

## **C Immortality 181**

### Chapter 181: Meeting In Dark Woodlands

Jacob looked at the Crock Snake with a hint of fear. If he hadn't felt the vibration of the branches, he might've been in a world of pain.

This crock snake was a very nasty Magic Beast proficient in camouflage with its innate ability Water Mirror Illusion of its Water Magic Core.

Although it was just a rare tier-5 magic beast, it was akin to a rare tier-8 beast without any magic core.

'At least I don't have to worry about food shortage, and this also solved my problem of finding a 1-Star Water Magic Core. A good first day starts indeed.' Jacob's lips curled up, and he cut open the crock snake's skull.

An azure membrane encased a small round object hidden within its brain matter, and when Jacob touched it, it burst like a bubble, and a gentle blue light fell on Jacob's eyes.

It was an azure color Water Magic Core just like the earth core he had found back in the goblin's stomach.

He stowed it away to save it from diffusion, then cut off the head and threw it down before he started gutting the snake's body. Blood flow all over the tree as the smell of the potent blood linger in the air.

Jacob then stowed away the fresh meat and left the snake's innards on the bloody trees for scavengers.

He knew this was just the start, food was the biggest problem for living like him, and magic beasts like crock snakes were all over the dark woodlands.

Furthermore, only sneaky beasts like crock snakes who know how to hide in plain sight could survive this place full of dark begins, and Jacob didn't want to be their food.

Although there was a 'Life Scanner Device' in the alliance market to detect such creatures, it was too expensive for Jacob, so he could only do without it.

If he had stayed in the freedom plains to accumulate wealth, it would take him decades, and it was too dangerous because any place rich with magic beasts and rare resources was under the control of four powers.

If someone wanted to hunt, they needed to give away 60% of their accumulation and be part of four powers.

Jacob could easily undermine the former rule, but he didn't want to appear in the freedom plains because he knew Nixon was searching for him.

Because soon after he got 'kidnapped,' the entire Easter City's Nightmare Knight Legion stirred and madly started to search for him as well as they destroyed any known or suspicious hideouts of the Killer Skull Society.

Not only that, but he even found himself trending on the local news again, which was the second time he appeared in trending.

Lastly, the Killer Skull Society didn't reply or make pass any statement in refutation of Nightmare Knight Legion slender, which was equal to admitting they really kidnapped the blanker.

But Jacob found it fishy since he had seen the history and the Killer Skull Society cared about their public image as the face of justice, so their silence was quite unusual.

That was why Jacob didn't want to stay in the freedom plains since they were monitoring devices of all of the four powers, and he didn't want to fall into someone else trap after making an escape.

So, coming here was his best choice, where four power or three hegemonies had no control.

Although unknown dangers haunt this place, Jacob knew as long as he treads carefully, he would be fine.

Lastly, Jacob wasn't without a plan. He knew a place out here which could shelter him and wasn't as petty as the four powers or three hegemonies, the Dark City of Rare Plains!

There was a dark city in freedom plains, but after some research, he discovered that the Dark City in the freedom plains was known as Freedom Plains Dark City, not the Rare Plains Dark City.

So, it was pretty evident that there was another Dark City somewhere in the vast rare plains, and the rumors about it were also all over the star network.

Like the common plains, Dark Cities were the most dangerous places in a region, and one just needed to search for them.

The Dark City of Freedom Plains was also in the most dangerous zone of the Rare Freedom Plains, but it was quite famous, and its location has long been publicized, so it lost its mystery.

But the Dark City outside the Rare Freedom Plains was still as mysterious as the zodiac plains, and Jacob wanted to search for it because he had been in a dark city and knew just how advanced that place was from the region they were located.

Although his goal was somewhat ethereal and suicidal, Jacob was quite confident in searching for it with all the clues he had.

After his rest, he didn't stop anymore and continued to head toward the north, where the rare wilderness plains were, but he was still far from reaching there.

Only 5% of Dark Woodlands fell in the territory of Rare Freedom Plains; one could only imagine the lands they covered on this side.

However, Jacob was soon stopped in his track when he heard a commotion a couple of meters ahead. His steps became almost silent as he slowly crept toward the fighting area.

He soon reached the gully's entrance and remained hidden within a tree crown.

A cloaked figure was holding a long double-edged sword clashing with a skeleton warrior with a spear. There were couples of bones scattered around the two.

Furthermore, the cloaked figure was clearly powerful, as it had already taken care of all those skeleton soldiers. The skeleton warrior had already lost half of its left skeleton, and only his right side remained.

But it was still fighting fiercely with its right side and didn't let the cloaked figure deliver the killing blow and protect its skull.

Alas, the cloaked figure seemed to be toying with it, and as if it had sensed something, its sword suddenly came alive, and the blade whistled through the air, and before the skeleton warrior spear could block its skull was blasted the very next moment.

The dead flame appeared and then diminished, marking the death of that fearsome skeleton warrior.

Jacob was naturally astonished by this person's swordsmanship, and he was very dangerous.

But Jacob's heart jumped when that cloak person suddenly performed a strange movement and vanished from his vision before he felt goosebumps from the side. Without hesitation, swords appeared in his hand, and he slashed them at a horizontal angle.

'clang...'

Eerily sound of metal clashing together rang in the vicinity.

Jacob looked at the cloaked figure who had somehow appeared right where he was observing the battle and was over twenty feet above the ground.

Their blades were locked together, trembling as both sides tried to push them to each other.

Jacob's eyes turned cold before he entered 2X acceleration, and he could now hold this sword with one hand, and his second sword was free.

With a light push, Jacob suddenly thrust his right-hand sword toward the cloaked head.

"Oh?" A man's voice rang with a hint of fear when he felt Jacob's power increase and the blade coming for his head.

The next moment, his strength also exploded, and using his sword, he twisted its blade and could barely block Jacob's deadly sword thrust a few inches away from its cloak.

He didn't underestimate Jacob anymore and again twisted his feet in strange angles before he vanished from Jacob's sight again!

"Forgive me. I take you for a sneaky animal." The man's jeering voice rang from the ground again.

Jacob still felt lingering sourness from his hands. This man was clearly as strong as him and did not forget about his skills, especially that strange movement. He would've thought the man was using teleportation if he hadn't had good reflexes.

Jacob didn't want to fight to the death with such a person, and it was indeed his fault that he was sneaking around the man when he was in a deadly battle against a dark being.

If it were him, he would do the same or even worse.

"It was indeed unbecoming of me. Farwell." Jacob didn't want to linger anymore, in case this guy had companions like him.

"Wait!" The man quickly uttered as if he wanted to say something.

But Jacob didn't want to stay even more now, so he took the opposite direction of the gully and, without paying more attention, started leaping from tree to tree.

"What are you running for, I said wait!" The man suddenly started to follow Jacob as he yelled at him.

Jacob coldly said, "Don't follow me, or I'll make sure you never walk again." Thereby, his speed suddenly exploded.

The cloaked figure was astonished as it really stopped following Jacob when he saw the increase in his speed.

He mumbled with a hint of intrigue, "A strong newcomer has appeared in the woodlands. I'll have to report it to the leader!"

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 182: Gray Land Trees

Somewhere in the Dark Woodland,

Inside a concealed manmade underground cave, a group of nine wearing fighting gears was sitting around a round stone table.

Eight of them were demi-humans belonging to different species.

The Demi-Humans were famous for their elvish and animal features. Nevertheless, they were still not a match for the elves in looks. They were not like Orcs with humanoid torsos and beast heads, albeit they were still related.

Lastly, there was a tall, burly, green scale long lizard face creature with a pair of small horns on his forehead and a pointed horn over his nose. It was a Kobold.

Kobolds were also small in numbers and were one of the few races that could rival the top species of rare freedom plains and one of the overlords of Iron Sierras.

The Kobold coldly looked toward the demi-human with cheetah skin and asked in his raspy voice, "Are you sure this person you encountered didn't belong to any hunting teams or four powers hunting bases?"

The cheetah skin man coolly replied, "Yes, he wasn't wearing any emblem, nor he seemed to know about where he was going. If my guess is right, then like all the newcomers, he was clueless about the Dark Ruins and wants to leave the Dark Woodlands."

The Kobold thought for a moment before speaking, "Even if your institution is right and this person was indeed a newcomer on this side, he's already gone, so it's meaningless now."

"Besides, if he can Overspeed you in reflexes, I don't think he'll easily join us misfits. He might even be some hidden talent sent here for training from one of four powers or, even worse, someone from the three hegemonies."

"Leader has a point. There are only three kinds of people who tread alone in these parts of dark woodlands, Misfits like us who don't want to get controlled by those manipulated organizations."

"Then those army men who were forcibly sent here to collect resources and buy back their citizenship."

"Then there are those who come here on their own accord for either adventure or training, and both types of persons are simply arrogant madmen who had too much confidence in themselves and were spoiled by their backing." A woman with delicate features and cat ears snorted disdainfully.

Everyone couldn't help but nod their heads.

