

BIOLOGICAL 1201

Chapter 1201: Friend or Foe No More (3)

Erik's plants surged but only ended up clashing against Bill's invisible hands. His defense was absolute.

Bill's defense relied on quantity over quality. He could instantly create hundreds of invisible hands that formed a solid barrier, blocking and destroying anything Erik threw at him. While each hand wasn't particularly strong on its own, their massive numbers made them impossible to break through.

The young man quickly learned that a power that would disintegrate everything was a very nasty defensive ability. The invisible hands instantly destroyed anything they touched, turning attacks and objects into nothing. Like a meat grinder disguised as a shield, this barrier didn't just block—it obliterated everything that came near.

Erik's elemental powers could destroy the invisible hands, but it made no difference. Each time fire incinerated them, ice broke them apart, or lightning struck them down, Bill conjured more hands to fill the gaps. The endless cycle of destruction and replacement meant Erik couldn't gain any ground.

Below them, the battlefield had transformed. The Law Gate's organized defense had descended into chaos as the Chimaeric Demons appeared. Yet the defenders weren't helpless—they fought back fiercely.

The blackguards were still the blackguards, and while they were not as physically strong as the Chimaeric Demons, they still had superb brain crystal powers and plenty of neural links.

Yet, it was clear they were having trouble.

"Your army is going to be destroyed," Erik said, launching another attack.

Ice spears got surrounded by lightning, the crackling energy coiling around the frozen projectiles like a nest of venomous serpents.

Bill was forced to spend a significant amount of mana to maintain his defensive barrier of invisible hands. Erik noticed his opponent's increased energy consumption and took advantage of this weakness to deliver a psychological blow.

"Your Vindicators are dead. How does it feel to lose everything?"

Bill struck with increased ferocity, but he still was unable to land a hit on Erik. He was too fast, too shrewd, and, most importantly, he acted as if he knew what Bill was going to do.

Bill wasn't stupid. He knew that was most likely because of one of Erik's powers. The younger man simply had too many advantages.

Erik had to constantly use his Instability brain crystal power in this battle, despite not usually needing it.

Against Bill's attacks, this ability was essential—it let him see what his opponent would do next and dodge the invisible strikes coming his way.

Bill's invisible hands struck from all angles. His power to create thousands of these deadly weapons made him a threat, even for Erik.

The young man used Instability brain crystal power because it was basically the only way he had to counter the invisible hands—without it, he couldn't prevent the invisible attacks from killing him.

One touch from these hands meant instant death, as they turned everything to dust on contact. Erik could not allow a single hit to land on him, and the only way to avoid something invisible was to know from where Bill was going to attack. Of course, his Hydra's heads were going to defend in case he couldn't avoid the attacks.

At the same time, Erik read the man's mind. Bill was becoming increasingly desperate as he watched his troops being slaughtered below, his authority crumbling with each dead soldier.

He found himself completely boxed in—he couldn't beat Erik in combat, and there was no way out.

The Law Gate was clearly lost, yet he was determined to inflict as much damage as possible on Erik's forces before retreating.

The second division commander's earlier confidence had vanished, along with his subordinates, but he wanted to make Erik pay at least.

Yet Bill wasn't the only one having a hard time. Even if Erik was keeping up with the man, the fact that Bill was matching him only thanks to his Brain Crystal power was unsettling. Erik was more powerful than Bill and had multiple brain crystal powers, yet, despite not being on the losing side, he was struggling to win exactly like it happened when he fought against Monica.

Erik needed to corner Bill, to provoke him into acting hastily.

"The mighty blackguards," Erik said, his voice dripping with contempt as he watched the man. "Your elite soldiers, your unstoppable force—all brought down by the very brain crystal power that made you strong in the first place. The same power I took from Monica when I killed her. Rather ironic, wouldn't you say that your greatest strength has become your undoing?"

Hundreds of invisible hands erupted at once, cutting through Erik's first defensive line with brutal efficiency.

<Shit...>

That caught Erik by surprise.

Bill had been so aggressive Erik couldn't avoid the incoming attacks, but Erik's fourth Hydra's head had already created a fire dome around him, and to reach that, the hands would have to get past a field of elemental barriers.

Layer by layer, Erik's defenses took shape. Ice walls formed the outer barrier, followed by a web of crackling lightning between frozen pillars. Behind those, layers of packed earth and stone rose in concentric domes. A blazing fire barrier created the last defense, while enhanced vines snaked through the entire structure, their sharp thorns at the ready.

The invisible hands smashed into the ice walls, breaking them apart and sending ice fragments everywhere. Fifty hands vanished on impact, while a hundred more pushed forward. Lightning flashed and struck the approaching hands, destroying many in bright explosions. But thirty hands still made it through the electric defense, moving closer to Erik's remaining protective barriers.

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The earth domes collapsed in sequence as the invisible hands smashed through. The stone barriers broke apart with sharp cracks, sending rock fragments flying. Only a few hands out of hundreds made it to the last defense. The searing fire dome, burning as hot as molten metal, destroyed these stragglers instantly, reducing them to faint traces of energy that faded into nothing.

But Bill simply made new ones.

<Fuck...>

Albeit talking big, Erik was spending a lot of mana to defend against the immensely powerful brain crystal power of his opponent.

Erik glanced down at the carnage below. His clones moved with deadly efficiency, but they were still dying, and once that happened, also the undead stopped moving. However, it was also true there were many of Erik's troops, so despite the clones dying, there was still more death on the Blackguards' side.

<I need to destabilize him more...>

"Are you seeing this?" Erik asked, gesturing at the brutal combat below where his forces were killing the blackguards. "This is what will happen to all of you. Your troops are being cut down one by one, and there's nothing you can do to stop it."

Erik said that, but he wasn't seeing a way to defeat Bill. <These motherfuckers are too tough...> Indeed, it was the truth.

The division commanders were powerful. They didn't have Erik's physical strength or speed, nor did they have all his powers, yet the few they had were enough to counter him, or at least to prevent him from dealing a killing blow.

Until now, Monica had been the scariest of them all, yet Bill wasn't less strong. It was just that his powers were different from hers.

It was then that a shimmering barrier materialized around Bill, trapping him in a perfect cube of energy.

Even Erik hadn't expected this development. A question remained, though: Was the barrier meant to protect Bill or trap him?

Then Erik had his reply. Bill's invisible hands struck the walls, but for the first time, they found something they couldn't destroy.

Both men froze for a moment. Erik's hands tightened around his weapon, his mind racing to understand who could have created such a powerful barrier.

Bill's eyes widened with dawning horror as he realized he had been trapped. Barriers could not be destroyed unless the barrier master was killed, and there were six of them at the law gate that Erik's troops could have taken as undead.

Erik was still confused, though. He hadn't created this trap, and his plants stopped mid-attack as he tried to understand what was happening.

Bill spun in place, his invisible hands probing every angle of his prison. The barrier held firm, its surface rippling but never breaking, because while his power allowed him to disintegrate everything, mana wasn't among those things, and a barrier made of that, even if he could destroy it, was just going to mend itself. His eyes darted around, searching for the source of this power.

A sickly green-yellow mist began rising through the air, curling toward Bill's position like a predator stalking its prey.

He turned to Erik, only to see his face was equally confused. Then Erik turned and saw the fog, and a grin spread across his face.

"No..." Bill said, his invisible hands now striking the barrier with desperation-fueled strikes.

The barrier held firm, leaving him helpless as the fog crept closer. Bill knew there was no way for him to counter a gas.

Chapter 1202: Friend or Foe No More (4)

Bill's invisible hands struck against the approaching fog. They created temporary gaps in the fog that quickly closed up again. Wherever the spectral hands carved through it, the fog

simply flowed back together.

"You think this will stop me?"

There was an edge of panic in his voice. His invisible hands multiplied; thousands of them struck at the barrier walls while simultaneously aiming for the gas.

The barrier rippled from Bill's attacks but held. It was powered up by six barrier masters, after all. The hands split the fog, yet it simply swirled back into place. Each time he carved a path through the mist, Amber's power replenished it, negating his efforts to disperse it.

Bill's movements grew erratic as reality started sinking in-his powers failed against the advance of the corrosive cloud.

His composed demeanor cracked. Sweat beaded on his forehead as his breaths grew faster. "This can't be happening." Bill redirected his attacks to the barrier again, but the mana construct simply absorbed each impact, rippling but never weakening.

The corrosive fog filled more of his prison. Bill created a dome of overlapping invisible hands around himself, layering them so dense that even air could barely pass through. For a moment, he thought it might work-the gas seemed to slow its approach.

Then it began seeping through the microscopic gaps between his defenses, proving as unstoppable as time itself. Bill's breathing grew ragged as his space shrunk, the deadly mist forcing him toward the center of his prison.

His first scream pierced the air like a blade through silk. Bill's left hand was the first one to be touched by the corrosive fog, and the pain was unbearable.

Erik heard it; Amber and the others did, too, and most importantly, the blackguards heard it. The blackguards lost all order when they heard their commander screaming. Soldiers stopped fighting, dropping their weapons as they realized what was happening to Bill.

Everyone, from new recruits to experienced fighters, watched in shock as their seemingly unbeatable leader was dying.

Bill's flesh sizzled on contact with the gas, turning gray before beginning to dissolve. The corrosion spread up his arm like a rapidly growing tumor, eating through skin, muscle, and bone.

The barrier amplified his cries, which made everyone flinch. His clothes melted into sludge that dripped from what remained of his body.

