

## D. Extraction 711

### Chapter 711 Dimensional Creature

The Dimensional Creature's body was covered with scales and spikes that seemed as hard as the toughest steel and as sharp as blades.

Its tail was long and lethal, tipped with a spike that could pierce through layers of armor and flesh. Its head was horned and fearsome, with a mouth full of jagged fangs that could tear apart anything in its path.

"What in the world?! How is that Creature here already?!"

"This is bad! This Creature had never lurked around the entrance before!"

"We must return immediately! The entrance may close, but we can still open it someday!"

"Master Steins! We have to go!"

"Sir Immortal! It probably sensed your presence and had gone mad! We need to be careful!" Steins said as he could only guess that Vale's presence itself had attracted the Dimensional Creature!

It wasn't that difficult to connect the clues after all!

"Mhmmm... This Creature does indeed look strong. No wonder many of you died from it." Vale commented as he thoroughly inspected the Creature while it was destroying everything in its path to arrive at their area.

"Sir, wanted to help you, but we just arrived! Our Spell Models haven't adjusted in this realm yet! We have no way of supporting you." Steins immediately said after realizing that Vale didn't look worried at the Dimensional Creature's appearance.

"I understand... Just do your best to protect yourselves." Vale said as he took a deep breath. He was getting ready to fight against the mysterious Creature.

Screech~

The Dimensional Creature didn't roar loudly, but it created a screeching noise that seemed to attack their very soul!

Luckily, Steins and the others had prepared for such an attack as their amulets took effect. As for Vale, his soul was already strong enough to ignore this preemptive attack from the Creature.

As the Dimensional Creature charged at them and started getting too close, the Arcanists prepared to fight back... Not with their Arcane Spells, but with their Magic Artifacts...

They had Talismans, Amulets, and other trinkets that would support them, and they also raised their weapons, ready to unleash their close combat skills.

Although their Spell Models hadn't adjusted yet, their Arcane Energy could still be used to trigger their Artifacts.

However, they soon realized that even triggering their Artifacts' abilities was difficult!

'Is it because of the noise this Creature made just now? That's an interesting ability... I thought it only messed up the energy flow to stop the Arcanists from using spells. It actually disrupted Magic Artifacts' energy as well...' Vale mused as he analyzed what had just happened.

Nonetheless, before Vale could act, a few of the Arcanists were still somehow able to launch some of their spells.

They all came from the Talismans they were carrying!

It was quite an interesting bit of information as it showed that Talismans were actually built quite different.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

As Vale watched the spells hit the Dimensional Creature, he realized why it was a menace against Arcanists.

The Dimensional Creature appeared to be immune to any type of spell. As soon as the Spells landed, it was as if they were nothing but sparks and smoke.

'No... It's not like that... This Dimensional Creature isn't immune at all. The Creature itself is resisting the presence of Spells. The Arcane Spells were distorted and dissipated and unable to affect the Creature...' Vale mused as he witnessed how the Dimensional Creature appear immune to spells, but it was simply using a method that was quite similar to his Spell Dispersion!

However, the only difference was that his Spell Dispersion needed to be cast, but the Dimensional Creature needed not.

"Tsk... This is just impossible." Steins muttered as he confirmed that there was really nothing they could do for now. He was already thinking of retreating, but because the Immortal was still planning to stay, he could only pray that it wouldn't be too late if Vale failed to win against the Creature.

"Master Steins..."

"We should move now..."

The Arcanists behind him were obviously shocked and terrified, realizing that they had no way to defend themselves.

"Just shut up and wait for the Immortal's instructions." Steins said as he waited for the clash to happen.

The others also looked at Vale, hoping that he could save them.

They knew that he was different from them, that he had powers that they could not comprehend. They knew that he was an Immortal and that he could use Divinity and Celestial Arts.

'Fine... My observation is done...'

Vale saw the fear and desperation in their eyes, and he knew that he should give them some assurance or they might really flee or do something stupid..

Since Arcane Spells doesn't work, he had to use something.

That would be his Divinity and Celestial Arts.

He already confirmed that these two could work really well in this realm.

As Vale stepped forward and faced the Creature, he removed his mask and revealed his face.

"Come..." Vale said as he confidently smiled.

The mask may give him amazing effects in the Human Realm but it was only restraining a bit of his Divinity in the Celestial Realm.

Right now, he wanted to ensure that he would be at his full strength.

"Let's see how you deal with this..."

Vale muttered as he activated his Divinity, and unleashed his Celestial Arts.

First, he summoned a bolt of Divine Lightning and hurled it at the Creature.

Boom!

The lightning struck the Creature and caused it to roar in pain. However, the lightning's strength was already halved when it hit the Dimensional Creature!

Obviously, it wasn't enough to make the Creature bleed!

He did it once again...

Boom!

The lightning lit up the sky and revealed the cracks and fissures that were spreading across the realm. This time, the Dimensional Creature was prepared and was able to cast a strange technique that destroyed the path of the lightning!

It wasn't hit at all!

'So it can learn so quickly... It saw one of my spells and already learned how to deal with it. This Creature is scary!' Vale commented in his mind.

He couldn't help but feel impressed!

'I need to extract this Dimensional Creature... No, maybe I should try enslaving it first...' Vale mused.

He then used his natural ability to control Shadows to continue his fight.

He knew that he had to weaken the Dimensional Creature if he wanted to enslave it. He had to weaken its mind or make it vulnerable!

Whoosh~ Whoosh~

Vale then created a swarm of shadow blades through his Shadow Manipulation and sent them flying at the Creature!

Of course, it was filled with Divinity, and every shadow blade could equal a Tier 3 Piercing Spell!

Thud! Thud! Thud!

As expected, the blades sliced through its scales and spikes.

Screechhh~~

As the Creature bled from its wounds and staggered in its movements, it released another screeching noise, hoping that it would stop Vale from his attacks!

However, this time, the screeching included a clear destructive energy that the Dimensional Creature used to stop his Divine Lightning for a while.

It was completely different from the Corruption Energy of the Demon Saints!

Then, the Dimensional Creature started charging and in a blink of an eye, it was already in front of Vale!

'Interesting... ' Vale mused as he realized that the energy was indeed quite new.

"That's not going to work!" Vale shouted as he cast the Aurora's Embrace, and wrapped himself in a cloak of rainbow light.

Before, he would just release this Celestial Art and hope to hit his target and kill it.

But after becoming an Immortal, his understanding with his Celestial Spell Models increased as well.

As soon as he gathered the Aurora's Energy, he accepted it in his body, and it increased his speed and agility, and dodged the Creature's attacks.

Boom!

Vale's previous spots was destroyed and the Arcanists were thrown away by the sheer force it had released.

Nonetheless, Vale's True Sight was already activated.

True Sight could be considered a Dragon Spell and it was different from other Spell Models.

After it was activated, his senses and perception were enhanced, and he analyzed the Creature's weaknesses.

"It doesn't have one..." Vale wryly smiled after realizing this.

Nonetheless, Vale finally decided to use the Celestial Arts he had obtained from the Immortals and even the Demon Saints!

"Try this!"

Vale said as he invoked Meteor Summon, a spell he extracted from an Immortal!

Indeed, he called forth a massive meteor from the sky and it was directed towards the terrifying Dimensional Creature.

Vale didn't stop from that as he used his Shadow Manipulation to bind the Creature for a second!

It was enough to smash it with a devastating force coming from his Meteor!

Boom!

The Creature was crushed by the impact, and buried under the rubble.

Whoosh~

Of course, the Meteor also caused a shockwave and shook the ground!

"Ahhh..."

Even Vale paused for a moment as he realized that he might be the cause of the destruction of this Remnant Realm!

Chapter 712 Reward?

"Take cover!"

"Move back! Don't get close to the battle!"

"Master Steins! Wallace's team was injured!"

"Fine! Retreat to that hill!"

The group of Mystic Arts Practitioners who should be guiding Vale to take the Golden Key while avoiding any disasters could only adapt to the situation.

Steins had to lead his team and ensure that there would be no casualties!

In the meantime, Vale remained focused as he realized that he could still feel the presence of the Dimensional Creature...

'What a tough creature... This abomination should never enter the Human Realm or it will be a disaster.' Vale thought as he was now determined to ensure that this 'Dungeon' would be forever closed, erasing all possible link to the Human Realm.

Vale then used Ethereal Step, and appeared behind the Dimensional Creature. It was already injured.

This time, he pulled out his Stormbringer Sword, and without any hesitation, he stabbed it into the Creature's heart.

Screechhh~

The Creature was hurt and wanted to move away! It tried to destroy the Sword that Vale was holding but it wasn't just any normal sword, it was considered as a Divine Sword since it was used and made by the previous Paragons!

Vale then imbued his Sword with lightning and burned the Creature from the inside!

Of course, Vale didn't forget to activate his Divine Extraction System!

He had to do this if he wanted to capture or kill this Creature!

[ The target has resisted the Extraction. ]

[ Unable to Extract. ]

[ The target has resisted the Extraction. ]

[ Unable to Extract. ]

[ The target has resisted the Extraction. ]

[ Unable to Extract. ]

[ The target has resisted the Extraction. ]

[ Unable to Extract. ]

"What the heck?" Vale was confused as he could tell that the Creature's life was already weakened! He was confused why he was still failing!