The cheetah skin man sighed ruefully, "I know this, but that man didn't rub me as someone who could be controlled or arrogant in the least. I still couldn't understand how he drew his swords. It was like they appeared out of thin air."

"Lastly, he didn't want to fight me and quickly left despite getting the upper hand. Since he was loitering in area-232 without any crewmate, I thought he was a newcomer and wanted to report to the leader."

"Inviting him in the crew was another matter, but if he's a newcomer, he'll soon stumble on the dark ruins and meet his death. What a pity."

"Heh, if he's really a newcomer and a misfit at that, then if he managed to survive, he'll surely make a name for himself in the dark woodlands. We'll think about inviting him to the crew then."

"It's not easy to leave the dark woodlands, my friend, and everyone learned it the hard way. We can't break the tradition, right?" An old man with a pointy nose chuckled.

The Kobold's eyes shimmered darkly before he nodded, "Let's not distract ourselves anymore. We have a foray into worrying about. I received a message from the Killer Skull Society's Base!"

Everyone's face turned somewhat pale when he heard this, but a tingle of madness flashed past their beastly eyes!

Jacob had no idea that a famous crew of misfits in the Dark Woodland had a small discussion about him. Even if he knew he wouldn't care about it except for whatever these Dark Ruins were.

He was moving further and further away from the Dark Pass.

Especially after his vague encounter with the cheetah skin man, he wanted to leave the Dark Woodlands as soon as possible before he met a group from one of the four powers or some vagabonds.

But how could it be so easy to leave the Dark Woodlands?

A week later, Jacob entered an area filled with creepy gray bark trees that looked wilted entirely, but the ground beneath them was covered with gray weeds.

First, Jacob was vigilant as he tried cutting the ground and those weeds, even trees, but they were completely normal except for their crimson phloem.

Furthermore, there wasn't any information about this area, and the map he had was the cheapest one he could find and only revealed the general directions because the fully detailed map of Dark Woodlands cost 10 ZC, which was simply too ridiculous for a price tag.

Moreover, there weren't any maps of wild nations or the rare plains, the freedom plain was simple at the edge of the vast rare plains, and no one had ever managed to gauge the area of the wild nation, let alone the entire rare plains.

So, Jacob was on his own, and spending 10 ZC on a single area map was simply not worth it.

Since this area was on its way toward the exit of the dark woodlands, Jacob knew he had to swallow this bittersweet pill. But for some reason, he felt strange from the woods ahead, like he would regret it if he entered.

Gritting his teeth, he summoned Immortika, wasting his chance to summon the book for 24 hours.

After his encounter with the golden elf, he knew just how precious Immortika's ability to detect high-level species around it was, and he started to cherish this chance more and more.

"What are the strongest species around me?" Jacob asked darkly.

"Hahahaha... I don't know if you're plain stupid or simply too daring. Nevertheless, I like it out here!" Immortika manically wrote while ignoring the actual question.

Jacob squinted his eyes, "It seems you have something to say to me."

"Being too smart can be a cursed sometimes; that's why ignorance is bliss." Immortika wrote, "All I have to say is you're the latter in this situation but not far away from being former."

"I don't have time to play riddles with you nor the forbearing. So just say what you have to say or answer the damn question!" Jacob coldly uttered in exasperation.

Sometimes, he wonders if being selected by this book was the real curse or talking with Immortika.

"Hahaha... did I say something just now? Too bad, I already forget. As to answer your question, there is nothing besides some Anthropophagy Trees. The Gray Land Trees rank between Tier-1 Rare to all the way up to Tier-2 Extraordinary.

"These trees grew upside down. Simply put, the wilted branches you're seeing are actually their routes, while the tree core is hidden deep underground. Without destroying that tree core, getting rid of this Gray Land Tree is impossible.

"As for those long gray weeds on the ground, they're their sensory receptors. All you need to know is as long as you didn't bleed on that grass or didn't try to dig to a certain depth, you'll be fine. Those trees didn't have intelligence and only reacted on instincts.

"Or trust me, if a Gray Land Tree had intelligence, you'd be long dead after you try cutting those trees and grass, even their soil, hahahaha..."

Jacob's heart skipped a beat when he read this as he looked at the gray forest with fear.

'Ignorance is really bliss.' He smiled bitterly and finally understood why Immortika wrote that strange phrase.

He also took a mental note not to try to cut anything if he had no idea about what it was, even harmless-looking trees.

"So, if the blood didn't spill on that grass, I can cross this forest?" He questioned, just to be sure.

"That's pretty much it. But even if someone else bleeds while you're deep within the gray land tree forest, it will be the end of you because once the gray land tree forest awakens, it will kill anything which is not a gray land tree within! Hahahaha, that would be incredible to watch."

Jacob couldn't help but reevaluate the danger of that seemingly harmless dry forest.

Still, if he wanted to move forward, he needed to cross this place, and he had no idea if taking a detour would be the right choice since he didn't know just how far these trees were spread.

Nevertheless, he still decided to check. He preferred wasting some days searching for a new route than risking his life to cross that dreadful forest. He wouldn't try to cross it unless he had no choice.

Moreover, that place might teem with skeletons since they don't bleed, and battling with them will only worsen things.

Done deciding, Jacob headed in the east direction, hoping to find the end of this gray land tree forest.

Ten-day passed, and Jacob's expressions were as grim as they could get because that damn gray forest was simply endless no matter how far he traveled!

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 183: Impatient Or Not...

Ten days passed since Jacob started searching for another route around the Gray Land Tree Forest, but this damn gray forest was endless no matter how far he traveled!

With a grim look on his face, he looked at the grayness in front of him. He had wasted ten whole days and much less founding the end of this forest. He didn't even encounter an undead, much less a living being.

'Here goes nothing!' Jacob took a deep break and directly jumped on the roots of the Gray Land Tree.

In these ten days, he had already noticed that there wasn't a single life form out here, as if everyone was avoiding this place, which was nothing but good news.

Because as long as blood won't touch that gray weeds, he didn't have to worry about being burry in that forest.

So, he started his journey in the gray land forest while being fully alert, and Jacob didn't want to even a twitch escape his ears.

The moment he sensed something, he would summon Immortika!

As he moved deeper and carefully moved from tree to tree, he couldn't help but notice the roots were growing larger and larger, and so did the weeds in the ground. He assumed it was the sign of higher tier Gray Land Trees.

The forest was filled with gloomy silence, and the weeds made it harder to see anything on the ground. It was simply a heaven for sneaky predators!

Jacob's breathing was also controlled while his steps were silent. This was the benefit of practicing meditation and learning the control of his fluid acceleration.

A whole week passed without any incident, and right now, Jacob was resting amid 50-meter gray land tree roots, and the weed below was 3 meters long. The darkness of night gave this place even spooky vibes.

Jacob didn't sleep and only rested with his eyes closed while his senses were focused entirely.

The next day, Jacob continued his journey and wanted to leave this forest as soon as possible. However, he didn't like the feeling of having his life at the mercy of someone else.

But the silence of the Gray Land Tree Forest was proof that other beings knew the risks of messing in this place, so it was a kind of relief.

However, after two weeks, while carefully treading on the web of long gray roots, Jacob found the roots were still growing, and the weeds were not any different, which made him even more restless, and not to talk, he was mentally exhausted.

He wasn't a machine, and every living being needed sleep to function normally and restore mental fatigue.

Jacob understood that if someone knew about the terror of this forest, just being in this forest was torture. Anyone with a sane mind wanted to leave this forest as soon as possible, but that was where true despair lay as well.

One would start to doubt their direction senses after constantly seeing the same kind of surroundings, and those routes were almost connected, making a web of a maze.

It was harder to tell north from south in this kind of setup, especially when you're focusing on being vigilant all the time.

If Jacob wasn't keeping track of the sunset and sunrise, he might really have been lost long ago.

On his twentieth day, Jacob finally couldn't take it anymore and decided to sleep since nothing was around besides this gloomy grayness. But he still didn't let his guard down.

However, he was too tired, and the moment he tried to sleep, he fell into deep darkness and completely lost track of his surroundings.

"Little Jack, son, you're too impatient." A benevolent voice chided the Young Jacob, who was walking hurriedly toward a colossal building wearing clean white clothes.

"Old Man, it's you who's slow!" Young Jacob retorted, but he still slowed down to match the step of an old man in priest robes walking with the spot of a cane with a benevolent smile on his wrinkled lips.

"That's not what I mean, though you're right nevertheless." The Old Priest chuckled while looking at the tall, handsome youth.

"Then what do you mean?" Young Jacob questioned in perplexity.

"My boy, you're excellent in every aspect, even I didn't imagine you would get a chance like this. But you have a terrible flaw, impatience! You like acting first and then worrying about the consequences later.

"This is a terrible habit, my boy. People could easily exploit this flaw of yours without even you realizing it. Where you're going having this flaw is fatal. Especially with your fiery nature, I'm worried you might break someone's teeth before you even think about how it will affect you." The old Priest thoughtfully stated his worries.