The outer layers of his skin followed, sloughing off in sheets that dissolved before hitting the ground.

Bill tried focusing his powers, trying to create a shell directly against his skin, but his concentration shattered as the waves of pain intensified and quickly overwhelmed him.

Then his powers flickered and failed as the neural links required to channel mana were eaten away by Amber's corrosive fog.

The gas reached his torso, going through his chest like thousands of hungry worms. His ribcage became visible for a moment before dissolving, internal organs liquefying and dropping to the barrier's floor in wet chunks that were quickly consumed by the relentless fog. His last scream cut off abruptly as the fog reached his throat, dissolving his vocal cords mid-cry. His face followed quickly after, features melting like wax under intense heat.

His eyes, already clouded with agony, dissolved last-two final points of horror before they too succumbed to the gas.

What remained of Bill collapsed into the growing puddle of his own dissolved tissue and clothes. Blood mixed with liquefied flesh and various types of bodily fluids, creating patterns like oil on water before the corrosive gas broke down even these remains.

Within moments, nothing remained of the second division commander except a rapidly

shrinking puddle of organic soup and the lingering echo of his death cries.

[Second Division Commander Bill killed: Mana absorbing process starting.]

[0%...1%...5%...30%...70%...100%]

[Mana successfully absorbed, starting converting procedure.]

[3...2...1...0]

[Mana successfully absorbed into experience. 18,278,301.48 experience points and 182,783.0148 DNA points awarded to the host.]

<Bill gave a lot of experience. I don't know if I should think I'm lucky or not.>

These many experience points meant the opponent was powerful, but it also made it easier for him to level up.

Erik briefly glanced at his status. His level had jumped a lot during this entire ordeal, but his experience points were still increasing since the battle was still going on.

<I will give a better look at it when everything is done.>

The barrier masters maintained their prison until even these last traces disappeared, leaving only clear ground where one of the blackguards' most powerful commanders had stood.

Erik watched in silence as his opponent was erased from existence, his expression unreadable.

<Well, at least this is finally done...>

The battle for the Law Gate was still going on, and even if the remaining blackguards mostly lost the will to fight, they were still doing it. Yet Bill's death marked a turning point.

When their commander died, the blackguards realized they couldn't win the battle. Their coordination gave way to more reckless behavior. Instead of retreating, the blackguards chose to cause as much damage as possible. They discarded any form of defense in order to inflict the maximum damage on Erik's army.

Many blackguards began charging straight at the attackers, surrounding themselves with destructive power. These attacks killed fighters on both sides, devastating large areas of the battlefield.

The Chimaeric Demons found themselves facing a changed enemy. The blackguards rushed forward in waves, trading their lives for a chance to destroy their opponents.

Their attacks became simple but devastating, as charged with mana as they were-they would charge in and unleash their full power without restraint.

In the meantime, Erik noticed the barrier started dissolving, and that happened when Amber's fog had completely done its job, dissipating to reveal the empty space where Bill had made his last stand. Even the air seemed cleaner somehow, as if the corrosive fog had purified it of more than just its target.

The corrosive fog had been ruthlessly thorough-not even a thread of clothing remained. Besides, the brain crystal that held Bill's powers had dissolved along with everything else.

Erik scanned the battlefield for one last time and then searched for Amber. He found her sitting on a nearby rooftop, which even he didn't know how it survived the brutal battle between Erik and his opponents.

Amber was having trouble breathing. It was clear she used all her mana, and that she strained a lot to seal the deal with Bill.

Erik knew Amber's power was strong even with her only being at the B rank of the Ferebitz

scale. It was a highly efficient power, and making more neural links made it even more efficient and deadly. The problem was that Amber didn't have that much mana, at least not compared to monsters such as Bill and Monica.

Creating and maintaining the corrosive fog while fighting against Bill's constant interference had drained her.

Her fog had proven superior to Bill's defenses, but that was because it was impossible for him to create an air-sealed space, nor could he bring the fog out by using the invisible hands to repel it, and that was because the barrier didn't allow it.

Besides, Bill had more mana than her, and to bring the man down, she had to make so much of it that not even the man could destroy it all.

Each time his invisible hands tore through it, she produced more fog until she overwhelmed him, but in another situation, she would have lost. Bill was fast, shrewd, and resourceful. The moment he saw Amber, if the barrier hadn't been present, he would have killed her.

He felt a twinge of regret at the lost opportunity to get Bill's powers. It would have been incredibly useful, especially if he merged Bill's birth brain crystal power and the invisible

hands.

Amber's corrosive gas destroyed everything completely. It turned Bill's body, clothes, and equipment into basic particles. Most importantly, it destroyed the brain crystal in Bill's head - the source of his powers.

"It's a shame," he said. "With that kind of power, we could have been much safer on Mur. But

I suppose this couldn't be helped."

Despite all of Erik's different powers, he could have never beaten Bill in a direct fight. Those invisible hands were simply too strong and versatile.

Bill's three powers worked perfectly together: invisible hands, super speed, and matter destruction. He could block or dodge anything Erik tried.

It hit Erik hard: some brain crystal powers were stronger than others, even if they were on the same level. A single powerful and versatile ability, like Bill's invisible hands, could overcome multiple different powers of equal rank.

Bill's fight showed that three well-chosen, complementary abilities could counter a wider range of powers. Quality and synergy mattered more than quantity.

"I really need to make more neural links for telekinesis."

If he could wield telekinesis with the same mastery as Uncle Benjamin, who could lift entire buildings and control thousands of objects simultaneously, he would be much stronger than anyone else in battle. Similarly, the Hydra's head brain crystal power needed more neural

links.

Chapter 1203: Unexpected guest (1)

More undead and Chimaeric Demons rushed inside the base.

At the same time, the stream of notifications kept arriving.

The clash between the two armies was brutal and merciless. Explosions lit up the battlefield as powers collided, and the air filled with the sounds of combat. Neither side showed any sign of backing down as they fought with increasing intensity, turning the area into a war-torn wasteland.

The battlefield was painted in smoke and blood. Poisonous smoke filled the air while fires spread everywhere, the ground that was full of explosion holes, and the awful smell of burning bodies and scorched ground was everywhere.

Mangled vehicles lay scattered like broken toys, bodies of dead blackguards sprawled across the field in various states of dismemberment-some cleaved in two, others with limbs torn from their torsos.

Blood covered the ground, turning the soil dark red. The blackguards' flags, torn and dirty, fluttered in the wind, in what was for them a sad reminder of their former glory.

After losing their commander, the blackguards abandoned discipline and turned into berserkers, launching suicide attacks that killed many of Erik's clones. They fought to the death, prioritizing damage over survival.

But the clones weren't pushovers. Most of the blackguards died before they could even reach the clones. The problem was that when they did; the clones died in droves.

Damaged structures offered little protection, their walls pocked with blast marks and splattered with blood. Between them stretched a killing field littered with corpses, their vacant eyes mirroring the flames that consumed the battlefield.

The survivors walked carefully through the destroyed battlefield, trying to avoid stepping on the dead bodies and pools of blood. All around them, people were screaming as they died while energy weapons were fired and bodies were being destroyed.

[LEVEL UP] [LEVEL UP] [LEVEL UP]

Battle notifications flooded in as Erik's troops clashed with the blackguards. Every fallen soldier, ally or enemy, contributed to the experience he was getting.

Erik gave a look back at Amber.

He approached her, seeing her slumped against a wall. Her face was ghostly pale and damp with sweat, her breathing ragged from the mana she used to kill Bill. Mira, Emily, June, and the three Chimaeric Demons had gathered around her.

"Are you alright?"

Amber managed a weak nod. "Just... drained. That bastard was tough to kill." She turned to see the ongoing battle, where waves of blackguards threw themselves at the remaining Chimaeric Demons.

Things were getting worse by the second. Fires spread everywhere as soldiers used their brain crystal powers without holding back.

Losing their commander had transformed the blackguards from disciplined soldiers into vengeful berserkers. It was to a point so absurd that Amber and all the other ones were confused.

Who would willingly sacrifice their life like this? It made no sense, especially considering there was no family member involved. Erik didn't kill brothers and sisters, fathers, or mothers. Yet the blackguards behaved as if that was the case, as if Bill had been their spiritual leader, a figure they revered more than their own lives.

Maybe it was. The blackguards were arrogant and brutal and had no moral qualms, but their leaders were figures who inspired even him, and that was only because of the powers they possessed.

Erik could understand how, from a foot soldier's point of view, their leaders were deities. Erik watched from his position as the blackguards kept attacking. Energy blasts cut some soldiers in half, while others lost their arms and legs in the battle.

Despite seeing their fellow soldiers die horrible deaths, the blackguards kept fighting.

Their sacrifice accomplished nothing except adding more corpses to the field. Yet they persisted, driven by a loyalty that transcended self-preservation.

"I don't understand," June said, shaking his head as he watched another wave of blackguards charge to their deaths. "This isn't normal military behavior."

"It's like they've been brainwashed," Emily said. "No rational human would throw their life away like this."

"Maybe the blackguards look at their commanders as something beyond human," a clone said.

Erik nodded. "Bill wasn't just their commander. He was their symbol of power, their proof that they were superior. When Amber killed him, they started understanding they were not that sacred group they thought they were. Their entire worldview collapsed."

Erik gave them a better look. "I think they are trying to prove their worth through death. They've been so thoroughly indoctrinated that they can't imagine life without their leadership structure."

