

A Ghost 851

Chapter 851 The Paladins Arrive

"The tragedy of the Oasis Spirit is one that probably happened a few hundreds of years ago..." Sighed Nia. "Maybe two... or three hundred years. Our Guardian is said to have perished when a Malicious Darkness emerged from the northern lands, a miasmic being, an evil monster that absorbed the life out of everything in the Golden Desert. They called that entity "The Dark Pest" ..."

"The Dark... Pest?" I wondered. "A being made of miasma... Huh, Tyr?"

"Yep, most likely... An Evil God Fragment..." Tyr was shaken. "To think there was a wandering one that managed to travel all across the desert... Were the Gods not watching carefully? Or maybe... they orchestrated this."

"There used to be many more cities and towns in Goldsand, and many more Oasis as well, but the Dark Pest destroyed it all. The only thing the people of the past found from these towns were destroyed houses, and the corpses of people... dried out of their lives, who would then slowly wake up as mummies." Nia sighed. "And that monster came to our city long ago... The Oasis Spirit, seeing how it would doom all of us, decided to step in, walking out of the Oasis where she lived, and fighting the monster."

"W-What happened afterwards?" Wondered Tear, as if she didn't just heard she died...

"The Oasis Spirit fought the Dark Pest, darkness against the purity of water." Nia said. "Ultimately, the Dark Pest was besting her, his malicious powers having grown as he had devoured thousands of people on his way here... However!"

Nia was really good at telling tales, filling everyone with suspense.

"Our brave guardian sacrificed herself, utilizing her spiritual powers to create a Divine Seal, chaining the monstrous Dark Pest in the depths of the Dungeon." Said Nia. "It is said that when the people went down to see what had happened, the Dark Pest had been turned into a black-colored statue, and the Oasis Spirit was nowhere to be seen... Many speculated that she has given up her life for us."

"I see, so she sealed him within a monolith made of the crystallization of her powers." Tyr analyzed. "That must have cost her a lot of Divine Power and Mana, enough to kill her... But her soul reincarnating into a mortal? That feels strange. I have never heard of such a thing happening before..."

"That's so sad..." Tear sighed. "The Spirit was so brave, she sacrificed herself for us! Sniff..."

"She must have loved the people a lot." Jonathan said. "Divine Spirits are incredible beings of great power. She could have simply chosen to escape, yet she fought to protect everyone..."

"Isn't it? The Tales of the Oasis Spirit are always told to every child, it is to teach us about bravery, and about self-sacrifice. In our city, we have a culture of helping one another. The reason we've survived so far even with these problems right now is because we usually help one another. Whenever I have something, I make sure to at least share a bit of it." Nia smiled. "The people you've helped today, will surely repay the favors one day."

"Well, we don't really need any payment or something." I smiled. "We did something that anybody would do... Well, I would like to think that they would. Do you know anything more? perhaps about something happening in the dungeons?"

"There are rumors that there are weird, black-cloaked people sometimes wandering the town at night and walking inside the dungeon. The guards allow them to enter without problems, that's all I know..." Nia sighed.

"Oh well, that's more than enough." Lucifer nodded. "So, what should we do now- Hm?"

"What's wrong?" Nia wondered, as she noticed Lucifer stopping to talk midway through as she glanced into the other direction.

"There's a group of people coming our way right now... Around five- no six, seven? Eight. It's eight... people." Lucifer said. "Hmmm, they're humans but feel strange."

"What do they want?" Partner wondered. "I should go and see what's up-"

"Outsiders! Come outside of that house immediately! We know that you've illegally distributed the blessings of the water goddess to the people for free! We've come to apprehend you in the name of the law of this city and of the church of the goddess of water. This is an order issued by the Saintess of Springs, Lady Emilia!" A Paladin suddenly roared. "If you don't come out soon, we'll be forced to barge inside the house and deal with you as we please. So please, be civilized and walk out."

"Wait, what? Are you kidding me?!" Partner was flabbergasted. "Are these bastards for real?!"

"These bastards..." Catarina spoke.

"Maybe we should go kill them." Lucifer said with a bloodlust aura emerging from him.

"If they're threatening us like this, I guess there's little option..." I shrugged.

"Hahh... We're doing this, huh?" Jonathan was mentally preparing himself.

"K-Kill them?! Y-You should run! You cannot possibly try to kill these paladins; the whole church will hunt you down!" Nia suddenly stopped us from stepping out.

"Mama, what's wrong?" Celes suddenly walked to her side.

"S-Stay there dear, don't step out, okay?" Nia said. "Please, escape through the window over there!" Nia kept insisting.

"But Nia, let us handle this." I tried to stop her.

"Sometimes bloodshed is not the real answer..." Nia sighed. "You shouldn't risk your lives for this!"

She ignored us, slowly opening the door, hoping we would escape while she bought time.

"Sorry, t-there's nobody like that in here." Nia opened the door, timidly talking.

"Nobody?! I heard some voices! Open the door and let us in, ma'am!"

"Do it quickly, we don't want to get rough."

"You should already know that illegal distribution of the blessing of the water goddess is severely punished by the church!"

"B-But that's... T-They're not here...!" Nia said.

"Open the damn door!"

"Ahhh!"

BAAAM!

"Mommy!"

One of the Paladins kicked the door open, throwing Nia into the floor with a wave of his hand, the rest of the Paladins barged in as the started looking inside.

Chapter 852 Celes' Power

"Mom! Are you okay?!"

Little Celes ran towards his mother, asking if she was alright.

"I-I'm fine, dear... D-Don't worry about me."

Nia quickly hugged her son, tightly, as she protected him from the Paladins that had savagely barged inside her house.

The kept looking for Maria and her group, but they were nowhere to be seen! Not even the large group of kids they were tagging along with were here.

It was as if they had been swallowed by the air...

"Nobody's here..."

"I could swear we heard something!"

"Hey, you guys outside, did you hear something? Is there anybody outside running away?"

"N-No captain... there's nobody."

The Paladins, wearing brilliant blue armor, kept looking. However, after lifting everything in the small house, they gave up, the captain and the other Paladins glared at Nia and Celes with furious expressions, mixed with disgust.

"T-They're not here.. S-See?"

Nia and her son were trembling on the floor, she probably felt relieved Maria and her allies were nowhere to be seen. However, they weren't going to let her go so easily.

Of course they weren't.

"We sensed their presences though."

"They were here just seconds ago..."

"It's weird, did they use some magic to escape instantly? To where?"

"Answer, where did they go." The Captain of the Paladins walked towards Nia.

"W-Wait...! T-This is...!" Nia cried. "I have no idea! I already told you, if they aren't here..."

"If they aren't here, you've hidden them somewhere, you filthy woman!"

The Captain furiously grabbed Nia by the neck, lifting her off the ground as he gritted his teeth in fury and disgust, his eyes filled with hate.

"Uuurgh...! Aaaggh...!"

"Mamaaaa! Let mama go!"

Celes started crying as he saw the Paladin grasp her as if she were a ragdoll, his strength was completely inhumane. If he wanted, he could have already killed both of them with just a punch in their faces...

Yet he couldn't just kill them, he needed to get as much information out of them as he could. He couldn't simply go back to the Saintess empty-handed.