Young Jacob chuckled coldly, "I don't care about those damn scions. If I didn't place him in their place, they would only think I'm easy to suppress!"

"See? You like violence too much. But if you really want to realize your dream of becoming the richest in this world, impatience will be your biggest enemy. Are you willing to succumb to it just because you didn't want to control it?" The old Priest sternly questioned.

Young Jacob finally fell into silence as if he was mulling over something before he said thoughtfully, "I understand. I'll try to be more tolerant and only mind my own business. I still wanted to reply to you for showing me the right way. I won't let this chance slip through my hand."

The old Priest smiled again while shaking his head, "I don't need you to repay me anything. We are all pitiful children of the Lord, and I did what the Lord demanded from me. I'm already gratified by the blessing he sent us in your shoes."

Young Jacob's face fell as he retorted, "Why are you always giving credit for your hard work to something that didn't even exist?! Those other children and I are only grateful to you since you are the one who feeds us and shelters us, not that stone idol!"

The Old Priest sighed ruefully as his eyes were filled with the vicissitude of life, "My Boy, when you conquer your impatience and realize your dream, you'll understand why I serve the Lord.

"When you understand, I want you to build a temple. That would be my salvation if I didn't exist that day." The Old Priest smiled leniently as he looked at young Jacob's frowning face.

Jacob's eyelids snapped open, revealing his amber eyes filled with melancholy before clarity returned to them. He found himself lying over a thick root and the familiar grayness around him.

'It's been a while since I had a dream of the past and that Old Senile appeared again, still haunting me with his strange religious beliefs.' Jacob lamented, but his lips curled up, revealing a rare respectful smile.

But it was only for a fleeting moment as he returned to his usual cold self, but that memory was still clear as day in his head.

'Impatience, huh? But it was exactly this impatience that made me what I was. Too bad you weren't around at that time to see that, or I would have a good laugh for finally getting one over you, Pops.' Jacob sneered inwardly before a hint of grief appeared deep within in eyes.

'I still built that magnificent temple of yours, though, and instead of your Lord, I place your statue, and you were even more famous than your Lord who gave you nothing but hardship. Instead, by praying to you, no one goes home empty-handed, and I make damn sure of it!

'Even those arrogant pricks have to bow their head to you if they want something from me, and I bring down the whole world down into your knees. Is that what you mean by faith, that can be created by strong and so easily manipulated?

'I still don't understand even when I tried so hard at the end of my life, I really tried to, but there was nothing for salvation, only despair. Hope died, and I followed her footsteps, but I was alive and given a chance to achieve something I longed for.

'Impatient or not, I'll achieve Immortality, and I'm pretty impatience to get it!'

Jacob scoffed and stood up as he was completely restored. He ate two slices of raw but fresh meat and started his journey again.

It was already noon, but today there were dark clouds covering the sky, and the rain might start at any minute.

To not get lost, Jacob trivial slow since the sun was his only compass in this damn forsaken forest.

Thereupon, with a booming rumble, the rain started to fall over the spooky forest, and the only comfort was everything was normal except for the sound of rain and Jacob's unhindered footsteps.

But after moving a few miles, Jacob's heart skipped a beat, and he was stopped in his tracks because even in that rain, sounds of metal crashing together were reverberating over a hundred meters away!

## Cursed Immortality

### Chapter 184: The Mysterious Dark Ruins

If it were any other time, Jacob would've taken a detour while minding his own business. However, in this deadly forest where just a drop of blood could decide his life and death, any fight in this place was his business.

Soon, Jacob was looking at the four-meter-tall weeds sea, which was getting hacked like water splashes and stomped by hundreds of skeleton soldiers!

Right in the middle of this siege was a 6-meter-tall giant who was stomping those skeletons like bugs under his menacing war hammer!

Jacob's eyes widened ever so slightly since it was his first time seeing a living member of the giant race, and he had to admit that just watching this giant swinging his giant war hammer and creating small tremors gave him the frights.

The Iron Giant Tribe had no match when it came to brute strength, and to make others resentful even more, some giants even had magic resistance, and they were also one of those races with connate magic talent.

They were dreaded by any intelligent race on the freedom plains, and even elves think twice before provoking these dark stars.

Nevertheless, Jacob was still worried about this giant getting wounded and bringing everyone's doom.

But he was somewhat relaxed when he saw just how helpless those skeletons were. However, he knew this many skeleton soldiers wouldn't lay siege on a Giant. There had to be a mastermind.

And just as he thought, amidst those hundreds of skeleton soldiers, skeleton warriors suddenly appeared holding spears and halberds and shot toward the giant like arrows!

However, when Jacob was about to warn, the giant suddenly pulled an icy smile on his giant iron color face, and the next moment his war hammer suddenly started to shimmer in dark sheen.

Jacob's heart palpitated, and without wanting to find out, he ran in the opposite direction.

The next moment, the giant roared while swinging his glowing war hammer, "Iron Hammer Smash!"

"Boom..."

The entire area around the giant rumbled as a terrifying shockwave blasted those skeletons into smithereens, even the gray land trees and weeds weren't spared, and the over twenty meters area around the giant had become a no man's land.

Jacob, who barely managed to avoid the worse of that ghastly shockwave with the shelter of a thick gray root, looked in the giant direction again with a lingering fear.

That was simply too powerful, and he was even more sure there was magic involved in that strike.

"Humph, a bunch of bones wanted to kill the Great Elbio. Go born as a giant first!"

The Iron Giant named Elbio coldly sneered as he retracted his war hammer, which left a small five-meter-deep crater behind, and in this crater were strange blade shape gray leaves!

Jacob knew he wasn't the other party's match and found his notion of protecting the fellow ridiculous since no one without skill dared to enter this place.

"And you little fellow, come out!" Elbio coldly looked at the exact tree root where Jacob was hiding.

Jacob knew he might not be able to get rid of this fellow as he did with the cheetah skin man since those giants were also freighting fast as well. Moreover, he didn't want to test his strength with this fellow in the middle of Gray Man Tree forest.

Therefore, calming himself, he came out.

Elbio looked at Jacob's hooded figure and coolly said, "I saw you wanted to help him, so I won't persuade you to sneak up on me. But what are you doing in this gray shithole?"

Jacob looked at Elbio nonchalant expression and then at the destruction he had just caused. He answered, "I'm naturally headed toward the exit of the Dark Woodlands."

Elbio's eyes shimmered as he suddenly pulled a mocking smile, "You're new in Dark Woodlands, aren't you?"

Jacob was caught off by this strange question but still answered, "I'm indeed new. May I inquire why you think so?"

Elbio coolly stated, "Only newcomers would say they wanted to leave these god-forsaken woodlands."

Jacob frowned, "Is it not possible?"

Elbio shook his head, "It's not impossible but not far from it either. Forget it since you tried to help me. I'll tell you, if you cherish your life turn around and leave. Unless you're a Tier-6 Extraordinary, don't even think about passing this forest, or Dark Ruins will be the grave of you just like any other."

Done saying his piece, Elbio turned around his giant body.

Jacob was now even more perplexed by Elbio's sublet warning and had many questions. He could tell this terrifying giant wasn't lying. He simply didn't need to with his prowess.

"Wait, tell me about these Dark Ruins, and I'll pay any price." Jacob tried another method.

Elbio's lips curled into a mocking smile while his back was still facing Jacob, "Little fellow, if you want to know about Dark Ruins, then cross this forest, and you'll naturally know. If you manage to return alive, find me in area-892, the name is Elbio."

The next moment, his figure suddenly turned blurry, and Elbio's giant figure faded like a ghost.

Even for Jacob's eyes, that giant was terrifyingly fast, making his heart skip a beat. If that Elbio wanted to kill him, he was afraid he wouldn't even have the chance of retaliation!

'What are the Dark Ruins?' Jacob squinted his eyes and wasn't in the mood to stay in this area. He left before more skeletons were drawn by the commotion. He still didn't change his direction, though.

Elbio's figure appeared a few meters away from where Jacob was standing.

A huge cold grin was spread on his giant face when he saw Jacob still continuing on the same path.

He mumbled while he faded into the rain.

"I never thought while hunting that skeleton. I'll meet a newcomer. If you survive, you'll be one of us, a caged slave. A pity that the chance of that happening is almost null...."

However, Jacob didn't continue to head in that direction blindly anymore. He could tell something was wrong with all of this after hearing Elbio's ambiguous warning.

First, he had no idea what area-892 was; he didn't even know if there were dividends in this place.

Then he thought about the map and the scope of information about the Rare Plains. Except for Dark Woodlands and general directions, there wasn't any information about this forest or these Dark Ruins.

Lastly, the four nations weren't too worried about the Dark Beings swamping this place, which was relatively peaceful, unlike what was mentioned in the information he gathered.

There was even terrifying existence like that giant residing in this place, and they seemed to be not from the four powers' military.

Why didn't these people leave the Dark Woodlands and remain in these god-forsaken woods?