If they had been in their position, they would have just fled. All of them then thought about what would have happened if Erik was the one dying, if Mira, Amber, June, or Emily was the enemy leader, and how they would react in their same shoes.

<Maybe I would have done the same...> They all thought in unison.

Amber's gaze went to the hangar's smoking ruins. The plane they'd fought so hard to protect was nothing but twisted metal now. "What do we do?" she asked Erik. "Without the plane, we have few

chances of reaching Mur safely; we would need a lot of Chimaeric Demons, and I don't think we can bring those from the rest of the country."

Since they could bring only those currently inside the Law Gate, it meant that the more clones died, the worse their situation while crossing the sea would be.

Erik examined the wreckage. "We need to rest first. You especially need some time to recover." He turned to the three Chimaeric Demons. "Get the barrier masters' brain crystals

and blood ready."

Since Amber was the one who killed Bill, it was clear it had been their team to make those barriers, meaning they resurrected the six barrier masters they had been tasked to kill, and if that happened, he had no intention of letting their powers go to waste. "I'll get them all. One will be given to your clones; the others, I will keep for myself-I have plans for them."

Multiple barrier master clones would make their stay in Mur much safer. Layered barriers would create stronger protection than a single one could provide. By taking turns, the clones could keep barriers up nonstop without running out of mana.

The problem was, Erik would have to wait in order for the new clones to mature. Besides, they would need more time to make enough neural links.

Erik worried that all this waiting would give the blackguards on Mur enough time to reach power levels that even he couldn't handle. That was the reason he decided to give the ability to the clones and make some eggs, which, though he knew, would mature only once they were

on the lost continent.

Yet there was time to think about that. Now, what he needed to focus on was Amber.

"We might send some Chimaeric Demons to Frant. With so many barrier masters, winning the war should be possible, even easy."

Erik nodded, then turned to the Chimaeric Demons. "Take them to the underground tunnels," he said, referring to Amber and the others. "They need to recover somewhere safe."

"And you?" Mira asked, noting his gaze returning to the battlefield.

A small smile crossed Erik's face as he watched more blackguards pour into the fight. "We thought there were around eighty thousand elite blackguards here. Each one is strong enough to feed me a lot of experience." His plants began rising around him. "It would be wasteful not to take advantage of that."

[LEVEL UP]

[LEVEL UP]

"The rest of you, get to safety. I'll handle things up here."

"We can still fight," Mira said, with Emily nodding beside her.

"I know you can, but I don't need help against these small fries."

Mira snorted. "Small fishes? They're elite blackguards. Each of them could destroy a city."

She paused.

"Well, at least they could have done it 4 years ago."

"Yeah, they are small fries. I would have been able to kill even Bill if it wasn't for his nasty brain crystal power, the constant help he received, and the fact I had to protect the plane while killing all his minions." Erik's plants rustled menacingly around him.

Mira sighed. "Yeah, yeah. Exactly as you said."

Emily laughed. "Now go. I want to focus on absorbing their experience points."

However, a piercing screech echoed across the battlefield, a sound so powerful it made the

ground tremble.

The high-pitched cry cut through the noise of battle like a knife, causing both blackguards and Chimaeric Demons to pause their fighting.

Erik recognized the sound, and it was nothing good. That was the call of the cerulean bird.

The color drained from his face. "Underground. Now!" he said to the Chimaeric Demons, his voice carrying a fear they had seen coming from him only when the Leviathan Serpent was

involved.

The clones tensed, their bodies rigid with fear, because having Erik's memories, they shared his same worries.

"Erik, what's happening?" Amber asked, her voice tight with concern as she noticed the sudden change in everyone's demeanor.

"We have company," Erik said. "It's something you shouldn't get involved with." His eyes scanned the orange sky as the screech grew louder. The creature was drawing closer. Erik went to collect the brain crystals from the barrier masters himself.

Chapter 1204: Unexpected guest (2)

Erik rushed to the fallen barrier masters in a hurry. He didn't know when the monster was bound to arrive, but it was soon, and he couldn't waste even a second.

Fear gripped him, and his heart pounded faster with each passing moment. The creature that was coming was so powerful that just thinking about it scared him.

What was coming was something able to kill a black wyvern at its full power, a creature coming from Mur, most likely as powerful as the Leviathan Serpent.

Erik first gathered the blood of the six barrier masters that Amber's group had killed.

Then he extracted each crystal and collected their blood in separate vials, marking each one to match its corresponding crystal.

One by one, he gathered them all, storing each precious resource. Precious not because of the powers themselves, but because of what would happen if he failed to get them on time. Death.

However, there was another barrier master to take the brain crystal power from, one that no one had considered until that point, and that, contrary to the barrier masters, the Chimaeric Demons used as undead also had another power.

He reached the seventh barrier master-the Vindicator. The woman could both create barriers and also increase stamina and mana regeneration.

That was actually one of the most valuable powers Erik had ever seen, since it allowed the user to restore both physical energy and mana reserves.

In battle, this meant warriors could fight longer. It meant there was a much lower risk of death and that they could use their powers more frequently without exhausting themselves. Besides, combined with the barrier masters' powers, it made for an incredibly sustainable defensive strategy, because barrier masters could stay on duty far longer and could replenish their barriers for much greater amounts.

Of course, the main problem was always the same.

If an attack was powerful enough, no single barrier could withstand it-that's why multiple barrier masters worked together. When one barrier took the main hit and broke, the others maintained their defenses while the first barrier master recovered and rebuilt his or her shield.

It didn't take much for Erik to find the woman's body. It was lying apart from the others; her face frozen in an expression of defiance even in death.

She had proven particularly troublesome during the battle. Not only was she very skilled in battle, but her power allowed her to bring the undead to a stop and prevented the death of many of the blackguards while, at the same time, recharging their reserves.

If it wasn't for her, Bill would have never lasted that long, because before she arrived on the battlefield, he was with a foot in the grave, as he almost ended his mana.

Erik had a particular usage in mind for her power. He didn't know how that actually worked, but if it did as he had seen, giving the ability to the Chimaeric Demons meant no one on his side would even end his or her mana, and God only knew how much they needed it on Mur. With infinite mana, Erik could unleash attacks filled with all his reserves and recharge it soon after. If there was one person with the ability, it would not recharge that fast, but with thousands of people, the sky was the limit.

A screech snapped Erik out of his reverie. Time pressed against him.

<What the fuck is this thing coming here for?>

It came all the way from the Eldraith Mountain range in Frant, to Hin, and on the western side. It was not a short distance. Not that it mattered for a beast of that power.

<Is it possible this thing heard the battle from there? Maybe the mana unleashed.>

What Erik was worried about was that the cerulean bird came here for him.

He sighed to ease the tension and made an incision to extract the last brain crystal from the Vindicator's skull. Blood dripped from his hands as he collected it, the metallic scent sharp in his nostrils.

He turned around, only to see the battle was still ongoing. That was both a good and a bad situation. Good, because he would get more experience points from all of that, and it was going to help. Bad, because the number of potential helpers against that beast was going to decrease.

Not that the blackguards were going to help. On the contrary, they would die willingly if they knew that would ensure the Cerulean Bird killed him and the Chimaeric Demons.

Another screech of the cerulean bird urged him to move faster.

Without hesitation, Erik chose the first brain crystal, bringing it to his lips along with its corresponding vial of blood. He swallowed both in quick succession, his throat working as the power settled into his system.

[Unknown Barrier Master's DNA gained. Initiating analysis...]

[Analysis complete.]

[10000 DNA points required for extraction. 15000 points to avoid pain and loss of consciousness.]

[15000 DNA points used for painless instant absorption. Procedure complete.]

[Unknown Barrier Master's brain crystal gained. Initiating analysis...]

[Analysis complete.]

[10000 DNA points required for power extraction. 15000 points to avoid pain and loss of consciousness.]

[15000 DNA points used for painless instant absorption. Procedure complete.]

Erik immediately turned to the biological supercomputer. "Merge this power with the Chimaeric Demon brain crystal power," he said. "Every clone from now on needs to create

barriers."

[25000 DNA points required for merging. Confirm to proceed.]

"Do it!"

[Merging procedure initiated...]

[Merging procedure complete.]

The supercomputer's confirmation flashed through Erik's mind as another piercing cry split the air. The sound was closer now, too much for Erik's comfort. Erik glanced skyward,

knowing his time grew shorter with each passing second.

In the distance, chaos continued to unfold as blackguards hed with his forces. The structural integrity of the Law Gate crumbled further, smoke rising from multiple points across the fortress-like city.

Erik reached for the next set of brain crystals, knowing each moment was precious. His hands trembled slightly as he absorbed two more barrier masters' powers in rapid succession.

[15000 DNA points used for painless instant absorption. Procedure complete.] [15000 DNA points used for painless instant absorption. Procedure complete.]

[15000 DNA points used for painless instant absorption. Procedure complete.] [15000 DNA points used for painless instant absorption. Procedure complete.] "Merge them with Tower Bastion! I need something strong to survive against that thing!"

[I'm working on it!]

[Merging procedure initiated...]

[Merging procedure complete.]

[Merging procedure initiated...]

[Merging procedure complete.]

"Can you stop giving me these notifications?!"

[Why? They are cool!]

"They are not cool; they are just annoying!"

Power surged through Erik's body as the merging completed.

"What did I get?"

