

D. of Pride 531

Chapter 531 531- Showing Up (2)

However, from the words of the mister assassin, it didn't seem like it was easy getting a beast inheritance after all it wasn't guaranteed that the beast would form a beast inheritance even if it had a core stone.

Not to mention a beast of calamity class was an existence he could come in contact with and hope of surviving after that. After the beast was dissected, the group laid their attention on the big thing inside the hall, the treasure chest that it was guarding.

Looking at how exquisite the treasure chest looked and from its size, one could tell that it was filled with treasures. They had heard many stories from the adventurers telling them about the many rare items that could be found inside a treasure chest of a hidden chamber.

This was their first time coming in contact with one, they couldn't help but get excited over it. What kind of rare treasures would they find? Just thinking about it made their heart beat faster.

Just as they stepped forward towards the treasure chest, they heard a clear clapping noise come from one side of the hall.

CLAP... CLAP... CLAP...

"That was amazing, you guys clearly have a good synergy and coordination with one another. Only a few groups of your level could defeat a savage war lion". The voice was deep and hoarse one, something that was impossible for a human to make.

When they instinctively turned towards the direction of that voice, they were stunned to see a black figure slowly walking towards them from the darkness. Immediately, all the hairs on their body stood on end and they hurriedly brought out their weapons.

With the appearance of the figure, the entire hall had descended into an eerie silence. A weird chill circulated in the air and an invisible pressure grasped everybody's heart. That pressure wasn't something that was realised by that figure but simply something caused by his mere presence.

As the figure of that person slowly came out of the darkness, a suppression that was born out of their level difference metastasised. It started from their heart and slowly spread through their whole body.

Burg and the other two warriors who were in front involuntarily took a step back.

"A-A-A... D-Demon Noble" Marba's legs trembled, and her voice stuttered as she shouted out the race of the being that had just shown itself.

The words that she uttered echoed across the hall. Even without her pointing it out, everyone present in the hall recognised the being in front of them.

A demon noble was hardly seen in the extreme north-western region of the central continent that was closest to the demon continent. However, more than half a year ago there was an incident where the capital of their kingdom was invaded by a demon noble who had completely turned the place upside down.

After that, they had disappeared but their tales and stories were still being told by those who had witnessed the scene that day. Burg and the others who had arrived at the capital after the occurrence, of course, heard stories of what had happened at the capital and the perpetrator that was responsible for the destruction, a demon noble.

Now that they were seeing a demon noble with their own eyes, they were frozen stiff from the sheer presence and the looks of the being in front of them.

GULP... Burg who was one of the front liners of this group, gulped audibly and asked "What should we do now?".

The demon had appeared so close to them without even them realising it. Given the pressure they were feeling just by standing in front of him, they could tell even without fighting that they were no match for him.

Forget about a battle, they would be immediately eradicated if they made a wrong move. In fact, Burg was not far from the truth, given the average level of their party which was around level 360, they were capable of dealing with even a peak elite class beast.

However, this level of suppression that the demon gave off was even stronger than some of those super class beasts that resided deep within the ghastly winding forest.

"Do not falter, the one we are searching for is right in front of us" While the group was paralysed with fear from the appearance of the demon, Alvara stepped forward and spoke out.

Her words caused a great storm to brew inside the minds of these young fellows, who looked like they had received the shock of their life. The person named 'Simon' they were looking for all along, turned out to be a demon noble that they heard stories and tales about.

Even if this demon wasn't the one that destroyed their capital, just the fact that the other party was a demon noble, bred fear and anxiety in their hearts.

TAP... TAP... Alvara with her alluring figure, stood in front of Simon and observed him with her dark black eyes. She hadn't seen him for a while, but the air around him seemed to have changed completely.

Of course given the fact that she was used to seeing his human transformation and had only seen him in his true form once during the battle of the finest tournament also affected her judgement.

Those devilish features, crimson eyes that seemed like two blood red pools that could devour one's soul, and that wicked smile that was hanging at the corner of his face. No matter how many times Alvara observed it, she couldn't relate it to that human appearance she had seen while travelling with him back then.

Two people stood opposite each other, Simon due to being a member of the demon noble race, was more than a head taller than Alvara who was quite tall herself.

As she observed Simon, he too observed her. Since the last time he had met her, the figure of this woman seemed to have become more fiery. Now along with that sharp sword aura, she was also exuded a faint mature aura.

It was not only her looks, even her level had risen by quite a bit. She was now around level 394, a level sufficient enough for her to kill the brigand master in a few exchanges which she had risked her life back then to defeat.

"It looks like you have been doing well these days..." Alvara spoke in a voice that was unafraid of the being in front of her. It was not too subtle yet not too overbearing.

Simon who heard her words smiled and spoke in a tone that subtly pointed at something.

"Yeah, it's all thanks to you people, I'm getting by somehow".

How could Alvara who was a guard captain working at the royal palace, not get the cynicism hidden in those words?

Although she arched her brows slightly, she didn't say anything. She knew that the demon held quite a bit of prejudice against them after what had happened back at the capital and the ensuing pursuit and chaos that followed after.

"So why is the guard captain responsible for guarding the safety of the princess doing all the way here in the north-western borders and inside my dungeon shouting my name?" Simon swept his gaze over the people behind Alvara and spoke indifferently.

His character and temperament was nothing like the time when he was travelling with them, foolishly believing that a part of him was still a human. Now however, he had clearly drawn a line and accepted the being he was now.

Hearing the cold and detached tone in his voice, Alvara sighed. When the identity of the demon in front of her was revealed in front of thousands of people back then, she was also amongst the ones that was shocked and believed the claims that were made against him.

The third prince of their kingdom was attacked and a prince from a foreign kingdom was found dead in his mansion. Given that it was Sir Vouves who had personally done the investigation, there was little to say when it came to believing it or not.

However, after the capital was turned upside down in that calamitous battle, the royal palace did some investigation and found out that there were hints of a different demon being in their capital.

It was further proven true when Vouves declared the energy signatures of the two demons were completely different. The one that was found inside the manor where the prince of blackthorn was staying was different than the energy pattern of the demon who was present in the coliseum.

Some claimed that the two demons were working together, but the princess and Alvara who knew the whole picture knew that Simon was innocent. Nevertheless, they weren't influential enough to change the view of the masses.

Alvara sighed, even if the demon nobles were said to be their arch enemies it was all in the history. The demon noble in front of her helped them safely get through the capital, not to mention he had also saved her life. She couldn't bring herself to hate the demon no matter what.

While the two parties were talking amongst themselves, the people behind Alvara were freaking out from anxiety. Before coming here, they had crafted many theories about this mysterious person named 'Simon' that they were searching for.

Some thought that he was some adventurer, others thought that he was some countryside noble. Marba even went as far as thinking there was some illicit relationship between the man and the princess.

However, who would have expected that the man they had drawn so much expectation in their head, would turn out to be none of those options and a demon noble instead?

Chapter 532 532- Letter

"H-How does the captain know the demon?"...

"It was a mission ordered by the princess, doesn't that mean she is also acquainted with this demon?"

Unable to keep their curiosity in check, they started whispering to each other.

"If you guys don't want to die, then keep quiet. Where do you think you are in currently? This dungeon is the lair of that demon, if you displease him, not even your corpse would stay intact".

Seeing the young fellows forget the situation and start racketing, the assassin chided. Amongst the group except for Alvara, he was the only one who wasn't fazed by the appearance of the demon.

"T-This dungeon is his lair?" as expected, these fellows weren't aware of that and as soon as they heard that, their faces visibly paled and they shut their mouths.

Alvara who could hear them hullabaloo from her position, sighed internally and focused her gaze back on the demon who appeared much too relaxed even though he was outnumbered by them.

"I'm here on a secret mission on the orders of the princess, I believe you know who I am talking about" Alvara stated, she didn't like going around and talking in circles, thus she quickly came to the point.

"Hnn.." Simon made a nasal noise and nodded his head. Of course, he knew who the princess was, they had travelled with each other at that time. Although at that time he was unaware of her other identity.

"So what does the princess want? Don't tell me she sent you all here to capture me for what happened back then in the capital?" Simon stepped forward, arched his head and locked gazes with the guard captain.

The moment his words fell, a faint sense of danger pervaded the air causing all the hair on Burg and the rest to stand on end. Forget about the time when he was lower level but still stronger than them. It needn't even be mentioned how big the gap between them was now that his level was on the brink of reaching the level 500 barrier.

Just his erupting emotions were enough to cower them to submission. Although her body shook a little, Alvara forcefully suppressed it and continued to glance at Simon with an undeterred face. Her personality was stubborn, she would never reveal any fear in front of her opponent.

"The Princess won't do something like that. And looking at you now, I don't think we have enough manpower here to capture you" She retorted back.

The bodies of those behind her trembled, their faces seemed to be saying that they wanted to run away from here immediately.

"If it's not to capture me, then may I ask for what reason the guard captain has visited my abode?" Simon laughed withdrawing his aura.

"We are here to notify you of something on behalf of the princess and a message from her" Alvara spoke, she took out a letter from her space ring and passed it to Simon.

