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WORLD TEACHER

Author: Neko Koichi
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Sirius

"Leave this to me, Lord Sirius!"

Emilia

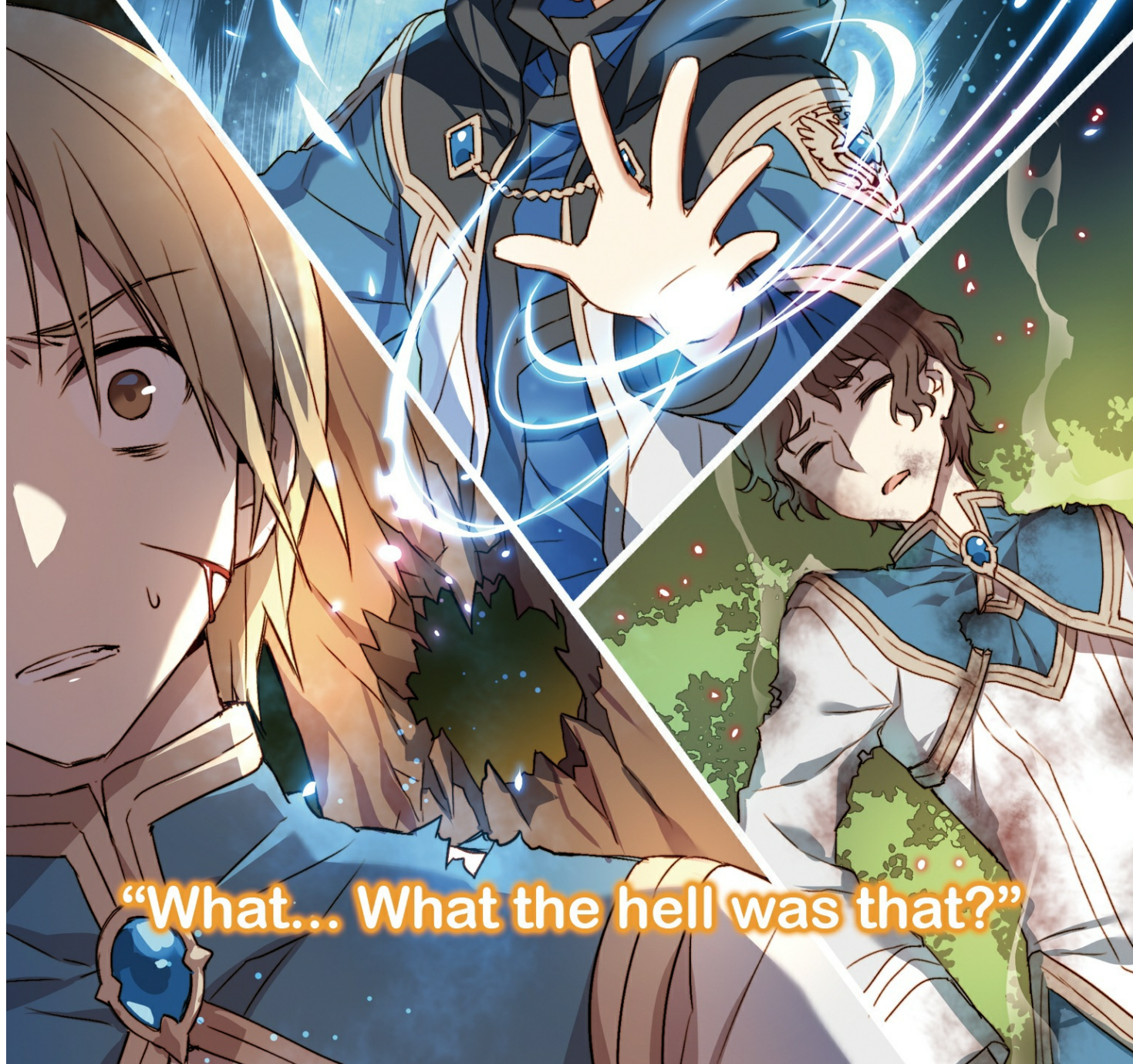
"I'll leave this in your hands, you two."

Leus

"Taaaaake thiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiis!"

Our heroes get ready for their new lives

“Blow them to pieces, ‘Impact!’”



“What... What the hell was that?”

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Prologue

The Jeweled Turtle is a magical creature that resembles a normal turtle. The key difference, however, is that its shell is completely covered in stones and other mineral ores, resulting in said shell becoming harder than steel itself. Though it is a mighty beast, around ten times bigger than I, its hard and heavy shell makes it extremely slow. Therefore, running away from it is quite the easy task.

The reason countless adventurers seek this beast, and some die trying, is because of the jewels that are on this very shell of the beast. Those who manage to get their hands on them end up wealthy, as they can sell them at a very high price in any marketplace. Acquiring them is no easy task however, as the Jeweled Turtle has an insane amount of magic and physical resistances, as well as immense raw power, able to subdue even the most veteran adventurers.

The reason I'm talking about this beast in the first place is because, well, we're fighting it right now.

"Here I go! 'Air Shot!'" shouts Emilia as she emits a translucent sphere of wind from her hand. The sphere slightly grazes the beast's shell, chipping it a little bit, but it's not enough to do a considerable amount of damage. Though air magic is effective against smaller rocks, we're fighting against a titanic boulder here.

"Attack its tentacles now!" I shouted to her.

"Roger! 'Air Slash!'"

Though the Jeweled Turtle is slow, it's such a fearsome beast because the gigantic shell is supported by a myriad of tentacles. Each of them possesses a will of its own, and all are capable of ripping a person apart. Fortunately, these tentacles aren't made of stone like the shell, so Emilia's Air Slash should be good enough to cut them apart.

"You're doing great. Keep distracting it, okay?"

As I relay commands to Emilia atop a nearby uphill overseeing the entire battle, I draw a summoning circle. What I'm doing right now is a basic earth-type spell, one that requires this summoning circle to be drawn out with a liquid, obtained by mixing some herbs and minerals together. The spell is used to manipulate the landscape. By infusing mana into the summoning circle, I can create holes in the ground big enough for me to fit inside them. All we need to do now is lay a trap for the beast, and that'll be the end of it.

"The preparations are ready, Emilia!"

"Got it!"

Emilia has done her job of enraging the beast, and she's now leading it towards where I am as I ordered her. Once it approaches, I take cover, and just when the beast is right above the holes I made...

"Cut off all of its tentacles now!"

"Roger that! 'Air Slash!'" shouts Emilia, letting out a barrage of spells, slicing the remaining tentacles off the beast.

"Well done! Here comes the second part!"

Once I make sure that she's cut off all of the tentacles, I direct some mana through the "String" spell I inserted into the holes, triggering a chain of explosions, and making it so the beast falls on its back, defeated. Since the beast is now on its back, I doubt it'll be strong enough to right itself on its own.

"Whoa... how did you do that? This thing's gigantic..."

"When I made the holes before, I set up an 'Impact' spell within them."

Using what I'd learned in my previous life, I made a replica of a mine. In this particular case, I'm pretty sure that even tanks would've been obliterated by it. If I just left the holes be, eventually they would've exploded, but I needed a way to control the timing of the explosions, so I used a "String" spell to direct mana through the holes, making it so whenever I infused mana into the string itself, it would trigger the "Impact" spells whenever I would want.

Considering I placed the holes on the side of the hill I am on, the beast had to climb it. Gravity worked in my favor and helped the explosions force it to fall

backwards, and on its shell.

“I got youuuuuuuuu!” shouts Leus as he pounces on the beast, its belly facing upwards.

The weakness of the Jeweled Turtle happens to be in its exposed belly, where its heart is located. Leus doesn’t think twice: the moment he sees an opening, he rushes towards it and stabs a red zone at the center of its belly with his sword, which I assume is its heart.

“Wait, whaaaaat?!” he shouts in surprise—he only managed to stab the heart with half of his sword. He had failed to consider that even the belly of the beast is hard. The pain of being stabbed sends the beast into a frenzy, and it starts thrashing uncontrollably, making Leus grab his sword so he doesn’t get sent flying.

“Leus, let go of the sword!”

“But I just need to push it in a little further to kill it!”

Normally, the beast would be able to get back up without any issues, but thanks to Emilia cutting all of its tentacles it can’t, or at least, it shouldn’t be able to for the time being. Unfortunately, we don’t have all the time in the world, as these tentacles regenerate themselves quite quickly. That’s why I’m desperately trying to get Leus to retreat. If I don’t he could get caught and crushed by the beast when it flips over.

“You’re being overconfident! Retreat now!”

“Hngh!”

Leus finally understands the gravity of the situation, so he quickly lets go of the sword. At the same time, I use “Air Step” to position myself above the beast, and as I look down on it, I concentrate mana on the palm of my hand, visualizing a grenade launcher as I do it.

“Do me a favor and stay still for me. ‘Launcher!’”

The sphere of magical energy impacts slams into the beast, which stuns it for a few moments. I wasn’t trying to deal massive damage, but instead wanted to buy time to use my signature move.

“Magnum!”

I manage to point the shots of this second spell from my fingertips right above the hilt of Leus’ blade, pushing it deeper and deeper towards the beast’s heart. Once it reaches it, the beast unleashes a blood-curdling scream, along with its tentacles visibly stretching in pain. Right after that, the beast stops moving altogether.

“H-Have we done it?”

“Are you hurt, Leus?” asks Emilia as she rushes towards Leus, but suddenly...

“...Wait, kyah?!”

The beast starts moving once more, extending its tentacles and grabbing Emilia, who was beside it when it happened, lifting her up in the air.

“Emilia!” I shout, as I kick the air heading towards her. I use the sword Dii gave to me to cut the tentacles binding her, causing her to fall from their grasp. Fortunately, I was able to catch her before she hit the ground. As I do that, I use “Impact” on Leus’ sword shoved into the beast’s heart once more. This time, it sinks even deeper, causing the beast to completely halt its movements once again, this time for good.

I land back on the ground near Leus’ location while holding his sister, and use my “Search” skill to make sure the turtle is completely dead.

“Are you okay, Sis?!”

“Yeah, I’m fine. Thank you, Lord Sirius.”

“Though I am glad that everyone came out of this safely, I assume you both know what I’m about to tell you, yes?” I say, with an upset tone while giving them a nasty look, making the siblings cast their gazes downward in shame.

“Yes. I lowered my guard before making sure the target had been properly killed.”

“Honestly, I lost my focus too.”

“So long as you both understand, I suppose that will do for now. Anything else you’d like to mention, Leus?”

While pouncing on the turtle to pierce its heart wasn't the worst choice, I still don't think trying to finish the job while the beast was trying to thrash him was a good idea. I understand that he could've pushed into it a little more to finish the job, but if he kept his grip on the sword while the beast was thrashing about, he could've pulled it out, and that would've caused a disaster. That's why I told him to let go of it, but he took a while to obey my command.

"Yeah, I'm sorry for not listening to you. I was just so close to finishing it that I, well..."

"I'm not angry because you didn't immediately react to what I told you to do."

Though it is true that not listening to what I ordered him to do was an issue, the real problem is that he didn't take the initiative and required me to order him to react, and that's not how I've been training him. I'm far more concerned about his poor decision-making skills.

Leus needs to understand that he was not the only one fighting something just now. I want him to understand that there shouldn't be a need for me to tell him that he can't do something. He should be aware of where he needs improvement and his limits. It is important for him to be able to make snap decisions and rely on his comrades a little more.

I explain to both of them that what I seek is for them to be able to make quick decisions without the need for me to explicitly tell them everything that needs to be done. After my long explanation, both of them nod in understanding, though I'm not sure if they understand the meaning behind my words just yet.

"Basically, this boils down to you being able to make decisions based on what you know you can and can't do. If there's someone in front of you that you won't be able to beat, then I expect you to prioritize getting away from them. Got it?"

"I got it perfectly!"

I'm worried about him turning like Lirole and becoming a fighting maniac that doesn't think about his opponent. I just hope he truly understood what I meant.

"I understand that what I'm explaining to you right now is a difficult concept

to grasp in a short period of time, but I expect you to keep it in mind from now on. Understood? Whatever the case, this counts as another learning experience for you both. You both may still be children, but through these battle situations and many blunders you'll eventually learn how things are done. I have high hopes for the two of you. Also, don't be afraid of failure. Reflecting on one's mistakes and looking ahead to the next challenge is what matters in the end."

"Yes, Sir!" both of them shout at the same time.

I think I'm done grilling them for the day. I should praise them a little to balance things out a bit.

"Both of your moves weren't bad at all, though. Emilia was able to cast multiple spells without losing her cool, and your leap timing when you jumped to stab the turtle was impeccable, Leus. You two have gotten stronger for sure, and it shows."

"Really?!"

"Yaaay! Can I have a petting session in return?! Pretty please?!"

I pet both of them, and the siblings wag their tails, visibly pleased.

After that, we head towards the jeweled turtle's remains and search for whatever gems it had on its shell. Once we take them, Leus jumps on the beast's belly to retrieve his sword, but the moment he does he shouts.

"Aaaaaaagh! My sword!"

Between the thrashing and my "Magnum" shots, the sword wasn't able to take the hits, and at some point it broke. Judging by the damage, I'm not sure it can be repaired.

That sword was a gift from Dii when he went to a town near his place to buy some provisions. I remember how happy Leus was when he came back with the sword and gave it to him as a gift. I head over to Leus, on his knees and clearly dejected, and pet him.

"I'm sorry for your loss. Though I don't think you'll accept, I'll allow you to have my sword."

"...It's okay, big bro, I don't really need it. As long as my sword was useful for

you to kill the thing, I don't really care."

"We'll both apologize to Dii later. Besides, look at the bright side, these gemstones will give us enough money to get you an even better sword."

"Really?! Thanks, big bro!"

I didn't want to say it out loud, but the sword Dii bought for Leus was pretty cheap, and not the greatest weapon out there. I was starting to think that the weapon was a little too flimsy for someone like Leus, who has grown quite strong at this point. It might be for the best that it broke, because now we can look for a more proper weapon for him. While his sword did hold some sentimental value for him, I should be careful the next time something he cherishes is in danger of being broken.

I start checking the shell once more in search of what I was truly looking for, and Emilia, who is on the other side looking as well, seems to find it, as I hear her say "I think I found what you were looking for, Lord Sirius."

"Nicely done, Emilia," I answer, as I head towards her and pat her on the head.

I check the place she's pointing towards, and a golden, glistening gem stuck to the shell. Fortunately, I have my mithril knife handy, so I can easily take the shell apart and get the stone out without any issues.

"Whoa, it's so beautiful."

"I think this is the first time I've seen one so big."

Just to give an idea of how big the stone is, it's about as big as a rugby ball. It's a gigantic nugget, and though it is still unprocessed, it glistens without a need for me to even polish it with a cloth.

Though it took some effort, I think today's training yielded plenty of results. We were able to use Leus' sixth sense to track the Jeweled Turtle, and thanks to that, we got our hands on a bunch of gems and this large gold nugget.

"Hehehe, I bet Noel and Dii are going to shout in surprise the moment they see these. Let's go home already, big bro!"

We then make our way back towards the mansion, all while the siblings

constantly discuss and imagine how surprised and happy both Dii and Noel will be when they see the stones we retrieved.

Chapter One

Clear Skies after a Rainy Day

“You fought with a Jeweled Turtle?! What did it look like...?”

“I alone wouldn’t have been able to face it. Calling the thing dangerous would be an understatement.”

“Whaaaat?! Y-You’re not hurt or anything like that, right?!”

As we returned to the mansion and explained to everyone what happened, seeing Noel rush towards us with a worried expression on her face made me feel at ease.

“Don’t worry about us. We’re fine, as you can see. Look at what we got out of our fight,” I say, while showing her the many stones we extracted from the turtle’s shell. Dii and Noel both froze in place.

“Wanna hold them?” says Leus.

“Nyaaaah?! Stop this right now! You’re more than aware that I’m a master at breaking plates! Don’t tease me like this!”

She has a point. I don’t want to say it out loud, but it’d be for the best if we didn’t give them to her. I’ll hand them to Dii, who has been an adventurer and probably has more experience handling these kinds of things.

“Well, I’m definitely not an expert, but I’m pretty sure these are very valuable.”

“I knew it. Now the question is, where do we sell all of these...”

These are worth a lot of money, but we need to find the right buyer, otherwise the stones are no good to us. We can’t publicly disclose what we have, otherwise someone could try to rob us or perhaps something even worse. Maybe we should sell this in some town far away from here...?

“Hahaha, how about you allow me to sell these, Lord Sirius?”

“...I assume you’re aware of the danger you’re exposing yourself to by

agreeing to do so?”

“I am. Back when I was an adventurer I had a partner who I deeply trusted, and I still trust him to this day.”

After a short explanation, I learned that Dii’s partner eventually became a merchant, and he opened up a business in the same town where Dii travels to buy our supplies.

“He happened to mention to me that he was on the lookout for some rare items to sell, so I’m sure he’ll be overjoyed to have the opportunity to sell these stones.”

“I see. Then let’s hope we can sell these at a high price.”

Considering Dii has never been the best at communicating with others, let alone making friends, if he trusts this man, then I can safely assume that we’re in good hands. Hopefully things go well and I can stop worrying about the school’s tuition expenses. Actually, speaking of which, I should probably mention another topic that has me somewhat worried, just in case.

“Disregarding the stones for a moment, have you had a chance to look into that other matter I asked about, Dii?”

“Wha—?!” shouts Dii as he places his hand over one of his pockets—that’s where he’s keeping it, no doubt.

“What are you talking about?”

“You asked Dii to do something for you?” asks Noel.

“Well, err...” says Dii, seemingly at a loss for words.

Both Noel and Leus ask about what’s going on, unaware of the situation, so I should probably explain it to them. Instead of doing that, though, everyone looks at Dii, who is finally being cornered and seems to have resigned himself due to lack of options. All I want is for him to stop running away from his feelings.

“Dii, remember my mother’s words.”

“Lord Sirius...”

Dii then slowly nods, and with a serious look on his face puts his hand into the pocket, pulling out the ring, and then taking Noel's left hand, putting the ring in one of her fingers.

"Whoa... this is a beautiful ring! You're giving it to me?"

"N-Noel!"

"Yes?"

Dii takes a deep breath and then takes both of Noel's hands, looks at her in the eyes, and...

"Will you... will you marry me?!"

"...Whaaaaaat?!"

Yes! He finally proposed to her!

"Ah! Um, you... want to marry me...?"

"Yes, I want to spend the rest of my life with you, and only you, Noel!"

"B-But I'm a demi-human, and... and just a slave..."

"That doesn't matter. You're the woman I love, Noel. I want you to stay smiling by my side, so please... give me your answer!"

"...Yes! I... I want to become your wife too, Dii!" shouts Noel, while smiling and hugging Dii, the two then locked in a mutual embrace.

Dii has harbored these feelings for her for a long time, but after more than ten years, these two are finally together.

"Congratulations, you two."

"You're finally together, big sis Noel! Big bro Dii!"

"Congratulations to you both! I'm so happy right now!"

"Lord Sirius, everyone... thanks!"

"Thanks..."

Can you see us from heaven, Mother? We are still sad that you're no longer with us, but I hope you can rest peacefully knowing that we're still smiling and laughing down here.

As the two of them continued their embrace, the siblings and I showered them with applause, overjoyed by this latest development. We have dinner shortly after, and, well...

“Tehehe... Dii...”

“Noel...”

...They sat on the sofa next to each other and kept murmuring their names with their gazes locked on each other.

I should let them be in their little world for the time being. With how long this has been going on, it's understandable that they may want to make up for lost time. Meanwhile, Emilia is watching them, her eyes gleaming.



“Haah, they look so lovely together... Hopefully Lord Sirius and I will eventually look like them, and—I mean! There’s no way that’d happen! I’m nothing but his pupil, after all! The fact that I can remain by his side is good enough for me, either way. However, if one day he could hold me in his arms, I...”

Looks like she’s in a world of her own, as well. I walk over towards her, heave a long sigh, and pat her on the head, bringing her back to reality.

“Wha—?! Hehehe... Lord Sirius...”

“Welcome back to reality. Also, to the two love birds, if I could have your attention for one second...”

“Huh?! I-I profusely apologize, Lord Sirius!” shouts Dii.

“Tehehe...”

Noel doesn’t seem to have snapped out of it just yet. Hopefully she comes back to reality once I start talking... hopefully.

“I was thinking of holding your wedding ceremony tomorrow.”

“Wedding ceremony?!” Dii, Noel, and Emilia suddenly cry out loud at the same time. Looks like Noel is finally back.

“There’s no need for such a thing, my Lord! As long as Noel stays by my side, I wouldn’t ask for anything else!”

“Y-Yes, exactly! There’s no need for you to go so far for us, and...”

“It’ll be a small ceremony for those of us living here only, so there will be no need to spend an outrageous amount of money, don’t worry.”

After how long the two of them have made us wait for this, I’d like to celebrate their love as best as I can. It’s a once-in-a-lifetime event.

“Let’s do that, big sis Noel! Big bro Dii!”

“Yeah! I’d like to celebrate for you two as well!”

“Whether we have your approval or not, we’re going to prepare the wedding anyway. All you have to do is wait for us to finish said preparations.”

I was hoping to keep these wedding preparations a secret, but this is a small mansion, and we all live together here, so Dii or Noel would've found us out eventually. I had a feeling that we probably should be forthcoming in the end. That way, they can tell us what they'd prefer to have in this celebration and we can make it even more special for them.

Upon hearing that we will celebrate it no matter what, both Dii and Noel smile and nod.

"Thank you so much, Lord Sirius!" both shout at the same time.

I suppose the celebration itself will be my wedding present for them.

For the rest of the night, we spend a bunch of hours talking about the wedding and how it should be done. We wake up early the next morning and assign roles to each other, so we know who will be responsible for what.

"Just as we discussed yesterday, Emilia and Noel will take care of the wedding dress. Leus will procure the ingredients for the food, while Dii and I will be on cooking duty."

"Okay!" everyone shouts at the same time.

"With regards to the design of the dress I gave to the two of you, there's no need to follow the plans to the letter if you believe it will be too difficult to make. Understood?"

"No need to worry! I'll be able to make something today for sure!"

"Indeed! Miss Erina taught us everything we'd need to succeed!"

Yesterday, I gave Emilia and Noel a rough sketch of a wedding dress design I remember seeing in a magazine back in my old life, telling them to use that as a reference for Noel's dress.

"Also, Leus, if something happens, be sure to come back here immediately. Got it?"

"Leave it to me, big bro!"

The forest around this area should be like Leus' backyard by now. He must know it like the back of his hand, so it should be safe to leave him to his own devices.

Once those three begin their assignments, Dii and I head towards the kitchen to begin our own preparations.

“Let’s get started with the cooking, then.”

“I’ll be sure to make sure I understand everything,” says Dii while pulling out a notebook and a pencil, his expectant gaze watching my every move.

He’s probably caught on by now that I’m going to make a new dish, and is planning on taking notes so he can do it himself. When it comes to cooking recipes, he always wants more and more of them; his curiosity never sated.

“We’ll have to leave the main dish for when Leus returns though, because we need the bird in order to cook it. Let’s start with the cake first and go from there.”

“A cake?! You will make a dish that only the nobility can enjoy for our wedding, my Lord?!”

“I don’t think the cake you’ve envisioned and the one that I’m going to make are the same thing, so don’t worry about it too much.”

Apparently, the cakes they make around here are more of a status symbol than things you eat. As far as I’m aware, they’re created with a bread dough base, kneading sugar into it and adding some fruits to the dough before baking it, which results in a rather bland taste. Nobility tends to stack these circular cakes one over the other, creating these gigantic towers that signal their status of superiority over the others.

Obviously, that’s not what I’m aiming for here. What I plan to do is make a cake that resembles more the ones that were made in my own world. This can be done using a sponge dough with eggs, butter, and other basic ingredients, some whipped cream (that I’ve been able to emulate recently), topped off with some fruits and berries for flavor.

“Okay, so first things first, you gotta mix these ingredients into a single dough, then we’ll bake it all in the metallic box with the circle inside.”

As I explain to Dii the process of making a cake, I create the dough and place it into a cake mold, followed by placing it into a steel box beside us. Though it sticks out like a sore thumb, this is a special box that I asked Dii to get for us in

town. Within it, there's a special magic circle I drew. When mana is infused into it, the circle ignites itself and emanates heat within the area where it has been drawn, acting like the equivalent of an oven.

"This is the part you must be most careful about, so remember well what I'm doing right now... okay, it should be fine like this. Next..."

"Big bro! I got the bird and the berries you asked me to fetch for you!"

Just as we've finished making the sponge for the cake and I've taught Dii how to make whipped cream, Leus returns with everything we need to finish the plates.

"Good work, Leus, but... I think you went overboard with what you got. There's too much food..."

"But we're talking about big sis Noel's and big bro Dii's wedding here! I wouldn't be able to forgive myself if there wasn't enough food to celebrate!"

The reason I'm scolding him right now is because his bag is absolutely brimming with berries, and he's holding a total of six duck-like birds in both of his hands. There's enough food for ten people here, not for five. Hell, there might be enough for fifteen people. Maybe I should've been more specific with the quantity of food I wanted, but I wasn't expecting Leus to do all of this. I'll be sure to remember this the next time I ask him to do something by himself, so I don't leave him to rely on his instincts.

Leus' excess of food forces us to find a way to preserve the excess amount he brought, which ends up taking quite a bit of time, far more than I'd expected once he returned with the ingredients.

Whatever the case, once night arrived, the living room was already arranged in a way so we could hold the wedding ceremony there.

We've set up a podium on which I can stand as the priest. To fulfill this role, I'm wearing a long robe, while Dii has decided to wear some flashy clothes for the occasion as well. He's clearly restless though, as we both wait for Noel to enter. Leus, now aware of Dii's nervousness, gazes upon him with a shocked expression and approaches him in an attempt to calm him down.

"Big bro Dii, you gotta take it easy. Big sis Noel isn't gonna go anywhere, you

know?”

“I know, okay? Try and understand how I’m feeling right now...”

I can understand his nervousness. It’s his wedding, after all. Whatever the case, the door eventually opens, and the first one that appears is Noel wearing her wedding dress.

“I’m sorry for making you guys wait! The main heroine has appeared on stage!” says Emilia, with a smile on her face. She’s holding hands with Noel.

The wedding dress Noel is wearing is the culmination of my mother’s teachings: the lace fastens the dress, and the dress has a few ornaments as well. Considering they made it in a single day, I’d say this is a fantastic effort, and it looks absolutely beautiful.

Without saying a single word, Noel slowly approaches Dii, and once she stands before him, she smiles.

“So, how do I look? Am I... beautiful?”

“Of course you are,” says Dii, while opening his eyes like plates and staring into Noel—he’s completely entranced by her.

Emilia takes a few steps back, and after that, both Dii and Noel face me with a serious look on their faces. Looking at them like this is making me tear up a little bit. I feel like a father whose daughter is getting married today, but this isn’t the time to be sentimental. I must do my job.

“Well then, I suppose it is high time to start the wedding ceremony.”

“Yes,” both answer at the same time.

Weddings in this world aren’t much different from the ones in the world I used to live in, at least when it comes to nobility. Family members and friends are invited, so the two who are getting married recite their vows, and then hold a party to celebrate. When it comes to commoners having weddings, things are rather different, and wedding ceremonies can take many forms, just like the one we’re having right now.

“Since we haven’t decided how we’re going to do the ceremony just yet, would you two allow me to do it in the way I know?”

“Since you were the one who proposed the idea of having the ceremony, I’ll leave everything to you, Lord Sirius.”

“I’m fine with that as well.”

“Thanks. Then I’ll need you both to answer some questions of mine.”

I remember that back in the other world I had to pretend to be a priest in an undercover mission. I never would’ve expected to act like an actual priest after that, though. Anyways, I clear my throat and turn around, look up as if I was facing heaven itself, and start the ceremony.

“To the Lord above, Dimas and Noel stand before us, ready to join together in holy matrimony in front of us all. We beg you to watch over the ceremony and accept their vows.”

I then turn around to face the happy couple, who are looking at me very seriously, clearly tense.

“First, to the bridegroom Dimas. Do you take Noel to be yours in holy matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to her, so long as you both shall live?”

“I... I do!”

“Now to the bride Noel. Do you take Dimas to be yours in holy matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor, and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to him, so long as you both shall live?”

“...Yes, I do!”

“Do you both vow to devote yourselves to each other?”

“We do!” both answer at the same time.

“Now if the bridegroom could please place the ring on the bride’s finger. Here...” I say while handing the ring to Dii.

Normally in my previous life there had to be two rings, one for each person, but in the end, Dii was only able to procure one, so we had to account for that. I was a little worried about how he’d be able to handle this part, but after a lot of trembling, Dii manages to eventually place the ring on Noel’s finger.

“...I’ll do my best to make you happy, Noel.”

“No. *We* will do our best to make each other happy. Understood?”

“Yeah.”

That was a nice exchange of extra vows. That makes it easier for me to finish the ceremony.

“Then in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. You may now kiss the bride.”

“What?!” both shout at the same time, shocked.

I know it’s embarrassing, but it’s part of the ceremony, so hopefully they follow through, because otherwise this’ll get awkward. I look at Dii indirectly, telling him that he needs to step up here and that he has no choice. After a moment of hesitation, he turns, faces Noel, and takes her by the shoulders, stealing a kiss from her.

“Kyaaaah!”

“Whoaaaaa!”

These two are being so dramatic. Normally I’d just tell them to shut it, but we’re in front of people who are pretty much our family and in closed doors, so I’ll let this pass for the time being.

“You have declared your consent before God himself. May the Lord in His providence strengthen your consent and fill you both with his blessings. That God has joined, man must not separate. Amen. Okay everyone, a round of applause for the couple!”

“Congratulations!” the siblings shout at the same time while clapping their hearts out with a smile.

“Thanks, everyone.”

“Everyone, I... I’m so happy right now! Thanks! I truly mean it!”

And thus, the small wedding ceremony ended.

For a moment, in one of the empty seats, I felt the presence of my mother clapping as well, as she congratulated the happy couple.

After the short ceremony, we hold the party. When you think about it, however, we're just the same five people that normally live in this mansion, so it might be better to think of it as a luxurious dinner.

Noel changed her clothes back to her maid costume before dinner, I assume because eating with a wedding dress wouldn't be very enjoyable.

"Hmmm! This bird meat is so tender and tasty. I love it!"

We prepared one of the many birds Leus brought in question like I would a roasted turkey in my own world. Normally these would be eaten during Thanksgiving, but I thought that it'd suit a celebration better, and the bird in question tastes better than turkey, so why not?

"The dress looked so nice on you big sis Noel, why did you change clothes already?"

"I wouldn't want to dirty the dress that I've been working so hard for this great day, Emi. You know what I mean?"

"You have a point. Whatever the case, I'm super happy for you, big sis Noel!"

"Mhm, and I thank you again for it. Having you, Leus, and Lord Sirius watch over us while Dii and I exchanged our vows was great, and I couldn't have asked for anything else. I'm the happiest woman alive right now."

Noel and the siblings are eating like there's no tomorrow, but in the middle of the feast, Emilia stops eating and tilts her head, looking like she just remembered something.

"Wait, but aren't you and Dii married already? Why haven't you changed how you address him?"

"Well, you're right there. Hm, I suppose now I should probably call him... dear! Don't you think that Lord Sirius' cooking today is as impressive as usual?"

"Hmphgagh!"

Dii had been eating his share quietly, right until Noel called him "dear" and he almost choked on his food. Dii has always been very innocent, and once she decided to call him that, it must've really helped cement the reality of his new situation. Seeing his reaction, Noel grins.

“Okay, dear, open your mouth wide...!”

“Hey, Noel...” I tell her, worried about Dii.

Noel sticks out a fork with some of the bird towards Dii, waiting for him to open his mouth, to which he responds by eating the food from the fork without any issues.

“Hehehe, I’m so happy right now...”

Both of them enter into their own little world once more, filling the room with sugary undertones. Emilia looks at them expectantly, her eyes gleaming, while Leus looks overall confused. Meanwhile, I leave them be, because I really don’t mind them doing that kind of stuff in front of us as long as they’re happy.

“Hey, big bro, is it just me or does it feel like talking to them, or even approaching them would be difficult right now?”

“Considering how happy they look, the best we can do at the moment is just watch over them.”

“If you say so. For some reason I’m getting chills down my spine too...”

Given that Leus has always been someone particularly sensitive to what’s going on around him, maybe he can sense the lovey-dovey aura surrounding those two.

“It’s so great to see big sis so happy... aww man, I wish I can be like her some day...”

Emilia gazes at them for a moment, and then looks at her own fork, which has a piece of bird on it as well, which prompts her to, for some reason, start talking to herself. “No... I can’t! I’m just his pupil! That’d be wrong of me. But I could do it to return the favor to him, and... no, I can’t! I just can’t!”

Though she’s having some sort of internal struggle, Emilia still points her fork towards me. Oh well, I should tell her to have a little more restraint, but I end up eating the bird meat on her fork anyway, so I won’t say anything.

“Haah... I’m so happy right now...” Emilia says as she sees me eat from her fork.

“Wait, my sis is giving me the same vibes as those two now. I’m getting more

chills down my spine. What does this all mean?”

“You’ll probably understand when you’re older... maybe.”

“What do you mean by maybe?!”

What I mean is that you’re a little bit of an airhead, Leus, and maybe you won’t get it even after growing up.

Leaving that moment aside, once we’re done having the main course, we jump straight to the wedding cake. The sponge has gotten a little tougher since we made it that morning, but I’m pretty sure the cake came out nicely.

Noel and the siblings look at the cake, and the moment they do, they notice the cream ornaments, which make their eyes gleam expectantly. Actually, cutting the cake is part of a wedding, right? Though Noel might have changed her clothes, I think we still have time to have her and Dii cut it.

“Th-This is a cake?! It looks completely different from the ones nobles tend to have!”

“Whoa, it has such beautiful patterns. How did you guys do it?”

“You’re amazing, big bro!”

...They’re too excited to be able to do anything correctly. Oh well, I suppose we can ignore who cuts the cake.

“I don’t think it’s the best out there, but I can assure everyone the taste is good.”

“Yaaaay!” Noel, Leus, and Emilia shout at the same time.

Since Noel and Dii are the stars of the show, we left bigger portions of cake to them. Once we all had our servings, I started eating, and everyone else followed suit.

“Whoa! This is so sweet and tasty! I love it!”

“Itph pho gooph, phig phro!” Leus tries to say while he has his mouth full.

“I never knew that a cake could be this sweet and delicious!”

“...Incredible.”

Personally I think the cream didn't come out as nicely as I would've liked, but everyone's praising this as if it was the best thing they've had so far. Oh well, at least it's decent.

"Dear! Please tell me that you—!"

"I made sure I understood the recipe. We'll be able to make it again some other time."

"You're the best, dear!"

They treat each other pretty much the same as before they were married. That seems like it should be obvious, since they've known each other for years at this point. I think they'll be a long-lasting couple for sure.

The party continued late into the night. There was one last thing that we prepared, and obviously we wouldn't forget that.

After giving Leus and Emilia some tea with special leaves to make them feel drowsy, I carry them to the bed, and then prepare the bed for the newlyweds as well.

"I'm pretty tired today, so I think I'm going to have a long sleep with some earplugs on so I can't hear anything. If you two wanna be noisy for a while, you can."

"...What?"

"What?!"

"Also, just to let you both know, Emilia and Leus will definitely stay asleep until tomorrow morning, so yeah. G'night."

"Lord Sirius, you can't possibly—Wait, Lord Sirius?!"

Though I think I'm being a little too obvious here, I've never been one to sugarcoat things, so this is for the best. Besides, the first night as newlyweds is a very important one. I want them to have fun today.

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The next day...

"Noel, does it still hurt?"

“Just a little, but I’m happy either way, so I’m fine, my love.”

Seeing the both of them cuddling makes me decide that I should inform my mother about what has happened so far.

Chapter Two

Aiming to Go to School

“Welcome back, dear!”

“I’m back, Noel.”

It’s been a few days since Dii and Noel got married. Dii went out yesterday to buy provisions, and he’s just returned from his trek. Noel noticed his presence way before he arrived inside the mansion, before I or the siblings could, so she headed outside the mansion to greet him with a hug. Maybe her love for him made her more sensitive to his presence overall?

While she hugs him, I feel bad about interrupting their happy little moment, but I need to interject.

“Welcome back, Dii. Sorry for making you go out there by yourself.”

“Indeed, I have returned. It’s okay, my Lord. I am your servant, after all. I’m bound by duty to you.”

“Before you report to me, let’s get back inside the mansion first. Let’s take your report over a hot drink.”

“Right. Thank you for the concern, my Lord.”

“I’ll carry your things, my love. Don’t hesitate to ask for my help with these things.”

“Thanks, Noel.”

“Oh, no need to thank me. I am your wife, after all, and—whoa, this is heavier than I expected!”

Leus eventually arrives and helps Noel carry Dii’s things while we all head inside the mansion. Once there, we all sit on the sofa, have Emilia brew some tea for us, and once Dii has a sip of it, he pulls out a gigantic bag. I take the bag and dump its contents onto the table.

“No wonder this was heavy.”

“I can see your eyes turning into the shape of gold coins. Stop it.”

“Whoa, whoa! This is amazing! I think this is the first time I’ve seen so many gold coins!”

The siblings are looking at the pile of gold with glittering eyes, while Noel recoils at the sight of so much money.

“There should be 75 gold coins here, would you mind confirming with a count...?”

I trust Dii, but I should count them as he suggested.

I count the coins individually and, as he stated, previously, there are indeed 75 coins. This is the profit we made from selling the stones we got from the Jeweled Turtle. This is quite the amount of cash right here.

“Everything seems to be in order, and the coins are real, so I’m satisfied. It must’ve been quite a pain to go through the sale.”

“Indeed, my Lord. I was nervous the whole time.”

Apparently the trade was made without anyone else knowing at the establishment where Dii sold the items. Only he and his friend who he sold the stones to knew what he was carrying, as well as the payment made in exchange for them.

Just in case, I use my search skill to see if Dii has been tailed, but I sense nothing, so I suppose we’re safe for the time being.

“Um, so Sis, I know this is a lot of money or whatever, but how insane of an amount is it?”

“Well, think of it this way. One gold coin is equal to twenty silver coins.”

I get why Leus has no idea or much interest in gold. Neither he nor his sister ever needed it, so they obviously show little interest or understanding of its value.

