

Abyssal 261

Chapter 261 - Ready To Bet Her Life

Sophia knew that there was no point in trying to hide her presence. The enemy may be incredibly weak right now due to the deadly wounds he received during his last fight but his consciousness was still on a different level since it had obtained a qualitative improvement the moment he had awoken his True Soul.

Above the egg, two eyes made of black fire were formed and the lava around them started to form shields and giant weapons that targeted the Neo-Demon. He had detected the woman the moment she entered the magmatic chamber, but moving from this location would severely harm his healing process so he was forced to wait until Sophia reached this area.

If his soul was in its peak condition, then he would not have needed to move to defeat the woman. He could have taken control over the entire magmatic chamber and used it to crush Sophia, but right now taking control of the lava around him was the best he could do.

The Neo-Demon did not rush to her opponent. Even if he had lost most of his power, he was once a Rank 4 life form and his strength was too great for Sophia to face him in a battlefield that increased his might and weakened her's.

Sophia had done many preparations for this battle and the environment was clearly taken into consideration. She took ten black pills from her space ring and allowed them to melt inside the lava. Immediately after that, the lava around Sophia started to gain a black color while foul and wicked energy changed it.

The moment that happened the eyes of fire above the egg widened and they released a great force that attempted to contain that energy from expanding but before it could do anything one hundred pills that were in the periphery of the magmatic chamber exploded and formed a black gas that fused into the lava next to them.

A chain reaction occurred inside the magmatic chamber and in a matter of seconds, the tons of lava that it contained were transformed into a vicious and putrefactive substance.

The area in more than one hundred of kilometers around the duo had transformed into a toxic hellscape that could rot the body of a Novice Rank 3 life form with ease.

The individual inside the egg could no longer control the lava around him after it was affected by that foul energy and he felt how it became poisonous for him. Escaping this place without a fight was not an option since the substance hindered his movement and running without incapacitating his opponent first would leave him open to her's attack, which would result in grave injuries.

Immense wrath could be seen in the fiery eyes. He had stayed in this place for many years now and had been very careful but this woman, who was not even a Peak Rank 3 life form, had ruined his plan.

"AWW!" A bird cry full of hate was heard from inside the egg before it was consumed by black flames and it transformed into a four hundred meters tall Abyssfire Demon Phoenix.

Sophia's eyes narrowed when this demonic being appeared. This was the bloodline she desired. Sophia had fought hordes of demons and risked her life just for the chance to obtain it.

She knew that Emperor bloodlines would be bought from the Scientia Kingdom and Zatiel would allow her to pick whichever she wanted, but none of them would be able to compare with her Styx Dragon Bloodline and they may even harm her bloodline instead of helping it if she fuses with them.

After a lot of research, she became interested in this Abyssfire Demon Phoenix bloodline. Not only was it at the same level that the Styx Dragon Bloodline, but if her hypothesis is correct and her plan is successful, then the combination between the two of them would bring something exponentially more powerful than the mere sum of the two.

After the battle with Tomas, the demon had endured deadly wounds, and even though he had managed to escape from the Angelic Paragon, it was a matter of time before he would succumb to his injuries. That was the main reason he was able to hide from the Heavenly race since there was no point in wasting time in hunting an enemy that would die eventually. Not to mention that they needed to focus on the much bigger threat that was the Magi invader force.

What they did not know was that thanks to his bloodline, the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix had access to all kinds of supernatural abilities. His ashes reached this volcano and after using the power of his True Soul's to command demons to guard this area, he activated the ability called From Ashes to Flesh.

This ability allowed him to reconstruct his body. After enough time his body would have regained his original power. Although his soul had fallen to Rank 3, with a body at Rank 4, there was still a possibility for him to once again become a true Rank 4 life form.

There was an even more amazing ability that the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix could have used that would not only have completely healed his body and soul but also increase the power of his bloodline and his affinity with the laws. However, if the demon activated that ability, there was a great possibility of failure and that would mean his soul being destroyed, so the demon did not dare to attempt it.

Sophia knew how dangerous her enemy was and the multicolored flame in her eyes burned brighter. His enemy's body had not reached Rank 4 yet, but it was still more powerful than the one of a Peak Rank 3 demon. Luckily for her, the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix soul was still wounded and her attacks had the ability to target the enemy's consciousness.

The Neo-Demon did not hesitate and activated Blood Essence Combustion making a black flame appear on her chest and then she took a red pill from her ring and swallowed it. Sophia's bloodline started to burn and she felt as if a stream of fire was running through her veins.

The pill she had just consumed filled her body with an immense amount of power but there was a severe side effect. That power was obtained by burning part of her bloodline, so after the effect of the pill is over, her bloodline will start to decline and with time it may even decline into a King bloodline.

Despite that, there was no wavering in Sophia's eyes. She was willing to stake her life on this battle. As long as she gets the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix bloodline, any damage would be repaired and she was ready to die if her plan failed.

As the power inside Sophia's body grew, the Neo-Demon's dragon roar filled the entire magmatic chamber.

"ROOOAAARRR!" A sphere of Styx water hundreds of meters in diameter appeared around Sophia's body.

That sphere appeared to contain countless tsunamis moving in every direction and carrying a power that could destroy entire cities. But in an instant, the sphere started to morph and its temperature fell.

In a moment, an Ice Styx Dragon appeared inside the magmatic chamber. The head of the creature was immense. Its teeth secreted a filthy liquid full of diseases and curses. Its body was six hundred meters long, there were two massive wings made of thousands of ice spears on its back and its tail was filled with spikes that glowed with chaotic energy.

Even the poisonous substance around the massive body of the Ice Styx Dragon started to rot due to the lethal energy the creature expelled.

Sophia's figure could not be seen inside the body of the creature but the eyes of the dragon glowed with intelligence and killing intent as it stared menacingly at its opponent.

The killing intent in the eyes of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix was not any less than the one of the Neo-Demon.

There was no need for words between the duo since they could clearly feel the desire in the eyes of the other.

"AWW!" The black fire around the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix raged and released an immense power while the demon waved his wings and propelled his immense body at the Ice Styx Dragon.

"ROOOAAARRR!" Sophia did not wait and along with her roar the lethal energy around the Ice Styx Dragon grew stronger and she flashed to the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix with a speed that one would think impossible for such a massive creature.

Chapter 262 - Ice Styx Dragon Vs Abyssfire Demon Phoenix

Inside the magmatic chamber filled with dark poisonous lava, the Ice Styx Dragon and the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix were fighting. The energy that transformed the lava did not stop working as the two fought and it was a matter of time before the magmatic chamber was filled with something completely different.

One of them released frost and toxic energy from its body while the other was wrapped in a black fire that evaporated everything around him.

The collisions between these two massive demonic figures released powerful shock waves full of black fire and toxic frost energy. A void formed around the Ice Styx Dragon and Abyssfire Demon Phoenix every time they clashed. In the next second, the dark lava that was pushed backward came back and submerged their bodies.

The Ice Styx Dragon was immune to the poisonous energy in the lava and it was also able to move through it without a problem. The Abyssfire Demon Phoenix, on the other hand, was forced to spend its energy to protect himself from the lava that had previously helped his recovery.

Despite fighting in a battlefield that weakened his power, the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix was stronger and faster than the Ice Styx Dragon.

"AWW!" The demon released a cry full of murdering desire as it flashed to the Ice Styx Dragon and ripped a piece of its back before releasing a blast of black fire.

After the Ice Styx Dragon endured that attack, the ice that formed its body was thin enough to allow the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix to see with his own eyes the body of the Neo-Demon.

Despite being a demon, the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix was not a slave to his chaotic evil impulses. His bloodline allowed him to possess an intelligence not inferior to a devil.

As the fight developed, he learned that attacking the head or another vital point of the Ice Styx Dragon would be useless since the creature was just a powerful construct. No matter how much damage he inflicted, it would only result in Sophia having to consume her energy to rebuild the creature.

The Abyssfire Demon Phoenix's consciousness was strong enough to detect the Neo-Demon inside the creature, despite the isolating effect of the Styx water. This required putting pressure on his wounded consciousness and a lot of effort, so the demon was not willing to waste this chance.

The demon prepared to release a beam of fire energy from its beak when the wings of the Ice Styx Dragon shot more than half of the ice spears that formed them, in his direction.

The demon was forced to delay his attack to dodge those ice spears. Unfortunately for him, the Neo-Demon acted fast and made the Ice Styx Dragon twist, before moving her body to another part of the creature.