[I called it Absolute Castle,] the biological supercomputer said. The biological supercomputer knew why Erik wanted to merge two powers to Tower Bastion. It was to power up its defensive abilities, and there were two, which came from two different powers, one of which was Nathaniel's. That was exactly what the biological supercomputer aimed for when doing

the mergings.

[Let me explain what Absolute Castle can do,] the biological supercomputer said. [This defensive power completely outclasses Tower Bastion.]

[First, the barriers it creates are much stronger than before,] it continued. [Then, its base

defense is much greater than Aegis Morph.]

"Do you think it can resist the Cerulean Bird?"

Another screech pierced the air, closer than before. Erik grimaced.

[It can, but only up to a certain point. That thing is bound to be able to use a lot of mana, not

even a barrier should be able to resist its attacks easily or for long. I don't even think you can kill this thing. At best, you can make it desist from attacking you, and even that is hard.]

"What can we do then?" Erik started getting anxious.

[Order the Chimaeric Demons to focus on killing the blackguards. Each kill provides more mana, which leads to more experience and faster level ups.]

The biological supercomputer paused.

[I suggest you also absorb the Vindicator's brain crystal power. You will get the regenerative power along with her barrier master's ability.]

Erik nodded. That was exactly what he did. For now, he was going to keep both powers, but as soon as he was done, he was going to give the regenerative power to the Chimaeric Demons. That way, he would have multiple clones with that ability, and by bringing them with him, he would end up with infinite mana, at least in theory.

The fourth barrier master's crystal slid down his throat, followed by its corresponding blood. This one he kept separate, ensuring he kept the basic barrier creation ability in its pure form. The power settled alongside Absolute Castle, providing him with versatility and raw strength.

[Unknown Barrier Master's brain crystal gained. Initiating analysis...]

[Analysis complete.]

[40000 DNA points required for power extraction. 50000 points to avoid pain and loss of consciousness.]

The biological supercomputer already knew what Erik wanted to do.

[50000 DNA points used for painless instant absorption. Procedure complete.]

[Fuck...] the system said.

"What?"

[The Vindicator's power... It doesn't work on the caster.]

"Shit..."

Erik could only merge it, but he was still going to do it after the battle.

Chapter 1205: Blue demon (1)

"Well, at least the other two work."

It was unfortunate that the Vindicator's power didn't work on the caster, but there was nothing he could do about it.

Besides, it wasn't like Erik could protect the Chimaeric Demons during the battle; at that point, they were alone. He could just try to stop the Cerulean Bird and try not to make it target his clones, but that was easier said than done.

The Cerulean bird was too powerful. It was too fast to see it move, too strong to try to resist, and had enough mana to destroy a nation with a single attack. Erik didn't even know if his defenses would be enough against the beast's talons, but it wasn't like he was willing to try.

Erik knew he couldn't afford a single moment of distraction—one blink could give the beast the opening it needed to strike him dead.

So Erik gave his orders.

<To all the Chimaeric Demons, focus on killing the blackguards. I'm going to need as much mana as possible if we want to survive this, meaning I need to level up as much as I can. Spare no one.>

The clones heard Erik's telepathic message through their mental link, but they were alarmed by the raw emotion that came with it.

They felt their master's overwhelming unease and unmistakable fear—emotions they had only seen and felt just once in the past, during that encounter with the Leviathan Serpent in the middle of the ocean.

This meant that Erik truly feared whatever was coming. That Erik wasn't sure he could even survive the beast, let alone injure or win against it.

The Chimaeric Demons needed no reminder of the Leviathan Serpent to understand the threat, especially because, having Erik's memories, they knew how powerful that thing was.

The problem was, back then, when Erik saw it fight against the black wyvern that June stole the blood from, Erik was much weaker.

Not only did he have even less than his current stats, but he also didn't know thaids could get more than 54 neural links.

He didn't understand the true scope of the battle that happened between the two titanic monsters because he couldn't even survive standing amidst it and kept as far from it as possible.

But now he did. The clones did too, and that knowledge made them all understand how lucky Erik had been.

Then the cerulean bird arrived.

It was nothing more than a small dot in the sky. Quickly, it became bigger and bigger, visible only in its silhouette. Until it was close enough to appear in all its majestic and terrifying aura above the city, obscuring the sun like an ancient god's hand reaching down from the heavens, vast enough to eclipse entire districts in its shadow, its presence as overwhelming as a storm cloud that promises not just rain, but the end of all clear skies. It was a promise of death.

The blackguards knew too what that thing was. It was one of the thaid they forced to leave its nest when their operations on Mur destroyed its natural habitat, forcing the creature to reach Mannard coastline and later its tallest mountain range to get a place where it could live.

Many years have passed since that happened, and while the blackguards on Mannard didn't know anymore what those on Mur were currently doing, they knew what they did in the past.

The blackguards knew how powerful and scary the creature in front of them was, and they didn't like it.

The only reason they were still fighting was because they knew there wasn't a chance for them to escape that destiny. If the Cerulean bird didn't kill them, Erik Romano's army would.

It didn't make a difference anymore whatever they chose, so they kept fighting. Yet they knew the Chimaeric Demons, Erik. They had much to lose, and they were going to make them maximize that loss to the best of their abilities.

Even though Erik had seen the Cerulean bird before, its presence still filled him with a primal, overwhelming dread.

Its massive body blocked out the sun as it descended, each wingbeat creating gusts that could tear buildings apart.

The creature's feathers weren't just blue—they seemed to capture and reflect the very essence of the sky, shifting between deep azure and brilliant cerulean with every movement. Not because they are biologically that, but because the mana was so dense around it that the sun's rays got reflected on it.

Everything around it radiated an intense bluish sheen, as the creature's massive form bent and distorted light like a living mirror. The air itself seemed to ripple with azure waves, making the surrounding buildings, streets, and even the ground reflect blue light, as if submerged underwater. The effect extended for hundreds of meters in every direction, creating a surreal dome of cerulean light that marked the bird's vital space.

As for the creature's mana. Erik felt in front of an ocean so vast and deep that his mind struggled to comprehend it.

This wasn't just another powerful creature—this was nature's answer to humanity's hubris, a being that could snuff out armies with the same ease that a child might blow out a candle.

The creature dove towards him, and it was there that Erik understood with crushing clarity why the wyverns of Mannard, creatures he once considered the apex of power, were nothing compared to the terrors of Mur.

This bird, this sky-born nightmare, was proof that his understanding of power had been painfully limited.

Erik observed the beast's sky-blue feathers with fear, wondering if Emily, Mira, Amber, and June got out of the city.

Only minutes had passed—four at most. Everything happened in a blur: collecting, absorbing, and merging the barrier masters' powers.

<Are the others safe?> Erik asked his clones through a mental link he established thanks to the Instability brain crystal power. He waited anxiously for news.

The answer came quick, but it wasn't good. <No, master. We're fighting many blackguards. The enemy is blocking our escape route, but luckily, many of our brothers joined us. We're protecting them, but they're still too close to the giant bird.>

<How are they doing?> Erik asked.

<June is ok, and he's keeping himself out of the fight. Amber is resting since she does not have mana. Mira is helping Emily, which is providing us with some cover. The blackguards keep attacking in waves—when we beat some more they show up.>

<Where are they pushing your group?> Erik asked.

<Toward you, Master. We think they want to trap us, hoping the Cerulean bird will kill us if they fail.>

<Stop fighting the blackguards! Just get them out of here, NOW! That's the most important thing!> Erik ordered, his fear showing in his mental voice. <I don't care how many enemies you leave behind. Break free, cause confusion, do anything—but get them to safety!>

<Yes, Master.>

<Tell me right away if anything changes,> Erik commanded. He felt helpless, knowing his friends were fighting for their lives while he couldn't directly help them. But he had to trust his clones to protect them.

<Stay away!> Erik ordered the Chimaeric Demons. Then wings sprouted out of his back, and he flew toward the beast before it could land.

Erik then focused back on the creature. He wasn't even sure if his mana reserves would be enough to create a barrier strong enough to protect himself or if his new brain crystal power, Absolute Castle, could withstand the monster's onslaught.

Though Erik knew he couldn't kill the beast, he could at least keep its attention focused on himself. As he approached it, he activated his Absolute Castle brain crystal power. While it functioned similarly to Tower Bastion with the same core abilities, its defensive capabilities were significantly more powerful, and he could feel that.

A shimmering layer of energy coalesced around Erik's body. Like liquid starlight, the mana responded to his will, crystallizing into plates of armor.

Each piece formed and interlocked with each other as they materialized from the pure energy. The armor was ethereal but then solidified, its surface rippling with patterns that resembled flowing water caught in crystal, and then turning menacing as that of a medieval soldier.

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However, Erik didn't know if that was going to be enough, despite him having pumped almost all his mana into it.

He also used the part of the Absolute Castle that came from Nathaniel's powers, creating small energy shields all over him. These got significantly boosted by the barrier masters' powers, but if they were enough to resist the attacks of the cerulean bird, Erik didn't know.

The massive creature's gaze locked onto Erik, and for a moment, its predatory focus wavered. Something in its eyes shifted—a flicker of recognition, perhaps, or confusion.

It was an unsettling change in demeanor that made Erik's instincts scream with warning, like a prey animal sensing a snake coiled in the grass before seeing it.

Using the Instability brain crystal power, Erik reached out to touch the creature's consciousness. The mental contact was like plunging into an ocean—cold, vast, yet filled with purpose. But what he found there made his blood run cold.