Simon took the letter and saw the seal of Serene Palace Merchant guild on it. This told him that this letter was not from the princes but from the mistress of the merchant company that he had travelled with back then.

Simon opened the letter in front of the curious eyes of everyone and after a while, his expression froze.

Immediately afterwards, the atmosphere of the room changed, the air visibly took a faint crimson colour and a pressure that cracked the ground descended onto the floor. Nobody knew what went wrong after the demon read the letter, but they all took out their weapons and stared at him cautiously.

Given the dreadful killing intent he was releasing, it was a subconscious action of theirs.

"Master are you alright?" a maid appeared behind the demon at some unknown point. She was beautiful, her beauty was on par with Alvara and she possessed a unique thoughtful and intellectual temperament.

Annette had appeared behind Simon surprising everyone as they failed to notice her presence.

The trembling of his hand that was holding the letter, stopped at this moment. He tore his eyes away from the letter and shifted it towards Alvara almost in a glare and demanded.

"Are the things written in this letter true?".

This time, even Alvara wasn't able to remain unperturbed, given the rich killing intent that was involuntarily surging at her, the natural reaction of her body was to tremble in fear.

Simon at this moment had forgotten to keep his aura and his killing intent in check, they wildly surged out of his body like a tsunami and quickly filled the chamber.

After massacring thousands of ogres in the Blackfield, Simon's body carried a natural rich killing intent. It was so dense that if any person below level 200 came in contact with it, they might have a seizure and immediately faint.

Alvara nodded her head with some difficulty, at this moment she found her body locked in place and struggle breathing.

"Lord Simon... if I may interject" while Simon was lost in his thoughts, a voice sounded out in the hall breaking the silence.

"You are..." Simon who was called out looked at the person and furrowed his brows. This person in assassin attire looked familiar, where did he see him before?

"You are that assassin who had given me the map back then" after thinking for a while, it finally dawned on Simon who this man was.

This man was the very same person who appeared before him when he was running wildly from the pursuit of the sea god's trident guild after losing the protection of Adalinda.

If not for the man providing the map and stalling the enemy's line-up, he might have wandered into the Vulkan fortress where the sea god's trident had set up their camp and was waiting for him.

"Haha... the name is Brett. It seems like lord Simon remembers me. It might be asking too much but if you don't mind can you please retract your aura, the newbies are about to faint".

The assassin pointed at the group behind him who looked so frail and terrified that they would pass out any moment if this continued.

It was only now that he realised that he had lost control of his emotions. He hurriedly retracted his aura and suppressed his vast killing intent.

Haa... only when there was no longer that pressure that grasped hold of their hearts, did these few fellows exhale a breath of relief. The next moment though, they looked at the demon with even more dread.

Alvara too hurriedly composed herself after she was free of that killing intent holding her in place.

"Master are you alright?" Annette repeated herself, her face was masked with worry when she saw him losing himself in anger at that moment.

Simon didn't say much, he passed her the letter and focused his gaze back on the guard captain.

"If the contents of the letter are true, then it possesses a great risk. What I don't understand is why would you reveal it to me instead of keeping it a secret and allow it to happen?"

Simon asked, his eyes were observing the two carefully, detecting the minute movement they made to determine if there was any deception involved. If there was, he was resolved to kill them instantly.

After what had happened last time, one cannot blame him for being callous. He had forsaken the human side of him and had accepted that there cannot be any reconciliation between them.

"Sigh... it's because the princess believes that no good would befall us by antagonising you. She said that the kingdom of Ellesmere can only prosper if they reconcile with you. It might be hard for you to believe, but she wants to apologise to you for what happened back then in the capital".

"She knows that you were wrongly framed and pursued thereafter. She wants you to know that she was deeply upset when unable to keep the promise that she made with you. The contents of that letter are her way of showing her goodwill" Alvara stated in a soft voice.

"Goodwill?... Kfufu... Hahaha," Simon chuckled, his giggle turned into a loud burst of laughter.

"In one side you seek a compromise while on the other side you are trying to antagonise me. Aren't your words contrasting a little too much Guard Captain? If you want to deceive me, at least get your facts straight".

Alvara spoke of reconciliation but the contents suggested otherwise. Simon didn't know if he should laugh or get mad.

"Lord Simon... I know that it won't be easy to change your view of us. Hence we do not think that we can come to an understanding now. We only want you to know that princess Cynthia is doing everything in her power to maintain this relationship".

"You must understand that she is after all just a princess of the kingdom and does not have the authority to prevent that. Thus she could only inform you through this method. She hopes that this information would be of some help to you" Brett interjected.

In the backlines however, the fellows who were intently listening to their conversation, were going crazy after finding that the demon noble who had wreaked havoc in the capital was none other than the one in front of them.

This revelation cemented their fear even more. Unknowingly, they had entered a very dangerous place in search of this person.

On the other hand, they found it astounding and strange that the princess of their kingdom had a relationship with a demon noble.

Everything that is being discussed right now, was a secret that nobody other than them in the kingdom was privy to. If the words of today's event were to be spread even they did not know what kind of storm it would brew.

Chapter 533 533- Letter (2)

Nevertheless, these people weren't fools they were tactful enough to know what they should keep a secret. Plus, the reason why the princess had sent them here as a part of team, was because she had absolute faith in them that they won't betray her.

Simon was silent for a while as he intensely pondered the intention of this princess who had helped him numerous times. She had not only warned him to leave the capital before his identity was revealed, but she had also even provided him with a map to safely traverse back to his dungeon and now this...

Simon was not a fool to take their words at face value, thus he briefly considered other various factors that would lead the princess to help him.

"Alright for now I would maintain a neutral stance against her. However, I want you all to tell her one thing, I'm not a nice person who would forgive someone who tries to backstab me. I will not show any mercy to my opponents no matter who they are. If they dare to invade my dungeon, their only outcome will be death".

Leaving those dark and heavy words, Simon turned around and together with Annette, they left the hidden chamber.

With him gone, the pressure that was boring down on them had also vanished. The group exhaled a deep breath of air that they had been holding for quite a while. The chamber was silent, nobody dared to speak a word even after it had been quite a while since the demon left.

"Alvara... let's go back now. We have completed the task assigned to us by the princess. There is nothing left for us to do in this dungeon. Now that we have given him the letter, it does not concern us as to who wins or dies" Brett spoke to break the silence.

Alvara nodded solemnly, it was just as Brett had said, their duty was to hand that letter over to the demon. Now that they had completed it, their job was over. It concerned them not whether the one that won was the demon or that side.

"Do you think he will be able to survive that?" Alvara composed herself and turned around to face her companions and Brett.

"It is difficult but you should know the answer. With them taking actions personally this time, whatever chances the demon had of surviving, was gone" Brett was not trying to sound pragmatic but that was how dire the situation looked from his perspective.

Alvara did not comment and silently nodded her head. However, she didn't know why she felt that even though there was such a disparity between the strength of both parties, the demon wouldn't lose.

There was no basis for that, it was just a gut feeling. She once had travelled with this man around a year ago. At that time, without even revealing his full strength, he was powerful enough to resolve all of the problems they met along the way.

However, even that strength fell short on that day in the capital. She was aware that the demon had become far more powerful than before when she faced him again this time. Nevertheless, the opponent he was facing this time was the best of the best of their kingdom.

So why is it that she still believed that the demon would win? Was it because of the princess?

Alvara shook her head and shifted her attention to her companions and stressed—"I know that you all understand this already but do not reveal a single word about what had happened here today to anyone".

Burg and the other nodded their heads with a dead serious faces. The group decided their next course of action and everybody agreed to go back.

"Captain, what about the treasure chest? We have fought so hard to defeat the guardian monster. Wouldn't it be a waste to just leave without opening the treasure?" Burg asked with some anticipation.

Although the situation had turned around completely with the appearance of the demon noble, it couldn't be denied that they had cleared this hidden chamber and were entitled to the rewards here.

Alvara sighed, looked at the eager eyes of her companions before nodding her head.

Inside one of the halls of the white palace, Simon silently sat on the couch pondering something. His eyes were looking at a window in front of him and his hands were continuously swiping it randomly.

He continued this action of his for a while when suddenly the door to the hall was pushed open and Irene along with the Valkyries, Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse and every close subordinate of his walked in.

"You guys..." When Simon saw all of them gather in the hall, he couldn't help but arch his brows in a frown.

"I have called them" Irene spoke softly while walking towards him "I have heard from Annette about the contents of the letter thus I called everyone here to let them know about the approaching storm".

Simon shifted his gaze towards Annette when he heard that.

"Don't look at her, I knew that you would try to cover up the issue from everyone and try to shoulder everything on your own again. Thus I had no choice but to do this. It is true that a leader must be strong however, the true essence of a leader isn't only based on their strength but also on

their ability to make sound judgements, their flexibility during critical situations, the trust that they have in their subordinates and dependability".

Irene glanced at Simon with her crystal blue eyes and continued—"Everyone here, deeply trusts you, depends on you and has faith in your judgement. They know that whatever decision you will make, will only be for their benefit".