Something was strange about all this; the answer lies in the Dark Ruins.

So, Jacob tried to search the Star Network for information on Dark Ruins, but to his dismay, nothing appeared, even in the Alliance Server.

Afterward, he could only give up and decided to sleep over it.

The next day, besides some clouds, the sky was clear, and Jacob decided to move on with his journey. He at least wanted to see what these Dark Ruins were. Even if he had to go back afterward, he would know about what he was dealing with.

After making his decision, he didn't stop and continued to move while being vigilant of skeletons. He didn't have the destructive power of Elbio, so he wanted to avoid fighting in this forest.

Unknowingly, Jacob had been traveling in the Gray Land Tree Forest for over two months, and besides the growing roots of gray land trees, Jacob didn't encounter anything.

However, on this day, as the night descended, Jacob suddenly felt a strange sensation when he stopped to rest for the day, and his eyes were closed. It was like he was... moving, or, more accurately, the roots beneath him were moving.

Jacob's eyes sprang open. Quickly, he jumped to his feet, but when he looked around, he was flabbergasted because the entire forest around him had... vanished!

Yes, there was nothing around, below or above. He was just sliding forward in the darkness.

Horrified, Jacob tried to run back, but something even more ghastly was waiting for him. No matter how much he ran, he didn't feel like he had moved forward.

'Not good!' Jacob was simply spooked as he continued to slide forward.

"Cursed Immortality, what the fuck is going on?!" He quickly summoned Immortika while looking around for an escape route.

He knew something had happened while he was resting, and whatever happened was out of his comprehension. Only Immortika might be able to shed some light on this situation.

Immortika appeared in front of Jacob and wrote, which sent a shiver to Jacob's entire being when he read it. Somehow, he knew he was screwed!

"Welcome to the Rare Trail Plain, hahahaha!"

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 185: Plain Trials & Terrifying Revelations

"Welcome to the Rare Trial Plain, hahahaha!"

"What Rare Trial Plain?! Explain, am I in danger?" Jacob quickly asked while continuing to find a way out of this darkness.

Although his vision was good, this darkness was completely different, and he could only see Immortika because of their special connection.

"Not for now, I guess."

This reply from Immortika gave Jacob a massive relief, but he was still not out of the woods since this darkness was simply too eerie as all his senses were blocked, and all he could feel was moving forward.

"What is happening then?" Jacob properly asked while his swords appeared in his hands.

"Well, since you've already entered a Trial Plain, I can tell you now." Immortika wrote.

"But let me ask you something first since you were a researcher yourself and a successful one at that. What do you think about World Evolution? Which could change a World?"

Jacob's face fell. He didn't have time to play the riddle, but he still answered since it was a simple question, "Knowledge! Now just tell me where I am and where did that forest go?"

"No, it is 'Truth Behind Everything.' Knowledge can only be acquired after one finds a Truth behind something; sometimes, the Truth can be the opposite of what Knowledge deems it to be.

"Why, even after acquiring Knowledge, do we still dig deep into the same Knowledge and sometimes find something incredible? A Truth is what changes everything, and nothing can topple Truth.

"There is always Truth behind a Truth, like infinite layers. The more Truth you find, the more you want to confirm if it is the Truth or if someone else will doubt your Truth and then start searching for their own Truth.

"But if someone acquired an Absolute Truth, it could have unimaginable consequences. Like the Zodiac Plains, which is virtually immeasurable!"

Jacob's eyes widened in disbelief, "But how is that possible!?"

Although he understood what Immortika was trying to imply, he would never believe something so ridiculous.

Furthermore, he still didn't understand what this had to do with the current situation.

"Hahahaha... nothing is impossible, I had told you; you are so insignificant that even a grain of sand might have a higher status than you in the Zodiac Plains.

"But you will understand if you could cultivate the scripture to higher phases.

"All you need to know is the Zodiac Plains is immeasurable, and you could consider it a Universe. But it didn't work like the universe you know of. There are stars, solar systems, and galaxies, but for a particular reason, everything has been combined, forming the Zodiac Plains!

"As for why the sky, sun, and moon are just like you remembered, it is also related to the reason for Zodiac Plains being a Universe.

"The Common Plains are known as Type-0 Plain, and Rare Plains are known as Type-1 Plain. There are higher plains, and on those plains lies the unimaginable Truth.

"As for the place you are currently stumbled upon is called a Trial Plain. Every Plain above Zero has these Trial Plains."

Jacob calmed down to a great degree after he read all that unimaginable information. This mysterious world broadened his horizons again.

"What kind of Trials do these places have, and what is their purpose? Since they're Trials, who set them up and monitor them." Jacob asked sternly.

"These Trials are created by the Zodiac Plains itself, and it is also Zodiac Plains who monitored them. You can call it Zodiac Will. Like people say, Gods are always watching over the world, and the Zodiac Will is even more terrifying. Hahahaha."

'Zodiac Will? I'll remember it.' Jacob quickly engraved this name in his mind.

Immortika continued, "As for the purpose of these Trials, it has only one; to open the way toward a Higher Plain!"

Now Jacob was even more confused as well as startled, "Are you telling me without passing this Trial, no one can move to a higher plain? But it's impossible since the Alliance could take someone out of here if they complete a certain condition."

"You don't understand at all. By means to open the way toward a higher plain means stripping off the protection from that plain and removing the barrier that hinders other races from moving freely toward a higher plain.

"Aren't you curious why that undead couldn't attack or step foot into the freedom plains? It is because that area is called Life Plain, where Dark Beings couldn't enter, while the Place known as Wild Nation is established on an area called Dead Plain, where Living Beings couldn't enter.

"Lastly, the area where any being could move freely is known as Neutral Plain, like the Dark Woodlands.

"It's just that the living beings in this place are simply too weak. They had yet to find the exit from the Trial Plain like the Dark Beings and entered this neutral Plain while avoiding the actual Trial plain.

"Similarly, a being born on other plains or if they had a certain level of bloodline and prowess, couldn't enter those two protected areas or on the plain, as a matter of fact. Neither could they clear the Trial of that plain. Only a native born on that Plain could enter and remove the Trial of their birth plain.

"The only exception to this rule is the Star Ocean or when the protection of that Plain is lifted when someone clears that Trial. However, in the latter case, there is still power level restriction of the Plain.

"Or do you think both factions, Living and Dead, would let each other prosper on the same ground? There are more twisted rules on higher plains, but you don't need to know them now.

"Anyhow, the person who clears this Trial, either from the living or dead, will have a specific right on that plain, and every reward acquired from these Trials are lavish to extreme.

"Lastly, if a Trial were cleared, it would reset after 1000 Years, and every time a Trial is different from the last.

"My guess is the Dark Beings on Type-1 Plains had cleared the last Trial, and that's why they had the upper hand on the living and probably trying to clear it again. That's why they were swamping this place with their pawns to make things even more difficult for those freedom-plains fools!"

Jacob felt like a mist had been lifted from his eyes as he finally started to understand what was happening in the Rare Plains.

"Wait, you said only natives can enter these protection zones and Trials. Why am I able to bypass these two restrictions?" Jacob instantly caught the crux of the matter.

Just as he thought, Immortika's mad laughter filled the whole page.

"...hehe, how about you try to guess?"

Jacob instantly thought of something and replied uncertainly, "It's either you or it has something to be with my rebirth."

"Don't give yourself too much credit. Only the inheritor of one of the Nine Universal Godly Scriptures can bypass these rules. Let me tell you something else. Hehehe."

Jacob had a bad proposition all of a sudden.

"The Nine Universal Godly Scriptures could also see through the trial's hidden conditions," Immortika revealed.

"What it had to do with me? I'm not interested in clearing those Trials. On the contrary, as long as they won't completed, I can simply move between places and do my things. Even if I offend someone, I can hide in the other side's territory, and they won't even be able to touch me." Jacob was now completely calm as he thought of the benefits of having such an advantage over everyone.

"Hahahah... are you sure? Let me tell you, the person who clears these Trials will be rewarded lavishly by the Zodiac Will with ZC, and a special shop will be opened to the Trial's Champion. You can buy anything

that exists on that plane from that shop, even 9-Star Element Cores!" Immortika words were laced with temptation.

Jacob's eyes widened slightly when he read it, "Are you serious?"

"Absolutely! Even the delivery would be instant. But think about it, if you lifted the barrier, the freedom plains would be swallowed by the dark beings at this juncture. Or even worse, those fellows in the living faction like your Alliance might hate you to tip the balance so soon." Immortika pretended to give a warning.

Jacob's lips curled into a disdainful, icy smile, "Do you think I care?"

Right at this moment, Jacob suddenly looked ahead as he saw the light at the end of the darkness. He was on his destination, wherever it was.

"Hahaha... I knew you wouldn't disappoint me. Alright, read carefully. I don't have time. You can't summon me in the Trial Plain for a reason I can't tell you right now. The moment you exit this space, I'll vanish.

"These are hidden conditions to complete this trial name Dark Ruins."

