

D. of Pride 501

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How was it possible that Simon who hadn't directly killed the ogres was able to get the experience point? That was because the one who had dealt the killing blow to them was not the Andromedas but him.

The Andromedas only brought the ogres to the point where they had a silver of Hp remaining, the rest of the damage was done by the curse energy. This way, not a single kill was wasted and all that experience from the ogre army was channelled into Simon.

"You idiots what are you doing? If you can't outrun miasma, then just blow it away using wind magic" Giz-Mogo directed, even though he got outplayed by Berigard, he was still a crimson horn and the second lieutenant of the black ogre army.

The ogres complied and quickly used their magic, skills or the abilities of their mounts to blow the miasma away from their surroundings. However, it was as if their attacks had no effects, the curse energy spread around unhindered.

The ogres tried again and again using various methods; nevertheless, the outcome remained the same. They were unable to disperse the curse energy.

"It's useless... curse energy is not something that can be pushed back by normal magic" Simon commented shrugging his shoulders and looking at their wasted efforts.

"You... stop that right now" Giz-Bozo was finally forced to move. With a step of his, he quickly disappeared from Simon's line of sight and appeared beside him in an instant. The crimson horn of Giz-Bozo glowed a bright crimson indicating that a powerful attack was coming.

"[Shockwave Blast], [Ability conferment- Greater force]" mana aura enveloped the ogre's hand and quickly formed a gauntlet which was then swung towards Simon.

Realising the incoming danger, Simon's instinct flared and he quickly unfurled his wings to get away from the trajectory of the punch. A decision that was the right option to make.

The skill that Giz-Bozo had employed was the same skill that the black horn ogre used to topple down the wall. However, in the hands of Giz-Bozo, it was multiple times stronger not to mention the skill was altered to have a different effect.

Missing the target, the punch swept through the air causing ripples around the surrounding. These ripples were not any ordinary ripples but shockwaves that travelled through the air.

Seeing this, Simon narrowed his eyes. Of course, he had seen the black ogre activating the same skill; however compared to the one executed by Giz-Bozo, that looked like just a demo.

Simon was not among the ones to underestimate his enemies and surely not one that was this much powerful. There was a difference of more than a hundred levels and an entire rank between them.

Normally, Simon wouldn't have initiated a fight against such an enemy. However, why is it that even though he knew that there was such a huge gap between them, he was very much excited for this battle?

Smile... unknowingly a smile crept up to his face. This was it, this was the battle he needed to find out how much progress he had made in these past few months and where he stood when using the greatest power currently in his arsenal.

The attack from the ogre was strong; however, it was not enough to daunt Simon.

[All basic abilities are strengthened by 500%] looking at the notification that had popped up when using the curse energy, Simon smiled.

Using the Curse energy, made him unable to use his magic and skills but it compensated by boosting his physical powers to far greater heights. That was not all, the curse energy present inside the trial only gave him a boost of 300%.

However, right now his physical power and basic abilities had been boosted by 500%. The reason for that was because unlike the curse energy present inside the trial grounds that had degraded through time, the curse energy that he was currently using, was from the finger of Ozymandias.

The latter was the source of this foreign energy therefore it was only natural for it to produce a dense amount of curse energy that was incomparable to the one that had seeped inside the mausoleum during the cataclysmic fight between Yela and Ozymandias.

His increased understanding of the curse energy might have also played a part in too. In any case, thanks to the buff, Simon was able to react to attacks of a being that was only a step away from reaching calamity class.

"You dodged that huh? Then how about you try and dodge this" Giz-Bozo took out a double from his space ring and enveloped it with his mana. The blades of the axe glowed crimson and blue lightning started discharging out of it.

[Battle Monger's Axe] a [B] rank weapon that had bestowed various skills to its user and Lightning magic was one of them. The weapon was a present gifted to him by the Ogre King Gil-Garna himself and since then it was his prized possession.

Giz-Bozo was someone who was a pure warrior, he did not bother to learn any magic and solely directed all his efforts to skills and stats that would make him a better warrior. To compensate for his lack of magic, he used weapons such as the axe.

"[Lightning Slash], [Ability conferment- Mana Armament]" Giz-Bozo swung the axe that released thick columns of lightning.

The lightning released quickly took the shape of an axe that came flying towards Simon like a bolt of lightning. Simon understood that even if he dodged the attack, he would be hit by the columns of lightning around it. Thus he chose to deflect the attack instead of dodging it.

Simon brandished his Crimson Blazing Flame Sword and clashed with the incoming lightning axe with his own sword swings. He might not be able to use any skills or magic right now, but it wasn't like he had forgotten the essence of [sword mastery] skill that he had learnt by putting his body at the line.

CLANG... RUMBLE....

The moment the two weapons collided, clanging noise rang out followed by a discharge of lighting that threatened to devour Simon. The sky brightened up as a result of their collision.

The lightning axe repeatedly erupted with lightning; nevertheless, it was unable to push Simon back who was cloaked with the curse energy. The lighting around the lightning axe was starting to disappear after a while and it seemed like Simon had successfully defended through the attack.

But that was when he realised that something was wrong. The attack instead of getting weaker was actually becoming stronger over time.

The lightning axe that was enveloped in blue lightning, suddenly had a red aura erupt out of it and it quickly became a crimson axe. Simon was taken aback, this was a technique that he had seen Godwin execute when chasing after him.

According to him, it could only be used by those above level 600. Unable to hold the axe back any longer Simon was pushed back and coincidentally saw the smile of victory on his opponent's face.

This immediately annoyed Simon and he exerted even more curse energy on his sword. So what if the ogre was capable of using a technique that was beyond his realm? Hadn't he defeated an opponent who also used a similar technique not too long ago?

Simon recalled his battle with Morgress who used a quasi [Mana Armour]. The ogre in front of him has to be doing the same. Since they had yet to reach that level, they might be using a quasi [Mana Armament].

If that was the case and it was not a complete technique, then there was no reason to think that he can't break through this mana armament.

Simon wasn't far off from the truth, the technique that the ogre used was in fact incomplete. However, unlike Morgress who learned the [mana armour] technique, the technique of [Mana Armament] suddenly appeared to Giz-Bogo one day.

This also indicated that it wouldn't be long before he stepped on the calamity class. Giz-Bozo extended his hand and following his will, the Lightning Axe that had now turned crimson, continued to apply pressure on the demon.

"You overestimated yourself demon... if this is all your strength, then you can forget about closing this war".

Giz-Bogo stated, thinking that he had gauged the strength of the demon. But he realised that he had judged too soon, his assessment came wrong when he saw the peculiar miasma surrounding the demon increase in intensity.

It slowly travelled through the demon's body before enveloping the lightning blade itself. At that moment, Giz-Bogo suddenly felt his connection with the lightning blade weaken. The mana that he was supplying to the quasi-armament was suddenly disrupted until finally, he could no longer send any mana to it.

To his amazement, the crimson lightning axe slowly started becoming purplish black and dissipate into thin air.

BOOOM... before the shock from what had transpired could hit him, he saw the demon rushing towards him at an insane speed. He did not even have the time to think when Simon was already upon him.

Simon wrapped in curse energy, channelled it all into his claws whose sharpness was even comparable to a blade made of Mythril.

CLANG... the sound of metal colliding with metal echoed out. Giz-Bozo was forced to use the [Mana Aura] technique to defend themselves from Simon's attack. Though if he really was safe, was yet to be seen.

CHIII...

Simon smiled, a scorching came from his claws and in front of the horrified eyes of the ogre, his mana armour was slowly being gauged through.

With the increase in his understanding of the curse energy, Simon was able to understand more profundities of the curse energy. He used the decaying attribute of the curse energy and applied it to his claws to slowly pierce through the mana armour of the ogre.

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The decaying property of the curse energy did not have an instant effect. Instead, it slowly stuck to the target and spread like a disease from that point. In another word, the curse energy had a powerful D.O.T (damage over time).

It can decay through anything given the time. So what was a mana armour in front of it?

As Giz-Bozo was exposed to droves of curse energy coming out of Simon, the quality of his mana slowly degraded from within and Simon was able to easily pierce through his [Mana Aura].

'Not Good' feeling the danger, the beastly instinct of the ogre kicked in and he hurriedly moved his body aside. Although he was able to dodge the claw, nonetheless, some part of his skin still made contact with the curse energy.

Giz-Bozo opened up a good distance between him and the demon before staring at him cautiously. This was the first time that he had met someone who did not break or cut through his mana armour but instead melt it down.

The fact that he couldn't get any reading of that peculiar miasma around the demon made him even more alert.

Simon did not pursue his target after his attack failed to land. Instead, he flashed a wicked smile and continued his staredown with the enemy.

The ogre thought that he was safe after dodging his attack and opening a distance from him. But he couldn't be any more wrong, the little bit of curse energy that he got exposed to had dozens of strands of curse energy that got stuck to his skin like maggots and was slowly decaying and draining him from within.

Since the effect was not too apparent yet, the ogre failed to realise what was going on nevertheless, he should soon start feeling some effects.

Simon had no hurry to attack his enemy, after all, the power of his curse energy relied on its D.O.T and the more the time passed, the better for him.

