

D. of Pride 521

Chapter 521 521- Mysterious Dream

Irene muttered under her breath, turned towards Simon and extended her hand.

Getting the clue, Simon took her hand and brought her near the bonfire for a dance.

"Just so you know, I have never danced before this. So it might be..." Irene said averting her eyes.

"Don't worry, their dance is not as difficult as you think" Simon assured. He placed his hand over her willowy waist and locked his other arm with hers. Just like how Cecilia had taught him, they started dancing.

And although Irene said that she never danced before this, her poise was graceful and her steps elegant. Coupled with the fact that one had the charms of a devil while the other was a celestial beauty, they quickly stole everyone's breath.

Their dance was so mesmerising that every watching eye was locked onto them and their mouth gaped open from the scene.

"You are quite good for someone who said that they have never danced before this. Did you enjoy it?" Simon spoke coming to a break after a while.

"Well, I never said that I was bad" Irene responded with a flushed red face. This was the first time she had danced with someone. not to mention with the opposite sex no less.

At this moment she looked so beautiful that one might even have difficulty tearing their gaze away from her.

CLAP... CLAP... CLAP... Came the loud applause of the crowd. At some unknown point in time, all the other couples had stopped dancing and were watching them intently.

Irene turned around and walked away, leaving behind a few short words "Thank you for the gift".

Simon smiled, she didn't reply to the latter half of his question; nevertheless, from her behaviour, he could tell that she did enjoy it.

On one corner of the town square, Bea was brooding intensely causing cracks to appear on her plate.

"How long do you plan on continuing that, get over it. Our Master and Miss Irene.. they truly are a good match" Annette spoke standing beside her.

"B-But... Unnngh!!" Bea pouted, before she could say anything, Alice beside her finished her cake and waltzed towards where Simon was saying "After Princess Cecilia and Miss Irene, it is my turn".

"Huh? Wait... I shall be the one to dance first" Bea hurriedly tagged along followed by Emma and Bianca.

"Sigh" Annette sighed and followed her sister to ask for a dance with their master. Like that, Simon had to dance with all the five Valkyries before he could take a break.

It turned out that the birthday party he had thrown for Cecilia, was super popular with everyone. The party went on for quite a few hours before everyone turned to their homes.

Simon did not teleport to the white palace and instead chose to stay in the bamboo house made for him at the insistence of everyone. As there was no way to tell the passage of time inside a dungeon, one had to follow their instincts and rest when they feel tired.

Simon was a demon noble, he did not have much need for sleep unlike the forest spring spirits. But perhaps because it was a long time ago that he took a nap, he quickly fell asleep as soon as he turned to the bed.

How long was he asleep? Simon couldn't tell... all he could say was he was drifting endlessly to somewhere without his control. Before he knew it, he was in a vast white space with no end or beginning.

The place was completely empty and other than him, there was nothing there. Simon quickly recalled where this place was, when he was tackling the trial in the ancient treants territory set by Aldebaran, this was where he ended up after he lost consciousness on the ninth step.

[TEEEEEE]...

Just like that time, the weird noise rang out within the empty space calling him towards it.

Simon followed the sound and soon he appeared in front of the object that was releasing an intense amount of light and was so hot that it felt like the core of the sun.

Needless to say, Simon couldn't approach closer to it because of the heat. Nonetheless, his ability to resist heat was on a whole different level after his flame magic evolved to the advanced level. He was much closer to the object in terms of distance, than the last time he was here.

Still, there was a few meters distance between them that no matter how much he tried, he couldn't cover. It was not the problem of heat, it was as if his feet were invisibly stuck to the ground unable to proceed any further.

Simon sighed, looked at the object and spoke "You brought me here again this time too didn't you? What are you? And for what reason did you call me?".

It might look odd that he was talking with an object; however, make no mistake, it was no ordinary object and was capable of communicating with Simon.

[TEEEEEE] just like always, it communicated with a ringing sound. Simon who got adept at that language the last time he came here, tried to understand what it was telling him.

"What!?!... You want to show me something?" He muttered in confusion. Before he could ask what it wanted to show him, the vast white space he was in, disappeared. His vision blurred and the scenes around him changed.

When he tried to look around to see where he was now, he saw an enormous tower piercing the very dome of sky. It was so majestic, grand looking and impactful that it was incomparable to the tower of his dungeon.

Nonetheless, what amazed Simon was not the tower but the destruction that was around it. The land around here for thousands of miles along with the very space here was devastated to the point that it was unrepairable. The sky was fragmented with black holes appearing everywhere.

Even the ginormous mighty tower was damaged with a portion of its walls collapsed.

As Simon was surveying the place his eyes suddenly went towards two shadowy figures standing high up in the sky without a foothold. Facing them, were eight figures who were shrouded in a mysterious light except for one.

When Simon saw that figure that was not shrouded in a light, his eyes opened wide and a look of disbelief appeared on his face. He was so perturbed that his mind had gone blank instantly.

The reason for his shock was the eighth figure that was not shrouded in light. It was a familiar figure, one that was very close to him.

"Cecilia?!!" Simon couldn't help but yell out in shock. Yes, one of the figures standing nobly in the air, was none other than his little sister Cecilia.

More accurately, that someone looked very much like Cecilia, but it wasn't her. Those emerald green hair, fairly like beautiful face, butterfly wings and those mysterious speckles of light that always followed her.

Her every feature matched with Cecilia, just that they were more taller, mature and grown up than the current little girl that he knew of.

It couldn't be a mistake, the similarities were just too uncanny.

Who was that someone that looked like Cecilia? Who were those other seven shrouded figures around her and who were the two shadowy figures that they were facing?

What kind of dream was this? Simon had more questions than answers. He felt a burst of pain assault his head and before he knew it, he passed out.

HUFF... HUFF...HUFF... the next time he opened his eyes, he was back in his bed inside the bamboo house on the forest spring village.

"What was that dream... Haa... Haa" Simon mumbled, his body was drenched with sweat and he was out of breath like he was having some nightmare. He couldn't understand the dream that he had just now.

That mysterious white space and those figures, everything felt so real that he couldn't discount it as a dream. Especially, the figure of Cecilia, it brought back those words that he heard from Aldebaran about Cecilia being a reincarnation of one of the Eight Emmisarries.

No matter how much he thought about it, he couldn't arrive at any other explanation.

That light and that dream, why did he have it now? Unable to calm his mind, Simon got up from his bed and went out for a stroll. Unknowingly, he had arrived in front of the spirit tree who was sleeping soundly like an infant at this moment.

According to Irene, one of the abilities of the spirit tree was to glimpse into the future, Simon thought that his peculiar dream had something to do with it. However, it looked like he was wrong, the spirit tree wasn't involved in his dream.

And he didn't know why, but a part of him told him that it wasn't a future nor any dream but something that had already occurred, a distant past.

Simon had a splitting headache every time that he tried to recall the scenes for some unknown reason. It was very different from the time when he witnessed the Historia in the forbidden trials, the dream he had today was very real, like a memory he had experienced himself.

"Why did you suddenly walk out of the house?" bringing along a cold gust of wind, Irene appeared behind Simon all of a sudden.

The woman's senses were too sharp, even though he made no noise while coming out of the house, Irene was still able to perceive him.

"No reason particularly, since I couldn't sleep, I just thought to take a walk" Simon tried to sound as convincing as possible. Even if he discussed the dream he just had with Irene, it would only be worrying her needlessly thus he decided to cover it up with an excuse.

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"What about you, why are you here? Didn't you go to bed alongside Cecilia?" Simon turned the question back to her.

"Indeed I was taking a nap, but I came here looking for you?" Irene said.

"Looking for me?" Simon furrowed his brows. When he saw her taking out the object he presented her as her birthday gift, he finally understood what she meant.

"This Hairpin... why did you choose this as a gift?" Irene asked, one could feel a weird turmoil in her otherwise always calm voice.

The hairpin in question was made of jade and was a beautiful emerald green colour. It had a beautiful design and a phoenix at the end. The jade hairpin was one of the items that Simon and his colleagues had put inside the gacha.

On that note, it was a super ultra rare item with a drop rate of less than 0.0001 per cent. It was so rare that Simon was inwardly amazed that he managed to get it and not any [A] or [S] rank items which have a better drop rate than the pin. There was no way he could say that it was a gacha item with no practical value other than its aesthetic look and rarity.

"That hairpin is one of the few rare items I possess in my [Inventory]. There is no other like it in this world. The reason I gave it to you is because I thought it might look good on you" Simon was not lying, the hairpin was indeed one of its kind and exquisite looking.

While he was preparing a gift for Cecilia, he had been thinking about what could be an ideal gift for Irene. For someone like her who could easily take out philosopher's stone and other high ranking items, the items in his inventory might not have any appeal to her.