"Therefore you should embrace their feelings and start reciprocating them back. You cannot be always stalwart and headstrong in every situation, learn to be a little flexible at times and rely on your subordinates a little".

Although Irene's voice was calm and collected, Simon could hear thousands of emotions from it. He closed his eyes, took a few deep breaths and nodded his head when he opened his eyes again. There was no longer that look of impatience and impulsiveness in them again.

These few words from Irene had made him realise that sometimes a single individual can only do so much with his own strength and he needed to trust and depend on his subordinates a little more. Wasn't this the reason why he had summoned them in the first place?

Simon looked at the eyes of all of his subordinates; he could feel their trust and resolve flow from those eyes. This cleared his head and he understood that if he wanted to solve the upcoming situation he would need to depend on all of them.

"I haven't informed all of them yet. Since this is the duty of a leader, you should be the one to tell them that" Irene added from beside him.

Simon held the figure of his subordinates before opening his mouth to tell them about what was going on, the group that came and the contents of the letter.

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"That's how it is, the top five guilds of the kingdom of Ellesmere are preparing for a big expedition into our dungeon. Their motive is clear and that is to capture our dungeon and eradicate its master that is me. Quite a few big guilds have joined their coalition".

"It is no doubt by far the biggest hurdle our dungeon has ever faced, therefore I will be relying on you all to protect our dungeon, the home that we live in. The intruders this time will be strong, their levels will be far higher than any of the adventurers that have dived inside our dungeon up until now".

"I won't be able to guarantee that we will be able to survive through this scot-free but I can assure you that as long as I live, I will protect you all and this dungeon with all my strength" Simon spoke his mind, he did not know what a leader should say at a time like this but the things he said was from his heart.

He did want them all to survive, he wanted to protect this dungeon that he had built with such care. Unwittingly these few simple words of his, managed to touch the hearts of his subordinates.

Simon had undermined the charisma and confidence that his body naturally exuded, coupled with his warm words, it was enough for these people to view him as their greatest leader.

"Master..."

"Lord Simon"...

"We shall do our best to protect this dungeon"

His subordinates spoke in determination and in unison. Looking at them who were oozing confidence, Simon felt an unknown surge of emotion flood his heart and a smile unwittingly crept to his face.

Irene who was standing beside him looked at his side profile and a warm emotion appeared in her cold emotionless eyes. He was slowly but surely becoming the leader, the pillar of faith the inhabitants of the dungeon needed him to be.

"According to the letter that princess sent you, there is only a week or two remaining before the combined coalition of the guilds knocks on the dungeon. What do you plan to do?" Irene asked, they needed a plan to prepare for the upcoming intruders.

Simon's expression immediately changed, he clasped his hands into a fist and a wild crimson glow flashed in his eyes.

Since they have decided to come, he will show them that he wasn't some softy that they could just squash as they willed. Once they stepped inside his dungeon, he would make sure that every last of them dies and become a nourishment for his dungeon and a stepping stone for his growth.

No matter how big their number was or how powerful they were, this dungeon will become the graveyard for each and every one of the intruders.

Chapter 534 534- Earth Shattering Lower Dragon

Simon resolved internally that no matter what happens, he would defend his dungeon. He looked at the determined faces of his subordinates and started handing out orders to them.

"Relay this message to the ones living on the 49th to 52nd floors. I want all of them to be ready with their subordinates and be at their peak state when the time comes".

On the orders of Simon, all safety measures that was put in place for the adventurers of the tower town, would be removed. All traps in the lower middle floors and lower floors would be changed to all lethal.

Manufacturing of Andromeda mk 9 would start early. Not only that, he also opened the operation mutation of the monsters again.

Simon assigned a good chunk of DP to the helpers to alter some of the areas of the floor to better suit the monsters. He even ordered them to create more hidden floors and increased the overall difficulty of the monsters and the complexity of the lands starting from the middle floors.

All the subordinates hurriedly left to carry out their orders except for Irene and the Valkyries. The Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse was responsible for managing the disaster class beasts and those who were close to breaching this class. Thus it hurriedly left to prop those beasts back into shape.

Simon could already imagine the scene on the deep sea alligator floor occurring once again.

After he handed others their orders, Simon suddenly remembered the words the spirit tree had said. It told them about a future danger that would befall them. He couldn't help but wonder if this was the danger it talked about.

"Where are you going?" Irene asked seeing Simon walk out of the hall.

"Back to training" Even if those guilds used the air engine which they will most likely use to arrive here, it would still take them more than a week to travel all the way from the capital to here. Simon had to make the best use of the time he had left with him.

After handing out the management of the dungeon to Irene, Simon arrived in front of the pond side once again and started training with even more fervour.

Unlike the last time when he could take it leisurely, he was pressed for time this time. He wanted to acquire the skill before those guilds arrived and add more cards to his battle powers.

Three days passed by in an instant as Simon was focused on his training. In the area near the serenity pond which was covered by a thick mist of mystical energy, a figure jumped out of the pond with a splash.

The tall and lean figure was none other than Simon who dived inside the pond. After his huge jump in level, he was now able to stay inside the pond for more than five minutes without feeling the pressure or experiencing his HP decrease.

Since that was the case, Simon took this opportunity to bask in the benefits of the pool. Irene had once told him that the water of the pond contained a high concentration of pure mystical energy which was increasing every day.

If he could dive inside the pond and bask in its effects every day for a few minutes, it would not only strengthen his physique but also optimise his body to its peak state. Not only that, as the effects of the pond start accumulating on his body, he would undergo a metamorphosis of some sort where his talent, aptitude, stats and basically all other values will receive a huge boost.

Although the effects that could be felt now were very subtle and couldn't be seen in the status, Simon could still sense that he was getting stronger every single day, even though his level stayed the same.

During the three days, Simon had basically started living near the pond-side and never left the place even for an instant. His routine constituted of training the [Mana flow] skill bitterly day and night and diving inside the pond to bask in its effects.

Of course, every time he dived inside the serenity pond, he did not forget to rummage up some mutation crystals and various other treasures from the bottom of the pond.

He would call one of the [Helpers] here and pass them the crystals every day during these past three days. On that note, since they were short on staff, Simon had increased the number of [Helpers] assigned to help manage his dungeon, from seven to fifteen.

Only the most talented forest spring spirits were chosen for this role. Coleus was still their leader and he was also the one that was managing the project mutation on his behalf. As he had followed Simon and spent quite some time observing the mutation on the monsters, he could be said to be a little knowledgeable about this stuff.

Simon did not shy away from assigning a sum of DP for him to summon monsters to experiment on. Failure was the mother of success, Simon knew that much of the DP would be burnt in a jiffy.

Nevertheless, every successful mutation added a new and powerful monster into their collection and increase their chance of surviving the upcoming expedition.

After passing the mutation crystal to the new [helper] named Reed, Simon arrived inside the white palace. At this moment, the palace was empty. Everybody was busy carrying out their tasks.

Irene was handling the numerous affairs of the dungeon, Cecilia was in the forest spirit village and the Valkyries were training. Of course, it was not like they had neglected their duty towards Simon, everyday one of them would be assigned to stay beside him and take care of him.

Simon sat inside the hall for a while before the space fluctuated and the beautiful figure of Irene appeared in front of him. When he saw her, he quickly got up from his seat and told Irene that he would be stepping out of the dungeon for a while.

"Where are you going?".

When asked that, Simon revealed a fierce smile, pointed in a direction north-eastern from here and said—

"I need to complete what I started. Only a little more than a month is remaining before the one year agreement with Aldebaran already comes to an end. Before that, I need to subdue the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon and complete the three overlords of the north set. With the addition of the Earth shattering Lower Dragon, the defensive might of our dungeon would increase".

Seeing that Simon had made up his mind, Irene was silent for a while. It was true that the situation looked a little grim, an expedition of this magnitude and size was a first for this dungeon.

All the top five guilds combined their strength and even roped a couple of dozen big guilds from the surrounding region to form a coalition against his dungeon. It wouldn't be wrong to say that this was the might of an entire nation.

It wasn't something a low rank dungeon like theirs can look down onto. Simon who had travelled to the capital of that kingdom, knew very well the might of these guilds.

Just a single Sea god's trident guild was able to corner him until he had to resort to using the transit to stone to flee. Much less needed to be said now when those powerful top guilds have allied together against his dungeon.

As the phrase goes—once bitten, twice shy, Simon who had experienced the humiliating experience first-hand, knew better than to underestimate his opponents. He would do anything and everything that was possible for him currently to boost the power of his dungeon.

The dungeon was a very important existence to him, he cannot allow anyone to destroy it. This also included the people living inside it. Thus he had no choice but to confront the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon a little earlier than he expected.

Irene looked at Simon, who was oozing confidence and had an atmosphere around him saying relax I got this. He might have been able to fool others with that, but not Irene. She knew that it was just a cover, he was masking his insecurities with a veil of confidence so as to not worry anyone.

Irene as a woman was considerate enough not to reveal it. However, the matter of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon still made her worry. Of course, the reason for it was that Adult Dragon.