Jacob was baffled when he read he couldn't summon Immortika in the dark ruin, but soon his attention was drawn by the sudden shimmer spark on Immortika before an entirely new page appeared.

"Type-1 (Rare) Plain Trial NO.128094302

"Code Name: Dark Rune

"Time of Beginning: 392 Years Ago

"Time of End: Ongoing

"Conditions Implanted for Trial Code Name Dark Rune:

"1. ...!

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 186: Underground Catacomb!

At this moment, space shuddered before it was torn apart by an invisible force, revealing a black hole.

Thereby, a figure was suddenly thrown out from this black hole before it vanished just as fast as it appeared.

The figure landed on an old stone floor. He wore a long black jacket with a long hood on his head; a faceless black was hidden underneath. It was none other than Jacob who had mysteriously been sent into this place which was Rare Plain Trial!

If not for Immortika's previous explanation, he might be clueless, even spooked by this entire ordeal, just like any ambitious newcomer in the dark woodlands. But he was calm since he knew what kind of place it was and what it represented.

Jacob looked around, and his eyes widened slightly when he saw he was standing on a passage dimly lit with flame torches on the walls.

However, the walls made him apprehensive because they were made of skulls!

'A catacomb?' He mused darkly as he looked behind, and there was also a long passage going way back, just like in the front.

He has no idea on which part of the dark ruins he is in, but he is clearly underground within these catacombs.

Suddenly, Jacob felt a vibration on his wrist, which was his star watch.

He then slid his sleeve and was astonished when he saw a notification on his star watch.

'Faceless Ancient Welcome in Dark Runes of Rare Plains. Please explore the Dark Ruins for glory.'

It was an ambiguous message, but it did reveal the name of the place he was in.

'Could it be the Star Network is also controlled by the Zodiac Will? This might explain this Network's mysterious background.' Jacob assumed but didn't dare to speak out loud.

He was even apprehensive of this Zodiac Will now since even Immortika seemed afraid of it. If Immortika hadn't told him to keep wearing his star watch, he might have already stowed it away in his infinity pendant.

Jacob then tried to use the Star Watch, but to his dismay, the connection was completely off with the outside, confirming his hypothesis even more.

Nevertheless, he kept his star watch on his person, and after that ambiguous message, no more messages appeared.

Jacob then decided to move in the left direction while holding a pump action shotgun in his left hand and his sword in his right hand.

He didn't dare to underestimate this place. Even that giant was wary. Even if he knew how to clear it, it didn't mean he could do it.

If Immortika was correct, then Dark Beings of higher level might be teeming this place to clear it as well, and with his current power cap, he would be courting death.

He couldn't summon Immortika either, and he was pretty sure it had something to do with the Zodiac Will, or there might be some other reason. In any case, he has to be careful.

Jacob's first objective was to leave these underground catacombs.

As Jacob moved slowly toward the dimly lit passage, he noticed the dust on the walls and his footprints on the stone floor. Evidently, this passage hadn't been used for quite a long time.

But when he thought about those burning skull torches, he thought otherwise.

After walking for half an hour, he frowned because a skull wall blocked his way forward, a dead end.

Flustered, he turned back since he didn't want to touch those skulls unless absolutely necessary.

After walking for over an hour, Jacob's face turned dark when he saw a wall blocking his way again. It meant both sides were completely blocked off!

'Something is strange. This passage is too long. Moreover, these torches kept burning without showing any sign of turning off, and the air here also didn't seem to suffocate. There has to be some kind of ventilation system.' Jacob frowned as he finally decided to get his hands dirty.

He first moved toward the skull wall blocking his way and slashed his sword, blasting those old skulls into bits and raising a small dust cloud.

When Jacob saw there was really a stone wall behind those skulls, he then moved toward the other suspicious thing, which was those torches.

The passage was only 3 meters in diameter, so Jacob's hand easily reached the torches position. When he tried to remove a torch, strangely, it didn't move an inch as if it was fixed on the wall.

With his sword hilt, he tried to break the torch, and the skull shape torch easily blasted, but Jacob was stunned the next moment because a palm size yellow-red flame appeared in the air when the torch broke.

It suddenly started flickering after losing the torch's protection and then diminished, leaving behind a dumbfounded Jacob.

'Magic!' Only this could explain the phenomena now.

Before, Jacob thought there might be some gas line supporting those torches, but it seemed he was dead wrong. He needed to think out of the box since he was in a magical world where anything was possible.

Giving up on torches, Jacob decided to focus on those skulls, and after cleaning those skulls for half an hour, he had cleared over ten meters on both sides as skull debris filled the floor.

Yet, Jacob saw nothing but stone walls on both sides, perplexing him.

This passage was simply too long, and if he started to clean those two walls, it might take an entire day, and he still might not find any clues about where he was or how he could leave.

"Let's blast our way out of this strange place." Jacob sneered.

The next moment, a pale yellow rectangular appeared in his hand. It was only six inches long and two inches thick.

It was trinitrotoluene (TNT)!

He literally meant those words when he said he would blast his way out of this place.

This TNT was hand-made by him. When he was planning to leave the freedom plains, he knew the place out there was not something he could handle with his current prowess, so he prepared some things if he ever experienced such situations.

The TNT happened to be one of those things.

With cold eyes, he placed the TNT on the stone wall blocking the passage and sets it up with a radio wave controller.

Only after looking at those sturdy stone walls did he dare to take his mad action, or if it were a shallow cave, he would rather continue searching than risk using TNT and bury himself.

Jacob put hundreds of meters of distance between TNT and himself before he pressed the red trigger!

"Bommm...."

A massive explosion rang quaver the entire passage, and those skulls started to fall from their positions, and a huge dust cloud enveloped the whole passage like a tornado.

Jacob was completely unfazed as he waited a few moments before going toward the explosion area. Crushing the skull debris under his unhindered footstep, he reached the dust-filled explosion area and approached the wall.

He couldn't help but notice a light in the center of that. Even with all the dust, it was quite apparent.

'So, there was a passage.' Jacob's lips curled up as he finally saw the half-broken wall and another passage behind it.

Without hesitation, he crossed the opening and stepped foot another dimly lit catacomb passage, but it was slightly more spacious than the one he had just blasted his way out from.

This time, Jacob went toward the left again, and after walking for ten minutes, he didn't encounter another wall but a cross path.

'Is this some kind of grave maze?' Jacob's face fell, but all of a sudden, his ears perked because faint footsteps were approaching from the left cross pathway toward his position!

'The explosion must've drawn whoever this is.' Jacob was vigilant and didn't dare to underestimate the approaching party.

Whoever could come to this place was not simple, and he was far more worried about those Dark Beings.

Jacob quickly took the right passage before that person reached this place, and with silent steps, he escaped the vicinity.

A minute after Jacob left, a petite woman with wolf ears, wearing a short black armor that only covered her vitals, appeared, holding a sword and an assault rifle in both her furry hands.

She looked at the still dusty passage where Jacob had appeared and frowned, "Someone just used explosive force to blast their way out of a dead passage? Is it magic or technology? Whoever it was, they were strong. If it is not a Dark Being, and if I can team up with this person, I might be finally able to leave this shityard!"

A ray of hope appeared in her wolf eyes as her small fair nose started to twitch, and she instantly looked toward the right passage where Jacob had gone.

Her lips curled up into a beautiful smile, "Smell of chemical, definitely not a magic user!"

With great anticipation, she also chased after whoever it was without caring about the consequences. It was far better than suffering alone in this maze of skulls!

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 187: The Dreadful Maze

Even though Jacob wanted to, he couldn't move carelessly in this catacomb maze.

But he was more worried about the footsteps behind him, which would catch up to him no matter which direction he took or how fast and silent his steps were.

In the end, he decided to confront whoever it was, or he won't have peace of mind.

A sniper rifle appeared in his hand, but it wasn't the Titan rifle but CT.408 Sniper Rifle with a normal 32X standard infrared scope created by him.

Jacob coldly placed the sniper rifle at the end of the cross path, hid it with those skulls, and then placed his eye behind the scope.

He won't care if it is undead or living. He was going to get rid of them since this person kept chasing after him.

Without his hearing, he might not be able to hear the other person, so he knew just how stealthy the other party was. This place was teeming with an unknown danger, and Jacob couldn't have a threat that was proficient in tracking.

Jacob's finger was the trigger as he heard those footsteps slowly approaching.

Thereupon, something entered Jacob's view, and he pulled the trigger!

'Boom...'

The bullet sound reverberated in the silent vicinity of the catacomb pathways.

But Jacob's eyes narrowed because the thing that was blasted apart was a random dry skull on a blade tip. But what made Jacob astonished was the bullet didn't pierce through the silver tip of the sword but bounced off without leaving a scratch!

Not only that but the holder of that sword didn't seem affected by the bullet impact either, as the blade was still held at the same spot without dropping.

The other party is extremely strong!

"So, you can hear my footsteps and go for a decisive kill, huh? Nice, you have some skills and grit to survive." A crisp voice filled with disdain rang at this moment.