'Does it have to be on its dying breath to extract it? Or can I only kill it? No other options?'

Vale sighed as he realized that the Dimensional Creature was truly quite special. Anyway, since that was the case, he decided to just kill it for now. In any case, he could probably look for another Dimensional Creature later.

'Die...'

Finally, Vale twisted the blade and ended the Creature's life... or, at the very least, that was what he thought!

Vale's eyes widened in disbelief as the Creature, which should have been killed, began to stir once more. Its heart, pierced by the divine Stormbringer Sword, seemed to regenerate, stitching the fatal wound closed as if by some dark sorcery.

The beast's screech turned into a growl, and its red eyes blazed with renewed fury.

It burst with overwhelming power and pushed Vale away!

Furthermore, his Sword started showing some cracks!

Even with his Divinity coating the Sword, it still took severe damage from the Dimensional Creature's mysterious attack!

"Impossible..." Vale muttered under his breath.

He had underestimated the Creature's resilience, a mistake he wouldn't normally make. Nonetheless, he realized one of the Dimensional Creature's secrets. It was no wonder they could travel through other dimensions!

Steins and the other Arcanists watched from a safe distance, their hearts pounding as they witnessed the Immortal's battle.

"It's still alive..." Steins muttered. He was also in disbelief after seeing the weakened Creature suddenly burst with power. As a matter of fact, it seemed to have even gone stronger!

"But it's the first time we've seen the Dimensional Creature gets injured. We might have a chance to win."

"That whole Creature is a fortune... If Vale gets its corpse intact, it will shake the whole continent..."

"Right... Even just a few grams of its blood will probably make us rich."

The other Arcanists mumbled as they saw some hope in this battle although the Dimensional Creature was still alive.

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In the meantime, Vale, realizing that the Creature could not be killed by that attack, tapped deeper into his Celestial Arts!

He gathered his Shadow Divinity and triggered one of his strongest Celestial Art after being an Immortal, it was his Shadow Mutilation!

Vale cast the Spell and targeted the Creature... It didn't fail as expected but Vale realized that the mark didn't last long!

Before he could try and cut the Creature's shadow, the effect was already gone!

"Three seconds... I need to attack within that time frame if I want to kill with this Spell." Vale mused as he decided to try using his other Spells.

Vale took a deep breath as he enveloped his body in a shroud of darkness that seemed to move with a life of its own.

It was Vale's Darkness Manipulation Spell. Although the other Arcanists weren't able to use their Spell Models yet, Vale had no issue using it now.

The only concern was that the Dimensional Creature had a strange ability that protected its body from Arcane Spells.

Screecchhh~

Once again, the Creature lunged, its massive form was a blur of motion. The Arcanists failed to see its movement but Vale faster! He was no longer in his previous position when the Creature arrived!

Vale reappeared above it, his body crackling with the raw power of Divine Lightning. He actually used his body as the catalyst instead of the sky!

It was something that was only possible after becoming an Immortal!

Boom!

With a thunderous roar, he unleashed a torrent of lightning and divine energy, striking the beast with a force that tore through the air.

Vale trusted this Spell a lot since he had already upgraded this Celestial Arts to the limit!

It was already in the Perfect Realm!

The Creature howled, its body convulsing as the divine energy coursed through it.

But it was not yet defeated!

It swept its tail, the venomous spike at its end aiming for Vale with lethal precision.

Screech!

The attack didn't end there, the Creature continued with its sound attack, hoping to disorient Vale in the process.

Vale, however, was already moving, his form flickering with the speed of Presence Shift.

Then, he also activated his Aurora's Embrace.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Vale danced around the Creature's attacks, his movements were like a haze of color and light!

Vale knew he needed to end this quickly.

A prolonged battle between two powerful beings in this realm wasn't good!

After all, the realm was already collapsing around them. The very fabric of the dimension had started tearing apart!

He still had a mission to find the Golden Key!

He raised his hands to the sky, invoking the Meteor Summon once again!

Although it would damage the Realm, he had to do this if he wanted to capture the Dimensional Creature.

The air grew heavy, and a shadow loomed above as a massive meteor hurtled down from the cosmos, aimed directly at the Creature.

This time, Vale spend over 300 Divinity Points to cast this. It was several times larger than the normal amount!

However, he had to do this if he wanted to kill it!

With a ground-shaking impact, the meteor struck, engulfing the Creature in a cloud of dust and debris. The Arcanists shielded their eyes, but Vale stood firm, his gaze locked on the settling dust.

"Stay together! Use your Amulets to protect the front!" Steins commanded as he couldn't help but feel impressed at the power of the two beings.

Their battle was truly on a different level.

'I'm lucky to have brought this Recording Crystal... This would be huge...' Steins couldn't help but think at the riches he will earn once he sold this Crystal that contained the full might of an Immortal and Dimensional Creature!

As the dust cleared, the Creature emerged, wounded but still alive.

Vale couldn't help but sigh after seeing this.

The Dimensional Creature was truly a being born of the Cataclysm, a survivor of apocalyptic destruction.

Vale understood then that this battle was more than a fight—it was a testament to his resolve as an Immortal.

"Since your beings killed plenty of Celestials before... I guess it wasn't surprising that you're incredible strong." Vale muttered as could tell that Dimensional Creature was preparing to attack once again.

However, before it could launch another attack, Vale used his Ethereal Step.

In a blink, he was upon the Creature, his Stormbringer Sword that was glowing with an ethereal lightning was about to land!

With a roar of his own, Vale struck, the blade cutting through the Creature's hide as if it were made of shadow.

The Creature's roar turned into a whimper, its form beginning to fade. Vale did not relent. He channeled the Corruption Curse, a Demon Saint's Spell he had Extracted that would ensure the Creature's demise.



Black tendrils of energy wrapped around the beast, seeping into its wounds and corrupting its very essence!

With a final, desperate attempt, the Creature tried to retaliate, but its movements were sluggish, its strength had already started waning.

Then, Vale tried to use his Slave Mark, but as expected... It somehow didn't work.

With a sigh, he delivered the final blow, his sword cleaving through the Creature's neck!

The head fell, and the body collapsed, the dark energy of the curse consuming it until nothing remained but ash...

### Chapter 713 Captured

Vale exhaled deeply, his shoulders slumping slightly as he looked at the ash where the mighty Dimensional Creature once stood.

Not a scale nor a drop of blood remained that might be good for alchemy. It was definitely a significant loss since he knew that it would be a great gift to Denise.

Steins approached, his expression mirroring Vale's disappointment.

"A shame we couldn't harvest anything from it." He said, his voice tinged with regret.

"Indeed..." Vale replied, his gaze still fixed on the ground.

"But at least we're all safe. That's what truly matters."

The others nodded in agreement, their faces a mix of relief and wistfulness. They had all dreamed of the wealth and fame that would come with such a trophy. Yet, they were grateful for Vale's victory, which had spared them all from harm.

As they set out towards the location of the Golden Key, the realm around them seemed to protest, its end near.

Thunder cracked like the world's spine, and the earth trembled with the realm's death throes.

"Keep your eyes open and your feet steady..." Steins called out over the din.

"This place won't hold much longer..." Vale muttered as he looked around...

"It does look like that, Sir Immortal. However, we confirmed that it would still last for centuries..." Steins said.

Vale decided not to comment on that, but he still nodded at him.

The group then moved with purpose, but the unpredictable quakes made their journey perilous. There was also chaotic energy, whirlwinds, and flashes of lightning strikes that they had to worry about.

Nonetheless, Vale's Magic Zone remained active.

Suddenly, Vale halted, his hand raised for silence.

Everyone quickly noticed it and of course, they didn't ignore the Immortal's warning.

"What is it?" whispered an Arcanist, her eyes scanning the surroundings.

"There..." Vale pointed to a small, darting shape.

"A Dimensional Creature—perhaps the offspring of the one we just faced."

Vale didn't just made a random guess. Vale had been observing it for several minutes now.

He already noticed the similarity between the Dimensional Creature's Aura and appearance. He also knew how it had been watching them ever since he killed the other Dimensional Creature.

It was as if it was waiting for him to return its parent.

Nonetheless, as soon as they realized that it was a baby Dimensional Creature, excitement flickered in the Arcanists group's eyes.

This was definitely a second chance, a new opportunity for glory.

Vale crept forward, his movements silent as the falling dusk. The Creature, sensing danger, tried to flee, but Vale was quicker.

He used his Presence Shift to get a better position before he triggered his Shadow Divinity and controlled the shadows everywhere. Soon, bands of darkness sprang from his fingertips, ensnaring the Creature!

"Sir Immortal! We have a Containment Crystal from the Rune Arts Department of the Burea. You can try capturing it alive with its help!" Steins suggested.

Vale was already thinking of using his Extraction System since he actually didn't get an error when he tried. It means that his Slave Mark would most likely work as well.

However, he was quite curious if the Containment Crystal would actually work.

After a moment of hesitation, Vale nodded.