“That’s not exactly it, Emi. Okay Leus, remember that problem we solved the other day where each pudding cost one iron coin each? How many could we buy with a single gold coin?”

“Two thousand, Big Sis!”

“That’s it! Isn’t that amazing, Leus?!”

“Yeah! Now I get it!”

...I suppose that if the example helps both of them to understand the value of the coins, that’s all that matters.

Anyways, I made a rough calculation of how much these gold coins would cost in my previous life, and more or less these amount to 7,500,000 yen. Considering how cheap things in general are in this world compared to the other one, I know for a fact that this is a lot of money right here.

Whatever the case, this money solves the main problem we had in the near term.

“Leus, for the time being understand that money is what we need to survive in this world. In fact, we have so much right now that I bet you and your sister could go to school with me.”

“What?!” both Leus and Emilia shout at the same time.

My initial plan was to have both Leus and Emilia live in whatever town was near the school, but I bet they eventually would’ve attracted unwanted attention due to the fact that they’re silver wolves. Thus, I concluded that it would be better to have them enroll along with me.

These two are still naive, and I can’t imagine them living on their own for the time being, so if they stay at school with me, they won’t be taken advantage of by bad people. The main problem was the money needed to enroll them both, but with what we just made from slaying the Jeweled Turtle, it should be more than enough.

“I promised Mother that I’d take you both to school while she was alive.”

“I think that’s a great idea! Emi, Leo, you should both go to school, too!” says Noel.

“Indeed. Stay by Lord Sirius’ side in our stead as much as you can,” follows Dii.

The siblings were stunned for a moment, but quickly after, their astonishment turned into a smile, and they started jumping for joy.

“Let’s go!” both of them shout at the same time.

At first, I didn’t know what to do with the amount of money we’d be given, but I’m glad I found a solution by spending it on the kids. Whatever the case, while Noel and the siblings spend their time frolicking about, Dii and I start to think about our next steps.

“I’m pretty sure the enrollment fee amounts to five gold coins, and there are three of us, so 75 minus 15...”

“There’s still a lot of gold left over. Keep the rest for whatever needs you may have over here.”

“Understood. I’ll decide what to do with the remaining coins, then. Also... I want to make sure, but that man will be arriving the day after tomorrow, yes?”

“I’ve already received a letter confirming his arrival. He’s not one who tends to rush things, but I already flashed the bait before him, so he’ll come for sure.”

“So we managed to make it in time, I see.”

I decided to call for him myself, since he hasn’t bothered to show his face around the place for a while, instead choosing to maintain correspondence through letters. I need to settle things with him, especially now, since there’s only less than half a month left before I leave this place.

The name of the man I summoned here is none other than Baldomir Dorian... my father.

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After two days of waiting, I finally found myself facing my father, Bardomir Dorian. Behind me stood Dii, while I ordered for the siblings to be hidden in another room, so they wouldn’t cause any trouble.

Though this is the first time I’ve formally met him, the wrinkles on his old face, along with his visible weight, make it abundantly clear that he has lived a life of excess. From what I remember, his hair is whiter than the last time I saw him, and he’s definitely put on some weight.

He seems to be annoyed by being here, but without paying any mind, I prepare some tea for us to drink and decide to introduce myself.

“I’m pleased to meet you, Lord Baldomir. My name is Sirius, and I’m Miralia’s son.”

“Interesting. I wouldn’t have expected that wench to birth a child with such proper manners. It appears that she educated you well, at the very least.”

Unfortunately, it doesn’t appear that things are going to go as smoothly as I’d hoped. As per usual, he decided to be rude from the very beginning.

Visibly growing tired of the situation, Baldomir drinks the entire cup of tea in one gulp and looks around him.

“What happened to her? I find it quite disrespectful that she won’t even grace me with her presence, after I came all the way here.”

“Unfortunately, Erina passed away some months ago. I am currently managing the affairs of this estate in her stead.”

“I see, so she finally kicked the bucket. She was good at her job, but she was such a troublesome woman.”

“Well, for me, Erina was... not only my servant, but also like a mother to me, and I appreciate all that she did for me. I owe my education and my very existence to her. I consider her to be the greatest woman I’ve ever known.”

“She’s ‘the greatest woman you’ve ever known?’ Hah! Maybe she actually brainwashed you into trying to take my property from me, too.”

The fact that he always has some sort of retort makes him even more despicable than he outwardly appears.

I’m trying my best to hide my anger behind a smile, but Dii is giving him a death stare. It doesn’t appear he’s noticed however, which is good for us.

Suddenly, however, I hear the voice of Leus in the distance.

“Boost!” he’s shouting.

“Stop it, Leus! You won’t solve anything by going there!”

“Let me go, Big Sis! He’s making fun of Erina, and I will never forgive him for that!”

“I understand why you’re angry, Leus, but you can’t do this now, please keep

it together!”

Tch, I told them to stay in their own rooms. What in the world are they doing?

Eventually the voices die down, but Baldomir has taken notice of them already, as he places his attention on the door behind me.

“It’s so noisy back there. Who or what is over there?”

“You needn’t worry about that, my Lord. Anyways, let’s talk about the reason I’ve asked you to come here, if you don’t mind...”

“Oh, right. I am a busy man, but I will admit that the promise of giving me a substantial amount of money caught my interest.”

This man, this... monster, didn’t even show his face here when Erina was dying, so I understood that the only way to get him to crawl out of his hole was on the false pretense of acquiring gold. Dii knows some townsfolk, and according to them, Baldomir is not in the best financial state of affairs at the moment, so I knew he’d jump the moment I mentioned money.

“Indeed. I wanted to give this to you in person, which is why I called you out here.”

“Heh, like you’ll ever be able to sway me in your fa-... wa-wait, what in the world is this?!”

The moment he checks the contents of the small bag I handed to him, his face turns white in shock. I guess it makes sense. No one in their right mind would expect the people living here to have such a large amount of gold.

“Gold coins?! Where did you get these?!”

“This is the money Erina had been saving while she lived. She gave it to me, and in turn, I’m handing it to you.”

“Hohoho, that’s quite generous of you, I must say. However, I assume that you’ll want something in return, am I wrong?”

“Indeed I do, but before I tell you what I want, allow me to rephrase my previous statement. What I meant to say is that this money was never mine to begin with, it was yours all along, and all I’m doing is paying you back.”

“What do you mean, my money?” he asks, as he smiles while he stashes the coin purse within his attire, puzzled.

“It is yours, because these are the expenses you gave to my mother to raise me many, many years ago. She noted the amount of money you gave to her, so I wanted to repay every penny.”

“Hmph, I suppose she did know how to do her numbers.”

I gave him way more than what he gave her, but I knew he wouldn't mention that. As far as she had mentioned, Erina said that he gave her five gold coins in total.

Before he can interject, I continue.

“I added extra gold coins to pay you in exchange for letting us live here for all these years. Anyways, as for my request...”

“Hmph, don't tell me that you want to become a candidate to inherit my estate.”

“Oh, far from it, my Lord. I'm about to leave this place, and I have no interest in your wealth. My only request is for you to officially take the Dorian surname from me.”

The money I gave to him and the reason I called him over here was to formally sever all ties with the man. Honestly, I have little interest in his family or his affairs, and would rather stay far away from all that.

Besides, if I keep my surname and go out there, I would start attracting the wrong kind of attention, so it's better to simply do away with it. Therefore, the sooner I'm able to cut all ties with him, the better. Not like it matters much, since he had plans to kick me out and disown me anyway, but it's better to hear that come from his own mouth.

“...Are you insane? You would throw away our noble family name just like that?”

“Indeed, I am no noble. I do not want to live as such, and would much rather live my life as simply Sirius.”

Both Aria and Erina, my motherly figures, would've wanted me to go into the

world and live free from the chains of my family, so I'm following their wishes, as well as my own, of course.

I understand why Baldomir is puzzled right now. The man just got a sack of gold coins and I asked him to officially disown me, which has him in shock.

After staring him down for a good minute, he eventually gives his response.

"Very well. In the name of the Dorian family, and as its leader, I, Baldomir Dorian, hereby disown you and strip you of all titles and your very family name. From this day onwards, we are no longer related by blood."

"Understood."

I'd never called myself a Dorian in the first place, but this is what I wanted, so I'll simply follow along.

Well then, with all of our ties severed, this meeting should be adjourned. I'll send the man back home before Leus storms in here and starts raising hell.

"That's all the business I had with you. Thank you for your time today."

"Good. This took more time than it should've," he says with a smirk on his face, now that he has his bag of gold.

I can see how he earned his reputation where he lives, though. The man is greedy to his core, and will stop at nothing to get his hands on more gold.

"Normally I'd oust you right now, since we're not related anymore. However, I will respect your wishes and allow you to stay a little longer. Aren't I generous?"

"Thank you."

"However, remember that I expect you all to be out by the time I return here, whenever that might be. Otherwise, I will treat you as trespassers."

"I understand. We'll be out of here soon enough."

He leaves shortly after. Knowing the man, now that he's aware that I have some gold on my person, he'll probably not take long to return, given that he could leverage getting more of my gold by offering to prolong my time here.

Whatever the case, now I'm not a noble anymore, just Sirius. I'm not related to that monster any longer.

“Lord Sirius...” utters Dii as he raises his fist to the air, at the same time as Baldomir is seen mounting his carriage and leaving. “Back when I was in the other mansion, I never directly interacted with that man, but I’m starting to realize the suffering Erina had to go through with him.”

“You bet. I’m not sure how many times she met with him, but it couldn’t have been easy.”

“I’d be lying if I said that I don’t feel powerless in the face of all this. It angers me that he can simply barge in and act so high and mighty around the ones I love.”

“Good thing you didn’t intervene, in any case. Had you done so, Noel would’ve probably suffered the consequences. You kept your cool, so well done.”

“Your praise is wasted on me, Lord Sirius.”

Baldomir has enough power and influence to put Noel and anyone he despises on a wanted list, so the less we anger him, the better.

“Also, you don’t really need to address me as a Lord or anything of the sort. I’m not a noble anymore, after all.”

“You’ll have to excuse me, then, because I intend to keep calling you Lord Sirius for the rest of my days.”

“Yup! I’m doing it too!” follows Noel.

“Me too! I’ll go to the ends of the Earth with you, as your servant!” says Emilia.

“Me too, bro!” finishes Leus.

Sometimes I do forget that beyond my servants, I consider these people to be my disciples, and, well... as an extended family of sorts.

“Thanks, everyone.”

I am thankful for their words, and hope that I can fulfill their expectations.

After that, I head to the living room, where I decide to have a cup of tea to relax after the intense meeting with Baldomir. Emilia follows me as well, clearly

wanting to say something, as she places herself standing before me.

“Um, Lord Sirius, about your father, err...”

“He means nothing to me at this point, so there’s no need for you to mince your words. I didn’t exactly treat him like a son would treat a father either, and I’m sure you noticed that.”

“...Understood. If that’s the case, then I won’t feel guilty by saying that he’s a horrible person! I can’t believe he’d treat his own son as coldly as he did.”

“Yeah! Not only him, but also Erina. The things he said about her just now... I’ll never forgive him!” suddenly says Leus, appearing in the living room.

I can see why they feel that way. Silver wolves treat their family members as if they are as valuable as gold, and it’s understandable why they’d be mad at Baldomir.

All in all, I think this was a good lesson for them to learn: there are assholes out there, and sometimes you need to cut your losses, no matter what. Besides, they are my family, not Baldomir, so distancing myself from him was the right move.

“That man never liked demi-humans, so back when I was at the old mansion I would be treated with lots of hatred.”

“How could anyone hate you, Noel? You’re the most charming girl out there.”

“Dear...”

“Noel...”

And there they go again, back to their own world of love and kisses.

“Ahem...” I clear my throat, making the both of them return their attention back to me.

“You sure held your ground and composure quite well, Lord Sirius. Had it been me, I probably would’ve slapped him on the face the moment he started insulting Erina.”

“True! You should’ve done something, bro! That’s what big brothers do when they insult their mothers!”

“...Do you truly think I did nothing to the man?”

“Wait... did you give him fake gold, or something?”

“No. However, I tampered with the tea he drank in one gulp, though.”

Erina was good with herbs, and I was able to learn a thing or two from her. As such, I was able to brew a bit of poison into his cup. The effects of the poison are long-lasting, but I made sure that whatever happens, this evening he should see his condition worsen. He'll try to waste his gold on women, but he's not going to take kindly to the fact that he won't be able to stand for a while.

I explain the effects of the poison to everyone, but I try to keep it as wholesome as possible, because Emilia and Leus are still too young to be told the more gruesome details.

“So that's why you insisted on brewing the tea yourself. Well done!”

“That'll probably be lethal to him, considering how fat he is.”

“Well, I didn't get what you said very well, bro, but he's gonna have a rough time, yeah?! Hah! He got what he deserved!”

Emilia is the only one that seems mildly concerned about my explanation, though. “You'll have to excuse me for what I'm about to say, Lord Sirius, but please be careful about using such methods. I wouldn't want you to mistakenly drink the poison yourself, and well...” she whispers, clearly worried.

I'm actually surprised to see Emilia act like this. She's more well-versed on the effects of poison than I'd expected, but I bet it's all thanks to Erina raising her well.

Oh well, I'll pretend I didn't hear that. Let's change the subject so this doesn't turn awkward.

“Let's not talk about that lowlife anymore and talk about happier things. I assume everyone's ready to leave this place?”

“Everything's in order, Sir.”

“I left the place squeaky clean!”

“No issues here.”

“I’m ready to leave whenever, bro.”

“That’s great to hear, everyone! Let’s have a small party to celebrate the occasion, then!”

“Yeah!” everyone loudly exclaims right after.

We’ve been preparing our departure for a while, so obviously we could leave now if we wanted to. In fact, that’s what we’ll do tomorrow. Baldomir most likely will come around in the next day or two, so we should leave sooner rather than later.

Seeing the place being so empty makes me imagine the frustration on Baldomir’s face when he comes back. Man, he’s definitely not going to like seeing the place left completely empty.

As we’re getting ready to celebrate, Noel suddenly breaks the ice.

“By the way, I’ve been thinking about this for a while, but what family name will you have from now on, Lord Sirius?”

“Oh, right... I hadn’t thought about it, but I suppose I need one if I want to be able to participate in society...”

The family name in this world is the closest thing to a surname in my old world. I just threw away the “Dorian” name I once had. Noel and Dii have their own names, and the siblings carry the Silvalion surname, but this world’s surnames are mostly used by nobility. Commoners rarely have the chance to use them, so most times they simply state their given name.

I can’t really get out there without a surname, though. It’d be kind of embarrassing, so I probably need to think of something, no matter what.

“Will you take Lady Aria’s family name, Erdland?”

“I’d like to, but the Erdlands were a noble family, despite the family in question having no power. There’s probably other members of that family that are alive out there, and the last thing I’d like to do is bother them if I happen to use that surname.”

“If that’s the case, then let’s think about a new name together. We’ll come up with something that suits your pedigree, Lord Sirius!”

“I don’t think I have this ‘pedigree’ you speak of, but...”

“You’ll become a renowned figure in the future, Lord Sirius, so you need to have a good family name.”

Noel, my plan is to travel around the world with Emilia and Leus as my students, nothing else. No one wants to become a person of renown, but I suppose there’s no stopping her.

Before I realize it, Noel has gathered everyone around me, and now they’re all discussing my new family name.

“Okay, everyone! This is our very first meeting to decide Lord Sirius’ new family name! A round of applause!”

Hopefully Noel understands that this’ll be the first, and hopefully the last meeting regarding this matter. I’m not going to interrupt them while they’re clapping and having their fun, though. I’ll limit myself to watching and seeing what happens.

“We need to think of a name that properly conveys how amazing Lord Sirius is. One with enough punch to it!”

“How about something related to dragons?”

“I wouldn’t mind him taking the Silvalion name. It’d look like he married me to get it... hehehe...”

“Uhh, I don’t really get all that stuff, but I wouldn’t mind him having my surname. That’d make us true brothers!”

...I don’t think leaving these two to their own devices was the best move on my part. I need to come up with something before things turn south, so let me see... hmm, I am aiming to become an instructor of sorts, so how about...

“How about teacher?”

“Teacher? Is there a meaning behind such a word?”

“Back in my other life... I mean, I read in an old book somewhere that the words means ‘educator.’”

“Educator? That’s... actually not bad!”

“Sounds good to me! I mean, you’re our master and teacher, after all.”

“I think it suits you, Lord Sirius. You are very knowledgeable, after all.”

“Then it’s decided.”

Okay, that’s one less thing to worry about. Starting from today, I’ll be Sirius Teacher, no more will I call myself Sirius Dorian.

After the quick meeting to decide my surname, we prepared our food for the occasion, and celebrated our last night in the mansion.

The next morning, we all pack our bags and leave the mansion. Before we leave, we turn around to look at it one last time—this has been the place that has nurtured me for ten years now. It should come as no surprise that I’m attached to the place, and it hurts to have to leave like this. I bet it’s the same for the siblings, despite the fact that they lived here for a shorter period of time... yep, they’re crying, alright. Noel and Dii on the other hand are simply staring at the building without saying anything.

It hurts to leave, but this day had to come sooner or later. I realize that I need to take the first step, so I tap the shoulders of both Emilia and Leus, and then turn around and start walking away. I hear them moving shortly after, but I don’t turn around, choosing instead to lead the way forward.

Thank you for all you’ve done for me so far, Mother. I’ll be leaving now.

It takes half a day or so, but eventually we manage to arrive in Almesto, the town where Dii and Noel used to shop for things back when we lived at the mansion. Almesto is technically just a medium-sized town, where people are simply living where they’ve always lived. This belongs to Baldomir's fiefdom, as he’s the one overseeing the town, like many others in the region. You can tell this is part of his domain as there are barely any demi-humans to speak of.

Knowing this would be something we’d have to plan for, Noel and the siblings are covered by their robes, hiding their beast-like features. We decide to make a stop at a random tavern located in town, where we eat our fill before we continue our trip.

“Isn’t this the first time Emilia and Leo have visited a town?” asks Noel.

“Well, we have been to towns before, back when we were slaves, but we were forced to stay in horse carts. This is the first time we’ve been able to walk around on our own two feet,” answers Emilia.

“Yeah. Both of us were always chained up in horse carts.”

They both say this without much of a pained expression on their faces, which is proof that they’ve grown a little.

“Ohh, okay. I guess now I understand why you two looked so nervous when you were walking around.”

“Mhm. There’s just so many things that we don’t understand all that well...”

“Lots of people and new smells, so it all feels... weird, you know?”

“I get it. Back when Lady Aria first brought me under her wing, she took me into a town almost immediately. It took a lot of courage on my part to not lose my cool while I was there. Thankfully, Lady Aria held my hand all the way. That made it much easier for me to cope with the situation.”

“Right, sometimes I forget that you went through that as well,” follows Leus.

“Obviously! And I know you two are going through something similar. I noticed how you were both grabbing Lord Sirius’ clothes while we were walking around.”

This makes perfect sense. You can’t simply ignore years of mistreatment as slaves easily, so obviously the siblings are still uneasy about the whole situation. It’s fine, though, in time they’ll get used to it.

“I can’t really relax when there are lots of people around, but having Lord Sirius’ presence near me is always soothing.”

“It’s no wonder, sis. There’s so many people around this place that I wouldn’t blame you for getting nervous. I don’t get it, though. Why were you so calm, bro? This is your first time in a town as well, right?”

“I’ve been mentally preparing for something like this.” This hamlet is pretty much nothing compared to the sprawling megacities I experienced back in my old world.

“You’re going to find people no matter where you go, so I’m sure you’ll both

get used to this in no time. See those adventurers over there? I bet you'd be able to overpower them easily, so there's no need to be frightened by anyone here, really."

"...Understood."

"Yeah, I see what you mean. There's young guys and some old men here and there, but nothing about them seems 'impressive' to me either. I gotta say, though..." he says while stuffing a spoonful of the meat and vegetable stir-fry he ordered into his mouth. I can tell that he's eating it because he has to, but he's not finding the food very enjoyable to eat. "Not gonna lie..." he suddenly says, "This tastes completely different from the food you and Dii usually cook, bro."

"It's just... it has too many spices, and it doesn't blend together that well."

"Hahaha! I see what you mean, but that doesn't mean that this food is bad. Lord Sirius and Dii are simply a cut above the rest when it comes to this."

The meat wasn't cooked in a uniform way, and some of the meat and vegetables were probably somewhat past their expiration date, which explains the overuse of spices. Personally, I think this doesn't taste half bad compared to some of the stuff I've had to eat in the past.

Once we've finished our meals, Dii brings a man to the table, so we can all talk.

"Apologies for the wait, Lord Sirius. This man used to be my old adventuring pal. His name is Gad."

"Huh, so you're the Lord Sirius that Dii keeps talking about?"

Gad is a short-haired man. The first thing I notice when I look at him are the scars on his left eye and his left arm—he definitely went out on an adventure or two back in the day. He also is well-built, which gives me the impression that he might still be in business to some degree.

Whatever the case, Gad seems surprised for a few seconds, but he quickly extends his right arm towards me, along with a broad smile.

Considering he's a friend of Dii, I already more or less knew that he had to be a good person, but I can't sense hostility in his words, and his smile and

manners are genuine. I'm glad my initial assumptions weren't incorrect.

"I suppose introductions are in order. I'm the head of the trading company that works around the area. Company's name is Gargan, mine is Gad."

"I'm pleased to meet you, Gad. My name is Sirius."

As I shake his hand, I notice he's missing his pinky, but this isn't the time to inquire into his past exploits. In fact, I should probably start by thanking him for all the help he's provided.

"I heard from Dii that you're the one who bought our medicines, precious stones, and procured other items we needed, so I thank you for all the help thus far."

"I should be the one thanking you. The medicines you guys provided were of very good quality, and the stones were much appreciated, I'll tell you that much."

"Then the feeling is mutual. That's good to hear. Also, would you mind if I asked what Dii has told you about me?"

"Not much. He's been asking me for weird stuff lately, and whenever I asked why he wanted the stuff, all he would say is that you wanted it, so obviously I'm very curious about you."

I understand where he's coming from. We did ask him to procure that special oven for us, so obviously he'd be curious.

"I asked about your age, and when he told me you were just a child, I couldn't believe my ears at first, but here you are."

"I told you, I wasn't lying."

"He isn't. And watch yourself around him, because whenever he gets angry, he's scary, alright..."

...I shudder to think what kind of rapport I've built from the words of these two.

"Don't mind what these two might say about me. You know how they have a tendency to exaggerate."

“Whatever the case, you’ve taken care of my man Dii, so there’s no need to be so formal. I’ll call you ‘Boss’ from now on in exchange. Deal?”

“Do as you please. Also, I am curious, but you were once in an adventuring party with Dii over here, were you not?”

“Yeah. He and I watched each other’s backs in our old days.”

He then explains to me that they used to go out together on adventures, but Gad sustained pretty serious injuries after one of their outings, and he was forced to retire, which is why he’s a merchant now.

I assume those injuries he alluded to are the ones visible in his eye, his arm, and his hand.

“Not gonna lie, I was quite surprised to find you in this town when I decided to stop here for the first time. What a small world we live in, eh?” says Dii.

“I’m the one who was surprised. Who would’ve thought that Dii the introvert would end up doing errands for a noble family.”

Gad understood the tight situation Dii was in when they met, and nevertheless he decided to sell him things knowing that he wouldn’t make a profit off of it.

“We wouldn’t have made it without you, to be honest.”

“Dii’s friends are my friends, so don’t worry. Anyways, let’s get down to business already. I heard you need a way to transport all your things to a new place, yes?”

“Indeed. Lord Sirius and his disciples need to head west, while Noel and I will head east.”

“Wait, you ain’t going together? ...I won't pry, but I can't help but wonder why you'd travel in opposite directions.”

It'll take them a few days to get to the town of Hados, and I wasn't necessarily expecting to find a solution for this problem any time soon. As such, I've made plans for us to stay in town for a few days. However, Gad pulls out some pieces of parchment and gives them a quick glance, nodding to himself.

"It's your lucky day. I actually need to carry some goods to a few nearby

towns, so I'm leaving today for your destination, Dii. You and Noel can hop in one of my carts. The boss is a whole other issue, though..."

"While I appreciate this, I'd rather we solve Lord Sirius' situation before my own. Is there truly no cart that could be heading towards Elysion?"

"Elysion, huh? There are carts that'll go there, but... those generally have goods and guards with them, so there won't be much space for you, boss. If you hop in a cart, it won't be a comfortable trip."

"I don't mind."

Beggars can't be choosers, so I'll just take whatever I can get. My resolve doesn't appear to have moved him, however. In his eyes, he's still talking to a child.

"No need to worry, Gad. Lord Sirius will be fine. I swear on my honor."

"If you say so, then I suppose that's fine, but are you sure, Dii?"

"Oh, don't you worry, we'll show you how much we do..."

"We'll make you regret that attitude towards him!"

"Heh! Big words. Ah well, I'm looking forward to it either way."

We eventually leave the diner and head towards the location of Gad's company, located in a nearby building.

In front of the establishment, there are several carriages, and even more men, presumably employees, loading the carts with goods.

"Zack! Gimme a sec!" Gad shouts to one of the men.

The man he calls turns around, showing his young age. He has no scars on him, unlike his older brother. Yes, Zack is Gad's younger brother, by the way, though looking at him from afar, I doubt I would've known that without prior knowledge.

Gad approaches the carriage near Zack, and I assume explains the situation to him. Once he's done, the both of them walk towards us.

"I'll introduce you, boss. This is my younger brother Zack. He's the one who'll deliver you safely to Elysion."

“Sup. Name’s Zack. Pleased to meet ‘cha.”

Now that I can see them standing next to each other, I think I can see a few similarities. Gad must be in his thirties, while Zack’s probably in his early twenties. Zack doesn’t look like he’s annoyed about his new guests that’ll travel with him, so that’s good to know.

“Uhh, Gad, you sure the kid knows what he’s doing?” asks Dii.

“Don’t you worry about him. He’s gone to Elysion countless times, and this time the carriages will be guarded by members of the adventurer’s guild, so your master will be absolutely fine.”

“Don’t ‘cha worry, boss. I’ll have y’er back all the way there. We’ll be travel buddies ‘til we get to Elysion, so here’s hoping everything goes fine and dandy,” says Zack, as he extends his hand towards me with a broad smile, to which I respond by shaking it.

“Here’s hoping everything goes fine as well. Also, why are you calling me boss, again?”

“My brother calls you boss, so why not? He also told me to save you some space in the carriage, so he definitely must have a soft spot for ya.”

“Shut up, you loudmouth!” suddenly interjects Gad, clearly embarrassed.

Ah, so that’s what they were talking about while they were out of earshot.

Though Gad whacks his brother on the head with his fist, Noel smiles, understanding what’s going on.

“Hehehe. You could be more honest with your feelings, Gad. It’s okay to admit that you’re willing to drop some goods for Lord Sirius’ sake.”

“Never change, Gad.”

“Shut it! This is simply an investment for when your boss becomes big and important, so he can return the favor. One more word out of your mouths and I’ll leave y’all stranded here!” he shouts, while starting to unload some of the carriage’s goods.

“Shoot, I should probably help him. Anyways! Just wait until we’re ready, ‘kay?!” he says, as he walks towards the carriage.

Judging by what they're unloading, it seems like a bunch of barrels and big wooden boxes. They have to do this one by one, so obviously it's going to take them some time. That's fine for us, as it gives us plenty of time to say our goodbyes.

Noel approaches the siblings right as Zack gets to work, and hugs them.

"Thank you for everything you've done for us, big sis."

"It's not like we're never going to see each other again, so please don't make it sound like that."

"Still! We'll make sure to support Lord Sirius as much as we can, so you make sure to support Dii as best as you can too, okay?"

"I'm supposed to be the big sister here. Come on, now!"

While the three of them melt into a hug, Emilia suddenly places her mouth over Noel's shoulder and nibbles it a little.

"Ah! Wait, did you just...?!"

"Mhm. For us silver wolves, gnawing at someone's shoulder signifies affection, and I love you to bits, sis, so..." says Emilia as she continues.

I can tell Noel appreciated the gesture, because her hug only tightens on the pair.

"Hehehe... you can bite a little harder if you want. I'll be fine."

"I'll only bite harder for Lord Sirius, no one else."

"Oh my! Love conquers all, it seems. Even I can't win against that."

I'd rather not get my shoulder ripped off by Emilia, so for the time being I'll have to decline that offer.

"Let me chew you a little too, big sis Noel!"

"O-Okay, but be gentle, okay Leo? I feel like you'd bite hard enough to break the skin..."

"Leave it to me, sis!" he says while following Emilia's example. The two of them are now nibbling on Noel's shoulders, with tears in their eyes.

“Emi, Leo... look after Lord Sirius for me, okay?”

“Leave it to us.”

“I’ll protect my siblings with everything I have!”

“Be sure to watch out for yourselves too, though! I wouldn’t want either of you to get hurt.”

“I’ll watch after myself too... after Lord Sirius is safe, that is.”

“Leave it all to me, sis!”

“...Neither of you inspire much confidence, to be honest.”

Noel, I completely understand how you feel right now. I would love for them to worry about themselves more, but time is the greatest teacher to us all, and I’m sure they too will slowly learn the virtues of self-preservation eventually.

While I was in my own little world thinking about the siblings’ attitude, I suddenly found Dii standing beside me, lowering his head a little.

“Lord Sirius...”

“Mhm. Looks like we’ll be apart for a while.”

“It pains me to say goodbye for now, but... please take this,” he says, while pulling out a small leather bag from one of his pockets and presenting it to me.

“...What is the meaning of this?”

“It’s still not too late to give this back to you, so I’m doing it now,” he says, while handling the small pouch containing quite a large amount of money.

In order to understand why he's handing me this gold pouch, I'll have to talk about what happened last night, after we were done with our party. The siblings and I had to sit on the table to count the money we had. Our mother used to keep tabs on this sort of thing, but now that she wasn’t here, it became my responsibility. The money we had lined up on the table was all of the wealth we had to our name, save for what everyone had in their own pockets.

“We have a total of 73 gold coins, and 10 silver coins. The tuition for the siblings and I will cost 45 gold coins, leaving 28 gold coins and 10 silver coins...”

While I was thinking about how to ration the rest of the money properly, as

one gold coin could cover expenses for a while, Dii and Noel came to me since they needed to talk about something.

“Um, Lord Sirius, do you have a moment?”

“Hm? What’s wrong? Why do you two look so serious?”

“Well, we wanted you to have this, first and foremost...” he says while giving me a single gold coin. I knew that this was quite a bit of money for these two, and not something they’d lightly give to anyone.

“Why are you giving me this?”

“This is some of the money we’ve been able to save after all the payment we received from Miss Erina all these years.”

“Consider it our farewell gift to you.”

This goes beyond normal gratitude. These two truly are something special. I knew mother didn’t pay them much, but she still made sure to pay them as best as she could for their services.

“Sorry, but I can’t accept this. Don’t you two have to worry about future living expenses?”

“Oh, don’t you worry. We’ve got more saved up for ourselves, so it’ll be fine.”

“This is our way to thank you for the many things you’ve taught us, Lord Sirius. In reality, we don’t think that anything will be enough to pay back your kindness, but would you at least accept our meager gift?” Dii says as both him and Noel bow towards me.

Usually, the mere desire of wanting to assist me would normally be enough to get the message across, but I feel guilty accepting something like this...

“...Very well. I’ll gladly accept this, then.”

“Thank you!” both shout at the same time.

I’m a bit startled seeing the both of them so joyous merely because I accepted money they gifted to me, but like a wise man once said, don’t look a gift horse in the mouth.

“It seems as though it's my turn to give you two something as well. Here, take

this as my parting gift to you.”

“...What?” both say in unison once more, shocked to see me giving them the aforementioned pouch which contained twenty gold coins.

“Mother and I had already discussed this before her passing. We promised each other that any remaining from the estate would go to the two of you.”

“Thi-This is so much...”

“Yo-You’re giving us far too much, Lord Sirius! Dear, give it back! Give it back!”

Dii tries to hand me the pouch, but I wordlessly express my stance by crossing my arms.

"Dii, you should know better than anyone how much it costs to start a restaurant, or any business for that matter. I am sure you've considered the costs countless times."

“Well...”

I know for a fact that it had been a dream of Dii's to open a restaurant, but as we both know, procuring the money for such a venture is no small feat. I'm not entirely sure how much money these two have saved, but I know that it's not enough for them to accomplish this, and it'd take them many, many years to save anything close to the money I'm offering them now.

“Consider this your payment for several years of loyal service. There is no shame in keeping it.”

“Bu-But this is too much, my Lord!”

“Yeah! I bet Emi and Leo think the same!”

“Personally, as long as it’s for you two, I’m completely fine with this,” says Emilia.

“Me too. Plus, I think it’d be great to have as many people as possible taste your food, Dii!” follows Leo.

“Ungh!”

Hearing the siblings agree with me silences any objections from Noel—I

understand why they feel guilty about taking the money, which is why I'll make things equitable for everyone.

"Once we graduate, we'll probably return to see you both. You can treat us to free meals as a way to pay us back, how about that?"

"We never had any intention of taking your money, Lord Sirius."

"Then... how about this? Once we're back, I expect to see an amazing store, and two children or more. Only then will I consider my little investment to have been worth it."

Once I'm done explaining myself, both of them simply bow their heads while crying, unable to say anything else.

That's all that happened last night.

I'm still unsure as to why Dii would try to give the money back to me, though. Is he still feeling guilty, after all that I said to him?

"You'll need that more than we will, Dii."

"I simply do not know if we will be able to meet your expectations even if we accept this money, Lord Sirius."

Ah, I see. Dii has been under the protection of masters and a Lord for a while, serving under their houses. He is insecure about his future, because he fears failure. Since he has never needed to search for answers on his own, he has considerably more anxiety now that he's responsible for someone whom he deeply loves.

"Dii..."

"Please, my Lord, reconsider, I—hmpgh?!"

Seeing that pleasantries won't do it with him, I'll have to convince him the hard way, applying some violence and fear tactics. I punch him in the gut, and follow up by grabbing him from his collar.

"Wha-What in the world?!"

"Stop being such a pushover, Dii! You have a wife and future children to consider! Is this how a man should act?!"

“Hngh!”

“I get that you’re uneasy about your path forward. Fortunately, you already know how to fend for yourself out there. Stop being afraid, and keep walking forward with your head high. Have some self-respect.”

Dii is strong enough to defend his loved ones from any hoodlums or other miscreants, since I was the one who trained him, but the insecurities plaguing his mind are the ones to conquer on his own.

“...You are right, Lord Sirius. We promised to you that we'd do our best, and yet here I am, unable to even notice that my husband felt so uneasy... my apologies,” Noel suddenly says, rushing to Dii's defense.

“You’re wrong, Noel. I... I’m just a weak man, that’s all. Though this is the last time I’ll be weak in front of others. Let’s walk this path together!”

“Yes, dear!”

Okay, now that they're off in their own little world, I think we can consider this matter settled. The money will stay with them, and I won't have to worry about Dii trying to give it back to me.

“I see... Dii, I respect your ass,” suddenly says Gad, who is standing beside me. So far, he hasn’t said anything, instead opting to watch and see what would happen.

Gad, now with a slightly different look in his eyes, points to the carriage while calling for my attention.

“Boss, the carriage is ready. We’re ready to go whenever, so tell Zack when you’re ready to leave.”

“Thank you, Gad. Okay, you two, back to the real world, come on!”

“Huh?!”

“I-I’m so sorry for making you wait for us, Gad!”

“T’is fine. Just make sure you love each other whenever I ain’t around, got it?”

After a short awkward silence, Dii and Noel blush as red as tomatoes. Dii then heads over to the siblings, and crouches down to speak to them at eye level.

“Emilia, Leus. I shouldn’t have displayed weakness in such a way in front of you both. Forgive me for being a bad role model of how an adult should act.”

“Dii, you’re a great role model. We respect you more than you think! You’re like a big brother to us!”

“Yeah! Your food is what’s helped us get bigger, after all!” says Leus.

“Thanks, you two. Noel already told you both what I was going to say, but just in case... I’ll leave Lord Sirius in your capable hands.”

“Yes, Sir!” both shout at the same time.

Once he bade his farewells to the siblings, both him and Noel head to where I am, bowing before me.

“I think it’ll take five years to graduate, so I suppose we won’t see each other until then.”

“Five years... now that’s a long time. I wouldn’t have minded bringing you back to my homeland if you weren’t interested in attending that place.”

“That doesn’t sound like a bad idea, though unfortunately I don’t have anything to do there.”

“You could always live in my place, though knowing you, Lord Sirius, I bet you could easily make one of your own.”

“Sounds like you’d want me to stay there forever. Ah well, whatever the case, I’ll be sure to check on you both once we graduate... or should I say you three, by now?”

“E-Ehehe... I think it’s still a little too early for that, but we’ll do our best! Also, this might be too much to ask, but just in case. Would you... give our future child the honor of being his instructor, once he’s of proper age?”

“...What are you talking about?”

“I’ll be sure to teach our child all of Miss Erina’s lessons! And if it turns out to be a girl, I’ll even allow you to marry her if you so wish, my Lord!”

“Sis! You can’t decide things like that so easily! You meanie!”

Emilia doesn’t seem too happy about what Noel just said, but funnily enough,

I'm not amused by what she said either, so go get 'em, Emilia!

On a more serious note, I don't think it's right for a parent to decide their child's future before they're even born, so Emilia is right.

"It's okay, Emi. I know you're his number one student, so she won't take that spot from you."

"...As long as you understand..."

...Emilia, how could you do this to me? I swear, first that elf named Fia declares that I should become her lover, and now this? What's wrong with the women in this world? Why are they so pushy about this stuff?

"You better let your child choose their own future, Noel."

"I-It'll be fine! I'll keep an eye on her, and the child, of course."

"Dii, let me brainwash our child as I see fit."

"Hell no!"

Haah, I really don't want to prolong this charade much longer, so the sooner I leave, the better.

As a last farewell, I shake hands with Dii. I was going to do it with Noel as well, but she instead decides to grab my head and hug me, followed by kissing me on the forehead.

"I wish you a future full of happiness, and there's nothing in the world that'll make me change my mind," she says, as she slowly separates herself from me, tears in her eyes.

Why do you always have to be so emotional for these things, Noel? I'm gonna, you know...

"Same goes for you. I hope you have a happy life... big sis."