"Tell me WHERE they went!" He roared.

"Uurgh...! Agh...! I-I... don't know...!" Nia cried, her eyes beginning to become red as she was lacking oxygen.

"Mamaaa!" Meanwhile, Celes kept crying.

"You're a strong woman, to say that in front of us..." Smiled the captain, letting her go and throwing her into the floor. "You know I could kill you with just my fists, right?"

"Please spare us..." Nia cried. "Please, we haven't done anything...!"

However, the captain quickly unsheathed his sword and pointed at Nina, while asking the other Paladins to hold her tightly, spreading her limbs into the ground.

"W-What are you doing?! Unhand me! S-Someone... Someone help!"

The Paladins held her tightly as the Captain started cleaning his sword with a handkerchief.

"So this how things are going to go now, ma'am." He said. "We're going to cut your limbs, starting from your arms. Until you answer our questions."

"W-What...?! How can you call yourselves Paladins of the goddess?! T-Those are acts of criminals, of thugs... Of monsters!" Nia cried.

"Mamaaa!" Celes cried, but was being held by another Paladin.

"Monsters you say?" The Captain asked. "We're no monsters here, you're the only filthy beasts that suck up to our wealth and resources. All of you commoners should die already! We couldn't bear giving you more of our goddess' blessings, always intended to be for US! Do you understand? Killing you is like killing another beast out in the wilds... It's not something that will ever torment our minds. If anything... it will help us feel more relieved."

"N-No, wait...!" Nia cried, as she saw the sword nearing her left arm.

"We're going to ask you again after we cut your arm, you better answer if you don't want to lose both."
The Captain smiled. "Got it? Now ma'am... grit your teeth. I'll make it swift."

The captain raised his sword and then, swiftly moved it down, shaping it an arc!

SLASH!

"MAMAAAAA!"

With an agonizing, and furious scream, Celes suddenly sent out a powerful shockwave of magical energy from his body.

TRUUUUMMM...!

"W-Wha...?!"

The Paladin holding him was sent flying as he hit the walls and made them collapse over his entire body.

CRAAASH!

Meanwhile, the captain lost his balance and ended falling into the ground, failing to slice Nia's arm. The other Paladins were all sent away by his scream, as the boy's eyes started glowing bright blue.

"C-Celes...?!"

Nia was surprised as the boy kept crying, his body suddenly beginning to generate a strong, blue colored aura, with hints of spiritual energy and even the brightness of a bit of divinity within...

"W-What...?!" The captain slowly stood back up, glancing at the boy. "T-That power... Spiritual Energy?!"
Suddenly, the Captain recalled something Saintess Emilia had told him before.

"The Reincarnation of the one that betrayed our Divine Mother is roaming in this city." She said. "If you ever see someone wielding water magic, immediately send them to me. They must be executed instantly! Anybody could be her... Anybody!"

Because of this, any person with water attribute magic was swiftly kidnaped and executed, but none had ever wielded this power like the young Celes did...

"T-The Reincarnation... could it be this boy?!" The Captain gritted his teeth. "Men! Stand up!"

Something deep within the boy's soul had awakened in his most perilous of moments. The water of his tears suddenly condensed into his hands, shaping like spears...

"Leave mama alone!!!"

Celes ran towards his mother, putting himself in front of her as his tears turned into sharp spears, firing themselves towards the Paladins.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

However, the explosions were nothing really strong, their armors protected them from the magical damage easily, as the Paladins slowly started advancing.

"You're too weak yet! I bet you're just Level 1!" The Captain smiled maliciously. "Your efforts will be in vain! We'll execute both you and your mother, you stupid child!!!"

He charged forwards, easily tanking the boy's magic as his sword was raised, and then swung vertically, unleashing a gigantic wave of slicing blue aura!

SLAAASH!

Chapter 853 Actually, We Never Left

Filled with the excitement of being congratulated by the Saintess for having slain what he believed might be the actual reincarnation of "the one that betrayed our divine mother", the Paladin Captain laughed, raising his magic sword, and swinging it down, attempting to kill both Celes and Nia at the same time.

"DIE, YOU SINNERS!"

SLAAASH!

A powerful slashing wave of sword and mana energy emerged from his sword, rushing towards Celes as he tried to create a barrier made of water, but was quickly cut down! The barrier exploded, splattering water everywhere, seconds before the slashing attack were to reach his frail and small body.

"CELES!"

His mother screamed, harboring any strength she had left to run in front of her son while throwing him down into the ground, attempting to take the hit for him.

CRASH!

The powerful slashing wave reached her, as a huge impact shook the entire house once more, as it was about to collapse. The people around the area walked outside their houses, watching the commotion from afar.

"Hahaha....! You foolish woman, it isn't as if putting yourself in front of your son would have saved him, now both of you are cut down to halves!" Laughed the Paladin Captain, as the smoke slowly dissipated, only to reveal a mass of darkness in front of the two!

"What?!" The Captain suddenly felt a chill down his spine as he stepped back.

The strange mass of darkness was shaped like a huge hand, which quickly opened several eyes on each finger, glaring at him. Invisible rays of energy came from them, trying to petrify him!

"Urgh?! Petrification?! What is this beast you've hidden, woman?!"

The Paladin stepped back as he saw his hand beginning to turn into stone, but his rings and magic powers activated, easily inhibiting the spreading of the petrification, and canceling it!

"Heh, foolish monster, did you thought you could petrify the captain of the paladins?!" Laughed the man, whose blue hair and sharp green eyes shone brightly, as if they were artificially dyed that color. "Paladins! Stand your ground! Slay the beast and-"

"That's enough with you." The "beast" quickly shapeshifted into Maria, surprising everyone. "Nia, we tried our best to stay hidden, but as we told you, these bastards wasn't going to let you go just because we went away."

"M-Maria...!" Nia cried.

"And also your kid's pretty awesome. Looks like we got ourselves a special boy here." Maria giggled.

"A-Ah...!" Celes just realized he had done all kinds of awesome things. "J-Just what happened, what did I do?!"

"We can talk about this once things are done. For now, you two, get here. Being out there is dangerous." Maria swiftly spread her shadows, absorbing Nia, and Celes inside.

"Wait! What do you think you're doing, ghostly woman?! Wait! Y-You're the adventurer, isn't it?! What sort of being are you?!"

The Captain asked those words as he rushed towards Maria, sword in hand, his aura exploded as ten swords made of water emerged around him, and he fired them towards her and her shadows, trying to interrupt her from taking away the suspects.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

However, Maria yawned as she waved her bare, beautiful, and delicate hand as she easily blocked all the swords made of water with her smallest finger's slightly long black colored nail.

"So lame."

"DIEEE!"

The captain screamed his lungs out, swinging his sword against Maria a dozen times, powerful slashing blows that could massacre most monsters outside the city were easily blocked by Maria's tiny nail.

Crack, crack, crack...!

CRASH!

"W-What?! My sword... Cracked by your mere nails?!"

The Paladin Captain gasped, stepping back in horror and disbelief. Maria smiled back at him maliciously and mischievously, her red eyes glowing brightly.

"What's wrong? Weren't you going to kill me?"

She opened her arms, as her shadows spread around the entire house, quickly summoning her family to fight. The seven other Paladins could not go help their captain, as they were forced to fight Maria's family.