The cerulean bird's thoughts weren't chaotic or mindlessly destructive. They were focused, deliberate, and terrifyingly specific. Erik felt its drive, its consuming purpose: to hunt. And not just anything.

The devastating truth hit Erik like a physical blow, knocking the breath from his lungs and sending icy tendrils of dread crawling down his spine.

"SHIT! I am not just one of the targets. I am THE target of this motherfucker! It came here because of me!"

Chapter 1206: Blue demon (2)

The Cerulean bird moved, its wings carving through the air with frightening speed. Erik barely had time to reinforce his barriers before the creature's attack hit him—not with its full strength, but with enough force to make him understand the difference in power.

A wall of compressed air slammed into Erik.

The attack was like a freight train made of pure air—a roaring, howling mass of compressed air that created a thunderous sound as it tore through the sky, akin to a bomb exploding.

The noise was so loud that it hurt Erik and shook his whole body, and he could feel it rumbling through his bones despite wearing armor.

Even with the Absolute Castle brain crystal power at full strength, the impact sent him tumbling backward through the sky.

The force was so strong it felt like it was crushing him from all sides. He couldn't even breathe for a moment as the pressure squeezed his chest. He spun wildly through the air like a leaf in a storm, unable to tell which way was up or down.

His armor cracked but held together, drawing heavily on his mana reserves to repair itself. "SHIT!"

Erik's entire body trembled.

"It's even worse than I assumed!"

Erik knew the Cerulean bird was strong, but not THIS strong. Absolute Castle resulted from merging many brain crystal powers, including two powers from barrier masters. In theory, it made little sense that with its mana output so powered up, the armor couldn't resist even this simple attack.

Yet that was exactly what had just happened, and that only had an explanation. The Cerulean Bird had massive amounts of mana.

<This thing is too strong. It might even be stronger than the last time I saw it...>

Fear gripped Erik as this thought hit him. He felt small and helpless, like a child facing a giant. Back then, it had already been terrifying. Now, if the beast was really stronger, Erik realized with dread that it could kill him effortlessly if it wanted to.

Yet Erik felt the mana surrounding the creature and knew the Cerulean Bird was holding back, using a fraction of its strength. His blood ran cold.

Erik had to know how strong the beast really was. One of his parallel brains, the Hydra's heads, willed the system to show him the status. He wouldn't have been able to do that if it hadn't been for them. In fact, all the brains were wired against the creature. Two to defend himself, one to attack and bait, and one to study the beast and the battlefield below.

-[Analysis]—

Race: Caelestis Bellator

Physical Description: A giant blue bird-like thaid, so huge that a human is only as big as one of its claws. Its wings are so powerful as to create winds strong enough to damage buildings simply by using them to stay in the sky. It has so much mana that simply being the creature causes strange effects in the surrounding air. Despite its massive size, the creature moves with incredible precision and control. Its intelligent eyes and behavior suggest it's high compared to other thaid.

Brain Crystal Power:

Wind titan (X-X): The thaid has complete control over wind. (Error. Unable to compute the rank. Too many neural links to be classified.)

{Attributes}

STRENGTH: 1178

INTELLIGENCE: 100

DEXTERITY: 1152

ENERGY: 3789

{Others}

Power Level: 3551

Brain Crystal Rank (Wind Titan): X-X

Estimated experience by killing it: 311,357,898.45

-[End]-

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

Erik shivered. He observed the beast's attributes, then went to the rank. There was nothing there. The only thing the system had been able to understand was that the creature was X- ranked on the Ferebitz and Jorm scale, but as for the Idor scale, the one that told humans how many neural links

someone or something had, the system had been unable to classify it. <What the fuck does this mean?>

[Sorry! It has too many neural links! There is no scale that can rank it!]

<How many neural links do this thing have?>

But the attributes it had made it clear they were a lot.

[270!]

<WHAT?!>

Erik finally caught himself in mid-air and regained control. The Cerulean bird's beating wings were creating air currents so strong that he even had trouble staying close to it. Not that it mattered, because the creature followed him whenever he unwillingly went.

<System, I need options. How do I survive against something this powerful?>

[Trying to fight this thing head-on would be super risky! This bird's got way more neural links than anything we've ever seen in our records. Even with all your cool powers, it's like bringing a water gun to a tank battle!]

<I know that! Give me something I can use!>

[Use Phantom Veil with Will of the Hydra to trick and confuse it. One head should be tasked to control the illusions and make them the best you can, while the others help you hide and

maybe do sneak attacks!]

<This thing will see through them!>

[Create plant barriers between you using Verdant Architect. Big as the bird is, it'll have trouble moving through vegetation, and you can use it to hide! Just keep in mind its wind powers could blow the plants away.]

<It won't work! That thing is tracking my mana. The only way for me to hide would be if I stopped using it, but that would mean having to take one of its blows head-on and without protection!>

It wasn't all. The creature's intelligence rating of 100 meant it wouldn't fall for simple tricks. [Your Absolute Castle defense isn't enough on its own. Layer it with Elemental Lord to create stacked elemental barriers behind your armor for better protection.]

<What about offense? Can I do something?>

[No way,] the system said. [This thing has 270 neural links-your attacks won't even scratch it. The mana you are seeing surrounding it is the beast's natural mana barrier. Only massively powered attacks will work, or many smaller ones, but that would need us to ask for the Chimaeric Demons' help since not even you can make so many as to injure it.]

Just by existing, the Cerulean Bird warped the surrounding air, showing how incredibly powerful it was. Erik was completely outmatched.

Below them, the sounds of battle continued as the Chimaeric Demons fought against the blackguards, and Erik kept getting experience points and level-ups.

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

The beast's attack had been casual, almost lazy-like a cat batting at a mouse before deciding

whether to kill it.

Yet, it emptied Erik's mana reserves just to pump Absolute Castle enough to protect his sorry ass. Luckily, he leveled up thrice. His mana got restored, but he knew he would need to use it all again just to resist the following ones.

He knew they were going to come, and based on how fast they were, he didn't think he would be able to avoid them.

The colossal bird wheeled overhead, its feathers catching the light, moving so much wind they could tear buildings apart.

Erik had to do whatever he could to increase his speed. So, he activated a lot of stuff. His Absolute Castle and Beast shapeshifting were already active, but he also activated his telekinesis brain crystal power to try to stop the wind currents around him, or at least to reduce the effects and decrease the resistance, so that he could move faster. As the system suggested, he also activated the Phantom Veil, brain crystal power.

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

This, which was a power he got by merging Shade's brain crystal power, not only allowed him to turn invisible but also to create illusions, which was what Erik did.

He hoped the monster would focus on the illusions rather than on him.

So, he tried to counterattack as best as he could. Ice spears materialized around him, each one crackling with lightning as he hurled them toward the beast.

The projectiles cut through the air, but the Cerulean bird didn't even bother to dodge. Instead, it simply flapped its wings once, creating a gust that scattered Erik's attack like leaves in a storm.

"Shit..."

The bird's next attack came soon after. The creature released wind blades, all aimed at the illusions. The creature didn't deem them a threat and for sure recognized they were just that, fake things, yet it still attacked, as if it was just having fun killing something more.

A single wing sweep sent a crescent of compressed air toward Erik and each of the illusions. The barriers shattered first, then the blade hit the armor.

He tried to dodge the main attack, but the edge caught him, sending him spinning through

the sky. The creature wasn't even using its most powerful attacks, and the blades Erik received weren't even close to those the creature used to bisect the black wyvern back then.

The Absolute castle held, but Erik got still injured. He healed himself, but his mana went to rock bottom again.

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

The illusions got unharmed as the wind blade went through them. In the meantime, Erik tried creating multiple barriers again, layering them in complex patterns like he'd seen the barrier masters do.

Chapter 1207: Blue demon (3)

The beast attacked again. A particularly powerful gust caught Erik off-guard, slamming through his outermost barrier like it was made of paper.

Pain exploded across his chest as the attack connected, and only the enhanced durability of his Absolute Castle armor prevented lethal injury.

Even so, he felt ribs crack under the impact, and the air rushed from his lungs like oxygen escaping a spaceship's hull breach.

<What the fuck...?>

As Erik struggled to maintain altitude, he noticed the beast observing him. It was clearly playing with him—if it had wanted him dead, that last attack would have torn him in half instead of merely injuring him.

His power was running out fast while trying to defend himself. Even though his Absolute Castle shield was very strong, it used up too much energy to keep working.

For the first time in his life, he felt with no option. Even when he came across the Leviathan Serpent, he wasn't so desperate. At that time, he only needed to find a way to escape, but here, instead, he had to resist the beast's attacks.

It was just that there was no simple way. The creature he faced was just too powerful—even his best defense wasn't enough to stop it.

Besides, he was creeped out by the beast's behavior. What was it that made him interesting enough for this monster to play with rather than kill him?

<I feel like a mouse in front of a cat.>

[Because this is what basically you are, right now...]

<Oh, this makes me feel better.>

[I'm not saying this to mock you in a life and death situation. I'm telling you this because if that thing eats you, or makes your head explode, I will die with you. Remember? BIOLOGICAL supercomputer system, I'm alive.]

<Then give me a hand!>

Below them, Erik saw his Chimaeric Demons still battling the blackguards. Each death fed more experience into him, but it wasn't enough—not nearly enough to close the vast gulf between him and the creature he faced.