Simon used this time when his opponent was cautious of him to glance at his subordinates and see how they were doing.

Even with just ten percent of the power, the Valkyries who were each level 699, were a force for the ogres that the latter were unable to contain. They slaughtered the ogres with finesse, brutality and expertise. Finally forcing the brown horns to butt in.

The Gir brothers mounted on their beasts, were completely different enemies than before. It was as if their powers had suddenly doubled as they executed attacks that utilised the full potential of their beast.

Gir-Rago, the eldest of the brother riding atop a hawk with three talons called the Fierce Siliantos was facing Annette. The second eldest brother, Gir-Rugo riding atop a stone Hide Mammoth beast called the Mountain Dozer, was fighting Bianca and last but not least, Gir-Rego riding on the Fire Breed Hound was fighting Alice.

For the first duo, both their attacks comprised of fast attacks and high agility. Annette was quick on her casts as she barraged Gir-Rago with non-stop attacks, while the orc used his aerial advantage to dodge and manoeuvre around the magic.

His counterattacks came from the skies and were deadly enough for Annette to have some form of defence around her or so Simon thought. However, he couldn't be any more wrong.

The reason why Annette protected herself with earth barriers, was because she didn't want her maid dress to get dirty by the attacks of the ogre not because the attack was capable of hurting her.

From her perspective, the maid dress was given to her by her master. She couldn't probably forgive herself for staining or damaging it even a little. Because of this concern weighing at the backside of her mind, the fight looked more or less even.

The second duo, their fight was a pure clash of strength, a display of force. Gir-Rugo mounted on his Mountain Dozer used the skill [Mountain Crumbling Charge] which could even trample down mountains to trample the maid in front of him.

But to his surprise, the maid that he thought was just a pebble on the path of his prided beast turned out to be a titan who couldn't be moved no matter how much pressure they exerted.

Frustrated and unresigned to back down, Gir-Rugo channelled all of his powers into his beast using the skill [Beast Link].

Bianca on the other hand simply used her shield to stop the beast and his charge. For an [Imperial Aegis Knight] like her whose stats and abilities were purely focused on defence and strength, this level of pressure was nothing.

If she wanted to, she could have used her immense strength and sword to cut down down the mammoth along with the ogre mounted on top of it. However, her order was to defeat the ogre who was on top of the beast and not the beast too.

Because of her comprehending the order inaccurately, she was locked in a standstill that she herself created.

If there was a subordinate amongst the Valkyries that followed his order to the book, it was Bainca. Thus if not instructed otherwise by Simon, Bianca would never hurt the beast to end this match which should have ended a long time ago.

It was a good thing that Simon wasn't aware of what these valkyries were thinking or else he would have plucked his hair out due to frustration.

Perhaps the only fight that did not go wrong was the third one. Alice whose opponent was riding on his Fire Breed Hound, was agile and was a close combat fighter. They would try to cover up the distance between them and their opponent before using their deadly teeth and fire-breathing ability to tear apart the target.

Unlucky for him, Alice was the very bane of these kinds of close combat fighters who did not have any long or medium range attacks.

Using her bow, high agility and situational awareness to manoeuvre around the crowd of ogres, she bore holes after hole into her opponents.

She would blend in the crowd and make it difficult for Gir-Rego to find her. She would then besiege him from every direction making the ogre regret being ever born.

Looking at that Alice, Simon was genuinely surprised. Alice was a Wood Elf and according to the setting, wood elves were known for their ranger skills and craftiness.

'Who would have thought beyond that pretty face, would be a mischievous devil' Simon thought internally. Although the Valkyrie's battles didn't go the way he thought it would for some reason, the experience today would nonetheless, become a cornerstone for their growth in the future.

DING... another notification sounded out alerting Simon that he had levelled up once again.

"This should be the fourth alert of the day" Simon murmured. When he looked at the ogre army, he could see that their numbers had declined by more than a thousand. Which meant that he needed the experience of more than a thousand 350+ level ogres to level up a total of four times.

Then what if he absorbed the experience from all of the surviving forty-six thousand ogres? Doing the match shouldn't he be able to level up a total of 184 times?

However, that calculation was wrong, levels do not work like that. The amount of mystical energy that one needed to absorb becomes greater, the higher the level one reaches as time goes on.

For example—let's say Simon needed to absorb 1000 mystical energy to become level two which he got from defeating one direwolf. However, to reach the next level, that is level three, he would need around 3000 mystical energy and would have to defeat three direwolves to collect the necessary energy.

The same was the case here, although it took around 250 ogres for him to level up once, that number would only keep on getting bigger as his level goes higher.

That is if he only defeats ogres at around that level. Weren't there more juicy ogres with higher levels present such as the ogre in front of him?

The ogre that was clearly the leader of this army, was according to his [Analysis] around level 599. Such a fat lamb was sure to give him a ton of experience. An excitement like never before started rising within Simon and he started chuckling which soon turned into a bellowing laughter.

Giz-Bozo who was keeping every action of the demon within his sight was enraged when he saw the latter laugh. The other party was having fun laughing at the army he was given by lord Gil-Garna dropping down one after the other.

"You...!!!" he shouted but before he could take any action, he suddenly felt his power drop down by a lot and his mind growing agitated. Giz-Bozo fell on his knees and coughed out a mouthful of blood.

"Bozo... what going on?" Giz-Mogo near him called out.

The former did not answer since he himself was puzzled as to what was going on. He did not take any damage than why? It was then that he noticed his body was realising a faint purplish-black miasma.

"When did he..."Giz-Bozo suddenly clutched his body in agony as the miasma slowly started eroding his body from within making his power drop even further.

"So you finally realised huh.... though it's already too late. Isn't it agonising to channel your mana? Doesn't your body react violently whenever you activate your skill? The curse energy had invaded deep within your body and has corrupted your core stone. The more you try to struggle the more painful it will get for you. Just give up... you have already lost".

The voice of the demon sounded like an evil spirit at this moment. It strangely had the hypnotising effect of making weak-spirited individuals instantly lose their minds and obey his commands.

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However, Giz-Bozo wasn't among those weak-spirited individuals, no matter how much his mind was corrupted by the curse energy, he still retained a trace of sanity not to fall for that trick.

"You... Grrrruuaahhh!!" the ogre gave a loud warcry and came charging towards him.

"Hehh... you are quite firm willed I see" to be able to ward off the mind corruption of the curse energy in his state, Simon was a little impressed with the ogre.

A solid punch enveloped by mana aura, came targeting his face followed by a kick and axe slashes from the lightning axe.

The attacks were unending; nevertheless, now that Giz-Bozo's power has dropped by a lot and he was afflicted with the decaying effect of the curse energy, his attacks were much more sluggish than before.

So much so that, Simon was able to easily dodge the attacks with minimal movements. What's more, to speed up the effects of the curse energy, Simon even willingly took a few hits so that more and more miasma will latch onto the ogre.

BAM... a crimson horn was a crimson horn, his attacks were still powerful enough to push Simon back dozens of meters and disrupt his internal blood flow.

"Gugh... huff... huff" Giz-Bozo fell on his knees and coughed another mouthful of blood. It was as the demon had said, his core stone was slowly being corrupted and it was very difficult to channel his mana around his body.

What's more, every time he did he suffered a serious backlash.

"Bozo what's going on?" Mogo who had somewhat recovered from his injuries came supporting the former.

"Mogo... that demon, he uses some unknown kind of abilities. I'm afraid in my current state, I'm not his match. I will need your assistance to finish him off". This was the first time Mogo had heard Bozo saying that he was unable to defeat an enemy on his own.

Naturally, he was surprised but more than that he was cautious of this demon who even Bozo couldn't defeat.

Knowing the consequences of their defeat, Mogo unhesitantly agreed to lend his assistance. This would be the first time that they were facing an enemy who was not from the seven king tribes together.

"Be careful of that miasma around him. Do not let it touch you or else your condition would also be like mine" Bozo reminded. The two ogres nodded at each other and started assaulting Simon together.

Needless to say, Simon did not back down and instead welcomed this change. He utilised the full potential of the current limit of the curse energy that he was capable of handling right now and engaged in a fierce close combat battle with the ogres.

Their clash was so intense that they left aftershocks everywhere. Simon used his increased basic abilities and physical power to dominate most of the rounds of the fight.

Thanks to not being able to use his magic in his current state, his battle experience and close combat skills was being honed at a rapid speed.

Simon was the type who was slow at learning new things, most often than he would have to put his body in the line to learn something. He would fail ninety-nine out of hundred times and succeed only once.

However, his most redeeming feature was not his talent nor his cheat like [Main Menu] or the items he has got in his inventory but his perseverance and determination to succeed. Simon would keep on struggling until he achieves the desired result and in this case, it was the battle experience and the mysteries of the curse energy.

He was increasing his understanding of the curse energy during his battle with the ogres and trying to incorporate it into a skill. Yes, Simon was trying to create skill from a whole different system of energy.

For a moment, Simon felt that the curse energy enveloping his sword suddenly sharpen like its blade. The feeling was vague and disappeared as soon as it appeared. However, Simon felt it clearly making him unable to forget that sensation.

