

It's been two days since we left the city of [Oidao]. We have been advancing without stopping, trying to get as far away as possible in case we have been discovered and there are adventurers behind us; however, so far, it seems that that is not the case. The only thing that relieves me about all this is that Shalia will be fine from now on.

The carriage jolted over the uneven path as I gazed at the towering rocky mountains ahead. According to Usofra, we'll be in demon territory once we cross those mountains. However, the expedition is assumed to be challenging since there are a lot of dangerous monsters, and it requires navigating narrow and dangerous paths as well as caves where large groups would struggle to pass simultaneously. Those reasons are why neither demons nor humans send their armies through this path, making it the perfect route for us to cross the border undetected. Unfortunately, it also means we can't continue in the carriage and will have to proceed on foot from now on.

It was already night when we reached the point where we had to leave the carriage behind. Deciding it would be best to advance during the day, we set up camp to rest to continue our journey in the morning. Namy, Usofra, Sunshine, and I sat around the bonfire to eat before going to sleep. Strangely, the atmosphere was quiet. Partly, it was because Sunshine, who is the loudest, was already dozing on my lap. Although the greatest reason is that there was a certain nervousness in all of us.

"So, Darx," Usofra began, breaking the silence, "You're about to enter a place quite different and similar at the same time from what you're used to. Are you nervous?"

I nodded, "A bit. I've heard stories, but I know they're just that—stories. I know that humans have not set foot in demonic territory in a really long time, so I'm intrigued to know what awaits us," I paused briefly to rest my back on a log behind me, "But now that we are so close, what else can you tell me about the territory of the Demons? I would like to know as much as possible before crossing the border."

Namy leaned forward, her dark hair falling over her shoulder, "Hmmm... is there anything in particular you would like to know?"

This being the perfect opportunity, I started asking questions that maybe I should have asked a long time ago, "I remember last time you told me that Demons are so dangerous because they are born with aptitudes equivalent to that of adventurers of ranks from D to S without having to go through a ritual, which is shocking to me. But what about the classes? Usofra is a Rune Master, and you, Namy, seem like you have a support class. If Demons don't get a class through a ritual, how do Demons know their qualities on the battlefield? Or what skills do they have?"

"That is simple. We unlock a class between the ages of ten and eighteen in a natural way. It's in our blood, our nature. We don't need a ritual or the help of a Goddess to give us powers," Namy

responded, smiling proudly, "Each Demon feels pride in this quality that distinguishes us from other races."

"However, it is also the reason that some Demons take it to the extreme and feel that they deserve more than other races," Usofra added, interrupting Namy, "For this reason, Zaine, who avoided confrontation with humans and other races, was betrayed and replaced by someone who seeks total dominance believing Demons who are the strongest race should rule over the entire continent having the others races as subjects."

I listened, absorbing every word. The way they spoke, it was clear that strength was quite crucial to Demons, "So, strength determines your place in Demon society?"

Namy chuckled, a low, throaty sound, "Exactly. Money means little without the power to back it up. The strongest are the ones who lead and command respect—quite the contrast with humans who value money and social class more. I have always found it absurd how some human nobles, who are weaklings, can order and insult adventurers much stronger than them, and those adventurers do nothing just because the other person has status or money. Demons would never fight or would they let themselves be bossed around for someone weak or someone who didn't win their respect first."

The sound of a crow overhead momentarily distracted me, making me look up at the moon, largely covered by clouds. However, my attention quickly returned to the front when Usofra started speaking.

"Another difference is that, in human territory, customs and practices are similar no matter where you are. But in Demon territory, customs, and practices vary depending on which of the nine regions one is," Usofra explained, taking a sip of her drink before continuing, "The Demon King is the one who governs the entire demonic territory but especially has control of one of nine regions which is where the capital is located. In contrast, renowned houses govern the remaining eight. These families are ancient, strong, and wealthy, managing their territories in their own unique style and only obeying the Demon King's orders."

"I imagine they are something similar to nobles for humans," I commented.

"Not at all!" Namy was quick to correct me, "These eight houses are nothing like human nobles. The leader of each family possesses a mighty treasure passed from generation to generation, which is said to give them powers exceeding any other Demon except the Demon King. The treasures they gain make them nearly unbeatable. Not to mention that each family has control over their own legion, which, for you to understand, is like their own army," Namy crossed her arms and smiled slightly, her face reflecting a bit of pride, "According to the latest calculations before we defected, it was estimated that the combined power of just three of these houses together with their legions was equal to that of all human forces."

