

D. of Pride 411

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Perhaps it was just the gullible Forest Spring Spirits and Simon who believed them.

"I see... Alright, I accept your surrender" Simon stated and ordered the Andromedas to lower their weapons.

The moment that happened, a grin surreptitiously crept on Morgress' face but he was quick to conceal it. Irene locked her brows at Simon's decision; nevertheless, she did not question it and quietly stood by his side.

"Since you have already surrendered and accepted your defeat, why don't you throw your weapons?" Simon asked completely playing at the hands of his enemies.

"PFFTT... What an idiot, as if we will surrender to a Demon Viscount" Morgress said with a face of ridicule. Before anyone could understand the change in his behaviour and expression, they all heard a voice that was filled with anger and hatred.

"Die Demonn!!! [Swift Backstab]" A person manifested behind Simon out of nowhere and plunged his dagger onto the defenceless back of the latter.

It was only when they saw who the assassin was, did the seven swords finally understood what their guild master was planning. He knew that Boris had a blood debt to settle with the demon and discerned that the former would attack given the opportunity.

Thus all Morgess had to do was keep the demon occupied and distracted. As long as the demon died, the more than eight hundred golems will become useless and they would only have to deal with the two calamity class monsters. After which everything would be for them to enjoy.

As Morgress smiled thinking about how he had won the bet, he saw the people around the demon remain unfazed even after the appearance of the assassin. What's more, they did not even look bothered when the life of their master was being threatened like that.

"Is that all you were plotting? If you have something else stored up, now is the time to use it" Simon calmly declared, a golden halo of light surrounded his body.

It was only now that Morgress realised why these people acted all undisturbed even when an assassin crept so close to their master and attacked. It seemed that the demon was already aware of the presence of Boris hiding with stealth nearby and deliberately chose to play into his hands so as to bait him out.

'Dammit' Morgress cursed and grit his teeth in anger. It appeared that the one that was being played was him all along.

The golden halo of light around the demon stopped the dagger from inching closer to Simon and pushed Boris back. It stayed around his body for a second before disappearing.

If one paid enough attention to his body, they would be able to see the shattered pieces of a golden stone in his hand. The golden stone was none other than the Golden Guardian stone that created a shield around him and protected him from all kinds of physical attacks for a second.

Simon knew what Morgress was planning, he was much too familiar with the backstabbing nature of the humans and thus pretended to play gullible and accept the surrender of the latter. All of it was just a bait to see what the other party was trying to plot.

Simon had to admit that the assassin that just tried to kill him, was highly skilled with the stealth skill so much so that Simon did not even feel his presence using all of his detection skills. He would have been done for given that it was some other place.

However, this was his dungeon and as its master, he was aware of all the presence and beings currently on this floor. Unless, they were completely new and unregistered beings like the fire eater rat and the fire fanged mouse nobody would be able to hide from his Main Menu.

It was a pipe dream for that assassin if he thought he would be able to kill Simon when they were inside his dungeon much less when surrounded by his subordinates.

The reason why Irene and the others didn't stop the assassin wasn't because they were unable to sense the presence of the latter but because Simon told them not to interfere. He wanted to thoroughly crush all the hopes that these intruders were harbouring and show them what true despair was.

After his failed attempt at assassinating the demon, Boris jumped back and tried to go into stealth once again to reposition himself. However, how could it be this easy for someone who had just attacked the lord of the dungeon to get away?

RUMBLE...

The Lightning Draconic Serpent who thanks to the effects of the technique [Ancient Draconic Compel] had become completely loyal to Simon, was absolutely furious at this offender who tried to attack his master.

It roared furiously and sent forth bolts of thunder towards Boris and forcing the latter to run like a pathetic dog to save his life. This time, the Lightning Draconic Serpent did not take action on its own, it turned towards Simon and only moved when he got a go ahead from the latter.

Simon did not even turn around to see who was the assassin that attacked him, with the nod of his head, he gave the Lightning draconic serpent the permission and at the same time signed the assassin's death warrant.

"That useless fool" On the other end of the mountaintop, Morgress and his team cursed at Boris incessantly for failing to accomplish his task. What good was an assassin if he can't even assassinate someone?

Morgress sighed and unwillingly gave up on his thoughts on defeating the demon without a fight. It was a mistake on his part to try and deceive a demon noble using trickery. Now that it has come to this, there was no other option remaining but to fight the opponent head on.

"It seems that you are all out of tricks, in that case, the fight continues" Simon snapped his fingers and the hundreds of Andromedas once again activated their weapons and took aim at the group of humans.

"Wait... I have a proposal to make" Just when the army of golems was about to fire their weapons, Morgress spoke out again. It seemed that he was up to something yet again.

With just the point of his finger, Simon could command the hundreds of Andromedas and tire these intruders to death. Yet Simon decided not to do so and entertain the other party in whatever they were plotting.

The reason for that was simple, Simon wanted to crush every hope and confidence his enemy had until they were on the edges of despair. Simon was smiling not because he wanted to, but because he was absolutely furious that these mongrels were eyeing the things that belonged to him.

"There is no fun if you simply use your numbers to squash us. Of course, the golem army of yours is more than enough to handle us but there is no excitement in doing something as boring as that isn't it?"

"As a Demon Noble don't you want to fight your enemy and bask in their blood? How about we do it this way then, me and you fight in a one-on-one duel. The winner gets everything... do you dare? Or are you afraid that without your golem army you are nothing".

Morgress bellowed in a thundering voice so that everybody could hear it loud and clear, even the ones at the base of the mountain.

An obvious taunt, a pitiful attempt at grasping at the last straws. There was no way any sane person would accept that and willingly discard the advantageous position they had. However, herein lies Morgress' trap.

The demon was surrounded by these beautiful and breath-taking ladies, being a man himself, he of course understood how a man thinks. Being taunted like that in front of them, any man would try to salvage their image and pride by accepting the duel like a man.

And in this case, Morgress was trying to take advantage of this very emotion from the demon noble and force him to accept the duel in front of his ladies. What he didn't know was that Simon did not care about something as superficial as that.

All the people around him were loyal to him and weren't amongst the ones that could be swayed by something like that. But Unfortunately for Morgress, by saying all that, he had triggered something that practically guaranteed his death.

[Your authority has been challenged]

[Pride has been activated, all your other emotions are being suppressed at this moment].

Although Simon had learned how to activate the fragment of pride, it did not mean that he has learned how to control it. The moment the pride fragment activated, all of his emotions disappeared

and he felt like a completely different person. there was no resistance from him, he just let it overwhelm him.

"Very well then, I accept this duel" Simon stepped down from his warhorse and declared in a calm voice.

The moment he accepted the duel, a hideous smile appeared on Morgress' face. 'I got you now, you fool' he thought internally. From his perspective, the demon Viscount accepted the duel because he had no choice but to do so to save his face around the ladies.

"Even though I wanted to fight him, I give this chance to you. Guild leader smash that mush and make it so that he never dares to show it ever again" Lombus said smiling widely.

The others around him were also of the same opinion. Now that the demon had accepted a one on one duel with their guild leader, victory was practically guaranteed. After all, who was Morgress, he was a level 500 [Grand Thunder Warrior] who was just a step away from becoming one of the powerhouses of this kingdom.

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Not only that, he was also someone with much more experience in adventuring than everyone else here. This was not the first time Morgress had done a one on one duel before, he did it so many times when they were adventuring around the kingdom.

Each time, it ended up with his victory. Therefore, the thought of him losing never even occurred to them.

"Alright remember, this is what you wanted. You can't go back on your words when you lose" Morgress asserted trying to hide his fear of the incredible line up of Andromedas in the sky.

"Relax, I won't be needing their help to deal with the likes of you" Simon said dispassionately.

"Heh, I like your confidence, let's see how long you are able to maintain that" Though the demon's comment made Morgress angry, when he thought how the other party was saying all that to maintain his image in front of the ladies, he thought it was pitiful, laughable even.

There was a reason why he initiated a duel with the demon noble, from what he could tell and from the rumours going around the kingdom, the rank of the demon noble in front of him seemed to be just a demon viscount.

A rank fit only to be the subordinates of higher ranking demons and from the aura he was releasing, it was clear that the demon was yet to reach the peak of his rank. That is to say, the demon wasn't his match

Compared to fighting with hundreds of golems, and the two calamity class beasts beside him, it was much more easier to take on the demon viscount who was somehow the core of all of this.

Morgress was by no means initiating a fight that he has no chance of winning, in fact all the fights he had ever fought were thoroughly calculated and one where he had the highest chance of winning.

It was a similar case this time too, from his years of experience in adventuring, he had developed a sixth sense of some sort that allowed him to see through some of the potential and the level of the threat his opponent represented.

In the demon's case, though, he was getting no readings of danger from his sixth sense which made Morgress all the more confident in his victory.

Simon raised his hands and on his command, the hundreds of Andromedas looming over the sky deactivated their weapons. After that, he turned towards his subordinates and asked them to step back so that they can have the space to themselves for their duel.

Be it Irene or the Valkyrie sisters, none of them doubted his decision and moved back swiftly.

"You guys should move back too" Morgress did the same and told his team to move back. Though in their case, they were lazy enough to even lie down on the ground and rest assured of their victory already.

"Now there is no one to interfere between us" Morgress laughed taking out his great sword from his space ring.

Simon did the same and brought out his [A] tier Crimson Sword from his inventory. The moment each of them gripped their weapons and took their stance, the entire aura around them changed.