In that case, instead of burning a hole in his DP and providing her with an [A] or [S] item, he thought of giving her the Jade hairpin that he was lucky enough to get on one of his gacha or [ga?????] rolls a few days ago. So it was not like he did not think at all before giving her this gift.

"So it was like that..." Irene mumbled looking at the hairpin in her hand. No matter which women looked at the hairpin, they would no doubt call it pretty but for some reason, Simon felt like Irene wasn't very happy with his answer.

In fact, Simon couldn't have guessed at that time that the hairpin symbolised a different meaning in the place she came from.

Irene nodded her head and kept the hairpin. She gave him one of those rare smiles and said "Thank you, it's very beautiful".

Well at least she did like it, Simon thought internally and said "You are welcome".

The morning of the next day, everyone cleaned the town square before Simon and the others returned back to the main floor.

"Hehe, big brother look at all the gifts that I got" After coming to the main hall, Cecilia brought out all of the gifts she received from everyone. With a quick count, Simon guessed that there were more than 40 gifts lying there.

He also noticed that Cecilia had worn the necklace he had given her for her birthday on her neck. The necklace other than being a great protective item, looked good in the aesthetic department too. Thus it did look good on her neck.

On that note, in preparation for that unknown danger, the array that they had laid down was also completed. It had absorbed a sufficient amount of mana and was ready to work at any time. So if any danger did fall on the forest spirit floor, at the very least the protection array would be there to defend them.

Simon opened his [Main menu] and looked at the progress of the adventurer's teams. The group that was leading the exploration was none other than the tyrant mountain guild. There were a few more groups who were a floor or two behind them.

These groups were new to the town and came after the distress call. Just like the tyrant mountain guild, they too were from a big guild from the kingdom of Ellesmere. The highest floor that was currently being explored was floor 38.

It was not a lot of progress when you consider the fact that this was the same adventurer team that was on floor thirty fourth a month ago. It was not just the tyrant mountain guild, every other guild and team that was in the tower town, had their progress halted.

The reason for this was none other than the sudden invasion of the orcs. Due to the town being destroyed and many adventurers dying or suffering a trauma, many teams had to dissolve, guild members had to go back to their headquarter to give a report while other simply did not have the nerve to stay in the tower town anymore.

In a situation like this, it was only just normal that the dungeon exploration progress would get slowed down. It was especially the case for low rank adventurers and small teams that did not have the backing of a guild or anyone to rely on.

The lowest ranking adventurers or the daily bread earners were the groups that took the heaviest blow from this incident. Resulting in the demographics of the low ranking adventurers in the tower town to go down.

However, their departure did not affect Simon in the slightest since after the distress call new and more adventurers had flocked to his tower town replacing the old. Their levels were higher, they had a solid guild behind their backs and most of all, they provided much more DP than those low ranking adventurers.

From this unfortunate incident, the tower town had seen a new breeze of adventurers flocking to the town. However, it was not like all the low ranking adventurers were gone. There were still a few groups that made it through the storm or were persistent enough to create a new group.

Apart from that, due to the dungeon Laplace, being in close proximity to some of the border cities of the northwestern kingdoms of the central continent, it was bound to attract newbie adventurers and low ranking adventurers.

If one took a survey of the tower town, one would be able to notice that after the distress call, the average level of the adventurers in the tower town has gone up to level 300. For Simon and his dungeon, it was a good thing; however, it was also a double-edged blade hanging around his neck that could come down at any moment to claim his life if he did not prepare enough countermeasures.

Finding the growth of his dungeon satisfactory, Simon closed the [Main Menu]. Now that everything was taken care of, it was time for him to head towards the pond of serenity for his training.

Irene before walking away last night, told him to come to the pond of serenity tomorrow to continue their training. Now that Simon had acquired [Mana Lines] and [Minimal Mana Consumption] as Irene had asked him to before reaching level 500, it was time for him to move on to his next set of objectives.

When Simon got up to walk out of the Main palace, Cecilia and the valkyries too showed their willingness to tag along with him. Since that was the case, Simon allowed them to come with him.

When they walk past the mist and the light of the beautiful crystal trees, a pond straight out of some kind of fairytale appeared in front of them. Near the shore of the pond, was a woman of ethereal beauty silently sitting by the pond side.

The moment they spot her, she too discovered them.

Simon arrived before her and smiled bitterly. The plan was for him to train here alone however, they insisted on coming along with him disturbing the tranquillity of the place.

"This pond... no matter how many times I see it, it looks as magical as ever" Alice commented. By her side, Cecilia who heard that started talking about how it looked completely different than a few months and how unique things seemed to grow inside it.

Annette, Bea and the others started setting up tables and chairs and preparing tea. Looking at them, one would have to wonder if they were out here for a picnic.

Irene sighed before dawning on a serious atmosphere. Her crystal blue eyes seemed to shine with a mysterious light as she observed Simon.

"Un.. it's good that you stabilised the growth of mystical energy within your body after going through a big level up. Now that your body has adapted to that level of stats, it's time for you to acquire the next set of skills before you rank up".

"As I have mentioned before, to grow strong one must first build their foundation. A solid foundation is the key to grow stronger in the future. Someone who neglects that, and goes for fancy skills with high damage power to see immediate results will find themselves soon facing a wall that cannot breakthrough".

"In your case, you have focused more on key skills that build your strength gradually rather than any fancy attacking skills. This means that it will be much easier for you to breakthrough when the time comes".

Irene observed. It was as she had said, Simon was now level 473, which meant that it was only a matter of time before he reaches level 500 and goes through a rank-up.

Yes, a rank up means that Simon would finally be able to become a Demon Earl from a Demon viscount and step into the true nobility amongst the demons.

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It would also mean that he would finally be able to sense the true essence of the mystical energy and acquire those dreadful skills the Demon Earls had. Not only that, the rank up from a demon viscount to a demon earl meant that his body would be going through various qualitative changes.

For example, his bloodline. A Demon Earl's bloodline was much purer than a Demon viscount. So when he ranks up, the purity of his demon lineage will be on a whole other level and the effects it would have on his mind would also be on a whole other level.

A demon nobles rank is not only measured by the purity of their bloodline but also the capacity of mystical energy they can hold in their body, the amount of strength they can exert, their mind, skills and the comprehension of the mysteries of mana that they possess.

Everything goes through a qualitative change when a demon noble ranks up. Just by thinking about it, Simon was getting excited.

How long had it been since he ranked up last? If you count that it has been more than 1 year 2 months since he came to this world and take out the three months it took for him to rank up to a demon viscount from that, it has been more than 11 months since then.

11 months after becoming a demon viscount, Simon was about to step into a new rank soon. If any other demon nobles heard that they would be stunned beyond belief. Never has there ever been a precedence that a low ranking Demon baron with an inferior bloodline managed to rank up twice in less than a year.

Forget about it being possible or not, even if it was possible for a demon baron to become a demon earl they would at least need hundreds of years and an accumulation of incredible treasures, willpower and a miracle for something like that to even happen.

So Simon ranking up in less than 2 years is nothing short of impossible for others to believe or accept after all it broke all norms and common sense.

Well, all of it would only be true once he ranks up. Simon hadn't forgotten about the shackles that bound him and every other organism, the undeniable law of this world. The purity of one's bloodline.

One needed a pure and strong bloodline to climb the ladders in this world. Since Simon's bloodline was very impure due to being a demon born from mana and all, he had not the slightest chance of ranking up even if he reaches level 500.

However, that law would have applied to him if he didn't have his [main menu] with him. One of the options of the Main menu, [Character] allowed him to view his stats, skills and magic just like the status.

However, unlike the status system of this world, the [Character] option of his [main Menu] was much more advanced in that it had additional two functions, [Promote] and [Constellation].

[Constellation] was the function that provided more detail on his title, Demon of Pride. It showed him all the fragments of pride that he possessed in a Cygnus constellation pattern. The stars that were locked, represented the incomplete or missing fragments of pride and the star that was shining was the fragment that was currently in his possession.

However, what baffled him then and even now was that the status of this world showed him that there were only 5 fragments of pride whereas the [constellation] displayed six. Simon didn't know if it was some kind of bug or not and how to gather the fragments.

It was not like he didn't think about asking someone however, those demons that had the fragment, were the demon lords. He couldn't just go to their place and say 'Oh Hey!! Can you tell me how to gather the fragments?' now can he?

In the first place, possessing a Fragment of Sin made one exceptional amongst exceptional in the demon hierarchy. They were a special existence even above the Demon Archduke and were born with an extraordinary destiny.

From what he had seen in the Walpurgis, a person holding the fragment of sin was bound to become the demon lord carrying the glory and envy of all demonkind. It was further confirmed by Aldebaran when he sensed the fragment within him.

That is why Simon cannot ask anyone about this as that would be revealing one of his biggest secrets to someone else. If that someone harboured ill intent in their heart, they would try to kill him or snatch his fragment if that was possible.

