a lot of room for failures. This, of course, can be accounted for in safety margins on the power levels applied, but she wants to make them safe to use, since graphite is significantly easier to mine and produce synthetically than diamonds are, given the time alone.

Unfortunately, the ‘cost’ Daniel is referring to is the temperature required to melt graphite under high pressure, which would allow them to produce liquid graphite and then cool it, which should give it a bit more uniform structure without the compacting time required to produce diamonds. The only substance he knows of off hand that can burn that hot and is easily attainable to him comes from…

He looks at Ryuogriar and Reignleif again, and then Geirahoel. Each of the three look at him expectantly.

Yeah, we’ll try to convince the other dragons to produce theirs for a reward.

Geirahoel perks up, as if reading his mind. “Mukori! You just thought that we could help, but you’re afraid to ask us! Why!?”

She storms over and stands beside Wenlianna, facing him as she stares into his eyes with a fiery gaze.

“I… uh… The diamond machine takes a long time to heat up, and if we want to produce a lot of low-cost crystals, we’d need something to produce a lot of heat quickly…”

“Ignityal…” states Reignleif, figuring it out. She smiles, squeezing his arm against her chest. “You may have as much of mine as you desire, Mukori.”

Both Geirahoel and Ryuogriar flinch. They exclaim together, “Mine too!”
“Hey!” snaps Hekate as she presses in between them to try to defend Daniel. “I… I probably produce ignityal, too!”

“This conversation is difficult to keep up with…” remarks Erue, the Baroness. Treia explains, “Ignityal is the liquid dragons produce. It can melt almost anything.”

The others become awkwardly quiet for a moment as the three dragons and Hekate whine to insist that Daniel use theirs, and he tries to think over the cacophony. “Either way!” he calls out. “We need to test if it can burn in a vacuum. If there is oxygen, the graphite will simply burn. We could also heat the vessel from the outside, but we’ll have to test vessels for durability under dragon fire, or we’re looking at an extremely dangerous explosion.”

They turn serious, finally, realizing that when Daniel says something is dangerous, it very likely could kill them all. In this case, though, it’s not the most destructive thing he’ll have done.

“So, our immediate goals for Mattarglos, in addition to identifying the sources of monsters and trying to eliminate the source itself, are to produce cheaper mid-grade magic crystals, improve transportation across the vast parts of Mattarglos to reach the sea, and improve quality of living for the crawgistes. Barons, Viscount, I would very much appreciate your assistance in getting the proper permissions for the Fievegal to operate and improve both of our situations. Master Merchants, I hope you’ll consider my offer. I know it’s a big ask for a stake in your company, but once you see what we’ll be building, you might be willing to sell me the whole ownership.”

Daniel is being friendly, but the industrial revolution likely would have taken a fair bit longer if it hadn't been for the mighty trains. Their power and efficiency are undeniable, which is why mass transportation still relies heavily on trains when moving across land, even in the modern age. And, working in Daniel's favor is the fact that, boiled down to the core components, old steam engines are extremely simple devices. Daniel effectively designed his tanks running on magic water crystals from the way a steam engine operates, though in that case, the steam had to be boiled, so he's skipping a major step as long as the magic crystals have mana.

He's not sure if driving the industrial revolution of Zenkon forward at such a rapid pace is a good idea, but his family has expressed things they want, and he can make them possible. Connecting his allies to the Fievegal will only strengthen the Fievegal's defenses. In time, he can even use the trains to deploy forces quickly and efficiently, even if the routes are far more restricted than shuttles or airships.

"Daniel,…" starts Peiburi cautiously, and her parents whisper sharply. However, she ignores them to ask seemingly seriously, "Are you sure you want to marry my sister?"

"Peiburi!" snaps Erue, and Gwenesphia is shocked as well.

Daniel is hesitant to answer, since it's a difficult topic for him, even now, but his companions seem to be gearing up to gang up on Peiburi, either to rebuke her about who actually gets to be married, or for betraying her sister.

The betrayal goes further, though, when the elder sister states, "I'm a lot more business savvy than Gwen, and I'm a better warrior…"

Their mother snatches Peiburi quickly, covering her mouth. “F-Forgive our foolish daughter, your Grace! She is being insolent.”

“Peiburi?” asks Gwenesphia, a little hurt.

Daniel, knowing the answer immediately, finally replies, “I don’t particularly mind anyone speaking their mind freely, but every word has consequences. I wouldn’t take as a companion anyone who could so readily try to undermine their own family for personal gain. I don’t dislike you, Miss Peiburi, but please keep that in mind.”

She twitches, but she looks down, finally seeming at least a little apologetic. Daniel then adds, “Noble ladies and gentlemen, we’ll be in contact for further negotiations. If you’ll excuse me, I have other business to attend to.”

“Of course,” reply the others, while Erue bows her head, still holding Peiburi.

Ryuogriar and Reignleif let Daniel go to allow Daniel to usher Gwenesphia away so that she can have some time to cool down. He doesn’t want either sister to say anything mean or hurtful. He suspects Peiburi’s meaning wasn’t to harm Gwenesphia, but instead, to try to capitalize on an opportunity.

She just blurted out that thought without thinking about her youngest sister.

As they all head for the airship, Hekate bounds up beside Gwenesphia and takes her hand opposite of Daniel. “Don’t worry, Gwen. If you did your job right, Daniel can’t replace you now. My little… um… Nieces? Nieces and Nephews? Step-children? Whatever they are, I’d chew his face off if he betrayed anyone like that.”

“Don’t write me off so easily, Sweetpea,” retorts Daniel. “As we saw when the cause of my mana was discovered, I couldn’t escape the lot of you if I wanted

to.”

Ryuogriar snickers. “That’s right. Even if you did get away, we’d track you down and drag you back, Mukori.”

Several others nod and hum in agreement.

As they walk, Daniel asks, “Neith, you’ve travelled quite far, yes?”

“Yes, my Liege,” chimes in Neith, having been following the group at a distance. Geirahoel scowls at him, but he does his best to not provoke her further.

“What do you know about the northern sea? Is there a reason it’s particularly treacherous to travel?”

“Well, I’ve never travelled by sea, but the main reason I’ve heard that people don’t sail across the seas is due to monsters that destroy ships.”

“Good to know. I guess we’ll have to make monster-proof ships, then.”

“S-Such a thing exists?” asks Veiranoei, ever-surprised by the things Daniel names so casually.

Daniel smirks at her. “Tell me, Veiranoei, do you think even the Dragonslayer would actually do much damage to a ship?”

“I… I don’t know… I’m still not sure how it works.”

“Yeah, and she hasn’t seen the tanks yet!” replies Hekate in her defense. “Wait! Is that it? You’ll put tanks on the ships?”

“Close,” replies Daniel with a bright tone. “As they say in my homeland, ‘when all else fails, you need a bigger gun.’”

He feels a little guilty at the result of his playful reply, which has no basis in reality. After all, every one of his companions is looking at him with wonder and imagination.

Thankfully, in this case, it's close enough to the best strategy for dealing with monsters, wherever they happen to be.

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 136: Looking for Staff

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 136: Looking for Staff

Daniel collapses into a seat in the airship lounge to rest. It's been a taxing day. Of course, he is quickly piled on by Hekate, Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel, who all zealously try to cling to him every chance they get, as if he'll vanish into thin air before their eyes. The others find seats around the lounge, and shortly after, Grand Duchess Aramellianna enters the lounge.

"Your Imperial Majesty, I, the Grand Duchess Aramellianna kos Stalvaltan warmly greet the great Empress of the Fievegal and her husband…"

"Mother…" states Daniel dryly, and she smirks.

"Let her do it," whines Hekate. "I kind of like it!"

"Isn't it exhausting, though? I'd rather be accomplishing something than having my ego stroked for accomplishments already… accomplished."

Aramellianna giggles as she approaches and takes her usual seat, which is near Daniel's lounge sofa. "That is one of your most endearing traits, Daniel, though I must insist that you respect at least s*ome* traditions of nobility. You may hope and believe that you can communicate with your subjects on their level until the end of your days, but relaxing the etiquette and expectations can cause dissent and the rise of schemers and traitors."

"I do understand, Mother, but that very same coin has a second face. And, that face is resentment *because* of the elitism. Many of my country's most effective

leaders were absolutely hated by the united machine of propaganda, and instead, loved by the people because they actually walked the same streets as the people, went to the same churches and schools to see with their own eyes. In a perfect world, there is no ‘us versus them’.” He laughs lightly at himself. “And, no matter what, I don’t want to forget where I come from. I was no one special on Earth. Anyone could be here, doing these things instead of me.”

“Thankfully,” starts Aramellianna as she relaxes in her chair. “We got you instead.” She then returns to business, “Now, if you don’t mind, as promised, I have gathered a great deal of candidates for servants and ladies-in-waiting that I hope you will be pleased with. You may regard them with suspicion, but most of them are not directly from my household.”

Daniel nods in understanding, and Hekate states, “Even if they were, you already have a high-ranking spy among us.”

“I’m not a spy!” complains Wenlianna passionately. Hekate and the others snicker playfully at her, while the Grand Duchess simply smiles. “I am confident that the secrets that I would truly want, I would simply need to ask for. Everything else, I can live without.” She then smiles. “Now, may I have your permission to introduce you to the candidates? I’ll not speak for your Graces, but I do hope you will consider each and every one of them.”

Hekate looks at Daniel, and he nods. She says, “Please do bring them in, your Grace.”

“As you wish, your Imperial Greatness.” Aramellianna waves her hand, and her own lady-in-waiting nods, opening the door to invite the candidates in.

Daniel watches, but something immediately strikes him as unnerving as the candidates walk in, starting with female candidates, and then males.

Most of the servants, as evidenced by little more than rags for clothes, are children under the age of fifteen.

Aramellianna adds softly, “I can spare some of my staff for training, but many of them do not wish to reside in the Fievegal, so far away from home. These are the most promising candidates that are willing to move, your Greatness, your Graces.”

“Th-They’re… children…” murmurs Geirahoel, being the first to state the obvious.

Daniel looks at Aramellianna, and she gives him an apologetic look. He realizes at once what he’s looking at.

Most of these children have nothing to lose and *absolutely need* a way to survive.

They’re orphans.

Every person in the world is an individual at the end of the day, but orphans this young have some moldability, as well as a hole where their parents should be, and thus, trust is difficult to earn, but loyalty once accomplished can be some of the greatest known to all living beings.

The girls, as young as four or five years old, manage to perform unstable curtsies as they meekly present themselves, while the boys bow respectfully to greet Hekate, and then Daniel.

Daniel is torn. He can’t just say ‘yes’ to all of them because they’re orphans, so he still needs to do the interviews. But, he is not apathetic to their plight. Aramellianna is presenting the individuals that she believes can be trained and

will be loyal, even if some of them will likely be unable to speak their native tongue well, let alone learn a new language on top of it.

Daniel smiles, greeting them gently. “Hello there. I’m Daniel, and these are my family members. We don’t have to bombard you with our names just yet, since it’ll be a lot, but how about you introduce yourselves for us?”

The children fidget and glance around nervously. The two eldest, a woman who appears to be in her thirties, and a teen, each step forward, and the senior woman bows her head. “Your Imperial Greatness Hekate and your Royal Majesty Daniel of the Fievegal, I am humbled and honored to meet you. My name is Haelastarr. I am a Baroness whose husband recently passed away, and our lands and assets were seized by the royalty of Bromlund before the revolution. I hope to be of service to you.”

Before the teen can speak, Vaergraes asks gently, “You didn’t return to your territory after Bromlund’s territories were restored?”

Haelastarr shakes her head. “No, your Grace. Our territory was… difficult to manage. The King of Mornistae felt that it should go to a more stable family, since our house was unable to provide support in preserving Bromlund. I’d someday like to reclaim our lands, but as the widow with no children, I have a very weak claim to begin with.”

“I see, thank you. I hope you someday succeed.”

“Thank you, your Grace.” Haelastarr bows again and steps back.

The teen steps forward, and she bows. “I-I a-a-am B-B-Bellph-phine, y-y-your Gr-Greatn-ness. It is an ho-honor to m-m-meet you.”

“You don’t have to be so nervous, child,” urges Ryuogriar gently.

Bellphine gives a complicated expression, and Wenlianna, who is surprised to see her, glances at Aramellianna and Daniel a couple of times each.

Aramellianna explains, “She has a stammer, your Grace, due to an immense shock she undertook performing her duties.” Bellphine nods in agreement. “I do assure you, her talents and learning are well-rooted, and she will perform her duties well.” Again, Bellphine bobs her head vigorously in confirmation.

“What did you do before applying for this position?” asks Treia. “I’ve only ever seen one other kind of job take an injury like that, and it was an oneiromancer.”

“Ahhh, you mean Lord Yuinblock, right? My elder brother talked about him,” replies Gwenesphia.

Treia nods, looking to Bellphine for her answer.

Bellphine hesitates, glancing at the Grand Duchess. Aramellianna states, “If you’d permit me, I can…”

“She was the court Dawnseer after the one that foresaw… the Calamity passed away.” Wenlianna speaks, and she looks at Daniel to hope he understands what she means. “She was performing a Dawnseeing the day magic dipped across the world.”

Daniel’s stomach twists. The ‘Calamity’ is the vision the Dawnseer saw that prompted Mornistae to perform a summoning ritual, which transported Daniel and Rikuto to Zenkon.

‘The day magic dipped’ is just one of the ways people refer to the day a horrifying power was unleashed upon Zenkon.

It was the day the Devourer was destroyed with Earth’s most devastating weapons.

Vaergraes asks, “A Dawnseer? Are you still capable of performing Dawnsights?”

Bellphine confirms with a nod. The former demon queen is ecstatic. “Fascinating! I’ve witnessed the art before, but it’ll be interesting to compare visions.” She glances at the others, clearing her throat. “A-Assuming you are selected.”

Daniel can’t let pity or guilt guide his choices. He’s choosing people who will be close to his friends and family, as well as the children. He’ll need to stew on it longer to hopefully give his gut a chance to really decide whether or not Bellphine -and for that matter, any of these people- are acceptable. He’s optimistic, but he doesn’t want to be reckless.

So, he keeps it moving for now. “Thank you both.” He then smiles gently. “See? That’s not so scary. Who wants to go next?”

***

Zuzia stretches and yawns as she embraces the morning sun. Thankfully, the weather was fairly temperate, so she didn’t set up her tent in case she needed to flee in a hurry. She was hoping it would all be a dream, but she had a different one instead. She dreamed that she was in some sort of story. She was to be sent to a whole other world to fight monsters and demons.

And, in her dream, it sounded like fun, so she agreed.

In exchange for her agreeable-ness, the angel or whoever gave her immense magic powers and strength.

But, of course, all of that would be absolutely ludicrous. While she still feels unsure about everything, the young Polish woman is more confident that she

was somehow kidnapped and brought somewhere she doesn't recognize by people who don't speak Polish.

It's strange though. She didn't recognize the language at all. Usually, it seems fairly easy to at least guess somewhat, but the language didn't really match any of Zuzia's expectations. Especially because she should still be in Europe, even if she's not in Poland anymore.

Then again, perhaps she is in Poland, but the castle was controlled by foreigners. Not that such a scenario is much more believable than her being transported to another world by magic, meeting an angel or something, and receiving magic powers, but still…

Zuzia cleans up her camp and continues on her way. The GPS for 'Daniel' is guiding her towards the west, as far as she can tell, and without any other real sense of what to do, she has no choice but to at least head that direction. She'll try to talk to people in town if she judges it to be safe enough, but she has to be careful.

She's still close to the cultist castle, and her only real means of defense are a camping knife and her bear-deterrent OC spray. Because she backpacks around Europe, some areas of which contain a large number of wild bears, she always carries the bear-rated OC spray, rather than regular mace, just to be safe. Her grandfather and uncle both warned her that she shouldn't use bear spray on people, since it's illegal due to the much higher concentration of the irritants.

But, Grandpa, I'm pretty sure kidnapping is more illegal. I'll beg for forgiveness later. Oh! Which, if I can, I suppose I should try to buy some more OC spray once I'm in town, just to be safe.

Though, again, she'll be cautious of the first few towns she passes until she's confident she has evaded her captors.

As she walks through the forest, listening to the sounds of nature, she can't help but be in awe and feel a little at ease. She's hearing sounds she never heard before; warbles similar to a wilga (PL: Golden Oriole), maybe, but definitely not the same. There is a rolling call that could be a głuszec (PL: black grouse). But, none of the sounds are quite right for the birds, insects, and other normal calls the young backpacker recognizes. Her grandfather would almost certainly know what they are, since he seemed to know every bird, bug, and any other creature in Europe, if not the world, simply from a glimpse or a single sound.

Zuzia smiles fondly at the memories of her Grandfather. She silently makes a note to toast to him the next time she can. He taught her a lot about survival in the wilderness, and she feels perfectly at home in these alien woods.

The blonde is fully aware that it won't last, of course. She does want to go home, but she avoided permanent imprisonment thanks to her equipment and preparation, and her drive to escape carried her to relative safety. She doesn't know the intentions of a castle full of creepy weirdos. She knows that animals are either hungry, territorial, or scared, and more often than not, will avoid her.

That's what she was thinking, anyway.

Without warning, Zuzia is snatched off of the ground by forceful arms that slam into her like tree branches, and claws dig partially into her skin, causing her to cry out and scream in surprise and fear. Not that she knows personally, but it feels like what she imagines being grabbed by a tiger would feel like. Her only chance is to protect her neck and try to escape. But, she's already in its grasp as she is tumbled around by the grip shifting on her.

No animal in the world behaves like this, not in Europe. Not as far as she knows.

She manages to feel teeth, gums and lip, and does her best to grip before she is bitten, pushing the head away from her neck as the beast tries to line her up for a bite. She's still screaming and grunting in pain, but she has to escape.

She doesn't want to die.

Once she has a good read on its head, even with the daze the dizzying movements are causing, she swings her right fist as hard as she can, trying to batter it. She hits it once somewhere above its jaw, and it makes an eerie and sharp bark that sounds strange.

Regardless, just a single hit is enough to cause it to drop her, and she hits the ground on her stomach, scrambling away as hot liquid drips on her head and into her hair. She hears the panther or tiger land on the ground behind her, and she picks up the pace, sprinting as fast as her legs will carry her.

Zuzia never did track and field or any other running sports, but she's getting her exercise now. She actively makes an effort to weave through trees to try to make it more difficult for the beast to pounce her. Given the claws and the fact that it was in the tree, it had to have been some kind of big cat, but unless it escaped from a zoo, there's no way something so big should be roaming free in Poland.

Zuzia runs until she has no more forest to flee through, coming to an open plain that rolls rather far into the distance. She grips the finger ring of her remaining bear spray and draws it, finding a spot to put her back against safety and tries to whirl to find the attacking zoo animal.

To her surprise, she doesn't hear it, she doesn't see it, and nothing else seems to be pursuing her at the moment. She pants heavily.

Now that I think about it, was I running faster than before?

She shakes her head.

No, if I was, it was only because of the adrenaline. I need to get to safety.

She remains alert, but she takes a moment to check her phone. She still doesn't have service, including emergency services, and her battery is about 50%. She'll have to charge it with her battery backup when she gets a chance.

For now, she needs to keep moving.

Her legs wobble, and she collapses into a kneel against the tree she braced against. She sighs. "Alright. I guess I'll rest for a moment. Not like I can outrun a tiger in a field."

But, what is a tiger doing here? I really must not be in Poland, right? This has to be another country… right?

She looks up at the sky.

That dream… was just a dream, right? I mean, that young woman said she was a goddess, but there's only one God.

She sighs.

Next, you'll tell me Falkor is going to come pick me up and fly me to the Princess.

Zuzia laughs at herself. *Geez. How ridiculous would that be? Me, a fantasy world heroine.*

The blonde looks around the forest, which she knows at least one large predator resides in. “Or, more like I’m stuck in a jungle game…”

The backpacker finally climbs to her feet and keeps walking, watching for any other predators or aggressive creatures. This countryside is beautiful, but she doesn’t recognize any of the horizon landmarks. Not that she knows every inch of every country, but she should be able to at least make *some* sense of her surroundings.

The field she’s walking through seems to be cultivated, which makes sense, given that she’s only a day or so away from the castle. The towns and villages need farms, and thankfully, it’s not too tall right now.

She can see the smoke rising from what she would guess is a town, and she navigates in that direction. She’ll make her decisions once she’s closer whether or not to enter the town. But, for now, it's potentially civilization.

Even still, though, she can’t get a signal on her cellphone. She pays for international service on her phone, so it’s not a roaming issue. As much as she doesn’t want to accept it because it’s bonkers, ‘another world’ is becoming a more rational answer by the hour.

If it is ‘another world’, and her GPS won’t let her clear the marker for ‘Daniel’, then it’s the only sense of direction she has. As a backpacker, exploring and wandering are part of the fun. But, at the end of the trip, there needs to be a destination.

Since Zuzia has no idea where she is, she can’t rightly plan where that destination will be.

***

Tembly trembles as she stands in line with the other girls waiting to introduce themselves to the Emperor and Empresses of the Fievegal. Everyone keeps showing the most deference to Empress Hekate, but she looks only a little older than Tembly, who is twelve.

She's terribly nervous. A woman offered Tembly a job at the dilapidated old shack where she and a large handful of other children with no parents live. Her younger brother is all she has in the world from her family, and he's extremely sick. He's not alone, but that is Tembly's reason for doing anything she can to try to earn enough money to buy medicine.

And now, she's standing before Empresses and an Emperor and the Grand Duchess of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy.

Even as an orphan, the young scraggly girl has heard rumors about a powerful woman in the southeast who commands the respect of kings. She's the kind of woman little girls dream of growing into, but it seemed like it was rumors and stories, which Tembly never had time for.

Her face isn't especially cute, nor is her body as well developed as some of the other girls present. That was another rumor going around about the Emperor, Daniel; he favors beautiful women and will do anything for them.

That'll never be Tembly, but some part of her wishes she could compete. She and her brother would be safe and healthy for the rest of their lives if she could become an Empress…

"Your turn," urges a woman with platinum blonde hair and faintly-gold horns growing out of her head. "Please introduce yourself."

The Empresses have been taking turns talking to the people applying for the positions, and this woman is looking directly at Tembly. For some reason, the

young orphan girl's tongue feels like it has left her mouth.

She stammers a little, and she takes a step forward, but her clumsiness swoops in to claim another chance to help her brother.

She trips over her own feet and screams as she falls, hitting the coffee-table in front of her and the Empresses and knocking a tray off of it, shattering pots and cups with terrible noise, while tea that Tembly could never dream of having the luxury of drinking spills all over the floor.

Many people stand up suddenly, including the Emperor, and Tembly curls into a ball as she cries out, "I'm sorry! I'm so sorry! Please forgive me!" She begins sobbing, unable to control herself.

However, a body swoops in and scoops her up. She is being man-handled, even as she waits passively for her punishment.

Instead, the woman handling her is somewhat forcibly inspecting her hands. "My goodness, child! Are you hurt? Let me see? Do you feel any pain?"

Tembly can't stop sobbing, and she wants to tell the woman to spare her life at least, but she can't form words.

To her surprise, though, through her tears, she sees that the woman holding her is the same platinum blonde, while the blue-haired woman with blue horns has also approached, along with Hekate, the black-haired girl with big, gatonine-like ears, but bigger, and a much bigger tail.

All three of them fuss over her, even as she makes an unsightly display of sobbing in front of them after making such a horrifying blunder.

"You're going to suffocate her if you squeeze her that hard, Ryuo!" complains Hekate.

“I have to reassure her. Shh, child, we all make mistakes…” This chapter was taken from novelping . com without permission.

“Does she have any broken bones?” asks Reignleif, studying the girl.

“No. She seems to be unharmed.”

Tembly is finally able to whimper out the words, “I’m sorry…”

Ryuogriar continues petting her head, saying gently, “It’s alright. I’m glad you weren’t hurt.”

Hekate puts her hands on her hips. “Yeah! You should have just relaxed. You’re almost as old as me, so I hope we can be friendly.”

Tembly’s eyes water again, and Hekate panics.

Emperor Daniel steps closer, placing his hand on the young Empress’s shoulder. “This is all my fault.” He kneels down and offers his hand to Tembly. She hesitates, and Ryuogriar gently takes her hand, placing it on Daniel’s. He says gently, “I know you’re stressed because you think this is your last chance. Why don’t you start with your name, and we’ll go from there. As I’m sure the Grand Duchess promised you, we’ll pay you well for your time, no matter the outcome today, right?”

He looks over his shoulder at Aramellianna, who nods in agreement. “Of course, your Imperial Majesty. This is an auspicious day, so no one will walk away worse for the experience.”

Daniel smiles at Tembly, and her heart finally starts to feel a little at ease. He adds gently, “If you really do want to work for us, you’ll have to get used to being around all of us, right? So take a few breaths, puff your chest up, and introduce yourself. Then, we’ll interview you properly.”

Tembly finally manages an affirmative bob of her head, and she sniffles as she tries to wipe her face. Ryuogriar lets her stand up, but the Empresses remain kneeling with Daniel, and Tembly feels immensely awkward.

Ryuogriar adds, “Please tell us your name at least.”

“T-T-Tembly, your… um… Majesty.”

The voluptuous blonde woman nods. “Tembly. An interesting name. Can you tell us a little about yourself?”

The young orphan hesitates. She nods, telling a brief version of her story. “I-I live with the other children. A-And, I am applying for this job because I’ll work hard and dedicate myself to any task. P-P-Please forgive my mistakes.”

“Already forgiven,” states Hekate confidently. “I only ask you to be more careful and to relax.”

Tembly nods quickly, while the red-haired woman with horns finally speaks, “You are a weak human child. You should avoid making us worry about you by appearing to be strong.” Her tone is more harsh than the others, but there’s a strange sense of sincerity behind her words, and it reassures Tembly a little.

“I-I’ll try, your Majesty… Th-Thank you…”

Tembly steps back into line, and her mind swirls as she feels dizzy after what happened. One of the maids already working for Aramellianna swiftly cleans up the glass while the rest of the introductions are being done, and the room smells like tea for a long time. Tembly feels embarrassed, but she wasn’t chased out.

Rather, she notices a woman with caramel-skin, framed glasses on her face, and elongated ears like an elf approach Daniel. She whispers into his ear, and

he listens to her, while the others seem to scowl at her with distaste.

Then, Daniel's gaze and the woman's fall upon Tembly, causing her to flinch.

"You're sure?" asks Daniel.

The woman nods. "Of course, my Beloved. Did you forget? My body is covered in them."

Covered in what? thinks Tembly to herself. *I don't have warts do I? Moles? Oh no! Is it my freckles?*

Daniel sighs. "You there, Veuthene, was it?"

"Y-Your Grace?" asks the young woman next to Tembly on her left.

Tembly notices a presence appear behind her, and she glances over her shoulder to see a man with grey hair, a dark grey mantle, and broken horns peeking out of his hair. He also has a silvery reptilian tail under his cloak. Veuthene hasn't noticed him yet, as she is remaining calm under the inspection of Daniel and the elf-like woman.

Daniel asks, "Care to explain what a young lady like you needs with a psychic defense tattoo?"

This causes Hekate to flinch like she's going to stand, but Daniel's hand lands on her lap, causing her to halt.

Tembly glances between them and Veuthene, as well as the horned man standing behind her. She feels terrified.

The young woman replies, "I don't know what you mean, your Grace. I have no tattoos to my knowledge."

“I see. How about the offensive mana boost?”

This causes Veuthene to twitch, but she replies again, “Offensive… mana boost? I’m not familiar with…”

“I’m glad you played dumb, actually. If you had tried to sell them to me as advantages that would belong to me and my family, I might have believed you. What you just told me is that you have hidden abilities you intended to use as contingencies. Tell me, what is normally done with spies?”

Veuthene doesn’t answer, and Tembly feels fear gripping her.

Is something going to happen? Is… Are we going to be accused as well? I-I’m not a spy!

Aramellianna is the one to finally reply, “Forgive me, your Imperial Majesty. This oversight is mine. I shall dispose of this spy myself.”

“That won’t be necessary,” replies Daniel. “Six dragons now have your scent, Veuthene, if that is your name. You may walk out now and report two things to your masters; your failure to get inside of the Citadel, and our ability to detect your tricks.”

“Daniel,” warns Aramellianna. “I would urge you to reconsider…”

“Capturing her, torturing her, and trying to extract information from her is a minimal-loss endeavor, but not necessary. The person she’ll lead us to is a middle man, and he’s likely already dead. So, you can walk out right now with your life, or you can gamble on successfully taking out one or two of us right now. But, you’re in the casino now, and the House always wins.”

The suspect maid candidate replies a little defensively, “Your Grace, I was personally selected by her Grace, the Grand Duchess of…”

“That you have fooled the intelligence officers of the woman who has accepted me as her son has no bearing on whether or not you are an enemy. Mind your words and think very carefully about the very next thing you say or do. I have no incentive to grant you additional chances.”

Veuthene hesitates for a long time, and she finally glances over her shoulder to see the grey man.

After a long time contemplating, she curtsies. “It would seem I’m not suitable for this job after all. Thank you for your time, your Grace, your Greatness. Please be well.” She then departs, leaving the group of applicants one fewer.

Daniel replies with a scoff, “I thought there would be more trouble than this, so I’ll take it. Neith, thank you.”

He gestures the grey man over, and the latter obliges. The Emperor hands Neith something, and the man bows before returning to his post.

Daniel stands up, and Hekate joins him. He explains, “I expected spies to work their way into our borders, so me and my companions were looking for it. I apologize for the scare. Now then, let’s conduct the interviews and go from there.”

While Tembly is still confused, when her turn comes to interview, Daniel brings only Hekate and Ryuogriar to interview her.

In spite of her shaking, in spite of the mess she caused, the answer she receives nearly stops her heart.

She is accepted to be an apprentice maid for the Fievegal.

And, along with that, her brother will receive treatment from the Fievegal.

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 137: The Curse Belonging to an Emperor

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 137: The Curse Belonging to an Emperor

Daniel and his companions are gathered in the lounge of the airship after the applicants for various serving positions of the Citadel have been guided out.

Immediately after the door has closed, Aramellianna leaves her seat to kneel before Daniel surprising him as much as anyone else.

“Daniel, I have no excuse. I am aware that I am already in a great debt with your trust as it is. I accept full responsibility for a spy infiltrating the candidates.”

Wenlianna glances at each of them nervously. The human mechanic from Earth sighs softly. “Mother, that isn’t necessary. *None* of us would have caught it were it not for Doephluev. She was using the same techniques as the archoneldwyn assassins.”

Hekate sucks her teeth, and Geirahoel grumbles, “At least she is useful for something.”

“You grace me with your words, your Illustrious Grace,” replies Doephluev with a slight bow and obvious sarcasm in her otherwise neutral tone.

Thankfully, she doesn’t antagonize anyone further, and Vaergraes points out, “The question is, are there more archoneldwyn, or was there someone controlling Brosjak after all?”

Ryuogriar nods in agreement. “The obvious answer, regardless of who was pulling the strings when he was alive is that our enemies still possess the powers to threaten us.”

“And, they have no qualms about attempting to infiltrate to do so,” adds Treia pointedly.

“Frontal assaults very clearly don’t stand a chance,” starts Kera’tai. “That has been proven by one of the largest armies of the east marching to the Citadel. The fact that the Covenant didn’t try to attack right after indicates that they realized they didn’t have the forces necessary to make a dent either.”

Aoloan speaks up next, speaking a little softly, “I fear it may have been an overstep on our part to make a show of force to the Empire… specifically…” She looks at the dragons, adding cautiously, “The eggs…”

“But, they’re just eggs,” remarks Hekate. “N-No offense. But, what I mean is, why would the Empire want to do anything about eggs and not us directly?”

“An excellent way to destroy a ruling body is to destroy their future,” replies Aramellianna grimly. “Our Graceful Dragon Empresses are demonstrably powerful on their own, and the last surviving male greater dragon is one of the largest creatures alive.” She looks at Neith, bowing her head respectfully, and he nods in gratitude. The Grand Duchess then continues, “Even the rest of the Einherjars and Valkyries are the scale by which easterners wager that we can take a dragon at all. A greater dragon would require a great deal of luck with an entire army just to bring one down. But,… an egg, or even a child…”

“Significantly easier targets,” replies Hekate as she understands. “But, wouldn’t that be stupid? I mean, NONE of us will take that lying down, no matter whose egg it is. The only thing I would have to say to an angered mother would be to

wait for me to put my own armor on." She takes Ryuogriar's and Reignleif's hands, since they're closest, and she smiles at both of them, also smiling at Geirahoel. "There will be nothing left."

"Forgive me for speaking out of turn, your Greatness," chimes in Magnir. "But, I don't think the success condition of such a plan is to distress a dragon." He looks at Daniel, adding, "The Fievegal is powerful now without technology from Earth, but… The worst power of the Fievegal comes from one man."

"Would anyone really think the eggs were Daniel's?" asks Gwenesphia gently. "Not that I disagree with Hekate, since I, too, will fight for all of our family, but if their goal is to harm Daniel…"

"It would succeed," replies Daniel bluntly. "No matter what other rumors go around about me, many people know I risked everything to save Erimaya. To anyone who sees me in a negative light, I may be a lecher interested in children, but to anyone who knows me in any sort of positive light…"

"A man saving a child before anything else," remarks Wenlianna softly.

Daniel nods, "One who is not my own. If there's any implication that I would adopt the children of my now-known dragon consorts, they would be a weak point…"

Daniel trails off softly as he falls into thought, and everyone is respectfully quiet for a long time. He starts softly, "There was a billionaire on Earth who refused to pay the ransom for his grandson being kidnapped. He was afraid the rest of his family would become targets if he did." He scoffs as he smirks with an emptiness behind his smile. "I'd never be able to do that… I was a fool… Aoloan's right. We shouldn't have flaunted the children at all."

Ryuogriar takes his hand and squeezes it gently. “We all agreed to play the game, Mukori. If anyone should be blamed, it would be me, for insisting we bring the eggs when they would have only been a few yards away.”

“I-I am to blame as well, then,” replies Geirahoel urgently. “It was my idea, and I would have pressured Ryuo.”

“We all agreed,” adds Reignleif softly. “I don’t regret it. Even if we hadn’t done it then, there is no way that spies won’t eventually learn of the children. They would become targets no matter what. Now we know one more of the forms the enemy will use to try to infiltrate us… and what preparations they are capable of.” She looks at Doephluev, who is an assassin using a rare type of rune magic through tattoos that made her extraordinarily powerful in single combat, while also allowing her to easily conceal her mana from even many of the most sensitive mages in Daniel’s inner circle.

Doephluev replies gently, though there is a fairly sinister meaning behind her words, “I have it on good authority that rune words that are broken will cease to function. That is why the most important ones will sometimes be engraved on our bones, especially our skull.”

The rest of the group is quiet for a moment, and Geirahoel asks coldly, “Does that include the contract nullification and automatic revival spells?”

The archoneldwyn mistress simply smiles. “Yes. Though, as I’m sure *you* know, out of everyone here, my Beloved Daniel doesn’t use the contract for compelled action anyways. And, if I wanted him dead at this point, I could have simply let any of his attempted solo missions go exactly as they were had I not been present.”

This upsets the others a little, and Daniel sighs. “We have to know all of our limits and when our enemies have lost the drive to be enemies.” He looks at Geirahoel, adding in front of everyone to make his point, “The harness I made her to wear has already decayed completely, making it useless. She has been able to negate the contract and attack at any time for at least a week now. And, she has known about it longer.”

Doephluev looks away from him with a somewhat embarrassed ‘you got me’ expression, while the others are surprised to hear him acknowledge it in front of others, such as Aramellianna’s ladies in waiting, maids and butlers, and the Stalvaltan Guard.

The mechanic adds pointedly to finish his thought, “This is a weakness that, if we weren’t watching for it, we would be vulnerable if we blindly rely on the equipment I’m having us make. We all, myself especially, need to understand *how* everything ties together, or we’ll suffer another setback like with Brosjak. Thanks to Doephluev, I’m now certain that, for whatever reason, mana and the decay rate of anti-magic ores are inversely proportional.”

“Wouldn’t that mean that what’s in the ground would have long ago decayed away?” asks Reignleif. “That was part of what went into defeating the Devourer, wasn’t it?”

“You’re right. From what I can guess, given the evidence we have so far, is that the whole world of Zenkon itself is like a living being in that it produces a great deal of mana. If so, it should have countered and decayed all anti-magic ores naturally long ago. Someday, I hope to understand why, since otherwise, it would be a major oversight in this story on the part of the author.”

He gets a few chuckles from his fourth-wall joke, and Reignleif remarks on it, “You make comments like that rather often…”

Daniel grins at her cheekily, though it's mostly because it has to be fiction, or he would struggle to believe his life has turned out this way.

"Either way, the same can be addressed in reverse. How does Zenkon produce usable mana, when there is an immense amount of radiation all around the world, most of which comes from the sun."

"It does?" asks Wenlianna eagerly.

Daniel nods. "Stars, assuming Zenkon isn't in a completely different universe from my own with completely different rules, which is always on the table without knowing for sure, they are gigantic fusion reactors similar to how the god-killer works."

As usual, it's somewhat of an inside story for those who know what the 'god killer' or 'god smiter' is. But, because it's now quietly known as the weapon that defeated the Devourer, it's understandable why it would be surprising that the sun of Zenkon is just like it, let alone all of the stars in the sky.

"So the sun is going to kill us all?" asks Gwenesphia innocently before a few others have the same idea.

Daniel laughs softly, trying to cover his mouth. "S-Sorry. No. It's been doing that since it was born, and will be doing it long after every one of us has long passed away. There is a process for the death of a star like the sun, but without knowing its actual size, it's difficult for me to say which way it will die. Either way, since life is still functioning normally, it's not something that will happen for many many lifetimes of even the elves."

The others are quiet, and he adds softly, "It's extremely difficult to wrap our heads around it because the scale is so ridiculously big. But, the sun is to Zenkon what this room is to this coin." He sets a coin on the coffee table

nearby, and everyone stares at it. “As I mentioned, I don’t know the exact scale, but that’s to try to put it into perspective. Earth’s sun was so many times larger than the Earth itself, I think it was something like three hundred thousand Earths would equate to the same mass as the sun, and for volume, it’d be around a million Earths to fit into its physical diameter. We also knew through research that Earth’s sun is actually a relatively tiny star just in our galaxy, which…” He clears his throat, realizing he’s going down a rabbit hole. “Anyways, the sun here is almost certainly as large or larger than Earth’s.”

As usual, Wenlianna is taking notes, nodding along as she listens, and Aramellianna sums up what Daniel was originally getting at. “So, regardless of anything else, Zenkon should not sustain mana the way it does because of our own sun, if we follow only what we know so far.”

The earthling nods. “Precisely, Mother. The only alternative would be if everything in this universe uses mana in the way that the fabric of Earth’s universe uses atomic theory. But, if that was the case, then I don’t know if the weapon I made would have been as effective. I think Zenkon itself is the primary variable, which means there must be some reason Zenkon maintains mana and anti-magic stones maintain their potency even after long periods of time.”

“I can offer a suggestion,” points out Vaergraes. “While it’s true that the world has a great deal of mana, it’s normally not especially pronounced. You said it simply increases the decay rate, but perhaps the mass is simply large enough to last as long as it has. We know proximity is also a factor.”

Daniel nods in agreement. “I agree, and we still have much to learn to solidify any theories.”

“Then, high mana concentrations are almost definitely what cause monsters, right?” asks Hekate, since that was a recent topic of a similar discussion.

“Almost certainly,” replies Vaergraes. “That much has been suspected for a very long time, but as we discussed, doing it synthetically is extremely difficult even for mages more powerful than me, indicating some other factor. And, there has never been anyone who witnessed a natural change, to my knowledge.”

“We’ll be able to try to narrow it down once we finish the mana detector,” replies Wenlianna. “Oh! Which reminds me, we have a conference call with Ahok soon to check on her progress.” She squeezes her hands and trembles excitedly, though enviously. “Oooh, I’m envious of her right now!”

The others laugh, and Aramellianna replies playfully, “I did not necessarily expect that you would be spending so much time on my airship so soon, my dear Wenlianna. I will instruct the builders of the next one to include a sizable laboratory and storage space just for you.”

The magic artisan blushes, nodding gratefully. “Thank you, Mother.”

“It was foolish of me to neglect such a detail.” She turns serious, facing Daniel again, “Which is why, I am very sorry for my oversight, Daniel.”

“As I said, Mother,” starts Daniel gently as he kneels in front of her, where she has remained kneeling for the moment from her apology. “We have a lot to learn, and we all have enemies that are testing our limits. I ask for your help and resources to make sure we can overcome their preparations.”

“Of course, my dear son.” She cups his cheek. “I am grateful for your understanding.”

“There wasn’t much to understand. I wouldn’t have caught it either. Choosing children was a good move, I think. We can raise them and train them to our expectations. It’ll just require more work.”

“You will have access to my senior staff for as long as you need them. I just ask that you allow them to rotate. Under scrutiny, of course.”

“If they are willing, I will gladly accept your help.”

She smiles, and he helps her to her feet as they both stand up. They both return to their respective seats, and she adds with her usual confident tone, “Now, Daniel, I know this may not be the best setting for it, but I do believe we are all family here as well. So… Might I ask when I might expect a grandchild?”

Daniel and Wenlianna both freeze at being called out so specifically without a single name being mentioned. And, the others can’t help but laugh at them.

***

Daniel excuses himself to be alone for a bit, bringing Neith with him. Once on the hull of the airship, he asks, “Xyreko, can you please come to me?”

“Of course,” replies the golem caretaker’s voice as she appears next to them. “How may I serve you today?”

“Your golems have been following that candidate, right? She went by Veuthene, right?”

“Yes. She has just reported her failure, though there were no names exchanged, and no other useful information. I will transcribe the conversation for you.”

“Good. But, it’ll likely be in code, and I know almost nothing on that subject anyways.”

“May I ask your intentions, my Liege?” asks Neith quietly.

“I gambled, and hopefully it wasn’t a complete loss. Xyreko, take us there.”

“Pardon?” asks Xyreko and Neith together. Follow the newest chapters on NovelPing.

“I’ll explain after. Take us there quickly.”

“Daniel… I…”

“I understand your hesitation, but please trust me. I need to be the one to do this.”

She hesitates for only a moment longer, but she teleports Daniel, herself, and Neith to the alleyway where Veuthene is, and she flinches. Neith starts to move, but Daniel gestures with his hand to stop the grey dragon, and he walks forward.

“M-My Liege!”

“I meant what I said, Veuthene. Capturing and torturing you would be a minimal loss endeavor.” The human approaches his wary counterpart, and she goes into a defensive stance, still trying to appear meek and sneak away.

“I still don’t know what you mean, your Grace. I have only ever known the orphanage. You’ve come to a misunderstanding about me.”

“I came here wanting to kill you, because it would be all too easy for me to order someone else to do it. You are a threat to my family, and you indirectly

threatened them harm by your very obvious intentions."

When he's about five feet away from her, the teen's expression changes. She's no longer a scared little girl.

She is a predator hunting prey.

A glint appears from her sleeve, while Daniel simply moves his left thumb forward against the minimal resistance.

"My Liege!" "Daniel!" shout Neith and Xyreko, respectively. Veuthene lunges forward with enough force to scrape the soles of her simple shoes against the cobblestone of the alleyway. However, as she jams the dagger she slipped into her hand straight into Daniel's chest where his heart is, her own expression switches from predatory to surprised. She didn't get the force she needed to kick off, and she doesn't have the strength…

…to penetrate what appears to be Daniel's simple deep-red leather jacket which has both the Stalvaltan Soulwyrm and the Fievegal's Hekate emblems on his shoulder. He smirks down at her, snapping his own arms up. His left snatches her knife hand and his right snatches her neck as he shoves her back and against the wall, lifting her up. She's a human of Zenkon, and unfortunately, a teenager, so she's extremely small and light compared to Daniel.

He wrenches her wrist to the side to force her to drop the dagger away from her own left hand as she tries to push him away and then pry his fingers off of her neck. Her legs kick and dangle near his waist, but he keeps her at arm's length, which diminishes most of her force, and he uses his left arm once the dagger is clear to block her kicks. She loses energy quickly, struggling to try to relieve the chokehold, but to no avail.

Daniel growls, “Fighting without magic is very different than fighting with magic.” She glares at him, unable to speak or breathe effectively, and he adds, “I’ve lived without any magic for all of my life until recently, even in this world. Also, I’ve made a new friend;” He holds open his jacket briefly, revealing an extremely low profile under-clothing ‘mail’ made of shimmering rainbow-colored scales. It confuses her a bit, and by now, Neith and Xyreko have also both closed in on either side of Daniel to assist him, though Xyreko needs to keep her distance.

Daniel squeezes his hand, trying to follow-through.

She’s a spy. A particularly dangerous spy. She wanted to infiltrate a role that would put her close to my family… to my… children.

He is trying to stoke his anger and use it; to finish this enemy agent before she can bring more harm to his family.

If they figure out that I let her leak information, it only gets worse. Just… Just do it, Daniel. She’s no one. She’s disposable to her enemies. They would kill her to silence her without a thought…

In spite of trying to convince himself, and in spite of everything else Daniel has done, he can’t bring himself to take a life in cold blood.

He drops her, backing away a step, and she crumples to the ground, seated on her calves as she coughs and keeps herself up with her hands on the cobblestones.

Neith puts himself in a position where he is more between Daniel and Veuthene than he was, and Xyreko picks up the knife when the dragon kicks it away from the teenage spy. She stands gracefully like a noblewoman, even with a dagger in her folded hands.

“Shall I finish her?” asks Neith, sensing that Daniel is in conflict.

“It’s the right answer, isn’t it?” asks Daniel, feeling uneasy.

The dragon hesitates, prompting the inexperienced pseudo-emperor to exhale deeply.

“I’m… not going… to beg…” murmurs Veuthene.

As he looks at her, he notices something that catches his eye at the center of her collar. He crouches and grabs it, pulling it free of the fabric it was holding bound. “Your Grace?” asks Neith, surprised.

It came from what appears to be a fairly simple cravat at a glance, but for a supposed ‘orphan’, it was fairly valuable. The ornament that he pulled from her cravat has a jewel-like smooth surface with a soft blue coloring.

The reason he wanted to inspect it more closely has already vanished though; something was familiar about it. He doesn’t know where he has seen the emblem that was on the jewel, but it reminded him of something he has seen, and he wanted to inspect it more closely.

Without the emblem on it, he looks at her, and her gaze is locked on him. Her expression is serious, but not in the way he might expect someone to react if they were about to steal a precious family heirloom.

She’s expecting something.

Ahhh… I keep forgetting, this world has curses. I’m surprised Xyreko didn’t…

When he looks up at the golem caretaker, he can tell he’s receiving a disapproving glare.

Yep. She's mad. Kaeralegier, thank you for protecting me.

"[I'm glad you realize you messed up, Daniel. I think there was some kind of effect on it, but I didn't analyze it before it activated.]"

So, it should be safe now, right?

"[I don't know if it can recharge itself. It'll be best to get rid of it.]"

While conversing with Kaeralegier, he was studying the ornament for any further clues, but he finds nothing. He offers it back to Veuthene, and she recoils as if instinctively. Her eyes go wide, confirming his suspicions.

Daniel can't help but smirk. "Oh? Is something wrong with it?" He tosses it at her, and she gasps, trying to scramble away from it.

"My Liege…" murmurs Neith. He sighs. "You really must…"

"I know," replies Daniel. "I know. But, it's confirmed now."

"I'm telling Ryuogriar," warns Xyreko.

"Alright. But first…" Daniel stands back up, watching Veuthene for a moment. "Sir Neith, take Veuthene into custody and hand her over to golems to be transferred to containment. Xyreko, if you'd please, retrieve the ornament and store it."

As he gives these instructions, Daniel steps away, placing his hand on Nemaisol to sheath the sword.

Just before he does, a strange sound like a reverse gasp comes from Veuthene, and all three look directly at her, including Daniel. Neith shouts

quickly, “Don’t stow the blade!”, swinging his hand out at Daniel as the human mechanic stares dumbly at the clandestine maid applicant.

Her body is tense with her back arched, almost like she’s in some part of a seizure, though Daniel has never witnessed a seizure in person. Just as suddenly, though, her body flops to the ground with her eyes open, and she doesn’t move even a little.

Neith is already between Daniel and Veuthene, trying to make sure Daniel doesn’t sheath Nemaisol, while also glancing at Veuthene to assess what has happened. A squad of golems armed with rifles and grenade launchers arrive, immediately fanning out to surround Veuthene. Two lead-armored golems arrive with massive shields as well, lumbering towards Daniel to immediately guard him as he feels like he’s in a surreal state.

Veuthene isn’t the first person he has seen die. She wouldn’t even be the first whose life he took himself. However, he is still shocked by what just happened; the ring only touched her -her clothes no less-, and now she is dead, painfully.

Neith cautiously backs up towards Daniel, glancing over his shoulder to try to control two different situations at once. He puts his hand on Daniel’s shoulder, reiterating, “Do not stow Nemaisol, Sire. Not until I can investigate.”

Daniel nods. “Understood..”

The grey dragon in humanoid form approaches Veuthene cautiously, crouching down to check for signs of life. He avoids touching her directly, asking, “Minister Xyreko, did you detect anything?”

“No. As you said, the magic seemed to dissipate the moment Daniel took the ornament off.”

“Agreed, though it clearly seems to have come from the ornament, given her reaction.”

“Activation was undoubtedly delayed by Nemaisol’s area of effect.”

The soldier golem that picks up the ring-like ornament suffers no immediate ill effects, so it stores the ring in a void bag held by another. Xyreko then sends the golem away as well, just in case.

“Daniel, do you have any indications of whether or not you are cursed?” asks Xyreko in a strange way. He’s still a little dazed, so it doesn’t make sense what she’s asking that she wouldn’t be able to see obviously; he’s still alive.

“N-No…” He shakes his head clear. “I mean… I…” *Can you tell, Kaeralegier?*

“[Hmm… As you had suspected, it shouldn’t have been able to plant upon you while I’m protecting you. Do you trust me, Daniel?]”

Wholly and with my life and family.

“[Oof. No pressure…]”

Y-You’re a… goddess.

Her voice snickers in his mind, and she retorts, *“[Fair enough. Then, I need to check you more… directly. Your blood will do.]”*

Daniel draws Nemaisol without hesitation, asking quietly, no longer caring about hiding Kaeralegier as specifically, “How much do you need?”

“[Just a little. I recommend the back of your forearm, rather than something dumb like your finger or palm, since you may need to fight.]”

“My Liege?” asks Neith as he watches Daniel ponderously study his legendary sword.

“Don’t panic, Sir Neith. I’m checking something.”

The dragon clearly wants to object, but he allows Daniel to move, as does Xyreko.

Daniel carefully maneuvers his forearm with the sword held upright, and he creates a modest cut on his forearm as Kaeralegier instructed, allowing the blood to run down the blade.

“[That’s enough, Daniel. Have one of them tend to your arm.]”

The human mechanic relaxes his posture, and he explains, “Apologies, you two. Can one of you…?”

Neith doesn’t hesitate. He goes into his own magic bag and retrieves a first aid kit prepared per Daniel’s instructions. Because potions and potations are still minimally effective on Daniel, he prefers not to use them for minor injuries, and most of Neith’s own magic skills pertain to offensive power. And, the more arcane magics he has learned, including some aspects of necromancy and decay, are certainly not beneficial in the current situation. He begins wrapping Daniel’s left arm, joking quietly, “My Liege, you certainly don’t make my survival easy.”

Daniel manages to scoff, but he’s still distracted by what just happened, and he’s waiting on Kaeralegier’s analysis of his blood. Xyreko understands this, so she has remained silent, even if she doesn’t approve of him apparently harming himself to do so.

“Sorry, Neith… But, are you sure you should be touching me?”

“I shall share your fate, my Liege. If it can spread from person to person, then I do not deserve to be spared for failing to properly prevent it.”