Upon hearing me call her big sis for the first time, Noel looks away, grabbing Dii's arm, which was stretched around her.

"Do your best, Dii!"

"Yes!"

We then hop on the cart, and tell Zack that it's time to go.

"Got it, boss. Okay, Gad, we're out!"

"Aye. Be sure they have a nice trip."

As we slowly leave and Noel's and Dii's figures gradually disappear in the distance, we keep waving our hands towards them until they're no longer in sight.

We eventually reach the main gate of town, where two adventurers were waiting for us. They're supposed to be our bodyguards for this trip, so they mount the carriage as well, and we then depart to Elysion.

As far as I know, Elysion is a four day trip from here. There is a dirt road that leads there, along with plenty of signs, so it'll be difficult for us to get lost on the way there.

After several hours, we decide to stop near the path to eat, and that's when Zack decides to have a small chat with us about the flora of the area.

"Whenever winter comes, that tree over there has a beautiful bloom, and the leaves of the tree can actually be used as medicine, I tell ya'!"

"You sure know your stuff, Zack. I actually didn't know that."

"You overestimate me, boss. My brother taught me all of this. He ain't just strong, he's a smart guy, y'see? I hope I can be half the man he is when I grow up."

The majority of the conversation actually revolves around Zack's pride in his brother and his achievements, which I can listen to since they're rather interesting.

"I feel you, Sir! I, too, want to be like my big bro when I grow up!" says Leus immediately after.

The siblings like Zack quite a bit already, mainly because he complimented their fur the moment he saw it. Both Leo and Emilia love being complimented about those kinds of things. Leo has taken a particular liking to Zack, as both share similar traits, such as holding their brothers in high regard. It's like they're best buddies now.

“Man, Leus, you’re just like me. Um, you sure you don’t wanna hop in, though?”

“No problem! This is like training for me!”

Time for some context. Leus is pretty much running beside the carriage right now, making Zack force a smile as Leus declines his offer to hop inside.

“This is normal for Leus, don’t mind him too much,” says Emilia.

Normally I’d advise Leus against doing what he’s doing, as it’s normally better to conserve your energy for a trip like this—who knows what could be lurking in the shadows, waiting to attack us. However, the carriage isn’t going particularly fast, and considering we have two adventurers to protect us, I think this should be fine. I also made Leus run around the mountain way faster than he’s running now, so this is probably far too simple for him at this point.

“Not a lot of beasts roam around this area, so I think we should be fine. If you’re feeling tired, just lemme know, ‘kay?”

“Beasts in this area...?”

“Yeah, but it’ll be fine, Emilia. We got people to protect us if any were to appear, and I can handle myself too, so we’ll be just fine.”

“Why would you employ guards if monsters rarely appear, though? Maybe... bandits are more common?” I ask, as I glance over at the two adventurers, who stay silent on the back of the carriage.

“Cat’s out of the bag, I s’pose. I mean, I don’t think hiding it would change anything, but... yeah, there’s been news about bandits appearing more frequently in the area, so that’s why we’ve hired these guys.”

“Oh, so this isn’t the first time you’ve had these two with you?” I ask, as I bring Emilia closer to me.

I felt like they were a little suspicious, mainly because ever since they hopped into the carriage and didn’t say a single word. Emilia seems to be wary of them too, because she’s stayed close to me ever since we started the trip.

“Yeah, these two are well-known adventurers because they kick some bandit butt, from the Adventurer’s Guild, no less. It’s okay, everyone’s vetted by my

big bro, so we're safe."

"If that's the case, then I suppose that's fine."

I'm not acquainted with the Adventurer's Guild or how they operate, so this might be the normal thing around these parts and I'm simply being clueless right now.

Even so, I feel like we're not completely out of the woods yet, so I decided to activate my search skill around us, and... lo and behold, I can sense several presences on our tail.

"Zack! Bro! Stop the cart!" suddenly cries Leus, who is lagging behind the cart a little, as he runs towards us. He's looking around him, clearly nervous, which means that his instincts have kicked in as well, and he's noticed we've got company as well.

Zack, who doesn't have a clue of what's going on, simply tilts his head confused and reins in the horses, making the cart stop.

"Sup?"

"There's a lot of people coming our way! And I have the feeling that they might not be friendly!"

My search skill detected eight of them, split into two groups, aiming to flank us from the front and the back of the carriage. Normally I'd propose splitting into two teams and fighting them while they're separated, but I don't think we'll have the chance to do that.

"Wait, bandits?! You two, could you check if—?! Agh!"

"Stay still, boy. You don't want anything to happen to this monster, do you?" says one of the supposed "adventurers" as he uses one arm to hold Emilia's throat, as he points a knife towards her.

"I-I'm so sorry, Lord Sirius..." utters Emilia at the brink of tears, while holding a cup of water in her hand—the lowlife managed to get ahold of her while she was trying to get some water for Leus and I, it seems.

"Tch, I should've known the timing was too convenient..."

"What are you talking about, you little runt?! We don't give a damn about

killing her, so you better drop your weapons now!”

“..Okay, I’ll drop them. No need to get aggressive.”

Once we start disarming, the one holding Emilia loses his grasp on her a little, and points the knife towards us instead, which is a mistake he’ll soon come to regret. If he thinks Emilia is a defenseless child, he’s in for a rude awakening.

Zack throws his sword to the ground, making both of the bandits grin.

“Happy now? Just don’t hurt the child, man,” says Zack.

“That’ll depend on how good of a boy you are, you little shit. Hey, keep an eye on the other freak outside, so he doesn’t come near us.”

Well, that eliminates the possibility of a surprise attack from Leus.

I use a “Call” spell in order to signal to Leus that he has to stay put for the time being. We don’t want Emilia getting hurt if we can avoid it.

“If the guild finds out, you two ain’t gonna have a good time.”

“I doubt it. None of you will live to tell the tale after we’re done sacking the carriage.”

It’s just as I feared. These two are in league with the bandits. They’re part of the guild, and probably have some sort of deal in place. If there’s no one to tell the guild what happened, then they’ll obviously walk away from this scot-free, which makes me wonder how many times they’ve done this kind of thing already. They could also simply report that they were heavily outnumbered and were forced to flee, which could be a saving grace at the cost of lowering the guild’s reputation, along with their own.

“Hey, wait. You can take the cash and everything else, but let the children live, at least!”

“You ain’t in a position to choose what we take and don’t take, idiot. We’ll let the children live, but we’ll make sure these little freaks become nice slaves we can sell!”

“Eeek!” suddenly cries Emilia as she starts shaking uncontrollably—what the man just said probably reignited memories of her past, and it’s a wound that’s still fresh in her mind.

Hm, I could aim for his arm and... maybe Emilia could do something...

"Emilia, can you hear me?"

"Ye-Yes, I can!"

"You're not a weakling anymore. Remember your training."

"Ah..."

Hearing my voice is enough to have her calm down, as she finally opens her eyes and stops shaking.

"You remember now? You should be more than capable of dealing with these two by yourself, so go all out."

"...Yes, Sir!"

"What are you two even on abo—? Buagh!"

Emilia quickly bends forward, freeing herself from his choke, and quickly takes his arm, twisting it until he's forced to drop the knife.

"The only one who's allowed to touch me is none other than Lord Sirius!" she shouts as she grabs his arm firmly and throws him away towards the other man, sending the both of them flying away from the carriage, landing on the ground.

"Wha-What just happened?!" shouts Zack, barely able to understand what's going on around him.

Leaving the explanations for later, I quickly head over to Emilia, petting her head to reward her for a job well done, making her tail wag happily, along with a smile on her face.

"I did it, Lord Sirius!"

"Yes you did, and you did well. Remember that you're not a weak slave anymore, and this is proof of that."

"All thanks to you, Lord Sirius!"

"No. This is all the fruits of the effort you placed in your training, no one else. I simply helped you along the way a little bit."

I feel like Emilia has grown from this experience, and that's a great thing to

see in action. I'd love to continue praising her, but we still have the other bandits we have to deal with, so we'll leave it for later.

"You can still fight, yes? We'll have to deal with more people now, so get ready."

"Yes! I'll stick with you!"

With Emilia close behind me, I quickly pick up the weapons we dropped and approach Zack, who I need to tap on the shoulder so he can return to his senses, as he was still in shock.

"Wo-Woah, wasn't expectin' you to give those two that thrashin'. This has to be the first time I seen such an ass kickin'!"

"All thanks to Lord Sirius' training. Also, we should step outside and get ready for the next fight."

"The next fight?! Wouldn't it be better to scram?!"

Zack's reaction is appropriate, especially considering that we're all literal children in his eyes.

"It'll be fine, Zack. Emilia can clear a path for us. You simply run away to the nearest town, if you can."

It takes a bit for my words to sink in, but once they do, Zack quickly picks up the blade he had thrown away moments ago and looks at me with a serious look on his face—looks like Emilia's determination rubbed off on him.

"My... My bro told me to look out for you three, and if you decide to fight, then... then I'll fight too!"

If anything, Zack has a strong sense of duty, and that's something I respect about the man. He treated us with kindness ever since we met, and he didn't hesitate a single second to throw his weapon away the moment Emilia was taken hostage as well to protect her.

Anyways, now that I know I can trust him, we all jump out of the carriage, chasing after the two lowlifes that threatened Emilia.

"Bro, sis, are you okay?!"

“We’re fine. Here, have a sword.”

Just as we jump outside, Leus approaches us, and once he does, I throw him one of the blades I bought before going on this trip.

“Um, why did the two bodyguards get thrown away from the carriage, though? Are they baddies or something?” he asks, not entirely understanding the full extent of the situation just yet.

“Those two and their buddies are supposedly planning to turn us into slaves, so we have to fight off the ones coming our way with everything we’ve got.”

“They wanted to make sis a slave again?! I’ll never forgive them for that!” shouts Leus in anger, contrary to Emilia, who still seems somewhat scared of the entire situation.

Leus picks up the sword and turns his attention towards the two adventurers, glaring at them.

“Fucking shit... what’s going on?”

“Be careful! These kids are something else! We gotta wait for reinforcements!”

I’ve gotta hand it to them, at least they’re not dumb enough to face us in this situation. I’d wait for reinforcements as well.

“We gotta get rid of these two before their pals come ‘ere, so I’ll go in first!”

“Oh no, it’s already too late for that, Zack.”

I can sense the other eight, and they’re already surrounding the carriage. We spent too much time talking and regrouping.

They start appearing one by one, surrounding us. The one who looks like their boss takes a step forward, focusing his attention on the two adventurers. He doesn’t look very happy right now.

“Hey, you two, why do they still have weapons?”

“Shut up! We didn’t expect one of the runts to be a literal demon!”

“Tch, don’t you feel any shame that you got your ass kicked by a literal child? Haah, you, get the job done,” the boss says, ordering one of his henchmen to

approach us.

The henchman then slowly approaches Laus with a grin, until he stands right in front of him. Leus doesn't seem to be intimidated by the man, though. Instead, his gaze is cold and distant.

"Drop your toy sword now, or you're not gonna like what happens next."

"You guys are bandits, I take it?"

"You got it, kid. We're the Devil's Tooth, and the mere mention of our name makes children cry in their sleep—"

"Then you're my enemy!"

"What did you—? Buagh!"

Leus punches him in the face, sending the now very confused man flying away, landing beside his boss, then losing consciousness.

As everyone wastes their time looking at what just happened, I finish assessing the situation and grasping everyone else's position. Leaving aside the man Leus just knocked down and the two adventurers, we have three enemies to face in front of us, three behind us, and there's one man left hiding behind a nearby tree, aiming his bow at us.

"Leus, take care of the three men in front! Emilia, take care of the three men behind us!"

"Yes, Sir!" both shout in unison.

I pick up a nearby rock, and shout as I throw it, "Time to kick some ass!" Once I finish the sentence, the rock hits the man hiding behind the tree, followed by Leus lunging towards his opponents.

"What the-?! Why's he so fast?!"

"You're just too slow!"

Leus has practiced the way of the blade with both Liola and I so many times by now that he has enough skill to face all of these guys. I doubt they'll stand any chance against him. Considering most of his fights with the old man were almost to the point of death, right now he has no issues cutting these people

down either, especially since they're a direct threat to his family.

"Yo-You little shit!"

"Eat thiiiiiiiiis!"

The boss, still surprised, manages to swing his sword, and the moment it collides with Leus', both blades break.

"Fuck! I ain't done yet!"

This is quite impressive, considering Leus' sword was pretty cheap, in comparison to the one the man was holding, which was a two-handed greatsword that was probably quite valuable.

I bet Liole would've been able to break his blade without having his being destroyed in the process, and I think Leus realizes this as well, because he doesn't look too happy about what just happened either.

"We told you, stupid! We'll take care of that little shit, you focus on the black-haired runt!"

"Take him hostage! He's definitely their leader, so they'll stop fighting if you do!"

"Like I'll ever let you get close to my bro! Tch! Get off of me!"

The two adventurers were already positioned behind Leus, managing to grab him and restricting his movements the moment he retreated after his blade shattered.

The leader follows up by picking up a spare blade and heading my way, but Zack places himself between us, holding a sword in his hands.

"I-I ain't letting you touch this child!"

"Move aside, you filthy merchant!"

Zack is moving his hips backwards, and it's clear that the other man is stronger than him, but I am happy to see that he'd give up his life to protect me.

"If you think merchants can't fight, you got a thing comin' pal!"

"Like you'd ever be able to... waighhh!"

Before Zack gets hurt, I decide to finish the man off as quickly as I can. I managed to use the “String” spell and tangle it around the man’s feet, making him trip the moment he tries lunging towards Zack.

“...What just happened?”

I leave Zack be, still petrified in a stance with his sword in hand, and move towards the leader, and knock him out with a blow to the head. Leus has already cut some of the other thieves’ arms, so I head to where they are, still writhing in pain, and knock them out with “Impact” as well.

“Raaaaaaaaaah!”

Leus throws away his sword, and quickly manages to land an uppercut on the jaw of one of the adventurers, knocking him out in an instant. The other one is also on the ground, not moving either. God knows what happened to him. Honestly, this would normally be the part where the drums and cymbal would be playing.

“Phew... that was some nice exercise... you okay, bro? And you, Zack?”

“Yeah, I’m fine.”

“A-Aye, I’m good!”

“Nice. Aw man, I wish that blade was a little stronger.”

I should probably make a mental note of this incident. Leus is considerably strong, so he’ll need an appropriate sword if he has any hope of his not breaking every time he fights. Ah well, I promised him I’d buy him a good blade back when we defeated the Jeweled Turtle, so once we arrive in Elysion I’ll make good on that promise.

“”O-Okay, we’re saved, then...? But wait! What about Emilia, guys?! Is she alright?!”

“Uhh, she seems to be finishing up as well,” I say, as I look behind us, where Emilia is still fighting with clean and beautiful movements against the remaining thieves.

“Wha-What’s wrong with this absolute demon?!”

“How am I supposed to attack her?! Tch! She’s got no openings! Agh!”

“No! Stay away! Eeeek!”

I think she would’ve been able to dispatch them quicker with magic, but she seems to have chosen a knife to be her weapon, so I’ll leave her be.

Emilia already has good reflexes thanks to her training, and she’s using an enhancement spell in order to move even faster, so if anything, she’s just toying with them at this point. Her silver hair moves around the area as she quickly cuts them over and over, and once she makes sure they’re not willing to fight any longer, she places herself in front of them and points her knife their way.

“Yield your weapons and surrender, otherwise, *you won’t like what happens next...*”

“Shi-Shit...!”

The bandits don’t look very happy about being beaten by a child, but in the end, they drop their weapons, accepting their fate. Emilia quickly uses a spell to knock them out right after, makes sure they’re unconscious, and quickly regroups with us.

I pet her head as a reward for improving her battle skills. Compared to when we battled the Jeweled Turtle, she did way better this time around. In response, she happily wags her tail.

“I finished the job, Lord Sirius!”

“Good girl, you sure did. Okay, let’s tie all of them together, shall we?”

“You got it! Zack, do you have any rope in the carriage?” asks Leus.

“I-I think there’s some in there, yeah...”

After taking a moment to regain her composure, Zack helps us tie up all of the bandits. Just as we finish tying them up and apply some first aid to each other, Zack quickly heads back to the carriage, where a cage with a bird holding a piece of paper is located. He frees the bird, letting us know that it’ll relay a message to Gargan, informing him of the situation and requesting reinforcements.

“They’ll take half a day or so to come ‘ere. Um, by the way, boss, what are we gonna do with these guys?”

“I was planning to hand them over to whoever comes to help. Did you have something else in mind?”

“There’s something I’ve been meaning to ask them. You mind if I interrogate them a bit?”

I get the feeling he's probably aware of something that I'm not, so I simply nod in agreement.

“Hey, you’re the group who’ve been attacking carriages around here lately, yeah?”

“And what if we are?”

“You’re gonna tell me where your hideout is, and how many guys you got workin’ for ya. Business ‘round these parts is gettin’ dicey because of you people.”

“Heh, like I’d know any of that.”

“That your final answer?” Zack asks while placing his blade on the boss’ neck.

He laughs in response, “Try me, kid. Killing me won’t change a damn thing. Like a filthy merchant could kill anyone anyways. I can feel your hands trembling, lad.”

“Kgh!”

Zack doesn’t say anything, and instead places his attention on the adventurers.

“Ain’t you two ashamed of helping bandits? Or tryin’ to turn kids into slaves? You’re supposed to be adventurers, too. I can’t believe it...”

“I’d keep your mouth shut if I was you, tradesboy. If it wasn’t for those ‘children’ you’d be dead by now.”

“Those same children kicked your asses, idiot. Why would you want to make an enemy out of the guild anyway? What do you gain from this?”

“Shut your mouth! Blame your shitty brothers’ business!”

“You better take that back, otherwise I might...”

“Everyone, calm down.”

Before Zack loses his cool, I stop the entire conversation. After he realizes what he was about to do, he hangs his head in shame. “Sorry, boss. Whenever people talk crap about my brother, I can’t help myself.”

“Oh, I understand Zack! Trust me!” shouts Leus.

“You’re a merchant, Zack. Interrogating people isn’t your job, you know that. Why don’t you leave this to the professionals?”

“Several other traders like me have been robbed constantly around this area, y’see.”

“Well, they’re carrying valuables, so I can see why they’d be targeted.”

“It’s just weird. They don’t care if we employ people to protect us, and sometimes they even make deals with adventurers like you saw today. My brother is already lookin’ into what might be part of a greater conspiracy, but... well...”

But you’re not the best at asking questions, so you’re getting nowhere... while I’d love to tell him the truth straight to his face, this isn’t the time nor the place. Besides, we still have to coexist together for however long it takes us to arrive in Elysion. These thieves wanted to turn us into slaves, so I might as well help him out a little bit.

“If you don’t mind, you can leave the interrogation to me.”

“Huh? I mean, you’re the one who took care of them with the others, so I ain’t against it, but...”

“Then just leave them to me,” I say as I head towards them, placing myself in front of their leader, who has killing intent written on his face.

“Wha-What does the little dog tamer want with me, now?”

“Dog tamer...?”

Instead of allowing myself to be carried by my emotions, I grab his arm and let some magic flow through it.

“...Good, I’m done.”

“If you think you’ll get away with this scot-free, you’ve got another thing

coming. Stop playing with my arm, child!”

“Right back at you. Besides, no one’s playing here, trust me. I grabbed your arm to give you a curse.”

“A curse? What in the world are you on about?”

Instead of saying anything, I pinch the same arm I cursed, and slowly but surely, his face turns from one of confidence, to a pale, white mess.

“Wha-What did you do to me?!”

I pick up one of the knives the thieves were using, and make a small incision in the area where I pinched the man. There’s a lot of blood coming out, but the wound is small at best, the man shivering all the while.

“He-Hey! What the fuck’s your problem?! It’s just a little cut! What are you so scared of?!” shouts one of his mates.

“I-It doesn’t hurt or anything! But there’s so much blood coming out! I-I can’t believe it!”

“I told you, this is a curse.”

I use magic to stop the bleeding for the time being, followed by peering into the man’s eyes, tasting the fear in them. I’m grinning right now, so he probably thinks I’m far more terrifying than I actually am.

“I research these curses in my free time, see? The one I placed on you right now makes you immune to not only pain, but everything related to its five senses.”

“What...?!”

“If you lie, the curse will spread to other parts of the body, and it could extend to every single corner of your being. You know what that would mean, don’t you?”

“Heh! Hehehe! If it’ll make me immune to pain, then I don’t see how you’re gonna torture me for answers! Hahahaha!”

“You still don’t get it, I see. If you lose your five senses, you’ll be unable to taste any food, or enjoy the pleasure of being with a woman.”

Hearing my words makes the man shut up once more, and he starts trembling again, this time even more violently than before.

In reality, this “curse” is simply the equivalent of an anesthetic in my past life. It lasts for around half a day, and it’s mostly applied in medicinal magic, so whoever is getting treated doesn’t feel pain while any procedures take place. The good thing is that this man has no knowledge of this, so I can take advantage of that and use it against him.

“Bo-Boss! Isn’t that going too far?!” says Zack, equally terrified.

Emilia whispers to him something—I assume the secret behind the “curse”—and once Zack understands the situation, he stays still and watches while I continue.

“Once the curse has spread throughout your body, there’s no way to dispel it, by the way. So I hope you decide to answer truthfully, for your own sake.”

“I-I’ll say whatever you want! So please!”

There you go. It’s so easy to threaten someone by taking away their food and adult necessities. Most people quickly fold at the prospect.

The head of the bandits was much more willing to answer questions after that. The other henchmen answered questions with equal ease, as well as the adventurers, allowing us to understand the whole picture.

“I knew it... I knew that someday this would happen, but not like this!” shouts Zack, angrily.

From what we’ve come to understand, these people have been robbing the Gargan’s employees for quite some time, acting on someone else’s orders. Their aim was obviously to make it difficult for Gargan to do business. The company was growing too fast for whoever ordered them to do the job, and someone leaked the trade routes Gargan used, so they could have an easier time robbing them. In order to not make everything too obvious, they robbed some other random merchants as well.

The two adventurers, on their end, apparently haven’t had a lot of luck lately with their assignments, and the money they’ve been getting has been meager at best. Lured by the false impression that merchants made loads of money,

they decided to pair up with the thieves to get some of the spoils.

“He-Hey, I told ya everything now, okay? So please, undo the curse!”

“Sure, but before I do that, I want you to look at this,” I say, as I pick up a nearby rock and show it to them, immediately followed by me boosting myself and crushing the rock to pieces. I also perform the “Impact” spell in my hand, turning what remains of the rock to dust, which flies away with the wind once I open my hand.

“Disparage either of my students again and I’ll show you what a true demon looks like... your head will start looking a lot like what happened to this rock, got it?”

I know they’re merely disparaging them because they lost and feel humiliated, but a demon is not an insult I take lightly. My students are definitely not demons. I won’t stand idly by while they’re insulted.

“Do you understand?!”

“Yes, Sir!” everyone shouts, scared out of their minds, nodding as fast as they can.

After giving them one last death glare, I then undo the “curse,” which involves me casting “Light” to complete the illusion, which makes the men sigh in relief.

Unfortunately for them, it’s still too early for that.

“You’ll continue to feel nothing in your arm for half a day, also, I could reapply the curse whenever I want, so you better not think of revenge or anything stupid like that. Once a curse is reapplied, I don’t think I’d be able to help even if I wanted to. Remember this.”

Everyone looks at me with a terrified expression on their face, but that’s good. As long as they stay the hell away from us, I’ll be happy. It won’t matter too much anyway, considering they’re going straight to jail after this, but I’d rather be safe than sorry.

While we wait for reinforcements to arrive, Zack makes sure to ask for forgiveness over and over again.

“I’m really sorry about all this, boss! But I gotta thank you, too! You not only

saved me, but you saved Gargan as well! Thanks!”

“I don’t know why you’re apologizing for something that was out of our control. Besides, we’re the ones who forced ourselves to join this caravan, so if anything, this is the least we can do after you were so kind to us.”

Considering Emilia was able to overcome her fear of these situations, more or less, this seemed like a valuable experience overall.

“Damn, and here I was expecting you to ask for some cash in return, but you’re simply leaving this with a thanks? Damn... I-I respect you so much for this! Please! I think I’ll actually start meaning it when I call you ‘Boss’ from now on!”

Oh? It seems as though he views us as equals now, which makes things easier. It alleviates any need for formalities between us.

“You okay if I speak normally, then? No formalities?”

“Aye aye, Boss! Umm, by the way, what’s our plan? We’ll hand the bandits to the town guard that’s coming, but by then it’ll almost be dusk, so how about we go back to the town with the soldiers?”

“Is there really a need for us to turn back?”

“I’d be fine sleeping outside, but I can’t let you and the kids sleep out here in the cold, Boss.”

“Oh, we don’t really mind. In fact, we’d rather sleep outside. Besides, the sooner you deliver these goods, the better, right?”

We’ve slept in the mountains several times back when we lived in the old mansion, so we wouldn’t waste any time with our training. I know it isn’t the safest thing to do, but it worked for us. Plus, if we go back, we’ll just be wasting our time, so the quicker we get done with all of this, the better.

“Leus and I are also used to sleeping outside, so we’re okay with Lord Sirius’ proposition.”

“Boss, I... you don’t mind, you’ll be okay if we don’t return?”

The best part is that we won’t have to carry those two adventurers anymore, which means more space for us, and the carriage can move faster.

Eventually, the town guards arrive, along with members of Gargan. We explained what happened to them, and once we're done, we restart our journey towards Elysion. Fortunately, we didn't have any more setbacks after what happened, but the sun was starting to go down, so we found a nice spot beside a nearby river and decided to camp there for the night.

"I'll keep watch for the night, so you guys get some sleep, 'kay?"

"If you're planning to keep watch during the night, we should do it in shifts, if anything."

"No need, Lord Sirius. The three of us are enough to trade shifts, so you go and get some sleep."

"Denied. We all need to be treated equally, it's part of what you need to learn."

"If you say so, then so be it. I don't think at your age you should be doing such a thing though, Lord Sirius."

"...You really a kid, Boss?"

"He's my big bro! That's what he is!"

It takes some time for all of us to come to an agreement, but we finally decide to guard the place in shifts, and once we do, we start preparing dinner. The dinner in question would be nothing special: a soup with little to no taste, salted meat, and some hard bread to accompany it all. This is pretty much normal for merchants who travel long distances, so my assumption is that anything resembling canned food is non-existent in this world.

We could also procure ourselves some extra food from monsters around the area. However, unless you possess vast knowledge of what parts are safe to eat, the results could be deadly. Fortunately for us, we lived in the mountains for a long time, so we've grown accustomed to such things, and that's why we decided to procure some extra meat for the meal.

"Emilia, you're in charge of searching for wild flowers and any edible plants around the area. Leus, you go and hunt something."

"Understood."

“I won’t let you down, bro!”

Zack, who is sitting beside the fire, placing a pot of water on top of it, is staring at me in disbelief. He’s carrying some meat and bread on a plate, but instead of offering it around he stands still, in shock.

“Uhh, I was planning to give this to you three, but it looks like you don’t need it?”

“Hm? Oh right, apologies. I should’ve mentioned earlier that we’d be able to procure our own meals.”

“Now that you mention it, I can see why you guys would go and get your own stuff from out there anyway. Okay, I’ll eat and go to sleep right after, if you don’t mind,” he says with a nod, proceeding to take a bite of the bread.

Seeing him makes me wonder, “Wouldn’t you like to eat something warm, Zack? We can prepare a plate for you, if you’d like.”

“O-Oh, no need! You already saved my life, and you’re great company! I can’t have you prepare my meal, too!”

“Don’t be shy. Besides, I’ve been wanting to test a little something I concocted a few days ago, so your input on the taste would be useful, if anything.”

“You’re... testing food? ...I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t intrigued by what you said, Boss, so if you’re okay with me testing it, by all means!”

As Zack finishes his bread, I proceed to head for one of the bags we are carrying, pulling out a container with a light-brown gravy-like goo inside. I take a spoonful of it, and place it inside the boiling water. After mixing it for a few seconds, it starts to smell really nice. This is something we made back in the mansion before we all left.

“O-Oooh... what’s this? It smells so good! Is it coming from that thing you got out of the container?”

“I mixed a bunch of spices together, thickened the whole concoction, and that’s pretty much it. I mixed in some preservatives as well, so it can last for a long time without spoiling.”

If I had to compare what I just created with something from my old world, it'd probably be miso soup. Though this one tastes completely different, since this world's ingredients are obviously nothing like the ones from my previous life. Zack looks extremely interested in what I said, as he gazes at the container.

"So this is it...? Whoa, it's spicy, alright."

"Yeah, having it as-is would probably not taste too great, so that's why you need to dissolve it in water."

What he just did reminded me of Leus. He did the exact same thing Zack's doing right now back when I showed him this. These two are like two peas in a pod.

"We're back, Lord Sirius."

"Bro! I got some good stuff!"

With impeccable timing, the siblings come back from their foraging and hunting, and as they do, they approach us and show us what they found: Emilia got some nice fragrant herbs, along with mushrooms, while Leus got a medium-sized bird.

"Is that a Boul? I heard they're always ready to run away at the drop of a hat, so I'm surprised you managed to get your hands on one of them," says Zack.

"Yeah, this guy ran away quite a few times, but after I cut the distance between us, I was able to give him the business."

"Ah well, I don't get what you're trying to tell me, but catching one's a big deal, man!"

Leus is definitely not the best at explaining himself, so I can understand Zack's confusion.

Whatever the case, we de-feather the bird, separate the parts we can eat from the ones we can't, marinate it with the herbs and some salt, and roast it on the fire. We mix the other edible plants and mushrooms with the soup, toss in some dried noodles we had lying around, and the dinner is pretty much ready. Also, if you really want to know, these noodles are ones I made, using similar methods to dry them as the ones used for cup noodles in my old world.

These, however, taste way better than dry bread once rehydrated, that's for sure.

Zack is salivating at the sight of the feast in front of him.

"Well, it's done. Go ahead, no need to hold back."

Zack accepts Emilia's bowl of soup, and once he tastes it, I almost see a switch flipping inside of him, and he starts devouring everything. He's using a fork, so eating the noodles is proving to be a task for him, but he doesn't seem to mind. He also tries the roasted Boul right after, and seems to like it as well.

"This definitely outdoes your random crappy diner in the middle of some village, lemme tell ya. Who would've thought you could cook something like this with herbs, man?"

"What matters is that you like it. I bet Dii, Noel, and your brother are having this soup right about now as well."

"If that's the case, I can already imagine my brother's face, Boss. In fact, I'd go as far as calling your soup base and these dry noodles almost revolutionary! Could we sell these through Gargan, Boss?"

"You want me to teach you the recipe? Personally I don't mind, but you'd have to ask Dii for permission."

"Shouldn't it be the other way around, Lord Sirius?" asks Emilia.

"Yeah, bro. Dii would be asking for your permission first."

I can imagine that being the case. Dii and I worked together to achieve this, after all. Honestly, though I had more of a hand in creating this, I don't mind if Dii makes a good living selling the recipe. If Dii knew this, however, he wouldn't listen to me at all. Then again, neither of us desperately need the money right now, so... sure, I'll teach him, with some conditions, though.

"I'm fine teaching you the recipe, but only under the condition that I'll get a percentage of the profits."

"A part of the sales, y'mean?"

"We have no clue what it would sell for, and we'd probably need Gadd's opinion if you wanted to mass produce it, so talk it out with him first."

“Oh! Boss, you don’t need to! You can ask for any percentage of the sales! You’re the one who came up with this amazing idea, after all!”

“As long as I make enough to live comfortably, I really couldn’t care less.”

I know I haven’t known Zack and Gadd for all that long, but it’s actually amazing how fast I’ve been able to trust those two. Personally, I mean what I said: as long as I get enough to live comfortably, I’m fine if they keep most of the profit from the invention. Considering Gadd has been the one who has provided for the household before I was even born, I feel it’d be a good way to pay him back.

“I also have a favor I’d like to ask you. You saw what we were capable of today, but I’d appreciate it if you kept this a secret between us.”

“That makes sense. I can imagine nobles and unsavory people alike trying to get a piece of you kids if they knew what you were truly capable of. So yeah, my lips are sealed, Boss. I owe you three my life, after all. No matter what the big fish try to threaten me with, I’ll always be on your side, Boss!”

It’s good to see he understands what I meant by that. “Thank you,” I reply.

“To be honest, though, I think you three will stand out no matter what.”

“Indeed we will. Lord Sirius’ greatness will soon be known all around the world, just you wait.”

“I wouldn’t expect any less from my bro!” follows Leus as he puffs out his chest.

“If that’s the case, I kind of feel lucky that I got to meet you like this. Gargan actually has a place in Elysium as well, so hopefully you come around once you’re settled there, Boss.”

“If we have time for it, we’ll probably order a thing or two from you guys, so I’ll definitely do that.”

It’s basically the same thing I used to do with Dii back when we lived in the mountains: I asked him to bring x or y ingredients, and he’d go to the nearest town—where one of Gargan’s offices are located—to procure them for me. This is good: I was expecting the quality of the food we’d eat in Elysion to decrease,

but with this arrangement, I'm pretty sure we'll be just as well off as we were back at the mansion.

"Leave it to us, Boss! I'm really looking forward to helping you out however I can!"

The rest of the trip was pretty uneventful: no robbers tried to assault us again, and we found a couple of goblins, but the siblings managed to fend them off without many issues. Every time they did, Zack would always sigh and lower his head.

"Haah, honestly Boss, being around you three makes me feel somewhat worthless."

"You're a merchant, Zack. You're not supposed to be out here defending the carriage. Think of us as your temporary guards, that's all," I said, in an attempt to console the young man.

After a few monotonous days, we finally arrived at Elysion.

"Boss! Look, that's Elysion right there."

"Oooh?! Whoa, that's a big city!"

"Look at that wall! It's huge!"

Elysion is one of the big cities of the continent of Merifest, better known for its defenses: a huge white wall surrounding the metropolis. There are never any dramatic storms, there's very little variation from season to season, and it's always warm. The monsters around the area are also dealt with on a daily basis, making it easy for people to settle here.

Beyond the wall, the most iconic and striking thing that can be seen is the huge castle within the city, where the King that rules the country lives. As far as I heard, he's a competent statesman as well. People have little to no complaints about how he runs the city, and things seem to be in order for the most part.

Surprisingly enough, though, the most iconic thing of the city isn't actually the castle, but the educational institution, the Elysion magic school. This institution not only requires those who wish to enter it to pay quite the tuition fee, but its examinations are also notoriously difficult, making it very hard for anyone to

graduate. This is why even entering the school already gives the person who managed to do so some degree of prestige.

The thing I'm mostly worried about is the discrimination the siblings will face in the city, given that they're demi-humans. Demi-humans are not seen very favorably around these parts. However, the King issued a decree which more or less banned open discrimination against them, so even while they'll stand out, hopefully nothing bad will happen while we stay here.

It's also worth mentioning that around 30% of the population is composed of demi-humans, while the rest are humans.

"The ones ruling these parts are human supremacists, so I'd watch out around the city's nobles if I were you."

"Thanks for the warning... also, are we ever going to move?"

Right now we're in the middle of a long queue of carts, waiting to get into the city. The gate that leads inside has a bunch of soldiers, who conduct searches to not allow anything weird or dangerous to come inside.

Hopefully Zack has some sort of credential that proves he belongs to a merchant company, otherwise we'll probably be questioned before we enter, and that'll slow everything to a crawl. We've been advancing very slowly, until at one point one of the carriages ahead of us got stopped and its owners are being questioned right now, making us stop in our tracks. It's been thirty minutes since we moved.

"This is how it be sometimes, Boss. Anyways, Emilia, Leus, you two especially watch out around these parts, okay?"

"Got it. Lord Sirius, could you please place a collar on me?" she says with a wide smile, her tail furiously wagging.

"...Why are you asking me to do that, again?" I ask, puzzled.

"It's to make everyone think that I'm your possession, Lord Sirius."

"I didn't know you wanted to go back to looking like a slave."

"I wouldn't mind being your slave."

"...Well I would, so your proposition is denied."

“Understood...” she answers dejectedly, lowering her head and sniffing.

Now I look like the bad guy. Is it really that horrible of me to not want to enslave her?

“Err, I actually think it wouldn’t be a terrible idea.”

“Really, Zack? What are you implying?”

“Emilia’s a cute lass. I could imagine some noble thinking the same and trying to kidnap her to do God knows what. It’d be better to pretend that you own her, that way you lower the chances of that ever happening.”

I suppose that’s what happens when a lot of people gather in a single spot: the worst within us starts to creep out. While I do not think Emilia would ever have any trouble if she were to be attacked, I suppose it is true that we have to keep an eye out regardless.

“Haah... I’ll think about it. Leus, watch out from now on, got it?” I say to the boy, who is beside the carriage doing some light exercise, all while Emilia is looking at me, her eyes sparkling with excitement.

“I got it, bro! It’ll be fine! If someone tries to do something to me, I’ll just kill them!”

“If I understood anything you just said, then you clearly failed to understand what I was trying to say.”

Just as I was about to lecture him about why he shouldn’t resort to killing as the easiest way to solve all his problems, we finally started moving once more. We didn’t have anything to show to the guards to prove our identity, but Zack talked with them, and it worked, because it wasn’t long before they were done with their check.

“Good thing you were able to speak on our behalf.”

“Oh, it’s fine. After what you’ve done for me and the company so far, this much is nothing. So, what are you gonna do now, Boss?”

“The entrance exams for the school are starting a few days from now, so we should first find a place to stay, I suppose.”

“Then why don’t you stay in the place I usually go to? It has good food, the

prices are decent, and I trust the people who work there.”

“Considering this is our first time here, sure. I’ll accept your offer.”

The sun is already going down, but Zack does us the favor of leading us to his preferred inn before going to Gargan’s HQ to deliver the goods.

“Well, here we are, Boss. This is the ‘Springbreeze Barstool.’ Lemme talk to the owner before anything else, ‘kay?”

The building in front of me is quite a bit bigger than the old mansion: a two-storied wooden structure. In front of us is the lobby, and right beside it is a diner, where we can see a bunch of people eating and drinking, some of them obviously drunk as they can be.

As far as I can see, the first floor has the diner, offices, and general areas for everyone, while the second floor has the individual rooms where people can stay.

My past job gets the better of me and I start to plan escape routes in the event that we’re attacked, but while I do that, I see Zack heading to the main desk of the lobby, ringing the bell on top of it.

“I’m coming! Oh, Zack! Hey!”