Simon wasn't an idiot, he knew how having a treasure and not having the power to protect would lead someone to. It would only bring him unwanted troubles, greed and jealousy of everyone if he revealed that he possessed the fragment of pride.

That is why asking someone about that was a no go and also the reason why he had left the [Constellation] option alone.

The other function [Promote] was what gave Simon his confidence and power to rebel against the unwritten law of this world. [Promote] allowed him to achieve the same effects as the rank up of sorts of this world.

In the game, this option was meant to break the cap limit of the players allowing them to reach new heights. Essentially, the function allowed Simon to ignore the rules of this world and rank up and break through his limiters, something that would be unthinkable for others.

And it was not like he was just making an assumption, he had actually tried the function and ranked up to become a demon viscount. Since that was the case, Simon wasn't worried that he would be shackled by the limiters placed on him by the world.

Seeing Simon's eagerness, Irene nodded her head and said—

"You have already acquired the [Mana lines] and are now able to channel your mana throughout your body in an organised and orderly manner. The other skill [Minimal Mana Consumption] allows you to cast magic or skills with less amount mana without affecting its firepower, cast or effectiveness. This way, not only are you cutting down on your mana expenditure, but you are also reducing the strain on your mana pool".

"For warriors with limited MP, this skill can turn the tides of a battle. Now that you have acquired both the skill you cast magic and skills more efficiently and with less amount of mana than what it would take others to cast the same".

"These are your building blocks for growth, thanks to you acquiring them earlier, when you rank up, they will also advance with you. Now, the next set skill that you need to master before you reach level 500 is [Mana Flow]".

Irene spoke adopting the disposition of a teacher. This made all those who were present not goof and listen intently to her. Given that how Alice and Cecilia had stopped talking altogether and were looking at Irene, Simon could say that it was working.

"[Mana Flow] is a skill that allows to you control things and objects without touching them physically. The principle behind this skill is to emit your mana out from your body and control it like how you do with your arms and legs. Think of it an extension of your body... like this"...

Saying that, Irene extended her hand and with the gesture of her index finger, a stone immediately flew towards her. The stone was not being touched physically nor was there any trick behind this, it was the simple application of [Mana Flow].

"You must have seen this kind of skill being used during your adventures. In fact, you have also learned a technique that kind of achieves a similar effect".

When Irene said that Simon recalled those high levelled adventurers he met near the flatlands of the Aqualin city. Even without touching physically, they were able to recall their swords and dagger back into their hands.

Also, a few days ago when he was fighting the ogres, he saw how they were capable of transferring mana into their weapons without even touching them. They have to be using a similar skill.

On that note, Irene was right he did indeed have a technique that sort of achieved the same effect. The technique he was talking about was none other the "[Dominators Control]...". A legacy technique passed onto him by Irene.

The [Dominators Control] technique could also control things and objects from a distance. But it used runes instead of Mana and its effect wasn't only limited to inanimate objects.

"Right, I derived this technique from the [Mana Flow] skill. It can be said that the technique is the advanced application of the [Mana Flow]. For you who have learned the [Dominators Control] technique and understand some of its fundamentals, it would be much easier for you to learn the [Mana Flow] skill".

Irene explained, no matter how much the technique has deviated over the years, it was still derived from the [Man flow] skill thus Simon who had learned this technique, should be able to learn the [mana flow] skill relatively easily.

Just like how he had acquired [mana lines] using his [Ancestral symbol Ignition] he could achieve the same using the [Dominator's Control].

Simon nodded his head called out his [A] tier crimson blade and used the technique to move it around. He then closed his eyes and tried to understand it on a deeper level. [Mana Flow] is all about emitting mana out of your body and controlling it just like your own limb.

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Simon had seen people doing it, the [mana aura] of the ogres and the [mana wings] that the Valkyries used were all an application of emitting your mana out of your body. It was just that those people who were able to do it were all above level 500.

Emitting mana out of one body was totally different than casting magic. The former released non-attribute mana while the latter changed the attribute of the mana into that particular element. Changing the attribute of mana to emit it out was just casting magic, it had nothing to do with mana flow.

What Simon wanted to do was not to emit magic but to release mana from his body without consciously trying to give it any element. It was difficult for Simon because he was used to converting mana into different elements to cast his magic.

He had been doing this from the moment he had learned how to use magic... so it was a tall order from him to suddenly release mana without giving it any elemental form subconsciously.

"Ugh..." Simon extended his hand and tried to pick up a stone from the ground by emitting his mana out.

Fwoosh... the stone trembled and was lifted above the ground; however, it was not an application of [Mana Flow] but simple casting of wind magic.

'Damn..' Simon furrowed his brows and started repeating the exercise again and again. The stone would move every time but it was never because of the mana as it was because of the wind element, fire element or the electro element.

Looking at Simon diligently training from the spot the Valkyries had set up, Irene nodded her head. She took a sip from the tea cup that Annette had poured her.

"How is all your training going? I know that you guys all have high levels and plenty of Lost Ancient and higher tier skills. Nevertheless, you guys severely lack experience. You might be able to suppress your enemies with just brute strength for now".

"However, there would arrive a time when your master would have to face strong enemies and it isn't a distant future that I'm talking about. At that time, you won't have the option to go easy on your opponent neither would you have the time to master all of your powerful skills" .

Irene commented glancing in the direction of the valkyries. Even though they were summoned with a part of their strength sealed, all of them were nonetheless still level 699. It was a level enough for the people of this world to consider them a true powerhouse.

"Miss Irene is right... that is why we are focusing on learning the skills that master had bestowed us. We do not want to commit the mistake from the past once again. Thanks to Miss Irene and Master pointing it out, we now know in which areas we have to make progress on to help master in the future" Annette said stressing each word with determination.

Seeing the fire of resolve in the Valkyries eyes Irene did not speak any further and directed her attention back on Simon. The Valkyries did not stay for long, they all teleported to the training floor after seeing their master training diligently, he had involuntarily lit a fire within them.

Out of the twelve heroes, the maids were given the moniker of Valkyries because they were designed and their characters set to be like the valiant warriors in the battlefield. So even if they wore maid dresses underneath their armours, one shouldn't mistake them for delicate flowers.

After the maid teleported to the training grounds and Cecilia went to her village because she was bored, it was only Simon and Irene left in the tranquil pond-side.

How many times have he failed by now? Hundreds or even more.. nonetheless Simon kept on trying to get the hang of emitting his man out. For an untalented person like him, he would have to try it thousands of times or even more before he could start getting a hang of it.

Irene saw Simon struggling and failing numerous times but never once giving up. His dogged perseverance was something even she admired. This was the quality that she liked about him, he never gave up and persistently hanged on until he succeeded.

Perhaps to others, this kind of struggling might look pathetic and just a waste of effort from their standpoint. But in Irene's eyes this feature of him was what made him shine the brightest.

Simon had never received a proper guidance, the magic that he mastered and used today was self-taught and had years of experimentation and efforts put into it. If he had a proper training and given the fact that he was from the demon noble race, one of the few races in Althea known for their strong affinity with mystical energy, his power today would be strong beyond belief today.

"Dammit... it failed again".

Simon cursed. The mana he tried to emit out once again took an elemental form. It was not like he was deliberately attributing an element to his mana, it was a subconscious action whenever he released his mana.

Irene knew what kind of difficulty Simon was going through, people who usually emit their mana from their body in the form of [Mana armour] or [Mana Wings], usually do so after reaching level 500 and turning the mana into a liquid state.

It was much more easier to control liquid mana than the gaseous mana used by those below level 500. Since that was the case, it was no wonder that Simon was struggling to emit his mana out of his body.

His next hurdle will be when he successfully manages to emit non-attributed mana. He then has to learn how to control it outside of his body which needed acute control and extreme concentration.

All along he has been using the [Mana lines] to control the flow of the mana inside his body. Now that there was no such things as pre-laid out paths outside, he would have to control every strands of mana himself or else it would just end up dissipating with the air.

So why was Irene asking him to do something which might come naturally to him once he reaches level 500 and learns to liquidise his mana?

The answer was because she wanted him to master controlling mana when it was in its most difficult to control state. That way, when he reaches level 500 in the future and the state of his mana starts turning into liquid, he would have a much easier time and a higher level of control at that time.

Not only that, but it would also make mastery over other mana emitting techniques such as [mana Armour] and [Mana Wings] much easier. The [Mana Armour] he would be able to create around his body will not only be sturdier but it will also be faster to evoke.

One cannot stretch on how important of a factor time was in a battle. Those who knew how to take advantage of that factor, can change the course of a battle in a matter of a second.

In the future Simon would find many such opponents capable of doing that thus Irene was already beating it into him from early so that he can face them without suffering a disadvantage. What she was hoping right now was for Simon to build himself a solid foundation that would become his building blocks for growth.

Irene silently sat there observing Simon's progress, she never got impatient no matter how many time he failed nor did she tear away her eyes from him.