In a heated battle with not one ogre but two, Simon was diverting a portion of his mind in creating this skill. How could Giz-Bozo and Giz-Mogo who had plenty of battle experience from waging wars and destruction in the forest, be willing to miss that opportunity?

They immediately pounced on it and attacked Simon with their most powerful attacks. Mogo used his [Aura Bomb] skill while Bozo used his [Ability conferment] skill to bestow an ability [Greater force] to his skill [Chaotic Shockbolt].

The two powerful attacks as if tearing through space, appeared in front of Simon who had no way of defending himself. the attacks arrived and collided with Simon who at this moment closed his eyes.

"Fall!!!" the ogres shouted, a furious explosion erupted out causing the land to rumble and a crater more than fifty meters big and with an unknown depth, to form on the ground.

The might of the two powerful skills of the crimson horns, was on full display in front of everyone. Tiny debris fell from the sky, the orcs and the ogres waited with bated breath to find out what happened of the demon.

The explosion had raised a huge cloud of dust in the air causing their field of vision to get covered by it.

"What happened? Is the demon safe?" Berimond asked.

"Didn't you see what happened? Those two powerful attacks clearly hit that demon, there is no way he would be able to survive that" Berirock commented with an anxious face.

Those attacks from the ogres were so powerful that it raised all of the hair on his body, even though he wasn't the target of the attack and was thousands of meters away.

Berigard did not comment, he simply looked towards the Valkyries who did not seem unfazed by that attack on their master and continued to fight their battles. Narrowing his eyes, he turned to face the miasma that was slowly covering the battlefield and seeing that it had yet to dissipate, a realisation struck him.

Not only did he notice this peculiarity, but even Giz-Bozo and Giz-Mogo, the two parties involved, had an incredulous look on their face.

"It cannot be, why isn't the miasma disappearing?" Mogo spat out in disbelief. He had learned his lesson and did not underestimate his enemy this time. He used his most powerful attack from the get-go when their guard was down the most.

Even if the enemy somehow possessed the [mana aura] skill, they shouldn't be able to endure the might of their combined attacks.

Giz- Bozo's skill was even more powerful than Mogo's which is why the shock that was written on his face was even more apparent. While he was confused about whether the demon was alive after taking on this attack or not, from the corner of his eyes, he noticed a faint purplish miasma wafting off from within the body of Mogo.

"Mogo you...". The latter jolted after being suddenly called like that and turned to face Bozo.

"What's wrong?" Mogo asked.

"Did you get exposed to that miasma..." Bozo couldn't complete his sentence when he realised that the reason why Mogo was affected was because of him. The miasma surrounding him was also capable of spreading to a new target on its own when in close proximity.

"Get away from me" he suddenly shouted and pushed Mogo back.

"What are you doing?" Mogo cried out in indignation.

Only when the former pointed at his body, did he finally realise that his body was also slowly being corroded by that energy. Immediately, he invoked his mana and tried to suppress it only for a cackling voice to sound out from within the dust.

"It's useless... curse energy isn't something that the likes of you can try to suppress. Once afflicted with it, your only salvation is death.... Kfufufu".

Finally, the dust spread apart and the figure of the demon came into view in front of every peering eye. All eyes had something in common and that was the characteristics of shock and disbelief.

No matter if it was the ogre or the orcs, they couldn't believe that the demon who was standing in the air on top of that crater, was unscathed from head to toe even after taking on that attack.

Not a single hair on his head was damaged, the only thing that could be said to be different about him was that a gigantic greyish item was now hanging around him. It was like a pillar or more like a giant finger of a titan-like being.

The finger of Ozymandias was finally out.

The thing that had defended him from the combined attack of the ogres was not any mana armour or anything but the finger of Ozymandias. The finger was so powerful that even after suffering the full blow of their skills, it did not even have a scratch on its skin.

Which also showed how incredible the defence stat of that being that he witnessed in the historia was. Nevertheless, even a being like him was slashed and his arms cut by that woman with angel wings.

There was always a summit above a summit, a sky above that sky. The curse energy that seemed all powerful right now, was not actually so and could be subdued and defeated in some other ways.

However, right now its strength was unparalleled. There was no way the likes of ogre could even hope of contending against the curse energy.

Hearing Simon's words, Giz-Mogo tried to furiously suppress this foreign energy that was wrecking havoc in his body only to suffer a fierce backlash. Just like Giz-Bozo he coughed out a mouthful of blood and the energy that he just recovered, slowly start depleting.

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"This-This is not possible, how can you survive that attack?" Giz-Bozo muttered like a broken tape recorder.

After using it as a shield to protect himself from their attacks, Simon kept the finger of Ozymandias back inside his [Inventory]. Since he was unable to use his skills right now, it was impossible to manipulate the finger without the [Dominator's Control] skill.

After keeping the finger back inside his inventory, he turned to face the ogres fighting him and flashed his most wicked smile up until this day.

SSSHHH... the curse energy that was dormant within him up until now, burst forward like an enraged beast and a thousand meter big halo of death formed behind Simon.

Transferring all of the curse energy that was currently within him towards his blade, he condensed it till the point his crimson blade visibly took a purplish hue. Next, he executed the basic stance of the [Sword Master] skill and slashed towards the gobsmacked ogres.

WHOOSH... the space was painted a purplish black by the blade of light as it travelled towards the ogres. The highly condensed curse energy blade was a skill that Simon had just created now, thus it was highly volatile.

The blade form quickly crumbled and the curse energy took the shape of a skull with its mouth wide open. The skull quickly inched closer in front of the despairing eyes of Giz-Bozo and Mogo and in a matter of seconds engulfed them within.

What was left afterwards, was the slowly rotting bodies of the two ogres that were once feared by the inhabitants of this ghastly winding forest.

No matter if it were the orcs or the ogres, they weren't able to believe the sight in front of their eyes. Giz-Bozo and Giz-Mogo, the ogres that possessed the crimson horn and who were like some diety to the ogre army, were sprawled on the ground with their bodies slowly rotting away.

The black ogre army who have never seen this sight of their leaders losing, much less dead, naturally would be unable to process the information that was in front of their eyes.

For the orc army who had given up all hopes of living, this was a situation that was completely unexpected for them.

The onlookers were stunned but more than them, the attacker who dished out that attack, Simon himself was gobsmacked at the power of the curse energy.

A few seconds earlier while fighting with the ogres, he had this sudden epiphany to use the curse energy like a sword blade thus without any hesitation, he put all of his concentration into doing it. The result was in front of everyone's eyes, the skill that could instantly corrode a disaster class being, was formed.

What's more, the skill was something that did not follow the standard system of this world and needed mana to execute and instead utilised the curse energy.

This revelation told Simon that skills were not only limited to the mystical energy system. Additionally, Simon felt that the curse energy was still hiding a lot more secrets; if he wanted to uncover it, he would have to continue using it in the future too.

"Who knew the curse energy would be able to do this... perhaps I should use this energy from now on..."

Simon quickly shook his head at the thought, it was still too early to forsake the mystical energy and deem the curse energy stronger when he hadn't even comprehended the true essence of the former.

It would be foolish, no utterly stupid to break his years of hard work and the foundation that he had built for his growth. Thus, he came to a conclusion, he would be sticking to the mystical energy but also be learning the mysteries underlying the curse energy and why he was able to use it.

After defeating the two leader ogres, Simon next set his gaze on the black ogre army who trembled from head to toe just from his glare.

Under the effects of the curse energy and due to the impact it had on the onlooker after he killed two of the strongest ogres present on the battlefield with just one attack, no one was gutsy enough to meet his gaze.

Simon wasn't particularly trying to intimidate them or anything, he was simply searching for his subordinates amidst them.

All three Valkyries had already finished their battle and were waiting for Simon to deal them the last blow. Simon extended his hand and created three stakes out of the miasma in the air which impaled the three Gir-Brothers.

The skill that he used, he named it [Curse Stakes] and unlike the [Curse Slash] it did not have much decaying power. Nevertheless, it was more flexible to use and could be conjured more easily than the [Curse Slash].

DING... when he got that familiar notification, Simon flashed a satisfied smile. This trip to the Diluvian High orc territory ended up becoming a great one with him reaping such incredible profits.

"Now then, it's time for me to clean up this mess" Simon muttered to himself. He stretched his hands wide and using his newly increased understanding of the curse energy, he started manipulating the spread of the miasma faster and faster until it became a purplish-black storm razing through the ground.

The ogres that were exposed to it, started losing their minds one after the other as their bodies slowly but surely started decaying.

Seeing this, all hell broke loose on the side of the black ogre army and they dropped their formation to quickly flee from this place.

Simon manipulated the curse miasma with the greatest amount of power he could gather right now and tried to contain the fleeing ogres within. They were going to be the stepping stone for his future growth, how could he just allow them to leave like this?

Nonetheless, even with his increased mastery of curse energy, a few thousand ogres still managed to escape from the reach of the miasma and flee back to their territory.

Simon did not pursue them since the duration of time he could use the curse energy was up. Curse energy was not the standard energy of this world and it wasn't something that an inhabitant of this world should be able to use.

But for some reason unknown to even him, Simon was able to use it. However, it did not mean that he could keep on using the curse energy forever. The curse energy compared to the mystical energy he had access to right now, was much more profound and powerful.