Unlike the pride that reflected on Namy's face, I couldn't help but feel a little nervous. If what Namy says is true and the military power of only three of the nine regions is comparable to all human power, then how strong would the armies of the nine regions combined be? And Namy is not counting the twenty generals that are believed the demons have, which have a power equal to or greater than that of the S-Rank. Now, I finally comprehend why the Queen insisted that the union of all races is so necessary to face the invasion of Demons.

"This treasure you speak of that is passed down from generation to generation to the leader of these houses, is it perhaps a relic of Zrephia?" I asked.

"I think so, but I couldn't know for sure since the nature of these treasures is not something publicly known," Usofra answered me.

"In the castle, I heard that the Demons had twenty generals with a level equal to or higher than the S-Ranks. Are these eight individuals who lead those houses and control those regions part of them?" I asked, seeking answers to the various questions I had.

"Indeed!" Usofra replied, "Of the twenty generals, eight of them have the title of Duke and are the head of each of the eight houses already mentioned. These eight are considered the eight strongest demons after the Demon King thanks to the artifact they inherited from their houses, while the other twelve are entrusted with the protection of the Demon King and operate under his direct orders."

Hearing that twelve of such powerful individuals were in charge of protecting the Demon Queen left only one question in my mind, which I asked without thinking, "If Zaine was protected by twelve individuals as powerful as they, how was it possible for Zaine to be dethroned?"

Namy and Usofra's expressions turned grim as soon as they heard my question. It was quite evident that I touched on a sensitive topic for them.

"It's not obvious," Namy responded rudely, her face reflecting frustration, "Some of those elite individuals who swore loyalty and promised to protect Zaine betrayed her. It was a bloody war where generals fought against generals—legions against legions, filling the streets with blood. Ultimately, those of us who fought for Zaine lost, and we had no choice but to serve the new Demon King or die."

"I see... sorry for asking." It was the only thing I could think of to say, noticing that it was not a topic Namy and Usofra seemed to like to discuss.

"You have nothing to apologize for," Usofra stated, "It's important that you know all this because we will inevitably come across these people, considering our goal is to save Zaine. So keep asking whatever you want to know."

"Alright," I sighed, feeling a bit overwhelmed by all the information I had received. The weight of this information was beginning to take its toll on me, "Maybe we should continue this tomorrow. Too much to process, and it's already quite late."

"Agreed," Usofra nodded. Namy seemed to concur as well.

I turned my attention to Sunshine, who had fallen asleep during our conversation. I carefully picked her up and placed her in the carriage, ensuring she was lying comfortably on my hooded cloak. With Sunshine taken care of, I prepared to retire for the night, eager to get some rest. However, my plans were interrupted when both Namy and Usofra approached me, their expressions clearly indicating that they had something else in mind.

"Darx," Namy began, her voice sultry, "There's one more thing we need to discuss before you can rest."

"Ask away," I replied, trying to mask that I know well what they want.

"Actually, it's not something we can talk about," Usofra chimed in, her tone equally seductive, "It's something we need to... show you."

Their intentions became crystal clear. I knew full well that demons like Namy and Usofra needed to engage in sexual activity to restore their mana, and it's been a couple of days since we haven't had any action. Namy and Usofra wasted no time in undressing me, pushing me down onto one of the sleeping bags. Namy knelt between my legs while Usofra straddled my chest, her wetness inches from my face. I could feel my cock harden as they began to stroke it together, their fingers entwining as they massaged the length of my shaft.

"You have been a bad boy," Usofra whispered, leaning close to my ear, "You used the skills of the goddess in the mansion even though you knew you shouldn't do it. Now we need to get rid of the excess demonic energy so you won't lose control."

I hesitated for a moment. Was this really necessary? I don't really feel sick or have a fever. But the truth was, their touch felt incredible, and I found myself craving more. Relenting, I kissed Usofra deeply, our tongues dancing together as Namy took my cock into her mouth.

The sensation was electric, sending shivers down my spine as Namy sucked and licked with expert precision. Usofra moved herself lower, pressing her breasts against my chest as her lips found mine once more, our bodies moving in sync.

Namy moaned, releasing my cock for a moment, "Let us take care of you."

"You taste so good!" Usofra added, her dark eyes filled with desire.

My hands slid up Usofra's back, pulling her closer as our mouths continued to explore one another. Meanwhile, Namy returned her attention to my throbbing member, sucking and teasing it with renewed enthusiasm.

"Fuck," I growled, unable to hold back my pleasure any longer, "You two are incredible."

"Isn't it better when you let loose?" Namy purred, briefly looking up from her task.