Time flowed by quickly and more than half a day had already passed yet Simon was at it without stopping for a rest or break. His sheer perseverance and doggedness to succeed was blazing in his eyes like a flame that refused to die even at the fiercest of breeze.

His determination was so palpable that no matter who looked at him, they would be able to feel the energy like the blazing warmth of a fire. Irene too was no exception to that, she was somewhat astonished and at the same time impressed. Thus she decided him to give a little advice.

"It is all fine and good to be stubborn when trying to achieve something. However one cannot be too headstrong and inflexible when handling mana. You cannot force it to bend your way and expect to get results. Take some time to rest, allow the mana within you to lead you and you will find out that it is not that difficult to emit mana without conferring any element to it".

Haaa..Haaa...

Simon who heard Irene's cold and tranquil voice, stopped exerting his mana. He took a deep breath, lowered his hand and did what Irene told him. He noticed that the mana inside his mana pool that had become turbulent at some point, finally settle down.

SIGH... Simon released a sigh and walked towards the place where the Valkyries had set up a table and chairs. Finding a chair to sit on, Simon reviewed what Irene had told him.

The Valkyries visited him in turns, although they themselves were training they didn't neglect their primary task and that was to take care of their master. It so happens that it was Emma's turn right now to serve him.

"M-M-Master.. Here's you tea" With a voice that was trembling, Emma poured Simon a cup of tea.

"Yeah.. thanks" Simon thanked and took a sip. There was nothing better than having a cup of tea or coffee after working so hard.

As he was enjoying his tea, he looked at Emma who was minding her head down and had an apologetic expression on her face. Although she usually appeared all timid and cry-baby, giving a fake impression of weakness to others. In actuality she was like the worst nightmare for the enemies in the battlefield.

Controlling and restraining her opponents with her invisible threads and robbing them of all freedom.

Chapter 525 525- Familiar Face

She was an expert manipulator who liked having control over everything on the battlefield. Her personality would be more accurately described by the word Machiavelli. Though that was the case, it did not mean the crybaby front she showed on the outside was phoney, it was just how she was, timid when not on the battlefield.

Now that Simon thought about it, Emma was a user of strings. She uses it to manipulate her enemies while the other times just as simple trap. There were many applications for strings but the one she uses her powers the most for was manipulation.

The way her strings behaved like an animate object which moves and follows around the target almost as if it has a mind of its own has to be due to a certain skill. When he asked her that, Simon found his answer.

Although not entirely correct, Emma was indeed emitting mana to control her strings but the reason why they behaved like animate objects was due to a certain number of skills used in conjunction.

Simon was enlightened, it appeared that taking a break when he was stuck really did end up opening a way.

"It looks like you found an answer" Irene commented looking at Simon's eyes that was shining with a bright crimson light.

Simon smiled, a wicked look on his face, as if he was up to something. He hurriedly drank his tea and got back to his training. However, unlike the last time when he tried to achieve emission and control of mana all at the same time.

This time he called forth his sword and tried to emit just his mana around it. The reason why he was failing again and again without any progress to be seen, was because of he was trying to do everything at once.

There was no shortcut to strength, this was something Simon had early on, it was a mistake from the start to think that he who only had succeeded in controlling his mana within his body after he learned [mana lines] would be able to achieve the same effect outside of his body where he had no support of said skill.

Not to mention emitting mana outside of his body was already proving to be a difficult task. He was trying to master the [Mana Flow] skill all at once instead of understanding its essence. No wonder he failed to make any progress.

What was he in such a hurry of? It was not like there was a time limit to learning this skill.

Now that Simon had sorted out his thoughts, he started his training with a new objective in mind. He would first learn the emission of non-attributed mana and to do that, he used the support of his sword, the only other extension object that was like an extension of him thanks to him mastering [sword Mastery] skill.

Every skill that he had learned up until now, was aiding him to acquire another skill and helping him grow altogether. This methodological way of training from Irene was extremely effective where every acquisition of skill was thoroughly planned and in range of his ability.

What kind of understanding and attainment in strength did one have to reach to guide someone else like this?

Simon had Goosebumps appearing all over his body. Excitement like never before welled up from within him. The heights he would be able to reach in the future, the height that Irene was currently gazing at the world from.

There was so much to look forward for. Simon was convinced, this woman was even more powerful than any of the other people he had met in his journey up until now. Yes, it even included Adalinda and that mysterious angel like figure Yela that he had seen in the [Historia] of the forbidden trails.

Simon discarded the unnecessary thoughts and focused back on the task at hand. Although he had divided the work, it was still hard to emit mana out of his body without having any attribute attached to it.

Time passed by, and after an hour of continuously failing, when he tried for the umpteenth time, suddenly the mana which behaved like a floodwater whenever he cast a magic, flowed like a gentle stream of water and for the first time, he managed to emit mana out of his body without attaching any attribute to it.

Although it was only once and after numerous tries, Simon finally managed to do it. Simon suppressed the excitement and tried the process once again before he forgot the hang of it. It was infrequent maybe one out of every hundred times; nevertheless, he now had a vague idea about how to emit his mana.

He wasn't worried about the probability right now since it will increase once he becomes more proficient in handling mana. But yes, he was finally able to do it.

Simon was excited about his success but this energy didn't last long and was dampened when he realised that taking the next step was a hundred times more difficult than the first.

Now that he was able to emit mana amidst although very infrequently, controlling it was a totally different challenge. Perhaps it could be said that in the [Mana Flow] skill, the application of emitting mana was the easiest part.

The tricky portion lay in controlling it.

'No, it's still very soon for me to worry about that when I can't even emit mana properly without trying dozens of times' Simon mused closing his eyes. He cannot rush these things, he needed to progress one step at a time.

Controlling mana outside of his body might perhaps become an incredible challenge. However, he who hasn't even reached that stage yet, doesn't have to worry about that right now. All he has to do at this moment was to put all of his attention and concentration on the task at hand.

After he learned how to emit mana, then he could worry about controlling it.

Irene who suddenly saw Simon's state of falter, frowned her shapely crescent brows. She was about to open her mouth and say something when she noticed that Simon gained control of his emotions once again.

It was surprising to her sometimes by how calm headed he behaved. She did not even need to step in to remind him of anything. Irene calmly watched from the sidelines as Simon slowly but surely mastered the emission of mana.

Seeing that the latter was making steady progress and didn't need her help, she left his side, leaving Simon to train in peace. In any case, now that the dungeon master was busy, there has to be someone to take care of things around. And who better to assume these responsibilities than the guardians of the dungeon?

Guardians were the second highest position in Laplace after the dungeon master, the authority and the degree of control they had over the dungeon was far higher than any other position. The dungeon Laplace had three Guardians currently, Irene, Cecilia and the Null elemental named Wisp.

The Wisp was busy controlling the [workshop] and building golems while Cecilia... the little girl was just too young to assume such responsibilities. The only one who was left to monitor and run his dungeon was Irene.

Although she left his side to run his dungeon, she would nonetheless, visit him and check on his progress every now and then.

Simon who now understood the importance of a break and how crucial it was to rest his mind, took a pause to refresh his mind whenever he felt he was stuck at a bottleneck. The Valkyries who were similarly affected by the environment around him trained diligently too.

They would visit him in turns and cater to his needs. Days passed by swiftly like that and before Simon knew it, a month had passed.

Whoosh... a sound of wind rusting could be heard amidst the dense mist around the pond and the figure of Simon appeared from within it after the mist around him was slashed in half.

Currently, he had his eyes closed, the crimson blazing flame sword was on his right hand which was emitting some slight buzzing noise. If one looked carefully at the edges of the blade, one would be able to notice some faint blue energy like an aura covering it.

The aura wasn't stationary and was flowing around the sword in a fixed path like an outer layer. The aura was very thick, and very inconspicuous if one did not pay enough attention to it, one would miss it entirely.

Nevertheless, it was this layering that made the sword even more dangerous. Usually, If Simon did not utilise his powerful strength stat, he would be unable to cut the mist formed by the rich mystical energy, as effortlessly as he did right now when it was covered by the layer of aura.

It not only made the edge of the blade sharper, but it had also extended its range increasing its lethality even more. Simon felt like the sword in his hand had suddenly gone through an increase in refinement with how powerful it felt right now.

Though in actuality, I was just that layering of pale blue aura around the blade doing its work. The layering of blue aura was none other mana which he was continuously channeling.

After a month of progress, Simon was able to emit mana outside of his body as effortlessly as he would when casting any magic. Not only that, even his control over the mana has shown some positive results over the month.

Chapter 526 526- Familiar Face (2)

Now not only was he able to control it somewhat, but he was also even able to give some basic direction as could be seen by the way his mana was flowing around the edge of his [A] tier sword.