While Morgress gave off a feeling of a seasoned warrior that had stormed through many battles, Simon gave off an oppressive and bloodthirsty vibe. His emotionless eyes and his sword were so crimson that it seemed like they were soaked with great amounts of blood from their enemies.

The two of them stood absolutely still with no one moving an inch. The situation lasted like this for a while when suddenly Morgress swung his sword behind him deflecting and stopping a spear made entirely of flames.

The first one to break this deadlock was Simon as he used his mastery over flames to gauge the abilities of his enemies out.

Morgress gave a derisive smile after easily deflecting an attack that came from his blind spot. However, the next second his irises became narrowed when he felt a dozen more of the same flame spears targeting him from all around.

Clicking his tongue, he invoked his advanced thunder magic and infused it with his skills. "Great Thunder Clap" with a loud roar, a powerful amount of thunder generated from his sword and blasted all of the flame spears apart.

Right after he finished executing his skill, Morgress charged towards his enemy, throwing one skill after another on the latter. [Great Horizontal Slash], [Great Vertical Slash], [Great Thunder Slash], each of these attacks were powerful to cleanly bisect a huge boulder and penetrate through low tiers armour made of WhiteSilver.

However, how could simple skills like these be enough to stop Simon? He stood his ground and deflected all of the attacks with his own sword skills.

The forbidden trial ground not only helped him to grow physically and mentally, it also showed him the areas he was lacking. To counter the hordes of zombies and to regulate his mana so that he doesn't run out before the last horde arrived, Simon had to learn the Sword Mastery Skill.

Although the skill was still at Basic Normal tier, combined with the powerful stats of a demon viscount, it was still enough to face these simple attacks.

After he deflected his opponent's attacks, Simon unfurled his wide bat like wings activated his [High Speed Flight] to get away just in time to avoid an overhead wide sword attack from Morgress who had closed the distance between them.

BOOOM...

Morgress' sword landed on the ground and destroyed a part of it demonstrating the amount of power that was imbued on it. After failing to land his surprise attack that should have been the blind spot of his enemy, Morgress grit his teeth in annoyance.

He had to admit that the demon he was facing was quite experienced to have dodged his chain attack. If it was any of the opponents he had faced before, they would have a hard time deflecting all of those attacks from him not to mention dodge his surprise attack so easily.

Be that as it may, his opponent must be struggling a little with his attacks for them to use their racial ability to fly and dodge his last attack. In that case, there was only thing that needed to be done and that was to pressure his opponent even more so that they make an error in judgement leading to their ultimate downfall.

"[Super Enhanced Strength], [Super Agility], [Super Enhanced Endurance], [Body enhancement], [Thunder Drive], [Battle Instinct]".

Morgress activated his skills that augmented his powers even further and dished out more powerful attacks that constantly pushed his opponent on the back foot.

"Hoh, so guild master is finally getting a little serious. Hey, why don't we all make a bet to see how long that demon noble can last against him" Sprawled on the ground, Lombus said lazily.

"That's a good option, so what are the stakes for this bet?" Sable asked, similarly assured of their victory.

Lombus gave a vulgar smile and said "How about the prices that are soon going to be ours?".

There was no need to even ask what was the price he was talking about as every single one of them were aware of what he was thinking.

"Hehe, interesting in that case I say he wouldn't be able to last more than thirty exchanges. I'm willing to bet that girl that I want so badly" Sable said licking his lips. When they all looked towards who he was pointing at, they couldn't help but make a knowing face.

They were all aware of his fetish thus it came as no surprise to them that he would select the youngest one with the blonde hair out of all the ladies standing there.

"For me it is definitely those three, hehe I would bed them day and night," Lombus said controlling his drool and looking at the icy cold beauty and the two beside her.

How could Irene and the Valkyries not feel their lustful gazes? Though they were sick and disgusted by those looks, they did not start anything as this would violate the rule of one on one duel that Simon had accepted.

While these adventurers were having such talks, the situation where the duel was taking place, changed. Both the parties had disengaged from each other and opened up a wide space between them.

"Kehehe, It seems like you have lost Sable, that demon is still standing even after thirty exchanges" Lombus made fun of his teammate but the next second he became silent when he saw his guild master suddenly resort to using one of his strongest abilities.

What stunned him even more was that the demon who was standing still even after feeling that strong volatile energy coming out of his opponent.

"Ah! I take my earlier statement back that demon is going to go down now" Lombus remarked looking at the scene. His teammates around him nodded their heads in agreement.

The ability that Morgress was using was his advanced tier Thunder Magic which was further bolstered by his skills and his class [Great Thunder Warrior] which provided buffs to his already powerful thunder magic.

To his teammates the fight seemed to be progressing well in the favour of their guild master. But to the person in question who was fighting the demon, the situation looked anything but favourable to him.

The reason behind Morgress using such a powerful attack now was because he was unable to gain an edge over his opponent even after activating all his augmenting skills. He thought that he could pressure the other party into making a mistake; however, it seemed that the one who was getting pressured was him.

Due to him activating all those skills, his mana and stamina was being drained at a rapid rate plus against the annoying ability of flight that his opponent had, he had to exert himself even more and throw extra attacks just to keep the demon noble in check.

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Unless one was born with the racial skill that granted them the ability from birth, [Flight] was something that can be gained by humans after they breach level 500 or through artifacts that bestowed the ability.

But in the case of the latter, it was very hard to find an artefact with that ability in a small kingdom like theirs. In any case, Morgress did not have the ability of flight thus it made it all the more difficult for him to reach the demon who was utilising all of his advantages.

He had no choice but to make an impact by using a powerful skill even though he knew it would just drain him faster.

"[Great Thunder Fang]" Morgress allowed his powerful mana to go rampant and coil around his sword like a beast. His sword which was made of Blackgold, turned completely red at this moment with thunder erupting out of it like crazy.

It radiated so much power and light that space itself trembled and a heavy atmosphere descended onto the surrounding. It took a while for the rampant thunder to settle down and take the form of a crimson dragon coiling around his sword.

The dragon formed was only a meter big; however, it was powerful enough to create ripples around the air.

A droplet of sweat trickled down Morgress' face as he marvelled at the powerful dragon. With this, he thought there was no way the demon viscount wouldn't go down. Usually, the best way to handle an attack as powerful as his [Great Thunder Fang] was to disturb it before it even forms.

However, the demon for some reason after disengaging from him, did not move from his spot allowing him to successfully complete his attack. He did not know what his opponent was thinking but he was grateful for it, with the completion of the dragon coiling around his sword, his attack was unstoppable.

'Even if you rely on that ridiculous agility of yours, there is no way you can dodge this' Morgress thought and swung his sword allowing the dragon latched onto it to charge towards the demon.

Whether it be his teammates or the people at the base of the mountain, they were all astonished at the power of the attack released by Morgress. The one meter long crimson dragon was just like a miniature thunderbolt, so fast and bright that it was already upon Simon in the blink of an eye.

To all the humans watching from the base of the mountain, it looked like the demon wasn't even able to react in time. But Morgress and his teammates who had a better view of the duel from the top of the mountain, were clearly able to see that demon did not move from his spot not because he couldn't but because he chose not to.

Given the level of attacks they had seen coming forth from him, the seven swords were all but sure that this would be the end of the duel.

However beyond their expectation just when the crimson dragon was about to strike him, out of a sudden a golden halo appeared around his body before everything was covered in a brilliant flash of crimson.

RUMBLE...

the [Great Thunder fang] attack of Morgress, was powerful enough to destroy a part of this enormous mountain and shake it to its very core.

The shockwave that resulted from the blast, reached the base of the mountain and pushed the dense mist covering the whole floor far away. The people on the mountain top were not spared from the aftershock either.

For the seven swords, they had to pull far back while Irene simply extended her hand and negated all of the damage. However, all of the attention and eyes of the humans were glued to the area where the blast had just occurred to notice this peculiarity.

Usually, Lombus would be the first one to celebrate their guild master's victory after that last attack. Though right now, all of them had a sceptical expression on their face unsure of what had happened.

They weren't your run of the mill adventurers, each and every one of them had a rich experience in battles and were considered an elite. There was no with their sharp eyes they wouldn't be able to spot the peculiar golden halo engulfing the demon right before the thunder dragon arrived.

They had all seen the golden halo stopping the attacks of Boris who tried to assassinate the demon from behind but was stopped by this very same golden halo.

Nevertheless, they all believed that even that golden halo wouldn't be able to stop an attack as powerful as this. After all, the two attacks weren't even comparable. However, like an omen what they thought wasn't possible really did come true.

After the dust from that berserk aftershock dissipated, they were all astounded to find the demon standing there perfectly fine and without a scratch.

"T-that is not possible, a demon viscount like you shouldn't be able to block that attack" though the one who was most shocked by it was none other than the caster of that attack, Morgress himself.

He was so in disbelief that, he did not even sense dozens of flame spears manifesting behind him.

BOOOM... another explosion rocked the mountaintop and a figure burned by flames appeared in front of everyone. Morgress who took the attack unguarded, appeared extremely miserable at this moment with severe burns everywhere.

"Dammit" he cursed and quickly drank on a vial of potion. Had it not been for his armour and his stats, he wouldn't have just simply suffered this level of burns.

After his wound healed a little, Morgress glared towards Simon and accused him for using unfair items and even blamed him for cheating.

His frame of mind was completely shaken after witnessing his most powerful attack not even managing to scratch his enemy.

SIGH... facing the accusation, Simon audibly sighed, his face looked extremely bored and disappointed.

