

VILE EVIL HIDES UNDER THE VEIL

Chapter 8: Into the Osan Woods

Eren had decided. In this life, Dom would have to stay a nameless hunter. He would snatch all the lucky encounters from Dom and make it his own.

Eren wanted to resume his developments with aunt Nina but now was not the time for that. Even she doubted there's a demon beast involved in the Osan woods disturbance now. She had to inform the respective authorities.

No good hunter worth their salt would ever take a demon beast evolution lightly. Their evolution process required them to target humans. If precautions weren't taken, the process could end up in a lot of hunters dying in the woods.

Nina grabbed her ID stone and held it against her mouth. She circulated her mana through it and the inscriptions over the stone lit up. She spoke a few words that didn't make any sound and kept the stone away.

The ID stone was a multi-purpose magic device that every person who could use mana in this world carried upon their person. It could be used as an identity token for that person when they traveled from one city to another and as a communication tool. It also had other uses.

After some time, a carriage stood in front of Nina's apothecary. Two men came from within it. They got inside the shop and bowed in front of Nina. She just nodded and pointed them towards Matt.

They went towards the man and picked him safely before approaching the carriage again. Once they went inside, Nina asked Eren to bring out the potions and antidote that Dom required from the storage. The latter had already paid Nina for the same.

Dom went away as soon as he received the potions. Nina headed towards the carriage to board it. But she soon turned midway and approached Eren:

"I'll be gone for a while, Erni. Possibly for two or three days. You better stay at home during this time. If the demon beast evolution is involved, things could get real ugly real quick.

The regular and additional city guards would have to be dispatched to secure the forest area. The city lord will have to bolster the city walls as well in case the demon beast initiates a beast tide on the city.

And multiple hunting and adventurers parties would have to be deployed to confront the beast. High ranking personnel will be involved.

The city will be devoid of strong lawful forces for some time until the issue is resolved. The forces that usually stay in hiding might use this time for their exploitation. Although our neighbourhood is less likely to get involved in trouble, it's best to be cautious."

Eren just nodded his head and waved Nina goodbye. He waited for her carriage to depart. Then he grabbed a few potions before heading in Dom's direction.

Dom was walking towards the southern city gates while thinking about something. As Nina's apothecary was located near the southern city gates so it wasn't necessary to take a carriage. Dom could take a colt for rent by the city walls to travel to Osan woods.

Eren caught up with him soon. Dom was too caught up in his thoughts to notice the boy's arrival. But that changed when Eren called out to him:

"Sir Dom. Wait a minute. I have a few things to tell you. It's regarding how to save your healer."

Dom stopped in his tracks and turned to look at the approaching boy after hearing what the latter had just said. He asked Eren what he meant.

Eren told him about a complicated procedure that needs to be performed on Elena based on various visible and invisible symptoms she would be displaying at the time. Dom was doubtful. He never heard about such a procedure. And using potions had been standardized. They didn't need any extra care during consumption.

But Eren told him that potions won't help much if the user had built a tolerance due to their extended consumption. The poison cure through the combination of potions and antidote was not as simple as normal potion consumption. Plus, the one on whom the potions were going to be used as a healer. She must have already used additional potions and spells to relieve her condition. That would complicate the procedure further.

What Eren had said was partially true. Although he didn't become an established hunter in his previous life, his experiences had taught him many things. But his explanation was not applicable here. That's because Nina had already considered the above points and administered a suitable course. But Dom didn't know that.

Dom was caught in a dilemma. If what Eren said was true, Elena needed special care that he wouldn't be able to give. The potion administration seemed complicated. He couldn't take risks. Elena's life was at stake.

But Dom couldn't find another free healer that quickly. He'll need to visit the hunter's guild and request an active healer's on-field services. It could take a while. There was only one choice that he could come to in his head:

"Boy, your name is Erni, right? Why don't you come with me and treat Elena your way? I'll take full responsibility for your safety and will drop you at home after the outing is completed.

Of course, I'll pay you a good amount for your services, Erni. And I'll also consider as I owe you one. If there's something that you need me to do that is within reason, I'll put my honour as E Rank hunter that I shall fulfil your request. What's your take?"

"Sir Dom, surely you jest. First of all, let me make this clear, my name is Eren, not Erni. That is something my aunt used to call me. I prefer other people calling me by my name Eren.

Second, if you haven't noticed already, I'm just a teenager who hasn't awakened his mana core yet. I'm not even an F Class yet. How can I help you in the Osan woods? Plus, aunt Nina has told me not to go out of the house. Here you are talking about going out of the city to head to the root of the city's problems. I can't just ignore..."

Eren wanted to continue his facade when Dom interrupted him:

"Aah! My bad. So Eren, as I've told you. You don't need to worry about your safety. We will be entering from the north side of the woods to avoid any troubles. Although it didn't give us a free ride to our destination last time, I'm sure we had avoided a lot of problems. And I'm capable enough to handle the rest of the problems that do come our way.

I'll take care of your safety. With an antidote administered, we have nothing to fear the SR snakes as well. If push comes to shove, I'll prioritize your safety over mine and Elena's."

"But..." Eren still carried on his act of playing hard to get! Dom cut him off yet again:

"If you fear madam healer's objection, we can keep this a secret from her. I'm sure the report about the possible existence of a demon beast to the healer's association and the aftermath that would ensue will keep her busy for three days or more. She might need to visit the Osan woods from a different side by temporarily forming a party.

That is enough time for us to enter the woods, treat Elena, and get back. Nobody will be the wiser of your involvement. And you need to consider this from a different point of view.

If I leave and Elena dies because of my ill administration of poison or antidote, her death will not be upon me or the snakes, but upon you. So tell me your choice now?"

Dom knew that he had played dirty by blaming the possible death of Elena on Eren. But he didn't have any other choice. Neither did he feel guilty about it. If his act can increase Elena's survival chances, then so be it.

Finally, Eren decided to yield after gaining sufficient reason from Dom not to. Dom patted the boy's back in excitement and told him again that it'll stay as a secret between him and the Dom's Raiders.

Eren looked anxious about leaving the city behind against aunt Nina's orders. But he was strengthening what he had planned from the moment he heard about Dom's name in his mind.

Dom took care of hiring two colts for both of them. They were F Rank, tamed magical beasts raised in captivity. They were much faster and had more stamina as well as resilience to adapt to the change of terrains than normal horses.

Eren acted like he wasn't professional in riding mana colts to keep his cover intact. He would strike Dom when the latter was least expecting it.