“Hey there, Miss. I’ll be staying here for the night, usual business.”

A plump lady appears from within the moment he does. She’s in her forties as far as I can tell, and her smile reminds me of the one mother had. She’s looking at us right now.

“Same room as usual, I take it? Oh, and those are some kids I’ve never seen before. Are they yours?”

“I ain’t married, so no. They came with me on this trip as guests, and they were looking for a place to stay, so I told them about this one.”

“Much appreciated! So! What do these three cute guests want for a room?”

“One room for two, and...”

“One room for three!” shouts Emilia, not letting me finish.

I was planning to give Emilia a room for herself, considering she’s a girl and

already at an age where she should be conscious about sharing a room with guys, but there she goes again, even pushing me aside to speak against her “Master.”

“So you three want to share a room, yes? Um, are you okay sharing it with your two friends, missy?”

“Yeah! This one here is my brother, and Lord Sirius is my master, so I have no issues sharing the room with him.”

“Same here, sis!”

“Very well, then I’ll give you the big room at the end of the corridor.”

I’m happy that we got a room, but I feel conflicted about the way Emilia expressed herself just now. Should I say interject?

“I know how long Zack will stay, but how about you three?”

“Well, for the time being we’ll have to wait for the entrance exams and then enroll at the school, so until then, I suppose.”

“Sis told me that it takes a long time, so that’s gonna be it.”

“Yeah, pretty sure that’s how it is. Um, so just set them up for five days to start,” says Zack.

“So five days, three meals included, and in the big room... that’ll be two silver coins.”

I’m pretty clueless about market prices in this city, but that sounds like a reasonable thing to ask for in exchange for five days in a big room and three meals each day. In fact, I’d say it’s on the cheap side. We can always extend our stay if we need more time, so I’ll pay...

Before I pay, though, Zack does it for me.

“This is for me and the Boss right here.”

“Oh? Quite rare of you to pay for someone, considering how frugal you tend to be. Did something happen between you guys?”

“He may not look like it, but the Boss over here is someone amazing, and he’s been... let’s say ‘takin’ care of my ass’ for these last few days, y’see.”

“A-Are you perhaps part of a noble family?! My apologies if that’s the case, Sir!”

Considering how quickly her smile changed into a concerned look on her face, I can already imagine how troubling it can be to deal with nobles in this city. I don’t really want her to apologize to me for something like this, though, so...

“Um, we’re not nobles or anything like that. There’s no need for formalities.”

“Yeah, Miss. Boss ain’t a nobleman, but trust me when I say that he could aim to be something even greater than nobility. He’s someone important to Gargan, so once I leave town, hopefully you can keep an eye on them for me.”

“Re-Really now? Okay... phew, I almost had a heart attack right there. In any case, I’ll be sure to take care of you while they’re our guests, so leave it to me.”

She then pulls out what seems to be a register, followed by bowing towards us: her manners are pretty good, and though not as perfect as mother’s were, I think they’re still commendable.

Also, before I forget, I should probably give Zack the money he paid in our stead.

“Zack, I’d feel bad if I had you pay for our stay, so here, have two silver coins.”

“Look at him, Miss. So young and already so mature. But yeah, I’ll be paying for you this time around, so tough luck, Boss.”

“But...”

“Sorry for interrupting you, but do you have a moment?” asks the owner with a smile as she looks at me.

“Let Zack pay for you this time around. You know he’s a merchant, so let him have his way before he tries to convince you in his own way.”

“You tell ‘im, Miss. I’ll be gone by tomorrow anyway, so let me at least pay back the favor by doing this!”

Well, if they’re so insistent, I might as well let it go. If Zack feels compelled to do this, I should probably accept his kindness. It’ll be better than denying it and giving a bad impression. If anything, this has taught me that the woman knows how to deal with people, and knows how to defuse a tense situation.

“...Very well, I’ll accept your generosity, then.”

“Thanks, Boss. Well then, Miss. I’ll be stopping by later, but I’ll leave the rest to you. I’m going to deliver the goods to the office now.”

“Aye aye, have a good one. Well then, I’ll need your names to be written over here, dear guests.”

Zack leaves and we write our names in her registry... this has given me a chance to take a look at other guests’ names, but I’m noticing a similar writing pattern in many of these. Why would that be the case?

“So Sirius, Emilia, and Leus, I see. Your writing is beautiful. There’s a lot of people who can’t really write, so I’m the one writing their names in their stead, usually,” says the woman, solving the mystery behind the similar handwriting. “Well then, time for me to show you the room, but before that, have you had dinner? The diner is open, so you can grab a bite there whenever you want, okay?”

She explains to us that the diner opens at certain times of the day, and guests are given a special voucher they can use to eat there. If they want more, they’ll have to pay a small extra fee to get seconds. You can also carry food with you if you tell them in advance.

“I wouldn’t mind having dinner, but I’d like to have it with Zack if possible, though I’m not sure when he’ll be back.”

“Zack won’t take long to return: the office is not so far away from here, and all he needs to do is deliver the goods and he’ll be done. How about I tell him to come to your room once he returns so you three can eat together?”

“I’d appreciate it if you could.”

The Lady then shows us the room we’ll be using: it’s normally supposed to be used for four people, so there are four beds lined up in it. There’s also the closest thing to a toilet, using a water summoning circle as its way to flush things. To top it all off, they even clean your clothes around here, making this place quite a bit more sanitary than what I was initially expecting.

Baths take a lot of labor to maintain, so apparently they aren’t present anywhere except noble houses. I remember back when we lived in our old

home that we had a barrel where we had our baths in, one which I'd made for such a purpose.

Normally, we'd have to use hot water on a towel and scrub our filth off that way, but for an extra fee we can go to a nearby bath house, making that problem disappear. Honestly, so far I've been impressed by the way hygiene is viewed in this world, but this city is definitely taking it to the next level. Then again, it's a huge metropolis, so it only makes sense.

Once the lady explains everything we need to know, she leaves. We then leave our luggage in the room, and we all sigh in relief almost at the same time: we haven't had much time to actually relax since we started the trip because of our night shifts, and finally having an actual bed to sleep in is a welcome change.

"We should probably unpack what we can before Zack returns. You two remember what we talked about for the entrance exams, yes?"

"Yeah, it consists of two parts: a one-on-one interview with the teachers over there, and a magic skill test."

"Indeed. Remember that the most important thing is that they don't realize you can cast spells without chanting them, so remember to mutter anything you want before you cast something."

We'd probably be questioned if they found out we can already cast spells without requiring any sort of chant/incantation before it, especially because the people we'll be dealing with are scholars, who have their knowledge already deeply rooted into their psyche. They won't be too happy that we can do things outside of what they think is normal. It's better if we start showing our actual abilities in time, and not suddenly, otherwise they won't take it well. In any case, we'll be muttering something short instead of a long chant, so that will already give them some sort of clue that we're special.

"I'm not particularly good with magic, but I'm damn good with the sword, at least."

"It'll be fine, Leus. As long as you can cast basic spells, they'll let you in, so just show them anything you've got."

“Got it, big bro! I’ll show them the magic you taught me!”

All I taught him is what I knew, which is colorless magic. It ended up being nothing more than the general motions of how it all works, but Leus ended up mastering a few spells thanks to that later down the line. He says I taught him, but in reality, I simply gave him a little push, he did 99% of the work himself.

“I’m personally more worried about the interview than anything else. I’m not very convinced that you’ll even speak like you should to whoever talks with you, Leus...”

“She’s not wrong. Leus, I assume you can take care of yourself in that aspect?”

“Erina taught me some of the basics, so I should be okay... I think...”

I don’t believe the interview will last very long due to the large number of applicants, but Leus’ manners leave much to be desired in many ways, which worries me a little. He’s also picked up an awful habit from the old man Liole, where whenever he finds something he can swing his blade at, he will. Good thing he isn’t so obsessed that he tries it on random people we encounter, otherwise we’d have a real problem in our hands.

“I suppose you won’t have any issues, Lord Sirius.”

“Yeah, there’s no point in worrying about him.”

The thing that concerns me about how my examinations will go basically stems from the fact that they’ll check what type of magic I can wield, and I’m not entirely sure how they’ll react when they see I’m colorless.

“Worst case scenario, I’ll work for Gargan, and focus on delivering whatever goods Dii and Noel need for their business, because why not?”

“And I’ll accompany you if needed.”

“I’ll be sure to cut any criminals down who try to rob you!”

Good to know they’re ready to jump the boat even if I fail and they pass.

After we rest in our room for a bit, both siblings are suddenly on alert, as we all hear steps heading towards our room.

“Boss, it’s me,” says Zack while knocking on the door.

Leus approaches the door, and before letting him enter makes sure that it’s him by sniffing it: someone could be faking his voice, or maybe he could be trying to do something funny, for all that we know. Anyways, Leus places one of his ears against the door and asks: “Who’s the best?”

“Our big bros!” Zack answers.

...When did these two come up with a password to be able to enter the room? And why that one, of all things?

As I try to understand what led these two to decide such a stupid thing, Leus opens the door, and Zack enters, a smile on his face.

“Sorry for the wait, guys. Not gonna lie, seeing you wait so we could eat together is making me blush a lil’.”

“Oh, don’t worry. Let’s just go to the diner.”

“I’m actually looking forward to the food, since you said it was pretty good,” says Emilia.

“Me too! The roasted Jaola here is the best, I’m telling ya!”

“I don’t think whatever they serve here will be better than big bro’s cooking, but that sounds pretty good too!”

We have a hearty dinner at the diner, and congratulate ourselves on a successful trip without many issues. In the middle of it all, Zack decides to prematurely toast to, well...

“Well then! Let’s toast to everyone’s Magic School enrollment!”

“Uhh, Zack, we haven’t even seen the school yet.”

“Huh? It’s not like you three will fail either way, right, Boss?”

“We could toast to our newfound friendship, or many other things before that, though.”

“Oh, that ain’t bad either! Okay! Then to our newfound friendship!” shouts Zack, after a somewhat tiresome deliberation.

The roasted Jaola was quite fatty and tasty. In fact, if I had to compare it with

food from the other world, I'd say it tastes closest to roasted eel. It makes me realize how much I miss my roasted eel dipped in soy sauce, but that's something I unfortunately can't make here, at least for now.

"This isn't half bad. I'd recommend this dish if someone asked me."

"I like it too! It tastes super good with bread!"

"Hm, it's good and all, but I'd kill to have some rice with it."

"'Rice?' Would whatever that is match with this food?"

"Is that a new thing you haven't taught us about, big bro?!"

"Wouldn't mind hearing what that 'rice' thing is."

Since they show a lot of interest, I start to describe rice to them, its size and color, where it should logically grow, and how it's definitely needed if we're going to have something like what we're eating right now.

The reason I'm going out of my way to explain the taste and everything related to rice right now is because I bet Zack could be able to maybe think of something that could replace rice in this world. Whenever I wanted specific flavors, I would tell Dii and then he'd tell Gadd, who would then look for things that could emulate the taste I'm seeking.

"Got it, Boss. I'll look into it whenever I have some time."

"Considering you'll be a busy man starting tomorrow, I feel bad about giving you more stuff to do, but thanks. You've got a day off tomorrow, right?"

He mentioned that normally he'd stay here for two days, but he needs to report what happened with the bandits on the trip to Gadd as soon as he can, which is why he's returning earlier than usual.

"I know it's a pain, but we've gotta discuss with the company what we're gonna do now that we know the criminal's motives, most likely some revenge. They'll regret targeting us!"

"Yeah! You gotta give 'em what's comin', Zack!"

"I'm pretty sure my big bro will be back by the time I return, so that's when everyone at Gargan will probably team up and give those bandits what's comin'.

to 'em, like you said!" shouts Zack, full of confidence.

He has a point: he may have come out of that robbing attempt unscathed this time around, but seeking revenge for what happened is completely justified, because they don't want to be attacked again.

"We've had a lot of dangerous encounters on this trip, but I've met you three in the process, so I can't say I'm not happy about the end result, Boss!"

"Same goes here. Be sure to show that nice smile of yours whenever you return here to see us, got it?"

"Aye aye, Boss! I'll be sure to come around with my big bro to properly thank you next time!"

We eventually finish our dinner and return to our room to sleep until the next day.

In the morning, we wake up early to see Zack off, and once he's gone, we decide to have a look around the city. Normally, we'd be preparing ourselves for the school entrance exams, but we're already pretty well prepared, so the best thing for us to do at the moment is to walk around the city to start getting acquainted with it. As we do, we notice a large number of children and young men wearing blue robes, clearly a uniform.

"You can tell this place is way bigger than the last town we visited, alright... um, are those people wearing blue robes from the school?"

"They're pretty similar to what we're wearing, bro. Also, where's that store we're looking for, again?"

"It should be around this area..."

Lirole told us about the blacksmith that forged his two-handed greatsword, and that his shop is nearby. Considering the old man's sword never even chipped once back when he swung it with all his strength, I think that this blacksmith could be the solution to Leus' problems.

I still remember when I asked the old man about him, it had to be one month ago. I sought him by myself, without having Emilia nor Leus tag along with me this time around.

“...There you are.”

“Mhm.”

Normally the old man would be rearing for a fight, but this time was different from the rest, because, well... we promised to each other that the next time I came, we'd fight for real, without holding back. The old man was carrying his best sword, unlike the sparring blade like he used to, while I was carrying my mithril knife. We also agreed to not use any spells in this fight, except “boost.”

“This could be the last time we face each other, so you better not kick the bucket before I do, you hear me, kid?”

“Right back at you.”

No more words needed to be spoken. After that, we moved to a big enough space where we could fight, and a fight we had after that, one where our very lives were at stake. Both of us intended to kill each other with every swing of our blades in that one. I was actually so concentrated on our fight that I barely remember the specifics of it, to be honest. All that I remember is that I ended up winning, and that after that fateful strike, silence ensued.

I remember looking around me, and not only the trees around us were completely torn apart, but the ground was gouged and splattered with blood, as if an actual war happened in that spot where our fight took place. I remember at the old man keeling over, one of his arms now missing, and covered in blood, as well as how tired I was, to the point of me having to stay with him that night, since I couldn't go back to the mansion because of how exhausted I was. He almost died that night, but I was able to treat him quickly enough to avoid this outcome. I was even able to manage to stitch the arm I cut off of him once again to his body, so as long as he did some rehab, he'd be back in top form in no time.

“Hahaha! I thought I was a goner for a moment!”

“I really wouldn't be so happy if you died, so please quit laughing about it.”

“Sorry, lad. I don't think I wouldn't have been able to win against you, even if I had the strength I had back in my prime,” he said in a rather sad tone, which was unbecoming of him. I didn't blame him for feeling that way, considering

what happened.

He'll simply grow older, and I'm still young, after all.

"Well then! Does that mean you'll properly retire this time around?"

"As if!" he shouted with a smile. That wasn't the look of a man that was close to the brink of death hours ago. In fact, he should probably take it easy, otherwise his wounds will reopen...

"I'm going on a trip. One to train myself, not look for new apprentices!"

"...Are you serious?"

"Of course I am. Besides, I couldn't care less if I die in the middle of it, and it's not like you'll return here once you go to that school of yours. Staying here makes no sense anymore."

I never would've thought back in the day that he'd come to that conclusion. I knew that it would probably be the last time we'd meet, due to the impossibility of me returning once I got to Elysion, but a trip of all things?

"I'm quite worried about that decision, old man, but it's your life, not mine. You won't listen to whatever I say in the end."

"I'm glad you understand. Anyways, do you think you'll ever come back here, or...?"

"Hm, maybe in the future..."

"Then you better bring your students along this time! Especially Emilia, got it?!"

Why would he ask for Emilia in particular? She's not a weapons user. The answer was revealed later, but basically the old man had a weakness towards Emilia, who he considered the closest thing he'd ever had to a granddaughter. Half a year ago, she came around to introduce herself as Leus' big sister, since he was training under him at that time, along with me. I remember she was quite surprised to see how big the old man was, but still kept her cool.

"No need for formalities, kiddo. Treat me like you would anyone else."

"Understood, then... may I call you Grandpa?"

“Uogh?!”

From that point onward, the old man became Emilia’s doting grandpa.

“Grandpa, the tea is quite hot, so don’t sip it all at once, okay?”

“As if some hot tea could beat the likes of me! Argh! What is this feeling I have in my chest?! I’m so strangely happy for some reason right now!”

Seeing the old man interact with Emilia as he did was a nice way to see another side of him.

In fact, Leus tried to call him Grandpa as well, but things didn’t go as well as they did with Emilia. I tried asking why he didn’t treat him any differently than her, to which the old man answered, “Look, lad, he’s a student of yours, and I’m teaching him the way of the blade. I can’t be soft on him, you know this. He’s charming and all, but nothing like Emilia either way!”

Considering he never married and had kids, he definitely wasn’t looking forward to having a granddaughter, which is why Emilia’s presence gave his life a new meaning, and a way to experience a similar joy.

“I was planning to do so anyway, but why her in particular?” I answer to his plight.

“Because I wanna see her face, obviously. That comes first, and... well, I was thinking of teaching Leus my secret technique.”

...Leus would cry a little if he heard the old man just now.

In the end, I left the mean part out, and Leus was excited to know that the old man was looking forward to teaching him that secret technique of his.

In any case, the last time we saw Liola was a few days before we left the mansion. He was pretty much ready to embark on his trip, so he simply wanted to bid his farewells before parting.

“I’m really grateful to you, lad. You’ve shown me the new path in life I must take.”

“You really shouldn’t thank me for something like that, I’ve told you a million times already. In fact, I should be the one thanking you for putting up with me so I could become stronger.”

After a handshake, he gave me a small pouch from one of his belongings.

“In this bag is the proof of mastery. Give this to your lad whenever he grows into a fine swordsman and you feel like he deserves it.”

Within the pouch there was a medallion with the symbol of a blade carved into it, as well as a letter.

“The letter within is addressed to a grumpy, dwarven old man that lives in Elysion. He forged my blade, and the letter asks him to forge the boys’ as well.”

That’s when I knew that deep inside, Leus was someone the old man cared deeply for, even if he didn’t show it in the open.

Personally, I’m wondering who this man could be, considering the old man called him “eccentric,” that being the nicest thing he mentioned about him.

“I also ask him to make something even better for Emilia, otherwise I’ll cut him in half the next time we meet,” he continues.

...Sorry, Leus. I wish I could say something right now, but I can’t.

“I’ll be off, then. I’ll make sure to win against you the next time we meet!”

Along with a smile and quick wave of the hand, the sixty year-old man then turned around and left, embarking on his new trip to find himself.

In any case, while I have the letter right here, the old man never mentioned where the place was exactly, so right now I’m quite lost. All that he told me is that the signboard of the blacksmith looked dumb. Apart from that, not much else.

“Grandpa mentioned that this guy was supposed to be tiny, annoying, and always angry. How could someone like that be around here?”

...I feel like both Leus and the old man are being somewhat mean towards this blacksmith, but oh well. I’ll concentrate on looking for his shop at the moment.

“I’ll ask that person over at that stall, Lord Sirius.”

Emilia’s instincts are always on the mark when it comes to these things. It’s better to ask a local that frequents the area, that way it won’t take us as long to find the place.

We wait for a bit, and eventually Emilia comes back, a meat skewer in one of her hands.

“As far as I’ve been told, there’s a place that could match what we’re looking for over at that alley.”

“Good job. Let’s check it out.”

After the usual headpat to reward her for a job well done, we head to the gloomy alley, and as we head deeper into it, we see a sign with the name “The Forger of Death: Indestructible Blades...” Now I get why the old man said his billboard sounded dumb.

“...What the...” says Leus, equally confused as I am.

Whatever the case, this has to be the place for sure.

We enter. The outside looked decrepit, as the signboard could barely be read because of how old it was, and the building itself looked abandoned, but a quick look inside quickly tells me that this place is well-kept, and a functioning business. The sound of someone pounding metal against an anvil could be heard coming from the very back of the store. Whoever runs this place clearly has a knack and love for forging weapons, because the ones I see lined up right now seem to be well-taken care of.

“Someone theeeeere?!” shouts Leus, to no avail, since the sounds coming from the back of the shop don’t cease.

“Helloooooo?! We’re here to buy stuuuuuff!” he tries once more.

...No answer. Maybe whoever is back there can’t hear us because they’re being too loud?

“Come out already, you drunk gremlin!”

“Who’s a drunk gremlin again?!”

“...He heard that one. Why did you try to insult him, though?”

“Grandpa told me to say that if we wanted to grab his attention.”

...I’m not entirely sure what the relationship between the old man and this blacksmith was, but if they insulted each other like this, could it really have

been that good?

Whatever the case, the man who comes out from the back is someone who's as tall as me, his face red and clearly angry. Judging by the length of his hair and beard, I could immediately tell that this man had to be a dwarf. They're always the preferred race to ask for weaponry, and they know all about ores and minerals, as well as having a soft spot for alcohol.

"Sir, we have a letter for you explaining why we're here."

"Hmph! It better not be a prank, otherwise I'll smash my hammer against your skull, you moron!" he shouts while snatching the letter from my hands, followed by him giving it a quick glance, still seemingly mad.

Once he finishes reading it, he crumples it and tosses it away, followed by picking up a bunch of swords that were lined up and placing them on the counter, followed by looking intensely at Leus.

"Try every one of these from this one on your left. Whichever you feel is best, keep it!"

"Got it. Ooohh, this one's amazing!"

While Leus starts testing the blades he's offered, I see Emilia is focused on a specific dagger, which is displayed along with the other blades.

"Look at this knife over here, Lord Sirius. Don't you think it would cut things nicely?"

"I see you have a good eye, missy."

"I bet this one can cut through any meat like butter, and it has enough length to not be too short or too long either."

"I like selling things to folk who understand their greatness. How much you offerin'?"

Emilia gives me a glance, to which I answer with a nod, letting her know that she can do whatever she wants. I hand her a bag with her allowance of silver coins, and simply watch to see how much she'll bring the price down.

"I don't have much in hand, so... three silver coins is what I can offer."

“Silver? Uhh, I ain’t sure I can sell this unless gold coins are on the table.”

I agree with him. I think that knife is worth gold coins for sure.

Knowing that Emilia doesn’t have as much, he scratches his beard for a moment and quickly picks the knife up.

“...There must be a reason why you want it so badly, though.”

“There is. Would you be so kind as to check the one I use right now?”

“Hm? Huh... yeah, this knife sucks, missy.”

We bought it in a random place, so of course he’d say that.

“I’ve served Lord Sirius so far with this one, but I don’t think it’ll last very long in a real fight, which is why I was taken to the marvelous knife you were displaying here.”

“Heh! Then why not have that master of yours buy it in your stead?”

“I can’t. Burdening my master is not something I consider ethical, nor good as his retainer.”

“Hnghhh! Look missy, I get what you mean, but this is a business, y’see? Try somewhere else if that’s the case.”

“...You’re right. I apologize for bothering you, Grandpa.”

“Grandpa?! Aaargh?! My heart! Why is it beating so fast right now?!”

...He’s literally just like Liole.

“Well, I... you seem so similar to Lord Liole, that I unconsciously called you the same thing I used to call him. Hopefully you don’t mind...”

“Ohhh?! O-Of course not, missy! You can call me that whenever you want!”

“I will, Grandpa! Anyways, I’ll save up so I can come and buy that knife another day...”

“Damn it all! Fine! You can have it for free!”

And there it is. Emilia wins, by a landslide as well. She doesn’t seem very happy with this outcome though, because she shakes her head, followed by getting a bunch of silver coins.

“While I thank you for the offer, I can’t bring myself to take such a fine piece for free. I know this doesn’t match its real cost, but please accept this in exchange for it.”

“Ah well, if you insist, then I’ll take you up on that, missy.”

“Thank you so much, Grandpa!”

“Uooooogh! Just take it for free, damn it aaaaaaall!”

In the end Emilia pays three silver coins in exchange for the knife, despite the insistence of the dwarf to have her take it for free.

“Having a cutie such as you using my knife makes me feel like my work was well worth it, missy,” he says, with a smile on his face.

Just so we’re all on the same page, the knife Emilia showed him was for cooking. The one she uses for fighting is a little better, but still. Maybe if the old man knew how she actually planned on using that knife, he’d think twice about selling it to her, but... then again, if she called him Grandpa he’d probably overlook it, I bet.

“I’ll give you a little extra! Have this knife! And this one too!”

“Huh?! I can’t possibly take all of this!”

Looks like Emilia herself wasn’t expecting to get all of those extra knives.

While she’s being showered in gifts, Leus seems to have found the blade he likes.

“Old man! I tried all of the blades!”

“Huh? Tch! You just had to ruin my happy moment... so? Which one did you like the most?”

Leus doesn’t seem taken aback by the man’s abrasiveness, mainly because this is work, and he’s probably too concentrated on the task at hand either way.

“Um, the fifth and sixth one starting from the left. Both seem equally good, but...”

“Hah! Your taste in blades is weird, runt. Then again, you’re that old coot’s disciple, so...”

“I’m not a runt, old man. I have a name, and it’s Leus.”

“Heh! And I’m Grant, you runt.”

“Leus. And I’m my big bro’s disciple! Not that old coot’s.”

“You’re still as weird as the old coot when it comes to swords, runt!”

“It’s Leus, old man! Or are you too senile to remember?!”

Before things get violent between the both of them, I decide to intervene and stop them from running their mouths. However, the good thing is that Leus has found the sword he likes out of all the ones he tried, so that’s something positive we can take from this exchange.

“So Leus has chosen a sword similar to the one Liolo uses, I see...”

“You got it, kid. Each blade expresses the personality of the bearer. Lighter ones tend to be for sharper people, while heavy ones are better suited for brainless people like the runt, you dumbbo.”

“Hey! My big bro isn’t a dumbbo!”

“That’s just how he expresses himself, Leus. Get used to it and shut up. Anyways, do you think the one he chose suits him?”

“It’s heavy, and resilient enough, with the center of gravity on the handle as well... in fact, it’s so similar to that old coot’s sword that I’m getting pissed off just thinking about it. Leaving that aside, the runt has a good taste, just like the young Lady.”

It’s good that Leus told him normal swords felt light for him, because that way Grant was able to tell which ones would suit him better based on his preference, which is not only heavy swords, but also an aggressive stance and moveset, pretty much like Liolo.

“If that’s the case, would you be so kind as to forge a blade to match his likings? I only have this much with me right now, but if it’s not enough, I can pay you the rest as soon as tomorrow,” I say, as I pull out my bag of gold coins and bow towards him.

I know what I have is not enough. Emilia was lucky, and she still felt guilty for having things gifted to her, but I need to remind myself that Leus is the closest

thing I have to a younger brother, so I need to make a good example for him.

“Big bro...”

“Heh! Very well, I’ll forge that blade of yours!”

“For real, old man?! Aw yeah! Okay! So basically it needs to be heavy and resilient, got it?!”

“Leus, you need to be more specific... um, let’s see... we’re not looking for something as great as what Liole was carrying around, but as long as Leus can swing it with all he has without having it snap in half, he’ll be happy.”

“WHAT?! And you expect me to forge something with those half-assed specifications of yours?! Dumbo,” he shouts while picking up a nearby hammer and pointing it my way.

“Like I’ll ever forge a mediocre blade! I’ll create something you’ll carry along for the rest of your life, you moron!”

“Wow, old man! You almost sounded cool for a moment!”

“Of course I did! In exchange, I expect you to get stronger and whoop that old coot’s ass for me the next time you see him, understood?”

“You got it! I’ll show him what a real warrior is made of!”

...And now they seem to get along decently. All’s well that ends well, I suppose. The issue right now is how much all of this is gonna cost: while the letter of introduction from Liole might help us secure better pricing, maybe we could pay monthly installments, if that’s even a thing over in these parts...

“Right!” suddenly shouts Grant as he claps his hands, “There’s a question I’ve got for you, kid,” he continues.

“Sure thing, go ahead. Although if it’s related to blades, I probably won’t be of much help.”

“The old coot told me that you’re capable of some incredible feats. Show me some of that secret knowledge of yours, if that’s the case.”

He then explains to me that he needs to see something impressive, which he needs to get some inspiration so he can finish one of his latest blades, since he

feels like it needs something he's missing out on.

"Hm... maybe I could show you some of my weapons, since they're not exactly easy to find out there," I say as I show him the rare, short blade Dii gave to me, as well as the mithril knife Fia gifted to me.

"The mithril knife is nothing special, in my eyes, but that short blade of yours... it shouldn't be this light, especially considering what it's made of..."

"You actually can tell what it's made of just with a simple look?"

"Obviously. This blade is made of granvilite, which is a sturdy, but equally heavy mineral. This blade should weigh five times more, but here it is, light as a feather... how's that possible?"

"...Could the secret lie within the runes carved on the blade itself?"

"Most likely. I ain't got a clue about any magical kerfuffle, so that's out of my league."

"Honestly, that much is enough for me to see how knowledgeable you are about these either way, so thanks."

Unfortunately I wasn't able to stimulate his brain with what I carry, but I got some useful info out of it all. I didn't know the secret of the blade was in the runes, so that's very good to know.

"Anyways, nice blades, kid, but I was hoping you'd show me something more... stimulating."

"Hmm, how about this?" I say as I start talking to him about my knowledge of knife and sword-making in my old world—In Japan, to create Katanas, there's this metal called ferrite that smiths add to the core of the blade, while surrounding it with carbon steel, making the katana not only flexible, but hard enough to withstand any impact without breaking. Unfortunately, I'm not privy to the specifics of how to forge katanas, but maybe my general knowledge could help him draw out some ideas.

"Yo-You absolute moron!" he shouts immediately after I'm done with my explanation, banging his hammer against the floor, opening a hole in it. Have I said something he didn't like at some point? I thought, until he breaks the ice

after a few seconds of silence, “If what you said could be applied to reality, do you have a clue how strong my blades would become?!” he screams in a fit of rage.

Looks like I touched a string.

“I merely spoke about theoreticals just now. I’ve yet to see any sword that matches what I talked about.”

“Of course you haven’t, moron! That’s my job! Awww, I’m so ready to forge something new with that info!” he shouts once more, this time clearly excited and happy.

Okay, now that he’s in a good mood, I’ll pay whatever he tells me to and finish our business for the day.

“Anyways, for the cost of forging the blade... how much would it be in total? Also, could I pay monthly-?”

“Huh? What you told me just now counts as enough payment, moron.”

“Uhh, I’m not sure that could count as anything valuable.”

“Trust me, kid, what you just told me had value. Besides, I’d never ask a kid to pay me for something, moron.”

As long as he’s fine with this deal, I’m okay and all, but I’ll be living here for some time, so eventually I’ll actually pay him what the sword was worth, whether he likes it or not.

In any case, Grant tells us that he wants to test my knowledge, so until he’s done experimenting, he said that he’d take some time to finish Leus’ blade.

“Just show your faces here after a while and I’ll tell you how’s it going,” he mentions.

“Thank you. We’ll be sure to return in a little while, then,” I reply.

“Thank you, old man!”

“You bunch helped me too, so we’re square, runt.”

“I’ll be sure to treasure this knife, Grandpa. Thank you so much for the gift!”

“You moron?! Agghh! Here’s your money! I don’t need iiiiiiit!”

“Could you stop it with your weird obsessions already?!” I suddenly shout, unable to stay silent after seeing him trying to push the money back to Emilia.

Once we’re done dealing with Grant, we explore the rest of the city, and soon enough, the day of the entrance exam arrives, and we head towards the school.

“Whoa, this place is huge...”

“This school place is gigantic, big bro! I wonder how many times our old mansion would fit inside.”

While the school isn’t visible across the walls due to it not being as huge as the main castle of Elysion, it’s still a gigantic institution, rivaling the main castle.

We’ll be spending the next few days here while the exams take place, and if we manage to pass, we’ll be able to attend every day.

“I’m glad to see you’re both excited, but let’s focus on where we need to go first...”

“Lord Sirius, there’s a crowd over there, maybe that way?” Emilia asks while pointing right at the main entrance. There’s a banner over there, which has “Entrance Exams Here” written on it. There’s also a table below it, with “Information Desk” written on it, so that’s probably where we need to go first.

The people gathered around it are mostly noble children, as I would have expected, along with a bunch of demi-humans, though they were so few in number that they could be counted with one hand.

As we head towards the information desk, I sense the presence of many pairs of eyes attached to the silver-haired wolves accompanying me. Then, a young, approachable man calls out to us from the table.

“Did you come for the entrance exams?” he asks.

“Yup, all three of us.”

“I sure hope you carry the tuition costs along with you. There’s a lot of children that come without that, and you’d probably rather avoid the embarrassment.”

“We’re fine. It should be fifteen gold coins per person, yes?”

“Indeed. Which would make it 45 gold coins in total for you three... and in exchange, I’ll be giving you these,” he says, while pulling out a pendant with what seems to be a jade stone on it, and a number carved behind it.

“This will be the proof you’re taking the exams, and the number behind it will be your personal number to identify you, so be sure to remember that. Also, it has a magical seal inscribed on it that will attack the wearer if it leaves the school grounds, so be careful of that as well.”

“Understood. Here’s the tuition fee.”

In a matter of seconds, all the money I’d ever had to my name vanishes. My tuition is being paid by the money that Mom, Dii, and Noel gave to me, so I better pass these exams and make them proud.

Once the young man is done counting the coins, he gives each of us a pendant, as well as a piece of paper containing a detailed map of the school’s interior which serves as an introduction of the facility in general.

The three of us wear our pendants and move aside so we can read the pamphlet without bothering the other people trying to apply behind us. Based on the information here, the exam will be taking place in a separate building. All of us will be given a form, which we’ll need to fill out with some basic information, like our name, where we were born, who our parents are, and our magic attribute. I assume this is to determine if we’re of noble or common origins, as well as determining if we can read and write or not. This exam follows the same rules as one in my old world would have, which is that you cannot speak to others in the middle of the tests, and leaving the paper blank results in a disqualification.

Once the written exams are over, people will be called in groups of five to a specific room, where they’ll conduct their interviews and aptitude tests with seven teachers present in the room. You need four approvals out of the seven in total if you wish to pass, and if you get through on that day, it means you’ve been accepted.

If you fail, you will be given back a portion of the tuition money you handed over, which I honestly hadn’t expected at all, especially coming from a world like this one, but it’s a welcome gesture nevertheless.

As I finish reading the pamphlet, I notice that Leus has his attention fixed on one of the corners of his, where the picture of a person is present.

“Big bro, who is this over here?”

“Lordvael? Hm, probably the headmaster of the school.”

There’s “headmaster” written under the picture, and as far as I know, he’s an elf that’s over 400 years old. Considering he’s not human, he must be someone pretty amazing to be able to pretty much run an institution such as this one in Elysion.

“That reminds me, haven’t you met an elf before, Lord Sirius?”

“I have, which makes me wonder where she might be right now...”

As far as Fia told me, she wasn’t supposed to leave the forest for ten years, and three have passed since we met, so it’s a little too early to be thinking about a second meeting. Besides, we still need to clear up that whole thing about her believing that I’m her future husband.

“Anyways, let’s head to where the exams will be taking place. My number is... 156.”

“I’m 155.”

“And I’m 154.”

Though we have these numbers, I’m not entirely sure we’ll be able to take our practical exams together. I should remain skeptical of the possibility just in case. They take everyone in groups of five, so I’ll be in a different batch than theirs for sure.

“We’ll probably do the practical exams separately, so remember what I’ve told you. Trust in your own abilities, and do everything as you usually do. Break a leg out there.”

“Yes!” the siblings shout at the same time.

Once we make sure we’re ready, we head towards the place where the exams will be taking place.

Lordvael’s POV

Another year, another round of entrance exams...

As I gaze out my window, I can see the faces of the many who will try their luck in the exams, clearly nervous about what awaits them. As far as I've been told, a total of 163 students have applied. These exams are open for the next few days, so by the end of it all I predict a little over 300 people trying their luck this year, as per usual, but the first day is always the busiest, and this year is no different.

"Headmaster, it's almost time."

"Understood, let's get going."

Now it's the time for me to meet our potential new students. We'll be given the documents that they themselves will fill with their personal information to see if falsehood lies within them, and if everything's correct, we'll test them in groups of five to gauge their abilities.

I tried performing these examinations other years, but people got too nervous in my presence, so I've decided to hide myself and pretend that I'm just another teacher, named Will. That way, the kids will show me their true potential without feeling any pressure.

"You're late, Will! How dare you make me wait, you low-born! Move it!"

"My apologies, Sir."

The one who shouted at me just now happens to be Gregory, a member of the teaching staff. I've made it just in time for the examinations, but I'd rather avoid arguing with the man, so I'll simply shut up. It's funny to see that he doesn't know I'm pretending to be this character either. Personally I find having him a bother, especially because of his attitude towards demi-humans, and his nasty habit of abusing his social position, but he is a skilled caster, and his social status made it difficult for me to not promote him to his current position. Being a headmaster is not the easiest job in the world, I'll tell you that much.

I sit in my designated position and check on the other teachers, who fortunately have no clue who I really am, either. Amongst the ones present, only Magna knows my true identity.

In order to conceal my identity, I'm wearing magical rings so that my ears

don't reveal my race, and I've also changed my hair color. I actually find it quite surprising this has managed to be enough so far, but hopefully someone notices at some point.

"...Let's begin the personal interviews. Call the first five applicants."

Interrupting my train of thought, Gregory calls in the first five applicants, who enter the room and sit at their designated tables... let's see what the youth of this year has to offer.

"My attribute is earth. I'm not very good at casting offensive spells, but I'm pretty decent at summoning earth elementals."

"I specialize in fire magic, and I bet I'm better than all of you seven raisins."

"I specialize in wind magic, but a genius such as I won't be contained for long once I enroll at this school. My name will be known across Elysion soon enough, just you wait."

"Um... I specialize in water magic. I'm not very good at casting offensive spells, and... and I'm terrible at fire magic."

We continue the interviews, with an acceptance rate of about 60%. Only 20 applicants are left for us to interview now. Half of the people we interviewed today belong to noble households, and I could tell by their arrogance alone. I was actually surprised one of them tried to bribe his way into enrollment, which is rather rare these days.

Normally, I enjoy this time of the year where I can meet the potential great magicians of the future, but this year's crop doesn't seem to be very great... In fact, I'd argue kids these days are definitely not as bright as they used to be.

Nobles thinking they're good at magic just because they can cast a few spells aren't the only problem either. Demi-humans are also determined to only deal with their race, refusing to mingle with humans or anyone else whatsoever.