"Much better," I admitted, my fingers tangling in Usofra's hair as I pulled her in for another passionate kiss.

Our bodies writhed together, the three of us lost in a haze of desire and carnal pleasure. I could feel the pressure building within me, the need for release growing stronger with each passing second.

"I want you to come for us," Namy urged, her voice breathless and needy, "Give us that delicious energy you've been holding onto."

Usofra echoed, her nails digging into my shoulders as she rode my fingers, "We need it."

Unable to resist their pleas, I finally allowed myself to surrender completely to the sensation, letting out a guttural moan as my cock pulsed and released my pent-up cum. Namy greedily swallowed every drop while Usofra shuddered against me, her body trembling as she couldn't contain herself anymore, and sat on me, putting my cock in her pussy even though I had barely cum.

"Darx, you feel amazing inside me," Usofra moaned loudly.

She began to ride me, her hips moving in a steady rhythm as I thrust up into her. Each movement brought new waves of pleasure crashing over me, the intensity growing with every second. My hands found her waist, gripping her tightly as I tried to keep up with her pace.

Namy, clearly not content to merely watch, slipped her fingers between her legs, moaning softly as she began to masturbate herself. Her eyes locked onto our intertwined bodies, a lustful glint in her gaze that sent shivers down my spine.

"Gods, watching you two like this..." Namy trailed off, biting her lip as she continued to pleasure herself, "It's so fucking hot."

"Then come join us," I urged, desperate to have both women close again.

"Your wish is my command," Namy purred, crawling over to us on all fours. She positioned herself beside Usofra, their faces mere inches apart. My vision was filled with the sight of these two beautiful women; their bodies pressed together as they shared a passionate kiss.

"Darx, it's my turn now," Namy insisted, breaking away from Usofra. She presented herself to me, her ass raised enticingly in the air, "Fuck me now, please."

"Of course," I responded, my voice barely more than a husky whisper. I carefully pulled out of Usofra, allowing her to dismount before positioning myself behind Namy.

Eager to feel her warmth around me, I slid into Namy without hesitation, causing her to let out a deep moan. She felt incredible, her wet vagina enveloping me in the most intoxicating way. Gripping her hips, I began to thrust into her with fervor, each movement eliciting further moans and gasps from both of us.

As our bodies moved together, lost in ecstasy, Usofra watched on, her face flushed as she continued to touch herself. The sight of her pleasuring herself only served to heighten our own arousal, driving Namy and me toward an inevitable climax.

"Darx, I'm...I'm so close," Namy whimpered after a while, her body trembling with the intensity of her pleasure.

"Me too," I admitted, feeling the pressure building within me.

With a final, desperate surge of passion, we pushed ourselves over the edge, our release coming in tandem as cries of ecstasy filled the air. Spent and satisfied, I collapsed beside Namy and Usofra, trying to catch my breath as the last waves of pleasure faded away. After we had taken some time to recover, we fell asleep naked with our bodies entwined.

The following day, we collected everything, and leaving the carriage behind, we began walking, making our way through the dense forest towards the mountains. The next two days were spent walking through the forest until we finally reached the foot of the mountains, which we began to ascend. As we ventured deeper into the treacherous mountains, the steep cliffs and rocky terrain proved to be a constant challenge. As we ascended higher, the wind became quite strong, not to mention the thick fog that remained as the days passed. As we passed through the small paths on the side of the mountain, it was not uncommon for large rocks to fall from above, which several times almost knocked us over.

"Everyone alright?" I asked after several of those stones fell near us.

"Y-yeah," Usofra stammered, "That was close."

"Let's keep moving," Namy suggested, attempting to regain her composure, "We need to get through these mountains as quickly as possible."

As we continued advancing, crossing a narrow ledge, I detected something around us. Squinting, I spotted a gigantic monster hidden in the shadows. It was monstrous, unlike anything I'd seen before.

"Stay back," I whispered to Namy and Usofra, not wanting them to get caught in the crossfire.

With a deep breath, I focused my demonic energy, feeling the familiar dark miasma enveloping me. Directing the energy toward the monster, I unleashed a beam of pure darkness, striking the creature with deadly precision. The monster let out a pained screech before collapsing in a heap, lifeless.

"Is it...dead?" Usofra hesitantly asked, looking at the weird creature.

"Yes," I confirmed as my dark miasma dissipated.

"I have a feeling we'll find more things like that along the way," Namy said quietly.

As we continued, the weather began to worsen. Heavy rain pelted us from above, soaking our clothes and making the steep path even more treacherous. The cold wind howled around us.