A strong power naturally needed a strong vessel. The body of a demon viscount wasn't strong enough of a vessel to hold that power. Thus Simon could only use it for a short duration of time before the curse energy starts adversely affecting his body.

The purplish-black miasma enveloping Simon started dissipating and he returned back to normal.

"Kuh..." pain from overexerting himself a little started assaulting his body all at once making his centre of balance go a little awry.

"Master are you alright?" the Valkyries immediately came to his side and asked.

"Yeah, I'm fine. I cannot collapse when I'm yet to finish what I started" Simon replied looking at the ogre army. Not counting the ones that have fled, there were still more than twenty five thousand ogres under the effects of the course energy and waiting for him to make them his experience points.

Fortunately for him, they have lost their sanity and their powers and defence have dropped by a lot. Thus it was much easier to kill them.

"Flame magic Mastery... [Flaming Doom]" Simon cast one of the intermediate tier flame magic with the highest AOE and destructive power currently in his arsenal.

Now that curse energy had left his body, he was once again able to access the mystical energy and cast the magic that he was most proficient in.

Probably because he just had an epiphany and his mind was still in that transcendent and mysterious state, the flame magic he was conjuring started taking more and more of a golden hue.

Previously, Simon was only capable of converting a part of his crimson flames into golden flames when compressing them to their extreme limits.

However, now when he wasn't even deliberately compressing it, the colour of his flames started taking on a golden hue on its own indicating that his flame magic was about to breakthrough to become advance tier Infernal magic.

Thousands of infernal snakes materialised in the air raising the temperature of the entire battlefield to a dangerous degree. The night sky was lit up by the golden hue of his magic and a pressure like that of a volcano erupting descended onto the place.

So what if Simon wasn't being buffed by the curse energy anymore? The magic that he conjured using more than half of his MP, even Giz-Bozo and Giz-Mogo if they were alive, wouldn't be able to look down on it.

Much less these ogres whose powers had been eroded by the curse energy. When the magic came down and the thousands of golden snakes dropped down on them, they did not even have time to scream before their bodies were scorched to cinders.

DING... DING... DING... DING... DING... DING... DING...
DING...DING...DING...DING...DING...

The sweet notification bell rang inside Simon's head like a heavenly melody evoking an absolutely smile from him.

As they watched, the ogre army burn in the golden flames of hell, the orcs all instinctively felt a fear that grasped their very soul in an invisible grip. Some of them fell on their butts, some unwittingly took a step back while the others gulped down their nonexistent saliva.

The ogres were their enemy who were slaughtering their brothers like cattles, needless to say, they did not feel any pity nor any remorse for them. If they were feeling any emotion, that would be the cold strokes of fear

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The fear that had born within them, had appeared due to one individual, the demon that was currently smiling in a twisted pleasure looking at the work of his own magic.

How could this not frighten the orcs when a single individual had single-handedly closed this war which needed more than three hundred thousand orcs to fight?

The demon had done what was impossible for them and closed this chapter with his own two hands.

"Berigard... how do you know such an individual?" Berimond asked unable to tear his eyes away from the golden flames on the battlefield. His voice was a little shaky due to how cold his body was right now, a clear contrast to the temperature which had risen up due to the appearance of infernal flames.

"So he was this strong all along... no wonder, no wonder he wasn't at all daunted by the ogres and their king. If one possesses this much power, they sure as hell don't need to fear anyone" Berigard muttered, his dark eyes had an unknown gleam in them.

Unlike the other orcs, he wasn't afraid of the demon since he had already sworn his loyalty to the latter. The power that the demon had shown only seemed to have solidified his decision even more.

He had no qualms against submitting to a power that his own might wasn't able to best. Perhaps their tribe of orcs would have a better future if led by such an individual, Berigard couldn't help but imagine such a future.

As the flames of hell slowly died down, so did the chaos of war. The battle was finally over, none of the ogres managed to survive the flames other than the lot that ran away.

It wouldn't be farfetched to say that the orcs have won this war or did they? The outcome was yet to be known.

"Master... here, these are the remains that were left after you eradicated those ogres" Alice who went down to the battlefield to search for something, came up with an object in her hand.

When Simon looked at the thing that was on her hand, he creased his brows and grabbed them in his hand to examine. The thing on his hand was none other than the crimson horn that belonged to the two ogres that he fought.

What was surprising about these horns was that they contained an unimaginable amount of mystical energy within them and were something that even survived the corrosion of the curse energy.

Every part of the ogres had dissipated into thin air other than these crimson horns that were on their forehead. Simon did not know what use these crimson horns had, but he did realise their value and kept it in his [Inventory].

"Thank you Alice" Simon thanked Alice and patted her head. Had it not been for her eyes which were able to spot these horns amidst the dust and thousands of corpses, he would have missed it entirely.

A part of him which was a game developer before, liked hoarding the spoils of war that one got in the games after every successive clear. This habit was cultivated over the years and had become a routine for him now.

It must have been difficult to spot the horns, Alice deserved his praise. Once Simon stored his first spoils of war, he moved on to the next. The biggest spoils of war that he got from this war... the tribe of orcs.

When the gaze of the demon landed on them, the orcs couldn't help but instinctively back away. Fight? That was a stupid notion given when their spirits were broken and the one they needed to fight had single-handedly closed the war.

"We greet our new lord" Berigard was the first one to get on his knees and speak out.

The rest of the hundred and fifty thousand orcs looked a little apprehensive or lost as to what to do. Finally, after a while, those orcs that belonged to Berigard's faction, bowed their heads just like their leader while some were cowered into submission by that aura released by the demon.

Those orcs that did not bow their heads and remained standing belonged to Berirock's and Berimond's factions.

Annette was displeased by that behaviour but she knew how to hold herself back and not show her murderous intent like Bea who had no control at all partly due to being from the night amazoness race.

Simon did not bother with those orcs and went on to address Berigard—

"Berigard... I believe you will honour our agreement?" Simon smiled and said in a calm tone. He was not worried about the latter going back on his words after all that display he had put forth for the orcs.

Not to mention, given the character of Berigard, it was impossible for the latter to back down on his words after all that.

"Yes, I am aware. As I have mentioned before, in exchange for saving the lives of my clan, I will swear my loyalty to you and become your subordinate from this moment forward..." Berigard iterated.

However, Simon interrupted him in mid-sentence—"Not only you Berigard, the agreement was for your entire tribe to submit to me in exchange for me saving you guys from the ogres".

When the hundred thousand and more orcs heard that, they couldn't help but turn towards Berigard with their questioning gaze. Some of the gazes that were directed at him, were angry, some puzzled and the rest hollow.

Berigard was silent, he couldn't refute the words of the demon since they really were the truth. However, at that time he was in a desperate situation where he had no other choice but to take the demon's help and thus made the decision on his own.

Now confronted with the choice he had made previously, Berigard had no choice but to come out clean in front of everybody.

He turned towards his tribe members and explained the deal he had with the demon causing a fierce storm of retorts to come his way. Most of it came from the Berirock and Berimond's faction who did not have the mind to accept someone else's rule.

However, they were in the minority, the majority of the orcs that have witnessed the valour of Berigard and had been won over by him, were silently contemplating their choice.

Clamour... Clamour... an uproar ensued out, Berigard's faction defended their general while the other faction tried to put the blame on them.

"Are you saying that, general Berigard can take this decision for everyone? Did he forget his post already?"...

"You bastard you think you can just wipe your hands clean and avoid responsibility now that the war is over? Did you rather want to become the slaves of the ogres?"...

"What responsibility, we never agreed to such a decision and regarding the matter of being the ogre's slave, can you guarantee that it wouldn't be the same if we submit to that demon?".

Accusations were being thrown in every direction disturbing the silence that had just settled down on the battlefield.

"Silence!!" Alice shouted and took out her bow to fire a shot into the sky.

BOOOOMMM... a huge explosion echoed out drowning out the voices of the arguing orcs. The shot was so powerful that the sound travelled as far as hundred miles.

Now that nobody was shouting anymore, Simon addressed Berigard once again—"So what you are telling me is that you do not have the right to make the decision for all of them right?".

"That is right" Berigard responded by bowing his head even further. Even if his achievement today made him a war hero, he was still far away from becoming their king. If Belgarius was here, he might have been able to take that decision on his own; however, Berigard was not Belgarius.

"I see..." Simon was about to say something when Berigard hurriedly continued.

"But worry not my lord, if you could give me some time, I would talk to them. I'm sure that they will come around and accept being subordinated by you".

The orc general was afraid that Simon would just vaporise the tribe of orcs just like what he did with the ogre army if they displeased him too much. Thus he uttered those words to gain some time. He hoped that perhaps if he talked it out with the other two generals, they would understand and make a better decision that wouldn't threaten the existence of their tribe.

Nevertheless, Simon simply shook his head and refused to give Berigard any time.

"There is no need for that, I'm not some usurper like the ogre king so you don't need to be so anxious. I'm not going to exterminate your tribe for just that. However, an agreement is an agreement. Let's do this... those that approve of your decision and wants to follow you, I will take them as my subordinates and you all can come with me to my dungeon. Those that are unwilling, can stay here".