If the Irene of a year ago saw the current her, she would be amazed to see how she was displaying such concern and worry for a man. Nonetheless, the current her did not have the mind to pay attention to such things.

The earth Shattering lower dragon might just be a lower dragon and an overlord of the northern region but it was a dragon no less. Just this last fact alone was enough to put it on equal standing or even above those seven kings of the forest.

That was how powerful the dragon clan was, just having their bloodline made the individual extremely strong. This was also one of the reasons why a body of a dragon was considered a priceless treasure from the point of view of everyone in this world.

Given the fact that the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was a genuine dragon and the blood of the dragon clan flowed within it, which made countless lives inside and outside of this ghastly winding forest covet it.

However, despite that, the Earth shattering lower dragon was able to stay alive inside the forest and without facing any trouble while it was just in its juvenile stage. There had to be someone or something that was protecting it from the shadows.

What the Lightning Draconic Serpent told them about the dragon clan, should be the truth. A mature dragon was silently protecting the juvenile dragon.

Chapter 535 535- Earth Shattering Lower Dragon (2)

The dragon clan weren't fools, they understood how much allure each part of their bodies held towards the member of other races. Regardless of that, how were they able to roam free across the world and establish themselves as one of the peak clans in this world?

It was because of their might. The powerful bloodline of the dragon clan bestowed them with a powerful body. Not only that, a dragon was one of the apex beings of this world who have already reached the peak of their evolution since their birth.

That is to say, they are born powerful and their bodies need not go through an evolution like the other beasts of this world to reach their ultimate stage. That is not all, due to their bloodline the skills and power of a dragon are not something that just any beast in this world can match.

Even though she knew that Simon had the backup of relying on that legacy technique and the dragon aura of that girl inside his body, she was still a little concerned. One cannot say how a battle would turn out, especially when one's opponent was a dragon.

"Alright, I will head out now".

Seeing that Irene wasn't saying anything, Simon was just about to walk past her when he felt a pair of cold hands that were soft yet delicate, gently grab his wrist.

Her shapely white hand felt smooth to the touch, her fingers and those well-maintained nails had an endless allure.

Simon turned around to face Irene when he felt her touch. This was the first time Irene had initiated a physical contact on her own.

A couple of seconds passed, the two gazed at each other when suddenly Irene realised her hand was still grabbing onto Simon, she quickly released it.

A turmoil of emotion faintly flashed in her eyes before it was frozen and suppressed once again.

"Take this with you" Irene extended her hand and plucked an azure blue strand of her hair from her head. She then extended her finger and that strand of hair immediately flew towards Simon and entwined around the index finger of his right hand.

This sudden action by Irene, took him by surprise, he looked at the index finger of his right hand and noticed that her hair coiled around his finger like a ring. This strand of hair other than having that rare azure blue colour appeared ordinary.

"Always keep that with you" Irene spoke and revealed a rare smile that was like a powerful spell that could enrapture the heart of any creature of this world.

Simon nodded his head and did not ask her about it. For some reason, Simon felt that she didn't want him to ask her about it. Thus he turned around, opened his main menu and teleported away.

The moment Simon disappeared, Irene's face which maintained a smile, paled immediately. Her body shivered intensely, blood streaked out from the corner of her mouth. Even her aura at this moment had become extremely frail.

A mysterious phoenix marking like a crown appeared on her forehead and suppressed the turmoil in her body. Nevertheless, each time that phoenix markings appeared, her eyes would become hollow and lost as if she was recollecting something that had been forgotten.

Counting the number of times the phoenix marking appeared on her forehead, it had already been two times. And each time the phoenix marking appeared, Irene's aura seemed to have increased significantly.

Wind whistled by, the refreshing air of the early morning brushed past Simon's body. He flapped his wings and soared through the air. His speed was so fast that he was like a black streak cutting through the sky.

After experiencing that big jump in level, Simon felt he was much stronger than before, every cell, and every muscle in his body was brimming with energy. He was itching to try his powers on someone to see the current limit of his strength.

Other than that, there was also this mysterious feeling of approaching an invisible threshold. Simon's current rank was demon viscount, usually for a demon noble like him with an impure bloodline, that would be the ceiling of his growth.

That is to say, Simon was quickly approaching the peak of his current rank which was level 500. Most of the demon viscounts who were fortunate enough to grow to such heights, were stuck in this level for dozens of years or even centuries, unable to make any progress after that.

If somebody were to ask these people why were they unable to progress any further than this level, all of them would recount that they seemed to have arrived before an enormous wall that did not budge no matter what they did.

Simon who was hurriedly approaching that limit, could vaguely feel that wall ahead of him. The wall that was the barricade that barred him from going any further, the bloodline limit.

However, Simon wasn't worried about that limiting him, he had the [Main Menu] with him. This thing along with the fragment of pride was his biggest support and most deeply guarded secret that would help him to reach the sort of level and power, he desired.

While Simon was having these thoughts, he quickly approached the northern region of the forest. The landscape below him quickly changed and before long he had arrived near a familiar place.

Simon bitterly smiled as he recalled the incident that happened here more than a year ago. At that time Simon who had just reincarnated into this world, thought of himself as unbeatable and someone who could look down on all creatures.

The low level monsters around him further boosted that ego of his, he was just like a naïve young demon baring his fangs at everyone and anyone that he saw.

It was only after he met the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon and went to the Walpurgis, that he truly understood the vastness of the world and that he was just a frog looking at the world from inside a well.

As a matter of fact, that experience and everything that he had to go through up until now forged his character and wiped that naivety away from him. Simon understood that the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon represented the toughest challenge out of all the three overlords and would be a strong opponent to beat.

However, Simon too was a tough nut to crack. He had his own pride and he would not shy away from challenging the opponent he had once run away from.

The Earth Shattering Lower Dragon might be strong but it wasn't like he did not stand a chance. As long as that mysterious adult dragon did not intervene, Simon had the confidence to beat the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon even without the aid of curse energy.

As these thoughts ran inside his head, Simon fixed his gaze on the distant lonely mountain that stood tall and mightily in the middle of the forest. He then looked at the ground below him, if he proceeded a few more meters forward, he would be entering the territory of one of the three overlords of the northern region.

PHEW... Simon exhaled a deep breath and walked forward, the moment he stepped foot inside his territory, that guy had already perceived his presence. A heavy pressure like a hundred foot huge wave came barreling at him from the distant mountain.

Nevertheless, it wasn't able to stop Simon as he simply walked forward. If it was before, he wouldn't have been able to sense its presence but now that he was swiftly approaching the peak of demon viscount, he could clearly feel it.

That enormous giant like aura that was resting inside that mountain. The sheer volume of that aura was so huge that it was enough to cause others to feel a heavy suppression.

"No wonder everyone was afraid of the dragon clan, what a ridiculous amount of mana this guy has" Simon muttered, being a race that was sensitive to mana, he could naturally tell that his opponent was one troublesome fellow.

"The pressure earlier should be a warning from that guy. Heh, did he really think that he can scare me with just that?" Simon continued to advance ignoring the warning.

Soon after, he was before that gigantic mountain that was much too familiar in his mind.

'It's coming!'

The gigantic mountain started to tremble causing the ground near to form numerous cracks. The cracks continued to become bigger and bigger until they formed a deep gully inside the earth.

Simon hurriedly braced himself and focused on the dark deep gully. Moments later, a thunderous roar that was enough to scare the monsters, resounded across this part of the forest.

TREMBLE... TREMBLE...

The trembling intensified and the thing hiding inside the earth, finally showed its appearance. An enormous claw decked with rugged stone scales clawed out, followed by a humungous body.

That body was easily bigger than a hundred meters, it had large spiky rocks like scales protruding from its gigantic body. Two draconic eyes that were filled with ancientness and profundity slowly opened.

The being raised its head and roared towards the heaven causing a small shockwave in the process. A wide jaw and spear-like teeth could be seen from the slight opening of its mouth.

Two sharp horns that looked like millennial old rocks protruded from its head. The top of its body is covered in rounded scales and a row of enormous spiky crystals run down its spine. Its bottom was covered in smooth skin and was coloured much lighter than the rest of its body.

Four thick limbs carried its oversized frame emanating an aura of a sturdy ancient mountain. Its large barbed tail was connected to a round spiky stone that looked like a flail. The being in front of him was none other than the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon from his memories.

Chapter 536 536- Simon Vs Earth Shattering Lower Dragon

However, unlike the past, the current Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was many times bigger and more powerful than before. Its entire presence gave the feeling of indestructibility.

"Those enormous crystal like stones on its back didn't look that ancient before" Simon reckoned. Though those stones were covered with moss and dust, their lustre was like the gem whose brilliance refused to fade away at the slightest.

After the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was done roaring at the heavens, its eye finally looked down and it landed on the demon who remained unfazed even after it showed its appearance.

The dragon did not bother to speak, it raised one of its limbs and clawed down.

BANG...

The ground was immediately cracked apart from the sheer force of its attack. one would expect a body this big to be extremely slow; however that attack earlier was enough to break all preconceptions that anyone had about its speed.