Not losing her momentum, Sophia manipulated the Ice Styx Dragon like it was a six hundred meter drill and attacked the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix with a potency capable of destroying mountains and leveling cities. The rotation drew the lava around the Ice Styx Dragon which increased the range of the attack.

The distance between the two was too short and the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix had just finished dodging those spears, so he knew he would not be able to evade the attack. Without wasting time, the demon folded his wings around his body and transformed himself into a tornado of black fire as he flashed to Sophia's direction.

Both demonic entities took the form of natural disasters.

The moment the Ice Styx Dragon and the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix clashed, an explosion of ice and fire was generated that made the entire volcano tremble.

Both creatures were pushed backward and the injuries in them were deep.

The Abyssfire Demon Phoenix had a piece of his chest ripped and you could see on his eyes that he was enduring great pain. The damage to his body was small, but that attack had managed to reach the demon's consciousness.

The condition of the Ice Styx Dragon was much worse than the one of the demon. Its head was nowhere to be seen as well as the upper side of the creature's body. If it was a living being, then death would have been the only result of such severe damage.

But despite its power, it was just a construct made by Sophia's energy. The ice turned back to a liquid state and in the next second, the Ice Styx Dragon was reformed. The size of the creature had decreased by one hundred and fifty meters but besides that, no other damage could be seen in it.

When the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix saw the state of the Ice Styx Dragon, wrath filled its eyes. The energy inside his body was ignited and he flashed to the Neo-Demon with an immense amount of black fire ready to be released from his beak.

The eyes of the Neo-Demon inside the Ice Styx Dragon were filled with killing intent but there was also a cunning light in them. She increased the amount of output of energy in her body despite the damage in her bloodline and commanded the creature to face the demon in front of it.

"ROOOAAARRR!" The Ice Styx Dragon roared as it swam through the poisonous lava. The energy that the Neo-Demon proportioned gathered in the maws of the creature.

When they were both less than five hundred meters away from each other, the attacks that they had been charging were released. From the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix's beak, a pillar of black fire, hot enough to even burn lava, was shot while the Ice Styx Dragon generated a dragon breath that took the form of a cone of black frost.

Thunder and lightning were generated around the impact zone as the two extremely opposite powers clashed. One full of ice power along with toxic energy and another full of heat power along with destruction energy.

The black flames of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix displayed their incredible power as they pushed back the dragon breath of the Ice Styx Dragon.

The eyes of the demon glowed as he pictured the body of the Ice Styx Dragon disintegrating under his flames. The Abyssfire Demon Phoenix slowly moved closer to his opponent, while he maintained his attack, pushing the head of the dragon back.

What he failed to notice was how the dragon's tail did not move and the distance between the two decreased.

The demon's eyes narrowed as he felt danger but it was too late.

The dragon tail that was full of spikes glowing with chaotic energy clashed on the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix's back and it exploded releasing the power contained in nine Abyssal Blasts.

The Abyssfire Demon Phoenix released a cry of pain while the bones on his back cracked. The demon was thrown with such potency that he did not stop until he reached the deepest part of the magmatic chamber and clashed on the earth.

Sophia did not go after the injured demon, instead, she made the Ice Styx Dragon swim to the exit of the magmatic chamber. She even made the creature adopt its liquid state to increase its speed, despite the downgrade in its defenses.

In the place where the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix had landed, a terrifying black flame was formed and the eyes of the demon displayed an uncontrollable rage.

The truth was that the physical injuries he had received were unimportant and his bloodline was already mending them. The power in those Abyssal Blasts, however, generated great damage to his already wounded consciousness.

The pain the demon felt was so much that he did not care about trying to escape anymore. The only thing he wanted was to kill the woman, no matter the consequences. However, the moment the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix noticed how Sophia ran to the surface instead of taking advantage of his weakened state, confusion filled his mind.

After taking a moment to calm his rage, he used all the power of his consciousness to explore the surroundings and make sure this was not a ruse.

All of a sudden the eyes of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix widened as he concentrated on the dark lava that filled the magmatic chamber. In the beginning, he just thought that the woman had transformed the lava into a poisonous substance that changed the battlefield to her favor, but now that the modification was completed, the demon realized what the lava had truly become.

Panic filled the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix's eyes as he employed every ounce of energy he had to run to the surface.

His speed was impressive but while the dark lava hindered his movements, it was like water to a fish when it came to the Ice Styx Dragon. By the time the Abyssfire Phoenix had progressed half of the journey to the exit of the magmatic chamber, Sophia was already out.

The Ice Styx Dragon transformed into an ice cocoon that had hundreds of layers, with Sophia right in the center.

'It would be better if I am completely out of the volcano, but that would give him enough time to escape the magmatic chamber. If this level of danger could make me hesitate, how could I be worthy of by his side?' Determination filled Sophia's eyes as she made a white pill drop from the cocoon into the dark lava.

A small shockwave can create a chain reaction inside a plastique explosive (C-4) that results in a detonation process with an explosive velocity dozens of times faster than the speed of sound.

The moment that the white pill touched the tons of dark lava, the same detonation process occurred. The entire magmatic chamber could be considered one giant plastique explosive.

Chapter 263 - Nirvanic Rebirth

The enormous volcano with a crater that broke the clouds and appeared it could rip the firmament had endured several earthquakes as the battle between the Ice Styx Dragon and Abyssfire Demon Phoenix carried out.

Despite the power of Sophia and the demon, when the shock waves generated in its core finally ended, the volcano still stood strong.

But the calmness was just an illusion. After those few short moments of peace, the magmatic chamber with the thousand of tons of lava became the origin of an outburst of dark flames. The

power carried in that explosion was so high that the entire volcano was reduced to ashes in an instant.

The flames gave the illusion they could reach the Crystal Wall. It generated a sonic boom so loud it could liquify the inner organs of a Rank 1 life form with ease. There was also a hurricane of toxic air that extended for hundreds of kilometers.

The core of the explosion reached equal temperatures to the ones you would find on the surface of a sun belonging to a Low World.

Two figures covered in flames were ejected from the explosion with such a potency that they landed more than five hundred kilometers away from the area where there used to be a volcano.

The first one to disperse the fire was Sophia. Her breathing was harsh and energy in a disarray. She continuously coughed mouthfuls of blood. The inner organs of the Neo-Demon were filled with injuries.

Most of her skin was charred, her eyes were destroyed due to the immense temperatures and her left leg was gone. The Styx cocoon was pulverized and only a thin layer remained covering the body of the Neo-Demon.

The condition of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix was countless times worse. The only thing that remained from his body was part of his chest and head. The heat he endured was so high that his remains appear to be petrified.

Sophia stared at the corpse of the demon and her eyes narrowed. She took a moment to take control of her body and then slowly flew to the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix.

The Neo-Demon was less than five meters away from the demon and was about to place him into her spatial ring when the eyes of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix glowed with dark light. From them, an invincible force was fired into Sophia's consciousness.

The attack had immense power and Sophia fainted for a moment. In that instant, a drop of dark red blood came out from the head of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix and landed on Sophia's glabella before melting inside her head.

It only took a moment for Sophia's eyes to regain their focus. She grabbed her head and an expression of immense pain could be seen on her face.

The light in the Neo-Demon's eyes was constantly changing. You could see a chaotic and evil presence appear on them for a moment along with a nasty smirk.

"Hahaha, this body is too amazing. Its energy pool contains a very pure Abyss Aura and has an unbelievable talent and tuning with the natural energy. Woman, you can be proud that your body will be taken over by the mighty Eliezer."

In the space where Sophia's soul resided, a foreign entity appeared. Unlike the Neo-Demon's soul that appeared to be an agglomeration of energy, the soul of the Eliezer had the form of an Abyssfire Demon Phoenix.

This is because the demon had previously awakened his True Soul. However, its power was severely weakened. You could notice it by the fact the soul was almost translucent.

What Eliezer had done was use the last bit of power he had to transport his bloodline and True Soul into Sophia's body.

The original body of a creature would always be the best vessel for his soul. That was because, from their creation, they were perfectly tuned for each other. This is the reason why Rank 4 life forms would usually create a clone of their original bodies to occupy, in case they are forced to escape with only their True Souls.

The stronger and older your soul is, the more severe would be the side effects of transferring it to another body. With the right knowledge, those problems could be reduced.

Eliezer had controlled several Peak Rank 3 demons from whom he could have taken over their bodies. However, those bodies were too weak and their aptitudes were too trashy for him to disregard the side effects.

The condition of his body, after the explosion, was too severe. There was nothing he could do other than invade Sophia's body. When he realized how amazing the body of a Neo-Demon was, he was ecstatic.