"Alright, let me see if it works."

"Yes! We'll also help bind it!" Steins urged his team while stepping forward with a Containment Crystal in hand.

Vale then took the Containment Crystal, and after an appraisal, he immediately knew how to use it. Without hesitation, he triggered the crystal and lights started appearing from it.

Soon, the Creature fought against the magical restraints. Its tiny form was actually surprisingly powerful even with a small body...

However, Vale's Shadow Manipulation was stronger.

The light from the crystal constricted, and the Creature's struggles slowed.

With a deft movement, Steins secured the Creature within the crystal. It glowed faintly, the Creature's eyes meeting Vale's through the translucent barrier.

For some odd reason, the Containment Crystal, with the size of his fist, was able to fit a Dimensional Creature that was about 1 meter in height!

It was such a strange sight!

"We have it..." Vale announced, a hint of triumph in his voice. This was the first time he captured a creature with such a method. He didn't dislike it at all!

The group then gathered around, peering at the captured Creature with a mix of curiosity and awe.

"Haha! We did it!" Steins couldn't help but laugh. He was already happy that they were able to help the Immortal achieve this.

"Incredible... I thought that the Rune Arts Department wasn't doing anything incredible. I guess the budget for their department was justified."

"Hmph... It doesn't change the fact that they're eating a huge part in the budget! We should still be the ones getting the most with how dangerous our job is!"

"This could change everything," murmured an Arcanist, her eyes reflecting the crystal's glow.

Steins nodded, his mind already racing with possibilities.

"Let's move on. The Golden Key is still waiting for us..."

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The journey resumed, the group weaving through the treacherous remnants of the Celestial Realm.

Thankfully, although the surroundings were still unwelcoming, there weren't any other Arcanists exploring the area.

After all, they believed that these Arcanists who had access from other entrances were much more dangerous.

After an arduous hour, Steins halted, his hand raised for attention.

"We're close now, just half an hour from the altar..." He announced, his voice carrying a note of urgency.

However, as Steins and the group edged closer to the altar, the ground beneath them convulsed violently, heralding the arrival of another formidable foe.

It was another Dimensional Creature!

"Not again..." Steins couldn't help but complain after seeing it. These Dimensional Creatures should be near those areas rich with otherworldly energy!

The Golden Key, which doesn't have any energy flowing out of it, shouldn't attract these creatures!

Nonetheless, as they observed the Creature, it was akin to the one Vale had vanquished.

It emerged from the rupturing earth, its scales shimmering like dark steel and its spikes promising agony once you've gotten hit.

Bam!

The Creature's tail hit the ground. It was a lethal appendage tipped with a spike sharp enough to pierce the heavens.

Its horned visage, a grotesque mask of primal rage, housed a maw lined with fangs eager to rend flesh from bone.

Well, it seemed a lot scarier than the previous one.

It actually looked really angry!

Steins' voice was a calm in the storm...

"Stand back! This one is beyond our measure."

Whether it was the old or the young Dimensional Creature, their group would be helpless against it. There was no point in staying in this battle, and they should have just trusted the immortal.

Soon, Vale stepped forward as he observed the subtle energy fluctuation of the Dimensional Creature...

It was a bit different from the one he encountered first...

"This Creature... it's not just strong. It's ancient, powerful, and untamed..." He said, his eyes locked with the beast's baleful glare.

Screeechhh~

The Creature screamed, a sound that seemed to tear at the fabric of the realm itself, and charged with the fury of a cataclysm.

"Are you that angry? Come!"

Vale met its onslaught with his own Spells.

He summoned a Meteor from the void, its fiery tail illuminating the chaos of the collapsing realm.

Boom!

The meteor crashed into the Creature, but it was undeterred, its scales deflecting the celestial flame. It wasn't even knocked back!

It then started releasing destructive energy that would crush anything it touched!

It was dangerous!

However, Vale's form flickered with Divine Lightning, his silhouette a blur as he employed Presence Shift to evade the Creature's relentless attacks.

Then, he released his Divine Lightning to disrupt its flow of energy! That's right, the Divine Lightning was now reduced to a Celestial Art that could only disrupt the Dimensional Creature.

Nonetheless, wrapped himself in Aurora's Embrace, a haze of colors and light that obscured his movements... He wanted to release this Spell after finding an opportunity.

But the Creature was relentless.

It matched Vale's speed with its own ferocity, its tail a blur as it countered every move.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Vale struggled as his Spells were being blocked or destroyed by the Creature's tail.

Furthermore, even if he got a direct hit, the Creature would just completely ignore the pain and continue!

The Creature's resilience was unlike anything he had faced; it was as if the very essence of the realm bolstered its strength!

Steins and the others could only watch in awe, their hearts racing with the knowledge that they were witnessing a battle between titans.

Vale, drawing upon the depths of his Immortal power, knew this was a fight that he really had to take seriously or he might be the one to fall!

After taking a deep breath, he channeled all his might into one decisive blow.

He pulled out his sword and poured his Divinity into the weapon. Vale then used his Presence Shift to ensure that he wouldn't miss this blow!

Boom!

Vale caught the Creature off guard!

The Creature then faltered, its roar fading into a pained gasp as Vale's sword pierced through its head!

This time, however, Vale couldn't help but feel curious as he was now allowed to Extract this Creature!

Chapter 714 Pawn

Vale decided not to kill this Dimensional Creature immediately. Instead, he chose to take his chance and extract this being!

[ Living Monster has been discovered. Would you like to start the extraction? ]

"Monster?" Vale muttered in surprise before finally agreeing to the extraction.

"Yes..."

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +500, Vitality +0.5, Divinity +5, Aetherial Essence +100, Complete Evolved Spell Light ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +500, Vitality +0.5, Divinity +5, Aetherial Essence +100, Complete Cosmic Sight Spell Model, Rift Blade ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +500, Vitality +0.5, Divinity +5, Aetherial Essence +100, Complete Evolved Spell Light ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +500, Vitality +0.5, Divinity +5, Aetherial Essence +100, Complete Astral Chains Spell Model, Complete Void Claw Spell Model ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +500, Vitality +0.5, Divinity +5, Aetherial Essence +100, Complete Evolved Spell Light ]

[ Extraction Failed. ]

[ Extraction Failed. ]

As soon as Vale saw several failed extractions, he knew that he already reached the limit and had to stop.

'Spell Models, new Essence, and even an item... Interesting...' Vale mused as he realized that he had obtained such valuable things in this extraction.

Of course, he still couldn't help but feel curious how he managed to extract this Dimensional Creature but failed to do it with the first one.

He could only guess that it was related to his arrival in the Realm. Perhaps, his Divine Extraction System wasn't adjusted yet, or the Dimensional Creature was just unique.

Nonetheless, as Vale finished his extraction, the Creature finally collapsed, its body dissolving into the aether, leaving behind only the echo of its final cry.

Vale stood victorious, yet the toll of the battle was evident. Just now, he already used a quarter of his energy. If he encountered several Dimensional Creatures at the same time, he might really be in trouble.

He then turned to Steins, nodding solemnly.

"We must hurry to the altar..."

With renewed urgency, the group pressed on. After encountering these Dimensional Creatures, they knew very well that they had to finish their mission as quickly as possible. They must find the Golden Key.

Vale, ever vigilant, sensed the latent perils that might lurk on their path.

"Wait... Let's not rush. I need to prepare something." Vale said as he decided to employ his Slave Mark Spell on the young Dimensional Creature they had captured earlier, hoping to turn a potential threat into an ally.

After all, if there are many Dimensional Creatures later, he might fail to protect Steins and the others.

The others could only accept Vale's proposal as they waited to see what he was about to do.

Vale then looked at the Containment Crystal made by the Bureau's Research Team.

The Creature, small compared to its fallen kin, was like a living black fire contained within the crystal. Its scales were shimmering dark hues even through the containment.

Tiny spikes adorned its back, and its eyes, wide and curious, glowed with a faint otherworldly light.

'It looks quite cute right now, but it'll definitely be scary once it grows up.' Shane commented in his mind.

After appreciating the Creature for a while, Vale carefully unsealed the Containment Crystal, the air around them humming with released energy.

Whoosh~

The Creature blinked up at him, its instincts urging it to flee, yet it remained still, transfixed by the power Vale exuded.

It definitely sensed their difference in terms of Divinity.

'Good...'

With a silent activation of his Spell Model, Vale cast the Slave Mark Spell. A sigil of light emerged from his hand, floating down to rest upon the Creature's forehead. The mark pulsed once, twice, then settled, before disappearing completely. It was a sign of the bond now forged.

'That's a lot easier than I thought...' Vale mused as he initially thought that he would have to pummel the Creature to the ground.

The Creature let out a soft, resonant sound, not of submission, but of recognition. It seemed to understand its new role in the grand scheme of Vale's quest.

"Sir Immortal... What happened?" Steins asked.

"It's not fleeing... Did you somehow tame it?!"

"Ahhh... That's possible?!"

The Mystic Arts Practitioners couldn't help but exclaim. After all, their Bureau tried everything they could to deal with the Dimensional Creatures. It means that they used the 12 Arcane Paths to find its weakness already.