"This duel turned out to be just a huge waste of time. Are you done yet or are you gonna complain some more?".

"What?" hearing his condescending voice full of arrogance and pride, Morgress became even more furious.

"When you proposed the idea of a duel, I was honestly thrilled. But now that I look at you bitching at every single wrong that's been happening to you, I think it was a mistake on my part to have taken you seriously".

"When have we decided on not using artefacts? You say I'm cheating and using unfair items while you yourself are using a [C] rank armour and weapon made of Blackgold? This duel isn't some children's game so stop crying like a baby. You know, if you really wanna call something unfair, then have a taste of this..".

Simon declared indifferently, and raised his sword high. The moment he inserted his mana into it, the sword lit up with a radiant golden fire that roared out as if alive.

The temperature around the surrounding rose up drastically to the point where it was scalding hot even from the base of the mountain. The golden flames coming out of the sword was so powerful that it gave the illusion of being near the sun to every observing eye.

"Infernal Magic?" Sable the [Crimson Scorching Mage] stood up immediately the moment he saw the bright golden flames. As someone who also specialised in fire magic, it was his dream to one day be able to master infernal magic.

And being as close as he was to evolving his flame magic, it came as a surprise to him that the Demon Noble who was just a Demon Viscount, was able to utilise the magic.

"That Sword..." Morgress with his sharp eyes, was immediately able to attribute the powerful magic to the sword.

When he used [Analysis] on it, he was stunned further to find the tier of the sword.

"A rank?" Morgress's expression was at this moment a sight to look at. It was so distorted with disbelief and astonishment that it couldn't be any more ugly.

"Infernal magic Mastery- [Infernal Surge]" Simon muttered and directly poured one third of his mana into it.

The resulting magic coming out of the sword was so powerful that the mana around the mountaintop was set in a scorching frenzy. That was not all, the powerful magic vaguely took the form of a demon's face as it charged towards Morgress.

Morgress, feeling the power of the Infernal magic, [Infernal surge] which was no weaker than his [Great Thunder fang] attack, had a completely serious face.

He still remembered the earlier comment made by the demon who was completely looking down on him. As a level 500 [Great Thunder Warrior] and someone who was used to looking down on others and not the vice-versa, chose not to back down in front of the attack.

"Don't you dare look down on me!!!" he roared loudly, took out a shield from his space ring and in front of all the stunned eyes, took the attack head on just like what the demon did earlier.

WHOOSHH... the golden fire bringing along an infernal amount of heat, engulfed Morgress within and brightened the entire mountaintop making it hard for anyone to see what was happening.

After the flames disappeared, a hideous looking figure with a half melted armour and blackened skin appeared in the place where Morgress was supposed to be.

"Guild master" Lombus shouted, he was just about to charge there when Thiago stopped him.

"Calm down, he is fine. Although he looks injured, those are just superficial injuries. As long as he has that skill, he won't go down that easily".

The skill that Thiago was talking about was the layer of bluish green energy that covered Morgress like an armour.

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"[Mana Armour]" Simon narrowed when he saw the bluish green aura around his opponent that saved him from being utterly burned by his infernal magic.

'When someone breaches level 500, their mana will start to become more dense and solid and can be used to form a cloak of some sorts giving them increased defensive power' as this was not his first time facing an enemy who is able to use [Mana Armour] Simon wasn't fazed by seeing his enemy surviving an advanced tier attack head on.

However, the Mana Armour he knew off was much more powerful than this which shows that Morgress' Mana Armour wasn't complete. It could be because he had yet to breach level 500.

Whatever the case maybe, the Mana Armour ability of Morgress wasn't something that was impossible to deal with.

"Hehehe... How about that, there is no way I'm weaker than you demon" Morgress drank a few vials of potions and shouted hysterically. He was trying to hide the feeling of uneasiness in his heart with his shout.

The attack earlier was so powerful that it melted [C] tie armour and almost burned him alive. If not for the fact that he had the [Mana Armour] skill he would have been completely done for. But even then, Morgress was more aware of the limitation of this skill that could at most be called a proxy [Mana Armour].

The [Mana Armour] was a technique that can only be utilised by someone who has stepped through the boundary of level 500.

However, Morgress was someone who was stuck at the level 500 barrier for more than a decade unable to progress further because of his bloodline limitations.

He thought that if he could learn some of the techniques such as [Mana Armour], that bottleneck would loosen. To his disappointment, he was still stuck at his current level with a cheap imitation of a higher level technique.

That is why, he coveted the spirit orbs of the forest spring spirit race so much. Not only was it considered one of the greatest treasures in this world, it was also one of the few items in existence that is able to increase the purity of one's bloodline, talent and aptitude thus allowing one to breach their current limits and reach greater heights.

In the end, the sad truth was that not only their guild fail miserably to get their hands on the spirit orbs, they even made an enemy out of the Sea god's trident which led to the events up till here.

Morgress had a bottle full of resentment and frustration that he wanted to take out on somebody. Fortunately for him, the reason and the source of all of his troubles was right in front of him. However, they weren't an opponent that he could take on lightly.

As could be seen from their battle, the demon not only had an army of golems, two calamity class beasts under him, he also had this powerful [A] tier sword that could shock anyone, in his possession.

Not only that, the demon was also constantly studying him, poking for any weakness in his guard. But the most frustrating thing about the demon was his experience in dealing with adventurers.

It wasn't like Morgress was going easy on the demon viscount or something, in fact he had fought with a demon viscount just like the one in front of him many years ago in the snow valley. However, that demon wasn't as annoying as this one to deal with nor did he have these incredible line ups of followers.

But most of all, that demon wasn't as adept at dealing with the adventurers as the one in front of him.

His heart skipped a beat when he heard the demon identify the technique he had used. Nevertheless, when he saw him frowning, his confidence returned back to him.

"That is right, this is an advanced technique only those who have stepped into the realms of true powerhouse can use. There is no way any attacks that a demon viscount who hasn't even reached the peak of his rank could throw that will be able to surpass my [Mana Armour]' Morgress thought internally.

He also believed that the infernal attack like the one earlier should be very taxing and cannot be used consecutively.

He was not wrong, in fact, Simon had to use one third of his entire mana pool to dish an attack as powerful as that. But the thing that Morgress forgot to account was that Simon wasn't going all out from the start unlike him.

"Interesting [Mana Armour] huh. I have quite some history with this technique. No, this is a good opportunity, now I will be able to see if my current abilities are strong enough to get past that [Mana Armour] of yours or not" Simon said flashing a wide wicked smile for the first time since the battle started.

A terrible amount of bloodlust flooded out of him which was so palpable that one could feel their skin tingling. This amount of killing intent and bloodlust wasn't something that could be faked and could only be released by one who have killed thousands of people.

Feeling that powerful amount of bloodlust and hearing those words, Morgress wondered what the demon was talking about when he suddenly realised that the aura around the latter suddenly start to rise; No, skyrocket to whole different realms.

It was not only him that felt the changes, everyone who was observing the demon, felt that change. In front of the astonished eyes of every humans and even his subordinates, Simon's body started buffing and increasing in volume starting from his height to his muscles.

The next change was the weird markings all around his arms and chest that started lighting up and igniting his upper clothes revealing his lean and packed muscles along with the ancient symbols on his body.

With the change in his physical state, his aura and stats also started rising to whole new levels. The skill that Simon used, astonished everyone. After all, a skill on the level of Lost Phantasmal tier was something that only a few individuals including Irene knew that Simon had.

That absurd of a change warranted that incredulous of a look from the observers.

BOOOM... the moment the changes finished taking place, Simon flapped his wings and disappeared.

From the start of this fight, Morgress had kept his opponent in his sight; however, after that peculiar change, the demon moved at such an incredulous speed that he practically disappeared for a second or two from his opponent's line of sight.

The next time he appeared he was already behind Morgress and was in mid motion of swinging his sword.

Sensing the demon behind him, Morgress' eyes opened wide, he wanted to turn around and defend but it was already too late.

CLANG... a heavy grating noise echoed out and Morgress was sent flying to the base of the mountain where he crashed ultimately creating a small crater.

BOOOM... BOOMM... BOOM... Before he even had the chance to compose himself and get out of the crater, dozens of flame and lightning spears came targeting him from the sky.

A barrage of flame and lightning hit his body that was lying on the ground generating intense reactions from the onlookers. The demon's assault did not stop there, after that intense display of magic, it dropped down onto the crater where Morgress was like a meteor.

BOOOOM... the ground in a few meters area trembled and from amidst the dust, a figure could be seen flying out.

The person who just rolled out of there was none other than Morgress who looked quite worn out. He was covered in dust, his hair and skin burnt in many areas and his Blackgold armour was almost but gone.

Looking at that state of his, whether it be his teammates or the people teaming up with him, they weren't able to believe that this person was their guild leader, the man with the highest level in their party.

Before their brain could comprehend what was happening, the figure of the demon appeared out of the pit and released an aura that kept on getting stronger.

'As I thought so, the [Mana Armour] technique this person is using is not complete. In that case..' Simon thought internally and decided to boost his powers even further by activating all of his augmenting skills.

Added with the fact that he was under the effects of his [Ancient Symbol Ignition] skill and the buffs provided by his sword, the power he erupted out with was ridiculous to say no less.

BOOM... right after boosting his powers even further, Simon charged towards Morgress not intending to give the latter a single moment of respite.

Thus, a brutal fight started with Morgress being thrown all around the thirty sixth floor like a ragdoll being slammed with all of the magic and skills of his opponent. He was being so utterly overwhelmed that it did not even look like a fight any more and more like a one sided beating.