It was clearly the owner of the sword.

Jacob frowned, 'Not a Dark Being. Since everyone is fighting for survival in this place, each faction might be more untied than the outside. Furthermore, from this person's tone, she let me hear her footsteps so she could test me?'

"Who are you?" He decided to question since having an experienced person around would only do better than harm.

Well, as long as they had no malicious intentions, that is.

"I'm also just like you, who was mysteriously thrown into this shityard two years ago. You are the first person I have encountered in two years. How about we team up? I have no ill intention and only wanted to leave this godforsaken shityard!" revealed the woman in an aggravated tone.

Jacob was startled when he heard she had been trapped here for two years!

'Just what kind of place is it? Or she might be just lying to win my trust. But if what she said is true, then I need to know why she couldn't leave even after two years.' Jacob was sullen.

"Look, I know it is difficult to trust someone you just met. But I'm sincere in working with you to get out of here. I'm going to come out to show my sincerity!" The woman declared.

Jacob remained stoic as he coldly watched as white furry hands slowly appeared, and seeing the infrared view, he confirmed it was a living person.

A petite woman with wolf ears, wearing short black armor, only covering her vitals, appeared while holding her hands above in surrender. A sword and an assault rifle were attached to her slim waist.

'A wolf demi human!' He instantly guessed when he saw those features.

Since the other party was showing their hands, it was clear she was sincere about her words or simply too confident in her act.

But Jacob decided to believe her since she might hold vital information about this maze.

However, he didn't lower his rifle and walked in front of her, "What is this place?" He asked.

The wolf woman's eyes lit up when she saw Jacob and smiled while she said, "Can I lower my hands?"

"You may, but if you so much as twitch your finger, I'll shoot!" Jacob coldly stated.

"So scary!" She giggled, "As I said before, this place is called Dark Ruin."

Jacob frowned, "I know. I'm talking about, where are we?"

He didn't know if this woman was being deliberately cute or not, but it wasn't working.

"Oh, you must also receive that message in your star watch, right? Sigh... is this some kind of game played by the Star Network?" She wondered out loud.

'Close enough.' Jacob thought.

"Then you didn't find the way out of this place in two years?" He asked another question.

"How long have you been in this place?" She questioned instead with a hint of anticipation.

Jacob frowned but still answered, "Couple of hours."

The Wolf Woman's eyes shone brilliantly, "I knew it! Who is the current ruler of the Ice Nation? And did we win the Nightmare Championship?"

Jacob wanted to shoot her down as she started asking meaningless questions like a curious baby.

Suppressing his dark urges, he coldly uttered, "I have no idea, nor do I care. If this is all you have to say, then I better wonder alone. Don't follow me anymore!"

The Wolf Woman quickly changed the topic as her curious expression turned severe and aggravated, "Alright, you won't have to be so mean to a fellow tribesman, you know."

Jacob remained silent even after being called a fellow tribesman. She was clearly his species with those subtlet words, which was proof enough of this woman's cunning nature, just like a real wolf.

The Wolf Woman suddenly smiled charmingly when she saw Jacob didn't fall for her trap, "I'll tell you straight this time, it's not like I don't find a way out, but it's just that there is something terrifying blocking the way out. If you wander in this shityard long enough, you'll naturally bump into that fellow.

"But that thing is probably Extraordinary-Tier-1 or even 2, so unless you are one as well, there is no other way out of this place. No matter how much you dig or blast, this strange maze is endless.

"Because this maze changes every 72 hours, any damage done to it will also reset with it. You won't even know it has, and you'll keep moving in circles while thinking you have made progress.

"But you'll die of hunger and thirst soon, if not madness. Trust me. I'll learn the hard way!"

Jacob suddenly felt something was not adding up with her explanation, "How do you survive in two years?"

The wolf woman's lips suddenly move into a crescent smile, "Of course, it's because I found a special room in this place which had a clear water pond with some fish. It also recovered every three days, no matter how much you drank or ate from it. It's just that finding it is a hassle, but now I'm a pro at it."

Jacob felt silent when he heard this. No matter how much it sounds ridiculous, it might be possible in this place.

"Now, you should understand teaming up with is your only way to survive and leave this place!" Her smile was somewhat foreboding.

After thinking for a moment, he lowered his rifle and nodded, "Alright, I'll help you, but only if I am confident. I won't throw my life away."

She smiled broadly when she heard this and nodded, "Don't worry, I won't ask you to commit suicide. I also wanted to leave this place more than you could ever."

Jacob could only take her words for it.

"My name is Livia, and I'm from Blue Wolf Human Tribe of Ice Nation." Livia introduced herself.

"Jack." Jacob coldly uttered.

"Just Jack? Hmm, well, it is easy to remember, I guess. Let's go. I'll show you around this shityard." Livia giggled as she didn't mind Jacob still hiding his origin.

She would do the same if she were in his shoe or even worse.

Jacob then followed Livia as she led him through different pathways. He had to admit this maze was big, and all the passages looked almost identical.

"Look carefully, the skulls on each pathway had different patterns, and as long as you can remember them, you can easily navigate this place. This is also how I discovered the reset time of this maze. I must say I almost go berserk when I do, though!" Livia sighed as she told about her nasty experience in this place.

Jacob also frowned. He might do the same if it was him. It could be said that Jacob was quite lucky to encounter Livia or hunger was something he dreaded most after death.

He also noticed the walls' skulls were arranged in different patterns. It was hard to notice if someone really hadn't been paying attention to them.

Soon, they reached their destination!

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 188: You Seemed... Lonely

Livia stood in front of a skull-filled wall, but there was something different about this wall that was quite hard to notice.

There was a black skull with folded black horns hidden within other skulls, and in this dim light, it was almost invisible if someone wasn't looking for it.

Livia then flashed a strange smile toward Jacob before she twisted the left horn of that black skull, and the next moment, the deep sound of a mechanism being stirred rang.

Thereby, the entire wall suddenly trembled before a slit appeared. It was a door!

Jacob was baffled by just how much lucky Livia would've been to find something like this. He started to look at the wolf woman in a new light.

As the small skull door opened, a ten cubic meter space appeared, lit with the same fire torches.

"Come in, don't be shy." Livia chuckled as she entered.

Jacob followed suit, and his eyes narrowed when he saw the interior.

Unlike the rest of the maze, there weren't any skulls on the walls, but a 1.5-meter stone statue of a skeleton in priest robes holding a red follower in its bone hands which looked completely wrong in many ways.

On the room's left and right walls were strange ruins.

Lastly, there was a 2-meter wide clear water pond right in front of this skeleton statue, and some common tier fishes were swimming inside.

Besides, there were some weapons lying on a corner which were clearly Livia's, and there was nothing else.

Livia said smilingly, "No bad, right? Besides that creepy flower skeleton, this place is quite good compared to the rest of the shityard. Now you believed me, no?"

Jacob had no choice but to believe Livia since she was the only place where anyone could survive in this maze if she were telling the truth.

If it were Jacob, he would never bring some stranger into this place, much less someone he had just met not even an hour ago.

"What are those symbols?" He couldn't help but ask since it was his first time seeing such language, and those symbols somewhat resembled the Philosopher's Language.

Livia coolly answered, "It's Rune Language. Just like the Philosopher's Language, many old ruins and scriptures are translated from it. However, the Rune Language field is wider than the Philosopher's Language. Since the former can be used in magic while the latter is used in alchemy."

'Rune Language? Doesn't Decker mention it in his journal?' Jacob's memory was quite sharp as he remembered, 'This language also used in magic?'

"So, you can read it?" He looked at Livia. She was becoming more useful by the minute.

Livia was quite talkative since it's been two years since she had talked with someone, and she needed Jacob to get out of there, so she answered his question to win his complete trust.

"You sure like to ask questions for someone who didn't even reveal his full name. But I'm not a petty person. On the left is written, 'Death shall bring Salvation,' and on the right side is written, 'Salvation shall bring Death.' It was clearly written by some sadistic." She sneered disdainfully.

However, a peculiar glint flashed past Jacob's eyes before vanishing competently.

"Thank you for telling me." He nodded.

"No problem. Do you want to try some fish?" Livia questioned.

"No, thank you. How about you share your plan on how to get out of here? I'm sure you didn't want to waste more time." Jacob probed coolly.

Livia's eyes shimmered with coldness, and she nodded, "Yes, I had been monitoring that fellow for over a year now, and as long as we attack in pair, we can easily get out of here. So, you should rest for the day, the maze will reset in a day, and that would be the time to start."

Jacob didn't object and nodded, "Alright, but if I found that 'fellow' dangerous, I won't participate in that suicide charge."

Livia's eyes narrowed ever so slightly as the smile on her face stiff, "It won't be difficult, I've been headbutting with him for over a year, and I could always escape without getting injured, so that it won't be much difficult for you. Oh, do you have more explosive?"

Jacob thought for a moment before he nodded, "I have around 100 grams of TNT left. I didn't know I was going to trap here. I just wanted to leave the dark woodlands but was thrown into this space instead." He sighed ruefully.