"Darx, we need to find shelter," Namy shouted over the storm's roar.

"Agreed!" I replied, my eyes scanning the mountainside for any sign of refuge.

Through the sheets of rain, I spotted a small cave nestled in the mountainside, "There!" I pointed, leading the group toward it. Sunshine fluttered close to me, her tiny wings struggling against the gale.

We made our way inside, relieved to escape the harsh downpour. The cave was cramped and damp but provided some respite from the elements. Using our supplies, we started a fire in the cave's center.

"Thank goodness we found this place," Usofra said as she wrung out her soaked hair.

"Let's dry our clothes and warm ourselves up before we continue," Namy suggested, peeling off her sodden garments.

I nodded and removed my own soaked clothes, laying them near the fire.

"Let's rest while we can," Usofra added, her stoic expression betrayed by fatigue, "We have been crossing these mountains for days, and it seems that we are not even halfway there yet."

We gathered around the fire, taking advantage of the heat it generated while the storm outside continued with rage.

To pass the time while we waited for the storm to pass, I decided to continue searching for answers to some of the questions I had: "Now that I know that the demon territory is divided into nine areas, one of them is the capital managed by the Demon King directly, while the other eight are handled by eight houses that rule their region in their own way, only obeying the orders of the Demon King, I am curious to know what the area we will enter is like. What can you tell me about the house that governs it?"

Namy and Usofra exchanged a glance before Namy spoke up, "I honestly don't know much about this place, only that the area is called Miktlan and is ruled by Duke Vanth, The Monster Layer. All I know about him is that he's known for his cunning and ruthlessness."

"More importantly," Usofra chimed in, her voice tense, "He is one of those who betrayed Zaine. He played a significant role in helping the current Demon King subdue the other houses and their armies still fighting for Zaine."

"Usofra, what do you suggest we do when we cross this territory?" I asked, trying to keep my emotions in check.

"Crossing Miktlan as quickly as possible without attracting attention is our best option," Usofra replied, her eyes narrowed with determination, "If we are discovered, not even you would be able to confront this Duke."

"Wait," I said, my curiosity piqued by her statement. "Are you suggesting that this Duke is stronger than me? What makes this Duke so powerful that even I wouldn't stand a chance?"

"From what I've heard," Usofra began cautiously, "Duke Vanth is a powerful Monster-Tamer, which, for you to understand, is a class similar to the Beast-Tamer class of humans. If the rumors of what he is capable of are true, he is one of the strongest generals, far above an S-Rank. He can control and command a large number of powerful and legendary monsters, in addition to possessing his house's artifact."

So, a special class that only Demons can acquire is called Monster-Tamer, and this Duke can control powerful monsters. At first glance, it doesn't seem that amazing, but it all depends on the number of monsters he can control and what type of monsters they are. Whatever the case, as Usofra says, it is best to go unnoticed.

"I understand," I said, nodding grimly. "We'll make sure to stay as low-profile as possible while crossing Miktlan. We need to reach Zaine, after all."

"Agreed," Namy added.

"Right," Usofra confirmed, her voice firm. "For Zaine's sake and for all those who have suffered under the rule of these traitors, we should focus on finding Zaine first."



When I was about to forget about this topic, a thought suddenly crossed my mind. This Duke Vanth is a Monster-Tamer who can command a large number of monsters. Some time ago, something strange happened when a large number of monsters came out of the forests and attacked many villages, including mine. These monsters destroyed my village and killed many people I grew up with, including Oliver and Amelia's parents. Could it be...

"W-Wait," I said suddenly, my voice taking on a sharp edge, "Namy, Usofra... I have to ask you something."

Both women looked at me, their faces reflecting confusion, "What is it, Darx?" Namy asked.

"Those monsters that attacked several human villages some time ago... Could Duke Vanth be the one behind those attacks? Is it possible that he controlled those monsters?"

Usofra and Namy exchanged uneasy glances before turning their attention back to me. It was Usofra who spoke first, "Darx... We had our suspicions but didn't want to say anything without being sure. However, it seems highly likely that he was responsible for those attacks."

Namy nodded, adding, "The distance of those attacks and the place where he was is very great, yet I believe he is capable of doing it."

Hearing their confirmation felt like a punch to the gut. All the pain, suffering, and loss caused by the destruction of my village could be traced back to this Demon. A cold, seething rage began to boil within me, and I clenched my fists tightly as I tried to control the rising desire for revenge.

Duke Vanth must pay for what he's done. He won't get away with this.