Simon did not want any followers that were unwilling to serve since it would do him worse than any good. Other than that, he did not have enough mana or stamina to continue this war.

The Valkyries could probably do the job for him if he asked them to; however, that would be relying on their powers too much. Other than that, it would be a waste of experience if he just let the Valkyries kill them.

Besides, he had some other plan for them. When Berirock, Berimond and their faction heard that, they were instantly overjoyed. However, that joy on their face did not last long when they heard the next sets of words from the demon.

"Nevertheless, I'm not a Samaritan either, I cannot just allow you to stay in your territory for free after all the trouble I had to go through for you".

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'What troubles, you were clearly enjoying slaughtering the ogres' the orcs wanted to retort back but stopped themselves from saying anything after they remembered who they were dealing with.

"What do you want?" Berirock gathered his willpower and asked.

"Hmm let's see, since the tribe of orcs does not want to submit to me, then it is only natural for me to assume that you will pay this debt through something else. I have a few things in mind. First, I want rights for me and my people to freely roam the territory of the orcs".

"Additionally, I want the rights to excavate every mineral mountains that are in your territory..."

Simon listed several conditions like how the core stone and the other spoils of war that would be found on the battlefield would go to him. One condition even bars the orcs from going anywhere near his dungeon.

As the orcs did not mine, they had no qualms with Simon mining the mineral mountains that were abundant in their territory nor were they surprised that the demon didn't want them to linger around his dungeon. All of the aforementioned conditions were acceptable to Berirock and Berimond.

"Apart from that, I want everything that your tribe of orcs have stored in your treasury which also includes the possession of your previous king" Simon stated matter of factly.

The orcs that were planning to not submit to his rule, furrowed their brows at those words. Taking everything that was in their treasury, didn't it mean that the demon was trying to empty out their coffers that they have been collecting for hundreds of years?

What's more, the demon wasn't just satisfied with that and was even planning to loot the possessions of their king. The orcs couldn't help but doubt whether the one in front of them was a demon or a bandit.

"W-Wait a moment please... we cannot possibly accept you emptying our treasury and taking the inheritance of the previous kings away" Berirock spoke out unable to accept the conditions.

The mining rights and the rights to collect all of the spoils of the war were acceptable to them. However, they couldn't just allow the demon to simply plunder their coffers.

His retort was the final straw that broke Simon's patience. He pointed at the orc and called out "Bianca".

BOOM... immediately raising a cloud of dust in her wake, Bianca travelled so fast that she was already beside Berirock before the latter could even blink.

Simon did not have to give any other order to her, the Valkyrie knew exactly what he wanted.

BANG...

a punch was delivered to Berirock's face shattering some of his teeth and making him roll on the ground all the way to where Simon was. The Orc general was unable to perceive a thing, his mind had blanked out from the force.

When the pain finally returned to him and he tried to get back up, a foot came bearing down on his head forcing him to kiss the ground once again.

"GUGH.. UGH..." the orc general struggled. His agonising grunts were heard by all the observing orcs who looked like they had a bucket of cold water poured over them suddenly.

During the heated debate, they had forgotten who they were dealing with and were trying to haggle against someone who had just wiped his hands with the blood of thousands of ogres.

What was currently being done to Berirock was not just a punishment, but an example for everybody.

While still keeping one of his feet down on the orc general head, Simon addressed the crowd—"You seemed to have misunderstood me, I was not a request but an order, one that you all have no say in".

BANG... Simon kicked Berirock away from him and towards his faction.

"Master please give us the order to eliminate them. There is no value in keeping such ingrates that do not even know who their benefactor is alive. They would be much more valuable if they become experience points for your level".

Annette spoke out unable to take this charade from the orcs any longer.

"Elder sister is right, these stupid and stinky orcs deserve to die. They have already forgotten that they were on the brink of having their entire tribe eliminated at the hands of the ogres just a few moments ago. And now look at them, not only they are shirking from taking accountability, they are even trying to keep the things that should rightfully belong to our master to themselves. Please give me an order master... I will immediately open thousands of new holes in their bodies".

Alice took out her bow, ready to fire her shots. The elder sister wanted the ingrateful orcs to become his experience points while the little sister wanted to open thousands of holes in the bodies of orcs and eliminate them at once.

How could the orcs who had witnessed their powers firsthand, not be terrified after hearing all that? Some of them even started trembling as fear grabbed hold of their bodies once again.

"Calm down you two, put down your weapons" Simon declared, as he silently walked towards Berigard who was yet to give the order to raise his head.

"Tell me Berigard, in this Ghastly Winding Forest, what happens to the side that loses the war?" Stopping beside him, Simon asked.

Berigard answered while still keeping his head down—"The side that losses, becomes the slave of the winning party. All their possessions and territories become the prize for the winning party including their life. Basically, one loses all their rights as an individual or as a tribe if they lose in a war".

"I see" Simon nodded his head "Then why is the attitude of your tribe not like the losers? Did you perhaps think that this was your victory? Don't make me laugh, the one that won this war was me".

"The ones that are on the losing side are you orcs and the ogres. As the losses, it is only just fair for me, the victor to take all your possessions. You should already be thankful to me that I'm not enslaving you or taking away your territory".

Each of Simon's words were like arrows that pierced at the heart of the orcs and since all that he said was true, it hurt even more.

Victor reigns supreme, that was the unequivocal law of this forest. If one wasn't fine with that, they could only suck it up or leave the forest in which case they would have to wander the desert or be subjugated by the humans.

The demon was already doing them a great favour by allowing those who didn't want to submit to still live their previous life. If they asked for even more, they would only be shown the boot.

Berirock who was painfully made aware of that, could only nod his head in approval. Berimond was tactful enough to not stick his head out, he too nodded his head without any question.

The orcs who were in their factions, mimicked their leader's actions and dodged being slaughtered indiscriminately.

"Alright, it looks like you guys get it now. Berigard, assign some men to clean up this mess. You will come with me to the treasury and the place where the orc king used to live" Right after throwing his words, Simon along with the Valkyries took off towards the centre of the orc territory.

The orc general finally raised his head up after he saw the demon disappear into the horizon. He moved his men as per the orders of his new lord and quickly scavenged through the battlefield.

"Berigard... are you really going to become the subordinate of the..." Berimond came over, he couldn't complete his sentence for fear that the demon was hiding around the corner and was eavesdropping on their conversation.

"Don't worry, he is not here. As for your question, I have already made my decision" Berigard replied without any hesitation in his voice.

"Is that so... that's a pity. I have never seen an orc general like you, perhaps now that the seat of orc king is empty, the orcs might have considered electing a new king. One that is truly worthy of the position this time" Berimond lamented, turned around and left.

Berigard did not stop him, nor did he call out to the latter. The position of an orc king, it was no doubt an enticing offer; however, Berigard was not among the ones that coveted such a materialistic thing for himself.

Besides, the reason why he wanted to dethrone the orc king was already accomplished. There was no reason for him to be fixated with that position anymore. If he had to state his disappointment, it would be that even though the truth had come out in front of everybody, he wasn't able to exact vengeance for his friends by killing Belgarious himself.

"I wish you good luck" the next one to reach out to him was Berirock who looked a little worse for the wear.

The general wished him luck and left the place along with his subordinates. The only ones that were left here on the battlefield was Berigard and those that wanted to follow him.

"Master was it alright to just leave them like that?" Annette asked after they were a certain distance away from the Blackfield.

"I have the same question master, wouldn't it have been better for us to kill them rather than let them live even after they had the audacity to accept master's help. That orc also said that the losers become the possession of the winners which means that all their lives was yours for the taking"

Alice added after Annette, while Bainca simply nodded her head in agreement.

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"You guys are not wrong; however killing them at this point would only result in me levelling up a few couple of times. Besides, if I initiated a bloodbath on them, those orcs that were going to become our subordinates, would forever be under the impression that we are no different than the ogres".

"Since I'm taking them as my subordinates I want to slowly ingrain loyalty towards the dungeon and myself within them" Simon explained.

"I see, so if we had initiated a bloodbath there, it would have adversely affected Masters plan" Alice murmured finally understanding why Simon had stopped her at that time.

"Right... but there is another thing, I'm not so merciful as to let them live after all the pain and efforts I had to go through to defeat the ogres" Simon added.

"Does master mean that..." Annette who was smarter than all her sisters, had some ideas as to what her master was planning.

"Yeah, they are the bait. The war is not over, the ogre army deployed by the ogre tribe today is not their strongest force. I don't believe that the tribe led by one of the seven kings of the forest is only this strong. They have got to be hiding much of their strength".

"The ones that ran away from the battlefield were sure to report what had transpired on the battlefield back to their superiors. This would surely incite the anger of the ogre tribe and one of the seven kings towards the orcs and me".

"When the time comes, they are sure to retaliate for what happened today with their full force. We must be ready for that. Fortunately for us, we have these orcs who will work as our sentry and decoy, their deaths will be the perfect signal to warn us when the ogres are coming".

Sparing them to maintain his reputation, was just an excuse. The real reason why he didn't kill them and made them into his experience was because he needed them to serve another purpose.

After the attack on the tower town, Simon had learned his lesson. He couldn't just sit still and allow the monsters of the ghastly winding forest to ruin the town and the dungeon that he had built up over the past year with much difficulty.