Morgress was a human who had one foot in the level 500 barrier for many years. Usually, it wouldn't have been this easy for Simon if he wanted to suppress him. However, Morgress failed to account one thing when he challenged Simon on a one on one duel and that was the current state of their bodies.

Compared to Simon who was brimming with energy, Morgress was battle worn from descending so many floors, clearing monsters and fighting so many golems. It was only natural that he would be expended and would be unable to fight like in his peak state.

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It was his conceit and overconfidence that led to him challenging Simon in a state where he was not even half of his peak state. The result was this complete bashing from the demon viscount he thought was weaker than him.

After only a few seconds, he was reduced to a pitiful state and looked quite wretched. Nonetheless, If it was just that, Morgress wouldn't have such an ugly face, the thing that was eating him up alive was the cracks that had appeared on his mana armour after every successive attacks from his opponent.

The skill that he was most proud of and was his magnum opus was being broken in front of his own eyes by the demon. The despair that he felt at this moment was on a whole different level.

CLANG...CLANG...BOOM... sword slashes and magic like a rain poured onto him disintegrating his [Mana Armour] slowly as if it was made from cheap material.

SHATTER... finally, that dense mana surrounding Morgress body like an armour gave up and completely shattered in front him.

PFFFTTT... Morgress laid motionless onto the ground and looked at his dissipating [Mana Armour] in a daze, his eyes were dim and he seemed dead internally.

"Guild Master..." at this moment, a voice rang out and a couple of figures could be seen rushing here from the distance. Lombus, Thiago, Sable all of the seven swords assembled near Morgress at this moment.

Hearing their voice, Morgress turned towards them only to be baffled by the sight of the huge mountain in front of him. Their duel started at the top of the mountain and later encompassed the whole floor.

To his surprise he was being dominated so badly that he did not realise up until this point that the demon was just toying around with him.

"That can't be... I can't lose, I will not lose!! You all help me kill this demon" Morgress bellowed out in anger. At this moment he did not care about the rules of the duel, or the disdainful look of his opponent and the other humans looking at him from the distance.

Right now, he had to kill this demon, this being that was cannot be measured by common sense or else he would be able to quell the anger that was trying to burn him from within. Never in his life was he so pathetically stomped upon nor was he looked down like that, on the contrary, he was always on the other side and not on the receiving side.

His mind was in chaos with fear, confusion, disbelief and all the emotions running rampant that he couldn't think straight anymore. All he wanted right now to erase this demon who was like an eyesore in front of him even if it meant breaking the rules of the duel and throwing away his face.

The seven swords as stunned as they were, nodded their heads and took out their weapons to engage Simon. If it was before in the kingdom of Ellesmere, this strategy might have worked leaving Simon no choice but to run pathetically for his life.

However, this place was not the kingdom, this was his dungeon, his home and he was not alone here.

WHOOSH.. WHOOSH... multiple figures breaking the sound of speed, appeared around him. Irene, the Bloodthornn demonic warhorse and the Valkyries, stood beside him. If Morgress thought that he could win by outnumbering Simon, he was sorely mistaken.

"Master, there is no need for you to waste your precious time on them any longer. Allow us to dispose them on your behalf" Annette said fuming with cold fury.

"Right, to dare to lay their dirty hands on master, I want to tear their whole body apart at a time and torment them until they beg for death" Bea said with a violent furious face.

Nevertheless, Simon shook his head and rejected their help. Even when facing the almost full line up of the seven swords, Simon was still as fearless as ever.

"Are you going to use that?" As if reading his mind, Irene asked. She only backed down when he gave her a nod.

Although the others wanted to know what the two were talking about, they chose to stay silent and believe in their master.

"That bastard is still looking down on me. You all forget about conserving your mana, go all out with me and kill that demon first" Morgress grit his teeth so hard that he might have even shattered a few.

Whatever reserves of potions he had, he used it all on healing his wounds and recovering some of his mana at this moment.

"Don't worry guild master, that demon is all over his head right now to challenge all of us without his subordinates. His pride shall be his downfall... hmph" Lombus said brandishing his hammer.

The other seven swords got into their formation, their eyes were completely serious and were no longer looking down on the demon.

"Attack now" with Morgress' yell as the mark, all of them simultaneously dished out their attacks or conjured their magic with the demon as the target.

[Great Thunder Fang], [Hundred Brutal Hammer Mastery- Hundred Brutal Beating], [Leaping Beast Slash], [Sharpshooter Bow Mastery- Dead Notch Arrow], [Amalgamation Magic, Flame-Gale Mastery- Flames of Hell], [Tremor Magic Mastery- Boulder Collapse].

Crimson Thunder, hundreds of hammer shadows, sword slashes in the shapes of a beast, invisible arrows, fiery flames fanned to the extreme by gales and huge boulders bigger than a man, all flew towards the demon.

One could imagine the kind of pressure all of these elite techniques, magic and skills dished out by the people whose average level was above 450 was. The land and air around the entire mountain trembled, the space distorted wherever the attacks went and a dreadful heaviness that bore on everyone descended onto the place.

BANG... far in the distance, a huge draconic tail slammed into the air causing a person who was blended with the environment, to come out of that space and crash into the ground.

COUGH... COUGH... Boris coughed a few times and picked his battered body up. He turned around, looked at the Draconic Lightning Serpent and said begrudgingly.

"Don't get in my way beast, I have no grudge with you. I must kill that demon who killed my little brother with my own hands and solve this hatred".

[Shadow Slash], a blade shadow that boomerangs back towards the target when their guard is down the most. An exclusive skill of the [Night Shadow Assassin] class and a Rare Ancient skill.

Nevertheless, in front of the powerful Lightning draconic Serpent and its draconic scales, the attack managed to deal only a negligible amount of damage. The latter did not even bother to dodge the attack and took it head on demonstrating the level of confidence it had on its body.

"Is that all you can do? Hmph, with that level of strength you think you are my lord's match. Let me tell you something, you are weaker than those Diluvian High Orcs that held the delusion of subjugating me when I was ruling the northern areas of the forest".

However, now that I have grown stronger and surpassed my limits, you are nothing but a pebble on the roadside, insignificant and trivial. There is no way I will allow you to trouble my lord as I alone am enough to deal with tens of you".

The Lightning Draconic Serpent declared proudly. It was not lying when it said that it had grown stronger since then, after it was subordinated by Simon and brought here on the thirty sixth floor where the density of mana was getting denser by the day due to the many mana trees planted all around the floor.

Thanks to the ample mystical energy it was able to feed on, it broke through the level 500 barrier and became a calamity class. Additionally, being subordinated by Simon meant that it was also under the effects of the pride fragment that allowed one to grow many times faster.

However, it was unaware about it and thought that it was some kind of blessing from his lord. Now that it has broken through its restraints, it was dozens of times more stronger than before.

Forget about Boris, if Berigard along with his diluvian high orc army were to be the one facing it right now, they would be obliterated in a few minutes of time. Let alone a single human assassin who was already tired from fighting all those monsters and golems.

Boris huffed and tried to regulate his breathing, he checked his space ring but realised that he was all out of potions. He spat in frustration and was just about blindly charge towards the serpent in his anger when suddenly his body stopped moving altogether.

His sharp senses that he had honed till now as an elite assassin, warned him of a terrifying amount of energy that was brewing in the distance. It was not only him, even the Lightning Draconic Serpent stopped its movements and turned around to look towards the direction of the huge mountain in astonishment.

That energy in the distance was so evil and negative that even from this distance, just a whiff from it was enough to overwhelm its very soul. The direction where this tremendous negative energy originated from, was where its lord was.

At some unknown point in time, there was a huge greyish object that looked like a gigantic finger at a glance, floating beside his lord. When the Lightning Draconic Serpent tried to observe the thing more carefully, it felt a burst of negative energy try to enter its body and crush its mind and soul.

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Alarmend and Panicked, the Lightning draconic Serpent hurriedly shifted its eyes and only felt relieved when it felt the effects of whatever that thing was, dissipate.

Even though it was so far away and the pressure of the miasma that the finger released wasn't on him, the thing was so powerful that just by looking at it, it gave the illusion of being crushed under a mighty energy.

It wasn't only him that felt the abnormality of that thing by his lord, at this moment, whether it be beings who were the inhabitants of this dungeon or the intruders all felt a mighty pressure that bore down on all.

Simon who was flying in the air, made some peculiar hand gestures and circulated his mana in a way that evoked some peculiar runes to arrive on the giant grey finger suspended beside him.

The moment those runes arrived, they interlocked with each other and spread across the entire finger. Surprisingly enough, those exact same runes also appeared on the index finger of his right hand.

With the process completed, Simon very slowly lifted the index finger of his right hand and pointed it towards the barrage of incoming attacks dished out by the six humans.

Following his gesture, the huge greyish finger started moving. Although to the onlookers, it looked like the giant finger was moving at a very slow pace, in actuality it was moving at a speed so fast that their brains were unable to comprehend it.

It covered dozens of meters of space in a fraction of a second and tore the space around it wherever it went. A powerful miasma exuded out of it eroding away at the shattered space.

In just a few seconds, the finger was already in front of the onrushing storm of attacks dished put by the humans.

There was no need to even mention the difference in power level between the two. On one side was the combined power of the most powerful attacks of the seven swords whose level was around 480 and on the other, the finger of a being whose entire existence was an enigma, Ozymandias.