He wanted to assimilate Sophia's soul to heal some of the damage on his True Soul and then take full control of the body. What he did not know was that the moment the Neo-Demon's soul perished, the Chaotic-Core would destroy the Bloodline Heart and Elemental Chaos Heart and waste away the body.

That was one of the many counterintelligence measures Zatiel had designed for the Neo-Demon race. He would never allow information about his greatest creation to fall on anyone's hands.

Of course, the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix did not know any of that. There was a vicious smile on his face as he launched himself at Sophia's soul to devour it.

Before he could reach his target, a set of glowing letters clashed on him and threw him back.

There was wrath on Eliezer's face as he focused on his opponent. He could not read them but understood immediately what they were.

"Hmph, you think your True Name can stop me. Stupid women, I will..." Eliezer abruptly stopped speaking and panic filled his eyes.

The clash with the True Name did not hurt him at all, but the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix felt something on his chest. He was very familiar with the aura in it. Slowly, he looked down, and absolute terror filled his face when he saw the small dot of multicolored fire.

"Nirvanic Fire!"

The shock on Eliezer's mind allowed Sophia to get back control over her body. Instead of rage or desperation, what appeared on the face of the Neo-Demon when she realized that the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix had invaded her body was a satisfied smile.

"I... got you!" The moment she spoke those words, the multicolored flame that touched the True Soul of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix reacted violently and expanded without control.

That fire not only filled the space where the soul of Sophia and Eliezer were, it also appeared all over the body of the Neo-Demon.

The ability that the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix was too scared to use, that could have healed his body and soul and improved his talent, was named Nirvanic Rebirth. That ability used the power of the laws to incite Nirvanic Fire to burn the flesh and blood while tempering the soul.

Nirvanic Rebirth could be considered a test of the laws to those who possess a bloodline capable of inciting it. Success meant experiencing a rebirth that would increase their talent and the potential of their bloodline. Only death awaits those who fail it.

Sophia's plan had two paths. The first one was to defeat the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix and then take the purest bloodline from his corpse. This path would generate a normal fusion from the demon's bloodline with her Styx Dragon bloodline. The result would have been a very powerful bloodline, but still, it would have been just an Emperor bloodline.

The second path was an extremely dangerous one. She had used the Nirvanic Root and the knowledge in the Rank 4 recipe for the pill Nirvanic Fire to create a Pseudo-Nirvanic Flame.

The power in the Pseudo-Nirvanic Flame was too small to produce an effect anywhere close to the one you would see in Nirvanic Fire. But once it entered in contact with the True Soul of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix, it triggered Nirvanic Rebirth in the demon and produced Nirvanic Fire.

The core of the plan was to trick the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix to invade her body with his bloodline. Most of the power of Nirvanic Fire targeted Eliezer's True Soul, but there was still a part that reached Sophia's soul.

This was also part of Sophia's plan. The Neo-Demon's soul glowed as she activated the ability of the Chaotic-Core to swallow the bloodline of the demon. She wanted to temper the fusion of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix bloodline and her Styx Dragon bloodline with the power of the laws in Nirvanic Rebirth.

Eliezer understood that he was lured into a trap and killing intent filled his mind. He was very clear that there was almost zero percent chance he would survive Nirvanic Rebirth.

"Damn woman, I may die today but I will take you with me!" Eliezer's True Soul still was powerful enough to severely harm Sophia's soul.

Sophia's body still had a smile on her face. On her chest, the Mirage Rune glowed, and in the next second, the Neo-Demon disappeared.

Chapter 264 - White Egg

Less than a second after the Mirage Rune was activated, Sophia appeared above the 11th magic tower. The Neo-Demon's body was covered in multicolored flames that drew everyone's attention.

Eliezer's True Soul felt immense pressure being cast on him. His already diminished power was reduced even more. Before he could even assimilate what had just happened, chains of light and shadows materialized around the Neo-Demon.

The chains formed a cocoon around Sophia's body. This would stop any attempt of external interference.

"RESTRAIN" After that word was pronounced, a red aura strengthened the chain. Eliezer knew that escape was not an option.

Sophia's eyes were cold and pushed the power of the Chaotic-Core to the maximum. The Abyssfire Demon Phoenix bloodline inside her body was still under Eliezer's control. The Neo-Demon needed to devour it.

Above Sophia's body, the image of an Abyssfire Demon Phoenix and a Styx Dragon appeared. They were illusions created by the two bloodlines inside the Neo-Demon's body. Nirvanic Fire formed a dome that contained both creatures.

If the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix had all of his power, it could put up a fight against the Styx Dragon and the devouring ability of the Chaotic-Core. However, it was now under the Ten Tower Formation's force field and the attack of the Nirvanic Fire.

The Styx Dragon's eyes were filled with hunger and cruelty as it looked at his opponent. The creature did not wait and launched itself at the prey in front of him.

Sophia's face was completely calm, a complete contrast to the battlefield above and inside her body.

"Woman, I will kill you, even if it's the last thing I will do!" Eliezer's True Soul clashed with Sophia's True Name. There was madness on the demon's eyes as he endured the power of the Nirvanic Flame. Before, he could have defeated his enemy with ease and provoked great damage to the soul of the Neo-Demon, but now he could not beat the glowing letters.

Even though most of the force in the Nirvanic Flame targeted Eliezer's True Soul, some of its power also reached Sophia's soul. Luckily, her soul was much more resilient than the one of a normal Rank 3 life form due to the constant tempering of Abyss Aura.

Despite the Neo-Demon racial advantages, the Nirvanic Flame was dangerous for her. The lowest threshold for undergoing Nirvanic Rebirth was Rank 4. If the full power of the flame targeted her, she would have perished.

The Styx Dragon was having a much easier time overpowering its opponent and enduring the Nirvanic Flame. The creature attacked the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix without mercy. You could hear the cries of the demonic bloodline as pieces of its body were being eaten.

Sophia's bloodline devoured its enemy while strengthening itself. The Chaotic-Core was constantly spinning as it swallowed pieces of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix bloodline. The laws in Nirvanic Rebirth were also drawn into the merging process.

As the Neo-Demon's bloodline grew stronger, something happened with her True Name.

Eliezer's True Soul had just clashed with his opponent when he noticed how the letter started to morph. The transformation took less than a second. For an instant, white light filled the area.

Before Eliezer could even analyze the change on the Neo-Demon's True Name, an endless force was released from it.

The force grasped the demon's True Soul and began to squeeze it. Eliezer could not believe what was happening. Before they had fought on equal ground, but after the True Name's transformation, he was being crushed.

And the nightmare for the demon was only starting. The True Name not only incapacitate him, but it also began to absorb parts of his True Soul. That was purified and siphoned into Sophia's soul.

Sophia was not too surprised by the fact her True Name had evolved. After the Neo-Demon reached Rank 3, it was already on the brink of evolution. This fight acted as a catalyzer that brought its power to a new level.

She had not considered her True Name's evolution in her plan, since it relied too much on chance. The powers to incapacitate Eliezer's True Soul was not shocking since her True Name had always been related to the soul and spiritual entities.

However, the ability to swallow parts of the demon's soul and send them to her came as a pleasant surprise for Sophia.

With that energy nourishing the Neo-Demon's soul, her capability to overcome Nirvanic Rebirth grew exponentially. Sophia did not let her guard down, but she was able to relax a little and feel the benefits of the Nirvanic Flame.

Sophia felt her soul and consciousness being tempered while the impurities in them were burned.

Inside the magic tower, Zatiel was looking at Sophia with his Eye of Life and Creation. From the moment she started her fight with the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix, he had been awake and monitoring her condition.

Zatiel's body now looked like the one of a man in his forties. A golden aura covered him that would give mortals the sensation of being in the presence of the divine.

From the moment Sophia arrived covered with Nirvanic Fire, his expression had been solemn. Even if he could bring her back if she failed, the idea of not seeing her face for hundreds of years bothered him greatly. However, the moment he noticed the changes in her soul, a happy smile appeared on his face, and he rested.

The cries of the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix above Sophia's body finally stopped. This happened because the Styx Dragon devoured him completely. The Chaotic Core had finished swallowing the demon bloodline.

Due to the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix bloodline being a demon bloodline born out of countless mutations, the connection with the ancestor of the original bloodline was so weak it was severed the moment the Styx Dragon won the fight.

"ROOOAAARRR" The Styx Dragon released a roar to display its might. The creature went back to Sophia's body. In the future, a new bloodline will be born from the fusion of him and the Abyssfire Demon Phoenix.