If he had to have a way of knowing when an attack was coming beforehand, then he would be able to prepare in advance and stop any unnecessary destruction of the tower town.

The adventurers living in the tower town are the main source of income for his dungeon. It has to be said that, if the town is threatened again and again it was sure to be deserted by the adventurers.

After all, nobody liked resting and leaving their backs open in a place that could be besieged anytime.

Simon would have to prepare multiple countermeasures for that in the future. For now, the territory of the orcs, served as an ample warning for when the ogres are attacking.

Other than that, there was another thing bugging Simon's mind that he didn't speak about to the Valkyries. It was the motive behind the ogre starting this war. Simon wanted to know what was driving one of the seven kings to attack the orc tribe which did not even have a calamity class as its protector.

Could the tribe of orcs have something that even someone on the level of a seven kings coveted? Simon couldn't help but think around that line. It was also because of this reason that Simon wanted to forage through their treasury and the place where the orc king lived.

A thousand kilometres east of the Blackfield was a vast sea of woodlands filled with exotic plants and trees. Unlike the Blackfield and the territory of the orcs, this place was filled with carnivorous plants, monsters and various insects inhabiting the place.

The mana here was dense enough to form mist around these parts which lasted year long. Thanks to the many mystical veins flowing underneath the ground, various treasures of the nature could be found growing around here.

At the depth of this place, was an ancient ruin which was covered by the dense foliage of the forest over the years. Every house around this part was broken, growing out of their roofs were many trees of mana crystals.

At the centre of the ruins was an enormous temple which looked quite grand even when most of its splendour was degraded with time. Inside the temple, hordes of mana crystals, core stones, artefacts and other various exotic treasures lined up the place.

If any ordinary adventurer saw that, they wouldn't be able to help but drool with their mouth seeing this much wealth. At the end of the hall was a gigantic carcass of an ancient beast.

Unlike the one that was in the underground chamber of the orc territory, this one did not release any aura.

The carcass was enclosing a small pond in the centre. The ceiling around this area was completely broken thus allowing the sunlight to penetrate through and fall on the pond. Peculiarly enough, the water in the pond was crimson in colour like the blood itself and a small exotic flower was growing at the centre of it.

The flower had an outlandish shape and had the power to ensnare one's soul as it released a violet fragrance all around it.

Not far away from the pond, sitting like a statue was an ogre with flame like bright crimson hair. They were wearing sturdy looking armour, pelts of monsters as clothing and strapped a heavy sword on their back.

The ogre was leaner, smaller than even the crimson horn and looked no different than an average human. That is if you ignore the deep purple horn the ogre had on its forehead.

The ogre must have maintained that position long enough for the dust to settle on his armours and clothes. His presence was so minimal that one wouldn't even be able to tell that he was here without approaching a few meters near him.

The ogre was so still that if not for the occasional rise and fall of his chest, he might have been considered dead. At this moment, the slight dust that had accumulated on his shoulders fell down and the ogre finally opened his eyes revealing two fierce beast like dark brown eyes.

The ogre extended his hand and two small crimson stones the size of a pebble appeared on his palm from inside his space ring. There was a small crack in the stones and the energy inside was slowly seeping out.

"What?!" due to the slight disturbance in his concentration the entire ruins shook for a moment causing dust and debris to fall down from the ceiling.

Whoosh... wind rustled and a figure appeared behind the ogre like a shadow.

"Lord Gil-Garna what is the matter?" the figure asked calling forth the name that was the lord of all the black ogres and one of the seven kings.

Gil-Garna turned his eyes towards the shadowy figure and said "Gish-Bagh... Giz-Bozo and Giz-Mogo are dead. Their soul stones just broke".

The shadowy figure was none other than the ogre with the indigo horn that was communicating with the two crimson horns before the war. Gish-Bagh's eyes went wide the moment he heard those words; nevertheless, he quickly composed himself and bowed his head in apology.

"I am extremely sorry to have disappointed my lord. I thought that sending two crimson horns against that orc king would be enough to bring the tribe of orcs down, who knew that Giz-Bozo and Giz-Mogo would turn out to be so useless. I shall make preparations and send someone there immediately...".

"There is no need, the ogre army there should have already been wiped out. If there is an enemy there who can kill even a crimson horn who was about to break through to become an indigo horn, then no matter who we send there to, it would be the same" Gil-Garna turned down Gish-bagh's suggestion.

"Could the orc king be the one to defeat them? But he didn't strike me as that strong.." Gish-Bagh mumbled frowning his brows.

"I don't think it's the doing of that orc, this should be the doing of a third party" Gil-Garna affirmed his suspicions.

"Could it be someone from the seven kings?" Gish-Bagh asked putting his words very carefully.

Gil-Garna was silent for a while before he shook his head once again "I don't think that is the case, however, I cannot be entirely sure. Someone had tampered with my plan and they did it just when I was about to procure that inheritance".

His first suspicions went towards Gufardus who had an inkling about his plan. But before he could ponder on that any further, the flower on the pond suddenly started sending ripples through the water and emit an ear piercing cry like that of a hundred babies crying at once.

Immediately, Gil-Garna stood up from his place and started walking towards the pond making the dust that had accumulated on his body, to fall down on the ground.

"Gish-Bagh I need to focus on growing the Six Nether flower and cannot leave my position. You go and find out who was behind all of this" Gil-Garna ordered.

He used his nails to slit his hand and drop his blood on the pond. The pond immediately started boiling while the six nether flower released a bewitching violet colour.

Seeing his king getting busy, Gish-Bagh obediently nodded his head and swiftly left the hall.

Chapter 508 508- The Second Piece (2)

At the centre of the orc territory, a narrow pass between two inconspicuous mountain, led towards a waterfall behind which rested a huge stone door. When Simon and the Valkyries discovered this huge stone door, they couldn't help but hold their breath for a while.

The stone door was more than thirty meters big and ten times heavier. It had many mysterious drawings and pictures carved on it. When asked what these pictures meant, Berigard simply shook his head telling Simon that it was something that their tribe of orcs found after they settled here.

This means that, the stone door was something that was even more ancient than the history of the orcs living here.

"The first orc king had placed a seal on the door, so only an orc king or an orc general can open it" Berigard explained. He touched the wall with his hand and exerted his mana.

Immediately, incomprehensible runes started appearing on the ground and entered the stone door.

"Runes?!" Seeing the runes appear, Simon muttered in astonishment.

TREMBLE... the huge door started shaking and moving aside opening a path to the treasury. Berigard led Simon and the Valkyries through a dark path and onto a bright open space lit up by countless phosphorescence stones.

"This is..." Looking at the treasury of the orcs, Simon's crimson eyes gleamed for a second. The treasury cannot be said as grand by no means since the orcs did not have the concept of keeping things organisedly.

However, even cumbersome, the sheer amount of treasures that the orcs had collected throughout the years was enough to make anyone flabbergasted for a second. No matter if it was gold, core stones, artifacts, rare ores or herbs, the orcs had those in abundance.

Their quantity was so much that they were lined up in heaps of mountains.

"These are all the treasures that our tribe has collected since the beginning. Now that my lord is our new ruler, everything in this treasury rightfully belongs to you" Berigard stated adopting the attitude of a subordinate.

Simon did not stand on ceremony and quickly got to business. He asked the Valkyries to sort the treasures for him and passed them a few space rings that he got from the adventurers that had died in his dungeon.

With that said, they quickly got to work, the mountains of treasures started disappearing swiftly and into the space ring of Simon. Before long, most of the treasures were hoarded by Simon except for a few miscellaneous items that couldn't be put into a category.

Among these items some were peculiar stones that he had never seen before, a couple of orbs with weird runes drawn on them, grimoires, materials harvested from the many monsters around the ghastly winding forest and last but not least, an old parchment of paper.

"Master what should we do with all this?" Alice asked perplexed.

The skill on the grimoires had the requirement of a class attached to it which meant that it cannot be used by anyone else other than someone possessing that same class.

The peculiar stones did not initiate any response from the [Analysis] and monster materials were something that they had no use for as of yet.

What remained was a parchment of paper in Simon's hand.

"Just keep them in a separate space ring, I'm sure they will come in handy someday" Simon ordered and opened the parchment in his hand. Probably because it was very old, it had many crumbles and was torn in many places.

The ink had faded slightly but the contents of the parchment, the map was still differentiable. Looking at the map, Simon was immediately stunned. That was because the map drawn on this parchment, was one of the missing pieces from the map that Simon had found from the guild master of the seven swords guild.

Taking out the other piece that he had kept inside his space ring, Simon tried to piece them together. However, since the last piece was still missing from the map, one still couldn't tell where this place was.

"It looks like some sort of mountain," Annette remarked looking at the map.

"It also looks like a waterfall if you turn it around" Alice added her observation.

"Master is this some kind of treasure map?" she asked, one could see stars lighting up in her eyes. The little girl was excited by the thrill of going on a treasure hunt.

Simon did not deny nor confirmed her words, he turned towards Berigard who was waiting for them in the corner and asked—

"Where did your tribe get this map? Do you know anything about it?".

Unfortunately for him, the orc general had no information regarding the map or where it lead to.