"Paladins, you must support- Ah!"

The Captain immediately noticed it, of course, as he saw the entire house collapsing as Maria's family started clashing against the Paladins, both he and Maria were forced to quickly step out, as he stood above the rubble while glancing at Maria slowly float into the night sky.

She resembled a supernatural entity like nothing he had seen before, her body was translucent and phantasmagoric, emanating a threatening aura, so strong it made his spine become paralyzed and his legs tremble... without realizing, his entire body was drenched in sweat.

"Hahh... Hahhh... W-What... What are you?!"

He pointed his sword at her, as wings made of water emerged out of his back, his sword was severely cracked, but it still remained powerful, imbued with a mighty magic Maria had not seen before.

"I am Maria, nice to meet you, Sir Paladin." Maria smiled. "So, now we'll do things two ways. You guys go away right now and never return or... you fight me and die."

"Tch...! You might be a capable phantom magician, but it's not as if I haven't fought my fair share of malicious curse casters before!" The Paladin Commander smiled cockily, trying to convince himself she was merely using illusions to play with his mind. "By the Blessings of the Goddess of Water, I will not falter before your tricks and illusions!"

"Illusions?" Maria laughed. "You're really delusional. Okay then. Just for today I'm going to fight physically, bare fist style. Prepare yourself."

"A delicate woman like you fighting with her fists?!" Laughed the Paladin Captain. "I'll crush you to smithereens, you trickster! RAAAAH!"

The Paladin flew into the skies, reaching Maria in an instant as he swung his sword towards her! He was at least comparable to an A Rank monster in strength and speed, that much Maria could guess.

Maybe in the past, he would have been a really hard foe to fight and defeat, but right now? Maria was merely trying to enjoy herself and crush his confidence and pride before taking away his life.

"[One Hundred Sea Tridents]!"

The Paladin swung his sword, combining it with his aura to the point it resembled as if each of his strikes looked like a huge trident made of water.

However, Maria simply pushed her bare fist towards him.

BAAAMMM...!

Chapter 854 The Church Of Water's Paladins Trump Card

The Paladin Captain couldn't allow this stranger to insult his honor anymore, even if she could float in midair and do a few "tricks" he was a much stronger and mightier man, someone who was praised and beloved, he filled himself with confidence and overpowered this strange sense of dread he felt as he confronted Maria, rushing towards her with everything he had.

"[One Hundred Sea Tridents]!"

The Paladin swung his sword, combining it with his aura to the point it resembled as if each of his strikes looked like a huge trident made of water, striking against Maria, dozens of strikes in just a split of a second!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH! CLAAASH!

However, Maria simply pushed her bare fist towards him.

"[Phantasmal Fist]"

Her bare fist suddenly gathered a tremendous quantity of sheer phantasmal energies and Mana, suddenly creating the illusion of a gigantic translucent fist.

BAAAMMM...!

The attack was overwhelming, the Paladin Captain's attacks were instantly cancelled and blocked, as the fists impacted him head-first, slightly shattering his sword again, and spreading several cracks across his armor!

CRAAASH!

"Urgh...! W-What was that?!"

He quickly vomited blood, as he felt that his very guts were punched. If he wasn't someone already above Level 100 with excellent magic-enhanced equipment, he would have been reduced to smithereens.

And this was just Maria's weakest Demonic Ghostly Fist Technique out of over ten different and deadly techniques! This was the strength she had honed after deciding to not just rely on magic alone, desiring to grow in physical strength as well.

Her special techniques utilized her special body as a ghost combined with her accumulated physical strength to exert abilities never seen before.

"T-That fist..." The Captain glanced at Maria in disbelief.

"Do you understand the difference now?" Wondered Maria. "Or do you want me to humiliate you further? Because I don't mind if you do."

"D-Difference?!" Laughed the Paladin Captain, completely immersed on himself. "Yeah, the difference between you and me is that you're just a bastardly outlaw and I am a dignified paladin of the church! The goddess of water's blessings are within me!!!"

The Paladin Captain's entire body erupted with a sapphire-colored aura of Mana and Ki, concentrating together and constantly transforming and expanding, this time, turning into dozens of giant sharks.

"Hoh, not bad." Maria smiled. "This guy could make for a good Undead Paladin."

"Not bad?! I'll show you what's NOT BAD!!!"

The Paladin Captain roared, rushing towards Maria by literally riding one of his Sharks made out of his Water Blade Aura, reaching her in just a split of a second.

"[Spirit Shark Swarm]! Tear her apart!"

"ROOAAR!"

The Sharks roared, something Maria did not expect, as Sharks were incapable of roaring, actually. They reached her in an instant, opening their jaws and biting her entire body, trying to tear her down to pieces.

CRUNCH! CRUNCH! CRUNCH!

However, as they tried with all their strength to do that, they quickly realized something was wrong. Maria despite looking so delicate, was incredibly tough, so tough their sharp fangs shattered the moment they bite her.

"Ah, that tickles a bit." Maria laughed. "There we go!"

BAAAM! BAAAM! BAAAM!

With a quick swing of her two arms, Maria pulverized five of the Sharks in a single second. Their bodies exploding into water that started raining down over the city below.

"Tch! Keep attacking her! RAAAH!"

The Paladin Captain kept summoning sharks from his aura, one of his "ultimate moves" or something, as he rushed towards Maria and looked for a blind spot, finally finding it as Maria was distracted by having to deal with his summons.

"[Oceanic Trident Blade]!"

His longsword suddenly channeled his powers once more, generating a Blade Ki Aura mixed with Water Attribute Mana, shaping itself into a huge trident as he attempted to pierce her back while Maria was busy dealing with the sharks.

BAAAM!

The strike that could take down weakened A Rank Monsters reached her "blind spot" and easily pierced through her "flesh", making the Paladin smile inwardly as he celebrated that he had managed to hurt the malicious witch!

"You were not as strong as you said you were, you trickster witch!" He laughed. "Now, die!"

"Hya!"

However, Maria carefreely kicked the trident away with her beautiful legs, unleashing a mighty kicking [Reaper Uppercut] another of her Demonic Ghostly Fist Techniques.

CRASH!

The trident exploded into particles of blue light as Maria's hands reached the Paladin below, suddenly resembling huge skeletal fingers, channeling her special energies.

"[Skeleton Claws]"

Yet another of her Demonic Ghostly Fist Technique was utilized, her skeletal, sharp claws sliced through the Paladin Captain's trident and destroyed his sword, shattering it into pieces.

Crack, crack, CRAAASH!

"M-My sword...!"

The Paladin Captain panicked, pointing his hands towards Maria as he unleashed a spiraling vortex of oceanic waters using his magic, pushing her back a few meters to win time.

He unsheathed a blue knife and imbued his Mana into it, quickly beginning to conjure several sea snakes out with his magic.

"He's trying really hard."

Maria was beginning to feel like the villain here, if it wasn't because this bastard just tried to mutilate an innocent woman, she wouldn't had gone this far... maybe.

"[Sea Snake Swarm]! Devour her!"

The Paladin Captain screamed, unleashing a barrage of cutting attacks using his Magic Knife, each cutting wave was charged with Mana and Water Magic, and it came accompanied by dozens of large Sea Snakes, each as large as ten meters trying to bite and wrap around Maria.