After crushing the ground near the demon, the eyes of the dragon immediately darted up and landed on the demon who was casually flying in the sky.

"Straight to business eh?" Simon grinned.

The Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was a member of the dragon clan, thus it was extremely intelligent. Forget about understanding him, it could even speak if it wanted to. Not to mention it was about to break through the level 500 barrier and enter the disaster class.

The dragon narrowed its eyes, it didn't expect its attack earlier to not accomplish anything causing it to glance at the demon carefully.

FWOOSH...

A sharp sound of wind tearing came and a black shadow hurriedly magnified in Simon's vision. The thing was so fast that it was right upon him in the blink of an eye. It carried a tremendous force and momentum as it came crushing him.

Just when the black thing was a few inches away from him, Simon took out his [A] tier crimson blade and using his sword mastery skill he diverted all that force and momentum and easily repelled it.

BANG...

The earth cried and the land in his vicinity was easily crushed. After the dust and tree splinters settled down, a hundred-foot deep pit appeared in the place.

The hand which held the sword, trembled intensely and blood leaked out from some of his nails. After clashing with the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon head on, Simon finally realised how much of a monstrosity the other guy was.

Even though he had used the sword to buff his stats and redirected all of the force of that attack, it still manage to slightly injure him. Although this kind of injury was nothing to him, and it healed within seconds, it was enough to tell him that his stats were still inferior to the other.

Finally, after even that attack failed to do anything to the demon, the dragon became a lot more serious. Its body moved and the black thing was quickly retracted back. The thing that attacked Simon earlier was none other than the flail like tail of the dragon.

"So you have also come coveting my blood too? You all are nothing but insects yet you dare to look down on this king? All of your constant bugging has gone for long enough. This king will show this time that it is not so easy to take my blood".

The Earth Shattering Lower Dragon spat out a few words of vehemence. Right after that, the energy inside him started boiling and raising even further.

'Finally willing to talk huh' Simon did not know what blood and intrusion it was talking about, but he could see that his opponent, was finally serious. It had stopped looking down on him.

"Well might as well get over with it" Simon did not bother to hold back either and swiftly activated the [Ancestral Symbol Ignition] skill.

Since the other guy reached the peak of its evolution already, its base stats were already higher than his. Not to mention the skill they had should not be inferior to his. If he did not increase his strength further, the result of this battle would be totally one sided.

The complex tribal like markings on Simon's body, started heating up and with a brilliant golden light, it started igniting. A mighty aura that was not any weaker than the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon erupted from him and the collision of their auras alone was enough to create wild storms.

A solemn expression descended on the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon's eyes after seeing that he wasn't able to suppress the other party with its aura. Its body shook mysteriously, and the numerous spiky boulders on its back lit up with dusty brown light.

Waves after waves of ripple passed through the ground. Immediately afterwards, the land for a few hundred meters started moving as if it was alive. The mud, the sand even the small granules, everything that comprised from soil started moving towards the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon.

Simon looked at the changes occurring with grim eyes. He was trying to use his [Analysis] skill on the dragon only to find that it was unable to see beyond its level and race. His attempt to peer at its skill had failed.

While he was bracing himself for what was coming, the soil quickly crept up to the body of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon and disappeared inside those glowing crista stones on its back.

The process was extremely fast, it only took a few couple of seconds before the soil around hundreds of meters was swiftly sucked into its crystals. After the crystals on its back finished devouring the soil, the light emitted out of it brightened even more.

After which, it was fired towards Simon. This light wasn't just any beam of light, it contained a heavy pressure like that of a mountain and had an extremely destructive power within it.

Simon did not dare to slight this kind of energy, he tightened his grip on the sword and slashed forward. At that moment, the blade of the sword lit up with a brilliant golden light that vaporised the moisture in the surrounding few hundred meters of land.

The sword slashed forward a golden glow sped towards that brown light.

RUMBLE... a blinding light erupted when the two attacks collided followed by a rumbling noise. A surge of wild energy waves and flames burst from the two attacks and spread around the surrounding destroying anything and everything.

Trees, land, monsters or even mountain, everything would burst apart and then turned into tiny debris.

The energy waves from the first collision was yet to fade when Simon noticed several more pillar of brown light shoot towards him.

In the distance, the Dragon was repeatedly firing one shot after another from those large glowing boulders on its back.

Simon did not give it time to mount the pressure, his calmness turned into a fervour, and his attacks became ore intense. He matched every attack of the dragon with his own golden blade glows.

Each of those blade glows contained an infernal amount of heat and his understanding of the sword mastery skill. They were in no way, weaker than the brown light pillars shot by the dragon.

BOOMM... BOOOM...BOOOMM...

Numerous eruptions of brown and golden light dotted the sky, the land was flipped upside down and even the space around the explosion showed signs of distorting.

In the blink of an eye, Simon had exchanged numerous blows with the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon.

Previously, it was much too strainful and draining for Simon to use infernal magic repeatedly like that. However, after his flame magic had advanced, and that drastic increase in his level, coupled

with the fact that he had gained the [Minimal Mana consumption] skill allowed him to dish out such attacks without any problem at this moment.

He was a vastly different person than the time he had first encountered the dragon. After a while, when both parties failed to gain any edge over the other, the brown beams of light stopped coming.

The Earth Shattering Lower Dragon had stopped firing probably realising that it was useless. The brown glow on those crystals had also diminished by a lot.

"My turn" Simon grinned, after exchanging a few blows with the dragon he realised that the other party was vastly different from any of the opponents he had faced up until now.

He couldn't gain even an inch of advantage against the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon. Not only were its attacks powerful, it had yet to show him their entire power. It still had many cards up its sleeve that it was yet to use.

Simon flapped his wings and utilising the surge of power that came from igniting his ancestral symbol, he zipped towards the dragon and appeared a few meters away from its body.

A faint blue layer of aura covered the edges of the blade and slashed towards the underbelly of the dragon that wasn't covered by those solid looking stone scales.

After clashing with the Deep Sea Alligator king, Simon was aware of some of the weaknesses of a streamlined body. Even if the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was a genuine dragon from the dragon clan and not a reptile type beast like the Deep Sea Alligator king, it had a streamlined body that made its underbelly its biggest weakness.

Seeing that the demon ignore its upper body and directly go for its weakness, the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon panicked for a moment. Nevertheless, it swiftly composed itself and interrupted the demon before it could get any closer to its body.

A black shadow appeared in front of Simon in a lightning like speed forcing him to swiftly pull back.

BAM... the black thing that was the tail of the dragon flattened the ground where Simon was just a second ago.

"This speed still not enough" Simon muttered inwardly, he grit his teeth and activated [Super Enhanced Agility], [Super Enhanced Strength] and his various other augmenting skill.

Chapter 537 537- Simon Vs Earth Shattering Lower Dragon (2)

The power inside his body soared even more and vaguely approached a threshold. This threshold was like an invisible wall that restricted his stats from going any higher.

Energy surged through his body brimming it with power and might that Simon had never experienced before. Of course, activating the many augmenting skills on top of igniting his ancestral skills, strained his body to its limits.

Cracking noises came from his body and he could feel some veins and tissues snapping, indicating that his body was still not ready to hold that amount of power.

Simon took a deep breath and quietly endured the pain. This was the first time after that crazy level that he had activated his power to his limits. He wanted to see what kind of strength, his current powers could display.

BOOMM...

Leaving behind a sonic boom, Simon flapped his wings, his figure disappeared from the sight of the dragon and appeared beside its body in an instant.

Although the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was unable to see the demon and was surprised by his speed, it did not panic like before. On the contrary, it was expecting the demon to target his weakness once again thus it was prepared.

It flailed its tail and the brown light from the stones gather on the striking head at the end of its tail increasing its heaviness and power to a new degree.

The moment, Simon appeared a few meters away from the body of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon, he saw its tail magnifying in his eyes. Simon did not panic though, he had already expected his opponent to react that way.

This time, he did not shrink away from the might of the tail and instead collided against it head on. Simon clenched his left hand into a fist and swung it towards the incoming tail with all of his power.

Mana unwittingly covered his right hand and vaguely formed a gauntlet of sorts.

BANG... when the two attacks met a harsh clanging reverberated and a ripple like shockwaves spread through the air.

The force of the two attacks was so powerful that anything that those ripples touched would be blasted into smithereens.

A fist and a gigantic tail were tightly locked in a battle, none of them could gain any ground against the other. Clearly, the force of the two attacks was equal.

The dragon who didn't expect to see his opponent not flying away like a bug, was stunned for a moment. This momentary daze, made it unable to react to what came next.

Simon utilised his battle experience from continuously fighting strong enemies to shift the force of his enemy's attack away from him. He rotated his body in an unusual manner and slipped past the tail and the earth Shattering Lower Dragon's guard.

SLASH...

Simon did not stop there, he took advantage of the momentary lapse of guard of his opponent and slashed towards its underbelly. A brilliant golden glow accompanied by an infernal heat lit up on the sword, the blade whose lethality was further enhanced by a layer of mana easily tore through its negligible defence and opened a large gash big enough to cover one-third of its underbelly.