Ozymandias was so powerful that just with the simple movement of its hand, it was able to create a storm not to mention its powerful curse energy and the Armageddon like battle it had with Yela.

Even though what Simon was currently controlling, was just a finger from the hand that was culled by Yela, it was still something that belonged to a being that broke all concepts of the current power level.

Forget about these humans who had yet to breach level 500, even if it was someone above level 600, they would suffer a devastating defeat against it.

When two attacks of totally different calibre collided, there was no expected collision and a huge explosion thereafter. When the finger was just about to collide with the storm of magic and skills and when it seemed like an explosion was certain, everything got drowned out by the curse energy and thereafter shattered into tiny fragments from the force of the finger.

Like a stone that had shattered a mirror, the finger directly crushed everything in its path whether it be the space around it or the storm like combined attacks of the seven swords, nothing could stand in front of its might.

Naturally, the shock of seeing their attacks be crushed so one-sidedly had a deep impact on them however, before their mind could process what had actually transpired, the fierce backlash from having their attacks shattered like that and the curse energy that they were exposed to, made them fall on the ground and bleed from all of their orifices.

Their faces were pale, bodies continuously spasmed and they had a traumatised look on their face.

The finger stopped after destroying their attacks and retreated back towards Simon's side as per his will. The result of this battle had concluded with his overwhelming victory.

As he looked at the despair ridden face of the humans that tried to intrude on his home and take what belonged to him, Simon finally showed a content smile. With that last attack of his, he had finally and utterly broken any and all hopes harboured by these humans that tried to go against him.

He must admit that he very much liked the current expression these people were making, it gave him a sense of euphoria when he broke their hope and trampled them underneath.

Simon never thought that he would feel this good when oppressing others like that. Perhaps it was due to his demonic side that had brought these changes on him. Nevertheless, he did not care about it anymore since he had already embraced that side of himself.

Demon nobles are a race that acts true to their desires, in a way they can be said to be the very incarnation of desires. Having completed his desire to feast on their despair, Simon turned his focus towards the giant grey finger levitating beside him.

When he rejected the aid of his subordinates and decided to take all the humans on his own, he wasn't being conceited or anything. On the contrary, his confidence stemmed from his abilities and knowing what his current limit was.

That is why he decided to face the humans alone because he knew how powerful of a weapon sitting inside his inventory was.

"This technique imparted by Irene is quite profound" Simon muttered looking at his index finger which had the same runes as the giant grey finger. As he looked at the mysterious runes, the image of Irene floated in his mind.

A few days ago near the pond of serenity, Simon had asked Irene's help with the gigantic finger that he had brought back from the trial. At that moment, she told him that it was not impossible to use the finger as a weapon.

"How much do you know about techniques?" Irene asked.

"Not much, but I do know that it's different from skills and magic and it's not something that can be displayed on a status," Simon said explaining whatever little knowledge he had about techniques.

Irene nodded her head, she was not amazed that he was unaware of it since Simon had already explained to her how his inherited memories were incomplete.

"Although you are not wrong in saying techniques are different from your skills and magic, you are not entirely right either. The reason why techniques are not shown in your status is because they are made up of your skills and magic which are already there in your status".

"A technique uses your magic and skills in a manner that creates a whole different effect than what was previously possible while using them individually. Obviously, the effect depends on the nature of the skills and magic and whether they are compatible and can be blended together".

"Techniques are a whole different branch in itself and require an equal amount of time and focus as in with the skills and magic" Irene clarified.

Simon pondered over her words for a while before asking a question "What about techniques that don't use your skills and magic?".

The Ancient Draconic Compel for example was a technique taught to him by Lucine. There was no need to even mention how mysterious and powerful the technique was which meant that the skills and magic needed to use it should be equally complex and powerful.

However, Simon neither had those skills or magic to create an effect capable of subjugating a member of the draconic race. This is why it raised a question in him when he heard her explanation.

Irene smiled in the face of his question and further explained. "Right, just like there are some techniques that need the usage of your skills and magic in a specific way to work, there are also techniques that work without you needing to have those specific skills and magic".

"For example, that [Ancient Draconic Compel] you used to subdue the Lightning Draconic Serpent. That kind of technique that can be passed down to others are called Legacy techniques and are more precious and powerful".

"A legacy technique is something that has been polished through the years until it reached the realm of perfection. The skills and magic to create that effect, get assimilated with the bloodline over time thus removing the requirements needed to cast the technique. Although one would need the bloodline of the being that created the legacy technique to cast such a technique".

"Usually, you wouldn't see the legacy technique being used unless you are facing a truly powerful enemy".

Simon nodded his head in understanding, he did receive a droplet of blood from Lucine when she passed him the technique.

"Are you saying that a technique is needed to use the finger?" Simon asked. There could only be one reason for Irene to initiate a conversation on technique right now and that was that they were relevant to using the finger.

"Right, if you use a technique called the [Dominator's Control], you should be able to use the finger as a weapon. [Dominator's Control] is a powerful technique that allows one to dominate and control things marked by them".

"Using this technique you can move things without having a need to touch them physically. Additionally, the technique is so powerful that its reach also extends to living beings. Though, you need to have a complete mastery over the technique to dominate something with a will of its own".

"Though the finger that you brought has its will separated from it, it still exudes a heavy curse energy that makes it impossible to dominate unless one can harness the curse energy".

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"Normally, it would be impossible for anyone but since you said that you are not affected by its miasma and are somehow able to harness it, you should be able to dominate the finger with this technique" Irene mused looking at the gigantic grey finger encased in her ice magic.

A plethora of emotions overwhelmed Simon at this moment, from her words, he was almost certain that there was a way to use the finger as a weapon.

[Dominator's Control] as powerful and absurd the name of the technique sounded, the effects it created were equally or even more absurd. To control objects or even living beings without touching them physically what kind of ridiculous concept was that?

Nevertheless, if he can use this technique he would be able to dominate the finger and control it as he wants.

"Since you told me about this [Dominator's Control], then does that mean that you know this technique?" Simon asked only to get a positive nod from her.

"That is great, so how do I acquire this technique".

Seeing him eager to want to learn this technique, Irene smiled delightfully. She extended her hand and extracted out a droplet of blood that emitted a phoenix cry before flying towards Simon.

Learning from his experience, he was not as clueless as before and knew what to do with the droplet of blood. He made a slight cut on his thumb and allowed the droplet of blood to assimilate with him.

It took a few seconds but the moment the assimilation was complete, Simon felt a vast amount of knowledge pour into his brain like a river.

"So that's how it is..." Simon took a deep breath and muttered. Next, he looked towards Irene and was just about to say his thanks when the latter suddenly shifted the topic.

"Although I provided you with the [Dominator's Control] technique, it's not like you have comprehended it yet. Unlike that technique you used to subdue the Lightning Draconic Serpent, the [Dominator's Control] is more of a technique that depends on an individual's abilities".

"You have to grasp some of the mysteries behind this technique to even begin using it. Let's see, if you use the serenity stone and meditate near the pond, it will take you around a week or two to get a rudimentary understanding of the technique".

"However, seeing that you decided to ask my help now of all times, means that you want to add the finger to your repertoire in the upcoming defence of the dungeon... isn't that right?" Irene asked looking straight into his eyes.

Simon did not know if it was his facial expression but boy he was easy to read. He had no intention of keeping it a secret from her in the first place and thus nodded his head telling her of his intentions.

Even if the possibility of grasping this technique in a few days was next to impossible, Simon still wanted to give it a try. There was no telling what might happen during the battle to defend their dungeon. Thus it was crucial that he increases the number of trump cards he had at his disposal.

Plus, thinking about the future, he thought that this was the best option he could take right now. If he could use the technique to control the finger, it would become an incredibly powerful asset for him.

Therefore, Simon immediately sat on a nearby rock and was just about to close his eyes and comprehend the knowledge that was imparted to him, when he saw Irene sitting nearby him.

The latter sighed seeing his action and told him "I knew you would start doing something rash again and carry all the burden on your shoulder. Although I'm not saying that it's a bad decision, but you should rely and trust your subordinates a little more, just like you did a few moments ago. But I guess saying all that is useless to you now, since you have already made your decision, allow me to help you".

Simon reflected on those words of her and accepted her help.

"I don't know how much of the technique you will be able to grasp in a few days but let us try our best".

Simon recalled the training he had gone through under Irene in the past few days. Fortunately, he was able to grasp enough of the [Dominator's Control] technique to test the abilities of the finger on the intruders.

Right now, he can only use the finger of ozymandias to press down on his enemies in the most crude and unrefined manner. However, with time as he grasps more of the mysteries of the technique he would be able to achieve much more with that finger.

Finishing what he had set out to do, Simon flew back and was greeted by his subordinates.

"Welcome back my Lord"

"That was a splendid match, as expected of our master".

The Bloodthorn Demonic warhorse and the Valkyrie sisters voiced out their opinions.

"You can take care of the rest, remember not to kill them all. I still need to get information out from them" Seeing the fire of eagerness to battle in their eyes, Simon declared giving his approval for them to run amok.

While most of the Valkyrie sisters reacted in a more calm way, Bea released a great amount of bloodlust towards the intruders that slighted her master.

The Bloodthorn demonic warhorse was no different, it too was itching with an intent to fight with them.

"In that case, does master have anyone in his eyes he wants to keep alive to interrogate" Perhaps it was only Annette who was viewing everything in a more analytical way.

"Let's see... those ones over there. From their movement and coordination, they definitely seemed to be from the same party or a guild. Leaving a few, you are allowed to kill the rest" Simon declared casually signing the death warrant for the humans.