"I have to give it to you, you're a tenacious bastard. You remind me of cockroaches." Maria sighed.
"However... This is as far as I'll let you go."

Maria's entire body flared with phantasmal flames, as she rushed towards the Paladin, destroying his summons with her sheer physical strength, resembling a black star!

FLASH!

"G-Get away from me!"

The Paladin panicked, sending out punches, knife attacks, and kicks against Maria, as spears of spiraling water started falling over her, to merely be destroyed at the moment of impact.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"[Soul Devouring Finger]"

Pointing her right hand's index finger, Maria used it as a spear, piercing the Paladin's armor and his chest, destroying his heart and his soul!

CRAAASH!

"URGH?!"

However, as Maria had already expected something within the Paladin's body was incapable of accepting his death!

Countless of fleshy tendrils emerged from the wound on his chest, as his armor melted into a metallic slime-like substance, merging with his wounds!

"Gruuuuaaagghh...!"

Maria instantly noticed what was happening, this man was not like the chimera kids from before, no, his body had been "enhanced" with an even more refined method than those.

"Would you look at that..."

The powers he held within were those of an Evil God's Fragment, and his armor was also cursed with its powers and miasma, made with its materials.

But at the same time, it was much more different, this dark power wasn't merely just an independent monstrous form, but there was indeed SOMETHING controlling its growth.

"The Blessings of the Water Goddess will not let me DIE so easily, you witch!!!"

"Hoh~"

As the Paladin's Captain body kept growing monstrously, a gigantic arm made of countless of fleshy tendrils unified together, wrapped on blue and silver colored scales, clashed against Maria!

CLAAASH!

Chapter 855 Angry Nyx!

The people of Sapphire Temple glanced into the skies; their hearts filled with horror as they saw the Paladins that had emerged slowly beginning to transform... It wasn't just the Captain Maria was humiliating, but the other seven of them had already been pushed to turn into the "blessings" of the water goddess.

Maria knew that this was a good opportunity for the kids to gain some battle experience, so while Lucifer, Partner, Emeraldine, Tear, and Jonathan supervised things, Fabian, his friends, Silva, Nyx, and Catarina were mostly taking care of them.

Fabian and his friends had leveled up a bit by hunting wild monsters in the deserts outside, and managed to reach a sizable level of power, with their combined efforts, they took down three of the Paladins.

Meanwhile, Nyx fought two by herself, all while Catarina and Silva fought another two. The battles were slightly even, but that was mostly because they wanted to use these Paladins as punching bags, they were perfect for that, thanks to their amazing physical strength and defenses.

However, they weren't that hardy, after a few claw attacks from Nyx, the two Paladins she was fighting collapsed, her abyssal death flames, her phantom dragons, and her mighty draconian strength mixed with her phantasmal, sneaky abilities made her too mighty, and that's without her actually turning into a giant dragon!

"Uuurggh...! Y-You damn brat!"

"Argh...! M-My bones...!"

"Hmph, you shouldn't had picked a fight with us if you were going to regret losing!" Nyx said angrily, crossing her arms. "I will never forgive those that harm my friends, and Celes became my fren now!"

Nyx had played around with Celes for a couple of hours, learning a bit about the young blue-eyed boy. Who was always rather lonely but had an unexpectedly nice and playful personality.

It only took a few hours for her childish and innocent heart to think of him as a friend, and so, a friend he became!

She felt slightly angry when her mama told her to remain quiet within her shadows to hide from the abusive paladins, but Maria couldn't contain herself anymore and stepped out, deciding to go against Nia's will to not intervene nor bring bloodshed to her house.

Now the house of her new dear friend was destroyed, and Nyx felt incredibly guilty about it, so she let go a bit of steam by beating these Paladins to death!

"The Blessing... the blessing of the goddess of water!"

"Please, give us the strength we need!!"

FLAAASH!

Their chests glowed with a bright blue aura, as shockwave of energy emerged from within them and forced Nyx to step back.

"Huh? What's going on?!"

Nyx was shocked, opening her mouth wide open as she saw the two Paladins transform, fusing together as one! Their bodies turned into fleshy tendrils, their souls were darkened by black, miasmic waters, as their forms converged into a single, monstrous entity.

"RAAAHHH!!!"

[The power of their [Corrupted Oasis Spirit's Heart Fragment] has forcefully transformed both [Water Goddess Paladins (A Rank)] together into a [Two-Headed Aquatic Miasmic Aberration (S- Rank)]!]

[All their Stats have merged together and have further increased by +100%!]

S- Rank monster!

It was of a much higher level of power than any other transformations Nyx had faced before. She felt slightly nervous, but at the same time, she had helped her mom defeat an S+++ Rank monster... So it wasn't as if she was completely afraid and without any confidence either.

The monstrous beast had the slight shape of some sort of lizardman monster. The armor and weapons the paladins wielded melted and turned into blue and silver scales covering its humanoid-like body, with four enormous arms with sharp claws and two sea snake-like heads, and a huge blue and black crystal growing on its chest, protected by its scales.

It emanated a deadly aura of pressure, miasma, and spiritual energy! This was a completely unique transformation, not like something they had ever faced before.lights

And that message that showed in front of Nyx appeared in front of everyone else as well, the [Corrupted Oasis Spirit Heart Fragment] was already setting a lot of flags.

Just what had they done with the true Oasis Spirit? Was it truly dead? Did it truly reincarnate?

Those will be answers Maria and her family will have to search for once they're done cleaning the floor with these slightly overpowered mobs...

"RAAAHH! T-The blessings! It feels so good... SO GOOD! GRAAAH!"

The furious two-headed lizard-like sea snake monster roared, his four arms moving upwards as he summoned four spears made of spiraling black and blue spiritual waters, glaring at Nyx with his four eyes, two in each head...

"We'll kill you; you damn brat! You'll die by the power of our goddess's blessings!!!"

"Hmph! I'm not a brat! I will stomp on the bullies of my friends!"

Nyx and the fused chimeric paladin roared at the same time, rushing against one another at an incredible speed and clashing! Although her foe was over ten times her tiny size, Nyx was mighty and fearless, capable of blocking his four attacks at once with her bare claws, as an armor of black crystal-like scales grew over her body, the power of her [Obsidian Demonite Crystal Scale Armor] Skill!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

Their clash was intense, several shockwaves were being unleashed across the skies as the people below panicked, screaming, and running away from the battle.

"GRRHH, those scales...! Are you a lizard or something, you damn brat?!" The two headed monster roared, swinging his long tail, which ended on the head of yet another sea snake as it opened its jaws and engulfed Nyx completely!

CRUUUNCH!

"Hahah! But you lowered your guard, FOOL!"

The chimeric fusion celebrated, thinking they had chomped down Nyx easily!

However...

"ROOAR!"

Nyx unleashed a mighty draconic roar, her eyes glowing bright red as her tail grew much longer than originally, resembling the tail she had in her true dragon form.

Her Tail suddenly loaded itself with her powers, as it pierced the head of the sea snake trying to eat her a hundred times!

"[Void Piercing Spear Tail]!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

BOOOMMM...!

The gigantic sea snake head could not resist her might, exploding into smithereens!