Livia's eyes also flash with resentment, "I could relate. Don't worry. We might be able to leave after we escape this maze."

'So, she didn't know just what kind of place the dark ruins is?' Jacob thought.

He knew this woman was going to feel despair after leaving this place or who knows if that place she wanted to go was even the real exit or was just another part of the maze.

However, this wasn't something he had in his mind right now as he was struggling to decide something.

Afterward, Livia started to ask all kinds of questions about the outside world, which Jacob had no idea how to answer since he only stayed on the freedom plains for a short while.

So, he could only make an excuse that he was the low-ranking officer of the golden sword army and had offended someone and been sent out here, but instead, he escaped.

Although Livia might not believe it, she can't do anything.

Jacob also didn't ask any more questions except the guardian of the way out, and the small space soon fell into silence.

Time passed quickly. Jacob was resting with his eyes closed, but he was completely awake, and at this moment, he heard Livia's heartbeat moving and instantly opened his eyes.

Livia was currently going through her weapons while her round bottom was completely displayed. As she sensed Jacob's gaze, she looked at him with a strange smile and slightly shook her ass.

"It's nice, right?" She asked ambiguously.

Jacob merely said, whiteout retracing his gaze, "It is, so?"

Livia's eyes widened slightly, and she stood straight while looking at Jacob. She smiled seductively, "If you show me your face, I might let you touch it."

Jacob thought for a moment before he stood up and he, pulled his hood off, and then took off his mask, revealing his long silver hair and handsome face. He had a... smile on his face.

Livia's eyes widened, and she exclaimed, "You're an elf!"

She didn't notice Jacob's ears since they were covered under his hair, and she clearly had never seen a human, so an elf was the only thing that came to her mind after seeing his handsome appearance.

Even Demi-Humans respect elves and only some of their tribes can rival them.

Jacob smiled and nodded, "You look shocked."

"But your hair is silver?" She asked curiously since elves in the freedom plains have golden hair.

"I'm a Silver Elf, a hybrid of sorts." Jacob lied through his teeth without even flinching, and the warm smile on his face never vanished.

"Why do you suddenly show your face?" Livia couldn't help but feel something was wrong, but she never put her finger on it.

Because Jacob struck her as someone aloof and cold, but now he was acting friendly. If Jacob's weapon weren't lying on the floor, she would think he was going to ambush her.

But no matter how she thought of it, Jacob didn't have a reason to kill her since he needed her help to find the guardian and fight with him.

'Is he after my body? Or did he want to see just how badly I want to get out of here and see how I react?' She could only think of this since she was quite confident in her looks and figure.

Although she wasn't as beautiful as an elf, she was clearly more beautiful than the average women of the freedom plain, especially better than those ugly races such as goblins, orcs, trolls, and so on.

Jacob took a step toward her with his warm smile and suddenly took off his jacket showing his tight black gear vest and masculine muscles underneath.

Livia couldn't help but look closely at Jacob's body. She was not admiring his body but looking for a hidden weapon, but there was nothing, and his sword, rifle, and a block of TNT were left lying in his sitting position.

This made her even more assured that he was after her body or just testing her, but she still didn't let her guard down.

Jacob stopped when he was only a foot away from Livia, and the smile on his face hadn't vanished at all.

He said gently, "After I thought it over, I found you quite sincere and lovely that's why I show you my appearance. This will break any wall we have, and our corporation will be flawless, right? Besides, I couldn't help but notice that you seemed... lonely."

Livia's eyes trembled slightly as she looked deeply into Jacob's amber eyes.

Jacob suddenly approached closer as they could almost feel each other's warm breath, and Livia somehow felt compelled and couldn't stop his advance despite wanting to...

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 189: Broken Shackle

Jacob suddenly approached closer. They could almost feel each other's warm breath, and Livia somehow felt compelled and couldn't stop his advance despite wanting to. She just felt like the despair she was hiding under her cheerful self was breaking out.

She felt smooth cold skin over her face, and their lips were about to meet when Jacob suddenly whispered something while his hand touched her alluring face.

"You shouldn't have told me what was written on that wall..."

Jacob's voice was no longer warm like before as it was extremely icy, and when Livia finally noticed, it was too late...

Blood suddenly splashed over Jacob's expressionless face as he looked at Livia's widened eyes filled with disbelief and despair.

The light in her eyes slowly faded away as she kept looking at those ruthless amber eyes, which hid some remorse, but it slowly faded away.

Jacob was holding the hilt of his second sword, and the blade was piercing through Livia's head while her blood dripped from the sharp edge.

Jacob didn't give her a chance to retaliate and killed her instantly.

The blade from his hand vanished again, leaving behind an open slit in Livia's head as blood and brain matter started to flow from the opening.

Jacob swiftly moved his hand and captured her falling dead body. He stored her star watch and sword in his infinity pendant and then threw her body into the clear pond under the skeleton statue's feet.

The clear pond quickly started to turn crimson with Livia's blood.

Jacob felt something inside him was finally gone as that tingle of remorse was gone with it.

"I don't know if you were pure with your intentions or you also understood what the phases mean on that wall. Whatever the matter was, I didn't care since this was inevitable. A survivor like you would've done the same thing if you knew this was the only way out of here." Jacob coldly said while looking at the bloody pond.

He then looked at the skeleton priest holding the flower, 'One of the three conditions to clear this trial is, Salvage the Priest with Blood Flower by staining his tears with blood.

'I never thought I would find the Priest with Blood Flower so easily. I thought it was some kind of terrifying existence, but when tears fell into the mix, it didn't make sense anymore until I saw this statue with a pond and then those phases on the wall.

'Death shall bring Salvation, and Salvation shall bring Death. But this phase is wrong. The proper phase should be, Salvation shall bring Death, and Death shall bring Salvation.

'The one who seeks salvation shall bring death, meaning a sacrifice, and that sacrifice will salvage the one who seeks salvation or the person who performs the sacrifice.

'If I hadn't known about the condition to clear the Dark Runes, then I would've never thought like this. This woman might feel the same, but she didn't know where to perform the sacrifice. She might've thought that the sacrifice should be made to the guardian.

'Or I'm simply overthinking, and all of this was just my wild imagination, and this was not the right place after all.' Jacob thought as he looked at the still, unmovable statue.

Although he was 90% sure that he had done the right thing, he had no way of finding out if it was true. Even if he knew the conditions to clear the trial, they were still not completely clear.

If this wasn't the Priest with Blood Flower, then he still has to find a way out of this place which also means fighting that guardian alone, which Livia was afraid of.

Nevertheless, Jacob won't regret it since he had done what he thought was right, or he might've never gotten another chance again.

At least if it failed, he would know this was the Priest with Blood Flower and rule out a possible target and get rid of Livia, who might've turned into a foe at some point or not. Who knows...

However, when the pond's bloody water started to tremble as bubbles began to rise like it was boiling, Jacob knew he wasn't wrong after all!

Jacob quickly picked up his jacket and weapons lying around, including Livia's.

At this moment, crimson smoke started to rise from the pond and what Jacob saw next made him astonished the next moment.

The pond of bloody water suddenly started to crawl toward the skeleton statue and slowly started to cover it in crimson liquid.

The entire pond was dry-cleaned as the priest's skeleton was now dyed red, and surprisingly, Livia's body had vanished from the pond. Not even a bone was left!

"Rumble..."

Rumbling sounds suddenly started to ring all over the catacomb, and the ground began to quiver as if hell was about to break loose.

Jacob was baffled by this, and his heart palpitated because if this place collapsed, he'd be buried with it.

'This doesn't make sense. Did the one who cleared a condition supposed to die?' Jacob felt something was amiss.

'LLjjjkl...'

At this moment, strange eerie cries started reverberating in the vicinity, making anyone's blood run cold.

Before Jacob could comprehend what was going on, the blood-soaked priest's skeleton started to shake violently, and the next moment, it suddenly collapsed into crimson sand!

But Jacob's eyes widened because a small passage appeared right where the skeleton stood before, and it had the same size as the skeleton.

Jacob didn't believe Livia hadn't tried to destroy this skeleton before to find the passage, so it clearly appeared after that condition was completed.

Without hesitation, Jacob moved. He wanted to get out of this creepy place. But these steps suddenly came to a halt when he noticed something within the crimson sand left behind by the priest's skeleton.

It was a crimson flower that the priest's skeleton was holding. It was completely intact!

Jacob didn't know why but he felt this might come in handy or might have some other use, so he quickly picked up the crimson flower, stowed it in the pendant, and entered the small passage.

However, what Jacob didn't know was that his action just made the entire Dark Ruins shake violently!

Somewhere in the dark ruins was a ruined black castle and a tremor suddenly ran past it, almost making it crumble completely.

Deep underground in this palace, under the pitch-black darkness, two ghostly blue flames were blazing within the earthquake.