Eliezer's True Soul had already lost the ability to resist the power of Sophia's True Name. A few minutes after his bloodline was assimilated, the demon perished. What remained of his True Soul was turned into a source of energy that invigorated the Neo-Demon's soul.

Now that Eliezer was gone, the power of Nirvanic Rebirth started to concentrate on her. Sophia knew she would not last long under the power of the Nirvanic Flame, but she was not worried. The reason was that her body had begun to disintegrate.

The body of the Neo-Demon, with the only exception of her Chaotic-Core, transformed into ashes. Those ashes, along with the Nirvanic Flame that created them, began to form an egg.

The moment the egg was formed, if the soul stood strong, it means that Nirvanic Rebirth had been overcome.

The chains of light and shadows strengthened by the Law of Killing fell back, showing a white egg. It was three meters tall and two meters wide. It had all types of mysterious runes formed around the shell.

Many Magi were looking at it, some of them Rank 4 life forms that had come in secrecy. Some displayed greed in their eyes since the egg would be a useful experimentation resource. However, none of them dared to act.

Sophia was Zatiel's partner. They were sure that if they attempted to seize her, Heinz would kill them. They feared the Cultivator, so they made sure to hide their desires.

Unfortunately, they did not do it well enough. Zatiel was able to detect their emotions thanks to his Animus abilities. The Eye of Life and Creation focused on each one of them.

'Since they are just thoughts and I am in a good mood, I will be merciful. I will only kill you and not your families.' In Zatiel's mind, not submitting them to endless torture for thinking of harming his lover was magnanimous of him.

A portal made of shadow appeared in front of Zatiel. The same one appeared in front of the white egg. The Neo-Demon hand passed through the portal and touched the egg.

Sophia's soul noticed the hand. When she felt the aura in it, she did not put resistance.

The white egg was moved into the dimension inside the spatial ring.

Zitra appeared on the floor where Zatiel was and saw him looking at the ring on his hand with eyes full of love and a warm smile. The woman did not say anything and limited herself to move to his side and wait for his instructions.

Zatiel did not waste time. Since Sophia would no longer need his assistance, he could start with his own plan. He took a crystal from his ring and communicated with Heinz.

"Brother, go and help Tutto. Remain in the shadows for the moment and only show yourself if you see the chance to inflict casualties on the Rank 4 life forms of the Heavenly race."

Heinz was in the sky above the tower. After he heard Zatiel's instructions, he nodded and teleported.

"Let's go to the 1st magic tower." Zatiel looked at Zitra and the woman covered both in shadows. The duo reached the teleportation formation undetected and disappeared from the 11th magic tower.

Chapter 265 - Key

Zatiel and Zitra reached the 1st magic tower in an instant after using the teleportation formation. The duo's presence was hidden thanks to Zitra's Law of Shadows. The Magus already knew their first destination, so less than a second after reaching the tower, they disappeared.

One thousand meters away from the magic tower, Zitra and Zatiel rose from the shadow of a rock.

The Law of Light created a dome around them that made those looking from the outside see an illusion. If they destroyed the area, even a Rank 4 life form would find it hard to notice anything.

Zitra released her consciousness to investigate the surrounding. She made this to make sure there was no one hiding in this place and also to analyze why this place was so significant.

She knew that Zatiel considered this mission extremely important. That aroused her interest, but no matter how much she tried, she could not detect anything unique about this place.

The Neo-Demon saw her efforts, and a funny smile appeared on his face. Zatiel shook his head before stomping the ground. A wave of energy was released from his foot that transformed the terrain and made it completely flat.

"No matter how much you try, you won't find anything. Even the consciousness of a Peak Soul Law Domain existence would only detect a bunch of earth and rocks."

Zitra was surprised when she heard those words. She was smart enough to understand that Zatiel was someone special and that he did not consider Rank 4 extraordinary. However, the consciousness of a Peak Soul Law Domain existence could explore the core of a sun and manipulate it.

The fact that her consciousness could not see it was normal, but that even a Rank 6 life form could not do it, shocked her.

Zatiel noticed the expression on Zitra's face. He made a small cut on the palm of his hand and created an orb made of his own blood. Under the control of the Neo-Demon's consciousness and Mind Force, hundreds of threads of blood were formed.

With amazing dexterity and superb control, the threads of blood started to engrave runic lines in the earth.

"I did not choose this location because it was special. I could have started anywhere else. You could say that this location became special because I chose it. This is where the end of our saga in this world starts." Zatiel maintained his sight on the rune formation as he spoke.

Zitra's eyes widened when she heard that. The Fornes continent was already theirs. It was a matter of time before the force field of the Ten Tower Formation extended all over it.

But then, they will have to carry on with the rest of the world. Totally dominating a Middle World, especially one controlled by a powerful faction like the Heavenly race, could take thousands of years.

All sorts of questions filled Zitra's mind, and she could not hide her curiosity.

"You can ask me anything you want. I may choose not to answer your questions, but at least I won't lie."

Zitra's eyes narrowed as she stared at Zatiel. The Neo-Demon proceed with the rune formation, and it appeared he did not notice the woman's gaze.

The Magus remained silent for a moment, and all the locations they will be visiting appeared on her mind. There was not a clear patron in them, but they covered the entire continent.

"What are you creating?"

"Hmm, I guess you could call it a key. One that only I know how to make and whose sole material is my bloodline."

The Magus understood that she would not obtain a more concrete answer. Although she had more questions, this was not the time for them, so she remained quiet by Zatiel's side as he worked.

The more he advanced, the more intricate the runic formation became. It was not long before Zatiel had to use the Eye of Life and Creation to assist him in his work. Each runic line created a pattern that connected with the others around them, all of them reaching a perfect sense of harmony.

Zitra had no talent as a Runemaster, but her knowledge about the profession was vast. However, she could not identify anything in Zatiel's work.

The one thing that was clear to her was that the complexity in the runic formation was extremely high.

Just the fact that the runic lines were so thin that even her, a Rank 4 life form, could barely see them proved that it would be impossible for a normal Rank 3 Runemaster to create this runic formation.

'With his talent and knowledge, becoming an Origin Runemaster will be extremely easy. A monstrous genius in the hardest profession that exists, capable of pushing his battle power to the boundary of Rank 4 despite entering Rank 3 a short while ago and the greatest military mind that I have ever seen. I wonder if there is anything he could not achieve given enough time.' Zitra's eyes glowed as she saw Zatiel's flawless work.

When Zatiel's started to work, the sun was at its zenith. The night had already arrived, and the runic formation was a little more than eighty percent completed.

All of a sudden, the eyes of the Neo-Demon started to twitch, and he jumped away from the runic formation. The orb of blood, along with the threads, was pulled back into the Neo-Demon's body.

Zitra was confused by his behavior, but in the next second, she understood what happened.

Zatiel's eyes became bloody, and he clenched his fist with so much strength that the nail buried in his skin. His entire body trembled, and his face became pale. A wave of soul tearing pain was assaulting the Neo-Demon.

The Prayer of Horus improved the condition of his body while also mending the damage on his life force and delayed the episodes of agony he had to endure due to the wound on his soul. However, it did nothing to diminish the pain.

Luckily, the Neo-Demon was able to react to it and move away from the runic formation, or else he would have lost control of the threads of blood. Any damage to the formation would force him to start all over again.

The feeling of having a piece of his soul ripped from him lasted a little less than one minute. Zatiel found it hard to regulate his breathing, and he almost crumbled to the floor.

"Do you need to rest?" There was concern in Zitra's face as she supported the Neo-Demon.

She could not imagine what that type of pain could do to someone's will. The psychological pressure of knowing that you have to endure it over and over again could drive anyone mad.

Zatiel noticed the emotions in the woman's eyes and the sincerity in them. A small smile appeared on his face as he regained his bearing.

" I have a purpose, and my spirit will remain firm as long as I push myself to it. This level of pain could never break my determination to move forward." Zatiel made the orb of blood appear again, and he continued working in the runic formation.

Zitra's eyes glowed with admiration, and her sight was glued to Zatiel's back, which appeared capable of bearing the weight of the world.

.....

On the highest floor of the winged castle in Saint City, Tomas and Oliver were having a conversation.

"The Magi are acting very bold. They are constructing magic towers without even having active the Second Layer to assist them. What news did we get from the team we sent to monitor them?."

Tomas' face was pale, and parts of his wings were missing.

"They were instructed to send hourly reports, but we have been unable to contact them for more than fourteen hours." Oliver did not comment on the fate of the team, but anyone could see by the sour expression on his face that he did not have hopes of them returning.