Huff... Simon exhaled a deep breath of air and slowly opened his eyes, he extended his right hand which was holding the sword and he gently release his hold from it. According to common sense, the sword should drop on the ground with a clanging noise.

However, nothing as such happened and the sword even while not in his grasp was suspended in the air in front of him. It should be mentioned that Simon did not activate the [Dominator' Control] technique nor were there any runes on the sword or on his hand connecting him with it.

Simon was able to achieve what he was doing right now from the simple application of emitting his mana and controlling his sword through it. Even though he said control, he could just barely keep the sword suspended in the air even after a month of training.

If he tried to move the sword even a little or distance himself from it, his connection with the sword would break and it would fall to the ground. It was still a tall order for him to move things around given his current mastery of [Mana Flow].

It was because of this reason that Simon wasn't able to manifest it as his skill yet. It turned out that, he needed a much higher understanding and mastery over the skill to acquire. Nevertheless, Simon could distinctively feel that he was just on the verge of grasping something and if he kept at it, it wouldn't be too long before he manifested the skill.

The Crimson Sword suspended itself in front of Simon, every now and then his brows would twitch along with his extended hand following which the sword would tremble too. If one looked deeply at the sword and the outstretched hand of Simon, one would be able to notice that there was a thin line like a thread made of faint blue colour connecting Simon with the sword.

This faint blue thread that was also covering the sword in a layer, was none other than his mana which he was currently emitting out.

The shape of the thread would constantly distort, never able to stay in a fixed shape. But it was this thin thread that was currently able to make the sword stay afloat. With every twitch and turn of Simon, the quiver around the sword would increase.

This continued for a while, his hand gently moved and the sword which was unable to maintain its balance, wobbled before falling down on the ground with a clanging noise.

"Haaaa... it is far more difficult than I thought" Simon sighed a turbid breath of air. He was trying to see if he could move the sword but it seemed like his control of mana needs to be much more proficient to do something like that.

Although it sounded very easy, in actuality it wasn't that easy. The layering that was on the sword, was made of hundreds of tiny strand of mana that was being constantly channelled by him. That is to say, if he wanted to move, the sword, he would have to give a direction to these hundreds of stands of mana.

The level of concentration and attention needed to do that, could be imagined. In fact, Simon was only able to achieve what he was doing right only through the help of his [High Speed Thought Processing] Skill which sped his thought processing ability dozens of times.

"The [Dominator's Control] skill is much easier to use because of the many runes that make application of mana flow much easier" Simon muttered to himself. To learn the [Mana Flow and gain a deeper understanding of it, every single day for the past month, Simon had used the [Dominator' Control] skill for hours.

He kept on at it, thinking that he would be able to uncover some deeper secrets of this technique that was passed onto him. However, it appeared that he was much too naïve to think that he would be able to disassemble a legacy technique that was much harder than acquiring the [Mana Flow] skill itself.

Although he was unable to gain some profound understanding of this technique, he was at least able to tell that the runes that appeared when he activated the technique channelled his mana through an invisible route towards the sword using which he was able to control the sword as he wished without touching it physically.

Simon was unable to comprehend what the runes meant and how it all worked; however, he was at least able to understand that his mana was being channelled into that sword through those runes. They also worked like transmitters and receivers that transferred his commands and will back to the sword.

Apart from that, Simon could feel that the ruins had a much deeper secret to them other than just being a simple transmitter and receiver for a simple application of [Mana Flow].

Anyways, this train of thought brought Simon to where he was right now. Although he was now able to emit mana outside and have some control over it, it was still far from being the function of the transmitter and receiver he thought of establishing.

The mana that he could emit outside could follow a few simple commands and a base like the sword to work. If emitted his mana without a base it would just dissipate with the wind. From this, one could tell that Simon had much more way to go before he could lift a pebble as easily as Irene.

"It looks like I'm stuck at a bottleneck once again. Since that is the case, I better a take a break..." Simon picked up his sword and turned towards the table where a Valkyrie waiting for him.

Today it was Annette's turn to serve beside him, thus she stood by the side silently without trying to disturb him. When he came over, Annette passed him a towel and brought him towards the table that she set up and swiftly started preparing tea.

"How goes all of your training?" Simon initiated a small talk.

Although he was training, it did not mean that he was clueless about what was happening around his surroundings. With the way the Valkyries appeared in front of him with battle intent surging out of their bodies every single day, he could tell that they were doing their own training on the training floor.

He could sense from the way they conducted themselves, that they were improving every day.

"It's going very well, master has nothing to worry about. All of us sisters are working very hard so that we never make the same mistake as last time once again. Miss Irene is also helping us by giving us some directions and advice. We feel like we are improving every single day" Annette said, gently placing the teacup in front of him.

"That good..." Simon nodded his head. It appeared that the Valkyries were a little stuck up to that small mistake they had committed the last time.

It was not a bad thing since this mistake had become their motivation to improve so Simon did not say anything. On that note, the Bloodthorn demonic warhorse who loved training was also with them.

Simon discussed a few more topics with Annette as he enjoyed his tea when suddenly he felt a figure rush towards him from the distance. When the figure finally passed through the dense mist and appeared in front of them.

Simon noticed that it was none other than Coleus the leader of the [Helpers]. The latter wore a complicated look and approached him as fast as possible. Seeing that, Simon could tell that there was some trouble and narrowed his eyes.

"My lord" Coleus got on his knees and greeted his lord first. Only after seeing the latter nod in acknowledgement did he progress to give the report he came here to give.

"My lord... there seems to be a situation and we do not know how to proceed" Coleus reported.

Simon bunched his brows, he asked "What Situation?".

"There seem to be some adventurers who claim that they know you. They are going around the dungeon collecting every piece of information that they could find about the master of this dungeon. They are even going around shouting your name on every floor".

When Coleus spoke until here, he glanced at his lord who seemed to be deep in thought.

There weren't many people that knew his name, heck even the adventurers living in the tower town do not know the name of the demon that controlled the dungeon and dived regularly.

Simon was a cautious person, other than a few individuals he interacted with, he did not reveal his name to anyone, especially any adventurers. So when Coleus said they were shouting his name, Simon was quite surprised.

He tapped the table with his finger a couple of times before asking "How do they look like? Do you know what they are saying?".

Coleus dutifully nodded his head "They are a group of eight elite people, their leader seemed to be a woman. Unlike the other adventurers, the fighting style of this group is a little different in that it looks organised like an army".

"Even the way they dispose of the monsters is different. The other adventurers would harvest the materials from the monster they defeated. However, this group doesn't seem to be interested in that and is only trying to clear the floor. The words that they are shouting are targeted towards my lord, asking you to come out".

Chapter 527 527- Familiar Face (3)

"Hoh? A party made up of people other than adventurers are shouting my name huh. Do you know which floor they are on?" Simon asked with a little interest in his tone.

"About that... my lord, they are currently on floor twenty-five and have accidentally entered the hidden chambers"...

Floor twenty-five, it was a land filled with ant hills. Giant Beetle Ants as big as an elephant roamed this place. They are around levels 150-180 and live in colonies. Floor twenty-five contained eleven colonies of around 2000-3000 ants in each colony.

Usually, these monsters resided inside their hill and only came out occasionally.. however that is only if no adventurers disturbed them by entering their hill.

The veteran adventurer's party who have dived inside this dungeon and gone through this floor have many a time cautioned the other adventurers and the adventurer association to be careful around this floor since the number of the monster here was simply too much for even a guild to handle on their own, much less a small adventurers party.

The instructions that they passed down were to kill any beetle ant that they meet as soon as possible and get away from that place before its cry for help attracts the other towards it.

They especially cautioned about the queen residing within every hill... if any unfortunate adventurer party was to meet it, their only hope in surviving was to pray that it was in its egg laying phase. During that time it was weak and unable to move around much.

However, even then the elite adventurers have cautioned the others not to kill a queen since it only makes the entire beetle ant colony crazy. They will not stop until they kill the adventurers that killed their queen.

Sensing the frightfulness of the floor, the adventurer's association have put up many notices on its quest board trying to inform and spread awareness among the adventurers. They even went to great lengths as to appoint a strong guild to chart out the map of the various ant hills.

Since the stairs that led to the next floor was located in the middle of the floor, one had to pass through the ant hills to reach there. Thus a map became essentially crucial in the off possibility that they fell into one of the ant hills.

If they had the map with them, it became easier to manoeuvre out of the meandering tunnels. The map became one of the crucial life support items that an adventurer group must have if they were thinking about tackling the twenty fifth floor.

This was a common knowledge amongst the adventurers; however, there seemed to be a new rumour or news per se spreading amongst them about a mysterious chamber that was found around the middle of the floor where the stairs to the next floor was located.

It was rumoured that these mysterious chambers were full of valuable treasures and laced with traps and dangers. According to some adventurers group that have encountered the mysterious chamber and was lucky enough to survive the encounter, a strong monster guarded this place.