Daniel replies quietly, “No… This is my fault for still not observing caution in this world when it comes to curses. Like electricity, I should know better. I am sorry.”

“Daniel, I shall inform the Empresses when we return,” warns Xyreko with a somewhat disappointed tone. “I chose not to disobey you, but you cannot keep endangering yourself with the excuse of protecting everyone else.”

The dejected earthling looks away and down. He replies in a somber tone, “As you know… I had nothing to lose on Earth. I lived alone, went to sleep alone, and did almost everything as if I might disappear one day. This isn’t an excuse, but… I have too much to lose here.”

The golem steps closer to him, hugging him without warning. Normally, she would deactivate in the direct presence of Nemaisol, but Kaeralegier does have some control over the mana deactivation, and is likely allowing it for Xyreko’s sake. “What you constantly allow yourself to overlook, my Master and Emperor, is that there are now many individuals who feel the same about you. I can say this confidently because I am one of them.”

The mechanic remains quiet for a moment, and he finally hugs her. “Then… help me find a compromise… Even if you have to enlist their help.”

She sighs. “Fortunately for you, Hekate is interested in the same. I’ll dedicate any resources I can to find a solution that we all can live with.”

“Thank you…”

Kaeralegier's voice says in Daniel's mind, *"[Daniel, I've completed my analysis. If you can make the dragon swear to secrecy, I'll tell you both.]"*

"Neith, keep what you're about to hear confidential from everyone. I'll tell you later who you can discuss it with outside of us who are present."

"As you wish, my Liege," replies Neith without hesitation as he finishes bandaging Daniel's arm.

Kaeralegier speaks to all three of them. "Very good, Neith. I am Kaeralegier, bound to the sword Nemaisol. And, I have determined several things from Daniel's blood."

Neith expresses surprise at first from the new voice, and the declarations, but he glances at Daniel, who is watching him. The human nods, and the grey dragon rolls with it, taking it completely in stride. "I am honored, Lady Kaeralegier. I am Sir Neith gur Lawson, brother and knight to Daniel."

"I know. I've been here the whole time. Anyways, Daniel is indeed cursed." All three of them tense, but Kaeralegier adds to reassure them, "It's alright. As you can see, I can easily suppress it while I'm unlocked from my sheath. Unfortunately, this is an ancient form of magic that even I thought had died out. The curse does not bind to one's body in the way that typical curses do, through an entanglement with their natural mana. Instead, it binds to one's soul."

Both Xyreko and Neith look at Daniel with concern, and he listens intently to the goddess explaining it.

She continues, "That's the first bad news. The good news is, this actually makes it even easier to analyze the curse and its causes and effects."

“What’s the other bad news?” asks Daniel. Xyreko somewhat instinctively grips Daniel’s forearm in nervousness.

“There is no known way to break these kinds of curses. It has already entangled itself with your soul, which helps disguise it from external detection.”

“S-So Daniel is going to die?” asks Xyreko, her usually stoic and controlled voice wavering for once.

“*That* is the second good news. No, Daniel is the only one I have seen who will likely not die. I’ll give you three guesses as to why.”

“He has insufficient mana?” asks Neith.

“First guess,” replies the goddess warmly. “Though it doesn’t bind directly to one’s mana, mana is an extension of the soul, and as such, is how the curse will cause its effects. It is intended to crush the heart of the victim and simultaneously drain their mana to zero. My guess, this is to prevent healing and revival magic from having any effect.”

“Is it contagious?” asks Daniel, not fully knowing how curses work, and equating them to diseases.

“No. Not person to person. Because it buries itself in the victim’s soul to hide, it can’t be contagious in that regard. However, when cast upon an inanimate object, it will curse anyone who touches it without first reciting a counter spell to temporarily deactivate it.”

“Allowing her to take it off…” murmurs Daniel as he does his best to understand the curse that will afflict him.

“Is this counterspell a dispel for the curse?”

“No. Only a temporary deactivation. Daniel, it works like a cocking mechanism and trigger. By pulling the ring from the scarf, you triggered it, so the scarf likely has the ‘cocking mechanism’ spell on it. I hope that makes sense.”

“Well enough, replies Daniel.”

“Wait, wait, wait!” urges Xyreko. “I’m still stuck on something. You said Daniel is ‘likely’ to not die. How likely? What are his chances? What will happen to him? Will he be disfigured? Will he be able to si-…”

“Xyreko…” interrupts Daniel as he hugs her. “Stay calm. We’ll get there…”

“She’s going to ask you to sheath her and activate the curse! You could die!”

“I’ll likely live,” retorts Daniel.

“But *how* likely!?” She grips his sleeves. “If you intend to do this, I’m summoning everyone right now. I’ll not allow…”

“Xyreko! Calm down, please! Listen to me!”

Her uncharacteristic distress finally simmers down a little, but she would certainly be biting her nails if she had a proper mouth and fingernails. Daniel explains gently, “You’re right… They’ll be just as upset. But, I brought this on myself. I’m a fool, and I have to pay for it…”

“Y-You can keep… You can keep Nemaisol drawn. There’s no reason for you to…”

“I have to return to my sheath when I’m not actively drawn,” replies Kaeralegier. “Daniel is the only one who will wield me, and his fate is his own. I will help where I can, but I have my own circumstances. I cannot change my own curse.”

Xyreko starts to squirm, looking more alive than ever before.

Daniel finally asks gently, “Can you give me my odds of survival, Kaeralegier?”

“No. Because… I’m not going to be the one who determines them. You will make this choice yourself with the information you have now. But, the only choice you really have at this moment is to deal with it now, or to wait until it happens by surprise when I can no longer stay drawn.”

“H-How long is that?” asks Xyreko, still trying to grasp for control over the situation to protect Daniel’s life without taking risks.

“I don’t know. Whenever the conditions require that I return to my sheath.”

Xyreko looks at Daniel, and even with her expressionless golem face, he can tell that she doesn’t want him to risk it, but she doesn’t have any answers for once, and it’s making her a wreck.

The mechanic looks at his arm, where Neith bandaged him, and he then looks to the dragon directly. The loyal knight doesn’t know what to say either. It seems the event is inevitable, and the only difference will be whether or not others are around Daniel at the time.

Neith looks away from Xyreko as he says quietly, “You should do it now, my Liege. You’re not a fatalist, so I’m sure you’ll survive. And, it will be easier to ask for forgiveness…”

“Are you mad, Neith!?” snaps Xyreko. “If anything, everyone should have the chance to be with him, just in case! M-Maybe there will be something someone can do! Maybe someone can dispel it! What is the name of the curse!? I’ll go ask!”

“Do that,” replies Daniel. “I’m sure we have at least a little longer.”

Kaeralegier answers the question, “If I recall correctly, it’s referred to in ancient texts as ‘the Emperor’s Heart’, ironically enough.”

She nods, backing away from him a few steps. “Then, I shall return with the others.”

The mechanic-turned-Emperor bobs his head with a smile. However, just as her teleportation spell is activating, she makes eye contact with Daniel.

He has Nemaisol lined up with the sheath, and his gaze is one of calculated determination.

“Daniel!” screams Xyreko right when the spell fully activates and transports her away.

“Neith, whatever happens, thank you for everything.”

“I will stay with you to the end, my brother,” replies the dragon quietly.

Knowing that delaying the inevitable will only drag out the pain, Daniel shoves Nemaisol into the sheath, with Neith and a dozen golem soldiers as his witnesses.

***

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 138: The Emperor’s Heart

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 138: The Emperor's Heart

Xyreko appears in the observation deck of the airship, where the five Dragons other than Neith are gathered, along with Hekate, Wenlianna, Aramellianna and her other daughters, Veiranoie and Kalegrynten, Gwenesphia and her full available family, Treia, Kera'tai, and Aoloan. The only ones not currently present are Senn, Doephluev, Vaergraes, and Illianna.

Unfortunately, the golem caretaker just witnessed something truly horrifying to her, and it has rattled her as she tries to start teleportation, only to realize she needs the others, but she has only produced the word, "Daniel! What-!?" She glances around at the confused stares.

"The Emperor's Heart! Do any of you know of it!?" She fiercely searches the group, asking just as quickly before anyone has any time to even process her question, "Where are Senn and Vaergraes!? No, Doephluev! She knows ancient spells! Where are they!?"

"Prime Minister, please elaborate," requests Aramellianna as she stands up to approach.

Xyreko's mind is locked between two different priorities; return to Daniel and find a solution. As he does when he's set on something, he tricked Xyreko into leaving so she couldn't stand in his way. She should have commanded the golems to prevent him from stowing Nemaisol, but it's too late now.

And, worse than her indecisiveness now is the fact that she doesn't want to discover the worst case scenario upon returning to his side.

No! I have to save him! Whatever it takes!

"Daniel has been cursed! It's something called 'The Emperor's Heart'! We all need to go to him and save him!"

"Cursed!?" cry out almost everyone as they spring up.

Xyreko does her best to explain through her own distress, wavering when she reveals the last moments she witnessed just before arriving in the observation area herself, where an informal gathering was being held to relax and talk to each other.

Since Daniel made his excuse to deal with Veuthene without them knowing, they all assumed he was either spending intimate time with someone, or he was working on some secret devices.

It's clear that Daniel is afforded too much privacy when it comes to allowing his reckless behaviors, but the primary focus now is ensuring he survives to be scolded later.

"Take us to him immediately!" orders Ryuogriar as she storms towards Xyreko.

"What is the 'Emperor's Heart?'" asks Geirahoel sternly. "Did Doephluev cast it?"

"She left to follow him, like she always does," adds Hekate sourly. "If she did this…"

"It wasn't Doephluev," explains Xyreko. "It was the spy, Veuthene."

This surprises everyone, but none more-so than Aramellianna.

“The spy? Daniel’s instructions were very clear.”

The golem caretaker replies coldly, “I know your own soldiers were following her, but she managed to evade them. You’ll likely receive a report about it soon.”

Aramellianna’s expression turns grimly serious. “Just because I said I would observe his wishes does not mean I will let a spy continue to exist after what she learned.”

“M-Mother?” asks Yanidere nervously. The Grand Duchess cups her daughter’s cheek.

“Yanidere, this is an inevitable truth of being the Grand Duchess. You must take action, even when your allies want plausible deniability.”

“Which is exactly why… Daniel did the same,” replies Xyreko with disappointment in her voice. “He claims he doesn’t want to be an Emperor who sends assassins to kill his enemies because it’s too impersonal.”

Aramellianna is a little surprised, but quiet about it. And, given the ponderous silence from everyone, Xyreko adds, “He… couldn’t do it. He couldn’t see her as the threat she was. However, when he wanted to inspect one of her belongings, it triggered the curse, only held at bay by Nemaisol.”

She clenches her fists, struggling to explain the rest. “The last thing I saw… He was stowing Nemaisol because there’s a chance he’ll… survive.”

“We need to go, now!” shouts Treia. “What are we standing here for!? Ryuo already gave the order!”

“I must caution against such a rushed decision,” calls out Aramellianna. “All of you travelling to an uncontrolled area is just as reckless and dangerous. Can the Emperor not be brought here?”

“Not if he draws Nemaisol again, and…”

“I’ll send my troops to secure the area,” replies Kalegrynten. “If there’s one spy, there are likely to be more undercover agents.”

“If Daniel is putting himself in danger, then I’m going,” replies Hekate. “I would have nothing without him.”

“Where is that fool who is supposed to protect him!?” snaps Geirahoel.

Magnir replies immediately, “Sir Neith is with him.”

The three Dragon Empresses have the same idea at the same time, bombarding him with telepathy and demanding to know where they are.

“My honorable Empresses, please calm yourselves… His Grace is still alive.”

“That’s not our question! Where is he now!?”

“We’ll be returning shortly. His Grace has endured the curse. We are verifying that it is safe for him to return without risk of harming anyone else.”

“Return immediately!” snaps Geirahoel through the connection. “You should know better! Are you trying to fail us all again!?”

“Your Grace…”

“I don’t want to hear it! You’re the worst brother in the world! I hate you! If you don’t bring Daniel back right now, I’ll kill you!”

There's a long silence, and not even Neith responds. Geirahoel, whose eyes were already watering, begins to cry, and she sinks to her knees, caught and supported by Ryuogriar as they go to the floor together.

No one addresses the revelation just yet, since she was screaming her thoughts even as she projected them via telepathy.

"There are new circumstances that will need to be clarified in person, your Grace. I will fly Daniel to the airship at once. Please hold further questions until then."

"Shut up! I hate you!" snaps the orange dragon, continuing to cry into Ryuogriar's shoulder.

The platinum dragon matriarch replies quietly, "Neith, you will answer for this. Tell us where you are, and we will escort…"

"I am arriving at the airship now, your Grace. I will meet everyone in the lounge in mere moments."

Everyone is surprised, and they head for the lounge. There, Neith is supporting Daniel with his shoulder as the human wearily walks. They are surrounded in a near-instant, being bombarded with questions.

Neith urges, "His Grace will survive! Please! Let us explain!"

"Now, scum!" snaps Geirahoel. "Stop wasting time!"

The grey dragon sighs.

***

A short while before, Daniel watches as the spell triggers for Xyreko's teleportation. He has seen it many times, so he has a pretty good idea of the activation sequence and timing. He won't have long before she can react to try to stop him in various ways, so he had to wait until she was locked into the transversal.

They make eye contact, and the last thing he hears as he is lining Nemaisol up with the sheath is, "Daniel!"

She vanishes, and he says gently, "Neith, whatever happens, thank you for everything."

"I will stay with you to the end, my brother."

The human mechanic is reassured by that. Somewhat selfishly, he doesn't want anyone to watch him die, and certainly not anyone who won't understand. Neith knows what it's like to reach the bottom; to no longer have anything else. To get out of that hole, they each found a purpose, and the longer they clung to that purpose, the stronger they became.

Daniel doesn't believe he's about to die. In fact, he's confident he will live. The problem is, no one else but Neith would want him to take the risk. He can't blame them. He specifically tries to keep them out of as much danger as possible because he cares about them.

In this case, though, he was the fool. He was careless because he became curious and needed an answer quickly, as if it would slip through his fingers if he didn't address it immediately.

And, it slipped away from him anyways, as if it were some kind of trap. All he ended up with was a blank jewel, no immediate memory of what he saw before

that because he was distracted, and a curse that could kill him -and would definitely kill anyone else-.

The mechanic shoves the legendary sword Nemaisol into its sheath with determination. Delaying it now will accomplish nothing. And, if he survives, he will be able to deal with the aftermath.

The sword clicks into place, and almost immediately, the curse springs into full effect.

Daniel cries out, doubling over as his heart feels like it has just been grabbed. An immense feeling of dread washes over him, pulling him deep into a mire of fear and pain. He feels like he's rapidly being pulled under water as his heart aches, struggling to even form a single beat.

Daniel gasps, and he finds himself without pain, but he also finds himself dazed and confused.

If he had to envision an out of body experience, he's experiencing it now. The dread related to his own death is still lingering around him, like cobwebs tangled in the hairs on his skin, tugging at him with even the smallest moves, but not actually restricting him. Similarly, he has the same surreal feeling he felt when he first faced Mulmonbargonaed, the red dragon that attacked Fort Peony. He feels like he's awake and dreaming at the same time, unable to tell whether or not he's actually conscious.

Fascinating… whispers a voice that startles him. Because he can make no sense of his surroundings, he feels like he's in pitch black darkness.

When he tries to speak, it's like the nightmares he had as a child; nothing comes out. He can't say anything, and he can't even seem to translate his own thoughts. The fear grows stronger, and he begins to feel more and more like

his death is truly upon him this time. The fight with the archoneldwyn assassins was much more sudden, and his adrenaline was pumping.

This time, it's more akin to one time when Daniel took too large of a dose of allergy medication. He wasn't in pain, but he couldn't sleep, and he couldn't escape the certainty that he was dying for hours following. He had hours to reflect on the fact that he felt like he was going to die, and it was all the more agonizing for it.

Perhaps we will both soon be free… whispers the voice. Similar to Xyreko when he first encountered her, the voice is rather androgynous and deep in tone, like a titan speaking to him with a gentle and quiet tone.

As Daniel turns, he finally discovers why he can't make sense of his surroundings. He must be dreaming, but he's standing in the shadow of something with an eyeball that is wider than the propellers of an aircraft carrier, which were titanic when Daniel saw them in drydock.

He stumbles back a couple of steps. It may possibly be thanks to the dream-like state he's in, but the scope of the humongous creature's eye doesn't prevent Daniel from being able to tell that its gaze is following him.

The eye has a rather distinct shade of pink for an iris surrounded with a dark, night-sky like sclera speckled with points of light, and a massive iris with four flower-petal like light markings at the four quarter-clock positions of the eye, forming something like a dark crosshair for the eye.

Daniel feels weak upon seeing the eye, sinking to a kneel as he clutches his chest. Maybe it's the pain in his heart reaching into his out-of-body experience. If he is astral projecting somehow, then he has no idea where he is or what this being is.

Tell me what you are called…

Daniel tries to summon even the miniscule strength to speak, but he still can't form words or even sounds.

Ahh… I see… Is that how you survived? Very interesting indeed…

The eye suddenly ascends away from Daniel, rising high and gaining distance on him.

For a brief instant, Daniel catches a glimpse of the creature's silhouette, and he would struggle to describe it. If he goes mad after seeing it, he might feel like he's in a Lovecraft novel, but it's mainly the size and scope of the titan, which is singularly larger than anything Daniel has seen yet, that makes it difficult for him to identify any meaningful features other than a mountainous being. It didn't necessarily look reptilian, like a dragon, nor mammalian, like a feldrok. Daniel has seen drawings of the Strylak, which is a mythical titan of Zenkon, but this thing didn't have the colossal squid-like shape of a polypus.

In spite of the distance, which now feels like miles, and the additional five eyes that seem to decorate its head in a half-circle gazing down at him, the voice reaches him with ease.

If I am not mistaken, you are the one known as the Harbinger of Calamity.

This surprises Daniel, but he can't answer audibly, so he nods.

Beastly lips curl away to reveal a row of sharp, shark-like glowing blue teeth.

This returns feldroks to the possible candidates, since Daniel has seen Hekate's triangular teeth glow in the dark with different colors, though she's usually careful to minimize showing off her teeth when she's anything but happy, since she's self-conscious about appearing ugly or scary.

Good… It has been a pleasure meeting you. Perhaps we will meet again.

With that, the shadowy creature fades into the all-consuming blackness of the void around Daniel, and suddenly he coughs.

At once, he is awake, screaming suddenly in pain as a completely dejected Neith suddenly flinches and perks up. “My Liege!” He does his best to reassure Daniel, as the human is slammed with the aftermath of the pain he felt from his heart seemingly dying.

He feels like his very veins are on fire, and his head is throbbing painfully, while his weakened heart flops around pathetically and erratically in his chest.

“I’m here, Daniel! Stay with me! You’re back! Pain is inevitable, but you’re back!”

Daniel can barely breathe. Every inhale feels like he is taking in glass into his lungs. Every exhale feels like his ribs are about to burst out of his skin. He squirms around, trying to find a position to make the pain go away, but every single movement just antagonizes every nerve in his body.

Neith can only stay close and try to keep Daniel from hurting himself further with his writhing, while the golems around them keep guard.

When Daniel finally wears himself out and can no longer struggle, Neith tries to help him be as comfortable as possible, saying with a light laugh, “I thought I lost you, My Liege.”

Daniel pants, wheezing with exhausted lungs. He manages barely a whisper, “H-How… l-long?”

“Moments, but after you collapsed, your heart stopped, and all traces of mana left your body, as Kaeralegier said. I feared the worst.” He winces, as if a

sudden headache is afflicting the dragon. The loyal grey knight simply scoffs. “It took longer than I expected… Our beloved Empresses are simultaneously demanding that I return with you.”

The fatigued mechanic rasps out, “Buy me… a minute or so… It’s… c-c-calming…”

Neith nods in understanding. He had to endure his own revival, though the potations used that day do provide a nice alcoholic effect which helps dull the pain a great deal. His body may not have been mutilated, but Daniel just endured a painful curse that seemed to have killed him.

Daniel breathes deeply, trying to catch his breath and stabilize himself. He doesn’t want to move. He feels far worse than he did after being stabbed and nearly killed by the other archoneldwyn with Doephluev, and even railgun exploding in his face or firing a 20mm round against his chest don’t compare.

Still, he is alive, and he can tell that he has a future beyond the next few minutes, given the pain subsiding slowly. As long as he can get to where he can walk, even under assistance, he can survive the lectures he’s about to get.

While he doesn’t enjoy worrying his family, it does remind him that he is deeply loved, and it reinforces everything he fights for.

This time, he didn’t intend for it to be even remotely dangerous. A valuable lesson about curses has been learned. If he had more mana, he’s certain he wouldn’t have awakened ever again.

“I’m sorry, my Liege. I can’t talk them down. If we don’t return immediately…”

Daniel nods. “I’m ready… Can you teleport?”

“Not yet, my Liege.”

“Alright.”

Neith reveals his wings, instructing the golems, “Return to the airship unless otherwise retrieved by Xyreko. I shall return with his Grace at once.”

The golems nod, watching long enough for Neith to pick up Daniel onto his back. Since Nemaisol is sheathed, he doesn’t actually need his wings to fly with both of them, and only really has them ready in case something comes up.

The grey dragon flies back to the airship quickly, which is thankfully only a short distance away. From the sounds of it, Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Geirahoel were ready to rush in, along with everyone else if they each had their say.

Though he was technically supposed to already be on house arrest, Daniel is forbidden from leaving someone’s side for the foreseeable future, and Hekate orders Xyreko to inform her and the others immediately if Daniel tries to do another solo mission. She then makes Daniel give the same order. Read this novel at novelping.com for the best experience.

Neith does most of the explaining, and Daniel is too weak to mention the strange vision he had. It seemed to be unrelated to the curse, though it did also happen while he was under the effects, and the being seemed to be unsurprised that they encountered each other. It was actually surprised that he survived.

After Neith finishes explaining, Reignleif asks, “Do you need anything, Mukori?”

Daniel sighs. “I am sorry,” he whispers, his voice still weak. “I keep letting you down…”

“Then ask for help, stupid Mukori!” snaps Geirahoel. “We are dragons! Hekate is a feldrok! The others are warriors in their own right!”

“And, how many times do we have to tell you to be cautious!?” asks Treia, wringing her hands in irritation. “I’m not even a mage, and I know to check suspicious items for curses!”

Neith tries to defend him a little, though everyone present knows Daniel should have had a golem take it. “In my Liege’s defense, your Grace, it was an article of clothing actively being worn. Even I would consider it extraordinarily rare to see a two-part curse like that one. I can’t name the last one I’ve heard of or dealt with.”

“That’s no excuse!” yells Geirahoel. “*You* should have…”

“Mukori,” blurts out Daniel, all but coughing the word, and she halts, glaring at him with hurt in her eyes. He speaks as loudly as he can without hurting himself further, which is barely above a whisper, “Mukori, I have been meaning to ask this for a long time, and if you’d prefer to talk about it in private, I’ll ask you again later. What is your relationship to Neith?”

Everyone falls eerily quiet for a long time, and Aramellianna states quietly, “I’ll excuse myself for now, your Grace. I’d like to speak to you at a later time, though.” She departs upon Daniel nodding, and Geirahoel continues to stare at nothing on the floor.

She finally glares at Neith, who is remaining silent, allowing her to control the facts.

“I’m *told* we share parents. I remember Mother speaking to him before she left and never returned. Then, when I was still a child…” Her eyes burn with anger at the grey dragon.

Ryuogriar finally speaks, “He was chased out…”

“Then he should have taken me with him!” snaps the orange dragon. “I didn’t have anyone else!” She then shifts to a growling tone, “And then Morthybargaron took over…”

To Daniel’s knowledge, there is a lot of time in between those two periods, since both Neith and Morthybargaron studied under the feldroks of the Citadel for a long time before Morthybargaron’s betrayal. Then an additional stretch of Neith wandering the world for more powerful magic to try to counter Morthybargaron stretched even longer.

He hasn’t asked, but he suspects Geirahoel is roughly half Reignleif’s age or younger, but that still puts her somewhere in a couple of centuries old, most likely, while Reignleif and Ryuogriar are each over four hundred. Geirahoel does seem to be speaking of a time before the feral feldrok, and unless Daniel misunderstood, he thought that was even longer before.

Neith fills in Daniel’s misunderstandings. “Morthybargaron… used his same strategy on dragons. Those who did not agree or go along with him spent a great deal of time trapped in void spaces. Siblings… were not spared…”

Hekate and a few of the others gasp, and Geirahoel seems to be most hurt by this revelation, looking at Daniel with watering eyes. “I… I was punished because of him!”

“That’s despicable…” murmurs Kera’tai. She’s not making a joke in reference to how she met Daniel, but rather, the fear it causes, which Daniel witnessed first hand via Shek and, to a lesser extent, Kera’tai. If Morthybargaron was using it as a threat, he undoubtedly would ensure the other dragons knew exactly how precarious their fate was, and that it was in his hands.

Ryuogriar confirms this, “In addition to the torture, he used it as a means to delay everyone else’s growth, ensuring that he would remain the most powerful among all of us.”

“All but the one dragon who fled…” remarks Gwenesphia as she glances at Neith.

Neith is silent for a long time, while Geirahoel starts to cry. Daniel does his best to climb to his feet, limping slowly to her to hug her, and she sobs into his shoulder, though it takes a great deal of his miniscule remaining strength to support them both.

Neith finally says, “My Liege… no, Daniel… What she says is the truth. I did abandon her when I was her only adult family member. I left Morthybargaron in power for far too long. I wanted to ensure… but, regardless, I am a failure.” He kneels. “All of you… Ryuogriar, Reignleif, Geirahoel, Roeta, and Magnir… I am sorry. As you have said, I am weak and a coward. If I had fought him right away… perhaps I could have spared the rest of you…”

Ryuogriar has a cold tone when she remarks a little nihilistically, “Had you destroyed each other, his brother or that green idiot would have simply taken charge.” She scoffs. “And, their children would be plaguing this world without a curse to temper them.”

This leaves a sour taste in the air, but is a very distinct point. Neith didn’t believe he could defeat Morthybargaron at the time, and certainly wouldn’t have survived even if he did. And, in the infinitesimally small chance that he survived, he would be weak and easily slain by those very two dragons who were picked off by Daniel by surprise *before* he had the Citadel to back him up.

Daniel asks a question that he doesn't want to ask, but he knows he needs to. His voice is weak, and he has no strength to accomplish anything. But, he needs to clear the air.

"Geira-Mukori… Do you want to send Neith away?"

She grips his shirt tightly, and her knees weaken. The human mechanic braces himself to try to keep them both on their feet, but he won't make it if she goes limp.

The orange dragon finally whimpers, "N-… No…" She looks at Neith, her expression hardening. After a moment, she tears her gaze away and finally sniffles. She snaps her eyes up to meet Daniel's once more, this time with a fiery determination that startles him somewhat.

"Mukori, will you obey one request? No, not a request. A demand. I have a demand, and if you don't accept, I'll never forgive you." The youngest of the dragon empresses sniffles again, and Daniel replies with his torn up voice, "I'll do anything in my power."

"This one is." She straightens and orders Daniel, "From now on, you must treat him like your shield. If something must be touched, Neith does it. If enemies are near, Neith is in front of you. If you are going somewhere, Neith is beside you. Always." She wipes her eyes, staring seriously into Daniel's to await his response.

Daniel glances at Neith, who nods. "I could not agree more, your Grace."

The human from Earth nods. "I'll do it. I'm sorry. I just want to…"

She puts her finger to his lips to hush him, and she then looks at Neith. "Neith, I have an order for you. You will not hide Daniel's comings and goings from us

ever again.”

“That’s right,” adds Hekate. “Even if Daniel tells you to keep it secret.”

“In exchange,” starts Ryuogriar when she notices both Daniel and Neith become uneasy, since they both agree that, at the very least, the Dragon Empresses are precious to the dragon race. “Just as the mission with the mantaroucks and Yaulwembor, we’ll *listen* to reasons to hold back. *If* they’re convincing reasons.”

Reignleif, Hekate, and Geirahoel nod in agreement, and Gwenesphia speaks up. “Um… C-Can I add something?”

Ryuogriar nods. “Please do.”

“I-I’d like… I’d like you, Daniel, to stop feeling like you need to handle everything yourself. If the spy needed to be dealt with… You should have sent the golems.”

Daniel tries to speak, but he begins coughing. Neith speaks on his behalf, “His Grace expressed concern that he will become too detached from the consequences if he can simply send unfeeling soldiers to accomplish tasks.” The inexperienced emperor nods to confirm this statement.

“That does not matter,” replies Xyreko passionately. “You do not make decisions from a place of cruelty, greed, or petty malice. And, if you seem like you are, you hear reason when *we* express concern.”

“Mother was already going to take care of it,…” points out Wenlianna softly. “Were you afraid we would see it as cruel?”

“She was a child…” murmurs Daniel.

“Then imprisonment,” retorts Ryuogriar bluntly. “Her age would not have stopped her from causing harm against us or our children. If you allow such a weakness to be exploited, it will become the primary method our enemies will exploit.”

Daniel slumps, and she quickly softens. “I… I didn’t… Mukori, I just want… I want you to use us more. We’re not just freeloaders or precious flowers you need to protect. I’ve taken more lives than you. Very few of them I regret. If you must condemn yourself, you must condemn me.”

Daniel is quiet for a moment, and he sighs. “I won’t condemn any of you… And, I’ll struggle and slip, but I’ll try to include everyone, even when I don’t want to.”

“At least some of us, and we can go from there,” replies Vaergraes. “Decisions made in a void can easily lead to destruction.”

“Or curses,” adds Treia sourly, twisting the knife a little.

“Thank you all…” murmurs Daniel.

“Thank us by taking better care of yourself,” retorts Reignleif.

He nods, and he is then escorted to bed to relax.

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Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 139: Everyone Can Make Mistakes

For once, Daniel has exhausted himself to the point of sleeping well before dinner time. Hekate checked on him, and Gwenesphia, Treia, and Veiranoei are watching over him for the time being, talking quietly nearby. Veiranoei starts to jump up when she spots Hekate, but the young feldrok Empress waves her hands for her to relax. She approaches the table where the three gatonine women are cleaning their swords, with exception of Gwenesphia, who is cleaning the Dragonslayer. Daniel let her use it against the surviving mantaroucks and to finish off Rohgattabor, so she chose to clean it after everything was settled. She's one of the few who have been taught how to properly disassemble Daniel's firearms to maintain them.

Hekate takes a seat, speaking softly, "Excuse me for interrupting."

"Not at all," replies Treia. "We were just talking about visiting our families when everything settles down. I asked Grand Duchess Aramellianna to reach out to my family and offer my sister and mother to interview for service positions. I don't know if they'll accept, but my brothers will be more likely to take interest in the family business."

Hekate nods, and Gwenesphia explains, "My parents have sent letters to my eldest brother to begin repairing the apiaries and replanting the flower fields. Honey should be our main export again in no time."

"That's good. I'm looking forward to it."

“Is… everything alright, your Greatness?” asks Veiranoei cautiously.

“Yes. Just wanted to check…” She looks at Daniel for a moment. He looks noticeably weary, even asleep, and she sighs. “I’m sure, now, more than ever, we need to come up with something…”

“Will the teleporter not work?” asks Treia. She isn’t especially talented in magic equipment, so she can’t help as much on the teleportation pack as the ones who are working on it.

Hekate shakes her head. “It will do its job, and I’m sure Wenlianna, Reignleif, and Ahok can make it work. But, what I mean is…” The young ravenette squeezes her fists tightly. “The Devourer is bound to some kind of crystal until he can be revived… If we can, that is.”

“Th-The Devourer?” asks Veiranoei nervously, mindful of her volume.

“We weren't there for it either, but it was a humongous monster Hekate, Daniel, and the dragons killed,” replies Treia.

The feldrok girl in question snickers quietly. “It was mostly Daniel. But, it's a secret.”

“Where did the crystal come from?” asks Gwenesphia. “Are there more?”

“Xyreko gave it to Daniel. Sh-She hasn't said I have to marry him, but…”

“Daniel?” asks Veiranoei, to which Hekate shakes her head, her big triangular ears laying out in disappointment. The three gatonines’ ears also lay flat in sympathy.

But, Treia points out as she looks at Daniel, “Daniel won't allow you of all people to be forced into anything.”

“The fate of the feldroks isn't your fault,” adds Gwenesphia, “Nor your burden to bear.”

Treia adds in the same vein, “I’m not entirely convinced a race can be brought back from a single pair, even if there was a male feldrok. I worry about the dragons… Though, they don’t seem too concerned.”

“Do you… worry about the feldroks becoming extinct, though?” asks Veiranoei.

Hekate is quiet for a moment. “Truth be told… I would be fine if my children were human. Daniel says he likes my ears and tail, but… I wonder if he’d like me more…” She trails off, and Gwenesphia hugs the feldrok girl, surprising her a little.

“Please don’t say that, Hekate,” replies Gwenesphia gently. She adds playfully at a near whisper, “I have it on good authority that Daniel likes to nibble…”

Hekate blushes furiously, going rigid. She may not know entirely what Gwenesphia means, but she knows the situation for which she’s implying it.

Veiranoei’s expression goes flat, and she retorts with a fair hint of sarcasm, “I wonder who ‘nibbled’ on his shoulders.”

Both Gwenesphia and Treia blush, twitching guiltily in response. They glance at each other, and then quickly away at various points of the wall and ceiling.

The gatonine knight sighs. She pouts as she puts her hand on her chin. “I assume it was enjoyable…”

“Uh…” murmurs Gwenesphia as both hers and Treia’s expressions soften. Veiranoei hasn’t had good fortune in the intimacy or romance departments, which is how she came to be one of Daniel’s consorts in name only, in order to raise her honor through someone who fears no gossip or damage to his own

reputation, because he commands the rumored most powerful military in the world.

“So, your Greatness, are you hoping to get another one of the crystals you mentioned?”

Caught a little off-guard, Hekate doesn’t press on the other topic, which could only disparage Veiranoei if she doesn’t want to talk about it. “Well, that type of crystal needs to be actively used, which is how Daniel retrieved the Devourer’s soul at the end. S-So… I was hoping… to come up with something that can capture Daniel’s if… he’s ever in danger…”

“I-Is such a thing possible?” asks Gwenesphia, her own curiosity piqued along with the others.

“I don’t know… I… I don’t want to ask her, but…” She looks down and to the side.

The others know immediately, and it’s a shared sentiment. “Doephluev…” murmurs Treia.

“Shhh!” hisses Hekate. “She’ll appear if you say her name.” She slumps, mumbling in disappointment, “She’s… too useful…”

The three gatonines are respectfully quiet for a moment. Treia remarks, “She certainly doesn’t hide her ambitions, either. But, as long as she helps,… I guess it’s alright…”

“A-Anyways, I’m afraid she’ll know what to do, and… I don’t want to ask her.”

“But,…” starts Veiranoei. “If she has the knowledge you need, won’t it be better to make use of it? Isn’t the goal more important than any feelings you have about her?”

Hekate frowns, pouting a little petulantly. “Yes, but… what if she asks me for a favor? She’s shameless…”

“If it’s too much, you’ll have to find another way…” answers the gatonine knight bluntly. She has the least interaction with Doephluev, so she’s the least invested in how such a compromise would turn out.

The feldrok girl whines softly, and she stands up. “I… I’ll think about it… I’m going for a walk.”

“Let us know if there’s anything we can do,” replies Gwenesphia.

“I’ll alert you if Daniel wakes up or has any troubles,” replies Treia.

“Thank you.” Hekate stops at the door. “Oh… Um… Have any of you seen Wenlianna?”

The three gatonines smile, but Treia jokes, “Let me check my Wenlianna-tracker.” She makes a gesture of pulling something out of her pocket, but there’s nothing in her hand. “Boop. Boop. Boop.” Hekate hums in irritation, and her big ears fold back as she frowns.

“She’s definitely not in this room,” finishes Treia while Gwenesphia and Veiranoei laugh softly, with the latter-most trying not to.

The feldrok empress scowls at them dryly. “You clearly have been spending too much time with Daniel. I can fix that.”

This only prompts the three women to laugh even more, and Hekate leaves with rosy cheeks, embarrassed by the gatonines. She makes her way through the airship, checking the places that Wenlianna can usually be found. It turns out, she’s actually in one of the engine rooms, recharging the magic crystals that power the engines and provide lift.

Hekate calls out as she enters, “Wenlianna?” The engine room is noisy with the central air unit that maintains comfortable temperatures in every room on the massive vessel.

The magic artisan-turned empress consort perks up, looking over her shoulder. “Oh! One moment! I’ll finish quickly.”

“Take your time,” replies Hekate, waiting at the door, since the high amount of noise is even more pronounced to the fox-eared girl, and even Wenlianna is wearing hearing protection inside the room.

After finishing one of the crystals, she returns it to its standby harness, which allows the technicians to quickly swap them while airborne as the loaded crystals run low on power.

The two head to a small break room, which Wenlianna added to the original design after she and Daniel discussed common labor practices on Earth, in case any of the enginemen need to rest. It has seating for about five people, a storage cabinet with water and rations, and a simple first aid kit and a couple of eastern healing potions. Similarly to Magic Artisans, the alchemists that specialize in brewing potions command a premium salary, though to a lesser extent. Regardless, even a wealthy family like the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy will typically only have a couple of alchemists on payroll in their domains, and neither of them accompanied the airship due to motion-sickness.

After they take a seat in the small lounge, Wenlianna wipes her hands on a rag as she asks, “Did you need something? Is… Is Daniel alright?”

“He’s still sleeping,” replies Hekate. “Gwen, Treia, and Veira are watching over him for now.” The young feldrok girl fidgets with her hands, and the brunette takes notice. She is patient and kind to Hekate, even after it could be argued

that Wenlianna was Daniel's first friend in this world, as well as a sort of protector. If things had only gone a little differently, Hekate would never have met Daniel, as Wenlianna was already in love with him before he left, and he cared about her, to the point that they could have become lovers if he hadn't been banished first.

"Are… you… happy with Daniel?" asks the Empress of the Fievegal, surprising Wenlianna a little. "O-Or, rather,... um… Are you… Is there something stressing you out? Is it…? Are we…?" Even Hekate herself knows that she normally has an unfaltering confidence when she speaks, even when she's saying something foolish, because she's not afraid of being wrong. She's only afraid of causing pain to people she cares about.

Wenlianna, surprised by Hekate's struggle to formulate solid questions to get her real concerns out, cocks her head a little as she tries to run through what Hekate could be searching for. It's obvious that the little fox-eared teen knows Wenlianna's feelings, but she's after something else.

"I… am quite happy," replies Wenlianna, still unsure of what Hekate is looking for. "As… we've talked about before, I have reasons to kick myself. But, I'm happy that I've been welcomed so warmly. I don't want to share, but… I don't hate it." She looks aside, blushing a little. "D-Daniel… is very respectful about it, as well."

"H-How so?" asks Hekate. She's probably the only one of Daniel's innermost circle and family -as well as self-proclaimed consort that she is- who hasn't been intimate with Daniel because of her age.

Wenlianna squirms sheepishly. It couldn't be more obvious that Daniel is her first love, and she feels immensely awkward about what happens in private.

“He, um… He takes special care to ensure… that I feel like the only one on his mind… wh-when we’re together.”

Hekate nods with a gentle smile. “Mm… I agree.”

“Y-You do?”

The feldrok girl nods. “Mm-hmm! When he cuddles with me, I feel like the queen of the whole world!”

Wenlianna giggles. “Indeed.”

The triangular ears of the expressive young woman flatten out as she deflates a little. “But… Y-Y-You’ve… You’ve been trying for… w-weeks, now, haven’t you?”

“Trying?” asks Wenlianna innocently. “What are we try-…” She halts, and her cheeks completely fill with color. Hekate looks even more worried, even though the eldest Stalvaltan daughter is only embarrassed. Find the original chapter at novelping(.)com.

Still, Hekate’s saddened and worried expression makes it connect for Wenlianna. She turns serious, realizing what the Empress is worried about.

“Oh…” The brunette puts her hand on Hekate’s, smiling gently. “Thank you for the concern, Hekate. Truly. But, humans don’t always succeed. Mother says Yani took almost a year, and she was worried that I would be her and Father’s only heir.”

Hekate wraps both hands around Wenlianna’s, holding it desperately. “Y-You’re… It’s not stress, is it? D-Do you need a break? V-Vacation time? I can ask the others if there’s…”

The senior of the two young women places her free hand on top of Hekate's, reassuring her warmly. "It's very sweet of you to worry about me, Hekate. I'm very thankful to have a friend like you. But, I am very happy, and… um… D-Daniel spares no effort. S-So long as… no one objects,…" The magic artisan smiles sheepishly.

Hekate nods with a gentle smile. "If there is anything I can do, please let me know." She does her best to straighten her posture and restore her usual confidence. "After all, I'll expect you to spare no effort for the crown princess when she is born."

"C-Crown Princess?" asks Wenlianna bashfully, surprised by the confidence of Hekate's statement.

The feldrok nods proudly. "Mm-hmm! My first child is going to be a girl."

"H-How do you know?"

"Because I'm going to cast a spell on him to ensure it. Heeheehee!"

They both laugh together. Afterwards, Hekate adds sincerely, "I asked Vae to check the future for me, and she said that she saw me with a baby girl with my hair and eyes." Hekate blushes softly. "A-And, I know it's not set in stone or anything, but it makes me happy to know…" She turns serious, adding, "I want to make sure that no one is sad. Wh-Which is why I want to make sure you're alright."

"Thank you. I'm sure it'll be fine. I have time, anyways, so please wish me good fortune, but don't worry yet."

Hekate nods. "Good luck, Wenlianna." She leans close and places her hand on the artisan's chest, which surprises the brunette a little, but she doesn't resist.

The feldrok empress adds sincerely, “I wish I could give actual blessings, but if you’re listening, Ryukana, please bless this woman with great success in all of her endeavors. *All* of them.” She smiles, and Wenlianna giggles softly. “Thank you, your Imperial Greatness. You truly honor me.”

“Heeheehee! Do the same for me on my eighteenth birthday, and we’ll be even.”

“You have a deal.”

“Now then, do you need any help on the engines?”

“Hmm? Oh! I… won’t object to assistance. I’m mainly inspecting and recharging crystals. Only a handful of the crewmembers for the airship have enough mana to recharge crystals, and I can only do a couple a day. There’s… obviously a lot of them.”

“Then, let’s get to work! I’ve got mana to spare, now that I’ve had some rest since fighting Yaulwembor.”

“Speaking of,” starts Wenlianna as the two put their ear protection on. “What will happen to… her?”

“Yes, her. She had a nest with unfertilized eggs. We’re going to keep her in storage for now until we return to the Citadel. From there… I don’t really know. She’s really powerful, and if she can break out of the Citadel…”

“It’s a shame… She can’t talk, can she?”

“We don’t think so, but she seems capable of understanding… It may be that she just never learned, but… I don’t know.”

“I see…” The two enter the engine room, and Wenlianna finishes her thought. “I hope everything works out. If it’s true that her scales are sharmelkolle, I think we might be able to make some unique new magic equipment.”

“Remind me to tell you about my new plan,” calls out Hekate over the noise.

The magic artisan nods, withdrawing her notepad and pencil. They both grin at each other as Wenlianna winks cheekily.

***

Neith escorts Aramellianna at her request, alongside Sir Helbeit and Sir Resken, the two knights that accompanied the assault team that fought Rohgattabor and Yaulwembor. Daniel is being protected by Magnir and Roeta alongside several of the empresses, including specifically Reignleif, who was least upset by the danger he put himself in. Reignleif and Daniel have each said they have similar outlooks to each other, and while she was also disappointed, she accepted Daniel’s answer the easiest. He truly does make difficult decisions in hopes of protecting the people he cares about, even if it is intended to protect them from him making darker decisions than he usually does. This time, he nearly paid the price in full.

Now, the Grand Duchess has taken charge of her own endeavor, and she invited Neith to accompany her.

“I’m certain you’re fully aware, Sir Neith, that I am not Daniel.”

“I would be shocked if anyone would even joke that you’re related, your Grace,” replies the Dragon civilly. It prompts a giggle out of the matriarch of the Grand Duchy.

“Yes, well, I would consider it my own great fortune to have given birth to such a resourceful young man. Thankfully, that was not the case, as Wenlianna would be quite lonely otherwise.” She then turns serious. “I do not take my blunders lightly, and I have a great deal less mercy for my enemies.”

Two knights guarding a door to a small building in the town, to where they have walked, open the door to allow the Grand Duchess and her small entourage to enter. They both greet her, “We greet her Majesty, the Grand Duchess.”

“Greetings, gentlemen. We’ll only be a moment.”

“As you wish, your Grace.”

The two knights close the door behind them, standing guard to ensure no one else enters.

In the center of the room, tied to a chair, is a bruised and battered person. A shenwulf is cleaning tools nearby, bowing his head reverently at the group. “Your Grace. It is my sincere honor to host you.”

“Have you had any issues, Sir Samvinez?”

“A rat came snooping. He’s in the back room if you’d like to question him next. Paid by some nouveau riche, but I haven’t taken the time to get the name yet.”

“How did you determine that much, then?” asks Helbeit.

The shenwulf, who is dressed down compared to his knight counterparts, gives a toothy grin. “I’m an expert in these affairs, Sir Helbeit.” He tosses a bag to the human knight, which rattles like a bag of stones. Helbeit pours some of the stones out for the others to see, and it turns out to be tiny diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, and rubies, in addition to ‘sealed plates’, small, thin ingots of silver that carry a fairly high fixed value of gold, but are stamped with a seal

that can only be exchanged at certain locations; namely a merchant company's approved vendors and sellers. This reduces the effective loss of a theft, as well as the weight of the gold that it takes the place of.

And, the seals are all stamped with a specific company's trade emblem.

"I don't believe the traders are related, but those seals are extremely common for new nobles to deal in, especially when on the rise, when they can't afford a full guard detachment."

Aramellianna agrees as she studies the collection. "Indeed. I remember my grandfather speaking of the idea before it was ratified in the Empire. He was neutral on the policy, since it has advantages and disadvantages."

"Yes, your Grace. Not least of which is the fact that they are worth only the weight of their own silver content if our friend in the back is not the one to trade them in."

The Grand Duchess hands the one seal she picked up back to Helbeit, and he returns the treasures to the bag. "No matter. Restoring my honor is more important." She faces the bound human, who has been watching her for a long time. "I had great faith in your word, since we have shared business in the past, Lord Joenn."

He coughs and struggles to breathe. "I… I had no… idea…"

"No idea?" She paces around him as the knights stand watch. "You sold her to me most fervently. She was impressive, I'll admit, but it was your words that carried weight."

She stands behind him, saying menacingly, "Do you see the man in the grey mantle right there? The one lurking behind my knights?"

Neith shifts, unsure how to respond.

Aramellianna continues without an answer, “That man is the right hand knight to his Grace and my son, Emperor Daniel kos Lawson. Your recommendation nearly placed an assassin at my Imperial Son’s side. More importantly,…” She places a hand on his shoulder to intimidate him. “Your recommendation nearly placed an assassin in arm’s reach of my grandchildren.” She squeezes his collarbone, which is admittedly not very painful coming from a rather pampered noblewoman.

She steps away from him finally, saying calmly, “Sir Neith; I grant you leave to take over.” She steps between Resken and Helbeit, and the dragon steps forward, a little confused. He agreed to accompany the Grand Duchess thinking he was going to be protecting her.

She gestures her hand out towards the prisoner, saying, “I believe there was some mention of a person in charge? I do not know the full details, but someone put this man in contact, and he is obviously a skilled liar, as you can see.”

“All men break in time,” replies Samvinez confidently. “How useful they are is all that differs.”

Neith studies the beaten human. While he looks defeated, something is off about his “ignorant” appearance.

“Have you taken anything off of his person?” asks Neith, looking at Samvinez.

“No, Sir Neith. He was retrieved… in a state of vulnerability.”

“You kidnapped me… from my home…” grunts out the man, coughing afterwards.

Samvinez shrugs. “If he is related to the spy, he may have a cursed artifact in his home. Something that looks like jewelry.”

Joenn keeps coughing, not seeming to be disturbed by the revelation of the cursed artifact.

“Hmm…” thinks the shenwulf interrogator out loud. “I was part of the retrieval team, but I didn’t take much notice of the trinkets. Our first priority was getting his lordship out unnoticed. Evidence will be collected later.”

“Were there any casualties?” asks the dragon.

“No, Sir. As I said, we mainly focused on our task.”

“Her Imperial Grace will hear of this…” grumbles the prisoner.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” replies Aramellianna, feigning concern. “I didn’t tell you. You no longer exist. I only wanted my draconic companion here to question you in case we miss something. It seems there is indeed something to look for.”

“You can’t do this! I am a law-abiding citizen of the Empire, and a noble lord!” Read the latest chapters at novelping.com.

“You’re not the first petty lord that has disappeared after betraying me, ‘Lord’ Joenn. You won’t be the last. When your body is found mangled by monsters after you foolishly tried to claim your own sliver of the Fievegal’s glory following the defeat of the Three Terrors, you’ll be nothing more than one more soon-to-be forgotten corpse of the wilderness.”

“Pardon me, your Grace,” speaks up Sir Resken, the shenwulf knight that accompanied them. “You waste your breath on this spy.”

“I won’t,” declares Neith as he steps forward. He makes a sound like he’s sucking his teeth, but in actuality, a flame ignites in his mouth, glowing a violet purple color. The entrancing flame immediately ensnares Joenn’s gaze, startling him. Neith keeps his lips curled enough to allow air to feed the pilot flame, and he asks, “Who would the spy have contacted?”

“I-I don’t know! I told you, you people have the wrong man!”

Neith says confidently, “There is an artifact in his house, likely near his bed, which he puts on every day and takes off. It’s possible it’s nothing more than a ring for a finger or a cravat. It cannot be touched, however. It’s cursed, and only the proper words can deactivate the curse temporarily.”

“You’re speaking nonsense! I’m innocent! And, when the Empress and Grand Premier hear of this…!”

Neith spits, and a small flame darts from his mouth to the man’s right hand. Joenn immediately begins huffing and squirming, writhing against his restraints and trying not to scream. The purple flame continues to burn, dancing just above the skin like tea-leaves in a pot. However, it is not a harmless flame. The man’s hand is noticeably melting, rather than burning.

Neith watches the man as he begins to scream, quickly losing breath as he bucks and pulls, trying to escape the flames, but to no avail. The others in the room back away, as the heat is noticeable even from the small fire melting a human hand.

The grey dragon asks mockingly to no one in particular, “Do you know how hot dragon’s fire burns? Flesh doesn’t easily melt without burning. Of course, it helps that the oxygen is pulled away by the flame, and its own heat causes the flame to rise and fall in the presence of matter it is melting.”

“Make it stop!” screams the prisoner. “Please! Make it stop!”

“Worry not,” states Neith. “You’ll lose most sensation in your hand before long, once the nerves are burned away. Amazing what you can learn from an otherworlder, even as a dragon of seven hundred years like myself.”

Neith licks his teeth, and he makes the same clicking sound again, igniting a new pilot flame.

Lord Joenn screams in agony. “Mercy! Please! Mercy your Grace! Make him stop!”

“You think I can stop an actual dragon?” retorts the Grand Duchess mockingly. “I’m flattered, but there aren’t enough Stalvaltan Guards in the world to defeat Sir Neith.”

The knights chuckle uneasily, though it’s a little disappointing to hear it for all of them. That said, all three of the knights present had to retreat from the heat of a tiny, effortless flame. If Neith was actually fighting them, the three of them wouldn’t last long. Helbeit had the luxury of using the Dragonslayer during the battle with Yaulwembor, but he also had the protection of titans like Neith, Magnir, Roeta, Vaergraes, Doephluev, and Hekate holding back Yaulwembor’s attacks. While they were holding back to protect the forest and the lake, Yaulwembor proved to be a relatively even match for a large group of the Fievegal’s strongest fighters.

“V-V-Viscount Telgabe! Viscountess Telgabe put me in contact with her! I s-s-swear! I knew nothing about Veuthene before that! Please! Mercy! I-I’ll tell you all I know! GAHHHH!”