When Tomas heard that, he was surprised. The team they sent to spy on the Magi invader force was composed of three Soul Forging existences, and all of them were very talented in gathering information undetected.

The Angelic Paragon did not have to think too hard to have an idea who killed them. It should have been the same person that destroyed his wings, severely harmed his consciousness, and left injuries full of killing energy in his True Soul.

There should have been sadness in the Angelic Paragons' hearts due to the death of their comrades and friends, but the way their minds analyzed it was as a loss of military power.

They saw them as nothing more than numbers. This would have been unthinkable a few months ago, but now they found it normal, and they did not even realize how much they have changed.

Chapter 266 - Moving Forward

"How is the interrogation going?" Tomas had been informed about the futility of Finibus' effort, but he hoped something had changed.

"Hmph, those fools are useless. They even got the help of other people talented in torture, to maintain the pressure every second of the day, and yet the only thing they got from that man was laughs." The rage in Oliver's eyes was immense. He had maintained himself away from the Silent House since he feared he would lose control and kill Zatiel.

Both Angelic Paragons felt impotent. They had sacrificed many Rank 4 warriors to capture Zatiel, which reduced their military might immensely, not to mention that eventually, they will have to face Gonzo's wrath due to Vapula's death.

And for all that sacrifice, the only thing they got was a man who mocked and laughed at them every day. Invading his brain or consciousness was not plausible since Zatiel's rune would explode his head, and his soul was too weak to endure any attempt of soul searching.

For a second, Tomas' eyes twitched, and an idea developed in his mind. Black tendrils appeared on his eyes, and if you could see inside the Angelic Paragon's head, you would notice that they also had invaded his brain.

"I doubt more time will be of use. No matter what we do to his body, physical pain appears to be useless against him. We will use the Soul Apple and heal his soul. Then, with the Sage's assistance, we will be able to get everything that we need from that man." Tomas's expression was calm, but if any other member of the Heavenly race were to hear his words, they would be shocked.

Oliver frowned when he heard that idea. He still felt uncomfortable working with an animal, but his reluctance was less powerful when it came to matters regarding the Sage. In the end, he accepted that Tomas' plan was the best path to follow.

"It will take us time to adjust the Soul Apple's potency. In the meantime, those buffoons will continue working on him. Who knows, they may have luck and their tactics eventually achieve something." Oliver knew he was only fooling himself into thinking that Finibus and the others could break Zatiel's will. But he refused to allow a moment of peace for the man he hated to the core.

The Soul Apple was a powerful medicine, with the potency to help Law Engraving existences. It could not be administered in its raw form to a Rank 3 life form unless they wanted him to develop countless tumors and transform his soul into an amorphous ball of energy that would dissipate in a matter of seconds.

Tomas and Oliver continued discussing how to handle the Magi threat, and in the end, they chose that the best path was to give up the Fornes continent. The duo understood how strong Heinz was and that with their current power, they could not face him. But they also knew that it was a matter of time before he would be expelled forever from the Beta Heavenly World. Once the swordsman is gone and they have obtained Zatiel's knowledge, it would be simple to regain complete control over the world.

.....

Time passed in the Beta Heavenly World, and the Fornes continent changed greatly. The Magi invader force raged through it without resistance. The Ten Tower Formation's force field covered more than eighty percent of the continent.

The construction of the new towers was conducted by the Rank 4 Magi and Fallen.

All those at Rank 3 and below focused their time harvesting resources. Even though they had to pass a great amount of the wealth they gathered to the Soul Forging existences, what remained for them was still substantial, so they worked without stop.

A couple that also did not have time to rest was Sigrid and Aren. The Eye Holder siblings had passed every single day fighting members of the Heavenly race, and now that the Fornes continent was almost entirely purged from them, they have focused their energy on magic creatures.

They were currently fighting a pack of magic creatures led by two Novice Rank 3 Four-Headed Manticore. They were using all of their power, however, not only were the two Four-Headed

Manticore very powerful, but they also commanded dozens of Rank 2 Poison Manticore. The great number of enemies forced the duo into a dangerous situation.

Sigrid and Aren knew that any mistake or weakness would cost them their lives. In the end, they were able to kill the entire pack. Their energy pools were depleted, and their bodies were filled with wounds.

Before they could start to rest, the duo felt as the earth trembled. Soon they saw a pack of magic creatures marching to their location. They must have been attracted by the sounds of the fight and the blood of the killed Four-Headed Manticores.

The leader of the pack was a Master Rank 3 Spiked Armadillo, and following him closely was an Advanced Rank 3 Spiked Armadillo.

Even if they were at their peak, there was no way Sigrid and Aren could face this pack on their own.

The eyes of the Master Rank 3 Spiked Armadillo glowed as he focused on the siblings. Their bodies carried less energy than the Rank 3 Four-Headed Manticores, but the magic creature could feel the special power in their blood.

The Master Rank 3 Spiked Armadillo went ahead of the pack and launched himself at the Eye Holders. Unfortunately for the magic creature, when he was one hundred meters away from his prey, a giant hand made of red lightning fell from the sky and crushed him.

Spiked Armadillos were slow, and their offensive power was mediocre, but they were known for their great defenses. However, the hand obliterated the body of the magic creature. It absorbed the energy of his flesh and blood, and it flashed to the pack, where it created a giant cage to contain them.

The Advanced Rank 3 Spiked Armadillo and the rest of the pack were only able to react once they were incarcerated. They started to roar, and some of the Rank 2 Magic Creatures were dumb enough to try to break the cage. The moment their bodies touched the red lightning, they died immediately.

Ezequiel's forty-five meters body appeared in the next second. The moment he stared at the magic creatures, all of them, even the Advanced Rank 3 Spiked Armadillo, became silent and lowered their heads.

Magic creatures are used to follow their instincts. Right now, their instincts are telling them that they are in front of a being immensely superior, and they can only prostrate themselves.

Sigrid and Aren were not surprised about Ezequiel's appearance. They knew that the Supreme Neo-Demon had been watching them the entire time, but they also knew that he would not help them, even if that meant they would die.

When the training started, the Neo-Demon left very clear what they needed to achieve and what the consequences would be if they failed.

"You have six hours to rest. After that, the cage will disappear, and you would have to face them. Remember, there are only six months left until the deadline." Ezequiel's eyes were emotionless as he looked at the Eye Holders. Once he finished speaking, he rose to the sky and disappeared in the air.

The siblings did not show anything to the coldness of the man. The demise of their clan had taught them how cruel the world can be, and they were not foolish enough to think that people would help them due to the kindness of their hearts.

They took all kinds of drugs and potions from their rings and started to consume them. Their bodies were healed incredibly fast, and the power in them increased. Their energy was recharged, and their consciousness grew stronger.

The duo was able to consume medicines that would make Rank 3 life forms green with envy. They had reached the Peak of Rank 2, and it won't be long before their Rank Spells are finished.

However, they have not completed the first level of the Path Technique Zatiel gave them, and they are not sure if they would be able to achieve it before the time is up.

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Very deep within the Ravaging Ocean, there were fourteen Rank 4 Magic Creatures whose bodies extended for thousands of meters. There was a shark-like magic creature whose head was four and a half kilometers large.

All of these magic creatures shared the same incision of the top of their head. The injuries were less than two meters deep, and they could be considered unimportant if you take into consideration how big their bodies were. However, were these seemingly insignificant injuries, the ones that destroyed their souls.

In the middle of these magic creatures, Heinz was in a meditative position with his eyes closed. A gravitational force was released from the body of the Cultivator, and threads of blood started to converge in him.

Chapter 267 - Demodand Constitution

The blood entered Heinz's body and was transformed into blood energy that drove the Blood Demodand Technique forward. The Cultivator had already completed the second level of the technique and was ready to progress to the next level.

Heinz had already grasped the third level. To enter it, he only needed to form his Demodand Constitution. The Heavenly race did not interfere with Totto, and it appeared they had given up the continent, so he was able to focus on increasing his power.

He had spent a long time hunting the most powerful Soul Forging Magic Creatures in the Ravaging Ocean. Every magic creature around him was at Peak Rank 4, and they only needed to increase their law comprehension to advance to Rank 5. Unfortunately for these gargantuan beings, despite being the kings of the ocean, they were unable to put up any resistance against Heinz, who had the Law of Killing at the 'Minor Completion' level.

While Heinz's body became stronger due to the enormous amount of blood energy that was formed inside him, a creature started to form behind him. It was so immense, that made the magic creatures whose bodies were thousands of meters large appear like babies in front of an adult man.