Since they did not bother to keep their voices silent, of course, the adventurers with their keen hearing were able to hear everything. They were already in despair of having to face so many golems and their rapidly decreasing reserves of potion.

If not for the fact that they still held a tiny bit of hope in the strongest people amongst them, the seven swords who were trying to defeat the master of this dungeon, they would have tried to escape from this floor already.

However, the hopes that they held onto, was brutally snuffed out by the demon when he displayed his overwhelming might by defeating the entire line up of the seven swords by himself.

Unlike Morgress and his teammates, the demon stood by the rule of the duel and defeated all of them with just his own powers. Looking at that gigantic finger standing beside him, they could still vividly remember the tremendous amount of negative energy that gave them chills, released by it.

They were sure that if that thing was pointed towards them, they wouldn't even survive the attack. The delusion that they had of conquering the dungeon was already gone replaced by only the will to survive somehow.

As such the moment they heard the master of this dungeon set lose his subordinates to kill them, they started running and escaping from this hell. However, how could it be this easy to escape from the Valkyries who were one of the 'Twelve Heroes'?

FLAP... with a flapping of clothes, a maid wearing armour over her dress appeared in front of two adventurers who were dashing towards the exit at their full speed. She had a pretty face that could mesmerise any man and a curvaceous body.

She would have been extremely desirable if only she did not have unkempt long hair and sleep deprived eyes. Though her beauty made up for her flaws.

Nonetheless, these adventurers were not in the right mind to pay attention to a beauty right now as all their focus was on escaping from this place alive. Thus when they saw the woman block their path, they did not slow down and instead drew their weapon out.

"Get out of our waaay" the adventurers roared and jumped trying to run past the woman. However, to their surprise the moment they stepped to the side, they found their body become stationary all of a sudden.

Confused, they tried to move their body only to realise that they were unable to no matter how much force they used.

"What is going on... what did you do to us?" the two adventurers barked in anger and panic.

"Hiii...I'm sorry" Emma said in a feeble voice.

"If you are sorry then release us right now" seeing that they cannot break out even while using their skills, the adventurers became even more frustrated.

"Im sorry... im sorry" the woman apologised slowly creeping closer.

"You goddamn dumb woman, release us this instant" her apologising attitude only seemed to flame them more.

"Im sorry... you must have been very hurt... is it painful?" Emma asked.

"Fuck, what is this woman saying" one of the adventurer roared, he was just about to apply more force when he realised that his hands and legs were free again.

Normally, he would be happy that he can move again however, that was not the case this time. His limbs were moving on their own and without his control.

"You can move? Hey...w-what are you doing with that sword?" it was only when his friend pointed it out that the adventurer realised his hands had picked up his sword and his legs were taking him towards his friend.

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Realising what was going on, the man tried to stop himself only to realise that he had lost control over his body.

"Have you gone mad? S-STOPPP..." his friend squealed but it was already too late as the sword was already swung towards the defenceless him.

CHIII... the man watched in horror as blood sprayed out from his friend's neck, their hatred filled eyes and their head which rolled down onto the floor.

"AHHHH" the adventurer screamed in fear, he wanted to run, he wanted to deny everything that happened today, he wanted to escape from this goddamn dungeon. However, it seemed that fate had some other plans for him.

"Im sorry..." he heard the voice of that woman again and realised why she was apologising so incessantly. She was apologising because it was already destined that they would die at her hands. even the way she looked at them was as if she was looking at a corpse.

"Haha..ahaha" the man laughed, his neck slowly twisting a full 360° like a screw. CRACK and finally his neck made a cracking noise and hanged down losely.

"Im sorry... [Marionette Play]" Emma said mourning at their death.

Remaining Humans- Ten.

"FUCK.. FUCK... FUCK... I knew it, it was a huge mistake to dive inside this ominous dungeon. I told you we shouldn't have accepted that commission from Benny Beckerman".

"How is that my fault? Didn't you say that we can't defy that guild and make an enemy out of that man?".

Two humans were bickering with each other as they hurriedly moved under the cover trying to hide from the calamity class beasts they thought would come after them.

"Shut up everything is going downhill... if only I never accepted this commission". The two of them hid underneath a foliage and tried to hide their presence as much as possible.

CREAK... at this moment, they suddenly heard some twigs breaking and their bodies immediately became alert.

"Do you think it's those golems or is that calamity class beast?"

"Don't speak so loudly, what if they hear us?" the two of them talked in a hushed voice.

When the latter peeked from the foliage only to see a maid standing there, he sighed a breath of relief. His heart almost came out his mouth thinking it was those annoying golems or those powerful calamity beasts.

"Who is it?!"

"Relax, it's just a maid. I don't think she has noticed our presence. This is our chance let's slowly move away from here"

"Wait... I think this is a chance, we should capture that woman"

"Have you lost your mind?"

"Think carefully, our survival out of this dungeon is already very low that it is almost 0. But what if we capture this woman and use her as a hostage till we get out of here? Once we are out, the demon wouldn't be able to do anything to us".

Hearing his plan, the other person too thought that it wasn't a bad move. In fact, it might really be their one and only opportunity to get out of this dungeon. The two of them nodded their heads and came out of the shrubs.

"What a coincidence, if it isn't one of the maids of the master of this dungeon. What brings a beauty like you here? Don't tell me that you have fallen for one of us?" the humans tried initiating a conversation, slowly creeping closer towards the maid so as to not alert her.

They thought that the maid would react by either running or trying to call for help. However, when they saw that she did not even react, they felt like something was wrong. Nevertheless, they did not stop their advance and just when they were a few meters away from her, they started charging towards the maid not intending to give her a moment to react.

"Got you!!" One of the humans dived towards her trying to pin her down while the other blocked her way. However, contrary to their expectation, the maid still held onto her emotionless expression even in the wake of their assault.

Just when they were only a few inches away from her, she performed a simple punch followed by a roundhouse kick in a swift motion. These movements of her might seem simple but to them who were the recipient of the attack, it was anything but simple.

BANG...

BANG...

The punch and the kick that the maid performed packed enough power to easily shatter the defensive gears the humans were wearing and send them flying back. What was amazing about it was that the maid moved so fast that up until the point they were hit, the two people did not even see an attack coming.

Bianca approached the two people who were lying on the ground squirming and puffing out blood. Amongst the Valkyrie sisters with the exception of Mercedes, she was the most powerful when it came to pure physical abilities.

Coupled with her level, these humans who were trying to pounce on her might as well be as good as ants. Additionally, amongst the sisters, Bianca had the least emotions due to her race being a homunculus and also because of her settings which made her to be a little dunce.

Thus when she was using her black glossy heels to step on the part frightened, part disbelieved face of the two humans and smash them like watermelons, all the while, her face was the very definition of calm and emotionless.

There was not even a single ripple in her eyes when killing these people.

Remaining Humans- Eight.

On another corner of the forest far from the mountain where Simon and the others were, an assassin was sprinting around the trees at an incredible speed dodging the bolts of lightning coming his way.

He criss-crossed around the place and on numerous occasions tried to outsmart the Lightning draconic serpent and rush towards the distant mountain where his target was.

By now, Boris knew that he wasn't a match for the Lightning Draconic Serpent and more so of that demon who was able to single handedly defeat his former teammates. He knew that it was impossible for him to avenge his little brother but even then, he did not want to give up because if he did, he would no longer have a reason to struggle.

"That fucking demon doesn't even know who my brother is...at the very least I must at least kill someone dear to him. that way, he will understand the pain I'm going through" Boris cursed hiding behind a tree.

His state right now could only be said as wretched with blood and wounds covering his body. His reserves of potions were already out and he was on his last legs.

"Do you think you can hide from me? Your petty tricks can only buy you so much time" the Lightning Draconic Serpent hissed. It was starting to get a little annoyed with the puny human that was trying to continuously avoid him instead of fighting directly thus extending the battle.

If not for that, it would have already closed this fight and by now it would be near his lord.

Seeing that the man was still not coming out even after his warning angered the Lightning Draconic Serpent even more and thus it decided to use the skill it was hesitating up until now.

RUMBLE... all of a sudden, wind started picking up and dark clouds loomed over the sky for a few kilometres. The mana around this part of the forest was set in turbulence as they raged around haphazardly.

Sensing the danger in the air, Boris' face became ugly. He did not know what the beast was trying to do but given the mana and thunder that was flooding out of it, it knew that it was bad news. He weighed his option and decided to run away instead of trying to stop it from conjuring whatever attack it was trying to conjure.

He thought that given the intensity of the attack it would take quite a while for it to complete and given his agility, by the time the attack was complete, he would already be out of its range.

Boris was not wrong in thinking so but he had underestimated one thing and that was the range of the attack the Lightning Draconic Serpent was conjuring. It was trying to use a skill called [Weather Manipulation] and conjure thunder clouds in a few kilometres of area.

Boris wasn't even half the way out of the forest when a loud boom echoed out from the clouds above. Following that, the clouds started churning and turning red from the numerous bolts of lightning that were brewing in them.

"Thunder Rain" With the bellow of the Lightning draconic Serpent, the entire forest lighted up as crimson thunder like bolts of snakes dropped down from the sky.

BOOOOMMMM... the land trembled and the sky cried pouring thunder like rain. The forest for a few kilometres was burned and devastated with no presence of life to be found around. The same was true for Boris the assassin whose entire body was turned into ashes by the thunder rain.