Joenn’s arm suddenly comes free of his wrist restraint, and he screams.

His hand was left behind, continuing to melt before everyone's eyes, and liquid flesh drips from his wrist. No longer exposed to the ignityal flame, it quickly flares in a puff of orange fire, and the flesh is quickly charred before the flame puts itself out.

All the while, Joenn continues to wail in pain and agony, trying to put the flames out himself, only to strike pain through every nerve ending. Nothing will make the pain stop, and staring at it only makes it worse as his horrid eyes remain locked on.

"Tell me about the cursed items."

"I know nothing about that! I swear it! Please!"

"Perhaps he was left-handed after all," remarks Aramellianna.

The first flame finally falls leisurely to the floor after melting through the arm of the chair. Neith spits another flame that intercepts the first, and they snuff each other out. He puts the pilot flame out. "Yes, I suppose you are right, your Grace. I should have figured out which was his dominant hand."

"I'm telling the truth! The closest to information that I have is Viscountess Telgabe!"

"What interest do you have in the Fievegal's serving staff? Why would you have recommended a prospective maid?"

"The Grand Duchess asked me!"

"More accurately, I put out a request via my serving staff," replies Aramellianna. "Though, I obviously reached out to many former trusted contacts."

“This isn’t my fault!”

“The final fault lies with me,” replies Aramellianna. “But, I will correct my mistakes.”

Neith states sincerely, “Forgive me, Sir Samvinez. You’ll have to restrain his arm differently now.”

“No matter, Sir Neith. You got more in three minutes than I got all morning.”

“I’ll return at your request, my brother in arms. For now, I would like to investigate this man’s home.”

“Speak to Dame Peltuos, if you would. She can explain her role to you in the absence of… our friends, here.”

Neith nods.

“I’ll take you to her,” replies Aramellianna. “Sir Samvinez, I trust you will use our friend’s newfound cooperation wisely. Lord Joenn, I have heard my dear son is even more effective than a dragon at getting answers. It may be wise to answer Sir Samvinez’s questions now, rather than later.”

The agonizing lord trembles, pain and terror equally fighting for dominion over his expression. Samvinez bows his head. “Until next time, your magnificent Majesty. Sirs Neith, Resken, and Helbeit.”

The knights give their farewells, following Aramellianna out of the room.

“Daniel tried to protect my daughter and the others from the truth when he wanted to handle Veuthene himself,” remarks the Stalvaltan matriarch. “It’s probably only fair that we return the favor.”

“Your Grace, if he asks…”

“You may tell him and lose no faith with me, Sir Neith. I know you swore yourself to the Emperor.”

“No… I swore myself to a human from a far away world called Earth. I don’t care what his title is here.”

Aramellianna smiles. “You and me both.” She then adds seriously, “Regardless, from what I understand, and from what I have seen, he is not cold enough for this sort of work. His world was very safe. Very comfortable. Very warm.” She trails off as she imagines Earth to the best of her ability.

“I agree with you,” replies the grey dragon softly.

She gives a gentle nod, adding, “I don’t want to keep secrets from him, but if he is unwilling to handle the darker sides of this world, then I will. I hope you will assist me when needed.”

Neith is quiet for a moment. He already did, just now. And, while his first duty is to Daniel and the Imperial Family of the Fievegal, he has no objections to serving them from the shadows when need be.

“I must prioritize the Imperial Family, your Grace.” He smiles, adding softly, “My understanding is that it includes the Empress Mother.”

It’s not often that Aramellianna blushes, and she comes admittedly close just now. “You flatter me, Sir Neith.”

Just as he’s about to respond, something feels off. Neith is one of the most powerful beings in the world, though there are a fair number above him. Regardless, he is standing next to someone who might as well be among the weakest; a normal human for all intents and purposes.

The grey dragon doesn't usually have to rely solely on his instincts. He normally has all the time in the world to respond and plan, since he doesn't have to worry about being attacked.

It's different now that he's a defender. Someone who can't withstand the attacks he would easily survive is directly dependent on his actions to survive.

Neith whirls around in front of Aramellianna, shoving her into Helbeit. A crackling clap of thunder explodes, and the dragon is stumbled by a powerful blow to his spine. The other four knights, including the two guarding the hideout for the interrogation team, are blasted away from him by a concussive blast, and the door is blown inwards.

Neith drops to a knee as he tries to orient himself. Were he anyone else, including many of the warriors more powerful in magic than he is, it's possible they would have perished.

But, he is a greater dragon, as well as the First Jomsviking; a warrior recognized by the great and powerful Harbinger of Calamity.

Ryuogriar, Roeta, Geirahoel, and Magnir were all taken down by Brosjak through magic. Neith is not any of those four. He would never intend disrespect, but such are the facts.

Another fact is; someone is trying to kill either himself or Aramellianna.

He whirls and breathes tainted fire; dragon flames where he intentionally mixes his venom into the blend, which causes heavy black smoke to fill the air. He sweeps short-range flames around them to obscure their positions while he retrieves smoke grenades from his bag. He pulls their pins and throws them around them, hiding the group to prevent a follow-up attack. He's not as strong

in defensive magic as the likes of Vaergraes, Illianna, or Doephluev, so he has to fight defensively with his offensive might.

Incinerating the town block would be an option, but his priority is Aramellianna's safety while minimizing collateral.

The Jomsviking of the Fievegal quickly darts to Aramellianna to check on her, keeping himself between her and the direction the attack came from. He can sense the strong source of mana moving beyond the smoke, so incinerating everything in that direction would be rather easy. But, the potential innocents caught in the flames and the destruction of property would not be forgiven by Mattarglos, whom the Fievegal has come to ally with.

Instead, he has to evacuate Aramellianna at all costs.

Assuming that goes according to plan, he'll then have to explain to Daniel and Wenlianna.

It's not a conversation he's looking forward to, but he prays he gets to have that conversation under the right conditions.

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 140: Moving Shadows

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 140: Moving Shadows

The walls creak and fires burn nearby. Not many can take a direct hit from a focused explosion spell carried by a lightning arc. Neith managed to dive in front of the first spell to protect the Grand Duchess, but the concussive blast still managed to put him on his knees and knock the four knights and the matriarch herself to the ground.

The grey dragon in humanoid form breathed tainted fire in a wide arc, creating a smoke screen until he could deploy Daniel's smoke grenades, which create thick, obscuring white smoke much longer than the venom-choked flames of his ignityal.

One of the sources of magic that he's sensing flees, but he can tell they are far from safe.

Neith quickly kicks one of the knight's swords up to his own hand, wasting no time in gripping the blade as a knife-thrower would a perfectly weighted instrument. He launches it forward with supersonic force, and he can feel the blade wobble and strain in resistance to the might of his true strength. The blade cuts through the air in a wheel-like spin, and a moment later, there is a terrible crash, followed by the mana of the attacker fading.

Unfortunately, the same kind of attack can work against him, and Neith scoops Aramellianna up and leaps clear of another incoming magical attack.

A barrage of explosions rip apart the buildings and the cobblestones of the street.

This isn't going to work, thinks the dragon to himself.

He doesn't want to leave the knights or their captured quarry behind, but he knows there will be serious consequences if he does what he's thinking.

He can flee with Aramellianna, and the losses will be minimal. However, he is a knight of the Fievegal. He may not be as honorable as Daniel tends to be, but he is not so honorless as to leave allies behind.

Neith makes the decision quickly, and he keeps the unconscious Grand Duchess close as he chants. He is lightly wounded, which only makes things easier.

Transforming into his true form is easy for a powerful dragon.

Transforming into an unstoppable killing machine requires a different kind of magic.

Neith's droplets of blood suspend in the air as he chants, and power passes through them and supercharges his spell.

Black smoke-like auras swirl in around Neith and the Grand Duchess, and he is mindful of her presence through every bit of the transformation as he erupts from the smoke almost fifteen times larger than he was in the form of a metallic grey beast with leathery wings, armor plates for scales, and a crown of broken horns. Neith bellows a terrifying roar, and he can feel some of the structures rattle and crumble under foot.

I'll confess to my Liege later and try to sort it out peacefully. I don't know if I can pay for all of this, but…

The humongous dragon encloses the Grand Duchess in his massive claw, protecting her from incoming harm. He then tries something new that he hasn't experimented much with.

He takes a deep breath and exhales, as if to breathe fire. In place of ignityal, however, he summons a magic smoke vapor that quickly fills the air. Neith continues a long projection of this magic fog, ensuring to sweep across the entire area. When he spots a spell circle form to cast a summoned element, he uses his hand to cast a barrage of icicle-spears, and the enemy spell quickly switches to interception.

The caster fails, however, and is caught up in the hailstorm of attacks.

There aren't many mages who can take on a greater dragon. The few who can rely almost entirely on the element of surprise, including the Harbinger of Calamity. He could probably defeat a dragon without surprise now, but he wouldn't survive a direct attack.

Once the air is filled with the magic smoke, which rolls across the ground and rises slowly into the air, Neith quickly takes a breath. He is careful to keep Aramellianna above the vapor cloud as he 'dives' below the fog to scoop up the allied knights.

It's times like this that he wishes he took Daniel's suggestion to carry a dragon-sized triage bag on him more seriously. He could tuck people away into a normal bag for transport, especially in the event of so many at once. A void bag would be even better, but his human-sized ones are too small for him to manipulate with his claws.

For now, he carefully gathers the knights with his left hand, returning above the heavy cloud he created.

That cloud, for better or worse, is a sleep mist, which will put anyone inside of it to sleep. Naturally, it has limited effectiveness on mages that can counter it, but given how much mana he dumped into it, they'll have a great deal of trouble. If he's not careful, he could put himself to sleep with it.

After collecting the knights, Neith smashes his way in through the damaged wall of the hideout, retrieving the prisoner and Sir Samvinez.

Remembering the mention of another prisoner, Neith sighs. He uses his forearm to brace against the top of the building, hoping this will work.

He lifts the building carefully, and the second floor and above comes off of the walls of the first floor which remain behind.

He was somewhat hoping the whole building would rise together, but it makes sense. Most buildings aren't built with the expectation of lifting the whole structure, and certainly not from the second floor's ceiling.

Either way, it accomplishes what he wanted. He can see the unconscious person, who looks like a derelict or other vagrant. That said, those are often the best disguised infiltrators in the world because most people try not to pay them any mind.

Either way, Neith will have to sort them all out later.

He scoops the knights and prisoners onto his left-hand claw using his tail. He'll have to be mindful not to drop any of them, but he'd rather keep the Grand Duchess separate. She may need medical attention, and he has wasted a lot of time already.

What is it with the Fievegal's leadership and doing these things themselves?It seems I will need to speak to Hekate and the others and try to convince

everyone to let the knights handle these things. Or, better yet, golems.

Neith takes off with powerful sweeps of his wings, dispersing the sleep magic into the air. Once he's high enough, he flies directly back to the airship, and he notices the Stalvaltan Guards on the top deck point him out. They go to combat readiness, but Neith comes to a hover and slows his approach.

After observing him for a moment, the guards on deck give signals via semaphore, granting Neith permission to land.

He does exactly that, easing himself down onto the deck of the airliner. He sets the knights and prisoners down first, pointing out the two prisoners. The brave Stalvaltan guards immediately step in, taking custody of the prisoners.

Neith then gingerly hands over the Grand Duchess to another of the Stalvaltan Guards, who calls out, "Your Grace!"

The grey dragon casts his spell once more, returning to his humanoid form. It surprises many of the soldiers, but they maintain their composure. Once he's their size again, he approaches the human soldiers kneeling with the Grand Duchess in his arms. "How did this happen, Sir Neith?"

"We were attacked. I ask that you take those two men into secure custody and keep them from dying. I'll take the Grand Duchess to her chambers, but please do send two female escorts to ensure nothing untoward happens."

The Stalvaltan guard scoffs lightly. "Not that any of us could stop you…"

"You could and should try, Sir. You might get lucky, and in defense of your liege, no battle fought is in vain. That is my opinion."

The guard nods, and he helps ease Aramellianna into the dragon's arms. "The knights and her Grace were hit with the shockwave of an explosion spell.

They'll need to be monitored by healers."

"Of course, Sir. I'll lead the way." The Stalvaltan Guard helping Neith stands up and calls out, "All stations, return to posts and maintain vigilance! You four, bring the prisoners."

"Yes, Sir!"

The guards escort Neith into the hull of the craft, and he encounters Yanidere on the way to the Grand Duchess' private stateroom.

"M-Mother!? S-S-Sir Neith, what's…!?"

"She's alive, and she'll recover my Lady. Come, I'll explain what happened."

"L-Let me go get Wen-…"

"Begging your pardon, my Lady, but with Wenlianna betrothed to Daniel, you are next in line for the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy. You or your husband."

"M-My husband is defending the Grand Duchy alongside the Fievegal troops."

Neith nods. "Of course. Which is why you'll need to take command for now. I don't know the extent of her Grace's injuries, but…" Neith stops at the door, and one of the knights swoops in to open the door quickly, allowing the dragon to enter. "We won't let further harm come to her. So, acting Duchess, please follow me to discuss our next actions."

Yanidere nervously hesitates, glancing at the guards. Each one of them folds their right arm across their own chest, bowing slightly. Just as they serve the Grand Duchess loyally, they are prepared to follow Yanidere's orders just as well.

The young woman nods, following Neith to the bed. He carefully places the Grand Duchess in the bed as the attendants start to arrive. “Your Grace!” “Madam!” They crowd around the bed to check on her, and Yanider passes out instructions to organize them. Once she finishes, she looks at the grey dragon. “Sir Neith?”

“My Lady,” replies the Jomsviking politely.

“Are… dragons…” She glances around. The room is mostly filled with women now; two women Stalvaltan Guards, a handful of maids and ladies in waiting, and Yanidere. The Stalvaltan daughter continues her uneasy question. “Are dragons… attracted… to humans?”

Neith cocks his head, wholly confused for a long moment.

He perks up as it hits him. “Oh, if you are concerned, I shall leave the room. To answer your question, my Lady, no. I am not aroused by the human form. I don’t expect the Empresses are, either. I’ll take my leave.”

“Stay, Sir Neith.”

“Your Highness?” asks one of the ladies-in-waiting.

“Whatever’s going on, I’d prefer to have you nearby to protect Mother. I am not ready to inherit the Grand Duchy, and I’m in no rush.”

“I can remain just outside the door…”

“No. Please, Sir Neith. You said Mother could be injured. Your strength will make moving her easier. If… If you would.”

The dragon ponders it for a long moment as the other women wait for his response. True, he doesn’t have any sort of physical attraction to the Grand

Duchess. He also has Roestren, with whom he has been exchanging letters. He never dedicated any energy to romantic interests or the pursuit of offspring before now, and he's only gotten to know Aramellianna a little. This story is hosted at novelping dot com.

He doubts he's in the running for the next Grand Duke.

That said, he's not a soulless machine.

"My Lady, I do not want to upset her Grace before I have a chance to become the next Grand Duke."

Several of the women gasp or murmur, while Yanidere stares at him in disbelief. Her brain finally reboots, and Neith finally chuckles warmly. "Just a joke, my Lady. If you still desire my protection and assistance, you have it."

The young Duchess huffs and stammers. Her cheeks fill with color, and she steps closer to him. Her voice is barely above a whisper when the brunette retorts, "I have no objections to Mother remarrying if it's the right man, but be careful, Sir Neith. She has rebuffed all advances so far. She'll not look kindly on a joke of the matter."

He laughs again. "Understood, my Lady. Shall we?"

She nods in agreement. "While we do so, explain to me exactly what happened. I know you were all doing something you shouldn't have, so don't bother lying. What you tell me will determine how much I tell the others."

Neith agrees. She sends one of the maids to inform the rest of her sisters, as well as Hekate and Reignleif at the least. They'll all want to know the Grand Duchess's condition.

The dragon then explains the brief mission, as well as the two prisoners, who should be locked up at present. He'll need to verify that nothing happened to them.

While giving the explanation, Neith helps the ladies in waiting dress down Aramellianna into a simple nightgown, which will help her rest while the healers check on her and treat her.

Both potions and potations are excellent resources in an emergency, but with the minor scrapes and bruises the matriarch received, she'll be safer with natural recovery. The accelerated healing provided by magic means can sometimes cause new issues to arise, especially when healing bone fractures.

That said, the healers will perform simple spells to analyze Aramellianna's condition continuously, looking for signs of more grave injuries.

She seems to be relatively unharmed, all things considered. Though, one of the Stalvaltan knights comes by to inform them that the five knights suffered fairly serious injuries, since they were caught by more of the blast than Aramellianna, who Neith shielded.

Yanidere asks, "Sir Neith… Can we ask the Empresses capable of healing magic to assist us? If five of our own need aid…" She trails off, looking at her unconscious mother. The healers employed by the Grand Duchy for the airship are still tending to her to make sure she's safe. Since there are only two, priorities will naturally exist.

"Consider it done," replies Neith. "I informed Hekate as you were speaking, and she has agreed. She'll handle it."

Yanider bows. "You have my thanks, Sir Neith." The young woman can't resist her tears any longer, and she chokes out, "You protected her… If… If you

hadn’t been there…”

“I’m afraid there are better protectors, my Lady. But, I am glad I was able to bring her back.”

The brunette nods gratefully. Neith steps to a corner of the room to remain out of the way for now. Attacking the Grand Duchess is very much an attack on the Fievegal royalty. The only problem is; *who* attacked, and what was their actual goal?

***

Senn approaches the massive airship belonging to the Stalvaltan Grand Duchess. When she was living as a recluse on a cape, the elven woman still managed to occasionally hear rumors and gossip about the kingdoms from the various merchants that would stop by to trade with her. Even those who came to demand or beg for her help as a mage would let slip a great deal of information that was easy to piece together.

The Stalvaltan Grand Duchy has two fully operational airships that didn’t originate from this world. Or at least, their designs didn’t.

And, like the awful sky shuttles that Daniel and his companions use, the airship can fly. She has no idea if she would be able to bear it. However, thanks to that very same strange human from another world, she now regularly purchases ginger root to keep on her person in case she needs it.

Elves weren’t meant to fly. She has ridden on wyverns before, but she would never go out of her way to do it again. If she had to, she’s glad she met Daniel.

Today, though, something strange is happening, and she needs to check in with the Fievegal leadership.

The Stalvaltan Guards, unsurprisingly, are firmly defending a perimeter around the massive vessel. It is their liege lord's home away from home in both size and comfort, so Senn is prepared for it when they confront her at the pathway leading close to the vessel parked outside of the town.

"Halt, who goes there?"

The ancient mage comes to a stop with a polite smile. "Senn the Unflinching, here to meet with the Emperor," replies the elf. It's a rather embarrassing nickname from the legends that have grown about the elven warrior who faced the Strylak and didn't falter even a single step. The tale isn't as true as one might think, since she was already well-acquainted with the Strylak at that point, and they have a mutual understanding of non-interference. The Strylak only appears rarely when it senses something wrong in the world. It's not unlike a god, residing in the depths of the ocean and ruling the world through the seas. Senn is one of the few that could wound the immensely powerful being in a one on one fight, and she might be one of the even fewer that could defeat it. She has no interest in finding out, but she has always wondered if the Strylak avoids going any further than it does because it knows that there are a handful of beings that can kill it.

After a brief moment where one of the guards operates a strange magic device, a voice comes back, "This is Duchess Yanidere. I grant Senn the Unflinching permission to enter."

"Yes, your Highness," replies the guard. He signals the others, and they relax their guard. "Senn the Unflinching has permission to enter. Jombe will escort you."

The elven woman bows politely. "Thank you, good Sirs."

She follows the Guard that steps ahead of her, leading her to the ramp that leads to the inside of the vessel. Yanidere, the second eldest daughter of the Stalvaltan family, meets with the elven woman. “I’ll take you to her Greatness now, Lady Senn. Have you been well?”

“Yes, thank you, my Lady.” As they walk, Senn asks, “Has something happened, my Lady? I expected the Grand Duchess to meet with me first, if anything.”

“Mother is feeling under the weather today. Apologies on behalf of the Grand Duchy.”

“No apologies necessary. Is there anything I can do to help?”

“Thank you, but she is resting now and should recover quickly.”

“Very well. I was hoping to ask something of Daniel.”

“Yes, the guards said so. Since he’s our distinguished guest, though, it is the Stalvaltan family’s responsibility to meet the visitors first.”

“Of course.”

“Also, I’ll bring you to the first four Empresses, because Daniel is also under the weather for the moment.”

“He is?” asks the elf, a little surprised.

“Yes.”

Suddenly, some things are starting to make sense. A major attack happened in town the evening prior, and the Mattarglos soldiers are still looking for clues.

Some rumors say a dragon was present, but there are conflicting reports. Most of the witnesses seem to have been asleep, which is damaging their credibility.

Senn uses her magic to scan a proximity around her. She can find everyone except one; Daniel. What little mana he had during the fight with Yaulwembor has vanished completely.

Using another spell, though, she is able to find the sounds of life aligning with the lack of mana.

“Has Daniel used his mana?”

Yanidere stumbles. “P-Pardon?”

“I can’t detect him at all. Either he exhausted his mana, or something else…”

The elven woman has been alive for a *very* long time. She has studied faces with every race she has ever interacted with, and she has learned many of the tells in behavior for all of them. Gatonines, shenwulves, and feldroks have a built in disadvantage with their ears and tails, which are often extremely expressive. Humans, however, are plenty expressive without them, and in all cases, the young are the weakest at hiding their thoughts.

“Something else, then.”

“I… You should ask the Empresses…”

Senn smiles and nods. “Yes, indeed. Though, I suspect you know better than they do the importance of protecting one’s reputation in noble society.” They continue walking, finding the three Dragon Empresses and Hekate crowded around Wenlianna as they all work on something in the small lab belonging to the magic artisan.

“Um, excuse me, your Greatness, your Graces…” calls out Yanidere gently.

The five women turn to look, each greeting Yanidere and Senn.

“What brings you here today, Lady Senn?” asks Ryuogriar, who has a bit more of a scowl on her face than she normally does.

“I was hoping to speak to Daniel, but I believe one of my questions has been answered.”

The women wince, and the scowls on Ryuogriar’s and Geirahoel’s faces harden a bit, though it’s not directed at Senn.

Wenlianna glances around hesitantly, and she finally explains, “Daniel is resting. He was injured.”

“It seems he has lost his mana,” blurts out Senn, watching the reactions.

She obviously receives surprise, and the eldest of the three dragons grits her teeth, her jaw and lips trembling as she holds back pain.

The young orange dragon doesn’t contain her emotions. She tenses tightly for only a moment before storming towards the elf. She yells, “If you don’t have anything useful to add, you can see yourself out!” Read the latest chapters at novelping.com.

Senn does her best to stand fast, but dragons can unleash a lot of damage quickly and without warning.

“Geira, calm down,” urges Reignleif gently. “She was simply stating what she can undoubtedly sense.”

“I don’t care! He didn’t trust us! How am I supposed to…?” Her expression twists, and Senn can see the glisten of tears appearing as she whirls away from the elf just as quickly.

The elven woman has no real investment in the situation other than hoping Daniel doesn’t destroy the world with his devastating superweapons.

Geirahoel finally growls coldly as she squeezes her hands into tight fists, “I just want to lock him away where he can never be harmed or taken away again.”

There’s an awkward silence in the room, and Senn has no investment in the outcome, since most of Daniel’s “power” are weapons that can be deployed by anyone who knows how, it seems. There’s not much disadvantage to letting Geirahoel have her way.

“Mukori would never forgive you,” retorts Reignleif bluntly, which in turn, makes Geirahoel go pale, and even Ryuogriar seems to deflate at those words, as if she was thinking the same thing without saying it.

“Th-That’s why we’re working on this project!” adds Wenlianna. “Actually, would we be able to pick your brain on the matter, Lady Senn? I know you don’t often choose to exchange the more ancient techniques with anyone, but it may be of some benefit to you, if you’re willing to help.”

Her interest piqued, the elven mage asks, “Oh? Before that, though, I wanted more information on what Daniel and Aramellianna encountered. I have some suspicions, but I need more information.”

Hekate replies, “They were separate instances. Both of which involved Neith, and are otherwise unrelated.”

“The grey dragon?” Senn ponders this for a moment. She knew Larvenmaouchoul when he wasn’t much more than an adolescent, and she encountered him briefly a few times over the centuries before the fall of the feldroks. He isn’t the smartest dragon in the world, and he doesn’t have much ambition other than to live an honest life. Morthybargaron’s death became his ambition after the betrayal. It’s unlikely Neith is capable of lying in a meaningful way, let alone choosing to betray someone like Daniel or the Empresses before Senn now.

Still, it’s adding up. There are rumblings that have started ever since Daniel and Rikuto appeared in this world. When Daniel disappeared for a time, everything seemed to return to the status quo, even with Rikuto making the changes he was making to restore Mornistae to a stable state.

But, now, the rumblings have started again, and seem to be getting more intense. Daniel is a threat to someone, and they are unhappy about it, as if he might drag them out into the light.

Naturally, Senn can’t prove any of this. The only other one who might sense what caused Senn to come investigate the otherworlder Emperor is Vaergraes, the former ‘Demon Queen’.

“Explain each situation as best as you know it, please,” replies Senn after her pondering. “I’m afraid this might be a link I have waited decades for…”

***

Geirahoel stands just inside of the stateroom with her arms crossed, watching. Doephluev the former-assassin is carefully tending to Daniel. He’s still incredibly weak after getting cursed, and his mana has still not recovered at all.

You idiot… Why? Why do you never…? She can't even finish the thought as she watches. She's not even sure why she came to his room. Her heart hurts, her body feels twisted in knots, and she feels unrelenting anger boiling in her.

You promised… Why do you promise and keep breaking it? D-Does he… Does he not l-love…?

She looks away, feeling the hurt and anger intensifying. She feels so helpless. Dragons aren't supposed to be helpless.

And yet, this mere human with no magic regularly makes her fearful, helpless, worried, and… happy.

She never knew the kind of happiness she knows when she and Daniel are arranging flowers in the garden, or when he's teaching her new recipes, and even how to work on his own hobbies, like tinkering on new devices. She has been happy to do anything and everything that he wants her to do, and she has plenty of her own things that she loves to do.

And yet… She can't get over her immense disappointment, anger, frustration, and a host of other turbulent feelings that make her want to destroy something.

"Geira… Mukori?" asks Daniel's voice weakly, and she flinches with a start. She locks eyes with him, staring into his expression for a long time. He only breaks eye contact to look at Doephluev when the archoneldwyn teases softly with her own disappointment, "I see the rumors are true…"

The human mechanic glances between each of them, since it's late at night and they're the only ones present at the moment. Wenlianna, Hekate, Reignleif, and Aoloan are working on the special teleporter they've been working on, Vaergraes is meeting with the elf woman Senn, Ryuogriar is discussing security with Neith, Magnir, and Roeta -as well as lecturing Neith-. Kera'tai is training

with the knights to try to improve her own strength, and the three gatonine women are resting after looking after Daniel since early in the morning.

Daniel starts to say when he once more connects his gaze to the orange dragon's, "Mukori, I…"

Tears well in her eyes. Each time, hearing that word now, is jabbing at her heart. She whirls and flees the room, unable to bear it any longer.

"Muko-!" calls out Daniel before coughing, and that's the last she hears as she runs down the halls, up the stairs, and out to the weatherdeck of the airship. She summons her wings and lifts into flight before she can process her thoughts and feelings.

Before she knows it, she finds herself far away at a place that has only recently become familiar, and yet, is the only true home she can claim; the Citadel.

Geirahoel is one of the administrators of the Citadel thanks to Daniel, so she can fly directly to the rooftop garden without worrying about the barrier.

There, she drops to her knees, flopping down to her hands on the ground, panting as tears fall freely from her eyes.

If you only knew! If you only knew, you fool! I… I… The terrible thoughts I had… The terrible things I wanted to do… How could you look at me? How?

How am I his favorite?

She begins to sob, plopping down gracelessly to curl up in a ball on the grass of the rooftop garden.

In the morning, Geirahoel finds herself covered by a blanket, and her eggs are nestled nearby.

Gold, the second eldest female dragon, is seated cross-legged in her human form. Her own egg is nestled in the cross of her legs, and she is leaning rather casually on the shell. Thankfully, dragon eggs are fairly sturdy, but it definitely would make most nervous to see what she's doing.

The junior orange dragon pulls her eggs close to hug them, and she murmurs, "How long…?"

"Have I been here? An hour or so. Balamae informed me that you had returned, but it sounded like you needed some time alone first, so I waited until this morning."

Geirahoel nods absentmindedly. She let her emotions flood out of her, and now, she feels weary and numb.

"Did… something happen to Daniel?" asks Gold.

Geirahoel winces, and the elder dragon scoffs. "Figures. Humans are pathetic, temperamental bea-…"

"Enough," snarls Geirahoel, and the golden dragon flinches. Unlike the regal appearance of Ryuogriar, Gold has a more rough appearance, like an unkempt woman who would rather drink and fight than rule a kingdom. She doesn't attempt to appeal to Daniel in any capacity, and in fact, only cooperates with him and the Empresses because she has been granted immense freedom and luxury with very little responsibility.

Geirahoel surprised herself with the suddenness of her own response. Hearing Gold start to insult Daniel, however, was a line she won't tolerate being

crossed.

She finally murmurs more softly, “He’s not a beast… He… He just… He won’t… rely on… me…”

The elder dragon is a little surprised, and she blinks a couple of times. Finally, she lets out a sigh and leans on her egg once more. “I’m guessing there’s more, but I don’t really care about your family drama… Listen, no matter what you want to hear, you are a dragon. Once upon a time, that meant something. Dragons do whatever we want, because nothing is more powerful than us. That… human has no interest in collecting wealth or power. So, why does he do anything he does?”

Geirahoel gives it thought for a long moment, and Gold groans, “I wasn’t trying to make you think. I was asking because I don’t get him. Even without wanting those things, he defeats everything he comes across. But, then he just lets us do whatever. It’s confusing.” She scratches her head as she deliberates on the meaning of Daniel’s behavior. “I mean… He gave me the task of feeding a bunch of stinking shellfish because it would apparently make me richer than I ever was in Shialvolgarro’s Hoard. I told that foolish human ‘challenge accepted’. Know why?”

Geirahoel shakes her head, and Gold smirks. “He said he would give me all of the profits from the diamonds if he loses, in addition to my freedom and command of the Fievegal’s entire army.” She licks her teeth eagerly. “Dumb human. As if some disgusting puddle-bugs will ever make more money than what I had in the Hoard.” She laughs boisterously, continuing her taunt, “Hahaha! He’ll need a thousand more years to pull one over on me! Hahaha!”

“What if he wins?” asks Geirahoel, which halts the senior dragon’s jovial guffaws.

“What?”

“What if he wins?”

This completely baffles the rough-edged dragon. “What do you care? Afraid I’m going to become part of his harem?” She snickers deviously.

However, the orange dragon continues to catch her off guard. “Not at all. I’m excited to see our children, but yours and Daniel’s would almost certainly be beautiful as well.”

Gold stares at Geirahoel with her mouth agape, unable to form a thought for a long time.

She finally shakes her head, clearing her throat. “Ahem… Well, we can both rest easy. He reassured me he won’t make me be a part of his harem. He just asked me to accept a job if he wins.”

“What job?”

The golden dragon shrugs. “Don’t know. He’d be dead before he could win, and he only gave himself a year instead.” She grins wickedly. “Maybe I should have made him become a part of *my* harem instead, hmm?”

Geirahoel is unperturbed by the taunt. She doesn’t admire or care for Gold as much as she did Ryuogriar and Reignleif during their time before Daniel, but she never really disliked the second eldest dragon matron either. She has been frustrating before with her blasé attitude and arrogant behavior, but she’s harmless overall.

The gamble isn’t much of a loss for either side. Gold taking over the army would be a potential threat, but Daniel has the golems at his back, which are part of the Citadel specifically, not the army.

Additionally, the light-hearted conversation surprisingly accomplished what it was intended to do.

Geirahoel isn't quite as upset as she was, and in fact, feels a little better.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 141: Sincerely Yours

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 141: Sincerely Yours

Daniel eats the meal prepared by Reignleif as he ponders the damage he has done with his reckless behavior. The stateroom is smaller than his room in the Citadel, so it becomes quickly crowded if too many people try to remain inside to watch over him. As such, his companions have been taking turns while he recovers. Those with other tasks have focused their attention on those projects, which includes Daniel's usual clingiest consorts, Hekate, the dragons, and even Doephluev.

As such, Kera'tai is the one sitting with him now, resting from her own efforts to train for strength with the legendary Stalvaltan Guards.

"Any word on the Grand Duchess?" asks Daniel, since he heard about what happened.

"She's awake as well and asking after you," replies the Chi'rinnis mage. "Everyone felt it was safer for her to recover without magic, and Duchess Yanidere has been upkeeping all of the business meetings in her place. So far, there have been no major issues."

Daniel nods, absorbing her words.

"Also, Ahok believes she has finished the device you asked for, so she'll be sending it on the next shuttle."

"Thank you. I'm sorry I'm out of commission for so many important things."

Kera'tai smiles sympathetically. "You really gave everyone a fright once again, Daniel. Geirahoel was quite insistent on turning Neith into a female. I think Ryuo is also in agreement now…"

Daniel's expression turns downcast. Reignleif has visited him plenty, explaining curses more thoroughly and why Daniel needs to be more careful. "Even dragons are wary of treasure that comes too easily," she had said.

However, both Geirahoel and Ryuogriar have refrained from speaking to him, which has certainly not gone unnoticed by anyone. And, after Geirahoel fled the room, Daniel is certain that he has truly upset them this time. They may want to punish Neith, but they also are hurt and disappointed that Daniel broke his promise again.

"Do you mind telling me where Ryuo and Geira are now?" asks Daniel gently.

Kera'tai hesitates for a moment. Daniel tries to treat his companions as if they're the only person in the world when they're being intimate, but at the moment, he is worried about the discord he himself sowed in his family.

That said, the Chi'rinnis woman's hesitation isn't because of that, but rather…

"I think… Geirahoel left. I haven't heard where she went, but I'm pretty sure she isn't in town or on the airship anywhere."

Daniel tenses, and she continues, "Ryuogriar has been attending meetings with Yanidere, but I think she's currently resting in the lounge."

Daniel nods. "I see…" He wearily climbs out of the bed, and Kera'tai stands up to be ready to help him. She does try to insist that he rest, but he needs to start repairing the damage.

"You should rest, Daniel. We don't know what the full effects…"

“I’ve been sitting around too much, and I owe some very important apologies.”

She hesitates, but she understands where he’s coming from. And, he starts with the person right in front of him. He takes her hand and kneels in front of her, surprising the young chieftain’s daughter.

“Kera’tai, my unofficial first mistress in this world…”

She scoffs at his remark, since it is technically true. Even Wenlianna, Gwen, and Treia didn’t officially express affection for Daniel the way Kera’tai did before she met him.

“I am truly sorry for the concern and worry I have caused. I thank you sincerely for taking care of me after my blunder, and I will strive to learn from this experience and be more mindful of how my actions affect everyone.”

She nods, and he kisses her hand. She adds gently, “I’m working on getting stronger as well, Daniel. Don’t be surprised if I challenge you to a fight one of these days…”

He laughs softly. They both know the intended meaning of that statement. He jokes softly, “I am the Harbinger of Calamity, muhdame. I haven’t even used any real magic yet.”

She bursts out a laugh, “Pu-hah! Hahaha! Very funny, Daniel. But, I think it was ‘Apostle of Despair, Harbinger of Woe.’” She leans down and kisses him affectionately. The kirin-woman then adds softly with a playful edge to her tone, “I haven’t rued that day even once.”

Daniel smiles, comforted by her kind words. She then helps him back up to his feet, and they walk towards the lounge. She teases him along the way, “Besides, I think you should really fear the children of the Harbinger of

Calamity. I have seen the power they wield over you." She snickers deviously, rubbing her own abdomen eagerly.

The mechanic can't help but laugh softly. "Yes, yes. I will be defeated in no time at all, at this rate."

As they reach the lounge, he hesitates at the door. He's not afraid of Ryuogriar, even though she is far more powerful than him as a dragon, and that she is obviously angry at him. However, he has faced far worse encounters many times, including superior officers 'upgrading' him for mistakes he had made. And, unlike any other situation he has found himself in before or since, there was no such thing as making excuses for some of those officers. All he could do was shut up and take it and explain how and why they should let him resume doing his own job.

This encounter with Ryuogriar is the one he dreads most, since she is the most mature, and as such, most articulate in how she is going to reprimand him.

Daniel opens the door, and the two walk into the lounge.

Presently, Vaergraes, Treia, Gwenesphia, Roeta, Magnir, Veiranoei, a handful of knights, and Yanidere are all scattered around the room, either in small groups or alone to talk and relax.

Seated in the center of the room on the lounge sofa is the platinum dragon matriarch and Second Empress of the Fievegal.

She looks directly at Daniel, and her expression is relatively cold, though certainly to be expected, all things considered. She sets down the papers that she was reading over, standing up and curtsying. "Your Grace…"

Daniel's heart feels like it tightens for a moment. He's definitely hoping she's just punishing him, and that he can fix what he has done. He has too much to lose now, and he was reckless. Never has it been so clear to him.

Daniel approaches her, and he kneels. "Ryuo-mukori… I deserve that. I deserve reprimand, punishment, house arrest… I was reckless and foolish. Please… give me one more chance to fix my mistakes. I owe everyone here an apology, and I don't deserve your trust with my promises, but I ask you to help me be the person you think I am. Please correct me. I will accept whatever punishment you see fit."

Everyone else watches quietly, and Ryuogriar stares down at him with the same cold expression. She finally growls, "Leave us."

It is the most emotionless and distant her voice has ever been.

Kera'tai tries to nervously defend Daniel, "R-Ryuo, Daniel is…"

The dragon looks at her, and she flinches. It's clear the second highest-ranking Empress is no longer having fun or playing around.

"Do you have something to say that can change the past, Kera'tai? No? Then there is no reason to speak."

"L-Lady Ryuogriar,…" starts Vaergraes, possibly the only other one who has the seniority of character to speak to Ryuogriar on an equal level outside of the inner circle of the Fievegal.

The dragon looks over her shoulder, retorting with the same vicious coldness she has had the whole time. "If none of you want to confront what happened, then you should expect it to happen again. There are only two who stand above

me in the Fievegal, and I will be speaking to one of them. Alone. Do not make me repeat myself."

The knights, Yanidere, and the three gatonine empresses make their way out without further hesitation, while Kera'tai and Vaergraes linger a little longer. Vaergraes finally yields, and she bows, walking out of the room, leaving only Daniel, Kera'tai, and Ryuogriar.

The blonde dragon glares at the Chi'rinnis woman with her icy gaze once more. "Kera'tai…"

"I just… If you'll only listen…"

"I have listened. I have heard it all before. Daniel has come accepting the punishment *I* see fit. If I am to kill him, then that would be my prerogative, no?"

Kera'tai winces, gently gripping Daniel's shirt at his shoulder. He makes eye contact with her, nodding gently. "It's alright, Kera'tai. Ryuo-mukori is right."

The Chi'rinnis finally relents, and she nods silently, bowing to Ryuogriar and making her way out.

Once the room is clear, Ryuogriar sighs. "I suppose you don't know why I'm actually angry, do you?"

Daniel replies quietly, "Some combination of my thoughtlessness disguised as protecting everyone and not asking for help."

She is quiet, looking to the side. She finally nods. "That's the most of it…"

They both remain in silence for a moment. Daniel is the one to speak first this time. "I know I can't just keep apologizing. And, I know I can't protect everyone forever. I just… it was a long time before I had anything to lose. And this

time… When I saw the emblem on that ring, I felt like I *knew* what it was, but as soon as I touched it, it vanished."

"And, the curse's immediate effect was delayed by Nemaisol," remarks the dragon, finishing the thought herself.

The mechanic nods once in confirmation.

"Why did you feel the need to confront the spy by yourself? Especially after making a show of letting her go? What if she had attacked you. If the assassin's words are to be believed, she could have killed you before Neith could defend you. And, he doesn't specialize in defense."

"Can I explain through a slightly different story, Mukori?"

She cocks her head, still wearing her cold expression, but she nods once.

"You know the videos on my phone, now, how they're fictional and drawn by hand using technology more advanced than my phone, in some cases. Well, we had interactive versions of that, where the player controls a character. You can experience the adventure without the fear of harm or death, similar to when we all "visited" Sundenelle's palace."

"What does this have to do with you getting cursed?"

"I have been telling myself -lying to myself- that everything is a video game. When I killed Mul-… Mulmon… the Red Knight, I wasn't brave. I was delusional. I drowned out my fear by repeating that it was all fiction. A really realistic fiction. I did the same with Lugrae, when Morthybargaron led the assault on the Citadel… All of it. Somewhere along the line, all of it started to blur together." He looks at her. "I come from a safe world. A comfortable world. I don't have the instincts to fear magic, to be wary of curses. I look at a

dragon and feel wonder before I feel fear. I see a spirit…" He gestures at the light spirit hovering around his collar, who is watching the conversation without any input. "And, I think of how cute she is. It never really sinks in how powerful even this tiny little being is." The pixie-like being giddily hugs his hand when he moves it close, and Ryuogriar watches. This story is hosted at novelping.com.

The earthling takes another breath and sighs. He looks up at Ryuogriar. "When I receive affection, it really does feel like a dream. It feels like I'm still some loser, dreaming an impossible scenario that would never happen. I'm happy, but a part of me is afraid of losing it all if I don't prove that I'm actually a part of it, and worse, I want to protect everyone, even from my own anger and fears…"

Ryuogriar hears him out, and she ponders his words. He adds sincerely, "I'm not trying to make excuses, though I suppose that's all it really amounts to. I will atone however you wish, but please… even if I don't deserve it, please give me a chance to see the future with you… I do need you. I… I need you to be real… and not… a dream…" The mechanic tries to fight it, since he's not fishing for sympathy, so much as asking for a chance for forgiveness. However, his efforts are unsuccessful, and a tear slips down his cheek. He looks down and away, trying to hide it.

The dragon immediately cups his cheek with her hand, pulling his face to look at her. She stares into his eyes for a long time, and he can see tears wavering in her own gaze. She is still hurt and angry, but because it comes from a deeply-seated love, just as Daniel's disappointment in himself does.

She squeezes his cheek a little, digging her nails into his skin ever so slightly as she states seriously, "I am real. Your children are real. The pain you made me feel is real. You are not dreaming. Take responsibility and make it up to me properly."

“What do you wish for?” asks Daniel. “Anything in my power is yours.”

Ryuogriar continues to hold his cheek, looking to the side only with her eyes. She ponders her next words carefully, and then says seriously, “Very well… I don’t hate you, Mukori. I want you to know that… I want you to know that you are and will continue to be my Mukori.” She holds his other cheek tenderly, now completely in control of his head with her hands.

Daniel doesn’t feel the slightest fear.

The dragon matriarch continues, “Make it real, Mukori. Take me as your wife.”

Daniel’s eye twitches, and her own gaze narrows in a light scowl. She continues, “This isn’t a joke, nor an attempt to antagonize anyone. I am not your real wife, and so, you do not restrain yourself as a husband.”

She can undoubtedly feel Daniel’s cheek muscles shift and tense when he hesitates, and she takes a breath and sighs. Her grip squeezes a little more on his head, and she replies with the same iciness to her voice that she had before, “I have told you the terms, Mukori. Your atonement is to make peace with Hekate and make me your wife. Then, I will accept no more of these broken promises.”

Daniel lets his eyes wander for a moment. It’s a completely rational request, and she’s forcing him to commit more meaningfully than simply apologizing and making promises. He’ll have to go through the entire process, however Ryuogriar wants to go through with it. It’s not that he doesn’t want to, but…

Now, he feels a moment of fear.

He isn’t afraid of Ryuogriar, but it’s at this moment that he realizes she’s asking him to fully give himself to her and their family.

The last time he truly felt this fear was when he first signed up for the Navy and was about to ship out. It was a fear of commitment, as well as a fear of change, combining together to make him anxious.

If he's learned anything in his ~34 years of life, it's that he, himself, is not a particularly brave or heroic person. His instincts lean more into the realm of cowardice, even when he was so low that he wanted it all to end. He couldn't grasp that end with his own strength, and he continued to live in fear.

Eventually, that fear became indifference, and now…

Now, he is just feeling an echo of the past. A fear of growing up truly and completely.

The human mechanic from Earth, lost in this far away world, places his hand on hers. He jokes softly, "You want her to kill us all, don't you…?"

Her expression doesn't change, and he pulls her left hand to his lips to kiss it gently. "I'll talk to her tonight. We'll work it out somehow, but, if you'll have me… please marry me officially, Mukori."

Finally, the dragon's icy expression softens. She gingerly uses her right hand to stroke the side of his face. "I won't be so forgiving next time, Mukori. If you really do love me, you will remember that well."

"I will. You're right. I need all of you. I need your strength, your wisdom, and your magic." He takes both of her hands, adding softly, "And, I don't want to live without your love."

Her softened expression warms into a tender smile, and she leans over to kiss him, hugging his head firmly as their lips interlock.

When she breaks the connection, she still holds him close.

“You’re on your own with Hekate, since it’s your punishment, but I expect you to not neglect dear sweet Reina and Geira, yes?”

He nods. “If… it’s alright, I’d like to… with everyone, make it official…”

She pecks his lips more briefly this time, saying a little smugly, “If it will stop this nonsense about reality and dreams and thoughtlessly excluding me, then I will approve. I will not control who you show love to, but I expect you to heed my counsel if I have something to say. If I have not proven myself trustworthy, I have had you at my mercy for several minutes now and would only be one additional person away from becoming the master of the Citadel.”

“Whatever your official title, you’re already the master of the Citadel in every way that matters, Mukori,” teases Daniel.

She grins, now gripping his collar to pull him to his feet. “As long as you understand, my darling Mukori. You trust too easily, just as your kindness can be a weakness. If you need someone you trust to make a final decision when it is hard for you, I will do so. So, trust me more, Mukori. Give me everything, and you will need nothing else.”

Daniel nods. “I’m going to spend the rest of the day apologizing to everyone as best as I can, and I’ll talk to Hekate about what we discussed. However, I can’t drop the feeling that the ring was something important. If a spy as dangerous as Veuthene was trying to infiltrate us,…”

“The odds that her cohorts or even unrelated others already have are not zero.”

Again, the mechanic silently agrees.

“We must increase our level of caution, then. Can you recall the emblem on the ring?”

“No… I wish I could, but it seemed familiar at a glance, which was why it gripped me.”

“Hmm… Perhaps,…” The dragon matriarch trails off as she thinks, rubbing her slightly bulging belly.

“What are you thinking?” asks Daniel, gently placing his hands on her hips. Thankfully, she doesn’t pull away from him, and if anything, leans towards him.

“I… only have a thought at the moment. I was wondering if Dawnsight would be able to help, or perhaps some other spell…”

“Is oneiromancy a thing in this world?” asks Daniel curiously.

“Oneiromancy? What is that? Is it an English word?”

“Well… yes. It’s the process of divining visions or meaning out of dreams, since dreams are generally rooted in the subconscious parts of the mind.”

“Hmm… Yes, that could work… But, *will* it work?” She looks at Daniel seriously, reminding him one more time of his blunder.

The curse drained all of his mana, and by all appearances, it still hasn’t returned. He admits softly, “I don’t know.”

“Yes, well… For now, go make your apologies, Daniel. I’ll spread the word to the others that I fully trust.” Just as he starts to back away to kiss her hand, she grips the human’s collar and pulls him close to put her face directly in front of his. “You will finish your apology tour tonight by returning to me. That is non-negotiable.”

“I’m thankful for your forgiveness, my glorious Mukori.”

She smirks in a way that shows her teeth, retorting bluntly, “You’re not completely forgiven yet, Mukori. We’ll have to see how I feel tomorrow.”

Ryuogriar is one of the most outspoken and forward of Daniel’s companions, and she has been none-too-shy about expressing her desires.

With that in mind, Daniel takes the initiative to answer her with one final kiss, and she wraps her arms around his neck in approval. She whispers deviously, “I have high hopes for you, Mukori.” When she finally releases him, she does rest her hand on his chest as she adds, “By the way, you won’t have time today to talk to Geirahoel. She returned to the Citadel.”

Daniel winces, but she adds with a slightly bitter tone of encouragement, “You’ll have the rest of today to figure out how you’ll make it up to her. She took it harder than any of us, and you don’t even hide that she’s your favorite.”

The human opens his mouth to speak, but she places her fingers over his mouth to quiet him. “I accept that she has found a special place in your heart. As long as mine is right next to hers, I will say nothing more of it, so long as you start your long list of weddings with either Hekate or myself.”

Daniel can’t help but laugh at his situation. “Deal. Then… tomorrow, will you accompany me to the Citadel to find her? I’ll talk to her alone, but…”

“Happily, Mukori. Now, go. The sooner you finish your task, the sooner you can return to me.”

The inexperienced Emperor bows politely, saying softly, “As you command, my lovely wife.”

“Mmm… Don’t keep me waiting, Mukori.”

Daniel leaves the room, finding each of his companions that he can to make the apologies he needs to make. He'll give everything he can to recover the damage to his family.

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"Zuzanna, I have chosen you and humbly ask for your cooperation. My name is Amalaskae, your very own goddess! Can you believe it?"

Zuzanna looks around, surprised to observe her current surroundings, which are rather sterile. She was camping in the woods, doing her yoga stretches to stay in shape. She has another backpacking trip scheduled on the anniversary of the last trip she took with her grandfather, so she wants to make sure she can make the full hike. She has a long trek planned, and it takes a great deal of endurance and excellent health to ensure she can make it.

"A… mal… askae?"

"That's right!" expresses the young woman excitedly.

"But… there's only one God."

The strange young woman flinches, not expecting that answer. "Gah! Uh… Well, that's… Uh… What I meant to say is… I'm more like… I guess, 'middle management'?"

"So… you blasphemed?"

"Gahhh! Listen, I'm sorry. I'm not trying to take over God's position or anything. I've just been told it's easier for humans to understand if I tell you… I'm… a goddess…" The source of this chapter is novelping.com.

Zuzanna isn't a fool. She's in touch with modern pop culture, even if she only dabbles in some of it.

Anime has stories like this; a random person is summoned by a higher being in order to go to another world for one reason or another.

'In fact, I'm lucky it's the "summoning" style, right? Aren't there just as many stories where someone dies? I… didn't die, did I?'

"I didn't die, did I?" asks the startled young Polish woman. "Actually, isn't this, like, an exclusively Japanese thing?"

Amalaskae giggles at her remark. "Japanese? U-Um, no. It has nothing to do with the country of origin. Planet is more important. E-Earth doesn't have magic, but because of its level of overall advancement, there is great reliability in earthlings.Th-There is risk, as well, but… Oh! I'm not supposed to say that."

'For a goddess, she doesn't seem very reliable…' thinks Zuzanna to herself.

"Oh! And, you haven't died. I-If you were paying attention, there… was a magic circle that appeared beneath you to summon you."

"Ah… I did see that."

"Right! And, I've summoned you to request your assistance in another world. Th-There was a summoning ritual, and they want a hero to help them."

"H-Hero? Me?"

"Mm-hmm! Don't worry, I said I'm your personal goddess, because it is my duty to empower you and watch over you as your journey progresses. And,

you'll be my very fi-… Um… fine heroine for this task. I-If goddess doesn't work, please think of me as simply an angel."

"So… what? Is this like some video game world?" asks Zuzanna a little skeptically.

"Not exactly. You won't have to shout 'Status!' for no reason, since your new gifts won't be numerically quantifiable, in the way that your current stamina is a part of yourself, but not quantifiable. I-I hope that makes sense."

"I suppose… But… Why me?"

"Y-You have good character, and you're easy to talk to, and… Um… Well…" Amalaskae fidgets with her hands.

It only takes a second for Zuzanna to consider possibilities for why she would be adequate to go to another world.

"I have no meaningful familial attachments to Earth."