The chamber was a little tricky to find and up until now only a few groups of strong adventurers have managed to discover them. But the thing common among them was that all of them found the chamber accidentally while searching for the stairs that led to the next floor.

"No matter how I look at it, this place seems to be that mysterious chamber those adventurers from the association were talking about".

A woman spoke unfolding a map in front of the group. She was donned in a light leather garb and a brown robe on top. There were five people beside her with similar apparel and looking at the map intensely.

While the six of them wore a frown of consternation on their face, two people walked out from inside the tunnel. When the group saw the two people come out, they immediately turned towards them and asked "Captain did you find the stairs?".

The two people that walked out, were women. One of them was holding a staff and donning a garb just like the six people in front of her. The woman beside her who was referred to as captain, was a familiar face that Simon would instantly recognise.

She had a temptational figure, a cold stern face and the demeanour of a warrior. She had the poise of an unsheathed sword and an intense aura radiated out of her. Her short black fell on her shoulders revealing her pearly white neck, she donned a simple leather armour much like the people around her; nevertheless, the clothes weren't able to hide her alluring curves.

The woman was a head-turner through and through. If Simon was here, he would immediately recognise the woman as the Guard Captain Alvara he had met back when he was masquerading as an adventurer.

Alvara who was asked that question by her subordinates shook her head. They were searching for the stairs that led to the floor downstairs; however, while they making their way to the middle of the floor, they were suddenly spotted by the Giant Beetle Ants, after that it was just like a never ending battle with ants pouring out of the ant hill in hot pursuit of them.

Fortunately for them, they were able to escape out of that chase but during that, they found themselves accidentally deviating from the path on the map and inside this meandering tunnel full of traps and dangers.

From what they heard from the talks of the adventurer in the tower town, they could somewhat tell that the place they were in was that mysterious chamber that was the hot topic in the town. Unfortunately for them, the chamber was something that was discovered in the recent days and nobody had a map of it.

"The outside is oozing with the Giant Beetle Ants, it isn't a good idea to go out. We can only proceed forward through the tunnel and hope that it would lead us towards the stairs" Alvara stated pointing at the map.

"Ungh... it's all because of you, muscle head. If not for you attacking their queen, they wouldn't have become insane like that" the woman with the staff pursed her lips and viciously cursed at the burly man amongst the group.

"Hey I'm not an adventurer, how will I know that monster was their queen?" The burly man defended himself.

"Are you kidding me... didn't you see the size of that thing? In what world did it look like an ordinary beetle ant to you?"

The woman flared even more. She was the sole magician of this group and also someone who possessed quite a high authority in their group.

In front of such a furious assault, the burly man could only scratch his head, she was not wrong, it was indeed his fault to attack the queen first. But who would have known that the abnormally big ant he thought was just an ordinary beetle ant would turn out to be their queen.

Although the queen radiated a strong aura she was surprisingly weak for some reason. However, before she died to their group she issued out an ear piercing scream that made all the beetle ants in that colony go crazy and hunt them until the ends of the floor.

"You two stop bickering, if you have the time to fight among each other then use it to find a solution" Alvara harshly intervened.

"Hehh, I have a plan. Why don't we leave this muscle head as their dinner while we use this chance to get out of here" Everybody could only laugh dryly at those words from the woman mage.

The burly man felt his feet go cold and his back drench with sweat when he heard that.

Alvara sighed, shook her head and turned to face the interior of the tunnel. If they wanted to proceed forward, their only choice was to go through this meandering tunnel which for some reason was avoided by the ants.

'Sigh... Princess, I don't know what you see in him for you to go to such lengths but since it is your order, I will see to its completion no matter what' Alvara mused in her heart. She clapped her hands stopping the conflict between the two and declared with a cold voice that told others that she wouldn't take any more of this fooling around attitude.

"Alright you all, we had enough rest, Let's proceed forward and see what lies ahead" she declared.

The group nodded their head and cautiously advanced forward. There was an experienced person with a [Hunter] class with them, thus it was not too troublesome for them to disarm and avoid the many traps that lay in wait for them.

The group of eight continued forward like this for a while, from how synergically they worked together with each other and from their strength, it could be seen that it was not their first time working together.

Each of them knew what their role was and they worked together in a good overall team balance. It could be said that the traps on this tunnel were nothing for this group of people. However, they still proceeded with caution indicating that they were quite experienced too.

Of course, while they proceeded forward they did not forget to call out the name of the person they came all the way here to search for.

"Captain, isn't it time that you tell us who this person is?" the woman with the staff asked.

The question that she asked was on everyone's mind, they too wanted to know who this person they came all the way here from the capital to search for was.

"You will find out once you see him. For now just keep on proceeding" Alvara spoke sternly.

Chapter 528 528- Savage War Lion

She did not disclose the identity of the individual they were searching for because they were here on a secret mission. It was not because she didn't trust them. Every member here belonged to the same faction and was someone that could be trusted.

In any case, even if she told them, they would either not believe her or would be too afraid to dive inside the dungeon. Simon's infamy when he left the capital was earth-shaking, his achievements and the mark of battle that he left behind was still there.

Those who had witnessed the battle that day spread the news everywhere and by now everything was so exaggerated that some facts were no longer the truth. Everybody feared that mysterious demon that had turned their capital upside down.

If this group knew that the one they were searching for was precisely that demon noble, their faces would be a sight to see. This would only just cause unwanted fear and distress in their group. Knowing that, Alvara had no other choice but to keep it a secret from them for a while.

Though it was not like all of them were unaware of the identity of the person they were searching for. Alvara's eyes shifted towards the assassin with the [Hunter] class leading the group.

Everybody made a dissatisfied voice when they heard the guard captain's words; nevertheless, they weren't among those people who couldn't take a clue, they swiftly understood that there was a big reason for keeping the identity of the individual a secret.

However, the more Alvara hid it from them, the more curious they became. The thing that bugged them was that even though the mission was a secret one, the identity of the individual was so tightly kept that even they, the members involved in this search, did not have a clue.

From the start of the dungeon descent seven days ago, they have been repeatedly shouting his name on every floor as they descended. But even until now they haven't even the slightest clue or indication as to which floor the individual was on or whether he was alive or not.

"Hey who do you think this person we are searching for is?" the woman with the staff asked in a hushed voice.

The burly man beside her locked his brows before saying "I don't know but given the secrecy of this mission, I would say he has quite a high identity".

"Tsk... even I know that. For the guard captain who is tasked with the safety of the princess to act personally, that person's identity was anything but simple" the woman curled her lips and mused "I was asking because I think that there might be a special relationship between the two... hehe".

She didn't know who this Simon was but at the very least she could tell that it was a male from that name.

"Shhh... are you trying to get us in trouble? You know what will happen if you utter such blasphemy right?".

The burly man hurriedly put his finger on his lips and gestured for the woman to be quiet. Drops of perspiration trickled down his face and he only sighed in relief when he saw that the guard captain didn't hear them.

"Hmph... you are too timid for big fellow aren't you Burg"...

Burg's mouth twitched when he heard those words from Marba. This girl was too fearless and didn't know when to shut her mouth.

"Hmm... I wonder if this man is as talented as that guy who is trying to court the princess" Marba played with her staff and mumbled.

"Are you talking about Lucas Blackwood from Castelia City?" Burg asked a little interested in whatever hypothesis this woman was cooking up in her head.

Marba nodded her head... "The very same one". Right after saying that she looked in front of her, the guard captain was still busy minding her own business and leading the group.

"It is said that Lucas Blackwood was officially accepted as the branch manager of the Adventurer Association in Castelia city. Not only that, his achievements in this past year was extremely shocking with him raiding quite a few dungeons and bringing back lots of treasures".

"His charisma along with his talent was extremely shocking and it even stood out during the battle of the finest. He is good friends with the second and third princes and a little birdie told me that the second prince is trying to put forward the proposal of betrothing princess Cynthia to Lucas".

"What?!!!" Burg couldn't help but yell out. His sudden voice attracted everyone's attention and they turned their head to face him.

"Ahaha... it's nothing, I just accidentally stumbled" Burg hurriedly shook his head apologising for his sudden rise of voice.

"You big fellow why are you yelling out for?" Marba cursed and swung her staff at the burly man.

"How do you expect me to react when you drop a bombshell like that? the Second prince is trying to betroth princess to that Lucas.. are you sure about that? For some reason, it doesn't feel right. Miss Cynthia is the princess of this kingdom while Lucas comes from only a marquis family. Even if he became the branch manager of the adventurer's association, the disparity in status between them is too large".

Burg rubbed his chin and remarked.

"Humph... you are only saying that because you don't know anything. King Henry's health is deteriorating very fast, and even the best doctor in our capital is unable to heal him. It is only a matter of time before he..."

"Anyways, when that time comes there would be a fierce power struggle as to who would inherit the throne. The faction of the first and second princes is locked in a fierce struggle while the third prince is only obsessed with martial prowess".