Unlike Berigard who had numerous resources and cards at his disposal, Boris was just a second-rate assassin in a third-rate kingdom. Even up until the moment he died he had an unwilling face that was unresigned to his fate.

After finishing the annoying assassin, the Lightning Draconic Serpent flew over to his master's side only to see that the others have already finished their task and were now surrounding the six humans who dared to attack their master.

All nine of Simon's subordinates excluding the [Helpers] were gathered around his side at this moment.

Name- Emma

Race- Black Widow Spider

Rank- [A]

Level- 699+[???

Skills- Analysis, Ultra Enhanced Detection, Blunt Super resistance, Cut Super resistance, Piercing Resistance, Poison Immunity, Ultra High Speed processing, Parallel Thoughts, Ultra Natural Recovery, Ultra Minimal Mana Consumption, Ultra enhanced Endurance, Ultra Enhanced Endurance, Ultra Enhanced Defence, Ultra Enhanced Magic, Battle Instinct, Essence Mana Conferment, Ultra High Speed Regeneration, Ultra High Speed Mana recovery, Five Senses Ultra Enhancement, Ultra Acute Control, Future Attack Prediction, Golden Mana Lines, Cooking, Cleaning, Sewing, Housework.

Racial Skills- [Marionette Master], [Supreme Thread Reeling], [Supreme Thread Production], [Supreme Thread Weaving], [Supreme Thread Control], [Telekenisis], [Colourless Concealment], [Reverse Powerplay], [Will Distribution], [Poison Synthesis], [Nether Poison Mastery], [Ultra

Precise Poison Control], [Ability Overlay], [Ability Conferment], [Binocular Vision], [Unification++].

Name- Bianca

Race- Homunculus

Rank- [A]

Level- 699+[???

Class- [Imperial Aegis Knight]

p Skills- Analysis, Ultra Enhanced Detection, Blunt Ultra Resistance, Cut Ultra Resistance, Piercing Ultra Resistance, Poison Resistance, Ultra High Speed Thought Processing, Parallel Thoughts, Ultra Natural Recovery, Minimal Mana Consumption, Herculean Strength, Herculean Endurance, Herculean Defence, Herculean Agility, Seismic Magic Mastery, Ultra Battle Instinct, Ultra High Speed Regeneration, High Speed Mana Recovery, Five Senses Ultra Enhancement, Essence Mana Super Burst, Tyrant Aura, Dense Mana Control, Future Attack Prediction, Golden Mana Lines, Cooking, Cleaning, Housework.

Class Specific Skills- [Impenetrable Tectonic Wall], [Tectonic Blast], [Golden Body], [Titan Buff], [Barrier], [Barrier Overlay], [Aegis Knight's Call], [Battle Hunger], [Counter], [Impenetrable Aegis Mastery], [Ability Overlay], [Ability Conferment], [Aegis War Beat], [Aegis Imprisonment], [Helix Crush], [Defence Boost].

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"These puny humans dared to attack our master, their sins are absolutely unpardonable. I will skin them alive and torcher them until they die regretting that they were ever born" Bea declared in a violent rage.

Her words were so extreme that it made the others frown. Just when Bea was about to make her move, Annette stopped her saying "Did you already forget what master ordered us to do? He needs them alive so you of all people who doesn't know how to hold back shouldn't step up for this task. Besides, there is still the ..."

At the end of her sentence, Annette volume became so low that only Simon and those near him could hear her. Although Bea was a little unwilling that everyone got their chance to shine except her, she still decided to listen to Annette and step down for this one.

"In that case, allow me to aid you" Bloodthorn demonic warhorse stated stepping forward. Now that he was relieved of his duty as the steed of his lord, he could go wild and take some of his built-up frustration on these people a little.

"Then I'm counting on you," Annette said nodding her head. She looked towards Irene and Bea beside Simon one last time before moving towards the area where the six adventurers were.

The sevens swords after being handed a devastating defeat at the hands of a single demon viscount, lay on the ground with a face of disbelief. It took them a while and the deaths of the people that came with them to make them realise that they were still in the enemy's territory and if they did not move or escape from here, it would be their turn to die next.

RUMBLE...

Thiago turned his head and saw thunderclouds brew in the distant forest and pour down like rain. His eyes immediately went wide when he realised...

"Boris is dead, his presence is gone!!".

"What?!"

The other seven swords reacted with a complex expression on their face. Even if Boris had betrayed them by revealing their position and information to the Sea God's Guild, he was still their former teammate, a person who was one of the seven swords.

His strength was something that they could vouch for themselves. A person of his calibre to die at the hands of someone other than the demon, made them finally realise how dangerous the dungeon they dived inside truly was.

There were other power beings other than the master of the dungeon himself capable of killing them.

"W-we must get out of here" Morgress said clenching his body. Out of all the others, he had suffered the most damage. Even the potion he took from his teammates did not have much effect.

Nobody objected to his decision, in fact, they all unanimously approved of it. After all, being shown such an obvious difference they would be a fool to stay here and continue to fight. A decision that could be said to be the most correct one.

But how could Simon allow them to escape just like this? The decision to dive inside the dungeon was up to the humans; however, the decision to get out of here depended on the master of the dungeon, Simon who has already decided to capture them alive.

"RUN!!" Morgress shouted at the top of his lung seeing the subordinates of the demon arrive beside him one after the other. The seven swords obeyed his command and together made a beeline towards the exit.

But the exit was covered by the Bloodthorn demonic warhorse and Annette who were already standing there.

"Lombus" Morgress cried out, immediately the warrior wielding his huge hammer charged out and brandished his weapon in a wild, unimpeded manner.

BANG...BANG...BANG... as if a chain of explosions had gone out, each swing of Lombus was powerful enough to create bursts of winds that pushed everyone back and uprooted the surrounding trees.

Huff... Huff... after Lombus stopped his wild attacks, the entire area in front of them was covered in dust. It was only after the dust settled, that they could see a silhouette of a six legged warhorse standing perfectly still in front of them.

What's more, it had endured every attack from Lombus' hammer without even suffering any damage.

NEIGHH... the Bloodthorn demonic warhorse roared, reared its legs and stomped down onto the ground hard enough to create a small earthquake. Its three pairs of dark eyes looked at the adventurer in front of it as if saying 'Is that all?'

Lombus wasn't a genius but even he could see the mocking look in its eyes.

"Don't underestimate me beast!!! [Hundred Brutal Hammer Mastery- Hundred Brutal Beating] ORAAAA!!!..." "angered, Lombus used his most powerful hammer mastery technique.

It was around this technique that his entire self-confidence was built. Although it was quite a big shock to see their combined attack thwarted out like it was some kind of child's play earlier, he still believed the hammer techniques that had brought him this far and made him one of the seven swords, would be able to display its effects against the calamity class beast.

But to his utter despair, it seemed to display no effect.

BANG... BANG... BANG... the hammer bringing along a tide like power slammed onto the warhorse's body, horns, and face. Nonetheless, none of it managed to even shake its body much less do any damage.

"H-how can this be?!" Lombus stopped swinging his hammer and dropped it on the ground. His face was laden with despair at this moment and faint black smoke was coming out of it.

Seeing Lombus' attack fail to even faze the enemy, all of the seven swords wore an incredulous on their face. They were nevertheless, an elite adventurer and thus they swiftly recovered from their daze and prepared to engage with the enemy in front of them.

"Flame Magic Mastery- [Flame Tsunami]" Sable roared out and started casting a powerful intermediate-tier flame magic.

While Thiago pulled his bowstring and released multiple arrows towards the warhorse targeting its weak spots like eyes and nose "Tch.. Sharpshooter Bow Mastery- [Swift Notch Strike]".

The flames roared out, the magic was just about to be complete and the arrows about to reach the warhorse when suddenly the mana around the surrounding was disrupted causing the magic cast by Sable to go out of control and explode in front of his face.

As for the arrows, before could reach a few inches of the warhorse a greenish barrier encircled its body deflecting the attacks.

"Essence Mana disruption, Tempest Magic Mastery- Tempest Guard" Annette recited out from behind the warhorse. It was only now that the rest of the group noticed Annette's presence. That magic just now was something that was cast by her.

COUGH...COUGH... Sable coughed and needed the help of Kendric to support himself.

"Are you alright?" the warrior asked.

Sable nodded with a pale face and pointed at the maid in the distance "Be careful, that woman is no ordinary maid. Not only can she use disruption, but she can also cast magic without any delay".

Hearing his words, the group's expression became even more uglier. As if the presence of warhorse wasn't threatening enough, even the maids around the demon weren't simple. To be able to cast magic so fast, one would need multiple rare and lost skills not to mention they also have a disruption skill in their arsenal which made them all the more troublesome enemy to face.

Imagine a scenario where you aren't able to cast any magic because of the disruption but your opponent is continuously throwing magic at you. There was no need to even say who will come out on top given the situation.

Thus when the seven swords heard Sable mention the skill disruption, all of their faces twitched. They realised that even against a subordinate of the demon, they would have to work together if they wanted to get out of here alive.

"Lombus get back... Kendric, us three will attack the warhorse, Thiago you keep the maid busy and don't allow her to cast her skill. Sable and Osborn use all of your mana if you have to, but keep on casting multiple small magic to create a disturbance. Listen all, we must get past the two of them before other subordinates of the demon arrive here".

Morgress issued orders one after the other. He thought that as long as the demon himself did not take action, they could work together to defeat any subordinates. But he couldn't be any more away from the truth.

The Bloodthorn demonic warhorse was already a powerful calamity class beast while the five Valkyries were each an [A] rank summon. Seeing that Lombus did not respond even when he called out to him, Lombus frowned and called his name again.