The alleged goddess looks to the side, murmuring softly, "I… y-yes… Th-That's right."

The young golden-blonde Polish woman is quiet for a moment. But, only for a moment. If she really is an 'angel', then Amalaskae probably has all the time in the world.

"I see… Then, how does it work? If I'm being chosen, do I have to… I don't know, level up or something? Do I get something to protect me in this other world."

"Y-Yes! Of course! I-I actually can give you magic powers to boost your strength even higher than the average person there. The world you're going to

is called Zenkon, and there are things there you won't be used to, but as long as you are careful and diligent, there should be no issues."

"Hmmm… Alright, but I want my backpacking equipment. And, I'd like my stamina to be higher. Plus, I'd like to have magic, if this world has magic. You mentioned it, so I'm guessing it must be a factor."

"Y-Yes of course! I have no intention on holding back!" She gives a proud pose of eagerness. "I have carefully selected everything I can possibly give to you to make sure you are completely safe and succeed in your mission."

"Oh?" asks Zuzanna curiously. She doesn't usually need much, since she has a decent job, her hobbies aren't expensive, and she lives within her means. But, Amalaskae was right. She can imagine some reasons why she wouldn't want to leave Earth, but she also doesn't have much specifically keeping her there.

"Yes! I'll be giving you enhanced strength and stamina, as well as magic resistance. You'll also have a special magic that will always work. Oh! And, the most important one; I can't make you invincible, since that comes with too many restric-… Ahem, anyways, ignore that. What I mean to say is that you'll have a regeneration ability. So, as long as you can escape, you'll be able to heal. S-So be careful, and be ready to run."

"Um… Do I have to not run at any point?"

"Th-That's up to you. I can't force you to do anything, but I wanted to answer the summoning request for the kingdom calling for a hero, and if you accept, you'll be sent to Zenkon with the powers I described."

Zuzia nods, strongly considering the offer. It's a very tempting, considering she has always had a bit of an adventurous soul. But, she might not have an

opportunity like this again.

“B-Before I decide, is… there any way I could… s-speak to my Grandpa?” asks Zuzia gently. “It’s almost the anniversary of our last backpacking trip together, so… I wouldn’t want to miss it…”

“Oh…” murmurs Amalaskae, disheartened by Zuzanna’s request. “I… I’m afraid… that won’t be possible. I-… I’m not supposed to explain it, but… Um… L-Let’s just say, your Grandfather is living a new life, and he won’t have his memories.”

Zuzanna bows her head as she quietly prays for his happiness and comfort in his new life. Thankfully, the young and nervous-seeming angel remains respectfully quiet during the small prayer.

The blonde takes a breath and sighs once she has completed her prayer.

‘Grandpa wouldn’t want me to twist my life around for the trip. Rather, he’d want me to go on this journey for both of us.’ She giggles at the thought of her adventurous role model. No mountain was too tall, nor any path too rugged. He taught her everything she needs to know about survival, from the equipment she absolutely needs, to the ways to improvise safely on the trail.

‘Right. If they’re summoning a hero, then they almost certainly need help with something. And, if Miss Amalaskae is giving me the strength to help them by the grace of God, then all the better. I won’t shy away from adventure if I’m needed for it. Grandpa, please watch over me on this journey. I swear, I’ll make it count for both of us.’ She smiles and looks up, even though it’s very possible she’s near heaven itself already, if she’s talking to an angel in this strange place.

“Alright, then, if it’s not too much trouble, I have a few more requests.”

“Y-Yes! I’ll grant you everything I can! Thank you so much!” Amalaskae seems to be over the moon, and Zuzanna explains what else she wants.

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That’s when Zuzia wakes up. She can recall it now, in detail. She was magically pulled into a strange place, where one of God’s angels asked her to take on a mission in another world. She explained many of the rules, including the fact that the immense bestowal of magic power on Zuzia would likely cause amnesia when she arrived, but hopefully, she would be able to handle it quickly.

The young Polish woman blanches at the thought. Not only did she panic, she used her bear spray on several people. It’s illegal in most countries to wield bear-rated pepper sprays against humans because of the increased potency. Zuzia never had to use hers at all, let alone against a person, but she has read online that it can be potentially lethal to a person, and the high-pressure of the spray can do permanent damage to the skin and eyes.

She winces.

She definitely sprayed that blond guy square in the face at close range. There’s almost no chance she didn’t hit him in the eyes. Given how he was dressed, he’s very possibly someone high-ranking in this world.

And, now that she knows that she’s no longer on Earth, she is aware that they weren’t kidnappers. She doesn’t know their character regardless, but it’s more fair to assume that they are who the angel sent her to in answer to their summoning request.

Zuzia lays out flat on the ground as she groans. “Nnnnnugh! How did that all happen?” She looks at her backpack. She still has all of her gear, which if she had any sense, she would have realized meant that she wasn’t kidnapped. And,
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she certainly wouldn't have been kidnapped and transported an untold number of kilometers while still possessing all of her gear. They would have to have been the most inept kidnappers in the world.

That said, they didn't do much to make her feel safe when she was disoriented and fearful. And, she couldn't understand their words.

Now that I think about it… Did she mention anything about knowing the language?

Zuzia looks up to the sky. She groans silently to herself, keeping her thoughts only in her mind. *Amalaskae! I knew you were unreliable!*

That said, she flexes her hands. She has no scrapes or bruises, including the calluses she had from her previous trips and exercises. She is in tip-top shape.

And wait… If I received super-strength from Amalaskae, then that means… The portcullis exploding…

Zuzia turns pale as she remembers her escape. In a panic, she flung her arm against metal grating, and it exploded. Not only that, she was able to pull apart metal and swim with her full gear *plus* fully armored knights as if they were nothing. She was so convinced that it had to be a movie set or something, that she had no idea that she was dismantling solid metals with her bare hands.

And then causing an explosion with a barehanded back-hand.

If she had struck anyone with her panicked flailing or defensive strikes…

She covers her mouth, terrified of letting that thought go any further.

She agreed to be a hero for this world, but killing people is definitely among the last things she'll ever want to do.

She sits up, pondering her next moves.

I have to be careful, now. I'm not just some woman. I have a lot more strength than before. That's a good thing, but I can't be reckless. For now…

She pulls out her phone, inspecting the map. She still has a long way to go to reach 'Daniel', who is northwest of her. It's a long trip, but if she keeps a steady pace, she can probably make it in a few weeks.

She'll have to ponder what the right answer is. She probably already burned the bridge with the guys who summoned her, since she attacked them in her panic. And, now that she thinks about it…

Wait! What is my actual mission here!? My memories came back, but I forgot to ask her what I'm supposed to do as a heroine!

"A-Amalaskae!? Can you hear me!?"

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 142: Not Just a Small Town Girl

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 142: Not Just a Small Town Girl

“Piwo… Piwo… Piwo…”

This is the mantra Zuzia has been grumbling as she walks through a flax field to avoid entering town. The next town she encounters will be the one she'll go into. Now that she remembers being transported to another world, it's less about “kidnapping” and more about the embarrassment and fear she feels with how she had to fight to escape. If any of the fancily-dressed men was a noble or king, she could very well have signed her death warrant.

“Potrzebuję piwa!” snaps the Polish woman as she reaches the end of her patience.

It seemed like a great idea at the time to come to this world. Amalaskae asked nicely, she gave Zuzia immense magical powers to protect herself, and she even was able to bring her camping equipment. Her phone also still manages to work to give her GPS maps, even though this world seems to be mostly medieval. Amalaskae really gave her an advantage in this world, since she was able to escape a castle with mages and knights with relative ease in an alien world. She also managed to save a few lives without realizing her own strength, which is another point of embarrassment.

If she had even given a little thought about her situation, she might’ve realized it was too good to be a kidnapping. It was magic.

“Piwoooo…” grumbles the Polish woman one more time before calling out in Polish, “Amalaskae? Are you there?”

Finally, a person appears beside her in a flash of light, jogging into step with the young woman who is trying to keep forward momentum. “Y-Yes! I’m here, Zuzanna. I’m sorry. I… I was dealing with something else.”

“Another hero?” asks Zuzia, curious enough to ask, but it's a low priority.

“Oh, no! Not at all. You’re my o-… Ahem, I was speaking to a colleague.”

Zuzia is becoming more and more suspicious that Amalaskae isn’t exactly an upstanding and illustrious angel among her peers, but she has granted the young woman enough strength to defend herself, so she isn’t completely useless.

“I see. Um… I seem to have made a mess of things.”

Amalaskae looks down, fidgeting with her hands, which makes the young Polish woman wary.

“You know why I had amnesia upon arriving.”

The angel flinches, blushing in embarrassment as she avoids eye contact. “U-U-Um… That’s… well, you see…”

“Tell me, please. Why did it happen?”

The young-looking ethereal being hesitates just a moment longer. “I-It’s because… I gave you too many abilities and powers.”

Zuzia cocks her head. “Just because of that?”

“Y-Yes… You see, your body, mind, and soul have to adjust to the new powers, and your short-term memory is the primary thing sacrificed in the process. I-If I… limited how much strength I gave you, you would have been able to recall within seconds. B-B-But…”

“I’m basically a super-hero here,” murmurs Zuzia aloud.

“Y-Yes, essentially… Your immunity to magic nullification, particularly, was a heavy burden on you. I-It’s… I gave you enough to make sure that only a go-erm, an angel like me or God can take away your powers.”

“Yes, that makes sense. Did… you have to take away some of my powers? It’s only been a couple of days.”

“Certainly not! You’re exactly as we discussed. You should be able to take on some of the most powerful beings in this world with ease, and if you gather allies, you’ll have no trouble.”

“Alright. Then, a couple of things we missed.”

“Eep!” squeaks the strange angel as she flinches. “M-M-Missed?”

Zuzia nods calmly. She’s not angry at Amalaskae, even though she’s the one that arranged all of this. It really would be her responsibility that such things were overlooked.

“The first is; I can’t understand anyone here.”

“Ah! That’s because they all speak different languages than Earth.”

The Polish woman narrows her beer-brown eyes. Amalaskae panics and adds, “I-I-I know you know that! But,… Oh… Y-Yes… I see…”

“I don’t speak any of these languages,” declares Zuzia a little coldly and sarcastically.

“O-Of course. Th-th-that’s my mistake. Um… Right, so, which language would you like?”

“Can’t you just give me automatic translation or something?”

The angel hesitates, fidgeting with her hands, prompting Zuzia to sigh. “Right. I’d suffer amnesia all over again, wouldn’t I?”

“F-For a bit…”

“How long?”

“W-Well… B-because your soul is still a little unstable… each language will extend it a long time. P-P-Probably. The best idea will be to pick a language, and when you stabilize, I can try to give you another one. A-Also, there are magic spells here that can give you language comprehension for a language at a time. Th-Though…”

Zuzia can’t help but put a palm on her forehead. Every second that goes by, the more certain she is; this angel is completely new at this. “Magic resistance…”

“Y-Yes…”

“Alright, then what’s the most common language here? Can you give me automatic translation for that language?”

“Y-Yes. In the world, there are a few contenders, but I think Eastern Imperial Trade will be most useful to you.”

“What, like Japanese? Is there a colony of Japanese descendants here?”

“N-No, nothing like that! I’m sure that heroes of the past do have descendants, but their influence is usually rather little.”

Zuzia isn’t sure how she feels about that. She has read a couple of novels and mangas, in addition to having watched a few animes. Some have a solo ‘hero’ on an adventure to defeat some demon lord or something, and their overall influence on the world is minimized because they keep all of their modern technology to themselves. Or, the world is a weird amalgamation of technology and magic, and doesn’t always make the most sense for how it continues to function without some kind of implosion of society.

But, the former part brings her to her next question. “So, who is ‘Daniel’, and what was I summoned for?”

The color drains from Amalaskae’s face. She stammers as her expression goes dizzy. She trips and falls flat on her face, and a startling event occurs.

The ground cracks open in a massive fissure in front of the angel, startling Zuzia into a backwards leap that clears five meters, which also surprises her amidst the chaos around her.

The fissure rapidly snakes its way to the town, widening into a massive gap into the ground as Amalaskae panics in terror.

Adrenaline kicks in for Zuzia, and she glances between Amalaskae and the town. The answers to her questions are meaningless now. Her instincts are to run away, but the villagers are completely innocent.

And now, they are in danger.

Without thinking, Zuzia sprints at full speed, cratering the ground behind her as her footing slides in the dirt upon her take off, and each foot fall indents the

soil. She is processing it well thanks to her rush, just as when she was fleeing the soldiers and didn't realize she was running far faster than even a horse.

She has to overtake the fissure. She's not entirely sure what she can do about it, but her instincts are to try to help, especially because she's partly to blame, if only a little. She called upon Amalaskae, and continued to walk while talking. There was no evidence that Amalaskae was destructive or clumsy, since she's supposed to be an angel of God, but there's nothing to be done about that now.

Thinking fast, Zuzia sprints ahead of the fissure as it snakes its way past one of the houses of the town, already disrupting its foundation. She slides to a stop, which is an impressive feat for her, considering it's regular dirt she's sliding on in an effort to stop her huge momentum.

Without time to consider the consequences, Zuzia spins on her heel, stepping towards the leading crack of the fissure, and she throws her entire weight and strength behind a punch towards the ground. She's praying that her strength and durability are enough to handle what she's about to do, since she doesn't have a strong base of how to use her magic yet.

Her fist strikes the ground, piercing into the soil. For her, it feels relatively slow, but her balled up hand sinks into the seemingly-soft ground as if it were nothing more than cotton.

However, she can feel compression under her knuckles, and a supersonic crack rumbles around her fist.

And then, the ground explodes in a massive crater almost 20 meters across, throwing dirt and rock in every direction. Zuzia shields her face as she drops down and back a couple of meters and stumbles further away from the

epicenter, caught off guard by the small eruption of sediment. She regains her senses and composure a few steps away, looking at her handiwork with shock and awe.

Dirt and rock are still raining down in a fountain-like pattern, spreading across the town and pelting the rooftops and roads, as well as any people and beasts of burden that are present. People scream and yell, and the ‘rain’ of debris sounds like hail amidst the echoing boom of the explosion.

Most importantly, though, the fissure has been stopped in its tracks about three meters into the teardrop-shaped crater formed by a small town girl’s punch.

I guess I’m not just a small town girl, huh? thinks the young blonde to herself.

Someone screams nearby, startling her out of her thoughts. One of the houses is collapsing into the fissure. Part of the wall is already separated, and a woman is trapped inside as she clings to the table.

The fissure is too wide where the house is collapsing for Zuzia to try to straddle it or anything obvious like that, not to mention the ground is already collapsing in on the fissure, which is even wider closer to where Amalaskae tripped. Thankfully, there isn’t any lava or water coming out of the fissure, nor a demon horde to start the apocalypse, but it’s very much an issue right now.

Zuzia bolts without thinking too hard about it. She dives through the window of the collapsing house, rolling to her feet. For as much as she’s taking a beating, she doesn’t seem to be hurt easily anymore, which is rather inspiring for her endeavors as a hero of another world.

Now inside the house, she has seconds to react. She darts to the woman, who is cradling a baby, and she hugs them both close, using her free left hand to launch the table as hard as she can towards the collapsing wall. The wall and

table explode together into shrapnel and debris, all of which ruptures outwards and plummets into the chasm.

As the floor starts to buckle and warp, Zuzia scoops mother and child into her arms in a princess carry, and she sprints towards the open wall, leaping with them both across the chasm to minimize the debris that is likely to hit them if she tries to charge through another wall.

The woman screams while the baby cries, and Zuzia watches a pitch-black void lurk beneath her as she braces for their landing.

She stumbles upon her feet hitting the ground and falls to a slide on her knees, still protectively cradling the young mother and her infant. Read this novel at novelping dot com for the best experience.

The sounds of beams cracking and stones breaking denote the collapse of a sizable portion of the house as the ground gives way underneath, swallowing all of it into the inky black depths of the fissure caused by a clumsy angel.

Zuzia exhales in relief. The crisis is averted for now, since no one is in further danger, but the chaos has only just begun. She immediately notices the gathering crowd of people who are staring at the destruction, as well as the strange foreign woman still cradling a mother and her child as the frightened woman remains frozen in terror, clinging to her baby. Many of the villagers, numbering somewhere in the range of 50-100, are covered in dirt, and some of them have cuts and fresh bruises from the debris raining down.

Zuzia didn’t get a chance to get that new language from Amalaskae, and she certainly has no idea how to communicate with these people otherwise.

She gingerly sets the mother down, who whimpers and tries to scoot away from the strange woman in alien clothes.

The honey-blonde Polish woman keeps one hand up to try to ease everyone's concerns while quickly patting herself down. She still has her remaining bear spray canister, her water bottle, her backpack, and her camping knife. She's pretty sure she didn't lose anything in any of her stunts.

"Right, so, uh… I know you probably don't understand me, but… there was an angel… or something. And… uh…"

A couple of the men talk, one to the woman with the baby, and another seemingly directed at those standing near him while his eyes stay focused on Zuzia.

One of the younger men nods and takes off, having just received instructions to do something.

"Yep… That's definitely my cue, isn't it?"

She came from the southeast in general, though she entered the town from the northeast, given the path she was trying to avoid it. The young man ran southwest. She doesn't want to run in the direction of the boy who is likely going to retrieve the knights, but she also needs to keep making her way northwest, since that's the direction her phone is telling her to go.

"Muszę iść! Cześć! [I should go! Bye!]"

The honey-blonde backpacker bolts to her feet into a run, startling everyone. They begin shouting, but she quickly leaves earshot as she sprints towards the hills northwest of town. She keeps running for as long as she can, losing the daylight a couple hours later.

She takes a break against a tree that has fruit on it, seemingly similar to an apple tree. She's not exhausted, thankfully, but she does breathe heavily to try

to calm herself down.

"A-*fff*-A-Amalaskae!"

"H-here…" whimpers the goddess as she nervously peeks around the tree. "I-… I'm so sorry!"

"Sorry!? What was that!? Are you some kind of demon!?"

"N-No! I'm just a caretaker of this world! I… I…"

"Obviously, you're taking really good care of it!" snaps Zuzia, frustrated and upset by everything that just happened. People could have gotten even more seriously hurt, and not only that, she doesn't have any idea how to control her own powers. In addition to that, it almost certainly would look like she's the one who caused the fissure, just as she created the crater to stop it, as if stopping her own mistake.

The angel claps her hands together and bows her head, saying desperately gratefully, "Y-You really helped me out! That was entirely my fault! I'm so sorry! Thank you so much for covering for me, Zuzanna!"

Zuzia groans in exasperation, pacing around in a small circle as she tries to let go of her anger. When she faces Amalaskae again, she goes on full attack to keep the angel from getting her bearings.

"Alright! Enough games. Tell me the truth! What happened? Why does it seem like I'm being tricked?"

"Th-Th-There's no trick!" whines the angel urgently. "I-I-I…" She slumps, admitting softly, "I'm… extremely clumsy."

Yeah, no duh, thinks the Polish woman to herself.

“Th-That’s why I was so excited when my first summoning was happening, s-s-so, I acted quickly. B-But… If I’m being honest…”

Zuzia narrows her gaze, piecing together what she has assumed with what she now knows.

“There was no specific threat on this world needing a hero, was there?”

“Well, not exactly… Some races on some worlds will summon heroes every chance they get, but this one… Um… Well, the threat that caused another hero to be summoned has already been defeated. And yet, he summoned you. I… I’m not entirely sure why, but… um, my colleague before me… She thinks the hero is afraid of someone who came to this world with him.”

Trying to make sense of it, the blonde shakes her head. “Wait, you mean there are two other people from Earth here? Are they Polish as well?”

“N-No! The hero is Japanese, while the other one is an American. B-But, rumors say he was sent here accidentally.”

Remembering her phone, Zuzia pulls it out to look at her map. Daniel is a fairly common name of Biblical descent on Earth, having spread quite far across the world, including Poland.

The only information on her map is the name itself, so she has no way of knowing for sure that it’s an American named Daniel, but she is fairly confident that it’s not the Japanese hero summoned to this world. “Is the American… Daniel?”

“Yes.”

“Then, my phone… Is it guiding me to Daniel?”

“Mmm…” Amalaskae looks, and she perks up. “Oh! Yes! I linked your phones so you’ll be able to find each other.”

“Didn’t you say the heroes are afraid of each other, though? Who’s the bad guy?”

The angel goes quiet as it becomes clear that such concerns never crossed her mind.

“Ugh…” groans Zuzia in disgust. “Then, what am I supposed to do here?”

“W-Well… Um,... You could try to stop the conflict between Daniel and Rikuto. I think my colleague said it’s growing into a larger conflict, s-so, if you can stop them… Maybe that will be enough?”

“Enough to what? Can’t I just go home?”

Amalaskae gives her a pleading expression, and she asks, “What? Are you going to be killed if I abandon this world? Just summon another…”

Tears start to form in the angel’s eyes. All of her hopes are apparently pinned on Zuzia.

Great… No pressure.

She sighs, asking a little coldly, “This is your first and only chance in your new position, isn’t it?”

Amalaskae nods vigorously, trying to fight back tears.

“Gaaahhh… Ojej!” groans the Polish woman as she paces in a circle again, this time clutching her head and raking her hands through her messy hair. She storms over to Amalaskae, who puts her hands up in immediate surrender. Still,

Zuzia pokes her chest, saying sternly, “First, you’ll give me that… Japanese language or whatever it was called. Second, you’ll ask your colleague to come talk to me so I can get some solid answers. And third, I want two wishes when I complete my task, instead of the one you promised me.”

Amalaskae nods nervously like a scared puppy, but she quickly flinches. “I… Well, I can do the first one easily. A-And, I-I’ll ask her… but I can’t make promises for her. We’re really supposed to minimize interference with each other, but this is a special case. A-As for the wishes…” Amalaskae swallows a lump in her throat. “Um… I… I’ll try to find a way. I-If you can end the major war on this world, I’ll do everything in my power to get you a second wish. I swear it.”

Zuzia sighs again, this time more in acceptance than in exasperation.

“That’s probably the best I’ll get, right? I agree. I’ll try to live up to your expectations.”

“Ooooh! Thank you Zuzanna! Thank you!” Amalaskae hugs her, and for the first time since coming to this world, Zuzia feels actual pain. This clumsy angel nearly destroyed a village simply from falling over, which was very un-divine to begin with, so she’s probably one of the only ones who can overpower Zuzia now. Zuzanna frantically pats her back calling out, “Fine! Fine! Go easy on me!”

Amalaskae releases her with rosy cheeks. “S-Sorry… I… Well, you know…”

Ugh… Yes, I’m figuring it out, you clumsy angel…

Still, Zuzanna can’t stay mad at her with such a gentle and caring expression. Come what may, Amalaskae is *her* clumsy angel watching over her.

“And, from now on, feel free to call me Zuzia. A-As long as it’s alright to consider us friends.”

Amalaskae happily smiles. “Oooo! Yes, of course, Zuzia!” She dances in place giddily, adding, “I-I’m not really supposed to be ‘friends’ with my chosen hero, but I think it’s okay. Ryukana is friends with one of her heroes, after all…”

You’re going to get us both in humongous trouble, aren’t you? thinks the blonde to herself, though she can’t help but smile.

“Alright. Then, give me this world’s Japanese language, and I’ll keep working my way towards Daniel. I just hope those guys don’t catch up to me…”

“It’s not Japanese!” whines Amalaskae rather un-angel-like. “I recommend Eastern Imperial Trade, but if you’d like another language…”

“I thought you said it was the same as Japanese…”

“No! It’s very different!”

Zuzia laughs, and the angel fumes impotently before using her powers to bestow the language on the Polish woman. As warned, she can feel a surge in what feels like her entire body, as well as a throbbing headache, but she is able to remember everything still, thankfully. With a few parting words of encouragement, Amalaskae vanishes with a promise to continue watching over her first and ‘favorite’ summon.

It looks like, even though it’s her choice of what direction to go, Zuzia is going to have her work cut out for her in this new world.

***

Daniel approaches the final boss of his adventure so far. She is the most dangerous and potentially unstable enemy he has challenged to date. Having absorbed the magical power of titanic foes, her deceptively small package hides what she truly is. You are reading on novelping(.)com, the official source.

Amber eyes tilt away from the game the small demon-kin is playing, and large, triangular ears perk upright in excitement.

“Daniel! There you are. A-Are you… alright to be walking around?”

Yes. She is the final boss, and she is potentially the most dangerous enemy Daniel will ever face.

But, she jogs to his side to make sure he is alright.

After all, she is Hekate, the young feldrok girl whose life he saved from the brink of defeat and starvation, and in turn, she became one of his most loyal and loving companions.

“Hekate, thank you, but I’m alright. Do you have a minute to talk?”

She cocks her head to the side, with her big ears flopping with the movement of her head. “Sure, of course. I-Is… everything alright?”

“Mm-hmm. I’ll explain. I just wanted to do it with just the two of us.”

“Alright. Um, Bunni?”

Bunnrimae, the second youngest daughter of Aramellianna, smiles and bows her head. “Please don’t mind me, Hekate. Daniel. Desti? Do you want to take over for Hekate?”

“Sure!” calls out the youngest daughter. She trots over and takes up Hekate’s side of the chess board, studying the remaining pieces and their positions as her elder sister refreshes her memory on the gameplay.

Hekate takes Daniel’s hand and leads him to a private area. She asks playfully, “Is today the day you break your rules, Daniel? Heeheehee! Just kidding.”

“Yes,… in a way…” murmurs the mechanic.

The young empress halts and looks at him in surprise. “W-W-What?”

Daniel sighs and takes a seat. He pulls her onto his lap so he can hold her gently, since he’s not afraid of her response, whatever it might be. She could destroy the world if she reacts negatively, but he has faith that his little companion will hear him out at least. “Hekate,… I want to lead with this; I love you. I really do care about you, and nothing and no one will ever take your place away.”

“Th-Thank you, Daniel.” Her rosy cheeks accentuate a sheepish smile, but she points out nervously, “Y-You’re never this direct, though. D-Did something happen? I-I-If you’re worried about the curse, I-I’m not happy about it, but I won’t leave you. I-I already forgive you.”

“I know, Sweetpea. But,… I’m going to need your forgiveness again here in a moment… Whether you give it to me is up to you.”

The feldrok girl goes silent as her ears droop. She knows she’s not going to like what she’s going to hear, but she trusts and cares for Daniel as well. She grips his hand with both of hers, saying softly, “I love you Daniel. As long as you remain by my side,… Then you can tell me.”

Daniel hugs her, hesitating for a long time. He made a promise, and the one he made that pledge to has the best interests of him in mind as well as herself and even Hekate.

“Please hear me out to the end.”

Hekate nods softly, sensing the moment approaching. She squeezes his hands for comfort, bracing herself.

“I’m going to marry Ryuogriar.”

The ravenette tenses with a single, solid flinch. She is locked in place for a long moment, and Daniel adds softly, “It was her demand to receive her forgiveness, as well as… a reason for me to keep my promises…”

This finally prompts the young girl to look up into his eyes, staring at him with a needful expression. She desires answers, but her brain can’t seem to keep up with the questions as they form in her brain.

Daniel tries to pet her head, but she smacks his hand away, and he slumps a little. A wide array of emotions pass across the young teen’s face as she processes her feelings, trying to make sense of what she just heard. Part of her wishes she had thought of that, another part wishes to object, another wants to run away, and still a part of her wants to cry.

He adds softly, “I don’t want to lose any of you, and Ryuo is right. I have been afraid to act like a part of this family, because I don’t feel like a part of this world. I haven’t been able to convince myself to fall backwards into anyone’s arms. She’s willful enough to speak her mind when I’m wrong, and mature enough to know how to keep things under control. But, that’s not to say, well… I…”

“…th me…” mumbles the feldrok girl.

“What did you say?” asks Daniel gently, trying not to ignore her.

She suddenly springs off of his lap and grips his collar, screaming, “Then do it with me! Marry me instead! Why is it Ryuo!? Why!?” Tears burst forth from her eyes, and she continues to scream for answers, “Why does it have to be this way!? You promised me first! You… I don’t have anything without you! Ryuo is still a dragon! She has lots of things! So make her leave!”

“Hekate! Hekate! Calm down!” Daniel tries to hug her, but she squirms away from him, crying out in objection. He tries to speak over her so she hears him, “I’m not making anyone go away!”

“I don’t want to be your daughter! I want to be your wife! That’s all I want! I don’t care about anything else!” She throws her steel crown across the room, yelling, “I don’t care about any of it! I just want you!” She loses herself to her sobs, finally allowing herself to be held, and she instinctively grips him, though she continues to squirm as if she’s fighting herself.

Daniel holds her close and pets her head, trying to calm her down.

He doesn’t know if there’s a circle of hell being made just for him, since he certainly isn’t walking the path of a particularly godly man, but he decides he can’t put it off any longer. “Listen, Hekate, I… know I’ve danced around the topic. S-So…”

As she continues to cry into his chest, he digs in his magic bag for a specific object. “It’s not perfect, since I was still working on it, but… Here.” He slides her onto the bed of the room to kneel in front of her. “Hekate, I… I know this doesn’t seem fair, but… Please, accept this as a promise…” He shows her a ring with an amber-colored stone. “I want to hold to my principles, but I’ll give

this to you now as an official promise. The day -the very moment- you turn eighteen… If you will still have me, I would like to marry you.”

She whimpers, looking at him as she sniffles. “But…”

“Ryuo is forcing me to make a commitment now, and she’s already old enough. But, I promised you that I would never leave you. I also tacitly went along with the plan that you would be first, but…”

Hekate looks to the side for a moment, hiding her gaze. She grumbles, “Y-… You never… promised…”

He takes a breath and exhales. “To my shame, I’ve broken promises already, all with the weak excuse that I’m protecting everyone else. That’s why I don’t want to marry you until you’re an adult. I wouldn’t even mind waiting longer, but at least when you’re an adult, you’ll have gotten to be a kid for at least a little while.”

“B-But, I’m not a kid,” whines the young feldrok, her ears flattening back in irritation.

“No, but you’re not quite an adult yet, either. So please, accept this promise, and I swear I won’t break it. You’ll remain the Empress of the Fievegal, and I’ll step down to a rank of Prince Consort or something if that really matters.”

She sucks her teeth, retorting with a hint of disgust, “I told you, I don’t care about that. I don’t care about the Fievegal if you’re not with me. I only play along as Empress because you want me to.”

The human chuckles softly. “Yes, well, you’re right. You do dislike it more than I do.”

She finally cracks a small smile, but she's far from happy yet. She looks at the ring again, asking softly, "Why can't Ryuo wait, then?"

"We had a discussion about that. We're hoping it'll curb my reckless tendencies, because I'll officially have a lot more to lose than ever. And, it'll make Ryuo happy."

"Hmph!" The ravenette crosses her arms and looks away. "I hope you have a plan to explain it to all of your other mistresses."

The mechanic sighs. "I hate that I can't deny it anymore…" He cups her cheek gently, pulling her face to look at him again as he leans on her lap. "Sweetpea, before anyone else, I owe you my life. You were the first one to really give me a reason to live in this world, even if you were just a munchkin to me."

"Hey!"

He takes her hands and holds them gently. "This is probably dirty of me to say, but whoever will have me, I would like to marry them. And, I'd like you not to kill them."

She huffs again, looking away. "I haven't done anything bad to anyone. Even if they're sucessfully stealing you away from me."

"If you can convince Ryuo of a better plan, we'll go with that one. After all, you are the First Empress."

Hekate pouts her lip, scowling at him with frustration. "So, you want me to solve your problem for you?"

"Honestly… I want all of you to speak your minds even more freely. I'm just some guy, not some hero. If being married officially will make Ryuo stop hesitating to speak to me about her concerns or to scold me before I do

something foolish, I don't mind. I actually… like the idea a bit. That's why I made that ring already, even if my original plan was to wait for you…"

Hekate's ears finally perk up, and she looks at the ring again. It's then that she realizes what he's saying.

Even as early as it is, he was making a ring to propose to her with, so that he would have it perfect when the time came. She sniffles. Daniel does care about her more than anyone, as do the other Empress consorts.

She wipes her cheeks, throwing her arms over his shoulders and wrapping her legs around his waist. She grumbles, "You're a butt, Daniel. A big stinky butt…"

He chuckles warmly. "Yes, yes. And, where would any of us be without our stinky butts?"

She scoffs and whines, "You dummy!" She lays her chin on his shoulder, and he continues to hold her, patting her back. She murmurs, "Carry me…"

"Carry you? Where do you want to go?"

"I don't care. Just carry me for a while."

"Alright."

Daniel stands up without objection and walks with Hekate clinging to his chest. After a little while, she mumbles, "Daniel… I don't want you to think of me or treat me like your daughter… Ryuo's a dumb-dumb, so I can't stop her, but… I'm going to be your wife, too. S-So don't try to back out of it."

Daniel chuckles as he carries the little feldrok girl. "Sure, sure, Sweetpea. As you wish."

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2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 143: Enemy Unknown

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 143: Enemy Unknown

“Sir Neith, we’re going to the Citadel.” Daniel informs the grey dragon, who is on probation with the dragon Empresses, while Ryuogriar stands behind the human mechanic. Daniel already told everyone else his plan, and Reignleif will be joining them shortly. Aramellianna is awake now, but she is recovering from her ordeals.

“I am at your service, if you’ll have me, my Liege,” replies Neith with a humble bow.

“If you’d prefer to remain where you can visit your lady friend, I don’t mind. I’ll take Magnir or Roeta. Or, I’ll rely on my Empress, who is plenty strong enough.”

The first of the Jomsvikings shakes his head. “My Lady Roestren is aware that my duties are chaotic right now, your Grace. I will be honored to be entrusted with this task.”

“I’m curious, Mukori,” starts Ryuogriar, giving a ponderous expression and pose. Daniel looks at her, asking gently, “What about?”

“Neith was present for both you and the Grand Duchess. Does that not raise questions for you?”

“I have questions, but not for Sir Neith,” replies Daniel sincerely. “Something is wrong, but I don’t have enough information to make a decision. With myself and

you three Dragon Empresses away from this location, we will still have Vaergraes and Hekate guarding everyone here, but Vaergraes has successfully kept a low profile, and Hekate is easy to underestimate. She has agreed to capture anyone suspicious, and to be suspicious of everyone."

"My Liege… Your Grace… Are… you… implying…?" Neith can speak casually with Daniel when he's alone, but he is extremely careful to watch his manners and tone when anyone else, particularly the Dragon Empresses. To question the Emperor and the Second Empress *could* cause problems, and Geirahoel would be quick to snap if she's not in a good mood.

However, Ryuogriar is more tolerant in general. She remarks, "That someone within the Fievegal's upper ranks can not be trusted?" She looks at Daniel, saying coldly, "I am almost certain of it."

"The question is 'who'," adds Daniel. "And how do we lure them out? I have a friendly relationship with all of… uh… my consorts…" As awkward as it is for Daniel to acknowledge out loud, Ryuogriar nods proudly in agreement, and he continues, "And I trust the Einherjars. Neith, you're often too honest for your own good, and Magnir and Roeta are pretty simple in taste."

"Could it be Lady Senn?" asks Neith, glancing between the two.

"It's possible, but I doubt it. She has the power to give *everyone* pause, and she seems to have some understanding of Earth's technology and capabilities, even if she doesn't fully comprehend everything we can do. If she wanted to, she could likely defeat me with ease. Truthfully, everyone could. But, I think the 'plan' would have shifted, now that there is a line of succession for how the Citadel is inherited."

"Line of succession?" asks Neith.

Daniel nods. “Among the first things I did with Xyreko after Brosjak when I had some spare time was figure out how to change the spellbinding of the Citadel’s controls, which recognize me as the master. Because it’s a magical system, it can easily recognize a new master, and loyally protect that recognition until the master is dead. So, what if there’s also an inheritance of the ‘master’ role already established, even if the master dies? My country used a similar system for the ‘ruler’ of the land, which we called the President. If the President were killed, the Vice President takes over. If the Vice President also dies somehow, then… I think it was the Speaker of the House? I honestly don’t know the full chain of succession, but it was a very long list, to reduce the probability of needing to enact the lowest levels to nearly zero.”

“And, the Citadel will do this for the ‘master’?” asks Neith.

“Yes. Xyreko helped me tweak the magic to ensure that, even if something happens to me, Hekate becomes the master, and it goes in order of the Empresses. Since four of those Empresses are stronger than virtually all other beings in the world, let alone the other empresses, it’s more difficult than simply killing me and being able to take over the Citadel, which is now the pinnacle of modern technology for Zenkon.”

“More importantly, Mukori,” starts Ryuogriar as she hugs his arm to her soft chest. “Is a president higher than an Emperor?”

Daniel laughs a little at the bluntness of that question. “That really depends on the nation whose ruler is a President versus the Empire whose ruler is an Emperor, honestly. In practice, I guess an Emperor is technically the highest, as far as I know, before you reach an actual god or something, as far as how humans rank rulers.” He cups his chin as he thinks. “My country was, at least for a time, the leading power of Earth in terms of economic strength and military power, even while another country who was arguably subordinate to

mine held an emperor.” He scoffs with a hint of disappointment in his voice. “Ironically enough, Rikuto’s country is that country. The Emperor of Japan is ceremonial, to my knowledge, like the King or Queen of England, which was a Queen for most of my lifetime. Long story short, it depends on the power of the country and their specific title of ruler. Certain government systems promote and allow for greater growth, while others suppress it, so it’s a balancing act. Either way, the line of succession is active for the Citadel, and if they are in the inner circle… I suspect they know that.”

“I didn’t, and I haven’t killed you, Mukori,” replies the dragon matriarch clinging to his arm.

He snickers lightly, using his other hand to pat her arm gently. “Yes, yes, Mukori. Not killing me is a decent place to start. But, that doesn’t eliminate anyone anymore… unfortunately.”

“What about Doephluev?” asks Neith, brainstorming.

Daniel replies quietly and seriously, “It could be Hekate, for all we know.” Both dragons wince, and the human adds, “Obviously, I know it’s not Hekate. She refused to take the Citadel when she had the chance. And, given what happened with that spy and with Mother,… there is something deeper going on… I’m reluctant to put on my tin foil hat, so to speak, but… I think it’s related to the never-ending war.”

“The perpetual war you spoke of, yes?” asks Ryuogriar.

Daniel nods grimly. “Yes. I didn’t want to believe it, but… It does seem like there are enemies on all sides… and worse, they are coordinating.”

“The amulet…” murmurs Neith.

“What!?” snaps Ryuogriar, stunned at hearing the thing that cursed Daniel brought up now.

The grey dragon clarifies, “The spy was wearing an amulet with a distinct emblem on it, but even I can’t remember it. When Emperor Daniel touched it, the emblem disappeared. Since the curse was undetectable, it was likely intended to wipe us out simply by virtue of me attempting to separate it from my Liege in a panic.”

“I am almost certain I’ve seen it before,” adds Daniel. “I was certain of it at the time. But, it was too small to make sense of without inspecting closer. Once it disappeared…”

“It was too late…” murmurs Ryuogriar. “Then, whoever the emblem belongs to has a hand in this perpetual war?”

“I think so. We’re making assumptions, obviously, and as they say in my country:” Daniel states in English, “[When you assume things, you make an ass out of ‘u’ and ‘me’.]”

Both dragons stare at him blankly, and he clears his throat awkwardly. “It’s a figure of speech. Anyways, point being, assumptions can bite you as easily as they can help, so they’re risky. We need more information. I’m obviously not going to start executing anyone, but the most suspicious members of the inner circle are not necessarily problems. It’s the ones who aren’t suspicious at all that we need to be cautious of.”

Ryuogriar and Neith are both quiet with serious expressions.

The human exhales deeply. “I’m not suspicious of either of you because you have tested my suspicions already.”

“Forgive me for asking this, Mukori,…” Daniel flinches in surprise at the new voice that appears at his left, like a soft-spoken ghost suddenly appearing.

“R-Reina-mukori! You surprised me.”

“Sorry. But, I wanted to ask. Who do you feel the least affection for among your lovers?”

Daniel recoils a little. He often restrains himself consciously from disrespectfully and ignorantly discussing romantic matters of *others* in his intimate circle with those in front of him, though there are situations like now when he is asked directly.

“Ahhh,” muses Ryuogriar as she cups her chin with her fingers. “You have a keen mind, Sister. Indeed, answer her, Mukori.”

Daniel glances at each of them, and then at Neith. The grey dragon, who has also looked at each of them in confusion, shrugs his shoulders unhelpfully.

“I… I haven’t really given thought to it like that,” replies Daniel uneasily.

Reignleif pouts softly, pushing her lip out and everything. “Does that mean I am low on the list, Mukori?”

The mechanic grits his teeth. He has told Geirahoel and only Geirahoel that she is his favorite, though everyone seems to know. However, that is a close race between Ryuogriar and Reignleif for an extremely narrow ‘second’ place. The dragons aren’t hesitant at all about expressing their affection in their own ways, and make Daniel feel truly at home. Everyone else remains rather cautious with him, like he is more powerful than he is.

“N-No! I… Listen…” He glances at Ryuogriar, but she gives him a very devious smirk. She is planning on exploiting this moment no matter how he answers.

“Now, now, Reina. Everyone knows that our sweet youngest sister is his favorite.” She feigns a sigh with her palm on her cheek. “We are simply mistresses…”

“That’s not true!” snaps Daniel suddenly, tensing with embarrassment when his own words sink in for him. He sighs, “Listen,... No one needs to remind me I’m in an impossible situation. I know it. I really do… I think I know what you want from your question, Reina-Mukori.” He looks at Reignleif, who cocks her head. She’s the shortest one present, and her dress and mantle make her look rather cute. The human adds gently, “Obviously, I don’t have any intimate feelings towards Veiranoei. Vae and I have been reserved with each other…”

“Vae, hmm?” asks Ryuogriar, not missing that for a moment.

Daniel sighs. “Yes. I think, for her age, she’s as innocent as she appears. She is a hard worker, and likely is too busy upholding her duties to scheme or pursue romance.”

He thinks, concluding softly, “I guess that leaves Aoloan, Kera’tai, and Doephluev. But, I think Doephluev is very obvious with her ambitions, so I have no real fear of her.”

“And, you fear the other two?” asks Reignleif.

“Well, not exactly. I guess… I don’t feel as close to Aoloan as anyone else. I like her, but…”

Everyone remains quiet in thought for a moment. It becomes awkward, and Daniel asks, “Why? Have any of you noticed anything?”

“Not specifically, no,” replies Ryuogriar. “But, anything I could say of Aoloan, unfortunately, I could say of almost everyone else. I’m not especially close with

anyone but the other three first empresses.”

“Same,” replies Reignleif, “With exception of Wenlianna, and… I… um…”

“Doephluev has been working with you, yes?” asks Ryuogriar dryly. “I understand you have more of a rapport with her. Still, hopefully this narrows down our list.”

“Hardly,” replies Daniel. “Aoloan had a chance to destroy me when it was her, Kera’tai, and the Goblin Queens when we met. And, she knew I had no power of my own.”

“True,” replies Ryuogriar.

“For now, my Liege, I will operate on the assumption that the only ones exempt from suspicion are her Greatness Hekate, the Dragon Empresses, and I should believe Lady Wenlianna, yes?” This chapter is updated first at novelping.com.

Daniel confirms with a dip of his head. “I think we’re safe eliminating them.” He touches the cheeks of Ryuogriar and Reignleif with his palms. “I am certain about you ladies.”

Both Dragon Empresses smile, and Reignleif makes a somewhat dry joke, “You hear that, Ryuo? We are at least in the top five.”

“Indeed, Sister Reina. I suppose we’ll have to settle for top five…” The eldest of the three Dragon Empresses sighs with her palm on her cheek. “Though, if we count how often that lustful assassin seduces him…”

“Alright,” interjects Daniel. “I think it’s best we depart, since we’re all here.”

“Yes we are.”

“Jesus!” exclaims Daniel as he flinches from another new voice appearing directly behind him. The bearer of that voice speaks with a seductive and amused tone, and is none other than the ‘assassin’ in question; Doephluev.

“For f-… Doephluev!?”

“I have told you countless times, my Darling Beloved, I only serve you. I shall accompany you wherever you shall go. Assuming you don’t escape me.” She glares lightly at Neith, who doesn’t flinch under her gaze.

Daniel sighs, while the dragons scowl at the archoneldwyn dressed in rather elegant maid attire. She fits into a strange position, since she was supposed to effectively be Daniel’s servant with the express purpose of restoring the archoneldwyn race. She receives Daniel’s affection enough to be considered a consort, or even an ‘empress’, but she is not as welcomed by the others because of her role as an assassin that nearly killed Daniel.

However, Ryuogriar starts the greeting. “Doephluev. I was wondering how long it would take you to arrive.”

“You flatter me, your Grace, but I am always nearby my Beloved in case he should ever need me for *anything*.”

“Indeed. Be sure not to get in the way.” Ryuogriar turns away to walk onto the shuttle, and Neith follows her, knowing everyone else will be close behind.

And, right she is. Daniel looks at Doephluev, who gives him a smile.

“Doephluev… I’d… like to ask you for a favor,” starts Daniel gently.

She frowns, knowing that his request is likely to be something that runs contrary to the brief conversation that just took place. She murmurs in a tone

meant to ensure her disappointment is apparent, “I am at your service, my Love…”

Daniel hesitates, and Ryuogriar comes to a stop to listen. He finally explains, “You caught the spy quickly, and… I’d like you to watch over everyone here.”

“M-Me?” asks the archoneldwyn in surprise. “But… I want to sabotage everyone else.”

“Yes, and everyone knows it.” The two Dragon Empresses present scoff dryly. Daniel adds, “I also know that you’re smart enough not to cause any harm, because you’re going to be suspect number one.”

Doephluev pouts a little, but she can’t help the slight smile of amusement that forms on her lips at Daniel’s assessment of her.

“Is this an order, my Beloved Darling?” asks Doephluev, trying to entice him into changing his mind by flirtatiously dancing back and forth.

“No, but I would greatly appreciate it if you would look after everyone.”

She crosses her arms with a bit more sass behind her demeanor. “What’s in it for me, then?”

Daniel smirks. “How about a diamond?”

She looks away with a huff. “Please save me a seat, Empress Ryuogriar.”

The two female dragons chuckle as Neith watches quietly.

The mechanic sighs. “Five diamonds and three new custom-made dresses.”

This catches her interest, but she doesn’t yield yet. “Mmm… Better. But, diamonds are like ears of corn to you.”

“You know the dresses alone will take a lot of my time, right?”

She smiles, feeling a little proud. “Yes, and you’re asking for a lot of my time.”

“You could ma-…” starts Reignleif before Daniel quickly covers her mouth. “Five diamonds and five dresses,” counters Daniel. “I’m not going higher.”

The former assassin ponders the offer as if she’s deep in thought. “One diamond, but I get to pick the jewelry it’s on, five dresses, a nightgown, and three sets of lingerie,” counters the archoneldwyn mistress boisterously.

This causes the dragons to twitch, and Daniel hesitates. Value-wise, the diamonds carry a great deal more weight. With five of them, she could easily afford to run away and go into hiding, and Daniel would likely never see her again. With the lingerie specifically, Daniel can design outfits, but for the delicate fabric-work, he’ll be leaving it to actual seamstresses. She’s overtly telling him that she wants gifts over payment, particularly gifts that feed her vanity.

Daniel sighs. “Deal. So, you’ll protect our allies here?”

Doephluev smiles and hops to kiss his cheek. “Yes, my Love. Don’t expect me to serve them, but I’ll at least watch out for threats to anyone on the airship.”

“That will be great. Thank you.”

She presses close to him, leaning her chest against his. “Don’t be gone too long, my Beloved. I might get bored and unruly.”

Daniel rolls his eyes and kisses her hand to send her off. He jokes, “Sometimes I wonder who the servant is supposed to be.”

“Well, if you’re offering…”

The Emperor turns her around by the shoulders, retorting bluntly, “Get going. Contact us over the radio if you need anything.”

“As you wish, my Darling!” replies Doephluev cutely, turning around to see them off.

Now free of the delay, Reignleif walks with her arms wrapped around Daniel’s to be escorted onto the shuttle, and Ryuogriar leads as Neith waits at the shuttle’s ramp for everyone else to board first.

After that, they take off bound for the Citadel.

***

Empress Sundenelle nurses a work-related headache as she reads a handful of various reports from all over the Empire. Taken individually, they are relatively innocuous. However, together as they are, she sees the bigger picture.

After the elimination of Fort Twilight, the Fievegal has made contact with Mattarglos, an allied territory to the Empire, but not a vassal state nor a traditional noble-supported kingdom. Mattarglos operates with a declared ruler, but doesn’t weigh noble rank and etiquette as highly as the other kingdoms. Strength and merit are greater priorities, and because the land is much more difficult to live in thanks to rough terrain, cold weather, and abundant monsters, no one bothers to try to undermine and invade them.

That is, until the Fievegal has shown interest in them before all other kingdoms. If the reports are to be believed, and that is speaking for the ones coming from merchants, the Fievegal is already establishing a trade presence in Mattarglos. Though the goods are limited to a degree, it is undoubtedly Daniel and his allies.

Not to mention the recent celebrations of the defeat of three of Mattarglos's most troublesome monsters, which all came in rapid succession.

Grand Prince Yaulander has also made moves of his own, visiting Mornistae for mysterious purposes, only for rumors to arise of a new hero being summoned.

Sundenelle groans, "Could they have succeeded?"

"Your Majesty?" asks the captain of her guard.

"Nevermind. Has there been any word on the progress of the Fievegal invading Mornistae?"

One of the other advisors replies, "No, your Illustrious Grace. It seems they have secured the Stalvaltan territory and have held borders since. Though, the supposed summoning has caused quite a stir in the kingdom as a whole. Reliable information is buried in less useful rumors and claims."

"I see…"

Sundenelle weighs her options for a moment, and one of the Imperial Dukes serving as a minister clears his throat. "Your Majesty, if I may be permitted to speak."

"Go ahead."

"Thank you, your Majesty." He asks cautiously, "Should we not send out missives to cut off all trade with anyone claiming ties to the Grand Duchy? A great deal of their funding undoubtedly comes from the enhanced magic crystals…"

"And cut off our supply of crystals as well, Duke Walliskah?" asks the young empress with her forehead propped up by her hands. "The danger of a

monopoly is exactly this scenario, but no one else has positively identified the source of the enhanced magic crystals. I have magic artisans pursuing rumors that they are merely gemstones, such as diamonds, but even so, the largest diamonds seen to date pale in comparison to the size of a single enhanced magic crystal, which are consistently large." She wants to flop her head down on the desk. The number of people in her office are limited to a handful of ministers, trusted nobles, guards, and her mother as her lady-in-waiting.

Byleathea raises her hand gently, and Sundenelle looks. "Yes, Lady Byleathea?"

"Your Imperial Majesty, the Empire is indeed in a precarious position when it comes to the Fievegal. But, if the two separate issues of the Stalvaltan Duchy and the territory of Mattarglos are not combined into one, I fear we are in grave danger of massive instability."

"I agree, but if we are to treat one or the other in either way,..." Sundenelle sighs. She stands up and approaches the territorial map laid out on the large table nearby. It depicts known troop positions, but with the Fievegal and Daniel's technology, the map is constantly out of date. She points at the mountains, specifically where Fort Reeffjord is represented. "There are two fortresses that now allow passage through the mountains with Fort Twilight lost, Reeffjord and Peony. Mattarglos all but completely controls access to Fort Peony, and it is undeniably the smallest passage of the three fortresses. Additionally,..." She points to the map as everyone gathers around it. "Fort Twilight is confirmed to be merely a crater at this time. While it was too large to determine from stable ground, it is not impossible for a passable route to exist across the crater. A very *large* passable route. If we dedicate energy to trying to chase the Fievegal out of eastern territories, we open ourselves to invasion at any one of the three fortresses."

The captain adds, “Additionally, your Majesty, if the reports are accurate, the Fievegal can move large numbers of troops through the air using the strange flying carriages, though there are no confirmed reports on how many vessels the Fievegal possesses.”