No blood flowed out, as everything was charred by that golden infernal heat.

ROAARRRR... the unimaginable pain made the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon open its mouth wide and wail. It failed its body around in a wild and violent rampage collapsing the mountain that was its home and everything around it.

WHOOSH... Simon withdrew a few distance away and looked at the dragon with a grim light. Although he had managed to cut open a wound on his opponent, it wasn't quite deep and failed to deal it much damage.

When he looked at the dragon's HP, it had only fallen by one-tenth. From this, one could tell how powerful the body of a dragon was. The underbelly of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon had the least amount of scales and defence, unlike its top half which was covered by those dense sturdy looking stony scales.

However, even then it failed to reach its organs and deal any significant damage.

Simon glanced at his sword, it was an [A] tier weapon yet it was unable to pierce through the defence of a dragon. Just this fact was enough to tell how fearsome the dragon clan was.

ROOOAARR... the tone of Earth Shattering Lower Dragon's roar turned from agony to fury. Hatred and killing intent raged across its brown eyes that gazed at the demon.

This wasn't the first time that it was challenged, many other beings that resided in this forest had tried to attack him blinded by their greed. However, each time it showed them the vast difference between them and the might of someone who was a member of the dragon clan.

This would perhaps be the first time that it was injured by an opponent who it believed was beneath him.

ROARR... Rage covered its eyes, the pain from earlier was still throbbing in its body. Unforgivable... it wanted to tear apart that demon only then will its hatred be quelled.

How could Simon who was the recipient of those negative emotions not be able to feel it? The demon noble race was sensitive to such emotions. He could tell that the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was completely furious now, it had stopped holding back.

The power inside its body flooded out, and a pressure that seemed to be originating from the ancient times descended onto these lands. In front of that vast draconic pressure, most of the races of this world would be instantly intimidated and cowered into submission.

However, Simon was different this change only seem to excite him further. The demonic blood within him was exhilarated by this development.

Of course, Simon did not simply give in to these instincts, he was calm-headed as his eyes roamed all around him.

Now that he had attacked the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon, that mysterious protector of its wouldn't sit still. He was wary of that individual suddenly intervening, if need be Simon was ready to shatter the golden guardian stone and use the ancient draconic compel.

Nevertheless, that mysterious adult dragon did not show its face.

"Did they perhaps adopt a wait and watch attitude?".

Simon could only guess what the other party was thinking. While these thoughts rapidly flashed in his mind, the angered Earth Shattering Lower Dragon slammed its limbs into the ground causing the land for dozens of kilometres to tremble intensely.

The trembling caused enormous cracks to appear on the ground as if a massive earthquake of more than twelve Richter scale had occurred. Big chunks of bedrock surfaced out of the earth changing the topography of the land completely.

ROAARR... the brown draconic eyes filled with fury and murderous intent, did not stop there. After pulling out the bedrocks from the ground, the biggest crystal on top of its body started shining with glaring brown light.

These brown lights contained some mysterious power that allowed it to control the bedrocks. The substrata started moving and were gradually lifted in the air.

This unexpected change made even Simon frown a little. It must be mentioned that each of these bedrocks was as big as a mountain, lifting them in the air like that must cost a ridiculous amount of mana.

Even with his mana points [MP], he reckoned that he might not be able to do something as ridiculous as that.

"Puny Ant!!... This king shall show you the might of the dragon clan" the arrogant Earth Shattering Lower Dragon who hardly bothered to talk with him since the start, finally opened his mouth at this moment.

"Regret in hell that you dared to covet the bloodline of this kind. DIE" as soon as the dragon stopped talking, all those bedrocks started moving towards Simon from all directions.

This move from him intended to crush Simon into a bloody splatter in between those bedrocks.

Simon flapped his wings and moved around, because of the weight and size of the substrata, they moved slowly but after dodging for a while, Simon realised that he couldn't escape them. No matter where he went, these bedrocks followed.

It was like he had become a magnet that attracted them. The bedrock from all around rushed towards Simon and encircled him in between. Finally, they buried him in between.

BANG... BANG... BANG...

The impacts from multiple bedrocks snapping together caused a deep muffled rumbling noises to repeatedly echo far into the surrounding.

A faint smile appeared on the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon's face. It was marvelling at its work, the advanced tier Seismic Magic Mastery. However, the faint smile on its face did not last long when it saw the bedrock suddenly pulling back and leaning vertically towards the sky.

There was nothing in between those rocks. Immediately, the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon pulled his attention up and saw the demon appear high up in the sky.

Simon using his advantage in speed to dodge the bedrocks in the nick of time, appeared in the sky and observed this dragon opponent of his who had become weirdly stationary after pulling out the bedrock from the ground.

Even the numerous crystals on its body had lost their weird brown lustre except for that single biggest one in the middle.

"Is it unable to move because it needs to focus all of its attention on that one crystal was controlling these things?" Simon postulated narrowing his eyes, a sudden thought flashed in his mind.

He did not have much time to ponder over it as the bedrocks came rushing towards him once again.

Simon hurriedly descended and sped towards the motionless Earth Shattering Lower Dragon who was observing him with its eyes. It did not move or did it do anything, only the light coming from the biggest crystal on its back brightened.

Chapter 538 538- Simon Vs Earth Shattering Lower Dragon (3)

As he approached near the body of the dragon, the bedrock strangely became faster. At this moment, he was finally able to notice the mysterious fluctuations coming from the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon that dispelled some of his conundrums.

"So it was like this... no wonder I wasn't able to master it. I guess I must thank you for this" Simon muttered to himself, a unique look of enlightenment dawned on his face.

He came to halt around a hundred feet away from the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon and released the sword from his grasp and let it fall on the ground. Now that he had stopped, the bedrocks quickly came over from all directions, imprisoning him and burying him in between.

This time, however, Simon did not dodge them, a sea green bracelet appeared in his hand just before the bedrocks entombed him inside.

BANG... the deep rumbling sound once again echoed across the surrounding. Just the sound from the bedrocks colliding was already so dreadful one did not have to imagine much what kind of state the being that was crushed in between them would be.

Forget about remaining alive, everything would be smashed into a bloody splatter and ground to dust. It would be amazing if the demon managed to survive that. So were the thoughts of Earth Shattering lower dragon, it clearly felt the demon getting crushed by the rocks this time.

It made a victorious face and issued a deep growl of triumph towards the sky. Although it was injured this time because it was careless, the victory still belonged to him in the end.

CLANG... CRACK...

Just when it thought about turning around and leaving, it heard a slight cracking noise and a surge of infernal heat assaulting its body. Its outer body was protected by numerous stony scales and a thick layer of hardened skin thus it did not damage him much other than feeling a searing hot pain.

However, it was not the pain nor the infernal heat that caused its expression to crumble, it was the faint cracks that were appearing on the biggest stony rock on its back.

It needs to be mentioned that the toughest part of its body, was not its stony scales or its hide but those huge rocks on its back. They were not just ordinary crystals but crystallized mystical energy that it had been accumulating and condensing deep inside the earth all these years.

It was the source of its powers and the efforts of years of its struggle. Seeing it crumble apart like that, how could it not be devastated? In the blink of an eye, the cracks on the largest on its back intensified and it watched with an ashen face as it broke apart.

Years of its hard work and perseverance broke apart just like that.

"It's that sword..." the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was going through a great sorrow when suddenly it spotted a sword completely crimson in colour from the corner of its eyes.

Those eyes were lost for a while when suddenly it realised that it had seen this sword in the hands of that demon. The damage on its crystallized rocks was clearly due to this sword.

It had already defeated the demon, so why is it that this sword was still suspended in the air?

"Could it be?" at that moment, a thought struck him and it quickly turned its gaze towards its front where numerous bedrocks had crushed a figure within it.

Tik... TAK... CLACK... a small pebble rolled down and made some noise. Immediately afterwards, all of the substrata started shaking and with a great force, all of them were pushed back revealing a black figure inside it.

Extreme emotional turmoil like a tsunami, went through the heart of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon as it watched the figure come out with little damage after being crushed between those enormous bedrocks.

The scene of blood splattered bloody scene did not happen, instead, a figure walked out with all of his blood and bones intact. A pale yellow barrier that barely stood standing was enveloping their body.

"How is that possible? How can the demon still be alive after that?" the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon's eyes trembled with disbelief.

The attack that it had used earlier was one of its strongest attacks so how was it possible for that demon who was only an ant in front of its eye to still be alive and kicking?

While the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was going through an emotional upheaval, Simon who pushed open the gigantic bedrocks from around him and walked out, wiped the traces of blood from the corner of his mouth.

Both of his hands were bleeding severely, and he had suffered great internal injuries. If not for the barrier around him he might have been completely crushed by the force.

Simon quickly purchased a couple of elixir of healing from the shop and gulped down on it. Only after feeling its effects boosting his [High Speed regeneration] skill and various other recovery abilities, did he sigh in relief.