However, none of it worked against the Creature, so they concluded that only the Immortals with Divinity could deal with them!

"Yes... I've tamed the creature. It will no longer harm us." Vale replied as he looked at their reaction.

"Alright! Let's go and continue." He said as he gestured to Steins to continue escorting him.

Half an hour passed as they navigated the crumbling realm, and finally, the altar came into view.

But it was not as they expected. Two cloaked figures stood before it, their hands raised in a complex weave of spells, their fingers tracing intricate patterns in the air.

The Golden Key, resplendent and ancient, hovered above the altar, encased in a matrix of glowing runes.

The cloaked figures chanted in unison, their voices a discordant melody that clashed with the realm's own song.

The runes around the key flickered and twisted, contorting as if in pain, struggling against the intruders' magic. The key itself seemed to pulse with a desperate energy, as if crying out for rescue.

"W-what's going on?! Who are those people?!" Steins cried out as he saw what was happening.

Those cloaked individuals were definitely not people from the Bureau!

"Master Steins! We should stop them!"

"They're trying to take the Golden Key!"

"Wait... It should be guarded by the Remnant Spirits of the Celestials!"

"R-right... There were two Dimensional Creatures and over a dozen of Celestial Spirits were lurking around this area before. If they managed to defeat all of those beings, then they're definitely powerful. We might have to retreat, Sir Immortal..." Steins immediately said as he realized that there were no ordinary people who would enter this place.

"Since they're not part of the Bureau. Then we can kill them, right?" Vale muttered as he used his Divine Sense and failed.

He then used his Dragon's True Sight and other Spells that would help him identify these people but he actually failed from doing so.

'I guess they deserve to be here...' Vale mused.

Nonetheless, he still didn't feel intimidated as he made his move.

Vale stepped forward and released his Aura. He made sure to announce his presence.

"Halt! Your actions desecrate the sanctity of this place..." He declared, his voice echoing with authority. It was as if he wasn't planning to do the same.

Then, without waiting for their reply, he also showed his Shadow Divinity and covered the entire place with darkness.

The cloaked figures paused, turning to face the newcomers, their eyes hidden but their intent clear. They had not expected interference, and now, a new confrontation loomed on the horizon.

However, despite Vale's Aura and Darkness covering the entire field, the two individuals weren't scared.

"Who are you?" Vale demanded, his hand resting on the hilt of his Stormbringer Sword, ready for any attacks.

The two people didn't answer immediately as if they were trying to assess Vale's power. After a few moments, they seemed to have gained more confidence and answered with a hint of ridicule.

"We are beyond your understanding, young Immortal." One of the figures spoke, their voice echoing as if from a distant chasm.

The other smiled and decided to reveal their identity. He was hoping that the group who had disturbed them would be scared enough and just leave this place.

"Alright... You probably heard of us. If we're not busy we will be taking your Divinity, but you're allowed to leave this time... If you still don't get it, I'm telling you now that we are Time Manipulators, masters of the temporal weave."

As soon as Vale heard this, he was shocked... This was the first time he had seen Time Manipulators, one of the beings that could deal with Celestials!

'Not good.' Vale thought.

"Are you sure we're letting him leave?" One of the figures asked his companion.

"Yes... We're busy with this Golden Key. Should we deal with them first?"

"Mhmm... I think we should kill them now. The Golden Key might weaken us or something. It's better to remove any potential threat."

"That's true..." As soon as the two Time Manipulators made up their mind, Steins, Vale, and the rest of the group realized that they were in danger.

Without warning, the air turned heavy as if it was filled with chaotic energy, and soon, Vale felt a crushing force envelop him.

Time itself seemed to slow, his movements becoming sluggish, his thoughts clouded.



"W-what?" Vale was shocked as this was the first time he had felt something like this.

"You can be proud of yourself. You will die from a Time Manipulator's hand..." The other figure taunted, a cruel smile in their voice. "We control the very fabric of time. You are but a pawn in our eyes, young Immortal."

## Chapter 715 Against the Time

Vale wasn't even bothered how they recognized him as a young Immortal instead of an ancient one and just simply maintained a young appearance.

Instead, he was really worried that he'd get killed at this point!

He struggled against the temporal distortion, each second stretching into an eternity.

His allies were frozen in place, helpless to assist.

There was simply no way these normal Mystic Arts Practitioners were capable of fending off the two Time Manipulators!

'Not good...' Vale's mind raced as he tried thinking what Spells he could use against the Time Manipulators.

It was unfortunate that the Charms, Talismans, Amulets, and various Magic Artifacts that he had prepared weren't activating in front of these Time Manipulators.

He has the Black Grimoire that he could use to summon powerful Undead Creatures, but he doesn't have the time to call them.

His Doombringer Ring was also incapable of turning these figures into undead. His Devil Mask, Stormbringer, his Arcane Energy Scrolls, and other trinkets weren't useful in this situation as well.

Then, he also considered using the Rift Blade he had just looted from the Dimensional Creature. After all, it might be the variable he needed in order to win.

'No... There's still another item.' Vale thought.

Aside from these items, there was one of them that he could use to fight against the Time Manipulators!

It was none other than his Temporal Timepiece!

However, although he kept it in his body, it wasn't being triggered even after being attacked by the Time Manipulators.

It doesn't have any passive ability that could protect him!

In the end, Vale had to do his best to trigger its activation and help him in his current predicament!

'No... It's too late!' Vale thought as he realized that the two Time Manipulators had increased the intensity of their abilities!

If this continued he will certainly die!

He had to try to activate his Divine Extraction System and hope that it would extract the mysterious temporal force that was pressing on him!

But that would require some concentration to make it work!

However, just as despair began to take hold, the young Dimensional Creature, branded by Vale's Slave Mark Spell, let out a resonant cry.

Awwwoooo~

It was a sound that transcended the bounds of time, a pure note that pierced the veil of the Time Manipulators' magic!

The temporal field they had created fractured, shards of frozen moments shattering around them.

Suddenly, Vale found his strength returning, his speed restored. Vale was also shocked at this as he failed to react in time!

"Impossible!" one of the Time Manipulators exclaimed. They already noticed the existence of the Dimensional Creature a while ago. They weren't too bothered by that creature since they'd already killed plenty of them before.

They knew that it wouldn't be that difficult to kill another one.

"How can this small creature break our control?!" The other Time Manipulator was also confused as he squinted his eyes and stared at the young Dimensional Creature.

"It seems we have underestimated this one... I think we should capture it first..." The other conceded, their composure slipping.

"No... Let's just kill it. I have no interest in learning its secrets. Once it dies, the problem will be solved."

The two Time Manipulators agreed as they looked at the young Dimensional Creature.

However, as Vale's power returned, and realized what had happened, he wasted no time.

He triggered one of the Temporal Timepiece's it was the Temporal Bubble that covered himself. With this defensive ability, he hoped that it would be enough to stop the Time Manipulators from making him helpless.

As for its other ability, he was unfortunately not skilled enough to operate two abilities of the Timepiece at the same time. With that in consideration, he decided to use its defensive ability instead.

With a roar, Vale charged, his Stormbringer Sword alight with divine energy.

The Time Manipulators raised their hands, weaving spells of reversal, but the Dimensional Creature was faster.

It darted between Vale and the manipulators, its body glowing with an inner light. As it moved, the spells unraveled, their magic dissipating into the air.

'Nice job!' Vale thought as he used his Presence Shift!

Vale seized the moment, his blade singing through the air as he struck at the figures.

They dodged, their cloaks billowing, but they were clearly shaken.

Just now, they also failed to use their Time Magic against Vale! They stealthily used a total of four other Temporal Magic, and for some reason, Vale was being protected by something they couldn't see!

It definitely did not come from the young Dimensional Creature!

'How did he suddenly get immune to our Spells?'

'Not good... This guy is only baiting us! He had the power to stop Time Magic in the first place!'

"Retreat!" One of them hissed. "We must regroup!"

In a flash of light, the Time Manipulators vanished, leaving behind only the echo of their departure.

Vale could probably have stopped them in time if he used Temporal Distortion instead of the Temporal Bubble. However, as he thought of this, he also knew that he would die if he didn't use the Temporal Bubble just now.

"Whew~ It's finally done." Vale sighed as he still felt glad that he survived this unexpected battle.

He really didn't expect to have a battle against Time Manipulators in this dimension.

Anyway, Vale turned his attention to the Dimensional Creature, a newfound respect in his eyes.

"Thank you, little one..." He said softly.

"You have saved us all."

The creature chirped, its eyes gleaming with intelligence. It couldn't speak, but Vale knew that the creature could understand what he was saying.

With the immediate threat gone, the group approached the altar.

The Golden Key lay before them, and its seals were intact since the attempts of the Time Manipulators were thwarted. These seals were even regenerating at an incredible speed.

"Sir Immortal, alright?" Steins said as his group finally gained the courage to move. They also thought that they were about to die just now.

Although they weren't assaulted by the Time Manipulators spells, they were still caught within the Temporal Field they had created, albeit at the edge of it.

The pressure they felt wasn't as terrifying as what Vale experienced, but it was still very dangerous for them.