It was impossible to identify its true form at the moment since the Demodand Constitution was far from being solidified. However, it possessed draconic, insectoid, and demonic features.

The more blood energy Heinz generated, the greater the power in the Demodand Constitution became. As it grew more corporeal, powerful vibrations started to originate from it. The ocean became violent and full of storms, while the sky raged with thunder and lightning.

The days passed, and the countless tons of blood inside those gargantuan magic creatures were drained. Even the energy inside their flesh and bones was absorbed, and they looked no different than mummified corpses.

The Demodand Constitution was far from being completed, but Heinz did not worry about a shortage of blood energy. A red whirlwind had formed around the Cultivator, which released a monstrous gravitational force that extended for thousands of kilometers, and its range only increased the more blood it swallowed.

Millions of magic creatures live in the Ravaging Ocean, and all those who were in the area covered by the gravitational force produced by Heinz's red whirlwind had their blood forcefully extracted. Those at Rank 4 were also affected but were powerful enough to escape, although not before losing a great amount of blood.

If Heinz were to use this technique in the Magi World, powerhouses from different organizations would force him to stop, but he was in a Beta Heavenly World, and no one could stop him if he wanted to do something.

The Blood Demodand Technique was incredibly powerful. Once the user formed the Demodand Constitution, he would have a body capable of fighting Rank 5 life forms.

Just like there are many different types of demodands, there are many Demodand Constitutions that can be formed. There are constitutions that have special abilities that could solve a weakness in the user battle style. Some allow the user to blend with the void and use a minor form of Void Disruption, others increase one's offense might with lightning or fire, and there are a few that proportionate great regeneration abilities.

Heinz had the Law of Space for speed and survival, the Law of Blood and Juntu's help to heal his body, the Law of Sword, and the Law of Killing to display an overwhelming offensive might. Instead of creating a Demodand Constitution that would grant him a skill weaker than the one given by his laws, the one he had chosen focused solely on enhancing his strength and speed.

Although physical power did not seem very impressive compared with the might of the laws, some beings could survive the explosion of a world purely depending on their bodies.

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Inside the Silent House, Finibus, Pipit, another man, and a woman were discussing among themselves. The new members of Zatiel's torture squad were Tina and Samuel. They were both Angels of Supremacy skilled in inflicting pain.

Finibus had requested their help, and they arrived full of confidence. The duo was sure they would be able to make Zatiel speak, but the only thing they got was laughs. Things only got worse as time passed, and the duo felt the chill in Oliver's eyes whenever they reported their lack of success.

As the pressure on the four members of the Heavenly race became greater, Zatiel's started to speak his thoughts out loud as they tortured him. He started with small things, like questioning the coldness Oliver showed to them, despite being members of the same race.

Zatiel also commented on how weird it was for Oliver and Tomas to display such an apathetic attitude to the fallen members. The Neo-Demon even relayed some stories that gave hints to the situation of the dukes.

It was not easy to sow doubt in their hearts, and Zatiel knew they would never betray their comrades, no matter how much wealth he offered them or how great the pressure became. But what if they think they are helping their people and that their leaders have fallen under the hand of the enemy?.

Under Zatiel's subconscious manipulation, the four started to pay more attention to Oliver and Tomas. Some of them had known the dukes for hundreds of years, so they were able to notice the changes.

"Finibus, what do you think we should do?" Pipit asked the Angelic Paragon. His face was full of doubt and uncertainty.

Tina and Samuel also focused on him. Not only was he the most powerful of all, but his bloodline was of a higher order. Of the four, he was the only one who could speak to the other Angelic Paragons in the Beta Heavenly World on equal grounds.

"We have to be careful. It is clear that this man is trying to sow discord among us, but we cannot ignore the things we have seen. The danger that Lord Oliver and Lord Tomas represent is immense, so we can't stand idly by if they have fallen into the enemy's control." Finibus was not stupid, and he understood the Neo-Demon's plan. But despite his cruelty to other races, he truly cared about the fate of his kind and was willing to give his life to protect them.

Zatiel could not hear what they were saying since they spoke using their consciousness and in a secretive manner, but even if he knew they were aware of his machination, he would not care. What he had told was the truth, and Finibus and the others knew it, so it doesn't matter where they got the information.

"I will speak with the generals to see if they have noticed something and learn their attitudes toward the dukes. I will be discreet and cautious since it would be easy for Lord Oliver and Lord Tomas to declare us as Fallen if we are found talking behind their backs. They may say we have been corrupted by this man." Finibus' face was solemn and understood very well the danger of his mission.

All of a sudden, Finibus, Pipit, Tina, and Samuel stopped speaking, and they turned to Zatiel. They used their most devious spells on the Neo-Demon and tore his body.

Zatiel did not say anything when he saw the abrupt change in behavior of the four members of the Heavenly race. He knew what was going on and only displayed a funny smile. The Neo-Demon found their performance hilarious.

A couple of seconds after they started torturing Zatiel, the gates of the Silent House opened, and both dukes entered. Once they appeared, Finibus, Pipit, Tina, and Samuel stopped their spells and bowed to Tomas and Oliver.

Tomas' wings had healed, and his body appeared to be in top condition. Unfortunately, the wounds on his True Soul would take a lot more time to heal.

The dagger wound on Oliver's chest had disappeared, and the power of the Angelic Paragon appeared to have increased in the last year.

Oliver noticed the behavior of the four people and when he saw Zatiel winking at him, he knew they had obtained nothing.

"Useless fools!. What is the point of having people like you who cannot even handle such a simple task?" Oliver's eyes were cold, and there was a flash of killing intent in them.

Tomas' attitude was aloof. It appeared he did not care about the cruelty Oliver showed to the members of his own kind.

Chapter 268 - An Amicable Conversation

"Leave this place and don't come back. We will handle this man from now on". Oliver's eyes were cold as he focused on Finibus and Pipit, "Once I am done with this, I will handle your punishment."

Tomas and Oliver walked until they were in front of Zatiel. They no longer bothered with them, and their sole focus was on the Neo-Demon that received the duo with a mocking smile.

Regardless of their feelings, Finibus, Pipit, Tina, and Samuel did not show any sign of resentment or disobedience. They bowed to the dukes and headed to the exit of the Silent House.

However, before they could leave the warehouse, a grey aura rose from the ground in front of them and formed a faceless humanoid figure. The arrival of this individual shocked the four Soul Forging existences since even now that he was in front of them, their consciousness could not detect him.

Finibus and the rest were experienced warriors and understood that the difference in power between them was immense. The only reason that this person did not take the opportunity to attack them by surprise was that they were absolutely no threat to him.

A black aura that carried an immense pressure was generated from the grey humanoid. It had such power that it made the three Angels of Supremacy fall to their knees immediately before freezing their energy and consciousness.

The only one who was able to withstand the black aura was Finibus, but the Angelic Paragon knew that there was just a matter of time before he succumbed. He prepared himself to call for help when one beam of heat energy and another one of sword light descended from the sky and landed on his back.

Finibus felt immense pain as the attacks blasted his back open and shattered his spine. He crashed into the ground, and a mouthful of blood was fired from his mouth. With all the power he had left, he turned his head and stared at his attackers.

The Angelic Paragon with wings made of blades saw Tomas and Oliver floating above him. Their eyes were filled with a substance that resembled boiling asphalt, while the veins in their heads protruded and throbbed as if they were pumping a heavy liquid.

Zatiel saw everything that happened, and for the first time since he arrived in this place, his smile disappeared. His eyes lost their light, and absolute indifference filled them. His face became devoid of any emotion or the slightest expression.

The Sage focused on the members of the Heavenly race in front of him, and it appeared he did not care about the changes on the Neo-Demon.

"My new friends, I see the doubt in your hearts and perceive the seed of discord in your fates." The moment the Sage spoke, the power of his dark aura increased, and the Angels of Supremacy fell flat to the ground while their eyes bled.

Finibus' injuries were the worst of all, and moving any part of his body was torture. Regardless, his face displayed immense pride as he turned to look at the Sage. His eyes were filled with irreconcilable hate and disgust.

When the Sage saw the revulsion in the face of the Angelic Paragon, instead of feeling angry, he started to laugh. He walked to Finibus' side, grabbed his neck, and raised him into the air.

"So much xenophobia and pride, you could have become an excellent specimen. Unfortunately, I am not strong enough to control another one of you. Oh well, nothing that can be done." The moment the Sage finished speaking, a monstrous mouth appeared on his head.