"Grrrr... Now I'm mad!"

Nyx was genuinely angered now!

Chapter 856 Nyx's Amazing Strength

Nyx was mad! And it clearly showed as her eyes glowed bright red as her tiny body was covered constantly by her armor of scales. Her wings kept growing larger, as she flapped them rapidly, pushing her into the skies as her claws reached the beast in front of her!

"[Draconic Phantom Boost]!"

FLAAASH!

Her body erupted with a draconic, phantasmal energy enhancing her stats tremendously. Her tiny body's muscles were strengthened, her reflexes were improved, and her speed was sharpened!

[You have activated the [Draconic Phantom Boost] Skill!]

[An Aura of Draconic Energy and Phantasmal Energy is encompassing your body! All Stats have increased by 50%! Dragon-type and Phantom-type Damage has increased by +100%!]

"[Phantasmal Death Claws]!"

Her claws suddenly resembled those of her mother when she transformed them into a skeleton-like form, huge and menacing, covered by an obsidian-colored crystal scales!

Using them, she swung them against her foe furiously, slicing and clashing against the chimera's weapons, destroying them in a single second as her spear-tipped tail pierced the beast's chest.

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

CRAAASH!

"GRUUAGH...!"

The chimeric aberration vomited a mouthful of blood as its metallic scales were twisted, the blue colored crystal on its chest gaining several cracks.

"RAAAAH!"

However, with a desperate scream, the beast opened its jaws and channeled their energies within, unleashing two powerful beams of miasmic and water spiritual energies, right in front of Nyx's face!

BOOOMMM!!!

"Ugh...!"

Nyx was pushed back dozens of meters, using her tiny, scaled arms to defend the rest of her face as she gritted her teeth. The angrier she grew, the more her power kept rising.

Her arms seemed to be burned, as the scales kept falling, only to regenerate quickly as her phantasmal powers conjured her Heal Undead Spell, which could heal her as well.

"You're nothing compared to us, you damn bratty lizard girl!!!"

The two-headed chimera roared, rushing towards Nyx at an incredible speed, his enormous four arms gaining gauntlets made of miasmic water, sharp and filled with spikes, and unleashing a barrage of fist attacks towards her!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Urrgh...! Raaarr! RAAAAAH!"

However, as Nyx blocked the strikes with her bare hands, her wings, and her spar, she kept growing angrier and angrier, her mouth begging to erupt with phantasmal flames!

"[Abyssal Chaos Breath]!"

Opening her mighty little jaws, Nyx unleashed a devastating beam of pure darkness and chaotic energies spiraling together, disrupting all barriers or magics her foe had conjured, and clashing directly into his body!

BOOOOMM!!!

"G-GRAAAGGH...!"

The giant two-headed chimera was burned alive, his scales falling off easily as his charred body started falling from the skies, only for its flesh to kept regenerating, his soul covering his wounds like a miasmic veil as it forcefully regenerated him.

"You'll need much more than this to defeat us!"

The monstrous chimera roared, suddenly growing two enormous fish fin-like wings, and moving them rapidly as they flew towards Nyx to strike her down instead!

Their four arms shapeshifted into tendrils, which then fused together into a singular, gigantic muscular arm covered on scales, clashing against Nyx!

CRAAASH!

"RAAAH!"

However, Nyx was pissed off, quickly intercepting the clash with all her might, both of her claws flaring with phantom and chaotic flames as she unleashed a barrage of slashing blows, covering the entire arm into cutting attacks and slicing it into pieces.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

"W-What...?!"

The two-headed chimera panicked for a split of a second, before the madness that this entity taking over him caused to the combined minds took over his fear and made him even madder.

His eyes glowed bright red as the monster regrew a new pair of arms, this time without fingers but possessing two sharp spear-like ends, made of blue and silver metals.

The spears were encompassed by spiraling waters and miasma, further boosting his speed and strength.

"DIEEE!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

However, Nyx evaded the deadly strikes as she left a "illusion" made out of her own phantom dragons of her, using Shadow Sneak to appear behind her foe, charging her two strongest new spells.

"[Spectral Phantasmal Flare]! [Abyssal Dark Star]!"

Spectral Phantasmal Flare and Abyssal Dark Star merged together, summoning a dozen of spheres of abyssal darkness, void, and phantasmal flares of incredibly high burning power.

"YOU DIE!"

Nyx roared angrily, the phantasmal meteors reached her foe and completely bombarded him with dozens of explosions, his entire body beginning to be torn to shreds!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"AAAGGH...! Y-YOUUUU!!!"

A monstrous, malefic roar echoed from within the fused chimera, a voice that Nyx did not recognize as the ones from the paladins, as their flesh was being blown to pieces, the phantasmal soul within emerged, infected with several energies, countless red and blue eyes popping out of its black colored soul!

"You pathetic mortals! I WON'T let you get in the way of my resurrection!!!"

The phantasmal mass reached Nyx, unleashing countless of explosive beams of darkness and corrupted, miasmic water spirit energy, which started piercing through Nyx's defenses!

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

"[Phantasmal Dragon Fusion Magic]!"

The little daughter of the Dragon King and the Saintess of Death gathered her powers together into her hands, as all the Phantom Dragons she had summoned and saved up in her Shadows emerged one after another, fusing and materializing to her will!

They fused, transforming into several rotating Phantom Dragon Shields around her, as she kept charging forwards!

"What is that magic?!"

The entity was incapable of comprehending Nyx's strength, as another group of her Phantom Dragons suddenly fused into an enormous Abyssal Phantom Dragon Sword!

"This is my own unique magic!"

Nyx said furiously and pridefully, her giant sword ignoring the constant beam rain, as it pierced through the phantasmal aberration's soul and shattered its core at long last!

CRACK! Crack, crack...!

"T-This...! I cannot block a mere sword?! URGH...!"

Crack, crack!

"You accursed outsiders!"

Crack, CRACK!

CRAAASH!

"RUUUAAAGGHH...!"

BOOOMMM...!!!

With an agonizing scream, whatever that was controlling the aberrant chimera died, its forces and powers shattered and pierced by Nyx's mightiest magic!

"Wow... You guys are so awesome!"

Nyx celebrated with her Phantom Dragons.

Chapter 857 An Ideal Sand Bag!

As the Paladin Commander that Maria was fighting was driven to a corner and almost slaughtered as her strike pierced his chest and left a huge wound, something suddenly started to change!

Countless of fleshy tendrils emerged from the wound on his chest, as his armor melted into a metallic slime-like substance, merging with his wounds!

Maria instantly noticed what was happening, this man was not like the chimera kids from before, no, his body had been "enhanced" with an even more refined method than those.

It seems that the Paladins of this second city in the Desert of Goldsand had undergone an even more drastic transformation, with an even more advanced method of modification, perhaps similar to the one the Heroes that invaded her Village had undergone.

"Would you look at that..."

The powers he held within were those of an Evil God's Fragment, and his armor was also cursed with its powers and miasma, made with its materials.

But at the same time, it was much more different, this dark power wasn't merely just an independent monstrous form, but there was indeed SOMETHING controlling its growth.

"This is...?"

"The Blessings of the Water Goddess will not let me DIE so easily, you witch!!!"