"I'm extremely sorry my lord. That map is something that had been stored inside the treasury since the time of our first king. We all were unaware of what this parchment of paper was thus we simply kept it in our treasury. It is only now that I was made aware that it was a map and the drawings on it was a coordinate" Berigard replied.

"I see..." Simon wasn't very disappointed, he knew that would be the case. After all, one wouldn't just keep a map rotting in the treasury if they didn't know anything about it.

"Ah yes, I can only say that the map was incredibly precious to the orc king so much so that he deemed it safer to keep it in the treasury rather than roam around keeping it in his space ring".

Simon's eyes glowed crimson for a second when he heard those words. something that even the first orc king deemed precious, the map no doubt hid some incredible secrets and if he wanted to find that out, he would have to search for the last piece and complete the map.

After they were done emptying the treasury, the group moved out towards the underground chamber where the orc king used to live. When they approached near the place, they found signs of destruction everywhere.

The underground chamber was empty and the orc king was nowhere to be found.

"That guy really did run away huh" Berigard clenched his hands in anger. The huge carcass that had been with their tribe since the beginning was gone and they found the broken pieces of the transmission conch at the entrance of the chamber.

With all the evidence present, there was hardly any doubt remaining whether the orc had fled away or not.

Simon on the other hand wasn't fazed to see the underground chamber empty. Given his understanding of the orc king from the words of Berigard, he already expected this to happen.

"Berigard can you tell me what are the things missing from the underground chamber?" Simon asked, this was his first time visiting this place, naturally he did not know the things that were kept here.

Berigard took a deep breath of air to compose the burning anger within him. He pointed at the altar at the centre of the chamber and said.

"The huge carcass of an ancient beast that had been with our tribe since the start, is gone. It was the material behind all our weapons and also the thing where the holy spirit resided. It is obviously taken by Belgarious before he left this place".

"Holy Spirit?" the word instantly intrigued Simon and he couldn't help but ask.

"Our tribe of orcs can only select a new king through two methods. The first way was by recommendation of the previous king and the second method is through the holy spirit's approval. The gigantic carcass that used to be here, harboured that spirit. The reason why we call it a holy spirit is because it has been protecting our tribe of orcs since the beginning and has been lending strength to all our previous kings.

Belgarious was chosen through the first method. However, what I cannot understand is how could the previous orc king not see how treacherous Belgarious was to have selected him to be his successor" Berigard spat his frustration out.

"Perhaps there is still an element that you are unable to see. Anyways, what is all that holy spirit giving you power about?"

Simon was more interested in the holy spirit than how Belgarious became the orc king. For some reason, he felt that carcass held some mysteries that the orc in front of him wasn't willing to disclose.

Berigard faced Simon bowed his head and answered sincerely "It means exactly what it means. The holy spirit of that carcass has been lending strength to all our previous kings, allowing them to step in the calamity class".

"Is that so..." Simon glanced deeply at Berigard for any signs of lies, seeing that the guy was telling the truth, he dropped the issue.

A carcass that resided a holy spirit who granted powers to others. Simon had many speculation and questions as to what it could be. However since the carcass was gone, there was no point in digging any further.

After seeing that there was nothing to loot in the underground chamber, Simon along with the Valkyries, decided to return back. Before leaving, he left a few instructions for Berigard.

Unlike the time when they entered the Diluvian High Orcs territory, Simon and the Valkyries did not bother to mask their scent while leaving since all of the orcs were now more or less aware of his presence.

There was no point in hiding his scent from them. Simon did not stop on the way back to his dungeon and hurried back at his full speed. The Valkyries were following closely behind him.

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"Master does not need to worry, Miss Irene is inside the dungeon. Besides her, there are my sisters there and that warhorse also to guard it" Annette said trying to alleviate some of Simon's worries.

Seeing that his emotions were so easily read by Annette, Simon smiled helplessly and shook his head.

"I know that... it's just being the master of the dungeon, I cannot settle down unless I see the dungeon with my own eyes".

It was not that he did not trust his subordinates, it was simply that being a dungeon master came with some responsibilities. After what happened the last time, Simon had learned his lesson when his dungeon was almost breached while he was training in the forbidden trials unaware of all of this happening.

Even if there was Irene, the Valkyries, Bloodthorn demonic warhorse and the many new inhabitants of the dungeon spawned, mutated or otherwise brought from outside the dungeon to protect it, during times of need a dungeon master's presence cannot be discounted.

Apart from that, Simon was a little concerned about the tower town that was above the ground. The tower town was his source of income where most of the adventurers resided.

At this crucial moment when the town is just starting to build itself, it would be beyond disastrous if it were to be attacked by monsters again. The town could fend off the Normal, Strong or even the Elite class monsters; however, the appearance of a Super class monsters again might really break the spirits of the adventurers there.

Simon had to find a way to stop the same incident that happened before, repeat once again.

After a day of non-stop travel, they were finally out of the western region of the forest. From there, it was just half a day of travel to reach his dungeon which was located at the eastern region of the forest.

By the way, all of them were travelling using their flight skill. Simon had his inborn wings and [High-Speed Flight] skill whereas the Valkyries were using [Mana Wings] to fly in the sky.

The technique was something that one could only learn when they reach level 500 and the mana within them becomes dense enough to turn into liquid.

Reaching level 500, as simple as it sounded, in actuality, it wasn't that simple to reach such a level. It needed an enormous amount of talent, hard work, opportunities and the purity of one's bloodline to reach such a level.

Once one reaches that level, one can officially call themselves a powerhouse. They can walk these lands with their head held high and countless people fawning over them. Why wouldn't they not, Level 500 represented a realm that differentiated the truly strong from the strong.

The gap was so big that even if there were dozens of level 490+ individuals fighting a person who has just reached level 500, they wouldn't be able to put a scratch on him simply because of the existence of the techniques such as [Mana armour], [Mana Wings] and such.

Other than that, being able to liquify your mana also plays a large role in differentiating the realm from the other levels below it.

Liquified mana essentially possesses more power than your normal mana... if put into quantifiable terms, it would be more than ten times powerful.

Naturally, when one uses such a mana, the skills and the magic that they conjure would be ten times more powerful as well. Apart from that, being able to turn your mana into a liquid state means that one is able to hold more mana, and their mana pool increases drastically.

The aforementioned reasons are why people look so highly at those that reach such a level. Level 500 was like the natural barrier where numerous people in this world find their progress halting due to their bloodline, talent or lack of opportunities.

They dwindle their time away trying to find a way to break through all their life. From this one could imagine how hard it was to truly break through into level 500 and become a powerhouse around these lands.

Incidentally, most guild masters or the vice guild masters of the strong guilds around the north-western region of the central continent are around this level.

While feeling a little envious of the Valkyries who came with their high levels when he summoned them, Simon and the others reached the dungeon.

The first thing that he did after reaching the dungeon, was to erase his and the Valkyries' presence using the ice phoenix sigh and observe the tower town which was being rebuilt once again.

After the last attack by the orcs, many lives were lost and the town was almost but destroyed with only a handful of building remaining intact. It was no wonder the humans were rebuilding their stores once again, this time making it much sturdier and bigger than before.

The fencing around the town was also upgraded into a wall that enclosed the town within. Gates were installed and crossbows were mounted on those walls. Apart from that, there were also many tall sentry towers built around the wall to alert the inhabitants of any incoming monster attacks.

Although, it wasn't much, it at least gave the people in this town ninety per cent of who were adventurers and the rest traders and merchants, ample time to react.

Seeing the slowly rebuilding town from up there, Simon sighed in relief. Of course, the adventurers and the merchants returned back to the town. Despite knowing that the town might be attacked again anytime, they still risked their lives and came back.

The motive driving them was simple, it was the profit that they were earning from the dungeon. The dungeon might be in an extremely dangerous place, however, it was filled with riches that would go to waste if not harvested.

How could these adventurers and the merchants that buy the stuff from them, be willing to let go of this opportunity? Simon was relieved that he had been trying to make his dungeon lucrative for the adventurers from the start.

The many items that he got from his daily [Ga??????] that he set aside as the reward for the adventurers was paying off.

After getting the taste of profit from the dungeon, even when unwilling and knowing the danger, these people still took the risk to come back.

Most of the buildings in the town were turned into debris except a few and the adventurers association building was one of that few. At this moment, there was a crowd gathered inside the building and it seemed like something was going on.

"Master, would you like to go down and check it out?" Seeing that her master was looking at the adventurer's association building, Annette commented.

Simon shook his head in denial. Of course, he could just use the Grimlock's trinket to change his appearance and go in there if need be; however, Simon felt like it was not necessary.

Finished observing the town, Simon opened the [Main Menu] and using the teleport function in the [Dungeon], he teleported to the main floor along with the Valkyries.

"Welcome back master" As expected, Bea who was adept in space magic had sensed the spatial turbulence and was lying in wait for them.

"Un... I'm Back" Simon nodded his head in acknowledgement to her greetings. While the sisters looked at each other and nodded.

"Right! Master, you must be tired. I will immediately prepare the bath for you" Bea smiled in victory towards her sisters.

"Yeah, I'll trouble you. By the way, I don't feel Irene's and Cecilia's presence, are they not here?" Simon asked turning towards Bea.