The noble children have been the ones giving us the most trouble recently, though. We are very clear that while they're at this school, race and origin do not matter, but the number of discrimination cases towards demi-humans and low-born children has been on the rise. Nobles also try using their house name and reputation to try and threaten our institution for whatever reason.

“Your family is as honorable as you are, and with that, it’s a yes from me,” says Gregory beside me. Gregory has a very “special” eye for students. He makes sure to exclusively accept those of rich and powerful households, most likely to curry favors, or who knows what else. I’ve kept my eye on the man as of late, since I think he is plotting something, but apart from that, it’s all speculation, so there’s nothing else I can do on the matter.

“Haah...” I sigh.

“Is something the matter, Professor Will?”

“Oh, nothing. I was just thinking about how close we are to finishing today.”

“If you’re so tired, then leave. Also, don't think I'll forget how you've slighted me by failing every single one of the students I passed!”

Haah, back in the old days, I probably would’ve given Gregory a piece of my mind, but I’m too old and too tired for this, so I’ll let him have his own little moment. Good thing Magna is rushing the next students in so this doesn’t lead to an argument.

“Le-Let’s bring in the next set of candidates. Applicants 150 to 155, you may enter.”

It was at this moment when I’d realize that not all hope was lost with the potential new candidates.

“My name is Leus Sylvalion. I specialize in fire magic, but I’m better with a sword than casting spells.”

“My name is Emilia Sylvalion. I specialize in wind magic.”

The moment those two introduced themselves, the mood of the room shifted completely. First of all, though least important, is the fact that they’re not only siblings, but Silver Wolves, which is a race of peoples that are rarely seen around these parts. One of the things we're most impressed with, I think, is the fact that had we not seen them in person, we would’ve thought of them as nobles, given their clear knowledge of manners, and their beautiful writing skills as we can see in the documents. The most striking thing of it all is that they seem to be completely relaxed, unlike the other applicants we’ve seen so far.

It's also refreshing to note that they completely lack hubris, and I can sense that they're brimming with confidence... good, this will make things interesting.

“Hmph! You animals may appear confident, but that won’t change anything.”

“Professor Gregory, enough. Have you no shame picking on children who aren’t even half your age?”

“Hngh?! Hmph!”

We continue the interview by ascertaining the magical aptitude of the applicants. Sometimes what they say doesn’t match reality, so we verify their claims just in case.

Leus was truthful about what he said, because the magic crystal beams with an intense red color the moment we use the device on him. I’m actually surprised that he has an affinity for the blade rather than a magical one, considering how he looks. The crystal beamed quite brightly as well, so I think if he wanted to he could become quite the proficient magician, perhaps more so than a simple swordsman.

Emilia was right as well, because the light beamed quite brightly, showing her affinity for wind. In fact, I’d argue hers is the strongest we’ve seen today, compared to everyone else.

“Very well, we’ll continue to showcase of skills now. Let’s start with number 150, if you may...”

The first three applicants, though low-born, displayed abilities we’d expect of people their age and upbringing, so all three passed without many issues. Every professor gave their approval, except Gregory, as per usual.

“Let’s start with number 154 now, Leus Sylvalion. Would you show us what you can do?”

Nice, now things will get interesting. The room is connected to an outside patio, where a magical ground target is located. The exercise consists of casting a spell towards the target, and I’m anxious to see what these two are capable of.

Leus, instead of seemingly preparing himself to cast a spell, clenches his fists,

and asks, “Um, just to make sure, I *need* to hit that target over there, right?”

“Of course you do. I swear, I knew your race had subhuman intellect, but to that extent...?”

“Professor Gregory, I’d advise you to stay quiet. What do you have in mind, Leus?”

“Well, the spell I want to cast is meant to be used in close proximity, and I don’t think you’d see if I had to cast it over there.”

“Oh, I see. If you may, Professor Magna.”

Magna nods and creates a clay target closer to where Leus is located. I’m proud to see this, Magna is my disciple, one that learned earth magic well under my tutelage.

“I bet that is close enough for us to see. If you will, Leus...”

“Thank you, Sir. Okay! It’s time to ignite my fist and... ‘Flame Knuckle!’”

Along with an incantation, his fist erupts in flames. Any normal person would scream in pain, but he seems to not even notice. Everyone but Emilia seems surprised by this.

“Shatter!” he shouts while punching the dummy.

The moment his fist collides with the dummy, an explosion occurs, and the dummy appears to be completely vaporized.

I can’t believe it! The incantation was short, and despite that, the potency of this spell I’d consider on the mid-range! Amazing! I’ve never seen such a thing before! I also commend the boy for having the outlandish idea of enveloping his fist in flames! That’s what I’d call thinking outside of the box!

“Hah! Why would you purposefully cast a spell that could hurt the caster?! I can’t believe I’m witnessing such stupidity!”

“I didn’t really feel anything, though”, Leus says as he shows Gregory his palm, proving that there is no trace of burns on it. I can tell those are the hands of a warrior, but apart from that, they’re smooth and absent of burns.

“That was a wonderful display, Leus. I’d say we don’t need any further

deliberation, but what does everyone else think?" I ask while looking at the other teachers, all of them nodding in agreement.

"Well then, consider yourself accepted, Leus. Also, I'd like to ask, how did you...?"

"Tch! A boring spell from a demi-human, so what?! Next applicant! Come on!"

Damn you, Gregory. I was about to ask him how he did that, but you had to ruin the moment. Can't he understand the greatness of what we just witnessed?!

Ah well, I can ask the young lad later, since he'll enroll after this, so let's move on.

"Applicant 155, Emilia Sylvalion, step forward."

"Yes!"

Emilia moves forward without making a single sound, and as her silver hair flutters in the wind, she extends her arms, pointing towards the dummy in the distance.

Let us see what you're capable of!

"I invoke the wind to tear you to pieces... 'Air Slash!'"

Wow. That's a mid-level spell she was able to cast at such a young age, and the time she took to cast it was quite short as well. It makes me wonder what kind of training she must've done in order to reach this point.

"...Nothing happened."

Gregory is right on this one, though. What she did was summon a gust of wind at best. This is weird, because I did notice how magic was used, so why...?

"Heh! That's what happens when you try to perform a mid-level spell without enough training, you runt! Learn your-!"

"Oh no, I'm not done yet... 'Air Shot!'"

Just as I expected, she's able to cast beginner-level spells almost without a chant. Well done, Emilia. The ball of air she casts travels towards the dummy, and while we're already surprised, we notice how the moment the ball touches

the dummy, it disappears...

A normal Air Shot would've destroyed the dummy, but this one didn't. Maybe the lack of chant weakened her spell for some reason...? But wait!

"What the-?!" all of the teachers exclaim.

Just as we thought nothing happened, the dummy suddenly breaks down. Judging by the amount of pieces, I can tell that she didn't just successfully cast Air Slash earlier, she cast it three times. Just as we're all starting to elucidate what happened, she bows and tells us that she's done.

"That's all I can show you."

"...Well done. Please return to your seat. Professors...?"

The panel gives the same reaction as they had towards Leus. Gregory fails her, but everyone else accepts her abilities, and thus she's accepted into the school.

Considering she not only managed to almost not chant any of her spells, but was also able to cast it multiple times and able to preserve the air slashes' sharpness over such a distance tells me that we've got the find of the year. And to think I was losing hope mere minutes ago and thinking of retiring! Like hell I will after seeing this display of skill!

Fortunately, Gregory will have no interest in these two, so I'll make sure to have Magna keep an eye on them for me.

"It appears all five applicants have been accepted. Good. Let's jump to the next five..."

"Wait a second. I have some questions for Emilia and Leus, if they don't mind staying with us for a little longer," I plead, hoping to know more about these two before they leave.

Though a certain professor isn't very pleased with my idea, the others nod, as the siblings place their attention on me, smiling.

"The spells you both displayed were magnificent. Would you allow me to know who trained you before coming here? Or did you both teach yourselves everything you know?"

"Our master Lord Sirius taught us everything."

“Which means that you’re both his retainers?”

“Indeed we are. He saved us from slavery, and has taught us all that we know.”

“I was able to get where I am thanks to big br-I mean! Lord Sirius as well.”

Well, I’ll have to give it to this Sirius fella, he’s someone I’ll probably be able to respect, judging by the attitude of these two young’uns.

After that, they leave, but before the next five applicants arrive, I feel compelled to ask the teachers. “Does anyone know who this Sirius fellow is, by any chance?”

“No clue. I thought of someone else when Emilia cast that wind spell, but it can’t be him.”

“I find it weird that someone who taught them that level of magic hasn’t become a well-known person by now.”

“Like anyone should care about someone who has subhumans under his wing. Let’s move on already.”

Maybe this Sirius fellow is someone who purposefully lives in hiding to avoid undue attention. That’s the only thing that makes sense to me

“Hm?! Professor Will, please look at the next contestant’s name!”

“His name? Um, let me see... wait, it can’t be!”

The moment I realize what Magna is highlighting, my eyes widen, unable to process the information in front of me. It can’t be! He’s... he’s only ten years of age! There’s no way a child could teach magic of that level! But... but he has the same name, so it wouldn’t be far-fetched to imagine the possibility. Regardless, we’ll know soon enough. I sure hope he’s the man those two were talking about, because if he’s the one who taught those two magic, then I’m certain things will only get even more interesting.

If so, I’d definitely like to ask the man how in the world he trained those two, and if so, what kind of skill does he possess? Oh man, I feel like a child once more just thinking about it.

“I’m applicant number 156, Sirius Teacher.”

Once he is done, I give a long and hard look at the kid, who is sitting on his chair with proper manners: at first glance he looks like just another black-haired boy out there... but I can tell that his look is different from one a boy his age would normally have. He's looking around the room, but quickly enough he places his attention on me, and when he does, he starts looking confused.

Now I feel like I'm the one who's being assessed instead.

This child seems ready to go at any moment as well. If I tried to attack him by surprise, I have the impression that he'd be ready to counterattack without delay. Just as I thought, he's not your usual child, he's different.

"I'm applicant Astro El-Melloi, from the renowned El-Melloi family!" shouts one of the applicants, snapping me back to the real world.

I don't think he should've felt the need to shout his name. I've known Astro since he was a child. The El-Mellois are one of the most powerful families in Elysion, and I've had the displeasure of sharing the same space as them during many events for years now.

He's a skilled lad, but I fear that his social standing and the lack of parental education might've turned him a tad arrogant. The other three applicants are Astro's retainers, and they made sure to follow their master's example by shouting their names to the four winds.

"We'll be assessing your magical affinity now. Starting with Sirius, if you may..."

In the documents, Sirius claims that he's colorless and has no affinity in particular. He is in for a world of pain in this school if that's the case and he manages to pass.

Which makes me wonder, why is he here in the first place if that's the case? If Sirius is the man I think he is, he must be more than well aware of what he's doing... or maybe he tested himself on a broken magical device.

I feel like the rest of the professors agree with me on this one, because all know by now what he wrote, but haven't said anything so far. Whatever the case, he extends his hand towards the device, and...

"Don't touch that, low-born! As if we'd allow a commoner such as yourself to

touch it before Lord Astro!” shouts one of his retainers, as he pushes the kid away from the device, to which I feel compelled to intervene.

“What in the world are you doing?”

“You must agree that having his filthy hands touch the device before Lord Astro does would be an affront towards him.”

“Social status has no value within the walls of this institution.”

“Ah well, not like it matters much, does it? Astro, I will allow you to touch it first. Your heritage grants you this privilege.”

...Sometimes I feel like I need to remind Gregory of the rules that this institution is meant to uphold.

“I don’t really mind, so by all means,” says Sirius.

“Heh! That’s how it should be.”

Now I wonder who’s the actual child in the room. Anyways, when Astro touches the crystal, a red and green light emanates from it.

“Hahaha! Gaze upon greatness, commoner! I am a chosen one, as you can see!”

“Amazing, Lord Astro! Simply incredible!” his three retainers shout at the same time.

“So this is one of those rare cases of a double-affinity, huh?”

Sirius is right. Being compatible with two attributes at the same time is quite rare in itself. Though he is genuinely surprised about this, we the professors are not. We already knew about his double-affinity a long time ago. His father made sure to tell every living being in Elysion about his Son’s rare gift long ago, so we’re tired of it at this point.

Leaving Sirius for last, the other retainers then take turns to test the crystal, making me realize that they’re used to doing whatever they want without any restraint. Ah well, they’ll pass since they have the skill, so personally I’m not very interested in seeing what they have to offer.

“Well then, Sirius, sorry for the wait,” I say as I offer him to touch the crystal.

He does, and the light... is white. Just like his document said, he's colorless.

"Hah...! Hahaha! To think that you'd be talentless!"

"Indeed. He really thought he could enter this school lacking what's needed."

"I feel insulted just sitting beside him!"

Just as I thought. The professors stay silent, but Gregory seems to have a couple of words for him, because he suddenly stands up and points towards him, red as a tomato.

"We don't need talentless whelps in our institution! We won't even need to test your magical skills! Off with you!"

"You heard the professor, leave!"

"You talentless imbecile!"

"Enough," I say, now angrier than ever before.

The kids stay in their seats, now shaking a little, and Gregory shuts up, though his smile persists. I probably went a little too far there, but the amount of criticism the kid was getting for no reason at all was unjustified.

I check on Sirius, but he seems to remain calm in his seat, not saying a single word, while bowing his head down a little bit. It's good that he's not a normal child, as things might've been different otherwise.

"Astro, may I remind you that this isn't your estate, where you can do and say as you please? I feel like the attitude you displayed just now is nothing short of shameful, and says little about your upbringing. If you have time to laugh at others, you may as well have found the time to improve yourself before coming here, or so I hope."

Heh, I can see Astro and Gregory aren't giving me the friendliest of looks, but by all means, Gregory, do fire me, or try to expel me from the room, and see what happens then.

"Whatever the case, we're more than aware of what you four are capable of, so you pass. We'll remain and check Sirius' capabilities by ourselves, so everyone else is dismissed."

“Hmph! Good! I wouldn’t want to remain in the same room as him anyway! We’re leaving!”

“Ye-Yes, Sir!”

Astro and his retainers leave the room, and once they do, Gregory stands up as well.

“Checking the capabilities of a colorless is meaningless, so if you’ll excuse me, I’ll take my leave. I have high hopes that the obvious decision will be made regarding this one,” he says while leaving the room, hoping to catch up with Astro, most likely to sway him towards his side. Astro is not only a nobleman of high pedigree, but also a double-attribute user, something Gregory would drool over.

Whatever the case, I’m glad he’s gone, that way we’ll have one less headache to deal with while we’re testing Sirius. The rest of the teachers are here as well, so I assume their train of thought is similar to mine. It’ll be easier for us to accept Sirius into our institution this way, whatever the case. If he has the skills, that is.

“I apologize you had to see this scene unfold, Sirius.”

“It’s fine, I had expected that reaction, more or less. It’s good to see most of the teachers have chosen to remain as well,” he says with a smile, as if he didn’t care at all about what happened.

Looking at the other teachers, they’re still intimidated by the tone I used before with Astro and Gregory, so I might as well continue the interview on my own.

“Well, whatever the case, let us continue. Could you show us what you’re capable of, Sirius?”

“Understood.”

The light on the magical device was stronger than Emilia’s, and I realized this now, because I was too focused on its coloring, but if that’s the case, then maybe that lack of color means something else...

Sirius slowly extends his arms, and...

“I’ll do a basic spell... Shine on... ‘Light.’”



That was fast! And when in the world did he concentrate his magical power to be able to do that? He did it as easily as one could breathe, and... and yet, he's been able to cast a white ball of light in his hands. I'm surprised he's been able to cast such a spell without the proper preparation either.

"Go..." he whispers, as the ball of light separates itself from his hand and slowly approaches us, splitting in six smaller balls of light on the way, each one stopping before us.

As I attempt to touch one of them with my hand, I confirm that this is indeed a "Light" spell anyone could use.

What I find surprising is his ability to concentrate so much, to the point of being able to do what he's doing right now.

"That's all," he finishes while clapping his hands, making the balls of light disappear.

While other people would've lost all hope of enrolling the school after knowing their attribute, Sirius seems to not only not care about that very fact, but also overcome this hurdle and managed to even completely master colorless magic.

I need to see more! This is a bad habit of mine, but...!

"I need another demonstration. Could you show us something else, please?"

"Wouldn't what he did be more than enough, Professor Will?"

"...Very well. Destroy... 'Impact.'d"

Though the spell he just chanted was beginner-level, the lack of chant and the fact that he completely pulverized the dummy makes it almost intermediate in its strength. A normal "Impact" spell would at most sway the dummy a little, but to think he completely pulverized it...

"That'll be all," he says while returning to his seat.

While he's colorless and all of us know it, we also know what our decision is on the matter. In fact, if someone objects to having him join, I'll reveal who I am.

“What does everyone think of him? I say we should pass him.”

“If you say so, Professor Will...”

“Ri-Right. I don’t think a novice could cast that spell we just saw...”

Though some are clearly unsure, they agreed with me, so Sirius passes. The moment he realizes this, he bows his head towards us, finishing the interview. But before he leaves, I feel the need to ask...

“Apologies, Sirius, but before you leave, could I ask you a personal question?”

“...Go ahead.”

“Earlier, a pair of siblings named Leus and Emilia were tested. Were you the one who taught them about magic?”

“I am. Though they owe their results to their own efforts, not to me. I simply taught them the basics.”

“The basics, I see...”

I do not believe for a single second that he’s being truthful here, but we’ll have plenty of time to speak while he’s with us, so I don’t mind him hiding the truth from me at the moment.

“One last question, Sirius. Who taught you magic?”

“I was taught the basics from a woman I know, but the rest was learned through self-study. I have a penchant for that, and here I am.”

Huh, just like me. I’m mostly self-taught as well. The other teachers seem to be impressed as well.

“Thank you, Sirius. I’ll see you at the entrance ceremony, then.”

“I’ll take my leave.”

What a pleasant day, this was. There’s a lot of mysteries surrounding him, but I can tell Sirius is an interesting lad, that’s for sure. I’m certain the coming years will be interesting, to say the least.

Sirius POV

Phew... people flipped their lid once they saw that I'm colorless, but fortunately I managed to pass despite that. I'm actually glad I was alone there, though. Had any of the siblings been present, blood would've been spilled, and I don't think that would've ended up well.

I was thinking of using "Magnum" at first, but that spell would've been too powerful to showcase, so in the end I showed "Light" and "Impact" with some twists. Both managed to catch the attention of one of the teachers, which was my saving grace. I think the name of that man was Will, but I do wonder who the hell he might be.

He seemed like a young man at first, but the presence he radiated was definitely of someone older, and he carried a dignified presence about him, making me realize that there's something more about him than meets the eye. I also felt like I had seen him before somewhere else the moment I met him, but maybe I'm just imagining things...

"Lord Sirius!"

"Big bro!"

The siblings shout while rushing towards me. Both seem nervous at first, but my smile quickly tells them everything they need to know, making them smile as well, all while happily wagging their tails. They told me that they passed when we met while I was going to my own interview, so it seems we all managed to pass without issues.

"Of course you passed, Lord Sirius."

"Nice! Now we'll be together, big bro!"

Neither of them realize that we're getting some nasty looks from people, but it's not like it matters so much, so while I make sure to pet them for a job well done, I remove my pendant.

"Well then, let's give the pendant back and return to our room. I think we'll have to come back in roughly three days, if I remember correctly?"

"Yes. The pamphlet says that in three days' time we'll be allocated rooms in

the students' dorm."

"Oh, so there's a dorm... right, I remember Zack mentioning that the rooms are meant for two people..."

I wonder how Zack got ahold of that information, but he probably has his sources. Whatever the case, we return our pendants and return to our room at the inn.

"You guys passed! That's great! I'll treat you to tonight's dinner to celebrate, how about that?" says the owner once we tell her about what happened, making us feel the warmth close to mother's.

The days until we were allocated our rooms at the school we mostly spent touring the rest of the city. Considering we'd be staying there for the next five years, we'd obviously need to know every nook and cranny of it, just in case. I managed to find new spices and ingredients to cook new dishes, while Emilia got herself a part-time job at the inn during the process to get some pocket money. She did so well she formally got invited to work full time there, surprisingly enough. So yeah, a lot of stuff happened in between.

Eventually we had to say our goodbyes, though, so the day we'd be given our dorm rooms, we bade farewell to the owner, bowing towards her.

"Though it was for a short time, we thank you for hosting us here."

"I should be the one thanking you guys. So, Emilia, wouldn't you like to work over here once you graduate?"

"My apologies, ma'am, but my place is beside Lord Sirius."

"That's a shame... but ah well, you'll be living in Elysion either way, since you'll be living at the school dorms now, so be sure to come around to grab a bite every now and then."

"I'll be sure to come again for some of that roasted Jaola you guys cook here."

Once we make sure to bid our farewells, we leave the inn and head towards the school dorms. As far as I know the rooms are meant to be for two people, so I pray to whatever's up there for my roommate to not be a complete ass.

We arrived at the school once more, where there were several people

waiting, but far fewer than when we went to apply on the day of the entrance exams. Considering the exams take place over the course of many days, I assume that everyone here are people who passed.

“Looks like the people over here will become our classmates... look, those adults over there are wearing beautiful clothes, I wonder if they’re students as well,” says Emilia.

“Those seem to be the parents of some of the noble students enrolling this year. It’d be best to stay away from them and avoid trouble.”

A quick head count reveals to me that there’s around two hundred new students. Many of them have guards around, and the majority seem to be from noble households.

“So, let’s see who we got assigned to...”

“Lord Sirius, there seemed to be a bunch of pamphlets lying around over there with that info, so I brought one to check it out together.”

I pet Emilia for thinking ahead of time and accept the pamphlet she offers to me. I gave it a glance, and part of it mentions the room allocation... hum, I’m seeing a lot of low-born people checking a bigger pamphlet in front of the gate, which makes me think that this paper probably isn’t meant for us to use...

“Emilia, are you sure this isn’t meant for the nobles?”

“It looks like it, but I simply went to the counter over there, bowed, and was given the paper without saying anything at all.”

Maybe they mistook her for someone else? Ah well, like it matters. I’ll check who we got paired with, first and foremost.

“I sure hope I got my room with you, big bro.”

“I... there I am,” says Emilia.

The dorms are separated between men and women, and each building was named after a magical attribute.

Normally, that’d make anyone think that they allocate people based on their attribute, but that doesn’t seem to be the case. However, Leus has been assigned room 38 in the fire dorms, while Emilia has been assigned room 25 in

the water dorms. Meanwhile, I, uhh...

“Wait... I don’t see you anywhere, big bro!”

We all check the pamphlet again, but my name is nowhere to be seen.

“There seems to be a couple of empty rooms, so maybe they made a mistake and didn’t add me?”

“It’s okay, big bro. I’ll kick out whoever got paired with me so we can be together.”

“I know that was a joke, but it was in poor taste, Leus. Let’s just ask,” I say as I head towards the main desk, which is held by a man who isn’t a professor, but clearly works for the school. He looks tired, probably from dealing with nobles day in and day out. I asked Emilia just in case, but he’s not the same guy that gave her the pamphlet.

“Excuse me, but I had a question related to the rooms assigned to new students.”

“Yes?! ...Oh wait, you ain’t a noble... so? What do you want to know?”

“I don’t see my name anywhere here. Could this be a mistake?”

“Are you sure you double-checked? Ah well, whatever... what was your number, again?”

“One hundred and fifty six.”

Once I mention the number, the man pulls out a sheet of paper from under the table and gives it a long, hard look. It seems to contain a list of people, different from the pamphlet I’m holding. His gaze starts turning down, and at some point it stops somewhere, making him sigh.

“You’re that kid named Sirius, yeah?”

“I am. Sirius Teacher’s my name.”

“Then your room ain’t in the dorms. Follow me, please.”

The man tells another person beside him to cover the place for a while and starts walking inside the school, to which we follow, more confused than anything else.

We go past the dorm buildings and start climbing what feels like a mountainous road. It is clear that not many people have walked along this path for a while, because it is thick with foliage. Eventually we arrived at my supposed lodging. A plot of land is revealed within the forest area, in its center a wooden building, similar to the mansion in which we used to live.

“This is where you’ll be living.”

“Wait... that’s the place?” asks Emilia in disbelief.

“You’re telling me that thing is big bro’s place now?!” follows Leus, in an angrier tone.

The house in question has vines creeping all over it, the planks of wood are half-corroded... at the very least the roof seems to be in acceptable condition. With some luck, I won’t be having a free shower on rainy days.

The area around the house has a small plot of land to cultivate things, and a well, though they are barely visible and I can’t tell them apart very well.

Whatever the case, I think this used to be some sort of building that was used for school bureaucratic purposes at some point, but it’s nothing short of a ruin now.

“This is anything but a livable dorm!” Leus shouts.

“It ain’t my fault that this is his place. That’s what this paper says, see?” he says while showing the document to us.

The paper explicitly states that “Talentless hacks can’t stain the good name of our official dorms, so I decree that the place he’ll be staying at will be the old management building, which should be nothing short of an honor to him.” The signature after it says “Gregory,” and it has a seal of approval, possibly belonging to his noble family.

“This...! This is nothing short of abuse of power!”

“Look, dude, a nobleman ordered this, so give up. He should be lucky that he got accepted into the school while being colorless, so this isn’t as bad of a deal as you’d think.”

Instead of saying anything, both siblings give him a death stare.

“Eek!”

But before they lunge towards him, I grab them by the nape of their necks, so we avoid bloodshed. The man was this close to running away, but I managed to stop him in his tracks before he had the chance.

“Look, it’s fine. I just have a question, can these quarters be cleaned and made liveable, at the very least?”

“Lo-Look, I have no clue about that! I’m just supposed to show you the place, okay?!”

“Then make sure to check on that immediately. In fact, please ask Professor Will, if you may.”

“Go-Got it!” he shouts right before dashing away, fearing that I’d let the dogs loose on him if he didn’t comply.

“Why did you stop us, big bro?! He was literally insulting you!”

“He’s just a lackey being ordered around. Giving him a thrashing won’t make any difference.”

“That doesn’t excuse the fact that this is deplorable treatment, at best.”

“I’m glad you two got angry in my stead either way. There, there, thank you.”

Once I’m done calming them down, I decide to head into the building, to see what I’ll be dealing with from now on. The door seems to be in fine condition, so I push it and go inside, and... I see nothing short of what I was expecting. This place is caked with dust. I bet building a tent outside of this place would make it a better place to live than this one.

“So there’s five bedrooms in total here... not bad, quite spacious.”

“It’s just like the place we used to live at, though this one doesn’t have a second floor.”

Leaving aside the big room, which I assume is the dining and kitchen area, as well as my own bedroom, there’s four other rooms in here.

“Are you really going to live here, big bro?”

“I do. It may not look very nice right now, but the building itself seems to be

mostly fine, so with a couple of days of cleaning and some minor repairs done here and there, this place will be quite decent.”

Besides, this is perfect. I won't have to share this with anyone else in the school, so I'll be able to make myself at home without any issues. I used to employ my knowledge of my old world to test with magic and many other cooking and investigative experiments, some of them being dangerous. I was able to do them back then because we lived in the wilderness and everyone living with me was okay with it, but I was worried about not being able to do that once I had to share space with other people who might not be as accepting of what I do. I also considered that I might end up in a highly populated place where I wouldn't be able to consider more dangerous experiments, which won't be the case here. This is probably the best outcome for me, in fact.

I explain what I have in mind to the siblings, and that makes them feel more at ease, and restores their good mood.

“You know how it is, don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Anyways, let's get to cleaning the place, first and foremost.”

“There's so much dust in here that I feel like we'd need an eternity to get rid of it...”

“Let's just do a general sweep first and foremost, and then we can worry about the details. I'm counting on you here, Emilia.”

“Leave it to me!”

We made sure to open every door and window of the place as we were touring it, so now Emilia can cast the spell “wind” without any issues. Normally this would summon a light gust of wind, but its intensity can be adjusted to whatever the caster desires, and right now, we want a pretty strong gust, if possible.

The building for the most part only contains furniture, so we don't have to worry about small things being swept away by the gust. Anyways, the gust comes into the house, sweeps the majority of the dust inside, and leaves through the windows and doors as quickly as it came in, leaving it in a better state than before.

“Emilia and I will take care of cleaning inside. Leus, you take care of the weeds outside. Make sure the garden looks pretty though, I don’t want to have a burnt mess of a home if possible.”

“Got it! Now I feel like cleaning this place will have some kind of good results after all!”

“I’ll take care of most stuff that sticks out, big bro!”

“If any of you find anything weird or worthy of note, let me know before doing anything, okay?”

Emilia was taught how to clean by mother, while Leus was taught how to care for the garden back then by Dii, so I’m trying to maximize their strengths as best as I can right now. The main issue is that even though we got rid of most of the dust, there’s still a lot inside, and the vines are covering the entire house, so Emilia and I start doing our thing, all while using cloths as masks to avoid breathing in any of the dust.

While I take care of the rooms, I’ve given Emilia the task of taking care of cleaning the kitchen. We’ll gather all usable things in one of the rooms, and whatever we deem unusable, we’ll simply toss outside and deal with it later. I use Boost to lift and move rotten furniture outside, and as I bring a table with a rotten leg out, I spot Leus cutting weeds with a sword.

“Take thiiiiiiis!” he shouts as he continues working—the area surrounding the house is actually surprisingly visible now, showing how fast he’s working. Then again, he’s using a sword, so that will definitely help him out quite a bit.

“Keep it up, Leus.”

“Aye aye! This is like training for me, so I’ll gladly do that!”

I return inside the house ready to continue working, but I hear the church bell from town signaling that it’s afternoon, and I decide to take a break instead. Fortunately, Emilia has made the kitchen usable by now, so she decides to cook our meal for us there, and we have it outside.

“Apologies, Lord Sirius. I would’ve liked to make something better, but...”

“You used what I gave you. No need to blame yourself.”

Dii was the one who mostly cooked back when we were at our old home, so I bet Emilia was raring to show me her skills, but I gave her some extra preserved food I had lying around, so she couldn't. I know we're close to town and we could grab a bite elsewhere, but we have so much of this food that I'd rather start getting rid of it.

"I think the twist you added to the dish was quite nice, though. Definitely do this again whenever the house is livable and we can relax inside."

"For sure! I'll show you everything that I've got!"

Just as I'm petting her, Leus, who is almost done with his food, turns his attention towards the path that leads to school, the one we came from.

"Someone's coming," he says.

"Hm, it seems to be one person... I don't sense any malice about whoever it is..."

I can sense their presence with "Search," and as I do, I immediately recognize it. I know this person.

Slowly but surely, the familiar presence reveals itself...

"Hello there. It smells really nice over there."

"Oh? Aren't you one of the teachers from the interviews?"

"I am. You may call me Professor Will."

There he is. Will is the one that caught my interest back then. His presence is as powerful as it was back then, but his smile is genuine, so for the time being, I bow as a way to greet him.

"Are you here because of the building, Sir?"

"Right! Hear me out, look at what they gave to-!"

"That's why I am here, yes. I should firstly apologize for... well, how things have unfolded for you so far," Will says, cutting Leus off.

Normally this is when Leus would say something, but he's so dumbfounded by being cut off that he's staying silent.

"I asked the young man in charge of the entrance gate, and it appears that

Gregory made this decision on his own.”

“Which means that none of the other Professors had a hand in what happened?”

“”Mhm. I know it won’t sound as anything but an excuse, but he made this decision without letting any of us know. But it’ll be fine, I’ll make sure to find you a place within the dorms, and...”

“Oh no, I’m perfectly fine with what I’ve been given.”

Will is taken aback by what I say, but quickly enough looks at me with a serious gaze.

“It’s quite far from the school grounds, though, and I’m not sure if it’s in a livable state either...”

“I’m fine with the location, and I’m pretty sure that once we clean the place and make some minor repairs it’ll make a lovely home. Besides, I’m fine with this arrangement. Living by myself will... definitely help, let’s say that.”

“Fixing and cleaning this space would require a massive effort-” he says, but before he finishes the sentence, he looks around and checks the outer state of the terrain, once again opening his eyes wide, impressed with the state of affairs. Leaving aside the building, most of the weeds around the area are now gone.

“You have been here only this morning, have you not? You’re telling me you three have been able to progress this much already?”

“There’s still a few days before the entrance ceremony happens, so we’ll have made this place livable by then. Anyways, I called you out here because I’d like to ask a favor of you.”

“As long as it's in my power to help you, I’ll hear you out.”

“Thank you, Sir. I mainly wanted some sort of permit that would allow me to actually clean and reform this place, if possible.”

I mainly ask this because this is, in the end, property of the school, so obviously I’ll need a permit or something similar if I intend to “modify” this property in any way, shape, or form. The main reason I’m requesting permission

is related to cutting some trees around the area to fix the house, which Professor Will quickly understands.

“Understood, I’ll be sure to relay this to the headmaster. I’m sure he’ll give the approval, so go ahead and do what needs to be done for the time being.”

“Are you sure? Thank you. I appreciate that we could resolve this matter quickly.”

“Well, none of this is your fault either way, so I’ll make sure you can live here as best as you can.”

The three of us bow towards him, thankful for his words of reassurance.

“I thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping Lord Sirius!”

“Thanks!”

“Will you need any other tools or materials, by the way?” he asks.

I graciously accept his implied offer, and ask for basic tools and utilities like a hammer, nails, things like that.

Once everything is said and done, Professor Will turns around and starts leaving, but before he does, Leus calls out to him, “Um, professor, why would Gregory... Professor Gregory treat big bro this way?”

“...Though I probably should keep these school matters to myself, I suppose you guys deserve an explanation, at the very least. Gregory belongs to a noble household, and his concept of social class is deeply rooted within his psyche. In his mind, he believes that commoners are nothing but subhumans.”

Not only does he not like my social class, but he holds colorless people in even lower esteem, which means I possess more than one reason for him to despise me. He also mentioned the siblings to be careful around him, since Gregory doesn’t seem to be fond of demi-humans either.

“Gregory’s house is a powerful one within the walls of Elysion, so whatever happens, be sure to tell me before taking any action, okay?”

I know Professor Will could tell us more if we asked, but the less we involve ourselves with this whole mess, the better.

“Understood, we’ll mind ourselves around Professor Gregory from now on.”

“Apply that to other nobles if possible. Also, I forgot to mention this, but how about you name this building whatever you want, Sirius?”

“Didn’t the building have a name before?”

“This building used to be a mere resting place for people who performed magical experiments elsewhere, so it never had a formal name attached to it. You’re pretty much breathing life into the building once more, so I’m convinced you’d have the right to name it whatever you wish.”

“Well, living in a nameless building would be good, now would it? Then... how about the Diamond Manor?”

“I assume there’s a reason behind naming it this way?”

“I’ve heard that diamonds are transparent and valuable minerals, and I think I’d like to follow that example of transparency and value in everything I’ll do.”

“...That doesn’t sound half bad. Very well, I’ll make sure your new home is named as such.”

He then turns around, this time ready to leave, but before he does, he turns around once more, “I personally believe you’ll be worth more than any of those diamonds you mentioned, Sirius, but you’ll see in time. Farewell,” he says with a smile, and then departs for good.

It appears he’s taken a liking to us, plus, he can take blame if needed, even if it’s for a bunch of children like ourselves. I also appreciate that he doesn’t seem to be part of the nobility, but a normal person instead. I don’t think he’s trying to get anything out of having me stay here, either. The thing that caught my attention the most was how he was holding back his smile. I could tell he was having fun seeing all of this unfold.

I could sense he had the same presence as Fia when I met her as well. He has to be an elf, although I’m not sure how exactly I would prove that just yet. Whatever the case, he’s hiding what he’s really capable of, otherwise he wouldn’t have been able to intimidate everyone in the interview room the other day.

“Is he the headmaster Lordvael?”

“...Yeah! I bet once he asks the headmaster everything will be fine, big bro!”

“I’m so glad to see there’s someone who understands your plight, Lord Sirius!”

Hm, I’m surprised they haven’t been able to tell, but Lordvael must have a reason to change forms like he did, so for the time being I’ll keep quiet about this whole thing.

The siblings return to their job, now humming a song while they’re on it. They are in a very good mood, most likely thanks to “Will’s” visit.

We’ve mostly cleaned the inside of the house, but we haven’t gathered every usable thing within just yet, and there’s a bedframe, but no “bed” to speak of.

“...This is somewhat embarrassing, but I’ll return to the Springbreeze Barstool for the day and sleep there.”

I’ll have to buy a lot of things in town to stock up properly, and maybe I can buy an actual bed from the inn if I offer good money in exchange. As for the holes in the walls... we can take care of those tomorrow. We’ll leave the roof for last, I suppose.

We cut some trees from the forest surrounding the area, and Leus made sure to cut the unwanted branches and foliage from them. The wood is too wet for us to be able to make any use of it, though, so tomorrow I’ll cast a magical circle so we can heat the wood and dehydrate it as much as we can.

We’re now walking towards the town, and Leus, who is a few steps ahead of Emilia and I, turns around with a smile on his face, “I know we’ve still got a lot of work to do with that house, but I’m finding this whole thing quite fun!”

“Hehe, indeed. It’s like we’re building our own house, in a way.”

I am assuming that by the way they’re speaking, they’ll want to live alongside me. Normally, I’d think of this as normal and have no qualms with it, since they’re supposed to be my retainers, but... I don’t think that would be the best outcome.

“Emilia, Leus, once you two are done eating dinner with me, I expect you both

to return to the dorms, to your own rooms.”

“What?!” they both shout, surprised.

They need to meet new people, make friends, see what the outside world is really all about. We’re not in the middle of the countryside anymore, and they need to get used to being around people, socializing, that kind of stuff.

Things would be different if we didn’t decide to go to this school, or didn’t have enough money to pay for our stay within its walls, but as long as we’re here, I think they’ll be way safer than venturing to the city and having nasty encounters with unsavory people.

“You two have a place to stay now, and I expect you to use it.”

“I-I understand that, Lord Sirius, but our place is beside you, you know this.”

“Tell him! Our place is with you, big bro! Come on!”

I don’t like playing the bad cop, but I feel that unless I force their hand here, they’ll get away with what they want, and I can’t have that.

“Listen to me, and listen to me well. You’ve been given a room within the school grounds, and you must use it as your living space from now on.”

“But... but you won’t be there, big bro!”

“I’ll still be nearby. It’ll be just like when I went to train and sleep at Liole’s house.”

“I... I’d rather take care of you, Lord Sirius.”