"Hoh~"

As the Paladin's Captain body kept growing monstrously, a gigantic arm made of countless of fleshy tendrils unified together, wrapped on blue and silver colored scales, clashed against Maria!

BAAAM!

Maria was slightly surprised by the increasingly powerful strike, but blocked it with her bare fists, unleashing a barrage of fist attacks that pushed her foe meters away, giving him the time to finish his transformation...

Ding!

[The power of their [Corrupted Oasis Spirit's Heart Fragment] has forcefully transformed the [Water Goddess Paladin Captain (A Rank)] into a [Shark-headed Aquatic Miasmic Aberration (S Rank)]!]

[His body is now encompassed in a mighty [Aura of Corrupted Spiritual Energies], further increasing All Stats by +150%!]

"Corrupted Oasis Spirit Heart Fragment?" Maria wondered. "This is new, it's not the Evil God's Fragment, or Demonite? Or his Secretion? What... is this?!"

In front of Maria, the Captain of the Paladins had underwent a drastic transformation! Unlike the other Paladins, who had transformed into S- Rank, he had become a full-fledged S Rank threat, his appearance now resembling a giant of over twenty meters, covered on fish-like scales, muscles, and whose head had become the ugly and monstrous head of a giant white shark, showing off his sharp fangs.

He no longer had a sword, but he had simply materialized two anchor-like weapons made out of black spiritual water he summoned and could control at whim through this form!

A cocky smile emerged on his face, glancing at Maria from afar, his enormous body floating in midair with utmost ease, emanating a strong Aura.

"Do you see now, the might of my Goddess?!" He laughed. "You might have taken that hit, but these ones coming right after won't be that easy to block!"

"You're not channeling just the powers of the Evil God! What is going on with the Divine Oasis Spirit?! Are you stealing her powers?!" Maria roared furiously, clashing against the former Paladin, now turned into an ugly shark-like humanoid abomination!

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

CRAAASH!

"Hahahaha! What are you even talking about?!" The shark man laughed; his two anchors made of corrupted water fused together into a huge trident. "This is all but the power of the Goddess of Water! [Abyssal Ocean Trident]!"

The enormous trident reached Maria in a split of a second, her hands swiftly grabbing the entire thing, as black lightning started sparkling from her body.

CRAAASH!

"Huh?!"

The shark man was shaken as he saw Maria easily grab his magic weapon and then imbue her black lightning into the weapon, letting the water do the rest!

"Fine, I'll just ask questions to your soul once you're fried into some nice seafood."lights

ZAAAP!

BOOOM!

A huge explosion of lightning engulfed her foe, his entire body electrifying and frying alive, her black lightning held incredible power as she had inherited it from devouring a Divine Spirit created by Thor as a vessel of his mind, allowing him to descend into the mortal world without wasting energy!

It was, in fact, a Divinity!

"UUUAAAGGHHH...!"

With an agonizing scream, the former paladin commander flew several meters away from Maria at the same time as his enormous arms kept regenerating, new fleshy tendrils emerging, covering his gigantic arms with scales, as the waters he controlled shapeshifted into huge gauntlets with sharp spikes!

"DIEEEE!"

The sharp-spiked gauntlets clashed against Maria at lightning speed, their force being equal to a meteor descending from the skies. It wasn't a S Rank monster for nothing!

However, Maria's lightning kept spreading across her entire body, her appearance suddenly gave sudden change, her hair became blonde, zapping with lightning, her eyes became pure black with golden irises, and her dress became black and gold, her white skin gaining golden-colored lightning-shaped tattoos!

"Let's try something different for a change..."

Ding!

[You have activated the [Divine Thunder Spirit Body: Lv3] Skill!]

[Your body has undergone a radical change; lightning is coursing through you completely! Due to the absence of other strong Body-type Skills, the Elemental Effects of this Skill have been amplified!]

[All Stats, Movement Speed, Reaction Speed, and Attack Speed have increased by +100%, Lightning Attribute Magic Power has further increased by +250%!]

[An Aura of [Chaotic Divine Lightning] is being generated by your body, which constantly produces large quantities of volts and electricity!]

"[Abyssal Death Lightning Fist]!"

CLASH! CLASH! CLASH!

CRAAASH!

"S-So fast! I can't even catch up to her?!"

Maria blocked the strikes of the abominable shark man with her lightning speed fists, flying around his body so fast it looked as if she was teleporting, her fist suddenly overflowing with so much golden and black lightning that she unleashed it all into a cannon!

"[Chaotic Lightning Cannon]!"

ZAAAP!

The former paladin commander was completely overwhelmed, most of his body charred, yet new flesh kept emerging from within the burned flesh, discarding it as his body shape constantly became more and more animal-like and monstrous.

A second shark head emerged, and another pair of enormous, muscular arms, while his legs disappeared, turning now into a long swimming tail!

"RAAAHHH!!!"

However, Maria kind of liked that...

"You're one tough nut to crack... An ideal sand bag!"

CRAAASH!

Chapter 858 Maria's Overwhelming Might

Maria noticed that the powers of whatever was within the paladin's body were amplifying in response to his body being exposed to near-death experiences. But this wasn't really happening with the other Paladins, this Paladin Commander guy was really quite special in that regard.

She also noticed that there was some sort of blue jewel glowing beneath his chest, hidden within his still beating heart, a blue jewel that was completely overtaken by a vicious darkness... This somewhat reminded her of the tale that Nia had told her about the Divine Oasis Spirit.

Where she sacrificed her own life to seal The Dark Pest with her body and soul... Yet, if Celes is truly her reincarnation, then that means that whatever they're using as her fragments, it might be something left behind, perhaps a piece of her divine body, corrupted by whatever the Dark Pest truly was!

However, Maria would have to find out if these theories were real or not once she dealt with this monster, that kept shapeshifting in an attempt to adapt to the constant damage it was taking.

"RAAAAHHH!!!"

The giant abomination swam across the skies towards her, without even holding the ability to speak properly anymore, opening its enormous shark jaws, and constantly trying to bite Maria!

CRAASH! CRAASH! CRAASH!

However, Maria swiftly evaded its attacks, moving at lightning speed, quite literally! Her body felt as if it was made of pure electricity, as she started to charge more and more energy into her fists, the second the giant shark beast reached her, conjuring an enormous quantity of miasmic spirit waters, shaped into hundreds of shark jaws!

"GROOOAARR!"

"Honestly, that's pretty cool." Maria laughed. "Alright, it's decided, you'll become my new Undead. [Phantasmal Limbs]!"

Her entire body shapeshifted, growing hundreds of long, phantasmal arms from her body, made out of phantasmal energy and divine golden and black lightning!

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

With mighty electrifying fists, she stopped the enormous wave of sharks conjured out of corrupted spirit magic, as the shark swiftly emerged from amidst the explosions, opening its jaws and swallowing Maria whole!

CRUNCH!

"GRRRHHH...?!"

However, the moment it closed its jaws, the shark felt incredible discomfort, being forced to open its jaws by Maria, who kept punching its mouth!

CRAASH!!!

"GRYYAARGH!"

The shark's lower jaw exploded with a lightning burst, as Maria escaped the beast's maws and looked down at it from above, her lightning constantly growing stronger with each passing second.