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

The Cerulean bird's power was simply on another level, belonging to a world Erik had only glimpsed in his encounter with the Leviathan Serpent.

The bird then started getting closer again.

<SHIT! WHAT DO WE DO?!>

[PUMP UP ABSOLUTE CASTLE TO THE MAXIMUM!]

The bird attacked again, this time with a series of quick jabs from its beak.

"AAAH!"

Each strike hit with the force of a freight train, the shockwaves alone pulverizing anything nearby into dust.

Though the beast was playing with him, each blow threatened to tear Erik apart. His barriers shuddered and crackled like glass about to shatter, while his armor splintered and reformed.

Erik felt like a rabbit cornered by a hawk—his every desperate dodge and evasion only delaying the inevitable strike. His powers, which had served him so well against lesser threats, now seemed as useless as a paper shield in a hurricane. Each second that passed drove home just how completely outmatched he was, his usual confidence replaced by raw, primal fear.

Yet the beast was still playing with him and stopped a little to observe Erik's reaction.

<Damn, this is humiliating!>

Taking advantage of the brief reprieve, Erik looked at the battlefield below. The Chimaeric Demons went far in their slaughter of the blackguards, but even they died. However, each fallen enemy immediately rose as an undead, joining the growing army of the dead.

The undead forces had reached critical mass, their numbers enough that they could handle the blackguards without further input from the Chimaeric Demons.

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

[LEVEL UP.]

But even as the experience flowed into him from the carnage below, Erik knew it was meaningless against the Cerulean Bird. No amount of level-ups could bridge the astronomical gap between him and the beast.

That simple thought was enough for Erik to realize he could do nothing without the Chimaeric Demons.

They could try luring the bird away, distracting it with multiple targets, or inflicting minor wounds to annoy it. Even if their attacks were insignificant, having multiple allies harassing the creature from different directions would be more effective than facing this overwhelming force of nature alone. The Chimaeric Demons could divide their attention and potentially create openings that Erik could exploit, and that was what Erik wanted to do.

<I need your help! Now!>

Despite his pride, Erik had no choice but to ask for help. He hated having to do it, but the truth was clear—without their help, he would die, and with his death, everything would be lost. Erik also worried about what the Cerulean Bird might do after killing him, and that prompted him to ask for help.

The Chimaeric Demons sensed Erik's fear through their mental link. They looked up at the sky, where the huge Cerulean bird made their master look tiny in comparison.

The clones trembled as they realized just how bad the situation was. The bird's energy was so strong it seemed unnatural, and even the surrounding air looked twisted and wrong.

Without hesitation, they answered Erik's call for help. It was their purpose to protect him and fulfill his wishes—they would fight for him until their last breath.

Yet a troubling thought crossed the clones' minds: what could they possibly do against such a powerful creature?

They all knew they lacked enough mana to harm the beast. Their attacks would be weaker than mosquito bites.

Yet even a mosquito bite was better than nothing. The Cerulean Bird seemed more interested in toying with Erik than killing him. Like an irritated cat, it might abandon its plaything if annoyed and disrupted enough.

Another wing sweep from the massive bird sent Erik violently tumbling through the air, his body spinning uncontrollably at high speed. The attack came so fast that his reflexes failed him—he couldn't even make his protective barriers in time.

The attack tore through the few defenses Erik put up and sent waves of pain through his body. Blood filled his mouth, and he realized with growing dread that he was mere centimeters away from death.

[HEAL YOURSELF!]

<Fuck!> Erik pumped mana frantically through his body, directing the energy to close his wounds. His whole body glowed as he channeled all that mana.

The long gash across his chest knitted itself together at astonishing speed, muscle and skin regenerated layer by layer until his skin was unblemished.

[IT'S GOING TO ATTACK AGAIN!]

The beast created a sphere of compressed air in front of Erik, similar to what he'd seen it use against the wyvern. The pressure began to mount.

"FUCK! DO SOMETHING!" Erik said to the Chimaeric Demons, who immediately left everything they were doing and channeled mana as best as they could.

The blackguards found themselves with a little bit of respite, but the undead were still there, and fighting against things that didn't die easily wasn't exactly a walk in the park.

A barrage of starlight fireballs suddenly streaked through the sky like a shower of shooting stars.

The Chimaeric Demons activated their brain crystal powers, unleashing hundreds of blazing white and blue projectiles toward the massive bird.

Each one crackled with energy and left trails of light as they streaked through the air.

The clones couldn't allow themselves to go easy on the creature, and despite needing the mana to fight against the blackguards, they still channeled all the mana they had into the brain crystal power in order to maximize the damage they would do to the Cerulean Bird. That if it was enough to damage it to begin with.

The attacks connected with devastating impact, creating a spectacular display of lights. Hundreds of fireballs detonated against the bird's body, each explosion releasing intense heat waves that turned the winter sky into a summer one.

The explosions spread all over the gigantic bird's body one after another, lighting up the sky like fireworks. As the attacks kept coming, the bright flashes made it easy to see the bird's massive shape against the sky.

Yet, to everyone's dismay, the Cerulean bird didn't even flinch. The fireballs were powerful enough to incinerate humans and most thaids on Mannard, but they still dissipated against its feathers.

However, Erik realized the beast's eyes narrowed slightly, and the surrounding winds intensified.

"OH SHIT!"

The massive bird showed signs of irritation. It wrapped itself in a spinning shield of wind, trying to brush off the attacks like they were nothing more than annoying bugs. That wind alone was enough to shatter Erik's armor completely again, and for that reason, Erik was forced to push more mana into it while also creating a barrier with the barrier masters' powers and with Nathaniel's one.

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At the same time, he realized that while the attack had been no more than an annoyance for the creature, it still worked.

"DO IT AGAIN!"

The Chimaeric Demons obeyed. Fire filled the air once again. The attacks converged from multiple angles, forcing the giant bird to take notice.

The clones' army grew larger, as more and more Chimaeric Demons joined the fray, leaving the blackguards below a lot of free space and time. Some of them even decided to leave the battle, but of course, that would happen only if they were fast and smart enough to get past the undead.

The combined attacks weren't strong enough to harm the giant bird, but they created bright explosions across the sky that made its immense body clearly visible.

Some clones even had the idea of partially shapeshifting into the Luminous Leviathan so that they could use its power to blind the beasts. The clones realized it wasn't the strength of the attack that annoyed the beast, but rather the blinding lights they created.

What was best to create blinding lights than a power made for that exact purpose?

The demons kept attacking without stopping. They fired countless beams of energy into the sky, forcing the Cerulean bird to keep its wind shield up and blinding it so many times it started to get enraged.

The bird turned to Erik. Somehow, it knew Erik was there and that the pesky creatures below obeyed him.

Its massive head tilted to the side as if considering a particularly interesting puzzle, but its eyes were closed.

Below, more blackguards fell to his forces, and Erik felt the familiar surge of experience points flowing into his body.

The bird then flew toward him. Its shadow blocking the sun below and engulfing Erik completely.

"What the fuck is it doing now?"

Chapter 1208: Blue demon (4)

No one knew what the creature was going to do, but everyone was waiting with bated breath.

The Cerulean Bird towered over Erik, channeling more and more mana. At that point, that the creature was targeting Erik was the last of the problems, because it looked like it had just decided to kill everything, at least in theory.

[ERIK! YOU HAVE TO STOP IT! IT'S RAISING MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF MANA!]

The Biological Supercomputer System had never shown such alarm before, and that alone was enough to make his blood run cold.

<HOW THE FUCK DO I STOP IT?!>

[THEN GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!]

But both Erik and the biological supercomputer knew the Cerulean Bird would chase Erik, so there was no point in fleeing. Erik and the biological supercomputer weren't the only ones noticing the abnormal amount of mana being released. The Chimaeric Demons did too.

For them, their master's safety was the absolute priority, hard-wired into their very bodies. They had to do something before the beast did something irreparable.

[Allied Chimaeric demon killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Human enemy killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Allied Chimaeric demon killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

They had already tried using their brain crystal powers against the creature, but these proved ineffective.

Their attacks bounced harmlessly off the creature. Even their most mana-charged blows, which could tear apart everything else, felt like mere pinpricks against the Cerulean Bird's feathers.

This forced them to resort to more direct methods. There was one thing the clones hadn't tried yet. Something that would most likely result in their deaths. Physical attacks. Maybe they would not be strong enough to deal with the creature, but thousands of attacks were bound to have some kind of effect.

Erik's Chimaeric Demons shapeshifted. Their shapes changing rapidly. Bodies expanding while their bones reconfigured and dark scales emerged from their skin, turning them into powerful battle creatures.

Each clone took on the form of the black wyvern they had seen in Erik's memories-the same creature the Cerulean bird had slain with ease.

Where once stood humanoid figures, now towered massive lizard-like bodies, large wings, long tails, and black scales.

Erik watched the clones transform, hoping their plan would succeed. However, he had his doubts. Any action they took would likely only enrage the creature further, possibly hastening its mana, channeling, and stepping up whatever it planned to do.

[Allied Chimaeric demon killed: mana-absorbing process starting.] [Human enemy killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Allied Chimaeric demon killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Human enemy killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

The sky darkened as thousands of black wings unfurled. At that point, most of the clones abandoned their battles with the remaining blackguards, prioritizing their master's safety over all else.

They rose, massive wings moving the wind and casting shadows across the battlefield below. Even the Cerulean bird paused, its head turning to see this unexpected development. Thanks to the Instability brain crystal power, Erik felt a flicker of something new from the creature- not fear, exactly, but uncertainty.