"But I must say, this bracelet came into use at this critical moment" Simon glanced at the sea green bracelet in his left hand. Although the thing appeared ordinary in fact it was not.

It was an ancient item that he had gotten as one of the rewards after clearing the third trail in the forbidden trail grounds. The barrier around him was the ability of this bracelet.

Item Name- Stone Guard Bracelet

Rank- [B]

Temporarily grants the user immunity to Tremor Magic, the intermediate tier of Earth magic.
Duration- 10 minutes

Cooldown- 27 Hours.

The item had the ability to make him immune to the Tremor magic for a short period of time. It was thanks to this ability that he was able to survive the attack from the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon.

However, even then the barrier wasn't able to completely negate the full power of that attack. The bracelet had the ability to make him immune from the tremor magic but not from its advanced form, the seismic magic.

From what Simon could tell that kind of absurd ability to lift the entire bedrock from the ground, was only possible with advanced magic. Thanks to the barrier standing between him and the seismic magic, he was able to somehow survive that attack.

Nevertheless, he still underestimated that attack somewhat and had paid a heavy price for it. Simon's internal organs were in a mess, his arms were numb not to mention the Stone Guard Bracelet had broken after that.

Simon sighed looking at the faint crack in the sea green bracelet. Perhaps it was too much for it to guard against an advanced tier magic. The Stone guard bracelet might work again if it was restored in the future.

Simon kept the bracelet in his inventory and turned his attention back on the Earth Shattering lower dragon. From its expression, he could tell that the latter didn't expect him to survive that attack of its much less retaliate and make it suffer an even greater loss.

Simon beckoned with his hand and the sword immediately flew towards him. There was no mysterious runes on the sword nor on his hand, he was clearly not using the [Dominator's control] technique.

So how was he able to manipulate the sword like that?

The answer to that was something that he had figured out while fighting the Earth Shattering lower dragon. He came to an epiphany and finally understood how the dragon controlled all of the bedrocks after pulling them out with its advanced magic.

[Mana Flow]... clearly, the dragon was also able to use it.

Simon observed the unusual mana fluctuation around the bedrocks and immediately came to a realisation. The other party knew the skill he was struggling with. At that moment, he made up his mind and decided to take on the attack.

Although it was kind of putting all of his eggs into one basket kind of thing, an extremely high risk high gain decision. He still went with it and used the other party's attack to advance his own skill.

While being crushed by the pressuring force of those bedrocks, Simon diverted a portion of his attention towards the mysterious fluctuation. That was when he finally understood the mysteries barring him from acquiring the skill.

A profound understanding descended onto him and he used this newfound discovery to manipulate the sword that he threw onto the ground earlier. He had chosen to attack the moment he saw the rock on the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon's back, dimming down a little.

The huge crystals on its body was the crystallisation of its power and incredibly sturdy but at the same time also its weakness. While trying to use magic, it would be lit up and emit a berserk amount of mana into the surrounding.

This made the Earth Shattering lower dragon unable to move for a while not only that when those rocks like crystals on its body dimmed, that was when it was in its most weakened state.

Simon who was noting every quirk and movement of his opponent since the battle started, came to that realisation after a while. And he was spot on.

Although it was extremely risky to do something like that based on some assumption, it had paid off. Simon did not know how important those crystal like rocks were for the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon but he at least understood that with that gone it would no longer be able to control those bedrocks anymore.

Involuntarily, Simon had dealt a great damage to the earth shattering lower dragon.

"This can't be. How are you alive demon? How did you survive that?" the dragon roared out, his thundering voice reverberating across the place. The arrogance of the dragon was finally snuffed out after facing Simon.

Chapter 539 539- Valdris

"Who knows, why should I even tell you that? An ant has its own way of defending itself. Don't tell me that the high and mighty king from the dragon clan is afraid? Kehehe... prepare yourself, earlier it was just the crystals on top of your body, my attacks won't stop until you kneel in front of me".

What a joke, the dragon was arrogant in front of him? Simon's words showed the latter who was the real ant.

He was not the same person he was when he faced the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon for the first time. He had ranked up, gone through multiple life and death battles that slowly filled his battle experience and forged his character.

It was a huge mistake on the part of the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon to underestimate him. Ultimately it allowed Simon to pull the rug out from underneath him.

The Earth Shattering Lower Dragon, was astonished, furious hearing the cold and condescending words of the demon. It was the overlord of the northern region of the forest, a dragon from the dragon clan.

Who out there would dare to look down on him? Even those incredibly strong beings living inside deep inside the forest, did not dare to. The demon was the first.

Kneel down? This type of humiliation was greater than killing itself for the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon. It was so furious that it could no longer think straight.

"Just because you managed to break my crystallised energy, doesn't mean that you have won? I shall see how long you are able to keep that smirk on your face demon. Those augmenting skills should soon be showing their repercussions. Let's see who has the last laugh after the effects of those skills wear out".

The Earth Shattering Lower Dragon was angered. However, it did not mean that all the reason flew out of his head. Just like how Simon was observing him, he too was observing Simon. His intelligent eyes allowed it to identify the sudden energy raise of his opponent was due to the superimposition of various augmenting skills altogether.

Given its intelligence, it understood the kind of backlash and strain that one has to go through for doing something as ridiculous as that. It was clearly counting on the time, waiting for the skill that buffed the demon to wear out.

At that time, he would be the final victor. The demon had made him suffer a huge loss, that crystal like rock on its body took dozens of years of accumulation deep underneath the ground to form. Now that it was broken, its power took a sharp drop.

Not only that, it has also pushed back his chances of moving up the class by dozens of years. It won't be able to quench this anger if he did not tear the demon apart with its very own claws.

Simon had a solemn look on his face, the dragon was indeed nothing like the other opponents he had faced. The other guy too knew his weakness. After activating all those augmenting skills, his body was under an enormous pressure, the berserk amount of mana surging within him threatened to burst out of his body.

This kind of forceful raise in strength had a timer and was a great detriment to his body. It would definitely leave some hidden sequelae behind. But so what? As long as he can make this concieted, arrogant dragon bow to him, it would all be worth it.

[Your emotions stirred the fragment of pride]

[The Fragment of Pride has been activated, all other emotions would be suppressed at this moment].

Simon felt his weary and giddy mind, suddenly clear up. Even the pain that he has been enduring all this while, swiftly faded. Make no mistake, his injuries and exhaustion did not heal up, it was just that under the influence of the fragment of pride all other things were suppressed and forgotten.

Of course, all of them would have their effects and rebound back once the effects of the fragment of pride disappeared. Nevertheless, for now Simon felt no longer restrained by that great increase in power.

Immediately, he conjured multiple magic of Infernal, Lightning and Gale elements and barraged the Earth Shattering Lower Dragon with it. He wanted to see how many scales on its body the dragon was ready to lose before it bowed its head in submission.

A wild clash where both parties were unwilling to back down against the other, erupted. While all this was happening, around a hundred kilometres away, there was a person in pale yellow clothes, seated on a rock on top of the mountain range.

He was a middle aged man, his eyes were closed, and he was in a meditative position like an unmoving boulder. Space fluctuated around him with every breath that he took and an aura like a calm sea, emitted out of him.

That person who had some peculiar yellowish scales protruding out from the corner of his eyes, arched his brows at this moment.

"Alder... if you have something to say, just say it. There is no reason for you to sneak up behind me like that is there?" he muttered without opening his eyes.

"Haha... dear me, it looks like I'm getting old. Even a junior like you can sense me approaching now" strangely that voice came from one of the towering trees behind the middle aged man.

A gentle breeze blew and all the trees around immediately became active. An emerald green light erupted out and the tree in the front wiggled before taking on a humanoid shape.

If Simon was here, he would immediately be able to tell that the shape of that humanoid tree resembled Aldebaran, the king of the ancient treants.

Finally, the middle aged man opened his eyes revealing two pairs of deep yellowish draconic eyes. When the eyes of the middle aged man opened, his aura which was like a calm sea, disappeared. "

Haha... it's been a long time since I last saw you, Valdri. That naïve brat from back then became strong" Aldebaran laughed and slowly approached the middle aged man named Valdri.

"That was more than a thousand years ago, stop treating me like a brat all the time, you old ghost" Valdri remarked, his face remained impassive. His body did not turn around nor did his eyes which were gazing at a particular place far into the distance.

The way his eyes were watching that place without moving was as if his eyes could penetrate through the space and can look far into the distance.

Aldebaran did not comment anything seeing his attitude, his old green eyes fixed on the same place the other person was watching.

TREMBLE... a small aftershock passed through the ground, disturbing the flora and fauna around this part. That aftershock wasn't the only one, numerous aftershocks travelled from the direction where two pairs of eyes were deeply fixed.

"What do you think?" Aldebaran suddenly asked, he did not provide any more context yet it was enough for Valdris to understand what the old ghost was talking about.

"He is capable; however, if he thinks that he would be able to subdue that fellow with force, then he is mistaken. If necessary, a dragon will choose death instead of submitting and living a life of shame".

Valdris opened his mouth to comment. His voice was resolute and unbendable as if he could tell what the outcome would be already.