"This flashy fighting style is not bad; I could get used to this..." Maria thought.

"RAAAAH!"

The shark, even without a lower jaw, did not give up, conjuring all the magical and spiritual powers it could into a massive aura, which summoned hundreds of tridents, firing them directly towards her!

"Again with the same?!" Maria smiled, rushing down, and punching the corrupted spirit water tridents one after another with her bare fists!

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

"Let's end this!"

She reached the beast, as the monster's four arms quickly unleashed a barrage of fist attacks towards her, which she swiftly intercepted with her own fists!

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

Her attacks were so potent that electricity constantly zapped out of her blows, breaking apart her foe's arms, as they constantly kept regenerating.

"How about this then?"

She gathered her electricity and combined it with a magic circle, conjuring a series of chains made of sealing, chaotic lightning, which quickly wrapped itself around the beast's arms, forcing it to keep still!lights

"[Sealing Chaotic Lightning Chains]!"

FLASH!

"GRYYAAAGH?!"

The shark was quickly taken aback by this, as Maria swiftly rushed down towards its chest, and then pierced it with her fist, overcharging it with electricity!

"[Infernal Spectral Lightning Fist]!"

Combining her Ghostly Fist Techniques with her lightning powers, she pierced her foe's chest, and then went deeper, grasping the origin of its endless power and shattering it!

Crack, crack...!

CRAAASH!

"GRYYAAAHHHH...!"

The life force of the entire beast started to disappear at the same time, as Maria absorbed it by merely touching it, its soul quickly trying to run away, for some reason.

"Nuh-huh, you're not going anywhere..." Maria smiled, grabbing the soul back and sticking it into the recently dead corpse, repairing its chest wound and then... "[Creation of Death]"

FLASH!

Phantasmal energies covered the entire corpse, as its soul was sealed within, and the entire being was reanimated as Maria's new Undead.

"GRAAAHH..."

The beast groaned in frustration, it seemed to not have liked what happened there... Especially because it used to be a person, and now it is stuck in the form of an aberrant being.

"You'll get used to it." She gently patted the shark's head.

Meanwhile, as Maria had finished off her foe, the other Paladins weren't just sitting ducks. They had all transformed into their own sorts of marine-like monsters, even the ones that little Nyx fought had fused into a big one!

However, Nyx's opponent wasn't the only one that had decided to become a giant, combined beast. Especially because the other paladins were too weak to make something strong alone, the forces controlling their bodies into turning into chimeras swiftly decided to fuse them into a gigantic multi-headed sea snake-like creature.

And the ones taking care of that beast were nobody else than Fabian's group, as Maria wanted them to train and get stronger, he and his friends had to make sure to fight properly and earn their EXP! And this was a rather ideal opportunity for that...

"RAAAAH!" The large and strong Garon rushed towards the giant chimera, his fists blazing with powerful red flames, his red hair turning into pure fire as his entire body channeled the powers he had inherited from his chimeric body before turning into a special kind of Undead. "[Blazing Ifrit's Fist Meteors]!"

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

With the might of his already high stats thanks to his new body, the powerful Garon managed to crush several of the skulls of the chimeric beast they fought, only for its long tail to swiftly hit him from behind, smacking him down!

BAAAMMM!!

However, before he were to fall, the little Beery appeared, conjuring a mass of purple-colored plants around his tiny body, which quickly caught Garon's body from falling further below.

"Careful!"

"Beery!"

"GROOOAARRR!"

The multi-headed beast glanced down at them, swiftly rushing towards the kids, only for a dozen spears made of Demonite to pierce its back!

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

Chapter 859 The Warlocks

Fabian conjured his special magic, piercing the chimera with several giant spears of Demonite, which also sapped out its strength and energy, making it much weaker and slower!

At the same time, within below, Beery and Garon rushed upwards, unleashing their attacks. Garon blazing fists left large burnt marks that wouldn't regenerate easily, while Beery's special plant growth magic spread across many of the limbs of the chimera, draining its vitality and lowering its stats!

"Spectra! Nick!"

Fabian called his other two friends, as they came rushing down while he distracted the gigantic monster himself. His spears made of Demonite constantly clashed against the beast's body, causing constant explosions over its body!

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM!

"SHAAAH!"

Spectra appeared from behind it, her body quickly conjuring her special abilities, which were partially similar to Maria's ghostly abilities.

"[Spectral Body]! [Spectral Limbs]!"

Her body quickly turned translucent as she expanded her size and used her many limbs growing from her phantom form to wrap around the monster, giving it chills, cursing it, and constantly draining its health as well!

"Alright, nicely done, Spectra!"

Meanwhile, Nick produced a purple-colored poisonous gas from his hands, which he could freely manipulate, quickly utilizing it to intoxicate the beast as it smelled the poisonous gases, its entire body felt even more weakened!

Most of this party was composed of those capable of weakening their foe to the extreme, and with Garon and Fabian as the heavy hitters, they had a really good composition.

However, with Silva, things became perhaps even more perfect!

"[Miasmic Boost]! [Chaotic Enhancement]!"

Silva sat down over Blackie, the Zombie Shadow Wolf of Catarina, as Catarina made sure to hold the girl well so she wouldn't fall.

Her powers instantly reached Fabiana and Garon's bodies, making them overflow with newfound magical strength. Before the chimera could even retaliate back, the two descended towards the beast together!

"[Ifrit's Volcanic Explosive Fist]!"

"[Great Demonite Abyssal Spear]!"

Garon gathered all his powers into his right arm, as a gigantic fist made of volcanic lava, flames, and magma materialized, clashing against the chimera's chest, and making it overflow with blazing flames!

At the same time, Fabian's strongest spell descended, in the shape of a huge black spear made of black Demonite, piercing the monster's chest, and shattering its core!

CRAAASH!

They had been fighting the beast for a while, but they finally managed to weaken it enough to strike it down! The beast gave out an agonizing shriek, as the many souls and lives composing it all perished at the same time as its internal organs and heart core were destroyed!

BAAAMMM...!

Its corpse quickly falling over the ruined house that once belonged to Nia and Celes, creating a huge commotion that shook the entire City of Sapphire Temple...

"A-A monster?!"

"What just happened?!"

"Where are the paladins...?"

"Didn't you see?! They turned into beasts! We've been dominated by monsters this entire time!"

"T-That's... it can't be, right?!"

"W-Who could have defeated them in such forms?!"

The people gathered around the corpse, only for Maria to quickly get there, grab the corpse, and make it disappear inside of her inventory, her entire body veiled in shadows, so they couldn't see exactly who she was.

"I should get going, I can't just stay in here... Might as well hide somewhere." She thought. "Everyone, we're retreating, follow me." She spoke to her family through telepathy, as the children nodded and quickly followed her, alongside Lucifer and everyone else.

The intense atmosphere of battle and destruction that covered the city disappeared just as it appeared, rapidly and without anybody realizing.

The people dispersed, fearing that the paladin monsters might come for them next, hiding in their houses, or somewhere else, hoping to just live another day.

Meanwhile, within the temple, the news about what had just happened quickly reached the Saintess of Fountains and Springs, Emilia, her face filled with frustration, disbelief, fear, and anger.