Under the terrified sight of the Angels of Supremacy, the Sage put Finibus' head inside his mouth and ripped off with a single bite. The grey humanoid did not stop there, and he proceeded to eat the body of the Angelic Paragon until nothing was left from him.

After killing Finibus, the Sage concentrated a great amount of dark aura on his hand, and then he clenched his fist. Pipit, Samuel, and Tina felt how their hearts exploded, and their True Souls were shattered.

Once he was done killing the four Soul Forging existences from the Heavenly race like if they were pigs in a slaughterhouse, the Sage walked forward until he was right in front of Zatiel. He waved his hand and sent a beam of energy that healed the Neo-Demon's body completely.

Tomas and Oliver descended from the air and landed behind the grey humanoid. Their eyes were still filled with boiling asphalt, and they remained as faithful statues behind the Sage.

Zatiel's eyes were still empty. He gave one look at the Angelic Paragons before focusing on the Sage.

Neither the Sage nor Zatiel spoke. They remained watching each other for a long time. The tension in the air was so high that it could suffocate a weak life form.

The Sage was the first one to act. He reached for the runes that were in Zatiel's head and analyzed them.

"The information about your mastery over rune crafting is not exaggerated at all. Despite not being a Rank 4 rune, I find myself incapable of neutralizing them without killing you." The Sage withdrew his hand, and his monstrous mouth disappeared. He knew that intimidation would never work on the man in front of him.

"I am sorry about the scene with that Angelic Paragon and those Angels of Supremacy. It was a little too barbaric to my taste, but it was the most practical way of handling them. However, I must say that if you thought that I would not notice that trump card, you are sadly underestimating me." The voice of the Sage returned to his robotic tone, and there was a power in it that would make people lower their guard.

When Zatiel heard that, nothing changed in his indifferent eyes or emotionless face.

"If you think they could qualify as a trump card, then I can only say that you are the one underestimating me. I only played with their minds to pass the time and have some fun. It doesn't matter if they did not spread doubt in the Heavenly race. In death, they have fulfilled their purpose." Zatiel's voice was flat and apathetic. It was impossible to detect anything about his feeling from it.

"No battle between the Magi and the Heavenly race that involved Rank 4 life forms had occurred recently. I am sure some people will have doubts about the disappearance of these four individuals. After all, the number of Soul Forging existences in the Beta Heavenly World is not so large for their absence to go unnoticed."

The Sage remained quiet after he heard Zatiel's words. Finibus and the others may not be able to spread their suspicions about Oliver and Tomas. However, their disappearance right after the dukes visited them would raise questions.

"Finibus, Pipit, Tina, and Samuel did not disappear. They were corrupted by the Taboo Existence known as Zatiel Daybreak and became Fallen. They blocked communication with the exterior and ambushed Oliver and Tomas. Both dukes attempted to make their friends listen to reason, but there was nothing that could be done, and it is with great pain that they killed them." The Sage's words created an illusion above his head that displayed exactly what he told it happened between the dukes and the other four members of the Heavenly race.

The illusion transformed into two beams of energy that landed on Tomas and Oliver's heads. In the next second, a genuine and extremely sorrowful expression appeared on their faces. Even tears fell from their eyes, but due to their condition, instead of liquid, what came out were drops of boiling asphalt.

Zatiel stared at the Angelic Paragons for a moment, and even for him, it was impossible to see any falsehood in their actions. The reason he could not see their lies was that they truly believed the idea the Sage planted in their minds. Their sadness and regret were honest, and the moment they share the story with the rest of the Heavenly race, no one would doubt them.

"I see, they are not disposable servants. You have plans for them in the future, so you can't steal their free will and force them into servitude since that would waste away their talent. I must say that the control technique you used on them is impressive." Despite his words, Zatiel's voice was still emotionless.

"You are absolutely right. The price I had to pay to control two Soul Forging with Emperor bloodlines was high, but when they reach Rank 5 and travel to the Heavenly Creator World, I will have two powerful pawns in one of the Principal Worlds of the universe." The Sage's voice was robotic, and you could find none of the pride that would usually accompany such a grand statement.

Zatiel and the Sage appeared to be having an amicable conversation and openly expressing their thoughts. However, both the Neo-Demon and the grey humanoid knew that from the moment they began to speak to each other, a contest of deception tactics started.

Chapter 269 - Go

The Sage and Zatiel conversed for a long time. They asked each other hundreds, if not thousands of questions, and exchanged all types of stories. The Neo-Demon and the grey humanoid were masters in the art of deception, and it was easy for them to recognize flagrant lies.

That is why every word that came out from their mouths was a combination of truths and falsehoods. Zatiel and the Sage knew that ninety-nine percent of the information they obtained from the other was useless, and they needed to be very careful with what they decided was the other one percent since false information was many times worse than no information at all.

Zatiel had an advantage over his opponent. The Sage believed he had captured the Neo-Demon, and therefore he unconsciously lowered his guard. However, it was difficult to tell how effective that trick was for someone like him.

The duo spoke for almost two days when the Sage decided it was time to proceed with the reason he came to this place.

"Our conversation was interesting, but I should not waste any more time."

"I guess that you have found a way to heal my soul and let it become strong enough so it can withstand soul searching." Zatiel's face remained emotionless, and it appeared he did not care what would happen to him.

When the Sage heard Zatiel's words and saw the complete disregard for his future, he paused for a moment.

The grey humanoid remained quiet for a couple of minutes before his head started to shake. Two white circles emerged on it that appeared to represent his eyes, but the most shocking fact was that they began to release Mind Force.

If Zatiel had not pacified his mind and soul, he would be extremely shocked right now. Not only was the Sage using one of the racial characteristics of the Mind Ruler race, but his Mind Force was also many times purer and concentrated than the one you would find in their greatest geniuses.

The qualitative disparity was so great that it could be compared to the difference between Abyss Aura and Elemental Chaos. The Neo-Demon erased all the thoughts that were about to surge in his mind since he was not sure he could maintain his peace once they appeared.

The Mind Force coming from those white eyes spread all over the Neo-Demon's body. The Sage was careful when he neared the area that was occupied by the runes.

"Interesting, I can't feel anything. Just who were you?." Those words seem to be directed to himself, and the Sage did not expect a response. "You are half right and half wrong. I will restore your soul, but I won't use such a barbaric and crude method as soul searching to obtain what I want from you. After all, you are a Rank 3 life form, and even in your peak condition, you will only withstand one wave of soul searching before dying."

The Sage still perceived no emotion coming from Zatiel, but he felt that something was wrong. However, he could not figure out what it was.

"Smart, I guess you are going to use a Soul Apple, which has been modified so it can be used safely by a Rank 3 life form. Give it to me." Zatiel signaled the Sage to act and opened his mouth.

The Sage made a small vial full of pink liquid appear, but he did not act right away. His eyes focused on the Neo-Demon, and the power of the Mind Force they released became so strong that it was about to incite a response from the World Consciousness.

Zatiel felt as his emotions were agitated by the Sage's Mind Force, and the slightest misstep would produce a chain reaction that would make him lose control.

Unfortunately for the Sage, in the end, he was not able to detect anything. He waved his hand, and the pink liquid entered Zatiel's mouth.

The Neo-Demon felt pure and soft energy travel through his body, enter his brain, and reach the dimension where his soul resided. Zatiel could not stop the invigorating effect of the liquid, but what he could do was slow down the rate at which his soul was strengthened.

The Sage gathered a wisp of black aura on his finger. He was about to touch Zatiel's forehead and put him into a coma when the Neo-Demon spoke.

"It will take some time for the Soul Apple to fulfill its goal. How about we play a game from my original world in the meanwhile?." Zatiel's voice remained the same, and it appeared he did not notice the finger that was less than five centimeters from his head.

Originally, the Sage planned to maintain the Neo-Demon in a state of trance after giving him the Soul Apple. That is why he spoke with him for so long before this. However, his interest was aroused when he heard about Zatiel's original world.

"What game would that be?" The Sage did not pull back his hand, but he also did not move it forward.

"An abstract board game for two players named Go. The goal of the game is to surround more territory than the opponent. The rules are simple, but the game itself is very complex. To give you an example of the variations that can be formed in this game, let's say that you counted every atom in Baator and then multiply it by a million. The number you would obtain will still be inferior compared with the total of board positions in Go."

"Oh, you like this type of game. I see the intellectual appeal in them, but what is the point of proving your intelligence to others. Violence is the ultimate force in this universe, and everything else can be crushed under its might." The Sage continued speaking in his robotic voice, but there was a deep meaning in his words.

Of course, someone like him understood that this type of game could allow you to have a greater understanding of your opponent. However, the Deep Dark Dream would show him all he needed to know.