While the bird had easily killed a single wyvern, facing thousands was outside its experience. The Cerulean Bird didn't have an ability that allowed it to gauge the enemy strength like Erik did, so, for it, those were all real wyverns.

Yet it was still confident that, despite the army of wyverns, it could come out of the situation relatively fine. However, it wasn't simply playing anymore at that point. Seeing those many wyverns was bound to make the creature go on edge.

The clones surrounded the Cerulean bird, creating a blanket that covered the sky. Then they dove toward the monster, who turned to look at the newcomers.

Even the strongest creature would think twice when surrounded by thousands of enemies of similar power to his.

That was what the creature did, because the first thing it did was to release hundreds of wind blades toward the wyverns.

[Allied chimaeric demon killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Human enemy killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Allied chimaeric demon killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Human enemy killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Allied chimaeric demon killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

[Human enemy killed: mana-absorbing process starting.]

The Cerulean Bird met their charge with its wings spread wide, each one larger than the sails of a warship. Having feasted on wyverns before, it remained unintimidated by the swarm of creatures.

The air pressure from a single flap of those enormous wings sent ripples through the clouds above. Even in their massive form, the Chimaeric Demons look small in comparison.

The clones then arrived at striking range, and the Cerulean Bird acted once more. The closest wave vanished under the barrage of hundreds of wind blades.

For the clones, there was nothing to do. Despite using all their powers, even healing ones, their bodies were torn apart by the creature's blades.

Blood rained, and huge carcasses fell to the ground, bisected, decapitated, or simply because their wings got cut in halves.

Not all the clones died, but certainly many got out of the fight.

<Shit! Do you think they have some hope?>

[Not at all,] the biological supercomputer said.

Unfortunately, experience flowed into Erik as each clone died.

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[LEVEL UP.]

While the experience points were a fine addition, he didn't like the source at all. Each death notification represented one of his clones-a part of himself-being killed violently. The system treated these deaths as mere statistical gains, but for Erik, it was like experiencing his kids being killed in front of him.

The deaths of his Chimaeric Demons weren't just personal, but also tactical losses. The blackguards were still there fighting, and the more of the clones died, the more undead

ceased to move.

Despite them trying, the Chimaeric Demons were having trouble reaching the Cerulean Bird. Some of them did and were currently using their talons and maws to injure the creature. The problem was that most of the clones that tried to get close died. Those who couldn't and who were still alive launched massive Starlight Fireballs.

Countless fireballs streaked across the sky in a deadly barrage. The raw heat transformed the Cerulean Bird's defensive winds into searing currents. All this concentrated power made the air shimmer and warp around the creature.

The temperature skyrocketed, turning the battlefield into a scorching inferno. [ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[LEVEL UP.]

The Cerulean bird's feathers remained unscorched, but its movements became more hurried, less precise. It was feeling the heat, and the wyverns around it trying to maul him didn't help

either.

Erik stood frozen, watching the battle in horror. His fists were tightly clenched as he saw his clones being killed one after another. The sight of such massive destruction left him unable to move or act; he could only stare at the fight happening in the sky.

[DO SOMETHING, YOU IDIOT!]

Then, as if waking up from a dream, Erik channeled all his mana into a single attack, one of fire, hoping it would synergize with the clones attacks.

Though he knew the creature's air currents would dissipate much of the attack's power,

channeling all of Erik's mana meant the blast would still wound the beast. Maybe not grievously, but something was still better than nothing.

The ball of fire surged forward like a crimson meteor, its flames reaching the battlefield below as it grew larger with each passing moment.

Below, the blackguards felt the heat. It was scorching, as if the sun had got a few meters from

the planet. It was scary.

Some of them decided the best thing to do would be to leave the battlefield, but it wasn't easy, considering the undead. However, there were fewer now, so it was possible. The Cerulean Bird shrieked in rage. It spun in place, generating a tornado that shredded hundreds of Chimaeric Demons.

Then Erik's fireball arrived. It collided with the Cerulean Bird's body like a meteor striking Earth. Given the creature's size, which made humans appear as mere specks in comparison,

the analogy was fitting. The impact released a blinding flash of orange light and a thunderous explosion.

The bird unleashed another piercing screech.

Through Instability, Erik felt both the beast's agony and the excruciating pain of his Chimaeric Demons as they were caught in the blast.

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[ALLIED CHIMAERIC DEMON KILLED: MANA ABSORBING PROCESS STARTING.]

[LEVEL UP.]

The attack must have finally overwhelmed the Cerulean Bird's resolve. With several of its azure feathers charred and smoking, the creature beat its enormous wings, creating powerful gusts of wind that scattered the remaining wyverns, and retreated into the distant clouds.

Chapter 1209: The Fall of the Law Gate

No one knew what triggered the Cerulean Bird to turn on its heel and go away, yet it did. Perhaps it was due to the overwhelming number of Chimaeric Demons, or possibly Erik's fierce attack.

There was no way to be certain. However, everyone knew one thing: many Blackguards remained to be killed, captured, and interrogated.

Erik sighed.

"Well, that was fun," he said with sarcasm. "There is nothing better than a morning dance with a monster hell-bent on devouring your head to really get the blood pumping."

The man looked down at the scene below. The battle continued to rage across the fortress- like city, with thousands of fighters clashing.

Despite their situation, the blackguards were still alive and kicking and made their way close to the walls to escape from the city.

Many clones died, and with them, the control of many of the undead, which allowed the blackguards to push enough to almost get out of the city. Erik looked at the scene.

"There is something weird with their numbers..."

Erik didn't miss the detail.

[Of course there are; a lot of blackguards got out of the city.]

There were significantly fewer blackguards around, but the number of bodies didn't match.

<Damn. If we don't get them before they get too far in the forest, searching for them will be a nightmare.>

The blackguards didn't have many places to go, and with the last plane destroyed, reaching Mur was going to be impossible.

Not that any sane person would want to go there.

The only thing they could do was try to leave Hin, and to do that, they would have to travel toward the east.

That meant that facing humans, as scary and powerful as they were, was still better than facing the Thaidis-especially those on Mur.

This meant they were going to flee toward Sleb Harbor, and from there, maybe, they would try to reach the other countries on the Mannard Continent.

Of course, Erik wasn't going to let that happen.

[You just survived an encounter with the most dangerous creature on the Mannard continent, and you still think about the blackguards?]

<What can I say? I'm a dumb asshole...>

The biological supercomputer mentally laughed.

<To all forces,> Erik said. <Some of the blackguards got out of the Law Gate. I want you to find and kill them before they get too deep into the forest.>

The Chimaeric Demons that were still in fighting condition split into two groups. The larger contingent returned to the battlefield and rejoined the fight against the blackguards trapped within the city walls. The clones' reactions were methodical and brutal, most likely fueled by the rage, grief, and sorrow they felt for their kin being killed by the Cerulean bird. They left no room for mercy or escape to those still inside the city.

Meanwhile, a smaller group of clones broke away from the main force and spread out into the surrounding forest, searching for any trace of the blackguards that got out of the city during the earlier chaos.

With that done, Erik flew down. He needed to rest, and urgently, at least until the Chimaeric Demons killed enough blackguards to refill his mana.

He sat on a rock, his breathing heavy as he watched the situation unfold.

<I'm starting to get sick of all those battles,> Erik said. <Every time I get out of one, I immediately go to another one...>

[Well, that has been your choice all along, right? It's not like you have someone else to blame,] the biological supercomputer said.

<I know that... It's just that we can't leave the blackguards alive even if we want to. What do you think will happen if they are given the chance to get into Mannard again? If they controlled

everything from the shadows until now, as soon as they have another breakthrough with their research, they will not stop at controlling it from the shadows anymore.>

[Maybe it's not so bad...]

<What did you just say?> Erik couldn't believe the words that just came out of the biological supercomputer's digital mouth.

[If what Bill said is true, and that people with powers were present on earth since ancient times, if it is true that one of them saw a future where we would have been invaded by something, then having a world under control isn't going to be terrible.]

<Did you believe his bullshit?>

[I don't believe his bullshit. It's just that I find it weird that an organization, and a group of people so big, decided to do what they did for no reason at all. Greed, yes, it can be a great motivator, but if lust for power was all there was in this matter, then the blackguards wouldn't have kept progressing their researches.]

Erik paused, unable to utter a word. That, until rage surged through him.

<That is simply because they want to be so strong that no one can contest their powers.>

[I wouldn't be so sure about that... Whatever the blackguards did to their soldiers is not something that will end with them. Changes to brain crystals will affect their children, too. It is likely that their kids will have more than one brain crystal power.]

Erik was at a loss for words. Before he could formulate a reply, Amber, Mira, June, and Emily emerged from the eastern side of the battlefield, approaching him with a dozen Chimaeric Demons as their escort.

"Erik!" Amber rushed to his side. "Are you alright? That was quite the fight up there."

"You look exhausted," Mira said with furrowed brows.

"A fight? That was like a toddler trying to arm wrestle a gorilla..." He sighed again.

"We saw it."

There was silence, because everyone understood that the Cerulean Bird represented the Thaid's on Mur. If that creature was just a fraction of what they would face there, their chances of survival on that continent were slim at best.

Erik waved off their concerns with a tired smile. The power he got from the barrier masters had been enough to avoid fatal injuries, and whenever he got hurt, he simply healed himself,

so there wasn't much to say.