She nods. “Yes. I don’t think the Grand Duchess is truly a hostage, either. I think the Grand Duchy, if we can get spies into their borders, would appear rather safe and quite amenable to the Fievegal, meaning they likely have full economic support in both directions. The problem is, I don’t want to escalate the war any further, and I had believed for a moment that Daniel can be reasoned with. It seems getting in touch with him is the difficult part.” She looks at the map.

Duke Walliskah adds as he points to the capital of Mattarglos, “Your Grace, I know that information is difficult to obtain on the exact whereabouts, but there does seem to be some credible evidence that the otherworlder Daniel is in the capital of Mattarglos, having celebrated the fall of the monsters.”

“And, what about outside of Mattarglos? What kind of rumors are we hearing?” asks the young woman. She has a pretty good idea of the answer, but she’s wondering if it’s fading or getting worse.

Finally, Marquis Rambok clears his throat. “Your Imperial Majesty, the… incidences of the otherworlder Daniel’s name have increased. While there are some mentions of the monsters of Mattarglos, more often,… it is the negative rumors?”

Sundenelle sighs in disgust as she holds her head with a hand. “Such as…?” she grumbles.

“Well… It seems to be a common belief that he keeps the company of demons…”

“That one is true, but not exclusive to demons. Next.”

“The vulgarities toward the second princess of Mornistae get brought up frequently, though they seem to have gotten more dramatized.”

“Of course…”

“And… Well…”

“Go on…” urges the impatient Empress.

The men gathered around glance at each other uneasily, and Byleathea clears her throat. “Some of the rumors claim that he enslaves and beds children, your Majesty.” While she managed to deliver it with a straight face, her own tone betrayed a struggle to finish the sentence.

“And, can I trust that Yaulander’s faction is the one spreading these rumors?”

“That is the safest bet, your Grace,” replies Duke Walliskah respectfully. “Hekate being in his inner circle does little to quell such rumors, though she obviously does not behave as a slave.”

Sundenelle scoffs, and she looks at the map. Walliskah adds, “Merchants in league with Grand Prince Yaulander’s faction are the ones carrying such news and rumors to other territories. It seems the Fievegal’s visit to Mattarglos was convenient for them, as they will likely run into friction with any other territories from here onward.”

“One thing is clear, Daniel is not a politician. He doesn’t seem to be doing anything about his reputation. I’m a little surprised Aramellianna kos Stalvaltan

isn’t taking a more active role in trying to battle Yaulander blow for blow in the social landscape.”

“Is it possible she actually has been… conquered by the Fievegal?” asks the Marquis.

Sundenelle shakes her head. “I don’t think so. The Stalvaltan family had a mutually beneficial relationship with Daniel, specifically. Daniel didn’t strike me as the kind to turn on his allies.”

Byleathea adds, “Additionally, the eldest daughter is said to have been taken with him. It is likely, hostage or not, Aramellianna would lean more in favor of the Fievegal for her daughter’s sake.”

The men around them bow their heads respectfully. It is no secret that, while her role was less fiery and charismatic than Sundenelle’s, the woman now serving as her lady-in-waiting played a large role at disrupting the internal infrastructure of the palace, granting Sundenelle an opening to turn the fight for the throne in her favor. And, the very first thing Sundenelle did, known to the people in this room, was to ask Byleathea if she wished to be the Dowager Empress, even though she was only ever a legal consort to the Emperor. Byleathea politely declined, opting to serve as lady-in-waiting to help bolster Sundenelle’s personal authority.

There would be no one to go behind Sundenelle’s back.

Or at least, almost no one.

“Captain, have some men sent to find out what Yaulander is doing in Mornistae. If the Grand Prince is acting beyond his capacity, then I’d like to get ahead of it before he makes the current situation worse. Duke Walliskah, I’d like you to try

to make contact with Daniel or any of the women of his inner circle as soon as possible. We need to establish reliable means of communication."

Both men bow, confirming their new orders. "As you wish, your Imperial Majesty."

Marquis Rambok asks, "Shall I attempt to curb the rumors, your Imperial Majesty?"

"You may try, but I would temper your expectations. Attempting to drown a rumor might only cause it to burn brighter."

"I would suggest," starts Byleathea, "that rumors regarding the Fievegal and its members are their own concern more than ours. It is true that Grand Prince Yaulander likely has a hand in the rumors, but the Empire is not automatically liable for the result."

Sundenelle nods in agreement, adding, "Given how he behaved, I doubt Daniel or his companions care about such rumors. The very fact that they seem to be making inroads into Mattarglos will carry a great deal of weight in any further negotiations."

"Then, your Grace… Are you intending to carry on negotiating with the Fievegal?" asks Duke Walliskah.

She takes a breath and sighs. "I'm willing to gamble a little further. He may have made a fool of me, but I can still turn it around. Daniel and I will be wed, and in exchange, the Empire will not begin sanctions against the Fievegal's trade negotiations with Imperial territories or our allies."

The room is awkwardly silent, and she sighs. "I am aware of how it looks. However, the technology Daniel has introduced through the Stalvaltan Grand

Duchy, as well as the Fievegal, cannot be overlooked. If I can make a deal with Daniel and set it in stone with something as simple as marriage, I think it is a worthwhile arrangement." She looks at the small fox-like statue meant to represent the Fievegal on the map. It is currently set over the location of the Citadel. "Beside that, I believe he and I share almost all of our enemies."

"But, the demons…" starts Walliskah.

Sundenelle shakes her head. "The Covenant has been quiet since the Fievegal captured Fort Twilight. There have been no reported scouts. If our own troops weren't scattered to try and intercept retaliation from the Fievegal, it would be an adequate time to attempt to push through the mountains. But, we need to understand the borders of the Fievegal better, or we're looking at a conflict we may struggle to win. Daniel has demon allies, just as he has human allies. He may be further along with ending a seemingly endless war than all of our soldiers combined have achieved so far."

"I urge you to take your time if this truly is your decision, your Imperial Majesty," urges Byleathea. "I would recommend a lengthy engagement period to try to further assess the otherworlder's true intentions."

"I agree, your Grace," replies Walliskah. "As much as it pains me to agree with your plan, if you can secure the loyalty of a force that can hold back an Imperial battalion with ease, further conflicts may take a more positive turn for the Empire."

"If the Covenant is still intact, we'll need all the strength we can get. Though, if Daniel is to be believed, the dragons are no longer a part of the Covenant."

"That does not make them our allies, your Majesty," replies Byleathea. "You must be careful not to insult or provoke them during this gamble of yours."

“I’ll be careful. Duke Walliskah, be sure to get us in contact with him as soon as possible.”

“Of course, your Majesty.”

With that, she dismisses her retainers to carry out their tasks and return to their normal duties. Byleathea remains behind, as usual.

“Mother,… Should I focus on recovering my reputation with the nobles?”

“To do so would be directly opposing the Fievegal. While I don’t like what we just discussed, it’s clear that we can’t recklessly engage the Fievegal in combat. If what they say is true, and there are more of the airships used to bring them here, then they can easily bypass the mountains that still restrain us.”

Sundenelle nods. It’s obvious, really. She has already lost any prolonged war with the Fievegal. If she can preserve her dignity in any capacity by making everyone believe that she’s the one orchestrating the wedding, and if she can get Daniel to agree to some beneficial terms for the Empire, then she can likely gain a great deal.

Now, she just has to get in touch with Daniel again, and try to reduce the damage from Twilight being eliminated and Yaulander scheming behind her back.

They need to sort out who the enemies really are.

***

A/N: Hey Dear Readers! If you didn't catch them already, Chapters 29-31 have been rewritten to improve the battle with the Feral Feldrok. I have updated the

old chapters (in their appropriate positions) to be the new material. If you haven't read the updated versions, I hope you might check them out!

In any case, I hope you continue to enjoy! Thank you for reading!

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 144: A Burning Question

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 144: A Burning Question

Ryukana the violet-haired goddess is waiting for Daniel, specifically, as the shuttle touches down at the Citadel after passing through the perimeter checkpoint. He excuses himself for a moment from the three dragons who accompanied him, and they head towards Xyreko, who is waiting patiently nearby.

“Ryukana, you look like you need something.”

“I knew you were arriving soon, so I wanted to inform you that I am going to leave for a short time once more.”

“I understand. I appreciate you letting me know.”

“I’ll still be on Zenkon, so if you need anything…” She scrunches her face as she thinks. Once more, Daniel is completely devoid of magic, in spite of how long it has been since he was inflicted with the curse. Senn has retreated to her own mysterious hideaway to search for a means to dispel the curse, while Xyreko has been attempting various spells in the Citadel in preparations for trying to help Daniel as well. In Ryukana’s case, she can no longer detect him, as it was when he first arrived in the world. Ryuogriar and Reignleif have been insistently feeding Daniel milk every few minutes in order to try to restore his mana, but it’ll take time to see results either way.

“I will do my best to keep my gaze on you, Daniel. If you need me, I will be listening.”

Daniel nods. “As you know, I try not to bother you. I didn’t pray much before I came here, I don’t know if it’s fair to expect prayers to work now that I’ve peeked behind the curtain.”

She snickers softly. “Very funny, Daniel.” She ponders deeply as she studies Daniel for a long time. He cocks his head, and she adds, “This curse is peculiar.”

“You can… see it?” asks Daniel, curiously. He tries not to give away too much, since Kaeralegier is still trying to remain undetected by anyone associated with the Divine Realm, and he knows she was able to identify it and its effects with relative ease.

“I can. It’s very subtle, and it doesn’t work with mana the same way as usual. There shouldn’t be any beings in this world capable of such a twisting of energies…” She tries to think.

“I don’t know how it works, but could it be something that pre-dates your management of Zenkon?” Daniel can’t remember all of the details, but he has certainly learned enough about this world’s peculiarities to trust his gut. And, his gut says that the vision he had while he was ‘dead’ from the curse might be related.

“It’s… possible. It’s difficult to really quantify, because time flows differently for us than for mortals. There was a goddess that disappeared before I became the manager of Zenkon.”

Daniel is surprised. He’s not sure he does a great job of seeming genuinely innocent, but he tries his best. “Ohhh? Disappeared? How… How does a

goddess disappear?”

“Why?” asks the goddess in front of him. “Are you planning on trying to make one disappear?”

He laughs. “Just curious.”

“I don’t know, honestly. As you probably guessed, Chaos and Order aren’t exactly beings that can be questioned easily.”

Daniel nods in agreement. “I see. Apologies for holding you up, though. Is there anything you need me to do?”

“Not at this time. I have been asked by my junior to speak to her summoned heroine. I expect they’re seeking advice.”

“I understand. If I can help, please do let me know.”

“I will. Thank you.” As she starts to walk away, and Daniel turns back to the others, she suddenly stops. “Daniel?”

“Yes?”

“I’ve wondered this for a while, but I supposed I hoped to understand without needing to ask.”

Daniel faces her again, replying sincerely, “What is it?”

“Have… you considered trying to negotiate with Rikuto?”

Daniel feels his hands tighten a little. It’s a completely reasonable question, and he knows she’s not the first one to have thought it.

The problem is, he tried to keep his head in the sand, to deal only with the problems directly in front of him. Rikuto was far away, and his fears were fears that wouldn't come true.

Daniel is not a moral paragon, but he understands the gravity of the thing he created in this world using its materials and adapting the principles as best as he could. He could easily become a tyrant, or simply sow destruction across the world. The hard part has already been completed.

But, he hoped that his inaction and lack of threats would serve as enough evidence that he had no such intentions.

That is, until Rikuto unleashed his own counter-weapon to Earth's deadliest creations. All at once, Daniel's goal to live and let live was shattered.

"I have been concerned with provoking him," replies Daniel. "I hoped he would let it be since I made no threats or demands. Obviously, I was wrong."

"Then, the invasion?"

"I didn't intend for it to be a full invasion, but we needed to secure the Grand Duchy's borders. If Rikuto is willing to negotiate, he hasn't made any indications of such."

Ryukana sighs. "I am painfully aware…"

Daniel is quiet for a moment. He can admit that a part of him didn't care anymore about negotiating with Rikuto after his first rallied soldiers were wiped out, many of whom couldn't be recovered at all due to the nature of the weapon annihilating everything in its effective radius. Neith aside -which was angering enough alone-, Daniel knew more than a few of the names of his soldiers from

seeing them in town. He masks his pain around everyone else, but he has been carrying doubts and guilt since then.

Daniel takes a breath and exhales. “I’ll make an effort to reach out to him, if you think that’s best.”

“I’m not supposed to overtly guide the course of interaction on this world. The Devourer and the Demon invasion was one thing, because there was a real threat of the world’s complete destruction. Even the Strylak, the elven mage Senn, and your newest companion Yaulwembor are all beings that I had to keep my eye on because of their immense power. But… if… you and Rikuto could find a position of balance between you, whatever form that takes, it would put me at ease.”

Daniel nods. “Yeah… you’re right, of course. Very well, thank you for your guidance. I will do my best to make peace with Rikuto immediately.”

The goddess relaxes her shoulders. “I would appreciate that. But, you must also do what your heart commands. As you know,… I am not as omniscient or wise as Chaos or Order. And, together, they created free will, the most powerful force in all of creation.”

Daniel chuckles. “I don’t know. I’ve seen my fair share of turds.”

Ryukana scoffs. “And yet, you, ‘just some guy’, managed to save a whole world from one of its existential threats. I believe even Chaos and Order might be concerned if you were more than ‘just some guy’.”

This time, Daniel laughs at her joke. “As soon as I draw Excalibur, I should be maxed out.”

“Yes, yes. I’m sure you’ll find it.” She smiles and bows her head politely. “Now, please excuse me. I need to go speak with my junior.”

“Somehow, I don’t think you need my permission. Goddess and all…”

She grins and winks, disappearing in a modest flicker of the air.

Daniel returns to the group waiting on him, though his next challenge is right around the corner.

***

Zuzia looks at her fist as she works on summoning her courage. In the heat of the moment, she was able to act and save a lot of lives, as well as most of a town. However, she hasn’t really accepted her powers for what they are yet. She can’t test the magic resistance OR her ability to bypass magic negation without those things being present, but she can do her best to understand her gifted strength.

The young Polish woman looks behind the large boulder, scanning all around. There is a tall hill that forms a backdrop, and no signs of people or farms in the way. She takes a breath, facing the boulder once more. She’s quite certain that she can lift and throw the mass of stone, though that will be her next test.

The village could have been a fluke, just as the escape from the castle could have been.

Zuzia takes one more breath, trying to prepare herself. She acted without thinking before, but now, she has a strong sense of fear at the risk of breaking her hand. She flexes her fingers, which are still intact after punching a metal portcullis and then the ground.

The otherworlder balls her hand into a fist, standing so that the impact will be rather shallow.

Zuzia punches her fist forward, withdrawing it just as quickly. A loud bang like a cannon thunders all around her, startling her, and the gigantic rock shifts deeper into the dirt. As it rolls towards her with the new position and different center of gravity, the top half slides forward. It rolls easily off of the bottom half thanks to the shards of smaller pieces between them serving as crude bearings, and the massive chunk of stone slams the ground. It's not a smooth anime-style slice through the rock, but it sheared on its fault lines with a relatively small punch.

Zuzia looks at her hand.

Her knuckles have reddened a little, but she didn't even break the skin. She shakes her hand, but it never hurts. She could tell she impacted the stone, but it was comparable to a simple tap with her knuckles normally.

"Well… That's something. I should *definitely* avoid punching people like that…" She chuckles to herself, bending over to pick up one of the pieces of the massive rock that was ruined in an instant.

Of course, when she stands up, there is already a hooded person standing there, giving her a heart-stopping jolt. "Ojej! Holetta!" She leaps backwards in a stunning jump, and her back smacks into a tree. Thankfully, it doesn't hurt, and she gained some distance from the newcomer.

"Please calm down. My apologies for startling you. This was the location Amalaskae provided."

"H-H-How do you know that name!?" snaps Zuzia in her native tongue, even though the language she just heard is from this world.

Without missing a beat, the woman speaks in fluent Polish. “Yes, my apologies for the start. Amalaskae is… a colleague, and my junior in many ways.” The woman takes her hood off, which also nearly stops Zuzia’s heart.

However, it’s not a fearful moment. The woman is stunningly beautiful, with a visage that seems to glow without light, and her skin appears to be as soft as a perfect silk that doesn’t exist. Her hair seems to float on the wind without noticeably drifting out of control. *If* Zuzia were to believe in a goddess, this woman would definitely fit that image.

“I am Ryukana, the former manager of the world of Zenkon. Amalaskae asked me to come and speak to you and answer your questions. I will answer what I can, but please understand, I am bending the rules as it is. Since I am not responsible for you, I can’t give you specific guidance.”

“I understand. I just want to know the how and why. How are people like me chosen?”

“Normally, through observation. We don’t experience time in the same way you do. It’s relatively easy to see enough of a person to decide if they’re suitable. Though, part of it comes with the risk that the chosen candidate can make unexpected choices, often when the world summoning them doesn’t understand them.”

“I see… And, is it a problem if… I don’t really have a reason to be here?”

“Amalaskae informed me,” replies Ryukana while she places a hand on the upper half of the stone. “And, I had some suspicions. There is an argument to be made that perhaps you could stop the war between Daniel and Rikuto, though I’m honestly hoping one of them will be able to resolve it on their own. You might also go forward to establish your own country, or become the ruler

of one that is present. These actions can lead to long-term stability as well. Since you were summoned in Mornistae, it's fair to assume that they wanted you as additional military might against Daniel, which, of course, is your prerogative."

Zuzia scoffs and waves her hands dismissively. "No. Absolutely not. I may have liked the idea of being a heroine, but I'm not being someone's stooge. Certainly not a soldier-stooge. If that's why they summoned me, they're my enemy."

"I-I only made assumptions, I don't know their motivations. Regardless, the choice of how you live in this world is yours. While there is *supposed* to be a goal, if you have chosen to stay, even because Amalaskae will be punished if you return without accomplishing anything, then you are a member of the world of Zenkon now."

Zuzia nods as she absorbs the information. "Fair enough. Then, I don't have to fight Daniel or this Rikuto?"

"Not if you don't want to. If you do wish to return to Earth, however, and can't convince Amalaskae sooner, you will want to find a way to accomplish something important that will preserve the world's existence."

"Got it. My current plan is to meet with Daniel and see what kind of person he is. After that… I'll figure something out, I guess."

Ryukana smiles gently. "Yes, if that is your choice."

Zuzia nods. "Then, can I contact you again?"

"I'd prefer it if you contact Amalaskae primarily, since she is the one responsible for you. However, I am also still responsible for this world, and if I can provide guidance to that point, I will." She thinks for a moment, adding

softly, “Daniel and Rikuto have each created weapons that can threaten this world, but also have ironically brought them into balance. There are no monsters that are an automatic doom for the world because of them. I am now charged with ensuring Daniel and Hekate refrain from becoming threats to the world.”

“Thank you. I’ll try not to become a threat myself.” Zuzia looks at the boulder she cracked with her bare hand and minimal effort. Amalaskae said she would and could get stronger if she puts in effort, but the young brunette isn’t sure how that is supposed to take place without her destroying half a country.

“Yes, you seem to have a very temperate personality. I believe Amalaskae chose well. Please do be patient with her. She means well, and she’ll do everything in her power to protect you.”

“I don’t dislike Amalaskae. I just… Isn’t she… as much of a threat to this world as any monster?”

Ryukana looks to the side, confirming Zuzia’s suspicions. The clumsy angel is extremely dangerous, even if it is unintentional.

“Will I… need to stop her?” asks Zuzia, looking at the angel before her.

Ryukana replies confidently, “She will never be your enemy. Though, just as I ask that you be patient with how she looks after you, I hope you will look after her as well.” Ryukana bows her head. “Please look after my junior until she can find her own way to be reliable, Zuzanna. In exchange, *I* will provide the second wish you asked for.”

This surprises Zuzia. She was skeptical of the wish being something she could get, but she wanted to push Amalaskae’s buttons, since she’s a bit ditsy and

clumsy. But, she has done everything she can to ensure the young Polish woman gets whatever she wants out of this arrangement.

“Alright. Then, if you notice anything that needs a hero, be sure to make Amalaskae send me there. I don’t want to miss out because she’s not paying attention.” Zuzia smirks with one hand on her hip, and Ryukana smiles. “It’s a deal. I am confident Amalaskae will always be watching over you, but remember, she can’t do everything for you. If you find yourself in trouble, it’ll be more likely that she’ll send someone to help you, rather than help you herself. It is how the rules have been established.”

“I’m surprised there are so many rules. Why is that, if I’m allowed to know?”

Ryukana smiles gently. She faces the direction of the setting sun. In case she injured herself, Zuzia decided to perform her experiments in the evening so she could rest afterwards. Thankfully, that doesn’t seem to have been necessary, but she’s content with the outcome either way.

The angel explains softly, “Do you know why gravity only pulls you towards the ground, rather than pushing you away?”

Zuzia cocks her head. “This isn’t going to be some stupid philosophical-sounding nonsense like that show with the elves, is it?”

“No. It’s actually quite simple. Our God created gravity as it is as a part of how the things that exist interact with each other. There is a boundless wisdom required in creation when we can observe something as simple. While I do not make a habit of questioning God, I can speculate on the reasons for some of the rules that are in place. If Amalaskae or I took direct intervention on every issue, there would be no need for people to use their free will and overcome the challenges of life. If God were to solve all problems, there would be no

meaning to life and free will, both of which rely on a balance between order and chaos to progress forward. Our intervention comes in when something has transcended the boundaries of what should be possible, and could threaten the Realm of God and the other worlds tied to it. God can erase the problem, but we are afforded the opportunity to protect his precious creations through indirect means."

Zuzia nods, having heard the explanation and it making enough sense. Many people question the existence of God on Earth because terrible things happen, but the strength and resolve that humans develop as a result of overcoming those hardships is part of finding the right path. God gave humans free will knowing they would make mistakes, and it is sometimes said that Lucifer's intense love for and envy of humans, and the pride of his own vanity lead him to believe that he could do a better job at being god than God Himself. Many of the devil's temptations involve the 'easy' route, most often at the expense of others. Perseverance and resolve are among the highest priorities that God looks for in His children. His angels are meant to give guidance when it is needed, but not to fight the battles of God's children, lest the children become too weak to thrive on their own.

God saw fit to pair Zuzia with an angel who is not his most reliable, but He let her give Zuzia a great deal of power in this strange other world so that they could prove their worth and accomplish something of great value to benefit that world. It is both a test and lesson for Zuzia, from the patience and understanding needed to work with Amalaskae, and the humility to accept that Amalaskae really is likely to be her greatest ally in whatever challenges she faces.

Ryukana adds after Zuzia has had some time to process the first sentiment. "God is both a creator and a destroyer, and embodies order and chaos in

everything we see or do. As I said, there is not a single soul that could truly and fully comprehend His mind and reason behind every little thing, because He had to foresee and create every little thing, from the atoms that make up each element to the largest of stars. Even the possibility of Earth's most deadly weapons being created, and then somehow ending up on another world through unnatural means. God did not have to allow these strange things to take place, and yet He did. Only recently have I begun to truly appreciate the beauty in randomness and the comfort of certainty." She gives a devious smirk. "Amalaskae will be afraid for a while, but I speak from experience when I say this…" The angel leans closer to Zuzia, whispering softly, "As long as they are not overtly broken, God often forgives the rules being bent a little. After all, what good is free will if we, His creations, aren't allowed to exercise it?"

The young Polish woman stares at her in shock, and the angel smiles. "I'm not trying to tempt you into anything sinful or evil. I'm just saying… If push comes to shove, I *might* make an appearance, even when I probably shouldn't." She winks, adding sincerely, "And, the same goes for Amalaskae. Though, as I said, do everything in your power to overcome and endure on your own."

This time, it's Zuzia's turn to bow. "Thank you so much for your guidance. I'll take it to heart and go forth with courage and kindness in my heart."

"I know you will." Ryukana backs away a couple of steps. She adds, "Oh, and… You might not approve of Daniel fully, but try not to dislike him too much, either. He doesn't share the same beliefs as you, but he has a good heart."

"Thank you. I'll observe him with an open mind, then. So long as he respects me as well, of course."

Ryukana nods, "Then, I look forward to seeing what you achieve, Zuzanna."

“Same, Ryukana. Thank you.”

With that, Ryukana vanishes just as quickly as she arrived. Zuzia finishes her strength experiment by lifting the parts of the boulder with ease, in spite of each half weighing at least as much as a pickup truck. She can even throw them further than she could throw a softball on Earth, even without much effort.

She restores the area to as close to original as she can, leaving the two halves near each other so they won’t randomly shift and crush anyone passing by.

The young brunette makes her camp to rest for the night.

Little does she know what awaits her in the near future.

***

Daniel finds Geirahoel tending to the rooftop garden with her eggs nearby. She comes to a stop well before he gets close, but she refuses to face him.

The human approaches to within a few paces, and he lowers himself to his knees. “Geira-Mukori, it’s me…”

She doesn’t respond, simply holding her watering can to her chest and seemingly ignoring him.

“I know I upset you greatly. I have been reckless because I don’t value myself enough. Even with everything I have, I was floating between my detachment from Earth and my own life and the family I have here. Those feelings… those habits of just trudging forward… They’re hard to break. So…” He slides himself a little closer to her, adding softly, “I’m going to marry Ryuo and Reina, and… if you’ll have me…”

These words finally elicit a response, and Geirahoel whirls to face him. Her eyes are watering a little, and she isn't especially happy yet.

"What difference will it make!? You'll still… You'll still…!"

"I *will* die to protect any one of you, Mukori. That will never change. *But,* I know I have to fight harder and think smarter so that I become one of the most difficult beings to kill in this entire world. I don't know what I'll be up against, but… I'll need the help of my favorite dragons. And,… obviously, or… hopefully it's obvious… I love you, Mukori. I won't go so easily anymore. Please continue to look after me. I'm a mess, so I need capable people." He gives her a gentle smile.

Geirahoel's jaw trembles a little, and she swiftly leans forward, kissing him. Daniel lets her do as she wants, but he hums in surprise as a sweet and chilling sensation washes across his tongue as hers dances with his.

He immediately recognizes the flavor as ignityal, the fire-producing fluid the dragons make naturally. She keeps leaning forward, forcing Daniel backwards until he falls, with the orange dragon pinning him down and feeding him more and more of her ignityal. The sweetness coupled with the kiss is rushing to his head, and he feels a little dizzy after a bit.

When she pulls away, she has a strange look on her face, like she is pondering something.

With a flick of her tongue, a spark ignites intense flames in her mouth; her pilot flame for breathing fire.

For a moment, Daniel feels startled and briefly afraid for his life. She just filled his mouth with that very same fluid, a fluid that can burn hot enough to melt stone even at range from the source.

It is the very fuel of dragon fire, and he is the same normal human he had always been before coming to Zenkon.

Geirahoel says seriously, staring down at Daniel with an intense gaze, “I will not tolerate any more broken promises, Daniel. The very next time will lead to one final kiss.”

She leans closer and closer to him, and he can feel his heart racing. But, he grits his teeth and resists the urge to run. He knows he couldn’t escape if he wanted to, but more importantly, he isn’t afraid of Geirahoel. He trusts her.

Just as her mouth is about to reach his, the flames go out with a puff of black smoke, and a charcoal-like smell accompanies it. It’s the smell of dragon venom burning, which is one of the few substances that can extinguish burning ignityal.

She blows her breath on his nose, adding quietly, “You have given me the gift of love, Mukori. I won’t let anyone, not even you, take it away from me. If you are truly willing to marry me, then you will accept one more condition.”

“What is it?” asks Daniel, feeling like his own voice might leave him at any moment.

She cups his cheek with her hand. “You will pledge your soul to me to do whatever I wish with it after you perish.”

“I… that’s…” She narrows her eyes as he fumbles for words, and he adds, “I… don’t really object, but… I don’t know how to do that…”

“You will accept a cursed object from me, and you will never remove it from your person.”

Daniel cocks his head. “Alright… Do you have it now?”

“I will soon enough. And, if you take it off…” She kisses him again, intentionally licking more ignityal into his mouth. His heart beats faster once more, and she adds coldly, “I will track you down and give you a loving kiss.”

The mechanic tries to joke, “Well, now you’re just tempting me to…”

She pushes him down onto his back again, filling his mouth with the icy-sweet sensation. She then kisses his cheeks, leaving behind the same coldness that feels almost like ice. “You are weak, Mukori. If you want to escape me, you shouldn’t have stolen my heart. And, if you want to track down our enemies, you should be including your much stronger wives. You may be the Harbinger of Calamity, but I am a Valkyrie. *I* will choose when you die.”

Daniel smiles softly. “Very well. I accept, Mukori.”

She smiles, and this time, she kisses him more tenderly.

Of course, with them being alone, it’s only natural what their current position will lead to.

***

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 145: The Illusion of Comfort and Peace

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 145: The Illusion of Comfort and Peace

Hekate watches Doephluev as the archoneldwyn ‘maid’ tidies up Daniel’s stateroom. She doesn’t ask questions about what she finds, since at least some of the mess is because of her. She simply keeps herself busy with doing seemingly-simple servant work, even though she is overt about her schemes to become Daniel’s first and favorite Empress.

Given the recent events, Hekate is unsure how everything is going to play out. If he marries Ryuogriar and the others, will Hekate still be the ‘First Empress’? He has been adamant that she’ll remain the Empress for as long as she lives, more than how Daniel is ‘the Emperor’. For now, she’ll play along with his rules about age, but she wishes she could grow older more quickly.

And, ironically enough, Doephluev is also the person who can help her.

It irritates the little fox-eared feldrok girl, since Doephluev has become one of her most combative rivals. It’s even strange that both of them have stayed behind, since Doephluev has followed Daniel on multiple occasions.

It’s suspicious, and the human mechanic entrusted Hekate with finding anyone suspicious and reporting to him.

Sure, some *small* part of Hekate takes joy in the fact that the most suspicious person in the Fievegal is Doephluev, since it means there is some possibility of her being banished by Daniel, but Hekate has to be smart about it. If it

backfires, he could end up trusting the archoneldwyn seductress even more than he does already.

After folding the blankets and placing them neatly on Daniel's bed, Doephluev finally sighs. "Can I help you, your Greatness?"

Hekate flinches, certain that she had only cracked the door a tiny bit. Even if her quarry was aware that she is being watched, it should be extremely difficult to tell who is on the other side of the door.

Doephluev faces the door with her hands folded professionally in front of her like a true maid. "I know it's you, Hekate. You were growling quietly."

The young feldrok gasps as she recoils from the door. She whines impotently, and the door opens to reveal the archoneldwyn former-assassin. "You've been watching me all morning." She grins deviously, taunting Hekate with her mature wiles. "Have you found my schemes to take over the Fievegal through Daniel?" She snickers mockingly. "My scheme is right here," retorts the archoneldwyn as she pats her belly. She isn't noticeably pregnant yet, but she's starting to look a little more rounded than one would associate with a lithe and nimble assassin.

Hekate stammers, "N-N-No, I… I was just…"

Doephluev stalks closer, pinning Hekate to the wall. The young feldrok could easily overpower the Archoneldwyn right now, since her magic is sealed. Or… it should be. Even still, Hekate has absorbed a lot of mana from both Lugrae and the Devourer. Senn has remarked that she may be the most powerful being in the world, other than a god or goddess from the Divine Realm.

Doephluev uses her free hand to cup Hekate's chin, and for some reason, it all makes the young fox-eared girl's heart race. The archoneldwyn asks, "If you aren't spying on me, then what is it?"

“I… I… I wanted to ask for your help with something.”

This surprises Doephluev, and she takes a step back. “My help? Seriously?”

Hekate nods sheepishly. “Y-Yes. There’s a spell I want to learn, and… I think you’re the only one who will teach it to me.”

“Mmm… Going to finally eliminate the rest of your competition? I understand.” She nods confidently, certain of Hekate’s goal.

“N-No! Not that! I… I want to be able to use illusion spells.”

Doephluev cocks her head. “Really?”

The ravenette bobs her head to confirm. She is embarrassed to ask it, but Doephluev is surprisingly discreet, considering her goal to undermine all of Daniel’s other companions to raise her own consort rank.

Never has Hekate considered her position as ‘non-wife’ as useful as now, since, so long as Daniel is true to his word, Doephluev can never outrank her.

“Mmm… I see…” Doephluev snaps her fingers, and at once, she becomes an exact copy of Hekate, even sounding like her, which makes Hekate shiver. “So, you want to disguise yourself. Whatever for, I wonder?” The second Hekate smirks at the first, taunting the young feldrok girl with her own mirror image.

“I… I just want to learn more magic! That’s all!”

“Mmm-hmm,” retorts her new duplicate. It’s scary how proficient Doephluev is. If she wanted to, she could have likely infiltrated the Citadel this way and tricked Daniel, since he can’t see through magic on his own. She wonders if even the dragons could see through this magic, since Doephluev is surprisingly lifelike, other than her personality.

“Y-Yes. So, please teach me.” Hekate bows her head humbly. Truth be told, she doesn’t hate Doephluev that much anymore, but she is still on edge any time the archoneldwyn mistress makes it known that she is out to steal Daniel for herself.

The Hekate-doppleganger crosses her arms and looks away, even flattening her ears in irritation and swishing her tail back and forth. “I don’t do anything for free. You know that better than anyone.”

“You try to seduce Daniel all the time!”

“No, I successfully seduce my Darling all the time!” retorts the pseudo-maid bluntly. Hekate grunts in disbelief and shock, defeated by her own words.

Doephluev continues in Hekate’s voice, “More importantly, it’s different for someone you love. But, I get something out of it anyways, not least of which *is* that love.” The second Hekate smirks at the original with the same haughty expression Hekate has practiced for her empress routine, “I don’t love you, your Greatness.”

Hekate grits her teeth. She has to be careful, since her teeth are sharp, but she can’t help but feel frustrated by this impudent woman. Not that the feldrok girl is overly concerned with rank and noble authority, not to mention the fact that she’s an empress, but Doephluev certainly doesn’t hold anything back in any capacity.

“What do you want?” growls the true Hekate.

The false Hekate puts her finger to her chin as she looks up, pretending to think. For any of Daniel’s mistresses and empresses, she asks for the same thing most of the time; to exchange a day of empress in their place. She has several already stacked up, which she’ll likely cash in for some scheme of hers

once everything is in place for her to do so. While her overtly stated goal is to claim Daniel and his power for herself, it's possible she still has some other ulterior motive, considering what Daniel told Hekate to be looking out for.

"I want you to convince Daniel to make me a formal consort," states the archoneldwyn assassin in disguise. Hearing it from Hekate's own voice is less imposing than it would have been, though Doephluev rarely speaks harshly. She usually masks her vitriol and scheming behind a sweet tone, if anything.

"What? Then… What about your days as Empress?" asks Hekate, confused.

Doephluev smirks. "I can't keep racking up something like that to be treated so trivially, wouldn't you agree? Daniel might get upset if I treat his affections like a token to be traded. I already have a few, and I can use them to increase my position for a day." She smirks, indicating that she has far more planned for those special days than simply being able to accompany Daniel formally as 'Empress Doephluev' for a day or two. While she has left her own wording open to a distinction between consort and empress, even Hekate realizes that she's simply maneuvering for a higher position, and once achieved, she'll reach for the next position when the opportunity arises.

She's looking ahead and doesn't care about anything else except for getting what she wants.

"You forget, Doephluev," growls Hekate a little sassily, which is definitely awkward since she's talking to a virtual reflection of herself. "I am the Empress of the Fievegal. Even Daniel will say that my rank surpasses his. I can make you his consort if I want."

The seductive elf-like woman smirks proudly in her feldrok-girl disguise. "I do not think you wish to declare Daniel's mistresses for him. Have you not already

made that mistake once?”

The original Hekate flinches in surprise. It’s still somewhat recent, but no less relevant. She foolishly got Daniel another harem-member in Veiranoei through what the feldrok girl believed to be a lighthearted joke. But, Kalegrynten rightfully turned it into a lesson for her.

Hekate sighs. She’s no match for Doephluev, clearly. But, she doesn’t have to be a complete fool.

“Fine. But, we’ll make it a contract. Neither of us can use our exchange for harmful acts.”

Doephluev cocks her head, and her illusory triangular ears flop to the side, similar to Hekate. “Interesting, but I don’t object. I have been quite honest about simply wanting to be Empress. If I kill you, I lose that, so it’s better for me to seduce my way to the top, don’t you think?” She giggles playfully, and Hekate can’t help but growl as she squeezes her hands into fists.

Suddenly, she asks coldly, “Did you know?”

“Hmm? Know what?”

Hekate glares at her temporary doppleganger. “Did you know about the curse?”

Doephluev recoils slightly. “What?”

“The cursed thing! You saw through that girl’s magic tattoos! How could you not have seen the curse!?”

Doephluev retreats backwards as Hekate presses forwards, angered by the sudden and total realization.

“I swear to you, I didn’t know! I’m not all powerful! I wish I was, truly! But… Well…”

Hekate grips the blouse disguised by magic for the moment. “What do you know!?”

“I-I-I only know what I heard once. I don’t even know how long ago it was, since I know we were in stasis, but I don’t know how long!”

Hekate relaxes her grip a little, and Doephluev dissolves her illusion, returning to her normal appearance. She clears her throat, adding softly, “Brosjak was looking for the journal of a feldrok. One who was said to have reached the power of the gods. But, the feldrok disappeared without a trace. The stories kept saying that he became an elder god, since he was actually more ancient than the gods who govern this world. But,… I don’t know.”

“What does that have to do with the curse?” asks the feldrok girl skeptically.

“W-Well, you see, this feldrok discovered a way to manipulate souls. W-Which matches how the curse bound to Daniel. Even without magic, it probably would have entangled with him. But, according to him, the only reason he survived is because he has so little mana. I-I-If… If someone found a way to cast that curse… I… Well, they must have found the journals Brosjak was looking for.”

“What if it’s something that Brosjak knew about when you returned from stasis?” asks Hekate. “Would you tell me if you knew?”

Doephluev narrows her eyes in irritation. “We are rivals, your Greatness. Not enemies. I chose to accept my new life with Daniel because I was tired of being a weapon.” She looks to the side, adding distantly, “Brosjak had someone giving him instructions. I don’t know who, and I don’t think even he

was privy to most of the details. If his belongings are still in storage, though, we could analyze them for links to that maid, which might give us a clue."

Hekate nods. *That actually makes a lot of sense. I wonder if Daniel thought of that. Could he have been right after all? Is this some kind of fake war being orchestrated by puppet-masters?* This chapter was copied from novelping . com without permission.

She looks at Doephluev a little less skeptically. While Hekate is not a master of discerning lies or truth, she has a pretty good feeling that Doephluev is being sincere.

She asks bluntly, "Then, what would you say about the war between the east and the west being orchestrated by the same group of people?"

Doephluev doesn't scoff or dismiss the idea. She thinks for a moment before answering quietly. "I would think you need to be more careful about who you discuss that with, your Greatness. I just followed orders, but with players like the Strylak, Yaulwembor, Vaergraes and Senn in the world, there's not really a good explanation for why the war continued as it had. I mean, why didn't the west rally the east to try to fight the Devourer?" She crosses her arms, looking up to the side. "Of course, if they had, they might have never summoned Daniel from his world, so I would still be a meat-sword assassin."

Doephluev brushes her hair to the side as she wistfully stares off down the hall, though she's more likely imagining something much further away. "You know, I know Ryukana is a goddess. Or an angel. Or whatever other term that is served by beings that manage worlds. I don't care. When I was growing up, I learned that there are many forms of deities, including the elder gods. The elder gods are said to have come from people, and taught the gods how to treat their creations, lest we small folk lose faith and perish in despair. Among

those elder gods is the ancestor to the archoneldwyn. Don't think about it too hard, I don't think we're all inbred or anything like that. That's just the story."

Hekate scoffs. She comes from a race that was few in number to begin with, so she learned long ago not to ask those kinds of questions.

Doephluev continues her story, now looking at Hekate. "The elder archoneldwyn said that the encounter that is most surprising to us is likely to be our most important one." She smiles as she looks down at her own belly, petting it surprisingly affectionately. "My encounter with Daniel wasn't surprising at first. But, it evolved to be so." She adds softly, "He confessed what he did to me, though I thankfully don't remember it specifically. I had dreams of drowning for a time afterwards, even without knowing, but ever since…" She looks at the feldrok Empress with a fire all but literally glowing in her eyes. "A man who can defeat feldroks, dragons, faormyrs, and probably just about anything else without ever needing to abuse his authority over others… That is someone I can give my heart and soul to. I *will* make him mine, and I will be the Empress of the Fievegal. I will never give up, and I will take it without stooping low. I will teach you the magic you seek, because I know you are a woman of your word, Hekate. You will not rest until you have convinced Daniel, because you will promise to do so. And, I will continue to serve you not as a loyal retainer, but as your rival who will steal your love fair and square." She smirks at Hekate, who can't help but smile at the frustratingly straightforward former-assassin.

"Fine. Xyreko, bear witness."

The golem caretaker of the Citadel and Prime Minister of the Fievegal appears in a flash of light. "Present, your Greatness."

"I, Hekate fell Lawson, do hereby declare that I recognize and dub Doephluev arc Lawson as a rightful consort to Daniel, accepting his approval which I will

make him give, and that she is a member of this family.”

This surprises Doephluev a little. “R-Really?”

Hekate crosses her arms a little indignantly, looking away. “Prove to me you’re not an enemy. Help me root out whoever is. If you do that, I will be certain that you can at least be trusted to care for Daniel, even if I can’t trust you alone with him.”

Doephluev laughs, but she bows respectfully. “I owe you nothing, my dear rival Hekate. But, I will earn your trust because you will be the godmother to my children.”

Hekate blushes a little, huffing as she looks away to try to maintain her composure. “Very well. Then, report to me if anyone seems suspicious. B-But, don’t think this means I’m done watching you, either!”

The archoneldwyn servant smiles and bows respectfully. “I shall do as you command, your Greatness. At least until I’m the Empress.”

Hekate rolls her eyes and departs. She needs to check on some other things while she’s at it.

***

Daniel walks with Jieka and Tekten in his arms while the three dragon empresses follow him carrying their eggs. Shek and Skloe are giving them a tour of the improvements being made to the town around the Citadel, including the expansion beyond the wall. Hundreds of demon-kin and human-kin have been moving into the area after the destruction of the Orbicharium and the scattering of the tribes of the Citadel. Without Vaergraes to persuade the leaders and Zolorad to keep them loyal, the Covenant has virtually shattered.

Most of the Dattakoriens had already been moving to the Citadel territories thanks to the subjugation of the dragon lord, and the Chi'rinnis have been granted access to greater farmlands and hunting forests thanks to the Fievegal. Together, they have begun to help develop the lands into a usable state, with goblins forming the bulk of the workforce. Jieka and Tekten are Daniel's first princesses, even if the succession will likely go to the children of Hekate or one of the dragons, because Shek and Skloe don't wish for a higher station other than Daniel's lovers and goblin Queens.

"Papa, food!" exclaims Jieka happily as she points at one of the many pop-up stands that the demon-kin have built to sell grilled meat.

"Yes, yes, my Princess," replies Daniel warmly, earning him a happy giggle. Money is a somewhat new concept to the demon-kin, at least in the sense of how human-kin use it in the east, but they're adapting quickly. Trade is a fundamental part of virtually all societies, especially those that rise towards the pinnacle of prosperity. Earth has plenty of examples of virtually every system humans could come up with to both govern themselves and progress society into the future, and Daniel is doing his best to try to implement things that will quickly boost the well-being of his people, even if they are a random assortment of goblins, imps, gatonines, dattakoriens, dragons, succubi, Chi'rinnis, and a handful of other races.

The immigrants from Mattarglos have also started to arrive under secure escort from the Citadel. Ahok has been working on the other projects Daniel has tasked, so the power generators haven't gotten any stronger, leaving the Citadel with a relatively neutral mana production to usage ratio, thanks to the donations of the citizens. He won't be able to ignore the near-deficit forever, since he needs to be able to run the Citadel as well as rely on the military might of the golems if greater problems arise. The current army is doing well in the

Stalvaltan Grand Duchy, but they have minimal training. Daniel would like to see the multi-specialty proficiency of the Stalvaltan Guard applied to the weapons of Earth, which would make the Fievegal army a nearly unstoppable force in this world, even more so than they are now.

Regardless, the town around the Citadel is really growing and bustling with life. The farmlands are recovering from the last siege, and the Citadel is needing to draw on its storage reserves less and less.

The feldroks stockpiled for themselves for decades worth of resources, but there are a great deal more citizens that Daniel is caring for, and draining the resources haphazardly will only lead to ruin. He is no fool, even if he has virtually no leadership experience of any kind, save training junior colleagues in his various fields of work.

The governing body cannot simply give to its citizens indefinitely. There is a need for exchange, or the resources will run out.

Shek and Skloe come to a stop at the end of a small neighborhood leading towards a structure built on the lake. Daniel turns, facing the two goblins. “Is something wrong?”

Skloe answers, “We will return to our duties, if that’s alright.” She seems a little hesitant to answer.

The structure is the enclosure Daniel had built to house his next major financial endeavor for somewhat quick money. The one tasked with overseeing the endeavor is the second eldest of the female dragons, who goes by the name ‘Gold’.

“Has Gold done something to you?” asks Daniel a little coldly.

“N-No! Not at all!” urges Skloe as both goblin queens shrink. They are due any time for their third children each, and Daniel’s sons are being looked after by one of their own chosen servants while the boys nap.

Ryuogriar steps forward, looming over the two goblins. They aren’t afraid of the platinum dragon matriarch, but she does cut an imposing figure. She growls, “Speak, my dear sisters by law. If Lady Gold disrespected you…”

Shek finally speaks up, stepping in front of the more timid Skloe. “She did nothing wrong!” exclaims Shek. “Sh-Sh-She’s just… Um… W-With Daniel and our sisters by law, life is… comfortable and relaxing. L-Lady Gold… She’s…”

“Daniel is a stoopee fool!” exclaims Jieka with a laugh, and both goblin queens go pale. The laugh sounded like she was copying someone, however, and everyone looks at her.

“Gold dragee say Aunties Ryuo, Reina, and Geira too good for Papa,” adds Tekten softly.

“Nuh-uh!” retorts Jieka. “She say Aunties too good for Daniel because he a stinky fool.”

“J-Jieka! Tekten!” exclaims Shek, mortified by her daughter’s exclamations along with her step-daughter.

Tekten mumbles, “Jiejie, Papa is Daniel.”

Jieka is stunned by this, looking at Daniel with bewilderment.

Daniel simply smiles. He cuddles both girls to his cheeks so he can kiss them, replying gently, “Lady Gold said all of that, huh?”

“Mukori, we shall deal with…”

“There is nothing to deal with,” replies Daniel. He looks at his goblin consorts. “Has she said anything that made you feel inferior?”

“N-No!” replies Shek quickly. “She just… speaks more… abrasively than anyone else.”

“She doesn’t speak like the other dragons,” adds Skloe.

“Mukori, Gold will apologize…”

“Let’s go talk to her now,” interrupts Daniel with a polite smile. “Jieka, Tekten, what do you think? Do you want to go see how Lady Gold is doing?”

Jieka excitedly claps and nods, while Tekten is more reserved. Jieka replies warmly, “Gold is funny! I like talking to Gold!”

“Good,” replies Daniel. “She has always been fun for me, too.”

The three Dragon Empresses hum in disapproval, and he asks dryly, “Didn’t you try to talk me into making her a mistress, Mukori?”

All three dragons exclaim at the same time, “Those were different circumstances!” They blush and glance at each other as Daniel laughs, and he kneels to Shek and Skloe’s level. “My beloved queens, if she is too much for you, we’ll go on ahead. I’ll look after the princesses.”

“S-Sorry…” murmurs Shek.

He smiles, bouncing the two princesses in his arms. “Don’t be. How often do I get to play with the girls? They’ll protect me from Lady Gold’s wiles.”

Geirahoel clears her throat forcefully, and Daniel chuckles. “I was going to add ‘assuming she has any’.”

This causes the young orange dragon to blush, looking to the side.

Daniel carries the princesses, which only becomes challenging when Tekten insists on climbing up onto his shoulders to cling to the back of his head and see everything better. Since she manages rather skillfully, he allows it, which frees up his hand to open the door for himself. Tekten is usually pretty sharp, and it's possible she foresaw this scenario. But, it's also possible that she was just getting sore from the position of sitting against his side, which Jieka is still perfectly content doing, since she can cuddle against his cheek.

The inside of the building mainly provides protection from birds, as well as easy access to the growing number of aquariums housing a modest little shellfish of Zenkon that is some kind of muscle or clam. After confirming that they do, in fact, produce pearls, Daniel started having the goblins, orcs, and dattakoriens who were willing gather them and bring them, while the Chi'rinnis and goblin artisans make the aquariums.

"Well, well, well… Look who decided to grace me with his glorious presence."

The voice reminds Daniel of a female MMA fighter, possessing a little tint of masculinity to both her tone and mannerisms. She is seated on a large oval-shaped lounge chair with her legs crossed and her hand on her chin. Her egg is nestled in the cross of her legs while one of the experimental video crystals Ahok's team developed plays a movie for her to watch. "What brings you to my humble abode, oh great and powerful Emperor of Calamity?" The source of this chapter is novelping(.)com.

"Johella-…!" starts Ryuogriar angrily, but Daniel uses his free right hand to stop her. She halts, looking at him urgently. Reignleif knows Daniel's stance on the matter, and Geirahoel is also sometimes disrespectful with how she speaks,

considering Daniel's position as the Emperor of the Fievegal, second only to Hekate.

Gold grins as she leans her head smugly on her palm. "Are you going to draw on me, 'Master'? Have I insulted your delicate sensibilities?"

"Goldie!" exclaims Jieka, squirming to be let down. Daniel kneels, and he can feel Tekten slide off of his back while he places Jieka on her feet. Both goblin princesses jog to the golden-blonde dragon seated brazenly on her chair. She stares down at them without giving any real response, and the two goblin princesses stop at the edge of the big seat. "Lady Goldie have good morning?" asks Tekten politely. But, her half-sister ruins it by asking bluntly, "Goldie give tweats?"

The dragon glances at them, and then the other four, while Daniel watches cautiously, still crouching.

Gold lets out an exasperated sigh as she suddenly scratches her messy blonde hair. "Haaa… You little…" She digs inside of her casual robes, which Daniel asked her to wear in human form, lest she be naked by choice. She presents a couple of hard candies made from some kind of sweet sap or nectar that Daniel hasn't identified yet. She hands them over, saying sternly, "Don't choke on them. I won't feel bad if you do."

"O'tay!" "'Kay." reply the princesses in character. She pets their heads and pulls them up onto the seat as they begin licking their candies, and she stands up. The golden dragon makes sure her egg is safely nestled in the seat before approaching the group of four adults, asking more seriously, "Do you need something, Emperor Harbinger?"

Daniel scoffs. He says gently, “I appreciate you not calling me a filthy human in front of the girls. Thank you.”

She huffs and looks away. “I’m a dragon, not a monster.”

“You’re a monster when you’re hungry,” retorts Reignleif fearlessly, and Gold shoots her an impressive pouting glare. She glances at Geirahoel, adding a little sourly, “The brat is lucky she only knew lost time. Starvation punishment was far, far worse.”

“B-Brat!?” whines Geirahoel, knowing immediately who Gold is referring to.

Daniel replies bluntly, but kindly, “If I could, I would bring Morthybargaron back only so we could all mount his head on the mantle. I’d even lend you my rifle, if you wanted.”

Gold scoffs, crossing her arms under her chest to push her breasts up. She doesn’t appear in human form as well-endowed as Ryuogriar, but she is still an impressive specimen of feminine curves, considering her somewhat masculine personality. “My, my. Perhaps I’ve misjudged you after all, Harbinger. You do know how to seduce a dragon maiden.”

Ryuogriar scoffs, and Gold narrows her eyes at her.

The dragon empress smirks, replying warmly, “Apologies. I was only amused by the thought of either of us being considered ‘maidens’.”