The mixed emotions in her face were hard to discern by the rest of her servants, knights, and paladins there, but they were just as afraid of what had happened.

After all, for their peaceful lives to be suddenly interrupted by someone capable of slaying them with ease, it wasn't something to take lightly at all...

"After having worked so hard for what I've accomplished... After finally taking ahold of this pitiful city and raising it into something a bit more decent, those outsiders come and begin to mess things up!" She groaned. "B-But just how powerful are they to be able to defeat the Chimeric Sea Beasts?! This just doesn't make sense..."

"It certainly feels like it doesn't make sense, isn't it, Saintess Emilia?" Suddenly, a voice that Emilia recognized well, yet she had not talked with for a while echoed within her throne room.

An extremely old-looking man, with sharp red eyes, pointy ears, and sharp canine fangs, an Elder Vampire, stepped into the halls, wearing a black cloak that covered most of his body, even his old face, only revealing his old-looking, long fingers, as he slowly walked towards her.

"Maleficus..." Emilia spoke, glaring at the man while squinting her eyes. "Your chimeric experiments have failed me. You said you could imbue the power of the Goddess into my soldiers, yet they were defeated anyways by those outsiders!

"I am well aware of that." Maleficus spoke with an old, dry voice. "However, that is because those beings that have come to our city are no normal entities... They're beings beyond S Rank, and I've heard a bit about them... They might be as well the ones related to what has happened to the Ruby Palace."

"What...?!" Emilia panicked. "T-Then why are they here?! What do they want?" She furiously asked.

"They're agents of their own selfish desires, much like me, and you. They follow their own codes, their own justice. They will seek those that have wronged others and slay them." Maleficus laughed. "It seems that our years of peace have finally come to a close, oh, little Emilia."

"What do you mean by that?!" Emilia angrily roared. "You, as the leader of the Warlocks, should know of a way to get rid of them!"

"Oh well, I do have many ways to do so... But I wonder WHICH ones might work, heheheh..." The Old Vampire laughed.

"Whatever their purpose is in here, we have to stop them before things get out of control..." Emilia was biting her nails in concern. "Amass your troops, find them!"

(Maria's POV)

Once we managed to beat the annoying Paladins, we veiled ourselves on Stealth and Camouflage Spells and escaped into the farther areas of the city.

Despite being a city in the middle of the desert, it was tremendously huge, perhaps a bit bigger than Ruby Palace, as Sapphire Temple harbored a whole church, it had an even longer and richer history.

Compared to modern day Earth cities, its obviously not as big, but it might be the largest City I've ever visited, perhaps slightly larger than the Dwarven Metropolis.

There were countless of streets to choose for hiding, and there were also a lot of places to stay if we wanted, there were many Inns, and as we moved further into fancier areas of the city, things started looking rather beautiful.

The floor was paved, for once, there were beautifully made houses, the streets were clean, and there was also more security... But as long as we kept our appearances slightly changed through our shapeshifting abilities, we shouldn't be found out so easily.

We ended choosing a midway point between fancier places and the still poorer areas, as we paid an Inn and decided to hide in there to rest for a little while, as usual.

There were a lot of things we needed to talk about, and we were quite a lot of people, so we rented the largest room, which was as big as the whole third floor of the Inn... This also included renting all five of the rooms, so the kids could sleep comfortably.

The lady was rather surprised we were such a huge group, until we explained her they were our adopted kids... And we were a "merchant family", having gotten that merchant guild certification was really coming in useful right now, as it helped at our credibility, and well, if that didn't worked, I could had also done a few Mind Tricks... If you know what I meant.

But thankfully, there was no need for such trickery, as simply by stepping in and paying, we were given all the space we needed to unwind, and also a lot of meals, three a day for everyone! The Inn Keeper didn't question us anymore after I showed him a bag with gold coins.

"Phew~ We've finally got some time to rest..." I sighed in relief, hitting the fluffy bed. "Ahhh, this place of the town is sure fancy, these beds are so soft..."

"Yeah..." Partner yawned. "I want to take a nap; the strong sun gets me so tired..."

"I want to take a bath first; I am all sweaty." Emeraldine sighed.

"Ahem!" Lucifer muttered, as he glanced at us. "Are we not going to address what has happened just now?" He said, pointing at Nia and Celes sleeping over the bed. They had fallen asleep in my Shadows, so we left them on their own bed to rest for the moment.

"I know, I know. We learned about this town's history, then some paladins showed up looking for water... Seriously? And then... Huh, Celes got a lot of magic talent." Partner was trying to tie things up, but she was utterly failing at it.

"T-That's not how it exactly went but yeah, something like that..." Lucifer sighed. "I am just rather worried, what should we do now? Should we bring Nia and Celes to our town? Would they be okay with that? And about Celes' powers... Didn't you hear they said that they were too abnormal to be just magic? I also sensed it, didn't you all? His soul emanated a powerful Divine Spirit Aura, stronger even than Emeraldine's Divine Spirits."

"Well, yeah." I sighed. "I've checked his soul already, and it is very strong, but it is kind of sealed? It is as if his own powers sealed themselves as a way to protect the boy..." I said, rubbing my chin. "It might be too much of a coincidence that he's the reincarnation, but I suppose that's not the first-time coincidences like these happen. After all I hold so many Titles, that Fate kind of... finds a way to get me involved in a lot of stuff."

I've learned a lot about Title Skills and Skills from the people of this world, and from what I've learned the most, they usually say that Title Skills are very important powers, they are very rare as well, so someone like me that holds so many is an incredibly rare occurrence.

And it is said that Title Skills change the fate of people, and give them an "Aura of Charisma" that makes you know they're important... I'm not trying to explain things completely based in just that, but it is one of the elements that might be involved into this.

Well, not like I mind it, we are really strong and came here for a reason, and we don't mind getting our hands dirty either, so crazy things happening as a result of our very existences should be expected, even more now that we're S Rank beings...

Oh, talking about Ranks, let's check the System...

Ding!

[You have defeated [Shark-headed Aquatic Miasmic Aberration (S Rank)] x1!]

[Your Party have defeated [Two-headed Aquatic Miasmic Aberration (S- Rank)] x1 [Multi-headed Hydra Aquatic Miasmic Aberration (S- Rank)] x1!]

[You earned 15.000.000 EXP!]

[LEVEL UP!]

[Your Level has increased to Level 100/100!]

[All your Stats have increased greatly!]

[Your Class and Race Level have reached Max Level!]

[You can now Evolve and Rank Up your Current Class!]

[By using System Points and other Materials, you can now customize your Class Rank Ups and Evolutions.]

[New System Functions will be unlocked upon Evolution!]

Uooh! Max Level! Finally! And above all, I can now Evolve and Rank Up my class but... What with that description? I need to spend System Points and Materials to get stronger Evolutions and Ranked Up Classes?

Interesting... But I don't know if that's a good thing, or something to make things even more complicated. Nonetheless, it's nice to know there'll be a new System Function unlocked once I evolve.

"Sigh, you're so relaxed about everything... Oh well, it's not like we don't have our history of insane events happening but still..." Lucifer sighed.

"Haha, sorry. Alright, I'll get more serious!" I nodded. "...After I take a bath and eat something though."

"Why even try..." Lucifer facepalmed. "Let's talk once we're all rested up then."