"Haha... we don't know that yet. Miracles can happen anytime. I won't be surprised if something out of your expectation were to happen" Aldebaran's laughter rang out, he seemed to be much more positive about the situation.

"Hmph, a miracle is called a miracle because it does not occur often. I cannot see this situation going any other way. That junior of mine might be only in the middle of its juvenile stage but he is from our dragon clan nonetheless".

"Even if that demon is a little unique, he does not stand a chance. Once the buff from the numerous augmenting skills he has superimposed on himself wears out, it would be all too easy for a member of my tribe to deal with him".

Valdris who was looking into the distance finally tore his eyes away from the scene and focused on the being that appeared beside him. The old ghost that refuses to die even after thousands of years goes with another name around this part of the land.

"You seem to be enjoying that title quite a bit. Don't tell me you are raising those upstarts who call themselves the seven kings of the forest?" .

Valdris smirked, there was condescension and ridicule in his eyes when he mentioned that title. From his point of view, this title of seven kings was all bullshit. It was like some kids playing with a title and trying to appear intimidating in the eyes of the adult.

"Hmm... you are not wrong. Although I do not like this title, I'm indeed raising those fellows. I believe they have some potential" Aldebaran gave his usual smile, he was not offended by the other party's ridicule.

Seeing that his comment didn't manage to faze Aldebaran even a bit, Valdris immediately lost interest. His eyes shifted back to that same place far into that distance.

"Although I do not know why you would be raising those troublesome fellows, I do not care. However, if they dare to covet the bloodline of a member of my tribe again, I wouldn't mind deposing some of those kings of yours from their thrones".

From his words, one could tell that Valdris had already engaged with some of the seven kings of the forest.

"Do whatever you like. It's not like I can control them or they listen to me anyways" Aldebaran was non-committal.

Chapter 540 540- Valdris (2)

"Hnn... is that so? If it's not for those six, then it means that you are here for that guy?" Valdris' attempt to converse was just him probing for the intention of the other party. And seeing Aldebaran not deny and simply laugh it off, he was certain that his guess was spot on.

Valdris narrowed his eyes, for Aldebaran to be secretly backing the demon, there was no way the latter was simple.

"You have taken the initiative to appear me, is it because you don't want me to meddle in that?" Valdris asked, a strange light flashed in his yellow draconic eyes.

"Something like that".

This time, Aldebaran did not deny it and made his stance clear. An ordinary person won't be able to feel it, but Valdris was no ordinary person. He could see the mana around the entire mountain range change their course at this moment and slowly flow towards this person standing beside him.

"Hehh, are you telling me that I should just stay put and ignore the plight of a member of my tribe? Aldebaran, don't you think what you are asking is too much?"

A faint trace of anger leaked out of Valdris. Even if he didn't count the fact that the earth shattering lower dragon belonged to the same pavilion as him, just the fact that both of them were from the dragon clan, made him obligated to help the earth shattering lower dragon until he grows out of his juvenile stage and reaches the mature stage.

Asking him to not help the earth shattering lower dragon went against the rule of their tribe. Even if it's Aldebaran standing against him, he cannot do that.

"Although I doubt a member of the dragon tribe would need protection, what if I say that it's not possible for me to sit back when the time does really come for me to make a move? Are you going to fight me?"

Valdris questioned, his aura was no longer as calm as the sea. Waves after wave started appearing in that sea of energy.

Aldebaran might carry the same title as those seven kings of the forest, but those who know him or heard about him are aware of how powerful he was. This old ghost who refused to die, was a relic from the ancient times.

Even Valdris himself was unaware of some of the information regarding this ruler of the Ancient Treant. What he did know was that he was someone even before the era of the first Apex war. This fact itself put him in the same seniority as those legendary ancient dragon elders from their tribe.

Compared to that, Valdris who had only lived slightly more than three thousand years appeared just like a brat in front of the other party.

"Haha, you don't have to worry, I won't be raising my hands against a junior. But I would like to tell you that perhaps getting subjugated by that little fellow might be the best outcome or even a blessing in disguise for that tribe member of yours".

Contrary to his expectation, Aldebaran wasn't here to start a fight. Not mentioning the disparity in strength between them was too much, it would not bode well with Aldebaran to raise his hands on a junior given his status.

"A blessing in disguise? Haha, what a joke. Aldebaran even if you want to help that demon, you shouldn't spout such nonsense" Valdris spat irked by that remark.

"Nonsense or not, a person of your calibre can easily tell that. there is no way you haven't discovered the aura hidden within his body. If he brings that out, even you won't be able to stay unaffected. Haha... honestly, I'm pleasantly surprised. That little fellow didn't have that aura the last time I met him. He has grown quite a lot since then".

Aldebaran's voice had a trace of approval and appreciation in it. He didn't expect Simon to grow so much in less than a year since he last met him.

Valdris eyes shone with a mysterious yellow light; how could he not be aware of that aura? In fact, he knew more about that aura than Aldebaran himself. It was precisely because he knew so much about the aura inside that demon that he had difficulty believing.

Simon might be unaware of it, but Valdris had been monitoring him for a while. He had witnessed the latter's battle with the Deep Sea Alligator king, seen him subdue the tribe of orcs and scare the ogre tribe away.

His achievements were quite good even in his eyes. However, in the end, the demon was just a viscount, the second lowest rank in the demon hierarchy and not even a genuine demon noble. These two things contrasted so much that he had a hard time believing how the demon got hold of that aura.

"I cannot tell how high the ranking of the dragon was from that aura but it shouldn't be difficult for you right? Well even without that aura, the demon is special. His fate is destined to be a great one".

"Do you know when this old self first met that young fellow, he had just broken through the demon viscount rank and his level was hardly worth mentioning? Yet in less than year, his aura is starting to show signs of being full once again".

Aldebaran's tone was extremely pleased as he watched the fight between a dragon and a demon in the distance. The more he looked, the more satisfying the demon appeared in his eyes.

"Hmph, so what if he has grown quickly? His bloodline is quite impure, and in the end, he would get stuck by that wall unable to break through forever" Valdris had his own perception and thoughts.

"That may not be the case... haha" Aldebaran laughed "Well, I only came here to see how this little fellow was doing and judging from the situation, it doesn't look like he needs my help".

Aldebaran turned around and walked towards the copse of trees. An emerald green light emerged from his body and he quickly turned back into an ordinary tree.

"Not only that old ghost but even Venerable Red thinks highly of him to give a fraction of her dragon aura to him. No matter how I look at him, he seems ordinary to me. Am I missing something?"

Valdris watched as Aldebaran walk away before placing his attention back on the fight that was happening more than a hundred kilometres away.

"It seems like I can only ask him".

Of course, Simon, fighting the earth-shattering lower dragon, wasn't aware of what was being discussed over there. He did not even know that he was being observed by two incredibly powerful beings.

All his attention and focus was on the heated battle that he was having with the dragon in front of him. One magic after another was conjured by Simon, it clashed intensely with the attacks of the earth shattering lower dragon who counter attacked with equal ferocity.

The latter had long since stopped looking down on the demon whose power was enough to make him look in an equal light.

Power explosions continuously rocked the surrounding, changing the topography of this part of the land completely. Every single attack in this collision was filled with a berserk amount of mana. It was so powerful that all of the beasts in a hundred-kilometre area ran away from the place in fear for their lives.

Even the power super class beasts that were like the tyrant of a small area, were no exception. Powerful shockwaves travelled through the air shocking anyone that thought of approaching closer.

There were a few adventurers who had entered the northern region of the forest. However, all of them fled when they felt the tremors and the shockwave coming.

"Hehe, this is fun" Simon gave a wide grin and commented. He was already past his limits but the excitement of the battle made him unwilling to give up. Thus even while knowing that he might have to suffer a horrendous backlash later, he kept on fighting.

The earth shattering lower dragon was also not in a good shape. Most of the crystal like rocks on its body were shattered, its skin that was covered with stony scales was scorched black and its body had suffered numerous slash wounds.

If one counted the hundreds of years of life that it lived, this would be the first time it was wounded so severely. Yet the inborn pride of being a member of the dragon clan, stopped it from falling down.

Both of them were obstinate enough to not fall down before the other. Two attacks collided, one was a powerful sword glow while the other was an enormous spike head of the tail of the earth shattering lower dragon.

BANG...

Devastation spread and a deep pit formed on the ground adding to the number of pits that had already formed due to their battle. The energy storm caused by their attacks bent the space and forced the both of them back.

The earth shattering lower dragon took dozens of steps back while Simon flapped his wings to dispel some of the force pushing him back. Nevertheless, he had to still fall back by hundreds of meters.

"Demon I praise you for pushing me to this extent. You should be proud that you were able to fight a member of the dragon clan for this long. However, all of this stops here. This will be my final attack. Prepare yourself, this king will show you the true power of a dragon".

There was some respect in its tone. The two fighters who were engaged in a fierce battle had found a newfound respect for each other.

"Yeah, I accept your challenge" Simon was not among the ones that would back down in front of a challenge.