“That’s not what you tell me in bed, Mukori…” teases Daniel, and Gold bursts into laughter as embarrassment claims the eldest dragon matriarch. Ryuogriar snaps, “Mukori!”

But, he ignores her outburst and tugging on his arms to ask, “So, Lady Gold, how fares our little wager?”

“Hmm? Fine, I guess. Just a few died. I cleaned them out like you said. Or… my minions did.” She gestures to one of the aquarium sections, where goblins are working together to clean one of the aquariums without disturbing the shellfish too much.

“Did you pry open their shells?” asks Daniel. Depending on the state of decay, there may be no need to forcibly separate the shells, but since they’re already dead, they don’t have to be gentle about it.

“No. We tossed them into the lake,” replies Gold.

Daniel palms his face with a sigh, and Gold whines, “What!? They were dead! What the heck was I supposed to do with them!? Eat them?”

“You should have asked for instructions,” retorts Geirahoel. “Ahok has a radio capable of reaching us anywhere.”

“Yes, or you could participate in the evening meeting,” adds Ryuogriar.

Gold frowns, frustrated by having to answer to anyone but herself.

“I’m not some good little housewife like the rest of you, and I don’t belong to anyone, not even the Harbinger of Calamity!”

“Oh?” retorts Ryuogriar, stepping towards Gold. “So says the tattoo on your chest.”

Gold growls, pressing her own chest to Ryuogriar’s, squishing their breasts together. “I would have chosen death if the Harbinger of Calamity was trying to enslave me.”

“You wouldn’t have had a choice if…”

“Ladies…” urges Daniel. When they both glare at him, he glances with his eyes towards the princesses. Tekten is watching nervously, but Jieka is watching like the only thing she is missing is popcorn.

The two dragons glance at the princesses and take a step back from each other. Each clears her throat, and Gold states, “Yes, well, either way, I didn’t know. I’m sorry, Emperor Harbinger.”

“His name is Daniel,” grumbles Reignleif.

“I know that. I’m not a moron.” Gold twirls her hair as she looks away. “It’s just… I’d rather have been defeated by the ‘Harbinger of Calamity’ instead of some random human named ‘Daniel’. That doesn’t even sound like a human name!”

“Wight!?” exclaims Jieka. “Daddy is Hawbinger of Cawamity!” The young goblin princess giggles excitedly as her sister nods in agreement, looking at Daniel like the greatest hero who ever lived. And, they’re only a few months old, completely lacking any knowledge of any of Daniel’s feats. Unless…

He looks at Gold, and she seems to piece it together at the same time. She grins and gives a devious giggle. “Have I done something wrong, your Imperial Great Harbinger-i-ness?”

“That wasn’t formal at all!” complains Geirahoel, while Daniel scoffs. “What have you been telling my children?”

“Mmm? Me? Only the brutal and savage truth of their monstrous father, the Harbinger of Calamity.”

Daniel covers his face with his palms as he sinks to a crouch.

“M-Mukori?” ask Reignleif and Ryuogriar urgently.

“I will never live down that cringe moment, will I? Curse my past self…” groans Daniel.

Geirahoel pets his head, giving him a merciless reply, “There, there, Mukori. It is important to share these moments with each other, so we can all laugh together later.”

Ryuogriar, Reignleif, and Gold all snicker, while Daniel groans, being ‘comforted’ by Geirahoel.

“You’ve even tainted the princesses…” mumbles Daniel.

Again, the dragons all scoff, and Reignleif teases, “Mukori… We will all be telling our children stories about you. The Harbinger of Calamity is also an important part of the history of Zenkon now.”

Daniel flops onto his back. “Dragons are truly terrorists…” mumbles the human with a warm expression on his face.

Regardless, his daughters both exclaim, “Daddy!” and they slide off of Gold’s chair to race to him, touching and hugging him to check on him.

“Oh, on another note, Emperor Harbinger,” starts Gold.

He looks up at her as the two goblin princesses get comfortable on Daniel’s chest. “What is it?”

“The former Dawnseer Bellphine arrived a couple days ago. She has been having nightmares.”

“Do we have any good apothecaries?” asks Daniel, glancing at the others each in turn.

“That’s not the point, Daniel,” retorts the warrior-like woman. “The point is, I think it’s a premonition.”

Daniel looks at the other three dragons, who have looks of concern on their faces. Ryuogriar explains softly, “Vaergraes would be better for explaining in full, but… The premonition that aligns with your arrival and Hekate’s awakening is why Morthybargaron was so afraid of you that he was desperate to gain control of the Citadel.”

“Premonitions are usually accurate in a sense,” adds Reignleif softly. “If a Dawnseer is having nightmares, it’s… only a matter of time before others do as well.”

Daniel nods. He asks seriously as he holds the two princesses, “Where is Bellphine now?”

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 146: Shadows of the Future

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 146: Shadows of the Future

Hekate flops down onto one of the comfortable chairs in the airship's lounge, where everyone regularly gathers. It's a little boring without Daniel and the Dragon Empresses to stimulate her, even if it's usually teasing in Ryuogriar's case. But, regardless, she's far from alone.

Wenlianna is working on some drawings for new magic equipment, and Aramellianna is overseeing the lecture Haldestania and Bunnrimae are undergoing for their etiquette training. The Grand Duchess is still weakened and bruised, but Magnir is standing by her side, ensuring he's ready to protect her or evacuate her at all costs.

Seeing Wenlianna and Aramellianna reminds the young feldrok girl of a conversation that was had with Daniel, though maybe it's several conversations that all added together.

When Wenlianna excuses herself to go to the small micro-lab she has near the engine room, Hekate follows her.

"Wenlianna!" calls out the fox-eared girl as she jogs close.

"Oh! Hekate! Wh-What can I do for you?" asks the magic artisan.

"I… um… I was just… wondering something…"

"You were? Something I can help with?"

“Yes. Well, er… I mean, it’s about you, so… um..” Hekate fidgets awkwardly, and the eldest Stalvaltan daughter looks around briefly. She perks up. “Ah! My room is just over here. Do… you mind if we head there to chat privately? Maybe it’ll be easier to say.”

Hekate nods gratefully, and she follows the brunette to her room. There, they both take seats to get comfortable.

“I won’t rush you, so take your time.”

“Thanks… I was just wondering… C-Could… Do you think… the dragons…?”

Wenlianna cocks her head, not knowing what Hekate wants. “Are you… worried about the dragons being the target of whoever attacked Mother?”

“N-No… Well, yes, but… I meant… They spend the most time with Daniel…”

“Oh… Hekate, I am touched that you are worried for me, but life happens. In the… hopefully off-chance that I’m infertile, perhaps we can find a solution. But, I think it’s just one of those things.”

Hekate slumps a little, flattening her ears in disappointment. Wenlianna quickly jogs over to sit with her, holding her to comfort the young empress. “I’ll let you know first thing the moment I know.”

Hekate nods in agreement. “Good. I just wish I could do something to help.”

Wenlianna scoffs. “If it weren’t for you, this airship wouldn’t be nearly safe enough to protect us.”

Hekate smiles. “I’m happy for that. So, then, how is the other thing going?”

“Other thing… Ah! You mean the emergency medical device?”

“Yes.”

“With Great Aunt Reina having departed, we’ll hit a bit of a snag. Miss Doephluev’s magic is profoundly helpful, though. I’m not sure how or why it was forgotten, but the archoneldwyn… Their rune magic is some of the most complex and potent spells I have ever witnessed, short of the raw mana output of the dragons or you.”

“But, what about… Will the curse affect it?”

“I… don’t know…” admits Wenlianna softly. “Even if it works, I’m not sure how we’ll recover him.”

“Leave that to us,” says Hekate proudly. “Xyreko has already tasked Daniel with finding ancient magic that can restore a soul back to life. So, as long as we can make something capture it,…” The young feldrok relaxes her posture to a gentle demeanor. “We’ll be able to protect him for a change.”

“O-On that note, the teleporter is almost finished. As I mentioned, I don’t have all of the equipment I need here, but I sent the components and designs to Ahok, so she’ll be finishing the final assembly and begin testing once she has time.”

“We have too many things that we need to do!” whines Hekate. “We’re still waiting on the mana detector!”

“Ah! That should be finished, actually. Since Daniel and the Dragon Empresses went to the Citadel, I’m certain they’ll retrieve it and bring it back so we can find out the causes of the monsters… hopefully.”

“Mm-hmm!” agrees the feldrok empress proudly. “That’s good, then. Tell her to immediately finish the teleporter and then start working on the steam engine. If

Daniel finds out what we're planning…"

"I think he'll listen. I… heard what Ryuogriar started. I know Daniel struggles with prioritizing himself. He was… actually worse when I first met him. There weren't monsters to fight, but…"

"I know…" murmurs Hekate. "I… don't talk about this much, but… It's because he has no mana that he was able to even look at Lugrae. I… I was… s-so scared… I felt like my heart was going to stop, and I couldn't hear or see anything. I felt like I was drowning… But, Daniel wasn't afraid. He thought it was a dragon at first, and he still tried to fight it." Hekate looks to the side.

"Daniel relies heavily on the element of surprise. Because he's so weak, every one of his enemies ignored him until he could get into a position to launch one or two devastating attacks." The young feldrok teen fidgets with her hands nervously, and Wenlianna continues to wait and listen patiently. The younger woman finally looks at the brunette with watering eyes, which catches Wenlianna off guard.

"If his first attack didn't work…" Hekate can't finish the thought. Deep down, she has always known, but watching the fight with Brosjak was agonizing, because it was the first time Daniel had to struggle on the fly to fight an enemy. From what Doephluev said, the ruins where the elemental scarf came from was similarly reckless, and then… the monsters of Mattarglos.

Wenlianna puts her hands on Hekate's, squeezing them for reassurance. "Hekate, when my father passed away, it was devastating to us. I would do anything now that I know about the revival potations. But,…" Wenlianna smiles. "Mother stepped into his role so swiftly. She was heartbroken, but she didn't have time to mourn. Father's relatives were coming from all corners of the kingdom to try to cannibalize the Grand Duchy, and Mother did many things to

protect our home." She closes her hand in tightly. "I… I always liked magic devices and reading more than the parties and social connections. I… hate dressing up, and I absolutely *hate* being asked to dance by money-hungry men. Father chose Mother because he liked her work ethic, and Mother fell in love with him because he was a kind but stern man who never budged on his morals, and he was very attentive to her." She looks at Hekate after reminiscing, "Apologies for rambling a little, but my point is that I dove even more into the magic devices to try and make things to make life easier for my family, and to protect them with things that only I could do." Her own eyes water, and she adds softly, "Father was like a mountain to me. A giant. I never believed I could be like him, and I still don't. Even Mother is a colossus whose shadow I may never leave. But,…" She smiles proudly, even as tears trickle down her cheeks. "Doing the things only I can do is what Father would want."

"The things only I can do…" murmurs Hekate as she thinks. They both sniffle a little, and they look at each other with rosy cheeks. Both young women laugh, and Hekate stands up. "Thanks Wenlianna. I'm gonna go do what only I can do now."

"If you need a hand, I'll be on the airship for the foreseeable future."

The feldrok girl nods and leaves the room. She's not sure what things only she, a young impressionable teen who was a slave until only a year or so ago, can do that no one else can, but she has an abundant supply of mana and an important task.

She finds Kera'tai, Aoloan, Treia, Gwenesphia, and Veiranoei in the lounge now, in addition to Roeta, Magnir, and Aramellianna, who is having an informal audience with some people Hekate doesn't recognize.

The first five seem to be discussing a potential trade route through Fort Peony for merchants travelling through Mattarglos to use.

"… Empire will almost certainly want to establish tariffs on all goods passing through an Imperial Fort," explains Gwenesphia. "Assuming that Sundenelle allows it."

"Fortunately, we're not moving crucial goods via the ground route," replies Treia. "It's possible that the burden on Peony might be a little too great as well, depending on how much traffic there is."

"I can't imagine it will be too much, will it?" asks Kera'tai politely. "How many merchants will want to make such a long journey? The Chi'rinnis will gladly open trade, but other than the Fievegal, we don't traditionally trade in currency. The problem might be the goblin and imp tribes that haven't joined the Fievegal. They often practice scavenging and thievery if they believe they have the advantage."

Aoloan adds, "There are also many different tribes of both, including more passive groups and more… aggressive ones."

Hekate asks, "Didn't we already conclude that Peony isn't a good option?" She approaches the group, who each give her a smile upon her arrival.

"We were just discussing for the interim. Assuming the railroad works and the naval port is functional, it'll take at least a year or more to construct them all, assuming we can get the resources moving right away," explains Gwenesphia.

"Grandfather is already sending out messages to the various territories between the capital and the three port towns," adds Veiranoei. "He wants to gauge interest levels and the safest route. Though, I'm sure it'll be a challenge to explain to everyone, since… I'm still a little skeptical of how it will work."

“The construction will take time either way,” replies Gwenesphia. “I was just hoping the Chi’rinnis and dattakoriens might be interested in helping us secure the route to the Citadel.”

“I’ll send a message on the next shuttle to be passed to one of my people,” answers Kera’tai proudly. “I am certain it won’t be an issue.”

“I guess I’m not needed for this, then,” replies Hekate, a little disappointed.

The others are sympathetic, and Aoloan replies, “You do have final say on anything the Fievegal does. Even if Daniel left Doephluev to watch over you…” The succubus gives an apologetic look, and Hekate cocks her head.

“What?”

The others are a little surprised by this as well. “Doephluev?” asks Gwenesphia. “I thought it was only because he’s going to check on Geirahoel, so he didn’t drag her along.”

“I’m not so sure. I’ve only seen her when I see Hekate.”

The feldrok girl flattens her ears subconsciously. *Would Daniel have her spy on me? Or, does he think I need protection? I’m not a child…*

Gwenesphia thinks out loud, “I suppose that’s true. She doesn’t show herself very often.”

“I wouldn’t think much of it,” replies Treia. “I’ve yet to see her do anything other than antagonize whoever gives her attention.”

The feldrok Empress stands up, saying seriously, “I have to go check on something.”

“O-Oh! Um, alright. If you need anything, please don’t hesitate to ask.” Gwenesphia grins and pats her void bag as she jokes, “I’m almost as powerful as the Harbinger of Calamity myself.”

Everyone snickers, and Treia teases, “Don’t let Daniel hear that.”

Again, everyone shares a laugh, and Hekate makes her way out. She needs to have another word with Doephluev.

***

Bellphine follows patiently as Ucahote shows her around the private quarters area of the Citadel. To her surprise, Erimaya and Heralesse are both in the Citadel. They both recognized her as well, though she struggled to make a proper greeting due to her stammer.

Because Rikuto banned Dawnseeing in Mornistae, Bellphine no longer had a profession, and her stammer has made her unattractive as a noble wife, leaving her effectively without anywhere to belong. Because of this, her parents told her that she needed to find her own way, and she heard about a strange opportunity from merchants in contact with the Grand Duchess and her people.

Now, she’s halfway across the continent from where she grew up in the most mysterious and technologically advanced fortress she has ever seen. Even the fabric for her dress and apron are better quality than the ceremonial robes she wore as a Dawnseer.

“If you have any questions, Miss Bellphine, please do give me an indication, and I will do my best to answer.”

She nods. She doesn’t like to talk if she doesn’t have to, since it’s embarrassing for her struggling just to speak. Her parents and siblings were

ashamed of her, but it wasn't her fault. They have no idea what she felt when the wave hit her. The terror and madness that gripped her made those around her nearly send her to a convent to live out the rest of her days as a nun.

Bellphine writes a note on the notepad Ucahote gave to her, and she gently taps his bicep. The golem General is one of many of the sentient golems that reside in the Citadel, and the others are giving tours to the other new servants hired by the Fievegal. He looks at her with a seemingly gentle movement, and she feels thankful that she was paired with the respectful and kind being. It's easy to forget that he's not a normal living person.

She shows him her note, which reads, "[Pardon me, but why are the Queen and Princess of Mornistae here? Are they prisoners?]"

"Ah, that. Well, Erimaya arrived on her own, offering herself as a sort of collateral to prevent a revenge strike on Mornistae by Daniel. Heralesse stumbled upon our staging of forces in the Grand Duchy. They're both otherwise guests here, as long as Heralesse remains docile."

Bellphine nods in understanding.

"If you have thoughts of trying to free them, it is inadvisable. Daniel is keeping them here so they won't be harmed as collateral. There is nowhere safer than the Citadel."

Bellphine shakes her head vigorously. "[I'm no hero.]"

Ucahote chuckles. "It doesn't take a hero to be reckless and try to do 'the right thing'."

"There you are," calls out a male voice, and both Ucahote and Bellphine turn.

Approaching them is the strange, tall otherworlder known to Bellphine simply as Daniel. He is accompanied by four women carrying large eggs, and each woman possessing a reptilian tail and metallic horns. Behind them, they are escorted by a similar male being, with grey hair and a silvery tail and horns. Bellphine has only gotten a brief overview so far, but she recognizes the fact that at least some of the Empresses are in her presence now, along with Daniel the Emperor.

Bellphine kneels quickly, stammering out, “G-G-Good d-d-d-d-day t-to the E-E…”

Daniel kneels directly in front of her, which startles her and interrupts her. He says gently, “I’m aware of your condition, Miss Bellphine. Don’t feel the need to force yourself. Please feel free to write your notes if it’s too difficult to speak.”

She nods gratefully, truly touched that Daniel is showing her such deference. Even her own parents were disappointed in her. She carefully jots down her greeting to Daniel and the Empresses, and he smiles and nods. He introduces everyone to her, and then asks, “How are you settling in?”

She nods sheepishly. Her lifetime of etiquette training demands she be respectful, but Daniel’s straightforward and respectful way of speaking to her is making it awkward.

“[It’s a lot to take in, your Grace, but I am grateful to be here.]”

“Good. If you have any trouble, please bring it to the attention of any of the golems, or the empresses. Well… definitely the dragons or Hekate at least.”

She nods in confirmation of his advice. He then asks, “Do you mind if I ask you something?”

“[Please do. I am inexperienced in a lot of ways, but I will do what I can.]”

“Thank you. Lady Gold tells me that you’ve been having nightmares.”

Bellphine twitches in surprise. She glances at the gold-haired dragon, who explains, “I heard it from Balamae. I felt it was something that the Emperor should know, coming from a Dawnseer.”

Bellphine’s face darkens a little, and she trembles slightly.

Daniel says gently, “I’m not going to force you to do anything, but if you could at least share what you can about the nightmare, that will be a good place for us to start.”

“Be mindful, Mukori,” starts Ryuogriar. “Sometimes, a nightmare is just a nightmare.”

“If that was said before, Mukori wouldn’t have been summoned,” counters Reignleif softly. “Even if the thing they feared in the visions was Mukori, it’s only because they performed the summoning that the Devourer is dead now.”

“I agree. And, I’m not trying to treat Mukori like a fool, but this is magic that is not common on this side of the mountains, because the Uhl’tall practice a different artform similar in ability.”

“Either way, if others start having the same nightmare,” interjects Gold. “We’ll know it is more and more likely to be a premonition.”

“Minister Xyreko will also tell you to be cautious,” explains Ucahote. “A Dawnsight or premonition do not hold intent. It is merely a glimpse at the future through a very small hole.”

Bellphine nods in agreement, looking at Daniel nervously.

“Thank you all for the advice. I will strive not to make any rash decisions with the information. But, if we can start to make sense of what we might be up against, I can try to come up with countermeasures.”

Bellphine looks at the others, who don’t have any further warnings or objections. Daniel asks gently, “Will you write down what you saw in your vision?”

She agrees, and they head to an office room where a handful of goblins, dattakoriens, and ogres are working. The demon-kin notice the group entering, and they all bow and salute as they give the Imperial Family their greetings.

Bellphine writes down everything she saw in the vision as well as she can. Once she’s satisfied that she got everything, she hands it over to Daniel.

He reads it with a serious expression as the four dragon women all lean over his shoulders to read it as well.

“[The vision I saw in my dreams was of a bright rainbow-colored fire that was consuming everything, including castles, fields, and even down into the ground. I saw dragons in flight…]” Daniel notices that ‘dragons’ was written by a trembling hand, as if she’s afraid of there being an implication of an accusation.

He continues reading, “[They were breathing fire and racing towards the cities.”

The young Dawnseer-turned-Lady-in-Waiting quickly scribbles down another note and hands it over, even before Daniel has finished reading the first one.

This one says, “[I don’t know what the dragons were doing, I only saw them. Please understand…]”

“We’re not angry at you, child,” replies Ryuogriar gently.

“If what you say is true, it’s more likely we were trying to assist others against whatever the ‘rainbow fire is’,” replies Reignleif with her soft voice. “And, the feldrok… That couldn’t be… Could it?”

“Certainly not,” replies Ryuogriar.

Daniel continues reading the first note, since he’s not sure what they’re talking about yet. “[There was an eclipse, and I felt like I saw you, Emperor Daniel. You were standing in the heart of the flames, but you weren’t burning. Then, something happened. I saw a dragon, but it wasn’t a dragon. It had glowing yellow eyes, fox ears, and jet black fur tinted with a red and purple glow. It was trying to cast magic in a dark place, and I saw cities burning. The last thing I saw was a monster with six eyes, and it said the words, ‘You truly are my Harbinger’.]”

Daniel studies the note. Like the dragons, he doesn’t believe for a second that the feldrok in question is Hekate, but that is a whole other issue. What troubles him more is the very last being described in the vision. A creature with six eyes matches what Daniel caught a glimpse of when he collapsed from the curse. And, the fact that it spoke of a ‘Harbinger’ gives him a light churn in his stomach. He was pulled to this world to slay Vaergraes, but in actuality, the real goal was to defeat the Devourer. Now, there is a new vision with a new monster, and one that seems to know Daniel specifically.

That said, he doesn’t forget the warnings and advice. Rikuto and Daniel were pulled from Earth with the goal of fighting Vaergraes, but the former Demon Queen was not the true enemy. If he reacts emotionally or fearfully, he is likely to only make things worse, if not play right into the premonition.

If I’m going to need to fight another feldrok and that being… I won’t be able to rely on surprise forever. I hate to do this, but… If worse comes to worse, I’d

prefer to have everything I could possibly need, rather than be under-prepared.

Daniel glances at the dragons who are still looming over him. Gold is even leaning on the sofa behind him, while Reignleif is hugging his neck, and Geirahoel and Ryuogriar are seated beside him.

“What is it?” asks Ryuogriar, perceptive to Daniel’s expressions, and less afraid to question him.

He ponders what he should tell her, but a hand lands on his other side forearm. He looks at Geirahoel, and she makes a point of licking her teeth behind her lips while staring into his eyes meaningfully. She’s warning him.

The mechanic sighs. “I can’t and won’t make any moves outside of the Fievegal based on this information. There’s no telling what will cause the events Bellphine has seen, nor when they’ll happen, right?”

“That’s right,” replies Reignlief confidently, even with her soft voice. Follow the newest chapters on novelping(.)com.

Daniel bobs his head, reaffirmed of his decision. “So, the best and most important thing I can do is to prepare for the most powerful enemy we could face. For now, we should assume it’s a feldrok stronger than Hekate.”

The dragons nod in agreement, and Geirahoel states, “That much is obvious. Why the hesitation, Mukori?”

Daniel twists his lips as he thinks of how to say it. Bellphine is essentially the only one present that he doesn’t want to know about his plans, just to be safe, since Gold was alive and well when Daniel and the others defeated the Devourer.

That said,… He looks at Bellphine. The young woman had her life dramatically altered because of Daniel. Her mind was nearly destroyed, and she's lucky to be alive and have any semblance of her identity intact, let alone be able to function.

"I have several things we need to build as quickly as possible, and among them… the ultimate backup."

The Dragon Empresses gasp, specifically, and Ryuogriar asks softly, "Mukori, you said…"

"I know what I said…" interrupts Daniel gently. "But, if it comes to direct conflict… I am the weakest person in this world. I won't be able to fight head to head against a feldrok. We *might* be able to win with anti-magic rounds for the rifle, but… after the fight with Yaulwembor…" He looks up at the ceiling, adding distantly, "If I can catch the enemy off-guard, specifically completely unaware, then I have a decent chance. But,…" He gives each of the dragons a worried expression. "If a feldrok stronger than Neith were to be aware of me and my current equipment, Yaulwembor is proof that there is too little that I can do…"

"That's not true, Mukori," retorts Geirahoel sternly. "The Fievegal is what it is for a different reason. You are our center, but it is not just *you* who will be fighting these enemies." She takes his hands, urging sternly, "You recently renewed a promise, and you claim you will keep this one, because you are going to accept your place in this world. Was that a lie?"

"N-No… But,…"

"Then, you will be one of many fighting these new enemies. We are with you, now and always."

“The combat team you took to fight Yaulwembor was holding back,” states Reignleif seriously, petting Daniel’s head as she continues to hold him from behind. Neith nods in agreement with her, adding confidently, “Yaulwembor was stronger than any one of us, except maybe Her Greatness Hekate or Lady Senn, but even holding back, we managed victory without losing anyone.”

“If we have to, Mukori, we will defeat our enemies, no matter the cost to the world,” declares Ryuogriar powerfully. “A thousand or a million lives lost are nothing compared to the extinction of this world. If those are the stakes, then we will carry the burden you can not. You come from a peaceful world. The only one here with as little blood on their hands as you is Miss Bellphine.”

Daniel looks at all five present dragons. He knew, deep down, that they were all viewed as monsters by most other races on some level, though he has never asked to what extent. He is personally aware of the Orbicharium, which would have been no shortage of death on the part of the four dragons who led the assault. But, what happened during the centuries between the fall of the feldroks and the day Daniel defeated the dragons?

I don’t think I need or want to know. It’s the past now, and they’re all my responsibility now.

“We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it,” replies Daniel quietly. “I only want to have them ready in case. And, I have two other projects the Citadel can work on making possible. One will be armor to make me strong enough to survive being in battle, and the other will be another weapon that might not need us to use the bombs.”

A chuckle draws everyone’s attention to slightly behind and to the side from Daniel. Everyone is now looking at Gold, who is snickering deviously with an

eager smile on her face as she looks at Daniel. “Emperor Harbinger,… I would personally like to make a request.”

“Something amusing?” asks Ryuogriar coldly, unamused by the masculine woman’s humor.

“Only the most amusing, dear Sister.” She turns a little more serious, though there is a hint of excitement in her voice. “When your new armor is ready, I wish to be your opponent.”

“What!?” snap all three of the Dragon Empress as they whirl to put themselves between Daniel and the golden dragon. The warrior woman smirks as she crosses her arms on top of her egg, which is in a carrying harness.

“The Harbinger of Calamity will be worthless if he cannot actually fight after all of his effort, no? Who else will give him an honest fight to test his new equipment?” She looks at Ryuogriar, the most overtly loyal of the Empresses. “You, Madame Loyal Wife?” Ryuogriar grits her teeth, while Gold looks at Reignleif next, “Or you, Miss Cuddleclaws?” She smirks as she looks at Geirahoel, who is already fuming even more than the platinum dragon. “You’d ‘attack’ him, of that I have no doubt. But, the armor test will be useless.” Geirahoel blushes and ignites her pilot flame, but the second eldest dragon matriarch turns around to look at Neith. “What about you, Sir Knight? Can you fight Daniel without reserve to ensure his armor is even useful?” Neith doesn’t lose his nerve, but he does glance at Daniel, and then back at Gold. He admits, “No. I have no interest in taking that risk.”

“I want a fair fight with the Harbinger of Calamity. A rematch. Better, a rematch with an even stronger Harbinger.” She grins at Daniel. “I will do everything I can to scale upwards cautiously so I do not kill you, with your permission of course.

If you can not defeat me, then there is no chance at all you will defeat any feldrok, no matter who it is."

Geirahoel tries to lunge forward, but Gold skillfully catches her hand before the youngest dragon can grip her collar. The elder of the two growls, "I cannot harm you currently, your Grace, but you know as well as I do, the name used for the contract is not my true name. And, I am permitted to defend myself."

Geirahoel struggles in vain to pull her hand free, and she snarls, "You'll just use it as an excuse to hurt Daniel!"

"I'm using it as an excuse to have a fair fight with an opponent who defeated me once already. And, of course, I will have terms for if I win the fight. Without killing him, of course. I will gladly forfeit my life if I fail and cause irreparable harm to you, your Imperial Grace." She releases Geirahoel and pushes her aside to step closer to Daniel. The haughty and impertinent dragon takes a knee, surprising all of the other dragons present. "Emperor Daniel, I swear on my life that I will fight you fair and square, so please grant me this fight. There will be danger for both of us, I can not deny that. But, we both have a progeny that will carry on our bloodlines, and I trust you to pursue a victory condition where I survive, just as I ask you to trust in me."

Daniel looks at the other four dragons present. Neith doesn't have much personal experience with Gold, but even he seems to be as surprised as the three Empresses who do know the proud dragoness. The Empresses look at Daniel with mixed feelings.

He is quiet for only a moment as he thinks about it. Gold is right. He'll need to test anything he intends to use in battle, and a dragon is the closest he can get to fighting someone powerful enough to compare to the enemies he'll need to

defeat, since Hekate will be in the same boat as the Dragon Empresses and Neith, and Senn is still an unknown factor.

“Mukoris, I would like you to grant us permission.”

This surprises the Empresses as well, and Geirahoel immediately exclaims, “Denied!”

“Hear me out,” urges Daniel. “Gold is right. I won’t send the rest of you to fight while I stand on the sidelines. I won’t fight alone this time, but I won’t survive alone, either. So, I need to make all the preparations I can to win the fight. Lady Gold won’t hold back, but I trust that she will fight in good faith. She is the best choice.”

“But… If you get hurt… or worse…”

“I am immune to magic again because of the curse. I regret my negligence for that. But, I can still be treated like inanimate objects without mana.”

There is an awkward silence for a moment, and Neith blurts out, “Void bags…”

“What!?” snaps Geirahoel. “That’s…!”

“That’s exactly right,” confirms Daniel. “Store me right away if the worst should happen, and do what it takes to bring me back. I’m sure there will have to be a way, even if it means… Well, I’m sure you will find a way.”

“What way!?” panics Geirahoel as she grips Daniel’s shirt now, demanding the thought he trailed off. “I’m not sure!” pleads Daniel as she pressures him. “I’m just certain that, in this world of magic, there must be something else like Nemaisol or the elemental scarf with untold power. A fairy’s wish, a magical divine elixir that works on anyone, something. And, I trust you to find it. I’m

obviously hoping the armor does its job, though. That's the hurdle I have to cross first, and I only have some suspicions right now."

She finally releases him, and she looks at Reignleif and Ryuogriar.

After a moment, Reignleif replies, "I agree with Mukori and Gold. It's better that Daniel tests anything he makes in the most controlled conditions we can get, so there is at least some confidence that it'll work."

Ryuogriar sighs, "I don't like it, but unfortunately, I don't know of a better solution."

"The golems," growls Geirahoel. "Make golems wear the armor to test it." She looks at Gold, retorting bluntly, "You already lost to the Harbinger of Calamity. Just because you don't like being defeated does not change the fact that you were."

The golden dragon looks to the side, but Daniel hugs Geirahoel from behind, surprising her. "Mukori… Gold is willing to help, and she's making a request. I would like to oblige her, if it is what she wishes."

The orange dragon groans and whines. "But… what about what I wish? Is her wish more important than mine?"

"No, but your real wish is that I'll be safe, right? Just as my wish is that you'll all be safe as well."

She whines and groans. "I… The first battle will be with a golem," retorts the orange dragon after a long internal battle. "Th-Then… If the golem can survive, I *might* allow Daniel to wear it."

The group sighs, and Gold replies gently, "Thank you, Geirahoel. I will not take your Mukori's safety lightly. If we could spar on the same level, I would not

need to make such a request."

Daniel then asks as Gold rises back to her feet, "So, Lady Gold, assuming you win, what will you ask for?"

She smiles. "Simple. I want my child to be granted a formally high rank in the Fievegal so that he or she is free; a friend to the Imperial Family, not a servant."

Daniel nods. "Very well. I'll figure out how to structure it later. For now, I need to get to work on the designs. I've been thinking about it since Yaulwembor, and there was something I wanted to look into thanks to her." He looks at Bellphine, who has been patiently waiting on the conclusion of the conversation. "Miss Bellphine, I sincerely thank you for the prophetic dream. If there are ever any new details, please relay them to me so we can consider how best to address them."

She nods cautiously, but she writes a note. "[The anti-magic weapons that you used that day… Is that what you were talking about earlier?]"

Daniel nods, and she writes another note.

"[Please forgive my selfish request, your Grace, but… please inform me when you will be using it.]"

Daniel nods. "I'll do you one better. I will ensure you're completely safe from its effects."

She relaxes and bows respectfully. "Th-Th-Th-Thank y-y-you, y-yo-your G-G-G-G-Grace."

"I am responsible for what happened to you. Come what may, I will ensure the rest of your life is as comfortable as possible."

She smiles tenderly, nodding as tears fill her eyes.

The ‘Harbinger of Calamity’ may be a fraudulent title in truth, but Daniel will do everything he can to ensure that his family and allies are able to move towards prosperity so long as he shall live.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 146.1: A Taste of Order and Chaos

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 146.1: A Taste of Order and Chaos

~Greetings Dear Readers! This is a bonus chapter that might do more harm than good to the overall mystique and power scale of Chaos and Order, so if you have thoughts on this chapter after reading it, please let me know.~

***

Ryukana can't stop thinking about the conversation she had with Chaos and Order outside of existence; a place that she couldn't even comprehend. While Ryukana theoretically has the power to shape a world, including to destroy it, it truly made her feel the gap between herself and her creators, who can effortlessly create and destroy the entire universe.

The goddess meditates on the information she got the first time, and how she can help Amalaskae, her summon, Daniel, and Rikuto keep Zenkon in one piece.

That said, she can't stop thinking about the story Chaos mentioned about a man that was able to apparently exceed their power.

I wonder if I'm allowed to ask more about it. Or even, why did they need to create us…

"If you're that curious, you only have to ask. After all, we allow blasphemy in much more open terms, do we not?"

Just as Ryukana is recognizing Chaos's voice, she finds herself in the same strange warped dimension that Chaos and Order reside in normally, and which no one, not even anomalies capable of doing so in the Divine Realm can intrude upon or observe the conversation.

The violet-haired lesser goddess immediately bows. "My glorious creators, Lady Chaos, Lady Order."

"Ryukana," replies Order with her usual stoic expression and tone.

"I thought you might still be stewing on what you heard," teases Chaos as she grins at Ryukana deviously. The resident of the Divine Realm knows her role is to serve, but also to protect a whole world. She has never thought of herself as a mere puppet on strings, but this time, it seems she danced to Chaos's machinations in time with the tune.

For her part, Chaos doesn't rub it in nor does she mock Ryukana for being an apparent plaything. She simply playfully remarks on the goal of the conversation. "Were you wondering which side of the line you fall on; creator or creation?"

"I know that I am a sort of middle-ground between the two," replies the subordinate goddess politely. "I am to handle tasks beneath your interest."

"You say that as though we are not capable of being interested in the smallest of details," counters the more youthful seeming of the two Primordial Goddesses. "I'll have you know, I know what Daniel ate for breakfast this morning. I also know what mistake Bob made in accounting, the exact time Carol plans on arriving for her date, the shoe-size of Reignleif, the years of Jim's three SUV's that he has owned, and the precise fluctuations confirming or denying the concept of climate change on Earth."

At face value, all of that information is completely useless, but it proves Chaos's point. She is cognizant of virtually anything and everything. If anything, it reminds Ryukaka of how imperfect she is as a middle-management goddess. She is powerful, but she made a glaring and obvious mistake.

"I'm not sure how to word it exactly, then," starts the violet-haired world manager. "Only that you are the superior authority of all of existence, and I am your humble servant."

"You have existed for a great deal of time," starts Order, continuing with a gentle and stoic tone. "As with most of the others, you rarely choose to wonder about your own existence. You should know that curiosity itself is not a punishable action."

"Actually, do you even know of anyone who has been erased?" asks Chaos bluntly.

Ryukana hesitates. Once more, she has been asked a question she has no answer for. In all of her existence, she has never heard of anyone that was erased for any crime. There were always the rumors and warnings the senior gods and goddesses give to their juniors, but even the list of names Ryukana has heard is abundantly short, with Kaeralegier being the only name she can think of.

The truth is the only answer she needs to give, though. "I know of no one, personally, my Lady."

"Mm-hmm. Of course, we could rewrite everyone's memories if we wanted to." The entropic goddess shrugs deviously, while her counterpart cracks a small smile.

Order then challenges Ryukana further. "What do you think we are, truly?"

“I…” The violet-haired subordinate goddess studies both Primordial goddesses for a moment. Chaos has been shifting shapes without any sort of warning or seeming change, yet her appearance will suddenly be different, especially when Ryukana looks away from her for a moment. Right now, she appears to be some sort of reptilian bipedal race. “As you’ve mentioned, your true form is beyond my comprehension, but I suppose…” She trails off, unsure of how to answer. She doesn’t want to insult them by belittling their being in some way, nor over-simplifying.

“What about our creator?” asks Chaos deviously, implying with her tone that the answer could truly go either way; they transcend time, so they don’t have a creator, or the Primordial Goddesses are more powerful versions of their creations in that sense. “You can guess, Ryukana,” teases the mischievous all-powerful being. “We won’t be angry. Just take a stab in the dark. What came before my dear sister and I?” She grins cheekily, waiting for any answer to explain how it is wrong.”

Still, Ryukana is afraid to take any guesses. Not wanting to simply refuse to answer, though, the subordinate goddess does finally offer, “The simplest answer would be the simplest state; the nothingness of the Void, my Lady.”

Order answers with a simple and direct tone, “A safe answer, but wrong. There have always been two. No more, no less. There has always been the perfect state of order; the Void, as well as the ever-changing state of chaos; Existence. What you see before you are simply manifestations of ourselves into a friendly form for ease of communication.”

During the conversation, Chaos continues to take on many forms, including an old woman, an aquatic alien, a fairy, a spider, smoke, and various others.

Order adds, “Even we cannot define a ‘before’, in the way that you cannot personally picture what you were before you came into being. But, this is also because time *exists* because of us, not the other way around, as is the case for all of the things that exist. Creation takes time. Destruction takes time. Time must exist for them to be able to occur. We do not occur. We simply are, and from our perspective, have always been.”

“*I* like to believe our mother, or maybe our father, was a lonely spark of power,” starts Chaos. She even creates a visualization of her story. “That lonely spark finally decided to become two, giving birth to Order and Chaos; nothingness and existence.”

“I-… Is that… possible?” asks Ryukana gently.

“As I said,” reiterates Order. “A square existing only in two dimensions cannot fathom being a cube of three. If there is an entity that gave us being, it is unknowable to us.”

“As far as you’re concerned,” chimes in Chaos. “You exist because we created you. The difference between creating a fully sentient being and leaving the ingredients to mix themselves into one, as is the case with most other life.”

“But, why the need for us? If you can reset the worlds or control them as you like.”

“All other beings see morals, needs, desires, justice, injustice, fear, happiness, and all sorts of other wonderful things,” replies Chaos. “But, the essence of Chaos is embodied in free will and self-determination. Even if the free will and self-determination of one will cause problems for the other.”

“Living things grow stronger in hardship,” adds Order. “We forge the souls that are to be, but allow their existence to bring them back to us in death. For life to

continue, they must overcome hardships of all kinds, many of which are simply the mechanisms of existence running their course. We *could* 'fix' everything in the way you and the mortals envision, but that would defeat the entire purpose for life."

"We do not, contrary to popular belief, draw a sadistic pleasure from watching suffering and hardship any more than a doting euphoria of witnessing benevolence and altruism. It is the whole of life that we created and take joy in the outcome."

"We do not experience boredom," adds Order, clarifying Chaos's point further. "We do not need to be entertained. However, it would be a lie to say we feel nothing when we witness the triumphs of our creations, especially in overcoming the hardships that the entropy that is existence creates."

Chaos gives a more direct explanation. "We started creating life in the way that a mother chooses to have children, or I suppose for Divine Realm gods like yourself, the pride of seeing your chosen champions completing their tasks. You are personally involved in the outcome, and part of existence is the desire to experience victory." The youthful-seeming Primordial Goddess grins brightly.

"So… your reason for creating existence… was to experience parenthood?" asks Ryukana, a little surprised at the simplicity of the motivation of the creators of everything.

"Yes and no," replies Order. "It is an oversimplification to put it that way. It's not instinctual for us the way it is for many living beings, nor is it out of loneliness."

"That's where it might *seem* like we just create and destroy simply for entertainment. We did it because we could, and because it makes us happy.

But, it would be meaningless if everything was stagnant.” Chaos continues to illustrate their explanation with slow and casual flutters of her hand.

Order takes over the explanation for a moment, “When Chaos and I joined hands the first time, existence was created, but it was empty. So, we filled it with worlds. I placed them where I felt they looked the best.”

“But, they didn’t move. They were empty and unchanging, and I didn’t like it. My sister’s perfect creations were imperfect,” replies Chaos, not entirely making sense. But she continues, “So, I moved them when she wasn’t looking. I made them turn. I made them circle each other. I made them race away from their gathered center. I gave them sparks and made them age. I made the ingredients she used dance so that they would never be the same.”

“And, in turn,” starts Order. “My Sister’s imperfect destructions were not yet perfect. I made the worlds follow paths, so that they would cycle in a defined manner. The sparks were beautiful, but remained simply sparks and ingredients, so I added formulas that they would follow. These basic laws combined with my sister’s ever-changing entropy and took shape.”

“And thus, life was born,” declares Chaos proudly, like a small child. “For every time I tried to break something, Order fixed it. And for every time Order fixed something, I would break it. The more elaborate it became, the more it moved on its own, using both my sister’s structured laws and my beautiful pandemonium, we created something we could watch over and take pride in as it grew.” The illusion generated by Chaos is filled with color, expanding and changing before Ryukana’s eyes.

“In addition, we take the bad with the good,” explains Order. “Just as something that is broken is something to be sad for, death is both a loss of life and a return to purified order. As creators, life functions best without

interference. In the face of utopia, life goes extinct because there is no reason to pursue anything. In the face of death, the living appreciate life more."

Chaos begins in a fairly serious tone as her sister trails off. "But, every now and then, an anomaly occurs. It is not a mere spark of chaos, nor a simple cascade of discord. It is something that threatens the balance of life and death on a world, and could disrupt the cycle entirely. That's where you and your champions come in. The Divine Realm is the immune system of existence, meant to defend against these anomalies so we don't have to start over completely." This time, Chaos turns into a male form with steel-grey eyes, and on his left and right forearms are golden bracers, each bearing 3 rings that orbit slowly. He also stands with a cane with a dragon forming the shape of the handle. Her voice is gentle, but masculine for the moment. "Recall the story of the man who accidentally stole a piece of our power. A story that no longer exists from your perspective, but very much does from ours. Do you know why we did not erase him upon learning of the power he was in the midst of attaining?"

Ryukana has been listening in wonder to the back and forth tale being told to her, explaining far more about her own creators than she thought she'd ever be privy to. She shakes her head. "I… I can only truly guess that the answer has nothing to do with inability. Or,… You mentioned once he had adapted to the power…" The subordinate goddess thinks a little longer, pondering the notion. If she had to guess, the image Chaos is presenting of the man is the person in question, but he looks like a fairly normal human. His eyes are a little strange, but it's only a rare color, not an unnatural one.

"You didn't consider him an anomaly…" murmurs Ryukana, and the image of the man grins brightly. Even Order smiles with a motherly, proud smile.

“I… don’t understand, then. How was a man capable of challenging you not considered an anomaly if something like Zenkon’s Devourer was?”

Order takes over the explanation. “Because, at the very moment that he saw us, he realized what he had done, what he was further capable of, and what the stakes were. He never intended to nor was driven to eliminate all life, nor were his intentions rooted in tyranny or stagnation, even if they were unrepentantly evil in scope. He sacrificed himself in order to produce a champion capable of restoring the balance.”

For once, Order changes form this time, and she takes on the appearance of the young black haired girl Chaos once appeared as, with glowing sapphire blue eyes and a gladius that she apparently treasures. “She restored the pieces that were stolen and became something akin to what you are now, in spite of not being a goddess herself. Though, she will live for a very long time.”

“Wait, I thought you said his mistake was reset,” repiles Ryukana, a little confused now.

“It was. At least, the damage to existence and the Divine Realm were, making it as if it never happened. We’re telling you because it’s important to know that not everything is simply about need or desire, but sometimes it is.” Order takes her normal form again, approaching Ryukana. There are times that the Primordial Goddesses appear larger than anyone else, gazing down upon their creations, but this time, she stands no more than an inch or so taller than her subordinate creation. “Anomalies are not always cut and dry. After all, there are black holes and giant asteroids that, to us, are nothing more than objects we placed to serve as a part of the universe. Though infinitesimally small in chance, it would not be an anomaly if one were to cross paths with a world and annihilate it whole.”

“That is the entropy of chance,” replies Chaos, taking over for the next part as she turns into a female scientist look. “But, if, say, a *person* found a way to summon black holes and could and would destroy the world, that person would be an anomaly because he or she is threatening to exceed the bounds of expectation and could shatter the whole universe if allowed to go too far.”

“That said, if there is another equal in position to counter, we would hold back and observe.”

“In the case of the man, our machinations to try to impede him with ‘champions’ only spurned him to move faster, and his accumulated factors that made him who he was made him much further outside of our expectations that we initially estimated.”

Ryukana ponders for a moment, and she murmurs, “I… always see you, my creators, as infallible. I would not think you could make such mistakes.”

“Mistakes?” asks Order. She places her hand on Ryukana’s cheek, and the gesture is a little unnerving for the subordinate goddess. As always, Order or Chaos could snap her out of existence for any reason, but the Primordial Goddess’s hand has a strange warmth to it, as if Ryukana can actually feel the certainty that everything will be okay, as if it is already written.

“There are no mistakes in imperfection and disorder. We specifically created the ability for our creations to exceed our expectations. We only act if it will cause us to need to restart from scratch. As long as there is measured resistance, or, in even more special cases, an anomaly self-aware enough to curb himself, the universe will survive. Otherwise,…”

“I would have erased him instantly,” replies Chaos coldly. Ryukana can feel the certainty in that declaration as well.

“Fo-forgive me for saying ‘mistake’, my Creators. You have graciously catered to my curiosities, though I’m not entirely sure why.”

Chaos grins. “Call it a… Bonus Chapter.” She winks, though Ryukana is fairly certain the wink isn’t meant for her or Order. “A big thank you for supporting our existence beyond expectations.”

Before Ryukana can make sense of that last sentence, Order takes her hand away, adding gently, “A fundamental duality is a stable dance, no matter what happens. And, another anomaly -a true anomaly- will be returning to Zenkon soon. You and Amalaskae will possibly have your hands full.”

“Can you tell me anything about the anomaly?” asks Ryukana, the urgency apparent in her voice.

Both Chaos and Order smile sympathetically, and the ever-changing goddess, now in the appearance of a fox-like woman with a folding fan, is the one to answer. “We can tell you everything, but you must understand, your direct actions to intervene will empower her. She likely already exceeds the power of anyone in the Divine Realm, with the possible exception of the world’s managing goddess.”

“A-Amalaskae!?” asks Ryukana, surprised. However, she just as quickly connects the dots. The middle-seniority goddess of the Divine Realm cannot deny that Amalaskae is brimming with magic power exceeding her ability to restrain it, which Ryukana has admittedly never heard of in anyone else’s case. Upon awakening, the managers of the Divine Realm already know and understand their power. And, the violet-haired goddess has pondered it ever since she saw the destroyed rock fountain.

She’s not sure she could break parts of the Divine Realm so easily.

Yet, small movements of Amalaskae's can shatter the most solid parts of the Divine Realm. She is destruction incarnate with the personality of a gentle and timid young girl.

"I… Will she be allowed direct intervention?" asks Ryukana, feeling like she's on the right track, but still not understanding.

If Amalaskae were to intentionally use her powers… would anything remain?

Chaos grins, likely reading Ryukana's thoughts once more.

"She will be the last line of defense against that being taking control of the Divine Realm. If the champions of Zenkon can't stop her, Amalaskae will be the only one who stands a chance."

"C-Can we just stop her now?" asks Ryukana a little desperately. "Why wait for her to return?"

"You will have a child with a human that will go on to start a war on Zenkon," states Chaos a little bluntly and somewhat coldly. "Should we erase you to prevent that future?"

"I… But… That's…" Ryukana's mind is swimming, since she can think of only one human she might entertain that notion with, but nothing of that regard has even started to form. She's not sure if Chaos and Order can truly see the future as if it were written, or they wouldn't need the managers of the Divine Realm to handle small-scale issues. If they can see the future, it seems rather inefficient to simply let life struggle anyways, if they already know the outcome.

Order explains to answer the younger goddess's thoughts, "Time is a construct, or rather… a dimension of existence. Like the rest of it, though, entropy, disorder, and unpredictability are baked into the fabric intentionally. We see

futures that are predictable because we have seen the past so many times. She will arrive as a contract demon and will have a singular choice that determines the route that must be taken."

"She'll almost certainly choose the wrong route," adds Chaos a little dryly. "But, if she doesn't she won't need to be destroyed, just like the man we keep mentioning. She is dangerous, but no more so than Amalaskae or even that little Hekate. When the time comes, she will choose, and a battle will occur."

"But… if we can prevent it…"

"Your job is not to prevent death," retorts Order coldly. "Your job is to prevent the imminent destruction of existence, starting with a single world."

Ryukana freezes and looks down. She cannot defy her creators.

"Or can you?" asks Chaos, strangely countering something that Ryukana didn't specifically think. The sovereign goddess of disorder adds with a grin, "If you can find her before her return and destroy her, will we stop you? Will we condemn you? Or, if you destroy her enemies for her, quenching her thirst before the world is destroyed, you can stave off the worst of it that way. We have given you no direct orders in this case, though, you know the rules from long ago. If you fear repercussions for defying the almighty, immortal goddesses who even know that this is Chapter 146.1, then you already know what to do, yes? You have no need for questions from us." She smirks wickedly, selling her point further.

Ryukana thinks desperately, trying to make sense of the obvious lesson here. Chaos is teasing her, but also making an important point.

Am… I allowed to act of my own free will? Even if that means I am against… THEIR decisions?

She glances at Chaos and Order, reminding herself once again that they can read her mind with ease. Order shows no expression, while Chaos has a cheeky smirk that hasn't changed.

I… perhaps… the very fact that I can even think this… But then, why was I scolded all those times…? My heroes were in more danger the less power I gave them, but I had to follow the rules, didn't I?

It's almost imperceptible, but Ryukana was looking for it. The smirk Chaos is wearing shifted just the tiniest bit.

I see… It wasn't about my violation. It was a lesson that they have known for eternity… A lesson I know now… Too much power can cause problems, but I could still have decided based on my own courage. Or, lack there-of… Ryukana smiles after thinking this.

I truly am a coward. When Daniel was first transferred, I worried more about finding him than informing anyone else who might be able to help because I was afraid of the consequences. I wasn't worried about his life. I was worried about my mistake coming out.

She looks seriously at Chaos who cocks her head. "Something to say, Ryukana?"

The violet haired former world manager doesn't respond right away. *I truly was complacent, wasn't I? I pushed the boundaries repeatedly because I knew I would likely only be scolded, but I never truly had the courage to openly do what I felt was right, even if I was wrong. I wasn't being scolded to stop me, necessarily, so much as to warn me of my consequences.*

"I will observe the nature of my enemy, and I will help my new friends defend against it, even if it puts my existence at peril," declares Ryukana proudly.

"And, if my child tries to become an anomaly, I will do everything I can to discipline him or her back onto the right path. I will *not* simply allow the individuals to whom I've grown attached to simply be killed. If need be, Amalaskae and I will stop this anomaly. Please send me back. There are preparations I need to make."

"Are you sure?" asks Chaos, knowing something that Ryukana doesn't.

"Yes," replies the subordinate Divine Being without a thought.

