

## Chapter 294 - Valmask Family



'Usually they would simply weather through any predicament by relying on their resourcefulness and unconventional ways, and yet...

"Don't fuck with me! For my Servant Leaders who have faithfully obeyed the laws of old to have been killed...by the likes of a little lass who's lived for merely 300 years, some random Servant Leader of a branch family...even if she might have mastered one of the six treasures...what a load of unbelievable crap..." A vampire with a sly face loudly screamed in his private chamber.

He was Lunz Ravahl Valmask - an elderly being who was one of the <Head Servants> directly descending from Familia, and an authority in the Blood Court. By his comrades, he was called Lord Lunz.

He was fuming with anger, causing the many wrinkles carved into his face to grow in number and a crimson mist of blood to form in front of his eyes, over the humiliation of having lost Rui, Nalga and Gold, his <Servant Leaders>.

Of course, that was a direct result of his insistent, obsessed chase of Taboo Veronica. And his irritation just kept getting worse when he imagined how he ought to report this failure to the Grand Elder Council to be held soon.

'It's not just Taboo either. Just what the fuck's wrong with the strength of that unidentified spear user...?

'Either way, this blunder will weaken my standing. I guess I've got no choice but to accept the disgrace. It's expectable that Alnerd and Hoffmann will gleefully use this chance to condemn me. It's annoying, but I'll sit it out.

'The Empress is scary if she gets mad, but her basic character is a gentle one. So I can count on her to mediate my case.

'After the meeting, I'll choose some excellent <Servants> from among the subordinates of Rui, and promote them to <Servant Leader>. It'll cost me a huge amount of blood and mana, but that will be fine as long as I can have some fun by secretly going out on a night hunt in our allied Coastal City Terrier...

Lunz pondered with his eyes deeply bloodshot.



The **【Great Tomb of the Blood Court】**, a place wrapped up by the silence of ancient, eternal objects of the finest art. Its location was in the underground, deep below steep, coastal cliffs facing the

south-eastern Heim Ocean, while at the same time connected to the underground of Royal Capital Gromheim. It was the Vampire Empire priding itself of a history far older than that of the Millennial Demonoid Empire Hazarn which had invaded this world through a Black Ring. A hidden group of vampires who came out victorious in long years of battles against the ancient wolves, humans and the twelve families.

And in that place, which also served as a temple of Vampire God Lugnad, the Grand Elder Council was about to begin.

"Well then, is it alright for us to start the Grand Elder Council of the Valmask, Empress?"

The woman referred to as Empress nodded, causing the silver tiara on her forehead to lightly reflect the dim illumination, and her long blond hair to sway with some straggling strands of hair jolting softly. Thin, beautiful eyebrows and long eyelashes bordered her blue eyes, and the prominent nose accentuated her small lips. Bluish-white veins pulsated and squirmed like worms beneath her white, transparent skin.

She was a being anyone would immediately identify as empress even without being explicitly told so. While being a vampire who had lived through many millennia, she possessed a devilish beauty like you'd find rarely in this world. It might be just understandable for all her bloodkin, who had been staying with her for a long time now, to have their breaths taken each time they had the honor to feast their eyes upon her. That's just how remarkably conspicuous her perfect beauty was.

Her name was Familia Ravahl Valmask Lugnad. She was a <Head Servant Leader> of Vampire God Lugnad, and the first of the twelve families. She was the one who had been endowed with the strongest of Lugnad's blessings.

Even if one only took a look at her <Blood Path - Open Second Gate>...they'd find the following child skills: <Blood Gauntlet>, <Blood Sword>, <Blood Spear>, <Blood Crow>, and <Blood Pigeon>. In other words, she possessed a great variety of skills that were finely branching out in all kinds of directions.

She had her beauty, but at the same time she was one of the strongest, even among the non-human life-forms.

A male <Head Servant> addressed her, "...I shall give my report then."

That particular <Head Servant> had black hair which resembled seaweed, and his looks could only be described as handsome. His name was Alnerd Ravahl Valmask.

Alnerd kept talking about the information of dark guilds, including the blood intelligence, Gromheim, many other cities, Oseberia, Leften, Zamalia, Radford, Seven Pholia, and the island nations.

"...The supply of blood under the cover of the war is proceeding smoothly."

"Having a war going on nearby does make it relatively easy. Even our Blood Bank will hold for a few more millennia."