"Yes... I'm fine... You have to thank that Dimensional Creature as well. We should name him..." Vale replied.

"Y-you're right... We're not going to... Uhm... Kill it to get its parts and sell them?" Steins asked to confirm.

"Of course, not. I will keep it as my pet." Vale answered.

"Right.. Right... Of course, that's the best decision we should make." Steins replied as he agreed to Vale's decision to keep the Dimensional Creature's life. In any case, the ownership of that creature belongs to the Immortal.

"I'll think of the name later. In any case, do you think there's still any danger when we approach the Golden Key?" Vale asked while also using all his scanning abilities to see any dangers ahead.

"I don't think so, Sir Immortal. I believe that the dangers were already destroyed by the two Time Manipulators." Steins replied.

"That makes sense..." Vale said.

However, he was also worried that the two Time Manipulators would suddenly decide to appear.

After all, Vale felt that they had left too quickly.

They had barely shown their powers, and Vale knew that they were certainly stronger than they had shown.

'They're probably exhausted after trying to destroy the seal of the Golden Key. If they're just recuperating somewhere while observing the situation here, they might attack again once they notice that the Golden Key is about to be taken.' Vale mused as he certainly had to think of various situations.

He wouldn't allow himself to get backstabbed now that they had gotten closer to obtaining them.

Determined not to be caught off guard, Vale reached for his Black Grimoire. The ancient tome fell open with a whisper, its pages fluttering as if alive.

Steins and the others watched, eyes wide with a mix of awe and trepidation.

'So that was the rumored grimoire...' Steins thought as he saw it with his own eyes.

Soon, with a voice that resonated with the power of the ancients, Vale summoned the Undead Beings...

From the swirling mists of necromancy, three formidable figures emerged, taking their positions around the still-sealed Golden Key.

The Mummy Lord stood tall, its form wrapped in enchanted bandages inscribed with eldritch runes. Its eyes, two glowing embers, pierced the gloom, and its presence exuded an aura of timeless authority.

The Doom Knight was an imposing sight, clad in blackened armor that absorbed the light. Its helm, adorned with horns, obscured any trace of humanity that might have once existed. In its gauntleted hand, it gripped a sword that hummed with dark energy.

The Ghoul King, on the other hand, was a terrifying masterpiece, its flesh a patchwork of decay and malice. Crowned with a jagged crown, it leered at the living with a hunger that had transcended death itself.

Hissss~

Steins and the rest could only take a deep breath at their sight.

Chapter 716 Survival

"Those undead are no joke... Don't make any unnecessary movements. Even if they're under control by their Summoner, powerful beings like that have a little freedom with their actions." Steins warned his team.

The others could only gasp and nod silently.

To be honest, even Steins stared in disbelief as these guardians of the netherworld took their silent vigil. Although he was a strong Mystic Arts Practitioner and could probably flee from these beings, he wouldn't even want to try and act mighty.

The air grew colder, the very essence of the ancient ruins seeping into the surroundings...

At this time, Vale simply ignored Steins and the others.

After spreading his Magic Zone again and confirming that there are no signs of Time Manipulators around, he approached the Golden Key...

Vale also glanced at the trio of undead looming like sentinels. He was satisfied with the threat they posed to whoever would try to disturb him at this moment.

Vale then stepped forward, his hands trembling with excitement.

Since the Time Manipulators wanted the Golden Key, this item was undoubtedly valuable.

Then, as Vale touched the sealing formation that was stopping him from getting the Golden Key, he received a notification from the system.

Unlike the Time Manipulators, who had to do some tricky or complicated reversal of the seal made by ancient Immortals, Vale simply had to extract it!

[ Energy Source has been discovered. Would you like to start the extraction? ]

"Yes!"

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +800, Immortal Essence +100 ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +800, Immortal Essence +100 ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +500, Immortal Essence +100 ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +500, Immortal Essence +100 ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +400, Immortal Essence +100 ]

...

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +100, Immortal Essence +100 ]

[ Extraction Successful. Energy +100, Immortal Essence +100 ]

[ Extraction Failed. ]

[ Extraction Failed. ]

As soon as he was notified about the failure of the extraction, he knew that it was over. Soon, the sealing formation crashed and disappeared into nothingness.

Just like that, the seal that had stood strong for a very long time was destroyed by Vale's Divine Extraction System.

At this time, the glow of the key grew stronger as if it was excited that it had finally escaped from its prison!

"Let me take care of you..." Vale whispered, reaching out to claim the key.

As his fingers brushed the artifact, a golden light enveloped the surroundings. It was surprisingly a warm glow, and for some reason, he didn't want to place it in the Prison Box that he had received from the Bureau... He wanted to continue holding it...

He doesn't want anyone to touch it. No, letting others see it also felt incredulous! He must be the sole person able to see this item! He must eliminate the others!

As he reached these thoughts, his Spell Dispersion was automatically triggered and soon cleared his mind!

Vale's eyes widened as he swiftly placed the Golden Key in the Prison Box that the Bureau had prepared! He was hoping that it would be fine!

Luckily, as soon as he did this, the Golden Key's influence in his mind also completely disappeared, and his Spell Dispersion stopped working to its limits!

'That's dangerous!' Vale thought as he heaved a sigh of relief. The Golden Key was definitely sealed because it could affect the mind of the one holding it!

Nonetheless, as Vale kept the Prison Box in his inner pocket, a thunderous roar echoed through the Celestial Realm.

The ground trembled violently beneath their feet, and the air crackled with chaotic energy. Lightning streaked across the darkening sky, striking the ancient ruins with a fury that spoke of the end of times.

"This doesn't look good..." Vale muttered as he realized that the intensity of the lightning and the shaking of the earth seemed to slowly get stronger.

He immediately recalled the three Undead Creatures who were curious at the sudden collapse of the realm!

Indeed, the realm itself seemed to scream in agony as it began to destroy the lands and mountains from afar. The unstable fabric of this dimension became even more unhinged and it was tearing apart, the very essence of its existence fading into oblivion!

"Move quickly! We have to leave now! This realm is on the verge of collapse!" Steins shouted over the chaotic atmosphere, his voice barely audible above the realm's death throes.

Vale nodded as he could easily tell what was going on...

He wasn't sure if it was because he had taken the Golden Key or the Time Manipulators did something as an act of revenge.

He wouldn't be surprised if those two did this since he might've done it as well if he were in their shoes.

Anyway, he could probably use his Presence Shift in this situation, but he won't be able to bring these pitiful Arcanists.

He then turned to the others, his eyes meeting Steins'—there was no time for hesitation.

The group of Mystic Arts Practitioners, along with the young Dimensional Creature, sprinted towards the portal that would take them back to the human realm.

The path was treacherous; the once-solid ground now shifted like sand beneath their feet, and fissures opened up, threatening to swallow them whole.

Steins led the way, his staff glowing with a protective aura. Thankfully, although the energy was chaotic, their Spell Models had already adjusted, and they could somehow use their Mystic Arts now.

Steins chanted incantations that stabilized the ground long enough for them to pass.

Behind him, the other practitioners followed suit, using their powers to shield the group from falling debris and the relentless assault of the elements.

Vale also helped them as he took all the lightning bolts that were in their path. He was also able to feel the space that was tearing apart, but with his Temporal Timepiece, he was somehow able to fix it and save the lives of the Arcanists plenty of times!

After some time, they soon got closer to their destination.

Since they were hurrying without care for the path where the Dimensional Creatures would normally stay, they were able to see their destination a lot faster.

Vale also focused on the path ahead, where the portal shimmered in the distance—a wavering promise of safety.

As they neared the entrance, a massive quake shook the realm.

A deafening crack split the air as a chasm opened directly in front of the portal.

Vale's heart raced; they were so close, yet the collapsing realm seemed intent on claiming them as its final victims.

As Vale was thinking of what to do, his attention was suddenly shifted to his current slave.

"Aaarrou!"

With a determined cry, the young Dimensional Creature unleashed its power, warping the space around them to create a bridge across the chasm.

Vale could hardly explain what he was seeing. This wasn't a simple Elemental Spell. It was definitely on a different level!

However, they had no time to think about it!

The group dashed across, the bridge disintegrating behind them as they leaped through the portal just as the realm imploded in a blinding explosion of light and energy.

It was truly destroyed!

Thud! Thud! Thud!

They landed roughly on the other side, the familiar yet jarring sensation of the human realm grounding them once more.

Vale looked around; they were safe, but the echoes of the Celestial Realm's destruction rang in their ears. It was a somber reminder of the narrow escape they had just made.

"I don't think I'll be doing missions like this again. It's better to stay in this realm." Vale muttered.

In any case, he learned from his four Immortal Slaves that the reason why the Immortal or other Celestials would leave the lower realm was because they could barely produce Divinity here.

It would take eons to reach the limit of their power, and although they were immortal, they wouldn't typically want to take that long to get stronger.

That was why they had to ascend to other higher Realms and develop their power or Divinity faster.

As for those Immortals who would rather stay in the lower realms, they were the ones who didn't have much talent and knew that they wouldn't achieve great things if they ascended.