The goddess of entropy shrugs, and without even a flash of light or strange distortion, Ryukana is simply back in the Citadel, as if she blinked, but without having done so at that moment.

Almost immediately afterwards, she realizes…

Oh… I didn't ask for any more information on the Anomaly woman.

She can hear Chaos's voice snicker at her, as if knowing all along.

And, possibly as a reward for realizing it, Chaos whispers directly into Ryukana's mind, "*Daniel should be able to describe her to you soon enough. Good luuuuck~.*"

Ryukana trusts that Daniel, Hekate, and the others will hear her out and trust her word. If Daniel himself has some piece of the puzzle, then Ryukana just needs to figure out how to ask him so he knows what she's talking about.

If they prepare for everything, they might just stand a chance, no matter what their enemy is.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 147: Suspicions Rising

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 147: Suspicions Rising

Roeta walks with Grand Duchess Aramellianna as the matriarch makes her way to her office. The pink dragon tries to urge her gently, “Your Grace, you really should continue to rest. Lady Yanidere…”

“Has done an excellent job during my convalescence,” replies the Grand Duchess. “But, I was brazenly attacked out in the open, and several of my loyal guard were slain. I…”

The brunette trails off as she overhears, “I don’t care if you have to line up every citizen and question them! The Grand Duchy is pledged to the Fievegal, and an assault was carried out on both the Grand Duchess of Stalvaltan *and* the commanding General of the Fievegal Army. You should be thankful the Grand Duchy is keeping the Fievegal from invading at this very moment!”

They enter the office where there is a surprising number of people. Aramellianna sees Kalegrynten, Veiranoei, the Honeydip Baron and Baroness, as well as Gwenesphia, and a few upper-rank nobles from other parts of Mattarglos.

At the center, standing behind Aramellianna’s desk, which is piled high with paperwork, is the second eldest daughter of the Stalvaltan Grand Duchy.

Yanidere adds passionately, “Even as we speak, my sister, Empress Consort Wenlianna is in council with his Grace, the Emperor, trying to dissuade him

from retaliating with the full might of the Fievegal."

Several of the nobles who don't already know better shrink a little under the verbal assault.

One of them, Count Klajurr, tries to reply as respectfully as he can, "Your Ladyship, no one disputes your position, but the fact of the matter is that we don't have the resources to…"

Yanidere slams the desk with her fist. "'Resources, resources, resources'! That's all I've been hearing all morning! Merchants and mercenaries have flocked to the capital to grab the momentum of the defeat of the Three Terrors! Has the meat from those combined monsters suddenly run out? Have the rivers run dry?"

"N-No, your Ladyship, but… Steel is…"

"Then say so! If armaments are your concern, it must be the security of the city. The Grand Duchy will…"

Yanidere finally notices Aramellianna and Roeta standing in the doorway, and she flinches. "M-Mother!? Y-You're…" She darts around the desk as the others also turn in surprise. Everyone bows respectfully to the Grand Duchess, and she dips her head.

"Are you alright, Mother? You should get more rest. If there was anything I needed, I would have…"

Aramellianna cups her hand against her daughter's cheek, halting the young woman in her tracks. "My Dear Yanidere, you seem to be doing quite well. I'm proud. But, you are still in council. You should mind your etiquette in spite of your feelings."

Yanidere flinches and glances at the nobles in the room. Gwenesphia, Veiranoei, and Kalegrynten give her gentle smiles, since they've seen plenty of her to know she's doing just fine overall.

Yanidere collects herself, taking a breath. She curtsies politely, saying, "Your Grace the Grand Duchess, welcome. I am glad to see your condition has improved. Please, join us. We were discussing the state of affairs of the capital."

Aramellianna smirks, saying as she enters the room, "I heard. For a moment, I thought I was having an out of body experience."

The nobles in the room chuckle together, and they each take a moment to greet the Grand Duchess as Roeta keeps within arm's reach, since she *could* collapse at any time, let alone fall under attack.

Aramellianna takes a seat on the sofa, saying gently, "Even unbiased, I would agree with Lady Yanidere. Crowd control is well within the Grand Duchy's capability, and we have two of the Empress Consorts of the Fievegal present with us. I believe we can count on the Fievegal's support in defending the capital while Mattarglos guard commences a full investigation."

"Many… are concerned," speaks up Marchioness Fyluer, a shenwulf woman. "There are many reports of a dragon that partook in the attack."

"That dragon was Lord General Neith of the Fievegal. The Grand Duchy acknowledges the collateral damage caused by Sir Neith's reactionary defense. Lady Yanidere, has the Fievegal spoken of the collateral?"

Yanidere glances at Gwenesphia, who nods. "Yes, M-Your Grace. Lord General Neith has been sanctioned by her Greatness, Empress Hekate, and

construction materials for repairs and financial aid for the affected families are already en route."

"I see. Thank you. Then, what else is there to discuss? The soldiers and guards of Mattarglos undoubtedly have greater familiarity with local terrain, so it is only natural that the search be carried out by local authorities, yes?"

The other nobles are quiet, and Grand Premier Kalegrynten finally speaks up, "The Emperor and his people saved Mattarglos from a triple plague of the worst monsters seen in generations. They are asking for our assistance to find dangerous assailants that are the enemies of our new allies. The standing army can be brought into the capital, but as her Grace said, the local authorities will have an easier time rooting out the enemies."

A new presence bursts into the room. While she has one of the smallest statures on the airship, her presence is easily the largest as she walks in with the archoneldwyn 'lady-in-waiting', given her dress.

"Your Greatness!" greets Yanidere quickly and nervously.

Hekate says nothing, storming straight towards Count Klajurr. Without a word, she grips the man's right forearm and yanks him to the ground, startling everyone as those who are seated bolt to their feet.

Gwenesphia cries out, "Hekate!? What are you-…!"

"Get this demon off of me!" cries out Klajurr.

Anyone who looks like they're moving to aid the count is quickly warded off by Doephluev stalking in a slow and predatory circle around Hekate and the count, keeping everyone else back.

"Your Greatness!" shouts Aramellianna.

“I’m working,” retorts Hekate, inspecting the man’s wrist. She then grabs his other one, inspecting it as well. He tries to struggle, but Hekate puts her shoe on his bicep and wrenches her whole body at her waist.

A sickening ‘*pop-crack!’* silences the room, with exception of Count Klajurr screaming out in agony.

“See?” states Hekate as she shows the limp wrist to Doephluev. The archoneldwyn nods, blurting out a little more innocently than usual, “How do we remove it?”

“The safest method will be…”

“Enough!” snaps Roeta as she storms in, shoving Doephluev back to confront Hekate. “This is *not* acceptable, your Greatness! Look at everyone here!”

Doephluev states, “I promised to protect everyone on this vessel in Daniel’s absence, Roeta. Stand down, and I’ll explain once the situation is secure.”

“I do not take orders from *you*!” snaps the pink Valkyrie as she whirls to face Doephluev.

Hekate finally states bluntly, “My Love made me Empress of the Fievegal, Dame Roeta. If I declare someone to be an enemy, then they are an enemy. The Fievegal is the greatest power in this world. And *this*;” She wrenches the man’s arm again as he tries to get leverage to move, and he screams in agony once more. “*This* is a cursed object.”

There are many gasps in the room, and Kalegrynten reacts the most quickly. “Clear the room! Guards! Escort everyone out! Quickly!”

Roeta glances between Hekate and Doephluev, confused by what is happening so suddenly.

And, just as instructed, everyone is ferried quickly out of the room, save Roeta, Aramellianna, Doephluev, Hekate, the count, and Kalegrynten. Yanidere and Veiranoei try to stay behind as well, but Kalegrynten convinces them to leave for now, and for the gatonine knight to escort the young Duchess.

Once the room is relatively secure, Aramellianna asks coldly, “Doephluev, is… it truly the same?”

“Yes, it has to be,” replies the servant standing off to the side.

However, the Grand Duchess replies, “I wasn’t talking to you, Hekate.”

This surprises everyone else, including Doephluev and Hekate. Hekate, still pinning the fading man down, thinks for a moment. Her expression twitches, and she murmurs, “My Love… Damn.”

The Grand Duchess smirks, while Roeta snaps, “Wait! What!? Y-You…!?” She points at each of them, and ‘Doephluev’ crosses her arms. “You ruined it!”

“Not so fast, your Greatness,” replies Aramellianna. “I would not have had the success in life that I have enjoyed were I not observant of people’s behavior. There were already signs, and talking long enough,… Well, regardless, explain what I am party to. This was supposed to be a meeting on state affairs, not a battlefield.”

‘Hekate’ sits down on Klajurr after putting him to sleep with magic. She replies in a mature tone, “Ever since my Beloved was cursed, I have been looking for signs of it *everywhere*. This…” She points at the cufflink on the count’s left wrist. “This has magic on it that I don’t understand. I did not witness the curse or the cursed object, but given the effects, it is a magic I am not familiar with.”

“It’s common knowledge that Daniel and the Dragon Empresses have left, and rumored that I left as well,” explains ‘Doephluev’. She flinches, realizing that she’s still in disguise. She cancels the spell, turning into her usual self as Hekate. “Since I rely on Daniel so much. Even if not, I still need to protect everyone. And, now that we have one of the mystery people tied to whoever cursed Daniel, I was hoping Vae or Senn could analyze it and determine where this spell comes from.”

“I believe they are both in town performing healing for the people,” explains Kalegrynten. “I can send a couple of soldiers to retrieve them.”

“Please do,” replies Hekate.

‘Hekate’ then speaks, “The problem is, according to Daniel and Neith, touching it caused the emblem to vanish, and holding it activates the curse, even if it’s passed to someone else. Only Nemaisol could temporarily cancel it out.”

“We don’t know that yet,” replies Hekate. “Daniel didn’t have any magic stones present at the time.”

“And, how do you intend to test it? I’m not doing it, and if I allow you to, My Beloved will never forgive me.”

“Obviously we’re not going to touch it!”

“Then how do we determine what works? We can’t risk deactivating it until it can be better understood.”

The others watch Hekate and ‘Hekate’ bicker for a moment, and Roeta finally cuts in, “Either way, why did you walk in and assault him while everyone was here? Couldn’t you have waited until he was on his way out?”

Hekate shakes her head. “No. Because I don’t think everyone on the airship can be trusted either.”

This puts an unease into the air, and her doppleganger adds quietly, “Right now, her Greatness and I are actually in the colosseum, fighting. Sir Magnir and Xyreko are handling that.”

Roeta is baffled, and she darts to the door, looking up and down the hallway, which is clear for now. She then walks closer and whispers just loud enough to be heard only by those in the room, ideally, “You really think one of the Empresses is an enemy?”

“Daniel is worried that it might be the case.”

Doephluev, still in disguise as Hekate, puts Count Klajurr into a void bag to prevent him from waking up. “Obviously, it should go without saying why we’re even having this conversation with you three.”

Aramellianna, Roeta, and Kalegrynten glance at each other, and then return their gazes to Hekate and ‘Hekate’, who are now standing next to each other.

Kalegrynten states with a fairly stern and somewhat angry tone, “Veiranoei is not a traitor.”

“I think you’re right,” replies Hekate. “But, no one stands out like this guy did. He’s like a small bonus, because I wanted to collect one of the cursed items that was still not deactivated.”

Kalegrynten looks at the void bag Doephluev is holding. He grumbles, “Count Klajurr has been a colleague and friend of mine for twenty years, now. He held my youngest son at his first magic assessment…”

“He is allied with our enemies,” states Doephluev coldly.

Kalegrynten nods quietly. He retorts a little coldly, “That is the only reason we are not in battle currently.”

“We need to learn of their allegiances,” replies Aramellianna. “But, my interrogators have been killed or wounded more gravely than myself. I can contact an Inquisitor who owes me a favor, but…”

“The worst enemy is the one who blends in with your friends,” replies Hekate for the Grand Duchess, thinking the same thing. “One of my friends could be a traitor, and it makes me sick to my stomach to think that it’s even possible.”

“I’d like to keep an eye on Aoloan, your Greatness,” remarks Doephluev. “She tried to pit us against each other. I feel like that makes it obvious.”

“Almost too obvious,” grumbles Hekate. “If we’re on the right trail at all, these are a people who have been manipulating a forever war in this world for as long as most people can remember.”

The Grand Duchess crosses her arms across her chest, bearing an uncomfortable expression. “Daniel mentions it so casually, but… I don’t know if I am afraid that he is wrong and we’ll be making a mistake pursuing this issue or…” She trails off, and Hekate finishes for her. “That he is correct.”

Aramellianna nods softly. “Reflecting on meetings and words of the past,… I can certainly see *why* someone could be convinced of the existence of such a group, but…” She sighs. “I have had some of my best and most loyal information gatherers investigating leads in the Empire and Mornistae. I’ve only received a few reports so far, but it does seem that information from deep within the Citadel is known to individuals far outside of the Fievegal’s apparent reach.” Aramellianna looks at Hekate. “I understand the position Lady Vaergraes was in, but are we certain she is not a part of…?”

Hekate shakes her head. “Vae negotiated with Daniel in hopes of defeating the Devourer. From everything I saw that day to now, I don’t think she has a dishonest bone in her body.”

Roeta murmurs, “I agree. She was often quite opposed to Morthybargaron taking action. She preferred us dragons to focus on the Devourer if we were going to do anything, but we had long given up on that.”

Aramellianna can’t help the small smile that finds her lips, which Hekate notices. “What is it?” asks the perceptive young fox-eared girl.

“Oh, nothing important. I just find myself wishing I could have borne witness to the feat of defeating such a being with my own eyes. To know that my one and only son holds such prestige…” She smiles reverently at the thought.

Hekate frowns a little dryly, but she doesn’t make any objections. If anything, she agrees with the Grand Duchess… mostly. The only difference is, she was there.

“Anyways, we have to be careful, Doephluev. Aoloan can detect lies, so if we’re not careful, we’ll give away that we’re onto her, and she’ll be more careful about covering her tracks.”

“Is it possible she was also just concerned for her Greatness?” asks Kalegrynten as he thinks. Until now, he has been listening, since he doesn’t have as much information.

“I’m not sure,” replies Hekate. “She was simply pointing out that Doephluev is suspicious, and that Daniel left her to spy on me, which are both sort of true.”

Doephluev frowns, and Hekate scowls at her in turn. “Am I wrong?”

“Of course not, your Greatness. It just displeases me that you enjoy saying it so much.”

“Daniel knows he can’t stop me, so if I kill everyone here, that’s my prerogative. He’d be disappointed, so I won’t, obviously. But, if anything, Doephluev is here to help me, since this place is less secure than the Citadel, where he went.” She grumbles, “I bet those evil lizards are just having the time of their lives right now…”

“Laughing at you,” adds Doephluev, as if it were a matter of course.

The Feldrok Empress grits her teeth. “Scheming behind my back…”

“Sleeping in my Beloved’s bed…”

“Grah!” snaps Hekate as she swings her arms in futility to derail that train of thought.

Aramellianna finally offers advice, “Your situation is very different than mine, your Greatness. I do not believe I would be content, but from the outside looking in, I am certain you are well-loved and greatly respected, even in such strange circumstances. And, something you must accept; when your loved ones are not currently in your field of view is when your trust truly matters. You need not blindly trust, but you will learn what your darling’s tells are if he is being deceitful.”

Hekate narrows her eyes at the brunette matriarch. It’s no secret that Aramellianna still carries a great deal of love and affection for the man who gave her five daughters. It’s difficult to believe she ever suspected the Grand Duke of unfaithfulness or deceit.

Aramellianna, as if reading the teen's mind, simply smiles gently. "No, he was never unfaithful to me. I am fortunate in that regard, even at times when I might have been insufferable enough to drive him to such. No, he once tried to hide the fact that Yanidere kicked a duke's son at a royal banquet while I was on bedrest shortly before Bunnrimae was to be born."

"Y-Yanidere?" asks Hekate, surprised. The young woman is rather well-mannered and, if anything, somewhat timid in social gatherings, from what Hekate has seen. Though, given the meeting that Hekate and Doephluev interrupted, she is merely keeping herself under control.

"That's right. And, Yaandrestarr tried to convince me that nothing happened that I should be worried about. I knew he was lying at once, even though he didn't give it away obviously. But, I knew." She smirks. "You'll learn the same skill in time as well, not just for Daniel, but for those you surround yourself with. Often, those with the most to hide are the quickest to speak."

Hekate nods. "Thank you for the advice. I do trust Daniel, and I know that the Dragon Empresses love him very much. I *know* what they'll be doing. I'm just… really jealous…"

Kalegrynten laughs, and the young empress gives him a mighty pouting glare, while Roeta, Aramellianna, and Doephluev all look at him.

The gatonine grandfather says jovially, "It's always refreshing when those we fear are larger than life share the same problems as the rest of us." He pets her head a little more roughly than she likes, and she growls, batting his hand away.

The Grand Premier adds with a gentle tone, "Tell me, young Empress; if his Grace Daniel disliked girls with black hair, would you still like him?"

Hekate cocks her head with a look of disgust, and Kalegrynten laughs again. “Sorry, sorry. My point is, even the trivial things, including beliefs he brings from his world, if any of them were different, would he be the man you want to be with?” He smiles as he remembers his own past. “My wife would snore. Darn near shook the entire house some nights. I have loved her every day of my life since she told me that I was a muscle-brained fool who would bury myself on the battlefield.” He pulls out a small memento and shows it to Hekate, depicting two gatonines, a surprisingly familiar man before decades have passed to bring him before Hekate now, and a beautiful gatonine woman with faint pink hair. It is a carved stone with a surprising level of detail, and the two look truly happy together. “My wife snores. That is part of being the woman I made my wife.”

Hekate smiles softly. Daniel cares about her a lot, and he has promised her. She has a long time to live, and she’ll find a way to keep Daniel around for all of it. If he tries to forget his promise, she’ll make him remember. If he still won’t honor it, she’ll make him fall in love with her. She won’t give up. She doesn’t have to give up.

“Thanks, Grandpa. This… helped. A-And, thank you to the rest of you, too. Aramellianna, I… I’ll take what you said to heart.”

“Mmm. I never get tired of being called ‘Grandpa’,” replies Kalegrynten with a big grin.

Aramellianna smiles. “The Grand Duchy has prospered thanks to your generosity, my Empress, and the Stalvaltan family is more secure and stronger than it has ever been. Perhaps, with your help, I can even restore the honor of my own Grandfather’s legacy. Though, to do that, I would need a new heir to that family, and I would not want to lower Yaandrestarr’s children to that family.”

“You have my blessing to start your family as a branch family,” replies Hekate. “The Fievegal will acknowledge both families as rightful noble families under the Fievegal, though your heir to Phenglegorn will need to prove themselves for me to decide for sure what title to bestow.”

The Grand Duchess smiles with amusement. “That is very prudent of you, your Greatness. I look forward to that day.”

“You could always do what the dragons did,” blurts out Doephluev. When the others look at her, she adds, “With the exceptions of couples like Sir Magnir and Dame Roeta, most of the greater dragons’ first eggs are not from living dragons. Since you’ve said you will likely never marry again.”

Hekate retorts sassily, “If she’s going to do that, she should use one of the feldroks, then. At least then I wouldn’t be the last one in the world.”

“Would that even work?” asks Kalegrynten. “I know humans and gatonines… but, we’re close enough to humans…”

“You haven’t seen them, but the second eggs of each of the Empresses are Daniel’s,” confirms Roeta. “I can’t speak to what kind of children will be born, but the Empresses are… eager.”

Everyone notices that Aramellianna is silent, and they look at her.

She’s deep in thought.

Hekate whines, “I-I-I wasn’t serious! I-It’s just an option, your Grace! I don’t really care! It’s kind of nice that I’m the only one. Then, when we beat monsters and stuff, I get all of the mana!” She becomes bashful, “Th-Though, it doesn’t make as big of a difference anymore. B-But, you would know better than me what you want to do…”

Kalegrynten warns a little playfully, “As I said, your Greatness, I would urge you to mind your words. The words of an Empress are the law of the land.”

“I know!” complains the feldrok girl. “But, anyways, I don’t even know if a half-feldrok or half-dragon child…”

Suddenly, the ravenette halts, and everyone looks at her, including Aramellianna.

Hekate murmurs, “Half-dragon… Great Aunt Reina…”

Just as suddenly as her train of thought shifted, Hekate’s expression seems to drain of all color. She bolts out of the room, leaving everyone stunned. They glance at each other, and Roeta asks, “What was that?”

“Is.. Would it be dangerous?” asks Aramellianna.

“N-No. No more than usual, at least. A child is a child. I don’t know, but I’d expect that an egg would develop. W-Whether you can… lay it…”

“That doesn’t seem to be what concerned our young Empress,” points out Kalegrynten.

Doephluev sighs. “Ugh… I’ll go spy on her.” She jogs after Hekate, just in case it’s something she’ll need help with, or if it will need to be quickly relayed to Daniel.

***

Daniel does his best to work on assembling a copy of the mana detector that Ahok finished. The half-goblin magic artisan is nearby, though she is still keeping solid objects and furniture between her and Daniel. She has warmed up a little bit, especially because Shek and Skloe join her to meet with any of

the male demon-kin she needs to meet with, and Daniel is noticeably cautious about not putting pressure onto her.

The interruption Daniel is facing happens to be a young dragon who is seated on his lap, lounging against him while he tries to work. He's trying to be careful to work in front of her, but it's definitely a little inconvenient. But, Geirahoel is trying to push his buttons for a change. She regularly changes positions, complains, takes the thing he's actively assembling. He doesn't make a fuss about it, since she'll get bored eventually…

He assumes.

"Daniel," calls out Ahok. "I'm afraid I don't understand what you're trying to do with this. To my knowledge, anti-magic stones cancel out magic in a large area."

"Certain materials can block the effect, but I think sharmelkolle might actually be able to conduct it. If we can switch between which one is active, I should be able to adapt to more situations."

Ahok studies the drawings once more. She explained the void artillery to Daniel and his team, and from what she described, she was given the springboard idea from a loose description of an atom bomb, and adapted that to mana and the elemental magic.

Daniel adds, "It's just an idea for now, and I was hoping it would make enough sense to test it."

Ahok nods, studying Daniel's notes. She's very sharp, and Wenlianna believes she's much more adept at the magic-side of magic devices, where Wenlianna is stronger at the function of the device when trying to design tools and other useful equipment.

The half-goblin sets the note pages down and starts writing on one of the pages. She flinches, asking, “S-Sorry, is… is it alright…?”

“Please do,” replies Daniel gently.

“Make him rewrite it if you need the original again,” retorts Geirahoel unhelpfully.

Daniel smirks, and he kisses the top of her head, which causes her to squirm. “Do you need anything, Mukori? Restroom? Drink?”

She scowls up at him, retorting as she settles into his lap again, “No. I’m quite comfortable.”

“Good. Me too.”

She hums with a pouting expression, and Daniel adds, “My thinking is to use lead to switch which material is exposed to the sharmelkolle.”

“I’ll run some experiments, but… I… The sharmelkolle…”

“Please be reasonable with your attempts, but you have my permission to experiment. If you’d like, send me some designs of the test apparatuses, and I’ll approve them or make suggestions.”

Ahok nods. “I’ll do that. Thank you.”

“Of course.”

There’s a knock on the door frame, and Balamae is present. “Your Graces, Lady Artisan, please pardon my intrusion.”

“No problem at all, Balamae. What is it?” asks Daniel.

The golem bows her head, explaining, “There has been an incident, your Grace. Raiders are encroaching on Fievegal territory.”

“The Grand Duchy, or this side?”

“This side, your Grace. Primarily the northwest area.”

Daniel nods. “Please gather the Field Marshals and their commanders at the conference station, and inform the… uh… Empresses and Queens if they want to attend.”

“I shall at once, your Grace. Please excuse me.”

Daniel sets the components down, and Geirahoel, who ended up helping more than disrupting, also sets the pieces she was working on onto the workbench. However, she doesn’t make any effort to get up.

“Mukori…?”

“What will you do, Mu-YEEP!”

Daniel shifts her with his arms so he can cradle her, and he stands up, carrying her like a princess as he leaves the room. “Excuse us, Lady Ahok.”

“R-Right, your Grace. I’ll report if I need anything.”

Geirahoel stammers, “M-M-Mukori…”

He ignores the orange dragon’s mild protests and embarrassed expression, since a small victory will be in making her squirm and blush. Outside of the lab, Daniel finds a couple of acolytes of the Unity of the Great Dragons standing by patiently. They are faithful servants, even if they are definitely still cultists. They worship the dragons, and though the Empresses rarely call upon them for

anything important, they follow the dragons around the Citadel in hopes of being able to show their faith.

“Your Graces,” state both women together. One is an oni, and the other appears to be a succubus or cambion, but Daniel is unsure.

Daniel says gently to the two women, “The eggs are in their stroller. Please retrieve it and bring it with us if you would.”

Both women perk up, suddenly glowing brightly with being given such an important task.

“Y-Yes, your Grace!”

“Y-You’re embarrassing me,” whines Geirahoel as she hides her face while the two women jog into the lab to retrieve the egg stroller containing two eggs from the youngest dragon Empress. They return right away, having politely greeted Ahok and given her a respectful farewell before following Daniel and Geirahoel.

Daniel trusts his subordinates to make the decisions needed, but he has tied their hands in the past. He needs them to know what he’ll tolerate, now that it’s clear to him that he was wrong.

The worst thing he could do is keep making the same mistakes.

***

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1. Novel

2. **Trapped in Another World With No Magic**

3. Chapter 148: Important Pursuits

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 148: Important Pursuits

Hekate bursts into Wenlianna's private state room on the airship, exclaiming, "Wenlianna!"

The magic artisan and two maids are wholly startled in the middle of changing the young noblewoman from her lab-clothing to her dinner dress. She yelps in terror, stammering, "H-H-Hekate!? Wh-What's wrong!?"

The feldrok doesn't register what's going on, instead rushing to Wenlianna quickly. The brunette tries to back away, but is cornered as the fox-eared girl closes in on her in an obvious frantic state. The two maids try to block Hekate, but the young empress is too quick and manages to dart between them. "Wenlianna! We have to go! Hurry! We're wasting time! We have to tell, and we have to go. I think there's a shuttle, please!"

Wenlianna tries to keep her arms free of Hekate, crying out, "He-Hekate! Hekate! I don't- No! Please stop!"

In her terrified and apparently delirious state, she begins dragging Wenlianna by the wrist towards the open door, still urging desperately, "Let's go! We can't keep wasting time like this! I'm such a fool! It was right in front of me the whole time! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Please, just…"

"HEKATE!" screams Wenlianna, trying in vain to escape the deceptively strong teen's grip.

The only thing stopping the brunette from being dragged out of the door, since Hekate is able to overpower her and her maids, is the caramel-skinned elf-like woman that *might* stand a chance in a fight against Hekate, at least for a short time.

Doephluev places herself in Hekate's path, making it clear that she's blocking the feldrok girl. "Doephluev!? Move! I have to-…"

"I only take direct orders from Daniel," retorts Doephluev as she blocks the door. She can't physically stop Hekate, but she can brace against the door and refuse to move.

Her insolent retort also halts Hekate in her tracks, and she is stunned for a moment. "What? I order you to move, Doephluev! I'm in a hurry!"

The archoneldwyn shakes her head. "No."

"You're under contract! H-Have you…!? YOU!"

Hekate releases Wenlianna finally, and Doephluev's composure breaks. She lurches backwards almost unnaturally, as if possessed, and she cries out, clutching her chest. She catches her breath, and Hekate, finally disrupted from her panic, snaps at Doephluev, "You were resisting it?"

Doephluev nods. She murmurs with her voice weakened, "The real question is… what are you… doing?" She continues panting as she tries to recover from the pain of being compelled by her magic contract.

Hekate looks behind her, and both maids are now trying to protect Wenlianna, who has retreated to the other side of her bed.

"Please come to your senses, your Greatness!"

“Her Grace has done nothing wrong! Please!”

“W-Wrong?” stammers Hekate, horrified that everyone is so terrified of her suddenly. She looks at Doephluev, who is trying to posture herself to move in some sort of defensive manner as well. She then looks at Wenlianna, who is stripped down to her silk underclothing.

The feldrok teen droops her ears and tail as she tries to recall where exactly she went wrong, and she realizes it immediately. In her haste to fix the problem she made a realization of, she didn’t explain why she wanted Wenlianna to follow or what the reason was.

Hekate says apologetically, “I’m sorry… I… Wenlianna, I… Everyone, I was too hasty. But, w-w-we… I think…” She fumbles her thoughts because she’s still distressed by what she figured out.

Wenlianna takes a breath to calm herself now that she sees how disappointed Hekate is in herself. The first daughter of the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of the Stalvaltan noble family bore witness to the strongest and most fearsome mother the world has ever seen. She’s certain of it.

Recalling how her mother would respond, Wenlianna takes one more, easy-going breath, lifts her head and straightens her posture, and she approaches Hekate gracefully, not in an intimidating manner, but in an elegant and reassuring motion without a hint of anger.

Aramellianna could be terrifying. In fact, she was most terrifying when the girls *expected* her to be angry, but she had not yet raised her voice or her hand.

Instead, she was a master of controlling her emotions in order to instruct her children carefully and affectionately.

Wenlianna approaches Hekate and speaks gently. “You obviously have something very important to tell me, Hekate. Please take your time and tell me as calmly as you can.”

Hekate looks at Wenlianna with a child-like surprise, which is an expression Wenlianna has worn many, many times. The feldrok girl then glances at the maids briefly, seeming to be unsure.

Wenlianna says gently, “Please step outside.”

“Your Grace?” asks one of the maids.

The magic artisan-turned-empress smiles softly. “It was a simple misunderstanding. Our glorious Crowned Empress was just concerned for me. Please give us a moment.”

“As you wish, your Grace.” Both maids bow, and they step outside, passing Doephluev who stays behind. The archoneldwyn states quietly, “I would like to remain, in case my advice is useful.”

Hekate nods, and Wenlianna bobs her head in agreement. The former-assassin closes the door, and she stands by patiently for Hekate, who takes a breath.

“I figured it out, Wenlianna. I’m sorry it took so long. I feel so stupid for not realizing it right away, but… We need to go to the Citadel so we can fix it as quickly as possible.”

“Please explain, Hekate,” replies Wenlianna, taking a seat nearby. She gestures for Hekate to take the other seat at the small tea table, and the feldrok girl reluctantly sits down. Her tail swishes back and forth. She seems almost embarrassed to talk about the specifics.

“Your… Um…” Her ears suddenly perk upright, and she sits up. “You’re a dragon!” exclaims Hekate.

Both Wenlianna and Doephluev cock their heads in confusion, and the archoneldwyn remarks dryly, “Have you been drinking in secret, your Greatness?”

“I haven’t!” whines Hekate. She quickly adds, “I-I-I don’t mean,… I meant… Your great grandma was a dragon, wasn’t she? O-Or… A half… dragon?”

“Great Grandmother Gyualenestreom? Yes, but… I’m not sure I understand.”

Hekate’s expressive ears droop, and her eyes glimmer as if she might start crying. “Th-Th-The… curse…” whimpers the feldrok girl.

“Cur-…?” starts Wenlianna, halting as quickly as she starts the word. Her own face goes pale, and Hekate’s eyes truly begin to water.

“I’m sorry,” whimpers Hekate. “I-I should have… I should have thought of it sooner.”

Wenlianna touches her abdomen, her own expression drained.

Doephluev is able to read the room, so she doesn’t ask any prying questions. She knows Daniel won’t let her get away with open cruelty towards the other consorts. She has wiles, patience, and schemes enough to take what she wants without cruelty, the one thing the object of her motivation abhors.

Hekate repeats, “I’m sorry…”

Thinking quickly, Wenlianna rushes to Hekate and hugs her. “I-It’s not your fault, Hekate. It’s… If you hadn’t… said anything, I would never have known… I… It should… only affect actual dragons, though, shouldn’t it?”

“I-I-I don’t know! But, if… If it is… Then…” Hekate sniffles, adding softly, “It could have been… h-h-horrible…”

Wenlianna relaxes a little, still hugging Hekate. Doephluev finally asks gently, “I assume this isn’t the curse Daniel was hit with?”

Both of the other women shake their heads. “No,” replies Hekate. “It’s a curse that the last feldroks of the Citadel inflicted on the dragons. I-… It’s a bad one, too.”

“Some of my distant ancestors were dragons,” adds Wenlianna.

“And,… there is a cure in the Citadel?” asks the archoneldwyn.

“Yes,” replies Hekate. “We’ll have to take Wenlianna as soon as possible.” Hekate hops off of her chair, holding Wenlianna’s hands. “Let’s hurry and take the shuttle in the hangar, and we can be there in just a few hours.”

Doephluev counters politely, “While I can understand wanting to remove any curses promptly, I would like to recommend that we contact my Beloved, since our forces are currently divided for specific reasons.”

Hekate sighs. “We can take Aoloan with us, as well.”

Doephluev shakes her head. “That isn’t the whole point, Hekate, and you know it. We have to defend the airship and maintain a presence in Mattarglos until we fully have their cooperation.”

“But, Wenlianna is an Empress, Doephluev. It’s easy for you to preach patience when you already have an heir on the way.”

The former assassin is caught a little off guard and loses her balance for a moment from the awkwardness. “I… That’s… I’m not saying to delay for very

long. I just think Daniel will want to handle it so that you and I remain here."

Hekate thinks for a long time, since Doephluev is definitely right. But, it would also be an excuse to go to where he is.

As if reading Hekate's brewing intent to dispute, Doephluev adds, "We also don't *know* that Aoloan is… the one, as much as I think she may be."

The feldrok teen thinks on the former assassin's words for a moment. It obviously doesn't help that Doephluev is suspect number one for most people.

"I guess you have a point… But, Wenlianna…"

"I'll survive a little longer," replies the young brunette. "And, I don't want to distract Daniel from what he's doing just to tell him over the radio. If you agree, let's tell him,... Or rather, let's ask him when he's returning, and express that we need him sooner than later."

Hekate bobs her head affirmatively. "We'll go with that, then. I'm… sorry I startled you. I-I'll apologize to your maids, too."

Wenlianna giggles. "It's alright, Hekate. It's reassuring that you're looking after me so protectively."

Hekate blushes, scratching her cheek. "Y-Yeah, well… If you're sad, everyone else will end up sad, too, including me. So… It was for myself." Hekate trails off bashfully, and Doephluev rolls her eyes while Wenlianna smiles affectionately.

***

Daniel listens patiently to the reports from the Field Marshals he assigned for each region.

“The Stalvaltan territory is now fully under control of the Fievegal, with its borders heavily protected, your Graces. It’s believed by our spies that the easterners know about our ranged weapons, as well as the iron drakes. There’s also a presence that we believe to be imperial centered around the capital, but their numbers are unknown. We don’t have enough spies to get to the heart of the area. They seem to be searching for someone or something, heading west.”

Daniel nods at the oni Field Marshal. “Thank you, Field Marshal Rostas. Now, Field Marshal Klur, please report on the bandits I was briefed on.”

The oni bows and takes his seat, while the goblin addressed stands up on his chair, lest he not be any taller than the table. “Klur report to Emperor.” The goblin salutes momentarily, and then states, “Raiders attack refugees and villages. Goblins in packs.”

“Goblins?” asks Ryuogriar.

“Yes, Powerful Dragon Empress. Klur ensure multiple reports to verify.”

“Do we have forces to spare?” asks Daniel, studying the map. The formal army of the Fievegal is spread thin, with most of their soldiers in the Grand Duchy, and the bulk of the rest are securing a trade route to Fort Peony.

The dattakorien who served under Baeka for a time before becoming one of the Field Marshals of the Fievegal replies, “We’re training volunteers as quickly as possible, your Grace, but presently, we only have two hundred troops on standby near the Citadel that can be deployed right away.”

“That should be enough, shouldn’t it?” asks Daniel.

Klur clears his throat. “Klur have request, Emperor.”

Shek starts to scold him, “Field Marshal, it is not the time for requests…”

“It’s alright, Shek,” replies Daniel gently. “Tell me, Klur.”

“Goblins attack. Hurt Fievegal goblin honor. You send goblins. We restore honor.” He seems genuinely angry and cold, clenching his fists as the diminutive green-skinned man bares his teeth.

Daniel thinks for a moment. No one says anything to encourage him or discourage him either way.

Shek once explained that there are effectively two different kinds of goblins, which even the regular demon-kin consider ‘feral’ versus ‘social’ goblins. ‘Feral’ goblins are exactly like what Daniel would expect goblins to be from all of the fantasy media he consumed in his lifetime. Having seen an anime about a party of adventurers specializing in combat against goblins, Shek and Skloe, as well as others, confirmed that feral goblins behave like those goblins. As such, even demon-kin regularly exterminate feral goblins that grow out of control near settlements.

Foolishly, Daniel neglected basic social problems of governing, even after he stole away manpower to form a central army.

“Field Marshal Klur, you have my permission to handle the raiders as you see fit. They must meet the definition of enemies that I’ve laid out before. Rescue any refugees and captives, and I’d like you to gather any treasure you find so we can make sure any captives and refugees get their belongings back. Afterwards, your troop may disburse everything remaining.”

Klur salutes again, standing proudly. “Goblins small and weak, but we not monsters like dumb goblins. Klur stake life on this mission.”

Daniel laughs lightly, while the Dragon Empresses all smile, and Shek and Skloe seem to be pleased as well.

Without any hesitation, Ryuogriar suggests, “What say you to this, Mukori? Feral goblins should be called dumgobs, since they do not deserve the honor of being known as true goblins. This will make it much easier to distinguish enemy types, since dumgobs fight differently than goblins.”

Klur nods. “Klur honored by Beautiful Dragon Empress wise words. Klur agree. Dumgobs not goblins. Bring shame to goblin name.”

Daniel smirks. He does find it a little amusing to see goblins speaking of honor and carrying themselves with dignity. They still tend to be greedy and fairly selfish, but he can understand. Shek, Skloe, Klur, and all of the others who have joined the Fievegal have been upstanding citizens, even if they have some strange customs.

“Very good. Klur, do whatever it takes to clear out the dumgobs. You have permission to show no quarter.”

This surprises everyone, since Daniel has been notoriously passive in most conflicts. He gave a fairly wide blanket permission to win any fights in the Grand Duchy, but he isn’t pressing the borders actively.

Now, he’s granting the goblins permission to exterminate enemies without holding back at all.

Daniel clarifies his position, “They’re harming our citizens directly. I said I was done playing the gentle game. If you think captives will be useful, you may take captives. However, know this; I won’t allow slavery.”

Klur nods. “Leave it to Klur, Emperor. Klur report finished.”

“Anyone have anything else to report?” asks the mechanic gently.

“Yes, I do,” declares Geirahoel as she stands up. She holds up one of her two eggs, setting it on the table. “Let everyone spread the word that the soon to be First Dragon Princess is going to hatch in the next two weeks.”

“What!?” gasps Ryuogriar as Reignleif recoils in surprise.

The orange dragon snickers proudly. “That human maid has proven useful. She said this egg will hatch first out of all of ours. And, she’ll be a princess.” She hugs the egg, which, if Daniel remembers right, is the first egg Geirahoel laid. He promised to treat the first three eggs well, even though they aren’t specifically his.

And, as if to add fuel to the fire, Ryuogriar places both of her eggs on the table, declaring overly-loudly, “W-Well, Mukori’s first Dragon child has started making noises.”

Daniel sighs. “Any *military* matters to report?”

“None, my Liege,” answers Neith from nearby.

“Mukori!” whine both Ryuogriar and Geirahoel as they cling to his arms. Everyone departs, with the exception of the Dragon Empresses, Gold, Neith, Shek, and Skloe.

Reignleif flops onto his back, hugging his neck. She grumbles, “It is news of Imperial princesses and princes, Mukori. What could be more important?”

Daniel sighs. “Where I come from, we have a saying; don’t count your chickens before they hatch.” He looks at the egg. “Pretty much a direct application in this case.”

“They make sounds, Mukori!” whines the young orange dragon.

The overwhelmed emperor sighs with a soft smile. “I’m just saying, we can make a proper announcement when they hatch. In some cultures on earth, the birth of royalty was celebrated all across the nation.”

He notices the two goblin queens glance at each other a little despondently. The mechanic knows immediately what troubles them.

“I’m sorry, Shek and Skloe. As I’ve mentioned, I… was very much *not* royalty of any kind in my homeland. It didn’t occur to me to have an extravagant birthday for the children.”

The three Dragon Empresses still clinging to Daniel glance at each other.

However, Gold is the one to blurt it out. “Isn’t the answer obvious, then? We should hold a grand celebration for all of them, since the two gremlin princesses are old enough to remember it and enjoy it.”

“They’re goblins, not gremlins,” grumbles Geirahoel defensively.

Gold grins cheekily. “If Auntie Gold says they’re gremlins, I bet they’d both happily agree with me.”

“We’ll start planning a celebration,” interrupts Daniel before a fight erupts. “Tekten and Jieka are the firstborn princesses of the Fievegal, even if we’ll retain the ranks of their mothers for successorship…” He laughs at his own circumstances as he rubs his hand through his hair. “Once we figure out the best way to handle that mess…”

Gold crosses her arms, teasing playfully, “If the Harbinger wasn’t so insatiable, it might be easier to figure out.”

“Oh ho,” laughs Ryuogriar with one hand over her mouth. “Have you finally come around, Lady Gold? Do you wish to be an Empress?”

“Hah! I’m a thousand years too young to be tied down like that again!”

Daniel looks at his companions, who are enjoying themselves. Even Shek and Skloe are amused by the conversation.

Still… I wonder if I should give her a title or something? The dragons don’t seem to care about it as much, but it should give her something more than simply being a dragon if she needs to interact with anyone in the future. I’ll have to think about it some more.

Satisfied with the outcome, Daniel simply listens to the banter going on mostly between the dragons for a moment. Geirahoel is still a little snippy with Neith when he speaks, but she has toned it down to mild insults, rather than vitriolic hatred towards him. This gives him an idea.

When Daniel and Geirahoel are walking alone for a bit after the meeting, Daniel decides to enact his plan.

“Mukori?”

“Yes?” asks the dragon as she walks arm in arm with him. The acolytes of the Unity of the Great Dragons are escorting the stroller behind them with Geirahoel’s eggs, ensuring they are present if Geirahoel asks for anything.

“I should have told you this before, but we had a word for someone like Neith on Earth.”

She instantly perks up, pressing her chest against him. “Oh!? You’re right! You have neglected me, Mukori!” She squeezes his arm, pouting up at him. “I’ll… I’ll only use it sometimes.”

Daniel sighs. “You may use it as much as you want. I told you when we met, I believe in freedom of speech.”

“Yes, but you also told me there would be consequences.”

“That’s true, but… The consequences of this term are minimal, I promise. It’s kind of like… the opposite of ‘Mukori’. The only other ones who will know are me and the readers. It’s that meaningful.”

“Well, then stop beating around the tree and tell me.”

Daniel snickers playfully. She does her best with figures of speech that he teaches her, but she’s adorable when she does.

That means it’ll be all the more perfect when his plan comes together.

He smiles sincerely as he looks into her eyes.

Oh, yes. This is going to be fun.

***

Neith studies the strange aquatic setup Daniel had made, over which Gold observes. She’s currently overseeing a handful of goblins wading in one of the large pools as they pull shells out of the water. The bivalves are simple creatures, and often found in the cleanest creek and riverbeds. The grey dragon knight has eaten them before when he was travelling, as well as similar species, but he has never given much thought about whether or not farming them is practical.

Gold notices him and perks up. “Hmm? Sir Neith. Fancy meeting you here. I figured you’d be following the Harbinger around.”

Gold doesn't have a formal place in the Fievegal hierarchy, but Neith has been instructed to let her do what she wants, since Daniel has the golems reporting to him, and she has been rather docile in terms of not scheming anything. As Neith remembers her, she was simply a restless soul and liked to conquer challenges, but lost much of her vigor after losing several would-be hatchlings and one successful hatchling. He can tell her eyes follow him fiercely as he passes the rounded lounge chair she favors, where her egg is resting.

Daniel would have Neith tortured and killed in cold blood if anything happens to *anyone's* eggs, because he is fully aware of how tragic the story is. Gold would be a red-hot inferno.

All that is to say; Neith has no interest in correcting her.

"The Emperor is within the boundaries of the Citadel itself, and he is with the Empresses and Queens."

She smirks, relaxing a little when he intentionally walks a path that puts her between him and her own egg. He effectively walks past her to observe the workers checking and fishing out bivalves.

"I am often surprised how regularly our Liege finds ways to surprise me."

The dragon matron scoffs, crossing her arms under her ample chest. "Right? These things stink when they die, and he wants thousands of them. And, he's willing to gamble on them."

"But why? And what are you doing now?"

"How should I know why? The Harbinger just said I'd know if I opened up the dead ones. So, you there, Oppok, hand me a few of the dead ones."

A female goblin perks up from nearby her floating collection tray, and she pushes it through the water as she wades over to the two dragons, saying brightly in the goblin language, “{Yes, Madame Dragon!}”

Once she reaches them, Gold takes one of the deceased shellfish and pries it open with her fingers, inspecting the inside.

Naturally, there is the meaty, tongue-like part of the body and the much softer innards, already starting to stink rather quickly. The inside of the shell has a beautiful sheen, mostly white but with rainbow coloring shimmering in the light.

“It’s not like the chances are any higher of finding a pearl if you just crack one open and…” As Gold says this sarcastically, she tips the shellfish. Something round and hard rolls out of the shell and clacks across the floor as everyone looks. Neith picks it up, and even he is stunned by what he finds.

It is indeed a pearl, though relatively small. It is almost perfectly spherical, with a rather beautiful nacre that charms his dragon instincts with ease. This story is hosted at novelping.com.

Gold reaches for it, and he hands it over. The female dragon inspects the pearl as well, turning it over in her hand.

“G-Guess I picked a lucky one.”

She looks at Neith, and she sets the first shellfish on the wall of the aquafarm. Both she and Neith take fresh shellfish out of the floating basket as Oppok and the other goblins watch in wonder.

Sure enough, two more pearls come out, one slightly deformed, and the other perfectly spherical and a little larger than the first.

“Wh-What have you been feeding them?” asks Neith, bewildered.

“I… I don’t know. Green water the Harbinger instructed me to make. I… This can’t be…”

Gold proceeds to open all of the deceased shellfish Oppok has collected so far out of the hundreds in the aquaculture. Some have multiple pearls, and only a couple have no pearls at all.

She flops down to a seated position on the floor as she stares blankly ahead, and Neith looks at the small collection of varied pearls in the female dragon’s hand. “Daniel didn’t explain what you were doing?”

“W-We made a bet… b-because I was so arrogant… He just told me what to do and how to take care of them. I… I figured he was after pearls, but…”

“What did he have you do?”

She looks up at him, replying quietly, “We just put tiny pieces of sand in each of them. Then, spread them out in the aquafarm and feed them.”

“And… How long ago did you start?”

“A-… A couple months…” She turns pale, realizing that, with thousands of these shellfish still perfectly healthy, and more being brought in every week via trade with the dattakoriens, she has already lost the bet. Pearls are rare, and therefore, very treasured on Zenkon.

Just like diamonds are.

“H-He’s… He’s a monster…” remarks Gold distantly.

Neith laughs warmly as he looks at the aquafarm. The goblins have come to a stop and are awaiting further instructions. Their eyes gleam with eagerness

and a hint of greed, but they know better than to steal. The aquafarm is observed by golems, meaning Daniel will inevitably learn of traitors.

“H-… How the hell… How does he know these things?” asks Gold distantly, finally looking up at the grey knight.

He smiles and replies, “The only glimpses I have seen are through his actions and his phone artifact. His world truly is a fantastical place.”

Gold suddenly claws her hair. “Oh spirits… *That’s* why he was surprised I didn’t open the ones we discarded before! I’m such a fool!”

“Where are they now?” asks Neith.

“The bottom of the stupid lake! Where else?”

Neith smiles. “Well then, I think it’s a task for Dame Roeta and Sir Magnir. I’ll ask for permission to have them brought to see if they can find the dump site.”

Gold finally scrambles up to her feet. “I have to tell him! I… I… This is… I want to… expand! We can fit more in here! Look at all of this wasted space! Let’s go!” She starts to run away, but she halts. “Everyone, keep collecting the dead ones, but don’t you *dare* harm the live ones. The longer they live, the bigger the pearls will be, and the richer we’ll be. Do you understand?”

The goblins all cackle together as they nod eagerly and excitedly. They resume their tasks with fresh vigor, chattering with each other excitedly in their various dialects, some of which are even challenging for Neith to understand.

Gold then dashes to her lounge chair, which is being watched over by an older acolyte woman, who bows on her approach. “Your Eminence.”

“Do what you want! I’m going to the Harbinger!”

Neith laughs and jogs after her. “Don’t rush out. I brought a vehicle. It’ll be an easier ride through the checkpoint.”

“Then hurry up!”

“What about your acolyte?”

“Grrrr… Hurry up, Bonnelaede!”

“Y-Yes, your Eminence!” The woman does her best to jog after them, though Gold is already waiting in the rover by the time she arrives, and Neith holds her door open for her, assisting her inside.

“Th-Thank you, my Lord.”

Neith simply nods, climbing into the driver’s seat and accelerating away from the aquafarm.

The three return to the hangar of the Citadel, and Gold immediately asks the first sentient golem they see as she rushes up on it. “You! Uhhh… Thuirdan, right?”

The golem turns and bows, speaking in a fairly deep voice belonging to an oni in life. “Yes, Lady Gold. How may I assist y-…”

“Where is the Harbinger! I have to speak to him immediately!”

Unfazed by her urgency, the golem simply replies, “His Imperial Grace is with the imperial princes and princesses in the Violet Garden.”

“Which one is that?”

“The roof,” answers Neith. “Thank you.”

“Let’s go!” Gold charges ahead, and Neith follows right behind her, while Bonnelaede does her best to follow. Though, the acolytes aren’t allowed in the Violet Garden itself, since there are many private areas Geirahoel strictly enforces.

Once the two dragons arrive via the transporters, Gold and Neith scan the garden briefly, listening for several distinct sounds.

There are voices to the north, so they follow the paths in an unnecessary rush.

Unfortunately, the path leads them around a corner that bursts into the area where Jieka is running across the path, and she spots the two at the last possible second.

Gold tries to halt her momentum, but her egg slips from her hands. She could easily recover it herself, but she’ll likely scare or trip over the tiny goblin princess in the process.

Neith reacts within a split-second decision. He dives across Gold’s path, shoving her back to keep her from reacting instinctively as he reaches for the egg with his other hand. He manages to scoop it close to himself as he spins. From there, he is able to pass over Jieka and land on his back on the other side of her, absorbing the shock on the egg using his hands and wind magic to soften his own landing to minimize jostling the pre-hatchling inside.

Neith comes to a stop, still holding the egg as he slumps. Jieka cries from being startled, and everyone in the area comes running over.

“What was that, you fool!?” snarls a very familiar voice. Neith looks to find Geirahoel as Gold quickly tries to comfort the young princess, now that she is certain her egg is safe.

Neith relaxes. *Here we go…*

However, Geirahoel starts with scolding Gold, passing Neith right by. “You know the children play up here! Why were you even running in the first place!? And, with your egg, no less! If you don’t want it, give it to me! At least I won’t throw it!”

“It wasn’t intentional!” snaps Gold in reply, but Geirahoel retorts with just as much fire in her tone, “Of course not! But, you should know better!”

“Why!? Because I-…!” Before Gold says what she’s about to say, her own eyes starting to glimmer with tears, Jieka whimpers even more, and now Tekten and even the princes Daugli and Pomiel are on the verge of crying. Gold is supposed to be the ‘fun auntie’, and everyone will be hurt by her finishing her thought.

Geirahoel seems to know what she was going to say, also toning down quickly. “You know I didn’t mean it like that… I just meant… P-Please be more careful. F-For everyone’s sake. E-Especially the baby.”

Gold nods quietly, and Geirahoel finally looks at Neith. “You’re a fool, too, Onii-chan. You should have talked her down. Someone really important almost got hurt.” She pets Jieka’s head gently, who is crying into Gold’s shoulder.