The Blood Bank was one of the blessings they had received from Lugnad. It was a magic room surrounded by glass and installed beneath the Great Tomb of the Blood Court. A sea of fresh blood was spreading out in that special, vast room. It was a blood storage, which the vampires could freely use as they liked, and at the same time a blood laboratory.

But, this blood storage had its own share of difficulties. It was possible for uncontrollable monsters to be born from it, owing to the fact that Lugnad's divinity, the land's mana, and clusters of mana that could turn into a labyrinth were overlapping in there.

Familia every time defeated those monsters while casually calling it a nice workout, but for the low-ranking vampires below the rank of <Servant Leader> those monsters only spelled dread.

"Yes, but the blood test site in Lalarbuin's Mountain was completely destroyed by the alchemist..."

"That old facility was still working? Hoffmann, you should know more about Lalarbuin."

Familia turned her eyes towards her <Head Servant> Hoffmann.

After performing a respectful bow, Hoffman answered, "The facility in Lalarbuin has been attacked by the black-haired Makoto and his subordinates. <Servant Leader> Toyz is safe. It seems Toyz expended a great amount of blood in the battle, but he succeeded in repelling them. The opponents managed to get away as he apparently underestimated them as mere humans. Moreover, since the facility itself was destroyed, the blood test site has been moved to a certain village in the east."

Hearing his report, the empress's face showed irritation as she was obviously grinding her molars, and her blue eyes narrowed into thin streaks.

Hoffman became drenched in cold sweat.

"I see...Alnerd, continue."

"...As you wish, milady. Remains of the Moons is still the strongest power in Pelneet's underground world. There are times when their guildmaster, the spearmaster, suddenly vanishes, as if being swallowed by the ground, making getting a grasp on his behavioral patterns quite complicated. Lastly, the time for the annual Underground Auction held in Pelneet is drawing close."

"The final matters are the usual, so no need to expand on it. Lord Lunz, would you give us your report?"

'What boring answer', Familia thought to herself as she shifted her eyes from Alnerd to her <Head Servant> Lunz.

"As you wish..." Lunz spoke up, "The pursuit of the traitor, Taboo Veronica failed. My three <Servant Leaders> and many <Servants> died in battle..."

"Lord Lunz, that's quite a heavy blow... However, you should have known for a good while now that the "Spearmaster and Black Cat" are near Taboo?" Familia blamed Lunz with a thundering voice and a glare blazing in her eyes.

Just as the empress said, she was well aware of the spearmaster's existence. Even outside the reports by Alnerd's <Servant Leaders>, she had personally monitored him on several occasions while remaining hidden.

Of course she also passed on some of it as information to Vampire God Lugnad in the spirit world. Lugnad himself had also started to become interested in the spearmaster who was said to possess an independent blood authority. An unknown spearmaster who had slipped through his blood authority without him having any knowledge or memory of it; it caused curiosity, anger, and various other, complex emotions to burst forth in Lugnad. Lugnad vented his anger by starting fights with the King of Desire Zansuyn and Terrifying King Nocturne, scorning Vaamina and Meliady, tearing out the roots of Kyulha, and throwing those at King of Destruction Rashinz Lebioda. This resulted in the birth of unknown plant-type kins on the spirit world's soil, giving the cue for a new faith to come into existence in the spirit world.

"...It's just as you say, it's a tremendous blunder by me..." Lord Lunz croaked while disgustingly distorting his face. It was an expression you wouldn't expect of that elderly vampire who usually looked cunning.

His bitterness had clearly made its way on his expression.

"...If you just had given the word, I would have helped out as well." The <Head Servant> sitting next to Lord Lunz interjected.

He was Hoffmann Ravahl Valmask, the vampire who became <Head Servant> as replacement for Slot. He had reached his current rank in the vampire hierarchy by murdering Slot's <Servant Leaders> Cipher and Shinyuin. Because this also served as proof of him possessing the strongest power among the servants back when Slot died, he was elected as Familia's <Head Servant>.

All these facts were unknown to Veronica who was a <Head Servant> despised as Taboo.

"As result of the three-way-war of dark guilds, Taboo should have shared her information with the spearmaster of chaos after becoming his underling...did you lose your mind, Lord Lunz?" Alnerd ridiculed the old vampire.

Alnerd's <Servant Leaders>, who were standing behind him, naturally stared at Lunz with cold eyes as well. <Servant Leader> Phigoran, <Servant Leader> Arg, and <Servant Leader> Elise. Phigoran and Elise had just recently earned themselves the achievement of having successfully finished their reconnaissance mission in Pelneet.