"In a situation like this what would happen if one side suddenly gains new allies? It is rumoured that there are two dukes backing Lucas Blackwood. Because of this, the second prince is trying to deepen his relationship with Lucas so that he could gain their support when the time comes and rope the two dukes into his faction. "

Marba spat out and proudly puffed her chest.

So that's how it was, it was only now that Burg understood the full picture that was going on at the royal palace back in the capital. No wonder he was trying to betroth the princess who Lucas fancied to him.

Like this not only would he gain a loyal ally but will also gain the support of the two neutral dukes, Montford and Redcrest which will give him an edge over the first prince.

"Uggh" Burg felt a headache coming thinking over the complicated schemes of the higher ups of their kingdom. It wasn't impossible to imagine the changes that were bound to come once the current king steps down.

While he was thinking all that, the assassin that was leading them through the tunnel, suddenly raise his hand. Seeing that, everybody in the group halted their steps, their eyes followed the direction his finger was pointing and they soon noticed a light coming from the end of the tunnel.

As the group cautiously proceeded forward, they noticed that where the tunnel ends, an enormous space opened up beyond which stood two huge doors made of stones.

"This is?!" Burg muttered stepping out of the tunnel. The stone doors in front of them were more than ten meters big and have a drawing of a fierce beast carved on them.

"This must be the mysterious chamber those people were talking about" Alvara studied the stone doors and muttered. There was no doubt in their minds now, they really had stumbled upon the place that was the hot topic amongst the adventurers.

"What do we do now, guard captain" the assassin leading the front turned to face Alvara.

Alvara folded her hands and contemplated for a while, it had been more than a week since they dived inside the dungeon. They have been calling his name for a while yet the person did not show up.

Alvara when she first came to the tower town did some investigation and found out that the deepest floor that had been explored was the 38th floor. After a week of progress, they were currently on the 25th floor... their group was far from reaching the deepest floors of this dungeon.

Considering that they were even capable of reaching the deepest floors, it would end up taking a marginal amount of time. Alvara couldn't spare any more time than she already had diving inside the dungeon.

She was the guard captain tasked with the safety of the princess after all, and cannot leave her side for too long. Some people in the royal palace might even begin to suspect something if she was away for too long, thus Alvara had to finish her mission fast.

Well, even if she put it like that, It sounded easier said than done. She had no idea how to make that person show up plus there was also a concern that he won't show up at all.

After all, he had not received the best of hospitality from them when he arrived at the capital. They might even hold a grudge against them.

On the other hand, Alvara couldn't just leave without completing her mission. So what can she do so that can make that person appear in front of her? While she was thinking that in her mind, the enormous stone doors coincidentally appeared in front of her eyes.

Suddenly an idea flashed in her mind and her eyes became resolute. To make that person show up, they must first gather his attention and what better way to do it other than by clearing this mysterious chamber?

Chapter 529 529- Savage War Lion (2)

'If he is the dungeon master of this dungeon, he is sure to notice it' Alvara thought internally. Even if this tactic failed, they can just go to the next floor and call out his name. If he doesn't appear even after that, she can just give it up.

Now that she had made up her mind, she unsheathed her sword strapped on her back and gestured to her teammates to get ready. After that, the assassin in the front gently placed his hand on the wall and pushed it.

At that moment, the underground space started trembling with the movement of the stone doors. The stone doors slowly pushed open revealing a dark chamber beyond.

GULP... needless to say, all of them were elite soldiers, knights and mage. Even without the need for any words, they could feel the tension in the air and the heavy pressure from the inside of the chamber.

Clearly, there was something inside that was releasing such a pressure. From what they deciphered from the contents of the discussion they had with the adventurers above ground, every chamber had a guardian monster inside.

It was said that they were incredibly strong, far stronger than the monster on this floor. And from the weird chill, they felt the moment the stone door opened and the dark chamber came into view, those words were proven true.

"Alright, we are going to enter this chamber and challenge the monster that is inside. I know you guys don't need me to remind it but stay on your toes and watch out for any tricks or traps that are hidden inside".

Alvara reminded curtly. She took her position as the frontline and stepped forward, followed by the warriors and knights like Burg by the side, Marbe the mage in the middle and that assassin as the rear-guard.

The moment all of them stepped inside the chamber, the stone door behind closed shut with a slam cutting off their path of retreat.

Whoosh... as if willed by an invisible intent, the stone chamber was lit up by the numerous troches that were hanging on the side walls. The stone chamber was a huge round hall made entirely of greyish stone.

The ceiling was dark and quite high. At the centre of the hall was a giant treasure chest that looked quite exquisite to look at. If it was any other adventurer, they would have immediately gone insane with greed and stepped forward towards the chest.

However, Alvara's group was different in that their profession wasn't an adventurer. Though that might be the case, the main reason they did not step forward to open that chest was because of the numerous corpses and skeletons that were on the floor slowly being absorbed by the ground.

It appeared that another party had entered this chamber before them. However, they were unlucky enough to not survive the encounter. What's more, the thing that did this to them was still inside the chamber.

A weird chill palpable enough to be felt with one's skin was in the air. Weapons were drawn and the tension was high. However, even after the group observed every corner of the hall, they couldn't see the monster that was supposedly guarding the chamber.

"What is going on? Shouldn't there be a monster guarding the chest according to those adventurers?" Burg remarked; nonetheless, he didn't relax his guard and tightly held his shield.

The group slowly walked forward and approached the treasure chest, just when they were a meter away from it, two pairs of dark brown eyes that were filled with brutality and insanity, opened up in the ceiling.

Feeling this gaze, the group instantly halted their steps and looked at the ceiling. More precisely at the glowing beast-like eyes that was dripping with murderous intent.

Although the ceiling was dark, it was still not too difficult for them to spot a vague black figure sticking to the walls.

BAM... the beast let go and dropped on the floor a few meters away from the treasure chest. It then crouched on the ground, flashed its big claws and fangs that still had blood from its previous prey on them and released a deep low growl.

The way claws were coming out of its paws and its outstretched legs made it seem like it would pounce on them at any moment.

Under that threat, Alvara's group slowly raised their weapons and circulated mana within their bodies ready to engage at any second.

The beast in front of them was more than six meters, it had a body of a lion and the tail of a snake. The snake's tail was quite thick and covered with scales. At the end of the tail, was a snake head that had its eyes closed, and its slithery tongue hissed at them.

The guardian of the hidden chamber on floor 25th had finally shown its appearance in front of them.

"A Savage War Lion..." the assassin in the rear guard quickly identified the race of the monster in front of them.

"W-What's a Savage War Lion? Are they strong?" Burg asked readying his shield.

"What do you think? It's a species that can only be encountered deep inside the northern regions of the ghastly winding forest. According to the adventurer's association, they are one of the top predator races there and are known for their superior hunting senses" the assassin replied.

"It's level 377... all of you don't let your guard down. Burg, Lez, Rifa... I leave you all to distract it. Marba, start conjuring your strongest spell. Brett.. you and I will pincer it. Do not allow it to get to Marba" Alvara threw commands one after the other.

The group readied themselves and Marba who was the only mage capable of casting intermediate-tier lightning magic, swiftly started casting her spells. The mana inside the hall started fluctuating and the tension in the air that was stretched taut finally snapped.

The Savage War Lion being one of the top predator monsters in the northern region, quickly identified the threat that was Marba and roared. Using its powerful legs, it jumped over the three front liners and rushed towards Marba who was in a defenceless state.

"Stop him!!" Alvara hurriedly shouted.

"You aren't going anywhere!!... [Raid Guardian's Beat]" Burg slapped his sword on his shield and produced an unpleasant noise that forced the beast to shift its attention to him.

The skill that he used was one of the Normal Superior skills of the warrior class. The other two warriors lez and Lefa distanced themselves and used the [Raid Guardian's Beat] turn by turn so as to keep its attention on them and buy Marba time.

However, just like how every skill had its duration, after it ended, the savage war lion quickly snapped out of that inducement. But those few seconds were enough time for the group to encircle the beast and cut off its every path.

"[Greater Shield Defence]" when they saw the beast raising its front paws in a swiping motion towards them, they used one of their defensive skill to firmly stand on their ground.

Seeing that the warriors were capable of tanking the monster, Marba closed her eyes and pulled all her attention into completing the magic. As mana around the surrounding was set into a turbulence and the magic slowly took shape, a ferocious light flashed on the beast-like eyes of the savage war lion.

It raised its head high and growled towards the ceiling.

[ROAAARRR] a deafening roar that was like a blast of compressed sound blasted towards the ceiling and pushed all of the humans back. Alvara who was rushing towards the beast to deal it a blow hurriedly backed off and looked at its action in alarm.

She felt unease the moment the beast roared for some reason and that worry of hers was spot on.

CRICK... CRACK...