“O-… Onii-chan?” asks Neith, glancing at Daniel.

Daniel murmurs, “This wasn’t what I had in mind…” He takes Jieka from Gold, and scoops up Tekten as well, hugging them both as they cling to his neck. Daugli is in Ryuogriar’s arms while Pomiel is in Reignleif’s as they approach.

“I-I’m sorry,” says Gold. “Neith… Y-You… You saved me… from lots of mistakes today.”

“You finally did something impressive… Dumb Onii-chan.”

Neith scoffs as Geirahoel looks away from him, crossing her arms. He recognizes the gesture, but he’s surprised by the name she’s calling him. She’s not as angry at him as she once was, and it was… mostly a compliment.

Regardless, he hands the egg to Gold as she approaches, and he says politely, “I did only what was expected of me. The Princess is a treasure of the Fievegal, and your egg is a treasure to the dragons, if not the Fievegal as well.”

“What were you in such a hurry to tell us, Lady Gold?”

“Hmm? OH! Right! This, you damn… Monster!”

The two empresses and all four children gasp at these words. However, when Gold withdraws the items from her pouch and presents them to Daniel, he is the first to laugh.

The dragons and half-human children stare at it just as Gold and Neith had; a handful of small pearls, most of which are quite impeccably spherical and beautiful.

The dragon matron holding the pearls softens her expression, and she says tenderly, “You’ve defeated me again, Harbinger…”

The human teases playfully, “It hasn’t been a full year yet…”

The golden-haired woman sighs in disgust. “Ugh… I know how far you’ve gotten with diamonds alone! I’m not an idiot!”

“Mukori,…” starts Reignleif. “Did you make these yourself?”

Daniel grins at her, and the three dragon Empresses stare at him in disbelief. He only corrects them to give credit where it's due; "I laid out the instructions. Lady Gold and her workers have done the hard work."

"We're going to bankrupt the world…" mumbles Ryuogriar a little eagerly.

Finally, everyone shares a laugh, though Neith is still curious about where Geirahoel's new title for him came from.

As far as he's concerned, it might be better off left as a mystery.

If she doesn't know what it means, Neith doesn't want her to think he had any part in it.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 149: Goblins VS False Goblins

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 149: Goblins VS False Goblins

A carriage creaks as it rocks back and forth. Chains and anchor rings rattle and jingle with every little jostling motion. Insects buzz and hum in the distance as amphibians sing their evening songs.

They are normal sounds, filling the forest with their noise.

Hungry eyes gaze upon the carriage as it and several others behind it make their way down the dirt-laden path towards the war mountain.

This hunger is not one that can be sated, however. It is not food that is desired. Pure greed and malice are the driving forces of those watching the carriages from their hidden positions amongst the trees and shrubs. Many treasures of all kinds are ferried to and from the war mountain. They are easy targets, and those who are the quickest and strongest get to take the spoils of their choosing.

The only being in the world that matters is the one whose gaze trails to the tallcat driving the leading carriage as it approaches. Tallcats are tricky to deal with because they are fast as well as strong. But, they are arrogant because they are tall, just like all of the other talllings. Their blood still flows when they are cut and stabbed, and their screams and cries still make this particular green-skinned warrior laugh.

The most satisfying victories are against those who think they are stronger than him, since he is the greatest and most important being in the world.

The Warrior glances cautiously from his hiding place. Others have constantly started appearing to try and take his loot, and many of them have successfully stolen his treasures. He would love nothing more than to kill them all and steal his rightful treasures back, but they have their uses. They make great distractions when fighting talllings, and some of them even save the only true warrior in the world the effort of killing the enemies himself. If he's really lucky, they kill each other.

Today is just another such hunt for treasures. The tallcat appears to be female, which is a bonus whether she lives or dies. And, most likely, there are other talllings in the carriage. As long as he's not the first one to charge, he can wait for the right time to attack and outlive the fools who lead.

Sure enough, a cry from one of the other green-skinned thieves arises as he bursts out of the trees from a high branch, landing on the carriage. Dozens of other green-skins join the attack just as quickly, and the Warrior cackles as he rises to his feet. He will wait for just the right moment and take what is his.

He rushes towards the pullbeasts of the front carriage. Pullbeasts can be frightening when they panic, but they are the first thing that needs to be dealt with, or else the prey might escape.

The green-skins far outnumber the greatest army of the foolish tallings, making this just as easy as all of the other attacks before.

The tallcat doesn't move, stricken with fear as the Warrior closes in on the pullbeasts. Even the pullbeasts are afraid to move. The Warrior cries out his

mighty battle-cry as he swings his ax with its painfully jagged blade. “Gyaaaahhhhh!”

Reddish brown slow poison marks his battle-harden weapon, and the pullbeasts will be helpless when he takes out their legs.

The ax comes across with ferocity, and the pullbeast doesn’t even look at him. He slams the blade straight into its knee, but to his surprise, the ax bounces off with a surprising ‘clonk!’.

Confused by this turn of events, the Warrior snarls. “Shi-shi mo-al-okka!” curses the Warrior, swinging his ax again, this time for below the knee.

Still, the same ‘clonk’ follows the impact, and pain sears through his hands. He cries out, “Bakyaka! Ba! Fusu-lesa!” He stumbles back a step, plopping his ax head down onto the dirt.

He looks up at the pullbeast, which has neither moved to get away, nor even looked at him. And, where he struck its legs has no signs of blood, even though two fairly deep chunks of its flesh have been chopped out. In all of his wise years of life, the Warrior has never seen a pullbeast not respond at all to being attacked, even if it wears shinyshell like the weak and cowardly talllings do.

Neither pullbeast has moved, and they haven’t even made a sound.

Likewise, a chorus of pings and clangs are filling the forest as the lead carriage is attacked, and confused green-skins snarl and chatter towards the back where the other carriages seem to be empty.

The Warrior looks at the green-skins ahead of the carriage, who are waiting to take down the pullbeasts if they do manage to escape him. They are just as confused as he is, and those attacking the lead carriage are getting frustrated.

Another peculiarity starts to dawn on the Warrior. The only voices he is hearing are green-skins. There are no screams of even the tallcat that was driving the lead carriage, nor anyone inside the carriages. He looks at the tallcat, who has been struck by weapons several times by now-confused green-skins. Her flesh has chipped away, but there is no blood. It looks more like wood.

It's then that the Warrior sees the tallcat's face. It barely looks like a person now that he can see it behind the hood. There is no fur anywhere on its body. Only paint denotes a difference between skin and the parts that should be fur or hair.

The greatest and most intelligent Warrior in all of the world is puzzled. Something is very strange compared to the other ambushes.

The Warrior begins to grow concerned, feeling a tingle in his body that replaces the dull pain in his hands and arms. He doesn't fear tallings, but he is not stupid like the others. He's not going to die.

Just as he's pondering this, the side flaps of the lead carriage open, leaving about four holes too small to crawl through on each side, and three on the front.

A mechanical 'Clunk!' sounds out from within the carriage's hidden interior, and then a startling roar that turns into a strange, monster-like low growl rumbles the Warrior to his bones.

He stumbles back a step as many of the other green-skins cry out and chatter in surprise, all readying their weapons against the carriage.

There's another metallic cough from the center-front hole, passing by the tallcat and through the pullbeasts towards the group behind the Warrior.

Thunder booms loudly, causing the Warrior to shriek in terror as the green-skins scream in pain and agony near the blast.

From their, terrifyingly loud pops and cracks spit fire and smoke out of the holes on the carriage, and green-skins all around the warrior cry out and scream as blood sprays in every direction. Just as some of them try to retreat, the rear carriages explode violently in violent puffs of white, grey, and brown, sending even more screams into the air as the last of the Warrior's hearing vanishes.

All he can hear now is a strange drum beat, too fast to be music, as it thumps rapidly. He looks around frantically. Green-skins are falling in sprays of blood, while others try in futility to attack the carriage, only to be killed by unseen attacks from within.

And then, the true terror strikes.

Flashes erupt from the trees as green-skins try to flee, flickering like skyflashes, but filling the undersides of the trees with light.

The thumping drum beat continues in the Warrior's ears. He can't see anything. Phantoms are slaughtering the weaker green-skins, and the cowards are unable to even leave the trail.

Several green-skins have the clever idea to hide beneath the carriage, and they seem to last a while.

However, from his vantage point, the warrior can see something drop into their midst from the bottom of the carriage. Just like the ones out in front of the carriage, an explosion of white, grey, and brown engulfs the cowards who took cover beneath the vehicle.

Even with all of the chaotic attacks, the pullbeasts haven't even attempted to move, nor has the tallcat driving the carriage.

A memory finally resurfaces in the Warrior's mind. Talllings often make fake versions of themselves and other things. Some are carved from stone, others from trees, and still more from shinystone. The fake tallings do not move, do not respond, and seem to be dead, but because they are made from those things, they are not edible.

The tallings of this carriage have used the fakes instead of risking themselves, like the cowards they are. And now, phantoms are slaughtering all of the thieves that the Warrior had to contend with for treasure.

He is no fool, though. He alone is not enough to defeat all of the phantoms *and* whatever talllings might still be in the carriage, even if they are craven weaklings.

The bravest Warrior in the world walks cautiously backwards as smoke and flashes still flicker out from both the lead carriage and the forest behind. If he's not careful, he'll be spotted by the phantoms and attacked. Most likely, they can only attack if he isn't looking at them, since he has been watching the carriage the whole time, and not one of their foul invisible attacks has come near him.

Suddenly, the Warrior bumps into something, and he is violently shoved to the ground. He screams in anger and surprise as he faceplants into the dirt of the trail, and he feels pain shoot through his nose and one of his ears as strangely familiar cackling sounds out all around him, still muffled to a degree and partially drowned out by the unending rapid drum beat.

He scrambles to lift his head and looks around.

He can feel the rapid squeezing in his chest tighten even more as sweat starts to form all across his skin. The greatest being alive is gazing upon dozens of green-skins. But, unlike those who joined him in his attack, these ones are wearing shinyshells like tallings, not just scavenged trophies made to fit. They all look identical to each other, with a headshell painted black, along with chest, arm, and leg shells painted dark green with various shades of green, black, and grey mixed in. And, on the front of their helmets, from which their green-skin ears protrude, there is a frightening face with sharp teeth and evil eyes as black as the darkest caves where even the mighty Warrior cannot see.

The green-skins facing him are carrying strange black rods with protrusions all over, some of which are emitting smoke from one end. His frantically jumping eyes see one of the green-skins emerging from the forest further back, and the weakling points the smoking end of his cowardly stick in a specific direction. A burst of fire comes out of the black stick before a thief who had helped the raid flops lifelessly to the ground from a pleading position.

The Warrior is the wisest being he knows in the entire world. He may be surrounded, but his heroic wits are easily too much for these hardshelled cowards, even if they hide their terror behind cackles and chatter the Warrior is too intelligent to understand.

“{Look at this one. He made urine on himself.}”

“{Let’s put him out of his misery and return.}” This chapter was copied from novelping.com without permission.

As the second one speaks unintelligibly like the craven wretch that it is, another steps up and puts its hand on that one’s firespitter. This arrogant weakling of a green-skin is wearing a long piece of fabric that reaches from his shoulders to his ankles, and it is a solid grey color.

“{Hold, brother. It looks like he’s the only survivor. Tag him and let him flee.}”

The craven smallfry that dared to attempt to attack the Warrior retreats a step in fear of his greatness, and he grips a fist full of dirt in his left hand, while his right hand still holds his trusty red-brown poison-bladed axe.

Suddenly, pain hits the Warrior’s shoulder from behind, and he shrieks in anger. “Greeeaaaahhh!” He sweeps the ax in a wide arc, and all of the green-skins hop back fearfully, giving him an opening. He flings the fistful of dirt at the pompous weakling wearing the longcloth, springing to his feet into a full sprint. His brave and ingenious strategy will be to gain distance and attack the cowards one by one if he truly is the only one to survive. Then, he’ll claim the firespitters for himself and become even mightier than the fire scalebirds.

After all, he is the mightiest warrior in the entire world. His feet have never let him down before, and he runs as fast as he can through the woods, pain still burning his shoulder. He’ll devise new cunning plans to wipe out all of the cowards who would dare gang up on him.

For now, the Warrior returns to the hoard where he and those other thieves have agreed to hold a truce to store their treasures. Some of the weakest green-skins are already present, likely having turned back before the raid even began.

He’ll have to kill them later and take what is rightfully his. If they were too cowardly to even join the raid, then they are obviously too weak to stand against him. After all, he is going to defeat the hardshelled cravens and take their firespitters.

Just as the Warrior snarls, “Glakka boort fuon bok,…” He hears a sound from behind him. He is deep within the depths of the burrow now, where the weak

and cowardly captured talllings are huddled together, waiting for their turn to be a meal.

The Warrior readies his backup rending cleaver, a handle that fits his impressive hands with an even more impressive blade, though it is heavier than the ax, which is why he doesn't use it as often. But, because he didn't have time to keep hold of his trusty ax, he'll just have to retrieve it after he slaughters the phantoms and their pathetic green-skin slaves.

When he turns, however, the greatest and most powerful Warrior in the world is met with a surprisingly sharp pain under his lower jaw. He is stuck and unable to move as his eyes roll back for a moment from sharp pain piercing into his mouth and behind his nose, and he can feel hot liquid draining into his throat.

He struggles to lower his gaze to look at the source of this pain, and he finds the same green-skin weakling who was wearing the long grey rag on his back, but it is no longer present. The green-skin's gaze is as cold as ice, and that chill sends a shiver down the Warrior's spine.

The name 'Alkus Gristak' once found its place in the Warrior's thoughts after a dream he had. Green-skins who live like talllings have their pathetic beliefs, and that place is why they don't dig deep into the ground.

This green-skin, from the look in his eyes, is one of those who have come back from that place.

The hot liquid draining into the Warrior's throat causes him to cough, and blood sprays out, splattering the Gristak demon lightly. Even so, the impossible terror-beast doesn't even blink. It simply growls in a cold tone, "{Scum like you give us goblins a bad name. May the chains of Alkus Gristak never release you.}"

The Gristak demon raises its right hand holding something that looks like a strangely shaped hammer or boomerang, but without either of the usefulness of those two.

Regardless, its shape looks even more specifically like something the Warrior learned of only today; firespitters.

He can only widen his eyes as he looks down the pitch-black maw of the weapons of the Alkus Gristak.

It's not a firespitter.

It is a soulstealer.

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"Look at this one. He made urine on himself." The goblin of "Grendel 6" who just spoke is Locke, one of the few who have been blessed with an Earth name by order of the Emperor. He was a feral goblin living in the Citadel prior to the arrival of the Emperor and Empress, and didn't have a name. Regardless, goblins are fast to adapt and learn, and Locke's best chance at survival was to become a loyal soldier for the Fievegal, which he now eagerly bears with pride.

Field Marshal Klur studies the carnage around them. A light blinks from inside the disguised and heavily modified 'Iron Buckrokh'. While not as heavy and nigh-indestructible as the iron drakes, the iron buckrokhs are still classified as tanks, according to Daniel. Using a high power boiler empowered by water and fire crystals, it emulates a similar high torque engine design from Earth.

And, the iron buckrokh is much faster and more maneuverable than the iron drakes, perfect for this mission.

“Let’s put him out of his misery and return,” replies Olk, a goblin from the far north, where it is much colder and harsher weather. His stoic personality matches the scar spreading across his face.

Olk aims his compact machine gun, the largest weapons goblins can handle safely.

Klur steps forward and places his hand on the barrel of Olk’s weapon. “Hold, brother. It looks like he’s the only survivor. Tag him and let him flee.”

Olk sighs in disappointment, stepping back. In that moment, the last surviving dumgob swings his rusty ax and flings a handful of dirt, and the goblins of Grendel 6 all hop back to easily avoid the last-ditch attack.

The dumgob springs to his feet and bolts, sprinting as fast as he can away from the ambush sight.

The elite forces of the Fievegal gather as they see him off, cackling together. The tank is already running, in case they needed to evacuate, so it’ll be an easy escape. To run silently for the trap, Klur requested a rapid retrofit to include a smaller engine like the iron drakes, but the High Goblin Ahok already had a new design specifically used as a prototype; an iron buckrokh with both the water and fire powered engine, and an electric crystal powered engine that runs almost silently.

Klur’s cup has always been full since joining the Fievegal, and seeing these disgusting wretched feral goblins enrages him. Everyone hates, fears, or underestimates goblins because of them, treating the diminutive demon-kin like beasts.

But, not Emperor Daniel and his Empresses. They arm and armor goblins as well as they would any other soldier, and now Klur can go toe to toe with even

drakes and gulpoxen on his own. He'll struggle, but he could potentially win.

And, goblins never fight alone.

He smiles as the dumgob stumbles, disappearing into the brush. "Grendel 6! Forward unto riches!"

"Raaaaahhhh!" cheer the goblins in both the tank and on the ground. Klur leads his primary squad forward while the rest of Grendel 6 reattaches the carriages in order to follow. This area's main group of dumgobs was part of the ambush, so there shouldn't be another raid. That said, their ability to escape will be greatly amplified if they're already chained to the tank, which no amount of dumgobs will be able to stop.

Olk jogs alongside Klur, with Locke leading the way. He has the prototype mana tracker that Ahok's subordinates produced under her supervision, and it follows a linked 'tag', which was jammed into the back of the dumgob's shoulder like a fish hook. Even if he realizes what it is, the dumgob will likely be too afraid of the additional pain to try to remove it, and none of the others will help him, since his death means his loot belongs to them.

Klur hates that he knows how dumgobs think. Fundamentally, they're still goblins, meaning their instinctual greed and desire for treasure as much as the screams of others is hardwired into them all. Social goblins like Klur and Olk learned long ago to cooperate with each other on a more trusting level to increase the overall wealth of their tribes, which led to the construction of villages and even recognition by some of the other demon-kin.

But, something even Locke can attest to, being a former bloodthirsty dumgob himself, is the fact that the screams that sate their inherently malicious hearts don't have to be innocent women and children.

They can be the terrified screams and suffering of other goblins.

Particularly, feral goblins giving the rest of them a terrible reputation.

Klur calls out over his shoulder as they jog at a leisurely pace, “Make sure to sweep the forest! Scenthunters, find them and smoke them out. We’re leaving none of them alive.”

“Yes, Field Marshal!” reply the members following him.

“Field Marshal, does that mean we’re fully free?”

“Against the dumgobs, yes. Give no quarter, spare no mercy. Any prisoners and dumgob children need to be corralled and protected.”

Olk grins maliciously. He was, as one might guess, banished from the north because he has a very low bar for his temper. In the Fievegal, treasure and blood are in great supply, as long as impulse control is maintained. Olk is likely pent up from being a field trainer for the other goblins becoming soldiers.

“Your wish is my command, Field Marshal.”

“What about the female dumgobs?” asks one of the soldiers in the back.

Klur’s grey mantle flaps behind him as he looks over his shoulder, still keeping his pace. “If they fight, they die. If they surrender, then tie them up. But, there will be no slaves. We’re here for vengeance, not conquest.”

Several cheers of agreement join him. Klur is certainly not the only one angered by the dishonor dumgobs create. The grey mantle flowing in the wind behind Klur is proof of the Emperor himself acknowledging the goblin during the battle with the eastern empire. While it was something Daniel cautioned against after the fact, Klur had led his team of goblins behind enemy lines to steal anything

and everything of value, including troop movement plans, magic scrolls, and logistical documentation. Goblins didn't win the battle the way Hekate and the dragons did, but they did what goblins do best; create a great deal of pain and rot in their enemies.

Word won't spread quickly, but Klur intends to make every being ever born with green skin and goblin ears *fear* ever becoming a dumgob again.

The burrow appears before them quickly, with various dumgobs milling around. One is dragging a seemingly lifeless being by the leg; it could be a child of the taller races or an imp. Regardless, time is of the essence.

Klur gives hand signals as he was taught, and his troops nod in understanding. Locke takes a handful of the elite goblins off to the left, while Olk stalks out of sight on the right. Visit novelping.com for the full chapter.

Klur is a goblin, so his intelligence will never be as high as other races. Ahok is an anomaly because of her half human or elven blood, meaning the First and Second Princess of the Fievegal may be anomalies as well.

But, Klur has strived to learn from his liege lord everything that the Emperor will teach. Some of it is in books, others are by demonstration. Every time the Emperor graces Klur with his time and effort, Klur is stronger for it.

And so, the goblin Field Marshal withdraws a special tube that attaches to the end of his submachine gun. With just a simple tube, the weapon spits a sound little more than a soft cough and the clanking of its metal parts. And at range, it's almost unnoticeable, even for the powerful ears of a goblin.

Once the others are in position, Klur checks his own team, who have also added their own suppressors.

Everyone takes aim, and with careful precision, Klur fires, taking out the dumgob dragging the small person. He flops to his side with out time to grunt, while his blood spritzes out.

When the others turn to look at him, whispered coughs fill the air with light amounts of smoke, and the rest of the goblins fall.

Klur runs to the girl, signalling Locke and Olk to track down other entrances, which they quickly sweep the area. The Field Marshal then kneels next to the girl, keeping his eyes peeled as he checks her pulse. She moves on her own, which gives him some relief. He clicks his teeth with his tongue twice, signalling the medic to move up.

Floria, a female goblin member of Grendel 6 jogs up. Her armor is lighter than the rest, and instead of a black helmet with the Feldrok Grin, she wears a grey helmet with the Fievegal's healing emblem; a special flower with a halo and golden ropes sweeping around it. She has both potions and potations in her void bag, which allows her to safely treat the widest variety of people possible. Floria was also a feral goblin, though she's very young and is still recovering from the terror of living in the Citadel before the Emperor and Empresses. Having been spared, Daniel asked her what she wanted to do, and she answered that she wanted to heal the injured, including on the battlefield. He then bestowed her the name "Floria", an easier to remember tie to a famous healer on Earth.

The injured girl is terrified when she sees the goblins of Grendel 6, but she doesn't have the strength to fight back. Floria quickly checks her condition. "Shhh, it's okay. It's okay. We're here to help you," coos the goblin medic. The girl is a human, which means she most likely came from the far side of the mountains somehow. There's no telling how she ended up on the other side of the Fievegal for certain, nor how she ended up in the clutches of feral goblins,

but it makes Klur feel a hole in his heart. He knows why Daniel is the way he is. When good deeds are done, people will happily reward you. When you can help someone, it feels almost as good or better than spilling blood.

The only advantage to a situation like this is the fact that the Field Marshal and Grendel 6 have the privilege of spilling blood *and* helping people.

“She’s weak, but I can get her stable, Field Marshal. I’ll stay with her until Mobile arrives. Send a runner for me if you need me.”

Klur nods. His job isn’t finished yet, and he can smell the beast that fled from him back at the ambush site.

Klur takes off his mantle, placing it on the girl’s body to cover her. He says as reassuringly as he can, even though he knows human children fear goblins rather easily, “With this, you have my protection. You won’t be hurt again.”

The girl starts crying, and the Commanding Goblin stands up, marching into the cave. “Let’s move.”

Klur and his squad storm the cavern, sweeping each and every tunnel and pocket, exterminating dumgobs with swift and precise attacks, overwhelming and surprising them. He can already hear the same suppressed coughs of submachine gun fire deeper in, indicating one of the other teams found another entrance. It’s imperative that they secure all exits to prevent any of the dumgobs from escaping. Those that can be reformed will be dealt with later. For now, they have to capture the burrow and rescue any prisoners while exterminating hostile dumgobs.

After killing around a dozen dumgobs, Klur’s nose leads him exactly where he wants to be. And, to his morbid satisfaction, he is the first one to arrive.

This is the prisoner room, which is usually the territory of only the strongest and highest ranking of dumgobs, so their treasures are also often located here. The Field Marshal had a suspicion, given the nature of the ambush, that the dumgob allowed to flee was a little higher than a peon or a leech, but he also doesn't seem to know where anything is, suggesting that he's just treating everything as his now that he knows the others of his 'tribe' are gone.

Klur draws his dagger, swooping up behind the frantic savage. The feral wretch cheers eagerly in unintelligible gibberish, which is a scare tactic dumgobs use because they rarely learn languages unless they become social goblins.

Like the rusty ax, the dumgob prizes a rusty blade that looks like an elongated butcher's cleaver, with a rectangular blade and a handle traditionally suited to a taller race's single hand. To a goblin, it's closer to a heavy shortsword, but because this one is so poorly cared for, it would be a slow and painful death for anyone foolish or helpless enough to be hit by it enough times to die.

The goblin honored by the Emperor doesn't give the feral dumgob a chance to even realize that he's there, let alone swing. He swoops the dagger blade-up into the underside of the dumgob's chin, and his eyes roll back from the painfull shock. But, because of the force and a blade now piercing into a part of his brain, his motor functions give out. He probably doesn't even realize that his feet are dangling due to Klur's superior strength honed over months of training.

The dumgob is finally able to look at him with trembling eyes full of terror, slowly coming to terms with the fact that he is already dead. His brain just hasn't realized it yet.

The dumgob coughs weakly, spitting up blood that sprays a little on Klur's face and helmet. He doesn't even flinch as his cold, angered eyes stare deep, watching the dumgob's soul fade.

“Scum like you give us goblins a bad name,” growls Klur with his voice cold and full of malice. “May the chains of Alkus Gristak never release you.”

He lifts his side arm from its holster, aiming it directly at the dumgob’s head. The fading wretch has just enough cognizance remaining to process what it is, and the terror renews in his eyes as he weakly tries to move his pierced tongue.

BANG!

Blood sprays both forward and behind the dumgob as its soul is cast into the deepest pit of the world.

It is said that the Chains of Alkus Gristak grow heavier over eternity, and they forever burn the flesh of the imprisoned with molten steel. Once the Chains ensnare someone, they will never be seen again. They will cease to exist.

They will cease to be important.

Klur has had his goblin beliefs shaken up by the eminence of the Fievegal’s unrivaled Emperor, but this is the first time he hopes Alkus Gristak is real. It is a place said to be prowled by the most vicious and evil of demons, created at the dawn of time to punish those who dig too deep and heed not wisdom, having become slaves to greed and vanity.

Klur holsters his pistol and sets the dumgob down, pulling his dagger out and dropping the lifeless body to the floor.

The Field Marshal surveys the room around him. A couple of dattakoriens, one of them roughly as young as the girl outside, three humans, a succubus, and an Uhl’tall. Those that are conscious and have the strength cower in the corner,

huddling together to try to avoid the goblins they know are present; specifically one that created a flash of light in this dark cavern.

Goblins can see almost as well as dattakoriens in the dark, so he can see them perfectly fine, just as the dattakoriens can likely see him. The humans, however, are glancing around, listening for signs of whatever vile things are to come.

But, Klur is a goblin and a Field Marshal of the Fievegal. These people are under his protection now, and that of the entirety of Grendel 6.

And, around him, the other members of his squad have assassinated the dumgobs that either fled into this room or were already present when he pounced upon the one he just killed.

Olk's squad appears at the entrance, and he nods at Klur, who returns the gesture to confirm the burrow is secure.

"Please stay calm," states Klur in his gentlest voice he can manage. "We are soldiers of the Fievegal's Grendel 6 Unit. I am Field Marshal Klur. You're going to be free."

The women tremble, too afraid to speak. Only the dattakoriens can likely see him, and the younger one whimpers, "A-Aren't you goblins?"

"That's right. These beasts are false goblins, a stain on my honor. I will not stand by while these things continue to happen."

Locke approaches, handing Klur a handkerchief, and the Field Marshal wipes his face off, approaching the women huddled together. They're tied to the walls with collars, so it would be a challenge for them to escape normally.

“Emperor Daniel granted me the privilege of coming to help you. Please, accept our hand of helping.” Klur kneels in front of the group where they can see them, and they recoil in surprise.

The young dattakorien girl whimpers, “I… I want to leave… I don’t want to be here anymore…”

“M-M-Me too!” whimpers the other, before many of them are sobbing. The goblins of Grendel 6 step in to try to comfort them, providing water, food, and blankets to help them. Many of the goblins are covered in blood, but blood is like food. It only satiates one’s hunger for a time because it is not everlasting. Likewise, the prisoners, the survivors, have seen much worse, no doubt.

For most of his life, Klur was an aimless goblin without a calling. But, as he looks at the survivors being escorted out by his soldiers, he finally knows what his purpose in this world is.

A goblin with a true purpose is a rare thing.

He will savor the terror in that dumgob’s eyes; that feral goblin that shared all the traits of a goblin like Klur. But, it will remain a bittersweet memory, because of what *others* had to suffer for him to be able to enjoy it.

Klur has a new resolve, and a new request for the Emperor.

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1. Novel

2. # Trapped in Another World With No Magic

3. Chapter 150: Devil of the Wood

Trapped in Another World With No Magic

Chapter 150: Devil of the Wood

Field Marshal Klur is a goblin who grew up in as stable of an environment as a typical social goblin might, like the Queens Shek and Skloe. He was still kicked around by the taller races and drafted for combat against the east. His chances of seeing his home again were low, and when the Harbinger of Calamity rose to power, he felt his days were even shorter.

Now, he is riding in the carriage with the survivors rescued from the dumgob, or feral goblin, burrow. They are exhausted and fearful, wrapped in blankets provided by the soldiers of Grendel 6 as most of them sleep.

In total, there were twenty two survivors, ranging from children to adults, mostly female, since even most goblins can fight the women and children of most races with minimal risk.

There is a young human girl, who was the first one found upon discovering the burrow, and she is still wearing the Field Marshal's grey mantle as a blanket while she sleeps with her head leaning on his shoulder. The middle carriage is effectively a dummy carriage as part of the bait to lure out the dumgobs, so it is normal in every way except that it was built in a hurry and with materials the Fievegal didn't need. It's not comfortable, but it's better than making these weary and exhausted souls walk.

For now, the near-silent electric motor is driving the iron buckrokh, a disguised tank pulling the two dummy carriages behind.

Klur studies the young human girl, who is only a hair shorter than he is due to her age. Klur was the first one to comfort her when she was rescued, providing his mantle as a sort of protection, something that the goblin field commander wouldn't have come up with on his own. The Human Emperor regularly gives his own belongings to his daughters and sons to reassure them, and it quickly pacifies them when all else seems to fail.

"M-Mister Goblin…?" asks the Uhl'tall woman that was found in the prisoner room.

Klur looks at her, asking as respectfully as he can, "Need something?"

She hesitates, shrugging into her blanket. "I… What will be happening to us now?"

Klur shifts only a little, trying not to disrupt the human girl. "As I briefly say, we will head to Citadel. Emperor and Empresses order to provide new home or take to home."

She absorbs his words, since he knows that he is still not fully proficient at speaking any of the common languages between demon-kin, let alone the eastern trade language Daniel favors.

"S-So… w-will we be… slaves?" asks one of the other women who appeared to be asleep.

"No. No slaves. As goblin given great honor by Fievegal, Klur encourage to stay in Fievegal, but Emperor want know you can go home. If want."

"What if…?"

"Klur apologize. Klur know very little of future. Mission to kill dumgob raiders and save prisoners." He looks at the third carriage, which has the captured

feral goblins, mostly consisting of children and goblin women to be offered the chance to redeem themselves and become functional members of society, so far as Klur knows. Given what he has seen, as well as some of the soldiers in his very own Grendel 6 unit, anyone can be redeemed if they choose to walk the right path.

The women look down, a little disappointed that he can't answer their questions. He'd like to, but he simply doesn't know enough.

Suddenly a whistle catches Klur's attention. He can see the dattakoriens perk up and listen intently as well.

A second, tone-changing whistle tells Klur what he needs. The scouts have discovered a threat.

Klur stands up, which jolts the girl awake. But, he can't focus on that now. "Grendel Six! Contact! To stations! Free the Titanslayer!"

The last word startles those who were paying attention among the former captives. The goblins guarding the refugees start jumping off of the carriage as Klur explains, "Stay in carriage. We can only protect know where to concentrate defense. Trust or you die." He gets some frightened nods as the women huddle together, and he buckles his helmet's chin strap back down. "Grendel 6! Defend carriage train! Titanslayer, check targets carefully!"

Klur receives confirmation of his commands, and several soldiers run up to the sides of the tank, pulling safety pins and jumping out of the way of the sides, which drop the disguise panels off of the sides of the tank, revealing the iron-hull of the Harbinger's iron buckrokh prototype.

The main engine roars to life, startling the women as steam starts rising out of the top vents. The turret turns to the right as a soldier out front guides them to

which direction the threat is coming from; slightly to the right of the forward path while goblins quickly remove the panels from the rear so they don't block the rear carriages if they have to take off. The panels for the disguise are simply made out of stretched canvas and wooden frames, or wooden planks. They were intended to be disposable in case they needed the full capabilities of the tank as quickly as possible, or to flee at full speed. The iron buckrokh can flee faster than an unladen buckrokh at full speed, though they'll have to be mindful of the carriages in the current mission.

That means, they have to stand and fight or make slow progress while defending to keep the footsoldiers safe.

The staccato of submachine gun fire echoes out through the forest in bursts, while goblins begin shouting. The flashes illuminate the underside of the forest being claimed by the setting sun yielding to night time.

Briefly shown while firing is a monstrous jawline full of teeth as a creature lets out a loud roar.

"Drake!" shouts Klur as others do the same.

While the goblins in the area keep firing, Locke climbs onto the side of the tank, deftly scrambling up the side to the top of the main hull. He opens the rear tool bay where two heavier rifles are stored. They're too much for goblins to use in combat, but Neith recommended Grendel 6 bring a couple for emergencies.

The hatch on top of the tank opens as the tank commander surveys the battle. He calls out directions into the vehicle as the turret adjusts.

Because communication devices are still in development, the commander pulls and releases a lever at his station three times, which blares a loud horn in time

with the action. The goblins in a wide arc of the firing line scatter, and the drake bellows.

Shek and Skloe are fairly down to earth for rulers in such lofty positions, and Klur has heard it from them himself; the two goblin queens met Daniel after he defeated a drake and the Red Knight singlehandedly.

“Aim for body mass, not the head!” calls out Klur.

The commander signals an affirmative with his hand, and just as the drake inhales, a blast of fire and smoke bursts forth from the barrel of the tank’s 50mm cannon, which is much smaller than the iron drakes, but the shells are more manageable for goblins to use.

The tank jolts from the recoil, rocking back and forth on its tracks. Within seconds, the drake shrieks as most of it rolls violently to the side, clawing wildly.

Its left claw is left behind on the ground, and blood pours out of its shoulder in a messy spray.

The women in the carriage are crying, while Locke scans the woods using the scope on the rifle he withdrew. He has to use the bipod because of the length and weight, and he has to be mindful if the turret turns all the way around, but it shouldn’t because the carriages would be in the line of fire.

“Commander, begin advance! Teams-…!”

A new roar fills the forest from the other side. However, this one isn’t a drake. It has a tone that exceeds the drake and the tank cannon, and hearing it fills Klur with an instinctual dread that he can’t place. To his knowledge, he has never heard this sound before, but it’s like his body *knows* the danger it poses.

No, his *soul* knows it.

Something ancient and evil has been awakened.

“Regroup!” shouts Klur. “Prepare to evacuate!”

The turret swings to the left as birds caw all around, raising the volume from silent to near chaos. The Field Marshal readies his weapon towards the origin of the sounds, towards the left side deep into the forest.

The goblins of Grendel 6 return to the carriages, climbing onto all three vehicles as they prepare to run, even as the tank creeps forward.

Pitch black birds erupt from the tree line to the left, cawing and screeching relentlessly.

“Fire! Fire! Fire!” shouts Klur, immediately squeezing his own machine gun’s trigger in bursts, joined by the other soldiers.

Avian devils fall in nearly as great of numbers as the bullets being sent forth, swooping towards the carriages as the goblins do their best to fight. The covers of the rear two carriages provide almost no protection, as the birds have no sense of self-preservation and spear through the canvas to try to attack the people within.

The non-combatants cry out in fear and pain, and the goblins desperately try to fight off the airborne assault.

Klur checks for hand gestures from the squad leaders, and he gets confirmation that everyone is on board. He signals to the tank commander, who quickly ducks down into the tank.

The engine bellows as the tank accelerates, and the carriages jolt a little at the increased speed.

Thankfully, the decoy buckrokhs serve a purpose, as many of the birds try to attack the tank and the wooden dummies, breaking their own necks and flopping to the ground all over the place. They seem to be attacking the means of mobility intentionally, and Klur can feel a foulness in the air.

A deep boom rumbles through the ground deep in the forest, and the sounds of trees cracking and crashing down fills the forest, joining the chaotic chorus of birds cackling and wailing.

The tank's turret aims upwards, and it suddenly booms as it spits fire and smoke. A large swath of the birds fall in response; an anti-wyvern round. It's meant to increase the chances of hitting wyverns, but with how thickly crowded the airspace around them is with the ravens, it easily takes out dozens of them with the oversized scattering of projectiles. Daniel calls it a 'shotgun' or 'scattergun' design, and it's the only such weapon that they have on hand.

Another boom follows the first, and it's making the dread increase in Klur's body. It's taking a lot of focus for him and the others to stay in the carriages, which are bumping and bouncing with the speed of the tank pulling them forward. They are at the mercy of the tracked vehicle, and the only thing keeping them from driving off course too much are the divots created by the heavy vehicle's path.

The booming gets closer and closer, picking up speed as the beast bellows again, and the birds seem only somewhat to have been cut down in numbers by the massive amount of ammunition being quickly expended.

The trees start shaking and falling in a diagonal behind and to the left of the carriage train.

Klur is hit by one of the ravens torpedoing into him, and he shouts in anger as he flops down to his left hand from his kneeling position, thrown off balance by the impact. He has too many things to think about, and it's much different than a frontal assault or ambush.

However, the giant monster is behind them, and the turret will be blocked by the cover of the carriages. He is repeatedly needing to steady himself when a large bump jostles him anew.

The tank launches another scattershot into the air, and more of the birds fall from the sky. But, they have to address the giant sooner than later. The tank is running about half of its full speed to avoid throwing anyone out of the carriages, and the refugees and captives are clinging to any part of the carriage that they can.

The goblin commander shouts as he makes a cutting hand motion with his left hand pointed at the supports of the carriage canopy. It's relatively useless anyways, and they need full visibility, as well as rotation for the tank.

"Non-fighters, stay down! Cut the canopies! Now!" He lunges to the nearest safety release for one of the risers, and he unfastens it. Olk is in the back of the same carriage, and he handles the one at the rear left. Several goblins take care of the right, and they quickly throw the canopy off to the right.

The rear carriage quickly follows suit, and Klur signals for the tank to focus on the rear, where a massive and likely ancient tree topples into the road.

Klur only catches a glimpse of the beast stomping after them and gaining on them. Were it standing still, it would be easy not to see it in a forest. It appears

to have skin made of bark and limbs made of twisted, knobbly branches. It's form seems to be some sort of tree-like chimera, with four legs and the gait of some sort of large feline, but the upper torso somewhat resembling a goblin or human. That said, it is monstrous in every way, given that the twisted tree-like appendages forming its arms come to sharp claws, and it has imposing 'wings' made of treetops that make it look even larger. Its head bears a hateful, evil gaze with wolf-like features, distinguishable only by shape and piercing golden gemstones nestled deep in pitch black holes in the mask-like bark of its face. They glow like magic lanterns, seemingly meant to lure in prey, were it not already pursuing Grendel 6.

Out in the open, the titan's form is gigantic, only barely avoiding reaching above the trees due to its low stalking posture. It easily rivals the Dragon General Neith in size.

And, it picks up even greater speed than it had before after surveying its quarry.

Klur shouts out orders as he frantically gestures, and the tank turret rotates rearward. "EVERYONE DOWN! FIRE FIRE FIRE!"

KABOOM!

The cannon fires overhead, and the survivors and captives all scream as the goblin soldiers wince.

Klur knows he can barely be heard by the people in his carriage over all of the noise, even at the top of his lungs, so he frantically keeps the hand gestures going, urging the tank team to keep firing as quickly as possible.

KABOOM!

His prayers are answered, and explosions hit the titan with each shot. The first one blasted through its lower torso, causing it to stumble to its left, and the second shot tears through its right arm.

Its pursuit is barely hindered, though.

The tree-like devil picks up speed after each stumble, ignoring its injuries. It doesn't shed a single drop of blood, only wooden shards and splinters where the shells ripped through.

To Klur's horror, he watches as both its torso wound and arm regenerate from new woodland material in seconds, even on the run.

The rifle booms overhead as well, and he is jostled by another major bump in the road. Though Locke's shot hits the demon's head, it doesn't slow.

KABOOM!

Yet another thunderous report from the barrel of the tank beats on Klur's chest, and this shot his directly in the monster's chest, causing its goblinoid torso to fold backwards briefly as it bellows in what the goblin can only pray is pain.

Regardless, it recovers, resuming its panther-like bounds towards the tank. It'll be on top of them in moments.

"GRENADES!" shouts the goblin commander, finding his own on his belt and pulling the pin as quickly as he can, pitching the explosive as far as it'll go while avoiding the rear carriage. The goblins in the rear carriage are firing barrages of submachine gun rounds at the titan's head, hoping to blind it or hit a weak point.

Others in his own carriage, including Olk, pitch their own grenades, and seconds later, a chorus of booms pit the ground, stumbling the forest devil once

more as it howls in anger.

KABOOM!

The tank doesn't relent either, firing as quickly as the reloader can put shells into the breach. The ravens continue to divebomb the carriages and tank, forcing some of the goblins to return fire. The injuries are stacking up, but if they don't stop the giant, they'll all die in an instant.

The forest spirit roars in a long, somber-seeming cry that still fills the goblin Field Marshal with dread. It only faintly reminds him of a wolf's howl, but more sinister.

And, as if answering the call, the shadows of the nighttime forest under the moonlight take shape, rising from the darkness to claim the forms of beasts of the forest.

"CONTACTS!" shouts Olk, the only goblin audible to Klur right now.

"All I have for my life," murmurs Klur to himself.

He is frozen by the realization that they are completely surrounded by evil.

The monstrous forest devil has reached the rear carriage, and it rears it's claws back, sharpening them into singular spikes with the shapeshifting devilry of its timber-armored limbs.

The moment drags out as the passengers in the rear carriage all scramble forward, and some ready to abandon the carriage, which would be a disaster of its own.

A beam of light shines down from the heavens as if the goddess of the Citadel is watching over them.

The hue of the light is a bright, near-blinding purple-white, and it is concentrated on the left side of the carriage, cutting a line from where it touches down diagonally to the right. The beam touches the devil, halting it in its tracks as the carriage train continues its flight away.

In the split second following the appearance of the divine light, a trailing succession of incinerating explosions erupts from the ground, throwing a massive spray of flames. A gust of wind shields the carriages from the flames as everyone cries out together, startled by the turn of events.

A shadowy figure swoops by overhead, its own teeth and jawline illuminated by blue flames. Though it is fairly far away in the nighttime sky, when it turns, the figure is an inspiration for the goblin Field Marshal.

The divine being that came at the last possible second is none other than a dragon.

The devil falls behind as it flails, its giant body burning thanks to the flames. It doesn’t die, and sinister energy seems to roll out of its body like a black mist. The evil power swirls around the demon, rising into the sky.

Just as suddenly, the moon disappears as clouds form, and a heavy rain begins falling over the forest, extinguishing the flames. The goblins and refugees are drenched quickly, with the non-combatants crying and whimpering in their huddled positions laying down. Some of them are bleeding badly, but the train is still surrounded by enemies.

“Don’t relax! Keep fighting!” shouts Klur, getting his second surge of courage. He aims and fires at the ground-based beasts charging out of the wood line to attack the group. Some charge straight into the tracks or path of the tank,

getting crushed just as quickly. But, those attacking the carriages slam into the sides, jostling and startling everyone onboard.

Grendel 6 unleashes volleys of machine gun bursts in virtually every direction. Their weapons are almost useless against the devil, but for these smaller beasts, they are capable of slaying them.

The possessed creatures on the ground are unfortunately larger than the birds, though, and as such, they take a fair number of shots each to bring down. Everything from wolves and balinkons to panthers and even goblinoid beings seem to be mindlessly and fearlessly attacking them. There's no time to think about why. Only a small part of Klur's mind processes the fact that their eyes glow a golden color. This chapter is updated first at novelping dot com.

While the goblins battle the creatures trying to knock over or break the carriages, the tank turns its turret and unleashes blasts into the crowds as they appear along the trail's edge. Dirt and debris explodes like sudden fountains of solid matter, launching bodies and disintegrating fiends as it leaves a crater behind.

Simultaneously, the dragon swoops down for another strafe, casting the divine beam down upon the ground once more. The air crackles and booms from the incinerating-lance passing through the raindrops, and the forest devil tries to shield itself, only for its body to explode and burst into flames for a second time.

This time, the dragon comes to a hover as it sustains the high-power fire breath on the monster, trying to disintegrate it completely.

After a surprisingly long several seconds of immolating the archfiend, the dragon resumes its flight inline with the carriage train to catch up to them. It

flies low to the treetops, breathing a white fog-like breath. The possessed beasts touched by the breath freeze solid quickly, ceasing all movement forever. The icy path also seems to create a barrier that the beasts refuse to cross, and they retreat into the forest to continue their pursuit by trying to get ahead of the dragon and the tank.

The avian demigod settles into a cruising flight directly over top of the middle carriage, and the goblins are afforded some breathing room finally.

Floria is in the middle of providing healing in spite of her own injuries dripping blood on the carriage floor. Other goblins are assisting her or taking care of their own injuries while they can, and others reload and reassure each other.

Olk slides close to Klur, asking over the noise of the birds being held at by by wind magic seemingly being cast by the dragon, “Did you contact the Citadel?”

“No, but I suspect someone in the tank did. Good thing, too. We’d be doomed without our Lord General.”

Olk nods in agreement.

Suddenly, a tall person appears from the air, dropping onto the middle carriage and landing in a crouch, startling the goblins. They quickly relax, though, since the dragon has ‘disappeared’. Rather, he has turned into a human-like man with silver horns and eyes, grey hair, and a grey reptilian tail. He also wears a long grey mantle like the one Klur gave to the human girl, and he greets the group with a tone conscious of the situation. “Field Marshal, I came as soon as we got the emergency call. What’s the situation?” Neith’s presence instantly reassures the goblins of Grendel 6. He is one of the bravest and most powerful warriors in the Fievegal, and as a dragon, is nothing less than a demigod to the goblin soldiers.

“Squad leaders get head count now,” replies Klur as he glances at Olk, who nods and immediately begins relaying the instructions down the carriage train. “We have known injured. Medics working. Ammunition running low.” He has to brace when the carriage jostles from a pothole, rocking back and forth afterwards. “Enemy appear after Titanslayer used on drake. Titanslayer no work. Grenades also.”

Neith nods. “It was able to cast weather magic and withstood enhanced dragon fire. I’m not sure what it was, but it was no mere treant or dryad. And, given that the weather continues, I believe it is not yet destroyed.”

Goblins are not known for their wisdom in magic. Klur is no exception. He can only believe the words of the dragon, and it is unnerving that the forest devil can sustain a powerful spell after taking a direct attack from that same dragon.

Neith’s tail bumps one of the women, and she cries out.

“Ah, my apologies, my lady.” The dragon does his best to minimize his interference with anyone, but the carriage is packed full with him present. Just as the dragon General is about to speak again, the tank pulling the carriages grinds to a halt, and the carriages ram into the backs of the vehicles in front of them, dropping everyone to their decks.

The tank lets loose another shell, lurching backwards as the soldiers and Neith scramble up to find out what’s going on.

Ahead of them is a sight that sends a gripping fear through all of them.

The forest devil that Neith ensured to incinerate with a dragon immolating breath is blocking the road, gesturing with its hands as magic forms around it.

The grey dragon bolts forward, leaping into the air before turning back into his true dragon form. Wind blasts across the tank and carriages from the transformation. He puffs a breath of burning ignityal to interrupt the titan, but it blocks the fireblast with a sudden swooshing blade of water that it summons.

Neith is also preparing his next attack. Black smoke seems to roll out of his mouth, and he inhales deeply through his nose. His talons begin to turn pitch black and the veins in the dragon's wings begin to glow an evil reddish purple color.

Even the possessed beasts recoil and flee from the dragon as he focuses on his magic.

Meanwhile, the forest devil is turning its hands into fresh spears, ready to strike once more.

When it pounces forward to spear Neith with its massive wooden spikes, he easily catches them in his talons, and the spikes immediately begin to turn a dark grey color as the monster twists its face in anger and confusion.

The force and brutality of its attack was devastating, creating thunder with the impact with the dragon, but he was able to stop it dead in its tracks.

And, with a powerful exhale, a column of pitch black smoke spews from the dragon's maw. His own flesh seems to discolor and decay around his mouth as the fog engulfs the misshapen tree monster.

The forest devil shrieks in agony. The sound is so air-shatteringly loud that it forces the goblins to their knees with cries of pain, as well as everyone else. Only Neith seems to resist the powerful wail of pain, still gripping the rotting wooden spikes as he continues to exhale the stream of black fog.

Unlike smoke or simple fog, just gazing on the substance leaving the grey dragon's maw terrifies the goblin Field Marshal. Goblins are considered evil by many races, and their reputation is unfortunately well earned in most cases.

And yet, fear grips Klur more tightly than anything he has ever felt before. He can all but see deities of death circling around the forest devil, each tearing off a part of its soul. Alkus Gristak is said to be a place inhabited by evil beings that specialize in torture, instilling fear, and revelling in suffering.

That seems casual compared to the raw, pure evil Klur is witnessing presently.

And, as if it agrees, the terrifying titan of the forest struggles in vain to pull away from the colossal dragon.

Not only is the beast entangled in the Chains of Alkus Gristak, but the claws of far more terrifying soul reavers are dug in as well, and Klur can do nothing but watch. His own body trembles, and his senses are all but shattered.

The forest devil's cry finally dulls into a low squeal, before finally a long sigh like a last breath, and its body evaporates into grey dust, as if it turned to ash in an instant, though even that ash vanishes soon after.

A swath of destruction is all that is left behind as the dragon coughs, doing his best to recover his breath. He uses the last of his magic to transform back into his human form, stumbling away from the lingering cloud of death.

Neith slumps onto the side of the middle carriage, and the goblins finally react, though the lingering trembles of fear still shake their bodies. Even Klur can feel hesitation as he reaches for Neith to keep the dragon and their rescuer steady.

This is the bringer of evil. It is said that, once entangled in the Chains, no one ever escapes Alkus Gristak.

If he was told that Neith was the first, Klur would believe it now.

“Get him into the carriage!” shouts Olk, and he is joined on the ground by other goblins including Klur to lift the Dragon into the carriage, while others pull him in from inside. They all scramble aboard, and Locke calls out, “Aboard! Go! Go!”

The tank commander calls out, ducking inside the tank, which rumbles into gear again. It picks up speed, avoiding the lingering black fog of evil by pushing through a thin portion of the woodland nearby, and the driver circles wide.

For the moment, other than the engine of the tank rumbling, the tracks creaking, and the cracking branches and fallen limbs breaking, there is not a single sound of the forest remaining. All of the possessed beasts have vanished, and any natural creatures of the forest are nowhere to be seen.

After a battle like that, Klur can’t blame them.

Once the forest gives way to the open fields, Klur feels himself relax so much that he nearly collapses. Everyone can feel the tension relieve heavily, and in the sky, they see the lights of the Fievegal’s shuttles coming to provide further support.

Klur intended for Grendel 6 to be able to handle the mission without external support, but even so, the Fievegal had to dispatch reinforcements, or they all would have died.

He’ll have to thank the radio operator who put the call out when he did.

For now, Klur just wants to sleep, but he has to check on everyone’s condition first.

Thankfully, though there are some fairly grave injuries, including the grievous decay of Neith’s face and hands, there were no casualties. The nearest to

death were put into void bags to preserve their condition until they return to the Citadel. It's a precarious state to be in, because a person is neither alive nor dead inside of a void bag, and if it is destroyed, everyone inside ceases to be.

In this case, their hands were forced. It just means that Klur can't relax until they're inside the protective ward of the Citadel itself.

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