“And I’m glad you feel that way, Emilia. But I want you to understand that there’s more people out there besides me that you need to meet. You’ll each have a roommate in your respective rooms, and I’d appreciate you guys making some friends over there.”

“...What if we get paired with a bad person?”

“Then by all means, throw them out the window, or do whatever you want. I know you’re both capable of telling if a person is good or bad at this point, and you’re both stronger than most people out there if push comes to shove.”

Both don’t seem very thrilled with what I’m saying at first, but Emilia slowly

nods, her eyes somewhat moist, most likely wanting to lead the way for Leus.

“You won’t leave and disappear on us, will you?”



“If I ever leave for somewhere far away, I’ll be sure to tell you both in advance.”

“And as long as it doesn’t bother you, we can stay at your side, besides where we sleep?”

“Of course. Besides, we’ll need to train quite a bit together, so we’ll have to stay close to each other either way.”

“...Understood, then we’ll live in the dorms as per your request.”

“Sis...?”

“Forcing our own unreasonable needs to Lord Sirius would only bother him. Besides, Lord Sirius feels like we need to have this experience, so we might as well go along with it.”

Leus nods, “Okay, Sis. I’ll do my best, too!”

“I’m sure you both will!”

All I can do is pet them as a way to thank them both. They’re always thinking about me, and that’s something I can only appreciate.

I know living alone is going to be hard for me as well, since, unfortunately, I won’t have these two around as much as I’m used to now, but I’m convinced this will make them better people in the long term.

Chapter Three

New Friends

A few days later...

All of the new students gather in the school's auditorium, where Lordvael, the headmaster, gives us a rousing speech as he uses the spell Echo to ensure that the entire audience can hear him.

"What you learn here might not be the same as the person next to you, but what matters most is how you apply this knowledge in the future," he says.

Though he may look young, apparently he's 400 years old. Lordvael has the title of "Master Magician," and is considered the strongest spellcaster on the entire continent. He has three affinities, and his spells can not only summon earthquakes, but also cast terrible floods and storms if he so wished. He's also mastered spells from the only affinity he doesn't have, which is fire. All in all, he is a respected figure in the magical world, and that respect is evident by looking at the expressions on the faces of those in the crowd.

He continues, "Remember that even though magic has countless uses, killing or hurting others is considered one of them, and I sincerely hope no one here aims to use it for those purposes."

Looking at him now would make anyone immediately discard the possibility of him disguising himself as Professor Will, especially because it's hard to try and explain why Will has no elven ears, but I know that's his alias. Whatever the case, I'm positive that he does so for his own amusement, possibly to check on the students without causing a scene, so I'll leave that be.

"Mwaaah..." yawns Emilia.

"Did you stay up late last night?" I ask.

"Ah!? We-Well, actually... yes. I started talking with my new roommate, one thing led to the other, and we stayed up until quite late without realizing it..." she answers with a blush.

Good to know she's getting along with her new roommate. As far as I know, she arrived in the room yesterday, and that's when they met each other. She's a human, and she doesn't seem to feel any animosity towards demi-humans like Emilia, so that's a good first step.

"Her name is Lise, and she's a beautiful girl with blue hair."

"Great to hear that you've already made a friend."

"I'm happy to have a new friend as well!" she says with a smile.

I glance over towards Leus, and notice that he's asleep, but before I can wake him up, a fox boy beside him taps him on the shoulder.

"Big bro, uhh... wake up, don't fall asleep now..."

"Huh? Oh, my bad, hehe."

The fox boy is named Lou, and he's from the "Fox Clan." Apparently Leus tried to start a fight with him the moment they met, but Lou punched him in the gut, taking Leus by surprise. He was so impressed that he asked Lou to be his little brother, and that's that. You should've seen my face when Leus introduced the young man to me...

"Hey there. I'm Lou, by the way. I'm Leus' little bro, and it appears you'll be my big bro as well from now on."

"Hey! I'm the only one who can call him that! However, you technically are his little brother so... just call him chief and we'll be good!"

"So-Sorry! Nice to meet you, chief!"

Leaving aside my surprise after finding out that our little family had grown, I found out that Lou actually knows how to read situations quite well. Unless explicitly needed, he keeps his distance from us, and I think that's something respectable.

The renovations over at the Diamond Manor are almost finished, by the way. We used the leftover wood to create all manner of furniture, and I bought everything needed for me to make the manor a very cozy place. I'm still debating over what to do with the empty rooms, but that's an issue for another day.

"I've said all that I need to say. On that note, I'll explain the curriculum for those of you who are starting this journey..."

Summing up Lordvael's speech, basically out of the five years it takes to graduate from here, two are spent studying general education, and starting from the third, everyone chooses a focus. Leus will choose the swordsmanship-related magical fields, while Emilia will most likely steer towards wind magic. I, on the other hand, think that magical tool creation and enchantments are something I'd want to focus on.

"We'll now proceed to have each teacher introduce themselves. We'll commence with Professor Magna, who specializes in earth magic."

Most of the introductions happen without many incidents, but when the turn of a certain Professor wearing a red and yellow-striped cloak arrives, the mood in the room takes a marked shift.

"My name is Gregory, and I'm a proud double-attribute user. Earth and fire magic are the ones I mastered. I belong to a proud family with a storied lineage. Here and now, I invite every noble and human worth a damn here to follow my teachings, so we can stand above low-born and demi-humans alike! In my family's name, I swear I'll make you stronger than any other third-rate caster out there!"

Though most of the people in the room are shaken by his words, a few nobles and other humans applaud. Lordvael is shaking his head, and the other Professors seem tired as well, so I'll assume Gregory is a character they have to handle on a daily basis. They have my sympathies.

"...I'll never forget that man for being mean to you, big bro."

"He's a high-ranking noble, so I'd stay where you are and keep whatever anger you have to yourself for the time being."

As I try to calm Leus, I place my attention on Gregory. He looks confident, and believes every word he says, which makes me worry about... well, everything about him.

"The entrance ceremony is thus concluded. Check the board outside where the classes are listed, and head to your assigned classes."

We then leave the auditorium and focus our attention on the schedule posted outside, as Lordvael had said.

There's still time before our first class starts. Some people quickly look at the schedule and head to where they need to be, while others stay chatting with friends, and some even ask nearby Professors questions they might have.

I'm looking around the place while Leus and Emilia check where they've been assigned.

"I hope I'm in the same class as Lord Sirius..." she mutters to herself as she stands beside me.

The clothing we're all wearing right now is the school uniform, meant to be worn at all times, except whenever we're doing special activities or events where we're explicitly told of the exception. It doesn't look like anything special, but the clothing is actually made of something they call "Magic Threads." These magic threads protect their wearer from spells up to the intermediate level, and they can also stop knives and blades from piercing them. It's allowed to be worn around the school premises and within Elyson, but not outside. In fact, you'll be considered a criminal if you leave the city wearing one of these uniforms.

"...Is anything wrong, Lord Sirius? Something troubling you?"

"Oh no, I was just... thinking about how good the uniform looks on you, Emilia. Your normal clothes are also good, but you're cute like this."

"Really?! I'm so glad to hear that!" she says while making a turn, her hair fluttering and her smile radiantly beaming.

Emilia is a good-looking girl, despite her young age. She definitely seems way older than what she really is, and many other male students are glancing her way whenever they pass along, her silver hair attracting a great deal of attention.

"Right, I almost forgot to ask. I was wondering if I could meet your roommate Lise, if she's around, that is."

"Um, apparently she was summoned by her family for some reason, so she hasn't been able to come to school today."

"It must be something important to make her skip the entrance ceremony."

"I mentioned that as well, but apparently she already got permission from the school, so I think she's fine."

A shame, I was looking forward to meeting her, but I suppose it can wait for another day. Also, I'll ask just in case...

"So Lise is a nobl—?"

"Oh, there you are," a familiar voice says behind us.

It's Professor Will. The last time we saw each other was some days ago, when he came to tell me that he got permission for me to do whatever I needed to the Diamond Manor. His smile always lifts my mood.

"Greetings, Professor Will. Thank you for your help the other day."

"I didn't do anything special, so no need to thank me. I haven't been able to check on it because I've been rather busy, but how does the Manor look these days?"

"The walls have been repaired, and the Manor is a livable place, so I'll return the tools you lent us the other day soon enough."

"Interesting. I must say, only a few people would be able to turn that place into an actual living space, so I'm quite intrigued by... ahem! I mean, I think you guys did well. Mhm."

In this world, only sons of architects learn the tricks of the trade, which is the reason he's interested in what we have achieved. My experience comes from building small sheds when I was assigned to active combat zones. I'm no expert by any means, but I've built a couple of shacks and log houses.

"Also, I probably should've mentioned this earlier, but you do understand that the Manor is not under surveillance, unlike the dorms, yes?"

"Do not worry. I already imagined that would be the case, and I'm getting some protection measures ready in case someone or something comes and tries to steal or... well, you know."

"I suppose my fears were unfounded. Just don't overdo it if the occasion arises and we'll be fine."

Normally, anyone would think that a ten year old wouldn't need to be told to try and avoid "accidentally" killing would-be robbers, but here we are. Though I find the idea of setting non-lethal traps to be a pain, I'll come up with something eventually.

"You can ask Professor Magna or I for help, should you ever need it. Well then, I'll be taking my leave now."

Once Professor Will leaves, Leus appears from within the crowd, rushing towards us.

"We're all in the same class!" he shouts.

Each class has its own name. Ours is Kalaris, and the Professor in charge of Kalaris happens to be Magna. Will, or should I say Lordvael, definitely had a hand in this, as he most likely placed the three of us in the same class, considering he told me to ask Magna or him if we need assistance.

Once I'm done petting both him and Emilia, we all head towards our class.

The names of the classes for new students come from famous people. Kalaris is ours, and there's also one called Aion, another called Belgarred... you get the idea. Each class has around 30 students, and the classrooms are shaped like amphitheaters, close to what a modern college lecture hall would look like.

The moment we arrive in the classroom, silence ensues, and everyone inside turns their attention towards us.

"Wow, this place is bigger than I thought... so, where should we sit, sis?"

"I'm pretty sure we can sit wherever we want, so... how about over there, Lord Sirius?"

As we head to the third row of seats starting from behind, we start to listen to the people around us. We're being subjected to rumors right now... I can hear some of them saying that we have "amazing magical powers," while others claim that "we're all colorless." Someone must've leaked what happened in the interview to other people, and I can only think that this would be Gregory or Astro's doing...

Once the class is filled, I check on the people around me. There are an equal

number of humans and demi-humans, as well as an equal female to male ratio. I notice we have barely any nobles here, so I'm assuming this is intentional. Most of us are probably commoners.

Interrupting my train of thought, three male students approach us. The one in the center, a red-haired boy, takes a step forward and bows towards Emilia, "Excuse me, silver-haired maiden, may I ask your name?" he asks.

"What do you guys want? What business do you have with my sister?" Leus answers as he takes a defensive stance.

"Silence, you insolent cur! Do not speak while Lord Mark is doing so!" shouts one of the guys beside the red-haired man.

"Did you just call me a cur...?!"

"Hey, Leus. You weren't spoken to, so be quiet for a moment," says Emilia along with a sigh.

"You guys also calm down. Remember that you're my attendants. Dignity and honor before anything, as you represent me," the man says.

I knew from the beginning that he was of noble origins, but this confirms it. He's pretty handsome, and his red hair is striking. If someone told me he's the king's son, I'd believe it.

"I apologize for the rudeness of my attendant just now. Anyways, your name, please?"

Before saying anything, Emilia looks at me and then nods, "My name is Emilia. May I ask for yours?"

"You don't know of Lord Mark, you foul creature?!"

"That's enough out of you two. Apologies again. My name is Mark Hortia, and I'm the second son of the renowned Hortia Family," the man said as he elegantly bowed.

I'm actually surprised that this guy isn't an arrogant asshole, like most of the other people from his social caste that I've met so far.

"I'll be honest. I'm smitten by you. Your hair and manners are wonderful, and I was wondering if you'd be open to serve me, as one of my attendants."

"Thanks, but I'll have to refuse your offer."

"Hah! You should be honored to be invited to serve as Lord Mark's... wait, what?" says one of the servants, clearly confused by the answer.

"I said I'm grateful for the opportunity, but I refuse," she immediately continues.

"Lord Mark, she dares to mock you."

"How about we remind her of her place? Hm?"

"Quiet, you two... may I ask the reason behind your refusal?"

"I have already sworn my life to my master, that's why."

"Oh, you have a master? Is it the young man next to you?"

"Exactly. This right here is Lord Sirius," she says while sticking close to me.

"...So you are Emilia's master. May I ask for your name, Sir?" he says along with a sigh as he looks at me.

"I am Sirius Teacher."

"Teacher...? Your family name escapes me. Are you, perhaps, a noble from outside Elysion?"

"Oh no, I am no noble. I am but a commoner. She decided to become my servant because she likes me, that's all."

"A commoner with servants?! We won't stand for your moronic jests any longer! Offer the cur to Lord Mark now, unless...!"

"Wait a second. Could it be...? Are you perhaps the colorless child everyone's talking about?"

The class' attention shifts towards me once the word colorless is thrown in the air. It's quite interesting to see how being colorless causes these kinds of reactions within people in this world.

"Though I am privy to the rumors, it is true that I am colorless. Is there anything wrong with that?"

"Why would an incompetent whelp such as yourself be allowed to attend

here? Lord Mark has already mastered intermediate spells such as 'Flame Lance,' and you're telling me he has to be in the same class as this... this colorless?"

"He probably just bribed his way in... but then again, I doubt he has that much money to spend."

As I place my hands on both Emilia's and Leus' heads so they don't lunge at them, I decide that a demonstration is in order.

"Leaving your precious Lord aside, I personally wonder why you two are even here in the same place, considering you most likely can't cast a spell to save your life."

"What did you just say, you bastard?! We may be Lord Mark's attendants, but you should know that we also happen to belong to noble houses here, within Elysion!"

"That doesn't take away the fact that you two probably can't cast spells. Besides, just because I can't cast 'Flame Lance' it doesn't mean that I can't attend this class."

"We're simply educating you on our Master's greatness, bastard."

"For being servants, you're quite bad at it. Your Lord ordered you both to be quiet a while ago, and yet here you are, running your mouths like no tomorrow."

As that realization begins to sink in, they shut their mouths, all while giving me a death stare.

"That's enough. It appears that you two lack manners both as servants and noblemen. I'm appalled, to be honest."

"Lord Mark! Will you stay idle while this lowlife keeps running his mouth like he is right now?!"

"You two provoked him, not the other way around. I personally don't believe I need you, but my father commanded me to employ you both, so I command you to stop yapping and causing trouble for me."

Both retainers then step back and refrain from speaking any further. I'm

actually surprised he called them out on their actions, but this is good to see. Though if he blamed me for the confrontation that just happened I would've just laughed in his face at that point.

"Though it'll come off as a cheap excuse, these two are new to their roles, and are still learning their place. My apologies, Sirius."

"I'm fine, but keep them on a leash next time, because I don't know if I'll be able to keep my attendants in line if something happens again."

I'm using my secret petting technique to calm them down, and now they're smiling and wagging their tails, so things have calmed down by now. To think that seconds ago they were ready to literally kill those two...

"Well then, the Professor should arrive at any moment, so I'll be taking my leave."

"You're okay leaving this matter with Emilia be, then?"

"My honor won't allow me to steal her from you, but I'll make sure to make a name for myself soon enough, and that's when she'll have no other choice but to leave you for me."

He then takes his uniform, flips it on his back, and returns to his seat, his princely attitude wafting in the air as he leaves. His servants follow, all while glaring at me, but at this point they're nothing more than a joke to me. Besides, they'll surely receive a reprimand from their Master for lacking manners after this class for sure.

"Like I'll ever be charmed by another man that isn't Lord Sirius... hmph!"

"I will never abandon you, big bro!"

I tap their shoulders, reminding them that they should keep those comments to themselves, since they're now letting their grievances out because I'm petting them too much.

Anyways, the class calms down, and soon enough, Professor Magna makes her way into the classroom.

"It appears everyone is here... I am pleased to meet everyone. My name is Magna, and I will be your homeroom teacher here, in the Kalaris classroom."

Professor Magna seems to be a woman in her forties, wearing a uniform similar to ours, along with a yellow-lined cape. She has a presence similar to the headmaster's, so obviously everyone's quiet right now.

"I'll leave my more detailed introduction for later. For the time being, I feel like it's best to have you all get acquainted with each other, since you'll be spending the next two years together. Could we start with... you, the cat-like demi-human in the first row?"

Everyone introduces themselves. Most mention their race, their reasons for being here, and their attribute. Eventually, Leus' time arrives.

"I am Leus, from the Silver Wolf Clan, and I serve as Lord Sirius's attendant. I'm pretty good with swords, and my attribute is fire. Nice to meet you all."

The applause is sparse, but it appears that he's welcome to some extent. I was kinda worried about what he'd say, but I'm relieved after hearing him out. I'd say he did a rather good job.

Now it's my turn... "I am Sirius, a human, and as you all know by now, my attribute is colorless. I want to specialize in the research of summoning circles, as well as the construction of magical tools," I say, along with a bow.

I get no response. Most people in class seem confused, and don't know how they should react.

Emilia's introduction is quite different from mine, though, as her etiquette and impeccable manners leave everyone awestruck. Mom always said that good manners could dominate the mood of a space, and Emilia is definitely embodying her teachings right now. There's no need to worry about what she might say.

"I am Emilia of the Silver Wolf Clan. My attribute is wind, and I serve Lord Sirius along with my younger brother Leus. To those wondering, I offered my body and soul to Lord Sirius already, so hopefully everyone understands," she says with a smile on her face.



While everyone is losing their minds, I look at Emilia, asking her non-verbally why she said that, but her smile reveals everything I need to know. She wanted to break the ice after the shift in mood caused by my own introduction. She's thoughtful to the extreme, and I appreciate that.

"Hehe... that was my perfect excuse to proclaim your ownership of me, Lord Sirius."

...Nevermind. Anyways, after the bomb Emilia dropped, the rest of the introductions continued without much incident.

Once we were all finished, we had a break, and that's when Magna left and a bunch of people suddenly gathered around us, asking tons of questions and talking at the same time.

"Emilia, your hair is so beautiful. I'm so jealous right now, what did you do to groom it like that?"

"What did she mean by having offered her body and soul?! Is she his slave or something?!"

"If you're that good with the sword, then you won't mind sparring with me later, right?"

"Yo! Were you serious that you're a colorless?!"

"How did you get into the school?! It must be tough, having no attribute and all..."

The noble students watch from a distance, while the commoners are the ones swarming us with questions. As far as I understand, they think I worked my ass off to get where I am, and they're mostly right. I coughed up blood several times while I trained, so I think my training was definitely extreme.

We had no proper class today, but Professor Magna detailed to us what subjects we'd take this year, which is something that wasn't explained in the entrance ceremony.

The evening bell rings, and that signals the end of classes for the day. Some students leave the class, talking about their dinner, while others stay and chat with their friends. Basically, we are now free to do as we please.

Breakfast and lunch happen here in the school's cafeteria, while we're free to dine wherever we want.

"Lord Sirius, what are your plans for today?"

"I was thinking of working on the Diamond Manor a little more."

My own room and the kitchen are pretty much done, but I need to think of how I'm going to install a bath in one of the empty rooms.

Suddenly, Emilia bows, "You'll have to excuse me, Lord Sirius, I'd like to return to my room and check if Lise is there before helping you out. It might be a little while before I'm available to aid you."

"Don't worry about it. Go and relax. You too, Leus."

"I'm really sorry, big bro!" shouts Leus while bowing as well, followed by turning around, where a bunch of demi-humans carrying wooden swords are awaiting for him near the entrance.

Nice, it appears he got invited to spar with them. That's good.

"They told me that they wanted to spar, so I immediately said yes without thinking about you... don't worry, I'll tell them that I can do it another day, and-"

"Wait a minute, Leus. Didn't I tell you that making friends and spending time on your own was fine? Go ahead, don't worry about me."

"Big bro... Okay! I'll whoop their asses real quick and get back to you as soon as I can! Promise!"

"No need to hurry for my sake, Leus. Be sure to take your time with them, learn their strengths, and capitalize on their weaknesses."

"Got it!"

I'm not sure if he fully understands, but as far as I can see, none of those demi-humans waiting for him look like nobles, so I think he'll be fine.

Just as Leus leaves with his new friends and Emilia leaves the classroom, Mark calls out to me right as I'm about to leave as well.

"Are you going back to your room as well, Sirius?"

"Mhm, I am indeed, sir."

"Hahaha! No need to be so stiff with me, Sirius. I might be of noble birth, but I'm fine if you talk to me like you'd talk to any other person. Everyone's an equal here, and all. Anyways, I was hoping you and I could chat for a minute before you left."

"Sounds good. What happened with your two lovely attendants, if I may ask, my Lord?"

"No need for you to address me as Lord, really. As for them, they cited 'urgent matters' and left quickly, though I doubt the veracity of their claims and intend to question them later, as well as give them a reprimand for what happened earlier."

"I know I'm going to sound rude asking this, but why did you decide to have those two under you?"

I'm especially curious because they act like anything but servants. They are cocky, arrogant, and shout to the four winds without the explicit permission of someone who's supposed to be their master.

"They belong to one of the many branches my family has, though they themselves are nobles, they don't have a lot of influence, per se. You get the deal."

Mark then tells me that initially he was against having them, mainly because he's aware the only reason they're around is to hopefully get in his good graces for the sake of their own families. Since his father apparently was fine with this arrangement, he had no other option but to accept the status quo for the time being. He's been trying to fix their attitude towards those they consider "inferior," but has had no luck thus far.

"I know I shouldn't be saying this, but are you sure you should be telling me about all this stuff happening with your family?"

"It's fine. I personally believe nobility has gone a little too far as of late, and what happened before was a fine example of what I mean. I sincerely hope that if you suffer such discrimination from both of them again that you report it directly to me, so I can properly discipline them, at the very least."

"I'll be sure to do so."

I see Mark off after our short conversation and head out towards the Diamond Manor. I make sure to take my time, since I know it will be some time before Leus and Emilia show up.

I know I've been spending more time by myself ever since I told those two to make friends and all, and in a way it feels lonely, but at the same time I know this is the best course of action for my two siblings, so I'm fine with how things are right now.

Before I arrive at the manor, I stop in the middle of the mountainous path that leads to it, as I notice someone's presence nearby.

"...Do you need something?"

"Hah, your senses are quite sharp, colorless," says one of Mark's attendants as he appears from behind a nearby tree. He's accompanied by his lovely friend. The way they're looking at me tells me everything I need to know. They aren't here to make amends, that's for sure.

"Your presence was just easy to detect. So? I assume you're not here to have a good time, so what do you want?"

"Of course we're not here to have a good time, bastard. We'll overlook the arrogance you displayed towards us before, but we want you to offer that demi-human to Lord Mark in exchange."

"She said no twice, and I respect her wishes. Take a hint."

"I couldn't care less about what you respect or not. Just do as we say, or there'll be consequences," he says, as two other male students appear from behind another tree, carrying wooden swords.

They definitely are not from my class, but judging by the way they look, they're all buddy-buddy, and ready to cause some trouble, I presume. It doesn't matter all that much.

"I'm not sure why you would take things this far. What would your Lord think of your actions, I wonder?"

"Oh shut your mouth. We have to make the man happy, or else our asses will

be on a platter, you see?"

"It's rare for him to show such an interest in someone, and while we know he's all talk, we know he'll be happy if we present her to him."

What a pitiful bunch. One can only imagine the frightful amount of headway they'd make if they put that sort of effort into pleasing their master, instead of causing trouble...

"We all have our needs, and Lord Mark is a man, after all. Though I struggle to imagine why he'd place such interest in a demi-human, but oh well."

"She's good-looking, but that doesn't change the fact that she's an animal."

"I see..."

I think I understand what Mark meant by the attitude of nobility as of late, especially towards demi-humans. No matter, I don't intend to play along with them.

Knowing what's gonna happen, I start doing some stretches.

"Just do as we say already and... what the hell are you doing, you bastard?"

"Warming up. Can't you see?"

If they wanted to threaten me, they should've pinned me down first, then talked. Judging by their naive thought that numbers would make the difference, I can tell that they have no previous combat experience.

"You can't seriously be thinking that you can fight us all by yourself, can you?"

"He's colorless, what makes you believe he can even think in the first place?"

Well, given the fact that they don't seem to care too much about their master, and based on the fact that they insulted Emilia, I think I'm in the right to beat their asses as I please. And here I wanted to stay away from nobles if possible...

Instead of saying anything, I answer their laughter with a simple motion of my hand, signaling them to come at me.

"Oh yeah, I can take you all on no issues. Come on, I'll teach you some manners."

"Tch, you colorless bastard!"

Thinking of me as easy prey, only the two men carrying the practice swords approach, one by one. The first one swings his blade my way, but I step back to evade it and punch him in the gut.

"What?! Shit!"

Before the other one has time to react, I quickly lunge at him right as his buddy is about to hit the floor after the punch I gave him. As he's falling, I grab his blade and throw it to his buddy, who thrusts the blade away with his, but it's too late. I'm already behind him, and he can't see me, judging by how he's reacting right now.

"What the-!? Where did he go...?!"

"Over here."

I place my arms around his neck, and perform what is commonly known as a stranglehold. Normally, this move is pretty hard to get away from, especially the moment you tangle your legs around the rest of the victim's body.

He doesn't seem to be too tough, so I make sure to choke him lightly while not using my legs, and as I notice he's struggling to breathe, I whisper to his ear, "Do you want me to stop?"

Instead of saying anything, since he can't due to the choke, the man simply nods. The other two cowards are meanwhile talking shit instead of coming at me, believing that I've taken their friend as a hostage. Honestly, if anyone's a coward, it's those two.

"Tap my hand if you want me to sto—"

Before I finish my sentence he taps my hand. A shame that he gave up so easily, but I do as he says and let go, to which he answers by quickly picking up his sword again and turning around, swinging it my way.

"Idiot! ...Aaagh!"

But before he could do anything to me, I tripped him with my leg, as it was too easy to tell that he'd try to do something dirty like that. Once he's on the ground, I pick up his sword and point it towards him.

“Eeeek!” he shouts, terrified.

I don’t really plan to use it on him. In fact, I simply pierced the ground with it. He’s terrified, and unable to move right now. These people need to be taught with fear or violence, otherwise they don’t learn a thing. Whatever the case, he won’t be up for a fight for the time being, which gives me space to deal with the other two.

“He-Hey! What’s wrong with you?!”

“Are we gonna lose our dignity to a colorless?!”

The moment those two see their buddies lying on the ground, they start realizing that they are now alone against me.

“I’ll immobilize him, so you use your magic to finish him off, okay?!”

“Got it!”

One of them rushes towards me, hoping to land a hit, but he’s open to counterattacks. I could knock him out at any moment, but I’m really curious about what kinds of spells his friend over there can do, so I’ll simply evade whatever he throws at me while I wait for him to cast something.

"What happened to all of that bravado? Come on, hit me! I’m right here!"

He seems to know a thing or two about fighting, but he isn’t as good as Leus or the old coot. Whatever the case, as I keep evading his punches, I notice that his friend is almost done with his chant.

"Release an arrow imbued with fire... ‘Flame Arrow!’"

Though the spell he used is in the intermediate range and in most cases non-lethal, it can still cause a tremendous amount of damage if it hits, since it consists of fire taking the form of an arrow and being shot at someone else. It’s not a spell that should be used on other people unless you have a clear intent, that’s for sure.

The guy hitting me tries to move aside so the arrow hits me instead, but before he can do that, I grab him by the collar and throw him towards the flame arrow.

"What the-?"

"Wait!"

With no way to evade the spell, the arrow collides directly with him, creating a small explosion on impact and making him roll on the floor, now injured. Normally, the damage sustained should've been higher, but we're all wearing our school uniforms, so at worst he probably got some minor burns, maybe a bruise or two.

"Damn it! I beseech the great power of the flames themselves to—!"

The man left starts chanting in a panic, not realizing that there's no one else who can protect him while he tries to cast his next spell, so I make sure to calmly approach him and slap him on the cheek.

"Argh?! What are you doing?!"

"...Can't you see you're wide open for attacks?"

"Get out of the way, you colorless idiot! I just need this spell to hit you, and then it'll be over!"

"Blow him to pieces, 'Impact'...!"

I unleash the spell right beside him, knocking his body into a nearby tree, and piercing a hole in its trunk. He looks behind him to see what I did, and the moment he realizes what happened to the tree, his eyes widen in terror.

"What was that...?"

"Do you want the next one to be aimed at your pretty face, or your stomach?"

"Do you... Do you truly believe you'll be able to get away with doing what you just did?"

"You attacked me first, not the other way around. Besides, I'm not sure if Mark will believe whatever story you tell him, or your overall attitude today, to be honest."

His expression sours, making it obvious that he knows what his master will do if he finds out what happened.

"I wonder what your excuse would be for your little adventure today. What? You're gonna tell them that you went against a colorless kid four-on-one and

still lost? You'll be an object of ridicule amongst your peers, and those commoners you hate so much will also make sure to remind you that you lost to a kid four-on-one."

"Hnghh! Damn it all!"

In a desperate attempt to do something, he tries to punch me in the face, but it's so telegraphed that I simply move aside and sweep my leg to make him trip. I finally point a finger towards him while giving him a death stare, which makes him punch the ground with the little strength he has left, giving up. Looks like he's not willing to fight any longer, so that means it's over.

"As long as you stay the hell away from me I'll be sure to keep what happened between us, got it? And I won't be more violent than necessary, unless you give me a reason for it. Now scram, before I start telling everyone how pathetic all of you are."

We might be far away from the dorms, but anyone could wander around this place and see what happened.

Once I finish speaking my peace, he heads to the other man who couldn't move because of how terrified he was, picks him up, and then helps the other one lying on the ground up as well, leaving shortly after.

Once the four of them are gone, I continue heading towards the Manor, and as I do, I happen to hear Emilia behind me. She's wagging her tail as she heads my way.

"Lord Sirius! I thought you were already back home!"

"I took a little longer than expected talking with some classmates, so that's why I'm a little late. What about you? Was your friend in the room?"

"Lise was indeed there when I got back, so I told her about the entrance ceremony and what happened today, so she's up to speed."

As we keep walking, I notice how she's carrying something with her, which is a set of clothes I'm used to seeing.

"Why are you carrying your maid outfit around?"

"I'll wear this whenever I'm taking care of you, Lord Sirius. As your servant, I

must keep up appearances, after all.”

To me, the mere thought of having to change clothes every time she commutes to the Manor and back to the dorms is painful, but I suppose that’s part of her pride as a servant. If she wants to do it, then let her do it.

“Big bro!”

Leus joins the party, and places himself on my right side as he happily tells me what happened with his new friends.

"I defeated everyone, bro! Not gonna lie though, it took a lot of effort to hold myself back!"

“I sure hope you didn’t hurt them too badly, Leus...”

“They could walk when we were done, so I’m sure they’ll be fine. Anyways, uhh, can I ask you for a favor, big bro...? When we get back home, could we...?”

“I know. We’ll spar once we get back, don’t you worry.”

“Nice! I’ll be sure to land a hit on you this time around, you’ll see!”

And here I thought the fighting would end for the day, but I suppose I was foolhardy to assume such a thing. Now I have to deal with Leus as well.

We keep walking the path, the sun setting and shadows growing longer as time passes.

The next day, I head to the classroom, and before the teacher comes, Mark heads towards me and bows without saying anything. Everyone is surprised to see a noble bowing to a commoner, so I ask him to raise his head and to explain to me why he’d do that.

“I’m truly sorry for what happened.”

“Look, I get it, just tell me why you’re apologizing first, then we can go from there.”

“Oh right, I should probably do that. It’s about what happened between you and my attendants yesterday.”

He was apparently looking for them last night since they weren’t coming back, and he ended up finding out that they were in an infirmary. Once he got there,

he saw them covered in burns, bruises and other injuries, as well as one of them ranting about me, making it clear that something between us had happened.

Once he got them to talk, they explained what happened to him. Instead of being angry, he simply resigned himself, and decided to report to his family what happened. Now both of them are awaiting to be punished by their fathers, now that their past misdeeds and conduct was revealed by their former master.

“Considering how disgraceful their attitude has been, I assume they’ll both be disowned, and who knows what else.”

“Looks like an appropriate punishment in my eyes. I can see them trying to get revenge on me for their misfortune, though...”

“I vow on my house’s good name that it won’t happen. We’ll make sure to send them somewhere far away from Elysion and force them to never come back here. Whatever the case, I’m glad you didn’t sustain any injuries, Sirius. However, it is true that this is partly my fault as I couldn’t keep them in check, so have this as some sort of repayment for the damage caused...”

He then bows and pulls out a silver coin, but I quickly push it back towards him.

“Look, the apology alone was fine. I didn’t get hurt, so it’s fine. If you wish to apologize, I’d rather ask you for something else instead.”

“What do you need?”

“I would appreciate it if you could help me out if I ever... get in trouble with people from your social class again. Only if I really need the help, though. If I’m the one who caused issues, then you don’t need to intervene.”

Instead of saying anything, he smiles and nods.

“Heh, very well. If that time ever comes, I’ll be sure to do what I can for you.”

We then shake hands, closing this matter. Although that doesn’t really help my case from there onwards. Rumors have already started spreading, and apparently I’m now the guy who not only made an aristocrat bow to me, but

who also refused money he offered as an apology as well.

And to make matters even worse...

"Good morning, big bro! And you too, chief!"

"...Morning."

Now every single one of Leus' buddies who got their ass kicked by him have become his little brothers, and I'm their chief now. I swear, are all demi-humans like this, or what?

Leus told me that he'd beat them up until they stopped with that, but to be completely honest, I think that'll make things even worse. I really don't want to become some sort of mafia kingpin out of the blue, I really don't.

I could see myself becoming the head chief of the Diamond faction if I'm not careful, but let's hope that doesn't happen... please, anything but that.

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Several days have passed since classes began.

Today's morning class consisted of Professor Magna talking about the different types of magic that exist in our world.

Though most of those were useless to me, I decided to think about how I would deal with each type of magic were it to be cast against me. Eventually, classes ended before I even realized, and we all headed to the cafeteria right after to have our meal. Leus is eating like he has two stomachs, while I'm having a grilled meat set.

"Not gonna lie, this ain't as good as Dii's food, but it's still pretty good."

"Mhm. I wonder if it's because of the ingredients being used?"

"Emilia's right. This meat is definitely different from what we're used to."

Though the meat itself is soft and tender, as well as tasty, there's too much juice coming out of it, taking away from its potential flavor.

"I'll ask later about it, but I am pretty sure this would be better for a stew instead of a grill."

"Oh! Does that mean that you have something new in mind?"

"I'm definitely excited about it! Oh! Look, Lord Sirius, that's Lise over there! Hm...?"

After we're done eating and taking a rest, Emilia catches sight of Lise, her roommate. All I know about her is that she has blue hair, so I was hoping Emilia could introduce us, but...

"Something wrong?"

"Yeah. She was the definition of happiness this morning, but she looks incredibly sad right now."

"Go talk to her, and find out what's going on. I'll wait for you here."

"Thank you. Excuse me for a bit."

Leus sighs as we both look at Emilia leaving the cafeteria.

"I don't know why she's taking this long to introduce her friend to us. I took no time to introduce my buddy to you two."

Leus, he thinks of you as his boss. You're the only one who thinks you're both on equal terms.

"Maybe she'll bring her back here and introduce her then, who knows?"

Emilia takes a while, but she finally comes back, alone. She also looks quite saddened, which is definitely not how she was before she left.

"Lord Sirius..."

"What's wrong? Did you two have an argument or something?"

"Lise's quite troubled, and after hearing her out I just... I told her to confide in you about this, and I know that it wasn't in my place to do so without your permission, but..."

"It's fine, if she wants some advice, I can certainly help. I assume it's something she can't talk about in front of other people?"

"Indeed. She specifically asked me to talk in a place where people wouldn't eavesdrop on our conversation. Are you really okay with this?"

"Hm... well, we won't lose anything by listening to whatever she has to say, so let's just meet at the Diamond Manor. Once classes are over, tell her to come

around. I assume that's okay with you?"

That's probably the safest place I can think of. No one tends to wander around the area, so we won't have to worry about any eavesdropping. She's Emilia's friend, so I'll try to help her as best as I can.

"Thank you so much, my Lord! I'll tell her right away!"

Her smile returns and she quickly heads out of the cafeteria once more. I don't know why she looks that happy just yet, I mean, we haven't even learned about Lise's problem. Maybe it's something we won't be able to fix.

"I'm happy my sis has you, big bro. I'm sure you'll be able to fix whatever problem that friend of hers has."

"I sure hope it's not related to love, because in that case I won't be of much help."

"I'm sure you'll be able to figure something out."

What makes him say that with such confidence? I swear...

We made an appointment to meet with Lise, and lunch break was over. Maybe this is about her menstruating or something... I suppose she'd go to a doctor for that, so it can't be about anything related to physiological pain.

While we wait for Emilia to return, Leus and I talk about our most recent sparring session, and eventually she does come back with a smile on her face.

"Lise is in the Aion class, so we'll finish our classes more or less at the same time. We decided to meet up in the library once we were done so we can head to the manor later."

"Sounds good to me. The break's about to end in any case, so let's just return to our own class."

Looks like we've got after-school activities today.

Anyways, our afternoon classes happen to be practical ones. We're able to freely use whatever magic we want in the courtyard specifically used for these, but most of what I see are basic-level spells. No wonder, I'm supposedly the weird guy here since I'm so young, but apparently to be able to cast anything at my age is already considered an achievement in itself.

Professor Magna has created some dummies for us to practice our spells on. Mark is the one who's standing out compared to everyone else, managing to cast 'Flame Lance' on the dummy he's assigned. I can tell that he's worked hard to achieve his skills, and that it isn't all natural talent, but nevertheless, he looks quite frustrated after casting a series of consecutive lances, despite everyone's awe and applause. I'm personally impressed by the fact that his mana pool doesn't seem to be depleted after casting so much stuff at the same time.

"Tch, it's the same as always. I need to at least make the lance sharper, or maybe cast two at the same time, at the very least..."

"You're pretty amazing, Mark. You must've trained a hell of a lot to be able to cast that."

"Oh, I still have a ways to go. I could say the same thing about you, Sirius. I've never seen such a strong 'Impact' before in my entire life."