It was his mana that was non-existent.

"I'll be fine. I just need to catch my breath and wait for the clones to do their job. Fighting that bird took more out of me than I expected, but as soon as they get enough blackguards, I will level up and will be ready to fight again."

He paused. "Actually, it took me less time than I expected... but it still was scary."

Erik thought he was going to die, honestly.

"We should get you somewhere safer," June said. "You're too exposed here."

"She's right," Emily said. "The battle isn't over yet, and you're in no condition to fight if more enemies show up."

Erik shook his head. "No, I need to stay here. Can't let those bastards escape. Besides," he pointed at the Chimaeric Demons surrounding them, "I'd say I'm well protected."

Amber crossed her arms, but she knew better than to argue. "At least let us stay with you, then. We can keep watch while you recover."

"Fine by me," Erik said, closing his eyes for a moment. "Just expect little conversation. I have a lot to think about."

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The battle at the Law Gate continued for many hours. After all, there were at least 80 thousand blackguards there, spread across the fortified walls and defensive positions. The fighting intensified during midday, with explosions and magical attacks lighting up the sky, while the clash of weapons and screams of the dying rang all the time. The Chimaeric Demons eliminated them without showing a hint of mercy, but it wasn't as easy as they assumed, especially not with far fewer undead than they began the assault with. The undead still did most of the work, but the Blackpricks learned the Chimaeric Demons were behind them, so they started targeting them, which was exactly what Erik wanted not to

happen.

The undead could be created easily, given the never-ending amount of Thaidis in the wilderness, but the clones took time to be made. That meant that a lot of Erik's troops died, but not so much as to prevent Erik from reaching Mur.

One by one, the blackguards got killed. Those who tried to surrender were shown no mercy- the demons followed Erik's orders, and, albeit not honorably, there was no way he was going

to let these guys live.

Of course, a select few blackguards-no more than twenty in total-were temporarily kept alive. These prisoners were brought to a makeshift interrogation area where Erik was going to read their minds one by one, extracting the information about their operations, hideouts, and

plans on Mur.

However, Erik knew that once he got what he needed from each prisoner, they were going to be executed like the others.

The few who tried to flee and were still inside the city were quickly hunted down and dispatched, eaten by the undead, or by the thaids inevitably lured to the Law Gate by the smell of blood and the mana ripples that spread from there.

The Law Gate, which had been a stronghold of the blackguards, was now under Erik's complete control. The only movement came from the Chimaeric Demons and their undead.

"It's done," Erik said. "The Law Gate is ours."

Chapter 1210: Fragments of Truth (1)

Erik made his way to the makeshift interrogation area, a hastily cleared section of a building inside the Law Gate's eastern area. It wasn't much, but it still was something more than

nothing.

Hundreds of Chimaeric Demons stood guard over twenty prisoners, all of them with high enough rank, judging by their uniforms. The captives sat bound in a line against the wall, their faces showing mostly fear, but some defiance.

When Erik first entered the scene, no one was scared of him. Every single time he captured a blackguard for interrogation, they never showed a hint of fear. They showed only insolence, arrogance, and pride.

Yet with all Erik did in the past year, now his name, his face, turned into the very source of fear that the blackguards lacked for years.

Erik Romano had shown these people exactly what he was capable of through his actions, not words. He didn't need to make threats or put on a show of strength. Instead, he proved his power by following through on what he said he would do.

His actions changed the way they saw him. They realized that true power comes from getting things done, not from trying to look intimidating. Yet he proved to them what fear really was.

Without their masks, the blackguards were powerful but regular people-just men and women who had made choices and whose position turned them into monsters.

Their bare faces showed they were still human, displaying fear, worry, and other emotions like anyone else.

Erik reminded them they were just humans.

"Report," Erik said as he strode into the room. The air inside smelled of copper and smoke-remnants of the battle that had raged hours ago.

A Chimaeric Demon stepped forward. "Master, we started the interrogations, but the prisoners kept silent. Your presence might persuade them to reconsider."

Erik ran his fingers through his hair, still damp with sweat from the earlier fight. Around him, his clones were busy sorting through the captured documents and equipment. "What ranks are we dealing with?"

"Mostly mid-level commanders," the clone said, pointing to a stack of uniforms piled in the corner. "We captured them before they could execute their superiors' suicide protocols. Among them are two logistics officers we caught trying to destroy some documents. We salvaged what we could from the papers they burned."

Erik nodded. "Did they try to resist?"

"Of course they did, Master. No one lets others willingly imprison them."

"No, I mean, after you got them."

"Ah. Yes. Some tried using their brain crystal powers," the clone said. "We subdued them quickly, and after we showed them it would have been futile to try to escape, they stopped." A second Chimaeric Demon stepped forward. "Master, these guys might know about Mur's situation. We might be able to have a general idea of their plans, or at least where to find their last division commander if we read their minds."

Erik paused. "Yeah, this is exactly the reason I am here. I'll start the interrogations as soon as they are ready. Prepare a room. I don't want to waste more time than we already did."

"Yes, Master."

The Chimaeric Demons nodded.

"And bring me their personal effects-insignias, documents, anything that might show their level of access to sensitive information," Erik said. "I want to know exactly what we're dealing with before I start probing their minds."

The Chimaeric Demons didn't waste time and started doing their job.

"Master, should we separate them for individual interrogations, or would you prefer to question them as a group?"

Erik quickly thought about it. "Individual sessions," he said. "This way, we can keep control of the situation and get the information we need. Get the highest-ranking officer ready."

After giving his orders, Erik found himself alone. He walked to a dirty window and watched the sun going down.

They were running out of time, but he knew he couldn't hurry. Then someone knocked on the door. "The first prisoner is ready, Master."

Erik turned away from the window. "Good. Let's begin."

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Erik spent hours interrogating the prisoners one by one. He asked seemingly innocent questions while using his Instability brain crystal power to read their thoughts.

The problem was that while these blackguards had once been well-informed about operations in Mur, recent months had seen them cut off from such intelligence.

Apparently, it was Bill's idea-the second division commander. The blackguards knew Erik would attack the Law Gate, and if they failed to protect it, he would inevitably interrogate

someone.

The less they knew, the better it would be for the organization.

"Tell me about your communication with the first division," Erik said to one of the logistics officers, watching the man's thoughts flicker in response.

The officer's mind wasn't hard to crack, especially because of how scared he was, and that meant he had trouble controlling his thoughts. Not that he knew Erik could read his mind. Before the two divisions cut contact with each other, supply routes changed, communication channels got severed, and any news about Mur became more vague.

Yet pieces slipped through. In the months before communications were cut, the blackguards processed many reports about increased activity in the Lorogia region. The first division had concentrated their forces there, apparently at least, searching for something. The problem was that they didn't know what.

Erik pieced together these fragments, building a picture of the blackguards' activities on Mur. The first division's search seemed important to their plans, enough to risk concentrating forces in one of the most dangerous regions of that hostile continent.

Erik had never visited Mur, even less in the Lorogia region, and neither had Becker and his soldiers. Only Erik's father, Lucius, had been there. Still, from reading the blackguards' documents, Erik understood just how dangerous the area was.

<Do you think they are searching for the procedure used to make you?>

[Most likely, but I can't tell if they are in the right place. I was sleeping when your father took me from there, so I don't know where he found me.]

<I just hope Dad destroyed everything.>

[Did he say something about it?]

<No. The only thing we talked about was his journey, how he survived, and what he found.> [This means that, for all we know, the place where I was made could still be standing.] Lucius said that he found the biological supercomputer in the Lorogia Region. The problem was that he also said he went to the place after having learned about it from the blackguards. That meant they knew where the Biological Supercomputer was.

[If they are still searching, it means they found nothing where I was kept.]

<Maybe you were made there, but the equipment there was far too destroyed to be useful, or maybe Dad really destroyed it.>

[I wouldn't expect less. Your father already understood the blackguards went on Mur to find that specific lab, meaning he would have been a fool if he didn't destroy the place.]

<So they must be searching for a lab having at least partial information about the crafting procedure.>

[Yeah.]

Then Erik paused. There was something he couldn't understand about all of this. <If the blackguards are trying to make more of you, why are you helping me?>

The system paused for a little. [There are two reasons. The first is that I'm not stupid. More biological supercomputers, especially in the hands of the blackguards, would just bring the world's destruction, and as much as I'm here, I'm bound to live here too.]

<Yeah... But you also said I will turn into a biological supercomputer once I die.>

[And that is also the second reason. Whoever made me made sure that I wouldn't be the only one around. Even if I do nothing, more of us will be born, some day.]

<Isn't it a little contradictory? You said that more biological supercomputers would bring the world to ruins.>

[That's because whatever they find won't be the complete research. Whatever they make won't be like me. This is not the case when you turn. You will have all your memories. You will be able to choose a host and even to avoid getting one. You might even be able to get a thaid as a host, but I have no information about that. In theory, it should work.]

<If I will have my memories, then why didn't you?>

The biological supercomputer paused. [I'm not sure about this, really, but I can make an educated guess. In theory, I spent a lot of time sleeping. Centuries, this means I simply forgot everything. However, mine was a peculiar situation. I was the first of my kind, and I was kept in a lab until 4 years ago. Your case will be different because you will be free to roam around as

soon as you turn.]

<It makes sense.>

The situation was becoming more and more complicated. Erik turned to the prisoner, his face serious and being as threatening as possible.