"...There was news of him having disappeared, so I gave my permission for the attack."

Hearing Lord Lunz's reply, Hoffman's cheeks twitched as he perceived it as an overly dumb excuse and a decision that completely misread the situation.

Suddenly, while narrowing his eyes in scorn, Hoffman derisively hissed at Lunz, "So you have turned that mysterious spearmaster, who's strong enough to have slaughtered the Power of Light, Mad Knight while releasing a peculiar blood scent, into an enemy of the Valmask family..."

"...It seems like you have forgotten that we're prospering exactly because we're beings wading

through the shadows, Lord Lunz." Following up on Hoffmann, Alnerd also reproached Lunz sharply.

"The recent Lunz has been tied down too much by the laws. It might be a fate of us vampires who've been forgotten by the flow of time, but he hasn't realized that his attitude has been increasingly getting more arrogant while he adhered to the laws too strictly," Alnerd assessed. "Using this opportunity, I will thoroughly beat him down to where he belongs."

"I have nothing to say in my defense." Lunz warped his face while accepting Alnerd's reprimand, but immediately returned his expression to normal.

Alnerd turned his face to Empress Familia.

"Empress, what shall we do with Lunz who has brought danger upon us with his failure?"

"Alnerd, cease your harsh bashing. Lord Lunz, you have learned your lesson from this as well, haven't you?" Familia's expression had completely changed from one of anger into one of gentleness, reminding one of a calm lake.

She cast a smile like a blooming flower on her face. However, a deep scarlet gleam was burning in her pretty eyes, and vermilion mana was gushing out behind her. Familia Ravahl Valmask Lugnad was demonstrating her authority as empress.

It was such a thick blood mana that it made the air in the room quiver. Yep, it was indeed <Blood Mana>. The empress' <Blood Mana> was so powerful that those looking at her could actually see fresh blood surging out of her shoulders and head.

"...Yes, milady." Lunz squeezed out while feeling horrified by Empress Familia.

'I've made her angry. But, I won't give up. I won't let her get away, but...right now is a time of repentance. Still, fortunately I've got an infinite amount of time, and so does my target, Taboo. My chance will come, sooner or later. It won't be too late even after I power up myself, store enough strength, and gather powerful <Servant Leaders> again. When everything's in order, I'll also head out with the resolve to bring this to an end. I'll slaughter Taboo, and the spearmaster who's caused me to lose face.

Lunz decided in his heart with a sharp gleam in his eyes.

On the other hand, the empress, who had been watching him with her crimson eyes, also pondered how to deal with the unresolved issue of the spearmaster. Of course, the empress harbored no intent to become his enemy. Familia's thinking tended in the direction of resolving everything peacefully.

The empress' eyes returned to their original blue color, and then she stood up from her seat at the Elder Council, arbitrarily declaring its end, "The meeting is over."

Then she headed over to the glass wall surrounding the blood lake - the special room with its enchanted glass.

Familia pressed a hand against the glass of the blood storage, and gazed at the blood lake. Inside the

blood bank, gentle blood waves hit the glass walls. She changed the color in her eyes to crimson once more. In response, the formerly calm blood lake began to stir.

It moved as if it was aware of Empress Familia's presence through the glass. The blood waves tried to enter Familia, turning into raging waves as they splashed against the glass wall. The waves, transformed into a roaring, stormy sea, clashed against the glass as if to break through it. The repelled sprays turned into a bloody spindrift, just to vanish shortly thereafter. The glass wall was thick, but each time the waves hit it, a sharp vibration traveled through the air, resounding in Familia's ears like a cacophony of bugs.

'The spearmaster, who killed the Light's Mad Knight, and his important partner, the black cat, are magnificent.

While watching the waves of blood...the empress wallowed in her feelings towards the spearmaster.

'I wonder if he's ever going to visit the capital. I want to look at his black eyes, which remind me of the deep night, from close proximity, but it might prove be a vain wish. On top of Pelneet being far away, it's close to the forest of Benrack, where the ancient wolves dwell... Seriously, it's so difficult to single out those who might be useful. Moreover, extinguishing each and every of the fires spreading into the sea of trees, including the vagrants of Halzelma is a chore...it's very risky in various meanings. Even the other day, I got found out by the vampire hunters and ancient wolves on my way back from Pelneet.