An eerie voice suddenly laughed loudly, "Hihihhi... someone just broke a shackle. Could it be the King finally can't control his hunger? Hihihhi... time has come, huh?"

The eerie laughter boomed hysterically in this darkness while those two flames grew brighter and brighter.

Someone else in the Dark Ruins,

An icy voice suddenly rang within the tremor, "Who dared to break the 500 years treaty?! The freedom plain is still not strong, so it had to be those damn corpse eaters! I have to report it and stop them before they bring our ruin!"

A blinding white light suddenly illuminated the dark sky of the dark ruins before it vanished altogether.

At another place of the Dark Ruins, filled with a sea of skeletons and zombies, the center of this incredible force was a high platform.

A dark cape figure holding a pitch-black staff with crimson crystal on top was sitting on a bone throne over this platform.

When the tremor started, a deep, eerie voice rang from the throne as if the metal were scratching together, "Hmm? Broken Shackle? How bold!"

He suddenly hit his staff down in anger, and a powerful shockwave emerged, blasting a vast number of skeletons and zombies.

He roared, "Since our prey wanted to play tricks, let them show the grit of hunters. Start the conquest!"

Menacing cries of bones and wails rang as the sea of Dark Beings started to move!

While the powerful existences overseeing the Dark Ruins started to get restless.

The man who caused it was completely oblivious to this fact.

Jacob didn't know that such phenomena would appear after every trial condition was complete. He merely thought it was just happening in the catacombs.

As he moved in the dark tunnel, Jacob's star watch suddenly vibrated, startling him.

When he saw another message from an unknown source, he frowned and opened it.

"You have received the Blessing of Priest."

'What does that mean? Is it some kind of proof that I clear one of the three conditions? What will happen if someone else clears the other two? Who would be the winner and loser?

'That damn book left too many loopholes. All I can do is keep moving and hope such a situation won't arise.

'No one has any idea about what conditions are in place, so I shouldn't have any competitors unless I have terrible luck.'

Jacob thought gravely as he moved forward, and as he moved, he felt he was going upward after walking for half an hour.

Jacob finally saw a ray of light coming from a tiny hole!

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 190: The Three Conditions

Jacob finally saw a ray of light coming from a tiny hole, and with shimmering eyes, he quickly approached it. The earthquake was already gone, and the catacomb maze with it, probably.

As he approached the tiny light hole, Jacob's senses were on an all-time high. He tried to look on the other side, and his eyes widened when he saw the other side of the hole.

Although he could only see a small portion of the other side, Jacob was astonished because there was an old dusty stone bookshelf under a dim light. Other than that, he couldn't see clearly, but he didn't hear any movement.

'A bookshelf? What is this place?' Jacob didn't make a move posthaste as he decided to observe for a while.

The space on the other side was blocked by a wall, and if he broke it, this would cause a huge commotion, so he wanted to make sure no one was there to ambush him when he did break the wall.

Jacob didn't see or hear anything even after a while, so he decided to move. His short sword appeared in his hand, and he impaled it into the hole. He wanted to make it bigger to see more clearly.

The wall was made of soft stone, the blade easily pierced through it, and Jacob could finally see what was on the other side.

It was a five cubic meter stone room. Besides the small stone bookshelf, there was a stone bed, a magic torch like the underground catacomb, and a stone door to the left, nothing else.

Since no one was there, Jacob didn't wait any longer and punched with full force and blasted open a hole large enough for himself to leave the secret passage.

However, Jacob wasn't in a hurry to check the stone door as he moved toward the bookshelf first.

A thick layer of dust was collected over the bookshelf. There were five books placed in it.

Jacob tried picking up a book, but the moment he did, it turned into dust.

'Just how long have these books been here to decay into dust?' Jacob frowned as he tried to touch the other book, but it also crumbled under his touch.

However, the third book didn't crumble, making Jacob's eye shine with anticipation since this will make this book unique from the decaying ones.

He picked up the old book, and after clearing up the dust, it had a gray tatter cover and was two-centimeter-thick, and the writing on it was still readable.

But Jacob frowned when he saw the writing was the same kind of runes in the underground catacombs, it was rune language.

'I have to buy rune language after I leave this place.' Jacob thought as he stowed away the book and decided to decipher it after leaving the dark runes.

He then tried the last two books, the fourth one also turned to dust, but the last book survived, which made him happy since there could be some unimaginable knowledge stored in these books.

Especially the book with the rune language, which according to Livia, was the language used in Magic.

When Jacob cleared the dust, he discovered the second intact book was actually a folded parchment made with some beast skin.

When Jacob opened it, his eyes widened because there was a complex design with symbols drawn.

'Ritual Array Formation! Although the symbols used in this design are from Rune Language, it looked too much like the Ritual Array Formation within Immortika.' Jacob made an educative guess with ecstasy and stowed away the parchment.

He never thought he would discover something like and Ritual Array Formation in this place or it was a reward for clearing the first condition.

Whatever the case was, Jacob was glad that he came here and more resolute than ever to clear the entire trial.

After making sure there was nothing else hidden in that stone room, he finally moved toward the stone door, and after using some force, it finally moved while making eerie sounds.

What appeared made Jacob baffled because the door opened behind a 2-meter-tall half-broken statue on an altar. As Jacob vigilantly left the room, he discovered a broken hall with weeds and debris.

He then has a clear look at the broken statue. From its design and skeleton feet, he instantly saw the resemblance between this statue and the Priest Skeleton Statue underground.

'Is this a temple of Priest Skeleton?' Jacob guessed as he frowned grimly.

Because if he hadn't appeared underground, he would never have been able to find that this was the place he was looking for with just those debris and his half-broken statue.

Nevertheless, he wasn't too worried since It's only been a day in dark ruins, and he had already cleared one of the three conditions, which hadn't been clear for almost 400 years!

Afterward, Jacob closed the secret room since it was a perfect-hidden place if he ever needed it, hid it with dust, and then blasted the remaining statue in front of it, blocking the room completely and making it look like it was like this from the start.

Jacob then left the doorless temple while covering his tracks.

When he appeared outside, he was baffled because in front of him were all sorts of ruined buildings, the sky was completely dark without any stars or moon, and the broken stone streets were lit with Magic torches.

'So, Dark Ruins are a City?' Jacob wondered as he looked behind the small temple, which was the only intact place within these buildings.

Holding his swords, he took the street toward the south, the place was filled with darkness, and he couldn't see clearly far ahead, and the only light was the dim light of those torches.

However, Jacob had only crossed three streets when he heard hundreds of footsteps approaching. Startled, he quickly hid in a broken stone house and tried to hide his presence as much as possible.

Soon, those footsteps got closer, and they clearly didn't notice him as they continued to move toward wherever they were going.

Jacob peeped through the broken wall, and his heart jumped when he saw hundreds of skeleton soldiers marching forward.

'I almost forget about the undead.' Jacob grimaced as he waited for those skeletons to pass through.

It didn't take long before leaving, and silence descended on the area again.

However, Jacob didn't move carelessly anymore as he started to think about the last two conditions and where they might be.

'The first condition was, 'Destroy the Dignity of King.'

'The second condition was, 'Give the Maiden Hope.'

'The third condition was, 'Salvage the Priest with Blood Flower by staining his tears with blood.'

'Since the last hurdle is precise, I should look for the easiest one that made any sense. Destroy the Dignity of King is the easiest to make sense of. A King's dignity is either his Kingdom or Position, so I should look for a castle or palace where's a King live.

'As for the Give the Maiden Hope, I have no idea what it means, just the third condition.'

Jacob sighed ruefully. Although he knew the conditions to clear the trial, these conditions were as good as riddles. He wondered just how difficult trials would be in the higher plains since the rare plains trial was this difficult.

However, his thought process was broken when he heard footsteps again!

Furthermore, this time, there were even more than before.

'Just how many Dark Beings are in this place?' Jacob's heart churned as he silently spied on the approaching beings.

This time, there were no skeletons but rotten skin zombies with ghastly features as green toxic saliva trickling from their lipless mouths. Their movements weren't sluggish as they walked even faster than the skeletons.

The Toxic Zombies type Dark Beings were dreaded even more than the Skeletons type Dark Being because of their venomous properties. All the high-level zombies were virtually cureless since the Rare Plains didn't have the resources to make the cure for their toxic.

Furthermore, high-level zombies can turn anyone into low-level zombies, making them their thralls who follow them mindlessly.

They were one of the biggest trump cards of Dark Beings.

However, Jacob's eyes blazed with killing intent because there was one more fact about zombies 80% of them possess magic cores!

If he could ambush one zombie at a time, he might collect some well-needed magic cores. His entire purpose for leaving the freedom plains was to collect the magic core, which hadn't changed even with the location.

Even if he could buy high-level magic cores, he still had to collect the low-level ones, and he didn't mind saving his ZC for something else if he could collect those cores on his own.

Lastly, only the Extraordinary Skeletons have magic cores, and they were not easy to hunt for Jacob right now, but these Zombies were different, and as long as he didn't alert the entire horde, he could hunt them easily!