"Miss Irene and princess Cecilia are in the forest spirit village. It seems that there was something unusual going on with the spirit tree. Hence they went there not long ago" Bea replied.

She was just about to leave triumphantly to prepare a bath for her master, when Alice happily skipped towards her and whispered a few things into her ears.

Immediately, an aura of intense jealousy that was palpable enough to materialise itself, wafted off from Bea.

"Kuhhhh... not only did you get to spend so many days with master, but on top of that you got to eat his cooking too?!!! Even I want to... Kuhhh!!" Bea chewed the edge of her dress and gritted her teeth in vexation.

"Enough"

TAP... at this moment, while Simon was wondering what was going on with Bea, Annette arrived before Bea and tapped her head with a karate chop which ultimately shut her up.

"Weren't you going to prepare a bath for master? If you don't want to then allow me"...

"No-No... I'm going. You have already had your fair share of serving master, you cannot take this opportunity from me" Bea responded while fleeing towards the palace.

"As for you Alice, don't incite Bea any further. Look at how dirty your clothes are, go and clean them Asap!"...

"Y-Yes elder sister" leaving those words, Alice too fled from the scene leaving a gawking Simon and the bisque doll like Bianca behind.

Looking at that Annette who immediately brought her sisters in line, Simon couldn't help but laugh helplessly. Just a few simple words from her was enough to make all of the Valkyries cower. She wasn't their elder sister for no reason.

Right after entering the white palace, Simon took a bath. These few days of travel and constant battles had made him want to relax in a hot bath for a while.

"Haaah.. I fell like all my exhaustion is being washed away" Simon muttered laying down inside the sauna.

There was a huge aquarium beside the sauna providing a beautiful view of the different kinds of fish inside.

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Entertainment and relaxation, that was the main purpose of this place. After spending some relaxing time there, Simon teleported to the forest spirit village.

The thing about the spirit tree never left his mind, but since I knew that Cecilia was there, he wasn't very concerned. Simon walked through their village observing the daily lives of the forest spring spirits.

The kids were out playing on a field while the adults were farming, ploughing and using magic to grow different kinds of plants. Everybody was busy doing something or the other.

When they saw Simon, they bowed their heads in respect others showered him with gifts that they had grown with their own powers. Looking at how jubilant and merry they were, it even rubbed off on to Simon making his mood much lighter.

The atmosphere of the forest Spring village was much brighter than before probably because they decided to move on with their lives after the incident that happened to them a couple of months ago.

They were a strong bunch of people, Simon couldn't help but think so. As he strolled around the village, he noticed that some of the young forest spring spirits have started forming couples. This made Simon realise that it wouldn't be long before the population of the forest Spring spirits thrives.

An increase in the population of the forest spring spirits meant that their power will be able to affect a larger portion of the floor. The natural energy that they controlled, would bring new changes to his dungeon allowing it to take another step towards ranking up.

Other than that, he would also have more caretakers for his dungeon in the future. In any case, it was a good thing for Simon and for his dungeon.

While he was thinking all this, without him realising, he had arrived at the mountaintop where the spirit tree was. A couple of people were standing around the tree, their hands clasped together in a prayer.

Simon spotted a few familiar faces, among them were Cecilia, Irene, Fennel and two of the [Helpers] Maya and Fay. The rest of them were the villagers.

"You are here" Irene glanced at him with her crystal blue eyes. There was no way his presence would escape her senses.

"Yeah, I just arrived a couple of minutes ago. So what is going on with the spirit tree?" Simon asked stopping beside Irene.

"My lord ..." Fennel and the other tried to kneel and show their respects but was quickly dismissed by Simon who told them to continue with their task.

"I do not know but according to Cecilia, the spirit tree is trying to say something. However it's still an infant so it's very difficult to understand what it is saying" Irene replied looking at the little girl with emerald green hair who was patting the trunk of the tree as if consoling a child.

"Trying to say something? Could it be its abilities to talk with the spirits of the dead are awakening?" Simon turned down the idea as soon as it popped inside his head.

Irene had told him that the spirit tree was still a sprout, it would have to grow to become a mature tree to be able to communicate with the spirits.

"Everyone please lend me more of your strength, this child is still hungry" Cecilia spoke, she used her newfound powers to direct the vast mystical energy present in the surrounding towards the spirit tree.

At this moment, her hair shined a brilliant emerald green colour as multiple speckles of light started gathering around her.

With her butterfly like wings, she just looked like a beautiful fairy. The other forest spring spirits assisted her with their powers.

WHOOSH... it was like invisible winds were rustling the branches of the spirit tree as its leaves shined with a brilliant pale blue light.

"Un... now sleep okay? Everything will be alright. I'll come again to visit you" When Cecilia said that, the spirit tree rustled as if saying that it understood.

After she was done taking care of the spirit tree, she turned around to face everyone when all of a sudden her eyes went wide in surprise to see Simon silently smiling at her. Ecstatic she rushed towards her brother in an attempt to get his attention and praise.

Simon spared no effort in praising her "Cecilia, your abilities are indeed very mystical".

To be able to divert the course of mystical veins which forms naturally over hundreds of years could only be described as such. Not only that, to be able to have such an affinity with the nature, truly a royalty amongst the forest spring spirit clan.

"Hehe..." Cecilia smiled, she liked being patted and praised like that by her big brother.

"Cecilia... is the spirit tree fine now?" Irene asked.

The little forest spring spirit girl nodded her head and replied "Un... it's consoled now and is growing up healthy. It must have had some nightmare for it to be crying like that all of a sudden".

"A nightmare you say? What did it see... did it tell you?" Irene interrogated further.

"Eh?! Umm... I couldn't understand most of the things it said... yeah, right it was muttering something about danger and fire" Cecilia tried hard to recall some of the words that the spirit tree said.

Hearing her words, Irene fell silent, her crystal blue eyes seemed to have drifted somewhere else.

"Big sister... is there something wrong?" When asked that, Irene quickly changed the subject. Nevertheless, this peculiar behaviour of her didn't go unnoticed by Simon.

Now that the spirit tree was pacified, all of them went back to the village together. Fay and Maya tagged along because they have something to report while Fennel brought him towards one area of the floor to show him something.

Of course, Irene and Cecilia as a matter of factly came along with him. As Simon saw the familiar area, he quickly recalled that he had installed a pond of Serenity here. This place also had those mysterious Obsidian Energy Exuders.

"My lord those huge slates that you have placed here are starting to act weirdly" As Fennel said that, a fierce mana shockwave came from the direction of the pond powerful enough to even disturb the mana within them.

"This is?!" feeling the shockwave, Simon uttered.

"This is precisely the thing I wanted to show you" After Simon and the others came near the shore of the pond, Fennel pointed out.

"That mana shockwave that hit us, came from those huge black slates that My lord has placed here. Each of those slates has been producing a shockwave like that after every fifteen minutes subsequently" Fennel reported.

Those huge black slates that fennel was talking about, were none other than the Obsidian Energy Exuders that had mutated from the obsidian slates that he bought from the shop.

The original function of the Obsidian slates was to absorb the mana from the air, store it and then transfer it to another object. Basically, it was like a battery. However, after the mutation, it had become something else entirely.

The last time he visited this place, he felt the obsidian slates release waves of pure mystical energy around the surrounding. However, it wasn't as powerful as the one he had felt now. Also when he checked with his Analysis the last time, the obsidian slates were called the obsidian Energy Exuder and was ranked [A].

However, at that time he couldn't see all of the functions of the object and thus left it alone. Would it be the same this time too? There was only one way to find out. Simon activated his Analysis.

Item- Obsidian energy Exuder

Rank- [A]

Description- Made with the Obsidian Meteor, it has the property of storing an enormous amount of mystical energy. The runes on it are the work of a famous grandmaster craft smith who chiselled it with adamantium. Only a certain number of them are there in existence.

Functions- 1) Can be used as the power core to run multiple arrays and formations.

2) ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■

3) ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■

Simon read the information displayed by the Analysis. Although his skill was still low level to view all of the uses of the item, he was nonetheless, able to see the description of the item and one of its uses.

According to the Analysis, it could be used as the power core for the arrays and formation. Simon remembered that there were a few arrays and formations listed on the [Shop]. However, since it was still unavailable for him to buy at this point, he did not know what it did.

"Lord Simon please tell us if we should be wary of these shockwaves," Fennel asked looking a little worried.

Well anybody would be seeing the shockwaves getting stronger and stronger day by day. Simon snapped out of his thoughts, even if Fennel asked him that, he did not what to answer.

The shockwaves of the Obsidian Energy Exuders were indeed strong and the village was not that far away from the pond. If the shockwaves reached there, would it not disturb the daily lives of the forest spring spirits living there?

Fortunately for him, he had a competent woman near him who knew what to do in this situation.

"Elder Fennel doesnot have to worry. The shockwaves of the obsidian energy exuders are just the expulsion of pure mystical energy and are by no means harmful. Nonetheless, it would be too disturbing to have the shockwaves reach the village".

"Don't worry, I will do something about it so that you wouldn't have to worry about it anymore". Irene said, her eyes calmly observing all of the seven slates each of which was positioned at the edges of the pond encircling it in the middle.