'Well, I have a different reason for staying in the human realm and not thinking of ascending...' Vale thought...

Of course, if there were a time that he really had to ascend, he would consider the Shadow Realm that the Sentinel had informed him of before.

"Whew... We survived!" Steins shouted, he even had the urge to kiss the ground of the human realm!

Breathing heavily, Vale nodded at Steins as he knew what he was feeling right now... To be honest, he actually felt the presence of two Dimensional Creatures chasing them while they were escaping in the realm!

He kept silent about this since if their nervousness stacked up, they might make a mistake, which would certainly cost them their lives!

The mystery of the Golden Key may be far from over, but for now, they have achieved their goal and survived the collapse of a realm! It was worth a celebration!

## Chapter 717 The Rift

The first light of dawn had just begun to grace the horizon, casting a soft glow over the Arcane Cloud Tower.

At its peak, in the grandest chamber adorned with ancient runes and maps, Odessa, the Royal Mage, stirred from her slumber.

Her hair, a cascade of midnight blue, spilled over the pillows like a starlit sky. Her skin, fair as the moon, contrasted with the dark, intricate tattoos that marked her as the custodian of Ancient Knowledge. Her eyes, a piercing shade of violet, flickered open, reflecting the nascent light.

But this morning was unlike any other.

Odessa rose, wearing her elegant office robe woven with threads of the finest silk that shimmered around her. She looked at the mirror and admired her current appearance. This was all thanks to the blessing she received after she had accepted the Fortune Goddess' Divine Blessing.

Anyway, she was planning to do her morning routine for today, but something unexpected happened.

The Tower, a magnificent construct of magic and stone, had sounded an alarm that pierced the silence of the breaking day.

"Mhmm? This alarm..." Odessa felt worried since the sound she heard was definitely a warning that endangered not just the capital or the whole Kingdom. It was an alarm alerting her of the danger that the entire continent was facing!

She immediately connected her mind to the Tower's Core to confirm the situation.



With her mind connected, information immediately flowed through her mind.

A tear in the fabric of the human realm had appeared!

This means one thing: the harbinger of the Abyss Realm's invasion had been detected!

Odessa's heart raced as she swiftly moved to the Tower's observatory.

'Not good... We're still not prepared... The Immortal's help wasn't guaranteed as of now... I hope this invasion isn't in full force yet... We still need to gather help from those ancient organizations...' Odessa complained in her mind.

As she entered the observatory, she immediately felt the heavy atmosphere.

Her team, a cadre of the realm's most skilled mages, were already at their stations, their faces etched with concern.

The Arcane Cloud Tower, a bastion of magical defense, hummed with energy as its sensors scanned the horizons.

"A total of ten gates have opened," one of the mages announced, his voice tense.

"We've located two rifts across the Kingdom. One of them is close to us..."

Odessa approached the central platform, where a holographic map of the Kingdom floated. Points of red light blinked ominously, each marking a breach where the Abyss had begun its incursion.

There was no doubt about this information since they trusted the tower's ability to sense the byproduct of the spatial tears.

"They really chose to open a rift near us... They're brave. We must act swiftly..." Odessa commanded, her voice steady despite the turmoil.

"Deploy the barrier runes, and send word to Princess Ceres. The Millton Kingdom shall not fall on our watch."

As her team sprang into action, Odessa raised her hands, and the tattoos on her arms glowed with a fierce light. She channeled her power into the Tower's core, reinforcing the protective spells that shielded the Kingdom.

The Tower responded, its spires emitting beams of light that converged on the closes rift, seeking to mend the tears before the Abyss's denizens could pour through.

None of them were capable of using Space Magic, but they had the Arcane Tower that could harness the power of Arcana that they have!

With this Arcana, they have a method of reversing the rifts as long as they are close to them!

But as the light met the Rift, a sinister force countered their efforts.

Whoosshh~

From the depths of the tear, three figures emerged their presence alone enough to halt the Tower's mending spell.

"Demon Saints!" Odessa exclaimed as she saw their appearance.

The Demon Saints, distinguishable from the lesser denizens of the Abyss by their humanoid forms and attire, stood just outside the Rift...

Their eyes, devoid of pupils, glowed with a malevolent crimson light. Horns adorned their heads, and an aura of Corruption Energy pulsed around them, a stark contrast to the pure arcane energy being released by the Tower.

With a mere gesture, the Demon Saints unleashed their Corruption Energy, a dark miasma that clashed with the Tower's beams.

The light faltered, and the Rift remained open, a gaping wound in the world.

Odessa gritted her teeth as she had no way of increasing the intensity of the Arcana that they had. Her choice was to only kill the Demon Saints to continue with the closure of the Rift.

However, before she could even make another command, the Demon Saints already acted.

With a coordinated signal, the Demon Saints commanded the Rift to unleash its horde.

Thousands of demons, each more grotesque and terrifying than the last, poured forth from the Abyss. They swarmed into Milton Kingdom's capital!

Chaos ensued as soon as the demonic creatures arrived. The deep roars of the beasts, the hissing of the serpentine creatures, and the beating of leathery wings created a noise as if they were in hell!

The sky darkened under the shadow of the Abyssal legion, and the ground shook with their every step.

Odessa, undeterred by the overwhelming odds, raised her staff high. Her Arcane Cloud Tower was the first line of defense against these Demons!

She just had to hold on until the forces that the Royalty had prepared arrived!

"To arms, protectors of Millton!" she cried out. "We stand as the bulwark against the night!"

The mages rallied to her call, their Holy Arts or Anti-Demon Spells weaving a powerful resistance!

As for those without Anti-Demon Spells, they were still able to cast Spells that could hurt them!

Elemental Forces, Mystic Arts, and other Arcane Arts collided with demonic flesh as the battle to protect the Kingdom had started!

The Arcane Cloud Tower, once a place of study and contemplation, had become the epicenter of a war that would decide the fate of their Kingdom!

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In the midst of the tumultuous battlefield, a sudden stillness befell the Demon Saints.

They were ready to unleash their Corruption Spells upon the Arcane Cloud Tower to aid the demons they released.

However, they suddenly froze, their heads turning in unison towards the west.

A presence, ancient and powerful, something that defied the very laws of their existence, had made itself known.

A flicker of fear, uncharacteristic of these formidable beings, flashed across their faces.

The air around them, once thick with the threat of destruction, dissipated as they canceled their Spells, the intricate weaves of Demonic Magic coming undone!

The Demon Saints, who should never known retreat, found themselves compelled to abandon their conquest.

With a sense of urgency that bordered on panic, they retreated, their forms becoming shadows that slipped back into the Rift!

Of course, the Demons remained as they didn't care about the actions made by the Demon Saints! They were here to feast and eat the human flesh!

However, these actions from the Demon Saints didn't go unnoticed by Odessa and the others!

Some warriors of the Arcane Cloud Tower who were keeping an eye on the three Demon Saints had also watched in disbelief as the Rift sealed behind the fleeing Demon Saints!

That's right, they didn't even give a chance for whoever they were scared of from being followed!

Odessa had no idea what had just happened!

"This... Why did they suddenly flee?"

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Elsewhere in the Kingdom, echoes of turmoil resonated.

At the Order of the Lore Hunters' stronghold, Forbes, a venerable officer of the Elemental Faction, was met with a throng of concerned faces upon his return.

His latest endeavor to crush a gathering of Dark Magicians in a neighboring city, had been thwarted by the formidable Dark Arts Expert, Lesley Hoffman. Her might was such that even the Archbishop of the Church of the Fortune Goddess found her overwhelming.

As Forbes, whose silver hair spoke of his many years in service, stepped through the halls of the Order, he was swiftly briefed on dire news.

A rift to the Abyss Realm had torn open in the south of the Milton Kingdom, one of two ominous breaches within the realm's borders.

The other lay perilously close to the capital—and to them.

"It's near us? How unlucky..." Forbes commented. He had also felt the change in the atmosphere as soon as the Rift was opened. However, he didn't expect that it was so near.

With a weary exhale, Forbes absorbed the gravity of the situation.

His age had not dulled his resolve, nor had it weakened the fire of duty that burned within him.

"Prepare the Order..." Forbes commanded, his voice carrying the weight of an experienced commander.

"We must seal these rifts and protect our Kingdom from the abyssal tide. Gather the Elemental Envoys and ready the Arcane Artillery..."

The Order, spurred by Forbes' spirit, mobilized with haste.

The old elemental mage watched them, his eyes reflecting the first light of dawn that promised a battle between the two realms—a battle they could not afford to lose.

## Chapter 718 The Demon Saints

On the other side of the continent, in the bustling port city at the heart of the Braham Republic, the newly erected temple of the Church of the Three Paragons stood as a beacon of faith.

The city, nestled on the westernmost edge of the Braham Republic, and at the eastern side of the continent, had become a sanctuary for the Cardinals who fled the Milton Kingdom.

The revelation that the Immortal of the enigmatic forest was the same as the Masked Devil Incarnate who had claimed their Divine Sword had scared them away. The fear of retribution, had driven them from their homeland!

Nonetheless, despite their departure, the Church's work persisted, for they believed the Immortal would not harm innocents over a personal vendetta.