"Everyone look above" Alvara hurriedly called out with a pale face. Her comrades who followed her voice and looked above similarly had pale white faces the moment they looked up.

At this moment large debris that was more than five times the size of a man, was dropping down from the ceiling in droves. The roar earlier from the beast damaged the ceiling and caused the many rocks there to crack apart and fall.

"[Greater Shield Defence]..."

"[Air Blast]..."

The warriors and the others each used their own skill to withstand the rain of debris.

BOOM... BOOMM... one could imagine the force they brought when dropping from that height. The ground trembled and dust filled the air.

"Dammit..." Alvara cursed, she used her mastery in Gale magic to swiftly blow away the dust only to find that the beast was gone.

BAD!!

A bad premonition struck her and when she turned her head it was proven right. The Savage war lion using the debris and the dust as a distraction made its way towards the mage that represented the highest level of danger as per its hunter instinct.

"Dammit" Alvara cursed under her breath, she used a skill called [Gale Speed] to wrap the wind around her and sped towards the beast in an attempt to stop it from reaching Marba.

The mage right now was completely defenceless and didn't have the time nor the ability to dodge the ferocious claws of the beast in time.

"Leave it to me" a voice sounded out and the shadow below the beast fluctuated before the assassin came out from it. His dagger danced and he dished out multiple attacks on the underbelly of the beast.

PSHHH...

[Shadow Slash], a deep gash from which blood sprayed out wildly, opened in the underbelly of the beast stopping its attack. Using this chance, the rest of the group joined with Marba and encircled the beast once again.

"Don't give it the chance to heal, keep mounting the pressure" the assassin named Brett spoke. Clearly, he was the most experienced one here.

Chapter 530 530- Showing Up

The group did as he was told and engaged the beast with all their skills.

"Something's not right" Alvara who had used her [Gale Speed] to open numerous wounds on its body muttered after seeing that the wounds on the body of the beast, weren't closing.

Typically a monster of this level already had multiple regeneration skills or recovery skills that made them somewhat tenacious and hard to kill. Most of the monsters that had encountered after the 20th floor were all like that.

So when seeing the savage war lion which was a level 377 monster, not display any signs of healing from its wounds, it naturally caused some questions to appear in her mind.

Seconds after she muttered those words, the beast raised its head once again to growl. The group thought that it was using that tactic once again and hurriedly look up only to see that the ceiling was fine, no debris was falling down on them.

"Get back" before they could realise who issued those words and for what reason, a black figure came crashing down on them with an insane speed, blowing them away in the process.

The three warriors were blown away and crashed into the wall on the other side of the hall. Alvara and that assassin narrowly dodged that attack and looked at that thing with dread in their eyes, the black thing that blew the warriors away was none other than the tail of the savage war lion.

The tail of the beast was long and slithery like a snake and was covered with numerous black scales. At this moment, the eyes of the snake was fully open at this moment and releasing some strange light.

"Don't look into those eyes" Brett cautioned from the side. Alvara who was about to look into those snakes eyes hurriedly averted her eyes.

"The eyes of the snake head on the savage war lion holds a strong inducement effect that dampens your senses and slows down the circulation of mana inside your body". Alvara's eyes went wide when she heard what Brett said.

Those eyes of the snake head had this kind of mysterious effect. No wonder that burg and the other warriors were sent flying by it.

Warriors of their level had quite a high defence stats, they wouldn't be so easily blown away like that. That is if they weren't able to use their skill or feel the attack coming altogether.

The awakening of the snake head had made the situation a little dire, if they couldn't look how could they fight the beast? As this thought lingered in their minds, a voice that had kept silent all this while, sounded once again.

"This is for targeting me. You stinky beast... have a taste of my... [Lightning Magic Mastery]-[Lightning Blitz]".

An intense amount of blue lightning gathered into a spot forming a lightning bird that was more than three meters big. The lightning bird released a loud chirp as it was alive, the flap of its wings caused repeated thunderclap noises to echo around the empty hall.

The air around the bird was a little distorted and the mana around the surrounding was frantically fleeing away from the bird. All these indications were enough to tell everyone that the power within the lightning bird wasn't small.

Huff.. huff...

Marba took hurried breaths of air, her face had visibly paled from the exhaustion after conjuring the lightning bird. Nevertheless, the gleam in her eyes was brighter than ever.

"Captain, leave this stinky beast to my lightning magic" Marba pointed, willed by her intent, the lightning bird fixed its lightning eyes towards the savage war lion. Due to the lightning bird being an inanimate life, it wasn't affected by the eyes of the snake head.

RUMBLE... the lightning bird flapped its wings and quickly charged towards the savage war lion. The two beasts collided, and intense energy surged out from the point of collision and spread to the entire hall.

Alvara and her group were forced to step a few meters back and guard themselves against the random lightning bolts that were wracking havoc all around wildly.

The two beasts fiercely clashed against each other, the one that came out with a loss in that exchange was the savage war lion. Its entire body was scorched, numerous wounds dotted its body and lightning raced around its skin causing it to tremble continuously.

"Hehe..." Seeing that, Marba made a V sign towards her companions who gathered around her at his moment.

Burg and the warrior were a little worse from the wear after suffering that attack from the beast. The armour around their chest was bent inwardly and blood lingered around the corner of their lips. Nevertheless, all of it faded after they drank a potion or two.

"You three get back to your positions, Marba's magic wouldn't be able to hold it for long" Alvara commanded, it was just as she had said, after colliding with the Savage war lion a few more times and dealing some significant damage to it, the lightning bird started becoming faint before dissipating completely.

Fortunately for them, it bought them enough time to compose and heal themselves back. On the other hand, the wounds from back then and the newer wounds made the beast even weaker than before probably as a side effect of activating the snake its tail.

A new round with the savage war lion started, this time it was heavily dominated by Alvara's team. Burg and the other warriors who didn't get to shine last time, bombarded it with their skills, Alvara and the assassin anime Brett provided support from the sides with their fast and powerful attacks while Marba conjured some novice tier magic from the backlines.

Time passed by and finally, the savage war lion gave a deep growl before succumbing to the attack of Burg who plunged his sword into its chest.

BAM... the beast fell flat on the ground, its blood making a pool around it.

"Dammit... this is the payment for ruining my new armour" Burg cursed and pulled his sword back in an annoyed fashion. At last, when the beast was down, the group sighed a breath of relief.

They turned towards each other and smiled, they could each see the excitement from the battle still lingering in the other's eyes and a happiness that came from levelling up.

"No matter what one says, levelling is much more efficient and faster inside a dungeon" Marba commented with a delight after feeling the rise of power within her.

"Not to mention we also get to keep the monster that we hunted. I get it now why so many of my friends wanted to become an adventurer. If we keep on hunting bests like this won't we become rich very soon" Burg rubbed his head and laughed.

The others around him also showed various kinds of emotions. Seeing that her group was totally smitten by the scope and allure of the adventuring profession, Alvara did not know whether to laugh or cry.

It was true that in their world, the profession of adventurer was highly viewed, it even paid much more than what an average knight or a soldier of a kingdom earned. Nevertheless, it wasn't just all glitters and glory, it was filled with dangers at every turn where it wouldn't be shocking to lose your life the next second.

The life of an adventurer was filled with such dangers. Brett the assassin who was the most experienced in the group, being a former adventurer and all, started dissecting the monster and taking out its good parts.

When they dissected its chest, a muddy red stone that was as big as a baby's fist came into view.

"Hohh!!... it's a core stone. Who would have thought we would end up finding this treasure? The value of this thing is quite high and looking at its size, it holds quite a bit of energy inside" Brett analysed.

A core stone was like the heart of a beast where all of its powers and energy were stored. It could only be found inside a few sentient monsters and the higher the level of that monster, the better the quality of that stone.

A core stone of a beast of level 329 like the savage war lion would be of quite good quality and could be used into making some decent artefacts. All of them were aware of what a core stone was thus they didn't raise any questions.

The only one who asked any question was Burg who looked at the quail egg sized core stone in Brett's hand.

"Hey, do you think we would be able to get any inheritance from this stone?" he asked, his eyes shining with expectation.

PFFTTT...

Hearing these words of his, the rest of the group could hold themselves from laughing out loud. The loudest to laugh was Marba who had tears in her eyes from laughing so hard.

"Sigh... listen up brat, an inheritance is something that one can find just willy-nilly. It only forms inside a very strong beast probably calamity class or higher and even then one isn't guaranteed to receive its full inheritance" Brett who was the eldest and the most experienced out of the group explained.

Burg dejectedly dropped his shoulders, it was his first time diving and adventuring with a group like this thus when they finally found a core stone inside a beast, he couldn't help but get excited and dream of something unreasonable.

He thought that just like the Savannah Beast guild one of the top five guilds of the kingdom who were in command of a beast inheritance and passed it down from generation to generation, he had also chanced upon one.