Nonetheless, Lombus refused to turn around which made the group notice that something was different about him. Black smoke was coming out of his body at this moment and he had that silly look on his face as if he had gone insane.

He had thrown aside his hammer into the ground and was just standing there in a daze. What they didn't know was that Lombus after losing out in the contest of strength that he was the most proud of had become mentally vulnerable and was easily susceptible to the mental encroachment skill of the warhorse.

Now that his guard was all down, how could the warhorse miss the opportunity? It neighed, reared its powerful forelegs and stamped down on Lombus cracking his armour and imprinting four deep hoof prints on his chest.

BANG... the man flew back dozens of meters crashing down on a few trees on his way and only came to a stop after rolling on the ground a good long distance where he lay motionless. Nobody knew if he was dead or alive.

Name- Annette

Race- Superior Spirit

Rank- [A]

Level- 699+[???

Skills- Analysis, Tempest Magic Mastery, Infernal Magic Mastery, Thunder Magic Mastery, Spirit Control, Ultra Enhanced Detection, Blunt resistance, Cut Resistance, Poison Resistance, Herculean Magic, Ultra Super Enhanced Endurance, Ultra Super Enhanced Agility, Ultra Natural Recovery, Ultra Minimal Mana Consumption, Ultra High Speed Regeneration, Battle Instinct, Shadow Chant, Delay Chant, Concurrent Chant, Super Body Strengthening, Golden Mana Lines, Cooking, Cleaning, Housework.

Racial Skills- [Essence Mana Compression], [Essence Mana Manipulation], [Essence Mana Strengthening], [Essence Mana Anthem], [Chant Connection], [Essence mana Disruption], [Magic cast Annulement].

Amalgamation Magic- [Infernal- Thunder Mastery], [Tempest- Thunder Mastery]

Mutated Magic- [Locked], [Locked], [Locked].

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An eerie silence descended onto the place and bore down on the seven swords out of which only five stood standing.

"Nowwww!!" Morgress roared in a grave tone, he along with Kendric rushed towards the warhorse while the rest of the group kept the maid busy.

The scene was quite messy with skills and magic being thrown around everywhere causing serious destruction around the area. At a glance, the five humans seemed to be even with the subordinates of the demon.

However, the adventurers weren't actually trying to defeat them instead their main objective was to creep closer towards the exit.

"Hmph, do you really believe that such an obvious objective would go unnoticed from unnoticed from elder sister Annette?" Bea folded her hands and commented. She along with Simon, Irene, Valkyries and the five [helpers] were watching the whole show from the mountaintop.

"Ouch... that must have hurt a lot, mister warhorse didn't show any mercy when stomping down on that human" Alice said empathising with the unfortunate adventurer.

Emma: "I-I'm sorry".

Bea: "Sigh, why are you saying sorry for, it is all the fault of those humans, they deserve it".

"But wouldn't it go against our master's order if that human died?" Alice asked tilting her head.

"Hmph, it would be too merciful to kill him just like that. The warhorse held back enough and simply knocked the human out" Bea explained.

While they were talking about all that, Simon called Coleus out who bowed in front of him.

"Did you complete the task I told you to?" Simon asked.

"Indeed my lord, I have planted that thing you told me to in all of those floors" Coleus reported.

Simon nodded and dispersed the [Helpers]. Irene beside him heard the conversation between them from start to finish but did not comment since she was already aware of what he was planning.

At this moment, the situation in the distance changed once again, the remaining humans frantically tried to use each and every skill and ability in their arsenal to get to the exit. However, their hopes and attempts were brutally smashed apart by Annette's impossibly quick tempest magic that made a huge AOE vortex in the area that pulled all of the adventurers into one place.

The bloodthorn demonic warhorse used its [Demonic grip] ability to encroach their unstable mind and break their will just like how it did to Lombus. When it all seemed like escape was impossible for the adventurers, they did something which even surprised Simon.

Having realised that escape was impossible for all of them, the last of the mage of this team, Orson decided to at least allow his guild master to escape from here. He was able to somewhat resist the mental encroachment from the calamity class beast due to having mastered light magic and was the only person sane enough to think properly.

The wind was pushing them opposite of the exit thus even if he ran with Morgress in tow, he wouldn't be able to make it. That is considering that their enemy even allowed them to run in the first place.

If running towards the exit was impossible, then there was only one thing he could do in this situation. He grabbed his staff that was a [C] rank item tightly, and overloaded its core stone to reinforce the magic he was casting.

"Gale Magic Mastery- [Gale Tunnel]" Orson cried out loud, his staff made a cracking noise and broke apart into numerous splinters.

The energy that erupted out from the destruction of the core stone, was infused with the magic. A powerful gust of wind that spun at high speed blasted Morgress who was affected by the [demonic grip] skill and carried his body all the way to the exit.

Fortunately for Osborn, Morgress' body was facing the exit.

Realising what the enemy planned to do, Annette tried to use her disruption skill at the last moment to break the magic; nonetheless, she was a step too late as even she didn't expect the light mage to suddenly use an offensive spell on his teammate like that.

The Gale tunnel that was created, opened a hole in the AOE vortex created and went unimpeded carrying Morgress through the stairs and all the way to the thirty-fifth floor.

THUD... successful in his attempt to at least allow his guild master to get away from this floor, the mage fell onto the ground on his butt huffing and puffing.

He then used this moment when Annette and the Bloodthorn demonic warhorse were momentarily stunned to try and cast a quick novice tier light spell to dispel the mental encroachment skill. But his hand were quickly shot down by a bolt of thunder that came from dozens of kilometres away from the distant mountaintop.

Alice having used one of her skill, blew at her hand that was gesturing as a gun right now.

"Alice do not use any more of your skill..." Bea stated turning towards the blonde girl next to her.

Alice tilted her in confusion then suddenly realised the words Annette had whispered to them.

"Ah!! Right.. right... hehe, I'll be more careful".

"It's alright, we have shown them plenty of our strength, they should make their move soon" Simon said moving towards the place where the adventurers were with his entourage. Seeing their master come over, Annette and the demonic warhorse bowed their heads.

"I'm extremely sorry master, because of my negligence one of them escaped. Please allow me to make up for it by going after that human immediately" Annette said, dejected at her failure.

"There is no need..."

"Hehehe, my magic sent guild master far away, even if you pursue him right now, you will not be able to stop his escape" Before Simon could answer Annette, the mage responsible for the blunder, spoke out delightfully at this moment.

The wide grin on his face rubbed the subordinates around Simon the wrong way as they made a murderous face.

However Simon himself was calm even after that comment, he arched his brows and even entertained the mage in a little chit-chat.

"Why do you think he will be able to escape from us?" Simon asked.

Orson looked at the demon's crimson eyes and felt his body shudder. Nonetheless, he still fearlessly answered him.

"Do you think we dived inside this dungeon without any preparation? Don't underestimate our guild we still have the last resort of some sort to escape from this place. Once guild master escapes from this place, he will disclose the actual strength of your dungeon and at that time powerful adventurers will come flooding and you won't be able to stop them... hehe".

p The man had a wide grin of victory written all over on his face but it didn't last long and quickly crumbled apart after the comment from Irene.

"The last resort you are talking about must be a return scroll right?" She said after musing a little.

"What's a return scroll?" Simon asked curiously.

"Ah, it's a scroll enchanted with the laws of space. Although it is useful in certain times, it is extremely cumbersome to use and needs a fixed transit point and exit to be set beforehand" Irene explained nonchalantly.

"H-how do you know about the return scroll?" Osborn asked in a grave tone.

"Hmm? Well, it's not like you guys are the first bunch that tried to use a scroll of return" Irene dispersed the questioning of the man with a few simple words and turned towards Simon.

"You don't have to worry, that man is not a mage and with the condition and the mana pool he has, it would take him a long time to set all the parameters for the scroll to activate. The thing you have planted on the floors above will be able to easily stop that from happening".

Simon nodded his head and glanced back at the man whose face seemed to be frozen at this moment as a faint black smoke came out of his body. It looked like the man had finally succumbed to the [demonic grip] skill after that blow.

Now that all of these humans have been apprehended, it was time they dealt with the last of the intruders.

Remaining Humans- One

"I believe you have seen enough, isn't it time for you to come out?" Simon said gazing around his surrounding.

Soon after his words rang out, the air in a few meters distance away from him, trembled and a silhouette of a person came out.

"Hehe, so you were aware of me huh?" Bryan said smiling ear to ear.

Simon looked at the man with an illusory pair of wings protruding out from his back, he did not know how the man was able to trick the system of his dungeon and disappear from the [Archive]. Nevertheless, he knew that the man was dangerous and had some other goals in mind.

"It seems that you are not with them... What are you after?" Simon asked.

"Hehe, why do you think I'm not with them?" Bryan asked back intrigued.

"Isn't it obvious, you have been hiding your presence and observing everything that was happening here as if it doesn't concern you" Bea was the one to answer him, she observed him with her eyes ready to make her move the moment the latter showed any movements.

The reason for them prolonging the conversation was because they knew that the man was hiding his true strength from the start and coupled with his bizarre ability to hide from the sureillance of the dungeon, it made the man quite a troublesome opponent to face.

"Indeed, you are right, I was not sent here by the guild that employed these guys. I'm Bryan, you can also call me number 007, a senior executive from Cerberus. The reason I came here was to observe the source of the rumours that has been making its waves all across this kingdom" Bryan gave a polite greeting before making known his objective.