They believed that the Archbishops and the Priests would be safe from Immortal's wrath.

At this time, however, they had a different worry.

"The Abyss Realm's invasion has commenced. May the Paragons absolve us and deliver us from this plight..." Cardinal Lucius, the sage elder of the trio, prayed with a heavy heart. His life's work had been the study and dissemination of the Paragons' teachings—the divine trio that they believed had shaped the world.

"We must rouse the Messenger of the Paragons. Time is of the essence!" implored Cardinal Sophia, whose youth and beauty were matched by her cunning and ambition. She envisioned a Church that wielded unparalleled power and influence.

"I concur... We must no longer hold back. The sacrifice of the five designated villages will awaken the Messenger. We await only your consent, Cardinal Lucius..." Cardinal Marcus, a man of valor and strategy, urged. His role had always been to safeguard the Church's interests and allies.

Cardinal Lucius' resolve wavered as he was faced with the weight of their proposal.

'Sacrificing those five villages might bring us more trouble... Even the current leaders of the Braham Republic weren't looking at us kindly. If we were found out, then our Church would have no place in this country...' Lucius gritted his teeth.

Yet, as he pondered, a new Rift tore through the fabric of reality, its ominous presence felt even from afar. The Republic was now under threat!

The three Cardinals looked at each other as they all felt that opening of the Rift. They could not be mistaken since the three of them were already starting to grasp the secrets of Spatial Arts. It was just one of the benefits they had after becoming the Cardinals of one of the dominant churches of the continent.

With a clenched fist and a heart laden with sorrow, Lucius knew there was no alternative.

The awakening of the Messenger of the Paragons required a sacrifice he wished he didn't have to make.

As the Cardinals convened, a plan was set into motion—a plan that would alter the fate of many in hopes of saving the world, or perhaps the Church, from the encroaching darkness of the Abyss.

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In the village of Elmswood, where the railways hadn't reached yet, a blacksmith's hammer sang against the anvil, shaping the day's first task.

Children's laughter echoed through the streets of Brookstone as they chased one another, their games were innocent and carefree.

In the orchards of Greenvale, farmers tended to the bountiful trees, their hands deftly picking the ripe fruits of their labor.

The villagers, each absorbed in their daily labors, remained unaware of the fate that loomed over them. They greeted their neighbors with warm smiles, shared stories of yesteryears, and looked forward to the evening's communal feast.

Life, with its simple joys and sorrows, continued unabated.

But as the sun climbed higher, an unnatural heat began to suffuse the air. It was a warmth that did not come from the gentle rays of the sun but from an unseen, malevolent force.

"Mother... It's getting hot!" One of the children playing in the streets of the town immediately complained as he felt his skin getting burned.

"Get inside the house! Hurry! This is not normal!" A concerned parent immediately exclaimed. He had learned the basics of Arcane Arts, and he immediately realized that this phenomenon wasn't normal.

"Ugh... I'm really thirsty..."

"Not good... I think there's a Dark Magician attacking us!"

"We're going to die at this rate!"

"I think that we're being cursed! Did the Fire Elementalists attack us?"

"Where are the Arcane Inspectors?!"

"Call the Priests!"

Some villagers paused as they tried to understand what was happening, and some began to panic as the heat was unbearable. Nonetheless, a sense of unease crept into their hearts.

The laughter stopped, the hammering ceased, and the picking hands froze as they all hurried to find water or shelter, hoping to cool themselves down.

In the distance, the grand temple of the Church of the Three Paragons stood silent...

Within its hallowed halls, guarded by their Knights and Priests, the three Cardinals—Lucius, Sophia, and Marcus—gathered in solemn assembly.

Their faces were etched with the severity of their decision, the weight of the impending sacrifice pressing upon their souls.

With heavy hearts, they began the ancient rite, their voices rising in a chant that had not been uttered for generations.

The air within the temple shimmered... Soon, the ritual started shaping as the fabric of reality thinning... Their actions continued for more than an hour as they called upon the divine Messenger of the Paragons.

Crack... Crack... Crack...

Outside, the villagers felt the ground tremble beneath their feet.

Then, a searing pain enveloped them, as if their very essence was being drawn outwards, towards the temple.

They clutched at their chests, their eyes wide with terror, as the heat intensified, becoming an all-consuming inferno that threatened to engulf their souls.

And then, amidst the chaos and despair, a figure descended from the skies—an eight-winged angel, glorious and terrifying at the same time.

Its wings bore celestial light while also emitting a suffocating aura.

The villagers, in their final moments, gazed upon the divine being, their fear giving way to awe.

Through the Secret Eye Spell of the Cardinals, they watched as the Messenger took form, confirming that their ritual was complete.

The sacrifice of the five villages had been made, the price of their salvation was paid in full!

The Messenger of the Paragons turned its gaze upon the Church and was able to see Cardinals behind its walls...

The Messenger then glanced at the people who had been sacrificed just to summon him, but after that, it disappeared and showed itself to the three Cardinals.

"The Paragons had instructed that you can only call me if the Church is in immediate threat... Did you call for me to ask the Paragons to bless you again, or do you want me to help you eliminate the threat?"

The Messenger asked as he glanced at the Rift that was opened by the Abyss Realm. It was quite far from the Church, but he knew very well that the chaos would soon reach this place.

Cardinal Lucius took a deep breath before he answered. "We want your help to fight back the Abyss. We need to ensure that they know not to send any Demon Saints in this area... We need to intimidate them enough and let them focus on other areas."

He knew very well that the Messenger couldn't win against the whole Abyss Realm, however, dealing with a few Demons and Demon Saints, wouldn't be that difficult, especially if the three of them and other Knights and Priests joined as well.

The Messenger nodded, its wings unfurling as it prepared to lead the charge against the encroaching darkness...

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As the Rift tore through the skies of the Braham Republic, two Demon Saints emerged, their formidable presence would guarantee that the Rift would remain unchallenged.

After confirming that there was no force that could stop them here, they unleashed the Abyss's minions upon the unsuspecting city, creating a chaos for the unprepared citizens!

Graaaghh~

The demons immediately sensed the abundant presence of life and were excited to devour the people!

Yet, amidst the destruction, the Demon Saints paused, sensing a potent Aura that does not belong to their side...

After a moment of observation, the two Demon Saints felt thankful.

"Hmm... It is not the Shadow Immortal..." One of them murmured with a hint of relief in his tone.

"True. This entity is something we can handle..." The other agreed, confidence lacing his words.

They had faced the Life Devourer Shadow Immortal, a title they gave to the Celestial guarding this Human Realm. The two of them knew well the terror it wrought upon their ranks.

The Demon Saints prepared themselves, not for retreat, but for confrontation against the Messenger...

As entity arrived in front of the two Demon Saints, the surrounding space even started to twist.

The Angel, the Messenger of the Paragons, alighted upon the battlefield with eight wings unfurled, each feather shimmering with divine light.

"Ha! You've come alone?!"

"Just because we're fleeing from that Immortal doesn't mean that we're weak. Do not underestimate us!"

The Demon Saints shouted in fury!

The Demon Saints, armed with their Corruption Energy, met the Angel's radiant strikes head-on.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The battle was a spectacle of light and shadow, each blow from the Angel parried with the Corrupted Force brought by the Demon Saints.

Chapter 719 The Silent Rift

Whom~

The Angel was unfazed by the Corruption Energy from the two Demon Saints. Its eight wings unfurled, and each feather was like a blade of divine light, ready to carve through the darkness. It didn't stop attacking the Demon Saints!

"Not enough!"

The Demon Saints, cloaked in the malevolent energies of the Abyss, met the Angel's advance with a sinister grace.

Their forms expanded, and their aura radiated... The surrounding trees and grass started dying because of their energy! The day had even turned night as they cast a malevolent Demonic Spell that covered the skies with dark clouds!

Soon, the two Demon Saints moved with a speed that belied their size, as they launched a barrage of demonic spells and physical strikes to the Angel.

Boom! Boom!

Burst of energy started exploding in the air with the collision of holy light and corrupting force... Some of the demons who were coming out of the Rift were even injured or killed in the process!

However, the three powerful beings didn't care about these demons.

The Angel's sword, aglow with the essence of the Paragons, hummed through the air, clashing against the twisted blades of the Demon Saints.

Crack! Crack! Snap!

Sparks of divine fire erupted with each contact, illuminating the ruined cityscape with flashes of day amidst the encroaching night brought by the Demon Saints!

"Hmph! This Angel isn't a normal Messenger. Is he serving one of the higher Celestials?" One of the Demon Saints guessed.

He couldn't help but realize that the Angel wasn't just a normal summoned being. This Angel must have a high position and serve a powerful Celestial in the upper realm!

"That's probably the case... Whoever summoned this one must've sacrificed a whole city... Ruthless. They don't deserve to be humans."

Despite their might, the Demon Saints found themselves matched by the Angel's relentless assault.

"Hmph! It's still better than fighting the Shadow Immortal. Let's end this quickly before we attract that merciless Immortal."

The other Demon Saints agreed as they fought in desperation, born of knowing the consequences of failure.