Though I've certainly managed to catch a lot of people's attention after showing what I can do with "Impact" and "Light" just as I did in my interview, the one hogging most of the protagonist energy right now is, well...

"Cut my enemies, oh wind... 'Air Slash.'"

"I summon the raging fire on my fists... 'Flame Knuckle!'"

Emilia and Leus. Every time they destroy a dummy with their spells, everyone gives them a standing ovation. Leus is surrounded by his demi-human friends, while Emilia has lots of people gathering around her, impressed with her skills.

"You must be proud of them, Sirius. That's seriously amazing."

"I am. I never thought they'd reach that stage, I'll tell you that much."

I can hear the people around them ask about their spell casting, and I have a bad feeling about what's going to come out of that.

"Yooo! How did you do that just now?!"

"I've never seen you cast a spell before, and you barely made a chant as well! Who taught you that?!"

"Our master Lord Sirius did, obviously."

"This is pretty normal if you become his follower. I learned my swordsmanship from him as well, by the way."

"Whoa! Okay! I wanna be his follower, too! Where... where is he, again?"

I hide myself behind a nearby pillar so nobody finds me. Hopefully Magna lets this go, but I really don't want anyone to try becoming my follower and then find out that the training is too harsh for them. Besides, Leus, Emilia, and I have already been at it for years since we were very young, and that's something these kids don't have, which is dedication towards something like that.

Leus isn't making things easier for me as he's still talking about the training, though.

"Oh, but the training's quite tough, you guys. Look, we start by running in the morning, and..."

Leus then goes on to describe how grueling the training is, and it doesn't take too long before everyone around him clearly gives up on the idea of becoming another follower. Leus and Emilia tilt their heads in confusion when that happens, but what they don't realize is that the effort they've put into achieving what they have now is nothing that should be scoffed at, plus they have some innate talent themselves.

Once our classes are done, we head to the library so we can wait for Lise to finish hers. The amount of books piled up makes me feel dizzy and awestruck. How did they manage to get so many of these, considering their book-binding technology is clearly not as advanced as the one we had in my old world?

Well, this is a great chance to check out what this place has to offer, so I'll read a book or two while we wait for Lise. It'll be the best way to kill some time.

We all find a book to read and sit together for a while. Eventually Emilia looks out to see what time it is, and then tells us that she'll go and look for Lise real quick while standing up without making a single sound.

"Oh, it's already time? Very well, we'll wait here."

I watch Emilia leave the library, and right as I'm about to return to my book, I see Leus staring at his while looking troubled.

"Uhh, I have a question, big bro. Do you think that if I pictured how the flame lance works while I do my 'Flame Knuckle' the fire in my hands could possibly catch that same effect and be projected as well?"

"Heh, it appears you've caught on to something. Ask Mark to show you how he does the spell tomorrow, and practice from there. Trial and error is the essence of magic."

"Sounds good! By the way, what do you even think about when you cast that 'Magnum' spell of yours?"

"...That's a secret."

Leus is as active as a child his age should be, but sometimes I feel like he's completely focused on violence and dealing damage or destroying things way more than he should. I'm glad that he can read just fine thanks to Mom and I, but the old man definitely turned him more violent than he should... next time I see that coot I'll punch him for that.

I then return to my book and start taking notes of the important passages, until Emilia eventually comes back with Lise.

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting, Lord Sirius. This is Lise, my new friend. We're of the same age, and we share the same room."

"I-I'm pleased to meet you. My name is Lise."



Emilia wasn't wrong when she described Lise: her blue, wavy hair reaches her waist, and she doesn't look outstanding in any way, but I can tell just by looking at her that she's a gentle soul.

"I'm pleased to meet you as well. Emilia probably mentioned me already, but I'm Sirius. "

"I'm Leus."

"I have indeed heard of your outstanding deeds more than once from her."

"Emilia always takes it a step too far, doesn't she? If she ever bothers you, let me know."

"Oh, it's fine! I really enjoy listening to her stories anyway. Hm? Were you perhaps in the middle of studying?"

"Eh? Oh, no, not really. I was almost finished reading this book anyway."

Just as I'm about to return the book to its shelf, she checks the title and tilts her head, confused.

"The World's Greatest Recipes?"

"Cooking is a hobby of mine."

"Wait, what...? You're looking at cookbooks in a magic school?"

"Leaving that aside, I think Emilia already told you that we'd talk over at the Diamond Manor. I'm sure we'll be alone there and won't be disturbed, so I'm hoping that's okay with you."

"I am sure that if you were a bad person you wouldn't have warned me in advance, my Lord. Besides, the trust Emilia places in you is nothing but indicative of what kind of a person you are."

"What about me?"

"You're Emilia's little brother, so I'm not too worried about you either. I believe your name is Leus, yes?"

"Leus is the name, miss! Also, you're the same age as my sis, right? Can I call you sis as well, then?"

“Hehe, sure thing. I wouldn’t mind having a little brother myself.”

The fact that she’s showing this much trust from the beginning makes me worried, honestly. If anything, I feel like she’s just young and naive, but at the same time she’s a gentle person. No wonder Emilia likes her.

We then leave the library and head towards the Diamond Manor. While on our way we introduce ourselves fully, but well...

“Oh, I wasn’t aware that you were a noble, Lise. I should probably mind the way I speak from now on, then.”

“Um, I’m okay if you just call me by my name. In fact, just treat me like you would any other person. My family became part of the nobility months ago, and we come from commoner roots, so I’d appreciate it if I was treated normally. My mother... well, my mother and I used to live in a remote village not so long ago, and shortly after she died of an illness, we got a letter saying that apparently she used to be the mistress of a nobleman, so one thing led to the other, and here I am...”

I wasn’t really planning to ask for the specifics behind her status, but I guess she wanted to tell someone.

“Are you sure you should be talking about this with someone you just met?”

“I already discussed that with Emilia, and I feel like you two are trustworthy, so it’s fine, I think...”

I respect the fact that becoming part of the aristocracy wasn’t her goal in life, but for the time being, the less we talk about that topic, the better, as it doesn’t seem to make her happy.

“I’ll be sure to treat you normally, then. Though you should probably loosen up a little as well”

“Oh, I apologize, but my mother taught me to speak like this. I assume she knew this would eventually happen, which is why she educated me like she did.”

“I didn’t intend to remind you of your mother, so I apologize for that.”

“It’s fine, you didn’t mean anything by it. Besides, I can’t really compare my

situation to the one Emilia or Leus are going through..."

"...What did you tell her, Emilia?" I ask Emilia, glancing her way. For some reason, Lise thinks I'm mad at her for whatever she told her, so she places herself between us.

"Wait! She simply talked about her past, and she has nothing but praise for you, so please don't be mad at her!"

This is interesting to see. This is supposed to be a problem between a master and his servant, but knowing this well, Lise still decided to cover for Emilia. It says a lot about what kind of person she is, in many good ways. So much so that I can't help but smile.

"Why would I be mad at her? I simply find it nice that she found someone who could be her confidant, that's all."

"Lord Sirius... hehehe..." Emilia says, as she casts her gaze downwards, all as I pat her head.

Leus asks me to do the same to him, and as I give them both their daily patting session, Lise gazes at the scene.

"You feel more like their mother than their master, so I think I'm starting to understand why Emilia likes you so much."

"A mother that is ten years of age..." though she has a point. I technically am an old man in a child's body, and I see these two as my surrogate children, so...

Emilia dashes ahead of us before we arrive at the Diamond Manor, and eventually we arrive there.

"Who would've thought that there'd be a building in the middle of this place?"

The new Diamond Manor looked like a completely different place. The weeds were no more, and all of the planks had been changed, all of which were painted in a beautiful, white color. The garden's fields were also freshly tilled, and the well has been refilled with a summoning circle, with a magical pump installed on it to help me get the water I need.

Lise keeps gazing at the Manor dumbfounded, so I decide to break the ice,

"I'm the only one living here at the moment," as I let her in.

"E-Excuse my intrusion..."

"Looks like sis Lise is our first guest!"

We open the door, and we're greeted by Emilia, who's wearing her maid uniform. She makes a perfect bow towards us, and...

"Welcome back, Lord Sirius, Leus, and welcome to you too, Lise."

"...Why is Emilia wearing a maid outfit?"

"I am Lord Sirius' servant, that's why. Lord Sirius, Lise, could you please take off your shoes? Wearing them is strictly banned within the Manor."

"Wearing shoes is not allowed?"

"It's a rule big brother decided. I know it sounds weird, but you'll get used to it."

"It makes the place easier to clean, as it minimizes the amount of dirt that gets scattered around," Emilia says.

I know it's common to wear shoes in this world, but I decided to make it my own little rule to follow Japanese customs.

"Welcome to the Diamond Manor, in any case. Would you like to have some tea?"

"Su-Sure..."

Though Lise is hesitant, this is only the beginning for her. She's about to be shown a whole new world.

The living room of the Manor is already prepared for Lise's arrival, with tea sets on top of the main table, along with a cake that was prepared exclusively for her.

"What's this? It looks like bread, but it seems... different."

"It's a cake made by Lord Sirius. Give it a try, please. Use this fork."

"Isn't this something nobles prepare for celebrations exclusively?"

"Big brother's cakes are just one of his many snacks. Possibly the best one he makes!"

"A snack...? Hm?!"

The moment she places a bite of the cake into her mouth, she smiles, and places her other hand on her cheek as she savors every moment of it.

"It's so sweet... and so soft, too... I've never tasted anything like this before..."

"Big sis Noel pretty much reacted like you just did... in fact, everyone tends to react like that whenever they try this for the first time."

"We don't have this very often, which is why it's probably the tastiest for them."

Lise doesn't say anything, instead she focuses entirely on the cake, and once she's done, she blushes, realizing that she'd been in her own little world up until now, so she takes a sip of tea and bows.

"I'm... I'm terribly sorry. You're treating me so nicely, and I haven't said anything while I ate, I just..."

"Oh, it's fine. You didn't need to say anything, the way you looked like you were eating was enough of a clue."

"Ack! We-Well, let me tell you directly, then. That the cake was delicious, and the tea as well..."

"Would you like another cup?"

"...Yes, please."

With a newly-poured cup of tea in front of her, she suddenly clears her throat, and her expression worsens a little. "I know it's a little late, but I thank you for inviting me to come here, first and foremost," she says.

"It's fine. I heard from Emilia that you had a problem you wished to discuss."

"I-I do. Well, the thing is... I want to be able to use all beginner spells from all attributes."

The attributes she's referring to are water, fire, earth, and wind. If she wants

to master the basic spells, then that basically consists of "Flame," which produces a ball of fire and can be used to start small campfires or as a substitute for a torch. "Aqua" can generate water out of nothing and has several uses, mostly something firefighters use, or for general household chores. "Wind" blows air around and can circulate the air around you, or act as a fan of sorts. Finally there's, "Earth," which can in a very basic scope change your immediate surroundings to your will, such as raising basic walls, excavating holes, and more uses related to construction.

Basic spells are normally taught to those who have compatible attributes, and depending on the training one undertakes, all of them can be mastered, despite the lack of attribute compatibility. In any case, that can't be the reason she's here. Otherwise she'd talk it out with a school Professor.

"There's no school rule that dictates the necessity of learning all basic spells if you wanna graduate."

"I know that is the case, but in my class it is needed for us to not be branded as failures. Our Professor said that those who can't shouldn't have the right to remain in the school, and..."

"...What class are you in, and who's your homeroom Professor, again?"

"I'm in the Aion class, and my homeroom Professor is Sir Gregory. I'm always made fun of whenever we get to our practical classes and I can only use one element..."

As far as I know, everyone in the Aion class has been handpicked by Gregory, and if they don't fit his ridiculous standards, I can't even imagine what sort of verbal abuse she's receiving right now.

"I don't mind being laughed at, but I can't bear it when they talk badly about my mother. What's so wrong about me not being able to cast magic from incompatible attributes?" she says while clenching her fists, clearly frustrated by the situation. She then starts crying a little, but Emilia gives her a handkerchief so she can wipe her tears off before she continues.

There's just something about her story that doesn't add up, "I bet there's others in your class who can't use all four attributes either, so I'm not sure why you're being focused on," I say.

"You're right, but just as you said, I'm the one who's being targeted, not them."

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"Won't Gregory intervene?"

"He never says anything during practice, but he calls me after classes and tells me that he's on my side, but I find him creepy more than anything, and it's hard for me to trust him at the moment. In fact, I made you guys wait at the library because Professor Gregory wanted to speak to me today as well."

"As far as I know he's only arrogant, and not much else. Has he ever touched you inappropriately?"

"At most, he only strokes my head, but he tends to place his hands on my shoulder, and leaves it at that."

After a few more questions, I take out the possibility of him simply being a creep. I'm still weirded out by this whole situation. Why would he allow the badmouthing to continue if he claims to be her ally and friend? One would think that he's frightened by the nobles he's handling, but he himself is from a great household, so I doubt that's the issue.

"...Maybe he's trying to brainwash you?" I whisper to myself.

That would make sense. It's not unheard of that some people intentionally make others feel cornered so they have no choice but to accept any generosity that comes their way. I could also imagine him knowing something about her that we don't, and keeping it to himself and the students to avoid further conflict.

"Did you say something?"

"No, nevermind what I just said. Anyways, the main issue is that you want to master the basic spells, but you are made fun of, yes?"

"Indeed. I try to cast 'Flame,' but I simply can't do it no matter how hard I try."

"What sort of affinity do you have? What can you do well, and where do you struggle?"

"I specialize in water magic, and can cast healing and water spells up to an intermediate level, I'd say."

If you have a water affinity, then it's difficult to master any sort of fire spell, and vice versa. Basic spells can still be mastered with enough practice and discipline, along with studying.

"It'll probably be better to see what you can do rather than have you tell us. Could you show us some of what you can do outside?"

"Of course."

We all leave the manor and Lise demonstrates what she can do. She uses "Earth" to dig a couple of holes, and casts "Wind" without many issues, summoning a gust of air around us. She didn't seem to struggle casting them, which makes me realize that she has latent potential within her for sure.

Emilia's "Wind" spell, while she can't sustain it for long, could be strong enough to blow away the entire manor, by the way.

Lise then casts "Aqua." Normally, the ball summoned by this spell isn't bigger than a tennis-sized one, but she managed to cast three of them at the same time, and each ball is three times larger than normal.

"Whoa! I bet I could fit my entire head inside one of these!"

"Thanks to her we don't really have to worry too much about having water in our room at all times," Emilia says.

"If you ever need some healing or water, I'm your girl!"

"Very well, let's see what your problem with 'Flame' is."

"Okay!"

I cast search on her as she starts chanting the spell, not noticing any weirdness about her. Her mana flow looks just fine, and her chanting is correct, but despite all of that, only a puff of smoke comes out of her hands each time

she tries.

"I summon thee, Emissary of Fire... 'Flame!'"

Again, a puff of smoke comes out of her hands.

"Not again... agh. No matter how many times I try, the result is always the same," she says while falling on her knees and looking me in the eyes, as if she's pleading for me to help her.

Both Emilia and Leus go to her and try to console her, all while looking at me as well.

"Lord Sirius..."

"Big bro..."

Both are kind in nature, and while I find it normal for Emilia to want me to help her friend, I feel it's quite surprising to see Leus doing the same as well, but he's a good guy, and he's definitely taken a liking to Lise.

I know what her issue is, but I'm not sure if it's something I should say out loud. Maybe the best option for her would be to give up on trying to cast fire spells and simply make herself the best she can with water spells, but....

"Is there nothing you can do to help her, Lord Sirius?"

"Big bro, I can't stand looking at her like this..."

Haah, I suppose I still need to toughen up. Whatever the case, since they insist, I might as well bring the topic up. I quickly cast "Search" to see if there's anyone nearby who might be eavesdropping, and once I make sure there's nobody around, I then prepare myself to drop the bomb, "You can see spirits, can't you, Lise?"

I still remember Fia's words back when I met her: "There are those who would seek to capture us, and use our power for their own benefit." And Fia was someone who could cast powerful spirit wind magic, to the point of summoning hurricanes, blow castles away, or tornadoes big enough to cause massive disasters.

Spirit magic users can cast magic that normally require big groups of people to cast, and that's why they hide their power, to avoid being targeted by those

with power who would seek to use them for their own benefit.

"What? No way...!" she says while widening her eyes—she's shaking.

She knows what happens to those who see spirits, I assume. The first thing I need to do is calm her, so I place myself in front of her and look her in the eyes as I fall on my knees so she can look at me better.

"No need to be afraid. Your secret is safe with me... well, with us, I should say. I assume everyone here agrees?"

"No need to even ask, big bro! Even if my life is threatened, I'll never talk!"

"Neither will I. So don't worry... okay?" Emilia says while hugging Lise, making her shaking stop, and calming her down for good.

"I-It's fine... my mother always told me to keep it a secret, unless I wanted my life to be in danger, so..."

"Sorry, I didn't want to scare you like that."

"It's fine. I wouldn't know how to word myself either if I were in your shoes... so, can you see them as well, Sirius? Is that why you know?"

"I'm colorless, so spirits are not very fond of me."

"Oh... my bad," she says, while looking sad. If there's anything I can say about Lise, it's that she wears her emotions on her sleeve.

"No need to apologize. The reason I know is because I've met someone who can see them as well, and their feelings towards it all are not much different than yours."

"Have you really met someone like me?!"

"Yes, a female adventurer. She also hides her ability to see spirits from others."

"Do those spirits have anything to do with Lise's problem?"

"Mhm. As far as that female adventurer told me, spirits tend to be jealous creatures, you see."

"Spirits are meant to be great beings. Is it really the case that they're subjected to petty human emotions like we are?"

"Unfortunately, that seems to be the case."

Fia told me back then that spirits would only help her whenever she would cast wind magic, but tried their best to make it impossible for her to cast any other type of spell. Since Lise's fire spell is being completely thwarted, I could only assume that the only thing that was keeping her back were the spirits, preventing her from casting anything besides water-related spells.

"I assume you can see and hear them, Lise. Could you tell me how the spirits act and look whenever you try to cast fire spells?"

"Well... now that you mention it, when we use water magic, the spirits seem to gather happily around me, but whenever I try to cast fire magic, they seem almost hostile to the very act. "

"You might've not noticed since you were concentrating on chanting the spell, but I am pretty sure that the spirits are the ones preventing you from casting fire spells, as they are probably jealous and want you to cast their attribute exclusively."

"Would the spirits do something like that? Really?" she says dejected.

Fia always laughed those things off since she was used to it, but Lise must feel betrayed, as the spirits must be the closest thing to her companions, and she trusts them, I'm sure.

"Well... if you really want to use fire magic, why don't you try asking the spirits not to interfere while you do so?"

Fia told me that she could plead with the spirits to let her use earth magic whenever she needed it, but she decided against doing it in general, because pleading by itself was already exhausting enough, let alone casting any spell later by the time the spirits agreed.

"...I'll give it a try!"

Lise immediately concentrated her magical power and called out to the spirits, "Please... just a little bit. Allow me to use fire just a little bit, I beg you!"

After completing the incantation and casting "Flame," a small ball of fire appears on her hand.

"I did it... I did it!"

"It's small, but that's definitely a proper 'Flame' incantation. Congratulations, Lise!"

"Well done, Lise!"

As Lise shouts and jumps overjoyed, the ball of fire suddenly disappears. Spirits truly are difficult beings to deal with, alright.

"Ah well, I expected this to happen anyway..." she says, in a somewhat sad tone of voice, but with a smile on her face.

"I assume that's one less problem to deal with on sis Lise's end?"

"It's too early to call this a victory, Leus."

I don't think this will count in Gregory's eyes. He'd simply say the ball is either too small, or the time she could sustain the spell was insufficient, and nothing would change in the end.

"I feel the same way. Sorry, Lise, but I don't think that'll be enough to solve your problem just yet either."

"Yeah... you're right. The ball was too small..."

"What are we going to do then? I'd rather not see Lise upset again!" shouts Leus as him and Emilia look at me once more.

I need to think of a solution soon, or I can see Leus coming to blows with Gregory so... okay, maybe we shouldn't try to "fix" Lise herself, but perhaps her environment instead?

"How about you transfer to our class?"

This is when knowing people comes in handy. Professor Magna already has a good opinion of me, and she is acquainted with the headmaster, so if I explained the situation with Lise to him, maybe she could help us out and allow her to change her from Aion to Kalaris.

"That sounds like a great idea! Let's do that!"

"Mhm! That way Lise would feel safer for sure!"

"Wait a minute, guys! It's a good idea, but changing classes is not as easy as it

sounds!" shouts Lise in a panic. Then again, I'm just another student here, so no wonder she reacted that way.

"Though you have a point, if you truly want to change classes, I'd ask you to place your faith in me and let me handle the issue for you. So?"

"Well, if I could, I'd definitely love to be in the same class as you three."

"Sounds like a plan, then I'll start pulling some strings tomorrow. Just try to endure your situation for a bit longer, okay?"

Maybe I won't be able to do anything, but if I tell the headmaster, then I'm sure something will be done, at the very least. I also make sure to warn her about Gregory, and tell her to stay well away from the man.

"Um, why are you doing all of this for me, though? I may be a noble, but my family isn't rich or anything like that, and I can see spirits, which only makes me... ouch!"

Before she could finish her sentence, I lightly hit her head, "I don't really care about your social status, or your condition. You're Emilia's friend, and that's all I need to know to help you out."

Helping her helps Emilia as well. She'll be a good friend to her, and this'll be invaluable for her future. Besides, it doesn't sit well with me that she's being manipulated by the whims of that man.

"Thank you... very much..."

"You can thank me once it's all over. Anyways, it's almost dinner time, so would you like to join us?"

"Like, here? Wouldn't you prefer going to the cafeteria for that?"

"No need to do that. We're explicitly inviting you to dine with us, so I'd take the chance if I was you."

"After sampling his cake, I bet you'd be looking forward to what other wonders he can cook. I can assure you it's way better than the cafeteria's food."

"Cake...? Oh God, I'm starting to salivate," she says while nodding.

Children never hide how they feel, that's always been something I like about

them.

"Anything specific in mind you'd like me to cook, guys?"

"I want to eat some meat!"

"Okay, we'll have a hot pot with some meat and veggies. Leus, go get some meat in the forest."

"Got it! I'll be right back!"

"I'll go and wash the vegetables, Lord Sirius."

While everyone splits up to do what they need to do, Lise, who is simply waiting for everything to be done, goes to Emilia so they can speak.

"Um, Emilia, is Sirius really going to be the one cooking? Aren't you his servant? Shouldn't you be the one...?"

"I cook sometimes, but Lord Sirius tends to be the one who cooks. In fact, the one who thought of that cake recipe was none other than him."

"Wait, he's the one who baked that?! Wow, he really does feel like a motherly figure, doesn't he?."

I can understand why she's weirded out. Normally when you have servants, you leave the household tasks to them. Then again, I'm not one who follows convention anyway. I'll do what I feel is best for me.

Time to boil some water, make the broth, and... done. Look at Lise, she's staring at the pot with a sparkly look in her eyes. This must be the first time she's seen something like this, because I can tell from a mile away that she's ready to dig in.

"Wow... it looks delicious. So I should take what I want to eat into this plate and then have it, yes?"

"You can take what you want directly from the pot if you want."

"Directly from the pot? Is that okay...?"

"This dish is meant to be eaten with family and friends, so whatever makes you feel more comfortable, really."

"With friends... okay! I don't mind taking it directly from the pot, so I'll do just

that!"

She had some trouble navigating herself with the chopsticks, but once she started eating she didn't stop. The way in which she had the hot pot and the cake tells me that she really enjoyed both of them, and I'm very happy to know that.

"I can taste the meat and vegetables in the broth, and it's so delicious!"

"Let's have more meat, big bro!"

"Sure thing. Have as much as you want, there's plenty of everything left."

She ate so much that it makes me wonder what size her stomach is, but in the end, as long as she enjoyed the meal, that's all I really care about.

Once there's only broth left, we cook some noodles in it and finish the dish like that. Eventually we're done, and we all decide to close things up for the day.

"Good night, Lord Sirius. I'll be taking my leave now."

"Good night, big bro!"

"Um, errr... good night."

"Night night. Be careful on your way back."

Once I see them off, the place becomes eerily silent, but I return back inside the manor, and as I'm about to finish my homework for the day, I decide to check on one of the supposed empty rooms.

"I swear, every time she comes here I feel like more things appear out of thin air in this room..."

Her maid uniform is hanging on one of the walls, but there's clearly more personal stuff of hers lying around. In a way, it feels like she's trying to non-verbally tell me that she wants to move in and will do so at any time, but she's making friends at the dorm, and I don't want her to leave Lise by herself, so I won't let her come here for at least a few years. I know she wants to come, but that won't be allowed for a while, Emilia.

"Yeah, I know this is going to be a pain to deal with," I say as I close the door

to the room and go back to mine.

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The next day I make sure to arrive early to school, so I can go to the faculty room, where Professor Magna should be. Normally I'd pass this information to Will, our friendly headmaster in disguise, but Magna is our homeroom teacher, so I thought telling her about this issue would be for the best. And by this issue, I obviously mean Lise and her class situation.

"I apologize for bringing this up out of the blue, but could you pass this information along to the school principal?"

"I will surely do so, though I must say that I find you coming here just a few days after classes started to be quite weird, indeed. You're a special one, that's for sure."

"I simply would like to stay true to what I believe should be done. In any case, here's a little something for both you and the headmaster in exchange for your time."

"Ohhhh?! I mean! Ahem... I appreciate the gesture, but this could be taken as bribery, and you know."

I could tell the moment she placed his eyes on the cake that she has a sweet tooth.

"Oh, that couldn't be farther from the truth, Professor. This is something I made myself, I tend to do this from time to time."

"You're telling me this is handmade? Interesting, this has to be the first time I see such interesting shapes and patterns on a cake, so it must be true."

"My siblings, or servants, I should say, love this, but I was hoping to know what an adult who is not related to me would think of it, so..."

"So you'd like to know what I think of the cake? Sure, that can be arranged. However, if I were to accept your generosity for free, it would be considered as an act of bribery, so give me a price, whatever it may be, in exchange."

"Hmmm, I haven't really given it much thought. Could you give it a try first and then judge how much you'd pay me for this?"

"Confident, aren't we? I will warn you though, I'm picky with my sweets," she says with the most serious expression on her face I'd ever seen.

I'm confident that she'll like this, and now that the "trap" is set, I just have to wait to see how she reacts to it once she gives it a try.

Once lunch time arrives, as I'm about to head to the cafeteria along with Emilia and Leus, Professor Will approaches me.

"Greetings, Sirius. There's something I'd like to talk to you about, so could you come with me for a second?"

I know what he'll want to talk about, so I tell the siblings to go ahead without me, so they don't have to hear any details of what's going on with Lise once more.

"Very well, Lord Sirius. I'll be sure to order the usual sandwich you pick for yourself, okay?"

"I'll leave that to you. Also, could you check on Lise as well, if you don't mind?"

"Got it, big bro! I wonder how her practical classes went today..."

"As long as she's not feeling down, I think it'll be fine. Anyways, we won't keep you longer, Lord Sirius."

Professor Will simply waits and watches, while Leus and Emilia bow towards us and head to the cafeteria. "It appears Miss Lise made good friends," he says.

"You know her?"

"Let's just say we know each other, yes. Should we move somewhere else to talk?"

I follow him to the section reserved for teachers exclusively. At the end of the long hallway there's the headmaster's office, and Magna's room is around as well, the same place where I went this morning to ask him about this matter.

"I don't have a room for myself, so let's use Professor Magna's for the time being," he says while making his way to Magna's room.

Once we arrive, I see Magna has already prepared tea and other

refreshments, as it appears Will has told her he'd come in advance.

Will and I sit on opposite sides of the room, and once Magna is done brewing some tea, Professor Will suddenly takes his earrings off, revealing his true form, and returning his ears to their normal elven-state. That finally shows me how he managed to hide himself, and Lordvael, clearly noticing that I caught on to the trick, simply smiles and nods a little.

"Heh, I knew you'd realized who I was long before I did this. When did you notice?"

"I was already imagining it could be the case during the interview, but your entrance ceremony speech erased my doubts. Though I can't help but ask why you decided to reveal yourself to me now, of all times."

"I'd be lying if I said I'm not interested in getting to know you better!" he says, his eyes gleaming with genuine excitement, as if I were some sort of toy he really wanted. "Though I'd like to stay and chat for a while, I'd rather get to the main reason you're here, which is Miss Lise. Professor Magna over here told me that she's apparently not having the greatest time in her class," he continues.

"Indeed. We met yesterday, but it was clear that she wasn't having a very good experience over there so far."

"Gregory doesn't seem to be too keen on helping her out either... but what am I expecting from that man..."

"I think the sooner this is resolved the better, which is why I proposed the idea of having her change classes."

Lordvael simply nods to what I have to say, "I agree, which is why I sent Magna to talk to Gregory about it, but..."

"...Things didn't work out, I presume?"

"Gregory, and I think he has a point, said that he's still trying to gain all of his students' trust, and that he'd rather not have any interference at such a critical moment in time."

I know that if Lordvael had the authority, he would've already changed her from her class instead of sending Magna to negotiate with Gregory, which

means that there must be a reason this isn't as easy as it seems. There could be other options, but I am curious to know...

"I wasn't aware that Lise was that important to Professor Gregory. What's the reason?"

Though the possibility of him knowing she can see spirits is one of them, the general answer would be that he simply thinks it'll be good to have someone of noble status such as her nearby.

Lordvael's gaze turns into a serious one, "Before I answer that question, I'd like to ask you how much you're aware of Miss Lise's... circumstances, let's say."

"She mentioned that she was of commoner origins, but recently became part of the aristocracy."

"She must trust you quite a bit to be able to tell you that much in such a short amount of time."

I personally found that strange too, but the only reason behind that I can imagine is because Emilia has been giving her a very positive impression of me. Maybe she went overboard?

"Okay, then let me answer with another question: what do you gain from helping her out?"

Though I know he thinks I might have other motives in mind to befriend her, I'll simply tell him the truth, "She's Emilia's friend, and her friends are mine as well. We already ate together, and I think I understand her pain and want to help as much as I can, that's all."

She also happens to be understanding of the situation Leus and Emilia are facing, and doesn't mind the relationship we have going on between each other, so that's another reason.

"Would you need a reason to help a friend, sir?"

"A friend, huh?" he says while turning his gaze towards the window, exhaling while doing so.

"I believe her circumstances are... complicated, to say the least. I fear Gregory knows of this, and he's trying to curry her favor as a result."

"Complicated circumstances...?"

"I suppose you have the right to know, since you're now involved in this mess. Would you like me to tell you?"

"I'll hear those if she chooses to confide in me one day. All I really care about right now is that class change."

Knowing that I really don't care about her hidden potential, both Lordvael and Magna nod.

"I respect your drive, Sirius. And because of that, I have an idea I want to propose to you."

"And what might that be?"

"It's an almost forgotten rule in our school, but teachers can choose a single student from another class so they can add them to their own. This is what we call 'Draw.'"

This "battle" of sorts called "Draw" is apparently a very old school rule, in which each class chooses a bunch of representatives so they fight each other, and whoever wins can recruit a student from the losing class.

"It all started back when a professor claimed that they could raise a student from another class better than the other professor. Normally you'd think professors would battle each other because of this, but that's strictly prohibited."

"So technically, we could invoke a Draw, and if you won, you could recruit Lise from Aion, though there are reasons this rule is not used nowadays, you see..."

"The professors must agree to this, and the students themselves must agree as well."

"There's always a case where one side wants a student, but the other doesn't even want to think of the possibility, so they simply refuse, making these Draws almost a thing of the past nowadays."

"We fear that Gregory might not be interested in any students from my class."

"How about Mark from the Hortia family?"

"Though I think Mark possesses many traits Gregory would like, his core personality is definitely not compatible with the man."

"How about we simply provoke him to make it so only Lise is involved in this exchange? There's many rumors about the man, and maybe threatening him to prove some of them true could make him turn the cheek."

"Blackmailing Gregory? Now that's something I wouldn't expect coming from you."

"Oh no, we'd be doing nothing of the sort. We'd just have a conversation. Perhaps... let's say that we have proof that he's engaged in... irregular activities and actions..."

"Just like that?"

"Mhm."

Magna doesn't look enthused by the idea, but both Lordvael and I are furiously grinning.

"Heh! Interesting to see that you and I were thinking about the same thing," he says while taking a piece of paper out of his pocket and dropping it onto the floor.



Magna picks up the paper, and after giving it a quick read, he looks at the headmaster, stunned, "Isn't this the document that Gregory submitted to the accounting department?"

"Oh no! The piece of evidence I had against Gregory just fell out of my pocket! How could I! Hopefully the right person picks it up and uses it!"

"This unprecedented usage of funds is unheard of! Has Gregory been blackmailing the accounting department as well?"

The document in question is a letter directed to the accounting department, demanding them to overlook certain expenditures made by Gregory. Manga seems conflicted about using this information, but to nudge her over to the right side, I decide to ask her...

"By the way, Professor Magna, did you enjoy what I gave to you?"

"What?! O-Oh! Of course I did, Sirius! What kind of food was that, exactly?!" she says, shouting, making the air of tension in the room suddenly disappear.

"It's a cake, but obviously with my special touch."

"You're telling me that that exquisiteness was a cake?! I'm used to hard pieces of... of tasteless bread to be called so, not that!"

"Glad to know you liked it."

"It was indeed a wonderful thing. Um, I was thinking about the payment and maybe five silver coins...? No, one gold coin I'd say is what it's worth!"

"...What?"

Though she tries to force the gold coin on me, maybe I should've told her that the cost of the ingredients didn't go beyond a bunch of copper coins. A gold coin is the equivalent of a hundred thousand yen in my old world, why would she pay this much for it?

"I-I think you're going overboard. It was just a slice of cake, so a single silver coin would already be too much, I think."

"It is worth that much to me. In fact, if you think it's too much, would you mind making it once more for me?"

Nice, the bait worked even better than I expected. Now I just need to deliver the final blow...

"Oh, I wouldn't mind at all, ma'am, but Lise's issue is definitely taking a toll on me, and until it's done I don't think..."

"Let me talk to Gregory post-haste! I'll leave the rest to you, headmaster!" she says while bolting out of the room and heading to Gregory's room, slamming his door.

"Things sure are getting interesting. So? Let's assume he agrees to the Draw, who do you think should fight?"

"Considering I'm the one who proposed this whole idea, I think it should be me."

"I'd ask you if you think you're confident enough, but that'd probably be insulting. Is there any way I can help?"

"As long as you oversee the match, I'll take care of the rest."

Apparently much of the final decision falls onto the one who accepts the challenge, but I'm sure that it'll be difficult for Gregory to pull a stunt on us if the headmaster is the one overseeing the whole ordeal.

"Understood. There's also something very, very important I'd like to ask you as well, Sirius," he says with an intimidating voice, which I wasn't expecting at all. Had he the intent to kill me, he could've done so already.

"I also want a cake from you! And a bigger one this time, yes?!"

...And all of his intimidating presence evaporates. It appears, in any case, that the ultimate weapon of bribery is cake in this world. I thank the lack of sweet things in this world for that. I can't believe I can turn a 400 year old elf on my side with such a simple thing.

Once classes are done, we're given documents related to the Draw. Apparently Gregory somehow accepted, and Lise is the only student that will be at stake in this competition. I'm glad things worked out fast.

It doesn't appear like there'll be much of a need to prepare, so the duel will be taking place tomorrow.

"Though I confirmed with the headmaster that the rules we decided were appropriate, we don't know what Gregory might do, so stay alert, no matter what," Magna told me when she gave me the documents.

We all decided to gather at the Diamond Manor, where I told the siblings and Lise of what happened, and about tomorrow's Draw, which made Lise lose her mind a little.

"I'm so sorry you're going to have to go through this!"

"Considering I'm the one who came up with this idea without consulting you first, I should probably be the one apologizing."

"N-no, no! Thank you so much for going through all this trouble for someone like me... I'm happy, really!"

Though we technically have nothing to lose here, if we do lose, the discrimination against her will most likely get worse, so I'd better win this one.

Leus clenches his fist, excited, "Does this mean I can fight too, big bro?"

"Considering it's a three against three, then yes, I do expect you to participate."

The rules stated on the paper are as follows:

- Three people from each class must be chosen to participate.
- Only spells up to intermediate level can be used.
- Any physical weapons will be made out of wood. Other weapon types will be requisitioned from the referee or the professor in charge.
- The match will be decided by complete inability to fight on one end, or whenever the referee feels like it should end.
- No matter the outcome, we want a big cake after.

Leaving aside that last rule, which has been crossed out, most of these seem normal enough, though there could be loopholes. I was expecting something worse, but I feel like we're being taken lightly because they think they're wildly superior, so whatever. For the time being, I'll simply exercise caution.

"If three people must fight, then it's decided. Big bro, sis, we fight!"

"Indeed. We'll fight for Lise's sake."

"The best way to solve every problem!"

Despite the determination of the siblings, Lise remained confused as the center of the situation.

Lise looks troubled, and I feel for her. I would also feel that way if suddenly three people you barely know jumped to fight for your sake all of a sudden. Though I must admit that part of the reason I want to do this is out of my own selfishness, and not entirely out of the goodness of my heart.

"Just pray for us to win, and that's all we'll need," I tell her.

"I-I will," she answers while looking down. Reminding me of one of my old cadets back when I was in my old world, I feel compelled to pat her on the head, "No need to look so sad. Just leave the rest to your friends, okay?" I say.

"Ye-Yes... do your best tomorrow!" she says, with more energy than before.

"No one can resist Lord Sirius' petting. Can I have a round when you're done with her, my Lord?!"

"Me too, me too!"

Looking at this scene makes her gaze at the siblings with a smidge of envy, but quickly enough she gazes off into the distance. The headmaster said her circumstances were complicated, and hopefully one day she will open up to us. For the time being, however, it's totally fine if she wants to keep things to herself.

"Well then, let's prepare ourselves for tomorrow. I assume you'll stay to dine with us before you leave, yes?"

"Yes! Ah... i-if you don't mind, that is..."

"Sis Lise has been eagerly waiting for today's dinner, so you gotta do some tonkatsu today, big bro."

"You get it, Leus. Very well, go and get what we need," I tell him.

"I'll prepare the breadcrumbs, Lord Sirius," Emilia says, as she heads towards the kitchen.

Having decided all of our roles, as we're in the middle of cooking, I hear Lise whispering "Thank you."