"Absolute power can crush all schemes. But tell me, who has been able to say that they can move unhindered and act without any form of restriction in the universe?."

"I can think of one individual. I don't dare to speak his name, but he was able to make a Principal Plane tremble, and every Being of Law in it felt despair. Even the Archangels and Dawn Titans could only depend on the assistance of their worlds to face him."

"I think I know who you are speaking about, but didn't he die as well?." Zatiel's eyes were indifferent, and his voice was still emotionless.

The Sage did not show anything when he heard Zatiel's words. Him knowing about the Incarnation of Death and Destruction was not surprising since it was a piece of information that could be bought. The grey humanoid nodded and signaled for the Neo-Demon to continue.

"If I was free, with one word, I could make the Magi leave this world and forget about it. You currently control Oliver and Tomas, so the Heavenly race it's at your command. To the two of us, the Beta Heavenly World can be considered just one giant board of Go."

The Sage did not show anything to Zatiel's words, but he pulled back his hand before breaking the restraints that keep the body of the Neo-Demon tie to the torture chair.

Zatiel could still feel the black power in his body, freezing his energy and consciousness. He knew that his body could not move faster than the Sage's thoughts. If it attempted to do anything, he would be paralyzed.

"Explain the rules of Go." The Sage's robotic voice did not reveal anything, but it was clear he was interested in the game after Zatiel's speech.

The Neo-Demon did not stall for time. He calmly taught the Sage everything that there was needed to know about the game.

It would take several hours for a gifted human to understand the game of Go. To someone like the Sage, less than three seconds after Zatiel explained how the game was played, he fully mastered.

The grey humanoid waved his hand, and from the ground, a board of Go came out. A small box with black stones appeared on Zatiel's side of the board while the Sage had one with white stones.

"Let's play until your soul is ready for me to act in it."

Chapter 270 - Madness

Turning back time to a few moments before the Sage appeared in the Silent House, Zatiel's true body containing his main soul was standing before a finished runic formation.

The runic formation contained millions of incredibly thin runic lines. Once it was completed, the formation glowed with a red light before disappearing.

Zitra saw the runic formation disappear but was not surprised since the same had happened with every single one Zatiel had created. The first time it occurred, the Magus became curious and used her consciousness to explore the earth, but no matter how much she searched, she found nothing. It was as if the runic formation had never existed.

"Let's go to the next..." Zatiel had not finished his sentence when coldness filled his eyes, and he stared in the direction where Saint City was located.

The Neo-Demon's aura became extremely cruel and savage, no different from the one of an ancient monster who had found his prey. But that state lasted less than a second before Zatiel's face grew expressionless, and his heart became void of any shred of emotion.

The change did not escape Zitra's perception. Just as she was about to ask what happened, the Neo-Demon turned to her with empty eyes and spoke with an indifferent voice.

"Let's go."

Zitra knew that something important happened, and the fact Zatiel did not share anything meant it involved the enemy she was too weak to handle. The Magus limited herself to nod at the Neo-Demon's command and used her maximum speed to advance to the next location.

Shadows covered the duo, and less than three seconds after that, they appeared close to a river. The Law of Light had already affected the area, so they were hidden, and no one could see them.

Zatiel immediately made an orb of blood appear and started to work. This time, the number of tendrils he generated was seven times greater, and the speed at which they worked was enhanced by a factor of four.

The Neo-Demon was pushing his consciousness, energy, and Mind Force to the limit. The speed at which he advanced in the runic formation was enhanced exponentially.

However, there were severe downsides in using his power in this manner, with the wound on his soul and the state of his life force. Less than an hour after he started working on the runic formation, Zatiel's face became pale, and the blood vessels on his eyes swelled.

Due to the pressure on his soul, the waves of pain came faster, and the agony he endured was greater. The silver lining was that they lasted the same as before.

The Neo-Demon got back control of his body and immediately continued to work. Zatiel was able to finish the runic formation almost ten times faster than previous times. Once it disappeared, he signaled Zitra, and they went to the next location.

Less than fifty hours after Zatiel began to inscribe the runic formations with such an amazing speed, parts of his hair turned white, and there was blood on the corners of his eyes. Even with the help of The Prayer of Horus and his mental fortitude, the Neo-Demon knew he would not be able to keep this up for a very long time.

Zatiel had been working in the runic formation without a break other than to resist the waves of pain originating from his soul. Whenever his energy ran low, he would consume a pill and continue. But he had to stop when he received a shocking piece of information.

'What is this type of Mind Force?.' For the first time in a very long time, Zatiel's mind was filled with confusion and doubt.

He had a great comprehension of the Mind Ruler race and knew that this type of Mind Force was not present even in their Beings of Laws. It was not about quantity but quality. The essence of the Sage's Mind Force was completely superior.

There were very few things that escaped the knowledge of the Incarnation of Death and Destruction, and although some theories came to his mind when Zatiel thought about the origin of such power, he was not sure about any of them.

After a moment, Zatiel shook his head and no longer bothered with it. The Neo-Demon understood that many things could have happened during the millions of years that he spent in The Eternal River of the Afterlife, especially since his final battle in Baator affected the whole universe.

Zatiel was not worried about them mending his fragment of soul since he had made sure any information about his second life was erased, and the memories of his current life were modified. If they had soul searched him, the Neo-Demon would have been more than happy since the soul would have collapsed, and his wound could start to heal.

Although the Neo-Demon was confident in his capacities, the Sage was an enemy he could not underestimate.

'There is no way I will be able to complete my work before the Soul Apple finishes improving the power of that fragment of my soul, but as long I slow it enough, I will give Heinz sufficient time to prepare himself. Even with the strength that my brother will obtain, I am not confident in his chances. The only way to end this, once and for all, is to activate the key.' Zatiel did not care about the damage his soul and body were withstanding. His only focus was to finish the runic formations as fast as he could.

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Inside the Silent House, Zatiel and the Sage were sitting in front of a board of go. Oliver and Tomas were standing behind the grey humanoid, and their eyes were still filled with boiling asphalt.

Zatiel was not a gifted strategist when his path to power started, but countless battles commanding unruly hordes of demons helped him develop a mind that could trick Archdevils. Despite that, he had to use all of his abilities to face his opponent.

There was the fact the Sage was a higher life form, and his speed of thought was thousands of times faster than the one of Zatiel, but to him, that was irrelevant. In the Neo-Demon's mind, defeat is absolute, and excuses are worthless.

It took them ten hours to finish the first game, and Zatiel was the winner.

Once the game was over, the Sage remained motionless for ten seconds before waving his hand and starting another one.

The game of Go allowed Zatiel to have a better understanding of his opponents, and he could even deduce their personalities from the way they played. The second game he engaged with the Sage gave the impression to the Neo-Demon that he was playing with a totally different person.

It was not so simple as a change in his tactics. There are small patterns one would unconsciously display that had a connection with your habits and temperament, and even Zatiel had them. The patterns the Sage was showing now were too different from the ones in the first game.

Zatiel chose not to bother too much with the erratic behavior of his opponent and focus on the game. The skills of the Sage did not change too much compared with the last game, and the Neo-Demon was able to win.

After the second game was over, the Sage once again remained motionless for ten seconds before starting the third, and just like last time, his behavior changed.

The Neo-Demon and grey humanoid continued playing. Despite the great difficulties and close calls, Zatiel managed to secure victory every time.

However, it was after the eighth game that instead of ten seconds, the Sage remained unmoving for an entire minute.

Nothing changed on the grey humanoid's appearance after that, and he just waved his hand to start the new game.

Zatiel's mind and soul displayed no emotions, and his eyes remained indifferent, but when the ninth game started, the instincts of the Neo-Demon screamed with such power that they almost made him lose control. He felt as if he was now in front of the most formidable opponent of his life, someone even the most cunning Archdevil could not equal.

As they played, Zatiel realized that the Sage's skill reached a whole new level after this last change. What called most the attention of the Neo-Demon was that as the game advanced, he noticed that his opponent did not attempt to win.

What the Sage wanted, what his actions told Zatiel he desired more than anything was to sow madness. To submerge everything and everyone into a sea of insanity. Normally, those who pursued such goals acted irrationally and sluggishly, but the Sage showed his most meticulous and precise behavior as he wreaked complete havoc on the board of Go.

After thirty-four hours of playing, when Zatiel saw the board, he could not help but give an internal sigh and put the last piece.

The ninth game of Go between the individual who was once the Incarnation of Death and Destruction and the mysterious entity that goes by the title of Sage ended in a draw.