However, it was a difficult battle as they bled in battle, mingling with the ashes of the city that was already overrun by the demons...

Each strike they delivered was met with a counter from the Angel, whose own wounds began to glow with a holy light, healing as quickly as they were inflicted.

"Tsk... It's recovering too quickly..." The Demon Saint complained as they couldn't copy that regenerative ability yet. Although they could already use 80% of their strength even if they just exited the Rift, the 20% missing has to do with their ability to regenerate, so it was still a big deal for them.

As the battle raged, the Demon Saints realized the tide was turning against them.

With a final, concerted effort, they unleashed their most potent Corruption Spells, they had to use their Life Force to attack!

A maelstrom of dark and corrupt energy that threatened to consume all in its path was released!



The Angel, undaunted by the threat they posed, soared higher, its wings beating a gale that dispersed the Demonic Arts!

With a piercing cry, the Angel dove, its sword aimed at the heart of the storm!

The Demon Saints, recognizing the impending strike, evaded at the last moment, but not without cost. The sword grazed them, leaving searing wounds that would not easily heal!

"Aahhhh!"

"You're dead! We'll return to devour you!"

Acknowledging the stalemate and their own injuries, the Demon Saints made a tactical retreat!

In just a few moments, they vanished into the Rift, their forms dissolving into the shadows from whence they came.

The Angel, victorious but vigilant, looked at the Rift with a calm gaze before he slowly turned to ashes, and his ashes were brought to the ruined city...

When the three Cardinals arrived, it was already too late.

The battle between the two forces had ended, but the war was far from over.

Similar scenes occurred around the continent as a total of 10 Rifts had appeared!

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Meanwhile, in the shadowed area of the mountains close to the peaceful Cainhorn Town, a rift slithered open almost without making any noise.

This was no grand spectacle like the other ten Rifts that had torn the world asunder and had sent out endless legions of demonic spawn.

No, this Rift was different—calculated, precise, and alarmingly silent.

From this careful tear in the space, there emerged not the rabble of low-tier demons but a force far more formidable.

Three hundred Demon Captains, each a veteran of countless infernal campaigns, stepped through the Rift with a disciplined march.

Their armor was black as the Abyss from which they hailed, adorned with sigils that pulsed with malevolent energy. Their eyes glowed with a baleful light, and their hands gripped weapons forged in the fires of perdition.

Just by looking at them, anyone would be able to tell that they were all high-ranking Demons!

Commanding these legions were three Demon Saints, beings of such power that their mere presence caused the air to shimmer with dread. They stood taller than their infernal brethren, their stature commanding and their visage terrifying. Horns curled from their foreheads, and their cloaks, woven from the darkness of the Abyss itself, trailed behind them like the shadows of death.

"Mhmmm... Perfect." One of the Demon Saints muttered as he confirmed that their arrival had barely created fluctuations of energy. It means that they were most likely not detected by various Artifacts that detect the ripples in space.

"We've run countless trials to make this work. It should be perfect." Another Demon Saint said.

"Chubles, Prorda, Ipha, and other Demon Saints sacrificed their lives to make this work. They were all killed by the merciless Shadow Immortal because of those failures. This will certainly work! We will avenge them!" The third Demon Saint said, recalling the deaths of their fellow Demon Saints after the Rift they had previously tried to create was detected by the Shadow Immortal.

Unfortunately, only after several Demon Saints died did they learn how to open the ripple-less Rift and get past the Shadow Immortal's detection!

"That's true! Once we conquer the other lands, all our forces will focus on that Immortal's haven!!"

## Chapter 720 The Arrival

Together, the Demons formed three legions, each with a singular, malevolent purpose: to weave a silent rain of dark curses and disease, to sow death and despair across the Ruri Kingdom without drawing the gaze of the one they feared.

Indeed! They would spread their corruption across the continent, and only when their influence was absolute would they dare to confront the formidable entity that haunted their every move.

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As the first light of dawn crept over Cainhorn Town, Arriane, an Elementalist known for her attunement to both Fire and Wind Elements, awoke with a sense of foreboding.

The morning air, usually crisp and invigorating, felt heavy, tainted with an invisible miasma.

She immediately summoned her Wind Spirit, a mysterious being born from the Elements...

Arriane wasn't just any Elementalist; she had already finished eight years of study in Academy of Elemental Arts.

She had only returned to the small town for her vacation since the Mayor was her father.

She had long auburn hair framing a face that seemed to contain wisdom beyond her years. Her eyes, a striking emerald green, then looked at the Wind Spirit with a serious gaze.

Arriane was only dressed in the simple garb of her station, a robe of deep blue adorned with symbols of the elements she commanded.

"Do you feel something off about the air? Is it just the smoke?" She asked the wind spirit.

It wasn't able to answer her as it couldn't speak, but Arriane could understand what the Spirit feels since they shared a connection.

Arriane narrowed her eyes as she realized that the Wind Spirit was also feeling worried and wanted to run away. She didn't immediately panic and decided to further investigate.

If she was going to report something, she had to be sure what was going on.

She immediately went outside to investigate.

Cainhorn was a modest town, its cobblestone streets winding between cozy thatched cottages and blooming gardens.

The townsfolk were simple, and their lives were intertwined with the bountiful land and the changed seasons.

But this morning, as Arriane continued her observation, she felt something was amiss. Although she wasn't an Earth Elementalist, she could tell that the earth beneath her feet lacked its usual vitality...

With a growing sense of urgency, Arriane expanded her investigation, her elemental senses extending up to the limits of her Magic Zone.

Since it was still early, the town was still waking up, oblivious to the creeping darkness that had begun to seep into their homes.

"Not good! This is a curse!" After some time, she finally realized what was going on!"

She felt some type of curse spreading, a vile presence that sought to corrupt the people living in it!

"Dark Magicians! We're under attack by Dark Magicians! They're casting Spell Curses! Take your talismans and amulets with you!"

Without hesitation, Arriane made her way to the town square and warned everyone!

This surprised the townsfolk, especially those who had just woken up!

"Dark Magicians?!"

"Curses?!"

"Ah! That's Miss Arriane! Listen to her!"

"Oh no! It must be true! Hurry! Get those amulets!"

The townsfolk immediately found the items they've prepared for this situation.

Nonetheless, Arriane knew that it wasn't enough!

She immediately reached the Mayor's office, a sturdy building that stood as a testament to the town's resilience.

The Mayor, also Arriane's father, was a robust man with a penchant for leadership. He listened intently as Arriane described the malignant force that threatened their peace.

"We must act... We need to call the Priests and ask for help from the King! I've never felt this kind of curse before. This must be Forbidden Spell!" Arriane implored, her voice carrying the weight of impending doom.

She then noticed the Mayor understood her, but for some reason, he was hesitant to call for the Kingdom's help.

"The curse is strong, and there's no way for us to completely eradicate it with small anti-curse talismans and amulets! We have to ask for help!"

"Fine! We'll be calling for the Royal Knights' assistance. There should be a few of them patrolling the area. They should have a way to deal with this curse."

The Mayor then called the attention of the Royal Knights through a communication crystal. Then, the bells of the town tolled, not in celebration, but in summons to battle an enemy they could not

see. Arriane stood beside the Mayor, ready to guide her people through the shadow that encroached upon their lives.

However, as the malignant curses and virulent diseases began to cover the Cainhorn Town, Arriane's connection to the elemental spirits faltered.

The spirits, usually vibrant and resilient, waned under the oppressive might of the dark magic. Their ethereal forms flickered and dimmed, struggling to maintain their presence in the face of such overwhelming corruption...

Whooshh~

Her Elemental Spirits soon disappeared.

Yet, amidst the encroaching darkness, a glimmer of hope shone through.

"What?" Arriane was surprised.

The townsfolk somehow bore a shield against the darkness! The Talismans and Amulets they adorned, simple trinkets purchased from a wandering Merchant Organization, flared with a protective aura.

These artifacts, infused with the essence of the Shadow Immortal, repelled the curses and diseases as if they were mere nuisances.

'Where did they get that?!' Arriane was shocked. She simply had no idea about the mysterious merchant airship that was visiting this town since she had just arrived!

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High above, concealed within the mountain's shadow, the Demon Saints and their Captains had also observed the unfolding scene with incredulity.

"What's going on?" one Saint growled, his voice a rumble of thunder.

"It's not a problem with our curse. It's their Magic Artifacts!" another exclaimed, his eyes narrowing.

"How can they all possess high-grade Artifacts! This is ridiculous!" the third barked, frustration lacing his words.

The Demon Saints, commanders of legions, found themselves at an impasse. Their meticulously laid plans were unraveling before their very eyes.

"There's no point arguing! Let's just attack them! It won't take three minutes to destroy the whole town. The Shadow Immortal won't be able to react in time!" one suggested, the bloodlust evident in his tone.

But as they reached a consensus, the air itself seemed to thicken, and a chill descended upon the mountain ridge.

A shadowy figure materialized before them, silent as the grave and as imposing as the night itself. The Demon Captains recoiled, their battle-hardened forms trembling as an unknown fear took hold.

It was the Shadow Immortal!