Let's hope you can say it out loud tomorrow with a smile on your face, Lise.

The next day we head to where the duel will take place, which is the school's arena. It pretty much looks like the Roman Colosseum, and it's nowadays barely used for its intended purpose, though students can ask for permission to use it, if they so wish. Currently, it's mostly used for events and festivities related to the city of Elysion.

Emilia, Leus, and I are currently standing in the middle of the arena, waiting for our opponents to arrive.

"Do we really need to do this here? This place is gigantic," Leus says.

"You know the reason, Leus," I say as I point towards the seats of the arena: on one side the members of the Kalaris class are seated, while facing them on the opposite side are the members of the Aion class.

Normally the entirety of both classes wouldn't be here, as other classes are having normal schedules right now, but Gregory insisted on having everyone see the duel, so that's why both of our classes are present in their entirety. I assume he wants to do this to "show us the difference between our skill sets and social standing" if they win.

Fortunately, our classmates seem to be supportive enough to forget about all of that.

"Sirius, do your best!"

"Fight, Emilia!"

"Big bro! Boss! There is only victory!"

Meanwhile, the kids in the Aion class are commenting on how dirty we are, about how we're "making them waste their time," and so on and so forth.

Lise is sitting at the very edge of her class, her hands simulating prayer.

"Lise... just you wait. We'll win, I'll be sure to..." Emilia says while clenching her fists.

"Just fight like you're used to and we'll have no issues, understood?"

"Oh! Yes, apologies."

"Um, so when are the others coming, again?" Leus says, clearly impatient.

We've been waiting here for a while now, we've even done some warm-up exercises and are ready to go, but these people just refuse to appear.

Just as I'm about to go and ask someone to get them here, we spot the teachers heading our way with what seem to be our opponents, at last.

"Apologies for the wait," Will says.

"Making the failure and his two dogs wait matters not."

"I'm not done with you, Gregory!" says Magna, as she starts arguing with Gregory.

Magna doesn't seem to be very happy right now, and neither does Gregory.

"We're really sorry for the wait, Sirius, but there were some... disagreements, you see," says Will, as he approaches us.

I can tell. We're wearing school uniforms and holding wooden swords, but two of our opponents are clad in full iron armor.

There were no rules that stated anything about armors, so technically that's fine, but they're completely covered in armor, even their faces, so it's difficult to even tell if these are actual students or not.

The main issue is that there's six of them, though. Astro is there as well, along with his two attendants, and the three of them wearing iron breastplates.

Professor Will shows me the paper with the ruleset, and I read the first one: Three people from each class must be chosen to participate, but they may bring their retainers if they wish, and these won't count as participants.

The first thing that comes to mind is that Gregory most likely used special ink to hide the letters, because that last part definitely wasn't there when I last checked the rules.

I know there's no photocopying tech in this world, but this reaches levels of borderline satire at this point.

Gregory seems to be insistent on Professor Will to start the match: apparently he's our referee.

"Wait! I can't accept this! Not yet!"

"Enough with your petty complaints, professor. The rules are clear about this."

"Is this how nobles act, nowadays? First the armor, and then this... this shameless act on your end? Pathetic."

"When the lowborn try to reach for the sun, they must be reminded that they'll get burnt, Professor."

"Now now, let's all calm down for a moment."

Professor Will's intervention makes the both of them step back, still annoyed at each other.

"He's the one complaining about a rule that was written as it is!"

"It's still his opinion, and you should respect it. Shouldn't we ask the one who will be influenced by this sudden turn of events first, though?" Will says as he turns around and looks at me.

His look says it all. He knows I won't mind, since he thinks I'll be able to take them on.

"Do you object to any of the rules, Sirius? You're the one who will be fighting, after all."

"Considering we aren't really losing anything out of this, I say we should go for it."

"Sirius?!" Magna shouts.

We could simply ask some of our classmates to join us, but they only have their uniforms, and I don't want them to get involved in something I started, which is also the reason why I didn't ask Mark for any help this time around either.

"What about you, Emilia? And Leus?"

"I'll go with whatever Lord Sirius desires."

"Same here."

"Very well then, let us proceed with the current state of affairs."

"Hmph! Your posturing won't be of much use, dogs."

Will and Gregory step away, while Magna takes a while longer to regain her composure, "Sirius, this isn't fair. You should forfeit. It's wise to know which battles you should choose, and this isn't one of them," she says.

"If we back out now, it won't turn out well for Lise. We must move forward, professor."

"Please leave it to us, professor. Lord Sirius has a point."

"We'll take all of them just fine! Trust us!"

After a long sigh, she then places her hands on my shoulders, "Very well, take care and fight well, but the moment I feel like things will get dangerous, I will intervene, understood?"

"It'll be fine, we'll win."

Magna then leaves, and we place our attention on our opponents. Astro is grinning while pointing towards us.

"Hey, you, the animals over there. Do you truly intend to face me in battle?"

"You think we're here to sightsee, or what?"

"Hah! Very well, I'll show you the teachings of Professor Gregory. We'll crush you under our heel, and then maybe you'll learn your lesson, trash. You'll regret not choosing to run away like the dogs you are."

Judging by his attitude, it doesn't seem like he'll cooperate too much with his classmates, which is good. I can also tell that this guy loves to make a habit out of bullying those whom he considers to be inferior.

I can more or less predict their strategy. The armored dudes will serve as

tanks to attract attention, while the attendants with breastplates are meant to be mobile melee attackers. Astro doesn't seem to be carrying any weapons with him, so I'm going to assume that he'll provide magical support from the rear. I need to be careful with him. He has a double-affinity, so he probably has an ace or two up his sleeve.

You should feel honored, you incompetent fools! You'll have the privilege of facing Astro El Melloi himself, who has mastered two magical attributes!"

"Big bro, can I kill that guy?"

"Not if I slash him in half with a 'Air Slash' before you have the chance..."

"I understand how you two feel, but please just stick to the plan."

"Fine..." both say in resignation.

Seeing how his words were having no effect, Astro seemed to be a little upset, but I had to pet those two to keep their rage in check.

"The 'Draw' between Kalaris and Aion will begin now!"

I know our classmates are worried about the difference in numbers, but we've trained for situations like this. There could be ten of them, and it'd still be easy for us to deal with them.

"Let the match... begin!" says Professor Will while lowering his hand, beginning the Draw.

"Deal with those two dogs quickly, and I'll make quick work out of the colorless."

"As if I'll allow you to touch us! I invoke you, wind! 'Air Shot!'"

"Taaaaaaake thiiiiiiiis!"

"Ugh!?"

Before they can even react, Leus casts "Boost" on himself and rushes to one of the armored men, while Emilia shoots an "Air Shot" towards the other one, blowing both of them away.

"As long as we're here, we won't let you touch Lord Sirius!"

"If you want to fight him, you'll have to go through me first!"

Both of them look happy to release some of that pent-up frustration they had on these people. I bet they feel like knights in shining armor protecting their lord.

The two armored men stand up once more, and the others are surprised to see how they were blown away so quickly in the match.

"What was that just now?"

"Those... those two are fast, alright..."

"Just shut up and attack them both at the same time! You! Restrain the colorless for me!"

Astro's command makes everyone regain their composure, and they divide themselves into two groups. One surrounding the siblings, while the other is going for me.

"What? None of my attacks are connecting! Why?!"

"What's wrong with this year's brats?!"

And there it is. What they said, along with their height and tone of voice reveals their true nature. These must be students from the school, sure, but way older than we are without a shadow of a doubt.

We could strip their helmets off and reveal their identities, but I don't think it could cause a disqualification, especially when there was no rule that stated people from other classes couldn't participate.

The siblings are being kept quite busy with the armored men and some of Astro's retainers. The main issue is the weapons they're carrying, which are virtually useless against their armor, and now that they lack the element of surprise, they won't have it as easy as they had it before.

The biggest problem was holding back. They had only faced me or monsters as opponents before, so they rarely held back like they would against a human opponent. Unlike the bandits they fought before, they couldn't chop off arms, or cut them with knives.

The issue with this whole thing is that the siblings must hold back. This isn't like that time when we fought bandits in the middle of nowhere and we could

fully defend ourselves, but they can't go all out and break bones in this fight like they could with the others.

"Good! Keep them busy like that! I summon thee, the fire from within me..."

Astro, thinking that everything's going according to plan, starts casting "Flame Lance." I find it impressive in its own way that he can do it, which means that, like Mark, he must've undergone quite the amount of training to be able to reach this point. A shame he's trying to cast such a spell without knowing who he's dealing with, though.

"I just need to make it easy for Lord Astro to hit the colorless... wait, wagh?!"

One of his attendants rushes towards me with his blade, clearly underestimating me, but he swings badly, to which I quickly dodge and grab his wrist, throwing him in the ground. I then make my palm face Astro, who is too concentrated on his chanting, and...

"Blow him to pieces... 'Impact!'"

"May the flame spear pierce his... uogh?!"

My "Impact" manages to hit him, interrupt his chant, and blows him away. He doesn't take too long to stand up once more, now glaring at me with an intense anger in his eyes.

"Colorless fiend! Can't you keep him in check while I'm chanting, you useless piece of garbage?!"

"A-Apologies, My Lord! He's much stronger than I anticipated!"

"Enough excuses! I want you to keep him busy, no matter the cost!"

The attendant rushes me once more and swings his sword, this time with more vigor than before, because the speed at which it moves is much faster. I find that interesting, so I decide to not dodge and instead parry it with my own.

"I will not let you do as you please any longer! I'll cut you to pieces!"

I can tell that he has a background in fencing, and this isn't his first rodeo with blades. While I find that respectable, and I also respect the hard work it took to reach this level, I think he could put that attitude of his into practicing his art rather than belittling others.

Something catches my attention while we trade blows, so I decide to tell him, “You rely too much on the weight of your blade for your attacks, making them weaker, but you swing fast, I’ll give you that.”

He opens his eyes wide, telling me all I need to know. I bet he’s used to practicing with a heavier sword, but he got used to its weight, and relies solely on that when he swings.

“Li-Like a colorless would ever say anything of use to me!”

“Right, I also forgot to mention that your grip is uneven. Be careful, because that could make the sword slip from your hands if you’re not careful.”

“Shut up! SHUT UP!”

His strikes suddenly get even faster and stronger, probably because I’ve angered him by telling the truth.

“All I need to do is buy time! You waste yours by talking to me, mongrel!”

I wouldn’t mind playing with him for a little while longer to judge his capabilities, but as he already stated, I don’t have time for that right now.

“This should do it...!”

“Graaahhh!”

The siblings blow away the last armored man, so that tells me I should finish up over here as well.

In order to get the advantage, I lightly hit the hilt of his blade from below, making it fly upwards.

"What?!"

"I told you, be careful with your grip."

I then punch him in the gut, making him faint on the spot.

The only one left standing is Astro. Our classmates are practically shouting, while the Aion people are throwing insults our way.

All that’s left is for me to interrupt Astro’s cast, and then get into melee range, ending the whole thing...

"I invoke the winds to shatter my enemies... 'Air Shot!'"

Looks like Astro already knew what I was planning and had a countermeasure prepared ahead of time, casting a beginner-level spell at me.

"Useless pawns! No matter! I'll deal with you lot using my skills!"

He shot two orbs of air at the same time, aiming for the siblings. While Emilia casts the same spell to cancel out the orb of air heading towards her, Leus raises his sword and stays in place, which probably means he's going to...

"Now!"

Leus then swings his sword downwards at an incredible speed, applying one of the old man's techniques we learned under his tutelage. Leus has keen senses, and knows exactly when to swing so the orb would be sliced in half, making it just a gust of wind by the time it reaches him, raising some sand around him, but nothing more.

"No way!" Astro groans as the arena grows silent.

Only very few are capable of the feat which Leus displayed just now, which is pretty much using a slash to cancel out a magical spell. The old man taught us this technique, but you need to have the courage to stand in the path of a casted spell, which is an accomplishment in and of itself. The hard part is that wind magic is nearly invisible to the naked eye, but Leus' senses managed to save the day on this one.

What's terrifying is that Liola was able to cut even intermediate-level spells. I swear, he's a monster in disguise.

"Hah! That was nothing compared to what an air ball from sis can do whenever she goes ballistic!"

"...Are you perhaps trying to imply something, Leus?"

"Eek! O-Of course not, sis! Of course not!"

"Hold on a moment, Leus! Why don't I show you what happens when I really 'go ballistic.' Come here!"

"No! Please! Anything but the iron claw! Aaaargh!"

Seems like Emilia overheard Leus' snide remark. Sorry buddy, you did it to yourself.

Astro doesn't seem too enthused either as he watches the siblings run around, clenching his fists in frustration, "You subhumans! How dare they make a mockery of me?! Unforgivable!"

"You do understand the situation you're in, right?"

"If only I could use my flame lance, I'd obliterate you all! ...In fact! How about you and I finish things up one-on-one? What do you say, colorless?"

He appears unwilling to admit defeat, despite the obvious advantage.

"Owww... what's this guy talking about, big bro? It's okay, leave him to me," says Leus, as he finally manages to escape from Emilia's iron claw.

"Oh, don't worry. I'm fine having a one-on-one."

We could easily win right now, but unless I show him some of the things that I'm truly capable of, he won't be able to accept any sort of defeat. It's better to play along with his stupid games, that way we'll save ourselves a headache after I'm done with him.

Everyone seems surprised except for Gregory and Astro, who grin the moment I accept the proposition. Will also seems to be enjoying himself, by the looks of it.

"Wait a minute, Sirius. Why would you do that?" Magna says.

"You heard the man. Change the format of the competition to a duel between Astro and the colorless!"

"...Very well. He agreed to it, so I might as well. Emilia, Leus, sit this one out. Do not interfere, or I'll disqualify Sirius, understood?"

"I will admit that you're a rather quick caster, but your spells lack power. You won't be able to beat me with anything you have."

"You're implying I'll even let you cast anything in the first place."

"Silence! True magic is meant to change the course of a battle in a single blow! I'll show you!"

He then starts casting flame lance. Normally one-on-ones expect both participants to fire their spells at the same time so they clash, so while I could cast before he does, I decide to concentrate power on my hand, all while whispering random gibberish so it sounds like I'm chanting something while I wait for him.

"Pierce my enemies with a raging fire! 'Flame Lance!'"

The lance he casts is much bigger than the one I saw from Mark, embodying his concept of glass cannon magic. If I took a direct hit from that, it'd burn my uniform to a crisp.

The speed of the projectile is too slow, though. Normally I'd dodge to one side, but that would mean losing, and I can't do that this time around.

After investigating the magic that flew towards me with "Search," I raised my right palm to face him and cast a spell of my own.

"Shatter my enemies... 'Launcher!'"



This magic mimics a grenade launcher, a weapon from my past life, and produces a shockwave upon impact. However, the shockwave is clearly smaller than that of the Flame Lance and was easily swallowed up by the spear of flames flying towards me.

"I told you, it's all about the first strike... what!?"

The magic I cast is also swallowed up, but it expands and explodes within the Flame Lance itself, causing it to be eliminated by the shockwave.

Looks like my spells can deal with intermediate-level magic, though I still need to understand what happened just now.

Regardless, this is something I was planning to test with Mark to see if he could help me, but thanks to Astro, now I've got most of the information I needed.

"No way! Impossible! I am a double-affinity magician, and you're telling me my superior spell didn't work against his?!"

Though I'm ready to fight until I can't, Astro now seems confused, as if he's completely lost it. His eyes staring at the distance while he casts yet another Flame Lance.

The flames around him are bigger than the last time, but they're taking the form of a sphere, not a spear. Whatever the case, it doesn't seem like whatever he's intending to use against me is being cast correctly.

"This is bad! His magic flow is getting out of control! We must stop this!"

"No! Don't! Astro, you may disgrace yourself, but defeat him no matter the cost!"

"What are you gonna do, Astro?"

Magna is trying to stop this, but Gregory is preventing it, all while Will is standing by, simply watching to see where this goes without saying anything—it appears he's testing me.

"Run away, big bro!"

"Allow me to help you, Lord Sirius!"

"Step back, I'll be fine."

I kneel and draw a summoning circle on the ground. Meanwhile, Astro continues to concentrate his power on the ball, to the point where the color is rushing out of his face. He's exhausting his mana, and soon enough he won't be able to control the ball, possibly making it explode.

"Hnghh! Aaaaaaaaah!"

He then finally releases the spell and throws it my way. This time Launcher won't save me. Luckily, I already drew the circle, so I start transferring power to it.

"...Earth.'"

With it, I create a wall before me, to protect me from the damage. I make two more, making sure there are gaps in between them, but Leus doesn't seem to be very excited with my idea, especially because the walls I summoned are pretty thin.

"They're too thin! The ball will blow them apart!"

"Don't worry. One more should do the trick... there!"

As soon as I'm done with the wall, the ball explodes with a thunderous roar, raising the entire ground around us, limiting all visibility.

"...I'll use 'Wind Storm,' because I can't see a thing," says Will, as he immediately casts the spell, clearing all of the lingering dust and sand still in the arena.

"Wind Storm" is supposedly an intermediate-level spell, meant to summon blades of wind to cut everything within an area, but Will altered it so it's harmless. He didn't even need to chant anything, which is definitely one of the reasons he has the reputation he has.

"Hmm... it appears the match is settled."

Astro lies on the ground, exhausted. His friends are also out of it, and we're the only ones left standing, so it would appear we've won.

"Do I need to state the winner's name, Gregory? Or is this good enough for you?"

"...Hmph!"

"Keep your part of the bargain, and don't worry, I'll make sure to tell the headmaster about every irregularity that went on during this match," Will says.

"Do as you please! I'm leaving!"

Gregory storms out of the arena along with a bunch of the Aion class, leaving Astro and the others lying on the ground, not even showing a shred of remorse for leaving them there.

"...I guess there's a reason all of them are lumped in that class with him," I say, as I heave a sigh.

"Indeed. Though his students will be punished in time, I'll make sure that punishment befalls Gregory as well," Will follows. "The match is over! Kalaris stands as the winner!" he then shouts, while shaking my hand. "My congratulations are in order. I must ask, though, how in the world did you manage to block that last spell?" he continues.

Those three walls I summoned at the beginning were indeed too thin to contain the ball, and would've been completely destroyed by the explosion.

"The spell was unstable, that's why. The excessive amount of mana poured into it prevented the spell from taking its intended lance form. As a result, it lost its inherent piercing power. However, the loss of power was compensated by the exponential increase in the strength of the flames, which in turn meant I needed to find a way to brace for the imminent explosion. If you want proof, check the fragments of the walls I created."

"Fragments? Come to think of it, there seem to be fewer fragments than I would have expected to see," Will says, curious.

"That's because I made sure to place a mix of sand and gravel between the walls, making them sturdier," I explain.

Pretty much a similar thing to what I did back when I fought with some guerillas. The impromptu walls we built back then were thicker than the ones I made here, and unless you brought a crane with a wrecking ball and hit them several times over, there's no way you could take them down.

"Huh, who would've known that this could be applied in such a way. It would appear I've learned something new today."

That's probably why Lordvael is so powerful. He seems open, or should I say excited, to learn anything he can.

My initial plan was to build a dome-like structure around Astro so he would give up, but oh well.

Will had more questions, but he had to leave to formalize the paperwork for the transfer that happened as a result of the Draw. Once he's gone, I see the siblings pushing Lise towards me.

"Lord Sirius! We've brought Lise with us!"

"C'mon sis Lise, get a move on!"

"He-Hey!? Slo-Slow down...! Aaah?!"

She trips over a rock, but before she falls on her face, I manage to catch her mid-air. Once she realizes in what position she's in, she takes a few steps back and blushes.

"Um, I... I want to thank you..."

"I'm happy to see you're glad about the outcome, but guys, don't push her around like that."

"Ri-Right. Sorry, Lise."

"My bad, sis Lise."

"I'm glad to see everything went fine in the end," Lise says with a smile, shaking her head a little to indicate that there's no need for them to apologize.

"We had our big bro with us, so of course it went fine!"

"And now that you'll be in our class, you'll become everyone's friend!"

"Huh? Everyone's... friend?"

Every time we mention friendship to her, she always freezes up a little.

"Mhm. You're not only Emilia's friend. Her friends are mine, too."

"Wouldn't... wouldn't you like to be our friend as well, sis Lise?"

"O-Of course I'd love to! It's just... I'm overcome with emotion right now..." she says, as she starts to tear up.

Before she can openly cry in front of us, Emilia rushes towards her and gives her a hug.

"Thanks, Emilia, but I need to do this properly," says Lise, shaking her head as she separates herself from Emilia, "Sirius, Emilia, Leus, thank you so much! I look forward to being friends with you all!"

Now that's the smile I wanted to see.

"Likewise. I'm looking forward to it," I reply.

Once she calms down a little, we have a brief chat, and eventually Magna approaches us, having taken care of the injured, "Miss Lise, I simply want to confirm if you have any objections to joining our class before proceeding."

"No objections, professor. I'm looking forward to joining the Kalaris class," Lise replied.

"Very well, then I'll file the necessary paperwork, but before that..." she then moves aside, letting all of our Kalaris classmates surround us.

"You guys are seriously something else! Astro is an arrogant fool, sure, but he's definitely good at magic, so I'm glad I found a friend and rival in you guys!" shouts one of them.

"And here I thought you'd be done for the moment I saw the difference in numbers..." says another.

"Big bro! Boss! Outstanding as usual!" shouts the group of demi-humans in unison.

Amidst the praise, Magna claps her hands to get everyone's attention, "Now now, everyone. I'd like to introduce the new student joining Kalaris from today. Let's welcome Lise."

Lise is gently pushed by her to face the others, and she turns around to look at us, still doubtful. We simply nod and smile towards her, and she understands that there's nothing to fear or any reason to be embarrassed. "He-Hello, everyone. I'm Lise, and I will be joining Kalaris starting from today. My attribute

is water, and I'm good at healing magic. Um... I'm pleased to make your acquaintance," she says, clearly nervous.

Everyone welcomes her with cheers and applause, welcoming a new friend to our class.

Will called me to go to Professor Magna's room by myself. I made sure to send Lise and the siblings to get things for a welcoming party this evening, which we'd have at the Diamond Manor.

"Welcome. Please, sit down. No need to be shy," Magna says, the moment I enter, making me feel like she's treating me as her superior for whatever reason.

"Thank you. Um, may I know the reason why I've been called here?"

"Considering you're directly involved in the matter, I thought about telling you about some things that happened recently as a result of the outcome of the Draw," says Willl.

"I appreciate the gesture, but I'm just a student, no? I'm not sure if I deserve to know..."

"I already said that I do seek your friendship, Sirius. This is a way for us to get closer, or would you rather keep your distance?" he asks.

Considering he's someone who finds learning fun, I could use this moment to my advantage. Lordvael is someone who is far stronger than I am at the moment, and I could have him teach me a thing or two if I play my cards right.

"Your clean win also secured the possibility of allowing us to take her away from Gregory without causing a scene, for which we are very grateful."

"Okay, got it. So? What do I need to know?"

"First and most obviously, Lise's transfer to Kalaris has been made official. Gregory can't object to it now, and the paperwork is done."

"The next one concerns Astro. He lost consciousness due to mana depletion, but he woke up not so long ago and should be back in the dorms as we speak."

"Good to know he didn't suffer too many injuries."

"You know the saying: you reap what you sow, and he reaped, alright. There's no need for you to worry about Astro. Besides, I bet this experience was a wake-up call for him, so hopefully that'll make him grow up a little."

Anyone would become arrogant like Astro is if they were born as nobles and with a double-affinity as well. Besides, Lordvael has known Astro since he was a child, so whatever he says about him is probably right.

"I'm not sure if winning like that against him was the right way of going about it."

He could try to get some revenge, but Will shakes his head as he pulls out a parchment out of one of his pockets.

"You don't have to worry about that. He signed this pledge not so long ago."

"A pledge... may I see it?"

The document pretty much says that Astro is banned from interacting or bothering Kalaris' students in any way, unless he wants Lordvael to notify his family of his misbehavior.

"Are you sure the threat of telling his parents will be enough for him to follow along?"

"His father is a strict man, and if I report anything to him, he'll most likely have Astro return home."

Considering he bent the rules to have an unfair advantage and still lost, I can see why a strict father would rather save face and recall his son rather than facing any further shame.

"It'll work because Astro enjoys his newfound freedom at the dorms, a privilege he did not have back at his home, which is quite far away from here, might I add. So I believe he'll follow the rules and keep his word."

"I think his classmates from Aion might tell his father anyway, though, considering they watched the Draw as well."

"I am certain that before anything reaches their ears, any rumors they try to spread will be quashed. I can safely promise to you that no harm will befall you or any of your friends after today's match, Sirius."

I bow to convey my gratitude. Going through the trouble of doing all that for the sake of a lowborn like me must've been tough, yet he still did it, and gave me a report in person, which I appreciated.

"The issue lies with Gregory, more than anything. Not only did he falsify documents, but he also riled up Astro, and pushed everyone in the arena to unhealthy limits."

Astro was apparently unaware of the rule changes up until the day of the match, when Gregory forced the armored men on him. At first, he apparently refused, but Gregory convinced him otherwise, which makes Astro look somewhat better in my eyes, but not much better. Also, just to confirm, the armored men were indeed older students, apparently fourth-years.

I swear, the more he tells me, the more I believe Gregory is an absolute idiot...

"May I ask why someone of such disposition is a teacher at this institution?" I inquire.

"He's never been this hideous, but the recent streak of events and knowing you and your retainers were the Draw opponents probably pushed him over the edge," Will says.

Considering I've been told that he's not very fond of demi-humans, and that he pretty much called me a "subhuman" because of my social class, I can imagine why he'd be upset. I just hope he doesn't develop a personal grudge towards us because of this.

"None of this is your or your friends' fault, Sirius. Gregory is the one in the wrong here, which is why I... decided to punish him. I'm also making sure to keep an eye on the man, because his actions have been rather... suspicious, as of late."

"I'm gonna assume it has to be something pretty big if you're keeping an eye on him, but I won't ask."

"And I thank you for staying out of it. Whatever the case, he's being monitored carefully, so I doubt he'll do anything to you that would evade my notice."

The main reason I enrolled here was to grow up facing the least amount of

danger possible, and that goes for Leus and Emilia as well, so this will be for the best.

"Well, that's pretty much everything, though there's something else I needed to mention..."

I know exactly what he's going to ask, "I assume you're talking about the cake?"

"Indeed. Just name your price, but get to it as soon as possible."

"I asked Sirius to make one for me first, Professor Will! How shameless of you!"

"I taught you all you know, so show some respect to your master and let him have his cake first."

"I may indeed be your disciple, but even I have some rights I can't concede!"

I decide to leave the room while those two argue about who will get their cake first.

"Well then, a toast, to Lise joining Kalaris!"

"Cheers!" everyone shouts.

Along with a toast of fruit juice, we now enjoy the fruits of our labor, which consists of a dinner for four people, as we're all celebrating for Lise's class change.

"Um, big bro, the meat is red here. Are you sure this is cooked?"

"That's roast beef, and it's supposed to look like that. Don't worry, it's cooked through."

"Whoa... this is so good! Can I have more?!"

"Just be sure to leave some for everyone else. Lise, go ahead and..."

...Nevermind. She's already placed some meat on her plate and seems to be enjoying it quite a bit.

"*Munch Munch* Aww, this ish gho good... delicious!"

"No need to try and keep appearances for us, go all-out, if you want. Besides, I'm pleased that you're enjoying the food."

That's a cook's greatest joy in life, after all. Seeing Lise's face turn red as she stuffs her face is a sight to be seen though, that's for sure.

After the noisy, but pleasant celebration ended, we started to clean up, until I noticed something, "Emilia, what's wrong with your tail?" I ask her.

"Huh!? Well... err..."

Normally her tail is groomed, unlike Leus who always has it ruffled, so it's weird to see hers like that.

"Why are you so red? It's not so big of a deal, is it, now?"

"I-I failed as your servant, Lord Sirius. I can't believe I couldn't keep my tail groomed in front of you..."

"No need to call yourself a failure. Here, come, I'll groom it for you," I say as I pick up her brush and sit on the living room's sofa, patting the spot beside me so she can sit there.

With her eyes sparkling excitedly, Emilia runs over to my side and sits where I tell her to, placing her tail on my thigh, and then I start brushing it.

"Hehe... fuehehehe.... Fuehehehehehe..."

Only family members or romantic partners can do this to demi-humans, which means how much I mean to Emilia... as a family member, that is.

"Man, I'm so jealous of you, sis," says Leus, looking from a distance.

"You'll have your turn as well, so just wait."

His tail shakes a little, but I bet he's trying his hardest to contain his

excitement.

After a few minutes I'm done, and Emilia stands up, starting to caress her tail, "I'm so happy right now..." she says.

"Okay, big bro, now's my turn!" he shouts while sitting down next to me, and I repeat the exact same things I did with Emilia, though Leus' fur is harder to comb than hers.

"Ohhh! There! That's the spot!"

Leus prefers a brush with stiffer fibers, which he and his sister are both quite particular about. Leus and Emilia have their own brushes, and you don't want to see them whenever the brushes are switched, because it puts them in a real bad mood.

Once I'm done grooming the siblings, I notice that Lise is staring at me, with quite the serious look on her face as well.

"You look like you have something to say."

"I do, actually. Would... would you make me your disciple as well?" she says, with a serious look on her face. She's clearly not joking.



"...You're kidding. Could you explain to me why?"

"Very well. My father forced me to enroll in this school, as I myself had no intention to do so before he decided my fate. Initially, I was simply aiming to pass the time here as best I could, calling as little attention to myself as possible, but... after seeing you, Leus, and Emilia fight, I came to the conclusion that I am here for a reason, and that is to help others, like you've helped me so far."

"And that's the reason you want to become my disciple?"

"Indeed. I'm afraid to admit this, but right now I am weak. I'm only useful when it comes to healing magic, and my intention is not to cower behind others to do the fighting for me, but to stand by their side, on equal terms."

The phrasing and cadence of her words makes me wonder if she had subconsciously been gathering this resolve in her mind before we'd met, and we were simply awakening them.

"You know what becoming my disciple would entail, yes? Even Leus, who tends to avoid complaining, even nags about our training from time to time."

"Hey, stop it, big bro!"

"I'm already aware of what you make these two go through. Though I am not sure if I'll be able to keep up with everyone, I'll definitely try my best, so please!" she shouts while standing up and bowing to me, alongside Emilia and Leus, who are giving me puppy-dog eyes, silently begging for me to grant her request.

Who would've thought that Lise and these two would grow so close in such a short amount of time?

"...What if I simply use you? You can see spirits, haven't you thought that I could take advantage of you for my own benefit?"

"Having known Emilia and Leus tells me that you're merely asking a rhetorical question. I do not believe you'd ever do that. Besides, even if you were to use me, I do not believe you'd do so out of malice, either."

At the very least, I do not intend to force her to do something she doesn't

want to do.

I think her main issue is that she's too trusting. Had it not been me, I don't know what would've become of her if she confided in other people. Besides that, I have already considered the possibility that, mainly because of her ability to attract water spirits, I could definitely heighten my abilities even further. The siblings are good friends with her, and I'm sure they'll be good rivals for each other so they can improve themselves as well.

"Very well, then I suppose I'll accept you."

"For real?!"

"Mhm, but I do not intend to go easy on you, so be ready to train like there's no tomorrow."

"I will! I hope I won't be a burden to everyone from now on, Sir Sirius!"

"I don't really think you need to address me like that. Why would you even do that?"

"You're technically above me since you're my instructor, and I can't really call you professor, since we already have professors at school. Besides, I think calling you Lord Sirius like Emilia does wouldn't sit right with either of us, so..."

"You're technically older than me, so I don't think it'd be a bad thing if you simply called me Sirius."

"You're my instructor, Sir Sirius, so don't pay me any mind."

"I suppose as long as you're okay calling me like that..."

And so, I gain yet another disciple. Her actual name is Fairlise, but Lise is the nickname everyone uses around her, and she's a water spirit-user.

Lise and the siblings hug each other, overjoyed by my decision. While they do, I think about my next steps with Lise. I need to train her to at the very least defend herself, as I assume if someone discovers her abilities, she might have to fight if push comes to shove. So first things first, she really needs to improve her stamina, so I'll adjust her training regime accordingly to understand her limits. Considering she has a different constitution than the siblings, this is going to add yet another layer of complexity to what I have to plan when it comes to

regimes, but that's enjoyable in its own way.

Emilia kept stroking her tail until she was about to return to the dorms, claiming that she wouldn't wash her tail ever again, which prompted me to try and joke with her a little, but well...

"You better wash your tail when you get back, you hear me?"

"Please, Lord Sirius! I beg of you to reconsider!"

"...Please tell me you're joking."

"But I don't want to ever forget the feeling of the brush against my tail! How about... yes! We could take a bath together, Lord Sirius! That way—!"

"Denied!"

Emilia, you're taking it too far. Stop.

Epilogue

It's been a few days since Lise became my new apprentice, and here she is today with us, running around the Diamond Manor.

"Good, keep it up. Remember to maintain your breathing stable, otherwise you're gonna have a rough time keeping up, and it'll hurt."

"Huff...huff...yes!"

At first glance she looks like an ordinary girl, but surprisingly enough Lise has more stamina than other children her age. According to her, she used to run around the mountains and fields with her mother, who was a former adventurer back in her hometown. She has a strong will, and the fact that she was okay eating that meal I made for her the other day, which was something she'd never seen before, without hesitation gave me some clues about her being this way. Whatever the case, that doesn't mean she's way better than other children. If we found ourselves in a dire situation, she wouldn't last for long.

In order to fix this issue, I'm having her run laps, just like I did with Leus and Emilia back in the day. Those two could last longer because they're Silver Wolves, but I adapted this training for Lise, since she's a human just like I am.

"Okay, last lap, Lise. Give me a final sprint!"

"Keep it up, Lise!"

"Go, Lise, go! I know this is tough, but you'll forget all about it by lunchtime!"

"Huff...yes!"

Leus and Emilia ran their laps with weights on their backs, and since they finished early, they're cheering for Lise as she struggles to do her last lap.

"I'm almost...there...!Ahh!?"

Before she finishes her lap, she trips and falls on her face, triggering Emilia and Leus to run towards her, but before they can check on her, I stop them and place myself in front of Lise, kneeling in front of her and looking at her.

"Can you stand up on your own?" I ask.

"Huff...I can...stand...up!" she struggles to answer.

"Okay. Be sure to take it nice and slow, and by yourself..."

"Yes, I-... I'll finish what I started..."

Lise then runs what's left and collapses, but before she falls to the ground, Emilia, who already had a towel in hand, catches her mid-air.

"Good job, Lise."

"Mhm, I... I did all I could..." she said with a smile on her face, as the siblings looked at her overjoyed by her finishing the course.

I was expecting less from her, to be honest. At first I made her run to her absolute limit, just to see where her stamina levels were at, and once I assessed that, I created a training regime for her. I've been making sure to have her go through a rough time with each session, mainly to test how determined she was, to see if she was simply carried away by emotions back when she pleaded to become my apprentice, as well as wanting to know how strong her desire was for self-improvement.

I also prepared for the eventuality that it'd be too much for her, but she never complained thus far, and tears have been shed, but so far she's done everything I've asked of her. I think part of the reason is because the siblings are there to encourage her, but she also seems to have drive of her own, and she's a tough nut to crack.

I touch her head and cast "Scan" to see if there's anything wrong with her as Emilia wipes her sweat, but as far as I can tell she's simply exhausted, nothing else. All I need to do is cast a regeneration spell later along with some rest time and she'll be back on her feet in no time.

"Morning training's over. Lise, take it easy, we'll make breakfast in the meanwhile."

"Okay... I'm starving, yeah..."

"I'm starving too!"

"Before that, let's all drink some water, yes?"

I tend to Lise in one of the Manor's empty rooms and let her rest there while

the rest of us prepare breakfast. Once we're done, Lise stands up, feeling better, and comes to where we are to eat.

"This omelet is great, big bro!"

"Here's your share, Lord Sirius."

"Thanks. Lise, if you find difficulties eating, at least have the soup and... nevermind, you seem to be enjoying yourself already."

"*Nom Chomp* Mwah! ...Can I have seconds?"

It appears that her stomach is something I won't have to worry about—I prepared breakfast for the equivalent of 8 people since Leus and Emilia eat quite a bit, but adding Lise to the mix might have our supplies run out sooner than expected.

"This is so good that I feel I could eat for the rest of the day..."

She may eat a lot, like Leus does, but she has manners, unlike a certain young man. Leus always gulfs everything as quickly as he can, but she tries her best to take her time and keep table manners, at the very least, which is appreciated.

Once she's done with her second bowl of soup, Lise gives me that look: she wants more.

"Um..."

"I assume you want more? Go on. Eat until you're content."

""You heard him, Lise! You want a big portion?"

"...I do!"

"I want seconds too!"

Despite eating this much, we burn so many calories each day that this much is okay. In fact, I've already more or less checked on the siblings, and they barely have any excess fat on them.

Once classes are done for the day, we all return to the manor to keep training. While Emilia and Leus train elsewhere, I'm spending some time with Lise, doing some magical training..

"I know you're tired of having me tell you this, but the most important thing

when you cast is to visualize what you want. I know it's not exactly what they teach us at school, but this is the way we've learnt magic ourselves."

"I know you've said it many times, but I struggle to understand what exactly you mean by 'visualizing what I want,' to be honest."

"Well, one thing is me telling you, and the other is applying this knowledge, so for the time being let's focus on casting ten water balls at the same time."

"Ten? But four is my max limit, and..."

"Thinking like that will get you nowhere. Besides, you have spirits that could aid you. Ask them to bear some of the magical burden you'll have to endure."

"I'll try to communicate with them, then!" she says excitedly.

When it comes to visualizing her spells, I can help her without many issues, but spirits are beyond the realm of what I can understand, and I only know what Fia told me about them, so I can't really help much there.

Lise then begins to try and communicate with them, and while she does, I spot the siblings approaching us. I assume they've finished their own training.

"Allow me to help you out, Lord Sirius."

"I'm done with my training, big bro! So let's spar later, yeah?!"

"We can do that after I'm done with Lise today."

"Please! Ah...! I did it... I did it!"

"Looks like you catch on faster than I thought. Okay then, let's keep this up, yes?"

"Yes, please!"

Parting with Dii and Noel was tough, but I've found new friends and rivals, as well as a new disciple in Lise, and seeing her train with a smile on her face will definitely make my school days more enjoyable than what they already are.

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